

Fourth ISUFItaly Conference, Bari, Italy, 26–28 September 2018

The theme of the Fourth ISUFItaly Conference was 'Reading built spaces: cities in the making and future urban form'. The conference took place in the Politechnic University of Bari. Giuseppe Strappa (President of ISUFItaly) opened the conference, which comprised 7 plenary sessions and 25 parallel sessions. Parts of the world represented included China, Japan, Brazil, Syria, Spain, Portugal, Germany, the Balkans and Egypt.

Matteo Ieva, who chaired the conference together with Paolo Carlotti and Loredana Ficarelli, emphasized the importance of considering built space through the 'lens of objectivity' in order to extract from it the 'essence' of its 'becoming reality' that reaches us through its concrete evidence, expressed in collective activity rather than being the prerogative of the individual who tries to interpret it.

The presentation by the Italian architect Renato Rizzi began the afternoon sessions on the first day with a philosophical speculation, providing a critical view of the relation between contemporary culture and architecture, with the latter conceived as an act of civilization and singularity rather than an exaltation of the ego.

'Teaching urban morphology' was the theme of the plenary session on the second day. The principal contributors were Wowo Ding (in the chair), Alonso de Armiño Pérez, Carlos Dias Coelho, Marco Maretto, Nicola Marzot and Giuseppe

Strappa. From this session several methods for teaching urban morphology emerged. In the afternoon session there was a presentation on Matteo Ieva's book, *Architecture as language: processes and design projects*, and one by Mohammadreza Noghsanmohammadi from Iran on Yazd's urban morphology.

On the third day, after a morning of parallel sessions from which emerged the different theories of morphological studies that animate the Schools of Architecture in Europe, Uwe Schröder, Ivor Samuels, Carlo Quintelli and Josep Muntañola i Thornberg presented their design and theoretical researches by reflecting on the themes of the 'Future city' and the 'City in becoming'. From this session different methodological approaches emerged, opening up different perspectives for the practice of urban design.

To close the conference, there was a round table co-ordinated by Giuseppe Strappa who invited Renato Rizzi, Nicola Marzot, Uwe Schröder, Carlo Moccia and Josep Muntañola i Thornberg to propose critical visions of the relationship between reading and design.

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Second Conference of the Turkish Network of Urban Morphology, Istanbul, Turkey, 31 November–2 December 2018

This conference was organized by Ayşe Sema Kubat at Istanbul Technical University. The theme of the conference was 'Metamorphocity: changing city, space and form'. The sub-themes were 'Changing morphological structure: theory and techniques', 'Urban morphology and planning/architecture/design', 'Schools of urban morphology – methods of morphological analysis and quantitative analysis', 'Historical changes in urban form', 'Macro-scale changes in urban structure and rural morphology', 'Urban growth and fringe belts', 'Urban transformation and renewal', 'Change and society, actors and administration', 'Public space and social use of space', and 'Urban morphology and spatial perception'.

The conference began with welcoming speeches by Murat Gül, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture

at Istanbul Technical University, Ezgi Küçük, of Marmara Municipalities Union, and Ayşe Sema Kubat, President of the Turkish Network of Urban Morphology. This opening session continued with a presentation by Kubat on 'Morphogenetic structure and transformation process of the historical peninsula of Istanbul'. She highlighted Istanbul as a laboratory in which to apply different methods of comparative analysis, including inter-temporal transitions and transformations, and superimposed layer maps obtained using GIS. Then Candaş Bilsel (Middle East Technical University) spoke on 'Morphological approach in the reproduction of urban space: the case of Paris', focusing on the Versailles morphological school, and providing insights into the regeneration process in Paris. Topics covered included the importance of

conservation and the effects of social structure on urban form. After the keynote presentations, fringe belts in Istanbul were displayed and macro-scale changes in the urban structure and urban growth of selected ancient towns in the northern and eastern parts of Turkey were discussed. The day concluded with parallel sessions covering such topics as schools of thought and different aspects of the field of urban morphology.

On the second day, two keynote speakers highlighted the importance of morphological structure in the process of changes of urban space. First, Tolga Ünlü (Mersin University) addressed the evolution of urban form in his presentation on 'Urban morphology and formation of space'. Research and practice were highlighted, linking scales of intervention and the relationship between parts and whole. The second keynote speaker, Murat Güvenç (Kadir Has University) discussed the 3-year mapping project on memories of Istanbul's streets in 'Genesis of urban form and representation of change: issues in cognitive communication'. An enormous amount of information was gathered from a numerology book (Ölçer, 2015) based on 1927 population census data. This was superimposed on today's road network for several districts, including historic centres. Supported by GIS, this study offers a new cartographic technique to represent land use, multiple floors and building material data on the same map.

After the plenary sessions, several multi-layered Turkish towns, mostly in Anatolia, were scrutinized in terms of transformation and renewal processes. After presentations on the analysis and comparison of the morphological structures of rural settlements, there was discussion of rural typology and changes in rural-urban relations.

The last day started with a keynote presentation by Giuseppe Strappa (Sapienza University) entitled 'Urban morphology: following the Muratorian tradition'. The influence of the Muratorian school on urban morphology was spelt out. He highlighted the significance of understanding urban

form by taking into consideration, in the design process, the continuity of tissue-structure culture from the past. In addition, the studies of important morphologists, such as Aldo Rossi, Carlo Aymonino, Gianfranco Caniggia and Sedat Hakkı Eldem, were considered. He also gave a presentation, entitled 'The ancient city as a text: reading Rome as a matter in transformation', at Marmara Municipalities Union, sponsor of the symposium. In parallel sessions, the effects of legal and administrative processes on urban morphology were discussed within the context of identity, user behaviour, socio-cultural factors, social structure, and usage. In addition, topics such as spatial perception, urban image and urban memory were referred to in the framework of the morphological structure of space.

The closing session was directed by Ayşe Sema Kubat, Cânâ Bilsel and Tolga Ünlü. They gave an overview by considering ideas to enhance the effect of organization and local networks. Eren Kürkçüoğlu gave statistical information about attendance and the percentages of papers according to themes. It was announced in conclusion that the next symposium was to be held at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey in November 2020, in collaboration with the Departments of Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning.

Reference

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Fourth PNUM Workshop, Maringá, Brazil, 27–29 September 2018

Urban morphological theory was put into practice in the fourth workshop of the Portuguese-language Network of Urban Morphology (PNUM). The workshop took place at the Universidade Estadual de Maringá and attracted nearly 40 participants. Organizers Gislaïne Beloto, Karin Meneguetti and Mayara Coimbra proposed to revise and apply

morphological concepts in a practical planning exercise with the theme 'Expanding Maringá: urban morphology and ecological precepts applied to a new parcelling'. The proposed exercise was to combine Conzenian and typological approaches in the planning of a new mixed-used neighbourhood in an empty area close to the city centre.

The workshop started with a series of three talks. First, Vítor Oliveira, President of PNUM and Secretary-General of ISUF, introduced the historico-geographical approach to urban morphology and the work of the British geographer J. W. R. Whitehand, Editor of *Urban Morphology* (Oliveira, 2018). Then, Renato Leão Rego presented the morphology of the original layout of Maringá, a city planned from scratch on garden-city lines in the late 1940s (Rego and Meneguetti, 2008, 2010). Finally, Karin Schwabe Meneguetti discussed the evolution of Maringá's urban form in relation to a number of urban morphological concepts that were later explored in a practical exercise. She applied the fringe-belt concept to Maringá, identifying the characteristic 'landscape units' of that city – a notion derived from the Conzenian morphological region – and accounted for the building types found in those urban tissues (Meneguetti and Costa, 2015; Meneguetti *et al.*, 2012; Rego and Meneguetti, 2011). She also considered the city's green infrastructure and landscape ecological principles.

After a theoretical framework had been provided by the initial presentations, participants visited the 30 ha site where the morphological analysis and planning exercise were to be undertaken. The analysis endorsed the physical and social processes that are involved in the shaping of urban form. Attendees from different parts of the country had the chance to identify the building types of the neighbouring occupied areas, appreciate the nearby forested area near the local spring and observe the transformation of the landscape. Then, gathered together in small groups, they outlined the occupation of the targeted area, connecting the existing urban structure and proposing a linear park. By recognizing local morphological features and building types they designed a new neighbourhood reflecting the city's individuality. Preliminary schemes were presented, and assessed by the whole group, and the initial concepts were checked on the drawings ready for the final sketches to be prepared.

As announced at the closing ceremony of the Seventh Conference of the Portuguese-language

Network of Urban Morphology (PNUM) (Viana, 2018, p. 139), this workshop was a preparatory step for the next PNUM conference to be held in Brazil, between 21 and 23 August 2019. The outcomes of the workshop are expected to provide a theoretical and methodological contribution to discussions at the PNUM conference in 2019.

References

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Fourteenth European Urban History Conference, Rome, Italy, 29 August–1 September 2018

The Fourteenth European Urban History Conference was held at the School of Economics and Business Studies of Roma Tre University in

the southern suburbs of the city. This was for the very practical reason that the building contained a large number of lecture spaces of varying sizes

with good circulation space for refreshment breaks and excellent buffet lunches for the more than 500 participants. Papers were presented in up to 18 parallel sessions making reporting the proceedings an almost impossible task. For urban morphologists the conference theme, 'Urban renewal and resilience: cities in comparative perspective', could not have been more closely aligned to our interests and many of the papers were distinctively geographical with 'space' figuring in many of the titles. Participants were young (with many contributors giving their first conference presentation) and there was a noticeable majority of females. Too small a proportion of the papers considered more than a single example, and wider contextualization was frequently missing. It was clear that 'the emotional turn' was as powerfully present in urban history as it is in human geography.

The proceedings got off to a disastrous start with a keynote address from Brigitte Marin (Aix-Marseille) delivered in French, at high speed, to a largely non-Francophone audience. A second keynote from Richard Rodger (Edinburgh) redeemed the situation as he explored the theme of 'city limits?', showing how normally invisible (and little studied) administrative boundaries have affected urban affairs. The boundary between Edinburgh and Leith was a straight line across open field land to begin with, but as the two cities grew and merged development ignored the boundary so that houses were bisected and occupants could be in Edinburgh in their living room and in Leith in their kitchen!

Given the very large number of papers I shall concentrate on sessions relevant to urban morphologists, rather than individual papers. The major all-day sessions included 'The engineered city' – water, heating, air pollution; 'Spaces of arrival and transit for migrants 1500–2000' – from

Castillian suburban inns to airport infrastructure in mid-twentieth-century Berlin; 'Natural disasters and the urban' – floods in Prague and Seville; fires in London, Istanbul and Edo; the 'Urban texture of Mediterranean harbour cities of the Roman Empire'; 'Domes and bell towers as visual poles and signs of memory' – dominated by examples from Naples; 'City space and the sacred' – a very varied group of papers, mostly on church buildings, which engendered an excellent discussion; 'The impact of war on urban landscapes (15th–18th centuries)', where the fortification of Italian, Maltese, Polish and Siberian towns was analysed; 'Markets and civic buildings', which provided succour for medievalists; and there was a session on the American impact on rebuilding European cities after the Second World War. Three sessions explored digital methodologies in urban history and there was a strong discussion across four or five sessions on aspects of urban heritage, and though not all of these papers were concerned with the physical urban landscape, many were, notably papers exploring the reconstruction of Polish and German cities after 1945.

Finally, I must mention a stimulating session on 'City museums as agents of change', exploring how museum curators are having to rethink their presentational methods to be as inclusive as they can be for current populations. One paper could have deserved special mention as it contained 'urban morphology' in its pre-conference title, but the presenter was unable to attend. The Fifteenth Conference will take place in Antwerp in 2020.

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Second Hispanic International Seminar on Urban Form (ISUF-H), Saragossa, Spain, 13–14 September 2018

Held at the *Escuela de Ingeniería y Arquitectura* in the University of Saragossa, and chaired by Javier Monclús and Carmen Díez, this conference attracted over 200 participants. After the welcoming words of José Ángel Castellanos (Director, EINA, University of Saragossa), the cross-disciplinary perspective of the conference was introduced in presentations by Vicente Colomer (President of ISUF-H, University

of Valencia), Carmen Díez (University of Saragossa) and Javier Monclús (University of Saragossa).

Colomer noted the increased consolidation of ISUF-H based on the number and quality of the papers received in comparison with the first ISUF-H. He highlighted the need to enrich the discipline of urban morphology by bringing together contributions from environmental and social fields.

Díez framed the conference expectations, focusing on the three concepts/keywords in the conference title – ‘City and urban forms: crosscutting perspectives’ – the ‘city’ as the natural ‘laboratory’ of urbanism, the analysis of ‘urban form’ as a ‘pertinent’ way to tackle urbanism, and the ‘cross-cutting approach’ embracing both disciplinary fields and professional profiles. Monclús addressed the crosscutting topic, underlining the essential relation between urban forms and the processes that generate them, and pointing out the sensitivity implied in the analysis of urban morphology. He cautioned against a ‘formalist’ outlook, noting the distinctiveness of cities, even if urban processes, strategies and regeneration proposals may be comparable.

In the first keynote presentation, José María Ezquiaga (Polytechnic University of Madrid) reviewed ‘The contemporary condition of urban space’, quickly moving from macro to micro, between cities and world data, and concluding that between these extreme dimensions there is room for urban form. However, this only becomes relevant if framed within urban visions that stem from wider responses to changing contemporary urban paradigms (taking into account such factors as densities, sprawl and compactness, mobility, planning, lifestyles and diseases).

The second keynote speaker on the first day was Carles Llop (Polytechnic University of Catalunya). He discussed ‘Efficient cities, metropolitan territories and urban regions’, gradually setting the scene to present the ‘City as a territorial mosaic’, an interpretative concept in which the city is envisaged as a product of interactions with territory and an expression of the intricacy of the scales involved. His final slides presented a ‘Guide for territorial analysis and efficiency’. This is an analytical system for looking at territory in a kaleidoscopic and polyhedral way which he rendered more objective in an array of possible lines of intervention materialized in metropolitan Barcelona.

The second day of the conference began with the two remaining keynote presentations. Complementary to the previous ones in its wide-angle approach, the talk by Rubén Lois (University of Santiago de Compostela) on ‘The urban forms of late and neoliberal capitalism’ guided us through

some of the meandering and less visible aspects of the world of finance and their powerful impact on shaping our cities. Though these cities have in some ways become more efficient and beautiful, they have nevertheless not solved glaring social and economic problems, such as segregation, unfairness and inequality.

Ignacio González-Varas (University of Castilla-La Mancha) focused instead on a more specific subject: ‘The reuse of built heritage as an urban revitalization strategy: principles, methods and examples’. Exploring built heritage as one of the driving forces for the transformation of the city, he presented a series of examples in which universities work as both direct entrepreneurs and partners in urban regeneration processes. He stressed the need for a compromise between continuity with the past and contemporary reuse of built heritage.

The closing session began with Diego Vergara and Juan Cano (University of Guadalajara, Mexico), chairs of the forthcoming ISUF-H 2019 in Guadalajara, presenting the context and main goals of that conference.

In addition to the keynote presentations, two round tables brought together researchers/thinkers on the city. The first – ‘Rethinking the contemporary city’ – was led by Javier Monclús and the second – ‘Re-designing the contemporary city’ – by Pablo de la Cal (University of Saragossa). There were also 38 parallel sessions, divided into four sets, showing the diversity of approaches to urban form and the kaleidoscopic vision that informed the conference. Ten thematic volumes of the conference proceedings brought together 130 papers ahead of the conference.

Special events included a ‘lunch with books’ on both days, in which authors gathered for an informal lunch during which they presented their recent publications. There was also a pleasant conference dinner preceded by a bus tour to the Expo 2008 area and the opening of the exhibition ‘Zaragoza 1968–2008’.

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