

Housing and community consolidation in informal settlements:

A case of movement economy

38

Margarita Greene

Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, Chile

Abstract

This paper summarises the final findings of a five-year research project aimed at understanding the spatial factors that have affected the consolidation process of peripheral settlements in Santiago de Chile. The project included the collection of data on site, the development of new tools to measure consolidation and new ways of modelling urban space, as well as a programme of innovative representation techniques and statistical analysis. Previous results of this research, presented at the Third Space Syntax Symposium (Hillier et al., 2000), showed that the consolidation process of the peripheral settlements in Santiago was led by what was identified as an 'edge economy', which in fact was understood as an expression of what Hillier had previously described as the 'movement economy' (Hillier, 1996a).

Further and more detailed analysis is presented here, giving rise to some complementary new findings. Firstly, the building and analysis of 'parts of the city' syntactic models made clear that different sectors of the city undergo different consolidation processes, where the variables affecting them and their relative weight, change considerably. Secondly, a dual road system, composed of streets and small internal alleyways, was associated with very different patterns of movement. These in turn play different roles in the consolidation process. Thirdly, the role of the provision of infrastructure and urban services was clarified. Instead of being considered a product of consolidation, it is now considered an important independent variable necessary to set the whole process going.

Keywords

housing, community, consolidation, informal settlements, neighbourhood

mgreenez@puc.cl

38.1

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