Urban safety in residential areas
Global spatial impact and local self-organising processes

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Abstract
This paper reports some preliminary data, analysis and results that have arisen from the first year of a three-year research project aimed at identifying spatial characteristics involved in urban safety and feeling of (in) security in residential areas. This complex subject is been approached from a multidisciplinary perspective, involving social science techniques, econometric methods and categories from urbanism, combined with a space syntax approach including configurational modelling, space use observation and statistical analysis. The first phase of the project involves the collection of data from six settlements located in an old district of the city of Santiago de Chile with similar social characteristics but with different spatial characteristics.

The preliminary results deal with the identification of variables involved in the feeling of insecurity, the contrasting of places that were considered unsafe by the population and those where mugging had actually taken place and the analysis of space use patterns. Rather than provide answers, the results at the moment have helped to clarify the problem, and raise new fine tuned questions.

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