



# Divided Cities: Understanding Intra-Urban Inequalities

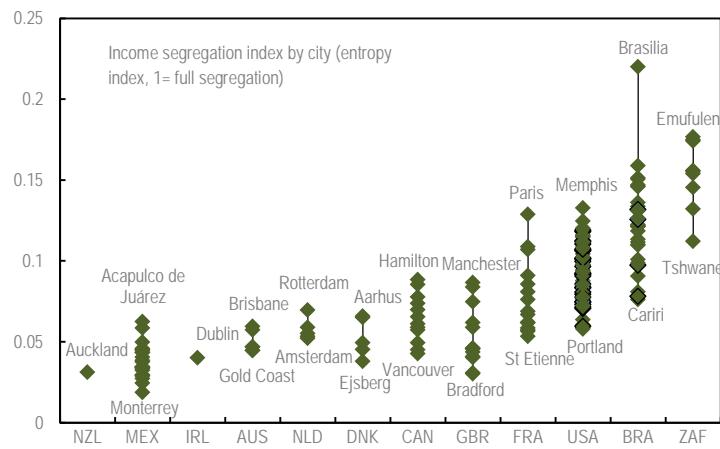
## Urban inequalities are found at the neighbourhood level

Cities provide economic opportunities to people with different backgrounds and skills. However, cities can often be divided. In a divided city, specific groups are concentrated in particular neighbourhoods and face limitations to access opportunities, amenities and services. Inequalities in access can exacerbate disparities and leave behind the most vulnerable members of society. The OECD report *Divided Cities* provides evidence on spatial inequalities and segregation in cities. It considers multiple dimensions of inequality, including income levels, migrant background, and access to jobs by public transport.

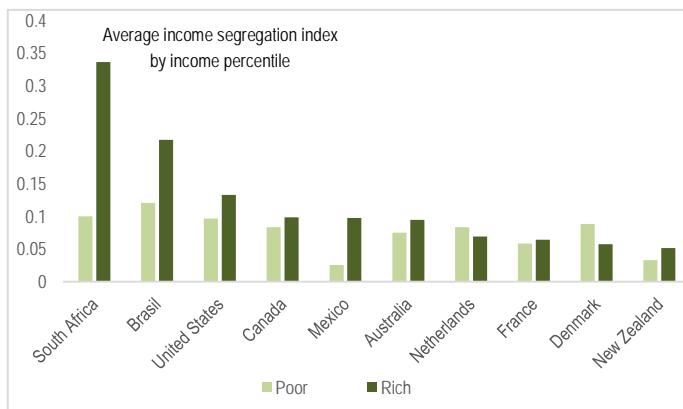
## Income segregation varies greatly across and within countries

The concentration of people in particular neighbourhoods according to their income level – also called income segregation – differs greatly across cities around the world (Figure 1). Income segregation is, for example, high in South Africa and Brazil and low in Ireland and New Zealand. Income segregation in Brasilia, the most segregated city in Brazil, is seven times higher than in Auckland, the most segregated city in New Zealand. Segregation levels can also vary widely within countries. In the United States, for instance, average income segregation levels in Memphis, are more than twice as high as in Portland.

*Figure 1. Differences in income segregation are large both across countries and cities*



*Figure 2. In most countries, the rich are more concentrated than the poor in specific neighbourhoods*



Not all income groups are equally likely to be segregated. In most countries the rich have the strongest tendency to live among themselves. For example, in South Africa the rich (those in the top 20% of the income distribution) are three times more segregated than the poor (bottom 20%) (Figure 2). The situation is the opposite in Denmark and the Netherlands, where the poor tend to be more segregated than the rich. This might be related to a high concentration of social housing in specific neighbourhoods.

### What city characteristics are associated with higher income segregation?

- Income segregation tends to be higher in larger, more affluent and more unequal cities. For example, income segregation in the wealthiest cities is more than twice as high as in the poorest cities.
- Across **Brazilian cities**, the rich tend to concentrate in high-rise housing neighborhoods, which have the best access to amenities and employment, while other areas might lack access to opportunities.



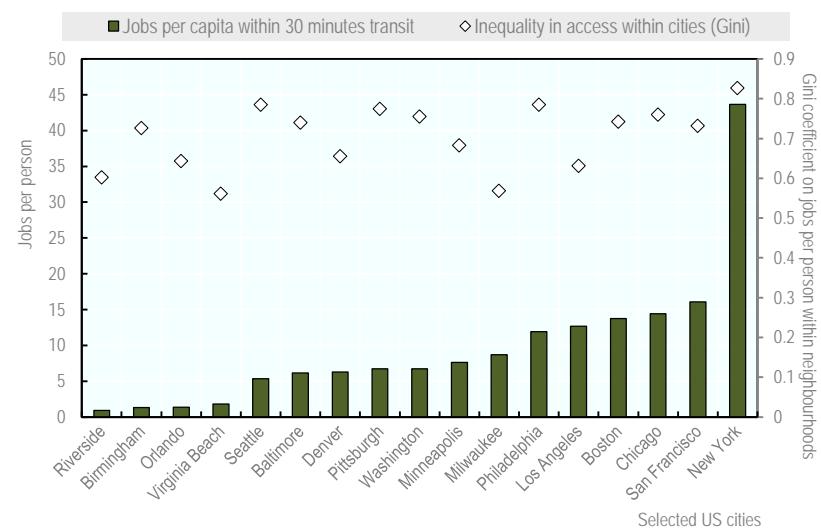
## Migrant location within cities matters for neighbourhood inequalities

Increases in the size of migrant communities in cities can translate into less concentration in specific neighbourhoods (clustering), as observed for European cities. The likelihood that migrants concentrate in specific neighborhoods is higher for those who settle in large cities, come from distant countries; and/or come from countries with higher levels of forced migration.

## Access to jobs by public transport is unequal within cities

Figure 3. Job access by public transport per capita varies greatly across and within cities

The extent to which living in specific neighborhoods can affect economic prospects is largely determined by access to jobs via public transport. The number of jobs that a person can reach within a 30-minute commute by public transit can be very different across cities (Figure 3 shows evidence from the United States). Job access also varies considerably within cities, even in those with high absolute access. For example, New York City has both the highest absolute access per capita and the largest disparity in access across neighborhoods.



Jobs typically carried out by minorities in cities in the United States are often located in areas lacking appropriate transit connections, even though minorities are concentrated in inner city areas that are relatively well-served by public transport. This disadvantage in access can translate into higher likelihood of unemployment for minorities.

### Policy can help bridge divides and make cities more inclusive by:

- ✓ Broadening opportunities for people across neighbourhoods that lack access to high-quality education and training.
- ✓ Linking the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods with places of opportunity by better transport connections between the locations of jobs and residential locations.
- ✓ Making neighbourhoods more inclusive and affordable, through land-use regulations that facilitate the building of new housing, and with social housing avoiding concentration of disadvantage.