A new model of urban development in Latin America: The gated communities and fenced cities in the metropolitan areas of Santiago de Chile and Valparaíso

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Over the last decades, in the main Chilean cities the development of residential quarters with restricted access increased remarkably. This trend has occurred parallel to the construction of various features that significantly modified the organization of urban space: privatised highways, large retail centers and enclaves of advanced services. This article analyses these elements on the basis of geographical information systems. This makes it possible to demonstrate different kinds of urban fabric and their impact in a comparison of the two largest metropolitan areas of Chile. As similar structures and processes are reported from other Latin American countries, it seems that urban development has reached a new structural phase: after the compact colonial city, sectoral pattern and bi-polar city fragmentation are the key words to explain the internal pattern of Latin American cities. Thus, the findings of the study present a new model of the development of Latin American cities.

Keywords: Urban development, urban fragmentation, gated communities, Latin America, Chile

Introduction

Massive changes have been taking place in Latin American cities within the last three decades. The most significant factor is the appearance of tall apartment buildings and of individual family home quarters totally separated from the rest of the city by walls, fences and security installations. These “gated communities” are called Condominios in Chile (Borsdorf, 2000) and Brazil (Pöhler, 1999; Sobarzo and Beltrão, 2003), barrios privados as one type of gated communities in Argentina (Janoschka, 2002; Vidal Koppmann, 2003; Clivechesky, 2002; see also Svampa, 2004; Ariza, 2005), conjuntos or urbanizaciones cerradas in Ecuador (Kohler, 2002), or fraccionamientos cerrados in Mexico (Cabrerales and Canosa, 2001).

The new gated communities are to be seen everywhere in Latin America, even in medium-sized towns and some small towns. However, in the large metropolises the process has reached a very high level, and there is hardly any new urbanisation which does not follow the new fashion of fencing it in. Furthermore, in some metropolises such as São

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Paulo, Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile, gated communities were established for more than 50,000 inhabitants or are under construction. They can no longer be called “gated communities” but “gated cities”. They are equipped with public and private schools, universities, shopping centres or malls, sports infrastructure including golf courses and swimming pools or artificial lakes with marinas.

In this paper, gated communities or quarters are regarded as habitat units (at least two houses or apartments), secured by fence or wall and a proper security infrastructure (guards, video, and automatic barrier). In the Chilean case, all these fenced areas are in common property (“condominios”). Gated communities are not related to any social strata: although it seems that they are restricted to the upper classes, the predominance of condominios is occupied by the middle classes, but even social housing is nowadays realised in gated areas. There is even a tendency to fence marginal quarters, but these quarters are not analysed in this paper, as their legal state is different from that of condominios. Scientists of Latin America, North America and Europe developed quite a large variety of typologies (Borsdorf, 2002; Svampa, 2004; Arizaga, 2005). Borsdorf and Hidalgo (2006) tried to harmonize these different approaches in form of a classification mind-map.

In Santiago de Chile, private highways were constructed to link these new towns with the office quarters and business centres of the city, allowing the inhabitants to reach their workplace within 30 min, whereas they would need four times as long on the public highways during rush hour.

There can be no doubt that these developments are only possible in a planning milieu of deregulation and thus are strongly connected to the neoliberal economic system and the influence of globalisation (de Mattos, 2003; Parreiter et al., 2005). Some former developments, with a strong base in the Latin American urban culture, such as the closed vecindades or conventillos (Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2004), eased the adaptation of the North American model of fenced-in cities for the Iberians (Borsdorf, 2002; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2004a). Thus, the relationship of urban change and globalization is not a linear process, and it is by no means reproduced in the same way all over the globe. There may exist a certain evidence that the rise of gated quarters in Latin America is similar to earlier processes in the United States of America (see: Kirby et al., 2006). However, at least in the case of Chile it may be stated that ethnic factors are less important whereas social variables are much more characteristic for the differentiation of the fenced areas. The literature on the gating phenomenon all over the world is numerous. A recent overview is given by Glasze et al. (2005).

The development of these new gated communities and fenced cities has come with the deepening fragmentation of the social space of the city. Indeed the condominiums, in their different modalities, try to fit into the city like independent units, with filtered access, based on the labour necessities and of services in general, with the city “more outside” of their boundaries. These residential spaces form a central element of the new model of the space organization of the Latin American cities (Borsdorf, 2000; Janoschka, 2002; Mertins, 2003) and are one contemporary expression of the inequality and exclusion that have characterized the residential areas of the Latin American cities from their initial formation (for Santiago see Arenas and Hidalgo, 2003; Hidalgo, 2004; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2004, for Buenos Aires Torres, 2001 and for São Paulo Caldeira, 2001).

Based on this argument, the present paper will characterize the new structure of residential space of two Chilean Metropolitan Areas: Santiago (AMS) and Valparaíso (AMV). Our analysis centres on the construction of gated communities. In addition, we will relate these processes to global economic and social factors that greatly influence such developments in order to explain the main spatial parameters that are present in the new model of metropolitan area that has modified the classic one over the last three decades.

### Gating and fencing of quarters and cities and the new model of the urban structure in Latin America: from polarization to fragmentation of the metropolitan spaces

Gated communities can be observed in large and medium cities of the whole Latin American continent. In terms of their legal form they may be set up as condominios. In this case, the plot belongs to all settlers, and everyone possesses only a share of the site. This allows – even by law – fencing the “one” plot of land in. However, in addition, fences are put up around individual plots when owners decide to protect their site by walls or fences. Closed streets as well as the protection of larger units of parcelas de agrado (sites with more than 5000 square meters in the rural areas surrounding the cities) are not legal in the strict sense but tolerated by the authorities. After Alphaville in Brazil and Buenos Aires (Nordelta) in Chile, a new wave of gating started in the first years of the 21st century, when developers began to construct “mega-projects” planned for 50,000 inhabitants and more. Nowadays gated areas can be found all over the cities or agglomerations and in their vicinities (Borsdorf, 2000; Meyer and Bähr, 2001; Kohler, 2002; Kanitscheider, 2002; Hidalgo and Borsdorf, 2005). A linear relationship of city size and number of gated communities is problematic. In the case of Santiago and Valparaíso the share of condominios (gated communities and towers) is even higher in the smaller agglomeration. This is, why there a larger percentage of apartments and even houses are second
homes for the wealthier people of Santiago, who like to spend their week-ends at the coast.

The rise of gated quarters has intensified the fragmentation of the urban fabric. The gated communities are disconnected from each other. They are highly “car-referred” and interact with other functional units (malls, shopping centres, colleges, and work places) by car-based mobility (Vidal, 1999).

In this respect, urban fragmentation is the spatial answer to the process of closure of the urban space and the rise of residential archipelagos that are driven by aspects of security and exclusiveness. These new residential spaces “are easily identified by the existence of elements that clearly mark the limits of these districts: barriers, walls, walls of wire and sentry boxes of security, among others” (Roitman, 2003, 2005).

These forms of dwelling are expressed in a social space that tends to hide itself away from the rest of the city in which it locates itself. In general terms, authors like Roitman (2003) indicate that the social segregation in the city is associated with “the spatial separation of the different social groups in a geographic area according to ethnic differences, religious or of income, among others”. Of this form, it is possible to visualize in a city the different districts where each social group has its own specific space. In the case of the segregation based on differences of income, the relations of being able and subordination become evident. The high-income groups can choose their residential location, while the impoverished groups are more dependent to the offer of social housing.

Fragmentation however can not only be observed in the residential sector, but also in commerce, industry, supply, services, leisure infrastructure, and transportation. It comes with the privatization of former public spaces: in the Santiago agglomeration there is one municipality, in which more than 18% of the total space is inaccessible to the public. Even a complete highway was constructed for the exclusive use of wealthy dwellers, living in one of the fenced-in cities on the outskirts, to connect them with the office quarters of the cities, where most of them work (Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2005).

The new structural model of Latin American cities

The new structure of the urban fabric has overwhelmed the former structure, where the “rich” and the “poor city” were clearly separated. In this sense a clear succession of different development processes can be observed in the Latin American city that mirrors the “development model of the Latin American city 1500–2000”, as published by Borsdorf et al. (2002). This model is based on former approaches by German and North American authors, starting in the late 1970s, and it reflects the newest trends of urban structuring. According to these authors, the initial phase was characterized by a compact city, in which the distance to the plaza indicated the social status of any dweller. The second phase, initiated by European immigration, was characterized by linear structures: the boulevards in form of alamedas, paseos or prados, or the new industrial quarters orientated towards the railway lines. The third phase started with the rural exodus and the new doctrine of import substitution and led to a bi-polar structure, clearly separating the rich from the poor sectors of the city. Only the last phase, initiated by neoliberalism and globalization, restructured the agglomeration again, and opened it up for polarization in a minor spatial dimension and for fragmented structures – a city of islands (Janoschka and Borsdorf, 2005) or an urban archipelago.

In many cases, gated communities are disconnected from each other by larger distances, but there are communities in which one fenced area is followed by another. With Svampa (2004) and Judd (1995) it can be pointed out for the Chilean studies in Santiago and Valparaíso, that there are strong relationships to malls as fortresses and other urban artefacts. Borsdorf and Hidalgo (2006) point out that each basic human need may be realised in a gated or ghetto form (education: private schools and universities; supply: malls; recreation: club holidays; social life: clubs and “countries”; traffic: private highways; work: industrial estates; living: gated communities).

It may be argued that fragmentation emphasises the complexity of the city. The social position of the citizens or the importance of a business are no longer

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<th>Number of houses and apartments</th>
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<td>Total</td>
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Table 2: Condominiums, houses and surface involved in the construction of condominiums in municipalities of the Área Metropolitana de Santiago (AMS) 1990–2000, compiled by the authors.
Figure 1  Model of urban development in Latin American cities 1500–2000 (Source: Borsdorf et al., 2002).

Figure 2  Municipalities in the Metropolitan Area of Santiago.
determined by their location (Prévôt Schapira, 2000). Although it sounds paradoxical, the dynamic fragmentation allows vibrant metropolises to establish (expansion, mobility, emergence of new centralities) and at the same time to break out of the unit, resulting in aggravated social inequalities and forms of desolidarization (Prévôt Schapira, 2000).

When Vidal Koppmann and Dietrich (2005) characterize the outskirts of Buenos Aires as made up of “urban fragments surrounded by illegal marginal settlements, rubbish dumps to open sky next to small and medium units of the traditional urban plot, parks and industrial areas very close to luxury residential quarters, and freeways having been constructed over local earth roads without any maintenance” (all translations from Spanish or German to English by the authors) – this description may characterize not only Argentina’s capital but all Latin American agglomerations. Globalization and neoliberalism, new centralities and urban fragmentation build up the general frame of the contemporary urban development in Latin America. This paper aims to analyse this re-structuring of cities for one of the Latin American countries which opened its market, policy and society early to neoliberalism and globalization. For our case-studies we took the two major metropolitan areas of the state, Santiago (AMS) and Valparaíso (AMV).

Methods for the study of the closed districts and the changes in the urban structure in AMV and AMS

The Metropolitan Area of Santiago (AMS) is a conurbation, constituted by 36 municipalities with about six million inhabitants (5,599,761 in 2002), whereas the respective areas of Valparaíso include five municipalities with a total of 819,387 inhabitants (see Tables 1 and 2). Put together, the two agglomerations represent close to 44% of the total population of the country.

For these 41 municipalities in order to get a solid base for the analysis we built up a database of all condominiums corresponding to the Chilean law 19,537 of 1997 on real estate co-property. According to this law two legal forms of condominiums may exist: (a) the vertical condominiums in form of tall buildings with different apartments, and (b) the horizontal condominiums constituted by bungalows on a single site.

Taking into consideration these two basic types of condominiums the following variables were included into the database: name of condominium, location (defined with the help of GPS), date of approval, developer or building firm, size of site and urbanized areas, number of houses or departments. The database is geo-referred and integrated into a GIS, based on ArcView 3.3., allowing development of map or...
The database has been regularly updated up to the present. The database is interrelated to socio-economic data, such as the Human Development Index (IDH), proposed by the UN Programme for Development, and an indicator of socio-economic development of the urban population (IDS), developed by the authors.

The IDS was conceptualized on the basis of three types of indicators: possession of consumer goods, level of education of the population over 25 and quality of the homes (Pnud-Mideplan, 2000; Hidalgo and Borsdorf, 2005). It included nine variables for 1992 and eleven for 2002.

In 2002, the following variables were included: possession of a car, a light truck, motorbike, washing machine, microwave, fridge, telephone, colour television, video, internet access, and cable television. The education indicator is constituted by one the following five levels: primary education, secondary education, technological level (a specific Chilean educational level, similar to the Austrian system), professional level and university level. The variables for quality of the house are the types of ceiling, floor and wall. These data were standardized for the census quarters. The higher values correspond to higher levels of socio-economic development.

The new model of urban organization of the metropolitan areas of Santiago and Valparaíso

For centuries the agglomerations of Santiago and Valparaíso have concentrated a large part of the Chilean population, urban infrastructure, industry, commerce and services. Since Santiago, founded in 1541, became the capital of Chile, it was the undisputed centre of the colony, and after independence it even managed to increase its influence (Wilhelmy and Borsdorf, 1985).

Valparaíso, located on the coast at the same latitude as Santiago, constituted the front door and exit of the capital from colonial times onwards. The political, economic and financial restructuring in the first decades of the 19th century meant the introduction of Chile into the global economic circuit as a supplier of raw materials like silver, copper, guano, wheat and flour. The export volume of these products increased considerably – and so did the population of Valparaíso.

Caused by the economic boom of the harbour, the neighbouring town of Viña del Mar with its fine beaches was incorporated to the agglomeration (Cáceres and Sabatini, 2003) and later the neighbouring town of Concón Figure 3, which is becoming the favorite place for the second homes of rich Santiagoño citizens.
At the beginning of the 1980s, as in other Latin American agglomerations, various types of gated communities sprang up and led to a profound alteration of the urban structure (see Figures 1 and 2). This process was accompanied by the emergence of other new elements within the urban organism, like the location of commercial centres, shopping malls and urban entertainment centres all over the urban perimeter, and not just in the traditional sectors of the higher classes; the increasing importance of the infrastructure for motorized traffic that increases the attraction of residential sites in easy reach of metropolitan freeways; the location of areas of enterprise and industrial innovation in the periphery, business centres, technology centres, logistic centres, most of them enclosed by fences and gates and with controlled access.

These “artefacts of globalization” (de Mattos, 2003) are generating the modification or alteration of the traditional socio-spatial patterns and the morphology of the cities. This is why it is essential to investigate the social and territorial dynamics that generate the construction of condominiums.

All these questions and the aspects indicated are visualized in Figures 4–7. Eight main processes stand out in both cartographies that have taken place in the recent conformation of Santiago and Valparaíso. They will be described in the next sub-chapters.

Reinforcing the historical accumulation pattern of people on higher incomes

In the case of Santiago, to this day a large proportion of condominiums are concentrated in the richest municipalities of the city, in Providencia, Las Condes, Vitacura, Lo Barnechea, La Reina and Núñoa. In the city of Valparaiso, the condominiums are concentrated in locations with a view on to the Pacific Ocean, in Viña del Mar, Reñaca and Concón, not only on the marine terraces, but also on the upper levels. The shortage of sites with sea views has caused a predominance of vertical condominiums in tall buildings in the sea-shore locations. However, in a comparative view of the complete metropolitan areas, Valparaíso and Santiago are not too different: In Santiago 82% of all living units are made up of apartments, in Valparaíso the share is 83.1%. And the relationship of horizontal and vertical condominiums, too, is quite similar in both agglomerations: In Santiago 66.7% are condominiums of apartment houses, in Valparaíso 64.2% of condominiums are vertical.

In the case of Santiago most of the owners are living permanently in their houses or apartments,
whereas in the case of Valparaiso a larger percentage use their apartments as second homes.

Arrival of the middle-class in physically deteriorated central areas with the complete infrastructure of consolidated urban spaces

Formerly these areas were inhabited by people on low incomes and their transformation indicates a process of gentrification. This process can clearly be observed in the centrally located municipalities of the AMS like Recoleta, Independence, San Miguel, Quinta Normal and Estación Central, in which the traditional indicators of socio-economic development changed (cf. Figures 6 and 7). However in Valparaiso, on the so-called cerros (hills) of Alegre and Barón, a series of vertical condominiums have been constructed in consolidated areas with good urban infrastructure and services. Nevertheless, unlike the municipalities of Santiago, these hills always have been traditionally inhabited by the middle-classes.

Changed distribution of parts of the middle, middle-to-upper and the upper classes, which now tend to move to gated quarters in peripheral municipalities of low income, formerly characterized by social housing and self-construction

It is a striking phenomenon of segregation that in recent years gated quarters for middle and upper classes have been constructed in formerly quite poor areas – islands of wealth in an ocean of poverty. This process is one of the main characteristics of fragmentation, and is accompanied by the establishment of malls, shops or business parks in the same area. In the AMS this is the case in the municipalities of Huechuraba, Peñololén, Florida and Puente Alto, and to a smaller degree also in Quilicura, Pudahuel and Maipú. However, there are still municipalities dominated by the lower classes in which as yet no new isles of the rich have been established, for instance Cerro Navia, El Bosque, La Granja, Lo Espejo, Lo Prado, Pedro Aguirre Cerda, Renea y San Ramón (see Figure 2). The main drivers for these new location trends are the demand for new land, the lack of land in more central areas, the price of land, but also the increased mobility of the dwellers.

In the case of the AMV, the described situation is quite similar in the municipalities on the periphery such as Quilpué, Concón and – on a smaller scale – Villa Alemana, where the real estate agents find optimal places for the construction of horizontal condominiums. The disadvantage that the peripheral location of these municipalities might present is compensated by the supply and low price of sites to generate housing projects of low density.
Expansion and colonization of new urban structures by high-income groups in peri-urban or even rural communities

Whereas there is no longer any marked increase in population in either the AMS or the AMV, the peripheral municipalities within a peri-urban cycle or even in the rural neighbourhood of the agglomerations show a dynamic development in certain parts. There are two quite different types of these development trends: the rise of new fenced-in cities of remarkable dimensions (up to 65,000 inhabitants) and the purchase of sites with more than 5000 m² for a single house, frequently combined in units which are protected by gates and fences.

These sites are designated for agricultural purposes. However, if the buyer builds his or her own house on it, it is hard to distinguish between gardening and agriculture. This is why the so-called parcelas de agrado became quite popular among the upper-classes of the agglomerations, allowing them an Arcadian-type lifestyle in the middle of nature and – because of the low prices – quite a lot of luxury. It should be pointed out that this development complies with the law. Act DFL 3516 was formulated to protect agricultural land from being divided into too small stripes – and the developers do respect this law. Most of these parcelas de agrado can be found in the municipalities of Lampa, Colina, Calera de Tango, Pirque and Padre Hurtado.

The second trend in the outskirts is the rise of new towns, the so-called mega-projects, often designed for more than 50,000 inhabitants. Most of these projects can be found in the north of Santiago, in the municipalities of Lampa and Colina (see Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2004b), but there are some also to the west of the agglomeration. Although they may look like New Towns as we know them from Great Britain or France, they are quite different as their inhabitants all come from the same social strata. There are New Towns like La Reserva and Chicurea for the highest strata, Piedra Roja and Valle Norte for the upper class, Larapinta and Valle Grande for the middle-class. However, they are or will be equipped with malls, shops, schools, and universities for their inhabitants, with the same restricted access as to the whole urban ensemble. Some of them are connected to business or technology parks, like ENEA or Valle Grande.

The AMV, too, has initiated the construction of mega-projects of fenced-in cities. Curauma, located about 15 km east of the agglomeration, is planned as a new city. Its residential spaces have been designed as closed districts. With a surface of 4300 ha, Curauma represents one of the more
important real estate projects of the country and is the most important of the region. It includes a technology park, services and leisure facilities (sports club, artificial lagoon, hypermarket, and university). Its construction has a planning horizon of 25 years and it is expected to have a future population of 150,000–200,000 inhabitants.

Location of popular condominiums in quarters of social housing and self-construction
Like the parcelas de agrado, closed districts within the urban organism, which have been closed off by fences, walls and gates only recently and include private sites, are not condominiums in the legal sense, but they look like them, and one could call them condominio de facto. Generally they are the product of a coordinated action of neighbours who close the streets and stop the free circulation with the aim of controlling access and of protection against crime, to give their children a safe playground and to exclude any form of harm and pollution. It can be observed that not only existing compounds of individual houses fence themselves in, but also units of social housing or even marginal quarters. Thus, the motif of security for fencing and gating, predominant in the upper-class, has reached the lower and marginal classes as well.

This is why the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism nowadays only develops new social housing projects with security systems such as fences and gates.

This phenomenon can be observed above all in peripheral municipalities of the AMS, like Puente Alto, La Pintana, San Bernardo, La Florida, Maipú, Pudahuel, Renca, El Bosque, in which more than 70% of social housing constructed between 1979 and 2002 is concentrated. In recent years, peri-urban municipalities like Paine, Buin, Petaflor, Talagante, Lampa y Colina, started to initiate quarters of this type (Hidalgo and Arenas, 2003).

In the AMV the same processes occur in the areas of social housing. In Valparaíso these are the areas on higher ground and on the slopes, where nearly 60% of the total social housing of the AMV was built in the period from 1992 to 2002. It also includes Quilpué, where 34% of the social complexes were built during the same period (Hidalgo and González, 2004).

Construction of new inner-city high velocity freeways
The construction of new inter-communal freeways and the improvement of the existing highways are very important driving forces of the metropolitan transformations. In the case of Santiago, the construction
of the freeways North Costanera, Vespucio North and South Express, Radial Nororiente and Central, demonstrate the enormous improvement of access to the metropolitan area. These new freeways have toll systems, some quite sophisticated, and were developed by private corporations.

One of the new freeways was even constructed for the exclusive use of the citizens of the new cities North of Santiago, living in La Reserva, Valle Norte and Piedra Roja, very exclusive residential areas for the upper classes. The freeway Pie Andino connects these gated cities in less than 15 min with the upper quarters of Santiago, where most of the office towers are located, thus saving their inhabitants a 1–2 h ride on the public highways during rush hour. However, in early 2006, the private highway was given to the municipality as a gift, was renamed Autopista Juan Pablo II and is now openly accessible.

Relocation of the service and commercial areas

The malls, shops, hyper- and supermarkets, formerly located close to the quarters of the upper classes, are spread over the whole urban fabric in the post-modern metropolis. However, some siting preferences can be observed. Most of them are associated with the large ring roads or the free- and highways that cross the city. In this sense they have changed their location preference: in the 1970s they were located in the centre of the upper-class quarters, and acted as new focal points for urban development. In the contemporary urban fabric, most of them are reached by cars, thus being commercial enclaves, rather like some of the rich condominiums in poor surroundings on the residential level. Thus the new malls and shops are a constitutive part of the new urban archipelago.

Formation of new nuclei of advanced services

Another characteristic that the metropolitan areas display nowadays is the formation of new commercial, services and technology parks. Financial services, business consultancy, global logistics, real estate services, research and development and others are located in these parks. The transition from modernism to post-modernism has triggered a substitution of the heavy industries with those of specialized services (de Mattos, 2003). Post-modernity means – among other characteristics – the weakening of traditional location theories. For services this means a shift from former locations in the city centre to peripheral ones (Escolano and Ortiz, 2005).

However, the headquarters of multi-national companies do not necessarily need a location in one of
these new parks. The fragmentation tendency even leads to quite scattered sites.

In the AMV too, industrial nuclei outside the consolidated area have been developed, for instance Curauma, which in its original concept may be compared with ENEA, although the dimension of its final proposed stage will be much larger.

A visualization of all these new tendencies may be drawn in specialized maps like Figure 8 for Santiago and Figure 9 for Valparaíso. However, the spatial reconfiguration to be observed in the two Chilean metropolitan areas is not a Chilean phenomenon, it can be observed in all larger cities, at least of the Spanish speaking countries of Latin America, and with some variations for Brazil, too. This is why it is possible to generalize the urban development of the sub-continent in a model (Figure 1), which makes clear that the new phase of development is the latest in a series of urban restructuring, and may be called the phase of globalization. The main tendencies in this last stage are fragmentation, segregation, along with gating in varying degrees, large-scale privatization not only of public space but also of educational institutions and universities, freeway development, de-industrialisation in the traditional industrial quarters, business and technology parks on the periphery, along with orientation to specialized and business related services.

Conclusion

In a general context, globalization causing economic transformation, deregulation, a retreat of the state, weakening of urban planning, but also the rise of (internationally organised) crime and – on the other hand – the perception of vulnerability by the citizens are powerful drivers for the urban development in Latin America in the described form. Social exclusion therefore is no longer an attitude of the upper classes; privatization, gating and fencing can be observed in all social classes and in all sectors of the urban economy. The specific forms and structures however may vary in each country, region and city. This was the central motive to compare the phenomenon in two neighbouring metropolitan areas of quite different dimensions.

Closed quarters in the form of vertical and horizontal condominiums, closed streets or even fenced-in cities are the most visible structures in the new Latin American city, accompanied by malls, shopping centres and hypermarkets. Exclusion itself may be regarded as the central structuring force in the cities and the societies: it is not only the central motive in residential areas and in the business world, it is present in education, leisure and recreation, communication, and mobility, that is in all basic functions of human beings. If modernity to a certain degree meant urban and community life, social interaction and a common responsibility, the contemporary or post-modern Latin American city seems to loose these urban qualities.

This is why from a larger perspective one can say that – given a differentiation on an idiographic scale – the described forms, structures and processes can be generalized into a model, which, as studies of the authors and other geographers in Latin America show (see Meyer and Bähr, 2001; Mertins, 2003; Janoschka and Borsdorf, 2005; Caldeira, 2001; Pöhler, 1999), may illustrate the general structure of the contemporary Latin American city.

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