

Mini Review

Investigation of gated communities in Tehran city

Authors:

Sara Kalantari¹
Mojtaba Rafieian²
Aref Aghasafari³ and
Hossein Kalantari Khalil Abad⁴

Institution:

1. PhD Student at the
 Institute of Culture,
 Arts and Architecture of
 ACECR, Iran

2. Associate Professor,
 Department of Urban
 Planning, Faculty of Arts,
 University of Tarbiat
 Modares, Tehran, Iran

3. Assistant Professor of
 Academic Center for
 Education, Culture &
 Research (ACECR), Iran

4. Associate Professor,
 Department of Architecture
 and Landscape Research
 Institute of Culture, Art &
 Architecture, Academic
 Center for Education,
 Culture & Research
 (ACECR), Iran

Corresponding author:

Mojtaba Rafieian

Web Address:

[http://ecologyresearch.info/
 documents/EC0470.pdf](http://ecologyresearch.info/documents/EC0470.pdf)

ABSTRACT:

Gated communities are the new concept of urban planning in the field of housing development and urban ecology in Iran. There has been a lot of research done on this topic in eastern and western counties. However, in Iran, especially in Tehran, this topic needs to be more discussed and research to be initiated at different regions. This review, firstly, tries to discuss about the concept of gated communities in the entire world with some specific example of England, United States, South America, and Africa. Secondly, four types of gated communities (utopian social, security, state and special gated communities) in Iran were explained. Methodology of this review is based on qualitative data from librarian source. The study contains some examples in Tehran such as, Sobhan and Kohestan residential complex for utopian social groups, Sahar residential complex for security groups, Shahid Beheshti and Taxirani residential complex state groups and Garrisons as the special gated communities. We found the main factors that shape every aspect of categories and design of gated communities as social, economic and cultural factors that hiding the basis of gated communities in Iran, and it depends on cultural attitude, built environment and delivers significant benefits of the cities.

Keywords:

Gated communities, Tehran city, Utopian gated communities, Urban community

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Iran faces various developmental challenges after 1978 revolution. Both urban and rural areas still face various developmental challenges in terms of integration, access to basic services and protection of basic rights as guaranteed under the constitution. The urban geography of Iranian cities is rooted in various historical and cultural trends with four-season climate and rapid urbanization and migration of population from the rural to the urban areas become the cause of spread of proprietary in urban communities.

Within this context, a new trend has emerged in urban formation namely, gated communities. The gated communities with specific pattern and large number of referees in the world solve this problem. There is no single explanation of the concept of gated communities. In addition, it calls the different shape with the same meaning such as “gated enclaves, edge cities, and enclosed neighborhoods”. Various types of urban development are one of the effective factors in producing ecological footprints, even though, in some cases, it can increase environmental damages or decrease to some extent. Gated communities as a form of urban development have had major influence on urban structures and different settlement types. Furthermore, these phenomena could change citizens' consumption-patterns throughout the city. But the most important character of gated communities is related to the physical separation of walls or fences and actual need in this type of housing (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). In Iran, especially Tehran, gated communities emerged both in inner and outer of the city. Gated communities in Iran except Tehran usually located within the nature in the higher heights and with the best climate and availability of land-size and lower prices. These types of gated community are located in north of Iran where large forests, Caspian sea and rural areas exist, which can really hurt urban ecological environment. This type of gated community is related to high-income groups. A further characteristic of this re-

search in Iran focuses on the Tehran Metropolitan Region; however, the gated communities have already spread to other Iranian cities as well, predominantly in the form of new real estate developments. This review article can further contribute to the debate about possible outlook for the development of gated communities in Iran, especially Tehran. This review could be applied to different types of researches about gated communities in eastern countries and housing markets.

Definition and description of gated communities

Gated communities are residential territories with restricted access for none-residents that cause privatization of common public spaces. This accessibility is being controlled by physical obstacles and entrances with guardians. These gated communities consist of new residential developments and old residential areas surrounded by fences or railings. It is a different phenomenon according to apartments or condominiums with security services or guardians. Usually, Public accessibility to the banks, roads, open fields or playgrounds will be restricted by gated communities. It means all the resources, which were accessible to the citizens previously (Blakely and Snyder, 1997).

Also, Peter Marcuse points to “Castle” for the description of gated communities in his book and renders a specific definition, says these are concentrated districts that the residents are being interpreted with a unique position in comparison with their neighbors, and this community has been created to protect and support this position and situation (Marcuse, 1997). The fact that has been acquired based on this massive study, declare that all the gated communities contain similar general specifications.

Including Security Services

In such communities, for the protection of the residents' security, various approaches as using electronic entrance cards or codes, applying fences or walls around the territory or, etc. will be considered.

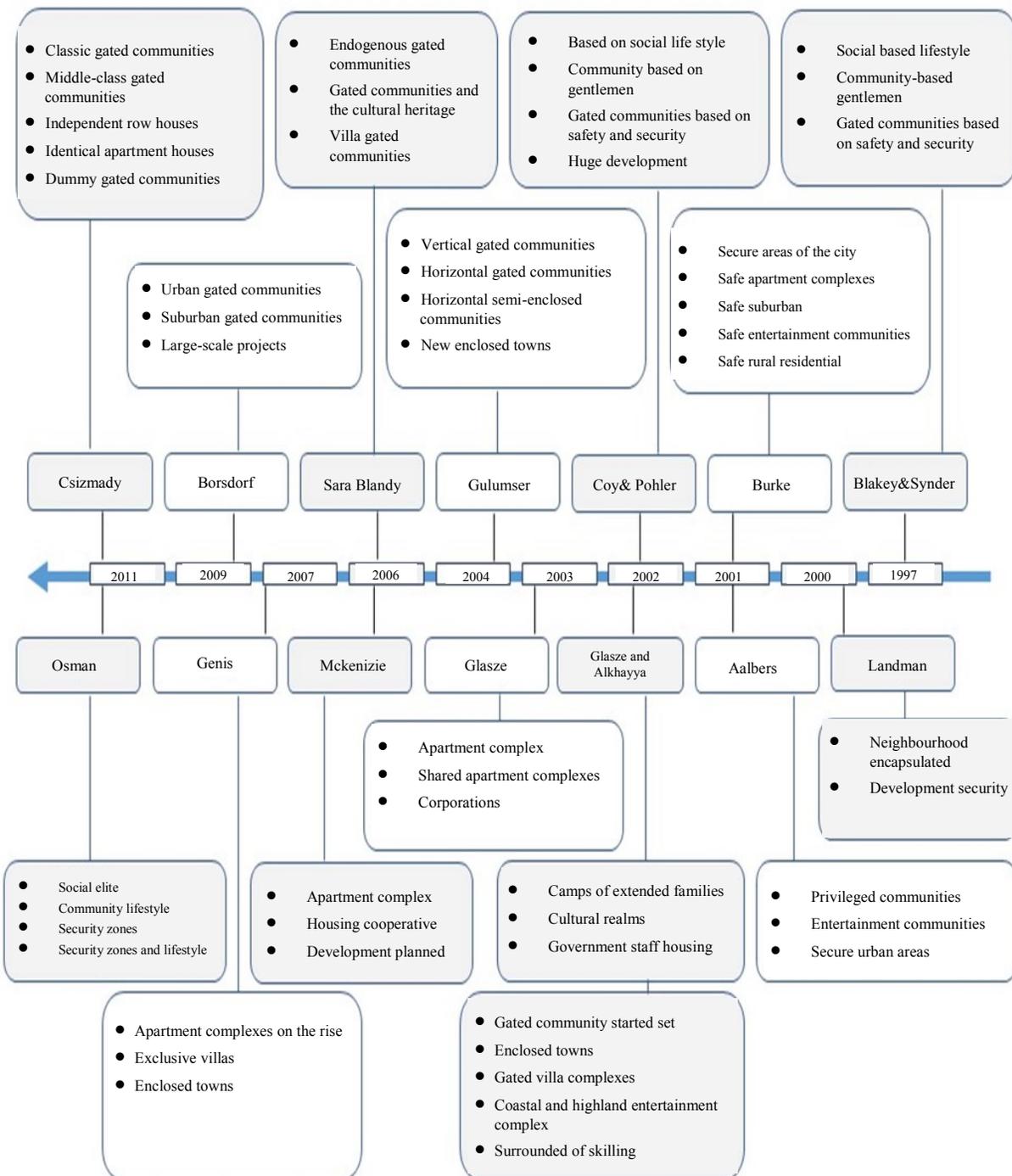


Figure 1. Development of gated communities and theories in the world

An especial type of properties-ownership

Various types of ownership may be available in Gated communities, but the thing which is evident is the fact that all the residents have an ownership on the common public spaces moreover, the ownership of the residential unit. It will be mentioned that these types of ownerships exist under specific laws.

Existence of owners’ society and interior management: This phenomenon is the other impressive element to cause a difference with the other residential developments. The managers are representatives of the owners to manage the interior incidents.

Shared facilities and services: In Gated communities according to the size of such societies and finan-

cial complaint of the residents, the amount of facilities and services may vary, but even in very small forms, urban requisite facilities and small public spaces exist.

History of gated communities in the world

The histories of these communities are different from one country to another country all over the world. Gated communities are not born in these days and age. The histories of gated communities flash back to the human habitation and formation of human communities (Blakely and Snyder, 1997). Based on the evidence and the findings of the first human settlements along the Nile, communities were enclosed to deal with the risks. The first known human territories have been surrounded by defensive walls and gates (Low, 2001), such as Mesopotamia walls and many cities in Greece and ancient cities such as Rome, London and Paris. Changes in these communities since the 1970s in various countries were different, but we can say that during the 1970s and 1980s, the communities in many parts around the world are widespread distributed, and most countries had experience with this type of urban development. Various studies of the emergence of these communities in the United States (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Goix, 2005; Low, 2004; Vesselinov, *et al.*, 2012), the UK (Atkinson and Flint, 2004; Blandy, 2006), Argentina (Thuillier, 2005), Brazil (Coy, 2006; Caldeira, 2000), Chile (Salcedo and Torres, 2004), Saudi Arabia (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002), Egypt (Shamseldin, 2016), South Africa (Jürgens and Gnad, 2002), Portugal (Raposo, 2006), Indonesia (Leisch, 2002), Russia (Blinnikov *et al.*, 2006) and China (Song and Liu, 2017; Zhao, 2017). Hence, in this section the status of selected communities in different countries. In these studies, various typologies have been carried out, and the Figure 1 represents this configuration.

England

In the UK, the first gated communities were built to protect the Romans soldiers and their families against the villagers around 300 BC. After the Ro-

man empire in the 10th century and the 11's medieval walls and gates of the city were constructed to protect the cities. In London, before the 18th century, wealthy families were confined to their residential area to protect themselves from the lower races (Atkinson and Flint, 2004).

United States

Late 19th century appeared the first gated communities in the United States. These communities were restricted to recreational areas focused on the recreational activities and was used as a second home. At this time, according to Blakely and Snyder (1997), the first gated communities in America called Tuxedo park and private streets of St. Louis to save the rich races from the negative consequences of rapid industrial growth of cities (Low, 2005). On the other hand, Liewellyn Hayden park in New Jersey in 1850, was the first gated community in the United States, which had roots in local communities constructed for wealthy races (Borsdorf *et al.*, 2007).

South America

In Latin America, changes occurred to the structure of the cities. These changes led to the development of the gated communities in the suburbs of the cities. Before the development of these communities, the suburban areas were not considered as the most desirable parts of the cities. This type of development created new types of spaces. The expansion of gated communities is perceived not only as a reformation of the spaces but also of the society. The public places reduce with the creation of the gated communities (Danielsen-Lang, 2008).

Coy and Pöhler (2002) evaluated gated communities in Brazil. They declare that after 1970, due to increasing urbanization and modern lifestyle in urban areas, displacement of income classes has been appeared. In the first gated communities in Brazil, there was the indisputable success of gated communities in the 1980s and 1990s. During this period, there was

much criticism against the government, urban crime has increased dramatically, and as a result it led to the spread of gated communities (Coy, 2006).

In another study Caldeira examines gated communities in Brazil's Sao Paulo. He has documented the gated communities and private spaces as, enclosed and controlled for residence, consumption, leisure and work districts (Caldeira, 2000). This study was based on the following six pillars:

- They are private properties for public use
- They are physically surrounded.
- No relation to the surrounding streets are designed
- They have security systems and guards.
- They are flexible.
- These communities trend to create a homogeneous social environment.

Africa

The new face of gated communities exists in Africa, especially in South Africa. These gated communities have high-end security and a combination of social and racial segregation (Jürgens and Gnad, 2002). Legal restrictions were eliminated in 1991 and the subsequent consequences was the integration of residents. The purposes of the foundation of gated communities in South Africa have changed during passing of time. In 1987, the first residential area which had a surrounded territory has been constructed. Other communities followed this type of design. A fundamental change occurred after the first democratic elections in 1994. Parts of the white population were worried about the consequences of the post-apartheid period. On the other hand, the black middle race of the society also followed this trend towards the gated communities. Even older neighborhoods have also followed this trend and engaged to found restricted areas (Glasze, 2003).

Gated community in Iran

The Comparison of typologies of gated commu-

nities which has been provided by experts illustrates that, the global typology of gated communities according to the different social, economic, political and environmental situations at different regions around the world is quite impossible. However, to recognize the aspects of the gated communities, it is necessary to classify these communities. Gated communities in terms of physical, social and economic characteristics, have many variations at different regions. On the other hand, in terms of management features, the gated communities, in confrontation with political and ideological contexts, have encountered with different laws and regulations. In this study, the categorization of residents in gated communities in Iran, based on the motivations and purposes residents were discussed. In this view, the gated communities have been divided to 4 categories.

First category: Utopian gated communities

These communities emerged due to a higher level of habitation demand during all times. The residents of these communities are looking for an ideal life regarding to their financial abilities. This incident has strikingly affected the consumption market. These communities can be defined as a leisure-oriented community or the second house. Not only the villa gated communities, but also many apartment-gated communities are currently developed as utopian communities. These communities could be located at different places within the city or outside the city, or even in tourist areas as a second home, we can see most of these community in the north of Iran.

The evaluation of gated communities in Tehran asserts that the portion of utopian gated communities are just 15 percent of whole gated communities (Table 1). The other important issue is the distribution of such community on all over the city (Figure 7). With skimming through the evidences of this distribution, it will be indicated that these communities appear in the northern half of Tehran and the southern half of Tehran is

Table 1. Category of gated communities in Tehran

S.No	Typology	Population	Count	Area (Hectare)	Average Area	Density
1	Utopian gated communities	117787	42	293.422	6.98624	401.425
2	Security gated communities	193724	131	263.862	2.01421	734.187
3	Governmental gated communities	454127	112	1706.88	15.24	266.056
Sum		765638	285	2264.17	7.94445	338.154



Figure 2. Sobhan and Kohestan residential complex (Source: Tehran map, Tehran municipality, 2008-2017, Available from: www.map.tehran.ir)

deprived. Furthermore, appearance in central district is more than the other parts of Tehran.

Sobhan and Kohestan residential complexes have been rendered in this article as two important examples. These residential complexes have been inserted in this section due to the type of residents, facilities and services.(Figure 2)

Second category: Security gated communities

This class of gated communities have been distinguished by many researchers in all over the world. The most important function of these communities is providing security in a level beyond the rest of the city. For whatever reason, residents are demanding a higher level of security services tend to live in these communities.

Security services can be varied as semi-transparent walls of the fence, security cameras or identification cards for the residents. Blakely and Snyder (1997) divided them as the city perch, the suburban perch, and the barricade perch in the security-zone communities. The location of these communities inside the

city appears as a blind alley or security gated community but outside the city could only appear as a security gated community.

Actually, such communities are approximately half the Gated Communities in Tehran (Table 1). These communities commonly are small residential communities which in trying to achieve security, being surrounded. Even though, fences and gates render a new identity



Figure 3. Sahar residential complex (Source: Tehran map, Tehran municipality, 2008-2017, Available from: www.map.tehran.ir)



Figure 4. Shahid Beheshti and Taxirani residential complex (Source: Tehran map, Tehran municipality, 2008-2017, Available from: www.map.tehran.ir)

to this society but don't create a striking social status, and necessarily appear as "Secure Islands" in the city. The distribution of these communities, and evaluation of their size clearly illustrate a widespread distribution and the small size (Figure 7).

Sahar residential complex has been identified as a security gated community, and this complex has been surrounded only because of security considerations (Figure 3).

Third category: The governmental gated communities

Next class of gated communities is available in countries with a centralized government or government agencies to address housing shortages in socialist countries. These communities are gated zones that do not offer good services and do not provide a high level of security. The location of these categories is generally in suburban areas and low-price districts of cities or on governmental lands. The most important point in these communities regards to this fact that surrounding of these areas is not only due to residents' demand or providing security, but also because of defining communities' boundary and following the approaches of providing residency in west.

The evaluation of the maps which belong to distributions, and the sizes of the governmental Gated communities illustrates that such communities have

been constructed along the peripheral districts in various evolutionary periods of Tehran city. The reason relates to abundant existence of earth and cheaper prices of land in this section of the city (Figure 7).

Shahid Beheshti and Taxirani residential complexes have been introduced as two governmental gated communities. These complexes have been constructed by the government due to housing-provision goals for the employees. There are not appropriate facilities and services for such complexes and the only reason was the requisite of housing-provision (Figure 4).

Fourth category: Special gated communities

These communities are built with specific goals and objectives. In Iran, the military communities, industries, film and technology group are classified under this



Figure 5. Special gated communities (Source: Tehran map, Tehran municipality, 2008-2017, Available from: www.map.tehran.ir)

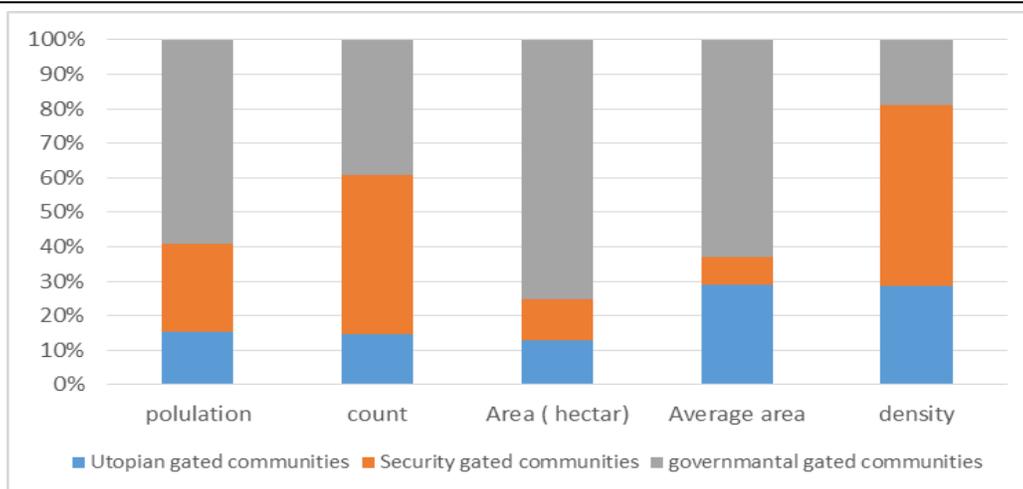


Figure 6. Category of gated communities in Tehran

category, even though, these communities could contain a wide range of different activities.

In the category of special gated communities, the complexes regarding to the “Iran Islamic Republic Guard Corps” or the “military residential complexes” have not been evaluated to gain data collections due to security issues, and in this section only an image have been provided at the (Figure 5).

The evaluation of the number of gated communities in Tehran declares the precedence of security gated communities in Tehran city, and such communities are approximately half the gated communities in Tehran (Table 1; Figure 6). Furthermore, the distribution over

the city clearly indicates the requirement of protection and security all over the city’s territory. After security gated communities, it is observable that the governmental gated communities have the great abundance, and another important point about these communities is the large area of these territories in Tehran city. The governmental investment and preparing the construction costs by the government are the most important reasons to configuration of such structures.

Gated communities are a new product of housing development throughout the world. There was a lot of study have been carried out on the topic of gated communities, that these communities point to have a

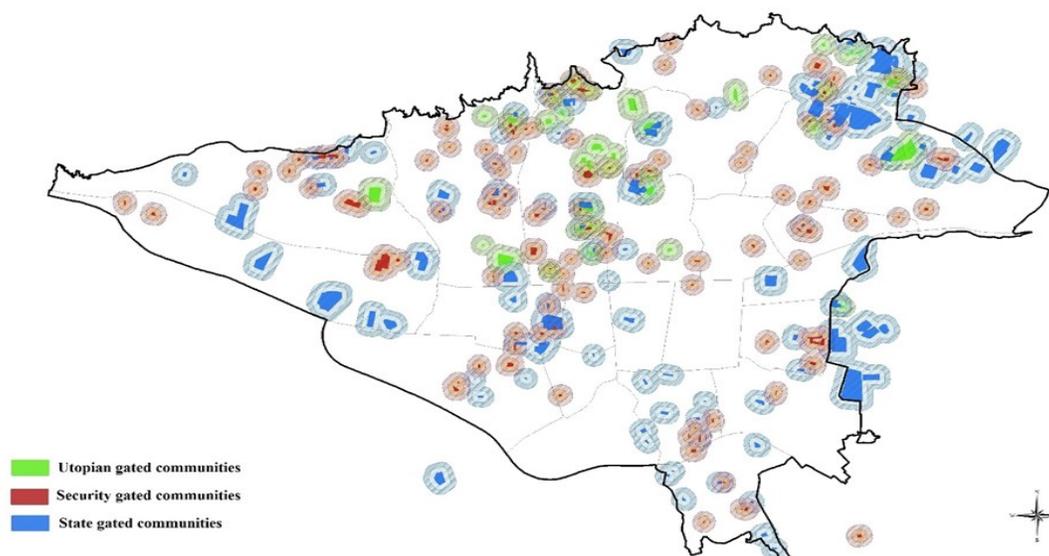


Figure 7. Distribution of gated communities in Tehran

long history even in the ancient world.

On the other hand, lack of research on gated community in Iran clearly indicates the requirement for future research on the perception of utopian, security, and governmental gated communities. Safety and exclusion have been highlighted by many researchers around the world, but the obtained consequences of this article present the relationship between social processes and spatial forms of gated communities in Tehran metropolitan city. The gated communities in Tehran, assume as a separate individual community, the main factors that shape every aspect of the gated communities' categories are social, economic and cultural factors that emanating of a centralized government.

CONCLUSION

The resulting findings from this investigation assert that the gated communities approximately have been distributed on all over the Tehran city, but in the form of this distribution, there are many differences. The utopian gated communities have been distributed in the northern half of Tehran. According to the severe polarization of the north and south, and superiority of north in comparison with south, this result is acceptable. The number of security gated community is more than the other forms of such communities, but have smaller areas, and appear more in the northern half. The governmental gated communities during various city development periods appear more in peripheral districts of the city. This phenomenon is due to abundance of land and lower levels of prices in such regions. It will be mentioned that these regions during the subsequent periods merged with the city.

One of the important points in evaluation of gated communities in Tehran is about the small size of area, which has not been able to cause a serious damage to urban spatial structure yet. On the other hand, the large number of these communities indicates that the

high growth of these gated communities may be dangerous for Tehran city.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This paper is part of PhD research in gated communities in Iran with name of "Defining the role of gated communities in spatial development of Tehran.

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