

From vernacular to collage city

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Abstract

The Federal District in Brazil was created in 1956. Within its borders, it included the small centenary town of Planaltina, 40 kilometres to the Northeast of the Pilot Plan of Brasilia.

The urban area of Planaltina has sharply increased throughout the last four decades. Space Syntax is used to describe its morphological process. We have three different phases: 1) the original vernacular town, up to the dedication of Brasilia, in 1960; 2) the modernistic improvements dating from the 1960's through to the 1980's; 3) the isolated condominiums – mainly constituted by the irregular parcelling of land, public or private – that began to flourish in the last ten years or so.

An attempt is made to characterise these three phases by means of configurational measures, mainly integration, intelligibility and dispersion. Two levels of analysis will be carried out: 1) a global level, by which the configuration of this urban system will be analysed as a whole; 2) a local level, by which some of the characteristics of its parts are depicted.

As a whole, integration and intelligibility have fallen, and dispersion has increased over time. The impact of such variation on the use of the city is analysed, in terms of the relations between co-presence ratios and other morphological measures. In addition, a metric stance is included, as far as the measure of dispersion is concerned, in order to evaluate distances between houses and services. The potential of analytic tools such as GIS software in doing so is tested. Finally, the social logic behind these physical changes over time is hypothesised.

Keywords

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