

Historic and Contemporary Segregation

Today, Spain's capital, Madrid, finds itself as the most segregated European city (Sorando, Uceda, & Domínguez, 2021). However, this was not always the case as Madrid experienced a decrease in segregation from 1981 to 1996 (Leal, 2004). The decrease in segregation within this period is attributed to complex urban change, in which the central areas where the middle class had settled since the 19th century became more diverse (Leal, 2004, p. 84). Segregation intensified in Madrid from 2001 to 2011 to its current levels due to two main factors: the real estate bubble, and an influx of a significant number of international immigrants (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Pujadas-i-Rúbies, 2014). The Spanish real estate bubble grew in the 2000s with housing prices increasing 155% before falling due to the 2008 financial crisis, resulting in evictions that have affected 400,000 families (Hadzelek & Prieto, 2012).

Madrid



Photo of the Metropolis Building by Javier Alonso from pexels.com.



Photo of buildings in Madrid by Andrés Garcia from pexels.com.

Beyond the real estate bubble, as of 2019 the foreign-born population in Madrid accounted for 22.2% of the population with over 700,000 immigrants in the city that has 3.2 million inhabitants. In recent years the largest influx of immigrating people has come from Venezuela, with the number of Venezuelans in Madrid tripling over a four-year span after 2015. Venezuelans, second only to Ecuadorians, now make up the second largest foreign community in Madrid (Cano, 2019). Population growth and economic growth in Madrid have stimulated gentrification in urban centers where its most diverse neighborhoods exist, as well as on the periphery (Sorando, Uceda, & Domínguez, 2021). Other elements that are factoring into segregation in Madrid are young natives moving into newly built peripheries as well as migrants moving outward of the city center in search of better housing conditions to homes left by native residents. This process has led to a centrifugal migration movement from the center into further distances in the metropolitan area (Arbaci, 2019).



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Segregation Policies and Programs

The city of Madrid has made no plans to counter segregation directly but has announced plans to update the city's planning codes that will affect segregation in the city. On June 30th, 2021, Madrid lawmakers announced plans to update the city through a slew of different initiatives. One of these new planning codes is to change comfort standards for homes while placing an emphasis on promoting outdoor space through balconies and patios. Another initiative is an investment of €180 million (\$214 million), towards public housing that would seek to build 1,200 units for low income and vulnerable populations. Beyond this, the city government announced plans to crack down on vacation rentals as well as encourage more co-living residences (Squires, 2021).



Photo of the Gardens of the San Lorenzo Monastery by Fátima Estévez López from pexels.com.

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