



## 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.