

FORMAURBIS LAB.

The relationship between the various levels of research on urban morphology

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ABSTRACT

Most studies on urban morphology and morphogenesis by its very nature undertake the analysis of urban form and characterize the moments and the evolution processes of certain fabrics or their components. Less commonly, the investigations aim at creating basic tools for developing sequent research works or, on the other hand, the transfer of knowledge to the production processes of the urban object, either by focusing on the evolution of the current city urban fabric, or by creating models with operational purposes.

In this sense, the presentation addresses the experience of articulating three distinct facets of aforementioned research on urban morphology, collectively or individually developed within the research group *FormaUrbis Lab* at the Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University of Lisbon. As an example of research work whose primary objective is aimed at creating a database, it is presented a project that proposes to build an Atlas of Urban Form of the Portuguese City, the main project developed by the *FormaUrbis Lab* and at the origin of the constitution of the research group. The work approaches in a systematic way the urban fabric and its main components, dialed in an integrated and transverse mode enabling the relationship of all the available data.

Under implementation since 2006 and incorporating earlier researches developed by the team, this study proposes to materialize a collection, graphic restitution, illustration and description of different examples of the built fabric of Portuguese cities as well as the elements that compose it. It is intended that the obtained material may prove to be a representative set of the typology diversity, state of evolution, sedimentation processes, dimensions and uses.

The Atlas of Urban Form in the Portuguese City is organized into three parts: (1) the city, (2) the public city, and (3) the private city. Thus, in a standardized way are addressed the Urban Fabric and Urban Layout, the public space through the Square and the Street, (work already completed and partially published) and on the third part. The private space, addressing firstly the basic unit of the built fabric - the Block and its plot division (undergoing work) - to finish at a later and final stage with the typological study of the Building.

As an example of an extension work of the Atlas, using the database material collected and organized on it, it is presented a study that focuses on the characterization of an element of the urban fabric, in a particular case. The work sought to identify the structural axis of Lisbon, seen as exemplary of a homogeneous fabric additive process, from one of the situations identified - the axis comprising the streets of Alecrim/Misericórdia/São Pedro de Alcântara/D. Pedro V/ Escola Politécnica – in order to deduce the properties of articulation and structuring of adjacent urban fabrics performed by this axis.

Finally, as an example of a work whose goal is the construction of operational models, it is presented a case conceived following the previous study, with the express purpose of informing the production process in terms of its urban development. The study explores a structuring model of suburban segments, nowadays composed of homogeneous monofunctional zones of the peripheral ring of the city of Lisbon, with the purpose of consolidating complex and legible fabric through a process of urban sedimentation.

Keywords: Urban morphology, morphogenesis, urban fabric, research.