

OUR COMMON FUTURE IN URBAN MORPHOLOGY (Vol 1)

ISUF

Editors

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Shaping the city. Public space in the (re)construction of Portuguese contemporary city

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Due to the fragmented and discontinuous spread of urbanization, the Portuguese and European cities have seen over the past four decades their urban condition profoundly changed, resulting in the mangling and mutation of the urban landscape around the main urban centres, and in the weakening of the role of public space in structuring new urban expansions. Considering this background, and given the lack of consistent models or paradigms to intervene and design (or plan) the city today, will seek to question if, and how, is it possible continue to confer a “shape” to contemporary City from public space, particularly in its more recent and less consolidated parts (questioning also the nature of that hypothetic ‘shape’). We will seek to highlight the role that the project of public space can (still) play in building the ‘shape of the contemporary city’, recognizing it as a system of spaces with urbanisitic, formal and functional qualities, able to provide meaning and identity to the urban space, and able to restructure and support the growth of the city. Based on this understanding, we will defend (as an hypothesis), the need to consider the project of public space from the concept of urban fragment (recovering the importance of the urban project as the most consistent and appropriate way to approach an intervene in the city), seeking to recognize and systematize (using as case-study recent portuguese public space interventions), the purposes, the methodological principles, and the key architectural and urbanistic criteria which may recover the strategic importance of public space project in defining the ‘shape of the Contemporary city’.

Key words: contemporary city, public space, urban shape, urban design, urban regeneration.