

Review of: "A Conceptual Review of Discontinuity in Urban Design: The Morphological and Ethical Dimensions"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The general ambition of the paper, discontinuity in urbanism studied from morphological and ethical perspectives, is interesting, as is the idea of relying on interdisciplinary interpretations of the term to support the investigation.

Yet, the execution fails to deliver. The definitions of discontinuity are too many, too general, and never really brought together to explain what it means in either morphological or ethical terms. Consequently, one is left wondering what the difference is, for example, between discontinuity and change and evolution in our settlements, which is one of their fundamental characters, their nature. The latter is never accounted for, which is, in my opinion, the fundamental issue of the paper. When does natural change in urban form become a discontinuity? There is no evidence to illustrate this, nor to, at least, draw informed conclusions by elimination from a good definition of discontinuity. The discussion on how the concept is used in other disciplines is inconsequential (and greatly imprecise, i.e., see the section on ‘philosophical discussions’) and unbalanced (see the section on ‘Mathematical theories’).

Most attempts to illustrate the key concept through examples are vague, and the amount of detail to describe them, or the historical logic provided, is chaotic and generally insufficient. The promise of casting an eye on “contemporary Arab-Islamic thought, highlighting the unique manifestation of discontinuity through the coexistence of traditional and contemporary urban systems,” is also insufficient, mostly relying on images with no context or analysis.

I am afraid I do not consider this paper ready for dissemination.