

The role of the neighbourhood 'social-building' unit as a tool for the construction and transformation of the contemporary city. Two case studies in Venice and Tokyo

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Abstract

Recently we are observing a profound re-evaluation of the neighbourhood concept which takes a very wide turn in the contemporary debate on urban issues. This paper suggests a comparative analysis of two apparently very different realities in order to propose some considerations on the neighbourhood units and their consequent phenomenological implications. Therefore, the two selected case studies are based on the comparison of two representative urban structures: an urban neighbourhood in Venice and one in Tokyo.

Despite the geographical and cultural differences of the selected plots, both the urban fabric systems seem to play a crucial role in the dynamics of the selected urban settlements, thus preserving life comfort quality and a good social interaction among the inhabitants.

The analysis, conducted throughout the urban morphology and the Information Technology tool (GIS), shows how the relationship between private and public spaces, within streets, paths, and lanes among different building typology, defines the concept of neighbourhood unit as a construction and transformation tool for the contemporary city- thus considering social and environmental behaviours.

The work finally offers a contribution for a further methodology in order to define a new approach for the del XXI century city's scenario.

Finally, a synoptic table will illustrate the fundamental elements that characterize the form of the analysed case studies, defining similarities and differences that give to the two urban structures their own identity.

Neo-liberal Urbanism and Socio-spatial Segregation: A case of Housing for Urban Poor in India

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Abstract

We are living in a world where market economy driven neo-liberal ethos is shaping our cities in complex ways. Capital investment led urban development has raised concerns of social sustainability in growing Indian megacities wherein approaches and strategies of neoliberal urbanism have led to increased social polarity, marginalization, gentrification, spatial inequality and displacement. With an understanding that neoliberal urbanism induces socio-spatial segregation through creation of spaces of centrality and marginality, the study explores two fundamental questions; first, how state sponsored housing and related policies have consistently peripheralised the urban poor and second, what impact does relocation to mass housing schemes located on urban fringes have on the life of vulnerable groups of our society. The study analyses four slum relocation sites for urban poor who have been displaced from core urban areas due to implementation of urban renewal schemes and policies in cities of Ahmedabad and Surat. Through mapping, interviews and on-site documentation the study reveals socio-spatial manifestations of exclusionary neoliberal policies in the form of disruption of socio-economic ecosystems and networks, reduction in earnings, non-inclusive decision making, commodification of public land, life in resource inefficient environments and culturally non-responsive spaces. In this context, current trajectories of urban growth in India can be questioned, as synchronized efforts by private sector and the state to regenerate urban areas have led to more pronounced socio-spatial segregation in an already fragmented urban landscape.