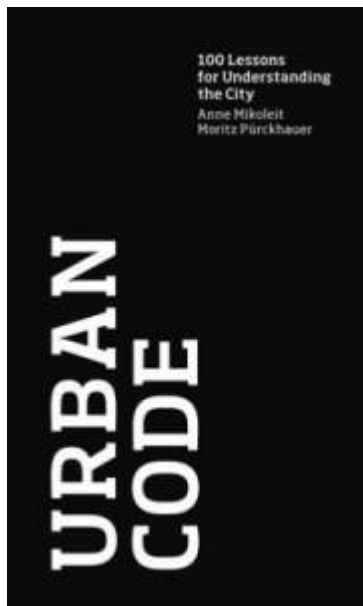


THE LAWS OF THE CITY, MORE THAN MATHEMATICAL MODELS

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They say that we could explain cities through certain physical and natural laws. [Geoffrey West](#), For example, through one of those TED talks that inexplicably receive enormous attention due to its simplicity, he insists on the predictability of certain factors that could be common to any urban reality in terms of population growth, mobility, or crime. The Economist also published an article -[The laws of the city](#)- a few days ago uniting this idea with new approaches since the promise of *big data* as the material that will make it possible to predict urban mechanics and functioning (quoting West again, but also other works by [Shlomo Angel](#) on population and urban growth or the work of the [Senseable City Lab](#) from MIT or the [Center for Advanced Spatial Analysis \(CASA\)](#) about data, real time and visualization).

It is a reasonable ambition: to transform scientific knowledge into useful knowledge to understand cities in their most macro and micro functioning. In fact, it is even possible to model the apparent urban chaos and understand that behind everyday events there is a mathematical logic (suggestive the book [X and the City: Modeling Aspects of Urban Life](#)).

But there is also a more qualitative but equally precise approach. Things in cities work for surprising and sometimes obvious reasons. And there are things that work and others that don't. Realities that are fixed in all cities. This is the approach of [Urban Code . 100 lessons for understanding the city](#), a proposal of one hundred propositions of urban evidence. A kind of [codex urban](#) with the same explanatory force as any mathematical model. At [Design Observer](#) You can find the surprising list of the strength of many of the statements and how much common sense they contain and could be applied in many urban planning decisions, economic and commercial activity management, architectural design or traffic management.

These are my favourites:

01 People walk in the sunshine.

08 Salespeople possess analytical knowledge of the district.

13 Tourist carry bags.

24 Equal grids cause unequal blocks.

33 Small, specialized shops are essential to maintaining a district's vitality.

42 People walk more slowly in the afternoon.

54 Small public squares are busier than large public squares.

64 Public squares and niches create positive outside spaces.

82 Cars drive down main roads faster than down side streets.

You may also be interested in:

- [City intelligence is on the streets](#)
- [Book. Death and life of big cities](#)
- [Everyday scenes in a smart city](#)
- [A city without people is not an urban laboratory](#)

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