

## **SPATIAL SEGREGATION AND TERRITORY IN MAJOR URBAN CENTRES**

### **1. Introduction:**

The discussion on spatial segregation and territory in major urban centres brings up a number of challenges in terms of analysis and the possibilities of taking direct action. The transformation of city space into the privileged residence of large sections of our countries' populations is a reality that is becoming more and more pressing.

We live in a world that has become completely urbanized, and this process has transformed the urban agglomerations. All kinds of social gaps are now revealed: generational, ethnic, socioeconomic, political, and so many others that harmony and respect have become challenges far from being met.

The challenges of territorial management have become complex, and any easy, miraculous formulas have fallen short, given the magnitude of the problem. Urban segregation is now an everyday reality for the inhabitants of large cities. Current economic models and forms of government have not only come up against serious difficulties to establish forms of administration that promote democracy, welfare and harmony, but have often been incapable of finding an answer to these problems, and have even been responsible for the rise in many forms of discrimination and exclusion affecting the people who live in cities.

### **2. Goals:**

- To discuss the problem of spatial segregation in major urban centres, characterize the different forms of social and territorial exclusion that exist in our cities and identify the social sectors most interested in addressing the problem.
- To discuss the forms that local governments' answers to the problem have taken and emphasize the development of local experiences based on the principles of citizen participation and social involvement.
- To provide information on the similarities and differences between the Latin American and European approaches to this issue.
- To attempt, right from the start, to have this debate included within existing international forums such as the FALP and UCLG.

### **3. Methodology:**

Active interrelations are sought between network participants and, particularly, the local governments of the respective cities. All contributions will be disseminated. After being circularized on the network, they will be submitted to a prior systematization with the aim of enriching the debate.

The different cities and organizations participating in the Working Group should present their contributions structured around the above Goals. The Working Group will coordinate and organize communication between participants and will be responsible for systematizing the main information items.

#### 4. Content:

Bearing in mind the great diversity of the situations currently existing, an essential part of the Group's work will be to study participants' experiences as they are contributed. To do so, it will be very important to understand:

- The details of the processes of segregation and hierarchization of territories and urban space. To tackle this problem, it is necessary to understand the legal and political relations underlying the hierarchization of territories and urban space.
- The role played by immigrant populations and their organizations, and the action taken by other social and political sectors.
- It will also be very important to pay special attention to the roles played by the younger generations in major urban centres, in order to understand the origins of protest and conformity.
- Another important discussion point is the existence of a suburban culture associated to lifestyles and coexistence in the suburbs of large urban centres, with the aim of rescuing the cultural expressions that form the basis of people's identities and political-territorial and generational affinities.
- Another key factor refers to citizen participation and mechanisms of participatory democracy: the recovery of the associative potential of populations that have settled in major urban centres will be addressed, as will discussion on their scope and dynamic nature as essential elements for a better understanding of contemporary cities.
- A further key point to help understand the phenomena of segregation in current-day cities refers to the impact of poverty and people's lack of essential resources and services. There is vast literature on the transformation of major urban centres into territories of exclusion and poverty. Understanding the nature of contemporary town-planning processes and concentrations of wealth and opulence that emphasize even further the signs of inequality and exclusion will contribute to a better understanding of the subject.

#### 5. Products/Results:

- Systematizing document incorporating the main aspects of the contributions presented and available on the network.
- Broadening of citizens' visions and actions, in a constant effort to strengthen the democratic system.
- IOPD access to a range of studies and cases that can serve as inspiration for new studies on inequality in contemporary society subsidized by citizens, social organizations and local governments.
- The production of a work document that can be taken advantage of by participants in international forums of cities and local governments such as those of the FALP and UCLG.

**6. Programme:**

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
July	Launch of WG basic document on the network.
August/September	Enrolment of interested parties in the WG.
September/October	Contributions circularized on the network. Partial systematization disseminated.
November	Document issued systematizing the main contributions for presentation at the meeting in La Paz.