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# INSIDE THE GATE

HEGIASRI KARLINA HUTARIES

In this research, I picked two different case studies of gated communities. One in my home country, Indonesia, and another one in the country I currently live in, The Netherlands. Why did I choose these two? Here are the reasons. First, I have been to the one in Indonesia. Secondly, the case study in The Netherlands is the only one prominent example of gated community presents in this country. It also makes the most accessible option for me as I live here at the moment.

The one located in Indonesia is named Kalibata City. Having been there for more than a couple of times, I still possess a clear memory about the place. Located in the middle of a dense area in Southern Jakarta, it is a complex of residential apartments blocks surrounded by gates and fences, and also equipped by extra security systems.

The second one -which is located in The Netherlands- is named Haverleij, the newly built neighborhood close to the middle-sized city of Den Bosch. I spent one Saturday there to observe the place and gain information as much as I could. It features nine castle-like apartment blocks, consisting of several gated communities grouped together.

Both cases share the same idea of controlling mechanism: the gates. In order to understand more about this mechanism, my research is focused on its socio-spatial characteristics, since these characteristics represent the elements that support the idea of security in gated communities. There are

four of them according to J. Grant (2004), Ghonimi (2011), and Blakely and Snyder (1998); the boundary physical barriers, the street network patterns, land use type, and housing type pattern.

ACCORDING TO J. GRANT (2004), A GATED COMMUNITY IS DESCRIBED AS A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON PRIVATE ROADS, CLOSED TO GENERAL TRAFFIC BY A GATE ACROSS THE PRIMARY ACCESS. FENCES, WALLS, OR OTHER NATURAL BARRIERS THAT FURTHER LIMIT PUBLIC ACCESS MAY SURROUND THE DEVELOPMENT.[1]

GATES SYMBOLIZE BOUNDARIES. BOUNDARIES DETERMINE MEMBERSHIP; SOMEONE MUST BE INSIDE AND SOMEONE MUST BE OUTSIDE.[2] THE PEOPLE INHABITING GATED COMMUNITIES HAVE SOCIALLY, RELATIONALLY, AND THE MOST IMPORTANT - SPATIALLY, EXCLUDED THEMSELVES BY CHOOSING TO LIVE EXCLUSIVELY.

By taking the two different examples of gated community as a reference point for the research, the following questions are raised:

**How are the four socio-spatial characteristics shown in both cases? What are the distinguishing spatial factors between them? In which way**

**does these factors effect the idea of security? And how the spatial design of the housing blocks can contribute to social interaction as part of a (positive) controlling mechanism?**

The goal of this research is to find the answers to those questions, for thereby the conclusion will be drawn.

1 Grant, Jill, and Lindsey Mittelsteadt. "Types of gated communities." Environment and Planning B 31 (2004): 913-930.

2 Aalbers, Manuel B. "The double function of the gate. Social inclusion and exclusion in gated communities and security zones." (2001).

# THE FOUR SOCIO-SPATIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GATED COMMUNITY

## BOUNDARY PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Boundary physical barriers around communities serve several functions, they create visual screening, permit privacy, define property, and limit access. (Grant 2004).

## STREET NETWORK PATTERNS

The street network patterns that are most commonly used in gated communities is inward oriented especially *cul-de-sac*. This pattern offers a dendrite structure, as it reduces the number of through roads and, consequently, the corresponding number of entries and exits to be controlled. (Ghonimi, 2011). *Cul-de-sac* pattern consists of two types: bulb-like type and dead-end type.

## LAND USE TYPE

Grant (2002, 2004), argued that mixed uses are rarely occur in gated communities. Gated communities explicitly resist difference and relies on single land use type mostly residential.

## HOUSE TYPE PATTERN

Developers always seek to separate different housing types apart from each other so as to control services, amenities, and maintenance of who are the same social and financial standard. These features reflect the design goal to benefit of control and privacy as well (Blakely and Snyder 1998).



Example of a bulb-like type of *cul-de-sac* street pattern.

Picture source:  
[http://thisrecording.com/storage/Cul-de-Sac%20Sub-Division.jpg?\\_\\_SQUARESPACE\\_](http://thisrecording.com/storage/Cul-de-Sac%20Sub-Division.jpg?__SQUARESPACE_)

# KALIBATA CITY

LOOKING BACK INTO MY MEMORIES, I REMEMBER HOW DIFFERENT THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS FROM ITS SURROUNDING AREA. IT IS A KIND OF A PLACE THAT YOU CAN ALREADY NOTICE IT FROM AFAR. THERE STAND 17 APARTMENT TOWERS WITHIN A TOTAL AREA OF 12 HECTARES, MAKING IT LOOK LIKE A JUNGLE OF CONCRETE BLOCKS.



## BOUNDARY PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Kalibata City is located right next to an artery street of South Jakarta. Surrounded by low-height steel fences and rows of trees, Kalibata City has three entrance gates that look prominent from the outside.



The presence of the low-height steel fence and trees surrounding the neighbourhood keeps any stranger from entering the area, while in the other hand, still allows the inside to be visually visible. In my opinion, this gives an impression of a transparency but not in a completely visible way. Getting inside the complex, you will find the high-rise -19 floors vertically- apartment walls that create another effect of a strong inner-barrier.

## STREET NETWORK PATTERNS

The main inner streets are in linear, grid-like pattern, with some branches to access every each apartment blocks. These branches end in a dead-end type of *cul-de-sac* pattern. This automatically limits the traffic into each block, making them exclusive streets for only the residents of that block.

The main inner streets are accessible by cars, motorcycles, and pedestrians. This makes me think that even though those streets are supposed to be exclusive, but this can also makes it easier and convenient for the other residents or guests to permeate any other areas that are not in their own territory.



## LAND USE TYPE

All apartment blocks are used for residential use, but their ground floor areas are exceptional, as various food vendors and other small service companies for the residents fill them in. There is always an inner court as the common area at each apartment block. This turns the whole ground floor area becoming a lively place for social exchange between residents.



The inner court

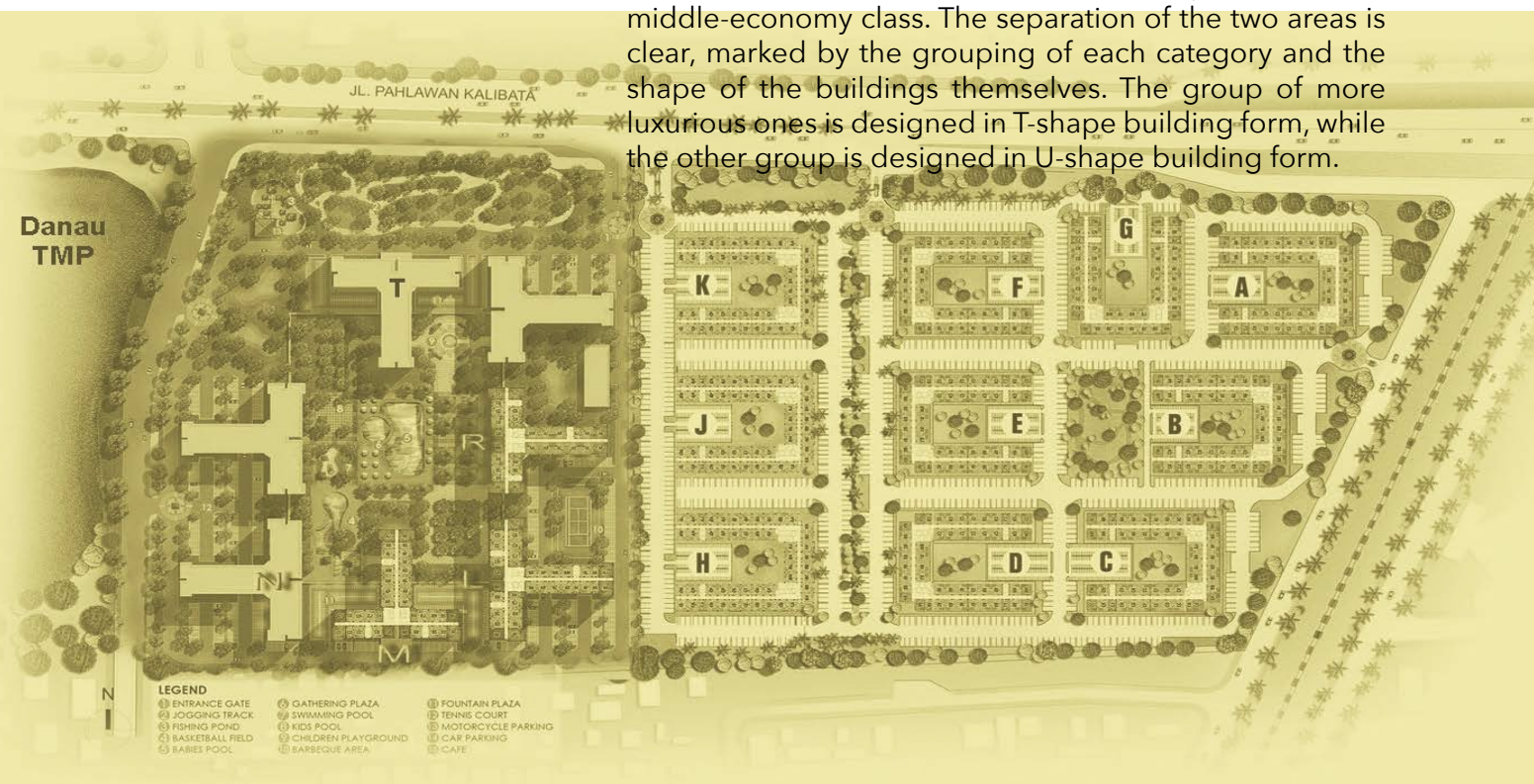


The shared facilities

There are also shared facilities such as a swimming pool, jogging track, children playground, and a fitness center exclusively for the residents.

## HOUSING TYPE PATTERNS

All apartment blocks in Kalibata City are located next to each other in a grid, creating a dense spatial configuration. Such a density would make it easier for anybody to know what is happening outside his own blocks. In term of housing categories, there are two types of them for the apartment complex. Out of 17 towers, seven of them are more of luxurious design for higher economy - class, while the rest ten towers are more of a simpler design for middle-economy class. The separation of the two areas is clear, marked by the grouping of each category and the shape of the buildings themselves. The group of more luxurious ones is designed in T-shape building form, while the other group is designed in U-shape building form.



# HAYERLEIJ

**T**HE FIRST IMPRESSION I HAD WHEN I JUST ENTERED HAYERLEIJ WAS: "THIS PLACE IS SO EXTENSIVE!". NO WONDER, SINCE ONLY 10 PERCENT OF THE 225 HECTARES IS CULTIVATED. THE REST ARE A VAST LANDSCAPE OF MEADOWS, ROWS OF TREES, WATER FEATURES, AND GOLF COURSES.



## BOUNDARY PHYSICAL BARRIERS

The entrance to Haverleij is located more than two kilometres away from the main streets, which already makes it difficult for any pedestrians to reach the area without using any vehicles. I can feel that such distance already creates a spatial barrier for the neighbourhood itself.

Haverleij consists of nine castle-like apartment blocks. There are extra buffers to get into each castle. Those extra buffers can be water, green plantation, fences, or bridges. These extra buffers add more layer of control, by playing with the sense that "nobody belongs here but the residents", and this also creates more hassle for any strangers to get through.

These castle-like apartment blocks only have one or two access points each. Each building has a maximum of five floors vertically.



The buffers into each castle-like apartment blocks.





### STREET NETWORK PATTERNS

The streets inside the area are designed in organic pattern, adjusting to its green and water surroundings. The street has branches to each castles, each ends in a bulb-like type of *cul-de-sac* pattern inside the castles' inner streets.

I faced some difficulties to walk around the area, because the streets in Haverleij are designed only for cars and bikes to pass. There are no sidewalks for pedestrians. This may create more reason for any strangers not to walk through and loiter around the neighborhood, which can actually be beneficial for the residents. But in the other hand, it also gives a subtle force to the residents to stay inside their own apartment blocks, as it is not very convenient to walk outside. Despite having a walk there on Saturday afternoon, only six encounters I had with people.

### HOUSING TYPE PATTERNS

Different architects designed each "castle" in Haverleij. Thus each of them has different architectural design style. This can help to build their visual identities, distinguishing one with the others.

The housing grouping is not clearly defined, since each castle-like apartment blocks are located far from each other. Getting inside one of these blocks, one can also see some of the housing units which have their own gardens, which is possible, because all of the ground floor areas in Heverleij is also used for residential purpose only.

### LAND USE TYPE

Castle-like apartment blocks in Haverleij are strictly used for residential purpose. All the amenities including shops and restaurants are located in different blocks in the area. The residents can reach these facilities either by bikes or cars.

There are also a school and small offices located inside the first building complex at the entrance, children playground a golf club with 18 holes golf courses, and natural features. All of them is scattered around in the whole neighborhood, creating a loose spatial configuration. In my opinion, this would make it a bit more difficult to control what is happening outside the building blocks. Besides, this can also lead to the limitation of social interaction between each block's residents.

# CONCLUSION

Now we can all see that even though both of the gated communities deal with the same safety and social-inclusivity theme, each of them has its own way of working, spatial-wise.

The most distinguishing characteristic is in the way they set the physical boundaries. Kalibata City with its dense spatial configuration mostly uses visual boundaries for its defense mechanism. Meanwhile Haverleij- although it also has inner gates- uses mainly distance for its defense mechanism as it has a loose space configuration. Both ways, with their own socio-spatial characteristics, has the same purpose which is to provide the "safe feeling" and the sense of inclusivity for its residents.

Personally, if I were to choose one of these gated communities for me to live in, I would prefer Kalibata City to Haverleij. Despite the fact that it is quite dense, it actually provides bigger opportunity to socialize with other residents, hence stronger sense of community. Accordingly, I believe that a compact gated community with a strong sense of community provides better "safe feeling" for its residents. This is driven by the larger possibility for the neighbors to easily hear, see, and reach each other in case of emergency. This is the feeling I could hardly find in Haverleij, since all the places are distantly located, I would rather feel a little bit insecure. However, Haverleij can be a good option for people who seek for a quiet neighborhood with a greater guarantee on privacy, and to be surrounded by natural environment, secluded from the busy city life.

To sum up, the findings of this paper therefore can be added to enrich the existing researches on the topic of gated community, that the spatial design of housing blocks can contribute to social interaction as a part of a positive control mechanism.

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