November 2012

The URBACT Tribune

www.urbact.eu

ARTICLE

CITIES OF TOMORROW ACTION TODAY

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Connecting cities
Building successes

URBACT

Naples, Scampia housing estate (2003). Photos: Iván Tosics
One of the most segregated areas of Europe, with concentrated problems of poor neighbourhoods. Some of the buildings have already been demolished but an overarching solution to this extremely segregated area (far away from the city centre) has still to be found

AGAINST DIVIDED CITIES IN EUROPE

BY LAURA COLINI, DARINKA CZISCHKE AND IVÁN TOSICS,
EDITED BY PETER RAMSDEN

The aim of the URBACT work stream "Against divided cities" is to help cities rethink existing local policies concerning spatial and social segregation in European urban areas. As a first step, this article intends to provide an overview of the concept of urban segregation and related public policies that have been studied by experts and academics and experimented by URBACT city partners working on integrated sustainable development.

The challenge: growing spatial segregation in European cities

In the European Commission's Cities of Tomorrow report a view on European cities as places of advanced social progress is promoted: "… with a high degree of social cohesion, balance and integration… with small disparities within and among neighbourhoods and a low degree of spatial segregation and social marginalisation…"[1] Social cohesion is, however, threatened by the increase of social polarisation, which is a consequence of many parallel processes: an increasing income polarisation since the 1980s, a decreasing security of employment (due to global competitiveness challenges) and a huge increase of migration flows towards Europe and its cities (complemented by internal east-west migration within the EU).

Since the 1990s there has been an increasing recognition of these challenges and gradually different policy responses have been developed. The reactions at EU, national and local level, however, usually aim for direct interventions into those areas which are considered to be "problematic", often failing to address the wider reasons and drivers of the spatial processes. As a result, many failures and externalities occur. Sociological analyses show increasing number of examples of urban policies becoming harsher towards marginalized groups, using neighbourhood regeneration in many cases to pay lip service whilst covering up underlying aims of attracting more affluent middle classes back into the inner city areas. As property values and rent levels increase in the course of re-urbanisation, disadvantaged groups are often forced to relocate.

Social cohesion is threatened by increasing income polarisation, decreasing security of employment and a huge increase of migration flows towards European cities.

Tackling socio-spatial polarisation is a difficult task for urban administrations. Besides the complexity of the issue there is also a big gap between politicians and practitioners on the one hand and researchers on the other. While the former tend in many cases to favour short-term, high visibility interventions, the latter often lack the ability to communicate their ideas in a way that is easily understandable by the decision makers.

The complex nature of the problem makes it sometimes difficult for cities to learn from or adapt the practice of others. Although there are common trends, each situation is specific, and consequently there is much reinvention of the wheel. Even when "good practices" are exchanged, these are often applied without the much-needed adaptation to the specific local circumstances. In the following sections we will explore different manifestations of segregation in selected European cities and the approaches employed to deal with their related issues.

Different experiences in dealing with segregation

Spatial segregation is the projection of the social structure on space[2]. This is why almost all European cities face growing problems of spatial segregation. Although Europe still has relatively less polarised and segregated urban structures compared to cities in other parts of the world, it is in cities where the contradictions of development are most visible, with the fast-paced development of rich areas (gentrification, gated communities, and sub-urban sprawl) and the growing deprivation of poor areas and a trend towards them

Box 1: The case of Berlin, Lead Partner of the URBACT Co-Net network[i]

The city of Berlin has been the lead partner of the Co-Net network in URBACT II which explored area-based and integrated approaches to strengthen social cohesion in distressed neighbourhood.

Berlin has a long standing experience of supporting community led development, involving people at neighbourhood level in community council with participatory budgeting of micro projects.

Both ERDF and ESF have been combined in a system of area–based approach which involves the neighbourhood, district and municipality under the national programme Socially Integrative City. Since reunification in 1990, the city is no longer politically divided, however a new, social form of separation has been observed. Ethnic, religious, social, economic division are evident in the way people access basic facilities and services, the housing sector, the health and social assistance and the labour market.

Migrants– guest workers who arrived in the 1960s (many from Turkey and Vietnam), refugees who fled civil wars since the 1990s and increasingly economic migrants from within the EU grew a multicultural population in Berlin resulting in a patchwork of communities (around a quarter of Berlin inhabitants have a foreign background, a figure that rises to 40% among children[ii]).

Rental cost have been rising rapidly in the last few years whilst unemployment remains at a high rate (the risk of being poor is above national average with a high level of social transfer payments: about 20% of the Berlin population with precarious employment, part-time employment); cultural, ethnic and financial divisions affect the urban pattern of the city.

Other forms of self-chosen segregation take place in the wealthy areas of the west including Grünewald and Charlottenburg which are hardly ever discussed in the debate about policies regarding urban cohesion although this aspect is also important.

The most deprived areas are located both in the former eastern and western part of the city with a strong dominance of the southern zone where Kreuzberg and mostly Neukölln are located. Berlin has a long tradition of urban regeneration programmes to address such neighbourhoods. In 2011, Berlin launched the programme "Action Areas Plus" as an umbrella around various thematic interventions to reconnect those areas that have been identified as most deprived according to a multidimensional social monitoring system.

The objective is to improve the opportunities of their residents and to create a new vehicle to promote inter-departmental cooperation for more effective intervention. Berlin has followed other cities identified in the URBACT Project Results publication in 2011[iii] by bringing in a monitoring system to measure spatial effects of socio economic deprivation.

(i) http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/conet/homepage/
(ii) http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/presse/archiv/20080702.1000.104149.html
(iii) http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general_library/Rapport_Urbact_II.pdf

Berlin, Kreuzberg (2009). Photos: Iván Tosics
The pictures illustrate the mixture of population: the diversity of shops and the big number of dish antennas refer to high share of migrants

becoming ethnic and immigrant ghettoes. This trend affects prosperous and growing cities and shrinking cities alike.

Social exclusion and the manifestation of segregation are mostly the result of wider economic restructuring, changes in the welfare state, flexibilisation of labour markets and work relations, and the weakening of social networks and solidarity. These are all problems that exist at city level beyond the neighbourhood. It is therefore important to understand how cities can rethink under these circumstances existing local policies with new modes of integrating multi-scalar challenges.

The cases of Berlin (box 1) and Malmö (box 2) show that even in countries with a strong welfare state there are different manifestations of growing spatial segregation. In Berlin there are multiple issues of deprivation in more than one area while Malmo shows more concentration of deprivation into the central urban area.

The main intent of current public policies against segregation is to break the vicious circle of urban disadvantage. Therefore, greater cooperation has been initiated at neighbourhood level, with local job offers and employment agencies in order to develop services and measures to promote employment among long-term unemployed people (e.g. Malmö's Local Action Plan[3] as part of the Co-Net project). These policies against segregation focus on combining integration and employment services, and on building cooperation and coordination between individual and family care, between the Labour and Integration Centre, and with the Work Centre and associations. A key aspect is to lower the barriers to access services (e.g. decentralised municipality services with meeting venues, computer and internet facilities, a copy shop and job and housing information points), and to start involving the younger generation.

Both cities are in countries with well-developed social welfare systems. The level of socio-spatial segregation in these cities is not among the highest in Europe but is on the rise. Mixed use working class areas close to the inner city and large scale housing estates at the periphery are where disadvantage tends to concentrate. Looking more closely, segregation follows through distinct patterns. Berlin has dispersed areas of deprivation but the level of social polarization is not extreme. Malmö, on the other hand, shows more concentration of the poorer people in a few neighbourhoods of the city.

These differences can partly be explained by historic factors – such as the different roles the large prefabricated housing estates play in the cities. In Eastern Berlin these areas had a mixed population structure before the fall of the wall, while in Malmö the few "million programme" areas sank quickly to the bottom of the housing market. The differences in levels of segregation are partly explained by the operation of social housing policies.

The cases of Berlin and Malmö underpin the hypothesis of Murie and Musterd[4] that there are unique context-related combinations of market opportunities, welfare provisions, social networks and neighbourhood features which offer potential means to reduce and overcome the negative effects of segregation and exclusion. On the other hand, we assume that in our later work when we include the cases of a French city and a south European city, also the effect of the welfare state will show prominently.

Policy interventions to tackle socio-spatial segregation

Ever since tackling segregation became a policy objective in the 1980s, a wide range of types of interventions started to develop. The most frequent way to classify these policies is by distinguishing between "horizontal" and "area-based" types of interventions. Horizontal interventions refer to policies that are not linked to any particular spatial level, but focus on improving the situation of individuals or households with low income and specific needs. Such policies – sometimes also called "people-based policies", or "sector" policies – may apply to different

Box 2: The case of Malmö, partner in the URBACT Co-Net network[i]

The city of Malmö was involved in the Co-Net network with the aim to develop community life in an integrated way on three levels: building bridges between inhabitants in the neighbourhoods, between the different neighbourhoods of the larger districts and between the whole city and the disadvantaged district.

Today Malmö, the third largest city in Sweden, has the highest proportion of immigrants in the country (citizens represent 174 nationalities and speak 147 different languages and about 40% of the population has a migrant background).

Strong public interventions ensure that all young citizens have equal access to schools regardless of the area they live in. Housing data are accessible and transparent to everybody and the level of unemployment is not among the highest in urban Europe.

Nevertheless, Malmö is a city in which segregation is rising and its most evident form is the ethnic segregation in key neighbourhoods. In the mid-20th century the most deprived area was located next to the port.

However, after the construction of the Oresund link to Copenhagen and massive investments into urban renewal the harbour zone has turned from brownfield into a trendy residential and mixed-use area including offices, restaurants and university departments.

As a result, disadvantaged groups have moved to other areas of the city.

Today, Malmö can be described as ethnically and socio-economically segregated, with middle class neighbourhoods in the west and working class neighbourhoods in the south and east.

Unemployment, higher crime rates and growing number of households in need of social benefits are the usual patterns in the poor neighbourhoods. Rosengård is the district with the highest unemployment rate where low income people end up living.

They dream of moving out whenever there is a chance to catch a better working opportunity and higher income.

Fosie is a nearby neighbourhood, which is likely to become trendier in the future due to its large parks. This might in turn reduce the volume of housing available in the future for new migrants.

The eastern part of the city which includes Rosengård and Fosie plays the same role as the harbour used to for newcomers.

This would not be a problem in itself but Rosengård was built as a monofunctional residential area in the heyday of the Swedish "million homes policy" and is difficult to adapt to new circumstances.

(i) www.urbact.eu/conet,

geographical scope, i.e. national, regional or city wide. Area-based policies, on the other hand, do not focus on individuals but on a specific geographical unit, most often a neighbourhood. Typically, they include urban and social regeneration programmes and other interventions whose main goal is to improve the situation of the people living in the given areas. Area-based policies rest on the assumption that by focusing on places with specific problems, the situation of the people living in these areas will improve.

The distinction between these two types of policies is not always clear-cut. For example, employment or training programmes that run in a specific neighbourhood will address a certain target group (e.g. early school leavers or long-term unemployed) but are also to the benefit of the community as a whole (most visibly if the training scheme is about maintaining public space or improving social infrastructure).

Horizontal interventions

Horizontal interventions operate according to the domain of intervention. These can be, for example, citywide policies on school and adult education, job training, citizen participation in planning policies, health, etc. They do not aim at reducing spatial segregation per se but focus on social issues and can thus have an effect on segregation or make a special effort in segregated areas. Educational polices, for instance could be sensitive to the social structure in school catchment areas and reflect this in the size of classes and number of teachers. Public health policies can be reinforced in areas that are particularly affected by environmental hazards or show high levels of lifestyle related health problems or substance abuse. Housing policies and in particular social housing policies often aim at providing affordable housing for low-income households. Instruments include supply-side subsidies to increase social/affordable housing construction and statutory quotas of social/affordable housing in every new housing development.

In France, the law called ***Solidarité et Renouvellement Urbain*** (Solidarity and urban renewal – SRU), which came into force in 2000, promotes tenure mix through legal requirements: in urban areas, every commune (municipality) should reach a minimum of 20 per cent of social housing in its housing stock before 2020.

Policy responses usually aim for direct interventions into the "problematic" areas, failing to address the wider reasons and drivers of the spatial processes.

In the field of labour market integration, the example of Berlin's ***Local Pacts for the Economy and Employment*** stands out as an approach that complements citywide policy. The main aim of this policy is to foster "intelligent networking" of existing areas of strength and development potential in order to increase employability and occupational and social integration of disadvantaged groups of persons, create new jobs and training opportunities and enhance local economic structures. It works by developing partnerships with boroughs to tap local potential for economic growth.

Area-based interventions

Area-based interventions rest on the assumption that living in specific areas has an additional and independent effect on the life chances of individuals. The rise of this type of strategy is linked to the development of new governance arrangements in cities across Europe particularly in the context of increasing decentralisation of power from national to regional and city levels of government. As a further step in decentralization, the neighbourhood level is seen as "attractive" from a policy implementation perspective, because it allows for relatively easy experimentation in new forms of participatory governance. Moreover, it provides a manageable areal focus while avoiding the much higher costs of intervening throughout the city or more universal policies.

Montpellier (2008). Photos: Iván Tosics
Tenure mix may also be achieved with new construction. The first picture shows the scale-model (mock-up) of three newly built buildings, one of them private, the other social housing while the third student hostel – from outside people can not see which has which function. The second picture shows a part of the newly built central area of the city where half of the housing belongs to the social rental sector

Segregation can be tackled by "horizontal" interventions, focusing on households with low income and specific needs, and by "area-based" interventions, focusing on problem areas.

The actions within area-based interventions are often divided into "soft" and "hard" measures. **"Soft" interventions** include strengthening networks and interaction between people in the area (for example through work integration and training programmes in specific areas, street work, local festivals where the community can gather), while **"hard" interventions** are typically physical restructuring or upgrading programmes involving demolition and new infrastructure and/or housing developments.

A specific manifestation of area-based policies is the "social mix" approach. Whilst it has gained prominence in policy-making over the last decades, at the same time it has stirred considerable controversy both in public and academic debates, as explained in more detail in the box 3. It is worth noting that, while in some contexts social mix is regarded as a policy objective in itself (notably, in France), in other contexts it is considered one policy tool amongst others to achieve less segregated urban areas.

The "hard" version of area-based interventions, notably demolition, tends to act more as a cure-type approach to the problem rather than prevent it from happening. It should be noted that, unless extreme circumstances, demolition usually represents a policy failure[5] with enormous cost implications. The prevention-type of approach is less frequently found due to, amongst other reasons, the difficulty in anticipating social and urban decline of an area.

Overall, "hard" interventions have the advantage of being more visible and relatively easier to carry out (though with high cost and high levels of social fracture), while "softer" interventions have a more complex, long-term and process-oriented character but may be cheaper and more effective in the long term.

Integrating horizontal and area-based policies

Area-based policies have received a fair amount of criticism. However, there is also recognition that areas facing extreme social and urban decline are in need of spatially targeted interventions in order to prevent the formation of ghettoes and to provide anyone living there access to the full range of opportunities that cities have to offer.

When designing policies to tackle socio-spatial segregation, it is important to understand the structural factors underlying social urban problems in local areas, such as unemployment, poverty and lack of participation. There is consensus on the limitations of area-based policies to solve these wider structural problems that underpin social problems at the local level. This raises the need to develop policies that integrate horizontal and area-based interventions. This was also reinforced by the findings of the URBACT NODUS[6] and REGGOV[7] projects. As Andersson & Musterd state: "Area-based interventions might well be considered as a complement to more universal and sector policies"[8].

In Europe, we have found few attempts to achieve this integration. Nantes Métropole (France) provides an example (see box 4).

In our future work we will look in more detail to understand how area-based and horizontal interventions can best be combined to achieve the most results. We will pay special attention to the framework conditions for local actions, i.e. to what extent national and EU-level policies are needed to help incentivise municipalities to deal with their most disadvantaged areas.

Box 3: Social mix in a nutshell

Since the 1980s social mix has been a widespread approach amongst urban policy makers across Europe to tackle areas with high levels of socio-spatial segregation.

Although the **definition of social mix varies between countries**, broadly speaking these policies aim at changing the social composition of areas with high concentrations of a particular social group.

While in most cases this involves the introduction of better-off residents in deprived areas, in some cases this policy takes the opposite shape, for example, through the introduction of statutory quotas of new social housing construction in well-off areas. As in the case of area-based policies, social mix is based on a number of **assumptions**.

Specific assumptions commonly used to justify social mix policies include the expectation that proximity of different social groups to one another will foster social interaction amongst them, thereby improving social cohesion, and that a more "balanced" social composition will, amongst others, "calm" crime-ridden areas. In addition, it is expected that the physical maintenance of the area will improve through the influx of well-off residents.

However, these assumptions as well as the very objective of social mix are widely contested[i].

Some commentators raise "normative" arguments (i.e. whether social mix is a desirable policy objective), as well as pragmatic questions (i.e. does social mix work?).

Amongst the former are, for example, the dilemma between implementing social mix at the expense of the right to housing; the destruction of local social support networks and community identities and; the pricing-out of local residents by the arrival of better-off residents (gentrification). Pragmatic questions raised about social mix include whether social mix can improve the situation of residents in these areas or whether it just moves "the problem" to another area.

Furthermore, available evidence is inconclusive on whether living in close proximity to a different social group really fosters social interaction.

Last but not least, one of the key challenges for practitioners remains how to manage socially mixed areas.

(i) Atkinson, R. & Kintrea, K. (2001) Disentangling area effects: evidence from deprived and non-deprived neighbourhoods, Urban Studies, 38(12), pp. 2277–2298
Blanc, M. (2010) The Impact of Social Mix Policies in France, Housing Studies, Special Issue: Housing Policy and (De)Segregation: An International Perspective, Volume 25, Issue 2

Box 4: Integrating horizontal and area-based housing and urban policies to tackle socio-spatial segregation: the case of Nantes Métropole [i]

Nantes Métropole is an "Urban Community of Municipalities" that defines its housing priorities according to a Local Housing Plan – housing objectives and principles for metropolitan districts and towns.

The Nantes approach to socio-spatial segregation combines top-down, national-level horizontal policies with the design and implementation of a set of metropolitan and local (i.e. district-level) area-based policies. In addition to the national legislation about social mix and the enforceable "Right to Housing" law, the conurbation has several regulation tools such as the integration of social and urban mix areas in the Local Urbanism Plan.

Moreover, in order to guarantee social mix, it promotes a partnership with social landlords (that own and manage social housing).

Nantes Métropole developed an "experimental" rehousing policy for inhabitants from neighbourhoods concerned by urban regeneration, tested in the Malakoff and Pré Gauchet neighbourhoods.

Nantes Métropole adopted its first Local Housing Plan in 2004, followed by a second one for the period 2010-2016, which is more ambitious (5000-6000 dwellings built per year).

The latter has amongst its priorities the increase in new construction and the diversification of new dwellings affordable to low-income households either by increasing the social housing stock or by funding and reserving up to 30% of dwellings in new building programmes.

Furthermore, the plan aims to improve the geographical distribution of the construction funding efforts between the different municipalities, with a particular focus on reducing the deficit of social housing stock in some parts of the Metropolis.

This shared construction effort has to be related to the objective of improving the social mix, in response to the process of social polarization in urban areas. Additional actions in this domain are an urban renewal programme in social housing neighbourhoods.

Overall, the last decade has seen urban policy objectives and strategies being formulated at the metropolitan level, deemed the most appropriate level to integrate the populations' employment and residential needs.

However, urban social cohesion strategies and area-based policy remain limited to "priority urban zones".

One aspect that stands out in the approach of some local social landlords supported by Nantes Métropole to tackling socio-spatial segregation is the development of analytical tools to understanding "residential trajectories" and "life-cycles" of residents, and the integration of this knowledge in the design and implementation of its housing and social mix (rehousing) policies.

(i) URBACT SUITE The Housing Project Baseline Study available at: http://urbact.eu/en/projects/quality-sustainable-living/suite/homepage/; City Report: Nantes, WILCO Publication no. 25 (2012)

Nantes (2010). Photos: Iván Tosics
The segregation of social housing estates can effectively be reduced with public transport. In Nantes most of such estates are linked to the city centre with newly built tram lines

Preliminary conclusions

Our article shows that the issue of socio-spatial segregation is complex. The same symptoms of segregation in different cities might be present in areas that are very different in their dynamism and include people at different stages of their life trajectories. As we have shown, seemingly similar segregation patterns might be the results of totally different factors and reasons. All areas are heterogeneous and generalisations might be misleading.

Our URBACT Work stream aims to analyse further cases to elaborate useful suggestions for cities. We emphasise how to understand different forms of socio-spatial segregation and how to start addressing it. At this point we have formulated some preliminary statements:

- The phenomenon of socio-spatial segregation needs to be properly analysed and on that basis the objectives and spatial aspects of interventions need to be determined. The first task is to understand, analysing the dynamic processes, the type and problems of given areas (e.g. are they dead-end or transitory areas). This has to be followed by the analysis of the reasons behind the dynamic mobility processes of population groups. A typical mistake cities make is to judge neighbourhoods on the basis of static measures and deciding on policies which might undermine the role the area plays in the city in dynamic sense.

- At the level of policy design, local administrations should require up-to-date information and analysis on the socio-demographic, economic and geographical dynamics of their local populations in order to design policies that meet current and future needs effectively.

- In addition, on the implementation level it is advisable to involve users so as to achieve maximum impact through their input and cooperation. Furthermore, local partnerships and other efforts of cooperation across sectoral and organisational boundaries are crucial for the success of this type of intervention.

- In most cases both horizontal and area-based interventions are needed, with a long-term commitment to the proper combination of these different types of interventions. The example of Nantes gives a flavour of how this integration of different policies might be organised, especially at the spatial level of the functional urban area where negative externalities can best be mitigated.

- New ways of working across disciplines should be promoted at city level and at the level of smaller areas to improve the knowledge of what is at stake and what needs to be done. Such knowledge needs to be maintained over time to avoid repeating mistakes and reinventing the wheel. A solid information base, such as the social monitoring system in Berlin, is necessary for informing policy making and for allowing balanced and effective interventions.

All these questions will be discussed at the URBACT Annual Conference on 3-4 December in Copenhagen at the two workshops on socio-spatial segregation. After the conference a final paper will be published with practical suggestions for city practitioners dealing with these problems and with an update on how cities can deploy new approaches set out in EU regulations such as community led local development and integrated territorial initiatives.

Acknowledgement to Simon Güntner and the URBACT Secretariat for valuable remarks on this article.

(1) DG Regio 2011 Cities of Tomorrow, page 10 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/citiesoftomorrow/index_en.cfm

(2) Haussermann-Siebel, 2001, quoted in Cassiers-Kesteloot, 2012

(3) http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/CoNet/documents_media/Malm%C3%B6_URBACT_CoNet_LAP.pdf

(4) Musterd, S – Andersson, R, 2005: Housing mix, social mix, and social opportunities. In: Urban affairs review, Vol. 40, No. 6, July 2005 761-790

(5) At least of the original housing construction and sometimes of efforts to deal with current problems

(6) www.urbact.eu/nodus

(7) http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/reg-gov/our-outputs/

(8) Andersson & Musterd 2005 pp. 387

Acknowledgements to…

People involved in the workstream activities so far:

Workstream coordinator:
- *Iván Tosics*, URBACT Thematic Pole Manager on urban sustainable development

Workstream core group members:
- *Peter Ramsden*, Lead expert of the URBACT Smart Cities network and former URBACT Thematic Pole Manager
- *Darinka Czischke*, Delft University of Technology (The Netherlands) and former Thematic Expert of the URBACT SUITE network
- *Simon Güntner*, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences
- *Laura Colini*, IRS Leibnitz Institute for Regional and Structural Planning, Berlin and former Lead Expert of the URBACT URBAMECO project
- *Reinhard Fischer*, Berlin, former Lead Partner of the URBACT Co-Net network
- *Thierry Baert*, Lille, former Lead Partner of the URBACT Joining Forces project

Witnesses and advisors:
- *Pia Hellberg-Lannerheim* and *Bertil Nilsson*, Malmo, partner in the URBACT Co-Net network
- *Jan Vranken*, Antwerpen University
- *Paul Lawless*, Sheffield Hallam University
- *Ronald van Kempen*, Utrecht University
- *Georg Galster*, Wayne University, USA
- *Reiner Aster*, GSUB Berlin

MORE INFORMATION
http://www.conference2012.urbact.eu/workshops/about-conference/themes/against-divided-cities-in-europe