GATED COMMUNITIES IN MARSEILLE, URBAN FRAGMENTATION BECOMING THE NORM?
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Urban fragmentation

Gated communities in Marseille, urban fragmentation becoming the norm?

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Introduction

The widespread construction of gated communities has been the object of many research projects over the past thirty years. Their global increase throws into question contemporary urban forms and the influence public interventions have on private centrifugal dynamics that lead to various forms of fragmentation (Navez-Bouchanine, 2002; Capron, 2006; Dorier-Apprill, Gervais-Lambony, 2007; Vuaillat, 2010). This expansion goes hand in hand with neoliberal developments towards an entrepreneurial and financialised system of urban production and management, formerly identified and analysed in the Americas (De Mattos, 1999; Webster et al., 2002; Borsdorf, 2003; Le Goix, 2003; Guerrien, 2004).

The case of Marseille, on the French Mediterranean coast, epitomises such developments, which
are similar to certain dualist and fragmented contexts in the South, particularly in Mexico and Chili (Borsdorf, 2003; Capron, 2006; Hidalgo et al., 2006; Rojo Mendoza, 2015; Gómez Maturano, Alvarado Rosas, 2016). Marseille, a city and port undergoing a restructuring phase, is marked by strong social and territorial inequalities, particularly by the material degradation of the historical centre. Social housing is concentrated in the under-equipped northern parts of the city; it is insufficient, which encourages slum landlords to pursue their renting activities. Symmetrically, middle and upper classes are concentrated in Southern parts of the city where gated communities have flourished in the past twenty years.

These social and economic disparities, adding to governance issues and political cronyism, make Marseille a complicated case in France, as pointed out in a recent OECD report (2013). This is illustrated by the recent tragedy (November 5th, 2018) of the collapse of several dilapidated buildings in the working-class city centre near the Vieux-Port (Noailles district), which killed eight people. One of the buildings belonged to the municipality, the others to social landowners, including a regional elected representative. In the ten days that followed, over 1,300 people were brutally evacuated from their homes in the city centre on the grounds that they faced imminent danger in their dilapidated housing, a situation that had long been common knowledge. The significant local media coverage was transmitted nationally and internationally, including a memorable article in the New York Times on poverty in Marseille. This tragedy triggered legal inquiries and the accusation and the suspension of elected representatives: it rattled the municipal and regional political system.

Marseille has always been characterised by a lack of urban planning. For centuries, urban production was mainly private (Roncayolo, 1996). Political and trade union patronage (Péraldi, Samson, 2005; Mattina, 2016) is coupled with informal arrangements that can also be observed in the management of other mediterranean cities (Donzel, 1982 and 1998; Vallat, 2000; Dorier et al., 2012; Godard, Donzel, 2014), and frequently in cities of the South (Jacquot et al., 2016). However, for the past twenty-five years, concurrently with public laissez-faire in impoverished districts, an urban renewal strategy is being implemented, focusing on attractive and coastal locations, and public support to a touristic and residential economy. Since 2001, the TGV connection between Marseille and Paris, and an intense urban marketing policy have led to rising real estate prices and rents, which used to be very low until then. To the exception of major government-supported projects, the bankrupt municipality makes resolutely neoliberal choices, similarly to other cities in crisis (Rousseau, 2008): strategies to make the city more attractive target certain areas that are granted and managed systematically through public-private partnerships. Private real estate development initiatives were made possible through the provision of properties and land owned by the municipality, evictions from the city centre, and minimum regulations in urban outskirts, in order to modify the social composition of the population in certain districts (Morel Journel, Sala Pala, 2011). We will study the tendency to rapidly enclose residential areas in this article, which contributes to the changes aforementioned (Donzel, 2006; Berry-Chikhaoui, Deboulet, 2007; Dorier-Apprill et al., 2008; Dorier et al., 2010, 2012).
A global dynamic

The case of Marseille should be put in perspective of the global market for forms of gated and secured communities, as studied by an international research network. This network was launched by Georg Glasze among others (Webster et al., 2012; Glasze, 2003; Billard et al., 2005). The spread of these residential forms must be associated to public-private partnerships in real estate production and to the governance of urban spaces (McKenzie, 1994; Mangin, 2004).

Research on urban territorialities in relation to residential enclosures first concentrated on the link between gates, rising social inequalities and security issues. Gated communities also represent a social division of space on multiple scales and in various forms that has become commonplace in the suburbs of Latin American, American or African major cities (Blakely, Snyder, 1997; Caldeira, 2001; Bénit, 2007). Security aspects and segregation alone are insufficient to justify this global trend for enclosure. The latter goes hand in hand with a transition to archipelago-like living spaces due to the increased use of cars and the proliferation of specialised urban centres: business districts, shopping centres, leisure spaces (Guerrien, 2004; Hidalgo, 2004; Capron, 2006; Gómez Maturano, Alvarado Rosas, 2016). By gating and securing these areas, they are transformed to welcome some of the upper and middle classes who prefer to leave the historic centres in favour of neighbourhoods with a better quality of life: nature areas, former working-class areas being renewed (Le Goix, 2003; Hidalgo et al., 2006; Rojo Mendoza, 2015).

Towards a definition of gated communities in the public urban data apparatus

In numerous countries, statistics are available to quantify and locate gated communities. This is the case in the United-States (Le Goix, Vesselinov, 2012), Latin America (Hidalgo et al., 2006; Enriquez Acosta, 2007; Gómez Maturano, Alvarado Rosa, 2016) and South America (Ferreira, Visser, 2015). It is then possible to cross-reference these data with public statistics on income or ethnicity on very small scales. For the past fifteen years, all the research done have led to the conclusion that this phenomenon is accelerating, whatever the type of context, from wealthier areas to working-class neighbourhoods to urban outskirts.

In France, there is no standard definition or appropriate public sources at a local scale on the “gated” nature or “commonhold-like” management of a whole community or street. The phenomenon cannot be assessed without a direct investigation. To partially overcome this constraint, estimations on enclosures were attempted at a national level. They are based on the analysis of real estate market offers on the internet (Billard et al., 2011). Gated properties, whether within collective housing or individual housing lots, and equipped with gated open common spaces, have become a norm in the real estate business. They have spread, especially in suburbs, and even in smaller cities, following new housing dynamics (Madoré, 2012). This new secured housing offer is only one of the forms available, while other enclosure initiatives are developed spontaneously, a posteriori by the landlords, in the very heart of some large cities such as Marseille.

To complement national assessments, case studies were carried out in France on small areas where the phenomenon is the most apparent. They made it possible to analyse the factors and forms of enclosure, especially in suburban areas around Toulouse.
(Sabatier, 2006) and on the *Côte d’Azur* (Billard, Madoré, 2009). These studies reveal that gated communities have become commonplace in France in the past ten years. Moreover, research in Ile-de-France based on the study of aerial photographs reported enclosed housing but was unable to distinguish between housing lots with or without gates (Loudier-Malgouyres, 2010).

There are numerous reasons for these dynamics. Residential isolation and the desire to remain with other wealthy or middle-class households is a major factor (Charmes, 2005; Callen, Le Goix, 2007; Loudier-Malgouyres, 2013). Urban production stakeholders also play a central role. The security argument and its “market” (Madoré, Vuaillet, 2009) are nourished by individualistic aspirations by guaranteeing a certain “comfort” through the private management of equipment and services (Sabatier, 2006; Sencebè, 2007).

Several works deal with the ambivalent stance of local authorities on the proliferation of these residential forms and on the growing role of commonhold associations, residents and private administrators in the management of these French urban spaces over the past twenty years (Le Goix, Loudier-Malgouyres, 2005; Callen, Le Goix, 2007; Charmes, 2007; Le Goix, 2010).

In Marseille, our research showed that enclosure dynamics were permitted and even supported by public authorities: they see it as a way to reduce their investment by delegating part of the local management, at the cost of increased fragmentation on a local scale (Dorier-Apprill et al., 2008; Dorier et al., 2010, 2012). This phenomenon has recently been boosted by the modification of a national law that facilitates the gating of private properties and limits the possibility for public appeals (Dorier, Dario, 2016).

Based on these observations, we will examine in this article the concrete conditions and geographical impacts of this phenomenon. We will concentrate on the dynamics, influence and impacts of enclosure processes. We will first present their scope and forms. In a second part, we will explore the modalities of their dissemination. Finally, we will analyse the factors and socio-spatial consequences of these centrifugal dynamics: the creation of restricted entities, gates and interruptions affect accessibility to roads, facilities and nature areas in cities, which leads to social tensions.

**The unsuspected extent of the phenomenon**

*The city of Marseille, a laboratory of fragmented urban spaces?*

We consider Marseille as a laboratory, in the sense suggested by Pierre-Paul Zalio after studying this city for fifty years (Zalio, 1996). For us, the idea of a laboratory takes shape in several ways. Our research was conducted over ten years (2007-2017), during which time we carried out two exhaustive inventories on the entire Marseille municipality, made diachronic observations, and compared this information with public data on building permits and the construction of new housing units. This field study approach enabled us to gather an unprecedented corpus. We also did a geohistorical study (interviews and archive analyses) with many direct investigations done in various territorial contexts. The approach we used was monographic, in the sense provided by Marcel Roncayolo (1990, 1996). His works also provided us with elements on the making of Marseille; it is characterised, according to him, by the production of private housing and public laissez-faire (1996). From this angle, Marseille is a good case study for analysing...
the links between morphogenesis and authorities’ liberal stance, spatial separation and centrifugal social dynamics, hermetic and juxtaposed urban forms.

We started by observing the large gated communities in the posh 7th and 8th districts by the sea. We wanted to verify the assumption that the enclosure process is becoming commonplace, and to establish a typology and timeframe of the evolutions by dating constructions and enclosures. Finally, we attempted to understand local dynamics and their concrete effects on territories and their urban forms. A first exploratory study (Audren, Garniaux, 2007) revealed that the phenomenon was much broader and complex than we thought; it required two inventories that took longer than expected. The latter were carried out between 2007 and 2009, and later in 2013-2014; they covered estates of over 10 dwellings with common spaces (parks, parking lots, roads), enclosed by gates and with restricted access.

The following aspects were examined for each compound:
- the nature of their secured or unsecured access points (for pedestrians or vehicles) and their closing modalities,
- the type and height of the gates,
- the facilities inside (landscaping, sports areas, parks, etc.),
- the security devices (entry codes, watchmen, security cameras, etc.) and collective equipment (bin rooms, letterboxes), etc.

All this information was integrated in a geographic information system and cross-referenced with real estate offers, new housing constructions, the land register, public road standards, and the perimeters of urban renewal enterprises.

Public authorities previously did not have comprehensive information on the subject, and we transmitted our findings to them. The Marseille naval fire brigade was the only one to have constituted a database that located certain obstacles on the roads, including the gates that had hindered their interventions, especially during a fire in 2009. The first study was based on the whole city and was carried out in the framework of a contract with the Plan Urbanisme Construction Architecture (Dorier et al., 2010); it revealed that most of the fences were built informally, without filing an explicit, although mandatory, request to the planning department of the municipality.

The practice of closing off private streets a posteriori, which was done greatly in certain neighbourhoods, was even more rarely reported to municipal services. Our last global survey (2013-2014) was co-funded by the City of Marseille, and its findings shared with urban community services. This systematic survey has raised public awareness of the phenomenon, without significantly inflecting the laissez-faire stance or support by public authorities to this trend (Dorier et al., 2012). A diachronic database of over 10,000 photographs has been created, making it possible to assess changes. Interviews were carried out with property managers, co-owners and residents. A geopolitical approach inspired by urban anthropology methods continues to be conducted in several contexts.

The results presented in this article are based on the 2014 inventory; they identify the number of dwellings, the name of property developers and managers, the origin and factors of the phenomenon. We continue to observe this ongoing enclosure progression: it also concerns tertiary real estate and public facilities that form large clusters.

### Main characteristics of enclosures in Marseille

One of the major findings is the extent of the enclosure process and the diversity of the residential forms concerned. In 2014, 1,531 closed residential estates were identified.
throughout the municipality. The phenomenon concerns, in unequal proportions, the 16 districts of the city, and 99 of the 111 neighbourhoods contain at least one of these estates. As in other French cities, these closed residential estates have an average surface area of one hectare, and only a dozen of them exceed ten hectares. Collective housing is predominant, unlike gated communities in North America particularly.

**The spatial spread of gated communities**

Gated communities can be found throughout Marseille, even in a few renewed enclaves in the historic centre. In less than twenty years, this urban form has spread to almost all urban contexts, but with different forms and logics.

In the 1970s, the first gated communities were located in Colline Périer and Kennedy Corniche (Southern coast). These estates are part of the Marseille bourgeoisie’s privileged way of life, who left the historic centre to go south in the late 19th century. With the Bastides housing estate, made up of large bourgeois properties with parks, large commonholds were created in the 1960s. The latter began to close in the mid-1990s: until then, it was a phenomenon linked to private urbanisation that could be seen as the isolation of wealthier neighbourhoods. Individual housing estates dating back to the 1930s were then gated (fig. 1).

From the 1990s onwards, the Northeast (12th and 13th districts) and southern (bordering the Calanques uplands) outskirts, which had long remained agricultural, were opened to urbanisation in the form of concerted development zones (*zones d’aménagement concertées*) that involved local authorities and private operators. The objective of this measure was to attract young executive workers and their families around the Chateau-Gombert science park or the Sainte-Marthe eco-neighbourhood project in the 14th district. These concerted development zones turned into mosaics of new gated communities. Gated residential estates also became omnipresent in all areas of urban renewal, i.e. around tramway lines or the new inner ring road (L2) in the east, or even within the Euromediterranean project perimeter.

![Fig. 1/ Evolution of gated communities in Marseille since 1990](image-url)
The spatial scope and proportion of housing in gated communities are not as important in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, most of which are located in the North. However, the national programme for urban renewal (PNRU), co-funded by the government, also leads to enclosures. Many former social housing have been enclosed (58, including 14 that were gated after 2010); moreover, new real estate projects are gated from the outset and bordering renewal schemes, with an objective of “social cohesion”. These projects benefit from State support through the national agency for urban renewal. For other projects, tax breaks are given for new estate constructions (5.5% VAT, temporary property tax exemptions). These measures have encouraged the construction of small collective private housing lots, all gated, in the 14th and 15th districts (Dorier et al., 2012, 2017).

The link often made between enclosures and social contexts is harder to establish in France than elsewhere in the world, due to the lack of very detailed statistics on incomes (fig. 2). To test this hypothesis, we used reported tax revenues per consumption unit (CU) at the sub-municipal level, i.e. INSEE’s IRIS level (the most detailed geographical statistics available in France). It appears that there are more gated residential compounds in the wealthier IRIS, in terms of both numbers and surface area; figure 2 also unveils the link between the recent and voluntary establishment of gated communities in renewed neighbourhoods and the social modification of certain neighbourhoods (13th and 14th districts). Although the settlement of middle classes on the fringes of renewed neighbourhoods leads to a “statistical” increase of incomes at the IRIS scale, the latter is misleading at the neighbourhood scale: enclosures induce localised segmentation and new social tensions.

**Enclosures in proportion to built areas and housing**

The presence of enclosures is verified by the amount of land concerned and by the supply of housing (fig. 3). In 2014, 1,531 gated communities occupied 13% of the city’s urbanised area and 20% of predominantly residential spaces (fig. 4). Their proportion even reached 50% of residential areas on the Southern coast, Colline Périer and around the Calanques national park, where they are mainly single-family homes. These urban forms have become commonplace in the city, as they now concern nearly a third of dwellings. This proportion exceeds 30% in 43 of the 111 neighbourhoods, and even 50% in 19 of them. Unlike the large gated suburban housing compounds, typical of North-American contexts, 72% of gated communities in Marseille consist in dense collective housing: 87% of dwellings in gated residential estates are apartments, which are either part of large commonholds in the South, or of social housing schemes in the North.

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8. Assessed through the combination of GMES Urban Atlas (2008) and high-resolution orthophotography (IGN, 2011). The areas mainly covered by buildings represent approximately 132 square kilometres, while undeveloped areas cover 104 square kilometres.

9. In 2013, 29% dwellings, that is 125,000 out of 431,000, according to the cadastre.
“Building with gates” or “enclosing housing lots”: What a diachronic perspective tells us

Although gated housing lots characterise the residential landscape in Marseille today, 86% of them were built after 1990. It all started in the 1990s-2000s and became a norm between 2000 and 2010. Analysing enclosures and constructions through aerial photographs, direct investigations, archive analyses, building permit deposits and land registry has enabled us to specify the recent and rapid nature of this phenomenon.

In Marseille, there are two types of enclosures that do not have the same types of design, social motivations and impacts. In the first case, gates are included in the construction of the compound from the start. In the second case, formerly open buildings or areas are enclosed (fig. 5). These a posteriori enclosures represent 55% of the corpus, or 805 units, and the speed by which they appear is exceptional, as only 7% of them were enclosed in 1990, while 52% had already been built.

These characteristics are revealed by the historical importance of private urban production and by the weakness of public regulations, which have generated a legacy of a more significant private road network in Marseille than in many other French cities.

Sources: LPED, INSEE, VOM, GMES.
Authors: Dario, Dorier, Rouquier, Bridier, Aix-Marseille Université, 2018.

Discretization method: Geometric progression

Fig. 3/ The significant presence of closed residential compounds in Marseille

Fig. 4/ The evolution of the number of gated communities in Marseille since 1960
cities; we estimate the proportion of private roads in Marseille at 28%\textsuperscript{10} compared to 9% in Bordeaux and 13% in Lyon\textsuperscript{11}. Land developers, often from large local bourgeois families, massively urbanised the successive outskirts of the city (Donzel, 1982). We analysed the archives of these housing lots from the 20th century (between the 1930s and 1960s), as well as correspondences between co-owners and the municipality regarding the status of their roads.

These exchanges expose the secular pursuit of disorganised urbanisation, “piece by piece”, as described by M. Roncayolo for the 19th century\textsuperscript{12}. Certain former private statuses served as the basis for enclosures. A number of them are even built on the walls that bounded the parks of large bourgeois properties (or bastides). Until the 1990s, co-owners insisted for the roads in private housing lots to be in the public domain. The municipality remained reluctant to this request, but it nevertheless provided occasional and informal maintenance of these roads, which had continued to be open to all. This type of management was part of a culture of arrangements, often found in many cities of Southern Europe\textsuperscript{13}, but not so much in other more historically “standard” French cities.

The reasons for the transition from a large “open private” road network to the recent wave of enclosures are complex. There are both global dynamics and local factors. Although some security arguments have intensified and localised tensions have been observed, these factors are not enough to explain the spread of the phenomenon. By analysing the arguments (decisions made during owners’ assemblies, interviews), we found a plurality of motivations. These include difficulties to park, limiting car traffic, ensuring children can play safely outside, maintaining roads, and enhancing the value of real estate. The tendency to enclose areas thus appears to be highly determined by the contexts in which they are located: proximity of facilities or hubs (universities, hospitals, beaches, stadium, and metro terminals), sources of traffic, wild parking, and proximity of socially deprived housing estates.

Among these factors, we can distinguish a common and structural cause related to the evolution of governance combined with strengthened property rights. In Marseille, the vast majority of private roads became so in the 2000s, and enclosures are currently planned or underway in several large private residential estates that are still open. The private status of these areas, sometimes “forgotten” during decades by owners’ associations, has been an obvious facilitating factor. Most of the gates were built without authorisation (which was mandatory to have), but the municipality rarely did something about it. The right to enclose one’s property has solid legal ground enshrined in the French civil code and is frequently employed in disputes between co-owners in favour of enclosures and neighbours\textsuperscript{14}. Today, several legal changes deprive municipalities and residents of a legal basis for defending the enclosure of private roads, which reinforces “public impotence” (Le Louarn, 2003): removal of articles in the urban planning code that made it possible to defend the free movement of pedestrians\textsuperscript{15}, reduction of the majority required in commonholds to vote for enclosures, exemption from building permits for non-masonry enclosures (2014).

![Fig. 5](https://marsactu.fr/)

**Fig. 5** Surface area in square meters of the top ten percent of the largest gated housing lots

\textsuperscript{10} Figures are based on the processing of municipal network data, with the addition of sections from IGN’s TOPO database, cross-referenced with the digital cadastre.

\textsuperscript{11} Figures are based on the number of private roads in Lyon and Bordeaux, accessible on https://www.data.gouv.fr/fr/

\textsuperscript{12} Internal archives of the city, made available to Julien Dario in 2016. This aspect is further developed in another publication (Dorier, Dario, 2019, to be published) as well as in the PhD thesis currently being submitted in 2019.

\textsuperscript{13} This withdrawn position of public authorities can also be observed in Naples, Rome (Valiati, 2000) and Lisbon (Salgueiro, 2001), where the role of informal processes and arrangements in urban governance has long been highlighted.

\textsuperscript{14} https://marsactu.fr/bref/lotissement-coin-joli-justice-valide-fermeture/

\textsuperscript{15} Former article L. 441-3 of the Urban Planning Code.
Although a recent phenomenon (two thirds were built after 2000), the increase of estates designed to be gated from the time of construction (45% of the corpus) reflects different motives. The average number of gated communities, which was 1.4 per year between 1930 and 1990, reached 12.4 during 1990-2000, 39.7 between 2000 and 2009, and seems to plateau with 30 initiatives of the kind every year between 2010 and 2014. This increase correlates with a global intensification of real estate in Marseille from the early 2000s onwards, but the comparison between our observations and building permits delivered between 1993 and 2013 reveals that 60% of new estates were already gated when they were completed.

In the peripheral districts (8th to 16th arrondissements), this proportion reaches 72%. In 31 of the 111 districts, the proportion even exceeds 80%. Over the past two decades, the wide outskirts invested by real estate developers have been transformed into a patchwork of gated communities. New real estate projects are now rarely open when completed. These new estates designed to be enclosed have one or two entrances closed from the outset, whereas estates that become gated a posteriori (vertical commonholds, residential housing estates), initially designed as “fragments of the city” and integrated in the road network, initially had numerous entrances.

Evolving levels of access and security

We located 2,195 vehicle access points and 2,505 pedestrian entrances, an average of 1.4 vehicle and 1.6 pedestrian access points per estate. On average, there are 3.85 access points (both for pedestrians and vehicles) for estates that were initially open and built between the 1920s and 1970s. This number shows the extent to which efforts were made to enclose estates after they were built; these efforts are done on a voluntary basis, are expensive and not adapted to their design, as they were previously integrated in the urban fabric and connected to their immediate environment. Conversely, in the estates built after 2000, real estate developers reduced the number of possible access points in the design; isolation became the norm, supplemented by gates.

In our database, the types of access were classified by level of permeability according to a standardised method (Dario, 2011). An access point can either be open (a broken open gate for example), it can allow pedestrians to pass through but control vehicle movements (double bends, grouped cones, unlocked symbolic gates, etc.), it can be open during the day only or block movements (closed gates). Most of them do not permit through traffic: 87% of estates prevent external vehicles from entering using gates, exit points and fences that are closed both day and night. Pedestrians have access in 30% of cases. Gated communities can be partially open, during the day for instance, when there are shops inside or in case of unrepaired damage, but this remains very marginal (photo 1).

Our analysis for the 2007-2014 period reveals that no gated community with fences has removed them. Conversely, some enclosures were reinforced. Access points that had been open to pedestrians (lifting gates or double bends for instance) have been replaced by hermetic equipment, which sometimes causes conflicts with neighbours outside or between residents. In 2012, when the Coin Joli homeowner association replaced simple
cones with fixed gates, some neighbours outside and inside the compound strongly complained, about not being able to jog freely in the quiet streets of the area for instance (photo 2).

Although it is not rare to observe different degrees of permeability, most gated communities are completely closed off, and this trend tends to be exacerbated over time.

Reinforced surveillance systems

Another element that characterises gated communities is active surveillance. In Marseille in 2014, only 3.7% of estates were equipped with surveillance cameras. This is however a growing trend: between 2010 and 2014, 37 new estates were equipped with these systems, and this number is constantly growing. They concern high-end estates but are also installed in estates of a more modest social level. The latter indeed face repeated incivilities, while law and order forces have been less present in the past ten years. Les Castors du Merlan is an old estate of working-class origin located near the dilapidated social housing compounds of the northern districts and a stadium (Audren, 2008). Over the past ten years, this estate has radically evolved. A group of owners, driven by a sense of abandonment and by a proactive homeowner association, engaged in an extreme security process that led to the construction of an informal wall topped with barbed wire, the installation of gates and ripraps in front of the entrance, as well as video surveillance equipment. Such defensive devices are rare nevertheless: this characteristic reveals that the security argument plays a minor role in enclosure processes. Active screening of people at the entrance of gated communities is also rare. 28% of estates have a caretaker, who often performs various functions: maintenance, gardening and caretaking. Less than 1% of estates have entry and exit controls, but these are the wealthiest and biggest. However, since 2013, a quest for security has been underway in the high-end estates of Colline Périer, where motorised security companies control entrances at all hours of the day and patrol inside (Dario, Dorier, 2019).

Internal amenities and equipment: a two-tier city

Internal amenities and equipment, which greatly differ from one estate to another, are elements that enhance patrimonial value and are markers of social distinction. Only a few estates, which are considered as gated communities, combine high-level amenities (sports equipment, park, pool, restaurant) and the (desired) absence of public services.

Parking lots and the security of vehicles are what characterise and justify many gated estates in Marseille, a city with a poor public transport system, especially in the evening. Numerous residents highlight the issue of “external” vehicles (parking, traffic) to justify enclosures, but forget to mention the issue of shifting these problems to neighbouring areas. Interior landscaping, which exists in 77% of gated residential estates, compensates for the lack of or poor condition of public spaces. The latter are supplemented by parks in 56% of estates. Markets and commercial services are rare (5% of the estates, which happen to be the biggest). Their presence, inherited from the former phase of open estates, can be a source of local tension. The frequency of traffic that shopkeepers wish for can indeed be a nuisance for residents.
The frequent presence of public equipment or networks can be a challenge. In 60% of cases, public clearance services are done in gated estates, often without additional fees. This phenomenon is particularly the case for old estates that are integrated in the urban fabric and gated a posteriori. On the contrary, recent gated estates are almost always systematically equipped with an external rubbish room and a private lighting network. This evolution reflects old arrangements (Dario, Dorier, 2019) and the redefinition of boundaries between public areas and private residential areas in a city where sanitation and solid waste removal are recurring issues (Godard, Donzel, 2014). Based on a neoliberal model, the management of predominantly residential areas tends to be paid for by residents and co-owners, thus offsetting the inefficiency of public services or justifying their withdrawal.

Gated estates in Marseille therefore have relatively common amenities. However, in a city with a shortage of public areas, simply having well-maintained parks, children’s playgrounds or the guarantee of having a clean area within the estate are major assets. Limiting good “quality of life” to private collective areas is an issue common to the neoliberal conception of cities.

The impacts of generalised residential enclosures

Although often mentioned in literature, the social and spatial impacts of generalised residential enclosures are rarely examined due to a lack of accurate data at a relevant scale. With the studies carried out in Marseille, it was possible to analyse several of these impacts on urban spatial practices. These approaches also feed into ongoing reflections (Toth, ongoing) on how urban dwellers have evolved in making compromises in terms of coexistence and sociability, tensions and conflicts (Grafmeyer, 1999; Dorier-Apprill, Gervais-Lambony, 2007; Dorier et al., 2010; Dorier, Dario, 2016).

“When our fence is an extension of our neighbour’s”: the effects of “clusters”

One of the major consequences of the multiplication of gated estates is the creation of clusters that transform the landscapes and uses of the city (fig. 6 and 7). 53% of gated estates are adjacent to at least another estate, which represents 59% of the total enclosed area. The cluster can be seen as the spatial form resulting from the sum of enclosures; it can eventually constitute a large urban divide. Although half of the 280 clusters are less than 2.1 hectares, 10% of them range between 7 to 50 hectares, and represent 25% of the total surface area of gated estates in Marseille.

Their size increased in the time between our two studies: the consequences are that people need to make increasingly bigger detours when moving around and that having a car has become necessary. The multiplication of these very vast clusters raises the question of urban coherence.

“Clusters” do not imply internal permeability: the estates that compose them are most often hermetic to one another. Even if these clustered estates...
have homogeneous socio-economic and residential levels, the fences materialise commonhold and management units. There are very rare cases of shared private parks managed by neighbouring commonholds; a few clusters were created in the framework of concerted development zones: La Jarre in the south (Hauts de Mazargue) and Sainte-Marthe in the north (Dorier-Apprill et al., 2008; Dorier et al., 2012).

The multiplication of clusters made up of several gated residential lots reflects the weakness of regulations. In the districts close to the city centre, there are older estates that were gated a posteriori one after another; nuisances (traffic, wild parking) are then shifted to neighbouring streets. By domino effect, estates that become gated thus encourage the enclosure of nearby estates. In the recently urbanised districts (fig. 7), these gated estate lots are created through the juxtaposition of new residential estates that are designed to be gated and whose roads are cut off from the rest of the city. Road access to these large blocks, provided by former rural roads, is not planned and is insufficient. In the absence of public transport, this causes a heavy traffic congestion on insufficiently calibrated inter-residential road networks (Dario, 2011, 2019).

This practice of enclosing within socially homogeneous estate lots reveals an aspect of Marseille’s urban dynamics that combine communitarianism and “clubbisation” (Charmes, 2011), something which is currently under analysis17. Having a structural approach based solely on income levels seems limited, as shown by the case of Colline Périer (fig. 7a). In this wealthy, socially exclusive neighbourhood, two clusters, made up of 15 fenced estate lots that are impenetrable by the residents themselves, form an 80-hectare mosaic, even if one caretaker now keeps all the keys to the firefighter access points. A two-meter wide public stairway path, bordered by walls, still makes it possible for non-residents to reach the sea. The presence of such a continuum of gated communities is the result of the City’s inability to create a public road crossing the hill, despite this project having been discussed in the late 1960s, and later in 2008. For a long time, co-owners with strong legal and social skills countered the integration of the estates’ roads into the public road network, insofar that they have retained their private status to this day.

(Im)permeable roads and access to amenities and services

The impact of enclosures on the road network in Marseille was measured with a spatial analysis method based on GIS and modelling18. Information on access points were ranked according to a typology of permeability levels19. The type of roads (enclosure measures) and the level of importance of their different sections were then assessed to determine the impact of enclosures on the coherence of the network. When roads inside an estate lot cluster are landlocked (loops, dead ends), its enclosure only

17. Toth Palma. Fragmentations versus urbanité(s): vivre dans l’archipel des quartiers sud de Marseille, ongoing Geography PhD, under the supervision of Elisabeth Dorier.

18. This method is detailed in Julien Dario’s thesis: Julien Dario (2019) Géographie d’une ville fragmentée, morphogenèse, gouvernance des voies et impacts de la fermeture résidentielle à Marseille, Geography PhD, under the supervision of Elisabeth Dorier and Sébastien Bridier, from Aix-Marseille University. 686 p.

has a limited impact on the global coherence of the road network. However, closing off busy roads that have always been open can be a more significant factor of “interruption” (Héran, 2011). It appears that the sometimes very uneven road networks of several outlying districts are greatly affected by the impacts of enclosures.

Finally, specific places (public transport stops, public schools) were selected to measure detours (time commuting before and after enclosures). Such an analysis on all primary schools in Marseille reveals a fundamental trend (fig. 8): numerous public schools are directly located within private gated estates. The pathways used by students to cross estates are now hampered by new fences. The students and their parents must sometimes walk along the roads with heavy traffic and narrow sidewalks; this creates a high risk of accidents and justifies the need to take the car rather than walk. These enclosures have led to several conflicts.

The case of Mazargues-Vaccaro public school, located inside one of the estates in the Southern districts of Marseille, is emblematic. Students in the neighbourhood could easily reach this school through a pedestrian walkway belonging to the condominium. When it was suddenly closed off in summer 2016, students then had to walk twenty minutes more than before, despite an average walking time of 6 minutes from 500 points calculated within a twenty-minute walk of the school. The parent-teacher association used our observations and our modelling tools to reach out through petitions, protest marches and media alerts, and to negotiate the partial reopening of the walkway during school hours with the municipality and the gated community (fig. 9).

**Accessibility restrictions to public transport**

Another example of an impact of enclosures is that of accessibility to public transport, such as the high-level service bus. The latter is presented as an alternative to the car and is linked to future Southern and Northern tramway lines. The areas surrounding the bus stops are supposed to be within a “good service perimeter” where the densification of constructions will be authorised. Yet, this “good service” principle is only theoretical: it does not consider residential enclosures, which are omnipresent along the Southern line. Commute journeys have all increased on both sides of Michelet Boulevard, which is bordered by hermetic gated communities. Certain bus stops are particularly affected. This situation affects both walking and public transport journeys, especially for children and disabled people (fig. 10).

The detours pedestrians must make to access certain facilities (public transport stops, schools) appear all the more problematic as the municipality publicly supports sustainable and pedestrian-friendly projects in recent urban planning documents, on both municipal and inter-municipal levels (fig. 11). “Soft” modes of transportation and access...
to “service hubs” are thus confronted to an urban reality that is marked by an increase in discontinuities and fragmentation.

**Accessibility restrictions to environmental amenities**

Finally, the enclosure of private parks, a historical heritage of the bastides in Marseille, is a major urban issue, as the city is marked by a significant lack of public green spaces. The average share of private and inaccessible green spaces within Marseille exceeds 28%, with 15% within collective gated estates, 13% as the gardens of private houses, and we have not counted gated spaces for various activities (Rouquier, 2013). This average is the result of large geographical disparities: between 50 and 74% along the coast and in the outlying districts recently opened to urbanisation on the city fringes. These restrictions increase with the privatisation of certain emblematic public parks, such as Valmer Park (on the coast). On the city fringes, especially on the coveted border of the Calanques national park, clusters of gated communities form real barriers that tend to be consolidated as older estates are gated one by one (fig. 7d).

Concurrently, for the past twenty years, less local public parks have been created. The municipality encourages the development of intra-residential and/or enclosed green areas in cases of land sales, concessions or within concerted development zones such as La Jarre (9th arrondissement) or Sainte-Marthe (14th arrondissement). This is a claimed way of delegating the management of these local amenities, considered too costly, to the private sector (Dorier-Apprill et al., 2008; Dorier et al., 2010, 2017). These parks are administered by residents with similar income levels and are located

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20. The 2012 local urban planning scheme recommends the development of peripheral “service hubs” to limit intra-urban travel and CO₂ emissions.

21. Statistics from the 2014 Topo database (IGN – French National geographic institute) and Marseille Provence Territory Committee (Conseil de Territoire) land register (2014). The Calanques national park is excluded from the calculation.

22. See the studies carried out by Palma Toth (2012) and Camilla Glauda (2013) in the framework of LPED research programme.
Yet, park activities and games are often very limited, if not forbidden, which hinders their use. The youth, when they gather, are considered too loud, and are hence excluded from these estates (Berry-Chikhaoui et al., 2014).

From a real estate perspective, enclosed parks are increasingly considered as areas of high environmental quality. When recent projects are advertised, classified wooded areas (espaces boisés classés – EBC) within estate lots are presented as a residential added value. There is no mention in the regulations governing classified wooded areas of having to open them to the public. In Marseille, a considerable trend towards “green confinement” is expanding, despite local demonstrations by residents and associations. Most of the vegetation on Colline Périer overlooking the sea is private and enclosed. The wooded hill top, from which the view of the city is exceptional, was recently privatised and made inaccessible by a series of walls. In certain neighbourhoods with little vegetation, residents are left longing for verdant areas when those that were formerly accessible are closed off. This increased physical inaccessibility underlines the privilege of having economic access to good living conditions in a city with very high social and spatial inequalities. It questions the existence of a political will for environmental equity in the face of the development of “green and blue propositions”

23. Article L. 113-1 of the Urban planning Code.
24. Article L. 113-6 of the Urban planning Code makes it possible to open these parks to the public provided that a convention between co-owners and local authorities is signed for management costs to be paid for by the latter.

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<th>Road network points</th>
<th>Pedestrian access time (min)</th>
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Framework data
- Gated communities
- Buildings
- Blocks and easement

Sources: Isi, LPED, BMPM. Author: Dario, 2018.

Fig. 10/ Detour to access the “Michelet-Taine” BHNS bus stop

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<th>Road network points</th>
<th>Pedestrian access time (min)</th>
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Framework data
- Mazargues-Vaccaro primary school
- Area reachable in 20 minutes by foot
- Gated communities
- Building
- Blocks and easement

Sources: Isi, LPED, BMPM, VdM. Author: Dario, 2018.

Fig. 11/ Detour measurements to access Mazargues-Vaccaro public school
as advocated for in urban planning documents that refer to nature and biodiversity: if
birds and butterflies can cross barriers, what about human beings?

Conclusion

In this article, we have underlined the geographical forms and impacts of the
proliferation of enclosures, something that is now so commonplace in Marseille that
we are sometimes surprised to see residential areas that are still accessible outside of
the historical centre. Far from the clichés of the welcoming Mediterranean melting-
pot, large areas, of all social levels, tend to become transformed into mosaics of sepa-
rate enclaves managed by numerous and poorly coordinated stakeholders
(co-owners, service companies, homeowner associations, etc.). These dynamics can
be seen as the outset of a French privatopia (McKenzie, 1994), with detrimental
effects on the functioning of the city.

Certain factors do not solely concern Marseille (standardised promoter offers,
trend towards private security, etc.). However, this article analyses the cumulative effects
of legacies and informal arrangements, closely combined with a deficit of public urban
regulations, something which is increasingly asserted from a neoliberal perspective. Two
dynamics overlap in Marseille: the construction of new gated communities and the very
frequent enclosure of estates a posteriori.

The construction of new gated residential estates is becoming a standard in an
environment where real estate offers for recent gated constructions are abundant and
in which all major international companies intervene. This real estate market mainly
concerns the outskirts of the city, and is encouraged by the municipality to attract
middle and upper classes as part of its urban renewal schemes (Dorier et al., 2010,
2012). The offer of gated communities comes with the recomposition of “populations”
(Morel Journel, Sala Pala, 2011) as supported by the municipality in working class
neighbourhoods; but, in so doing, it contributes to exacerbate territorial fragmentation.
Concurrently, old constructions and the environment in working-class neighbourhoods
in the centre and North of the city continue to deteriorate, to the point of leading,
in 2018, to the collapse of dilapidated buildings (Nouailles), and the emergency
evacuation from a hundred others.

The extent of a posteriori enclosures testifies to a proactive approach on the
part of co-owners: the search for social exclusivity, the defence of a preserved living
environment, and, sometimes, deep urban uneasiness, and a feeling of abandonment
when public services withdraw from certain territories. Social contrasts and the histo-
rical disengagement of the municipality from road maintenance or sanitation manage-
ment cause the depreciation of public spaces and generate this segregation. It is
intensified by the persistent omnipresence of cars, something which is partly linked to
the lack of public transport and which leads to using the need for private parking
spaces as an excuse for enclosures. The consequence is the rejection of nuisances in
public spaces. This evolution is facilitated by the importance of private road net-
works, inherited from a secular public laissez-faire approach to urbanisation. It is
also encouraged by recent changes in the national law that make it easier for
owners’ associations to take the management of local services into their own hands.
The private management of enclosed areas such as streets or common private green
areas thus supplements poor or withdrawn public management.
The combination of individual initiatives for residential withdrawal multiplies these effects: simply closing off a street can congest a whole area\textsuperscript{25} as shown in figure 9. However, the dynamics of the phenomenon are still ongoing. Numerous neighbourhoods that we identified as enclosure-prone areas in 2010 were actually enclosed by 2014. The trend is now increasing in several areas with real estate speculation operations such as those bordering the Calanques national park (Sormiou), or the perimeters of urban renewal (EUROMED and ANRU intervention districts).

In this article, we assessed the impacts of these dynamics at the neighbourhood and even city levels: neighbourhoods are partitioned due to the formation of “clusters” made up of several adjoined gated communities that have a strong impact on movements and access to environmental amenities. These enclosures hinder pedestrian mobility and affect access to facilities or natural areas in the city. They are also likely to foster feelings of spatial injustice and urban tensions. Conflicts between residents, which are broadcasted by the media, lead to campaigns and legal actions\textsuperscript{26}.

With the enactment of a new law on housing and land planning (Elan) which aims to “liberate constructions and protect the most vulnerable”\textsuperscript{27}, we must underline the functional, social and environmental impacts of urban recompositions without regulation and concerns of spatial justice. Through the proliferation of urban enclosures, Marseille can be considered as a “testing” ground to study the geography of the combined effects of territorial inequalities, deregulation and the confusion between real estate production and urban development.

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