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# City Marketing and Gated Communities: A Case Study of Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

Carlos A. Suarez-Carrasquillo

*University of Massachusetts Amherst*, professorsuarezcarrasquillo@yahoo.com

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CITY MARKETING AND GATED COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF  
GUAYNABO, PUERTO RICO

A Dissertation Presented

by

CARLOS A. SUÁREZ-CARRASQUILLO

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2009

Department of Political Science

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Approved as to style and content by:

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John Brigham, Chair

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Laura Jensen, Member

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Ellen Pader, Member

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John A. Hird, Department Head  
Department of Political Science

## DEDICATION

To Milagros Carrasquillo Bonilla (*mi madre*) and Ángel Luis Suárez Martínez (*mi padre*) for  
nourishing my dreams.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This arduous process has required a lot of patience and considerable *aguante*. I have had the privilege of being nurtured and supported from a variety of disparate sources and people. I would like to first recognize my committee for pushing me to the limit, making sure that I would render the best possible work. To John Brigham for making sure that this process would honor the academic sacrifice and personal dedication that it endured. The process was characterized by great communication and interaction, providing the essential knowledge that led to making this a better dissertation. To Laura Jensen for nurturing my interest on gated communities, your feedback and conversations at your office only enhanced and provoked my understanding that would lead to this dissertation. Ellen Pader encouraged me to present my local knowledge on this case study as a *guaynabeño*. Also to Nick Xenos; for being a significant force in fine tuning the development of this dissertation.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **CITY MARKETING AND GATED COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF GUAYNABO, PUERTO RICO**

SEPTEMBER 2009

CARLOS A. SUÁREZ-CARRASQUILLO, B.A., UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO RÍO  
PIEDRAS

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor John Brigham

This dissertation focuses on the dynamics of gated communities with attention to the municipality of Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. Despite the growing numbers of gated communities worldwide, research on this matter remains scarce. I argue that a “gated community consensus” has emerged in Puerto Rico. The hypothesis is that in Guaynabo, the municipality facilitates the emergence of gated communities in order to change the face of the city and reap an economic windfall. Interviews demonstrate the municipality’s commitment to facilitating the construction of new communities and lending support to older communities. Most of these gated communities respond to high end income projects, thus altering the profile of Guaynabo’s residents. This has all led to the development of Guaynabo as a commodity, Guaynabo City, suitable to contractors, the municipality, and interested buyers. The gates confer prestige in the municipality.

Keywords: Puerto Rico, gated communities, city marketing, urban policy

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: ROAD 837

A recurring experience during my childhood was to transit Road 837 on our way out of our neighborhood of Sierra Berdecía, located in Barrio Santa Rosa Uno, Guaynabo. As part of this journey during the 1980's I would encounter new neighborhoods that had a new characteristic, they featured a single gated entrance. During the 1990's I noticed how older communities (i.e. built before the mid 1980's) started to gate all of their entrances. My personal experience over the past twenty years reflects the significant increase in the number of gated communities in Puerto Rico. These communities are diverse in terms of design and layout, featuring a variety of security mechanisms and a series of amenities for its residents. The case study for this project is Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, located in the San Juan metropolitan area. One of the most relevant features of this municipality is that it holds the highest average per capita income for Puerto Rico, an element that facilitates the emergence of gated communities.<sup>1</sup>

In concrete terms I want to confirm the following questions: Is the Municipality of Guaynabo a promoter of gated communities? Does the state (i.e. municipal government), have a significant role in promoting these communities? Is there a coherent process or logic driving this process? I want to examine if the municipality has a coherent policy to this end, and its possible reasons. This is the main inquiry, but in addition to this, the dissertation will have a series of common threads that will be present throughout the text.

The gated community consensus serves as one of those lines of inquiry; I have defined it as the scarce research and public debate on gated communities in Puerto Rico. I

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<sup>1</sup> According to the 2000 census the per capita income for Guaynabo is \$16,287.

have called this the gated community consensus. Also what I have called Guaynabo's exceptionalism, which consists on how the municipality administrators in Guaynabo understand that their efficient public administration should serve as a model for other municipalities. In order to achieve this exceptionalism, Guaynabo's administrators have coined the term "Guaynabo City" as its brand name, also alluding to the municipality as a "Five Star City" because of its standard of living.<sup>2</sup> This proves an interesting part of the gated community process since the positive value that Guaynabo City holds to some Puerto Ricans can attract potential buyers.

The contribution of my dissertation to the literature lies partly on its focus on policy makers. The gated community literature focuses for the most part on case studies rich in descriptive ethnographic accounts. Many studies have also focused on its residents and their experiences in such a community. It is important to engage policymakers since they hold values and are not neutral actors. They have subjectivities that can influence the policymaking process on gated communities. Also it will consider the limits of the gated community literature in Puerto Rico.

What makes the Puerto Rican experience so relevant to the gated community literature is an unwavering state support. For this reason, my project will focus solely on the municipal perspective, as part of the unique field of relations of force which constitute the state. This actor has been a willing partner during this most recent urban process. Opposition to gated communities has emerged since the mid 1980's, but today gated

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix C shows the signs that the municipality has placed at each of its territorial limits. Other steps have included labeling police cars, ambulances and other public services with the distinctive "Guaynabo City". The novelty of this process lies in that Guaynabo is the first municipality to use English as an identifier, official state language that is not used daily by most of the population. Initially this change was the object of significant ridicule, but now many *guaynabeños* and non *guaynabeños* have embraced this label.

communities are widely embraced by most of the public, and policy makers.<sup>3</sup> How does Puerto Rico fit into the larger discussion of gated communities? This question aims to locate the Puerto Rican gated community experience as part of the gated community literature. Does the literature provide explanations that can help us understand the experience of Puerto Rico? Chapter Two will offer some relevant definitions and discussion on gated communities. This will help to consider the contribution of the literature and the goal of my project.

The dissertation is also important because this subject has been rarely acknowledged and it has not been the subject of intense academic inquiry in Puerto Rico. A public and intellectual debate emerged in Puerto Rico during the early 1990's concerning this issue, yet for the most part academics have positioned themselves as marginal to the process. A possible reason, at least in the field of political science is because urban politics has been the object of little attention. Interest evolves mostly around issues of the nation/nationalism, political parties, and what is called the "status issue" (the political relation between Puerto Rico and the United States).

Most of this debate on gated communities had to do with the constitutionality of gating old communities. Civil rights advocates who were part of this dialogue were concerned by the lack of access that citizens would have to these communities. The debate did not stop the spread of gated communities, but certain legal issues were clarified and addressed by the government. Such as planners and architects considered issues having to do with the increase of gated communities as part of our urban context.

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<sup>3</sup> The state has played a significant role by legislating and allowing the gating practice to continue. In Puerto Rico there has been no case to my knowledge where a gated community has been turned back because of government pressure, whether it is public or private.

In terms of this project I include gated communities built between 1987 and 2006.<sup>4</sup> The year 1987 is presented as the starting point since Law 21 (allowing gating) was approved during this year. The literature on Puerto Rican gated communities has included planners, who have contributed with the journal *Plerus* that published an edition in 1993 devoted to *controles de acceso*.<sup>5</sup> Scholars in other fields have also contributed, particularly in Public Administration and Social Work. Some of their research questioned whether *controles de acceso*<sup>6</sup> are an effective measure against crime, or the impact of *control de acceso* in a community. Sandra Velázquez' (1996) thesis caught my attention since it was a case study of Guaynabo and provided a glimpse into how the public hearing process operates.

The most comprehensive examination gated communities in Puerto Rico is anthropologist Ivelisse Rivera-Bonilla's (2003) dissertation on gated communities in San Juan. Her work analyzes the cultural beliefs that see crime deterrence as an issue of territorial control and justifies solutions like gating. This dissertation responded to the 1990's gated community debate. It is a great starting point for students of gated communities in Puerto Rico.

While all of these contributions are significant, a number of relevant issues have not been addressed. This dissertation engages these questions and emerges with some preliminary conclusions, in a particular context where gated communities are not currently

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<sup>4</sup> I have started the timeline from 1987 since that was the emergence of Law 21. In concrete sense *controles de acceso* walls were erected in 1990. A detailed account of why can be found in footnote 30 of Caquías, José R. "Controles de Acceso: Un Enfoque Interdisciplinario". *Revista del Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico*, January-March 1995, v. 56, n.1.

<sup>5</sup> These are the roadblocks that were placed by residents with governmental support. This has been the government's policy since Law 21 of 1987.

<sup>6</sup> This is the term used for old neighborhoods that decide to gate.

part of a public debate.<sup>7</sup> An important element to consider is what drives the municipality, in this case Guaynabo to take such a stance. Is there a particular logic that drives local governments to a particular position on gated communities? How does local government benefit from this? Local government will have a new legitimizing role in offering new links to its constituency. Since Guaynabo is a municipality with considerable economic means it is in the position to offer these types of services. This element highlights the process of how Guaynabo has something to offer that other communities do not have. This aids the process of Mayor O'Neill's attempts to feature the municipality as a brand name Guaynabo City. My understanding is that this brand name is an easy identifier for the public to perceive, one that holds a positive value for the general public. This logic has aided in the process of attracting investment by developers, adding more resources for a clientelist policy.

The literature in Puerto Rico fails to discuss issues having to do with state actors and gated communities. San Juan's metropolitan urban issues have been addressed in recent years for the most part by historians, architects, and novelists.<sup>8</sup> Why state actors are rarely recognized is an interesting line of inquiry. Certain academic sectors and the public have stopped analyzing gated communities. The gated community consensus features a collective that has stopped analyzing or looking at them critically, they are just one more accepted element of the urban landscape. A possible reason is that a number of economic interests have evolved around gated communities. The interests have much to lose if by any chance they stop being a powerful dynamic.

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<sup>7</sup> I have called this the "gated community" consensus. It consists of the understanding that gated communities are not questioned in Puerto Rico. Questioning has ended since the mid 1990's and have been justified as an effective response to crime.

<sup>8</sup> One of the most recent is Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá (2005) *San Juan: Ciudad Soñada*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

This project has a wider goal, and that is to provide some critical assessments that can bring this topic into the attention to fellow social scientists. Also that this is the face of our current cities, and if the pattern holds steady the intense experience that is seen in Guaynabo will be replicated in other municipalities in the years to come. In that sense I will present Robert H. Nelson's view that neighborhood associations have an experimental purpose for the future<sup>9</sup>, where they can lead the process of privatizing neighborhoods.

I recognize that only a small segment of the population lives in gated communities, but it is quite possible for these to become the new paradigm of urban life. The reason that I argue that this could serve as a paradigm in the future is based in the increase of these communities in the United States and the rest of the world.<sup>10</sup> Industrialization has facilitated the emergence of these communities, in particular, its tendency of privatizing spaces in order to deal with social differences. As the state and the real estate industry favors this dynamic of urban development the odds of having more people live in them increases.

The evidence that will be presented in the literature review will show that only in a few occasions gated communities were reversed. In most of the examples gated communities are built and replicated as models, even nominally communist China has joined into the fray. Four factors are crucial in facilitating the emergence of these communities, crime/and the search for homogeneity, the prestige that these communities convey to many, the element of an increase in property value, and private services/governance. The rest of the dissertation will showcase examples of these instances particularly in the case of Guaynabo. This has been the framework that has allowed me to focus on these four elements.

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<sup>9</sup> Particularly his arguments presented in Robert H. Nelson (2005) *Neighborhoods and the Transformation of Local Government*. Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute Press.

<sup>10</sup> The literature review chapter will document this element.

This dissertation has been delineated with the purpose of taking on the previously mentioned concerns. Chapter Two contextualizes the current situation of gated communities. I explore gated communities as part of the current worldwide landscape, illustrating how they began in the United States and have gained popularity in developed and underdeveloped countries.<sup>11</sup> This section discusses the political context that has allowed these communities to propagate. The second part of this chapter discusses the genesis of gated communities in the United States. It will document the changes from mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to this day, and how the development of gated communities started in the Northeast and later flourished in California.

After this introduction to gated communities, the project will introduce McKenzie's explanation of the interaction between local government and gated communities and government's interest in promoting gated communities.<sup>12</sup> Here the project presents the different reasons why gated communities are favored by local governments. This section elaborates on what McKenzie says about local government politics, in particular, the interest of local governments in increasing its tax base while decreasing public expenditure.

The fourth section offers a panoramic view of the main reason why communities fort up. This is presented with literature that captures the different elements behind these reasons. The last section provides a summary of this chapter. The final section offers the principles

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<sup>11</sup> Its popularity has reached pop culture status including movies and television series. An American example is the TV show "The Real Housewives" on Bravo that chronicles the lives of rich housewives that live in a gated community. The 2006 Argentinean movie *Cara de Queso-Mi Primer Gueto* is a comedy that features a Jewish gated community as the setting for its story.

<sup>12</sup> See Evan McKenzie (2003) "Private Gated Communities in the American Urban Fabric: Emerging Trends in their Production, Practices and Regulation", Paper presented at the Gated Communities" Building Social Division or Safer Communities? Conference, University of Glasgow, 18-19 September.

from the literature used to analyze Guaynabo as a case study. What will be the “tools” to be used during the dissertation? Also I will identify the gap in the literature that this project will engage.

Chapter Three initially takes on the concept of City Marketing and the possible explanatory power that it has for Guaynabo’s gated community experience. Yi-Fu Tuan (1991) has provided some explanations on how language can “make place”. In the case of gated communities it is significant how names given to gated communities attempt to depict certain values and symbols. The examples for these accounts are quite vivid in the first chapter, in the second I will provide some theoretical framework.

This chapter also contemplates how political science has attempted to provide an understanding of gated communities. The most significant authors here are Evan McKenzie (2003) and Robert H. Nelson (2005). McKenzie directly addresses one of the main concerns of this project, the reason why local governments support gated communities. In his case study of Las Vegas he argues that it is done for fiscal reasons. Robert H. Nelson considers the privatization of neighborhood associations.

The main goal of Chapter Four is to contextualize how Puerto Rico turned from an agrarian to an urban society. This element is crucial since it lays out a process that was also witnessed in Guayanbo. This municipality reflected the change that Puerto Rico was undergoing particularly in the 1950’s and 1960’s.<sup>13</sup> This chapter considers the context and evolution of Puerto Rican cities, benefiting from the recent rise of Puerto Rican academic interest on cities. Fernando Picó (1988) offers insightful accounts on how different

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<sup>13</sup> This change in Guaynabo will be featured later in the dissertation when figures of the US Census will document the economic change that propelled Guaynabo’s ascendancy as a significant urban player in Puerto Rico. By this I mean its high concentration of urban communities and its economy that consists to a great extent on the provision of services.

municipalities around San Juan were shaped before the 20th century. Aníbal Sepúlveda (2003) documents the development of San Juan, particularly the historic walled city. The role of the Spanish state is evident and offers some perspective to what the role of the state was then. Edwin Quiles (2003) takes account of the neglected places in that walled city and the early expansion outside of the city walls. I examine the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Puerto Rico was mostly an agrarian economy with compact cities and towns that were just showing flashes of sprawl. Poverty and intense contestation of the American presence in Puerto Rico was common during that period.

During the 1940's political instability increased (e.g. massive strikes, intensifying nationalist movement, and requests for a Puerto Rican governor) and there was a shift in American policy with more funds allocated to Puerto Rico with the justification to deal mostly with chronic poverty. What emerges as a concern to this project is that a massive project of urbanization gets under way at this time. Developers tried to sway the actions of political operatives (i.e. the governor) in order to benefit from the process of expansion. Articles such as those by Aníbal Sepúlveda (2003) and Carlos Zapata (2003) have presented the role of these developers, particularly Darlington Long from South Carolina. With his knowledge of federal regulations and Washington D.C. contacts, Darlington Long tried to be a controlling figure in this process of urbanization. With an increasingly stronger economy, thanks in part to Operation Bootstrap; Puerto Ricans were in the position to access this expansion process as their income increased.

One of the most dramatic changes that Puerto Rico has witnessed since the 1970's is the increase of crime and violence. Gated communities have been presented as the response to this concern, starting with those who can afford it. Later, from 1992 to 2000 public

housing would be gated. I will examine how gated communities became part of the picture, as a measure in order to prevent crime.

Following this analysis I will take a look at the current urban situation in Puerto Rico by documenting its most current trends and potential future. Here I will draw on the literature that emerged out of Puerto Rico in the early 1990's, and take into consideration how different interest groups emerged out of this dynamic. These interest groups emerged in the early 1990's when the gated community debate was not settled. From the mid 1990's onward these debates have subsided, paving the way for today's gated community consensus. It is crucial to clarify that some of these interest groups are still operating, such as contractors, the security industry, real estate and others.

Chapter Five examines how gated communities have been theorized in Puerto Rico, by looking at the types of debates that emerged over the past twenty years since the gated community law was established in 1987. It also explores how gating became more relevant as part of a national conversation in the early 1990's, allowing the gated communities consensus to emerge. In addition, Puerto Rican academics have stopped addressing gating as a relevant issue today. The last public debate on this issue was during 2005 when the Jehova's Witnesses attempted to gain access to these communities in order to preach.<sup>14</sup>

Chapter Six provides an introduction and assessment of Guaynabo. The reason why I selected this town is one of access and familiarity. It is my hometown, I am aware of the intricacies of local politics that are a vital part of the community, and I have access to different informal sources. Also there are a number of reasons that make Guaynabo a paradigmatic case in the Puerto Rican context. It is the first municipality where a gated

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<sup>14</sup> The Jehova's Witnesses in Puerto Rico has argued in the U.S. District Court in Puerto Rico for access to gated communities during August 2005.

community has been documented by the literature. Second, in the past twenty years this municipality has been the subject of a significant boom in the construction industry that has been constituted because of a favorable municipal policy

An additional element that has been instrumental in this resurgence is the profile of incoming Guaynabo residents. It features the highest per capita income in Puerto Rico, but most importantly some of them figured as a significant lobby in order to get older communities to gate with municipal support. Also under the incumbency of Mayor O'Neill the municipality has been willing to be a part of this process in terms of establishing an office to deal exclusively with this process. In addition as will be evidence later in the dissertation, the municipality has spent resources in order to study, understand and improve these services.

On a larger scale this case study will be one where the policy of Caribbean municipal state towards gated communities will be examined, an element that to my knowledge has not been studied. This will help bring the focus to current urban development that is undergoing in the Caribbean. Also this will showcase the politics of an American territory, a subject that has been of little interest to researchers in the United States.

Most importantly at the end of the project I will show if the dynamics of the state as a facilitator of gated communities can be documented in Puerto Rico, and if comparisons can be drawn to the gated community literature. The specificity that Guaynabo has to offer is how a number of elements coincided in order to facilitate a gated community boom, a real estate emergence, public clamoring and a willing municipality. For this reason, understanding how gated communities work here can serve as a window through which to

consider how Puerto Rico will look decades from now, since this is one of the towns leading the process of gating.

This municipality is one of the few that uses the municipal autonomy that has been in place according to law since the early 1990's.<sup>15</sup> In addition, its current mayor, Héctor O'Neill, is a strong advocate for new buildings and settlements in the downtown area. He has favored the displacement of communities for the sake of building new residences in locations that clearly point to gentrification.

This chapter documents the evolution of the richest per capita municipality in Puerto Rico from the 1980's to the present, exploring the role of the municipal government in granting permits to gated communities for construction and to old neighborhoods that want to gate up. The legal division of the municipality is the office in charge of making this decision and I examine the documents that they are able to provide. In addition I conducted interviews with the leaders of the legal division who are responsible for implementing this policy. I will also offer the findings of other significant players in Guaynabo, the Municipal Police, the Mayor's head advisor on gated communities, and Guaynabo's planning office.

This will give me a chance to understand the process coming from the municipal perspective. This is the key element that places this dissertation at a significant advantage in the literature, a direct conversation with city office in charge of enacting the policy on gated

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<sup>15</sup>Puerto Rican municipalities have had the option of gaining more autonomy on their operations since the approval of the *Ley de Municipios Autónomos* in 1991. In terms of operation Guaynabo has been managed as such since 1999, when they were fulfilling all the requirements. By the year 2000 Guaynabo was officially declared an autonomous municipality.

communities. Mr. Albizu who is the mayor's legal advisor on gated communities offers the perspective of someone who has been in that position for the last two administrations. This interview documents how the previous administration handled the rise in gated communities, and how the current administration deals with similar issues, since to my knowledge this has not been documented before.

Mrs. Bones talks about the duties that the planning office takes on when dealing with gated communities. Mrs. Correa of the Legal Office indicates how the municipality handles complaints and frequently interacts with the public. This office has the most interaction with the public, making it crucial in terms of public attention. The Municipal Police provided me with the opportunity to interview their three main figures. The conversation was able to document how they engage gated communities, municipal orders, patrolling, and crime rate record keeping. These will serve as an opportunity for me to assess the municipality's position on gated communities, widening an academic understanding on gated communities, and how this can be possibly helpful in other countries.

Chapter Eight provides a profile of the construction sector in Puerto Rico, making use of the information provided by the *Junta de Planificación* (Planning Board)<sup>16</sup>. This considers the significance this has for Puerto Rico, and most importantly the particularities in Guaynabo. My interest in doing this exercise is to determine what kind of gated community is being developed in Guaynabo, communities for the rich, middle class or poor. This analysis gives a face to the ongoing process, particularly since Guaynabo assumed permit

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<sup>16</sup> The *Junta de Planificación* was created in 12 May 1942 under Law 213. Its purpose was to systematize Puerto Rico's planning process under a single government agency. This office also assists the governor in designing and outlining public policy.

granting authority as part of the *Ley de Municipios Autónomos*. This law, enacted in the early 1990's, gave more duties and autonomy to Puerto Rican municipalities.

Finally the conclusion assesses the dissertation's findings. First, what is Guaynabo's position on gated communities? Is the municipality promoting them, and if so, why? Second, what does local government gain from their position? Third, what is the larger logic for the municipality to follow a particular policy. Following this evaluation, the dissertation attempts to fill a gap in the Puerto Rican gated community literature. From a mostly descriptive literature to one that engages critically in terms of a larger logic that surrounds Puerto Rico's acceptance of gated communities. Guaynabo can provide us with a glimpse into what is happening throughout Puerto Rico, and therefore be of relevance to gated community scholars beyond Puerto Rico.

## CHAPTER II

### ASSESSING DEFINITIONS, TYPOLOGIES AND EXPERIENCES

#### **Introduction**

Over the past twenty years Gated Communities have been the subject of significant attention. The following evaluation will present the groundwork for this dissertation: Why has the municipality of Guaynabo promoted gated communities from 1987 to 2006? This is the main question that I pose in the dissertation. Once this question has been addressed I will consider the logic or rationale that the municipality has followed for enacting a particular policy.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide useful typologies from the literature on gated communities, examples of different types of gated communities, to discuss some of the reasons for their emergence, and finally, to identify crucial evaluative elements missing from the literature. I use the typology developed by Blakely and Snyder, since it is the most comprehensive and recognized by most students of gated communities (Blakely and Snyder, 1997).

Using these typologies as a base, the chapter focuses on the different expressions of these communities in a broader global context. They are increasingly becoming more popular and widespread, a phenomenon that this project recognizes. Finally I look at the different elements that facilitate the emergence of gated communities. One of those elements has a particular significant relevance to this project, the promotion of gated communities by local governments in order to raise revenue. The evidence to corroborate this assertion will be presented later in the dissertation where I will examine the value of homes built in Guaynabo within prestige communities. Every municipality in Puerto Rico taxes new

property and if Guaynabo features higher income property it helps the municipality raise more revenues.

This is a significant deficiency that political science struggles today when facing urban developments. A major reason it should engage gated communities is that they impact the notion of what constitutes public and private space, having the potential to blur or change the traditional liberal line of what constitutes public and private space. The state, and eventually governance, can be impacted by having a state that assumes different responsibilities. A further impact relates to how democracy can be impacted by how interests are articulated. There are historic links between the city and democracy, as in the case of Ancient Greece.<sup>17</sup> The rest of the chapter will consider the following: Why do people move to gated communities?

## **History**

Blakely and Snyder point to the mid 1800's as the time when gated communities emerged. Its residents belonged to the upper income sectors of the population, such as the communities of Tuxedo Park in New York and the private streets of St. Louis (1997: 4). They were considered rarities, but exploded onto the landscape nearly a century later with the master-planned retirement developments of the late 1960's and 1970's (Ibid.). The first communities to institute Homeowners Associations (HOA) were Gramercy Park in New York City in 1837 and Louisberg Square in Boston in 1844 (McKenzie, 1994: 9). The pioneering element behind this was "the use by developers of common ownership plans and deed restrictions as private land planning devices" (Ibid.). The importance of this initial

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<sup>17</sup> For a discussion about the links between democracy and the city in Ancient Greece see Fernando Carrión M. (2007). *El desafío político de gobernar la ciudad*. Nueva Sociedad, No. 212, pp. 36-52.

HOA is that it lays the groundwork for the form of governance that is found in today's gated communities. This was a type of governance where spaces were surveyed and controlled by residents of that particular community. The political consequence is that this experiment laid the groundwork for the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&R's) that bound residents in today's gated communities.<sup>18</sup>

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century gated communities emerged as retirement and leisure communities in the South (Blakely and Snyder, 1997b: 22). Southern California had the first gated community in the state with 1935 in Rolling Hills and in 1938 with Bradbury (Le Goix, 2003: 5).

Later in the century Blakely and Snyder point to retirement communities as the model of a booming gated community consisting of golf and leisure-oriented subdivisions in the Sunbelt retirement areas of Florida, the Carolinas, Southern California and Arizona (1997: 46). These communities went beyond the Sunbelt into northern cities as a result of the 1980's real estate boom (pp. 55-56). A noticeable change is that the settlements built between the 1970's and 1990's are home to the middle and upper-middle class and not just the wealthy (p. 6). They are also a phenomenon of metropolitan agglomeration. These authors estimate that by 1997 there were as many as 20,000 gated communities in the United States (p. 7).

### **Defining Gated Communities**

The single most comprehensive definition presented is by Blakely and Snyder. They defined gated communities as residential areas with restricted access in which normally

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<sup>18</sup> For a great discussion on the development of CC&R's see Evan McKenzie (1996). *Privatopia: Homeowners Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

public spaces are privatized. They are security developments with designated perimeters, usually walls or fences, and controlled entrances that are intended to prevent penetration by non-residents (Blakely and Snyder, 1997: 2). They have characterized these gated communities according to three major categories, lifestyle communities, prestige communities and security zone communities.

The three types of lifestyle communities are the retirement community, the golf and leisure community, and the new suburban town (Blakely and Snyder, 1997: 39). These communities are of a suburban character and can be understood as communities where a particular way of life is sought (e.g. golf, sailing/boating). As this term indicates, these communities provide private amenities to its residents and their guests. This example shows a gated community where most of their lifestyle is privatized and protected by walls.

Prestige communities do not present a particular lifestyle, they are home to middle to high class residences. They lack the recreational amenities of the lifestyle community, but are distinguished from other residential areas because they feature gates for protection (Blakely and Snyder, 1997: 41). This type of community can be found in both urban and suburban spaces. They tend to provide fewer amenities and can be built without abundant space. These communities provide a safe space in luxury, but lack the considerable amenities of lifestyle communities.

A different situation is present with security zone communities. They belong mostly to an urban context and respond to the fear of crime, where gates in locales were not envisioned as part of the original design. This particular model of community is more common in areas where residents lack considerable income. Developing countries are also a common setting for these kinds of communities.

Other comprehensive definitions of gated communities have been presented in the literature. Setha Low defines a gated community as “a residential development surrounded by walls, fences, or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs, with a secured entrance” (2003: 12). A quite comprehensive definition that emerges out of the British literature has been provided by the ESRC Centre for Neighbourhood Research. Their definition states the following is: “Walled or fenced housing developments to which public access is restricted, often guarded using CCTV and/or security personnel, and usually characterized by legal agreements (tenancy or household) which tie the residents to a common code of conduct” (2003: 2).

Steven Flusty referred to gated communities as “luxury laagers”; these are confined by walls punctuated by occasional guardhouses and remotely activated gates (1997: 50). Both Blakely and Snyder, and Flusty consider situations when streets are closed by the request or interests of its residents.<sup>19</sup> These are predominantly found in older communities and where people of lower income reside. Flusty calls this “Crusty Space”, this referring to spaces where access is limited by the obstructions provided by gates, walls and checkpoints.

Peter Marcuse uses the term “citadel” when referring to gated communities. He defined it as “a spatially concentrated area in which members of a particular defined by its position of superiority in power, wealth, or status in relation to its neighborhoods, congregates as a means of protecting and bracing that position” (1997: 314). A common thread among most of these definitions is the role of gating, that physical boundary is the element that is most visible or most evident. This sets off the difference between residents and non-residents, placing a dynamic in place where there are those who either are in or live

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<sup>19</sup> This experience was witnessed in Puerto Rico during the 1980’s as neighborhood associations rallied together in order to gate their communities.

outside. This previous account is mostly descriptive, not dealing fully with the plausible causes or reasons for their emergence. In my opinion Blakely and Snyder's definition is the one that gets the closest to defining the reasons for their emergence.

As I have mentioned, these communities can be found in different parts of the world. They use different names for similar concepts. Brazil has been the subject of significant academic attention and also an emerging setting of these communities in Latin America. Many neighborhoods have been surrounding themselves with walls or fences to present security for their spaces and controlling access. These have been called *condomínios exclusivos*. Carvalho, George and Anthony argue that these *condomínios exclusivos* are having a dramatic effect on urban form in Brazilian cities by reinforcing spatial differentiation by class (1997: 735).

Angela Giglia has raised concerns about the term gated communities and presents the possibility of dissent in a gated community. Arguing that she would rather call them collectivities which are “groups in which not everybody shares the same perspectives, or the same lifestyle, where internal conflicts do exist...” (2003: 14-15).<sup>20</sup> This consideration is crucial in the literature since unity is what developers aim to portray but is not always achieved. That is where the crucial role that CC&R's have, by trying to homogenize certain practices and behavior in a community. This element of behavior can also be linked to property value and homogeneity, achieving the sense of security that many desire when moving into these communities.

The definitions that have been offered are the most commonly seen in the literature. Giglia's definition is one of the few definitions I have encountered that recognizes the

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<sup>20</sup> My translation.

possibility of differences inside these communities. It also considers some of the nuances inside gated communities. Setha Low also offers a significant contribution by going beyond the tangible elements of their subject of study. She focuses on the issues of homogeneity and difference that are at play in gated communities. I will use the typologies offered by Blakely and Snyder, since they provide the most descriptive detail that can account for the experience in Guaynabo.

### **Gated communities worldwide**

In this section I will present different regions of the world where gated communities have been becoming more prevalent. The historical context and timeline vary, but the fact that they are found around the world make for a universal experience. With this segment I am interesting in offering the nuances of these different urban realities.

#### **South America**

Anthropologist Teresa P.R. Caldeira has examined gated communities in the city of São Paulo, Brazil and the fear of crime and violence. Caldeira documented the rise of fortified enclaves and has defined them as “privatized, enclosed and monitored spaces for residence, consumption, leisure and work” (2000: 213). The following features characterize these fortified enclaves. First they are private property for collective use; second, they are physically demarcated and isolated by walls, fences/empty spaces and design devices. Third, they turn inward, away from the streets. Fourth, armed guards and security systems control them. Fifth they are flexible, and sixth they tend to be a socially homogeneous environment (2000: 258).

The metropolitan area of Buenos Aires, Argentina has seen the emergence of these communities.<sup>21</sup> During the 1970's and 1980's *country clubes* emerged (Coy and Pöhler, 2002). Later, during the 1990's weekend retreats were turned into permanent residential areas. This market has diversified in a similar fashion to the United States. A variety of amenities and styles has been presented to the community. This depends on the size of the lots, on existing open space, and on the project's infrastructures concerning education and leisure. According to these parameters the Buenos Aires market distinguishes between *barrios cerrados* and countries (gated communities), *clubes náuticos*, offering water sports, *clubes de chacras* or *clubes de campo*, in which the rural character is stressed (2002: 366).

Guy Thuillier adds more details about the Argentinean situation. He points to the first gated development developed in Argentina. In 1932 the Tortugas Country Club was founded in the city of Pilar (2003: 2). Tortugas Country Club followed the initial model presented by Coy and Pöhler. It is interesting to note how different authors have established disagreeing dates in terms of the first Argentinean gated community. This points to how contested many of these definitions and starting points are. A possible reason for this discrepancy and others in the literature might have to do with the definitions and typologies that are used.

According to Guy Thuillier, *barrios privados* are more frequent than the country clubs that were the originators of gated communities in Argentina (2003: 3). Another significant change since the 1990's has been the increasing urban character of these communities, as they have become more of a part of the Buenos Aires fabric. These developments hit a sudden stop with the economic collapse Argentina suffered during

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<sup>21</sup> This example and the following ones do not pretend to be representative of the literature.

2001.<sup>22</sup> This shows how the emergence and sustainment of these communities in the developing world are on shakier ground than in the United States and other rich nations.

### **Asia**

Asia has also been a witness to the emergence of gated communities. The gated communities reality in the Philippines caters and appeals to Western tastes and symbols. As a middle class has emerged, exclusive suburbs have become more common. These new residential developments are identified as villages rather than *barrios*. The developments are further defined by their names, many of which are not Filipino and make use of the English language (Connell, 1999: 425). The names given to the community provide a sense of distinction that is pursued by its residents (Ibid.). This is an example on how language can create a sense of place.<sup>23</sup>

In the case of Indonesia, security seems to be the basis for these developments. As Harold Leisch indicates, these communities target the middle and upper classes. The profile of the gated community resident is described by the authors to be modern; the people/residents are often educated abroad and tend to have only two children (2002: 346). The examples of the different faces of gated communities have showed us how greatly they vary. Indonesia provides a situation where, according to Leisch, the term gated community is not appropriate for this popular Indonesian type of settlement. The reason being that thinking of these residents as having social contacts is misleading. This points to how at

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<sup>22</sup> See Negri, Antonio and Giuseppe Cocco (2006). *GlobAL*. Paidós: Buenos Aires, for details on the Argentinean economic collapse.

<sup>23</sup> See the contributions to geography made by Yi-Fu Tuan. (1991), "Language and the Making of Place: A Narrative-Descriptive Approach", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 81, no.4, pp. 684-696.

times definitions established by Western academia might not capture the realities outside of its realm.

As part of this discussion there has been a consistency in terms of the type of countries showed, most of them are nominally capitalist and under direct influence of current neoliberalism. China showcases a situation where even though not nominally capitalist, it has adopted many of its features and gated communities have been one of its most recent creations. The phenomenon is quite recent and pertains mostly to the 1990's. China has witnessed a number of economic changes that attracted foreign investment. For that reason foreign capital and expatriates have moved to China.<sup>24</sup> Initially, these people had to live in hotels or uncomfortable quarters, and until September 2002 had to live in approved residences in Beijing. Fulong Wu and Klaine Webber (2004) illustrate how since 2002, how the establishment of foreign settlements has been liberalized, and foreign gated communities have emerged in Beijing.

Apartment complexes or villa compounds have been built into secured gated communities. These spaces go beyond simply providing a space to live; schooling, markets, and recreational facilities are common features of these spaces. What will prove to be an interesting situation years from now is that “overseas Chinese with foreign currencies, and local household with foreign remittances, wealthy domestic buyers have gradually entered the foreign housing market” (Wu and Webber, 2004 p. 210).

Guillaume Giroir also focused on the emergence of gated communities in China. He portrays gated communities as “appear[ing] as secret even taboo housing areas” (2003: 3).

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<sup>24</sup> Hong Kong serves as a neighboring example of expatriates and gated communities.

This is probably the best way to understand the emergence of these communities in a nominally communist country.

The Asian case study features a recent emergence of gated communities, with prestige and lifestyle as the main examples. The literature does not present crime as an essential concern like the case of Latin America. I expect this continent will offer the most diversity of cases, particularly if China continues having the economic relevance that it enjoys today.

### **Africa**

The African continent has also seen its particular expression of gated communities, particularly in South Africa. They are called gated or walled communities, or security villages, combining both social and racial segregation (Jürgens and Gnad, 2002: 337). In 1991 legal restrictions were lifted and as a result there was a certain urban integration of residents. The focus of gated communities in South Africa has varied over time. In 1987 the first residential areas that were offered since its inception included a walled perimeter (Jürgens and Gnad, 2002: 340). Other communities followed with thematic inspiration, whether it was the Mediterranean, gulf estates, etc. A significant change occurred after the first democratic election of 1994. Sectors of the white population were fearful of what the past apartheid period would represent. Middle class blacks also assumed this barricade mentality by moving into gated communities (Jürgens and Gnad, 2002: 314). Older neighborhoods also followed this practice by setting up roadblocks that created enclosed neighbourhoods (Ibid.). This example shows an underlying issue that has been expressed, and that is the exclusionary and racial undertones that gates can have. Newspaper

advertisements for new gated communities are a common example of this dynamic, where white families are portrayed enjoying themselves at their new community.<sup>25</sup>

### **Middle East**

The Middle East is a region with considerable social conflict; where gated communities have also emerged. Glasze and Alkayyal classified gated developments in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia into three types; extended-family compounds, cultural enclaves, and governmental staff housing (2002: 323). The extended-family compounds consist of a group of villas surrounded by a common fence or wall (Ibid.). The cultural enclaves are compounds formed for Western professionals, promoted by the Saudi government. The third type of development is for high-income Western employees. These compounds are guarded and Saudi nationals are mostly excluded from the communities.

The Lebanese are part of the buying market in their country; a situation that differs from the Saudi case. Glasze and Alkayyal (2002) distinguish condominiums containing apartments, from gated model towns and villa complexes; Lebanon also offers gated beach, mountain resorts and ski villages. The oldest type of gated settlements consists of beach and mountain resorts started in the late 1960's. During the 1980's the first gated communities as permanent residences were built in the context of the ongoing war (Glasze and Alkayyal, 2002: 330). After the war, security was not a focal point of the gated community industry. War or non-declared wars have also promoted the emergence of gated communities. Israel, too, has seen the development of gated communities. They have emerged as part of an Israeli government policy of supporting the establishment of such settlements (Segal and Weizman, 2003: 25).

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<sup>25</sup> A common example in Puerto Rico is to examine the Saturday edition of the newspaper *El Nuevo Día*. It includes a section titled *Construcción* where new communities are advertised.

The Turkish gated community phenomena started in the mid 1990's with the development of second housing for the rich (Dündar and Özcan, 2003). What triggered this emergence was the liberal economy that emerged during this decade. As foreign investment increased in Turkey the urban landscape was altered, including urban gated communities. By the 1990's Ankara saw an increase in the number of gated communities and as Dündar and Özcan found, an increasing outsider/insider divide.

### **Gating Up**

An important element in the gated community literature considers the reasons for gating. The literature approaches this matter in a variety of ways. Some studies focus exclusively on a single element (e.g. crime), while others attempt to be more ecumenical and analyze a wider number of reasons. The relevance of the reasons for gating with my hypothesis consists on contextualizing what drives to people to gate, reasons that can be used by the state in order to galvanize support behind their city marketing campaign.

A crucial question lingers after evaluating the diverse definition on gated communities and their varied locations. Why do people move to gated communities? Crime, or fear of crime more specifically, has been presented almost as a universal reason for why people gate up. I consider that people move to gated communities for four reasons: crime/homogeneity, prestige, property value, and governance/private services.

### **Crime/homogeneity**

This is considered as the driving force behind the emergence of gated communities. It is important to keep in mind that the actual violent event (i.e. crime), has less weight than the potential for it to happen (i.e. sense of crime). Crime can be interpreted as an objective fact, for example the statistics developed by the police and other government agencies. I

would like to stress what has been developed by some authors, that the sense of crime can be created. Fernando Carrión Mena and Jorge Núñez-Vega researched how fear is socially constructed by comparing four South American cities, Quito, Bogotá, Montevideo and Santiago de Chile (2007).

They analyze the relation between insecurity and representation of violence in statistics, and insecurity and urbanism from a perspective defined as urban imaginaries. They argue that the statistics on violence have a particular theoretical and conceptual value by those who generate these terms, and the source for this information comes from the institutions in charge the administration over the monopoly of violence. Those imaginaries of fear can be approached by looking at the totality of the city, continuing through emblematic places that characterize the city, arriving to different spaces at a smaller sense.

Carrión and Núñez-Vega (2007) argue that colors, sound, temperature and bad smells can add fear to a particular space.<sup>26</sup> The authors state that media coverage where television process and sensationalizes elements add to the sense of fear. Municipalities also add to the fear by generating maps of violence, this is where it becomes crucial to see how government manages this type of information. In conclusion Carrión and Núñez-Vega argue that the social existence of fear in the city depends on a number of fields of power, identifiable and concrete such as statistics, media and urban architecture.

Fear can serve as a commodity in the advertisements that are generated by developers.<sup>27</sup> Homogeneity serves as a key component that can be achieved by living in a gated community because of its restrictive nature. Feeling that your neighbors act like you or

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<sup>26</sup> As a contrast it is interesting to note how in Shopping Malls spaces are sanitized where none of these elements are found. Gated communities attempt a similar strategy by the elaboration, enactment and implementation of CC&Rs.

<sup>27</sup> Setha Low (2003) addresses this deep psychological element in her work.

look like you is of crucial significance, particularly in situations of high social heterogeneity and significant levels of income are at play. This provides a significant sense of security for community residents (Low 2003).

One of the most outstanding goals of both developers and buyers is to achieve homogeneity in their new space. The most evident, but less discussed method of achieving this is by income. In the particular context of the United States in 1968 the Federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) was passed in order to provide equal access to housing in part, to counteract blatant racial discrimination. In the particular case of gated communities, the stakes are higher since they tend to be more expensive than non-gated homes. Traub has argued that “Community associations and real estate developers keep individuals out by enacting strict prerequisites to buying property in gated communities” (2000: 387). Board members of some of these communities also prescreen potential new buyers in addition to the economic constraints. In other words: “through such established requirements, the communities are enforcing class restrictions based on arbitrary wealth requirements” (Ibid). Other elements can factor into this decision that go beyond income, such as race, political persuasion, etc., and be presented as ways that appear not to contravene in the case of race the Fair Housing Act.

Homogeneity is not necessarily a subset of crime. But in these types of spaces it is pursued since it is related in terms of values, symbols and practices. These elements do not operate directly in terms of deterring crime, but it favors homogeneity which provides a sense of peace of mind when facing the fear of crime. Perception factors in as a crucial element in this dynamic.

Considering that White America is considerably richer than the other groups they will have a stronger hold in high-end communities', thus achieving homogeneity. The concept of exclusion according to income is not exclusive to the United States, as it can be seen in most of the examples provided; the rich live the most secluded lives with expensive goods. This argument applies in the case of high-end communities that live under a particular homogeneity of class. Residents who live in security-zone communities also live under a regime of homogeneity, one that was likely not selected since they lack the resources for greater mobility.

Setha Low presents a significant contribution to the gated community debate by stressing the particularities of an ideal homogeneous community. This happens when the walls provide refuge from people who are deviant or unusual and perceived as dangerous (2003: 21). The sense of security that is provided by walls, private police, cameras and others allows for the existence of what Low refers to as "purified communities" (Ibid.).

An important element to consider is that these definitions portray the reality of the middle to upper classes. These have the mobility (i.e. income) to select where to live, but those who have no mobility suffer from the perils of an unequal society. Low argues that those who live in the gated communities she examined (no security zone spaces) may place the residents at a higher risk. The risk for gated community residents can be generated by possibly becoming targets of crime by those who do not share their same income, who target these communities as wealthy enclaves. An additional element to consider is that these communities are characterized by a low level of interaction that makes the residents feel more isolated (2003: 131).

To a great extent income homogeneity is equated with racial homogeneity. The result of this is that “the physical space of the neighborhood and its racial composition become synonymous” (Low, 2003: 146). For that reason, outsiders are easier to identify in a space that strives for homogeneity. This is achieved since these particular gated communities attempt to create a pure space for its residents (p. 143). The more “pure” the space is, the easier it becomes for residents to monitor those who stray from their established norm (Ibid.). It becomes of considerable importance to acknowledge the fact that Low’s analysis considers a particular segment of the gated community universe. On this particular issue most of the gated community literature has focused on the wealthy.

In her comparative analysis of gated and non-gated communities of different incomes, Wilson-Doenges agrees with what most of the literature has indicated about gated communities. The findings show that in the high-income communities there were no significant differences in the actual crime rate (2000: 607). In addition, low-income communities show that there are no reported benefits to living behind the gates (2000: 608). The conclusion of this study is that gated communities do not increase the sense of community either (2000: 609). The context for this study was the public housing and high-income suburban communities. This allows the reader to consider both ends of the social spectrum that are rarely analyzed in this literature.

The empirical study of Helsley and Strange, point to a result where gating diverts crime to other communities (1999: 82).<sup>28</sup> For that reason they should not be considered as a strategic defense against crime in terms of public policy; only those who live in that

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<sup>28</sup> I have found this argument to be popular knowledge in Puerto Rico as a justification for gated communities.

community are safe. This is not a sound method for controlling crime, since it segregates communities into small enclaves or pockets of security.

According to Caldeira (2000), São Paulo has been the subject of three patterns of spatial segregation. The most recent has been characterized by “transformations [that] are generating spaces in which different social groups are again closer to one another but are separated by walls and technologies of security” (2000: 213). What emerges out of this situation is what the author calls “fortified enclaves”. This has been mentioned before, but in what pertains to this section is that the principal justification for these enclaves is the fear of violent crime (Ibid.).

São Paulo and Caldeira’s study have provided new elements to the gated community literature with reference to crime. She uses the concept of the aesthetics of security, this is a code that “encapsulates elements of security in a discourse of taste and transforms it into a symbol of status” (2000: 292). Now architecture, security and prestige are meshed into a single space, where adjustments need to be made in order to face crime and have a space that is livable. An important element that needs to be clarified is that the dynamics of the aesthetics of security are presented in the context of a single home, not of a gated community. What can be argued is that gated communities provide the opportunity for a number of residences to be bounded by a single gate that provides an aesthetic of security.

Caldeira points out that during the 1970’s enclosure was a marketing strategy and to this day security procedures are essential in any building labeled as prestigious (2000: 260-261). An extreme case is that of Alphaville, Brazil, an edge city constructed in the late

1970's that featured a private security force of more than eight hundred guards and eighty vehicles for its 20,000 residents.<sup>29</sup>

All this emergence of fortified enclaves and the aesthetics of security are placed under the context of the influence of crime, and its fear in particular. As I have mentioned, fear of crime drives the process of gating more than crime itself. Blakely and Snyder point out that even during the early 1990's, when the crime rates were declining, gated communities were on the rise (1997: 100). Lifestyle communities, prestige communities and security-zone communities share fear of crime as one of their legitimizing reasons. What becomes more shocking with security-zone communities is how residents selectively seclude themselves. One of the most relevant results of this study is that "homeowner association boards show that security is likewise a primary concern for those who buy in gated communities" (1997: 126). Private security has increased as a corollary to this process, numbers from a 1993 National Institute of Justice study show three times as many people in the security field (Ibid.). I would like to consider the following: Is this is one of the openings by which private entities are assuming the role of the State? Issues of governance become salient as part of this question since citizens make less use of the State for security purposes.

The argument for private security has been presented by the proponents of gated communities. Blakely and Snyder argue that private security measures increase and do not replace police services. They propose that the dynamic that emerges is one where there are those who can pay for supplementary police services and others who cannot (p. 129). What emerges out of this dynamic is an increase in private security, space where privatization has

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<sup>29</sup> For a more detailed account on Alphaville see Carvalho, Máya, R. Varkki George and Kathryn H. Anthony (1997), "Residential Satisfaction in *Condomínios Exclusivos* (Gated-Guarded Neighborhoods) in Brazil", *Environment and Behavior*, v.29 no.6, pp. 734-768.

crept in. Coy and Pöhler examined São Paulo and witnessed this process as the basis for a flourishing trade on people's fear (2002: 363). I consider that using people's fears can be a great intangible asset when selling a property. Gated communities, particularly security zone communities, are a common element in this dynamic since their main purpose is to deter crime. Lifestyle and prestige communities have those considerations as well, but their residents presumably have greater mobility.

This comes through a process by which residents attempt to distinguish themselves from others. A relevant element to keep in mind here is that those who tend to do this tend to middle and high classes. By this I am not arguing that the poor lack a sense of aesthetics or prestige. What they lack are the resources necessary in order to achieve this type of separation.

### **Prestige**

Caldeira presents an interesting connection between protection against crime and prestige. She documents with her definition of the aesthetics of security, how protecting a residence from crime and keeping the personality of each residence in place lends itself to particular social codes in a community.

All this emergence of gated communities is bounded by the limits of the market. Advertising has played a facilitating role in placing developers and buyers on the same page. Strategic marketing devices have been set in place in order to attract potential residents, by creating a name or allure that will make prospective buyers buy. This is probably the most salient or palpable reason for a person to live in a particular community. It is important to note that the target audience for this kind of gated community are those who can afford to live there.

Taking a glance at what the literature has to offer, it becomes evident why prestige is such a salient issue. Blakely and Snyder's three gated community's typologies include two that allude to this angle, Lifestyle Communities and Prestige Communities. Lifestyle Communities often start as second homes and eventually turn into a permanent residence, particularly once retirement looms closer. Prestige communities deal more explicitly with a particular motive to live in a gated community. Blakely and Snyder note that these "symbolize distinction and prestige and create and protect a secure place on the social ladder" (1997: 40-41).

Prestige, in the particular case of gated communities, can be achieved partly through homogeneity. As has been mentioned, homogeneity is achieved by the regulation of conduct, and most importantly, income. Low points to more subtle means of control like resident behavior, house type and taste culture (2003: 19). I argue that these subtle forms of control are encapsulated under the aura of prestige and a particular lifestyle within Blakely and Snyder's typology. Prestige and lifestyle do regulate the conduct of residents. Generally all of the factors that foster living in gated communities have a regulatory rationale.

Language can serve as a powerful component in terms of creating prestige. Yi-Fu Tuan (1991) examines language as one of the main elements in the interpretation of human geography. His Narrative-Descriptive approach considers the role of human speech in the creation of space. Tuan highlights how geographers, landscape historians and others "tend to see place almost exclusively as the material transformation of nature" (Tuan, 1991: 684). Place can be generated by the use of language; thus, language must be recognized and explored as a factor in the creation and shaping of gated communities. Language can be a useful tool for developers in order to develop prestigious spaces.

These are concrete examples of the role of prestige and status. Manila provides us with the crucial role that developers can have in an emerging community and the clientele they attract. J. Connell points out that “Suburb names and street names set the tone for the promise of the new communities within them” (1999: 425). As I presented earlier the new residential developments are identified as villages rather than *barrios* (p. 424). In addition they avoid Filipino names and use American or European names. This is a clear instance where the developers establish the tone of what these communities should look like in the imaginary of buyers and all of those interested.

In the context of Indonesia, taste and prestige have a preponderant role in the continued relevance of gated communities. Residents are proud to live in a town where there is a country club, golf club, or international school, even if they cannot afford these (Leisch, 2002: 348). Lifestyle and prestige frequently are linked to behavior and habits. In less than two decades, from 1980 to 2000 Argentina, particularly Buenos Aires, has witnessed a change of habits and values. The elite live in the city now, in a suburban life similar to the United States. Guy Thuillier characterizes this process, “Now they want their own garden, they appreciate to ‘leave the door opened’ when they go out and to ‘have the children playing safely on the streets’” (2003: 4).

Another example where prestige plays a significant role in gated communities is that of expatriate housing. This housing tends to be located in booming economic sites where integration between locals and foreigners are not common. China provides a current example where the standards for foreign residence have been liberalized, making it more accessible to rich Chinese. A considerable number of these foreigners are in high profile jobs where prestige matters. Their salaries are higher than most of the public, where a particular quality

of life is expected to be maintained, and most importantly, expatriates have a high professional and managerial profile (Wu and Webber, 2004: 207). This profile is relevant to the company they represent and themselves. Gated communities with all their amenities, schools, shopping centers, etc. allow for the social distinction that expatriates desire.

Prestige has also political consequences. Giroir (2003) points out that a certain number of expatriates in China frequently see local leaders and officials as part of their business life. Their living condition allows for business networks to be enhanced in their own residential area (p. 4). In essence, expatriates are able to situate themselves in the spheres of economic power of the host country.

### **Property Value**

A factor that is important for arguments in favor of moving to gated communities or limited access streets is that of property value. The argument has been that these measures raise the value of their homes, where homeowners associations have a considerable function. Through an effective policing of CC&Rs homogeneity is achieved in terms of residential policies when it comes to behavior of residents and guests.<sup>30</sup>

To a great extent the value of many of these expensive gated communities is predicated on the kind of services and amenities that they provide. A particular example is that of the expatriate community in China. As part of their evaluation, Fulong Wu and Klaine Webber point to the characteristic of foreign housing as one characterized by “luxury design standards, high rent, high security, a clean living environment, and a large variety of facilities” (2004: 208). These diverse services add value to the property that homes have in a particular gated community. Setha Low argues that the CC&Rs present in most gated

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<sup>30</sup> For more details on CC&Rs see Robert H. Nelson (2005). *Private Neighborhoods and the Transformation of Local Government*, Urban Institute Press: Washington D.C., pp. 52-53.

communities provide financial security for their community (2003: 159). Aesthetics can also serve as a point of demarcation, and also to keep properties attractive and with high value.

Blakely and Snyder address this issue of property value, contending that there is little agreement among developers and realtors whether gates add to a home's price or help to maintain property values (1997: 16). After examining an area of Orange County, California they arrive at the conclusion that "gates do not automatically confer a premium on housing prices" (1997: 17).

The study generated by Michael La Cour-Little and Stephen Malpezzi examines gated communities and property value. In their St. Louis case study they find that "houses in the gated communities command an economically significant price premium, others factors held constant" (2001: 2). It is relevant to point that whether these benefits are real or imagined, they are reflected in some house prices (2001: 19). In other words having gated communities and its key component of sense of security is of significant value to all those involved in gated communities. Including those involved interests such as real estate agents, residents, government and others. Living in a gated community is a decision that adds value to its residents, whether it is the psychological effect, monetary value or the prestige that it can afford.

The literature is not conclusive to whether gates add monetary value to houses. Popular understanding and behavior in the particular case of Puerto Rico is that it does. For that reason popular perception is paramount as part of this project.

### **Private services/governance**

One of the outstanding reasons offered for moving into gated communities is the attempt to seek refuge from failing governmental services. The American literature is the

most direct in offering this perspective to students of gated communities. McKenzie argues that “Over the last 25 years, this massive privatization of local government functions has changed the appearance and organizational structure of American urban areas” (2003: 3).

McKenzie’s case study documents the process by which Bonanza Village becomes a gated community in Las Vegas. Residents of this neighborhood were divided over the issue, but with the help of the city Bonanza Village became a gated community.

McKenzie argues that the municipalities will be able to increase their tax revenue as the numbers of gated communities increase. Public expenditure will be minimal since residents will carry that fiscal load. In other words, this example points to fiscal solvency as the driving reason behind local government promotion of gated communities.

In a previous work, Evan McKenzie examined the rapid growth of Common Interest Housing Developments (CID’s), which include gated communities through much of California (1998). The study raises a number of political issues that emerge out of the growth of gated communities. One is the possible mobilization of CID’s residents as a voting block. Their particular issue would be to avoid double taxation, particularly since residents pay fees as part of living in gated communities as well as taxes that non residents pay. This is a salient political issue that can generate a powerful voice as these communities increase in numbers and political clout.

Sometimes the state can facilitate the emergence of gated communities, as in the case of Argentina. A significant change in the roadways was witnessed in Argentina as an extensive motorway system was initiated by the military dictatorship in the late 1970’s<sup>31</sup>. Highways and roadways facilitate the access to gated communities, particularly those located

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<sup>31</sup> In the case of the United States the Post WWII period led to a massive interstate highway system subsidized by the federal government.

at the outskirts of a city. Later, in the 1990's, these motorways were extended and enlarged (Thuillier, 2003: 2). This is an example of how the state facilitates the emergence and success of these communities, a factor that will be stressed during this project. The possible motivations of the state are several, first the number of revenue that the state can generate as a result of taxing these properties. And second, the state's capacity of reshaping space with the complicity of the private sector, thus privatizing and sanitizing public space. Third, the process by which public space can be altered leads to a process that can be conducive to city marketing.

City marketing is a process by which local government (i.e. cities) launch a campaign in order to attract capital (Seisdedos, 2004). The city generates a particular brand or element that will attract investment to that locality. This context is facilitated by today's economic shift towards a service economy where capital moves easily across the world if needed. Cities are the subject of changes in order to attract investment, and this serves in certain contexts to justify urban space. City marketing is fueled by the interest of attracting efficiency and also the competition among other cities, whether domestic or foreign.

It is interesting to note how for the most part prestigious gated communities are not adjacent to the road or highway. Part of their prestige lies in the fact that they are secluded. The literature has failed to examine the connection between gated communities and the roadways that provide their access.

The arguments for its edification are not new, protection against crime, prestige and increasing property value. As I have noted, even though privatization is occurring it could only happen with the assistance of the state. One reason why the state, mostly local governments, favors gated communities is "because the infrastructure is paid for by the

developer, who then passes the cost on to the homebuyers” (Damstra, 2001: 529). Richard Damstra argues that an additional reason why citizens turn to private government is because local governments are unable to “preserve property values or provide the desired level of services” (2000: 534).

Another issue of political significance is the power that municipalities have in stopping the construction of gated communities. Damstra points to the process that municipalities have if interested in preventing the proliferation of gated communities within their limits (2000: 560). It is relevant to note that the literature considers the possibility of communities favoring gated communities, not communities that do not. The literature decisively points towards examples where gated communities are growing, and not how they can be stopped or reformed. My research attempts to understand the state’s political role in facilitating the emergence of gated communities. In the Puerto Rican case study that I offer city officials will be interviewed to capture a glimpse of the municipal government’s position.

## **Interviews**

A significant component of this dissertation includes interviews with several Guaynabo municipal officials in order to have a better assessment of gated communities, since it has been significantly neglected by the literature<sup>32</sup>. Since such information has not been documented to my knowledge, I interviewed different figures in the municipal structure. In terms of methodology I plan to have a number of set questions that will be used for all, and a particular set of questions for each office. The nature of the interview will be semi-structured, in order to provide a flexible setting in which I can obtain information. The Legal Affairs (*Asuntos Legales*) office will award me with the opportunity to see if the municipality

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<sup>32</sup> See Appendix B for an outline of the Guaynabo government.

has followed a particular policy in terms of gated communities. This office features a *control de acceso* unit that deals exclusively with gating. Out of all the offices that I will interview, this is the only office that “nominally” should be best qualified to answer my questions. The other offices interact with gated community issues daily; but do not have as their sole purpose to address issues like the ones I will present.

The Land Use and Planning office (*Ordenación Territorial*) is crucial in my inquiry since it is in charge of planning and offering a broader view of the urban process in Guaynabo. This office has as its mission to shape space in the municipality, and I am interested in learning what drives their office in relation to gated communities. This is crucial since out of the scarce literature that I have examined none has considered the role of this office, particularly since it is closely linked to the *Ley de Municipios Autónomos* (LMA).<sup>33</sup>

The Municipal Police is one of those entities that I did not initially consider for this inquiry. But the mayor’s statement on crime rates in gated communities was too provoking to ignore. The goal with this interview is to see if they can corroborate the mayor’s statements and how they patrol these communities. Do they prefer to have gates or not? Most importantly, if my findings reflect that they do not deter crime, conventional wisdom would be debunked. And I will finally interview Mr. Albizu a well known lawyer in

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<sup>33</sup> The LMA emerged out of the context of the 1980’s when disappointment with management by state government. The goal of this law was to decentralize the responsibilities of state government and award those authorities back to local government (*municipios*). It could be denominated “Puerto Rican Style Devolution.” The LMA was set in place under the leadership of Rafael Hernández Colón’s third term as governor (1988-1992). A more elaborate account can be found in Angel I. Rivera and Héctor Ríos Maury, pp. 319-334.

Guaynabo who has consistently figured as one of the main municipal advisors on this subject.

### **Elite Interviewing**

This introduction has presented the main arguments in terms of the officers that I will interview and its reasons. By discussing some of the existing literature on interviews I want to make clear why this particular research method was selected. Lewis Dexter points out in “Elite and Specialized Interviewing” that “interviewing is the preferred tactic of data collection when in fact it appears likely that it will get better data or more data or data at less cost than other tactics!” (Dexter, 1970: 11). Considering the scarcity in terms of published materials on this issue, interviews should yield significant contributions.

The interviews I conducted were with people who constitute the elite of Guaynabo’s municipal hierarchy. They have privileged information in terms of their respective responsibilities, and direct contact to Guaynabo’s leading political figures. Most of these actors have been part of these changes occurring in Guaynabo, since these developments have occurred over the past two decades.

Some have argued that social scientists do not study elites since they are “difficult to identify and often are inaccessible, much less open to being the subjects of scrutiny” (Odendahl and Shaw, 2001: 299). A particular issue in many occasions is that elites are not part of the public eye, and gaining access to them can be challenging. The literature points to the challenges posed by gaining entry or access to these private figures. That certainly was not the experience with my dissertation research. By narrowing my research interest and taking a look at the municipal flow chart and description of each office, I was able to assess where I should direct my attention. A key element in the initial phase of my interview

process was the fact that I was not going to interview elected officials. I knew which agencies to target during the interview, but not individuals that hold those positions and that later I would have the opportunity to interview.

Elements of elite interviewing literature influenced my interviewing process; particularly A. Cochrane's 1998 "Illusions of power: interviewing local elites". In this work the author recognizes the difficulty in exploring local power structures. Cochrane argues that the emphasis in research has now shifted towards the study of local politics (Cochrane, 1998: 2123).

This research is going to likely yield some particularities, but as Chapter One should remind readers, this responds to a wider situation. I do recognize that I am limiting this research only to local government, and leaving out powerful players who lie outside of this structure. Cochrane argues that "the powerful do not necessarily live in the places where they influence the operation of local politics" (Cochrane, 1998: 2126). I argue that in this particular case, Guaynabo might be a case where the powerful influence the community where they live. The analysis of the interviews conducted at the *Ordenación Territorial* and *Policía Municipal* will show how powerful sectors were in charge of drafting and promoting these new laws (i.e. Law 21 of 1987). I share the concept of elites presented by Woods, where the author points to elites, not as hierarchical structures, but as a web of fluid social relations (Woods, 1998: 2103). This contemplates for the fluid nature of those who shape space in Guaynabo that can include city officials, contractors, the economy, and community leaders. In terms of conducting interviews L. McDowell's 1998 "Elites in the City of London: some methodological considerations" brings the issue of positionality in terms of using connections when conducting interviews (McDowell, 1998: 2136). My position as an

interviewer is that of having access to people at the municipality and being a resident, which places me in an advantageous situation.<sup>34</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The literature I examined in this chapter has its origins in the United States, with California as the principal case study. The first neighborhood associations were product of eastern cities like New York and Boston. Chapter Two just presented some of the most significant contributions to the understanding of gated communities. I have shown some of its shortcomings and possible lines of inquiry for future research, in particular its highly descriptive nature that for the most part lacks explanatory power. It also does not fully contextualize the circumstances and conditions where gated communities are found. The international literature follows the same predicament.

This dissertation addresses the case study of Guaynabo and is highly influenced by my understanding of the literature that preceded my research. Guaynabo features the typologies developed by Blakely and Snyder that fall under the category of prestige communities and security zone communities. These two typologies will become part of the analysis throughout the dissertation. Chapter Three will feature political analysis that has shaped my understanding of space and power. I will engage the most pertinent examinations,

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<sup>34</sup> I present the data that is consistent throughout my interviews and those that varied. Since I have been the youngest in all the interviews, I did my best to visually compensate by growing a beard and dressing in similar fashion to how men dress at these offices. I cannot certainly say if I was treated as an expert or ignoramus (as McDowell qualifies it). Certain people recognized some expertise in terms of how they talked to me, while others simply addressed me as a student who was there in order to gather information from the experts (i.e. the interviewee). What consistently surfaced was my academic affiliation. It was quite helpful to be linked to UMass since it was a recognizable name. The possible reasons for this are many, (1) its location in the US east coast, (2) a state that features a considerable number of Puerto Rican communities, (3) a considerable UMass alumni in Puerto Rico, or (4) the UMass men's basketball program of the mid 1990's that had several Puerto Rican players on its roster.

and offer my interpretations on how they can be incorporated into the case study of Guaynabo.

These typologies are a recurring element throughout the dissertation, as is the consideration of the engagement between local government and gated communities. An additional consideration for my research is the examination of the possible existence of a coherent policy in Guaynabo on gated communities, and the potential reasons for the municipality to support that particular political project.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CITY MARKETING**

#### **Introduction**

The gated community literature provides case studies that offer typologies and nuanced accounts. I have noticed that the literature is frequently void of concrete political considerations. It also lacks concrete elements of public policy formation, city marketing will help us understand how possibly Guaynabo is framing its urban policy. In order to situate the reader prior to the following literature the hypothesis that drives this analysis is the following; *if Guaynabo has a particular policy that favors gated communities this will have city marketing as one of the most significant elements for its justification.*

#### **City marketing**

An element that is relevant in understanding the case study is the concept of city marketing. This is a tool by which cities engage a particular public in order to attract them to invest and gain interest in a city. Hermenegildo Seisdedos (2004) states that it is not enough for cities to be a backbone of their economic activity, they must also offer a variety of services such as public works, housing and others. The social changes that have made city marketing an important element are the following: first, a large protagonism for cities, where it can have a more effective intervention over important issues such as the environment, employment, health and education. Second, a growing competition among cities, this as quality of life becomes increasingly important and physical means become more important; and third the technological and communications revolution that has been emerging over the past two decades (Seisdedos, 2004: 55).

A key component of this dynamic is how the city is perceived not only by its citizens but most importantly by its future and potential clients (p. 56). The city's image should be designed in such a way that it summarizes and highlights the personality of the city's trademark (p. 56). The strategic work of the city's identity and image is a key component for achieving the desired positioning.

City marketing is situated in a conceptual or symbolic level where it pays special attention to the perception of its clients and of other cities that compete for investment. A city can materialize its strategies, focus on its clients, and can be useful in highly competitive markets where the capacity of each competitor to control the market is limited.

A key element when thinking of this dissertation's case study is that: "what is really important are the functions that the city does, which do not depend mostly on its size but its available resources (Seisdedos, 2004: 58).<sup>35</sup> Guaynabo is not largest geographical municipality, it has historically been a poor municipality, but today it has the highest per capita income in Puerto Rico. Today Guaynabo enjoys significant resources making it a prime space for enacting practices that enable city marketing practices to emerge.

Seisdedos argues that in terms of the central elements of city marketing a number of measures must be taken to attract possible investors, future residents, businesses and also satisfy current residents. An important element when generating a practice of city marketing is establishing the capacity by municipalities to design a clear strategy over how to enact such a policy (p. 59). A key component is that this dynamic emerges out of municipal autonomy, a dynamic that is generated by the municipality without necessarily having other forces interacting over the municipality. Once city marketing and a particular image and

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<sup>35</sup> My translation.

reputation of the city is generated (its position), this influences the attractiveness of each identifiable urban product separately and autonomously (e.g. offices, hotels, land, etc.)

Guaynabo has a number of qualities that can help it launch a city marketing campaign, including a strong municipal government and political stability. Some of the elements that we can present as evidence in terms of a coherency are the use of English as a language throughout most of the municipal buildings,<sup>36</sup> and the constant use of city slogans in official documents, and city vehicles.

As Seisdedos points out, this is a municipal enterprise, a significant in the context of Guaynabo where the mayor and the municipal structure have been effective over the past decade. This practice has been magnified since Guaynabo gained the status of an autonomous municipality at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>37</sup>

A significant element to consider as part of this argument is that according to Seisdedos there are occasions when municipalities engage in city marketing practices “Traditionally many of these actions [city marketing] have been done in an isolated way, without any previous planning. And what is even worse, not even knowing if such actions are the ones that the city really needed to achieve their expected objectives” (2004: 59).<sup>38</sup>

### **A political take on city marketing**

In the previous section I presented aspects behind the concept of city marketing. Carlos A. de Mattos explained how globalization, real estate and urban transformation

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<sup>36</sup> The use of English in the municipality of Guaynabo starting in the 1990’s was a bold move since it was the first in Puerto Rico. This generated a significant number of criticisms, since language is a contested topic in Puerto Rico with significant political connotations. Today other municipalities with mayors that also favor statehood for Puerto Rico have adopted this practice (e.g. San Juan).

<sup>37</sup> Later in the dissertation I will showcase the municipal structure.

<sup>38</sup> My translation.

interact in different Latin American cities. A particular element that he argues that is significant to this analysis is the way that city marketing plays a significant role in terms of attracting private capital. He argues that because of the recent increase or interest in real estate we have seen an increasing mercantilization of urban development (p. 83). A key component that the de Mattos has presented and that has been recognized by the literature is the capacity for high mobility that capital has enjoyed as a result of the dynamics of globalization.

As a result of changes that globalization has brought with the assistance of technology the world has seen a higher mercantilization of urban development for the following three reasons: first, the uncontrollable financing of the world economy stimulated by deregulatory policies, privatization, and liberalization that took a significant change since the mid 1970's. And second, the abandonment of the efforts for promoting a rational normative and centralized urban planning, which was replaced by a focus on neutral criteria and subsidizing state. This helped to consolidate a situation where decisions and private actions could be displayed with more autonomy and liberty than in the past. Third, strategies such as city marketing by which cities explicitly and deliberately attract foreign capital has helped to increase private real estate investment, and has had an increasing role in urban and metropolitan transformation (p. 83). De Mattos argues that these changes have promoted an increasing role for private investment, and consequently the imposition of strict capital logic in urban development.

For the purpose of the dissertation and the case study what is of great interest is the component of city marketing that links it to gated communities. These communities can be

used purposefully or not as a way of reconfiguring space and giving a particular source of identity for the particular layout of a municipality.

De Mattos (2007) argues that cities have always been under competition, but now this competition is a central component of the urban process. The justification for city marketing has consisted of arguing that a larger flow of capital constitutes a requirement in order to increase productive capability and growth. This would be a necessary condition in order to increase employment levels and of income, and in order to ensure a better quality of life for its residents (2007: 91). The real estate industry has been highly valued by urban administrations, since their involvement cultivates the construction industry and this ultimately generates jobs in this economic sector. What is the final balance of these changes? In the case of South America de Mattos points out how cities become unequal and fragmented or might see an increase in their inequalities. The great inequality will lie in those that cannot afford a property under these terms.

Considering the preceding literature I will like to think that my hypothesis, as outlined earlier in the chapter, if proven would show how city marketing allows for a partnership between the municipality and residents that allowed for the privatization of certain services and social spaces. If I can demonstrate that Guaynabo attracts expensive gated communities this can validate what McKenzie (1994) has argued in his case study of Las Vegas. When a municipality attracts high end communities, this will help to fund different enterprises in the town (e.g. recycling programs, public works, and beautifications projects). These will help to elaborate an element of distinction in the municipality generating a *esprit d' corps* among its employees, a sense of pride among its residents, and generating Guaynabo's exceptionalism as a space where "government works".

This will have the end result of generating a prestigious brand more admired by residents and non residents. This is when an effective element of city marketing plays a significant role. As Guaynabo enhances its brand name this legitimizes political satisfaction among its residents and will prove to be a crucial economic element in Guaynabo. As this element of quality of life improves in Guaynabo it will attract capital to the city which is considerably important in boosting its economy by attracting more investment into the municipality that will raise its revenue and profile.

In Guaynabo, and the case of most municipalities in Puerto Rico, the goal is to attract local capital in construction industry, not foreign. This is one of the few economic instances where there is a class of local capital at work. The capital is mostly Puerto Ricans with its banking industry, the workforce is local<sup>39</sup>, and most of the raw material is found in the island (i.e. sand, concrete). This reliance on the construction industry presents a significant problem since it is a volatile industry on which to base a national economy, including the severe negative impact that it can have on the environment and use of space.

It is important to keep in mind in order to understand this case study that the brand name of Guaynabo City has municipal support, where it originated by naming its buildings with names in English and making use of Five Star City as one of its elements. Public works employees also use uniforms that feature many of these elements; its services also follow such logic like the Guaynabo City Roamer.<sup>40</sup> This has created a brand that can be physically defined and can be seen by residents and nonresidents.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Migrant labor whether it is legal or not is part of this workforce. This has been barely acknowledged by the literature in Puerto Rico.

<sup>40</sup> This is a transportation service that runs throughout the municipality.

<sup>41</sup> The incorporation of Guaynabo City into popular culture has been significant. For example there is G City Magazine, Guaynabo City Blues which is published in *La Revista* of

## **Governmental Role**

In order to understand how city marketing can be at work in Guaynabo it becomes relevant to understand how local government interacts with different instances. Setha Low (2003) frames the situation as one where private interests are taking over public spaces. This is happening by way of zoning, taxes and incorporation. Physical means such as private security guards, gates and walls are also used in order to achieve these goals of privatization. Low highlights non-physical means by which privatization occurs. These include Business Improvement Districts (BID) which she defines as “private organizations allowed to tax local business and retail establishments to provide private services such as special policing, trash removal, or street renovation” (Low, 2003: 83).

Private gated communities use other means that are connected to regional and municipal planning. These include incorporation, incentive zoning, and succession and annexation. Incorporation was promoted “by homeowners who wanted to limit their property tax burden, expansion of government bureaucracies, and social welfare programs” (Low, 2003: 93). This was a product of Los Angeles politics in the late 1950’s which provided the precedent for a practice that is common today. The political consequence is that private governments become public entities that can then tax their residents and use the funds for private community needs.

Low presents the example of incentive zoning in Nassau County, Long Island, New York. Here the incentive permits the construction of more houses than allowed in exchange for the provision of amenities for the town or village (2003: 95). These new developments keep taxes low since there are more houses. The key to this dynamic is that its logic operates

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*El Nuevo Día* newspaper that offers accounts of Guaynabo written by Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá.

in spaces where land is scarce and developers promote high density in order to generate public space. This principle may very well be at work in the zoning practices of Puerto Rico.

Annexation takes place when municipal governments join together in order to save money. However, in the process, the quality of services often declines. Annexation also occurs when cities incorporate existing gated communities. This raises concerns over the amount of taxes that an individual must pay. Not surprisingly, as a consequence the issues of local government and gated communities are numerous. One example is documented in Washington D.C., where local governments have assisted in the formation of mandatory homeowners associations, quasi-governmental organizations (QUANGOS). This particular example showcases how local governments have assisted in the formation of organizations, such as HOA and QUANGOS. Those who favor special districts argue that “they offer the chance to provide services in areas with limited financial and administrative capabilities” (Mallett, 1993: 388). In addition, a burden is not placed on local government if these spaces are able to raise their own funds. An additional positive feature presented by Mallett is that local government stays away from the political wrangling that may ensue in these urban spaces. Despite the many arguments for these communities, critics of this movement point to a number of problematic elements such as the fragmentation that it can cause, and the promotion of individual solutions.<sup>42</sup> Who is responsible for the emergence of gated communities, the local government or a particular homeowners’ association? It should be noted that this process of generating HOAs is spearheaded by local governments.

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<sup>42</sup> · Of these, I want to underscore to government fragmentation and the loss of public accountability. This is crucial because of the impact that it has for democracy at neighborhood level.

According to Mallett the groundwork for privatization can be broken down to the following four principles: (1) It is assumed that the public sector initiates change in the public and private dynamic, (2) the services provided by the private sector have been awarded or granted by the public sector, (3) certain governmental functions, such as taxation, coercion and the administration of justice, are more difficult to privatize or should not be privatized, and finally, (4) privatization means that the local government is rolling back (Mallett, 1993: 389).

In the example concerning Washington D.C., one of the reasons for the development of business initiative districts is the fact that the city's government is fiscally unable and politically unwilling to commit more resources to the upkeep of downtown or other business access (Mallett, 1993: 395). Mallett argues that private government is part of local government for the following reasons: first, homeowners associations are not voluntary; second, the coercive power of the private government emerges out of the state; and third, the state controls these organizations. The evidence that Mallett presents leads him to the conclusion that the private sector interest uses state authority to construct a parallel local state (1993: 407). He concludes that local government has not shrunk, but in fact it has expanded.

It is important to keep in mind that there are a number of reasons for the expansion of local government. Even when it seems that private government keeps expanding it occurs under the auspices of local government that acts as a facilitator. This relationship is crucial in my later discussion of how local government interacts with gated communities.

The dynamic between local government and gated communities has a number of ramifications, the relation among residents, between city and HOA's, and in particular the consequences of gated community's impact on nonmembers. According to David Kennedy,

some of the harm that residential associations cause includes the development of exclusive communities by gating formerly public streets and neighborhoods and by increasing the fiscal burden of cities and states (1995: 763). Since residential associations have significant power Kennedy argues that they should be treated as state actors. The analysis of residential associations that Kennedy offers pertains to neighborhoods where streets have been privatized and walls have been erected (1995: 765). This example includes what I consider to be lifestyle communities such as The South Carolina Sea Islands, to the “private street” movement that in my estimation falls under Blakely and Snyder’s typology of security–zone communities (Kennedy, 1995: 768-769). This example shows the range of the different types of communities that are part of Kennedy’s examination. These findings and analysis are useful to the case study of Guaynabo since this town has closed a significant number of streets, showcasing a significant number of security-zone communities.

David Kennedy elaborates on how nonmembers are penalized, but my focus is on the interaction between local government and their communities. My project looks into how local government engages their communities. In other words what kind of interests that interact in the state’s interests in promoting these communities, and what is driving this logic.

Kennedy documents how very frequently gated communities take over facilities created at the public’s expense. This places a burden on the taxpayers who do not get to use many of these facilities.<sup>43</sup> Residential homeowners associations generally seek a tax status in which they are not taxed on the membership fees that they collect or a tax arrangement that benefits the association rather than the individual (p. 776).

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<sup>43</sup> These facilities can include parks, athletic fields or community centers.

This analysis raises the question of when it is appropriate for municipalities to regulate gated communities and their boundaries. Local government can make use of police powers (even if limited) in order to place limits on gated communities (p. 545). The most significant limit on the power of local government to regulate land use is the constitutional prohibition against taking private property for public use without just compensation (p. 548). This is the situation at the American federal level; at the state level the dynamic is different because some states offer more latitude than others (p. 522).

A situation that is rare in the literature is one in which the city is permitted to ban gates.<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to note that existing gated community literature almost exclusively considers local governments that facilitate the construction of these communities. The conclusion of Damstra's analysis illustrates that local government has the capacity to prevent the proliferation of gated communities (Damstra, 2001: 560). Thus, one must consider the following question: if local governments have the power to prevent gated communities why do so few use it? I argue that the gated community consensus and the forces discussed below are a significant reason for this behavior. The main influences are market forces, public interest, and capital shaping space and politics, and local government's interests.

### **Interaction between gated communities and local government**

The existing literature has dealt mostly with gated communities that provide privatized services. These services had been traditionally provided by municipal government and that consequently has weakened local democratic governance, both in terms of being an organization that has a duty to provide services for all of its citizens, and in terms of fiscal

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<sup>44</sup> Damstra points to several examples in "Don't Fence us Out: The Municipal Power to Ban Gated communities and the Federal Takings Clause", *Valparaiso University Law Review*, 2001, vol. 35, pp. 525-560. In footnote 8 he points to La Habra Heights, California, and the communities of Cary and Carrboro in North Carolina.

solvency for the city (Gated Communities: A Systemic Review of the Research Evidence, 2003: 42).

Now I consider the literature that focuses on how local governments benefit from the erection of these gated communities. Renaud LeGoix (2003) examines how gated communities in Southern California follow a particular logic. Local governments consider gated communities to be a valuable source of revenue because suburbanization costs are paid by private developers and homebuyers. These costs consist of all the processes that followed in order to build subdivisions, such as land studies, geologists, engineers and all other costs. This forms a public-private partnership whose result is an urban infrastructure that increases local segregation (2003: 1). An essential premise of Le Goix, which I also share, is the belief that gated communities are commodities produced by the real estate industry (p. 2). The reason this is relevant for my project is that I, too, will discuss gated communities and capital as part of the same dynamic.

Another author who has taken a similar approach to LeGoix's is Evan McKenzie (1998). His most recent work considers the role of local government and how it benefits from increasing the local tax base. His work and Le Goix's are the two most relevant to my project since they focus on the role of local government. McKenzie discusses the reasons why CIDs have been spreading. He points to the supply side that consists of the roles and concerns of local government and real estate developers in facilitating their emergence. He points to them, but what does he say about them? In contrast, the demand side points to the desires of homeowners in their desire of buying these types of communities.

According to McKenzie, the event that facilitated CIDs' popularity in California was the approval of Proposition 13 in 1978 which decreased the power of local government to

finance its activities through property tax (1998: 56). This change in the tax structure and the consequent reduction of the public capability to build and maintain infrastructure made CIDs' more attractive to local government (p.56). Real estate prices and local fiscal constraints explain the spread of CID Housing in California (p. 67). McKenzie concludes his study by pointing that the supply side is benefited in this dynamic.

Le Goix and McKenzie argue that gated communities became more prevalent because of the push to build by contractors. During the 1960's land costs were rising and CID units were less expensive to build than what was built at the time.<sup>45</sup> In addition to local governments and developers, McKenzie also argues that CIDs have become more popular because of the buying choices made by homeowners. The author presents these as choices, but I argue that these choices are not entirely freely made. Space is shaped, never neutral, and this limits the possible purchasing options for the buying public. Space is impacted by the economy, public policy by governments, and behavior by individuals and others. Prestige also is an important factor for many people, particularly when language plays an essential role in this issue. Language has a significant role since the names given to residential projects can make it more attractive for potential buyers.

Evan McKenzie examined the concrete case of Las Vegas. In his paper "Private Gated Communities in the American Urban Fabric" he examines how gated communities have been emerging in that city under a "neoliberal consensus". The municipality took the responsibility of promoting gated communities in the city. This example points to the level of interest that a particular municipality takes in making sure that gated communities are built. This examination is relevant since it focuses on municipal politics.

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<sup>45</sup> In Puerto Rico most of the land had agricultural purposes mostly for the sugar cane industry.

Recent developments in the literature have presented arguments for privatizing neighborhoods. This is particularly significant since many municipalities are moving in the direction of allowing their space to be used in order to build more subdivisions. Robert Nelson (2005) embodies an optimistic view of the market and its faculties. He highlights, as I also do here, the fact that political science has failed to offer a significant study of the gated community phenomenon (2005: xix). I agree with Nelson's point that the development of private neighborhoods has been a product of the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (p.21). It needs to be recognized now that earlier inceptions of private government in neighborhoods were seen as early as in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

An important element that I need to clarify is that private neighborhoods are not the same as gated communities. Nelson reminds us that gated communities are simply one of many types of neighborhood associations that exist (p. 29). He proposes an exploration of the rise of neighborhood associations and its social significance (p. xix). Nelson argues that zoning provides the legal authority for suburban communities to exclude others (p. 6).

Like me and many other researchers, Nelson holds to the common understanding that local governments granted approval of large new projects on the condition that local services be provided by the neighborhood association so the fiscal responsibility would not be assumed by the local government (p. 41). Nelson also points out that neighborhood associations are able to engage in forms of social discrimination in which a municipal government are not (p. 66). The capacity for discrimination that neighborhood association

have is its operation as private property<sup>46</sup>, element that allows them to determine who will be admitted to the community and who will not.

Nelson recognizes that the extent of discrimination has not been fully established. Courts, legislative bodies and other political realms are debating this and making it clear that discrimination is more than the forces of the market at work or simply a logic of supply and demand. It seems that the consumer demands discrimination. This gives validity particularly to Setha Low's (2003) argument that residents of gated communities seek a homogeneous space. Nelson fails to fully recognize the problematic of the creation of a homogeneous space.

In his eagerness to give a progressive face to his project, Nelson claims that neighborhood associations can be described as socialist (2005: 69). His version of socialism is "American style privately established, voluntarily chosen individual by individual, and linked to a small geographic scale" (Ibid). Nelson presents this view by claiming that this shows a different side of American character by going away from its tradition as an individualistic society. Such Americans favor more physical and social closeness in these communities and tighter control over their daily lives. In my opinion, this understanding is limited and problematic since it stems from individual decisions in the context of liberalism. The fact that individuals are willing to surrender liberties in order to obtain a greater good does not necessarily make it a socialist model.

It will be interesting to see if the gated community lobby picks up on this portrayal of these communities as embodying a kind of socialist or progressive agenda. Such a stance might serve to legitimize expansion of private neighborhoods across the United States and

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<sup>46</sup> Robert H. Nelson argues that the criterion for discrimination has not been settled. These have not been settled by courts, legislative bodies and other policy making forums.

elsewhere where criticism might emerge. In terms of worldwide patterns, it is interesting to note that the United States is a trend-setter in terms of the literature on this particular topic.

Nelson delves into the inner dynamics of local government and neighborhood associations. These associations are subject to the jurisdiction of the municipal or other public government and it works as if they are two local legislatures. This is a novel way by which to talk about this dynamic, because this is one of the few places in the literature that is addressed as such. An interesting element behind Nelson's nomenclature is his use of neighborhood association rather than the more common homeowners association. The way the author presents these associations seems to be a more palatable way to understand them, by making these more appealing to the interested audience.

Nelson asserts that neighborhood associations have been limited by state governments. The author advocates for neighborhood associations to follow a business model of governance (p. 86). The logic followed here is quite consistent: the market should be favored, and the individual is a customer.

The political consequence of this approach is that it focuses on generating a profit for contractors and those who benefit economically from this type of development. By neglecting social considerations that are not paramount to the previously mentioned forces. I argue that a greater good is not considered here, unless it is that of the market. The individual will have room to operate according to his or her position in the market. A snowball effect seems to be present here, in that one should let the customer follow the dictates of the market and their expectations will be fulfilled and each resident will take care of their own. The segregation that LeGoix has documented in Southern California is a likely consequence.

Nelson contemplates the possibility that neighborhood associations will stop existing one day. He believes “constitutional process for terminating a neighborhood association would offer a superior method of local assembly” (p. 97). The relevance of this for my project is that this is an additional instance where homeowners’ associations and government would have to engage in a dialogue. The gated community literature has failed to recognize and consider this possibility. The consequences for associations that got formed and dissolved later would show a more fluid process for HOAs. The literature does not document a significant process of dissolving associations; this might be a significant trend in the future, by not at this time.

This issue is a political source of contention for local government and gated communities. If at this point the trend is towards promoting the formation of these organizations, is a reversal of this trend likely? I would venture to say that it would be easier to end these associations in urban spaces where individual houses are the norm. Dissolution is unlikely in cases where common recreational spaces, walls, maintenance, trash collection or common walls are shared. If that were to happen, local government would likely have to pick up the responsibilities. By contemplating this possibility Nelson has definitely brought to our attention a crucial topic that has been barely considered by the literature.

Nelson has a vested interest in making these communities work by becoming more popular and appealing. He envisions the possibility of the formation a well-organized group that is politically active and engaged (p. 129). Who would lead this group? How coherent would they be? Would local government support these communities? Community leaders can be ideal figures to launch political movements. Such leaders possess knowledge of their communities and possibly the resources to launch a political project.

Underlying Nelson's arguments is the notion that we may be entering into a postmodern era. Nelson thinks of this era as a growing society that is subdividing into smaller units (p. 197). If this were to happen it would imply that private neighborhoods will gain more salience. Nelson draws attention to the fact that the opinion of American intellectuals about private neighborhood associations has been mostly critical. He argues they have not caught on and that "most political scientists and other urban students have not connected this new way of thinking to the rise of the private neighborhood association" (p. 198).

Nelson believes that the rise of private neighborhoods responds mostly to a grassroots movement. It includes a leading real estate industry, a few government civil servants, and ordinary men and women; it has been basically a social revolution (p. 199). I would like to provide some critical distance from these comments. First, this idea is totally enmeshed in the logic of the market. How do we explain or account for those who have no social mobility (i.e. income) and those that are excluded for other reasons such as race, income, level of education? Second, describing it as a grassroots movement has the consequence of portraying its emergence as organic, though it is difficult to uncover its origins. Third, why is the role of the state only slightly acknowledged or not at all? What were those few government civil servants following? Is this an innate impulse by these officials to follow a trend or can we account for a different logic?

I consider that such a facile conclusion is unfair; most importantly, I have paid more attention to the origins of gated communities. While Nelson has done important work focusing on the blossoming nature and future prospects of these communities, he has not taken into consideration the diversity of them. Some were built with gates in mind; others

were not. Nelson begins his analysis of neighborhood associations in existing communities under problematic terms. He argues that if these communities could begin again many would have established neighborhood associations (p. 259). However, he provides no evidence for such a claim.

For this dissertation project, I have attempted to avoid unfounded statements, and for that reason my objective is quite specific in terms of the timeline, town, and object of study. My aim is to provide an analysis of the rise of gated communities in the city of Guaynabo over the past twenty years.

As part of his analysis Nelson claims that “state governments enact new legislation to provide for the creation of new private neighborhood associations in older neighborhoods of existing homes” (p. 259). It is interesting to note that such a provision has existed in Puerto Rico since 1987. The logic that publicly drove that process was the perceived rise of crime rates, and consequently, gating was presented as a crime fighting mechanism. The Puerto Rican legislation does not allude to any particular legislation or example in a different jurisdiction that served as a model for its development. The genesis of this law has not received significant attention by Puerto Rican academics. Some possible reasons are that in Puerto Rico there is no culture, let alone a consistent publication that follows the emergence of the legislative process. There is no publication similar to what Roll Call Newspaper does in the United States, this fuels what I have called the “Gated community consensus” where gated community has been the subject of little attention of academic research in Puerto Rico considering its growing presence during the last twenty years.

Robert H. Nelson advocates for the creation of Neighborhood Associations in an Established Neighborhood (NASSEN). The logic of the market, or maybe of popular

empowerment, runs rampant in his suggestions. For example, as part of Municipal-Neighborhood Negotiations, Nelson expects a service transfer agreement between the local government and the neighbors (p. 266). Clearly the goal here is to privatize. Puerto Rico's gated community context can serve as an alternative model. On this island, local government promotes the emergence of neighborhood associations and local government provides basic services like trash collection, recycling and maintaining parks and athletic facilities.

In the case of Guaynabo, I point to a hybrid model since it provides certain public services to the communities, but others are operated privately in conjunction with the homeowners association. Why does Guaynabo's government still provide these services? Why does it not opt for privatization? This is one of the critical elements of my dissertation project that will receive full attention later, but a preliminary answer is that this is a good vehicle for a clientelistic state to keep its hold on a particular community. This will eventually lead to a thorough discussion of the role of the state and what is happening in Guaynabo. What is the role of Guaynabo's municipal government in this issue?

Underlying Nelson's argument is his belief in the existence of an inefficient state which is weak at providing services. He asserts the following: "Private provisions of common services might particularly benefit many urban neighborhoods in big cities now receiving these services from distant public bureaucracies" (p. 269). Why is there such a hesitancy to improve local government? Is there any hope for local government?

An important element that Nelson fails to recognize is the homogeneity of neighborhoods. The communities that mobilize to form a neighborhood association are in a better position to negotiate with local government. What happens to those that are not able to organize? Is the burden on the state to take care of them? Will everyone have the same

access to organize his or her own NASSEN regardless of income, race or any other condition?

Assuming that rent increases in a particular neighborhood after a NASSEN has been created, Nelson believes people will be able to find attractive neighborhoods with more reasonable rent (p. 310). This blind trust in the market is disturbing. Is there any guarantee that everyone will be able to find a desirable neighborhood after he or she has had to move from the previous one? Also, once a NASSEN is created, what will happen to those who cannot afford to pay the fees for the responsibilities that their community has assumed?

Nelson is quite insightful when the inner dynamics of each neighborhood association is considered. He is quite democratic in his consideration of such issues as elections and the creation and workings of a board of directors. Fully aware of the deficiencies that come in the associations' decision making processes, he keeps in mind the frequency by which dictatorial boards of directors emerge (p. 342). Democratic neighborhood associations are attractive to people, such appeal helps to advance his political project.

## **Conclusion**

I have discussed and presented some of the main political issues that have been raised in relation to gated communities. The most important consideration to keep in mind is that space is not neutral; it is subject to political and economic influences. This is particularly relevant when looking at lifestyle and prestige communities in which residents have more mobility and multiple options as to where to live.

The most significant connection to the following chapter on Puerto Rico's Urbanization Process is how context can facilitate urban changes. In the second chapter I presented some considerations in terms of the definitions of gated communities that have

been offered in the literature. This third chapter has considered the dynamic present in the introduction between gated communities and local government. This chapter has also stressed how the element of understanding context when examining gated communities is paramount in order to have a wider understanding of this dynamic. Chapter Four will document how Puerto Rico once featured an agricultural context and small cities over fifty years ago, and the political changes of the 1950's that allowed for the creation of industrialization.

## CHAPTER IV

### PUERTO RICO'S URBANIZATION PROCESS

#### **Introduction**

Puerto Rico has been the subject of an intense transformation, from a mostly rural country into a nation with several urban spaces featuring a sprawling context and the use of the automobile. In this sense Puerto Rican cities are no different than other cities in the world. What makes the Puerto Rican experience remarkably different is the high density of the city and the frantic pace in which the industrial change happened; practically in half a century. This chapter considers the types of urban settings that Puerto Rico had prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its change from an agricultural society driven by a consumer based economy. It is crucial to recognize that we can think of San Juan and its surrounding municipalities as a single metropolitan area starting from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century until the present.

This chapter focuses on the agents that promoted the process (e.g. the state, capital) and how the population adapted to these changes. Special attention is given to those regions that eventually formed San Juan and its surrounding metropolitan area. Guaynabo will play a facilitating role in San Juan as capital city of Puerto Rico.

Urban sprawl became a common feature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it came with its usual participants (i.e. intense use of the automobile, shopping malls).<sup>47</sup> Privately developed communities called *urbanizaciones* became an alternative to many Puerto Ricans as they

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<sup>47</sup> For a different interpretation on sprawl see Robert Bruegman (2005) *Sprawl: A compact history*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. The author argues that sprawl is not a product of the American 20<sup>th</sup> century experience. Ancient Rome and 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris are earlier examples of sprawl.

looked to improve their living conditions.<sup>48</sup> Eventually these *urbanizaciones* would be the precursor to today's gated communities. This chapter examines how space has been managed in Puerto Rico for building residential areas.

### **Early origins**

The first colonial settlements in Puerto Rico were Caparra established in 1508 by Juan Ponce de León, and Villa de Tavora established in 1509 and located in the western end of Puerto Rico. According to architect Edwin Quiles, author of *San Juan tras la fachada* (2003) two reasons were behind locating Caparra in that particular area: (1) the possibility of connecting the administrative location to the exploitation of the territory; and (2) the proximity to a bay that would guarantee the flow of mining products to Spain and receiving the materials needed for mineral extraction (p. 23). These were the practical conditions that made Caparra an initial attractive settlement. With the support of the Spanish Crown, Caparra was left for a new settlement in 1521 that paved the way for today's Old San Juan. The reasons for leaving Caparra were because of the precarious conditions it offered and the difficulty of its terrain for a new settlement. Aníbal Sepúlveda documents how the settlement of Caparra was built with materials that pointed to a temporary settlement. Permanent materials like rocks and other types were few, particularly since this settlement's presence was partially predicated on the search of gold. Only a few houses were built with materials that would lead to a permanent settlement.

The erection of walls around the city of San Juan was done by the taxation of its residents in order to protect the new city from attacks by the enemies of the Spanish Crown.

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<sup>48</sup> *Urbanizaciones* are single unit houses that became popular in Puerto Rico after the 1940's. I will be referring to this concept during the dissertation. Publications that I have consulted about *urbanizaciones* in Puerto Rico have named them subdivisions.

After the Dutch attacked San Juan in 1625 and occupied it for almost thirty days a massive wall was built around the old city with funds coming from the state's tobacco monopoly (Dietz, 1986: 8). This was a significant effort to protect a city that would be of significance to Spanish military establishment until its last days in 1898. During the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Puerto Rico's economy was mostly based on an emerging mining industry, and the second half of the century saw the emergence of a sugar cane economy product of slave labor.

Of other urban settlements in addition to San Juan, the most notable was San Germán, on the southwestern part of the island. Dietz points to the following: "In 1556, the 'city' of San Juan had only 130 vecinos (residents) and San Germán but 20" (Dietz, 1986: 7). The other settlements that were established in Puerto Rico had as their purpose to be spaces for gold mining. For that reason they were located next to rivers. According to Sepúlveda the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of the towns that constitute Puerto Rico's biggest cities today. By 1771 only four towns had over a 1,000 residents. Only San Juan and San Germán could be considered as significant urban enclaves at that time.

During this time period, Guaynabo played a secondary role as an outlier of San Juan and for this reason the capital city has been the source of our attention. The failed attempt of Caparra was Guaynabo's first urban experiment following European standards and promoted by a colonial power. When Guaynabo was finally established as a town in 1768 its nucleus (i.e. city hall, public *plaza*, and church) were located in a distant area from the Caparra settlement; for this reason I argue that Caparra and Guaynabo's historic urban center serve as two following two parallel historic formations, leading to two different entities. Edwin Quiles documents Guaynabo's role with San Juan as one of assisting the emerging city with

food and materials. The canals that connect both were the preferred method of transportation. This was practical since one of the problems that Caparra faced as a permanent settlement was transportation.

### **Nineteenth century expansion**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a change in Puerto Rico and its interaction with Spain, impacting the city of San Juan. By 1812 Puerto Rico stopped receiving funds from the *Situado Mexicano* and the country was subject to a number of changes.<sup>49</sup> The island started to show signs of an improved economy compared to the first three centuries of Spanish rule. Puerto Rico exported mostly to the United States and foreign trade improved “Between 1814 and 1854, foreign trade increased nearly 2,100 percent in total value, and from 1854 to 1883, another 141 percent” (Dietz: 19).

Like the rest of the island, San Juan was the subject of a series of changes during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Population increased during that century at an impressive rate, this population demographic growth was a result of a series of policies set in place by the Spanish Crown such as the *Cédula de Gracias* and the number of Spanish loyalists who arrived in Puerto Rico as a result of the Wars of Independence throughout Latin America.<sup>50</sup> During the nineteenth century “Population increased more than sixfold, reaching nearly one million by the time of the U.S. occupation in 1898” (Dietz, 1986: 16). To be certain, these changes would have an impact on San Juan. Vertical construction that was geared mostly towards housing became more frequent in San Juan, out of its need to accommodate more people in a reduced space (Quiles, 2003: 44).

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<sup>49</sup> The *Situado* was established in 1582 and its goal was to fund Puerto Rico’s colonial administration.

<sup>50</sup> The *Cédula de Gracias* was established in 1815 with the goal of promoting immigration to Puerto Rico from Europe.

As previously noted, San Juan was the subject of military fortification and walls for protection. A significant change stems from the economic development started in the island. Quiles notes that for the notable military buildings, the nineteenth century promoted the development of a new civic image of the city, more open to the participation of citizens with financial capacity (p. 48). This was particular to San Juan, and does not represent what was happening on the rest of the island. An underlying theme of all these developments was the role of the state. Most of these buildings were constructed with strict political considerations in mind. Some of their purposes were to pay for the transshipment of goods or to house the military.

During the nineteenth century there was a more elaborate project of the urban landscape. In 1837 the post of city architect was created in San Juan in order to improve the quality of the urban space that would be generated in the city (Quiles, 2003: 48). Evidently, this was relevant only to the segment of the population that could afford a second home. It is important to keep in mind that Puerto Rico was the poorest of the Spanish Colonies in the Americas. After the Wars of Independence, Puerto Rico kept that distinction since the other colonial possessions of the Spanish Crown in the Americas was Cuba, an island with more economic vibrancy. Despite the lack of resources there was a concerted effort on improving city life.

Guaynabo also played a significant role for a section of the population during the nineteenth century. During the sixteenth century it provided San Juan with goods, and during the nineteenth century it played a different role in relation to San Juan. Quiles documents that one of the ways San Juan's wealthy residents coped with the urban confinement was by having houses in the countryside. Monte Edén in Guaynabo provided a contrast that was

desired by many *sanjuaneros* (Quiles, 2003: 50).<sup>51</sup> This fact points to urban settlements beyond the realm of San Juan and its walled city. Historian Fernando Picó documented how shops of San Juan's surrounding towns were not vibrant. Guaynabo featured only five stores by 1820 while Santurce had thirteen (1993: 14).

Santurce de Cangrejos was one of the settlements outside of the walled city that experienced significant growth. In addition, other surrounding municipalities also witnessed changes. To contextualize what was happening around San Juan we need to look at its population and economy. The economic protagonism of the surrounding communities of San Juan was short-lived (Picó, 1988: 27). Strictly speaking this was the period between the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when sugar cane and coffee provided impulse to the economy.

An additional element that fostered a population growth outside the walled city of San Juan was the exclusion of certain residents. The municipal government of San Juan expelled from the walled city people who would not properly be incorporated into the workforce, or would not follow its sense of order (Picó, 1988: 31). During the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century most of this population settled outside the walled city and engaged in self-sustaining agriculture (Picó, 1988: 32).

One of the towns that emerged out of this economy of subsistence was Caimito in the municipality of Río Piedras.<sup>52</sup> Its significance to this project is twofold: first, it is a well-documented glimpse into what constitutes part of today's San Juan suburbs and second, Caimito is located next to Guaynabo and is a precedent to some of the connections that we

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<sup>51</sup> Residents of San Juan are called *sanjuaneros*.

<sup>52</sup> Río Piedras was incorporated into the Municipality of San Juan in the year 1951.

see today between San Juan and Guaynabo.<sup>53</sup> By taking a look at the last names and marriage licenses historians have tracked the emergence of this community. On that note, Picó points to two elements that add to the link that was mentioned previously. First, some residents of Santurce moved to Caimito as a result of changes in landholding patterns in Santurce. Second, family bonds were created by marriages between residents of Caimito and Guaynabo (Picó, 1988: 50). Caimito had no significant agricultural exploitation and its residents practiced self-sustaining agriculture. Its demographic composition is quite eclectic, consisting of freed slaves, mulattos, and Europeans of different extractions. This shows that San Juan's walled city was not the only source of development.

Considering this issue, a crucial question is how to characterize the economic activity and connections between San Juan and neighboring towns. The supply routes towards San Juan were not safe and for that reason business was not intense. The business in towns surrounding San Juan during the 1820's, such as Guaynabo, Santurce de Cangrejos and Toa Baja, were few and of little significance (Picó, 1993: 19).

The *Carretera Central* has been proposed since the 1830's and its eventual construction started in 1853 (Picó, 1988: 53).<sup>54</sup> By 1898 conditions inside the walled city was one of overpopulation. Some steps were taken to address issues such as facilitating business, for example, in 1897 the *Puerta de San Justo* that faced San Juan Bay was torn down.<sup>55</sup> This gave enclaves located next to the walled city, like *Puerta de Tierra*, a more direct access to the city. Private capital had a significant role in advocating for these changes

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<sup>53</sup> I am interested in understanding Guaynabo in this particular context.

<sup>54</sup> For more details on Puerto Rican roads during the 19<sup>th</sup> century see Jesús Martín Ramos (2006). *Las Comunicaciones en la isla de Puerto Rico*. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia.

<sup>55</sup> Pictures of San Justo gate and its eventual demolition can be seen in Feliciano Alonso (2007), *Álbum de Puerto Rico*. Madrid: Doce Calles.

in the city. As noted previously, the military establishment was apprehensive to changes that would tamper with the military infrastructure. The process of eliminating walls was not exclusive to Puerto Rico; other cities in the Caribbean and Latin America faced similar situations at that time.

Sectors like La Puntilla, Puerta de Tierra and Santurce de Cangrejos grew outside city walls as the economy during the 19<sup>th</sup> century intensified. Cangrejos had the particularity of being the first settlement outside the walled city of San Juan (Quiles, 2003: 108). This provided us with a glimpse of the past to where 21<sup>st</sup> century suburbia would be located. It is important to note that Puerta de Tierra and La Puntilla developed faster than Cangrejos because of its proximity to the walled city. By the 1890's Cangrejos witnessed resurgence in its development (Quiles, 2003: 112). This was promoted by a series of factors: lack of space in the walled city, development in productive capabilities and changes in agriculture (Quiles, 2003: 115).

## **1898**

In 1898 Puerto Rico was no longer in Spanish control as a result of the Spanish-Cuban-American War. By a naval invasion mostly through Guánica; Puerto Rico became an American territorial possession to this day.

San Juan had an urban master plan led by principles that came from Spain. Starting in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century a European blueprint was created for Puerto Rican urbanism. The military had a significant hold in terms of what done in the city. The Spanish army engineers were better suited and had more resources than city hall to get work done in the city. Sepúlveda documented the battles that ranged, particularly at the end of the 19th century, a time that saw an emergence of state-sponsored buildings at the northern end of the city.

The walled city was bursting in terms of its overpopulation and questionable health conditions. The 20<sup>th</sup> century presented San Juan with the opportunity to address these issues with a new colonial administration and its particular agenda. As mentioned, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the walls that faced the rest of the country came down and the opportunity for expansion became possible. With a new colonial power that promised democracy and epitomized modernity, Puerto Rico had significant expectations. The new regime promoted sugar cane cultivation as the main agricultural product. As a result, land moved into the hand of a few because of the production model that was brought. These landowners were mostly Americans, and many were not on the island (*ausentinstas*). To this end Dietz elaborates: “The ownership of land in general, and not just of that in sugar production became more highly concentrated under U.S. control, a pattern that was firmly in place by the end of the first decade of political domination” (Dietz, 1986: 106). What was more flagrantly problematic is that many of these farms were in violation of the 500-acre limit that was part of the Foraker (1900) and Jones Acts (1917) years later (both documents established the political guidelines for Puerto Rico under American rule). This is an example of how the agricultural interest of the sugar can industry was struggling for its survival. Ushering a transformation, that would lead the way for an increasingly industrialized and urban Puerto Rico.

Land was concentrated in the hands of few and the living condition for the majority of Puerto Ricans was one of poverty. These two issues led to dramatic impact at the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century that had consequences for demographics on the island. The male population started migrating to the shore to work at sugar cane plantations since tobacco and coffee lost economic significance.

During the 1930's Puerto Rico went through one of its most tumultuous decades during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The conditions for the working class worsened as they became poorer. Massive strikes were in place in sugar cane fields, the Great Depression was in effect and the Nationalist Party militantly struggled for independence. The government mobilized to address some of these concerns. The Chardón Plan that was set in place in the mid 1930's had a goal to "reduce unemployment; to end the monopoly of land, especially by absentee corporations; to reduce the flow of profit, interests, and dividends going to the United States; and to diversify the productive structure of the economy" (Dietz, 1986: 151). There was opposition to these changes and it took different attempts to get this project under way. President Roosevelt created the Puerto Rican Reconstruction Administration (PRRA) to support this plan.

The end of the 1930's witnessed the validation of the 500-acre law. The Puerto Rican government was able to take action against the Rubert Hermanos Company for violating it in a case that made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court on March 5, 1940. This was a sign of the changes to come in the economic realm, in political parties, and most importantly with the use of land. Popular unrest, shifts in Puerto Rican and American leadership paved the way for these changes. Social space would see dramatic change years later. To the extent that currently there is a detachment of most Puerto Ricans in terms of working the fields and where agricultural work is not well regarded by the public.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Partido Popular Democrático in power***

The 1940's was a dramatic decade in which new political alliances were formed. The *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD) emerged as the majority party in the elections during

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<sup>56</sup> This situation got to the extent where being called a *jibaro* (peasant), is used as an insult by some people. Language has played a role in shaping how place and its people are portrayed.

the 1940's. It is important to note that at this time the President nominated the governor of Puerto Rico. Luis Muñoz Marín emerged as the leader of this new political formation in addition to his position as president of the Senate. There was resistance to this political figure, particularly by *nacionalistas*.<sup>57</sup> During the 20<sup>th</sup> century Guaynabo provided a rural residence next to San Juan as was for Monte Edén centuries ago. Juan Antonio Corretjer, a *nacionalista* leader, was present at his Guaynabo home during the 1950 uprising against the Puerto Rican government (Rodríguez Juliá, 2005: 11). This provides some similarities in terms of the use that Guaynabo had for some of the elite. The number of changes during the 1940's and the Puerto Rican state was dramatic. Particularly since *parcelas* were being given to entitled recipients (Dietz, 1986: 200).

Land reform had a significant role, since more land would become owned by fewer people, paving the way for suburbia, also, the shift away from agriculture meant more land was accessible for prime development. The population's support of the PPD was a faithful accomplice to these changes in Puerto Rico since one of the main issues of the PPD campaign was land reform. Dietz interpreted land reform in the following way: "it was more a mechanism for Muñoz and the PPD to consolidate their power via popular reform which, however, lacked significant content and would have little long term impact on the economic and class structure" (Dietz, 1986: 196). Taking a different interpretation I argue that this land reform paved the way for the urban explosion of Puerto Rico.

The land reform partly allowed for the urban explosion seen in Puerto Rico for the following reasons: first, there was decentralization in the ownership of land. The state would

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<sup>57</sup> The *Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico* militantly advocated for Puerto Rican independence. Pedro Albizu Campos was their leader at the time, and the party's most important historical figure.

reclaim the ownership and redistribute to the public in subplots (*parcelas*). Second, land reform was the death knell of the sugar cane industry, signaling the consolidation of the industrialization project. This process favored the insertion of Puerto Ricans into a consumption driven economy, which had now the support of a new social space.

A number of recent studies consider the political elements behind the land reform that the PPD supported. For example, Rubén Nazario Velasco tries to shift attention from economic terms into cultural reasoning (p. 149). He argues that this will help us understand how land eventually became quite valuable as a real estate interest more than for agricultural use. Also, in a country whose economy was considered semi-feudal, owning land dramatically shattered that scheme, giving power to PPD supporters. The *parcelas* that were given to the people as part of the Land Act were partially owned by the government. In 1968 when the opposition party *Partido Nuevo Progresista* (PNP) won its first election, full ownership of *parcelas* were given to those who qualified.

Nazario Velasco points to Muñoz Marín as the person who promoted a discursive change that allowed for these agricultural lands to be split up and held by individuals. I argue that even though Muñoz Marín was the intellectual figure behind the project, during the 1940's the Puerto Rican state assumed a number of social responsibilities it had never taken on before, even during Spanish domination. Just to name an example, during the 1890's the electric power supplied to old San Juan came through by a private entity Luz Eléctrica. The Autoridad de Fuentes Fluviales was a state-supported agency created in 1941 with the mission of providing energy to this growing city, and the rest of the country.

A changing role of the state following the 1930's political crisis, repression of the opposition, PPD's rise to power, and the figure of Luis Muñoz Marín with massive popular

support made this project possible. In other words, we need to consider the new role of the state as part of this change, not forgetting that Muñoz Marín featured *caudillo* elements that were quite common in the Caribbean at that time. These were concrete changes that were articulated and facilitated by an industrial and urban expansion.

At this crucial juncture of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Muñoz Marín sought to change Puerto Rico's political structure and solidify his credentials in the spheres of American power. Darlington Long a contractor from South Carolina tried to derail the process of the new Puerto Rican constitution because of personal differences with the Puerto Rican governor. Mr. Long's attempt of sabotaging the constitutional process proved unsuccessful.

Puerto Rico attracted a number of contractors as the country was undergoing the process of building houses, particularly for war veterans. Darlington Long came in a comfortable position since he never encountered difficulties in obtaining loans from the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) (Zapata, 2003: 233). As Zapata elaborates, the initial relation between Luis Muñoz Marín and Darlington was good. The Puerto Rican government allowed Darlington to bypass a series of regulations since this would facilitate the construction of more houses.<sup>58</sup> This process of ignoring certain regulations started when Jesús T. Piñero was governor, prior to Luis Muñoz Marín. The regulations had to do with issues such as size of the lots, block and the width of streets and sidewalks (Sepúlveda, 2003: 174). Another interesting element behind this process is the heavy contribution of the state by guaranteeing subsidies from the water and power company speeding the process of

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<sup>58</sup> The Puerto Rican state is currently facing a controversy over the condominium *Paseo Caribe*. This building is located in historic Old San Juan, and the process by which the contractor obtained the building permits has been under intense questioning and scrutiny.

permits and bypassing certain regulations. All of these elements constitute what Sepúlveda has called the *síndrome Long* (i.e. the Long syndrome) (2003: 177).

Some of the consequences out of the Long syndrome were that these new communities that became more visible by the 1950's were distant from the existing urban center promoting the use of the car. Municipalities were not ready to process this entire public and provide adequate services, and went in a different direction from the development plan that existed at the time. The role of the automobile is one of the missing elements when studying Puerto Rico's urban experience. A process such as urban sprawl played into the hand of car use. This process is not exclusive to Puerto Rico, but I argue that the consequences were more dramatic in Puerto Rico, particularly since the existing train system that traveled along Puerto Rico's shoreline and urban streetcars were eliminated by the mid 20th century. This historical mistake was partly rectified by the creation of the *Tren Urbano* in the metropolitan area of San Juan on 6 June 2005. This is a partial and ongoing process since the public has to embrace the use of this new transportation system, and more importantly with the project named *Ciudad Mayor* where new building are slated to be built along the train line.

Eventually Darlington tried to overlook certain regulations without the consent of the government. As a result of this disagreement Darlington recruited Senators from his home state to question Luis Muñoz Marín's leadership and his alleged communist tendencies. The constitution was eventually ratified with a lot of effort from the Puerto Rican government. The political consequence is that this started the trend of intense lobbying on the part of the contractors.

The concern that Muñoz Marín had with the way that urbanism was going was shared by others as well.<sup>59</sup> As a result of the urban transition the government of Puerto Rico actively engaged in a series of studies to document these changes with the help of academics. Helen Safa captures one of these attempts in terms of life in shantytowns. Her study is an account on the effects of Operation Bootstrap, particularly migrants who left the rural areas in the 1940's and settled and found Puerto Rico's urban labor force in the outskirts of the city (Safa, 1974). It serves as a glimpse on how Puerto Rico finally entered into an industrial society.

### ***Urbanizaciones and new urban challenges***

What is the connection between shantytowns, urban sprawl and gated communities? As the government improved the quality of life in the shantytowns, it became evident they were trying to make it a thing of the past. The option for their residents saw an eventual crossroad; either move to a housing project or move to an *urbanización*.

As part of Safa's observations we can see a number of issues that gained relevance in the following years. First, "These shantytown families who have purchased a home in an *urbanización* (subdivision) are particularly proud of their achievement" (Safa, 1974: 86). This could be interpreted as a positive trait, pride, sense of belonging; these are some of the possible particularities that might come to mind. The connection between this experience and today's gated communities is that at this historical juncture *urbanizaciones* (subdivisions) connected with the public. Puerto Ricans began to massively embrace this

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<sup>59</sup> Our understanding of social space was forever changed. Rural elements became an issue of folklore and to be celebrated during the Christmas, those would be our moments to go "*tierra adentro*" (to the mountainous countryside).

type of urban residence and development that for the most part was foreign to Puerto Ricans, with the possible exception to those that lived in the United States.

By this process the people were rooted out of their historical barrios that consisted mostly of their family members into an urban space that featured individuality in terms of the use of space, functions and everyday life. The historical link of a barrio and family was being lost morphing into new uses of space and social relations. It is important to remark how subdivisions are the base for gated communities and this transition in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century should be recognized as a significant process that allowed for *urbanizaciones* and gated communities to be commonplace by the latter part of the past century. *Urbanizaciones* are the building blocks of gated communities in the Puerto Rican experience and their link is significant because of the changes in space and its social relations.

A more disturbing or ominous sign was also observed by Safa by showcasing what was emerging as the advent of consumer society and the reliance of cars. The significance of these changes points to how this intense use of the automobile and of massive consumption started to dominate Puerto Rican life. As this process continued, Puerto Ricans morphed into living in houses that now featured the most significant space (i.e. facing the street) for cars instead of living rooms. The priorities of what constitutes of significance in a home started to change. Neighbors in these *urbanizaciones* competed in terms of what they owned (p. 87). This pattern evidently plays into the hands of the intense consumption-driven capitalism that Puerto Rico has witnessed for the past 50 years. Other interesting observation emerged from Safa's observations during the 1960's.<sup>60</sup> These *urbanizaciones* were distantly located from the existing urban centers. According to the sources analyzed for this chapter there is no

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<sup>60</sup> Other significant contributions that evidence the changes in Puerto Rico during this period are the work of Oscar Lewis and Rafael Ramírez.

clear explanation for this. Its consequence, however, is evident; cars would be needed to transport residents to urban centers and job sites. The spirit of the time could be summed up by Safa's comments: "Property and material acquisition, especially home ownership take an added value as important status items in the new consumer society" (Safa, 1974: 105).

Around this time, San Juan was taking shape as a large metropolitan complex in transition. This transition has been characterized in the following way: "The combination of decelerating urban growth and rapidly rising economic capacity has partly transformed San Juan from a city of slums to a city of suburbs" (Caplow et.al., 1964: 8). Suburbs gained a predominant role in San Juan's surroundings. The process of shaping this space was clearly favored by government, in Puerto Rico and the United States. Industrial private interests certainly had a profit to make, bolstering construction as one of the main economic players in Puerto Rico.

Understanding urban sprawl in greater San Juan is significant as part of this project. As more subdivisions were built in San Juan this led to its eventual expansion, a time when Guaynabo (particularly its northern end, Guaynabo Norte) witnesses a similar process of expanding subdivisions in the municipality. Caplow et.al. point to a similar situation with public housing, saying that they "seem extraordinarily isolated" (1974: 43). These two situations have directly contributed to urban sprawl. These authors add that San Juan is a typical Latin American city since "it is impossible to identify the central point of the metropolitan complex" (p. 31). San Juan's historical centre is located inside the walled city. A city surrounded by walls is not a problem, but these walls are limited since they are located on a small island that is connected by a bridge to the rest of Puerto Rico. The space where this walled city could expand is quite limited. This could explain why San Juan has been

such a propitious place for urban sprawl, stressing that this is exclusively the case of San Juan. What constitutes the metropolitan area of San Juan consists of municipalities that are not surrounded by historic walls, but has seen urban sprawl.<sup>61</sup>

The 1960's offers an insight to what would happen in Puerto Rico during the following decades. Puerto Ricans were getting acquainted with new urban tastes. Caplow et.al. (1964) find a particular similarity between American and Puerto Rican tastes and structure "In his housing preferences the sanjuanero belongs entirely to North America, not Latin America or Europe" (p. 220). This reflects how the American presence in Puerto Rico has had a significant urban impact.

Analysis during the 1960's presented some warnings in terms of the capital city, but it was mostly optimistic. It is important to note that San Juan and its metropolitan surroundings were not the only sources of urbanization. The reason why it has been the source of study by this dissertation is the following, availability in terms of sources and academic work; and second most of the migration from the countryside to the city of San Juan.

By the end of the 1960's we see a change in Puerto Rico's consumer habits that support the process of sprawl. Caplow et.al. point to the following as issues that San Juan would face in the future: (1) urban sprawl, (2) traffic blight, (3) the persistence of slums, (4) the consequences of mass housing. The situation in Puerto Rico has not changed much since then because, with the exception of the slum issue, the other three concerns have intensified in the country. The island still deals with inadequate and insufficient housing for people with

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<sup>61</sup> As for Guaynabo I have documented how it saw its origins in Caparra. The historic center of Guaynabo would emerge later, distant from San Juan Bay, this is a possible explanation of why the municipality faced economic hardships.

low income, but slums like those in the 1960's are mostly a thing of the past for the most part in the metropolitan area.<sup>62</sup>

Shopping malls play a fascinating role as part of Puerto Rico's urban sprawl. I mentioned that housing projects and *urbanizaciones* were located away from the existing urban centers. Malls eventually picked up that vacuum by providing new spaces for recreation, consumption, and needs of the new sprawling city. It has been documented how shopping malls attempt to provide a sense of recreation of other existing spaces.<sup>63</sup>

Additional links exist between shopping centers and Puerto Rican *urbanizaciones*. These were built as consumer settlements connected by streets whose function is to use the automobile (Dávila Santiago, 2005: 178). The role of the mall in Puerto Rico's 20<sup>th</sup> century changes has been mostly overlooked. Fortunately, authors like Dávila Santiago have started to engage this emergence.

As expected, this transition from the countryside to the slum and from there to urbanized projects left an impact on Puerto Rico. A variety of areas have been impacted included, diet, sports and others.<sup>64</sup> It is a more difficult exercise to find instances where a resistance to these changes can be documented. Spaces had to be cleared to facilitate urban expansion, particularly in the proximities to San Juan's existing core. The press of the time did provide an account of the displacements and its challengers.

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<sup>62</sup> It needs to be acknowledged that Puerto Rico is still struggling to provide adequate housing. Former governor Sila María Calderón (2000-2004) launched a program for *Comunidades Especiales* and one of its goals was to provide adequate housing for the poor.

<sup>63</sup> For more details see Rubén Dávila Santiago (2005). *El Mall: del mundo al paraíso*. Ediciones Callejón: San Juan.

<sup>64</sup> This is in my opinion what Neil Smith calls absolute and social space where both dramatically shaped. By increasing its urban component promoted by Puerto Rico's late emerging industrialization.

Arcadio Díaz Quiñones presents the example of El Monte in San Juan where its residents claimed that they were not wanted by the surrounding *urbanizaciones* of Hyde Park and Baldrich for being poor (1993: 32). A political question out of these changes is whether there was any resistance. The example of El Monte shows residents of that *barriada* taking political contestation into their own hands by making their demands public. The action of voicing their dissent was not enough to stop the construction of new condominiums in the area, and the displacement of these former residents.

Were there any movements that went beyond specific neighborhoods? If not, why? The examples that I encountered in the literature are those presented by Díaz-Quñones (1993) and residents that were interviewed by Safa (1974) who still enjoyed living in their old neighborhoods. Díaz Quiñones addresses this issue and comments that only a small heterodox minority, conservative and radicals, questioned the dominant discourse and its social and political consequences (1993: 45). By discourse what can be taken out of these changes is that they were encapsulated in a bigger process. To name a few examples I can mention Operation Bootstrap, the significant relevance of the PPD and its modernizing agenda, consolidation of the American presence, mass migration to the United States and others.

### **ELA's decay and the consolidation of suburbia**

The 1970's witnessed a considerable slowing process in Puerto Rico's economy. A recession hit the country in the 1970's and early 1980's and several academics questioned the limits of the Puerto Rican model or its failure (Sotomayor 2004: 1395). San Juan became a bigger city as urban sprawl continued impacting surrounding municipalities such as Guaynabo. The considerable effects of the change from a rural to an agricultural society

could be witnessed at this time. This shift has been presented in the following way “By 1970, nearly 60 percent of the population was living in urban areas, the first time that urban dwellers outnumbered rural inhabitants” (Dietz, 1986: 282).

Even though Puerto Rico did not have one of its best economic moments, as Sotomayor indicates, this did not impede the growth of the cities. To the contrary, government projects like highways continued at a steady pace. Gated communities came into fruition during the 1980’s, particularly at the middle of the decade when they became sanctioned and sponsored by the Puerto Rican government through Law 21 of 1987. At this point in order to assess the current urban situation in Puerto Rico I highlight the disputes between environmental groups and contractors, particularly the *Asociación de Constructores de Hogares* (ACH, Homebuilders’ Association). These two sides have not been able to articulate a coherent political project. Particularly in terms of how to make use of the shoreline, environmentalists would like to see an end to construction in that area, while builders have not considered embracing this kind of action. The government of Puerto Rico has not been able, or interested, in harmonizing these two interests. The ACH continues its legislative lobbying, while the environmentalists have stepped up their political claims through different means.<sup>65</sup> These include physically blocking the construction of projects, lawsuits or media mobilization. Also a new battleground is not sugar cane fields or land for pasture. The shoreline has taken the historical spotlight away from them. Being a tropical island makes its shoreline an attractive area to settle because of its scenic beauty. The relevance of this debate to the dissertation is that contractors have built lifestyle communities

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<sup>65</sup> A significant example of how the ACH has become a more visible political group in Puerto Rico has been its involvement in supporting the tax incentives for stimulating the purchase of homes in 2007. Also they have assumed an active role in supporting contractors in the *Paseo Caribe* dispute.

in coastal areas. These communities feature golf courses, stores, and in some cases schools. Many of these lifestyle communities are located in towns such as Dorado and Río Grande.

Guaynabo does not feature this elaborate type of lifestyle communities, most of its gated communities can be considered prestige and security-zone community. A possible reason for this might be Guaynabo's its lack of a shoreline. Guaynabo's coastal area is limited and used for industrial purposes for storing some of the goods that come into San Juan Bay. Guaynabo does not feature the *bellezas naturales* (i.e. beaches for golf resorts) that can be seen in the previously mentioned towns. Contractors can compensate by enhancing the Guaynabo City label, its vicinity to San Juan, the luxury of the residence, the efficiency of the municipality's services, in other words quality of life. That is why the Guaynabo City brand name becomes so relevant, why enhancing such a brand name can be of importance for the municipality (attracting capital) and contractors (generating profits through sales).

Manuel Valdés Pizzini documented some of the struggles that the environmental movement has gone through in order to defend the shoreline. As part of his study, Valdés and his colleagues denominated coastal gentrification (2001: 1). What is interesting about how they develop this concept is that "One of the assumptions of our project was that "coastal gentrification", jointly with development and urbanization, was highly correlated with an increase in the formation of community-based and environmental organization" (2001: 1). They elaborated an element of contestation to their outlook. Throughout this account of urban history one of the most impressive factors is that moments or movements of contestation are not the subject of much attention. The significance of this lack of contestation to these urban changes adds to what I have named the gated community

consensus. This silence and acceptance for the most part of this urban paradigm facilitates the emergence of more gated communities.<sup>66</sup> That is not case in Pizzini's study, since the purpose of the project is to showcase those moments of resistance. This study starts with the main argument that unsustainable growth is to be expected. Valdés Pizzini argues that "the main challenge for the environmental movement will be to develop, engage and transform the policies and politics of sustainability" (2001: 2).

A relevant issue is to ask why after all these years, have coasts finally become a source of contention? At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a shift of agricultural interests went from coffee in the highlands to sugar cane in the coastal areas, with this some of the population shifted to the shoreline. Río Grande is a municipality that characterizes the current coastal gentrification that Valdés et. al. discusses. The government removed coastal settlers from 14 kilometers of beaches in coastal plains and sugar cane plantations (Valdés et.al., 2001: 10). Once these residents were moved a number of beach resorts were built. During this process Río Grande's fishermen were deprived of a coastal area for their work. In addition the population did not have access to beaches for recreational purposes. This provides a glimpse some of the controversies that Puerto Rico is facing in terms of its coastal constructions. Río Grande is an example of how the urban sprawl of San Juan is going towards the east and potentially impacting El Yunque Rain Forest.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Certain localized forms of resistance have emerged against the increasing role of expropriation as a vehicle for gentrification. In Guaynabo the community of Juan Domingo has been active in opposing expropriation. Also voices of opposition have emerged within Mayor O'Neill's party as he has been challenge in the 2008 primaries. His opponent Mike Gutarra has argued that one of the main problems with O'Neill's administration has been the expropriations targeted at the poor.

<sup>67</sup>The *Corredor Ecológico del Este* has been presented as a measure to stop this sprawl. This would be a 3,200 acres natural reserve; it has the support of environmentalists, elements of

Why has the construction industry witnessed such a dramatic rise in the last ten years? This boom has certainly propelled the emergence of gated communities, where most of the new projects whether they are walk-up, subdivisions or condominiums have gates as a common factor. Valdés argues that “Construction is viewed as an alternative to palliate the potential effects of a deceleration in the growth rate of the economy” (2001: 13). Some economists have tried to understand why construction has received significant governmental support. Economist Santos Negrón argues that the government established a strategy of heavy investment in order to ameliorate the effects of decreased employment as a result of Section 936 in Puerto Rico (Negrón, in Valdés 2001: 14).<sup>68</sup> Section 936 of the US Internal Revenue Service was established in 1976 and allowed US firms to operate in Puerto Rico with tax-free income. In 1996 the US Congress repealed Section 936.

As I continue this critical assessment of urban spaces in Puerto Rico one lingering question remains: What kind of cities do we have in Puerto Rico? The urban sprawl has created a San Juan metropolitan area that is quite different from the rest of the island, mostly because of its heavy concentration of population, *urbanizaciones* and all the leading governmental offices and agencies. But where do these urban areas end?

It is interesting to note that the term “city” does not exist as part of Puerto Rico’s Planning Board’s list of urban terms (Valdés, 1996: 2). It seems that there is more agreement on defining a metropolitan area. In the eyes of the government the closest thing that we have according to the Census Bureau is the *Area Metropolitana Estadística Consolidada de San Juan-Caguas*. This region encompasses a multi nuclear area of two million residents (Valdés

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the political class and public. As of the summer 2007 the project has not been approved in the Puerto Rican legislature, and it is still under debate.

<sup>68</sup> These disputes will continue as long as the construction industry remains a significant component of Puerto Rico’s economy.

1996: 3). Puerto Rico's urban expansion has reached a point where drawing lines becomes a difficult exercise. Where does the city begin and where does it end? That is one of the elements that make Puerto Rico's urban reality more challenging.

It seems that there is more agreement on defining a metropolitan area of greater San Juan, popularly called *el área metropolitana* (metropolitan area) or simply *el área*. The most common label on how to identify urban settlements is *pueblo* or *ciudad*. Why it is so difficult to achieve the term city with some homogeneity is puzzling. Municipalities that evolve with considerable population, size, or that have historical significance are commonly called cities. Another context when they are called cities is when they lack the previously mentioned elements, but seem well under way to progress or modernization. And in Puerto Rico that is usually equated with the following elements, urban expansion (i.e. more *urbanizaciones*, walk ups, box stores). This usually is followed by new accesses like highways, new roads, beautification projects, such as planting trees, and painting bridges.<sup>69</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Chapter Four provided an account of the urban changes that Puerto Rico has witnessed since its contact with Spain. The relevant element lies in the dramatic changes witnessed during the Twentieth century. The new colonial power brought new priorities and local elites collaborated with some of these changes. Efforts to promote public housing and single-family home units were significant. *Urbanizaciones* emerged out of this dynamic as

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<sup>69</sup>The element of art, political ads and the color used for painting bridges has been gaining more relevance. In recent years the Mayor of San Juan Jorge Santini has been the subject of criticism for these reasons. Graffiti artists have complained of municipal brigades who paint blue (the color of his political party) over their artwork. While placing political ads in bridges and major highways. By the summer of 2008 an agreement was reached between the Mayor and some urban artists. The Municipality would provide a number of spaces where artists could display their art.

the emblematic figure during the past century. Both absolute and social space featured a high urban component.

The significance of this analysis lies in how these changes helped facilitate the emergence of gated communities. Two main developments were behind this, the emergence of *urbanizaciones* and the new difficulties that Puerto Rican cities were facing, such as overpopulation, intense use of land and the automobile, and the decrease in pedestrian culture. The 1980's presented an urban reality of increasing violence where citizens' proposed gated communities as a method of coping with these dire circumstances. Chapter Five looks into how gated communities emerged in Puerto Rico. By focusing on the urban change that it promoted, the contestation and support that it generated; how academia has tried to understand it, and the changes that they pose for the future.

## CHAPTER V

### *URBANIZACIONES, CONTROLES DE ACCESO IN PUERTO RICO*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter considers how academics, mostly Puerto Rican, have analyzed gated communities on the island. These have been the product of the past twenty years when Law 21 of 1987 was approved. *Urbanizaciones* play a crucial role in the emergence of gated communities in Puerto Rico, since these were the subject of the first *controles de acceso*.<sup>70</sup>

According to Mary Frances Gallart, Puerto Rico has seen three types of *urbanizaciones*; the residential park, the super-development, and the controlled access development (2000: 32-33). Each responds to different types of periods and governmental support in Puerto Rico. The residential park was basically a private initiative, with the Condado sector of San Juan from 1908 to 1918 as an example. The super-development features a heavy measure of governmental support, initially under the context of the New Deal. The US and Puerto Rican governments joined forces to tackle the issues of poor housing, slums and urban congestion. During the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the PPD-led government took as its mission to end the conditions of poverty that existed. These measures had the support of the US government for a number of reasons.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Control de acceso* literally means “access control” and it is the popular term used in Puerto Rico to designate *urbanizaciones* that feature gates as a security device. This term became very popular during the 1980’s as security-zone communities became more common in Puerto Rico. Today different types of gated communities are indistinctively called *controles de acceso*.

<sup>71</sup> Some of these were to showcase Puerto Rico as a democratic regime in the region, support the PPD project and to deter the pro independence movement.

Many of these communities stand to this day, and those that have been gated fall under the security-zone typology. While *urbanizaciones* like Roosevelt and Puerto Nuevo<sup>72</sup> were built, government focused on public housing more vigorously. Social interest housing was directed, for the most part, to *residenciales públicos*<sup>73</sup> during the mid 1950's to 1970's. The third type of *urbanizaciones* that Gallart describes is that of “controlled access development”. This is the more recent development that I will analyze in this chapter and its connection to gated communities.

### **Urban change and gated communities**

Part of the urban imaginary that pertained to Puerto Ricans during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was that of owning their own home and plot of land.<sup>74</sup> The quest got to the point where “The construction boom continued through the sixties; then, in the early seventies, the phenomenon of “urban sprawl” suddenly became an issue for real concern” (Gallart, 2000: 59).

The San Juan metropolitan area had to deal with new concerns such as increasing urban densities and a diminished availability of unused land. Gallart presents Puerto Rican urban reality during the 1970's and 1980's as one where urban discontent was increasing. During the 1980's “residents of urbanizations at last took matters into their own hands and sought their own solutions” (Gallart, 2000: 61), this was the people's reaction to perceived government inadequacy in dealing with urban problems (i.e. mostly crime).

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<sup>72</sup> Urbanizaciones Roosevelt and Puerto Nuevo are located in the San Juan area of Hato Rey. This region is a plain that was used mostly for livestock.

<sup>73</sup> This is term used for public housing in Puerto Rico.

<sup>74</sup> Puerto Rican labor during the agricultural era did not own the land that they worked. They lived in land owned by the corporation where they worked.

Gallart positions gated communities as one of the attempts to “take back” the city. In this concrete case she points to crime as the triggering element that made residents move to recently built gated communities (p.61). I consider that this is one of the elements that drove residents to move to prestige communities such as Los Paseos and Montehiedra.<sup>75</sup> Other factors that impact the consideration for individuals to move were considered in Chapter One, those include Prestige, Property Value, Private Services/Governance, and Crime/Homogeneity. The experience was significantly different for those who could afford to move. Their best option for facing crime was to gate the communities where they already lived, generating security-zone communities.

Gallart documents this by showing how the public outcry forced the Puerto Rican legislature to approve Law 21 of 1987, and the Regulation for Traffic Control and Public Use of Local Streets of January 20, 1989 (p. 62). These laws allowed residential associations to partially close streets and control vehicular access to their communities. This gave way to a significant emergence of security-zone communities. Her analysis takes a prominent position in terms of why this has happened in Puerto Rico.

“These governmental practices corresponded to a neo-liberal view of public policy that had been developing since the eighties, in which government was no longer considered a benefactor state; instead, it was expected to intervene as little as possible. According to this view, citizens are the agents of social and economic development and the government is seen as a kind of clearinghouse of private efforts” (Gallart, 2000: 62).

This quote reflects a combination of failing governmental policies and urban dissatisfaction. Gallart is the only author in the Puerto Rican literature, to my knowledge, who has contextualized gated communities as part of a neoliberal public policy. The author understands neoliberalism as one that portrays government as a broker, and responsibilities

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<sup>75</sup> These two lifestyle communities are located in the outskirts of San Juan.

of change are given or vested in the individual. For that reason Gallart portrays the 1990's as a period of intense neighborhood activism. Evidently, this process of empowerment is not new; the interesting feature is that this belongs to a governmental policy. A significant fact presented is that "Between 1988 and 1992, twenty-eight access-control permits were granted in the metropolitan area" (p.62). Community leaders and lawyers had a primary role in this process, reminiscent of some of the suggestions promoted by Robert H. Nelson (2005).

Later in this chapter I will feature Ivelisse Rivera-Bonilla's dissertation where she documents how community leaders gathered support to rally their community behind the goal of gating. Presently, the gated community literature lacks numerous examples on how previously existing communities rally in order to successfully close up their neighborhoods. What has been documented for the most part are conflicts amongst residents of the same communities. A classic example of this is Evan McKenzie's case study of Bonanza Village in Las Vegas, Nevada.

### **Academic inquiries before the consensus**

Academic debate about gated community occurred during the early 1990's. At this time the intellectual and public debate over gated communities was at its highest point. New responses and concerns emerged over the ramifications that the public would have to contend with as a result of gating. It is significant to note that by the time Law 22 came into effect more communities were gating their streets.<sup>76</sup> At this point some processes of gating were controversial and highly disruptive. The gates in dispute were those that would qualify as security-zone communities, since they rearranged existing space. The debate was

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<sup>76</sup> Law 21 of 1987 was amended, creating Law 22 of 1992 that would liberalize the gating standards, facilitating the gating process.

particularly relevant in the metropolitan area of San Juan, where these gates were more common. Gated communities were not settled yet in Puerto Rican urbanism.

Rafael Pumarada argues that the initial 1987 law established some guidelines explaining that only a peripheral area of the city would be subject to gating (1993: 3). This was changed drastically by 1992 when several residential groups were asking for a change in the law. His analysis considers that as a result of this, there are winners and losers. Focusing mostly on the losers, Pumarada argues these the losers are those who cannot afford to gate, the debates on gating itself, and changes in driving patterns and pedestrian movement (p. 5). He argues that at the end, there are more losers than winners. I consider this dynamic of winners and losers as problematic, since this reflects a fragmented and problematic view of society that does not promote a more collective effort, since this frames the urban debate between those who can afford to be part of the new urban dynamic of gating (winners) vs. those who are not able to achieve this position (losers). This type of understanding neglects why this dynamic is happening, and a broader concern over what constitutes a city, one that does not follow a dichotomy of those who can and cannot get inserted in real estate and commercial logic. In addition, this view loses track of the loci of most of this change, the state and the economy.

The politician Víctor García San Inocencio points out in the journal *Plerus*, that gating should be discussed after five years of Law 21 as a problem rather than a solution (1993: 11). Puerto Rican legislators and mayors running for office in 1992 used this issue as a method to gain political support. The 1992 General Election campaign featured, discourses on getting tough on crime were followed with an increase of *controles de acceso* as will be evidenced later in the dissertation with the interviews to several city officials. There have

been instances of the municipality using resources with potential clientelistic consequences. This serves as a significant drive in terms of the highly clientelist element present in gated communities and municipal interaction (particularly in the case of security-zone communities) where politicians have allocated funds for these communities in order to receive electoral support.

The emerging process of gated communities during the 1980's was fueled by public discontent with the perceived element of crime and willing politicians to allocate to their constituents' concerns. I contend that politicians are willing participants for a number of reasons. First, the fact that the public goes to politicians looking for economic support, validates them as a political player, validating and justifying their existence. Particularly in a context of growing disenchantment with the political class, it is considerable that the constituents look for them as a source of political aggregation. Second, this strengthens the links of clientelism, a crucial component for political mobilization in Puerto Rico. Election years tend to be a prime period for the public to present their claims to the political class. And finally, whether politicians are aware of this or not, it serves as a preventive action in the eventuality that gated community residents become a significant political action group. It is not surprising to realize that *urbanizaciones* from the middle and upper class were the ones to lead this movement. Their political clout and access to resources probably facilitated this process.<sup>77</sup>

Orlando De La Rosa (1993) considers that crime is a result of the excesses of any developed city or on its way to become one. He argues that the public has directed the process where the state has facilitated the erection of gated communities. One of the

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<sup>77</sup> Pork barrel funds provided the means to wield this kind of power.

predictions he makes for the future of our cities is that he contemplates the possibility of the use of private mechanisms in order to keep social order. As communities of gated origin have expanded, a remarkable use of private security in different ways have become more popular. A significant economic side has been created by the growing emergence of private security guards in Puerto Rican lives, allowing for a growing element of symbolic violence<sup>78</sup> that can help in legitimizing the role for gated communities in Puerto Rico, by capturing popular imaginary and support. The relevance of this analysis to this dissertation is to consider if sense of security and the fear of crime had a legitimizing role for gated communities in Puerto Rico, by capturing popular support. In Chapter Seven I will devote considerable time interviewing members of Guaynabo Municipal Police in order to corroborate with evidence if fear of crime was a significant factor in Guaynabo's experience.

A significant element of this early debate is that of civil rights, expressed on the most part by lawyers and opponents to gating.<sup>79</sup> In the journal *Plerus*, María S. Kortright Soler (1993) traces the origin of gated communities in Puerto Rico to the mid 1980's when newly gated communities were built with access controlled for those who were not residents. At that point there was no popular opposition to these communities. Unfortunately, neither Kortright nor any other of the authors that I have examined has been able to generate evidence in the sense of which were the first gated communities to emerge under that profile.

By 1987, crime and the government's failure of facing, and the increase of value of newly built gated communities facilitated the emergence of Law 21 (1993: 29). By 1992

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<sup>78</sup> For a greater discussion on changes in cities and the growing role of symbolic violence and private security guards see: Lucía Dammert, *Seguridad Pública en América Latina: ¿qué pueden hacer los gobiernos locales*, Nueva Sociedad 212, November-December 2007, pp. 67-81.

<sup>79</sup> Lawyers tend to have more exposure on the Puerto Rican media than experts on any given social subject.

popular support was able to promote amendments to the 1987 law. I consider that it is interesting to note how in its early stages, electoral politics certainly drove the process of gating and facilitated laws favorable to the proponents of gating, it is important to note that 1988 and 1992 were election years.

Kortright Soler is one of the few authors to address even, in a limited way, the role of municipal government. The author argues that municipal governments have been characterized by promoting the process of gating rather than assuming the role of a neutral party (1993: 30). Kortright Soler argues that municipal governments have made several irregularities allowing for communities to gate when they have not met the requirements expressed by law (Ibid).<sup>80</sup> The reasons for this were not discussed at length, but I would like to argue the following, there was ignorance over a recently established law, lack of knowledge over instituting this type of urban practice for the first time, or an overriding interest of getting the gates established in order to ratify a number of constituents. Issues of this kind have been mostly overlooked by Puerto Rican academia, but this has not stopped the emergence of more security-zone communities.

These early debates evolved around security-zone communities. Lifestyle and Prestige communities were not subject to this type of controversy. Dissidents of the security-zone communities were not able to garner significant political support to significantly stop their popularity. The political consequence of this dynamic is that a new set of interest were emerging. Politicians and citizens benefited by the emergence of the security-zone communities in the context of clientelist politics, and other interests followed such as contractors and private security companies.

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<sup>80</sup> For example public streets that have been closed to non residents and there access is monitored by private security guard.

## **Dissertations and theses**

The previous section highlighted some of the significant debates that emerged during 1993, as part of a conference dedicated to *controles de acceso*. At that time gated communities were under contestation, and the gated community consensus was not yet present. These academic publications followed a debate that was part of a 1993 conference on this issue. In this section I consider several contributions made to understand the reality of *control de acceso* and gated communities. These debates had no significant impact in the public attitude toward this issue. They were published in academic and professional journals that are read by a particularly small audience. This was certainly the last gasp of gated communities as a source of a lively debate in Puerto Rico, paving the way to what I have called the gated community consensus where the debate died and gated communities gained consolidation in Puerto Rico.

Vilmarie Pabón Díaz replicates the argument that has been exposed before, and that is the state's incapacity to control crime that has made possible the emergence of gated communities (1994: 3). Her work documents how, by 1991, the pro-gating group, *Concilio de Presidentes de Asociaciones de Residentes de Puerto Rico* registered their organization in Puerto Rico's state department. Two years later the *Ciudadanos en Defensa de sus Derechos Civiles* was organized with the purpose of stopping the emergence of *controles de acceso*.

It is interesting to note how the group that favored gated communities emerged first and before the 1992 elections, since it is common in Puerto Rico for interest groups to coalesce in the context of elections and articulate demands. The public feels that if political demands are presented during the elections they will have more leverage in order to achieve their goals. This dynamic goes to the extent that the public understands that politicians will

place works of infrastructure on hold until election year, when they can be showcased to the constituents<sup>81</sup>. The adversary organization emerged after the 1992 election. In addition, I would like to highlight the fact that the main argument that was presented against gated communities was one surrounding civil rights. This shows a lack of willingness to address the issue that supporters claimed, that gating deterred crimes. The opposition was not able to debunk the main argument of the gated community advocates. Those who did not favor gates were not able to successfully articulate a campaign to favor this position at this crucial time of the public debate, particularly since some of them emerged after the 1992 elections.

Clientelism emerges as a considerable element in terms of funding many of these gates. Pabón Díaz highlights that a number of state legislators awarded money from their pork barrel funds to over 48 *urbanizaciones* in San Juan and Guaynabo.<sup>82</sup> This is a clear example of how the legislative branch was able to articulate an electoral support by financially supporting the *controles de acceso*. It should not come as a surprise that a significant element of the Puerto Rican elite lives in Guaynabo and San Juan. Some of the communities that are home to the most expensive *urbanizaciones* are located in Guaynabo Norte and were part of the leading process towards gating in the municipality. San Juan had an interesting dynamic where communities that belonged to the middle class also promoted this process (e.g. Mansiones de Río Piedras). In the case of Guaynabo I can offer both anecdotal evidence that I saw that process evolve, and the accounts that will be presented in

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<sup>81</sup> This practice is not new in Puerto Rico. During the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century as the *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD) were known for doling out goods and favors to their political clientele.

<sup>82</sup> Interesting coincidences since these are the capital city of Puerto Rico and the neighboring municipality with the highest per capita income of the island.

the following interview. This would make these two municipalities a perfect object of clientelism, since they consist of a powerful electoral pool.

Gladys Rivera's thesis captures the atmosphere around gated communities during the electoral year of 1992. The eventual winning candidate for governor, Pedro Rosselló, promised to get tough on crime and gated communities seemed a reasonable measure. During his first term, 1992-1996, he supported *controles de acceso* in *urbanizaciones*, condominiums and public housing (1995: 68). It was very favorable for the proponents of *controles de acceso* to have a supporter at *La Fortaleza*.<sup>83</sup> During this time period gated communities became so prevalent, that historically progressive parties like the *Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño* favored gating in their 1992 platform. It is important to note that gating occurred at different stages initially in the form of security-zone communities in San Juan and the rest of Puerto Rico. It was not a homogeneous process, what is crucial to understand during this period is that a variety of political offers were made by different political parties. This reflects is the positive political atmosphere that gating had during the early 1990's and thereafter.

The most significant contribution to the Puerto Rican gated community literature and San Juan in particular, is the work of Ivelisse Rivera-Bonilla. Her dissertation does a great job of gathering sources and delves extensively into the international gated community literature. The previous authors were more parochial, concentrating exclusively on what has been published in Puerto Rico. Rivera Bonilla's dissertation bridges the gap between Puerto Rico and international debates and publications.<sup>84</sup> Her dissertation points to a concern that

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<sup>83</sup> The official residence of the governor of Puerto Rico.

<sup>84</sup> To my knowledge this dissertation will be the second one in Puerto Rico to incorporate gated community literature and a case study.

has been expressed before, “the implications of gating in and gating out have been poorly investigated” (2000: 3). The author also points that “Puerto Rican scholars have paid little attention to the gating phenomenon” (2003: 29).

My case study is that of Guaynabo and most of the literature examined focuses on San Juan. The literature on this municipality is basically nonexistent with the exception of Sandra Velázquez Rivera’s dissertation. Velázquez Rivera is interested in identifying and analyzing changes to urban space as a result of the *controles de acceso* in Guaynabo (1996: 1). Velázquez Rivera also has a highly political goal, that of creating solutions for residents in order to facilitate gating; in particular at the stage where public hearings are held by the Municipality of Guaynabo in its decision-making process of a particular community. This is the only reference that my dissertation will have in terms of an academic case study on Guaynabo.

Velázquez Rivera’s dissertation offers a glimpse into the public hearing process in Guaynabo and some of the consequences of gating. Her findings were not conclusive, and not applicable to the rest of Puerto Rico. Municipal involvement in the gating process is evident, but the lingering question is, does Guaynabo’s government favor gating?

### **Challenges for the future**

The Puerto Rican literature on gated communities has some commonalities. For the most part it focuses on crime as the driving force behind gating. And secondly, most of it claims that there is a small body of literature on gated communities in Puerto Rico. I suggest that the diffusion of this topic in academic circles is not significant, but several authors have tried to examine this topic. Public opinion has stopped paying attention to this topic because of the gated community consensus that emerged in Puerto Rico. This consensus presents

crime as the most significant element, and points to the emergence and popularity of gated communities as an organic process. It does not pay attention to the role of the state, which is precisely what this dissertation is attempting to capture. Considering this context this dissertation attempts to fill some of the vacuum that is present in the Puerto Rican literature.

The following chapter this dissertation addresses the issue of the state, in particular local government. In all of the findings an element that has not been explicitly researched in what local government has to gain with the emergence of gated communities, whether it is *controles de acceso* or new communities. The basic question is, is the state promoting gating? This problem will be examined focusing on the following, whether it is promoting a new type of governance (i.e. a neoliberal state), or reshaping urban space in order to market Guaynabo City and engage the municipality in strategies of city marketing in order to generate more income for municipal public projects. There are elements behind this question that lead to inquiries that have not been examined. Some of these are clientelism and electoral politics and how they interact with the gating process.

Since gated communities have been dramatically understudied in Puerto Rico, is there a way they can be brought to the forefront and generate a debate similar to that of the early 1990's and offering a different perspective?

## **Conclusion**

Politics was a significant element for the proponents and those who opposed *controles de acceso*. Recall the example of those who wanted to fight crime against those who raised civil rights concerns. The elements of politics inside the community in order to obtain support got to the point of manipulation by community leaders.<sup>85</sup> If there is an

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<sup>85</sup> See Rivera-Bonilla.

increase of the contractor lobby in the municipalities, I expect future clashes with environmental groups and community leaders who have become their most significant opponent.<sup>86</sup>

The Puerto Rican literature will be integrated into my dissertation by contextualizing when gated communities became part of the urban landscape. The first *urbanización* to gate officially as a security-zone was Mansiones de Río Piedras in San Juan during the 1980's, and the first gated community was Suchville (a prestige community) in Guaynabo during the 1930's. Guaynabo has one of its first cases and in the 1980's and 1990's followed the lead of San Juan, to the point of establishing an office that would deal exclusively with this concern.

In the following chapter I focus on Guaynabo's urban profile, which has made it an attractive space for gated communities to flourish.

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<sup>86</sup> A recent example is the organization of Barrio Caimito to protect its river from the illegal tampering of its stream by the contractors of Montehiedra in San Juan.

## CHAPTER VI

### UNDERSTANDING GUAYNABO

#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on my case study of Guaynabo, a municipality located adjacent to San Juan. Here I present a brief historical and socioeconomic account of this municipality and of the political structure of Guaynabo. The structure includes the mayor's office, the municipal legislature, and its responsibilities and duties. A remarkable element of Guaynabo is its political stability, featuring a single party majority rule for more than thirty years. The last two mayors have enjoyed considerable time in power and the transition stayed inside party ranks.

In addition, the profile of its population has not been exhaustively studied; for that reason I rely on Census information for assessment and to show the municipality's composition. A commonly known element in Puerto Rico is Guaynabo's high per capita income. These two elements (i.e. political stability and population) have been understudied by social scientist in Puerto Rico.

#### **Historical Overview**

The first Spanish settlement in Puerto Rico established was Caparra in 1509.<sup>87</sup> As documented, Ponce De León favored this location over any other. Opposition emerged to this location because of its swampy terrain, and its vulnerability to attacks.<sup>88</sup> Guaynabo's source of communication and supplies came through the San Juan Bay located at the north of Guaynabo. Once Ponce De León died in 1512, the capital city of Puerto Rico moved to its current location of San Juan. Puerto Rican historian Carlos Rodríguez (1984) argues that the

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<sup>87</sup> Caparra is located in Guaynabo next to the San Juan city limits.

<sup>88</sup> In 1512 it was subject to an attack by the natives, more than thirty houses were burned.

reasons for leaving Caparra were first, significant problems with offering supplies, and the lack of safety for its residents. By 1647, Caparra constituted a number of ruins and its population migrated to the new city of San Juan or went inland.

According to Rodríguez, the first written account of Guaynabo dates to 1723. From 1723 to 1768 Guaynabo existed as a village without any formal political recognition. Don José Valerio Meléndez and a number of residents lead the way from 1764 to 1768 to turn the village of Guaynabo into a municipality. From 1768 Guaynabo seceded from Bayamón as a result of the movement and governmental approval, featuring its own *Teniente a Guerra*<sup>89</sup> and *Parroquia*<sup>90</sup>. The topography of this municipality is quite irregular, with its northern end featuring flat terrains such as the barrios of Pueblo Viejo and Frailes. During this time they were used for sugar cane plantations and livestock.

Chapter Four documented how the urban area of San Juan emerged and how Guaynabo offered supplies and routes to San Juan. It also served a significant role as refuge when San Juan was under siege by enemies of the Spanish Crown. Guaynabo shared some of the hardships of San Juan, including the 1797 British attack of San Juan when these troops went inland including Guaynabo. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century Guaynabo featured the two most productive sugar plantations of Puerto Rico. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the economic misfortunes of Guaynabo became evident. This municipality did not possess the capital and technology needed for the sugar cane industry. Other parts of the island showed a robust sugar cane economy while Guaynabo's declined.

From 1821 to 1860 Guaynabo's economy concentrated on fruits and livestock (Rodríguez, 1987: 74). The population of Guaynabo served as evidence of the economic

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<sup>89</sup> First Lieutenant.

<sup>90</sup> Parish.

changes present in the municipality. The number of slaves in Guaynabo was not significant at this time compared to other municipalities. Rodríguez argues that “when comparing the total number of slaves of 1860 and 1842 (252 slaves) we will notice a decrease of 26.9% as a result of a migration of slaves to other areas and the actual slave trade that would take them somewhere else” (Rodríguez, 1987: 87).<sup>91</sup> In term of its demographics, Rodríguez shows how families in Guaynabo were not numerous and individuals tended to marry late, indicative of the hardships that these families faced.

Guaynabo’s urban economy was not significant, since its limited port access was controlled by San Juan interests. The number of stores was minimal, and the most relevant during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century belonged to Don Francisco Chiqués, this *pulpería*<sup>92</sup> provided basic goods to the community. The existing urban industry was based on a number of trades such as carpenters, butchers, bread makers, shoe makers and other types of trades.

The first Guaynabo mayor was elected in 1782. This position would continue to exist uninterrupted until 1875, when the municipality faced economic hardships that caused it to go bankrupt. Rodríguez points to (1) technological backwardness, (2) hurricanes, (3) lack of commercial vibrancy, (4) lack of currency, (5) difficulties in tax collection, (6) and debt as some of the elements that caused Guaynabo’s economic hardships. On 24 December 1875 Guaynabo’s twelve existing barrios were evenly divided and awarded to the neighboring municipalities of Bayamón and Río Piedras.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> My translation.

<sup>92</sup> It can best be translated as a General Store.

<sup>93</sup> As a result of this partition Bayamón acquired Sonadora, Guaraguao, Camarones, Pueblo, Santa Rosa and Pueblo Viejo. Río Piedras incorporated Quebrada Arenas, Hato Nuevo, Mamey, Río, Tortugo and Frailes.

The change of sovereignty in 1898 facilitated a number of changes in Puerto Rico. On 7 March 1912 Guaynabo was reinstated as a municipality with the support of *guaynabeños*<sup>94</sup>, Governor George R. Colton and the legislature. After 37 years Guaynabo gained its place as a municipality. The governor named José Ricardo Carazo as the first mayor of Guaynabo of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since that time Guaynabo has seen a total of twelve mayors at the helm of the municipality. From 1920 to 1960 Guaynabo had a significant demographic increase of 58.9% (Rodríguez, 1984: 66). During the 1950's Guaynabo still featured agricultural significance, but the industrial boom was starting to emerge.

### **Political Structure**

The mayor is the leading political figure of the municipal administration. The mayor and the municipal legislature are elected popularly every four years. This body consists of sixteen members, and currently (i.e. during the 2004-2008 term) 13 belong to the PNP lead by the mayor of the same party, Héctor O'Neill. The other three positions are held by the opposition parties, the PPD has two, and the *Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño* (PIP) one. This gives a clear majority to the mayor and his political party.

The responsibilities of the legislative branch are delineated by the *Ley de Municipios Autónomos* (LMA).<sup>95</sup> The responsibilities of this law, relevant to the dissertation are the nomination of municipal officials, and the members of municipal committees according to the LMA. This is of particular importance since these are some of the officials I interviewed.

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<sup>94</sup> This is the name for the residents of Guaynabo.

<sup>95</sup> This law was created in 1991 and its purpose is to give fiscal autonomy to municipalities. The LMA emerged out of the context of the 1980's when the administration of Puerto Rico's state government was under criticism. The goal was to decentralize the national government, giving authority to the municipalities. This law emerged under the PPD government of Rafael Hernández Colón with the consent of the PNP. For more information on this matter see Angel I. Rivera and Héctor Ríos "La Política en el nivel municipal" in Robert H. Anderson (2004). *Política Electoral en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Plaza Mayor, pp. 319-334.

The municipal flowchart shows that the *División Legal* and *Permisos Urbanísticos* respond directly to the mayor and the vice mayor (Appendix B). This is significant because it clarifies the importance that they represent to the municipality. *Permisos Urbanísticos* office is in charge of awarding permits for use construction permits, etc. Its website explains how in order to file any type of document having to do with these issues that “they will no longer be processed by ARPE<sup>96</sup> or the Planning Board, but by the Office of Urban Permits of the Municipality of Guaynabo”.<sup>97</sup> This comes as a result of the changes promoted by the LMA. There is no longer need to go to a centralized state office; these issues can be addressed at each municipality.

The Legal Affairs office is in charge of representing the municipality in any legal contention. This office features six working units, one of which is dedicated to *controles de acceso*. This division states in its website that it follows the conditions and requirements devised by Law 21 of 1987 and as amended in order to allow gating. The steps needed for consideration of this office are the following (1) the creation of Residents Associations that are incorporated in the State Department and; (2) submit a request for control de acceso to the municipality. This request should include a *Hoja de Cotejo*<sup>98</sup> that lays out the requirements, and it must be submitted with the documents required by the municipality.

The relevance of these two offices for this investigation is that both are closely linked to the issues of *controles de acceso* and gated communities. They are in charge of allowing these communities to emerge as gated entities, and they are in a better position to illustrate

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<sup>96</sup> ARPE stands for *Administración de Reglamentos y Permisos*, and its mission is to provide citizens with services to citizens in order to obtain permits, protecting the environment, and making sure that construction codes are followed.

<sup>97</sup> My translation.

<sup>98</sup> Checklist sheet.

how this process works. I will present the information that these interlocutors have to offer in Chapter Seven. These are: the Guaynabo Municipal Police, Legal Affairs, *Oficina de Ordenación Territorial*, and legal aide Mr. Albizu.

### **Political Continuity**

Guaynabo's political continuity has featured a single ruling party, the PNP. Also the political transitions have been smooth, primaries have emerged within party ranks, but they have never placed the party in a position of weakness against competing political parties. An additional factor is that the past two leaders that have emerged in Guaynabo's city hall have been charismatic and have attracted political support outside of the PNP ranks. None of these issues have been examined by academic research, and the best way to assess this is by examining electoral results. The relevance for my argument is that this stability has facilitated the emergence of Guaynabo as a significant municipality compared to other towns in Puerto Rico. The relevance for my argument is that this stability has facilitated the emergence of Guaynabo as a municipality in condition to offer a coherent political project without the pressure of electoral contestation. Governmental stability (i.e. the same ruling party) with no turnover of power has been a constant since 1968.

Alejandro "Junior" Cruz was in power from his first election in 1980 until his death in 1993. He was followed in power by the current mayor, Héctor O'Neill, who held positions as mayor's advisor, and in 1988 was elected Senator for the Bayamón district<sup>99</sup>. Both witnessed the emergence of gated communities in Guaynabo.

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<sup>99</sup> This district includes the municipalities of Guaynabo, Bayamón, Toa Alta, Toa Baja and Cataño.

Electoral behavior in Puerto Rican municipalities has not been the source of significant investigation by political scientists.<sup>100</sup> Most of the work examines political platforms, personalities and issues related to the political status of Puerto Rico.<sup>101</sup> This type of research dates back to the years of Spanish colonial control, the early years of the American intervention and from the 1950's the work of this type was conducted by Puerto Ricans.<sup>102</sup>

Puerto Rico's electoral system is nationalized; it features a national electoral board, the *Comisión Estatal de Elecciones* (CEE) that has the consent of the three main electoral parties PPD, PNP and the PIP.<sup>103</sup> Its website does not make available the results of municipal elections in Guaynabo.<sup>104</sup>

The PNP gained control of Guaynabo mayor's office in 1968. This was the first time that this party won national elections and it captured many municipalities, including Guaynabo. The margin of victory of the PNP was significant regardless of the candidate presented.

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<sup>100</sup> The only work that to my knowledge that deals with electoral behavior examination by exit polling are Cámara Fuertes, Luis (1999). *The Madness of every four years: A comparative study of voting, candidate selection and turnout in Puerto Rico and the United States*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan; and Cámara Fuertes, Luis (2004). *The Phenomenon of Puerto Rican Voting*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

<sup>101</sup> A recent text that provides a lively debate on recent Puerto Rico's electoral politics can be found in Anderson, Robert W. (Ed.). *Second Edition (2004), Política Electoral en Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras: Plaza Mayor.

<sup>102</sup> For a great analysis and an elaboration on this see chapter two of Edgardo Meléndez (1998) *Partidos, Política Pública y Status en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Ediciones Nueva Aurora.

<sup>103</sup> In 2007 Puertorriqueños por Puerto Rico emerged as a fourth party eligible for CEE funding.

<sup>104</sup> In order to obtain that information I looked at all the Reports that the CEE generates after each election at their library in Hato Rey, San Juan. The information is accessible to the public in hard copy.

**Table 1. Municipal Elections in Guaynabo**

1968 Municipal Elections <sup>105</sup>		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Santos Rivera Pérez	PNP	n/a
1972 Municipal Elections		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Santos Rivera Pérez	PNP	14,476
1976 Municipal Elections <sup>106</sup>		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Santos Rivera Pérez	PNP	20,001
Juan Berríos Arce	PPD	14,227
René Iván Salvá García	PIP	1,755
Manuel Hernández Collazo	PSP	206
1980 Municipal Elections		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Alejandro “Junior” Cruz	PNP	21,105
Luis R. Pastrana Silva	PPD	16,881
Juan Ramos Bonet	PIP	2,153
José Ramón Elías Rodríguez	PSP	109
1984 Municipal Elections <sup>107</sup>		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Alejandro “Junior” Cruz	PNP	24,156
Mariano Artau Figueroa	PPD	16,602
José Juan Gorrín Peralta	PIP	1,618
Armando E. González Maldonado	PRP	522
1988 Municipal Elections		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Alejandro “Junior” Cruz	PNP	25,794
Marian Berríos Sánchez	PPD	17,783
Gladys Rodríguez de Muñiz	PIP	1,359

<sup>105</sup> The CEE has reported the electoral results differently during its history. The last twenty years has seen a more homogeneous reporting, and I will present them according to how the CEE published these results.

<sup>106</sup> The *Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño* (PSP) emerged in 1971 as an alternative for the Puerto Rican left.

<sup>107</sup> By this year the PSP disbanded, and the *Partido Renovación Puertorriqueña* (PRP) emerged after a leadership split in the PNP.

1992 Municipal Elections		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Alejandro “Junior” Cruz	PNP	28,010
Elsie Droz	PPD	17,493
René Iván Salvá García	PIP	2,049
Write-In Candidates		47

1996 Municipal Elections		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Héctor O’Neill García	PNP	29,852
Francisco Chévere	PPD	18,127
Nancy Gutiérrez Díaz	PIP	2,049
Write-In Candidates		25
Blank Ballots		241
Invalid Ballots		406

2000 Municipal Elections		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Héctor O’Neill García	PNP	30,807
Georgie L. Cases	PPD	16,851
Wilfredo Concepción	PIP	2,478
Write-In Candidates		36
Blank Ballots		281
Invalid Ballots		152

2004 Municipal Elections		
CANDIDATE	PARTY	TOTAL VOTES
Héctor O’Neill García	PNP	31,588
Ramón Cruz	PPD	16,884
Adolfo Rodríguez Burgos	PIP	1,667
Write-In Candidates		61
Blank Ballots		239
Invalid Ballots		165

These CEE statistics show the pattern of electoral support that the PNP has enjoyed in Guaynabo. The CEE has not been historically consistent in terms of this public reports, what follows is a brief account. From 1932 the *Junta Insular de Elecciones* reported the name of the winning candidate for each Municipality and its *Asamblea Municipal*.<sup>108</sup> By 1952 the

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<sup>108</sup> This is the municipal legislature.

renamed *Junta Estatal de Elecciones* followed a similar format. Finally in 1972, the report featured the total number of votes of the winning candidate. In the previous election of 1968 the PNP gained access to the municipal chair in Guaynabo. This election was significant in Puerto Rico because the PNP won the gubernatorial elections and a significant number of municipalities including Guaynabo.<sup>109</sup> The *Partido Estadista Republicano* (PER) was not able to defeat the PPD in several elections; its eventual transformation to PNP proved fruitful. These electoral results proved to be significant to the eventual emergence of gated communities in Guaynabo since this would serve as the time when the PNP emerged as a significant political force in Guaynabo.

From 1976 the *Tribunal Electoral* showed a more comprehensive account of the electoral results. The 1980 election featured a new candidate, Alejandro “Junior” Cruz. His margin of victory featured a small increase during his three electoral campaigns. The same fortune has been experienced by current mayor Héctor O’Neill. This information is vital to assess the comfortable position the PNP has enjoyed in Guaynabo. The success of the PNP in Guaynabo has not been subject of analysis.<sup>110</sup>

Some examinations mention Guaynabo as a stronghold of the PNP, but it is not subject to thorough explanations. Angel I. Rivera and Héctor Ríos (2004) offered some explanations to the 1988 study conducted by Angel I. Rivera and Angel Viera Tirado that used data from 1968 to 1984. Their analysis argues that Guaynabo and San Juan never were strongholds of the PPD during its heyday (1948-1964). They had a weak PPD tradition, and

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<sup>109</sup> The only two studies to my knowledge on this significant election are Marcia Rivera de Quintero, *Elecciones de 1968 en Puerto Rico: análisis estadístico por grupos socioeconómicos* (San Juan: CEREP, 1972); Luis E. Agrait, “Las elecciones de 1968 en Puerto Rico”, *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* vol.16, no.1 (March 1972).

<sup>110</sup> Certainly this topic is in need of research.

after 1968 the PNP has been the significant political player (p. 292). What has been widely acknowledged by the literature is that the PNP did a better job of catering to the interests of those new urban forces that started to articulate their political interests during that time period. The PNP also benefited by the influx of recent immigrants (e.g. Cubans) who helped to bolster their pro-statehood stance.

A possibility of why Guaynabo has turned out into a significant stronghold of the PNP can be its increasing urban component. Robert Anderson described the PNP as enjoying significant support in urban centers. The PPD populism has been replaced with the PNP's urban populism since 1968 (See Anderson in Edgardo Meléndez, 1998: 49).

Edgardo Meléndez argues that the PNP's electoral success in 1968 reflected a change in the party's leadership. He notes that "Middle-and working-class opposition to the reactionary program of the sugar bourgeoisie was important in leading to the rupture of the alliance between the sugar and industrial bourgeoisie in the PER, which provided the basis for the formation of the PNP" (Meléndez, 1988: 83-84). During that time period Guaynabo was starting to emerge as an industrial and residential enclave. The profile of the population started to change, fitting the description that Meléndez elaborated. A change in Guaynabo's population, attracting non *guaynabeños* to the town, and an increasing urban component may be a reflection of the electoral behavior since 1968.

### **Socioeconomic profile**

Guaynabo's recent economic history has not been abundantly documented by academic research in Puerto Rico; nor has its change from a rural town to urban enclave. The evidence that I provide highlights how Guaynabo received a considerable number of migrants from the countryside and abroad. These groups would locate in new subdivisions

located next to the capital city, urbanizaciones that by the 1980's would serve as the locus for the emergence of a considerable number of security-zone gated communities. This process would intensify as Guaynabo's population would occupy industrial and service jobs, paving the way for the emergence of a consumer society impacting the spatial component of Guaynabo.

I also incorporate as part of this account relevant information from the US Census starting with the 1950 publication.<sup>111</sup> The driving element that I highlight with varied census information is Guaynabo's growing urban character, from a rural town in 1950 to a major suburb by the year 2000. Guaynabo's urban character could validate some of the hypothesis argued by previously mentioned social scientist; on why the PNP has enjoyed considerable support by the public.

Guaynabo's population was in a significant increase in the context of the island. From 1930 to 1940 it ranked third in population increase with 35.7%. The 1950 census depicts Guaynabo as a town that has a population of 29,120 with a 59% increase in population from 1940 to 1950 (US Census 1950, Table 4, p. 9). During this time period the barrio with the most significant increase is Pueblo Viejo, whose population in 1940 was only 5,813 and by 1950 it had 13,956 residents (US Census 1950, Table 5, p. 10). Why did Pueblo Viejo witnessed such a dramatic increase during this decade? Possible explanations include its proximity to San Juan and its flat terrains compared to the rest of the municipality. This can explain why it served as the site of the first significant *urbanizaciones* in Guaynabo.

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<sup>111</sup> The first census conducted in Puerto Rico was taken by the Spanish Crown in 1765. Once the United States gained possession of the island their first census was conducted in 1899, one year after the Spanish-American War. I have selected 1950 as the starting point of my analysis since it is the mid point of the century and the moment when the PPD political project reaches its consolidation by controlling the three branches of government.

While Guaynabo's population was increasing, its population was still considered rural. The 1950 Census reported that the municipality's population was 100% rural and 0% urban (US Census 1950, Table 10, p. 25). This is a considerable finding since the literature has talked of Suchville as the first gated community in Puerto Rico during the 1930's. Probably Suchville had no significant impact on the municipality at large, and it was a novelty at the time. This period can be summarized as one of considerable population expansion in a rural setting.

Guaynabo's economic characteristics were mostly rural. The major occupation group of employed *guaynabeños* fell under the category of farm laborers, except unpaid, and farm foremen 1,092. (US Census 1950, Table 40, p. 87). Women under the same category were private household workers 595 (Ibid.). The industry group of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries provided most of the work for 1,959 *guaynabeños*. While 617 *guaynabeñas* worked in the personal services industry (Ibid.).

The economy of the municipality can be clearly described as agricultural, but Guaynabo was the subject of significant changes. Out of the 29,120 residents of Guaynabo only 13,621 were born in the municipality, while 14,486 were born in a different municipality. Of those who were born out of Guaynabo, 2,236 were born in Bayamón, 1,374 in Río Piedras and 1,874 in San Juan. These migrations can be considered internal since these regions compose today's San Juan metropolitan area. At this time there were no significant migrating waves from the interior of the island.

During this same time Guaynabo also featured a large number of people who were born in the United States. A possible explanation of this could be the presence of Fort Buchanan Army Base in Guaynabo.<sup>112</sup>

The 1960 census would finally reflect Guaynabo's growing urban character. The municipality had a population of 39,718 out of which 25,190 were characterized as urban and 14, 528 was rural (US Census 1960, Table 5, p. 12). This is a considerable increase from the previous census when all of Guaynabo was considered rural. Pueblo Viejo continued with the largest population with 19,266 residents (US Census 1960, Table 6, p. 14). In order to contrast the second barrio with the largest population was Frailes with 3,727, both *barrios* next to the San Juan city limit.

This census report showed a similarity to 1950, when Guaynabo was ranked third in terms of increase of population 36.4%. Only two municipalities had a higher population increase, Bayamón 50.5% and Carolina 40.0%. The industry group for employed Guaynabeños also showed a significant change. For both sexes the Manufacturing industry had the highest number of people employed with 1,908. Agriculture ranked fourth with 788 behind construction 1,688, and private households with 888 (US 1960 Census, Table 70, p. 200).

The 1970's featured a population of 67,042. Table 36 points out that only 12.6% were rural non-farm and 4.9% lived in farms (US Census 1970, Table 36, p. 184). The conclusion is that only 17.5% were rural if we add these two categories, and the rest of Guaynabo is considered urban 82.5%.

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<sup>112</sup> This military base saw a significant expansion in May 1940 initially from 1,514 acres to 4,500 acres. For more information access: [www.buchanan.army.mil/sites/about/history/.asp](http://www.buchanan.army.mil/sites/about/history/.asp)

The occupation of *guaynabeños* for 1970 were mostly for clerical and kindred workers 2,091, while farm laborers were only 21% (US Census 1970, Table 83, p. 301). In terms of industry of the total population were employed in three main categories, Manufacturing 2,462, Construction 1,690 and Public Administration 1,277 (US Census 1970, Table 84, p. 309). The emerging Puerto Rican state was providing more employment to residents of Guaynabo who would commute to neighboring San Juan, where most of the state agencies are located, this can account for the growing public administration number.

The 1980 census shows a municipality with a population of 80,742. Out of those only 18.2% were born in Guaynabo (US Census 1970, Table 78, p. 13), for a total of 14,664, while 54,226 were born in a different municipality. The occupation of those employed show that the largest category belonged to managerial and professional specialties with 7,802; where Technical, sales and administrative support occupation featured 7,306 (US Census 1980, Table 84, p. 188). Farming, forestry and fishing occupations only employed 361 (Ibid.).

By 1990 Guaynabo's population was 92,886 with the two main occupations being the same as that of 1980. In terms of industry, Guaynabo had 374 dedicated to agriculture and 10,357 to services (US Census 1990, Table 55, p. 303). These changes were not exclusive to Guaynabo, since a significant number of municipalities in Puerto Rico showed a similar reality. From Operation Bootstrap that relied greatly on manual labor to today's service economy.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> An interesting example is that of Guaynabo's industrial park. During the past decades it was home to men's belts factories to pharmaceutical products. Today it is home to storage facilities, medical services and multinational chain coffee stores.

The latest figures of the 2000 census show Guaynabo with a population of 100,053 out of which 99,850 live in urban areas, while 203 are rural (US Census 2000, Table 7). These figures show the dramatic change that Guaynabo has seen, and helps to contextualize the emergence of gated communities. Vast territories that were occupied by livestock, farming or sugar can fields are now home to subdivisions that in the 1980's saw a turn to becoming security-zone gated communities. As the economy changed, so did Guaynabo's spatial layout and priorities.

### **Municipal perception**

Another significant element is how the Municipality of Guaynabo presents itself to the public through its publications. I have been able to gather a number of publications in which Guaynabo presents their achievements for each fiscal year. These are accessible to the public, so I can infer that its diffusion is meant to be wide.

The fiscal years that I am going to examine are 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003. These are not meant to be representative of what is published by the Municipality, just a snapshot of how it has been portrayed to the public.

Yi-Fu Tuan claims that naming is power, and confers significant value to the element of naming and its building capabilities. This section examines how the Municipality of Guaynabo created its own space by the use of language, particularly in these publications.

A slogan that has been a constant feature is *Forjando Nuestro Futuro* or *Forjando el Futuro*.<sup>114</sup> This slogan has the connotation of a collective effort that looks towards the future. Who is part of that collaborative effort that is working toward a future is not clear. Its ambiguity of who is part of that "us" makes it quite interesting. The concept of the future

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<sup>114</sup> This could be translated as "Creating our Future" and "Creating Future".

is a revealing element, since as we now it is not easy to define when we have arrived there. All of these reports are named *Informe de las Finanzas y Actividades Administrativas*.<sup>115</sup> They feature pictures and information of the different projects that have been built in the city and future plans.<sup>116</sup> The image of the word progress has a significant preeminence in how the municipality presents its work. It can be described at best, as one that features forward movement towards a better future, in a context of an efficient city. It is not spelled out clearly if Guaynabo is rural or urban, but in Puerto Rico, cities and related elements have a perception of progress among the public.

When I examine Municipal Finances for the year 1996-1997 there is a telling portrait. The municipality argues that under the current administration they organized the finances of the municipality (p. 17). The administration was able to make databases more modern by using computer programs and stopped using outdated manual recordkeeping. The municipality boasts how in only 4 years the government was able to increase their income by 49%. According to the report they were able to increase their income achieving those figures because of the profits generated by property taxes and municipal patent (*patentes municipales*). They claim that this places the municipality in a great position to face the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The 1997-1998 report highlights the achievements made in terms of public works, and keeping finances in a solid situation. The 2000-2001 report features in its first pages, the

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<sup>115</sup> Financial and Administrative Activities Report.

<sup>116</sup> An avenue of inquiry that has not been studied in Puerto Rico is that of the high premium that politicians and the public pay to public works. They are popularly called *obras* and the public ascribes significant value to them. This point to constituents, who are used to clientelistic practices in order to gain support. These are tangible ways by which constituents feel that work is been done; much easier to assess than a particular public policy.

efforts towards *Obras Públicas*<sup>117</sup> and it particularly breaks down the investment in different works. In terms of housing the municipality presents their role as a facilitating agent whose mission is to provide housing to low income residents (p. 13).<sup>118</sup> In an interesting element the report recognizes the controversy over the sector of Juan Domingo. Residents claim that the mayor is seeking to displace them, while the mayor argues that his intention is to provide them with better housing.<sup>119</sup>

The 2001-2002 report features significant achievements. While the government of Puerto Rico was facing fiscal and economic stagnation (e.g. declining construction and reduced investment), Guaynabo's municipal government enjoyed great economic stability (p. 20).<sup>120</sup> Property tariffs are featured as their main source of municipal income, generating the total of \$36,778,601.00

The 2002-2003 report shows significant changes in its layout. The financial report is presented in the front pages, with the economic figures and public works at the end of the report. The report highlights in its first pages how property tax for 1993 was \$14,803,203 and for 2003 is \$39,492,687 (p. 5). It is an interesting coincidence that the year selected was 1993 since Mayor O'Neill started his term of mayor on that year. It serves as an eloquent example of the achievements that the administration wants to feature. The connection of these figures to the project is that this is part of the city marketing project that Guaynabo is trying to generate. A space where Guaynabo is seen as an exceptional place in the Puerto

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<sup>117</sup> Public Works.

<sup>118</sup> My translation.

<sup>119</sup> Juan Domingo is a case that has been presented as a current case of gentrification and has captured the attention of Puerto Rican media. For an analysis on this issue see: Morales-Cruz, Myrta . "Don't hand me fish, teach me how to fish" Retrieved March 12, 2008 from [http://islandia.law.yale.edu/sela/SELA%202005/Myrta%20Morales-Cruz%20\(Final%20English%20Version\)%20v%201.0.pdf](http://islandia.law.yale.edu/sela/SELA%202005/Myrta%20Morales-Cruz%20(Final%20English%20Version)%20v%201.0.pdf).

<sup>120</sup> My translation.

Rican context (i.e. Guaynabo's exceptionalism), generating a sense of pride in its residents, generating a esprit d' corps amongst its employees by providing good working conditions (e.g. police, public works, EMT). Also English has been used as the language that has shaped this space, portraying a sense of prestige to the Puerto Rican public.<sup>121</sup> The space that has been created by these reports talk about a municipality that has solid finances because of good administrative practices; it shows good public works and responsiveness to the constituents. This certainly makes this municipality a great setting for investment. It has been addressed by the perception of an efficient government with popular and economic support.

Crime has been an issue of significant importance that has been addressed by the mayor. He stated that the most significant crime statistics in the municipality is that of break-in in gated communities (*El Nuevo Día*, August 30, 2006, p. 64). Members of the mayor's staff have met with the different presidents of the homeowners associations in order to address these concerns.

The political consequences of this comment have not stirred any significant reaction by the public. The gated communities' consensus is well and alive. This article made page number 64 in *El Nuevo Día* under the security section of the newspaper. Regional media covered this press conference but did not make any comments on gated communities. It only focused on the mayor's goal of making Guaynabo the safest city in Puerto Rico (*Guaynabo al Día*, Edition #1706, Sept. 5-Oct 5, 2006, p. 8). The municipality's exposure not only includes how it addresses public works and other duties, crime is a paramount issue of significant importance.

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<sup>121</sup> During 2008 Guaynabo Municipal Police patrol cars started featuring this motto on its doors "Protect, serve and maintain our quality of life".

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I documented the changes that Guaynabo has seen over the past half century. From a poor municipality (that was dissolved for some decades), to today's administration that has been favoring an aggressive city marketing campaign. This paved the way for an increasingly urban Guaynabo, allowing for a larger municipal structure to emerge. In the following chapter I will elaborate in terms of how this municipal structure (i.e. key city officials) interacts with the powerful component that is gated communities in Guaynabo.

The municipality has gone to great lengths to present their work in the best way possible by making use of their fiscal records, public works, and how they have handled crime as sources that validate its efficient municipal administration. This has been enhanced by making use of a number of slogans, driving the image that they want to convey to their audience. This is an astute political move, in order to consolidate public support, keeping the PNP as the uninterrupted political power in the municipality.

Having a better understanding of the municipal set up will be significant for the next chapter. In Chapter Seven I will present the result of interviews with city officials who are crucial to confirming if a municipal policy on gated communities exists in Guaynabo.

## CHAPTER VII

### MUNICIPAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND CIVIL SERVANTS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter addresses the municipal policy of Guaynabo towards gated communities. The literature in Puerto Rico has been limited in terms of the reasons behind state support of gated communities. International literature has addressed these concerns, offering a number of reasons that I have outlined in previous chapters such as prestige, crime/homogeneity, property value, and private services/governance. A basic assumption behind my analysis is that the municipality acts rationally in terms of articulating and implementing their policies. As part of this examination I would like to corroborate if this is so in the concrete case of gated communities. In the case of Guaynabo it is significant to determine whether the city has a concerted effort for a particular political reason.

An efficient public administration by the municipality can serve as an understandable rationale for its policies. A particular example has been the ability to market its assets, portray and sell the municipality as a brand and present a more accessible and efficient municipality to its public. I argue that these traits make it an ideal place for private investment in the construction sector of the economy, what has been described in the literature as city marketing. In the case of Guaynabo, gated communities have helped to support a city marketing project. The first attempt to privatize in the city was achieved by the constant changes in urban spaces (e.g. gated communities). After these communities were privatized other spaces followed (e.g. private gyms). But in order for this argument to hold true, it is important to determine if the municipality has a policy within regards to gated communities.

## **Municipal Documents**

Prior to the year 2000 Guaynabo followed the parameters established by Law 21 of 1987 in terms of gating security-zone communities exclusively. Once Guaynabo obtained its status as a *Municipio Autónomo* in the year 2000, it devised a regulation on controles de acceso *Reglamento de Ordenación Territorial* Number 3 of March 2000. This document was the first time that, to my knowledge, Guaynabo articulated how it would operate gated communities. The purpose is to “establish the norms and procedures necessary for the concession and authorization of permits necessary for the control of traffic accessing *urbanizaciones*, streets in the communities in the jurisdiction of the *Municipio Autónomo*” (Section 1.02).<sup>122</sup>

This document establishes the guidelines and makes clear the role for Guaynabo’s municipal government. It states that the initiative for gating should come from the homeowners associations interested in gating (p. 8) and presents the conditions needed to develop new gated communities. The interesting element out of this situation is that the responsibility is not in complete control of the Municipality. The Municipality needs to work in agreement with the Planning Board in order to make such a decision. The municipal government is the body in charge of providing the permit, with the consent of ARPE and the Planning Board.

This document establishes that the Municipality will be in charge of supervising what occurs in the community (pp. 19-20). The follow-up over what happens in gated communities will be conducted by the municipality, giving more leverage to the municipality

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<sup>122</sup> My translation.

over state government in terms of following up on the development. This is a case where there might be an opening for clientelist policies by the Mayor's Office, since this validates permanent contact between local government and its constituents.

In terms of this document, one of the most interesting policy elements can be found on its last page. In section 11.00, the bylaw states that ultimately the Municipal Legislature can delegate to the mayor any study, attention and approval of the final say on a petition to establish *control de acceso* in Guaynabo (p. 20). This eloquently shows how Guaynabo's municipal structure is followed and guided according to the mayor. This structure validates him as the leading elected political figure in Guaynabo. Later in the chapter I will evidence the Mayor's experience as a candidate while campaigning. The physical obstacles that his team faced served as a great impetus for understanding and addressing the emerging security-zone communities. As a result the municipality started forming a policy towards gated communities, one that evolved to the point where it is located today and will be evidenced later.

The mayor's current electoral success, discussed in Chapter Six, grants him great authority in terms of the municipal policies that are pursued in Guaynabo. Mayor O'Neill entered this position and through the different policies that he has applied has been able to gain popular support and political leverage. The perceived opposition to the mayor has been really insignificant. As evidence the main opposition political party PPD has been unable to present a mayoral candidate for consistent elections, after electoral defeat they do not return for the following elections.

Opposition has emerged over particular issues such as health care, and expropriation from communities such as in barrio Juan Domingo. There have been contingent moments of

opposition, but a steady opposition has been unable to emerge. It has been interesting to see popular discontent over some of the mayoral positions (e.g. expropriation for a School of Fine Arts that now hosts television network *Univisión* Puerto Rico). These instances of opposition have been scarce and have not been able to generate significant political opposition. The biggest opposition that the mayor and his neoliberal state project have seen has come within party ranks in the form of electoral primaries.

This bylaw was made available by the *Oficina de Ordenación Territorial and the Oficina de Asuntos Legales*. This latter office has a checklist document that outlines the requirements and proceedings necessary to request a *control de acceso*. This provides a basic outline of the steps to follow, and among them, it requests crime statistics to be provided by residents of the interested community. This perpetuates the discourse of crime as a legitimizing factor behind gating communities, where crime is presented as the dominant rationale. My project aims to go beyond the gated community consensus where crime is part of the hegemonic discourse, and I am interested in offering other possible explanation for the expansion of gated communities.

These two basic documents, the bylaw and the checklist, are what the municipality has generated in terms of specific guidelines for this process. The main document that dictates how the process is followed in Guaynabo and any other municipality is Law 21 as amended. In the process of conducting interviews other relevant documents surfaced. One of them has been acknowledged in their bibliographies by some academics in Puerto Rico, but it has been the subject of scarce analysis.

The *Estudio Control de Acceso de Urbanizaciones Públicas y Privadas: Guaynabo* is a study that was requested by the Municipality to the architecture firm, Mario A. Corsino y

Asociados. The timing of this study is quite interesting since it was finalized on 9 December 1993, the same year that Mayor Héctor O'Neill started his duties as mayor, and, according to the introductory letter of the document, was commissioned by Mayor O'Neill. Gated communities in the form of security-zone communities were emerging by the time that this study was published. The significant connection of this study is that some of its suggestions were incorporated as part of the municipal administration's policy towards gated communities. It would be reasonable for a new mayor to request this type of study in order to assess the situation of his municipality, showing his interest on this particular issue. According to my interpretation this was the first step towards establishing new policies on this matter.

This study recommends *controles de acceso* that have promoted an effective community involvement in order to help the government in the fight against crime (p. 2). Evidently a study with that type of introduction has its goals clearly set out in order to achieve a desired outcome, and that is to promote gating. It also characterizes Guaynabo as featuring *control de acceso* communities as belonging to high, middle high and middle class, groups that are subject to crime because of their accessibility to roadways, and their economic capacity. Also it mentions economic capacity and adequate street access (e.g. escape routes after burglary) that make them a more appealing target for criminals. It describes *controles de acceso* as responding to the impossibility of state and municipal efforts curtailing crime. In addition, it recognizes certain opposition to this trend at that time, that it would eventually fragment physical space. The public certainly accepted this dynamic, since the real estate industry would start to aggressively cater to this market.

When assessing the existing scenarios at the time of publication there are 42 petitions to gate up and 25 petitions waiting for a final approval. By explaining the scenario at the time of that publication they do present the positive and negative elements behind gating. As part of their analysis the study lists 15 negative aspects and only 3 positive. Despite this grim figure, gated communities have become really accessible in Guaynabo. Why? It is interesting to note that all of these 18 factors do not explicitly illustrate how the Municipality would benefit or receive a negative impact. Why did the Municipality continue with a project that does not clearly points to significant benefits?

A possible answer that I present is that there is a potential economic gain for the municipal state by the resources that are generated from taxes, which is what McKenzie argues in the case of Las Vegas. But there is a broader logic present in the dynamic and that is the element of city marketing. Gated communities are the symbol that has intended or unintended started to change Guaynabo's landscape.

The municipality has been to articulate a new space through these gated communities giving way to the creation of Guaynabo City as brand name. This has led to a particular city marketing where the city is showcased under a new light, creating a distinction from neighboring towns impacting other realm of city operation, creating a particular esprit d' corps. The interviews that follow will evidence what I have named Guaynabo's exceptionalism.

The significant benefit that I want to present and validate through evidence in the following chapter is that Guaynabo's benefits are twofold. The municipality is able to generate more income through gated communities since it brings more resources, thus fueling the Guaynabo City brand name. Through the use of city marketing Guaynabo is able

to attract investment which fuels the process of generating resources. It is important to understand that Guaynabo is transitioning to a post-industrial economy where this type of investment is essential to fueling the neoliberal project present in Guaynabo.

The goal behind their methodology is for their suggestions to “harmonize in an integrated and rational way with the future *Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial*” (Corsino et. al, 1993: 13).<sup>123</sup> This plan was a roadmap that allowed for the municipality to take advantage of the LMA, process that was culminated in 2000.

The *Estudio de Control de Acceso de Urbanizaciones Públicas y Privadas: Guaynabo* contemplates an analysis of crime rates, which were high, showing the municipality’s interest in addressing the role of crime as part of the gated community dynamic. What is crucial in its suggestions at this time is for the municipality to establish a new office, *División de Permisos de Control de Acceso del Municipio de Guaynabo*, office that exists today. This suggestion and implementation by the Mayor was crucial in professionalizing how the municipality handles these *controles de acceso*. Crime served as a space by which the municipality can access the public, and most importantly to this analysis how it can serve as a legitimizing force behind changes in the urban space. This was supported by *guaynabeños* who favored the initial steps by creating security-zone communities. After a market for this type of residence was created, other forces became part of promoting these urban spaces.

According to the suggestions offered by this study this new office should be ascribed to the *Oficina de Ordenación Territorial* under the new LMA. Also this report suggested different bylaws that the municipality should set in place that were not of punitive nature. It

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<sup>123</sup> My translation.

also indicates that *control de acceso* should comply with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) (p. 38).

This *Estudio de Control de Acceso de Urbanizaciones Públicas y Privadas: Guaynabo* argues that legislative funding should be directed towards transit studies, and now towards permanent improvements that might be in violation of the law (p. 41).<sup>124</sup> They also argue that the municipality should negotiate with developers and residents of public housing that are interested in gating (p. 44). It also points to the first articulation in understanding gated community reality in Guaynabo, and how the municipality followed on some of its suggestions. The *Oficina de Ordenación Territorial* has a significant role in this dynamic, to which I will be focusing now.

### **Oficina de Ordenación Territorial**

My first interview conducted was with Ms. Ada Bones on November 9, 2006, planner and director of the *Oficina de Ordenación Territorial*.<sup>125</sup> It is important when reading these findings to understand why she was interviewed; this is the office that has direct oversight over the planning process in the municipality. The responsibility of city planning is conducted by *Ordenación Territorial*, thus I consider that is of great importance to understand how have gated communities have been planned, and thought in Guaynabo. The relevance consists of understanding the origins, the needs that the municipality had, and the clientele that it had to cater. Ms. Bones points to Law 21 of 1987 as the source of gated communities in Guaynabo. The rationale that she offers for gating at that time is “(Gating)

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<sup>124</sup> It is important to keep in mind that early in this dynamic, legislators used to allocated pork barrel funds towards gating old communities.

<sup>125</sup> This interview was conducted on 9 November 2006. One element that needs to be pointed out is that this office is a product of the LMA, operating since the year 2000. The process of gating communities precedes this office, but I consider that this office is crucial in order to understand gated communities in Guaynabo.

obviously emerged out of the issue of security, of the issue of society starting to resent that, the State does not provide enough security, because of this they (the residents) had to make the efforts so they could guarantee that security. Basically, that's how the policy originated, or the law's intent".<sup>126</sup> I think that this was certainly some of the reasons experienced as part of popular discourse. Gates certainly increased, but I will later offer other considerations for its emergence.

This description points to crime as the reason behind gating and popular resentment that crime caused, and most importantly the State has not been able to provide security to its citizens. In order to cope with this situation, citizens had to take the steps towards providing their own security. Citizens mobilized fueled by the frustration with the state's incompetence in curtailing the crime rate.

An interesting parallel that I will present is the element of popular discomfort with the State at this time, a sentiment that gave way to the LMA. The citizens have to lead the process in terms of articulating their needs in an unequal process where those with better connections will make the best out of their claims. Resources and connections play a key role in Puerto Rican politics, and the fact that the origin of these communities rested on such consideration makes for an uneven start where those with resources and connections were able to form security-zone communities before other socioeconomic sectors.

Also Ms. Bones points to social evolution as broader issues that facilitated gating. The process stems from the community according to her account since everyone is "paranoid with the issue of security, they'll take steps in order to deal with this..." As the process of "social evolution" went downhill therefore impacting security, communities and residents

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<sup>126</sup> This quote and the ones that will follow for the interviews conducted were translated by me.

figured that gating was a reasonable step. The discourse of Law 21 certainly supports these failings, particularly since it was devised as a method to cope with social ills.

Communities have to follow a process in order to achieve gating that is “a rigorous process that the law has established” (Bones, 2006). Ms. Bones posits considerable trust and no criticism of Law 21; the law is not a source of criticism, but the process of gating is a different issue. Ms. Bones splits the process into paperwork and other considerations, “the procedural compliance, besides from the economic element that is involved in a community interested in achieving gating is quite tedious.”<sup>127</sup> Despite these difficulties at the end of the day residents “make it” and finalize the process of gating.

This early process of the interview points to the origin of gating and how citizens behaved during that process. She updated the current information by saying “Currently in Guaynabo we did a study and we’re reaching 240 gated communities.” This was a surprising finding, since this is the first time that the municipality has conducted a study on gated communities since 1993. Thirteen years (by the time of this interview) have passed and the municipality, to my knowledge, has not done any studies on gated communities. An interesting element to note is that this study was conducted by the municipality and not a private research firm like in 1993.

There is a breakdown in terms of gated communities registered in Guaynabo. Ms. Bones explains the process as one that breaks into two, one is that of communities that are built with gates (lifestyle and prestige communities). According to Ms. Bones lifestyle and prestige communities responds to the kind of development and its market. Here the process

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<sup>127</sup> I would point to the term used both by government and contractors of *permisología*. This term can have some negative connotation that points to the red tape in government transactions of this nature.

stems from the developer who proposes a project that includes gating, project that does not demand much work. There are more recent cases when contractors respond to the hegemonic fear of crime and simply build with gates, not having gates is a thing of the past.

Ms. Bones goes into some detail in terms of old communities, she comments that “When an urbanización was not (built) under that concept and wants to gate, first of all, under the LMA, when a Municipality, operates obviously autonomously it establishes its rules that emerge out of the Junta’s regulation, that they work the issue of gating when municipalities are not autonomous.” There is a considerable difference on how gating occurs predicated on whether the Municipality is autonomous or not. Ms. Bones presents significant nuances, the gates are not all the same and nor are their origins.

From 2000 Guaynabo established its own regulation for gated communities that have remained in operation to this day. She describes this regulation as a “copy paste of that of the Planning Board.” In other words Guaynabo has basically followed the blueprint established by the national government. There is a space for change according to Ms. Bones “once the Municipality understands its more particular dynamic on gating and the policy that it will establish, then it starts to amend its regulation.” This is significant because since 2000 Guaynabo has had the opportunity to direct its own process of overseeing gated communities, with more leverage than the municipalities that lack autonomy (thus taking advantage of the LMA Law).

A new study at the time of the interview was interested in understanding the impact of gated communities in the municipality. Ms. Bones explains “We are entering in the issue of analyzing the behavior of gating in the municipality. With the purpose of obviously, of having, a better picture on how they are behaving. The allocation of resources, the

municipality now has a great effort related completely to gated communities.” The important question is what has triggered Guaynabo to conduct this study at this time? The logic behind this recent interest seems to be resource allocation. Ms. Bones argues “A more effective way for resources to be better funneled. For example, decision making for future gates. I need to know if that community is isolated, or it can be gated through other that has been gated, and what is done, is that both are annexed. All this type of analysis is what we’re getting ourselves into in order to work with the regulation that will rule gating in Guaynabo”.

Again, in the interview I revisited the issue of why people moved to gated communities in Guaynabo in particular. Gated communities have achieved such a level of status and visibility that each developer who has a new project in mind has to consider, “The way that gating has been conducted in a community for a developer it does not sell if it lacks a *control de acceso*.” A particular divide then emerges between communities that feature gates and those that do not. Old neighborhoods that did not go through the process of initial gating feel like their communities are old and low income. This prompts many to gate their communities by generating security-zone communities.

When asked if the municipality provides funds to assist communities in gating (i.e. security-zone communities) the response is mixed, “No, no, no, it’s supposed that the Municipality doesn’t, well there are some that are municipal efforts. So you can see, Guaynabo should be of the no, no, no. It might be that other projects developed by the Municipality might include. Look even public housing features gates”.

This ambiguous response behind my question was quite puzzling. Out of this interview this was probably the least categorical of answers. Why is this case? I will suggest that the reasons behind this is that a municipality that prides itself in following the law and

bylaw, finds itself in an ambiguous space when it comes to the issue of funding for gating. She elaborates on how this municipality deals with this dynamic “In this type of effort, the municipality sets up a gate, sets up their facilities, because this issue of gating is expensive and the municipality does not pay for it. The municipality decides whether it can be built or not”.

This ambiguity is simply stunning and what should be considered is the element of clientelistic politics. That is the possibility that the municipality gates in order to satisfy the demands of residents. She presented the example of how *residenciales públicos* are gated in Guayanabo, turning them into security-zone communities, since the poor have the same right of living in a gated community like the rest of *guaynabeños*. This argument is strongly embedded in the logic of liberalism, providing similar opportunities to all.

Ms. Bones presents the caveat that any policy of gating needs popular approval of more than 75% of the residents. Guayanabo’s municipal government cannot impose gates, they decide whether it is approved or not.<sup>128</sup> An element that needs to be recognized is that both literature in Puerto Rico and elsewhere has expressed popular support for these gates. In the case of this interview, it crystallized in this particular way. “How this law [Law 21 of 1987] is enacted depends on the acceptability or lack of acceptability that it has among citizens”. Popular support or lack thereof is a crucial process that influences how Guayanabo manages gates. Public opinion does matter in Guayanabo. Not surprisingly since this municipality has worked hard in promoting a particular image, the city marketing process that we have seen in Guayanabo has included public appropriation of this same discourse.

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<sup>128</sup> It is really interesting that the municipality does not impose gates, but as the interview show the municipality has an interest in seeing all new projects with gates, and the interest of the mayor of achieving gating in certain communities (e.g. Lomas del Sol, Muñoz Rivera).

In terms of some of the crucial issues, a part of my questionnaire was to determine if Guaynabo operated in a similar fashion to other municipalities. The answer was not too categorical, but what followed responds to Guaynabo's particular geography. Ms. Bones argues "Among all the municipalities, if you're not autonomous, the Planning Board will lead the process, if you're autonomous then you do. Under your consideration, under your faculties as an autonomous municipality".

When asked if all barrios in Guaynabo are handled the same way an interesting response emerged. She said "That is related to urban activity, the behavior according to each area". The interaction is predicated on how economic activity has evolved. At this point is significant to consider the figures on Chapter Six that highlights Guaynabo's changes. Not surprisingly according to Ms. Bones the most significant action in terms of gates is found in Pueblo Viejo and Frailes. These two barrios feature flat terrain and proximity to San Juan. From an active player in the sugar cane industry in the past, today it serves as home to the highest number of gated communities. Ms. Bones points out that in this case the high component of high density and income has influenced this process. There are reasons for this dynamic, but I do not think that the dynamic of gated communities in other neighborhoods are only limited to these two considerations.

The geographic location of gates are mostly found in these barrios, but in certain occasions Ms. Bones points to areas located outside of high urban component areas. These are the cases where developers built out of the urban and high income context developing lifestyle or prestige communities. She explains "A developer showed up and built an expensive gated community where he felt like, without an urban context, his project was approved, and it's gated. Or residents that moved there have the means to do so". This

shows how the market goes over patterns of already existing urbanized spaces, and the developers fulfilled the legal requirements and now have a lifestyle or prestige gated community to sell.<sup>129</sup> The process of city marketing gets a considerable boost on these high profile communities. The municipality plays a role by facilitating the emergence of these communities in Guaynabo. It is likely to raise tax revenue, generate jobs, and homogenizing space, favoring affluent residents.

Ms. Bones is quick to point that urban activity is an indication of the number of gated communities in the case of Guaynabo since this is linked to income. But this is not the case for all of Puerto Rico; her hometown of Arroyo can feature a high urban component, but since the element of high income is missing gated communities can not be found.<sup>130</sup> If proven this could establish a new line of inquiry for this field.<sup>131</sup> Ms. Bones argues that high density of people with high income will facilitate the process of gating in that particular process. This could not be possible in her hometown of Arroyo because high density can be present, but not with the component of high income. Another element that is crucial as part

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<sup>129</sup>Municipal Highway 834 has an extension of 2.8 miles at a cost of \$38 million dollars. This highway was fully funded by the municipality, making it the first of its kind in Puerto Rico. It is located in Guaynabo Sur and was built in a rural area making it look out of place. Insistent rumors say that this was built in order to facilitate transit towards a massive lifestyle gated community to be built in the near future. During the 1990's Guaynabo's highways divided the city into three regions Norte, Centro and Sur. This is a case where language can shape space in Guaynabo.

<sup>130</sup> An additional element that I have not encountered in the literature and Ms. Bones has added to consideration on reasons behind gating is that of density.

<sup>131</sup> Mrs. Bones points to density as a significant factor that the literature has not fully considered, this is a reasonable hypothesis, but I would point to an additional element. Density should also be accompanied by a particular context, one where the economy is entering a post industrial stage.

of this dynamic according to Ms. Bones is that since the rich and poor live next to each other it increases the likelihood of crime.<sup>132</sup>

The discourse that Ms. Bones presents here is that lack of homogeneity is certainly problematic and seems to be a catalyst. She certainly validates Setha Low's point of view that homogeneity is significantly important when trying to understand the support for gated communities. Ms. Bones elaborates "It is certainly related, yes, yes, yes. And the fact that it has to be related if at certain socioeconomic level and you will adjust to what you can afford. There are gated communities that have an exclusivity and massive security, and there are others that have less, because their community is so, so, but not that much. You see?"

A very interesting paradox that emerged during this conversation has to do with the issue of privatizing services. The Puerto Rican state has failed in tackling crime (popular discourse) and this has given way to the emergence of gated communities. But interestingly in this particular case Guaynabo has been successful at handling other services, and these remain public. The marquee Guaynabo example is that of trash collection and recycling. This has been privatized in some municipalities, but that has not been the case in Guaynabo. The quality of trash collection in Guaynabo is stated by the public as one of the benefits of having Héctor O'Neill as Guaynabo's mayor. Trash collection has a close link to the process of gated communities in Guaynabo. Public Works is one of the agencies that have to approve the process of gating an old community. Efficient services of this kind help to boost the city marketing process that Guaynabo has promoted. It legitimizes municipal efforts for

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<sup>132</sup> A possible explanation that I would like to offer is that many *urbanizaciones* today are located in former sugar cane fields. These were surrounded by the houses of poor laborers. Once the sugar cane economy declined and fields turned into *urbanizaciones* the dynamics of rich and poor are set in motion. This has been mentioned in popular media, but to my knowledge is has never been properly analyzed. New residents of higher income in the new *urbanizaciones* live next to the poor that used to work those fields.

changing urban space, promoting a particular way of life, catering to a neoliberal city project, and has been important to the mayor in order to generate electoral support. This everyday practice of efficiency is an attempt to set Guaynabo apart from the experience of other residents of Puerto Rico of having an inefficient state. If the truck and the team in charge of this duty cannot access the community because of placing gates, the process is then stopped.

In addition to sanitary concerns, politics plays a crucial role when it comes to trash collection. This municipal service is the only one that serves all of the homes in the municipality, and evidently is crucial to the end process of consumption. The recycling and trash collection programs have been efficient during Mayor O'Neill's tenure, recycling in particular has been operating for more than a decade.<sup>133</sup> Initially concerned residents would take the recyclable products to collection centers and today trucks pick up recycling at homes on a weekly basis.<sup>134</sup> The service gives the mayor great political leverage, since it is quite common for people to mention trash collection as one of the virtues of his administration.<sup>135</sup>

This source of great public satisfaction gives the mayor significant political leverage, and to his credit this realization has been remarkable. Unexpectedly the issue surfaced in the interview with Ms. Bones. This occurred when I asked Ms. Bones about the quality of life and gated communities in Guaynabo. She elaborates "Guaynabo for that reason has so much attractiveness to its residential quality, I mean for its residential quality because of the

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<sup>133</sup> These efforts date to the mid 1990's when intentionally or unintentionally the municipality started promoting a series of everyday practices (such as recycling). Today it has progressed to a particular point where quality of life can be found in Guaynabo, this turns into a significant commodity that Guaynabo can use for its city marketing campaign.

<sup>134</sup> This was a considerable step forward for the municipality and its residents. Particularly since certain towns do a deficient job of trash collection.

<sup>135</sup> It would be interesting to know if the Mayor was aware of the possibility when establishing a more efficient program. If he was aware it turned out to be a brilliant political strategy.

services that it offers”. It is attractive for Guaynabo to have these efficient services, since this is part of the element of prestige behind what the municipality does, creating a brand name because of its services, which is part of the city marketing dynamic. This sets them apart from neighboring towns, promoting Guaynabo’s exceptionalism.

To validate this argument let us examine the consequences if Guaynabo stopped providing these services and went for privatization. It is a municipal initiative to take care of trash collection? She elaborates “And that [trash collection] impacts in other ways, pleased [public] with the Municipality with the socio-political factor”. City functionaries are well aware of the positive consequences that this practice has for Guaynabo.<sup>136</sup>

The municipal interaction with its public is a very revealing process. Ms. Bones revealed on how many of the promoters of the 1987 law were residents of Guaynabo are very knowledgeable on this issue. But what has happened after this how is the dynamic once these communities are set in place?

The municipality has set out a plan where they meet with residents every two months. According to Ms. Bones every time these homeowners run into difficulties they first contact the municipality. The mayor attends these meetings and he assigns the problems to the particular office in charge. The issues vary; the last time they met before this interview they discussed the issue of gated communities. She adds “Keep in mind that where they first go [residents] is to the municipalities and homeowners associations, understanding that they hold the issue of homeowners association for a municipality, for a politician is crucial”.

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<sup>136</sup> In the case of Guaynabo the trucks belong to the municipality, are labeled as such, have government license plates and are driven by municipal workers. I have been informed that there is private trash collection in some communities in the municipality of Dorado. This town has seen a significant boom in the past ten years as an ideal place for second homes and beach houses, offering mostly lifestyle gated communities.

If Ms. Bones's thoughts are representative of what happens in the municipality, they do understand the favorable view that this holds among the citizens. She considers that these associations are privileged for the type of treatment that they receive in Guaynabo. What was quite revealing from the conversation with Ms. Bones is the reason why Guaynabo residents are so active. She argues that active participation is related to high income, and since a certain segment of Guaynabo's public falls under that profile, municipal officers do experience intense participation.

Even though there is a speech of inclusiveness and of providing equal opportunities to Guaynabo's residents, the language used at times showed otherwise. By making reference to high income places like Villas Reales, middle class communities like Muñoz Rivera and low income like El Último Chance there is recognition of different communities in Guaynabo. The wealthiest segment of the population has the resources and knowledge to state their claims and be listened to by the municipality. There are evidently particular values that policymakers have when implementing specific policies.<sup>137</sup>

During the interview it became evident that there was little knowledge of gated communities outside of Puerto Rico. This is a different process from that seen in Great Britain where academics are part of generating findings about gated communities and share them with government.<sup>138</sup> The gap between academic work and public administration has not been bridged. The role of the expert is absent, as it has been outlined at different stages of this dissertation. A possible reason is the state of civil servants in Puerto Rico, first a significant element to consider is their recruitment. Puerto Rico only features a small

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<sup>137</sup> The values of civil servants in Puerto Rico have not been the subject of great attention. This would make clear how they stand on determinate issues, and if this can impact public policy.

<sup>138</sup> Chapter Two features some of these findings.

number of Public Administration programs for the whole country. There is no tradition of civil servants as in other countries like France or Great Britain. Second, a considerable element in the recruitment is closely linked to clientelist politics. Many who assist in the electoral campaign are rewarded for their work at government, generating a situation where some of the civil servants were not recruited for their merits. Another component is that many who are not satisfied with the working conditions in Puerto Rico (i.e. low pay, highly politicized spaces) serves as a catalyst for migrating mostly to the United States. Other potential civil servants study in the United States and decide to stay in that country because of better conditions. This interpretation is in relation to the little notion of the gated community literature that these civil servants had.<sup>139</sup> This points to a significant difference in Puerto Rico's public administration, where civil servant tradition is not as solid as in other countries. It is important to make clear that I requested a copy of this 2006 study on gated communities in Guaynabo and my request was declined. Ms. Bones argued that it has not been cleared by the mayor in order to be made public.<sup>140</sup>

At the end of the interview some of my questions yielded ambiguous responses. When I asked if the fact that Guaynabo has had political continuity has helped the municipality to have a more articulated policy on gated communities; she replied "There is a relation". That was enough to answer that question. This short answer was disappointing particularly considering that one of the advantages that Guaynabo has over other towns is its political continuity. The only reason that I can offer for why such an answer was offered is that it kept the conversation away from electoral politics. By doing this the conversation

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<sup>139</sup> This went to the extreme that she suggested if I could look into an inquiry that she has been dealing with. If I could separate how the variables of income and density interact, which one causes gated communities.

<sup>140</sup> This is an interesting glimpse on how information becomes cleared in the municipality.

continued to be conducted at a “professional level”, by not getting into a potentially “political conversation” (i.e. framed in terms of political parties).<sup>141</sup>

After analyzing this interview I would like to offer some concluding remarks to round up this section. In terms of policy, the municipality follows Law 21 of 1987 as amended and its own bylaw that is a copy paste of the original as set out by the Planning Board. Since 2000 Guaynabo has been operationally autonomously and one of their faculties is to have deciding power over which communities can gate. Most of the examples offered in this interview have to do with security-zone communities, since prestige and lifestyle have been contemplated as such and offer little difficulties to the municipality. She has mentioned 240 gated communities today without problematizing this in terms of the kind of protection (i.e. lifestyle, prestige or security zone communities). In that sense, access to their study might help with these figures.

What becomes evident is that gated communities are of significant importance in Guaynabo; Ms. Bones calls it a strong dynamic in the municipality, an example is how she stressed the upper class’s capability for mobilization because of its knowledge and resources. It is very interesting how she frames this, because particular examples were not mentioned.

The first study was done when the current mayor got hold of municipal duties, and in 2006 the municipality conducted a second study. It makes sense that they have focused on making sure that the law has been followed, since research is not needed to achieve this. Monitoring the behavior of gated communities seems to be a recent concern, trying to maximize the resources used toward that end.

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<sup>141</sup> It is important to note that the State is one of the largest employers in the country, and usually civil servant are uncomfortable talking about issues that have to do with party politics. Since they can feel that their jobs might be jeopardized.

## Legal Affairs

I interviewed Ms. Patria Correa, the person in charge of the *Control de Acceso* division in the Legal Affairs Office.<sup>142</sup> In the year 2000 the municipality generated its own regulation, specified that this is a regulation not public policy, I understood this as how the municipality operates when it comes to gated communities on a daily basis. This is so far consistent with the interview that Ms. Bones, but a number of different interpretations would emerge. In the year 2002 bylaw 148 gave the mayor the faculty to directly assume control over the policy on gated communities in Guaynabo. A possible reason for the mayor's interest might include that the powerful component that gated communities are in Guaynabo, the importance that residents can ascribe to them, or the component of city marketing that I will be presenting in the following chapters. The municipal legislature was willing to relinquish its responsibilities to the mayor on these issues, illustrating the significant control and hands on approach on this subject. This is a likely situation since, as presented in Chapter Six the mayor enjoys considerable political support by virtue of the electoral results, and a government that is clear of any wrongdoing at this time. There is an institutionally close link between the mayor and the municipal legislature.

Ms. Correa pointed to 140 gated communities in Guaynabo as opposed to Ms. Bones' calculation of numbers of gated communities, showing a discrepancy with the figures offered

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<sup>142</sup> On that same day I conducted an interview with the Legal Affairs officials. The director of this office was not interested in being interviewed, and Doña Suncha was able to book an interview with Ms. Patria Correa. Ms. Correa can be characterized as warm and accessible; we met at her office with no interruptions. A source of contention emerged when I asked if the interview could be recorded. She said something to the extent of, "well that is not how we usually do things, but let me call my supervisor". She went for the phone and picked it up, I told her that she should not worry, and I would simply take notes. I made the split second decision because at the time I figured that what she could offer was more valuable than having the opportunity to record the interview.

by Ms. Bones. There is a significant difference in their interpretation; this could be due to a context where information does not flow evenly.

Her office is in charge of monitoring these *controles de acceso* in the municipality, and interacting with old communities that look forward to gating. This is a frustrating situation to city officials like her since considerable time is spent on scheduling public hearings, generating paperwork and trying to address the concerns of the residents.

The biggest issue of concern for her office is the internal dispute among residents of the same neighborhood. For example, there have been times when the president of a homeowners association is replaced by a new person and as part of the transition no information is relayed. The animosity that is sometimes generated over these political issues drive individuals to act to the detriment of the community at large.<sup>143</sup> The new president has to get in touch with *Asuntos Legales* in order to have access to basic documents that were not relayed by the previous board. It is disappointing to see the municipality engaged in issue that should not be the municipality's responsibility.<sup>144</sup> Ms. Correa presents a more fractured view of the community in the process of articulating their interests. Community leaders at times are not able to follow a similar course for their benefit. It is interesting that the municipality has not set certain mechanisms in order to deal with situations of this type; I think that Alternative Dispute Resolution can serve as a possible method by which communities can air their differences. The reason why mechanisms of this sort have not

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<sup>143</sup> Robert H. Nelson is the only author that I have encountered in the literature that offers practical solutions for these particular situations.

<sup>144</sup> I argue that this is symptomatic of the significant reliance that the Puerto Rican public places on the State. According to this interview local government is asked to perform these duties too frequently. The role of the State and public responsibility is certainly at the crux of this matter.

been set in place is quite revealing. The municipality's efficiency can be called into question, or despite complaining, city officials are willing to keep on with the current system.

The issue of income is present in her interpretation of the reality as well. The wealthy behave without consideration for others, thinking that their resources are enough to have things go their way. The municipality has the position of not allowing this to happen. Also part of the difficulty in the dynamic between rich and poor is that communities precede the interest of the rich. Also part to the difficulty is the dynamic of these two classes in Guaynabo. The poor for the most part already live in a specific area, since their resources do not allow for significant mobility. In the past, a segment of the working class settled in slums. The situation that has been witnessed over the last forty years has been that of land invasions. These have not been exclusive to the metropolitan area, but by the contrary. Most of these have occurred out of the metropolitan area since significant plots of land are more available.<sup>145</sup>

Both Bones and Correa have highlighted the issue of proximity between communities of different income groups. Is this a widespread interpretation among public officials? What could be posed as a hypothesis is that this might fuel the process of expropriation in Guaynabo, in order to achieve more homogeneity.<sup>146</sup>

Even though the only policy that has been presented is that of following the laws the municipality has its preferences. Ms. Correa points to several of the positions expressed by *el Señor Alcalde*<sup>147</sup>, first, the mayor would rather see gates with security rather than tele

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<sup>145</sup> For a discussion on this subject see Liliana Cotto Morales (2006) *Desalambrar*, San Juan: Editorial Tal Cual.

<sup>146</sup> This subject is currently attracting the attention of the media. See *El Nuevo Día's* three part series on expropriation, December 6-8, 2006.

<sup>147</sup> This is how Ms. Correa respectfully referred to the mayor during the interview.

entry. I argue that his preferences have an impact on the decisions that are taken. Some examples that can be mentioned are his decisions of when studies are commissioned or when certain information is released by the municipality. Second, the mayor has recently established that he does not favor the process of double gating.<sup>148</sup> This is another instance where the mayor hands on approach become evident, by making clear his preferences on particular types of gated communities. These are not specific policies that have been documented, but his opinion on gated communities in Guaynabo.

Both Ms. Bones and Ms. Correa do agree that crime is the legitimizing element behind gating, Ms. Correa even admits that gates with guards are more effective than tele entry. How does she validate this? This is the interpretation stemming from her experience, her subjectivity, which is important to consider since it shows the values that city officials hold for different issues.<sup>149</sup>

### **Guaynabo Municipal Police**

I decided to interview the police department since crime continued to be a constant presence throughout the process of engaging the literature and the interviews that I was conducting. In order to have a fuller depiction of how crucial crime is for this dynamic, I decided to interview those with the ministerial duty of preventing crime.

*Comandante* Correa, *Sargento* Sánchez and *Teniente* Ruiz were the three officials who represented the police department during this interview.<sup>150</sup> *Sargento* Sánchez offered an

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<sup>148</sup> Double gating is the practice when a single community features two security-zone style gates. One gate faces the rest of the city and another inside of that same community.

<sup>149</sup> It was quite fascinating to listen to Ms. Correa as she described some of the gated communities located in Guaynabo Sur. She told me of driving up to a hill and “feeling like driving up to the sky”. It was a vivid and highly descriptive account that I truly enjoyed.

<sup>150</sup> The interview with the Guaynabo Municipal Police was scheduled for 14 November 2006. Doña Suncha was able to schedule a meeting with *Comandante* Mr. Correa. I was told to

elaborate account on the origins of gated communities in Guaynabo. He states that during the 1980's a number of gated communities did exist in Guaynabo because their residents had the resources to pay for private security. These were the communities of Suchville, Golden Gate and several streets in Garden Hills; these are the cases of wealthy security-zone communities all located in Guaynabo Norte. These communities seemed to have gated prior to the existence of Law 21.<sup>151</sup> During the years of 1986 and 1987 a rising crime rate in these communities prompted its residents to create neighborhood watch initiatives, select a president for the homeowners association, and request authorization to the municipality in order to gate their streets.

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call early on that day in order to confirm the appointment. I called at 10:00a.m. and he asked me to call again at 3:00p.m. When I called at that hour he indicated that I should go over to the police station "because I would like to get to know you first." I went there aware that the interview was not definite. At that time I made it to the police station with the authorization to ask for him. First I made it to the lobby where I was told to go upstairs. After I talked to his secretary I was told to wait, a period that lasted over twenty minutes. Once she told me that I could go in I was greeted by him as he was behind his desk. I sat at the meeting desk area and two other officials joined us, *Sargento* Sánchez and *Teniente* Ruiz. Mr. Correa invited them in order to have more information and help for my interview. The mood was initially tense, but it eventually turned more relaxed. I faced Mr. Sánchez, Mr. Correa sat at my left and Mr. Ruiz sat at my right. This was the first interview that I conducted where all the participants were male. The element of interviewing three officers at the same time was very challenging. Following a single line of inquiry was difficult and transcribing was more challenging than usual. After the interview I wondered if that dynamic of having three people was done on purpose to dilute the interview process. If this was the logic it certainly made it more challenging for me to conduct the interview. Of all the interviews that I have conducted this has been the one where the parties were interested in learning about me. At times I felt like being the subject of an interrogation, the following analysis will document this experience. When I started the interview I asked if they had a preference in term of having the interview recorded or me taking notes. Mr. Correa said that he would rather have me take notes. After a couple of minutes into the interview he realized the difficulty of note taking and allowed me to record. Once I took out the digital recorder they were surprised by its small size, and they wondered out loud how technology had change. What is relevant is their familiarity with this technology. This would lead me to think that they have been interviewed in the past.

<sup>151</sup> Suchville has been mentioned as the first gated communities in Puerto Rico. This was highlighted in previous chapters.

This practice became widespread in Garden Hills and Torrimar, while new *urbanizaciones* like Terranova (prestige community) were built with gates.<sup>152</sup> These are the type of residents that Ms. Bones alluded to when describing the well organized, educated and powerful *guaynabeños* that heralded the process of gating in the municipality. There is certainly a consistency in terms of the accounts offered by the different interviews. *Sargento* Sánchez was able to point to 1986 without the assistance of any documents as the year when a turn was made towards more gated communities in Guaynabo. Mr. Sánchez indicated that law bills were set in place as a response to crime either in 1987 or 1988 and the municipality responded to this popular sentiment. The blueprint that the mayor and the *Asamblea Municipal*<sup>153</sup> had was the *Ley de Municipios* that would eventually lead to today's LMA. Guaynabo was quick to respond to this request under the leadership of former mayor Alejandro "Junior" Cruz.

The discourse of crime as deciding factor for gates was reproduced for this situation as well. As I did in previous interviews I listed a number of reasons why communities turn to gates. At that point *Comandante* Correa provides a categorical answer "Security, out of all the social problems that Puerto Rico has, pollution, overpopulation, unemployment, the problem that worries people the most is security. If there is no security all the rest cannot be effective". Popular reaction to this situation is quite organic "once residents start facing crimes, they start to organize and the community starts to asses its options. A homeowners association is established and that association has to do with people who are willing to assume the economic consequences that they would have to assume if gates are set up". The

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<sup>152</sup> Garden Hills, Torrimar and Golden Gate are located in Guaynabo Norte. Terranova is located in Guaynabo Centro and was built in the 1980's. It served as home to Governor Aníbal Acevedo Vilá before moving to the State mansion of *La Fortaleza*.

<sup>153</sup> The name of the Municipal Legislature at that time.

other factors that I mentioned are secondary to Mr. Correa, and security serves as the main concern.

*Sargento* Sánchez steps in and problematized the issue of security stating, “What is it worth if I have a gated community that doesn’t provide security?” *Controles de acceso* need to be well planned and organized in order to be effective. There are also economic benefits behind this process, if there is security property value increases and indirect employment is generated for those who provide services for gates. *Comandante* Correa argues that there is a direct relation between effective security and the price of these communities. According to *Comandante* Correa “It can include *control de acceso*, they can be rich, but if that *control de acceso* does not work it is worthless”. Evidently Mr. Correa does not link income to a guarantee against crime, the system that is set in place needs to be operational, and it needs to work. According to Mr. Correa the logic of the real estate is linked to the process, since the public has asked the Guaynabo Police about crime rates in a particular community when looking to buy a house. *Teniente* Ruiz adds to this by providing a specific illustration “What people here, in Puerto Rico, purchase is security. What they want is an area where they *feel safe* twenty four hours a day, when they are at home and when they are not”.<sup>154</sup> This is a clear example of how security has turned into a much desired commodity in Puerto Rico. It is important to keep in mind that the gated community literature has not been decisive in terms of the effectiveness of gates in preventing crime, but still attracts many for that particular reason.

The police are part of reproducing the discourse on crime and gated communities. When potential buyers ask about crime rate in certain community’s facts and spaces of what

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<sup>154</sup> My emphasis.

constitute “good” and “bad” communities are handled. *Comandante* Correa has offered an account on how they deal with crime at their family realm. This is a good way of documenting the values behind these enforcers of the law. Mr. Correa talks to his family members about making sure that doors are closed before going to bed because “While you’re sleeping you’re dead!” The sense of being invaded in a secure space is part of this dynamic that is a source of great concern, “even to us that we are cops and a little bit more strong”.

Despite this police officers recognize that there is no 100% guarantee of prevailing crimes as a result of gating. *Comandante* Correa elaborates “There is no security system that is a 100% effective. You can have the criminal inside [your community]; what happens here is that there are white collar criminals everywhere”. Crime is pervasive; guaranteeing a sense of security is a more attainable goal. *Comandante* Correa portrays residents of these gated communities in a particular fashion, he comments “in those places the existing perspective is of less physical aggressiveness towards the police. Out of those *controles de acceso* for the most part you have decent people...good, educated, there are some white collar criminals, but the white collar criminal is not physically dangerous”. He later comments on several communities including public housing residents “Like Mabó and its surroundings, Muñoz Rivera<sup>155</sup> and its surroundings, Amelia, out there in that area maybe there is a need to patrol with a rifle and a shotgun. Because in any place you can find a guy that can face you and you might try to take him out of combat”.

The literature points mostly to the discourse of crime by how certain spaces smell, look, crime rates and how these are portrayed by the press, and the government. Gated communities help to sanitize these conditions, homogeneity is procured and even though it is

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<sup>155</sup> This middle class *urbanización* was placed in the same breath as public housing communities.

not 100% effective, it helps to foster a sense of security. Keep in mind how white collar people reside in these communities, instead of the more overt forms of violence found outside these communities.

I was interested in learning how the LMA has impacted the work of police officers. Here a particular portrayal of Guaynabo would emerge; what I have named Guaynabo's Exceptionalism. Mr. Correa said "we were also the first municipality that besides, of, the mayor has so much interest that his people became part of *controles de acceso* and knowing the fact that not even *controles de acceso* provides absolute security, aware of it, the mayor instructed for special patrolling for *urbanizaciones*, including those with *controles de acceso*". The following chapter will consider why city marketing can serve as one of the explanations for this municipal interest. A discourse of equal treatment is presented for these communities, gated and non-gated are part of the same plan. Also the mayor took steps in order to address the needs of "his people", as the originator of these policies for his public.

In terms of the hands on approach of the mayor, Mr. Correa comments that the mayor is a positive figure interested in having the police patrol these communities. Mr. Correa elaborates "That is the mayor's idea, because you see the mayor is very observant of the different departments and dictates and what we have..." According to Mr. Correa the mayor finds out because "he hears about it or the residents informed him".

An additional element of this exceptionalism is the lower crime rate that Guaynabo has compared to neighboring municipalities.<sup>156</sup> Mr. Correa adds that "Here what we have is

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<sup>156</sup> *Comandante* Correa provides as evidence the crime rate map generated by *El Vocero* newspaper. According to him Guaynabo is presented in white (low crime rate), while surrounding municipalities such as San Juan, Bayamón and Cataño are presented in red (high crime rate). For Mr. Correa this is a remarkable feat since Guaynabo is an autonomous municipality of over 115,000 citizens.

an average of two murders per month; the most that we see is two per month”. In terms of how this compares to other municipalities he comments “This means that at the end of the year and possibly us, a municipality as big as this [one] in the metropolitan area, is the only municipality that at this time has 20 murders, while other municipalities like Carolina, San Juan and Bayamón are almost reaching 50 [murders]”. This exceptionalism goes beyond political parties since out of those three municipalities; two belong to the mayor’s same political party.

*Comandante* Sánchez elaborates on an additional element that makes Guaynabo unique “It’s good that you know that Guaynabo is the only municipality that meets every three months with the presidents of the homeowners’ association”. The mayor meets with the residents and provides them with the crime statistics for that particular community. The effect that this can have on gated communities is that the municipality has an interest in engaging the different directives of HOAs that preside over their respective gated communities. *Sargento* Sánchez is the official in charge of keeping track of the crimes committed in Guaynabo. He also stated on this similar issue that “I think that this is the only place where this occurs [meetings], where the actual mayor meets with them [residents] in order to ask them about the crime rate. In other places the executive delegates that to the police”. Mr. Correa claims that the mayor is more interested in listening to the residents first, and then learns about what the municipal police have to say.

This municipal meeting consists of 78 homeowners’ association presidents that are invited to meet with the mayor. These 78 are not representative of all the existing gated communities in Guaynabo. They only represent those that are interested in engaging in this conversation with city hall. Some of the communities are not interested in participating,

reasons ranging from being small communities consisting of a single street or having password activated gates. The attendance is not consistent and it has fluctuated between 40 and 60 presidents of HOA's. The meetings are described as open exchanges, Mr. Correa quotes the mayor as starting a meeting with this comment "I trust them [city officials] that's why I have them. But I prefer you information, what you have to say, because I want to know the truth. I want to know what the police are doing..." This allows for the citizen's perspective to be respected, and an encouragement of equal opportunity.

As it has been mentioned before through the different interviews trash collection has emerged as a distinctive element in Guaynabo. The fact that these issues have consistently emerged when discussing gated communities highlights its political component. *Sargento Sánchez* compares the situation between Guaynabo and the coastal town of Dorado. In Dorado "Everything, everything, everything, recycling is private, everything is private. The municipality of Guaynabo no, the municipality of Guaynabo on the contrary, it offers services to all of the *urbanizaciones* and they pay a minimum for these services. That's why I tell you, that in some other places works; in other places it doesn't work". The difference that it can present to the emergence of gated communities is that in the case of Guaynabo the municipality has played a leading role that in other places in Puerto Rico. The municipal authorities have presented a consistent discourse in this sense.

The mandatory question as part of such an interview to police officers while discussing gated communities is "does it works?" I have alluded to the issues of values that are part of police officers and the duties that they perform. An important component is also the element called sense of security in the literature that I discuss in page 27. The issue of whether these gates actually prevent crime is one that the literature has not engaged like it

would be expected. In addition to these quotes I was also interested in learning if they had some statistics in order to validate their claims on gated communities.

While *Sargento* Sánchez explained the virtues of a place like Villa Reales<sup>157</sup> where there are four gates and has almost a 100% efficiency rate makes criminals target other communities with less obstruction<sup>158</sup> like Muñoz Rivera that has no gates. When I posed the question of the efficiency of gates Mr. Correa was more interested in stating his position on this issue, by saying that he favored gated communities. He added “When you go to bed and you know that nobody gets in that street or the possibilities are small. I think everyone rejuvenates, you feel more relaxed”. A concrete case occurs “there has been cases when you can open a gate and somebody can kill you, anything can happen; and particularly we as policeman that [we] have enemies out there”. Personal security and that sense of security and that sense of security are of great importance to Mr. Correa. His say is of significant importance since he is the leading figure in the Guaynabo Municipal Police, possibly impacting the values of those under his command. It is an issue of communities coming together and favoring this, “what happens is that my street is too small and I would like for all residents to meet and agree [on this]; because everybody has to do their share”.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Community built in Guaynabo Centro during the early 1990’s. This is the location where some of the petit bourgeoisie lives.

<sup>158</sup> I was told in the interview that the mayor is pushing for Muñoz Rivera to gate. If this were to happen this would serve as a situation where the mayor is actually promoting gates.

<sup>159</sup> *Sargento* Sánchez opposes gating in his community. He lives in a rural area and comments on the effectiveness of gating saying “the only thing that *acceso controlado* does is allowing certain people to enter, and the person that you want to leave out will have a harder time, but that does not mean that they do not have access. Because access is only controlled, it’s not total”. Later adding “There is no place where *acceso controlado* is total, you can go to an *urbanización* with *acceso controlado* and there is a security guard. They have to let you in!” He even acknowledged that there are occasions when people try to obstruct entrance, this is illegal. It seems that the place of residence influences their position on whether to favor gates or not. *Comandante* Correa lives in an area surrounded by

*Sargento* Sánchez also narrated the difficulties that the police had when gated communities emerged. Around the year of 1987-1988 and 1989 a problem emerged when crime rates dropped in gated communities to almost a 0%, but criminals looked for other ways in order to gain entry. Once criminals were able to break in a problem emerged. Since residents initially felt safe, they did not collaborate with the police in order to have their communities patrolled. That situation was addressed and now Guaynabo Municipal Police patrols these communities.

When I went back to my initial concern of the municipal statistics on crime, Mr. Correa indicated that these figures are available for the residents that partake in the meeting with the mayor. He directed me to the statistics generated island wide by the *Policía de Puerto Rico*.<sup>160</sup> They were willing to provide this information, but their municipal statistics would not be made available to me because “We can’t take it out of here [police station] what’s happening because it’s not convenient because criminals can find out a lot of things [by having this report]”. It is interesting to note how even though we had a positive dynamic during this interview; this did not break the barrier of providing the requested information.<sup>161</sup>

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highways and several public housing projects, while *Sargento* Sánchez lives in a secluded rural area. The respective position of these police officers in terms on how they stand on this issue of gated communities is varied. *Teniente* Ruiz remained silent and did not take any part of this discussion.

<sup>160</sup> After the meeting *Sargento* Sánchez printed the most recent information on crime for Guaynabo published by the state police. In the past these reports have been the source of contention between the two political parties that have held power the PPD and the PNP. This is an issue that has been barely researched. To the extreme that *El Nuevo Día* newspaper during a time period would have a daily “Crime Boxscore”.

<sup>161</sup> This is evidently an issue of power and as highlighted earlier in the chapter this is a case where the elite was not willing to yield any power during the interview. It is also important to note the lack of trust that they placed in this academic project, or simply the lack of knowledge on the purpose of a dissertation and its public. For example during several points of the interview I was told by Mr. Correa that I would get an A+ on the interview that I was conducting. His good will was evident; I recognized and appreciated this willingness.

Guaynabo Municipal Police's policy on the circulation of information was described by this by *Comandante* Correa "and ours [statistics] in general terms because we release it at meetings, or when the Municipal Legislature calls us. But specifically when we have an area [that] is being studied, like this [gated communities] which is a pilot plan. Then we can't, or we, shouldn't publish what is happening".

*Coronel* Correa then offered other type of information of Guaynabo as a municipality. And he added "...what we can tell you that really the crime rate in gated communities according to this plan is minimal. Is this right or not?" Mr. Sánchez addressed at that point that he is the person in charge of keeping track of those statistics and informed me that for the month of November 2006 he could only point to six crimes in 70 something gated communities. And then are a stolen vehicle, a robbery and a break in". These evidently do not add up to six, but that is what *Sargento* Sánchez reported in the interview.<sup>162</sup>

How do the police patrol communities that are gated and those that are not? Their policy is to patrol all communities whether they have gates or not. According to the officers this arrangement is uncommon in the country, but is common in Guaynabo. In terms of future plans for the police force they now have Sky Tracker system where they are able to track the location of police cruisers in real time. Every day they make sure that the vehicles follow the patrolling patterns presented by the police directives. Crime rate incident changes these patterns, and the police adjust according to where these crimes are committed. There is a visible inconsistency between what was reported in this interview and the mayor's press

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<sup>162</sup> After the interview Mr. Sánchez showed me how he kept track of the crimes committed in Guaynabo. He examines the reports of the *Policía de Puerto Rico* and then highlights all the crimes that are committed in Guaynabo. Then he tallies those in a Word file.

conference on crime.<sup>163</sup> The press conference pointed to high crime rates, while police officers argued to the contrary.

### **Attorney Albizu**

Mr. Albizu is from Guaynabo and serves as an advisor to the mayor in all issues pertaining to gated communities (i.e. *control de acceso*) providing his vast knowledge as a lawyer in Guaynabo.<sup>164</sup> He handles all the petitions of made by homeowners' associations to gate their communities and also, he also examines the documents making sure that they have complied with all the legal requirements and is also an official examiner of a committee on gated communities that is nominated by the mayor. Mr. Albizu has been at the head of these responsibilities since 1992 under former mayor Alejandro "Junior" Cruz.

There are a number of insights that can be analyzed from this description. The most evident is the highly legal component on how the municipality approaches gated communities. Throughout the interviews that I have conducted for this dissertation, city officials have been consistent in showing that the municipality takes pride in complying with all legal requirements, and also of providing a fair and equal process for all *guaynabeños*. The only experts that to my knowledge assist the municipality on its gated community policy are lawyers and planners, other professions such as sociologists, economists or social workers are not part of this dynamic.

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<sup>163</sup> During an interview break caused by a phone call, I showed *Sargento* Sánchez the newspaper clip of the mayor's press conference. He looked at it and placed it on the desk without making any comments. Certainly there is an inconsistency that they did not want to discuss.

<sup>164</sup> This interview lasted thirty two minutes and was conducted on 21 December 2006 at Mr. Albizu's office located in the Guaynabo Centro area in barrio Pueblo. I called him two days earlier to his cell phone that was provided by Doña Sucha. Once I explained the purpose of my research and interest in conducting an interview he agreed and a day and time was set.

The interview featured a very fluid conversation and Mr. Albizu was interested in following the questions in the order that I was presenting. I first asked him if Guaynabo had a particular policy on gated communities. His answer was a definite “Yes, there is one.” Mr. Albizu elaborates “There is one and in Guaynabo we have the advantage that the current mayor, Don Héctor O’Neill was a Senator for the district of Bayamón, and while being a Senator for Bayamón he understood the issues related in the area with *controles de acceso*”. He added “The fact that he was close to the *control de acceso* legislation while being at a senatorial commission where he participated, where he had, and from that moment [he] always has been interested with *controles de acceso*”.

The process of electoral campaigning and visiting different communities was of great impact to the mayor.<sup>165</sup> Mayor O’Neill was interested in making a distinction between controlling access and closing streets. While campaigning he noticed that there were a number of public streets that they could not access. These streets had no security guards; it only featured a list of residents with a phone dial in order to access these residents. Access to these streets was the problem, Mr. Albizu elaborates “If they were not residents, if you didn’t know the password, if you didn’t know how to open up the gates how it worked, you couldn’t get in”.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> My understanding is that this covered the 1992 when Mr. O’Neill was a Senator and Alejandro “Junior” Cruz was slated to continue as Guaynabo’s mayor.

<sup>166</sup> This was a source of concern to Mayor O’Neill. This issue became relevant to him because of electoral campaigning. This is an example of how crucial is the process of campaigning, and in the case of Puerto Rico because of its small size personal contact with the public is more manageable and relevant.

I was interested in learning when this policy was started. Mr. Albizu points to 1993 as the pivotal year once Mayor O’Neill assumes city hall responsibilities.<sup>167</sup> The interviewee elaborates “When Héctor arrives at city hall he recognizes that the closing of streets is an urbanistic problem. He contracted the services of a company, an architect named Manuel Corsino and Associates. That study revealed to him the number of areas with *controles de acceso* and the problems that all of those areas had with *controles de acceso*.” The study revealed that gated communities were not checked. Ever since that moment the municipality has taken steps in order to achieve a more standardized process in how to process the evolution of gates in Guaynabo. The municipality has continued with this effort for more than a decade.<sup>168</sup>

What can be learned is that after a decade there are still some difficulties with this single issue as part of the gated community dynamic. This reality validates what has been mentioned in previous interviews, Ms. Correa talked about how the mayor does not favor this situation of “double gating”. Certainly his position on this particular issue is of knowledge for those in charge at the municipality. What remains as a challenge to the municipality is how to stop this less common practice. The positive element for the municipality is that it can specify the areas that it should target since this only happens in older communities. Recently built gated communities are simply not allowed by the municipality to build in this manner, since they are for the most part lifestyle and prestige communities.

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<sup>167</sup> Mayor O’Neill assumes this responsibility once Mr. Cruz died while in office. This process of succession in Guaynabo has not been the subject of academic attention

<sup>168</sup> Mr. Albizu offered a recent account on this issue “Recently the mayor went through some areas where, there was a *control de acceso*; there was a gate and a security guard that allowed access after identifying. But inside that controlled area there were streets with gates that were closed. In other words, he came across a closed street inside a gated community.”

Municipal public policy on this issue certainly exists and the reason behind it has been explained. What is relevant is that out of those interviewed, Mr. Albizu was the only figure that was able to explain this municipal policy on gated communities. A number of reasons come to mind, Mr. Albizu's expertise of two municipal administrations, his constant and direct access to the mayor, or the position that he holds allows him to have privileged information that other city officials do not have. The other city officials could not point to a specific policy and the history behind it as Mr. Albizu did.

I asked Mr. Albizu for the main reason that we see gated communities in Guaynabo; his response is the following "In Guaynabo *control de acceso* always, from its origins has been used as a mechanism for the citizens to get involved in trying to help in fighting crime". This can be best evidenced by the logic behind Law 21 of proposing gates as a crime deterrent. "They [the gates] keep away the people who do not live in that sector and to serve as a deterrent, a control of who enters and leaves that residential area". "That is the purpose of the municipality, because streets never lose their public character". Mr. Albizu has emphasized the public nature, element that gets lost to the public. The best example is what the mayor encountered during his electoral campaign where streets were closed and people that were not allowed to visit a particular community because they were denied access.<sup>169</sup>

The purpose, the logic is that of security, but other factors eventually play into this dynamic. Mr. Albizu points that sometimes realtors and those that sell properties lure potential costumers by indicating that the property will have an increase in value if it is

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<sup>169</sup> Mr. Albizu explained how streets get transferred to the municipality after an *urbanización* is built. Once a contractor sells all the housing units, those streets get transferred to the municipality. Before the municipality "takes" these streets the municipality sends their staff to make sure that they are in good condition. Once this is certified they get transferred to the Municipality of Guaynabo.

gated. The only way that the municipality grants the permit to put up gates in old communities is that of fighting crime, thus creating security-zone communities. Mr. Albizu elaborates “As public policy the municipality grants *control de acceso* if you can justify it by stating with documents that there is evidence of crime [being committed]. If you do not prove in the public hearing that is held, that in your residential area that there is a problem with crime, then there is no reason for having *control de acceso* since that is the purpose of the law”.<sup>170</sup>

Guaynabo has a set policy and logic behind it. When asked who is in charge of monitoring this process Mr. Albizu explains that there are four elements (1) the Legal Division, (2) the municipal Department of Transportation and Public Works, (3) *Ordenación Territorial*, and (4) the Municipal Police. These are the steps that security-zone communities have to follow; the requirements and process are different for other municipalities. Mr. Albizu details the logic for this “When the *control de acceso* law arrives in Puerto Rico we had in the area of Guaynabo a lot of *urbanizaciones* that were not designed for having *control de acceso*. Not now. Now as a municipal public policy and Guaynabo is an autonomous municipality, it demands for all new construction in the municipality of Guaynabo as a requirement to have a *control de acceso*”. In the following two chapters I will consider why the municipality has decided to follow a particular policy; I will elaborate on how city marketing can serve as a crucial factor in this dynamic. The role of the mayor in this position is clear “The mayor demands for all housing development, all *urbanizaciones* or new construction that it needs to have a *control de acceso* from its origins”. No exception stands to this policy, public housing also falls under this policy.

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<sup>170</sup> It is important to make clear that justification is needed only in the case of communities that were built without gates.

Throughout my research city officials have made clear that municipal funds were not used to promote gated communities. Mr. Albizu was no exception, but an interesting loophole did emerge. Pork barrel funds were used to facilitate the process of gated communities in Guaynabo. He explained it in these terms “Pork barrel funds played an important, very important role. Since legislators of each precinct would assign funds for the construction of *controles de acceso* facilities. They also used those funds, that money [was used] for painting and improving the streets, to pave streets and to build and give money to homeowners’ associations to build the *controles de acceso*. That money I think that was funneled setting apart funds in the municipal coffers and some would be taken out of those coffers to be given to the communities”. It is important to note how there was no evidence of direct government funding in Guaynabo, but this quote explains how the municipality managed state funds to support gated communities. These funds could be quite advantageous for clientelistic purposes. This validates some of the comments that authors have highlighted in Chapter Four.

An issue that is crucial to my understanding of Guaynabo’s reality is that of political continuity.<sup>171</sup> When I asked Mr. Albizu about the role that political continuity has given to this process, Mr. Albizu replied “Oh; that has been very positive!” At that point Mr. Albizu provides an additional insight of the political continuity that Guaynabo has seen for the past decades. The attorney argues “There have been three mayors that have given continuity and each of them have accepted the decision of the municipal assembly that has granted control de acceso and has respected the other [previous administration]”. Mr. Albizu considers that

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<sup>171</sup> I define political continuity as the continuing political domination of a single political party in Guaynabo (i.e. PNP). This domination has featured mayors that belong to the PNP and have been in power for more than one term.

this has granted uniformity to the process. The LMA has also had its impact on gated communities, Mr. Albizu comments “Well, what happens is that the *Ley de Municipios Autónomos* gives the capacity to the mayor<sup>172</sup>, I mean, the municipality has two components and those are the Municipal Legislature and the mayor. The mayor with his agencies and his divisions, Public Works, Legal Division, with his aides, and then some. Then the *Asamblea* is the one that approves, that allows the mayor to move on with the bylaws. But there have been no more problems; the *Asamblea* and the Mayor have worked fine. There was a time when the *Asamblea* or Municipal Legislature did not work to intervene in nothing, nothing that had to do with *controles de acceso*”.

Mr. Albizu points to that time period when the president of the Municipal Assembly that did not sympathized with *controles de acceso*. During that time period the Assembly would transfer all the faculties on this issue to the mayor. That political “glitch” was solved by a recent bylaw where all power related to gated communities was deferred from the Municipal Legislature to the mayor.<sup>173</sup>

The pertinent question would be to know why the duties on gated communities were transferred to the mayor. Mr. Albizu answers the following “...they think [Municipal Legislature] that [gated communities] is too much hassle. And that they are there to deal

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<sup>172</sup> This slip-of-the tongue is fascinating. Mr. Albizu argued that the mayor had the authority on this issue, to notice and argue that there are two components to municipal affair. This slip validates the role of the mayor as a “hands on” figure, and questions the role of the Municipal Legislature as a possible check to the mayor’s power. This is not exclusive to Guaynabo; the political organization of power in the municipalities favors a significant concentration of power to the mayoral figure.

<sup>173</sup> Mrs. Correa also commented on this political process.

with budgets, to deal with other things, because *control de acceso* is continuous. It's a thing that is continuous".<sup>174</sup>

Mr. Albizu offered an account of the difficulties that are present in homeowners' associations. He mentioned several examples of different communities that have been the subject of infighting for more than a decade; problems would eventually show up at the city hall doorsteps. Mr. Albizu was able to provide examples; all of them were located in Guaynabo Sur in the communities of Lomas del Sol, Linda Gardens and Valle Escondido Estates.<sup>175</sup> Residents of Valle Escondido Estates have divided into two groups, Concilio Pro Bienestar de Valle Escondido, and Asociación de Residentes de Valle Escondido. There are different methods by which the mayor engages issues concerning gated communities. The mayor recently met with residents of this community, and had staff from the municipality visit each resident and answer a questionnaire.<sup>176</sup> The mayor is fond of surveys as a method of assess how residents of Guaynabo feel on a particular issue. Previous interviews mentioned the monthly meetings, but polling has only been mentioned by Mr. Albizu. The

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<sup>174</sup> When addressing this issue Mr. Albizu presents a nuanced observation on Guaynabo's population. However associations bring significant controversy, particularly since Guaynabo is a metropolitan town where people from other towns live bringing different ideas, and on weekends they leave Guaynabo to visit their families somewhere else. This was quite surprising to hear since I would not expect such a dramatic difference among people in Puerto Rico. But certainly Mr. Albizu considers that this is a relevant consideration. The pattern of immigration that was highlighted in this dissertation during the 1950's and 1960's has continued to this day. This would be an interesting line of research.

<sup>175</sup> Mr. Albizu claims that there are no differences in terms of how Guaynabo treats communities in Guaynabo Norte, Centro and Sur. But these internal community disputes have prompted the municipality to pay more attention to these controversies.

<sup>176</sup> It is not particularly clear how this survey is conducted, its scientific value or if it is lead by professionals on this matter. A glimpse of how these are conducted can be obtained by an article in *El Nuevo Día* of December 29, 2006 when Mayor O'Neill commissioned a survey of primary elections of his party in the District of Arecibo. The newspaper article explained that this poll was conducted by volunteers of his political staff in Guaynabo. No methodology was discussed.

mayor also has a list with the names of the leaders of all homeowners' associations in Guaynabo, this affords the mayor with direct contact with community leaders when needed. It helps solve problems and might be a good source of clientelistic politics.

His knowledge on gated communities in Guaynabo is quite remarkable, but it was interesting to notice his lack of willingness in terms of indicating the current number of *controles de acceso* in Guaynabo. When asked he replied "Please son, don't get me involved in that. They're so many!" He then suggested looking at the 1993 study in order to examine those figures.<sup>177</sup>

Mr. Albizu has corroborated certain elements that make Guaynabo a model for other municipalities to follow, promoting Guaynabo's exceptionalism. He comments "Guaynabo serves as a model, people come here from other municipalities looking for information on how [*controles de acceso*] are implemented here". What makes Guaynabo a different case compared to other metropolitan towns such as Bayamón or San Juan is "the advantage that Guaynabo has is that here economic power is really strong". He explains that in other towns the economic capacity is not as strong and this has an impact on gated communities. The working class is able to set up gates, but eventually do not have the capacity to pay for a monthly fee and the system eventually collapses. He used as example Levittown and certain *urbanizaciones* in Bayamón where paying a hundred dollar monthly fee is prohibitive. According to Mr. Albizu that is not the reality in Guaynabo, where extreme cases can be found, like Beverly Hills<sup>178</sup> where the monthly fee is of two hundred twenty five dollars. The

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<sup>177</sup> Mr. Albizu could have mentioned the current study at this time, providing that he is part of it. This would have been quite helpful in order to obtain current figures on gated communities. I would venture to say that Mr. Albizu should be aware of that study since he is the person with the highest degree of expertise in Guaynabo.

<sup>178</sup> This is the name of an upscale *urbanización* in Guaynabo.

link between this description and gated communities is precisely the socioeconomic profile that participates in the development that gated communities have witnessed in Guaynabo. This depicts the capacity that the municipality has compared to other towns in Puerto Rico. In the following chapters I will present how city marketing is a powerful component and how it can facilitate the growing homogeneity that is being pursued in terms of a particular space (i.e. gated communities) and the homogeneity of its residents. This will be evidenced as I will provide figures of the costs of different gated communities in Guaynabo.

What I have termed as Guaynabo's exceptionalism can be used as a commodity. Mr. Albizu points to what makes Guaynabo a different place. This difference is what will propel the municipality into adopting a series of spatial and daily practices. This can have a significant edge to Guaynabo's positioning as a different sophisticated experience through a logic driven by city marketing.

For that reason the economic component is crucial in the emergence of gated communities and its popularity in Guaynabo. Garden Hills in Guaynabo Norte led the push towards gating and other communities in the same area followed, such as Villa Caparra, Torrimar, Garden Hill Estates, Alameda and Caparra Hills. As it has been accounted by other interviews, particularly that conducted by Ms. Bones, social class was able to articulate their demands to the municipality. This knowledge and access to resources proved to be a significant factor in generating a considerable demand for the initial phase of security-zone communities. The dynamic has certainly changed today since by now most of the gated communities that are built in Guaynabo include gates. People with social mobility can now easily access a variety of gated communities.

At this point of the interview I wanted to know which one was the first gated community in Guaynabo. Mr. Albizu conclusively answered that it was Garden Hills. I wanted to confirm what has been published that Suchville was the first. Mr. Albizu then agreed that Suchville was the first, so according to this I can say that Suchville was the first community and Garden Hills followed. This made sense to Mr. Albizu since Suchville is a single closed street community (a prestige community). Mr. Albizu has the comparative advantage of serving on two administrations. Under the administration of Alejandro “Junior” Cruz the policy was to follow bylaw #20 of the Planning Board. Once Mayor O’Neill arrived to power in 1993 the suggestions of the Mario Corsino study were incorporated.

Guaynabo has served as a good model on addressing gated communities for other municipalities in Puerto Rico and I wanted to know if the municipality followed a particular blueprint. Mr. Albizu points that it had no model, “Guaynabo made it more perfect, little by little. Because when Guaynabo started San Juan also did, and in San Juan the mayor did it by executive order...” Guaynabo did a remarkable job in the context of creating a model that would be used by other municipalities.

## **Conclusion**

After contemplating the information in this chapter there are a number of conclusions that I can present. It is revealing that gated community literature has never engaged the subject in this matter, whether in Puerto Rico or abroad. The circumstances of my case study where literature is scarce made interviewing a necessary resource. I suggest that gated community literature should engage city officials, not only doing work on the field and those who live in these communities. It should consider the values and opinions of those in charge of implementing public policy.

It is evident that the municipality has not publicly stressed their support for these gated communities, but their practice shows otherwise.<sup>179</sup> The account offered by Mr. Albizu certainly traces the policy under Mayor Alejandro “Junior” Cruz and current Mayor O’Neill. The challenging issue is to understand why only one out of four city officials was able to outline a municipal policy. This reflects the possibility that only a few with direct contact with the mayor are aware of a policy, while the others simply execute. The LMA had a significant impact since it made Guaynabo assume more responsibilities; and the liberty to coordinate how they operate. This coincided with Mayor O’Neill’s arrival to office and the disposition that he had of making the issue of gated communities a priority. City officials certainly posit significant trust on this recent urban development. The *Oficina de Ordenación Territorial* is an example of resources allocated by the municipality for this purpose.<sup>180</sup>

More recently, the municipality has taken steps in order to understand the behavior of gated communities in Guaynabo. The information of that research is still confidential and has not been cleared by the mayor in order to become public. From what I was able to gather from the interviews the research was done with municipal resources. It will be quite revealing to follow the response to this research once it is made public. During the O’Neill administration, the municipality has visited the issue of gated communities two times. The first study had some suggestions that were incorporated and hopefully the one in progress will yield some positive results. It also conducts surveys and meetings with the communities to have a pulse of what is happening in these communities.

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<sup>179</sup> In the following chapters I will offer explanations of why this dynamic occurs.

<sup>180</sup> According to Mrs. Bones the Guaynabo office is well staffed and better equipped than the Planning Board office.

The mayor has featured a “hands on” approach in terms of how gated communities operate in Guaynabo. From deciding how information flows (i.e. the second study), meeting with residents, and his interest in seeing how the police operates, and receiving full control from the Municipal Legislature. Also he has established his preferences on different types of gates.

All of this is recognition that gated communities are a powerful component of the political dynamic in Guaynabo. The municipality features residents with resources and knowledge that organize behind these gating efforts. Also the municipality at times has to step in situations of feuding residents over homeowners’ association issues. The timeline of gated communities in Guaynabo and its rationale has been consistent. The discourse of crime is presented as the legitimizing element behind this process. All of the interviews point to the same period in the 1980’s when residents of Guaynabo were driving this process. The values and biases of those interviewed became in full display when articulating their thoughts on gated communities.

They all serve as legitimizing voices on this issue and how it is handled by the municipality. None of them were openly critical to the process of gating as a whole, by saying that the practice should be stopped.<sup>181</sup> An interesting consideration for the future is to analyze any possible changes in Guaynabo once the current study is incorporated into municipal practice. Gated communities are becoming a more important element in the political dynamic in Guaynabo and I expect the gated community consensus to be safe. No crisis has forced the government and the public to think otherwise. In the coming chapter I will offer my argument of why the municipality favors gated communities.

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<sup>181</sup> *Sargento* Sánchez commented that he would not like gates in his community, but he never indicated that the process should be stopped in the municipality.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GROUNDING THE EXPERIENCE FOR CITY MARKETING

#### Introduction

This chapter will provide answers to questions that were presented in Chapter Seven: with an emphasis on why is there a policy toward gated communities in the municipality. This policy was evidenced since most of the official accounts focused on how the law was rigorously followed, and the interview to Mr. Albizu crystallized that the municipality has followed a concerted effort in supporting the emergence of gated communities. In addition to what the interviews revealed, this coherency in action leads to conclude that there are a series of directives that Guaynabo's municipal administration is following. The development of gated communities in Guaynabo is not the result of an organic process, in the following pages I will present some of the various interests that are involved.

I also chronicled how the municipality has developed positions on issues such as not allowing double gating in any single gated community, and that all new communities should feature gates. This points out how the municipality has established a number of principles when engaging gated communities. The lingering question is why the municipality needs to have a policy in order to favor gated communities? And in this sense the municipality has not either dissuaded their emergence, or stayed neutral on this issue. What does the municipality have to gain? This chapter is an exploration of this matter.

The literature has been highly descriptive and its contributions cannot fully depict the experience that I have seen in Guaynabo. Blakely and Snyder, and McKenzie serve as notable exceptions that have engaged the pressing issue of the origins of gated communities, (as presented in Chapter Three). Their contributions have been significant; particularly

McKenzie's assertion that municipalities can benefit by the income that municipality can obtain because of the taxes placed on these new communities. These contributions, as significant as they are, fail to capture part of the dynamic that this Puerto Rican municipality presents. Even if the municipality obtains an economic advantage by expanding its tax base, there is a larger process occurring in Guaynabo. That is, how not only gated communities have emerged in the municipality, but that this has meant also a number of changes in the municipality's landscape.

The emergence of gated communities has been accompanied by a dynamic change of the municipal territorial layout. Some of the examples of these changes are gentrification, the privatization of public spaces, the monitoring of life, (e.g. the use of CCTV), and how English has become part of the everyday routine for *guaynabeños*, (e.g. the use of street signs in English). These changes have paved the way for the creation of what the municipality has sponsored as Guaynabo City. I argue that these changes have led to the creation of an esprit d' corps in terms of city employees with the use of equipment and their working conditions (e.g. public works staff).<sup>182</sup> This sense of Guaynabo's exceptionalism has also gone into other elements of the municipal structure, as evidenced by the staff members that were interviewed in Chapter Seven. They alluded to how the local municipality attracts a number of staff from other municipalities wishing to learn about how Guaynabo has handled gated communities at different levels, whether it is the police force, planning board or others. In

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<sup>182</sup> An interesting consideration for future research is how language can have such a significant role in creating space; Yi-Fu Tuan has contributed to this type of understanding in the discipline of Geography. What is even more fascinating is how this occurs in Puerto Rico under a clearly colonial context, and the language that is used is that of the metropolitan power. A potential question for the future is the following: Will this eventually lead to a broader use of English? This attempt failed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when public schools were mandated to follow an English only policy in classrooms. Will it succeed now?

my attempt to find an overarching explanation I will argue that city marketing can certainly serve as an explanation for the current gated community process in Guaynabo.

As I have traced the origins of gated communities in Puerto Rico, and in Guaynabo in particular, the discourse that was offered for its emergence is that of crime prevention. I do not dispute this origin since this was confirmed by the literature review and the interviews that followed. The literature has featured the powerful force that the sense of crime has played in the emergence of gated communities; particularly how the discourse on crime can be enhanced both by the government and by the accounts of the events presented by the media. Setha Low's analysis that gated communities bring homogeneity to the community and bring a sense of security to residents of gated communities is a significant contribution.<sup>183</sup>

These initial elements or the discourse of crime and the sense of security that gated communities represent, were the catalysts to the emergence of a number of interests that went beyond crime, changes that led to a transformation of the urban landscape. These interests come from the municipality, private contractors, the real estate industry, and others. I argue that these changes can be best understood and analyzed by considering what constitutes city marketing and how it can help us understand this growing urban reality in Guaynabo. It is important to emphasize that Guaynabo's gated communities did not emerge because of city

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<sup>183</sup> In the case of Puerto Rico even though the popular account emphasizes the process of "becoming" Puerto Rican as emerging out of the fusion of white (Spanish), black (from different parts of Africa) and native (*Taino* and other tribes), certainly racial differences exists to this day. I would like to argue that the homogeneity that can be accounted for in these communities in the Puerto Rican context is dominated by income, and not surprisingly the spheres of power that belongs for the most part to white Puerto Ricans. A clear example is how the term *guaynabito* has been gaining more prominence in popular conversations. This is in my opinion certainly an offspring of the term *blanquito* which is how whiteness has been defined in the Puerto Rican context that not only includes race, but income as well.

marketing; but this concept can help us understand why the municipality has continued assuming a supportive role on these communities.

### **Grounding the experience**

In order to understand this development it is crucial to understand the wider context under which these changes have happened. In Chapter Four I analyzed the urbanization process in Puerto Rico, and Chapter Six focused on the changes that have been witnessed in Guaynabo over the past century. In the case of Puerto Rico we have seen a significant process towards the provision of more services by the municipality, and the country's economy has featured an increasing role for the real estate economy.

Also during the growing process of neoliberalism, cities have emerged as spaces that create and support their own promotion, at times not following the national state and doing so in an independent fashion.<sup>184</sup> City marketing proves to be a method for doing these types of campaigns, and most importantly for attracting foreign capital.<sup>185</sup> In the case of Guaynabo it is a situation where the municipality has certainly created a space for investment through city marketing (i.e. Guaynabo City), but it is not located in the context of world capital. In other words, Guaynabo is not competing with Buenos Aires, Mumbai, Shanghai or São Paulo for foreign capital. But it has certainly been a part of the urban reconfiguration that invites changes for the sake of benefiting the real estate industry, and a privatized notion of the state.

Gated communities respond to attracting local capital, or international capital that it is already investing in the Puerto Rican construction industry, (e.g. electrical supplies, concrete producers owned by foreign corporations). In what it pertains to my dissertation project, I

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<sup>184</sup> A common example is that of Olympic cities vying for serving as Olympic hosts.

<sup>185</sup> BBC World, The Economist and other serve as examples of publications where these advertisements are most commonly seen.

will focus on real estate and more strictly gated community housing. As part of this analysis I will make use of the Planning Board official figures in order to examine the cost of the gated communities that have been built in Puerto Rico during the past years. Since all of the subdivisions that are being built in Guaynabo since the 1990's are gated (as the interviews revealed), this analysis will include the figures provided by the Puerto Rico Planning Board.

In this process it is important to acknowledge that housing and the reconfiguration of space is accompanied by the economic forces present in Puerto Rico. That is for the most part conformed by the goods and services economy that dominates the island, (e.g. shopping malls, movie theatres, etc). These types of business are crucial for these gated communities to be attractive, since spaces for consumption proves crucial for these types of urban reconfiguration projects. I argue that they are important since gated communities operate as a living enclave, and from that enclave people commute to other spaces, enclaves of consumption, or enclaves of recreation.<sup>186</sup> In the context of Guaynabo these are locations where things work<sup>187</sup>, meaning that it serves as a rest from other spaces in Puerto Rico where bureaucracy or even private services are not efficient. This is why I have emphasized throughout the dissertation the relevance of Guaynabo's portrayal as an efficient space in the

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<sup>186</sup> It is important to remind the readers of significant role that automobiles play in this dynamic. In that sense Guaynabo is the municipality that features the highest ratio of automobiles to individuals in Puerto Rico.

<sup>187</sup> A very fitting quote that certainly captures this point is presented in Rubén Dávila Santiago (2005). *El Mall: Del Mundo al Paraíso*. San Juan: Ediciones Callejón. Here he elaborates the following "The Mall is born with a reformist political vocation constituting, at the same time an arch of salvation in terms of its protection against the "exterior" world because of its enclosure, and a first form of a globalized walled city" (my translation) p. 12. The parallels between shopping malls and gated communities are considerable. From its enclosed nature that this quote captures, to the element of trying to control a particular space through its homogenization. This is certainly an interesting topic to be considered for the literature in the future.

context of an island mired in inefficiency. With examples that are part of daily everyday practices such as efficient trash and recyclables recollection programs.

These services place the municipality's standard at a premium, making it a desirable space for living, consumption, and visiting. This process serves in the creation of a brand name that will certainly attract both residents and capital. The brand name is certainly accompanied by practices that help to validate the public's perception.

As part of this dynamic of molding space, several processes have emerged such as gentrification, the privatization of spaces, police security and others as a growing development in today's cities. These provide the grounds under which strategies such as city marketing become viable, thus making this reconfiguration of space necessary in order for a city marketing project to be effective in the eyes of today's neoliberal city and the economic components that help to shape it. The reason for this is that these "visible" changes justify and are linked with the emergence of a particular slogan. My understanding that simply naming a space in a particular way is not enough, some changes, (i.e. the perception of changes) are crucial in the linkage between the marketing campaign and the product. I have remarked on the solid electoral approval that Mayor O'Neill has enjoyed, and that political dissidence has been localized and not completely effective in presenting a coherent opposition to the changes occurring in the city or other matters.

In essence this is how the municipality becomes attractive for investment. The allure for receiving these funds are achieved by maximizing the location of the municipality as a suburb of San Juan and making use of the inhabited spaces, and by expropriating and generating spaces of gentrification, (more recently areas of Guaynabo Centro), where middle class to lower class guaynabeños have lived historically. In that way the municipality

becomes an ally of capital, making sure to lay out the groundwork for what capital is interested in a city. Its interest lies in generating a place that fosters consumption, heavy investment and the circulation of capital as part of the daily activities of its residents. In the case of Guaynabo, it features the highest per capita income in the island, with access to spaces of consumption and easy access because of growing highways and an intense use of the automobile.

How do I intend to make city marketing an adequate explanatory force for what is occurring in Guaynabo? For acknowledging what the municipality has to gain, more than the strictly economic factor that the literature has considered (e.g. McKenzie). The municipality is certainly in a better position to fuel its economy by the force that real estate has in Puerto Rico. But I want to place the focus on other elements that the literature has not placed under significant scrutiny, pointing to how the municipality gains significant prestige and how this can lead to the reconfiguration of space and strict political gains. The spatial elements have already been discussed, but turning into the political; what are these gains? They consist of giving the municipality significant leverage in terms of free advertising, since living in this particular municipality proves to be an asset to city residents, since Guaynabo City is not only a slogan, it is transformed into daily considerations that operate efficiently. Guaynabo City can mean efficient services, increased resources for these services, the beautification of public spaces, and an increased sense of security, among others that have been featured throughout the dissertation.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> I am fully aware that this is the campaign that the municipality has offered. An interesting consideration for future research is the possible gap that might exist between this discourse and the actual existing reality in the municipality.

## Guaynabo's attractiveness for city marketing strategies

I have just alluded to some of the geographic and administrative considerations that have made Guaynabo such a propitious space for city marketing. In addition to these it is also important to consider the inner dynamics of the municipality. A considerable element is that the public has never presented significant opposition (i.e. rallies, ample political movements) to this sudden development of subdivisions and walk-ups and its corollary reconfiguration of space, since it was part of the natural process of urbanization that Puerto Rico has been seen over the past decades.<sup>189</sup> What is different now? The new element is that Guaynabo has been willing to promote the city with a number of certain intangible elements that the city has to offer as assets.<sup>190</sup> There is not a definite moment where I can document that it happened, but I can evidence the emergence of City Marketing by the number of slogans and self promoting enterprises that the municipality has assumed whether it is by the use of police vehicles or by use of garbage collection trucks.<sup>191</sup> This started after Mayor

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<sup>189</sup> In Puerto Rico some of the contestation that has emerged over the past years has surrounded a key cause. In the 1990's there were protest over the construction of Route 66 that stretches from Carolina to Canóvanas (which eventually was built); protecting the habitat surrounding *El Yunque* Tropical Rain Forest, or more recently the highly contested debate regarding *Paseo Caribe* in San Juan. What is interesting is how there has been questioning of the use of land (e.g. the lack of agricultural fields), but these are questioning of ongoing policies. The questioning of these policies have not generated massive political fronts, or captured the national spotlight like these other examples have. This is a challenge that is currently impacting the way that environmental groups are being articulating in Puerto Rico. It will be significant to see if in the future massive and heated mobilizations emerge seeking a new way of disposing of land. In other words these have not become attractive or popular causes in Puerto Rico's political idiosyncrasy.

<sup>190</sup> An interesting element as part of understanding the context in which Guaynabo's new municipal administration was situated is to keep present the economic downturn that the country was facing during the 1980's, which eventually led to the encouragement of the construction industry. Earlier in the dissertation I presented the contribution on this issue by the economist Orlando Sotomayor.

<sup>191</sup> For the sake of context it is important to indicate that under former Mayor Junior Cruz, Guaynabo had a particular reputation that the city promoted and it was that of serving as a

O'Neill initiated his duties as Guaynabo's leading public official. And more importantly, the name of Guaynabo City has been incorporated into the fabric of Puerto Rican pop culture.<sup>192</sup> A significant element in this consideration is that this is a coherent media project, in other words the spaces that are used for delivering these messages and the messages themselves are constantly the same. Some of these places are the entrances that welcome residents to the municipality<sup>193</sup>, the use of Guaynabo City as a slogan on EMT vehicles, police cruisers, and also identifying different city dependencies.

In addition to this essential municipal commitment, the public in Guaynabo is partially constituted by a number of people that are not originally from that municipality. As the census information earlier in the dissertation showed, Guaynabo was a space that witnessed a considerable demographic growth once that people arrived from different walks of the island during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, it was a demographic *tabula rasa*

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supporter of sports. I contend that the reputation as an efficient municipality emerged once Mayor O'Neill took office.

<sup>192</sup> To the extent that the *El Nuevo Día* cultural magazine *La Revista* features a section named Guaynabo City Blues where writer Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá offers reflections on Guaynabo.

<sup>193</sup> I have witnessed changes to how cities greet incoming traffic and pedestrians. In the past what was common in Puerto Rico were signs that greeted incoming traffic with a welcome sign. I vividly recall a sign in my youth on Road 169 that read *Bienvenidos a Guaynabo*, today as one of the dissertation's appendixes shows now the city has placed different signs that read Guaynabo City Limit. The earlier *Bienvenidos a Guaynabo* was placed just as the driver entered Guaynabo Centro, whereas "Guaynabo City Limit" is placed precisely where the territory of Guaynabo ends. A simple reading of this change points to a different language, and the tone used. In the more current sign it is a more neutral statement, simply indicating what constitutes the city line. What makes this issue more interesting, but probably with potential political saliency is that the neighboring city of San Juan has followed suit. Now their city signs read "San Juan City Limit". In the month of July 2008 San Juan made the official transition from *Policía Municipal de San Juan*, to San Juan Police Department. This was revealed in a press conference where it was stressed on how the officials were consulted in terms of the uniform that they wanted to wear. A transition was made from a green uniform, which gave way to the affectionate term of "*gandules*" (i.e. a type of bean of light green color) to black uniforms that have a "RoboCop" flair. The intent of this change is to boost the morale of San Juan's police

of sorts for those Puerto Ricans who converged from different parts of the island.<sup>194</sup> What does this mean in terms of this dissertation inquiry? That this process of exodus has certainly not ended, as new waves of migration arrive whether from inside the metropolitan area or from other parts of the island and from abroad including expatriate workers, and more recently the arrival of new migrant groups mostly from the Caribbean.

It is here where city marketing can prove as a beneficiary element for a municipality in order to attract new residents with all the implications that have been developed throughout the dissertation. It could possibly serve as a bonding element for all of its residents. Promoting the insertion of more public, generating a potential larger tax base, more consumers and residents to build new projects certainly fuels Guaynabo's city prestige.

All these elements converged as an appropriate setting for City Marketing to articulate in an expanding municipality that still has idle space that could be used for building gated communities, shopping malls and other constructions.<sup>195</sup> How this does connects to gated communities? The connection lies in the fact that all of these residential units that are built in Guaynabo are all gated; no exception. This is crucial since this is exactly what Mr. Albizu indicated in the interview, every time that a new subdivision is built in the municipality it has to conform to that policy. These are the conditions that make Guaynabo such a hospitable place for city marketing.

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<sup>194</sup> The elements that attracted Puerto Ricans to the capital city and the greater metropolitan area (Guaynabo included) ranged from economic considerations, accessing new lifestyle opportunities, working at some of the new state dependencies that were being created or expanding at the time. I want to stress that I recognize that the reasons for moving to the metropolitan area includes a variety of factors. What proves crucial to the argument that is being developed is that a wave of Puerto Ricans was converging in Guaynabo and the greater metropolitan area.

<sup>195</sup> It is important to note how this "idle space" is also created and promoted by the state through the process of gentrification and the possible expulsion of resident from communities have existed in some cases over half a century by making use of expropriation.

## **Connections between city marketing and prestige**

Why does the municipality want to spread the word? I will argue that the main reason is that by doing so the municipality attracts capital to the city, since different forms of investment are generated. This can certainly help the municipality in terms of available funds for their public projects. Also it is important to note that the public that is attracted to Guaynabo is for the most part one that either maintains or raises the median income level of the municipality. This will be evidenced once I evaluate the cost of the residential units that have been developed in the municipality over the past years. There is a concerted effort in terms of the public that has been targeted for this enterprise.<sup>196</sup>

It is important to recall how earlier in the dissertation I pointed to prestige as one of the main reasons for the emergence of gated communities as highlighted in the literature. Prestige in those cases was highlighted as a process that would develop in each residential development, with the intent of attracting new residents amongst other reasons. Here I would like to argue that prestige is at work, but in a different fashion to what the literature has considered. Prestige does not only responds to separate instances formulated by each

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<sup>196</sup> A growing speculation that has been circulating in the municipality is that the largest public housing complex in the Guaynabo Centro area, Residencial Los Álamos, will be subject to demolition. Its low income residents will be relocated; this serves as a concrete example of gentrification in a very evident way. What makes this speculation even more interesting is that as part of the changes that are ongoing in Guaynabo Centro it has been also rumored that across the avenue from Los Álamos a space that is been cleared will give way to a residential area that will be developed by Levitt Homes. This corporation has been considerably active in developing a number of prestige communities in Guaynabo Sur. In early 2008 I had the chance to have a conversation with one of the collaborators with the electoral campaigns of the current Mayor of San Juan, Jorge Santini. And according to this person, one of the main sources of contention between the capital city administrators and those of Guaynabo, is that as Guaynabo continues to gentrify these subjects of gentrification end up living in San Juan. According to the person I spoke with this has been certainly a source of private conflict amongst these municipalities. The key connection to the subject of the dissertation is that these new communities in Guaynabo are gated, continuing with the growing trend that I have been analyzing.

developer of new residential projects, but also to an actual municipal policy with the support of the different interest surrounding gated communities in Puerto Rico, a logic that has been certainly working on the ground. As a larger logic it not only pertains to gated communities, but they serve as a key component since housing and real estate in particular is a crucial element of the Puerto Rican economic framework.

As I have argued before, this intangible of prestige is accompanied by efficiency in services by the municipality, so this sense of difference is grounded in reality. The reality of the services that *guaynabeños* receive is a great political asset, since this allows the mayor to maintain his political support for staying in office. Efficient public services are crucial in Puerto Rico since great dissatisfaction exists in terms of what happens in the rest of the island. This was evidenced in the interviews presented in the previous chapter where other municipalities would visit Guaynabo in hopes of enhancing their operations and simulating their operations.

The municipal administration gains in the sense that it promotes the investment of more real estate ventures, it develops a sense of identity for the public, employees, and most importantly from the municipal administrative standpoint this project that has not been contested by the public. Popular support for this urban project in Guaynabo is best evidenced by the electoral support of the Guaynabo City enterprise, and fragmented contestation. Also it caters to those interests in Puerto Rico's goods and services economy, this provides jobs in these fields and for the most part Puerto Rico's governments have been increasingly embracing the neoliberal project.

### **Theoretical considerations for understanding this dynamic**

In Chapter Three I elaborated some of the key aspects of how cities have been operating in the past years, particularly as it pertains to city marketing. As part of the process of globalization, the mobility of capital that it represents, and the particular inequity by which it circulates makes it a significant context where city marketing campaigns can significantly benefit. It is crucial to consider that capital in theory has the capacity to operate with great fluidity in the current context of neoliberal policies<sup>197</sup>, allowing for a lucrative real estate industry to bloom. The changes that capitalism has witnessed have impacted cities in Puerto Rico during the last decades.

It is important to remind readers the theoretical considerations about the city that have been previously mentioned. Carlos A. De Mattos has argued that this fluidity of capital in this particular phase of capitalism (since the slowing of Fordism) has allowed for the strengthening of mercantilism as part of urban development. The elements for consideration are the following; first the increasing role of finance in the context of deregulation; second, the abandonment of efforts of a rational approach to planning by the State, where private interests acquire a significant role, and third, the criteria of urban competitiveness including what pertains to the dissertation, the role of city marketing.

### **Home costs in Guaynabo**

Determining the cost of housing found in the municipality is a significant component as part of the analysis in order to understand the dynamic of gated communities in Guaynabo. It is important to note that in this sense this project is departing from what most of the

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<sup>197</sup> For a succinct understanding of the Neoliberal state see David Harvey (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. And for a brief analysis of Globalization see Wayne Ellwood (2006). *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*. Oxford: New Internationalist Publications Ltd.

literature on gated communities has done. This provides a glimpse into the economic context that is present in terms of the value of these homes in the space of gated communities that is not frequently done.<sup>198</sup> I have adopted this approach since the argument that I am developing places considerable importance on the context found in this particular municipality, in order to consider why the municipality has assumed a supportive role of gated communities in Guaynabo.

Since the effectiveness of city marketing does not only rely on what the city portrays, but also on its capacity of attracting real estate capital to the city, this is certainly a considerable element in terms of the growing nature of gated communities in Guaynabo. As I have characterized before these respond to prestige communities.

I contacted the *Junta de Planificación de Puerto Rico* (Planning Board of Puerto Rico) to gather key figures in order to validate my argument and reading of the gated community reality in Guaynabo. As part of its responsibilities the Board generates a “Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry”. A number of tables and charts are generated in this report, and as part of this analysis I will consider two key elements, the main figures for Puerto Rico as a whole and also the numbers of developments in Guaynabo.

<sup>199</sup> This last consideration is the most important for this project, what is the profile of these newly built gated communities in Guaynabo?

This report includes figures that date back to 1997, serving as the accessible figures for analysis. Unfortunately this will not allow for an examination of the 1980’s when gated

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<sup>198</sup> The literature for the most part has continued to offer a descriptive component, and its analytical bent is in dire need of more publications along these lines. I will not get involved in a debate of this nature at this point, but it is important to recognize the difference that is present here.

<sup>199</sup> I had the opportunity to talk with Héctor L. Rivera Reyes who is the person in charge of generate these number as part of the Economic unit at the Planning Board.

communities became more common in Puerto Rico, particularly in Guaynabo. A fortunate element is that I was able to obtain data from 2000 and following years at which time Guaynabo gained independence over controlling the process of providing permits for new developments. In addition, the Planning Board also has a more customized process where Mr. Rivera Reyes<sup>200</sup> calls the different developers and according to the information that they provide, prepares a more specific survey analysis.

After contacting these developers he generates a report that is divided according to each municipality considering issues such as where the project is being built, the budget for the project, the number of units and the average price per unit. This last figure is crucial in order to determine the average price per unit built, and more importantly how Guaynabo ranks in comparison to what is being built in the rest of the island. This will prove to be significant in order to assess how Guaynabo fares, and more importantly to determine if in fact, the municipality presents the highest cost of housing in the island. Since much of the economic activity in the island is predicated on this industry, this would certainly place Guaynabo at a comparative economic advantage.

These figures are a significant element of my argument since it outlines how Guaynabo attracts some of the most expensive recently built housing on the island. Luxury housing provides the city with the prestige from which a campaign of city marketing can efficiently operate, and also by attracting considerable capital in order to fund its political project (i.e. city prestige, efficiency).

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<sup>200</sup> Mr. Rivera Reyes is in charge of generating the economic figures concerning the construction industry in Puerto Rico. This includes “investment in construction carried out by agencies, public corporations and municipalities; construction permits issued, cement production and sales, construction employment...” Planning Board (2006). Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry.

The direct impact of this elaboration for gated communities in Guaynabo is that from security-zone communities that responded to crime in its early stages, (i.e. 1980's), they have morphed into mostly prestige communities, and with rare lifestyle communities. Once these prestige communities emerged starting in the 1980's and then vigorously in the 1990's, a new series of considerations emerged with them. Private contractors had the opportunity to have a predominant role in the configuration of these communities, not each local homeowners association, decided to place barricades and private security guards (with or without state consent). Particularly since they had the space to generate new projects in terms of how spatial considerations were going to be constituted.

This meant that new considerations in addition to crime would be interacting for the first time. These considerations are from the real estate industry and all of its derivatives, banks, the construction industry and others. What is relevant for the argument that is being presented here is that the state was also present in this change. Its relevance lies in that there is an existing policy component that would be enacted by the state in order to pursue a particular project. Initially the Puerto Rican government and, from the year 2000 Guaynabo assumed full control of the permit awarding responsibilities.

As Chapter Seven showed, there is a policy towards supporting gated communities in Guaynabo. What is not coincidental and made me consider city marketing as the explanation for the process in the municipality is that these communities had something in common, their high price. Some reasonable questions that emerge are: what do these new communities have to belong to this socioeconomic bracket? What type of difference would it make if these new gated communities responded to a mixed income profile? Should the municipality stay neutral in terms of the newly built communities? What does the municipality have to

gain? Is there any opposition to this type of stance?<sup>201</sup> The answers to these questions direct me to conclude that there is a policy at play that attracts a particular type of development. The high income attracting development brings significant investment to the municipality, and if they were to bring mixed income investment to the municipality the composition of its residents would vary, thus not achieving greater homogeneity. The municipality could certainly stay aside, but under the context of neoliberalism which the municipality has adopted, cities have decided to embrace the role of facilitators to private investors<sup>202</sup> to supposedly stimulate the economic process.

The figures that follow give the reader a better sense of what type of development is being built in the municipality, and if it proves to be high income properties as I expect this will also mean that the municipality will benefit because of the capital that it has been able to attract and a particular constituency to the municipality.<sup>203</sup>

### **The construction industry in Puerto Rico**

It is important to stress the significance of the construction industry in Puerto Rico over the past years. The 2006 Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry of the Planning

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<sup>201</sup> A notable exception in Guaynabo has been the example of Barrio Juan Domingo. Their residents with the support of local leadership and other social networks of *Comunidades Especiales* has offered resistance to any possible changes that might provoke the expulsion of these long time residences from this historic community.

<sup>202</sup> Some examples of this practice include renting municipal buildings for private gymnasiums, to using private contractors for beautification projects in the municipality.

<sup>203</sup> An interesting issue that has not been openly stated either in the press or in Puerto Rican academia is whether this process of attracting expensive residences, welcoming high income individuals, and forcing people to move elsewhere because of gentrification could serve as crime deterring campaign. That is assuming that violent crime is more common at lower end communities, while white collar crime perpetrators reside at more upscale communities. This is highly speculative, but it is an issue that has some ground and validity considering what the leading officials at the Guaynabo Municipal Police discussed. That the municipality features some of the lowest crime rates in the San Juan metropolitan area.

Board offers some of the figures to illustrate its composition.<sup>204</sup> The results that this report considers span from the fiscal years 1997 through 2006. For example the total value of construction activity in the fiscal years of 1997 to 2006 breaks down in the following way (in million of dollars):

**Table 2. Total value of Construction Activity in Puerto Rico (in millions of dollars)**

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>Total</b>	4,689.8	5,355.4	6,551.4	6,849.3	6,756.9	6,491.2	6,334.6	6,595.9	6,513.6	6,398.1

Source: 2006 Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry of the Planning Board, page 1, Table 1.

As this information shows the construction industry in Puerto Rico witnessed its most recent apex in the year 2000. Coincidentally this is the year when the municipality of Guaynabo reached its status as an autonomous municipality. It is also important to note that these were favorable times for the world's macroeconomic numbers at this time. Serving as a glimpse to how the construction industry also responds to the economic patterns seen throughout the world.

The private housing industry during these years also offers a glimpse into the vital role that it has played and how it breaks down in the private sector. The first figure shows in million of dollars what the construction industry has meant for Puerto Rico, housing in particular, and its breakdown into the different categories that the *Junta de Planificación* uses. It is important to highlight as the report does that the figures for direct compensation responds to the FEMA funds that were allocated as a result to the aftermath of Hurricane Georges of 1999. Also the figures for the year 2006 responds to the projection of what that year would present in the future.

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<sup>204</sup> These were the figures that were available in my visit to Mr. Héctor L. Rivera Reyes at the Planning Board in the first quarter of the year 2008.

**Table 3. Private Housing Industry in Puerto Rico**

Year	Housing	Urbanizations	Rural Projects	Projects under \$500 thousand	Direct Compensation (Includes FEMA funds)	Apartment Buildings
1997	1,106.3	518.7	26.4	235.8	---	325.4
1998	1,341.5	655.0	18.5	280.5	---	387.5
1999	1,907.7	703.5	20.5	268.1	484.8	424.8
2000	1,750.9	796.1	25.3	280.5	71.3	577.8
2001	2,029.4	963.4	29.1	315.7	---	721.2
2002	2,245.3	1,154.6	21.9	318.8	---	750.1
2003	2,106.7	1,025.7	13.3	345.2	---	722.4
2004	2,066.6	939.9	15.7	400.6	---	710.4
2005	2,062.8	922.9	13.3	382.3	---	744.3
2006	2,247.1	932.1	10.3	383.2	---	921.5

Source: 2006 Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry of the Planning Board, page 1, Table 1.

Three significant elements emerge out of the analysis of this table. First *urbanizaciones* (subdivisions) have seen a slight decline over the past years. This report only presents figures and does not provide an analysis of the trends witnessed in the construction industry. Considering this, it would be interesting to note if Puerto Rico's contractors are shifting from building subdivisions to walk ups. If this trend continues in the following years it would be worthy of studying since as earlier chapters of the dissertation indicate subdivisions were the face of the growing process of Puerto Rican urbanization during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This fueled the intense use of the automobile, and the gradual neglect of pedestrian life and other consequences that this has had for the country. In the case that this shift holds true it would be interesting to see if this has any kind of political impact for how municipalities engage these new and more compact communities.

Secondly, and most importantly, the number of apartments has seen an exponential increase. This can very well point to the increase number of walk-up style condominiums that have been built in Puerto Rico. These would occupy the privileged space that subdivisions once had in Puerto Rico, as a massive project of urban densification. Some of the benefits of walk-ups for contractors are that they require less use of land in order to being built. And third, the number of rural projects that have been constantly in decline. This seems to indicate that the growing presence of construction is focused for the most part on the metropolitan area of San Juan and other urban enclaves. The profile that is generated out of these numbers validates the experience witnessed in this case study, that is of more walk-ups and other types of condominiums in the urban fabric of Puerto Rico, this will also be seen in the context of Guaynabo.

### **Construction Permits in Puerto Rico**

As part of the analysis of the 2006 Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry of the Planning Board an important element to consider is the number of permits given to different sector of the construction industry. These are broken down into Public and Private sector in Table 5 of the report from 1997 to the estimated projection of the year 2006.

I will focus on the figures for the Private sector since this is the one that fuels most of the gated communities that we see in Puerto Rico's real estate economy. This table is broken down according to a series of categories under which I will focus solely on Residential. Then I will present the information as part the report's Table 5 focusing on number of permits and value in thousands of dollars. This is the breakdown of that information that considers the year in question, number of permits and value in thousands of dollars).

**Table 4. Number of Permits and Total Value for Guaynabo**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Permits</b>	<b>Value (in thousands of dollars)</b>
1997	6,110	573,592
1998	6,718	588,055
1999	6,465	625,180
2000	6,530	882,003
2001	6,533	971,475
2002	6,737	986,751
2003	7,178	1,016,731
2004	7,656	1,189,790
2005	7,321	1,062,041
2006	7,252	1,241,668

Source: 2006 Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry of the Planning Board, pages 7 and 8, Table 5.

In all of the years under consideration the number of permits has been well over the 6,000 figure. By the year 2003 it went over the 7,000 mark seeing its apex by the year 2004. Also by the year 2003 the dollar figure went over the millions, with 2006 as the most significant year. In order to provide some context to these figures, a comparison of these figures with Public residential projects during the same time period is simply outstanding. As Table 5 of the report shows for the same time period the most significant year was 2005 with 252 construction permits for a total of \$228,821. The differences are striking; these figures do not approach those of what the private construction industry has to offer. Both in terms of the money invested and the number of permits that the government has approved. The year 2005 could possibly be an anomaly since it precedes the electoral year of 2004

when politicians tend to promote public investment for the sake of reelection or benefiting their political party.<sup>205</sup>

These figures validate what has been presented throughout the dissertation, the significant role that the construction industry has as part of Puerto Rico's economy and in particular the great disparity between private and public sector. In addition to the significant rise that private residences has meant for the construction industry. When analyzing the permits awarded for the private construction industry no other industry sector overtakes the private residential field. The only category that came close was that of permits awarded to the private capital for commercial construction and when considering this field of private commercial permits none of them even clear the 1,000 figure for total number of permits per year. The highest number of permits awarded was 923 in the year 2002.

The report (2006 Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry of the Planning Board) offers a glimpse into the particularities of the construction industry over well half a century (Table 6) in terms of the number and total value of new private and public housing units. And as part of this analysis it is important to note the two most significant time periods in terms of these two categories. Table Six of the report highlights the figures since the year 1951 (prior to the creation of the current Commonwealth status) until the year 2006. The lowest number in terms of units was that of 1952, and the highest number in terms of private housing units was that of 1973. When analyzing the Table 6 the two longest and sustained periods in terms of number of units are those from 1962-1975 and from 1994-2006.

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<sup>205</sup> In order to contextualize that year it is important that 2004 was the last year of Governor Sila María Calderón who as part of her administration placed some importance on *Comunidades Especiales*, term that her administration coined for poor communities in Puerto Rico. Through the *Comunidades Especiales* program once they were recognized as such by the government, funds were allocated to these communities following a logic of empowering these areas. This responds to her role as former Mayor of San Juan and philanthropy.

The first of the two periods shows 1973 as the most significant year in terms of number of units with a value of 248,002 (in millions of dollars). The second period has the year 2001 with the most active with 20,070 permits for a total of 838,938 (in millions of dollars). These were the two most active periods in terms of permits, but one striking element started in the year 2004, that of value that has transcended the billion dollar mark. The table is elaborated according to millions of dollars and this is the most recent numbers that the report has to offer.

**Table 5. Number of Units Built and Value for Puerto Rico**

Year	Units	Value (in millions of dollars)
2004	18,692	1,132,983
2005	16,873	1,027,293
2006	16,953	1,182,388

Source: 2006 Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry of the Planning Board, page 9, Table Six.

What is the significance of this most recent trend? Will it continue? It is too early to arrive at categorical conclusions, but certainly this significant trend deserves some analysis. An initial hypothesis that could be confirmed in the coming years is that the residences that are being built are catered to a public who is more willing to buy properties of higher value. A possible explanation for this could be Puerto Rico's economic difficulties that have possibly promoted a diminution of the middle class, while the gap between rich and poor becomes larger. Thus, allowing for a growing group to buy more expensive properties. This could see some explanations in a growing debt, or some people resorting to the underground economy. These are possible explanations that will receive more solid grounding in coming years.

This dependence of the economy to this sector is certainly beneficial to those contractors who specialize in private residential units. In the concrete case of Guaynabo this is more dramatic to our argument since all of these constructions will be gated. The significant element to consider at this time is the profile of these private residential units that are being developed in Guaynabo.

### **Construction in Guaynabo**

The initial gated communities in Guayanbo were security-zone communities that were for the most part subdivisions. Today it is more common to see either prestige communities built as walk-ups or subdivisions. Later in this chapter I will consider the new residential projects built in Guaynabo, and because we have the name of these communities it will be easier to determine if they are walk-ups or subdivisions. This is just part of the process of detailing the nuances of Guaynabo's reality, since from the perspective of the argument that is being presented here they are gated and respond to middle to high income buyers, thus preserving and attracting a particular type of resident in Guaynabo. The following evidence is an attempt to validate the argument that I have been elaborating.

Making use of the same report generated by the Planning Board, the figures in Table Seven present the number and total value of new private and public housing units by Municipality. Unfortunately the report does not offer a breakdown in terms of public and private sector, as it has done for other tables. Recognizing this limitation the information presented for Guaynabo shows the following.

**Table 6. Number and Total Value of Private and Public housing in Guaynabo**

Year	Number	Value (in millions of dollars)
1997	766	25,584
1998	301	27,632
1999	247	16,168
2000	426	19,464
2001	937	90,784
2002	337	35,733
2003	366	31,518
2004	578	49,295
2005	435	36,535
2006	174	26,385

Source: 2006 Selected Statistics of the Construction Industry of the Planning Board, page 9, Table Seven.

After analyzing this table the most relevant element for a comparative analysis is how does the rest of Puerto Rico compare? When doing this analysis the municipality of Guaynabo does not necessarily stand by itself. Other municipalities have indeed reflected more permits and higher values than those present in Guaynabo. In fact, in none of those years does Guaynabo stand alone in either of these two categories. The most competitive year from Guaynabo according to Table Seven was 2001, ranking third in number of units and first in the value of these units. Since this information validates that Guaynabo is not leading in these categories it is important to consider the type of residential unit that has been developed. The survey that has been generated by Mr. Héctor L. Rivera Reyes will allow us to have a glimpse into the type of residential development that is being generated in Guaynabo. It is crucial to stress the fact that Mr. Rivera contacts a number of contractor and they voluntarily provide this information, making for this a short sample of the new

residential projects in Guaynabo. The available information spans from the fiscal years 2000 to 2006.

**Table 7. Developments in Guaynabo for 2000**

<b>Name of the Development</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Total Number of Units</b>	<b>Average Price</b>
Fontainbleu Village	Apartments	100	
Porto Fino	Apartments	28	319,000
Regency Park	Apartments	110	170,000
Plaza Atiene	Apartments	25	210,000
Valles de Torrimar	Apartments	366	
Bosque de Torrimar	Apartments	64	
Los Frailes Walkups	Apartments	336	
Condominio El Laurel	Apartments	48	245,000
Lincoln Park	Apartments	108	
San Patrick	Apartments	16	300,000
Grand View	Apartments	60	
Monte Rey	Apartments	142	140,000
View Point	Apartments	80	
El Bosque Walk-ups	Apartments	160	
Palma Real	Subdivision	173	400,000
Villas de Montecielo	Subdivision	230	

The most consistent element that this table presents is that most of these developments were apartments in the form of walk-ups. None of them respond to the subdivision model that has been the most common in Puerto Rico for better half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Another striking element of what was witnessed during the Fiscal Year 2000 is the range of these developments from 16 to 336. Also, it is interesting to note that most of them incorporate either French or English as part of their name. Others use mention of exclusive sectors of Guaynabo Norte such as Torrimar, which is a subdivision that is over thirty years old. Most of these apartments were built in Guaynabo Norte, and most of them would qualify as prestige communities.

When making a comparison to the rest of the housing development for the same fiscal year some considerable elements emerge. Other municipalities feature more expensive units which in some cases respond to lifestyle communities, particularly in the Palmas Del Mar

complex in the coastal town or Humacao, or communities located in Dorado or Cabo Rojo. But in terms of walk-up apartments Guaynabo features for the most part the highest price per unit. That is not the case of subdivisions where the municipality of Gurabo has presented both lifestyle and prestige communities.

It is an important element to clarify is that since these tables are developed according to fiscal year, if a particular development takes more than one year fiscal year for its completion, this particular development will be included in the corresponding fiscal years. These will become more evident in our continued analysis.

**Table 8. Developments in Guaynabo for 2001**

<b>Name of the Development</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Total number of units</b>	<b>Average Price</b>
La Coruña	Apartments	120	
Meadows Tower	Apartments	32	
Regency Park	Apartments	148	170,000
Plaza Atenie	Apartments	25	210,000
Valles de Torrimar	Apartments	204	
Bosque de Torrimar	Apartments	64	230,000
La Villa Garden	Apartments	274	197,000
View Point Condo	Apartments	80	
El Laurel	Apartments	48	245,000
San Patrick	Apartments	16	300,000
Vistas de la Colina	Apartments	42	
Monte Mayor	Apartments	142	140,000
Villas Las Mercedes	Subdivision	54	400,000
Palma Real	Subdivision	180	675,000
La Cima Torrimar	Apartments	58	
Balcones de San Pedro	Apartments	100	135,000
Il Vilagio	Apartments	20	300,000

This year 2001 presents a number of new projects for Guaynabo, most of them are apartment units, but note how Palma Real's average price increased during this year. Also note the presence of small apartment units that feature developments of twenty or fewer apartments. Both of them, Il Vilagio and San Patrick are some of the priciest that are featured in this year's report, since these two feature a price of \$300,000. It is important to recognize that not all of these apartments are walk ups, El Laurel that is located in the

exclusive San Patricio neighborhood and also Regency Park<sup>206</sup> (are condominiums) which are located in Guaynabo Centro close to the Rafael Martínez Nadal avenue (Road 20) that crosses Guaynabo from north to south.<sup>207</sup>

Balcones de San Pedro offers an interesting example of how priorities can shift in the process of generating a development.<sup>208</sup> This apartment complex is located minutes from the Guaynabo City hall, in the heart of the historic Guaynabo Center. This project was initially touted as a *Proyecto de Interés Social* by the municipality, which means that its purpose was to cater to lower income residents in an opportunity to purchase a property in the context of Guaynabo's expensive market. Eventually this complex was redirected out of its *Proyecto de Interés Social* purpose, into an open market type of development. This might help to explain why it ranks as the least expensive out of those developed in that year.

When comparing Guaynabo's situation to the rest of the island the following can be noted. As in years past municipalities that can afford spaces for subdivisions offer projects with higher average value, and again lifestyle communities in towns such as Dorado and

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<sup>206</sup> An interesting element to point is that today El Laurel has been fully occupied, while Regency Park is a two tower project that to this day has been unable to sell all of its units.

<sup>207</sup> The Rafael Martínez Nadal Avenue replaced the historic Road 20 which was the route to follow in order to get to San Juan. Today this avenue has had a significant role in terms of providing a significant roadway in and out of Guaynabo. The selection of this name is not totally innocent; Mr. Martínez Nadal was a long time politician who supported statehood for Puerto Rico and resident of Guaynabo whose home was located next to old Road 20. He's known as an important figure in the cockfighting culture in Puerto Rico since he pushed through the bill that allowed for this sport to be legalized under the American period. Next to his home he had a cockfighting venue where people would go to place bets and enjoy their passion. Today this lot is home to a BMW Authorized car dealership.

<sup>208</sup> On an interesting note Balcones de San Pedro is quite probably named after San Pedro Mártir de Verona which is the patron saint of the Municipality of Guaynabo. Because of its historical links to Catholicism each municipality in Puerto Rico has a patron saint, after which usually the main church and a parochial school are named after. In the case of Guaynabo, the Colegio San Pedro Mártir de Verona was founded in the year 1958. Saint Peter Martyr was a 13<sup>th</sup> century Dominican preacher who was killed and later canonized by the Catholic Church.

Humacao can certainly offer elements that Guaynabo cannot offer such as stunning beaches, golf ranges and marinas. However, in terms of prestige communities Guaynabo keeps leading most of the municipalities in Puerto Rico. Small enclaves like Old San Juan can be an exception, for example the most expensive development in terms of average price for that year was the Luchetti Princess with eight units and a value of one million dollars per unit.

**Table 9. Developments in Guaynabo for 2002**

<b>Name of the Development</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Total number of units</b>	<b>Average Price</b>
Portal de Sofia	Apartments	130	165,000
Villas Las Mercedes	Subdivision	54	400,000
Palma Real	Subdivision	180	675,000
La Coruña	Apartments	120	
Meadows Tower	Apartments	32	
Regency Park	Apartments	148	170,000
Valles de Torrimar	Apartments	204	
Bosque de Torrimar	Apartments	64	230,000
La Villa Garden	Apartments	274	197,000
View Point Condo	Apartments	80	
Condominio El Laurel	Apartments	48	245,000
Lincoln Park	Apartments	108	
San Patrick	Apartments	16	300,000
La Cima de Torrimar	Apartments	58	
Monte de los Frailes	Apartments	56	
Balcones de San Pedro	Apartments	100	135,000
Il Vilagio	Apartments	20	300,000

When taking a look at the year 2002 an interesting element emerges. The two projects that are located in the heart of Guaynabo Centro are the ones that feature the lowest average price. Those are Balcones de San Pedro and Portal de Sofia which are separated by a two way street. The rest of these developments are located in mostly Guaynabo Norte which tends to feature the most expensive units. At this point it also becomes evident that these projects take a number of years to develop, and for that reason the tables reflect mostly the same developments.

Palma Real emerges once again as the development that features the highest average price per unit, making it known that subdivisions are rare in Guaynabo these days, but once they are built they prove to be the most expensive type of unit. Palma Real is located in Guaynabo Centro, where upon a minute drive away from Balcones de San Pedro and Portal de Sofia, the driver would encounter road 199. This is the last of a series of developments that emerged in Guaynabo during the early 1990's starting with Mansiones Reales; this gave way to a total of four subdivisions that feature the name Real or a derivative as part of its name.<sup>209</sup>

When considering how this compares to the rest of the island the following elements can be noted. In terms of apartments all of those who surpass Guaynabo's figures are located next to the beach, new locations that emerge this year is Rincón on Puerto Rico's west coast, and Isla Verde, Carolina that is located next to the San Juan International Airport features a number of condominiums that date back to the 1960's and 1970's.

**Table 10. Developments for Guaynabo in 2003**

<b>Name of the Development</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Total number of units</b>	<b>Average Price</b>
Villas Las Mercedes	Subdivision	54	400,000
Palma Real	Subdivision	180	675,000
Villas de Monte Cielo	Subdivision	193	290,000
Il Vilagio	Apartments	20	300,000
Balcones de San Pedro	Apartments	100	135,000
Murano Luxury	Apartments	180	425,000
La Coruña	Apartments	120	
Meadows Tower	Apartments	32	
Regency Park	Apartments	198	200,000
Valles de Torrimar II	Apartments	204	
Bosque de Torrimar	Apartments	64	230,000
Lincoln Park	Apartments	108	

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<sup>209</sup> These were developed by the known figure in Puerto Rico of Cleofe Rubí; that to according to some people that I have talked to resides in one of these subdivisions.

This fiscal year brought the emergence of a new residential project, Murano Luxury Apartments. These are walk-ups built across where most of the 1990's Guaynabo subdivisions of the Reales family that were built on Road 199 (Avenida Las Cumbres). Considering what has been mentioned in the literature and analyzed in this dissertation, this is a blatant attempt at incorporating prestige as part of the naming process. When taking a look at its website [muranoluxury.com](http://muranoluxury.com), we learn that all the apartments have elevator access, air conditioning, twenty four hour security, access control as well as a gym and clubhouse for its residents. In addition it includes Smart Home technology where this residential technology is available.

For all of these amenities the project is located in an average price of well over \$400,000. It is important to consider how this compares to other apartment units in Puerto Rico. In terms of apartments, once again the only areas that offer more expensive units are those located in the prestigious Condado area of San Juan, and the expensive units found in the coastal town of Humacao. This municipality has certainly benefited from the Palmas del Mar project that has been growing ever since it emerged over thirty years ago. This offers a fascinating glimpse into how the process of coastal gentrification is significantly supported by the emergence of these types of lifestyle communities.

When considered as a single municipality Guaynabo certainly ranks at the top in terms of average price per unit for its apartments that would qualify as prestige communities. As noted in previous years, lifestyle community condominiums and subdivision rank among the most expensive in Puerto Rico.

**Table 11. Developments in Guaynabo for 2004**

<b>Name of the Development</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Total number of units</b>	<b>Average Price</b>
Villas Las Mercedes Phase Two	Subdivision	17	
Palma Real	Subdivision	180	675,000
Valle Escondido	Subdivision	17	
Balcones de San Pedro	Apartments	100	135,000
Murano Luxury	Apartments	196	425,000
La Coruña	Apartments	120	
Meadows Tower	Apartments	32	
Regency Park (tower 1)	Apartments	198	200,000
Valles de Torrimar II	Apartments	204	
Paseo Monaco II	Apartments	80	
Miradores de Sabana	Apartments	88	
Hill View	Apartments	80	290,000
La Cima de Torrimar	Apartments	58	
Plaza del Prado	Apartments	100	
Portal de Sofía	Apartments	130	

When considering the figures for the year 2004 we see that more projects have been reported by the developers compared to the previous year. An interesting element that keeps emerging is the significant range in terms of the number of units per development. The number of units range from less than twenty to over two hundred units. Once I take a look at all the municipalities, Guaynabo ranks at the top in terms of the average price per unit of condominiums.

Guaynabo has certainly entered a position where it simply does not match the number of subdivisions that are being developed in other municipalities because of its lower numbers. That also means it has become a rarity to see a significant number of new subdivisions in the municipality. And when these do actually occur they come at a prime, mainly the developments such as those built in the Palma Real area along Road 199.

### **Year 2005**

The Excel sheet that was provided for this year uses a different layout than in previous years. And for that reason I am unable to provide information such as

classification, total number of units, but no figure for average price per unit. For that reason I have decided not to include the figures for this year by generating a table. Since the important element for this section of the chapter is to provide figures in terms of the average price of these new residences, this information that is not present will not jeopardize the argument that is being presented here. The figures that I have been presented and their analysis serve as an adequate method for offering the reader a profile of the type of residences that are being built in Guaynabo.

**Table 12. Developments in Guaynabo for 2006**

<b>Name of the Development</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Total number of units</b>	<b>Average Price</b>
Mirador las Torres	Apartments	256	200,000
Condominio Dina Plaza	Apartments	80	200,000
Hill View	Apartments	80	275,000
Murano Luxury	Apartments	196	425,000
Hacienda Elena (Phase A)	Apartments	250	475,000
Vista Linda	Apartments	12	480,000
Casa Magna	Apartments	48	600,000
Plaza del Prado	Apartments	100	600,000
Murano II	Apartments	100	
The Parc Apartments	Apartments	300	
Las Mercedes (Phase II)	Apartments	17	

The fiscal year 2006 presents a significant change in terms of the average price per unit. As it can be seen all figure over the \$200,000 mark, and even more impressive is that it also includes apartments for well over half a million dollars. This is an outstanding amount of money considering what the previous years offered. These figures are similar to those presented in other municipalities that cater to a lifestyle community profile.

Casa Magna is located in the exclusive area of San Patricio, in Guaynabo Norte and it features some of the amenity that other expensive projects have featured, such as a gym, club house among other spaces. It follows a walk-up model, while Paseo Del Prado is a two

tower condominium that features 50 apartments per tower. It includes a concierge, air conditioning in the hallways, and two gymnasiums (one for weights and the second one for Spinning), Valet Parking and controlled access. This development is located in the area close to Torrimar and Garden Hills. These two Guaynabo Norte communities were amongst the first to start the drive towards gating as it was highlighted during the interviews in Chapter Six.

### **Perception and Political Consequences**

As Guaynabo has effectively started to change the profile of what constitutes a resident of the municipality and most importantly what type of resident it attracts, a number of mild reactions have started to emerge. One notable contestation and criticism has emerged as part of the 2008 mayoral campaign, where the leading opponent from the PPD Héctor Landrau levied a number of criticisms against current Mayor O'Neill. The attacks consist of questioning the type of profile that is being generated in the municipality through the construction of expensive developments, and most importantly questioning the practice of expropriation for the sake of developing new expensive residential projects, (i.e. gentrification). Considerable questions do emerge out of this dynamic, who has access to the municipality in terms of its urban policy, and what is the criterion that is being pursued? When I follow the evidence that has been collected, it clearly points to developers.

An article that was published in [endi.com](http://endi.com) on July 24, 2008 the El Nuevo Día newspaper website runs with the title “Guaynabo ‘para ricos’” (Guaynabo “for the rich”) there Mr. Landrau points to the following. That if Mr. O'Neill keeps promoting the type of development that has an average price of \$300,000 three years from now no single middle to lower class person could buy a residence in Guaynabo. He is quoted as saying the following

“O’Neill does not offer options for the middle lower class, and by the contrary, he keeps promoting ambitious expropriation plans in order to build new projects for the rich”.<sup>210</sup> The PPD candidate goes on to add “I have no doubt that Héctor O’Neill has short term plans to turn Guayanbo to a city for high class people. That is the reason for the pattern of expropriations and that’s why the only allowed development is only for high price housing.”<sup>211</sup>

The article offers a significant backdrop to these statements, and that is the struggle of the Mainé community on warding off the Municipality’s attempt of expropriating these residents. This has gone to the *Tribunal Apelativo* (Appellate Courts) where the court has stopped the plans for expropriating these residents. The mayor claims that this verdict goes against the basic principles of the *Ley de Municipios Autónomos*. The article points that according to O’Neill “Nothing in the Planning Board’s law can or should contemplate any procedure that has impact over the power delegated to the municipality to start on its own a process of expropriation. To suggest that there is some type of consult of citing for the transaction of land is illegal.”<sup>212</sup> According to the article, the mayor has in the past also has questioned in the courts the validity of Law 232 of 2004, which recognizes that residents of designated *Comunidades Especiales* have a say in terms of the decision of expropriations that could impact their communities.

This is a situation where the municipality is using all tools available in the process of reshaping the urban context. What is interesting to note is that this is happening under the veil of legality, since these discussions are nominally occurring in the judicial arena. The

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<sup>210</sup> My translation.

<sup>211</sup> My translation.

<sup>212</sup> My translation.

final outcome of cases like this can prove beneficial to a municipality that is using all the resources that the *Municipio Autónomo* has to offer, while poor communities are resorting to the support that the *Ley Orgánica de Comunidades Especiales* can give. What will be crucial to see in the near future is if these kind of debates over access to land, how it is distributed, and according to whose interest and rationale spills out of the courtrooms. And most importantly if the interlocutors multiply including those that are not directly impacted by these decisions, (i.e. community residents), and not only the municipality and *Comunidades Especiales* such as Mainé.

Guaynabo is running out of real estate as evidenced by the significant number of apartments and the few subdivisions that are being developed in the last years. This certainly places the municipality at odds, either it has to keep promoting apartments, clear the way for subdivisions and apartments, or attract other forms of capital into the municipality. But the political consequences are significant, the profile of the municipality is undergoing a significant transformation and citizens are either not part of this process of opposition, their voices are not being heard, or this will be the beginning of a process of questioning this ongoing pattern.

This public criticism validates the findings and the argument that this dissertation has been displaying. Prestige is at a premium in the municipality, it is being sought at all costs to the detriment of those who do not fit the desired profile. Will this situation eventually generate enough antipathy where the Mayor will have to change his political agenda? I have to say that at this point nothing points to a massive opposition to this political project. Residents either praise this perceived efficiently run municipality, and others are casually critical of some of these measures of gentrification.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have considered a possible explanation for Guaynabo's municipal policy towards gated communities. During this process I have considered the significant numbers that the construction sector of economy has meant for Puerto Rico. This dates as back to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, but as the figures corroborate, the decade of the 1990's saw an exponential increase in the activity of this sector.

This has had a significant effect on the real estate industry in the island and on its municipalities. For that reason I considered how Guaynabo compares to the rest of the island with the available figures from the Planning Board, and also I considered the cost and the type of units that have been built in Guaynabo during the last years. As part of this process I was able to locate the names, type of development, number of units, and cost per unit. I decided to focus on these numbers since these were the ones that could validate the argument that I have been generating. Guaynabo has been attracting expensive residential units to its city limits. As the previous chapter clearly manifested, these new communities are all gated.

When analyzing these communities and its particularities, I have concluded that these respond to the prestige community category as elaborated by Blakely and Snyder. An important element that was validated by the available figures is that these expensive communities are mostly apartments, for the most part walk-ups and in some instances condominiums (i.e. towers). These do vary in number of units, from really exclusive numbers to more massive projects. Subdivisions that serve as the historical fabric of the Puerto Rican sprawl are less common in Guaynabo these days; certainly other municipalities are attracting these types of development. There are certain sectors of San Juan that attract more expensive developments, as historic Old San Juan, or El Condado. These cater to a

different clientele, different than the mobile middle class or nouveau riche that moves to Guaynabo.

For the purpose of the argument being presented here it is evident that Guaynabo is certainly attracting a particular type of development, and thus a particular profile of the municipality. This is coherent with the city marketing logic that I have presented earlier, where the per capita income stays among the highest in Puerto Rico and a certain air of prestige and esprit d' corps is generated. Guaynabo thus becomes a respectable brand name, desired by those who can afford it. This is the new consideration that I want to integrate into the gated community literature because of its significant explanatory power. The municipality sponsors a particular type of gated community, one that brings significant prestige since it ranks amongst the highest in the island. This facilitates the marketing of Guaynabo for prestige profit, and other political purposes.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE FUTURE OF GATED COMMUNITIES

This inquiry had as its early origins the goal of understanding the gated community process in Guaynabo. In order to do this assessment it was necessary to consider what the literature on gated communities has indicated, its descriptions, explanations and other contributions. Once this was set in place it became clear that the contributions of this body of work for the case study of Puerto Rico, and Guaynabo is scarce. For that reason the literature review had to borrow from other fields and other experiences.

By the use of literature review, interviews, and the examination of government documents a series of explanations were offered. Mainly that there is a policy towards favoring gated communities in Guaynabo, but what proved more difficult as part of this process was to determine reasons for this process. After examining the literature available there were certainly experiences seen in Guaynabo that have been replicated in other jurisdictions. But as part of this examination I was unsatisfied with the explanatory power that they had for the case study of Guaynabo. I simply understood that these explanations could not fully grasp the undergoing process in the municipality. For that reason the literature on city marketing seemed as a reasonable explanation for this particular Puerto Rican experience. This would present a larger logic for the ongoing process in Guaynabo.

My interest consisted in documenting how Guaynabo has been favoring the emergence of gated communities in the last years in order to raise the economic profile of the municipality; attracting capital to the city, but most importantly there is an ongoing process of reshaping who gets to live in the city and the services that the municipality will provide to its residents. In the process the municipality has pursued the creation of a new type of

identity. One that is driven by a goal of efficient services, massive public works, beautification projects, the use of the English language as a distinctive element thus creating a recognizable brand.

### **Guaynabo and the body of literature**

There are a series of contributions offered by the gated community literature that are certainly present in Guaynabo. The categories elaborated by Blakely and Snyder can be identified in the case study of this municipality. The historic origins of gated communities in Puerto Rico can certainly be described as belonging to the prestige community category. But the most recent trend that was driven by the fear of crime and a receptive government points to security-zone communities. Once these historic communities of Guaynabo Norte gated their streets, a new process emerged giving way to a considerable number of prestige communities (which are the majority to this day). The category of lifestyle communities is certainly present in Puerto Rico, but not in Guaynabo. For the most part these respond to beach communities that can feature a marina, golf course and other amenities. Because of the lack of a significant coastline Guaynabo has not been able to provide that type of development. The significantly exclusionary process of coastal gentrification is not part of Guaynabo's reality. Other forms of gentrification have been occurring, led by the process of expropriation and the nature of the expensive developments that are being attracted to the city.

The contribution that Setha Low has offered in terms of homogeneity inside these communities as one of the dynamics of the ongoing process of gated communities is certainly present in Guaynabo. This has taken form in the municipality's attempt of attracting a particular profile of residents to its city limits. Guaynabo or the developers have certainly

not used open or blatant forms of discrimination in order to achieve certain homogeneity. But it is important to note that in the context of Puerto Rico there is a considerable coincidence between high income and white Puerto Ricans.<sup>213</sup>

Guaynabo is one of those municipalities trying to attract capital to the municipality, by luring expensive development to the city's budget, this experience certainly echoes what McKenzie elaborated in the case of Las Vegas. These dynamics are not exclusive to the American context; since municipalities have money to earn by attracting this type of capital. This is best evidenced by the figures offered in chapter Seven, where these new gated communities do not respond to *Interés social* housing, but to exclusive middle to upper class developments. The statement made by mayoral candidate Landrau in the 2008 campaign, is the best testament to this reality.

Certainly the gated community literature has not been able to capture all of the intricacies existing in Guaynabo's reality. The first element is to focus on the role of a particular municipal administration. Most of the literature operates as if these processes occur organically, naturally, that there are no policies or their values working as part of this dynamic. In the case of Guaynabo I have presented how there is certainly a predisposition to support this kind of social endeavor. It does not occur by accident, the municipality has a political benefit in supporting this type of urban development. This is the consideration of city marketing that I have presented in the latter part of the dissertation.

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<sup>213</sup> The public imaginary certainly sees Guaynabo as a place for *blanquitos* (i.e. high income Puerto Ricans) to the extent that as I have argued earlier the more frequent use of *guaynabito* (i.e. as a reference to a particular type of *guaynabeño*) is becoming more common. T-shirts such as those handed out by a well known Yuppie Friendly Irish theme pub openly uses the term *guaynabito*.

Second, I consider that the literature should place more attention on city directives and how they bridge political and city interests as part of the ongoing dialogue with gated communities. These are not value free individuals; there is disposition as part of the political projects that they want to advance. The interviews on chapter Six offer a significant glimpse into some of the values that city officials have. A concrete example is evident when they make mention of a particular community, offering descriptions that are laden with their positions on certain communities. This is an element that for the most part is absent from the literature and needs to be recaptured, and most importantly contextualized. The focus of the literature for the most part examines each gated community, and sometimes offers generalizations on their particularities. But at no time, in my opinion, has it tried to offer a larger explanation that could serve as a rationale for the ongoing process that favors the emergence of these communities.

Third, to consider how gated communities can also be part of the process of coastal gentrification; and how the development of gated communities can justify process of expropriations and evictions. This is a growing reality of the situation present in Guaynabo. Certain communities have been cleared out with the purpose of new developments, which in the context of Guaynabo for the most part gravitate towards the development of gated communities (either walk-ups or subdivisions). Lifestyle communities are prime examples of how coastal gentrification operates; because of Guaynabo's reduced shoreline this dynamic is not existent in my case study. But it has certainly been a factor in sectors of San Juan or municipalities such as Humacao or Dorado.

An interesting dynamic found in Puerto Rico, and possibly in the rest of the Caribbean, is how gated communities can have a potential link to the tourism industry, since

they are frequently used as time share communities or villas for expatriates that might have a second home (i.e. a beach residence). The political considerations of this would be, who has access to the most desirable shores, what is the environmental consequence of building these gated communities, thus impacting wildlife and habitat. A virtual privatization of beaches would occur where only by staying in certain resorts you have access to a particular beach.<sup>214</sup> This would make this type of vacationing prohibitive, only accessible to those who can afford it.

Fourth, the literature has been significantly absent of considering if there has been support or opposition to this process of building more gated communities. Guaynabo has served as an example where the only partially significant opposition has emerged in those communities that have been threatened by potential eviction, or have actually gone through this process. Sectors such as Mainé, and Barrio Juan Domingo are prime examples of this reality, unfortunately they have not been able to garner significant support besides their own communities, or organizations and individuals who have as a goal to support communities undergoing these types of threats.

Fifth, how a city marketing process that has started in a particular municipality can be replicated by others. In the Puerto Rican case San Juan has recently started to use similar city marketing techniques as those in Guaynabo. What will be interesting to examine for those interested in the urban process in Puerto Rico, will be to consider if San Juan will also attempt to attract a particular profile for urban development in a similar fashion to Guaynabo

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<sup>214</sup> The press has captured this experience in the Cuban case where until recently Cuban nationals were not allowed to visit hotels catered to international tourists (e.g. Varadero). In Puerto Rico there has not been this type of ban, but prices make this experience nearly prohibitive for middle and lower income Puerto Ricans.

that has as its corollary a process of displacement for those with scarce economic resources that are in a position of marginality.

### **A Larger Logic**

An unexpected process, but necessary in order to understand gated communities in Guayanbo, is to place it as part of a larger logic, meaning that gated communities should be understood in conjunction with larger social processes that the literature does not frequently acknowledge, processes such as gentrification, eviction, and the interests of particular municipalities. As I have pointed out throughout the dissertation the literature on gated communities has been efficient in the descriptive nature of their contributions. From analysis on different types of communities, to interviews with their residents, to what drives the emergence of these communities. One element of the literature that proved unsatisfactory was how the role of local municipalities was barely acknowledged. The only examples that I have seen are those of Washington D.C., and the Las Vegas case study as analyzed by McKenzie. It is imperative that the literature on gated communities attempts to engage the larger process that is occurring that drive the emergence of these communities. Not only does individual choice matters (as the literature has thoroughly analyzed), but there are elements that need to be contextualized. In particular, the context under which individuals decide to buy a residence. Evictions, gentrification, property value, city marketing, are some of the many variables that are at work during this dynamic.

In my case study this is a situation where individuals are looking to make a purchase of a residence. But what kind of incentives would make their purchase attractive? In the case of Guayanbo there are a number of services that the municipality offers in a fashion that is well regarded by people in the municipality and elsewhere in Puerto Rico. Since they

might also be considering a purchase that will keep its value or increase during the years, the element that Guaynabo attracts expensive communities and residents with resources this will likely make their purchase a good investment.

This just to point how even these individual decisions that people make are bounded by a particular way on how gated communities operate in a particular space. In Guaynabo we have seen a municipality that has decidedly favored the attraction of expensive gated communities, and making sure that all its efforts are geared towards that direction. To the extreme that some of the dynamics that have been evidenced include intense processes of gentrification.

In this sense this case study and my approach has been attempt that this is certainly not a neutral; or organic process. An innocent process such as a home purchase is surrounded by a series of elements that should be engaged beyond mere description. There are some explanatory issues that in my opinion that are essential and this project is an attempt at filling that gap.

The larger logic is a dynamic where City Marketing matters to those related to the gated community process. Not only for the campaign and creation of slogans, the movement of capital that it entails, the generation of income to those involved the jobs that it generates to the economy. Also it has an impact on those who are not able to benefit from it (i.e. afford it), those who could potentially face eviction, or their communities could be the subject of a radical transformation. This is why City Marketing is crucial, because it gets constituted in actually grounded practices. And this has an impact on how gated communities get constituted in Guaynabo. Would the process of gated communities in Guaynabo have flourished without it? Quite possibly since these communities were emerging from the

1980's under a variety of circumstances, but what proves crucial is that the expression under which they occur is that of a sponsoring city campaign.

### **Lessons from Guaynabo to the literature**

A significant consideration to keep in mind is what type of experiences found in Guaynabo can be applicable to other places in the future. The most significant is how municipalities can have a significant role in the promotion of gated communities, by city marketing or other devices. Also a gated community process that started to intensify under the context of security-zone communities, evolved to the extent where the taste of buyers were significantly altered. It is common now to see how in the context of Puerto Rico and Guaynabo in particular, buyers actually look for gates and the advertisement for these communities prominently highlights these.

An additional element to consider is also, what type of forces if any have articulated in order to repel or offer some questions to the increased process that facilitates gated communities. Guaynabo offers an interesting example of what can be done in a limited space that is available for new developments. Mechanisms for “clearing out the way” become more evident, since the availability of empty space is significantly less. This has meant that for observers of this urban process, these dynamics are significantly out in the open, more blatant for those interested in examining this urban dynamic. This has been crystallized with some examples that were remarked during the dissertation (e.g. Sector Mainé). How the municipality has made use of the powers at its disposition (i.e. *Ley de Municipios Autónomos*) in order to push forward their urban project.

Finally I will like to consider four elements that I presented earlier in the dissertation, which summarized the gated community attractiveness. In this case study crime in particular

was a considerable element that attracted residents to the emergence of the early security-zone gated communities in Guaynabo. This was used to the advantage of city officials, the residents interested in seeing changes, developers and even the increasing role of private security officers. This also coincides to what the literature has pointed in terms of the privatization of public space. Today the element of crime is important, but I would argue that other elements in addition to crime drive the gated community process in Guaynabo.

The issue of homogeneity is crucial since an element witnessed in many of the gated communities in Guaynabo is just that, a similar economic profile that is attracted. This is in simple terms what is happening in Guaynabo, it is a project of urban homogeneity. The process of homogeneity is articulated through services, the beautification of spaces in a similar fashion, and the other elements that I have presented throughout the work. This increases the sense of security for residents since it nullifies precisely how the fear of crime is generated. Homogeneity is also achieved through income; by having a similar profile the differences are certainly decreased. And quite potentially tensions become less pervasive.<sup>215</sup>

Prestige is the most powerful force present as part of the most recent process in Guaynabo. The dissertation has articulated in an extended way how this is a significant player in this dynamic. The departure that I have taken from what most of the literature points on this issue is that Guaynabo's experience has the municipal state as a powerful force that is fully engaged and favoring this promotion. Language serves as a faithful accomplice to this dynamic, where many of these new gated communities feature names in language that

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<sup>215</sup> In this sense the Brazilian gated community literature has a significant element in common with the Puerto Rican experience. The issues of disparity coexisting side by side, where exclusive residential areas are located adjacent next to *favelas*. Teresa P.R. Caldeira's analysis of the reality in São Paulo is an excellent example.

are not Spanish (e.g. French or English). This in addition to the use of street signs in English, to the way the municipality has named its different dependencies and divisions.

Prestige also has operated beyond naming spaces, actual daily practices such as private security, gym and spa, valet parking and other sources of distinction have also being evidenced. These are identifiable practices that are at work in the dynamic of Guaynabo, which are advertised and serve a one of the many elements that make living in a particular community attractive.

Property value was depicted in great detail in Chapter Seven. Guaynabo has had a concerted effort in attracting high property value projects to its jurisdiction. This grounds and validates the process of prestige, by looking at the type of gated communities that are attracted, the context that surrounds it certainly points to a prestigious space that features a high property value.

The fourth category that I considered was that of private services/governance. At to my surprise this was not a significant element in the process of gated communities in the municipality. Guaynabo's government is active in terms of providing services to residents, and has an active role. The only spaces that could be pointed to privatization are those of beautification projects, and certain services like a few sports facilities. But for the most part out of the four elements that I presented earlier in the dissertation, this would be the most absent figure. The experience that McKenzie has documented of a declining governmental role has not been experienced in Guaynabo.

A possible reason is that providing these services gives the municipality more visibility that could be interpreted as a form of clientelism. People in Guaynabo seem to be

satisfied with the services that the municipality provides, this can be attested by the electoral support that the municipality has enjoyed over the past years.

### **Conclusion**

Guaynabo offers a glimpse to how other municipalities in Puerto Rico might be geared in the future. The experience witnessed in Guaynabo has been the object of significant attention in Puerto Rico, and because of its insignificant questioning by most residents this can serve as an urban roadmap for Puerto Rico. The municipality benefits, the political forces that surround it and the economic sector that is significantly dependent on the construction industry.

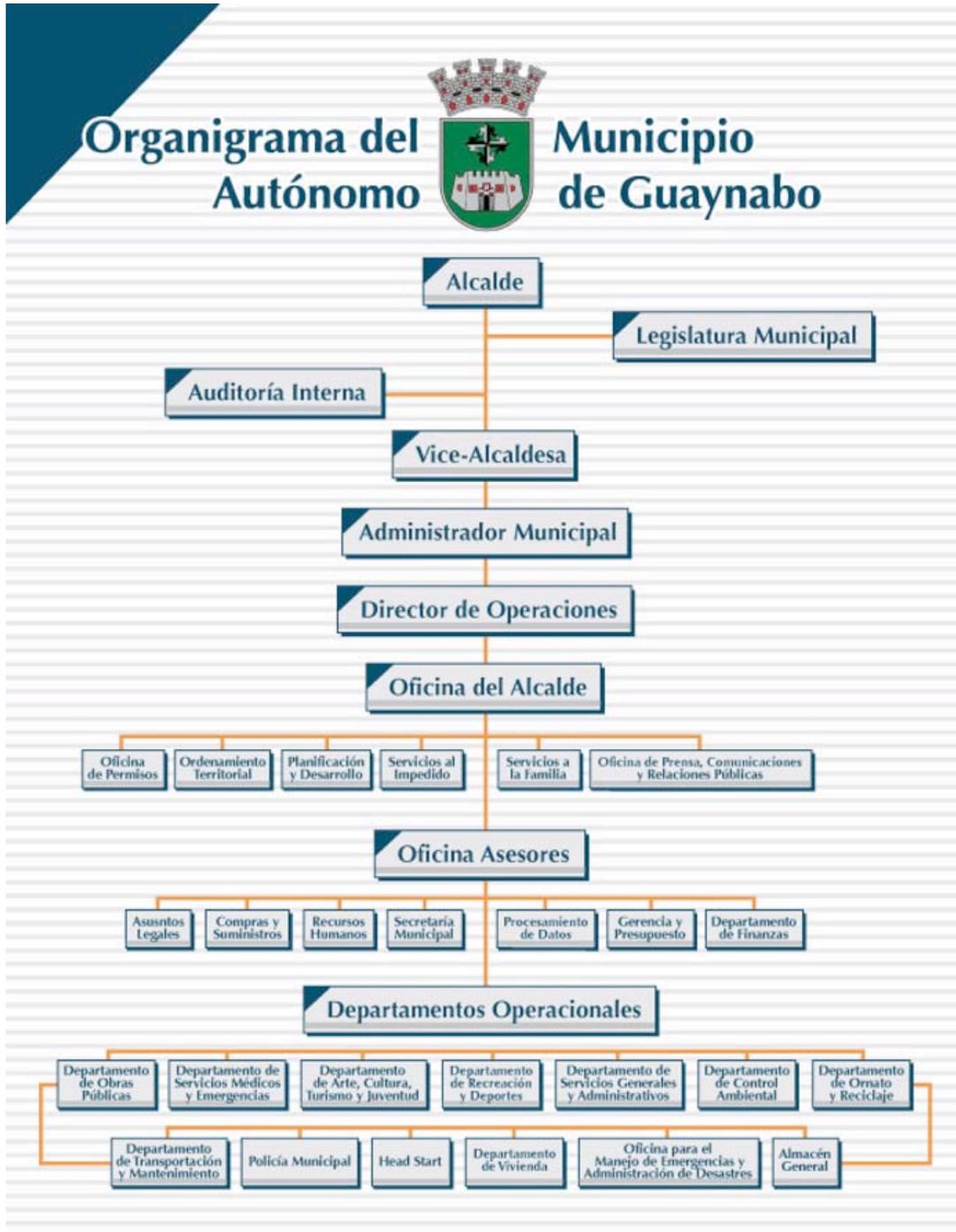
This is a dynamic where the citizenship has a diminished role, that of a customer. Unfortunately in Puerto Rico there has not been significant political opposition to coalesce in questioning this type of urban project. A possible locus of change might emerge as more residents are not able to afford living in these spaces, and social marginalization becomes more intense. This might be the day where massive mobilization can finally emerge.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF GUAYNABO'S BARRIOS



**APPENDIX B**  
**CITY FLOWCHART**



APPENDIX C

ESTABLISHING CITY LIMITS



## Controlling Pedestrian Access



## Security Zone Entrances



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