Marginal Urbanisms

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Informal and Formal Development in Cities of Latin America

Edited by

Felipe Hernández and Axel Becerra

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INTRODUCTION

LOCATING MARGINALITY IN LATIN AMERICAN CITIES

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Marginal urban development continues to be a challenging phenomenon in most Latin American cities. Although it is generally assumed that marginal urbanisation is a twentieth-century phenomenon, it has been ubiquitous since the foundation of Latin American cities in the sixteenth century. The phenomenon became more complex and extensive during the second half of the twentieth century, but it is important to understand its longevity. Indeed, it is difficult to approach the study of Latin American cities, historically and in the present, without the notion that marginality has always been an inherent part of them. The conditions of marginality and the extension of informal development that we see today in most cities throughout the continent are a magnified expression of the conditions of urban growth initiated by the Spanish and Portuguese with their segregationist approach to urban planning and design during the colonial period.

It is pertinent to start a revision of current attitudes toward urban marginality and informality with a historical reference given the fact that most of the celebratory literature produced in the past ten years focuses on recent interventions in the slums of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela. Although the celebration has receded, and a reflective mode seems to prevail at the moment, the relative success of programmes (and punctual isolated projects) in the above-mentioned countries has generated an architectural rhetoric that sees urban marginality as a problem that can be resolved via the insertion of urban infrastructure: transport, schools, libraries, parks and other communal buildings. This has fuelled an attitude of physical determinism, the idea that complex socio-economic urban problems can be resolved by transforming the physical environment. The implementation of rapid transport systems throughout Latin America, and other parts of the developing world, is a clear example. In the 1990s

Curitiba implemented successfully the first system. Bogotá followed with significant success and, then, other cities in Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico and Ecuador followed suit—with varying degrees of success and failure. Medellín built a cable car (Metro Cable) to link the slums on the hills with the elevated metro that runs along the valley. Today there are similar systems in Caracas and Rio, others are being built in Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil and South Africa. Another trend is the construction of schools and libraries in slums to improve education and, thus, maximise opportunities of employment. The assumption that physical infrastructure per se will reduce urban marginality ignores the complex and convoluted historical experiences of marginalised people, the very reasons why they are marginalised.

The purpose of this volume is not to celebrate recent interventions in Latin American slums. Instead, the essays collected here present a reflection on the achievements of the past twenty years, given that success has only been partial. There has been great development in governmental efficiency, so national and local governments have been able to execute important projects and urban programmes, thereby quickly contributing to the improvement of quality of life in deprived, often violent, communities. On the other hand, the causes of marginality have not always been addressed. As a result, the factors that cause collective disadvantage continue to affect many communities throughout Latin America. In other words, the essays in this volume focus on the wide range of socio-economic, political, ethnic and historical issues that have influenced the appearance of marginal urbanisms and informal architectures in Latin American cities, rather than focusing on physical interventions. The underlying premise is that changing the physical environment alone can only lead to superficial improvement of urban conditions. More significant change can only be achieved by addressing—through social discourse, policy and design—the subjacent socio-economic conditions that cause certain groups of people to exist in perennial conditions of disadvantage. Although contributors address different aspects according to the disciplinary fields in which they work and their research interests, there is thematic consistency throughout the volume in the interest to revise—and reflect—on the experiences of the past twenty years.

In order to create a context for the broad range of topics, and critical approaches, concerning the question of marginality and urban informality included in this volume, this introductory chapter discusses three key aspects: 1) the concept of urban marginality itself, 2) the prevalence of colonial urban principles and, 3) the question of race and its influence on the fabric of cities. The first section shows that marginality is not a

twentieth-century phenomenon in Latin American urbanism but rather an inherent characteristic of the continent's cities since their foundation. The second section argues that key aspects of colonial discourse continue to influence development in the continent: the socio-ethnic and economic fabric of Latin American cities continues to display patterns of segregation and discrimination whose origins can be traced to the Spanish and Portuguese colonial periods. The third section discusses the existence of widespread, yet concealed, racist practices which have an important effect on the way Latin American cities are built, experienced and consumed by people. The last section of this chapter explores the possibilities of translating recent academic debates into practice. As such, these three aspects introduce a new agenda for urban development in Latin America: the need to address the historical underpinnings of marginality and the longevity of the urban conditions found in our cities today. Thus, this chapter creates an ample context, and a historical-theoretical foundation, to support the more specific arguments presented by individual authors in the volume. At the same time, this chapter re-introduces key questions that require attention in order to develop inclusive urban practices that respond more adequately to the realities of the people who inhabit marginal areas in cities throughout Latin America.

Urban Marginality

Marginality refers not only to physical urban development on the margins of cities, the peripheries, but also to the entire range of socio-economic, political and cultural expressions which are considered not to comply with the minimum standards necessary to achieve an adequate participation in society. In urban studies, and the social sciences, the concept of marginality is often linked to socio-economic activity outside regulatory frameworks created by the government. Thus, marginal urbanisms, and architectures, are only an expression of such a complex set of circumstances, and a minute aspect of what is encompassed by urban marginality. Marginality can be understood in dichotomous relation to centrality, however this semantic duality is much more tenuous than in other pairs of terms, such as informality, which inevitably expresses the opposite of formality. Although no term, or pair of terms, would be able singularly to encompass the whole range of phenomena found in contemporary cities—in Latin America and everywhere—marginality is useful for embracing a wider set of issues including, but not limited to, architecture and urban form. Therefore, in order to broaden the scope of

our discussion in this volume, we want to refer to the question of urban and architecture informality in the larger context of marginality.

Let us first examine the historical evolution of term in Latin America through its proponents and detractors. Two of the early supporters of marginality theory in Latin America, the sociologist Gino Germani and the Jesuit priest Roger Vekemans, argued that modernization—and, indeed, industrialisation as an intrinsic part of such process—had caused a series of social divisions which disenfranchised the poor; who were unable to attain the same benefits possessed by other members of the urban population. Thus, in order to overcome underdevelopment, it was necessary to integrate excluded populations, so the poor could enjoy the full benefits of urban life, and have the same prospects of social mobility as everyone else in society.

Towards the end of the 1970s, however, the concept of marginality had lost credibility. Its critics had been able to argue convincingly that the poor were not always marginalised. Instead, they argued, the poor played a key function in both society and the economy. In her book *The Myth of Marginality* (1980), Janice Perlman affirmed that people in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro were "socially well organised and cohesive, and their residents capable of making good use of the urban milieu and its institutions" (Perlman 2010: 149). Perlman contends that favela residents were involved in politics and fully cognisant of their capacity to influence policy to obtain benefits. Perlman also criticises the fact that the concept of marginality became so powerful in Brazilian planning practices that it was used to justify favela eradication programmes, which triggered the very social divisions that caused marginalisation in the first place. This kind of criticism led to a decrease in the use of the term marginality, which was rarely employed in the 1980s and early 90s.

It is important to note that Perlman was not the only critic of marginality theory. There were others like Anibal Quijano, Emilio Pradilla and Paul Singer who also questioned the accuracy of the term to describe socio-economic conditions in Latin America. It is equally important to observe that Perlman's work focuses on Rio de Janeiro and, therefore, academic caution is needed before generalizing the rest of Latin America. There may be similarities with other countries, but there are also significant differences and the same claims that she makes for Rio would not be valid in some slums in Bolivia, Peru or Colombia.

In recent years, however, the concept has reappeared in academic circles. "Advanced marginality", for example, championed by the sociologist Loïc Wacquant, is used to describe the latest iteration of global capitalism, in which a significant part of the urban population has become

irrelevant in economic terms and, therefore, excluded from the rest of city, relegated to –what he calls– "segregated ghettoes".

Latin Americans have reacted with skepticism to Wacquant's notion of advanced marginality, which they find to be very similar to earlier definitions produced in Latin America. In her article 'Marginality, Again?!', for example, Teresa Caldeira denounces Wacquant's definition of advanced marginality for being "nearly identical to the theses of authors such as José Nun (1969) and Anibal Quijano (1971), who theorised about the appearance of a 'marginal mass' in the Latin American countries that industrialised under a condition of dependency" (Caldeira 2009).

Although Caldeira's criticism is accurate, it also helps to highlight where I see a difference between the notion of marginality used in the 1970s and more recent appropriations. In her critique, Caldeira speaks of a "marginal mass", the poor as an undifferentiated mass of people. For many of us today, "the poor" is not a homogeneous mass, but a multitude of groups who live in different conditions in the hostile environment of the Latin American city. There are different ethnic origins, gender identifications, religious affiliations, there are the urban poor versus the rural migrant poor, and so on. In other words there is an enormous multiplicity, and that is a difference in the way we approach the concept of marginality today: it helps to reveal that complexity.

Indeed, in their essay "Concepts in Social and Spatial Marginality", Mehretu, Pigozzi and Sommers describe marginality as "a complex condition of disadvantage which individuals and communities experience as a result of vulnerabilities that may arise from unfavourable environmental, cultural, social, political and economic factors" (Mehretu et al. 2000: 90). The conditionality of Mehretu's definition, 'vulnerabilities that may arise' from a wide range of conditions, is important because it opens the discussion to include key factors that received little attention in the 1960s: the cultural and social aspects of marginality. To these I add the historical dimension inherent in collective conditions of urban disadvantage. Let us introduce some interpretations, or categorisations, of marginality, in order to illustrate this important aspect. Mehretu et al., for example, propose four categorisations of marginality, two of which can contribute to the development of a more nuanced understanding of current urban conditions in Latin America: systemic and collateral marginality". [1] In their own words,

[1] The proposed four types of marginality: Contingent, Systemic, Collateral and Leveraged. See Mehretu, A., B., L. M. Pigozzi and Sommers (2000) "Concepts in Social and Spatial Marginality", in *Geografiska Annaler*. Series B, Human Geography, Vol. 82, No. 2, Development of Settlements, 89-101.

> Systemic marginality results from disadvantages which people and communities experience in a socially constructed system of inequitable relations within a hegemonic order that allows one set of individuals and communities to exercise undue power and control over another set with the latter manifesting one or a number of vulnerability markers based on class, ethnicity, age, gender and other similar characteristics. Unlike market-based inequalities, systemic marginality does not lend itself to reform policies of the welfare state. This is because systemic marginality is a deliberate social construction by the dominant class to achieve specific desirable outcomes of political control, social exclusion and economic exploitation. Systemic marginality is of particular significance in countries that have experienced pervasive inequity and oppression under colonial and/or neo-colonial regimes in the less developed world (Mehretu et al. 2000: 91-92).

It arises from their definition of "systemic marginality" that it is not a form of disadvantage caused by an internal inability of national governments to regulate the economy, or its failure to guarantee opportunities for all people, nor is it the fault of groups of people who are unable to succeed by themselves due to their own incompetence (i.e. it is not a failure of the poor). Instead the authors assume marginality as an artificially—"socially constructed"—form of disadvantage imposed upon and experienced, primarily, by groups of people who have been excluded from the structures of political control. As a result, economic and urban policy offers little opportunity to improve the conditions of life of those marginalised groups. In spite of their sophistication, and best intentions, economic and urban policies designed to assist systemically marginalised groups fail because there are long-lasting, historically constructed, cultural barriers that impede their success: racial designations, stereotypes, etc. In the authors' views, the dominant classes created these barriers intentionally to maintain their dominant positions.

Systemic marginality has two scales, international and national/regional. At the international scale we find a positional polarity between former colonial nations which continue to use colonial strategies in order retain their authority over their former colonies—through the creation and implementation of international trade laws, credit, aid and other mechanisms of control such as the restriction of travel for people of certain countries (for example, the fact that nationals from most Latin American countries need visas to travel to the USA and Europe). At a national/regional level there is another positional polarity involving former colonial settlers who continue to exercise political and economic control over indigenous peoples. In the case of Latin America, one example is Afro-descendant groups which have limited access to the institutions of power and,

therefore, little political influence (and representation).[2] That is why policy may guarantee access to credit for black people, or those of indigenous descent, but they are unable to trade on equal terms in a white-dominated market place. Similarly, local governments may build schools and offer training to people in slums, most of whom are ethnic minorities, but these people cannot access higher education or get better-paid jobs because they are dark-skinned or live in slums, due to a generalised social response whose origin is colonial. The latter example introduces us to the second type of marginality: collateral.

Collateral marginality is a condition experienced by individuals or communities who are marginalised primarily on the basis of their social or geographic proximity to individuals or communities that experience either contingent or systemic marginality. Generally, individuals or communities who are collaterally marginalised may not, in themselves, share vulnerability markers, but they suffer marginality by contagion as a function of their presence in a social or geographic milieu that is pervasively disadvantaged by contingent or systemic forces. (Mehretu et al. 2000: 93)

Thus, "collateral marginality" refers to the following condition. Many people from slums in Latin America are unable to develop a business, or take formal employment at the appropriate level (according to education, training or experience), because they live in slums. In other words, it is not a person's lack of education and/or training which prevents them from getting a job, not even the colour of their skin, it is their geographical proximity to marginalised groups which hinders their social and economic mobility. While these issues are relatively well known in scholarly discourse (and, even, in casual conversation), they are significantly absent from architectural debates and political discourse in Latin America. Issues relating to colonialism and race and class were not central to the celebrated projects built over the past twenty years in Brazil, Colombia or Venezuela, where mestizo, indigenous and Afro-descendants were generalised as "poor".[3] However, these issues are very important because they have deep

[2] In Brazil, for example, where Afro-Brazilians make nearly half of the country's population, they represent almost 80% of those living below the poverty line and contribute under 20% of the national GDP (Morrison, 2007). Another telling fact is that in 2015, 39 Brazilian government ministers in Dilma Rousseff's cabinet were White (Barbara, 2015). Conveniently, only the Head of the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality was not.

[3] It is important to note that ethnic issues were not completely absent, especially in Brazil, but have not been central to urban policy and do not feature largely in the celebratory architectural literature that was produced in the years following the

effects on the social fabric of the city—the whole set of ethno-racial interactions, economic imbalances, and access to services, education and even space in the city—not simply only on its physical form (i.e. to the fact that different ethno-racial group and social classes occupy different geographical areas).

While studying some of the urban interventions on the peripheries of Medellín, Colombia, we discovered that residents of Santo Domingo (where the first Metro cable was built and, also the location of the famous Library of Spain, known as Santo Domingo Library) often deny that they live there. Many forge their address because the association with Santo Domingo carries a negative stigma that can affect their chances of getting a job.[4] The French sociologist Loïc Wacquant explains these attitudes of denial—denying one's own identity—as strategies of self-protection. People who live in areas of the city conceived as sites of criminality, violence, vice, and immorality, deploy protective mechanisms to disassociate themselves from the physical and social context to which they belong. Not only do they lie about the place where they live, as in the case of Medellín, they disavow knowing people around them, they adopt a self-deprecating view of themselves taking the vituperative representations held by outsiders and applying them to their neighbours, and often retreating to the privacy of their homes in order to avoid contact with people in their community. "This social withdrawal and symbolic disidentification, in turn, undermine local cohesion, hamper collective mobilisation and help generate the very automism that the dominant discourse on zones of urban dispossession claims is one of their inherent features" (Wacquant 2010: 217-18).

In other words, systemic and collateral marginality generate urban conditions which not only perpetuate physical decay but also increase social fragmentation, thereby precluding the possibility of overcoming the disadvantages and vulnerabilities experienced by those individuals and communities who are unable to participate more actively in all aspects of society: politics, the economy, organisational friendship, etc. These are forms of marginality that cannot be resolved via traditional urban formulas for poverty alleviation. It is not simply that Latin American governments are unable at this point to absorb the vast portions of the population that are currently excluded and operate on the margins. Nor is it that the private

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completion of Favela Bairro (Brazil), Metro Cable (Medellin) and the similar cable car intervention in Caracas.

[4] Authors who have explored the demoralising effects of living in slums in Latin American cities include: Gilbert 1985; Nightingale 2012; Pearlman 1980 and 2001; and Turner 2000.

sector is also unable to employ such a large population at a time when industries and businesses focus on trying to reduce labour costs. Poverty alleviation policies, economic formalisation and slum upgrading are unable to achieve their goals because colonial socio-cultural markers based on ethnicity remain both in place and unchallenged. Here, education (at all levels) becomes an important vehicle for confronting and dismantling racial stereotypes, while policy is fundamental to promote inclusion and participation.

Our final interpretation, or categorisation, corresponds with Wacquant's concept of "advanced marginality", a concept that encompasses the complex reality I have just described.

> The qualifier "advanced" is meant here to indicate that these forms of marginality are not behind us: they are not residual, cyclical or transitional; they are not being gradually reabsorbed by the expansion of the "free market" […]. Rather, they stand ahead of us: they are etched on the horizon of the becoming of contemporary societies. (Wacquant 2008: 232).

Wacquant refers primarily to poor neighbourhoods in The United States and France, although he starts and ends his book, *Urban Outcasts*, making allusions to other regions of the world. Teresa Caldeira has taken him to task for implying that urban conditions in decaying USA and French cities are comparable to those in the developing world. Similarly, Janice Perlman takes issue with the fact that most residents of the favelas she has studied in Rio for over forty years are not 'forcibly relegated' and have the opportunity to move out of the favela—as indeed many have over the length of her study. The latter affirmation questionable, yet it is important to remind ourselves that both Caldeira and Perlman refer to specific cases in Rio de Janeiro.[5] In other parts of Latin America, particularly in countries affected by armed conflicts—like guerrilla and paramilitary wars in Colombia or drug cartels in Mexico—people are 'forcibly' displaced from the countryside to the outskirts of cities, and they have little opportunity to return. Thus, some neighbourhoods in Colombian and Mexico fit closely—though not precisely—Wacquant's notion of the hyper-ghetto: they are quasi-prisons that store a surplus population unable to retain formal jobs and unsupported by the state, where new hierarchical systems develop on the basis violence and territorial control. These are places where interpersonal relations are affected by suspicion and distrust,

[5] Indeed Caldeira can be accused of extending a specifically Brazilian condition to other countries of Latin America where socio-political circumstances are significantly different.

where public spaces are perceived as dangerous, where residents avoid one another in order to protect themselves.

Indeed, the rise of gang violence in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela, to mention only a few countries where this phenomenon is rampant, highlights a situation that is 'ahead of us', and so 'advanced' in Wacquant's terms. Moreover, the fact that statistically most gangs are made up of Black, Indigenous and mixed-race members, together with the fact that most gangs are formed in the slums of large cities, is striking evidence that sustained modes of marginalisation have an enormous impact on the social and physical fabric of Latin American cities.

For Wacquant it is important to develop ways to identify not only the forms of marginality that affect specific groups in specific cities, but also the causes of marginality: the historical socio-economic and cultural forces that generate pervasive forms of disadvantage which disqualify certain groups of people keeping them on the margins. Wacquant and Mehretu et al. do not limit themselves to theorising about contemporary forms of marginality. Their intention is to formulate a rigorous and comprehensive framework to study the multiple effects of uneven urban development.

I am not proposing to abandon other terms, such as informality itself (included in the title of this book), because such terms continue to be useful to address more directly specific aspects of the urban debate. Informality, for example, lends itself conveniently to the study of issues relating to architectural and urban form. Additionally, given the history, extent and influence of the formal-informal debate—in economics, urbanism and architecture—any intention to abandon it would seem ludicrous. In other words, our interest in this volume is not to undermine one term, or set of terms, in order to replace it/them by other(s), but it is rather to articulate a range of critical terminology in order to address more effectively a wider range of urban phenomena. I invoke their concepts at the beginning of this chapter, and this volume, in order to introduce the complexity of a condition that has become, and will remain, part of the Latin American urban reality; it is not a transient problem but rather a condition of our very urbanity.

The Prevalence of Colonial Urban Principles

We have already seen how several aspects of colonial discourse continue to influence development in Latin American cities. In recent years, sociologists, geographers, urbanists and cultural commentators have revealed the correlation that exists between marginality and colonialism. More importantly, this correlation can be found in former colonies as well

as in the cities and societies of the developed world. Authors such as Loïc Wacquant, mentioned above, and others like Carl Nightingale, James Scott, AbdouMaliq Simone, to mention only a few, have written extensively about the pervasive presence of racial colonial representations in the structure of cities around the world. Their studies open up new avenues for engaging with numerous subjacent socio-economic, political and cultural issues behind urban poverty. Segregation emerges as a key concept in studies about the rapid expansion of informal settlements and economies around the world—including the developed world.

The long tradition of colonial and postcolonial studies in certain parts of Europe[6] and North America, as well as in the Indian sub-continent, the Caribbean and South-East Asia, has helped to develop a more nuanced understanding of the persistence of colonial traits in the current social global order. Latin Americans, however, have been much less receptive to colonial and postcolonial discourses. In his book On Post-Colonial Futures, Bill Ashcroft observes that Latin American, and particularly South American, scholars strongly resist the idea of engaging with postcolonial discourse (Ashcroft 2001: 22). Ashcroft notes that for some scholars "Latin America is under threat from a new colonising movement called colonial and post-colonial discourse, yet another subjection, it would seem, to foreign formations and epistemologies from the English-speaking centres of global power" (Ashcroft 2001: 23). Rejection of postcolonial discourse could result from the fact that Latin American scholars in the 1980s and 1990s were sceptical about post-structuralism, which was seen as the basis of postcolonial critique: as European philosophical school of thought, post-structuralism was seen as a threat to Latin American intellectual integrity.

Only towards the end of the 1990s did a group of Latin American scholars produce an alternative to the Anglo-Saxon-led postcolonial discourse. The Modernity/Coloniality group (which includes Anibal Quijano, Walter Mignolo and Arturo Escobar) revisited earlier critiques of the historical inscription of Latin America carried out by Europeans in order to express their own positionality. "Walter Mignolo, ostensibly rejecting post-colonialism, cites the post-colonial critique of Edmundo O'Gorman in The Invention of America (1961) […] to sustain that O'Gorman did first what Said and Todorov did two decades later" (Ashcroft 2001: 25). Mignolo adopts the concept of "Coloniality" coined by the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano in order to develop an incisive

[6] Mostly in England and France, but also to a lesser extent in Germany and the Netherlands.

critique to the construction of Latin America and its societies.[7] Although their work has been very influential, it has not permeated architectural debates, and has had only a tangential influence in discussions about urban development. It is my intention to insert their ideas more directly into studies about cities in the continent. As an international and inter- cross-disciplinary group, they have developed a critical approach that could help broaden the horizon of formulaic academic interpretations and practical responses to the realities of people in cities throughout the continent. The fact that they engage directly with the legacy of colonialism is of particular importance.

By formulaic academic interpretations and practical responses to our urban reality, I refer to recent interventions in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, Medellín and Caracas, which consist of infrastructural insertions to satisfy a deficit in social services and urban standards. Building urban infrastructure—mass transport systems, schools, libraries and parks—has become the accepted formula for addressing uneven urban development, a formula now exported to cities in Africa, Asia and South-East Asia. The relative success of such urban interventions has fuelled an attitude of physical determinism according to which the socio-economic problems of Latin American cities can be resolved by changing the physical environment. However, this approach overlooks the historical causes of marginality and the composition of the population that suffers from exclusion: the subjacent socio-economic issues addressed in the previous section. Indeed, physical determinism dangerously distracts from the history of colonialism that underpins the very social structures it is trying to correct. That is why it is imperative that the colonial origin of Latin American cities acquires a more important presence in contemporary urban agendas. Colonial urban ordinances not only determined the physical fabric of cities, but also the place that cities occupy in a global system of dependent capitalism based on controlled local economies which rely heavily on the export of primary goods. The same ordinances determined the place of different ethnic groups in the socio-economic structures of production and consumption, not only their location in the physical fabric of the city.

[7] Other members of the Coloniality debate are Enrique Dussel (Argentina) and Arturo Escobar (Colombia).

The Laws of Indies and the Contemporary City

Much has been said about the implications that the Laws of Indies had for the socio-spatial configuration of cities founded by the Spanish in North, Central and South America.[8] Yet, such an extensive body of work has had little impact in architectural academia in Latin America. The legacy of colonialism remains understudied and largely misunderstood by architects and Latin American architectural historians. It is often reduced to a historical period, and a set of conditions, considered to have been overcome in the two hundred years after independence. The fact that segregationist Spanish colonial planning caused a socio-cultural, economic and morphological fragmentation that has developed through time—rather than appearing suddenly in the past ninety years, or so—needs not only academic attention but also a more nuanced understanding, so that contemporary policy can truly help to alleviate current urban conditions in Latin America.

Both the urban form and the architectures of Spanish cities were directly influenced by the Ordinances of Phillip II, which ordered that communication (as well as intercourse) be prohibited between the Spanish and the Indians, who were to occupy different quarters. Phillip II also insisted that the houses where the Spanish lived, and all buildings in the Spanish city—planned upon a grid—should be beautiful in order to impress the indigenous; leaving no doubt of the intention of the Spanish to stay and dominate (Nightingale 2012: 50). Indigenous people, and later African slaves, had restricted access to the "formal" (gridded) city. Neither indigenous nor black slaves were able to own land in the city, nor could they occupy administrative positions in government. Indigenous people were forced to live on the peripheries, where they developed an economy of subsistence outside the regulatory framework of the Spanish. In spite of their subordinate economic position, indigenous informal economies were part of an interdependent system including the slaves and the Spanish themselves, who benefitted from their productive activities. Yet the indigenous were penalised for their activities, which in many cases were considered illegal. This set of injustices generated an urbanism of marginality that lies at the basis of the contemporary city.

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[8] In the introduction to the *Rethinking the Informal City: Critical perspectives from Latin America* (2009) I discuss this point at some length. See "Introduction: reimagining the Informal in Latin America" pages 3 – 6. In his book *La Ciudad Letrada*, Angel Rama addresses the issue in much greater detail. See Rama, A. (1996) *The Lettered City*. Translated by J. C. Chasteen. Durham: Duke University Press.

In his seminal book *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*, Carl Nightingale describes very effectively the social effects of Spanish colonial planning in the Americas:

> In the interior of New Spain […] threats to Spain from other Europeans were less acute, and authorities dispensed with city walls. However, they fortified many of their houses in case of Indian revolt and established a system of urban separation for their conquered subjects. City officials forced local Amerindians into areas known as *reducciones* or *barrios*, far outside the central gridiron of the ciudad de *españoles* –the Spanish city. In Lima, Peru, the Indian quarter was a fenced neighbourhood inside the walled city known as *El Cercado*. The remaining Indian nobles, whom the Spaniards called *caciques*, were charged to look after the local secular affairs of these districts under a legal code designed exclusively for Indians.[9]

Two points stand out in this description: first, the choice of a particular set of physical forms (urban and architectural) as a vehicle to materialise a desired social order; second, the implications that such a set of forms had on the socio-political fabric of colonial Spanish cities. Nightingale's explanation shows that "separation" refers not simply to distinct physical locations for the Indian and Spanish populations—and later Black African slaves—but also to the creation and implementation of different legal codes for each socio-ethnic group. In other words, the Spanish colonial city in the sixteenth century was already constituted by separate socio-ethnic groups, each of which occupied different territories, obeyed different rules and produced different economies, architectures and urban forms. This heterogeneity implies a very complex urban construct, with a complex system of exclusions and inclusions that multiplied and perpetuated difference, instead of eliminating it. That is why studying the legacy of colonialism is necessary in order to understand contemporary urban conditions, and to respond more effectively to such conditions both through policy and design.

The Modernity of Latin American Cities

Just as it is important to study the legacy of colonialism, it is fundamental that architects, architectural historians, urban designers and policy-makers understand that Latin American cities are fundamentally modern. It is an

[9] Nightingale, C. (2012) *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 50.

error to assume that "the colonial city"—as most people throughout Latin America describe colloquially the old sections of cities—is pre-modern in relation to the areas that have been designed and built since the late nineteenth-century, which are considered to be modern. As I will show in this chapter, Latin American cities are materialisations of, and develop alongside, modernity.[10] Correcting this generalised error is necessary in order to overcome the judgement that marginal urbanisms, and informal architectures, are somewhat "non-modern" and, for that reason, incompatible with modern development. On the contrary, precisely because Latin American cities are fundamentally modern, marginal urbanisms are a constitutive part of their modernity. It is by understanding the inherent modernity of Latin American cities that we can overcome the physical determinism which, as I explained above, reduces cities to their material fabric.

The work of the Modernity/Coloniality Group provides a helpful platform for examining the relationship between colonialism and modernity in Latin America. The Modernity/Coloniality group, is a collective of [mostly] Latin American thinkers who have developed a methodological approach for reviewing the persistence of colonial constructs in our contemporary societies. For the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano, who coined the term *colonialidad,* or coloniality, Latin American societies have either retained or assumed the characteristics of colonialism after independence.[11] For Walter Mignolo, another member of the group, coloniality is the condition of being in the world as social by-products of colonialism and, therefore, as "outcasts from history".[12]As such, the notion of coloniality opens up a door for examining the position of formerly colonised subjects, who did not experience colonialism themselves—because no Latin American experienced direct colonial domination either by the Spanish or the Portuguese—but who exist in an awkward (disadvantageous) relationship with the former colonial centres of power, and currently with the USA—a country that has dominated (indeed intervened directly) in politics, the economy and urban development in Latin America since the end of the nineteenth century. The perspective of Coloniality brings to the fore what Mignolo, and others, call "internal colonialism": the process through which white elites in most Latin

[10] Modernity understood as an all-embracing social condition that has economic, cultural, technological and architectural dimensions.
[11] Quijano , A . (2001) *Colonialidad del poder: globalización y democracia.* Lima: Sociedad y Política Ediciones.
[12] See Mignolo, W. (2005) *The Idea of Latin America*. Oxford – Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 3.

American countries retain economic, political and cultural control, thereby perpetuating a hierarchical system based largely on racial designations created during colonialism.

Three key concepts lie at the centre of the work of the above-mentioned group: Modernity, Colonialism and Capitalism (the latter conceived also as Globalisation). For them, the series of phenomena largely understood as Modernity—the rise of rationalism, the development of mercantile economies, the prioritisation of individualism, and so on—developed due to, and at the same time as, European colonial expansion in the sixteenth century. It was necessary to develop new forms of spatial representation for the purposes of trans-oceanic navigation. It was also necessary to create more efficient ways to quantify time in order to transport products more effectively around the world. International trade and the exploitation of resources in distant lands required new economic and administrative (political) systems, together with a stratification of labour that granted authority to the colonisers over the colonised—for the purpose of control. Thus, capitalism is seen to develop alongside colonialism, as the economic system that could more effectively satisfy the complexities of colonial exploitation and trade. As such, capitalism is inseparable from globalisation because capitalism evolves in the context of a colonial-global economy. It thus became clear that colonialism is constitutive of modernity. Indeed, modernity cannot be understood without an understanding of colonialism, which in turn cannot be conceived in isolation from the development of capitalism and globalisation (Mignolo 2005: xiii). That is why, for Mignolo, the discovery of America "marks a turning point in world history: it was the moment in which the demands of modernity […] began to require the imposition of a specific set of values that relied on the logic of [colonialism] [13] for their implementation" (Mignolo 2005: 6). In order to serve their purpose as outposts of colonisation (i.e. centres of socio-economic control that guaranteed the effective exploitation of resources required to generate wealth in Europe and to participate in rapidly expanding networks of global trade), cities were conceived rationally. As argued above, the Laws of Indies did not only influence the grid as a segregationist tool, but also underpinned complex socio-economic, racial and political configurations that have outlived direct colonial intervention.

Latin American cities are inherently modern: they are simultaneously the product of modernity and the vehicle to achieve it. It may be that some

[13] Mignolo uses the work "coloniality" here, which I have changed for colonialism to express more clearly the principles that are referred to.

parts of contemporary Latin American cities are not stylistically "modernist", because they were built before the advent of modernism, or because they have been deliberately built not to match its aesthetic postulates, yet it is an error to assume that Latin American cities are not modern and that informal architectures are not part of the continent's modernity. Tackling this historical inaccuracy will reveal that the principles of colonial urbanism do not represent the antithesis to modernity. On the contrary, colonial urbanism is a constitutive element of the very modernity of Latin American cities. Indeed, if "modernism" –the architectural style that appears at the beginning of the twentieth century– is understood somewhat as Hilde Heynen suggests,[14] then we must understand the current physical condition of Latin American cities (their current urbanisms and architectures) as a result of the processes of modernisation particular to each city, and the experiences of modernity that all urban residents have had.

Contemporary Latin American cities correspond with colonial patterns in their political configuration, in the convoluted range of ethnic representations, as well as the social structures that support culture, the legal system and the economy. These configurations, representations and structures are expressed in the territorialisation of the continent's cities. It is a well-known fact that a large proportion of "the poor" are people of indigenous and black African descent, as well as mixed-race populations. Recent studies in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela also show that in many cities those populations can be linked to specific areas of the city, revealing an interesting—if scandalous—correlation between poverty, ethnicity and territory. Failure to comprehend the prevalence of colonial urbanism in contemporary cities hinders the possibility of producing more effective solutions to the problems that architects, urban designers and planners feel compelled to resolve.

[14] Hilde Heynen argues that modernism appears when architects agree that a particular set of forms is the legitimate answer to the experience of modernity and the problems and possibilities resulting from the process of modernisation. See Heynen (1999), [26]. See also, Hernández, F. (2015) "Architectural Latin American Modernism: Twentieth-Century Politics, Historiography and the Academic Debate", in Lindgren, A. and S. Ross (eds) *The Modernist World*. London: Routledge, 383-391.

The Race Question in Latin American Cities

In November 2014, the Mayor of Bogotá, Gustavo Petro, announced a plan to build social housing in some of the most affluent areas of the Colombian capital. It was also specified that the project, which consisted of several hundred units, would serve to accommodate, primarily, people displaced by violence—a population that continues to grow in Colombia despite the peace process. The announcement was politically bold and caused immediate reactions from all quarters of society. One such reaction came to my attention on the radio.[15] A woman who called the radio station and identified herself as a resident of Chico—one of the most prestigious barrios of Bogotá—said "I cannot conceive the idea of living near to all those black people".[16] She then expressed worries about her own safety, and the safety of her children, whom she would no longer allow to play outside, or in the park, if the black people moved in. The newspapers, which I read following the radio programme, reported that owners of commercial venues in the relevant sectors of Bogotá were also concerned about security and the fact that "the poor" would scare away their main customers.[17] Although it is a reasonable concern, it ratifies the association of "blackness" with both poverty and insecurity. The articles published in the papers summarised an interesting series of contradictory positions. On the one hand were the opinions of local property owners and residents, on the other hand were academics from local universities who appeared to be more receptive to the idea. According to the latter interviewees, none of whom was an architect, the mayor's idea would offer opportunities to overcome segregation in the capital and encourage a more peaceful and culturally productive social mixing. They also expressed concerns, but theirs focused on the policies and educational strategies needed to implement the mayor's idea while preventing conflict during its

[15] I was teaching a course at Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá at the time.

[16] This is my own translation of her comment in Spanish, "yo no puedo concebir la idea de vivir con todos esos negros de vecinos".

[17] See *El Tiempo*, Bogotá "Viviendas para pobres en barrios ricos, ¿es el camino? Los expertos aplauden intención de Petro para luchar contra la segregación, pero hacen advertencias". Yesid Lancheros. Published on 10 November 2014, accessed on 24 June 2015. See also *El Tiempo*, Bogotá. "Ideas para que gente de distintos ingresos conviva en un mismo espacio: Expertos evalúan cómo reducir brechas. Revivir proyectos y zonas abandonadas, entre las propuestas". Published on 11 November 2014, accessed on 24 June 2015. See also *El espectador*, Bogotá. "El Distrito identificó siete colegios públicos aledaños. Debate por casas gratis en barrios estrato 6". Published on 7 November 2014, accessed on 24 June 2015.

implementation. The programme seems to have been abandoned—at least public discussions have receded—but it certainly opened up a large area of enquiry about race, racism and racial segregation in Colombia, a debate that has received little attention in the country and, more generally, in Latin America.

The debate about social housing in upmarket areas of Bogotá led me to investigate further racial dynamics in the city. I remembered that Club Colombia, the most exclusive private social club in Cali, the country's third largest city, prohibited admittance to black people –at least until 1997, when I lived there– although several maintenance staff, cooks and waiters/waitresses were black. This urban phenomenon of racial exclusion is eloquently described by Fatimah Williams Castro, a black American academic, social commentator and blogger, the author of "Afro-Colombians and the Cosmopolitan City: Negotiations of Race and Space in Bogotá, Colombia". Her essay analyses an autobiographical occurrence when Williams and five of her friends, all Afro-descendants, were denied entry to an upmarket nightclub in Bogotá's Zona Rosa. Confirming the comments made by an unidentified caller to the radio station, Williams indicates that racism is prevalent in Colombia, even though it is concealed under the guise of cosmopolitanism.

The capital city serves as the symbol of Colombia's modernity, stability, and global status and plays a significant role in countering its image as a violent country run by narco-traffickers, mafiosos, and armed groups. However, the white elite cosmopolitanism promoted in Bogotá and the Zona Rosa depends on simultaneous practices of inclusion and exclusion and on complex convergences of space, time, and race. White Colombians help reinforce existing racial hierarchies and inscribe them in urban space through spatial distancing — locating racism and racial discrimination outside their immediate social worlds. Racial discrimination and spatial distancing impact the ways in which city residents interact with urban space and each other, maintain racialised cosmopolitanisms, and produce an everyday common sense about race and belonging embedded in urban space. They conflict with the national branding of Bogotá as a cosmopolitan city and Colombia as a diverse, multicultural nation. (Williams 2013: 106)

Williams reveals a subjacent condition of racial discrimination that affects how urban space is socially constructed and experienced—and consumed—by different groups in Colombia. It is subjacent because it is not an overt condition, nor is it considered socially or politically problematic (and is certainly not supported by segregationist policies). However, it is clear that it has an effect on the physical fabric of the city.

While there is no longer an official exclusionary statute that separates different races, the space of the city continues to be contested on that basis. Where different social groups live in the city, what spaces they have access to, what jobs they can get, and how other groups perceive them, is largely determined by race. As such, race is a key factor determining the geography of the city and the quality of its architectures.

I have already mentioned that in Caracas, Lima, Mexico DF, Quito and Rio de Janeiro, it is possible clearly to identify the specific areas of the city that are occupied by indigenous and black people. Indeed, the architect, sociologist, and urban commentator Priscilla Connolly has studied how planning legislation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries enforced ethnic segregation, contributing largely to the development of slums in Mexico. Her essay in this volume demonstrates that informal settlements have not always developed spontaneously, but rather following historical precedents of land speculation and ethnic segregation. Similarly, in his essay "Stratification by Skin Colour in Contemporary Mexico", the sociologist Andrés Villarreal provides statistical evidence that there is profound social stratification by race in Mexican cities. While the term "class" is more commonly used in Mexico, due to sustained inter-racial mixing, class designations are largely influenced by physical features and colour of skin. What is more, he demonstrates that darker-skinned individuals in Mexico, primarily those of indigenous and African descent, have lower levels of educational attainment and occupational status. As a consequence they are several times more likely to live in poverty and less likely ever to become affluent.[18] The historical precedent that Connolly examines, and the racial study that Villarreal undertook in contemporary Mexico, reveal a panorama of urban segregation where the most likely residents of slums are indigenous people and Afro-descendants. These examples corroborate the relationship between urban marginality and race.

It is important to understand that discussions about race, and urban racial discrimination, in Latin America require a great deal of specificity. Racial attitudes and policies in Latin America have not followed the same social and political routes as in the USA, which is often taken as the referent for racial studies. It is equally important not to generalise across Latin America because attitudes and policies vis à vis race vary from country to country, historically and in the present. As Edward Tellez and Tatiana Paschel note, "in Brazil, race mixture narratives held that blacks and African culture were central to the nation; in Colombia, they ignored

[18] See Villarreal, A. (2010) "Stratification by Skin Color in Contemporary Mexico", in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 75, No. 5, 652-678.

and downplayed blackness while greatly valuing whiteness; and, in The Dominican Republic, they excluded blacks and African culture by regarding them as backward and foreign" (Tellez and Paschel 2014: 865). These are only a few examples of varying attitudes towards "blackness" that reinforce the need for precision in addressing the impact of racial discrimination on the fabric of cities. On the other hand, while national differences need to be noted, the commonality exists that indigenous people and Afro-descendants represent the two most marginalised groups in Latin America and are the most likely residents of informal settlements.[19] More detailed inter- and cross-disciplinary studies are being carried out in many countries. However, the participation of architects and urban designers in these studies is notoriously scarce. The argument to be made is that architects and urban designers have skills, knowledge and expertise which could help to produce useful interpretations of current social phenomena and, in turn, help to translate those interpretations into more effective solutions. The focus, however, ought to be on the causes of marginality, not on its most recent expression; it makes little sense to invest in programmes that will never attain their intended effect due to the prevalence of insurmountable racial attitudes which preclude inclusive urban development. The point that I am at pains to demonstrate is that the mere provision of infrastructure –transport, education, recreation and health—is insufficient to resolve fully a complex set of socio-political and economic issues that have great historical longevity. Infrastructure only resolves the physical expression of a broad range of social conditions and experiences, which cause the problems we aim to resolve today with infrastructure. To be more effective it is necessary to create consistent and enforceable standards to prevent discrimination against individuals, and groups, on the basis of race, class as well as on the basis of their location in the city (i.e. the areas where they live). It is important to encourage

[19] Statistical estimates provided by Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) indicate that there are between 30 and 40 million indigenous people in Latin America, equalling 8% of the region's total population. The same estimates suggest that there are approximately 150 million people of African descent (blacks), or 30% of the region's total population. In other words, nearly half of the region's population can be classified either as indigenous or black. In this chapter I do not deal with statistics for mixed-race people (Mestizos, Zambos, Mulatoes, etc.) who also amount to a large percentage of the population and suffer from different forms of discrimination throughout the continent. See Hooker, J. (2005) "Indigenous Inclusion/Black Exclusion: Race, Ethnicity and Multicultural Citizenship in Latin America", in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (May, 2005), 287.

commercial interactivity, facilitating transition from the informal to the formal economy—even permitting the fluctuation between the two—without threatening marginalised people's economic autonomy. The latter proposition is a way of doing justice to the condition of interdependence that has characterised economic activity between dominant and marginalised groups since the colonial period. It is important to observe the urbanisms (i.e. the physical forms) that have developed over decades of systemic marginalisation. This is not to accept perilous urban conditions—environmental risk, health hazards, criminality etc.—but to reinforce spatial constructions that permit social-urban development in the particular conditions seen in Latin American cities. That is why greater participation in inter- and trans-disciplinary studies will help architects and urban designers to generate historically informed interpretations of current urban realities and, from that basis, produce more inclusive programmes for the improvement of the living and working conditions of minority groups.

Intervening in the Urban Fabric

After examining the question of marginality, the persistence of colonial principles of social control and segregation, and the need to address race as a key issue in the study of contemporary Latin American cities, let us explore some ideas about marginal urbanisms and the ways to deal with the challenges they present. The emphasis of this exploration is less on producing new methodologies for the study of, and practical intervention in, the fabric of cities, than in the possibility of continuing to develop existing practices, many of which have proven to be somewhat successful. The adverb somewhat is not an indication of pessimism, nor is it here to diminish the impact of recent urban programmes throughout Latin American, but rather to draw attention to the limitations inherent in any attempt to resolve those aspects of our cities that are considered to be dysfunctional, negative or perilous—many of which do not need resolution as such, but articulation.[20]

[20] I have proposed the notion of "Articulatory Urbanism", both as a method of analysis and as a design-practice whose purpose is to identify productive economic activity (often informal) in order to generate a programme for intervention in the urban fabric of cities. Instead of absorbing informal productive practices into the formal economy – thereby undermining the socio-economic practices and organisation of the poor – an Articulatory Urbanism uses architectural knowledge and expertise to enhance existing economic capacity with better physical