

## The Greek Review of Social Research

Vol 113 (2004)

113 A´ Special Issue: Social change and segregation trends in European cities. Editor: Thomas Maloutas



### Editorial: Urban segregation and the European context

*Thomas Maloutas*

doi: [10.12681/grsr.9214](https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.9214)

Copyright © 2004, Thomas Maloutas



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

### To cite this article:

Maloutas, T. (2004). Editorial: Urban segregation and the European context. *The Greek Review of Social Research*, 113, 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.9214>

*Thomas Maloutas\**

---

## EDITORIAL: URBAN SEGREGATION AND THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

---

### INTRODUCTION

This volume comprises the reworked presentations from two seminars on 'Recent Social Trends in European Metropolises' held at the National Centre for Social Research in Athens (April 2002 and June 2003). The contributions represent the kind of material discussed within the network on 'Segregation in Large European Cities' funded by the French CNRS, coordinated by Edmond Préteceille and regularly meeting during the past five years.

Interest in segregation was initiated and stimulated by the work of the Chicago School and produced a considerable body of literature until it became a rather neglected topic in the early 1970s following the crisis of positivism and the questionable explanatory value of the descriptive and undertheorised methods of investigating segregation that culminated in *factorial ecologies*. The turn to theory, and especially to political economy, as exemplified by David Harvey's personal trajectory in that period, connoted a turn to central stage politics from reformist policies parallel to the turn to higher order abstractions. Monographic work on segregation was increasingly marginalised as redundant and superfluous in terms of the development of the central theoretical arguments. Segregation, as well as other manifestations of social inequality and discrimination, was considered as more or less obvious and inevitable outcomes inflicted by capitalist social relations. The need was rather for a better grasp of the latter if radical social change was to promote their undoing.

While never having ceased to be an undeniable urban reality, segregation started to attract considerable attention again in the 1980s not only through the intense ethno-racial discrimination that led to urban riots in the US (a recurring phenomenon anyway) but also through the neighbourhood crisis in

---

\* University of Thessaly and National Centre for Social Research, maloutas@ath.forthnet.gr

European public housing estates and in deprived (mainly de-industrialised) areas. The renewed and more global interest is closely related to the 1970s changes and namely to the social impact of economic restructuring.

Apart from the spatial concentration of problems in areas that became increasingly difficult to regulate, the broad changes in occupational and revenue structures in the major urban centres of advanced capitalist societies enabled the development of phenomena like gentrification that diversified the spatial dimension of social relations and contributed to attract attention to the spatial concentration of the opposite social pole as well. At the same time, diversification and complexity have been putting new strains on the old concept of segregation to come to terms with new realities. These strains are subsequently discussed in terms of the impact of the divided city perspective, and of the implied meaning and connotations accumulated in the course of its long history, on the perception of segregation. Moreover, it will be argued that strains are also contextual, and that the European context in particular does neither seem to comply with the divided city perspective nor to accommodate relevantly the implied and connotative meaning of segregation.

#### SEGREGATION AND THE DIVIDED CITY

The interest for segregation has been always related to intense socio-spatial change as with the formation of the American mid-western industrial metropolis in the early 20th century or with the economic restructuring of the 1970s and its social impact on world leading metropolises. Although the renewed interest related to economic restructuring can only be considered as an incentive for the study of segregation, the specific conditions in which it materialised have brought about two major shortcomings:

The first is related to the entrapment of the analysis within the confines of a liberal regulation model which underlies the divided city approach. The social impact of economic restructuring in major world cities, and especially in the leading urban centres of the advanced capitalist world, is customarily summarised as social polarisation, following work initiated in the early 1980s (Friedmann and Wolff, 1982) and subsequently developed and forcefully advocated by Saskia Sassen (1991).<sup>1</sup> According to this work, economic restructuring triggers changes in the global city labour markets that induce social polarisation. State regulation is considered increasingly unable to act

---

1. See also Mollenkopf and Castells (1991) for similar claims.

against such an outcome. Increasing segregation is part of this polarisation dynamic. It is a spatial expression of the polarisation processes in the labour market pertaining both to the increasing social segmentation between jobs and to the catalytic presence of growing immigration. Sassen summarises this 'spatial polarisation' in the gentrification for/by the numerous new job elite, the massive appropriation of urban space through luxurious development for finance and other leading businesses and the parallel growth of segregation for low end jobs, minorities and immigrants (Sassen, 1991).

Although such phenomena and processes are undoubtedly present in most leading world cities, this dominant approach imposes an explanatory pattern on a situation which is much more varied by transforming powerful tendencies into supposedly real and ecumenical outcomes. This holds true primarily for social polarisation which has been contested as an outcome in several global cities.<sup>2</sup> On the same line, segregation is rendered, much more than it really is, a corollary of economic restructuring and a spatial expression of increasing polarisation. The relation between polarisation and segregation is in fact more complex. Polarisation is not a necessary ingredient for segregation. The two may change in relatively independent ways since the growth of segregation is primarily dependent on the mechanisms that allocate residential space to different social groups rather than on the degree of social polarisation or even on the range of income inequality. This is especially true when the land and housing markets are regulated in a spirit of decommodification (Musterd and Ostendorf, 1998a) or when marketisation is not strong enough to overwrite the influence of other factors (such as traditional family structures) in the allocation of residential space. The social polarisation thesis leaves no room for substantial input by elements not immediately related to the market and mainly to politics and policies aiming at the control of polarisation, segregation and of other socially dividing tendencies that are built-in the operation of market mechanisms.

---

2. Hamnett's critique is addressing the importance of welfare state regimes in shaping the outcome of economic restructuring in terms of polarisation and is providing empirical evidence supporting professionalisation rather than polarisation in London (1994, 1996) while Preteceille claims the same about Paris (1995). Both are in fact claiming that the polarisation thesis is excessively influenced and constitutes a generalisation of the realities of major US cities like New York and Los Angeles. *Urban Studies* has hosted several other authors who have been discussing polarisation in global (or presumed to be global) cities in different parts of the world. See, for example, Baum (1997 and 1999), Wessel (2000), Walks (2001) and Vaattovaara and Kortteinen (2003).

The second shortcoming is related to the contextual origins and setting of the polarisation thesis which are often forgotten. The growth of polarisation is argued on the basis of changes in the global city context, involving the spatial concentration of activities (financial and other high-end producer services) that give the leading edge to these cities as world management centres and impact on their social structure in a polarising manner. Regardless of the validity of this thesis, its paramount diffusion is giving the impression that polarisation and segregation are growing throughout the urban world even if in most urban areas of the western world the socially polarising mechanism assumed for global cities is not present.

Both the social polarization thesis and the underclass debate (Wilson, 1987; Massey and Denton, 1993; Mingione, 1996; Wacquant 1997) have contributed to create powerful metaphors of divided cities and societies that were subsequently emancipated from the analysis of their generating mechanisms and context. This is happening because theory is context dependent – in the sense of being relevant to the context from which it has emerged – but not necessarily context confined, since it can be projected and eclectically linked to different realities. The thesis on social polarization is definitely context dependent, since its rationale emerges from the analysis of structural change in the global city and namely from the decline of industrial activities that provided jobs in the middle of the social hierarchy with average income and status and their replacement by the development of much more polarized jobs in the service sector (Sassen, 1991).

Although the vast majority of European cities cannot pretend to be global cities, social polarization looks plausible for most West European ones because of the impact of de-industrialization on their social structure and especially on its lower segments. Polarization, in this case, is not understood *stricto sensu* as the dual process of increasing numbers in both ends of the social spectrum through the parallel concentration of high-end producer services offering high profile and income jobs and the proliferation of unskilled jobs in consumer and personal services, both replacing the disappearing middle of industrial employment. A lighter and confuse version of the polarization thesis, more linked to the metaphor of the divided city than to the analysis itself and using elements from the underclass debate, recognizes polarization wherever there is accumulation of problems and entrapment of people in the lower echelons of the social scale.<sup>3</sup> The impact of economic restructuring on the post-industrial city of Western Europe offers some recognizable elements that can be perceived as polarising and segregating under this broad view: loss of

employment and redundancy in the labour market; proliferation of professional and managerial jobs fuelled by the increasingly educated cohorts; increased gentrification within inner cities; increasing flows of immigration giving more visibility to the lower occupational categories; increasingly visible ethnic segregation.

Regardless of its origins, the social polarisation thesis has created a dominant way of seeing urban society extending much further off the global city context. By providing an implicitly context-indiscriminate and seemingly unproblematic link between segregation and economic restructuring, this way of seeing reduces the need to explain segregation in specific contexts and terms by taking the generating mechanisms and processes for granted.<sup>4</sup>

Many European cities (global or not), are not getting particularly polarised but are nevertheless experiencing more segregation. Preteceille's recent work on the Paris region (2003) shows a certain polarisation of the socially extreme types of residential space whose profiles have become more affirmed between 1990 and 1999. This is happening, however, in a context where the socially intermediate type of residential space is growing either through population increase or through the transformation of other types of space (mainly working class) to socially intermediate space. Andersen (in this volume) shows that although policies of the Danish welfare state prevent polarisation, the housing policies that are developed lately enhance segregation. Leal (in this volume) shows that although there is seemingly a decrease in segregation in Madrid due to changes in the occupational structure and mainly to the increasing numbers of the higher occupational categories, there is increasing segregation in terms of housing prices and income. In Athens, Emmanuel (2002 and in this volume) shows that segregation tendencies are fuelled by the increasing marketisation of the housing sector, and I have tried to show that segregation increases under different shapes while the occupational and income structures are not getting particularly polarised (Maloutas and Karadimitriou, 2001; Maloutas, 2004). This pattern may be an indication that land and housing markets in large parts

---

3. In this context, social polarisation and segregation are often used interchangeably. It seems, as Wessel shows about Sassen and Castells (2001, pp. 891-92), that even the major proponents of the polarisation thesis are sometimes using this terminology in a loose way. The social cohesion / social exclusion discourse has further contributed to promote this dual city and society imagery through loose conceptualisation (Maloutas and Pantelidou-Malouta 2004).

4. Burgers (1996), for example, explicitly claims that since all cities have the tendency to become 'dual cities', the best way to learn what is happening in cities all over the western world, is to study global cities.

of Europe are more vulnerable to commodification than labour markets either because of the shape of their protective welfare structures (relevant mainly for northern and western Europe) or because of the progressive demise of family structures and practices that used to impede segregation in combination with comparatively weak market forces (southern Europe). Increased segregation<sup>5</sup> may therefore be produced otherwise than as an immediate corollary of social polarisation and tackling it in effective ways entails a clearer grasp of its different forms and generating mechanisms.

### SEGREGATION AND THE BURDEN OF CONNOTATIONS

The problem in understanding, mapping, appreciating and eventually tackling segregation problems across European cities is not only related to biases from the reductionist metaphor of divided cities. It is also related to meanings and connotations accumulated in the long history of this old concept that are often carried forward to our days in rather unproblematised ways.

The definition of segregation in *The Dictionary of Human Geography* is very brief (“The residential separation of subgroups within a wider population”) and is followed by reference to the degrees of segregation and to their measure through segregation indices (Johnston et al. 1986: 424). The term originates from genetics and refers to the separation of chromosomes (Mendel’s laws). It was adopted by *human ecology* as a metaphor for socio-spatial separation which became subsequently its dominant meaning. Despite the apparent austerity and instrumentality of its definition, segregation is imbued with connotations that add uncontrolled meaning and make the use of the concept rather imprecise and intuitive.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Negative connotation and fluidity of meaning**

There is, first of all, an unequivocally negative connotation for segregation that spans from considering the spatial separation of the poor as an indication of social injustice to blaming it as the generating mechanism of injustice (Brun, 1994: 23). In fact, the range of this negative connotation often encompasses the old tradition that blames the poor/segregated for their fate. This negative connotation was engrafted on the rather ambivalent position of the Chicago School which considered segregation a kind of ransom to modernity, the price

---

5. Segregation may, however, not be growing everywhere. Wessel (2001) for example claims that Oslo is not becoming more segregated although income inequality has been increasing.

6. See Brun (1994) on the fluid meaning of segregation.

the emerging modern urban society had to pay for progress. The social disorganisation, embodied in the segregated areas of 'deterioration and decay',<sup>7</sup> became part of the modernist teleology of the Chicago School, based on the ever increasing social and spatial mobility, as a prerequisite or at least as a facet of the general move towards progress.<sup>8</sup>

Segregation became the process forming the cities' *natural areas* through individual choices made possible in the new urban environment which abolished the rigidities of the traditional community. Individual choice and competition made of segregation primarily a moral option rather than a social ill. The moral foundation of segregation's negative connotation, in that context, was largely embedded in a liberal perspective<sup>9</sup> which assumes that individuals have choice and are therefore responsible for their fate.<sup>10</sup> Increased mobility in both its social and spatial components was conceived as the product of growing competition. Social mobility was seen as a consequence of the process of individuation that broke up old bonds and attachments through the occupational and moral choices offered in the urban context, rewarding talent but also unleashing 'latent impulses' that would have been obscured and suppressed in smaller communities (Park, 1916 [1957: 51]). Competition, as the principle and the driving force governing individual behaviour in the new environment, compels "each individual to seek and find the task that he can

---

7. For a critical appraisal of the view that segregated areas, and mainly the ghetto, are 'socially disorganised', see Wacquant (1997).

8. "The area of deterioration, while essentially one of decay, of stationary or declining population, is also one of regeneration as witness the mission, the settlement, the artist's colony, radical centres all obsessed with the vision of a new and better world. (...). Segregation limits development in certain direction, but releases it in others" (Burgess, 1925 [1996, p. 158]).

9. 'Liberal' in this case has a double meaning as it also indicates *American liberalism* which, at the first quarter of the 20th century, had to survive anticommunism, anti-Semitism and racism. See Rhein (2001) for a discussion of *human ecology* as a survival strategy, as a kind of shield, for liberal sociology within that context.

10. On the other side of the Atlantic, in early 20th century France, moral degradation was also diagnosed for the segregated working class. In the durkheimian tradition it was interpreted, however, as the outcome of working conditions that induced this class not to be aware of the social importance of housing conditions. Thus, the segregated areas were not considered 'natural' and, even though this was considered a rather distant perspective, the young municipal socialist Maurice Halbwachs wrote in 1909 that municipalities will not forget that the ways people are grouped within a city influence greatly their social feelings and will, therefore, consider the spontaneous division of cities in rich and poor quarters as provisional and will avoid that social classes are spatially isolated from each other (Topalov 2001, pp. 36-40).



best perform, and the ever-widening division of labour multiplies his opportunities to find a vocation for which he is suited” (Park, 1929 [1957: 184]). Competition induces, at the same time, segregation, since in “the expansion of the city a process of distribution takes place which shifts and sorts and relocates individuals and groups by residence and occupation” (Burgess, 1925 [1996: 158]).

The negative connotation for segregation has always been at odds to account for any positive sides that spatial proximity could have, especially for poor social groups (see Preteceille in this volume), by permitting the development of self-help networks and other forms of survival strategies, the affirmation of cultural identities, the empowerment that aggregation provides in terms of more effective participation to local issues, in terms of increased electoral power etc. The approach of segregation as unequivocally negative is certainly related to the US situation of extreme discrimination against the Afro-American population (Wilson, 1987; Massey and Denton, 1993; Wacquant, 1997) which is largely responsible for the demise of the ambivalent position of the Chicago School that made no difference between the ethnic enclave and the ghetto.<sup>11</sup> There is no doubt that the highly differentiated residential environment, following not only the operation of market mechanisms but, mainly, overt racial discrimination and oppression, is a very important factor in producing unequal opportunities in terms of social mobility and life prospects.<sup>12</sup> Considerably lower degrees of segregation, as in the Netherlands, may also be detrimental for the prospects of those living in poorer social environments.<sup>13</sup> However, the ensuing political and moral condemnation of segregation does not provide usually a reliable account of the situation and does not seem sufficient to provide an unequivocal answer in terms of advisable policies: The main problem, either in the areas of relatively high concentration of poverty in a rather low social risk city like Amsterdam or even

---

11. See Philpott (1978) for this lack of differentiation, cited by Rhein (2001, p. 139) who stresses the fact that if in Wirth’s ghetto it was the African-American ghetto that was eclipsed behind the ethnic enclave and its partly positive role in terms of social integration, in its reception in France it was the unequivocally negative conditions of the black ghetto that dominated as more relevant to the changing local context in terms of immigration.

12. This ‘spatial determinism’ can be traced back to Wirth’s ghetto, which produced the ‘Jew’ rather than was produced by the concentration of Jews (Rhein, 2001) and to his later work (Wirth, 1938 [1964]) where he claimed that urban –in contrast to rural– space, mainly in terms of size, density and heterogeneity produces corresponding social patterns (Urry, 1996).

in the American ghetto, is that people are poor and/or oppressed and not that they live together. Consequently, desegregation is not expected to be an adequate solution at least for Dutch cities according to Ostendorf, Musterd and De Vos, (2001) since the spatial rearrangement of the poor will not take care of poverty which is mainly an individual and not a spatial characteristic. The negative connotation of segregation should therefore not be blinding the complexity of the socio-spatial issues it refers to by reducing them to a simple spatial problem to be cured by spatial rearrangement.

A second problem with the definition of segregation lies in its 'flexible' meaning that interchangeably designates the "residential separation of subgroups within a wider population" (as in the above mentioned definition) or the spatial isolation of the poorer groups, the second option being dominant and largely responsible for the negative connotation. Many authors seek other terms to designate the spatial isolation of the rich, while others clearly designate the use of 'segregation' as relevant only for the poor. Sassen, for instance, reserves 'segregation' to designate precisely the isolation of the poor, and uses 'spatial polarisation' as the generic term for the host of processes she identifies as the spatial expression of social polarisation (i.e. gentrification, massive appropriation of urban space by new high-end business, and segregation of the poor). This terminology issue is not only a technical problem. Reducing segregation to the spatial isolation of the poor –while neglecting the fact that in most cities the degree of spatial isolation on the other extreme of the social hierarchy is substantially higher (White, 1984, pp. 156-58; Preteceille, 1993)– is adopting, implicitly at least, a residualist position in terms of welfare regulation: It is only the poorer groups and the worst off areas that represent the presumably isolated problem, and need to be assisted in being integrated to the supposedly unproblematic 'mainstream' society.

### **Perceiving segregation forms and processes and measuring segregation intensity**

The meaning of segregation is usually not only restricted in terms of social content to the spatial isolation of the poor, but also in terms of form. Segregation presumes, in fact, a horizontal pattern of socially diversified neighbourhood communities. The horizontal pattern and the rather clear

---

13. See Musterd and Ostendorf (1998b) on the effect of segregation on social participation in Amsterdam.

borders between neighbourhood communities (characterised more by socio-racial homogeneity rather than communal bonds<sup>14</sup>) can be easily associated with the context in which the concept of urban segregation was generated, i.e. the fast growing industrial metropolis of the American mid-West through the low-rise suburban sprawl, the immigration wave and the heritage of racism from slavery and racial war.<sup>15</sup> In that context, segregation meant spatial isolation with spatial distance more or less being equated to social distance. Through its reference to a specific context –which progressively became implicit– segregation has acquired meanings that clash with the reality of different contexts in the same way that housing tenure, for instance, becomes problematic when called to perform outside the context where homeownership and social rented housing are the major and socially opposed tenure types.

Specific assumptions about the form of segregation have inspired the tailoring of quantitative tools for its measurement and mapping. The subsequent use of these tools has further consolidated the initial assumptions about the form of segregation since they were built-in these tools. The best known and more frequently used segregation index (the index of dissimilarity [ID]) is much more relevant to a binary social differentiation (Black/ White) than to more varied ones in terms, for instance, of occupational categories. Segregation indices account for the degree of separation for specific groups and not for different types of social mixture. They are also not affected by, and therefore do not account for the forms of distribution of the different groups within the spatial units of analysis or for the type of distribution of similar units (dispersion or aggregation) within the area for which the indices are calculated.<sup>16</sup> *Social area analysis* and the subsequently developed *factorial ecologies* presuppose that the differentiation pattern is horizontal and that the spatial units of the analysis are more or less homogeneous. The calculation of *factorial ecologies* is also not affected by the type of arrangement (the spatial structure) of the units of analysis which is examined a posteriori through the mapping of the analysis's results (Charre, 1995). The approach and the method were turned much more towards confirming assumptions about the major factors of urban social differentiation in residential areas (i.e. social rank,

---

14. See Baumgartner (1988, cited in Kearns and Forrest, 2000: 1012) on an American type of community cohesion attained through intense segregation, and based more on the absence of strife resulting from social and racial homogeneity rather than on solidarity.

15. See Gotham (2000) on racial prejudice and segregation in the US.

16. See, for example, Waldorf (1993) and Wong (1993) on shortcomings of the ID on this line.

family status and ethnicity) rather than being open to explore different forms and processes of segregation. Again, this is not a failure of measuring instruments, which were developed on the basis of the dominant perception of segregation. The pertinence of the answers they provided depended on the pertinence and the scope of the tasks they were assigned to.

Assumptions about the form are therefore related to assumptions about the process of segregation. The linearity in suburban expansion and the important immigration in early 20th century Chicago inspired the *invasion and succession* process as the central mechanism within the Burgess zonal model of urban growth. This model, as well as a number of subsequently developed alternative ones, and the above mentioned measurement tools are related to two important assumptions about segregation: The first is that segregation is reproduced in the linear and single-pattern process of the city's outward expansion in which social groups are invading areas they become able to invade and displace other groups that have become eligible for higher (or displaceable to lower) standard areas. The change therefore within residential areas should also be assumed rather simple and can be accounted for by some simple measure of changing ratios that estimate the distance from the situation of zero segregation for each group. The second assumption is that segregation is uniquely materialised through residential mobility. "Every change in the conditions of social life manifests itself first and most obviously in an intensified mobility and in movements which terminate in segregation" (Park, 1929 [1957: 199]). Social and residential mobility are in fact conflated through the assumption that the socially mobile will inevitably relocate to an area matching their new status.<sup>17</sup>

### THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

The assumptions about the form and the process of segregation, which usually remain implicit, are making this concept problematic when applied in contexts that partly at least contradict them. Phenomena like gentrification (Coing, 1966; Smith and Williams, 1986; Glass, 1989 and the *Urban Studies* special issue 35/10) contradict the single-pattern of change in the social constitution of urban areas, and burden the way segregation can be assessed

---

17. See Maloutas (2004) for a broader discussion of the assumption that segregation is uniquely a product of residential mobility.

as positive or negative. Gentrification is a process of social redistribution of residential space in mature urban settings, where change does no longer refer primarily to rapid urbanisation but to their internal remaking. This remaking often involves changes of scale and form for segregation through the diversification of patterns and mechanisms for the social allocation of urban space (see Hamnett in this volume). An area which is being gentrified is becoming less segregated, at least for some time, in terms of segregation indices, an outcome which in principle should be accounted as positive. The same could result, however, from a number of different processes as the loss of working class population in a working class area in crisis, the increased internal social mobility within a working class area under regeneration or the loss of upper and middle class population in areas of filtering down. The need to distinguish the specific processes of segregation involved in every different case stems also from the specific social dynamic of each process which may be temporarily producing lower segregation indices, but may at the same time be leading towards more segregated situations. Increase or decrease in segregation indices are, therefore, not unequivocally socially negative or positive, and segregation in its simple definition and operational use is a very insufficient concept to account for the complex spatial dimension of social distance in contemporary urban settings.

The spatial dimension of social distance in European cities is certainly much more complicated than the intuitive assumptions about segregation usually imply. More varied and nuanced forms of segregation may reasonably be expected in societies where class relations and not ethno-racial differences are the primordial differentiating element in urban space and where less abrupt discrimination and more egalitarian approaches are underlying their regulation. Important public intervention through the welfare state and, in particular, through explicit anti-segregation housing policies in several countries around Europe are a significant element expected to impede the clear 'shifting and sorting' of the market.<sup>18</sup> Different forms of segregation –vertical for instance (White, 1984; Maloutas and Karadimitriou, 2001)– and smaller scale of rather homogeneous spatial units may reasonably be expected in rather compact built environments with a substantially longer history than suburban expansions in intensely marketised conditions. Apart from complexity, segregation in parts of Europe with reduced residential mobility (in southern Europe for instance) is challenging the implicit assumption that segregation is materialised only through residential mobility, and is shedding light on the importance of the differential social mobility of long-term residents for the constitution of

segregation patterns and trends (Maloutas, 2004).

A contextualised approach of segregation in Europe will therefore permit to investigate the real issues by going beyond the deforming lenses of social polarisation and ghettoisation, and the first step in this direction is certainly to realise the contextual origins of the deforming lenses themselves.

The contributions in this special issue offer a glimpse on the complexity of patterns, processes and mechanisms involved in the construction of segregation in several large European cities. The contextual complexity of Europe is at odds with the intuitive and context dependent meaning of segregation. In this sense intra-European comparison points at the need to understand segregation in the very broad meaning of the construction of the spatial dimension of social distance and social isolation and to disentangle it from normative weight and preconceptions related to different contextual realities and to obsolete paradigms, and should help to shed light on the prospects that different options in the restructuring of welfare states and broader welfare systems<sup>19</sup> across the continent are reserving for redistributive justice in the face of concrete socio-spatial realities.

#### THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS VOLUME

Hartmut Haeussermann and Andreas Kapphan offer a description of current socio-spatial processes in Berlin. These processes occur in the peculiar context of a city divided for 40 years, and where its eastern part followed a path of 'decommodification' and the western part led an artificial existence as 'outpost of the free world'. Since reunification the two are coming back together under the relatively unobstructed influence of globalisation and this has produced an important socio-spatial impact.

The reinstatement of Berlin as capital of the reunited Germany induced expectations concerning its fast growth and the regaining of a place in the top range of world cities. However, the loss of its supra-regional functions for several decades seems difficult to overcome in the short term, and growth has been much slower than expected as a consequence. In fact, Berlin has lost rather than gained in specific weight in several economic sectors since

---

18. See Murie and Musterd (1996) for an interesting comparison of segregation trends between UK and Dutch cities in terms of different housing policies since the 1970s.

19. See Allen et al. (2004) for a discussion of the 'welfare system' as a broader framework permitting the comparison of welfare provision between contexts where welfare states have dissimilar structures and follow different principles.

reunification. This negative trend is primarily due to deindustrialisation and to the dismantling of the former GDR administration that resulted in job losses which were not compensated by increasing employment in the new services. Unemployment increased significantly as a result, attaining 18 per cent in 1999 and affecting mostly young people, people over 50 and immigrants. The increase of unemployment, on one hand, and that of new service professionals –even if it was slower than expected–, on the other, resulted in the growing inequality and eventually in the polarisation of the city's social structure.

There are parallel changes affecting the housing market which is traditionally dominated by the rented sector and the significant presence of public housing. An important trend towards privatisation has appeared as a result of growth expectations and of policies giving priority and incentives to corporate investment in real estate and housing development. This trend, greatly fuelled by the restoration of landed property and housing in the former GDR, produced supply-led gentrification which has not been matched by adequate demand from professionals in the new service economy. An oversupply of cheap housing for the middle classes is currently available on the market both in the city centre and the suburbs. This availability has induced many households to move, and the rate of residential mobility has rapidly increased. The privatisation trend in housing is clear in the ratio of private to public investment since private investment is currently 10 times higher than public. Relatively low public investment in housing leads to the formation of pockets of poor maintenance, and poor housing conditions more generally, both in the old housing stock in the city centre and in the large housing estates around it.

The authors conclude that increasing inequality and possibly polarisation in the social structure, increasing quality differences in the housing market and increasing residential mobility contribute to the growth of important segregation tendencies in Berlin.

Chris Hamnett's paper is a short resumé of his contribution in the debate on social change in large world cities and particularly in London. It begins with the elaborations of Friedman and Wolff (1982) and subsequently of Saskia Sassen (1991) on the strategic role of leading world cities as control centres of the globalising economy, and focuses on the assumption that this role implies the inevitable polarisation of these cities' social structure. Hamnett challenges this assumption when it means that there is an absolute and more or less symmetrical growth at both poles of the social structure, as Sassen would have it, but does not object to claims concerning the increasing inequality between the transnational elite and those at the bottom of the class structure.

London serves as an illustration ground for the argument concerning social polarisation in large world cities. From the early 1960s to the late 1990s, London has seen its industrial employment sharply decline, while employment in finance and business services increased significantly and represented almost 80 per cent of job increase in the 1980s and 1990s. These broad changes in employment by sector have been concomitant with changes in the occupational structure, where important growth in the professional and managerial non manual work force coincided with sharp decline in the numbers and percentages of manual labourers, while the occupational middle remained rather stable. Changes in the occupational structure during this period in London do not substantiate the claim for polarisation.

There is some evidence of polarisation between the late 1970s and the early 1990s in the distribution of earnings. However, this polarisation is very asymmetrical, with the high income group expanding much faster than the group at the other pole of the earnings distribution. The main trend in the distribution of earnings seems to be the growing range of inequality rather than polarisation.

The last issue raised by Hamnett's paper is about the spatial impact of these changes in the class structure. Using Ruth Glass's work on gentrification as a starting point, the author claims that gentrification in East London is the main trend in the social renewal of the city since the 1970s. The shrinking working class is gradually replaced rather than displaced in its former strongholds. Patterns of social distribution are becoming more complex in the process and segregation tends to be more important on the micro-spatial level rather than on broader spatial units which aggregate an increasing variety of social situations.

The paper by Jesús Leal discusses recent segregation trends in Madrid. His main effort is to present an overview of the intricacies of segregation as a process in the broad context of expanding middle class and shrinking working class numbers. To do that, he uses a series of parameters and discusses their interrelated impact: the changing spatial distribution of the occupational structure, the differential evolution of housing prices throughout the city, the different patterns of social mobility, the evolution of the spatial distribution of education levels and household income, the rather recent suburbanisation, the low rate of residential mobility and the system of housing provision.

The distribution of occupational categories seems to indicate a slightly decreasing segregation level in the last twenty years. However, the distribution of housing prices, income and education levels indicate otherwise, especially in the more recent period when the effort to develop welfare policies, which



started in the early 1980s, was reduced.

In short, the case of Madrid shows that the impact of economic restructuring on the occupational structure may be leading to an apparent decrease of segregation due to the increasing number of its more segregating element (i.e. the higher occupational categories). This occurs, however, in a context of reduced welfare state development and quasi absence of policies against segregation; of a housing sector dominated by the production of large firms and the concentration of land ownership and therefore producing a rather unobstructed translation of the 'social value' of residential space to housing price, especially through gentrification or the formation of new middle class suburbs; of the very reduced presence of public intervention in housing which could otherwise be a barrier to segregation; of a very unequal distribution of education services which are crucial for social mobility and therefore differentiate the appeal of different residential areas. Such contextual elements exacerbate segregation tendencies with variegated results whose interpretation is far from mono-causal.

Impediments to segregation are not stemming from policies to prevent or reduce it, but from practices related to the relative absence of social services (childcare for example) like the tendency of young households to locate near their parents in order to benefit from their assistance.

Edmond Préteceille elaborates on the discrepancy between the dominant preconception of segregation and the reality of urban social structures. He focuses on the fact that segregation, as the formation of socially homogeneous residential space, refers exclusively to the spatial isolation of the poor and the excluded and is therefore considered unequivocally negative. This preconception is concomitant with theoretical claims about the social polarisation and dualisation in leading world cities, according to which a substantial part of their societies and their residential space is increasingly distantiated and excluded from mainstream city/society. His paper is a refutation of such a simplified view of current urban social trends –which may be accurate for a limited number of residential areas at the edges of the social hierarchy but not for cities as totalities– on the basis of elaborate analyses of census data for Paris.

The main conclusions from these analyses, that do not corroborate the dual city perception and the focus on socially excluded spaces, can be summarised as follows:

- (1) The basic structuring principle of the social typology of residential space in Paris (embodied in the first axis of a factor analysis on the

spatial distribution of occupational categories in small residential zones) remains related to the main class opposition in industrial societies and not to changes produced by globalisation and economic restructuring.

- (2) The social typology of the residential space of Paris does not reflect polarisation, since an important number (22) of socially dissimilar types emerged from combinations of multivariate analyses on the spatial distribution of occupational categories.
- (3) Segregation is a relative phenomenon because: a very substantial proportion of inhabitants (42 per cent) lives in the types which are more socially mixed; even the groups at the extremes of the occupational hierarchy, that are more segregated than the rest, are only partly living in 'their' areas –the rate for both is around 50 per cent– where, moreover, they are usually a minority.
- (4) The residential spaces of the higher occupational categories are more 'segregated' than those belonging to the opposite end of the social hierarchy.

However, the absence of extreme segregation does not prevent spatial inequality from increasing with bourgeois spaces becoming more bourgeois and proletarian spaces accumulating a higher rate of disadvantages (precarious jobs, unemployment, social services). The available data in France regrettably do not support the analysis of ethnic and racial segregation.

The paper discusses also the complexity of segregation mechanisms. Although segregation occurs through the socially differentiated power to occupy the more desirable residential locations through the housing market and following a rather simple principle, in reality it becomes much more complex. Desirability is not unequivocal and universal and the quality of residential areas may change through investment, while public investment may counteract or reinforce market discrimination. The socio-spatial distribution of a number of social services is offered by the author as witness to the complexity of segregation as a process and the socially differentiated residential mobility and a number of other parameters add up to this complexity.

Préteceille concludes that the complexity of the situation could never be adequately handled by the simple predilection for socially mixed residential spaces –which by the way discards the positive side of communitarianism, i.e. the solidarity practices favoured by spatial propinquity– and, mainly, by reducing segregation to a problem of socially excluded groups and areas.

The paper by Dimitris Emmanuel is an overview of the recent trends (1990s) of social inequality in Greece, and more particularly in Athens, in terms of income and housing consumption. The author uses data from

household consumption surveys to control for inequality and polarisation, and prefers to use household consumption in stead –and as a surrogate– of income since direct data for the latter are less dependable.

Apart from increasing inequality that comes out as an undeniable tendency, Emmanuel traces a polarisation trend in the second half of the 1990s with the distribution of households by consumption level becoming slightly reinforced in the extremes and weakened in the middle. This trend should be attributed to the fast growth of the number of households with high and relatively high income / consumption level –which is more or less a phenomenon occurring throughout post-industrial societies recently– and to the massive inflow of foreign migrants in the 1990s which increased significantly the numbers at the lower social pole.

The paper focuses, more particularly, on the revolutionised commodification of the housing market and its social impact. The spectacular reduction of inflation in the second part of the 1990s, related to Greece's joining the European Monetary Union, has permitted the equally spectacular reduction of interest rates and thus the wider accessibility of mortgage loans. It could be expected that this additional and socially more accessible financial means would enhance access to owner occupation and/or lead to improved housing conditions. This enhanced access to housing credit coincided, however, with reduced supply and contributed to a steep rise in housing prices and rents that counterbalanced its expected positive effects. Moreover, since the Greek housing sector has never functioned through institutions, regulations and policies geared towards social equity, and the important popular access to housing has been mainly founded on family practices loosely structured by both state and market, rapid commodification could be expected to produce a socially dividing impact.

The important rise in housing prices and rents has thus neutralised the positive effects that could be expected from interest rate reduction. New buyers acquire less living space per capita and older housing. At the same time, access to home ownership becomes increasingly socially differentiated as well as housing conditions for both home owners and tenants.

Hans Thor Andersen's paper discusses first the assumptions about social polarisation in the global city debate, i.e. the assumption that the social structure in the leading cities of the world is becoming polarised as a consequence of globalisation. Then he endeavours to control the polarisation thesis for Copenhagen, which may not be a global city *stricto sensu* but partakes in the globalisation process at a lower echelon. Moreover, the Copenhagen context offers the opportunity of controlling for the presumably anti-polarising effect of a strong Scandinavian welfare state.

Andersen elaborates on the changing distribution of individual and household earnings and on the income scales respectively from the early 1980s to the late 1990s. The two distributions are more or less similar and retain their egalitarian profile throughout the examined period. No signs of polarisation are detected and the main features discussed are the faster income growth in the lowest income level (attributed to welfare transfers), the bigger number of high income earners and the wider range of the income distribution that may be signs of increasing inequality but not of polarisation.

In spite of the absence of social polarisation in Copenhagen, usually considered an important factor inducing segregation, Andersen detects a kind of spatial polarisation which he has to attribute to other reasons. Spatial polarisation is substantiated by the gradual redistribution of residential areas (neighbourhoods) towards the extreme types in their income profile scale. Thus, there are gradually more affluent or poor residential areas and less areas of average income.

The Danish welfare state seems to protect against social polarisation but not against this spatial polarisation of earnings and income. Andersen claims in fact the latter is not occurring in spite of welfare arrangements but as their by-product, since it is mainly changes in the housing sector (and particularly the easier access to owner occupation by the high income groups) that have induced socially selective residential relocation which produced the social 'upgrading' of certain areas and the residualisation of others.

The paper by John Sayas does not address issues immediately related to social polarisation and/or segregation. He deals with the sectoral and spatial reshaping of industrial activity in the Prefecture of Attiki (the wider administrative unit containing the Greater Athens Area) in a period of crisis followed by readjustment (1978-1988). The major changes depicted through his sectoral and spatial investigation did not end up affecting the traditional spatial pattern of industrial employment in the region, while the readjustment after the crisis has kind of sanctioned the end of the belated and weak industrial development in and around Athens with the further demise of dynamic sectors and the growth of small time and spatially dispersed activity linked to the local market.

Although the changes reported by Sayas are not immediately related to segregation, they are certainly valuable for the analysis of the unequal distribution of occupational categories in residential areas and mainly of those pertaining to the working class and to the wider secondary sector employment, as they contribute to elucidate important facets of the profile of these categories in the specific context.

## REFERENCES

- Allen J., J. Barlow, J. Leal, T. Maloutas, L. Padovani, 2004, *Housing and welfare in Southern Europe*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Baum S., 1997, «Sydney, Australia: a global city? Testing the social polarisation thesis», *Urban Studies*, 34 (11), pp. 1881-1901.
- , 1999, «Social transformations in the global city», *Urban Studies*, 36 (7), pp. 1095-1117.
- Baumgartner M., 1988, *The moral order of the suburbs*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Brun J., 1994, «Essai critique sur la notion de ségrégation et sur son usage en géographie urbaine», in Brun J., C. Rhein (eds), *La ségrégation dans la ville*, Paris, L'Harmattan.
- Burgers J., 1996, «No polarisation in Dutch cities? Inequality in a corporatist country», *Urban Studies*, 33 (1), pp. 99-110.
- Burgess E.W., 1925 (1996), «The growth of the city: An introduction to a research project», in R.E.W. Park et al., *The city*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press. Reprinted in R.T. LeGates, F. Stout (eds), 1996, *The city reader*, pp. 153-161, London, Routledge.
- Charre J., 1995, *Statistique et territoire*, Montpellier, RECLUS.
- Coing H., 1966, *Rénovation urbaine et changement social*, Paris, Les Éditions Ouvrières.
- Emmanuel D., 2002, «Segregation, polarization and inequality in the geography of Athens: The role of the housing market and urban development», *Geographies*, 3, pp. 46-70 (in Greek).
- Glass R., 1989, *Cliches of urban doom*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Friedmann J. and G. Wolff, 1982, «World city formation: an agenda for research and action», *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 6 (3), pp. 309-343.
- Gotham K. F., 2000, «Urban space, restrictive covenants and the origins of racial residential segregation in a US city, 1900-1950», *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (3), pp. 616-633.
- Hamnett C., 1994, «Social polarisation in global cities. Theory and evidence», *Urban Studies*, 31, pp. 401-424.
- , 1996, «Social polarisation, economic restructuring and welfare state regimes», *Urban Studies*, 33, pp. 1407-1430.
- Johnston R.J., D. Gregory and D.M. Smith, 1986, *The dictionary of human geography*, Oxford: Blackwell (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).
- Kearns A. and R. Forrest, 2000, «Social cohesion and multilevel urban governance», *Urban Studies*, 37 (5-6), pp. 995-1017.
- Maloutas T., 2004, «Segregation and residential mobility. Socially entrapped social mobility and its impact on segregation in Athens», *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 11 (3).
- and D. Karadimitriou, 2001, «Vertical social differentiation in Athens: Alternative or complement to community segregation?», *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 25 (4), pp. 699-716.
- and M. Pantelidou-Malouta, 2004, «The glass menagerie of urban governance and social cohesion. Concepts and stakes / concepts as stakes», *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28 (2), pp. 449-465.

- Massey D.S. and N. A. Denton, 1993, *American apartheid: segregation and the making of the underclass*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press.
- Mingione E., 1996, «Urban poverty in the advanced industrial world: Concepts, analysis and debates», in E. Mingione (ed.), *Urban poverty and the underclass*, Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 3-40.
- Mollenkopf J.H. and M. Castells (eds), 1991, *Dual city: Restructuring New York*, New York, Russel Sage Foundation.
- Murie A. and S. Musterd, 1996, «Social segregation, housing tenure and social change in Dutch cities in the late 1980s», *Urban Studies*, 33 (3), pp. 495-516.
- Musterd S. and W. Ostendorf, 1998a, «Segregation, polarisation and social exclusion in metropolitan areas», in Musterd S. and W. Ostendorf (eds), *Urban segregation and the welfare state*, London, Routledge, pp. 1-14.
- , 1998b, «Segregation and social participation in a welfare state: the case of Amsterdam», in Musterd S. and W. Ostendorf (eds), *Urban segregation and the welfare state*, London, Routledge, pp. 191-205.
- Ostendorf W., S. Musterd and S. De Vos, 2001, «Social mix and the neighbourhood effect. Policy ambitions and empirical evidence», *Housing Studies*, 16 (3), pp. 371-380.
- Park R.E., 1916 (1957), «The city: Suggestions for the investigation of human behaviour in the urban environment», *American Journal of Sociology*, XX, pp. 577-612. Reprinted in R.E. Park et al., 1925, *The city*, pp. 1-46. Chicago, University of Chicago Press and in Park R.E., 1957, *Human communities. The city and human ecology*, pp. 13-51. Glencoe, IL, The Free Press.
- , 1929 (1957), «Sociology, community and society», in W. Gee (ed.), *Research in the social sciences*, pp. 3-49, New York, Macmillan. Reprinted in Park R.E., 1957, *Human communities. The city and human ecology*, pp. 178-209, Glencoe, IL, The Free Press.
- Philpott T.L., 1978, *The slum and the ghetto: neighbourhood deterioration and middle-class reform, 1880-1930*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Préteceille E., 1993, *Mutations urbaines et politiques locales. Ségrégation sociale et budgets locaux en Ile-de-France*, CSU, Paris.
- , 1995, «Division sociale de l'espace et globalisation», *Sociétés Contemporaines*, 22/23, pp. 33-68.
- , 2003, *La division sociale de l'espace francilien. Typologie socioprofessionnelle 1999 et transformations de l'espace résidentiel 1990-99*, Paris, Observatoire Sociologique du Changement, FNSP-CNRS.
- Rhein C., «Le ghetto de Louis Wirth: forme urbaine, institution, système social», in Lepetit B., C. Topalov (eds), *La ville des sciences sociales*, Paris, Éditions Belin, pp. 111-149.
- Sassen S., 1991, *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Smith N., P. Williams, 1986, *Gentrification of the city*, London, Allen & Unwin.
- Topalov C., 2001, «Maurice Halbwachs et les villes. Les expropriations et les prix des terrains à Paris, 1909», in Lepetit B., C. Topalov (eds), *La ville des sciences sociales*, Paris, Éditions Belin, pp. 11-45.
- Urry J., 1996, «Sociology of time and space», in B.S. Turner, *The Blackwell companion to social theory*, Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 369-395.

- Vaattovaara M. and M. Kortteinen, 2003, «Beyond polarization versus professionalisation? A case study of the Helsinki region, Finland», *Urban Studies*, 40 (11), pp. 2127-2145.
- Wacquant L., 1997, «Three pernicious premises in the study of the American ghetto», *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 21 (2), pp. 341-353.
- Waldorf B.W., 1993, «Segregation in urban space: a new measurement approach», *Urban Studies*, 30 (7), pp. 1151-1164.
- Walks R.A., 2001, «The social ecology of the post-fordist/global city? Economic restructuring and socio-spatial polarisation in the Toronto Urban Region», *Urban Studies*, 38 (3), pp. 407-447.
- Wessel T., 2000, «Social polarisation and socio-economic segregation in a welfare state: the case of Oslo», *Urban Studies*, 37 (11), pp. 1947-1967.
- , 2001, «Loosing control? Inequality and social division in Oslo», *European Planning Studies*, 9 (7), pp. 889-906.
- White P., 1984, *The West-European city. A social geography*, Longman, London.
- Wilson W.J., 1987, *The truly disadvantaged: the inner city, the underclass and public policy*, Chicago, Chicago University Press.
- Wirth L., «Urbanism as a way of life», reprinted in A.J. Reiss Jr. (ed.), *Louis Wirth on cities and social life*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 60-83.
- Wong D.W.S., 1993, «Spatial indices of segregation», *Urban Studies*, 30 (7), pp. 559-572.