

***Participatory Democracy and spatial segregation and territory. Elements for the analysis.***

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## PROGRESS REPORT

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### 1. By way of Introduction

Case studies of spatial and territorial segregation occurring in 7 Latin-American cities were incorporated to the preparatory work of the WG, these were Porto Alegre, São Paulo and Santo André (Brazil), Montevideo (Uruguay), Cuenca (Ecuador), Mexico City FD (Mexico) plus the new experience of the TSS (*“Territorios Sociales Solidarios”* - Solidary Social Territories) in Paraguay. Methodological documents have also been produced and published as a result of group decisions, such as the first document drawn up by WG Coordinator, along with others drafted by Porto Alegre City Hall and COPEVI. An agreement was reached within the group to recommend a greater level of participation by local governments in the European area, along with an increased level of interaction with the team that are preparing the FALP (Forum of Peripheral Local Authorities) Meetings and the Getafe Meeting in 2010.

### 2. Results

The discussion of the question of spatial segregation and territory in major urban centres brings up a number of challenges in terms of analysis and the possibilities for taking direct action. The transformation of city into privileged residential areas for large sections of our countries' population is an ever more pressing reality.

We live in a world that has become completely urbanised and this process has transformed built-up urban areas, revealing a wide range of social divisions: generational, ethnic, socio-economic, political and many more, to the extent that the constant challenge of being able to lead a harmonious and respectful life in cities is one that remains far from being met<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> DAVIES, Mike. “Planet of Slums. Urban Involution and Informal Proletariat”, NLR, s/d. The challenges of territorial management have become complex and the application of miraculous and easy formulas has failed because of the magnitude of the problems. “The dynamics of third-world urbanisation summarises and, at the same time, confounds the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century precedents set by Europe and North America. In China we now find the largest industrial revolution in history, an Archimedean lever that is transferring a population the size of Europe from rural villages to cities that are drowning in smog and reaching up to the skies. As a result, ‘China will soon cease to be the predominantly rural country that it has been for millennia’.”

Urban segregation is now a daily reality for the inhabitants of major cities and current economic models and forms of government have found it very difficult to re-establish democracy, well-being and harmony. In fact, on the contrary, such mechanisms have been incapable and have, on many occasions, even been responsible for the growth of various kinds of discrimination and the exclusion of populations that live in the cities.<sup>2</sup>

A pioneering study undertaken by the Observatory of the Metropolises of Brazil has also recorded similarities and approximations<sup>3</sup> with regard to the growth of inequalities and poverty, to the extent that the idea of the “*third worldisation*” of major cities is often talked about, or even the “*Brazilisation*” (Lipietz, 1996) of certain developed societies. Mike Davies, in his brilliant study of cities<sup>4</sup> underlines the apparent paradox between the integral urbanisation of the planet and the increase in factors of impoverishment and unsustainability that are chastising the populations of these cities. In reality this apparent paradox is due to the brutal conditions that surround contemporary capitalism, trapped as it is between a convergence of financial, economic, climatic and food crises that predominantly sacrifice the populations of the peripheral (or emerging as they are now called) countries, who have become concentrated in cities.

In order to observe these new urbanisation processes<sup>5</sup> a less tendentious approach is required, both in terms of glorifying such tendencies and, *tout court*, questioning them. Globalisation is, in this sense, understood as an unfinished and contradictory process directed not only by the market but also by political forces and which does not override the importance of local dynamics<sup>6</sup>.

Increasingly, these days, we are witnessing a reinforcement of the sub-national levels of the State, which in turn generates new roles for people and means that the notions of citizenship and rights have been transformed, giving rise to the gestation of new social subjects.<sup>7</sup>

Processes of social segregation are fed by the excluding standards of location and settlement, which in turn lead populations to seek out solutions for housing and coexistence that are characterised by the scarcity or absence of sustainability. The insertion of these populations in consumption networks that are marked out by precariousness and low quality, wherein the generalised mercantilisation of the relationship feeds a circuit of symbolic violence, this in turn strengthens processes of racism, social “exclusion” and differing degrees of discrimination.

This situation, which is currently being designed for the development of cities, generates new challenges when it comes to conceiving the function of the powers of both the State and of society.

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<sup>2</sup> This whole reflection has been greatly enriched by the contributions of the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy WG “Social Segregation in Major Cities”, coordinated by the Observatory of the Metropolises (SP- Brazil).

<sup>3</sup> PRETECEILLE, Edmond & RIBEIRO, Luiz César Queiroz. “Tendencies in Social Segregation in Global Metropolises. Paris and Rio de Janeiro in the 1980’s”, São Paulo, *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, Vol. 14 no 40 June/99.

<sup>4</sup> DAVIES, Mike. “Planet of Slums. Urban Involution and Informal Proletariat”, in NLR, no. 26, 2004, mimeo.

<sup>5</sup> SASSEN, Saskia. *The Global City. New York, London & Tokyo*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> PRETECEILLE, Edmond & RIBEIRO, Luiz César Queiroz, idem, ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> SASSEN, Saskia. *Counter-Geographies of Globalisation. Gender and Citizenship in Transborder Circuits*, Madrid, Dream Traffickers, 2003.

These challenges are related to the way in which the policies of the State are thought up and which arise from the new configurations being acquired by society, the economy and politics. As the late Professor Milton Santos would say, “we have arrived (today) at the present phase of globalised structural poverty in which there is a globalised production of poverty, that is also a scientific production of poverty.”<sup>8</sup> An evolutionary (or perhaps *involutionary*) stage that has been imposed by the generalised mercantilisation of goods and services that affects spaces and places and transforms the very nature of the territories in which the State and the citizens found their place. The redefinition of the roles generated by this new situation gives rise to the emergence of new subjects and reconfigures the role of traditional institutions such as municipalities and local government authorities.

In reality, during the 1990’s, when the neoliberal hegemony dominated the agenda of national governments, under the so-called “*Washington consensus*”, a change of emphasis took place towards local governments and political and institutional innovations such as participatory budgets and the *Alter-Globalisation* movement. This change towards the local and to political innovation found its most important applications through the *World Social Forum* and the municipal administration of *Porto Alegre* (Brazil).<sup>9</sup>

“Against this background of red-hot experimentation and the institutional creativity of popular social bases”, according to Boaventura Sousa Santos<sup>10</sup>, there is an alternative law and counter-hegemony globalisation fighting to assert itself. The ideas of social protagonism, citizen’s participation and democratic radicalism are added to management and innovation experiences in the public sphere that give a new meaning to the notion of the State and democracy. This is the main balance of the enormous neoliberal hecatomb described in full detail and in all its drama by Naomi Klein.<sup>11</sup> The most interesting aspect, in terms of the debate that we are proposing, is in the lucidity with which this author tackles the extent of the neoliberal offensive and hegemonic globalisation, supported by the tyranny of the markets and governments that are obedient to the neoliberal order, mainly through the effects of the policies advocated by these stakeholders and the generalised deterioration of the living conditions of the populations, opening up the way for popular solutions that call into question this exclusive and antidemocratic logic. At the same time, such do not cease to be movements that defend against the deterioration of relationships in economic and social terms. Seeking shelter in “inventions” indicates that impoverished populations, those that have traditionally been marginalised by society, are “once more taking up” the path of their ethnic and/or racial identities, against the loss of effectiveness of other forms of subjectivation derived from the virtual “stripping” of sources of identification with the native social relations of the world of work.

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<sup>8</sup> SANTOS, Milton. “The Future of the Mega-Cities: Dualism between Power and Poverty” in *Cadernos Metrópole*, no. 19, São Paulo, Educ, 2008. *Traducción do autor*.

<sup>9</sup> GOLDFRANK, Benjamin. “From City to Nation? *Participatory Democracy* and the Left in Latin-America” in *New Society*, no. 212, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> SOUSA SANTOS, Boaventura & RODRIGUEZ GARAVITO. César (Eds.). *Law and Globalisation from Below. Towards a Cosmopolitan Legality*, Barcelona, Anthropos, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> KLEIN, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Buenos Aires, Paidós, 2008.

### **3. Latin America**

Latin America underwent a similar process in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the luminous experience of the Mexican Revolution in 1910; the student uprising in Cordoba (Argentina) in 1918, which spread like a powder trail throughout the continent in the following decades; the 1917 General Strike in São Paulo and its coincidence with the asset stripping of the oligarchic republican experiments that were sunk by the fallout from the crisis of 1929.<sup>12</sup>

These processes heralded the opening of political processes that were defined by populism and its attempts to install populist-national regimes, as well as the efforts that were made to generate worker, peasant, indigenous and populist alternatives.

This has now become part and parcel of the history of the continent, yet what is happening today is a situation in which parallels and similarities can be found with previous historic processes while, at the same time, there are very different circumstances, resulting from the situation inherited from the neoliberal cycle and its legacy of poverty, loss and the precarious nature of the rights conquered.

There is now a repertoire of responses designed to respond to the perverse effects of informality in working relationships and the degradation of the social policies of the populist past, swept away by the neoliberal “flood”. In the main they redesigned, on the basis of new profiles, the relationship between redistribution, territorialisation and social protagonism.

Such responses to segregation and exclusion aim to modulate affirmatively, or by overcoming them<sup>13</sup>, the goal of a city that is capable of accommodating social and cultural diversity, yet also of democratically assuming the structural heterogeneousness that arises from the history of its patterns of settlement.

### **4. Participatory Democracy and Social Segregation**

In this sense, the OIDP WG has made a partial and incomplete attempt to consider the organisation of questions of participatory democracy and spatial and territorial segregation and, in short, the WG has provisionally reached the following conclusions:

- Despite the fact that socio-territorial segregation produces conditions that are unfavourable for the social participation of citizens, dismissing roles and generating asymmetries of power, the experience in a determined territory under the same conditions and with the same problems can lead to a socio-political participation that produces social capital and allows citizens to fight for the affirmation of the rights of citizenship and of inclusion.

- Processes of participatory democracy can empower segregated social groups in such a way that they will be able to reduce the impact of asymmetrical power relationships in the city. Asymmetrical power relationships are understood as the differentiated capacity

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<sup>12</sup> The literature on this cycle is both prolific and well known insofar as it was the basis for a good part of the birth of Latin-American sociology.

<sup>13</sup> WACQUANT, Lôic. *Prisons of Poverty*, Madrid, Alianza Ensayo, 2000. “The political mutation in which this transition is inscribed could be summarised by the following formula: *disappearance of the economic State, reduction of the social State (and) strengthening of the penal State.*”

of groups and classes to set in motion actions that will allow them to dispute projects and demands in the public space.

- Spatial and territorial segregation are related to inequality in both the distribution of and access to public goods and services. Thus, experiences of participatory democracy can contribute to the protagonism of the most vulnerable and segregated groups and can revert that situation.

- Experiences of participatory democracy allow for an extension of the possibilities and potentialities of instituting new socio-spatial relationships, with reference to social and urban discussion, formulation and management. These experiences can be important in terms of social protagonism, in particular when expressing a new form of participatory democracy. In this way relationships of power and the organisation of the territory, by means of the planning and management of a public budget can materialise a process of socio-spatial organisation in which society and space are not analysed as separate parts of a whole, even more so if they are part of the same movement of socio-spatial constitution, creation and reproduction<sup>14</sup>.

### **5. Latin-American Cities: Participatory Budget and the Diversity of Urban Policy Tools to Overcome Factors of Segregation**

The WG has been enriched by the studies carried out on the cities of Porto Alegre (Brazil), Mexico FD (Mexico), Montevideo (Uruguay), São Paulo and Santo André (Brazil), Cuenca (Ecuador) and the TSS (*“Territorios Sociales Solidarios”* - Solidary Social Territories) of Paraguay<sup>15</sup>. These studies form a part of the summaries presented in the *portfolio* distributed in the present conference.

Some of these studies dealt with the effects on urban segregation of a significant tool in participatory democracy, i.e. the participatory budget<sup>16</sup>. Another study refers to the mapping of the factors of territorial segregation in Mexico City, produced by COPEVI for the Government of Mexico FD. Finally, Paraguay also participated with a study of the implementation by the National Secretariat of Childhood of the TSS.

This latter proposal has brought in an important innovation, insofar as it proposes a tool with which to confront processes of segregation with an intergenerational slant, associating the participation of children and adolescents and the neighbourhood associations of the country’s municipalities organised around the integration of the network of public services, the strengthening of the national, regional and municipal authorities of the Children’s and Adolescents’ Rights Councils and the reinforcement of local spaces

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<sup>14</sup> QUEIROZ RIBEIRO, Luiz Cesar de; ALVES DOS SANTOS JUNIOR, Orlando. Democracy and Urban Segregation: Reflections on the Relationship between City and Citizens in Brazilian Society. *EURE (Santiago)*, Santiago, v. 29, no. 88, Dec. 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Case studies of the instrumentation of participatory budgets in the cities of Cuenca (Ecuador), Montevideo (Uruguay), and Santo André and Sao Paulo (Brazil), which were carried out within the framework of the project “Incidence of the participatory budget for tackling social inclusion and spatial segregation in the cities”, coordinated by COPEVI, in Peru.

<sup>16</sup> The Porto Alegre Study consists of the drafting of a Map of Social Exclusion and Inclusion, which made an important contribution to Participatory Budget participants in that city.

through the implementation of cultural, recreational community centres, with the latter being managed by the social organisations of the towns<sup>17</sup>.

The TSS make up a proposal for social protagonism addressed to children, adolescents and young people who form a part of some of the most numerous sectors of society that are, these days, experiencing the worst situations of social exclusion and marginalisation. Alongside them a growth in the importance of the participation of women has been observed. This convergence of poverty with the increasing social protagonism of these sectors requires the adoption of programs that are explicitly aimed at giving priority to confrontations with the most serious situations.

## 6. Segregation and Territory

The debates entered into by members of the WG confirmed that the importance of making the territory the *locus* for the integration of public services is a supplementary factor that contributes to reinforcing public mechanisms that are capable of favouring the emergence of a new and democratic political culture.

The spatial distribution of the population responds to multiple factors, articulated in the territory, although it is evident that an excessive spatial concentration of inequality and exclusion in determined parts of the cities -which are generally associated with the spatial segregation of the population in conditions of poverty- may serve to exacerbate social problems such as delinquency and school leaving, and may also represent an obstacle in terms of upward social mobility for individuals living in poor homes located in those areas.

In this way, the territory not only refers to the objective aspects of the reality experienced by the people but also integrates a subjective dimension (“sufferings”, desires, expectations) of collective and individual life. Here, Dirce Koga made reference to two of Guy di Meo’s fundamental concepts: 1) Living Space, which is the material territory in which the daily practices of the subjects take place; and 2) Lived Space, which is limitless and is reconstructed mentally by the subjects or represented by their imagination.

The territorial dimension embraces three dimensions, in accordance with Guy di Meo’s exposition of meta-structure: 1) the places frequented overall; 2) social interrelations; and 3) projected and perceived psychological values. Boaventura de Souza Santos, subsequently, postulates 4 constellations of social relationships associated with the spatial territory dimension: 1) relation space – domestic time; 2) relation space – production time; 3) relation space – citizen time; and 4) relation space – world time. This approach is an interesting one insofar as it underlines the importance that territory has with a view to the procuring of conditions for the development of human and social activities that result in a satisfactory social relationship in the different “constellations” involved in present day life.

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<sup>17</sup> One very attractive aspect of this proposal, which is currently being implemented, is a strong identification with the discourse that articulates the protagonistic participation of children, women and those sectors of society that are most vulnerable. At the same time, an innovative solution is also proposed for *territorial democracy*, supported by intergenerational protagonism that is sustained by holding local assemblies in each of the TSS (Solidary Social Territories). The TSS aspires to contribute to a **political culture** to restore, return and strengthen a **project of emancipation** for society. It defends the reinforcing of democracy in order to extend protagonistic participation. **Sánchez**, Félix, São Paulo (Brazil), 2009.

A key factor of territorial segregation is its close link to the social inequality and exclusion that has historically prevailed in the city and which the current neoliberal model has reproduced and made worse.