

Socioeconomic Residential Segregation in Latin America. A Critical View of the Concept

Segregación residencial socioeconómica en Latinoamérica. Una visión crítica del concepto

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Abstract

Segregation is a polysemic concept, whose definition is biased according to the interests of each discipline. Sociologists, geographers, anthropologists, and architects allude to segregation both social, urban, and residential, to refer to the same phenomenon. In this sense, a conceptual theoretical analysis is necessary for which the structuring elements of the concept are identified from its most elementary sense to its specific determinations. To this end, a descriptive review of the accumulated knowledge on the subject is undertaken, mentioning consensus and discrepancies among its most important theoretical references. The consideration of the phenomenon in the social and urban context of current Latin American cities is a constant in the development of this article.

Keywords: city; modernization; social differentiation; urban fragmentation; urban planning, urban sociology

Resumen

La segregación es un concepto polisémico, cuya definición adopta los sesgos propios del interés de cada disciplina. Sociólogos, geógrafos, antropólogos y arquitectos aluden a la segregación, tanto social y urbana como residencial, para referirse al mismo fenómeno. En tal sentido, se hace necesario un análisis teórico conceptual, en el que se identifiquen los elementos estructuradores del concepto, desde su sentido más elemental hasta sus específicas determinaciones. Con tal fin, se acomete una revisión descriptiva del conocimiento acumulado en relación con el tema mencionando consensos y discrepancias entre sus referentes teóricos más importantes. La consideración del fenómeno en el contexto social y urbano de las ciudades latinoamericanas actuales es una constante en el desarrollo del presente artículo.

Palabras clave: ciudad; diferenciación social; fragmentación urbana; modernización; planificación urbana; sociología urbana

Introduction

Segregation has been defined by means of a series of urban revolutions¹, as an intrinsic characteristic of contemporary cities, regardless of their size, in terms of the area which they might have. However, to be able to explain this phenomenon has become a complex endeavor. Even though this concept has been analyzed by several authors on a number of occasions, it is still a current controversial topic and source of confusion when its implementation could mean more than one aspect of the same problem. This is due to the high range of perspectives that it conveys and the continuous modifications in the social and urban dynamics of modern societies, partially denoted by globalization. In other words, segregation can be understood in different dimensions, namely sociologic, geographic, urban, anthropologic or even more than one dimension at the same time, depending on the researcher's objectives.

Consequently, segregation and each one of its different conceptual versions must be comprehended according to the socio-spatial patterns of the present-day world. Besides, this phenomenon is expressed with higher intensity in Latin American cities where it is a result of economic matters. (Rodríguez Vignoli, 2001; Sabatini, 2002). Therefore, it is essential to shed light on what is specifically meant by Socioeconomic Residential Segregation (SRS). The theoretical and conceptual analysis of segregation might become a tool to explain the particular characteristics contained in each one of its various meanings, present within the urban area; mainly, when they are observed in levels of analysis which are lower than major cities as a whole.

Especifically, we propose the development of the concepts Urban Segregation (US), Residential Segregation (RS) and SRS, for the reason that it is imperative to figure out the conditions on which each type of segregation operates and how they impact the urban sphere. Some authors who have stood out as experts on this topic and their respective contributions lay the theoretical foundation of this paper, namely Sabatini (2000, 2002, 2006), Rodríguez Vignoli (2001), Duhau (2003), Rodríguez and Arriagada (2004) and Cortés (2008). By adopting different approaches, these authors have inquired about what the best way to understand segregation is.

Metodology

With the aim of establishing an adequate concept of segregation, we start by reviewing its conceptual and theoretical aspects that will allow us to better understand what conditions the different types of segregation concepts are used in. It is based on a critical analysis as a means to determine when segregation turns into US, RS or SRS. In the first stage, we gather the most representative authors' insights on this academic field. We start this process by carefully putting together the classic authors and the ones with high relevance for this study. For instance, Duncan & Duncan (1995) and Massey & Denton (1988).

In general, segregation as a phenomenon began to be studied with a greater emphasis since the emergence of the School of Chicago, in the early years of the XX century. This

new focus of study enabled the possibility to examine how its conceptualization has been evolving. It also allows the comparison of the initial elements that characterized segregation and which factors define it nowadays. According to Schteingart (2010), the present-day terms lack social content and they are not explained appropriately.

The bibliographic references are organized in line with the different approaches of analysis on this topic. From the Sociology field of study, the works of White (1983), Rodríguez Vignoli (2001) and Kaminker (2015) stand out; in the field of urbanism, the works of Sabatini (2000; 2002; 2006), Rodríguez & Arriagada (2004) and Schteingart. From the Geography perspective, Martori et al. (2006), Álvarez (2009) & López Trigal (2015), and from the standpoint of Anthropology, García Canclini (2005), Cortés (2008) and Checa-Olmos et al. (2011). This multidisciplinary compilation of works displays different standpoints regarding the definition of segregation, and allows structuring a conceptualization which preserves the key defining features.

Afterwards, we make the analysis and interpretation of the criteria which came out of different disciplines, in order to conceptualize segregation and two of its stronger variations, namely place of residence and economic power as differentiating factors. Differences and similarities are considered with the view of combining them into a more comprehensive concept which can embrace all the different meanings of this phenomenon.

Finally, concepts for segregation, US, RS, and SRS are stated precisely. Each one of these definitions are closely related to the dynamics of present-day cities. We observe a trend towards a reduction in the levels of segregative actions. Furthermore, we seek to clarify the particular characteristics that separate each concept so that they can be adequately used when studying this area of interest.

Outcomes

The concept of segregation

According the Dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, the notion of *segregation*², comes from the latin term *segregatio*, and it denotes the action of separating, isolating something or someone from things or people. From a sociological perspective, Rodríguez Vignoli (2001) argues that segregation can be understood as "the existence of differences or inequalities within a social group and the separation of subjects into categories relating to some degree of hierarchical distinction" (Rodríguez Vignoli, 2001, p. 13).

Segregation holds a notion of separation and alienation of a part from its whole. In a social sense, it refers to the separation of a section of society, identified in a particular way relative to the rest of the social group in which a certain level of superiority and inferiority is present. In this way, when we talk about social segregation, a subdivision of society is automatically implied, and it needs a means of expression. Thus, the urban area adopts its main role.

From the geographical standpoint, López Trigal (2015) points out that this term conveys an idea closer to *enclosure*.

1 Urban revolutions mentioned here are defined by Ascher (2007) as follows: The city of Modern Era (1500-1750); the industrial city (1750-1850) and the city of the XXI century (1900 - current years of XXI century).

2 We only focus on the concept of segregation, avoiding any characterizing word (residential, socio-economic, cultural, racial, etc.) which modify its meaning.

A difficulty to analyze the meaning of segregation can be seen from the very moment of its conceptualization. Whereas some concepts are related to a matter of separation, others address it as a notion of proximity. The difference between these two approaches lies in the fact that when we mean proximity, we are conveying a positive side of the phenomenon, where the segregated party might be likely to obtain a benefit, while the meaning of separation transmits a negative connotation.

Despite the fact that the two meanings imply a sense of distance, they do not make an integral component of segregation. Their lack of relation to this term is based on the conceptual and operative problems we would experience if we decided to include them. Besides, it has not been clarified if the best way to measure distance is by using a physical dimension, since sociocultural and temporal distances appear to be more relevant (Rodríguez Vignoli, 2001).

From an urban and sociological consideration, for Schteingart (2010), segregation is “the level of spatial proximity of families who belong to the same social group and the distance from other social groups”. (p. 349), Aliaga Linares and Álvarez Rivadulla (2010) understand segregation as the physical distance among different groups of the population. Likewise, Rodríguez and Arriagada (2004) explain it as ways of unequal distribution of groups of population within an area. Once again, we can observe negative and positive aspects in the manner of addressing segregation in terms of proximity and isolation along with a new aspect regarding dissimilarity.

Therefore, there exists an evident relationship between social and spatial matters in the concept of segregation. This connection makes it necessary to further analyze the term “socio-spatial”. In the view of the fact that unless it is imperative for society and urban areas to be studied separately, it is necessary to determine what kind of segregation the object of research is, either social or spatial. Thus far, we have considered a differentiation of social groups without any distinguishing features. This is a fundamental principle to enable the correct interpretation of segregation. However, as the social and spatial aspects are combined into a new concept and more specific elements are added, segregation adopts new types of meaning which need to be explained in further detailed.

Urban segregation

In the widest sense, the socio-spatial element of segregation has a more explicit expression in the urban sector. That is why this sort of segregation is known with the acronym “US”. In this context, segregation involves different forms of the occupation of public space by the population, no matter whether it is used for economic activities or other endeavors. Duncan & Duncan (1955), classic sociologists and experts on this topic, define US from a uniformity perspective, as the disequilibrium among shares of population who hold deferred qualities, expressed in the urban territory.

In contrast to the aforementioned concept, White (1983) embraces a wider vision of this situation, when he points out that US might be understood based on two perspectives. From the sociological standpoint, it refers to the lack of interactions, whereas from the perspective of Geography it refers to inequality in the distribution of social groups in

the physical space. His concept keeps the social and spatial elements, but goes beyond the general analysis of cities and divides the urban space into macro levels.

Although there exists rural segregation, it has been studied to a lower degree. As an example of this kind of research, we can turn to the work of Montes Velázquez (2017). However, there is greater concern about the complexity and the harmful effects present in segregation inside the urban areas. These repercussions keep extending towards the periphery and modifying the traditional patterns of population distribution.

From the sociology standpoint, Castells (1974) states that US is a “tendency towards organization of space where strong social and internal homogeneity takes place with strong social disparity between them. This disparity is expressed not only in terms of difference, but with regard to hierarchy” (p. 204). According to Tun Chim (2015), the preceding definition denotes an expression of tendencies, since this phenomenon is not static in nature. On the contrary, it is related to a particular social structure in a specific historical context.

In this sense, if we focus only on the differences without considering the hierarchical and changing elements, the correct understanding of what US really is will be hindered. Therefore, this type of segregation takes place when certain kinds of population gather together in a specific urban area (McKenzie, 1967). Regarding this, Bourdieu (2002) points out:

In a hierarchical society, there is no space that is not under this hierarchy and does not express hierarchies and social distances, in a distorted way (up to a certain degree), mainly, masked by the effect of the naturalization which entails a permanent engraving of social realities in the natural world (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 120).

Groisman (2010) affirms that one of the most negative consequences of segregation is the fact that socioeconomic strata are placed in a context of equal, uniform socialization, which promotes the naturalization of differences in the structure of society. Bourdieu (2002) as well as Groisman (2010) make explicit the fact that unequal space use becomes an everyday reality because this condition is tethered to the financial capital of individuals.

Tun Chim (2015) declares that US must be acknowledged as a differentiation phenomenon between the relations of social structure and urban spaces, implying a hierarchy of social groups. He also describes two constituent components, which are highly related to each other: Lack of interaction among social groups and physical distance. Therefore, it is better to denote it as socio-spatial urban segregation.

Even though, considering that segregation is understood in both social and spatial dimensions and when this term is used without any specific adjectives, it conveys the meaning of isolation of individuals or objects from the group. For that reason, socio-spatial US would be a redundant phrase because segregation involves social and spatial elements. Consequently, it is best to only use US to point out that this phenomenon takes place in the urban areas, since we are still referring to the set of asymmetrical relations between society and urban space. This dynamic generates an absence of social interaction and specific geographical configuration of locations in the city when

analyses are performed at a global scale. Yet, the concept has been delimited to facilitate its proper comprehension.

Moving forward in our analysis, let us turn to the sociological perspective. Duhau (2003) and Schteingart (2010) make a critical analysis of the use of the concept of US. They state that due to the type of territorial scale used, this phenomenon must be better understood as a social division of space. The use of the concept of segregation will be appropriate as long as the socio-spatial studies have a higher level of disaggregation as smaller territorial scales of analysis are the places where segregation can be really identified. However, a single emphasis on the social division of space limits the correct interpretation of this concept.

For Schteingart (2010), US refers to the great guidelines of the organization of public space, whereas Duhau (2003) conceives it as “the differences present in the intra-urban or intrametropolitan location³ of different groups [...] fundamentally related to the housing market, that is to say, housing costs” (p. 177). We can observe how a new element is added to these conceptualizations, and thus it is worth highlighting: the cost. Enabling different areas in a city involves variation in costs, in proportion to their status. For that reason, not everyone has access to the same areas because they are not at the same level within the socio-economic scale.

On the other hand, Aliaga Linares & Álvarez Rivadulla (2010) show that, as the level of segregation grows, homogeneity increases in spatial areas. Conversely, segregation will be lower if heterogeneity predominates. However, although hierarchy of social groups is important, it is not the only determining factor of urban segregation, since there might exist groups who belong to the same social scale, but differentiated by some cultural features. De Queiroz Ribeiro & Dos Santos Junior (2003) have highlighted this immaterial dimension of US with regard to the empowerment and disempowerment of social groups relative to their location in urban space.

Nevertheless, for Saraví (2008), urban-spatial segregation can be understood as a specific dimension of a general process of social differentiation, which opens the possibility of admitting multiple expressions that might manifest. Likewise, De Queiroz Ribeiro et al. (2015), state that US turns into a pattern of spatial organization characterized by high contrasts and hierarchies that have emerged in major cities. The differentiation of social classes becomes physical and symbolic barriers which hinder sociability and intensify the fragmentation of urban space. Sabatini (2006) also states that spatial segregation turns into a means used by groups within the population in order to strengthen their social identity.

So far, we have focused on the sociological standpoint. A fact stands in this line of argument, segregation is a product of social isolation and fragmentation existing in the urban areas. This consequence is manifested in specific localizations for each group. Furthermore, we emphasize the need for this type of segregation to be studied within a

macro scale framework. That is to say, urban segregation will necessarily involve the whole city and the way social groups distribute urban space by dividing it into smaller fragments.

However, from the Urban Geography perspective, Levy & Brun (2000) state that, regardless of the level of economic development, segregation concerns the issues of administrative area and territorial organization of power into urban conglomerates, so that they represent anomalies in relations within the social structure and positions of power, evident in territorial manifestations which become US.

On the other hand, Alegría (1994) explains segregation as “separation or spatial adjacency among social groups and not between groups and other urban entities” (p. 415). Although this definition tries to establish an explanation that simplifies the complexity of the urban segregation concept, it is not completely correct because both geographical distance and proximity unavoidably take place within, between and among two or more urban institutions. Therefore, the separation among social groups will be determined on a mandatory basis regarding other groups and the spatial units they belong to.

In this way, spatial localization becomes an allocation system for residential use of the territory, which is affected by the mechanisms of segregation, and highly determined by the position of individuals in the economic structure. Concerning this situation, Harvey (1990) declares that capitalism promotes an ongoing spatial relocalization of social structure with the intention of finding places with greater status.

Suárez Bonilla and López Irías (2016) explain urban segregation as a kind of socio-territorial segregation manifested in imbalances throughout urban population; mainly, those individuals who are excluded from the formal land and housing market because of their limited resources. From an anthropological point of view, García Canclini (2005), explains that these economic differences in socioeconomic strata adopt their meaning in relation to other forms of power such as symbolic manifestations. Nonetheless, it is widely accepted that socioeconomic conditions appear to exert control over most social circumstances in current societies.

Finally, Castells (1974) explains further that although US is a general tendency, this concept fails to give a satisfactory explanation of the configuration of residential areas in a specific agglomeration. In other words, cities are composed of a historic interweaving of several social and spatial structures, which ends up in specific cases of segregation. These occurrences must be analyzed individually in order to grasp a deeper understanding of all their degrees of manifestation.

Based on the previous theoretical discussion, we can state that US could be defined as the differences of territorial relations of multiple unspecified social groups with the city as a whole. In simple terms, it refers to the unequal territorial distribution of individuals with different positions in the social scale. Thus, the analysis of the relations of the social system with the urban structure within all the elements of a territory will imply considering all the possible actions that might take place there, specifically economic, housing, or commercial activities among others.

3 The term *intraurban* is defined as those socio-spatial dynamics which take place within urban areas (cities), no matter their extension. The term *intrametropolitan* is defined as those dynamics present in the urban space of cities with certain physical, political, urban and social characteristics. These features make them more important than the others.

Residential segregation

From the sociological standpoint, Rodríguez Vignoli (2001) defines territorial segregation (TS) as “a specific expression of segregation in which dividing categories of people allude to their own geographic location” (p. 13). According to Checa-Olmos et al. (2011), residential differentiation has become a constant feature throughout all the process of urban configuration by shaping the social dissimilarities and the territorial boundaries between populations. Therefore, in order for RS to exist, the geographic dimension and the disparities of the community must be considered in order to build a dialogue between society and residential areas.

For Tun Chim (2015) RS is a type of socio-spatial segregation, and thus this specific kind of segregation can be better used to understand the differentiations of social structures relative to the urban space. He defines this phenomenon as “the physical separation of two or more distinct groups in different neighborhoods” (Tun Chim, 2015, p. 37). Therefore, the urban area along with the residential space has become a more feasible means to understand the dynamics of social fragmentation within urban zones. Undoubtedly, segregated areas can be identified in terms of economic and functional aspects, but these elements do not allow a close analysis of the social structure as it is possible in the case of residential studies, where there exists the greatest expression of localization of social groups in the urban territory.

The aforesaid arguments are echoed by Sabatini (2000; 2002; 2006) and Sabatini et al. (2001), who assert that US refers to a distinguishing social phenomenon of contemporary cities; especially, major cities where spatial dimension interactions occur. In this facet, US can be seen as “the geographical agglomeration of families belonging to the same social condition or class, notwithstanding how these circumstances might be defined: Socially, racially or in another way” (Sabatini, 2002, p. 18). Massey & Denton (1988) further add that this phenomenon must be understood as multidimensional in nature, due to the fact that it is likely to appear in the dimensions of uniformity, exposition, concentration, centralization or grouping.

Moreover, Molinatti (2013) explains this phenomenon as the “existence of inequalities in the distribution of everyday locations of people or families who live in a specific urban conglomerate” (p. 68). Using the same social focus, Madoré (2005) declares that RS takes place when there exists differentiation or disparity in the spatial distribution of residences of certain groups in the zones of the cities, characterized by race, ethnicity, economic income, religious affiliation, nationality and so on.

Cortés (2008) shows that the concept of RS is established by putting the definitions of social integration and physical distance together. Social integration refers to the social combination of socioeconomic classes or any type of class in the same converging place, whereas physical distance is to be understood as the closeness or remoteness between groups of the same social level. Up to this point, cited authors have expressed that RS covers the differentiation of social groups of population, and thus, in terms of the geographic dimension, the place of residence is the main defining factor.

According to Kaztman and Retamoso (2005), apart from housing, this phenomenon deals with the segmentation of quality in health and educational services provided to

different social groups, which maintains the concentration of the most vulnerable socioeconomic strata in the degraded areas of the territory. The processes of RS change the social morphology of urban space by changing the social setup of neighborhoods. Since lower classes hold a higher quantitative share, their geographic concentration brings about social homogeneity and increases the inequality in distribution of people throughout the urban areas. (Kaztman & Retamoso, 2007). The preceding situation draws a fine line between segregation and gentrification, bearing in mind that both processes alter the socio-spatial composition of the areas of the city, (Sabatini et al., 2017).

In another vein, De Queiroz Ribeiro & Kaztman (2010) interpret RS as the territorial concentration of the most vulnerable sections of society, which triggers the reproduction of poverty and inequalities. They further add that the growth of segregative processes as a consequence of labor market segmentation and land market liberalization has generated a tendency of isolation from disadvantaged groups. However, they focus on the low-income population when segregation equally impacts all socioeconomic strata.

Based on a more geographical and urban approach, The Ministry of Economy Planning and Development (2012) and Martori et al. (2006) propose that RS points out the level of inequality in the distribution of social group from the population within the different areas or spatial units which make up a city. Unlike the conceptualizations based on sociology, segregation is, in this instance, defined without the consideration of the social dimension. Besides, this conceptualization only considers the place of residence of social groups in urban space.

On another note, Clichevsky (2000) defines RS as the isolation and separation of social groups of a community. It might be concentrated when a social group gathers in a specific area of the city. It might also be exclusive when a lack of integration of social groups takes place in common spaces for the members of these groups.

As we can observe, the combination of social and spatial elements in the previous conceptualizations is evident, which clarifies the fact that RS is a process that connects the interactions between the physical space and social individuals. This phenomenon is still determined by inequality and, to some extent, a degree of control. More recently, though, it has started to exert a growing and more specific influence over the housing dimension.

Socioeconomic residential segregation

With regards to distinctions, some attributes behave as differentiating elements of social groups with a territorial expression, and thus the meaning of RS takes on a whole new meaning. From the Urban Sociology standpoint, Rodríguez Vignoli (2001) identifies two types of characteristics. The first kind has to do with social stratification, expressed in income, level of education and the material living conditions. The second category deals with bio-sociocultural segmentation defined by skin color, language, nationality, ethnicity, religious affiliation and caste.

If one of the first group of criteria is used, RS must be characterized as socioeconomic. If the bio-sociocultural criteria is utilized “residential segregation will imply a differentiation in the location of people in terms of race, language, ethnicity,

religion and so on" (Rodríguez Vignoli, 2001, p. 14). When socioeconomic and bio-cultural properties are interrelated, residential segregation adopts both conceptions. This can be seen in the case when SRS turns to racial. In this situation, the analysis will focus on the racial distribution of groups along with their economic status.

By the same token, Suárez Bonilla & López Irías (2016) propose that when an analysis of the effects of spatial distribution on people's way of living is performed, it is essential to link this phenomenon to the economic, cultural, social and even political differences among groups who live in the cities; in other words, it must be characterized according to its ways of expression. RS, as a manifestation of social inequality, is such a wide topic that it is necessary to narrow it down so that it can be properly understood and a clearer view of the interaction between society and territory obtained.

In Latin America, unlike other countries like the United States where there is a long tradition of studies focused on racial RS, the priority has been given to research on socioeconomic residential segregation. This is a very understandable situation because of the income, class and social inequalities which represent a greater distinction in the social structure in their cities.

However, Kaminker (2015) underlines the necessity of detaching Latin American studies on RS from mechanical interpretations between space and social inequality, characterized by the economic aspects, since there are other characteristics worth analyzing, such as race and ethnicity. Nonetheless, from Martori's perspective (2007, p. 19) the cultural variables are not able to explain the types or the levels of segregation; at least, not with the same clarity in terms of housing and socioeconomic status.

Considering the previous train of thought and based on an anthropological perspective, Nivón Bolán (2003) claims that modern cities are increasingly more difficult to portray due to the effect of globalization. This condition along with the liberalization of the land market and the lack of housing creation control by the real estate companies has made residential segregation have an impact on families' economical situation above all. This dynamic leads to the creation of socioeconomic strata with clear characteristics with reference to their purchasing power and location within the city. This fact makes it very hard to avoid focusing on the relation among society, economy and space.

Obviously, the economic hierarchy present in social structures become the main determining factor of RS in a context ruled by social inequality. In this sense, Castells (1974) states that social organization conveys too many fields and refers to too many expressions. Therefore, it is imperative to select specific and meaningful characteristics to study this sort of problem.

In this way, social status becomes a key element to perpetuate SRS and turns out to be "the result of control of power by the dominant class over the mechanisms of the real estate market system in order to obtain income and maintain the status quo of the system (Tun Chim, 2015). In this way, "since the self-regulated market leads different groups to settle in different locations, we can consider the geographical models of the residential area structure as a tangible expression of the economic capitalist system" (Harvey, 1977, p. 285).

Returning to the subject of urban sociology, for Schteingart (2010), the location of social groups in the urban areas is a consequence of a complex interaction among the social struc-

ture, the production process of the inhabited urban sector, the intervention of government (in particular) and individual preferences. We cannot consider the capitalist economic system as the only decisive factor of urban segregation. As a matter of fact, there are individual, family or collective components when deciding with a view to purchase a particular place in the urban zone. Some factors, though, might be a barrier for this goal, such as enough economic resources, even social, cultural and human capital as well.

It is necessary to understand that RS is a social phenomenon tied to the spatial component. In Latin American cities, this concept tends to mean the distribution of population groups, depending largely on financial capacity, which materializes dissimilarities through the residence location in the territory. In the present-day world, social divisions of the city have become increasingly complex, and the obstacles to the interpolation of socioeconomic strata have not disappeared. On the contrary, they have become more numerous, turning spatial units into smaller and more specific items, where income as a segregating factor has been strengthened (Nivón Bolán, 2003).

Turning now to the sociological approach, for Saraví (2008), differentiation of social groups based on their socioeconomic status is one of the most important and critical aspects of RS in contemporary societies. It is widely accepted that other social differentiation criteria may appear in the spatial structure. However, the absolute significance of socioeconomic status for individuals to fit in the social structure is more evident in the urban areas. Likewise, Cortés (2008) defines the phenomenon as:

The pattern situation in which homes of different socioeconomic groups in their own context is distributed, built, purchased and furnished. This circumstance generates, expresses or reinforces differentiation, physical distance and mutual isolation between groups by hindering interaction and socioeconomic integration of underprivileged populations. (p. 443).

Furthermore, Rodríguez Vignoli (2001) defines it as "the absence or relative lack of socioeconomic mixing in the subunits of a city" (p. 7). In Sociology, it is evident that two elements impact directly on the development of residential segregation. On the one side, the component of separation where housing is seen as an occupation restrictive mechanism for unprivileged populations and as a device to control access to the higher steps in the social ladder. On the other hand, the following fact remains: A lack of contact and social and territorial integration in the different levels of the socioeconomic strata. About this Barry (1998) states that exclusion should not be taken as isolation because the first element takes place unintentionally and it is a characteristic of lower socioeconomic strata, whereas the second component happens as a consequence of individual decision and it is related to sectors of the elite.

Therefore, the segregation concept must describe wealthy groups of population as well as the poorest classes. From the urban standpoint, Clichevsky (2000) states that when the concept is defined more rigorously, segregation is absent in a context of socioeconomic heterogeneity, where the population belongs to different levels, ranging between the city sphere and the more specific scope of analysis, the neighborhood blocks. Nevertheless, the notion of social polarization is not very accurate, but instead of that, the concept of multi-polarization should be used. Due to the fact that, "both extreme poverty and wealth have intensified with the

recent impact of globalization along with a gradation (series of successive changes) of situations between the middle and working classes" (Schteingart, 2010, p. 347).

We aim to review and assess this concept in order to make it more understandable and facilitate its use as a tool to analyze extensively one of the multiple characteristics that constitute segregation, determined by the residential component under an economic approach. Although it is necessary to consider other cultural and ideological elements, we need to first understand how the economic-residential dimension by itself has an impact on the spatial organization of the different parts of the territory. After that, we will be able to bring in other elements.

That is why, it is necessary to observe segregation based on a trend analysis, so as to interpret it as a dynamic phenomenon in continuous modification. As Grafmeyer (1994). Ariza & Solís (2009) strengthened the argument for the variable condition of SRS, stating that the fact of belonging to a specific socioeconomic stratum can change as a result of social mobility. This assessment is accurate because both the social organization of metropolitan space and socioeconomic groups have changed in comparison to the urban configuration centuries ago.

Currently, changes in the economy have caused the deterioration of labor markets and the commercialization of urban space, leading SRS to become permanent in cities, and thus increasing its effects on lower social classes. (Solís & Puga, 2011). This sort of segregation is a product of self-segregation as well. Hence, the isolation of the elite and the sociospatial exclusion of poor people within the same urban areas are the components of the modern, globalized city landscape, bringing about the removal of the old segregative model, where the coexistence of socioeconomic strata did not happen. Meanwhile, separation, exclusion and, in general terms, inequalities between rich and poor have become sharper. Nonetheless, although the distance between these two classes has diminished, coexistence of wealth and poverty segregation is a widely acknowledged phenomenon of the XXI century.

In this sense, for Arriagada Luco (2012), SRS:

[...] can be defined as the geographical agglomeration of families of the same social condition, and it is an expression of a group which tends to gather around some areas of the city; the configuration of homogeneous social areas and the presence of segregation or exclusion. (p 71).

Conversely, from the perspective of geography, Álvarez (2009) proposes that socioeconomic RS refers to a fragmented way of spatial configuration of the city, which, to some extent, has an effect on social interaction and makes little contribution to building human relationships.

On that account, within the framework of inequality and hierarchies present in cities which start global processes or already belong to that dynamic, the growth of social and physical distance among social groups with different economic status hinders balanced socio-spatial development. Consequently, the binary relation between society and space, which exists in all cases where residential segregation takes place, becomes the means and product of the interaction among economic, political and cultural capital. This mediation defines the characteristics that will differentiate specific places in the urban areas. In reality, the social status of urban zones is largely determined by socioeconomic level in the present-day situation.

Discussion

The multiple meanings of segregation are an unquestionable fact, because each discipline modifies their understanding of the concept according to the research objectives. These delimitations might bring confusion to those who start to become acquainted with this topic. Even though, despite the conceptual discrepancies, the idea of segregation extends across all academic fields as a social and spatial phenomenon, which puts in place differentiation and promotes isolation between a part and the whole.

For that reason, to know the topical context used to study segregation, its definition according to the different disciplines which have dealt with this notion, their contributions and gaps in knowledge, becomes relevant as a means to understand the multiple variations of meaning in this term. As shown in table 1, sociology has made great contributions in order to design a set of indices to measure segregation. It has also helped establish its five constituent dimensions: Uniformity, concentration, grouping, centrality and exposure. There are some aspects which still need some consideration, such as the analysis of subculture emergence as a result of social fragmentation, the need to include a wider multidimensional approach and reflection on the way spatial distribution of elites comes about.

Within the field of urbanism, the main findings are related to the phenomenon of segregation and housing policies, which promote socio-territorial fragmentation as well as the correlation between the different housing models with the existing levels of residential segregation. However, the perception of inhabitants about their own socio-spatial situations have not been considered yet.

Sociology and urbanism have combined efforts to explain the patterns of social group distributions in major cities. The fusion of perspectives has made it possible to identify the necessity of further studies on segregation, for the reason that cities are undergoing constant modifications.

The scale of analysis is another aspect that these two disciplines have approached simultaneously. It is worth highlighting that the slightest modifications in this scale might affect the results. There are still significant gaps in information to be closed, specifically: A lack of long term, systematic studies on the evolution of residential segregation and the need to stratify population using different variables.

Furthermore, Geography has shown a non-existing relation between a social group's share relative to the population as a whole and the resulting values measured by segregation indices. Likewise, cultural variables are not enough to explain the varying types of this phenomenon, common to other disciplines, expressed in a reduction of its urban scale. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to make additional analyses of segregation by making a comparison of different periods as well as the use of other variables, apart from the level of education, with the aim of establishing a clearer delimitation of social groups.

Geography and urbanism have also worked together to analyze this topic. Some important changes in tendencies have been found in the central zones of urban areas, which have consolidated themselves as spaces for effective homogeneity for higher socioeconomic strata. Conversely, the suburbs are characterized by housing lower socioeconomic status groups in evident homogeneity. Paradoxically, as we move away from the center of higher socioeconomic

Discipline	Contributions	Pending issues
Sociology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Categorization of segregation into five dimensions and creation of measurement indices. 2. The impact of segregation is mostly evident on lower socioeconomic strata. 3. It is necessary to continue the analysis of this phenomenon in the present-day situation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To analyze the types of segregation in social groups of higher socioeconomic classes. 2. To perform multidimensional analysis that includes all the sets of variables of segregation. 3. To analyze the social repercussions for the cities because of the emergence of subcultures.
Urbanism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This topic is approached from different levels of analysis and its impact on the results of segregation indices. 2. Traditional patterns of segregation in cities have changed, reducing the level of expression of this phenomenon. 3. Housing policies foster socio-territorial fragmentation as well as the closed format housing types. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To perform long-term systematic studies on the evolution of residential segregation in cities. 2. Stratify the population by means of different variables in order to analyze the same zone and compare results. 3. Develop analyses with a qualitative approach to look into inhabitants' perception of RS.
Geography	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no relation between the share of social groups and the segregation indices values. 2. Identification of a reduction of urban levels of this phenomenon. 3. Spotting of changing tendencies of segregation through the relation between central zones and peri-urban areas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider variables different from level of education to delimit the social groups. 2. Perform analysis of different periods of time and a comparison among them 3. Assess the effect of intra-urban migration on RS.
Anthropology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reduction of distance between groups foster neither integration nor interaction in the social dimension. 2. Short and long-term effects of segregation are expected. 3. Segregation becomes more severe and permanent in the peripheries of urban zones. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reconceptualize RS according to political, social, urban and economic grounds of modern cities.

Table 1. Socioeconomic residential segregation, main contributions and gaps of information in each discipline.

Source: Authors' own elaboration, based on a revision of bibliographic references (2020).

groups, homogeneity starts to decrease and their degree of concentration grows. On the contrary, as social groups of lower classes come closer to the central zones, they tend to be more concentrated and heterogeneous.

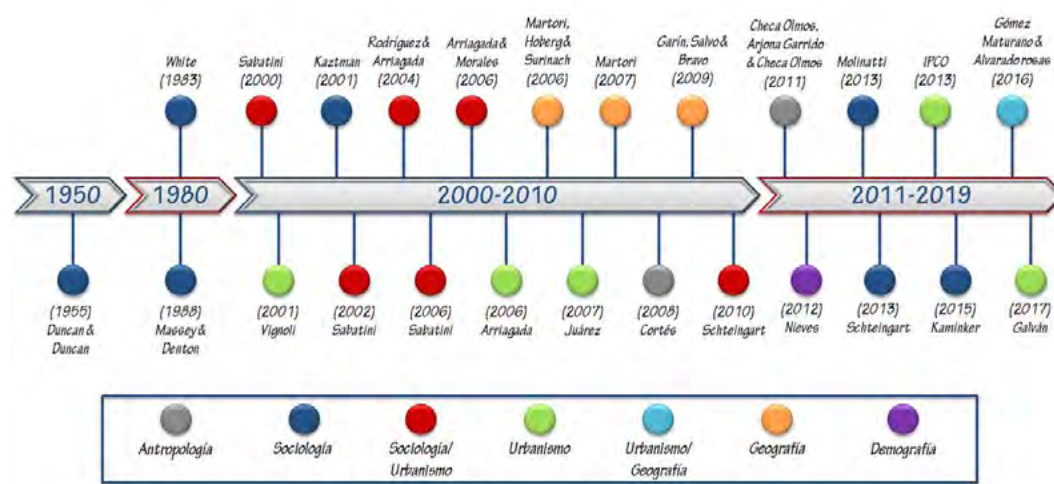
Finally, from anthropology's standpoint, it has been shown that a reduction in the distance among social groups does not lead to social integration, because they can coexist in the same zone of highly different socioeconomic strata without an actual relationship. Likewise, short and long-term effects related to segregation are highlighted. The former impact refers to the physical closeness of higher socioeconomic groups, which brings benefits to lower classes. The second category of effects have to do with gentrification. It is still a fundamental, unfinished matter to redefine segregation according to the functioning and dynamics of current cities.

Although a wide range of multidisciplinary studies on topics related to segregation are available, most efforts to analyze its effect on urban territory and its population as well as finding a way to establish a definition that mixes all the varying degrees of this phenomenon, have adopted a focus on major cities. This is by no means a wrong approach, but a general contribution done by multiple lines of investigation because the impact of this phenomenon is more evident in these places. Even so, it is essential to include smaller cities in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the way segregation is changing the traditional patterns of socio-spatial organization and specifically, what level of signification attains in relation to the characteristics of the urban context in which it appears and develops.

In this sense, the theoretical and conceptual analysis of segregation allows the identification of different standpoints to establish a precise meaning and the complexity of multiple denotations for the same term, conveying some sort of ambiguity in the definition. Each study and even each scientist, selects elements with a view to create a concept based on the objectives of the research. Moreover, in some cases, scientists who belong to the same academic field hold different views of the concept.

Out of the emergence of the School of Chicago, studies on segregation became more relevant; specially, those who adopted sociological and urban lines of research, since spatial segmentation of social groups is increasingly more evident in urban areas. However, due to the fact that this topic achieved a high relevance and it remains important despite the radical changes in its way of expression, other disciplines like geography and anthropology joined the efforts to explain the socio-spatial processes of this phenomenon.

Therefore, further conceptual development from a sociological perspective reveals a greater importance in social elements, defined as the interactions and integration that might take place within social groups which belong to a different economic status, cultural background, ethnic group and so on. On the other hand, experts on urbanism consider it is more relevant to explain the modifications that occur in the configuration of cities, as a result of segregation. From the geography perspective, the most important factor is the spatial location of social groups in urban areas. Finally, from anthropology standpoint, the main



Principales líneas de investigación por año

(1955) Analysis of measurement indices
(1983) Analysis of measurement indices
(1988) Dimensions of RS
(2000) Land markets and RS in Santiago, Chile
(2001) Social isolation of poor people in urban areas
(2002) Poor people's RS, a critical situation for Chile.
(2004) RS in Latin American cities.
(2006) Segregation of space in Latin America.

(2006) Relation between RS and levels of insecurity
(2006) Residential segregation and models or urbanization
(2006) Immigrant population and urban areas
(2007) Horizontal condominiums and their relation to RS
(2007) Indices of RS in Barcelona, Spain
(2008) Scales and reconceptualization of SRS
(2009) Tendencies of RS in Chile
(2010) Social division of space in Mexico City

(2011) RS of foreign population in Andalucía, Spain
(2012) SRS in metropolitan areas of Puerto Rico
(2013) Tendencies and patterns of SRS in Córdoba, Argentina
(2013) Socio-spatial inequalities in Mexican cities
(2015) Relevance of studies on RS in average-size cities
(2016) Special dynamics of RS in the Valley of Mexico
(2017) Vertical housing and its relation to SRS

Figure 1. Chronological timeline of the main studies on segregation (categorized by disciplines).

Source: Authors' own elaboration, based on their analysis of academic references (2020).

focus is directed to the individual and collective views from segregated and segregating individuals.

For those reasons, segregation is a complex socio-spatial phenomenon relative to the historical period which is being studied. Besides, it turns out to be difficult to understand when studies only focus on some characteristics of the population and the territory, avoiding a global analysis of this circumstance. Therefore, the standardization of criteria plays an essential role. That is why, it is absolutely imperative to use a second explanation based on a chronological criterion, which helps explain the way research on segregation has evolved and the disciplines that have made contributions to the studies.

In spite of the fact that segregation has been researched for many centuries, it is during the middle of the XX century that the interest in its analysis intensifies, due to the fast and constant urban, social, political, economic, technological and even cultural changes, taking place in cities. These alterations led to a reorganization of social structures within the urban area, even the non-urban zones, as it is shown in figure 1.

The fields of sociology and urbanism have individually and jointly approached this topic to a greater extent. One of the most important studies on this matter was done by Duncan & Duncan (1955). They proved that the indices used until that date were not able to accurately show the levels of segregation. Instead, they proposed a new algorithm to measure them, namely, the Dissimilarity Index which continues to be used and maintains its validity nowadays.

Later, in the 1980s, Massey & Denton (1988) along with White (1983) made important contributions as a means to better understand the reality of this phenomenon. They proposed five constituent dimensions of segregation and the optimal algorithms to measure each one of these components. Between 2000 and 2010, studies with urban and social focus started to appear and grow in number. However, due to the intrinsic complexity to obtain a precise understanding of the spatial and organizational

processes of social groups in cities, geography and anthropology joined the analysis of segregation in the late 2000s and they brought in new ways to interpret its dynamic. During the second decade of the present century, studies on this topic are still being conducted from the standpoint of sociology, urbanism, geography and anthropology; even new disciplines, such as demography, have become interested in this line of research.

Conclusions

It is evident that the complexity to conceptualize segregation is linked to the complexity of cities along with the significant changes taking place in short periods of time, which hampers the comprehension of how it is produced, maintained, transformed and what its precise meaning is. Besides, this phenomenon is increasingly fragmenting society and areas. We expect the involvement of other disciplines in the examination of segregation in the near future, and thus new ways of interpreting this situation might arise. These new contributions will surely strengthen the discussion about the nature of segregation.

In this sense, as researchers, we need to maintain an ongoing reflection on this concept and each one of its different and possible significations in order to adopt an established standpoint or as a means to build our own. By doing so, we will help to enhance the understanding of this matter, even though it may vary from the previous existing conceptions. It is a widely accepted fact that the polysemic nature of segregation will remain unchanged as more disciplines join the analysis of this phenomenon and new and completely different definitions are generated. Therefore, it will be very difficult to find a concept which gathers together all the different denotations of this concept. As a consequence, it is absolutely imperative to learn to operate within all the range of meanings so that we can create an accurate definition and be able to understand them by their individual definitions. Taking this into account, we will avoid wrong interpretations by the readers.

Wrapping up, in general terms, segregation refers to the physical separation of different social groups in a specific space. Although the concept has changed over time, its social and spatial characteristics have remained. To put it in

another way, it must be understood as a process, because it adapts to the dynamics of the ongoing times and it is a result of inequalities in socio-territorial relations among individuals, where hierarchy becomes progressively more relevant.

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