

Hierarchy, power and control: on the spatial configuration of Brazilian courthouses

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Abstract

Brazilian court houses are investigated in order to understand how the social attributes -hierarchy, power and control - of the judicial system are related to building's spatial attributes - spatial segregation, depth and high differentiation. The investigation showed that the social function of the institution is not reflected in the building as a whole. Such is the case, however, in the most ceremonial space, the courtroom, that retain the formalities required by the institution, and which are expressed by a controlled hierarchical spatial structure that is symbolic of power.