Spatial Segregation and Urban Accessibility in Brazilian Cities

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The article shows the relation between the degree of urban mobility, place of residence, land use patterns and income level of the population, trying to identify in what way the spatial interpretation of socioeconomic segmentation can contribute to the understanding of the mobility patterns and urban accessibility in Brazilian cities.

The methodological approach used in the study is the Theory of the Social Logic of Space or Space Syntax that associates the spatial configuration of cities with the subjacent social relations. The study performs the analysis of 03 main variables for several Brazilian cities, including São Paulo, Recife, Belém and Manaus, among others: (1) income level of the household head; (2) type of neighborhood (substandard sectors used as a proxy to slums; other precarious sectors not classified as slum; regular neighborhoods); and (3) integration indexes, derived from the axial maps of these cities.

Our results demonstrate that there is a strong correspondence between income level and type of neighborhood, with the population living in substandard and precarious sectors presenting lower income levels than the city average. There is also a strong correlation between integration indexes, income level and type of sector, with the areas where low income population lives, usually in substandard or precarious settlements, corresponding to the less integrated neighborhoods, showing a process of involuntary segregation. The opposite is also observed: the higher the income levels, the lower the probability of living in informal settlements and the higher the levels of topological accessibility as measured through integration indexes.

Keywords: urban mobility, spatial segregation, space syntax, accessibility, integration