

# Rearrangements in the Metropolis

Population figures show that communities on the periphery of Greater São Paulo have become more heterogeneous, with middle and lower classes living closer to each other while the elites still occupy the more exclusive zones

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The 21<sup>st</sup> century changes in patterns of residential segregation in Metropolitan São Paulo did not occur as it was anticipated at the end of the last century. Residents of the metropolis are still highly segregated, but the way it happened has not followed the expected trend that pointed to polarization of spaces and social structures. While the areas inhabited by elites have become more exclusive than ever, the rest of the city has undergone a change, becoming more heterogeneous. “The hypothesis of social polarization, expressed in famous metaphors such as ‘a divided city,’ is still alive, but did not prove true in São Paulo,” says Eduardo Marques, a researcher in the Political Science Department at the USP School of Philosophy, Literature and Human Sciences (FFLCH-USP) and researcher at the Center for Metropolitan Studies (CEM), one of the Research, Innovation and Dissemination Centers (RIDCs) supported by FAPESP. “The dynamics of the social structure did in fact point to the occupational polarization of the 1990s, but that trend was completely

reversed in the first decade of the 2000s. Compared with forecasts, the metropolis has changed less, and in a different way.”

The research confirms the picture that emerged during the 1990s and associates the major urban trends with transformations that have taken place in capitalism since the 1970s, such as the formation of a social group of the super-rich and the creation of protected compounds as homes for the captains of business. However, studies of changes in São Paulo in the last few decades did not conform with the effects of de-industrialization that began during the period, such as the curtailment of intermediate scale production activities, particularly the Ford model of industrial mass production.

The presence of industry in Greater São Paulo has diminished in relative terms in favor of retail trade and services, a sector that generated 800,000 jobs regionally during the 2000s. This trend was not because of the dwindling of industrial activity as observed in other countries,

but rather because factories have relocated to other regions, such as the macro-metropolises of Campinas and São José dos Campos. Furthermore, the effect of continued Ford-style mass production has been that these workers (skilled manual labor) are the most numerous social class in the metropolis according to the 2000 Census, although they are “in a decline associated with the growth of the professional class and the middle strata.” These trends have a significant impact on the map of social segregation: the classes that have grown the fastest proportionally tended to disperse during the first decade of the century, while those that declined in number (the wealthiest class) increased their exclusivity.

Marques arrived at these conclusions through a study that used census data from 1991, 2000, and 2011. An article on the subject, entitled “*Social structure and segregation in São Paulo: Transformations during the decade of the 2000s*,” was published

In downtown São Paulo, a building occupied by the homeless (*at rear*), close to a Metro stop, is reflected on the windows of a recently renovated building: the city has changed less than anticipated and in a different way



in December 2014 in the journal *Dados* by the Institute of Social and Political Studies (Iesp) at Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ) and will make up several chapters of a forthcoming book *São Paulo 2010: Espaços, heterogeneidades e desigualdades na metrópole (São Paulo 2010: Spaces, Heterogeneities and Inequalities in the Metropolis)*, scheduled to be released by Editora Unesp in May 2015.

With respect to the distribution of housing throughout the metropolis, the study detects both a pattern of social avoidance confirmed by the index of dissimilarity and the Moran's I Index value (measures of residential segregation) and a proportional distribution of classes in the metropolitan region. "It's not simply a group that isolates itself, although the elites really are the most segregated groups; rather it is a characteristic of the very structure of segregation," says Marques. "The data suggest, rather eloquently, that the greater the social distance between classes, the greater the degree of segregation, suggesting a pattern of avoidance in the residential choices made by groups who can pay higher prices for the land." This conclusion is consistent with anthropological and sociological studies that address subjects such as the use of public spaces in cities, gated communities, and the rise of shopping malls.

In addition to its high intensity, segregation is also strongly hierarchical,

as evidenced by the data measured by the index of dissimilarity. "The degree of differentiation is arranged perfectly by class," says Marques. That progression results in minor dissimilarity between any one group and its contiguous groups, but much greater dissimilarity between groups that are distant in the structure. Another significant deduction found in a chapter by Danilo França in the upcoming book is that segregation is not only socioeconomic, but also ethnic-racial, with the latter superimposed on the former, in much the same way as a combined hierarchy appears when simultaneously considering social class and skin color.

This apparently paradoxical phenomenon is one of the factors behind the increasing heterogeneity of the outskirts of the city, which has already been studied in the literature as "physical proximity and social distance." For example, this process occurred due to the increased popularity of gated communities in peripheral zones, which themselves were already heterogeneous because they served the people in the variable income strata found between those at the top of the income structure and those in the middle class. In Greater São Paulo, this phenomenon had a tremendous impact on peripheral areas such as the municipalities of Baurerri, Cotia, and Santana de Parnaíba.

In terms of dissimilarity indices, the spatial distributions of the middle class closely resemble those of the lower classes, thus reinforcing the finding of a mixed fabric in Greater São Paulo with the exception of the intense segregation of the classes at the top of the structure.

Overall, the elites exhibit the highest indices of segregation and the middle classes exhibit the lowest.

This analysis provides evidence to support the limitations of the social polarization hypothesis: the local effects of global processes are not always the same. "In Brazil, after the restructuring of the 1990s, the current century has brought the return of employment, growth in the formal labor force, and the improvement of wages," says Marques. "That, added to changes in the patterns of demographic growth and the government's investment in infrastructure, accompanied by a better distribution of construction activity, contributed to the heterogenization of the periphery." Marques observed that the studied period predated the launch of the federal program *My House, My Life*, which has produced approximately 130,000 housing units in Metropolitan São Paulo since 2009.

As a statistical parameter, Marques used the EGP (Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarrero) classification, adapted to Brazilian circumstances. The EGP classification is a method of grouping occupational categories to observe "milder, more continuous and durable" fluctuations than those based solely on education or income, for example. Another advantage of the EGP classification is that it provides common ground for international discussions. One of the activities of the CEM is to perform comparative research on international patterns of public policies and governance among São Paulo, Paris, London, Mexico City, and Milan. The main CEM offices are at two sites: one at FFLCH-USP and the other at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (Cebap).

Houses in Paraisópolis, with buildings in Morumbi in the background: enclaves of manual workers in the territory of the elite





In the foreground, the skeleton of a building in Vila Leopoldina in the western zone of São Paulo. In the background, new buildings that rose during the real estate boom of the early years of this century

Using the EGP classification, in the mixed middle/low class spaces characteristic of the heterogeneity observed in the peripheral regions, 71.6% of the population belongs, on average, to the classes of manual laborers (both skilled and unskilled), low-level manual laborers performing routine tasks, and technical and supervisory personnel. Relative incomes in those areas fall between middle and low. This population features a high percentage (40%) of blacks and browns (*pretos* and *pardos*) who live predominantly in houses (only 9% lived in apartments). Infrastructure conditions were close to the average conditions for the metropolis (sometimes even better, depending on the indicator).

In the geographical configuration of Greater São Paulo as revealed by the 2010 census, the mixed-middle-low class spaces are situated in the peripheral regions, “although with spatial discontinuities and a substantial presence of mixed-middle class spaces, especially

in the eastern zone (*Zona Leste*) of the city of São Paulo.” The historical center of the city is predominately mixed-middle class, demonstrating how the region has changed since the 2000 census due to an influx of lower-income individuals. The expanded city center occupied by the elite is situated southwest of the historical downtown, including neighborhoods such as Higienópolis, Pinheiros, Jardins, and Morumbi. Between 2000 and 2010, that area came to include regions located in the direction of São Paulo’s industrial area known as the “ABC” due to the expansion of Morumbi and Vila Leopoldina, areas that have experienced a construction boom in the new century.

That southwestern region contains two enclaves of manual laborers situated in the midst of the territory of the elite. These are the only two large slums (*favelas*) located within the limits of the expanded center—namely, Paraisópolis to the west and the Heliópolis-São João Clímaco complex to the southeast. In sharp contrast, the regions of Tatuapé and Santana are now also occupied by the elite. Both are rather small and lie to the east and north of the territory where the elite are concentrated. The centers of Guarulhos and Mogi

das Cruzes, to the northeast and east, respectively, are now home to the upper middle class. Areas near downtown Guarulhos have experienced an influx of lower class individuals.

Marques’ study is part of a more comprehensive, longer-term research project under way at the CEM. The book scheduled to come out in May 2015 complements *São Paulo: Segregação, pobreza, e desigualdade* (São Paulo: Segregation, Poverty, and Inequality), edited by Marques and economist Haroldo Torres and published in 2005 by Senac. Based on 2000 census data, that volume, like the future one, consists of coordinated chapters on subjects such as population growth, segregation, and access to public policies. Additional material has now been included to discuss aspects associated with the labor market, race, and urban mobility. ■ Márcio Ferrari

#### Project

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#### Scientific article

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