

Public Space: Identity and Inclusion

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Abstract— *In the first approach, it is our objective to raise the awareness of all the professionals involved in the process of conception, designing, implementing and managing the urban space, from the equipments, housing, transportation and highlighting public spaces, to the need to articulate efforts to transform the urban environment in a space more qualified and plural. That space responds to the needs of the man, that potentiates the diverse physical and psychical needs, as well as all their facets and activities, from rest, to work and recreation.*

Index Terms — Public Space; Inclusivity; Identity; Architecture;

I. INTRODUCTION

Moving in the city is part of the daily life of a large number of people; the inherent tasks of movement do not necessarily constitute professional work but they require a set of material, functional and environmental requirements on

whose comfort and safety depends on.

The Norberg-Schulz's[1] understanding of the Genius Loci as a determinant concept in the production of public space, says that the intervention of the architect in one specific place should give it the identity that makes it unique and reiterates his specific characteristics, and the importance of the Architect in the design of space, because it is common sense, is that at some point in our lives we are going to have reduced mobility and we need to see forward; or in a temporary way, like when our mother pushed us into the stroller, or in a definitive way as people with reduced mobility for whom living in the city may be impractical if the design is not appropriate. It is our aim to demonstrate that the right to full citizenship is part of good architecture. Together, with sustainability, the aim and effort of architects must prevail, because it is our belief that good architecture responds to these concepts: it is sustainable and inclusive.

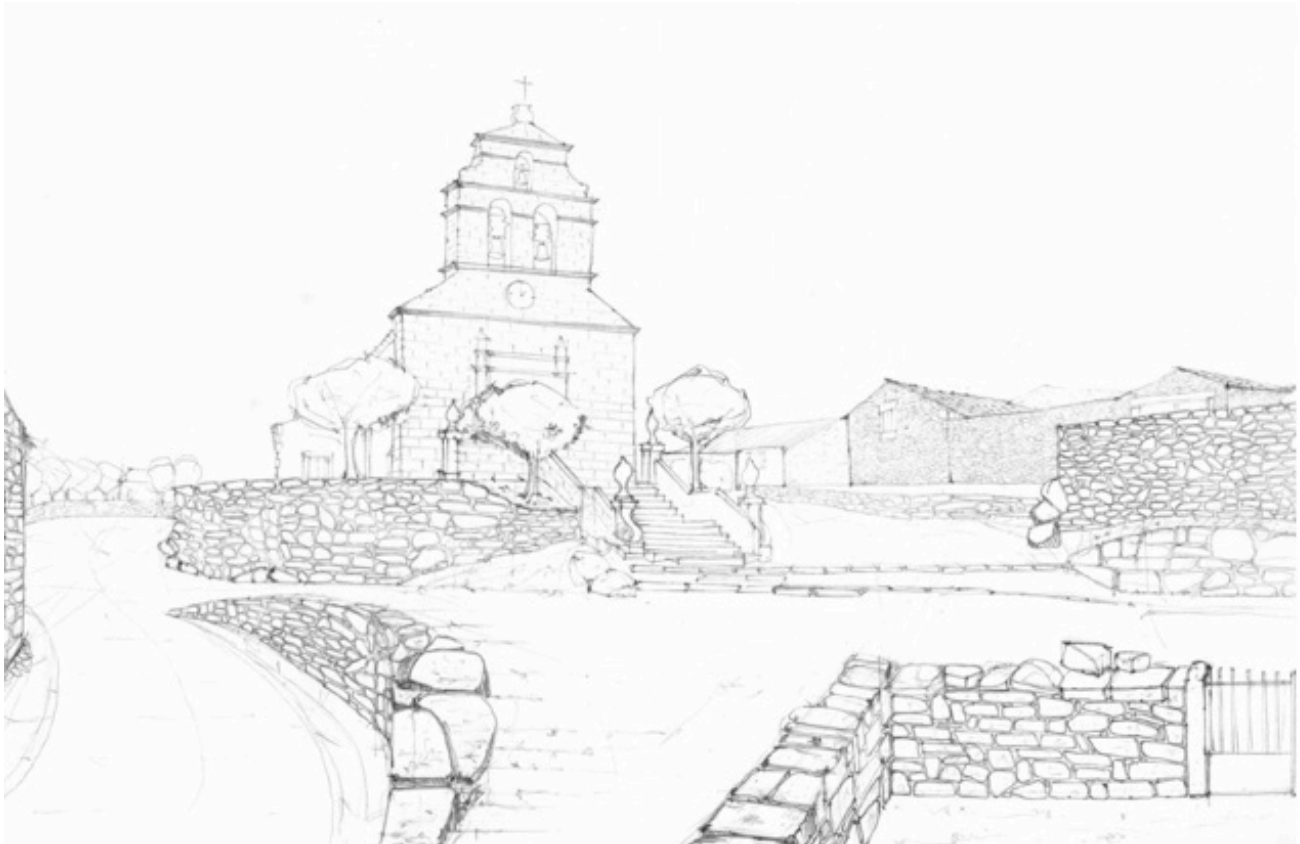


Fig. 1 – Public Space of Caçarelhos, Village in Northern of Portugal

II. THE IDENTITY OF PUBLIC SPACE

Therefore, the territorial delimitation of our research work, in the domain of morphological and typological analysis of physical and human structures, will allow us to carry out a rigorous interpretation of the variations in the same form or of different forms of the city, as well to analyze situations of the physical environment that represent architectural barriers as we observe in figure 1, where the stairs that accesses from the street to the profane and sacred space aren't inclusive, in order to gather information about the determinants that constitute the genesis of formation of the cities and the limitations to their inclusiveness and make efforts to correct those weaknesses.

Thus, the habitat is a complex, mutable and multiple frame within the agglomerate, fully justifying the morphological analysis of public spaces and production areas, as well as the different typologies that in the field of space connections establish precise relationships due to the compartmentalization and the internal functionalities, often leading to the appearance of architectural barriers.



Fig. 2 – Cover of the Book “The Ground and the City” by Pedro Brandão.

At the same time, through the evaluation of this correspondence, the validation of the scientific principle will be attempted, since uniform and stable physiographic units may correspond to well-defined forms, whereas in the case of transition situations these forms will not be than models that result from the organization that best adapts to the physical-environmental diversity.

In this sense, the choice of place arises to a certain extent influenced by the fact that there is a close relationship between the theme that involves the morphology and the architectural types that configure the public spaces and the

territorial support that conditions its structure, giving so much relevance to the nucleus and to the community relation as to the architectural element and typology, valuing in detail the originality and specificity of each construction.

In this way, public space is a complex, mutable and multiple systems within cities, fully justifying the morphological analysis of its public spaces and other areas, as well as the different typologies that in the field of space connections establish relations the compartmentalization and the underlying features should allow full citizenship.

III. ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS

This journey has led to the progressive "industrialization" of methods of intervention, to the growing need to repeat and multiply to which architecture, urbanism and design have not escaped, causing a progressive disqualification of the urban environment as we illustrate in the figure 2.

This "massification" and the "industrialization" of drawing, from the piece to the system, from the urban element to the square, from the roundabout to the cities led to the need to choose a pattern, a spatial and a functional reference to be able to project, to produce and repeat, to multiply in a short space of time. Progressively, and silently, we were assuming as a reference point to the use of the spaces that we formed a standard man, with a perfect image, male, between 18 and 45 years of age, with no motor or visual problems at the peak of their faculties. “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author” [2].



Fig. 3 – Men with motor problems in a wheelchair

We forget, however, that the city is also for children and more ever and ever for the elderly, the less fit, the handicapped as we exemplify in figure 3, such as the injured, as we continue to link an architecture and urban design based on arithmetic averages of heights, spankings and demanding dexterity levels. We strive to make the plurality of use difficult, to require the expenditure of energy levels much higher than necessary, sometimes putting at risk the safety of the user [3].”



Fig. 4 – Man walking in a damaged public space.

As we can observe in figure 4, we can clearly identify some barriers that appear in the public space: the damage in the floor covering that occurs not only as a consequence of the pavement option, but as well as the time erosion. The obstacles in the walks sometimes placed without respecting the free limit dimension between objections (1,20m) can cause a lot of damages in the population in wheelchairs or in mothers carrying their baby's cars. But those are not the only architectural barriers that we have in public spaces in general way. The most important are the maneuverability, difficulties in overcoming, range difficulties and control difficulties among others.



Fig. 5 – Work in field with investigators. Example of obstacle in V.N.Famalicão, Portugal.

If we define that architectural barriers are all obstacles or impediments of the architectural type that reduces or prevent the mobility and accessibility of the person or persons in their daily life in the usage of the city, is imperative that we set the boundaries of those barriers like we did in the paragraph below, as well as we exemplify them because their consequences leads us to the discrimination, marginalization and social segregation.

In these terms, for example, we are referring to treadmills as we can see in figure 5 in a case study in Vila Nova de Famalicão in Portugal where the investigator can't run with the wheelchair from one side to the other side of the walk. Other example appears in figure 6 showing the multiplicity of obstacles that we find in the way that puts the usability of the wheelchair driving in the middle of the cars because it hasn't 1,20m free from the left side of the bus stop and in the right side is the access to the parking line. The impediments that we find out in the public and private accesses, the parkings, the accesses to the public transports and urban equipment are important architectural barriers as well. It is imperative that we prevent them in the beginning of our projects.



Fig. 6 - Example of obstacle created by Bus Stop.

IV. IDENTITY AND INCLUSION

For many years we tried to avoid the un-inclusive cities in Portugal. With this purpose our Government created a law (123/97) that ordered that in 10 years all the public space should be inclusive. Unfortunately it wasn't enough and the 163/2006 came up to rescind the one before. The intent was to consider that the measure will contribute to a greater institutional capacity to intervene, with a view to meeting technical accessibility standards and correcting non-compliance which, if they continue, will have harmful effects on the mobility of citizens which they legitimately

intend to enjoy[4]. It follows from this understanding that it is possible to retain from architecture and architects a lesson of formal coherence, typological and a framework of an anonymous heritage that carries revitalizing values of the place, the possibility of modifying the city making it accessible to all citizens.

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people” [5] we truly believe that all together can reach out this efforts and make this world a better place.

V. CONCLUSION

The contribution of the architect, or rather, of all designers to eliminate or minimize architectural barriers, passes through the realization of the right to full citizenship. We only can achieve it when our cities are able to receive all human beings assuming human diversity being aware that when planned from the start doesn't make projects more expensive. The highlight of this study is the consciousness that we are only in the beginning of our investigation and we have the ambition to provide a valid and original contribution around the typologies and architectural morphologies in the public space that, in order to comply with the current legislation requires investigation in vast domains and territories. The next step is provide a case study, initializing with SWAT analyze and then propose the best solutions for each particular situation.

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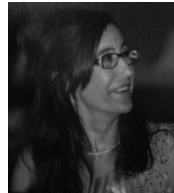
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