



The Maison de l'Europe de Paris and the City of Paris have organized a preparatory seminar of the conference entitled:

Schools, transport: integration, segregation?

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At a time when more than 60% of Europeans live in towns, and when the question of "living-together" is more urgent than ever, the city of Paris and the Maison de l'Europe, in partnership with the European Commission, *Courrier International*, *Films d'Ici* and the association *Les Promenades Urbaines* have launched a series of symposia in France, but also in Sofia, Berlin and Ljubljana, which will culminate in May 2008 in the European Conference of Citizens and City-dwellers. The European dimension of the project is fundamental: the idea is to encourage a pooling of experience among European citizens, to draw comparisons (the better to analyse) and to cooperate in the invention of Europe and its conurbations. This initial day of discussions was devoted to urban segregation, with two "indirect" approaches that also made reference to the everyday preoccupations of schools and mobility.

Across Europe, schools present problems, but the situation in Milan, London and Berlin, where multicultural issues are important, is not the same as that in Paris or Warsaw, where the questions are those of socioprofessional inequality, or the cultural foundations of education. Co-education often tends to be synonymous with segregation, and many parents who advocate integration as a moral value reject it in the name of the excellence they seek for their progeniture. It would clearly be an illusion to think that school maps (which exist in all the countries discussed during the day's proceedings) are likely to further the objective of co-education: that would imply an equitable distribution of different social and ethnic groups in urban space, which does not exist. But with or without such maps, it is generally only people of considerable means who can actually choose their childrens' school. The upper classes are shielded from the principle of co-education, both in residential and in educational terms. Segregation concerns, in particular, the middle classes, who are under pressure to participate in social integration, and the lower classes, who are less familiar with ways of getting round it. A genuine drive for co-education would presuppose a political will to act on the provision of schools, and on their intake. Behind the question of educational segregation, one thus finds that of socioresidential segregation. An effective policy would focus on the distribution of social groups within urban space, and would combine, in a coherent way, population and housing policies with educational considerations. It might be said that educational segregation is an indicator of social diversity, and that schools should play a double role of promoting integration and channelling social concerns. "Co-existing" does not necessarily mean "living together". Between individual practices and collective issues, should public action be aimed at mediation?

In urban spaces where spheres of life are mutually dissociated, mobility has become an issue in itself. The fact of having (or not having) the financial and cultural resources necessary to mobility is strongly discriminatory. Those who possess such resources have access to the

employment market and urban opportunities. Those who do not are at an additional (and growing) disadvantage, given the general norm of high mobility; and this leads to situations of "insularity". The configuration admittedly differs from one place to another (in Berlin, segregation affects the city centre, whereas in Paris it is peripheral), but the European comparison sheds light on a common set of problems. It would seem that the question of mobility is indissociable from that of territory, and thus also that of property. The price of land is a machine for allocating jobs and places of residence, with the middle classes being forced into marginal zones where land is less expensive. In Berlin and Paris, in the 1970s and 1980s, the middle classes moved out to the more peripheral zones. Now, confronted with the rising cost of mobility, they do not have the means to move back into the centre. The firefighters of London, for example, live 160 km from where they work.

The fundamental decision was political, namely to abandon diversity in favour of accessibility, better public transport and the systematic provision of fast road networks. Accessibility has made it possible for the authorities to avoid land use policies. But energy is no longer cheap, precariousness is stimulating a need for mobility that residential remoteness often renders difficult, and environmental constraints are looming. And as a result, the formula that was relied on for half a century to avoid land use policies now looks more like a trap snapping shut. It was supposed that territorial segregation could be compensated for by universal access to speed. But speed has now been called into question. Will the land question move back into the purview of political responsibility?

Co-education cannot be imposed – it must be lived. In metropolitan systems which, if not kept under control, have a strong tendency to create inequality, the question of public action and its necessary coherence on the scale of catchment areas is particularly acute. What is the function of civil society and its organisations, when it comes to the problem of equality with regard to life chances? What kind of society is taking shape behind the distancing which is now replacing confrontation, but which still does not prevent conflict? It is on the European scale, to some degree, that this issue is being played out. And it is on the European scale that we must decide what kind of urban development we want. Centralisation is one option; Poland and Romania, for example, are imitating France, with a policy of expanding their capital cities. Then there is the option of further urban expansion, which entails speed and an absence of diversity. Or again, city centres can be made denser, as is currently happening in London, and, to a lesser extent, Brussels. These questions are not technical, but political; and they can no longer be left out of decision-making processes on the European level.

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