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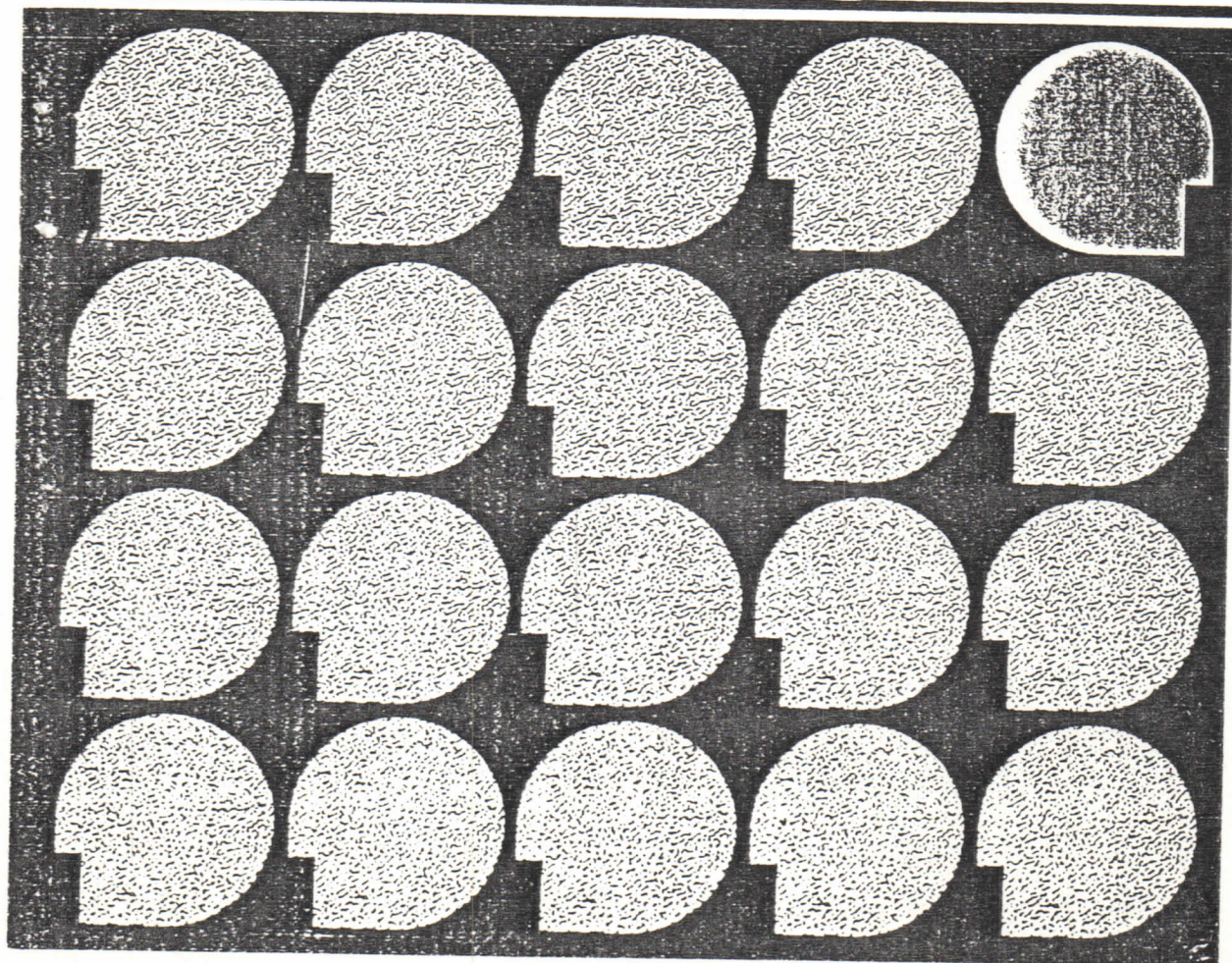
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ASPECTES QUALITATIUS

MAN - ENVIRONMENT
QUALITATIVE ASPECTS

HOMBRE - ENTORNO
ASPECTOS CUALITATIVOS

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E. Pol / J. Muntañola / M. Morales (Eds.)



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SOCIAL RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION AND URBAN SPACE

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abstract

The analysis concerns the social forces and relations of production which command the formation of urban space. It is a theoretical elaboration which relates the urban built environment to the economic and political processes. We will discuss subjects like the development of urban space, the production of basic categories of land uses, the interdependence of land-using activities and the political economy of the production of urban elements.

The analysis which follows deals with some of the major determining features of processes and forces which guide urban development and the formation of basic categories of land uses. It is an attempt towards a theoretical approach rather than an analytical and demonstrative study.

1. THE PROCESS OF URBAN SPACE FORMATION

The discussion regarding the way in which the built environment and the land uses in the modern city (1) have been formed, is necessary to begin with a basic social transformation which constitutes one of the causes behind the creation of modern form of urban environment. This refers to the change of the mode of production, from feudalism to the capitalist mode of production. (2)

Together with this change we found the disorganisation of agricultural economy, the appearance of a relative overpopulation (relative to the needs of agricultural production) in rural regions and the emergence of massive migrating movements toward urban centers (3); The masses of agricultural population, deprived of their land, may hire their labour force firstly to manufacture and later on to industry. The markets of cheap labour force, formed in this way, constitute an additional motive for industries to establish themselves in urban centers, where, they had also the opportunity of enjoying both the services of the already existing markets and the available infrastructure (energy, water supply, transportation networks). In addition, in regions with appropriate conditions for industrial location, the industrial concentration and the so formed environment, attracted population and thus new settlements were created. (4)

The development of Western capitalism, together with the subsequent change in social activities (reduction of agricultural activities and the increase of labour in industries and services), appear to be the main factors which promote urbanization. Of course, the city as a form of spatial organisation, existed prior to the capitalist production and thus the modern urban concentration inherited the characteristics of these older spatial organisations, which were gradually embodied and assimilated within the new form. However, what differentiates decisively the modern city from cities and settlements of the past, is its transformation from a market place to a productive unity. The city is not any more the place where the exchange of agricultural commodities and the consumption of income produced in agriculture take place. It constitutes by itself a new productive system which is based on technology of secondary and tertiary sectors, on labour force, on socialisation of productive forces and on mass consumption. The element which characterise the modern city becomes rather the productive activities than the market.

As it is already mentioned, this new productive system is articulated around the new technology, the labour force and the mass consumption. Its functioning aims at the maximization of the "rentability" of social effort, at the satisfaction of social needs and at the extraction of surplus value. The forms by which the above elements represent themselves are the following:

- a. The activities and establishments of industry and services
- b. The outputs or exchanges among activities
- c. The population and active population
- d. The quality of dwellings and of social equipment in general
- e. The product, productivity and profit on urban level.

These parameters determine the basic content of every urban concentration. They can be called strategic parameters of the urban development, the basis on which the evolution and importance of every urban space mainly depends. It must be noted that these parameters are closely interconnected through capital movement and the division of labour; they determine also the characteristics of urban space and land uses.

2. PRODUCTION OF BASIC CATEGORIES OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND LAND USES

The changes which take place in economic and social activities of the city, deriving from the development of capitalism lead to a transformation of land uses and to the production of networks (of transportation, water supply, drainage, energy) and buildings, in correspondence to the needs of population and production. Later on, the establishment of social equipments (schools, hospitals, open areas, etc), come to enrich the above environment. Naturally, this process is far from being selfcontained; the descriptions referring to the great urban centers of 18th and 19th centuries, illustrate a picture of misery, crowding, lack of rudimentary hygiene and facilities. (5) Gradually, the improvement of the standards of life which arise from the economic development and the continuous

struggles of workers for better material conditions of life, leads to an improvement of the quality of the urban built environment, In order to understand the unity of land uses and activities which take place in the city, it is necessary to examine how the spatial elements are integrated within the economic, political and ideological processes. First, the economic activities i.e. production, exchange, distribution and consumption, constitute the decisive elements for the formation of urban space. We shall discuss the formation of the basic categories of built space and land uses.

2.1. The Space of production (industries, offices)

The production of various merchandises within the urban web, pressuposes an ensemble of installations, the areas of production, in which the elaboration of raw materials by the labour force, with the use of appropriate tools takes place.

The form, size and characteristics of the buildings where production is taking place, are determining by the concrete production processes, by the concrete commodities which are produced and by the specificity of products. The mechanism behind the formation of production areas is determined by the economic and technological demands of production process.(6)

In parallel, the industrial location from where it results the designation of land use, appears to follow the process of introduction of every firm within the productive system. This suggests an integration which is completed at three levels: a technical one (technical integration); an economic one (economic relation); and at the level of the total productive environment (referring to the interdependencies between the units of production-external economies). (7)

This, implies that every firm forms its own installations according to the demands determined by the production of its commodities, while the choice of its position within the urban web, depends on the comparative advantages offered by the concrete position of the firm in relation to the necessary services (market, transportation etc.). (8,9)

In any case, the value of installations and the cost of their spatial elements are determined by the law of value which restricts the competitiveness of the commodities produced.

More unusual appears the reasoning which determines the characteristics and the position of areas and installations of services. Given the fact that the result of the production of services is not concretized into a certain product but it is rather a useful consumed the very moment in which it is produced, it appears that the spatial correlation of production and consumption is inevitable. This condition characterizes the ensemble of installations of services production, their location in the city and their size.

2.2. The Housing

The housing areas usually comprise the main mass of the city buildings.

The ensemble of dwelling characteristics (quality, size, position) can be expressed by its marketable value. It is an everyday experience the fact that the price of the dwelling (i.e. the monetary form of its value) depends on its quality, its size, its position in the urban web. The relation which determines the value of the dwelling of every household is decisive for the above characteristics.

For every individual household, the value of its dwelling (and consequently its quality), constitutes a function of its income and its consuming habits. These habits, are the ones on which depends the percentage of income which is going to be spent for housing. However, for the entirety of a social class, and especially the working class, which comprises the greater part of today's population, a special determination exists: the quality of their housing depends upon the value of their labour power and the conditions of their exploitation.

The fact that the dwelling is necessary to be used and consumed for the reproduction of the labour force, transforms it to an essential factor of the value of the labour force. Every improvement of housing conditions, corresponds to a rise of this value. But the price of the labour force can not be increased continuously because of its direct relation to the extraction of surplus-value. The limits of its increase are conditioned by laws of capital accumulation and especially by the conditions of accumulation in every sector of social production.

Thus, the housing conditions, to the extent that they constitute a determinant factor of the labour force value, are readjusted according to its laws of evolution. Their improvement is rather the result of the class struggle regarding the general distribution of the social output between capital and labour, than a kind of donation. Accordingly to the various categories of specialized labour, correspond different housing conditions.

2.3. Areas and Installations of Social Equipment

These buildings and land uses concern education, health, recreation and community facilities.

The characteristic of these installations is that they participate in the reproduction of labour force: not only the mere replacement of the labour forces which were spent in the production process (which is secured through expenses in dwellings, clothes, food), but also for the replacement and improvement of all physical and mental abilities which are necessary for the continuation of their participation in the productive activity.

The cost of the above mentioned "extended" reproduction of labour force is added to the cost of its "simple" reproduction and therefore the financing of social equipment follows the same limitations which are valid for housing: its production depends on the size of the social product, on the value of the labour force and on the claims for better standards of life. However, in comparison to the financing and the production of housing, social equipment represents a significant particularity. It is financed by the capital which is accumulated and administered by the State and not through wages. Thus, the explanation of its production, presupposes a

consideration of the entire Government Expenditures and of their role in the evolution of economic and social processes. (11)

We should note that the State undertakes the financing of all installations whose production is unprofitable for the private capital (because of the low percentage of profit) but which are nevertheless necessary for the continuity of the productive processes in all private sectors. (12)

2.4. The Networks of infrastructure and Transportation

The position and characteristics of roads, means of transportation, networks of water supply, energy, drainage and communication are determined in relation to the arrangement of areas of employment, housing and social equipment. That is because the reason of their existence is either to help in the realization of certain activities or to connect the areas of production to the areas of consumption.

We can classify the entire infrastructure into two categories. Many of the elements of infrastructure can be considered necessary for the completion of productive processes which have been started in the production areas. As such, we can mention the networks of transportation; other elements can be also considered as parts of social equipment, like the network of water supply and drainage or the means of urban communication.

For each of the above categories hold different standards of financing and production. We can say that in general, there is a priority in the production of the elements of the first category while the financing of the elements of the second one follows the same limitations as the elements of social equipment. (13)

3. THE INTERACTION OF LAND USES

Our previous description of the determination of land uses by the economic conditions, is not sufficient to interpret the urban ecological space in all its complexity. The urban concentration is something more than the simple sum of landusing activities. The spheres of production, of consumption of exchange, are found in a constant interaction instead of constituting separate spheres. The dynamics of urban concentration is not a result of the simple existence of the various activities. It depends on the relations and forms of cooperation which are developed among them.

Expression of the above mentioned cooperation is the spatial concentration of means of production, transportation and consumption (schools, cultural centers, hospitals etc.), as well as the relations which are developed among them. The articulation of these elements and their interdependencies have major operational significance for the capitalist production: to accelerate the rate of capital turnover in the various stages and forms which the capital takes, during the evolution of production and exchange. (14) Thus, the city is presented as a direct result of the need for reduction of the indirect costs of production and exchange, in such a way that the velocity of capital accelerates and the period during which the capital is used productively, is extended.

The significance of this analysis is essential for the interpretation of the relative spatial position of the material aspects of every activity within the urban web. The way by which the land-using activities and the land uses are correlated, far from being accidental, is adjusted to the given forms of cooperation of the productive sectors and to the various forms of specialized labour.

4 THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PRODUCTION OF URBAN SPACE

In market economies with State intervention the production of urban space is characterised by the complementarity of private and public sectors.

4.1. The Economy of Land Uses and Buildings Production

The formation of urban space follows both the conditions of land-using activities and the forms of their cooperation, which constitute the main socio-economic relations. However this causality is not exclusive. Plenty of social relations, of institutional and ideological elements of the social formation, come through the processes of production and social use of built space, to complete the social determination of the latter. The production of every particular building or other spatial element obeys the conditions of commodity production. This means that the intention behind its production is the formation of an exchange-value and not the production of a use-value (independently of the fact that it is the concrete use-value which permits its operation as a merchandise). The production of the buildings does not depend only upon the land-using activities but also on their rentability as specific merchandises (15). Therefore, a parallel causality, the economy of production and trade of buildings itself, determines a part of their quantitative and qualitative characteristics. (16)

A distinctive example is the production of housing where, due to particular conditions of the organic composition of capital invested and the high rentability which results, production obeys to the structure of profit opportunities. The subjection of the production of housing to the criterion of profit, influences its direct characteristics as well the social categories which will use it. The dwelling's polarization and the subsequent separation of population into distinctive zones in the city, corresponding to income categories, is nothing more than the result of combination of income's unequal distribution and inequality of the value of dwellings into a given dwelling market. (17)

4.2. The Political Intervention to Urbanization

The 'anarchism which inevitably is created by the established mode of building's production -as a multitude of independent producers and firms compete in order to obtain a greater profit- tends to be delimited by the institutional control of urbanization, carried out by the State. The tendency for planning and economic intervention aims to restrain competition which undermines urban development. The coordination of various factors of urbanization, the adjustment of contradiction between collective land use and its division by land owners, through State intervention, gives the

possibility, in the short run, of solving problems which could not be solved by the private capitalist sectors. Thus, urban planning is transformed to productive relation corresponding to urban space production. (18)

NOTES

1. The concept of the city is attributed to the area where the simultaneous concentration of population, productive processes, commercial markets, money markets, distribution networks, as well as the necessary installations for the satisfaction of population needs (dwellings, schools, hospitals, recreation areas, etc.), takes place.
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SOCIAL RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION AND URBAN SPACE

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to describe the social forces and relations of production which command the formation of urban space. It is an elaboration on the theory that relates the urban built environment to the economical and ideological processes. The main points of the paper are the following

1. A general framework for urban space

It is an historical review on the formation of urban agglomerations, parallel to the development to the capitalist mode of production.

2. The formation of basic categories of urban built environment and land uses

Under this title processes which determine the characteristics of land uses will be discussed. Especially analysis is referred to the socioeconomic determinants of

- 2.1. the space of production (industry, offices, shopping)
- 2.2. housing
- 2.3. social equipment
- 2.4. networks of transportation
- 2.5. central business district

3. The interdependence of land uses and activities

Descriptions of relations which determine the characteristics of land uses and buildings in the urban space can not explain the above environment in his total complexity. The concentration of activities in a limited urban space and the location of each one, follows a specific logic related to both cooperation and conflict among social agents of production.

4. The political economy of production of urban elements

The effects of the law of value in the production of urban space will be analyzed.

Finally some reference will be made about the role of ideological elements in relation to the urban design process and about the role of urban-planning system (as an expression of intervention of the political instance) on the economic and ideological relations of the production of urban space.

RELACIONS SOCIALS DE PRODUCCIO I ESPAI URBÀ

Resum

L'objectiu d'aquest estudi és descriure les forces socials i les relacions de producció que dominen en la formació de l'espai urbà. És una elaboració sobre la teoria que relaciona el medi urbà construït amb els processos econòmics i ideològics. Els principals punts d'aquest estudi són els següents:

1. Estructura general de l'espai urbà

Es una revisió històrica sobre la formació de les aglomeracions urbanes, paral·lel al desenvolupament del sistema capitalista de producció.

2. Formació de les categories bàsiques del medi urbà construït i ús del sòl

En aquest apartat seran discutits els processos que determinen les característiques de l'ús del sòl. L'anàlisi està referit especialment als determinants socioeconòmics de:

- 2.1. L'espai de producció (indústria, oficines, botigues)
- 2.2. Habitatges
- 2.3. Equipament social
- 2.4. Redes de transport
- 2.5. Àrea de negocis.

3. L'interdependència entre l'ús del sòl i activitats

La descripció de les relacions que determinen les característiques de l'ús del sòl i les edificacions en l'espai urbà no poden explicar l'entorn, dit més amunt, en la seva total complexitat. La concentració d'aquestes activitats en un espai urbà limitat i la localització de cada una d'aquestes segueix una lògica específica, relacionada tant amb la cooperació com amb el conflicte entre els agents socials de producció.

4. L'economia de producció d'elements urbans

S'analitzaran els efectes de l'oferta i la demanda en la producció de l'espai urbà.

Per acabar es farà referència al paper dels elements ideològics en relació amb el procés de disseny urbà i el paper del sistema de planificació urbà (com expressió de la intervenció d'instàncies polítiques) en les relacions econòmiques i ideològiques de producció de l'espai urbà.

RELACIONES SOCIALES DE PRODUCCION Y ESPACIO URBANO

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es describir las fuerzas sociales y las relaciones de producción que dominan en la formación de espacio urbano. Es una elaboración sobre la teoría que relaciona el medio urbano construido con los procesos económicos e ideológicos. Los principales puntos de este estudio son los siguientes:

1. Estructura general del espacio urbano

Es una revisión histórica sobre la formación de las aglomeraciones urbanas, paralelo al desarrollo del sistema capitalista de producción.

2. Formación de las categorías básicas del medio urbano construido y uso del suelo.

En este apartado serán discutidos los procesos que determinan las características del uso del suelo. El análisis está referido especialmente a los determinantes socioeconómicos del:

2.3. Equipamiento social

2.4. Redes de transporte

2.5. Area central de negocios

3. La interdependencia entre el uso del suelo y actividades

La descripción de las relaciones que determinan las características del uso del suelo y las edificaciones en el espacio urbano no puede explicar el entorno, citado más arriba, en su total complejidad. La concentración de estas actividades en un espacio urbano limitado y la localización de cada una de éstas sigue una lógica específica, relacionada tanto con la cooperación como con el conflicto entre los agentes sociales de producción.

4. La economía de producción de elementos urbanos

Se analizarán los efectos de la oferta y la demanda en la producción del espacio urbano.

Para terminar se hará referencia al papel de los elementos ideológicos en relación al proceso de diseño urbano y el papel del sistema de planificación urbano (como expresión de la intervención de instancias políticas) en las relaciones económicas e ideológicas de producción del espacio urbano.