Seduced and abandoned:

the social isolation
of the urban poor

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This article examines the effects that some recent changes
in the social structure of the early-developing Latin American
countries have had on the social isolation of the urban poor.
These changes mainly concern the labour markets and some
opportunity structures which are the source for the formation
of human resources and social capital. It is argued here that,
as a result of these changes, the links of the urban poor with
the labour market have been weakened and their areas for
informal socialization with persons of other social classes
have been made smaller, thus leading to their progressive
isolation. The article also analyses the reduction of
opportunities for accumulating individual and collective
social capital and civic capital and examines the particular
characteristics assumed by the processes of residential
segregation in the big cities of the countries studied.

I

Introduction

Most of the public policies carried out in the countries of the region in order to improve the well-being of the urban poor have neglected the problems of their integration into society and have acted as though merely improving their living conditions would enable them to establish (or restore) significant links with the rest of the community. It is only in recent years, as the worsening of the problems of social segmentation which have accompanied the application of the new growth models has become evident, that the discourse of academics and social policy-makers has begun to reflect a concern for the problems of social isolation of the urban poor and the mechanisms that further and support such situations, over and above consideration of their economic constraints and specific needs. Thus, the incorporation into the specialized vocabulary of such notions as exclusion, disaffiliation, disvalidation, fragmentation and the like reveals the concern over the growing proportion of the population which, as well as being linked with the labour market in a precarious and unstable way, is increasingly isolated from the mainstream[1] of society. Whatever the term used for it, this phenomenon implies fragile –or in extreme cases non-existent– links between the urban poor and persons and institutions who guide their own actions by the norms and values prevailing in society at a given moment in time.

One virtue of these approaches is that they incorporate the social structure as an explicit element of the conceptual framework within which they interpret the phenomena of poverty. The location of the poor within this structure varies not only according to the size of the gaps separating them from other social categories in the labour market, but also according to the degree of segmentation in terms of the quality of all kinds of services and the degree of residential segregation. These considerations make it possible to broaden the field of understanding poverty phenomena beyond schemes that see them merely as a result of the ups and downs of the economy or of the stock of resources of households and their capacity for mobilizing them efficiently, and at the same time they open up expectations about the possibility of formulating policies to deal with those phenomena in a more integral manner than in the past.

In the following pages we will put forward some hypotheses about the nature and determinants of the social isolation of the urban poor, in the hope that the results of their testing will help to make anti-poverty programmes more effective. It goes without saying that, since there has as yet been very little research on these matters in the countries of the region, most of those hypotheses are still at an embryonic stage.[2]

Among the factors that most powerfully affect the changes taking place in urban poverty in the region are the changes which are occurring in the labour markets. Under the influence of the processes of de-industrialization, reduction of the size of the State sector and the rapid incorporation of technological innovations in some areas of activity, the proportion of stable, protected jobs is going down, the income gap between skilled and unskilled workers is widening, and the problems of unemployment and underemployment are getting worse, particularly for the unskilled sector of the labour force.[3] Unless there are policies specifically designed to prevent this from happening, the widening

[1] The expression "mainstream" refers to that sector of society whose aspirations for social integration and mobility are directed through institutional channels and whose behaviour and expectations are in keeping with the prevailing norms and values. The word "prevailing" usually has the connotation not only of the power and prestige of this sector, and hence their capacity for spreading norms, values and models of behaviour, but also their numerical weight in society.

[2] Some results of studies made in Argentina and Uruguay may be found in Kaztman (1997), Kaztman (ed.) (1999), and Kaztman and others (1998).

[3] These connections must not be interpreted in an automatic manner, of course, since different States display different dispositions and capacities –usually reflecting collective values deeply rooted in their institutional systems– to take measures to soften the impact of the economic changes on poverty and inequality. Even so, it cannot be denied that the evidence built up in the developed

of the income gaps between segments of the urban population will further increase the social distances between the poor and the non-poor.

There are, of course, many explanations for the way disparities in income become social disparities. Perhaps the simplest of these is that which holds that, as favoured households depart from the average level of income of the population, their propensity to acquire in the market services of better quality than the collective average increases. When this form of behaviour extends to basic services such as transport, education, public safety, health and recreational services, at least three important changes take place in the social structure, which heighten the mechanisms causing the social isolation of the urban poor. Firstly, there is a reduction in the areas for informal socialization between different classes provided by the fact of using the same services. Second, there is also a reduction in the domain of common problems faced by households in their daily life. Third, public services lose the important support they previously enjoyed through the interest of the middle strata (where those with "voice" are concentrated) in keeping up the quality of the services they use. This gives rise to a vicious circle of growing differences in quality between public and private services which tends to lead to a further deterioration in the position of the poor compared with the rest of society.

Differences in income and in the degree of job protection and stability are also reflected in the location of the different classes in the urban territory. Thus, as we shall see later, one of the most obvious expressions of the reduction in the areas of informal interaction between the different socioeconomic strata is the progressive polarization of the social composition of neighbourhoods.

The result of these processes is growing social isolation of the urban poor from the mainstream of society. This isolation becomes a serious obstacle to the accumulation of the assets needed in order to cease to be poor, so that socially isolated urban poverty is a copybook example of social exclusion.

In the following sections we will examine some of the most important processes which are currently joining together to produce the three changes in the social structure referred to above, namely, the increase in the proportion of the economically active population with only precarious and unstable links with the labour market; the progressive reduction in the public areas that enable informal contacts to be made between the classes on an equal footing, and the growing concentration of the poor in segregated areas of the urban territory. The first of these processes is connected with the increasingly precarious and unstable nature of the labour markets; the second, with the segmentation of services (especially education), and the third, with residential segregation. Box 1 summarizes the main working hypotheses regarding each of these processes.

In order to simplify the presentation, box 1 does not mention other basic services, but health, transport, public safety and areas of collective recreation and leisure, as well as others, all represent areas of interaction, with their own specific mechanisms of integration and segmentation. Each in their own way, these go to make up the structure of opportunities on which the assets of the poor depend, and thus help to define the place of the poor in the social structure of the city.

We will now comment in greater detail on the nature, determinants and consequences of segmentation in the fields of employment, education and residence.[4]

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countries tends to indicate that the different types of welfare arrangements, while admittedly softening the impact of globalization on the households with the fewest social assets, are not sufficient to alter the general direction of the trends. As Esping-Andersen (1999) points out, maintaining more equitable types of income distribution is usually effected at the cost of high rates of unemployment, while in cases where unemployment rates are low, inequality is usually higher. These observations make one suspect that the tension between equity and full employment may be an inherent phenomenon in the application of the new style of economic growth.

[4] The terms "differentiation", "segmentation" and "segregation" are used in different parts of this article, so it is worth clarifying at this point the exact meaning assigned to each of them. The first term simply refers to differences between the attributes of two or more social categories. The second means that there are not only such differences, but also barriers to movement from one category to another, while the third term means that there are not only such differences and barriers, but also a desire by the members of one or another category to maintain or raise the barriers separating them.

	Box 1		
POSSIBLE INCIDENCE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF SEGMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE ON THE FORMATION OF ASSETS WHICH COULD RELIEVE TENDENCIES TOWARDS THE ISOLATION OF THE URBAN POOR			
Type of segmentation	Individual social capital	Collective social capital	Civic capital
In the area of employment	Reduces the probability of having networks of information and contacts which facilitate the search for work.	The separation of the places of employment which hire those who have "voice" reduces the strength of the labour institutions and demands of the urban poor.	Work ceases to act as the main link that gives a feeling of belonging to society. The acquisition of rights as a citizen is affected. Feelings of citizenship are weakened because the poor do not share the problems and fate of mainstream workers.
In the area of education	There is a weakening of: i) the formation of feelings of reciprocity and solidarity; ii) the possibility that those who have more will be aware of the merits of those who have less and will form links of loyalty with them; iii) the possibility of incorporating middle-class habits and attitudes regarding mobility, through education.	There is a decline in the participation by the parents of middle-class students in public education and their influence on maintaining the quality of such services is reduced.	There are fewer opportunities for poor students to experience belonging to a community where they have the same rights and obligations, similar problems and similar rewards for merit as their peers from other classes.
In areas of residence	Less information and fewer contacts. Less normative efficiency. Less exposure to role models.	Danger of decline of neighbourhood institutions for lack of leadership.	Weakening of feeling of citizenship because of not sharing neighbourhood problems with other classes; danger of formation of marginal subcultures.

II

Labour segmentation

For the purpose of the analysis which we are about to make, it is worth bearing in mind the observations summarized in box 1 on certain aspects of the stock of assets of the urban poor which could be affected by the changes taking place in the labour market which have an incidence on their degree of social isolation or integration:

i)   Individual social capital: the workplace is a prime place for building up networks of friends, through which resources are received in the form of contacts, information and facilities for gaining access to various kinds of services.

ii)   Citizenship in both its subjective and objective aspects: this too is a prime area for generating subjective elements in this respect by sharing problems, consolidating identities, bolstering self-esteem and building a common destiny. It is also an area of prime importance, however, for acquiring objective rights of citizenship through labour-related gains such as the expansion and improvement of the social benefits usually associated with the role of a wage worker.

iii)   Collective social capital: stable participation in an establishment with workers of different levels of skills increases the opportunities of the less-skilled workers for gaining access to institutions which will efficiently defend their interests as workers and preserve the rights they have already gained.

One of the central features of the present economic restructuring process is that the minimum levels of skills demanded for participation in the formal labour market are rising in line with the ever-faster rates of technological innovation and the need for world-level productivity and competitiveness. This usually means a drastic devaluation of the skills that workers have managed to acquire in the workplace and an equally drastic reduction in their possibilities of participating in the formal market and in the kind of employment where the type of assets referred to can be accumulated. At the same time, intensive processes of de-industrialization and reduction of the size of the State sector take place, with a consequent reduction in the proportion of stable and protected jobs and a corresponding increase in the services sector, especially personal and consumer services. As the distribution of income and skills in the services sector is more polarized than in industry, however, the massive transfer of labour from one sector to the other is linked with an increase in inequality in terms of income and working conditions.[5] Moreover, many personal and consumer services activities may be viewed as extensions of housework, so that they offer very little room for increasing productivity. As Esping-Andersen (1999) argues, citing Baumol (1967), these two characteristics expose these activities to the danger of cost disease, thus making them intrinsically precarious and unstable.

In order to appreciate how important these processes are for Latin American workers, it is sufficient to bear two facts in mind. The first is that the present tendency towards more precarious employment is to be observed in societies which have moved from the predominance of interactions governed by "mechanical solidarity" to the predominance of "organic solidarity" (Durkheim, 1964). This means that with the greater division of labour, and under the effect of the need for interdependence generated by the processes of differentiation and specialization, the main mechanism for integration in society was shifting from the primary institutions (the family and the community, for the most part) to the world of work, thus giving grounds for

hoping that, as in the early-industrialized nations, work would become the main means for integration into society and for the formation of identity and self-esteem.

This promise seems to have been losing validity, however, for the growing mass of population which, in the new global economic context, is not able to establish a sufficiently stable and protected relation with the labour market to serve as a basis for social integration processes. For these groups, work ceases to be the main activity on which the rational construction of everyday life is based. There is a weakening of the role of work as a shaper of identities and a generator of forms of solidarity in the working community and the institutions deriving from it, and, in so far as the reduction of stable forms of participation in the market and the weakening of the related organizations close off important sources of the construction of rights, it also loses relevance as a promoter of citizenship.

The second fact connected with the effects of more precarious and unstable employment on the living conditions of the urban poor has to do with the type of welfare system prevailing in the region.[6] Although none of the countries of Latin America have systems of social benefits of such a level of coverage, quality and organization that they could be described as "welfare systems" in the sense assigned to them by Esping-Andersen (1990 and 1999), the embryonic systems which have been established in the region have followed patterns which are closer to the "conservative" model followed in continental Europe, with emphasis on the procurement of rights through work, than to the "social-democratic" model of the Scandinavian countries, based on the idea of universal rights of citizenship, or the liberal model of the Anglo-Saxon countries, with its focus on the provision of safety nets for the poor and marginal sectors. In this sense, the institutions of the region responsible for the socialization of risks are poorly prepared for protecting a population with only precarious and unstable links with the labour market.

The State undoubtedly has a vital part to play in determining the effects of economic restructuring on labour segmentation. A guaranteed social wage reduces the urge to accept unattractive types of work such as unskilled jobs in the services sector. Public employment programmes make possible the temporary absorption of workers displaced by technological progress in jobs

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[5] A very extensive debate is in progress on the effects of de-industrialization on inequality (see, for example, Sassen (1999), Mollenkopf and Castells (1991), Hamnett (1998), and Musterd and Ostendorf, eds. (1998)). One of the main features of this debate is that little consideration is given to the processes which could be influencing the increase in income inequality and which are connected, inter alia, with changes in tax systems, social benefits, unemployment, household structure or the age structure of the population. The question of action by the State is a central issue in this critical analysis.

[6] By "welfare system" we mean the more or less organized arrangements for protection against social risks provided by the institutions of the State, the market, the family and the community (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

related with the functioning of different services. Changes in the tax system can activate potential sources of employment. In general terms, the State can measure out and balance the coverage and size of the resources it transfers to the social groups most affected by the economic reforms, making them more or less gradual and displaying a greater or lesser intention to limit their concentrative effects. Taking these factors into consideration helps in understanding the differences that exist between developed countries with different

welfare systems in terms of changes in income distribution and the relative weight of informal activities. It must be borne in mind, however, that even studies that lay stress on the differences between such systems recognize that, under the pressures arising from both the need to improve productivity and the changes taking place in demographic structures, there are signs of a retrenchment in social security coverage even in countries which had distinguished themselves by their advances in this field.[7]

III

Segmentation in education

The increasingly vital role of knowledge as a means for the progress of nations confirms the importance traditionally attached to education as the main means of social mobility and a key area for the social integration of the new generations. This role has repeatedly been stressed in the declarations of Presidential summit meetings in recent years, where the top public policy makers have agreed that equity in the first years of life must form part of the central core of values of the models guiding development in Latin America and that concentration of the resources of educational systems on children from homes of low social and cultural level is one of the most efficient ways of breaking the mechanisms responsible for the reproduction of poverty and social segmentation.

It seems paradoxical, however, that at the same time that they are enouncing these principles many societies of the region are going through an unparalleled process of stratification of their educational circuits.[8] It seems obvious that the educational system can hardly be qualified to help in lifting the social burden of poverty and inequality and offsetting the growing segmentation of employment if it is segmented itself. This is

undoubtedly one of the main problems of the present social dilemma in many Latin American countries.

In order to gain a better understanding of the importance of the social composition of places of education for the integration of the new generations, we need only consider the fact that –apart from the periods of compulsory military service, in the few countries where such conscription exists and really is universal– there are very few institutions that all citizens must pass through and which give persons of different social origins an opportunity to interact with each other for a lengthy period of time on a footing other than that of employment contracts or the commercial exchange of goods and services. Thus, the educational system is the main –and often the only– institutional area which can act as a melting pot, through its potential for generating contexts in which poor children and adolescents have the possibility of maintaining a daily relationship with their peers from other strata and developing with them common codes and links of solidarity and affection on an equal footing.

If the rich go to colleges for the rich, the middle class go to colleges for the middle class and the poor go to schools for the poor, it seems obvious that there is little the educational system can do to promote social integration and obviate marginality, whatever efforts it may make to improve the educational opportunities of those with less resources.[9] It is therefore important not

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[7] With regard to the case of France, see White (1998); for Germany, Friedrichs (1998); for Belgium, Kestellot (1998) and for Sweden, Borgegard, Anderson and Hjort (1998).

[8] So much so that in many countries of the region the awareness of such stratification causes many parents to go through a stage of great anxiety when they try to get their three or four year old children into certain kindergartens (where the infant candidates even have to take an entrance examination) because this will subsequently enable them to continue in an educational circuit made up of schools and colleges with high-quality teachers and equipment, which will in turn open the doors of the best universities for them.

[9] When considering these problems, it should be borne in mind that the distinction between paid and free and between public and private establishments does not cover all the forms that educational segmentation can take. Both the quality of these services and the social homogeneity of those attending them may be and usually

only to stress the contribution that the educational system makes to equity through greater equality of access but also its contribution to social integration by creating conditions that facilitate interaction between non-equals on terms of equality.

Going on now to consider the summary picture given in box 1, it can be said that the educational system can make an important contribution to equity in the distribution of social capital assets, by facilitating the establishment of student networks of heterogeneous social composition. For poor students, these networks are stores of reciprocity, confidence and loyalties which can be activated when the time comes to enter the labour market, through the mobilization of the "credits" accumulated with their more influential peers when they were studying together and the direct knowledge that the latter have of their merits (Flap and Graaf, 1986). Believing that merit alone will aid in social mobility is a fallacy that only comes true in exceptional circumstances. It is social contacts that help to exploit the full potential of human capital and, since they give a reasonable degree of certainty that it will be possible to obtain suitable employment, this provides a motive for continuing to invest in the development of such capital.

Likewise, in view of the impact usually caused by the exodus from the public educational system of the

middle-class elements who have "voice", any initiative which prevents an increase in educational segmentation will, on the one hand, make an indirect contribution to the collective social capital of poor students, by reducing or halting the deterioration of that system compared with the private system, while on the other hand it will aid in the early development of feelings of citizenship among poor students, based on their participation on an equal footing in an educational community shared with their peers from better-off households, which will give rise to shared identities and goals, positive attitudes of recognition of others as holders of rights, and feelings of moral obligation extending to their companions of different social, religious, ethnic or national origin. In other words, the contribution of a person's schooldays to his formation as a citizen will be all the richer when the social composition of the student community of each school is closer to that of the national community as a whole. In contrast, when there is greater segmentation among educational establishments, this will increase the likelihood that the members of a given social stratum will only come face to face with the members of other strata in the labour market, where relations are governed by the hierarchical patterns typical of the organization of the world of work.

IV

Residential segregation

Residential segregation refers to the process whereby the population of cities tend to congregate in socially homogeneous areas. Among the most important factors considered to influence this process are the degree of urbanization and the degree of poverty in urban areas, the degree of concentration of income distribution, the

are accompanied by the effects of the processes of residential segregation, so that the fact that better-off children may attend a public school is no guarantee that the educational system is carrying out its social integration function. Some politico-administrative arrangements may have the same effect, as in the case of some counties in the United States where the financial autonomy of the municipalities seems to completely neutralize the objective of integration (Massey, 1996), since if those that do not belong to a prosperous community cannot make use of its public services the results in terms of the segregation of society may be similar to those that would occur if those services were private.

nature of the pattern of social distances typical of each society, and the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the ethnic, religious or nationality-related composition of the urban population.

Many analysts of the situation existing in this respect in the United States, and also in the big European urban centres, have drawn attention to the concentration of the poor in certain neighbourhoods which have an unprecedented concentration of material deprivation that contrasts strikingly with the equally unprecedented spatial concentration of rich households in other neighbourhoods. In the opinion of these analysts, the relative weight of the population affected and the seriousness of the consequences of this situation on their opportunities of integrating into society and on the general health of the fabric of society are such that the residential segregation affecting the urban poor should

be given priority attention by those responsible for formulating social policies (Massey, 1996; Wilson, 1997, and Wilson (ed.), 1993).

Although they only deal with a clearly insufficient range of determinants, the efforts which have been made to measure residential segregation, basically in terms of the urbanization of poverty and the increase in urban density (Massey, 1996) are useful for bringing out the importance and historical singularity of the concentration of the poor in the cities as a necessary condition for setting in motion the mechanisms that may eventually lead to their social isolation. A further contribution they make is that they provide a simple explanation for the formation of subcultures which depart from the mainstream of society. According to the theory of Fischer (1975), such subcultures arise naturally from the spatial concentration of categories of people who share similar characteristics, and the mere fact of greater intra-group accessibility favours the formation of normative patterns that reflect those common features.[10]

1. A typology of lower-class urban neighbourhoods

Of course, it may be argued that the lower strata of the big cities have always tended to congregate in neighbourhoods that are different from the rest because of the average socioeconomic level of their inhabitants as well as a set of special features associated with the patterns of interaction that exist within the neighbourhood and between it and the rest of the city: a set of features which, although this might be an exaggeration in many cases, could indicate the presence of a subculture. If this is so, it might be asked why it is that social isolation, unlike other examples of spatial concentration of lower-class urban strata, is now presented as a central characteristic of the new cases of residential segregation of the urban poor.

In order to facilitate the search for answers to this question, box 2 presents a typology of lower-class urban neighbourhoods, defined in very broad terms. The types of neighbourhoods were ordered according to the hypothetical degree of openness to individual or collective mobility prevailing at the time when these neighbourhoods were growing up. As will readily be gathered from this box, it is based on the assumption that a knowledge of the changes taking place in the structures of opportunities which are most important for unskilled and semi-skilled workers is essential in order to understand the different kinds of poor urban neighbourhoods.

Before going on to examine each of the cells in box 2, however, readers should be aware of its limitations in at least two important respects. Firstly, this scheme stems from consideration of the history of urban changes in the Southern Cone countries, and while it will probably also be useful for interpreting the urban social morphology of big cities in other countries of the region with similar characteristics, it is doubtful whether it would be applicable to Latin American societies with situations of cultural heterogeneity due to strong ethnic differences. In such cases, the legitimacy of the pretended social superiority of the middle and upper classes does not appear to be openly questioned, and the social distances are so firmly established that they are unaffected by proximity or daily interaction between people of different classes (perhaps the most archetypal example is that of the castes in India). In these countries, the problem of segmentation in the areas of interaction controlled by the different institutional orders takes second place to the main challenge faced by the urban poor: that of coming closer to gaining access to full citizenship and legitimizing their desire to become integrated into society on equal terms.

A second limitation on the scheme presented is that it does not take account either of neighbourhoods made up largely or entirely of ethnic or religious minorities or households with the same territorial origin. The distinguishing feature of these neighbourhoods is that their inhabitants have voluntarily decided to settle in them. They may have various reasons for this: in order to restore networks, preserve customs or maintain common norms, values and cultural identities; to defend themselves against attacks by other social groups; to lay the foundations for business projects in which community social capital is a very valuable resource; or to organize under more favourable conditions collective actions to improve the common infrastructure or even to pursue longer-term political objectives. It is worth noting that in these cases residential segregation may be a deliberately sought instrumental resource (Boal, 1998, p. 97), a prior condition for forming a community, or a result of this (Castles, 1998).

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[10] In the case of urban ghettos, as Crane (1989) holds in his study on dropping out from school and adolescent motherhood in Chicago, what probably happens is that certain threshold levels of poverty density are passed, after which the patterns that build up around the conductual correlates of prolonged experiences of critical deprivation begin to operate as the dominant framework that guides action.

Box 2

TYPOLOGY OF LOWER-CLASS URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS ACCORDING TO THE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR MOBILITY PREVAILING WHEN THEY WERE BEING FORMED

	Individual	
COLLECTIVE	Favourable	Unfavourable
Favourable	Heterogeneous lower-class neighbourhoods (3)	Traditional working-class neighbourhoods (2)
Unfavourable	Neighbourhoods inhabited by recent migrants (1)	Urban ghettos (4)

a) *Neighbourhoods made up of recent migrants (cell 1)*

Following the Second World War, the growth of this kind of neighbourhood in many cities of the region was closely linked with the rate of massive transfers of rural dwellers, who mostly settled on the outskirts of large urban centres.

The situation in these neighbourhoods differs in various respects from that of the poor living in the present urban ghettos of the region. Firstly, many of these migrants voluntarily chose to live on the outskirts of the cities, close to relatives or friends of similar migratory origin. Second, most of these people were attracted by the possibilities for social mobility offered by the city. Achieving the status of a city dweller meant, among other things, gaining access to services and social benefits which did not exist where they came from. Third, the period in time when these migrations took place permitted them to cherish hopes of sustained progress, for the expansion of the machinery of the State –together with the expansion of public services– and the activation of the economy that accompanied the import substitution process in the two decades following the Second World War gave rise to a labour absorption capacity that extended to unskilled workers too. Moreover, when they compared their new situation with their previous way of life many migrants found that their efforts were well rewarded, thus giving rise to a climate of optimism and confidence in future progress. Both the actors themselves and most analysts of these processes basically perceived the passage through these areas on the outskirts of the cities as an intermediate stage in the process of full assimilation into the cities.[11]

b) *Traditional working-class neighbourhoods (cell 2)*

This category refers to neighbourhoods where a substantial proportion of the residents work in the same type of establishments, such as factories, mines or transport undertakings. In many Latin American cities, neighbourhoods of this type grew up around shipyards, meat packing plants, railway workshops or different types of industrial establishments. Their distinctive characteristic was a relatively strong sense of class, and the socialization that took place in the neighbourhood

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[11] This quick sketch does not do justice, of course, to the variety of situations associated with urban settlements of rural migrants in the various countries of the region. A wide-ranging and fruitful debate took place in the late 1960s on this subject among such experts as Roger Vekemans, José Nun, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Aníbal Quijano and Gino Germani. A good summary of the controversy raised from different perspectives on the nature of these phenomena may be found in the special issue on urban marginality of the *Revista latinoamericana de sociología* (1969). It is interesting to note that this situation is not very different from that which arose in connection with the processes of massive rural-urban migration in the United States in the 1920s, while there were similar tendencies in the European countries after the Second World War (see Esping-Andersen, 1999). Some studies were already arguing that the social problems affecting those settling in the poorest neighbourhoods of the cities were due to temporary circumstances which would disappear on the road to progress (Park and Burguess, 1925). However, even the situation of the highly segregated urban ghettos of the 1950s in the United States was radically different from the present situations, since the great majority of the unskilled workers in them had jobs, and this represented a central experience in their lives. The present residential segregation, in contrast, occurs in the context of a sharp decline in the employment opportunities and relative wages of unskilled workers (see Wilson, 1996a, p.54).

tended to strengthen the social microcosm that grew up around the inhabitants' work.[12]

This robust sense of class was the result of various factors. Firstly, there was the stability of the inhabitants' insertion in the same working environment and the size of the establishments where they worked.[13] Second, there was the existence of utopias generating images which highlighted the importance of the workers' role in the construction of a richer, more equitable and more integrated new society. Third, there was the accumulation of labour benefits through collective efforts and the parallel advances in the acquisition of rights as citizens. Fourth, there was the importance and strength of the workers' institutions, and fifth there was the hope of progress through industrial growth. In these circumstances, the attitudes and values emerging from the labour community had a strong influence in forming the patterns governing the relations among the residents of workers' neighbourhoods, and in turn the socialization among residents and their participation in neighbourhood institutions provided positive feedback for these attitudes and values.

c)   *Heterogeneous lower-class neighbourhoods (cell 3)*

This cell contains the neighbourhoods established in urban contexts that favoured individual and collective mobility. This phenomenon only occurred in some of the big cities of Latin America, and its relative weight was directly related with the age and depth of the industrialization and urbanization processes. The inhabitants of these neighbourhoods included industrial workers with steady jobs, other persons who had become independent by setting up workshops or small businesses, workers in various kinds of personal services, and office workers and teachers, all of whom kept up daily informal contacts in which they were basically classed as good or bad neighbours and as decent or not so decent persons, and in which other

distinctions connected with the socioeconomic situation of each household were of little importance. Although many of these households were close to poverty, as a whole they had sufficient purchasing power to stimulate the establishment of a large number of micro-enterprises (whose owners also lived in the neighbourhood) which provided a wide range of services such as all kinds of shops, hairdressing saloons, cinemas, bars and repair workshops.

d)   *Urban ghettos (cell 4)*

Cell 4 mainly reflects the results of the processes of residential segregation, which have basically operated since the 1980s in Latin America, in a context which displays considerable differences from the processes which marked the formation of the neighbourhoods made up of new workers (internal migrants) and old-established workers in the cities. The factors prevailing in this context are the processes of de-industrialization and reduction of the size of the State –i.e., the weakening of two of the most important sources of non-precarious urban employment–, the rapid shrinkage of employment opportunities for unskilled or semi-skilled workers, and the rapid rise in the minimum qualifications required for entry into the labour market. Instead of attraction to the cities, there is expulsion to their outskirts, and instead of stimuli provided by the possibility of new employment opportunities, a growing proportion of the active population feel that there is little hope of finding a stable place in the production structure. Unlike the migrants from rural areas, who favourably compared their new situation with that which they had left behind, many of the present urban poor are already imbued with expectations of full citizenship in terms of social, civil and political rights, including legitimate aspirations of sharing in the lifestyles prevailing among other residents of the cities. Instead of expectations of upward mobility, the feelings which now prevail are those of inevitable downward mobility or at least the impossibility of progressing. The negative effects of all these processes on the well-being of the urban poor and their possibilities of social integration are further aggravated by the perverse combination of two other phenomena: the central point for the formation of identity shifts from the world of work to the world of consumption, while the gulf between the material and the symbolic participation of these strata grows ever wider.

This historically unprecedented spatial concentration of people who have their own aspirations

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[12] A study made in Chile around 1960 deals with the ways in which the characteristics of the working environment and the community of residence mutually strengthen each other. The populations studied in this case were those of the coal miners of Lota, an isolated and economically depressed area, and the steelworkers of Huachipato (Di Tella and others, 1966).

[13] Lipset, Trow and Coleman (1962), in their study on the International Typographical Union, found that there was a relation between the size of the establishment and the strength of the links established: links that in turn involved a wide range of values, attitudes and activities outside the context in which the interaction originated.

regarding urban life but are suffering from serious material privation and have few hopes of making any significant achievements through employment gives rise to strong feelings of relative privation. In these circumstances, the new urban ghettos provide fertile soil for the most disruptive elements associated with poverty. The households which have sufficient resources to get away from these neighbourhoods do so, leaving behind them a residual population which lives in increasingly precarious conditions and is further and further removed from the kind of people who have the minimum features needed in order to be successful in present-day society.

The spatial concentration of people with these characteristics increases the precarious situation of the group in various ways. Firstly, interaction with neighbours is limited to contact with people whose skills, habits and lifestyles do not hold out any promise of successful results according to the prevailing criteria of society. Second, the neighbourhood networks available are of little use for obtaining work or information about opportunities for work or training. Third, the labour instability itself gives rise to difficulties in maintaining the basic neighbourhood institutions and adequate levels of organization and informal social control. Fourth, the children and young people lack contacts with successful role models of mainstream society and opportunities for exposure to such models. Lastly, situations of persistent unemployment increase the predisposition to explore illicit sources of income. Even if the local community rejects these forms of behaviour in principle, in practice the shared experience of the hardships caused by the daily struggle to survive in these conditions gives rise, because of a deeper understanding of its causes, to a more tolerant attitude to such deviations from the norm, and the gradual accumulation of these adaptive responses progressively causes the norms and codes prevailing in these neighbourhoods to depart from those of the rest of the city, thus accentuating the neighbourhood's social isolation.

2. Rises, falls and changes

A close look at the social composition of neighbourhoods at any given moment will very probably reveal the existence, alongside other types of communities, of neighbourhoods whose composition comes close to one of the types described above, thus forming a scenario which reflects the spatial projection of the heterogeneity of poverty. What differs in each case is the relative weight of each category, since their growth depends on different combinations of forms of development, degrees of urbanization and types of welfare systems. Each neighbourhood changes its composition at a different rate, but in an ongoing manner, as a result of the households that leave and others that arrive and the economic units that disappear and the new ones that are set up in the area, so that in each period a snapshot of any neighbourhood with a few years of existence behind it would reveal traces of different stages in its formation, of the way the territory was ordered and occupied, of the types of families that predominated, of economic activities that no longer exist or are on the way out, and of successive configurations of social structures that dominated socialization in their time and put their stamp on it.

In short, at least three working hypotheses may be derived from the foregoing discussion, and their verification could make possible some interesting advances in our understanding of the processes of residential segregation and their connection with social isolation. The first hypothesis is that the heterogeneity of poverty is projected into the urban space, so that there is a tendency among poor households to group together according to the nature of their stocks of assets. The second, which is the underlying assumption throughout the foregoing analysis, is that the new economic and social setting creates conditions that favour the growth of neighbourhoods whose characteristics come very close to those of an urban ghetto: i.e., neighbourhoods where people stay because they do not have the resources to go elsewhere and are joined by people who have had to leave other areas of the city, while those who are in a position to do so move out. The third hypothesis is that the households in such neighbourhoods display the highest levels of social isolation: i.e., the weakest links with the market, with the various State services, and with those segments of the urban population whose behaviour is guided by mainstream patterns of norms and values.
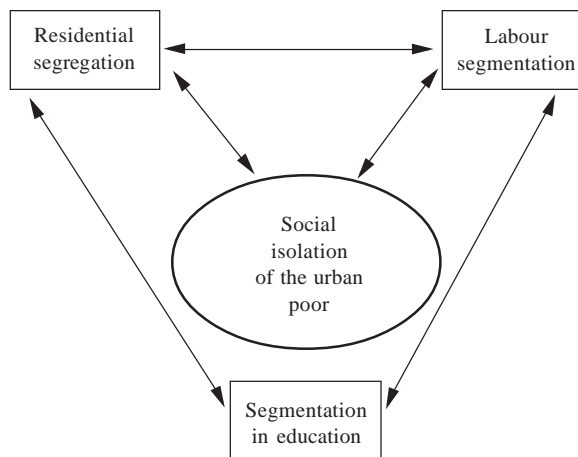
V

Segmentation and social isolation

Although such an assertion must be verified in each specific case, it is very likely that, as shown in figure 1, the three types of segmentation referred to above strengthen each other in terms of the progressive isolation of the urban poor. Thus, the increase in the disparities in income and working conditions due to the current way the economy functions will tend to be reflected in the segmentation of services and polarization of the distribution of classes in the urban space, while the subcultural formations which usually accompany the consolidation of the residential segregation of the poor will in turn strengthen the processes of differentiation of income and segmentation of services. As the disparities between socially homogeneous neighbourhoods grow deeper, they will be reflected in differences in the quality of the infrastructure in the areas of services, education, health, transport, public security and recreational and leisure facilities, all of which will increase the social isolation of the urban poor and reduce their possibilities of finding a stable rather than a precarious place in the labour market.

In spite of this hypothetical interdependence between the degrees of segmentation in the above-mentioned potential areas of interaction, however, the study of each of them separately has at least two advantages. The first is precisely the fact of presenting these supposed relations of interdependence as hypotheses, thus furthering the identification of the mechanisms behind the propagation of the segmentation effects from one area to another. The second is the fact of causing the deployment of the whole range of instruments available to the State for dealing with the problems of integration of the urban poor, which would provide a variety of alternatives for impeding these transmission mechanisms so as to reduce, slow down or offset segmentation in the other areas.

Thus, depending on the nature of the national socio-cultural matrices and the conceptions of citizenship guiding the State's actions, even if there is an increase in the segmentation and precariousness of the labour market, policies can be adopted to reduce its impact on differences in income and prevent those disparities from being reflected at the territorial level

FIGURE 1

Social isolation of the urban poor and the different types of social segmentation

Assets affected:
— Individual social capital.
— Collective social capital.
— Civic capital.

in residential segregation. The State can also incentivate or disincentivate universality in the use of basic services such as transport, public security, health and education by making greater or lesser efforts to maintain their quality and by leaving the possibility of acquiring those services on the market more or less subject to the free play of supply and demand: options which have obvious implications for the likelihood of loss of interest in them by the middle and upper classes. This seems to have been the position taken by some social-democratic welfare regimes. In the case of Sweden, for example, some authors consider that although the growing social and economic polarization between neighbourhoods, which began to show itself in the early 1990s, has weakened the spaces for interaction among the classes, its effects on the social isolation of the poor seem to have been effectively offset by a Welfare State which, although plagued by financial problems, continues to maintain generalized coverage of services which provide suitable levels of protection and security for all social classes (see Borgegard, Anderson and Hjort, 1998).

VI

Some mechanisms which help to further heighten the social isolation of the poor

1. The growing independence of the effects of marginal subcultures on the behaviour of the isolated urban poor

Whatever their causes, once concentrations of poor people involuntarily isolated from the mainstream of society spring up, this creates fertile ground for the emergence and perpetuation of marginal subcultures, since the reactions aroused in the rest of society by the forms of conduct guided and governed by those subcultures promote and heighten the social isolation of the urban poor.

There are many examples of the operation of such vicious circles of expanded reproduction of social isolation, and most of them were activated once public opinion branded the neighbourhoods in question as spaces where the "dangerous classes" congregate. Let us merely mention three of the best-known examples of this: i) their inhabitants –especially the younger ones– are usually victims of "statistical discrimination", whereby simply hearing where they live is enough to make some employers reject their job applications; ii) households which are in a position to do so move to other areas, thus depriving the neighbourhood of possible role models and of people with "voice" who could have helped to transmit the normative patterns of mainstream society and provide useful contacts and information for obtaining jobs and/or access to services; and iii) people avoid entering such neighbourhoods, thus reducing the frequency with which some new residents are able to keep in contact with their friends and relations who live in other areas of the city (see Zaffaroni, 1999).

Marginal subcultures are made up of a wide range of patterns of conduct and norms that gradually build up around an awareness of the adversities shared by a population with serious material wants and precarious living conditions, of the barriers to social mobility, and of the need to find common bases on which to build or rebuild their self-esteem, which has been seriously damaged by the experience of exclusion. As already noted, the lack of stable formal employment slowly but surely causes the world of work to lose its role as a central referent for the organization of daily life, for the provision of discipline and regularity, and for the coherent formation of expectations and the gradual achievement of goals, while the progressive isolation tends increasingly to reduce the clarity of the signals (if any) from mainstream society which point the way for unskilled persons to obtain decent living conditions. All this gradually increases the receptivity of the isolated urban poor to other normative proposals that arise in their immediate environment, some of which include guidelines that do not reject the idea of using illegal means to attain the elusive goals in terms of consumption, while the social isolation inhibits the effectiveness of possible initiatives that could counter these tendencies by appealing to the norms and values of mainstream society.

If we go a little deeper into the consequences of these processes, it can be argued that isolation helps to deplete the stock of assets of the poor inasmuch as it affects their capacity to accumulate social capital. There are at least three reasons for this. Firstly, isolation reduces the opportunities for mobilizing for one's own benefit the goodwill of persons who are in a position to provide work or information and contacts on employment opportunities, training facilities and strategies for making better use of the existing services, while the resources circulating internally within segregated neighbourhoods tend to be superfluous and ineffective. Secondly, there is less exposure to role models –that is to say, individuals who, because they have attained a good standard of living through their determination, talent and discipline, can serve as positive examples of the association between effort and achievement– and this reduces the attractiveness of the legitimate channels of social mobility as ways of satisfying the consumption aspirations of the poor. Thirdly, there is a reduction in the opportunities for sharing with other classes the kind of everyday experiences which nurture and preserve a belief in a common collective destiny and which are the basis for feelings of citizenship. The idea that one has the same rights and enjoys the same benefits of the universal principle of equality and freedom in social life may

seem a futile fiction when every day one is acutely aware of one's remoteness from mainstream society.

The marginal subcultures which spring up among the urban poor must therefore be considered as something different from what Lewis called "the culture of poverty", which may be summarized as meaning a legacy of values and norms whose knowledge helps to understand the persistence of poverty. Instead, the emphasis in this case should rather be on the idea that marginal subcultures are a reaction to structural conditioning factors deriving from the functioning of the market, the State and society: that is to say, that they are one of the results of the progressive buildup of adaptive responses to a mass of negative factors that go to make up a precarious and segregated environment.

From the point of view of those interested in devising ways out of these situations, the most important question is that of the capacity of these subcultures to keep on influencing the behaviour of young people after the main causes which gave rise to them have disappeared. In other words, how far will a significant improvement in economic activity make it possible to bring into the market unskilled young people who are currently trapped in a subculture which does not believe that there is a link between effort and achievements through work.

William J. Wilson is optimistic with regard to this situation in the United States, and considers that a change in employment opportunities could wipe out the effect of the immediate social environment. However, one should not underestimate the burden of the structural chains which transmit those effects from one generation to the next and which would appear to reduce the stock of assets with which poor people living in segregated neighbourhoods could face the challenge of taking advantage of possible new employment opportunities.

In an exhaustive review of the United States literature on the effects of neighbourhoods on a number of types of behaviour considered to present risks, Jencks and Mayer (1990) found abundant evidence of the effects of segregated and homogeneously poor neighbourhood contexts on educational performance, on types of behaviour associated with addiction and crime, and on adolescent motherhood. Furthermore, in a study recently carried out in Montevideo, the author of the present article tested the effect of the social composition of the neighbourhood on educational performance, adolescent motherhood, and the success of young people in the labour market, as measured by their hourly wages. The results of that study tend to confirm the importance of the degree of homogeneity of the social composition of the neighbourhood as a determining factor in the emergence of high-risk forms of behaviour and in the level of achievements in the world of work. The risk component in the types of behaviour analysed lies precisely in their capacity to act as barriers to the accumulation of the assets needed in order to take advantage of the opportunities that may present themselves in the market, in society and in the State (Kaztman, coord., 1999).

2. The desertion of public spaces by the globalized middle classes

Societies may be distinguished by the type of distributive rules embodied in their basic structures (market, property rights, the State, etc.). Those rules, which profoundly affect the living conditions of the population, are reflected in individual attitudes of greater or lesser toleration of inequality. These institutional forms, together with their corresponding mental attitudes, are vital elements of the socio-cultural matrix characterizing each society.

The notion of tolerance of inequality helps to understand the stability of some indicators of equity or inequity.[14] These are "underground" structures which, when the indicators of inequality rise by amounts that exceed tolerable levels, spring into action to set off actions of solidarity which tend to restore the balance. These actions may range from electoral support or initiatives designed to protect the weakest and maintain the quality of services of universal coverage to a willingness to pay taxes to finance redistributive measures.[15]

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[14] In a study which compares data on income distribution in different countries and different periods it is claimed that income inequality is relatively stable over countries and time, unlike the behaviour of GDP growth rates, which change rapidly and are not at all persistent (Li, Squire and Zou, 1998).

[15] Barry (1998, p. 23) argues that the willingness to pay high taxes not only makes it possible to raise the quality of collective services but at the same time reduces the resources available to the higher-income groups for the private acquisition of services, thus discouraging their desertion from public spaces. Of course, the contribution by the middle and upper classes to the maintenance of public spaces which make possible interaction between the classes is not motivated solely by their aversion to inequality. It is also due to their fear of the negative effects which usually accompany deterioration in the quality of life of the masses and of the public services they can use. Among those effects are political instability, a decline in the legitimacy of institutions –and consequent difficulty on the part of the elites in mobilizing collective support for proposed changes– and, increasingly, the effects of public insecurity on their quality of life.

Aversion to inequality derives from the degree of sympathy of the better-off classes for those who have less and from a feeling of moral obligation to them. These mental contents lose their vigour if they are not periodically renewed through informal contacts between persons of different socio-economic situation, and the more intense and frequent such interaction is, the stronger they will be. The area where these encounters take place is the public space (transport, public squares, schools and hospitals, football grounds, bars, beaches, mass events, the street, etc.). Both residential segregation and the segmentation of services reduce these spaces, thus weakening the structural base for that capacity for sympathy and sense of moral obligation and thereby affecting the levels of toleration of inequality and making the homeostatic mechanisms less effective.[16]

High levels of refusal to tolerate inequality also operate as mechanisms that cause the middle and upper classes to control their consumption themselves, especially in the case of those types of consumption which cause irritating and highly visible differences compared with the other classes. These mechanisms come into conflict with the expectations aroused by exposure –inevitable in globalization processes– to the lifestyles of their peers in the developed countries. In so far as the resources needed to satisfy these new consumption aspirations compete with those needed to satisfy the demands of the poor, a widening gap between the consumption patterns of the different classes will be accompanied by loss of interest on the part of the well-off classes in the situation and fate of the less-privileged sectors.[17]

Social solidarity mechanisms are usually not seriously affected by the isolation of a small sector of society which, because of its wealth, has always used private sources of services, but rifts in the social fabric begin to be obvious when a substantial proportion of the middle classes stops using public services.

VII

Final remarks

"Seduced and abandoned", the metaphor contained in the title of this document, seeks to highlight one of the special features of present-day urban poverty in many countries of the region: the growing proportion of households which, after having incorporated expectations of achieving full citizenship through work and developed consumption aspirations typical of today's society, witness the progressive weakening of their links with the means of obtaining the resources that would enable them to attain those goals. They have been seduced by a modern society in which they can only participate symbolically, since they cannot overcome by their own means the obstacles standing in the way of the corresponding material participation.

The approach taken here to the analysis of the nature and determinants of these phenomena, which might be termed a "structural" approach, differs from other ways of analysing urban poverty because it lays stress on the location of these categories within the social structure of the cities: i.e., on the existence and quality of the links established with the structure of opportunities controlled by the State, the market and other institutional elements of society. From this standpoint, it is important to know the manner of operation of the areas of interaction which can act as a source of the assets needed for social interaction in each historical stage, of the relations that are formed among these areas, and also of the behaviour of other social actors, especially the logic underlying the decisions taken by the middle classes to either foster and promote public spaces and services or on the contrary to abandon them (Hirschman's "voice" and "exit").

I have devoted particular attention to discussion of the problems of residential segregation, partly because I think this is a dimension which has been neglected in the social agenda, and partly also because I believe that neighbourhoods with a high proportion

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[16] These are a set of self-regulation phenomena which maintain relative stability in the properties and composition of the internal environment of an organism.

[17] In small and culturally very homogeneous countries, there is a climate of social nearness which tends to inhibit excessive growth of the gap between the elites and the rest of society, since in these cases the community has a greater capacity for expressing its disapproval of those who stray too far from the habits and lifestyles of the majority.

of households suffering from material wants and frustrated aspirations provide fertile ground for the appearance of high-risk types of behaviour and marginal subcultures whose emergence raises further barriers –which can often only be overcome with difficulty or at a very high cost for society as a whole– to the accumulation of needed assets and thus strengthens the tendencies towards the social isolation of the urban poor.

Since this approach is as yet only at an embryonic stage, the main suggestions made in this stage are of a largely theoretical nature. Thus, if we acknowledge that the study of the problems of residential segregation and the segmentation of services is a promising way of advancing in our understanding of the barriers to social equity, it can be concluded that there are various areas which warrant closer study and that several of the hypotheses put forward in this document need to be tested. Even so, the progress made so far indicates that a set of general guidelines can be proposed for improving public policies designed to deal with the root causes of the production and reproduction of urban poverty.

Firstly, it can be said that, whatever the form assumed by residential segregation in the cities, its consequences for the isolation of the urban poor seem to be sufficiently important to assert that those responsible for territorial planning should not leave that process to market forces impelled essentially by real estate considerations, in which case the income inequalities prevailing in the cities would tend to split up the urban space into neighbourhoods inhabited solely by people of the same class, where the spatial polarization of classes would act to permanently cement inequalities and thus prevent any subsequent return to more equitable situations.

In this respect, in order to identify the best practices to follow it would be desirable to make a detailed study of the actions taken in countries which have given priority to these problems on their social agendas, especially those countries with social-democratic welfare regimes which have shown themselves to have the most effective social integration policies. In Sweden, for example, even though there has been an increase in the indices of income concentration the effects this has had on residential segregation have been minimized by government policies aimed at mixing together different types of households in integrated apartment buildings. Similar results have been obtained through initiatives designed to equalize the rents for dwellings which are of the same level but are located in different neighbourhoods (Borgegard, Anderson and Hjort,

1998). Generally speaking, policies designed to de-mercantilize housing through rent subsidies or by facilitating ownership by lower-income sectors, along with other initiatives aimed at securing greater housing integration, can legitimately be considered an integral part of welfare policies (Murie, 1998). It should be borne in mind that the State can also withdraw from this area too or, as in the cases of Chile or South Africa, apply policies deliberately designed to promote residential segregation (Christopher, 1998; Portes, 1989).

Pressures to reduce the fiscal deficit and balance the public finances, associated with efforts to improve competitiveness, can also constraint the options open to the State for halting or offsetting processes of residential segregation. The pursuit of financial balance and the consequent need to maximize the use of public resources incline the State to concentrate its low-cost dwelling construction efforts in the cheapest urban or peripheral land or to legalize the unauthorized occupation of land by poor people trying to solve their housing problems who set up makeshift settlements and then press for their official recognition.

The slowness with which the decay of the multi-class spaces for informal socialization becomes evident in the cities means that the consequences of this process for social integration are often not noticed by citizens at large, and in any case the effects of these spaces as an integration factor and as sources for the renovation of the reserves of selflessness, solidarity and rejection of inequality are usually underestimated. In this respect, as Caldeira (1996) points out, although the idea of a city open to all, like the notion of citizenship, is never completely fulfilled, it nevertheless acts as an ideal that legitimizes the demands of excluded groups for incorporation.

The aim of strengthening social integration in the cities through the promotion of multi-class public spaces might also seem to be beyond the possibilities of State policies, partly because the resources needed for it are usually competing with those required for other priority items on the social agenda for poverty relief. This perception is certainly in keeping with the realities of many of the big cities of the region, where residential segregation, the segmentation of services and the abandonment by the middle class of public places for multi-class informal socialization is so advanced that the possibilities of halting or offsetting these processes in the short or medium term may seem quite unrealistic. Even so, these circumstances should stimulate rather than discourage such action, since the

alternative is the progressive worsening of exclusion, with unforeseeable consequences for the social order and civilized coexistence. Indeed, those consequences break out sooner or later, sometimes in a violent, anomic and unexpected manner, through the socially disruptive correlates of poverty marginalized by the buildup of privations and progressive isolation from the mainstream patterns of society. The response of the middle classes is to stay away from the public places and services used by the "dangerous classes", whose forms of behaviour, cultivated in isolation and generalized precariousness, seem outlandish and abnormal to the other classes. This desertion by the middle classes merely heightens the deterioration of public spaces, thus further narrowing the field of experiences that can stimulate empathy with the less privileged sectors and feelings of moral obligation towards them, ultimately raising the threshold of toleration of inequality. Familiarity with the experience accumulated regarding the consequences of neglecting these problems in the big cities can be particularly useful when designing preventive measures for intermediate-sized cities.

As already noted earlier in this article, policies to promote the use of public spaces, measures to prevent the segmentation of basic services and actions in the field of town planning are among the many ways in which it would be possible to promote multi-class socialization and offset the powerful tendencies towards a retreat into private worlds and isolation of the different classes. In many of these fields, what is needed is not so much specific policies as the incorporation of an approach into sectoral programmes which gives preference to all the initiatives that could foster more frequent and better-quality interaction between people who are not otherwise equal.

There are any number of examples of successful actions in this respect which could provide a very valuable information base for countries which are about to face these problems. There are many social integration initiatives which have been carried out in the cities of North America and Europe which, either through actions specifically designed for this purpose or as approaches kept in mind in the formulation of sectoral policies, affect town planning measures, the selection of beneficiaries for subsidized housing projects, defence of the quality of public services, and the promotion of spaces to encourage informal contacts between different classes. Careful study of these initiatives would make it possible to select those best fitted to the resources and special characteristics of each society.

(Original: Spanish)

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