**David P. Varady, ed.**. *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality.*
Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005. xix + 293 pp. $25.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-7914-6460-1.

**Reviewed by** Jessica Pardee

**Published on** H-Urban (May, 2006)

In his edited volume, *Desegregating the City*, David P. Varady unites a wide range of scholars to examine the status of urban segregation in the literature today. Moving beyond the basics of urban isolation, the chapters present detailed discussions of urban multiculturalism and its relationship to segregation. Varady's collection reinvigorates the debates, establishes the common concepts, develops theoretical nuances, and assesses the merits and detriments of segregation. The format of the book is organized in two sections, the first more theoretical and definitional, the second focused on policy. For the purpose of this review, however, I sort and evaluate the chapters around three themes. Under what circumstances is segregation acceptable? What is the interrelationship between segregation, development, and opportunity in contemporary urban environments? How can policy address the negative consequences of segregation, and at what cost?

Examining the first question, Peter Marcuse, Mohammad Qadeer, and Frederick Boal challenge the commonplace assumption that segregation is always a negative circumstance. Marcuse identifies three types of clustering: functional, cultural, and status. In this context, only status clustering and its conjunctions with the other two reflect hierarchical relations of power and domination, creating and reinforcing inequities. It is these forms of segregation that merit policy intervention. Voluntary clustering, by culture or function, does not.[1] Qadeer's chapter on Toronto presents a straightforward example of Marcuse's cultural clustering and an example of segregation without social inequality. Analyzing census data for the Greater Toronto area (GTA), Qadeer finds that ethnic concentrations compose small spatial areas (like a cluster of apartment buildings), but not entire neighborhoods as seen in New York or Los Angeles. As such, these enclaves reflect voluntary, segregated housing choices, which appear to promote the status of residents. In response, Qadeer urges a policy focus on desegregating institutions, such as schooling, work, or recreation, instead of residentially oriented policies. Finally, Boal offers a heuristic device, the scenarios or urban ethnic spectrum, to conceive of segregation as existing to differential degrees in any particular city and changing over time. The spectrum is a visual

scale, similar to a survey's "feelings thermometer," that ranks five degrees of ethnic relations based on urban divisiveness and segregation. The five degrees include cleansing, polarization, segmentation, pluralism, and assimilation. Using the scale, planners can envision what a city might look like if organized in a different ethnic patterning, then coordinate planning efforts to promote that organization. In Boal's discussion, pluralism and assimilation are acceptable forms of segregation (with Qadeer's Toronto and Park's Chicago falling to the right), while cleansing, polarization, and segmentation represent volatile and problematic ethnic configurations. The chapter concludes by challenging housing and planning officials to be cognizant of their assumptions, and to reflect upon how those assumptions direct planning and shift cities as a whole along the spectrum, for better or worse.

The second major focus within the text is the interrelationship between segregation, development (particularly sprawl), and opportunity in contemporary urban environments. Ceri Peach examines 1920s work on assimilation and the ghetto, arguing the Chicago school failed the field by assuming all ethnic and racial groups follow a ghetto-enclave-suburb settlement pattern over time. Yet, better critiques of the Chicago school model have focused on its failure to identify forms of structural mechanisms such as restrictive covenants, redlining, or blockbusting that sorted populations independently of choice and markets.[2] These same mechanisms are also missing from Tiebout's model, with residents conceptualized as consumers in a free-market setting. Robert Wassmer uses Tiebout's theory to show that even in the absence of structural discrimination, spatial segregation still results, suggesting that either economic inequity needs to be reduced through progressive taxation, or high-income households require enticements such as subsidies to accept low-income families as neighbors. In Tridib Banerjee and Niraj Verma's work, Tieboutian theory is assessed using a statistical technique, cluster analysis, to sort cases based on their commonalities. Using land-use characteristics, the authors identify six forms of cities in Los Angeles County, linking those to differential racial and ethnic compositions. Compared to Wassmer, Banerjee and Verma's Tieboutian analysis does not account for structural mechanisms of segregation, including differential access to mortgages or other forms of housing market discrimination. Evidence for these trends, based on historical legacy, is likely hidden among the patterns of neighborhood change within the generic cities cluster of their analysis. An expansion of the cluster analysis to the neighborhood level may likely reveal more specific gradations, and reflect higher levels of sorting than a city in its entirety. This pattern is evidenced in Alan Mabin's chapter on housing markets in South Africa. While townships and suburbs fall under a single municipality with a centralized government, they are fractured socially. This fragmentation exacerbates segregation, though it is based on class more so than race. Thus, as racial inequities reduce in the face of wealth (though race is still a salient factor), future works should consider the following: what policy measures are needed to institute economic integration?

This question is considered in the final chapters, which center on how policy addresses negative consequences of segregation and what the unanticipated, or tolerated, costs of those policies are. Glenn Pearce-Oroz's work on Honduran housing policy following Hurricane Mitch displays the ways in which governments can support contradictory initiatives of housing policy and economic development. Specifically, the Honduran government provided new housing to families left homeless by the storm. Due to property rights disputes, however, the majority of that housing had to be located on the urban outskirts, isolated from urban amenities and labor opportunities. The trade-off for higher quality housing with ownership opportunities was suburban isolation without transportation or work. This spatial mismatch between

labor opportunities and residential opportunities is found not just in Honduras, but in most major American cities as well. In South Africa, Marie Huchzermeyer argues that current housing policy is also creating spatial mismatch, reinforcing segregation, as de-densification of informal settlements push households to urban outskirts. In response, Huchzermeyer proposes a form of economic affirmative action to desegregate class-based clusters, locating workers closer to their jobs. Yet, one of the complications in resolving class-based segregation is the "cultural" justification for that segregation. Formally or informally, the culture of poverty perspective as articulated by Charles Murray has underwritten much of the debate over segregation, and may be the linkage needed for overcoming it.[3] Xavier De Souza Briggs applies social capital as a lens for understanding policy limitations, illuminating the contradictions of individual choice policies employed simultaneously with integration policies. While social capital is an asset, social capital is not powerful enough to overcome institutional limitations, like exclusionary zoning or housing discrimination patterns, which persist through prejudice against low-income households, not lack of social capital.

Gregory Squires and colleagues document the effects of housing discrimination, examining data from a telephone survey conducted in Washington, DC. Finding that blacks and whites have different experiences and outcomes in the housing search process, Squires et al. lend support to the argument that individual choice, access to networks via social capital, and even class status cannot overcome the effects of race on housing opportunity. For policy, class-based approaches will only alleviate some of the discrimination and inequity. While affirmative action has become politically incorrect, if Americans truly believe in equality, affirmative housing programs need to be presented and incorporated in the public agenda.

In the final two chapters, N. Ariel Espino and Rolf Pendall look to land-use patterns and sprawl as explanatory elements in understanding segregation. Espino uses a qualitative research methodology to consider land use in Houston, Texas, arguing that the pervasive use of housing as an investment inhibits integration through zoning that protects and enhances market value (especially amid new construction). One proposed resolution is to de-commodify housing. Like Marcuse, Espino recognizes that speculative investment in housing creates a double-edged sword; on the one hand, new development and gentrification increase tax revenues in urban jurisdictions, on the other hand, new construction and gentrification inflate the cost of living, expanding economic disparities and segregation. However, political feasibility of de-commodification is questionable, and such policies would require a metropolitan level implementation to prevent the continuation of urban disinvestment and population loss. In many American metropolises, regional fragmentation dominates, making de-commodification unlikely. Pendall's research on income segregation and density suggests policies need to cast a wider net to alleviate economic segregation. Using regression analysis, Pendall concludes that higher density promotes higher segregation, but to alleviate and reduce sprawl policies should target fast-growth, low-density regions. The contradiction is that higher density drives up land values, reinforcing economic segregation. The logical solution, promoted by Pendall and many other authors, is the inclusion of mixed-income housing. When compared to homogenous, expensive housing, mixed-income housing is a substantial improvement. The mixed-income approach, however, does not eliminate the reduction of housing for the lowest-income families.

While developers are not building mixed-income housing in new development areas, HUD is, effectively dropping the floor out of the low-income housing market by eliminating essential units for the neediest families. In New Orleans,

the privatization of public housing through the Section 8 voucher program and HOPE VI redevelopment program exacerbates inequalities as low-income housing is replaced by fewer, but mixed-income, units with stringent screening processes for reentry, despite a waiting list of over 19,000 names.[4] In post-Katrina New Orleans, at least three city council members have announced that public housing residents should not plan to return unless they have a job, effectively pushing the poor out by denying them access to the very finite supply of *truly* affordable housing. With the massive flooding that affected all major public housing sites except one (which is a mixed-income HOPE VI site), the local public housing market will likely be closed off to all except the "best" low-income families. One disappointing weakness of this volume is the limited discussion of the underside of the housing market: public housing and slum properties.

While the book has significant and impressive breadth, there are a few other weaknesses related to theoretical depth. First, several chapters utilize theoretical orientations that are over fifty years old (such as Park's concentric zone model and Tieboutian sorting). These perspectives predate the deindustrialization and the globalization of the manufacturing economy in the United States. The effects of deindustrialization were to eliminate thousands of skilled, well-paid (often unionized) manual labor jobs, many of which were largely replaced with low-wage service sector jobs. For some immigrant groups, such as Latina/os, their arrival in the United States followed this transition, and their abilities to accrue wealth and assimilate in a manner similar to German or Irish immigrants was truncated. The need for manual labor had disappeared. Now, many immigrants work at or below minimum wage, surviving by overcrowding in housing to make the stay affordable. Given the massive restructuring of the economy and its effects over the last thirty years, it is

surprising that not a single scholar discussed this matter in depth.

Likewise, a few chapters fail to communicate sufficiently with the work of political economists and new urban sociologists who have largely divorced themselves from the Chicago school assimilation model.[5] These works document and acknowledge the incapacity of that paradigm to adequately explain political mobilization, protest, rioting, persistent poverty, and segregation. In short, several authors give too much power to the Chicago school while ignoring the vast wealth of research that has replaced those early works. To argue that assimilation alone dominates the literature is to disrespect the last thirty-five years of empirically grounded research on segregation, uneven development, and socio-spatial patterning, particularly works by other authors within this collection. Finally, Varady presents the events of September 11, 2001, as a turning point for considering the role of enclaves and urban ethnic diversity, yet this theme is not developed fully in any other section of the book and seems largely unrelated to works presented here.

*Desegregating the City* provides an in-depth examination of segregation in national and international contexts, addressing forms of acceptable and unacceptable clustering, examining the causes and consequences of segregation, discussing racial and economic segregation, and evaluating multiple policy initiatives. Varady succeeds at challenging the notion that segregation is always detrimental, while updating the literature on the status of racial and economic segregation. The limited discussion of poverty deconcentration in American public housing policy (only in the preface) merits further examination, but on the whole the book is worth the investment.

Notes

[1]. Some examples of acceptable segregation include individuals who self-segregate on the basis of culture without any structural influences in that decision (i.e., in the absence of racial steer-

4

ing), or zoning restrictions separating particular land-use functions. Land-use zoning that separates elementary schools from stores selling explicit adult materials is an example of segregation generally supported by society at large.

[2]. Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900-2000* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002); Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[3]. Charles Murray, *Losing Ground* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

[4]. Jessica W. Pardee and Kevin Fox Gotham, "HOPE VI, Section 8, and the Contradictions of Low-Income Housing Policy," *Journal of Poverty* 9 (2005): pp. 1-21.

[5]. For example, Joe Feagin, *The New Urban Paradigm: Critical Perspectives on the City* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998); Mark Gottdiener, *The Social Production of Urban Space* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985); Gregory D. Squires, *Capital and Communities in Black and White: The Intersections of Race, Class, and Uneven Development* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at https://networks.h-net.org/h-urban

Citation: Jessica Pardee. Review of Varady, David P., ed. *Desegregating the City: Ghettos, Enclaves, and Inequality.* H-Urban, H-Net Reviews. May, 2006.

URL: https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=11722