

The Quality of Public Space in Mexico City: Current State and Trends

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Abstract : Public space is essential to strengthen the social and urban fabric and the social cohesion; there lies the importance of its study. Hence, the aim of this paper is to analyze the quality of public space in the XXI century in both quantitative and qualitative terms. In this article, the concept of public space includes open spaces such as parks, public squares and walking areas. To make this analysis we take Mexico City as the case study. It has a population of nearly 9 million inhabitants and it is composed of sixteen boroughs. For this analysis, we consider both, existing public spaces and the government intervention for building and improvement of new and existent public spaces. Results show that on the one hand, quantitatively there is not an equitable distribution of public spaces because of both, the growth of the city itself, as well as for the absence of political will to create public spaces. Another factor is the evolution of this city, which has been growing merely in a 'patched pattern', where public space has played no role at all with a total absence of urban design. On the other hand, qualitatively, even the boroughs with the most public spaces have not shown interest in making these spaces qualitatively inclusive and open to the general population aiming for integration. Therefore, urban projects that privatize public space seem to be the rule, rather than a rehabilitation effort of the existent public spaces. Hence, state intervention should reinforce its role as an agent of social change acting in the benefit of the majority of the inhabitants with the promotion of more inclusive public spaces.

Keywords : exclusion, inclusion, Mexico City, public space

Conference Title : ICACE 2015 : International Conference on Architectural and Civil Engineering

Conference Location : Rome, Italy

Conference Dates : September 17-18, 2015