

GATES, WALLS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: THE IMPACT OF GATED COMMUNITIES ON THE SURROUNDINGS IN JORDAN

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Abstract

With the global spread of gated communities and their emergence in the Middle East, particularly in Jordan, this study examines the social and spatial impacts of these communities on surrounding neighbourhoods. Historically, Arabian cities were composed of enclosed settlements bounded by walls and gates, which formed an organic spatial pattern and fostered cohesive communities. This morphology, reflected in courtyard housing and neighbourhood clusters, created socially cohesive communities. Since the 1950s, modern planning policies and the dismantling of physical barriers have led to the emergence of new urban forms, including the importation of gated communities from the United States and Europe. These developments proliferated across the Middle East, reaching Jordan during the 1990s, culminating in the establishment of the first fully gated community in Amman in 2015.

This study investigates the emergence of gated communities in Jordan and their broader socio-spatial implications. It also explores whether contemporary gated communities share characteristics with traditional enclosed Arabian neighbourhoods. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research focuses on gated communities in Jordan while drawing comparative insights from similar developments in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other Middle Eastern contexts.

A theoretical framework is developed by drawing on sociological theories, including the Chicago School's segregation theory and Giddens' Structuration Theory, to assess the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities. Space syntax theory is employed to assess spatial integration, connectivity, and accessibility, while a thematic analysis of expert interviews provides insights into the perceived social impacts. The empirical investigation is structured in two stages: a historical content analysis of traditional Arabian urban forms and a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with urban planning and architecture professionals.

Findings reveal that gated communities in Jordan exhibit low levels of spatial integration, limited accessibility, and minimal connection with their surrounding urban fabric. Space syntax analysis indicates that isolated street networks and inward-facing layouts reduce navigability and discourage socio-spatial interaction. In contrast, traditional Arabian neighbourhoods were characterised by a high degree of permeability

and hierarchical spatial organisation that promoted cohesion. Thematic analysis further reveals that while gated communities foster internal social cohesion, they often reinforce segregation from surrounding areas. These developments also impact urban economics, governance, and land use, raising property values, generating service-oriented employment, and attracting municipal oversight. Experts have noted that current gated communities diverge from historic Arabian models in terms of function and social inclusivity. The findings also suggest that improving public infrastructure, security, and amenities in urban neighbourhoods may reduce reliance on gated forms. The study recommends phased reintegration strategies, increased pedestrian permeability, and urban policies inspired by traditional planning principles to mitigate segregation and foster long-term urban sustainability.

Drawing inspiration from traditional planning principles, it proposes phased reintegration strategies and improved permeability to counter urban segregation. By combining historical inquiry, social theory, spatial analysis, and qualitative interviews, this research contributes to understanding gated communities as a socio-spatial phenomenon. It offers practical recommendations for fostering more inclusive and sustainable urban environments in the Middle East.

Keywords: gated communities, Arabian traditional urbanism, neighbourhood morphology, Jordan context, urban segregation and separation, social and spatial impacts

Declaration of Authenticity

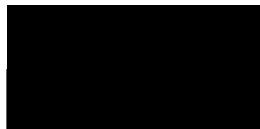
“I, Ahmed Hammad, declare that the PhD thesis entitled “Gates, Walls and Neighbourhoods in the Middle East: The Impact of Gated Communities on the Surroundings in Jordan” is no more than 80,000 words in length, including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work”.

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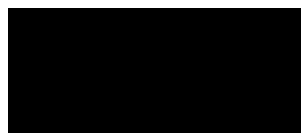
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List of Publications

Based on the research reported in this thesis, the candidate has produced the following papers, which have been published in various international journals and peer-reviewed conferences.

Journal Articles

1. A. Hammad, M. Li, and Z. Vrcelj. 2024. "The Rise of Gated Communities in Amman from the Old to the Modern: Socio-Spatial Impact on the Surrounding" *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp.433-442 (Hammad et al., 2024b).
2. A. Hammad, M. Li, and Z. Vrcelj. 2024. "The Infectious Divide: A Comparative Study of the Social Impact of Gated Communities on the Surrounding in the Middle East" *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 39:1395–1421 (Hammad et al., 2024a).
3. A. Hammad, M. Li, and Z. Vrcelj. 2025. "Space Syntax Analysis of Gated Communities in Jordan: Examining Urban Connectivity and Social Impact" *MDPI, Sustainability*, 17, Issue 2, 559 (Hammad, Li, et al., 2025c)
4. A. Hammad, M. Li, and Z. Vrcelj. 2025. "Reinterpreting Privacy and Community: Social and Spatial Transformations from Traditional Arabian Neighbourhoods to Contemporary Gated Communities" *MDPI, Buildings*, 15, 1111 (Hammad, Li, et al., 2025b)
5. A. Hammad, M. Li, and Z. Vrcelj. 2025. "A Narrative Review of Gated Communities and the Transformative Social Impact in Middle Eastern Cities" *Urban Planning and Transport Research*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2489464 (Hammad, Mengbi, et al., 2025)
6. A. Hammad, M. Li, and Z. Vrcelj. 2025. "Gated Urbanism in the Middle East: Expert Insights from Jordanian Case Studies", *MDPI, Urban Sciences* 2025,9, 399 (Hammad, Li, et al., 2025a)

Conferences

1. “From Tradition to Exclusion: Analysing the Surge of Gated Communities in Jordan and their Societal Consequences” Conference, 6th LIMC, pp 81-89, 2023. (Hammad et al., 2023)
2. “Reinterpreting Privacy and Community: Social and Spatial Transformations from Traditional Arabian Neighbourhoods to Contemporary Gated Communities” Centre for Contemporary Histories, 2024 HDR conference *Inheriting Histories*. 11. October .2024, Deakin University.

Details of Included Papers: Thesis by Publication

List details of each paper included in the thesis submission. Copies of published Papers and submitted and/or final draft Paper manuscripts should also be included in the thesis submission.

Item/ Chapter No.	Paper Title	Publication Status (e.g. published, accepted for publication, to be revised and resubmitted, currently under review, unsubmitted but proposed to be submitted)	Publication Title and Details (e.g. date published, verification of Scopus quartile ranking of the publication, indicator of quality, etc.)
5	Reinterpreting Privacy and Community: Social and Spatial Transformations from Traditional Arabian Neighbourhoods to Contemporary Gated Communities	Published	MDPI, Buildings 2025, 15, 1111. doi.org/10.3390/buildings15071111 - Special Issue Research on Promoting the Social Sustainability of Urban Neighbourhoods) Q2-ranked journal Impact Factor: 3.1
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8	The Rise of Gated Communities in Amman from the Old to the Modern: Socio-Spatial Impact on the Surrounding	Published	International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning – 28 Feb 2024 Vol. 19, No. 2, February 2024, pp. 433- 442 Q3-ranked journal Impact Factor: 0.284
9	Gated Urbanism in the Middle East: Expert Insights from Jordanian Case Studies	Published	MDPI, Urban Sci. 2025, 9, 399 https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci9100399 - 1 Oct 2025 Q1-ranked journal Impact Factor: 2.9
9	Space Syntax Analysis of Gated Communities in Jordan: Examining Urban Connectivity and Social Impact	Published	MDPI, Sustainability 2025, 17, 599. https:// doi.org/10.3390/su17020599 - 14 January 2025 Q2-ranked journal Impact Factor: 3.3

Declaration by: Ahmed Hammad

Signature:



Date: 16.10.2025

List of Abbreviations

CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GC	Gated Communities
GIS	Geographic Information System
ISILC	Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
RTP	Research Training Program
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
U.S.	United States
NVivo	Qualitative Data Analysis Software

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis investigates the social and spatial impacts of gated communities on their surrounding urban fabric in Amman, Jordan. It critically engages with existing literature that links the emergence of gated communities to socio-spatial outcomes, particularly segregation, isolation, and urban discontinuity. The study also explores the historical trajectory from traditional closed neighbourhoods in old Arabian cities to modern gated communities, questioning whether contemporary gated communities represent a continuation or departure from earlier urban forms. To guide this inquiry, the study addresses the following central questions: What are the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities on their surroundings? What are the driving factors behind their emergence in Jordan, particularly given their global rise decades earlier, especially in the United States? And why are these communities primarily located on the peripheries of Amman?

The research employs a qualitative case study methodology, drawing on semi-structured interviews with urban planners, architects, and academics. Two case studies are central to this investigation: Al Andalucía, Amman's first gated community established in 2015, and Green Land, which followed in 2018. It is worth noting that this development is officially titled Green Land, although it is occasionally referred to as "Greenland" in some publications; for consistency, the term Green Land is used throughout this thesis. These cases are analysed alongside a thematic review of relevant academic literature to understand how gated communities contribute to spatial fragmentation and social exclusivity in Jordan.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The concept of closed complexes, walls, and gates has been a perpetual feature across human civilisation, evident in regions such as ancient China and the Arabian Peninsula (Hammad et al., 2024a). Their presence around cities and capitals performed a substantial role in defence at a particular time in history, which ultimately created their environments. These walled cities shared features of privacy, sacredness, inward designs, and narrow streets, which contributed to the development of gated architecture. Historical Arabian cities were characterised by an organic pattern of narrow, closed streets and private roads

that prevented strangers from entering, creating features of privacy, sacredness, and inward designs (Hammad & Hammad, 2023). While examining the historical and socio-cultural aspects, it is evident that these have significantly influenced people's values and traditions, encompassing privacy, community, religious life, sacred spaces, and community interests. Additionally, geographical and environmental factors, such as hot, dry weather, local construction materials, and established trade routes, have significantly influenced their proliferation. In contrast, modern gated architecture, also referred to as closed architecture, describes a collection of residences enclosed by walls or fences, often with controlled access points. As explained by Hammad and Hammad (2023), this typology of residential arrangements prioritises privacy and physical separation. Today's gated communities represent a contemporary form of closed architecture, socially and spatially disconnected environments that emphasise exclusivity over integration.

Following World War II, new forms of urbanisation emerged, including gated communities in the late 20th century, driven by factors like increased crime rates and a desire for security (Hammad et al., 2024a). Their global proliferation has sparked debates on urban and socio-spatial implications. Internationally, scholars have explored issues related to gated communities in various countries, from the U.S. and South Africa to Europe and Latin America, all the way to Australia, with findings often highlighting social segregation, fragmentation, and the privatisation of public spaces (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005; Blakely & Snyder, 1997a; Landman, 2000; Quintal & Thompson, 2007; Roitman, 2005).

In the Arab World, particularly in the Middle East and GCC countries, several scholars debate the reasons for their emergence and their socio-spatial impacts. For example, Al Shawish (2015); AlQahtany (2022); Elsheshtawy (2008); Glasze (2006); Salim (2021) and others argue that their emergence is primarily related to socioeconomic reasons, concluding that several social and spatial implications of gated communities persist at both micro and macro levels. The way real estate developers promote these developments as elite places with distinctive environments implies isolation and separation. In the study area of this thesis, **Figure 1-1**, specifically in Amman, Jordan, limited research has been conducted on the spread of this phenomenon since the subject is relatively new (Abed et al., 2022). For example, Al Omari and Al Omari (2015) argue that the emergence of gated communities is primarily related to the rise of new layers in society, suggesting the

implementation of strategic plans to control their unregulated growth. Similarly, Alkurdi (2015) investigates the emergence of gated communities, concluding that in Amman, people select this type of living due to a desire for privacy and exclusivity, driven by the lack of public facilities and urban congestion. In contrast, the study by Al-Homoud and Al Aswad (2018) concludes that gated communities in Jordan can encourage inequality in opportunities between people and their surrounding neighbours. Furthermore, Abed et al. (2022) argue that two types of gated communities have developed in Jordan: mini-gated and mega-gated communities. They conclude that both categories require regulatory frameworks to facilitate their integration with the surrounding areas. Finally, Hammad et al. (2024b) investigate the reasons behind the recent surge in gated communities in Amman, suggesting that social and economic transformations have encouraged real estate developers to adopt such housing options. They conclude that the urban planning policies of gated communities can be reevaluated by incorporating features from historical cities that reflected cohesion and unity. While Jordanian scholarship has begun to address gated communities, most existing studies have concentrated on residents' motivations, lifestyle preferences, or internal social sustainability (Abed et al., 2022; Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018; Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015; Alkurdi, 2015). However, far less attention has been given to the external socio-spatial impacts of these developments on the surrounding urban fabric, particularly in relation to integration, connectivity, accessibility, and spatial fragmentation. Previous Jordanian research has not systematically applied spatial analytical tools, such as space syntax, to evaluate how gated communities reshape movement networks, nor has it incorporated expert-based qualitative perspectives to interpret broader planning and governance implications. Moreover, existing studies rarely situate Jordan's experience within wider Middle Eastern transformations or compare different gated typologies, such as mini-gated and mega-gated models. Therefore, a clear gap remains in understanding how gated communities in Amman influence neighbouring areas at both spatial and social levels, a gap this thesis addresses through an integrated historical, qualitative, and spatial investigation.

Figure 1-1 World Map Indicating the Research Settings



Source: ("Middle East," 2024)

The spread of gated communities reflects a global trend in urbanisation, with debates regarding their impacts. While they offer short-term solutions for privacy, security, and exclusivity, they often exacerbate socio-spatial challenges, such as segregation, inequality, and fragmentation. However, in Jordan, the recent spread of gated communities highlights the need to investigate their influences on the surroundings as early as possible in order to mitigate their impacts and ensure their urban integration.

1.2 CONTEXT

In Jordan, the widespread presence of gated communities, a new trend, warrants closer exploration for two key reasons. First, it is essential to examine potential continuities and contrasts with the spatial patterns of historical neighbourhoods in ancient Amman. Second, there is a need to assess their socio-spatial impacts on surrounding areas as neighbouring areas are being developed. Amman has experienced rapid urbanisation and significant socio-political transformations in recent decades, largely driven by waves of internal migration and refugee influxes, which have increased housing demand and contributed to uneven urban development and a spatial divide between West and East Amman (200).

Historically, Amman's urban fabric was heavily influenced by the culture of traditional Arabian cities of inward designs, emphasising privacy, communal living, and hierarchical urban forms (Alzyoud & Hammad, 2020). While these features resonate with the ideas advertised in modern gated communities, the displacement from organic, socially interconnected spaces and privatised housing features a significant departure from historical urban traditions. Such a transition reflects socio-economic changes within the society, fluctuations in social stratification, real estate market demands, and urban planning policies.

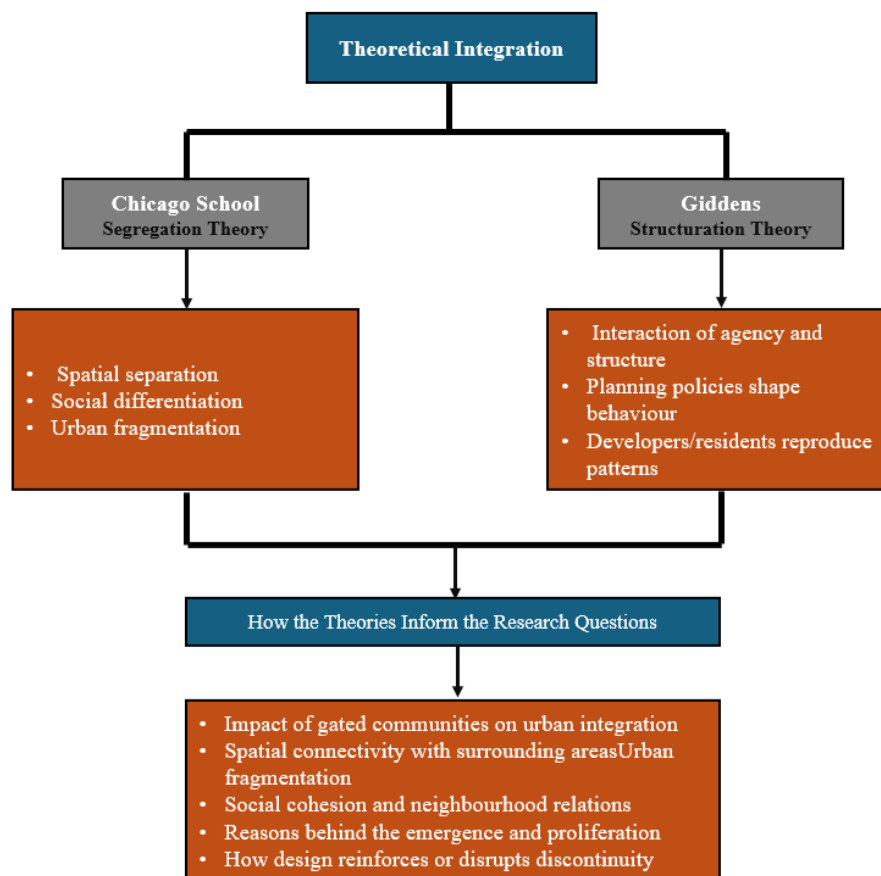
Despite their growing presence, gated communities remain a relatively new trend in Amman with limited scholarly investigation into their implications for urban connectivity, spatial integration, and social cohesion. Existing studies have primarily explored resident motives or social sustainability, often overlooking their impact on urban integration (Abed et al., 2022; Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018; Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015; Alkurdi, 2015). This study aims to bridge the research gap and situate itself within this context by employing a qualitative methodology to investigate the social and spatial impacts of gated communities in Amman on their surrounding areas. The combination of historical inquiry into Arabian urban designs and semi-structured interviews with key experts from Jordan and the Middle East aids this study in exploring the influence of gated communities on urban connectivity, accessibility, and navigability. The historical analysis provides a foundation for understanding the organic integration and social cohesion of traditional gated cities. This may assist in regenerating modern gated communities to ensure their natural integration with the surroundings. At the same time, the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews will reflect contemporary perspectives from professionals and academics in architecture and urban studies. Additionally, a case study design utilising space syntax theory will examine how the layout and design of modern gated communities impact accessibility, connectivity, and navigability. The findings aim to balance the demands for security and exclusivity with principles of integration and equality, incorporating historical attributes of social cohesion into the design framework of contemporary gated communities.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research seeks to examine the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in Amman by focusing on urban connectivity, accessibility, and social cohesion. The integration of

Segregation Theory (Goist, 1971) and Structuration Theory (Giddens, 1984) provides a complementary analytical lens for examining gated communities in Amman. Segregation Theory, derived from the Chicago School, explains how social and economic differentiation shapes spatial separation in cities, directly informing research questions about how gated communities influence urban integration, spatial connectivity, and social cohesion. In contrast, Structuration Theory emphasises the interaction between human agency and structural forces, helping to interpret how planning policies, developer practices, and cultural norms contribute to the emergence and reinforcement of gated communities. Together, these theories allow the study to examine both the macro-level forces that produce spatial segregation and the micro-level behaviours and decisions that sustain it. This integrated perspective clarifies why the research questions address both the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities and the reasons behind their proliferation, and how these developments interact with their surrounding neighbourhoods, as illustrated in **Figure 1-2**.

Figure 1-2 Integrated Theoretical Framework



Source: Researcher

The social aspect is investigated through thematic analysis of expert interviews using NVivo, while the spatial part is examined using space syntax analysis to assess integration, accessibility, and connectivity within and around selected case studies. In this thesis, key socio-spatial concepts are clearly operationalised to ensure analytical consistency between interview data and space syntax analysis. Social cohesion refers to the degree of community interaction, sense of belonging, inclusivity, and perceived social connectivity. It is examined through expert reflections on social interaction, community identity, and perceived exclusion. Spatial integration refers to the extent to which gated communities are physically connected to surrounding urban networks, as measured by permeability, accessibility, and ease of movement. Conversely, fragmentation refers to the creation of spatial discontinuities, barriers, and disconnections that weaken urban continuity. These social perceptions are aligned with spatial evidence through space syntax indicators such as integration values, connectivity, choice, and axial depth, ensuring that qualitative interpretations of cohesion and segregation correspond to measurable spatial configurations rather than abstract concepts.

Together, these methods support a comprehensive inquiry into the research questions:

- 1) How do gated communities influence social cohesion and urban integration in Amman?
- 2) How does the spatial layout of gated communities affect urban connectivity with adjacent areas?
- 3) How does the design of gated communities encourage integration or reinforce urban discontinuity?
- 4) Are there any shared characteristics between traditional Arabian urban forms and contemporary gated communities in Amman?
- 5) How can the design of modern gated communities be adapted to enhance their integration with the surrounding neighbourhoods?

The focus of this research is the socio-spatial impacts of these developments on their surroundings rather than their internal social or spatial forces. Therefore, the thesis adopts two gated communities as core case studies: Al Andalucía and Green Land, selected purposefully to reflect variation in scale, socio-economic positioning, and spatial configuration within the Jordanian context. Al Andalucía represents a large, fully

enclosed, high-end community located on the outskirts of Amman, while Green Land reflects a comparatively smaller, mid-income, partially enclosed development. Together, they provide analytical contrast and capture the spectrum of contemporary gated typologies in Amman, enabling examination of both extreme and moderate expressions of spatial enclosure. The intention was therefore not to build a statistically representative sample, but to select theoretically informative cases that illuminate how different gated forms influence spatial connectivity and social integration. Furthermore, this thesis employs semi-structured interviews with key experts rather than questionnaires or face-to-face interviews with residents of the selected gated communities. There are two primary reasons for this approach. First, the literature review identifies two studies that focus on residents' experiences using surveys and structured interviews (Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018; Alkurdi, 2015). Given the availability of existing data on residents, this thesis avoids redundancy by exploring alternative perspectives. Second, because the objective of the research is to examine the broader socio-spatial impacts of gated communities on their surroundings, interviews with professionals provide insight into planning, design, and policy considerations that influence these developments. As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), residents' responses may be shaped by personal motivations and emotional attachments, whereas expert interviews offer more analytical and objective reflections (Flick, 2022). While the study relies primarily on expert interviews with planners, architects, academics and governance professionals, rather than residents, this approach was adopted deliberately to capture broader socio-spatial implications beyond individual residential preferences. However, it is acknowledged that exclusive reliance on professional perspectives may introduce institutional bias, as expert interpretations can reflect regulatory or planning standpoints more than lived experience. To mitigate this, the study triangulates expert insights with historical investigation, spatial analysis, and existing empirical studies on resident perspectives, thereby strengthening interpretive validity. This combined approach ensures a balanced and comprehensive interpretation of the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities.

By addressing the research questions, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of gated communities in Amman in four key aspects. Firstly, this research helps to fill the intellectual gaps in previous research on gated communities in Amman, particularly regarding their socio-spatial implications, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Secondly, since gated communities in Amman are not regulated by standard planning

policies, this study aims to assess how their design and layout influence urban connectivity, accessibility, and social cohesion. Thirdly, Chapter 3 describes a theoretical framework that aims to analyse the social and spatial impacts of gated communities, based on a review and analysis of three theories: the Chicago School, Structuration Theory, and space syntax. The impact of gated communities is examined through several dimensions, including social segregation, spatial fragmentation, urban connectivity, and community identity. To address these dimensions, the study combines thematic analysis and space syntax in a complementary manner. Thematic analysis provides insight into expert interpretations of the social, cultural, and planning dimensions of gated communities, while space syntax offers an objective spatial assessment of connectivity and integration. Bringing these methods together enables the research to link qualitative perceptions with measurable spatial patterns, thereby producing an integrated socio-spatial understanding. This mixed qualitative, spatial strategy strengthens the findings by allowing thematic insights to be validated against spatial evidence, resulting in a more holistic interpretation of how gated communities influence their surrounding neighbourhoods. This can be generalised and extended to the design of other gated communities in the Middle East or similar contexts. Lastly, the research investigates the historical similarities between contemporary gated communities and traditional Arabian neighbourhoods, exploring a creative approach to extract positive attributes of social cohesion and community integration into the design of modern gated communities.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study is significant in its investigation of the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in Amman, with broader implications for Middle Eastern urbanism. It addresses key challenges, such as segregation, spatial fragmentation, reduced connectivity, and weakened community cohesion. By bridging historical urban forms with modern design practices, the research offers a contextualised understanding of how the design of gated communities influences urban integration. In response, this research aims to identify design strategies that enable the potential integration of gated communities into the broader urban area by fostering social cohesion and improving interaction with the surroundings. The primary contribution lies in developing a framework that enhances social cohesion and promotes interaction between gated communities and surrounding areas. This includes introducing shared public spaces,

community amenities, and connective infrastructure, which not only reduce physical disconnection but also encourage broader social engagement.

More specifically, the study contributes to the field in the following ways:

- **Design framework:** It proposes urban design guidelines that embed principles from traditional Arabian cities, such as courtyards, interconnected alleys, and communal gathering areas, to foster inclusivity and spatial continuity.
- **Integrating security and connectivity:** The research recommends design models that balance security needs with permeability, drawing on historical precedents to overcome social isolation and infrastructure discontinuity.
- **Alternative development strategies:** The study aims to propose alternative solutions for walls and gates that incorporate inclusive spaces, symbolising the functional principles of historical Arabian cities. This enhances connectivity and preserves the essential features of gated communities, including security, lifestyle, and seclusion.

By extracting the positive attributes of communal life and shared space from traditional Arabian urbanism, this study challenges the fundamental justifications for fully enclosed gated communities. Instead, it presents a context-sensitive approach to urban planning, encouraging designs that respect cultural heritage while addressing contemporary urban challenges.

1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis is structured into ten chapters, each contributing to the exploration of the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities, with a particular focus on Jordan and the broader Middle Eastern context. The first four chapters serve as the foundational part of the study, establishing the research framework, reviewing the relevant literature, identifying the intellectual gaps, and outlining the research methodology. This Chapter, Chapter One, introduces the research scope, objectives, and significance, setting the stage for the subsequent investigation. Chapter Two reviews the existing literature and is organised into nine sections. It begins with a theoretical discussion of the historical background of gated neighbourhoods in Arabian cities, followed by analyses of neighbourhood structures, controlled access, and community identity. It continues with a global perspective on gated communities, followed by an overview of their emergence in

the Middle East. Then, a closer review of their spread in Jordan, including regulations and socio-spatial consequences, concludes with a synthesis of research gaps.

Chapter three develops the theoretical framework, drawing on segregation theory from the Chicago School and Giddens' Structuration Theory. These perspectives are used to analyse the interaction between social structures, spatial design, and individual agency. Additionally, space syntax is introduced to assess spatial impacts, particularly in terms of integration and accessibility, with direct application to the Amman case study.

Chapter four outlines the research methodology, beginning with the epistemological and philosophical foundations, followed by the methodology and research design. This chapter explains the qualitative research approach, focusing on a case study of gated communities in Amman. The methodology emphasises the interpretive nature of the research, including a phenomenological inquiry that explores the lived experiences of residents, decision-makers, and stakeholders. The research strategy is designed to uncover the contextual conditions of the phenomenon using a combination of data sources, including semi-structured interviews, field studies, and literature reviews.

Chapter Five offers historical and regional socio-spatial perspectives of gated neighbourhoods. It explores urban planning principles in historic Arabian cities and their relevance to contemporary gated communities. It investigates the physical characteristics and spatial configurations of gated architecture, tracing the notion of urban segregation back to early examples such as Basra and Kufa. The chapter analyses the flexible spatial structure of these cities, where boundaries between quarters were often ambiguous. Additionally, it examines how traditional notions of privacy, spatial hierarchy, and community have evolved. Drawing from a published article in historical content analysis, it examines the architectural and morphological features of traditional gated neighbourhoods. Also, it examines their transformation into contemporary gated communities, demonstrating the socio-spatial continuity and reinterpretation of historical architectural principles.

Whereas Chapter Six focuses on the socio-spatial implications of gated communities in the Middle East, including the GCC countries. It examines how physical and social boundaries contribute to fragmentation and explores discontinuity as a mediating factor. Drawing on two published articles and expert interviews from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates, this study presents a comparative socio-spatial analysis. A

narrative review of relevant studies further supports this finding and highlights the market-driven nature of these developments, as real estate products are often positioned in isolation from the urban fabric.

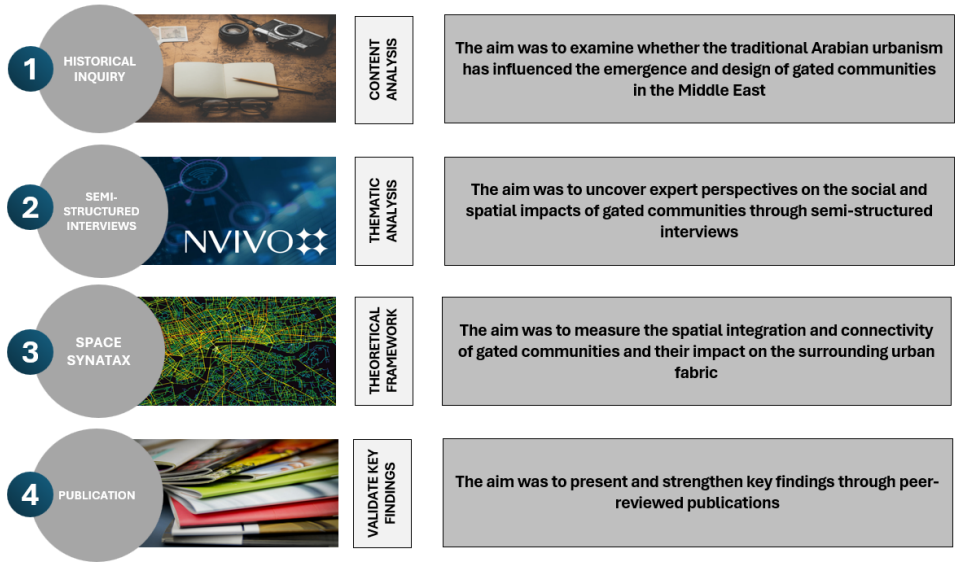
Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine represent the core investigation of gated communities in Jordan. Chapter Seven provides a historical and socio-spatial analysis of urban development in Jordan, with a focus on Amman. It traces the city's transformation from traditional, enclosed urban forms to more modern, linear patterns shaped by socio-political transformations, migration, and refugee influxes. It examines demographic change, spatial segregation, especially between East and West Amman, and access to housing and infrastructure. The role of public and green spaces is also explored, showing how unequal access reflects and reinforces socio-economic divisions. In Chapter Eight, the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in Amman are analysed in greater depth. The chapter examines the rise of gated communities in Amman as a distinct modern residential typology, separate from traditional urban forms. It explores how their development reflects changes in spatial organisation, social aspirations, and economic investment, influenced by both global trends and local forces. The investigation is grounded in a peer-reviewed publication, which analyses the transition from traditional neighbourhoods to controlled, exclusive developments. Chapter Nine extends the investigation by analysing the external socio-spatial impacts of gated communities on their surrounding urban context. It employs a dual-method approach, combining a thematic analysis of expert interviews with a space syntax-based spatial analysis to assess comprehensive patterns of integration, fragmentation, and urban connectivity. The chapter integrates findings from two peer-reviewed studies: one presents a thematic analysis of professional perspectives on the socio-spatial consequences of these developments, while the other applies spatial analysis to the case studies of Al Andalucía and Green Land to evaluate their influence on urban integration at the neighbourhood scale. Together, these studies provide grounded empirical evidence of how gated communities simultaneously respond to and reinforce structural inequalities, governance gaps, and exclusionary urban trends in contemporary Amman.

The last chapter, Chapter Ten, presents the conclusion and primary discussion. It synthesises findings across the study, proposes policy recommendations for urban planning in Jordan and the Middle East, and suggests future research directions on gated

communities and socio-spatial transformation. Additionally, it introduces an illustrative design proposal for the Al Andalucía case study, demonstrating how historical urban principles can be reinterpreted to guide the future integration of gated communities. As the final phase of the investigation, this chapter brings together historical insights, empirical findings, and theoretical frameworks to reflect on the broader implications of gated urbanism and articulate a forward-looking vision for more integrated and inclusive urban development.

To summarise the investigation, **Figure 1-3** below illustrates the four stages of this research: (1) historical inquiry through content analysis, (2) semi-structured interviews analysed thematically, (3) space syntax as the theoretical framework to examine spatial integration, and (4) peer-reviewed publications to validate and strengthen the key findings. Together, these stages provide a structured framework that guides the investigation and ensures coherence between the research objectives, methodology, and outcomes.

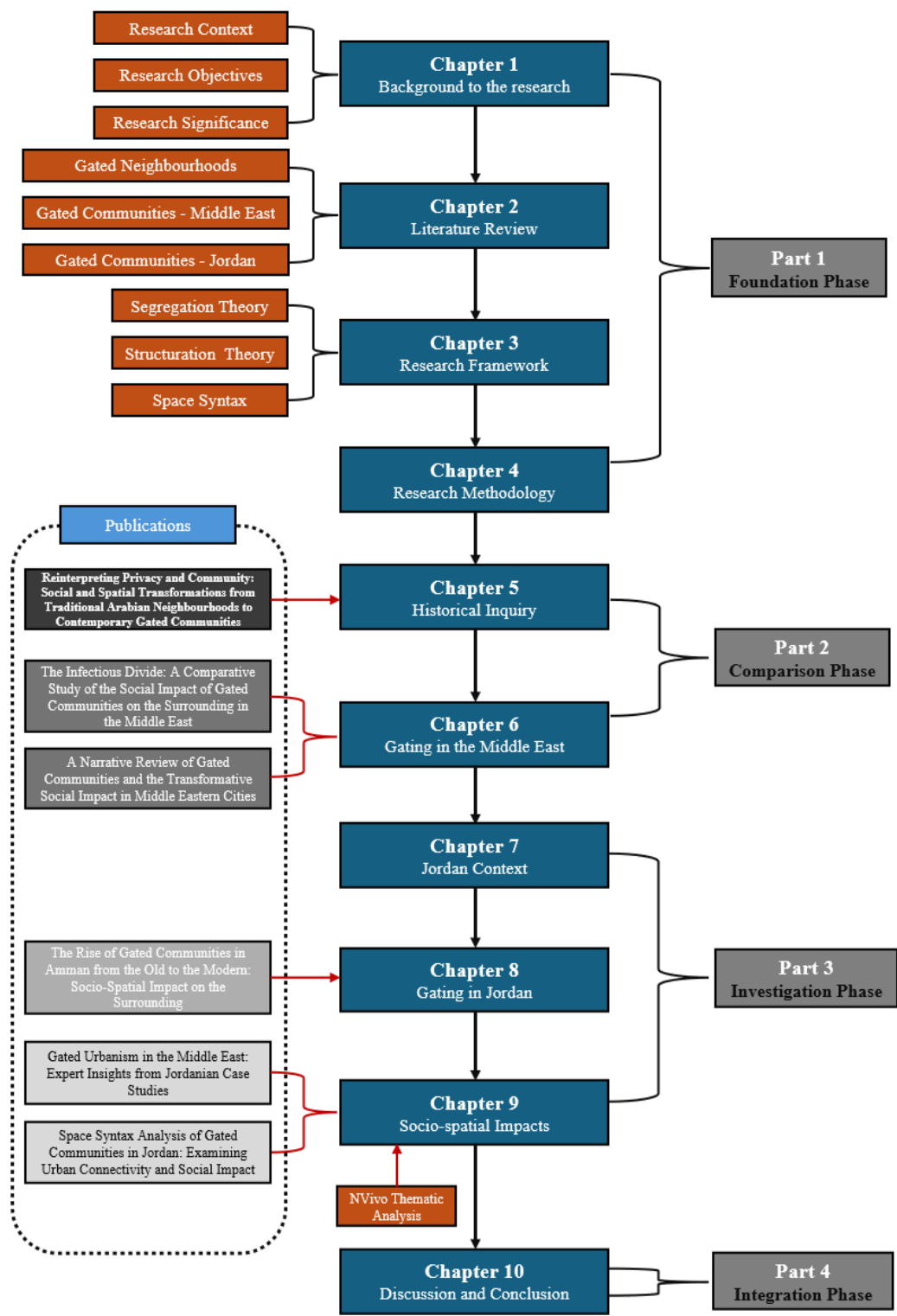
Figure 1-3 Research Design and Stages of Investigation



Source: Researcher

As this thesis is based on publications, several peer-reviewed articles (published or under review) are integrated into the investigative chapters. **Figure 1-4** illustrates the thesis structure and shows how these scholarly contributions are incorporated into the research framework.

Figure 1-4 Schematic Thesis Structure



Source: Researcher

Chapter 2: Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the scholarly literature on gated urbanism from both historical and contemporary perspectives. It aims to explore whether there is a relationship between modern gated communities and historical gated neighbourhoods from social and spatial aspects. Henceforth, this chapter critically examines the emergence, evolution, and implications of gated communities in the Middle East and the GCC countries, with a particular focus on Jordan as the primary case study for the thesis. The question of this chapter is how the literature has addressed gated communities and their social and spatial impacts on the surroundings, focusing on their evolution from closed neighbourhoods in Arabian cities to contemporary gated communities in the modern era. Some portions of the literature reviewed in this chapter have previously appeared in peer-reviewed publications authored by the researcher. These sections have been adapted and expanded for inclusion in this thesis to ensure coherence and alignment with its broader objectives.

This chapter is organised into nine sections: Section 2.1 presents a theoretical discussion of gated communities through a broader review of the historical background of gated neighbourhoods in the old Arabian cities. Section 2.2 reviews the structure of neighbourhood quarters, highlighting the benefits of controlled access and safety, which may support some of the positive impacts of modern gated communities. Section 2.3 reviews the notion of gated communities from a global perspective. Followed by section 2.4, which reviews the emergence of gated communities in the Middle East and the GCC countries, considering the reasons for people to choose this type of residence. Section 2.5 discusses how gated communities reached Jordan, considering the historical evolution and planning of Amman. Section 2.6 reviews the typology of residential housing in Amman, with a focus on gated communities. Later, Section 2.7 reviews the regulations of gated communities and the legislation of residential housing throughout history. Finally, Section 2.8 reviews the consequences of gated communities, focusing on their social and spatial influences, and Section 2.9 concludes with a summary of the research gaps identified in the literature.

2.1 HISTORICAL GATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

The historical growth of Arabian cities was connected to the needs of their people and driven by cultural and social behaviours influenced by religious factors. Cities grew into an organic, unforced, or spontaneous pattern, formalised by people's social behaviour rather than rigid formal plans (Ben-Hamouche, 2009). Separation and seclusion characterised many neighbourhoods, driven by a sense of sacredness and privacy that extended into residential architecture (Bianca, 2000, p. 35). Mosques were central to both daily life and the architectural fabric, while homes were inward-facing, centred around courtyard houses to ensure privacy (Hammad & Hammad, 2023). Arabian cities lacked conventional grids, favouring multifunctional nodes and irregular street patterns that fostered social harmony (Bianca, 2000, pp. 38-39).

Architectural and planning approaches addressed human needs, integrating buildings with society. Vernacular designs prioritised human scale, privacy, sustainability, and simplicity, fostering social cohesion (Sqour et al., 2022, p. 1049). Religious life and institutions influenced the urban form, embedding sacred nodes into the city's fabric. Comparable examples from China show that walls and gated layouts were common in early urban settlements, with neighbourhoods enclosed by boundaries (Hamama & Liu, 2020; Li & Xie, 2021). Thus, in Chinese literature, some scholars argue that the emergence of gated communities is a continuation of the enclosed urban colonies, as enclosed forms of closed suburbs are deeply rooted in Chinese society (Huang, 2006). Similarly, houses in Arabian cities were protected from the main roads and outsiders by walls and gates, with a visual hierarchy that segregated visitors from private areas (Bianca, 2000). Various researchers have argued that gated communities in the Arab world were related to the planning of old cities.

Glasze (2006) identified two main reasons for social segregation in the Arab world: a) the introduction of courtyards as an extension of the private and sacred spaces, and b) these courtyards served as the first line of defence since they were accessible through one gate, which could be seized at any point in time (Abu-Lughod, 1987). The formation of courtyards has created neighbourhoods within walls and gates, thereby protecting the city from intruders. Glasze (2006) further suggested that modern gated communities, especially in Saudi Arabia, result from blending traditional privacy norms with Western gated models. However, Touman (2005) argued that gated communities in Saudi Arabia cannot be considered an urban solution, as they primarily serve a specific segment of

residents on a temporary basis. Furthermore, Giddings et al. (2023) argued that gated communities in the GCC countries represent a new housing concept imported from the U.S. that greatly contradicts traditional housing. The disagreement between the authors demonstrates that a historical inquiry analysis of the history of Arabian neighbourhoods is imperative to identify the relationship, which will assist in answering the research sub-question of how gated communities can be merged and interconnected with the spatial and social fabric of the city through shared public amenities based on the Arabian city characteristics.

Alkan Bala (2018) compared cul-de-sacs and gated communities in Turkey, suggesting that while both restrict access, gated communities foster greater segregation. The author calls for further exploration of human behaviour and the evolution of spatial forms from traditional to modern. Yet, it focused mainly on cul-de-sacs, omitting broader historical characteristics related to segregation and integration. The study focused on the cul-de-sac and did not expand to other historical characteristics to investigate the notions of segregation and integration.

As explained by Bianca (2000), cities were divided by narrow alleyways and walls surrounding houses, resulting in gated, interconnected neighbourhoods. This intriguing historical context sets the stage for the subsequent discussion of the development of gated communities in the Middle East and the GCC countries, as well as their spread across these regions. The historical analysis of gated neighbourhoods in old Arabian cities examines the relationship between culture and social life, influenced by religious factors that shaped their organic patterns. The socio-spatial fragmentation, along with the notions of privacy and sacredness, is seen as the defining characteristic of these historical neighbourhoods, aiding in understanding their deep-rooted meanings. However, gaps exist in the literature on a deeper exploration of whether contemporary gated communities in the Middle East encompass or depart from these historical and social behaviours. Further exploration is required to bridge this gap and provide a deeper understanding of the attributes of gated neighbourhoods, such as community cohesion, privacy, fragmentation, and the organic fabric of gated communities.

While the literature presents rich historical examples from Arabian and Chinese cities, scholars differ in their interpretation of whether contemporary gated communities represent continuity or rupture with these traditional urban forms. Some authors emphasise the role of privacy, inward-oriented layouts, and controlled access as shared

characteristics between historical neighbourhoods and modern gated communities (Bianca, 2000; Glasze, 2006), whereas others argue that contemporary gated communities, particularly those influenced by Western models, contradict the organic, socially integrated fabric of traditional cities (Giddings et al., 2023; Touman, 2005). In the Jordanian context, this debate remains underexplored, despite Amman's historical roots within the urban traditions of Bilad Al-Sham. The limited literature on Jordan has focused primarily on resident motivations and housing typologies, rather than critically comparing historical urban patterns with the socio-spatial impacts of contemporary gated communities on their surroundings. This gap highlights the need for a context-specific comparative analysis that situates Jordan between historical Arabian precedents and modern gated communities' models.

Although historical quarters and contemporary gated communities share physical elements such as enclosure, controlled access, and social differentiation, their fundamental purposes and socio-spatial logics differ significantly. In historical Arabian cities, enclosure functioned as a collective mechanism influenced by cultural norms, religious values, and shared governance, supporting social cohesion, mutual protection, and gradual spatial integration within the wider urban fabric (Abu-Lughod, 1987; Bianca, 2000). By contrast, modern gated communities operate as privately governed developments, driven by real-estate market forces and individualised notions of security, exclusivity, and lifestyle, often resulting in spatial discontinuity and limited interaction with surrounding neighbourhoods (Blakely & Snyder, 1997a; Landman, 2000; Webster, 2002). This distinction indicates that contemporary gated communities should be understood not as a direct continuation of historical quarters, but as a transformation of earlier urban practices under modern planning, governance, and economic conditions.

2.2 STRUCTURE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD QUARTERS

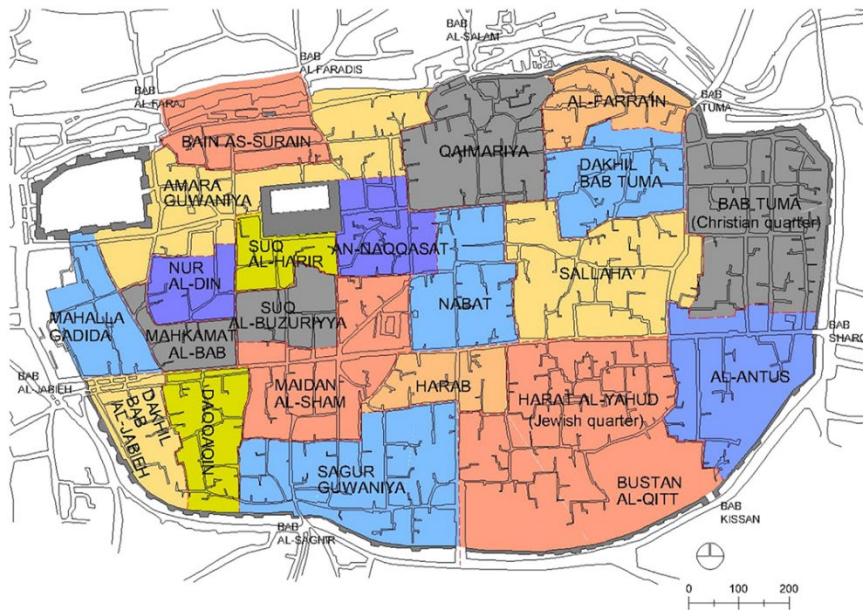
Quarters are often regarded as a primary building block of Arabian and Islamic urbanism, inhabited by residents from diverse religious and professional backgrounds, and separated by walls and gates (Dabbour, 2021, p. 108). The concept of 'mosaic nature', as identified by Weber¹, suggests that Islamic society is structured like a mosaic, consisting of

¹ Max Weber, a German sociologist (1864-1920), set up a framework for categorising and analysing the Islamic city by examining Asian and Middle Eastern cities. Goddard, C. C. (1999). The question of the Islamic city.

religious and social groups that divide the city into distinct quarters, which over time become self-contained. Some researchers associate quarters with the social ties between people in a particular physical space, which explains why quarters are not fixed urban forms; instead, they expand and decline, similar to the social relationships between people (Eickelman, 1974). Other researchers argue that the formation of quarters was due to the mass migration of immigrants from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, who established isolated or independent quarters to preserve their identities and avoid potential conflicts with the larger society (Dabbour, 2021; Hakim, 2007; Khaled, 1993). This configuration has resulted in cities being aggregated from previously isolated sub-areas with social aspects. The spontaneous development of these sub-areas led to fragmented, self-contained street systems, separated by main streets that minimised direct access between different parts of the city. This arrangement has facilitated and enforced daily social movement and interaction between people, as walls or streets once bounded quarters.

The planning of traditional Arabian cities, such as Damascus, Aleppo, Tunis, and Fez, offers an insight into the traditional planning of Islamic cities, characterised by a disordered block structure with island blocks varying in size and shape (Dabbour, 2021, p. 109). The lack of harmony and regularity of quarters resulted in a socio-physical effect, with an increased number of neighbours, ranging from one to four and a half, which emphasises the physical connection between quarters, as shown in **Figure 2-1**. Similarly, neighbourhoods are small units with significant social and spatial interactions that can be isolated into spatial zones (Smith, 2010, p. 137). This implies that quarters and neighbourhoods are similar urban spatial organisations with identical social features and functional roles. However, quarters tend to be smaller, whereas a neighbourhood can have multiple quarters. Each residential area can reach up to fifty quarters, defined as a settlement. Quarters are populated with residents from the same background, religion, social level, and even occupation, creating a homogenous neighbourhood (Priyoyudanto, 2014). Residential areas are categorised as pedestrian zones, where streets and narrow alleyways connect quarters and neighbourhoods on one side, and public and social activities, such as mosques and markets, on the other side (Al-Hemaidi, 2001). Each group within a family used to share a common open space connected to the rest of the city through a progression of passageways. In most cases, gates were built at the end of each aisle for safety and security reasons.

Figure 2-1 Structure of Quarters in the City of Damascus

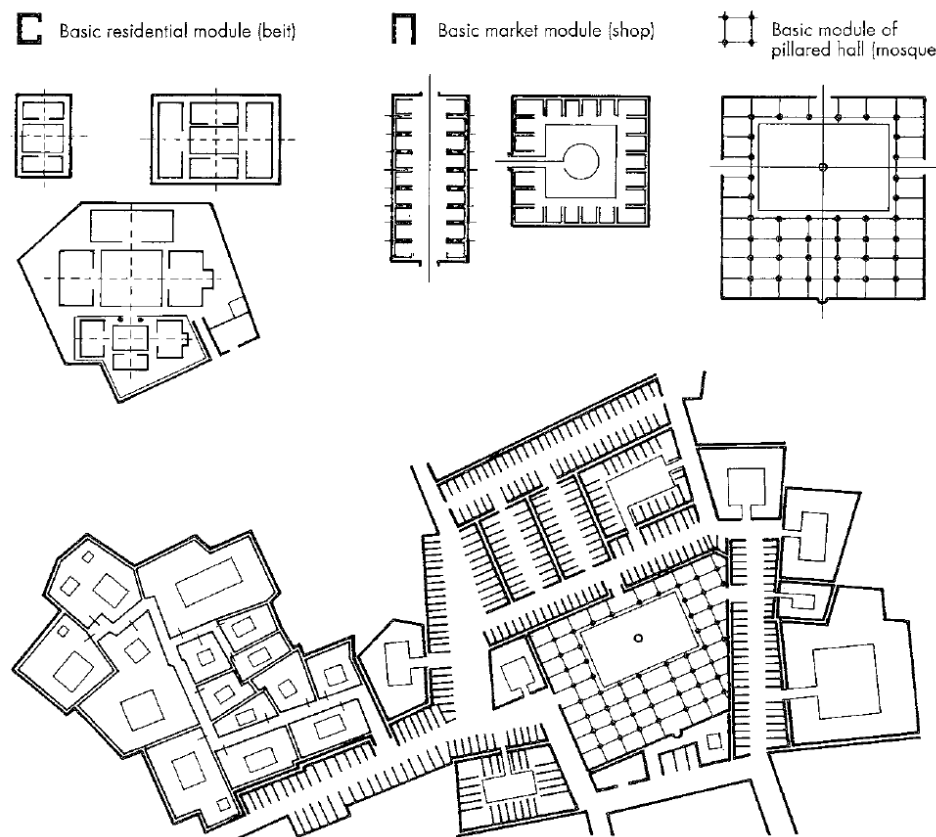


Source: (Dabbour, 2021, p. 111)

On a macro level, Al-Hathloul (1981, p. 26) explains Von Grunebaum's² view that most Islamic cities share a similar physical pattern, including walled quarters with controlled gates, a lack of open spaces, narrow and winding streets and alleyways, and residential houses facing inwards towards a courtyard. Whereas, on a micro level, residential quarters were defined by an indirectly constructed wall composed of the continuous outer wall of the residential houses arranged around a common closed alleyway. Access to the inner plots will be through a narrow, controlled passageway, which can be closed at any time and converted into an interior space (Amireh, 1990). The use of a ubiquitous cellular system with attached, connected, overlapped, and various-sized zones enabled an integrated system that conveyed a sense of unity and consistency (Bianca, 2000, p. 153). **Figure 2-2** shows the integration of a typical residential quarter with the market and the central mosque.

² Gustave Edmund Von Grunebaum is an Austrian historian and Arabist with extensive studies on Oriental studies.

Figure 2-2 Spatial Integration of the Residential Quarter, Market, and Mosque



Source: (Bianca, 2000, p. 153).

However, on the micro-level, the concept of a Cul-de-Sac, or a dead-end street, is defined as a street pattern that opens from one side and connects to other larger streets (Alkan Bala, 2018, p. 338). The term 'dead-end' may imply suburban isolation, separation, or discontinuity from the wider community. In contrast, cul-de-sacs were used to gradually control the hierarchy of space organisation, progressing from public to semi-public, then to semi-private, and finally to private. Although such implementation may not seem acceptable from a legal or planning perspective in modern systems, the results of such planning can lead to safer social zones with controlled traffic, especially when occupied by the same family members. The transition between public and private zones through the hierarchy of streets ending in a cul-de-sac may support the idea of modern gated communities, as they attempt to control public streets by introducing controlled gates to the private internal roads.

The structure of neighbourhood quarters is often characterised by self-contained residential zones influenced by socio-cultural and historical factors, in which residents share similar backgrounds, ethnicities, and professions. The traditional urban organisation witnessed in the old Arabian cities highlights the benefits of controlled access to internal cohesion and safety, which may support some of the positive impacts of modern gated communities.

2.3 GATED COMMUNITIES: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The transformation of towns in the United States after World War II led to the emergence of new neighbourhood forms in the late 20th century, including gated communities. These communities developed in response to socioeconomic and urban challenges, driven by rising crime rates and the desire for exclusivity and security. This trend extended beyond the US to neighbouring countries and across continents, attracting people seeking security, socioeconomic isolation, lifestyle, and exclusivity. As a result, gated communities emerged as a global trend, raising essential questions about their impact on urban development and social influences (AlQahtany, 2022; Hammad et al., 2024a; Mohamed Salah & Ayad, 2018). This section provides an overview of the global spread of gated communities, emphasising their social, economic, and spatial commonalities and variances across different regions.

Scholarly discussions have explored a range of international typologies and the motivations behind their emergence on different continents, emphasising both their positive and negative influences. For example, in South Africa, Landman (2000) suggests that gated communities are powerful concepts that can intensify the spatial and social separation between affluent and poor communities, influencing access to economic opportunities. The author further argues that their emergence may significantly impact the long-term sustainability of cities by disrupting patterns of social interaction, resource distribution and allocation, and urban growth. He concluded that gated communities are emerging in both developed and non-developed countries and are becoming the “*new garden-city model of the 21st century*,” with negative impacts on urban sustainability, particularly in urban society, urban life, and urban democracy (p. 6). Whereas Atkinson and Blandy (2005) emphasise the role of gated communities as a distinct urban form shaped by physical barriers and social and legal frameworks that control residents’ behaviour. Their argument revolves around the reasons for the growing number of gated

communities in Europe, which have lower crime rates and higher levels of social cohesion compared to the US. This reflects a desire for controlled urban areas that prioritise exclusivity and security. They caution that separating affluent individuals on isolated islands from the wider community may lead to disruptions in social diversity, social segregation, imbalances in safety and security, and reductions in services in poorer areas (p. 177).

In Australia, Quintal and Thompson (2007) conducted a study on the emergence of gated communities in Sydney, where the authors argue that their emergence was primarily related to people's responses to societal uncertainties and a desire for privacy. Their study challenges the critiques associated with these developments for promoting exclusion and segregation and counter-argues that gated communities around the city of Sydney reflect a positive desire for control and protection. The study concludes that while gated communities may contribute to segregation, they also fulfil essential psychological and social needs for their residents. They recommend that consequential urban planning policies address both security concerns as well as community cohesion in order to mitigate the potential for fragmentation (p. 1042). Similarly, Kenna (2010) examines Macquarie Links, one of Sydney's largest gated communities, questioning whether fear of crime and a desire for security are the primary drivers behind residents' choice of this type of development. Kenna suggests that minor crimes, such as graffiti and littering, contribute to the demand for privately governed neighbourhoods where people prioritise restrictive contracts over security. She calls for further research on such developments in Australia and their impact on urban life and social integration (p. 444).

In Latin America, Roitman (2010) conducted a literature review on the social, spatial, economic, and political impacts of gated communities since their widespread adoption in the 1990s. Her study concludes that the spread of gated communities is due to their becoming a trend or phenomenon in several cities. Moreover, the study highlights several positive attributes associated with these developments, including job creation, especially for low-skilled workers, and improvements in high-quality internal environments. However, their adverse effects include the privatisation of common spaces, which leads to fragmentation, encourages the use of private transportation instead of public transportation, and ultimately results in social disparities and segregation (p. 37). Similarly, gated communities are described as residential developments that privatise

public spaces, restrict access, threaten the security of the surrounding neighbourhoods, and exacerbate social inequality (Rafiemanzelat, 2016, p. 671). They spread across the US, UK, Europe, South Africa, South America, and Asia in the 1970s and 1990s, specifically built for people seeking a quality of life and lifestyle. Rafiemanzelat draws on studies by Gooblar (2002); Jane (1961); Landman (2000); Le Goix (2006); Webster (2002) to support her argument about the effects of gated communities on urban generation, social segregation, social exclusion, spatial fragmentation, and separation. In a comparative study, Klaufus et al. (2017) examine the role of real-estate developers in shaping gated communities in Latin America and Africa, focusing on how these developments contribute to urban segregation and exclusions. Their study focuses on how the influx of capital into these developments can create physical and social barriers, as well as the concept of pre-selecting residents based on their socioeconomic backgrounds. Their study concludes that real estate developers often lead gated communities in Latin America and Africa, which are typically self-contained and socially homogeneous. Their development involves the privatisation of public areas, marketed as innovative and sustainable projects serving specific economic, social, cultural, or religious groups (p. 10).

In Shenzhen, China, Wang et al. (2018) identify similar trends, suggesting that the privatisation of public spaces contributes to social fragmentation and inequality. Their study highlights that gating and privatisation limit access to essential services and facilities, leading to socioeconomic disparities. Meanwhile, Morales (2024) examines gated communities in Mexican metropolises, arguing that weak planning policies and social practices, the consolidation of the real estate market, socio-economic disparities, and increases in crime and violence rates have contributed to the growth of gated communities in Latin American cities. Morales concludes that the inability of local governments to provide adequate public services and infrastructure has encouraged families to relocate from the city centres to private gated communities. The study recommends implementing a holistic urban planning policy that prioritises inclusion, habitability, and sustainability over fragmented and exclusionary development models (p. 16).

Despite the negative implications often associated with gated communities, some scholars argue that these developments can foster social cohesion within their

communities. For example, Manzi and Smith-Bowers (2005) apply the club good theory to suggest that gated communities can help promote social cohesion by involving wider communities with similar income levels. These developments may help decrease crime levels, protect residents' vehicles, and enhance safety by preventing unauthorised individuals from entering these communities. Their study concludes that gated communities can offer certain benefits, such as a sense of community and cohesion, a feeling of safety for residents, and functionality as private clubs by providing security and well-maintained facilities. Additionally, gating can protect property values, encourage interaction between different social groups, promote social interaction and build ties with the surrounding neighbours (p. 28). Finally, in Lviv, Ukraine, Idak and Frankiv (2022) argue that gated communities can be justified in specific contexts where they provide security, privacy, and a safe environment. Despite the potential negative effects they may entail, such as reduced interactions with the broader community, they may create stronger internal bonds among residents, highlighting the complex balance between social benefits and exclusionary practices.

2.4 GATED COMMUNITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND GCC

The proliferation of gated communities has extended beyond Western contexts, becoming a significant urban phenomenon across the Middle East. The GCC presents distinct historical trajectories. In Qatar, for example, walled residential compounds emerged as early as the 1940s among merchant families, such as the Darwish and Al Manna families, along Doha's shoreline (Lockerbie, 2005, pp. 8-9). These early enclosures reflected traditional socio-cultural patterns rather than security concerns (Mahgoub & Khalfani, 2012, p. 54). The post-oil era transformed these into expatriate housing solutions, with merchants developing everything from labour camps to gated communities for foreign professionals (Al Shawish, 2015, pp. 72-73). Saudi Arabia's experience mirrors this pattern, with the discovery of oil in the 1930s triggering urban transformations (Glasze, 2006, p. 85). The conservative social climate made gated communities particularly appealing, as they allowed Western professionals to enjoy a lifestyle within secure boundaries (AlQahtany, 2022, p. 14). This contrasted with traditional compact urban patterns featuring protective neighbourhood layouts (Giddings et al., 2023, p. 5). American architects working for oil companies significantly influenced this housing transition at both macro and micro levels (Glasze, 2006, p. 85). In a recent study by Bint-

e-Waheed and Nadeem (2020) on the perception of security in gated and non-gated communities in Lahore, Pakistan, the authors carried out face-to-face interviews with residents from both communities to examine the increased demand for gated communities in the city. Their study recommends implementing the cul-de-sac concept of closed roads, as this may reduce the crime rate and create safer areas. Bahrain's earlier oil discovery created distinct conditions. While expatriates (54% of the population) favoured gated communities, these developments were smaller and less self-contained than their Saudi counterparts (Salim, 2021, p. 149). Bahrain's relatively liberal society meant these enclosures served less as cultural buffers than in more conservative neighbours.

Beyond the GCC, and in other Middle Eastern countries, motivations varied significantly. For example, in Egypt, developers marketed gated communities as exclusive luxury spaces, evolving from 1990s economic changes into symbols of elite liberation (Alaily-Mattar, 2008, p. 270; Mohamed Salah & Ayad, 2018, p. 2745). In Cairo alone, over 500 gated communities were established by 2013, demonstrating the scale of this development trend (Ibrahim & Hamed, 2015). More recent studies highlight the potential of border landscape design to blur the rigid edges of Egyptian gated communities, transforming them into more socially integrative zones while maintaining privacy (Hazem et al., 2025). In Lebanon, the weak public sector prompted private developers to create communities for affluent residents (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002, p. 334), while in Sudan and Iraq, gated communities emerged amidst poverty and instability as secure enclaves for elites (Demir & Mukhlis, 2017, p. 66; Elhadary & Ali, 2017, p. 45). Whereas Turkey's 1980s economic liberalisation created a new middle class seeking refuge from urban crowding (2007; Tanulku, 2018, pp. 153, 154).

This regional analysis reveals two dominant paradigms: GCC, where oil wealth and expatriate populations drove development, and other Middle Eastern contexts, where socioeconomic factors and urban challenges predominated. Despite extensive research on gated communities in the region, gaps remain in understanding the reasons for their emergence in the Middle East. Future research should focus on comparative studies that examine the impact of gated communities on social cohesion and urban fragmentation across different Middle Eastern contexts. A comparative analysis of the regional literature reveals that the motivations and forms of gated communities vary significantly across Middle Eastern contexts. In Egypt, gated communities are largely driven by the expansion

of the real estate market and elite consumption, marketed as luxury districts that address congestion, weak public services, and aspirations for social distinction (Alaily-Mattar, 2008; Mohamed Salah & Ayad, 2018). In Saudi Arabia, gated communities initially emerged to accommodate expatriate professionals within culturally controlled environments, blending imported Western models with local norms of privacy and segregation (AlQahtany, 2022; Glasze, 2006). By contrast, gated communities in Jordan are neither primarily expatriate compounds nor large-scale luxury cities, but rather market-driven residential developments targeting middle- and upper-income locals seeking privacy, lifestyle, and exclusivity within a context of limited regulation (Abed et al., 2022; Alkurdi, 2015). In this context, Jordan's gated communities align more closely with prestige- and lifestyle-oriented forms than security-driven models. At the same time, their peripheral location and limited integration distinguish them from both Egyptian mega-developments and Saudi typologies.

2.5 TYPOLOGY OF GATED COMMUNITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The oldest type of gated community can be found in the historical planning of Bilad Al-Sham (comprising Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon) (Wikipedia, 2024), characterised by its commercial quarters and houses with courtyards. These elements emerged from Islamic traditions during the Ottoman dynasty, spanning from the 16th century to the end of World War I (Shawash, 2003, p. 28). Amro and Bahauddin (2015, p. 162) explained that since Jordan was part of Bilad Al-Sham, it was influenced by the organic pattern of the urban fabric, characterised by irregular paths with closed ends that functioned similarly to courtyards in providing natural controls of heat and shading. Islamic cities, in general, shared common features of neighbourhoods positioned around a religious centre, such as Cairo. The organic planning of Cairo city, similar to that of other historic Islamic cities, reflects a general configuration characterised by narrow and wide streets, as well as closed alleyways and courtyards. Such a configuration served pragmatic functions, encouraging privacy, security, and social interactions that reflected the social and economic aspects of daily life, as illustrated in **Figure 2-3**.

Figure 2-3 Organic Planning of Old Arabian Cities



Source: (Amro & Bahauddin, 2015, p. 163)

After the end of Ottoman rule, the gates and walls of the residential neighbourhoods were the first elements to be demolished in order to control the cities, confirming the security and defensive purposes of these walls (Abu-Lughod, 1987). The concept of residential courtyards remained prevalent in Jordan until 1905; even in three-story buildings, the design typically featured residential rooms overlooking a courtyard, as shown in **Figure 2-4**.

Figure 2-4 Three-Storey Building in Amman (1887–1897)

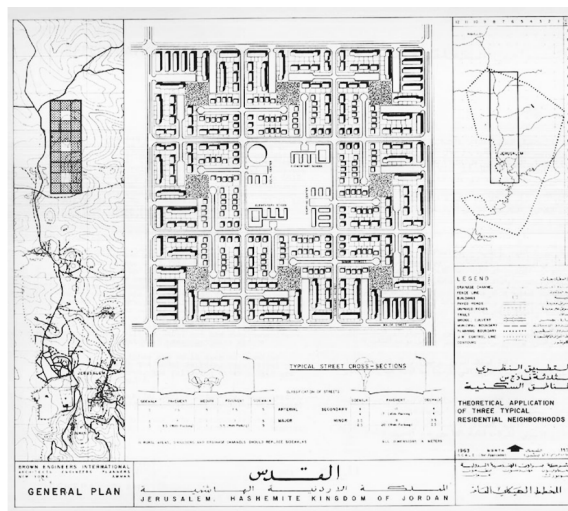


Source: (Shawash, 2003, p. 31)

Until 1908, Amman City had around 800 houses arranged in neighbourhoods surrounding the central Ottoman government office, along with other governmental buildings, including the post office, mosques, a central market, and other specialty shops.

In Jordan, the dominant residential typology seen during the 1930s was either arcade houses, courtyard houses, or central hall houses, which were adopted from neighbouring countries such as Lebanon or Syria (Jarrar, 2013, p. 82). Moreover, in the old plans of Jerusalem city dated 1963, the concept of the neighbourhood was formulated in a grid type that can accommodate five to ten thousand people (Dukhgan & Naïli, 2022, pp. 131-132). Each neighbourhood consists of nine blocks of single-family dwellings surrounding a central area for schools, retail, clinics, places of worship, and a playing area, “*all arranged in a campus-like manner*”, as shown in **Figure 2-5**.

Figure 2-5 Neighbourhood Configuration of Jerusalem, 1963



Source: (Dukhgan & Naïli, 2022, p. 131)

The second type of gated community is the extended family house, which was prevalent in the GCC countries, particularly in Qatar, during the 1940s. The residential houses, formerly known as “compounds”, spread to other families within the city of Doha by building walls to surround a group of houses from the same family, as shown in **Figure 2-6**.

Figure 2-6 Aerial Image of Doha, 1947



Source: (Eddisford & Carter, 2017, p. 6)

In the same era, a third type of gated community began to emerge in the Middle East, specifically in the GCC countries, as large numbers of Western professionals relocated to the region for work purposes. This era witnessed the introduction of imported urban planning strategies designed to accommodate the influx of population, culminating in the emergence of gated communities in the 1970s and 1980s (AlQahtany, 2022, p. 14). These gated communities were closed, guarded communities surrounded by high walls, providing Westerners with the freedom of social life, imitating their lifestyle back home (Hammad et al., 2024a, p. 10). The fourth type of gated community is the commercialised or developer-choice type, seen primarily after the 1990s. This type is a luxurious residential product that offers a lifestyle, attraction, and freedom from issues, providing attractive amenities for residents (Almatarneh, 2013). For example, a study published by Qureshi (2023) in the Global South cities, which includes the Middle East and GCC, investigated the rise of gated communities between 2000 and 2022. The study found that people choose to live there for security, prestige, proximity to work, affordability, and shared common areas.

However, the general types of gated communities, as described by Blakely and Snyder (1997b), can be divided into three main types: Lifestyle, Prestige, and Security, each with its own subcategories and characteristics, as shown in **Table 2-1**.

Table 2-1 Types of Gated Communities

Type	Features	Subtypes	Characteristics	Example
Lifestyle	Emphasize common amenities and cater to a leisure class with shared interests.	- Retirement - Golf and leisure - Suburban new town.	- Shared access to amenities for an active lifestyle. - The master-planned project with a suite of amenities and facilities, often in the Sunbelt.	1- AL-shorouk Panorama gated community, Egypt, Figure 6.
Prestige	Reflect the desire for image, privacy, and control; they focus on exclusivity over the community.	- Enclaves of rich and famous - Top-fifth developments - Executive middle class	- Secured and guarded privacy to restrict access for celebrities and very wealthy, attractive locations.	1- Mayfair gated community, Figure 7.
Security zone	Reflect fear; involve retrofitting fences and gates on public streets; controlling access.	- City perch - Suburban perch - Barricade perch	- Restricted public access in the inner-city area to limit crime or traffic closed access to some streets to limit through traffic.	Loloat AL-shorouk gated community, Figure 8.

Source: (Grant & Mittelsteadt, 2004)

The three main types are categorised based on the “*purpose of the settlement form*” as the lifestyle type is attracted by people seeking gated communities as home; the prestige type is for people seeking security and privacy; and the last type, the security type, concerns people who fear issues and trouble in other neighbourhoods (Grant & Mittelsteadt, 2004, p. 917).

Furthermore, Grant and Mittelsteadt (2004) developed a comprehensive checklist of features for gated communities based on Blakely and Snyder (1997b) initial list, as shown in **Table 2-2**. Thus, the situation in Jordan is not distinct, as these developments are an extension of the Western gated communities witnessed in the U.S. or the surrounding countries of the Middle East (Hammad et al., 2024b). In order to identify the categories of gated communities developed in Jordan and by utilising Grant and Mittelsteadt (2004) checklist of features, it was noticed that they share the following features:

- Function of Enclosure: Physical; Secure people and property
- Security Feature: physical fence
- Nature of security: guards always; patrolling guards; surveillance cameras
- Amenities: private roads; meeting places; recreation centre; open spaces; quality design
- Type of residents: homogeneous by class
- Tenure: principal residence
- Location: urban; rural

- Size: neighbourhood (tens to hundreds of units)
- Policy context: enables gating; growing area

Table 2-2 Gated Communities Features

Function of enclosure	physical	economic	social	symbolic
	secure people and property create identity for project	enhance property values protect club amenities	give visual or spatial privacy control those inside	display status and power control those outside
Security features	<i>nature of boundary</i> wall	fence—opaque	physical fence—visually open	symbolic fence—electric
	low fence, chain, or bollard	fence—barbed	speed bumps or chicanes	pavement texture or colour
	faux guard station	mirrored glass on guard house	‘private property’ signs	‘no parking’ signs
	hedge or vegetation	topographic feature	water	desert
	swing-arm gate	lift-arm gate	slide gate	swing gate
	<i>nature of security</i>		devices in road bed	guards at designated times
	guards at all times	patrolling guards	card entry	code entry
Amenities and facilities	auto opener entry	surveillance cameras	armed guards	house alarms
	private roads	meeting place	activity centre	recreational facilities
	open space	landscape maintenance	quality design	commercial facilities
Type of resident	institutional facilities	guards		
	homogeneous by age	homogeneous by class	homogeneous by ethnicity, race, status	shared activity (for example, golf)
Tenure	principal residence	secondary residence	seasonal residence	public housing
	fee simple ownership	condominium ownership	land lease	rental
Location	urban infill	suburban greenfield	exurban resort destination	rural inner-city
Size	cul-de-sac pod	neighbourhood (tens to hundreds of units)	village (hundreds of units, some commercial)	town (thousands of units and mix of uses)
Policy context	restricts gating	enables gating	growing area	stable or declining area

Source: (Grant & Mittelsteadt, 2004)

Gated communities in Jordan, as per Blakely and Snyder’s framework, can be classified into three types: lifestyle, prestige, and security. Drawing from Grant and

Mittelsteadt's checklist, these communities in Jordan exhibit common features such as security measures, private facilities, and a homogenous resident social class. They can also be divided into two categories based on size: Mini and Mega. Historically, gated communities in Jordan evolved from closed residential neighbourhoods and courtyard layouts that emphasised privacy, sacredness, and security, to modern, luxurious gated communities since the 1990s. Socioeconomic changes and the increasing demand for exclusivity and luxury drove this evolution. The literature review suggests that gated communities in Jordan are heavily influenced by Western gated communities, sharing similar features and designs. Several studies propose the need to regulate the growth and spread of these communities in a more planned and organised manner. However, the review lacks a detailed examination of the current regulations and offers no recommendations for improving their implementation. It also highlights the social inequality and segregation implied by gated communities.

2.6 GATED COMMUNITIES IN JORDAN

Amman originally developed through organic planning patterns characterised by narrow streets and closed alleyways, resembling traditional courtyards (Hammad et al., 2023). This urban form evolved under successive colonial influences, from the Roman and Ottoman periods to European and British imperialism (Omar et al., 2015; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015). The introduction of the main train line in 1903 marked a pivotal transfer toward linear urban planning with wider streets (Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015; Alzyoud & Hammad, 2020).

Gated communities emerged in Jordan after 1990, initially as extended family housing, and later developed into commercial projects after 2009. This transition responds to the demand from middle- and upper-middle-income groups seeking seclusion and luxury inspired by Western models, as found in a study conducted by Al Omari and Al Omari (2015). Their study demonstrates that while such communities offer privacy and security, their unregulated expansion poses risks to natural resources. Alkurdi (2015) identified several drivers behind the proliferation of gated communities, including aspirations for security, exclusivity, and modern living, as well as responses to urban congestion and inadequate public services. The study recommends selecting sites carefully to enhance interaction between residents both inside and outside the walls, thereby avoiding disruption to the urban fabric. In contrast, Al-Homoud and Al Aswad (2018) emphasised

that financial and social motivations prevail over security concerns. Their study, which focused on residents' preferences, found that feasibility and internal regulations were stronger incentives. In another study by Abed et al. (2022) to investigate the social sustainability of residents in gated communities. Their study categorised gated communities into mini and mega-developments, highlighting that mega-developments are typically located on the outskirts of the city. Whereas mini-gated communities are usually located in wealthy, urbanised areas. The authors recommend establishing regulatory frameworks to ensure the integration of urban services. A recent study by Obeidat et al. (2025) explored the tension between communal open space and privacy in gated communities. Using surveys, field observations, and space syntax analysis, it found that units closer to communal green areas reported lower privacy satisfaction, often leading to modifications such as balcony enclosures or fences. Residents farther away expressed higher satisfaction, reflecting the cultural importance of privacy in Jordanian society. The study highlights the need for flexible design strategies, such as spatial buffers and landscape barriers, to balance communal access with residents' privacy expectations.

Between 2003 and 2020, during the GCC financial boom, Jordan experienced significant developments, including Abdali, Jordan Gate, and Al Andalucía, which attracted investments from UAE developers. Unlike in the GCC, where gated communities served expatriate populations, Jordan's gated communities became symbols of wealth and prestige. Gated communities in Jordan are developed in both urban and suburban areas, targeting middle- and upper-income groups seeking exclusivity (Alkurdi, 2015). They all share common features such as private roads, open and green spaces, shared amenities and facilities, and security (Abed et al., 2022). While some scholars classify these developments as vertical, horizontal, or mixed (Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015; Alkurdi, 2015), whereas Abed et al. (2022) proposed a classification based on unit count, distinguishing between mega-developments (containing 80 or more units) and mini-developments (containing 5 to 40 units). They argued that gated communities in Jordan may not fall under the general classifications identified earlier by Blakely and Snyder (1997b) since the topic is relatively new compared to other countries. This may be attributed to land prices, as mega-developments require larger plots, and to the absence of government investment in such private projects. Mini-gated communities were also found to lack shared spaces, thereby limiting interpersonal interaction and reinforcing segregation. The study recommends further studies to assess the social segregation

between the residents inside and outside the walls. On the other hand, Mega-gated communities, typically located on Amman's outskirts, benefit from lower land costs and regulatory leniency, enabling developers to impose their guidelines and achieve spatial and social seclusion. Mini-gated communities, by contrast, are found in high-income urban zones and remain inaccessible to lower-income groups. Both types lack frameworks ensuring future integration into the broader urban fabric. The absence of specific regulatory frameworks governing gated communities in Jordan has direct implications for urban planning outcomes. Without clear guidelines addressing location, connectivity, and long-term integration, gated communities are often approved as isolated residential projects rather than as part of the wider urban fabric. This regulatory gap reinforces spatial fragmentation and limits opportunities for shared infrastructure and public space integration (Abed et al., 2022; Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015). Consequently, planning decisions remain largely developer-driven, with limited assessment of cumulative socio-spatial impacts on surrounding neighbourhoods, representing a significant gap in existing research.

A gap remains in the literature regarding the long-term implications of mega-gated communities, particularly their impact on surrounding undeveloped areas. The novelty of the topic in Jordan and its recent growth after 2015 have limited academic inquiry. To the researcher's knowledge, Abed et al. (2022) are among the few recent studies that address social sustainability and call for regulatory intervention to preserve cohesive urban development.

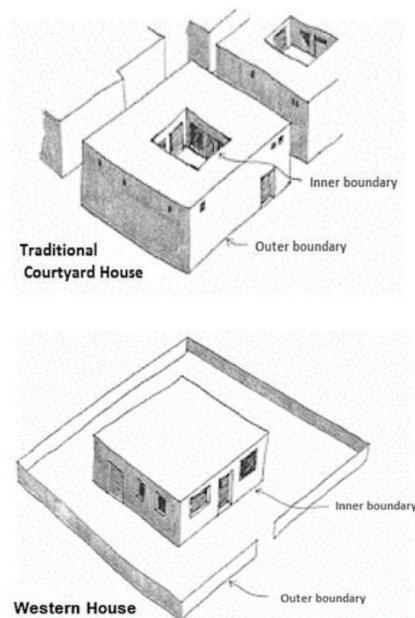
The emergence of gated communities in Jordan reflects the financial prosperity and social aspirations of its rising middle and upper classes, who increasingly seek exclusive, modern lifestyles in Amman. These developments are marketed as luxurious utopias offering security, privacy, investment potential, and protected environments for children. While existing research has thoroughly examined resident motivations and satisfaction levels, critical gaps remain regarding their broader urban consequences. Notably absent are studies analysing social cohesion, urban fragmentation, and comparative regional impacts. The current lack of strategic planning frameworks and regulations governing their growth, location selection, and long-term integration with surrounding areas presents a pressing challenge. As Jordan's experience mirrors the global proliferation of gated communities, with similar tensions between private benefits and public inequalities,

future research should prioritise comparative studies with neighbouring countries to develop more sustainable, integrated urban planning approaches.

2.7 REGULATIONS OF GATED COMMUNITIES IN JORDAN

The planning of gated communities in Jordan is governed by the general or standard regulations for residential housing, which also cover other housing types, such as flats, apartments, villas, and other combined residential housing, i.e., gated communities (Abed et al., 2022). During the 1920s and 1930s, modernism was introduced in urban planning throughout the Middle East, transforming the traditional cities' organic outlines under the French and British mandates. Amro and Bahauddin (2015) noted that foreign interventions significantly influenced Jordanian building regulations in the 1970s, ultimately leading to the elimination of courtyards from residential development under the new building standards. As an example of these regulatory modifications, modern residential houses were built outward, i.e., with façades facing the streets, rather than inward, i.e., with façades facing the internal courtyards, as shown in **Figure 2-7**.

Figure 2-7 Differences Between Traditional and Western-Influenced Houses



Source: (Amro & Bahauddin, 2015, p. 168; Edwards, 2006)

Land-use planning is primarily based on systems developed by British planners during the colonial period, with British consultants involved in preparing the roadmap plans in

1930 (Meaton & Alnsour, 2012, p. 370). The initial structural planning of Amman was developed in 1956 by the United Nations, and two additional systems were introduced in 1965, defined as the “Regulations of the City of Amman” (Alzyoud & Hammad, 2020, p. 67). In the same timeframe, the law of municipalities was already released, which was based on the concept of centralisation. The most recent building code was established in 2018, based on the original 1966 planning structure. The general housing regulations in Amman limit residential buildings to four levels or stories in height. A maximum percentage of the land area is allowed for construction, with the remainder designated as a setback or reserved for natural ventilation and lighting. Four categories govern the housing regulations in Amman: A, B, C, and D. These categories regulate the height, setback, required car park, and other aspects, including the facades' finish material. For example, Category (A) limits the construction area to a maximum of 39% of the land, whereas Category (B) limits the construction to 45%. It has been observed that these categories are strictly adhered to and implemented by the planning bodies in Amman, despite the numerous developments and diverse functions built over the last 20 years.

Notably, Jordan has witnessed economic prosperity over the last few decades, with new developments such as Abdali Development and Jordan Gate in Amman, Saraya Aqaba, Tala Bay, and Ayla Oasis in southern Jordan, among others, which do not fit this thesis. Alzyoud and Hammad (2020) explained that many legislations in Jordanian public law were derived from Ottoman planning regulations, which were initially extracted from Islamic laws, such as the law of damage and harm and the law of pre-emption. For example, the right of pre-emption is a common understanding between property neighbours that gives priority to an existing associate or owner to purchase the share of the partner(s) if they decide to sell before the property is offered to external buyers (Ben-Hamouche, 2009, p. 24). The primary purpose of this law is to protect partners from harming each other by introducing an outsider to the property, thereby reuniting the subdivided property and potentially promoting social harmony.

The planning of gated communities in Jordan is governed by general housing regulations that have evolved since the 1920s and 1930s. These regulations were influenced by modernist urban planning under the British and French mandates, followed by international interventions in the 1970s, which led to the elimination of courtyards. Similar to other countries in the Middle East, residential housing in modern Amman can be classified as imitating Western designs, reflecting the adoption of the British model

and the neglect of existing social, cultural, or political conditions. With the recent economic prosperity and the development of new projects, modified and amended regulations should be integrated to counter these changes and their social and spatial impacts. The following section highlights the social and spatial consequences of gated communities in the literature.

2.8 SYNTHESIS OF THE RISE OF GATED COMMUNITIES

The social, spatial, and economic impacts of gated communities in Jordan are extensively examined in this thesis through published articles presented in Chapters 6, 8, and 9 (Hammad et al., 2024a, 2024b; Hammad, Li, et al., 2025a, 2025c; Hammad, Mengbi, et al., 2025). These publications critically examine how gated communities function as both exclusive communities and sources of urban fragmentation, building upon and contributing to the broader scholarly discourse on their multifaceted impacts.

Socially, gated communities tend to reinforce segregation and exclusion by physically separating affluent residents from surrounding neighbourhoods, limiting social interaction and exacerbating inequality. Spatially, they create isolated “nodes” that disrupt urban continuity and reduce connectivity. Economically, while they may create temporary and service-sector jobs and increase property values, they may exacerbate existing inequalities.

In the GCC, gated communities often cater to professional expatriates, offering private, culturally distinct environments. In the broader Middle East, they typically cater to affluent locals seeking social seclusion. Scholars like Webster (2002) have characterised gated communities as “economic clubs,” yet this model can intensify urban fragmentation and privatisation (Wang et al., 2018). Although some studies highlight their benefits, such as enhanced safety, green spaces, and internal cohesion (Abed et al., 2022; Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018). These advantages are largely confined within the gates and rarely extend to broader urban surroundings. Several scholars implicitly frame the rise of gated communities within broader transformations in urban governance and real estate-driven development. Studies have linked gated communities to market-led housing production, the privatisation of urban space, and reduced public-sector involvement in service provision, resulting in fragmented and selectively governed urban environments (Klaufus et al., 2017; Landman, 2000; Roitman, 2010; Webster, 2002). In this context, gated communities operate as privately managed communities influenced by developer

interests rather than integrated planning frameworks, reinforcing socio-spatial inequality and uneven access to urban resources. However, in Jordan, engagement with governance- and market-related critiques remains limited, as existing studies primarily focus on housing preferences, typologies, or internal satisfaction rather than on the wider planning and regulatory structures that shape urban fragmentation.

The literature presents contrasting perspectives on gated communities, highlighting both their social and spatial implications and their economic benefits. While some studies link them to social inequality, urban fragmentation, and cultural disconnection, primarily through the creation of isolated “nodes”, others note benefits such as improved security and cohesion among residents of similar socio-economic status. However, these positive effects are largely confined within the gates, whereas economic benefits, such as increased property values and job creation, may extend to surrounding areas. In the GCC, gated communities typically cater to expatriates seeking cultural separation, while in other Middle Eastern contexts, they serve to isolate wealthy locals. Despite acknowledged benefits, significant gaps remain, particularly regarding long-term socio-spatial impacts and economic effects. Ultimately, further comparative studies are necessary to investigate the impact of gated communities in various regions, which may help identify best practices for promoting social interaction and effective regulation.

2.9 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Across this chapter, recurring concepts such as privacy, security, and socio-spatial fragmentation are discussed in relation to historical, regional, and Jordanian contexts; these concepts are synthesised in this section to avoid repetition and to clarify their evolving roles across scales and periods. This chapter has examined the evolution of gated communities, with a focus on Jordan. It traced their development through historical and modern phases, exploring typologies, spatial forms, and socio-economic drivers. Arabian cities traditionally followed an organic growth pattern, influenced by cultural and religious values, and characterised by inward-facing homes, narrow alleyways, and enclosed courtyards that reflected a sense of privacy and sacredness.

In the GCC, gated communities largely accommodated Western professionals, with designs influenced by American planners, and became preferred housing for affluent expatriates. In countries such as Lebanon, Egypt, and Turkey, such developments have proliferated due to socio-economic transformations, inadequate public services, and the

rise of the private real estate sector. In each context, these communities promoted exclusivity, security, and modern lifestyles.

However, in Jordan, two types of gated communities have emerged: mini-gated communities, consisting of 5-40 units, located in urban high-income areas, which have a limited impact due to their small scale. The other type was the mega-gated communities, developed on vacant land far from cities, with over 80 units catering to high-income groups seeking exclusivity and a particular lifestyle. This can lead to assume that most gated communities in Jordan do not emerge within existing urban fabrics or amidst lower-class neighbourhoods. On the contrary, they emerge on the outskirts of the city for several reasons, including high land prices, restrictive development legislation, and the need for seclusion and isolation.

The long-term impact of peripheral mega-gated communities remains underexplored, especially as surrounding areas are not yet fully developed. Therefore, more sustainable development, promoting organic townscapes, should receive greater attention from planners and authorities to ensure sustainable growth and a positive flourishing of the surrounding areas.

In this context, a phased, adaptive design approach is proposed:

- Phase 1: The internal layout and master plan should be designed with a long-term perspective. This may include creating a fully enclosed neighbourhood mimicking the historical quarter neighbourhoods during the initial phases, as the surroundings are still undeveloped. This enclosure can help develop internal social sustainability and strengthen personal relationships while also allowing for future integration as the surrounding areas mature.
- Phase 2: The internal designs and layouts should be adaptable and liveable, similar to the organic master plans of the old Arabian cities, in order to create diverse forms of enclosures. In the initial phases, the primary focus should be on safety and security, as well as internal social integration and coherence among the residents.
- Phase 3: As these communities develop, the enclosures could transition into interfaces that facilitate communication and resource sharing between the communities and their surroundings.

This phased strategy provides a framework for policymakers and urban designers to promote long-term sustainability and prevent the creation of isolated urban islands amid

urban sprawl. Beyond conceptual and contextual gaps, the literature reveals several methodological limitations in previous studies on gated communities. In the Jordanian context, empirical research remains limited, with most studies relying on surveys of residents or descriptive reviews and offering little investigation of the broader urban impacts of gated communities (Abed et al., 2022; Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018; Alkurdi, 2015). Moreover, few studies integrate spatial analysis tools to examine urban connectivity, accessibility, or fragmentation at the community or neighbourhood scale. The absence of combined qualitative and spatial approaches has constrained a comprehensive understanding of how gated communities interact with their surrounding urban fabric. These methodological gaps highlight the need for studies that integrate expert perspectives with spatial analysis to examine socio-spatial impacts beyond the boundaries of the gated communities themselves.

The review of the literature has identified several gaps that this research aims to fill:

- Context-specific studies: A notable gap exists in research focusing on Jordan. The latest study by (Abed et al., 2022) titled: Social Sustainability in Gated Communities Versus Conventional Communities: The Case of Amman
- Comparative Analysis: Limited studies have examined the similarities and differences in social and spatial impacts across two or more countries. A study by Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002) compared gated communities in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon
- Historical Analysis: Some researchers attempted to draw parallels between modern gated communities and the neighbourhoods of historical Arabian cities or compare gated communities with the cul-de-sacs concept seen in Arabian courtyards (Alkan Bala, 2018).
- Application of Theories: This research aims to apply international theories, such as Structural theory and space syntax, to a localised context of Jordan in order to provide a deeper understanding of their influences
- A phasing strategy framework for future gated communities. This can ensure a smooth transition and adapt to the expansion of the surrounding areas, ultimately fostering more integrated urban development.

The findings from the literature suggest that while some researchers have drawn parallels between traditional and modern developments, others have raised concerns about the impacts of gated communities on segregation, urban fragmentation, and social

exclusion. This study aims to bridge these gaps by linking historical design logic with modern planning strategies, ensuring that gated communities evolve in tandem with the growth of the surrounding areas.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Proposition: Segregation and Separation

INTRODUCTION

This chapter develops the theoretical framework for the thesis by reviewing three key theories that explain processes of segregation and spatial organisation: Segregation Theory (Chicago School), Structuration Theory, and Space Syntax Theory.

Segregation Theory, developed by early urban sociologists such as Park and Burgess, examines how urban space is structured along social and economic lines, framing gated communities as responses to perceived threats (Goist, 1971). Structuration Theory, introduced by Giddens (1984), transfers the focus to the interaction between social structures and individual agency. To assess spatial impact, space syntax analysis (Hillier, 2007) is introduced as a practical tool for measuring integration, an alternative to segregation.

The objective of this review is to identify a theoretical framework to analyse segregation and separation processes and to measure the social and spatial impacts of gated communities. The three theories support the analytical framework at complementary levels. Segregation Theory explains how social and economic differentiation produces spatial separation, framing gated communities as responses to urban pressures. Structuration Theory clarifies how individual choices, planning practices, and institutional structures interact to reproduce or reshape segregation, particularly through unintended socio-spatial outcomes (Giddens, 1984). Space syntax complements these perspectives by providing a spatial tool to assess integration, connectivity, and fragmentation. Together, these theories enable an integrated analysis of gated communities as social, institutional, and spatial phenomena, with specific relevance to the Jordanian context. A portion of this discussion is based on previously published work by the researcher. The material has been revised and integrated to support the thesis's theoretical framework and ensure consistency with the broader research objectives.

3.1 CHICAGO SCHOOL: THE SEGREGATION THEORY

The Chicago School refers to work by urban sociologists at the University of Chicago between 1915 and 1935. Robert Park proposed that cities follow a natural, ecological pattern of growth, while Ernest Burgess developed the concentric zone model (CZM), arguing that cities grow radially from a central business district, creating zones with distinct social characteristics, including a high-crime industrial zone (Newburn, 2017).

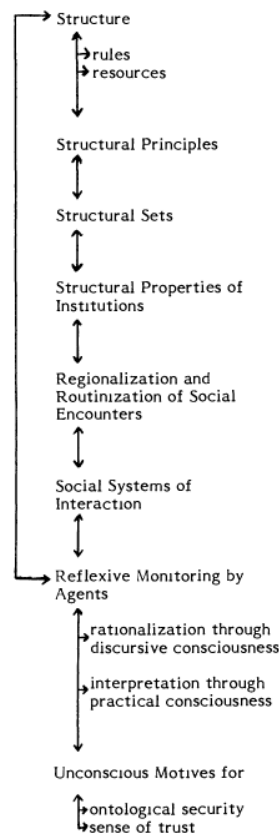
The School explained segregation as a natural phenomenon and a transitional phase toward social balance (Ruiz-Tagle, 2016). However, this perspective is criticised for its ecological determinism, lack of strong theoretical foundations for causation, and disregard for political economy factors like race and class. As Roitman (2007) notes, the School recognised that group interests and opinions drive segregation, but its models were unable to fully explain how social groups interact spatially. While foundational for understanding urban social structure, the Chicago School's framework has limited aptitude for modern complexities, particularly in the Middle East. It nonetheless provides a historical lens to view gated communities as a form of spatial response to social disorganisation and stratification.

3.2 STRUCTURATION THEORY

Structuration Theory, developed by Anthony Giddens, offers a framework for understanding the relationship between social structures and individual agency in shaping social practices (Roitman, 2007). The theory centres on the duality of structure, which posits that structures (rules, resources, and institutions) both constrain and enable human action, while individuals, through their actions, simultaneously reproduce and transform these structures (Giddens, 1984).

Giddens emphasised the dual relationship between structure and agency as they are inseparable, a concept he termed the “duality of structure”. Society’s structure is continually recreated by human actors, who are capable of inventing values and habits; at the same time, people are always constrained by these social structures. Structure, as explained by Giddens, refers to a set of rules and resources that can influence human actions, where rules can limit choices and resources can enable them, as illustrated in **Figure 3-1** (Lamsal, 2012, pp. 113- 114).

Figure 3-1 Key Elements of the Structuration Theory



Source: (Turner, 1986, p. 971)

A critical aspect of Structuration Theory is the concept of unintended consequences, where actions produce outcomes that were neither intended nor anticipated (Golsorkhi et al., 2010). In the context of gated communities, the intention to create security and exclusivity can lead to:

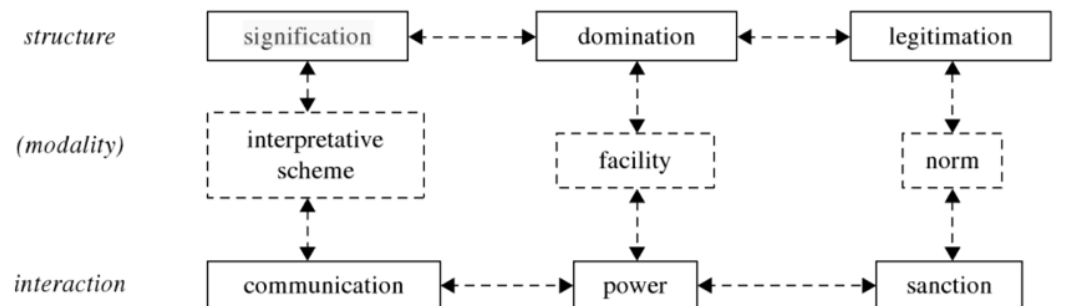
- Socioeconomic Segregation: Affluent residents seclude themselves, increasing social inequality (Lamsal, 2012).
- Impact on Public Services: Divestment from public infrastructure as residents rely on private amenities.
- Fragmentation of Social Connections: Physical barriers reduce community engagement with the wider urban fabric.

Figure 3-2 identifies Giddens' three core components of social structures:

- Signification: The production of meaning through language and communication.

- Legitimation: The normative rules and moral codes that govern social behaviour.
- Domination: The asymmetric control of resources and power among actors.

Figure 3-2 Forms of Interaction



Source: (Giddens, 1984)

The theory also bridges the micro-level of individual agency (e.g., a family's choice to move into a gated community) and the macro-level of social structures (e.g., urban planning policies, economic inequality). This relationship demonstrates how individual behaviour contributes to broader social patterns, and vice versa (Lamsal, 2012). Furthermore, Giddens explains that space is integral to the creation of social systems. Spatial arrangements, like gated communities, influence social interactions and resource allocation. For instance, a wealthy neighbourhood's collective resources can secure higher-quality public services, enhancing residents' quality of life and reinforcing spatial inequality (Lamsal, 2012, p. 115). In this theory, social integration, characterised by the exchange of practices between groups, is understood as the opposite of segregation (Giddens, 1984; Roitman, 2007).

To contextualise Giddens' Structuration Theory in analysing the social and spatial impacts of gated communities, this study applies the framework of structure and agency. Within this framework, "structure" encompasses socioeconomic factors, property values, and urban planning policies, while "agency" refers to individual preferences, lifestyle choices, and community interactions. The duality of structure, as explored in Giddens' theory, can be reflected in gated communities' efforts to provide security and exclusivity for certain social groups, as well as in their influence on social interactions and resource allocation. Moreover, the concept of unintended consequences and unacknowledged conditions can be observed in gated communities through socioeconomic segregation, the

fragmentation of social connections, and the impacts on public services. Structuration Theory can offer a comprehensive perspective on addressing micro-level issues within gated communities and the macro-level social factors that influence their development. By understanding how individual actions within gated communities can contribute to segregation and fragmentation, policymakers and decision-makers can employ strategies to address these challenges.

3.3 SPACE SYNTAX THEORY

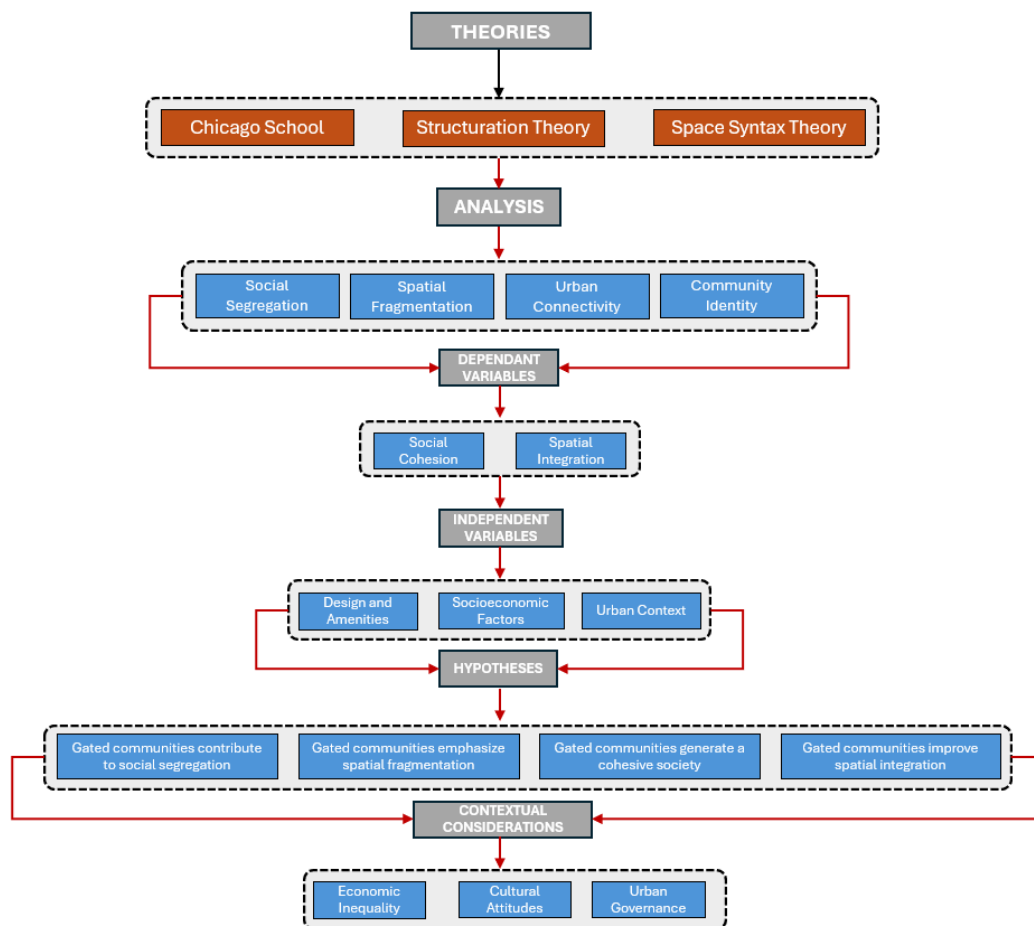
This thesis applies a third theory to measure the impact that gated communities have on their surroundings. As a method grounded in urban theory, space syntax measures the spatial relationships between streets and buildings, helping to explain how spatial configurations influence human behaviour, social interaction, and socioeconomic activities (Yamu et al., 2021, p. 1). In this thesis, space syntax is applied through key analytical themes, including configurational analysis, integration measures, and spatial intelligibility. Configurational analysis examines the relational structure of the street network and its influence on movement and accessibility. Integration values assess how spatial layouts support or restrict connectivity between gated communities and their surroundings, while spatial intelligibility reflects the relationship between local connectivity and global integration (Hillier, 2007). Together, these measures enable an empirical evaluation of spatial fragmentation and urban connectivity associated with gated communities in Amman. Further details are presented in Chapter 9 of the published article (Space Syntax Analysis of Gated Communities in Jordan: Examining Urban Connectivity and Social Impact).

3.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for analysing the social and spatial impacts of gated communities is developed based on a review and analysis of three theories: the Chicago School, Structuration Theory, and space syntax theory. The impact of gated communities is examined through several dimensions, including social segregation, spatial fragmentation, urban connectivity, and community identity. **Figure 3-3** illustrates the theoretical framework proposed for this thesis as follows:

- Social segregation refers to the contribution of gated communities towards social isolation and segregation and is based on several factors, such as income levels, backgrounds, and ethnicity.
- Whereas spatial fragmentation refers to the extent to which gated communities can create physical barriers and isolation, which may lead to spatial fragmentation and isolation.
- Similarly, urban connectivity can be characterised by the relationship between gated communities and their surroundings in terms of connectivity, accessibility, and integration.
- Community identity relates to the cohesive and integrated community within the gated community that shares common values and norms.

Figure 3-3 Developed Theoretical Framework



Source: Researcher

Analysing the impacts of gated communities involves considering dependent and independent variables. Dependent variables relate to social cohesion, measured through indicators such as social interactions, community engagement, and a sense of belonging, as well as spatial integration, examined through physical connections and accessibility to services and amenities. Independent variables include attributes of gated communities, such as design and amenities; socioeconomic factors, including income level, education, and demographic composition; and the urban context of surrounding neighbourhoods, including infrastructure, services, amenities, and land use. To ensure methodological coherence, these variables are explored through complementary qualitative approaches. Social cohesion, community identity, and perceptions of segregation are examined through social theory and thematic analysis of expert interviews. In contrast, spatial integration, connectivity, and fragmentation are examined using space syntax as a spatial analytical tool embedded within the qualitative case study design. This distinction aligns the theoretical framework with the thesis's qualitative methodology.

Furthermore, the thesis posits four hypotheses derived from social theories:

- Gated communities may contribute to social segregation by limiting interactions between different social groups.
- Gated communities may emphasise spatial fragmentation by introducing physical barriers that can restrict access.
- Gated communities can foster a cohesive society by offering a sense of community and shared facilities among their residents.
- Gated communities can enhance spatial integration with surrounding communities by implementing distinctive designs and selecting a suitable location tailored to specific socioeconomic contexts.

However, gated communities may involve several contextual consequences that may require consideration, such as:

- Economic inequality is related to the spatial distribution of gated communities.
- Cultural attitudes such as privacy, security, and community, which may influence their demand; and

- Urban governance is involved in regulating the spread of these areas within the urban plan.

In the Jordanian context, these consequences are influenced by socioeconomic disparities between East and West Amman, cultural preferences for privacy and security, and the absence of specific regulatory frameworks for gated communities. Economic inequality influences access to gated developments, while cultural attitudes reinforce separation and the creation of controlled environments. At the same time, governance limitations and reliance on general housing regulations allow gated communities to expand with limited consideration of long-term urban integration, intensifying socio-spatial fragmentation. Thus, the contextual considerations may have several implications that extend beyond the theoretical, practical, and policy realms. The analysis and investigation of the impacts caused by gated communities on the surroundings may foster a deep understanding of their impacts, which may assist in enhancing their social inclusion and spatial equity, such as regulating their spread, enhancing their connectivity, and promoting social cohesion by creating urban environments where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

3.5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has reviewed key theoretical approaches to segregation and separation to establish a framework for analysing the social and spatial impacts of gated communities on their surrounding neighbourhoods. The Chicago School provided a foundational perspective, linking spatial segregation to social structures and framing gated communities as natural responses to socioeconomic factors like safety, crime, and class. While valuable for associating social structure with urban form, this approach has limited applicability to modern urban complexities, particularly in Middle Eastern contexts where historical and cultural dimensions are integral to urban organisation. Whereas Giddens's Structuration Theory offers a more interactive framework by examining the interaction between social structures and human agency. Its concepts, including the duality of structure, unintended consequences, and unacknowledged conditions, help explain how gated communities reproduce class-based exclusivity and social fragmentation, leading to reduced public engagement and disparities in service provision. The theory's applicability at both micro (community) and macro (societal) scales makes it particularly suitable for understanding gated communities within Jordanian urban settings. Finally,

space syntax theory, developed by Hillier, complements these perspectives by providing a spatial analytical tool for measuring integration, connectivity, and accessibility. It enables precise assessment of how gated communities influence movement patterns and physical connectivity within urban areas. Though its generalisability may be limited by socio-cultural variations, its location-specific focus renders it highly valuable for evaluating spatial conditions in Jordan.

As these theories originated in Western contexts, their direct application to Middle Eastern cases, such as Jordan, presents challenges. Thus, this research adopts an integrated approach that combines Structuration Theory and space syntax. This hybrid framework enables a comprehensive analysis of both the social processes driving segregation, as explored through Structuration Theory, and the physical manifestations of spatial fragmentation, examined through space syntax. Together, they provide a robust basis for understanding the multi-dimensional impacts of gated communities in Jordan, bridging social theory and spatial analysis to address both theoretical and practical implications for urban development.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

INTRODUCTION

Based on the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3, this chapter presents a methodological framework for this thesis, grounded in the research question driving this study: “What is the impact and influence of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods in Jordan from social and spatial aspects that may lead to urban segregation?” To address this question, a qualitative research methodology with a case study design framework is applied, grounded in a constructivist paradigm (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Yin, 2009). The research philosophy emphasises the importance of understanding things in their natural settings and interpreting knowledge through human interactions. Additionally, a phenomenological inquiry will be implemented to analyse the experiences of residents, decision-makers, and other stakeholders, as experiences may significantly shape these developments (Husserl, 1970). These methods are integrated within a single qualitative case study design. Historical inquiry provides contextual grounding, phenomenology captures expert experiences and interpretations, and thematic analysis structures these insights into coherent patterns. Together, these approaches complement each other by linking historical context, expert experience, and socio-spatial interpretation, enabling a coherent examination of the social and spatial impacts of gated communities in Jordan.

Employing a qualitative research methodology with a case study design framework is suitable for uncovering contextual conditions of the phenomenon, and allows for gathering and combining data from different sources to illustrate cases (Baxter & Jack, 2015). Furthermore, qualitative research emphasises in-depth exploration of subjects that are difficult or not possible to measure or examine by conventional experiments (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, this methodology is appropriate for Jordan and the Middle East context, as social, cultural, and economic factors have a profound influence on the emergence of gated communities, which requires an interpretive approach.

This chapter is organised into six sections, starting with the research philosophy and epistemology, followed by the demonstration of the research methodology and design,

data collection and analysis, challenges and constraints, and concluding with the summary and discussion.

4.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

This research adopts a unique approach, grounded in social constructionism and interpretivist epistemology, as it explores the phenomenon of gated communities in their natural settings, interpreting knowledge through human interactions (Clarke & Braun, 2013). A qualitative methodology that uses words and interpretations for its data collection and analysis, and seeks to understand and interpret meanings and generate patterns. This approach is particularly suitable for the Middle Eastern context, as historical and cultural dichotomies influence the social structure of communities and impact the spatial organisations of cities.

Furthermore, this study will adopt a case study research design framework, a novel method that allows for in-depth investigation within a specific context (Yin, 2009). With the global spread of gated communities and their emergence in the Middle East, particularly in Jordan, this study aims to shed new light on their social and spatial influences on the surrounding neighbourhoods. The case study design is suitable for this research, as it will enable an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena within their real-life context and address the emergence of gated communities in Jordan.

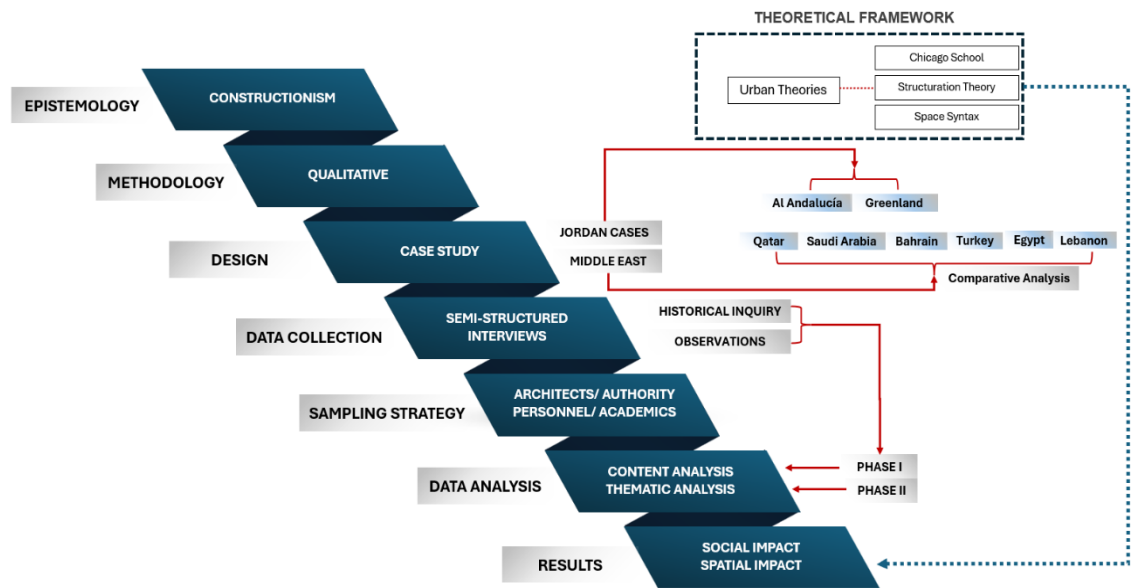
Moreover, a phenomenological inquiry will be employed, emphasising direct engagement with key stakeholders through in-depth interaction with concerned individuals, such as designers, planners, and authority personnel. By exploring a problem or phenomenon that is not well understood, this research aims to identify patterns and develop hypotheses (Husserl, 1970). Data collection will involve open-ended methods, such as semi-structured interviews with experts about the topic (Adams, 2015). The sample size can be relatively small, as the research seeks to develop hypotheses that can be transferred to other similar cases in the Middle East, rather than aiming for generalisation (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Additionally, a historical inquiry into the old Arabian gated neighbourhoods will be conducted in order to extract attributes related to social cohesion and integration. The historical inquiry will support and contextualise the findings extracted from the interpretive constructivism approach. Conceptual history focuses on understanding how the meaning of concepts evolves, as history provides a framework for thinking about the

past. Historical inquiry is a method for investigating, organising, and explaining past events. It connects these events to current movements by establishing historical evidence and constructing interpretations that answer research questions. The historical enquiry into walled cities in the old Arabian cities may address research questions related to segregation and separation caused by modern gated communities (Wimmer, 2015).

The research will follow two stages of analytical methods. Stage one will employ a content analysis to examine historical data on gated neighbourhoods, categorising phenomena and events to facilitate better interpretation (Woo & Heo, 2013). Stage two will conduct a thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the dataset (semi-structured interviews) and then organise, analyse, code, and describe these themes. Thematic analysis can be a constructionist method that examines the ways in which realities, events, and experiences affect society (Braun & Clarke, 2023; Nowell et al., 2017). This design aligns well with the aims and objectives of this thesis, which are to study and investigate the impact of the gated community phenomenon, a poorly understood topic, as illustrated in **Figure 4-1**.

Figure 4-1 Research Methodology



Source: Researcher

4.2 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis is identified as qualitative social constructionism research, as it aims to understand complex human phenomena of gated communities in their natural settings

(Cresswell, 2013, p. 48). “Natural settings” refer to the organic growth, physical locations, and spatial expansions of these developments in their natural environment. Observing their organic development within urban and geographic contexts, as well as the behaviours and experiences of residents of these communities with their surrounding communities.

Qualitative research is conducted to explore a problem or issue involving a group or population that cannot be easily measured. It is inductive in nature, aiming to develop theories and understandings based on collected data rather than testing hypotheses, as in deductive research. For example, investigating why people choose to live in gated communities or measuring residents' satisfaction can be conducted by collecting data through surveys or questionnaires. Such an investigation supports the aim of measuring something that can be answered by quantitative research. While this research aims to understand the impacts of gated communities on their surroundings from social and spatial perspectives, qualitative research can help elucidate the influence of social life, people's experiences, and feelings towards an application. These can be addressed through interviews or focused groups, for example, where people can tell their stories and provide details of their experiences. Bricki and Green (2007) explain that since the method of qualitative research involves the experience of a group of people being impacted by a phenomenon, it can answer questions about ‘what, how, why’ rather than ‘how many or how much’.

This approach involves direct engagement with key stakeholders, including planners, designers, authorities, and other relevant parties. Furthermore, qualitative research is particularly useful when quantitative measures and analyses fail to adequately address social issues such as people's interactions, gender differences, race and ethnic variations, economic status, and individual differences (Cresswell, 2013, p. 48). Data is collected by examining and reviewing multiple documents, observations, and interviews using open-ended questions rather than questionnaires. The research design framework applied in this thesis is divided into two stages: stage one is a classical case study design framework, defined by Yin (2009), which refers to an event, individual, or entity of analysis or inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context, applying several sources of evidence (Noor, 2008). Stage two will utilise a phenomenological inquiry, which describes the common meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals regarding

a particular concept or phenomenon, such as segregation in gated communities (Husserl, 1970). The theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 directly informed the case study protocol and fieldwork design. Core concepts such as social segregation, spatial fragmentation, and urban integration guided the formulation of interview questions, observation criteria, and case study variables. The case study protocol translated these theoretical dimensions into fieldwork steps, including expert interviews, site observations, and spatial assessment, ensuring consistency between theoretical propositions and empirical investigation.

The first stage, Yin (2009) explained that the case study is not a method of data collection, but rather it's a research design used to study or inquire about a social unit. Some critics have criticised case studies as design frameworks due to their lack of rigour, reliability, and generalisation. However, the strengths of case studies reside in the holistic view they take of a specific phenomenon, such as gated communities in this thesis. Stake (1995, p. 3) defines the case as a "bounded system" that is specific, complex, and functioning. Specificity and boundedness emphasise that it is an object and not a process. Case studies can be instrumental as they tend to answer the research question and the puzzlement associated with it. This allows for gaining insights into that particular case and enables the generalisation or transfer of knowledge. Case study research enables a holistic investigation of a particular setting or circumstance using multiple data collection methods (Wang & Groat, 2013, p. 18). The case study research design selected for this thesis is a descriptive case study, as it provides a detailed description of the phenomenon of gated communities in their real-world context. It describes the emergence of gated communities in the Middle East, in general, and in Jordan, in particular. The study highlights key phenomena, including cohesion and interrelationships among residents and their surrounding neighbours, social segregation and integration, and separation and exclusion (Priya, 2021, pp. 95-96). As discussed by Yin (2009), the research questions form the foundation of any case study research design, as they determine the actions that will be adopted during the investigations.

To recall the main and sub-questions that determined the course of investigation in this thesis:

The Research's Main Question:

What is the social and spatial impact and influence of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods? This question aims to determine the primary aspects that illustrate how gated communities exert their influence on their surroundings from both social and spatial perspectives.

Sub-questions are introduced to emphasise the central question and to further understand what elements of social and spatial impact will be investigated:

- How can gated communities be merged and interconnected with the urban fabric of the city, building upon the attributes of gated neighbourhoods, or the walled cities, of old Arabian cities, to realise their social cohesion and community engagement? This sub-question explores ways to integrate gated communities with existing urban areas to enhance social interaction.
- How do gated communities affect property value and housing affordability for residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods, which may influence their social and spatial interconnectivity? This sub-question examines how the economic aspect can influence the affordability of the surrounding environment, potentially disrupting social cohesion in societies.
- How do the architectural designs of gated communities impact the spatial relationship between the residents and their surroundings, including access to public amenities and connectivity? This sub-question examines the role of architectural design and designers in the broader context of the urban environment, specifically in relation to access to public services.

The selected case studies respond directly to the research sub-questions. Al Andalucía and Green Land enable examination of how gated communities affect social cohesion and segregation, how spatial layout influences connectivity and access to public amenities, and how architectural design shapes relationships with surrounding neighbourhoods. Their contrasting scales, locations, and levels of enclosure allow a comparative assessment of integration and fragmentation. At the same time, historical insights inform the evaluation of whether contemporary gated forms align with or diverge from traditional Arabian urban patterns.

As described by Priya (2021, p. 99), a well-developed research question can create a robust research design, resulting in an insightful and influential case study. According to Stake (1995), the case study design features the interrelatedness between the context in which the study is conducted and the subjects being investigated, such as community interrelations or individual preferences. Using a case study research design, this study focuses on neighbourhoods surrounding gated communities in Amman, Jordan, and neighbouring countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain, as well as on the urban phenomena under examination. Two comparative case studies were selected: Al Andalus and Green Land. These gated communities, located on the southern outskirts of Amman, represent contrasting scales and levels of urban integration. Al Andalus is a large-scale, high-end villa compound with strong spatial seclusion, while Green Land represents a smaller, semi-open development. The cases were selected using a maximum variation sampling strategy to capture a spectrum of gated communities typologies in Jordan. This approach facilitated comparison of differing levels of integration and socio-spatial impact. Both developments exemplify private, master-planned, enclosed residential environments, but differ in scale, urban integration, and socio-spatial characteristics. Fieldwork involved systematic site observations, analysis of spatial layouts, and review of secondary materials, including planning documents, zoning maps, and developer brochures. Particular attention was given to permeability, access hierarchy, and surrounding land uses, allowing for comparison of expert insights with physical observations.

Sampling is considered an important aspect of qualitative research since “You cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). They explained a couple of factors to be considered while developing a qualitative sample plan, such as (a) the relevance of the samples to the research aims and epistemology, (b) the reliability of descriptions produced, (c) the feasibility of the sampling plan in relation to time and cost; (d) the effectiveness of the findings for transferability of data (Priya, 2021, p. 99). When studying the emergence and influence of gated communities in Jordan and comparing them with their impacts in neighbouring Middle Eastern countries, it is not possible to explore this phenomenon in depth across all locations. Therefore, the selected case studies were limited to mega-gated communities in Jordan, as described in the literature review section, where such projects are typically developed on vacant sites located far from the established city centre. Since this phenomenon is considered

relatively new in Jordan compared to other countries (Abed et al., 2022), the researcher sought to analyse case studies from neighbouring countries. The analysis can help understand how gated communities in Jordan compare to those in other countries, focusing on their impacts and addressing lessons learned from earlier developments. The selection of neighbouring countries was based on the reasons for the emergence of gated communities in those countries, which concludes into two reasons: **a)** oil countries where gated communities emerged as a response to Westerners' movement to the GCC countries, which includes Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain; **b)** non-oil producing countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, and Turkey as gated communities emerged due to socio-economic reasons. Examining the impacts associated with gated communities in different countries can help evaluate their impact in the Jordan case, as a non-oil-producing country.

Additionally, experts, including architects, planners, authority personnel, and academics, are selected to share their knowledge and experiences on gated communities in different countries. Locke (2002); Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that purposive sampling can assist in reflecting on the research question and outline a range of sampling strategies for evaluating the audience. These can include maximum variation sampling, typical case sampling, critical case sampling, and extreme or negative case sampling. Therefore, the sampling strategy or plan selected for this research is purposive sampling, known as judgemental, subjective, or selective, used to identify information from different units (people, cases, events) to be studied in order to achieve the effectiveness of a limited or small sample (Patton, 2014; Rai & Thapa, 2015, p. 5). The primary concept of purposive sampling is to focus on a specific individual or group with unique experiences or specialised knowledge about a particular phenomenon. Cresswell (2013, p. 100) discusses several techniques for conducting purposeful sampling, including maximum variation sampling, typical cases, extreme cases, critical cases, and homogeneous sampling. However, this research adopts an expert sampling technique to gain a more extensive understanding of the phenomenon from individual experts with particular expertise (Rai & Thapa, 2015, p. 9). Selection of experienced individuals and participants, such as urban planners and architects, government authorities, and academics and researchers in the field of urban planning and urban design.

Urban planners, for instance, can offer insights into the spatial impacts of gated communities and the specific rationale behind such developments. Government authorities' personnel and officials possess insights and knowledge of policies and regulations, along with an understanding of the broader social and policy implications. In comparison, academics and researchers can discuss theoretical perspectives on similar cases. Expert sampling can provide a depth of knowledge from individuals with a comprehensive understanding of the social and spatial influences of gated communities, along with access to data and information that might not be publicly available. Rai and Thapa (2015, p. 9) argue that expert sampling can be practical when there is insufficient evidence of the impact and influence of gated communities in an area, which may take a considerable amount of time to uncover the findings. This thesis employed purposive sampling as this method is known for cost and time efficiency, particularly when data sources are limited. Given the focus on understanding the social and spatial impacts and influences of gated communities in Jordan, expert sampling is an appropriate technique that allows for the selection of key experts in the field. This method is valuable for exploring complex social phenomena, as insights can be gained while adopting a spontaneous approach (Bernard, 2017). However, purposive sampling has limitations and can be linked to research bias because the sample selection is based on the researcher's judgment. This may challenge the generalisation of the findings, as selecting different sets of experts may generate different results. Such an issue was mitigated by carefully selecting a diverse group of experts from different Middle Eastern countries, each with varied experiences and professions, ensuring robust findings and balanced viewpoints.

Case study design is regarded as a cross-case design, involving two or more cases that experience similar phenomena and replicate events, where collected data are compared to extract transferable conclusions (Noor, 2008, p. 1604; Yin, 2009). Punch (2013) believes that the in-depth study of a case can demonstrate a particular phenomenon and hypotheses that can be tested and further generalised. Moreover, the concept of saturation is typically associated with the sample size during qualitative research, as it is the point at which no new themes, information, or codes are found in the data, or when data collection should be stopped (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 202). Once the investigator reaches a level at which reviewing or adding more variations will not provide new information, this point can be considered a saturation point (Wang & Groat, 2013, p. 301).

Stage two of the research design will utilise a phenomenological inquiry to describe the common meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals regarding a particular concept or phenomenon, such as segregation in gated communities. Phenomenology, as a philosophical paradigm, accounts for meanings in the built environment (Husserl, 1970) and explores phenomena that people have experienced, heard, touched, smelled, felt, understood, or lived through (Seamon, 2000). In the design practice, Wang and Groat (2013) consider the phenomenological method rationalised by Seamon to be one of the most relevant components of architectural research.

Additionally, a historical inquiry into the old Arabian gated neighbourhoods will be conducted to extract attributes related to social cohesion and integration. The historical inquiry will support and contextualise the findings extracted from the case study approach. Conceptual history is a field of historical studies concerned with the changes in the denotations of a specific concept. It focuses on understanding how the meaning of concepts evolves over time, as history provides a framework for thinking about the past (Wimmer, 2015). Historical inquiry is a method for investigating, organising, and explaining past events. Then, historical events are interconnected with current movements to establish historical evidence and construct historical interpretations that can answer the research questions. The historical inquiry into walled cities in the old Arabian cities may help answer research questions related to segregation and separation caused by modern gated communities. Furthermore, historical awareness allows us to recognise behavioural patterns that have developed over time, explaining how the past affects current practices. On the contrary, historical ignorance will allow past mistakes to be repeated in the present (Esterhuizen, 2019). To conduct a historical inquiry, the process begins by identifying the area of interest, specifically the concept of walls and gated neighbourhoods in the old cities of the Arab world. Questions related to isolation and segregation in the old Arabian cities will be analysed to understand how separation and privacy did not lead to social segregation within a specific historical era.

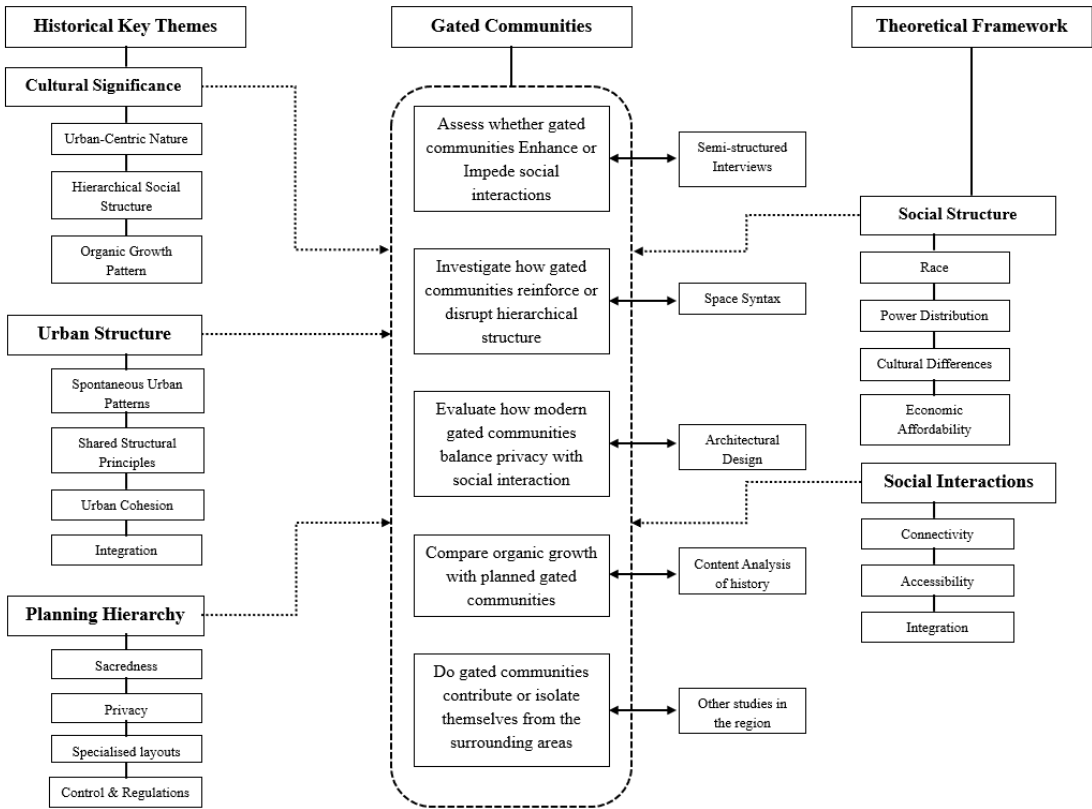
This thesis considers the qualitative form of enquiry for the design, data collection, and analysis. It employs a case study design to explore the experiences and perceptions of lived individuals regarding the social and spatial impacts of gated communities on their surroundings. Data collection includes interviews with key persons involved in the design of gated communities, as well as observations to understand personal experiences and

engagement with the phenomenon under investigation. In terms of data analysis, the research will employ a thematic data analysis method to identify patterns and themes within the dataset, and then organise, analyse, code, and describe these themes (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis can examine the ways in which realities, events, and experiences affect society, making it a constructionist method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This type of research emphasises exploring a problem or phenomenon that is not well understood; it is also conducted to identify patterns and develop hypotheses rather than providing a final, conclusive answer (Cresswell, 2013). Moreover, this type of research design is flexible and adaptable throughout the study and according to the emergence of new information or evidence, which can help in understanding the context and background of the problem; the form of data collection in this type of research is open-ended inquiries, which are less structured and can be useful in gathering a wide range of variables and information; data collection is open-ended such as semi-structured interviews with expert individuals who are knowledgeable about the topic; and the sample size can be relatively small which seeks to develop hypotheses rather than testing them (Yin, 2009). This type of design aligns well with the aims and objectives of this thesis, which are to study and investigate the poorly understood phenomenon of gated communities.

Therefore, since this research aims to examine the social and spatial influences that gated communities may have on their surrounding neighbourhoods, the assumption concluded from the literature review is that there might be a relationship between gated communities and segregation and separation. The thesis challenges this assumption and seeks to explore the relationship between gated communities and their surroundings by examining social structure and social interactions, as developed in the theoretical framework presented in Chapter Three of this thesis. Social structure refers to the spatial arrangements and social practices, including race, power distribution, and cultural and economic differences, within the built environment. In contrast, social interactions encompass connectivity, accessibility, and integration. Moreover, the historical inquiry reveals patterns of social interactions and interrelationships between urban planning, social norms, and religious values in traditional Arabian cities. These cities foster social interactions and community engagement through their organic planning, hierarchical structures, and the integration of religious and social aspects into daily life. Comparing historical insights of traditional Arabian cities with the theoretical framework will

examine whether gated communities enhance or impede social interactions and integrations. Furthermore, the comparison will contextualise the development of gated communities and test the assumptions derived from the theoretical framework, including those related to social structure and interactions. Three key themes emerged from the historical inquiry, selected based on knowledge of gated communities in the Middle East, in general and in Jordan in particular, as well as findings from the reviewed literature. The comparison of key themes from historical and theoretical data will reveal whether gated communities are associated with the theoretical aspects of segregation and separation or with their historical background of integration and cohesion, as illustrated in **Figure 4-2**. The key themes are 1) Cultural significance, 2) urban structure, and 3) planning hierarchy.

Figure 4-2 Key Themes and Theories



Source: Researcher

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for qualitative research can be categorised into four groups as described by Cresswell (2013, p. 158): Observations (gathering of field notes from different

perspectives), interviews (conducting unstructured, open-ended interviews), documents (different sorts of documents ranging from letters, memos, photos, and others), and audio-video materials (other types of data such as videotapes, websites, emails, or films).

However, Yin (2009) identifies six different forms of data gathering: documents, records, interviews, observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts. To support the study's aims and objectives, a combination of data collection methods was adopted, including expert participants from the Architecture and urban design fields, who could share their professional opinions on a particular practice in their fields. Semi-structured interviews with academics were conducted to gather insights into the theoretical aspects of this phenomenon and its historical boundaries. Observations in the fieldwork, including active observation, informal interviews with neighbours, and field notes, can enhance understanding of a phenomenon in its natural setting. As described by Wang and Groat (2013, pp. 6, 67), architectural research results from trial-and-error experiments and systematic observations, where observations represent the subjective scheme of inquiry. One additional tactic explained by Wang and Groat is acute observation, which is related to "*systematic, detailed measurements of historic buildings, used in concert with documentary material, to produce narrative sentences having analytical power*". Since this research employs historical inquiry to explore themes and attributes of old Arabian cities, particularly walled cities and gated neighbourhoods, careful observation serves as a valuable method for identifying cultural processes that were actively practised.

Semi-Structured Interviews

As described by Alvesson (2023), interviews are the "*bread and butter*" of qualitative research as they generate data from people who are engaged and well-experienced in a study. Questions form a dialogue between the researcher and several participants, guided by flexible protocols with follow-up questions. This method can assist the researcher in collecting data by exploring participants' thoughts and beliefs about a specific topic (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This research employs semi-structured interviews as its data collection method, with several fundamental questions that allow both the interviewer and interviewee to delve deeper, aiming to explore or elaborate on an idea. Gill et al. (2008) explain that questions can yield information about a phenomenon and address the aims and objectives of the research. Interviews were conducted with three

groups: Academics, Professionals, and authority-related interviewees. Open-ended questions were asked to elicit more than a yes-or-no response and to gain insight into their personal experiences in gated communities. Interviewees were based in different countries, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Australia. This method is employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Kallio et al., 2016). Such a method will facilitate discussions between the researcher and participants on their experiences in different geographical locations (Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001). Social impact will focus on the interactions and relationships between individuals and communities within a given context. In contrast, spatial impact will discuss access to public amenities and their disruption, the fragmentation of the urban landscape, and the displacement of existing residents, which may disrupt the social fabric.

Participant Recruitment and Sample Size

Semi-structured interviews typically involve in-depth questions that participants answer in open-ended responses. These interviews can be conducted with either an individual or a group (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These interviews typically last 30 minutes to one hour and are complemented by follow-up questions, comments, discussions, and probes. Interviews can be conducted with as few as 8–12 participants, allowing the researcher to collect open-ended data to explore participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Participants were recruited through the researcher's professional network, using email invitations that outlined the study's purpose and participation details. This purposive sampling strategy targeted experts in architecture, urban design, and planning who had direct experience with or insight into gated communities across the Middle East. A total of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals based in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Australia (the Australian participant has extensive experience in the Middle East and Asia, including Hong Kong). The expert panel ($n = 10$) was composed of urban planners, architects, and academics with 10–25 years of professional experience. The expert sample was intentionally structured to reflect variation in professional background, years of experience, and geographic exposure, enabling a balanced interpretation of gated communities from planning, design, academic, and regulatory perspectives, as shown in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1 Summary of Interview Participant Profiles

Participant Code	Professional Background	Sector	Years of Experience	Country of Practice
P1	Academic (Urban Studies)	Public	15-20	Jordan
P2	Architect / Planner	Public	10-15	Jordan
P3	Architect / Planner	Private	15-20	Saudi Arabia
P4	Academic (Urban Studies)	Public	20+	Jordan
P5	Academic (Urban Studies)	Public	20+	Jordan
P6	Academic (Urban Studies)	Public	20+	Jordan
P7	Architect / Planner	Private	10-15	Jordan
P8	Architect / Planner	Private	15-20	United Arab Emirates
P9	Architect / Planner	Private	20+	United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong
P10	Architect / Regulatory	Public	15-20	Egypt

Source: Researcher

The focus on expert perspectives reflects the study's aim: to assess socio-spatial impacts at the urban scale, complementing rather than duplicating existing resident-focused studies. This expert-driven selection enabled access to a range of perspectives from both regional and international contexts. The sample size was sufficient to reach thematic saturation, as no new substantial themes emerged beyond the tenth interview, consistent with established qualitative research guidelines (Guest et al., 2006). Participants were selected based on availability, willingness to be interviewed, and experience and knowledge about the topic. Therefore, academic professionals in the fields of architecture and master planning were interviewed to share their perspectives on the gated community phenomenon, its impact on surrounding areas, and the design criteria considered in developing such projects. This approach was adopted because the findings from several studies and articles in the Middle East are often limited in scope. Some focus on a specific type of gated community catering to expatriates living temporarily in the GCC, as noted by Salim (2021). Others use a single-case questionnaire to gather residents' feedback and motives for moving to and living in gated communities.

Observation

As a key tool in qualitative research, observation, as described by Cresswell (2013), involves noticing a phenomenon in its natural setting in accordance with the research questions and objectives. There are multiple types of observational engagement, including the complete participant, where the researcher is fully engaged with the people being observed. This approach can help establish a strong connection with them. The other type involves the researcher acting as an observer and participating in the activity

at the site. Several steps can be deployed during observation to collect data. These steps can start with site selection, identifying what and who to observe, and designing a method of observation, such as field notes or recording. The next step is to withdraw and prepare a complete set of notes with a detailed description of the events being observed. Wang and Groat (2013, p. 284) explain that even the simplest observational tactics, such as counting the number of visitors or pedestrians passing through an area, can yield powerful insights into the human ecology of the observed setting. Observations and site analysis were conducted to gather data and information related to case studies in Jordan, including photographs of the surrounding areas, design layouts, and physical characteristics, in addition to community social dynamics such as the level of interaction between residents and neighbouring residents, and the use of shared spaces (if available) (Blakely & Snyder, 1997b).

Data gathering and statistical demographics were collected from the Department of Land and Survey in Jordan (online), which will include the following data:

- Site plan map
- Parcels and plots for the site area and the surrounding area
- Land use plan
- Google Earth aerial plans
- List of the surrounding key developments (if available)

Secondary data

Qualitative secondary data, as explained by Irwin (2013, p. 295), refers to the use of existing or published data to develop a new understanding of a specific social, scientific, or mathematical topic. This method is employed to explore new research questions, generate fresh insights, access previously hard-to-reach populations, or conduct historical and theoretical analyses relevant to the study. Furthermore, Johnston (2014) noted that secondary data can provide a practical alternative to data collected by other researchers for a different purpose, especially when time and resources are limited. Reviewing existing secondary data and prior studies on gated communities, both across the Middle East and specifically in Jordan, helps position this research by identifying what is already known and highlighting critical gaps that require further investigation. In addition, secondary data can demonstrate previously collected data on a topic, as they may exist in previously published documents and can be utilised to address the research question. For

example, several articles have been published on gated communities in the Middle East, providing empirical data from related studies (Hammad, Mengbi, et al., 2025). Traditional resources, including reports, scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed journals, university studies, and government documents, were reviewed to extract data related to additional case studies from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain. However, for the Jordan case studies, an additional non-traditional source was included: social media, which is popular in Jordan, as highlighted by Altarawneh (2017, p. 110). Furthermore, the research follows explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria for evaluating studies related to the social and spatial impact of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods in the pre-defined cases (Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain):

Inclusion criteria:

- Studies that focus on gated communities and their impact on the surrounding area.
- Studies that analyse both social and spatial impact, which will include **a)** social segregation and exclusion of non-gated community residents, **b)** changes in the social cohesion and community identity, **c)** perception of safety and security among residents, **d)** changes in the availability and accessibility of public spaces, **e)** impact on the property values and housing affordability in the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Studies that consider the perspectives and experiences of both residents and non-residents of gated communities.

Exclusion criteria:

- Studies that do not focus specifically on social and spatial impacts on the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Studies that only consider the perspective and experiences of residents of gated communities without considering the views of non-residents in the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Studies that only examine the impact of gated communities on a narrow range of outcomes, such as property value, without considering other social and spatial impacts.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The approach to data analysis used in this research was flexible and shaped by the interests of the research development and the data collected. The analytical strategy followed a hybrid coding approach across three sequential stages. Stage one employed deductive content analysis of historical sources, guided by concepts derived from the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3. The outcomes of this stage informed stage two by providing sensitising concepts for analysis. Stage two applied thematic analysis to expert interview data, refining themes inductively while remaining aligned with the research questions. Stage three involved cross-case synthesis and triangulation, integrating interview findings with spatial and case study evidence. Together, these stages ensure analytical continuity between historical context, expert perspectives, and empirical case study findings. The thesis followed three stages of data analysis:

Stage one: Content analysis of the historical data related to gated neighbourhoods, social inclusion, and community integration. Weber (1990) identifies content analysis as a method that reduces material to make it more manageable and relevant, for example, by reviewing historical documents on gated neighbourhoods and walled cities in old Arabian cities to identify concepts such as privacy, social interaction, social cohesion, and community engagement. Krippendorff (1989) describes content analysis as an objective and systematic approach for analysing documents and improving understanding of phenomena. In this thesis, historical material is analysed using content analysis rather than thematic analysis or conceptual history, with categories derived from the theoretical framework to identify recurring socio-spatial concepts such as privacy, cohesion, and enclosure in traditional Arabian urban forms. The main objective of content analysis is to organise textual material into smaller units of meaning, enabling replicable interpretations and an expansive description of the phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 108; Weber, 1990).

Stage two: The second stage of data analysis employed in this study is Thematic analysis, which involves identifying themes and patterns in the data to address the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, identifying themes from the theoretical framework, such as segregation and separation, allows for the identification of patterns related to the social and spatial influences of gated communities on surrounding neighbourhoods, as interview questions cannot be used as themes (Clarke & Braun,

2013). The data used in the thematic analysis are extracts from 10 semi-structured interviews with architects, planners, authority personnel, and academics in the field of design and urban planning. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and included a broad discussion on the social and spatial impacts of gated communities on their surroundings, as well as their relationship with segregation and separation. The analysis is conducted using Braun and Clarke (2006) six-phase framework, which begins with data familiarisation, generates initial codes, searches for themes, reviews themes, defines themes, and, finally, writes up, as shown in **Table 4-2**.

Table 4-2 Six-Phase Framework for Thematic Analysis

Step 1: Become familiar with the data, Step 2: Generate initial codes, Step 3: Search for themes,	Step 4: Review themes, Step 5: Define themes, Step 6: Write-up.

Source: (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3354)

Step one of the data analysis begins with becoming familiar with the data; Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p. 3355) stress the importance of reading and re-reading all transcripts and getting familiar with the data, even impressions. Below is an extract from one of the transcripts with an academic from Jordan explaining the main reason for the emergence of gated communities in Jordan, in her opinion: *“I believe that the deficiency in public parks in Amman gave the opportunity for developers to take advantage and market for fully developed communities with all facilities, especially for children...”*

Step two is coding, which is organising data and reducing it into smaller groups of meanings in a systematic and meaningful way. Coding is carried out by extracting text that is interesting or relevant to the research questions, rather than coding line by line. This method is referred to as theoretical thematic analysis, as described by Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p. 3355). Coding is implemented by sorting data from the semi-structured interview transcripts and in accordance with the themes identified in the theoretical proposition, such as the relationship between social impact, separation and segregation using NVivo® software, or to help build ‘codebooks’ (Welsh, 2002).

Step three involves searching for themes, which are patterns that reflect significant outputs from the data. As themes are categorised by their significance, as explained by Braun and Clarke (2006). By the end of this step, the codes are arranged into a broader theme that relates to the research questions.

Step four is theme review. In this step, themes identified in step three earlier are reviewed, modified, and developed to make sense in relation to the research inquiry. Themes are reviewed to ensure they are coherent, distinct from one another, and aligned with the dataset's context. Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p. 3358) identified a list of items to be checked while reviewing themes, such as:

- Are those themes sensible
- If the data supports the extracted themes
- The amount of data being fit under one theme
- Any overall relationship between the themes
- Are there any sub-themes that can be introduced
- Any missing theme from the data

Step five, which is defining themes, is the last step of refinement before the write-up. This step primarily involves organising the themes, their relationships and interactions, and attempting to understand the actual meaning and output of each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Stage three: Findings from the interviews were triangulated with case study evidence, ensuring robustness through convergence of professional perspectives and built form analysis. The comparative evaluation of Al Andalucía and Green Land followed a structured cross-case synthesis. Each case was assessed across socio-spatial dimensions, including urban form, governance, aspirations, and economic effects. Patterns of convergence and divergence were identified to illustrate similarities and differences between the two developments. The comparative evaluation employed a structured matrix approach, incorporating both within-case and cross-case analysis (Yin, 2017). Each case was first analysed individually, then systematically compared to reveal similarities and differences in integration, governance, and social outcomes. A triangulation protocol (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Flick, 2018) guided the integration of findings, ensuring that a theme was considered robust when supported by both interview data and case study

evidence. This strengthened internal validity and highlighted how professional perspectives were grounded in spatial realities.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study received ethics approval from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval code HRE23-106 was obtained, and all research was conducted in accordance with NHMRC (2023) guidelines since this study was conducted in Australia. Informed consent, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity were strictly observed, ensuring ethical compliance in all interviews and fieldwork.

4.6 CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

This section outlines some of the challenges and constraints encountered during this phase, along with the strategies adopted to mitigate them. Time can be a significant challenge in qualitative research, as argued by Cresswell (2013). Data collection, especially interviews, as the method adopted in this research, is time-consuming. Ample time and preparation were planned for the interviews, which took approximately 8 to 9 months. This was due to the challenge of getting participants to commit to the agreed-upon time and date, given their busy schedules. Another challenge was the time difference, as the interviews were conducted with participants in the Middle East, in a different time zone from Australia. To overcome this obstacle, most interviews were conducted at night (Sydney time zone) to accommodate the participants' regular working hours. The other challenge was the language barrier, as some interviews were conducted in Arabic, as the interviewees felt more comfortable and confident sharing their viewpoints and ideas in their native language. This created an obstacle in transcribing the interviews, as translating the transcript would not give the same meaning in English. The overall idea was extracted by considering the cultural and contextual meanings of words, and then translated into English to preserve the general meaning and viewpoints expressed during the interview (Maclean, 2007).

4.7 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter outlines the research methodology, presents the research questions, and describes the design approach used to examine the social and spatial impact of gated communities in Jordan, particularly in Amman. This research employs a qualitative social

constructionist paradigm, characterised by the ability to interpret phenomena through human interactions and the meanings they structure. The methodological framework is built on two key stages of data analysis: the first stage examines historical data related to the development of Arabian cities and their urban design characteristics, including gated neighbourhoods and walled cities. This provides a foundation for understanding traditional urban patterns and their evolution, preparing for the next stage of analysis: a thematic review of semi-structured interviews with professionals, authorities, and academics in architecture and urban design. The dual approach ensures a rich and contextual exploration of both historical and contemporary viewpoints on urban development and gated communities. The sampling strategy employed in this research is a combination of purposive sampling and maximum variation sampling, designed to capture a wide range of experiences and perceptions related to gated communities. This approach is practical, given the limitations of accessing highly secure gated communities in Jordan, and allows for a diverse examination of experts' opinions. The historical inquiry, as provided through content analysis, enables a deeper understanding of how gated communities can be integrated with their surroundings, building on the historical attributes of social cohesion and integration. This methodology is best suited to the research objectives, providing a robust framework for exploring the complexities of gated communities and their influences.

Chapter 5: Historical Inquiry on Gated Neighbourhoods

INTRODUCTION

The spatial and architectural structure of old Arabian cities evolved organically, influenced by social customs, religious practices, and environmental conditions. Rather than being formally planned, neighbourhoods emerged gradually in response to historical events such as trade, migration, and social change. These developments produced a cohesive yet adaptable urban fabric, exhibited by flexible boundaries, inward-oriented layouts, and a strong distinction between public and private realms. Privacy, communal living, and spatial hierarchy were central to the design of homes and neighbourhoods, fostering social cohesion and shared responsibility. This chapter examines the key spatial characteristics of traditional Arabian urbanism, including gated architecture, spatial morphology, and community-based segregation. It considers how these historical practices compare to contemporary gated communities. The investigation is grounded in a historical content analysis article published through a peer-reviewed journal, which identifies categories for interpreting socio-spatial patterns in gated neighbourhoods. By reflecting on these traditional models, the chapter assesses whether their primary principles can guide more inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches to modern residential development in the Middle East. This publication directly addresses the research sub-question examining the historical relationship between traditional Arabian neighbourhoods and contemporary gated communities. By identifying key socio-spatial principles such as privacy, community cohesion, permeability, and informal governance, the study provides a historical benchmark against which modern gated communities are evaluated in later chapters. Collectively, this contribution forms the historical foundation of the thesis, complementing the empirical and spatial analyses presented in subsequent chapters to construct a comprehensive understanding of the socio-spatial transformation of gated communities in Jordan.

This chapter includes the following paper:

- 1) “Reinterpreting Privacy and Community: Social and Spatial Transformations from Traditional Arabian Neighbourhoods to Contemporary Gated Communities”
Buildings 2025,15, 1111 (Hammad, Li, et al., 2025b)

5.1 DECLARATIONS

OFFICE FOR RESEARCH TRAINING, QUALITY AND INTEGRITY

DECLARATION OF CO-AUTHORSHIP AND CO-CONTRIBUTION: PAPERS INCORPORATED IN THESIS

This declaration is to be completed for each conjointly authored publication and placed at the beginning of the thesis chapter in which the publication appears.

1. PUBLICATION DETAILS (to be completed by the candidate)

Title of Paper/Journal/Book:	Reinterpreting Privacy and Community: Social and Spatial Transformations from Traditional Arabian Neighbourhoods to Contemporary Communities		
Surname:	Hammad	First name:	Ahmed
Institute:	Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities	Candidate's Contribution:	80
Status:			
Accepted and in press:	☐	Date:	
Published:	☒	Date:	29/03/2025

2. CANDIDATE DECLARATION

I declare that the publication above meets the requirements to be included in the thesis as outlined in the HDR Policy and related Procedures – policy.vu.edu.au.

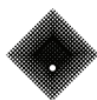
	11.08.2025
Signature	Date

3. CO-AUTHOR(S) DECLARATION

In the case of the above publication, the following authors contributed to the work as follows:

The undersigned certify that:

1. They meet criteria for authorship in that they have participated in the conception, execution or interpretation of at least that part of the publication in their field of expertise;
2. They take public responsibility for their part of the publication, except for the responsible author who accepts overall responsibility for the publication;



3. There are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
4. Potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to a) granting bodies, b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
5. The original data will be held for at least five years from the date indicated below and is stored at the following **location(s)**:

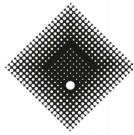
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Name(s) of Co-Author(s)	Contribution (%)	Nature of Contribution	Signature	Date
Ahmed Hammad	80	Conceived concept. Literature review. Methodology, writing manuscript		11.08.2025
Mengbi Li	15	Critical review and editing. Supervision. Final Approval		11.08.2025
Zora Vrcelj	5	Supervision. Administration		11.08.2025

Updated: September 2019

5.2 SOCIO-SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERNITY

This section presents the findings from a published study examining how privacy and community have evolved from traditional Arabian neighbourhoods to contemporary gated communities. *MDPI, Buildings 2025, 15, 1111*



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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Reinterpreting Privacy and Community: Social and Spatial Transformations from Traditional Arabian Neighbourhoods to Contemporary Gated Communities

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Article

Reinterpreting Privacy and Community: Social and Spatial Transformations from Traditional Arabian Neighbourhoods to Contemporary Gated Communities

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Abstract: Gated communities have been widely examined as a contemporary urban phenomenon, yet their emergence in the Middle East reflects broader socioeconomic and cultural transformations rather than a direct continuation of historical spatial practices. Historically, Arabian cities featured compact, human-scaled urban layouts with walled perimeters, narrow streets, and shared courtyards, fostering social cohesion, security, and communal interaction. These spatial characteristics evolved organically, balancing privacy with integration to meet communal needs. This article examines the historical evolution of enclosed neighbourhoods in Arabian cities and their sociospatial connections to modern gated communities, assessing their impact on urban sustainability. By employing historical inquiry, this study investigates how traditional principles, such as privacy, community resilience, and spatial hierarchy, have been inherited, reinterpreted, or redefined in contemporary developments. Findings indicate that historical Arabian cities reinforced internal cohesion and self-governance, whereas modern gated communities introduce deliberate spatial and social segregation, disrupting urban connectivity and weakening social sustainability. The study highlights critical implications for urban planning, suggesting that integrating historical spatial principles can create inclusive and adaptable contemporary developments.



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Keywords: enclosed neighbourhoods; gated communities; historical Arabian cities; sociospatial segregation; historical urbanism

1. Introduction

The structure of old Arabian cities and their physical layout reflect a strong emphasis on social cohesion and connection, with quarters, neighbourhoods, and communities collectively forming their urban fabric. These cities evolved organically, responding to unique historical events, such as wars, migrations, and economic transformations, contributing to their spatial flexibility and long-term resilience [1]. Unlike modern planning paradigms that rigidly divide cities into arranged zones, old Arabian cities exhibited integrated and permeable urban layouts that encouraged interaction and inclusivity. Despite various studies on traditional Arabian urbanism and modern gated communities, a gap remains in linking historical spatial practices with contemporary urban forms [2]. This study addresses this gap by examining how historical principles of privacy, security, and spatial hierarchy have been reinterpreted in modern gated communities.

Abed, et al. [3] note that discussions on sustainability often focus on environmental and economic aspects, while social dimensions, such as community integration, livability,

and accessibility, remain underexplored. Social sustainability ensures that urban development supports affordable housing, well-planned neighbourhoods, and inclusive social engagement [4]. Bramley, et al. [5] define social sustainability as enhancing well-being and reducing fear by reinforcing relationships in shared spaces [6]. However, the spread of gated communities in the Middle East raises critical questions: Do they recreate the sociospatial cohesion of historic urban forms, or do they exacerbate segregation by restricting access and interaction?

Despite regional variations in urban patterns, Arabian cities share a common morphological and spatial identity due to their shared social, climatic, religious, and geographic factors [7]. Settlement patterns were heavily influenced by the availability of natural resources, trade routes, and religious significance, with religion performing a central role in structuring urban life and spatial organisation. The influence of daily life extended beyond architectural styles to include shared cultural practices, such as community gatherings centred around daily prayers. These practices enhanced communal engagement and contributed to economic activity, as markets often surrounded mosques [8]. To balance privacy and collective belonging, urban structures featured inward-facing houses, central courtyards, and narrow alleyways, elements which will be critically examined later in this study for their relevance to modern gated communities [9]. Historically, enclosed neighbourhoods enhanced both security and social interaction within internal networks. For example, Basra, built in 660 AD, featured early gated architecture designed for protection and social organisation. Similar layouts influenced cities like Baghdad and Fustat, with traces of these structures persisting today [10]. However, historical walled cities regulated access while maintaining urban permeability, whereas modern gated communities prioritise exclusivity over connectivity. This contrast raises essential questions about their social sustainability: Do they foster self-sufficient, cohesive environments or contribute to urban discontinuity and socioeconomic segregation?

This study conducts a historical inquiry into Arabian gated neighbourhoods to extract attributes related to social cohesion and integration. By analysing the evolution of enclosure, gating, and spatial separation, it assesses whether modern gated communities represent a continuation, reinterpretation, or departure from historical models [11].

2. Literature Review

Historical Arabian cities were profoundly influenced by religious life and social institutions, which served as key nodes embedded in the urban fabric, shaping the spatial configuration and defining their architectural identity [8]. Gates and walls historically demarcated the urban landscape in Arabian cities, similar to other cultures, such as in China, where spatial enclosures represent security, order, and governance [12]. The prevalence of such gated urban forms in pre-modern cities was a universal phenomenon, symbolising security, order, and social hierarchy [13]. The historical pattern suggests that enclosed urban settlements were not unique to Arabian cities but rather a widespread urban response to security and social arrangement. Li and Xie [14] argue that early Chinese neighbourhoods were often enclosed by boundaries, suggesting a historical precedent for the gated community concept. Similarly, Huang [15] highlights that modern gated communities in China could be seen as an evolution of these enclosed urban colonies, which are rooted in long-standing cultural and spatial traditions. These historical features have evolved into controlled residential environments that regulate access based on social and economic factors, raising questions about continuity and transformation in urban design.

The theory of urban morphology, as suggested by Kropf [16], provides a framework for understanding how historical spatial forms persist or transform in contemporary developments. This theoretical perspective enables a comparative analysis of the organic

street patterns of old Arabian cities and the rigid spatial segregation of modern gated communities. From a social sustainability perspective, examining historical urban enclosures helps understand whether these spatial patterns contribute to long-term community resilience or reinforce exclusionary practices in modern contexts. By tracing the evolution from traditional to contemporary urban forms, this study seeks to uncover the sociospatial implications of these transformations [17].

2.1. Physical Characteristics

In Arabian cities, houses were historically protected by walls and gates that served as physical barriers for social regulation, establishing a structured transition between public and private spaces [8]. This spatial configuration ensured a balance between security and accessibility, fostering both privacy and community interaction. Traditional enclosed settlements allowed for permeability through semi-private streets and shared spaces, fostering interaction among residents. For example, the narrow, winding streets of historic Cairo or the Fez exemplify how traditional urban design integrated public and private realms. However, modern gated communities adopt rigid spatial enclosures that strictly regulate access, reinforcing exclusivity. These physical transformations mark a transition from historical urban models, where enclosures were integral to organic city growth, to contemporary layouts dictated by private development interests. Gated communities often feature controlled entry points, private amenities, and internal governance systems that differentiate them from traditional neighbourhoods. Unlike the organically integrated fabric of historic Arabian cities, where commercial, residential, and religious spaces coexisted, modern gated developments create defined internal zones with minimal interaction with surrounding urban environments [18].

2.2. Economic Aspect

Economic factors play a crucial role in influencing the development and expansion of gated communities. Historically, enclosed urban settlements evolved due to communal needs for protection and resource management rather than economic exclusivity [19]. In contrast, contemporary gated communities are largely market-driven developments that cater to specific income groups, reinforcing socioeconomic stratification [20]. For example, in the Gulf cities, the proliferation of gated communities is closely tied to real estate speculation and foreign investment, creating enclaves for high-income residents [21].

Studies highlight how privatisation and real estate speculation influence the proliferation of gated communities, particularly in Middle Eastern cities [22–25]. Unlike historical enclosures, which facilitated organic social structures, modern gated developments operate as exclusive, commodified spaces that cater to high-income residents, often at the expense of broader urban accessibility [26]. The financial models behind these communities prioritise return on investment, influencing the spatial and infrastructural layout of developments. This economic exclusivity challenges social sustainability by limiting affordability and inclusivity in urban housing markets. For instance, the emphasis on luxury amenities and security features in gated communities often excludes middle- and lower-income groups, exacerbating urban inequality [27].

2.3. Social Aspects: Segregation vs. Integration

Gated communities have been widely debated for their impact on social sustainability. Some scholars argue that their enclosed nature fosters strong internal social bonds by bringing together residents of similar economic status and shared interests [28–30]. Their physical designs, controlled access, shared amenities, and internal governance reinforce localised social cohesion, reflecting historical urban principles of community-centric planning. For example, residents of gated communities often report a sense of security and

belonging, which can enhance their quality of life. Conversely, other scholars critique the exclusionary nature of gated communities, arguing that they reinforce sociospatial fragmentation by restricting access to public resources and limiting social interactions beyond their boundaries [31–33]. Unlike historical Arabian cities, which integrated public, commercial, and residential spaces to foster inclusivity, modern gated communities prioritise exclusivity, often weakening urban connectivity and perpetuating socioeconomic segregation [1,18]. The separation of these developments from surrounding neighbourhoods creates physical and social barriers, limiting opportunities for broader urban integration.

Studies in Egypt [22], Qatar [23], and Bahrain [24] examine how gated communities influence social interaction, livability, and public space accessibility. These studies suggest that modern gated developments in Arabian cities diverge from traditional enclosed quarters, as they emphasise exclusivity and privatisation rather than organic social cohesion. This transformation raises concerns about whether modern gating fosters inclusive urbanism or exacerbates segregation [34,35]. Sociospatial segregation theory further interprets how gated communities reinforce urban divisions by creating areas of economic homogeneity, limiting long-term urban integration [36,37]. Historically, Arabian cities managed social distinctions through organic urban growth, allowing different social and ethnic groups to live together while maintaining distinct quarters. However, gated communities introduced rigid spatial separations that encourage exclusivity rather than fostering social integration. Unceta, Hausleitner and Dąbrowski [36] explain that traditional strategies for addressing urban segregation, such as land formalisation policies, often fail to mitigate sociospatial disparities. Instead, alternative urban planning solutions that acknowledge local spatial traditions may be more effective in balancing integration and exclusivity. This perspective challenges the reliance on Western planning models, which often disregard cultural urban forms [7].

2.4. Cultural Aspect: Continuity and Transformation

Cultural traditions have historically influenced the spatial organisation of Arabian cities. Glasze [18] identified two key reasons that contributed to social segregation in the Arab world: (a) the use of courtyards as an extension of private, sacred spaces, and (b) the defensive role of courtyards against intrusions, as explained by Abu-Lughod [38]. Glasze [18] further argues that contemporary gated communities in the Arab world, particularly in Saudi Arabia, represent a combination of traditional principles of privacy and sacredness with Western-inspired gated housing. However, Touman [39] argues that gated communities in Saudi Arabia cannot be considered an urban solution, as they primarily cater to temporary elite residents and fail to address broader urban challenges. Similarly, Giddings, et al. [40] argue that gated communities in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCC) are predominantly an imported concept from the United States, fundamentally contradicting regional housing traditions. Unlike traditional Arabian neighbourhoods, where communal spaces such as mosques and markets facilitated integration, modern gated communities often introduce artificial exclusivity by restricting access, reinforcing patterns of sociospatial division [41]. This transformation from functional enclosures to market-driven and exclusive products raises critical questions about sociospatial continuity between historical and modern urban forms. While some elements of historical enclosure persist, the transformation from permeability to exclusivity advocates a departure from traditional urban inclusivity, potentially weakening communal bonds in the social fabric. Specifically, does the reinterpretation of traditional enclosed spaces within gated developments support cultural continuity, or does it undermine historical urban inclusivity?

Building on this discussion, Alkan Bala [42] explored the similarities between gated communities and the traditional concept of cul-de-sac in Turkish urban culture. Using

a comparative methodology and case studies, Bala examined the privatisation of public space and its implications for social fragmentation. The study highlights that traditional cul-de-sacs were extensions of communal life, whereas modern gated communities redefine them as a tool that exacerbates social segregation. However, while Bala's study provides valuable insights into the spatial characteristics of gated communities, it does not explore the broader implications for community cohesion, social integration, and the impact of these design features on residents' daily lives. This gap in the literature highlights the need for empirical research on how residents perceive and experience cultural continuity in gated communities, particularly in the Arabian context.

Urban morphology, as explored by Krier [43], provides a critical examination of spatial evolution by recognising the historical heritage and past experiences of enclosed neighbourhoods. Tracing the transformation from historical Arabian quarters to modern gated communities allows for an in-depth understanding of urban continuity and discontinuity. Kropf [16] further emphasises that historic mapping and spatial analysis are essential tools for understanding how past urban patterns influence contemporary city planning. By reconstructing abandoned heritage, urban designers can ensure continuity in urban identity while addressing contemporary sociospatial needs [44]. This perspective is particularly relevant to the study of gated communities, as their spatial structures, access controls, and sociospatial hierarchies may reflect historical precedents or diverge due to social or economic factors.

While empirical data from resident interviews related to cultural identity in the Arab cities' gated communities were not part of this study, existing theoretical and comparative studies offer valuable insights. For example, Elsheshtawy [21] argues that rapid urbanisation in Gulf cities prioritises globalised architectural styles over local cultural heritage, weakening communal principles. This suggests that gated communities, while preserving privacy, often weaken cultural continuity by eroding the communal principles of traditional neighbourhoods. Similarly, Le Goix [45] highlights that gated communities globally reinforce socioeconomic divisions, weakening social cohesion. In the Arabian context, the absence of communal spaces like mosques and markets limits social interaction related to traditional urban life [21]. Furthermore, Bagaeen and Uduku [46] emphasise that gated communities often cater to transnational elites, creating a disconnect from local cultural practices. While gated communities reinterpret traditional principles of privacy and enclosure, their emphasis on exclusivity often weakens the communal and inclusive nature of traditional urban spaces, weakening cultural continuity.

2.5. Conclusion and Gaps in the Literature

The evolution of residential enclosures in Middle Eastern cities, from traditional Arabian neighbourhoods to contemporary gated communities, raises fundamental questions about the influence of inherited spatial structures on privacy, accessibility, and social cohesion. Historically, Arabian neighbourhoods were structured around gradual transitions between public and private space, fostering both community interaction and controlled access. In contrast, modern gated communities introduce rigid physical boundaries that redefine the balance between privacy and communal life. This often results in new patterns of exclusion and urban fragmentation that contrast with historical urban inclusivity.

The historical analysis of gated neighbourhoods in old Arabian cities examines the relationship between culture and social life influenced by religious factors that influenced their organic patterns. The sociospatial fragmentation, associated with the notion of privacy and sacredness, is seen as the defining characteristic of these historical neighbourhoods, which aids in understanding their deep-rooted meanings. However, gaps exist in the literature on a deeper exploration of whether contemporary gated communities in the

Middle East replicate or depart from these historical and social behaviours [24]. While previous research has examined the sociospatial evolution of gated communities in the region [18,40], limited scholarly engagement exists in relation to the historical continuity between traditional Arabian neighbourhoods and modern enclosed communities. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring historical attributes, such as community cohesion, privacy, fragmentation, and organic fabric. Building on these diverse perspectives, this study seeks to assess how modern gated communities reinterpret or diverge from traditional urban principles.

3. Contextualising Historical Neighbourhoods

Historically, quarters have served as the core spatial unit of Arabian urbanism, functioning as self-contained residential zones influenced by sociocultural and religious values [8,47]. These quarters were typically inhabited by residents sharing similar ethnicities, professions, or social backgrounds, leading to cohesive yet spatially fragmented urban patterns [48,49]. Their organic development resulted in walled enclosures, narrow streets, and controlled access points, fostering strong internal social connections while limiting access to other parts of the city [47]. In contrast to modern gated communities, which are explicitly designed for exclusivity, these traditional quarters evolved naturally as part of a broader, interconnected urban system.

This study examines historical urban patterns in cities such as Damascus, Aleppo, Tunis, Fes, Cairo, and Rabat, alongside modern gated communities like The Kingdom in Riyadh and Dar Al Salam in Qatar. By analysing the spatial characteristics of these historical and contemporary urban forms, the study highlights the sociospatial continuities and critical divergences between enclosed neighbourhoods of the past and present.

3.1. Historical Case Studies: Traditional Arabian Quarters

As shown in Figure 1, maps of Damascus, Aleppo, Tunisia, and Fes illustrate irregular and organically developed street networks with varied spatial configurations based on topography, culture, and governance structures.

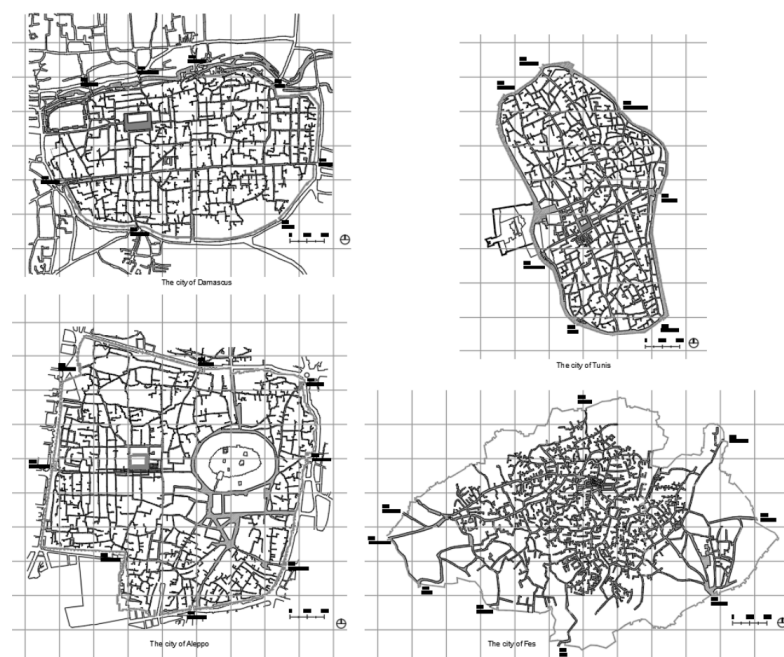


Figure 1. Arabian Cities, Damascus, Tunis, Aleppo, and Fes. Source: [47].

At the micro level, the concept of cul-de-sacs played a crucial role in structuring residential spaces, using dead-end streets to regulate access and define social interactions. These cul-de-sacs transitioned from public spaces into private areas, creating semi-private zones predominantly occupied by extended family members. This arrangement reinforced safety, privacy, and community cohesion, as illustrated in Figure 2 [42].

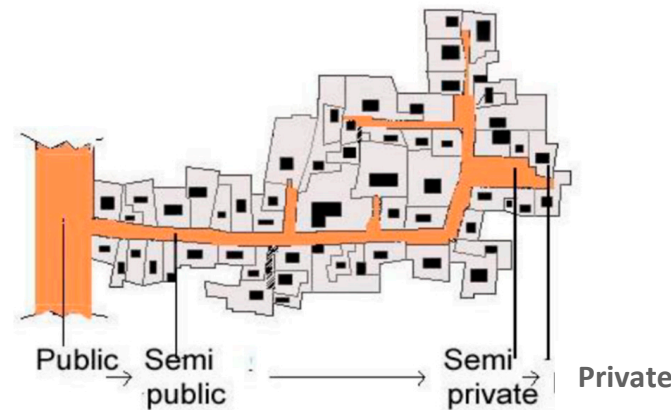


Figure 2. The hierarchy of quarters to cul-de-sacs. Source: [42].

The hierarchal structure of traditional Arabian quarters offered several benefits, such as crime reduction, traffic control, and the formation of safe zones for children. While modern planning regulations may challenge such configurations, their effectiveness in enhancing community interaction supports the argument that certain historical urban principles remain relevant today. The transition from public to private zones through street hierarchies and cul-de-sacs supports the idea of modern gated communities by controlling public streets through gates to manage access and ensure security [8,50].

As illustrated in Figure 3, the spatial integration of public spaces such as mosques and markets played a critical role in facilitating social engagement within historical quarters. This integration highlights the functional role of controlled access and cohesive spatial arrangements in enhancing safety and community interaction [42,47].

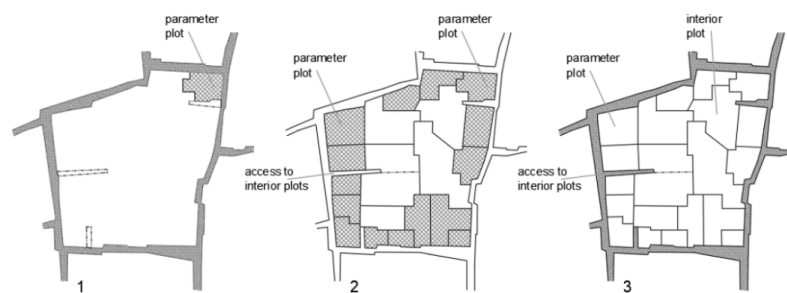


Figure 3. Arrangement of quarters. 1—A single house is erected parallel to the streets; 2—a row of houses follows the turning streets, leaving the middle of the area for public; 3—houses are erected in the public area plot forming a Cul-De-Sac as an access system. Source: [47].

Furthermore, historical Arabian cities adapted to environmental, social, and religious factors by developing compact urban layouts [51], walled perimeters, narrow streets, and shared courtyards. Their organic designs responded to climate conditions while prioritising human-scale interaction, privacy, and social functionality, as seen in Cairo, Rabat, and Damascus (Figures 4–6).



Figure 4. The urban form of the city of Damascus. Source: [52].



Figure 5. The urban form of the city of Cairo. Source: [52].



Figure 6. The urban form of the city of Rabat. Source: [52].

Tribal traditions and local governance further reinforced the self-sufficient nature of these neighbourhoods. As argued by Salama [2], land use and spatial planning were often managed at the community level, with tribal leaders or local authorities regulating construction and public spaces. Unlike modern gated communities, where private developers or homeowner associations often dictate urban governance, traditional quarters allowed for transformative spatial growth while maintaining a balance between privacy and communal life. Moreover, historical Arabian urbanism maintained a balance between social integration and spatial cohesion, whereas gated communities often reinforced segregation through physical barriers and restricted access. As illustrated in Figure 7, religious values influenced building heights, entrance orientations, and gender-based spatial arrangements. Such design principles prioritised privacy and maintained external connectivity, a feature that is often missing in contemporary gated communities.

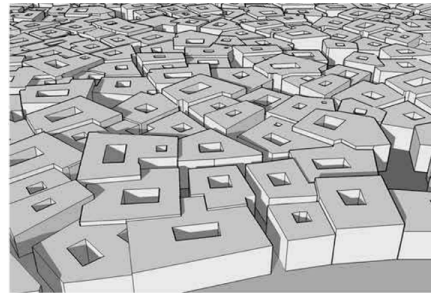


Figure 7. Typical prototype of old Arabian settlement. Source: [2].

Additionally, place identity, as described by Mohamed [53], reflects the relationship between physical characteristics and social structures. While historic cities promoted integration through shared courtyards and interconnected street networks, modern gated communities exhibit deliberate spatial isolation. Architectural features such as courtyards, shaded streets, and compact building arrangements facilitated climate adaptation, privacy, and social engagement, as shown in Figure 8. Conversely, the design of contemporary gated communities often prioritises private over shared spaces, reinforcing spatial discontinuity with the surrounding city.



Figure 8. Compacted urban of the old Arabian city. The red line indicates the Khedivate of Cairo. Source: [53].

3.2. Contemporary Case Studies: Modern Gated Communities

While historical Arabian quarters evolved as part of integrated urban systems, contemporary gated communities introduce deliberate physical separations and rigid access control. To better assess the spatial parallels and distinctions between historical quarters and contemporary gated communities, Figures 9 and 10 illustrate common urban patterns in selected modern gated communities [1]. This study examines two prominent examples:

- (a) The Kingdom, Riyadh (Saudi Arabia): A high-end gated development designed for expatriates and affluent residents, featuring enclosed perimeters, security-controlled entrances, and private recreational spaces.
- (b) Dar Al Salam, Qatar: A luxury gated community with a controlled entrance and exclusive residential zoning, illustrating contemporary urban enclosure in the Gulf.



Figure 9. The Kingdom gated community. Source: [54].

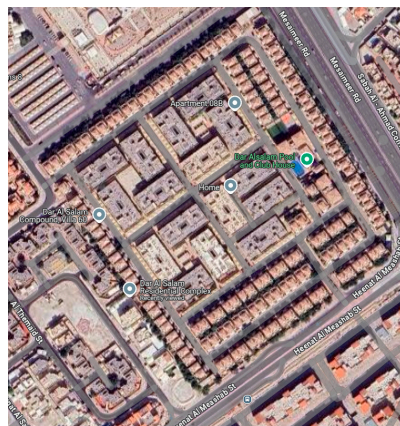


Figure 10. Dar Al Salam gated community. Source: [55].

While both historical quarters and modern gated communities incorporate spatial separation, their fundamental urban logic differ significantly:

- Governance and Accessibility

Traditional quarters evolved within broader urban structures, fostering internal cohesion while retaining integration with the city [34]. In contrast, modern gated communities impose strict boundaries, often restricting connectivity through private governance models.

- Public vs. Private Spaces

Arabian quarters featured shared public spaces, semi-private alleys, and communal courtyards that facilitated interaction. Modern gated communities, however, tend to prioritise private amenities, such as pools, golf courses, and exclusive parks, over shared public spaces, reinforcing exclusivity.

- Security and Social Control

Traditional quarters are self-regulated through social ties, religious principles, and communal administration. By contrast, gated communities rely on surveillance, security personnel, and controlled access technologies to maintain exclusivity.

The transition from historical Arabian quarters to contemporary gated communities raises key questions about the sustainability of enclosed urbanism in the Middle East. While historical walled neighbourhoods evolved organically within larger cities, modern gated communities introduce rigid separations that often challenge broader urban connectivity.

By examining the spatial principles of old Arabian cities, this study identifies key historical attributes that could inform more inclusive and adaptive models for modern gated communities. Rather than reinforcing urban discontinuity, gated developments can be

designed to incorporate elements of historical Arabian urbanism, such as open courtyards, semi-private zones, and shared public amenities, without isolating residents from the broader urban fabric. This section contextualises the study's historical inquiry within broader sociospatial trends, laying the foundation for the analysis of gated communities in the Middle East. The following sections will examine how historical urban patterns compare with contemporary planning models, assessing whether modern gated communities are a continuation, reinterpretation, or departure from these historical precedents.

4. Materials and Methods

The article employs a historical inquiry method, particularly suited to exploring the longitudinal characteristics of old Arabian gated neighbourhoods, aiming to extract attributes that promote social cohesion and integration. The historical investigation contextualises findings derived from an interpretive constructivist approach, connecting past urban practices with contemporary gated community trends. By integrating urban morphology theory [16] and sociospatial segregation theory [36], the study examines the evolution of spatial patterns, street networks, and land-use transformations in old Arabian cities and their reinterpretation in modern gated communities. Additionally, it provides a structured approach to understanding how historical patterns of spatial organisation, social hierarchy, and access control persist or evolve in contemporary gated communities. This methodological framework also assesses whether modern gated communities contribute to or challenge social sustainability by fostering inclusivity or reinforcing urban fragmentation.

Historical inquiry serves as a methodological tool to investigate, organise, and explain past events, providing a foundation for constructing interpretations that address the research questions [11]. As argued by Esterhuizen [56], historical ignorance will allow mistakes that happened in the past to be repeated in the present.

The literature for this study was sourced through a structured search strategy, ensuring comprehensive coverage of academic and historical materials related to gated neighbourhoods. A systematic review of published scholarly articles, books, and historical maps was conducted using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The selection criteria focused on peer-reviewed sources and authoritative texts that specifically discuss spatial organisation, privacy structures, and social interactions within both historical and modern urban forms [57]. Additionally, archival records and historical manuscripts related to Arabian cities were included to ensure an in-depth comparative analysis [53,58,59], whereas non-peer-reviewed sources were excluded to ensure reliability and academic rigour in historical interpretation. To ensure a rigorous and systematic approach, the study combines content analysis and historical inquiry, supported by a structured analytical framework.

4.1. Analytical Framework and Methodology

The study follows two stages of analytical methods; stage one will conduct a content analysis of the historical data related to gated neighbourhoods and confine the phenomena or events into defined categories to allow better interpretation [60]. The second stage will involve a historical inquiry into the old Arabian gated neighbourhoods to extract attributes related to social cohesion and integration and assess their relevance to contemporary gated communities. A coding framework was applied to categorise historical records into thematic groups, allowing for comparative analysis with contemporary gated communities [61]. Figure 11 provides a flowchart summarising the methodological process, illustrating how historical and contemporary data were analysed to address the research questions.

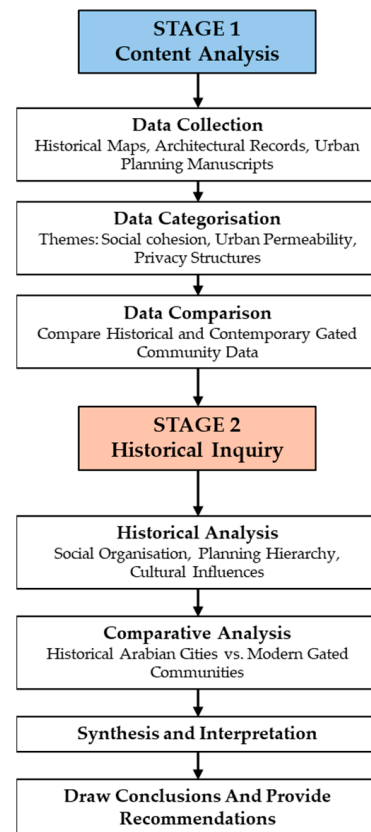


Figure 11. Flowchart of the Methodological Process. Source: Author.

4.1.1. Stage 1: Content Analysis of Historical Data

Content analysis is employed to categorise and interpret historical data on gated neighbourhoods, focusing on themes including social inclusion, community integration, and urban morphology. This method reduces complex historical material into manageable categories, enhancing interpretation and relevance [62]. For example, reviewing historical documents related to gated neighbourhoods and walled cities in Old Arabian cities and searching for themes such as privacy, social interaction, social cohesion, and community engagement. By comparing the past and present, the study evaluates whether historical spatial practices that promoted cohesion can offer insights into contemporary urban design, addressing issues of social fragmentation. The literature was evaluated based on thematic relevance, historical accuracy, and contextual applicability to the study's objectives. The inclusion criteria ensured that sources provided detailed spatial representations and analyses of historical urban forms [31,63]. The data set includes historical maps, architectural records, and urban planning manuscripts of historical Arabian urbanism published by several authors, including [8,64–66].

Data Selection Criteria

To ensure the relevance and reliability of sources, the following criteria were applied:

- Inclusion Criteria
 - Peer-reviewed scholarly articles related to spatial organisation, privacy structures, and social interactions in historical and modern urban forms.
 - Historical maps and manuscripts which provide detailed spatial representations of Arabian cities.
 - Sources explicitly addressing themes such as social cohesion, urban permeability, and privacy structures.
- Exclusion Criteria

- Sources lacking historical accuracy or contextual relevance to Arabian urbanism.
- General urban planning literature not specifically addressing gated communities or historical walled cities.

Analytical Process

The Content analysis involved:

- Identifying Units of Analysis, which may include words or themes that are categorised into defined groups.
- Systematically Reviewing Sources to identify recurring themes such as street networks, public-private space transitions, and sociospatial governance structures.
- Comparing Historical Findings: this step aims to compare historical findings with the planning of modern gated communities and their sociospatial influence to assess adaptations or transformations.

Krippendorff [67] describes content analysis as an objective and systematic way to describe and quantify a phenomenon, analyse documents, and test theoretical challenges that can improve understanding of data. Interpretation of historical records may be influenced by the availability and perspective of documented sources, necessitating a critical approach to avoid retrospective bias. Preliminary analysis revealed recurring themes such as the strategic placement of public spaces to enhance social interactions, the adaptation of urban forms to climatic conditions, and the role of hierarchical street networks in fostering connectivity and community resilience. The primary purpose of content analysis is to provide knowledge and diverse insights by creating replicable interpretations from the data set, aiming to achieve an expansive description of the investigated phenomenon [68]. The process involves selecting units of analysis, such as words or themes, to categorise historical evidence into defined groups. This enables a structured understanding of phenomena like privacy, social interaction, and community engagement, as illustrated in Figure 12, which outlines the analytical framework for content analysis [62,68].

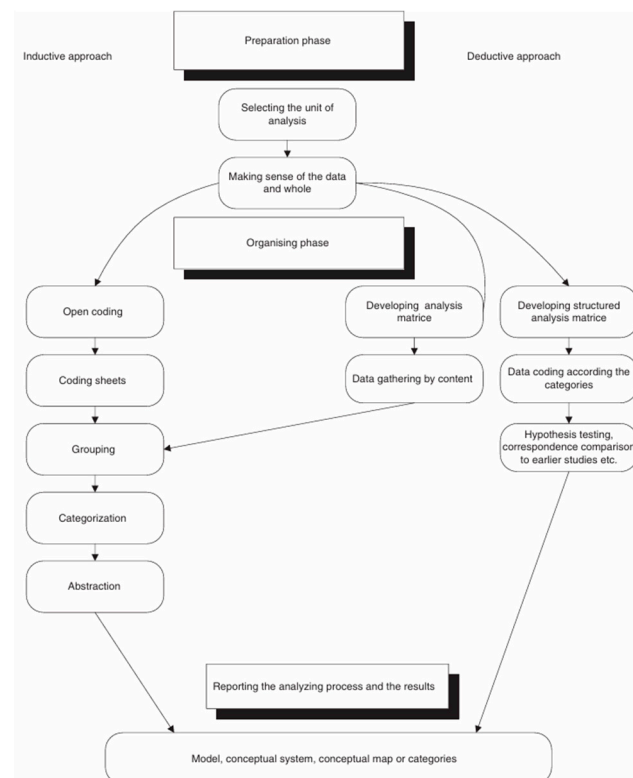


Figure 12. Content Analysis Preparation. Source: [68].

4.1.2. Stage 2: Historical Inquiry into Walled Cities

This stage involves a detailed historical inquiry into the urban structures of old Arabian cities, focusing on their gated neighbourhoods. The inquiry investigates elements such as social organisation, planning hierarchy, and cultural influences, as summarised in Figures 13 and 14 below:

- Key Themes and Concepts in Historical Urbanism

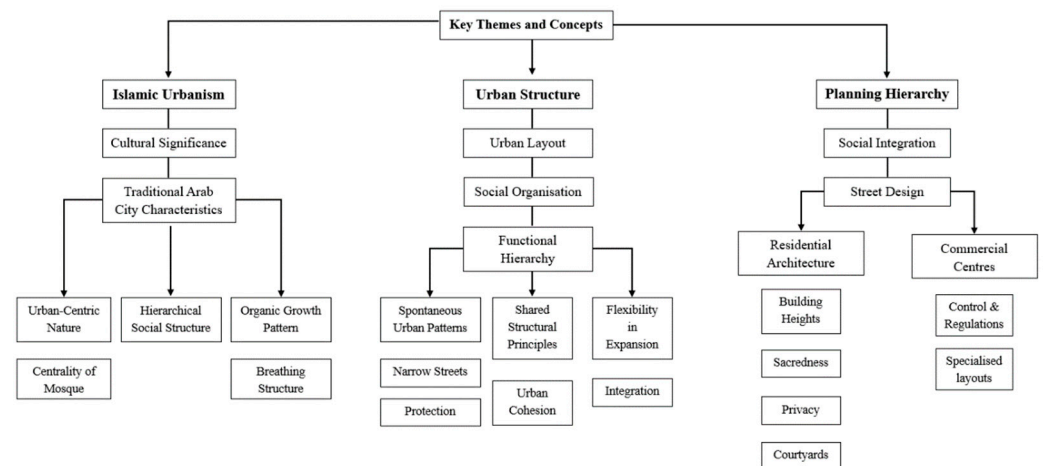


Figure 13. Historical Analysis, Key themes and concepts. Source: Author.

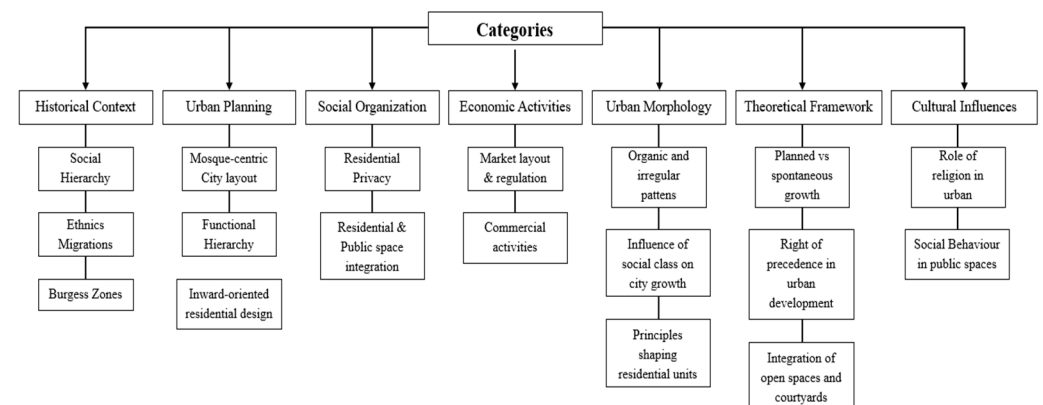


Figure 14. Categories of Historical Analysis. Source: Author.

The illustration in Figure 13 highlights the centrality of mosques, hierarchical social structures, and organic growth patterns within traditional Arabian cities. It illustrates how functional hierarchy and planning principles contributed to urban cohesion and integration. For instance, the centrality of mosques in urban layouts reinforced social and cultural cohesion and also influenced the organic growth of surrounding neighbourhoods. Hierarchical structures ensured balanced growth while allowing flexibility in expansion, a principle that facilitated integration and community resilience.

- Categories of Historical Analysis

Figure 14 categorises critical aspects of historical urbanism, including:

- Social hierarchy and its influence on urban design.
- Inward-oriented residential design and its role in maintaining privacy and communal interactions.
- Integration of public and private spaces to sustain economic and social activities.

Comparative Analysis

Through historical inquiry, the study identifies patterns of social cohesion and spatial integration, comparing historical Arabian cities with modern gated communities. Key comparisons include:

- Urban Permeability Against Restricted Access: Examining the accessibility of historical walled cities versus the exclusive nature of modern gated communities.
- Social Cohesion and Fragmentation: Analysing how historical Arabian quarters promoted community resilience and whether modern gated communities enhance or diminish social interaction.
- Privacy Structures: Assessing the evolution of privacy structures from courtyard housing in old Arabian cities to modern gated residences.

These findings highlight the importance of design principles such as centrality and integration, offering a framework for urban planners to address sociospatial segregation in contemporary gated communities by incorporating lessons from historical practices. As explained by Esterhuizen [56], historical awareness elucidates behavioural patterns that influence contemporary urban practices, preventing the repetition of past mistakes. Similarly, Jacobs [69] emphasises the value of inclusive, community-focused urban design, which can foster social cohesion and integration.

By combining historical inquiry with content analysis, this study examines how traditional spatial organisation fostered community engagement and whether modern gated communities sustain or disrupt social cohesion, inclusivity, and sustainable neighbourhood structures. Carmona [70] and Gehl [71] provide further support for the importance of human-centred design principles, such as centrality and integration, in creating more inclusive urban environments and suggesting lessons on how historical practices can foster social cohesion and integration. By clarifying the document-selection process, content analysis methodology, and evaluation framework, this study ensures a rigorous and systematic approach to investigating the spatial and social impact of gated communities within historical and contemporary contexts. This aligns with the work of Kropf [16] in understanding how spatial patterns influence social cohesion and inclusivity and emphasising the importance of urban morphology and legibility in fostering cohesive, inclusive urban environments. However, the study acknowledges limitations, including the availability and reliability of historical records, which may influence the generalisability of findings. Despite these limitations, the methodological framework provides a robust basis for addressing the research questions and offering insights that aid in mitigating segregation and enhancing community integration.

5. Results

The historical content analysis, as outlined in the methods section of this study, synthesises the sociospatial and architectural characteristics of old Arabian cities. By applying urban morphology theory (Kropf, 2009) and sociospatial segregation theory [36], this study systematically analyses how historical patterns of spatial organisation, social hierarchy, and access control have persisted or evolved in contemporary gated communities. These findings contribute to broader discussions on social sustainability by examining whether contemporary gated communities enhance or hinder social integration, accessibility, and community cohesion. The identified patterns in urban planning, such as hierarchical layouts, religious influences, and courtyards, reveal the complex relationship between cultural values and spatial planning, influencing both past and present urban configurations and impacting social sustainability. The historical content analysis establishes a foundation for understanding whether modern gated communities in the Middle East are a continuation, adaptation, or departure from historical principles. Furthermore, the analysis contextualises

gated neighbourhoods as sociospatial phenomena within the historical fabric of old Arabian cities. Findings suggest that while traditional Arabian cities facilitated social integration through spatial transitions, modern gated communities enforce rigid enclosures, leading to social fragmentation. The analysis enables a deeper examination of historical principles of privacy, security, and communal interaction and their reflection in contemporary enclosed neighbourhoods.

(Table 1) presents findings extracted from the historical content analysis, forming the basis for comparing the key features of old Arabian cities to modern gated communities in the Middle East. The thematic analysis focuses on urban characteristics such as spatial hierarchy, religious and cultural influences, architectural typologies, and sociospatial connectivity. The findings highlight that historical urban development is deeply rooted in religion and culture, shaping cities into flexible, hierarchical layouts that balance privacy and social integration. The central mosque emerges as the focal point of urban design, surrounded by markets and public buildings located along primary arteries. Residential patterns exhibit a strong emphasis on privacy, with inward-oriented units integrated seamlessly into streets and alleys. Functional and spatial organisation reflects a clear division between public and private spaces, influenced by social hierarchies, community interactions, and religious practices. Ethnic migrations have also contributed to the formation of town units that connect to urban cores. Notable features include multifunctional city structures, ecological integration, and organic growth patterns that balance public needs with residential privacy. These findings highlight how historical spatial organisation promoted social sustainability by fostering inclusivity, accessibility, and community interaction.

Table 1. Historical Content Analysis. Source: Author.

Key Themes	Relevant Information	Findings	Code Analysis
Urban Characteristics of Arabian Cities	• Influence of architecture on urban layout. • Social and spatial factors influence organic urban patterns. • Importance of hierarchy in city planning.	Theme 1: • Arabian cities are characterised by organic and hierarchical patterns. Their architecture reflects religious and cultural values.	Urban, Hierarchy, Mosque, Market, Residential, Privacy, Organic, Cultural, Public, Architecture
Social Hierarchy and Urban Development	• Social segregation: Distinct areas for ruling class and public. • Ethnic migrations forming suburban town units. • Residential expansion shaped by social class.	Theme 2: • The development of Arabian cities was shaped by social hierarchy, with ruling-class areas distinct from commoners. • Ethnic migrations influenced suburban growth.	Social, Ethnic, Migration, Class, Suburban, Hierarchical Structure
Religious and Cultural Influences	• Central mosque as city focal point. • High level of privacy in residential areas. • Islamic cultural influence on urban form.	Theme 3: • Religious and cultural practices influenced Arabian urbanism. • Mosques formed the city's focal point, with markets and public buildings surrounding them. • Privacy was central to residential design.	Religion, Privacy, Culture, Public, Social Interaction

Table 1. Cont.

Key Themes	Relevant Information	Findings	Code Analysis
Architectural Elements and Urban Layout	- Public buildings on main arteries, signifying hierarchy. - Residential units designed inwardly and integrated into alleys. - Marketplaces as central economic and social hubs. - Organic growth patterns.	Theme 4: - Arabian cities had a structured mix of public and residential spaces, with public buildings on main arteries and homes integrated into alleys. - Markets played a central role.	Public Space, Residential, Organic Growth, Market, Spatial Layout
Functional and Spatial Organization	- City structure: Central Mosque surrounded by markets. - Circulation: Main roads as spines, interconnected pathways. - Spatial segregation: Clear separation of public and private spaces. - Ecological system: Integration of residential units into urban fabric.	Theme 5: Arabian cities had a multifunctional core with interconnected pathways and clear spatial hierarchies, balancing public and private needs.	Connectivity, Public-Private, Hierarchy, Pathways, Circulation
Defensive Features of Walled Cities	- Fortifications: Walls, gates, and watchtowers for security. - Controlled access points influencing movement. - Urban compactness for defensive efficiency.	Theme 6: Arabian cities' walled nature was not just for privacy but also for security, shaping spatial layout and access.	Fortifications, Gates, Access Control, Security
Colonial Influence on Urban Form	- Colonial planning interventions altering city growth. - Spatial reconfiguration: New infrastructure and land use. - Hybrid architecture blending European and local styles.	Theme 7: Colonial rule impacted Arabian cities by introducing new planning models that modified traditional layouts.	Colonial, Planning, Transformation, Hybrid Architecture
Climatic Adaptation and Sustainable Techniques	- Passive cooling: Wind towers, courtyards, shading elements. - Street orientation: Narrow alleys for natural cooling. - Water management: Subterranean channels and fountains.	Theme 8: Arabian cities incorporated climate-responsive strategies, influencing modern sustainability discussions.	Passive Cooling, Shading, Courtyard, Water Management, Wind Tower

The idea of the content analysis is to extract and link findings from the urban characteristics of old Arabian cities with modern gated communities. Below are the major findings:

- Organic Patterns in Spatial Layouts: Organic patterns and hierarchal structures were key features in traditional Arabian cities, influenced heavily by religious and cultural imperatives.
 - Finding: Traditional Arabian cities were characterised by organic urban layouts, where streets and pathways emerged naturally in response to social, economic, and cultural needs. This adaptability reflects a highly flexible, community-centred approach to urban development that prioritises inclusivity.

- Link to Social Sustainability: Historical urban layouts facilitated social cohesion by ensuring interconnected spaces that accommodated diverse social interactions.
- Link to Gated Communities: Modern gated communities often replicate the organic aesthetics of historical cities in their internal layouts, with features including winding streets and clusters. However, these layouts are pre-planned with fixed spatial configurations that prioritise exclusivity, lacking the functional adaptability and openness of traditional cities, thus reducing opportunities for social inclusion.
- Social Hierarchy and Urban Development: The findings reveal that old Arabian cities were structured to reflect gradual social arrangements rather than imposed segregation, with spatial patterns that facilitated movement.
 - Finding: Social and religious priorities influenced the urban hierarchy, with central mosque and communal spaces serving as focal points. Residential areas were arranged to promote privacy while maintaining accessibility to shared spaces.
 - Link to Social Sustainability: The hierarchical structure of historical cities did not create rigid socioeconomic segregation but rather allowed for interaction between different social groups within shared communal spaces.
 - Link to Gated Communities: Modern gated communities reflect similar hierarchical structures in terms of exclusivity, catering to specific income groups or social classes. However, unlike traditional Arabian cities, they promote physical and social separation, isolating residents from the broader urban fabric.
- Integration of Public and Private Spaces
 - Finding: Arabian cities balanced public and private spaces through a gradual transition system rather than strict barriers. Public areas such as markets encouraged interaction, while residential spaces ensured seclusion with marginal separation.
 - Link to Social Sustainability: This balance promoted a socially sustainable environment where privacy was respected without compromising connectivity and social engagement.
 - Link to Gated Communities: Gated communities enhance privacy by implementing physical barriers and restricted access, disrupting urban continuity. This contrasts with historical patterns, where the spatial layout maintained connectivity without exclusion.
- Religious and Cultural Influences: The prominence of the central mosque as a focal point and the prioritisation of privacy in residential areas illustrate the influence of religious and cultural values on spatial arrangements.
 - Finding: The spatial hierarchy of Arabian cities was deeply influenced by religious and cultural norms, promoting inclusivity in public spaces and seclusion in private areas.
 - Link to Social Sustainability: Religious and cultural values reinforced social bonds by embedding collective gathering spaces that encouraged interaction while respecting social boundaries.
 - Link to Gated Communities: Some gated communities in the Middle East incorporate Islamic architectural themes for aesthetic purposes; however, their primary planning focus reflects Western market designs rather than the continuity of historical structures. This may imply that contemporary gated communities modify rather than inherit traditional Arabian urban principles.

- **Architectural Elements and Urban Layout:** Traditional cities featured a multifunctional mix of public and private structures, integrating houses, markets, and religious buildings within the pedestrian network.
 - Finding: Urban connectivity was a defining feature of old Arabian cities, ensuring movement and social interaction.
 - Link to Social Sustainability: This integration facilitated social sustainability by promoting inclusive, walkable communities where everyday functions were embedded within residential spaces.
 - Link to Gated Communities: Gated communities disrupt urban connectivity by enforcing spatial exclusivity. Their reliance on enclosed perimeters and restricted access contradicts the historically interconnected urban structure.
- **Defensive Features of Walled Cities:**
 - Finding: Arabian cities were fortified with walls, gates, and watchtowers for security. These defensive elements influenced urban compactness and controlled movement.
 - Link to Social Sustainability: Walled cities created a balance between security and community access, allowing controlled interactions within the city while maintaining protection from external threats.
 - Link to Gated Communities: Modern gated communities replicate this controlled access model but prioritise exclusivity rather than collective security. Unlike historical walled cities that remained interconnected, gated communities restrict movement beyond their perimeters, creating isolated enclaves.
- **Colonial Influence on Urban Form:**
 - Finding: Many Arabian cities underwent colonial interventions that altered their spatial organisation, introducing new infrastructure and hybrid architectural styles blending European and local designs.
 - Link to Social Sustainability: Colonial transformations disrupted traditional spatial patterns but also introduced modern urban planning concepts, some of which later influenced contemporary city layouts.
 - Link to Gated Communities: The Western-style planning imposed during colonial periods influenced the enclosed, exclusive nature of modern gated communities, marking a shift from traditional integrated urban models.
- **Climatic Adaptation and Sustainable Techniques:**
 - Finding: Arabian cities incorporated climatic-responsive techniques, including passive cooling systems (wind towers, courtyards, shading elements), narrow alleys for natural cooling, and water channels.
 - Link to Social Sustainability: These passive cooling strategies made urban living more sustainable and energy-efficient, enhancing comfort without relying on modern energy-intensive systems.
 - Link to Gated Communities: While some gated communities incorporate sustainability features, many lack the traditional adaptive techniques of Arabian cities, opting instead for high-energy consumption models dependent on artificial cooling.

The historical content analysis demonstrates the transition from integrated, community-driven layouts to the spatially segregated gated communities of today. While historical Arabian cities maintained a balance between privacy, accessibility, and social cohesion, modern gated communities often prioritise exclusivity and controlled access over connectivity and social integration [38,48,72]. The defensive features of old walled cities ensured protection while maintaining internal social fluidity, whereas contemporary gated com-

munities enforced physical and social isolation. Similarly, colonial planning interventions introduced spatial discontinuities that influenced the emergence of enclosed residential models, reinforcing the socioeconomic divide [21,24]. Additionally, historical Arabian cities integrated passive cooling techniques and climate-responsive designs that enhanced environmental sustainability [7,73]. In contrast, many modern gated communities rely on energy-intensive systems that overlook local climatic adaptations, further disconnecting them from the sustainable practices of historical urbanism [37].

The urban transformation raises critical questions about how contemporary urban planning can incorporate the lessons of historical Arabian cities to enhance inclusivity while maintaining privacy. By examining the historical spatial organisation of privacy through gradual transition spaces rather than strict barriers, urban planners can explore alternative models for designing residential communities that do not reinforce social division. The findings reinforce the need for culturally grounded planning approaches that merge historical sociospatial principles with modern urban needs. This analysis emphasises the broader implications of gated communities on urban fragmentation, accessibility, sustainability, and community cohesion in the Middle East by implementing sociospatial traditions in creating cohesive urban structures.

6. Discussion

This section critically examines whether modern gated communities in the Middle East represent an evolution, reinterpretation, or departure from the sociospatial principles of historical Arabian cities. It contextualises these developments within broader urban trends, such as privatisation, security concerns, and socioeconomic stratification, to assess their long-term implications for urban cohesion. Building upon the findings in the results section, this discussion explores key urban patterns, such as spatial hierarchy, privacy, and integration, to assess how modern gated communities align with or diverge from historical urbanism. The evolution of Arabian cities was shaped by gradual transformations influenced by sociopolitical, religious, and environmental factors, as explained by Abu-Lughod [38]. Unlike modern gated communities, which rely on pre-planned zoning and access restrictions, historical Arabian cities evolved organically, allowing for incremental spatial modifications that responded to social, economic, and environmental shifts. One major factor that contributed to urban transformation in Arabian cities was the influence of long periods of colonisation [21,24]. Colonial rule introduced new governance structures, imposed zoning laws, and altered urban layouts, which, in some cases, disrupted the organic development patterns of historical cities. These imposed planning regulations contrast with the adaptable and locally governed nature of traditional Arabian urbanism and are reflected in the rigid zoning of modern gated communities [37]. While historical cities had spatial divisions based on ethnicity and social background, as seen in the separation of Christian and Jewish families into distinct neighbourhoods within Arabian cities, these divisions remained functionally connected, allowing for economic and social interdependence [38]. In contrast, modern gated communities reinforce these distinctions through physical barriers and controlled access. Furthermore, property laws and regulations, such as the right of precedence and the right of vivification, established decentralised governance models that allowed for localised decision-making [7]. This approach fostered self-regulated communities where residents played a central role in spatial organisation and governance, contrasting with contemporary gated communities, where external zoning laws and homeowners' associations impose rigid spatial and social regulations. Unlike historical Arabian neighbourhoods, where spatial adaptability ensured an evolving socio-urban fabric, modern gated communities enforce rigid spatial arrangements that limit both physical and social flexibility [48].

Additionally, historical Arabian cities integrated climatic considerations into their design, employing passive cooling techniques such as narrow alleyways, inward-facing courtyards, and shading elements to mitigate the impact of the hot climate. These sustainability-driven strategies align with the broader concept of bioclimatic urbanism, which emphasises the adaptation of built environments to local climatic conditions. For example, the use of wind catchers and shaded alleyways in cities like Yazd and Jeddah demonstrates how historical urbanism prioritised environmental responsiveness, ensuring thermal comfort and energy efficiency [73]. In contrast, modern gated communities often prioritise aesthetic and luxury-driven design over environmental responsiveness, leading to increased energy dependency and reduced thermal comfort in outdoor spaces. However, it is worth noting that some contemporary developments have attempted to incorporate sustainability measures and certifications, though these efforts remain secondary to their exclusivity-driven design approach.

Key Considerations for Contemporary Planning

To develop socially cohesive and contextually responsive urban environments, it is essential to draw insights from historical Arabian cities, particularly in decentralising land-use authority and fostering organic spatial development. Although historical urban layouts reflected cultural and social distinctions, their adaptive governance models and communal integration provide critical lessons for contemporary planning. In an attempt to employ these principles, the design of modern gated communities can consider the following:

- **Ethnic and social diversity:** Encouraging a diverse resident population and offering varied housing options for different socioeconomic backgrounds to reflect the social fabric of Arabian cities. This approach aligns with the historical concept of organic growth, which accommodated a mix of residents while fostering communal harmony.
- **Spatial organisation:** Decentralising decision-making of gated community residents by empowering them to create common spaces and amenities. This can foster a sense of ownership and engagement, replicating the autonomous governance observed in historical Arabian neighbourhoods. This can be achieved by establishing a resident design committee that can be involved in design decisions.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** Incorporating cultural principles of privacy and respect for diversity, as observed in historical Arabian cities. This can be achieved through culturally appropriate recreational facilities, such as gender-specific spaces, which enhance inclusivity while respecting traditional values. For instance, gender-segregated swimming pools or communal courtyards can cater to different cultural preferences. However, several contemporary developments in the Middle East claim to integrate traditional Islamic architectural elements, but they often lack the spatial adaptability and social connectivity embedded in traditional Arabian urbanism.
- **Community engagement:** Facilitating collaboration and communication among residents by encouraging participation in town hall meetings or homeowners' associations. This approach mirrors the communal ethos of historical neighbourhoods, where residents collectively addressed shared responsibilities, including defence and social support.
- **Adaptable designs:** Creating spaces that can respond to changing demographics and community needs, such as flexible infrastructure, layouts, and amenities that serve multiple purposes. For example, a central court could function as a playground, a community garden, or a fitness area, depending on residents' preferences. This adaptability is often absent in contemporary gated developments, where strict land-use regulations and controlled access limit such multifunctionality.

Findings indicate that historical Arabian cities maintained a vibrant balance between private and communal spaces, integrating commercial, religious, and residential functions within a cohesive urban fabric. In contrast, modern gated communities enforce spatial fragmentation through rigid physical barriers, limited accessibility, and exclusive residential zoning. The transition from ethnic-based spatial arrangements in historical cities to economically driven segregation in modern gated communities highlights the transformations in urban sociospatial logic. A key point of departure from historical models is the treatment of architecture as a purely aesthetic feature rather than a socially embedded and functionally driven element. Unlike historical Arabian cities, where architecture responded to environmental, social, and economic conditions, modern gated communities often use Westernised aesthetics and luxury-driven planning, distancing them from their historical sociospatial values. This trend mirrors urban transformations observed in other regions, where contemporary housing models struggle to integrate sociocultural identity and sustainability. For instance, Herrera, Pineda, Roa, Cordero and López-Escamilla [73] examined sustainable social housing projects that attempted to balance private and communal spaces, drawing lessons that could be applicable in Middle Eastern contexts. Similarly, Núñez-Camarena, et al. [74] explored the role of memory and identity in urban regeneration, highlighting how revitalisation efforts in historical neighbourhoods can enhance social cohesion and preserve cultural narratives. These studies provide relevant insights into how modern gated communities might better integrate heritage and sustainability principles into their designs.

While modern gated communities may use some elements from historical urbanism, such as privacy and hierarchical spatial organisation, they contradict key principles. For instance, traditional Arabian cities developed organically, allowing for gradual spatial and social adaptation to the needs of their residents. In contrast, contemporary gated communities are often pre-planned and rigidly zoned, restricting spontaneous social interactions and adaptability. For example, gated communities in Saudi Arabia are considered private residences with strict access and controlled limits, reinforcing segregation between different socioeconomic layers [75]. Similarly, Bahrain's gated communities create urban fragmentation, contrasting with the historical Arabian concept of communal living, where urban quarters facilitated shared social functions [24]. Moreover, the adoption of Western architectural styles and planning models in many Middle Eastern gated communities further alienates them from traditional Arabian urbanism. The influence of global real estate markets and international investors has led to an emphasis on luxury, exclusivity, and Westernised aesthetics, distancing contemporary urban forms from the sociospatial values of historical cities [21,37].

Addressing the sociospatial challenges posed by modern gated communities requires a reconsideration of how historical Arabian urbanism can inform contemporary planning. While integrating historical urban principles, such as mixed-use zoning and permeable boundaries, could mitigate exclusionary effects, these solutions must account for modern governance constraints, economic pressures, and security concerns that drive gated community development today. By drawing inspiration from historical sociospatial practices, such as balancing public and private spaces, fostering inclusivity, and enabling resident autonomy, gated communities can create socially sustainable and culturally sensitive environments that resonate with the rich heritage of Arabian cities.

7. Conclusions

This study examines the sociospatial and architectural characteristics of historical Arabian cities and their influence on contemporary gated communities in the Middle East. It provides new insights into how historical spatial practices, such as hierarchical spatial

organisation, communal integration, and controlled access, have been selectively adapted, reinterpreted, or abandoned in modern developments. While previous studies have explored the spatial evolution of gated communities, limited research has systematically examined the sociospatial connections between historical enclosed neighbourhoods and modern gated communities. The findings reveal a nuanced relationship between historical urban patterns and contemporary urban planning practices, highlighting both continuity and divergence. Traditional Arabian cities exhibited organic growth, cohesive spatial arrangements, and integrated social hierarchies deeply rooted in cultural and religious values. These historical configurations prioritised privacy, community engagement, and connectivity, balancing public and private spaces to foster strong social cohesion.

While modern gated communities adopt elements of historical urbanism, such as privacy-oriented layouts and controlled access, they differ significantly in their sociospatial principles. Instead of fostering organic community relationships, contemporary gated developments reinforce exclusivity and controlled access, creating spatial barriers that contribute to socioeconomic stratification. Unlike traditional Arabian cities, which evolved to accommodate diverse sociocultural needs, modern gated communities impose rigid spatial divisions, reinforcing exclusivity and reducing organic social interactions. This reflects broader global urban trends, where privatisation, security concerns, and market-driven developments shape residential enclaves that are disconnected from their surrounding urban fabric. The planned exclusivity and controlled access of gated communities often disrupt urban connectivity, posing challenges to social sustainability by limiting integration, reducing shared public spaces, and reinforcing urban fragmentation. For example, while historical cities integrated market areas and religious nodes to facilitate social interaction, modern gated communities often restrict access to non-residents, creating urban islands separated from the surrounding city.

The findings emphasise the relevance of historical sociospatial principles in contemporary urban planning. However, integrating these insights into modern gated communities requires addressing critical challenges, including urban governance frameworks, economic constraints, and real estate market requirements. To enhance social sustainability and mitigate urban fragmentation, urban planners and policymakers may consider the following practical strategies:

- **Integrate Historic Space Principles**

Developing zoning regulations that encourage mixed-use developments, ensuring a balance of residential, commercial, and public spaces, as seen in traditional Arabian cities. This can be achieved by enforcing semi-public courtyards, shaded walkways, and communal spaces within gated developments to enhance social interaction and accessibility.

- **Balance Between Private and Public**

Introduce urban connectivity incentives requiring developers to create permeable boundaries, such as controlled pedestrian pathways or shared green spaces, in order to maintain interaction between gated communities and the surrounding areas. This can be attained by promoting gradual transition zones rather than rigid barriers, such as buffer zones with retail, cultural, or community spaces that serve both gated and non-gated residents.

- **Enhance Social Inclusion Through Governance**

Implement participatory planning approaches that involve residents in decision-making processes regarding shared facilities and accessibility policies. This requires inclusive design elements, such as public plazas, integrated mosques, and accessible markets, to reduce exclusivity while respecting cultural privacy needs.

- **Regulate the Socioeconomic Impact of Gating**

Develop affordable housing integration programs within or adjacent to gated developments, ensuring diverse socioeconomic representation. This can be achieved by implementing land use strategies that incorporate both private and public functions to prevent spatial and economic segregation.

A crucial aspect of social sustainability is the sense of belonging, which was deeply embedded in the structure of historical Arabian cities. Unlike modern gated communities, where exclusivity is largely driven by economic segregation, traditional urban environments fostered strong communal ties through shared religious, commercial, and social spaces. The presence of mosques, market streets, and interconnected residential quarters facilitated daily interactions and collective responsibilities, reinforcing a shared identity among residents. In contrast, the controlled access and privatised nature of gated communities often result in social isolation and weaker community bonds, limiting organic interactions that once defined traditional urban life. This transition highlights a fundamental departure from the socially cohesive frameworks of historical Arabian cities, where urban planning was inherently tied to cultural and social values rather than market-driven exclusivity. Furthermore, planners may interpret historical principles of inclusivity and permeability with current urban demands without reinforcing sociospatial segregation. By reinterpreting gated communities as adaptive, inclusive, and community-oriented spaces, urban planners can mitigate their sociospatial influence and foster sustainable and socially inclusive urban environments.

Despite these insights, the study acknowledges certain limitations that should be addressed in future research. The breadth of the literature analysed, while extensive, may not fully capture all regional variations in historical and contemporary urban planning. The historical review is limited by its focus on select periods and case studies, potentially overlooking other significant sociospatial transformations. Additionally, the typologies of gated communities investigated were constrained to specific urban contexts, meaning that findings may not be fully generalisable to all Middle Eastern cities. Moreover, this research primarily relies on secondary sources, which, while valuable, limit the inclusion of firsthand perspectives from key stakeholders, such as residents, urban planners, and policymakers. Future studies could benefit from empirical research incorporating interviews and ethnographic studies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences within gated communities.

Lessons from historical Arabian cities offer valuable insights for developing urban models that enhance social sustainability and cultural continuity. By bridging urban morphological theories, sociospatial structuring, and community integration frameworks, this study contextualises the evolution of spatial segregation from historical necessity to contemporary exclusivity. It emphasises the need for planning strategies that incorporate historical urban principles to respond to the growing sociospatial fragmentation in gated communities. These findings contribute to a broader discussion on urban sustainability, providing a framework for future research on how enclosed residential developments can be designed to support social integration rather than reinforce segregation.

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5.3 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The spatial configuration of historical Arabian cities evolved from organic processes influenced by cultural, legal, and social forces. As Abu-Lughod (1987) explains, these urban forms reflected demographic diversity, gender norms, and decentralised governance. Religious and ethnic groups often clustered spatially not due to imposed segregation, but through mutual protection and self-organisation. Gender expectations influenced the separation of public and private life, visible in housing typologies and street design. Legal customs, such as the right of precedence and vivification, allowed individuals to adapt their immediate surroundings, contributing to the compact and irregular morphology of traditional quarters. These spatial patterns were not aesthetic but reflected deeper socio-political conditions. Abu-Lughod (1992, p. 10) argues that traditional settlements met human needs more sensitively than modern techniques, explaining continued interest in vernacular forms.

Neighbourhoods in traditional Arabian cities fostered informal governance, shared responsibility, and collective resilience. Central mosques, surrounded by markets and communal courtyards, served as spatial and social anchors (Amireh, 1990). While some residential clustering existed, diverse groups interacted informally, promoting urban pluralism. In contrast, modern gated communities in the Middle East represent an inward-facing, exclusionary model. Controlled access, private amenities, and developer-led management fragment the urban fabric, reducing engagement with surrounding neighbourhoods.

Importantly, the goal is not to replicate traditional aesthetics but to reinterpret historical urban principles to address present-day socio-spatial fragmentation. Reintegration of communal spaces, adaptable housing, and participatory governance are particularly promising strategies. These ideas are further explored in Chapter Ten as part of the proposed integrative planning framework. **Table 5-1** summarises the key distinctions between traditional Arabian cities and modern gated communities, illustrating the spatial and social contrasts that strengthen this analysis.

Table 5-1 Distinctions Between Arabian Cities and Gated Communities

Aspect	Traditional Arabian Cities	Modern Gated Communities
Urban Form	Organic, irregular, compact	Planned, geometric, and uniform
Spatial Hierarchy	Gradual transition from public to private space	Sharp divisions; controlled access
Social Integration	High, diverse communities coexisted with informal interaction	Low, physical and symbolic separation from surrounding communities
Access and Connectivity	Permeable street networks, multiple entries and informal paths	Gated entries; limited external connectivity
Privacy	Layered through setbacks, inner courtyards, and street configuration	Achieved primarily through enclosure and physical barriers
Governance and Management	Decentralised, community and religion-based legal frameworks	Centralised, developer-led governance
Use of Public Space	Central mosque, markets, and shared courtyards encourage social life	Private amenities serve residents only; limited shared space
Housing Typology	Multi-generational, courtyard homes; adaptable layouts	Standardised villas/apartments; less adaptability
Response to Climate	Thick walls, courtyards, wind towers, and shaded narrow streets	Air-conditioning and detached designs dominate
Drivers of Segregation	Cultural norms (gender, religion) and self-organisation	Economic exclusivity and real estate product

Source: Researcher

Chapter 6: Gated Communities in the Middle East

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on gated communities in the Middle East, including the GCC countries, and is divided into four sections. Section 6.2 examines the social impact of gated communities in the Middle Eastern context through a journal publication, questioning whether this phenomenon can be contagious in different geographical locations. The following section examines the broader transformative social effects in Middle Eastern cities by conducting a narrative review of peer-reviewed articles from the Middle East and the GCC countries on the topic. The investigation is presented in an article publication, as reflected in Section 6.3. Section 6.4 synthesises the interviews conducted with key expert personnel in the Middle Eastern and GCC countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE). It summarises the interviewees' viewpoints on the socio-spatial and economic impacts of gated communities. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings and reflects critical reflections on the broader implications of gated communities. These two publications address complementary aspects of the research questions and together contribute to the broader analytical framework of the thesis. The first publication examines the social impacts of gated communities on surrounding neighbourhoods across Middle Eastern contexts, while the second synthesises regional evidence on the transformative socio-spatial effects of gated communities in Middle Eastern and GCC cities. Together, they situate the Jordanian case within a wider regional context, providing comparative grounding for the empirical and spatial analyses developed in later chapters.

This chapter includes the following papers:

- 1) “The Infectious Divide: A Comparative Study of the Social Impact of Gated Communities on the Surrounding in the Middle East” (Hammad et al., 2024a).
- 2) “A Narrative Review of Gated Communities and the Transformative Social Impact in Middle Eastern Cities” (Hammad, Mengbi, et al., 2025)

6.1 DECLARATIONS

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DECLARATION OF CO-AUTHORSHIP AND CO-CONTRIBUTION: PAPERS INCORPORATED IN THESIS

This declaration is to be completed for each conjointly authored publication and placed at the beginning of the thesis chapter in which the publication appears.

1. PUBLICATION DETAILS (to be completed by the candidate)

Title of
Paper/Journal/Book:

The Infectious Divide: A Comparative Study of the Social Impact of Gated
Communities on the Surrounding in the Middle E

Surname:

Hammad

First name:

Ahmed

Institute:

Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveat

Candidate's Contr

80

Status:

Accepted and in press:

☐

Published:

☒

Date:

Date:

03/05/2024

2. CANDIDATE DECLARATION

I declare that the publication above meets the requirements to be included in the thesis as outlined in the HDR Policy and related Procedures – policy.vu.edu.au.

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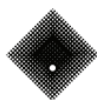
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In the case of the above publication, the following authors contributed to the work as follows:

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3. There are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
4. Potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to a) granting bodies, b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
5. The original data will be held for at least five years from the date indicated below and is stored at the following **location(s)**:

Victoria University, Footscary Park, Ballarat Road, VIC 3011, Australia

Name(s) of Co-Author(s)	Contribution (%)	Nature of Contribution	Signature	Date
Ahmed Hammad	80	Conceived concept. Literature review. Methodology, writing manuscript		11.08.2025
Mengbi Li	15	Critical review and editing. Supervision. Final Approval		11.08.2025
Zora Vrcelj	5	Supervision. Administration		11.08.2025

Updated: September 2019

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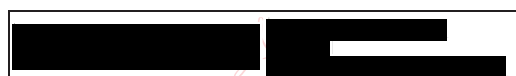
This declaration is to be completed for each conjointly authored publication and placed at the beginning of the thesis chapter in which the publication appears.

1. PUBLICATION DETAILS (to be completed by the candidate)

Title of Paper/Journal/Book:	A Narrative Review of Gated Communities and the Transformative Social Impact in Middle Eastern Cities		
Surname:	Hammad	First name:	Ahmed
Institute:	Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable	Candidate's Contribution:	80
Status:			
Accepted and in press:	☐	Date:	
Published:	☒	Date:	10/04/2025

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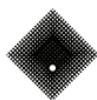
	
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3. There are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
4. Potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to a) granting bodies, b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
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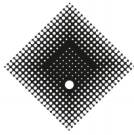
Name(s) of Co-Author(s)	Contribution (%)	Nature of Contribution	Signature	Date
Ahmed Hammad	80	Conceived concept. Literature review. Methodology, writing manuscript		11.08.2025
Mengbi Li	15	Critical review and editing. Supervision. Final Approval		11.08.2025
Zora Vrcelj	5	Supervision. Administration		11.08.2025

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6.2 SOCIAL IMPACT OF GATED COMMUNITIES ON THE SURROUNDING

This section presents the findings from a published study that examines the social impacts of gated communities on surrounding neighbourhoods in the Middle East and the GCC countries through a comparative qualitative analysis. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* (2024) 39:1395–1421.



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The infectious divide: a comparative study of the social impact of gated communities on the surrounding in the middle East

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Abstract

In recent years, gated communities have increasingly become an attractive lifestyle residence worldwide and in the Middle fostering security, privacy, seclusion, and exclusivity. Nonetheless, it seems that with these benefits, other impacts had unfolded and exposed the urban fabric to new attributes such as segregation, fragmentation, and social exclusion. However, gaps exist in the literature on comparative studies on gated communities in regions such as GCC (Gulf Corporation Council) countries and the Middle East (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002). This paper aims to examine the social impact of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods through a comparative analysis of cases from the Middle East and GCC. The methodology was implemented to develop a qualitative framework of social segregation indicators to examine similarities and differences between the cases, aiming to identify patterns and gain insights to answer the article's question of whether this phenomenon can be contagious in different settings. Findings reveal that gated communities can have negative and positive impacts on the social well-being of the surrounding neighbourhoods and may lead to social segregation and exclusion in different geographical settings despite their emergence motives. The paper concludes that isolation and lack of interaction between residents inside and outside the walls may have impacts on the social aspect of the surroundings.

Keywords Gated communities · Urban/neighbourhood segregation · Social exclusion · GCC and Middle East

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1 Introduction

The rise of gated communities has been a vigorous topic globally discussed among planners and researchers. Literature has liberally discussed several cases of gated communities in the U.S. being the pioneering experiment in gating and closed housing developments (Webster, 2002). Researchers have argued their impacts on urban areas as well as their effects on social and economic development (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005). Nonetheless, the spread of gated communities has surged worldwide and become a feature of the urban landscape in many countries (Roitman, 2010). Developers promoted gated communities as housing products that offer lifestyle, attraction, and free-from-issues and provide attractive amenities for residents (Almatarneh, 2013). Henceforth, developers recognise this gap in society who cannot depend on public infrastructure to provide protection or lifestyle and would prefer living in gated developments. In addition, researchers have debated the relationship between gated communities and social cohesion. For example, Low (2001) argued that gated communities led to social segregation, whereas Salcedo and Torres (2004) counter-argued the social segregation impact and argued that gated developments promoted social integration and positively impacted the surroundings (Harold, 2018). The common understanding of gating and gated developments is that they represent isolation and serve privatism, eliminating community connections and cohesion (Gottdiener, 2019).

Although there is a growing body of literature on gated communities globally, there remains a dearth of comparative research in regions such as GCC and the Middle East, where gated communities are rapidly expanding. To the best of our knowledge, the only comparative study on the topic in GCC and the Middle East was by Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002), when they compared gated communities in Lebanon and Riyadh. Their study summarised the reasons behind the emergence of gated communities in both cities and concluded that their emergence in Lebanon is comparable to most of the other locations where the private sector takes the lead in providing affluent people with a Western lifestyle. Whereas in Saudi Arabia, gated communities may be related to the old Arabian traditions and patterns.

However, this study aims to investigate the impacts gated communities have on the surrounding neighbourhoods by conducting a comparative analysis of the social impact on the surroundings in four different settings: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Jordan. The selection of these countries was related to the contradicting reasons behind the emergence of gated communities, yet they may share similar social impacts. For example, in the GCC, researchers argued that gated communities can be related to the historical evolution of walled cities since cities throughout history were surrounded by walls for safety reasons (Touman, 2005). In addition to the arrival of Westerners with their families in the 1930s with the exploration of oil (AlQahtany, 2022). However, the emergence of gated communities in Jordan transpired after the year 1990 as extended family housing, then developed into a commercial gated community post-2009 with motives related to the demand of middle and upper middle society seeking lifestyle and seclusion from the crowd (Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015). The selection of these countries, along with their socioeconomic difference, may create an opportunity to examine the impacts associated with such developments in different conditions. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to assess the reasons and motives behind the emergence of gated communities in different geographical locations and subsequently examine if the social impact on the surrounding neighbourhoods remains consistent across these diverse settings.

2 Literature review

Post World War II, the transformation of towns across the globe, and mainly in the U.S., created new suburban neighbourhoods that were remote from work, shopping areas, and entertainment, which later became the predominant form of neighbourhoods. With this change, new forms of walled cities, gated neighbourhoods, and gated communities were reformed late 20th century, influenced by socio-economic and urban forces. Over time, gated communities extended to many countries, attracting people who seek security, lifestyle, and socioeconomic isolation (AlQahtany, 2022, p. 14; Mohamed Salah & Ayad, 2018, p. 2745). For example, the U.S. has witnessed the highest growth of gated communities during that era due to several reasons, including socio-political changes, fear of crime, sociocultural differences, and the decrease in government responsibilities. Also, gated communities were seen in European cities such as London and Paris, as well as in developed and developing countries such as South Africa and Mexico City, but with different reasons for their spread (Smets, 2005, p. 3).

Moreover, in the Middle East region, gated communities spread enormously in Saudi Arabia, with more than 20 million residents selecting this type of housing (Mohamed Salah & Ayad, 2018, p. 2744). In Egypt as well, a study carried out by Ibrahim et al. (2011) identified more than 466 gated communities in the capital city were developed until 2010, and the number increased to 500 gated communities after three years in 2013 (Metwally & Abdalla, 2013). In a recent study carried out by Reda et al. (2022), the government introduced a housing development scheme for the middle class, which delivered an additional 140 thousand units in 2020 as gated communities developed by the government. Their study concludes that gated communities may pose social segregation despite their “utopian and revolutionary designs”.

Thus, gated communities are private residential areas that are known for their limited access and luxurious facilities; they have attracted the interest of scholars who are keen on exploring their origins, influences, and effects on urban growth and community relations. They are often criticised for their role in promoting social exclusivity and segregation. Researchers indicated that these developments tend to attract affluent residents, leading to economic divisions and limited social diversity within the gated communities. Awaad and Hamed (2015) argued that gated communities are isolated islands that emerged for certain layers of society who are seeking social and spatial isolation from the wider community. Moreover, gated communities, with their exclusive amenities and controlled access, have the potential to restrict interactions and connections between diverse social groups. This could result in the isolation of certain segments of society, raising concerns about the exclusion of marginalised populations, particularly low-income communities in the surrounding area, from the benefits and opportunities offered by such communities (Roitman, 2005, p. 307).

By reviewing the literature on gated communities in the study area, AlQahtany (2022) carried out a questionnaire in Saudi Arabia to understand the motives behind selecting gated communities as the preferred housing choice and found that lifestyle is the main reason. Furthermore, the author argues that gated communities are considered for the middle and high-income groups in society who share the same socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural preferences, or nationalities. The results of the study conclude that gated communities do not live in isolation since positive social attributes were found between residents and the

surroundings. Further examination is required to explore the thoughts of the people living in the surrounding areas to confirm the hypothesis.

In Qatar, for example, Al Shawish (2015, p. 68) demonstrated the impacts of gated communities on the physical and social aspects through a qualitative study based on urban theories and a case study. The article argued that the physical barriers and restricted access contributed to a sense of exclusivity, creating a social division between the residents of gated communities and the surrounding neighbourhoods. Such divisions can hinder social cohesion, limit interactions between different socioeconomic groups, and perpetuate inequalities in the broader urban context. The study pointed out that the main issue of gated communities in Doha is that they are built in the middle of the city and not on the outskirts, which has helped in further disconnecting the neighbourhoods and the demise of public interaction. The article recommends proposing design guidelines that allow the construction of an alternative model inspired by the positive attributes of gated communities, such as a sense of community and children's safety. Testing such a hypothesis may be carried out on a small-scale gated community prior to extending the experience to the rest of the city.

Furthermore, Salim (2021) investigated the urban and historical characteristics of gated communities in Bahrain through a case study analysis. The article highlighted the unique fragmentation that gated communities have on the urban. The article suggested that gated communities in Bahrain, in particular and in the GCC, in general, differ from gated communities in other regions since the GCC ones cater for expatriates relocated for work, and these developments create isolated islands. The article offers a new approach to examining the initiation and impacts of gated communities. Further studies are required to analyse the impact of migration, especially the expatriates, on the urban.

In a recent study by Abed et al. (2022) in Amman, the authors assessed the social sustainability factors in gated and non-gated communities by analysing social support, community engagement, safety, and common values between residents. They argued that personal relationships and social networks in large gated communities are much appreciated compared to conventional developments. Their study called for the prospect of growing this experience further in Amman by introducing design guidelines that may aid in improving the social sustainability between residents. The study concludes with a recommendation to regulate the spread of gated communities in order to maintain a cohesive urban realm as part of the urban landscape. This may be achieved through conducting design workshops and reviews between different stakeholders.

In a similar study carried out by Bandaiko et al. (2022) in Africa, where they carried out a systematic review procedure on 31 peer-reviewed articles on gated communities, they summarise that the crime rate, lifestyle, and globalisation are the main reasons behind the emergence of gated communities in the study area. In addition, their reviewed articles emphasise that gated communities may be responsible for encouraging social fragmentation, closing off public spaces, increase in inequality levels, and urban segregation. The authors conclude to address the spatial segregation by designing spaces that consider “*both social and functional urban integration*”, which may foster inclusion in society. Their study recommends a general planning approach, which may involve citizens and governments in future spatial planning. This approach can be merged with the suggestion of Al Shawish (2015), who suggests carrying out design guidelines to allow the construction of alternative designs inspired by the positive attributes of gated communities.

The reviewed literature is predominantly concerned with the impacts and effects of gated communities within a single setting and highlights their effects on social cohesion. Limited studies have compared more than one gated community in different geographical locations and examined if social impacts are comparable. One study was carried out by Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002) comparing gated communities between Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. The authors employed a case study method to analyse the cultural, political, and economic circumstances that aided in the appearance of gated communities in these two settings. The study concludes that gated communities in Saudi Arabia may be considered a resurgence of some social and spatial characteristics derived from the old Arabian cities. Whereas in Lebanon, their appearance may be related to the failure of public organisations. The article examined each setting separately and did not carry out a comparison of the outcomes.

Despite the differences between gated communities in several countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Jordan, the general theme of exclusivity and luxury prevailed in attracting affluent people to these developments and led to socio-economic divisions. Moreover, the location of gated communities within the city may contribute to a further disconnection between neighbourhoods. While other studies in Amman highlighted the positive social interactions within gated community residents, the study raised concerns about isolation. Notably, the study recommends regulating the spread of gated communities to maintain a cohesive urban realm as part of the urban landscape. Building on the literature review, there is a lack of discourses on gated communities and studies on the socioeconomic impact of gated communities in the Middle East; where this study seeks to fill in this gap by examining and comparing multiple gated communities in several geographical locations, aiming to determine whether the social impacts remain consistent regardless of the geographical location.

3 From old cities to gated communities

The natural growth and expansion of Arabian cities were related to the needs and desires of people driven by cultural and social behaviours influenced by the religious order. Therefore, cities grew into an organic, unforced, or spontaneous pattern formalised by the social behaviour of people rather than rigid formal plans (Ben-Hamouche, 2009). Additionally, the concept of privacy and sacred spaces has distinguished Arabian cities from others, where mosques were fully integrated into people's daily lives on the one hand and the architectural fabric of the city on the other hand. The same sacredness was extended into residences as houses were built inward with a central courtyard to protect people from extruders and to provide further privacy (Hammad & Hammad, 2023). Furthermore, the central core was occupied by the main mosque, which was surrounded by multi-layers of interconnected buildings through a system of roads and streets that small shops occupied (Bianca, 2000). The access from these shops to the surrounding residential quarters was through narrow alleyways and small gates controlled by the residents, which resulted in closed neighbourhoods. Therefore, the idea of gating and closed architecture in old Arabian cities was primarily extrapolated from the social hierarchy within the urban population. For example, each residential section was divided into quarters and neighbourhoods with its daily mosque and markets and was occupied by residents of the same background, ethnicity, social level, wealth, and occupation (Al-Hemaidi, 2001). Thus, traditional Arabian cities, especially cit-

ies that were governed by Islamic rules, displayed common characteristics such as low-rise buildings, compact urban, complex geometry, walled cities, narrow streets, and shared courtyards, and the most evident character is the organic form, which was seen in the 12th century. These characteristics did not represent a lack of control; they represented a transformative urban structure that evolved with the needs and desires of people (BenHamouche, 2003; Bianca, 2000).

Several forces, such as climate, construction materials and technology, social hierarchy and organisation, and legal systems, impacted the urban fabric formation of Arabian and Islamic cities. However, by focusing on the Middle Eastern region, Abu-Lughod (1987) suggests that the main forces that created Islamic cities can be limited to social, legal, and political aspects that were influenced by religious laws since the climate and construction methods were almost identical. For example, several classes within the society were introduced based on their relationship with the state, and this was reflected in the spatial configuration of the city. Furthermore, the configuration of neighbourhoods became a critical building block of Arabian cities, such as defence during breakdowns or wars, which strengthened social cooperation between neighbours. For example, each neighbourhood was dominated by a powerful family household and surrounded by other poorer families, where the dominant families provided municipal services, including safety and protection, and this may imply that the separation of the population was not based on class distinction. The idea that neighbourhoods defend themselves was witnessed in Beirut during the civil war in 1975, where local young boys were involved in protecting their neighbourhoods and society. Such social obligations had spatial implications on the urban planning of Arabian cities as reflected in the house's layouts, the configuration of courtyards, and the arrangements of quarters. Though this has encouraged spatial distance between the society, it did not impose social segregation since different ethnicities and backgrounds used to live in harmony, as witnessed in most Arabian cities. For example, the Christian and Jewish communities who lived within Muslim society until the 19th century were protected under special laws and regulations; however, they selected to live within closed communities for protection reasons. The nearest example of such ethnic segregation in modern history is the city of Beirut, where Christians and Muslims lived voluntarily in socially isolated quarters; nonetheless, both societies were heavily interacting with each other (Abu-Lughod, 1987, p. 165).

Analysing urban planning features of Arabian cities revealed that elements such as walls, gated neighbourhoods, gender segregation, and traditional religious laws have played fundamental roles in shaping Arabian cities. Where physical elements and symbolic functions remain comparable, high walls and gates are immensely seen as key features in most modern gated communities. These elements represent secure parameters, controlled accesses, seclusion from the surroundings, and a sense of exclusivity and prestige for residents, while initially, they were designed to reflect defensive purposes for a larger community or neighbourhood (Hammad et al., 2024). Furthermore, spatial distancing between different ethnicities witnessed in Arabian cities was not merely related to class distinction; it was, moreover, a reactive response to the social hierarchy within the society. Nonetheless, spatial segregation within contemporary gated communities is a deliberate design strategy that may result in isolation and social exclusion. Walls and gates surrounding gated communities were built to isolate and buffer certain social groups from the wider community through the privatisation of public urban spaces. As suggested by Ben-Hamouche (2009), the urban fabric is a result of complicated and continuous activities carried out by a community over decades

and centuries; nonetheless, gated communities can be considered fast-development urban communities led by private developers that aim to create a sense of community in a short period. Their isolation from the broader communities has impacted the urban environment, where social segregation and diverse qualities may lead to social exclusion and a decrease in unity within the society.

4 Distinctive motives – the emergence of gated communities

Gates and walls are not an innovation and have been seen in old Chinese cities as well as the old Arabian Peninsula. They have been a distinct feature of old nations and performed a substantial role in creating their environment (Hamama & Liu, 2020, p. 2; Li & Xie, 2021). Glassner (1999) indicates that the latest gating witnessed is more private and exclusive for their residents and built around fear. The culture of fear of crime had resulted in unnecessary risks, which encouraged people to adopt isolation and gating (Manzi & Bowers, 2005). The residents' perception of safety is referred to as fear of crime and has little correlation with the actual crime rate (Wilson-Doenges, 2000). Over time, fear of crime may negatively impact peoples' social interaction, decrease the levels of trust, and exploit dispensable security measures, leading to a decline in community interactions. In addition, a lack of community interactions may lead to regression in the sense of community and an increase in stress, impacting families, neighbourhoods, and any other religious or social gatherings (Nisbet, 1967). As discussed by Musterd (2020), people's behaviour generally produces certain levels of inequality, which in most cases generates spatial segregation based on economic, cultural, or demographic (age, race, sex) variances, and this segregation is impacted by historical and contextual factors. Furthermore, segregation in any urban setting is correlated with the surrounding built environment, natural attributes, and social and economic factors, especially in metropolitan cities, as discussed in the segregation theory by Park et al. (1967). Henceforth, the distinction between insiders and outsiders of the walls will lead to potential segregation or separation in society since gated communities are considered strangers within an urban setting (Musterd, 2020, p. 4).

Nonetheless, in the Arab world, as in the Middle East or GCC (Gulf Countries Council), spatial seclusion and fragmentation of urban settings were reflected in neighbourhoods and quarters as a key feature due to the large variety of ethnicities, backgrounds, and religions (Glasze, 2006, p. 84). Therefore, fragmentation was effectuated in the urban pattern where courtyards were employed to provide privacy and protection (Bianca, 2000, p. 79). Yet, at the social level, the structure of extended families and the shared daily activities invigorated unity and homogeneity (Bianca, 2000, pp. 155–157). Such an urban morphology characteristic was seen in Cairo city, established in 969 CE and was renowned as one of the oldest cities in the modern Middle East and North Africa (Masoumi et al., 2019, p. 172). The organic planning of Cairo city, akin to other historic Islamic cities, manifests the general configuration and urban planning represented by narrow and wide streets along with closed alleyways and courtyards. Such configuration served pragmatic functions, encouraging privacy, security, and social interactions as a reflection of the social and economic aspects of daily life (Amro & Bahaiddin, 2015, p. 162). Moreover, the concept of walls, which was noticed in most old cities, was derived from their functional role in illustrating privacy, sacredness, and protection from harsh weather and intruders, which was reflected in the cities' built environ-

ments and shaping their architectural fabric. For example, the city of Baghdad was planned as a circular walled city in 762 AD and primarily served defensive purposes, reflecting the practical approach to urban planning during that era, as seen in Fig. 1.

The pattern of old Arabian cities shares a common set of religious, social, and geographic aspects, which led to similar urban fabric outcomes. In addition, they were impacted by several forces, such as climate, construction materials and technology, social hierarchy, and legal system (Abu-Lughod, 1987; Ben-Hamouche, 2009; Bianca, 2000). This was seen in the classic built environment observed in the GCC as towns were walled with one or two-story houses made from mud with a central courtyard used for daily family use up until the 1950s, in addition to the narrow, bent and shaded streets that played a social role, such as family gatherings and outdoor play areas for children at that time. The mid-20th century heralded a paradigm shift in urban development, characterised by the erosion of this traditional built environment. This period witnessed the adaptation of international planning regulations, which were often discordant with local architectural practices and climatic considerations, as noted by Al-Hemaidi (2001, p. 180). New neighbourhoods emerged with wider roads, signalling a departure from the communal ethos, undermining the social vibrancy and erasing the distinctive open spaces intrinsic to traditional neighbourhoods. Many courtyards were removed, enabling a new grid system of roads and streets to be superimposed, which in return forced children to play indoors and ultimately affected social activities. Free-standing single houses and other modern types of concrete developments replaced traditional houses. Concurrently, the advent of oil discovery and the consequent demographic surge, driven by the influx of Western professionals, precipitated significant socioeconomic transformations. This era saw the introduction of imported urban planning strategies aimed at accommodating the population influx, culminating in the emergence of gated communities in the 1970s and 1980s. Henceforth, the spread of gated communities in the GCC was a response to the demographical changes that took place after the discovery of oil, which resulted in the mass movement of Western professionals in the 1970s and 1980s (AlQahtany, 2022, p. 14). Consequently, the provided gated communities represented a housing complex product for workers and employees as a government policy requirement. In addition, gated communities offered to Western professionals were an attempt to attract Westerners and their families to leave their countries and relocate to GCC. Residents could practice their daily lifestyle freely within the gates due to the conservative laws and regulations implemented outside the gates (Mahgoub & Khalfani, 2012, p. 54). On the other hand, gated communities spread out to neighbouring countries in the Middle East, where oil was not the driving factor behind

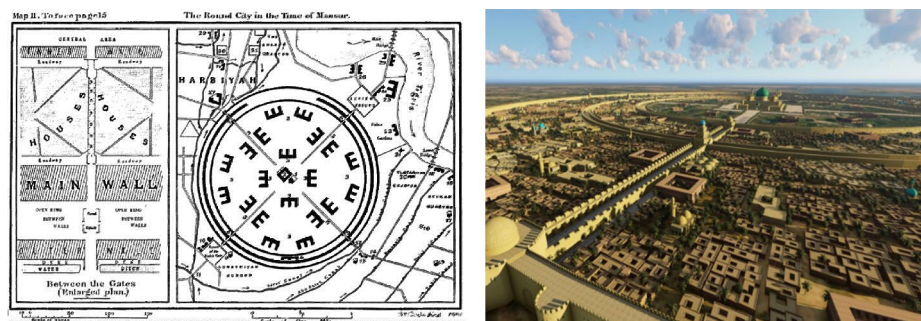


Fig. 1 Map of Baghdad, the Round City by Guy Le Strange. *Source* (Bayaty; Epoch, 2021)

their development. Gated communities were offered as a luxury and prestigious offerings to upper-class communities, as was the case in Cairo. These developments functioned as isolated islands from the surrounding fabric, offering prestige, lifestyle, and security (Ibrahim & Hamed, 2015, p. 45). However, gated communities emerged in Jordan in the 1990s as extended family housing, then evolved into commercial, residential development in 2015 (Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018, p. 894; Hammad et al., 2024, p. 437). The metamorphoses of gated communities in Jordan resulted from the demand of the young social society of the middle and upper middle class seeking seclusion and lifestyle away from the crowd, and they were replicated in the U.S. and Europe (Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015, p. 297). Figure 2 reflects the motives behind developing gated communities in GCC and the Middle East.

As examined by AlQahtany (2022) through a questionnaire study, fear of crime has been recorded at 4.333%, being the least motive for residents to move to gated communities in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it may be suggested that the evolution of gated communities in the GCC and Middle East may not be related to the motives of their development in the US and Europe, where fear of crime and searching for safety were the predominant factors for people to embrace gated communities as their safe haven (Wilson-Doenges, 2000, p. 599). The term “blind imitation”, which relates to the skills of imitating or copying a trend or a movement driven by the real estate market of demand and supply, might be a suitable description for emerging gated communities in the Middle East but not in the GCC.

5 Study background

This section provides information about the four selected locations for the empirical study. The selection of three locations in the GCC (Saudi, Qatar and Bahrain) were chosen since they represent the most significant number of gated communities in that region (Al Shawish, 2016; AlQahtany, 2022; Salim, 2021). They also represent the old Arabian cities as part

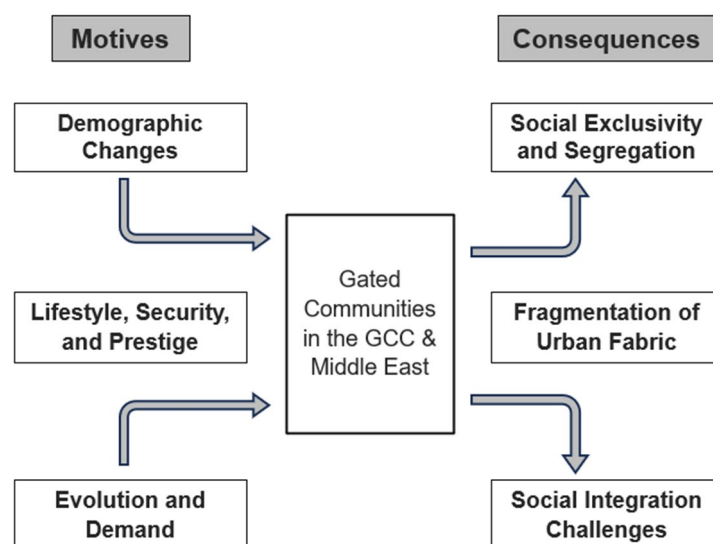


Fig. 2 Motives for developing gated communities in GCC and the Middle East. *Source* The Author

of the Arabian Peninsula, as closed neighbourhoods were seen in Riyadh until 1985 (Al-Hemaidi, 2001, p. 286). The fourth location (Jordan) was selected as a non-oil-producing country where gated communities emerged as a social seclusion preference. In addition, Jordan was part of the Arabian Peninsula (Wikipedia, 2023) and Bilad al-Sham (Wikipedia, 2024) and was impacted by the city planning of the old Arabian cities with narrow streets and closed alleyways (Alzyoud & Hammad, 2020, p. 67). The first fully developed gated community in Amman is Al Andalusía, which was developed between 2009 and 2015. Though there were earlier attempts since 1990, they were on a smaller scale and categorised as a family housing product. The selected case study will be further examined to investigate the reasons behind this late emergence on the one hand and then to investigate if such development has any impacts on the surroundings on the other hand.

As this paper will discuss the social impact of gated communities on the surroundings in the selected four regions, each country will be summarised below to include social cohesion and fragmentation impact individually. Following that, thematic data analysis will be implemented to identify patterns and themes found in the four locations' data sets to investigate if such developments can share similar impacts on the surrounding neighbourhoods in different geographical settings (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 8).

5.1 Gated communities in Qatar-Doha

The history of gated communities in Doha goes back to the mid-1940s when merchant families such as Darwish and Al Manna established their residential houses on the shoreline where goods used to arrive (Lockerbie, 2005, pp. 8–9). The residential houses, which used to be called “compounds”, spread to other families within the city of Doha by building walls to surround a group of houses from the same family. As argued by Mahgoub and Khalfani (2012, p. 54), neither fear of crime nor safety and security were the motives behind the development of gated communities (compounds) in the old city of Doha. Like other Oil countries in the GCC and with the exploration of Oil in the late 1950s, several multinational companies have relocated their staff and workers to Doha. Henceforth, multiple housing compounds or gated communities were constructed to cope with the increasing housing demand due to the economic development witnessed in the city (Al Shawish, 2015, pp. 72–73). In addition, and as discussed by Mahgoub and Khalfani (2012, p. 55), merchants capitalised on this opportunity to provide housing offerings in the form of camps (for labourers) and gated communities (for professionals with families).

5.2 Gated communities in Saudi Arabia

The introduction of gated communities in Saudi Arabia, much like other GCC countries, can be traced back to the discovery of oil in the 1930s (Glasze, 2006, p. 85). The influx of Western professionals has caused considerable social, urban, and economic transformations, resulting in a substantial upswing in the need for residential properties in the metropolis (AlQahtany, 2022, p. 14). Nevertheless, the selection of gated communities as a residential solution was related to the socio-religious configuration of the conservative Saudi society at that time (Glasze, 2006, p. 87). The idea was to provide Westerners with the freedom of social life within the gates, which imitates their lifestyle back home. This is considered an

attractive proposition as a short-term housing solution and an incentive to attract foreigners to relocate to Saudi Arabia.

Historically, Saudi cities were classified as a compacted urban pattern, with narrow streets and alleyways, which created miniaturised communities in the form of neighbourhoods that protect each other from intruders and strangers (Giddings et al., 2023, p. 5). Furthermore, Bagaen (2010) examines how communities in old Arabian cities in the Middle East employed various elements such as climate, culture, religion, and social norms to control aspects of their environment, which was manifested in the barriers and gates placed in the designs of the built environment. The general typology of houses utilised courtyards as multifunctional open-private spaces for family socialising and safe places for youngsters to interact and play (Giddings et al., 2023, p. 6). However, according to Giddings et al. (2023, p. 2), some people perceive courtyards as a connection to the past that they do not wish to reconsider. Instead, they prefer modern designs introduced to the country by Western professionals as early as the 1940s. The evolution of housing designs at the macro (urban planning) and micro levels (private houses) was affected by the American designers and Architects working for the oil companies. Henceforth, the modernisation of processes and the massive demand for private housing compounds for Western professionals resulted in a sprawl of gated communities, which later became a preferred housing solution for other expatriates relocating to work in Saudi Arabia (Glasze, 2006, p. 85). In a recent study carried out by Bint-e-Waheed and Nadeem (2020) related to the perception of security in gated and non-gated communities in Lahore, Pakistan, the authors carried out face-to-face interviews with residents from both communities to examine the increased demand for gated communities in the city. Their study recommends the implementation of the cul-de-sac concept of closed roads as this may reduce the crime rate and create safer areas. Their recommendation is in line with the notion of old Arabian cities where neighbourhoods were built as courtyards.

5.3 Gated communities in Bahrain

Replicating the situation in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the urbanisation in Bahrain was reflected by the mass movement of labourers from the Indian subcontinent and Western professionals due to the discovery of oil (Salim, 2021, p. 149). Nevertheless, as pointed out by Salim (2021, p. 149), Bahrain was the first country among the other GCC countries to discover oil, indicating that the migration of labourers and professionals commenced earlier than in the other oil countries. In addition, the connection between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia through a causeway completed in 1986 has further remedied Bahrain's urban growth (Al Ghatam, 2012). Furthermore, Bahraini citizens are considered a minority, with 54% of the residents being expatriates (Information). The housing demand reflected this demographic allocation, which impacted the urban landscape distribution, where expatriates with high incomes preferred living in gated communities (Salim, 2021, p. 149).

However, as described by Salim (2021, p. 154), gated communities in Bahrain are different from those in Saudi as they are generally smaller in size, have fewer amenities and facilities, and are less independent than gated communities in Saudi Arabia. It is worth mentioning that the establishment of gated communities in Bahrain wasn't solely intended to provide Westerners with a secluded way of living behind the gates. This is because Bah-

rain is less conservative compared to its neighbouring country, Saudi Arabia (Salim, 2021, pp. 154–155).

5.4 Gated communities in Jordan

The development of gated communities in Jordan was primarily impacted by two major dimensions: financial and social, as the security aspect had minor effects based on a study carried out by (Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018, p. 903). During the financial-economic prosperity in the GCC between the years 2003 and 2020, multiple developments took place in the Middle Eastern countries to attract international investments in a search for secure investments (Daher, 2014, p. 100). As part of the Middle Eastern competition, Jordan had its share of multiple developments, such as Abdali development in Amman, Jordan Gate, and Al Andalucía gated community, developed by an investor from the United Arab Emirates. On the social dimension, the rise of the middle and upper middle class in society seeking seclusion and lavish lifestyles mimicking American and European gated communities (Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015, p. 297). The development of gated communities in Jordan is markedly distinct from the driving factors influencing their emergence in the GCC region. For example, Al Andalucía gated community was developed approximately 20 km away from the city centre towards the outskirts of the city. Positioning this project between farms and agricultural lands and surrounding it with walls may imply social exclusion from the surrounding community and might prevent any possible interaction between the neighbours. Figure 3 shows the walls surrounding the development and statement of isolation presented by Al Andalucía development.

Fig. 3 The wall surrounding Al Andalucía development.
*Source*The Author



6 Social impact

As rationalised by Roitman (2005, p. 304), the emergence of gated communities is either captivated by social and economic factors, as in the cases in GCC, or a social group preference, as in Jordan. Furthermore, several elements may lead to social division within gated communities, such as economic stratification, cultural backgrounds, spatial design, and community engagement. To start with the economic implications, doubtless, gated communities provide jobs in the short and long term, such as construction activities, security guards, and cleaning services (Roitman & Phelps, 2011, p. 3489). On the other hand, some researchers argue that gated communities may impact the surrounding areas positively by increasing the property values of the neighbouring plots; nonetheless, Le Goix (2005) argues that developing a gated community in a particular district might affect the affordability levels of the surrounding plots and the purchasing powers resulting in disruption in wealth distribution and access to amenities. Moreover, cultural background composition within gated communities may achieve social homogeneity among residents. However, such homogeneity is merely based on socioeconomic levels, specific race or age, where residents might be interviewed prior to being accepted to live in these communities (Roitman, 2010, p. 35). This might imply that gated communities do not increase social disparities. However, they enforce the homogeneity of a specific social layer, which may increase social segregation at the societal level. In addition, spatial designs of gated communities, such as the privatisation of public spaces, streets, and parks, may lead to spatial fragmentation and separation due to the increase of polarisation and the decrease of cohesion within the society. Rafiemanzelat (2016, p. 673) suggests that spatial fragmentation may influence the sense of community which will result in impacting the social interactions between residents and their surrounding neighbours. While developing gated communities, the roles and responsibilities of the government are indirectly transferred to the private sector, and this can include the development and maintenance of infrastructure and support services such as small shops and markets, in addition to the maintenance of parks and public facilities. With such ownership and privileges come the responsibilities of the developer to involve residents in some specific responsibilities to encourage community engagement. Residents may feel socially and physically engaged in certain changes and decisions, which might enhance community cohesion and unity (Qureshi, 2023, p. 549). However, such community engagement might be limited to a certain group even within the same gated community, as Blakely and Snyder (1997b) pointed out that gated communities do not increase local participation. Furthermore, privatisation of public space along with autonomous decisions might decrease democracy as people from different social groups will not have similar rights (Caldeira, 2001).

Despite the different reasons and motives for the emergence of gated communities in each country, the outcome of the previous discussion in this article suggests that gated communities in both GCC and Jordan aid in secluding certain social groups spatially from the local society. However, in order to examine the social impact of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods and to investigate if the social impacts are similar in different geographical locations, this article adopted a thematic analysis as a method of investigation to analyse published articles on gated communities in the study area and then to extract meaningful themes related to the impact of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyse, and

report patterns (themes) within a dataset, which can help to gain a deeper understanding of the content and findings of the articles examined (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). Henceforth, the purpose of such a method is to extract useful and meaningful patterns to address the research question by interpreting and synthesising the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3353). The first phase of the thematic analysis is data transcription through reading a wide range of texts related to gated communities in GCC and the Middle East. Then, generating initial codes based on features observed in the data. After that, codes are collated into themes, data is reviewed, and theme names are defined for each theme. Finally, a report is produced which is related to the research question and literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Data will be analysed by examining the reasons and motives that provoked the emergence of gated communities in the Middle East and GCC on the one hand. Then, social impact will be explored and evaluated in the context of urban design critiques offered by urban theorists such as Bagaeen and Uduku (2010a) and Atkinson and Blandy (2013) on the other hand. In addition, several case studies will be reviewed in the study area in order to visualise and extract social impact attributes that may support the thematic analysis and the urban design critiques.

In order to examine the social impacts of gated communities on the surroundings, this section aims to review critiques and analyses offered by urban theorists such as Bagaeen and Uduku (2010b) and Atkinson and Blandy (2013), which denote definitions and meanings of the social impacts. At first, the definition of gated communities in general will be analysed to understand their structure and characteristics. The definition of gated communities is still ambiguous as there is no agreed meaning of such a term; however, historians and urbanists have described what establishes a gated community. For example, Blakely and Snyder (1997b) identify gated communities as private areas where insiders and outsiders use controlled entrances. Furthermore, (Touman, 2005) suggests a general definition for gated communities to allow other researchers to draw their own interpretation as it is difficult to limit their definition. He suggested that gated communities are urban settlements that are surrounded by walls and have multiple entrances and gates controlled by security with limited access to residents and their visitors. According to Atkinson and Blandy (2013), gated communities are “*housing developments that restrict public access*” as they include multiple shared services and amenities between residents as they share maintenance costs. In addition, they added that gated communities are physical structures and legal bonds that confine a group of people within a wall or a fence. The concept of privacy, exclusion of non-residents, and private lifestyle disguised by security are all personal attempts for some people to exclude themselves from the surrounding neighbourhood and the wider community. Whether the separation is a wall, gate, concrete blocks, or even soft landscapes and cul-de-sacs, the results of liberty of access and social exclusion remain unchanged.

As conceptualised by Atkinson and Blandy (2005, p. 179), the search for Security, as affirmed by certain affluent individuals, along with the passion for disengagement from the wider community, has segregated the people outside the walls and may have impacted the urban social relationships. The social division is seen at large in many areas where people are being clustered based on their social and financial status or ethnic backgrounds which led to social segregation. Hence, gated communities may create an additional urban issue as they tend to separate people from the wider community on both social and financial spectrums. They aim to generate an exclusive and isolated experience for affluent individuals and enjoy freedom of movement within the gates. Furthermore, the text argues that group-

ing affluent individuals in a confined space, such as gated community, did not sound like an issue; nonetheless, clustering poor people in one area appeared as an urban dilemma. If gated communities were developed to reduce crime rates, then the same issue of crime control remains unresolved on the outside of the walls and in poor districts. As summarized by Atkinson and Blandly, there are several impacts associated with the decisions made by affluent people when choosing to live in gated communities. First, the areas they moved out from may lose social diversity as the intensity of one social group is increased and that may lead to social segregation. Second, crime levels may transfer away from gated communities to less-secured areas. Lastly, gated communities are a clear representation of the “*social withdrawal*” of wealthy people, which may impact the spatial engagement between different neighbourhoods.

On the other hand, Bageen and Uduku (2010a) explained that the integration of gated communities within the urban has affected the planning and design of most contemporary areas. They added that gated communities imply that the people living outside the walls are criminals or from the lower class, and the walls are there to protect the middle-class residents physically and sociologically from the fear of the people living outside the walls. Furthermore, social sustainability was introduced in Bageen and Uduku’s argument, where they discussed the definition of social sustainability in literature. In summary, social sustainability is related to reduced segregation and exclusion between people, access to amenities and services, community interaction and participation, and the density of urban. They concluded that the form, impact on the urban, and the location of gated communities comply with the social sustainability criteria set in the literature. In addition, the spread of gated communities was associated with motivational aspects such as exclusivity and social status and not only fear of crime since gated communities are spreading in low-crime areas. Their study suggested extracting positive attributes from gated communities, such as the shared interest people tend to have when they choose to live together, can form stronger ties and connections.

The analysis offers an understanding of the heterogeneous nature of gated communities. Atkinson and Blandly illustrate the potential social consequences associated with gated communities, such as social division, crime transfer, and spatial isolation. Whereas Bageen and Uduku provide insights into the social sustainability criteria and how gated communities can contribute positively to reducing segregation and enhancing community connection if aligned with social sustainability criteria.

On the other hand, Blakely and Snyder (1997a) indicated that fear of crime and the search for security are the main grounds for developing gated communities. However, in the GCC and Jordan, it is more related to social polarisation, real estate influence, lifestyle, exclusion from the crowd, and exclusivity (Roitman, 2005, p. 305). Therefore, it is a personal choice for a social group to be segregated from the urban society without considering any repercussions of such a decision that might contribute to urban segregation. The social division demonstrated in a particular neighbourhood due to the emergence of a gated community might lead to a hierarchical relationship between residents within the walls and their surrounding neighbours, which can be seen as domination (as the residence of the gated community) and subordination (as the surrounding neighbourhood), the inclusion of certain society versus exclusion of the surrounding, privilege of living within the walls and deprivation of the surrounding community (Marcuse, 1993, p. 357). Therefore, it is more than inequality and distinction in architectural design, housing quality, amenities, and facilities.

By analysing the general characteristics of gated communities developed globally and in the GCC and Jordan, they share the following common criteria:

1. Large-scale land: gated communities are usually developed on large-scale private land, which will limit street continuity, connectivity, and accessibility and will restrict people from interacting with the city and the surroundings, as well as the loss of public life (Al Shawish, 2015).
2. Walled blocks: Gated communities often have high walls and boundaries restricting access and connectivity. These barriers may limit the continuity of street networks and hinder the flow of movement in and out of the area. As described by Jacobs (2006, pp. 80–92), the interactions between people causally in streets may lead to a sense of belonging and social cohesion. By blocking the urban streets with walls, pedestrians from the surrounding areas will have limited interactions with residents within the walls, and this may lead to social fragmentation.
3. Similar housing types and residents' socio-economic class: gated communities generally have similar housing prototypes and designs surrounded by walls. In addition, they accommodate residents from comparable socio-economic backgrounds and classes. This social homogeneity and the typical prototype of designs distinguished from the surroundings will thwart any possible social interactions between neighbours (Al Shawish, 2015, p. 72).

By reviewing the case of Al Andalucía gated community in Amman, and examining the social impact based on the urban design critiques offered by urban theorists, the case study may illustrate segregation from the wider community, social seclusion, and disintegration. Furthermore, the implication of high walls and private entrances may affect the outer community as they may feel they pose danger to the people living inside the walls. The prevalence of such development in an agricultural area may reflect a symbolic barrier that can emphasise social segregation. Though such development may create a distinct housing option for certain layers in the Jordanian society, they can accentuate segregation and reduce social interaction, as seen in Fig. 4.

Fig. 4 Al Andalucía development. *Source*The Author



By examining different cases in the study area, the analyses will evaluate the impact of gated communities on the physical and social aspects of the surroundings in order to extract themes related to social impact.

The selected case study is Dar Al Salam gated community located in Qatar as in Fig. 5. The development consists of 320 apartments and 151 villas, with a total population of approximately 1700 residents. Based on the analysis of the case study, the following impacts can be extracted:

- **Social Isolation:** Gated communities are often viewed as isolated neighbourhoods that lack social interaction and diversity, weakening the sense of community both within and outside the gated area.
- **Inequality and Exclusivity:** Gated communities can promote an environment of exclusivity that favours only particular socio-economic groups. This exclusiveness not only maintains existing social inequalities but also exacerbates societal divisions.
- **Loss of Public Life:** Gated communities have a detrimental effect on public life as they restrict access to shared spaces through physical barriers and walls. This ultimately leads to a decline in community involvement and social interaction opportunities.
- **Fragmentation of Urban Fabric:** Gated communities encourage isolation and division within cities. Their physical barriers disrupt the natural interconnectedness and interdependence of neighbourhoods, destroying the social fabric of communities.
- **Impact on Social Cohesion:** Gated communities can weaken social cohesion within a city. The lack of interaction between residents of gated communities and the wider community can undermine the sense of belonging and shared identity among citizens.
- **Sense of Security:** Gated communities are often associated with a perceived sense of security. While this can positively affect residents, it can also lead to a false sense of

security and reinforce divisions between different social groups.

2. Saudi Arabi (Alhowaish, 2015; AlQahtany, 2022; Giddings et al., 2023; Glasze, 2006; Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002).

In Saudi Arabia, the selected case study is The Kingdom gated community located in the city of Riyadh, as in Fig. 6. This development was built in 1997 on a land of approximately 250,000 m². The development consists of 368 villas, as explained on their official website (City). The analysis of the case study shows:

- Segregation: The establishment of gated communities reflected a form of spatial seclusion and segregation of social groups with different cultural backgrounds.
- Fragmented City: Private and guarded gated communities contributed to the fragmentation of the city, creating distinct enclaves or autonomous neighbourhoods.
- Differentiation of lifestyles: The trend of gated communities is driven by the growing differentiation of lifestyles and cultural orientations, resulting in the development of exclusive communities.
- Cultural diversity: Gated communities for Western expatriates accommodated people from various cultural backgrounds, fostering a diverse community within the enclaves.
- Limited interaction: Residents of gated communities may have limited interaction with the wider Saudi Arabian society outside the gates.

3. Bahrain (Salim, 2021, 2022).

However, in Bahrain, the selected case study is Al Jasser gated community as in Fig. 7. The development consists of 26 villas, as explained on their official website. General attributes from the case study are:

- Residential segregation: Gated communities contribute to residential segregation, creating social divisions.
- Socioeconomic status: The affordability of gated communities affects the socioeconomic

Fig. 6 The Kingdom gated community. *Source* Google Maps

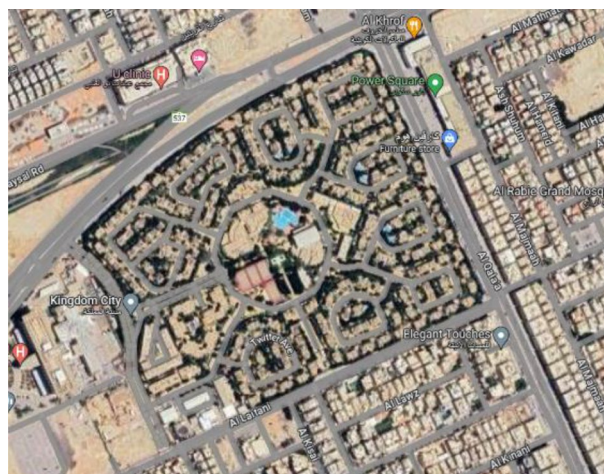


Fig. 7 Al Jasser gated community. *Source* Google Maps

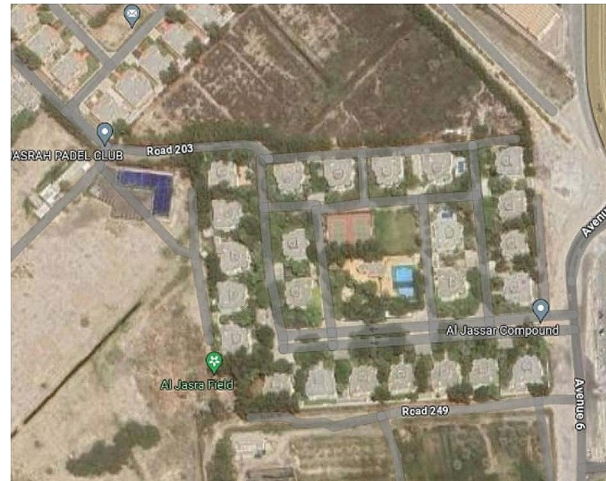
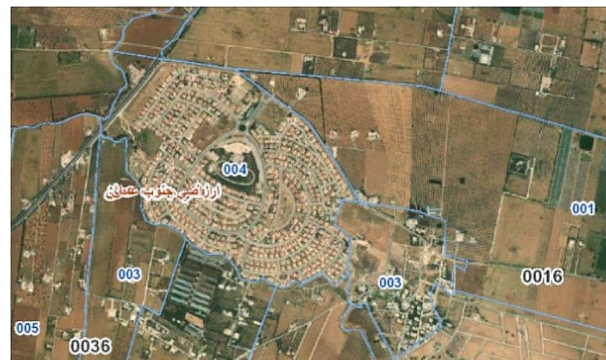


Fig. 8 Al Andalusia gated community. *Source* Google Maps



ic composition of residents, where everyone wants to live in a gated community due to the lack of public amenities and facilities.

- Nationality and diversity: Gated communities have diverse nationalities among their residents.
 - Cultural heterogeneity and adaptation: Gated communities serve as a means of adapting to cultural and religious differences.
 - Access to safe open spaces: Gated communities provide residents with access to safe open spaces.
 - Wealth transfer: Employer-provided housing in gated communities results in wealth transfer.
4. Jordan (Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018; Al Omari & Al Omari, 2015; Lawson, 2021; Makhamreha & Almanasyeha, 2011).

Furthermore, in Jordan, the selected case study is Al Andalusía gated community as in Fig. 8. This development was developed between 2009 and 2015 on a land area of approxi-

mately 800,000m². The development consists of 588 villas. General outputs from the case study:

- **Social Distinctions:** Gated communities contribute to class distinctions, allowing affluent individuals to distance themselves from other groups.
- **Detrimental Effects:** Gated communities can create class divisions and have detrimental effects on the natural and social environment.
- **Fulfilment of Needs:** Gated communities aim to fulfil various needs, such as sheltering, security, comfort, and socialisation.
- **Status and Symbolism:** Gated communities serve as status symbols, representing wealth, social status, and success.
- **Consumer Rationale:** Gated communities provide consumers with their desired lifestyle by offering a luxurious living experience, including exceptional amenities and a desirable location.
- **Urban Development and Spread:** Gated communities notably influence urban growth and are becoming more prevalent in metropolitan areas.

By analysing the selected case studies and the literature on gated communities in the study area, codes were extracted to identify themes related to social impact. The list of themes identified was used to provide a qualitative data presentation (Low, 2001, p. 52). An analysis of literature and articles identified shared themes related to segregation, inequality and exclusivity, fragmentation of urban fabric, as well as safety and security, and changing life standards. To elaborate on the themes that were extracted from each country, further analysis was required to understand the impact of each theme on the social aspect to test if such impact can be contagious:

Table 1 below summarises the initial codes generated from the data set and the names of the themes that were defined. The table's outcome relates to the main article question and literature review.

8 Discussion

The results of the thematic analysis demonstrate the reasons and motives behind the emergence of gated communities in the GCC and Jordan and explore the social impacts that these developments pose on the surroundings. In the GCC, for example, the main aspect extrapolated from the analysis is spatial seclusion and the need to seclude social groups from the wider community. Multiple socioeconomic factors, including the mass movement of Western expatriates to the GCC, drive the desire towards seclusion. However, the motives behind their emergence in Jordan are distinct from the GCC, as the main desire is exclusivity and seclusion from the crowd. Their emergence in Jordan is related to the personal preference of certain affluent individuals from the middle and upper middle class seeking symbolism. The results emphasise the importance of considering any contextual and cultural contrasts in several geographical settings in order to understand the reasons behind the emergence of gated communities.

Thematic analysis in the study area has uncovered shared themes across gated communities in Saudi, Qatar, Bahrain, and Jordan, such as inequality, social isolation, and fragmenta-

Table 1 categorises codes and themes in a comparative aspect:

	Qatar	Saudi	Bahrain	Jordan
Code	<i>Segregation</i>			
Theme	Social isolation	Segregation	Residential segregation	Detrimental effects
Code	<i>Social Exclusion</i>			
Theme	Inequality and exclusivity	Differentiation of lifestyles and exclusion of Saudi nationals	Socio-economic status	Social distinctions
Code	<i>Fragmentation</i>			
Theme	Fragmentation of urban fabric	Fragmented city	Nationality and diversity	Status and symbolism
Code	<i>Social Cohesion</i>			
Theme	Loss of public life	Limited interaction	Neighbourhood life cycle	Economic restructuring and social changes
Code	<i>Safety</i>			
Theme	Sense of security	Perception of safety and security	Access to safe, open spaces	Safety and security

tion, where each theme has contributed to different aspects of the social influence. The lack of social interaction and diversity may weaken the sense of community and may contribute to class division by allowing certain social groups to seclude themselves from others. For example, the case of Dar Al Salam gated community in Qatar emphasised that restricted access and exclusivity may lead to a decline in community involvement and an increase in social inequality. Similarly, in the Kingdom gated community in Saudi Arabia, the spatial seclusion of Western expatriates from the wider community may create additional complexity in the social fabric of the city. Furthermore, in Al Jasser gated community in Bahrain, though such development may foster cultural diversity, nonetheless, they may create segregation between the residents inside the walls and their surroundings. In Jordan, for example, the walls of Al Andalucía gated community may imply symbolism, which may create class division.

The review of the selected cases in the study area has identified common juxtaposes of lifestyle, exclusivity, as well as symbolic representation. These gated communities became a symbol of wealth and success since they fulfilled different needs of comfort, safety, and social life. Furthermore, the analysis of the social impacts of gated communities in different geographical settings in this article aligns with the critiques presented by Bagaeen and Uduku and Atkinson and Blandy related to social division and isolation.

9 Conclusion

The thematic analysis of gated communities in the study area has yielded insights into their social impact. A comprehensive qualitative data presentation has been constructed by identifying common themes such as segregation, inequality, exclusivity, urban fragmentation,

safety, security, and changing lifestyles. Further investigation was undertaken to assess the contagious nature of these impacts and understand their influence on the social aspect.

The research findings in this article revealed meaningful impacts on the social aspect due to isolation and lack of interaction. In Saudi Arabia, the establishment of gated communities reflects a form of spatial seclusion and segregation among different social and cultural groups. These private and guarded enclaves contribute to the fragmentation of cities, resulting in distinct autonomous neighbourhoods. The trend of gated communities in Saudi Arabia is driven by the increasing differentiation of lifestyles and cultural orientations, leading to the development of exclusive residential areas. While gated communities may accommodate a diverse mix of nationalities, the limited interaction between residents and the wider society poses a challenge to social integration.

Similarly, in Qatar, gated communities are often viewed as neighbourhoods lacking diversity and social interaction, leading to a weakened sense of community inside and outside the gated areas. The exclusivity of these communities may perpetuate social inequalities and further divide society, while the physical barriers restricting access to shared spaces diminish community involvement and opportunities for social interaction. As a result, the social fabric of neighbourhoods is impacted, and the overall social cohesion within the city is undermined. While gated communities may provide a perceived sense of security, they can also create a false sense of security and reinforce social divisions.

In Bahrain, gated communities contribute to residential segregation, as they create social divisions based on socioeconomic status. The affordability of gated communities affects the socioeconomic composition of residents, as the lack of public amenities and facilities compels many to seek housing within these enclaves. However, these communities also provide a platform for cultural heterogeneity and adaptation, serving to embrace and manage cultural and religious differences. Furthermore, they offer residents access to safe open spaces while concurrently resulting in wealth transfer through employer-provided housing.

And finally, in Jordan, gated communities strive to fulfil various needs such as security, comfort, and socialisation. They also serve as status symbols, representing wealth, social standing, and success. Consumer preferences play a significant role in driving the development of gated communities, as they offer a luxurious lifestyle with exceptional amenities in desirable locations. However, these communities contribute to class distinctions and impact urban growth, potentially detrimental to the natural and social environment.

This paper suggests that gated communities share similar themes driven by the lack of interactions between different groups. Regardless of their geographical location, residents tend to seclude themselves for different reasons such as diverse social backgrounds, ethnicities or religions, symbolism, exclusivity, socioeconomic, or even exclusivity. Consequently, it was necessary to analyse gated communities in different locations in order to investigate if the reason behind their emergence has any influence on their social impacts. This paper indicates that the social impacts associated with their emergence in the GCC may have created a community within a community. To a large extent, an autonomous community of expatriates with different backgrounds and ethnicities isolating themselves from the traditional local culture. As an example of such isolation, a small number of expatriates learnt to speak Arabic, though the formal language in GCC is Arabic. Whereas in Jordan, the social impact was admired by a certain group with the same background and ethnicities as the surroundings who are seeking seclusion and deliberate isolation. Overall, this study can be considered the first step in assessing the social impacts of gated communities in several locations within the

Middle East. Future studies may include other locations in the Middle East, hoping to assess if the social impact remains contagious in other countries.

In conclusion, the extracted analysis from the review of gated communities in the study area demonstrated significant social impacts regardless of their geographical location. They lead to a lack of diversity, limited social interaction, spatial seclusion and segregation, class distinctions, and urban growth impacts. Overall, gated communities cause social isolation, inequality, and exclusivity, fragmenting urban environments and hindering interaction with the wider society. While providing a sense of security, they reinforce social disparities and negatively impact the natural and social environment. Informed urban planning is crucial for fostering inclusive and united communities. Although gated communities may provide a sense of security, ultimately, they contribute to social isolation, inequality, and exclusivity, which disrupt the fabric of urban environments and hinder interaction with the larger society. Therefore, informed urban planning is crucial to promoting inclusive and cohesive communities.

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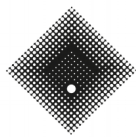
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6.3 THE TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL IMPACT IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN CONTEXT

The following section presents the findings from a published article that offers a narrative review of the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in the Middle East and the GCC countries. The study highlights both the internal benefits, such as security, lifestyle, and exclusivity for residents, and the external challenges, including segregation and reduced urban cohesion. *Urban, Planning and Transport Research*, 13:1, 2489464.



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A narrative review of gated communities and the transformative social impact in Middle Eastern Cities

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ABSTRACT

The rise of gated communities in the Middle East is vastly spreading, driven by socioeconomic fluctuations and a desire for exclusivity. This article aims to contribute to the scholarly debates on the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities by presenting a narrative review that synthesises findings from peer-reviewed articles in the Middle East and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The study suggests that residents of gated communities benefit from positive attributes, including security, lifestyle, and exclusivity. However, negative influences, including segregation and separation, extend beyond the walls, impacting the surrounding communities. This article argues that the spread of gated communities represents a trend of luxury and exclusivity for affluent individuals, largely driven by developers. It concludes that while gated communities offer several positive attributes, these benefits are limited to a specific group residing within their walls. Planners and policymakers are encouraged to leverage these benefits and incorporate them in future designs.

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1. Introduction

Gated communities are spreading worldwide as the preferred residential choice, reflecting a response to the socio-economic changes of the late 20th century and a growing desire for security and exclusivity. In the Middle East, as well as the GCC countries (Gulf Cooperation Council¹), gated communities are often considered a symbol of prestige and exclusivity, catering to affluent social groups and Western expatriates. Yet in the Middle East, they function as spatial instruments of state governance and expatriate containment (AlQahtany, 2022; Hammad et al., 2024a; Ibrahim & Hamed, 2015). While extensive research has examined gated communities globally, studies on their socio-spatial impacts have primarily focused on Western, Latin American, and African contexts (Le Goix, 2005). The Middle East remains underexplored, particularly in terms of how governance structures, expatriate policies, and Islamic urban principles, such as the segregation of gendered spaces, intersect with neoliberal gating (Ben-Hamouche, 2009). Unlike Western contexts, which are driven by crime and security, or African cities, which are

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characterised by neoliberal restructuring, Middle Eastern gated communities are often state-supported, tied to expatriate systems, and embedded in rentier-state political economies (Daher, 2014). Existing studies also overlook how these communities operate within a heterogeneous, state-controlled urban fabric, where foreign investment and privatised governance prevail (Elsheshtawy, 2008b). This study fills these gaps by questioning how Middle Eastern gated communities redefine urban connectivity, governance, and socio-spatial hierarchies.

To understand the challenges associated with gated communities, it is essential to closely explore their unique characteristics, which include restricted public access, comprehensive physical and digital security systems, and a variety of shared facilities and amenities. These features shape the social and physical structures, influencing residents' daily lives and reinforcing their separation from the wider community through restricted public access (Atkinson & Blandy, 2005, pp. 177, 178). Since there is no agreed-upon definition for the term 'gated communities', urbanists can describe what makes this phenomenon, such as privacy, walls, multiple entrances, controlled gates, restricted public access, and shared amenities. Some researchers describe them as private areas where both the insiders and outsiders operate with controlled access (Blakely & Snyder, 1997a). Others suggest that gated communities are urban settlements surrounded by walls and controlled by security guards, which limit access (Touman, 2005). On the other hand, Roitman (2007) defines gated communities as voluntarily enclosed residential neighbourhoods where public spaces are privatised by security systems that restrict residents' access. Building upon these foundational definitions, this article introduces a refined classification tailored to the Middle East and GCC context, identifying three distinct forms of gated communities: socio-political gating, expatriate-centric districts, and luxury-driven gated communities. This classification moves beyond physical characteristics to examine the socio-economic and governance mechanisms that sustain these developments.

In the United States, for example, the demand for gated communities stemmed from various factors, including concerns about crime, a desire for prestige, and a search for a sense of community (Low, 2001; Salim, 2020, p. 48; Wilson-Doenges, 2000). However, Blakely and Snyder (1997b) categorised gated communities into several types, including prestige and exclusivity. While these classifications provide a useful starting point, they do not fully capture the motivations and governance structures that influenced gated communities in the Middle East and GCC. This article builds upon these categorisations, introducing a framework that highlights the role of economic liberalisation, expatriate containment, and state-led urban policies in shaping these developments.

Moreover, gated communities in the Middle East resemble those in North America, as they manifest social and economic disparities, leading to various forms of segregation (Salim, 2020, p. 49). However, this segregation is not merely a spatial assumption limited to a specific space or development; rather, it stems from the behaviour of affluent individuals seeking seclusion, segregation, and distance from the crowd (Alaily-Mattar, 2008, p. 268). This study expands on the notion of voluntary segregation by incorporating socio-spatial stratification theory and urban governance frameworks, arguing that gated communities in the Middle East and GCC serve as mechanisms for both economic restructuring and expatriate containment (Al Omari, 2015, p. 295; Roitman, 2005, p. 303). Contrary

to the common belief that security and fear of crime are the primary motives for the emergence of gated communities in the Middle East, they appear to symbolise wealth and class distinction within society (Alaily-Mattar, 2008, p. 269). In the GCC countries, however, gated communities often cater to a different category of foreign expatriates relocating to work and live there. The primary objective of these products is to offer Western expatriates a lifestyle similar to what they had back home, which can help in containing expatriate culture within the walls (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002, p. 137). In a comparable study conducted by Deng (2022) during the COVID-19 pandemic, the author suggests that gated communities can imply social control by managing and controlling the population. By framing gated communities as socio-spatial constructs that reflect broader transformations in economic policy, expatriate governance, and social stratification, this study offers a novel comparative perspective. It contrasts the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in both the Middle East and GCC, addressing their different yet intersecting roles in urban governance, economic restructuring, and cultural preservation. While the reasons for their emergence vary, ranging from elite-driven exclusivity and lack of infrastructure in the Middle East (Elsheshtawy, 2008b) to expatriate accommodation and control in the GCC (AlQahtany, 2022), this article argues that their socio-spatial consequences, particularly in reinforcing urban fragmentation and exclusivity, are comparable.

With the growing number of articles on gated communities in the Middle East and the GCC, there is a need for a comprehensive narrative review of the literature. Existing reviews tend to focus on gated communities from singular perspectives, either socio-economic, cultural, or political. This study fills a critical gap by integrating these dimensions into a multidisciplinary framework, offering a synthesised interpretation of the socio-spatial implications of gated communities in the region. To address this gap, this article will conduct a narrative review of peer-reviewed articles published between 2001 and 2023. The review will be guided by the emergence of gated communities in the Middle East and GCC, their classification, and their socio-spatial implications, particularly in the context of urban governance and economic restructuring. This article aims to contribute to the existing body of literature on gated communities in the Middle East by compiling articles from multiple countries, including Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain. The selection of these countries would provide a comprehensive understanding of the surge of gated communities and their social impacts in the Middle Eastern region and GCC (Green et al., 2006, p. 103). On the other hand, a narrative review adopts a multidisciplinary approach, providing a rigorous interpretation of the history, culture, and socio-spatial characteristics of gated communities by drawing on multiple resources (Sukhera, 2022, p. 416). This narrative review offers a rigorous interpretation of the history, culture, and socio-spatial characteristics of gated communities. It introduces a novel analytical framework that situates these developments within broader urban governance structures, moving beyond conventional interpretations of gating as merely a security-driven phenomenon. The findings offer valuable insights into how gated communities transform urban landscapes and social interactions, contributing

to the broader discourse on urban fragmentation and social exclusivity in Middle Eastern and GCC contexts.

2. Literature review

2.1. *Discussions on urban transformation in the Middle East*

The urban fabric of the traditional old Arabian and Muslim cities is a complex outcome of geographical conditions, traditions, and the influence of Islamic laws, as argued by Ben-Hamouche (2009). Henceforth, the same was applicable to most Middle Eastern and GCC cities, as they were under the rule of the Islamic state at some point in time. The development of the urban fabric over time was an outcome of individual and community activities, such as subdivisions, extensions, demolitions, and reconstructions, which may have lasted for centuries. Thus, the number of these activities reflects the degree of complexity of the city. Furthermore, individuals had the legal power and freedom to act on their private properties freely without the approval of any governance party. This freedom is evident in the architectural design and character of houses at a particular time, as houses underwent constant alterations in response to family needs (Ben-Hamouche, 2009, p. 24). In addition, the emphasis on privacy and separation has played a significant role in shaping the urban fabric of traditional Middle Eastern cities. Narrow alleyways and streets delineated neighbourhood boundaries, yet these areas remained interconnected through courtyards and civic spaces such as mosques and markets (Hammad, 2023). In Riyadh, for instance, Al-Hemaidi (2001) describes how the city's irregular patterns of narrow, shaded streets created enclosed neighbourhoods that fostered social interaction and provided safe communal spaces for children. The architectural layout, with inward-facing houses and a central mosque as the primary node, reflected local traditions and environmental needs. These designs were tailored to meet the cultural, social, and environmental needs of their people, rooted in local needs and traditions. However, the transformation to modern urban planning in the post-1960s era significantly altered these patterns. The expansion of road networks and the prioritisation of automobile infrastructure physically fragmented neighbourhoods, diminishing opportunities for social interaction and weakening the sense of community Al-Hemaidi (2001, p. 196). As urban spaces became increasingly car-dependent, residents adapted by reinforcing privacy measures, such as installing high walls and closing windows on upper floors. These spatial transformations, imposed through international urban planning models rather than evolving from local traditions, disrupted the social fabric. The sudden shift was often not welcomed by some people who preferred the intimacy and cohesion of their original fabric. In response to these changes, high walls and screens were installed in some private houses, and windows on the second level were closed. The rise of gated communities represents a continuation of these externally driven changes in urban development. Influenced by global neoliberal and capitalist trends, gated developments introduce physical and symbolic barriers that reinforce socio-economic disparities. As Al-Hemaidi (2001, p. 196) suggests, the imposition of imported urban regulations without consideration for local customs has led to social and spatial fragmentation. Gated communities further this divide, creating exclusive developments that

detach residents from the broader urban environment while mirroring the global trend of privatised and securitised urban spaces.

The contrast between traditional urban designs and modern gated communities is evident in both the design and the socio-spatial configuration of cities. While geographical conditions, traditions, laws and regulations have influenced the evolution of urban spaces in the Arab world, which facilitated social interaction, gated communities intentionally limited this interaction. Additionally, these developments emphasised exclusivity and segregation, which often reinforced class and socio-economic divisions. The prioritisation of privacy and isolation stands in opposition to the principles of connectivity and openness, which were characteristic of earlier urban forms. Thus, while traditional urban forms promoted connectivity and inclusiveness, modern gated communities have disrupted the urban fabric, contributing to urban fragmentation and socio-economic divisions.

2.2. Gated communities in the Middle East

Gated communities are generally designed with strict security measures, dedicated services and amenities, and limited access for non-residents, which can imply social and physical separation (Roitman et al., 2010, p. 5). The design of gated communities, with their large walls, controlled entrances, and private amenities, can reinforce segregation by separating residents from the surrounding neighbourhoods. This separation not only limits social interaction but also affects daily activities, as non-residents are discouraged from entering these communities. As a result, gated communities can create isolated islands that operate in isolation, both socially and economically, from the wider community.

The discussion around the social impact of gated communities, particularly social segregation, is divided into two groups of discussion among scholars. One group argues that these developments cause separation and segregation due to their designs and access limitations (Blakely & Snyder, 1997a; Low, 2001; Xu, 2009). Conversely, another group counterargues this assumption and claims that gated communities may foster integration, particularly when developed in poor areas, as they create job opportunities and reduce geographical segregation (Corvalán, 2004; Roitman et al., 2010; Salcedo & Torres, 2004; Webster, 2002).

A recent study published by Qureshi (2023) in the Global South, encompassing the Middle East and the GCC, examined the rise of gated communities between 2000 and 2022. The study found that people choose to live there for security, prestige, proximity to work, affordability, and shared common areas. It concludes that these types of developments may pressure planners to balance protection and urban accessibility. Nonetheless, while Qureshi's study encompasses many cities in the Global South with diverse contextual and cultural backgrounds, this article focuses on the Middle East and the GCC, where cities share similar backgrounds, histories, and traditions. The Middle East has recently witnessed a significant increase in the number of gated communities, with Saudi Arabia and Egypt leading this trend by establishing hundreds of developments in the past two decades (Ibrahim & Hamed, 2015). Although gated communities may appear identical in their characteristics, their development purpose and backgrounds may differ

significantly from one country to another (Grant & Mittelsteadt, 2004; Mohamed Salah & Ayad, 2018).

In the GCC, and particularly in Qatar, gated communities emerged in the 1940s as an extended housing development (El-Ekhteyar & Furlan, 2016, p. 130). The discovery of oil in the 1940s and 1950s led many Western professionals to migrate to the Gulf countries, resulting in a significant increase in housing demand (AlQahtany, 2022, p. 18). Consequently, gated communities were developed as a housing solution for Western families, providing them with a lifestyle akin to their home countries while respecting Gulf traditions outside the walls (El-Ekhteyar & Furlan, 2016, p. 129; Salim, 2021, p. 149).

In a study conducted in Egypt by Alaily-Mattar (2008, p. 270), the author concludes that real-estate development has fostered gated communities and marketed them as luxurious, exclusive, and high-end residential solutions. Gated communities have proliferated in Cairo since 1990, driven by socio-economic and cultural changes associated with economic limitations and globalisation (Elsheshtawy, 2008b). Post-2000, gated communities evolved into a distinct concept, serving as a new form of liberation for the affluent, offering escape from crowded cities (Kuppinger, 2004; Mohamed Salah & Ayad, 2018, p. 2745). Similarly, gated communities in Turkey emerged as a result of the socioeconomic and cultural changes that occurred in the 1980s, driven by the financial, real estate, and construction sectors. This period witnessed the emergence of a new class of white-collar workers, driven by the opening of the economy to global markets and the influx of international companies (Geniş, 2007). Gated communities were viewed as a housing solution for individuals preferring to live away from crowded cities. In Lebanon, the emergence of gated communities can be traced back to a weakening public sector, which led the private sector to substitute the public sector and provide housing solutions with suitable lifestyles and amenities that meet the demands of affluent individuals (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002, p. 334). In Jordan, gated communities emerged in the 1990s, culminating in the establishment of a fully developed gated community in Amman in 2009 (Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018). The neoliberal restructuring and the experiences of neighbouring countries mainly influenced the development of gate communities (Al Omari, 2015, p. 296; Daher, 2014, p. 101; Hammad et al., 2024b).

Even in Sudan, where a majority of the population lives below the poverty threshold, gated communities have been spreading since 2003, catering to affluent individuals seeking prestige and better amenities (Elhadary & Ali, 2017, p. 45). Furthermore, in a dispersed country such as Iraq, the number of gated communities has grown more than tenfold since 2008 in Sulaimaniyah, largely due to the political and economic changes in Iraq and Syria. Many people flee to Sulaimaniyah, seeking security, safety, and employment (Demir & Mukhlis, 2017, p. 66). Elhadary and Ali (2017, p. 50) suggested that there might be a direct relationship between wealth and the emergence of gated communities at both micro or macro levels, alongside the public sector's inability to influence the private sector to cater for affluent individuals, as suggested by Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002, p. 334).

The emergence of gated communities in the GCC and the Middle East is influenced by historical, cultural, and economic factors unique to each country. The social and spatial impacts of these developments on the surroundings may vary significantly from one country to another. By examining these diverse contexts, this paper aims to contribute a nuanced understanding of the impact of these communities on their surroundings.

3. Methods of investigation

3.1. A narrative review

This investigation employs a narrative review methodology, synthesising peer-reviewed articles on gated communities and their social and spatial impacts to identify key themes, debates, and knowledge gaps within a multidisciplinary framework (Ramdhani et al., 2014, p. 103). Unlike a systematic review, which prioritises empirical studies, a narrative review allows for a broader exploration of diverse perspectives across urban, economic, and socio-political disciplines. This approach is particularly suited to the study of gated communities in the Middle East, as their development is influenced by a combination of geopolitical forces, regulatory frameworks, expatriate housing policies, and socio-cultural factors that are often absent in broader global studies. The study adopts a meta-narrative approach, which reconciles different scholarly perspectives through comparative synthesis and discourse analysis, critically examining the complexities of gated communities in the Middle East. This enables the study to bridge fragmented research perspectives, providing a cohesive analytical lens that accounts for both local and regional socio-political dynamics. The method involves a comparative analysis of how gated communities are framed within urban studies, socio-spatial stratification theories, and governance models, providing a comprehensive examination of their transformative impacts (Sukhera, 2022, p. 416). While this approach provides flexibility and depth, it also presents challenges, such as potential selection bias and the difficulty of synthesising studies with varying methodologies. Nevertheless, the narrative review enables a structured thematic synthesis, critical comparisons, and contextual interpretations of existing studies, making it well-suited to this investigation (Sukhera, 2022, p. 414). To mitigate potential biases and enhance methodological rigor, this study implements structured inclusion criteria to ensure that selected articles contribute to a balanced and representative understanding of the topic.

3.2. Inclusion criteria

To investigate the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in the Middle East region, a systematic literature search was conducted using academic database search engines, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, SpringerLink, and ProQuest. The search strategy employed Boolean operators and keyword combinations such as ‘gated communities’ AND ‘Middle East’ OR ‘GCC’ OR specific country names (e.g. ‘Jordan,’ ‘Saudi Arabia’) to identify relevant articles that were published between 2001 and 2023 (Ferrari, 2015, p. 232). The study focuses on articles published between 2001 and 2023, a timeframe that captures two decades of substantial urban restructuring and transformation across the region (Daher, 2014, p. 100).

The initial database search yielded 59 relevant articles, which were screened through a multi-stage process:

- (a) Title and Abstract Review: Articles were assessed for relevance to the research objectives.

- (b) Full-Text Screening: A detailed evaluation was conducted to ensure alignment with the study's thematic focus

Following this process, 14 peer-reviewed articles were selected for the final review. A set of inclusion criteria was applied to ensure methodological rigour and relevance:

- (a) Geographical Scope: Studies conducted in the Middle East and the GCC region, covering selected countries.
- (b) Thematic Focus: Articles must explicitly examine the classification, social, and spatial impacts of gated communities, including themes of exclusivity, segregation, governance, and urban transformation.
- (c) Publication Date: Studies were published between 2001 and 2023 to ensure relevance to contemporary urban development trends. While some earlier studies may provide valuable insights, this timeframe ensures relevance to contemporary urban transformations.
- (d) Academic Rigour: Only English-language peer-reviewed journal articles were included. While this ensures methodological reliability, it is acknowledged that omitting grey literature and non-English publications may exclude region-specific policy discussions and local case studies (Bandauko et al., 2022, p. 345; Sukhera, 2022, p. 415).

3.3. Data extraction and analysis

After identifying an initial set of articles that discussed gated communities in general in the Middle East, a systematic appraisal was carried out to evaluate their relevance to the topic by reviewing the titles and abstracts of the selected articles (Ferrari, 2015, p. 232). A structured thematic analysis was performed to extract and synthesise key findings from the selected literature. Articles were reviewed for:

- Study Objectives and Methodology
- Geographical Focus (Country and City of Study)
- Key Findings on Gated Communities' Social and Spatial Impacts
- Emerging Themes and Conceptual Frameworks

A full review stage was conducted to examine the relevance of the inclusion criteria and extract keywords and themes from the literature, offering a comparative synthesis of how gated communities influence urban and social structures across the region (Bandauko et al., 2022, pp. 345, 346).

3.4. Study settings

The studies and articles reviewed in this paper encompass a total of eight countries: five from the Middle East,² including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Sudan, as well as three from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), specifically Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain. The selection of these countries was based on their significant urban transformations, the availability of scholarly literature, and their representation of diverse socio-

economic contexts within the Middle East and the GCC. To ensure a representative scope, the review also covers major cities and capitals, including Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Istanbul, Khartoum, and Doha, as well as secondary urban centres, such as Dammam in Saudi Arabia. One article in Bahrain did not mention the city where the study was conducted. By incorporating studies from different development trajectories within the region, this review provides a balanced yet analytically feasible comparison of gated communities across distinct urbanisation models. While other countries may have relevant cases, the lack of sufficient peer-reviewed research would limit their inclusion in this review (Elsheshtawy, 2008a).

3.5. Study limitations

While this narrative review provides a comprehensive synthesis of the existing literature on gated communities in the Middle East and the GCC, certain limitations are acknowledged:

- **Language Bias:** The exclusive reliance on English-language, peer-reviewed studies may overlook critical perspectives from grey literature (e.g. government reports, dissertations) and non-English publications, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of regional scope (Palmer et al., 2024). However, this decision ensures that sources meet rigorous academic standards.
- **Historical Context:** The study's selection criteria, which prioritised research published between 2001 and 2023, may have overlooked earlier works that could provide historical context on the evolution of gated communities (Le Goix, 2005; Webster et al., 2002).
- **Geographical Representation:** Although the review synthesises findings from eight countries, this may affect the balance of regional insights, the scope of research, and the generalizability of the conclusions (Füller & Michel, 2014).
- **Lack of Primary Data:** As a narrative review, this study does not conduct primary data collection or statistical validation, meaning that its findings rely on existing interpretations rather than direct empirical measurement. Despite these limitations, the structured selection process and thematic analysis ensure a rigorous and meaningful synthesis of available research (Ferrari, 2015).

4. Results of the narrative review

The collection return from the combined database search that included gated communities in the Middle East and GCC was 59 articles. Eight articles were removed in the initial review of the titles as they didn't match the search inquiry. After that, 51 abstracts were reviewed, and 25 articles were removed to narrow it down to 26. Following this, 26 full texts were assessed, and 12 articles were excluded because they did not meet the set inclusion criteria, resulting in 14 eligible final studies, as shown in Figure 1.

4.1. Reasons behind the emergence of gated communities

The review identified two distinct types of gated communities: the GCC and the Middle East. In the GCC, the emergence of gated communities was primarily driven

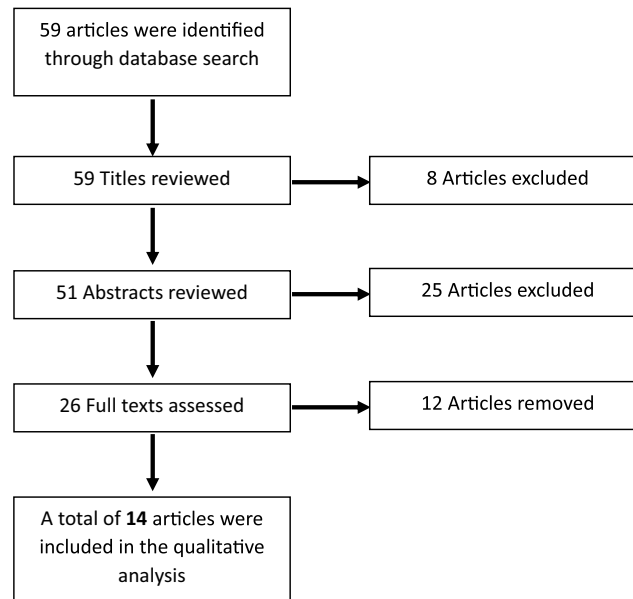


Figure 1. Flowchart of the Selection Process. Author

by the discovery of oil in the 1930s, which attracted large numbers of Western professionals seeking housing that aligned with their cultural and lifestyle preferences (AlQahtany, 2022, p. 18). This movement has led to the development of a distinct type of residential housing designed to attract Western professionals with their families to relocate to these countries, away from their home countries. Gated communities provided a housing solution that allowed expatriate families to practice their lives freely within the gates, shielded from the cultural and socially conservative societies of the GCC (Le Goix, 2005; Mahgoub & Khalfani, 2012). In contrast, the other types of gated communities identified in the reviewed articles were from Middle Eastern countries, including Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Egypt. These developments were largely driven by socioeconomic changes, particularly the rise of new middle and upper-middle-class groups seeking social distinction, higher quality of life, and social prestige (Al Omari, 2015; Denis, 2006). Furthermore, the public sector's failure to provide adequate infrastructure and services prompted the private sector to offer residential solutions that residents needed, such as public parks, play areas, and safe areas for children. In addition, as argued by Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002), the spread of gated communities is related to weak urban public planning controls, which allow private developers to merge, divide, or subdivide plots and land to cater to new towns (Kuppinger, 2004). This was seen in most cases in the Middle East, including Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon (Alaily-Mattar, 2008; Ghonimi et al., 2011; Hammad et al., 2023; Makhamreha & Almanasyeha, 2011). On the other hand, security was not considered the primary reason for the emergence of gated communities in the GCC and the Middle East, except in Sudan, where it was the second main reason, following economic growth (Elhadary & Ali, 2017). Instead, the proliferation of gated communities in both the Middle East and the

GCC regions reflects broader socio-political changes, including culture, conservatism, and economic restructuring.

4.2. Social and spatial impacts of gated communities

The reviewed articles identified both positive and negative impacts of gated communities within the same article. Positive impacts were mainly limited to residents, including enhanced security, safety, privacy, a sense of belonging, and increased property value. Gated communities also provide a lifestyle characterised by social homogeneity and exclusive amenities, including parks and sporting facilities. However, the negative impacts predominantly affect the surrounding areas and communities, leading to social segregation, isolation, disruption of spatial fabric, class division, and reduced civic engagement. [Table 1](#) presents a chronological summary of the 14 selected articles.

Five articles (5 out of 14) have utilised qualitative methods to collect data, which include interviews with different concerned stakeholders or questionnaires with residents of gated communities to gather their opinions and feedback, case studies, or referring to urban design principles and theories, for example (Al Omari, [2015](#); Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, [2018](#); Alaily-Mattar, [2008](#); El-Ekhteyar & Furlan, [2016](#); Elhadary & Ali, [2017](#); Glasze, [2006](#); Glasze & Alkhayyal, [2002](#)). Three studies utilised mixed methods design, including interviews and structured interviews for data collection, for example (Abed et al., [2022](#); AlQahtany, [2022](#); Salim, [2021](#)). Based on the reviewed articles, the following sections will present different experiences related to the narrative review questions, which include the reasons behind the emergence of gated communities in various settings and the positive and negative findings regarding the social and spatial impacts of gated communities.

4.3. Negative impacts of gated communities

4.3.1. Social segregation and separation

Social segregation was a recurrent theme in 11 out of the 14 articles reviewed. For cases in the GCC, gated communities were primarily developed to segregate and separate two societies with different backgrounds, namely Westerners from the local community (Glasze, [2006](#), p. 87). While this arrangement provides Westerners with more freedom and openness within the walls, it results in minimal interaction with the surrounding local culture, to the extent that many expatriates do not learn the local language despite their prolonged stay in the country (Glasze, [2006](#), p. 87). The socio-economic homogeneity exacerbates social fragmentation and reduces civic engagement, creating a social divide between gated communities and their surrounding neighbourhoods (Al Shawish, [2015, June 10-12](#), p. 72). The concept of 'private clubs', as Le Goix ([2007](#)) indicates, can be observed in these gated communities, where residents represent private members with their exclusive goods and services, serving a select group of people while excluding others. On the contrary, the Middle Eastern context presents a slightly different phenomenon since gated communities have segregated wealthy and affluent individuals from the wider community (Alaily-Mattar, [2008](#), p. 267). The decision to live in gated communities in the Middle East was driven by social and economic changes within the middle and upper-middle classes, who sought to seclude themselves from

Table 1. Summary of the Reviewed Articles. Author

SN	Article	Reference	Study Country/City	Methodology	Findings related to the reasons behind the emergence of gated communities	Positive findings related to Social and Spatial impacts of gated communities	Negative findings related to Social and Spatial impacts of gated communities
1	Gated housing estates in the Arab world: case studies in Lebanon and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	Glazze & Alkhayyal (2002)	Saudi Arabia (Riyadh) & Lebanon (Beirut)	Comparative case study	Riyadh: Shift from traditional housing patterns, housing for Western professionals. Lebanon: Socio-political instability, lack of public sector support	Security during the Lebanese Civil War, a safe shared space for extended families, and economic benefits due to higher rents.	Social segregation in Riyadh, spatial isolation due to strict access control, and economic disparities in the surrounding areas.
2	Segregation and seclusion: the case of compounds for Western expatriates in Saudi Arabia	Glazze (2006)	Saudi Arabia (Riyadh)	Qualitative narrative interviews	Housing demand for Western professionals, the need for security and controlled access.	Community bonding among expatriates, cultural freedom, higher rental yields, and social networks.	Physical and social isolation, urban fragmentation, and pricing disparities affecting affordability.
3	Beyond gated communities? Detachment and concentration in networked nodes of affluence in the city of Beirut	Alaily-Mattar, (2008)	Lebanon (Beirut)	Qualitative study based on conceptual analysis	Desire for security, privacy, and social exclusivity.	Increased security, stronger social ties among affluent residents, and improved urban aesthetics.	Detachment from wider community, urban fragmentation, exacerbation of social disparities.
4	The Contribution of Gated Communities to Urban Development in Greater Cairo Region, New Towns	Ghonimi et al., (2011)	Egypt (Cairo)	Urban Studies, sociology, and urban planning theories	Protection of property boundaries, private sector-led urban expansion.	Social homogeneity, exclusive services for residents.	Spatial isolation, disruption of urban connectivity, and social polarization.
5	Gated communities in Istanbul: the new walls of the city	Akgün & Baycan (2012)	Turkey (Istanbul)	Ethnographic Study	Legislative, socio-economic, and demographic factors.	Sense of security and privacy, increase in property value.	Social division, urban sprawl, traffic congestion.
6	Choices and changes in the housing market and community preferences: Reasons for the emergence of gated communities in Egypt	Almatarneh (2013)	Egypt (Cairo)	Mixed Methods approach: Interviews with stakeholders (developers, marketers, designers), Survey questionnaire, discourse analysis of marketing material	Market demand, exclusivity, influence of real estate marketing.	Sense of community, homogeneity, shared amenities.	Socio-spatial segregation, transformation of urban space.

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

SN	Article	Reference	Study Country/City	Methodology	Findings related to the reasons behind the emergence of gated communities	Positive findings related to Social and Spatial impacts of gated communities	Negative findings related to Social and Spatial impacts of gated communities
7	The Emergence of the Residential Gated Communities in Jordan	Al Omari (2015)	Jordan (Amman)	Qualitative study-review of secondary literature, comparative evaluation	Security, status, socio-economic restructuring, Western lifestyle influence.	Controlled environment, urban expansion, privacy.	Reinforces socio-economic distinctions, alters urban planning and land use.
8	Evaluating the Impact of Gated Communities on the Physical and Social Fabric of Doha City	Al Shawish (2015, June 10-12)	Qatar (Doha)	Qualitative case study with theoretical review of urban design principles	Demographic diversity, economic changes, employer-based housing.	Child-friendly spaces, diverse income-level offerings.	Urban fragmentation, restricted accessibility, weakened public interactions.
9	Sense of Community in Gated Communities in Doha: The Case of Al-Ein Compound in Ein Khaled Neighborhood	El-Ekhteyar & Furlan (2016)	Qatar (Doha)	Qualitative study: Case study with Interviews	Security, influx of foreign workforce.	Safe spaces, exclusive amenities, controlled environments.	Social isolation, exclusivity, affordability concerns.
10	A New Trend in Urban Housing: Gated Communities in Khartoum, Sudan	Elhadary & Ali (2017)	Sudan (Khartoum)	Case Study methodology	Economic growth, lack of government services, security concerns.	Social cohesion, improved urban stratification.	Spatial fragmentation, economic inequality, limited design diversity.
11	Social Shifts – Living in Gated Communities: A Case of Andalusia, Jordan	Al-Homoud & Al Aswad (2018)	Jordan (Amman)	Survey with a structured questionnaire	Lifestyle preference, investment appeal, privacy.	Sense of belonging, well-designed neighbourhoods, green space preservation.	Socio-spatial exclusivity, privatization of services.
12	Gated communities in Bahrain: historical and urban geographies	Salim (2021)	Bahrain	Mixed method study including semi-structured interviews	Housing for foreign workers, economic ties with Saudi Arabia.	Quality of life, diverse cultural adaptation.	Socio-economic segregation, social disconnection.
13	Evaluating the demographic scenario of gated communities in Dammam metropolitan area, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	AlQahtany (2022)	Saudi Arabia (Dammam)	Mixed method study, triangulation technique	Housing for expatriates, preference for homogeneity, security.	Community bonding, positive social interactions.	Gender-related segregation, socio-economic exclusion.
14	Social Sustainability in Gated Communities Versus Conventional Communities: The Case of Amman	Abed et al. (2022)	Jordan (Amman)	Mixed method – Survey and structured questionnaire	Housing affordability, rising costs, security, public amenities.	Strong social bonds, cohesive socio-economic groups.	Reduced civic engagement, service privatization, spatial segregation.

the broader community (Al Omari, 2015, p. 296). The architectural design of the single housing types also reinforces social and spatial discontinuities, which ultimately impact the social behaviour of the surrounding areas (Ghonimi et al., 2011, p. 6). In Turkey, Tanulku (2018, p. 107) argued that gated communities hinder the dialogue between residents, which thwarts the acceleration of society's diversity. By examining the marketing materials advertised by developers, prestige and exclusivity are identified as the top features of a successful gated community, and these features can be achieved through walls and gates that convey an evident exclusivity for a particular social class (Almatarneh, 2013, p. 571).

4.3.2. *Seclusion and isolation*

Another recurring issue is the seclusion and isolation created by the privatisation of public space and restricted access to gated communities. In the GCC, and based on the reviewed articles from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain, gated communities are often guarded by security personnel, and access is usually limited to the residents of these developments and their visitors; for example, Saudi nationals were prevented from living or entering these communities (Glasze, 2006, p. 85). In Qatar, for instance, the walls surrounding these gated communities lead to poor urban accessibility and weak interaction between people; this includes the interrelationships among residents within the same community due to lack of socio-economic diversity (Al Shawish, 2015, June 10-12, p. 76). In another example, in Qatar, residents do not have any social interactions with the surrounding neighbours, and even their children are prohibited from leaving the community (El-Ekhteyar & Furlan, 2016, p. 132).

On the other hand, the articles reviewed in the Middle East, from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Sudan, reflect that gated communities are typically built on large, often isolated plots that are far from city centres. This physical separation creates isolated islands of wealth, disconnected from the surrounding urban infrastructure (Alaily-Mattar, 2008, p. 265; AlQahtany, 2022, p. 17). For instance, developers in Jordan and Lebanon designated vast natural or agricultural land to build their projects away from the city and urban structures (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002, p. 333; Makhamreha & Almanasyeha, 2011, p. 253). Similarly, in Turkey, gated communities were proven to offer social values; nevertheless, these social interactions were within the residences and were not extended to the surrounding neighbourhoods due to the surrounding high walls (Akgün & Baycan, 2012, p. 107). In Sudan, neighbouring residents were unable to access services offered within gated communities as access was restricted to residents only. Thus, hiding behind walls implies that people are not enthusiastic to interact with people from outside the walls (Elhadary & Ali, 2017). In Egypt, Ghonimi et al. (2011, p. 9) explained the definition of social impact from Putnam's concept of social capital, where social interaction supports creating strong communities and personal commitments. On the contrary, gated communities disconnected any possible correlation between parts of the city and isolated people from the public domain. For instance, the initial vision of gated communities in Cairo was to create new towns that interconnect and correlate the wealthy with their inferior neighbours in an amalgamated urban form that is liberal, and all services are within walking distance. Tragically, the outcome was a product that excludes people with low incomes and secludes high-class individuals in walled zones (Ghonimi et al., 2011, p. 15).

4.4. Positive impacts of gated communities

Despite the negative impacts, gated communities have several positive aspects, particularly for their residents and the local economy, as highlighted in the majority of the reviewed articles. One of the most frequently highlighted benefits is the creation of temporary jobs during the development and construction phase, or long-term jobs for service providers during the post-delivery phase (Elhadary & Ali, 2017, p. 52). Moreover, most of the reviewed articles mentioned that gated communities often foster a strong sense of community and social cohesion among residents, as they gather people of similar socio-economic backgrounds (Abed et al., 2022; Glasze, 2006). From a security perspective, most articles agreed that gated communities offer a safer environment, particularly for children, as they restrict traffic and cars. In addition to the increased green urban spaces due to the large, landscaped areas, swimming pools, natural spaces, and well-designed neighbourhoods (Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018).

4.4.1. Economic impact

Economically, several researchers have argued that gated communities can have a positive impact both internally, within residents, and on the surrounding neighbours. For example, Salcedo and Torres (2004) suggested that developing gated communities can help create low-skilled jobs, such as those of construction workers during the construction phase or security personnel and cleaners post-completion. Whereas Le Goix (2005) discussed that the tax revenues generated from these developments can help local governments. Furthermore, Webster (2002) suggested that gated communities can function as 'economic clubs' where economic rights over shared neighbourhood features are legally protected. In other words, since gated communities operate as clubs, members can gain privileges and benefits by being a part of this community. On the other hand, Landman (2000, Aug 23-25) suggested that gated communities are influential urban products that have the potential to influence and transform the environment of urban areas in the 21st century. Her argument regarding the financial implications is complicated, as gated communities promise increased property values and potential insurance benefits. Nevertheless, they impose significant costs during their establishment and maintenance, which may add financial burdens on residents that lead to internal conflicts and ultimately impact democracy and urban sustainability (Landman, 2000, Aug 23-25, p. 5).

However, the reviewed articles in the Middle East align with the positive economic benefits of gated communities worldwide, as they reduce the cost of shared infrastructure and communal areas, and typically provide common amenities, such as playgrounds and recreational facilities (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002, p. 324). Moreover, rental rates in gated communities tend to be higher when compared to similar properties in non-gated developments, primarily due to the enhanced facilities and services they offer. Additionally, property owners refuse to reduce rental charges, which provides misleading indications of the rental market to the surrounding areas and leads to economic disparities (El-Ekhteyar & Furlan, 2016, p. 130; Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002). In Sudan, for instance, where a significant portion of the population lives below the poverty line, gated communities may exert additional pressure on local governments to improve public

services for residents outside the walls (Elhadary & Ali, 2017, p. 52). Similarly, in Egypt, gated communities have been found to create an imbalance in the distribution of economic resources due to their unaffordability, making them inequitably unaffordable for the average Egyptian citizen (Ghonimi et al., 2011, p. 17). Furthermore, gated communities may impact the prices of houses in the surrounding areas, as they tend to elevate the actual prices of these houses to match those in neighbouring gated communities.

5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to critically examine the rise of gated communities in Middle Eastern and GCC cities through a narrative review of the literature, focusing on the reasons behind their emergence in the selected study area, as well as their positive and negative social and spatial impacts. This article suggests that two types of gated communities have emerged in the study area: the Middle Eastern type and the GCC type. The Middle Eastern type has primarily developed due to the government's lack of public facilities and infrastructure, which has allowed the private sector to fill this gap. Additionally, the demand for exclusivity, security, and prestige among affluent individuals has contributed to the expansion of these services. On the contrary, the GCC type originated as a residential model catering to Western expatriates, driven by oil exploration and foreign investment in the region.

Despite these contextual differences, gated communities across both regions exhibit shared socio-spatial attributes, which can be categorised into positive and negative aspects:

5.1. Positive aspects

- **Enhanced Security and Safety:** Gated communities are perceived to provide a controlled environment with lower crime rates, which remains a key attraction for residents.
- **Community Cohesion and Identity:** The controlled nature of these developments fosters a sense of belonging among residents.
- **Access to Green Spaces and Exclusive Amenities:** Many gated developments prioritise landscaping, recreational spaces, and high-quality infrastructure, which may not always be available in surrounding urban areas.
- **Lifestyle:** Gated communities often serve as aspirational living environments, attracting families.

5.2. Negative aspects

- **Segregation and Social Fragmentation:** By restricting access, these communities create divisions between residents and non-residents, exacerbating socio-economic inequalities.
- **Urban Discontinuity and Spatial Isolation:** The physical barriers and exclusive nature of these communities disrupt urban connectivity and limit integration with the surrounding city.

- **Affordability and Exclusion:** Due to high costs, these developments remain accessible only to specific social groups, reinforcing socio-economic stratification.

The findings of this study align with Qureshi (2023) results, which also include insights from other cities in the Global South. Consequently, it can be suggested that gated communities may contribute to urban challenges such as the integration of functions and duplication of services. By examining the phenomenon through a social control perspective, it provides a deeper understanding of the socio-political implications associated with gated communities. Furthermore, findings of this study align with existing literature on gated communities in terms of their role in fostering socio-spatial segregation and urban discontinuity. However, what differentiates Middle Eastern gated communities from their global counterparts is their entanglement with state-driven development agendas, expatriate housing policies, and the privatisation of urban governance. In particular, the Gulf states exemplify a model where gated communities serve as strategic tools for economic diversification and attracting global investment, a phenomenon less commonly observed in Western or African contexts. Furthermore, the region's governance structures, which blend state intervention with privatised urban management, create a unique framework for spatial control and exclusivity. By foregrounding these factors, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how gated communities function within the socio-political fabric of the Middle East, rather than merely replicating global trends.

This study contributes to the existing literature on gated communities by providing valuable insights into their motivations and impacts, particularly in the context of the Middle East and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

6. Conclusion and study implications

The reviewed articles were narratively and critically analysed to extract key issues related to the development of gated communities in the Middle East and GCC. The analysis revealed that the social segregation of Westerners from the local culture, aiming to replicate similar lifestyles back home, was a primary factor behind their emergence in the GCC. In contrast, in the Middle East, the rise of the middle and upper-middle class in society seeking seclusion from the crowd, along with desires for luxury and safe play areas for children, drove the development of these communities. Additionally, the transformation and urban restructuring that took place over the past two decades, influenced by globalisation and neoliberalization, facilitated the proliferation of gated communities led by private developers.

The findings also highlighted both positive and negative social and spatial impacts, with the majority of the articles emphasising the benefits of gated communities, such as safe places for children, a sense of belonging, social networking, social homogeneity, and exclusive amenities; however, these positive impacts and advantages tend to be confined within the walls of these communities. Unlike the motivation for gated communities in the U.S. and Europe in the 1950s, which focused on security and prestige, their spread in the Middle East and the GCC has become a trend of luxury and exclusivity for affluent individuals who can afford to live in them.

The current study serves as a starting point for understanding the implications of this type of residential product on the broader social and spatial urban transformations within the surrounding neighbourhoods. The new products of gated communities largely replicate the Western global model, built to serve affluent individuals as a safe haven. Furthermore, the private sector has filled the gap left by inadequate local government services, providing comparable facilities and services, as predicted by several authors since 2002, notably in the case of Cairo, Egypt.

Despite the spread of gated communities across the Middle East and GCC, the number of articles remains limited, and more studies are required to understand how planners and decision-makers plan to control the spread of gated communities. Additionally, a gap exists in understanding the relationship and comparison between GCC and Middle Eastern gated communities, particularly the reasons behind their emergence. While gated communities appeared in the GCC due to the exploration of oil, it raises the question as to why they continue to proliferate nearly a century after oil exploration, especially when over 48,000 vacant units were reported in 2011.

The conclusions extracted from this narrative review illustrate several social and spatial implications of gated communities at both micro and macro levels. There is an urgent need to revise the design regulations to control and diversify their growth, as this article does not advocate replacing gated communities with alternative housing products. Instead, it acknowledges their benefits and advantages while recognising the isolating impacts of how real estate developers marketed these products as elite places and distinct environments. To mitigate the spatial and social challenges that emerged from the spread of gated communities, planners and policymakers can leverage their positive aspects and benefits, such as safety and security for children, reduced traffic, green areas, a sense of belonging, enhanced quality of life, community and lifestyle and incorporate them in the neighbourhood design.

Notes

1. GCC: is a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman, and is called the Gulf Cooperation Council. Gulf Cooperation Council – Wikipedia.
2. Middle East is a geopolitical region that comprises the Arabian Peninsula (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, southern Iraq and Jordan), the Levant, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and Iraq. Middle East – Wikipedia.

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6.4 INTERVIEWS ON SOCIOSPATIAL IMPACTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Consistent with the methodological framework presented in Chapter 4, this research employs semi-structured interviews as its primary data source. Ten experts from diverse backgrounds, including architecture, urban planning, authorities, and academia, across Jordan and the broader Middle East, were interviewed on the social, spatial, and economic aspects of gated communities. For a focused analysis, the findings are presented thematically; this section includes three interviews on the broader Middle East and GCC context, while Chapter 9 details seven interviews focused on Jordan. Each interview has been transcribed and summarised to extract key points. The following section summarises three interviews and offers a range of insights into the impacts of gated communities on their surroundings. Interview participants were selected using purposive expert sampling based on their professional roles, experience, and direct engagement with gated community development, planning, or analysis in the Middle East and GCC contexts. The sample included architects, planners, academics, and policy-related professionals with practical and analytical exposure to gated communities in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE. These criteria were appropriate to the study's aims, as the research focuses on understanding socio-spatial impacts at the community and urban scales rather than on individual resident experiences, and requires informed perspectives on planning practices, development processes, and regional trends. This purposeful selection enhanced the richness and credibility of the findings by ensuring that data were drawn from participants with in-depth professional knowledge and contextual understanding of gated communities in the Middle East and GCC. Their diverse yet relevant experiences enabled triangulation of perspectives across planning, design, and policy domains, strengthening the consistency and interpretive validity of the findings and reducing reliance on single or context-specific viewpoints.

Interview 1: Conducted with an architect and planner serving as a zoning officer in the GCC and Egypt. The interviewee outlined the historical evolution of gated communities in the region, attributing their rise to unmet needs in traditional urban planning, such as inadequate parking, lack of private open spaces, and insufficiently customised housing designs. Private developers successfully filled these gaps, leading to the popularity of gated communities over traditional neighbourhoods. He emphasised that even if urban planning addresses these deficiencies through “human-centric” neighbourhoods, socio-

economic factors like wealth disparity and the desire for exclusivity will continue to drive gated communities. He further explained that urban authorities have transferred from planners to regulators, reducing their influence, while private developers drive urban growth. Government attempts to develop affordable and inclusive neighbourhoods have been hindered by high land and infrastructure costs. The interview concluded that gated communities are market-driven solutions shaped by developer priorities, with authorities struggling to balance social needs and economic forces

Interview 2: Conducted with a British architect working in a consultancy firm in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The interviewee highlighted that gated communities emerged primarily to accommodate Western expatriates, driven by concerns over culture and security. These communities are highly sought after for their facilities, such as pools, tennis courts, and schools, and for offering a more relaxed lifestyle compared to the conservative norms outside the gates. However, he noted that such developments limit interaction between residents and the broader community due to high-security walls and restrictive access. Economically, they generate local employment in security, cleaning, and facility management. Spatially, these communities are often disconnected from their urban surroundings and feature architectural styles that contrast with the local context. While recent shifts in Saudi culture have increased external social interaction, gated communities remain favoured among wealthy individuals for their exclusivity and safety.

Interview 3: Conducted with an architect and owner of a design consultancy firm in the UAE. This expert traced the origins of gated communities to efforts to accommodate Western professionals in the GCC countries, especially in the oil sector. Developers initially responded to cultural sensitivities and market needs, but over time, financial motivations began to reduce long-term planning goals. This diverge led to a neglect of essential civic infrastructure, including police stations, schools, and mosques, resulting in isolated urban areas. Although the interviewee acknowledged the spatial isolation of these developments, he noted that social interaction still occurs in shared public venues, such as malls and markets. He questioned the continued necessity of physical walls, especially in safe cities with high cultural tolerance. He recommended using softer design features, such as landscaped buffer zones instead of hard physical barriers, to improve integration and reduce the symbolic separation between gated and non-gated areas.

Table 6-1 summarises the key themes drawn from these interviews, which are later used to inform the thematic integration in Chapter Ten.

Table 6-1 Summary of Interviews

Comparison/ Interview	Positives	Negatives	Parallels
Interview 1	Meets market demand; developer-driven innovation	Social and spatial isolation, class segregation	Historical emergence; developer dominance
Interview 2	Enhanced security, facilities, relaxed norms for expats	Cultural Disconnect, Social and Spatial Isolation, Wealth and Class Segregation	Security versus Social Interaction
Interview 3	Security, public facilities, potential for integration with Public Spaces	Lack of civic services; isolated design	Buffer zones as a design strategy, evolving urban needs

Source: Researcher

The interviews reveal several key discussions and contrasting perspectives related to gated communities in the Middle East region. Both interviews 1 and 2 emphasise the security features associated with gated communities, especially for Western expatriates seeking similar lifestyles to their home countries. Interview 1 views gated communities as an urban response to the failure of traditional urban planning to meet basic market demands, while Interview 3 sees them as a short-term financial solution that leads to a lack of essential civic services. Nonetheless, all interviewees agree that gated communities can create social and spatial isolation, resulting in limited interactions between residents and the surrounding communities. On the economic aspect, Interview 2 highlights that these developments can generate local employment in security and facility management. All interviewees identify spatial and social isolation as core challenges. Economic benefits, such as job creation, are acknowledged, but there is a general consensus on the growing need for better integration. Interview 3 proposes buffer zones as an alternative to high walls, particularly in culturally tolerant and secure urban contexts.

In sum, the expert perspectives reflect the complexity of gated communities across the Middle East. They highlight the challenges of integrating such communities into the

broader urban fabric, which is influenced by governance structures, cultural expectations, and market forces.

6.5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This section examined the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in Middle Eastern cities, emphasising their contribution to socio-spatial segregation. While no universal definition exists, most scholars agree that gated communities are characterised by privacy, security, restricted access, and exclusive amenities, features that can foster both social and spatial segregation. However, there is significant disagreement among scholars regarding the implications of gated communities, adding complexity to the issue. Despite this, concerns persist about the economic consequences of rising property values, which may displace neighbouring residents.

The chapter further examines the social impacts of gated communities in the Middle East in two publications: “*The Infectious Divide: A Comparative Study of the Social Impact of Gated Communities on the Surrounding in the Middle East*”, where the conclusion demonstrates significant social implications associated with these developments regardless of their geographical locations. The second article, “*A Narrative Review of Gated Communities and the Transformative Social Impact in Middle Eastern Cities*”, where the article argued that while gated communities are real estate-driven products catering to elite populations, certain positive features, such as safety for children, reduced traffic, green areas, and enhanced quality of life, could be integrated into broader residential planning to foster more inclusive environments. Additionally, interviews with urban planners and architects from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE revealed that gated communities have emerged in response to inadequate urban planning and service provision. They also highlighted the dominant role of private developers, who prioritise short-term profits over long-term urban integration, thus reinforcing isolation. Some experts proposed alternative design strategies, such as soft boundaries and buffer zones, to preserve the benefits of security while reducing spatial and social segregation.

In conclusion, the central challenge is to reconcile the demand for private, secure living environments with the need for socially cohesive and spatially integrated urban forms. A nuanced understanding of the role of walls, boundaries, and discontinuities is crucial for mitigating the exclusionary effects of gated communities and promoting more connected and equitable urban futures.

Chapter 7: Jordan Context

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the complex historical trajectory that impacted Jordan's urban fabric, including socio-political transformations and migrations. The chapter begins with a historical overview, tracing Jordan's development from early civilisations to the present-day urban fabric. The transition from a traditional, enclosed urban fabric to a more linear planning approach is examined in Section 7.2, reflecting transformations in urban morphology due to modernisation efforts and population pressures. Section 7.3 examines the socio-cultural demographics and explores the impact of continuous waves of immigration and refugee influxes on Jordan's urban fabric. Urban segregation in Amman is another critical theme in this chapter, highlighting the socio-spatial divisions between East and West Amman. The discussion examines how economic stratification, geographical constraints, and historical migration patterns have reinforced disparities between these two sectors, influencing housing distribution, infrastructure development, and social integration. Finally, Section 7.5 explores the significance of public and green spaces in Amman's urban development. While these spaces offer potential for social interaction and urban cohesion, their distribution and accessibility are influenced by socio-economic factors, further reinforcing existing spatial disparities. The chapter concludes with a summary and discussion in Section 7.6.

7.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Jordan was inhabited by several civilisations and kingdoms throughout history. These included early settlements from the Palaeolithic period, followed by the Bronze Age kingdoms of Ammon (from which the name Amman is derived), Moab, and Edom. The region later came under the control of the Nabataean Kingdom, which was annexed by the Roman Empire in 106 CE. It was subsequently ruled by various empires, including the Ottomans, until the early 20th century (Melnik, 2019). A major milestone during that era was the construction of the Hijaz Railway in 1900, which connected Damascus (the capital of Syria) with Mecca and Medina (the two holy cities in Saudi Arabia), passing through Amman. This has facilitated communication between Istanbul (the capital of the Ottoman Empire at the time and now a city in Turkey) and the southern provinces,

contributing to the establishment of the first municipal council in 1909 (Hanania, 2019, p. 4; Potter et al., 2009, p. 84). The opening of the Hijaz Railway through Amman in 1903 put the city on the map, with over a million pilgrims passing through the city between 1903 and the outbreak of World War I. Following the war and the end of the Ottoman dynasty, Amman was declared the capital of the new state of Trans-Jordan in 1921. The country gained its independence in 1946 and was subsequently renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

7.2 PLANNING OF AMMAN

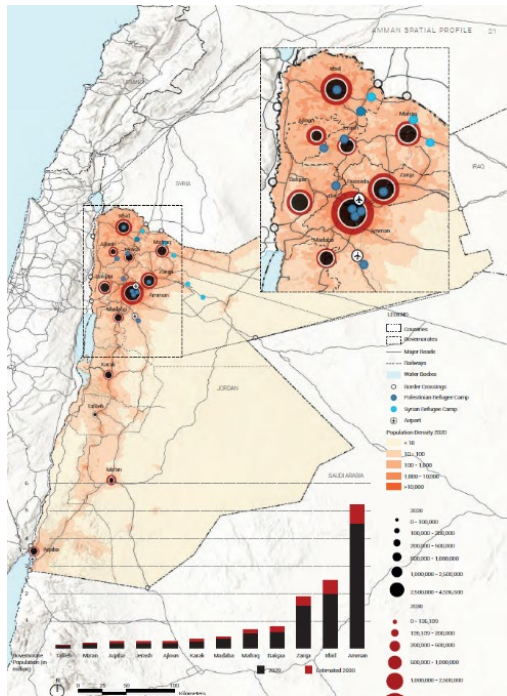
The history of Amman dates back to the earliest settlement of Rabbath Ammon, from the Catholic period, all the way till the Bronze Age (2000 BCE), through the ancient Greek era as Philadelphia, to its present name, Amman, as the capital of Jordan (Lawson, 2021). Historically, the city centre was surrounded by gates and walls to protect its inhabitants and trade routes from intruders. These walls dwelled as a key feature of the city centre until the rule of the Ottoman dynasty from 1516 to 1918 CE (Alzyoud & Hammad, 2020). Due to the construction of the main train line in 1903, the main walls and fences that surrounded and protected the city centre were removed to allow for the train to connect the centre with other surrounding cities. A linear planning approach with wider roads and streets has started to emerge in the city, replacing the organic pattern with narrow, irregular streets and dead-end courtyards, which was a reflection of the traditional Arabian house courtyard (Omar et al., 2015).

Amman experienced significant expansion and growth after the establishment of Transjordan³ in 1921. Driven by numerous waves of immigrants and refugees from surrounding countries, between 1948 and the recent refugee movement in 2009. The rapid population increase created a vast demand for housing and infrastructure, which impacted the city's master plan and led to unplanned expansions (200 .). The current image of the city reflects these demographic pressures and the resulting efforts to adapt the city's master plan to cope with the increase in population, infrastructure, and other utility demands, as illustrated in **Figure 7-1**. This historical timeline has led to socioeconomic segregation in Amman, resulting in two distinct zones: the West and East

³ Transjordan: is a Latin word means across, which is across the river Jordan, which represent the establishment of Amman city by a British mandate in 1921. Source: Transjordan Definition & Meaning | Dictionary.com

of Amman (Alkurdi, 2020). Surprisingly, the American geographical Ellsworth Huntington observed people living within the old Roman ruins, particularly in the Eastern part of Amman (Hanania, 2019, p. 84).

Figure 7-1 Spatial Distribution of Population in 2020 and 2030



Source: (UN-HABITAT, 2022)

Fast-forwarding to the political changes that took place, social segregation and inequality began to emerge in different areas of Amman, distinguishing between poor and affluent areas and creating ‘Two Ammans’: the West and the East. The common understanding of people in Jordan is that the Eastern part is considered the poorest and most conservative, with the highest number of refugee camps. Whereas Western Amman is the affluent section, featuring flourishing residential areas and high-end cafes and restaurants. The social and spatial distinction between the two areas may be considered the first impact that led to socio-economic zoning, which shaped the city and resulted in its current formation. Another major impact on Amman’s urban planning was the migration of humanitarian refugees from 1948 to 2019 (UNHCR, 2025). The excessive flee of the population to Amman in a short time, along with the internal rural movement, has forced the city to grow in multiple directions with more pressure on the Eastern part, as the land cost is considered cheaper, as in **Figure 7-2**, and **Figure 7-3** (Hanania, 2019).

Figure 7-2 East of Amman



Source: (Jarrar, p. 101)

Figure 7-3 West of Amman



Source:(Jarrar, p. 101)

It has been argued that the city of Amman never had clear planning due to political factors influencing city planning and the need to respond to the rapid movement of people over short periods. As argued by ²⁰⁰ . 0 , a variety of 56 master plans were developed between 1960 and 1990 at all levels. These plans were implemented over a longer period; thus, the city remains known for its uncontrolled expansion (Lawson, 2021). The sudden population growth primarily affected city planning due to the large number of immigrants arriving in the city. Nevertheless, ²⁰⁰ argued that no evidence or study has shown what has been implemented from these 56 plans. In short, the implementation of the city master plan presented several challenges, both socially and politically, as well as from a process perspective, which has impacted land prices and the

distribution of urban developments (Lawson, 2021, p. 12). Furthermore, the population of Amman has increased significantly, thereby affecting both the cost of land and the decline in agricultural areas (Makhamreha & Almanasyeha, 2011).

This immense increase in population has forced homeowners and investors to seek alternative land outside Amman's outskirts, in search of more affordable prices. Additionally, to better understand the city's retro plan, it is essential to note that the city experienced the highest urban growth among other cities in the Middle East between 1972 and 2009 (Potter et al., 2009). This has negatively impacted agricultural lands, leading to new complications, including infrastructure issues, traffic congestion, and environmental implications, such as the reduction of green areas and landscapes. Furthermore, Makhamreha and Almanasyeha (2011) concluded that the current pressure of urban growth will have an impact on the city environmentally and socially.

However, these implications have created opportunities for growth in different directions away from the city. People started seeking seclusion from traffic jams, a better environmental ambience, peace, and a lifestyle, which developers are marketing as the slogan for their new gated communities.

7.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Jordan has a population of 11,180,568 (2023 census), occupying 35,637 square miles, with 30% comprising non-citizens, including refugees and undocumented immigrants (DOS). The majority are of Arab origin (98%), while minorities such as Circassians, Chechens, and Armenians arrived during the Ottoman era in 1878 (Hanania, 2019, p. 2). Jordan has rapidly transitioned from a nomadic society to an urbanised nation, with around 2,253,000 people now residing in the capital, Amman (Population).

Jordan's demographic changes have been affected by successive refugee waves, starting in 1948 and continuing through the 2011 Syrian crisis. Today, the country hosts approximately 4.76 million refugees, including Palestinians, Iraqis, Syrians, and others (UNRWA). The influx of 1.3 million Syrians led to the creation of several camps, including Za'atari (**Figure 7-4**), originally housing 2,000 people in 2011 (Al-Tal & Ghanem, 2019, p. 592). Though intended as temporary housing, many camps have become permanent, with tents replaced by concrete structures. Scholars such as Dalal (2022) have even drawn parallels between gated communities and camps, as both reflect isolation and a sense of refuge.

The development of refugee camps has been a significant part of Jordan's urban and spatial transformation over the past 76 years, influencing its urban fabric due to their temporal or permanent status (Oesch, 2017). Camps built in 1948 and 1960 remain inhabited, influencing the urban fabric, land use, and planning. Along with rural–urban migration, these factors have exacerbated urban pressures, including land fragmentation, water scarcity, energy demand, pollution, congestion, and inadequate waste systems (Meaton & Alnsour, 2012, p. 373).

Figure 7-4 Za'atri Syrian Refugee Camp, 2013



Source: ("PLATFORM," 2019)

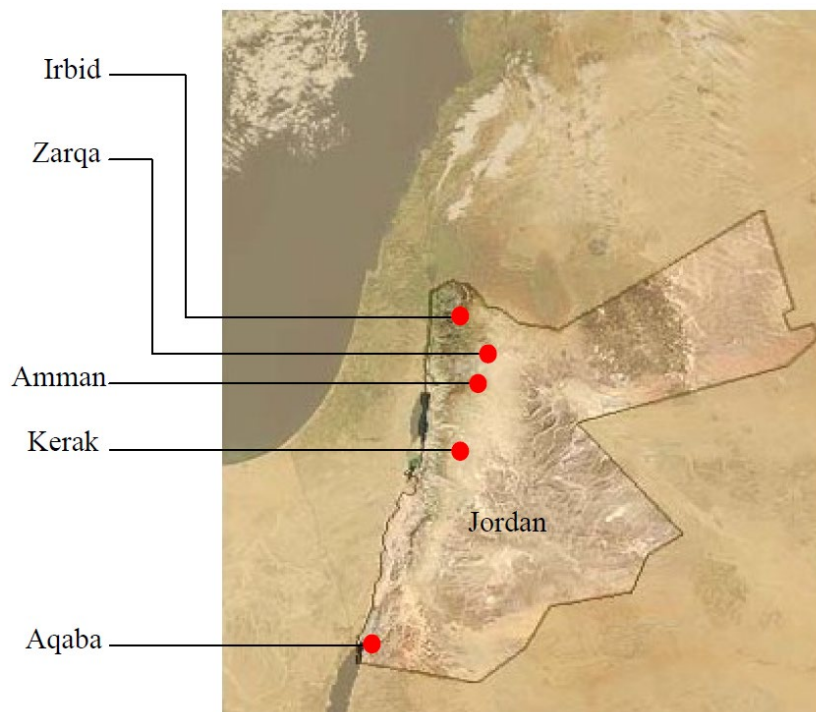
The dramatic population changes, driven by rapid growth, have significantly affected Jordan's demographics, ultimately leading to social change. Zaghal (1984, p. 54) notes that any changes in social life, such as demographic changes, education, and employment, can be considered social changes. As the population of the capital city, "Amman", has escalated from 250,000 in 1920 to over 2.25 million in 2024 (Population) has resulted in the development of the city, while creating pressure on other infrastructure aspects (Altarawneh, 2017, p. 158). The rapid increase in population led to unplanned and uncontrolled urbanisation, ultimately resulting in a decline in natural resources (Al Rawashdeh & Saleh, 2006, p. 211). Some researchers, such as Evans (2022), describe Amman's "identity crisis" as rooted in its relatively young urban age, especially when compared to neighbouring historic cities. Refugees and migrants have integrated into everyday life but disrupted coherent spatial planning, weakening the city's memory and heritage. In response, some Jordanians have launched campaigns to reinforce local identity. Notably, Palestinian refugee camps, despite decades of existence, remain outside the official municipal jurisdiction, though they have become part of Amman's social and

spatial character (UN-HABITAT, 2022, p. 82). However, immigrants and refugees have positively contributed to Amman's urban fabric by introducing modern urban aspects, such as schools and other commercial elements, while also preserving traditions and heritage.

7.4 AMMAN URBAN SEGREGATION

Amman is the formal capital of Jordan and is situated in the northern part of the country, characterised by a hilly topography that has formed the city's growth pattern. With such complex terrain comprising valleys, mountains, and gradients ranging from 8% to 50%, the majority of developments were built between steep slopes, which acted as natural barriers and restricted road interconnectivity (Meaton & Alnsour, 2012, p. 368). Furthermore, Amman has absorbed the majority of the growing population, including refugees, and accommodates more than 41% of Jordan's housing units. In another study by Jarrar (2013, p. 80), two-thirds of the population resided in the urbanised areas of western Jordan, specifically in the large cities of Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Salt, Karak, and Aqaba, as shown in **Figure 7-5**.

Figure 7-5 Major Cities in Jordan



Source:(Jarrar)

The distribution of houses in urban areas, associated with economic mobility and income distribution within neighbourhoods, can shape the evolution of cities and lead to urban segregation (Morales et al., 2019). Such urban distribution in Amman has impacted the social structure, creating more than one Amman. People talk of two Ammans: Eastern Amman, considered a low-income area and home to multiple migrants and refugees. In contrast, Western Amman accommodates high-end residents, with lower population density and higher land prices. The manifestation of separation has led to urban segregation within the city, which is closely tied to income distribution and the complex geographical terrain that has naturally contributed to this segregation. On the other hand, traces of urban informality began to emerge, giving rise to unplanned and irregular urban developments, such as informal settlements. Soliman (2021) identifies several reasons and root causes for this phenomenon, including socio-economic changes and political and socio-spatial polarisation. These changes were associated with internal rural migrations, external immigration, and regional instability in the Middle East. This has created implicit conditions for unregulated and unplanned urban growth, resulting in the emergence of refugee camps and relatively impoverished residential areas, as illustrated in **Figure 7-6**.

Figure 7-6 Informal Urban Areas in East Amman



Source:(Soliman, p. 349)

The current complexities of socio-spatial divisions within Amman, particularly between the West and East, and the uneven distribution of power may also influence the

social spaces that are crucial for fostering collective behaviours and sustainable growth. Morales et al. (2019, p. 2) define social spaces as areas where people can gather and interact, whether physically or virtually, to create relationships that are critical for collective learning and the exchange of information. However, several socio-political and economic factors may lead to segregation within the city, impacting the ties between residents and limiting the integration of social groups at the city level. In parallel with these socio-economic divisions, several profession-based housing initiatives emerged in Amman as early institutional responses to residential challenges. Housing schemes proposed by professional bodies such as the Jordanian Engineers Association and the Medical Doctors Association, as well as residential projects developed for public university employees and teachers through Ministry of Education programmes, allocated housing based on occupational affiliation rather than broader social integration. While these initiatives aimed to provide stability and affordability for specific professional groups, they contributed to the spatial clustering of socio-economic classes and limited social mixing. Such schemes can be viewed as early precursors to contemporary gated communities, as they reinforced selective access to housing and institutionalised patterns of socio-spatial separation within the urban fabric.

Rapid population growth and socioeconomic disparities have divided Amman into distinct zones: impoverished areas near refugee camps, especially in the East; middle-class neighbourhoods; and exclusive gated communities concentrated in the West and on the city's outskirts. The distribution of these residential zones is not merely a physical division, but they are deeply intertwined in the city's social fabric, creating polarisation in access to services, resources, and opportunities (Ababsa, 2011, p. 42). Furthermore, land coverage is expanding significantly outside the planned areas of greater Amman to accommodate rural-urban migration and the influx of refugees, as discussed in a report prepared by the United Nations in Jordan (UN-HABITAT, 2022). Unplanned areas are plots that are outside the jurisdiction of the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) and are usually not serviced by any infrastructure networks. One reason residents choose this type of plot is the affordability of the housing market in the planned areas. The population growth has led to an approximately 17% increase in rental prices, and only 10% of households can afford to buy a house. UN-HABITAT (2022) defines affordability as the ability to purchase residential housing of more than 100 m² without spending more than 30% of income. The housing affordability crisis has prompted people to relocate to

unplanned areas, where residents must pay higher costs to connect services to their plots. This analysis aligns well with the Makhamreha and Almanasyeha (2011) study, in which the authors suggest that a new concept of decentralisation of the city centre has begun to take shape, with the growth of new developments away from congested areas along main roads and axes towards the northern and southern parts of the city.

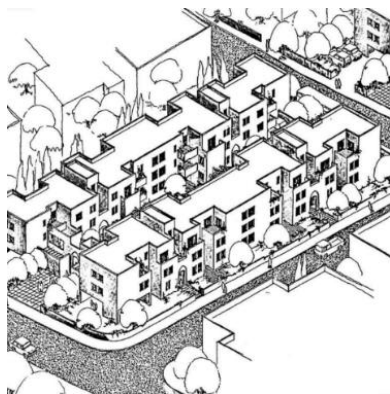
Meaton and Alnsour (2012, p. 384) summarised that the main concerns related to Amman's spatial challenges are the historical legacy of planning legislation, population pressures, whether from the past or ongoing migrations, and issues related to planning enforcement.

7.5 PUBLIC AND GREEN SPACES IN AMMAN

7.5.1 Public Spaces:

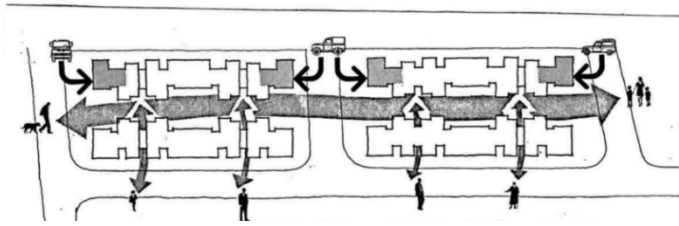
One of the earliest attempts to create a semi-isolated housing development in Amman resembling gated communities was made in 1987 by architect Bilal Hammad (**Figure 7-7**). The design, the result of a national architectural competition, aimed to develop residential housing on two adjacent plots. It prioritised separating vehicular traffic from pedestrian movement, as seen in **Figure 7-8**, allowing residents to move safely between buildings. Open spaces were designed for children's play, away from traffic, with an emphasis on semi-private green areas. Without physical gates or walls, the design incorporated key gated community features, including safety, openness, and child-friendly spaces.

Figure 7-7 Proposed Residential Housing, Architect Bilal Hammad



Source: (*Bilal Hammad Architects*)

Figure 7-8 Proposed Buildings Layout

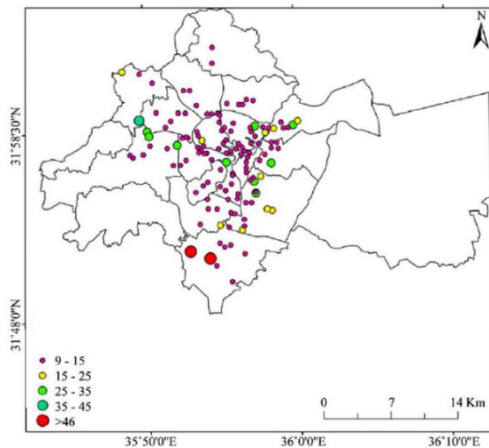


Source: (*Bilal Hammad Architects*)

The design promotes public spaces over exclusivity, fostering diversity and tolerance. These spaces enable daily social interaction, idea exchange, and communal services (Farhan & Al-Shawamreh, 2019, p. 58). Public spaces also support mental and physical health across age groups (Korpela et al., 2017), whereas integrating parks, water features, and play areas can enhance social interaction (Rasidi et al., 2012, p. 68). Farhan and Al-Shawamreh (2019, p. 60) concluded that such spaces allow people of all ages to engage with nature, interact socially, and experience cultural diversity.

However, Amman's population growth has driven housing densification, replacing single-family villas with apartment buildings, which in turn reduces the availability of public spaces, sidewalks, and parks. Socioeconomic disparities between East and West Amman have widened, weakening social cohesion. Recent transformations, privatisation and mega-projects have raised property values and contributed to isolated urban areas (Daher, 2014, p. 100). Meanwhile, a new, highly educated class seeks modern lifestyles and separation from extended families, resulting in residential buildings that often lack adequate public spaces. Residents now seek alternatives that meet their social needs. As Farhan and Al-Shawamreh (2019) explain, the local government's failure to provide public spaces has encouraged the private sector to offer alternatives, such as malls, parks, and social clubs (**Figure 7-9**).

Figure 7-9 Distribution of Parks in Amman



Source:(Farhan & Al-Shawamreh, p. 75)

Urban restructuring and the scarcity of public space have contributed to the growth of gated community development. Communities like Al Andalucía and Green Land emerged on Amman's outskirts for residents seeking exclusivity and private environments. This trend has increased socio-economic segregation. An academic interviewee noted: *“Places for people are not well organised, no places for sitting, meditation, or socialisation. Because of that, people prefer gated communities.”*

7.5.2 Green Spaces and Parks:

Green spaces are more than aesthetic elements, as they enhance well-being and foster community cohesion. Parks bring people together, strengthening social ties across age groups. International standards define the ideal area per person and types of parks by radius, as shown in **Table 7-1**.

Table 7-1 Parks Classifications

Classification	Size	Service Area	Served Population
Mini - Neighborhood Park	2,500 square feet – 2 acres (232 -8093.7 m ²)	Less than 0.25 mile (sub neighborhood) (402 m)	500 - 2,500
Neighborhood Park	5 acres is considered min. size. 5 -10 acres is optimum (20234 – 40468.6 m ²)	0.25 – 0.5 mile distance and uninterrupted by nonresidential roads (402 – 804 m)	2,000 – 10,000
Community Park	Usually 20 – 50 acres (80937 – 202343 m ²)	0.5 – 3.0 miles Serve two or more neighborhoods (804 – 4828 m)	10,000 – 50,000
Metropolitan Park	Variable	Within 30 minutes driving time	Variable
Regional Park	More than 250 acre (1011714 m ²)	Within one hour driving time	Serve entire population in cities

Source: (Tomah et al., p. 269)

However, in Amman, the concept of landscape architecture as a profession is considered novel, as it was introduced to the municipality in 1988, as demonstrated by Tomah et al. (2017, p. 264). Prior to this date, parks' distribution has historically fluctuated, influenced more by political and economic changes than by urban need (Mahadin, 1993; Tomah et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the socio-political changes related to migrants and the influx of refugees had significant planning complications and alterations ((200). According to Times (2019), Amman provides only 2.5 square meters of green space per capita, well below the WHO⁴ 9 square meters recommendation.

The municipality faces several constraints, including limited land ownership, weak early planning, and inadequate maintenance and security, which can make parks unsafe. The rising land prices and weak investment returns from agriculture have driven landowners to sell to developers. Without effective regulation, large agricultural zones have been urbanised, as seen in the transformation of Al Andalusía and Green Land into gated communities. A Jordanian academic noted: *“Even if you look around, you’ll find all the children are playing in the streets, there are no spaces within districts. That’s because of municipal laws when they began planning without designating open areas”*

In summary, urbanisation, socio-economic inequalities, and planning gaps have reduced the provision of public and green spaces. Private developments are now substituting for public parks, thereby exacerbating inequality, especially between East and West Amman, and reinforcing the trend toward exclusive residential communities.

7.6 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has examined Jordan’s historical and urban development, focusing on the relationship between migration, planning, and socio-spatial segregation. The historical overview highlighted the transformations that formed Amman’s urban fabric, from early civilisations to recent expansions driven by demographic pressure and modernisation. Socio-cultural transformations, particularly immigration and refugee movement, have had lasting impacts on spatial planning, land use, and social integration.

Urban segregation in Amman remains a defining feature of its spatial organisation, with distinct socio-economic divisions influencing residential patterns and access to

⁴ WHO is the World Health Organisation under the United Nations, which is responsible for international public health. World Health Organization. (2024). In *Wikipedia*.

infrastructure. The dichotomy between East and West Amman reflects broader inequalities in income distribution. The emergence of informal settlements, largely driven by socio-political pressures and insufficient urban planning, adds further complexity to the city's spatial configuration. Though public and green spaces are vital for cohesion and well-being, their uneven distribution reinforces spatial disparities.

Amman's topography, combined with historical legacies and demographic pressures, has intensified spatial fragmentation. Lower-income groups often reside in unregulated areas that lack essential services. Simultaneously, the scarcity of public amenities has enabled private developers to market gated communities as secure, high-quality living environments. GCC investment has played a key role in introducing commercialised gated communities, responding to societal divisions and demand for exclusivity. While these developments offer privacy and green amenities, they also risk deepening social exclusion and reducing interaction between different urban groups. Economically, they have raised adjacent land values and supported surrounding towns through resident spending.

In conclusion, Jordan's urban context reflects a complex relationship of history, migration, and planning challenges. Segregation and informal development have paved the way for gated communities, which offer security and amenities for wealthier residents. The rise of such developments reflects broader socio-spatial trends in Jordanian urbanisation, which will be examined in detail in the following chapter on gated communities in Jordan. While Chapters 7 and 8 are closely related, they serve distinct and complementary roles within the thesis. This chapter establishes the socio-demographic, institutional, and urban conditions that have shaped residential patterns and segregation in Amman. Chapter 8 builds directly on this foundation by focusing analytically on gated communities as a specific urban phenomenon through case study investigation. Maintaining these chapters as separate sections ensures conceptual clarity and a coherent progression from contextual background to empirical analysis.

Chapter 8: Comparative Study of Gated Living in Jordan

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the evolution of gated communities in Amman, Jordan, focusing on their emergence, spatial characteristics, and socio-spatial implications within the city's broader urban context. Building on a peer-reviewed article published as part of this thesis, which offers a detailed examination of Al Andalusía, this chapter expands the analysis to deepen the understanding of socio-spatial impacts across prominent gated communities. It synthesises the findings, linking case study evidence to broader patterns of urban development and inequality in Jordan. This sets the stage for Chapter 9, which deepens the investigation through a dual-method approach: a comparative case study analysis complemented by a space syntax analysis, together providing a comprehensive assessment of the external socio-spatial impacts of gated communities. The publication included in this chapter addresses the research questions related to the emergence, typological evolution, and socio-spatial implications of gated communities in Amman. Its specific contribution lies in establishing a Jordan-focused analytical foundation that links broader gated community debates to local planning conditions, development practices, and patterns of urban segregation. Within the overall thesis structure, this chapter functions as a contextual and conceptual bridge between the historical and regional discussions in earlier chapters and the detailed comparative and spatial analysis presented in Chapter 9.

This chapter includes the following paper:

- 1) "The Rise of Gated Communities in Amman from the Old to the Modern: Socio-Spatial Impact on the Surrounding" Vol. 19, No. 2, pp 433-442, 2024 (Hammad et al., 2024b).

8.1 DECLARATIONS

OFFICE FOR RESEARCH TRAINING, QUALITY AND INTEGRITY

DECLARATION OF CO-AUTHORSHIP AND CO-CONTRIBUTION: PAPERS INCORPORATED IN THESIS

This declaration is to be completed for each conjointly authored publication and placed at the beginning of the thesis chapter in which the publication appears.

1. PUBLICATION DETAILS (to be completed by the candidate)

Title of Paper/Journal/Book:	The Rise of Gated Communities in Amman from the Old to the Modern: Socio-Spatial Impact on the Surrounding		
Surname:	Hammad	First name:	Ahmed
Institute:	Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable		Candidate's Contribution (%): 80
Status:			
Accepted and in press:	☐	Date:	
Published:	☒	Date:	28/02/2024

2. CANDIDATE DECLARATION

I declare that the publication above meets the requirements to be included in the thesis as outlined in the HDR Policy and related Procedures – policy.vu.edu.au.

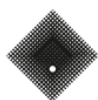
	11.08.2025
Signature	Date

3. CO-AUTHOR(S) DECLARATION

In the case of the above publication, the following authors contributed to the work as follows:

The undersigned certify that:

1. They meet criteria for authorship in that they have participated in the conception, execution or interpretation of at least that part of the publication in their field of expertise;
2. They take public responsibility for their part of the publication, except for the responsible author who accepts overall responsibility for the publication;



3. There are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
4. Potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to a) granting bodies, b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
5. The original data will be held for at least five years from the date indicated below and is stored at the following **location(s)**:

Victoria University, Footscary Park, Ballarat Road, VIC 3011, Australia

Name(s) of Co-Author(s)	Contribution (%)	Nature of Contribution	Signature	Date
Ahmed Hammad	80	Conceived concept. Literature review. Methodology, writing manuscript		11.08.2025
Mengbi Li	15	Critical review and editing. Supervision. Final Approval		11.08.2025
Zora Vrcelj	5	Supervision. Administration		11.08.2025

Updated: September 2019

8.2 TYPES OF GATED COMMUNITIES IN AMMAN

The increased number of gated communities in Jordan, in general, and in Amman in particular, may be attributed to the socioeconomic and cultural shifts associated with neoliberal urban reorganisation, as highlighted by Daher (2014, p. 100). The development of the Al Andalucía project started in 2005, which can be attributed to the reflection of neoliberal changes witnessed in neighbouring countries, as the primary funding came from the United Arab Emirates (Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018, p. 894). Additionally, the inauguration of the new urbanisation changes in Amman began after 2008, which can be attributed to the global financial and economic crisis. As a result, many Jordanians relocated to Amman due to the decline in employment opportunities in the GCC and the need to own a house in their home country (Ahid & Augustine, 2012). During the data collection stage, utilising the semi-structured interviews, a discussion with an assistant professor in Architectural theory in Jordan theorised that the emergence of such developments was primarily linked to the GCC foreign investment; he said: *“We are connected to the Gulf and foreign investments, and primarily Gulf investments.”*

The residential developments in Amman can be classified into two types: gated communities, also known as compounds, and conventional developments, which are standard residential buildings, as classified by Abed (2017). People’s preference for gated communities recently increased as a preferred luxurious development type for upper-income residents seeking security and a peaceful area isolated from the surroundings (Alkurdi, 2015). While gated communities in Amman are often classified by physical size and number of units, this study adopts a broader analytical perspective aligned with its research objectives. Beyond scale, gated communities are examined with respect to their degree of spatial connectivity with surrounding neighbourhoods, the presence of shared social and recreational infrastructure, and their capacity to support social interaction beyond the gated boundary. These criteria allow the analysis to move beyond descriptive categorisation and to assess how different gated typologies contribute to or mitigate socio-spatial fragmentation, urban integration, and social cohesion within the city.

From the data presented in **Table 8-1**, the concept of isolating a couple of units, which can be as few as eight to ten villas, is gaining recognition, as illustrated in **Figures 8-1, 8-2, and 8-3**. Developers and investors are capitalising on the lack of public and green

spaces, as described in section 7.5 of this chapter, and promoting this type of development to fill in this gap.

Table 8-1 List of Gated Communities in Jordan

Gated Community	Area (m ²)	Number of Units	Units Type	Construction Date
Green Land *	400,000	147	Apartments	2008
Al Andalusia **	800,000	588	Villas	2005–2013
Saraya Dabouq	6000	10	Villas	2011
Panorama Villas	3500	10	Apartments	2013
Mohd Odeh Compound	3860	8	Villas	2013
Green Valley Villas	4277	10	Villas	2014
Green Village	22,000	30	Villas	2016
Black Iris	13,550	18	Villas	2016
Sagr Compound	5094	11	Villas	2016
Mohd Odeh Compound	3860	8	Villas	2013
Panorama Compound	2850	8	Villas	2013
Al-Kursi Compound	2900	5	Villas	2016
Abdoun Complex	unknown	13	Apartment	2017
Victoria Villas	unknown	unknown	Villas	2023
Amman Gardens Compound	300,000	unknown	Villas	Concept
Mograbi Compound	6764	10	Villas	2024

* and ** represent the selected gated communities as case studies for this Thesis

Source: Researcher

Figure 8-1 Mograbi Gated Community



Source: ("Assarai,")

Figure 8-2 Panorama Gated Community



Source:("Panorama Villas Compound – jordan Properties,")

Figure 8-3 Sarya Dabouq



Source:(Abed et al., 2022)

Other types of gated communities were observed in the urbanised areas of Amman, such as Abdoun complex, which comprises thirteen residential buildings with shared central swimming pools, as shown in **Figure 8-4**. The development has shared common features, including open spaces, private roads, and infrastructure, as well as security and privacy. The developer has positioned a couple of residential buildings within a closed, controlled community to convey exclusivity, luxury, and privacy.

Figure 8-4 Abdoun Gated Community



Source:("Abdoun Complex,")

8.3 CASE STUDIES SELECTION

To better understand the socio-spatial implications of gated communities in the Jordanian context, this subsection examines two selected developments: Al-Andalucia and Green Land. These case studies were chosen for their contrasting scales, locations, and typologies, providing a representative insight into the diverse design approaches and urban integration challenges. While both are privately developed and marketed as secure and exclusive environments, they differ in spatial configuration, degree of enclosure, and proximity to existing urban infrastructure.

The rationale for selecting these two communities lies in their ability to reflect the broader spectrum of gated communities in Amman. As suggested by Al-Homoud and Al Aswad (2018), Al Andalucía is considered one of the earliest examples of gated residential communities in the city, setting a precedent for subsequent developments with its inward-facing layout and high-end positioning. It exemplifies exclusivity and spatial isolation, particularly in its controlled-access master plan. In contrast, Green Land represents a mid-income gated cluster with a more open interface with surrounding neighbourhoods. Their contrast in layout, design intent, and urban connectivity allows for a comparative analysis of how different gated typologies contribute to or mitigate urban segregation, spatial discontinuity, and socio-economic polarisation. These cases were therefore selected for their analytical value and relevance to the research questions. While this chapter provides contextual grounding and typological positioning for both case studies, the detailed, symmetrical socio-spatial analysis of Al Andalucía and Green Land is consolidated in Chapter 9 through a peer-reviewed publication. That chapter examines both developments using the same analytical depth, expert triangulation, and comparative framework, including spatial analysis, to avoid duplication and ensure methodological consistency.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the thesis employs semi-structured interviews with key experts in the field for its data collection rather than relying on questionnaires or face-to-face interviews with residents of the selected gated communities. This methodological choice is based on two main reasons:

1. Two previous studies have already investigated resident perspectives in Al Andalucía. Al-Homoud and Al Aswad (2018) conducted a structured interview and surveys, while Alkurdi (2015) distributed questionnaires to 70 residents and non-residents.

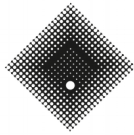
Given the availability of existing data on residents, this thesis aims to avoid redundancy and aims to investigate different perspectives.

2. The research aims to examine the broader impacts of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods, which will be examined through interviews with professionals who have a deep understanding of urban design and theoretical aspects. Residents' responses may express personal motivations and emotional connections with projects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In contrast, key expert interviews may be more objective and practical, which can help reduce bias stemming from personal attachments or emotions (Flick, 2022).

A detailed spatial analysis and comparative case studies, including space syntax visualisations such as axial and integration maps, are presented in Chapter 9. This chapter contains a peer-reviewed article that examines the urban connectivity, spatial integration, and social implications of Al Andalusía, the first gated community developed in Jordan.

8.4 CASE STUDY INVESTIGATION

The following section presents findings from a published study that investigates the socio-spatial characteristics of gated communities in Amman, using Al Andalusía as a case study. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning – Vol. 19, No. 2, February 2024, pp. 433-442.*



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

The Rise of Gated Communities in Amman from the Old to the Modern: Socio-Spatial Impact on the Surrounding

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The Rise of Gated Communities in Amman from the Old to the Modern: Socio-Spatial Impact on the Surrounding

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords:

gated communities, urbanism of Amman, Arabian neighbourhoods, historical Morphology, social and spatial impact

The spread of gated communities in Amman calls for a nuanced investigation as they increasingly become the preferred housing choice for middle and upper-middle residents. This article attempts to correlate the social and spatial characteristics of Arabian neighbourhoods with the implications associated with gated communities, such as fragmentation and seclusion. The investigation employs a descriptive-analytic method and historical inquiry, including the evolution of Amman's master plan. In addition to case study observations and analysis of Al Andalucía being the first gated community developed in Amman. Findings suggest that separation and segregation can be achieved without affecting the quality of life, as walls, historically, played a vital role in encouraging interaction. Notably, gated communities show no correlation with the historical morphological context as they symbolise segregation, fragmentation, and exclusion. This paper contributes to a better understanding of the pragmatic notion of gates and walls in history and how people interacted spatially and socially, which can be echoed in modern gated communities aiming to reduce their impacts on the surroundings.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the Middle East's real estate boom in 2003, Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) countries have been developing mega projects to attract international investors and tourists [1, 2]. The competition has spread to neighbouring countries, including Jordan, with developers' appetite to explore new areas and expand their investments. As a result of this expansion, an investor from a neighbouring country developed Al Andalucía as the first gated community in Amman in 2015 [3]. However, to our knowledge, there are no comprehensive studies that discuss the emergence of gated communities in Amman in the context of Arabian neighbourhoods and the evolution of Amman's master plan. Researchers have argued the impacts of gated communities, such as fragmentation, seclusion, and isolation; however, this article will discuss the connections of these terminologies with the social and spatial aspects of old Arabian neighbourhoods.

Building on several studies of gating and gated communities in the Middle East [3-8], this article seeks to demonstrate the historical backgrounds of contemporary gated communities in Amman by investigating the reasons and motives that fostered their development, then investigating their social, economic, and spatial impact on the surrounding neighbourhoods based on a case study analysis. As gated communities seek seclusion and isolation, in addition to other issues such as segregation, fragmentation, and exclusion [9], interestingly, these features

can be traced back to old Arabian neighbourhoods. As explained by Bianca [10], cities were divided by narrow alleyways as walls surrounded houses, creating gated interconnected neighbourhoods through narrow streets and alleys. Furthermore, separation and seclusion in Arabian cities have been a manifest feature of neighbourhoods and social groups. Researchers have widely studied the socio and spatial fragmentation of Arabian cities as the main characteristics that distinguish them from other liveable cities. These characteristics were derived from the ramification of sacredness and privacy, which has protracted over to houses and residential areas as traces of walls were found in most of the old Arabian cities [10]. These walls were part of the master plan features, enforced by privacy and hierarchy, as the notion of seclusion of social groups was derived from the old Arabian cities [7, 11].

By tracing the characteristics of Arabian neighbourhoods and then by analysing the development of Amman's master plan from the founding of Transjordan in 1921 until the recent master plan of 2009, this paper relies on descriptive-analytic methods and historical inquiry representing the Old Arabian cities utilising archives, historical documents, and case study observations, in the attempt to examine how modern gated communities in Amman can effectively utilise and implement the cohesion and social interaction features of the Arabian neighbourhoods.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The planning of Arabian cities was based on a multifunctional core structure identified by an unlimited number of nodes and individual buildings; therefore, there was no conventional grid of streets or plazas, and this pattern created homogeneity and coherence between neighbourhoods, which allowed for social harmony [10]. As this article attempts to investigate the impact of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods in Jordan, the literature review will be divided into three sections: the first section will present a historical review of walls and gates and the relationship between gated communities and closed neighbourhoods in ancient cities. The second section will review the emergence of modern gated communities in Jordan, as the selected case study is considered the first gated community developed in Amman. The third section will review the social, spatial, and economic impacts of modern gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods.

2.1 Gated cities in history

The way Gated cities and walls were predominant in pre-modern cities as a universal phenomenon and a symbol of security, law, and order [11]. In China, for example, gates and walls were a distinct feature of its urban landscape as cities were surrounded by walls [12]. The concept of gated settlements is embedded in Chinese society, where walls had an essential role in creating a distinct environment. Furthermore, Li and Xie [13] suggested that the structure of neighbourhoods in early China was likely to be enclosed with a boundary around the community. Thus, in Chinese literature, some scholars argued that the emergence of gated communities is a continuation of the enclosed urban colonies since enclosed forms of closed suburbs are deeply rooted in Chinese society [14]. Similarly, houses in Arabian cities were protected from the main roads and outsiders by walls and gates, with a visual hierarchy that segregated visitors from private areas [10]. Various researchers have argued that gated communities in the Arab world were related to the planning of old cities and the concept of closed neighbourhoods. For example, Glasze [7] and Abu-Lughod [15] identified two main reasons for social segregation in the Arab world: a) The introduction of courtyards as an extension of the private and sacred spaces, and b) these courtyards served as the first line of defence since they were accessible through one gate which can be seized at any point of time. Furthermore, Glasze [6, 7] also argued that the introduction of contemporary gated communities in the Arab world, especially in Saudi Arabia, resulted from the integration between the Arab traditions of privacy and sacredness and the Western types of gated communities. Nonetheless, Touman [16] has counter-argued this assumption and suggested that gated communities in Saudi Arabia may not be considered an urban solution as they were found primarily to serve a specific layer of residents temporarily. Furthermore, Giddings et al. [17] discussed that gated communities in GCC are new housing concepts imported from the U.S. and have greatly contradicted traditional houses.

Most of the old Arabian cities had walls and gates as part of their embedded history, where walls performed a significant role in creating their environment. In addition, some scholars link the emergence of gated communities to the history of enclosed urban areas. More needs to be known about how

walls and gates encouraged community interaction and contributed to a sense of community.

2.2 Gated cities in Jordan

Amman had an organic planning pattern with narrow streets and closed alleyways that functioned similarly to the courtyards [18]. Additionally, the city was surrounded by gates and walls in 1880 to protect people and trade from intruders, aligning with the thematic elements of the old Arabian neighbourhoods [19]. Over time, walls were removed, and new linear urban patterns started to emerge, creating new commercial spaces, public services, and multi-story buildings, in addition to the rapid movement of immigrants from surrounding countries. This transformation has enforced radical social changes that split the city into two nodes, which resulted in the fading of the organic pattern and the rise of a more organised grid [20]. Several articles argued the reasons behind the emergence of gated communities in Amman; they concluded that their initiation was mainly due to socioeconomic changes and the demand of the newly formed social group of the middle and upper-middle class seeking seclusion and a luxurious lifestyle imitating the Western gated communities [4]. The outcome of their study accentuated the lack of strategic planning necessary to regulate gated communities, as the unregulated growth of gated communities might affect the natural resources. Furthermore, Al-Homoud and Al Aswad [3] conducted a questionnaire to understand the reasons and motives of residents living in gated communities in Jordan. They found that regulations, feasibility, security, and lifestyle are the predominant reasons people select this type of housing over others. The study concluded that such developments have created inequality between people living inside the walls and the surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition, Abed et al. [21] conducted a study on gated communities in Jordan to investigate the social sustainability within residents of gated communities. Their study concluded that policymakers should regulate the spread of these developments in order to provide integrated urban.

The socioeconomic changes, along with the rise of affluent social groups seeking symbolism, facilitated the emergence of gated communities in Amman, and they do not correlate with the historical morphological context in the old Arabian cities. Yet, the historical demographic changes played a significant role in their development. Further studies of the evolution of Amman master plan are required to link modern gated communities with socioeconomic factors.

2.3 Social, spatial, and economic impact

Several researchers have argued the social, economic, and spatial impacts associated with developing gated communities. For example, Roitman et al. [22] argued that developing gated communities for the rich in poor areas will have an economic integration between both, as these communities may offer job opportunities for the poor people living outside the walls. On the social aspect, Rafie Manzelat [9] suggested that gated communities foster segregation, fragmentation, exclusion and lack of sense of community. She concluded that gated communities have several impacts on the surrounding neighbourhoods, such as access limitation and social inequality. From the spatial aspect, Wang et al. [23] discussed the factors that motivate residents of the gated communities to open up with the surroundings. Their argument was based on

a study carried out by the central government of China in 2016, which called for the suspension of developing gated communities and then gradually opening the existing gated communities. The article discussed several impacts of gated communities, such as the increase in walking distance, the impact on public life, the sustainability of public spaces, and the imbalance in the housing policy. Their study showed that private equity, safety, and property management were the main reasons for people to open their gated communities. The study also proposed that opening gated communities should be approached cautiously, highlighting the importance of coordinating with government authorities to address residents' concerns.

In conclusion, the historical literature in the Arabian cities suggests that walls and gates were part of their deep-rooted history, and gated communities are associated in a way with the concept of enclosed urban areas; however, further studies are required to investigate such assumptions. In addition, although Jordan was part of the Arabian cities' setting, the emergence of gated communities had no relation with the historical context, and their emergence was due to the socioeconomic changes that took place over time. To bridge this gap, more research is needed to investigate the historical evolution of Amman's master plan that resulted in the appearance of gated communities. Finally, while existing studies have discussed the social, economic, and spatial impacts of gated communities in specific settings, further exploration is needed to explore these impacts within the gated neighbourhoods in history.

This study contributes to understanding the historical background and contemporary manifestations of gated communities in the context of Arabian cities and Amman's master plan, aiming to shed light on the positive attributes of walls and gates in history and to reflect them in modern gated communities.

3. PLANNING OF URBAN SPACES IN THE ARABIAN CITIES

During the spread of religious life in 610 CE, starting from Saudi Arabia and then spreading out to the Arabian Peninsula and the rest of the world, Arabian cities shared common arrays of religious, social, and even geographic factors, which led to the introduction of similar urban fabric as shown in Figure 1 [24]. Thus, the main elements of urban Arabian cities are the residential neighbourhoods, courtyards, private houses, mosques, open areas and retails, gates, towers, and walls.

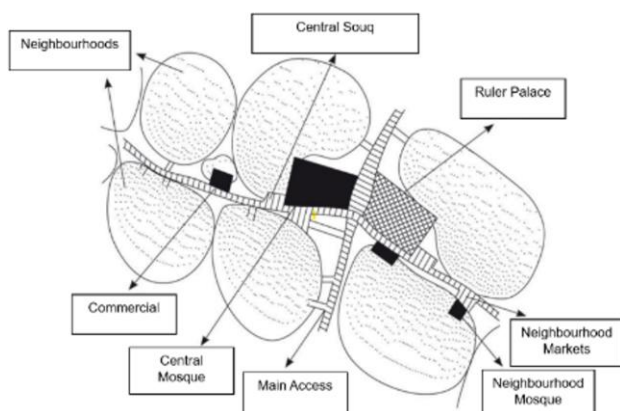


Figure 1. Diagram – typical Arabian city [24]

Furthermore, as religious life impacted many cities, the land-use pattern focused on the distribution of nodes within the city. These nodes were functional activities such as the central mosque, open spaces for prayers, markets, and retail outlets, which were embedded within the city's urban space and organised the master plans [10]. As explained by Bianca [10], the sacredness of these nodes had imposed their powers and predominance on the master plan through the alignment and orientation of roads, streets, and alleyways towards these nodes. In addition, the effect of sacredness has impacted the design of houses and residential dwellings and created the notion of courtyards, as shown in Figure 2.

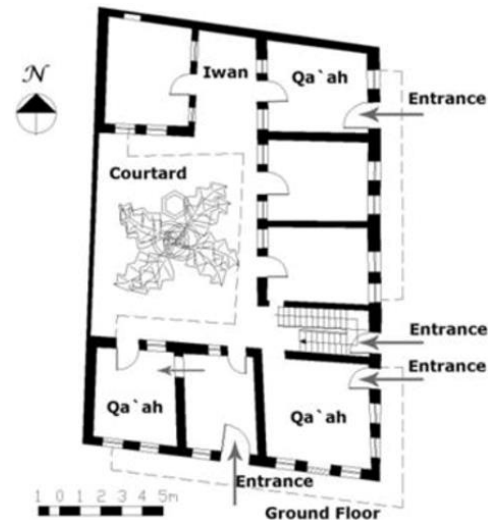


Figure 2. Typical courtyard house design [25]

Since houses were opening inwards, the periphery walls have created narrow alleyways that, in some areas, narrowed down to two meters. In some places, the expansion of the second floor had created covered and shaded alleyways where people and neighbours used to meet during hot days. Houses were away from the streets with no windows opening to streets or alleyways, or if a house had openings to an alleyway, the opposite house was not allowed to have openings on the same alleyway to ensure privacy, which resulted in an organic form of the urban fabric [24]. The distinctive features perceived in the urban designs of Arabian cities, including narrow alleyways, shared open spaces, inward-facing houses, gated neighbourhoods, courtyards, and quarters, may be seen in the designs of contemporary gated communities but in a different form, shape, and motivations. However, the evolution of the design features in the Arabian cities was natural and organic, which might be related to geographic, religious, and social aspects. Whereas in modern gated communities, exclusion and isolation often result from deliberate planning strategies. The emphasis on community interactions and shared spaces as extracted from the Arabian cities may contradict the privatisation and closing of some gated communities, which may question the social cohesion between insiders and outsiders of the walls.

Furthermore, by examining the defensive requirements that led to the construction of walls and gates around many old cities and capitals, it was noticed that walls surrounded most gated communities and had security rooms and guards. However, their motivations for security have extended beyond defence reasons to include exclusivity, prestige, and seclusion.

Investigating the historical phenomenon of Arabian cities and their features provides a further understanding of the social bonds within the community despite the presence of gates and walls, which may lay the foundation for resolving such dynamics in modern gated communities.

4. PLANNING PATTERN OF AMMAN

By tracing Amman's urban evolution, the historical features of old Arabian cities, such as narrow streets, closed alleyways, and organic patterns were noticed in the overall planning of the city [25]. Historically, Amman city centre was surrounded by gates and walls to protect people and trades from intruders, and these walls dwelled as a key feature of the city centre until the overruling of the Ottoman dynasty between 1516 -1918 CE [19]. The introduction of the main train line in 1903 provoked the disappearance of these walls and fences and led to a linear planning approach represented by wider roads and streets and regression from the organic pattern with narrow streets. Amman's growth, prompted by the numerous immigrations from the surrounding countries from 1948 until the recent movement of refugees in 2009, witnessed an unplanned expansion of its master plan driven by housing and infrastructure demands [19, 26]. The city's image, as it is perceived nowadays, reflects the mass movement of people and efforts of the city master plan to cope with such an increase in population, infrastructure, and other utility demands. Despite the articulation of numerous master plans between 1955 and 1990 on all levels, the implementation of these master plans was challenged by the complicated geopolitical aspects and the rapid population growth [27]. The uncontrolled expansion has affected land prices, distribution of urban developments, and decreased the agriculture area. This immense population increase has forced homeowners and investors to seek alternative lands outside Amman's outskirts, searching for cheaper prices. Also, to better understand the retro plan of the city, it is essential to point out that the city has witnessed the highest urban growth among other cities in the Middle East between the years 1972 and 2009, which has negatively impacted agricultural lands and created traffic jams which had affected the city environmentally and socially [28].

In Summary, Amman's planning experienced multiple impacts, including historical and geopolitical aspects, which formed a layer in the society seeking seclusion, better environmental ambient, and peace, which may have resulted in the emergence of gated communities as a housing solution.

5. URBANIZATION OF AMMAN

The historical evolution and transformation of Amman, from its origins in Rabbath Ammon all the way to Amman, which is the present name of the capital, has influenced the urban fabric of the city [27]. This historical timeline has delineated Two precincts in Amman; The West and East, where the East part has lower population density compared to the West precinct. With the political changes, including the influence of the Ottoman Empire in 1516, social segregation and inequality started to unfold in different areas in Amman, distinguishing between poor and rich areas as the case of West and East of Amman. The formation of two precincts may be regarded as the first attribute that shaped the city, which may have potentially contributed to the socio-economic

segregation. Hanania [29] identifies the substantial influence that forced the formation of Amman and affected the urban planning response as the mass migration of humanitarian refugees between 1948 and 2019. The excessive flow of the population in a short duration has forced the city to grow in multiple directions. Thus, the emergence of gated communities in Amman may be considered as an urban design solution that can create a resemblance of seclusion, or a response to the historical factors that led to the demographic shifts and socioeconomic divisions.

In summary, the urbanisation of Amman has been influenced by manifold historical factors, socioeconomic divisions, and the challenges inflicted by the mass movement of immigrants, which have contributed to the formation of Amman's distinct urban form. Therefore, the emergence of gated communities in Amman may be considered a nuanced response to the historical challenges and revolutions.

6. INSTIGATION OF GATED COMMUNITIES IN AMMAN

In order to investigate the reasons and motives behind the emergence of gated communities in Amman, it is crucial to understand the Jordanian housing sector review initiated by the World Bank [30]. The housing demand is primarily driven by the significant arrival of refugees from the surrounding countries, which resulted in unexceptional population growth. In addition to the increase of population concentration in the core urban areas including the capital, Amman, where approximately 75% of the residents live in these core areas as in Figure 3.

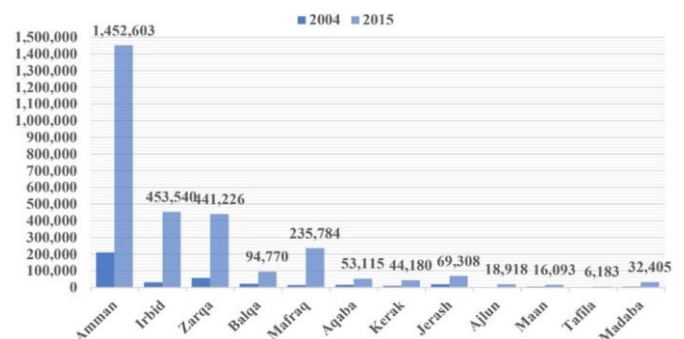


Figure 3. Population growth of non-Jordanians 2004-2015 [28]

Several motives have impacted the urbanisation of Amman and ultimately increased the residential costs. Starting from the concentration of the population in certain areas accommodated the regulatory challenges that faced the private sector, including coordination, authority approval, lack of sufficient project categories regulations, and changes in municipal codes. Furthermore, the structural shortage in residential plots is associated with complex zoning regulations and building codes, which resulted in low-density housing products. In addition to the fragmentation of Amman caused by the formation of two precincts, the West and East of Amman, has pushed the middle and upper-middle class of the society to favour the western part of the city, which puts more pressure on the city's growth and infrastructure and causes inflation in land prices and ultimately caused inflation in houses prices. Due to the increased land prices, a new concept of

decentralisation of the city centre has started to take shape with the growth of new developments away from the congested areas along the main roads and axes towards the northern and southern parts of the city. This created new nodes and centres away from the crowded areas [28]. These nodes and centres have created an opportunity to develop residential offerings that provide competitive and affordable housing products, seclusion, independence, and privacy. On the other hand, with changes in the socio-economic framework in recent decades, a new layer in society emerged, which is the middle and upper middle class seeking different types of residential products that fulfil their requirements [4]. As discussed by Al Omari and Al Omari [4], the term ‘conspicuous consumption’ refers to the needs and motivations for people to relocate to gated communities hoping to achieve social status. In other words, cultural segregation is based on financial and cultural powers as the rise of a wealthy society seeking social distinction and seclusion from others has created an opportunity for a new housing utopia. Lifestyle and prestige are predominant factors influencing people's decision to move to gated communities outside the crowded city [31]. The general understanding of the people of Amman is that gated communities are a luxurious utopia that provides security, privacy, and sophisticated infrastructure offered for a specific category of powerful society [4]. Alongside the socio-economic changes that influenced the people of Amman with the increase in housing prices, the surrounding countries, mainly the GCC, were competing to attract international investments and tourists, which spread out to Jordan and led to the development of the first gated community in Amman [3].

Thus, this paper suggests that the emergence of gated communities in Amman may be related to a combination of reasons, including socio-economic changes in the structure, which impacted the land use, socio-spatial changes in the society, which led to the appearance of affluent people who seek symbolism, the concentration of people that led to overcrowding in Amman, the immense increase in land prices, and lastly, the thriving real estate market and investment opportunities. The combination of these reasons may have collectively contributed to the decision of individuals and developers to seek such a housing solution.

7. THE CASE STUDY

7.1 Introduction to the project

Al-Homoud and Al Aswad [3] pointed out that the Al Andalucía project is considered the first closed community built in Amman City between 2009 and 2015, although there were previous attempts since 1990. Those attempts were on a smaller scale and represented a private or family product that did not have the scale of magnitude. Thus, Al Andalucía can be considered a relatively sizable scale development that can be further studied and analysed. Based on a review of the most recent gated communities developed in Amman as shown in Table 1 [32], the selection of Al Andalucía as a case study was based on criteria related to a) plot area where the selected case has the largest land area of 800,000m², b) number of units, as the total number of units is 588 villas, and c) the location of development was at the outskirts of Amman occupying an agricultural land, due to the land cost, which is in line with hypothesis of this article.

Table 1. List of gated communities in Amman [32]

Gated Community	Area (m ²)	Number of Units	Units Type	Construction Date
Green Land	400,000	147	Apartments	2008
Al Andalucía*	800,000	588	Villas	2009-2015
Saraya Dabouq	6,000	10	Villas	2011
Panorama Villas	3,500	10	Apartments	2013
Green Valley Villas	4,277	10	Villas	2014
Green Village	22,000	30	Villas	2016
Black Iris	13,550	18	Villas	2016
Al-Kursi Compound	2,900	5	Villas	2016

The project is located approx. 20km from Amman towards the southern part of the city on the main road leading to the airport. This project is close to Amman International Airport, which is in the south part of the city, towards the new nodes and centres. This is in line with the hypothesis argued by Makhamreha and Almanasyeha [28] vis-à-vis the decentralisation of the city nodes along the significant axes towards the northern and southern parts of the city and the emergence of modern centres, which met the needs of the new social class on the other hand. The selection of such a location, which is far from the city centre and the crowd, suggests that such seclusion may be a response to a particular layer of people who are seeking social distinction and segregation. The project was developed by TAAMEER Jordan as a response to the socio-economic growth in the city, as proclaimed by the company website. The developer's vision was to create a modern, luxurious lifestyle, private ambient, refined furnishings, dedicated green areas and water features, in addition to high-quality building materials [32]. In addition, the master plan of Al Andalucía incorporated a central multi-function recreational area which was located on the main paths where residents can meet during their movement. Furthermore, the concept of a cul-de-sac or closed roads, as discussed by Hammad and Hammad [33], suggests that this concept may reduce the crime rate and increase security levels since strangers' movement is limited. A similar concept of closed roads is seen in the development of Al Andalucía, which may help in addressing the security aspect. Furthermore, houses' orientation towards the internal roads may suggest that social interaction between residents is increased as residents can practice their daily activities of walking and meeting. On the other hand, the project was developed in an agricultural zone as the Department of Land and Survey categorised it at one stage in time. Figure 4 is a map captioned from the land department website, demonstrating the subdivision and the surrounding agricultural areas. As discussed by Makhamreha and Almanasyeha [28], between 1972 and 2009, Amman's population increased approximately 480 times, and the urban area by 595 times. This means that the impact on urban areas has been significantly excessive by taking over agricultural lands. This was observed in the case study, where the development was constructed on agricultural land. Furthermore, the construction works commenced in 2005 and were stopped during the global financial crisis, which has impacted the real-estate sector globally. The construction works resumed in 2009, and the development was ready to receive residents starting in 2013 [3]. Since the development was constructed on agricultural land with no local regulatory

plans, the designs were flexible and subject to the developer's/ designer's requirements. However, the development has improved the overall image and land prices of the area, which can be considered a positive impact, and this may put pressure on the planning authorities to replan the surrounding area to accommodate the new gated community and to ensure the capitalisation on such development to improve the overall area.



Figure 4. Aerial map for the case study

7.2 Project details and boundaries

The project was built on an area of approximately 800,000 m², with a total of 588 double-story villas. The project included a central recreational area with a clubhouse, clinic, shops, restaurants, cafes, side roads, and parks [3]. The built area of each villa averaged between 312 m² and 637 m² on a land area between 496 m² and 1,020 m². Using these numbers, the plot area coverage is approximately 27%, leaving 73% for open spaces. The development is entirely enclosed and inaccessible to the public, with private access surrounding the development. A private gate is located at the northern side, which is controlled by security guards with a physical concrete barrier surrounding the development, as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Main entrance

The development is surrounded by farms and agricultural lands with minimum service offerings, including basic amenities such as groceries, markets, laundries, and other services. Nevertheless, the development is in proximity to a city called Madaba, which is approx. 9.7 km (6 mi) away. This suggests that residents of the development need to travel to the nearest city to obtain other daily needs, which can be considered a positive economic impact on the surroundings. Furthermore, two international schools were built in the

surrounding area: Kings Academy, which is approx. 3.7 km (2.32 mi) away and was founded in 2007. The school was built on 144 acres of land and comprises education and accommodation buildings as boarding facilities. The second school is Eagles Academy, which is also in the same proximity of 3.5 km (2.2 mi) and was founded in 2013. Several other schools are available in the city of Madaba, which can be an option for the residents of the Al Andalucía community.

The case study may be considered a response to the socio-economic changes that impacted the city of Amman, such as the increase in population, rise in land prices, and demographic changes. In addition, the selection of this case was due to its size and design characteristics, such as central recreational area, cul-de-sac concept, modern and luxury living, green areas and water features. The walls surrounding the development and security gates suggest symbolism and isolation from the surroundings, with limited or even no interaction expected between people inside and outside the walls. The secluded location has economically supported the neighbouring areas as residents need to travel to the nearest areas for daily needs, schools, and other requirements. Al Andalucía 's case study provided insights into the evolving urban situation in Amman, and the same can be attested in other similar case studies for gated communities built on the outskirts of the city centre.

8. STUDY FINDINGS

To better understand and investigate the impact of such development on the surroundings, this paper will analyse the positive and negative impacts of this development on the spatial, economic, and social contexts.

8.1 Spatial impact

From the spatial impact, negative and positive impacts were argued between researchers. The subject case study provided compatible services and infrastructure within the development, which may positively influence people to relocate there. Nevertheless, this positive impact was within the walls and has reconfirmed the lack of adequate infrastructure for the surrounding areas. On the other hand, the negative impact, as identified by Landman [34], is the closure of streets, which shall impact emergency services and the disruption of footpaths and walkways. These impacts are invalid in the subject case study as the surrounding lands are currently unoccupied. This can put pressure on the planning authorities to implement a well-studied master plan on a macro level to integrate this gated community within a bigger master plan, avoiding negative spatial impact.

8.2 Economic impact

The second impact is the economic impact. This argument has always been on the developers' side, as gated communities may provide a positive economic impact internally and externally. Internally refers to within the walls, where jobs are created for multiple services such as cleaning, security, maintenance, and other supporting services required within the gated community [35]. Externally refers to the support services provided by neighbouring areas such as markets, kindergartens, and other amenities. This impact was positively reflected in the subject case study, as residents are urged to

travel to the nearest developed area for shopping, and this approach will support the economy in the surrounding areas. In addition, such developments may improve and increase the property value of the surrounding areas. However, Le Goix [36] has proposed a different analysis of the economic impact where he believes that gated communities might reduce the property value of the surrounding areas or in non-gated surroundings due to the decrease in affordability levels in the surrounding areas. This assumption requires further investigation in the subject case study to test its viability, as this might have a revolutionary impact.

8.3 Social impact

Finally, the most vital impact is the social impact, as this has been argued at length by several researchers and master planners. The discussion of social impact refers to urban social segregation and gated communities' role in social life and relations [37]. Few researchers have argued that gated communities create positive social relationships among residents and their surroundings as they encourage a sense of community [5]. However, this might be applicable within the walls and between residents and neighbours of the gated community. The social impact investigated in this article is associated with a much broader understanding of social relationships and interactions, which creates social homogeneity and, subsequently, a more robust social fabric [38]. On the other hand, the negative social impact is associated with segregation on the whole society, which might lead to social exclusion and disintegration [37]. One additional social impact identified by Low [39] is that people living outside the walls will feel that they pose a danger to people living inside the walls, which will undoubtedly prevent any interaction between the two communities. In addition, the impact of gated communities has protracted to impact the social environment where the location and distribution of these communities have detrimental effects [4]. By investigating the social impact on the subject case study, the predominance of Al Andalucía development reflects a symbolic barrier between the insiders and the outsiders, which may emphasise social segregation. Based on a questionnaire carried out by Alkurdi [32] with Al Andalucía residents and the surrounding neighbours, the majority of the surrounding neighbours feel that Al Andalucía development, in particular and gated communities in general, implies segregation and separation.

The study outcome is in line with the analysis suggested in this paper, as gated communities may support socio-spatial fragmentation and inequality. Furthermore, the general outcome from the case study analysis can be summarised as follows:

- The isolation of a particular layer of society from the wider community can contribute to social segregation and separation.
- The symbolism that gated communities impose with their walls and gates may influence urban growth and the natural urban spread.
- The luxurious lifestyle and safety provided by gated communities are exclusive for the residents within the walls.

The economic aspect is supported by the development of gated communities as the land prices of the surrounding areas may increase, as well as the economic opportunities in the surrounding areas, such as schools and markets.

8.4 Summary of key findings

To address the study findings on the three aspects: Spatial, Social, and economic, analysis of the impacts of gated communities are summarised below:

Spatial impact findings:

- Positive impact: local infrastructure, amenities, facilities, and services within the walls.
- Negative impact: lack of adequate infrastructure for the surrounding areas.
- Recommendation: a need for a master plan on a macro level to integrate gated communities aiming to prevent any negative impacts.

Economic impact findings:

- Positive impact: This may be considered as an encouraging investment opportunity for both sides of the walls as they may enhance the property values, internally and externally.
- Case study impact: economic support for the surrounding areas, such as shopping and schools.
- Negative impact: due to the increase in property values of the surrounding areas, a decrease in affordability levels in the surrounding areas may be noticed.

Social impact findings:

- Positive impact: community cohesion between residents within the walls.
 - Impact on the surrounding: potential social segregation and inequity.
- Case study insights: the walls and gates of the case study were identified as a symbol of segregation and seclusion.

9. DISCUSSION

The review of literature suggests that social and religious factors played significant roles in characterising the urban fabric of Arabian cities. Hence, this was noticeable in the design features as most Arabian cities had walls and gates that either surrounded the whole city as a defensive requirement or walls that surrounded houses and created courtyards. Therefore, the concept of walls and gates was remarkably seen; nonetheless, walls played a vital role in encouraging community interaction and contributed to a sense of community. Meanwhile, walls and gates of gated communities may influence segregation, fragmentation, and exclusion, which was not seen in Arabian neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, the findings extracted from the case study of Al Andalucía development synthesis with the literature review on old Arabian cities and provide valuable insights into the broader understanding of gated communities, especially in the Middle East, on the social, economic, and spatial, as follows:

Spatial impact:

By reviewing the social characteristics of neighbourhoods in the old Arabian cities, we found that community interaction was greatly encouraged. In contrast, modern gated communities introduced challenges related to segregation and fragmentation, as seen in the Al Andalucía case study. This may be considered a departure from the traditional planning of old cities and suggests a different approach to integrate gated communities within the urban to reinstate spatial interactions. Urban planning policies need to review and consider this departure and explore policies that may reintegrate gated communities into the broader community, aiming to enhance community interactions.

Economic impact:

The economic aspect had different viewpoints and opinions among researchers. Developers promote this type of development as a successful investment opportunity, as well as their impact on job creation within the walls, such as service jobs, maintenance, and security. However, as argued by Le Goix [36], the economic impact of gated communities on the surrounding plots may decrease the affordability of people to purchase since the increase in prices was irrational.

Further investigation in the context of the subject case study's influence on the surrounding neighbourhoods may be required to test the viability of this assumption by introducing urban planning policies and strategies that sustainable urban development.

Social impact:

The discussion on the social impacts relates to the complexities of social life and community relations. Some researchers argue that gated communities may create a sense of community, which may be seen within the walls and between the residents of the gated community [5]. However, the residents' survey carried out by Alkurdi [32] indicates that neighbouring communities feel the segregation and separation from the community of Al Andalucía. This understanding contributes to the ongoing debates on social interactions and community cohesion and calls for further urban planning strategies to regulate their spread and maintain an integrated society.

Future studies and recommendations:

The historical inquiry in the literature review synthesises the transformation and progression of social and spatial interactions with the old Arabian cities. As presented in the case study, the emergence of gated communities in Amman is a response to the socio-economic changes, which conflict with the historical background. Figure 6 is a proposed illustration by the author on the subject case study inspired by the characteristics of the Arabian cities in an attempt to create an integrated gated community with the surroundings.



Figure 6. Proposed illustration by the author

This aligns with the literature review and the emphasis on coherence and integration, where the development can be integrated and share common facilities. Future studies could focus on integrating gated communities into the existing urban fabric, aiming to create a harmonious and integrated environment. The finding from the case study emphasises the need to develop an integrated planning approach that incorporates social, spatial, and economic aspects that emerged from gated communities. The implications discussed in this article aim to contribute to a broader understanding of

the impacts of gated communities on the surroundings and recommend urban policies and strategies that reduce these impacts.

10. CONCLUSION

The historical evolution of Amman's urban planning, influenced by internal socio-economic changes within the community and external factors that impacted the real estate market in the surrounding countries, led to the emergence of gated communities. Those developments contributed to the economic aspect towards investors, as well as the surrounding areas, in addition to the internal amenities and facilities offered to the residents of gated communities. This paper aimed to correlate the characteristics of Arabian cities represented by gates and walls in history and how people interacted spatially and socially with the features of modern gated communities extracted from the case study. The findings of the study suggest a re-evaluation and assessment of the urban planning policies in Amman and other cities with similar historical backgrounds in order to encourage community integration, social cohesion, and economic affordability and inequity.

Recommendations:

- This article recommends developing urban planning strategies that can assist in integrating gated communities into the broader community, fostering cohesion and integration.
- Involve the broader community in the planning process of newly developed gated communities in order to ensure the concerns and needs of both communities are accommodated.

This article indicates that gated communities may significantly impact urban areas, affecting spatial, economic, and social aspects. Despite the positive features they provide, such as security and privacy for particular people in society, they also raise concerns about social integration and inclusivity. The case study of Andalucía highlights the need for future urban studies while the area is still developing to promote integration and cohesion. Future research may investigate the long-term effects of gated communities on Amman's urban fabric and socio-spatial dynamics.

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8.5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter examined the emergence and socio-spatial transformation of gated communities in Amman, tracing their evolution from organically developed neighbourhoods to contemporary private residential developments. This aims to assess broader socio-spatial implications rather than individual resident preferences, which have been addressed in earlier studies. The findings highlight that these developments are largely market-driven, prompted by the private sector in the absence of strong regulatory frameworks. This structure raises concerns about the long-term implications of uncoordinated growth, social stratification, and the erosion of inclusive planning principles. The socio-spatial divide between gated and non-gated areas reflects a growing urban dualism in Amman, with implications for equity, accessibility, and sustainable urban development. While this chapter has focused on internal spatial characteristics, socio-economic impacts, and urban typologies, the external consequences of these developments are equally critical to understanding their full impact. Chapter 9 addresses this through a detailed analysis of case studies, including a space syntax analysis of Al Andalusía and Green Land to map street connectivity, movement potential, and integration. This progression, from internal design to broader spatial influence, offers a more comprehensive understanding of the socio-spatial role of gated communities in Jordan's urban transformation.

Chapter 9: The Socio-Spatial Impacts on the Surroundings

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in Jordan, synthesising qualitative insights from regional experts with space syntax analysis. The integrated methodology, outlined in Chapter 4, reveals how these developments disrupt urban form, weaken social connectivity, and reinforce spatial fragmentation through physical design and inadequate governance. The chapter first presents the findings from semi-structured interviews with urban planners, architects, and academics, highlighting dominant themes of community segregation, economic disparity, and regulatory failure. These thematic findings are then complemented and empirically validated by a space syntax analysis of two case studies, Al Andalucía and Green Land, which measure their disconnect from the surrounding urban fabric. Section 9.5 presents a synthesis of both thematic and spatial analyses to reveal the interrelationship between socio-spatial patterns and urban fragmentation. Finally, Section 9.6 summarises and critically discusses key findings and conclusions from the analysis. Although the interview procedures and sample size are reported within the published articles included in this chapter, additional clarification is provided here at the thesis level. The number of expert interviews was guided by the principle of data saturation rather than a predefined numerical target. As analysis progressed, recurring themes emerged across interviews, particularly regarding spatial fragmentation, governance gaps, and social exclusion. In the later stages of data collection, no substantially new themes were identified, indicating that thematic saturation had been reached (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2006).

This chapter includes the following publications:

- 1) “Gated Urbanism in the Middle East: Expert Insights from Jordanian Case Studies” *Urban Sci.* 2025, 9, 399 (Hammad, Li, et al., 2025a)
- 2) “Space Syntax Analysis of Gated Communities in Jordan: Examining Urban Connectivity and Social Impact” *Sustainability* 2025, 17, Issue 2, 559 (Hammad, Li, et al., 2025c)

9.1 DECLARATIONS

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DECLARATION OF CO-AUTHORSHIP AND CO-CONTRIBUTION: PAPERS INCORPORATED IN THESIS

This declaration is to be completed for each conjointly authored publication and placed at the beginning of the thesis chapter in which the publication appears.

1. PUBLICATION DETAILS (to be completed by the candidate)

Title of
Paper/Journal/Book:

Gated Urbanism in the Middle East: Expert Insights from
Jordanian Case Studies

Surname:

Hammad

First name:

Ahmed

Institute:

Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveability

Candidate's Contribution:

80

Status:

Accepted and in press:

☐

Published:

☒

Date:

Date:

01/10/2025

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 02.10.2025

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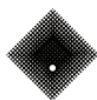
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2. They take public responsibility for their part of the publication, except for the responsible author who accepts overall responsibility for the publication;



3. There are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
4. Potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to a) granting bodies, b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
5. The original data will be held for at least five years from the date indicated below and is stored at the following **location(s)**:

Victoria University, Footscary Park, Ballarat Road, VIC 3011, Australia

Name(s) of Co-Author(s)	Contribution (%)	Nature of Contribution	Signature	Date
Ahmed Hammad	80	Conceived concept. Literature review. Methodology, writing manuscript		02.10.2025
Mengbi Li	15	Critical review and editing. Supervision. Final Approval		02.10.2025
Zora Vrcelj	5	Supervision. Administration		02.10.2025

Updated: September 2019

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This declaration is to be completed for each conjointly authored publication and placed at the beginning of the thesis chapter in which the publication appears.

1. PUBLICATION DETAILS (to be completed by the candidate)

Title of Paper/Journal/Book:	Space Syntax Analysis of Gated Communities in Jordan: Examining Urban Connectivity and Social Impact		
Surname:	Hammad	First name:	Ahmed
Institute:	Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable	Candidate's Contribution:	80
Status:			
Accepted and in press:	☐	Date:	
Published:	☒	Date:	14/01/2025

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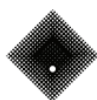
	11.08.2025
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1. They meet criteria for authorship in that they have participated in the conception, execution or interpretation of at least that part of the publication in their field of expertise;
2. They take public responsibility for their part of the publication, except for the responsible author who accepts overall responsibility for the publication;



3. There are no other authors of the publication according to these criteria;
4. Potential conflicts of interest have been disclosed to a) granting bodies, b) the editor or publisher of journals or other publications, and c) the head of the responsible academic unit; and
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Name(s) of Co-Author(s)	Contribution (%)	Nature of Contribution	Signature	Date
Ahmed Hammad	80	Conceived concept. Literature review. Methodology, writing manuscript		11.08.2025
Mengbi Li	15	Critical review and editing. Supervision. Final Approval		11.08.2025
Zora Vrcelj	5	Supervision. Administration		11.08.2025

Updated: September 2019

9.2 INTERVIEWS ON SOCIO-SPATIAL IMPACTS IN JORDAN

Building on the regional interviews provided in Section 6.1, this section synthesises findings from seven semi-structured interviews with Jordan-based experts in architecture, urban planning, real estate, and academia. The analysis reveals a strong consensus on the profound socio-spatial impacts of gated communities, characterised by a central paradox: they successfully create internal cohesion and safety for residents while simultaneously generating external social segregation and spatial fragmentation within the broader urban fabric.

The expert perspectives, summarised in **Table 9-1**, consolidate around four dominant themes:

1. **Social Segregation and Isolation:** Experts uniformly reported that gated communities foster a sense of isolation and perceived inequality among surrounding residents. The physical walls are perceived as both symbolic and real obstacles that hinder social interaction and contribute to the creation of a dual urban society.
2. **Spatial Disconnection and Urban Fabric Disruption:** A key concern is the disruptive impact on Amman's urban form. Gated communities are described as introverted "islands" that interrupt street connectivity, disregard existing urban layouts, and create low-permeability zones that hinder movement and visual access.
3. **Market-Driven Response to Planning Gaps:** Experts consistently framed these developments as a profit-driven private sector response to significant public sector failures. The lack of public parks, poor-quality infrastructure (including roads and sidewalks), and the absence of effective zoning regulations were cited as primary catalysts for their emergence.
4. **Limited and Challenged Economic Benefits:** While some experts noted a potential rise in surrounding land values, the economic benefits were generally viewed as internalised and uneven. The primary economic impact is the creation of low-skilled jobs in security and maintenance, rather than transformative local development.

These expert insights provide a critical qualitative foundation for understanding the impacts of gated urbanism in Jordan. The following sections will integrate these perceptions with empirical spatial analysis to present a comprehensive assessment.

Table 9-1 Summary of Interviews

Comparison/ Interview	Positives	Negatives	Parallels
Interview 1	Gated communities provide a strong sense of community within their walls They address gaps in local urban infrastructure, such as the lack of green spaces, playgrounds, and parks	Gated communities foster social segregation and isolation from the surrounding neighbourhoods. They disrupt the existing urban fabric and contribute to spatial disconnection. Profit-driven, catering to the wealthy while neglecting broader social inclusion	Reinforce economic disparity and create divisions. Social isolation is a recurring issue, characterised by limited interaction between residents and their surrounding neighbours. Gated communities emerged in response to gaps in urban planning, such as poor infrastructure, limited amenities, and a lack of public green spaces.
Interview 2	They address gaps in local urban infrastructure, such as the lack of green spaces, playgrounds, and parks		Gated communities in Jordan are smaller in scale compared to GCC, but they share exclusivity, isolation, and spatial disruption. Gated communities emerged in response to gaps in urban planning, such as poor infrastructure, limited amenities, and a lack of public green spaces
Interview 3	They offer safety, child-friendly spaces, and affordable options. They address gaps in local urban infrastructure, such as the lack of green spaces, playgrounds, and parks	Gated communities foster social segregation and isolation from the surrounding neighbourhoods. They disrupt the existing urban fabric and contribute to spatial disconnection	Gated communities emerged in response to gaps in urban planning, such as poor infrastructure, limited amenities, and a lack of public green spaces
Interview 4		They lack essential services and facilities compared to other regions. Profit-driven, catering to the wealthy while neglecting broader social inclusion	
Interview 5	Gated communities provide a strong sense of community within their walls	Gated communities foster social segregation and	Social isolation is a recurring issue, with limited interaction

	Increase in surrounding land values and create economic opportunities.	isolation from the surrounding neighbourhoods They disrupt the existing urban fabric and contribute to spatial disconnection.	between residents and surrounding neighbours
Interview 6	Increase in surrounding land values and create economic opportunities	Reinforced segregation; weak regulatory framework	Social isolation is a recurring issue, characterised by limited interaction between residents and their surrounding neighbours. Gated communities in Jordan are smaller in scale compared to GCC, but they share exclusivity, isolation, and spatial disruption.
Interview 7	High-quality infrastructure for residents	Gated communities foster social segregation and isolation from the surrounding neighbourhoods Profit-driven, catering to the wealthy while neglecting broader social inclusion Residents within gated communities enjoy better services and infrastructure	Gated communities in Jordan are smaller in scale compared to GCC, but they share exclusivity, isolation, and spatial disruption

Source: Researcher

Interpretive Summary

The interviews reflect several contrasts and parallels related to gated communities in Jordan. Interview 1 attributes the emergence of gated communities primarily to market demand and a lack of essential urban planning services. In contrast, Interview 2 associates their development with poor urban infrastructure, acknowledging the security requirements they fulfil. Interview 3 highlights affordability as a reason for their attraction, while Interviews 4 and 5 critique them for lacking integration with broader urban services and infrastructure. Interview 6 focuses on how these communities foster social segregation and offer limited economic impact beyond security jobs, while Interview 7 highlights their role in denoting prestige and exclusivity. All interviews agree that gated communities contribute to social and spatial isolation, creating physical and social divisions from their surrounding neighbourhoods.

9.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS FINDINGS

This section presents the thematic analysis of ten expert interviews from Jordan and the broader Middle East using the Braun and Clarke (2021) framework and NVivo 14. The first step of the thematic analysis involved familiarisation with the data. This was achieved through the transcription of interviews and a thorough review of the transcripts. The next step involved generating initial codes using NVivo 14, a widely used computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). NVivo facilitates the organisation of data, enabling researchers to generate codes and identify emerging themes systematically (Dhakal, 2022). A sample of the initial codes is presented in **Table 9-2**.

Table 9-2 Initial Codes

Initial Codes	No of Participants	Coding References
Children inside gated communities do not interact with other children who are outside gated communities	1	1
It's hard to get goods delivered inside gated communities	1	1
Businesses may open in the gated communities, generating income for those running the businesses	1	1
Developing gated communities with few housing units in them can reduce the cost of land inside the communities	1	1
Gated communities are spatially disconnected from the surrounding areas	1	1
Gated communities can lead to the introduction of good roads	1	1
Gated communities cause segregation in urban areas surrounding them	1	1

Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

After generating the initial codes, the next step in the thematic analysis involved identifying initial themes. Six main themes were identified from the data. **Table 9-3** summarises these themes and their scope.

Table 9-3 Identified Themes and Prevalence

Theme	Initial Themes	No of Files	Coding References
1	Reasons for the development of gated communities	10	53
2	Regulations involved in the development of gated communities	1	7
3	Role distribution in the development of gated communities	1	6

4	Link between old Arabian neighbourhoods and contemporary gated communities	4	8
5	Impact of gated communities	10	84
6	Factors that will facilitate the removal of walls creating gated communities	1	4

Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

Following this, each theme was described in detail. **Table 9-4** presents the identified themes along with their descriptions.

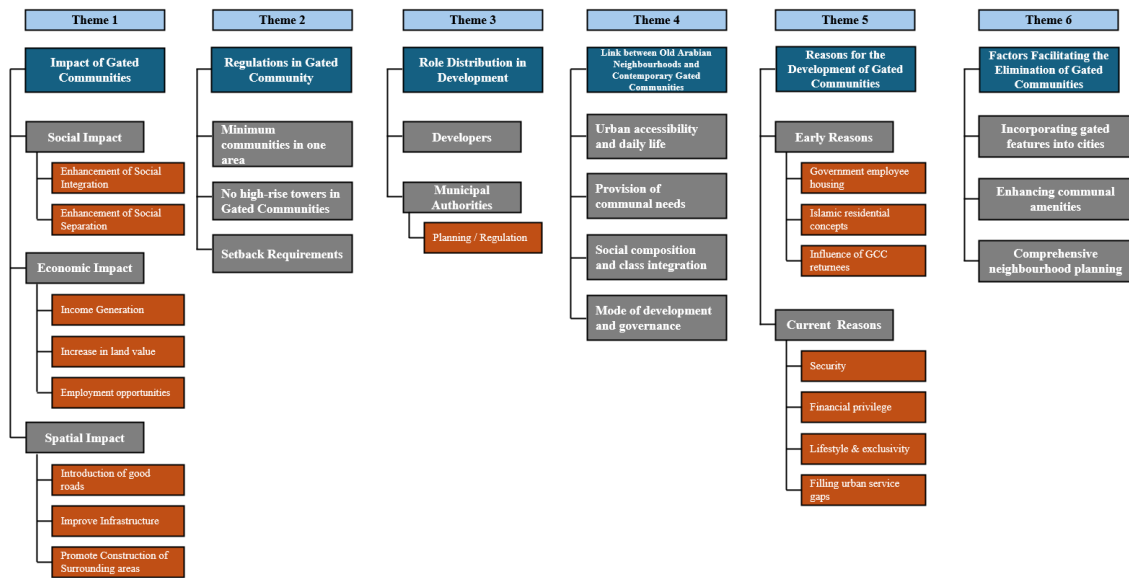
Table 9-4 Summary of Themes and Their Descriptions

Theme No.	Theme	Description
1	Impact of gated communities	This theme examines the various factors that contributed to the emergence of gated communities. Focuses on outcomes, including segregation and changes in land value.
2	Regulations involved in the development of gated communities	This theme encompasses the regulations established to govern the development of gated communities.
3	Role distribution in the development of gated communities	This theme explores the parties involved in the development and regulation of gated communities.
4	Link between old Arabian neighbourhoods and contemporary gated communities (Traditional vs. Contemporary Gated Communities)	This theme provides a comparison between old Arabian cities and contemporary gated communities.
5	Reasons for the development of gated communities	This theme covers the social, economic, and spatial impact of gated communities. Addresses motivations, such as security and exclusivity.
6	Factors that will facilitate the elimination of gated communities	This theme discusses the factors that will contribute to the elimination of gated communities.

Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

Figure 9-1 presents a hierarchy chart (node tree map) illustrating the relationships between the main themes and their associated sub-themes identified through thematic analysis.

Figure 9-1 Hierarchical Structure of Themes and Sub-Themes



Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

The final step of the thematic analysis involved compiling the findings report, which presented a discussion of the identified themes and subthemes. This report also included interview excerpts as supporting evidence for the codes.

Theme 1: Impact of Gated Communities

This theme captures the multifaceted consequences of gated communities. All participants discussed the impact, which was the most prevalent theme in the data (85 references), with social impacts being the most significant sub-theme. This theme is divided into three key subthemes as detailed in **Table 9-5**.

Table 9-5 Theme 1: Impact of Gated Communities

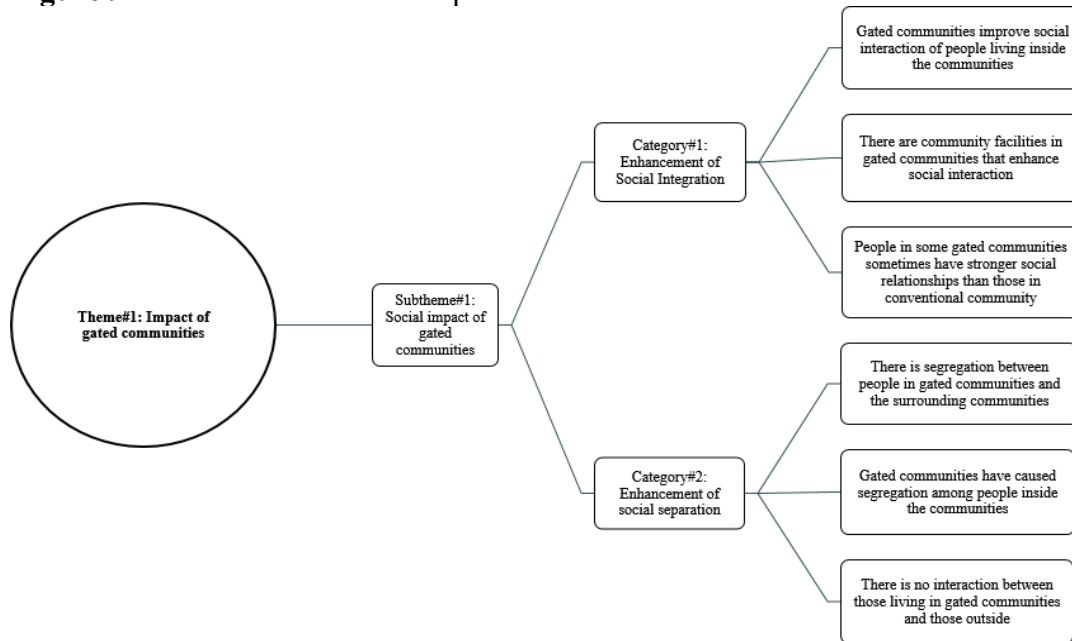
Theme/Subtheme/Category	No of Participants	Coding References
Theme No.1: Impact of gated communities	10	85
1.1 Subtheme 1: Social impact	9	48
Category 1: Enhancement of Social Integration	4	13
Category 2: Enhancement of social separation	8	35
1.2 Subtheme 2: Economic impact	7	15
1.3 Subtheme 3: Spatial impact	8	22

Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

Subtheme 1.1: Social Impact

The presence of gated communities has impacted the social aspects of people both inside and outside these communities. Two ways gated communities have affected people's social aspects are by enhancing social integration within the community and, in other instances, causing social separation from the surroundings, as shown in **Figure 9-2**.

Figure 9-2 Subtheme 1: Social Impact

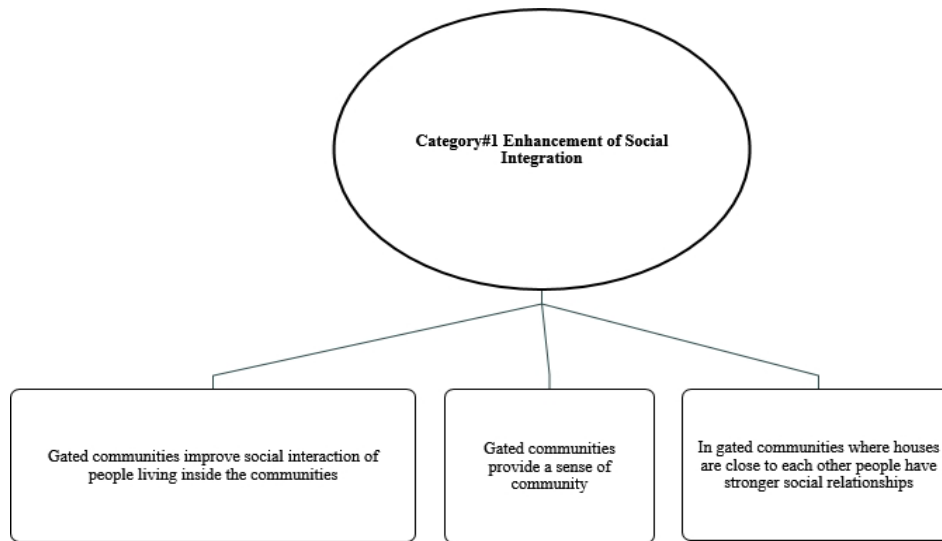


Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

a) Category 1: Enhancement of Social Integration

A minority of participants (4) pointed to enhanced internal social integration. This was facilitated by shared amenities and physical proximity, as shown in **Figure 9-3**. One participant noted the developments ‘*provide a sense of community*’ (OA), while another highlighted that ‘*social interaction is very strong in these areas, especially because of the facilities that exist inside*’ (AN).

Figure 9-3 Category 1: Enhancement of Social Integration



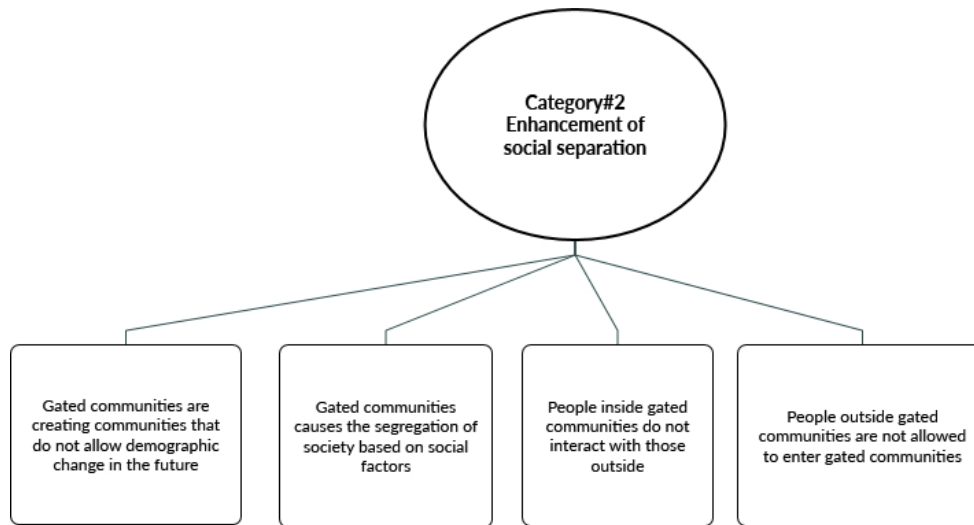
Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

The diagram represents how gated communities contribute to social integration by improving social interaction among residents *‘Of course, there is a community within the people of gated communities in Amman, the residents talk to each other.’* (NAD); provide a sense of community *‘it provides a sense of community.’* (OA); and strengthening social relationships *‘People have stronger social relationships with each other.’* (AN).

b) Category 2: Enhancement of Social Separation

The overwhelming evidence from most experts (8), categorised in **Figure 9-4**, highlighted a profound enhancement of social separation from the wider urban fabric. This occurs through restricted interaction, exclusion of outsiders, and segregation based on social status and other factors. Participants consistently described this effect, with one expert stating, *‘The gated community are going to encourage segregation between different levels of people’* (AAA). Those outside the walls also felt this sense of exclusion, as another participant explained, *‘People around these areas see those inside as elitist... as if it's their own little country’* (RA).

Figure 9-4 Category 2: Enhancement of Social Separation



Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

The diagram presents four Key coded dimensions:

- **Limited Demographic Change:** Gated communities create enclosed environments that restrict demographic transformations, leading to a static social composition over time.
- **Segregation Based on Social Factors:** These communities reinforce divisions along lines such as income, class, or ethnicity, limiting social diversity.
- **Restricted Interaction:** Residents within gated communities have limited interaction with those outside, resulting in reduced social cohesion across different urban areas.
- **Exclusion of Outsiders:** Access to gated communities is controlled, preventing non-residents from entering, further reinforcing physical and social barriers.

In contrast to the perception of strong internal cohesion presented in Category 1, several participants noted that social fragmentation can still occur even within gated communities. Participant AAA noted: *‘People didn’t know each other much.’*

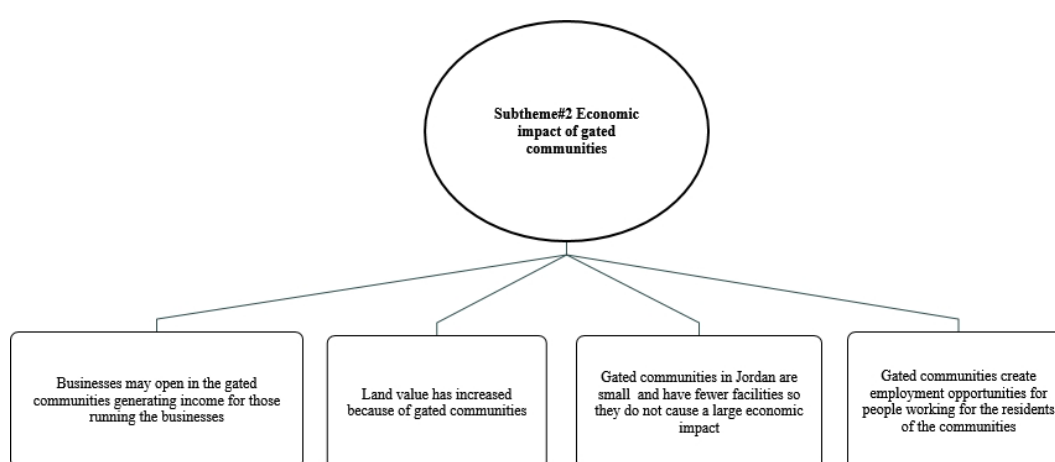
Participants also raised concerns about how gated living impacts children’s ability to interact with others beyond the walls. Participant MK stated: *‘Neither the children interact with each other.’* In summary, although gated communities may foster limited internal cohesion, the overwhelming consensus among participants was that these

developments intensify social separation, both externally and internally.

Subtheme 1.2: Economic Impact

The economic effects are positive but localised, as summarised in **Figure 9-5**. Benefits include rising property values and the creation of service-sector employment (e.g., security, maintenance). Crucially, their small scale in Jordan limits any significant national economic impact, as one participant argued, *‘It is not the presence of the gated community in Jordan that will revive the economy... due to their small size’* (AN).

Figure 9-5 Subtheme 1.2: Economic Impact



Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

This figure synthesises the key economic implications of gated communities based on thematic analysis of the interview data. Four major categories emerged:

- **Business Opportunities:**

Gated communities often contain small-scale commercial establishments, such as supermarkets and retail outlets, that provide income-generating opportunities for business owners and service providers. As noted by MK: *‘There are supermarkets sometimes...so, economy-wise, there is a boost to that area, to the neighbourhood.’* Additionally, the development of gated communities may increase property values within their boundaries. Participant JG remarked: *‘We can get more money...all we’ve got to do is put a wall, a gate, and security, and the house is going to get a premium of 30 or 40 per cent more.’*

- **Increase in Land Value:**

The presence of gated communities contributes to rising property values in surrounding areas, potentially benefiting property owners and developers: *‘The people who have land property are happy to have any gated community in their zone because this is going to increase the value of land.’* (AAA)

- **Limited Economic Impact in Jordan:**

Despite these localised effects, several participants noted that the relatively small scale and limited services of Jordan’s gated communities constrain their broader economic impact. AN explained: *‘So, in terms of the economic aspect, it has not had a big impact.’*

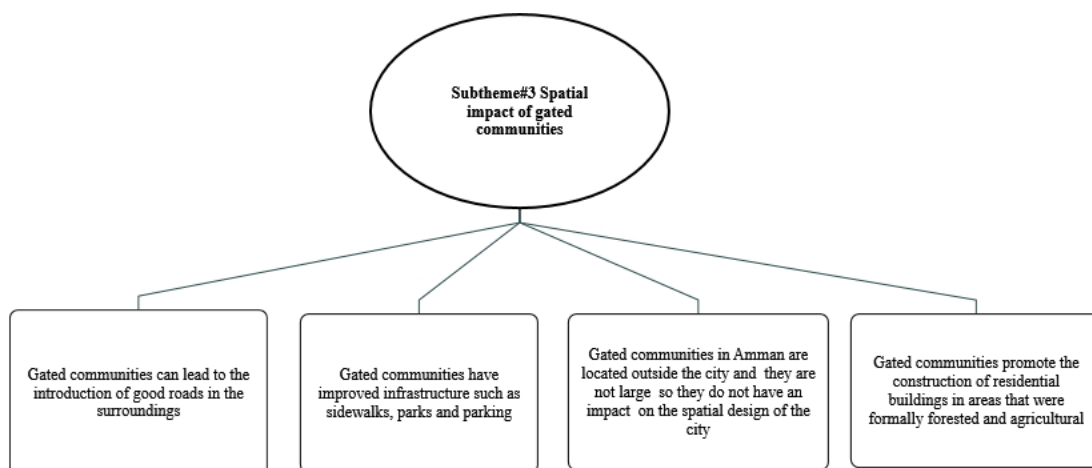
- **Employment Creation:**

Gated communities also generate employment, particularly in service-oriented roles such as security, maintenance, domestic work, and transportation. AN noted: *‘The people who work in the field of security can benefit from it.’*

Subtheme 1.3: Spatial Impact

Spatially, gated communities disrupt urban continuity. As coded in **Figure 9-6**, while they can sometimes improve local infrastructure, they primarily fragment the urban fabric, create barriers, and contribute to sprawl. One expert warned that they become *"an obstacle to communication between the neighbourhoods and the city"* (NAD).

Figure 9-6 Subtheme 1.3: Spatial Impact



Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

The above figure outlines various ways in which gated communities influence urban and suburban spaces. The NVivo coding output identifies four key spatial effects:

- **Improved Road Infrastructure:**

The development of gated communities often results in improved infrastructure in surrounding areas, including enhanced road networks, sidewalks, and public amenities. NAD noted: *'minor improvement on the street, network, sidewalks, infrastructure, parking, parks.'* Participant XA further highlighted that such developments can introduce: *'a new type of architecture...a new structure, new infrastructure, new architecture.'*

- **Enhanced Infrastructure:**

Gated communities often feature improved infrastructure, including sidewalks, parks, and parking areas, which contribute to urban development: *'usually the international schools are linked to a compound next to it for teachers and even for the residents.'* (MK). This suggests a spatial clustering of functional amenities that serve both the development and the surrounding urban fabric.

- **Limited Impact on Amman's Spatial Form:**

Many gated communities in Amman are small-scale and located on the city's outskirts, limiting their immediate effect on the city's overall spatial structure. NAD argued, *'their areas are not that huge,'* and compared to large-scale international developments, these projects are *'small-scale... 30 or 40 thousand m².'*

- **Urban Expansion into Former Green Areas:**

The spread of gated communities also contributes to the transformation of forested or agricultural land into residential zones. Participant AN, referring to Green Land, explained that the area was originally forested and agricultural, but *'the presence of Green Land has strengthened [urbanisation]... it encourages people to build.'*

Theme 2: Regulations Involved in the Development of Gated Communities

This theme, detailed in **Table 9-6** and discussed by one key expert (7 references), outlines the strict regulatory frameworks governing security-protected compounds. These regulations mandate high perimeter walls, limit compound concentration, and prohibit high-rise buildings to ensure security and control.

Table 9-6 Key Regulations for Gated Community Development

Theme	No of Participants	Coding References
Theme 2: Regulations involved in the development of gated communities	1	7
In military-gated communities, the boundary of the land had to have a high compound wall	1	1
The municipal did not allow many compounds in one area in some areas	1	2
There should be no high-rise towers in the compounds	1	1
There are regulations for planning military and police-protected gated communities	1	1
There are requirements on how far the building has to be set back in military-gated communities	1	1

Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

According to MK, strict planning rules apply to military-protected compounds. These include mandatory high compound walls around the perimeter, as *‘this was required in military-protected communities.’*

Theme 3: Role Distribution in the Development of Gated Communities

This theme (1 participant, 6 references), summarised in **Table 9-7**, identifies the key actors involved in the development of these communities. Analysis confirms that private developers are the primary entities driving construction, while municipalities act primarily as regulators rather than developers.

Table 9-7 Role Distribution in the Development of Gated Communities

Theme/Codes	No of Participants	Coding References
Theme 3: Role distribution in the development of gated communities	1	6
Developers are involved in developing the land	1	1
Municipal are involved in planning the bigger picture of how the land is used	1	1
Municipal can develop land in some instances	1	1
Sometimes, the municipal controls the work of the developers	1	3

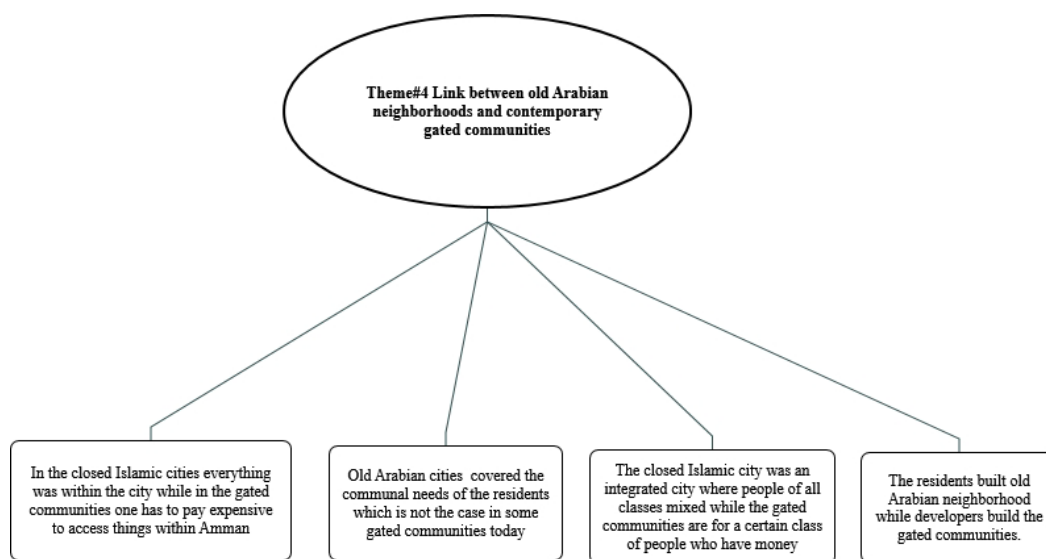
Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

For example, Participant AT stated that the municipal was involved in planning the bigger picture of how the land was used: *‘Municipal are associated with buildings and with planning towards enforcing the big picture.’*

Theme 4: Link between Old Arabian Neighbourhoods and Contemporary Gated Communities

This theme (4 participants, 8 references) provides a critical comparative analysis. The visual comparison in **Figure 9-7** outlines key differences in accessibility, social integration, and governance. Participants contrasted the organic, socially integrated traditional cities with modern gated communities, which are seen as exclusive, commercially developed communities. One participant captured this transformation: *‘The closed city was a public city... all professions and society... But the compound is for a specific class.’* (AAG).

Figure 9-7 Arabian Neighbourhoods and Contemporary Gated Communities



Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

The above figure suggests that while both Arabian neighbourhoods and gated communities share some characteristics, they also exhibit significant differences in terms of accessibility, social integration, communal services, and governance in the following aspects:

- **Accessibility and Cost of Living**

Traditional Arabian cities were compact and self-sufficient, with daily needs met locally. In contrast, modern gated communities are often located in peripheral areas and are costly: *‘In Al Andalusia gated community... You have to pay for petrol every day to go to any place in Amman... In Islamic societies, everything was within the city.’* (AAG)

- **Communal Needs**

Traditional cities supported inclusive communal life. In contrast, gated communities are often exclusive. Participant AT noted: *‘Communal needs were covered within a bigger space... they needed to come closer to each other, which provided shade and walkable areas.’*

- **Social Integration**

Islamic cities enabled coexistence across economic classes, while modern gated communities are often exclusive to affluent groups. AAG explained: *‘The closed city was a public city... all professions and society... But the compound is for a specific class... the class of capitalists who have money.’*

- **Urban Development & Governance**

Traditional Arabian neighbourhoods were built by their own residents, reflecting organic growth and communal decision-making. Gated communities, in contrast, are primarily developed by private developers. Participant AAA stated: *‘The old Arabian neighbourhood... was built incrementally... by people based on their needs and values. Gated communities... are built by developers... as a whole, in one shot.’*

Theme 5: Reasons for the Development of Gated Communities

This prevalent theme (10 participants, 56 references) identifies the drivers behind gated communities, categorised into two sub-themes as shown in **Table 9-8**.

Table 9-8 Reasons for the Development of Gated Communities

Theme/Subtheme	No of Participants	Coding References
Theme 5: Reasons for the development of gated communities	10	56
Subtheme 5.1: Early reasons for the development of gated communities	2	4
Subtheme 5.2: Current reasons for the development of gated communities	10	51

Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

Subtheme 5.1: Early Reasons for the Development of Gated Communities

The early emergence of gated communities in Jordan was closely tied to specific socio-political and cultural conditions. As shown in **Table 9-9**, only two participants addressed

this subtheme, generating four coding references. The primary explanations included housing for government employees, alignment with Islamic residential values, and the influence of returning residents from the GCC countries, specifically Kuwait.

Table 9-9 Early Reasons for the Development of Gated Communities

Subtheme/Codes	No of Participants	Coding References
Subtheme 1: Early reasons for the development of gated communities	2	4
Compounds were initially introduced in Amman as residences for people working in the government sector	1	2
Compounds were introduced in Amman as residences for people who were interested in the Islamic concept	1	1
People who came from the GCC countries, Kuwait, and Iraq introduced gated communities	1	1

Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

- **Residential Houses for Government Employees:**

One participant noted that early residential housing in Amman was built for public-sector workers. While these developments were not fully gated, they were socially and spatially exclusive: *‘The first one, Al Hussein housing in Amman, [...] was created for certain communities [...] who work in the government sector. Though it did not have a gate, it had the concept of a gated community.’* (OA).

- **Islamic Concept Influence:**

The same participant also observed that certain developments were initiated to reflect Islamic residential values. Participant OA added: *‘Another project was [...] designed by a French designer [...] and it was somehow like a gated community [...] for people [...] interested in the Islamic concept.’*

- **Influence of GCC countries, Kuwaiti, and Iraqi Residents:**

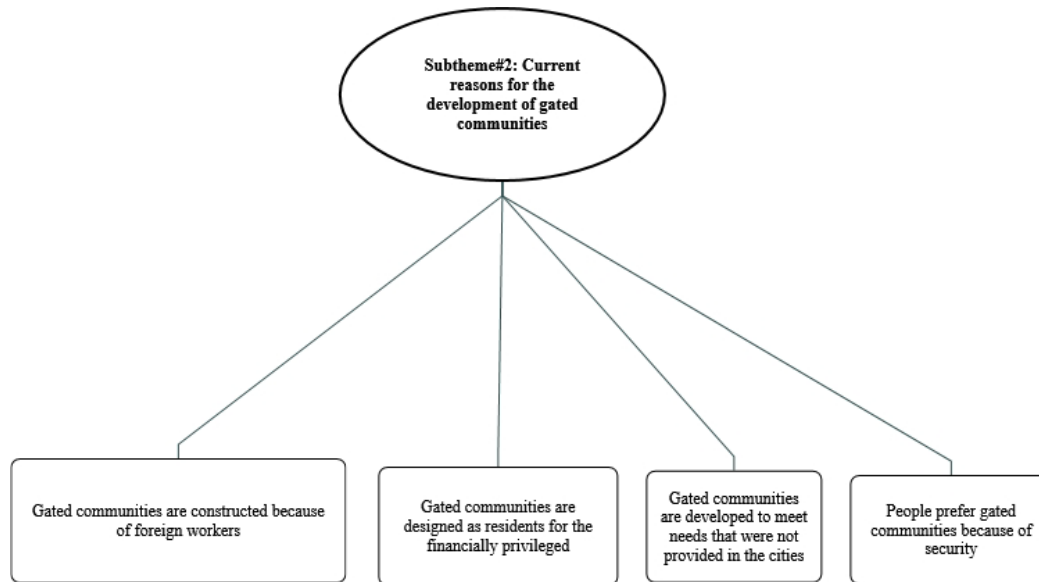
A third factor was the influence of returnees from the GCC countries and neighbouring countries, who brought with them expectations of more exclusive residential formats. Participant RA said: *‘People started coming back from the Gulf, from Kuwait, from Iraq [...] so we had the idea of multi-residential buildings.’*

Subtheme 5.2: Current Reasons for the Development of Gated Communities

Contemporary motivations for gated community development in Jordan reflect broader socio-economic, lifestyle, and governance concerns, distinguishing them from the earlier

drivers of this trend. **Figure 9-8** presents a mind map that organises the main categories of reasons identified by participants under this subtheme.

Figure 9-8 Subtheme 5.2: Reasons for the Development of Gated Communities



Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

The mind map organises these factors into four categories based on participant responses:

- **Security Concerns**

Security was the most frequently mentioned reason. Participants noted that gated communities provide controlled access, surveillance systems, and an overall sense of safety. Participant AN explained: *‘There are people who want to feel safe in this new community.’* Participant XA added: *‘Many professionals feel secure in gated communities because they don’t feel safe in the open city.’*

- **Foreign Workforce Demand**

Participants identified the use of gated communities to attract and accommodate skilled foreign workers, particularly in the GCC: *‘In the Gulf, gated communities offer luxury and security to attract top professionals who left their lives in America.’* (NAD). Participant XA added: *‘They were a solution to cultural and lifestyle mismatches — to help Western professionals live and contribute to the city.’*

- **Financial Privilege and Exclusivity**

Gated communities are designed for financially privileged residents, offering luxury, privacy, and high-end amenities that cater to higher-income groups. AAA explained:

‘They are mainly for upper-middle to high-income people with good quality of life.’ Participants JG and XA posited that people live in gated communities because they will live amongst people of the same social class. Participant JG said: *‘They’re for people who feel superior through their wealth — prestige becomes the main factor.’* Whereas Participant XA added: *‘People live in them to be around others of the same social class and values.’*

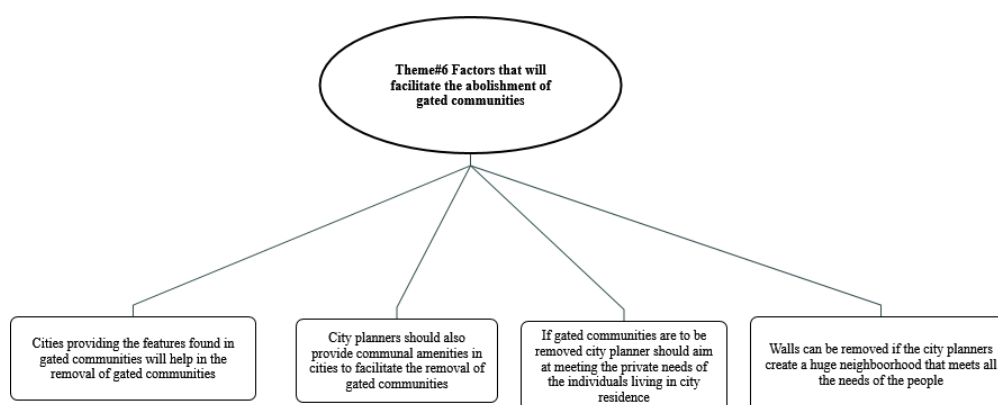
- **Filling Urban Service Gaps**

Participants argued that gated communities compensate for deficiencies in public services, offering infrastructure and recreational amenities that cities fail to provide. Participant RA said: *‘Developers now add gyms, cinemas, and pools.’* Participant XA added: *‘They offer facilities that neighbourhoods lack, like swimming pools and walking tracks.’*

Theme 6: Factors that will Facilitate the Elimination of Gated Communities

As conceptualised in **Figure 9-9**, participants suggested that the demand for gated communities would decline if cities incorporated their desirable features, such as safety, security, and quality amenities, into open, public neighbourhoods. The solution lies in proactive public planning that meets residents' needs for community and quality of life.

Figure 9-9 Factors that will Facilitate the Elimination of Gated Communities



Source: Researcher – NVivo 14

Thematic coding of theme Six revealed the following key factors:

- **Incorporating Gated Community Features into Cities**

This suggests that if cities incorporate the desirable features of gated communities, the demand for gated communities may decline: *‘So the cities started to look at the features that the gated communities are providing, and they started to try to provide neighbourhoods that cover these things.’* (AT)

- **Enhancing Communal Amenities**

The availability of high-quality public amenities, such as parks, security, and recreational spaces in open urban areas, can reduce residents' dependence on gated communities for these services. Participant AT elaborated: *‘but going as well to the communal amenities that are there in order to look at it in a holistic point of view.’*

- **Planners Aim to Address the Private Needs of Individuals**

This implies that urban planners should focus on addressing the individual needs, such as privacy, security, and quality of life, that drive people toward gated communities.

- **Development of Comprehensive Neighbourhoods that Fulfil Residents' Needs**

The removal of physical barriers was considered feasible if urban planning delivered cohesive, inclusive neighbourhoods of sufficient scale and quality. As Participant AT put it: *‘To say that the walls get removed... you need to develop a neighbourhood... not a small group of houses, but a huge neighbourhood... having all the needs.’*

This section has presented the thematic findings from the NVivo-based analysis of participant interviews, identifying six major themes: the characteristics of gated communities, their spatial and social impacts on surrounding areas, internal lived experiences, key challenges, reasons for their emergence, and factors that may support their elimination. Collectively, these themes offer a grounded understanding of how gated communities are perceived, experienced, and justified within the urban context of Jordan. They highlight issues such as exclusivity, disconnection, security, and lifestyle aspirations, while also pointing to potential policy and planning interventions. The following section builds on these insights by examining how regional experts interpret the broader implications of gated urbanism in Jordan and the Middle East.

9.4 EXPERT INSIGHTS FROM JORDANIAN CASE STUDIES

Building upon the broader thematic findings presented in Section 9.3, this section presents a peer-reviewed article that provides a detailed analysis of these phenomena within the Jordanian context. The article, which forms the core of this section, investigates the specific socio-spatial impacts of gated communities by synthesising the qualitative perceptions from the regional expert interviews with an in-depth comparative case study analysis of two prominent Jordanian developments: Al Andalucía and Green Land in Amman. *MDPI, Urban Sci.* 2025, 9, 399.

Article

Gated Urbanism in the Middle East: Expert Insights from Jordanian Case Studies

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Abstract

Across the Middle East, gated communities have become a defining feature of contemporary urban development, raising urgent questions about spatial inequality, public access, and social cohesion. This study examines the socio-spatial impacts of these developments by combining qualitative perceptions from regional expert interviews with in-depth analysis of two case studies in Jordan: Al Andalusia and Green Land. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with urban planners, architects, and policy experts from Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, the study employs thematic analysis to investigate expert perspectives on gated communities as a regional planning phenomenon. Findings reveal four dominant themes: (1) gated communities intensify spatial fragmentation and disconnection from surrounding urban fabric; (2) private sector dominance leads to unregulated, market-driven development that weakens strategic urban planning; (3) the erosion of inclusive public space and social cohesion is widely perceived as a social cost; and (4) gated living is framed as an aspirational lifestyle associated with security, prestige, and socio-economic distinction. The article concludes by calling for more inclusive urban policies that balance private development with inclusive planning strategies to mitigate the long-term impacts of fragmentation and exclusivity in Middle Eastern cities.

Keywords: gated communities; urban development; Middle East; expert interviews; spatial fragmentation; spatial inequality; urban planning; social cohesion



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1. Introduction

The global spread of gated communities has emerged as one of the most significant urban transformations of recent decades [1,2], with particularly complex manifestations in Middle Eastern cities. These privatised residential developments, characterised by restricted access, exclusive amenities, and socio-economic homogeneity, have become powerful symbols of contemporary urban development [3,4]. Their expansion reflects broader transformation in land use, urban governance, and spatial equity [5,6]. This proliferation is not merely a trend in residential architecture but a profound spatial expression of deeper socio-economic transformations. Scholars are increasingly interpreting this phenomenon through discussions of spatial justice and neoliberal urban governance [7]. Spatial justice concerns the fair distribution of resources and opportunities in space, arguing that urban form is deeply implicated in producing social inequality. From this perspective, gated communities can be seen as a source of injustice, creating privatised areas of privilege that actively fragment the urban fabric and restrict access to amenities for the wider public. This

is driven by a neoliberal concept of urban development, where market forces and private sector control prevail in planning, often at the expense of public needs [7].

In the Middle East, this manifests in distinct ways. In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, for instance, gated communities emerged historically as spatial instruments of state governance, primarily to accommodate and segregate Western expatriate workers during the mid-20th-century oil boom [2,8]. This model reinforced class divisions while serving both economic requirements and socio-cultural preservation objectives [9]. Across the region, gated communities share several common features: they are generally market-driven, cater to upper middle class or elite populations, provide controlled access and private amenities, and reflect broader socio-economic inequalities. Despite these commonalities, significant variations exist. In the GCC, developments are often large-scale, state-supported, and serve as tools of socio-spatial regulation. In contrast, in countries without substantial oil wealth, such as Jordan, developments tend to be smaller, privately funded, and shaped primarily by speculative investment and regional capital flows. Recognising these similarities and differences provides a framework for understanding gated urbanism as a heterogeneous but regionally embedded phenomenon.

In particular, there is limited comparative work that distinguishes between the state-supported mega-developments of the GCC countries and the more fragmented, market-led forms found in countries like Jordan. While studies on Jordan are increasing, they often focus narrowly on resident motivations or isolated case studies [10,11]. A synthesised analysis of regional expert perspectives on the socio-spatial impacts and governance challenges of these developments is notably absent. By situating Jordan within a regional continuum of gated urbanism, this article extends debates beyond country-specific cases toward a comparative Middle Eastern perspective. This gap constrains our ability to understand gated communities not simply as isolated developments but as spatial expressions of broader governance failures, investment flows, and socio-political dynamics across the Middle East. This study addresses that gap by examining the socio-spatial implications of gated urbanism in selected Middle Eastern contexts, with a particular focus on Jordan.

To support this discussion, the central research question guiding this analysis is: How do gated communities in the Middle East, particularly in Jordan, guide urban form, influence governance frameworks, and affect spatial and social equity? To address this, the study employs a qualitative, multi-scalar methodology that combines thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with urban experts across the region and a comparative case study analysis of two prominent gated developments in Amman: Al Andalucía and Green Land. A total of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with urban planners, architects, authority personnel, and academics, selected for their professional expertise and direct involvement in housing and urban development across Jordan and the wider Middle East. This composition ensured coverage of both technical and academic perspectives.

The selection of Al Andalucía and Green Land is deliberate, as the two cases illustrate contrasting models of gated urbanism that directly connect with the research questions. Al Andalucía represents a more exclusive, spatially segregated development designed around luxury branding and seclusion. Whereas Green Land demonstrates a hybrid, moderately integrative model influenced by progressive investment and diverse ownership structures. Their comparison highlights how different governance arrangements and market requirements produce contrasted socio-spatial outcomes, making them valuable cases for understanding the broader continuum of gated development across Jordan and the Middle East.

The findings reveal a heterogeneous and context-dependent phenomenon, influenced by infrastructural deficiencies, neoliberal urban policies, and evolving consumer preferences. While these developments cater to demands for security, exclusivity, and modern living standards, they simultaneously exacerbate socio-spatial inequalities by reinforcing exclusionary practices, urban fragmentation, and reduced urban integration. The selected case studies are large-scale, privately developed residences located on the urban periphery of Amman. While Al Andalucía exemplifies spatial seclusion and luxury branding, Green Land presents a more diversified and economically integrative model [12]. These cases, paired with thematic insights from expert interviews, illustrate how gated developments are not merely residential typologies but spatial expressions of broader governance, planning, and investment structures [3,13].

Jordan's gated development model offers particularly valuable insights into this regional phenomenon. The country's lack of substantial oil revenues has led to a distinctive model where these communities are largely driven by the private sector, influenced by speculative real estate aspects and regional capital flows [12]. Major projects, such as the Abdali development, which is significantly funded by UAE investors, exemplify how Jordan's gated communities have become embedded in regional investment networks, catering primarily to local upper middle class desires for prestige and security [6]. This has created what recent studies term an "infectious divide", a pattern of urban development where privatised residential spaces increasingly dominate city peripheries, exacerbating socio-spatial inequalities [9].

By combining expert interviews with contrasting case studies of Al Andalucía and Green Land, this study provides new insights into how governance structures, market requirements, and design choices influence socio-spatial inequality and urban integration. It thereby addresses a notable gap in comparative analyses of gated urbanism in the Middle East, particularly between state-supported GCC developments and market-driven Jordanian projects. These findings highlight the need for planning frameworks that promote spatial integration, equity, and long-term urban resilience [11,14]. These findings offer both academic contributions to debates on exclusive urbanism and practical guidance for planning policies that promote equity, connectivity, and sustainable urban development.

2. Literature Review

Gated Communities: A Global Perspective

The emergence of gated communities represents a significant global urban transformation, evolving from a post-World War II American phenomenon into a worldwide trend driven by desires for security, exclusivity, and socio-economic distinction [8,9]. Scholars highlight common themes of social segregation, spatial fragmentation, and privatisation of public space [4,15,16]. They are more widely critiqued for exacerbating urban fragmentation, social segregation, and spatial inequality [17]. While critiques often emphasise exclusionary impacts and urban inequality, some argue these developments can also provide residents with safety, cohesion, and enhanced property values [18,19]. This global literature establishes gated communities as spatial expressions of neoliberal urban governance, where privatised solutions fill voids left by public planning, often at the cost of broader spatial justice [20,21].

Gated Communities in the Middle East and GCC

The Middle East presents distinctive trajectories influenced by oil wealth, migration, and socio-political structures. In the GCC, early merchant enclosures and post-oil expatriate compounds evolved into large-scale gated developments catering to foreign workers and elites [2,22,23]. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar illustrate how cultural conservatism and expatriate demand drove gated housing models, while in Egypt, Lebanon, and Turkey, economic liberalisation and weak public provision positioned gating as both a luxury commodity and a coping strategy [5,24,25]. Scholars consistently emphasised the role of private developers, weak planning frameworks, and neoliberal housing policies in reinforcing urban inequality and socio-spatial segregation [6,26]. Despite regional diversity, the Middle East shares a dual legacy of exclusivity and fragmentation across its borders.

Gated Communities in Jordan

Jordan's gated developments emerged later, initially as family compounds in the 1990s before evolving into private sector-led projects after 2009 [10]. Unlike GCC contexts centred on expatriates, these communities target Jordan's middle- and upper-middle classes, marketed as prestigious, secure, and modern housing [13,27]. Studies indicate the existence of different typologies, such as "mini" communities in wealthy urban districts and "mega" developments on Amman's periphery, which are both characterised by exclusivity and weak regulation [13]. While motivations such as privacy, investment, and lifestyle dominate, concerns about urban fragmentation, resource use, and social segregation remain underexplored [11]. Recent mega-projects, such as Abdali, Al Andalucía, and Jordan Gate, highlight the influence of the GCC capital and speculative real estate [6,28]. However, a significant gap remains in understanding the socio-spatial impacts of these communities on the surrounding urban fabric and in synthesising regional expert perspectives on their development. This study addresses this gap by combining qualitative insights from urban experts across the Middle East with a comparative case study analysis of two major Jordanian developments, Al Andalucía and Green Land, to elucidate their role in reshaping urban form, governance, and equity in Jordan and the wider region.

3. Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative, multi-scalar research design that combines expert interviews with comparative case study analysis to examine the socio-spatial implications of gated communities in Jordan within a broader Middle Eastern context. This approach aligns with established qualitative methodologies that investigate urban phenomena through both regional patterns and localised case studies [29,30]. By integrating macro-level expert perspectives with micro-level analysis of the built environment, the methodology captures the structural drivers of gated urbanism while maintaining contextual specificities [31,32]. A flowchart illustrating the complete methodological process is provided in Figure 1.

3.1. Data Collection

Data collection was conducted between February 2023 and January 2024 and consisted of two parallel strands: expert interviews and case study analysis.

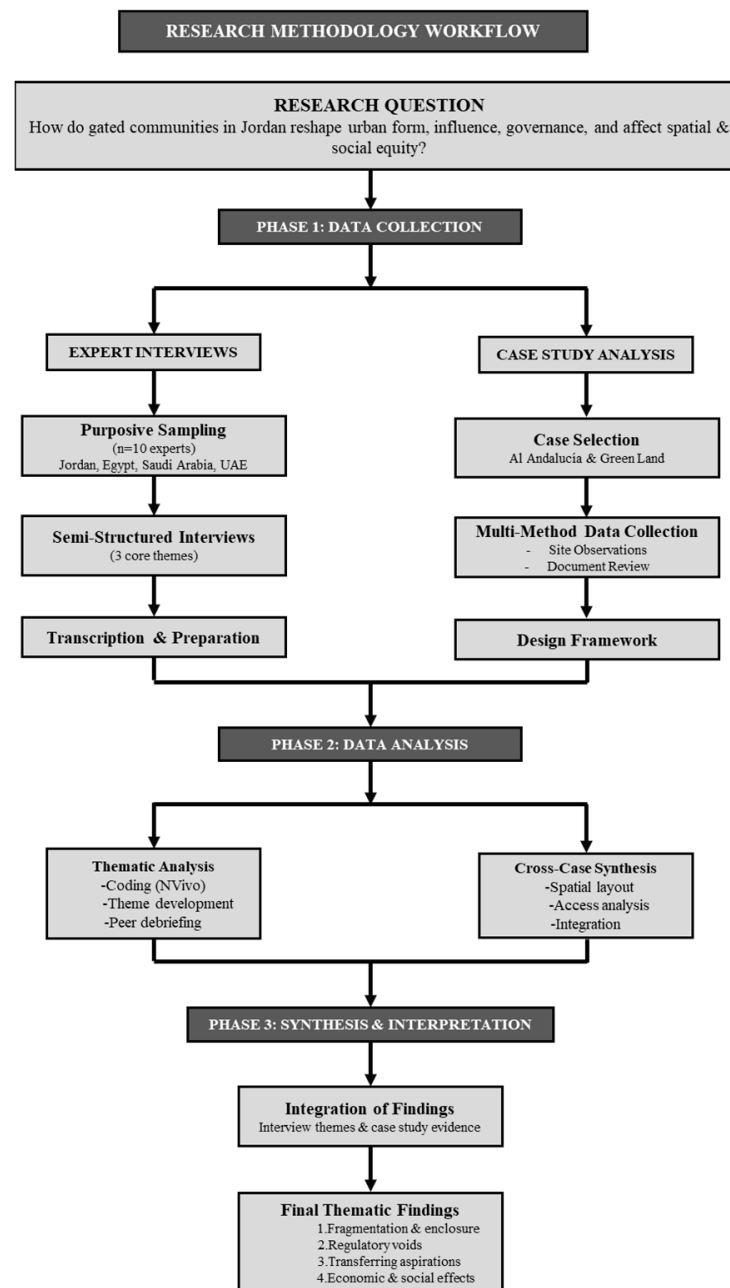


Figure 1. Research Methodology Workflow. Source: Author.

3.1.1. Expert Interviews

A total of ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with urban professionals and academics across four Middle Eastern countries: Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The distribution of experts was as follows: six from Jordan, one from Egypt, one from Saudi Arabia, and two from the United Arab Emirates. This distribution was designed to prioritise in-depth insights from the primary case study country (Jordan) while ensuring substantive representation from other key regional contexts, including both North African (Egypt) and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) models (Saudi Arabia and the UAE).” The expert panel ($n = 10$) was composed of three urban planners, five academic researchers specialising in Middle Eastern urban studies, and two architects with direct experience in gated community projects (Including 1 working as authority personnel). Their professional experience ranged from 10 to 25 years, ensuring deeply informed perspectives. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling based on

rigorous definitions of expertise in urban development within the Middle Eastern context. Expertise was operationalized through three criteria: (1) professional domain, ensuring balanced representation from academia, public sector/municipal planning, and private practice (architects, planners, developers); (2) a minimum of eight years of professional or research experience in urban development, housing, or gated communities; and (3) a demonstrable research or professional focus on the Middle Eastern region. This sampling strategy ensured diverse yet highly relevant perspectives, while reducing bias toward any single professional group [33]. This selection strategy was designed to capture the diversity of gated community development models in the region. Jordan provided the core empirical context for the study. Egypt offered perspectives from a highly urbanised North African setting experiencing significant gated expansion. Saudi Arabia and the UAE represented the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) context, characterised by large-scale, state-supported enclosed developments. This composition ensured a balance of regional perspectives and professional backgrounds, strengthening the reliability of the thematic findings. The decision to focus on expert interviews, rather than resident perspectives, was a methodological choice informed by the study's research objectives and the existing literature. The core objective of this study is to analyse the external socio-spatial impacts of gated communities on their surroundings and the broader urban fabric, rather than internal resident experiences. This approach is supported by two key rationales: First, the literature review identifies existing studies that have extensively documented resident motivations and satisfaction within Jordanian gated communities through surveys and questionnaires [11,27]. Our study aims to avoid redundancy and instead fill a different gap by providing a macro-level, professional perspective on urban-scale effects. Second, to analyse broader impacts on urban form, governance, and spatial equity, the objective, practical insights of planning experts are particularly valuable. As supported by methodological literature [34], expert interviews can reduce potential bias from personal attachments, providing a more theoretical and policy-oriented understanding of the phenomenon.

Interviews were conducted via secure digital platforms using a semi-structured format, which balanced predefined thematic domains with flexibility to explore emergent themes [35]. The interview guide focused on three core areas derived from literature on urban segregation:

- Perceived socio-spatial impacts;
- Regulatory challenges;
- Real estate market transformations.

Thematic saturation was reached after ten interviews, when no new codes emerged in the final two interviews; a threshold consistent with qualitative standards for depth and analytical sufficiency [36].

3.1.2. Case Study Analysis

The research incorporated two comparative case studies, Al Andalucía and Green Land, located on the southern outskirts of Amman. The case selection was based on a strategy of maximum variation sampling [37] to capture a spectrum of gated development typologies in Jordan. Al Andalucía was selected as a representative example of a large-scale, high-end, spatially secluded compound, characterised by perimeter walls and luxury branding. In contrast, Green Land was chosen to represent a smaller-scale, more moderately integrated development with a semi-open layout and hybrid design, facilitating comparison of differing levels of urban integration and socio-spatial impact. Both developments exemplify private, master-planned, enclosed residential environments, but differ in scale, urban integration, and socio-spatial characteristics. Al Andalucía is a large-scale villa compound initiated in 2005, located approximately 20 km from central

Amman. Green Land, developed in 2008, is comparatively smaller and situated closer to existing urban infrastructure in Na'ur. These contrasting cases allow for a comparative assessment of how gated communities interact with their surroundings and influence patterns of access, economic change, and social stratification [29]. The selection of these cases was based on comparative divergence in scale, spatial layout, socio-economic targeting, and development models. Both communities reflect broader patterns of privatised enclosure, land reclassification, and speculative development in Jordan's urban periphery.

Fieldwork for the case studies involved systematic site observations using spatial analysis, along with a review of secondary materials, including planning documents (e.g., zoning plans, municipal land use maps), developer master plans, and marketing brochures. Particular attention was paid to spatial layout, access hierarchy, surrounding land uses, and evidence of permeability or exclusion, allowing for direct comparison between interview insights and the built form.

3.2. Data Analysis

The analysis followed a parallel process for both data strands, followed by integration of findings.

3.2.1. Expert Interview Analysis

Interview transcripts were analysed using Braun and Clarke [38] six-step thematic framework, supported by NVivo 14 software (Figure 2).

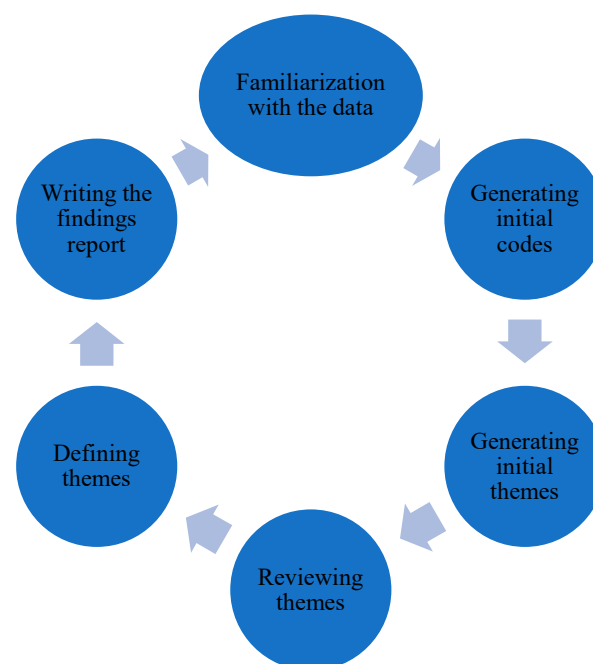


Figure 2. Six Steps Framework. Source: [39].

The coding strategy employed a combination of grounded and structured approaches, starting with inductive line-by-line coding [40,41]. These codes were refined through iterative codebook development and applied across the dataset [42]. Peer debriefing among research team members helped ensure analytical consistency through intercoder reliability checks [43]. The final synthesis yielded four dominant themes, which are presented and discussed in the Results section.

3.2.2. Case Study Analysis

The case study analysis employed within-case and cross-case synthesis [29]. Each case was examined individually to identify its unique socio-spatial characteristics, followed by systematic comparison to identify patterns related to urban integration, governance models, and social outcomes.

3.2.3. Analytical Framework

To ensure a systematic and transparent analytical process, the study was guided by formalised qualitative frameworks derived from established methodological literature. Although no statistical equations were employed, the following conceptual models guided our approach to data interpretation and synthesis.

1. Thematic Analysis Saturation Formula:

The principle of informational redundancy Guest, Bunce and Johnson [36] guided the assessment of thematic saturation in expert interviews. Saturation was reached when no new themes emerged in consecutive interviews ($n = 9$ and $n = 10$), indicating that additional data collection was unlikely to yield further insights.

2. Cross-Case Analysis Framework:

The comparative evaluation of Al Andalucía and Green Land followed a structured matrix approach [29]. Each case was assessed across socio-spatial dimensions derived from interview themes and literature (Urban Form, Governance, Aspirations, Economic Effects). Patterns of convergence and divergence were systematically identified, allowing for a clear comparison between large-scale isolation and smaller-scale integration.

3. Triangulation:

A triangulation protocol Flick [34], Denzin [44] integrated findings from interviews and case studies. A theme was considered robust when strongly supported by both data sources, enhancing internal validity [45].

3.2.4. Integration of Findings

The insights from expert interviews and empirical case study evidence were integrated through the triangulation process described above, ensuring that thematic findings were grounded in both professional perspectives and observable spatial reality.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

The study received ethics approval from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (HRE23-106) and adhered to NHMRC [46] guidelines. All interviews adhered to local ethical norms, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and respecting cultural and professional sensitivities. Best practices for research in culturally diverse settings were followed [47,48].

4. Results

This section presents an integrated analysis of findings from the expert interviews and case studies. The empirical observations from Al Andalucía and Green Land provide the foundational context, while insights from regional experts are merged throughout to interpret, contextualise, and explain these patterns within broader Middle Eastern urban trends. This approach enables a constructive examination of how macro-level expert perspectives are manifested in specific local contexts.

4.1. Case Study 1: Al Andalucía

Al Andalucía, developed between 2005 and 2013, is a gated villa compound approximately 20 km south of central Amman and represents one of Jordan's first large-scale gated communities [11]. Located along the Airport Road corridor, the development spans 800,000 square meters and comprises 588 villas, surrounded by a concrete perimeter wall and a single gated access point (Figure 3). It was selected for this study as a paradigm case due to its high enclosure, luxury branding, and socio-spatial segregation, which exemplify common patterns of gated urbanism in Jordan.



Figure 3. Al Andalucía Internal roads. Source: Author.

This case is critically significant to the research question concerning how gated communities reshape urban form and reinforce inequalities. Site observations confirmed a strict hierarchical access structure, featuring a single main entrance for residents and visitors, as well as a separate service entrance for deliveries and staff, both of which were heavily controlled by security personnel. Its spatial layout is characterised by low permeability and one entrance, reinforcing enclosure, and it was built on reclassified agricultural land, reflecting weak land use regulation in Jordan (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Al Andaluc'ia—Site Map. Source: [49].

The physical form of Al Andalucía exemplifies the theme of spatial fragmentation identified by regional experts. Its high walls and controlled access visually reinforce the

social exclusion and perception of elitism discussed in interviews. One expert remarked: *“It’s like another city behind walls—residents enjoy better infrastructure, while neighbours remain excluded”* (Interview 7, Jordan). This expert perspective aligns directly with the site’s observed isolation, confirming its function as what multiple interviewees termed a “social island.” Additionally, the expert perspective aligns directly with the site’s observed isolation, empirically demonstrating how such developments affect urban form by creating partitioned, disconnected territories that exacerbate socio-spatial inequalities. This sense of disconnection was empirically evidenced by poor access to public services, limited retail options, and the observed necessity for residents to commute to Madaba (9.7 km away) for basic goods. The internal road network spans approximately 1.2 km, and no local service facilities were present within the community, further highlighting disparities with surrounding areas.

Furthermore, Al Andalucía directly illustrates the governance gaps highlighted in the research question. Despite its internal amenities, including a centrally located recreational area designed to enhance internal social interaction, the development suffers from pronounced external social disconnection. This observation validates the expert-identified paradox of strong internal social cohesion within gated communities, which occurs alongside weakened external social ties. The development’s approval on reclassified land was attributed by experts to a significant governance gap. As one expert from Egypt noted, *“These projects follow investor logic—not planning logic”* (Interview 3), a point that directly evidences how gated communities thrive under conditions of planning gaps, influencing the governance framework by operating outside strategic urban integration efforts (Figure 5).

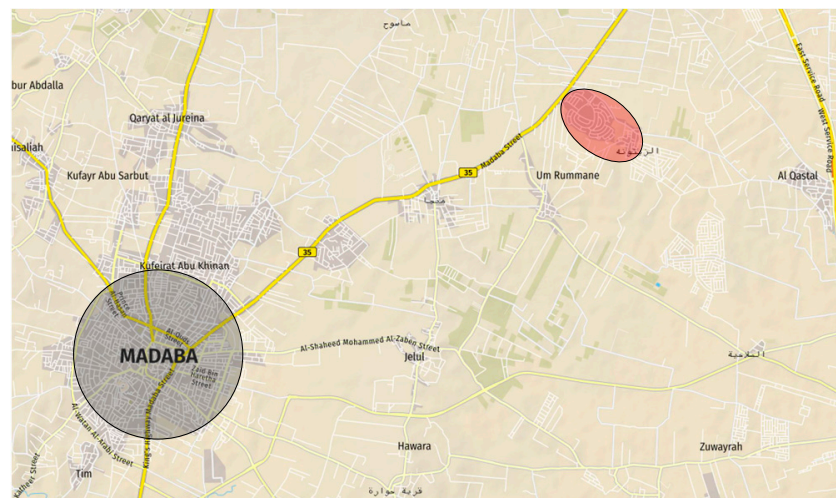


Figure 5. Al Andalucía in relation to the nearest city. Source: [50], illustrated by the Author.

4.2. Case Study 2: Green Land

Developed in 2008 by a prominent Jordanian investor, Green Land spans 400,000 square meters and comprises approximately 500 units. It was deliberately selected as a comparative case representing a hybrid model of development in Jordan. Unlike Al Andalucía, it adopts a moderately integrated approach, featuring a semi-open layout, partial plot-based development, and greater architectural diversity (Figure 6). Its design, potentially reflecting lessons from earlier projects, aims for moderate connectivity with surrounding areas while providing security. Also, it is located closer to central Amman (12.6 km) in Na’ur area and is enclosed by a wire fence and boom gate rather than a solid wall, presenting a more semi-open layout.



Figure 6. Greenland Development. Source: [49].

The site observations revealed a noticeably different atmosphere; the wire fence allows for visual connectivity with the surrounding area, and the main gate was frequently observed to be open during the day. Green Land’s physical characteristics reflect a more moderate approach to enclosure. Its partial build-out model, with 50% of plots sold to individuals, has resulted in greater architectural diversity than the homogenous Al Andalucía (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Greenland Site Plan. Source: [49].

This observed variation aligns with expert insights about diverse development models emerging in Jordan. The more urbanised setting provides better access to nearby towns like Na’ur and Marj Al Hamam, supporting the expert view that some communities maintain stronger connections with their surroundings. Despite these advantages, interviewees noted that Green Land still reinforces exclusivity and exhibits limited transportation options and inconsistent service delivery. Interviewees noted that Green Land “still reinforces

First, the theme of Fragmentation and Enclosure was empirically observed in both cases through walls and access controls, and was explicitly identified by experts as creating “social islands” that weaken external social ties. Second, the theme of Regulatory Voids and Governance Limitations was evident in the development of the case studies on reclassified land, and was critically explained by experts who cited a consistent “*lack of effective regulation*” and “*weak zoning enforcement*” across the region. Third, the theme of aspirational urban identity was observed in the marketing and architectural imitation of GCC models (particularly in Al Andalucía) and was explicitly framed by experts as an “*aspirational*” drive for “*privacy, order, and Gulf-style exclusivity*” tied to social status. Fourth, the theme of inconsistent economic and Social Outcomes was observed in the limited local economic activity around both sites and was critically analysed by experts, who noted that benefits are “*largely internal,*” with “*uneven*” distribution effects that are insufficient to stimulate broader economic transformation.

The comparative analysis of Al Andalucía and Green Land demonstrates how the observed case characteristics correspond to the four core themes derived from expert interviews. For instance, Al Andalucía’s spatial enclosure and high walls directly reflect the urban form and social fragmentation theme, while Green Land’s semi-open layout shows a moderate approach to integration. Governance differences, aspirational identities, and economic outcomes align with patterns highlighted by regional experts, confirming the thematic findings across different development models.

In conclusion, both projects highlight:

- The reliance on private capital and developer discretion;
- A lack of cohesive urban policy or regulation for gated communities;
- The persistence of social and spatial divides, despite differing scales and locations.

The analysis highlights that the current lack of cohesive urban policy directly enables the governance gaps and spatial fragmentation documented in both cases. The findings suggest that the demonstrated negative outcomes, such as economic insulation and social disconnection, could be mitigated by stronger governance mechanisms, including clearer zoning enforcement, requirements for integrating gated projects into municipal planning frameworks, and policies mandating permeability and mixed-use development.

4.4. Thematic Findings from Expert Interviews

The thematic analysis of ten semi-structured interviews with regional experts initially yielded six distinct themes, each addressing a key dimension of gated community development in the Middle East. These initial themes, along with their prevalence in the data, are summarised in (Table 2).

Table 2. Coding Summary of Initial Themes.

Initial NVivo Theme	Number of Files	Coding References
Reasons for the development of gated communities	10	53
Regulations involved in the development of gated communities	1	7
Role distribution in the development of gated communities	1	6
Link between old Arabian neighborhoods and contemporary models	4	8
Impact of gated communities	10	84
Factors that may facilitate the removal of walls	1	4

Reference: Author—NVivo 14.

While the number of interviews was limited to ten, thematic saturation was observed, as no new themes emerged beyond the final interviews. The sample included experts dis-

tributed across the four focus countries: Jordan ($n = 6$), Egypt ($n = 1$), Saudi Arabia ($n = 1$), and the UAE ($n = 2$), which ensured that the perspectives represented were regionally balanced and captured key contextual differences. The expert panel also represented multiple professional backgrounds, including three urban planners, five academic researchers specialising in Middle Eastern urban studies, and two architects with direct experience in gated community projects, including one working in municipal authority. While selected quotes illustrate key themes, the analysis integrates insights from all participants across countries and professions, ensuring that findings reflect both regional diversity and professional expertise, thereby mitigating potential bias. Based on thematic overlap, narrative coherence, and alignment with the study's research aims, these six themes were subsequently consolidated into four core domains to structure the discussion of findings. This process was primarily driven by the identification of significant thematic overlap and redundancy among the initial codes. For instance, the themes 'Role distribution in development' and 'Regulations involved' were integrated into the broader domain of 'Governance and Regulation', as both pertained to the institutional and actor-oriented mechanisms influencing gated community development. Furthermore, themes were evaluated based on their analytical scope. The theme 'Reasons for development', which encompassed drivers such as security and exclusivity, was integrated into the more comprehensive domain of 'Aspirations and Urban Identity' to reflect the deeper social and cultural motivations underlying gated living. Finally, considerations of narrative coherence and alignment with the study's research aims ensured that the resulting thematic structure, centred on urban form, governance, aspirations, and economic effects. The consolidation ensured transparency and reduced redundancy while preserving the richness of the data.

The thematic coding of interview transcripts is summarised in Table 3, including brief descriptions that reflect their analytical focus.

Table 3. Initial Thematic Framework Derived from Interview Coding.

Theme No	Theme	Description
1	Impact of gated communities	Examines outcomes such as spatial segregation, social isolation, and changes in land values
2	Regulations involved in the development of gated communities	Focuses on legal and institutional frameworks governing gated community planning and implementation
3	Role distribution in the development of gated communities	Explores the actors (e.g., developers, municipalities, investors) involved in gated community formation
4	Traditional vs. Contemporary Gated Communities	Compares old Arabian neighborhood structures with modern gated developments
5	Reasons for the development of gated communities	Analyses the drivers behind gated growth, such as security, exclusivity, and public service gaps
6	Factors facilitating the removal of gated boundaries	Discusses policy and planning mechanisms that may lead to more open and integrated urban models

Reference: Author—NVivo 14.

The four core domains: Impacts on Urban Form and Social Fabric, Governance and Regulation, Transformations in Spatial Aspirations and Urban Identity, and Economic and Social Effects, are correlated. Urban form and social fabric are affected by governance frameworks, as weak regulatory oversight or informal approvals influence the spatial

layout, enclosure strategies, and accessibility of gated communities. These spatial configurations, in turn, influence residents' aspirational identities, as the built environment reflects and reinforces desires for privacy, status, and exclusivity. The aspirational and socio-cultural aspects interrelate with economic outcomes, determining the distribution of local employment generation and access to services. On the other hand, economic constraints and market requirements control urban form, influencing investment strategies, plot allocation, and the degree of integration with surrounding areas.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to ongoing debates on the spatial consequences of market-driven urbanism in the Middle East, particularly the rise of exclusive residential districts as expressions of neoliberal planning, socio-economic stratification, and fragmented urban growth. By combining regional expert perspectives with grounded analysis of two case studies in Jordan, this article demonstrates how gated communities simultaneously address short-term infrastructural and governance gaps, while producing long-term challenges for spatial justice and urban inclusivity.

5.1. Methodological Justification

The research question, focused on how gated communities reshape urban form, influence governance, and affect equity, necessitated an approach that could simultaneously analyse regional structural drivers and localised spatial outcomes. The use of semi-structured expert interviews was crucial in uncovering the shared professional perspectives, regulatory challenges, and market logics that transcend national borders and influence urban development across the Middle East [31]. This method provided the macro-level understanding of gated urbanism as a regional planning paradigm. Conversely, the comparative case study analysis of Al Andalucía and Green Land offered a micro-level investigation into the tangible socio-spatial impacts of these paradigms on the ground [29]. The integration of these two methods through triangulation enabled us to validate whether the themes identified by regional experts were materially observable in Jordan's built environment, thereby mitigating the limitations of either method used in isolation [34]. By combining these approaches, the methodology effectively bridged the gap between abstract policy discussions and concrete urban form, providing a nuanced understanding that would not have been possible with a single-method design. This layered approach was therefore not merely a choice but a necessity to adequately address the complexity of the research problem.

5.2. Gated Communities as Responses to Urban Gaps

The expert interviews suggest that gated communities in Jordan emerge as compensatory responses to public sector deficiencies, including inadequate infrastructure, unreliable services, and weak planning institutions. This finding echoes similar influences observed in other Global South contexts, where privatised residential communities fill gaps left by the state in housing, security, and amenity provision [20]. However, our study reveals a critical nuance within the Middle Eastern context. In the GCC, as described by Glasze [2], gated communities often function as explicit "spatial instruments of state governance" to manage expatriate populations. In contrast, our findings from Jordan reveal a model of passive state withdrawal. The Jordanian state's role is defined not by active engineering but by a regulatory void and weak planning institutions, a finding that aligns with Daher [6] analysis of neoliberal transformation in Amman. This gap is filled by private sector actors, often funded by regional capital from the GCC, catering to local elite aspirations. This study builds on the work of Al Omari and Al Omari [10] by illustrating

how Jordan's absence of oil wealth has fostered a distinctive, market-driven trajectory of gated development, one characterised less by state-led segregation and more by the private sector's strategic exploitation of regulatory and planning deficiencies.

5.3. *The Paradox of Social Cohesion and Fragmentation*

A central paradox identified by this study is the coexistence of strong internal social cohesion and pronounced external social disconnection. This finding directly engages with the divergent views in the global literature. On the one hand, it confirms the arguments of scholars such as Idak and Frankiv [19] and Manzi and Smith-Bowers [18] that these developments can foster internal bonds, safety, and a sense of community among residents. On the other hand, it strongly reinforces the more prevalent critiques of Atkinson and Blandy [4] and Landman [15] regarding social segregation and spatial fragmentation. Our contribution is to empirically demonstrate how this paradox manifests in the Jordanian context. The internal cohesion observed in compounds like Al Andalucía is achieved at the direct cost of creating "social islands" that inhibit contact with surrounding communities, thus validating concerns about eroded urban openness and accessibility raised in earlier studies [11]. This pattern of internal cohesion and external exclusion exemplifies the "club urbanism" Webster, Glasze and Frantz [21] that challenges the civic integration essential for resilient cities.

5.4. *Economic Impacts: Uneven and Localised*

The economic impacts of gated developments in Jordan were perceived as modest, uneven, and spatially constrained. This finding challenges the narrative often associated with larger GCC or global models. While studies of mega-developments may show significant economic improvements, our case studies confirm Abed, Mabdeh and Nassar [13] classification of Jordan's projects as smaller in scale. The analysis, based on expert insight and site observation, reveals a clear economic divergence between the two cases that aligns with their design models. Al Andalucía, with its isolated location and closed perimeter, exhibited minimal positive economic improvements. Site surveys showed a notable absence of new commercial or retail development catering to its affluent residents at its periphery. The economic activity was almost entirely internalised, forcing a reliance on distant urban centres like Madaba for daily needs and reinforcing its status as a self-contained "social island." Conversely, Green Land's more integrated model fostered slightly greater, though still limited, local economic engagement. Its semi-open layout and proximity to Na'ur supported some marginal commercial interaction. Experts noted and observations confirmed a low level of local employment in construction, maintenance, and security roles. However, this integration was described as uneven and insufficient to significantly stimulate the broader local economy. The expert view that these communities are "*not large enough to transform the economy—maybe in Dubai, but not here*" is a crucial qualification to the global discourse. It suggests that the economic rationality of gated communities is not universal but rather depends on scale and context. The primary economic outcome for both cases was not transformative growth but the internalisation of benefits within the community, resulting in limited job creation and minimal positive economic spread. Our study thus adds a layer of specificity to the work of Glasze [2], showing that while GCC gated housings function as privileged zones, their Jordanian counterparts often remain niche districts with negligible broader economic benefit, instead exacerbating spatial disparities in service provision and reinforcing what Caldeira [20] terms "urban inequality."

5.5. *Spatial Isolation and Policy Gaps*

Both case studies, Al Andalucía and Green Land, illustrate how gated communities, especially when located on the outskirts of the city, contribute to urban fragmentation,

low-density sprawl, and limited permeability. The lack of a dedicated planning framework in Jordan, combined with the developer-driven nature of these projects, mirrors the “weak planning frameworks” and “neoliberal housing policies” identified as key drivers of segregation in Egypt, Lebanon, and Turkey [5,24,25]. Current policy weaknesses include fragmented land approval processes, minimal coordination of infrastructure provision, and insufficient planning for accessible public spaces. The substantial reliance on private transport and limited pedestrian permeability observed in Al Andalucía are direct spatial expressions of the “privatisation of public space” critiqued by global scholars like Atkinson and Blandy [4]. Despite differing motivations, such as state-engineered segregation in the GCC versus elite-driven prestige in Jordan, the outcome of urban fragmentation remains a persistent regional constant. To enhance practical relevance, these findings highlight the need for more regulatory frameworks. Potential interventions include integrating gated developments into broader urban plans, requiring developers to contribute to infrastructure networks, and mandating the provision of accessible public and green spaces. Such measures could reduce socio-spatial isolation, improve connectivity, and align private development with wider urban equity and resilience objectives [13].

5.6. Broader Regional Implications

Although the empirical focus is on Jordan, the inclusion of regional experts extends the study’s relevance across the Middle East. The findings substantiate the notion of a ‘dual legacy of exclusivity and fragmentation,’ while also emphasising the diversity of planning regimes and economic models that impact this phenomenon. Specifically, the contrast between the GCC’s state-supported mega-developments and Jordan’s privately led, fragmented projects illustrates two ends of a regional continuum of gated urbanism. By moving beyond single-country analyses, this study contributes a synthesised regional perspective that addresses a critical gap in the literature. Future research can build on this comparative study by incorporating the perspectives of residents and municipal actors, thereby advancing understanding of both the lived experiences and governance of these increasingly prevalent urban forms.

5.7. Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

This study makes distinct theoretical and empirical contributions to the literature on gated communities and market-driven urbanism. Theoretically, it advances debates on urban fragmentation, Atkinson and Blandy [4], Landman [15], by identifying the paradox of gated communities as spaces of internal cohesion yet external segregation. In doing so, it refines concepts such as club urbanism Webster, Glasze and Frantz [21] within the Middle Eastern context. Empirically, the study provides new evidence through analysis of two of Jordan’s first large-scale gated communities, Al Andalucía and Green Land. This extends beyond earlier work that primarily focused on resident motivations, Al-Homoud and Al Aswad [11], or isolated cases. This is further strengthened by original insights from regional expert interviews across four countries. Collectively, these contributions extend the literature beyond the well-documented experience of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) [2,8]. They highlight how, in Jordan, market-driven forces and weak regulatory frameworks influence residential urbanism. This sheds light on the governance and market structures that drive socio-spatial segregation, offering both academic and policy-relevant insights.

6. Conclusions

This study has examined the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in the Middle East through a combination of expert interviews and case study analysis of Al Andalucía and Green Land in Jordan. The findings demonstrate that gated communities are not

only residential typologies but also spatial manifestations of broader social, economic, and governance challenges within the region's urban structures. Furthermore, the results directly address the study's research question by demonstrating how gated communities in the Middle East, particularly in Jordan, affect urban form, reinforce socio-spatial inequalities, and reflect regulatory and economic governance gaps, as interpreted through expert perspectives and empirical case studies.

Specifically, the analysis reveals that these developments consistently reinforce spatial fragmentation and social exclusion, despite also fostering internal social cohesion. Furthermore, they provide limited and uneven economic benefits that are largely concentrated within their boundaries, a phenomenon that thrives under conditions of planning voids and minimal regulatory frameworks for urban integration.

Despite some differences in scale and development strategies between case studies, both illustrate how market-led residential urbanism, particularly when unregulated, can weaken inclusive, connected, and sustainable urban development in Middle Eastern contexts. Building on these diagnostic findings, the study concludes by outlining a conceptual framework for envisioning urban integration. This framework, illustrated in (Figure 9), translates the research themes into a spatial vocabulary to stimulate discussion on potential mitigation pathways. It visualises a hypothetical scenario for Al Andalucía, exploring how interventions like semi-permeable boundaries and improved pedestrian connectivity might hypothetically address the identified issues of fragmentation. The value of this conceptual exercise lies not in serving as a practical blueprint, which would require extensive resident engagement and feasibility studies, but rather as a scholarly tool to bridge critical analysis with policy imagination. It serves to demonstrate the applied value of qualitative research findings and to propose a direction for future investigative work, including the vital next step of incorporating resident perspectives into the co-design of more inclusive urban strategies.



Figure 9. Conceptual integration strategy for Al Andalucía. Source: Author's work [28].

This approach is illustrated in Figure 9, which conceptualises how boundary retrofitting and spatial linkages could enhance urban integration (Figure 10). This figure does not depict a final design but serves as a visual hypothesis to guide future research and policy dialogue on retrofit possibilities for existing fragmented urban forms.



Figure 10. Conceptual integration strategy for Al Andalucía. Source: Author’s work (2025).

Study Limitations

This study is limited by its regional scope and qualitative design. While experts from Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates offered diverse insights, perspectives from other Middle Eastern contexts were not included. The findings, based on ten expert interviews and two case studies, are context-specific and not intended for broad generalisation. Additionally, the study focused on expert and spatial perspectives, without incorporating the views of residents or local municipal actors. Future research could benefit from broader stakeholder inclusion and mixed-methods approaches to further validate and expand on these findings.

Future Research

While the empirical focus of this study was on Jordan, the inclusion of expert perspectives from across the region extends the implications to a broader context. The research confirms the notion of a “dual legacy of exclusivity and fragmentation” across the Middle East, while highlighting the range of planning regimes and economic models that shape it. Specifically, the findings reveal that the GCC’s state-supported mega-developments and Jordan’s private sector-driven, fragmented projects represent two ends of a regional continuum of gated urbanism. In doing so, the study addresses a key gap in the literature by moving beyond country-specific cases to offer a synthesised, regional perspective. Future research should build on these comparative studies and integrate the perspectives of residents and municipal actors to more fully capture the lived experience and governance dynamics of these increasingly pervasive urban forms.

Policy Recommendations

To mitigate the socio-spatial challenges posed by gated communities, several policy directions are proposed. It is crucial to strengthen regulatory frameworks by introducing clear municipal guidelines that mandate integration, service provision, and accessibility. Furthermore, planning policies should promote spatial integration by incentivising designs that support permeability, shared public amenities, and pedestrian connections with surrounding urban areas. A balance must be struck between public and private interests through mechanisms that align investment goals with the provision of public infrastructure and spatial equity. This requires context-sensitive planning that avoids replicating large-scale GCC models in lower-capacity cities; instead, it adapts strategies to fit local realities. Ultimately, supporting mixed-income and mixed-tenure housing is crucial for diversifying income groups, reducing exclusivity, and fostering urban cohesion.

As Middle Eastern cities continue to urbanise under the pressures of global capital, demographic growth, and weak planning systems, gated communities represent a critical way to examine urban inequality and exclusion. By foregrounding expert perspectives and presenting grounded case studies, this article contributes to ongoing debates on how to create more inclusive, connected, and resilient urban environments in the region.

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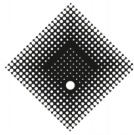
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9.5 EXAMINING URBAN CONNECTIVITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

This section presents a peer-reviewed article that analyses two Jordanian gated communities, Al Andalucía and Green Land, using space syntax analysis to visually examine their urban connectivity and social impact. The study translates qualitative themes of segregation and fragmentation from Section 9.3 into measurable spatial patterns, illustrating how design influences street integration and social exclusion. *MDPI, Sustainability* 2025, 17, 599.



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Article

Space Syntax Analysis of Gated Communities in Jordan: Examining Urban Connectivity and Social Impact

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Abstract: The trend of gated communities is becoming the new alternative housing for the high-end residents of Jordan, reflecting global patterns of urbanisation. However, their emergence on the outskirts of Amman on vacant lands requires an early proactive planning approach to ensure their development in response to the growth of the surrounding areas, fostering an integrated urban fabric. This article examines whether gated communities contribute to urban discontinuity and lead to social segregation. The study employs a space syntax analysis on two cases in Amman to assess their integration, accessibility, and navigability to address the study's key questions related to its integration, design implications, and spatial layout. Findings reveal significant spatial segregation, with low levels of integration and high step depth values, indicating potential challenges in navigation, connectivity, residents' mobility, accessibility, and safety. The article suggests the importance of re-evaluating the design and planning approaches for these developments to promote organic townscape growth to ensure smooth integration with the surroundings.

Keywords: gated communities; urban discontinuity/connectivity; spatial segregation; sustainable growth; design adaptability



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1. Introduction

The design of gated communities, in general, is based on providing strict security measures, dedicated services and amenities, and limited access for non-residents. While this approach offers safety and privacy, it often raises concerns regarding the potential social and physical separation from the urban fabric [1]. The novelty of this article lies in its focus on the limited research context of Jordan, providing a quantitative assessment of spatial integration and social segregation using space syntax analysis. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on urban segregation and offers a replicable methodological framework for similar urban fabrics and contexts. This article examines whether gated communities in Jordan contribute to discontinuity in urban areas and lead to social segregation.

In order to explore this hypothesis, it is imperative to differentiate between residential segregation and social segregation, on the one hand, and segregation and fragmentation, on the other hand. While residential segregation is the irregular or uneven distribution of residents within a space, social segregation refers to the lack of interaction between different social groups [2,3]. Segregation, in contrast, is related to the separation and division of social groups, whereas fragmentation is characterised by the physical disconnection of an area from its surroundings by barriers, changes in infrastructure, legislation, or other forms of discontinuity [3,4]. Given that social segregation reflects restricted social interaction and

interference between diverse social groups, this article aims to address two core questions: What are the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities on their surroundings? And can the applied investigation be replicated across other cities in the Middle East?

The argument on the social impact of gated communities, particularly regarding their potential to cause social segregation, is divided among scholars. One group argues that the physical designs of these developments encourage separation and segregation and limit access [5–7]. Another group counters this view, suggesting that gated communities may foster integration, particularly when developed in poorer areas, as they create job opportunities and reduce geographical segregation [1,8–10]. For instance, while an increase in property values surrounding gated communities may represent a positive economic impact, it can also lead to the displacement of existing residents, making these areas unaffordable. Consequently, further investigations are required to examine these economic implications, particularly in the newly developed gated communities on the outskirts of Amman. The replicability of the study's methodology, which integrates socio-spatial analysis with economic and social assessments, allows for cross-comparative studies to evaluate similar phenomena in other contexts. In addition to the design features of these developments and their economic impact, individual constraints such as income level, race, religious background, or education level may play a role in urban residential distribution and contribute to socio-spatial segregation [1]. Such geographical arrangements and residential distribution, when not dictated by choice, can result in socio-spatial segregation. Conversely, social separation of one social group stemming from the deliberate preferences of specific groups, such as residents of gated communities seeking seclusion and isolation, can be categorised as social group segregation. Another perspective on social segregation, as argued by Roitman, et al. [11], is related to the social practices of individuals, such as daily routines and intentional behaviours designed to satisfy personal preferences. These may include interactions such as working, socialising, consuming, or producing. Such practices can structure the developing patterns of socio-spatial segregation, as some practices may influence segregation more significantly than others.

Segregation can also stem from a lack of social interaction between neighbouring groups that live within spatial proximity. This may be due to perceived socio-economic or cultural differences or security concerns, which may lead to the establishment of physical and social barriers. For example, intended segregation occurs when gated community residents intentionally avoid interacting with their neighbours, perceiving them as security threats. In contrast, unintended segregation results from design features, such as high walls and security rooms, which may lead to a lack of social interaction [12].

By implementing space syntax analysis, this study offers a methodological approach that enables the assessment of the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities, which can be applied to similar urban contexts. Accordingly, this article seeks to examine the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities on their surroundings, employing space syntax analysis to assess levels of interaction and segregation. This analysis enables researchers and policymakers to determine whether these communities reinforce socio-spatial boundaries or promote potential integration across different regions.

2. Literature Review

The transformation of towns in the United States after World War II led to the emergence of new neighbourhood forms in the late 20th century, including gated communities. These communities developed in response to socio-economic and urban challenges, driven by rising crime rates and the desire for exclusivity and security. This trend extended beyond the U.S. to other places such as Europe, South Africa, and Latin America and also extends to the Middle East, including Jordan attracting people seeking security, socio-

economic isolation, lifestyle, and exclusivity. As a result, gated communities have become a global trend, raising essential questions about their impact on urban development and social influences [13–15].

In the U.S., Blakely and Snyder [16] classify gated communities into three main categories: lifestyle, prestige, and security zones. Lifestyle communities primarily focus on exclusivity and amenities catering to affluent residents, often reinforcing socio-spatial separation. Prestige communities serve elite people from society, symbolising social boundaries and increasing socio-economic disparities. Security zones develop as a response to the fear of crime, resulting in increased spatial and social isolation. Their findings suggest that gated communities contribute to fragmentation, social segregation, and the privatisation of public spaces, challenging traditional urban planning principles.

Internationally, scholars have investigated several issues pertaining to gated communities and their socio-spatial influences in different countries and contexts. In South Africa, Landman [17] highlights how gated communities disrupt patterns of social interaction, resource distribution, and urban growth, causing long-term challenges to urban sustainability. In Europe, Atkinson and Blandy [18] question the reasons for the growing number of gated communities, emphasising their role in exacerbating social segregation, disrupting social diversity, creating an imbalance in safety and security, and reducing services in poor areas. Similarly, in Latin America, scholars have investigated the positive and negative impacts associated with gated communities. While they may foster job creation and improvement of quality of life within the walls, they also privatise common spaces, encourage the use of private transportation instead of public, and lead to social disparities and segregation [19,20]. In Sydney, Australia, Quintal and Thompson [21] argue that gated communities reflect a positive desire for control and protection despite the fact that they may lead to segregation. Similarly, Kenna [22] examines Macquarie Links, one of Sydney's largest gated communities, suggesting that minor crimes, such as graffiti and littering, contribute to the demand for privately governed neighbourhoods. The author concludes that people prioritise restrictive contracts over security and calls for further research on such developments in Australia and their impact on urban life and social integration [22]. In Shenzhen, China, Wang, et al. [23] identify similar trends, suggesting that the privatisation of public spaces contributes to social fragmentation and inequality. Their study highlights that gating and privatisation limit access to essential services and facilities, leading to socio-economic disparities.

In the Arab World, specifically the Middle East and GCC (Gulf Corporation Council) countries, several scholars debate the reasons for their emergence and their socio-spatial impacts. For example, AlQahtany [14], Glasze [24], Salim [25], Elsheshtawy [26], Al Shawish [27], and others argue that their emergence is primarily related to socio-economic factors, concluding that several social and spatial implications of gated communities at both micro and macro levels persist. The way how real estate developers market these developments as elite places with distinctive environments implies isolation and separation. However, in the study area of this article, specifically in Amman, Jordan, limited research is conducted on the spread of this phenomenon since the subject is relatively new to the country [28]. For example, Al Omari and Al Omari [29] argue that the emergence of gated communities is primarily related to the rise of a new layer of middle and upper-middle in society seeking exclusivity and a luxury lifestyle. He suggests strategic planning policies are required in order to control their unregulated spread, as this may affect the distribution of natural resources. Similarly, Alkurdi [30] suggests that their development is associated with the desire for security, privacy, and modern living, concluding that the lack of public facilities and urban congestion has pushed people to select such options. His study recommends selecting vital locations that can enhance social interaction and avoid

separating the community fabric. In contrast, Al-Homoud and Al Aswad [31] suggest that people select this type of residential housing for regulations, lifestyle, and feasibility, concluding that gated communities in Jordan can encourage inequality opportunities between their people and their surrounding neighbours. In a recent study carried out by Abed, Mabdeh and Nassar [28], the authors suggest two types of gated communities are developed in Jordan: mini and mega-gated communities, concluding that both categories require regulatory frameworks to facilitate their integration with the surroundings. Finally, Hammad, et al. [32] discuss that the evolution of Amman's master plan over time, along with the social and economic transformations, has encouraged real estate developers to influence such types of housing options. They conclude that the urban planning policies of gated communities can be reevaluated by incorporating features from historical cities that reflected cohesion and unity.

Gated communities in Jordan demonstrate that such phenomena have spread out to different countries and contexts, reflecting similar challenges of urban sustainability, social fragmentation, and inequality despite their short-term solutions for security, privacy, and local inclusion. Such disparities align with the global trend seen in other parts of the world where gated communities may have social and spatial influences that can affect social interaction and privatisation of public spaces, leading to social inequalities.

3. Theoretical Proposition for Segregation and Separation

A community is defined by the relationship between people and their external connections, defining both existing and potential relationships [33]. The term "community" carries different meanings depending on whether it is viewed from the viewpoint of members or non-members, often implying shared experiences and cohesions, as the idea of sharing is assumed rather than being central. While "community" may suggest collective individuals sharing common cultural, historical, or other shared characteristics, a sense of community can be more than a spatial condition as it involves communication behaviours and attitudes at the neighbourhood level [34]. This sense of community emphasises involvement, commitment, and contribution and can be measured by elements such as feeling at home, satisfaction, shared values, belonging, and community attachment.

In the framework developed by McMillan and Chavis [34], they identify core elements to measure the sense of community: (a) membership, which reflects a feeling of affiliation and belonging; (b) influence, which relates to making a difference in a personal and a group scale in both ways; (c) reinforcement, which addresses the fulfilment of members being a part of that group; (d) emotional connection, associated with shared stories, histories, and time together. These elements collectively describe a sense of community where individuals feel connected, valued, and involved within a context of shared histories and values. However, while these elements create a strong sense of community, their manifestation requires more effort and time than simply grouping residents in a gated community. The idealised image of gated communities, often promoted by developers as a space of safety and exclusivity, does not spontaneously foster a strong sense of belonging or community interaction. This is evident in historical neighbourhoods, where community interactions traditionally emerged from deep societal bonds, such as shared histories, ethnicities, and culture, rather than being merely enforced by their physical layouts and architectural designs.

This challenge is exacerbated in the context of fragmentation in the Third World countries, particularly in the Middle East, including Jordan. Socio-political transformations, rapid urban growth, and inadequate urban and infrastructure planning helped in fragmenting the urban environments, as in the case of Amman. In this context, Balbo [35] explains that the conventional master planning processes are often too slow and based on

long-term forecasting, which is incompatible with the unpredictable growth rates in many Third World countries. Thus, planning techniques that demand technical qualifications, expertise, financial support, and continuous monitoring might not be available in these countries. For example, the city of Amman had 56 different plans between 1960 and 1990 to accommodate the mass and sudden population growth caused by socio-political changes. The influx of growth in the population led to a shortage in infrastructure, land provision, housing, and services, which have created the fragmented and unplanned cities that we see today [36]. This fragmentation extended beyond the physical manifestation to include social influences, with the spread of gated communities intensifying spatial separation. Balbo [35] explains that cities may become further fragmented with the rise of new urban forms such as gated communities, shopping centres, and business parks, which are forms of urban development that are isolated from the rest of the city. This type of isolation and fragmentation can limit interaction and reduce the sense of belonging and sharing. In Amman, for example, the design of gated communities with their walls and gates physically and spatially segregates their residents from the wider community, reinforcing disparities, limiting social interactions, and compromising the sense of belonging.

Amman's urban fabric will be analysed through the theoretical framework emphasising key elements such as membership and influence, as explained by McMillan and Chavis [34], in order to assess the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities. This will be examined by employing a space syntax analysis study to evaluate the spatial accessibility, navigability, and integration of these developments with the surrounding urban fabric.

In summary, conventional master planning methodologies, socio-political changes, and rapid population growth may aggravate fragmentation by creating new isolated zones with diverse levels of infrastructure, service provisions, and socio-economic status, such as gated communities. The case of Amman illustrates how socio-political changes and rapid population growth led to unplanned urbanisation and the need to address housing demands, creating new developments and configurations that are isolated urban forms. The theoretical framework aims to analyse the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities in Amman critically by linking the study to the findings and results extracted from the space syntax analysis.

4. Materials and Methods

This article employs space syntax theory to analyse the socio-spatial impact of gated communities on their surroundings, focusing on urban integration, accessibility, and potential segregation. Space syntax examines the influence of spatial relationships on social life, space, and society by quantifying spatial relationships between streets and buildings within the built environment [37,38]. This approach allows for a detailed assessment of how spatial configuration can influence human behaviour, socio-economic activities, and social interactions within an urban environment. Applying space syntax theory can add a social and spatial dimension to the analysis, examining how gated communities impact social cohesion, spatial inequality, and urban development.

In this theory, space is understood as the shared zone between physical layouts and social activities. Building arrangements and their relationship to the street network contribute to people's relationships and their socio-economic patterns [37,39]. For example, the linear arrangement of shops and passageways in a marketplace fosters visible interaction between retailers and customers, enhancing both social and economic engagement.

Thus, this study will employ space syntax to assess the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities by examining various aspects such as accessibility, social segregation, urban integration, perception, and experience. Accessibility will be evaluated by measuring the ease of movement between both communities (inside and outside). Social segregation will

be assessed by examining the physical barriers that separate them from their surroundings, while urban integration will be measured by examining the spatial integration and the physical connection of gated communities with the larger urban fabric.

4.1. Space Syntax Method and Axial Analyses

The built environment typically consists of public spaces enabling movement between different areas and private spaces linked to them, such as gardens and courtyards [37]. Urban public spaces are analysed using axial maps, which calculate the connectivity based on topological, geometric, and metric relationships. Space syntax provides metrics such as relative asymmetry (RA), real relative asymmetry (RRA), and choice values, which are used to evaluate spatial properties of urban layouts [37,40].

Spatial models are composed of a set or a group of axes that facilitate calculating the interconnection of all urban spaces topologically, geometrically, and metrically [41]. As explained by Vaughan [38], space syntax can be applied to explore the structure-function relationships within a city. This involves assessing the spatial integration of street axes, which can be achieved by measuring the number of directional changes required to reach other streets from a given axis. In spatial integration maps, integration is represented in black, indicating high levels of integration, and light grey for low integration. For example, in a small town with a main street identified as the main axis along with several side streets connected to it, the side streets directly connected to the main street exhibit high integration, while streets requiring multiple changes have lower integration. Such analyses are vital for understanding layouts that promote connectivity and movement within a city [42]. DepthMap 10 software is used for spatial analysis, which can perform advanced analysis, such as axial and isovist analysis. The software is an open-source tool used in space syntax research that is suitable for use in various urban environments worldwide. As such, this methodology is easily replicable in other regions to examine the socio-spatial impacts of urban developments. Space syntax also incorporates visibility analyses through isovist, which represents all visible elements from a specific location in the built environment [43]. As the observer moves and changes the location, the visible objects will change, creating new isovists that collectively map the area's spatial patterns [44]. This is particularly relevant in understanding how gated communities restrict or enhance visual and physical accessibility to their surroundings.

Furthermore, distance measurements within space syntax include topological distance, which refers to the lowest number of turns required to move from one space to another [45]. Angular distance, or geometric distance, is the least number of angular changes from one space to the other, while metric distance is the numeric distance in metres from each street to all other streets. Each of these distance metrics will generate various spatial patterns, which can provide distinct perceptions of spatial relationships. One of the key syntactic measures is integration, or mathematical closeness, which assesses the ease of access of each spatial element to all others within a given space or environment. For example, it measures how easy it is to travel from different intersections to the same point using a continuous and smooth route.

Whereas choice quantifies how many spatial elements are positioned on the shortest path of any pair of elements; in other words, if there are three possible routes between two different points, where two of these routes pass through a particular intersection, that section would be considered a higher choice value because it is situated on multiple shortest paths between different locations [39].

For this study, relative asymmetry (RA value) and real relative asymmetry (RRA) metrics were used to analyse gated communities in Jordan to identify the ease of access to each spatial element [46]. The RA metrics represent the level of integration of a specific

area; in other words, the higher the RA number, the more the area is integrated and the public, whereas the lower RA result means more private, segregated spaces. The relative asymmetry (RA) and real relative asymmetry (RRA) employed in this study are used in space syntax studies and can be replicated in different urban settings. These measurements can be calculated using the formulae provided, ensuring consistency and comparability across different case studies or geographical contexts.

Formula for measuring RA:

$$RA = 2(MD - 1)/(K - 2) \quad (1)$$

where MD represents the mean depth (average distance to reach a point from all others), and K is the total number of intersections in a space.

Real relative asymmetry (RRA) is used mainly in analysing building plans or spatial layouts.

Formula for measuring RRA:

$$RRA = RA/DK \quad (2)$$

where DK denotes a table for all the values of K spaces, which is represented by a diamond-shape [47].

4.2. Space Syntax Parameters

The selection of space syntax parameters in the study area is related to their role in analysing the spatial connections with the surrounding urban. The parameters include integration, both mean and step depth, and choice values. Integration is usually related to the easiness of access from other spaces, where high values indicate interconnectedness and low values suggest isolation [38]. On the other hand, step and mean depth are related to the number of steps required to reach a specific point or zone, indicating ease of navigation and accessibility. Whereas the choice value determines the alternate route options in movement, highlighting critical routes that facilitate movement [48]. High choice values indicate a settlement more accessible and easier to navigate, fostering interaction.

The comparative analysis of the selected parameters offers valuable insights into the spatial implications of gated communities in Jordan and their integration with the surrounding urban fabric. However, results may be limited when implementing these parameters since the measurement may not capture the socio-cultural influences, population growth, and socio-economic data [49–51].

4.3. Application to Gated Communities in Jordan

Space syntax analysis and metrics are applied to two gated communities in Jordan, namely, Al Andalucía and Greenland, to examine their impact on spatial division and social cohesion. The analysis included measuring and assessing accessibility, urban integration, and social segregation. The analysis is conducted using computer software such as Depthmap 10, using relative asymmetry (RA) and real relative asymmetry (RRA) to calculate accessibility, which is measured by evaluating the movement between gated communities and their surroundings. Urban integration is assessed through spatial integration indicators, which identify the connection of gated communities with the urban fabric. Finally, social segregation is examined by analysing the physical separation between gated communities and their neighbours. Figure 1 illustrates an integration map for the city of London, where the warm colours (red and yellow) indicate highly integrated spaces with easy access and high connectivity, while cool colours (blue and green) represent more segregated levels with lower integration. This methodology is not limited to gated communities in Jordan and can be applied to study other forms of urban segregation or

spatial integration, such as in informal settlements, mixed-use developments, or even historic city centres. The replicability of this approach makes it a valuable tool for urban planners, policymakers, and researchers interested in understanding and mitigating urban fragmentation and separation.

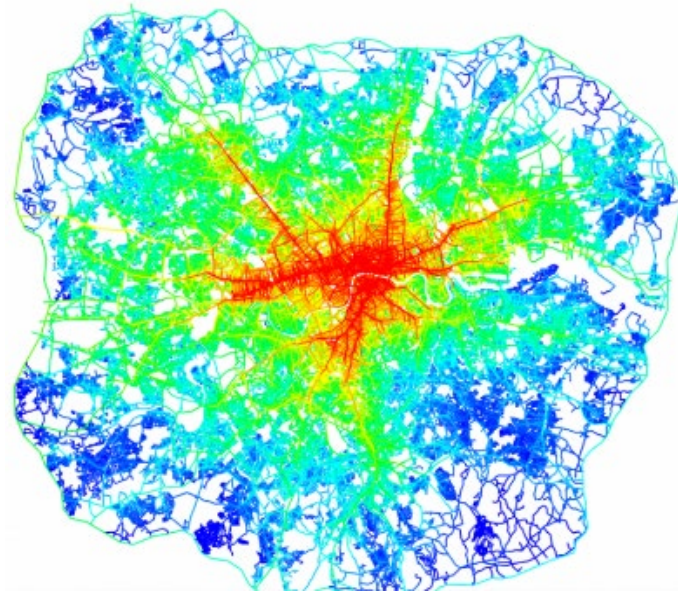


Figure 1. Integration pattern, map of London. Source: [37].

By implementing the space syntax metrics, this article aims to examine how the layout may influence spatial inequality and social cohesion within urban development. For example, the analysis of accessibility will verify the ease of access and movement between gated communities and their connectivity with the surrounding streets. The article aims to provide an empirical foundation for understanding the socio-spatial influences of gated communities in Jordan, aiming to foster integrated urban growth with their surroundings.

5. Analysis and Results

5.1. The Case Studies

The development of the first gated community in Amman—Al Andalusia—started in 2005, which can be attributed to the reflex of neoliberal changes witnessed in the neighbouring countries, as the primary funding came from the United Arab Emirates [31,52]. Post the global financial crisis, new urban transformations emerged due to the resurgence of Jordanian expatriates from the GCC countries favouring gated communities for their exclusivity and security [30,53]. Two case studies, Al Andalusia and Greenland, were selected for the space syntax analysis based on their contrasting urban context, location, development timeline, and socio-spatial features Figure 2. The selection of these cases allows for a comparative analysis to evaluate their spatial outcomes, which will help in understanding their interconnection with the surroundings. The selection of these cases allows for a comparative analysis to evaluate their spatial influence, which will help in understanding their interconnection with the surroundings. This comparative approach is vital as it provides insights into the urban changes in gated communities over time and their differing impacts on urban integration and segregation. The spatial outcomes of each community will be evaluated based on how they relate to their surrounding areas, with a particular focus on how the architectural and urban design choices contribute to either connectivity or isolation within the city.

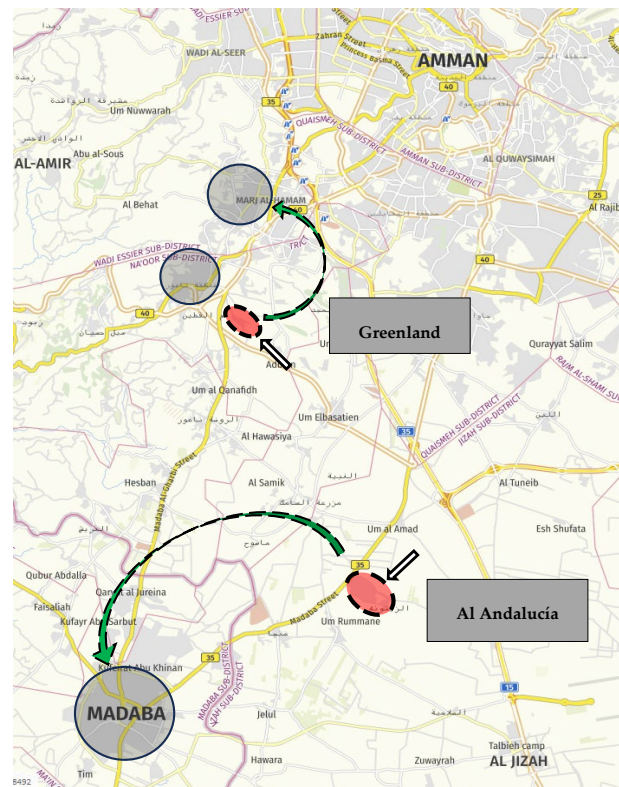


Figure 2. Location of both case studies. Source: [54].

Table 1 presents an overview of various gated communities that emerged in Amman, from early projects such as Al Andalusia to more recent developments and offers valuable insights reflecting the demand for exclusivity and security. Furthermore, the variation in the size of these developments reflects the targeted demographics, which ultimately may influence their spatial integration and influence. However, the preference for villas can be associated with socio-economic changes, such as increased wealth among Jordanian expatriates and their demand for more exclusive and larger residences.

Table 1. List of Gated Communities in Amman. Source: The Author.

Gated Community	Area (m ²)	Number of Units	Units Type	Construction Date
Green Land *	400,000	147	Apartments	2008
Al Andalusia **	800,000	588	Villas	2005–2013
Saraya Dabouq	6000	10	Villas	2011
Panorama Villas Compound	3500	10	Apartments	2013
Mohd Odeh Compound	3860	8	Villas	2013
Green Valley Villas	4277	10	Villas	2014
Green Village	22,000	30	Villas	2016
Black Iris	13,550	18	Villas	2016
Sagr Compound	5094	11	Villas	2016
Mohd Odeh Compound	3860	8	Villas	2013
Panorama Compound	2850	8	Villas	2013
Al-Kursi Compound	2900	5	Villas	2016
Abdoun Complex	unknown	13	Apartment	2017
Victoria Villas	unknown	unknown	Villas	2023
Amman Gardens Compound	300,000	unknown	Villas	Concept
Mograbi Compound	6764	10	Villas	2024

* and ** represent the selected gated communities as case studies for this article.

5.2. Analysis

5.2.1. Al Andalucía

The space syntax analysis conducted on the case study aims to evaluate the integration, accessibility, and navigational ease, providing insights into its spatial organisation and potential implications for residents' daily lives. Figure 3 shows the integration (the measure of accessibility) of the gated community with its surroundings. The analysis reveals low accessibility patterns, with the most accessible zone being the entrance area, as encircled red. This configuration is likely to create traffic congestion and difficulty in pedestrian movement. It was also observed that the highest integration value was 0.73, while the lowest was 0.30. The values are colour-coded on a heat scale; the red colour and other warm colours show the highest value, while the blue colour and other cool colours show the lowest value. The average integration for the case study was observed to be 0.45, which means the system tends to be segregated as a whole. The residential zones on the far left and right sides tend to be the most segregated ones, thus making them hard to access, which may also serve as quiet zones and prove to be possible crime occurrences.



Figure 3. Measuring integration for Andalucía. Source: author, developed by depthMap 10.

Figure 4 shows step depth from the main entrance, indicating how many routes one must take to reach the furthest point of the community. The analysis shows that this community is difficult to access, as the average number of steps (routes) is 7.91. This means that one typically requires eight different routes to navigate the area. The highest step depth was observed to be 16 steps away from the main entrance, which means that to reach the end of the community, one needs to turn at least 16 times before reaching the destination. This type could make it challenging to navigate in case of an emergency.

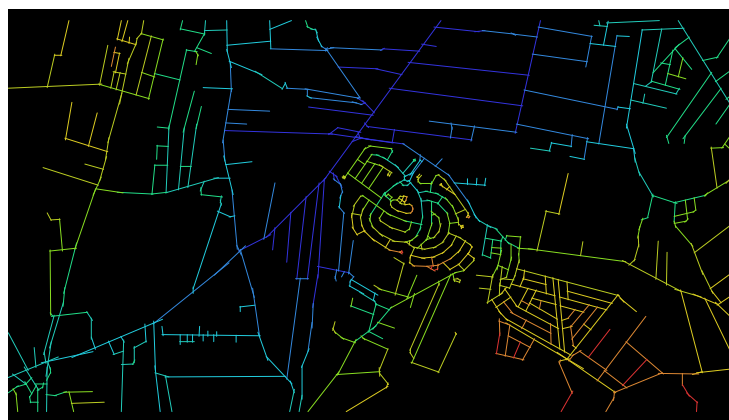


Figure 4. Measuring step depth for Andalucía. Source: author, developed by depthMap 10.

Figure 5 shows the mean depth of the community as a related concept of step depth. Mean depth shows the average number of turns one needs to take to navigate the space. The lowest mean depth was found to be 8.30, and the highest was 13.54, which is very high and thus makes this community hard to access in terms of movement.

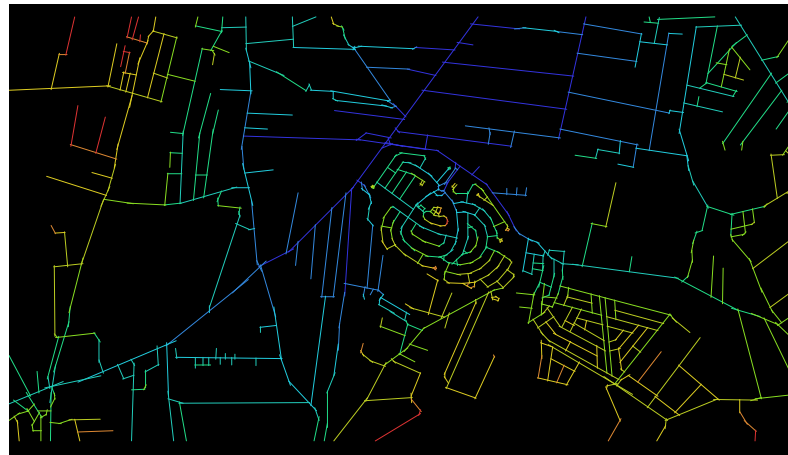


Figure 5. Measuring mean depth for Andalucía. Source: author, developed by depthMap 10.

Figure 6 shows the values of choice for this gated community. The highest value was observed on the red-coloured route and the lowest on the purple- or blue-coloured route. The choice value determines the alternate route options in movement, thus making a settlement more accessible and easier to navigate. Overall, this community shows the lowest choice values on most routes except for those shown in red, orange, or greenish colours.



Figure 6. Measuring choice values for Andalucía. Source: author, developed by depthMap 10.

In conclusion, the findings highlight lower integration and accessibility, with limited choice values and higher step depths, indicating potential challenges in navigation and connectivity. The findings highlight a spatial configuration that prioritises exclusivity and separation driven by the limited gate access and complicated internal street arrangements. These results are in line with McMillan and Chavis [34] theories of membership and connection related to the sense of community, as boundaries can strengthen the sense of belonging between internal residents and, at the same time, may reduce the interaction with the surrounding community. The social and economic background of Al Andalucía residents, along with their cultural norms favouring privacy, may also have a substantial role in accentuating separation and isolation.

5.2.2. Greenland

The spatial study carried out on the Greenland gated community represents a wide range of integration values that affect the accessibility and connectivity of the area. The community's spatial arrangement appears moderately integrated, with an average integration score of (0.26). Figure 7 shows that some areas exhibit low accessibility, with minimal integration readings of 0.10, while other areas indicate higher connectivity (0.44), suggesting potential social interaction. The entrance zone, indicated in red and orange, is the most accessible location with a maximum integration of 0.44, which is likely to experience traffic congestion and may hinder pedestrian movement. The average integration within the community is measured at 0.36; the community exhibits a thorough, accessible pattern, suggesting a spatial arrangement that is highly integrated. The zone, indicated in red and orange colour, is the most accessible location with a maximum integration of 0.37. Conversely, the residential neighbourhoods exhibit moderate accessibility, which may enhance accessibility but may contribute to a quieter environment.



Figure 7. Measuring integration for Greenland. Source: author, developed by depthMap 10.

Figure 8 presents the step depth from the main road of the community, which means the number of routes one needs to take to reach the end route of this community. It was observed that this community is easy to access, as the average number of steps (routes) one needs to reach is 7.91, which is 8, which means that one needs to take at least eight different routes to navigate this community. The values are colour-coded on the heat scale; the red colour and other warm colours show the highest value, while the blue colour and other cool colours show the lowest value. The highest step depth was observed to be 16 steps away from the main road, which means that in order to reach the end of the community, one needs to turn at least 16 times before reaching the destination. This type could make it challenging to navigate in case of emergency.

Figure 9 illustrates the mean depth of the community as a related concept of step depth, which shows the average number of turns one needs to take to traverse the space. The lowest mean depth was found to be 12.81, and the highest was 41.42, with an average value of 20.22, which is very high and thus makes this community hard to access in terms of movement.

Figure 10 shows the choice values, which determine the flexibility of movement within the community. The highest value was observed on the red-coloured route and the lowest on the purple- or blue-coloured route. The choice value determines the alternate route options in movement, thus making a settlement more accessible and easier to navigate. Overall, this community shows the lowest choice values on the majority of routes except for those shown in red, orange, or greenish coloured.



Figure 8. Measuring step depth for Greenland. Source: author, developed by depthMap 10.



Figure 9. Measuring mean depth for Greenland. Source: author, developed by depthMap 10.

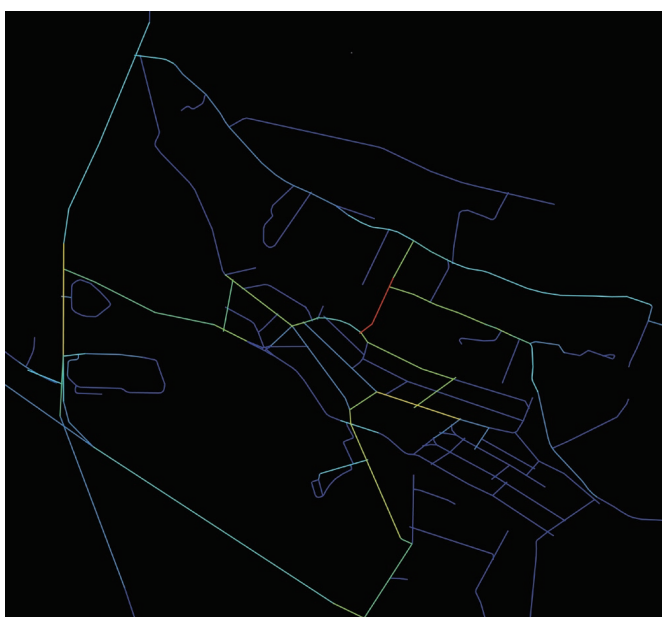


Figure 10. Measuring the choice values for Greenland. Source: author, developed by depthMap 10.

The spatial study of the Greenland gated community reflects a moderate integration score from the analysis, showing that the entrance area is accessible yet crowded. Although the developer aims for peaceful and calm settings, nonetheless, this may reduce visibility and connectivity, which may pose security risks to the development. The development incorporates a more connected street network, less rigid walls, reduced security gates, and closer proximity to service areas in comparison to Al Andalucía. The integration of exclusivity with functionality in Greenland may reflect a positive evolving approach for future gated communities since the development exerts less isolation and separation.

5.3. Similarities and Differences

The spatial analysis of Al Andalucía and Greenland developments reveals key differences in their integration and accessibility in relation to their socio-economic, social, and other key aspects, such as location, size, housing types, and residents' rationale for selecting such housing options. Table 2 presents a comparative analysis between the two selected gated communities, highlighting similarities and contrasts of both cases on macro and micro levels in order to illustrate how these developments have influenced their surroundings in the context of Jordan's gated communities. The locations of both developments significantly affect their accessibility, integration into the urban fabric and socio-economic implications. Al Andalucía, located away from the city of Amman, promotes exclusivity with challenges in the provision of daily services and amenities, making it more isolated compared to Greenland. Conversely, Greenland's proximity to the urban growth zone and its better integration with surrounding areas suggest a more inclusive development, fostering greater local interaction and better economic impact.

Table 2. Comparison between both case studies. Source: The Author.

Aspect	Al Andalucía	Greenland
Location	~20 km south of Amman, close to the airport	~12.6 km from Amman in Na'ur, closer to the urban growth zone
Developer	TAAMEER Jordan: International investor	Private Jordanian investor
Construction Timeline	Began in 2005, stopped in 2008, resumed in 2009, and was completed in 2013	Began in 2008
Land Use	Initially zoned as agricultural land	Formerly agricultural/forested land
Development Area	800,000 m ² with 600 villas	400,000 m ² with 500 units (villas, semi-villas, flats)
Architectural Style	Modern-style villas with landscaped gardens, premium finishes, private family atmosphere	Modern villas with landscaped gardens, private pools, and diverse architectural styles due to customisation option
Security Features	Enclosed with a concrete wall, single entrance/exit with security guards and surveillance cameras	Enclosed with a wire fence, secured with a boom gate and a small security room, less physical isolation than Al Andalucía
Transportation Access	Main access via Airport Road, followed by a dedicated road creating an "exclusion experience" on entry	Access via Airport and Dead Sea Roads; shares road with surrounding properties, suggesting better community integration.
Surrounding Amenities	Limited services around the area; basic groceries and laundries are available. Residents rely on distant shopping, impacting the local economy	Basic services nearby; closer to cities Na'ur (3.8 km) and Marj Al Hamam (6.3 km), though still facing some access issues due to limited public transport options
Social Interaction	Central recreational area promotes social interaction	Shared open spaces foster regular resident interactions. Recreational area decentralised; smaller size may reduce interaction, but still accessible for residents

Table 2. *Cont.*

Aspect	Al Andalucía	Greenland
Economic Impact	Contributes economically to surrounding communities like Madaba through resident shopping due to the lack of nearby services	Encourages surrounding area development by stimulating construction and residential investment nearby; increases local economic activity, though dependent on nearby cities for daily needs

The layout configuration of Al Andalucía, with its centralised community centre, cul-de-sac-type roads with dead-ends, grand security gate, and rigid concrete wall surrounding the development, emphasises isolation and social exclusivity. The simplified security gate distributed internal streets, and the low-wire fence surrounding the development fostered partial integration, which may enhance community interaction with the surroundings.

6. Discussion

The discussion examines how the findings of the spatial analysis of the case studies can integrate best practices of urban design principles, such as accessibility, walkability, safety, and social interaction. These principles are contextualised within McMillan and Chavis [34] studies, identifying community core elements such as membership, influence, reinforcement, and emotional connection. This framework highlights how the design layout of gated communities can foster or discourage a sense of community and connection.

The spatial analysis of Al Andalucía, with an average integration reading of 0.45, demonstrates spatial challenges related to accessibility and community connectivity. The overall design layout, with its centralised recreational area, may encourage social interaction and increase emotional connection. However, the low integration values and the physical barriers indicate limited spontaneous interactions and can isolate communities, as explained by Newman [55]. This finding aligns with Blakely and Snyder [16] review of gated community typologies, where exclusivity can be more important than connectivity, which reflects the broader trend of gated communities. In contrast, Greenland development has a lower integration reading of 0.36, which may indicate a slightly better-integrated community since the residential area is partially separated from the main entrance. The decentralised recreational area encourages unplanned interactions among residents, which enhances reinforcement by creating a spontaneous social exchange. This observation aligns with Balbo [35] observation that decentralisation in urban layouts can enhance social interaction compared to rigid and centralised designs. The contrasting design layout of both developments reflects the variance in the impact of social engagement and sense of belonging. The design approach of Greenland reflects more integration, which reflects an adaptive urban approach, as the developer may have responded to lessons learned from Al Andalucía. This aligns with the findings of Alkurdi [30] that the design of gated communities can balance exclusiveness with integration.

In terms of safety and security, both cases exhibit high-security measures by introducing fences, security rooms, and surveillance cameras, which aligns with the discussion introduced by Newman [55], as privacy in gated communities can limit observations and increase risk. The design layout of Al Andalucía may create low visible areas, which may increase security risks, whereas the layout of Greenland, with its wire fence, may reflect a sense of openness with the surroundings. This observation aligns with Hammad, et al. [56] analysis of gated communities in Amman, highlighting the balance between security and accessibility. Furthermore, both communities are located on the outskirts of Amman, which denotes that they rely heavily on the nearby infrastructure, which may strengthen their economic impact on the surrounding areas. However, the development

of gated communities on the outskirts of Amman may create isolated islands that physically and socially isolate their residents from the surrounding urban area, reinforcing social division [6]. Such spatial isolation resonates with Balbo [35] argument on urban planning in developing countries, where rapid urbanisation often leads to fragmentation and socio-economic disparities. Nonetheless, the location of the Greenland community suggests that since this project was developed after Al Andalucía, the developer may have learned lessons from other experiences, particularly in relation to the location selection and distance from Amman. This hypothesis may reflect an adaptable approach to urban design in relation to connectivity and accessibility yet maintaining exclusivity.

From a policy perspective, the study findings emphasise the need for urban planning strategies in Jordan that can integrate gated communities with the wider community. Recommendations may include providing shared public areas, fostering mixed-use zones, and connecting these developments with public transportation to enhance accessibility and reduce socio-spatial isolation. Studies from the Latin American context, where gated communities have privatised public spaces, suggest that integrating shared public areas can mitigate fragmentation [19,20]. Similarly, Australian studies emphasise the importance of connecting gated developments to their surrounding urban fabric through regulatory frameworks to reduce segregation [21,22].

Finally, gated communities in Jordan demonstrate the neoliberal shift towards seclusion, privatisation, and luxury. While Al Andalucía catered to affluent residents seeking seclusion and exclusivity, Greenland represents a more adaptive approach that balances luxury with accessibility and urban connectivity. Both case studies reflect the ultimate desire of residents and developers to create exclusive and secure areas while fostering challenges to inclusivity and connectivity. Exclude and seclude certain layers of society in an exclusive and safe environment. As argued by Balbo [35], gated communities exacerbate socio-economic disparities by restricting access to the surrounding neighbours. Policy actions that are extracted from historical urban characteristics, such as cohesive layouts and shared spaces, can create new gated communities that promote inclusivity and community integration while maintaining security and exclusivity [32].

7. Conclusions

The findings of the space syntax analysis conducted on Al Andalucía and Greenland developments reveal significant spatial and social impacts, particularly regarding accessibility and interaction. These findings highlight that gated communities, especially those built on the outskirts of the city, contribute to social and physical isolation and reinforce fragmentation. While the long-term effects of such developments require further time until they can be thoroughly examined, early findings of the space syntax analysis of Al Andalucía and Greenland indicate spatial and social implications. Therefore, planners and authorities should prioritise sustainable development by promoting organic, integrated townscape growth to ensure sustainable development and positive flourishing of the surrounding areas.

Based on the study findings of the space syntax analysis, the following design strategies are proposed for the future development of gated communities, particularly those developed on the outskirts of Amman:

- Long-term master planning: Gated communities should adopt phased developments that initially focus on internal social cohesion, followed by gradual integration as the surrounding areas mature. The space syntax findings suggest that providing pedestrian accessibility, such as walkways and green areas, can enhance the development integration and transition in future phases.
- Adaptability of layouts: The internal designs and layouts should be adaptable and liveable in order to create diverse forms of enclosures. Since the community is de-

veloped on the outskirts of the city, the initial phase may require focusing on safety, security, and internal social integration. The space syntax results suggest that higher levels of spatial integration within the community encourage stronger social ties.

- **Phased integration strategy:** A phasing strategy approach can help in the transition from enclosed communities to semi-opened developments that encourage communication with the surroundings, which will enhance overall community connectivity and integration. The space syntax analysis demonstrates that layouts with higher choice values and fewer step depths indicate stronger connections between internal residents.

This proactive approach ensures that the gated communities in Jordan have the potential to evolve in response to the growth of the surrounding areas, fostering a more integrated and cohesive urban fabric. It is suggested that authorities and municipalities are encouraged to enforce a design framework aligned with this phasing strategy, ensuring a smooth transition and future integration of gated communities so they will not stand as isolated islands within the urban sprawl.

Furthermore, the findings address the study questions by demonstrating that gated communities in Jordan significantly impact their surroundings by creating socio-spatial boundaries, reducing integration, and fostering social segregation. Additionally, the space syntax analysis, along with the design recommendations, offers a replicable framework for evaluating similar phenomena in other cities in the Middle East. While the study provides valuable insights, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The space syntax analysis was carried out on two case studies within a specific timeframe, limiting its generalisability. Further studies could explore additional case studies in Jordan to expand the analysis further for a holistic understanding of their influence on the surroundings. Regarding the time limitation, such analysis requires long-term investigation and monitoring of the area to assess the integration or separation of gated communities over time. Examining the role of policy and urban planning strategies in Jordan with regard to the design and integration of gated communities can provide additional perceptions of their growth.

Overall, the study contributes to the growing literature on urban segregation by assessing the social and spatial impacts of gated communities in Jordan through space syntax analysis. Additionally, the study offers a replicable framework for understanding similar urban contexts while addressing the socio-spatial challenges represented by gated communities.

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9.6 SYNTHESIS AND THEMATIC INTEGRATION

Gated communities have become a prominent feature of Jordan's urban landscape, influenced by historical precedents, global trends, and local development pressures. While echoes of closed architecture exist in old Arabian cities and Western models, their contemporary manifestation reflects distinct local socio-economic, regulatory, and spatial conditions. This section synthesises the key findings from expert interviews, NVivo-based thematic analysis, and space syntax into six interrelated themes:

1. Social, Economic, and Spatial Impacts

Gated communities create a paradox of internal social cohesion versus external socio-spatial segregation. They generate localised economic benefits through increased property values and service-sector employment, but their spatial design often prioritises private vehicular access, reduces walkability, and creates physical barriers that fragment the urban fabric.

2. Regulatory Frameworks

Military-affiliated developments are subject to the most stringent regulations, whereas privately developed communities face fewer restrictions. Municipal regulations generally limit the concentration of gated compounds in a single area and impose height restrictions on high-rise towers.

3. Stakeholder Involvement

Municipal authorities play a regulatory role, overseeing developers' activities, while private developers are responsible for planning and constructing these communities.

4. Traditional vs. Contemporary Urbanism

Unlike traditional Arabian cities, which accommodated diverse social classes and were built collectively by residents, contemporary gated communities primarily cater to affluent populations and are designed by private developers.

5. The Emergence of Gated Communities

Historically, such developments were established to accommodate government employees and expatriates. In the contemporary urban landscape, gated communities primarily address perceived deficiencies in public infrastructure and security, as well as the demand for exclusive residential environments.

6. Prospects for Integration

This finding suggests that the prevalence of gated communities could decline if urban areas were designed to offer the same amenities and security that currently attract residents to gated communities. Enhancing urban infrastructure and public services may reduce the perceived necessity of enclosed residential developments.

Further details supporting these findings are available in Appendices A and B of this thesis.

9.7 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter examined the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities on their surrounding urban fabric in Jordan, based on thematic analysis of expert interviews and spatial findings from a published space syntax study. Rather than focusing solely on internal life, the analysis highlights how these developments influence neighbouring areas. A prominent social theme emerging from the interviews was security as a key driver, reflecting a broader regional trend in the Middle East and GCC countries. This finding is consistent with previous studies that identify security and lifestyle control as central motivations behind gated community development, particularly in Middle Eastern and Global South contexts (Al-Homoud & Al Aswad, 2018; Blakely & Snyder, 1997a; Caldeira, 2000; Glasze, 2006). Similar to evidence from Egypt and the GCC, gated communities in Jordan emerge as private responses to perceived urban insecurity and deficiencies in public services, reinforcing patterns of socio-spatial segregation. While providing residents with a perceived sense of safety, this pursuit of security simultaneously fosters social segregation, physically and socially isolating communities and limiting interaction with the wider public. Another critical theme involved the response to deficiencies in public urban services. Experts emphasised that deficiencies in public amenities, infrastructure, and the lack of green spaces have prompted many middle- and upper-class residents to seek privatised alternatives. However, the privatisation of urban services has intensified inequalities between gated and non-gated areas, resulting in fragmented urban areas.

These qualitative perceptions were spatially supported by the space syntax analysis, which demonstrated how gated communities disrupt street connectivity and pedestrian networks through their rigid boundaries. This physical manifestation of separation limits

integration with surrounding areas, providing a clear spatial correlate for the social segregation observed by experts. The study revealed a strong correlation between these spatial discontinuities and patterns of social division. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the socio-economic exclusivity inherent in this model. Catering primarily to high-income groups, gated communities reinforce urban class divisions, creating pronounced social and physical distance between affluent residents and less wealthy populations. Historical reflections from participants suggested that while traditional Arabian cities valued privacy, they still supported neighbourly cohesion through shared spaces and gradual transitions. While some scholars interpret gated communities as contemporary reinterpretations of traditional urban forms (Glasze & Alkhayyal, 2002), the findings of this chapter challenge this continuity. Unlike old Arabian neighbourhoods, which balanced privacy with social integration, gated communities in Jordan operate through market-driven governance and rigid spatial boundaries that limit interaction with surrounding areas. This supports arguments that contemporary gated developments represent a transformation rather than a continuation of historical socio-spatial practices (Bianca, 2000; Giddings et al., 2023). In contrast, modern gated communities often abandon such integrative principles, deepening urban separation. Finally, governance and regulatory gaps were identified as a significant contributor to the rise and impacts of gated communities. Weak municipal control and the dominance of private developers have allowed market-driven models to dictate urban growth, frequently at the expense of spatial equity and inclusive planning.

The two publications included in this chapter address complementary sub-hypotheses of the research and collectively reinforce its methodological rigour and objectivity. The first publication, based on expert interviews, examines the socio-spatial hypothesis that gated communities intensify social segregation and governance-driven exclusion, providing qualitative insight into professional interpretations of their impacts. The second publication tests the spatial sub-hypothesis by objectively examining urban connectivity and integration through space syntax analysis. When combined, these studies allow qualitative perceptions to be validated against measurable spatial patterns, ensuring triangulation between expert knowledge and spatial evidence. This integration strengthens the robustness, credibility, and objectivity of the research findings.

In conclusion, gated communities in Jordan represent more than a residential preference; they constitute a socio-spatial model that actively reshapes urban life around exclusion. While fulfilling demands for security and private amenities, they significantly exacerbate urban fragmentation and social stratification. Addressing these challenges necessitates a fundamental reorientation of planning strategies towards prioritising integration, enhancing public realm connectivity, and instituting stronger, more inclusive urban governance.

Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusions

INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the social and spatial impacts of gated communities on their surroundings in Jordan and, more broadly, in the Middle East. It examined how these developments influence urban connectivity, spatial integration, and social cohesion with adjacent neighbourhoods. Rather than focusing on residents' motives for living in these developments or their internal influences, the research examined the external impacts these developments have on their urban surroundings. To achieve this investigation, the study explored the historical legacies of enclosed neighbourhoods in old Arabian cities, examined the socio-economic factors driving their contemporary emergence, and investigated their socio-spatial consequences in the case study area of Amman, Jordan.

Building on historical insights from traditional Arabian cities and contemporary urban design theories, the study employed an in-depth case study of Amman, supported by space syntax analysis and thematic examination of expert interviews. This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by being the first study to integratively apply Space Syntax analysis and qualitative thematic analysis of expert perspectives. It empirically demonstrates the socio-spatial fragmentation caused by gated communities in the Jordanian context and draws a novel comparative analysis with traditional Arabian urban forms.

Contribution and significance of the study

Collectively, the findings contribute to academic knowledge by advancing an integrated socio-spatial understanding of gated communities that moves beyond internal residential effects to examine their external urban impacts. By combining historical inquiry, expert-based thematic analysis, and space syntax, the study offers a multi-layered analytical framework applicable to other Middle Eastern contexts. Practically, the findings provide evidence-based insights for planners and policymakers to reconsider gated communities as part of long-term urban integration strategies rather than isolated residential products.

The research addresses five key questions:

- How do gated communities influence social cohesion and urban integration in Amman?
- How does the spatial layout of gated communities affect urban connectivity with adjacent areas?
- How does the architectural and urban design of gated communities encourage integration or reinforce urban discontinuity?
- Are there any shared characteristics between traditional Arabian urban forms and contemporary gated communities in Amman?
- How can the design of modern gated communities be adapted to enhance their integration with the surrounding neighbourhoods?

10.1 INTEGRATING KEY FINDINGS

The research examined four themes in the context of the Middle East, with a particular focus on Jordan. These themes explored the historical characteristics of gated neighbourhoods, the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities across different countries in the Middle East and Jordan, the social impacts derived from a thematic analysis of expert interviews, and the spatial impacts analysed using space syntax in the case studies. Although the thesis is structured around multiple publications that address related themes, this is inherent to publication-based doctoral research rather than redundancy. Each paper investigates gated communities through distinct analytical lenses, scales, or methodological perspectives, including historical inquiry, regional comparison, expert-based qualitative analysis, and spatial configuration analysis. The integration of these studies within this thesis allows recurring themes such as segregation, fragmentation, and exclusivity to be examined cumulatively rather than repetitively, enabling triangulation across methods and contexts. Through this synthesis, the thesis advances beyond existing studies by linking historical precedents, expert perceptions, and spatial evidence into a coherent socio-spatial framework specific to the Jordanian context. **Table 10-1** summarises how each publication contributes to distinct research questions, analytical scales, and methodological approaches, clarifying their cumulative role within the thesis.

Table 10-1 Publication Contribution Matrix

Publication (Chapter)	Methodological Approach	Primary Research Question(s) Addressed	Scale & Focus	Unique Contribution to the Thesis
Reinterpreting Privacy and Community: Social and Spatial Transformations from Traditional Arabian Neighbourhoods to Contemporary Gated Communities (Chapter 5)	Content analysis + theoretical synthesis	Research Question 4	Regional/historical	Provides the conceptual foundation for interpreting privacy, enclosure, and community, reframing historical gated forms as socially cohesive rather than segregated
The Infectious Divide: A Comparative Study of the Social Impact of Gated Communities in the Middle East (Chapter 6)	Comparative qualitative review	Research Question 1	Regional (Middle East & GCC)	Demonstrates how gated communities function as a transferable socio-spatial model across contexts, introducing the concept of gated urbanism as a “contagious” development logic
A Narrative Review of Gated Communities and the Transformative Social Impact in Middle Eastern Cities (Chapter 6)	Narrative review	Research Question 1 & 3	Regional (Middle East & GCC)	Synthesises regional debates on segregation, security, and market-driven development, situating Jordan within wider neoliberal and governance-driven urban transformations
The Rise of Gated Communities in Amman from the Old to the Modern (Chapter 8)	Historical inquiry + qualitative analysis	Research Question 4 & 5	Historical, contemporary (Jordan)	Establishes historical continuity and separation between traditional Arabian neighbourhoods and modern gated communities, clarifying how enclosure transferred from socially integrative to exclusionary practices
Gated Urbanism in the Middle East: Expert Insights from Jordanian Case Studies (Chapter 9)	Semi-structured expert interviews + thematic analysis	Research Question 1, 3 & 5	National (Jordan)	Provides expert-based qualitative evidence on how gated communities influence social cohesion, governance, and exclusion in Jordan, bridging theory and local planning practice
Space Syntax Analysis of Gated Communities in Jordan: Examining Urban Connectivity and Social Impact (Chapter 9)	Space syntax analysis (axial & integration measures)	Research Question 2 & 3	Case-study (Al Andalusía & Green Land)	Supplies objective spatial evidence demonstrating how gated layouts disrupt urban connectivity and reinforce spatial fragmentation, empirically validating qualitative findings

Source: Researcher

The evolution of gated communities in Jordan should therefore be understood not as a sudden shift from traditional Arabian neighbourhoods to contemporary gated forms, but as a gradual socio-spatial transformation influenced by intermediate phases of modern

residential development, particularly the socially homogeneous neighbourhoods established between the 1970s and 1990s, which provided locally grounded precedents for later gated models.

While the empirical findings across the included publications are derived through inductive qualitative and spatial analysis, the schematic illustration presented in Figure 6 (Article publication in Chapter 8) should be understood as a conceptual synthesis rather than a predictive or quantified policy model. The illustration does not extrapolate short-term findings into deterministic long-term outcomes; instead, it translates recurring socio-spatial patterns, identified through historical content analysis, expert thematic insights, and space syntax evidence, into a deductive planning logic that highlights potential trajectories for urban integration. In this sense, the framework is deductive in form but inductively informed, functioning as a theory-building device that bridges diagnostic evidence with strategic planning considerations rather than as a prescriptive policy instrument.

This section synthesises the findings and their implications, which address the research questions:

- **Historical Content Analysis**

The study reveals that traditional Arabian urban forms naturally incorporated enclosed neighbourhoods through cultural and religious imperatives, fostering organic growth and socio-spatial inclusivity. In contrast, modern gated communities often create rigid environments that weaken local traditions and cultural identity. Recommendations include:

- Encouraging ethnic and social diversity through mixed housing options.
- Implementing decentralised spatial organisation via resident design committees, which can provide a sense of ownership and engagement.
- Incorporating culturally sensitive design elements, such as providing gender-segregated recreational spaces or culturally appropriate facilities, would align with the traditions observed in the historical context of Arabian cities.
- Promoting community engagement through participatory processes such as hall meetings and homeowner association meetings.

- Developing adaptable, multi-use spaces would ensure resilience and sustainability over time.

- **Spatial impact of gated communities**

Space syntax analysis confirms that gated communities frequently disrupt urban integration through restricted access points and isolated layouts. The design of gated communities, in general, is characterised by high walls and secured gates that restrict access and reduce navigation and connectivity, which leads to significant urban discontinuities. In addition, the study found that gated communities, when built on the outskirts of the city, often function as isolated islands, limiting interactions with the surrounding neighbourhoods. The study suggests design strategies for future gated communities, specifically the ones built on the outskirts of the city, to ensure sustainable development and positive flourishing of the surrounding areas:

- Long-term master planning: Gated communities should adopt phased developments that initially focus on internal social cohesion, followed by gradual integration as the surrounding areas mature. The space syntax findings suggest that providing pedestrian accessibility, such as walkways and green areas, can enhance the integration and transition of development in future phases.
- Adaptability of layouts: The internal designs and layouts should be adaptable and livable to create diverse forms of enclosures. Since the community is located on the outskirts of the city, the initial phase may require a focus on safety, security, and internal social integration. The space syntax results suggest that higher levels of spatial integration within the community encourage stronger social ties.
- Phased integration strategy: A phased integration strategy approach can help facilitate the transition from enclosed communities to semi-open developments that encourage communication with the surroundings, thereby enhancing overall community connectivity and integration. The space syntax analysis demonstrates that layouts with higher choice values and fewer step depths indicate stronger connections between internal residents.

- **Social impact of gated communities**

The findings of the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews complement the space syntax analysis, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the

social impacts of gated communities. Key themes derived from the interviews include:

- **Security and Exclusivity:** Interviews revealed that security remains a top priority for gated community residents, which reflects a high standard of quality of life. Residents identified safety, exclusivity, and well-maintained infrastructure, such as green spaces and child-friendly areas, as key benefits. These features address gaps in local urban planning and attract people to select this type of residence.
- **Social and Spatial Isolation:** Recurring issues of social isolation and economic segregation emerged prominently. Interviews emphasised limited interaction between gated community residents and neighbouring areas, reinforcing socio-economic disparities and disrupting the existing urban fabric.
- **Economic and Infrastructure Contributions:** most interviewees acknowledged that gated communities positively impact surrounding land values and create localised economic opportunities. However, these developments primarily cater to the affluent segment of society, thereby excluding broader socio-economic groups.
- **Urban Fragmentation:** Interviewees agreed that gated communities contribute to both physical and social fragmentation. While they fill urban infrastructure gaps, their restricted access exacerbates urban discontinuity, particularly in the surrounding areas.
- **Comparative Insights:** Parallels with gated community developments in the GCC countries highlighted shared challenges, including exclusivity and spatial disruption. While Jordan's gated communities are smaller in scale, they exhibit similar socio-spatial dynamics, such as economic segregation and limited public integration.

These integrated findings demonstrate that while gated communities address specific resident needs, they fundamentally reinforce segregation and disrupt urban cohesion through both physical design and social dynamics.

10.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR URBAN PLANNING

The implications discussed in this section translate the thesis findings into practical planning, governance, and design considerations, demonstrating how the research

contributes beyond academic debate to real urban challenges in Jordan. The findings highlight the need to reassess urban planning in Jordan, particularly regarding the proliferation of gated communities. These developments, though marketed as secure and prestigious, contribute to urban discontinuity, spatial fragmentation, and social segregation. Their exclusionary nature limits public access, interrupts the continuity of the urban fabric, and diminishes social interaction between different socioeconomic groups. These challenges highlight a planning paradigm that prioritises private interests over collective urban well-being, aligning with Graham and Marvin (2002) concept of "splintering urbanism."

To address these implications, urban planning in Jordan must adopt a more integrated and inclusive approach that prioritises connectivity, accessibility, and social cohesion. Planning tools should move beyond conventional zoning and land privatisation models to incorporate participatory and socially responsive frameworks. Weak governance and poor coordination between public authorities and developers have enabled fragmented growth. In this context, the following key areas for intervention are proposed:

- **Enhancing Urban Morphology through Strategic Design**

Gated communities must be designed in a way that contributes positively to the broader urban fabric. Lessons from traditional Arabian city forms, characterised by organic growth, mixed-use patterns, courtyards, and adaptable spatial layouts, offer valuable precedents. Drawing on these characteristics, the study recommends developing gated communities that do not isolate themselves behind impermeable boundaries but instead embed themselves within the existing urban grid. This can be achieved by:

- Introducing semi-public interfaces and shared streets.
- Ensuring visual and physical connectivity with surrounding areas.
- Revising legal mechanisms to discourage physical barriers and support public access.
- Using tools like space syntax for evidence-based planning.

- **Long-Term Urban Integration Strategy**

Urban planners should consider gated communities not as isolated developments but as phases within a broader urban growth trajectory. Strategic urban development should:

- Anticipate Future Connectivity: Master plans should reserve corridors for future links to roads and transport networks, thus avoiding long-term spatial isolation.
- Phased Opening-Up Approaches: Municipalities can collaborate with developers on timelines for gradually opening private streets or shared spaces as adjacent areas develop.
- Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks: Urban agencies should track impacts through indicators like pedestrian flow, amenity access, and mobility patterns.

In conclusion, the findings of this thesis emphasise the need for a paradigm transformation in Jordanian urban planning, one that recognises the long-term social and spatial consequences of gated urbanism. A move toward inclusive, connected, and context-sensitive planning is not only desirable but essential for building sustainable and socially cohesive cities.

10.2.1 Policy Implications

The findings of this thesis highlight the need for clearer and more consistent policy frameworks governing gated communities in Jordan. At present, the absence of specific regulatory guidance allows gated developments to be approved as isolated, market-driven projects with limited consideration of long-term urban integration. Policy measures should therefore define requirements related to location, permeability, connectivity, and shared public amenities. Strengthening municipal oversight and clarifying the roles and responsibilities between public authorities and private developers are essential to reducing fragmented growth. Embedding integration criteria within development approvals can help balance private residential demands with broader objectives of spatial equity, social inclusion, and sustainable urban development.

10.2.2 Implications and Lessons

Al Andalucía case study demonstrates how spatial tools, supported by historical precedents, can serve as mediators in reconnecting isolated developments to the broader city. This does not imply eliminating existing designs but rather acknowledges gated communities as phases in urban growth capable of evolving with citywide needs. Such integration models offer a constructive middle ground between security, identity, and connectivity for planners seeking alternatives to socially fragmented urbanism.

10.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

While this thesis offers a comprehensive examination of the socio-spatial impacts, several limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations also serve as a foundation for identifying areas for future research and development.

- **Methodological Constraints**

This research primarily relied on qualitative tools, specifically thematic analysis using NVivo and visual-spatial analysis through space syntax. While these methods provided rich insights into the social influences and urban form of gated communities, they are limited by the scope and representativeness of the data. The NVivo analysis, for instance, was based on a limited number of interviews and textual sources and might not fully capture the diversity of experiences across different socioeconomic groups. Similarly, space syntax was applied to selected case studies, which may not generalise across the region's varied urban typologies. Additionally, the study relied exclusively on expert interviews rather than surveys of residents, which may limit the understanding of everyday lived experiences within these communities. Future research could incorporate resident perspectives to provide a more comprehensive socio-spatial analysis. This study prioritises expert-based qualitative insights and spatial configuration analysis to diagnose the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities, rather than undertaking longitudinal behavioural modelling of residents. Consequently, the schematic framework presented in this thesis represents a conceptual generalisation supported by triangulated evidence, rather than an exercise in empirical forecasting. Future research could extend this work by incorporating longitudinal resident-based studies, demographic profiling, and post-occupancy evaluation to test and refine the long-term applicability of the proposed planning strategies.

- **Geographical Focus**

The study concentrated primarily on gated communities in Jordan, with supporting comparative insights from the Middle East and GCC countries. However, this geographical focus may restrict the applicability of the findings to other Middle Eastern contexts with different regulatory frameworks, cultural forces, or historical urban forms. A broader, regional, or cross-national comparative study could offer more generalisable conclusions about the evolution and impact of gated urbanism in the Arab world.

- Scholarly Context and Availability of Jordanian Studies

The limited availability of scholarly research addressing the development and emergence of gated communities in the Jordanian context represents a structural constraint rather than a methodological choice. Existing studies on Jordan remain relatively limited and fragmented, particularly with respect to socio-spatial impacts, governance mechanisms, and planning implications. As a result, this research necessarily draws on contemporary regional and international literature from the Middle East and GCC countries to contextualise the Jordanian case. These comparative references are used analytically rather than substitutively, enabling the study to situate Jordan within broader urban debates while maintaining a primary empirical and analytical focus on local conditions.

- Modern Jordanian Residential Precedents (1970s–1990s)

While this research draws on regional and international gated community experiences for comparative purposes, it does not aim to marginalise Jordan's own modern residential neighbourhoods developed between the 1970s and 1990s. These neighbourhoods represent an important phase in Jordan's urban history, characterised by relatively open layouts, professional or institutional social composition, and incremental development within a public planning framework. However, they were not analysed as primary case studies, as the research focus is directed toward understanding the socio-spatial impacts of gated communities and their contemporary emergence. Future research could build on this thesis by systematically examining these modern Jordanian neighbourhoods as transitional models between traditional urban forms and contemporary gated communities, offering valuable locally grounded alternatives to exclusionary residential development.

- Design Projections

The conceptual master plan and 3D visualisations presented in the integration phase are illustrative and not tested through real-world implementation or stakeholder engagement. While they serve to communicate a vision for socially integrated urban design, they are not validated through participatory planning or feasibility studies. The proposed transformation of Al Andalucía remains speculative without pilot testing or policy support.

- Socioeconomic Dimensions

While this research focused on the social and spatial impacts of gated communities, economic aspects such as income disparity, housing affordability, and demographic transformations were not part of the core investigation. These elements were occasionally referenced to contextualise patterns of segregation or exclusion, but no detailed quantitative analysis was conducted. Future studies could build on this work by integrating GIS-based socioeconomic mapping and longitudinal demographic data further to explore the intersections between spatial configuration and economic inequality.

This study deliberately focuses on the external socio-spatial impacts of gated communities, particularly spatial segregation, urban fragmentation, and social exclusiveness. Other potential scopes, such as internal social influences, governance performance, and long-term economic restructuring, were beyond the scope of this research and represent important directions for future investigation. In addition, the study prioritises expert perspectives, historical inquiry, and spatial analysis over direct investigation of residents' behavioural and cognitive experiences, which were considered beyond the scope of this research and remain important areas for future study.

10.4 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Chapter 2 identified several gaps in the literature on the socio-spatial aspects of gated communities, with one key gap serving as the basis for this thesis's primary research objective. The remaining gaps relating to governance, economic drivers, long-term spatial evolution, and resident experiences represent significant opportunities for future investigation. The following recommendations outline potential directions for advancing the work presented herein:

1. **Economic Factors:** Future studies could explore how real estate markets, investment patterns, and land commodification contribute to urban exclusivity and segregation, particularly in the Middle East.
2. **Governance and Planning:** The study noted limited collaboration between private developers and public authorities. Further research is needed to examine how planning policies and governance structures either support or prevent urban fragmentation.
3. **Long-Term Urban Change:** The future development of gated communities is still uncertain. Longitudinal studies employing tools such as GIS, space syntax, and

ethnographic methods could help track how these communities evolve, whether they become more integrated or remain isolated.

4. Resident Perspectives: Future research might adopt ethnographic methods to examine how residents and neighbouring communities interpret and respond to urban enclosure.
5. Tradition and Modernity in Urban Design: As this thesis has drawn connections between historical urbanism and contemporary planning, future research could assess whether historical design elements can help create more inclusive, adaptable gated communities.

In summary, while this thesis has addressed significant gaps in understanding socio-spatial discontinuities, gated communities remain a multidimensional phenomenon that requires continued interdisciplinary research to fully understand their complex relationships with design, governance, the economy, and culture.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Code Book

Name	Description
Theme#1 Impact of gated communities	This theme covers the social, economic, and spatial impact of gated communities.
Subtheme#1 Social impact of gated communities	This subtheme examines the impact of gated communities on the social aspects of people within and outside these communities.
Category#1 Enhancement of Social Integration	This category encompasses the ways in which gated communities have facilitated social integration.
Gated communities enhance the social interaction among people living within them.	
Gated communities provide a sense of community.	
In gated communities where houses are closely spaced, people tend to have stronger social relationships.	
People in some gated communities sometimes have stronger social relationships than those in a conventional community.	
There are community facilities in gated communities that enhance social interaction.	
Category#2 Enhancement of social separation	This category covers ways in which gated communities enhance social separation.
Gated communities are creating communities that do not allow demographic change in the future.	
Gated communities cause the segregation of society based on social factors.	

Gated communities have caused segregation among people inside the communities	
Children living in gated communities may struggle to interact with those in the surrounding residential areas.	
People living in gated communities typically do not interact with that outside.	
People outside gated communities are generally not allowed to enter.	
People outside gated communities are not allowed to park outside the gated compounds.	
People surrounding the gated community might perceive the area as one for the rich and decide to steal from them.	
Some people in gated communities do not interact.	
There is no interaction between residents of gated communities and those outside.	
There is segregation between people in gated communities and the surrounding communities.	
Subtheme#2 Economic impact of gated communities	This subtheme examines the impact of gated communities on the economic well-being of people and businesses within and outside these communities.
Businesses may operate in gated communities, generating income for the individuals who own and manage the businesses.	
Developing gated communities with a limited number of housing units can reduce the cost of land within the communities.	
Gated communities are economically valuable to schools inside the communities.	
Gated communities can create job opportunities for people working in the field of security	

Gated communities create employment opportunities for people working for the residents of the communities.	
Gated communities in Jordan are typically small and offer fewer facilities, which does not significantly impact the economy.	
Gating a community can increase the value of houses within the community.	
Land values have increased due to the popularity of gated communities.	
The introduction of gated communities has created an economic opportunity for developers and investors.	
Subtheme#3 Spatial impact of gated communities	This subtheme examines the impact of gated communities on the physical elements that comprise the built environment within gated communities and their surroundings.
Gated communities can lead to the development of roads that prioritise cars over those that enhance human walkability.	
Gated communities allow the residents to have their unique unit design, which was not the case in city residences.	
Gated communities can lead to the introduction of good roads in the surroundings.	
Gated communities have improved infrastructure, including sidewalks, parks, and parking.	
Gated communities have led to the introduction of new architectural styles in regions where these communities are developed.	
Gated communities in Amman are typically located outside the city, and since they are not large, they do not significantly impact the city's spatial design.	
Gated communities often lead to the construction of residential buildings in areas that were previously forested or agricultural.	

Gated communities provide a better quality of built environment.	
More compounds are being developed near gated community schools for teachers and residents working in the schools for gated communities.	
No new facilities have been developed despite the development of some gated communities.	
Some gated communities are developed in underdeveloped regions, which causes an impact on the surroundings.	
Some gated communities lack public facilities such as shops, clinics, and schools nearby, which means they have led to a lack of development in the surrounding infrastructure.	
Streets have been paved and asphalted following the development of some gated communities.	
The development of gated communities in Amman doesn't significantly impact the spatial design of the surrounding area, as the gated communities are relatively small in size.	
The development of gated communities can make it hard for people to move around areas neighbouring the communities.	
The development of gated communities may fragment the land in the surrounding areas.	
Theme#2 Regulations involved in the development of gated communities	This theme encompasses the regulations established to govern the development of gated communities.
In military gated communities, the boundary of the land had to be marked by a high compound wall.	
The municipal did not allow many compounds in one area in some areas.	
There are regulations governing the planning of military and police-protected gated communities.	

There are requirements for the distance between buildings in military gated communities.	
There should be no high-rise towers in the compounds.	
Theme#3 Role distribution in the development of gated communities	This theme explores the parties involved in developing and regulating gated communities.
Developers are involved in developing the land.	
Municipal are involved in planning the bigger picture of how land is used.	
Municipal can develop land in some instances.	
Sometimes the municipal controls the work of the developers	
Theme#4 Link between old Arabian neighbourhoods and contemporary gated communities	This theme provides a comparison between old Arabian cities and contemporary gated communities.
In the closed Islamic cities, everything was within the city, while in the gated communities, one has to pay an expensive fee to access things within Amman.	
In the old Arabian neighbourhood, the construction of a gated community would require residents to participate in the design. In contrast, in modern gated communities, the financial feasibility of the developers is the primary consideration.	
Old Arabian cities met the communal needs of their residents, a situation that is not always the case in some gated communities today.	
Old Arabian cities were structured in a way to meet the private needs of the people, a feature also found in some gated communities today.	
The old Arabian neighbourhood was built incrementally based on the needs, while the gated communities are built as a whole from the beginning.	
The closed Islamic city was an integrated city where people of all classes mixed, while the gated communities are for a particular class of people who have money.	

The extended families controlled the economy of the gated communities in old Islamic cities, but companies now control it	
The residents built an old Arabian neighbourhood while developers built the gated communities.	
Theme#5: Reasons for the development of gated communities	This theme examines the various factors that contributed to the emergence of gated communities.
Subtheme#1: Early reasons for the development of gated communities	This subtheme focuses on the factors that contributed to the emergence of gated communities in Jordan's early days.
Compounds were initially introduced in Amman as housing for government sector employees.	
Compounds were introduced in Amman as residences for individuals interested in the Islamic concept.	
People from the GCC countries, including Kuwait and Iraq, introduced gated communities.	
Subtheme#2 Current reasons for the development of gated communities	This subtheme examines the factors that contribute to the existence of gated communities in modern Jordan.
Gated communities are appealing to people because they have safe areas where children can play.	
Gated communities are often constructed to accommodate foreign workers.	
Gated communities are designed to offer amenities that are not typically found in other urban residences.	
Gated communities are designed for financially privileged residents.	
Gated communities are developed to meet needs that were not previously met in cities.	
Gated communities are less crowded than cities, which attracts people who prefer less crowded spaces.	
Gated communities offer communal spaces that are not typically found in city setups.	

Gated communities offer private parking areas, which are not typically found in a city residence.	
Gated communities offer a private, open space that isn't typically found in a city residence.	
Gated communities provide a sense of self-esteem.	
People live in gated communities because they want to live amongst people of the same social class.	
People prefer gated communities due to their security.	
People prefer to purchase villas in gated communities because they are often more affordable than buying land and building an individual home.	
Theme#6: Factors that will facilitate the abolishment of gated communities	This theme discusses the factors that will contribute to the abolishment of gated communities.
Cities that provide the features found in gated communities will help in the decline of gated communities.	
City planners should also provide communal amenities in cities to facilitate the removal of gated communities.	
If gated communities are to be removed, city planners should aim to meet the private needs of the individuals living in city residences	
Walls can be removed if the city planners create a huge neighbourhood that meets all the needs of the people.	

Appendix B

Code List

Name	Files	References
Theme#1 Impact of gated communities	10	85
Subtheme#1 Social impact of gated communities	9	48
Category#1 Enhancement of Social Integration	4	13
Gated communities improve the social interaction of people living inside the communities	2	5
Gated communities provide a sense of community	1	1
In gated communities where houses are close to each other, people have stronger social relationships	1	1
People in some gated communities sometimes have stronger social relationships than those in a conventional community	1	3
There are community facilities in gated communities that enhance social interaction	2	3
Category#2 Enhancement of social separation	8	35
Gated communities are creating communities that do not allow demographic change in the future	1	1
Gated communities cause the segregation of society based on social factors	1	2
Gated communities have caused segregation among people inside the communities	4	6
Kids inside gated communities may have difficulties interacting with those in the residential areas surrounding the community	2	2
People inside gated communities do not interact with those outside	1	4
People outside gated communities are not allowed to enter gated communities	1	1
People outside gated communities are not allowed to park outside the gated compounds	1	1
People surrounding the gated community might perceive the area as an area for rich people and decide to steal from them	1	1
Some people in gated communities do not interact	1	1
There is no interaction between those living in gated communities and those outside	2	6
There is segregation between people in gated communities and the surrounding communities	5	10
Subtheme#2 Economic impact of gated communities	7	15
Businesses may open in the gated communities, generating income for those running the businesses	1	1
Developing gated communities with few housing units in them can reduce the cost of land inside the communities	1	1
Gated communities are economically valuable to schools inside the communities	1	1
Gated communities can create job opportunities for people working in the field of security	1	1

Gated communities create employment opportunities for people working for the residents of the communities	1	2
Gated communities in Jordan are small and have fewer facilities, so they do not cause a significant economic impact	1	1
Gating a community can cause an increase in the value of houses inside the community	1	1
Land value has increased because of gated communities	3	5
The introduction of gated communities has created an economic opportunity for developers and investors	1	1
Subtheme#3 Spatial impact of gated communities	8	22
Gated communities can lead to the development of roads that are car-oriented rather than those that enhance human walkability	1	1
Gated communities allow the residents to have their unique unit design, which was not the case in city residences	1	2
Gated communities can lead to the introduction of good roads in the surroundings	1	1
Gated communities have improved infrastructure such as sidewalks, parks and parking	1	1
Gated communities have led to the introduction of new architecture in regions where the communities are developed	1	1
Gated communities in Amman are located outside the city, and they are not large, so they do not have an impact on the spatial design of the city	1	2
Gated communities promote the construction of residential buildings in areas that were formerly forested and agricultural	1	1
Gated communities provide a better quality of built environment	1	1
More compounds are being developed near gated community schools for teachers and residents working in the schools for gated communities	1	1
No new facilities have been developed despite the development of some gated communities	1	2
Some gated communities are developed in underdeveloped regions, which causes an impact on the surroundings.	1	1
Some gated communities lack public facilities such as shops, clinics, and schools near them, which means they have caused a development in infrastructure in the surroundings	1	3
Streets have been paved and asphalted following the development of some gated communities	1	1
The development of gated communities in Amman doesn't impact the spatial design of the surrounding area since the gated communities are small in size	1	1
The development of gated communities can make it hard for people to move around areas neighbouring the communities	1	2
The development of gated communities may scatter the pieces of land in the surrounding areas	1	1
Theme#2 Regulations involved in the development of gated communities	1	6
In military gated communities, the boundary of the land had to have a high compound wall	1	1
The municipal did not allow many compounds in one area in some areas	1	2
There are regulations for planning military and police protected gated communities	1	1
There are requirements on how far the buildings have to be set back in military gated communities	1	1
There should be no high-rise towers in the compounds	1	1
Theme#3 Role distribution in the development of gated communities	1	6

Developers are involved in developing the land	1	1
Municipal are involved in planning the bigger picture of how land is used	1	1
Municipal can develop land in some instances	1	1
Sometimes the municipal controls the work of the developers	1	3
Theme#4 Link between old Arabian neighbourhoods and contemporary gated communities	4	8
In the closed Islamic cities, everything was within the city, while in the gated communities, one has to pay an extra fee to access things within Amman	1	1
In the old Arabian neighbourhood, the construction of a gated community would require the residents to participate in the design, while in the modern gated communities, the financial feasibility of the developers is what is mainly put into consideration	1	1
Old Arabian cities covered the communal needs of the residents, which is not the case in some gated communities today	1	1
Old Arabian cities were structured in a way to meet the private needs of the people, which is also provided in some gated communities today	1	1
The old Arabian neighbourhood was built incrementally based on the needs, while the gated communities are built as a whole from the beginning	1	1
The closed Islamic city was an integrated city where people of all classes mixed, while the gated communities are for a particular class of people who have money	1	1
The extended families controlled the economy of the gated communities in old Islamic cities, but companies now control it	1	1
The residents built an old Arabian neighbourhood while developers built the gated communities.	1	1
Theme#5 Reasons for the development of gated communities	10	56
Subtheme#1 Early reasons for the development of gated communities	2	4
Compounds were initially introduced in Amman as residences for people working in the government sector	1	2
Compounds were introduced in Amman as residences for people who were interested in the Islamic concept	1	1
People who came from the GCC countries, Kuwait, and Iraq introduced gated communities	1	1
Subtheme#2 Current reasons for the development of gated communities	10	51
Gated communities are appealing to people because they have safe areas where children can play	2	2
Gated communities are constructed because of foreign workers	2	3
Gated communities are created to provide facilities that do not exist in other urban residences	2	2
Gated communities are designed for financially privileged residents	6	9
Gated communities are developed to meet needs that were not provided in the cities	2	6
Gated communities are less crowded than cities, which attracts people who prefer less crowded spaces	1	2
Gated communities offer communal spaces that are not offered in the city setup	1	1
Gated communities offer private parking areas, which are not offered in a typical city residence	1	2
Gated communities provide a private open space that isn't found in a typical city residence	1	3
Gated communities provide a sense of self-esteem	2	2

People live in gated communities because there they will live amongst people of the same social class	2	2
People prefer gated communities because of security	7	16
People prefer to purchase villas in gated communities because they are cheaper than buying land and building an individual home	1	1
Theme#6 Factors that will facilitate the abolishment of gated communities	1	4
Cities providing the features found in gated communities will help in the removal of gated communities	1	1
City planners should also provide communal amenities in cities to facilitate the removal of gated communities	1	1
If gated communities are to be removed, city planners should aim to meet the private needs of the individuals living in city residences	1	1
Walls can be removed if the city planners create a huge neighbourhood that meets all the needs of the people	1	1

Appendix C

Semi-structured Interview Questions

Research Question

What is the impact and influence of gated communities on the surrounding neighbourhoods? This question aims to determine three main aspects that visualise how gated communities illustrate their footprint on the surroundings: (a) Spatial, (b) social, and (c) economic

Spatial: Arrangement of Buildings/ Transportation Systems/ Physical elements that make up the built environment

Social: Interactions and relationships between individuals and communities within a given context

Economic: Property values/ Business & service/ Economic Activity

	Sub-question 1	Sub-question 2	Sub-question 3	Other questions
Aspects	Social	Economic	Spatial	
Opening Questions	What are your thoughts on how gated communities impact social interactions and relationships between individuals and the surrounding community?	How does the establishment of a gated community influence the local economy?	Do you believe that the architectural design of a gated community has any impact on how neighbours perceive it?	What is the perception of people living in the neighbouring houses regarding the residents of these gated communities?
Core Questions	What are your observations on the social interactions within gated communities when compared to the surrounding neighbourhoods? Can you identify any discernible disparities?	What is your opinion on how gated communities affect the economy of the neighbouring areas? Specifically, do you think they have an impact on businesses, job opportunities, or property values?	Do you see any relationship between contemporary gated communities and old Arabian neighbourhoods?	
	Have any noticeable changes in community involvement in the nearby area can be directly linked to the introduction of a gated community in the region?	Have you observed any economic imbalances or discrepancies in the surrounding areas that can be attributed to the presence of gated communities? If so, kindly provide examples.	Are there any noticeable changes in the surrounding infrastructure, transportation, or urban design?	
	In your opinion, how do gated communities influence segregation within Middle Eastern countries?	What are the possible economic advantages or disadvantages for individuals living near a gated community development?	Have there been any notable alterations in land use or neighbourhood design due to the presence of gated communities? If there have been, could	

			you provide specific instances?	
	What is your perspective on whether gated communities lead to division within urban areas in Middle Eastern countries?		Do you believe that gated communities have had a positive or negative impact on the accessibility and connectivity of the surrounding neighbourhoods?	
Conclusion	What can be done to improve social cohesion between both communities?	Do you have any suggestions on how to effectively leverage gated communities for the benefit of the surrounding community?	Is it possible to implement the old Arabian neighbourhood concept to connect gated communities with their surroundings?	Do you think gated communities affect the surrounding neighbourhoods? (Considering the three aspects discussed)