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# **Approach to social inequality and residential segregation in Valencia. An analysis in the context of globalization policies**

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**Approach to social inequality and residential segregation in Valencia. An analysis in the context of globalization policies.**

*Abstract:* This article analyzes the social and urban evolution of the city of Valencia during the first two decades of the 21st century. Using a quantitative methodology and taking the dual city framework as a theoretical reference, the study identifies and exposes the different structural and contextual factors that explain the metropolis' progress towards a polarized territorial model. The results obtained show that the increase in social inequality and socio-economic residential segregation has consolidated a model of center-periphery segregation that has displaced the most disadvantaged groups in the social structure to impoverished areas on the outskirts of the city. In this context, the conclusions highlight that the main social challenge facing the city of Valencia is to finally overcome a deep-seated situation of inequality among the populations of its different urban areas.

*Keywords:* Valencia, social inequality, socioeconomic residential segregation, dual city.

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## IDEAS CLAVE / HIGHLIGHTS / IDEES CLAU

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Desde los años noventa, se llevó a cabo en Valencia un modelo de gobernanza neoliberal orientado a impulsar la globalización de la ciudad.</li><li>2. La transformación de la ciudad se sustentó en la mejora sustancial de una gran zona central, la conexión con el puerto, el desarrollo de grandes proyectos urbanísticos y la celebración de mega eventos culturales y deportivos de alcance internacional.</li><li>3. Los procesos de globalización y tercerización incitaron el avance de una estructura sociolaboral polarizada que incita el incremento de la desigualdad social.</li><li>4. La gentrificación y turistificación del centro histórico ha consolidado esta área como espacio de atracción de profesionales y turistas, al tiempo que los distritos periféricos de la ciudad concentran los grupos sociales más precarios.</li><li>5. La reproducción de la desigualdad socioeconómica en otros campos como la salud, la educación y/o el acceso a los servicios sociales revela que la desigualdad se ha convertido en un fenómeno estructural de la capital valenciana.</li><li>6. Las tendencias observadas en los ámbitos sociolaboral y territorial constatan el avance de la ciudad de Valencia hacia el paradigma de la ciudad dual.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In the recent decades, a neoliberal governance model has boosted globalization in Valencia.</li><li>2. The city transformation has been sustained by a noticeable improvement in the city center, the connection with the harbor, the development of big urbanistic projects, as well as the celebration of mega cultural and sport events at a worldwide scale.</li><li>3. The globalization and tertiarization processes induced the polarization of socio-labor structure, which contributes to increase social inequalities.</li><li>4. Gentrification and touristification of the historic center have attracted professionals and tourists to this area, whereas the most underprivileged social groups are displaced to the outer areas of the city.</li><li>5. The reproduction of social inequalities in other fields such as health, education and/or access to social services reveals that inequality has become a structural phenomenon in the Valencian capital city.</li><li>6. The observed tendencies in territorial and socio-labor aspects ascertain the shift towards the current dual paradigm in the city.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Des dels anys noranta, València ha emportat un model de governança neoliberal orientat a la globalització de la ciutat.</li><li>2. La transformació de la ciutat s'ha sustentat en la millora substancial d'una gran zona central, el desenvolupament de grans projectes urbanístics i la celebració de grans esdeveniments culturals i esportius d'abast internacional.</li><li>3. Els processos de globalització i terciarització incentivaren l'avanç d'una estructura sociolaboral polaritzada; incrementant la desigualtat social.</li><li>4. La gentrificació i la turistificació del centre històric ha consolidat aquesta àrea com a espai d'atracció de professionals i turistes, mentre que els districtes perifèrics de la ciutat concentren els grups socials més precaris.</li><li>5. La reproducció de les desigualtats socioeconòmiques en altres camps com la salut, l'educació i/o l'accés als serveis socials revela que la desigualtat s'ha convertit en un fenomen estructural de la capital valenciana.</li><li>6. Les tendències observades als àmbits sociolaboral i territorial constaten l'avanç de la ciutat de València cap a un paradigma de ciutat dual.</li></ol> |
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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The impact of structural phenomena such as globalization and deindustrialization on the social and spatial dynamics of contemporary cities has become one of the most significant topics in current urban sociology. In this regard, the recent comparative study conducted by Van Ham et al. (2021) has cautioned that the progression of these processes has spurred an increase in social inequality and socioeconomic residential segregation in large global cities, particularly in high-income countries.

In the specific case of cities within the European context, the comparative study conducted by Tammaru et al. (2016) concluded that both social inequality and socioeconomic residential segregation increased between 2001 and 2011. Consequently, these metropolises, which had historically been characterized by their high social integration (Hasserman and Haila, 2005), appear to be converging toward a polarized urban model, akin to the dual city paradigm (Sassen, 1991) observed in North American and Latin American cities (Borja and Castells, 1997; Mollenkopf and Castells, 1991).

In this context, several studies have documented the increase in social inequality and socioeconomic residential segregation in the main Spanish cities: Madrid and Barcelona (Leal y Domínguez, 2008; Mazorra, 2022; Michelini et al., 2021; Nel-lo, 2018; Porcel, 2016; Sarasa et al., 2018; Sorando y Leal, 2019; Sorando y Uceda, 2018). Across these studies, it has been concluded that the spatial separation between different social groups has expanded. Consequently, while city centers and privileged areas have become concentrations of qualified middle-class residents (Porcel and Antón, 2020), some impoverished peripheral zones have seen an increase in the statistical representation of the most disadvantaged segments of the social structure (Hernández Aja et al., 2018).

To expand the focus of these studies and contribute to the discussion in the context of intermediate urban areas, this paper examines the social and urban dynamics of the city of Valencia. We consider Valencia to be a paradigmatic case illustrating the impact of structural phenomena such as globalization, outsourcing, and neoliberalism on urban transformation. In pursuit of this objective, we adopt Sassen's (1991) model of the dual city as a theoretical framework, upon which we formulate our research hypothesis and define our empirical approach.

According to Sassen's conceptual framework (1991), the consolidation of the dual city paradigm implies the polarization of the socio-labour structure. This polarization is manifested through the growth of managers, professionals, unskilled workers in the service sector, other elementary occupations, and unemployment rates. It also leads to increased social inequality and socioeconomic residential segregation. Considering this framework, our research hypothesis posits that the city of Valencia has progressed towards a scenario of urban dualism in recent decades, characterized by the polarization of both its social and territorial structures.

The analysis of polarization was conducted by examining the evolution of the social and urban structures within the city of Valencia. For the social structure analysis, we relied on statistical data from secondary sources, specifically the Population and Housing Censuses of 2001, 2011, and 2021, the Living Conditions Survey (INE), and the Atlas of Household Income Distribution (INE). Additionally, we employed the Gini Coefficient as a reference indicator to assess social inequality.

On the other hand, the territorial dimension was studied using the Moran Index (Moran, 1950). This statistical tool allows us to determine the level of autocorrelation for a given variable, indicating the extent to which values of that variable tend to cluster in specific geographical locations—clusters—and their correlation with neighbouring areas. The Moran Index produces a spatial correlation measure ranging from -1 to 1, where values near 1 indicate perfect correlation, 0 denotes no correlation, and -1 represents perfect dispersion. Consequently, this indicator helps us assess whether the concentration of the considered groups occurs randomly across the territory—values close to 0—or if there are tendencies toward dispersion—values near -1—or concentration—values close to 1.

Our research has unveiled significant changes in the productive structure and their impact on the system of social stratification. The advance of globalization and outsourcing processes has encouraged the polarization of the city's socio-labour structure, favouring the emergence of a new occupational model characterized by the growing importance of skilled and unskilled workers in the service sector.

In this context, the advance of gentrification of the historic center since the turn of the century has led to a concentration of highly qualified workers —managers and professionals— in the Ciutat Vella district in 2011. The over-representation of these groups in the center of the city and their relative absence in the outer areas of the municipality reflected the existence of a spatial correlation pattern that clusters the professionalized middle and upper classes in the vicinity of the center of Valencia. In parallel, unskilled jobs in the service sector and other elementary occupations also increased during the first two decades of the 21st century, being occupied in many cases by foreign immigrants residing in the city. In this context, the advance of gentrification and touristification of the historic centre and the vulnerability of peripheral areas reflects the development of a centre-periphery scenario that displaces disadvantaged groups to the outer areas of the city.

Alongside these trends, the social dynamics of the region have been shaped by rising levels of social inequality and poverty since the global economic crisis of 2008 (Foessa, 2014; Romero et al., 2015). The polarization of the socio-labour structure and the persistence of high levels of social inequality and segregation in the city, regardless of how the economy evolves, emphasize that social inequality has become a structural element within the dynamics of Valencian society.

In conclusion, the trends observed in the socio-occupational and territorial spheres confirm the advance of the city of Valencia toward the dual city paradigm. Likewise, these results confirm the participation of an intermediate city in the Spanish context in the trends of inequality and segregation of the main metropolises of the contemporary world (Tammaru et al., 2016; Van Ham et al., 2021). This observation points to the need to extend the debate on the polarization of large global cities to other smaller cities and municipalities. While large metropolises are undergoing processes of separation and fragmentation that already seem difficult to reverse, there is an opportunity to take proactive measures in smaller, more cohesive cities, before these trends worsen and become structural.