A Theory of Socio-spatial Integration: Problems, Policies and Concepts from a US Perspective

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Abstract

Discussions about socio-spatial integration in the US have been primarily focused on research into residential segregation. The treatment of these two concepts as opposites has had two consequences. First, most policies for integration have been based solely on concepts of segregation. Second, the intensive criticism directed at integration flows more from those policies than from its conceptual meaning. This article develops a framework for socio-spatial integration. It does this first by outlining an understanding of segregation and the complexities of its treatment, then by making a distinction between policy applications and the conceptual meaning of integration. This review shows that, rather than suiting a linear approach, socio-spatial integration can be expressed as a multidimensional relationship that may work independently and at different scales. Socio-spatial integration is then exposed as the opposite of social exclusion, of which physical proximity between different social groups is just one dimension. Two lines of research are proposed: first, a repositioning of integration as a progressive aspiration and a critique of naturalist conceptions; second, a balancing of the weight of spatial proximity among the different dimensions of integration.

Introduction

Much has been said about residential segregation and poverty concentration in the US, and very little about integration. This is ironic as the majority of the policies promoting integration have been based on what is assumed in the studies of segregated poverty. Further, most criticism of integration flows more from its policy applications than from its conceptual meaning. Should one assume integration and segregation are antonyms? As this review argues, they are far from being direct opposites. Nevertheless, a substantial conceptual understanding of segregation is needed to distinguish and restate a strong concept of socio-spatial integration. Thus, the purpose of this article is to develop a useful framework for conceiving socio-spatial integration, first outlining an understanding of segregation and the complexities of its treatment, and then making a distinction between the policy applications of integration and its conceptual meaning. It is important to recognize, however, that the argument here is centered on the US case and that no generalizations to other contexts are claimed.

With that purpose in mind, I have organized this article in four parts. First, I outline a framework of residential segregation focused on the usefulness and necessity of

integration for certain groups. Second, I present some strategies practiced in the US, and a series of arguments for and against integration. Third, I try to define socio-spatial integration from a broad perspective, attempting to showcase different meanings, applications and measures, thus developing a multidimensional conception. Finally, I stress the necessity of redistributive policies, distinguish some problems with the literature and propose two lines for future research.

From segregation to integration

Segregation can be defined as a reflection of social causes (e.g. prejudice, discrimination, a sense of superiority) with physical manifestations (i.e. denial of access to space, spatial concentration) and social consequences (e.g. social dislocations) — in other words: the formation and maintenance of a ghetto (Marcuse, 2005). Many authors have defined ghettos as involuntary spatial forms of concentrated subordination (Wirth, 1927; Marcuse, 1997; Wacquant, 1997), but they are also a result of the need for integrity and continuity for communities (Wirth, 1927).

In fact, the literature has shown three major types of segregation (Cutler *et al.*, 1999; Adelman and Gocker, 2007): (1) segregation as port of entry for immigrants; (2) segregation as a centralized or collective reaction, related to neighborhood hostility, discrimination in the housing market and the role of the state in exclusionary urban development; and (3) segregation as decentralized discrimination in terms of market preferences (or socioeconomic segregation).

Causes of segregation

The structural causes of segregation, and particularly of the formation of ghettos in the US, have been presented as a function of large migrations, institutional practices, private behaviors and explicit public policies and interventions (Massey and Denton, 1993; Hirsch, 1998). Some research has also emphasized the out-migration of middle-class neighbors (Wilson, 1987; Marcuse, 1997, but questioned by Massey and Denton, 1993). Beyond this, Wacquant (2008) has stressed more than anything else the disappearance of a minimal social state as a source of marginalization. In addition, growing income disparities and structural changes in the economy are said to influence the bifurcation of the middle class, the so-called employment mismatch, and interactions between the labor and housing markets (Wilson, 1987; Massey and Eggers, 1990; Jargowsky, 1996). More recently, the global city literature has stressed a strong relationship between economic restructuring, and class and spatial polarizations. In large US cities this has been expressed through increasing concentration of minorities, expansion of new forms of poverty and the growth of exclusionary areas (Sassen, 1990; 1991). But segregation has also been portrayed in relation to more complex sociological characteristics, which I classify into six themes: (1) metropolitan mindsets, (2) resistance in the form of defensible spaces, (3) the 'identity-differentiation' paradox, (4) perceptions of disorder and the culture of fear, (5) individual actions related to aggregate results, and (6) dynamic factors.

First, the explanation of segregation in terms of metropolitan mindsets derives from Simmel's work and relates to a blasé attitude flowing from individuality and the money economy (Simmel, 2005). The urban personality acquires a 'schizoid' character, distanced from social relationships and expression, as a result of multiplied interaction, competition, aggrandizement and mutual exploitation (Wirth, 1938). That attitude is said to generate a tension between trust and paranoia, between doubt based on perceived risks and trust for the maintenance of social order (Karp *et al.*, 1991).

Second, segregation as resistance in the form of a defensible space refers to the rejection by communities of intrusions of inferior status groups (Burgess, 1928). Individuals become attached to their homes as to a secular version of the old spiritual refuges (Sennett, 1992) and seek new ideals of family life. There is an emphasis on the

maintenance of identity and the superiority of the established, through the exclusion and stigmatization of outsiders (Elias and Scotson, 1994).

Third, the 'identity-differentiation' paradox (or 'urban adolescence') poses one of the most interesting explanations for the actions of certain communities. When a group identity is fragile and relationships are unstable, insecurity grows and identity is built against an 'other' to define a separation and self-affirmation of superiority. In other words, a dialectical relation develops that leads to belongingness or exclusion (Sennet, 1970; Merton, 1972; Sandercock, 2003; Marcuse, 2005).

Fourth, as regards disorder and fear, one of the main ideas has been the 'broken windows' theory. This theory points out that minor forms of public disorder lead to serious crimes and to a downward spiral of urban decay (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004). The perception of disorder and the culture of fear are said to be larger than reality and to grow without limits. And this unlimited exaggeration sometimes brings about a subsequent exodus of upper-status residents (Low, 2001; Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004).

Fifth, some arguments challenge the direct relation between individual actions and aggregate results and, thus, the 'natural' character of segregation. Schelling (1971a) has been emphatic in asserting that there is no correspondence between individual behavior and the aggregate results of segregation. The consequences are aggregate but the decisions are individual. This means that individual motivations can be less extreme than the observable patterns, and that people do not necessarily like the cumulative results of segregation (Schelling, 1971b). Besides, the position that segregation is a 'natural' occurrence (Park, 1926) overlooks the intentional actions of public and private institutions, and has been widely criticized (Bell and Newby, 1972; Saunders, 1986; Flanagan, 1993; Gottdiener and Hutchison, 1994).

And finally, the phenomenon of segregation has been understood from dynamic perspectives. Here, the mobility of groups and investment decisions play a central role. Two models have been created to explain dynamic transformations of neighborhoods: the invasion–succession model and the tipping-point model. Invasion–succession refers to the arrival of lower-status groups in sufficient numbers to cause the departure of upper-status groups, and the tipping-point involves a threshold of demographic composition at which diversity is no longer bearable for established residents (Wolf, 1963; Schelling, 1971a; Schwirian, 1983; Gotham, 2002).

Consequences of segregation

Research on the structural consequences of segregation has been concerned with the formation of ghettos and the concept of the 'underclass'. This concept refers to a reality that, according to Wilson (1987) is not well captured by the term 'lower class'.[1] Many studies associate segregation with the rise of social dislocations such as school dropouts, children born out of wedlock, drug and alcohol abuse, welfare dependency and low attachment to work (Wilson, 1987; Jargowsky, 1997). Other authors emphasize problems like economic disadvantage, lack of political participation, unequal access to education, erosion of the economic base, lack of spatial mobility, activity segregation and consequent lack of social mobility (Western, 1973; Massey and Denton, 1993; Bolt *et al.*, 1998). High-poverty neighborhoods are said to suffer from the magnification of poverty due to its concentration, as well as from abandonment, and cyclical decay (Jargowsky, 1997; Adelman and Gocker, 2007). Jargowsky (1997) argues that these neighborhoods present a certain immunity to policy interventions, a culture that stresses short-term goals, a lack of role models and stabilizing institutions, underfunded schools, and a reduced access to new jobs at the metropolitan level.

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1   Nevertheless, Wacquant (2008) claims that 'underclass' is not an analytical concept, because it responds to a tendency to exoticize the ghetto, from the dominant view, creating a myth or a folk concept.

The notion of 'neighborhood effects' is used here to portray how poverty concentration influences deviant behaviors. Galster and Killen (1995), for instance, maintain that social networks and economic conditions in the environment affect young people's intellectual development, educational attainment, marriage and fertility, labor market participation and earnings, criminal behavior and drug use. And this concentration of social disorder is believed to promote psychological and physical withdrawal. That is, neighbors are perceived as threats rather than as supports (Massey and Denton, 1993). Massey and Denton (1993) even affirm that ghettos produce a counterculture of failure, an oppositional culture that may reinforce further disorder.[2]

But this normative concentration on social pathologies is criticized for discarding the understanding of the rationality of subsistence strategies. Wacquant (1997) contends that these conceptions of the consequences of segregation suffer from two related problems. First, ghettos are assumed to be disorganized social forms, disregarding existing institutions, stressing the inevitable outcomes of city growth, and omitting active forces of segregation. And second, the dominant view of ghettos leads to excessive attention to social pathologies and the reproduction of stereotypes, disregarding the fact that many forms of social deviation are actually forms of local social rationality in the face of real-life constraints.

Several authors in fact find that segregation brings some benefits or advantages, particularly in the form of social capital for small groups. Suttles (1972) portrays segregation as beneficial in terms of the additional mechanisms of order, avoidance of conflicts, restrictions on association, and decrease of anonymity that flow from it. Furthermore, Bolt *et al*. (1998) describe three types of advantages from segregation. First, it helps in the development of a local culture and social networks of support. Second, it facilitates ethnic entrepreneurship. And third, it creates a base for direct political influence at the local level, even without voting.

Segregation in different contexts

My contention is that two major structural factors distinguish residential segregation in different contexts: (1) the social stratification of each society and the cultural ethos evolving from it, and (2) the characteristics of the housing system. Social stratification relates to the number, strength and importance of horizontal and vertical lines of inequality in each society (race, ethnicity, class and so on), which create a system of social relationships. The housing system covers the particularities of each country or city in terms of mobility, the share of new versus used housing, the proportion of owners and renters, and the tenure and policies for affordable housing. It is important to mention, in addition, that the characteristics of, and role played by, the state in each society have a crucial influence on both social stratification and housing systems.

It is interesting to note that both in Europe and in Latin America, levels of segregation have been found to be more moderate than in the US (Telles, 1992; Peach, 1996; 1999; Sabatini *et al*., 2001; Musterd, 2005). In the case of Europe, there has been a more recent experience with immigration than in the US. Immigration has also been less massive, come from several different origins, received different constitutional treatment, and created cultural rather than racial divides (Peach, 1999). Low levels of segregation are usually associated with strongly redistributive welfare states (that also cover the housing issue) and low levels of social inequality (Musterd, 2005). Moreover, several categories created in the US are not observed with such strength in Europe. First, there has been no

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2 However, Small (2008) has recently questioned some common ideas of the ghetto in the US, emphasizing four factors that changed poor black neighborhoods in the 1990s and 2000s: the unacknowledged heterogeneity of poor black neighborhoods, the non-existence of popular stereotypes in most poor black neighborhoods, the variety of state institutions deployed in the ghetto, and the failure of the idea of 'involuntary segregation'.

direct white flight since the depopulation of large cities preceded the massive inflow of immigrants (Peach, 1999). And second, there has not been much evidence of neighborhood effects, due to the leveling role of the state regarding local opportunities (Musterd, 2005; Kauppinen, 2007; Oberwittler, 2007).

In Latin America, although the strict separation between the Spanish or Portuguese descendants and the rest (natives, mestizos, mulattoes etc.) was initiated during colonialism and institutionalized then within a class system (Beals, 1953), the present levels of segregation are lower than US hyper-segregation and are thought to be more class- than race-based. These low levels could be explained by a relatively more benevolent Catholic ethos, intensive interbreeding and the lack of clear racial borders, and a less dynamic housing system with a majority of homeowners. Despite the relatively lower level of segregation, however, there has been an increase in gated communities in recent decades (Roitman, 2011), and a worsening of social problems for extremely poor areas. Indeed, important neighborhood effects have been found (Sabatini *et al.*, 2001) due to the impact of neoliberalism in the spatial correlation between poor populations and poor services and opportunities.

Partial conclusions from the study of segregation

These arguments suggest several ideas that can be useful when elaborating a concept of socio-spatial integration. First, segregation has been treated by some influential authors as a natural (Park, 1926) or an inevitable phenomenon (Gans, 1994).[3] Consequently, physical proximity between different social groups has been portrayed as impossible. These stances have been criticized for being ideological conceptions of market and state practices, concealing racial and ethnic prejudices, economic interests and neoliberal administrative practices. Here, Wacquant is emphatic when affirming that ghettos are 'political creatures of the state, and not the product of some ecological dynamic creating "mismatches" or of the free choice, culture or behavior of its residents' (Wacquant, 2008: 80).

Second, some benefits have been observed in aggregations of particular social groups. In this case, segregation is understood as a concentration of social capital for the advancement of a social group, as is the case with immigrants' ports of entry. That is why it is understandable that some progressive authors deplore mere physical proximity as a solution, considering it as ineffective or too difficult (Young, 1999; Sandercock, 2003).

Third, one cannot simply equate segregation and ghettos to explain poverty, neither its causes nor its consequences. While segregation has social causes, its manifestation as spatial enclosure results in a magnification of poverty, as some famous and large-scale works have proven (Wilson, 1987; Massey and Denton, 1993; Jargowsky, 1997). In other words, segregation is an intervening variable in the production of poverty. This suggests that if we treat just the social causes of poverty, we overlook the intensifying effect of physical concentration. In turn, if we deal only with the spatial enclosure, we would be treating only the intervening variable, not the causes.

Finally, segregation is influenced not only by structural factors that force spatial positions, but also by complex individual and group behaviors: urban personality, attachment, identity, differentiation, perceptions of disorder and so on. Thus, the treatment of segregation should not be focused merely in terms of location, but in terms of a more complex sociology of place that includes human interactions and collective constructions.

3 Herbert Gans, among various authors, believes that ghettos are inevitable when poverty and discrimination are not abolished.

Policy applications for integration in the US

The Cambridge Dictionary's chapter of 'American English' defines integration as the 'action that causes (an organization or group) to bring into it people, especially of a different race, who have been kept separated previously, or to cause such a separation to end' (Cambridge University Press, 2010: American English). This implies that the persistent experience of racial segregation and the different attempts to counteract it have opened up the space for a particular definition. Indeed, the efforts to promote integration in the US have been primarily centered on racial segregation and, secondarily, on the deconcentration of poverty.

The primary framework was given by the Civil Rights Movement, in terms of urgent claims for integration in labor markets, schools, housing markets and public spaces. But in the urban debate, one of the main conceptualizations for integration efforts in the last decades came from the emphasis on role models: 'the very presence of such families [middle class] . . . provide[s] mainstream role models that help keep alive the perception that education is meaningful, that steady employment is a viable alternative to welfare, and that family stability is the norm, not the exception' (Wilson, 1987: 56).

Many integration programs have been applied since the late 1960s, and Goetz (2003) distinguishes two generations. The first generation, based on the 'open housing movement', aimed to reverse past discrimination and promote racial integration. The second generation, starting in the late 1970s, saw the treatment of poverty concentration as a 'new problem' and focused on mobility and the redevelopment of distressed public housing developments.

The Gautreaux Program was a first-generation initiative. It came about as a result of a court decision against the Chicago Housing Authority. This decision, mandated a metropolitan-wide remedy for the relocation of African-American public housing residents to areas of the region that were less than 30% black (*ibid.*). The evaluation was optimistic, pointing to positive relationships between relocated and original residents, gains in employment, education and safety, mobility from poor-segregated to middle-income-integrated neighborhoods, and 'second generation' effects for the movers' children. Furthermore, qualitative effects were highlighted regarding the sense of life-improvement, a new sense of self-efficacy, more know-how, less intimidation vis-à-vis white people, and behavioral modifications in exchange for community safety (Deluca and Rosenbaum, 2010). However, Gautreaux advocates recognize the political limits of implementing the strategy beyond this isolated case (Davis, 1993).

Next, Inclusionary Housing Programs have been established in some states to increase the supply of affordable housing and to foster economic and racial integration (Calavita and Grimes, 1998). The idea here is to involve private developers through special zoning ordinances, cost offsets and development incentives. This is made to include a 'fair share' of affordable and market-rate housing, and to open up exclusive suburbs. Some authors perceive this program as a 'unique non-forceful' means of integration, where the market is positively involved in the creation of diverse communities (Calavita and Grimes, 1998; Brunick, 2003). Nevertheless, some problems have been identified. First, the flexibility of local governments on the affordable housing quota has weakened the integration potential. Second, the maintenance of affordability in the units remains controversial. Third, not all developments are open to low-income housing. Fourth, the actual impetus of the real estate market comes from state mandates and not from their own principles. Finally, the units provided are still insufficient to meet housing needs (Calavita and Grimes, 1998).

The second generation is best known for Mixed-Income Housing strategies born out of the HOPE VI Program. This program is a major federal plan to revitalize the most distressed public housing projects and transform them into diverse neighborhoods. The major focuses here are the isolation and concentration of poverty, especially among the African-American population (Joseph, 2006). The development of Mixed-Income Housing has garnered increasing attention from scholars. Thus, its potential has been

framed on four main assumptions (*ibid*.): (1) the development of social networks and social capital; (2) the possibility of social control; (3) the modeling of culture and behavior; and (4) the improvement of the political economy of places. Many consider this to be the more controversial of the three programs presented, because of the shortages and delays in the replacement of public housing units (contributing to the deficit), insufficient resources to support residents during relocation, and a de facto practice of gentrification (Joseph, 2006; Smith, 2006; Greenbaum, 2008).

Arguments for and against integration

It is important to note, first, that the integration policies in the US have actually been policies of desegregation. That again poses an interesting conceptual paradox, because the same could be said inversely; policies of desegregation have been intended as integration policies. Then, one of the main arguments against integration efforts is the exclusive focus on locational changes. Many authors explain how simply providing spaces for diverse social groups to encounter one another will not make a substantial difference (Karp *et al*., 1991). They stress the importance of combining housing opportunities with investments in social services, education, transportation, job readiness, training and placement (Joseph, 2006).

A different type of criticism is outlined by Young (1999) with her idea of 'together-in-difference'. She points out the possibility of people coexisting in a common polity but locally differentiated into group affinities. In this case, the stress is on the movement of resources-to-people rather than people-to-resources (*ibid*.) and on the ability of households to reside in particular locations to maximize their opportunities (Galster and Killen, 1995). However, this ideal urban space of differentiation without bordered exclusion (Young, 1999) seems to overlook capitalist constraints of power and economic inequalities, highlighting only the positive outcomes of segregation. As I have mentioned, simply conceiving segregation as a result of the need for integrity and continuity for communities is to ignore its major social consequences.

Other arguments against integration highlight the previously mentioned contradictions. Integration has been for many people mere assimilation combined with the loosening of attachment to the original culture (Bolt, Ozuekren and Phillips, 2010). This has frequently involved the accommodation of blacks to the lifestyle of middle-class whites (Cashin, 2004; Goldberg, 1998). In the name of integration then, poor people have been forced — or at least expected to — assimilate external behaviors. In either case, the intention of integration programs has been questioned on the basis that assimilation is neither possible nor desirable.

Moreover, the policies of dispersion have represented atomization, and a breaking of ties that helps maintain unequal systems. This is more disintegration than integration. That line of questioning is the basis for social capital arguments around dispersal strategies. Authors have criticized dispersion, arguing that the supposed increase in social capital does not consider the social costs of moving. In many cases, social capital is diminished, not enhanced, because deconcentration is said to destroy the root systems of relationships that residents have with each other and with local institutions (Greenbaum, 2008).

Other authors have also deplored the need for social interaction in mixed environments as a means to deal with a generalized lack of communal ties. However, if one assumes that friendship does not work easily even in homogeneous settings, why could it work in forcedly integrated neighborhoods where a common ethos is more difficult to build? People do not need to seek unnecessary ties of friendship. But social interaction is still necessary for the achievement of higher goals: stability, coexistence and the negotiation of differences in relatively equal environments (Cashin, 2004).

Among the arguments for integration, Deluca and Rosenbaum (2010) argue that policies that have tried to improve the conditions of people remaining in the same neighborhood have often failed. More importantly, some authors have exposed 'keys' for

achieving integration based on particular urban and demographic characteristics, or as a result of persistent activism on the part of communities and individuals. Ingrid Gould Ellen (2000) has identified five factors that have favored stable racial integration in the US: the neighborhood's history of stability (as a self-perpetuating phenomenon), distance from main minority concentrations, percentage of rental housing, secure set of amenities, and the presence of African-American population in the metropolitan area as a whole.

From a more institutional perspective, Sheryll Cashin (2004) has illustrated two kinds of integrated communities: biracial middle-class enclaves and multicultural islands. Biracial middle-class enclaves are represented by older suburbs with highly educated neighbors articulated by a historical activism for diversity, and multicultural islands by neighborhoods that were inundated with a multicultural citizenship by circumstance, with an ample range of incomes and a diverse tenure, attracting middle-income inhabitants without causing gentrification. Cashin is emphatic about the importance of an institutional framework for intergroup communication in order to ensure coexistence and stability. In this case, as the inverse to homogenous exclusive communities, she highlights difference as the main feature in common.

A similar argument is put forward by Nyden *et al.* (1997), who offer two explanations of the emergence of integrated communities that, beyond the dynamics of tipping, are based on purposive decisions and actions. The first is the idea of 's*elf-consciously*' diverse neighborhoods, where they found active promotion of diversity through programs, organizations and social networks. And the second is '*laissez-faire*' integration, where diversity emerges by circumstances not attributable to intervention.

Integration policies in an international perspective

Integration policies have been applied in several European countries and in South Africa, among other places. In the case of Europe, despite the diversity of countries, most policies have failed to stop ethnic and socioeconomic segregation (Andersson *et al.*, 2010; Bolt, Phillips and van Kempen, 2010). Many policies have created further problems of disintegration (when they are based on dispersion) and constrained housing stocks (Bolt, Phillips and van Kempen, 2010; Phillips and Harrison, 2010). Similar to the US, the most excluded population has not benefited from integration policies but has suffered from them, and the middle class has been the point of reference for social and cultural norms (Blanc, 2010; Bacqué *et al.*, 2011). More generally, some authors have criticized social mixing's being used to facilitate control over the poor by atomization, and as a compensation for lack of integration at the national scale (Uitermark, 2003).

In the South African case, integration policies have marked a significant change from apartheid times, and in some places there is peaceful coexistence between different races (Lemanski, 2006a; 2006b). The processes of relocation have created new identities, sometimes making race less important than other factors such as the building of norms, housing politics, crime, legality and the like (Oldfield, 2004; Lemanski, 2006b). However, demographic mixing has masked a lack of social interaction and the persistent segregation of institutions and their practices (Lemanski, 2006a). In other words, physical desegregation is not leading directly to social integration. Besides, there is a growing tendency for more class- than race-based segregation in this new post-apartheid era (Lemanski, 2006b).

In more general terms, several authors have criticized the vast gap that exists between policy rhetoric and effective policy outcomes (Blanc, 2010; Bolt, Phillips and van Kempen, 2010). Integration has been proven not to be a mechanical consequence of desegregation (Lemanski, 2006a). Instead, authors claim that constructive social development should go beyond housing renewal and social engineering, and create real redistribution (Blanc, 2010; Phillips and Harrison, 2010; Bacqué *et al.*, 2011). Finally, as I will show more conceptually below, social mixing has been found to have contradictory

aims. It encourages urban equity but undermines the right to choose. In other words, equality and freedom are in critical opposition (Blanc, 2010).

Partial conclusions from policy applications

What have been the consequences of this misunderstood dichotomy (segregation–integration)? First of all, the general focus on relocation as a means to reduce poverty puts all the expectations on mere physical proximity with higher income groups. As I have shown, sometimes this proximity has worked to achieve some further outcomes, but sometimes not. In this sense, the aforementioned 'keys' of Ingrid Gould Ellen (2000) work in terms of stable physical proximity, but do not necessarily equate with integration. Furthermore, as I suggest at the outset, there is also a treatment of integration as the opposite of segregation, which is evident in the assumptions underpinning Mixed-Income Housing programs. I portray this excessive reliance on physical proximity (or even physical determinism) for the treatment of segregation, in Figure 1.
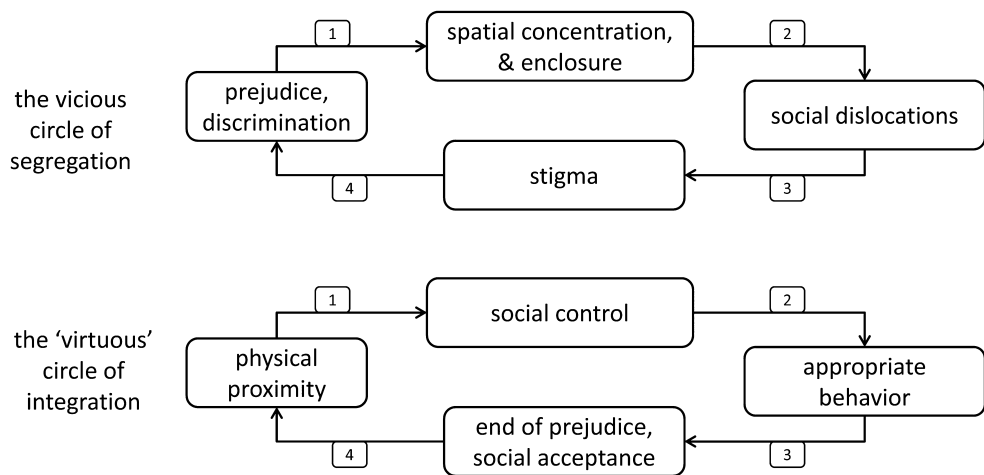

Figure 1 The vicious circle of segregation and the 'virtuous' circle of integration (*source*: author's elaboration)

My point here is that there is no direct causal relationship between physical proximity and better social outcomes. Even considering different social distances (close to middle class or to upper class), there is no unique solution for a multidimensional problem.[4] The dispersion practices of these policies then, are conceptually closer to disintegration in terms of assimilation, loss of attachment, atomization and breaking of ties. They have, that is, similar consequences to those of slum clearance some decades ago (Willmott and Young, 1960). Furthermore, there is again a generalized acceptance of segregation as *natural*, with the example of Inclusionary Housing as a *unique and non-forceful* way to intervene. But it is important also to emphasize that the failure of policies treating poverty without dealing with segregation (Deluca and Rosenbaum, 2010) should not be a reason for mere dispersion. I maintain that dispersion policies are aimed at mitigating the negative externalities associated with poverty concentration, but naively expect the causes can correct themselves. Moreover, integration policies rest on the assumption that

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4 This means that the focus could be either on better employment opportunities (improved with middle-class influence, see Galster *et al.*, 2008), or on a less conflictive coexistence in terms of non-threatening identities (better with upper class, see Sabatini *et al.*, 2001).

high-income people will positively contribute to the behavior of the poor, and that the converse is not the case. In other words, as I showed for the European experience, the middle class is the point of reference for normative prescriptions.

So, what would the 'unique and non-forceful' ways to achieve integration be? From civil society, we can look for activism in favor of integration and a willingness to protect neighborhoods without escaping from them. From the state, we might expect a generalized non-exclusionary form of zoning (which would tackle both elite and ghetto segregation), and integrative policies that consider much more than location.

The conceptual meaning of integration

The research paradigms for segregation and integration are starting points for this discussion. I maintain that there are basically two research paradigms in the study of segregation and integration in the US. One is a more positivist perspective, which leans more to quantitative methods and mainly observes demographic patterns. In the study of segregation, this perspective has relied on the intensive use of segregation indexes (Massey and Denton, 1988), and the discussion of its consequences, from a normative perspective, is still influenced by the Chicago School's social disorganization paradigm in the portrayal of ghettos as decomposed and pathological social forms (see Wilson, 1987; Massey and Denton, 1993; Jargowsky, 1997). As for the study of unplanned integrated neighborhoods (not subject to intervention), this perspective focuses on what I call an ecological-demographic model trying to explain the spontaneous emergence of stable diversity patterns in terms of specific demographic changes (Ellen, 2000).

The other research paradigm is a more critical perspective, which leans more to qualitative methods and studies the role of key actors under structural constraints. In dealing with segregation, this perspective brings forward the understanding of subsistence strategies, abandonment by the state, existing institutions, and the active forces behind segregation (Low, 2001; Gotham, 2002; Wacquant, 2008). As for unplanned integrated neighborhoods, there is a politico-institutional model that stresses the active influence of powerful actors and grassroots organizations in bringing about a desired coexistence (Molotch, 1972; Anderson, 1990; Nyden *et al.*, 1997; Cashin, 2004).

However, both the ecological-demographic and politico-institutional models merely explain how a certain diversity emerges and how it is sustained over time. They do not go deeper into how integration works, how it operates or what it actually means. That is why I develop here a framework of socio-spatial integration based on different dimensions.

Integration as a double-edged sword

Integration is a problematic concept. It can have negative or positive effects depending on the context. The term 'integration' is commonly defined as 'the act of combining into an integral whole'; it is related in meaning to such words as 'inclusion', 'incorporation', 'combining', 'mixing', 'blending', 'harmony', 'unification', 'fusing', 'incorporation', 'assimilation', 'amalgamation', 'commingling' and so forth (Farlex Inc., 2010). Similarly, the verb 'integrate' means: (1) to mix with and join society or a group of people, often changing to suit their way of life, habits and customs (Cambridge University Press, 2010); (2) 'to combine two or more things in order to become more effective' (*ibid.*); (3) 'to make into a whole or make part of a whole' (Farlex Inc., 2010), and (4) to 'become one; become integrated' (Farlex Inc., 2010).

Above and beyond these definitions, the etymologic meaning of 'integration' sheds further light. According to Arnal (1999), 'integrity' and 'integration' have the same root in Latin, from which one can extract their primary contradiction. In addition, 'integer' and 'intact' are closely related words. Thus, 'integration' could mean the alteration of a closed system through aggressive means that favor the integrating element, but bring no

benefits for the established element. This allows disintegration by incompatibility, but not integration. Therefore, the integrity (being intact) of the whole system is put at risk when integration is produced against nature. Thus, integrity and integration are understood as antagonistic terms: complete integration breaks the system's integrity, and complete integrity leaves out all the other elements (*ibid*.).

Different disciplines make use of the word 'integration' differently. In life sciences integration means 'the assimilation of nutritive material by the body during the process of anabolism' (Farlex Inc., 2010); in mathematics, it refers to 'the process of computing an integral; the inverse of differentiation' (Farlex Inc., 2010); and in psychology, integration involves 'the organization of the psychological or social traits and tendencies of a personality into a harmonious whole' (Farlex Inc., 2010).

In economics, integration means 'the process by which two or more countries proceed to eliminate, gradually or immediately, the existing discriminatory barriers between them for the purpose of establishing a single economic space' (Orantes, 1984: 143). A related definition in politics asserts that integration 'deals with the need to establish, along with the integrated space, an institutional center capable of regulating the functioning of the economic relations within the space' (*ibid*.: 145). The common feature of the economic and political definitions, says Orantes (1984), is the final goal of the creation of a larger space, which, however, carries with it the problems of loss of sovereignty and fear of disappearance.

In order to develop a common meaning, I extract some of the critical ideas from each of the definitions and classify them as potential benefits, neutral effects or potential damage (see Figure 2).

POTENTIAL BENEFITS	NEUTRAL EFFECTS	POTENTIAL DAMAGES
Elimination of barriers Opening of closed and exclusive system	Mixing of parts in a single space	Loss of identity (assimilation) Breaking the integrity of a whole system Disintegration by incompatibility

Figure 2 Integration as a double-edged sword (*source*: author's elaboration)

Social forms of integration

The idea of social integration, applied to human beings, refers to 'the extent to which an individual participates in a broad range of social relationships' (Brissette *et al*., 2000: 54). In terms of social theory, the concept is rooted in Emile Durkheim's work on social condition and suicide, in which social interaction is associated with greater wellbeing. Thus, assuming integration just as mutual moral support or cohesiveness (Durkheim, 1997), one can find different 'social forms', in Simmel's (see Wolff, 1950) sense, that do not necessarily imply mixture or diversity. Figure 3 is a taxonomic effort to define different social forms of integration based on its degree of mixture (or openness to diversity) and its degree of freedom under a group's discipline.

	DEGREE OF FREEDOM (under group discipline)	
DEGREE OF MIXTURE (openness to diversity)	**Low**	**High**
Low	Integrity	Limited liability
High	Assimilation	Cultural pluralism

Figure 3 Different social forms of integration (*source*: author's elaboration)

From this, I extract four types of integration. *Integrity* refers to a homogenous whole where only equal members are accepted, where norms and values are maintained by strict discipline and where individuals cannot express themselves beyond these norms. *Limited liability* represents homogeneous communities where individuals live independently and are tied solely by functional relationships. *Assimilation* covers cases where the access of diverse members to the group is determined by their adaptation to the original norms and values and proceeds only if the integrity of the group is not threatened (see Glazer, 1993; Hiebert and Ley, 2003). And finally *cultural pluralism* refers to an open access to diversity involving constructive interchanges where the group culture is enriched by difference but does not subsume the individual (see Locke and Stern, 1942; Glazer, 1997; Hiebert and Ley, 2003). Thus, if integrity may be destroyed by residential mobility, and if cultural pluralism is difficult to achieve, the most common forms in the city are assimilation and limited liability.

Integration, socio-spatial distances, and power relationships

Lefebvre (1991) maintains that social structures wear down in use and are sometimes transformed. But to avoid transformations, mechanisms like the enactment of laws and the production of space act as fixating structures, and then relations cease to be volatile. In other words, social relations exist as they have spatial existence, and get materialized through the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996). In a similar way, urban geographers refer to the idea of distance, which was coined by Georg Simmel, both in a geometric and a social sense (Ethington, 1997). Grasland (2009) suggests that sociological and geometric distances generate indirect pressures on the restriction of opportunities as part of a probabilistic approach. Similarly, Ethington (1997) affirms that geometric distance may influence or even produce social distance. Socio-spatial practices of distance may be essential influences on constructed identities of race, class, ethnicity, gender and the like (*ibid.*). Therefore, one can see that the issue of integration has been always mediated by distances, which are crucial parts of the structures that shape social relationships.

The interplay of social and spatial proximity is said to generate opportunities for contact, and then to improve the probability of relations (Blau, 1977; Grasland, 2009), be these positive or negative. The so-called 'contact hypothesis' affirms that increased contact among different groups creates positive attitudes among them and that, as a result, physical integration will be transformed into social integration (Zeul and Humphrey, 1970). Nevertheless, this idea has been rejected by other authors, who indicate that contiguity of different lifestyles could lead to tension, friction and conflict (Wirth, 1927; Häußermann and Siebel, 2001).

Other conceptions of integration along these same lines open up a number of different interpretations that imply different power relations. So, then, what are the 'contents' of integration?[5] Blau (1960) describes how individuals can be integrated into groups or communities through processes of social attraction. But individuals can also be integrated into society, and communities can be integrated into society as well. While useful in seeing how integration operates in relation to larger systems, these definitions do not reveal anything about power relations, superiority and subordination, which are crucial for segregation. Thus, a useful differentiation of contents should identify which elements are disadvantageous and which are not, which elements lead to people being socially or economically deprived or discriminated against. For example, individuals who are not disadvantaged but need integration might be friends, schoolmates, and even migrants and incoming neighbors, while disadvantaged people in need of integration might include former prisoners, people with disabilities and excluded poor and minorities (see Figure 4). Regarding the above discussion, the enforced

5 Again, in Simmel's sense (see Wolff, 1950).

NON-HIERARCHICAL RELATIONS	HIERARCHICAL RELATIONS
Friends, schoolmates, migrants, incoming neighbors, etc.	Former prisoners, people with disabilities, and excluded and poor minorities

Figure 4 Different contents of integration (*source*: author's elaboration)

spatial distances during the Jim Crow era in the US showed that space made social relationships worse — more explicit and more material (Ethington, 1997). Thus, one can see that distance is what makes hierarchies and power relationships stricter and more concrete.

How does space affect disadvantaged individuals? Former prisoners come from a physically separated and socially stigmatized environment: jails. They carry the burden of enforced social and spatial distance. Individuals with disabilities deal with the lack of adjustment of the built environment to their limited modes of movement and dwelling. And excluded and poor minorities cope with the persistent physical separation in neighborhoods, schools, jobs and public spaces.

The split between agency and structure: social and system integration

Beyond relationships between individuals, Durkheim (1997) conceives integration as interdependence or solidarity, where all parts of society work for a unified end. That is how he explains, in the development from traditional to modern societies, a transition from mechanical to organic solidarity. Human ecology assumptions were based on this idea: social organization operating through functional interdependence. However, modern societies started to show that not all parts work for functional unity, and that excluded groups sometimes do not perform significant functions. Thus, a special chapter in social theory developed a division of dimensions. This was first identified by David Lockwood as a fundamental split between people and parts, between agency and structure (Archer, 1996). Here, *social integration* focuses on the relationships between actors, and *system integration* focuses on the relationships through mass instruments within social systems (Mouzelis, 1992): mass production, mass consumption, mass communication and the like.

The argument was then posited by Jurgen Habermas. He emphasizes *social integration* as an 'internalist' perspective in terms of actors and participants, and *system integration* as an 'externalist' perspective of an observer of social practices and the system and its maintenance (Mouzelis, 1992). *Social integration* implies reciprocities between actors, while *system integration* involves reciprocities between collectivities (Archer, 1996). Thus, Habermas sustains a differentiation between 'life world' and 'system', considering the rise of more complex structures above kinship (Mouzelis, 1992).

The distinction was also recognized by Anthony Giddens (see Saunders, 1986), who differentiates between face-to-face co-presence (social integration), and high time–space distance between social systems (system integration). For tribal societies, social and system integration was simultaneous. But when human beings expanded their organization, the social system was stretched over space and time, and face-to-face interaction diminished. Thus, system integration emerges separated from its social dimension (Saunders, 1986).

Then, according to the differentiation between social and system integration developed by Lockwood, Habermas and Giddens, the following operational classification (see Figure 5) is offered:[6]

	SYSTEM INTEGRATION	SOCIAL INTEGRATION
CHARACTERIZATION	Relationship between individuals and the state and market systems. More importantly the role of the individual rather than its personality.	Spaces that provide security, stability, identity, sense of belonging, psychological sense of community, and affective connection with the territory.
POSSIBLE DIMENSIONS	Education, health, housing, job, social benefits, etc.	Social networks, job relations, urban environment, recreation, etc.

Figure 5 System integration and social integration (*source*: Parraguez, 2002)

Four dimensions of socio-spatial integration

In order to elaborate a definition of socio-spatial integration, I now take the relevant dimensions that play a role in these contexts. Marcuse (1997; 2005) affirms that integration represents the elimination of barriers to free mobility and the establishment of positive and non-hierarchical relationships — which is more than mere non-segregation. So far I have identified the importance of proximity, of functional relationships, and of respectful coexistence. Identification with common symbols in local settings is also an important factor defining community (Schwirian, 1983). In this sense, Simmel (see Wolff, 1950) argues that isolated elements (individuals and groups) may be unified by their common relationship with an outside phenomenon. Then, rather than posing a linear approach, I maintain that socio-spatial integration is manifested as a multidimensional relationship that may work independently and at different levels (see Figure 6).

MACRO DIMENSIONS	SOCIO-SPATIAL DIMENSIONS	CHARACTERIZATION
Systemic	Physical	Physical proximity between different social groups (defined by power and status)
Systemic	Functional	Effective access to opportunities and services in the territory
Social	Relational	Non-hierarchical interaction between different social groups
Social	Symbolic	Identification with a common ground

Figure 6 The dimensions of socio-spatial integration (*source*: author's elaboration)

The dimensions here defined are specifiable aspects of a concept to help grasp its complex meaning and to develop further operationalizations. The physical dimension implies the proximity between social groups, and can involve variables like space design, spatial distance according to social distance, agglomeration, clustering and so on. The functional dimension is related to access to opportunities and can involve variables like

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6   It is important to recognize that other authors have also applied a multidimensional approach to the analysis of social integration arriving at similar constructs (Landecker, 1951; Galster and Killen, 1995; Göschel, 2001; Marcuse, 2005; Sabatini and Salcedo, 2007).

spatial distance to opportunities, quality of opportunities, economic access to services, level of state involvement and presence of public and private institutions. The relational dimension implies the interaction between different social groups, and can involve variables like hierarchical and non-hierarchical relations, social control, leadership, community institutions, cultural exchange and assimilation between groups, role modeling, social capital, social networks, political participation, etc. Finally, the symbolic dimension is related to identification with a common ground, and can involve variables like external and internal symbols, real and imaginary boundaries, partial and common identity and differentiation, separation between established members and outsiders, perceptions of normality and disorder, etc. Then, how are these dimensions expressed in the different social forms of integration? Figure 7 endeavors to explain this.

	PHYSICAL DIMENSION	FUNCTIONAL DIMENSION	RELATIONAL DIMENSION	SYMBOLIC DIMENSION
INTEGRITY (low diversity, low freedom)	No proximity to different social group Behavior conditioned by enclosure (e.g. traditional ghettos)	Access to opportunities limited by level of state intervention and market interest in the group	Non-hierarchical relations easy because of homogeneity, but conditioned by group discipline	Strong identification, creation of symbols and boundaries, separation from outsiders
LIMITED LIABILITY (low diversity, high freedom)	No proximity to different social groups Enclosure does not affect behavior, just functional relations (e.g. dysfunctional ghetto)	Access achieved by personal interest, and also limited to state and market	Non-hierarchical relations are more functional than affective	Weak identification, only with symbols that are neutrally created
ASSIMILATION (high diversity, low freedom)	Proximity to different groups, conditioned to "adequate" behavior (e.g. bi-racial coexistence in the US)	Access achieved by market interest in the higher status group, and state efforts for dispersion	Relations, if any exist, are pre-eminently hierarchical and involve social control	Identification just with higher status symbols Differentiation occurs if integrity of higher status group is threatened
CULTURAL PLURALISM (high diversity, high freedom)	Proximity to different groups, mutual control and enrichment from behavior (e.g. Cashin's multicultural islands)	Access achieved by state and market, but also by community leadership, and by personal interest	Non-hierarchical relations are expressed through activism for coexistence, political participation, and social capital	Collective creation and exchange of symbols Differentiation with outsiders could occur but only if they don't commit to diversity

Figure 7 Social forms of integration through the different socio-spatial dimensions (*source*: author's elaboration)

Partial conclusions from conceptual meaning

First of all, segregation may be restated as the opposite of deconcentration and/or physical proximity to higher-status groups, and integration may be restated as the opposite of territorial exclusion. Social exclusion refers to a denied opportunity for participation: an involuntary social isolation as a response to hostility and discrimination (Barry, 1998). Social exclusion has been also defined as 'a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live' (Silver, 2007: 15). Thus, the proposed dimensions of socio-spatial integration can be reframed inversely through this lens: *physical* exclusion as residential segregation; *functional* exclusion as denied access to opportunities; *relational* exclusion as indifference and denied participation; and *symbolic* exclusion as imaginary construction of otherness. Figure 8 explains the distinctions between the opposites of segregation and integration, respectively.

MANIFESTATION	SEGREGATION	OPPOSITE
NEUTRAL	Spatial concentration of social groups	Spatial dispersion or deconcentration of social groups
EXCLUSIONARY	Physical separation from the rest of population and their opportunities	Physical proximity to higher status groups and their opportunities
DIMENSION	INTEGRATION	OPPOSITE (EXCLUSION)
PHYSICAL	Physical proximity	Residential segregation
FUNCTIONAL	Access to opportunities	Denied access to opportunities
RELATIONAL	Non-hierarchical interaction	Indifference and denied participation
SYMBOLIC	Common identification	Imaginary construction of otherness

Figure 8 The opposites of segregation and integration (*source*: author's elaboration)

However, integration does not represent a simple reversal of the causes of poverty or exclusion. Material dispossession and physical exclusion cause complex social problems. But, as I have argued, material provision and physical proximity are not immediate solutions to those problems. That is why it is necessary to recognize that, just as segregation is an intervening variable in the production of poverty, physical proximity is just one dimension in a more complex process of socio-spatial integration.

Persistence of the idea, literature gaps and future lines of research

First of all, it is important to note that integration is still necessary for excluded urban residents. Some authors highlight that support for integration appears to be decreasing among minorities despite increasing tolerance from upper-status groups (Cashin, 2004; Briggs, 2005). But the persistence of the claim for equal opportunities makes the redefinition of the concept, and the whole challenge of social equity, all the more necessary. As Cashin (2004) puts it: if there is ambivalence about integration, the desire for equal opportunity is intact. Socio-spatial integration then, has to be emphasized not only as access to the city or mere proximity to other groups, but as a real redistribution of resources and power in unequal systems. If integration has failed, it is because it has scarcely been tried; despite its difficulty, it is still necessary and possible. 'As with a marriage, successful stable integration requires work' (*ibid*.: 41).

It is difficult to separate the theoretical idea from its historical applications, as evidenced by the controversial experience of the US in terms of access to schools, jobs and residences. However, this is not a unique problem. Other policy concepts, representing both a state of affairs and an ideal, have similar difficulties. Democracy is one of them: there are problems with its meaning and its internal coherence as a concept (Birch, 1993). Considering this, there are two alternatives (*ibid.*); to observe the political practice and common usage (*the empirical approach*), or to express an ideal concept and consider its implications (*the idealist approach*). So far I have reviewed both approaches, with the conviction that concepts of this kind are in constant dialectical transformation between their value implications and their empirical impact among citizens.

In summary, the literature around integration presents three important problems. First, physical proximity is presented as an end in itself, an equalization between propinquity and integration. Second, integration is shown mainly as a right to opportunities and political participation, but rejecting physical proximity as impossible, ineffectual or too difficult. Third, spatial coexistence is sometimes restricted to structural factors, denying its sociological complexity. Throughout this argument, I have been assuming that space has a special importance in a social phenomenon. But, what is the level of that importance?

The multidimensional approach presented here expresses just a preliminary conceptualization from external characteristics; however, it is of course subject to empirical demonstration. There are two future lines of research that I believe it is

important to undertake. The first is to reposition socio-spatial integration as a progressive aspiration. This could be argued in terms of the idea of the Right to the City (see Smith, 2010), and as a critique of the 'natural' emergence of segregation. The second is balancing the real weight of spatial proximity in the achievement of integration, and studying the interrelations of its dimensions. Throughout this argument I have shown different metaphors of socio-spatial configurations, like the advantages of segregation (see Bolt *et al.*, 1998) or the together-in-difference idea (Young, 1999). But these metaphors should be better specified and scaled. What scale is harmful for segregation? Blocks, tracts, municipalities? At what scale do power relationships appear more clearly? What scale is adequate for integration? What distances are required for each relationship to occur meaningfully? Probably each of the mentioned dimensions of integration has its own spatiality. And this represents a continuum of three socio-spatial forms that have not yet been studied altogether: (1) complete exclusionary segregation; (2) micro-segregations and their positive potentials; and (3) a complete atomizing dispersion. In Figure 9, I draw the hypothetical segregation of a social group comprising 20% of the population of Chicago, in four different scales.
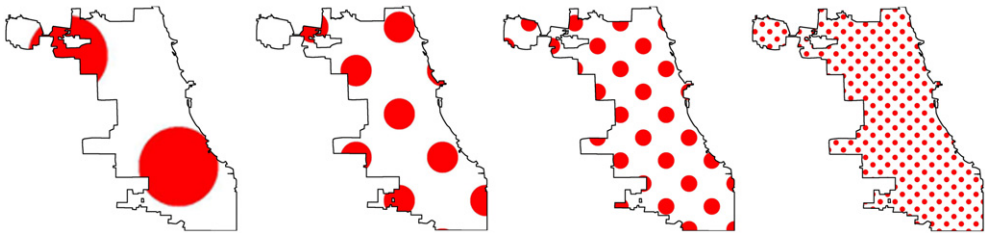
Note: Hypothetical map of the location of one racial and/or socioeconomic group in Chicago. Circles represent areas of homogeneous demographic composition (e.g. 100% black) in the city, which vary in four scales of clustering: from large areas to small areas

Figure 9 Four forms of segregation for 20% of the population in Chicago (*source*: author's elaboration)

The far-left scenario is closest to the present large-scale, exclusionary segregation of African-Americans on the South and West Sides of Chicago. The far-right scenario depicts the hypothetical situation of an almost complete dispersion, with more proximity to opportunities but loss of social ties, a factor that has been criticized in some policies. And those in the middle express the weakly defined situations of a supposedly positive segregation. With those spatially undefined scenarios, therefore, one can see that the relevance of space has been either overrated or taken for granted. As Figure 9 highlights, while we cannot find particular scales for integration, all the discourses about exclusion, social capital or disintegration could be lost in a vacuum without it. It is true that more proximity between different social groups in residential contexts have led to different interactions given these new spatial constraints and social positions. However, residential proximity may be in contradiction with other associated structures that remain separated and hierarchical, as I have shown with some integration policies. The spatiality of new policies, thus, should emphasize not only residential proximity, but also organizational proximity, institutional proximity, etc., creating a real redistribution of resources and equality of opportunity.

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