

Assentamentos informais. Espaços de integração urbana

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at evaluating the morphological characteristics and occupancy of several informal settlements scattered throughout the surrounding cluster of Unhos in Loures, Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Secondary objectives of this research are to understand the interactions between the morpho-typology of settlements, the use of public space and social segregation of their populations.

During the second half of the twentieth century, informal areas have emerged as the immediate solution for housing needs of a low economic resources population. Many of these emergency situations have resulted in whole urban informal settlements, which were defined by the OECD (2007:389) as "areas where groups of houses were built on land that the occupiers have no legal claim, or occupied illegally" and / or " unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in line with current planning and building regulations (unauthorized housing)." The process of sedimentation and the current urban informal socio-political situation, allowed an uncontrolled expansion of the city outside its borders. The politics of urban planning in the third quarter of the twentieth century just tried to integrate these new areas with a growing road network, with the sole purpose of facilitating the accessibility to the center. Thus, informal settlements grew with illegal building, as well as in many other European countries with similar urban developments, such as Spain, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia and Turkey.

The case study is Unhos and its surroundings, a peripheral area located at the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon. Its origins are rural based and its subsequent expansion was informal. These events have created a fragmented territory, without a strategy, and social inequalities. Therefore, the application of theories of spatial analysis may help to better understand the relationship between the lack of urban planning, lack of quality of public space and increasing social problems.

Generally, urban centers are directly related to attracting economic activities. Hillier *et.al* (1993) states that one of the primary properties of the urban network should be the main generator of movement patterns. The correlation between these patterns of movement is used as a measure of centrality. For the spatial analysis of urban network 'Unhos', this study uses the methodology of space syntax, developed by Hillier and Hanson (1984).. The space syntax is useful for understanding the formal logic of the urban fabric, with respect to its evolution and the emergence of centers and open spaces where the main urban activities are located. Using the methodology of spatial analysis, uses a set of variables such as integration, control and connectivity. Through analysis of their correlations, we seek to understand the formal logic of the urban network, with respect to the emergence of centers and open spaces.

The key questions for this study were: Are the morphological characteristics of a public space related to social segregation? What are the geographical factors which contribute to strengthening the urban dynamism?

The article concludes that the morphological characteristics of public space are closely related to social behavior, which means that the conversion of informal settlements and areas of social exclusion should also focus on the urban network, in addition to minimum housing conditions. The restructuring of the urban network can contribute with important benefits, by improving the design of public space and encouragement to the location of economic activities that can enhance the experience in outdoor spaces.

However, the lack of meeting and leisure places and the lack of centrality and accessibility contribute to an increase in urban society inequalities. Centrality is a spatial and functional process that can be found at any level of urban structure and can also, over time, change, as people change how they use public space. The centrality may even induce the transformation of urban morphology. In fact, the living spaces are crucial to the survival of a dynamic center and to maintain its importance. The continuing lack of experience and dynamic functions can reflect and deepen the gradual socio-spatial segregation.

Keywords: informal settlements, spatial analysis, centrality, Unhos.