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Does The 'Closed' City Contribute To The 'Open City'? The Recent Growth Of Pilar, Argentina.

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Abstract

Pilar is a city located in the third ring of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Region (Argentina). Over the last 30 years, its population has grown 70%. This growth has been encouraged by the private sector and particularly the development of gated communities contributing to the privatisation of the city. However, the growth of the 'closed' city also has important implications for the 'open city', which is characterised by poverty and precarious living conditions.

This paper examines the growth of Pilar over the last two decades and considers to what extent the development of the 'private city' of gated communities, private universities, hotels and shopping centres, contributes to the development of the 'open city', and ultimately to the improvement of the living conditions of its residents. The opinions and interests of the social actors involved in the development of Pilar are considered through the analysis of interviews conducted to developers, gated community residents, real estate agents, investors, local, provincial and national government staff, and local residents.

1. Introduction

At first inspection the view from the *Panamericana* highway that goes to Pilar is much like that from any highway and could be taken as evidence of 'edge city' (Garreau, 1991) style development and indeed has, together with developments elsewhere in the municipality, been regarded in more general terms as the sort of fragmented urbanism (Dear and Flusty, 1998) said to characterise the post-modern U.S. urbanisation. However the story of Pilar and the process of suburbanisation and any nascent post-suburbanisation in Latin American cities is rather different from that occurring in the United States (U.S.). We concentrate on one type of private sector actors and investors – gated communities – and their impact on the improvement of the 'open

city'. In this way we hope to contribute to the discussion on the potential contribution of private led development to the lives of the urban poor in peripheral areas.

We begin by developing a series of analytical themes regarding the contribution of gated communities to the urbanisation of suburbia – the question of their relationship to the economy, society and polity of municipalities - drawing attention to some of the specificities of the Latin American context. We then discuss our case study of Pilar – an extensive, third ring, municipality at the edge of the Buenos Aires metropolitan region. Our study is based on a synthesis of academic and policy literature on the subject of gated communities in Pilar itself as well as interviews with local and national government officials and civic, business and developer groups conducted on location in Buenos Aires and Pilar during April 2009¹. As the site of the very first 'Country Club' in Argentina, Pilar is synonymous with the phenomenon of gated communities. However, we stress the disconnection that exists between these gated communities and the wider municipal economy, society and polity. In conclusion, we attempt to draw out some of the similarities and differences in growth patterns at the edge of metropolitan regions.

2. From Country Club To Edge City? Gated Communities And The Transformation Of Suburbs In Latin America

2.1 Gated communities and the urbanisation of suburbia

It can be tempting and convenient to let analysis of a highly controversial phenomenon like gated communities take place within frameworks which we know rest on unsatisfactory theoretical dualisms. It is, for example, difficult to maintain a sharp analytical distinction between private and public space when those sites credited with the emergence of public space were originally private and where the benefits of public space may be overdrawn and those of private space overlooked (Kirby, 2008). For example, the apparent exclusionary nature of gated communities as private governments can be made to stand in stark contrast to ideals of public space, the public realm, and municipal government. In theoretical terms it is quite reasonable to interpret gated communities as clubs that straddle the public-private divide (Webster, 2002). The technical means of exclusion most commonly associated with gated communities –the walls, fences and security technologies – are only one among several other practical means of social exclusion (legal, financial or cultural). In theory then gated communities must be regarded as one element in what could be regarded as a secular trend toward fragmentation of the urban fabric and social segregation. As Webster has it, 'Government jurisdictions, public policy, land and property markets, distance, transport and employment markets, and community values all function as alternative institutions that curtail the spatial extent of consumption sharing. Together they create a patchwork of private, club and public realms that both cohere and fragment the city' (Webster, 2002: 409).

Since, 'Many definitions of freedom – not only public freedom but freedom of choice and the maintenance of civil liberties – can be tied to the defense of some form of independent corporate life' (Frug, 1999: 54), gated communities might appear as another instance of institutions intermediate between the state and the individual vital to protecting liberty. As such, 'the

privatization of security and the seclusion of some social groups in fortified and private enclaves... are changing concepts of the public and of public space that used to be dominant in Western societies until very recently' (Caldeira, 2000: 1). Indeed Frug (1999) argues that it is precisely the adoption of such a decentred conception of public governmental institutions which is vital to renewing prospects for community-building at the metropolitan scale. However, in practice, it is the private governments represented by gated communities that have set the agenda for community-building in national contexts where there has been no conscious collective decision to allow this or else in which they have been positively enabled to do so by legislation. It is ironic that it is these 'closed' gated communities and their private governments that have been visibly decentred in their social, economic and political relations within the 'open' public government systems in which they are embedded rather than the entities that compose these 'open' public governmental systems.

Gated communities are enclaves that are 'opposed to the city, which is represented as a deteriorated world ...' (Caldeira, 2000: 264). Nevertheless, the large and growing body of empirical studies of gated communities makes it clear that – for all their attempts at containment - these private spaces do have economic, social and political effects. This raises an important open question of whether these communities do indeed contribute to the urbanisation of suburbia and a rounding out of settlements regarded as suburban. In this sense, it is relevant to mention that although there are gated communities located in inner city areas, the majority tend to be located in suburban areas since they occupy extensive areas of land.

It is these wider effects of gated communities that take such entities out of the theoretical or normative realm to pose real issues regarding their wider social, political and economic impacts. 'Rather than try to pigeonhole this new social and political entity, it is more important to examine it from the standpoint of its relative legitimacy and possible effects on the meaning of citizenship' (McKenzie, 1994: 144). In short the theoretical status and normative values associated with gated communities as club goods may stand in some contrast to their actual effects.

2.2 The consequences of gated communities for local economy, society and polity

In the remainder of this part of the paper we go on to consider some of the evidence regarding the economic, social and political consequences of gated communities for municipal governments.

Gated communities have important economic consequences for the municipalities in which they are embedded. Blakely and Snyder (1997: 153) argue, for instance, that 'The segregation that gated communities represent is intentionally economic' and this should alert us to the probably modest economic spillovers created by the emergence of gated communities in any municipal context. Indeed Blakely and Snyder (1997) argue that gated communities are not very good at producing public goods, while the underuse of common facilities is suggestive of the value of such residences not as clubs but purely as signifiers of social status (Caldeira, 2000). It is at this point that international trade theory alerts us to the effects of gated communities being analogous to those of trade and investment 'diversion', whereby there is the potential for expensive and inefficient provision of services substituting for those that would otherwise be provided by

municipal government. There is a case therefore for believing that the impact of gated communities on the fiscal position of local government is on balance likely to be negative since ‘In many cities and towns, the wealthy have in effect withdrawn their dollars from the support for public spaces and institutions’ (Reich quoted in McKenzie, 1994: 23). However, if the economic rationale represented by gated communities is one of the preservation of property values, this has ambiguous implications since it can be argued that gated communities make positive contributions to the local tax base (Le Goix, 2005). Here the impacts of gated communities reverberate differently at different geographical scales, with Le Goix (2005: 323) suggesting that ‘local governments usually favour the development of this form of land use to pay for the cost of urban sprawl, while indeed producing social diseconomies for the whole metropolitan area’.

A second set of wider impacts of gated communities can be considered in terms of social interaction and segregation. Indeed, most literature that discusses gated communities and segregation links them with social segregation². Several authors highlight the broader significance of gated communities to societies and local government when insisting that the phenomenon of gated communities is cultural (Webster, 2002). Blakely and Snyder (1997: vii), for example, argue that ‘Gated communities are not merely another form of residential settlement. They are part of a deeper social transformation’. In this respect it is clear that gated communities signal a particular cultural and social transformation. Gated communities embody a ‘culture that links ownership of private property with freedom, individuality, and autonomy rather than with responsibility to the surrounding community’ (McKenzie, 1994: 25) and as such they can be regarded as further evidence of the mutation or refinement of the suburban ideology (Fishman, 1989; Teaford, 1997). However, their contribution to the social complexion and ideology of suburbia is somewhat ambiguous and potentially rather different in different national settings.

‘Gated communities have created a new housing option for some of us, but they have also created a new societal dilemma for all of us. The purpose of gates and walls is to limit social contact, and reduced social contact may weaken the ties that form the social contract’ (Blakely and Snyder, 1997: 137). One irony here is that ‘The withdrawal from the city’s public life and from the use of its public spaces is seen as a privilege only by those whose participation in it is taken for granted and who can dream of creating better and more exclusive universes’ (Caldeira, 2000: 289). The urban fragmentation with which they are associated is not necessarily or straightforwardly associated with social segregation. The impacts of gated communities on social segregation at the intra and inter-municipality scale are likely to be different in different national contexts. On the one hand, gated communities appear likely not to increase intra-municipality social disparities but to reinforce the relatively homogenous white middle class complexion of many U.S. suburbs and hence levels of social segregation at the inter-municipality scale. On the other hand, gated communities have increased social segregation at the intra-municipal scale in Latin American suburbs, with poor and rich neighbourhoods close to each other, but divided by walls, while at the same time contributing to something of a homogenisation of socio-economic levels, interests, and values at the inter-municipal scale (Roitman, 2008).

Finally, gated communities are argued to sharpen the focus on important issues of ‘private versus public rights, and responsibilities and the practice of community’ (Blakely and Snyder, 1997: vii). The problem is that the collective interests, or club good properties of the gated

communities significantly shift the balance that has traditionally held sway in community building. In gated communities, 'a residents' responsibilities to the "community" can be satisfied by meeting one's economic obligations. ... But cities, states and nations have vast networks of public and private threads that tie citizens together and make them interdependent. We are linked ... in ways that encourage or compel us to be responsible to, and for, each other. These responsibilities extend far beyond maintaining property values and conformity' (McKenzie, 194: 148-149) and we might add beyond the territorial boundaries of any particular gated community. The common interests or values and the tightly defined legal basis of these communities belies what Doreen Massey (1994) would regard as a relational sense of place and an associated ethical responsibility whereby our attachment to territorially bounded community need not, and indeed ought not, be at the expense of responsibilities of care to other communities near and far. As Blakely and Snyder (1997: 173) argue 'On the level of the individual household, gating is a rational choice. But from the perspective of the city, the region, or the nation, gating does nothing to address the cause of the problems that it is a response to'.

We can go further with McKenzie to note how 'This form of private government is strikingly different from that of cities. In a variety of ways, these private governments are illiberal and undemocratic. Most significantly, boards of governors operate outside constitutional restrictions because the law views them as business entities rather than governments' (McKenzie, 1994: 21). And yet, of course, even though formally recognised as private corporate entities they themselves are no respecters of legal boundaries – engaging in political behaviour and wielding increasing political power in the public governmental sphere they have in many respects seceded from. If gated communities represent privatisation it is a more fundamental form than we usually associate with the word, since in advanced economies such as the U.S. no conscious collective decision has been made to privatise by way of gated communities. This form of privatisation has occurred in a context of public inaction to the extent that within the emerging mass politics centred on gated communities public government itself is seen as a variable (McKenzie, 1994) and yet, as Pirez (2002: 155) notes, 'each private development is seen as a "city", which hides the fact that its existence is only possible within the city that provides it with the means of existence'. In other national contexts, as we will see in the case of Pilar, the form of privatisation represented by gated communities has been led by the private sector but has been actively enabled by laws and urban planning.

2. 3. The Latin American city

So far we have spoken of some of the generalities of the nature and wider impacts of gated communities. However, it is as well to remember that the growth of gated communities and their generative impacts on patterns of urbanisation and suburbanisation are context specific. Borsdorf, Hidalgo and Sánchez have quoted Vidal Koppmann and Dietrich's description of Buenos Aires in translation suggesting that it could apply to the Latin American city in general:

'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' (Borsdorf, Hidalgo and Sánchez, 2007: 370: their translation).

Such descriptions are reminiscent of depictions of the post-modern urban fabric of Los Angeles (Dear and Flusty, 1998) but it would be wrong to regard these patterns of fragmentation as equivalents.

To begin with, the first and major general contrast to be drawn between U.S. and Latin America is with regard to the socio-economic complexion of the suburbs. Notwithstanding the historic and contemporary diversity of U.S. suburbs which has been recognised, the general affluence of U.S. suburbs contrasts starkly with those in Latin America which are populated mainly by lower social classes. This pattern in the metropolitan periphery of Latin America has shifted somewhat in the last 20 years as middle and upper class populations have moved to the suburbs for a variety of reasons. This has created a situation in which poor and rich families live in close proximity (Roitman, 2008; Sabatini and Cáceres, 2004).

Speaking to the cases of Santiago de Chile and Valparaiso, Borsdorf, Hidalgo and Sánchez (2007: 367) identify a succession of different development processes leading to a situation where ‘The new structure of the urban fabric has overwhelmed the former structure where the “rich” and the “poor city” were clearly separated’. Similarly, and also in relation to Santiago de Chile, Sabatini and Cáceres argue that the pattern of large spatial scale segregation in Latin America is changing towards a process of segregation in a lower but more intense geographical scale: ‘The multiplication of gated communities that is taking place in Chilean cities is equivalent to a diminishing of residential segregation in a large spatial scale and, simultaneously, to an intensification of segregation in a reduced spatial scale. This reduction of the segregation scale takes place when gated communities are built in the low-income periphery’ (Sabatini and Cáceres, 2004: 11, our translation). However, it is relevant to emphasise that Latin American cities have been characterised by social segregation since their creation by the Spanish conquerors yet what it is new now is the appearance of gated communities as symbols of this process of segregation (Roitman and Giglio, 2009).

In contrast to the U.S., gated communities have been a predominantly urban phenomenon in Latin America. Nevertheless they play an important part in the re-shaping of the suburbs of Latin American cities as Caldeira (2000: 213) describes: ‘Superimposed on the center-periphery pattern, the recent transformations are generating spaces in which different social groups are again closer to one another but are separated by walls and technologies of security and they tend not to circulate or interact in common areas’. Indeed it may be true to say that the presence of gated communities in suburban Latin America is both more conspicuous and more profound because of their superimposition upon some of the poorest populations within metropolitan areas. Thuillier identifies:

‘upper class enclaves, requiring huge areas of land, spring up at the fringes of the metropolis, which in Buenos Aires do not consist of “edge cities” but of slums concentrating the poorest and more recent immigrants in town, coming from the most under-developed provinces of the country. Therefore a striking contrast appears at the outskirts of the Metropolitan area’ (Thuillier, 2005: 255-256).

As such ‘the two extremes of the social spectrum in Argentina coexist through the settlement of gated communities amongst this desolate suburban landscape’ (Ibid: 263).

A recent survey of studies of urban sprawl in Latin America and Europe situated gated communities as part of successive processes of suburbanisation, periurbanisation and post-suburbanisation (Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2008). However, the connection of gated communities to processes of suburbanisation and post-suburbanisation in Latin America can usefully be specified further in terms of features that set Latin American municipalities apart from their U.S. counterparts.

First, in a fashion not too dissimilar to that in the U.S., metropolitan peripheries have been concerned to attract gated communities. In order 'to deal with their lagging economy and bring new investment, suburban municipalities relied on their planning autonomy to foster the development of gated communities' (Libertun de Duren, 2007: 607). These sorts of developments have superficial generic similarities with those in the U.S., but are probably best thought of as representing a 'temporal disparity' – a difference in the phasing of similar patterns and processes of urbanisation in different countries - which makes direct comparison problematic (Phelps, et al., 2006). Instead, following Dick and Rimmer's discussion of East Asian city-regions, it may be best to depict Latin American cities as passing through a number of phases of divergence from and convergence on U.S. patterns of urbanisation. Interestingly, one such element of convergence taking place simultaneously against other divergent developments is the emergence of what Pirez (2002: 157) terms 'a "one dimensional city": use value becomes subordinated to exchange value' in the development of land which is reminiscent of the growth machine (Molotch, 1976) logic that drove the post-war mass suburbanisation in the U.S.

Second, one specificity of the Latin American, and indeed transition economies in comparison to developed economies comes in the contrast in the resources and technical capacities of municipal governments and the newly created private governments of gated communities. Historically, the public sector was heavily involved in the suburbanisation process in Latin America and in this sense the state was intimately involved in producing the particular socio-economic complexion of these areas, and indeed some of the ongoing burdens of suburban municipalities in trying to rectify poor levels of infrastructure and services. More recently, we see the suburbanisation process beginning to be led by private planning activities associated with gated communities (Pirez, 2002), not least since the human resources devoted to forward planning, development control and enforcement in municipalities remains limited, and certainly behind that in most developed countries. The situation is not improved by the lack of regulatory framework on which municipalities can draw. According to Pirez (2002: 155), '...the metropolitan area becomes a space for operations seeking, largely or almost exclusively, private economic gain' because there are no clear or consistent regulations on land use.

Third, the superimposition of gated communities upon outer suburban districts appears to have curtailed some of the possibilities for grass-roots political movements to shape a viable politics centred on issues of collective consumption and the 'retrofit' of amenities and infrastructure which has been apparent in some prominent instances (Phelps et al. 2006; Phelps and Roitman, 2009). Caldeira (200: 235) notes how

'At the same time that the working classes became important political actors, organizing social movements and demanding their rights and better living conditions, and at the same time that the infrastructure of the periphery indeed improved significantly, their incomes dropped, and their capacity to become property owners through autoconstruction was reduced'.

The privatisation embodied in these gated communities has also coincided with what Pirez (2002) describes as a triple fragmentation in the management of public services, making it extremely difficult for a politics of retrofit to leverage upon service improvements.

Taking these specificities into account, there are, as Webster notes, different challenges posed by the growth of gated communities in different settings. Issues of secession are perhaps most pressing in the U.S. The balancing of municipal revenues with the costs of gated communities in Europe. However, 'In Asia, South America, and Africa, the issue is one of how to let the market provide the professional middle classes with the urban services they aspire to without critically fragmenting highly unequal cities' (Webster, 2002: 400). Borsdorf, Hidalgo and Sánchez (2007: 377) go further to argue that 'Exclusion itself may be regarded as the central structuring force' emerging in Latin American cities in some contrast to the U.S. and Europe, in addition to status and social distinction (Caldeira, 2001; Roitman, 2003).

3. The Dual Suburb: The Open City Of Pilar And Its Closed Communities

Pilar lies 58 kilometres to the north west of the centre of Buenos Aires in the third ring of municipalities within the Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires. It is vast by European municipal standards, covering some 383 square kilometres³. The predominant activity is still agriculture, with 57% of its land used for this (Barsky and Vio, 2007). However, there is an increasing residential use due to the expansion of its population. It is one of the third ring municipalities with highest population growth rate: 55% in the period 1960-70, 77% in 1970-80, 54% in 1980-91 and 78% in 1991-2001 (Pirez, 2002; and INDEC website). At the last census in 2001 it had a population of 232,463 that was expected to grow to 274,000 by 2007 (INDEC website)⁴.

The city and district of Pilar have existed since the 19th Century centred historically around the main square –*Plaza 12 de Octubre*-. Following the pattern of Latin American cities this historic core has been overlain by self-constructed buildings until recently. Libertun de Duren (2007) reports that in the 1980s a third of houses in the municipality was of substandard condition with two-thirds of houses lacking piped water. By 2006, 25% of the population still had unmet basic needs in Pilar but yet coexisted with over one hundred gated communities (Vidal-Koppmann, 2007). As the largest municipal concentration of gated communities in Argentina, now sitting alongside both the existing middle and lower class population and the new poor neighbourhoods, it provides an extreme exemplification of the patterns of what has come to be regarded as something of a distinct phase of urbanisation of the Latin American city albeit a phase that has its roots in earlier times.

As the phenomenon of gated communities is itself diverse and has gathered momentum it has prompted typologies of these developments, including for the Argentinean case⁵. There are six types of gated communities in Argentina: 1) “*clubes de campo*”; 2) “closed neighbourhoods”; 3) “garden-towers”; 4) “farm-clubs”; 5) “nautical-clubs”, and 6) “mega-projects”. In 2001 a new type called “condominium” was created. By the same token, different definitions of gated communities make it extremely problematic to provide accurate comparable time series figures on the numbers of such communities (Roitman, 2004 and 2008). Here we use a variety of sources to provide some very general impression of the growth of gated communities in Pilar, though individual figures cannot be regarded as comparable. The number of gated communities

rose from 20 in 1980s, to 30 in 1991, to 115 in 2001 (Libertun de Duren, 2007). The most recent occasional publication '*Guía de Countries, Barrios Privados y Chacras*' puts the figure at 98 in 2005 (Publicountry, 2005). While Vidal Koppmann (2007) mentioned there were 117 in 2006, occupying 54 kilometres square (Barsky and Vio, 2007). Such large numbers also translate into a significant part of the land area of the municipality being given over to gated communities with 59% of land taken up by agricultural activities, 17% by residential development in gated communities, 12% by residential development in 'open neighbourhoods', 10% by empty land and 2.6% by industrial uses (Barsky and Vio, 2007).

The history of gated communities in Pilar begins with the creation of the *Tortugas Country Club* in 1932 as part of *Las Tortugas Polo Club* (Verdecchia, 1995; Svampa, 2001; Clichevsky, 2002). These 'country clubs' were related to the sports activities of elite groups who lived in Buenos Aires with houses used only during weekends. Later in the 1970s, this type of residential development expanded as people living in the city wanted to have larger houses for the weekend, with important sport infrastructure and in a green environment. From the late 1990s onwards they became mainly used as permanent residences as families could not longer afford having two houses –one in Pilar and one in Buenos Aires. Thus the original growth of Pilar as a location for 'country clubs' was limited, exclusive and based on the environmental quality of the area as one interviewee described:

'It had been chosen by the people, because of its landscape beauty. All 'country-clubs', which were already old, were in Pilar and you had a very high class group of population. Nobody did that, it was done by nature or the charm of the place. Some old residents told me that Pilar had always been used as a high place for people with asthma or breathing problems. 'Country-clubs' were already there. You can't say: accessibility because at that time there was no motorway. There was only Route 8. So one was looking for something that was different from other places ... This was the beginning of Pilar' (President, Grupo Farallón, 20 April 2009).

However, the major growth of gated communities in the metropolitan periphery took place from the 1990s onwards. Pilar attracted many of these gated communities and with them a major increase in population. However growth in this phase was based not on the environmental quality that had attracted previous gated community developments, but on a major latent demand for this style of living, coupled with increased accessibility from the periphery to Buenos Aires city centre as a result of the construction of the *Panamericana* highway⁶. Thus, according to one interviewee:

'I think Pilar grew not because it promoted growth but because it was 'invaded' by a need that was created in another place. For instance, Capital Federal: people who wanted to go outside Capital and move to a place more in contact with nature, healthier for their children. This was combined with the possibility that the new *Panamericana* brought. [Before] It was unthinkable that you would live 60 km away from Capital and you would commute everyday. The motorway made that possible' (Representative, Chamber of Business, Pilar Industrial Park, 7 April 2009).

The 'flexibility' of the planning system in Pilar, along with the under-resourced nature of local government, was also an important factor:

‘the legislation was very relaxed, that made it easier for investments to come here. But that created some problems because there are about 70% of these developments which are located in flooded lands. The investor takes advantage of the cheap land and does some hydraulic works to comply with the law and then sells it even if not all legal issues are clear. Today we have environmental problems... They can be sorted out, but you have to control them. And the government doesn’t have the capacity in terms of number of people and skilled people to do this. Now the municipality is improving and getting skilled people who are able to take decisions in all the managerial positions’ (Director of Planning, Municipality of Pilar, 7 April 2009).

In general, the growth of these gated communities in this more recent period was linked to the search for an explicitly suburban way of life, but also with a degree of social differentiation. *Barrios Privados* (also called ‘*barrios cerrados*’) – closed neighbourhoods - represented a more affordable version of the ‘*country clubs*’. This type of gated community was developed since the 1990s. Sport infrastructure is not as significant as in ‘*country clubs*’, but they also usually have tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a football pitch, in addition to a club-house for social events. Security is the most valued service. They are mainly used for permanent settlement. *Clubes de Chacras* are a newer type, located in less dense areas where plots are larger and it is possible to do more ‘rural’ activities. ‘*Marinas*’ or ‘*nautical countries*’ are similar to ‘country clubs’ but they have been developed recently and are connected specifically with water sports. There are no ‘*garden-towers*’ in Pilar because this type is more commonly found in inner city areas. These are high rise buildings with security and sport infrastructure.

Further there were a smaller number of ‘*mega-projects*’ or master planned communities which included several gated communities – each with its own secured access entrance - and a wider range of amenities including semi-public spaces, shops, schools, health practices, and sometimes university campuses. The most notable of these is *Nordelta* in Tigre, a neighbouring municipality, although *Pilar del Este* and *Estancias de Pilar* are also considered to be this type.

The newest type of gated communities is called ‘*condominium*’. It was developed after 2001 as a consequence of the economic and institutional crisis in Argentina to provide a more affordable housing option. They are two or three-storied buildings with security and usually not a significant sport infrastructure for common use. They occupy smaller areas than the other types and are likely to be, along with ‘*barrios privados*’, the most developed type in Pilar over the last eight years.

According to some observers, the ‘collapse’ of the *Panamericana* highway due to increased traffic flows heralds the end of the ‘boom’ in gated community development in Pilar. However, the figures for land use reported earlier indicate that the vast majority of land in Pilar is under agricultural use and presumably open to conversion to residential use. As one interviewee described: ‘You have the feeling that Pilar exploded and all has been developed but if you see it from the air, you see the in fact 70% of the land is agriculture land. There is still a lot, lot, lot to be developed’ (CBRE consultant, 20 April 2009). Moreover, only a modest proportion of many of the largest gated community developments has to date been built-out. The developer of a large gated community indicated that as little as 30% of the planned development had to date been completed (Developer, *Estancias del Pilar*, 15 April 2009).

The sorts of discontinuities in the extent, character and causes of the gated community phenomenon and associated population changes noted above actually conceal some important continuities. There is no national law on gated communities in Argentina. Some projects have been created under the figure of the national law 13.512 of Horizontal Property of 1948. This law was originally created to regulate high-rise buildings specifying the difference of individual property from common property. It states that owners of flats are exclusive owners of their flats and co-owners of the land and common spaces within the building. When this law is applied to '*clubes de campo*', the streets and common areas are treated as condominium property. This law also regulates maintenance fees.

Due to the growth of gated communities in Buenos Aires, other legal instruments were created later. The provincial decree 8912/77 was written regulating land use in the Province of Buenos Aires in 1977. It was the first legal instrument that considered the legal character of gated communities. It establishes the minimum plot size, maximum number of houses in each development and gives guidelines for the provision of services and infrastructure. It also states that municipalities are responsible for regulating land use. By the end of the 1990s this province passed more legislation (decrees and resolutions) on gated communities to overcome the legal void at the national level. However, many projects are still considered under the figure established by the National Law 13.512. During the 1990s, many municipalities also passed by-laws to legislate on this topic. Pilar was one of the pioneers in a sense with the by-laws 142/94, 148/94, 70/95 and later 2840/05.

Within this legislative context, municipalities are left to create their own regulatory planning and strategic stances toward gated community developments which can vary quite markedly within the Buenos Aires metropolitan region. As already stated, Pilar is one of the few municipalities with by-laws regulating gated communities although there is some suggestion that it has nevertheless lacked a clear and consistent approach to dealing with gated community developments in comparison with other municipalities (Libertun de Duren, 2007). In particular there has been no long-term strategy to deal with or leverage maximum benefit from these developments (Ibid). One of our interviewees described what he saw as 'the absence of the state as planner and regulator because what was not present in Pilar was the making of the city. So anyone came and put up barbed wire and build something' (Consultant, CBRE, 20 April 2009). More charitably this reflects the extreme commercial pressure that developers feel they face to exploit opportunities at relevant points in what has been a very unstable national economic cycle (Developer, Estancias del Pilar, 15 April 2009), which in turn has combined with the expedient planning approach of the past. There is something of an irony here since wealthy sections of society in Argentina have been participants in and beneficiaries of an informal market (Secretary of Municipalities, National Government, 8 April 2009) so that the municipality's attempt to tighten its planning approach coupled with an increasingly outdated local plan (not revised since 1985) have actually created uncertainty in the minds of developers, with the development of gated communities tail off in recent years (Real Estate Agent, 15 April; Developer, *Estancias del Pilar*, 15 April, 2009).

4. The Economic Impacts Of Gated Communities In Pilar

The vast majority of foreign direct investment into Pilar from the 1990s onward has been associated with residential real estate rather than other activities such as industry, service or commercial activities or indeed infrastructure and utility services (Director of Planning, Municipality of Pilar, 7 April 2009). For some observers, the gated communities that embody the bulk of this real estate investment have brought significant benefits to the local population in Pilar:

‘doubtless, the big [gated community] developments...have brought a lot of improvements and people who chose to live here now find that there are many services and infrastructure, like sewage, gas, internet, that the original residents of Pilar did not have. Each new development has several advantages because they are modern projects’ (Manager, *Fundación por Pilar*, 15 April 2009⁷).

However, this can be contested since improvements in infrastructure have taken place only in the areas where gated communities are located, which are not the poor areas. For instance, Manuel Alberti, one of the poorest localities in Pilar with 40% of population under poverty and 20% with extreme poverty condition, does not have paved streets, nor water, sewage and sanitation supplies. There have been improvements for the population living there, but these are more related to charitable activities carried out there. As the local priest comments:

‘There were no schools in the area 20 years ago, neither health emergency surgeries nor parishes. Now the local church runs several centres for the assistance of the population... these educational and social works are developed with the help of gated communities residents. The development of gated communities has created job opportunities for local people to have more decent lives’ (Priest, Manuel Alberti, 11 May 2009)⁸.

Yet, the suspicion remains that the ‘planning gain’ from these large developments has been modest. Developers are obliged to give a proportion of their land back to the municipality as planning gain, but there has been little control over this process with parcels of land being given in return for development which are some distance from the development, in a poor location or areas liable to flooding. Thus improvements that have been made are piecemeal and have yet to knit Pilar together in terms of infrastructure like roads, water supply and service provision, and may ostensibly be to serve the gated communities themselves in the form of access roads and the like. Indeed, only 13% of the roads of Pilar are paved (CIPPEC, 2005).

Even in the more mature political and municipal institutional context of developed nations such as the U.S. and U.K. bargaining with investors for planning gain, although now accepted as legitimate, is a comparatively recent phenomenon which as recently as thirty years ago was limited in its scale and scope and unsophisticated in approach. Not surprisingly in the context of relatively small and poorly resourced municipal bureaucracies in Argentina, bargaining for planning gain has been limited and mired in perceptions of corruption. As one local official in Pilar speaking to a national newspaper indicated:

‘Of course we did not ask them [the investors] for a bribe, but we did ask them to collaborate with the people. ... Pilar del Este [a new gated community] is paving 1.5 kilometers in a street, which used to be in terrible shape. That is the mother idea: If the

Municipality cannot, let the private sector give us a hand' (quoted in Libertun de Duren, 2007: 620).

At first glance the growth of gated communities and population in Pilar appear to have been accompanied by other developments that might be considered evidence of the urbanisation of the suburb. These include an industrial park, office blocks, hotels, cinemas, shopping centres and university campuses, along the *Panamericana* highway. Doubtless there are some causal connections between the growth of gated communities and these other elements in their spatial arrangement but the fuller sense of how they knit-together the community remains unclear.

Although Pilar has a number of industrial areas, its main industrial park is by far the most important employment and economic activity zone in the municipality. Covering 920 hectares it is home to around 180 companies and 12,000 staff (Representative, Chamber of Business, Pilar Industrial Park, 7 April 2009). And contributes to 89% of the economic structure of Pilar in comparison to 6% for commerce and 5% for services (Barsky and Vio, 2007). It was located in Pilar as a consequence of a private developer who foresaw the potential of the area, and supported by legislation that encouraged the creation of industrial parks 50 kilometres or more away from Buenos Aires.

The industrial park was actually developed in 1978 prior to the recent growth of gated communities but does provide job opportunities to the same new migrant populations as the existing gated communities. Industries located in this park get tax exemptions if they hire local population. As a representative of the Chamber of Business from the Industrial Park described:

'Pilar 60 or 70 years ago had one type of population, today there is a different population. Some have been attracted by the industrial park or the new residential developments that offer jobs in the construction industry, gardening or cleaning houses. So this encourages these people called *'trabajadores golondrinas'* [swallow workers] to locate in these centres as they know they will find jobs' (Representative, Chamber of Business, Pilar Industrial Park, 7 April 2009).

In addition to this, the increasing capital and knowledge intensity of some of the enterprises on the park now also offers important employment opportunities to skilled and professional workers from the gated communities.

Pilar has become home to several office developments and new Sheraton and Howard Johnson Hotels along the *Panamericana* highway. They include the offices of *Grupo Farallón* - one of the major gated community developers active in Pilar and elsewhere in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Region. However taken in the round, these developments are modest in scale and certainly are not regarded as a separate office submarket within the metropolitan sphere by commercial property brokers because big companies want to stay in Buenos Aires and not in the periphery (Consultant, CBRE, 20 April 2009). Pilar also has a major new out-of-town shopping and entertainment centre located at *'Kilómetro 50'*, which includes two shopping centres, hypermarket, and cinema complex. Another shopping centre is being built at *'Kilómetro 34'*. As such, in formal employment terms it would be very misleading to regard somewhere like Pilar as an edge city in terms of the scale of tertiary activity located there.

The arrival of this new population to Pilar has created a new demand for bilingual private schools in the area. However, this was a mutually reinforcing process because the new population demanded new schools and the new schools attracted more people:

‘One of the reasons why Pilar has so many gated communities is that once they started developing, new bilingual and full-day attendance schools came. There were already some private schools in Pilar from the 1970s. Having bilingual schools was good for developers who wanted to attract a good public. As people came to live here, more schools were created and there are now about 90 bilingual schools in Pilar. These are primary and secondary schools. I think it is the only municipality with so many bilingual schools’ (Real Estate agent, Haydée Burgueño & Asoc., 15 April 2009).

There are also two private universities and a private university hospital located in Pilar: ‘Pilar is the municipality where there is more relocalisation of services from Buenos Aires: The Universidad del Salvador, the Universidad Austral, and the Austral Hospital. You see how it is a place chosen for some services... These universities are still here in the centre, but they are now also located there to serve those high income groups’ (Advisor, Secretary of Municipalities, National Government, 8 April 2009).

However, the physical separation of these various new elements contributes to a sense of fragmentation in the municipal space. This is nowhere more apparent than in the case of the major shopping centre at *Kilómetro 50*. The story of how the location of this major service centre occurred is revealing:

‘In 1980 or 1982, I went to a one-day seminar. ... I listened to all the meetings the whole day. All NyCS –*nacidos y criados*- were there of course. The discussion was that Jumbo, and Disco –supermarkets- wanted to go to Pilar. What should I do? I can’t tell them not to go to Pilar. The NyCs were saying: “... we won’t accept that these people – supermarkets - come here”. So at the end of the meeting the mayor said to the NyCs: ‘okay, I accept what you say, but what should I say to the people that want to come here to put a supermarket? Don’t you think that this is ridiculous?’ So the NyCs said: ‘okay, we will make it possible for them to locate in the area between [Route] 234 and the *Panamericana* [which later became known as ‘*Kilómetro 50*’]. This was a low-lying area that was flooded every time it rained. So all [NyCs] were laughing saying ‘*mira como los jorobamos*’ [‘look how we bug them’]. So I said to them: ‘... remember that you have just founded the new commercial centre of Pilar’. All of them laughed and said: ‘they will be in canoes’ and of course today ... they are desperate because ‘*Kilómetro 50*’ was born because of their mistake’ (President, Grupo Farallón, 20 April 2009).

Here, it appears that different municipal stances have resulted in different patterns of incorporating gated communities into their suburban fabrics. Pilar’s myriad scattered communities compare less favourably to tightly clustered development in San Isidro and a sector of gated communities that has the potential to be integrated into public infrastructure networks such as the road system in Tigre⁹ (Libertun de Duren, 2007).

Still it might be objected that, on the face of it, the scale of development activity – gated residential complexes, offices and hotel developments and shopping centres – ought to confer financial benefits on the municipality and an improvement in its fiscal capacity:

‘I think there is no debate about the capacity of municipal governments of getting tax revenues. Sometimes they think that because those neighbourhoods [GC] build their own infrastructure, then they shouldn’t pay taxes that would benefit the whole community. But the reality is that those neighbourhoods use public space, fragment urban fabric, don’t make possible for other people to go through some places as shortcuts, and make security conditions of the rest worse. So there are many reasons why there should be different criteria for taxation and they should pay more’ (Secretary of Municipalities, National Government, 8 April 2009).

Yet studies indicate that the tax position of Pilar has not improved noticeably with the vast growth of gated communities and any associated developments (Goytia, 2005). Some explanation for this comes from the fact that current provincial law allows for between 10 and 15 per cent of real estate tax to go to municipalities. As a result local government officials do not see this as a major source of income, and may be little inclined to maximise contributions. Doubtless, there is balancing act here for the municipality as has been the case with the industrial park.

‘The law to promoting industrial location here was very important because this park was created under that law. There was nothing here. So the by-law by the municipality was related to that provincial law. It promoted industry location waiving municipal taxes for some time. Now they say: the park is completed, so we don’t need to promote this. People will come anyway. So we are not going to give tax free benefits. They need to pay the taxes and so we will have more money to do the things we need to do’ (Representative, Chamber of Business, Pilar Industrial Park, 7 April 2009).

Instead, it is the consumption patterns of new affluent residents and the employment opportunities that gated communities offer that are seen by local government officials as the major economic benefits locally (Libertun de Duren, 2007). One interviewee from the national representative organisation of gated communities in Argentina suggested that ‘each house provides directly 2.5 new jobs, in addition to all services that could be related to that, like supermarket, newspaper delivery person, cinema, etc’ (Manager, Argentinean Association of Gated Communities, 8 April 2009). Thus, Libertun De Duren (2007, citing Thuiller, 2001) notes how officials in Pilar believed gated communities offered employment for around 30,000 people. These jobs come at a price in that the costs of providing infrastructure and services to these new, often informal, settlements remain the responsibility of the municipality. As one interviewee explained:

‘there has been a huge growth of the population and then there is not enough infrastructure and services and the government has to attend to a huge demand for all sorts of services. I am always personally impressed by the variety of problems they have to attend to: the industrial park has one problem, but also there is the person who is jobless, or needs a school for his/her children, or a free pass for public transport. Then you have the ‘country’, which has a different socio-economic level and has different needs and also problems but is demanding security in the access road to the country’ (Representative, Chamber of Business, Pilar Industrial Park, 7 April 2009).

This last quotation neatly captures some of the divergent needs and expectations in the dual suburb of Pilar which we consider further in the next section.

5. Divisions In Community And Society In Pilar

The phenomenal population growth in Pilar – in which gated communities have been the key dynamic directly and indirectly – have also thrown up some new and significant societal divisions which in turn are suggestive of how the impact of gated communities on society might be judged. As one interviewee summarised,

‘The city of Pilar has one of the most polarised social and urban structures. The impact of the development of gated communities and a process of economic growth based on services created a segregated urban fabric and polarised social structure and also the worsening of the historic urban centre’ (Secretary of Municipalities, National Government, 8 April 2009).

The society, economy and polity emerging in Pilar as a result of this new round of investment raises important questions regarding the contribution that gated communities make, not least because ‘Actually defining *who* the deserving members of the local polity are determines the perceptions of the benefits gated communities provide’ (Libertun de Duren, 2007: 622).

The job opportunities generated by gated communities meant that people from other areas moved to Pilar and therefore informality and poverty grew alongside the expansion of gated communities even when it was not as visible as the latter:

‘Pilar is known in the surroundings and in the world for the gated communities. But once that you see deeper, there are many asymmetries. Because there is no public policy for healing these differences and heterogeneities... There are many social differences. If you ask me how many Pilars? There are many Pilars. You have the Pilar of *Kilómetro 50*, where you have the Sheraton and the Village [cinema]. That looks like the first world... [But] The social structure of Pilar is mainly of middle and lower middle class. We are talking about the ‘open’ fabric’ (Director of Planning, Municipality of Pilar, 7 April 2009).

As another interviewee went on to elaborate of the sorts of inequalities that have recently become apparent in the metropolitan peripheries in Latin America: ‘Unfortunately Pilar has two Pilars and this is really noticeable. There is a blossoming place where you can live very comfortable and then there is another Pilar which is the 8th poorest localities of the province’ (Manager, *Fundación por Pilar*, 15 April 2009). In actual fact, the picture is a little more complicated than this suggests. There are some potentially curious divisions and co-existences developing in Pilar. Residents are now informally divided into NyCS (*nacidos y criados* – born and bred) and *Venidos y Quedados* –came and stayed- or Non-NyCS. Furthermore, it seems – although it is not recognised- there are two types of Non-NyCS: the visible ones who have moved to Pilar to live in gated communities and the invisible ones, who have moved to Pilar to find job opportunities either in the industrial park or in the gated communities.

This last group consists of many people with unmet basic needs, which has turned Pilar into a poor district with high infant mortality (19 ‰), illiteracy (2%) and school drop-out (93% of children in school age attend primary school and only 50% attend secondary school) and lack of basic services. Twenty five per cent of the population of Pilar has unmet basic needs in 2001 (CIPPEC, 2005). In the same year, 84% of total households living in Pilar did not have sewage,

76% did not have water supply, 60% did not have gas supply, 7% did not have electricity, 24% lived in a neighbourhood with no street lighting and no paved streets (45%) or public transport infrastructure (27%) (Vidal-Koppmann, 2007). The relative numbers of households living with unmet basic needs in Pilar decreased from 1991 to 2001, but in absolute numbers this group grew from 7,800 to 12,100 in that period (CIPPEC, 2005).

Thus, the growth of 'closed' communities in the form of gated residential developments exists alongside a significant and persistent burden of unmet basic needs that falls upon the municipal government of the 'open' city. As a local political representative describes it

'We, as a municipality, need to solve the needs of people who came to Pilar looking for a job and unfortunately didn't get it. Or people who lived here before the growth of Pilar and had already problems of getting in the job market because they don't have training or skills... Unfortunately, I see that some times we are running behind events: gated communities came, people from different social groups settled here, and we were not ready for a fast response to people's needs' (Councillor, Municipality of Pilar, 17 April 2009).

According to census data, between 25% and 44% (according to the locality) of the population of Pilar were unemployed in 2001 (CIPPEC, 2005).

But it is interesting to note that the relatively modest elements of planning gain 'won' from developers along with any wider sense of social responsibility felt by developers and residents of gated communities have been focused on some of these poorer communities.

'In Pilar you have the extremes, you have wealth but you also have a lot of poverty. If you go to Derqui or to the 'back' of Pilar, you would be scared. I am putting tar-mac in some streets over there and building schools. And we are going to build a 1,000 housing units neighbourhood and you have to be brave to be around there. So what we should try to solve is that [social] difference. In this sense, people collaborate a lot to try to make this difference smaller. So today, more than paved streets we need corporate social responsibility to carry out projects' (President, Grupo Farallón, 20 April 2009)

If planning gain has been means of addressing some of the unmet basic needs in Pilar, then it has not always been won and the process of winning it has not always been transparent as an interviewee from the municipal government explained.

'this is not institutionalised. We are using here Corporate Social Responsibility. If something has a negative externality, the government can ask for compensation for the surrounding area. But this was not used in a clear or transparent way. It was more like: 'you have to pay me'. Now this is done in a transparent way and is translated into paved streets because we have a big deficiency here: only 20% of the road infrastructure is paved. This is working very well now' (Director of Planning Municipality of Pilar, 7 April 2009).

Moreover, in this picture, the original NyCs population now appear somewhat marginalised. As one interviewee described: 'There are two groups: the poor surrounding neighbourhoods, who ... just want to be treated well and they can survive – it is not much what they ask for!- and the *pueblo*, which are the NyCs [*nacidos y criados*], which is a group that is becoming smaller and

smaller, and in many cases they have opposed the growth of Pilar' (President, Grupo Farallón, 20 April 2009).

Civic bodies such as *Fundación por Pilar* have emerged in part as recognition of the very apparent socio-economic divides that exist in the municipality. The *Fundación* was created in 2000 and originally had broader aspirations in community building in conjunction with the municipality. This vision for Pilar promoted through the *Fundación por Pilar* with its strong links to the development community was a very different one to that centred on historic Pilar. As Thuillier (2005: 269) describes 'Insisting of the connection between gated communities and economic dynamism, the foundation does not hesitate to foresee for the area's future "Pilar Valley", a kind of Argentinian edge city, a subtle blend of high-tech corporations, gated housing developments and golf greens'. More recently, the *Fundación* has retreated somewhat from such broader visions for community building in Pilar in a more pragmatic narrowing of its aims to develop poverty reduction schemes in relation to access to health services and educational development.

These social divisions now also appear to coalesce around two distinct city visions that orient themselves to two distinct centres within the municipality. There remains the historic centre represented by the public Pilar Square which is used by NyCS and poor Non-NyCS but only very occasionally by affluent Non-NyCs when they need to do legal or bureaucratic activities, or go to the municipality. The second centre is the car-oriented shopping and entertainment complex of *Kilómetro 50*, used by Non-NyCs who live in gated communities. Here then, 'For the newer residents, the traditional centre of Pilar doesn't exist. It is now for other social groups' (Developer, *Estancias del Pilar*, 15 April 2009) while some middle class NyCs also use this second centre: 'We used to go for a stroll to the square, now we go to the shopping centres' (Representative, Chamber of Commerce, Pilar, 17 April 2009).

Discussing the contribution of gated communities and the industrial park to the 'open city', one representative from the municipal government of Pilar described how:

'They only provided job opportunities. The centre of Pilar hasn't improved and everybody wants to go to *Kilómetro 50*. Some commercial infrastructure is better. There are many restaurants now. But there are other areas where there is no improvement. There is a sort of competition between the two centres. If you go to *Kilómetro 50* on a Saturday night, it is crowded, while the centre of Pilar is completely deserted. People who live in the centre also go to *Kilómetro 50*' (Director of Planning Municipality of Pilar, 7 April 2009).

Moreover, the amenity value of an outer suburban area favoured for its environment is largely appropriated within closed communities rather than the open city. Public spaces in Pilar are poorly provided for and are often in poor condition. Although the municipality has plenty of green areas, they are mainly privately owned as one interviewee complained:

'Pilar is 60% green, but less than 10% is public. So we should expropriate land for people to have a much better life quality... Money is the first element of social differentiation in a city. The one who has a lot of money lives in the best land... So here you have a public space of certain quality for some groups and other for other groups (Director of Planning, Municipality of Pilar, 7 April 2009).

As we have explained, it is difficult to demonstrate directly the connections between the various new elements of Pilar – the accelerated growth of gated communities, the accretion of a shopping area and office development, hotels and industrial park. They contribute to the fragmented nature of Pilar’s urban fabric and this no doubt is due at least in part to the car-dependent nature of these developments. Some further measure of this is suggested by the way in which increased social distance and differentiation has become part of everyday life in Pilar - relationships between gated community residents and residents of the ‘open city’ are seen ‘in a bad way. It is the poor and the rich guys. It is a sort of exclusion. There are more security guards in gated communities than the police staff in Pilar’ (Director of Planning, Municipality of Pilar, 7 April, 2009).

6. Conclusion

In the course of this paper we have examined the contribution of one group of private sector interests in the urbanisation of suburbia in the Latin American setting, and particularly in the improvement of the urban condition of the ‘open city’. For some, the rise of these gated communities in peripheral areas where they were largely absent before is not a break from past patterns of urbanization in the Latin American city but rather a consequence of ongoing ‘social polarisation, ubiquitous urbanisation and loss of primacy of traditional urban cores’ (Libertun de Duren, 2007: 623). This is a highly schematic view of recent history of the periphery of Latin American cities and our research suggests that important discontinuities may indeed be apparent.

If the case of Pilar can be considered to give an insight into the contribution of gated communities to the urbanisation of suburbia then it is a contribution that seems likely to crystallise not soften social inequalities, segregation and spatial fragmentation at the municipal scale. Whilst there is evidence of the contributions that gated communities have made to piecemeal improvements in amenities, services and infrastructure, these do not appear to have contributed to the rounding-out and knitting together of communities at the municipal level. Instead, they appear to be contributing to something of a dualistic process of suburbanisation. Social polarisation has increased because both upper class and lower class groups have increased. The municipality has not been able to use planning ‘gain’ as a tool to contribute to the improvement of the ‘open city’ and there are stark differences between the ‘open’ and the ‘closed’ city represented by gated communities. Yet again the Pilar case is interesting in highlighting the need to examine carefully the changing dynamics within classes in the metropolitan periphery in light of some unusual cross class alignments.

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¹ Interviews were conducted in Spanish and translated by the authors.

² For an analysis of the literature on gated communities and social segregation, see Roitman (2008).

³ This is the current area of Pilar. In 1994, the provincial law 11.551 (20/10/94) modified the administrative borders of some municipalities of Buenos Aires Province and created Municipalidad de Malvinas Argentinas. Malvinas Argentinas annexed land that was formerly part of Pilar and the Municipality of General Sarmiento (Vidal-Koppmann, 2007).

⁴ INDEC –Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos-, Argentina, www.indec.gov.ar.

⁵ Typologies of gated communities have been developed for other contexts. Notably, Blakely and Snyder (2007) consider three types in the U.S.: lifestyle communities, prestige communities, and security zone communities.

⁶ *Panamericana*, officially called Northern Access, was formerly a National Route built in the 1970s.

⁷ *Fundación por Pilar* is an NGO that works mainly on health and education projects carried out in the poorest neighbourhoods of Pilar. It is privately funded by local families and companies and runs annual fundraising events.

⁸ Email communication.

⁹ San Isidro is an upper-class residential district in the north of Buenos Aires (first ring) and Tigre is a municipality located also in the north, which is now competing with Pilar in terms of gated community developments.