

Title	SOCIAL PRACTICES AND VIEWPOINTS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF URBAN SOCIAL GROUP SEGREGATION AND GATED COMMUNITIES
Keywords	Urban social group segregation; gated communities; social practices; viewpoints
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Paper no.	013

SOCIAL PRACTICES AND VIEWPOINTS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF URBAN SOCIAL GROUP SEGREGATION AND GATED COMMUNITIES¹

Abstract:

This paper seeks to discuss a conceptual framework for the analysis of urban social group segregation and gated communities. It sustains that social practices carried out by gated communities' residents and their viewpoints, understood as values, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, perceptions and knowledge, can serve as tools to examine the relationship between them and the social groups settled outside the gated communities.

First, the concepts of gated communities, urban social group segregation, social practices and viewpoints are defined. Then, a set of social practices is suggested as ideal types to be analysed, giving details of the criteria that encourage or discourage the isolation of gated communities' residents from the outside local communities. The proposed conceptual framework is applied to the examination of the viewpoints and social practices of the residents and outside neighbours of a gated community in the Metropolitan Area of Mendoza, Argentina. The paper is part of an ongoing research.

Introduction

There have been repetitive arguments in the literature on gated communities about an increasing process of segregation as a consequence of their expansion in cities worldwide. Many scholars (Blakely & Snyder, 1997; Castell, 1997; Caldeira, 2000; Svampa, 2001; Low, 2003; Campos & García, 2004; Sellés & Stambuk, 2004) have referred to this link of gated communities to segregation. According to them, gated communities encourage segregation due to their security devices that prevent penetration from non-residents.

However, there is a smaller group of scholars (Sabatini & Cáceres, 2004; Salcedo & Torres, 2004; Alvarez, 2005; Sabatini & Salcedo, 2005) who disagree with the argument that gated communities produce more segregation and say they could even foster integration. The argument is that since gated communities are located in

¹ The paper draws upon the main argument of the PhD thesis by the author: Roitman, Sonia, (2007), "Urban social group segregation: a gated community in Mendoza, Argentina", University of London, unpublished.

areas dwelled by poor households, this closer territorial proximity reduces the scale of segregation. Alvarez points out that gated communities' residents belong to homogeneous social groups with already closed social circles before moving to gated communities and therefore "already existing social and residential segregation facilitates the move to gated communities" (Alvarez, 2005: 11).

Bearing in mind these opposite arguments, the paper seeks to shed light on the process of segregation encouraged by gated communities' residents. It proposes a conceptual and methodological framework based on the main idea that the relationship between segregation and gated communities can be explained through the examination of the social practices and viewpoints of "insiders" and "outsiders".

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section reviews the key concepts of the framework: gated communities, segregation, social practices and viewpoints. The second section describes four models of social practices and viewpoints. The last section applies the proposed theoretical and methodological framework to the analysis of one of the proposed social practices, using data collected in a gated community located in Mendoza, Argentina.

1. Defining the concepts

The understanding of the relationship between gated communities and segregation requires building a framework that would clarify the meanings of the main concepts involved and the links between them. Moreover, a framework has to provide methodological suggestions on how these relationships can be applied to research on the subject. This paper proposes that the concepts of social practices and viewpoints can serve as tools to analyse gated communities in relation to living in gated communities. Four key concepts are thereby developed: gated communities, urban social group segregation, social practices and viewpoints.

Discussions continue about what is and is not a gated community: Is a *cul-de-sac* closed with a barrier a gated community? Is a neighbourhood with fences and security guards a gated community? Is a high-rise building a gated community? Is a social housing scheme closed by their residents to prevent crime a gated community? This paper argues that the concept of gated community includes physical and social components and goes on to define gated communities as closed urban residential schemes voluntarily dwelled by a homogeneous social group where public space has been privatised restricting access through the implementation of security devices. They are conceived as closed compounds from their inception, designed with the intention of providing security for their residents and prevent penetration by non-residents. These residential compounds possess high quality housing as well as services and amenities that can be used only by their residents. They have a private government that enforces internal rules concerning social behaviour and construction. They are mostly located in peripheral areas surrounded by neighbourhoods dwelled by lower-income groups.

Segregation is considered as one of the social consequences of the spread of gated communities. However, it is important to distinguish between two processes of segregation: segregation on a macro-scale and segregation on a micro-scale. The first process can be called urban social segregation and considers the city as the object of analysis, segregation being the result of the distribution in the space of different social groups. Structural drivers have more predominance than individuals' influences.

The second process is called urban social group segregation and refers to the separation of one social group (gated communities' residents in this case) from other social groups (the ones living in the surrounding outside areas) or the society as a whole on the basis of particular interests, needs and values resulting in the absence of social interaction between the two (or more) social groups. The social group that segregates itself or is being segregated is the object of study in this second case.

The third important concept to consider within this framework is the concept of social practices. These are regular, conscious and recognised actions carried out by social actors to satisfy their needs and interests. For the analysis of segregation, the focus is on the practices that imply social interaction between individuals or groups, and particularly between gated communities' residents and members of the outside surrounding neighbourhoods. Finally, the last concept that needs to be defined is viewpoints. They refer to the expressions of values, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, perceptions and knowledge held by social actors and can be positive or negative.

The relationship between living in gated communities and urban social group segregation can be analysed through the examination of the social practices and viewpoints of the gated communities' residents and the members of the local surrounding communities. The hypothesis proposed to explain this relationship is as follows: Social practices of gated communities' residents and outside local communities' members can lead to processes of segregation, which can be either an intended or an unintended consequence of social practices and viewpoints held by the social actors involved.

Segregation is intended when the process of separation of gated communities' residents from the "outsiders" is the result of the absence of social interaction between the two groups and the existence of negative viewpoints against the other social group. Social actors are aware of their practices conducive to segregation. Conversely, segregation is unintended when although social practices indicate that there is no social interaction between the two social groups, there are positive viewpoints about the other social group and, thus, segregation has not been pursued actively or is not known by gated communities' residents. The examination of particular social practices can indicate whether they encourage or discourage social interaction and, therefore, urban social group segregation. The next section proposes ideal types of social practices to consider in examining these relationships.

2. Ideal types

There are several social practices related to interaction between individuals or groups that can be analysed to examine whether living in gated communities could lead to the segregation of their residents from the outside local communities. These particular social practices work as ideal types. Four are suggested here and elaborated in this section: 1) access to the gated community; 2) use of services and infrastructure; 3) work inside the gated community; and 4) institutional communication.

2.1. Access to gated communities

Gated communities are residential schemes with clear limits marked by walls, fences, or gates. These physical barriers do not allow free circulation of people and vehicles from inside to outside and vice-versa. Therefore, the way in and out of the gated community refers to a special practice performed by residents as well as non-residents.

Gated communities' residents might enter through a residents' entrance that might be operated by barriers activated by remote control, digital identifications or by guards

themselves. The way out of the neighbourhood also requires the lifting up or opening of gates and barriers. Access to gated communities is a practice performed every time residents enter or leave their neighbourhood. It is critical to consider how this access is established. The existence of special rules or procedures to access the residential compound, in addition to physical security devices, such as walls, fences, and gates might imply an obstacle to social interaction between the residents and outside neighbours in everyday activities. Thus, it might imply the segregation of gated communities' residents from the outside surrounding communities.

A non-resident of gated communities performs a different practice from a resident, but also has to follow especial procedures. Many gated communities have one or two entrances for residents and guests and a different one for "service staff" that consists of builders, maintenance workers and others such as guards, gardeners and home-cleaners. It is relevant to know if the members of the outside surrounding communities have free access to the gated community and how often they enter to consider whether they interact with inside residents. This complements the analysis of the access practice performed by gated communities' residents.

The practice access is linked to the social relation that might exist between the two social groups. Outside residents cannot go and visit the residents inside if they do not know them or do not have any type of relationship with them, whether this is social or work related. Examining the social relation between "insiders" and "outsiders" that might be mediated by physical boundaries, it is useful to analyse how both social groups perceive these security devices and whether they justify their use or not. In situations of urban social group segregation based on how the practice access is performed, viewpoints about security measures indicate whether segregation is intended or unintended. Moreover, it is relevant to consider the overall image that both groups have about the other since having negative viewpoints would contribute to the segregation of the inside residents. This last variable is examined for all the proposed social practices.

Table 1 shows four possible outcomes from the combination of these three variables: access as the examined practice; viewpoints about the barrier or wall and viewpoints about the other social group. Access is always restricted due to the nature of gated communities. The other two variables fall within two categories: the wall and barrier can be justified as a means of security or as a tool to mark social differences; and the other group can be perceived in a positive or negative form. As a result of the combination of these categories, the practice always lead to segregation since there is no free access to anybody who might want to enter the gated community, keeping the inside residents separate from the outside surrounding neighbours. Security devices such as guards, walls, barriers or fences act as obstacles to deter free access.

However, segregation could be intended or unintended according to the two viewpoints analysed. The second and third variables refer to these viewpoints. The second variable consists of the viewpoints that both groups have about the security devices, especially the wall and the barrier that gated communities' residents trespass every day. This variable falls into two categories according to the meaning given to the barrier or wall. The first category refers to the justification of the wall or barrier due to increasing urban insecurity. The second category is related to situations aiming at making social differences more visible. The first category does not necessarily imply that inside residents want to separate, but to protect themselves from city nuances and social problems while the second category refers to the need to distinguish social groups, physical separation being one way of achieving this.

The third variable refers to the viewpoints that each social group has concerning the other group. Positive viewpoints imply that there is awareness of the other group, of who their residents are; the members of the two groups know some members of the other group; there is sympathy and good relationships between them. Negative viewpoints are related to unequal power relations, discrimination, no knowledge of the other group, and no sympathy.

Table 1: Access to gated communities

	Social Practice
Viewpoints	Access restricted
wall/barrier = security other group = positive	1 unintended segregation
wall/barrier = security other group = negative	2 intended segregation
wall/barrier = social differences other group = positive	3 intended segregation
wall/barrier = social differences other group = negative	4 intended segregation

According to this table, there is unintended segregation (Cell 1) when access to the gated community is restricted; however, the use of the wall and barrier that deters access is justified on the grounds of more security inside the gated community. This implies that the separation resulting from the controlled access and use of security devices is only on the basis of protection. This is emphasised since there are positive viewpoints concerning the other group and there might be social interaction between the two social groups. Thus, although restricted access means segregation, this was not planned or pursued by gated communities' residents and, consequently, it is a process of unintended urban social group segregation.

However, segregation could be intended. There are three possible situations according to Table 1. The first case (Cell 2) could be that access is restricted for security reasons. However, there is a negative image about the other social group that contributes to the lack of social interaction between "insiders" and "outsiders". Thus, segregation is intended. The second option of intended segregation (Cell 3) happens when access is restricted and although there is a positive image about the other social group, security devices are justified to make social differences between the two groups clear. Consequently, the separation of the inside residents is pursued as a form of differentiation. The third possibility of intended segregation (Cell 4) takes place when access is restricted and security devices are used as tools to show social differences in the area. Furthermore, there are negative viewpoints about the other social group. This is the most severe form of intended segregation since the three categories contribute to not having contact with the other group and, therefore, to intended segregation.

2.2. Use of services and infrastructure

The second practice to be analysed is the use of services and infrastructure. It is a broad practice that includes three other groups related to the venues for everyday activities such as shopping, recreation, worship, schooling and its related infrastructure. It also considers the use of public transport. This practice is divided into three groups according to the location of services and infrastructure. The latter could be: 1) located inside the gated community; 2) located in the surrounding local areas; and 3) located in the surrounding local areas but created for the gated community's residents.

The first group relates to the provision of facilities and services within the gated community, such as clubhouse, sport amenities, convenience store, transport, school and church. The first step in the examination of this practice is to consider whether gated communities' residents use these facilities and the reasons for their use. The second is to analyse whether the members of the outside groups use these facilities as well. Viewpoints about the other social group are also considered for the three social practices related to the use of services and infrastructure.

The analysis shows, according to Table 2, that there is no segregation when both groups use the services and amenities located inside the gated community (Cells 1 and 2) since this implies social interaction between the two groups. Segregation occurs when only one group uses the services and infrastructure located in the gated community, preventing it from interacting with the other social group. This segregation is unintended when viewpoints about the other group are positive (Cell 3) as viewpoints do not represent an obstacle for interaction. There is intended segregation when viewpoints about the other group are negative (Cell 4) since this would mean that it is planned as a result of negative opinions, feelings, perceptions and no knowledge about the other social group.

The second group of practices refers to the use of services and infrastructure located in the surrounding local areas. These include social and sport amenities, local shops, public transport, local school and local church. The analysis focuses on whether these are used by "insiders" and "outsiders", or only by one of these social groups. As for the first group of this practice, the analysis considers that there is no segregation when both groups use and share services and infrastructure (Cells 5 and 6), regardless of whether one group has positive or negative viewpoints about the other. There is segregation when only one group uses the services and infrastructure located in the surrounding community. It is unintended when despite the non-sharing of the services and infrastructure, there are positive viewpoints about the other group (Cell 7) and intended when these are negative (Cell 8).

Finally, the last group refers to the use of services and infrastructure which despite being located in the local area outside gated communities, have been created or installed there mainly for the use of gated communities' residents. These are mainly shopping malls, private schools, and private health facilities. Again, this practice would encourage no segregation when both "insiders" and "outsiders" use these services and facilities, regardless of their viewpoints (Cells 9 and 10). Conversely, there is segregation when only one social group uses these services and facilities. Segregation is unintended when viewpoints about the other group are positive (Cell 11) and intended when viewpoints are negative (Cell 12).

Table 2: Use of services and infrastructure

	Social Practices					
	Use of services and infrastructure					
	Located inside the GC		Located in the surrounding area		Located outside but created for the GC	
Viewpoints	Used by both groups	Used by only one group	Used by both groups	Used by only one group	Used by both groups	Used by only one group
Other group = positive	1 No segregation	3 Unintended segregation	5 No segregation	7 Unintended segregation	9 No segregation	11 Unintended segregation
Other group = Negative	2 No segregation	4 Intended segregation	6 No segregation	8 Intended segregation	10 No segregation	12 Intended segregation

Gender and age of the users of these facilities are examined for the three groups of this practice to see whether residents and non-residents performed different practices according to these variables.

2.3. Working inside the gated community

The third social practice analysed is working inside the gated community. It refers to members of the outside surrounding local communities to identify whether they can work inside the gated community. This is based on the argument that gated communities are frequently considered as job engines for the surrounding local communities, especially for the provision of low-skilled jobs, such as gardeners, home-helps and security guards.

The existence of members of the outside surrounding communities working inside the gated community would mean no segregation, regardless of the type of viewpoints existing from one social group towards the other. It would imply social interaction between the two social groups, as Table 3 shows (Cells 1 and 3). If there are no “outsiders” working inside, this would mean a process of segregation since social interaction is not possible. Segregation would be unintended (Cell 2) when despite having no working links, the two social groups have positive viewpoints towards each other. Intended segregation (Cell 4) would happen when viewpoints about the other social group are negative, this may be one of the reasons for not hiring local members to work inside.

Table 3: Working inside the gated community

Viewpoints	Social Practice	
	Work inside the gated community	No work inside the gated community
other group = positive	1 No segregation	2 unintended segregation
other group = negative	3 No segregation	4 intended segregation

It would be possible to also examine whether there are gated communities’ residents working in the surrounding local areas as this would imply social interaction between the two social groups. Nevertheless, it is believed that as most gated communities’ residents are professionals, it is unlikely they would find many job opportunities in peripheral residential areas.

2.4. Institutional communication

Institutional communication is the last proposed social practice. The objects of study are not inside and outside residents, but the neighbourhoods as social actors. It refers to formal or informal communication, to how if a gated community communicates and relates with one (or more) outside surrounding neighbourhood to discuss common issues. It is essential to identify whether there are common interests, or have been problems, conflicts or issues demanding communication between neighbourhoods. In identifying these common issues, it is relevant to consider how they have been treated. This practice implies analysing the role of the residents’ associations, which characterise gated communities. It might be possible to identify the existence of residents’ associations in the outside local neighbourhoods as well. Viewpoints about the other social group are also considered for this social practice.

The existence of institutional communication would mean the possibility of social interaction to deal with common interests and conflict resolution in a collective way and, hence, the existence of no segregation between the two social groups, as Table 4 shows (Cells 1 and 3), regardless of the respective viewpoints. The absence of

institutional communication would mean no social interaction and, consequently, the existence of unintended or intended segregation. Again here, viewpoints would determine whether segregation is unintended or intended. The first situation (Cell 2) refers to cases where despite the absence of institutional communication between the two social groups, positive viewpoints exist. There is intended segregation (Cell 4) when viewpoints are negative, which contributes to the lack of interaction between the social groups.

The absence of institutional communication would mean that there is no contact between the two social groups or that there is a third party involved that plays a mediator role. In this case, it is relevant to consider who the mediator is and why s/he/it has to play this role. The last point to be considered when analysing this practice is that communication could be formal or informal. Formal institutional communication would refer to letters addressed to the other neighbourhood and meetings held, whilst informal institutional communication would refer to informal visits to talk about some common problem or phone calls.

Table 4: Institutional Communication

Viewpoints	Social Practice	
	Institutional Communication between inside and outside communities	No Institutional Communication between inside and outside communities
other group = positive	1 No segregation	2 Unintended segregation
other group = negative	3 No segregation	4 intended segregation

This section has discussed four ideal types of social practices and viewpoints for the examination of living in gated communities and urban social group segregation. The next section uses this methodological framework and applies it to a case study.

3. Working with data

The methodological framework suggested in the previous section can be applied to any research focusing on the relationship between gated communities and urban social group segregation. The ideal types proposed might be changed or increased or decreased in number according to the research objectives. The data has to be collected through qualitative methods like semi-structured interviews or focus-groups.

This section analyses the use of services and infrastructure, which is one of the aforementioned ideal types. The information used for this examination comes from a PhD research undertaken by the author in 2003. The case study analysed is a gated community called Palmares, located in Metropolitan Area of Mendoza (MAM), Argentina. There were 260 families living there at the time of the research. The surrounding local neighbourhoods were varied: middle-class (called Altos de la Puntilla); lower-middle class (Fuchs and Obras Sanitarias) and a slum (Urundel). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Fifty residents of the gated community and 19 members of the outside neighbourhoods were interviewed.

Three groups of practices related to the location of services and infrastructure used by gated communities' residents as well as by members of the outside surrounding communities are examined. They are: 1) use of services and infrastructure located inside the gated community; 2) use of services and infrastructure located in the surrounding outside areas; and, 3) use of services and infrastructure located in the

surrounding communities but specifically created or built for the use of gated communities' residents.

3.1. Use of services and infrastructure located inside the gated community

Palmares had a clubhouse used as a social venue for meetings and parties, and sport activities like gym classes. There was also a coffee place inside the clubhouse and an open-air swimming pool. Moreover, there were two tennis courts and a football pitch. The neighbourhood had also a jogging circuit surrounding the residential compound.

About 70% of the interviewed residents and their families used these facilities (although they do not come free), especially the swimming pool and tennis courts. Alfonso² (46-year-old Palmares' resident) said: *"Kids spend the whole day playing [outside the house]... they play tennis or go to the swimming pool in the clubhouse and they spend the whole day playing with their friends and they also have the football pitch"*. Carolina (42-year-old Palmares' resident) mentioned that she and her family *"uses the swimming pool, the tennis court, the football pitch and the square"*. Samuel (44-year-old Palmares' resident) explained some of the advantages of having a clubhouse in the gated community: *"We have a private club where we can take the kids, where I feel safer; it is very close; they go walking or by bike and it is an environment where we know all those who live here... this is very positive..."*. This last narrative subtly indicates that gated communities' residents like having a place that is not open to everybody and they feel safer when it is an exclusive environment.

In most cases, kids were heavier users of Palmares' sport facilities than their parents mainly because they had more free time than adults and also they could easily meet their friends there. Graciela (32-year-old Palmares' resident) explained: *"I rarely use the clubhouse [she has a swimming pool at home] but my son [10 years old] goes by himself to use the swimming pool with his friends, to play football and tennis...and my daughter goes to the 'summer school' in the summer"*.

Residents had to pay extra to use these facilities. Tennis courts were booked per hour and so did the football pitch. The clubhouse could be booked for parties and social meetings. There was a membership paid per season for the use of the swimming pool. Residents mentioned that the fees for the use of the facilities in Palmares were not expensive.

The small number of residents who did not use these facilities did not because they did not practise sports or because they were members of other sport clubs. Like Enrique (40-year-old Palmares' resident) mentioned: *"There is a clubhouse here in the neighbourhood but myself and my family, we still go to the same club where we went before [moving to Palmares]... because my life hasn't changed... I still meet my friends to play football even when it is far away and I have a football pitch here [in the gated community] that I haven't used yet"*. Saúl (44-year-old Palmares' resident) explained: *"We don't go to the clubhouse because we pay [membership] in another club and so we go to that club where the kids carry out their activities"*.

There was no public transport inside the gated community for security reasons. Samuel (44-year-old Palmares' resident) explained *"Public transport inside the gated community would be unthinkable due to security reasons"*. Some residents mentioned that they would like to have a service of private transport inside the

² All interviewees are identified with nicknames to protect their identities.

neighbourhood taking residents from Palmares to the city centre or other central areas in the city. Marianela (34-year-old Palmares' resident) mentioned that one criticism of this gated community is the lack of private transport: *"When I moved here [to Palmares], they said there would be more things that never happened... like a transport service for the neighbourhood"*.

Services and infrastructure located inside the gated community were to be exclusively used by its residents. Non-residents could not use them, with the exception of relatives or friends of the gated community's residents accompanied by residents. There were only a few cases of outside members who knew people living in Palmares and from those who knew some residents, no one mentioned having used the facilities located inside the gated community. This would mean that only one group used the services and facilities located inside, which fact, therefore, contributes to segregation since there is no social interaction between the inside and outside populations (see Cells 3 and 4, Table 2).

To identify whether this process of urban social group segregation is intended or unintended, it is necessary to consider viewpoints about the other social group. The most common feeling about the outside surrounding group by Palmares residents is negative or neutral. They referred to *"poor people"*, not considering the variety of neighbourhoods existing outside their walls. María (53-year-old Palmares resident) pointed out the social differences between Palmares and its surrounding areas, which she described as *"contrasting"* because *"there is not the same quality of construction than in Palmares around here... we cannot ignore [poor neighbourhoods]... it is not nice. It is not that I don't like seeing them because they are annoying, but on the contrary, my heart is broken when I see people living like that... and one [herself] on the other extreme... but well it is not on my hands to do anything..."*. Alvaro (56-year-old Palmares resident) added: *"unfortunately we have many poor or marginal neighbourhoods... they do not give us problems, but the contrast is high... it is not that they annoy me but I would like them to improve or that the municipality would do something to improve the living conditions of those neighbourhoods and the surroundings would be more homogeneous"*.

Considering the negative or neutral viewpoints that Palmares' residents had about the outside group as well as having exclusive use of the inside facilities and infrastructure mainly for security reasons, this practice encourages a process of intended urban social group segregation by the gated community's residents (Cell 4 in Table 2).

3.2. Use of services and infrastructure located in the surrounding outside areas

The second group of practices refers to the use of services and infrastructure located in the surrounding outside areas. The local area where Palmares is situated had, as most urban local areas, services and infrastructure for use of local residents. These were quite developed since some of the neighbourhoods in the surrounding area were built between 20 and 30 years ago. There were state primary and secondary schools, a police station, a small public health centre, a church, public transport (buses) and plenty of local stores as well as a few small gyms. Local dwellers could meet most of their needs with these services and infrastructure.

There was good public transport in the surrounding areas that could be used by Palmares' residents and was used by most people working in Palmares like security guards, gardeners and home-helpers. Nevertheless, it was not usually used by people living in Palmares.

Most residents did not use public transport at all. But there were some differences when age groups were analysed. Children from Palmares did not use public transport. Their parents took them to school by car everyday. Most of these children had never taken a bus and depended on adults to move outside the gated community. Teenagers and young people in their 20s used public transport more often. Constanza (15-year-old Palmares' resident) said she occasionally took the bus *"to go to the city centre or visit a friend"*. Fernando (20-year-old Palmares' resident) mentioned: *"I go everywhere by bus... or walking"*.

Palmares' residents (adults) used their cars to go everywhere. Many households had at least two vehicles. But a handful of interviewees mentioned that they (or their partners) used public transport because they had only one vehicle. Celina (43-year-old Palmares' resident) provided a reason for not using public transport: *"basically because I have a car and when I needed to come here by public transport I had to take two buses... if you are coming from the city centre, there is a direct bus to here, but if you are coming from elsewhere, you have to take one towards the centre and then another one from the centre to here... I had my car in a garage mechanic for a month and I experienced the public transport..."*. The use of public transport was unsafe according to some residents. Carla (45-year-old Palmares' resident) said *"It scares me that she [her 17-year-old daughter] takes the bus because she might be abducted"*. The analysis of the use of public transport shows that it is not a popular practice within Palmares' residents. About 20% of the interviewees used public transport and young people and teenagers were the heaviest users.

As for the school facilities located in the surrounding area, Palmares' residents did not use the state primary or secondary schools situated there. Only two residents mentioned they had sent their kids to a private nursery school located in one of the outside neighbourhoods. All children from Palmares went to private schools, showing the increasing tendency of upper-middle class families to choose private education, with all-day schooling and emphasis on learning foreign languages. Some children went to schools in the city centre and did not change school when they moved to Palmares. But a large group of children went to the same private primary school located close to Palmares, but not to the state school in the surrounding area.

About 40% of the interviewees living in Palmares went to church and most of them usually went to the local church called Montserrat located about 15 blocks away from Palmares or to a sanctuary situated behind Palmares, close to the highway. Two couples were involved in the Montserrat church activities.

Concerning the use of local shops located in the surrounding areas, most Palmares' residents preferred shopping in hypermarkets, in the supermarket located in the shopping mall or in some stores in the city centre. About 20% of the interviewed residents mentioned, however, that they went to the surrounding areas for shopping for particular things. A few residents mentioned that they went to buy stuff for their houses in a large hardware shop located in the Fuchs neighbourhood. Others went to local grocery shops and the local butcher's in the outside neighbourhoods.

Finally, in relation to cultural or sportive activities, only three persons from Palmares said they went to the gym in a local neighbourhood because it was cheaper than going to the gym located in the shopping mall and the time schedules suited them better. Another person's daughter went to dancing lessons and to study English in the local area.

All the analysed services and infrastructure were heavily used by the members of the outside surrounding areas. Most people took buses to go to work or to the city centre.

Most outside households had only one vehicle and therefore they needed to use public transport to move in the city. There were some that did not have a car. In contrast to the situation of Palmares' residents, most of the children from the local areas went to local state schools. Therefore, school was not a place for interaction between children from Palmares and children from the outside local communities. Local people also went to the local church. Armando explained: *"My wife and I, we teach family catechism in preparation for the baptism...and we had to go to Palmares to see people there as well as to Urundel neighbourhood"* (Armando, 48-year-old Altos de la Puntilla resident). Lucía (26-year-old Fuchs resident) mentioned she usually went to mass in the local church and used to participate in teaching catechism to children as well. When asked about meeting people from Palmares at church, she said: *"There is no doubt that many people from Palmares come here [to the church] but you don't distinguish them... you see familiar faces, but you don't know that they live in Palmares"*. Members of the outside surrounding areas also used the local shops in their areas and went for some activities like gym or learning languages there.

This section has showed that both social groups used services and infrastructure located in the surrounding areas. Not all Palmares' residents did it, but there were many of them who used different services and infrastructure from the outside surrounding communities. The local church appeared as an important place to encourage social interaction of both social groups. Thus, opportunities for members of the two social groups to interact, even if superficially, exist. Therefore, the use of services and infrastructure located in the surrounding communities did not contribute to the process of segregation by people living in Palmares.

3.3. Use of services and infrastructure located in the surrounding area created for Palmares

Finally, in relation to the services and infrastructure created or installed close to Palmares to mainly serve this social group, it is important to identify a shopping mall next to the gated community that is called Palmares Open Mall and was built at the same time and by the same company as Palmares. Services offered in the mall covered a wide variety: from food shops, restaurants, coffee-places, multiplex cinema, clothes' shops, supermarket, books and music shops, to gym, discotheque, bank, beauty parlour and medical centre. In addition, there was a handful of grocery shops and take-away food places in Panamericana Street (the main street outside Palmares) that appeared after Palmares was built.

Many gated community's residents mentioned that having the mall was one big benefit for Palmares neighbourhood when deciding where to live. Carolina (42-year-old Palmares' resident) said: *"We liked the place [where Palmares is situated] because you have everything relatively close, you have the shopping mall and then you have access to many things without needing to move..."*. All people who lived in Palmares used the services provided in the shopping mall. Marianela (34-year-old Palmares' resident) said: *"We use the shopping mall a lot, we go to the supermarket there, to the cinema, to the gym..."*. The supermarket was the most used retail shop. Gated communities' residents also bought clothes in the stores from the shopping mall. However, residents also went shopping to the city centre as it was cheaper than the mall.

Some residents (but only a few) mentioned that they used the health services provided in the shopping mall. Carla (45-year-old Palmares' resident) said: *"We go to the language therapist, the psycho-pedagogue, the general practitioner; all in the medical centre in the shopping mall"*. Many of them went to the gym located in the

shopping mall, even though it was more expensive than other gyms located in the surrounding local areas. Many residents also went to the shopping mall for recreation or to eat. Graciela (32-year-old Palmares' resident) mentioned about her socialisation activities: *"In the end, we meet in the shopping mall... on a Saturday or Friday evening, you take the kids to the games' area and you sit on a table and you meet other people [from the gated community] and you share the table..."*.

The outside surrounding communities also used the shopping mall and saw it as one of the advantages of having Palmares gated community close to them. Like the gated community's residents' practice, the supermarket was the most used service. The gym was not very used, as it was more expensive than other gyms located in the surrounding areas. They also went occasionally to the cinema or just for a stroll. Gema (58-year-old Fuchs resident) mentioned: *"For us, having the mall here means the possibility of shopping and of spending a Saturday in a different way that you couldn't do before that [when] you needed to go to the city centre"*. Most of them could not afford buying clothes or eating in the most expensive restaurants from Palmares Open Mall.

The residents of Urundel, the slum located in the surrounding local area, were the only ones who did not use the services and infrastructure in the outside area that were mainly targeting the gated community's residents. Lucas (68-year-old Urundel resident) expressed the general opinion: *"Palmares has not benefited us in any way... but it has not harmed us either"*. Urundel's residents did not use the mall's services because they could not afford them and they did not go there even for a stroll.

In addition to the shopping mall, the construction of Palmares neighbourhood brought about the appearance of small new grocery shops and specialised shops like pizzerias, bakeries, and so forth, mainly on Panamericana Street. They were all used by Palmares' residents. Carina (39-year-old Palmares' resident) said: *"I go to the vegetable shop in Panamericana, out of the neighbourhood"*. These new shops were also considered a positive aspect of having the gated community nearby. Lucía (26-year-old Fuchs resident) mentioned: *"There are more specialised shops now than before [Palmares was built]"*.

The analysis of the use of the services and infrastructure located in the surrounding areas, though mainly installed to satisfy the gated community residents' needs, shows that both inside and outside residents used them. Both social groups mentioned the shopping mall as a positive and advantageous factor for the area. Although Urundel's residents did not use these services and infrastructure, considering that the rest of the surrounding area used them, this social practice did not contribute to segregation (Cell 9 or 10), regardless of the respective viewpoints.

3.4. Conclusions about use of services and infrastructure

The use of services and infrastructure has been considered in this section as a broad social practice consisting of three social practices. The first practice considered was about the use of services and infrastructure located inside the gated community. This social practice contributes to intended urban social group segregation by the gated community's residents as the members of the local outside communities were not allowed to use them and had never used them.

The second social practice analysed was related to the use of services and infrastructure located in the surrounding local areas. The research data collected showed that though not all, many gated community's residents made regular use of

them. Consequently, this social practice did not contribute to segregation since there were possibilities for both social groups to meet and interact.

The third social practice considered was the use of services and infrastructure located outside the gated community, but created mainly for its residents. It referred basically to the use of the shopping mall next to Palmares and a few small shops located in Panamericana Street. Both social groups made use of these services and infrastructure, although the use made by the outside local members was more reduced as they could not afford some services offered. Both social groups considered the shopping mall as a positive element for the area, which contributed to potential social interaction between them and therefore to no segregation.

The age of the interviewees was a significant variable to consider for the analysis of this practice. Children seemed to have less freedom to move outside the gated community and, therefore, used the outside infrastructure and services less than adults or young gated community's residents. They were the heaviest users of the services provided inside the gated community. Gender differences were not significant. Women and men, boys and girls used services and infrastructure similarly.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between living in gated communities and urban social group segregation. It proposes a theoretical and methodological framework to explain this relationship. The framework consists of the elaboration of four concepts: gated communities, urban social group segregation, social practices and viewpoints. The latter two work as tools to explain the link between the former two concepts. Four ideal types of social practices and viewpoints related to social interaction are elaborated.

Based on data collected in a gated community in Mendoza, Argentina, the findings prove that it is possible to apply the theoretical and methodological framework proposed. It also simultaneously proves and disproves the initial hypothesis that argued that social practices of gated communities' residents and outside local communities' members can lead to processes of segregation, which can be either an intended or an unintended consequence of social practices and viewpoints held by the social actors involved.

The proposed ideal types could be applied to any research on gated communities and segregation carried out in any city. The application of this framework to researches in different locations would make it possible to compare between different case studies and to propose new ideal types.

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