
CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios



Postmodern City, Gentrification and the Social Production of Fragmented Space

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Abstract

A new type of city has undoubtedly been taking shape in the latest decades to which, by commodity and lack of a better expression, is given the name of 'postmodern city'. The compact city, with sealed social zoning and precise limits, whose centre shows a relative social homogeneity, is torn in a group of distinct fragments where the effects of cohesion, continuity and urban readability give way to more complex and discontinuous territorial formations, which are socially and spatially enclaved. This process is partly due to the fact that, since the end of the 1960s, housing in cities of advanced capitalism has been facing significant changes through the emergence of new housing products and new forms of accommodation by gentrification. As a response to a growing social fragmentation and complexity, these changes have influenced the urban spatial organization towards an increasing micro-scale segregation. By approaching Bairro Alto as a case study we will focus on theoretical formulations whose claims are that this gentrification tendency, as a specific process of socially selective recentring in the city's central areas, has contributed to a social and residential fragmentation of contemporary urban space. The Bairro Alto, in the city of Lisbon, though repository of rooted and ancient cultural manifestations and traditions, has been facing deep changes in its social fabric with the arrival of new residents who have a particular lifestyle and who produce a particular and reticular social appropriation of the space-neighbourhood.

Keywords: Gentrification; Urban Fragmentation; Postmodern City; Culture of Consumption; Aestheticization of Social Life; Lisbon.

1. Introduction

It is more and more widely acknowledged that the complex contemporary changes at a socio-economic, cultural, political and technological level, and parallel developments at an aesthetic, intellectual and epistemological level do not merely represent an interruption in long-term developmental patterns but, on the contrary, indicate that distinctly different forms are now emerging. Whether these changes have been conceptualized in terms of industrial capitalist development at a final, late, disorganized stage of development, or whether in terms of late/hyper/over-modern formation, it seems that there is nevertheless a certain amount of agreement about the fact that things are not what they once appeared to be.

Throughout the last quarter of a century, pertinent ideas have been raised that the cities in the Western World have begun a new Era in their history. These ideas suggest that, as cities produced by modern societies, they undergo such far-reaching changes that they can no longer be accepted according to old labels. Neither can they

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be studied within the context of conventional urban theories. As a result of a whole set of changes related with restructuring the global economy and compressing time-space due to significant improvements in the means of transports and recent information technology, the larger cities in the developed capitalist world have undergone deep-seated changes in several vital aspects of their urban life: in their economic foundations, in their socio-cultural composition, in the urban structure and in politics and management, among others. A hearty consensus has already been reached among a growing number of authors as to the formation of a new kind of city which has appeared in the last few decades. For the sake of convenience and for want of a better expression, it has been called 'post-modern', 'post-industrial' or 'post-Fordist'. These terms owe a lot to the visionary theories put forward by Daniel Bell (1973) and Alvin Toffler (1970, 1981).

Nevertheless, there are certain undeniable aspects about the urban dynamic which, one could say, launched an experimental period a few decades ago; one that has continued up to the present, where a gradual transformation of the paradigm has occurred. Although a lot of theories warn us that many of these aspects seem to appear when links with the past have been cut off, it does not necessarily mean that there are no traces of the familiar and signs of continuity with Modernity to be found among them. One sort of answer to the different transformations that have been happening in the urban condition consists of defending the idea that such transformations represent variations of a continuous nature whereby the modern city shows on-going signs of crises. Changes are frequently depicted as only being passing symptoms within a basically consistent urban modernity, and not as the emerging signs of a potentially new form of urban social life.

Nevertheless, if it is a fact that the emergence of the post-modern city of late capitalism does not automatically replace and therefore obliterate the modern city of industrial capitalism, it is also true that the signs of change do not leave much room for doubts when outlining a new form of organizing urban space. The growing social urban fragmentation proves it to be so. It is a result of fast-moving changes in the economic and technological domain; of transformations associated with experiencing time and space; of transferring production to consumption as the pivot around which individual and social life revolves; of the increasing global scale of economic and cultural urban life and the growing complexity of socially sharing the urban space.

For more than half a century, the city drew up its image symbolically according to the serious, circumspect outlines of the industrial zone, and the retail and financial centre, representing its urban landscape with the symbolic factory chimney stack, the retail corridors of down-town and the rich, emblematic architecture of the financial district. At the moment, the city is perceived according to new perspectives, guided by principles that are also at variance with the recent societal modes that have produced the urban space.

It was only since the 1970s that a substantial change in this tendency started taking shape as a result of a new framework of social and cultural values gaining in status, even if the changes in the social dynamic had made themselves felt some years earlier. A new order of daily life took root and among the deepest and most keenly felt changes, which the industrialization process itself came to exert on world sociability and life styles, was the emergence of new experiences to do with time and with having to redefine the geography of daily life. Within this setting, the process of gentrification may be seen as one of the most visible spatial processes in this far-reaching socio-economic mutation. It was the materialization of the profound restructuring process that Western, late-capitalist societies experimented with in the urban space, under the pretext of self-affirming their own post-modern condition.

A new type of city has undoubtedly been taking shape in the latest decades to which, by commodity and lack of a better expression, is given the name of postmodern city. The compact city, of sealed social zoning and precise limits, whose centre shows a relative social homogeneity, is torn in a group of distinct fragments where the effects of cohesion, continuity and urban readability give way to more complex and discontinuous territorial formations, which are socially and spatially enclaved. This process is partly due to the fact that, since the end of the 1960s, housing in cities of advanced capitalism has been facing significant changes through the emergence of new housing products and new forms of accommodation. As a response to a growing social fragmentation and complexity, these changes have influenced the urban spatial organization towards an increasing micro-scale segregation. We will focus on theoretical formulations whose claims are that this gentrification tendency, as a

specific process of socially selective recentring in the city's central areas, has contributed to a social and residential fragmentation of contemporary urban space.

By approaching Bairro Alto as a case study, we will focus on theoretical formulations whose claims are that this gentrification tendency, as a specific process of socially selective recentring in the city's central areas, has contributed to a social and residential fragmentation of contemporary urban space. The Bairro Alto, in the city of Lisbon, though repository of rooted and ancient cultural manifestations and traditions, has been facing deep changes in its social fabric with the arrival of new residents who have a particular lifestyle and who produce a particular and reticular social appropriation of the space-neighbourhood.

2. On the post-modern urban condition

The concept of post-modernity has been invoked to describe the developments occurring in a certain number of areas such as architecture, art, literature, the cinema, music, fashion, communication, the experiences of space and time, aspects of identity as well as respective thought about them and other larger questions about social life which have been raised in the spheres of philosophy, politics and sociology, and also in geography.

There is an enormous amount of scientific literature that has amassed valid writing about the question of post-modernity being a relevant issue in social, economic, cultural, political and epistemological discourse². Post-modernity is not only a contemporary social, economic and political condition but also, and above all, it is a way of reflecting upon and providing a response to the numerous indications about the limits and limitations of modernity. Post-modernity is an indispensable condition for raising doubts, uncertainties and anxieties that increasingly seem to be corollaries of an unfinished modernity. The work engraved in stone that has been done by Boaventura de Sousa Santos has demonstrated that modern science has plunged into a profound crisis and we are experimenting our way through an era of paradigmatic transition between the modernity paradigm and a new paradigm whereby the latter's emergence is made up of visible signs to what we have called post-modernity for lack of a better term.

One of the first, if not the very first point worth discussing about post-modernity, is knowing not only "what it signifies" but also, and above all, in the event of it meaning something, "what the signification is of the signified" (which presupposes that it is different from what is designated by other concepts and/or paradigms). The prefix "post", while it surely expresses, more than anything else, the idea of answering back modernity, whether in the form of opposition or a breakaway, or as a different kind of continuity, also hints, at first glance, a certain taxonomic exhaustion. This being the case, it is important to find out whether one may speak of post-modernity as a new paradigm (or non-paradigm) and if so, ask what it consists of and how one may conceive its theoretical principles. However, this is not the aim of the present study.

Notwithstanding criticism about the excesses of post-modern discourse, it is essential to study its thought. If the theoretical debate that came up with the term had few repercussions on geography as a spatial science, the truth is that its perspective in trying to understand the world and science, changed the coordinates guiding Western culture. It is, therefore, worthwhile having a brief look at the uncontested focus of interest whereby post-modernity has come to represent the politics of difference, the fringes of the consumer culture and the new styles of urban living that have given the contemporary cityscape its stamp, its "decentred" identity as a gentrifier and as the production of a fragmented urban space.

Over the last three decades, the epistemological, social debate going on about the post-modern condition has frequently intercepted that of the city (Cachinho, 2006). The proliferation of neologisms describing emergent urban forms is indicative of intellectual confusion rather than mastery. They include such descriptors as

² See the basic references made by scientific literature dealing with post-modernism that has influenced Geography: Sousa Santos (1987, 1989, 1994, 2000); Dear, (1988, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2001); Dear and Flusty (2002); Benko and Strohmayer (1997); Soja (1989, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2001); Harvey (1989, 1996); among others.

polycentric, postmodern, patchwork, splintered, and post-(sub)urban. The places produced by these altered processes are variously labelled as city-region, micropolitan region, exopolis, edge city, or metroburbia. By the mid-1980s, the urban question had called into question the status of the analytical object called the city in both material and epistemological/ontological terms.

The indeterminacies surrounding the material and mental constructs of urban geography were complicated by a renaissance in social theory during the last quarter of the 20th century. The rise of post-structuralism, postmodernism, feminism, post-colonialism, *inter alia* altered the epistemological and ontological bases of knowing the urban space. Broadly speaking, such approaches shifted attention to the cultural realm and questioned the cognitive foundations of truth claims from all persuasions. The enduring importance of postmodernism's ontological and epistemological challenge has been widely accepted. The rationalities of the scientific revolution and the enlightenment have been challenged, replacing a belief in truth, foundationalism and laws with beliefs based in relativism, pragmatism and indeterminacy. The central tenets of modernism have been overridden by a cacophony of different voices, each claiming to offer something that helps us understand the world about us. Just as the core beliefs of modernist thought have been displaced by postmodernism's multiple ways of knowing, so has the notion of a universal urban process been dissolved by the multiplying logics that are transforming city-making. At the core of this transformation is the altered relationship between city and hinterland. In short, the process of becoming urban involves altered structural and functional relationships at the inter- and intra-urban scale that are radically different from those in the modernist city. The multi-centred or polycentric city is now constitutive of the urban and the urban question, not the classic mono-centric urban centre (Dear, 2000).

According to Phillips (2005), in the 1980s human geography has been influenced by a wider variety of intellectual influences including those associated with some notion of postmodernism. The study of gentrification has not been immune from these changes, and indeed in many respects has been amongst the leading sites of contestation over the significance of ideas of postmodernism.

Firstly, many of the areas described as having been 'gentrified' are said to incorporate the elements of 'postmodern architecture' and thereby become a 'postmodern landscape'. Postmodernism can be perceived as referring to an architectural style which seeks to be different from the modernist conventions of high, rectangular, large-scale regularly laid out and uniform constructed buildings. By contrast, postmodern architects sought to introduce variations in building surface, shape and size, with much of this variation being derived from sticking together elements of different styles, to create a 'pastiche'.

A second element of postmodernism in human geography has been an emerging distrust of the grand theory. Clear examples of grand theories are the theories of logical positivist spatial science, but it can also be seen to apply to other seemingly quite different approaches. Hence, Marxism, for example, can be seen to be a grand theory through its use of concepts like modes of production and class struggle. By contrast, postmodernists suggest that there are multiple causes of the gentrification phenomena and their importance will vary considerably from one situation to another. It can be said to favour 'humble' and 'eclectic' theory formation of 'local knowledges'.

Studies have been made about the urban space's modernity and its consequences that suggest it is now necessary to adopt and use the notion of post-modernity in order to duly understand the current urban condition of gentrification. In fact, when using the adjective, 'post-modern', it suggests that the urban phenomenon finds itself going through a transition stage where the characteristics and principles attributed to it in the 'modern period' are a lot less present now. It even emanates the general aura of having exhausted the urban experience it once represented. It is implicitly suggested that the new signs which are taking shape have not yet come up with a coherent model able to ensure an effective definition and a completely uninhibited use of the adjective 'post-modern', when referring to the city and the urban space.

When considering the question in terms of cycles, we may venture the idea that we are on the brink of a new cycle of the city's life that has often been described as being post-Fordist. This name is also a little ambiguous as it is based on the supposition that Fordism and the paradigm of the preceding cycle have both been completely

overtaken, which is not exactly the case. However, there is general agreement among more and more authors who have witnessed the formation of a new kind of city over the last few decades, which may be called 'post-modern', 'post-industrial' or 'post-Fordist'.

Restructuring the economic foundation is associated with the progressive de-industrialization of urban spaces and increasing the presence of tertiary activity, where both factors have a decisive influence on the city's functional structure. They redefine its inner functionality because the replacement process is stepped up whereby spaces reserved for production are now given over to the services and leisure. In fact, we are witnessing profound changes in the modern city's functionality where production used to be a component. The transition from being a modern city to becoming a post-modern city has been characterized, among many other aspects, by deep-seated changes in the demographic and socio-cultural spheres – changes in the family's structure and composition (a growth in the number of single households, a larger number of common-law marriages and childless couples), more working women, greater access to education, and the democratization of education, among others. All these factors have likewise helped towards radically changing social structures and patterns, conducts and life styles that come with the territory, mainly in following patterns of choice, with (p)reference for the habitat (Rodrigues, 1992a, 1992b, 2008).

As was mentioned above, the gentrification process has been set against a far-reaching socio-demographic re-composition, seen in the emergence of a so-called 'new middle-class' which is distinct from the traditional middle class (Ley, 1994, 1996; Butler, 1997). Its members occupy places in the traditional occupations which have tended to grow, and in the new professions exercising activity in what Bourdieu (1989) has called 'symbolic production'. They are the cultural intermediaries linked to the cultural industries, the arts, publicity, design, fashion, culture, image-making and marketing, architecture and decorating, among others.

3. Post-modern geographies: Fragmentation of the urban space and decentering the gentrifier subject

Gentrification is a term that has come to refer to the movement of affluent, usually young, middle-class residents into run-down inner-city areas. The effect is that these areas become socially, economically and environmentally up-graded. It's a process of socio-spatial change where the rehabilitation of residential property in a working-class neighbourhood by relatively affluent incomers leads to the displacement of former residents unable to afford the increased costs of housing that accompany regeneration (Pacione, 2001). Consequently, it's a process by which poor and working-class neighbourhoods in the inner city are refurbished via an influx of private capital and middle-class homebuyers and renters – neighbourhoods that had previously experienced disinvestment and a middle-class exodus. According to Smith (1996), it represents a dramatic yet unpredicted reversal of what most twentieth-century urban theories had been predicting as the fate of the central and inner-city.

Therefore, by definition, gentrification is always a process of the city's 'social filtering'. It strips the old city quarters of its important social re-composition, narrowing down the process that operates the housing market so that it deals more directly and concretely with the traditional, run-down working class areas. It means socially recomposing (and replacing) these spaces and transforming them into medium, medium-upper class quarters in a process which we are forced to call 'social replacement' whereby the resulting socio-spatial segregation is strengthened and the social division of the urban space is deepened.

The truth is that the point appropriation of space, which is characteristic of gentrification, introduces changes in the scale of socio-residential segregation that is the outcome. This is witnessed later on, and contrary to what happens in the modern city, it is on a micro scale that is a lot more complicated because it generates confusion over the city's primary social divide-lines consisting of homogenous agglomerations inherent to the principle of functional zoning typical of an industrial city.

Hence, when building projects start appearing in the historical, essentially working-class quarters and are aimed at housing people in the higher economic and social brackets, acting as true enclaves of luxury in the midst lower-class housing, it is easy to come to the conclusion that gentrification offers an example of a new kind of urban space organization, reinforcing the fragmented nature that is typical of the post-modern city. Implantations of real estate projects directed at the gentrifiers have a select point nature and make a sudden, stark difference when looking at the surrounding social environs. Notwithstanding, we need to stress that the characteristic central to the geographies of post-modern gentrification lies in the urban fragmentation, which derives from the selective recentralization inherent to the process. This fragmentation is found to be present whether in terms of the sporadic islands of new real estate products aimed at potential gentrifiers, or in the broken-up socio-spatial appropriation that the gentrifier causes in the quarter and in the city, or in the gentrifier's identity that has become increasingly polygonal and chameleon-like, turning living in a post-modern city into part of his nature, as Cachinho (2006) suggests when speaking about the consumer.

The fragmentation of space should be understood as "spatial organization characterized by the existence of distinct spatial enclaves that are not contiguous with the socio-spatial structure surrounding them" (Barata Salgueiro, 1998: 225). The author points out that what defines the enclave is not so much its size (which could even be small) but the kind of relationship (or better, the non-relationship) it has with the surrounding areas which adjoin it in spatial terms although they may be dispossessed of their social and functional continuity. The process of gentrification that occurs in the centre of various metropolises in the advanced capitalist world thus seems to corroborate the thesis put forward by Teresa Barata Salgueiro in her most recent studies (1997, 1998, 1999, 2001), on the post-modern city as a fragmented space. The compact city with its well-defined boundaries in whose centre there is a relative social homogeneity, has been shattered into a set of distinct fragments where the effects of cohesion, continuity and urbanist legibility have given way to more complicated territorial arrangements that are spatially disconnected and socially and spatially enclosed (Dematteis, 2001; Graham and Marvin, 2001).

The real estate projects that have been built with the gentrifiers in mind have an island-like point quality about them and cause a brusque difference when compared with the social make up around them. The urban structure promoting them is characterized by enclaves in dissonance with the mostly homogenous socio-spatial composition of the environment. We could say that although a spatial contiguity exists, there is no social or functional contiguity, the close neighbourhood having lost its social harmony owing to the fact that the new neighbours and the activities which they pursue are increasingly carried out in networks of relationships. Each gentrifier builds up his/her networks of transversal social connections with several residential spaces so that the strong links based on local solidarity and friendship now tend to surpass the geography delimiting the quarter.

In the post-industrial city, there is a gradual loss of importance as regards the 'next door' factor in structuring social relationships. In fact, the 'next' has ceased to be the 'same'. Social relations among the new neighbours are less and less likely to focus upon the space occupied by the quarter and the close neighbours. Each individual may arrange his/her own way of establishing a relationship close at hand and a relationship further afield, resorting to a profuse variety of relationships in the most diversified of social circles (Remy, 2002; Navez-Bouchanine, 2002; Bourdin, 2002; Miguel do Carmo, 2006). This has been largely due to, among other factors, improvements in transports and communications which have restructured the pattern that is now within the individual's reach, thus freeing many localities of their close confinements (Barata Salgueiro, 1998; Poche, 1998).

The problem of modern identity was, indeed, how to build an identity and safeguard its solidness and stability. The problem of a post-modern identity is, in the first place, how to avoid tying it down and how to keep all options open. In the setting of the post-industrial city, the different appropriations of space have emerged from the temporary, fluid aggregations established among various social connections (Bauman, 1995, 2000, 2004) or, in other words, flowing from these aggregations are various inter-personal choices and desires. The 'old' identities which gave the social world its stability for many years are now in decline. In the meantime, new identities have been forged, fragmenting the individual and tracing multiple, fluid paths. The 'identity crisis' is part and parcel of a far-reaching process of changes which, according to Stuart Hall (2005), is dislocating the central structures and processes of modern societies and toppling the frameworks of references that previously

lent people a stable anchorage in the social world. The appropriation of space is made more particularly in function of the different ramifications that previously gave the individual's daily-life experience its structure but which is now more fragmented (Miguel do Carmo, 2006).

These are the central elements celebrating the post-modern in its fragmented, multidimensional nature of gentrifier socio-spatial experience, thus meeting what Deleuze and Guattari, and also Lyotard have said in their work. They have all underlined the fact that contemporary experience is one of fragmentation, disorder and polyvalence. Indeed, these attributes are likewise applicable to the social identities of the urban space. Post-modern geographers studying gentrification have attacked the unidimensional ontology imposed by structuralism, mainly the controlling, self-certain impetus that attempts to classify the gentrifying subject as a unit with a perfectly typical profile.

For example, for Rose (1984), if it is correct to sketch a global outline about the belongings of gentrification protagonists, it is also important to refer to some of their mould-breaking traits owing to more diversified habits, values and life-styles. It is useful to consider the likelihood of various kinds of gentrifiers in conformity with variables such as: the stage in their life cycle which coincides with the moment they begin the process of gentrification; their socio-professional status; their income or economic resources, and their standard of adapting to their new home. The author draws attention to what she has called the marginal gentrifier, the less privileged fringes of the new middle classes who indicate a significant split between the high educational and cultural capital and the lower level of economic capital. Frequent examples are young students or recent graduates who are under-employed or have temporary jobs on precarious contracts, but who prefer residing in the central areas of the cities.

All of this converges on the need to understand the social micro-units, the spaces containing restricted groups and the complex social dynamic, mainly in terms of noting a considerable heterogeneity of spatial, social and cultural behaviours which do not easily fall into a single classification of well-defined social classes, such as those professed by Marxist theory. The simultaneous multiple belonging to various groups with their own fluid references in keeping with one's life cycle, bestows a chameleon-like quality on the typical urban *modus vivendi* of the gentrifier. This is what gives it its apparently chaotic quality and the added difficulty of making the methodological categories work so that they are able to detect such practices (Beauregard, 1986).

The traditional, well-defined correspondence between socio-economic status and social consumer practices where the spatial layout used to be spread over a cohesive homogenous patch (typical of the modern industrial city) has now come apart. Most of the current cultural status-builders are now to be found in diffused networks which are not often rooted in the places people reside in, or in family relationships, or even in their own socio-economic bracket. In the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1995, 2004), this spatial permeability and contingency has been expressed in the rhizome metaphor which is a post-structuralist concept based on stockroot forms where the connections are always (de)constructed at different levels and within multiple orders of territorial scales. In this sense, then, it is fairly difficult to build a general model of the appropriation of the social space accorded the post-modern urban condition as there is great heterogeneity in the ways of appropriating space and time in different, juxtaposing societal contexts (Barata Salgueiro, 2002).

The development of the consumer society offers a large number of identity-forging alternatives where it is impossible to deduce or relate determined types of cultural practices to the spatiality implicitly associated with certain kinds of socio-economic status of the gentrifier. According to the idea put forward by Teresa Barata Salgueiro (1997), it may be said that there is a tendency to appropriate the urban space here and there in detriment to the traditional extensive appropriation covering a whole area in a specific zone. Territory continues to play a role in identifying people although nowadays, the process is more selective and made at micro level where functional interdependencies and self-interest form the basis of social relations, thereby superseding neighbourhood solidarity and the former reliance on being close at hand. The wide offer of social diversity has become very relevant in its association with new consumer patterns and the pluralism of life styles which produce new, diverse cultural demands. As a phenomenon of urban restructuring, gentrification is bearing witness to the appearance of greater social specificity and particularities which have been reflected in a growing

differentiation of social and cultural practices. This in turn has been reflected spatially in networks which have formed a complex social fabric that is difficult to decipher.

4. Gentrification and the social production of fragmented space in Bairro Alto, Lisbon

Located in the pericentral and western area of Lisbon's downtown, Bairro Alto is one of the most traditional folk neighbourhoods in Lisbon's historical centre with its valued architectural and urban heritage where more than 500 years of history have taken place. Its cultural heritage is very rich and derives more particularly from the unique character of its urban shape. The image of its streets is built in a great variety of detail that belongs to different architectural responses resulting from long-lasting sedimentations and from corresponding stylistic evolutions.

Figure 1. Location of the area under study - Bairro Alto, in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area.



Source: Author's elaboration (2008).

There are often disagreements about the true geographical area of Bairro Alto. In fact, most Lisbon city-dwellers consider that Bairro Alto is composed of the area delimited to the East by the streets, Ruas S. Pedro de Alcântara and Misericórdia, to the North by Rua do D. Pedro V, to the West by Rua do Século, and to the South by the square, Largo do Calhariz and the street, Calçada do Combro. The area is under the jurisdiction of two Parish Councils, Encarnação and Santa Catarina. These two parishes constitute what is generally known as Bairro Alto (Figure 1).

Although there are spatial contexts which are differentially prone to gentrification in Bairro Alto, this fact is not enough to warrant a wider territorial delimitation in search of small enclaves within the historical neighbourhood. The neighbourhood should be perceived as a whole, although there are highly divergent internal characteristics which denote the still embryonic phase of gentrification in it, as we shall later see. Therefore, the area of Bairro Alto which is the subject of this study is substantially larger than what was referred to above, although a precise description of its boundaries is not pertinent to the aim of this paper.

In the previous paragraphs, we described how the process of gentrification was subsidiary to the fragmentation of urban space, thereby helping to shatter the compact city and disrupt its precisely-drawn borders and set up social divisions where its centre gave evidence of relative social homogeneity. With points of new real-estate products becoming available in the heart of the Bairro Alto quarter, this area of the city seems to have shattered into a set of distinctive fragments where the previous effects of cohesion, continuity and urban legibility have now been replaced by complex spatial formations that are disconnected from each other in terms of territory and are huddled into social and spatial enclaves. Gentrification is, after all, the most indicative and paradigmatic example of how the fragmented city has been consolidated as a post-modern space. It is proof that urban life today necessarily feeds upon conflicts and confrontations where the fragmentation process seems to juxtapose other splinter activities whereby the whole dwindles into the individual. The fragmentation process which is produced and accentuated has as much to do with space as with the individual.

In terms of the transition of the Bairro Alto quarter emerging from the social-spatial re-grouping process which it is presently going through and which has been relatively self-contained so far, things are gradually opening up to the outside and becoming more inclusive through the simple means of venturing beyond the confines of one's home whether to go to work or to pursue activities such as shopping or entertainment. As a basically residential quarter, Bairro Alto is not bereft of such facilities although, when it comes to the newcomers, what we see is a serious rift between the professional and the extra-professional, which tends to encourage spatial mobility leading people to go outside the quarter. The fragmentation present in the gentrifiers' point appropriation of space in the Bairro Alto quarter is based first and foremost on a diffused network of social contacts that seeks a suitable response to the various demands of a cultural nature or for the services in spaces located outside the residential quarter because the new residents fail to find them within.

With the exception of a few newcomers who mostly use the quarter during the day and for this reason show a greater likelihood not only for doing their shopping in the quarter but also, and more in particular, going to the local restaurants and hence having the chance to establish closer contact with the community, most of the new residents who were interviewed have established their social contact with people living outside the quarter. Usually, their friendships are found in places where they had spent their childhood or where they had gone to school. Their relationships with the original residents of the quarter are limited to simple greetings on a daily basis, or to what is strictly necessary.

In terms of the socio-economic functions of the city, mobility represents the increased independence of these very functions when seen in the light of the habitat's geography and even in their cultural and social capital which the interviewees' profile reveals only too well. As we have already seen, it is deeply entrenched in the paraphernalia of the consumer culture and the aestheticization of social life.

It is these two phenomena that have been briefly described – consumer culture and aestheticization of social life – that are at the basis of the appearance of a 'new middle class' in redesigning city centres and, consequently, in the valuation of new housing products that we start to find in them. The new middle class is also composed of

‘cultural intermediaries’, a new social group which carries out scientific, cultural and technical work related to education, professional training and to the academic world. In the case of Bairro Alto, this group is also visible, as approximately 30% of the new residential population in the neighbourhood belongs to the scientific, technical, artistic and similar professions. This percentage may seem overly high due to competition with other residential areas in the city that have also received important population flows in the last few years where individuals belonging to these social and professional groups are predominant. However, if we consider the groups of managers and executive staff as well as other office workers and technicians, all of which number 15%, and if we add this percentage to the scientific, cultural and technical professions, the total is about 45%. In spite of the unquestionable importance of these groups of more qualified workers among the new residents in the neighbourhood, the general structure of the working population presents a relatively balanced distribution. The less qualified workers found in industry, commerce and the services are also well represented. At first sight, this fact would seem to put at stake the process of “social filtering” associated with gentrification (Table 1).

Table 1. Residential population in Bairro Alto and in Lisbon, according to professional groups (representative by household) in 2001 (%)

<i>Professional Groups</i>	<i>Lisbon</i>	<i>Bairro Alto</i>	<i>New Residents</i>
People with scientific, technical, artistic and similar professions; managers and higher executive/administrative staff	30.9	21.9	32.9
Office personnel and technicians	27.3	27.4	11.8
Protection and security personnel, personal services and homemakers, and like professions including commerce	13.8	20.7	39.0
Agriculture and fishing workers; Armed Forces	0.9	0.6	0.4
Workers in the extraction and manufacturing industries; fixed-machinery operators and transport workers	12.2	12.1	15.9

Source: INE, Population Census, 2001. Social and housing Survey 1992/1993 – Bairro Alto and Bica Municipal Technical Office.

By definition, gentrification involves a ‘social filtering’ process in the city. An important process of social recomposition is underway in the old city neighbourhoods. It indicates a process that operates in the housing market, and more particularly where run-down housing is concerned in the traditionally working class neighbourhoods. In corresponding to social recomposition (and substitution) of spaces and to transforming them into middle and upper-middle class neighbourhoods, and in learning about the resulting strengthening of social and spatial segregation, it is important to refer to the deepening social division of the urban space. Coming back to the analysis of Table 1, the truth is that the point appropriation of space which is characteristic of gentrification, has introduced changes in the scale of segregation in the social and housing scene. In a contrast to what used to happen in the modern city, this is evident, at a micro scale of higher complexity, throwing into turmoil the original way in which the social division of the city fell into homogeneous zoning which is inherent to the principle of functional zoning associated with the industrial city. The change in scale is not perceptible in the National Institute of Statistics’ data available for the ward.

When we see the emergence of housing estates in historical neighbourhoods of essentially working-class characteristics that are now destined for groups of a higher socio-economic status – being as they are true luxury

enclaves contained within lower class residential areas – as in the present case of Bairro Alto, we may easily conclude that gentrification is an example of a new kind of organization of the urban space, reinforcing a fragmented structure which is characteristic of the postmodern city. The gentrification process in Bairro Alto seems, therefore, to corroborate the thesis advocated by Teresa Barata Salgueiro in her most recent studies (1998, 2001, 2002) of the postmodern city as a fragmented space. The compact city, of precise limits, whose centre shows a relative social homogeneity, splinters itself into a group of distinct fragments where the effects of urban cohesion, continuity and legibility, give way to more complex territorial formations, territorially discontinuous and social and spatially enclaved (Graham and Marvin, 2001). It reveals the still primary state in which gentrification is found and demonstrates its merely isolated spatial expression.

5. Final remarks

Increased mobility owing to the generalized access people have to motorcars, the quantity of information input (the importance of the mass media), and the advances made in recent communication technology allow a greater diversity of contacts among individuals. Such contacts are segmented and multiplied into different roles and identities but they also have to do with the several networks based on socio-cultural practices (some of them virtual such as operated through the worldwide web) which are translated into spatialities possessing a diffused and fragmented consistency, and witnessed in cultural practices that are scattered in different, separate and distant places not spatially interconnected. For many individuals, the spatiality of a particular socio-cultural practice is no longer defined by territorial continuity but rather by going to and ‘hanging out’ in a series of places, spots which are standardized and make sense as a whole only in the practices each one of them offers. In fact, it is increasingly more apparent that individual people’s places of action are made up of points that are distant from each other but are interconnected by cultural practices and patterns of social life. This situation is responsible for the diffused, fragmented social pattern of practices and the social appropriation of space which has ceased to rely on any kind of spatial contiguity.

Nowadays it is accepted that in their daily social situations, people behave according to the competences buoying up their identities which, opposite to what happened in modernity, fail to be more stable and rigid. Instead, identities have become transitory, ephemeral and plural. They are the object of a multiplicity of choices and possibilities and as such, they do not allow themselves to trace out a well-defined spatial pattern. Identity has become highly relational and interactive and reveals its contingent nature and dependence upon a personal, affective and subjective structure which is under continual progressive (re)construction by the subjects themselves (Fortuna, 1994).

The variety, under-pinnings and overlays of narratives and interpretative parameters about the world and life acting upon social identities reveal how the latter are consistently and rapidly being destroyed, only to give way to more or less momentary, disordered identities. It involves what Fortuna (1994) has called the “creative destruction” of identities. This continual readjustment of individuals’ identity matrixes necessarily calls for an appraisal of the meaning given the primary axes around which characteristic modern identities used to be constructed: socio-economic class, gender, employment, educational qualifications and family status. Nowadays, we are witnessing a de-centring of individuals and the problematic issue of identities. The current trend seems to lie in the narcissistic search for self-satisfaction which goes hand-in-hand with building errant personalities, free from lasting bonds and commitments and more in tune with fleeting attractions to newly emerging “centres”.

David Ley (1986, 1994, 1996) also makes it very clear that much of what is reflected in the gentrification process has resulted from changes in the social and cultural domain. They have not only had repercussions on daily practices and experiences or on the representational models and values of these more specific social sectors, but have also strengthened the social structure of Western contemporary societies. It is a case of what Lipovetsky (1983) has defined as contemporary individualism. The contemporary world, dominated by objects, images, information and hedonist, permissive values as well as by the consumer revolution, the cult of personal

freedom and relaxation, has generated a new way of controlling behaviours while diversifying and changing life styles and causing a constant swing to-and-fro between faiths and self-confessed social roles. In other words, what we have here is a new stage in the history of Western individualism, the stage of the personalization process.

The personalization process is the driving force behind the entire configuration of the gentrifier's motivational structure and comes into its own when house-moving trends inherent to the gentrification process are put into practice. The success registered in the central areas of the city and the efficient response to their spatial allure, directly vary with the degree at which the personalization process is fulfilled. It dominates all the surrounding features of the gentrification phenomenon (the possibility of appropriating the historical, heritage and architectural aspects of the old city quarters) because from now on in the sphere of real-estate offer as well as in the supply of production generally speaking, all these aspects will count as priority measures to fully satisfying the demands and wishes of the gentrifier, who is regarded as a unique individual with his/her singular personal views.

On the other hand, in order to understand the importance of the space in which social identity is built, one needs to go back to the principle that identity is defined and affirmed through difference (Bourdieu, 1979). Identity, therefore, may not represent a continuous homogeneity of practices, values and representations in the several cultural domains because of the polyform situational contexts in which they themselves determine how the production of individual identity will be expressed. It is necessary to understand that the effect of social and cultural practices converging upon the condition of being a gentrifier arises from the condition itself and does not happen because of any sharing of a common socio-economic situation. Perceiving the historical quarter-space as a means of building the gentrifier's identity does not conform to applied classical theory because it goes against the very essence of identity which in itself is affirmed and defined in the difference and the particular, and never in homogenous social and cultural practices that are induced and conditioned by the environment of a socio-economic class. This analytical perspective has enjoyed certain relevance in the most recent writings on gentrification. However it does not solve difficulties when it comes to explaining the many discrepancies in the practices, strategies and motivations triggering consumerism within the same class. Nevertheless, despite this omission, it gives an account of the changes implicit in the geography of the social appropriation of urban space in late-modern society and economy and at the same time, reveals the shortcomings of the traditional theoretical models that have been adopted with the aim of explaining the phenomenon.

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