

Changing Dynamics of Residential Segregation in Lima 1993 - 2007: Increasing Levels, Durability, but Mixed Effects on Life-Chances

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In Latin America, residential segregation started to be studied since the 1990s. Scholars now recognize that this phenomenon contributes to the reproduction of poverty and exclusion. However, case and comparative studies are still few. About its relation with the urban form, we know that for the period of urbanization by migration (from the 1940s to the 1980s) residential segregation occurred at a “great scale” while migrant-poor population concentrated in the peripheries (Sabatini 2003). Still residential segregation was lower than in US cities, both by ethnicity (Telles 1992, 2006) and by socio-economic level (Portes et al. 2006; Roberts and Wilson 2009). It also has been found that residential segregation in Latin America has less pernicious effects than in the US since poor neighborhoods showed high levels of social cohesion (Roberts 1978, 2011). But it also has been found that, since the 1990s, a new model of “small scale segregation” overlaps the traditional model of “great scale segregation”, being its main incarnations the mushrooming of gated-communities in poor areas of the city (Caldeira 2000; Sabatini 2003).

About the effects of residential segregation on the life-chances of individuals, Katzman (2001) argues that the “social isolation of the poor” inhibits their opportunities and marginalizes them. However, what we know about the way how this occurs is less clear and fragmented. In general terms, though we know that poverty becomes more heterogeneous (Salcedo 2012), a segment of this sector shows a tendency to become “ghettoized” (Auyero 2000, 2011; Salcedo 2012; Sabatini et al. 2013). Indeed, we know (based on studies on different Latin American cities) that contemporary residential segregation is associated with the weakening of social cohesion in poor neighborhoods (Roberts 2011), with the smaller size and extension of social networks (Marques 2012), with higher exposure to violence (Auyero 2000; Perlman 2011; Roberts 2011), and with negative stigmas associated to the place of residence (Caldeira 2000; Perlman 2011; Sabatini et al. 2013).

In this paper I explore the degree and durability of residential segregation, and its relationship with some dimensions of life-chances of individuals in Metropolitan Lima, Peru. Based on longitudinal analysis of data at the district level from the 1993 and 2007 censuses, I find that: 1) Residential segregation in Metropolitan Lima has increased for groups of all socio-economic levels. Also there is evidence that districts of Lima are becoming less diverse revealing a trend in which great areas of Metropolitan Lima are becoming more homogeneous. 2) Residential segregation not only has increased in the period of study, but it is also durable. In this sense, though I do not have data at the block or zone level, it can be argued that the most important trend in Lima is not (as some authors point for the case of other Latin American cities) the rise of small scale segregation, but the consolidation of great scale segregation. However, 3) data shows that population that lives in districts with a high concentration of poverty do not necessarily live in worst conditions than

population who live in districts with a lower concentration of poverty. Evidence on this respect is mixed: in some aspects (education and health), higher concentration of poverty does not seem to have significant negative effects; but in other aspects (employment and security), it has significant negative effects.

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