

rebirth; a perspective that is sometimes lost in contemporary accounts that stress how urban actors together with market forces reshape the urban fabric of former industrial areas centred on narratives of heritage and middle-class consumerist-driven regeneration. This may be successful in those developments created under the auspices of one downtown financier, providing a 'homogenized aesthetic of cheerful building interiors, upscale ground-floor tenants, and piped music' (p. 285), but, as this book demonstrates, this is only part of the story. Buildings, public places, parking lots and sidewalks are also in some large or small way shaped by earlier ideas and decisions, which continue to burst through to the present, hosting an uncontrollable mixture of different human and non-human elements.

Overall, this is a highly-accessible and absorbing text that will prove useful not only for urban morphologists but also for urban historians, geographers and planners. Especially for the latter group involved with the design and management of urban spaces, the methods, approaches and evidence gathered here is valuable. And while the text focuses on the fortunes of Detroit's downtown, *Dream city* raises several important points that apply to other cities charged with developing robust, sustainable urban futures in the wake of industrial decline.

David Adams, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK. E-mail: D.Adams.4@bham.ac.uk

Urban being. Anatomy & identity of the city by *Robin Renner*, Niggli (imprint of Braun Publishing AG), Salenstein, Switzerland, 2018, 315 pp. ISBN 978-3-7212-0968-6.

Urban grids. Handbook for regular city design by *Joan Busquets, Dinglang Yang* and *Michael Keller*, Harvard University Graduate School of Design / ORO Editions, Novato, CA, USA, 2019, 680 pp. ISBN 978-1-940743-95-0.

The grand projet. Understanding the making and impact of urban megaprojects edited by *Kees Christiaanse, Anna Gasco*

and *Naomi C. Hanakata*, nai010 publishers, Rotterdam, Netherlands, 2019, 640 pp. ISBN 978-94-6208-480-3.

Paris Haussmann. A model's relevance. An analytical review of Baron Haussmann's redevelopment of Paris from today's perspective by *B. Jallon, U. Napolitana* and *F. Bouttée*, Park Books, Zürich, Switzerland, 2017, 264 pp. ISBN 978-3038600527.

Four recently-published books can be classified as atlases by the important role played by the collection of maps, supplemented with texts, illustrations and graphic analyses. The atlases systematically illustrate the urban landscape with a focus on urban agglomerations in the book *Urban being*, regular city designs in the book *Urban grids*, urban megaprojects in *The grand projet* and the value of the Haussmann grid for contemporary cities in *Paris Haussmann*. What the books have in common, apart from the rich set of maps, is the importance given to comparability with the aim of finding regularities in form and/or performance. As is often the case in atlases, the number of detailed descriptions of different aspects of the built environment is impressive, while the interpretative framework is less well-developed. All four books are summarised separately below, highlighting some strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, with each additional book discussed, the main differences and similarities with those already covered are highlighted.

In the introduction of the book *Urban being*, Robin Renner formulates the goal with his atlas as providing 'the first step to improve the quality of a city' where the understanding of its structure is key and a comparative study the means. The atlas is then organized using five levels or scales of analysis: 'macroregion', 'surrounding', 'urban being', 'urban nucleus' and 'urban cell'. The latter is defined as the area between main arterial roads within a city, while the urban nucleus is the core of the city with most important functions, generally located in the physical centre. The urban being is the city, but not bounded by its administrative boundaries. Instead, the use of public transport, amount of traffic and economic activities define the bounding of the urban organism. The macroregion and surrounding are both defined by the distance between cities as well as their size and density. Based on this a typology is developed including, amongst others, the solitary city, a

group of cities and polygonal city clusters. The development of typologies is repeated for the other scales and it is here the book becomes interesting because the types allow the reader to distinguish similarities and differences between and within cities. Unfortunately, the definitions used are not very precise, which make the resulting types hard to interpret and apply elsewhere. Furthermore, the relation between the types and the qualitative implications for urban life (the goal of the atlas) are not discussed, empirically tested or linked to urban theories.

Urban grids is the culmination of eight years of research at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and emphasizes the value of 'open forms' for city design to increase its adaptability, where the grid city is seen as important example. This atlas has, in contrast to *Urban being*, a clear mission that can be summarized by the promotion of the grid city. However, it does not show or prove this in comparison to non-grid solutions, but instead maps are shown of a large variety of old and contemporary grid cities at the scale of the district and neighbourhood. For the definition used for grid cities, primacy is given to the design of the street layout, which regulates the arrangements of buildings and defines the form of public space. More important than its ultimate form, it provides the capacity for transformation in the long term (p. 19). The grid is thus not seen as a singular form, but as a system created to act over time. The book is composed of two atlases in which chapter 2 presents 101 existing grid cities across the globe and chapter 4 presents 48 projects that are currently being developed based on grid designs. In both chapters, the examples are redrawn according to codes that allow for comparison. While the scale of comparison is very different from the cases presented in *Urban being*, both books make use of typologies to summarize the differences and similarities between the cases. In addition to mapping, motives for developing these regular layouts are discussed in chapter 2. This provides an interesting overview of the grid as a means to control the territory or even the whole country, and the grid as a transformative device for the existing city using the example of Haussmann in Paris. The grid is thus defined based on its spatial organizing principle that promotes and/or provides the means for change. This aspect is also central to chapter 6 where the future role of urban grids is discussed, but unfortunately the lessons drawn from the more than 600 pages are summarized in very vague passages such as 'today's most interesting modern urbanism combines ideas

for space that defines a vision of the city' (p. 641). If the book had explored this further it would have lived up to the aim to verify the potential of the regular city, but now it remains unclear exactly how the grid is the answer to the challenges such as sustainable mobility and urban justice (p. 642). The statement on p. 649 should therefore be read as a call for more evidence to prove this rather than a call for 'evidence-based ways to produce it'.

The grand projet focuses not so much on a specific urban form such as grid cities, but on a specific type of project described as 'complex masterplans', such as the Olympic Legacy in London and the Jurong Lake District in Singapore. The central theme in this atlas is, similar to *Urban grids*, the level of adaptivity of the different case studies. *The grand projet* is the result of long experience through projects, studies and student work led by Kees Christiaanse working at KCAP, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) and ETH-Future Cities Laboratory in Singapore. *Grands projets* are defined as carefully laid-out urban developments, realized under the authority of a single or concerted governing body, and hosting programmes and tenants of acclaimed global relevance. In contrast to the other two atlases, *The grand projet* has clear research questions that address the making and impact of these urban megaprojects and draws lessons on how future projects can increase their capacity to create more inclusive and adaptive cities. The focus on spatial dimensions and planning practices is noteworthy, and makes this book very valuable for urban planners. The results are presented using typologies, as in the other two atlases, but this time related to the goals of creating more inclusive and adaptive projects. The first is addressed by the ways in which borders are managed in the projects. Borders can be used to better integrate projects with their contexts, but are also the means to create differences in space within the project by regulating flows. This is exemplified by the spatial framework of King's Cross (UK) that ensures permeability by extending existing streets of surrounding neighbourhoods in the project area and positioning squares and parks along these main axes. The capacity to create adaptivity is related to the level of flexibility in the planning documents from 'instrument-driven plans' that enable full adaptability over time to more drawn-up detailed approaches that define spatial outcomes in their full scope, so-called 'formal spatial plans'. In addition to these two types, two more are defined and exemplified with the

case studies: ‘structural spatial plans’ and ‘flexible frameworks’ with a more or less fixed spatial outline combined with design guidelines (p. 588–9). Based on eight examples, the authors conclude that younger European projects like HafenCity in Germany or King’s Cross in UK have built-in flexibility.

The third atlas, *Paris Haussmann*, analyses and reveals the potential of today’s Parisian urban model in relation to the challenges of tomorrow’s cities. The book, published in parallel with an exhibition at the Pavillon de l’Arsenal (January 31–May 21, 2017), shows, categorizes and compares the typical Haussmann urban axes, the public spaces and city blocks and buildings according to their current geometry. In addition to beautiful maps and photographs, the book provides analysis using contemporary criteria such as walkability and energy efficiency and compares the performance of the Haussmann solution with other international metropolises. It is, for instance, shown that the Haussmann grid is efficient in terms of walkability measured as the accessible portion of roadways within a walkable perimeter of 400 meters. Paris’s score is more than 60% which is comparable to Toledo and much higher than Brasilia, a city designed for motorized movement and long distances. This performative dimension is absent in *Urban grids* and *Urban being* and merely qualitative in *The grand projet*.

After studying the hundreds of maps and reading thousands of pages in these four atlases, two aspects are worth highlighting. First, types are used to communicate results in three of the four atlases (all atlases except for *Paris Haussmann*) and prove to be a powerful tool to distinguish similarities and/or differences between and within cities. The addition of the performative dimension would be a logical next step in this line of typo-morphological research, where some recent publications are worth noting: Araldi (2019), Bobkova (2019) and Berghauser Pont *et al.* (2019). Secondly, adaptability is highlighted repeatedly, as reason to study grid cities in *Urban grids* and to describe the performance of the megaprojects in *The grand projet*. Adaptability is an important aspect for sustainable urban development and, in a next step, should be studied using longitudinal models to prove the hypothesis put forward in the atlases in line with the morphogenetic approach.

To conclude, at least three of the four atlases are ‘must-haves’ just because of the beauty of the maps, especially *Urban grids* and *Paris Haussmann*, although unfortunately the latter has

already been out of stock for some time. However, if one also wants to use the atlas for planning and design purposes, I recommend *The grand projet* which, despite the small number of case studies, provides the strongest spatial arguments of how to make future projects more adaptable and inclusive, underpinned with a detailed description of the making and impact of eight megaprojects.

References

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Meta Berghauser Pont, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, SE-412 96 Gothenburg, Sweden, E-mail: meta.berghauserpont@chalmers.se

Human spatial navigation by Arne D. Ekstrom, Hugo J. Spiers, Véronique Bohbot and R. Shayna Rosenbaum, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, USA, 2018, 201 pp. ISBN 978–0691171746.

The authors of this book are well-known international researchers in the field of human navigation. Based on their expertise, it is clear that this book is written with a strong experimental psychology and neuroscience perspective. It is also worth noting that it is not written for a ‘popular science’ audience, rather it is apparently intended for students already entering this field, or researchers from closely-aligned fields requiring an authoritative overview of the topic.

This book is intended to be a comprehensive overview of what is known about human