

## **Porto morphological territories**

**Calix, Teresa**

Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura e Urbanismo  
Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto,  
teresa.calix@arq.up.pt  
Phone/fax numbers: 00 351 966 655 984

Nowadays the widespread idea about the real city form results in a feeling of loss of an image that no longer corresponds to the physical reality of the urban. Regardless the evidence of regional urban sprawl, the common sense idea still associates city with an ordered sum of morphological clusters, sometimes referring to ancient tissues and other times associated with contemporary architectural objects with recognized authorship and accepted as 'extraordinary'.

However, the reality shows that the distinction between the 'ideal city' and the 'other city' in its surroundings is not as real as the one that once distinguished the ancient walled city from the countryside.

In fact, the common analyses regarding the crisis of city form, structure and boundaries normally derive from conceptual frameworks too influenced by the old concepts. The alleged 'urban', produced by the metamorphosis of the city, is less consistent with a framework that does not correspond to present reality and does not discard the concept of the city as a 'confined thing'. The boundless 'urban' is not a result of the post-modern expansion by contiguity of the modern city. The extensive land development, as we know, is a 'mosaic of fragments' produced by several processes, sometimes resulting from the expansion over 'free' land, and above all, resulting from the urbanization in situ, 'colonizing' infrastructure.

The starting point for the analysis and planning of the present day territories therefore require the integration of new concepts to understand the authentic physical and social condition of the contemporary city and accept the lack of a single and simple identity.

Focusing on "morphological territories" instead of "urban fabrics", as proposed by A. Font in *Explosió de la Ciutat* (2004), this article intends to present for the debate, the concrete example of morphologies in Porto and its metropolitan area.

**Keywords:** City form, Urban sprawl, Morphological territories