

Borsdorf, A. (2003): Hacia la ciudad fragmentada. Tempranas estructuras segregadas en la ciudad latinoamericana. In: Scripta Nova. Revista electrónica de geografía y ciencias sociales. Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona, 1 de agosto de 2003, vol. VII, núm. 146(122).

Abstract

The face of urban centers of Latin America has changed during the last decades. Particularly the erection of fences and walls to close streets and encircle residential complexes varying in size emphasise this change. Some researchers see closed-off districts as copies of the North American gated communities, others interpret the changes as a relapse to medieval times.

However, it should be remembered that the tendency to shield private space behind walls is nothing new in Latin American cities. Originally, the patio house was a radical break between public and private space, a thick wall with a few small openings shielding the house from the street. Before the introduction of gated communities, whole districts in the traditional city were enclosed (e.g. conventillos, tugurios and vecindades, which were constructed until the 1950's).

Thus, the barrios cerrados in Latin America clearly have autochthonous roots. Nevertheless, economic transformation and globalisation have certainly contributed greatly to the emergence of these new residential and living forms.