

Bezug, andererseits hebt es aber massiv die inzwischen dominierenden Faktoren der inselhaften Stadtentwicklung hervor und kreiert damit einen eigenständigen Ansatz.

Obwohl die vorliegende Arbeit wichtige und zentrale Fragestellungen zur Entwicklung und Veränderung lateinamerikanischer Metropolen anhand des Fallbeispiels Buenos Aires beantworten konnte, kann sie keinen Anspruch auf eine vollständige Bearbeitung des Themenfelds erheben. Die qualitativen Ergebnisse ermöglichen aber tiefere Einblicke in die räumliche Organisation der Bewohner des *Nordelta*, in ihr Sozialverständnis und ihre Motivationen für die Umzugsentscheidung. Obwohl die Studie keine Repräsentativität und Übertragbarkeit ihrer Resultate auf alle anderen bewachten Wohnkomplexe beansprucht und dies auch nicht in ihrer Grundintention lag, ist die These der Fragmentierung städtischen Raums bewiesen worden. Insbesondere im Zusammenhang mit den Begründungen, welche die Bewohner des *Nordelta* für den Umzug verbalisierten, darf die Fallstudie Buenos Aires als nur wenig vergleichbar mit anderen Städten des Kontinents gelten. Es ist zu vermuten, dass den politischen und wirtschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen, aber auch der Frage der Kriminalität in anderen lateinamerikanischen Metropolen eine andere Bedeutung beigemessen wird. Bezüglich dieses Aspektes sind zukünftige vergleichende Studien notwendig, die sich auf einheitliche methodische Grundsätze berufen. Aufgrund der bisher unzureichenden Datenlage ist die Pionierfunktion dieser Arbeit aber erfüllt worden.

Über die reine Analyse von städtischen Prozessen hinausgehend sollte die stadtgeographische Forschung auch handlungsorientiert agieren und Lösungsansätze für akute Probleme entwickeln. Die wirtschaftliche und politische Krise sowie der inzwischen vollständige Vertrauensverlust in öffentliche Organisationsprinzipien bringen in Buenos Aires die Notwendigkeit zur Entwicklung neuer Konzepte städtischer Regulation hervor. Die bewachten Wohnkomplexe sind auch eine Antwort auf die anarchischen Verhältnisse in der Metropole. An diesem Punkt muss bei künftigen Studien angesetzt werden. Der Verlust staatlicher Organisationsgewalt durch die Privatisierung und die Zugangsbeschränkung von Wohngebieten müssen nicht als endgültig hingenommen werden. Courageierte Fachleute, die städtische Bevölkerung, aber auch glaubwürdige Politiker sind an diesem Punkt gefordert, um das gemeinsame Bewusstsein in der Öffentlichkeit zu schärfen: Zäune müssen zuerst in den Köpfen niedergerissen werden, damit auch ihre physische Existenz als überflüssig erachtet wird.

9 Summary

Massive changes have been taken place in Latin American cities since the end of the 1980s, chiefly due to private economic initiatives. Investments were concentrated on elements which are worldwide available and signs of post-modern urban development: the expansion and privatisation of motorways, private industrial parks, international hotels with integrated business centres, shopping malls and hypermarkets, urban

entertainment centres and multiplex cinemas and in first line gated and access-restricted residential quarters both in urban and suburban areas (gated communities).

Buenos Aires is an extraordinary good example for this process of transformation under the influence of foreign direct investment. The application of strong neoliberal economic policies led to a diffusion of the mentioned complexes largely in not integrated urban situations and changed structural aspects of the metropolitan area. Access-restricted housing complexes have been built up as well in central parts in form of skyscrapers as in suburban districts as one-familiar houses. Only the suburban developments expand nowadays over an area of more than one and a half of the surface of the *Capital Federal*, which has three million inhabitants. From the late 1990s onwards, real estate companies changed their strategies and began to develop various mega-projects with several thousands units and integrated shopping areas. The culmination of this process is *Nordelta*, a private and access-restricted town in the suburban region of Buenos Aires which will have almost all urban functions for a population of an estimated 80.000 future inhabitants. Due to the economic crisis, evolution of *Nordelta* and all other gated communities stopped since 2001, and it is not to be foreseen, "when" and even "if" the already developed projects will be filled with inhabitants.

The first objective of this investigation was a detailed description and analysis of the post-modern spatial developments. The private organisation of housing space, which in Buenos Aires became a mass phenomena during few years, has to be examined in the context of the economic transformations and the retreat of the state out of all politic and economic spheres of influence. The consequence of this vacuum of state power, the overtax of the state organisation and the loss of confidence in state institutions due to corruption and nepotism is the citizens' search for private organized forms of living without any state influence. The attractiveness of the neighbourhood increases as state intervention in all spheres can be cut back by neighbourhood or club-like organization forms. *Barrios Privados* are the perfect response to this desire. Besides they are merchandised in a strategic coalition between real estate agents and press companies as the "supposed" desirable lifestyle, the gated communities are the only real supply of housing for young families in the search for a suburban surrounding.

These arguments have even more relevance in *Nordelta*: The size of the project grows speculations within inhabitants that the legal separation out of the local government and the establishment of the first private communal administration in Argentina will be possible in the future. This is an interesting consideration for the inhabitants of the private town – part of the upper 20 percent of the society – as it gives them the opportunity to the final retreat out of the state organized solidarity community.

The analysed processes do not occur in isolation but are a common aspect of worldwide post-modern city developments. The transformations are characterized through spatial fragmentation and social atomisation, processes which are empirically proved only in the case of the Californian metropolis Los Angeles. But also other agglomerations follow similar trends, although showing different intensities. Gated communities exist nowadays in almost all metropolitan areas worldwide.

Urban development in Latin America until the 1980s differed strongly from the processes occurring in North America. Such contrasts and the own development path were shown in the models of the Latin American city. Due to this, the results of the US-researchers in urban topics cannot be extrapolated to the Latin American case. This investigation closes the existing gap between US-cities theoretical approaches and the studies concerning urban development in Latin America. The biographic-narrative interviews with the pioneers of the private town *Nordelta* showed clearly that this private urbanization and subsequently the development of gated communities, produce a new quality of urban fragmentation and another kind of urban interrelation inside spaces. On the one hand the activity space of *Nordelta* inhabitants is inward concentrated i.e. within the limits of the private town. On the other hand primary necessities such as shopping, education or leisure activities take also place inside isolated, private and access-restricted facilities which are exclusively reached using a private vehicle. The analysis of the empirical data of the Buenos Aires case study and the discussion of the theoretical concepts regarding North American city investigations directed us to the conclusion that privatisation led to new basic determinants for urban development. The new quality of the processes which cause fragmentation and exclusion as basic elements of urban life was pointed out. As a result of this, many of the hypothesis of North American urban scientists can also be reproduced in the case of the Latin American city. Nevertheless the inertia of urban structures allow for the existence of a typical regional urban form. Global processes and forces acting under different political backgrounds and power constellations in Latin America, bring to a regional kind of production of urban space.

This conclusion is the starting point for the development of a new model of the Latin American city. On the one hand this model is based on the traditional models of the Latin American city and tries to improve them. On the other hand the new model strongly points out the new and currently dominating factors of urban development through isolated and enclosed artefacts. In this way, the model attempts to be an own and independent draft.

Although this investigation responds to important and central topics about actual development and transformation of the cities in Latin America by means of analysing the case study of Buenos Aires, it was not feasible to give a final and complete answer to the whole field of research. The obtained results give a deep and inner view of the spatial organization of *Nordelta* inhabitants' life, their social understanding and the motivations for their decision to move to the private town. Although this work cannot and does not want to try to represent, generalize and transfer the results to all other gated communities, the hypothesis of fragmentation of urban space could be proved. Especially in the context of the motivations for their decision for moving to *Nordelta*, this case study cannot be generalized to other metropolitan areas on the continent. Probably the political and economic setting and chiefly the problem of criminality and insecurity are variably evaluated due to local or national characteristics. To resolve this problem, comparative studies with uniform methodological approaches are re-

quired. In this regard, this pioneer investigation was able to improve the basic data situation.

More than merely analysing urban processes, investigation in urban geographic topics should also act procedure oriented and develop suggestions to resolve the investigated problems. In the Buenos Aires case, the economic and political crisis which led to a total loss of confidence in public organisation principles shows the necessity of developing new concepts for urban regulation. The gated communities are only a response to the anarchic situation in Buenos Aires. This should be the starting point for further investigations. But the loss of state influence and organisational power through the privatisation and the private restrictions to neighbourhoods may not necessarily be the final solution. Knowledgeable and motivated experts so as credible politicians and active civic participation are required to increase the public awareness prior to any change to take place: The gates must first be torn down in the heads to get rid off their physical necessity.