Sustainable urban form, accessibility and travel: the relationship between polycentric urban development and commuting in Lisbon by *David Vale,* Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, Germany, 2010, 264 pp. ISBN 978-3-8383-2019-9.

This book, an outcome of a Glasgow University PhD thesis, considers, separately and in conjunction, definitions, models, and issues of sustainability, urban structure, transportation modes and accessibility. The last three chapters deal with the 'Park of the Nations' (PN), a new neighbourhood in Lisbon resulting from the 1998 international expo. *Sustainable urban form* sets out to investigate various specific questions relating to urban form and commuter behaviour.

The opening chapters probe deeply into recent concepts of sustainable cities and also delve into a large number of related concepts, in so doing referring to a substantial number of authors. The fourth chapter, on methodology, explains the author's research design in detail, namely the cross-sectional statistical model used for the metropolitan area of Lisbon (AML) relating land use and commuting by car and by public transport, and quasi-longitudinal analysis measuring the impact of residential and workplace relocation. Empirical data and their treatment as well as discussion of findings make up the last chapters. Chapter 5 presents a statistical treatment of commuting patterns in AML; chapter 6 deals with the residential mobility patterns of the new inhabitants of PN; and chapter 7 presents the commuting impacts resulting from home and workplace relocation to PN. These last two chapters use an abundance of information obtained from institutional interviews and questionnaires.

Sustainable urban form is thoroughly researched and contains a profusion of bibliographical and statistical data. It is not problem free, however. The preponderance of Anglo-Saxon academic sources and the reliance on almost entirely previous research on highly-developed Western countries in northern Europe and North America is an issue, given the different nature of the city of Lisbon and its metropolitan development in comparison with the other cities mentioned in the study. For example, there is the preference for living in suburbs that is brought out in many of the publications the author refers to, yet this preference is contrary to that of most residents of Lisbon's metropolitan area. Lisbon, in fact Portugal itself, is at the meeting point of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean worlds, as has been made clear by Orlando Ribeiro in relation to the geography and culture of the land. This 'overlap/frontier' paradigm devised by Ribeiro is still relevant to today's urban structural developments. The suburban living preference in Lisbon is contradicted in the analysis of 'alternative residential location' preferences (6.5.2), the outcome of the survey being that 'location within Lisbon was a determinant factor for households' (p. 170). This was also shown in previous studies, such as that by Barata Salgueiro (2001): 'high standing housing areas are not only detached houses in the western suburban sector (the 'Estoril sector'), but also renewed apartments and gated communities located in the city centre' (p. 29). The preference of many for city centre living is at odds with the findings of most of the cited publications on northern Europe and America.

The use of the term 'urban form' throughout the book and in the title itself requires a definition of its significance in the context of the range of concepts examined. It is misleading to use the expression 'urban form' when what is under consideration is really the distribution of land uses rather than physical form. Moreover, the term is used with various meanings. Sometimes it denotes land use; sometimes urban structure. The penchant for avoiding the materiality of the city is also at work in the substitution of the physical metaphor of the compact city by the more abstract 'multimodal accessible city', which is certainly productive when focusing on accessibility and large-scale governance policies but is hardly an appropriate model for urban design and the neighbourhood scale.

The choice of Parque das Nações is perplexing. It was selected as an 'example of a new mixed-use, dense and accessible centrality' created for the reinforcement of the polycentric structure of the metropolitan area (p. 5) and as an 'archetypal new centrality of a metropolitan area' (p. 220), and even as a 'typical suburban environment of AML' in terms of building and dwelling types (p. 151). But PN has a singularity that should perhaps make one cautious about claims for generalizations based on it. No other single area in the city, in fact in the whole metropolitan area, has received the public investment, the speed of infrastructure installation, the meticulousness of its green and leisure areas, or the massive publicity it obtained from being the successor of Expo 98. This is not to mention the exceptional natural conditions. With regard to the resident population it attracted, the uniqueness is not as pronounced but it has exceptional social, economic, educational and demographic homogeneity that is not common in Lisbon's neighbourhoods, either old or new. Moreover, PN was still in process of installation at the time of the

survey. This may well have caused some bias towards car usage. For example, might not the indifference to public transport accessibility by the residents be a transitional stage in the households surveyed? What happens when their families mature and start producing their own mobility patterns?

This study provides a precise and trustworthy data set on commuting. Its findings about behaviour in a recently developed area in Lisbon provide the basis for comparisons with other areas and cities. It is a noteworthy contribution to understanding Lisbon's city metabolism. Its main value lies in bringing accessibility issues in Lisbon to the forefront of the academic community's attention.

References

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Madalena Cunha Matos, Faculty of Architecture, Technical University of Lisbon, Rua Sa Nogueira, Polo Universitario Alto Ajuda, 1349-055 Lisbon, Portugal. E-mail: mcunhamatos@fa.utl.pt

The appearance of memory: mnemonic practices of architecture and urban form in Indonesia by *Abidin Kusno*, Duke University Press, Durham, USA, 2010, 332 pp. ISBN 978-0822346470.

Few books relating to architecture and urban form in Indonesia have been published in English during the last decade. In *The appearance of memory* Abidin Kusno examines buildings and physical spaces in Indonesia. Venturing to make sense of architecture and city environments in that country, Kusno connects the present-day city with history. The older history includes the Dutch colonial periods. The more recent past relates particularly to the years close to independence, the fall of Suharto, and contemporary developments.

Many of the architectural objects discussed in *The appearance of memory* are located on the island of Java and in the city of Jakarta, and these are understood by the author to be landmarks of Indonesian architecture. The architecture is shown to be influenced by a variety of actors, including politicians and the 'average' citizen, and such

processes as colonization and post-colonization, and the global influence of neoliberalism. Unfortunately, there is a big chronological hole concerning the history of Suharto's leadership, which I believe contributed much to the present built environment in Indonesia.

Various types of architecture and urban designs considered important to the making and remaking of spaces in Jakarta and Java are identified. Each section of the book contains several chapters, each unpeeling the history and events behind the visual composition of environments that Indonesia has produced.

A range of source materials, a variety of research techniques, and various personal experiences in Indonesia are utilized. However, the sense of place being communicated is not easy to grasp. With the mnemonic approach Kusno conveys an unduly partial picture of what has happened in Indonesia in the past. For example, what about the history of the housing provision programme during Suharto's presidency, a policy that triggered most of the architecture and urban design that we see today in Indonesia? What of the regulation and laws that allowed the private sector to produce these environments? They, and the places they have built, have added to social tensions and problems that contributed to the civil unrest of 1998.

Despite the fact that *The appearance of memory* is a collection of materials written since the year 2000, and that some of the chapters have been published before (in Indonesia), there is much of value in the book. The author attempts to connect the various themes raised in each of the chapters, and in this he has considerable success. But the choice and use of sources is problematic. What is published in the media in Indonesia is to say the least selective in what it says. Important information is often concealed from the public. There are important issues to discuss and explain about the appearance of gated communities in Indonesia. The production of such environments became manifest after the introduction of various reforms following the fall of Suharto, but, despite their appearance, it is not the general public who benefits from them but the elites.

Despite its weaknesses, this book is a useful contribution to our knowledge of architecture and urban design in Indonesia – a country rich in urbanism.

Teguh Utomo Atmoko, Department of Architecture, University of Indonesia, Kampus Baru UI, Depok 16424, Indonesia. E-mail: tiua@eng.ui.ac.id