

Assessing the Quality Of Life in New Gated Communities in Egypt

Eng. Omar Mohamed Ismail¹, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Shalaby² and Ass. Prof. Dr. Haitham Samir³

¹ Assistant Lecturer, Modern Academy for Engineering and Technology and Ph.D., Students, Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Egypt.

² Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning – Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Egypt.

³ Assistant Professor, Architecture Department, Effat University - Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

ORCID: 0000-0002-8034-6065 (Omar Ismail), 0000-0001-8851-0563 (Haitham Samir)[https](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8851-0563)

Abstract

Gated Communities are considered as a modern urban phenomenon, which offers a better life for its occupants and contributes, to some extent, in the formation of the urban landscape of the city. According to the lack of clear approaches to monitoring and assessing the needs of the target population of gated communities, this paper aims at formulating a methodological approach for assessing gated communities from the perspective of quality of life standards through a well-defined set of key indicators. It presents an analytical study of the requirements of gated communities through exploring their physical aspects (urban and architectural design) and non-physical aspects (economic, social and environmental). It starts with reviewing the concept and the evolution of gated communities. It elaborates the functional, physiological and social needs of the target people. Then the study focuses on the concept of the quality of life in the field of housing. It represents the quality of life key indicators, and methods of their measurement according to both the literature review and the analytical study of two case studies in UK and USA. Moreover, it employs a questionnaire survey for specialists to rank the importance of the suggested criteria for evaluation and to reach the proposed assessment model. The study tests the proposed assessment model on two local projects: Lake View compound in New Cairo and Allegria compound in El-Sheikh Zaid.

Keywords: Gated Communities, Quality of Life, Urban Design, Safety, Privacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Gated communities are one of the modern urban solutions offered in response to many urban, economic and social forces. In many countries, the demand over this type of development is rapidly growing due its potential impact on the well-being and quality of life. Private communities are becoming a part of the global trends of urbanization and part of the globalization movement that supports special urban governance. Within the framework of this concept, there must be criteria for measuring the quality of the development of these urban communities and the performance of their role during its stages of growth and their ability to achieve their goals. The concept of quality of urban life began to take its place in the world since the late sixties. Designers and officials were interested in studying the

priorities of the various needs of the population and the extent of satisfaction within the residential area. Hence, the concept of quality of life must be examined and analysed for gated communities to understand the different aspects which may affect its assessment. This research notices an absence of clear approaches to monitor and assess the needs of the target populations of gated communities. It would be helpful for developers to identify the various factors, which shape their decisions when it comes to planning and designing gated communities. Thus, the research through incorporating the concept of quality of life with the design of gated communities is seeking to develop a model that could be used as a tool for assessing to which extent gated communities are able to fulfil their occupants' needs. The main objective of this study is to formulate a model for evaluating gated communities through concepts and theories of quality of life. This objective can be achieved by understanding the meaning of gated communities, human needs, quality of life standards, indicators and their importance to assess the success or the failure of this type of development.

II. GATED COMMUNITIES

This new type of urbanization emerged around and within cities in the last decades of the 20th century, and soon spread to regional roads with distinct potentials and services, isolated by fences and gates. Closed urban communities are residential projects characterized by a focus on physical security measures such as gates, fences and guardians. They feature wide gates or barriers, access control by security personnel, special cards or coded codes, and various internal safeguards such as security patrols, alarm systems, CCTV or electric fencing and other forms of anti-intruders limit access to vehicles [1]. In addition, gated communities may include a variety of enhanced services and facilities. Living in gated communities means an affirmed community consent to a legal framework allows the extraction of monies to help pay for maintenance of common facilities [2].

II.1 Types of Gated Communities

Blakely and Snyder (1999) classify gated communities into three types [3]:

- Life Style Communities: In this type, gates are a way of separating the outside world from the indoor activities,

which built around a range of recreational services such as tennis courts and swimming pools for groups of common interests.

- Elite or Prestige Communities: It emphasizes the concept of luxury, catering to the needs of high-income individuals. It includes facilities, services and landscape elements. It has a little of services and is suitable for the rich, famous and business people, including golf courses and a health club, providing privacy and secure access.
- Security Zone Communities: Existing communities suffer from crime or poor traffic. These communities include houses with average prices. In this case, the residents themselves build fences and gates for their neighbourhoods. This closure occurs around the central and suburban areas of rich and highly impoverished housing communities.

II.II Characteristics of Gated Communities

Gated communities spread because of the need to privatize the public space as a mean of protection and to increase the capacity on efficiently use of resources to meet diverse needs [4].

Housing in these communities is an ideal solution for those who are looking for ways to protect themselves from undesirable neighbours, while they feel that public and political rules are inadequate to protect them. These communities increase because of fear of crime, need of Privacy and well-being [5].

Positive aspects of gated communities are privacy and security inside gates. They have a private and public urban areas, landscape and pedestrian. It also presents different types of residential units with high quality of finish. Services are one of the most important elements in gated communities. Negative aspects of gated communities may include the absence of the city's meaning, where the cultural and social values of the population are influenced by the diversity of urban patterns. Fear of deterioration of these gatherings after the completion of growth and the withdrawal of the developer without the provision of sources of funding covering the cost of maintenance over time [6].

III. THEORY OF THE HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Advocacy for a humanist approach to the design of cities is not new. Scholars such as Jane Jacobs, Christopher Alexander and Jon Lang have addressed the critical needs of the individual and the role of urbanism in response to those needs. Given the central role of humans in the function of any urban type of development, it is justifiable to consider the use of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to the field of urban planning and design. Abraham Maslow proposed a theory that outlined five hierarchical needs. According to Maslow's theory, one does not feel the second need until the demands of the first have been satisfied or the third until the second has been satisfied, and so

on. Figure-1 illustrates Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The levels of needs on Maslow's hierarchy are discussed as follows [7]:

- Physiological needs: are biological needs like oxygen, food, water and body temperature.
- Safety needs: The needs for security can become active when all physiological needs are met.
- Needs for love, affection and belongingness: When the needs for safety and for physiological well-being are satisfied, the next class of needs for love, affection and belongingness can emerge.
- Esteem needs: These involve needs for both self-esteem and for the esteem, which persons get from others.
- Needs for self-actualization: Maslow describes self-actualization as a person's need to be and do that which the person was "born to do". "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, and a poet must write". The person feels on edge, tense, lacking something, in short, restless if he is hungry, unsafe, not loved or accepted, or lacking self-esteem.



Fig. 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs [7]

In this study, Maslow's human needs terminology can be adapted to more accurately align with common urban quality of life nomenclature as follows:

- Privacy: It is to give human beings the possibility of voluntary isolation from others [8]. It can be classified into an urban privacy that means protecting against direct vision from neighbours by increasing distance between units and providing an appropriate sound environment away from noise, and internal privacy that means making activity inside house without revealing individuals privacy [9]. In this regard, gated communities are desirable for people who are seeking direct privacy as gating involve a clear form of privacy. However, from a wider perspective the society becomes fragmented by reinforcing social and class divisions, which might lead to ignore the complex relationships between individuals and the whole environment [10]. The trade-off between privacy offered for individuals by gating and the negative impact of segregation has been addressed in many studies.
- Safety and security: Which is one of the basic needs of human. Gated communities acknowledge community

members' concerns for safety and security. It offers safe urban conditions. The role of the designer here is not only to create a safe environment for the user, but also to design it in a way that reveals the sense of security. Giving confidence to the user is one of the most important considerations that the designer must provide in his design [11].

- Search for excellence: The importance of this need is shown in the distinctive housing to show prestige and exclusivity through the dwelling, which must indicate luxury [11].
- Belonging to the Community: It is a natural extension of human needs to make friends. It may not be necessary to have a strong connection with all members of a group, but your membership in a group gives you important psychological needs of social position and strength [11]. It appears in establishing a boundary for a person that shows his social status or his belonging to a group and thus defend any breach of the limits of that group. It divides into personal boundaries that respect each individual space and group boundaries that appears around residential areas which ensures that people connect to the place and protect it [9]. Many studies have indicated that gated communities can either underpin or undermine a sense of community. Karina, 2000 argued that number of residents have said that living in an enclosed neighbourhood contributes to a stronger feeling of community in the area. In contrary, others have mentioned that the feeling of community is not strong and sometimes result in increased conflict between residents [12]
- Beauty Needs: Fundamental to communities are the aesthetical needs revealed in the physical elements of their surrounding urbanism. Gated communities show a clarity of structure that can be obviously understood and navigated. The goal of the designer is to provide the details by which urban design can support the need for community form that enhance human life to satisfy the psychological, social, artistic and intellectual benefits [11].
- Communicate with design: Where the building carries a message from the designer to the user. This message reaches the user through his activities inside house so that the user senses the place is unique and directed to him, and reflect the importance of the place and reflects the user's personality [11].
- Urban services: Which related to the potential of the user's physical environment to help him to adapt with the surrounding environment [13].

Currently, there is renowned interest in this issue both in the academic and public press. A search of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) database from 1982-2005 reveals over 55,000 academic citations utilizing the term "quality of life," spanning a large range of academic disciplines. In the public press, quality of life is also a critical element in the ongoing discourse on economic prosperity and sustainability, but it has often been subsumed under the heading of "economic growth" based on the assumption that more income and consumption equates to better welfare [14].

IV.I Classification of the Concept of Quality

Recent research on QOL has focused on two basic methodologies of measurement. The First termed "subjective well-being" which focuses on self-reported levels of happiness, pleasure, fulfilment and alike. The other is called "objective" measurements of QOL quantifiable indices generally of social, economic, and health indicators that reflect the extent to which human needs are or can be met. For example, objective measures include indices of economic production, literacy rates, life expectancy, and other data that can be gathered without directly surveying the individuals being assessed [15].

IV.I.I Subjective indicators

Quality is a factor, which reflects the self-assessments of person's life, representing the micro level of quality of life, which is collected from persons, and the personal characteristics of the individual such as ambition, satisfaction and values held by individual. This type of measurements depends on self-realization of individuals to clarify the extent of their welfare, as shown in figure-2 [14].

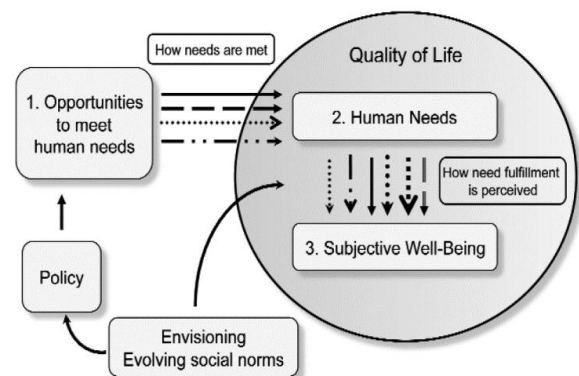


Fig. 2: Quality of individuals [14]

IV.I.II Objective indicators

The objective indicator termed as the physical wellbeing was further subdivided into one's ability to carry out daily tasks and routines [16]. It leads to Quality of conditions which can be divided into quality of Housing, social system, ecological and physical wellbeing.

IV. QUALITY OF LIFE

Enhancing Quality of Life (QOL) has long been a major explicit or implicit life-style and a policy goal for individuals, communities, nations, and the world. However, defining QOL and measuring progress towards improving it have been elusive.

IV.II Quality of Urban Life

Quality of life is an interdisciplinary notion. Improving the quality of life in cities is no longer a simple matter of physical enhancements, but the human satisfaction with different urban issues such as transportation, quality of public spaces, recreational opportunities, land use patterns, population, building densities, ease of access for basic goods, services, public health, providing for safety, education, social integration, promoting equality and cultural identities [17].

Based on previously mentioned definitions, it can be deduced that the term urban quality of life refers to the urban planning whose objective is to realize the sustainability of the development with the respect of individual quality of life see figure-3. It should be noted that urban quality of life does not refer to the quality of life in urban areas only as conventionally known but it refers to the quality of built environment in both urban and rural areas [17].

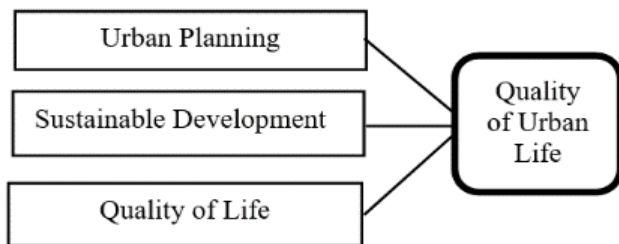


Fig. 3: Quality of Urban Life [17].

IV.III Study of Quality of Life in Population & Environment

The following part discusses the three main parts of the study, which pertain to the improvement of quality of life in both the residential component and the surrounding urban environment.

- The first part focuses on the quality of life studies of well-being and self-satisfaction with life, by asking individuals for satisfaction with life in general.
- The second part focuses on governments, which gain access to the concept of quality of life through the standard of living, and then the government improve the standard of living.
- The third part links the concept of improving the quality of life directly to the achievement of sustainable development, so that the two terms can be used almost interchangeably.

IV.IV Quality of Life Indicators

Different people may have different perceptions and therefore make different subjective judgments about the factors which influence their QOL. These Factors include specific attributes of their urban environment. To adequately investigate those factors of QOL. We might identify a set of objective indicators and subjective indicators that may be used to evaluate quality of life in a city or neighbourhoods within a city such as those attributes listed in Table-1 [18].

Table 1: Examples of QOL indicators that can be used to investigate quality of urban life in cities and neighbourhoods [18].

Objective indicators	Subjective indicators	Behavioral indicators
Employment rates	Desire to move	Public transit use
Crime statistics	Perceptions of crime	Participation in sports
Educational attainment per capita income	Housing and neighborhood satisfaction	Amount of walking and bicycling
Domestic violence	Perceptions of school	Visits to parks
Vehicle kilometers/miles travelled	Quality of health care services	Visits to cultural amenities and events
Incidence of chronic diseases	Feelings about neighbors	Amount of neighboring
Availability of grocery/ food stores	Life satisfaction, overall happiness (overall well-being)	Participation in voluntary organizations
Residential density	Feelings about congestion and crowding	Participation in local decision-making organizations
Air quality		
Housing vacancy rates	Feelings about government	Residential mobility
Amount of parkland	Feelings about rubbish collection	Visits to health clinics/doctors
No. of public transit riders	Satisfaction with health	
Distance to transit stop	Satisfaction with family, friends, job etc.	
Death rates		

IV.V How to Assess Performance of Cities, Lessons from the UK?

Sustainable communities embody the principles of sustainable development at a local level. In March 2005, the government in UK launched a shared framework for sustainable development, common to all parts of the UK, and the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy. The strategy sets out five new principles, including a more explicit focus on environmental limits [19].

- Living within environmental Limits: Respecting the limits of the planet's environmental resources and biodiversity to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.

- Ensuring a strong, healthy and justice society: Meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.
- Achieving a sustainable economy: Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivized.
- Promoting good governance: Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society engaging people's creativity, energy, and diversity.
- Using sound science responsible: Ensuring that policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, while taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

Area profiles is a pioneering Audit Commission pilot project to test the feasibility of bringing together all the data, information and assessments about local quality of life and services. The area profiles approach has the advantage of going beyond the use of just indicators, or a focus on only one particular agency, to look at all the services and quality of life issues in a local area.

The data and information will be structured around the ten quality of life themes Figure-4 used within the local quality of life indicator set. The Audit Commission sees the local quality of life indicators playing an important role in providing a 'headline' set of indicators to provide a snapshot overview of the quality of life and services in a local area.

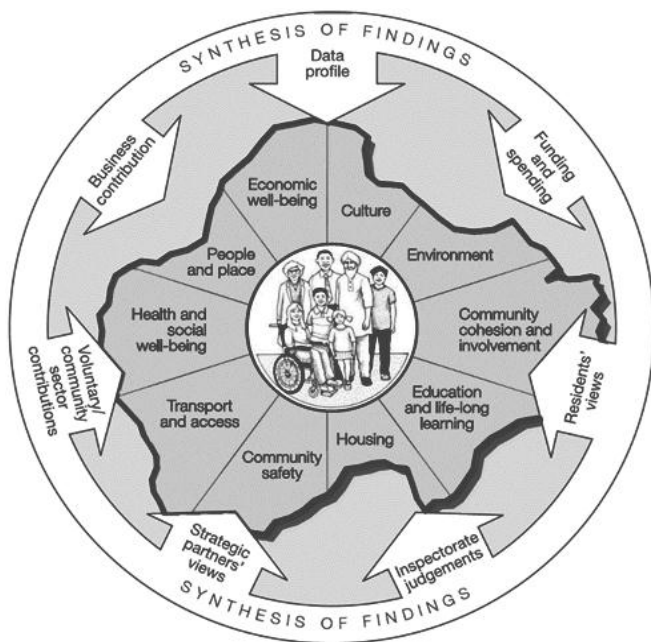


Fig. 2: Area Profiles and quality of life themes for audit commission in UK [19].

The case study in the UK is Stevenage city, which uses quality of life indicators to develop the city, as shown on table-2. The community strategy is the main partnership document for the town. It shows how they are working together to improve Stevenage and contribute to the sustainable development of the town [20].

Table 2: Quality of life indicators and their role in the development of Stevenage city in the UK [20].

City Challenges	- Deterioration of urbanization
	- Lack of transportation
	- Disparities in public health
	- Need to increase investment
	- Lack of education
	- Lack of monthly income
	- Increase fear of crime
Strategy Methodology	- Need for renewable energy
	- Extensive questionnaires and consultations at the city level
	- What are the best elements in the city?
Vision	- What things do you not like and what things you want to see?
	- What is your vision of the city?
	- Creating and saving jobs
	- City center vibrant and thriving neighborhoods
	-Educational City
	- Country health care
	- A safe city
Implementation	- Creative city
	- affordable houses, sustainable environment, and perfect transportation
	- Plans (timetables)
	- Performance Measurement
	- Monitoring and Auditing
	- Improved resource
	- Community participation

IV.VI Quality of Life in USA and its impact on developing The Santa Cruz Country California.

Santa Cruz County California has one of the oldest community indicator projects in the country, with the first year of the Community Assessment Project (CAP) starting in 1994 and continuing through 2006 and beyond. The CAP accomplishes four major goals:

- Assess the quality of life in the county.
- Educate community members about the economy, education, health, public safety, natural environment and social environment of the region.
- Act as a catalyst for social and political change.
- Help evaluate the impact of social and political change in the county.

The Community Assessment Project (CAP) is based on primary data and credible secondary data that are gathered for 125 indicators in six areas and here are the main indicators [21]:

- Economic indicators: include such things as retail sales, agricultural production, tourism, unemployment rates, job growth, income levels, poverty levels, and housing affordability.
- Educational indicators: include enrolment, special education, English proficiency, dropout rates, childcare, college and university attendance, library use, job training and adult education.
- Health indicators: include access to health care, insurance coverage, births, prenatal care, substance use, mental health, disability status, obesity, and leading causes of death.
- Public Safety indicators: include crime rates, police per capita, child abuse, elder abuse, disaster preparedness, family violence, and jail population characteristics.
- The indicators for the social environment: include voting, racism, discrimination, hate crimes, homelessness, food bank usage, volunteerism, youth activities and charitable giving.

- Indicators for the natural environment: include open space, park use, farmland, water quality, beach closures, water use, air quality, roadway congestion, transportation, and endangered species.

V. PROPOSED MODEL FOR ASSESSING QUALITY OF LIFE IN GATED COMMUNITIES IN NEW CITIES IN EGYPT.

Based on the previous discussion and the case studies presented from the UK and USA, it is apparent that quality of life in cities could be assessed through a number of aspects; each of them could be measured through indicators on table-3. The following are both aspects and its measuring indicators:

Urban Form: Which considers the element of services, mobility, beauty needs, and privacy in urban form, safety, security and planning standards.

Architecture Design: which considers adequate housing and privacy inside house.

Economic Aspects: economic well-being, price of the housing units, economic activities and maintenance price.

Social Aspects: which explores the elements of social integration, safety in the community, community health and community education.

Environmental Aspects: which considers the elements such as waste management efficiency, resource management, water quality and Air quality.

The applied study depends on data gathering by: personal interviews that used to gathering information directly from the source of information. Reports, plans and approved designs that is the official source of information.

The criteria of choosing the two case studies is clarity of the target group of project, private sector projects, integration of different project elements, variation in projects areas and types, availability of a kind of privacy and security at urban and architectural level and search for projects with a percentage of quality of life standards to study it.

Table 3. Proposed model for assessing QOL standards in gated communities in new cities in Egypt (the researcher)

Urban Form	Services	Privacy in urban form
	Inside city, outside city, service percentage	Distance between units, building heights & open, using trees
	Mobility	Safety and security
	Mobility time, kinds of mobility, planning standards	Against stealing, fire and car movements
	Beauty needs	Planning standards
Design of facades, view, green areas, luxury, site in quite areas with services	Urban fabric, open and closed spaces, Percentage of uses of land	
Architectural Design	Adequate housing	Privacy inside house
	No. of houses, percentage, quality of houses, variety	Percentage of noise, separate of uses
Economic Aspects	Economic well-being	Price of the housing units
	Economic activities	Maintenance price
Social Aspects	Social integration	Safety in the community
	Distribution of the population pyramid, growth rates, types of population, sense of belonging to places	No. of cases of theft, a feeling of security to let the kids play in open spaces, speed ambulance response
	Community health	Community Education
Disease percentage, life expectancy, satisfaction with health	The proportion of working-age, no. of and quality of schools and universities.	
Environmental Aspects	Waste management efficiency	Resource management
	Waste collection methods and the production rate, rate of waste recycled	Percentage of green spaces, resources.
	Water quality improvement	Air quality improvement
Drinking water rates & quality, waste rate, reusable water ratio, amount of water available.	No. of air quality monitoring stations, identify sources and levels of noise, air quality standards	

V.I The Proposed Assessment model for the Quality of Life in Gated Communities

A survey was conducted in June 2015 among the specialists to assign their preferences towards the different aspects. The questionnaire was structured to specify the significance of each aspect according to the respondent's viewpoints. Then the questionnaire was analysed to determine the relative importance of each aspect. This was illustrated using a compass-like graph Figure-5 and it is supposed to help identifying the factors which contribute to achieving the quality of life in gated communities. The five main aspects of the assessment and the percentages of the importance of each aspect are outlined. Each aspect contains a set of elements with a total rating equal to 100%. This value is divided into elements according to its importance to the architects. It is worth saying that developers may use this model to test their developments and judge to what extent they could reach certain degrees of (QOL). Consequently, this may affect the demand on their developments.



Fig. 5: Compass assessing (QOL) in gated communities (the researcher)

The compass explains the values of the main five aspects which assessing quality of life shows that the architecture design takes the high rate of 24%, urban form 22%, economic aspects 20%, environmental aspects 18% and social aspects 16%.

The architecture design aspect shows that the high values of elements affects are adequate housing 34% and privacy inside house 31%.

The urban form aspect shows that the high values of elements affects are services 22%, mobility 18%, safety and security 16% and privacy 16%.

The economic aspect shows that the high values of element affect is price of housing unit 30%



The environmental aspect shows that the high value of element affect is improve water quality 29%.


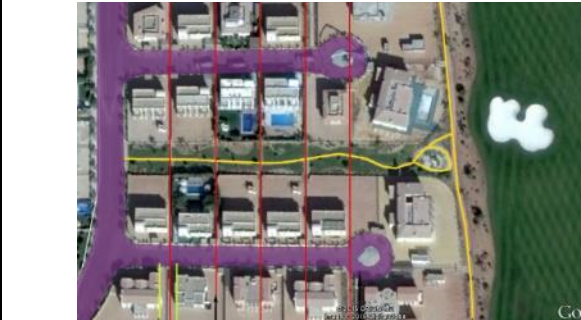





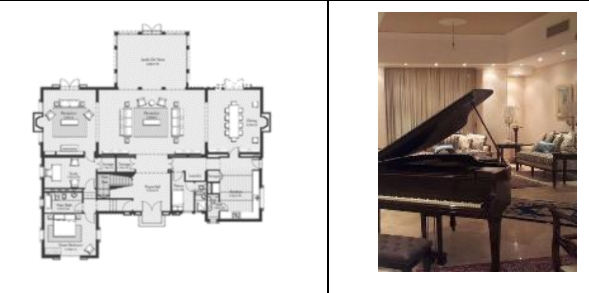


The Social aspect shows that the high value of element affect is community safety 36%.


V.II Local Case Studies

The study tests the proposed assessment model of quality of life in gated communities on two local projects: Lake View compound in New Cairo and Allegria compound in El-Sheikh Zaid. As presented on table no. 4.

Table 4. Analysis of two Local projects according to the proposed model for the (QOL) in Gated Communities (the researcher)

		Lake View Compound	Allegria Compound
Urban Form	Urban Fabric & Planning standards	New Cairo city – 270 acers – no. of units 540	El-Sheikh Zaid city – 550 acers – no. of units 1080
		Land for construction 50%, Streets 17%, Green areas 25%, Water features 5% & Club 3%	Land for construction 45%, Streets 13%, Green areas 40%, Water features 1% & Club 1%
			
		Organic urban fabric featuring a ring road around the project boundaries with a width of 15 m and secondary curved cul-de-sac with a width of 12 m	organic urban fabric featuring ring road connected to streets of a width of 17 m and secondary curved cul-de-sac with a width of 12 m
	Mobility	The project is located in the heart of New Cairo in the 90th street and is 3.5 km from the ring road and minutes away from the administrative district	The project is located in the north part of Sheikh Zaid city north of Cairo-Alexandria Road, 7 km from the Smart Village and 10 km from Juhayna square
	Services	Inside facilities: Sport club, lakes and Green spaces. Outside facilities: Petro sport Club, Dusit Thani Hotel, Air Force Hospital & Administrative Area 90th Street	Inside facilities: Sport club, lakes, Green spaces and golf court. Outside facilities: Al Ahli Club, Dandy Mall, British School, Sheikh Zaid Hospital, Smart Village, Sodic Administrative Area
Security	Visibility of entrances and avoidance of connected roads. The project is surrounded by high fence walls and three security gates	The streets have closed ends and are separated from pedestrian pathways. The project is surrounded by the walls that help to see inside, It has nine security gates	

Privacy				
	Beauty Needs	Location in quiet areas distinguished by high-level services. 	The view is more visible for special units 	
Architecture Design	Adequate Housing	Units areas range from 500 to 1100 m ² , and a density of 100 to 220m ² /person 	Units areas range from 270 to 900 m ² , and a density of 54 to 180 m ² /person 	
	Privacy inside house	Luxury in external elevations, Privacy inside units and luxury spaces 	Luxury in external elevations, Privacy inside units and luxury spaces 	
Economic Aspects	Average price of units ranges from 12 to 20 million L.E. The project provides many economic activities		Average price of units ranges from 5 to 18 million L.E. The project provides many economic activities	
Social Aspects	Safety	Security personnel are available 24 hours a day to ensure safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, or cars at any time. 		

Social integration	The sense of belonging to the urban community and making friends, Open spaces help children to play that Leading to the formation of friendships between resident families		
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VI. CONCLUSIONS

- The concept of quality of life should be considered and applied in urban communities in order to improve the urban environment and the well-being of its residents, through the development of a general framework of indicators and seek to apply them in urban development processes.
- The research conclude a model for assessing quality of life standards in gated communities in urban form, architecture design, economic, social and environment aspects.
- Architects should consider the adequate housing and the privacy inside house in architecture design aspect.
- Urban designers should consider the services, mobility, safety, security and privacy in urban form aspect.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Consider interventions and initiatives applied by international case studies and adopting them to our local cities.

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