

NILSON ARIEL ESPINO

Building the Inclusive City

THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR
CONFRONTING URBAN SEGREGATION



ROUTLEDGE RESEARCH IN PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN



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Building the Inclusive City

Social segregation is one of the main challenges facing urban development around the globe. The usual outcome of many urban development patterns is an unequal social geography, with the poor living in large clusters that are remote, isolated, dangerous or unhealthy. The result is inequality in a number of dimensions of urban life, from deficient urban access, services or infrastructure to social isolation, neighbourhood violence, and lack of economic opportunity.

This book brings together debates on ethnic and economic segregation, combining theory and practical solutions to create a guide for those trying to understand and address urban segregation in any part of the world, and integrate ameliorating policies to contemporary urban development agendas.

Nilson Ariel Espino is a lecturer at McGill University's Panama Field Study Semester, and at the Central American Master's Program for Conservation of Cultural Heritage for Development, at the University of Panama. He also directs Panama City's Urban Forum and Observatory and is a practicing architect and urban planner. He holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from Santa María La Antigua Catholic University, a master's in urban planning from the University of Arizona, and a Ph.D. in social and cultural anthropology from Rice University.

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‘By engaging with the spatial dimensions of inequity and exclusion, the book shifts the discussion on housing laterally and embeds it more squarely in broader urbanizations and city-making processes. Espino’s experience as a practitioner brings a nuanced voice to the challenges of creating equitable urban environments in the face of the uncertainties of global capital and the disruptions it creates in cities. A refreshing contribution to the literature on cities – where Espino provokes us to not discuss inclusivity but rather how not to make our cities exclusive!’

Rahul Mehrotra, Professor and Chair, Department of Urban Planning and Design, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

‘As many countries react to increasing levels of polarization, social exclusion and segregation by emphasizing social mix policies, it is important to understand the historical, political and anthropological reasons for our urge to segregate. Only then will we be able to make public choices that will have a chance of success. Espino’s multidisciplinary approach explains spatial choices as resulting from the exercise of power in its communicative and symbolic aspects, adding a necessary layer to the usual economic explanations.

But the book is much more than that. In Part II, dedicated to confronting segregation, Espino evaluates the social costs of segregation and – on the basis of recent research – the possible benefits of social mix, addressing issues such as social networks, peer effects, collective socialization, the culture of poverty, and the indelible scars resulting from living in high-crime areas. It concludes with a few case studies of recent projects in the Americas that promote social inclusion. What is especially wonderful about the book is that it is written in an easy, clear and breezy style, making it a pleasure to read and accessible not only to professional planners and policy-makers, but to both graduate and undergraduate students in a variety of disciplines.’

Nico Calavita, Professor Emeritus, Graduate Program in City Planning, San Diego State University, co-author of Inclusionary Housing in International Perspective: Affordable Housing, Social Inclusion and Land Value Recapture

‘This is a timely book on one of the most pervasive and difficult issues facing urban planners in Latin America and other parts of the world. With clarity and elegance it sheds light on the historical roots and geographical nuances of how and why social groups are separated/segregated in cities. With a refreshing anthropological focus on the spatial expression of society’s power hierarchies or differentials, the author pre-emptly the economist’s often apologetic account of the inevitability of spatial separation of income groups.

Broadening the view beyond the “dictatorship of the highest and best use” of land, the book discusses alternative reasoning for more inclusionary social housing provision. An account is thus presented of the social costs of succumbing to segregation, but most refreshingly also an up-to-date review of some tools and effective practices for promoting residential inclusiveness.

This richly documented book offers a “must reference” for students of urban residential segregation – which should mean all who are concerned with the pitfalls for the social-economic and political sustainability of our cities.’

Martim Smolka, Senior Fellow and Director, Program on Latin America and the Caribbean, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

‘*Building the Inclusive City* presents a fascinating overview of social power and how power translates into segregated populations and policies around the world. Lessons drawn from theories in planning, architecture, sociology, and anthropology help to paint a clearer picture of what we can know about exclusion and distinctions in order to make an argument for inclusion with the aim of achieving higher levels of social equality. We look at clothing, housing and neighborhood development in North America, Europe, China and South America in order to understand the reasons for separation and class distinction over time and how these distinctions have been solidified in our rules, regulations, policies and laws. This book then asks and demonstrates, given this tendency toward separations and class distinctions of populations, what interventions could be used to bring them back together to help build a rich tapestry of neighborhoods that embrace inclusiveness. Pushing this question one step further, this book touches on another key idea – the size of businesses and the problem of spatial monopolies in cities and whether we need to consider managing not only the mix of residences, but also the mix of businesses to protect vibrancies of street life, small businesses and natural mixing of populations that can occur. At play is the larger question for planners, architects, and policy-makers: Can we begin to understand how we exclude using tools such as zoning, evictions, regulations, and laws, and if so, can we rethink our use of these tools in order to create a finer grain of mixes of populations and business in order to develop inclusive, diverse and vibrant cities?’

Cherie Miot Abbanat, Lecturer, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Planning and design are the tool of power, or they are a kind of science fiction.

Lisa R. Peattie¹

For Miguel Ángel and Adrián Francisco

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Note

- 1 Peattie, Lisa. 1991. Planning and the Image of the City. *Places* 7 (2): 35–39, 39.

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to shed light on the socially exclusionary nature of contemporary city building, and to offer some ideas on how to shift to a more inclusionary paradigm.

It is hardly debatable that cities are developed in a socially exclusionary fashion around the world today. In response to economic globalization, cities on all continents tend to promote and build the same kinds of projects, aimed at attracting the same kinds of investors, residents, customers or visitors. These may take the form of extensive commercial and office developments, high-end residential projects, sports complexes, or even (supposedly) public spaces of different sizes. The resulting urban landscapes tend to be elitist, and to generate evictions and displacement of poor city dwellers as a matter of course. The normal outcome is a segregated urban geography, with the urban poor living in large clusters that are remote, isolated, dangerous or unhealthy. The result is inequality in a number of dimensions of urban life. Depending on the context, the poor may end up enduring longer commuting times, deficient (or nonexistent) neighborhood services or infrastructure, social isolation, neighborhood violence, or a lack of jobs or business opportunities in their surroundings. In more developed economies, this might be the fate of perhaps 20 or 30 percent of a city's households. In the more unequal global south, however, the proportion might be the inverse, with 70 to 80 percent of households being marginalized, excluded or pushed around as the town is "modernized" or transformed into a "world-class city".

The pattern is striking in that seems to transcend local cultures or political systems. When South Africa was preparing for the 2012 FIFA World Cup, poor households were removed from the roads leading to the stadiums, and their stalls were banned from the surroundings of sports facilities and "tourist areas".¹ Rio de Janeiro undertook similar actions in the run-up to the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics.² But the hosting of global events need not be the detonator. Beijing's traditional central neighborhoods, which for centuries have housed a great variety of families and small businesses, have been systematically razed and replaced with malls, hotels, and office buildings, and its residents displaced to peripheral apartment blocks.³

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A recent UN-Habitat report on the “State of the World’s Cities” (appropriately subtitled “Bridging the Urban Divide”) is quite explicit in this regard, highlighting the role played by politically powerful actors and the formal planning efforts drafted at the service of their interests.

Institutional capture by interest group factions or other coalitions in the developing world results in the apportionment to only a select few of the [urban] opportunities that should be shared by all. The particular way cities are planned, designed, and built says much about what is valued there, and the control of planning processes can help or hinder the development of opportunities for all. While urban planning has the potential to promote urban harmony and bridge the urban divide through an equitable distribution of city amenities, it has too often been used as an instrument of exclusion. Indeed, powerful members of society have used “master planning” to capture land and provide infrastructure, manipulating land use patterns in favour of the gentrification of entire areas in cities. In the process, massive displacement has taken place to make room for highways, skyscrapers, luxury compounds or shopping malls, to the detriment of the habitats and livelihoods of the poor. This is a worldwide phenomenon. The bulldozing of the vibrant slums of Maroko, Lagos, has led to the displacement of 300,000 residents; the governmental-led destruction of Harare and Bulawayo (known as “Operation *Murambatsvina*” or “drive out trash”) has been associated with large number of arrests and killings, as well as ransacking and the dislocation of more than 700,000 people; and in Shanghai, deliberate gentrification of neighbourhoods between 1991 and 1997 led to the relocation of 1.5 million people, the same number as those displaced by Rangoon’s tourism-oriented makeover.⁴

In many contexts, the study of powerful interests has indeed great explanatory potential. Many interventions are little more than urban “land grabs” orchestrated by local or foreign interest groups and corrupt government officials, usually working in tandem.⁵ But political analyses can only take us so far. It is the contention of this book that the exclusionary character of current urban development is also deeply rooted in the way our contemporary societies exert and express power. There is a pervading “common sense” that holds that different social classes must occupy different areas of the city, that certain types of development patterns are “unsightly”, and that successful cities necessarily share a certain type of “order” that happens to be, in close examination, consistently exclusionary. This worldview will tend to impose itself in “normal” urban initiatives and plans that have no “hidden” agenda, and that are even carried out with the best of intentions. In order to address this phenomenon, we need to understand where this worldview comes from – and what we can realistically do about it.

Some definitions and delimitations are in order. The United Nations Habitat report uses the term “inclusive cities” to describe a development

model that guarantees a certain degree of equality to its citizens in four key dimensions: social, political, economic, and cultural. In this context, it is an ambitious term, encompassing an equally ambitious agenda. In this book, I use the term “inclusive” in a more limited sense. Inclusiveness here will always have a spatial dimension, and it will basically stand in opposition to urban segregation. It will refer to the need to plan and design cities so that vulnerable social groups are not pushed out, isolated, and marginalized from important urban services, amenities, commercial flows, and jobs. It is a difficult enough proposition, and one that would either generate or require the other forms of inclusion. It is also a concept that deals directly with urban form, understanding the term in the more comprehensive way in which Kevin Lynch defined it:

I will take the view that settlement form is the spatial arrangement of persons doing things, the resulting spatial flows of persons, goods, and information, and the physical features which modify space in some way significant to those actions, including enclosures, surfaces, channels, ambiances, and objects. Further, the description must include the cyclical and secular changes in those spatial distributions, the control of space, and the perception of it. The last two, of course, are raids into the domains of social institutions and of mental life.⁶

Some years ago, I participated in an affordable housing and general development initiative in the historic center of Panama City (Casco Antiguo), which had been undergoing a process of gentrification for several years.⁷ The program produced rehabilitated rental units (managed by a government agency) for families facing evictions due to the continuing redevelopment process. The monthly payments were comparable to what the residents had paid in the years previous to the boom, but now in the context of the city’s costliest real estate. Because of the increased local and tourist traffic, the neighborhood was safer and more active. Four gangs that had previously kept the neighborhood under an environment of widespread insecurity had been disbanded and incorporated into the development process through new social programs, and the number of restaurants and hotel projects had increased. Cultural festivals and fairs were organized more frequently, and were extended to zones previously avoided by the general public.

Low-income residents benefited from this new state of affairs in several ways. Some beneficiaries of the housing program set up businesses in their apartments, taking advantage of the enhanced influx of potential customers. Others found jobs in the new establishments. Some residents’ informal businesses, such as food stalls, benefited from the increased frequency of open-air art events. As new, wealthier residents familiarized themselves with the conditions of their less fortunate neighbors, new social programs arose from both public and private efforts. Children and adults were able to attend courses and workshops offered in the neighborhood as part of these new

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outreach initiatives. The new programs included after-school art courses for children, work training courses for adults, and evening classes for finishing high school.

For those families that had to leave the neighborhood, however, Casco Antiguo became just another remote, metropolitan growth pole. Forced to move to the outlying peripheries where the poor typically live in Panama City, their commuting costs and times increased significantly, which also affected the logistics of moving children around for educational opportunities. In the end, the possibilities that the new boom offered were denied to them for all practical purposes.

These are the kinds of issues that I have in mind when speaking about “inclusive urbanism”: the possibilities that the city allows or denies its citizens for taking advantage of what urban contexts offer; specifically, the opportunities of mixing social groups and activities, of participating in the generation of new types of industries or services, of absorbing diverse individual and social talents, and of producing synergies among the various activities and initiatives of all its residents. The UN-Habitat report uses the term “urban advantage” to express the economic possibilities that cities offer vis-à-vis the rural world. The challenge is to make the promise true through an appropriate urbanism.

It is important to emphasize that an inclusive urbanism is not only about quality of life, but also about economic health, both for the urban poor and for the whole urban economy. Urbanization is inevitably linked to development, wealth creation, and improved standards of living. Modern, industrial economies can only develop and thrive in cities.⁸ Complex and dynamic economies – that is, those that have the capacity to innovate and grow – all depend on human agglomerations. As Hans Blumenfeld pointed out, only large populations concentrated in a space of mutual accessibility (“cities”) can offer the human resources that complex economies rely on: workers with different types of education, talents and capacities, new ideas resulting from social interaction, or entrepreneurs capable of creating new products from industry spin-offs.

The basic *raison d'être* of the modern metropolis is the need for cooperation and communication resulting from the division of labor. Only the large metropolis offers to the highly specialized worker (...) a wide choice of employment, and to the employer a wide choice of highly specialized workers. Primarily the metropolis is a labor market (...). This also sets its limits. It is a commuting area, extending as far as daily commuting is possible and no farther.⁹

It is no wonder that the planet has seen a continuing trend of increasing urbanization in the last two hundred years, and that by 2030 it is projected that the majority of the world's population on all continents will be urban.¹⁰ More than half a century ago, Blumenfeld stated, “People seek in the big city,

not primarily a way of living, but a way of *making a living*".¹¹ This still holds true.

Of course, a large urban population is no guarantee of social prosperity or sustainability, anymore than a large rural population is. But, by all estimates, people will continue to flock to cities in the foreseeable future in search for that "urban advantage", so it will be mostly in cities that human societies will ultimately succeed or fail. This success or failure will depend, to an important extent, on how cities are designed and planned to integrate their populations with their development processes, and to promote, and take advantage of, people's initiatives. We will need cities in which movement, access to workplaces and customers, urban safety, and opportunities for social interaction are reasonably distributed among the urban population. Social mobility and active participation in urban economies are seriously hampered when a large proportion of urban dwellers live in isolated conditions, suffer commuting times almost as long as their working hours, or cannot return to their neighborhoods at night for fear of being assaulted. As this book will show, extreme forms of urban segregation are partly responsible for these types of conditions.

We could also invoke here the work of Jane Jacobs on urban economic systems, and of Ivan Illich's concept on "convivial" tools or technologies.¹² For Illich, a convivial tool must put the user in control and increase her power to act. In contrast, when machines or technologies are very sophisticated, the user is left ultimately at the mercy of the manufacturer, who is the only party capable of repairing, modifying or adapting the tool to new circumstances and uses. However efficient this tool might be, it is ultimately confining, for it does not allow manipulation, evolution and change in the hands of the user. One of Illich's favorite examples of convivial tools is the bicycle, which tremendously multiplies the energy input of the driver (i.e., is very efficient), does not depend on external or scarce sources of energy, and is easy to build, repair, and modify. In Illich's formulation, a convivial city (seen as an environment or "infrastructure" for practical action) would be easy and cheap to use for all its residents, accessible, open, and flexible.¹³ In contrast, we are producing cities that are segregated, rigid, expensive, and monopolized, fluid for some, and incredibly burdensome for many others. This is important, because, as this book will stress, poverty is not just a question of unequal distributions of goods, income, or jobs, but also of other daily variables essential for economic participation, such as time, space, location, and centrality.¹⁴ This last concept was understood by philosopher Henri Lefebvre as access to "places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms and time uses".¹⁵

For her part, Jacobs championed the idea that the most critical conflict that economies face is the one between established and emerging industries.¹⁶ Established businesses (that is, the currently successful ones) thrive on monopolizing production, creativity, knowledge, technology, and space. Sooner or later, their success makes them complacent, eventually ushering

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decline to their industry and, on the way, to the urban economy they so thoroughly command. Their products or services cease to evolve, and to respond to the new challenges brought about by social, cultural, or environmental change, or to competition from businesses elsewhere. Instead of investing in new products or services, established monopolies invest energy in protecting the influence already attained, and cease exploring the new frontiers of the industry. In this sense, the main task of government policy, as Jacobs saw it, was to maintain and support the capacity of a city's economy to innovate. Otherwise, stagnation was a foregone conclusion, because the logic of power – the drive to monopolize it and keep it – would condemn urban economies to obsolescence in due time. Faced with an hypothetical visit from a successful civilization from outer space, Jacobs would not ask them about their technological feats, but rather, “What kinds of governments had they invented which had succeeded in keeping open the opportunities for economic and technological development instead of closing them off?”¹⁷ In this book, we will encounter examples of these types of conflicts as they play out in urban space: between large, powerful businesses and new business initiatives, or between the demands for status preservation of some groups and the needs of economic survival of others. In this way, urban inclusiveness can be seen as a key prerequisite of urban economic health.

The particular view of inclusion in this book is also a call for expanding the narrow focus of housing policy on the quantity and quality of affordable housing stocks, and to push for a more integral outlook that cares about the *location* of such housing, and its relation to the rest of the city. We need to transcend the discussion about simply “housing people”, and wonder instead about the types of cities we are building.¹⁸

The book is divided into two main parts. The first part is more theoretical, and attempts to explain how social power works in our contemporary societies and what space, especially urban space, has to do with it all. It starts with basic concepts from the social sciences, and more than Lynch's raid, it attempts to be a formal exploration of the relationships between urban space and social power, at least as they pertain to our current concerns.¹⁹ The second part is more practical, and addresses the challenge of how to produce more inclusionary cities, drawing both on theory and on public policy tools that have been used in different parts of the world. Rather than providing a comprehensive inventory of experiences, however, it aims mostly to profile some promising avenues available for societies with a typical mixed economy. The general idea is to provide a broad conceptual framework about the problem and its solutions, in order to help the reader evaluate existing experiences and envision new ones. I do hope that the practice-oriented reader, looking for concrete applications, will find the effort of reading the first part sufficiently justified, in spite of its more “exotic” nature.

My background is in architecture, urban planning, and anthropology, so the latter discipline will provide most of the concepts used from the social

sciences. The intended audience is the student, practitioner and lay reader, however, so a special effort has been made to keep the discussion as non-technical as possible. My own direct work and academic experience is also mostly limited to Latin America and the United States, so many of the examples will draw from that side of the world, and especially from personal experience in my hometown of Panama City, Panama. I do hope, however, that the book's applicability casts a much wider (global) net.

Notes

- 1 Smith, David. 2010. Life in 'Tin Can Town' for the South Africans Evicted Ahead of World Cup. *The Guardian* (April 1).
- 2 Romero, Simon. 2012. Slum Dwellers Are Defying Brazil's Grand Design for Olympics. *The New York Times* (March 4).
- 3 Meyer, Michael. 2008. *The Last Days of Old Beijing: Life in the Vanishing Backstreets of a City Transformed*. New York: Walker & Company.
- 4 UN-Habitat. 2008. *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide*. London: Earthscan, pp. 90–91.
- 5 See numerous examples in Davis, Mike. 2006. *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso. See also Harvey, David. 2012. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London: Verso.
- 6 Lynch, Kevin. 1984. *Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 48.
- 7 See Espino, Ariel. 2008. Heritage Preservation, Tourism, and Inclusive Development in Panama City's Casco Antiguo. *Land Lines* (October 2008). See also Espino, Ariel. 2009. Integración social y desarrollo económico. El caso del Casco Antiguo de Panamá. *Canto Rodado* 4, pp. 1–35.
- 8 See Jacobs, Jane M. 1970. *The Economy of Cities*. New York: Vintage Books. See also Jacobs, Jane M. 1984. *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life*. New York: Vintage Books.
- 9 Blumenfeld, Hans. 1971. *The Modern Metropolis: Its Origins, Growth, Characteristics, and Planning*, edited by Paul D. Spreiregen. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 123.
- 10 UN-Habitat 2008, p. 4.
- 11 Blumenfeld 1971, p. 42. Emphasis in the original.
- 12 Illich, Ivan. 2001. *Tools for Conviviality*. London: Marion Boyars.
- 13 I'm borrowing here from the concept of "landscape as infrastructure" in Jáuregui, Jorge Mario. 2010. Urban and Social Articulation: Megacities, Exclusion and Urbanity. In *Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America*, edited by Felipe Hernández, Peter Kellett, and Lea K. Allen. New York: Berghahn Books.
- 14 Reilly, Charles A. 1999. El equilibrio entre el Estado, el mercado y la sociedad civil: Las ONG para un nuevo consenso de desarrollo. In *Pobreza y desigualdad en América Latina: Temas y nuevos desafíos*, edited by Víctor E. Tokman and Guillermo O'Donnell. Buenos Aires: Paidós, p. 207.
- 15 Lefebvre, Henri. 1996. *Writings on Cities*, translated and edited by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, p. 179.
- 16 Jacobs 1970.
- 17 Idem, p. 250.

8 *Introduction*

- 18 In this sense, this book can be seen as a complement, and a further elaboration of, Shlomo Angel's milestone work about our current global urban challenges, *Planet of Cities* (2012, Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy).
- 19 The analysis in this book of urban segregation is solely qualitative. For a useful review of the quantitative techniques for measuring segregation (and their methodological challenges), see Flores, Carolina. 2009. *Advances in Research Methods for the Study of Urban Segregation*. In *Urban Segregation and Governance in the Americas*, edited by Bryan R. Roberts and Robert H. Wilson. New York: Palgrave.

Part I

Social power and urban space

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1 Power and difference

We are usually concerned with urban segregation because we see it both as an expression and as a cause of social inequality. Today, it seems logical to us that social inequalities present themselves spatially in the form of neighborhoods or urban zones segregated by income or wealth. However, segregation and inequality diverge frequently in the historical and anthropological record. Some very unequal societies, for example, barely practiced any social segregation at all, so the relationship between the two has to be examined in some detail. That is the purpose of this part of the book. It starts at the more abstract level of social power, and then works its way to the spatial dimensions of the topic. As we shall see, a theoretical and historical overview of segregation can be very useful for grasping why and how we have segregation today, and what avenues are open for corrective measures.

The reality of power has, as one of its enabling variables, the fact that all societies recognize differences between their members. All societies distinguish between different “types” of people, even if these differences are circumscribed to the most basic distinctions of sex and age. Categories such as male or female, or child, adult and elder, are, for obvious biological reasons, a basic part of any society’s classificatory scheme. Societies also have a more or less complex distribution of “roles” or “functions” that are essential for the survival and reproduction of that particular group. In small-scale societies with very simple divisions of labor, such as aboriginal bands, the few defined roles may be divided mostly along the sexual and age axes. For example, hunting may be assigned mostly to the men, while gathering and cooking might be performed mostly by the women. In contrast, in modern societies, the list of distinct social “functions” or “roles” may be seemingly endless, and may have a looser connection with gender, or even age. Social roles, however, are a ubiquitous trait of any social group.

With roles and functions come identities. In our societies, being a lawyer, for example, not only means that you perform the work typical of “lawyers”, but that you are also recognized as belonging to the specific group of people called by that term. You are known as a “lawyer” on a permanent basis, regardless of how much legal work you actually do, or are doing at any specific moment. “Being” a lawyer (rather than simply working as one) is

identified with a host of social characteristics and expectations, encompassing responsibilities, duties, lifestyle, income, personality, and many more. People have established expectations and images of what being a lawyer is, and are usually bewildered if the purported role-player doesn't behave or look like one.

This point is important in order to avoid an excessively utilitarian view on social roles or functions. People are identified with an established social role because of what they do, but also because of the image they project. "Looking the part" is an essential component of many social roles. When we are introduced to a stranger in a party, we immediately gather some basic information, such as profession or place of origin, which allows us to place the person in our social universe. We might then "understand" why the person is dressed in that particular way, or has a certain demeanor. If we are told that the person is a banker, we immediately form a series of expectations about that person, even if they consist of mostly stereotypes (which are an inevitable part of social life) or are mostly subconscious (which is usually the case). For practical purposes, then, there is not much distance between social "role", "function" or "identity", since they work together and reinforce each other.

Of course, all societies have well-established procedures for assigning roles and functions. Not just anyone can become an architect, a judge, or a witchdoctor. Depending on the culture, social recognition for a specific role may demand such varied requirements as years of training and tests, identification of special talents, supernatural signs, or exceptional performance. Credentials, be they formal or informal, on paper or in mind, are usually obtained through very specific actions, and the transition to the role is itself marked through ceremonies of some sort. Anthropologists call these ceremonies "rites of passage", and their use is also widespread across human societies.¹ Graduations and accreditation procedures are the rites of passage for modern professions, which relate mostly to the world of work. Other rites of passage mark the transitions of age (e.g., bar-mitzvahs, *quinceaños*) or sexual and romantic availability (e.g., weddings). In other words, the transitions to some social roles are more or less automatic and inevitable (such as becoming an adult), while others demand particular accomplishments. In both cases, however, the roles come with specific social expectations of behavior and performance.

The fact that roles and identities may vary in type and amount points to another relevant feature of social life: one person can have many roles and identities. Accordingly, she might be subject to different standards of conduct, depending on the particular reference group each role is related to. You may be known mostly as a parent in the context of your neighborhood or your children's school, as an accountant in your work environment, or as the "funny aunt" at family events. In each role and environment, your conduct may vary somewhat, because your audience and your peers are different. This is especially true in modern, urban societies, where people can belong to many different social circles that are not necessarily connected to one

another. The size of contemporary urban populations, and the diversity of economic and social life, makes this almost inevitable. In village societies, for example, where everyone is pretty much in contact with everyone else on a daily basis – be that in school, work or church – social identities tend to be less “fragmented”.

Note

- 1 Van Gennep, Arnold. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

2 Types of power

In the preceding chapter I introduced the fact that all societies produce and recognize different roles and identities for their members. I will now move forward by positing that these roles and identities are often *ranked*. In general, as anthropologist David Graeber points out, being a “person” always means being a specific *kind* of person, which also immediately means being ascribed certain forms and degrees of social power.¹

Extending a previous example, the fact that a particular person is a lawyer not only indicates a distinct function in society, but also a certain degree of power. His or her education, for example, may guarantee a higher social status than the one enjoyed by those who never got past high school or elementary. If used strategically, the law degree may serve as a trampoline for public office, for example, or may land you on a television program as an “expert”, thus guaranteeing more public exposure and admiration. A lawyer’s income is also typically higher than that of other working people in general, and of other professionals in particular. In other words, being a “lawyer” usually entails more money and status, a fact that is widely recognized in our contemporary societies.

The reason behind the higher earnings and status accruing to certain professions or social roles is, however, not always transparent or easy to justify. There is not always a proportional relationship between the power (monetary and otherwise) attached to certain roles and the “value” of their services to society (if we take a utilitarian view of things), and issues of culture and simple group bargaining power always play a part. Some social roles are accorded lower status for no practical or moral reason (according to our current values, at least), like the low status suffered by girls and women in many societies for the simple fact of not being male. It is frequently argued that the value of the services provided by teachers or nurses, for example, is widely out of proportion to their incomes relative to other professions and, in fact, this can even be numerically assessed: a recent study estimated that a good kindergarten teacher could be worth as much as \$320,000 a year based on the extra earnings accruing to the pupils when they reach adulthood.² In our capitalist societies, more money usually flows to those professions and activities that contribute more directly to the profits

of private corporations, usually at the expense of those whose contributions may seem (from this vantage point) more indirect and remote – like child rearing or public service – even if they are equally or more essential for social welfare.³

Before delving further into how societies establish or deal with power differentials among their members, it would be convenient to examine the concept of power itself. What is power, after all? Max Weber, one of the fathers of modern sociology, defined it very broadly as the capacity that an individual has to impose his or her own will in a social relationship or, in other words, to influence the actions of others even when resisted.⁴ There are many ways this can be accomplished, and the study of different forms of power in society has been an intellectual preoccupation for the social sciences for quite some time.

As everyone knows, in contemporary societies the most effective way to “get your way” is through the possession of money. Money not only buys things, but also services and (unfortunately) political favors. One could say that money is currently the most universal power medium. This is a very recent phenomenon in human history, however. In a not-so-distant past, when many people worldwide still lived in simpler economies, with basic necessities met largely by the household or the village, and trade being an infrequent activity, money had a limited capacity to confer influence, mostly because there was not much you could buy with it. Other forms of power, such as social esteem or fame, were far more critical, and many of these other modalities are still with us, even if in diminished form. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has produced a very useful classificatory scheme of power (partly derived from Weber) that can help us navigate this topic.⁵

For Bourdieu, there are three forms of “capital”, the term he uses for power. “Economic capital” consists of money or material resources, which is now the “dominant” form. “Social capital” consists of social prestige or “honor”.⁶ Finally, “cultural capital” is education, knowledge or “culture” (in the sense of erudition). The social class of a person, or his or her location in the power structure of a society, is determined by the relative amounts of each form of capital that the person has. (The scheme thus differs from the traditional Marxist view that sees classes as determined exclusively by their relative possession of material means.)

Thus, for example, a business magnate may have plenty of economic capital but little cultural capital (e.g., educational credentials), while an academic may have the opposite “composition”. This makes the magnate part of a specific social class (business leaders who deploy mostly their material resources to get their way) and the academic, part of another (scholars who defend their social influence through their purported knowledge). On the other hand, a political leader may enjoy plenty of social capital (recognition, legitimacy, admiration), but be short on money or academic credentials. All in all, economic capital will always have the upper hand (since it can frequently “purchase” the other two types of capital), but will always have to

contend with the resistance of the subordinate groups, which will deploy their assets to limit the reach of its influence.

The good thing about Bourdieu's analysis is that he explores how these different compositions of capital, as represented by distinct classes or interest groups in society, lead to different lifestyles, psychologies and consumption patterns, a link that is critical for understanding how social conflicts play out in cities, as we will see further below. For Bourdieu, each social class uses different consumption patterns that distinguish it from its adversarial classes and undermine their social pretensions, all of which evolves from a constant struggle for social legitimacy and power. (As is obvious, Bourdieu sees social life pretty much as a permanent power war.)

Following Bourdieu's approach one could analyze the clothing styles of the "classes" described above in terms of how they reflect particular compositions of "capital". As a member of the dominant establishment, the business magnate would probably dress in expensive, luxurious, and well-known brands, which demonstrate the purchasing power and economic success of the bearer. The academic, in contrast, may go for more offbeat styles, reflecting perhaps the dominance of taste and knowledge over money, as well as an anti-establishment attitude. For her part, the politician may stay closer to the styles of her constituents, reflecting the fact that her strength is in her social relations ("social capital") rather than in education or money.

For Bourdieu, who based his analysis mostly on contemporary French society, the lifestyle of the working class is characterized by its "naturalism", so that the goods and activities consumed or engaged in by this class tend to be understood as simple pleasures that meet immediate needs, rather than sophisticated entertainments that, of course, require previous education. Food is food (which is either good or bad) rather than "high" or "low" cuisine; sex in the theater is sex, rather than "art", etc. The classes that tend to engage in these distinctions (for example, those high in cultural capital, such as artists) are then seen as effeminate snobs, while these, in turn, may see the working class tastes as reflecting ignorance and lack of education. Those high in economic capital may actually share their antipathy towards the cultural elites ("why do they think they're so smart?") and, at the same time dismiss the working classes as helplessly tasteless and vulgar (they don't know how to behave or dress, or use cheap or unknown brands). When money is accompanied by culture (such as in older, wealthy families), antipathy will be directed also towards those with money but no "taste" (that is, the "new rich"), who flaunt their wealth in an inappropriately flamboyant manner. Bourdieu's work is replete with examples of these opposing styles, which exist both to reinforce the identity of their bearers and to distinguish them from their social adversaries, covering the production and consumption of food, clothing, music, sports, and art, as well as other aspects of class "style", such as body language or ways of speaking (accents).

In the next chapter we will examine some of the historical origins of these "style wars" in the Western world, but for now Bourdieu's insights drive

home an essential point: social power is not solely reflected and exercised when commanding and pushing people around. Power is also present in the way the world looks – and how cities are built and function. In other words, social power is also a question of *style*, and understanding this is essential for interpreting urban forms and landscapes, and evaluating how they impact people's lives.

Notes

- 1 Graeber, David. 2001. *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. New York: Palgrave, p. 59.
- 2 Leonhardt, David. 2010. The Case for \$320,000 Kindergarten Teachers. *The New York Times* (July 28).
- 3 These kinds of imbalances are a central topic in John Kenneth Galbraith's classic analysis of modern, capitalist economies, in *The Affluent Society* (1998 [1958]). Boston: Mariner Books).
- 4 Weber, Max. 1968. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, New York: Bedminster Press.
- 5 Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. See also Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press. There are several approaches for analyzing power (class) structures in contemporary societies. I have opted for Bourdieu's scheme because of the way it successfully integrates tastes and consumption, which are key to the discussion that follows. For a general overview of the topic, see Crompton, Rosemary. 2008. *Class and Stratification*, Third Edition. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- 6 Social capital would also include any "natural" characteristic of the person that might command higher respect in a particular society, such as gender or race.

3 Power and urban form

Style

So far, the argument can be summarized thus: All societies differentiate between different types of people, which are assigned distinct identities, roles and functions. Most of these distinctions entail power differentials, and they will also express themselves in different lifestyle and consumption patterns, broadly speaking. We might add that these social distinctions are also assigned in terms of social groups and categories. However unique we might feel we are as individuals (and we all are, in many senses), the way people evaluate us has to do a lot with the specific social group or category with which we are identified. These categories and groupings predate us (that is, they existed in people's minds before we were born) and are mostly out of our individual control, although, of course, they change and evolve through time.

The stylistic dimension is related to a fundamental demand for communication in the human (and natural) world. Basically, if something or someone is different in some way, this difference *has to be noticeable*; otherwise the difference is not transmitted and becomes inoperable in practical terms.¹ If the village has a chief, chances are the chief can be distinguished somehow, even if it's just due to a different kind of necklace. Looking and behaving differently – that is, having a different “style” – also helps others to recognize your role and to take it seriously. Much of what anthropologists study as art in more traditional societies (e.g., body painting, clothing, jewelry, building styles) and we might now call simply consumption, serves no other purpose than to distinguish and emphasize who's who (or at least to pretend to do so).

The styles in which social power has been cloaked vary enormously, as do so many other things, across human societies in space and time. It is difficult to interpret any particular social product as an expression of a society's power structure if we don't know the aesthetic code being used to express that power.

Specifically, the particular style of power in the West today (and, increasingly, all over the world) can be traced directly to the aesthetics and lifestyle of the European aristocratic courts that were formed in the sixteenth century. (This might sound like a bizarre statement, but there is nothing universal about these things, because they always develop from specific cultural and historical matrices). In the following centuries, upwardly mobile social classes

copied this lifestyle, eventually defining many traits of what was adopted as the “proper” behavior of educated or civilized peoples.²

Following the Middle Ages, the territories that eventually became the European nations consolidated under the rule of a single monarch, who shared power, and, frequently, living arrangements, with a group of “noble” families that formed the monarch’s “court”. The lifestyle, tastes, and demeanors of the monarch and the courtiers, in contrast with those of the common folk, were structured basically in opposition to two realms of life: “nature” and “work”.

A basic distinction between the aristocrat and the common person was that the former did not need to work. The necessity to work became a sign of low social status, while the capacity to live a life of “leisure” was a sign of prestige. (This view had important roots in European antiquity, in both Greece and Rome). Aristocrats also distanced their lifestyle from processes, behaviors, and materials that reminded them of the “natural” or the biological (“animal-like”) world, engaging rather in a lifestyle that celebrated “refinement”. Refined behavior and consumption was a sign that the world of basic biological needs, that weighted so prominently in the lives of the poor, was kept at bay. Let’s examine some material manifestations of this social ethos.

Aristocratic clothing, for example, became increasingly “impractical”, making movement difficult, especially in the case of women, and generating prototypes of such items as high-heel shoes, wigs, corsets, and layered clothing. The fact that this clothing style precluded normal physical tasks, and was expensive and time-consuming to put on, demonstrated a life characterized by plenty of wealth and “free time”. Close contact (visual, auditory, or tactile) with food and physiological processes was avoided, introducing the use of cutlery (forks and spoons) during meals, and establishing the modern standards of privacy in relation to sex, urinating, defecating, and other physiological processes. The medieval customs of eating with your hands, sleeping together with other family members, or satisfying physiological needs in the presence of relatives or strangers was increasingly seen as “vulgar”, “improper”, and “uneducated”. The use of overt physical violence, such as the public executions of the Middle Ages, was also censored.³ In the following centuries, these standards of behavior were taken beyond the boundaries of their original territories and applied by the European imperial powers to condemn the “backwardness” of non-European societies and to distinguish between “barbarian” and “civilized” peoples. These judgments fell particularly hard on the aboriginal peoples of the African and American continents, who were labeled as “savages” due to their non-aristocratic customs.

As usually happens with the lifestyles of the powerful, these new behaviors and standards of conduct began to be copied by the lower-status members of society, and eventually became the new standard for social acceptability by the burgeoning middle classes, setting them apart, of course, from the

“vulgar” working classes. By 1899, the economist Thorstein Veblen had already coined the term “the leisure class” to describe the consumption styles that he observed in North American cities.⁴ He noted that the aesthetic of dress among the upper and middle classes was closely tied to an expression of a leisurely life, something that three hundred years earlier would have applied almost exclusively to the styles of European courtiers.

Our dress ... in order to serve its purpose effectually, should not only be expensive, but it should also make plain to all observers that the wearer is not engaged in any kind of productive labor. (...) A detailed examination of what passes in popular apprehension for elegant apparel will show that it is contrived at every point to convey the impression that the wearer does not habitually put forth any useful effort. It goes without saying that no apparel can be considered elegant, or even decent, if it shows the effect of manual labor on the part of the wearer, in the way of soil or wear. The pleasing effect of neat and spotless garments is chiefly, if not altogether, due to their carrying the suggestion of leisure – exemption from personal contact with industrial processes of any kind. Much of the charm that invests the patent-leather shoe, the stainless linen, the lustrous cylindrical hat, and the walking stick, which so greatly enhance the native dignity of a gentleman, comes from their pointedly suggesting that the wearer cannot when so attired bear a hand in any employment that is directly and immediately of any human use. Elegant dress serves its purpose of elegance not only in that it is expensive, but also because it is the insignia of leisure. It not only shows that the wearer is able to consume a relatively large value, but it argues at the same time that he consumes without producing.⁵

In architecture and urbanism, the transformations were no less dramatic. The key changes in the interior of houses were the introduction of functionally differentiated rooms and of specific spaces for leisure. Medieval living quarters commonly consisted of undifferentiated spaces, where working, cooking, sleeping, and eating succeeded each other through the day in the same room. Furniture was scarce, and was moved around as daily activities unfolded. Modern standards of living required, in contrast, that sleeping, cooking and eating be assigned to permanent, separate rooms in order to guarantee the privacy of these activities. Eventually, this was successfully accomplished by introducing the hallway, which solved the problem of the typical sequence of chambers that opened directly into each other, and which characterized many earlier multi-room housing types.⁶

The activities of leisure were assigned to new spaces as well, to what became known as parlors, libraries, smoking rooms, dining rooms, and the like. Among these, the “parlor” became the quintessential identifying element of an educated, refined family home. By the eighteenth century, the existence of a parlor was already considered an essential component of a respectable

middle-class residence in the United States.⁷ Parlors, the precursors of modern-day living rooms, were spaces for playing music, reading, knitting and, especially, entertaining guests. They were the typical “leisure” space, from which work and common household activities (eating, cooking, sleeping) were usually banned. Today, the “status” of an upscale residence still depends, to a large degree, on the amount of space dedicated to these kinds of leisurely activities. As I realized when studying the private housing market in Houston during the late 1990s, bigger houses in some suburban markets in the United States meant not houses with more bedrooms, but with more living rooms.⁸ A modest house for a first-time buyer included one living room, but in the next model up, the “family living room” made its appearance, thus allowing the household to engage in the messy activities of TV watching and informal eating in a separate space, leaving the formal living room in its pristine condition for entertaining and impressing guests. The increase in surface area meant the doubling-up of social spaces, so that the daily activities of the household could be tucked away to more informal areas, such as “family” living or dining rooms, or breakfast nooks, leaving the “formal” spaces destined exclusively for the rare event of receiving visitors. In the process, the number of bedrooms stayed the same.

In more “backward” parts of the Western world, such as Latin America during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the introduction of “leisurely”, “refined”, or “luxurious” components to residences could be limited to the purchase of a glass cabinet, which would be used to display rarely used fine china or cutlery. The key was displaying spaces or objects that were signs of refinement, which meant that they were not needed for work or daily use – that is, that were essentially useless for daily life, thus reflecting favorably on the economic means of the household and its capacity to distance itself from the mean world of “basic” necessities.

At the urban scale, the greatest impact of this social aesthetic project was the separation of work and residence. It became unfashionable not only to work from home, but also to “contaminate” the home with the props of work. The typical city neighborhood that combined residences and workplaces in a mostly indiscriminate manner gave way to separate districts for “living” and “working”, now justified technically and scientifically through zoning and other types of regulations. The nature of many modern trades and the size of modern factories or corporations also made it very difficult to combine both functions,⁹ but the influence of the old aristocratic mentality should not be underestimated in this transformation of urban structures. Nowadays, when the internet has reduced the size of work teams and made working from home fashionable again, the “accepted” modalities of home-office work are the “clean” and “invisible” ones associated with computer technology, rather than the older, censored forms, such as auto repair or sidewalk vending.¹⁰ This is especially true in the globally influential suburban landscape that dominates so many urban regions in the United States. The typical suburban landscape is yet another direct descendant of the aristocratic

lifestyle, with its large, decorative front lawns, exclusively residential zones, and ornamental gardens (as opposed to a fruit or vegetable garden).¹¹ In fact, the classic twentieth-century North American city, with its “central business district” dedicated mostly to work, surrounded by its rings of exclusively residential suburbs, could be seen as a particularly extreme expression of this settlement aesthetic rooted in the European aristocratic courts, perhaps radicalized by the strong distinction between the realms of intimate relations (i.e., family life) and business (the “business is business” mentality) present in the Anglo-American culture.¹² While these models are now found almost worldwide, few urban regions show them in such a pristine form as in the typical twentieth-century urban region in the United States.

The fact that this model represents the dominant aesthetic paradigm of the “respectable” middle and upper classes in the United States is easily demonstrated by imagining what happens when such a landscape is spoiled by transgressions. A suburban neighborhood in which lawns are planted with edible crops or paved with basketball courts, sidewalks are used for mechanical work or for regularly selling goods (as opposed to the temporary garage sale), living rooms are used as bedrooms or houses as stores, would be, in the great majority of cases, considered a deterioration brought about by lower-class occupants.

The fact is, of course, that a city built with what was an originally aristocratic ethos in mind is exclusionary and restrictive by definition. Having an office separate from your home is expensive, just like having two living rooms is. For the urban poor, functional mix and flexible use are paramount, but many contemporary urban design regulations and development models preclude these kinds of approaches. As geographer Edward Relph has observed, contemporary urban projects look for “stylishness” and a recognizable, marketable, and professionally designed image, especially if they are high-end or high profile.¹³ These development models tend to produce “packaged” environments that allow for very little change and adaptation, and that are destined mainly for users with middle- or upper-class means.

In contrast, when the city is envisioned with the needs of lower-income groups in mind, you usually have to change your planning or housing policy approach. The practical demands of the poor tend to push for an environment that is “opposed to all that [is] ready-made and completed” and that has any “pretense at immutability”, requiring flexibility and openness instead.¹⁴ Lisa Peattie has tried to advance the analysis of housing in the global south as part of the economic and social strategies of the poor in general.¹⁵ Her argument is that housing in many urban centers of the region is a versatile resource that allows households to engage in all kinds of economic strategies: small shops can be housed, rooms can be rented, businesses can be started or incubated.¹⁶ Having a house enables people to become more effective economic agents in general. In consequence, housing policy in this part of the world should not be seen as simply an effort to provide people with shelter.

In this world of pavement dwellers and renters of tiny spaces it seems clear that “housing” is not to be thought of as part of the “market basket” of consumer goods as we tend to understand it in the social policy of the developed world. It is the most basic economic resource: access to the system. It can also be a piece of economic infrastructure, the place where goods are assembled for sale, services offered, equipment repaired. “Housing policy” in such a city is as much a basic component of general economic and social policy as “land reform” is for a peasantry.¹⁷

As an example, and in clear contrast to the middle-class model described above, the houses of the poor in self-built neighborhoods in Latin America expand not in terms of social areas, but rather in the number of bedrooms and amount of storage space. More bedrooms allow the accommodation of younger generations (grown children, grandchildren, and other relatives) in the all-important and key resource of the house, while more storage space shelters spare goods that might come in handy later, while also supporting different kinds of business ventures and initiatives. This all accounts for an environment that is in constant flux and adaptation, what Rahul Mehrotra has called the “kinetic city”, as opposed to the “static city” of formally designed urbanism.¹⁸

The aesthetic model that underpins development patterns and practices, as well as public regulations, is thus one factor that affects a city’s degree of responsiveness to the needs of its more underprivileged citizens. Standard middle-class models put many people at a disadvantage, because they implicitly demand resources that poorer citizens lack, such as private cars or specialized real estate. Instead of prioritizing cheap access, mixed use, or functional versatility, many cities tend to emphasize formal beauty, fashionable styles, and pre-established separations of use that segregate the more “disreputable” forms of work.

None of this should be taken as a criticism of the intrinsic aesthetic or practical values of the harmonious and well-designed middle-class urban landscape, or of the regulations that demand and uphold them. Given the resources and design talent frequently bestowed in many of these projects, it would be odd if the results were not of very high quality, or if they weren’t highly appreciated, even by the urban poor themselves. But the fact remains that these environments will be, in many contexts, highly exclusionary, unless subsidies are deployed to include low-income users and residents. As economist John Kenneth Galbraith has said in discussing the United States’ anti-poverty policies in slums, “The modern urban household is an extremely expensive thing”.¹⁹ This wording applies equally to the modern middle-class house, neighborhood, and workplace. In this regard, and as we will expand further below, only two paths seem to present themselves if social exclusion is to be avoided: societies can either impose high standards and subsidize those unable to afford them, or those standards must be relaxed for the sake

of social inclusion. The first approach is more common in wealthier countries, such as those in Europe, while the second is frequently the *de facto* solution in the global south, where a considerable proportion of the urban landscape is built by the poor residents themselves in violation of the urban norms supposedly in force for the whole city.

The above discussion on the impact of the middle-class ethos on the design of houses and cities has already illustrated an important way in which social exclusion takes form: through the stylistic expression of power and social order. In the following chapters, we will address the topic by focusing more precisely on its locational aspects, specifically on the history and evolution of urban social segregation. For now, and in closing, I will finish with a quote from Veblen that links the long historical trajectory of the social aesthetics of leisure and refinement in the Western world with the social prejudices that underlie so many exclusionary urban practices today.

The archaic theoretical distinction between the base and the honorable in the manner of a man's life retains very much of its ancient force even today. So much so that there are few of the better class who are not possessed of an instinctive repugnance for the vulgar forms of labor. We have a realizing sense of ceremonial uncleanness attaching in an especial degree to the occupations which are associated in our habits of thought with menial service. It is felt by all persons of refined taste that a spiritual contamination is inseparable from certain offices that are conventionally required of servants. Vulgar surroundings, mean (that is to say, inexpensive) habitations, and vulgarly productive occupations are unhesitatingly condemned and avoided. They are incompatible with life on a satisfactory spiritual plane – with “high” thinking. From the days of the Greek philosophers to the present, a degree of leisure and of exemption from contact with such industrial processes as serve the immediate everyday purposes of human life has been recognized by thoughtful men as a prerequisite to a worthy or beautiful, or even a blameless, human life. In itself and in its consequences the life of leisure is beautiful and ennobling in all civilized men's eyes.²⁰

Notes

- 1 Leach, Edmund. 1976. *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2 Elias, Norbert. 2000. *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, translated by Edmund Jephcott with some notes by the author (Revised Edition). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- 3 Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Allan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.
- 4 See The Theory of the Leisure Class. In Veblen, Thorstein. 1993. *A Veblen Treasury: From Leisure Class to War, Peace, and Capitalism*, edited by Rick Tilman. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe.

- 5 Idem, pp. 91–92.
- 6 For a general discussion, see Rybczynski, Witold. 1987. *Home: A Short History of an Idea*. New York: Penguin Books.
- 7 See Bushman, Richard L. 1992. *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. For a Latin American example of this process, see Orlove, Benjamin and Arnold J. Bauer. 1997. Chile in the Belle Epoque: Primitive Producers, Civilized Consumers. In *The Allure of the Foreign: Imported Goods in Postcolonial Latin America*, edited by Benjamin Orlove. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- 8 Espino, N. Ariel. 2005. *Home as Investment: Housing Markets and Cultures of Urban Change in Houston*. Ph.D. Thesis. Rice University.
- 9 Braudel, Fernand. 1992. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: The Structures of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 280.
- 10 See Espino 2005.
- 11 Fishman, Robert. 1987. *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*. New York: Basic Books.
- 12 Schneider, David M. and Raymond T. Smith. 1973. *Class Differences and Sex Roles in American Kinship and Family Structure*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, p. 63. In addition to its class aspects, the modern division of work and residence had, in its origins, a very important gender dimension. The world of work was envisioned exclusively as a male world, while the house was ideally left under the care of a wife, who was expected to become, in her education, activities, and tastes, a favored representative of the “leisurely” lifestyle. In the late-nineteenth century, Veblen observed that the clothing fashions of women were the most physically constraining of all (as they are still today). One of the most important ways in which a man could demonstrate wealth was by having an unemployed wife, who would then lead the life of leisure that the husband was usually denied (especially in the case of the lower-middle classes). Southall’s rather stark description of the Victorian era captures this well: “The external world was the battlefield of men, while the interior was the haven of rest for the capitalist warrior, where the faithful wife must prove by her vanity and helpless stupidity the husband’s power to keep her in idle luxury...” (Southall, Aidan. 1998. *The City in Time and Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 329). For an analysis of the gendered aspect of the early modern home, see Spain, Daphne. 1998. *Gendered Spaces*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- 13 Relph, Edward. 1987. *The Modern Urban Landscape*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 176–178.
- 14 The expressions are borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin’s analysis of popular culture in his work on Rabelais (1984. *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 11).
- 15 See Peattie, Lisa. 1994. An Argument for Slums. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 13 (2): 136–143. See also Peattie, Lisa. 1997. *The Productive City and Its Relations of Production*. Unpublished manuscript.
- 16 See Peattie 1994 for a discussion of the advantages of flexibility in the housing arrangements of the urban poor.
- 17 Peattie 1997, p. 3.
- 18 Mehrotra, Rahul. 2010. Foreword. In *Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America*, edited by Felipe Hernández, Peter Kellett,

and Lea K. Allen. New York: Berghahn Books. Jorge Mario Jáuregui also calls the designed parts of the city “authored spaces”, to emphasize their link to professional work (2010. *Urban and Social Articulation: Megacities, Exclusion and Urbanity*. In *Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America*, edited by Felipe Hernández, Peter Kellett, and Lea K. Allen. New York: Berghahn Books).

19 Galbraith, John Kenneth. 1998 [1958]. *The Affluent Society*. Boston: Mariner Books, p. 242.

20 Veblen 1993, p. 24.

4 Power and urban form

Location

Cities always reflect the power structure of society, but the way this happens varies. In some cases, the process is fairly transparent and explicit; in others, much more opaque and disguised. A lot in this regard can be learned from the metaphors that societies use to imagine, analyze, and plan cities.

In his search for normative theories of city form (i.e., “how to plan” a city), Kevin Lynch singled out three comprehensive metaphors that have been used throughout urban history for the purposes of city planning: “the city as a model of the universe”, “the city as a machine”, and “the city as an organism”.¹ The first was used frequently in the cities of antiquity and in many non-Western cultures, but is rarely deployed in our own non-religious times. The other two are of more recent development, and account for much of city planning discourse today. The machine model focuses on efficiency and technical matters, such as traffic modeling. The purpose is to produce a city that works as capably as a well-oiled machine. On the other hand, the organic model pursues a harmonious relationship between neighborhoods, commercial sectors, green areas, and other “functional” pieces of an organic urban whole. It uses zoning and other planning instruments to produce a “balanced” settlement, so that, for instance, all neighborhoods are close to a public park, or factories do not affect residential areas. Each type of urban area is like a different organ of a single body, each with a distinct location, function, and purpose. Let’s now use Lynch’s metaphors to begin the exploration of our topic.

The city as a “model of the cosmos” refers to those cases where cities or settlements are designed according to a pre-established physical “diagram” that reproduces and reflects the order of the universe, which is considered to be, at the same time, the correct order of society. By matching the form of the settlement to the cosmic order, natural and social stability and harmony are advanced and maintained. These design models were used by a wide variety of past urban civilizations, such as ancient Rome, India, China, and many of their American counterparts, such as the Maya and the Aztec, and also by non-urban cultures in many parts of the world.

The plan of the ancient Indian city, for example, was based on the Mandala, a diagram of concentric circles (or squares) that had a wide variety

of cultural applications.² The central square of the Mandala was the most sacred zone, sometimes considered the center of the world. Correspondingly, when settlements were designed following its principles, the center was reserved for the temple and the *Brahmins*, or higher castes. Progressing outward from the center, a series of concentric rings organized the occupation of other social groups. The further one lived away from the center, the lower the status and the sacredness of its occupants. For example, warriors would occupy the innermost circle after the center, craftsmen the following zone, and laborers the outer edge, against the city walls.³

The set of rules more frequently applied to the design of towns and buildings was the *Vastu purusha mandala*, whose basic diagram consisted of a square enclosing a cosmic man (Figure 4.1).⁴

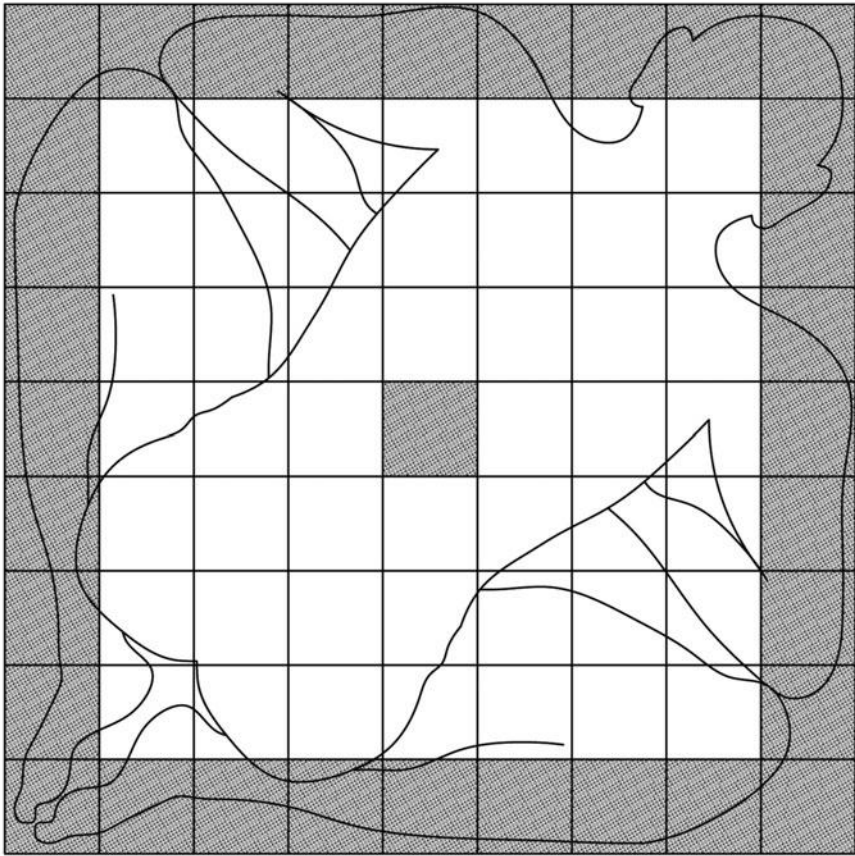


Figure 4.1 Diagram of the Indian *Vastu purusha mandala*, an example of a “cosmic” model used for urban planning. The model served to organize the layout of towns and segregate spatially groups of differing social and sacred rank. Diagram by author.

The square would be divided into a grid of smaller squares, forming a symmetric layout. The central square was assigned to Brahma, the creator, while the smaller squares (called *padas*) were assigned to gods of lower rank. When transposed to the plan of a town, each *pada* would correspond to a town block, housing groups whose social status coincided with the sacred level of the corresponding deity. The town itself should preferably be in the shape of a square, just like the Mandala, with the central axes oriented towards the cardinal points. The cosmic grid would also match the design of the street grid, as well as dictate the road widths. The streets along the more sacred central axes would be the widest, while the ones accessing the peripheral rings would become narrower as one moved to blocks of lower social and sacred rank.

The famous case of the Bororo, a Brazilian aboriginal culture, is another good illustration of these principles, albeit at a smaller scale.⁵ The Bororo village had a round form, consisting of a circular line of huts surrounding a semi-cleared zone (Figure 4.2).

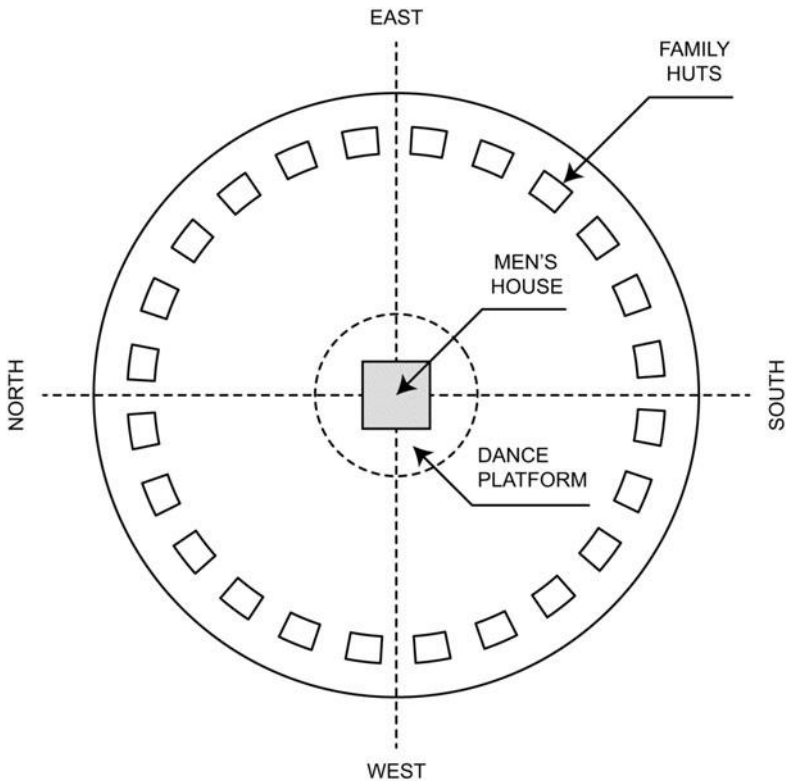


Figure 4.2 Plan of a Bororo village. The layout organized social groups and had also religious dimensions. Diagram by author, adapted from Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1963. *Structural Anthropology*, translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, Figure 9, page 141.

At the center of the empty circle stood the men's house, which was used as a meeting place for married men and as the bachelors' living quarters. Adjoining the men's house was a dance platform, which was used for the village's ceremonial rites, from which women were excluded. The circle of huts at the outer edge housed the women and children. Furthermore, the different sides of the circle housed different clans, which organized marrying patterns for the village. Thus, the division between the center and the peripheral circle represented the opposing worlds of men and women, as well as the sacred and the profane, while the different quadrants of the circle organized different family groups. So important was the physical layout for social life, that Catholic missionaries soon discovered that the easiest way to force the abandonment of the traditional Bororo culture and belief system was to destroy the village layout and reorganize the houses in straight lines. The priests found that the bewilderment produced by the new design made it easier to propose new belief systems and forms of social organization to Bororo communities.

The main point to highlight about these "cosmic models" is that the social order they proposed was transparent and known to all participants, regardless of their place in the hierarchy. The fact that the model was presented in religious terms did not conceal its social dimensions – the layout was explicitly religious and social at the same time.⁶ Today, of course, we don't talk about cities this way. In fact, our discourse about urban issues, replete as it is with "technical" terms, has a very limited social vocabulary. Following our commitment to the mechanical and organic models, our discussion of urban problems focuses on the challenges of traffic circulation, environmental pollution, urban blight or ugliness, decaying neighborhoods, "rational" land use distributions, and so on. Planners or urban authorities don't pretend to tell anyone where to live, and just the thought of it evokes repulsive memories of ethnic ghettos and discriminatory housing practices. We assume that the impersonal mechanism of the market is in charge of the spatial distribution of households, not a specific ideology or, worse, a religious cosmology. But that doesn't mean that our cities lack a socio-spatial order, or that power relations are less important today as a defining force of urban form. As Lynch rightly observed, "the machine metaphor often masks a form of social dominance which is simply less visible than the open display of power in the cosmic city".⁷

The fact is that technical discourse works both as a diversion and a surrogate language in addressing social power relations in the city. The anthropologist Constance Perin provided an excellent example in her analysis of the United States' suburban zoning system in her classic book *Everything in its Place*.⁸ Perin pointed out that the suburban zoning system reflected the ideal of a middle-class urban order enforced at the level of the autonomous local municipality. This order consisted of a "hierarchy" of land uses, with the single-family housing neighborhood occupying the apex. Commercial uses and more dense residential developments, such as apartments or

townhouses, were zoned away from the single-family residential areas in an increasing gradient of density and intensity of “land use”. Homeowners in low-density subdivisions considered their neighborhoods to be spoiled by the presence of nearby apartments for rent or lower-income residents. All these social and aesthetic valuations were translated into a measure of property market values, a concern which served as an important banner of neighborhood mobilization in the control of development in surrounding lands.

Of course, the hierarchy of “land uses” is nothing less than a social hierarchy, cloaked in the technical language of zoning. By saying that “single-family residential development” was incompatible with “multifamily residential development” and that these two types of development had to be separated in different “zones”, one was simply saying that certain people could not live close by to other types of people. This quasi-scientific discourse served to enforce a cosmology not very different from the ones found by anthropologists in faraway societies such as the Bororo.⁹

Concretely, Perin argued that the conventional zoning scheme, designed specifically to protect the single-family home neighborhood, was the spatial and symbolic expression of the dominant social script in North American society of a “ladder of life”, where families started as “urban” apartment renters and worked their way to full home ownership with a house in a suburban environment, perhaps to return to an apartment at retirement age. The detached, privately owned single-family house functioned as a symbol of success and arrival at the middle-class status, the core condition of the “American Dream”, as associated with credit-worthiness (obtained through the relation with the mortgage lender), independence, and a family-centered life. This distinction between renters and multifamily apartment dwellers on the one hand, and homeowners and single-family house dwellers on the other, seemed to mark a crucial symbolic watershed that zoning was called upon to protect, even at the expense of the renting poor, who were simply zoned out of many municipalities.¹⁰ Commenting on her work, other authors highlighted that this zoning system expressed a particularly strong American ideology of meritocracy (as opposed to effective egalitarianism), according to which the government could be legitimately called upon to defend the achievements of those that succeeded socially, while dismissing the impacts on those that “failed”.¹¹ We thus can see this planning philosophy as a “cosmology” similar to the ones framed in religious language by “exotic” societies.

At this point in time, the socially discriminatory dimensions of traditional suburban zoning in the United States (known generally as “exclusionary zoning”) are well known and documented, and have been challenged legally.¹² Historically, we also know that the spread of zoning in the country was due to its effectiveness at segregating social classes in both residential and work environments. The first U.S. zoning ordinance, drafted for New York City in 1919, was critically supported by Fifth Avenue merchants for strictly exclusionary purposes, much to the dismay of the planners who had championed it for its public health dimensions. The main issue in that

instance related to the presence of the garment industry and its workers, who were mostly poor immigrants. Whenever they moved, the shops were followed by the manufacturing establishments that produced their merchandise. The workers used the sidewalks during their lunch hour, mixing with upper-class shoppers and browsers, and ruining the social ambience of the street.¹³ The Fifth Avenue merchants lobbied for an ordinance that would exclude the garment industry from the area, thus creating separate “retail” and “manufacturing” zoning districts, which is exactly what they got.

Due to New York City’s density and history of mixed use, the groundbreaking 1919 ordinance established only one separate residential zone. But when applied shortly afterwards in suburban contexts all over the United States, the possibility of separating different types of residential neighborhoods became zoning’s most popular application.

The important point to highlight is that all this social planning is done without any explicit reference to actual people or their relations. Any planning document written in terms of social class, for example, would not be tolerated nowadays, even though much of what is discussed in terms of “land uses” or “urban activities” is doing exactly that.

The ideological reason behind this linguistic run-around is provided by anthropologist Louis Dumont.¹⁴ Reflecting on his research on the Indian caste system, Dumont makes a distinction between societies that profess an egalitarian ideology, such as our own, and those that have a hierarchical one, such as many traditional societies. In societies with hierarchical worldviews, social inequality is accepted as part of the natural or divine order and incorporated into the group’s cosmology. Every social group or class is ranked, and assigned rights and responsibilities. Our Western societies, in contrast, postulate an intrinsic equality between their members (“all men are created equal”), but then develop comparable or even more dramatic inequalities, which cannot be reconciled with their ideologies. (In fact, the degree of social inequality in today’s world is unprecedented in human history).¹⁵ According to Dumont, this contradiction is responsible for the “shamefaced” and “covert” way that inequality is treated nowadays, as exemplified by the technical language used in planning. We seem incapable of discussing inequality explicitly, without the discussion being seen as lack of tact or as fomenting “class warfare”. In other words, we have the problem of a hierarchical society that professes an egalitarian ideology.

According to Dumont, societies that have hierarchical worldviews try to integrate all their members, even if (as is frequently the case) they end up in a subordinate position. This position, however, comes with certain rights, since the survival of society depends on the survival of all its parts, including the weaker ones. In contrast, modern societies have a much more difficult time imagining a place for the “losers” in the battle for social success, and thus tend to simply exclude them. In sum, faced with groups that differ from the norm, says Dumont, “they will assign a rank, where we in the West would approve or exclude”.¹⁶

Of course, we would never endorse returning to such organically integrated social structures, and with good reason. Explicit hierarchies of this type are not only unfair according to our values but also seem extremely rigid. Our modern conception sees social order not as complete and eternal, as in a cosmic diagram, but as an evolving entity that responds to our changing plans and desires, ideally resulting from democratic processes.¹⁷ The possibility of change, adaptation, and social mobility are essential components of this modern cosmology. The point then is not to idealize societies with hierarchical ideologies, but to highlight how the processes that we use today to deal with social order, be it through the action of technical experts or of the marketplace, have an intrinsic conflict with our own egalitarian ideals. If we want to act responsibly as city builders, we have no other option than to address this conflict directly.

Notes

- 1 Lynch, Kevin. 1984. *Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 73ff.
- 2 Rykwert, Joseph. 1988. *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 163ff.
- 3 See also Southall, Aidan. 1998. *The City in Time and Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 243ff.
- 4 Nathan, Vini. 2002. *Vastu Geometry: Beyond Building Codes*. In *Nexus IV: Architecture and Mathematics*, edited by José Francisco Rodrigues and Kim Williams. Florence: Kim Williams Books.
- 5 Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1963. *Structural Anthropology*, translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, p. 141ff.
- 6 For readers familiar with the architecture literature, my argument here will recall the one by Tzonis, Alexander. 1978. *Towards a Non-oppressive Environment*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- 7 Lynch 1984, p. 88.
- 8 Perin, Constance. 1977. *Everything in its Place: Social Order and Land Use in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 9 An alternative to technical language is provided by aesthetic regulations, and many planning norms include both types of justifications. The social effects tend, of course, to be comparable. James S. Duncan and Nancy G. Duncan provide a telling list of regulated topics in their study of a mostly-affluent suburban municipality in the United States and its exclusionary practices: “provision of privacy; avoidance of congestion of population; conservation of the value of land and buildings; protection against unsightly, obtrusive, and obnoxious land uses; the enhancement of the aesthetic aspect of the natural and man-made elements of the town; restrictions on the use of solar energy collectors (...); and the minimization of conflicts among uses of land and buildings” (2004. *Landscapes of Privilege: The Politics of the Aesthetic in an American Suburb*. New York: Routledge, p. 88).
- 10 See also Krueckeberg, Donald A. 1999. The Grapes of Rent: A History of Renting in a Country of Owners. *Housing Policy Debate* 10 (1): 9–30.
- 11 Rapoport, Amos. 1979. Review of Perin’s *Everything in Its Place*. *Journal of Architectural Research* 7/1 (March): 34-37.

34 *Social power and urban space*

- 12 Abeles, Peter L. 1989. Planning and Zoning. In *Zoning and the American Dream: Promises Still to Keep*, edited by Charles Haar and Jerold S. Kayden. Chicago: Planners Press.
- 13 Toll, Seymour I. 1969. *Zoned American*. New York: Grossman Publications.
- 14 Dumont, Louis. 1980. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*, translated by Mark Sainsbury, Louis Dumont, and Baisa Gulati. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- 15 Lines, Thomas. 2008. *Making Poverty: A History*. London: Zed Books, p. 3.
- 16 Dumont 1980, p. 191.
- 17 Taylor, Charles. 2004. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press.

5 Power and urban segregation

A brief historical review

Moving now to the topic of urban segregation, it is clear that explicitly hierarchical societies produced segregated cities, in which different groups were assigned different spaces according to their rank. In a general sense, this segregation separated the powerful from the weak, but in order to understand modern segregation it is essential to note some important differences, as well as some important exceptions, especially concerning the history of Western urbanism.

Segregation in preindustrial cities had little to do with social class as we understand it today. As a general rule, most urban segregation was produced and enforced along two dimensions: ethnicity and occupation.¹ Cities were usually divided into neighborhoods or districts inhabited by either distinct ethnic groups or occupational guilds. Ethnic districts were formed by extended family groups or clans, foreigners engaged in specific industries, or immigrants coming to the city from a common, ancestral rural region. Sometimes these residential compounds were closed off from the public streets with high walls and controlled gates, which limited entry to residents and were sometimes locked at night. This pattern can be found in a variety of ancient cities in China, the Arab world, and pre-Columbian America. Since production of goods was usually tightly controlled by guilds, workers engaged in specific crafts also clustered together, combining workshops, stores, and residential facilities. Oftentimes, ethnic and occupational groupings coincided, since some nationalities specialized in certain goods or products.

Within the districts, however, social status could vary considerably. Ethnic groupings could be as hierarchically organized, and as socially diverse, as the city itself. Hierarchy imposed itself among the members of these well-integrated communities, as it did in the society as a whole. For their part, occupational districts included workshop owners, specialists, apprentices, and low-status laborers, all of whom varied considerably in their resources. In some instances, nationalities were segregated in cities not because they were weak, but rather because they were potentially too powerful or influential. This was the case of many foreign merchant groups, who were not integrated into the local political structure because their economic success represented a threat to the local rulers. Differences in religious beliefs could also be

dangerous to the ideological purity of the city. In seventeenth-century Nagasaki, Dutch merchants could only live in a closely guarded area in the outskirts of the town.² During the same era, Protestant European merchants were forced into a specific zone outside of Moscow's city walls – a zone that eventually became its most fashionable neighborhood.³ Urban segregation in explicitly hierarchical societies was, in consequence, wrought out of considerations of social rank, ethnic origin, occupation, religion, and nationality, rather than simply wealth. This leads historian Spiro Kostof to argue that “[urban] Divisions based on economic disparity are in some ways the newest”.⁴

On the other hand, preindustrial cities frequently counted on non-spatial mechanisms to regulate interactions between different types of people, which allowed for fairly high levels of social interaction and, in some cases, even rendered segregation unnecessary. This was the case of European cities through most of the continent's history, as we will see below. One of the most common non-spatial mechanisms consisted of “sumptuary laws”, which were widely used in order to clarify who was who in cities that tolerated high levels of social mix, be they segregated or not. Sumptuary laws specified what kinds of clothes, accessories or even transportation means different social classes were allowed to use. Another non-spatial mechanism consisted of established rules of deference; that is, gestures, greetings, and acts of reverence that lower classes had to perform in the presence of their superiors. In Panama City in 1623, four members of the city's elite were imprisoned for not dismounting and bowing in the presence of two government officials, as the rules demanded.⁵ Even the rigidly organized Indian cities complemented segregation with elaborate rules about interactions between members of different castes.

In England, sumptuary laws were established in the thirteenth century, and lasted for almost 400 years. Smooth fabrics like silk, bright colors, buttons and buckles were limited to the gentry.⁶ A late sixteenth-century English proclamation limited “cloth of gold, silver, or tinsel; satin, silk or cloth mixed with gold or silver” to “earls ... and all superior degrees, and viscounts and barons”, while “woolen cloth made out of the realm; velvet, crimson, scarlet, or blue; furs, black genets, lucerns” were allowed only for “dukes, marquises, earls or their children, barons, and knights of the order”.⁷ Sumptuary laws were also deployed in cities of ancient Greece, Rome, Japan, China, and the Islamic world. In most preindustrial cities, a cursory glance at an urban crowd provided more than enough information about the social rank of any individual. As historian Fernand Braudel points out, “Their costumes immediately [would] give them away”.⁸ Opera fans are familiar with the confusion and havoc that Mozart's *Don Giovanni* caused among his female victims by exchanging clothes with his servant at night.

In the words of a seventeenth-century source, sumptuary laws existed so that “the Ranks of People should be discerned by their clothes”.⁹ In Europe, they were enforced extensively from the Middle Ages to the early modern period, ebbing and flowing in response to very concrete social transfor-

mations.¹⁰ The most important social changes were the growth of cities, the appearance of new merchant classes and the concomitant reshuffling of power structures. The anonymity of growing urban populations and the appearance of new wealthy classes meant that the customary symbols of social status were being upended or ignored. Through sumptuary laws, urban European societies tried to provide symbolic stability in a dynamic social environment, as is argued in a detailed history of these policies:

On the one hand, [sumptuary law] offered a solution to pervasive problems in the process of urbanization of coping in a “world of strangers” and of living in the “company of strangers”, learning how we are to “know”, to “identify”, to “recognize” others. (...) On the other hand, the second project of sumptuary law was concerned with efforts to protect and reinforce hierarchical status claims of dominant classes. I will add an important extension to this second strand, namely that the protection of dominant classes by sumptuary laws intensified as the claims to superiority began to lose hegemony and become challenged by new social forces.¹¹

Sumptuary laws were important because European cities, from antiquity onwards, had a relatively low level of social segregation, so that space, in terms of where one lived or worked, was generally unreliable as a source of information on social rank. In Imperial Rome, workers lived dispersed throughout the city, and the housing of rich and poor intermingled in a dense, compact urbanism of multi-storied buildings.¹² In addition, for many centuries it was common for wealthy families to share their living spaces with large numbers of servants, slaves, and other laborers (Figure 5.1).¹³

In London, in the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, it is estimated that between 13 and 20 percent of the total workforce consisted of household servants.¹⁴ So common was the concept of a poor population integrated to wealthier households, that a sixteenth-century Rouen law regarding beggars demanded that “All those capable of work who have no trade or other source of income and lead lives of idleness and vagrancy are to leave the city within eight days, or find themselves a master”,¹⁵ and a seventeenth-century Toulouse booklet on the same topic referred to the poor working man as someone who “by the circumstances of his birth, is fated to serve the rich”.¹⁶ The following description of life in Imperial Rome captures this pattern in an early stage:

One sign of status was being surrounded by large numbers of lower-status clients, flatterers, and servants. Wealthy patrons often saw to it that such retinue lived close by. In Rome, they typically allowed their clients to enter the *domus* at will; they even set aside public sections of their homes specifically to cement these cross-class relationships. The most important violation of residential class lines, though, arose because



Figure 5.1 Jean Baptiste Debret’s early nineteenth-century depiction of a Rio de Janeiro “bureaucrat” promenading with his family is a good illustration of an explicitly hierarchical society that incorporates servants, slaves, and other laborers into the household. The order in this procession was predetermined, and the servants (following the wife) were lined according to their rank. “A Bureaucrat Promenades with His Family”, from Jean Baptiste Debret, *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil* (1834–1839). Image by SuperStock.

of wealthy people’s desire to control another crucial economic resource – the labor of personal servants. The *domus*, like aristocratic households across the world well into our own times, functioned as a kind of factory producing leisure and pleasure for the rich. Aristocrats typically lived with dozens of their social inferiors: cooks, gardeners, personal guards, musicians, dancers, and other specialized servants, most of whom were slaves. Though the slave quarters in Roman households were usually shunted to outer corridors, few doors or gates – if any – separated them from the most intimate spaces of the elite family.¹⁷

The basic social geography of many early medieval European cities showed a pattern familiar to modern eyes, with the wealthy living in the center, alongside the main religious and economic institutions, and the poorer members distributed in the periphery. As a general rule, those living closer to the center enjoyed a higher status. But the common effect of urban growth and densification was to mix classes, combining households of different means in the same buildings.¹⁸ In many cases, segregation was practiced vertically. In medieval

Italy, the floor just above street level housed the wealthiest families, and was called the *piano nobile* (“noble floor”), which evinced the existence of not-so-noble ones above and below.¹⁹ The Parisian garret of the proverbial starving artist frequently crowned luxurious town houses. According to Braudel, in seventeenth-century Parisian apartments, “...the social condition of the lodger deteriorated the higher he climbed. Poverty was the rule on the sixth or seventh floors, in attics and garrets”.²⁰ In nineteenth-century Berlin and Stockholm, upper-class apartments lined the streets, thus guaranteeing adequate lighting and ventilation, while the poor lived in cramped rooms around tiny courtyards in the middle of the same block.²¹

Writing in sixteenth-century Italy, the architectural theorist Leon Battista Alberti acknowledged that, in terms of residential segregation, there was a diversity of preferences among the elite.

There may perhaps be some who would like better to have the habitations of the gentry separate by themselves, quite clear and free from all mixture of the meaner sort of people. Others are for having every district of the city so laid out, that each part might be supplied at hand with every thing that it could have occasion for, and for this reason they are not against having the meanest trades in the neighborhood of the most honourable citizens.²²

As Alberti makes clear, social mix was inevitable if one sought a well-served neighborhood, since the poor provided many of the products and services required for daily life. Practical problems of traditional technologies also played a role in extending these urban patterns through time, as is argued in a history of three European capitals:

Socially mixed neighborhoods remained so [in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries] because the middle classes required the services of their less affluent neighbors. (...) It is precisely because today’s middle classes are less able to exploit the working classes that our cities have become more segregated than they were. It was only when the servantless, do-it-yourself household became the norm, with the large refrigerator, deep freeze, and the family car permitting once-a-week shopping at a distant supermarket, that the cluster of mews, back courts, and mean streets ceased to be the necessary adjunct to any middle class neighborhood.²³

It should be noted that, while these types of arrangements have largely disappeared from many parts of the Western world, they have found new versions in the global south, in cities of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where large populations of rural immigrants still guarantee a steady supply of cheap domestic workers, as was the case in Europe several centuries ago. In some Latin American countries, where domestic servants are still common for a large percentage of the middle class, these “mean streets” have now

been internalized into the house or apartment in the form of separate “service areas”, consisting usually of a maid’s room close to the kitchen or laundry spaces, and sometimes complemented with separate service entrances, corridors, stairs, or even elevators.²⁴ The two-part division of “private” spaces (for individuals and family) and “public” spaces (for guests) that we saw for the U.S. home becomes here a tripartite structure including an additional “service” zone. This stratification is even more reminiscent of an aristocratic past, but in a local version that incorporates colonialism’s racial stratification and the identification of household chores with domestic servants or slaves.²⁵ In general, then, and in a clear break with a more recent past, living spaces for subaltern social groups in the Western world have now been segregated from higher-income areas or, as in Latin America, incorporated back into the residential structure.²⁶

The ideology, and practice, of residential segregation as we understand it today appeared for the first time in England during the Industrial Revolution.²⁷ The social geography that Frederick Engels describes for the city of Manchester in the middle of the nineteenth century presents a telling contrast with Alberti’s earlier assessment:

The town itself is peculiarly built, so that a person may live in it for years, and go in and out daily without coming into contact with a working-people's quarter or even with workers, that is, so long as he confines himself to his business or to pleasure walks. This arises chiefly from the fact, that by unconscious tacit agreement, as well as with outspoken conscious determination, the working-people's quarters are sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle class; or, if this does not succeed, they are concealed... .²⁸

Several factors contributed to this historic shift. One was the size of the industrial city, which set a new standard in the urban history of the world. The city of London, one of the largest in Europe, had a population of half a million by the early-eighteenth century, roughly the same as Imperial Rome two thousand years earlier. By 1840, however, it had already grown to 2.5 million, and had swelled to 4.5 million by 1900.²⁹ Modern industries were also larger than the typical manufacturing workshops of previous eras, which meant that most workers were now part of an anonymous mass of factory laborers. The whole capitalist process did away with those typical “heterogeneous establishments... of most pre-industrial cities ... [where] ... persons of a wide variety of statuses and occupations, as well as ethnic origins, were bound together in patron–client chains with some degree of close contact and personal interaction, yet great social inequality...”³⁰ In the transition to an industrial society, social inequality was maintained, but the new army of anonymous workers had now no place inside the owner’s family quarters. The workplace became a large, centralized facility under constant surveillance³¹ – that is, a factory – and workers’ housing was equally segregated into distinct urban

The new geography of poverty also changed the moralistic discourse regarding the urban poor. During the Middle Ages, and before full industrialization, the main concerns of the urban elites were focused on the population of beggars and vagrants, especially when their numbers swelled in response to rural crises of food production. Medieval urban populations were accustomed to handling a fair number of beggars and paupers on a regular basis. It is estimated that, during the late Middle Ages, “beggars and paupers made up between 15 and 20 percent of the population, and that this percentage was stable”.³⁴ Beggars were regularly maintained through private alms giving and the work of the Church, its institutions and congregations. The practice of helping this population was seen as a duty under the period’s notion of Christian charity, and was an action linked to the salvation of wealthy citizens’ souls. Beggars were an integral part of medieval society, and were frequently organized in a similar fashion to craftsmen’s guilds. It had become a profession that, in line with the times, involved its own norms and standards for clothing, appearance, and manners.

When this population increased beyond its regular numbers, however, urban society was destabilized. The main anxiety involved confronting a population that was not under the control of wealthy families, the guilds or any of the formal power structures of the city. During these times, in the words of historian Bronislaw Geremek, “vagrants were assimilated to fugitives and were therefore incompatible with a system based on dependence rather than personal liberty”.³⁵ An increased population of beggars and vagrants would put pressure on the established system of charity, invariably triggering suspicions and accusations of fraud from the urban elites, who feared being taken advantage of. Censuses, arrests, deportations and other repressive measures were deployed in the hope of separating the so-called “true” beggars from the “false” ones, the “healthy” from the “unhealthy”, or the “honest” from the “dishonest”.³⁶ The “false” beggars were normally accused of being cheaters disposed to idleness. Laziness, dishonesty, and irresponsible behavior were the moral vices most frequently linked to the urban poor, that is, to beggars, vagrants, and paupers. The excessive concentration of vagrants in a city was also feared because of the riots they could cause if insufficient alms or jobs were forthcoming.

Industrialization brought an end to this model, and to its discourses and policy responses. The new industrial economies *needed* mass immigration from the countryside. On the other hand, the new form of urban “assimilation” was the conversion of the poor into an urban proletariat, which was, on the one hand, “free” from patron–client relations, and, on the other, forced to sell its labor and find its own accommodations in the city. Rather than being dispersed around the city, this population was now concentrated in very specific areas, and the target of the new policies and discourses was now a geographic entity: *the urban slum*.

Initially, and in continuity with previous patterns, urban slums were condemned in moral terms. In addition, public health concerns became salient,

since their sanitary conditions were blamed for the epidemics that ravaged nineteenth-century industrial cities.³⁷ The first United States governmental report on housing, published in 1895, combined both considerations in typical fashion:

The slum must go. Not only is it a menace to public health, but it is a moral fester wherein character is being continually debauched and the evils which afflict civilization recruited.³⁸

It is important to note that an important part of the moral dangers present in the urban lower class neighborhoods was their propensity for rioting and the dangers they posed in terms of social revolt. In fact, a common term for the new urban poor was “the dangerous classes”, which again echoed previous urban discourses.

Eventually, with the surge of progressive urban policies in the inter-war period, and especially after World War II, the moral criticism of urban slums subsided, and attention was paid almost exclusively to the improvement of housing and sanitary conditions for the urban poor.³⁹ With the “conservative revolution” of the 1980s, however, moralistic discourses regarding the urban slum made a comeback, now in the context of “welfare cheats”, a term with an eerie resemblance to the medieval discourse on “true” and “false” beggars. We will come back to this topic later, in the context of the discussion of the potential psychological impacts of segregation. For now, it is important to locate the origins of these discussions in the early industrial city. With the Industrial Revolution, Western societies started concerning themselves with the lifestyles of the urban poor, because what they frequently saw in the behavior of these classes – now freed from patron–client relations and common rules of deference – was supposedly incompatible with reigning middle-class customs, be they related to manners, taste, hygiene, family life, sexuality, or work ethic. How to “teach” the poor to live according to middle-class standards became a common preoccupation.

Building cities for this new social mix became a challenge. Public spaces such as urban parks, another important modern innovation, were now sometimes seen as places where the poor could mingle with the middle classes and acquire the right values through emulation; that is, where they could be “socialized”.⁴⁰ More sweeping strategies were also called for. One possible solution for the wealthier classes was simply to leave the city altogether and suburbanize. Another was to reassert the city’s elite character, refashioning its center according to the tastes of the newly powerful classes, even if that meant displacing the poor. The first path was followed in the cities of industrial England; the second, in Paris, with Baron Haussmann’s drastic nineteenth-century urban reforms.⁴¹ These types of models are very much still with us: in the latter case, with the gentrification projects of central city districts; in the former, with the development of new and segregated wealthy suburbs and communities, which are also now increasingly gated.

Notes

- 1 Southall, Aidan. 1998. *The City in Time and Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2 Idem, p. 179.
- 3 Kostof, Spiro. 1992. *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form Through History*. Boston: Bulfinch Press, p. 94. The urban segregation of foreign merchant groups is a constant in world urban history (see Nightingale, Carl H. 2012. *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 27–28). The term “ghetto”, for example, was coined in sixteenth-century Venice to designate the forcibly segregated neighborhood of Jews (idem, p. 32).
- 4 Kostof 1992, p. 117.
- 5 Castellero Calvo, Alfredo. 1994. *La vivienda colonial en Panamá*. Panamá: Biblioteca Cultural Shell, pp. 266–267.
- 6 See Bushman, Richard L. 1992. *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p. 69ff., where the topic is analyzed with reference to U.S. history. The parallel process in Latin America is described in Bauer, Arnold J. 2001. *Goods, Power, History: Latin America’s Material Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press. See also Braudel, Fernand. 1992. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century: The Structures of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 311ff.
- 7 Cited in Hunt, Alan. 1996. *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, p. 119.
- 8 Braudel 1992, p. 314.
- 9 Cited in Hunt 1996, p. 109.
- 10 Idem.
- 11 Idem, p. 109.
- 12 Morris, Anthony Edwin James. 1979. *History of Urban Form: Before the Industrial Revolution*, Second Edition. Harlow, Essex: Longman Scientific and Technical, pp. 66–67.
- 13 Braudel 1992, p. 308.
- 14 Geremek, Bronislaw. 1994. *Poverty: A History*, translated by Agnieszka Kolakowska. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 63.
- 15 Idem, p. 153.
- 16 Idem, p. 223.
- 17 Nightingale 2012, p. 40. The *domus* was the name used for the houses of the wealthy in Imperial Rome.
- 18 Geremek 1994, pp. 69–70.
- 19 Kostof 1992, p. 118.
- 20 Braudel 1992, p. 278.
- 21 Kostof 1992, p. 118.
- 22 Cited in *ibid.*
- 23 Olsen, Donald J. 1986. *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 133.
- 24 See Holston, James. 1989. *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 177ff. for the case of Brazil.
- 25 For an exploration of the association between house chores, racial groups, and domestic spaces in Brazil, see Goldstein, Donna M. 2003. *Laughter Out of*

- Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 26 The spatial definition of “service areas” shows that, once segregation is established at the city level, the incorporation of subaltern classes into the home of wealthier households is seen as an exception to the rule, and treated as such. In the U.S., regulations that enforced urban racial segregation frequently made exceptions for servants. A 1910 Baltimore ordinance, “...divided every street in... ‘white blocks’ and ‘colored blocks’ based on the races of the majority of their inhabitants at the time of the ordinance’s passage. It set a penalty of one hundred dollars and up to a year in the Baltimore city jail for anyone who moved to a block set aside for the ‘opposite race,’ except black servants who lived in the houses of their white employers” (Nightingale 2012, pp. 1–2).
- 27 Kostof 1992, p. 118.
- 28 Engels, Frederick. 1993. *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, edited with an introduction and notes by David McLellan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 57.
- 29 Southall 1998, p. 320.
- 30 Idem, p. 256.
- 31 Giddens, Anthony. 1995. *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, Second Edition. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 157ff.
- 32 Galbraith, John Kenneth. 1998 [1958]. *The Affluent Society*. Boston: Mariner Books, p. 237.
- 33 Koven, Seth. 2004. *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 34 Geremek 1994, p. 100.
- 35 Idem, p. 101.
- 36 Geremek 1994.
- 37 Hall, Peter. 2002. *Urban and Regional Planning*, Fourth Edition. London: Routledge, Chapter 2.
- 38 Cited in Harloe, Michael. 1995. *The People’s Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe and America*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 22.
- 39 Harloe 1995.
- 40 Sarkissian, Wendy. 1976. The Idea of Social Mix in Town Planning: An Historical Review. *Urban Studies* 13: 231–246. See also Cranz, Galen. 1982. *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 183ff.
- 41 Olsen 1986.

6 Power and urban segregation

The contemporary context

The urban historian Robert Fishman has argued that at the origin of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British process of suburbanization, precursor of the same phenomenon in the United States, lies the emergence of the modern idea that “social distinctions require physical segregation”.¹ This idea is now central to most forms of contemporary urban development.² It is now generally assumed that in most modern, industrial societies, location in physical space has become an indicator of location in social space.³ Your social status is indicated by where you live, which becomes a reflection of your wealth rather than your ethnicity or occupation. With no stable consumption patterns to distinguish people, space has become more critical than before as an indicator of social standing. The loss or absence of inter-class behavioral codes has also encouraged people to pursue daily interaction only with those with whom they share comparable levels of income, education, and culture, i.e., social power. As indicated before, the sheer size of modern urban populations also works against the stabilizing force of familiarity, the possibility that your social status is not in doubt because everyone knows who you are. Anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep, who famously named and analyzed the “rites of passage”, compared human societies to a “house divided into rooms and corridors”.⁴ For individuals, the assumption of new roles, identities, and statuses was like moving from one room of the house to another, and rituals and ceremonies typically marked this passage. Modern societies in the West must then be classified among those where this spatial metaphor becomes quite literal. In cities, status is now linked to spatial location, and social transitions tend to involve moving trucks.

All of this not only means that modern cities have a tendency to be residentially segregated. It also implies that contact between classes in public spaces has become more problematic, for it affords none of the status-reinforcing interactions of earlier eras and, in fact, may confuse the identity of the participants. One now is not only compelled to live in the right places, but also to shop and recreate in the right places too. Public settings have thus become group-specific.⁵ In some cases, the workplace is the only remaining setting where people from different classes can still come into contact (e.g., a CEO

and a janitor).⁶ Blumenfeld neatly summarizes this seismic historic transition from the perspective of the United States:

In preindustrial societies, a large part of the “lower” classes lived on the premises of their masters, as slaves or domestic servants. The alley dwellings of Washington and other Southern cities still reflect this older pattern. Elsewhere, as in Chinese cities, ambulant craftsmen worked and often slept in the compounds of their wealthy clients. Almost everywhere in preindustrial cities hovels are found next to or behind palaces. This did not disturb the “upper classes”. Their status was secured by family, title, rank, speech, manner, and clothing. In contemporary American society these no longer determine status. Only financial status remains and is documented by conspicuous consumption. The decisive status symbol is the residence in the “good neighborhood”, legally protected by zoning and fiercely defended against any intrusion of nonconforming elements, structural or human.⁷

Residential segregation, as a privileged means of establishing the social standing of people, is thus one of the most important forces that shape cities today, which then finds its way to all sorts of planning instruments, as we saw in the previous discussion of zoning. But the relationship here between private real estate developers and government action needs to be clarified. Private developers will naturally segregate, since an important part of what they’re selling is social “exclusivity”, that is, the notion that a particular development is targeted to a particular social group and not others. But the developer can usually only control what happens inside the boundaries of her project. She can provide no guarantees that the adjoining parcels will be developed in the future for the “right” (i.e., socially “compatible”) types of projects. The problem is that “free” land markets are subject to too many imponderables. To a certain extent, free markets are “blind” to the concrete symbolic structure that urban projects need to follow in order to respect the intended social hierarchy, which is, in the end, one of the key purposes of the development process.⁸ The reasons for purchasing two-million-dollar homes commonly include social representation and signaling, which can be ruined in our times if a neighboring developer builds, for example, an “affordable housing” project because she inherited the land and has no intention of making money off it by selling it at the “real price”.

This problem did not exist in pre-capitalist societies, since consumption was directly regulated by sumptuary laws rather than subject to somewhat unpredictable interactions. Today, when markets cannot guarantee the social order that we’re after, we also have recourse to force, which in our modern societies is a monopoly of the State. Residential zoning is precisely the mechanism that guarantees the socio-spatial order when the market “fails”. By zoning entire territories in a “rational” manner, municipal authorities complement the private sector’s efforts to create a social order that rewards

and protects its main customers with the status that they are seeking (and paying for). Of course, these customers are usually the same groups that have the most clout in urban politics.

Other aspects of our social dynamics and the corresponding urban development processes also remind us of societies supposedly past or exotic. According to Bourdieu, social tensions are always higher between groups that are “closer” in terms of power (e.g., income), since the possibilities of confusion between them are also higher. (This suggests, somewhat counter-intuitively, that it might be easier to mix groups with large income differentials.) In general, social mobility is achieved, by any family or individual, by accessing the social group immediately above in the social ladder, which can be done, for example, through more luxurious consumption, higher educational credentials, or through marriage. These advances will always tend to be resisted by the superior group, especially in the case of a large-scale movement, since the end result would be a drop in the value of the threatened social position, which, by definition, *depends on its relative scarcity*. Like the real estate advertisements that promote “exclusive” projects, status groups protect themselves with “entry restrictions” that preserve the privilege and the exceptional nature of the social position. Any “upward” movement from lower classes will tend to produce an equivalent movement from the superior group, which will immediately increase the membership prerequisites, say, through higher consumption levels or more sophisticated tastes. All this means, as Dumont points out, that the social hierarchy is always imposed from above; that is, the reason lower groups cannot “move up” is to be found in the restrictions and movements of the higher groups. This is logical, since as Peter Marcuse argues, “No group desires low status; it is imposed on them”.⁹

As Veblen argued more than a century ago, the higher instability of the boundaries between social classes in modern societies can make these dynamics even more critical. If the status of people around you is always moving, and the general expectation is that everyone should do their best to “improve”, emulative behaviors and anxieties are bound to proliferate:

In modern civilized communities the lines of demarcation between social classes have grown vague and transient, and wherever this happens the norm of reputability imposed by the upper class extends its coercive influence with but slight hindrance down through the social structure to the lowest strata. The result is that the members of each stratum accept as their ideal of decency the scheme of life in vogue in the next higher stratum, and bend their energies to live up to that ideal. On pain of forfeiting their good name, and their self-respect in case of failure, they must conform to the accepted code, at least in appearance.¹⁰

These kinds of dynamics can be easily observed in the workings of the real estate industry. In the United States, where residential development is mainly

a private sector affair, projects are regulated in terms of the types of housing that are *excluded* from the neighborhood. Deed restrictions or zoning do not prohibit the construction of mansions in poor neighborhoods, but of course, restrict precisely the opposite possibility, i.e., poor housing in a neighborhood of mansions. The following conclusions from a 1960s sociological study in several California neighborhoods illustrate the point well and are still generally valid today:

The basic framework of a community or subdivision class image is established by the price range of homes that are included in it, but the most important point in the range is the bottom because this price determines the extent to which a community or subdivision is considered socially exclusive. The Lynn Ranch subdivision in Janss/Conejo and the Starview subdivision outside it, for example, are felt to be the highest status subdivisions in the Conejo Valley [Southern California] largely because most people could not afford to live in them. (...)

Similarly, Hillsborough is considered the highest status community on the San Francisco Peninsula partially because it contains expensive homes but partially because it does not contain cheap ones. Since high-priced structures can be found in practically all Peninsula communities, the most important criteria in establishing the framework of a class image becomes the prices of homes that a community can exclude.¹¹

This discussion highlights what anthropologists have emphasized for a long time: the symbolic dimension of consumption. As anthropologist Marshall Sahlins succinctly put it when referring to modern consumer economies, “Rational production for gain is in one and the same motion the production of symbols”.¹² Back in 1944, the economist Karl Polanyi was already using this basic insight in his groundbreaking analysis of the origins of capitalism, *The Great Transformation*:

The outstanding discovery of recent historical and anthropological research is that man’s economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social relationships. He does not act so as to safeguard his individual interest in the possession of material goods; he acts so as to safeguard his social standing, his social claims, his social assets. He values material goods only in so far as they serve this end.¹³

Notes

- 1 Fishman, Robert. 1987. *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*. New York: Basic Books, p. 32.
- 2 Blumenfeld, Hans. 1971. *The Modern Metropolis: Its Origins, Growth, Characteristics, and Planning*, edited by Paul D. Spreiregen. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 53.

- 3 Rapoport, Amos. 1990. *The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication Approach*, with a new epilogue by the author. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, p. 71.
- 4 Van Gennep, Arnold. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 26.
- 5 Rapoport 1990, p. 185.
- 6 Rapoport, Amos. 1980/1981. Neighborhood Heterogeneity or Homogeneity. *Architecture and Behavior* 1: 65–77.
- 7 Blumenfeld 1971, pp. 53–54.
- 8 Espino, Ariel. 2008. La segregación urbana: Una breve revisión teórica para urbanistas. *Revista de Arquitectura* 10: 34–47.
- 9 Marcuse, Peter. 2005. Enclaves Yes, Ghettos No: Segregation and the State. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 23.
- 10 Veblen, Thorstein. 1993. *A Veblen Treasury: From Leisure Class to War, Peace, and Capitalism*, edited by Rick Tilman. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, p. 48.
- 11 Werthman, Carl, Jerry S. Mandel, and Ted Dienstfrey. 1965. *Planning and the Purchase Decision: Why People Buy in Planned Communities*. Berkeley: Center for Planning and Development Research (Unpublished study), p. 86-87.
- 11 Sahlins, Marshall. 1976. *Culture and Practical Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 215.
- 12 Polanyi, Karl. 2001 [1944]. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, foreword by Joseph E. Stiglitz, with a new introduction by Fred Block. Boston: Beacon Press, p. 48.

7 Power and land markets

The preceding considerations have introduced us to the world of urban land markets, which we need to examine more carefully in order to understand how the segregated city is developed. We have portrayed housing markets as a single entity, with winners and losers, and this is precisely how they work. This stands in contrast with the popular (and, unfortunately, quite influential) view among neoclassical economists, who see housing markets as a world of “choice”, in which households bid for space in the city according to their “tastes” and purchasing power, thus producing in the process a market in “equilibrium”. In this view, households engage in tradeoffs that produce “rational”, rather than unfair, outcomes. Usually, this approach relies heavily on the work of economist Charles Tiebout, who popularized this view of urban space as a supermarket of sorts, which could in theory offer different possibilities to a diverse population of households with different housing or neighborhood “preferences”.¹ Tiebout saw as positive the U.S. system of metropolitan governance that, due to its extreme decentralization, produced municipalities with very different service standards. Because each municipality obtained its revenues mostly from the property tax, those with more expensive properties could provide better services and schools. The resulting regional disparities thus allowed, in this view, for the exercise of “choice” among households seeking where to live.² The centrality of the concept of “choice” in these types of analyses is well expressed by an urban economist: “I believe that every correlation or regression investigated by an economist should be justified, if only in the economist’s head, by some kind of formal model that starts with decision-making agents”.³

However, once individual choice and rational decision-making are taken as the starting point for thinking about urban land markets, one steps onto a slippery slope that can lead to statements that defy common sense or are simply mystifying, such as the following:

When deciding upon a community of residence, people pay close attention to differences in local public good provision in prospective communities and differences in the local tax prices they need to pay to consume those goods. (...) As originally discussed by Tiebout, this

typically causes a sorting of individuals by income and class across communities in a metropolitan area. But when choosing where to live in an urban area, people are also concerned about the type of housing and the attributes of the neighborhood that come along with a local public goods/tax package. (...) these concerns usually work to further the degree of spatial segregation across an urban area.⁴

Or,

...the centerpiece of urban economics is the assumption that people choose their locations. (...) the spatial equilibrium assumption requires us to think through why people would be moving to neighborhoods that do bad things to them. Its logic implies that if neighborhoods are doing bad things to their residents, then they must be getting something good back in return, like low housing costs.⁵

To this approach, we can posit the following counterargument. Choice cannot be taken as the starting point of an analysis of consumer decisions in housing (or in any other matter) for a very simple reason: choice is an outcome of power. The more wealth or power you have, the more choices you enjoy, and, of course, the opposite is also true. In fact, one of the surest consequences of poverty is the restriction of choice in almost all facets of life. Thus, choice cannot be placed conceptually at the starting line of housing or any type of consumption, but rather at the end of it, as a demonstration of how power and wealth end up allocated. The fact that households live in dilapidated, unhealthy, or dangerous neighborhoods is not a proof of choice, but rather of the lack of it.

The language of choice and supply and demand is also particularly ill suited to real estate markets, since land cannot be “produced”. Each plot of urban land is a sort of monopoly, since you cannot really create another plot that is exactly interchangeable in location and attributes.⁶

So to clarify matters, below are three basic facts of land and housing markets in our capitalist societies as pertain to segregation and social exclusion.

The price of land, housing, and buildings is determined by the purchasing power of the people or social classes who want them

The price of real estate has as much to do with who’s looking at it as with its intrinsic qualities. If a particular neighborhood is suddenly under the gaze of Hollywood stars, its price will go up, regardless of whether or not it was considered a desirable place to live a month before. Even though we can all agree that certain characteristics of a site are valuable, their influence on price will be secondary to the means of actual prospective buyers. These interested parties will set the price of the real estate because their prestige, high or low,

will set the status of the place, and their power and influence (again, high or low) will determine how the neighborhood will impact people's lives, say, by being well-policed or dangerous.⁷ The mantra of real estate agents ("location, location, location") is often as related to people as to geography. Many squatter neighborhoods in Latin America occupy the mountainsides around their cities and thus enjoy very attractive views, but this doesn't make these zones any more expensive.

In a purely capitalist system, land and housing will be destined for those who can pay more (or pay at all)

Many people may covet a place, but developers and landowners will try to sell their products to those among them who can pay a higher price and thus guarantee higher profits, even if that group represents a tiny minority among the interested parties. In the presence of wealthy buyers, the building industry will crowd at their doors, leaving other households out of the game.⁸ If unimpeded by public policy, the future expectation of serving these customers can also keep land prices up, since many landowners and developers would rather wait for their chances with these more profitable buyers than to build for the more modest-income households waiting in line. Decent housing is also very expensive, and usually a large percentage of households are simply not able to afford it. Many are not even able to pay for the direct costs of land, infrastructure, and construction, let alone developer's profits and overheads. In other words, having an ample supply of urban land or housing is no guarantee that lower-income households will be served, regardless of their numbers. This is a challenge that all affordable housing policies face; segregation only adds another level of complexity.

In Sao Pãolo, Brasil, for example, the private housing market builds very little for the bottom 65 percent of the demand, while, strikingly, 50 percent of the all the housing produced in 2006 was targeted to the top 3.8 percent of demand.⁹ In other words, lower-income households can be regularly "outbid" in the housing market by wealthier households, and this holds true even if the former are not particularly "poor".¹⁰ Even in wealthier countries such as the United States, as much as a third of the population may be unable to afford decent housing at market prices.¹¹

Real estate markets function as a single symbolic system

Or, in more simple terms, what is good for the rich is generally also good for the poor. Given the choice, most people would choose quite fancy places. This doesn't mean that there is not a variety of preferences, but in any integrated society, value (and thus price) always follows power closely. In fact, an important advantage of power is to be able to define what is socially valuable.¹² Differing value systems between ethnic groups or social classes may account for sub-markets in some consumer goods (such as foodstuffs),

but this rarely applies to real estate, which is a very expensive and inflexible type of merchandise.¹³

The problem with much economic discourse is that it plays the same role that we saw previously with planning: it buries power relations in a “technical” language that hinders understanding on the topic or simply covers it up. Just like conventional planning language seems to reduce everything to “land uses” or “activities”, economics is all about objects: producing, buying, selling, and consuming “things”. It rarely accounts for the fact that what people are doing when they participate in the “economy” is really *fashioning social identities and relationships*. It would be much more illuminating if we saw the economy not as a system that produces different kinds of objects, but rather different kinds of *people*.¹⁴ In other words, individuals and groups define, announce, and become who they are (or who they want to be) by consuming certain objects offered in the market. And on the way, of course, the powerful and the weak get sorted out, since this is an important objective of the process to begin with. By reducing consumption outcomes to individual choices, Tiebout-like analyses thus obscure the systemic character of the social problems of cities.

Returning to our main topic, it does not seem reasonable to expect an inclusive and democratic city to emerge from a purely market-driven urban development process. The evidence in front of us is quite conclusive in this regard. For this reason, we will have to explore different institutional arrangements that can complement private development, and can get the work of urban inclusion done.

Notes

- 1 Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures. *The Journal of Political Economy* 64 (5).
- 2 In recent decades, the balkanized administrative landscape of the U.S. has worsened with the appearance of homeowner associations and other forms of “private government” at the level of neighborhoods (see McKenzie, Evan. 1994. *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*. New Haven: Yale University Press. See also Chen, Simon C. Y. and Chris J. Webster. 2006. Homeowners Associations, Collective Action and the Costs of Private Governance. In *Gated Communities*, edited by Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy. London: Routledge).
- 3 Glaeser, Edward L. 2008. *Cities, Agglomeration, and Spatial Equilibrium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 120.
- 4 Wassmer, Robert W. 2005. An Economic View of the Causes as Well as the Costs and Some of the Benefits of Urban Spatial Segregation. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 162.
- 5 Glaeser 2008, p. 187.
- 6 Barlow, James and Simon Duncan. 1994. *Success and Failure in Housing Provision: European Systems Compared*. Oxford: Pergamon, p. 12.
- 7 As Mario Lungo explains in more technical terms (following Christian

- Topalov), the price of the supply of urban land is set by the price proposed by the demand, which itself depends on its social use (2000. *La tierra urbana*. San Salvador: UCA Editores, p. 25).
- 8 In Lungo's terms (2000, p. 59), the housing industry serves the "solvent" consumers, not necessarily the "needing" ones. See also, UN-Habitat. 2003. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*. London: Earthscan, p. 169 ff. On the other hand (and to dispel any unrealistic expectations about alternative political systems), in socialist societies, inequality in housing outcomes was normally produced by the manipulation, by the more powerful groups, of the State's housing allocation process (see Tosics, Iván. 2013. From Socialism to Capitalism: The Social Outcomes of the Restructuring of Cities. In *Policy, Planning, and People: Promoting Justice in Urban Development*, edited by Naomi Carmon and Susan S. Fainstein. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press).
 - 9 Haddad, Emilio and Fernando Pires Meyer. 2009. Housing Conditions and Income Distribution: Evidence from São Paulo. In *Urban Land Markets*, edited by S.V. Lall et al. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. In a recent survey of 41 major Latin American cities, the percentage of households that could not afford the cheapest house in the market hovered between 29 percent (San José) to 80 percent (Caracas), with an overall average of 54% (Bouillon, César Patricio, editor. 2012. *Un espacio para el desarrollo: Los mercados de vivienda en América Latina y el Caribe*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, p. 76).
 - 10 Smolka, Martim O. and Ciro Biderman. 2012. Housing Informality: An Economist's Perspective on Urban Planning. In *Oxford Handbook of Urban Economics and Planning*, edited by N. Brooks, K. Donaghy, and J.G. Knaap. New York: Oxford University Press.
 - 11 Mallach, Alan. 2009. *A Decent Home: Planning, Building, and Preserving Affordable Housing*. Chicago: Planners Press, p. ix.
 - 12 Graeber, David. 2001. *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. New York: Palgrave, p. 88.
 - 13 Miller, Daniel. 1987. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Oxford: Blackwell.
 - 14 Graeber 2001, p. 211.

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Part II

Confronting segregation

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8 Segregation and urban economies

The central idea of the argument so far is the following: In our modern societies, power hierarchies or differentials have a clear spatial expression. In other words, whenever we confront power differentials, we will probably see accompanying forms of segregation. As a general rule, differences in status and social class will translate into spatial separations of one sort or another.

This should not be considered a universal human phenomenon, however, but rather a salient trait of our societies, which do not have the recourse to other signaling mechanisms for social status, such as clear consumption patterns (guaranteed, for example, by sumptuary laws) or established behavioral conventions. In other times and places, consumption codes, rules of etiquette, or simple familiarity lessened the importance of spatial mechanisms for the purpose of organizing and making legible the social landscape.

Of course, personal consumption is still widely deployed in our times as a signaling mechanism, through clothes, accessories, cars, and an infinite list of portable goods, but it is an unstable, ambiguous, and more easily contested terrain. (Try, for example, singling out the first-class travelers in an airport terminal.) The enormous global industry of counterfeit name-brand merchandise is proof of the continued importance of consumer goods as status symbols, but it also shows how open the mechanism is to assault. Space, on the other hand, is much more unyielding, on the one hand due to the monopolistic character of location; on the other, because of the high costs of real estate. It is one thing to produce a fake Prada handbag; it is quite another to try to contest the social impact of high-end housing in a pricy neighborhood.

Segregation will tend to present itself in all social realms, since, as has been argued, power is an intrinsic part of social life. But the modalities will change depending on the activity. The residential realm is perhaps the more easily analyzable. Whenever housing is built on its own through the “free market”, neighborhoods will be typically built for a narrow range of incomes. Lower-cost developments will be segregated or zoned out, price “floors” will be established for the project, and “exclusivity” in terms of buying power will be pursued as a marketing strategy. These mechanisms will then establish the social status of the neighborhood.

Workplaces present a more complex situation. Work environments usually include employees with a wide range of incomes and levels of status and power, all working under the same roof. This compels us to examine workplace segregation at many different levels. As a general rule, segregation in the workplace leads to very clear distinctions between zones inside buildings or complexes. Segregation might take place within the same floor, such as in the proverbial case of the boss's corner office. In tall buildings, some form of vertical segregation might be used, reserving certain stories, for example, for the company executives. In the case of building complexes or corporate campuses, certain separate structures or buildings could concentrate these superior groups.

Such high-status zones will not only be segregated, they will also *look* very different, which highlights the other key insight explored before: power always manifests itself in a distinctive style. We have seen that the stylistic matrix of high-status aesthetics in the West harkens back to the European aristocratic world, which emphasized "refinement" and leisure. This reference should be evoked mainly for heuristic purposes, since our capitalist economies depend critically upon fostering changing fashions. A lot will depend on the type of power that a firm, institution, or corporation dispenses. What is the source of power: money, knowledge, creativity, a combination of some of these...? In other words, we would need to explore something akin to Bourdieu's forms of power (or "compositions of capital"¹) and their stylistic languages in order to understand and/or predict the architectural and urban ambiances of these settings.

Take, for instance, the urban consequences of the more recent forms of the "international division of labor".² In the global north, manufacturing activity has declined, and has moved to the global south or east in search of cheap labor. Some cities in the north have thus specialized in corporate headquarters of leading firms, industries or banks. We should expect these "world cities", as they are sometimes called, to look very different from the cities devoted mainly to manufacturing, even if the latter also retain a sizable population of well-paid executives. The redevelopment of the London Docklands (Canary Wharf) has been described, for example, as an urban and architectural project that "perfectly embodied the Thatcherite dream of marbled offices filled with post-industrial workers staring at screens and making money".³ Luxurious materials, slick design, and absence of machinery (save computers) become here the language of the upper echelons of the corporate world.

In fact, the development of environments suitable for workers in the "service economy" is now seen as key ingredient for the global competitiveness of cities all over the world, and they are located frequently at the urban center, usually at the expense of the urban poor. One of Shanghai's subsidized housing programs, called "the apartment for talented professionals", aims to develop units with "middle-class" standards for professionals moving to the city who cannot yet afford to buy into the private gated communities popular among that class. The program is part of an overall effort to replace dense, mixed-use

and low-rise traditional neighborhoods with high-end apartment complexes, shopping centers, office towers, and hotels, precisely the kinds of facilities that make up the standard (that is, international) upper middle-class environment.⁴ More than one million households have been relocated to the urban periphery in the last 15 years to make way for this transformation, in what could easily be one of the largest and fastest urban gentrification processes in history.

The global leadership of “headquarter cities” tends to extend beyond the merely economic. It is typically also strong in the arts and the expressive sectors (e.g., fashion), which depend on large amounts of disposable income. They bring with them a whole different population, with a different “composition of capital”, and thus different tastes for architecture and urban landscapes. A workforce with a high level of “cultural capital” is almost certainly going to be less conservative in their tastes and lifestyles, and more willing to experiment with environments, building typologies, materials, and so on. The computer industry has developed, for instance, into a business that combines very high profits (“economic capital”) with outstanding scientific or artistic creativity (“cultural capital”). These are the types of highly educated and creative workers that tend to be responsible for gentrification processes and the revival of dense urban centers or old industrial zones as “loft” neighborhoods, something that was perhaps unattractive to older, “Fordist” business elites who saw suburban isolation as the most prestigious residential model.⁵

The “losers” in these environments will be, of course, the members of the low-paying service industries or occupations, such as office clerks, food industry employees, delivery personnel, cleaning service workers or public servants, who nonetheless will work in great numbers in these “headquarter cities”, sometimes comprising a majority of the population. They will frequently have difficulties finding affordable housing or a place cheap enough to install a business. As has been discussed, this difficulty is due to the spatial character of our societies’ power structure, in which places are *defined socially*. The real estate market does not ask, “What is this zone used for?” but, rather, “What is the *social image of this zone?*” Regardless of the variety of people that actually use or work in a place, the market will assign a principal use and status, and price it accordingly. If an urban zone is considered to be a “corporate center”, its real estate will command top prices, even if the actual population of high-paying executives in the area is relatively low. Similarly, lower prices will be charged in a zone seen mainly as a production site, even if it houses a considerable number of well paid employees. In other words, the *price hierarchy* will match the assumed *social hierarchy* of the urban zones or cities.

We will see these types of processes repeated in different types of cities, with different types of economies. Take for example, the typologies that Logan and Molotch proposed for U.S. cities in light of observed economic and social trends: “headquarters”, “innovation centers”, “module production places”, “third world *entrepôt*”, and “retirement centers”.⁶ Or Sassen’s typology of globalized cities: “production zones”, “centers for tourism”, and “major

business and financial centers”.⁷ Each of these types of economies implies a specific type of dominant social power, and thus a particular style of power. They will also imply different forms of agglomeration or decentralization of job centers. All of this will influence segregation trends and the possibilities for social inclusion.

It is easy to see, for example, how globalization can worsen urban segregation. If globalization is seen as mostly a process of expanding markets for goods, social conventions will inevitably accompany this process. From an anthropological point of view, the globalization of products necessarily entails a globalization of desires and anxieties. In other words, if an industry wants to sell products elsewhere, it also has to sell *the desire to buy them*. If the main selling point of these products is social status, as is frequently the case, the process will fuel status anxieties and preoccupations with “economic capital”, perhaps at the expense of “social” and “cultural” forms of power, which may be more amenable to social mix. Forms of status negotiation that depend on local familiarity or on education may be replaced by “conspicuous consumption” (to use Veblen’s classic term),⁸ which might employ segregation as an allied mechanism. One can argue that economic globalization is, to a large degree, a process of global “lifestyle” marketing that deals exclusively with symbols, at the expense of local social relations of any kind. At the same time, it creates a “global elite” that becomes its own reference group, that is, globalized corporate leaders and well-paid employees that have their own consumption standards and styles, and which are internationally established and negotiated. The new housing and office fashions, “golf-course communities”, and other types of developments that accompany the presence of highly-paid multinational workers through the global south, evince, of course, the use of social segregation as an important component of their planning approach.

On the other hand, globalization may also open up new *possibilities* for social mix. If your status reference group is international rather than local, this might make you *less sensitive* about the status of your immediate neighbors. This might also be the case if you’re highly mobile (nationally or globally), and if your stay in a particular city is going to be temporary. If you are a retiree living abroad, you might also not care that much about social status anymore, or your main social relations might be elsewhere. I sometimes found, for example, a higher receptivity for Casco Antiguo’s affordable housing program among international retirees than among local Panamanians.⁹

This relates back to the topic of the *purposes and meanings* of social segregation, to which the next chapters are dedicated.

Notes

- 1 Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. See also Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- 2 Sassen, Saskia. 2006. *Cities in a World Economy*, Third Edition. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.
- 3 Travers, Tony. 2011. Reg Ward Obituary. *The Guardian* (February 22).
- 4 Chang, Ying and Jie Chen. 2013. Public Housing in Shanghai: A Tool with Multiple Purposes. In *The Future of Public Housing: Ongoing Trends in the East and the West*, edited by Jie Chen, Mark Stephens, and Yanyun Man. Heidelberg: Springer.
- 5 These kinds of workers have been called the “creative class” by author Richard Florida (2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class: and How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books). The term “knowledge economy” has also been coined to describe an economy focused on product research and development (as opposed to manufacturing), and “knowledge locations” to characterize the diversity of urban districts created or promoted to concentrate these kinds of businesses. Knowledge locations come in a variety of forms and use a variety of terms, such as “science parks”, “technology parks”, “open innovation campuses”, “creative districts”, and “media hubs”, among others. The corresponding urban design models, and the inevitable gentrification forces that they generate, are explored in Van Winden, Willem, Luis de Carvalho, Erwin van Tuijl, Jeroen van Haaren, and Leo van der Berg. 2012. *Creating Knowledge Locations in Cities: Innovation and Integration Challenges*. London: Routledge.
- 6 Logan, John R. and Harvey L. Molotch. 1987. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 258 ff.
- 7 Sassen 2006, p. 54.
- 8 Veblen, Thorstein. 1993. *A Veblen Treasury: From Leisure Class to War, Peace, and Capitalism*, edited by Rick Tilman. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe.
- 9 Espino, Ariel. 2009. Integración social y desarrollo económico: El caso del Casco Antiguo de Panamá. *Canto Rodado* 4: 1–35.

9 Social benefits of urban segregation

Segregation is such an intrinsic part of our social dynamics and ideology that we cannot simply wish it away. Rather, we need to clearly understand its rationales, virtues, and costs in order to realistically propose alternatives or correctives. So far, we have seen segregation mostly in relation to inequality, which has thrown a rather negative light on the concept. But as a regulator of social interaction, there are important positive effects of segregation as it manifests itself in contemporary societies. In fact, because segregation is such a crucial component of our urban development processes, it inevitably has its advocates and rationales, and they are not without merit. It is important, however, to distinguish between the more harmless forms of segregation and the more clearly exclusionary.

The main defense that has been put forward for segregation, particularly in the residential realm, is that it allows like-minded people to live together and share life on a daily basis. The classic example is the ethnic enclave, where a shared culture within a bounded space allows for a rich social and neighborhood life that would be difficult to sustain with a more scattered living pattern. As previously discussed, this form of segregation has accompanied the urban history of the world for centuries. Ethnic enclaves can offer a number of advantages, both economic and psychological. For recent immigrants, who have not yet mastered the local language or customs, ethnic enclaves can facilitate social integration. By allowing a more gradual familiarization with the host culture and social system, ethnic enclaves can have a key welcoming function for immigrants. Another important advantage is the support of ethnic businesses, which can become important economic bases or stepping-stones for new community members, offering entry-level employment and local know-how. Ethnic enclaves also provide a psychologically safe space for their members, where they are spared from the discrimination or ridicule by dominant social groups that may occur outside the boundaries of the neighborhood. In more extreme contexts, characterized, for example, by violent conflict between ethnic groups in a city, such enclaves can literally save lives by providing “sanctuaries” to their members, and warding off the incursion of enemies.¹

If the idea is to preserve an ethnic culture in the midst of a diverse, modern city, segregation is also a very convenient way to go about it, as geographer

Ceri Peach argues: "If a group wished to maintain its cultural and social values untainted... If it was located in a city, residential segregation would be its best defense from contact with competing models of value or language".² As a general rule, ethnic or cultural purity is best maintained and reproduced within a community if interaction with other competing groups is minimized,³ and segregation can help provide this insulation.

On the other hand, one should never understand ethnic cultures as "pure" entities that exist independently of, or previously to, the social dynamics of cities. Instead of arriving "full-cloth", ethnic groupings can frequently form as the result of social urban interaction. If a particular group feels discriminated against, it might coalesce around a few (previously unimportant) cultural traits, and form a strong ethnic group where none existed before. National origin, skin color, religion, or language commonalities might be suddenly emphasized. Groups that in other circumstances might not have identified with each other, such as different social classes or nationalities, can unite if power struggles with other groups make such a move advantageous. A good example is the so-called "Hispanic" population of the U.S., which encompasses people from more than a dozen different Spanish-speaking countries and dissimilar social classes. The other side of this coin is the ethnic or national group that initially forms enclaves in cities that disappear in two or three generations, when families disperse in the metropolitan area or residents intermarry with the host population. In this case, the ethnic group is "assimilated" by the dominant culture. The important point is to see urban ethnicity, and its correlated ethnic neighborhoods, as forms of social organization that interact and transform themselves in the context of social struggle.⁴ Segregation can have here an important role to play in keeping the group united, and also in facilitating political struggle. Geographically-based group solidarity can have an important political function, by facilitating common action in the demand for better living conditions and services from governments.⁵ We will see below that this function is also important for low-income groups, and for neighborhoods of all social classes.

Generally, the ethnic enclave that is used to justify urban segregation is of the "voluntary" type. It is assumed that social groups form them somewhat freely in order to nurture the group values, customs, ideals, and sensibilities that define any particular culture. But, as the discussion above suggests, ethnic enclaves can also be forced upon their residents. The most extreme cases are those in which ethnic, racial or religious groups are forced, through repression and discrimination, to live in exclusive enclaves, usually under less-than-favorable conditions. This is the case, for example, of the classic Black neighborhood in the United States, which has been frequently imposed on its residents by a long history of discriminatory housing practices.⁶ Forced ethnic segregation has, of course, a deplorable history in modern times, starting with European colonial cities in the global south all the way to the Jewish ghettos in World War II Europe, and South African apartheid.⁷ In

these cases, the neighborhoods will typically show the problems of the “negative” forms of segregation that we will see below.

A highly interactive and interdependent neighborhood can also be based on commonalities of social class and, to an outsider, it might be difficult in some contexts to disentangle the “ethnic” and “class” components.⁸ For example, shared behaviors that might be attributed to ethnicity can also be related to coping mechanisms of an impoverished community. In this sense, it is probably prudent to avoid giving too much explanatory power to the role of ethnicity in the presence of significant levels of social inequality. Poor households of whatever ethnicity may be concentrating in particular neighborhoods because they have no choice, rather than because they want to live together.⁹ Sociologist Herbert Gans made a forceful point of this to architects looking for guidance in culturally appropriate design, by shifting the discussion to the more important effects of inequality:

I am sometimes asked by architects how one designs buildings and neighborhoods that respond to the distinctive culture of low-income people or of an ethnic group; this is a good example of the wrong question. The fundamental, or at least more urgent, user patterns do not vary by class or ethnicity; that is, different income and ethnic groups do not use dwelling units all that differently. ...The main distinction between the rich and the poor is in their ability to pay for space, and the main problem of the latter is to get enough of it. (...) As for low-income or ethnic neighborhood use patterns, these are not so rigid or permanent that they require special designs; in fact such designs sometimes ask people to continue behavior patterns which they would just as soon give up. For example, among some low-income groups street life is not a choice but a necessity, born of lack of space in the dwelling, which would disappear if apartments were large enough.¹⁰

Highly interactive neighborhoods are often found in very poor residential areas, like those of urban Latin America, where many neighbors share or exchange numerous services or activities, such as childcare, transportation, or recreation. In many of these cases, relatives also try to obtain housing in the same neighborhood, so they can support each other on a daily basis, especially with childcare. It is obvious that much of this neighborhood lifestyle is a response to common conditions of deprivation, such as low incomes and the absence of public services. Moving around the city can also be prohibitively expensive for these families, so much social life takes on a localized, neighborhood-based character. Of course, these common conditions foster and are in turn supported by a common culture, which can make segregation quite advantageous (given the lack of alternatives, of course). Neighbors may share tastes regarding pastimes, neighborhood activities, or the use of shared spaces. In some cases, the resulting neighborhood lifestyle recalls that of a rural village, but transplanted into the middle of a city.¹¹ As

Kesteloot argues, the resources of a community always derive from a combination of the households' private resources, government assistance, and the neighbors' efforts of mutual help.¹² As a general rule, the latter will tend to increase if the first two are scarce. If a neighborhood's households are poor, and the government is mostly absent, common activities geared towards sharing and mutual help are bound to become salient.

On the other end of the spectrum, we find the more impersonal mode of neighborhood life of the common middle- or upper-class neighborhood, succinctly described by one of Herbert Gans' informers in his classic study of the U.S. suburb of Levittown: "There are no neighborhoods here and no community, just a bunch of hardworking people who come home to putter around the house on weekends".¹³ In contrast to strong, localized social and family networks, we see here a more atomized pattern, where private family life is the norm in the local environment, and social networks (i.e., friends and relatives) are dispersed across the city, or larger, even international, geographies (Figure 9.1).

This view is a common one for contemporary social relations in cities. It acknowledges that people's social life does not necessarily revolve around the neighborhood. In a recent scheme on the topic proposed by sociologists Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl, for example, people today form "personal communities", which consist of those "significant personal relationships"¹⁴ with whom life is shared. These personal communities can be "neighborhood-

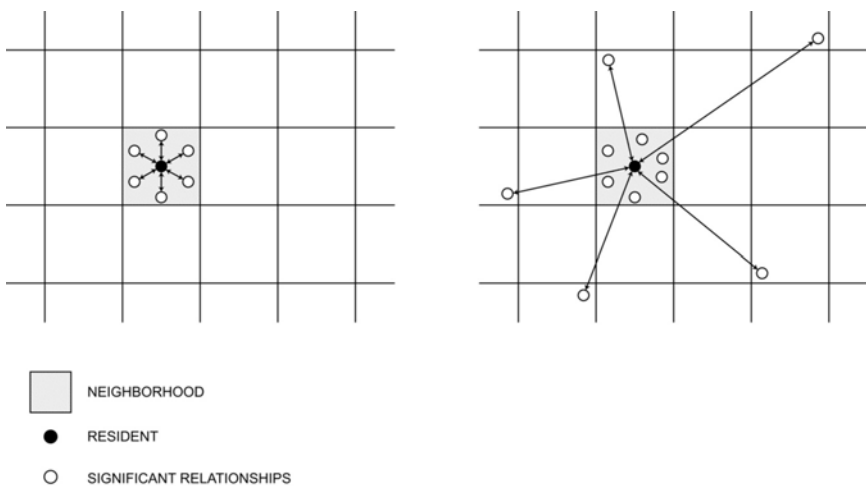


Figure 9.1 Two different types of neighborhood life as they relate to important social relations. In the scheme on the left, significant social relations are concentrated inside the neighborhood boundaries. In the scheme on the right the resident's main relations are outside the neighborhood, in other parts of the city. The first type could correspond to certain ethnic or low-income neighborhoods, while the second one might be more representative of the typical middle-class world. Diagram by the author.

based”, “family-based”, “friend-based”, or “professional-based”, among others, depending on whether the group is primarily composed, respectively, of neighbors, relatives, non-work friends, or colleagues. Only the “neighborhood-based” one depends on physical proximity. Personal communities are formed through shared interests, values, experiences, and commitments, all of which are usually too particular and accidental to coincide with residential living patterns. It is logical to expect that, for those belonging to geographically dispersed “communities”, the neighborhood’s social functions will be rather limited.

This neighborhood model links us with modern sociological theory, which assumes that urban neighborhoods are mainly the result of chance, and present no strong imperatives for social interaction.¹⁵ In contrast to what happens in the proverbial village or small city, family histories and networks are assumed to be less relevant in these modern urban settings. There is no shared “ethnic” culture, no relatives around, no “ancestral homes”, and no relationships that go “way back”. In addition, there is no pressing need to knock on the neighbor’s door. Rather than seeing this pattern as marking a distinction between “modern” and “traditional” or “ethnic” types, however, we are better served by framing it in terms of class. This is, in short, the urban middle-class neighborhood paradigm.¹⁶

In this model, households that do not know each other beforehand converge into a neighborhood in hopes of finding like-minded people and appropriate playmates for their children (if they have any). In lack of other available sorting mechanisms, we usually assume that similarities in such variables as income level, education, and stage in the life cycle can stimulate an active neighborhood life. But, of course, this is a big assumption. Perin has pointed out, for example, the ambiguous position that “neighbors” have in the world of contemporary urban social relations in the United States, where familial connections between neighbors are usually scarce.¹⁷ They don’t fit into traditional sociological slots, such as “relatives” or “friends”, and the category “neighbor” is somewhat empty of meaning and clear expectations. What to expect and what to demand from neighbors is not always clear. Modern lifestyles can be also quite varied, as we all know, and expecting deep social relations to emerge out of neighborhood life may be unrealistic, especially among highly mobile middle-class households. Still, such standard social variables may indeed entail commonalities in pastimes, sports, and other activities relevant for neighborhood life. In addition, since lifestyles are related to power structures, income categories can be a reasonable base line, as long as we keep in mind that social power comes in different guises (as our discussion of “compositions of capital” has shown) and is thus expressed in different behavioral “packages”. A certain degree of income homogeneity may also be useful in avoiding undue pressures on lower-income neighbors to “keep up” with consumption patterns that they can’t afford. These demands can be related to home improvements, social activities, or consumer goods, such as toys or clothing brands popular among the neighborhood’s

children.¹⁸ Being unable to “fit in” due to insufficient income can be a significant source of stress and feelings of shame for poorer families, who might find it more convenient to live among residents with comparable consumption levels.¹⁹

From a practical standpoint, the more productive analyses focus on what *essential* commonalities may be necessary for harmonious neighborhood life among unrelated neighbors.²⁰ Instead of expecting the residential community to become the be-all and end-all of people’s social life, they aim to point out what shared norms are necessary for avoiding a conflict-ridden environment. Such minimum commonalities may guarantee “neighborliness” and avoid enmities, while setting the ground for possible friendships and “more intensive social relationships”.²¹ This was the argument of Amos Rapoport regarding the more traditional notions of urban neighborhoods:

All planners and designers are familiar with the arguments in the literature about whether neighborhoods exist in modern cities or not, how important they are if they do exist and, hence, what design and planning decisions need to be made. (...) It is not a question of whether neighborhoods exist or not. More frequently it is a matter of neighborhoods existing for some purposes and not for others. Just because neighborhoods no longer constitute the setting for *all* of life does not mean that they cannot be important for certain activities and aspects of life.²²

One factor is common norms of property maintenance, and common property use. This might be critical in single-family housing neighborhoods, where maintenance lapses are very visible, and especially in those in which homeowners give great import to the conservation of “property values”, which in the U.S. suburban context, for example, is seen to depend on the overall appearance of the neighborhood.²³ Another critical one is common norms of child rearing. Since children are usually the most socially active among the household members, parents need to feel that their neighborhood peers or their children are not going to be a “negative” influence when they come in contact with their own offspring. On the other hand, keeping children active and entertained with similarly aged peers is a critical objective for parents, so the availability of enough children of the right age becomes an important factor when looking for a neighborhood. A shared commitment among parents to the activities of a neighborhood’s children can also be a tremendously integrating process. The organization of neighborhood sports teams and holiday events can generate considerable interaction among the adults, while the children forge friendships likely to last a lifetime – as long as their families do not move too frequently.

Finally, if we understand these commonalities as also implying common *interests*, they may also foster social cohesion when confronting threats to the neighborhood, such as undesirable developments in adjoining lands. In fact,

common action against exterior threats or in favor of beneficial urban changes has become a very frequent catalyst for neighborhood social interaction beyond the usual minimums (such as the common cordial greetings between neighbors).²⁴ Gans' positive take on what he considers the typical U.S. middle-class neighborhood or "community" emphasizes this capacity to act in concert as its defining characteristic.

...the community is a collection of individual households who live together as good neighbors, but devote themselves almost entirely to their own concerns and interests, leaving the town as a whole in the hands of a few eager or duty-bound activists and the officials who are paid to run its facilities... Once needed organizations are in place, and services function at an expected or tolerated level of efficiency, people devote themselves to family, self, and social life, creating a community only when new needs develop or threats must be dealt with. This is as it should be. The test of community is not cohesion or high level of participation, but whether, when problems arise, people do come together literally or figuratively, to solve the soluble ones effectively and democratically.²⁵

This capacity to act in concert is usually improved by social homogeneity, because class interests normally contribute to common goals in relation to neighborhood politics. If the different residents have conflicting visions, or very different needs, common action might be impaired. On the other hand, some authors argue that equality of status – or at least *perceived* equality – is a precondition for concerted group politics.²⁶ Of course, this discussion is applicable to neighborhoods of any income level.

So far, we have assumed a link between wealth and more impersonal or atomized neighborhoods. However, it would be a mistake to generalize in this regard. The U.S. middle-class pattern is the result of a large-scale, highly professionalized, and geographically mobile society. The country has traditionally been one of the most geographically mobile societies in the industrialized world.²⁷ Improving one's economic condition is frequently accompanied by moving to a new residence or a new town, as the main breadwinners take advantage of changing economic fortunes and opportunities in a vast network of cities. The expectations of moving, and the need to sell the house in a not-so-distant future, also foster standardization in neighborhood design and fuel the aforementioned concerns with "property values".²⁸

In contrast, other societies present a more stable residential pattern, sometimes as a result of smaller networks of cities and economic growth poles, more rigid housing markets, or different attitudes towards social and family relations. In Latin America, it is not uncommon for families of all incomes to move to the same neighborhood in order to sustain highly valued relations with parents, siblings, grandparents, or cousins. In those societies where social relations are critical for economic advancement (that is, where

who you know is as important as *what* you know), families of the same social class, especially the more privileged classes, may also seek to group together in particular neighborhoods in order to preserve and cultivate important social networks. Geographical mobility can also be hindered and decoupled from social mobility in cities in which housing is scarce, expensive or highly dependent on government subsidies, as is the case in some European countries.²⁹ Of course, stability through time is also critical for creating whatever neighborhood life and cohesion can arise in more impersonal contexts.

Finally, we can also find numerous examples in which populations with common modern lifestyles (or “compositions of capital” in Bourdieu’s terminology³⁰) intentionally pursue geographical grouping. The resulting “lifestyle enclaves” may evoke the image of the “urban village” or ethnic neighborhood, with the difference that residents do not include relatives and have no common national origin. Such is the case of urban zones dominated by artists, for example, or gays and lesbians. This would be a geographical outcome of the formation of what sociologist Michel Maffesoli has called contemporary urban “tribes”.³¹

It should be also noted that where geographical mobility is relatively low, and neighborhoods are able to change through time, initial patterns of high social homogeneity might transition into more diverse environments, while familiarity between neighbors might render supposed incompatibilities moot. That is, since different households will inevitably have different trajectories in terms of economic or social success, any stable neighborhood can end up with a high degree of social heterogeneity, regardless of how homogeneous it was at its origin. The conflicts that one would expect from such diversity could by then be neutralized by familiarity and friendships; that is, by the replacement of status competition or class interests with social trust and collaboration.

The self-built neighborhood in Latin America is such a case of an urban environment that changes its social composition through time with significant population stability. It typically starts with the city’s poorer families, improvised shacks, and lack of urban services. In two or three decades, most households have replaced their makeshift structures with houses of permanent materials, incomes have grown, and urban infrastructure has been installed, usually after significant neighborhood activism and pressure on the government. By this time, the neighborhoods show social conditions similar to the metropolitan average; that is, most of the population has improved socially *on the spot*. Interestingly, a lower-income population frequently remains in these neighborhoods, consisting of those households with less successful economic trajectories. Their houses, for example, might remain in more modest conditions (Figure 9.2). Sociologist Emilio Duhau has concluded that Mexico City’s informal settlements, which account for as much as two-thirds of urban growth, can be characterized as “a progressive habitat and as a socially heterogeneous one in the medium and long term”.³²

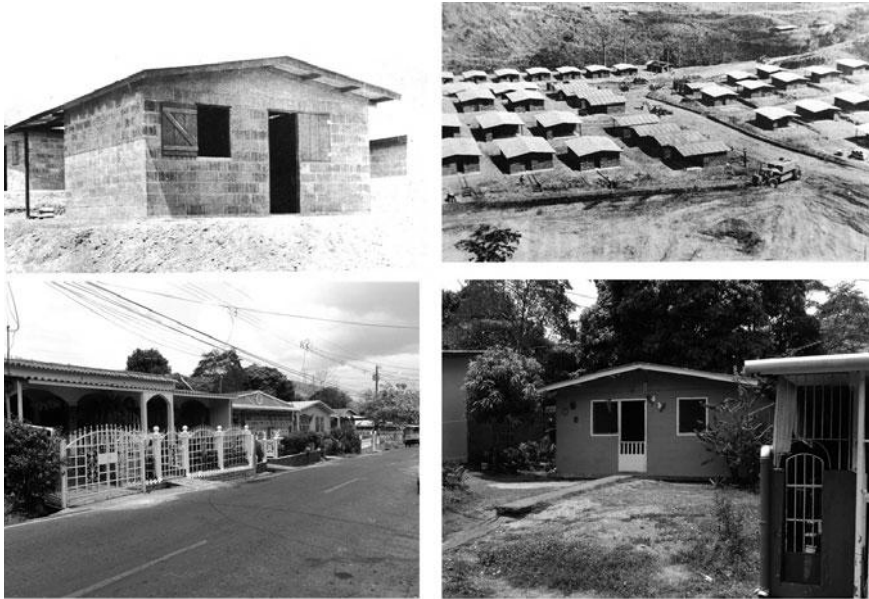


Figure 9.2 This low-income neighborhood in Panama City started with “basic” housing units built by the government (images on top), which were drastically modified and expanded by the households as their incomes improved (bottom left). A few houses, however, were never altered significantly beyond their original condition, reflecting a more modest economic trajectory for those households (bottom right). (The top images were taken in 1978; the bottom ones in 2014.) Top images from Nilson Ariel Espino. *Villa Esperanza o el precarismo*. Panama City: Comisión de alto nivel de San Miguelito (undated). Bottom images by author.

The development of “packaged” middle-class developments changes these patterns and usually contributes to increased social segregation. The following excerpt from Lisa Peattie’s account of the evolution of a Venezuelan “new town” highlights the virtues of self-built housing in a low-income community and the impact of new, formally planned and socially segregated projects.

Within the spontaneously developed city, there was a good deal of social mixture in almost every neighborhood because there were no exclusive “good neighborhoods” within which professionals and well-to-do merchants might segregate themselves. Furthermore, as some people at the bottom levels did well for themselves and improved their life situations, they characteristically improved their housing right where they were. The result was a great deal of social and economic heterogeneity, contact between the economically successful and the unsuccessful. But when the planners came into the scene, they found it complicated to plan and contract for housing except in relatively homogeneous chunks – so that

is what they did. As a result, the more established and upwardly mobile families in a mixed lower- and working-class neighborhood like mine had the possibility of moving into new urbanizations housing only people like themselves – and many of them did so, breaking or weakening, in the process, their ties to their less successful kin left behind.³³

This example connects us again with the role of housing as a status symbol, and serves to qualify our review of neighborhood sociality. All the above reflections on neighborhood social life should not blind us to the impact of simple status-seeking behavior in the production of segregation. The prospects of neighborhood sociality may be critical, but so might be the improvement of social status through location, which in the end may have very little to do with actual interactions between people. In this case, moving to the “right” neighborhood is all about symbolism rather than community, and hinges on such questions as, “Do we want to be identified with *these* people (of a given purported income level, race, etc.) that live here?” In this dimension, the neighborhood works mostly as prestigious address, rather than as a social group. Regardless of how socially active neighborhoods are, or are expected to be, attention to the apparent social status they confer is usually a factor powerful enough to fuel considerable segregation in many urban regions today.

Again, it should be emphasized that the pursuit of neighborhood social homogeneity would – theoretically, at least – be especially prevalent among social groups and classes that establish their status mainly through housing type and address (i.e., economic capital). Households that define their social standing mainly through their social networks (social capital) or education (cultural capital) may be much more tolerant of neighborhood mix. For example, a neighborhood composed mainly by academics may be quite accepting of social diversity, since the status of academics is defined in a world composed of universities, research institutions, and networks of scholars, and thus mostly distinct from the neighborhood sphere. Likewise, wealthy families of recognized names may also feel unthreatened by contiguous neighborhoods of lesser status, since their social position is well known. As previously discussed, higher tensions are bound to appear between groups that are close in status. In these cases, segregation has a critical function in preserving the understood social positions of households, especially in contexts where moving from one status to the other (e.g., from “working class” to “middle class”) is a highly valued and championed social objective, and where each status has corresponding residential typologies, that is, where the “middle-class” and “working-class” neighborhoods can be actually distinguished.

Notes

- 1 Peach, Ceri. 1996. Good Segregation, Bad Segregation. *Planning Perspectives*, 11: 379–398.
- 2 Idem, p. 385.

- 3 Barth, Frederik. 1969. Introduction. In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, edited by Frederik Barth. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- 4 Barth 1969 provides an important theoretical analysis of ethnicity in this light.
- 5 Boal, Frederick W. 1998. Exclusion and inclusion: segregation and deprivation in Belfast. In *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State. Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, edited by Sako Musterd and Wim Ostendorf. London: Routledge. See also Boal, Frederick W. 2005. Urban Ethnic Segregation and the Scenarios Spectrum. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press. Also, see Peach, Ceri. 2005. The Ghetto and the Ethnic Enclave. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press. Additionally, Qadeer, Mohammad A. 2005. Ethnic Segregation in a Multicultural City. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- 6 For an overview of the case of the Black neighborhood in the U.S., see Keating, W. Dennis. 1994. *The Suburban Racial Dilemma: Housing and Neighborhoods*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. See also Squires, Gregory D., Samantha Friedman and Catherine E. Saidat. 2005. Experiencing Residential Segregation: A Contemporary Study of Washington, D.C. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press. In addition, see Fainstein, Susan. 1998. Assimilation and Exclusion in US Cities: The Treatment of African-Americans and Immigrants. In *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State. Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, edited by Sako Musterd and Wim Ostendorf. London: Routledge. In this book, I will see racial segregation as a specific mode of class segregation, in line with what Carl H. Nightingale (2012. *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, p. 44) states: “Like all forms of segregation, color and race segregation are inherently forms of class segregation, designed to supplement privileged groups’ control over material resources” (although we have expanded the sources of social power beyond “material resources”). As the same author stresses, racial segregation is relatively recent in urban history, and only became widespread with European imperialism from the sixteenth century onwards.
- 7 For a historic overview, see Nightingale 2012.
- 8 This was the argument put forward by Gans in his classic study of a Boston neighborhood of Italian immigrants (Gans, Herbert. 1982. *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans*, Updated and Expanded edition. New York: The Free Press). See also the discussion by Musterd, Sako. 2005. Social and Ethnic Segregation in Europe: Levels, Causes, and Effects. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 27 (3): 331–348.
- 9 This is a case of what Peach (1996) calls a “false positive” – the assumption that ethnic groups are segregating voluntarily when actually coercion or discrimination are having an important impact. The opposite mistake – the “false negative” – assumes that groups are being forced into an enclave, when in fact considerable choice is present
- 10 Gans, Herbert. 1978. Toward a Human Architecture: A Sociologist’s View of the Profession. *Journal of Architectural Education* 31.2: 28–31, pp. 29–30.

- 11 See Gans' (1982) "urban villagers".
- 12 Kesteloot, Christian. 1998. The Geography of Deprivation in Brussels and Local Development Strategies. In *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State: Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, edited by Sako Musterd and Wim Ostendorf. London: Routledge.
- 13 Gans 1982, p. xvi.
- 14 Spencer, Liz and Ray Pahl. 2006. *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 45.
- 15 Langer, Peter. 1984. Sociology – Four Images of Organized Diversity: Bazaar, Jungle, Organism, and Machine. In *Cities of the Mind: Images and Themes of the City in the Social Sciences*, edited by Lloyd Rodwin and Robert M. Hollister. New York: Plenum Press.
- 16 I define "middle-class" households as those who enjoy stable jobs or sources of income that allow them to live a self-financed life at the level of the family or household. The view is similar to the one explored in Banerjee, Abhijit V. and Esther Duflo. 2011. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. New York: Public Affairs.
- 17 Perin, Constance. 1988. *Belonging in America: Reading Between the Lines*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- 18 Gans, Herbert. 1961a. The Balanced Community: Homogeneity or Heterogeneity in Residential Areas? *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 27: 176–184.
- 19 The extraordinary work by James Gilligan (2001. *Preventing Violence*. New York: Thames & Hudson) has shown how feelings of shame are one of the most destructive psychological consequences of poverty. Gilligan argues that evading shame-inducing situations is important for the poor, and is a frequent response to their condition. (Another one is violence.)
- 20 Gans 1961a. See also Gans, Herbert. 1961b. Planning and Social Life: Friendship and Neighbor Relations in Suburban Communities. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 27: 134–140. See also Rapoport, Amos. 1980/1981. Neighborhood Heterogeneity or Homogeneity. *Architecture and Behavior* 1: 65–77.
- 21 Gans 1961a, p. 176.
- 22 Rapoport 1980/1981, p. 70. Emphasis in original.
- 23 Espino, N. Ariel. 2005a. Inequality, Segregation, and Housing Markets: The U.S. Case. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press. A good example of this type of neighborhood "sociality" can be found in the account by Andrew Ross of Disney Corporation's new town of Celebration (1999. *The Celebration Chronicles: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Property Values in Disney's New Town*. New York: Ballantine Books).
- 24 Lynch, Kevin. 1984. *Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 247.
- 25 Gans, Herbert. 1982. *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community*, with a new introduction by the author. New York: Columbia University Press, p. xvi.
- 26 DeFilippis, James. 2013. On Spatial Solutions to Social Problems. *Cityscape* 15 (2): 69–72.
- 27 Long, Larry. 1991. Residential Mobility Differences Among Developed Countries. *International Regional Science Review*, 14 (2): 133–147.

- 28 Espino 2005a. See also Espino, N. Ariel. 2005b. Home as Investment: Housing Markets and Cultures of Urban Change in Houston. Ph.D. Thesis. Rice University.
- 29 Musterd 2005.
- 30 Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. See also Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 31 Maffesoli, Michel. 1996. *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, translated by Don Smith. London: Sage Publications.
- 32 Duhau, Emilio. 2014. The Informal City: An Enduring Slum or a Progressive Habitat? In *Cities from Scratch: Poverty and Informality in Urban Latin America*, edited by Brodwyn Fischer, Bryan McCann, and Javier Auyero. Durham: Duke University Press, p. 162.
- 33 Peattie, Lisa. 1987. *Planning: Rethinking Ciudad Guayana*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, p. 131.

10 Social costs of urban segregation

Whatever virtues can be attached to segregation, they must be balanced in the end with its social costs, to which I now turn. In general, the systematic segregation of the poorer members of society produces “areas of concentrated disadvantages”.¹ In some urban regions, as in the U.S., this might refer to central city slums (or, more recently, older suburbs);² in Latin America, to faraway peripheries. Regardless of the specifics, these areas impose considerable costs on their inhabitants.

The “concentration of disadvantages” in poor, segregated neighborhoods may produce what economists call “poverty traps”: a set of institutions, mechanisms or conditions that conspire to keep individuals, households, or populations mired in poverty in spite of their efforts.³ The negative impacts of segregation can be divided in two groups: those that have their origins in the relationship of the neighborhood to the rest of the city, or “extra-neighborhood impacts”, and those that derive from the interactions between the neighborhood residents themselves, or “intra-neighborhood impacts”.⁴ The first group includes the effects related to *deficient urban access*, *deficient urban services*, and *social stigma*. The second group includes those related to inadequate or deficient *peer effects* (or role models), *social networks*, and *collective socialization*.⁵ The first set of impacts is quite straightforward, while the second group is rather controversial, so I will leave it for last. As with most analytical constructs, these distinctions are, at some points, rather artificial.

Deficient urban access

Deficient urban access refers to the tendency in contemporary urban development to push the poor away from urban centers, concentrations of jobs, or well-serviced urban areas. As noted above, this might imply housing the poor in decaying urban centers, or conversely, in distant peripheries. In both cases, however, the poor are housed far away from “center of gravity” of the urban region, which will entail inadequate access to jobs and quality urban services. As a general rule, to the degree that not all critical urban functions can be decentralized, the poorer members of society are bound to end up living far

from them.⁶ In cities with deficient transportation systems, the poor will usually suffer longer commuting times than the wealthier classes, as the land market will inevitably impose on them an “urban exile” of sorts.⁷ The geographically inverse scenario is found in countries such as the United States, where low-income households are trapped in decaying city centers, while jobs and decent housing relocate in the suburbs, where, in turn, exclusionary zoning blocks the development of affordable living options.⁸

The “peripheralization” of low-income housing is a worldwide phenomenon, and a confirmed cause of poverty. Workers not only spend a considerable proportion of their already limited resources on transportation costs, but also an inordinate amount of time in commuting to their jobs; time that could otherwise be used in education, earning extra income, or simply attending to their families. This exacerbates the “time poverty” typical of low-wage earners, leading to stagnant incomes and absent parenting, which in turn has deleterious effects on their children’s prospects for social mobility.⁹ Panama City’s urban core contains 89 percent of the metropolitan region’s jobs in only 4 percent of its surface area, while housing 25 percent of its population, including the great majority of its wealthier classes. The lower-income households that have to live outside this zone and use public transportation spend on average four hours every day in commuting to work.¹⁰ Mexico City’s peripheral residents, who are also both low-wage earners and public transit users, can spend five to six hours daily in commuting to employment concentrations. As geographer Carlos Garrocho points out, they cannot live where there are jobs, and there are no jobs where they can live.¹¹

The private market pushes low-income housing to the urban periphery for the obvious reason that that’s where the cheap land is. Whenever private developers venture into low-income housing production, either through more affordable projects or the “clandestine subdivisions” common in the global south, the location is invariably peripheral. In the fortunate cases in which the private sector has been able to successfully address the demand for low-income housing, this locational issue frequently counteracts the benefits of massive low-cost housing production. In Chile, the government has been highly effective in orienting the private sector towards the production of affordable neighborhoods through subsidies and liberalization of development regulations, but critics have highlighted an increase in urban segregation and its accompanying ills, as well as urban social expulsion.¹² In Bangkok during the late 1980s, private developers were able to develop housing projects affordable to 60 percent of the city’s households, but since most were located at an average of 22 kilometers from the city center, the majority of poor households chose to stay in the central-city squatter settlements, close to job opportunities and existing social networks.¹³

Unfortunately, governments frequently follow the same approach with their own social housing projects. In order to save costs, and to avoid interfering and conflicting with the private real estate market, governments frequently exacerbate segregation in the process of producing decent housing, thus

undoing with one hand what they do with the other. As a general rule, the price for decent subsidized housing is urban exile. New or replacement housing for substandard units in city centers is built in remote parcels, in the process freeing more centrally-located sites for private projects or private-public joint ventures that include no affordable components. From an urban planning perspective, the location of governmental housing projects is usually highly irrational, for they simply end up “where the public land is”. The result often resembles what squatters normally produce on their own, that is, a haphazard scattershot of neighborhoods on public sites of little general appeal: a remote, abandoned military or industrial facility, or the site of a failed governmental rural project. In Latin America, one frequently drives through kilometers of privately-owned pastures or vacant land before arriving at these dense residential concentrations, packed within the confines of a public lot that squatters could successfully defend, or where a housing minister built a highly publicized “solution” to the housing shortage (Figure 10.1).

After Hurricane Mitch hit the city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in 1998, the “new towns” planned for the displaced families were built, in typical fashion, between 12 and 26 kilometers from the city center, where most households derived their income. Commuting time and costs increased, as well as

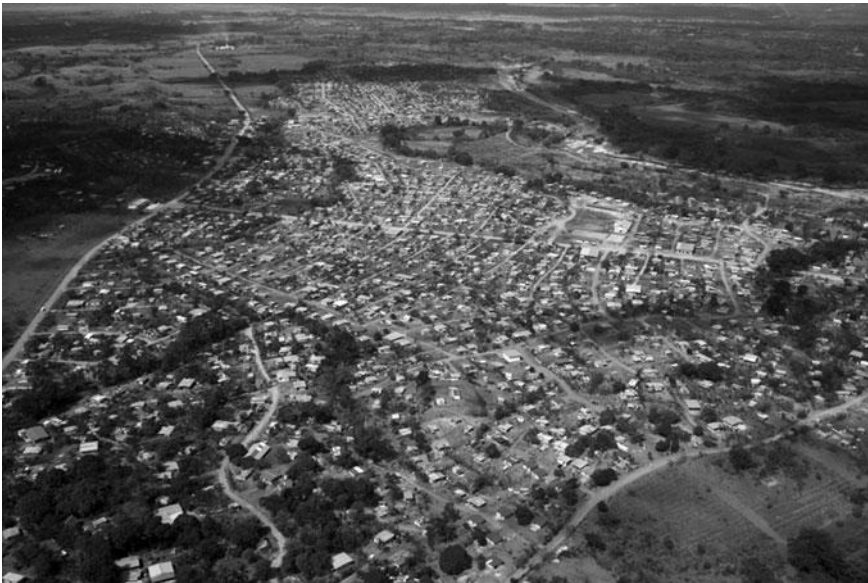


Figure 10.1 Image of Las Garzas, one of the newest and largest squatter settlements in the periphery of Panama City. In typical fashion, it developed as an enclave on available public lands, is surrounded by empty private properties, and is located kilometers away from the closest neighborhood – another squatter settlement also built on a public lot. Photograph by Álvaro Uribe (2008).

unemployment, and some workers promptly started to look for precarious accommodations in the city center where they could stay during the work-days, or where they could move back.¹⁴

Commuting long hours to job concentrations will be the plight of the regularly employed, but the workforce involved in the informal economy – a population of considerable size in many cities – will suffer additional forms of geographic exclusion. Forced to live far from employment centers, and thus concentrations of pedestrians and potential customers, the informal workforce will find it more difficult to capitalize on their housing for incubating or running businesses. Their portable street vending equipment will have to be carried long distances, and their own street activity might be banned or continuously harassed for occupying public spaces or being “incompatible” with the desired “ambience” (status) of the central urban zones.¹⁵

Deficient urban services

Spatial segregation also leads to deficiencies in the provision of urban services. Since poor residents lack political clout, services will generally tend to be more deficient in lower-income areas of the city. In the global south, this may include such fundamental services as drinking water, a functioning sewer system, trash collection, or paved streets. In wealthier countries, the key deficiencies might consist of good schools, health centers, and other community facilities. Of course, all of these services have a considerable influence on residents’ quality of life and their chances of escaping poverty.

A relevant component of livability and social progress is urban safety. When deficiency in urban services means rare or nonexistent policing, poor neighborhoods might spiral into zones of permanent violence or insecurity. In many parts of the world, exclusively poor neighborhoods tend to evolve into urban zones of “weak authority” or lawlessness. These neighborhoods are known by many names, both in colloquial and academic language: “no-go areas”, “red zones”, “violence enclaves”, or “governance voids”.¹⁶

For obvious reasons, neighborhoods that are rarely policed attract illegal or deviant activities of all sorts, such as drug trafficking or black markets of different types. In many instances, groups regularly engaged in criminal activities end up controlling whole urban zones on a permanent basis. The areas controlled by drug-trafficking gangs in many Latin American cities are perhaps the extreme case of this phenomenon. These zones house millions of city residents, suffer regular violence, are usually avoided by the police, and live under permanent “gang law”.¹⁷ Residents frequently have to pay “fees” in order to operate businesses, engage in street vending activities, or enter the neighborhood after certain hours. In addition, they cannot visit neighborhoods controlled by rival groups.¹⁸ Gang leaders function as *de facto* authorities, and turf wars (i.e., shoot-outs) among gangs are frequent, unpredictable, and deadly, often claiming victims among innocent neighbors who just happen to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.

It should be noted that the clientele for the services provided by the segregated, poor zones of the city might consist of a wide swath of its residents, including its wealthier members. These poor, un-policed areas provide a site for activities that many people patronize but will not tolerate in their own neighborhoods, such as prostitution or drug distribution.¹⁹ In addition, the factors that make these areas attractive for illegal activities – weak political influence, low status, scarce policing, and, as a result, cheap land – also makes them advantageous for unsavory urban facilities, such as garbage dumps, polluting industries, or prisons.²⁰ In other words, segregation of the poor creates areas that become the city’s “dumping grounds” or “back rooms”, places in which activities that are harmful, unsightly or shameful can be located without generating major conflicts or affecting the status of the more “respectable” members of the urban society. Of course, the inhabitants of these zones, a great majority of whom do not participate in any illegal activity but live there because of the affordable housing, will inevitably suffer the impacts of these activities on a daily basis.

Deficient services in poorer neighborhoods may not result solely from a lack of political influence, but in fact may also be a consequence of the fiscal structure of metropolitan areas. As previously discussed, urban regions in the United States have frequently grown as a patchwork of independent municipalities and their associated public school jurisdictions, which are carved along social and racial spatial boundaries. When a good proportion of local revenues come from property taxes, this balkanized political landscape impedes social redistribution of public moneys between neighborhoods or zones of different economic levels. As a result, those municipalities in greater need of improvements and services are also worse-off in terms of their public coffers. (Recall that the resulting disparity in municipal services across urban regions is considered part of the “geography of choice” for Tiebout-influenced thinkers).

In other places, a similar effect may be caused by the refuge of the middle and upper classes in gated neighborhoods and enclosed “communities” of different sorts, where services are provided privately by the residents themselves. In some cases, this leads to resistance from the wealthiest households of a city to pay, through taxation, for public services and facilities (such as parks) that they don’t need, but that poorer households living in other neighborhoods cannot fund by themselves.²¹ This easily leads to Galbraith’s “private affluence and public squalor”, that is, urban landscapes where the poor are trapped with deficient public services and wealthier households self-finance privileged environments and living conditions.²² It is clear that any vision of inclusive urbanism should reject any of these forms of “fiscal segregation”, even if social segregation is in itself not addressed.

It should be reinforced in closing that residents of homogeneously poor neighborhoods frequently close ranks and rally together to improve their living standards, demanding from governments, for example, better urban services or police surveillance. This is certainly “facilitated” by segregation,

which if not always a guarantee of a common culture, is certainly a guarantee of common *conditions*. In fact, as observed before, some of the most common incentives for neighborhood cohesion and interaction are the confrontation of exterior threats to the neighborhood or the struggle for the solution of certain common wants, something that is true for neighborhoods of all social classes. (That is, if poor neighborhoods rally for potable water, wealthier neighborhoods may rally to protect their neighborhood's property values, confronting, for example, the threat posed by the nearby construction of poorer neighborhoods). While the geographically-based political strength afforded by segregation might aid the urban working classes or marginal urban populations in their struggle for better living conditions, this neighborhood-bounded activism is, at the end of the day, incapable of changing the fundamental disadvantages of segregated cities, such as social stigmatization, inequalities in urban services, or deficiencies in urban access.²³

Social stigma

In the months before the 2014 FIFA World Cup, a debate ensued regarding the exclusion of striker Carlos Tévez from the Argentinian national team. On May 14, Tévez tweeted to his fans about his cycle as a player not being over despite the rejection. In the tweet, he incorporated an image of himself with his childhood neighborhood in the background: "Fuerte Apache", a large, dilapidated former public housing project in Buenos Aires. With the image, he included the message, "I come from a place where it was said that succeeding was impossible".²⁴ This is a good example of spatial stigmatization in action.

Urban segregation generates cities in which addresses impart not only status and social rank, but also a host of prejudices about people's habits, culture or social worth.²⁵ These prejudices are not only demeaning; they also have practical consequences, as when they become a liability while seeking work. In some cases, prospective employers systematically reject the residents of particularly infamous urban zones, fearing the behaviors commonly associated with their neighborhoods. Many residents are thus forced to conceal or falsify their home address.²⁶

Like all forms of consumption, housing and neighborhood location reveal as much as they conceal. We assume a certain homogeneity of income among households living in the same neighborhood, but in actuality variation can be quite large; all we can really know is that the households can all afford to pay for that particular housing. This holds true for all social levels. In the case of the urban poor, we also tend to have a rather static view of their neighborhoods, ignoring the changes that are constantly taking place on both physical and social levels. The same "run-down" neighborhood can be, for example, an important "stepping stone" in a strategy of urban social mobility for geographically mobile households, a "progressive habitat" for geographically stable ones, or a "poverty trap", in which residents stay where they are, but

neither houses nor incomes improve. In the heyday of informal housing development in Latin America, squatter settlements in the region were called “slums of hope” due to their social and physical dynamism, and were contrasted with the U.S. inner city “slums of despair”, in which conditions only tended to worsen.²⁷ Simple neighborhood appearance or conventional social stigmas tell us nothing in this regard, but from a public policy perspective, these distinctions are essential.²⁸

In this sense, in the segregated city, both poor and wealthy neighborhoods function as “masks” – in the pricier case, actively pursued, and in the poorer, inescapably suffered. The structure of neighborhood status inevitably confers prestige or stigma, while it disguises the actual wealth, lifestyles and prospects of the households in any neighborhood, which in many cases can be quite varied.

Segregation and behavior: The debate on peer effects, social networks, collective socialization, and the culture of poverty

Social stigma and deficiencies in urban access and services are the most important costs that poorer members of society must bear in segregated cities. Taken together, they impose considerable burdens on households and communities, and contribute to the perpetuation of poverty by making it more difficult to participate in, and take advantage of, the opportunities that urban economies offer in terms of employment, income, education, or social activities.

Other effects can be added to the list, although they are more controversial and difficult to assess. This last section is dedicated to a series of theories and studies that link urban segregation to negative outcomes supposedly originating in the interactions between the residents of poor neighborhood themselves. While the repercussions reviewed above are the result of the relative standing of poorer zones vis-à-vis other neighborhoods or the metropolitan region as a whole, this set focuses on the effects that poor residents might have on each other within the boundaries of their residential environment. Since urban segregation tends to concentrate the same class of people in the same neighborhoods, whatever advantages or disadvantages these residents bring in terms of values, customs, behaviors or social assets, will tend to spread and be reinforced within the neighborhood, or so the theory goes.

Much of the research done on this topic responds to the statistical fact that a number of social problems – such as crime, unemployment, teen pregnancy, or welfare-dependency – tend to concentrate in specific neighborhoods, so these might plausibly be creating or reinforcing cultures or habits that promote these kinds of outcomes.²⁹ Poor households might negatively influence each other by reproducing common values and attitudes that hinder social mobility or democratic culture, such as generalized despair, mistrust of mainstream society, excessive conformity to local social norms, or indifference

to education, voting, or formal employment. Segregation, by condemning disadvantaged populations to isolation, might contribute to the spread and reproduction of these destructive social views.³⁰

In light of the previous discussions, one might concede that these assumptions have a solid basis. After all, residential communities may not only exhibit a common culture, but are also frequently developed specifically for this purpose, as we saw in the case of the ethnic or lifestyle enclave. On the other hand, and given the historical evolution of the social geography of cities in the West, it is logical that today, social variables related to wealth, income or wellbeing cluster spatially; in fact, it would be odd if that were not the case. But the tricky point relates to the direction of causality. Does the prevalence of crime in a neighborhood reflect the incidental fact that criminals have moved there, or does the neighborhood facilitate crime by being isolated, more tolerant, or by offering recruits? In other words, is the neighborhood simply a place where crime occurs, or does it play a role in “producing” it? Are these areas poor because they house the poor, or are the people poor because they live there? These kinds of questions generate endless “chicken-or-egg” discussions, which are largely academic, and can be closed-off with the most likely answer: “both”.³¹ But these questions also validate a detailed study of “intra-neighborhood” effects. In the following pages, I will describe the most widely discussed ones.

“Peer effects” refers to the influences that some residents have on others as role models or mentors. Negative peer effects may encourage youngsters to quit school or become involved in the drug trade because that is what their neighborhood friends are doing; teenage girls to get pregnant because that’s the local pattern; men to remain unemployed or on welfare because that path is common and no longer considered disreputable in the neighborhood, and so on. In the converse side are the positive influences that more successful peers might have on those with greater risk of straying. If the neighborhood includes youngsters that stay in school and pursue a university education, this might influence those who are more ambivalent about those choices. Seeing other men or women leave for work every morning might pressure or motivate the unemployed to look harder for jobs. For some authors, the likelihood of positive peer influences is increased in mixed-income neighborhoods or developments, since the wealthier or more educated neighbors can function as positive role models for those less fortunate. This has led to the advocacy for these kinds of solutions to combat urban segregation. In the U.S. and Europe, ambitious policies subsidizing mixed-income projects, usually in the form of apartment complexes, are justified on these grounds. One can argue that peer effects tend to be more relevant for children and adolescents, who are more susceptible to peer influences than adults, and who tend to spend more time in the neighborhood itself.

The “social networks” argument is similar in that it looks at neighborhood interactions between residents of different social status as a potential asset for those with less power. In this case, the argument relies on the now-popular

concept of “social capital”, understood as the benefits that social connections, networks, and trust bestow on individuals and groups. (The term should not be confused with Bourdieu’s use of the phrase, which highlights the role of social prestige rather than relationships). Knowing and trusting people, as well as being known and trusted in different social milieus and having wide-ranging social networks and connections, are important assets, with clear economic and social benefits. The poor frequently lack such advantages, because they live in more isolated environments, or their circle of friends or acquaintances is restricted to people of their same social class, who share the same limited social range. The “social networks” argument then sees the segregated neighborhood as a social trap that impedes potentially beneficial interactions between people in need with others placed in more socially advantageous positions. A more fortunate neighbor could, for example, help others with job recommendations or information about job openings. By being better integrated to more dynamic and prosperous sectors of society, he or she can help connect less fortunate neighbors with opportunities that would otherwise be invisible under more extreme conditions of physical and social isolation. The development of mixed-income communities is then, again, a frequent recommendation tied to this type of analysis.

The third concept, “collective socialization”, also focuses on the relationships between neighbors, but the emphasis is placed on the shared values of the residential community, and how they are transmitted to residents. One frequently discussed aspect is the set of values that the group instills in its younger members as they grow up; that is, as they are socialized. If these values are at odds with mainstream values, or counterproductive for a successful career, the neighborhood becomes an incubator of social failure, instilling outlooks in its members that impede or sabotage social mobility. These may include attitudes of mistrust towards people of other social classes, government institutions, or mainstream scripts of success; a preference for irregular or illegal economic activities; and so on. Some overlap with the “peer effects” argument is clear.

Another dimension that we could relate to “collective socialization” refers to the degree of neighborhood cohesion.³² Is it easy for the neighborhood to organize itself and pursue common goals? Is there a consensus among residents on what constitutes appropriate behavior? Do people enforce that behavior? Do neighbors know and trust each other, in other words, is there high “social capital” *within* the neighborhood? These questions are relevant because some problems related to poor neighborhoods might plausibly have their origins in a low degree of cohesion or trust among neighbors. For example, if the neighborhood is covered in graffiti, is it due to the tolerance or indifference of the neighbors, or their inability to control the actions of residents or outsiders? Is a lack of neighborhood cohesion, and the corresponding inability to control social dynamics, at least partly responsible for the prevalence of criminal behavior in some neighborhoods? Are some

neighborhoods characterized by low “social capital”, and therefore frequently run into trouble?

While its arguments are completely plausible, the case for highlighting the impacts of peer effects, social networks or neighborhood cohesion as important contentions against urban segregation leads to some problematic positions, both practical and ethical. Firstly, these arguments rest on the assumption that social life in neighborhoods is critically important for residents, and that it is sufficiently intense to make such effects relevant. We have commented that this might not always be the case. Some neighborhoods have an intensive community life, whereas others don't, and while poor neighborhoods do tend to be more interactive for purposes of mutual help, situations on the ground most certainly vary significantly. In some neighborhoods, families might keep mostly to themselves, and have most of their friends elsewhere. In fact, in some neighborhoods with gang problems, many families go to great lengths to isolate their children from contact with their peers in the neighborhood, for fear that they will be negatively influenced. Many families try to exert considerable control over their children's relationships – with differing degrees of success, of course – so the presence of problematic peers in a neighborhood does not necessarily entail a contagion of bad behaviors or values. This point carries over to the difficulty of actually assessing the impacts of peer effects in general. While peer influences might play an important role in the development or appearance of deviant behaviors in children or teenagers, they surely interact with other factors, such as familial influence and the psychological effect of larger social processes.³³ Dysfunctional families may raise problematic youngsters regardless of their location or neighbors. Teenagers looking for trouble might pursue it beyond the neighborhood limits if they can't find local partners. One might suggest that peer effects could have a critical importance mainly in communities that are both highly integrated and isolated, perhaps due not only to poverty, but also discrimination or ethnic prejudice, as seen in the poor, mostly Black inner-city neighborhoods of the United States.

Moving now to the issue of positive peer influences, there is, in principle, nothing wrong with the idea that some residents might serve as positive role models for others. But such a dynamic requires certain predispositions from both parties. Just mixing people from different social classes is not necessarily productive in this regard, because physical proximity is as likely to produce antagonism as collaboration. Class isolation and physical proximity are not incompatible.³⁴ Higher-income households might resent their lower-income neighbors for threatening their status by their very presence, while in turn lower-income residents might resent the wealthier households for “putting on airs”. Peer influences are perhaps more plausible in diverse communities where neighbors know each other well, maybe because they grew up together. We saw earlier the case of the Latin American self-built settlement as an example of a neighborhood that starts more or less homogeneously poor, but that develops as an economically diverse community on the spot, as some

families improve their conditions more than others over time. In this case, positive peer influences would be integrated to interactions between friends or acquaintances under conditions of mutual trust, rather than occurring as an “accidental” by-product of disparate residents brought together by a housing policy.

Lastly, the idea that the poor must learn from the wealthy in order to succeed, or, indeed, that “learning” must be always in that direction, is suspect and ultimately condescending. Many people in disadvantaged positions would find such a theory disrespectful. In fact, that was the reaction of residents interviewed in a study of a mixed-income project.³⁵ This paradigm assumes that social success is always the result of personal and transferable qualities, such as knowledge, talent, effort, or motivation, rather than, say, family resources, social connections, or sheer luck. In addition, it assumes that negative peer influences can only come from poor households, and positive ones only from the wealthy. Wouldn't living next door to dishonest bankers, financiers or politicians put one in danger of negative peer effects? What would the recommended housing policy in those cases look like?³⁶

The “social networks” argument is safer in this regard, because it makes a more practical case and avoids assigning moral superiority to a given social class. This theory simply states that poor households can benefit by relating with more powerful and well-connected neighbors who might provide important contacts for employment or educational opportunities.³⁷ The question is, however, to what extent living in the same neighborhood is a necessary condition for these interactions to take place. While there is certainly nothing wrong with having the residential environment as the main stage, one could argue that such interactions could well take place in non-residential areas, such as the workplace or public spaces, where the potential for conflict over those aforementioned critical neighborhood commonalities may be reduced. In her study of Rio de Janeiro's favelas, anthropologist Janice Perlman highlights how her informants benefited from general geographical proximity between their slums and wealthier neighborhoods, as well as from the possibilities that they had of interacting and networking with higher-status people in the workplace.³⁸ The most negatively affected were those who lived too far from wealthier neighborhoods or the city center, and those who had lost social contacts due to unemployment.

Decoupling social networking from neighborhood segregation is important, I think, not only because there are more solid arguments to combat segregation, but also because the social network argument frequently serves as an excuse for not dealing with labor markets head-on, and instead leads to the search for “spatial” solutions to unemployment.³⁹ I will expand on this point below.

In a similar vein, one would be foolish not to praise the virtues of social cohesion in poor neighborhoods, but it is less clear that cohesion should be presented as a potential solution for the problems caused by segregation.

Neighborhood activism is commendable, but it requires time and energy, precisely what poor households generally lack. Residents of marginal neighborhoods have little time to spare for community organizing or policing, since, due to their low income and the segregated nature of their neighborhoods, their working and commuting times are usually longer. In fact, such activities are also difficult and challenging for wealthier classes, and many middle-class communities simply leave the issues of safety, vandalism, or upkeep in the hands of hired professional neighborhood administrators, the regular police force, or municipal service departments. Poorer neighborhoods are frequently abandoned by local governments and the police, and lack the resources to pay for private administrators or security forces. They also face greater challenges in terms of security than wealthier neighborhoods for the reasons given above, related to social stigma, location, and political weakness. It is a tall order to demand from poor communities an autonomous solution to these challenges mainly through neighborhood action. In more extreme cases, such as in neighborhoods with gang problems, expecting safety to result mainly from community organization is actually negligent and irresponsible from a public policy perspective.⁴⁰ This line of thought commonly leads to the unfair demand that poor communities or groups demonstrate standards of conduct or performance that are rarely asked from other classes. Wealthier classes are prone to forget how many of their own neighborhood challenges are automatically addressed by regular authorities and their homeowners' associations, leading them to underestimate the effort that direct community action entails. In fact, the available evidence in the U.S. indicates that in middle-class neighborhoods, there are frequent conflicts between residents and their management companies due to rule infringement, and that voluntary participation of residents in committees and boards is also difficult to obtain.⁴¹ Of course, due to the presence of the management companies, the price that residents pay for this lack of "social cohesion" is small.

It is important to note that the discussions about peer effects and community socialization are the heirs of a much older debate concerning the cultural or moral aspects of poor neighborhoods, and their potentially negative impacts on residents. We saw in previous chapters that these debates accompanied the appearance of the modern "slum;" that is, the segregated poor urban neighborhood, which took its classic form in the industrial city, and was frequently considered a "moral fester" which propagated the vices that plagued urban life. In the twentieth century, the moralizing discourse gave way to more technical discussions, but the concern about slum populations continued, and new terms and concepts appeared in order to characterize them. A brief review of the more recent debates is important for understanding the enduring appeal of this kind of argument, and to highlight its limits and pitfalls.

The late twentieth-century chapter probably begins in 1963 in the United States, when economist Gunnar Myrdal coined the term "underclass" in his

book *Challenge to Affluence* to describe “an unprivileged class of unemployed, unemployable and underemployed who are more and more hopelessly set apart from the nation at large and do not share in its life, its ambitions and its achievements”.⁴² This population had lost its economic footing with the disappearance of manufacturing working-class jobs, and lacked the education credentials demanded by the new service sector economy. This “useless and miserable substratum”⁴³ would concentrate in urban or rural slums, have a tendency to become more or less permanent, and remain unable to benefit from overall economic growth. Myrdal’s “underclass” concept would be used frequently from then onwards, and indeed up to this day, to describe urban populations that were disconnected from the formal economy and from prospects of social mobility.⁴⁴ In general terms, they would be unemployed, uneducated, isolated in slums, frequently dependent on government help, or engaged in illegal activities. Five years earlier, Galbraith had written that “Increasing aggregate output [in the economy] leaves a self-perpetuating margin of poverty at the very base of the income pyramid. This goes largely unnoticed, because it is the fate of a voiceless minority”.⁴⁵ The “underclass” term was used to describe this minority of “left-behind” citizens, who would live impoverished and disconnected in isolated slums.

Originally, this underclass was framed mostly in economic terms, but it would soon incorporate more clear cultural and behavioral dimensions. A key contribution to the debate would be the work of anthropologist Oscar Lewis, who published his major books shortly before and after Myrdal’s. Lewis developed the concept of a “culture of poverty” to describe a set of beliefs, outlooks, and behaviors supposedly common among the contemporary urban poor, based on his original studies in Mexico City and San Juan, Puerto Rico.⁴⁶ In contrast to Myrdal’s focus, Lewis was not theorizing about a minority, of course, but rather about the large masses of impoverished citizens who populated and defined the “Third-World” cities of Latin America and other regions. The issue of scale, however, made no difference, and Lewis thought his characterization was valid internationally in any capitalist, class-based society with significant degrees of inequality and unemployment.

Lewis described the culture of poverty in terms of a number of social and psychological “traits”, which included, among others: a lack of participation in and distrust of the major institutions of society, namely government and its agencies, the police, or the formal economic system; a predominance of “unconventional” family structures or patterns, such as female-headed households, out-of-wedlock births, absent fathers, or children’s early introduction to sex; incapacity to organize socially, or to plan and save for the future (that is, a strong “present time orientation”); authoritarianism and male chauvinism; and, importantly, a pervading sense of hopelessness, dependency, and inferiority.⁴⁷ According to Lewis, these last traits were more critical for the culture of poverty than simple material scarcity. Revolutionary

hope and mobilization, class-consciousness, or social activism had the power to defeat such cultural pessimism, since these would give the poor the sense of agency and possibility that were essentially contrary to the radical fatalism and passivity of the culture of poverty.

Lewis's main objective was to illustrate how the poor lived and saw the world, and to mobilize the consciences of the middle and upper classes, politicians, and other powerful groups. He was a pioneer in the detailed study of the lives of the poor, the strategies they used for survival, and the rationales behind their actions and beliefs. His work, as well as that of many other ethnographers who preceded and followed him, contributed to explaining the way that many behaviors considered antisocial or immoral according to middle-class standards made perfect sense for people living under conditions of extreme inequality, material scarcity, and uncertainty.⁴⁸ Young women were better off not marrying unemployed men, for example, since their condition made them unreliable partners and a permanent drain on scarce resources. Early motherhood made sense if it was highly valued and considered an important adult milestone, and if the chances of a university education or a professional career were slim. Distrust of government was logical if public services were always deficient and if the only government presence experienced in the neighborhood was police harassment. The poor rarely saved because savings were easily wiped out by emergencies; it made more sense to seize the moment and spend money when it was available, and to "save" in the form of usable and enjoyable consumer goods, such as large TV sets, that could be pawned and exchanged for cash when necessary. And so on.

Lewis and later scholars also emphasized that the poor did not necessarily have different "values" than the middle class. When asked, they mostly shared the same aspirations of the "mainstream" classes: to marry, raise a "traditional" family, acquire an education or a good job. Their living conditions, however, made these goals impossible. (Lewis thus warned of the need to distinguish between what the poor said and what they actually did.) As standards of conduct, values are not just "ideas", but actually have a price tag: one must be able to afford the conduct in order to live the "value" that justifies it. Someone might hold education in high esteem but be unable to pursue it because of the need to work from an early age. It wasn't so much that the poor did not share the culture and the values of mainstream society, but rather that they had given up trying to comply with them. Faced with insurmountable or recurring obstacles, they had adapted to social "failure".

But Lewis was also concerned with the mechanisms that reproduced this culture. He argued forcibly that typical forms of capitalist social exclusion, such as unemployment and low wages, actively generated the culture of poverty. But, once in place, he thought this culture would be transmitted from one generation to the other through the process of socialization, so that younger generations would continue to filter reality through this lens regardless of how circumstances changed in the world external to the slum (such as, for example, with increased formal employment). In his own words,

The culture of poverty... is not only to a set of objective conditions of the larger society. Once it comes into existence, it tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effects on the children. By the time slum children are age six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities which may occur in their lifetime.⁴⁹

This claim was his undoing, not only because he made no effort to prove it, but also because it severed behaviors and outlooks from external conditions, and made it easier for others to argue that the problems of the poor were actually inside their heads. He also framed many traits of poverty in terms of “pathologies”, and speculated about the psychiatric problems that accompanied that condition, which further individualized the problems of poverty. Critics have pointed out, for example, that the children of the families that Lewis originally studied had actually progressed as adults in the diverse ways one would expect from any social class. Some had been quite successful, surpassing considerably the conditions of their parents in both income and education, while others had stayed much closer to their original social conditions.⁵⁰ But the main blow came from the (mis)use of Lewis’s work in the ideological debate between conservatives and liberals in the United States during the 1960s and into the following decades. Conservatives used the argument of a “culture of poverty” and of an “underclass” to argue that the main reason urban poverty existed was not the unavailability of jobs, the low wages, or the lack of adequate government programs, but rather a dysfunctional culture on the part of the poor that embraced the wrong “values”. The poor could progress if only they married and stayed that way, if they postponed childbearing and focused instead on getting an education, and if they stayed out of trouble and worked hard enough. According to this view, government programs or policies aimed at combatting poverty were not only costly and inefficient, but were actually counterproductive, since they eroded the work ethic and generated a culture of dependency on government “hand-outs”. In sum, the “culture of poverty” theory became part of the conservative attack on the Welfare State and on government programs in general.

The controversy poisoned Lewis’s legacy, and also had consequences in the realm of research and academic work. It became much more difficult to objectively study the relationship between culture and social power, or between poverty and mental health,⁵¹ or even to evaluate *under what conditions* Lewis’s theses might hold.⁵² It also contributed to a decline in the amount of research and debate dedicated to the behavioral or cultural aspects of urban poverty in the U.S., both of which virtually stopped for almost twenty years, until they were reawakened with the publication of sociologist William Julius Wilson’s book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, in 1987.⁵³

Wilson’s book focused on U.S. inner city Black “ghettos”, and tried to explain the social tragedy that encompassed an overwhelming predominance

of joblessness, crime, female-headed households, welfare dependency, out-of-wedlock births, and teenage pregnancies. In Wilson's analysis, the disappearance and lack of jobs for unskilled workers was a key culprit, and the solution necessarily entailed universal government policies for full employment, as well as a series of public programs for social aid, especially for children. But he also pointed to "social isolation" as a compounding factor. In the recent past, when racial segregation laws had forced all Black families to live in the same neighborhoods, most Black communities housed a variety of households, some more successful than others. Black neighborhoods included professionals, business owners, blue-collar workers, and the unemployed. Neighborhood institutions, such as churches and social clubs, were supported by those better off, but incorporated this variety of neighbors as members. With desegregation policies and legislation, the upper- and middle-class Black families left for the suburbs, where their White counterparts lived, and left the poorer families, who could not afford new housing, stuck in the older inner-city neighborhoods. In the following years, ghetto families not only witnessed the disappearance of inner-city jobs due to deindustrialization, but also of "role models" within the neighborhood – people that worked or studied – and of social contacts with more successful neighbors.⁵⁴ The "ghetto" culture then developed as a response to these bleak conditions, and reproduced itself from then onwards within the community. The inner city Black neighborhood became an urban island housing only disadvantaged people, who were disconnected from the larger society, and who practiced a local culture that not only placed them at odds with conventional society, but that also practically guaranteed the reproduction of their marginal status. Although arguing for some form of neighborhood culture that endured through time and socialized its members, Wilson was able to avoid the conservative minefield on the topic by explicitly rejecting the idea that this culture had any life of its own beyond the social and economic conditions that generated it. Rejecting Lewis's intergenerational transmission thesis, Wilson emphasized that, once economic and social conditions changed for the better, the "ghetto" culture would disappear.

Wilson's "social isolation" thesis served to reawaken interest in the behavioral consequences of segregation, and thus lead to the recent research on "peer effects", "collective socialization", and "social networks". These arguments all invoke the image of a neighborhood where residents share values and behaviors and influence each other in crucial ways, where useful social contacts are to be had in the neighborhood or perhaps not at all, and where community cohesion (or the lack thereof) is an essential factor for neighborhood wellbeing. I have already pointed out the limitations of these types of perspectives. But, in the end, is there something useful to be retained from the "cultural" and behavioral debates about segregation? I want to dedicate the last pages of this section to rescue some potentially productive aspects.

A first essential point is that, while segregation contributes to the reproduction of poverty, it is not its main cause, which should be located in

the job market and the productive system of a society.⁵⁵ Combating segregation is an important component of any effort to create a more equitable urban society, but it cannot replace, or stand in lieu of, a policy squarely directed at creating jobs for those who need them. Combining social classes in the same neighborhood or buildings, so that the jobless can build connections through more fortunate peers, or “learn” from them how to access the system, while certainly promising at some level, is a highly indirect and costly way to attempt to “solve” unemployment. Such relations, while important, do not need to take place in a shared neighborhood. In fact, when employment is readily available, low-income neighbors can provide each other with plenty of job-generating contacts on their own.⁵⁶ In contexts where public resources are scarce, one could even argue that the funds used for mixed-income housing subsidies might be better used in public investments that actually create the needed jobs, and in job-training efforts where required. As we will see below, mixed-income projects do present many benefits for low-income households, and should perhaps be pursued more frequently, but they are bound to disappoint as a mechanism for addressing unemployment or low incomes.⁵⁷ Likewise, illegal neighborhood activities like drug trafficking are directly related to conditions in the formal job market and may be largely impervious to social pressures such as peer effects. As Gans has stated, “In any population that lacks enough legitimate opportunities, illegitimate ones will be created and someone will take them”.⁵⁸

A second point to note is that social classes – and, as a consequence, the neighborhoods in which they concentrate – *do indeed manifest different cultures, lifestyles or outlooks*. The traditional view in anthropology is that class cultures are real enough, although they are not as clearly delineated as ethnic ones. Their boundaries are fuzzier and more permeable, and people tend to renounce them as soon as their social position improves.⁵⁹ We saw how Bourdieu saw these lifestyles as reflecting different forms and degrees of social power, so the link with larger economic and social structures is clear,⁶⁰ but we should not deny the obvious significance of class cultures for neighborhood life and for chances of social mobility. From a practical standpoint, it might well be that local cultures or patterns of behavior of the poor, or specific groups among them, are, in fact, ill-suited to access the jobs available in the economy. This might require additional governmental efforts to help people adapt, perhaps in the form of special training or counseling. (This is only worthwhile, of course, if there are actual jobs waiting.) Laborers accustomed to factory work might find the transition to office tasks challenging, for example, in that they demand different skills, both technical and social.⁶¹ People that work on projects to integrate gang members to more conventional jobs know that the process requires an enormous amount of counseling and personalized attention.⁶² To assume that macroeconomic changes or the simple availability of jobs are enough to eliminate “ghetto” cultures can also be, in consequence, extremely naïve. Some residents might seize the opportunities immediately, but others might find the transition

impossible to bridge on their own.⁶³ For those involved in illegal activities, the available formal jobs may offer relatively little improvement in terms of income or social status.⁶⁴

Of course, the adaptations that the poor need to make are similar, in kind if not in degree, to those of other classes, such as professionals, that are also subject to changes in the nature of employment. In addition, the need to adjust behaviors or attitudes does not necessarily point to a “deficient” culture on the part of the poor, who, after all, have very little influence on how economic systems evolve, or on the educational resources available to them.

In sum, one needs to acknowledge that social classes have different cultures, and that, due to urban segregation, these might “color” daily life in contemporary neighborhoods. These cultures will relate, generally speaking, to the social position of their populations. However, neighborhoods can be internally very diverse, so it is always better to leave aside theoretical generalizations and stereotypes, and engage neighborhood contexts on their own, specific terms. Second, it is clear that the problems and challenges that the poorest neighborhoods present for the urban community must be addressed primarily at the level of social power, through improvements in the distribution of employment, income, education, and other key social resources. When improving these conditions, one might indeed encounter groups that have difficulties taking advantage of increased opportunities; in such cases, a more hands-on approach might be required, one that nonetheless respects the group’s perception of the situation and of their prospects for advancement.⁶⁵

These insights are, perhaps, what we can salvage for now from the debate on the cultural dimensions of poverty and segregation.

Notes

- 1 Healy, Patsy. 2003. Institutional theory, social exclusion and governance. In *Social Exclusion in European Cities: Processes, Experiences, and Responses*, edited by Ali Madanipour, Göran Cars, and Judith Allen. London: Routledge, p. 53.
- 2 Lucy, William H. and David L. Phillips. 2000. *Confronting Suburban Decline: Strategic Planning for Metropolitan Renewal*. Washington, D. C.: Island Press.
- 3 See Bowles, Samuel, Steven N. Durlauf, and Karla Hoff, editors. 2006. *Poverty Traps*. New York and Princeton: Russel Sage Foundation and Princeton University Press. In the literature on “poverty traps”, the impacts of segregation are included under “neighborhood effects”, which is a field of study that we will refer to in the following pages.
- 4 I’m borrowing the terminology from Galster, George. 2013. Neighborhood Social Mix: Theory, Evidence, and Implications for Policy and Planning. In *Policy, Planning, and People. Promoting Justice in Urban Development*, edited by Naomi Carmon and Susan S. Fainstein. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press.
- 5 Good reviews of the extensive “neighborhood effects” literature can be found, in chronological order, in Jencks, Christopher and Susan E. Mayer. (1990. The

Social Consequences of Growing Up in a Poor Neighborhood. In *Inner-City Poverty in the United States*, edited by Lawrence E. Lynn and Michael G.H. McGeary. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press); Sampson, Robert J., Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley (2002. Assessing “Neighborhood Effects”: Social Processes and New Directions in Research. *Annual Review of Sociology* (28): 443–478); Robert J. Sampson (2012. *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press); and George Galster (2013. Neighborhood Social Mix: Theory, Evidence, and Implications for Policy and Planning. In *Policy, Planning, and People. Promoting Justice in Urban Development*, edited by Naomi Carmon and Susan S. Fainstein. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press). What I call “deficient urban services” is covered under “institutional models” of neighborhood effects by Jencks and Mayer, and is called “institutional resources” by Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley, and “resource deprivation” by Galster.

- 6 Lynch, Kevin. 1984. *Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 266ff.
- 7 See, for example, the case of Tegucigalpa (Honduras) and South Africa in Pearce-Oroz, Glenn. 2005. Causes and Consequences of Rapid Urban Spatial Segregation: The New Towns of Tegucigalpa. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press, and Huchzermeyer, Marie. 2005. Housing Subsidies and Urban Segregation: A Reflection on the Case of South Africa, in the same volume. See also, UN-Habitat. 2003. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*. London: Earthscan, p. 174 ff.
- 8 See discussion in Jencks and Mayer (1990) for the U.S. and Syrett, Stephen and David North (2013. Spatially-Concentrated Worklessness and Neighbourhood Policies: Experiences from New Labour in England. In *Neighbourhood Effects or Neighbourhood Based Problems?: A Policy Context*, edited by David Manley, Maarten van Ham, Nick Bailey, Ludi Simpson, and Duncan MacLennan. Dordrecht: Springer) for the U.K. See also Roberts, Bryan R. and Robert H. Wilson. 2009. Residential Segregation and Governance in the Americas: An Overview. In *Urban Segregation and Governance in the Americas*, edited by Bryan R. Roberts and Robert H. Wilson. New York: Palgrave, for an analysis of the differences in the segregation patterns between the U.S. and Latin America. To a large extent, wealthier households in the U.S. have been able to suburbanize due to the governments’ investments in regional highway systems. The lack of such infrastructure in Latin American cities has kept higher-income households in the central city, close to employment concentrations, which, for the same reason, have not been able to decentralize either.
- 9 Dodson, Lisa, and Randy Albelda. 2012. *How Youth Are Put At Risk by Parents’ Low-Wage Jobs*. Boston: Center for Social Policy, University of Massachusetts Boston.
- 10 Espino, Ariel, Alexander Alleyne, Carmen Cecilia Rodríguez, and Jerónimo Toribio. 2011. Los costos económicos y sociales del desarrollo periférico de la vivienda de bajo costo en la ciudad de Panamá. *Revista La Antigua*, 73: 119–173. Commuting times of low-income groups can improve when workplaces decentralize and cities become more “polycentric”, which tends to happen when governments are able to invest on highways and regional roads (see Angel, Shlomo. 2012. *Planet of Cities*. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy,

- Ch. 12). There are limits to decentralization, however, and new employment centers tend to generate their own exclusionary processes in their surroundings. Having an excessive number of employment concentrations also works against efficient public transit systems, which then worsens commuting times again (Downs, Anthony. 2004. *Still Stuck in Traffic: Coping with Peak-Hour Traffic Congestion*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, Ch. 14). This topic is sometimes analyzed under the concept of regional “jobs–housing imbalances” or the “spatial mismatch hypothesis”.
- 11 Garrocho, Carlos. 2011. Pobreza urbana en asentamientos irregulares de ciudades mexicanas: la trampa de la localización periférica. In *Ciudades mexicanas. Desafíos en concierto*, coordinated by Enrique Cabrero Mendoza. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica and Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes.
 - 12 Smolka, Martin O. and Francisco Sabatini. 2007. El debate sobre la liberalización del mercado del suelo en Chile. In *Perspectivas Urbanas. Temas críticos en políticas de suelo en América Latina*, edited by Martin O. Smolka and Laura Mullahy. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
 - 13 Angel 2012, pp. 50–51.
 - 14 Pearce-Oroz 2005.
 - 15 I define the “informal” workforce as the one composed by self-employed workers whose income generally stays at subsistence level. The difficulties behind the term “informal” are explored by Lisa Peattie (1987. An Idea in Good Currency and How it Grew: The Informal Sector. *World Development*, 15 (7): 851–860), while Cole, William E. and Bichaka Fayissa develop a useful typology (1991. The Urban Subsistence Labor Force: Toward A Policy-Oriented and Empirically Accessible Taxonomy. *World Development*, 19 (7): 779–789).
 - 16 Koonings, Kees and Dirk Kruijt. 2007. Fractured cities, second-class citizenship and urban violence. In *Fractured Cities. Social Exclusion, Urban Violence and Contested Spaces in Latin America*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt. London: Zed Books.
 - 17 See the dramatic example of Rio de Janeiro in Leeds, Elizabeth. 2007. Rio de Janeiro. In *Fractured Cities: Social Exclusion, Urban Violence and Contested Spaces in Latin America*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt. London: Zed Books. Also in Perlman, Janice. 2010. *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro*. New York: Oxford University Press, and in the account by Anderson, John Lee. 2009. Gangland: Who controls the streets of Rio de Janeiro. *The New Yorker*, October 5, 2009. See also McIlwaine, Cathy and Caroline O. N. Moser. 2007. Living in Fear: How the Urban Poor Perceive Violence, Fear and Insecurity. In *Fractured Cities: Social Exclusion, Urban Violence and Contested Spaces in Latin America*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt. London: Zed Books.
 - 18 In neighborhoods with high levels of criminality, houses can also be burglarized if left alone. This usually forces households to always leave someone in the house around the clock, further limiting everyone’s mobility. See Garrocho 2011.
 - 19 Gans, Herbert. 1995. *The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Anti-poverty Policy*. New York: Basic Books.
 - 20 The tendency to locate harmful facilities close to low-income neighborhoods is commonly analyzed under the concept of “environmental justice” (see Pearce,

- Jamie. 2013. An Environmental Justice Framework for Understanding Neighbourhood Inequalities in Health and Well-Being. In *Neighbourhood Effects or Neighbourhood Based Problems?: A Policy Context*, edited by David Manley, Maarten van Ham, Nick Bailey, Ludi Simpson, and Duncan Maclennan. Dordrecht: Springer).
- 21 Séguin, Anne-Marie. 2006. Los barrios cerrados: ¿Una forma segregativa que amenaza la cohesión social a nivel local en las ciudades latinoamericanas? In *La segregación socio-espacial urbana: Una mirada sobre Puebla, Puerto España, San José y San Salvador*. San José: FLACSO. See also Chen, Simon C. Y. and Chris J. Webster. 2006. Homeowners Associations, Collective Action and the Costs of Private Governance. In *Gated Communities*, edited by Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy. London: Routledge.
- 22 Galbraith, John Kenneth. 1998 [1958]. *The Affluent Society*. Boston: Mariner Books.
- 23 In Latin America, the considerable activism of squatter settlements during the 1960s and 1970s was seen by many observers as a vehicle for socialist revolution, but most of it was focused on obtaining basic urban services, and decreased markedly after these services were obtained (see Fischer, Brodwyn. 2014. A Century in the Present Tense: Crisis, Politics, and the Intellectual History of Brazil's Informal Cities. In *Cities from Scratch: Poverty and Informality in Urban Latin America*, edited by Brodwyn Fischer, Bryan McCann, and Javier Auyero. Durham: Duke University Press).
- 24 “Vengo de un lugar donde decían que triunfar era imposible”.
- 25 What Paul White calls “addressism” (1998. Ideologies, Social Exclusion and Spatial Segregation in Paris. In *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State: Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, edited by Sako Musterd and Wim Ostendorf. London: Routledge).
- 26 Sabatini, Francisco. 2006. *La segregación social del espacio en las ciudades de América Latina*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank, p. 22. See also Murdie, Robert A. 1998. The Welfare State, Economic Restructuring, and Immigrant Flows: Impacts on Socio-spatial Segregation in Greater Toronto. In *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State: Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, edited by Sako Musterd and Wim Ostendorf. London: Routledge. Additionally, see Leeds 2007 and Perlman 2010.
- 27 See Fischer 2014, and also Peattie, Lisa. 1994. An Argument for Slums. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 13 (2): 136–143. Of course, squatter settlements can also become “slums of despair” if incomes don’t improve, criminal activity takes over, and unemployment becomes the norm. For recent discussions, see Perlman 2010. See also Duhau, Emilio. 2014. The Informal City: An Enduring Slum or a Progressive Habitat? In *Cities from Scratch: Poverty and Informality in Urban Latin America*, edited by Brodwyn Fischer, Bryan McCann, and Javier Auyero. Durham: Duke University Press. Additionally, see Marx, Benjamin, Thomas Stoker and Tavneet Suri. 2013. The Economics of Slums in the Developing World. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27 (4): 187–210.
- 28 See UN-Habitat. 2003. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*. London: Earthscan, p. 28 ff. In a classic study, sociologist William Michelson (1977. *Environmental Choice: Human Behavior, and Residential Satisfaction*. New York: Oxford University Press) found that people’s

- satisfaction with their residential environment was not only related to its physical characteristics, but to how well it temporarily served more long term plans for social mobility (for example, by being affordable).
- 29 Sampson 2012.
- 30 See reviews in Musterd, Sako. 2005. Social and Ethnic Segregation in Europe: Levels, Causes, and Effects. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 27 (3): 331–348; and in Musterd, Sako and Wim Ostendorf. 1998. Segregation and Social Participation in a Welfare State: The Case of Amsterdam. In *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State: Inequality and Exclusion in Western Cities*, edited by Sako Musterd and Wim Ostendorf. London: Routledge.
- 31 Sampson 2012, p. 308.
- 32 The term “collective socialization” comes from Jencks and Mayer (1990), and has been adopted widely in the “neighborhood effects” literature. I’m also including under this term aspects covered under Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley’s (2002) concept of “collective efficacy” and Sampson’s (2012) concept of “social cohesion”. I believe these dimensions are sufficiently related to allow for a unified commentary.
- 33 Jencks and Mayer 1990. See also the Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. 2010. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- 34 Newman, Katherine S. 1992. Culture and Structure in “The Truly Disadvantaged”. *City & Society*, 6 (1): 3–25.
- 35 Rosenbaum, James E., Linda K. Stroh, and Cathy A. Flynn. 1998. Lake Parc Place: A Study of Mixed-Income Housing. *Housing Policy Debate*, 9 (4): 703–740, p. 732. In fact, the statements one finds in the research literature regarding the potential benefits of mixed-use development are sometimes strikingly prejudiced. For example: “The notion is that somehow when public housing residents live next to non-poor neighbors, the more affluent neighbors will demand working local institutions, act as role models, and prevent concentrations of the poor from spreading negative behaviors at exponential rates with increasing concentrations of poverty (Kleit, Rachel Garshick. 2005. HOPE VI New Communities: Neighborhood Relationships in Mixed-income Housing. *Environment and Planning A*, (37): 1413–1441, p. 1413). Or: “One of the most important tasks of public policy is to provide low-income people with incentives to work. (...) When... low-income residents see that non-project families are accumulating savings to buy a home or to fund their children’s education, they can see the incentives for trying to get jobs” (Rosenbaum, Stroh, and Flynn 1998, pp. 731–732).
- 36 This is the argument by Slater, Tom. 2013. Capitalist Urbanization Affects Your Life Chances: Exorcising the Ghosts of ‘Neighborhood Effects.’ In *Neighbourhood Effects or Neighbourhood Based Problems?: A Policy Context*, edited by David Manley, Maarten van Ham, Nick Bailey, Ludi Simpson, and Duncan Maclennan. Dordrecht: Springer.
- 37 See a review in Briggs, Xavier de Souza. 2005. Social Capital and Segregation in the United States. In *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality*, edited by David P. Varady. Albany: State University of New York Press. See the discussions in Musterd and Ostendorf 1998 and Musterd 2005.
- 38 Perlman 2010, p. 216, 282.

- 39 DeFilippis, James. 2013. On Spatial Solutions to Social Problems. *Cityscape* 15 (2): 69–72.
- 40 Of course, neighborhood safety efforts in low-income communities require the participation of residents, but the police has an essential role, without which little can be accomplished. For effective and participatory experiences of reducing crime in these contexts in Lima, see Kruijt, Dirk and Carlos Iván Degregori. 2007. Lima Metropolitana. In *Fractured Cities. Social Exclusion, Urban Violence and Contested Spaces in Latin America*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt. London: Zed Books. For an effective experience in the U.S., see Kennedy, David M. 2011. *Don't Shoot: One Man, a Street Fellowship, and the End of Violence in Inner-City America*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- 41 Atkinson, Rowland and Sarah Blandy. 2006. Introduction: International Perspectives on The New Enclavism and the Rise of Gated Communities. In *Gated Communities*, edited by Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy. London: Routledge, p. ix. See also Chen, Simon C. Y. and Chris J. Webster. 2006. Homeowners Associations, Collective Action and the Costs of Private Governance. In *Gated Communities*, edited by Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy. London: Routledge, p. 20.
- 42 Cited in Gans 1995, p. 28.
- 43 Myrdal, Gunnar. 2005. *The Essential Gunnar Myrdal*, edited by Orjan Appelqvist and Stellan Andersson, with an introduction by Sissela Bok. New York: The New Press, p. 134.
- 44 In Peter Hall's excellent overview of the modern planning era's main themes (2002. *Cities of Tomorrow*, Third Edition. Malden: Blackwell Publishing), this topic is covered in Chapter 13, titled "The City of the Permanent Underclass".
- 45 Galbraith 1998, p. 79.
- 46 Lewis, Oscar. 1959. *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*. New York: Basic Books. See also Lewis, Oscar. 1961. *The Children of Sánchez*. New York: Random House. Finally, see Lewis, Oscar. 1966. *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty – San Juan and New York*. New York: Random House.
- 47 Lewis, Oscar. 2002 [1966]. The Culture of Poverty. In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, Fourth Edition, edited by George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner. Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc.
- 48 Goode, Judith. 2002. How Urban Ethnography Counters Myths About the Poor. In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, Fourth Edition, edited by George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner. Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc.
- 49 Lewis 2002, p. 271.
- 50 Rigdon, Susan M. 1988. *The Culture Façade: Art, Science, and Politics in the Work of Oscar Lewis*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- 51 The relationship between poverty and mental illness is significant (the research is, however, rather recent [see Poole, Rob, Robert Higgs, and Catherine A. Robinson. 2014. *Mental Health and Poverty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press]), although Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009. *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*. New York: Bloomsbury Press) document a connection between inequality and statistics of emotional wellbeing of the *whole of society*.

- 52 Anthropologist Mary Douglas (2004. *Traditional Culture – Let’s Hear No More About It*. In *Culture and Public Action*, edited by Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton. Stanford: Stanford University Press) has equated Lewis’s concept with a “culture of apathy” that develops within a group when progress is uncertain and risky, and the control of events is in the hands of outsiders lined up to reap the benefits. Psychoanalyst Ethel Person (2002. *Feeling Strong: The Achievement of Authentic Power*. New York: William Morrow) develops the link between the external and internal worlds by arguing that every individual experiences two types of power: personal power and interpersonal power. The first one consists of the confidence to act and the trust in our own abilities. The second one is the capacity to influence others and bend the world to our will (Weber’s definition). Both develop together. If we consistently experience powerlessness to change the world around us, our sense of personal power is diminished, and we feel helpless and insecure. Thus, poverty can easily generate an inner sense of passivity and fatalism.
- 53 Wilson, William Julius. 2012. *The Truly Disadvantaged. The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*, Second Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- 54 See Newman (1992) for a critique of Wilson’s assumptions in this regard.
- 55 DeFilippis 2013.
- 56 Slater 2013.
- 57 Joseph, Mark L. 2006. Is Mixed-income an Antidote to Urban Poverty? *Housing Policy Debate* 17 (2): 209–233. A more effective way to connect people with jobs is to set up social programs with this aim in the disadvantaged neighborhood themselves (Syrett and North 2013).
- 58 Gans 1995, p. 69. The need to incorporate employment programs into urban public policy cannot be overemphasized. In this regard, we might want to go back to Myrdal: “Work is not only, and not even mainly, a ‘disutility’ as conceived by the classical economist. It is, if not always a pleasure, the basis for self-respect and a dignified life. There is no real cure for unemployment except employment...” (Myrdal 2005, p. 138).
- 59 A classic statement in this regard is found in Barth, Frederik. 1969. Introduction. In, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, edited by Frederic Barth. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- 60 In the words of Douglas (2004, p. 107), “a culture is a way of thinking that justifies a way of living”. A “way of living” is, of course, closely tied to socioeconomic status.
- 61 See an example in Bourgois (2002. *Office Work and the Crack Alternative Among Puerto Rican Drug Dealers in East Harlem*. In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, Fourth Edition, edited by George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner. Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc.), who describes the challenges faced by Puerto Rican males in New York who had to transition between factory and office jobs. In the former, “being tough and violently macho” was admired, but this same conduct was counterproductive in office settings, which in turn offered no space for the highly valued “working-class” group culture that compensated for the low wages.
- 62 See, for example, the experience of Homeboy Industries in the U.S., at www.homeboyindustries.org.
- 63 Syrett and North 2013.

- 64 Bourgois 2002.
- 65 Douglas 2004. Towards the end of his life, Oscar Lewis summarized his view on this topic thus: “The crucial question from both the scientific and political point of view is: How much weight is to be given to the internal, self-perpetuating factors in the subculture of poverty as compared to the external, societal factors? My own position is that in the long run the self-perpetuating factors are relatively minor and unimportant as compared to the basic structure of the larger society. However, to achieve rapid changes and improvement with the minimum amount of trauma one must work on both the ‘external’ and ‘internal’ conditions” (cited in Rigdon 1988, p. 155). I agree unqualifiedly with this statement.

11 Searching for inclusionary development patterns and public policies

Perhaps the most practical approach to modern segregation that planners have put forward is that of Lynch, which focuses on the “grain” of the social geography, that is, the desired scale of social “mixing”.

It is professional doctrine that the grain of residence by class should be fine and blurred. The organic model insists that each small area should be a microcosm of the whole. Yet this doctrine has largely been neglected in practice, or has been ineffective, except in some socialist nations. If one looks for equity, for communication between groups, and the ability to cross barriers, then one is led to advocating a much finer grain of residence than now obtains in this country [the U.S.]. But the values that impel so many people toward segregation (such as security or easy primary relations) argue that within any mix there must be clusters of similarity which are relatively homogeneous and “pure”, so that people may be at ease among their own. At the same time, for reasons of equity, the mix within larger areas should be more balanced, and regional access should be high. There should also be zones of transition (“blurs”), within which status is more ambiguous, so that people may “cross over” if they choose.¹

In other words, Lynch assumes as a given that most people prefer to live “among their own”, and takes the socially homogeneous neighborhood as the basic building block of the modern city. At the same time, however, he advocates for these internally homogenous zones to be finely distributed in the urban geography, like well-mixed pieces in a puzzle. This would guarantee more equitable access to resources for all urban households. The key would not be social mix at the level of the neighborhood itself, but rather at a higher level, such as an urban district or zone. Large-scale segregations (“coarse grain”) should be avoided, and replaced with smaller and more localized separations (“fine grain”).²

Banerjee and Baer arrived at the same conclusion in their study on the relevance of the neighborhood as a planning unit in the U.S.³ The ideal urban pattern would allow for socially homogenous zones, bounded and supported perhaps by the street grid (Figure 11.1).

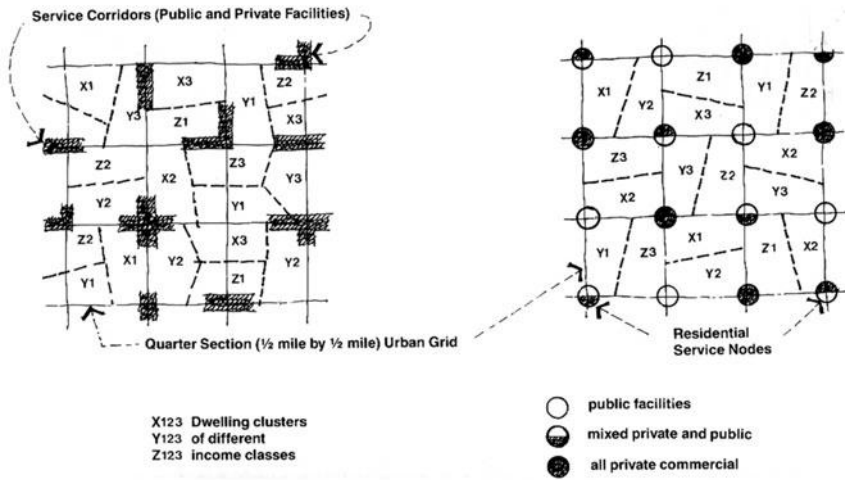


Figure 11.1 A planning proposal for groups with different income levels (from Banerjee, Tridib and William C. Baer. 1984. *Beyond the Neighborhood Unit. Residential Environment and Public Policy*. New York: Plenum Press, Fig. 7.10, page 188.) Reproduced with kind permission from Springer Science + Business Media B.V.

The zones would be well mixed at the urban level, and the dividing avenues would serve as the “neutral” areas where commercial establishments and public facilities would be located. These areas would then allow for encounters between citizens from different types of neighborhoods.

By acknowledging and accepting socially homogeneous zones, these proposals might be able to work with the tendencies for segregation that dominate contemporary real estate markets and buying practices. If planners and developers find the right urban design schemes, such “fine grain” urban structures might be produced under standard “free market” urban development systems. The key word here is “might”, because the level of segregation produced could also fall short of dominant social conventions. Higher-income neighborhoods might object to the development of adjacent lower-class neighborhoods, even if there’s a road in between (Figure 11.2).

In these cases, land prices will reflect a more radically exclusionary ideology, and produce a “coarse-grained” land price geography, which would then hinder the desired development pattern. In such scenarios, higher levels of government intervention are unavoidable.

Affordable housing policies come in many different forms, some of which include clear objectives in terms of location, and many of which don’t. The most straightforward solution to issues of both affordability and location involves the government simply acquiring land in the desired area and directly producing the affordable neighborhoods. This more “interventionist” model



Figure 11.2 A formal middle-class neighborhood (left) adjoins an informal squatter settlement (right) in Panama City. No roads connect them (and probably never will) and a river serves as a divider. Photograph by Álvaro Uribe (2008).

was common in European cities during the heyday of public housing programs in the decades immediately following World War II, but has been largely abandoned in the last 30 years.⁴ It was part of a “generalist” or “universalist” philosophy of housing provision, according to which the State was responsible for guaranteeing decent housing to the majority of the population regardless of income or occupation.⁵ This produced neighborhoods with a fair degree of social diversity and, when well done, also conveniently located, or at least with good physical integration with mass transit facilities.⁶ In some cases, governments produced and managed the housing on a permanent basis, generally through special municipal housing agencies; in others, management was transferred to non-profit partners. Most of the housing produced was for rent.⁷

Nowadays, most governments prefer to assist the private market, usually by providing financial subsidies to developers in order to lower the costs of housing on the market (“supply side” policies), or by providing subsidies to households to aid them in either renting or buying housing (“demand side” policies).⁸ These types of housing policies are usually devoid of any concern about segregation, so they are more likely than not to reinforce existing development patterns. Many are also deployed to stimulate private housing construction by expanding the potential number of buyers, and, concurrently,

to increase homeownership among low-income families, which is seen as a social benefit. But blindly spending public resources on subsidizing homeownership does nothing to curb urban speculation, segregation, or gentrification. (In my experience, for low-income families, the *affordability* and *security* of housing are more important than legal ownership.⁹) In order to deal effectively with segregation, we need to create policies that more directly target the pattern of urban land development. In the following sections I review some available avenues.

Land use regulations and development exactions

One approach involves utilizing land use regulations (i.e., zoning) to guarantee the availability of land in municipal plans for affordable housing projects. Since the regulations are directly spatial, the designated zones can be planned beforehand for adequate integration with key urban job centers and transportation facilities. In the U.S., a number of states require that municipal plans include sufficient zones for multifamily development, so that regional projections of affordable housing demand can be met in each city; this policy is sometimes called “inclusionary zoning”.¹⁰ This makes sense in that country, since affordability is usually related to housing density and typology: higher-priced housing normally comes in the form of single-family, detached housing, while lower-income housing typically consists of apartment complexes for rent. When apartment developers, whether for-profit companies or NGOs, are denied permits or available land, some states can use a “builder’s remedy” and override municipal obstructions. Another example is Brazil’s Zones of Special Social Interest (ZEIS), which designate specific privately owned, underutilized central-city areas or blocks for development into affordable housing.¹¹

These types of land use regulations are usually accompanied by other incentives and conditions that assist the production of affordable units in the allocated zones. In exchange for the production of affordable units, density bonuses can be offered to the developer, for example, or government subsidies and funds can be made available. Such instruments fall under what is known as “inclusionary housing” policies, a much more internationally common type of government policy.¹²

Under inclusionary housing legislation, private residential developers are required to provide a number of affordable housing units in their projects, usually as a percentage of the project’s total number of units. This percentage generally varies between 5 percent and 25 percent. In many cases, the requirement is not tied to any specific area of the city, and functions as a general “exaction” on private development. Currently, inclusionary housing requirements are used in countries and cities on all five continents.

Inclusionary housing programs were created, for the most part, to compensate for the retrenchment of governments as providers of social housing. Faced with massive cuts in public housing budgets under neoliberal and conservative policies, governments opted for shifting the responsibility

of social housing production to the private sector, demanding affordable housing units much in the same way that they were already requiring streets, parks, school sites, and other public dedications as part of private developments. In some cases, as I will expand below, inclusionary housing programs were also aimed at overcoming the legacy of large-scale public housing developments, which were seen as potentially isolated and violent “ghettoes”. The idea was precisely to spread around social housing in the city, instead of concentrating it in a single area, and a sure way to accomplish this was to tie it to the provision of market-rate housing in general.¹³

In many countries, developers can benefit from a number of incentives by providing the affordable units. These include density bonuses, fast-track approvals, relaxation of development regulations, or fiscal rebates.¹⁴ In addition, some inclusionary housing programs do not require the developer to provide the affordable housing units in the same project. Depending on the policy model adopted, the developer can build the affordable units on another site, or provide funding or off-site land for the development of affordable housing by other parties, such as the government or specialized NGOs. These types of programs may or may not ameliorate segregation, depending on the overall housing strategy and the targeted “grain” of segregation in the urban region.

Land banking and other direct interventions into land markets

In spite of the decline of the more heavy-handed models of public intervention from the public housing era, some local and national governments maintain a tradition of regularly purchasing land for the purpose of developing affordable housing.¹⁵ This is normally called “land banking”, and its advantages for inclusive development are obvious. Governments can acquire strategically located parcels to be developed by public authorities, or transferred or sold to interested developers or NGOs for the construction of lower-cost neighborhoods. Government acquisition might not solely involve the use of eminent domain, but also the sequestration of tax-delinquent properties. There are numerous examples of the latter practice, even in countries with strong “free market” ideologies, and especially in the context of central-city revitalization efforts.¹⁶

A related strategy consists of simply building affordable housing in cheap, usually abandoned land in depressed areas that are likely to be gentrified or acquired by private developers in future years, thus setting the ground for an eventual socially-mixed zone. This approach is commonly used in U.S. cities, which sometimes offer a considerable amount of centrally located, abandoned land in former industrial or working-class districts.¹⁷ This is a dynamic approach, which requires public or private housing agencies to have a strategic and opportunistic mentality and vision. They work only when affordable housing producers act as pioneers, and acquire critical amounts of land in a timely manner.

In all of these cases, the reselling of affordable units in the zone would have to be controlled, since the central location of the development will put its housing squarely on the sight of higher-cost redevelopment or gentrification, especially if the development is high quality, as it should be. If future prices are not controlled, affordable units might be eventually lost to speculation, leading in the end to the same segregated city that the programs are trying to combat. Many housing programs that involve government subsidies, including housing produced under “inclusionary housing” policies, indeed maintain control over the units’ rents or selling prices well into the future precisely for this reason. The requirement that affordable units be resold at something close to their original prices, so as to keep them circulating permanently in the market as affordable units, is also a common practice among Community Land Trusts, a type of housing NGO in the U.S. which usually places itself legally as the buyer of first refusal when the housing they produce is put back on sale.¹⁸

In a more formal and systematic model, a promising approach is suggested by “land readjustment programs”, which are, unfortunately, still not used as widely as they should be.¹⁹ In this model, a whole urban zone is planned as an integral unit, including the provision of public spaces and facilities and a mix of uses and types of development, which might incorporate affordable housing units or projects. All the land is pooled together as a single property in order to plan the new district without the encumbrances imposed by old parcel lines. Once the new plan is approved, land is redistributed to the original landowners in proportion to their original holdings (that is, after being “readjusted”). Since the urban zone is re-conceptualized as a single property, the benefits (profits) and costs are also redistributed in this manner, setting a new land price that reflects the new possibilities and demands placed on the zone.

The virtue of land readjustment schemes is that they don’t single out any one landowner to bear the costs of the less profitable parts of an urban development plan, such as affordable housing production or natural resource conservation, but distribute these among all the parties. Landowners benefit from land readjustment programs because they are usually accompanied by bonuses for higher densities and guarantees for government fast track approvals of individual projects. The resulting urban landscape is also usually of higher quality and better planned, and includes more valuable public areas like parks and roads, all while preventing the “free rider” problem, where certain landowners benefit from the changes to the zone without bearing any of the costs. All of the benefits are usually reflected in higher land prices. If the numbers are run well, land readjustment schemes can produce less segregated cities within the framework of conventional capitalist private development.

Land readjustment programs are, in reality, a developer-friendly way of utilizing private market forces to obtain socially valuable results, and are in fact more frequently used in countries with more *laissez-faire* ideologies. In countries where governments can more directly control the timing and type

of development on private lands, inclusionary development considerations can be incorporated into private projects from the planning stages.²⁰ In exchange for development authorization, private projects might be required to meet certain affordable housing targets, as well as provide adequate community infrastructure and efficient connections to public transportation networks. Reasonable land prices and developer's profits might be assessed and negotiated in the open, with public subsidies called upon to compensate the private parties if necessary.²¹

Addressing segregation in existing environments

So far, we have focused mainly on the challenge of incorporating affordable housing into new developments or urban districts. But oftentimes, the *existing* pattern of segregation in a city poses considerable problems. In Europe and the U.S., the main concerns involve inner-city public housing complexes and deteriorated neighborhoods, while in regions like Latin America, the focus today is mostly on large self-built peripheries.²²

Much of the current debate on urban segregation in Europe relates to the recent history of the continent's public housing stock. As previously noted, European public housing was initially built with a "universalistic" philosophy, according to which the State was responsible for producing a considerable proportion of the total housing stock, and of providing decent housing for households with a wide range of incomes. In more recent decades, however, European public housing has gone through a process of "residualisation", and increasingly only houses the poorest families, including ethnic minorities and welfare recipients. Concerns about the transformation of public housing neighborhoods into segregated "ghettoes" have thus become salient.

The social transformation of public housing in Europe responds to two converging dynamics. On the one hand, wealthier households have left public housing for new private developments, or have been able to buy their units under privatization programs. Publicly managed units have remained occupied by those unable to buy or rent in the private market, and in complexes that were the least physically attractive, and thus more difficult to privatize or sell off. On the other hand, surging unemployment assured that the conditions of those left behind also worsened with time. Public housing thus became the option of last resort for those excluded from the "mainstream" system of housing provision, which no longer included the State. In the U.S., where public housing was never proposed on a massive scale, this residual character has always been present, but has been compounded recently by the same processes of increasing social exclusion and dwindling public funds for maintenance.²³ Of course, the U.S. case also includes a critical racial component, since most public housing residents are not only mostly poor, but also Black.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the public policy response has consisted of efforts to "de-concentrate" poverty in these neighborhoods. In the U.S., two

strategies have emerged: helping some low-income residents find housing in middle-class neighborhoods through housing vouchers or subsidies; and redeveloping, or, more frequently, rebuilding, public housing complexes as mixed-income neighborhoods.²⁴ The latter strategy is also the most common one in Europe, which usually involves selling some of the units in the open market while preserving a percentage as rented social housing, thus creating a mixed-tenure neighborhood in the process. Income mixes are also sought in North American redevelopment projects through the combination of subsidized rental units with market-rate units for sale.

The great majority of these projects consist of apartment complexes, sometimes mixed with commercial spaces, and they are good examples of inclusionary options at the “finer grain” end of the spectrum. They are usually well located, well designed, and accompanied by quality urban services due to the presence of wealthier households. The density and mixed-use points are important, because these kinds of typologies offer unique possibilities for social inclusion. Multifamily developments offer the advantage that lower-cost units can be “disguised” better in larger projects that include units of different prices. The experience of affordable housing in market-oriented developments or zones highlights the importance that lower-cost units not be visually distinguished or singled out from the rest of the development.²⁵ This ameliorates the status concerns of the higher-income residents, while preventing the stigmatization of the lower-income ones. The cheaper units are also subsumed under a single “socially appropriate” aesthetic vision, which remains basically unchanged (which is, however, by the same token, quite inflexible). This effect is easier to accomplish as densities go up. It is easier to achieve in apartment buildings than in townhouses, and almost impossible in detached, single-family units.

Mixed-income apartment complexes of this type are the most ambitious (and most expensive) forms of inclusionary development, since they accomplish social mix while solving the usual challenges posed by unequal urban access and services, stigmatization, and middle-class aesthetic standards. In the context of decreasing public funding for housing, however, they have come under criticism for providing quality at the expense of quantity, and for unrealistically assuming that they can also help address problems related to unemployment and low incomes of the subsidized households through the effects of social networks and peer influences. Indeed, if the amount of affordable housing produced in a given city is decreasing, transforming existing public housing complexes into mixed-income ones can only lead to a net loss of affordable stock. Under these conditions, mixed-income initiatives can barely be distinguished from a gentrification policy.²⁶ On the other hand, de-concentrating neighborhood poverty by helping certain households move, as with the U.S. housing voucher programs, does nothing to solve the deficiencies of the slum itself, turns a social problem into an individual one, and channels public funds exclusively towards a lucky minority among the distressed population.

These criticisms have to be taken seriously, and underlie the importance of integrating inclusionary considerations into more comprehensive affordable housing policies. As Stephens notes, there are “enduring trade-offs in public housing: between size, quality and rent; between rent and quantity; and between location and density”.²⁷ It is obvious that Europe and the U.S. have historically placed a high premium on quality, which has allowed public or privately subsidized housing to blend in better with the middle-class city environment, while a region like Latin America has been forced to opt for quantity at the expense of quality, generating cities much more subject to stigmatizing social geographies. Each model presents its own sets of challenges.²⁸

In the European and North American contexts analyzed so far, urban poverty is usually concentrated in relatively bounded areas of the city, which consist of public housing districts or run-down, inner-city neighborhoods. This is frequently the typical case in the global urban north, but it is certainly far from reflecting the conditions in the global urban south, where the bulk of the city is dedicated, albeit deficiently, to accommodating the needs of the poor. In these contexts, the poor are not limited to certain enclaves, but rather occupy large, peripheral zones which are already highly segregated, and which can sometimes encompass half or more of the overall urban landscape. These cases require different strategies.

Most of the “affordable” neighborhoods in these urban regions have historically consisted of makeshift housing built by the households themselves on public or private lands, typically occupied at the margins of existing laws and regulations related to property ownership or building and planning codes – in short, what is generally called “informal housing”.²⁹ At their origins, these areas would generally lack basic urban services or community facilities, such as paved streets, drinking water, sewer systems, parks, or schools. The land would be invariably marginal, consisting of parcels that were remote or otherwise unpalatable for private development: river banks prone to flooding, hillsides prone to landslides, or sites adjoining garbage fills, noisy airports, or polluting industries. With time, the formal city would expand to engulf some of these neighborhoods, surrounding them with more upscale development, and triggering eviction or relocation plans, so that the newly valuable land could be used for more “proper” or profitable uses, sometimes called “the highest and best use” of the land. Residents would be then moved to new frontiers of peripheral living (Figure 11.3).

In the 1950s, when massive informal development first took hold in most Latin American cities, governments considered these squatter settlements an anomaly and an embarrassment, a type of development that should be eliminated and replaced with adequate affordable housing built by public institutions. With time, most governments realized that they lacked the economic and institutional means to meet the demand, and started seeing informal builders as potential partners, rather than adversaries, in the effort to quickly produce massive amounts of housing that people could afford. Efforts



Figure 11.3 An older, informal settlement surrounded by high-rise development in Panama City. Photograph by Álvaro Uribe (2011).

were then oriented towards supporting self-built communities through such development models as “sites and services”, in which public agencies would contribute those elements that households could not by provide by themselves, namely public infrastructure and community facilities, leaving the building of the housing units to individual families.³⁰ This produced some very livable communities, which in time became almost indistinguishable from middle-class neighborhoods, once families had sufficient time and resources to progressively transform their initial shacks into more permanent structures.³¹

Unfortunately, this shift from rejection to collaboration did not necessarily entail a change in the conventions regarding where the poor should live, and relocations and gentrification processes continued as usual in most places. More recently, however, there has been some change of attitude in the context of “slum upgrading” programs. It is now more widely acknowledged that low-income communities are not only entitled to basic urban services, but also to stay where they are, and to be able to benefit from what are now fairly convenient urban locations.³² In the case of older and now centrally-located low-income neighborhoods, the agenda thus consists of guaranteeing their permanence and their ability to keep offering affordable housing options, and focusing on addressing their common deficiencies: lack of good services, criminality and violence, and social stigmatization.

Peripheral low-income neighborhoods have the added disadvantage of their marginal locations, which makes them less prone to gentrification pressures,

but also easier to ignore. If the previous approaches described in the book can be grouped under strategies that “bring the poor to the city”, these contexts demand approaches that “bring the city to the poor”. In other words, we need to integrate these low-income areas more effectively in the dominant urban flows of people, goods, and services. A good example is the strategy pursued in the city of Medellín, Colombia, with a new network of transportation and cultural facilities targeted towards the city’s peripheral slums.³³ New public transit projects, such as cable car systems, have efficiently connected hillside squatter settlements with the urban subway system, considerably reducing commuting times for poor residents. At the same time, new cultural facilities, such as libraries and cultural centers, have been built within these areas. This has improved safety, spurred commercial development along the new transportation corridors, and attracted new visitors, users, and customers. Under the philosophy of building “the most beautiful buildings in the poorest areas”, as former mayor Sergio Fajardo put it,³⁴ these new facilities have been designed with high aesthetic standards, thus becoming attractions in themselves, and drawing publics that in the past would have avoided these zones, either because of their remoteness or their perceived lack of safety (Figure 11.4).

In this way, peripheral or isolated areas become a part of the “mainstream city” – its image, tourist circuits, and activities. They also become de-stigmatized, and acquire a much-needed sense of pride and dignity.³⁵ Concentrating resources on public services and on attractive public facilities in a landscape of otherwise modest dwellings is also a strategy with impeccable urban precedents, which include the classic Greek polis and other urban cultures that oriented most of their resources and creative energies towards the public realm.

Enhanced public services and facilities can, and probably should, be complemented with events that draw diverse publics to lower-income neighborhoods. Cultural or artistic events and festivals, sports competitions, and different types of fairs can open up these zones to the consciousness of other social classes, and contribute to combating neighborhood-based social prejudices. These activities are also important, of course, for the neighborhoods’ businesses and small entrepreneurs. If a particular neighborhood is characterized by a distinct culture, fairs can promote local traditions, generate income, and create a sense of pride, since residents feel they have something unique to offer to the rest of the city. A more conventional way of moving publics around is through citywide neighborhood-based sport leagues, in which adults, teenagers or children play in every other community’s field during the season. A combination of public projects and organized events can thus contribute significantly to urban social integration.³⁶

A note on urban safety

Any argument for ameliorating urban segregation has to confront the issue of crime, for segregation is also fueled considerably by personal safety concerns. In some urban regions, the levels of urban violence are so high that

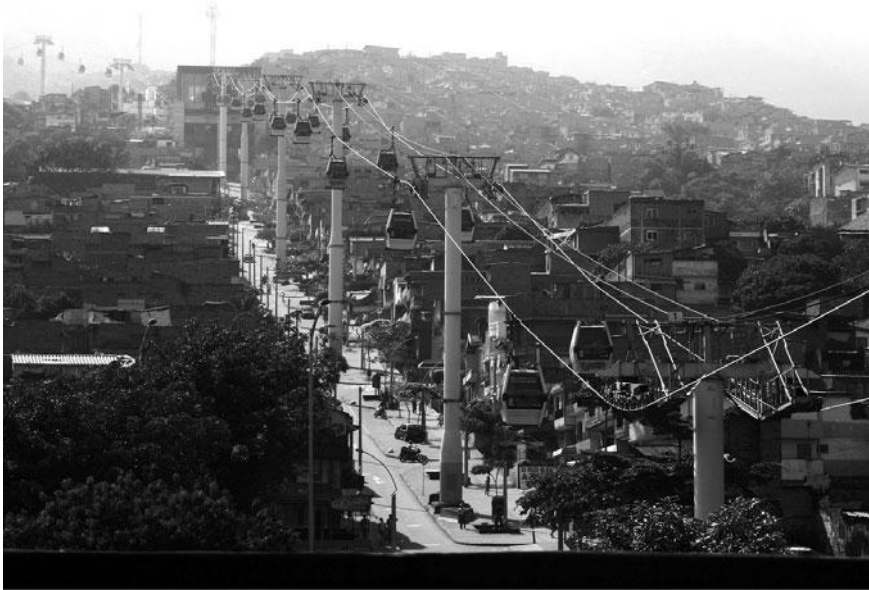


Figure 11.4 In Medellín, a new network of cable cars efficiently connects the low-income, self-built hillside neighborhoods with the city's subway system (above), and a new library and cultural center brings new services, users, and prestige to the zones (below). Photographs by Álvaro Uribe (2010).

to speak of desegregation can be seen as naïve or reckless. On the other hand, the fear of violence is frequently the main factor or excuse behind evictions of whole neighborhoods, widespread prejudices against communities, and restrictions of urban movement among all social classes. Of all the “intra-neighborhood” impacts that are researched and theorized, crime is the most indisputably damaging, especially for children.³⁷ In addition, it is practically impossible to address the inequities generated by segregation if safety problems are not solved. Fortunately, it is now more generally acknowledged that urban safety programs must be an essential component of any neighborhood intervention aimed at improving the living conditions of low-income families.³⁸

Safety concerns are one of the main factors behind the proliferation of gated neighborhoods among middle and upper classes, although, as we know, these concerns are easy to fuel for marketing purposes.³⁹ Gated neighborhoods have become popular in recent decades, and are a worldwide phenomenon.⁴⁰ “Gating” might serve several purposes other than safety, such as status symbolism, social regulation, and resource control.⁴¹ By more clearly defining the boundaries of neighborhoods, gated developments enhance the symbolic status of the enclosed residential areas (and in the process worsen the stigma of the unenclosed ones). They are also deployed to limit the use of neighborhood facilities like parks or sports fields exclusively to residents, thus avoiding overcrowding and conflicts with “outsiders”. By managing these common facilities with their own funds, residents of gated neighborhoods can also guarantee quality and maintenance levels beyond those that local public authorities can offer. Of course, when the thrust to self-finance neighborhood facilities turns into an aversion for the taxation-based funding of infrastructure in the wider community, gated communities can contribute to the worsening of social inequality in cities.

It is clear that the proliferation of gated neighborhoods or projects should be a cause for concern, since they are frequently a response to deteriorating social conditions, such as increased crime and social inequality, administrative incapacity of local governments, and loss of social trust. An urban society in which the wealthier classes retreat behind walls and turn a blind eye to the world outside is, in the long term, socially unsustainable. However, to the degree that “gating” can be limited to its more positive dimensions, and in cases where safety precautions of this type are unavoidable, it may not represent such a negative form of segregation. As argued before, an appropriate “grain” of social mix can be attained in cities even if individual neighborhoods are mostly homogeneous, and, one might add, even if they are gated. In this sense, we have advocated a focus on “regional”, rather than “neighborhood”, mix. Of course, a city of blank walls and gates is not a particularly attractive prospect, or one that speaks highly of a society’s commitment to social interaction, but it is by no means the worst scenario. As previously discussed, in many urban societies of the past, public streets offered nothing *but* blank walls and gates, since the city was organized

around enclosed family or ethnic compounds, each isolated from the other. This was the case, for example, of the classic Islamic or Chinese city.⁴² In these urban centers, social interaction between unrelated actors took place mainly around highly active nodes, such as temples or markets.

These kinds of urban social models are not highly representative nowadays, of course, and our “compounds” more frequently enclose groups of frightened individuals than integrated social groups, a situation that does not contribute to a larger social cohesion of any kind. In these contexts, in which well-distributed and interactive public spaces are key for social purposes, density can again offer some advantages. In apartment buildings, safety can be easily guaranteed through a single entrance and exit, while allowing the buildings to be integrated into highly dynamic and diverse urban settings. The classic dense urban structure of ground-floor commerce and upstairs residences can address many concerns: safety for the residents, vitality for the street, and a fine-grain social mix.

The worst tendencies are, in consequence, those that combine the construction of residential, office or commercial “fortresses” while diluting or destroying the public spaces of the city. The city then becomes an archipelago of fortified islands, connected only by trips in cars, which quickly cruise through as if on dangerous waters.⁴³ Public sidewalks, squares, and parks either cease to be built or are abandoned to crime, and every “destination”, such as shopping malls, office complexes, or neighborhoods, becomes an enclosed and patrolled facility.⁴⁴ This is the current situation in many Latin American cities, where, due to urban expansion, gated middle- and upper-class developments have colonized areas formerly occupied only by poor, informal settlements.⁴⁵ This colonization of former “peripheries” by pricier developments could in theory produce a more “fine grained” pattern of segregation, producing a more healthy social mix at the regional level. But, instead, each neighborhood is left to fend for itself, reproducing previous inequities even in the presence of less regional segregation. Higher-income neighborhoods maintain high levels of services, especially security, through a privatized provision, while on the other side of the wall public services continue to deteriorate.

Safety concerns, of course, relate to the particular impact of homogeneously low-income neighborhoods, especially if they are close to higher-income ones. These neighborhoods are typically a source of crime for reasons related to both their population and their urban conditions. As previously discussed, segregation directly contributes to violence by isolating low-income neighborhoods from the rest of the city and condemning them to political weakness. As “no-man’s land”, they become the city’s bastion of violence and illegality. The effects are suffered at the neighborhood level, and also exported to other parts of the city.

The international experience teaches us that most of the crime will be exerted by a handful of individuals, usually gangs of different sorts, dedicated to drug trafficking and other illegal activities and violently protective of their

turf, which is no more than a kidnapped neighborhood. Everyone in the neighborhood will know who they are, but without being able to do much about it.⁴⁶

These situations don't have a "physical" solution, and require direct social programs that must be integrated to general urban policies, included those dealing with segregation. They usually focus on job training, education, and counseling for gang members, and efforts at incorporating them into standard social roles, which sometimes have been inaccessible to their families or peer groups for generations.⁴⁷ Many of the factors that lead to the formation of violent gangs relate to problems of the general urban economy; for example, lack of formal jobs and the promises of a profitable drug-trafficking career. General social expectations also play a role. Unfortunately, mainstream ideals of economic success, related to high levels of consumption, are easier to pursue with drug trafficking than with the dead-end, minimum-wage jobs generally offered to many ambitious urban youths. Gangs offer money, social respect, and a sense of belonging to children growing up in poor and isolated neighborhoods, dilapidated housing, and broken or violent families. The gang territory and its associated criminal businesses become an avenue to find a place, a role, and a status not frequently offered by mainstream society.⁴⁸

The key challenge is, then, of the same type that we see in the physical realm: lack of integration of a social group into larger urban dynamics. The lack of access to education and labor markets mirrors the isolation created by urban segregation. Hidden away in isolated urban pockets or faraway slums, marginalized by the formal economy, lacking effective access to the customary forms of social esteem, and bereft of quality urban services – this is the plight of the urban poor, and this marginalization must be addressed in typical integrated fashion.

Incorporating commerce

The spread of inclusionary housing policies has, regrettably, not been accompanied by equivalent "inclusionary commerce" initiatives. This is illogical, because the same forces that segregate residences also segregate commercial activities of all sorts. Gentrification processes, for example, expel all low-cost uses, not just residences. Low-cost commerce may consist of establishments catering to lower-income populations that live or work in the area, or businesses set up by low-income entrepreneurs to take advantage of high foot traffic in the zone. In the first case, real estate prices may impede the presence of cheap eating-places or service establishments (e.g., laundromats, beauty parlors), generating commercially inhospitable zones for a considerable number of the people that live or work there. This typically leads to the proliferation of mobile ("street") commerce of all sorts – from stands, carts, or vans – that frequently get chased around by urban authorities (Figures 11.5 and 11.6).



Figure 11.5 This BBQ stall operated off a dwelling in Casco Antiguo (Panama City) is popular among the numerous public servants who work in the neighborhood, and who cannot usually afford the area's restaurants, which are mostly targeted to high-end visitors and tourists. These types of businesses are bound to disappear as gentrification of the neighborhood advances. Photograph by author (2007).

The necessary regulation of street commerce should be but a complement of a policy regarding the *housing* of cheap commerce, rather than a desperate attempt to deal with the consequences of a regular, and unregulated, expulsion process.

As previously discussed, all urban employment concentrations bring together workers whose incomes mirror the normal statistical distribution. Good urban policy should see that services respond to this reality. The same argument applies when affordable housing units are incorporated into pricier zones. If residential concentrations are to be well served by commercial establishments, the latter must respond to the variety of people living there. A mixed-income city is necessarily a mixed-commerce city, just as a residentially segregated city tends to be a commercially segregated city as well.

Commercial segregation is at its worst when combined with the “spatial monopolies” of the large urban projects that pass as “important” urban investments these days. Malls, sport “cities”, and large business or government complexes tend not only to target a narrow range of customers or



Figure 11.6 In this upscale office district in Panama City, low-priced meals are sold, for lack of a better place, on the median of an avenue. Photograph by author (2012).

entrepreneurs, but also to be owned by a single entity. These “cities within cities”⁴⁹ often threaten the economic viability of more traditional and diverse urban districts, and impede the synergies produced by healthy and “open” urban areas.⁵⁰ This represents a major manipulation of urban land markets – in essence, a free market move that effectively eliminates free markets in extensive urban zones. While the control of business monopolies has a long history in economic policy, we have not applied such thinking to spatial monopolies in cities. Should we perhaps manage not only the mix of establishments, but also the size of the interventions or the structures to be built? The development of inclusive, diverse, and vibrant cities may well demand these discussions.⁵¹

Notes

- 1 Lynch, Kevin. 1984. *Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 267.
- 2 This issue of the appropriate “scale” of segregation has complicated the debate on the topic since its very beginnings. See Sarkissian, Wendy. 1976. The Idea of Social Mix in Town Planning: An Historical Review. *Urban Studies* 13: 231–246.

- 3 Banerjee, Tridib and William C. Baer. 1984. *Beyond the Neighborhood Unit: Residential Environment and Public Policy*. New York: Plenum Press.
- 4 Harloe, Michael. 1995. *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe and America*. Oxford: Blackwell. See also Murie, Alan. 2013. Public Housing in Europe and North America. In *The Future of Public Housing: Ongoing Trends in the East and the West*, edited by Jie Chen, Mark Stephens, and Yanyun Man. Heidelberg: Springer.
- 5 Lévy-Vroelant, Claire. 2013. "Everyone Should Be Housed:" The French Generalist Model of Social Housing at Stake. In *The Future of Public Housing. Ongoing Trends in the East and the West*, edited by Jie Chen, Mark Stephens, and Yanyun Man. Heidelberg: Springer.
- 6 This does not mean that public housing was devoid of segregation. As Murie points out, "Some state housing was always associated with higher standards or status and stratification within the public sector has been a constant feature. The competition for the most attractive public housing was always greater than for other estates and dwellings and the evidence suggests that what housing people accessed within the public sector was affected by bargaining power associated with ability to wait or occupational status" (Murie 2013, p. 170).
- 7 While public housing has now a bad name in some countries, I am not sure that, on balance and for many contexts, we have superseded Hans Blumenfeld's assessment of 60 years ago, when he stated that "...world-wide experience over a hundred years has clearly shown that housing built for the purpose of use – whether by governments, cooperatives, trade unions, philanthropists, or even by employers – has been far superior to most housing built for the market" (1971. *The Modern Metropolis: Its Origins, Growth, Characteristics, and Planning*, edited by Paul D. Spreiregen. Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 183). This is even truer today than it was in the past, given what we've learned in the ensuing years about appropriate design and management. Housing produced "for use", and efficiently managed by the state or non-profit institutions, is immune from speculation and gentrification, and may be sometimes designed and built with the users' participation, making it an ideal vehicle for attaining a more inclusive urbanism.
- 8 See Mallach, Alan. 2009. *A Decent Home: Planning, Building, and Preserving Affordable Housing*. Chicago: Planners Press. Chapter 2 gives a historical summary of the U.S. case.
- 9 Idem, p. 214. Also, UN-Habitat. 2003. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*. London: Earthscan, p. 107 ff.
- 10 See Pendall, Rolf. 2008. From Hurdles to Bridges: Local Land-Use Regulations and the Pursuit of Affordable Rental Housing. In *Revisiting Rental Housing: Policies, Programs, and Priorities*, edited by Nicolas P. Retsinas and Eric S. Belsky. Cambridge and Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Housing Studies and Brookings Institution Press.
- 11 Santos Carvalho, Celso and Anaclaudia Rossbach, editors. 2010. *The City Statute: A Commentary*. São Paulo: Cities Alliance and Ministry of Cities. Another type of ZEIS acts to zone irregularly developed neighborhoods and calls for improvements to the infrastructure and the permanence of their low-income occupants.
- 12 Calavita, Nico and Alan Mallach, eds. 2010. *Inclusionary Housing in International Perspective: Affordable Housing, Social Inclusion, and Land Value Recapture*. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

- 13 Integrating affordable units into market-rate housing projects can present, of course, its own version of the typical social conflicts that we have previously discussed. In London and New York, some developers of high-end apartment complexes have built separate entrances to access the affordable units (called “poor doors”), sparking public controversy. See Osborne, Hilary. 2014. Poor Doors: The Segregation of London’s Inner-city Flat Dwellers. *The Guardian* (July 25). See also Westcott, Lucy. 2014. Bill De Blasio Seeks to End New York City’s ‘Poor Doors.’ *Newsweek* (July 24). The dilemma here is between providing affordable units in the same building or, alternatively, in a separate section. Public agencies can also generate mixed-income neighborhoods by purchasing units in already existing private buildings (usually of the older and cheaper variety) and managing them as part of the public housing stock. This is already being tried, for example, in England and South Korea. See, respectively, Chakraborty, Aditya. 2014. Enfield tears up rules in radical attempt to ease housing problem. *The Guardian* (September 1), and Jang, Yeong-Hee and Soo-Hyun Kim. 2013. New Experiments in Public Housing Supply in Seoul, South Korea: The Possibilities and Limits. In *The Future of Public Housing. Ongoing Trends in the East and the West*, edited by Jie Chen, Mark Stephens, and Yanyun Man. Heidelberg: Springer.
- 14 In some countries, density bonuses and other benefits are seen as actually being “paid” by the provision of the affordable units, since the landowner has no legal right to develop the property beyond its original condition or a certain land occupation index. In these cases, the State owns the “development rights”, while the landowner retains the “property rights”. Development rights always come at a cost to the landowner, and the funds obtained in the process can be used for a variety of public-interest improvements, including affordable housing. The process is sometimes called “land value recapture”, since it is assumed that the extra value that the landowner is taking advantage of by increasing the density is actually generated by the community, either through general urban growth or direct public improvements, and not by the landowner’s actions. For an overview of the concept and its applications in Latin America, see Smolka, Martim O. 2013. *Implementing Value Capture in Latin America: Policies and Tools for Urban Development*. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- 15 This is the case, for example, of Sweden (see Barlow, James and Simon Duncan. 1994. *Success and Failure in Housing Provision: European Systems Compared*. Oxford: Pergamon).
- 16 Brachman, Lavea. 2005. Vacant and Abandoned Property: Remedies for Acquisition and Redevelopment. *Land Lines* (October 2005).
- 17 Green Leigh, Nancey. 2000. Promoting More Equitable Brownfield Redevelopment. *Land Lines* (September 2000). See also Dewar, Margaret and Kris Wernstedt. 2009. Challenges in Reusing Vacant, Abandoned, and Contaminated Urban Properties. *Land Lines* (April 2009).
- 18 Greenstein, Rosalind and Yesim Sungu-Eryilmaz. 2007. Community Land Trusts: A Solution for Permanently Affordable Housing. *Land Lines* (January 2007).
- 19 Hong, Yu-Hung and Barrie Needham, eds. 2007. *Analyzing Land Readjustment: Economics, Law, and Collective Action*. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

- 20 See Kintrea, Keith. 2013. Social Mix: International Policy Approaches. In *Neighbourhood Effects or Neighbourhood Based Problems?: A Policy Context*, edited by David Manley, Maarten van Ham, Nick Bailey, Ludi Simpson, and Duncan Maclennan. Dordrecht: Springer.
- 21 See the examples of several Spanish cities in Calavita, Nico, Joaquim Clusa, Sara Mur, and Robert Wiener. 2010. Spain's Constitutional Mandates: The Right to Housing, Land Value Recapture, and Inclusionary Housing. In *Inclusionary Housing in International Perspective: Affordable Housing, Social Inclusion, and Land Value Recapture*, edited by Nico Clavita and Alan Mallach. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- 22 Before World War II, most of Latin America's urban poor concentrated in city centers, but in the following decades peripheral, self-built development eclipsed the central city's challenges. Today, the recovery of central urban cores is back on the region's urban agenda, and issues of urban segregation are salient in the debate. Thus, challenges similar to those facing Europe and the U.S. are increasingly relevant in the region (see Rojas, Eduardo. 2004. *Volver al centro: La recuperación de áreas urbanas centrales*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank).
- 23 Vale, Lawrence J. 2013. Public Housing in the United States: Neighborhood Renewal and the Poor. In *Policy, Planning, and People. Promoting Justice in Urban Development*, edited by Naomi Carmon and Susan S. Fainstein. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press.
- 24 See Galster, George C. 2013. U.S. Assisted Housing Programs and Poverty Deconcentration: A Critical Geographic Review. In *Neighbourhood Effects or Neighbourhood Based Problems?: A Policy Context*, edited by David Manley, Maarten van Ham, Nick Bailey, Ludi Simpson, and Duncan Maclennan. Dordrecht: Springer.
- 25 Mallach 2009, p. 72ff.
- 26 Lees, Loretta. 2008. Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards an Inclusive Urban Renaissance? *Urban Studies*, 45 (12): 2449–2470. See also Slater, Tom. 2013. Capitalist Urbanization Affects Your Life Chances: Exorcising the Ghosts of “Neighborhood Effects”. In *Neighbourhood Effects or Neighbourhood Based Problems?: A Policy Context*, edited by David Manley, Maarten van Ham, Nick Bailey, Ludi Simpson, and Duncan Maclennan. Dordrecht: Springer. Additionally, see Vale 2013.
- 27 Stephens, Mark. 2013. Social Housing in the United Kingdom. In *The Future of Public Housing: Ongoing Trends in the East and the West*, edited by Jie Chen, Mark Stephens, and Yanyun Man. Heidelberg: Springer, p. 201.
- 28 The contradictions between the different approaches can be seen in the debate about public housing after its twentieth-century heyday. Public housing was “criticized when it excluded the poorest and most vulnerable, yet condemned when it created concentrations of poverty” (Chen, Jie, Yanyun Man, and Mark Stephens. 2013. Preface. In *The Future of Public Housing: Ongoing Trends in the East and the West*, edited by Jie Chen, Mark Stephens, and Yanyun Man. Heidelberg: Springer, p. v).
- 29 For a discussion of the concept of housing informality, see Fernandes, Edésio. 2011. *Regularization of Informal Settlements in Latin America*. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- 30 For a general overview, see Chapter 8 of Hall, Peter. 2002. *Cities of Tomorrow*,

- Third Edition. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. For a description of the Latin American experience, see Gilbert, Alan. 1998. *The Latin American City*, Second Edition. London: Latin American Bureau.
- 31 Programs such as “sites and services” that depend on households’ own efforts to build or finish the units are usually located in the outskirts, since central city plots demand higher densities, which tend to be incompatible with such self-built strategies. Recently, however, some interesting typologies for progressive housing have been developed for the central zones of Santiago, Chile (see Greene, Margarita and Eduardo Rojas. 2010. Housing for the Poor in the City Centre: A Review of the Chilean Experience and a Challenge for Incremental Design. In *Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America*, edited by Felipe Hernández, Peter Kellett, and Lea K. Allen. New York: Berghahn Books).
- 32 Brakarz, José, Eduardo Rojas and Margarita Greene. 2002. *Cities for All: Recent Experiences with Neighborhood Upgrading Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank. See also Fernandes 2011. A UN-Habitat report emphasizes the need to see beyond the “housing people” paradigm and to consider the income-generating potential of informal housing, for which location is crucial (2003. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements*. London: Earthscan). See also UN-Habitat. 2011. *Building Urban Safety Through Slum Upgrading*. Nairobi: UN-Habitat.
- 33 Smith, Cynthia et al. 2011. *Design with the other 90%: Cities*. New York: Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, pp. 204–205. See also Kimmelman, Michael. 2012. A City Rises, Along With Its Hopes. *The New York Times* (May 18). Additionally, see Architecture for Humanity. 2012. *Design Like You Give a Damn [2]*. New York: Abrams, pp. 318–319. See also the similar programs implemented in Rio de Janeiro, described in Brakarz, Rojas and Greene 2002.
- 34 Architecture for Humanity 2012, p. 318.
- 35 A similar approach was followed in the “Favela-Bairro” program in Rio de Janeiro, which is another good example of this type of intervention (see Segre, Roberto. 2010. Formal-Informal Connections in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro: The Favela-Bairro Programme. In *Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America*, edited by Felipe Hernández, Peter Kellett, and Lea K. Allen. New York: Berghahn Books. See also Fiori, Jorge and Zeca Brandão. 2010. Spatial Strategies and Urban Social Policy: Urbanism and Poverty Reduction in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro. In the same volume.
- 36 There are even socially integrating events that do not require people to move to unfamiliar neighborhoods. Such is the case, for example, of carnivals and citywide festivals. Carnivals originally had an important component of social satire, and served to upend temporarily the social hierarchy, releasing social tensions in the process. In part for this “subversive” character, however, they were eliminated in most of Europe and other regions (See Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2006. *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy*. New York: Holt).
- 37 Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. 2010. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, Chapter 12.
- 38 UN-Habitat 2011.

- 39 Caldeira, Teresa P. R. 2000. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 40 Atkinson, Rowland and Sarah Blandy, editors. 2006. *Gated Communities*. London: Routledge.
- 41 Atkinson, Rowland and Sarah Blandy. 2006. Introduction: International Perspectives on The New Enclavism and the Rise of Gated Communities. In *Gated Communities*, edited by Rowland Atkinson and Sarah Blandy. London: Routledge. See also Blakely, Edward and Mary Gail Snyder. 1997. *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States*. Washington, D.C. and Cambridge: Brookings Institution Press and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- 42 For an interesting discussion of the Chinese case, see Pellow, Deborah. 1996. Intimate Boundaries: A Chinese Puzzle. In *Setting Boundaries: The Anthropology of Spatial and Social Organization*, edited by Deborah Pellow. Westport: Bergin & Garvey.
- 43 I'm borrowing the island metaphor from Moore, Charles and Gerald Allen. 1976. *Dimensions: Space, Shape & Scale in Architecture*. New York: Architectural Record Books, pp. 109–110.
- 44 In the case of Managua (Nicaragua), for example, main roads are built to connect the enclaves of the economic elite and have very little integration to the rest of the street network. They are also built to avoid streetlights in order to evade carjacks (Rodgers, Dennis. 2007. Managua. In *Fractured Cities. Social Exclusion, Urban Violence and Contested Spaces in Latin America*, edited by Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt. London: Zed Books).
- 45 See Caldeira 2000. See also Sabatini, Francisco. 2006. *La segregación social del espacio en las ciudades de América Latina*. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank. Additionally, see Sabatini, Francisco, Guillermo Wormald, Carlos Sierralta, and Paul A. Peters. 2009. Residential Segregation in Santiago: Scale-Related Effects and Trends, 1992–2002. In *Urban Segregation and Governance in the Americas*, edited by Bryan R. Roberts and Robert H. Wilson. New York: Palgrave.
- 46 See, for cases in the United States, Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. 2006. *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. See also Kennedy, David M. 2011. *Don't Shoot: One Man, a Street Fellowship, and the End of Violence in Inner-City America*. New York: Bloomsbury. For Brazilian examples, see Goldstein, Donna M. 2003. *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*. Berkeley: University of California Press. See also Perlman, Janice. 2010. *Favela: Four Decades of Living on the Edge in Rio de Janeiro*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 47 See, for example, the work of Homeboy Industries in the U.S. (www.homeboyindustries.org)
- 48 See Vigil, James Diego. 2003. Urban Violence and Street Gangs. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32: 225–242. See also Bourgois, Philippe. 2002. Office Work and the Crack Alternative Among Puerto Rican Drug Dealers in East Harlem. In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, Fourth Edition, edited by George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner. Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc. Additionally, see Fagan, Jeffrey. 1999. Youth Gangs, Drugs, and Socioeconomic Isolation. In *Youth Violence: Prevention, Intervention, and Social Policy*, edited by Daniel J. Flannery and C. Ronald Huff. Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press. Finally, see also Perlman 2010.

- 49 I'm borrowing this term from Nelkin, Dorothy. 1974. *The Boston Airport Controversy*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.
- 50 See, for example, the debate about allowing the establishment of large supermarket chains in urban India [Burke, Jason. 2011. India Set to Allow Foreign Supermarkets to Open Stores. *The Guardian* (November 24)], or that concerning the location of agricultural produce vendors in Chile (Aliaga-Linares, Lissette. 2012. On-Street Upgrading? Assessing the Consequences of Allocation and Regulation Policy in Santiago de Chile's "Ferias Libres". In *Latin American Urban Development into the 21st Century: Towards a Renewed Perspective on the City*, edited by Dennis Rodgers, Jo Beall, and Kavi Kanbur. New York: Palgrave).
- 51 This is a possibility already addressed by Jane Jacobs' classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961. New York: Random House).

12 Notes on selected case studies

I dedicate this last chapter to brief descriptions and commentaries on selected case studies of inclusive urbanism from my own professional practice and from published sources. The idea is not to present these projects as “exemplary” or more worthy of comment among a potential list of candidates, but rather to explore the possibilities and limits of different types of approaches and situations within the spectrum of social mix. The first case is an example of contiguous and seamlessly connected neighborhoods of different incomes without visual distinctions between the buildings or urban typologies of the two areas. In the second case, in contrast, the two income groups occupy the same buildings – that is, presenting the finest possible “grain” of social mix. In the third case, we juxtapose income groups again in adjacent neighborhoods, but with weak physical connections between them, and stark differences in architecture and urban typology. Finally, the fourth case is an example of commercial inclusion, in which “informal” businesses are incorporated into a redevelopment scheme that is, in all other aspects, envisioned as a standard, “middle-class” urban environment. All together, the examples will hopefully help the reader to grasp better the challenges facing inclusionary urban development in the residential and commercial realms.

The Casco Antiguo affordable housing program in Panama City

The Casco Antiguo program, as mentioned in the Introduction, sought to provide affordable housing options to long-time, low-income residents in a gentrifying historic neighborhood.¹ Casco Antiguo started out as the second version of Panama City, which was re-founded by the Spanish Crown in 1673. The originally walled formal city and its poorer outskirts contained most of the capital’s population until the early twentieth century. The city’s elite started suburbanizing in the 1920s, and were followed by the middle class in the ensuing decades, so that by mid-century the area was transitioning to a mostly rental neighborhood for an increasingly poor population. By the 1970s, most of the residents lived in crowded conditions, in small rooms with shared bathrooms. By that time, many owners had started to abandon the properties and ceased to collect rents, effectively propitiating

the development of a squatter neighborhood composed of deteriorating multi-family structures. The buildings were attached, two and three stories high with interior courtyards, and with mostly nineteenth-century architectural styles and detailing, reflecting the influence of the countries that had intervened in Panama through the centuries: Spain, France, and the U.S.

In 1997, the neighborhood was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, and new legislation was passed that subsidized restorations and facilitated evictions. While restorations started at a slow pace, evictions accelerated and, by 2004, one of every six buildings was empty or in ruins, and the neighborhood had lost a third of its population. Meanwhile, the price of real estate skyrocketed, tripling over the next five years as tourism boomed in the country, making the neighborhood one of the most expensive in the city. Evictions became a hot political issue due to complaints by long-time residents, and in 2002, when the fiscal and financial incentives were renewed, a new law dedicated the government-owned residential buildings in the area to affordable housing targeted toward the traditional population. This became the basis for the housing program.²

The program rehabilitated existing buildings according to the regulations that applied to all historic structures in the area. The resultant residential units varied in size, as is unavoidable in rehabilitations, and offered either one or two bedrooms. The units were all rented to low-income families from the neighborhood that either faced eviction from privately owned buildings or lived in substandard or dangerous conditions. The government agency in charge of the renovation of the entire historic zone managed all the rehabilitated units (Figure 12.1).

An estimate was made of the rents per square meter that were paid before the neighborhood started to gentrify (about \$1.50), and the rate was applied to all new units according to their surface area. Some buildings included commercial spaces on the ground floors, which were rented to neighborhood businesses that were also being evicted.

The rehabilitation project served Casco Antiguo residents in a number of ways. Living conditions improved dramatically, in a very short time, in the same neighborhood, and at an affordable price. Households maintained their rent at the established rate, so no new or unreasonable economic burdens were imposed. Access to bank mortgages, credit history, regular income, and other demands of formal homeownership presented extreme difficulties for this population, so the renting option proved to be highly practical. Of course, as previously mentioned, households benefited from the whole area's renovation process and the increasing popularity of the zone, and some residents established home businesses to take advantage of these new conditions.

All the renovated properties clustered in a number of contiguous blocks, which allowed for a certain degree of neighborhood life among households sharing similar living conditions. At the same time, these blocks were part of an "open" urban grid, which allowed easy interaction with other zones. As restored historic buildings, the new housing was indistinguishable from more

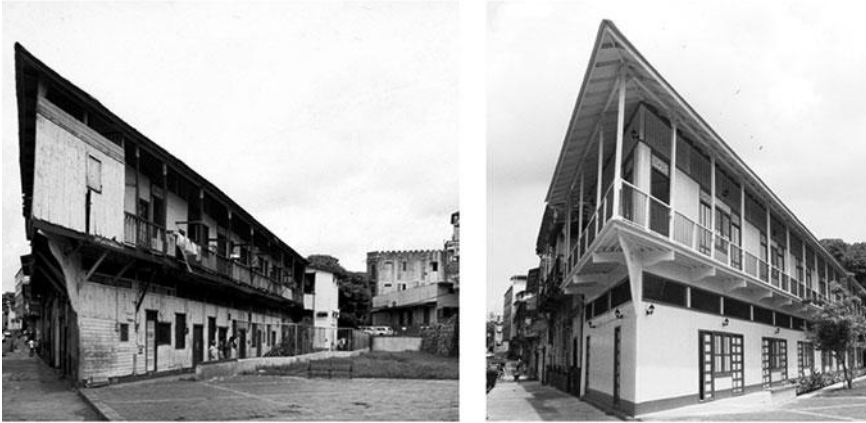


Figure 12.1 Before and after views of La Boyacá, one the affordable housing projects developed in historic properties in Panama City's Casco Antiguo. Photographs by author (2002 and 2005).

upscale properties in the surrounding blocks, so it was also difficult to stigmatize. Since each structure in the neighborhood has its own history, residents took pride in learning about the history of their own building, and of being among the people contributing to the renovation and upkeep efforts of a national and international heritage site.

Many of the wealthier residents and investors were initially skeptical of the housing program, and a major national newspaper editorialized against it. But once the buildings were finished and occupied, most of the criticism subsided, and attitudes shifted towards support or indifference. In this sense, the program can be deemed a political success. I want to point out several factors that made this possible, but which also establish the limits of this type of intervention:

- In the context of the historic zone as a whole, the program was small, initially involving eight buildings, and potentially applicable to 38 out of a total building stock of around 900. No one could argue that the whole zone was being renovated as a “low-income” community.
- The program focused on a very deteriorated part of the neighborhood, so the renovations represented a significant improvement of existing conditions for anyone concerned about the historic zone. In fact, the affordable housing program became the spearhead of general investment in that part of the neighborhood, since it was quickly followed by upscale residential and commercial development. This is logical, since it is very difficult to transition from total blight to high-end development. The affordable housing became a convenient transitioning effort, and the prices of private properties continued their inflationary trajectory.

- Management was able to keep the buildings in good condition, which assuaged fears that the improvements were just a temporary stage. Good upkeep also meant that the buildings continued to send the message that better times awaited the influenced areas.
- Crime-reduction programs targeted at gangs hugely improved the safety of the zone around the housing projects.³ The whole effort was thus seen as an effective mechanism for rescuing certain areas from unavoidable decay.
- In general, wealthier neighbors were foreigners or locals of very high income, and everyone in the city understood that Casco Antiguo was a unique and incomparable zone in the city. This meant that affordable housing initiatives would most likely not affect either real estate prices or the status of the households in the neighborhood. Both assumptions proved correct.

The Casco Antiguo project's viability hinged on the fact that the affordable housing program was a relatively small component of a larger revitalization effort in a highly valued neighborhood. It was inevitably part of an overall process of gentrification, and as such, cannot be taken as a model for a comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing housing shortages. But these experiences are very important for changing the terms of local housing policy debates. They assert the right of lower-income households to remain in their neighborhoods, to be able to access quality housing there, even of the historic type, and to participate in an improved central city along with other social classes. The next example shares some of these features.

Recent mixed-income projects in the U.S.

My second case study involves the recent and important U.S. experiences in mixed-income apartment projects in several cities.⁴ They consist of private developments or public-private ventures – many in former public housing sites – that sometimes combine different tenures or are supported by public subsidies. The complexes were all privately developed and owned. In all these cases, a social mix was achieved inside the same structures or complexes, so we are talking here about the most “fine grain” model within the inclusion spectrum. An important number of studies of the results have been produced, so the experience is well documented enough for us to draw some key lessons.

In some of the projects, income diversity was attained by securing government subsidies for the more affordable units, while offering the more expensive ones at market rates. In others, the market rate units subsidized directly the affordable ones. The different types of units were, for the most part, visually indistinguishable, and the properties were well designed, kept and managed, with strict rules for maintenance and the use of common areas.

In some of the privately developed projects, the mixed-income nature of the complexes was not divulged to potential higher-income tenants or buyers. In the case of those involving significant public contributions, the sponsoring public authorities made clear their goal of social mix. Some projects rented all the residential units, regardless of price, while others combined tenures. In the latter case, the market-rate products consisted in apartments for sale, while the rental units remained as the affordable option.

In general, as one would expect, low-income households benefited mostly from the opportunity of living in attractive and safe dwellings and surroundings that they could afford, with efficient urban services guaranteed by effective management. Interaction between different social classes or tenure populations was minimal, but in some cases, it was also low within groups. In some cases, higher-income tenants tended towards short-term occupancy, which may have contributed to class diversity by keeping expectations of social interaction low. In the case of Tent City in Boston, for example, the higher-income population consisted mainly of graduate students (Figure 12.2).

Income differences were rarely critical in affecting interaction; in any case, there was no real way of knowing who earned more or less. Lifestyle differences, such as those between households with and without children, did cause some conflicts, especially in the use of common areas. Management was usually able to resolve these problems. Most evictions were due to nonpayment of rents, rather than violations of property rules.

The lessons here reinforce several points. First, it is not impossible to have common rules for households of different classes in a residential environment. Efficient management is key, which is what middle-class households usually have and pay for, and what poor households usually lack and suffer from. Securing good urban or building services and maintenance for everyone can go a long way in diminishing conflicts between neighbors of any class. (This is true regardless of whether the “incompatible” neighbor is in the floor upstairs or in the building across the street). Low-income households probably sacrifice a certain amount of flexibility when forced to comply with middle-class standards of property use, but this might be offset by living in housing which is safe, not socially stigmatized, well located, and of high quality. Second, mixing classes is no guarantee of inter-class social interaction, but again, such expectations are unrealistic in most contexts. Mixed-income developments at least remove certain unhelpful appearances from the situation, perhaps allowing people to assess each other directly in terms of common values. As I pointed out above, *we never really know* (and most likely shouldn't know) how much our neighbors make; rather, we make inferences based on their capacity to buy or rent in the neighborhood. Relationships will develop – or not – based, in the end, on common interests and time spent living together, rather than on a supposedly common income.

The Casco Antiguo and North American examples are interesting in that they present social mix in a rather “fine grain” format: the former in



Figure 12.2 Tent City, a mixed-income apartment complex developed in downtown Boston. Photograph by author (2014).

contiguous areas connected by an open street grid; the latter within the same buildings. They were undoubtedly and inevitably facilitated by the characteristics of the households involved – their differences in income, their stability or transiency, their types of social power – as well as the characteristics of the neighborhood itself, including its uniqueness, price, and building typology. Like most experiences of this type, these are not easily transferable, but rather reinforce the notion that success, if it comes at all, will most certainly depend on the details. Our next case study further reinforces this notion.

The history of Morro dos Cabritos and Bairro Peixoto in Rio de Janeiro

My third example does not involve an urban intervention at all, but rather draws on a short published history of the relationship between a middle-class neighborhood, Bairro Peixoto, and an adjoining informal settlement, Morro dos Cabritos, in Rio de Janeiro.⁵ Historian Bryan McCann's essay traces the 70-year relationship between these neighborhoods from their inception to the present, highlighting the interaction between their social dynamics and the overall political and social junctures of Brazilian society. It is thus very useful for transcending discussions about urban or architectural design, and for focusing our attention instead on the effects of society-wide processes on the prospects of social integration at the inter-neighborhood level.

Morro dos Cabritos is an informal settlement (*favela*) perched on the hillsides surrounding Bairro Peixoto, a middle-class neighborhood composed of single-family homes and apartments largely built in the 1950s. Bairro Peixoto's layout includes a central plaza, which has been an important space of interaction between the two neighborhoods through time. McCann describes several distinct phases in the relationship between the two. In the initial years, interactions between the areas were rather limited, as one would expect given the social differences. Some residents from Morro dos Cabritos worked as cooks, maids or handymen in the residences of Bairro Peixoto, and pickup football games were shared between youngsters from both neighborhoods in the plaza. Relationships were thus of a practical nature, with cautious incursions of the lower-income residents into the public spaces of their higher-status neighbors. But in the 1960s the relationship intensified thanks the efforts of a new priest who took charge of Bairro Peixoto's Catholic church. The priest was committed to focusing on the needs of the poor, and started working intensively in the *favela* from the Bairro Peixoto parish. He was able to enlist some middle-class parishioners to help with his social programs, and eventually was able to integrate the two communities around the celebration of a popular annual festival, which took place in the plaza and included residents from both areas. This created a more socially "open" view of that public space than before. Social activism and egalitarian ideals were also in the air, as opposition to the military dictatorship

galvanized social forces committed to democracy in Rio and elsewhere in the country. Left-leaning intellectuals and public figures moved to Bairro Peixoto, thus instilling an aura of social progressiveness to the neighborhood, and emphasizing its commitment to peaceful coexistence and social solidarity with its *favela* neighbor.

This collaborative chapter ended in the 1990s, when social conditions in the *favela* started deteriorating and violent drug-trafficking gangs overtook Morro dos Cabritos. Residents of Bairro Peixoto hired private security guards and fortified their residences, and the exchanges between the neighborhoods came to a halt. In recent years, however, a new community police program has been able to successfully demobilize the gangs and make the *favela* safe for residents and visitors once again. Neighbors from Bairro Peixoto have renewed their collaboration with social programs in the *favela*, residents from both neighborhoods are attending the same churches, and the plaza has recovered its inter-class character. McCann, however, sees a weakness in the new forms of sociality:

Overall, relations between the Morro dos Cabritos and Bairro Peixoto are more peaceful and constructive than they have been in a generation. But they generally lack the kind of intention – the explicit drive to break down social divides and broaden access – that characterized the 1970s.⁶

This “intention” is nothing other than the specific ideology and values that frame the relationships between neighbors of different classes. The interactions between the two neighborhoods in the 1970s were informed by ideals of social solidarity and coexistence, and the accomplishments of the period arose from that intention. These contiguous neighborhoods had no “need” to interact, and yet their history together contains as many chapters of collaboration as of alienation. The case highlights the importance of values, ideology, and social intent in the dynamics of segregation and social inclusion. It also emphasizes the absolutely crucial issue of safety for facilitating any interaction initiatives that develop out of those dispositions. These factors are as important as the contributions of urban or architectural design, or of the typologies adopted for any degree sought of inclusionary “grain”.

The renovation of Casco Antiguo’s waterfront in Panama City

I finish the chapter with a description of another project in Panama’s Casco Antiguo that dealt mainly with commercial integration, and in which I participated as lead designer. It is a good example of what can be accomplished when the incorporation of small commerce is assumed early on as an essential part of the intervention, and takes us beyond the focus on residential segregation analyzed in the previous cases.

The project consisted of the renovation of a 600-meter-long waterfront in the historic area, with great views of the modern city and an obvious potential for tourism. The project sought to remake the waterfront as a more efficient connection between the historic neighborhood and the modern city by tying it to the linear park along the bay and widening the vehicular entrance to the formerly walled part of the old city. The waterfront was mainly an industrial zone dedicated to fishing and maritime transportation, used by a mostly low-income population, which meant that a wholesale eviction or relocation of these activities was an option under consideration. However, due to the resistance of the affected population, and the responsible attitude of the public authorities, these activities were to be kept in place and integrated into the new design.

The waterfront included four piers, three dedicated to artisanal fishing and one handling cargo and passengers moving between the city and the Pacific Islands, as well as small towns in the easternmost province of the country that were not accessible by roads. The fishing activity was directly linked to a fish market occupying one end of the waterfront. Between the piers, sidewalks were lined with an irregular assortment of improvised sheds and small buildings housing wholesale fish sellers and a variety of small entrepreneurs linked to maritime activity, such as repairers of fishing nets and overboard engines. Unbeknown to most Panamanians, practically the entirety of the fish and seafood consumed in the city moved through the place even though most of the facilities complied with few of the required sanitary regulations.

Early on, a decision was made to group all pier activities in a single structure, which allowed a very simple division of the waterfront into a “recreational” area towards the older historic zone and a “work” area towards the fish market. In front of the existing market, a new “vendor’s square” was proposed to house all the small businesses previously dispersed along the old street. Adjoining the square, a new pier was designed with three independent sections for cargo, passengers, and fishing (Figure 12.3).

The public linear park along the coast was made to pass between the pier and the square, so that pedestrians, cyclists and other recreational users could enjoy views of the pier and fish vending activities, and familiarize themselves with these important urban industries. Following conventional social prejudices, some authorities questioned the compatibility of these kinds of social groups, but in the end the proposed design prevailed (Figure 12.4).

The whole project was designed under a philosophy that might be called “zero evictions”. All existing businesses and vendors, regardless of the size of their operations, were given a space in the new facilities. A detailed census of vendors was made, which established their type of activity and the size of their stalls, and new facilities were offered that were of the same or larger size, and that complied with existent sanitary regulations. The approach allowed the complete transformation of the waterfront according to conventional visions of public urban spaces while avoiding harm to, and even strengthening, the traditional small businesses. Visitors and customers now



Figure 12.3 Before and after views of the Casco Antiguo waterfront. Above: old fish vendor stalls (Photos 2008). Below: New pier and vendor's market (Photos 2011 and 2014). The linear park runs between both facilities. Photographs by author.

felt safer in an environment that was more attractive, cleaner, and better organized. As could have been easily predicted, increased public affluence quickly changed the nature of many stalls, and a number of wholesale fish vendors shifted towards the preparation and serving of *ceviche*, a traditional raw fish plate, in a part of the square that turned into an improvised “food court”. The whole complex has become an important urban destination.

This final case is important for highlighting the need to incorporate small and informal businesses into large urban redevelopment projects, and to consider the social impacts of these projects from the planning stages. It also demonstrates that the economic benefits of redevelopment can be widely distributed, so that urban transformations can lead to mutually beneficial results for a variety of social groups and classes.

Notes

- 1 Espino, Ariel. 2008. Heritage Preservation, Tourism, and Inclusive Development in Panama City's Casco Antiguo. *Land Lines* (October 2008). See also

- Espino, Ariel. 2009. Integración social y desarrollo económico: El caso del Casco Antiguo de Panamá. *Canto Rodado* 4: 1–35.
- 2 The Ministries of Housing and of Tourism, as well as the Office of the Old City, which I directed, supported the housing program. The regional government of Andalucía (Junta de Andalucía) provided additional funds. The projects were carried out between 2004 and 2009.
- 3 A description and assessment of the program oriented towards the area's gangs is provided by DeManche, Paul J. D. 2013. *Bridging the Gap: Boundary-less Bureaucrats and Gang Reintegration in Panama City*. Master's thesis, Department of Urban Studies and Planning. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- 4 The analysis is based on eleven case studies, described in Pader, Ellen J., and Myrna Margulies Breitbart. 1993. Transforming Public Housing: Conflicting Visions for Harbor Point. *Places* 8 (4): 34–41; Joseph, Mark L. 2008. Early Resident Experiences at a New Mixed-income Development in Chicago. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 30 (3): 229–257; Rosenbaum, James E., Linda K. Stroh, and Cathy A. Flynn. 1998. Lake Parc Place: A Study of Mixed-Income Housing. *Housing Policy Debate*, 9 (4): 703–740; Kleit, Rachel Garshick. 2005. HOPE VI New Communities: Neighborhood Relationships in Mixed-income Housing. *Environment and Planning A*, (37): 1413–1444; and, especially, Brophy, Paul C. and Rhonda N. Smith. 1997. Mixed-Income Housing: Factors for Success. *Cityscape*, 3 (2): 3–31.
- 5 McCann, Bryan. 2014. Troubled Oasis: The Intertwining Histories of the Morro dos Cabritos and Bairro Peixoto. In *Cities from Scratch: Poverty and Informality in Urban Latin America*, edited by Brodwyn Fischer, Bryan McCann, and Javier Auyero. Durham: Duke University Press.
- 6 Idem, p. 123.

Conclusion

Looking for new urban cosmologies

This book has attempted to explain how social power works and expresses itself in urban space, especially in terms of segregation and spatial exclusion, which is the main form that inequality takes in contemporary urban development.¹ It has tried to advance the idea that all urban plans and designs inevitably deal with power and its distribution. In other words, when urban authorities and developers plan and design, they also allocate resources, such as access, location, space, time, and status.² They thus affect the chances that people have of overcoming poverty, which we have framed, in line with anthropologist Mary Douglas, as “the condition of not being allowed to enter the system of exchanges”.³ It is important that we be conscious of this reality, so we can take an informed stand on the issue, as city builders or citizens.

The book has also identified several factors that must be analyzed when attempting to confront segregation and push for more inclusive policies or projects. One must always remember that in planning, as in so many other things, context is key.

A first factor to investigate is the modes of urban sociality. What is the character of neighborhood life in the city we’re studying? Are neighborhoods integrated by a network of highly interdependent households, or by mostly anonymous neighbors who interact little? What is the extent of the interdependencies of the neighbors? Is it limited to common property management or does it extend also to daily support in other ways? Do neighborhoods have a strong ethnic or lifestyle component or do they contain a diverse mix of peoples? Are status considerations related to housing consumption paramount or secondary?

These are basic questions, since they point towards the appropriate *grain* of segregation that we should pursue in a given context. When neighborhood homogeneity is essential for the maintenance of valuable social networks or local cultures, some degree of neighborhood segregation must be supported, and the emphasis should be placed instead on *regional* integration; that is, in making sure that these social enclaves are not too isolated from each other and from main urban flows. In contrast, there may be some contexts in which a much finer grain of mix is possible, perhaps allowing the combination of different households within the same buildings or structures.

A second factor is the power structure of a place. What are the main industries, and how do they shape the city and the type of housing consumption? How tolerant are these forms of power to urban inclusion? What possibilities or constraints do they present? How do they affect the location and operational styles of different types of businesses? How do they shape the structure of the city and the relationships between residences and workspaces?

A third variable relates to density and building typologies. These factors, by themselves, have a great influence on the chances of inclusionary initiatives. I have argued that higher densities and multifamily building typologies offer interesting advantages for social and functional mix. Density is, of course, also crucial for sustaining public transit, which makes mobility more democratic; furthermore, denser development offers environmental advantages related to sustainability and land conservation. Issues of urban form, density, and building typology are thus an intrinsic part of any discussion related to urban inclusion.

These are all practical and hopefully useful considerations. But I want now to shift the attention back to the social processes that fuel segregation, and to those that can ameliorate it.

A central argument of this book is that segregation as practiced today responds to the way that social relations are organized in modern societies. The alert reader might have picked up on the apparent paradox that the most democratically oriented societies in history have also produced some of the most strikingly segregated settlements. As equality for all citizens has been championed and legislated, the most offensive forms of domination have been replaced by subtler or disguised forms of expressing social hierarchy. As the overt forms of expressing inequality based on imposed consumption patterns or rules of etiquette have become unacceptable and unenforceable, segregation has become a key mechanism for both signaling social power and for regulating relationships between people of different status.

Segregation, however, can also have a positive dimension. As I have argued, the most legitimate forms of segregation relate to the voluntary separation of cultural groups. People with different ethnic cultures or lifestyles use segregation to both protect and enrich their way of life. This concession, however, is not problem-free. After all, *any* form of segregation can be ultimately justified as responding to cultural differences. As we have observed, the rich, the poor, or the highly educated all live differently, and are thus theoretically entitled to their own space. Were we to follow this argument to its logical conclusion, segregation would cease to be troubling, and we would be back in the realm of “free market choice”.

The issue is, however, that inequality *produces* cultural or behavioral differences. Different life-chances and degrees of power generate, inevitably, different behaviors and outlooks on life. As Gans (among many others) has emphasized, class and tastes are inextricably linked, and the “subcultures”

that interact in urban neighborhoods are themselves the product of class differences.

Classes are strata-with-subcultures that grow out of the structure of the national economy and society. By class subcultures I mean *sets of responses* that have developed out of people's efforts to cope with the opportunities, incentives, and rewards, as well as the deprivations, prohibitions, and pressures which the natural environment and society offer them.⁴

Likewise, for Bourdieu, as we have seen, social classes form around common resources – money, education, social prestige – that define a way of relating to the world. In fact, in his view, many of the tastes that are characteristic of subordinate classes are the result of “making virtue out of necessity”, that is, of embracing and celebrating the behaviors imposed by their low status in society.

Of course, not all of a society's culture can be reduced to power games. One could claim a legitimate independence from this discussion for such realms as religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and perhaps many others. But we don't have to be as cynical as Bourdieu to accept the simple truth that social power and lifestyles are related. The world of the urban gangs previously described is a good example of a lifestyle wrought out of the very specific constraints and possibilities open to young slum dwellers.

All of this wreaks havoc on the common idea that lower-income groups somehow need to change their “values” in order to fit in better with mainstream society, and perhaps attain a higher degree of integration in middle-class residential neighborhoods. As many authors have eloquently argued, low-income households usually profess the same values as everybody else – the problem is they don't have the *resources to practice them*. As we saw before, middle-class lifestyles may be beautiful and harmonious, but they're also expensive. More than middle-class values are necessary for moving all social activities to the interior of houses, purchasing exclusively residential properties, remodeling them with taste, and keeping them in pristine condition.

I do not mean to argue that cultural or lifestyle differences are irrelevant or may not cause conflict in urban neighborhoods. On the contrary, lifestyle differences are real enough, and so are the problems they cause. Marked differences in notions of privacy, or property use and maintenance, can generate enough enmity among neighbors as to make neighborhood life quite unpleasant. For a typical middle-class household, accustomed perhaps to quiet residential surroundings, having a neighbor operate a business in the house next door might understandably be an intolerable situation.

From a public policy perspective, however, these differences cannot provide a blanket excuse for supporting all forms of segregation. To the degree that segregation is a product of social inequality, higher levels of social equality

must be pursued; this will in turn ameliorate the differences, and reduce the need for segregation.⁵ Improved social equality requires a more equitable distribution of those forms of social power that we have seen throughout the book: material resources, education, social esteem, and so forth.

It is important to emphasize that a reduction in segregation should not be pursued primarily to enhance social interaction or neighborhood life, but rather to reduce the inequities that segregation itself produces and sustains. This book has purposely taken a rather relaxed and contextual view of neighborhood social life. As discussed previously, high levels of social interaction in neighborhoods may be expected in ethnic or kin-dominated neighborhoods, some intense lifestyle enclaves, or areas in which low-income households need their neighbors for daily support. When these conditions are absent, neighborhood life might take a turn towards anonymity, but there's nothing necessarily wrong with that. Of course, a lively neighborhood life is something to commend, but the processes that lead to it are probably too particular and context-specific to justify public policy interventions towards this end.

In closing, I want to point to a critical factor affecting the success of inclusionary policies, and which can perhaps be called the "ideological environment". The degree to which urban inclusion initiatives can succeed will inevitably depend on how receptive the political environment of a particular society is to this discourse. I have already commented on how inter-neighborhood relations depend critically on people's attitudes about other social groups. These same attitudes have an impact at city and national levels, and determine the chances of inclusionary initiatives. Nothing is more effective for bringing out change than a change in mentality. Half a century ago, environmentalism was practically nonexistent, and had negligible influence in development schemes or debates. Today, it is part of a general "common sense", and informs most policy discussions, at least in progressive circles. Something similar will have to happen to urban social inclusion. I want to contend that social inclusion must become a "standard" component of urban policy if we are to have a real urban future.⁶

A lot will depend, of course, on the success of social movements that advocate for more inclusive cities. In previous centuries, subaltern classes undermined and fought against rules and policies, such as sumptuary laws, that upheld the social hierarchy. Today, space is becoming the lightning rod in the struggle for more equality in the urban environment, as well it should be. For better or worse, important policy changes normally occur only with social pressure.⁷ The United Nations also considers the issue of "civic culture" essential:

It is HABITAT's view that solutions to the divided city require strong local governments that are deliberately inclusive of all city groups, particularly the excluded, in the ways that they set policy, devise their plans and budgets, and implement their projects and programmes. In essence, the position ... is that failure to engage with the poor is closely connected

with issues of civic culture. The argument made here is that it is necessary to create a *culture of social solidarity and positive civic values* if any serious attempt is to be made to address the problems of the exclusion of the poor.⁸

We need, in a sense, new urban cosmologies. These should not be static or pre-designed, like those of the past, but flexible, context-driven, and based on agreed principles. Socio-spatial inclusion, in its residential and commercial dimensions, can be one of these principles, and could well be required when developing or redeveloping urban districts of different sizes. Such standards should apply regardless of the type of developer involved – private sector, the State, NGOs, or any combination thereof. Vestergaard has described a principle of the Danish welfare state under which “all individuals must be given the opportunity to establish good everyday lives for themselves and that nobody should have to live in an area in which accelerating physical and social decay is an accepted reality”.⁹ We must recover these types of outlooks and urban agendas, regardless of the uniqueness of our current political and economic conditions.¹⁰

For this task, we must shed off the myth that the “market” knows best, or that it efficiently transmits what consumers want or “prefer”. The “highest and best use” of urban land – in other words, the use that commands the highest price – has been taken to express some form of efficient or rational decision-making process, while it simply reflects the dominance of the highest bidder. As I have pointed out, the results of “free market” processes are often at odds with the urban order sought by defenders of the *exclusionary city*, who must then seek government action in the form of urban regulations. The inclusionary city will likewise not develop on its own out of conventional land market operations, and calls for a “hands-off” governmental approach to this issue thus ring hollow. However difficult or uncomfortable, explicit social goals in public policy are unavoidable, and they must inevitably become part of the planning process. As author Thomas Lines puts it,

Markets, like economic processes of any sort, can only be means to development, not ends in themselves. They do not operate in a social or ethical void and in moral terms no price is either right or wrong in itself. A price’s degree of rightness will depend on whose interest it best serves. The correct question to ask was not “Are the prices right?” but “Who are they right for, and why?”¹¹

When proposing new urban cosmologies we also acknowledge that cities are always unfinished. There is no complete city, because cities don’t stay still for a portrait. More than blueprints, we need good and democratic urban management systems, run with the right intentions, sensibilities, and principles. There is no end state, just effective management of urban conflicts, paradoxes, and tendencies.

Absent of purposeful action to reverse the tide, we can expect cities to become increasingly segregated in the foreseeable future. We are now raising whole generations of citizens in highly segregated cities, which end up believing that socially-mixed neighborhoods or districts are foolish pipe dreams. The memory of well-functioning, socially diverse urban zones fades into oblivion, like that of so many obsolete technologies. In the path of the new initiatives that we can undertake there is ample room for creativity, innovation, and learning. We must make the best of it.

Notes

- 1 Hopefully, the arguments have contributed to the explanation of “residential differentiation”, whose theories were in “desperate need of revision”, according to David Harvey when he wrote about the topic 30 years ago (Harvey, David. 1985. *The Urbanization of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 109). With the application of Marxist theory, Harvey sought to surpass the limitations of neoclassical economics, which normally relates such phenomena to consumer “preferences”, but never bothers to explain where these preferences come from. Harvey theorized then that residential differentiation – the distribution of residences in a city according to a pattern of socially homogeneous neighborhoods – was the result of class divisions in capitalist societies. Social classes and occupational groups manifested themselves as distinct “consumption classes”, who then clustered in neighborhoods and reproduced their social ideologies through neighborhood life. I have argued, in contrast, that housing markets are rather rigid, and usually less expressive of social ideologies than we assume. Housing consumption frequently follows considerations of social status, but the resulting neighborhoods can be very diverse beyond a certain income threshold. Moreover, neighborhoods are not necessarily good “incubators” of any kind of class-consciousness (though they certainly can be). The social geography of cities clearly arises from the power structure of society, but the spatial differentiation aspect responds to the particular form in which power relations are expressed and regulated in modern societies, rather than being a direct or logical result of the classic Marxist contradiction between capital and labor.
- 2 Peattie, Lisa. 1987. *Planning: Rethinking Ciudad Guayana*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, p. 70.
- 3 Douglas, Mary. 2004. Traditional Culture – Let’s Hear No More About It. In *Culture and Public Action*, edited by Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 109.
- 4 Gans, Herbert. 1982. *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community*, with a new introduction by the author. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 24. Emphasis in original.
- 5 DeFilippis, James. 2013. On Spatial Solutions to Social Problems. *Cityscape* 15 (2): 69–72.
- 6 This is closely related to what J. Barry Cullingworth (1993. *The Political Culture of Planning: American Land Use in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Routledge) has analyzed as national “political cultures”, which

- encompass notions about the legitimate role of the State and civil society, of common and individual interests, and other related topics that have an impact on the political scene.
- 7 This is clearly borne out, for example, by the history of public housing in Europe (Harloe, Michael. 1995. *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe and America*. Oxford: Blackwell).
- 8 Taylor, Paul. 2007. Civic Culture. In *Urban Crisis: Culture and the Sustainability of Cities*, edited by M. Nadarajah and Ann Tomoko Yamamoto. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, p. 57. Italics mine.
- 9 Vestergaard, Hedvig. 2003. Troubled Housing Estates in Denmark. In *Social Exclusion in European Cities: Processes, Experiences, and Responses*, edited by Ali Madanipour, Göran Cars, and Judith Allen. London: Routledge, p. 127.
- 10 For an example of a set of guiding principles in furtherance of urban equity, democracy, and diversity, see Fainstein, Susan S. 2010. *The Just City*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. There is also, of course, Kevin Lynch's (1984. *Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press) previously cited, and more abstract, effort. A valuable contribution comes from the global movements working with the concept of "the right to the city". See, Brown, Alison and Annali Kristiansen. 2009. *Urban Policies and the Right to the City. Rights, Responsibilities And Citizenship*. UNESCO/UN-Habitat, and Sugranyes, Ana and Charlotte Mathivet, eds. 2011. *Cities for All. Proposals and Experiences towards the Right to the City*, Second Edition. Santiago: Habitat International Coalition.
- 11 Lines, Thomas. 2008. *Making Poverty: A History*. London: Zed Books, p. 58.

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