Culture in the labor market: segmentation theory and perspectives of place

Harald Bauder

Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia V6T 1Z2, Canada

Abstract: Labor market segmentation theory explains the economic marginalization of racial minorities, the working class and women. Economic geographers have contributed a perspective of spatial entrapment and spatially contingent job markets. In this article I emphasize supply-side processes and the role of these processes in labor market segmentation theory. In particular I focus on issues of cultural experience of place and cultural representation of place. I develop this argument by integrating two bodies of literature: (1) segmentation theory, in which the role of experience and representation of place remains undertheorized; and (2) cultural geography, in which such a conceptualization of place exists. The article follows a contemporary trend in human geography that links cultural with economic processes.

Key words: culture, labor markets, representation, segmentation

I Introduction

Labor market segmentation theory explains the economic marginalization of ethnic minorities, lower classes and women (Clairmont *et al.*, 1983; Fevre, 1992). Economic geographers have contributed to the segmentation literature by focusing on home-to-work links, the spatial entrapment of workers and the place-contingent operation of labor markets (for example, England, 1993; Hanson and Pratt, 1995; Peck, 1989; 1996). Linked to the economic exclusion of social groups are processes of cultural marginalization of residential places. In this article I draw attention to processes of cultural experience of place and cultural representation of place and the role of these processes in labor market segmentation theory. I develop this argument by integrating two bodies of literature: (1) segmentation theory, in which the role of experience and representation of place remains undertheorized, and (2) cultural geography, in which such a conceptualization of place is developed. The article follows a contemporary trend in human

geography that links cultural and economic processes (Jackson, 1991, Zukin, 1995; Gibson-Graham, 1996; McDowell, 1997; Schoenberger, 1997).

A cultural perspective on segmentation allows for some autonomy or agency in the creation of labor market identity; an idea that remains underdeveloped in contemporary labor market segmentation theory. While contemporary segmentation theory to some degree reads off local labor market outcomes from the restructuring and decentralization of employment or institutions of labor supply governance, a cultural perspective can provide micro-level insights into how labor market identities are produced through experiences and representations of place. Place, in this context, provides more than the passive spatial container in which interlinking social, political and economic processes operate. Place assumes a proactive role (Agnew, 1987; Lefebvre, 1991) in the segmentation of labor.

In the first part of this article I review labor market segmentation literature and examine the role of culture in this literature. In the second part I engage with cultural geography and the way this field has conceptualized cultural experience of place and cultural representation of place. Thereby, I discuss the relevance of these arguments for the spatial segmentation of labor. Finally, I present implications for labor market segmentation theory and make suggestions for future research.

II   Labor market segmentation theory

1   Demand, supply and division of labor

Labor market segmentation theory challenges neoclassical economic theory and human capital theory on the grounds that workers and jobs are not matched smoothly by a universal market mechanism. Instead, it suggests that jobs and labor are divided into labor market segments. Early segmentation models argued for a dual split between primary (or independent) and secondary (or subordinate) segments (Ryan, 1981; Clairmont *et al.*, 1983), whereas later models suggest tripartite (Rumberger and Carnoy, 1980), quadruple (Lee and Wrench, 1987) and hierarchical segmentation (Gittleman and Howell, 1995). The particular arrangement of segments plays a secondary role in regard to this article; more important is the idea that boundaries between segments are rigid and ensure that workers and jobs are matched within segments, regardless of demand-supply processes in other segments (Averitt, 1968; Clairmont *et al.*, 1983; Fevre, 1992: 1–22; Peck, 1989; 1996). In Jamie Peck's (1996: 46) words, 'the rules governing the behavior of labor market actors differ from one segment of the labor market to the other.'

Segmentation theorists have argued that labor market segments are able to function relatively independently because both jobs and workers are divided by demand-side and supply-side processes. In this context, the supply-side refers to attributes of labor, such as education, job skills, occupational preferences, etc. Labor demand relates to the characteristics of jobs, such as skill and educational demands, employment stability, wages, etc. (Gordon *et al.*, 1982; Lee and Loveridge, 1987). In the literature, supply and demand issues have surfaced as 'pre-market' and 'in-market' processes (Ryan, 1981), 'occupational choice' and 'structure of opportunities' (Lee and Wrench, 1987), 'the worker's side' and 'employer's side' (Clairmont *et al.*, 1983), and 'social stratification' and 'market segmentation' (Picchio del Mercato, 1981).

On the demand side, Reich *et al*. (1973: 361) argued decades ago that '. . . employers actively and consciously fostered labor market segmentation in order to "divide and conquer" the labor force.' Demand-side approaches remain popular especially as explanation for spatial divisions in the labor market. For instance, the segmentation of inner-city minorities in the USA is often seen as an effect of industrial restructuring and decentralization of employment (Wilson, 1987; Scott, 1990; Kasarda, 1990; 1993; Skinner, 1995; Holzer, 1996). This demand-side approach expresses spatial divisions in the labor market as an accessibility issue whereby segmented jobs are unevenly arranged in space and simply not available in some places like inner cities. A large empirical literature on so-called spatial mismatch, however, has not provided consistent support for the thesis that lack of inner-city jobs causes the low earnings and high unemployment rates prevalent among inner-city residents (Ellwood, 1996; Cooke, 1996; Holloway, 1998; Zhang, 1998). Even those empirical studies that support the spatial mismatch hypothesis attribute only a fraction of city–suburb employment differentials to the spatial distribution of jobs (for reviews of the spatial mismatch literature, see Holzer, 1991; Kain, 1992; Hodge, 1996; Ihlanfeldt and Sjoquist, 1998; Preston and McLafferty, 1999). Spatial labor demand structure alone cannot explain the labor market situation of inner-city residents. Supply-driven factors also contribute to the spatial segmentation of labor.

2   Social nature of labor

Empirical segmentation literature has long established that supply-side processes trap women (Kenrick, 1981; Ashton and Maguire, 1984), minorities (Blair and Fichtenbaum, 1992; Gordon and Sassen, 1992; Morales and Bonilla, 1993) and working-class people (Clairmont *et al*., 1983; Offe and Hinrichs, 1985) in lower labor market segments, and that these gender, ethnicity and class effects often overlap (Carnoy *et al*., 1993; Romero, 1993; Athey and Hantaluoma, 1994; Massey, 1994; England, 1995; Segura, 1995; Hiebert, 1997; Mattingly, 1999). The notion of 'social nature of labor' (Peck, 1996: 29) recognizes that workers are social actors as much as they are labor, and that social division is constructed outside the market and then shapes employment relationships (Offe and Hinrichs, 1985; Hanson and Pratt, 1995). For example, the social roles of the female child rearer and the male bread winner reflect gendered labor market identities (Kessler-Harris, 1982; Gregson and Lowe, 1993; Hanson and Pratt, 1995). Supply-side approaches argue that '(o)ne reason secondary work exists is in the *prior* existence of a group of workers who can be exploited in this way' (Peck, 1996: 69, original emphasis).

However, the linkage between supply-driven social distinction and market segmentation is not a one-directional cause–effect relationship. Rather, the labor market exists in a wider context of interlocking sets of policies, practices and institutions that reproduce social inequality. For instance, 'race' in postwar Britain has been 'conceptualized as class fractions, constituted through but not reducible to the labor process' (Smith, 1989: 8). Similarly, the subordinate position of African Americans in both society and the labor market is shaped by circular relationships between practices inside the labor market, labor unions and social and political processes outside the market (Kelly, 1994). Willis (1977) and Marsden (1986) have demonstrated that social and labor market positions are not separable from each other and that British working-class identity is

produced and reproduced through interdependent social and labor processes. Likewise, McDowell (1997) has shown that gendered work identities are shaped by internal practices of merchant banks in the City of London.

Max Weber realized that work and social meaning are mutually dependent, and that ' "class situation" is ultimately "market situation" ' (quoted in Clairmont *et al.*, 1983: 254). Social groups achieve social closure, guaranteeing the reproduction of class structure, through controlling the processes that allocate workers to jobs (Parkin, 1974; Ashton and Maguire, 1984; Loveridge, 1987). The idea of social closure can easily be expanded beyond the context of class to include gender and ethnicity. Research on youth, in particular, has established that gender, ethnic and class-based identities are produced through entrance into a segmented labor market (Kett, 1977; Willis, 1977; Lee and Wrench, 1987; Valentine *et al.*, 1998). Social closure is achieved when class, gender and ethnic groups control access to labor market segments, and when segmented workers reproduce their position in society. Segmentation of labor is intertwined with supply-side processes of social stratification.

Interlocking demand and supply-side processes operate, of course, in a spatial context. Empirical research that conceptualizes local labor markets as home-to-work links has demonstrated that labor market entrapment in secondary work often coincides with the spatial entrapment of women, minorities and low-income families (Grieco, 1984; Manwaring, 1984; Holzer, 1987; McLafferty and Preston, 1991; 1992; Scott, 1992; England, 1993; Holzer *et al.*, 1994; Hanson and Pratt, 1988a; 1988b; 1995; Theodore and Carlson, 1996). By relating the entrapment thesis to spatial mismatch, demand-side arguments that attribute segmentation to the uneven spatial distribution of jobs have gained momentum (McLafferty and Preston, 1991; 1992; England, 1993). But the spatial entrapment thesis has also given new validity to supply-side arguments. Social and political processes of exclusion on the supply-side produce residential inequalities that confine individuals and social groups to local contexts. Smith (1989), for instance, examines political discourse and 'common sense' social practices in modern Britain that have produced and legitimized the residential segregation of blacks. It follows that processes of residential segregation are a crucial element of labor market segmentation.

Recognizing the importance of housing market processes, the discussion below focuses on literature that demonstrates how labor supply is constructed *within* segregated residential space. In other words, workers are segmented not only by class, gender or ethnicity but also by their place of residence. I concentrate, in particular, on writings in cultural theory and emphasize the insights this literature offers in the spatial making of labor market segmentation. I argue that cultural geography makes an essential contribution to a new generation of segmentation approaches, which is called for by Peck (1996: 83–115).

3   Culture and segmentation

The notion of 'culture' moves beyond the 'singularities of "class" or "gender" ' and expresses multitextured identities based on symbolic markers that have social significance and meaning (Bhabha, 1994: 1–2). In the context of this article, 'culture' is not expressed through objective or fixed categories of behavior, traits or values; rather, cultural difference is produced through discourse and practices of inclusion and

exclusion (hooks, 1990: 123–33; Anderson, 1991: 15–17; Bhabha, 1994). Jackson (1991: 219) explains that cultural 'meanings are defined, negotiated, and resisted' and that ' "cultures" are situated within broader structures of dominance and subordination'. Mitchell (1995: 104) notes that 'culture' is 'an idea used to differentiate and to classify'. Therefore it can be regarded as an ideology, which articulates a cohesive view of reality based on selected images of customary beliefs, social forms and material traits, legitimizing the categorization and hierarchical ordering of people (Smith, 1989: 4–7, makes a similar argument for 'race'). Processes of cultural identification and differentiation control social reproduction and achieve social closure.

Cultural identity can be self-ascribed or imposed by others. The latter represents culture as a construct of domination and 'otherness' (Steinberg, 1981; Omi and Winant, 1986; Blaut, 1992; Jackson, 1992; Bhabha, 1994); the former refers to culture as a lived experience. Both forms of cultural identification are reflected in images of behavior, material traits and social form. Nevertheless, the boundaries of imposed and self-ascribed cultural categories are derived from conceptually separate processes and describe different identities. Sometimes these identities overlap or conflate with each other. For instance, imposed cultural identities are often affirmed within a group if advantages arise for the group or for individual group members (Anderson, 1991: Herod, 1997). In addition, people who organize in resistance against cultural domination often identify themselves through common, externally imposed categories (Smith, 1989: 37; hooks, 1990). However, since internal and external processes of cultural identification and differentiation are conceptually distinct they affect labor market segmentation in a different manner.

That cultural differentiation and labor market segmentation are interlocking processes has been established in the literature. Cultural capital theory links internal processes of cultural identification with economic opportunity and labor market segmentation (Bourdieu, 1984; Jackson, 1991). Fernández Kelly (1994: 100) explains that cultural capital 'constitutes a repertory of symbols [that] affect the relationship between individuals, social networks and economic structures, including labor markets'. Through symbolic markers, associated with behavior, norms and material traits, individuals affiliate themselves with educational goals and occupational choices (Fernández Kelly, 1994). In addition, symbolic markers signify cultural identity that allows or denies workers to maneuver within the particular contexts of labor market segments. Zukin (1995: 153–85), for instance, suggests that employees in the New York restaurant industry work either in the 'front' (as waiters, bartenders or hosts) or the 'back' (as cooks and kitchen aids) depending on whether or not their reservoir of symbols matches with the expectations associated with the work task.

External cultural differentiation also relates to labor market segmentation. Mattingly (1999), for instance, finds that pay scales of Mexican domestic workers in San Diego, California, are based on cultural stereotypes on the side of employers that have little to do with actual job performance, such as lack of English language skills. Likewise, Segura (1995: 123) reviews labor market barriers for Latino women in the USA and credits 'a high degree of knowledge of the dominant culture' for avoiding cultural stereotyping and enabling access to higher education and upper segment employment. Both internal and external processes of cultural identity formation affect labor market situation and therefore are important supply-side factors of segmentation.

Although 'culture' is a socially constructed idea based on symbolic meanings without

necessary causal properties, the consequences of cultural differentiation are real and powerful (Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Mitchell, 1995). Academic and political discourse in the USA, for example, has constructed external identities of a 'culture of poverty' and 'underclass' that depict inner-city minority residents as a distinct subculture characterized by 'naturally' occurring cultural traits of criminality, teenage parenthood, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, dropping out of school and laziness (Lewis, 1965; Moynihan, 1965; Wilson, 1987; Corcoran, 1995). By falsely affixing causality for labor market failure to these 'cultural' attributes, culture-of-poverty and underclass ideas have linked the clustering of inner-city minorities in subordinate labor market segments to 'cultural' deficiencies. Thus, academic and political discourse has legitimized practices and policies of discrimination in the labor market (Habermas, 1983; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). It is the very process of cultural differentiation that causes the social segmentation of labor.

Cultural factors on the supply side have previously been emphasized by labor market theorists such as Willis (1977) and Marsden (1986). But the role of place as it relates to processes of cultural identification and differentiation has not served as a primary explanation for segmentation, despite the urging of Aston and Maguire (1984: 117) that the labor market segmentation hypothesis 'can only be tested at the local level'. Whereas economic geographers have drawn on the concept of place to define the economic, political and social circumstances that influence the division of labor (Massey, 1984; 1985; 1994; Peck, 1996), cultural geographers have also provided conceptualizations of place that are important to understanding divisions in the labor market. In particular, a literature emerged in cultural geography that stresses the production of cultural identity and difference through experience and symbolic representation of place.

III   Place, culture and segmentation

Some research has relied on essentialist conceptions of culture and has linked 'cultural' attributes of place to labor market segmentation. Rosenbaum (1991), for instance, examines poor families who moved to either Anglo-American suburban neighborhoods or African-American inner-city areas. He concludes that children of suburban movers adopt local behavioral patterns, norms and values that enhance school and labor market performance. Their inner-city counterparts, on the other hand, maintain behaviors and value patterns that impose a natural disadvantage in the labor market. A sizable literature on so-called neighborhood effects attempts to explain the economic marginalization of neighborhoods and their residents by assigning objectified notions of culture – usually those of the culture of poverty or underclass – to inner-city places (Jencks and Mayer, 1990; Crane, 1991; Galster and Killen, 1995; O'Regan and Quigley, 1996; Brooks-Gunn *et al.*, 1997).

In this section, I examine the relationship between place and labor market segmentation as it relates to nonessentialist ideas of cultural difference, whereby expressions of culture are negotiated in and through the context of place. The literature on the politics of place has pointed towards local practices and political discourse that are constitutive processes in the definition and reproduction of cultural difference (Agnew, 1987; Smith, 1989; Anderson, 1991). Below, I focus first on culture as lived experience, which reflects

internal formations of cultural identity. Then, I concentrate on cultural representation of place, which emphasizes external processes of cultural differentiation.

1   Place and culture as lived experience

Jackson (1991) interprets Raymond Williams' (1958) notion of structures of feeling as a cultural experience and a quality of place. This interpretation extends the humanistic notion of sense of place, indicating emotional attachment (Tuan, 1974), to include structural qualities of place (Longhurst, 1991). It suggests that everyday practices respond to a reservoir of symbols, meanings and expectations embedded in local structure (Agnew, 1987: 25–44). Jackson (1991) explains that structures of feeling produce symbols of economic value that, for instance, have led to the gentrification of urban neighborhoods. Zukin (1995) uncovers similar cultural experiences that shape New York's consumer landscape and create local consumption patterns. The link between cultural geography and segmentation theory is established when local structures of feeling shape labor market identities. In the context of labor market seg- mentation, local structures of feeling resemble a collection of employment-related symbols that constitute a form of cultural capital.

Fernádez Kelly (1994) shows that labor market expectations are influenced by the experience and interpretation of place-particular symbols and meanings. She interviewed youths in West Baltimore and found that decisions of having children, dis- continuing education or entering the labor force respond to a repertory of symbols that carry meanings of adulthood, independence and achievement. These meanings are place-particular to West Baltimore and different in other neighborhoods. Cope (1998: 130) shows for Lawrence, Massachusetts, in the beginning of the twentieth century, that work roles of women and ethnic minorities were derived from 'everyday life . . . and ordinary occurrences' and that they were 'broad cultural and more specific local con- structions of "who *should* do what and where" ' (Cope, 1998: 138, original emphasis). In another example, Wial (1991) demonstrates that images of good and bad jobs differ between ethnic neighborhoods in Boston, Massachusetts. These images of the desir- ability of occupations are constructed within the local neighborhood context through everyday practices of identity formation and through local socialization processes. Place-particular signification processes are important supply-side influences on the spatial segmentation of labor.

Culture as a lived experience expresses a shared identity that should not be conflated with class, race, ethnicity or gender. Nevertheless, class, racial, ethnic and gender differences feed into processes of cultural identification and differentiation (hooks, 1990; Bhabha, 1994) and intersect with the production of symbols, meanings and expressions that shape work roles and employment expectations. Scott (1990: 118–225) observes that local behavioral, attitudinal and speech patterns function as signifiers of class affiliation for members of working-class communities and reflect local labor market expectation.[1] Ethnic, racial, gender and class differentiations overlap and produce multidimensional identities. Bowlby *et al.* (1998) studied Pakistani Muslim women in Reading, UK, and found that the meaning of work is shaped by the social position of Pakistani Muslim women within the family, local institutions and the contexts of the neighborhood. The women considered cleaning, catering or nursing to

be bad jobs, based on their experiences in the home and the community. Good jobs, on the other hand, were associated with tasks that are visible to the women in their role as mothers, such as doctors (see also Brah, 1994). In research in San Antonio, Texas, I found that in one Latino neighborhood a large number of young women wish to pursue careers as nurses or nursing assistants, reflecting a female caretaker role derived from symbols embedded in the context of the neighborhood. Another Latino neighborhood reflects different symbols of meaningful employment, and many young women pursue professional careers in upper labor market segments (Bauder, 1998).

Local institutions play a critical role in the production of symbols that cultivate labor market expectations (Marsden, 1986). Willis (1977: 2), for instance, notes that the school

> is where working-class themes are mediated to individuals and groups in their own determinate context and where working-class kids creatively develop, transform and finally reproduce aspects of the larger culture in their own praxis in such a way as to finally direct them to certain kinds of work.

Schools are not the only element of local institutional networks through which cultural experiences are mediated. Other institutions include community centers, churches, housing authorities and probation offices (Bauder, 1998). Such institutional networks are place-particular (Waggoner, 1991; Brown and Lauder, 1992) and define local contexts in which the cultural shaping of labor market identity occurs.

Place-specific cultural experiences introduce a supply-side argument to labor market segmentation theory that stresses the importance of residential segregation. Pratt (1989: 101) recognizes that '(r)esidential segregation . . . creates varying social milieux which foster distinctive working-class subcultures, structured along the lines of ethnicity, stage in the life cycle and levels of skill. Educational aspirations and resources vary across these milieux, and this has the effect of reproducing skills across generations'. It is important to recognize that local expressions of culture are inevitably intertwined with wider social, political and historical circumstances of residential segregation (Smith, 1989; Anderson, 1991). Segregation, in turn, is linked to the labor process and contingent upon wage scales, occupational affiliation and professional identity. In addition, the experiences of place may also be influenced by local employment structure (Hanson and Pratt, 1995). Cultural experiences of place and labor market segmentation should therefore not be expressed as elements of an asymmetrical cause–effect model but as mutually constitutive processes.

The literature consulted above demonstrates that cultural experiences are embedded in the social, political and historical circumstances of place and that these experiences affect which labor market segment residents will join. Since circumstances are geographically variable (Massey, 1984; 1985; 1994) and locally produced (Agnew, 1987), place becomes an important, constitutive factor in the division of labor. Another process associated with place, which also influences labor market segmentation, relates to imposed images of cultural difference.

2   Cultural representation of place

Places are culturally coded and have social, political and economic meanings (Smith, 1989; Jackson, 1992; Sibley, 1992; 1995). These meanings are produced through political discourse and social practices of exclusion and inclusion (Agnew, 1987; Sibley, 1995). Cultural representations of place differ from local structures of feeling: the latter

describe cultural practices that are internal to place whereas the former reflect external labels that categorize residents by place.[2] Anderson (1991: 30) demonstrates how processes of external place definition operate. She conceptualizes Vancouver's Chinatown

> as an idea, one that relied on a range of cultural assumptions held by Europeans about the Chinese as a type . . . it was an evaluative term . . . Regardless of how Chinatown's residents defined themselves and each other – whether by class, gender, ethnicity, region of origin, surname, generation, dialect, place of birth, and so on – the settlements were perceived by Europeans through lenses of their own tinting. Without needing the recognition of residents, Chinatown's representers constructed in their own minds a boundary between 'their' territory and 'our' territory.

If such an imposed cultural idea of place expresses the economic worth of residents (Agnew, 1987: 33–34), then the representation of place becomes an important factor in the segmentation of labor.

Neighborhoods often carry labels of 'ghetto,' 'deprived' or 'underclass' areas, whereby place suggests an imposed cultural identity that is associated with skill level, work ethic and competence in the labor market. Although socially constructed, these labels shape employers' and educators' labor market expectations of residents. Kirschenman and Neckerman (1991) show that employers often equate inner-city labor with unreliable, uneducated and underskilled workers who lack work ethic. Employers use these stereotypes to evaluate the desirability of local job applicants. In this case, representational symbols of place legitimize the exclusion of a labor-force by place of residence. But images of place also justify the inclusion of workers into certain labor market segments. Manwaring (1984) observes that firms often attract workers from immigrant reception areas based on the perception that local residents have a strong work ethic and low income demands. With the objective of taping into an educated, part-time work-force some firms recruit from suburban areas in search of middle-class housewives (England, 1993). That employers consider area of residence as a variable for assigning workers to segmented jobs demonstrates the importance of cultural representation of place in the segmentation process.

The notion of statistical discrimination attempts to rationalize exclusionary practices among employers. Areas with high crime rates and low educational and skill levels are often bypassed by employers' hiring strategies in order to increase the chances of acquiring a desired work force (Kirschenman and Neckerman, 1991; Holzer, 1994: 711–12; 1996; Kasinitz and Rosenberg, 1996; Theodore and Carlson, 1996). For instance, some employers place job advertisements in newspapers that are not circulated in stigmatized areas (Wilson, 1996; Turner, 1997). Lee and Wrench (1987: 83) observe that 'white' suburban firms operate a 'catchment area policy, on the basis that they do not want apprentices to have a long journey to work'. This policy, however, is absent in firms located in 'black' inner-city areas. The practice of statistical discrimination imposes a homogeneous labor market identity upon residents based on cultural labels of place. Often these labels are associated with underclass and culture-of-poverty images.

Local institutional context provides an important element in the production of cultural meanings of place. Some institutions serve as symbolic markers that represent cultural qualities of place. Residents who live in a certain Latino neighborhood in San Antonio, for instance, carry a stigma of being undependable and lazy workers partly because the neighborhood contains a public housing project. Yet, only a fraction of the

neighborhood's residents actually live in the housing project. Residents of a nearby Latino neighborhood, which does not have a housing project, are considered honest and industrious workers (Bauder, 1998).

The cultural identity of neighborhoods is partially derived from the perceived labor market characteristics of the local residential population. In light of this observation, it is again impossible to separate residential segregation, cultural representation of place and labor market segmentation into cause and effect. Just as cultural representation of place influences the segmentation of labor, so does a spatially segmented labor-force give rise to the construction of place-based stereotypes. Cultural differentiation, residential segregation and economic segmentation are interlocking processes in the production and reproduction of inequality. Located at the center of these processes, however, is place, which now takes on a constitutive role in the segmentation of the labor market.

This idea introduces a spatial component to Max Weber's idea of social closure (Clairmont et al., 1983). It is not only achieved when social groups act in solidarity in order to control segmentation processes, but also when inhabitants of a place act collectively[3] or are collectively stereotyped. If place represents collective identities and processes, then place assumes the function of an agent. In the context of the locality debate (Jonas, 1988; Pratt, 1991), Cox and Mair (1991: 198) note:

> If people interpret localized social structures in explicitly territorial terms, come to view their interests and identities as 'local,' and then act upon that view by mobilizing locally defined organizations to further their interests in a manner that would not be possible were they to act separately, then it seems eminently reasonable to talk about 'locality as agent'.

By applying the terminology of 'place as agent' to processes of labor market segmentation I emphasize the proactive role of place (Agnew, 1987; Lefebvre, 1991,) in allocating workers to jobs. The cultural representation of place is an important practice through which this role is exercised.

IV   Conclusion

This article reflects an attempt to draw greater attention to supply-side processes in the spatial segmentation of labor markets. I stress the role of place in the production of cultural identities and differences and as a force in the allocation of workers to segmented employment. The risk of this supply-side approach lies in oversocializing labor market processes and in neglecting interdependencies between demand and supply. Both coexist and interact within wider social, political and economic contexts that reproduce inequality. For instance, social inequalities are also constructed inside the labor market, and stigma is attached to workers after, and because, they join a labor market segment (Barrera, 1979; Fevre, 1992: 252–55; McDowell, 1997; Cope, 1998). Work and social meaning are mutually dependent and jointly feed cycles of reproduction of labor. Therefore, I do not argue against demand-side processes but for a greater recognition of the supply side in the spatial segmentation literature.

The way I demonstrated that cultural identity and difference emerge as a crucial influence on labor market outcomes is grounded in a micro-level conceptualization of place on the neighborhood scale. Questions that remain are whether the same can be

said about other spatial scales and what the nature of culture–work interaction is on different scales. These are issues that need to be addressed by the new generation of labor market segmentation research advocated by Peck (1996).

The literature consulted in this article suggests that home-to-work travel patterns are insufficient to conceptualize local labor markets (Peck, 1989; Hanson and Pratt, 1988a; 1992; Scott, 1992; England, 1993). In addition, the notion of the local labor market must relate to place-based contexts that define cultural identity and signify cultural difference. The crux of spatial segmentation theory is that local labor markets are 'conjunctual structures' that operate 'in different ways at different times *and in different places*' (Peck, 1996: 94, original emphasis). The idea of local uniqueness, situatedness and contingency that makes any generalizations problematic (Rose, 1997, Schoenberger, 1997, Agnew, 1987), is precisely what is addressed in cultural geography that links cultural outcomes to experience and representation of place. Applying these ideas to labor market theory therefore contributes to the continuing erosion of orthodox economic theory that stresses generalizability, predictability and spatial uniformity (Massey, 1984: 67–69; Marsden, 1986: 1–25).

This article emphasizes that place assumes a proactive role in the social segmentation of labor. Residential segregation, reflecting uneven power relationships in society (Smith, 1989; Keith and Pile, 1993), is at the heart of labor market segmentation processes. A remaining task for labor market theorists lies with gaining a better understanding of the working of complex and interlocking relationships between the housing market, cultural identity, and labor demand and supply-side processes. Fourth-generation segmentation theorist should focus on place as a constitutive force to fill this gap.

Notes

1. Related, but exclusionary, symbols of class affiliation exist in white-collar areas (Davis, 1990).
2. Lefebvre (1991: 38–39) makes a similar distinction by using the terms 'representational space' and 'representations of space'. Representational space reflects imaginative, less coherent symbols that resemble structure of feeling. Representation of space is an intellectually worked-out conception of space.
3. Herod (1997) shows that workers themselves construct images of place in order collectively to secure their labor market position, and that they deny these images to other places.

References

Agnew, J.A. 1987: *Place and politics: the geographical mediation of state and society*. Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin.

Anderson, K.J. 1991: *Vancouver's Chinatown: racial discourse in Canada, 1875–1980*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Ashton, D.N. and **Maguire, M.J.** 1984: Labour market theory and the organization of local labor markets. *International Journal of Social Economics* 11 106–20.

Athey, T.R. and **Hantaluoma, J.E.** 1994: Effects of applicant overeducation, job status, and gender stereotype on employment division. *Journal of Social Psychology* 134, 439–52.

Averitt, R.T. 1968: *The dual economy: the dynamics of American industrial structure*. New York: Morton & Co.

Barrera, M. 1979: *Race and class in the Southwest: a theory of racial inequality*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Bauder, H. 1998: Labor market marginalisation of young latinos in San Antonio, Texas: a geographical perspective on neighborhood processes. PhD dissertation, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario.

Bhabha, H.K. 1994: *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.

Blair, J.P. and **Fichtenbaum, R.H.** 1992: Changing black employment patterns. In Galster, G.C. and Hill, E.W., editors, *The metropolis in black and white: place, power and polarization*, New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, 72–92.

Blaut, J.M. 1992: The theory of cultural racism. *Antipode* 24, 289–99.

Bourdieu, P. 1984: *Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bowlby, S., Lloyd Evans, S. and **Mohammad, R.** 1998: Becoming a paid worker: images and identity. In Skelton, T. and Valentine, G., editors, *Cool places: geographies of youth cultures*. London: Routledge, 229–48.

Brah, A. 1994: 'Race' and 'culture' in the gendering of labour markets. In Afshhar H. and Maynard M., editors, *The dynamics of race and gender: some feminist interventions*, London: Taylor and Francis, 151–71.

Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G.J. and **Aber, J.L.,** editors, 1997: *Neighborhood poverty. Volume 1. Context and consequences for children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Brown, P. and **Lauder, H.** 1992: Education, economy and society: an introduction to a new agenda. In Brown, P. and Lauder, H., editors, *Education for economic survival: from Fordism to post–Fordism*?, London: Routledge, 1–44.

Carnoy, M., Daley H.M. and **Hinojosa Ojeda, R.** 1993: The changing economic position of Latinos in the US labor market since 1939. In Morales, R. and Bonilla, F., editors, *Latinos in a changing US economy: comparative perspectives on growing inequality*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 28–54.

Clairmont, D., Apostle, R. and **Kreckel, R.** 1983: The segmentation perspective as a middle-range conceptualization in sociology. *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 8, 245–72.

Cooke, T.J. 1996: City–suburb differences in African American male labor market achievement. *Professional Geographer* 38, 458–67.

Cope, M. 1998: Home–work links, labor markets, and the construction of place in Lawrence, Massachusetts 1920–1939. *Professional Geographer* 50, 126–40.

Corcoran, M. 1995: Rags to rags: poverty and mobility in the United States. *Annual Review of Sociology* 21, 237–67.

Cox, K.R. and **Mair, A.** 1991: From localized social structures to localities as agents. *Environment and Planning A* 23, 197–213.

Crane, J. 1991: The epidemic theory of ghettos and neighborhood effects on dropping out and teenage childbearing. *American Journal of Sociology* 96, 1226–59.

Davis, M. 1990: *City of quartz: excavating the future of Los Angeles*. London: Verso.

Ellwood, D. 1986: The spatial mismatch hypothesis: are there teenage jobs missing in the ghetto? In Freeman, R.B. and Holzer, H.J., editors, *The black youth employment crisis*, Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 147–90.

England, K.V.L. 1993: Suburban pink collar ghettos: the spatial entrapment of women. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, 225–42.

—— 1995: 'Girls in the office': recruiting and job search in a local clerical labor market. *Environment and Planning A* 27, 1195–2018.

Fernández Kelly, M.P. 1994: Towanda's triumph: social and cultural capital in the transition to adulthood in the urban ghetto. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 18, 88–111.

Fevre, R. 1992: *The sociology of labor markets*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Galster, G.C. and **Killen, S.P.** 1995: The geography of metropolitan opportunity: a reconnaissance and conceptual framework. *Housing Policy Debate* 6, 7–43.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. 1996: *The end of capitalism (as we knew it): a feminist critique of political economy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Gittleman, M.B. and **Howell, D.R.** 1995: Changes in the structure and quality of jobs in the United States: effects by race and gender 1973–1990. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 48, 420–40.

Gordon, D.M., Edwards R. and **Reich, M.** 1982: *Segmented work, divided workers: the historical transformation of labour in the United States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gordon, I. and **Sassen, S.** 1992: Restructuring the urban labor markets. In Feinstein, S. Gordon, I. and Harloe, M., editors, *Divided cities: New York and London in the contemporary world*, Oxford: Blackwell, 105–28.

Gregson, N. and **Lowe, M.** 1993: Renegotiating the domestic division of labour: a study of dual career households in north-east and south-east England. *Sociological Review* 41, 475–505.

Grieco, M. 1984: Family networks and the closure of employment. In Lee, G. and Loveridge, R., editors, *The manufacture of disadvantage: stigma and social closure*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 33–44.

Habermas, J. 1983: Neoconservative culture criticism in the United States and western Germany: an intellectual movement in two political cultures. *Telos* 56, 75–89.

Hanson, S. and **Pratt, G.** 1988a: Reconceptualizing the links between home and work in urban geography. *Economic Geography* 64, 299–321.

—— 1988b: Spatial dimensions of the gender division of a local labor market. *Urban Geography* 9, 180–202.

—— 1992: Dynamic dependencies: a geographic investigation of local labor markets. *Economic Geography* 68, 373–405.

—— 1995: *Gender, work, and space*. London: Routledge.

Herod, A. 1997: From a geography of labor to a labor geography: labor's spatial fix and the geography of capitalism. *Antipode* 29, 1–31.

Hiebert, D. 1997: *The colour of work: labour market segmentation in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver 1991. Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis: Working Paper Series* 97-02. Vancouver Centre of Excellence (http://riim.metropolis.globalx.net/research-policy/research-policy2/Papers_e.html).

Hodge, D.C. 1996: And in conclusion: 'it depends'. *The Professional Geographer* 48, 417–19.

Holloway, S. 1998: The role of residential location in conditioning the effect of metropolitan economic structure on male youth employment. *The Professional Geographer* 50, 31–45.

Holzer, H.J. 1987: Informal job search and black youth employment. *American Economic Review* 77, 446–52.

—— 1991: The mismatch hypothesis: what has the evidence shown? *Urban Studies* 28, 105–22.

—— 1994: Black employment problems: new evidence, old questions. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 13, 699–722.

—— 1996: *What employers want: job prospects for less-educated workers*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

Holzer, H.J., Ihlanfeldt, K.R. and **Sjoquist, D.L.** 1994: Work search and travel among white and black youth. *Journal of Urban Economics* 35, 320–45.

hooks, b. 1990: *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Ihlanfeldt. K.R. and **Sjoquist, D.L.** 1998: The spatial mismatch hypothesis: a review of recent studies and their implications for welfare reform. *Housing Policy Debate* 9, 849–92.

Jackson, P. 1991: Mapping meanings: a cultural critique of locality studies. *Environment and Planning A* 23, 215–28.

—— 1992: Constructions of culture, representation of race: Edward Curtis's 'way of seeing!' In Anderson, K. and Gale, F., editors, *Inventing places: studies in cultural geography*, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 89–106.

Jencks, C. and **Mayer, S.E.** 1990: The social consequences of growing up in a poor neighborhood. In Michael, G.H., McGeary, L. and Lynn, E., editors, *Inner city poverty in the United States*, Washington, DC: National Academic Press, 111–86.

Jonas, A. 1988: A new regional geography of localities. *Area* 20, 101–10.

Kain, J.F. 1992: The spatial mismatch hypothesis: three decades later. *Housing Policy Debate* 3, 371–460.

Kasarda, J.D. 1990: The jobs–skills mismatch. *New Perspectives Quarterly* 7, 34–7.

—— 1993. Inner-city poverty and economic access. In Sommer, J. and Hicks, D.A., editors,

Rediscovering urban America: perspectives on the 1980's, Washington, DC: USA Department of Housing and Urban Development, 4-1–4-60.

Kasinitz, P. and **Rosenberg, J.** 1996: Missing the connection: social isolation and employment on the Brooklyn Waterfront. *Social Problems* 43: 180–96.

Keith, M. and **Pile, S.** 1993: Introduction part 2: the place of politics. In Keith, M. and Pile, S., editors, *Place and the politics of identity*, London: Routledge, 22–40.

Kelly, R.D.G. 1994: *Race rebels: culture, politics, and the black working class*. New York: The Free Press.

Kenrick, J. 1981: Politics and the construction of women as second-class workers. In Wilkinson, F., editor, *The dynamics of labour market segmentation*. London: Academic Press, 167–91.

Kessler-Harris, A. 1982: *Out to work: a history of wage-earning women in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kett, J.F. 1977: *Rites of passage: adolescence in America – 1790 to the present*. New York: Basic Books.

Kirschenman, J. and **Neckerman, K.M.** 1991: 'We'd love to hire them, but . . .': the meaning of race for employers. In Jencks, C. and Peterson, P.E., editors, *The urban underclass*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 203–32.

Lee, G. and **Loveridge. R.,** editors 1987: *The manufacture of disadvantage: stigma and social closure*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Lee, G. and **Wrench, J.** 1987: Race and gender dimensions of the youth labour market: from apprenticeship to YTS. In Lee, G. and Loveridge, R., editors, *The manufacture of disadvantage: stigma and social closure*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 83–99.

Lefebvre, H. 1991: *The production of space* (translated by Nicholson-Smith, D.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Lewis, O. 1965: *La Vida: a Puerto Rican family in the culture of poverty – San Juan and New York*. New York: Vintage Books/Random House.

Longhurst, B. 1991: Raymond Williams and local cultures. *Environment and Planning A* 13, 229–38.

Loveridge, R. 1987: Stigma – the manufacture of disadvantage. In Lee, G. and Loveridge, R., editors, *The manufacture of disadvantage: stigma and social closure*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 2–17.

Manwaring, T. 1984: The extended internal labour market. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 8, 161–87.

Marsden, D. 1986: *The end of economic man? Custom and competition in labour markets*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books.

Massey, D. 1984: *Spatial division of labor: social structures and the geography of production*. New York: Methuen.

—— 1985: New directions in space. In Gregory, D. and Urry, J., editors, *Social relations and spatial structures*, New York: St Martin's Press, 9–19.

—— 1994: *Space, place, and gender*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Mattingly, D. 1999: Job search, social networks, and local labor market dynamics: the case of paid household work in San Diego, California. *Urban Geography* 20, 46–74.

McDowell, L. 1997: *Capital culture: work in the city*. Oxford: Blackwell.

McLafferty, S. and **Preston, V.** 1991: Gender, race, and commuting among service sector workers. *Professional Geographer*, 68, 1–15.

—— 1992: Spatial mismatch and labour market for African–American and Latina women. *Economic Geography*, 406–31.

Mitchell, D. 1995: There's no such thing as culture: towards a reconceptualization of the idea of culture in geography. *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 20, 102–16.

Morales, R. and **Bonilla, F.** 1993: Restructuring and the new inequality. In Morales, R. and Bonilla, F., editors, *Latinos in a changing US economy: comparative perspectives on growing inequality*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1–27.

Moynihan, D.P. 1965: *The negro family: the case for national action*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor.

Offe, C. and **Hinrichs, K.** 1985: The political economy of the labour market. In Offe, C., editor, *Disorganized capitalism: contemporary transformations of work and politics*, Cambridge: Polity, 10–51.

Omi, M. and **Winant, H.** 1986: *Racial formation in the United States: from the 1960s to the 1980s*. New York: Routledge.

O'Regan, K.M. and **Quigley, J.M.** 1996: Spatial effects upon employment outcomes: the case of New Jersey teenagers. *New England Economic Review: Special Issue – Earnings Equality* May, 41–64.

Parkin, F. 1974: Strategies of social closure in class formation. In Parkin, F., editor, *The social analysis of class structure*, London: Tavistock, 1–18.

Peck, J.A. 1989: Reconceptualizing the local labour market: space, segmentation and the

state. *Progress in Human Geography* 13, 42–59.

—— 1996: *Work-place: the social regulation of labor markets*. New York: Guilford Press.

Picchio del Mercato, A. 1981: Social reproduction and the basic structure of the labour market. In Wilkinson, F., editor, *The dynamics of labour market segmentation*. London Academic Press: 193–209.

Pratt, A.C. 1989: Discourses of locality. *Environment and Planning A* 23, 257–66.

Pratt, G. 1989: Reproduction, class, and the spatial structure of the city. In Peet, R. and Thrift, N., editors, *New models in geography: the political economy perspective* (Vol. 2), London: Unwin Hyman, 84–108.

Preston, V and **McLafferty, S.** 1999: Spatial mismatch research in the 1990s: progress and potential. *Papers in Regional Science* 78, 387–402.

Reich, M., Gordon, D.M. and **Edwards R.C.** 1973: Dual labor markets: a theory of labor market segmentation. *American Economic Review* 63, 359–65.

Romero, M. 1993: Day working the suburbs: the work experience of Chicana private housekeepers. In Sedillo Lopez, A., editor, *Latina issues*. Vol. 2, New York: Garland Publishing, 147–61.

Rose, G. 1997: Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography* 21, 305–20.

Rosenbaum, J.F. 1991: Black pioneers – do their moves to the suburbs increase economic opportunity for mothers and children? *Housing Policy Debate* 2, 1179–213.

Rumberger, R.W. and **Carnoy, M.** 1980: Segmentation in the USA labour market: its effects on the mobility and earnings of whites and blacks. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 4, 177–32.

Ryan, P. 1981: Segmentation, duality and the internal labour market. In Wilkinson, F., editor, *The dynamics of labour market segmentation*, London: Academic Press, 3–20.

Schoenberger, E. 1997: *The cultural crisis of the firm*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Scott, A.J. 1990: *Metropolis: from the division of labor to urban form*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

—— 1992. The spatial organization of a local labor market: employment and residential patterns in a cohort of engineering and scientific workers. *Growth and Change* 23, 94–115.

Segura, D. 1995. Labor market stratification: the Chicana experience. In Sedillo López, A., editor,

Latina issues: fragments of historia (ella) (herstory), New York: Garland Publishing, 111–45.

Sibley, D. 1992: 'Outsiders' in society and space. In Anderson, K. and Gale, F., editors, *Inventing places: studies in cultural geography*, Melbourne: Longman Chelshire, 107–22.

—— 1995. *Geographies of exclusion: society and difference in the west*. London: Routledge.

Skinner, C. 1995: Urban labor markets and young black men: a literature review. *Journal of Economic Issues* 29, 47–65.

Smith, S. 1989: *The Politics of 'race' and residence: citizenship, segregation, and white supremacy in Britain*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Steinberg, S. 1981: *The ethnic myth: race, ethnicity, and class in America*. New York: Atheneum.

Theodore, N.C. and **Carlson, V.** 1996: Employment networks and the creation of local labor markets. In *Abstracts, 92nd annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers*, Charlotte, NC.

Tuan, Y.-F. 1974: Space and place: humanistic perspective. *Progress in Geography 6*, 233–46.

Turner, S.C. 1997. Barriers to a better break: employer discrimination and spatial mismatch in metropolitan Detroit. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 19, 123–41.

Valentine, G., Skelton, T. and **Chambers, D.** 1998: Cool places: an introduction to youth and youth cultures. In Skelton, T. and Valentine, G., editors, *Cool places: geographies of youth cultures*. London, Routledge, 1–32.

Waggoner, D. 1991: *Undereducation in America: the demography of high school dropouts*. New York: Auburn House.

Wetherell, M. and **Potter, J.** 1992: *Mapping the language of racism: discourse and legitimation of exploitation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wial, H. 1991: Getting a good job: mobility in a segmented labor market. *Industrial Relations* 30, 396–416.

Williams, R. 1958: *Culture and society: 1780–1950*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Willis, P.E. 1977: *Learning to labour: how working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Westmead: Saxon House.

Wilson, W.J. 1987: *The truly disadvantaged: the inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

—— 1996: *When work disappears: the world of the new urban poor*. New York: Vintage Books.

Zhang, Z. 1998: Indirect tests of the spatial mismatch hypothesis in the Cleveland PMSA: a labor market perspective. *Urban Affairs Review* 33: 712–23.

Zukin, S. 1995: *The cultures of cities*. Oxford: Blackwell.