

## **Social conflicts, urban violence and planning strategies: issues and evidence from the North and the South**

### COORDINATOR

Rachel Coutinho Silva

*Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*

*rachelcc@acd.ufrj.br*

### PANEL

William W. Goldsmith

*Cornell University, USA*

Rachel Coutinho

*PROURB/UFRJ, Brazil*

Yasser Elsheshtawy

*United Arab Emirates University, Dubai, Emirados Árabes*

Lucia Cony Cidade

*PPGGEO/UNB, Brazil*

Marília Peluso

*PPGGEO, UNB, Brazil*

Eliane da Silva Bessa

*PROURB/UFRJ, Brazil*

This roundtable investigates new forms of planning and governance in face of growing social inequalities, emerging conflicts and escalating violence in urban areas subjected to the externalities of a global economy and to the risks and vulnerabilities locally produced. In order to deal with social unrest, new public policies are being proposed to pacify or recuperate degraded and dangerous areas. This process is taking place in many cities, by means of different plans and programs. The papers will examine conflict in different urban settings and cultures, dealing with the question of tensions in informal and formal areas. We intend to explore social conflicts as they relate to urban violence and planning. All papers acknowledge that existing public policies are failing in promoting social inclusion, spatial integration and basic human rights. We hope to foster a critical analysis of current planning strategies for dealing

with conflict and depressed areas and to contribute for the dialogue between planners from different parts of the world. The first paper by William Goldsmith (Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University, CRP/Cornell U.) – “The Drug War and Inner City Neighborhoods” examines how violence evolving from drug trade in the United States depressed big-city neighborhoods is affecting local residents and the surrounding city and metropolitan area. Drug dealers employ youth, spend money locally, and support some community activities, but gangs often constitute an informal government that rules through violence. He argues that the “war” against drugs has brought bad results and that new planning policies are in need to improve the social and economic conditions of these neighborhoods. The second paper by Rachel Coutinho (Graduate Program in Urbanism, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, PROURB/UFRJ) – “A new governance of urban conflicts: a critical appraisal of the program of favelas pacification in Rio de Janeiro (2008-2016)” explores how the State is managing urban conflicts and violence that emerged after the implementation of the program Police Pacification Units (UPP). The UPP is usually complemented by urban designs and social programs aimed at improving infrastructure, the built environment and social services. The paper is based on statistical data on violence from the Institute of Public Safety, newspaper reports, data from local NGO’s and from field research in two favelas -- Complexo do Alemão and Cantagalo-Pavão-Pavãozinho. The third paper by Yasser Elsheshtawy (School of Architecture, United Arab Emirates University) – “Creative destruction in Dubai: the case of the Shorta neighborhood” examines the case of the Shorta neighborhood in the city of Dubai, where traditional families were displaced and their houses demolished in order to make way for a mixed-use upscale retail development. The case represents a continuation of neo-liberal planning policies, which seek to remove the past and to promote social exclusion, thus intensifying notions of displacement, transience and alienation. It also exemplifies a capitulation to global capital as well as a form of urban violence. The author adopts the notion of ‘creative destruction’ to demonstrated the process of homogenization and reconfiguration of urban space over an extended period of time – a kind of urban rupture that seeks to achieve a radical break with the past. The fourth paper, by Lucia Cony Cidade and Marilia Peluso (Graduate Program in Geography, University of

Brasilia, PPGGEA/UnB) – “Urban conflicts and social action in establishing metropolitan environmental services” deals with the tensions, disputes and conflicts that emerge in the appropriation of urban space and identify two main collective actors: the State and organized groups. Social movements lost its collective demanding character, and individual actions seem to prevail. With the emergence and the widespread use of the media and social networks, new conflicts appear. The research is based on empirical evidence from the Federal District (Brasilia). The fifth paper by Eliane da Silva Bessa (Graduate Program in Urbanism, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, PROURB/UFRJ) – “Planning in the Face of Urban and Environmental Conflicts in Socially Hazardous Areas”, examines governance issues and the action of public administrators related to the provision of basic infrastructure for low-income population in some areas in the peripheral metropolitan region of Baixada Fluminense, and how these planning strategies are a threat to social inclusion and the right to the city.