

# homogeneity & controlled deviation

DESIGN CODES AS BEHAVIOR CODES IN CALIFORNIA'S GOLF COMMUNITIES

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## OBJECTIVE

This study examines some of the most exclusive golf clubs and their residential desert communities. Particular emphasis in this work is given to the architectural design guidelines of these communities and how they frame the aesthetics of “landscapes of privilege” while simultaneously delineating the limits of creativity in custom home building. Based on site documentation, architectural analysis, and interviews, this fieldwork documents the ways design regulations dictate how residents must behave according to, buy in, or challenge the notion of homogeneity within the communities. A deep dive into the elite country clubs of the desert and their larger service and support communities brought to surface the cultural ideal of the “good life” that underpins our society.

To be in the top one percent has not proven to be a qualifier for complete creative freedom in design for these communities. This begs the question of why is not all privilege the same when it comes to design? Why do landscapes of privilege both conform with and diverge from the norm? And further, who controls homogeneity and deviation in architecture and landscape design?

## METHODS

fieldwork studies  
documentation of styles  
photographs

site visits  
architectural analysis  
interviews

## RESULTS

After studying each of the Country Clubs' design guidelines, HOA requirements, documenting during site visits, and interviewing club employees, I came to the result that all of the clubs restricted design guidelines except for one outlier. This single outlier was the most exclusive and most expensive club on the list. So why was design freedom only found in the most expensive club? The design scene in the uppermost class of society is still segregated. The results determined from this study were that the rest of the clubs were selling a lifestyle- one which many people bought into for social reasons and the background cultural narratives that are fed into the American Dream. It is necessary to study these clubs in hope to *understand* them and the people who live within the gates instead of just critiquing them.