

11 main types and their subtypes. The following inputs are used to determine the types: the structure of the street; the relationship of plots and buildings to the street structure; the relationship of blocks and groups of plots with free, green areas and street network. English (M. R. G. Conzen) and Italian (S. Muratori and G. F. Caniggia) theories and integrated methodology of urban morphology served as starting points in the formation of this typology. Furthermore, theories of contemporary urban planners such as Josef Stübben, Camillo Sitte and Otto Wagner, are used in the analysis and explanation as well as the works of important architects such as Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer, Hauszmann Alajos, Lechner Ödön and Pfaff Ferenc.

The book presents different types of cities through the analyses of 80 cities of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which had a common concept of development in terms of urban fabric and structure. The large majority of these cities (70) were located in the Kingdom of Hungary and are compared with 10 cities that were located in the Austrian part of the Monarchy. That comparative analysis identified the existence of a general concept in the development of cities within the entire Monarchy. The book shows the diversity as well as the common characteristics of these settlements where common economic and cultural roots are, even today, recognizable in most cities of Central Europe.

The research demonstrates that it is possible to form a typology of cities in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, despite their diversity in urban forms. Further, this typology and the criteria used to develop it are also applicable in the analysis of cities in other contexts. This integrated methodology of studying the urban structure and urban forms in dialogue with architecture – created during the research – is the greatest contribution of this work. The author defines this interaction as ‘micro-urbanism’ and highlights the possibility of further development of research in this field. The significance of the book is also in the comprehensive approach to the research, which resulted in the unique typology and complex correlations. The book is richly illustrated, especially with primary sources, maps and postcards, and can serve as a database for further research, which represents the third contribution of this publication. The systematic catalogue of urban structures and matrices of 70 cities, given at the end of the publication, could be particularly important for other researchers.

Lovre’s book will undoubtedly become a kind of manual for the analysis and comparison of Central

European cities at the turn of the century. Apart from its practical educational value, its scientific contribution should not be neglected, because this is not only an important monograph on Austro-Hungarian cities but also an exceptional scientific contribution to urban history.

Maria Silađi, University of Novi Sad Faculty of Technical Sciences Department of Architecture and Urbanism, Trg Dositeja Obradovića 6, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia. E-mail: maria_siladji@uns.ac.rs and Anica Draganić, University of Novi Sad Faculty of Technical Sciences Department of Architecture and Urbanism, Trg Dositeja Obradovića 6, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia. E-mail: draganic@uns.ac.rs

Master planning for change – designing the resilient city by *Ombretta Romice, Sergio Porta and Alessandra Feliciotti*, RIBA Publishing, London, UK, 2020, 192 pp. ISBN 9781859469262.

This is an important book. It addresses the challenges facing the field of urban design at a time when it can make a difference in the necessary redirection of our cities, and in extension our societies, into greater sustainability. It does so by fully taking on the task of reconceptualizing ‘the problem a city is’, as Jane Jacobs demanded 60 years ago (Jacobs 1961). It does so by following her, at the time, exceptionally prescient conclusion that ‘cities are problems of organized complexity’. Whereas this truth has been evident since Jacobs first stated it, we have seen little development in its direction despite the widespread canonization of Jacobs. One reason is obviously that complexity is difficult, especially organized complexity, which concerns systems whose variables tend to engage and influence each other so that they give rise to life-like behaviours. There is no better example of such organised complexity than cities, which Jacobs was the first to point out.

In a narrower sense, the problem is perhaps that the distinction between the built city and the lived city – between urban form and urban life – proves difficult to make for many, including practitioners in urban design. This turns the city into a virtually incomprehensible multitude of problems to solve. The separation of urban form from urban life, and the realisation that the former constitutes the primary medium for urban design to influence the latter, immediately simplifies the task. In the end, the

urban designer can only deal with problems that can be addressed by urban form.

Significantly, urban form itself is not a complex system, but comprises dead matter with no life-like behaviour; but, for that very reason, it is an excellent material for building resilience into complex systems. That is, despite the shifting and unpredictable behaviour of complex systems like urban life, we can create some order and predictability in it by way of urban form. Hence it has a central role not only when it comes to the well-proven resilience of cities but for redirecting cities into greater sustainability.

In the first two chapters of *Master planning for change*, we are given an unusually succinct and easy-to-follow introduction to all of this that helps us to reconceptualise our understanding of cities, and also how we are to address them in urban design. It does so based on theories of resilience developed in systems ecology, which should be kept distinct from the concept as used in the engineering sciences. In the latter, resilience concerns the ability of a system or a construction to bounce back to its original state after stress, whereas in ecology, it has a greater dynamic meaning, where such stress on a system actually opens for potential adaptation and ‘learning’. Stress or disturbance is therefore a natural part of such systems and helps them to develop, which is where we see the immediate relevance of the idea for cities. In the current COVID-19 virus crisis cities have proven resilient, but the need for certain adaptations has been clearly identified.

Especially innovative is how the authors here apply urban form into this context of disturbance and change, not least by making an excellent point based on the fact that systems of different scales often are nested into each other – another reason why complex systems are complex. We often talk about how different systems of urban form differ in longevity – street systems often exist longer than plot systems, which in turn tend to live longer than buildings. In resilience theory, this quality is sometimes called panarchy, where it is explicated how change can be initiated in such nested systems, both from the top and the bottom. Speaking about urban design we may use the slower systems at the large scale, such as street systems, to control faster systems at the small scale, such as buildings. But there are also processes going the other direction. Changes at the small scale, like densification at the building scale, may force changes at the larger scale, such as new traffic regulations in the street system. This resolves the interdependence of

these systems of urban form within a conceptual framework, that is, it suggests a theory.

This also leads to a reconceptualization of the masterplan tool, that has been heavily criticised for its typical top-down character. Here the book’s authors argue that, instead, the master plan can structure and accommodate change initiated in both directions, but that the slow and large systems, like street systems, are essential for creating order and resilience in this change. However, it is important to not plan too much, they argue, since bottom-up initiatives that prove vital for cities to adapt over time. Interestingly, this approach changes our conception of these practices from the classic blueprint planning of new urban projects, often conceived of as independent additions to a city, to a practice of the maintenance of an existing urban fabric that in a more organic way grows both by bottom-up initiatives and top-down planning.

However, in the book’s second part which illustrates and offers a detailed, worked-out handbook in such master planning, to a great extent it loses touch with the preliminaries set out in the first part. The second part instead turns out to be an unusually rich and detailed introduction to most of the common methods and techniques used in contemporary urban planning and design, and is richly illustrated. As such it may prove very useful, but it fails to bring the important reconceptualization outlined in the first part into practical procedures and techniques. This is unfortunate since some of the presented methodologies, such as the inherently systems-based space syntax methods, offer exactly this opportunity, whereas other classic techniques also discussed, such as Kevin Lynch’s mind mapping, seem to do that far less successfully.

In summary, the book falls into two parts which are both useful, but do not engage in each other to the degree promised. If the first part offers an original contribution to a much-needed reconceptualization of the field, its extension into a coherent methodology for its practice remains to be developed.

Reference

Jacobs, J. (1961) *The death and life of great American cities* (Random House, New York).

Lars Marcus, *Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden. E-mail: lars.marcus@chalmers.se*