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#### SEGREGATION IN THE BRAZILIAN METROPOLIS

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#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze social classes segregation in metropolitan areas in Brazil. It summarizes the main findings of a larger study which has comprised six Brazilian metropolitan areas with population above 2 million: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife and Salvador ( Bahia). This study was published in a book called **Espaço Intra Urbano no Brasil** ( see References). This paper includes a summary of the main findings concerning São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but conclusions are based on the six metropolitan areas. It includes a totally new topic called “Ethnical Segregation X Social Class Segregation”.

The paper also presents and intends to demonstrate the thesis that class segregation has played a decisive role in shaping the spatial structuring of Brazilian metropolitan areas, besides being a necessary process for the production of an unequal urban space and for upper classes control of that production. . Under the command of upper classes, segregation has determined the changes and spatial movements of metropolitan centers ( CBDs) and main sub centers, and has made possible the economic control of the real estate market and the political control of the State in the production of an unequal urban space. Finally segregation has made possible the production of a specific ideology about urban space. Like all ideologies, this specific one has had the purpose of making the above mentioned controls easier ( or acceptable) by the lower classes.

The study of metropolitan areas in Brazil, of HOYT ’s study of American cities in the 40’s (see References) and the informal observation of some metropolitan areas in Latin America, were sufficient to suggest the hypothesis that social class segregation and the spatial movements of upper class neighborhoods would occur in all capitalist contemporary metropolises. They would only be more visible or stronger, the deeper the gap between social classes ( like in Latin America).

## 2. Ethnical Segregation X Social Class Segregation

Ethnical segregation is probably the most widely known kind of urban segregation. Up to the 60's in many cities or states in the United States, for instance, there were political regulations defining separate **spaces** for whites and negroes such as bus seats, bathrooms, schools etc. The Jewish *ghettos* are another example.

Space is an important component of segregation. We will be dealing here with urban space.

We will begin by stressing the difference between minority groups segregation ( be it an ethnical group or not – such as gays) and social class segregation

In almost every large city in the world today there is some segregation of some social minority, not necessarily ethnical; blacks, Jews, Latins, gays. There are Japanese neighborhoods in São Paulo, black ones in New York, Turkish ones in Berlin, Arabians in Paris, Caribbeans in London and gays in San Francisco.

On the other hand, social class segregation seem to have occurred throughout urban history, from ancient Egypt, Mexico's Tenochtitlan or Peru's Machu Pichu, to New York or São Paulo. Besides its occurrence in ancient as well as in contemporary class societies, class segregation would be the most fundamental kind of segregation, when compared with ethnic or other group segregation . In Part 3 we will explain what do we mean by "fundamental ".

According to Castells ( 1978, 204) "...the distribution of residences in urban space produces its social differentiation; there is an *urban stratification* corresponding to a system of social stratification and, in cases in which social distance has a strong spatial expression, urban segregation takes place. :...in a first sense we will understand as urban segregation, the trend to space organization in zones of a strong internal social homogeneity and a strong social disparity among them; such disparity should be understood not only in terms of difference but also in terms of hierarchy."

American sociology derived from the Chicago School and the one that Castells ( Idem ibid.) calls North American "tradition of empirical sociology ," state that (GIST & FAVA, 1968, 159) "ecological segregation " derives from the fact that city dwellers are different and independent one from the other and in the "...struggle for social position and for a convenient location in the city, such differences and interdependences contribute to determine which space people consider desirable and up to what point is it possible for them to occupy that space. The result is ecological segregation, or the concentration, within the same residential area, of people who share similar characteristics." Further on ( Id. 160) Gist and Fava make a distinction between voluntary and involuntary segregation. The first one "... is produced when the individual, on his own initiative, tries to live with

others of the same class...” Involuntary segregation would take place when “... an individual or family...” is forced, by a variety of forces, to live or not to live in a sector or neighborhood. It is worth paying attention to the ambiguous and inconsistent use of the words *individual*, *family* and *class*. The impression the authors convey is that individuals or families adjust themselves to situations which were actually created by social classes. Class action seems to have taken place before, and would condition individual or family action. The social character of segregation is thus obscured in favor of individual or family character. The struggle aspect of segregation – whether individual, family or class struggle - is mentioned but not analyzed. If due emphasis was given to the class character of segregation, class struggle certainly would have to come up.

### 3. The fundamental aspect of class segregation

Rich Jews and poor Jews live in different neighborhoods. In Atlanta, Ga. rich Afro Americans and poor Afro Americans live in different neighborhoods.. In São Paulo rich gays and poor gays meet in different sectors of the city. The main difference between these neighborhoods or sectors is **location**. In São Paulo, for instance, the area where upper class gays meet is close to upper class neighborhoods where most of them live ( R. Consolação, in the Jardins sector) . Poor gays meet downtown, not only a violent and “deteriorated” area, but also far away from where the most gays live ( although a lot of them live downtown). In America, a society dominated by automobile transportation, the worst locations are the central ones, where people depend upon public transport . In central areas live poorer Afro Americans , Latins or Chinese ( although the reverse is not necessarily true).

Social class segregation is a process which would occur in all class societies. The class segregation process that takes place in Brazil is not very different in nature ( although very different in degree) from the one which takes place between East Side and West Side in New York or East End and West End, in London..

Another aspect which makes class segregation fundamental is that it is inherent to class societies whereas ethnic segregation, for instance, is not necessarily inherent to multi racial societies. In the past few decades segregation of blacks has been considerably reduced ( if not eliminated ) in America and South Africa. Class segregation however, would be inherent to class societies and the stronger the gap between classes the stronger segregation would be.

Last but not least, class segregation is the main force determining urban spatial structure in societies with deep gap between social classes. Group segregation does not exhibit a similar power. . This is the aspect that is analyzed in this paper.

Since we believe that class segregation dominates other kinds of segregation, we consider it the most fundamental kind of segregation.

#### 4. The concept of “Area of High Concentration of Upper Income Classes”.

Most urban segregation studies concentrate in neighborhood segregation, Our focus is on larger areas which include several neighborhoods and do not exhibit the “high” degree of internal homogeneity mentioned by Castells ( see above). Nevertheless they are segregated areas.

Our research has shown that Brazilian metropolises have developed for over a century, a segregation process of upper income classes. Such process has exhibited a remarkable similarity with that one described by Homer Hoyt ( HOYT, 1959) for American metropolitan areas about 60 years ago. In Brazil, upper class neighborhoods have shown a *pattern of movement*, always in the same direction, very similar to that exhibited by their American counterparts, and today are highly concentrated in one single general area or region of the metropolis. We believe that the wider the gap between social classes’ economic and political power ( like in Latin America) the stronger will be upper class segregation and the stronger the role their segregated area will play in shaping urban spatial structure and in dominating the State, the economy and the ideology in favor of the parts of the city where those classes have vested interests.

The “**Area of High Concentration of Upper Income Classes**“ has the following important characteristics:

- a. They include several neighborhoods of various social classes. In Brazil, several of them have even *favelas*.
- b. The majority of families in such areas **are not** upper class – or income - families.
- c. The majority of upper class families live in such areas, but the reverse is not true.
- d. With one single exception ( Recife) such areas concentrate more than 50% of upper class families. The remaining 50% are spread out all over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the urban area. However, the **trend** toward concentration in one single large area is clear even in Recife.

In Brazil, upper income classes started their spatial movement and segregation process toward areas ( or in areas) which met the two following requirements: a) good accessibility to the city center. b) natural beauty. As the city grew and consolidated its spatial structure, the second requirement became less and less important. The spatial growth in one single direction is necessary for meeting the first requirement. It shows the dominance of the spatial structure ( accessibility) over natural beauty.(\*)

In São Paulo Metropolitan Area ( 19 million population) an area was defined which in 1991 ( last census) comprised 13,7% of total population and 9,7% of the metropolitan urbanized area, but 54% of family heads earning more than 20 minimum salaries a month. In Rio de Janeiro a similar area comprised 8,9% of population and 7,1% of urbanized but 53% of family heads earning more than 20 minimum salaries a month. In both metropolitan areas this area has been the result of a spatial growth of upper class neighborhoods always in the same direction since late XIX century. In Rio this direction has always met sites of

exceptional natural beauty ( including the famous beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema) . In São Paulo, however, only the initial movements followed such areas. Between 1920 and 1950 upper classes have occupied flat land with no natural beauty at all.( Figs. 1 and 2).

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(\*) Accessibility to the city center ( CBD) has always been an important location requirement for upper class neighborhoods in Brazilian cities. In the past three decades there has been a strong trend toward upper class suburban growth. Nevertheless, a significant majority of that class still lives in the central city and even in central areas.

## 5. The thesis: causes of social class segregation.

Our thesis is that social class segregation is a necessary process for upper classes control of urban space production . Without segregation in a single **urban region** or **large area** such a control would be impossible or extremely difficult. According to CASTELLS ( 1978, 141) “... the whole social problematic has its origin in these two terms ( nature and culture) in a dialectical process through which a particular biological species ( particular, for it is divided into classes) “man” transforms itself and the environment in its struggle for life and for *the unequal appropriation of the product of its labor* ( emphasis added) . Urban space is a set of resources produced by human labor and social classes struggle for its unequal appropriation. These resources are of two kinds: a) Those which are produced by human labor and can be reproduced by human labor, such as water and sewage systems, parks, hospitals, schools, houses and apartment buildings, shopping centers, office buildings, super markets, etc. b) Those which are produced by human labor but **cannot** be reproduced by human labor. These are the **location** of schools, parks, hospitals, shopping centers and office buildings. It is impossible to reproduce the corner between Broadway X 42nd Street. Urban space is a set of locations which are produced by human labor, but cannot be reproduced by human labor. Social classes struggle for locations change with urban change. It is of fundamental importance to understand how and why.

Segregation is a necessary process for such the unequal appropriation of space, i.e. location of schools, hospitals, shopping centers, office buildings and super markets. Through segregation, location (and its counterpart which is transportation), is controlled.

It should be remembered that the control we are talking about is exercised through space production itself. Through a specific spatiality. It takes place in all the three spheres of social totality: the economic, the political and the ideological spheres.

### 5.1- THE ECONOMIC CONTROL: THE REAL ESTATE MARKET

The struggle for locations involves all urban activities.

Let's analyze the biggest concentration of business and services in the city: its CBD. In the past century the CBDs of Brazilian metropolitan areas have consistently grown in the

same growth direction of upper income residential areas. In all cases the CBD has split into two halves. One, facing the upper classes growth direction, gathering shops and services oriented toward upper class clientele. The other, facing the opposite direction and oriented to lower classes clientele. As a result another so called CBD ( a so called *new* CBD) was developed separately from the first (*old*) one.. The new one is oriented toward upper class clientele and the old one, abandoned by this clientele, was taken up by lower classes. Its shops, offices, cinemas, restaurants etc. once patronized by upper classes were abandoned by such classes and its buildings lost their real estate value. This process became known as *deterioration* of the CBD. An ideology was developed according to which the city had a *new* center. Precisely at this moment, when the *old* CBD becomes really the center of the city - since it is used by the majority of the population - the dominant ideology says it is no longer the center of the city. We will return to this point in part 5.3..

## 5.2- THE CONTROL OF THE STATE

This control takes place in three spheres: the spatial distribution of infrastructure, specially the transportation system; the location of government offices and land use and environment control legislation.

5.2.1- Historically the State in Brazil has always privileged investments in the **Area of High Concentration of Upper Income Classes**. Rio is a good example. The difference between the major street and transportation systems of the North ( poor) and of the South ( wealthy) Zones is remarkable. Since the beginning of XX century freeways, tunnels, elevated freeways and boulevards have been built ( including dumping the sea) to improve access to the South Zone. The North zone has traditionally been served by a much poorer major street system and by a poor, obsolete, unsafe and terribly overcrowded suburban train service. On the other hand, the South Zone is served by a much better major street system, with beautifully landscaped parkways and freeways and by a modern air conditioned subway..

5.2.2- In almost all metropolitan areas in Brazil, government offices are moving out of downtown and locating in the **Area of High Concentration of Upper Income Class** in the so called *New CBD*. In Salvador, Bahia, the state government has built an entirely new Civic Center, 10 km away from the old CBD, but in the direction of the Area of High Concentration of Upper Income Classes. In São Paulo, more and more, government offices – federal, state or municipal – move to that area.

5.2.3- Urban ordinances concerning land use and environmental controls – especially zoning and subdivision regulations – are designed to meet upper income standards of lot sizes, set backs, heights and uses. According to the City of São Paulo Government ( ROLNIK et alii, no date, 90) 60% to 70% of real estate properties in the city do not follow zoning, subdivision or building codes.

## 5.3- THE CONTROL OF IDEOLOGY

We follow here the traditional Marxist concept of ideology. The real world is not immediately obvious to our knowledge. That is why science is necessary. The reality we observe is then subject to versions or to interpretations. Ideology ( Chauvi, 1981, 21) is that

version developed by the ruling class in order to make its domination easier and acceptable by dominated classes. Such a version tends to hide from society the true process of social relations production.

There are several ideological versions concerning urban space and its social production. We will group them into two categories:

- 1) The first one can be called *naturalization of social processes*. The idea here is to make society believe that social processes are caused by nature, not by men. For instance: poverty in Northeastern Brazil is caused by persistent draughts. The idea of CBD *deterioration* belongs to this category. It tries to convey the idea that urban decay is a natural process. The idea of deterioration refers to the rotting of living bodies – fruits, vegetables, animals, human body - caused by old age or death. It is a natural inevitable process. Ideology tries to convey the idea that the so called *urban decay* of the CBD is a natural process caused by the old age and obsolescence of many CBD buildings.
- 2) The second category is the *universalization of the particular*, which tries to take the whole by one of its parts. Ideology tries to convey the idea that a specific *part* of the city is *the* city. Which part? The area with high concentration of upper income classes, the **new** CBD, or ( a few decades ago) that part of the CBD patronized by upper income classes. Another example internationally known: *Rio de Janeiro is a beautiful city*. Actually only a small part of the center and of the **Area of High Concentration of Upper Income Classes**, (which houses a small minority of the metropolitan area population), is beautiful. Most of the metropolis is as ugly, poor, dirty and with poor sanitation as any other metropolitan area in Brazil.. Another example: *The city center is moving. The city has a new center which is no longer the old one*. Actually the center that is moving is that part of the CBD oriented towards upper income clientele. The traditional CBD, now taken up by lower income classes, is now, more than ever, *the* center of the city since it is the center of the majority of the population. Ideology tries to convey the idea that the center of upper classes is *the* center of the city.

In order to check the image of the city the press conveys to its readers, a survey was made in outstanding daily newspapers, both, in Rio (*Jornal do Brasil*) and São Paulo, (*Folha de São Paulo*). The survey counted all mentions to any urban spot ( streets, plazas, beaches, parks neighborhoods, outstanding public and private buildings etc.) in days chosen at random during 1993 and 1994, amounting to a total 1.789 mentions in Rio and 2060 in São Paulo. No mention in paid matters was counted. In Rio, mentions to spots in the **Area of High Concentration of Upper Income Classes** amounted to 47,29% of total and mentions to CBD, to 13,36%. In São Paulo, mentions to the **Area of High Concentration** amounted to 74,66% of total and to the CBD to 5,87% ( VILLAÇA, 1999, 234)

We have strong reasons to believe that the deeper the gap between social classes and the smaller the proportion of upper income classes, the stronger segregation will be and the stronger its effect upon urban spatial structure. Above mentioned processes would then be stronger in São Paulo, Lima or Bogotá than in Buenos Aires, for instance.

## 6. FINAL REMARKS

Without segregation **in one single general region** of the metropolitan area, the control of urban space as above shown, would be impossible. Only with that kind of segregation – in one single large urban region - it is possible for the State to build a transportation system favoring only a part of total population. Only with that kind of segregation, upper classes oriented commerce ( luxury boutiques or restaurants, for instance) can more economically serve its clientele. Only that kind of segregation makes possible the unequal distribution of space as a product of human labor ( see CASTELLS quoted above). All this would be impossible – or economically unfeasible - if upper classes were segregated in neighborhoods spread out all over urban space; southward, eastward, northward and westward. ( Figure 3).

Only segregation in one single broad urban region – the one we are calling here **Area of High Concentration of Upper Income Classes** – makes possible for upper classes to control the State, the market and the ideology in the production of an urban space taylored to meet its needs. .

That is why **segregation is a necessary process for the unequal appropriation of urban space as a product of human labor.**

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