

characteristically innovative keynote paper entitled ‘What are cities for? And how does it relate to their spatial form?’ He builds upon previous ideas on *background* and *foreground* spatial structures of cities, in which cities are largely constituted of a background network of smaller streets consisting of residential areas and favouring local encounters, and a foreground of longer or more continuous street segments, favouring movement over longer distances. Based on recent archaeological findings, he now adds that the background structure has historically constituted the *spatial*, principally daily lives of the common inhabitants by which local culture is produced and reproduced, whereas the foreground has constituted the longer, and *transpatial* links of the elite with the ‘outside’ world. This is as true for Uruk, millennia ago (with its ‘channels in the san’, without which the city would mistakenly seem labyrinthine), as it is for

Venice and its *canali* between islands, without which the city’s global structure seems missing. However, we should await this keynote publication in full before reflecting more thoroughly on Hillier’s latest contribution. As Peponis remarked in the debate that followed, time is needed to ‘digest’ it for the complexity that it implies.

Reference

Hillier, B. and Hanson, J. (1984) *The social logic of space* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge).

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Fourth Conference of the Portuguese-language Network of Urban Morphology, Brasília, Brazil, 25–26 June 2015

This was the first PNUM conference to be held in Brazil, the venues of previous conferences having been within Portugal. The interest in the theme, ‘Urban settings and the challenges of urbanity’, was evident in the submission of 317 abstracts, 24 from Portugal, 1 from Spain and 292 from Brazil. Gabriela Tenorio and Frederico de Holanda, both of the National University of Brasília, were responsible for the meticulous co-ordination and general success of the congress. The event took place on the Darcy Ribeiro University Campus in the Central Institute of Science, a complex designed by Niemeyer, and which over the years has been enhanced by the addition of generous green areas and the diversified use of its facilities.

The conference was structured around presentations by keynote speakers in the first part of the morning, followed by debates. After the opening session, Vítor Oiveira of the University of Porto spoke on ‘A comparison of the different approaches to the study of the physical form of cities’. He was followed by Frederico de Holanda on the subject of ‘Back, shoulders and faces’, which was an exploration of aspects of continuous spaces and their everyday use. Paulo Afonso Reheingantz then spoke on ‘Ontological policies, situated knowledge, and spatiality’, also addressing perceptions of urban space.

The first keynote presentation on the second day

was given by Maurício Polidori (Federal University of Pernambuco), who spoke on ‘Urban Lab: between lines, cells and nodes’, which was concerned with the research developed at his laboratory. The presentation by Romulo Krafta (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul) was entitled ‘The physical-form-social city’. He proposed the tools needed for analysing the form of cities. The trio of presentations was concluded by Silvio Soares Macedo (University of São Paulo), who addressed the subject ‘Open space systems and urban form in the contemporary Brazilian city: derivatives from the Landscape Framework of the system of open spaces in Brazil – QUAPA-SEL a research project’.

The second part of the conference consisted of papers on the following themes:

1. Recent urban changes – new impacts, new challenges.
2. Socially unequal cities.
3. The configuration of urban and cultural heritage.
4. The legacy of the modern city.
5. Total urbanization and trends for the metropolis.
6. The public spaces of the contemporary city.
7. Theories, concepts and morphological techniques.
8. Urban landscapes and the history of cities.

156 oral presentations were given and 25 posters were selected for display.

The concluding statement included the following observations:

- Papers that describe and analyse morphological processes in Brazil are based, to a large extent, on space syntax concepts.
- The limited use of the traditional methods of the schools of urban morphology reflect terminological misconceptions. This has led to simplistic approaches rather than examinations of the interrelated triad of form, function and development.
- There are aspects of Brazil that call for different morphological instruments, notably to respond to regional and environmental challenges such as those relating to the Amazon region and the expansion of megacities.

Development of these instruments in large-scale studies could further enhance the effective contributions of PNUM to addressing major contemporary issues in Portuguese-speaking countries. It is hoped that such matters will be further explored in the next conference to be held at the University of Minho, Guimarães, Portugal.

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PNUM Workshop, Porto, 30 June – 4 July 2015

This First PNUM Workshop had as its theme ‘Different approaches in the study of urban form’. Taking place in the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto, from 30 June to 4 July 2015, it attracted 30 participants, including academics, researchers and practitioners from both public and private sectors in the fields of architecture, engineering and archeology. A significant number of participants were from outside Portugal, notably from Brazil.

The main goal of the workshop was to offer insight into a set of theories, concepts and methods for the analysis and design of the physical form of cities. On the first day, the different morphological approaches were presented: the historico-geographical approach of the Conzenian School and the typomorphological approach of the Muratorian School (both co-ordinated by Vítor Oliveira, Universidade do Porto), space syntax (co-ordinated by David Viana, Escola Superior Gallaecia) and shape grammars (co-ordinated by Sara Eloy, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa). The activities of the first day were concluded with a visit to the case study area in Porto: the northern part of the Rua Costa Cabral, situated between the Via de Cintura Interna and the Estrada da Circunvalação. At the end of the day, each participant was able to choose one of the four morphological approaches for subsequent application in the case study area.

On the second day, participants were divided into nine groups (each comprised of three or four people) according to the selected approach. Each group, supervised by one of the three co-ordinators mentioned above, investigated the study area in

relation to one approach. On the last day, after the presentation of the work carried out by each of the nine groups, a comparison between the different approaches was developed, demonstrating the potential and weaknesses of each approach, as well as the fundamental complementarities between them, bearing in mind an integrated utilization.

Following the theme and spirit of the workshop – the exploration of morphological diversity – the organizers asked those participants that were working on an approach that was clearly different from those presented in the workshop, to introduce it in a 30 minute presentation. Four participants (Isabel Carvalho, Mauricio Polidori, Susana Silva and Xose Lois Suárez) accepted the challenge, sharing their experience and enriching the exchange of morphological knowledge.

In addition to the three co-ordinators, the Organizing Committee of the workshop comprised Cláudia Correia (Universidade do Porto), Cláudia Monteiro (CM Arquiteta), Marco Maretto (Università degli Studi di Parma) and Teresa Marat-Mendes (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa). The Advisory Council was composed of Giancarlo Cataldi (Università degli Studi di Firenze), Giuseppe Strappa (Sapienza Università di Roma), Frederico de Holanda (Universidade de Brasília) and Jeremy Whitehand (University of Birmingham).

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