



BOOK REVIEWS

Diferentes abordagens em morfologia urbana. Contributos luso-brasileiros edited by *Vitor Oliveira*, Urban Forms, Porto, Portugal, 2020, 2nd edition, 158 pp. ISBN 978-989-20-8164-9.

This volume, whose title is translated as *Different approaches to urban morphology: Portuguese and Brazilian contributions*, didactically displays the concepts and methods of six significant approaches to urban form. This free, online Portuguese-language publication is a new edition of the 2018 e-book with a new preface, two more chapters, and revised introduction and conclusion. Relying on practical case studies and varied contexts, this richly-illustrated book has successfully rendered foreign theories for the Lusophone audience, not only for academic professionals but also for those involved with the making of cities.

The preface of the second edition is by Karl Kropf. Vitor Oliveira, the secretary-general of ISUF and the book's editor, prepared the opening chapter and the revised conclusion. In it, and following the lead of Kropf (2009), Oliveira urges morphologists to integrate and coordinate the approaches outlined in the book in order to improve the capacity to describe, explain and prescribe the urban environment (Oliveira, 2020, p. 150). Although the chapters were prepared and presented separately, Oliveira used M. R. G. Conzen's thoughts on interdisciplinary cooperation as a reference structure. The reader may thus read the book and consider the potential complementarity of the different approaches to urban form it presents.

The six morphological approaches – historico-geographical interpretation, typological analysis, shape grammar modelling, configurational analysis using space syntax procedures, cellular automata and transect-based studies, each comprising a

chapter – are delineated and contextualized in the introduction. Oliveira begins with the individual contributions and presents the first of three cognitive approaches to urban form related in the book. Thus, in chapter 1 Oliveira gives an overview of the Conzenian school of urban morphology, its background and main ideas. Conzen's historico-geographical approach and the concept of the morphological region are applied to a section of a street in the Portuguese city of Porto in order to account for its contemporary value. The chapter details some key concepts, namely fringe belts, burgage cycle and morphological region, with the due attention to the seminal contribution of J. W. R. Whitehand. It is worth mentioning that the Conzen-Whitehand concept of fringe belt has been adapted to Brazilian towns, which are mostly a product of shorter historical cycles and recent urbanization processes (Meneguetti and Pereira Costa, 2015). In chapter 3, Staël Pereira Costa, Maria Manoela Gimmler Netto and Simone M. S. Safe discuss concepts of the Italian school of urban morphology in terms of their application in a Brazilian context, namely the city of Belo Horizonte. The work of Saverio Muratori, Gianfranco Caniggia and Gian Luigi Maffei is explored, and the notion of territorial typology and the idea of territories as organisms thus gain a more comprehensive explanation within the Brazilian context. Following with the last cognitive approach, Alexandra Paio employs shape grammar in chapter 7 to shed light on Portuguese-origin urban forms. Observing geometrical/configurational features and topological/functional aspects, the chapter reveals their common generative logic and principles.

Moving on to the more quantitative approaches to urban form, in chapter 4 Frederico de Holanda reviews the work of Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson in order to consider the relationships between human activity and spatial configurations.

Certain areas of Brasília are explored to show how spontaneous occupation has rendered a different status to originally segregated spaces. The following chapter, by Maurício Couto Polidori and Otávio Martins Peres, draws on cellular automata, modelled on CityCell, to simulate the urban expansion of the city of Pelotas, representing spatial dynamics and exploring processes of change. Their study predicts the effect of different urban growth speeds, influence of attraction poles, special zoning for natural preservation, and the appropriate relationship between nature and urban form. Finally in this theme, in chapter 6 Alessandra Gobbi Santos and Bruna Cristina Lermen present the transect model known as SmartCode as a normative alternative to the traditional, abstract, elementary land use zoning, common in most Brazilian cities.

Portrayed as complementary tools, the six morphological approaches considered together in this book – ranging from qualitative and cognitive to quantitative and normative – are certainly inspirational, particularly in Brazil where historical urban studies are common. Such historical views help to explain why the city is the way it is or has the form it has, but in historical urban studies a further step to design and planning practice is not usually taken – and this book contributes to taking the step towards design and planning practice. The book does have recognized limitations, namely the lack of a comparative meta-study that helps planners to decide which approaches should be applied in a given case and how to integrate them – an urgent task to be undertaken. All in all, it is commendable for offering to the Lusophone world a panoramic view of innovative possibilities for analysing the present urban form and designing its future.

References

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Városok az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchiában: városszövet- és várostipológia 1867–1918

by Éva Lovra, TERC Kft, Budapest, Hungary, 2019, 240 pp. ISBN 978–6–155445–65–1.

Éva Lovra's book *Towns in Austria-Hungary: urban tissue typology and urban typology 1867–1918* represents a pioneering endeavour in researching the history of urbanism and architecture on the territory of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy since she observes both phenomena in mutual interaction and places them in a broader, historical and social context. Hence the book is a genuine example of an interdisciplinary research approach, in which the city and its architecture are considered as a common organism, subject to different influences. In addition to tangible dimensions, the author also reveals the urban identity of cities.

The spatial framework of the research is bounded by the borders of the historic Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The cities of that huge territory have been developed in a common socio-historical context, framed by the duration of the Monarchy. This began with its creation by the Austro-Hungarian agreement in 1867 and ended with its disappearance after the end of the First World War in 1918. This was the last period when Hungarian cities sought to achieve the development of those in Western Europe. A comparison with the medieval condition of the selected cities emphasizes the importance of the period (1867–1918) being examined, in terms of significant expansion and transformation. The forms of Central European cities formed at that time are still recognizable today.

Lovra considers the formation of a modern Central European city through specific elements of urban typology: industrial development; the development of means of transport, primarily railways; the relationship between the city centre and its other parts; and the influence of nature, considered in terms of attitudes towards the natural environment and green areas within the city structure. In addition to the urban and architectural development, she also provides an overview of legislation related to these activities as a special and very important factor in the origin and development of urban form and the architectural framework of cities in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

Lovra presents an urban typology matrix, combining the typologies of urban fabric types and urban planning types. Based on this integrated method, a total of 41 Austro-Hungarian urban types were identified, defined and divided into