

category is represented through the relationships between the three main analytical viewpoints, graphically represented: the *structured spaces* (or the *voids* delineated by boundaries), the plan view, and the generic structure (the position of the element under scrutiny in the multi-level diagram). The ways in which the multi-level compositional hierarchy can be operationalized for the analysis of the built environment, in particular by determining the desired level of specificity, is discussed.

Part Two, *Methods*, is the most voluminous. It discusses successively: the general process of analysis; the so-called desktop analysis; the field survey; and the synthesis. Kropf suggests that the three basic steps of the morphological enquiry are the analysis, the comparison (synchronic or diachronic), and the synthesis. He contends that a composite view results from a 'synthesis based on experience that is developed through cycles of hypothesis, deduction and induction' (p. 15). The general process of analysis is introduced and discussed at length, from the determination of the objectives and scope of the study, information gathering, desktop analysis, field survey, and interpretation, synthesis and communication. Beyond technical and procedural aspects, different types of analysis are abundantly illustrated by borrowing from a large number of case studies. The extensiveness, richness and exemplarity of the cases illustrated are such that serious substantive knowledge can be gained on various built environments and their morphogenesis. In addition to information on what to study and how to proceed, the attentive apprentice will start building a mental repertoire of the kinds of results to expect in different contexts, and of the interpretation that could entail. Part Three, entitled *Applications*, develops the latter aspects further, by presenting case-studies that investigate different aspects of urban form in order to produce knowledge that could inform the creation, the control of the transformations, and the management of the built environment.

The publication of such a handbook in English was much anticipated. In the opinion of this reader, this is a must-read, and perhaps the best tool available in that language for the teaching of urban morphology at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

## References

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- Pierre Gauthier, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Boulevard West, Montréal, Québec, Canada. H3G 1M8. E-mail: pierreg@alcor.concordia.ca*
- La dimensione urbana degli spazi commerciali. Il caso di Lisbona, 1970–2010** by *Alessia Allegri*, Collana Politecnica, Maggioli Editore, Milano, Italia, 2016, 123 pp. ISBN 978–88–916–1818–4.

This book stems from a PhD thesis in Urbanism and Urban Studies and seeks to decode the complexity that characterizes the relationship between retailing and the city. Alessia Allegri explores, through a typological classification analysis, how commercial spaces and the diversity of the urban fabric combine in urban evolution. This allows her to identify the morphological and functional features that influence this relationship.

The author acknowledges the links between commercial uses, urban fabric permeability, and spatial continuity, and that these relationships can be more or less worked out and controlled. She posits, however, that the historical dialogue of the retail/city binomial has been somehow compromised by the latest trends in the design of commercial spaces, which tends to produce enclosed units, unconcerned with their surrounding context and focused exclusively on their commercial vocation.

To investigate this issue, the author turns to Lisbon and its formal richness and diversity. The second chapter amply justifies the choice of Lisbon for the reader, given the crucial position that the retail spaces occupy in the organization of urban fabric, the multiple roles assumed by these over the last 40 years in particular, and the diversity of configurations that they have entailed.

Scrutinizing the reciprocity between commerce and the city of Lisbon, Allegri stresses the tension between diversity and unity in different historical periods. While singular commercial spaces integrated into urban fabrics have resulted from long processes of 'sedimentation' in ancient Lisbon, in other places and times these were designed as integrated units that sought to adapt and reinvent the commercial spatial structure that preceded them. Other circumstances led to urban and architectural explorations based on new forms of interaction between people and commercial spaces, starting with the introduction of large windows in façades in nineteenth-century urban expansions such as Avenidas Novas. More recently, retail environments have been conceived as autonomous units that dispense with urban fabric integration and ignore the system of public spaces that structures the city's layout, functioning as authentic commercial islands supported only by a road circulation system that guarantees them access.

The third chapter proposes a classification that seeks to map the typological diversity of commercial spaces, while systematizing the relationship that these spaces establish with their surrounding urban fabric. This facilitates understanding and allows for objective comparisons between these urban components and configurations. Specifically, Allegri proposes a new typological classification based on three commercial systems referred to as symbiotic, commensal, and parasitic.

The first represents all forms of commerce that are incorporated in the city's consolidated urban fabric, integrating the morphological and functional characteristics of the urban environment around them. This system stands out, above all, for the *symbiotic* relation that stems from great solidarity and mutual dependence, with shared benefits. It refers to the immemorial processes that produced all traditional commercial fabrics of local influence and that still persist to this day.

The second system refers to commercial environments marked by the introduction of units displaying singular morphological characteristics. While spatially integrated within the city's consolidated urban fabric, these create heterogeneity. This system, which dates back to the beginning of the 1980s and prevailed until the beginning of the twenty-first century, reveals a tension between the desire to affirm greater autonomy and presence in the city and the need to become a reference in the urban dynamics. These commercial units are developed in buildings that are distinguished by their architecture, size and position within the urban fabric.

The third system concerns the commercial units that are totally disassociated from the urban fabric and that alter the city's spatial organization and upset previous equilibriums. This system, established in the mid-1970s, marked a trend that reasserted itself with the construction of the Amoreiras complex (c. 1985) and continues today. It is comprised of large commercial units that seek to condense in a single space some of the city's urban qualities, but lack integration into the wider city.

The studies presented in this book offer a simple and clear reading experience, well supported graphically with photographs, cartographic material, plans at different scales, sections, views, and graphic charts. These graphics effectively contribute to the understanding of the relationship between commerce and the city at different levels of resolution. Above all, through the analysis of Lisbon's representative commercial types, this approach is useful as a conceptual support for the design of new forms of commerce. Further, it is a relevant contribution to the broader debates concerning contemporary city form, informing answers to questions about interventions in the urban fabric and the ways in which they affect the life of the city.

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**Shaping cities: emerging models of planning practice**, edited by *Mohammad Al-Asad* and *Rahul Mehrotra*, Hatje Cantz Verlag GmbH, Berlin, Germany and Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 2016, 192 pp. ISBN 978-3-7757-4236-8.

*Shaping cities* presents a rich selection of essays on innovative approaches to urban planning. It stems from a seminar held in Singapore in 2012 involving the collaboration of the Urban Authority of Singapore, the National University of Singapore, Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. In nine chapters, a series of experimental approaches to iconic urban planning projects from around the world (Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East and East Asia) are discussed at length.

In the first chapter, the editors introduce contemporary urban planning practices and methods