

Eighth Conference of the Portuguese-language Network of Urban Morphology (PNUM), Maringá, Brazil, 21–23 August 2019

PNUM 2019 took place in Maringá, a city born from a regional plan focused on agricultural colonization and whose design was based on formal aspects of the garden city. Under the theme ‘Urban form and nature’, the conference took advantage of the opportunity to focus on an issue intrinsic to the original layout of this city in order to emphasize the role of nature in shaping cities as a strategy for improving urban conditions.

With this objective, the first activity was a workshop putting together relevant pieces of urban morphological research carried out about Maringá and its region. Students from architecture and urbanism undergraduate and graduate programmes of the Universidade Estadual de Maringá presented the different aspects of the formation and transformation of the urban form, and then escorted the participants on a walking tour around the city centre and on a field trip through the neighbourhoods (Figure 1).

Renato Leão Rego, who chaired the conference together with Karin Schwabe Meneguetti, Gislaine Beloto and Mayara Coimbra, opened the conference emphasizing that PNUM has been fostering international debate among urban morphology researchers and exchanges between academics at many levels and from distinct institutions. Thus PNUM has advanced the understanding about the physical form of cities, their potentialities and problems as well as the possibilities for interventions in their urban forms. This opening session continued with a presentation by Fabiano

Lemes de Oliveira, reader at the University of Portsmouth, UK, who discussed the spatial aspects of green spaces throughout urban planning history and its role in making sustainable cities, in his presentation ‘City and nature: green in function of form’.

The second keynote speaker, Teresa Marat-Mendes, from the Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Portugal, presented her research on productive urban landscapes: ‘LX design with food’. Her work, joining teaching and research, shows how water and food permeate Lisbon’s urban form and the importance of these subjects to address sustainability in cities.

The first day closed with a plenary session comprising keynote speakers Fabiano Lemes de Oliveira and Teresa Marat-Mendes. Other speakers included two leaders of major research groups of urban morphology in Brazil: Staël de Alvarenga Pereira Costa (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) and Eugenio Queiroga (Universidade de São Paulo); the PNUM president, Vítor Oliveira (Universidade do Porto, Portugal); and a host researcher from Universidade Estadual de Maringá, Karin Schwabe Meneguetti. They each showed how urban morphology is applied in teaching and research in their institutions, and then debated the implications of culture and politics in urban-form studies. Current issues were also brought to the audience’s attention, such as the inclusion of lower-income classes and minorities in the cities, and the pressure of migration.



Figure 1. Walking tour in the city centre of Maringá. Photograph by Izabela Bombo.

There were 20 parallel sessions divided into five subthemes: Ecology in cities; Urban expansion; History and heritage; Morphological patterns; and Open space systems, in addition to the seven plenary sessions. The Ecology in cities sessions discussed the presence and form of green spaces; the role of water and its corridors to conduct urban occupation; and methods of measuring ecological assets. Studies were in the neighbourhood scale or from the river perspective. In the subtheme Urban expansion, the varied characteristics of Brazilian cities, the transformation and expansion of existing urban forms and their relations with social processes were emphasised. The scale was mainly the city. In History and heritage, case studies were presented focusing on cultural aspects of urban form and the misinterpretation of this thinking in legislation. The Morphological patterns sessions had the largest number of presentations, comprising studies from streets to neighbourhoods, and small cities to more complex urban forms. Finally, the Open space systems subtheme was the most varied group, with studies supported by distinct methodological and literary bases. The final session of this subtheme was a plenary session with three presentations showing the results of the Brazilian network of open space systems, headed by Professors Silvio Soares de Macedo and Eugenio Queiroga, from the Universidade de São Paulo, which comprises 28 universities from the capital and regional cities of Brazil.

The closing ceremony was conducted by Renato Leão Rego, who thanked the participants for the success of the event, and the organising group for their cooperative work, which was highly praised by all. Vítor Oliveira talked on behalf of PNUM and recalled the challenge that had been given to

Maringá's organizers in Porto in 2014 to hold the congress. He announced that the next PNUM conference will be held in Lisboa, Portugal, in July 2020. Renato Saboya, one of the editors of *Revista de Morfologia Urbana*, the journal of PNUM, presented the improvements they have made in the submission process of the journal, and informed the participants that the authors of the best articles submitted to the congress will be invited to publish a refined version in the journal.

In addition to the academic aspects, there were two social events: a dinner on the second day, and an informal meeting on the final day, where students, teachers and researchers could talk and new partnerships could be forged. A book-launching session was also organised to give access to the new releases in the field from the Portuguese-speaking world.

It is important to highlight that, despite being an international network, this congress consisted mainly of Brazilian participants, apart from the keynote speakers, the president of PNUM and one professor from a Portuguese university. However, considering the large territory of Brazil, it is remarkable that 41 Brazilian institutions were represented, with participants coming from 16 different states from all across the country. Once more, urban morphology can be demonstrated to be a substantial field contributing to the comprehension of the most diverse types of cities.

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Planning on the edge: Thirteenth Biennial of Towns and Town Planners, Plymouth, United Kingdom, 11–13 September 2019

The European Council of Spatial Planners (*Conseil Européen des Urbanistes: ECTP-CEU*) was founded in 1985. Its first Biennial was held in 1995 and, since then, the conference has continued to make a contribution to understanding how European cities are changing in relation to new urban paradigms. Through assembling professional spatial planning associations and institutes from European countries, its main goals are increasing the visibility of planners and recognizing their role in society, providing continuous education, understanding professional responsi-

bilities, and improving the way urban planning is taught.

With these goals, every year ECTP-CEU organizes one main event, either for European Urban and Regional Planning Awards or a Biennial of Towns and Town Planners. The first of these recognizes examples of good planning from all over Europe while the other brings together urban planners, designers, sociologists, historians, politicians and other professionals to discuss issues and share information and lessons learned in relation to a specific topic. A Young Planners' Workshop

is an integral part of the main event (for both Biennial and European Awards). The uniqueness of the approach lies in the activities before, during, and after the Workshop. After the launch of the workshop topic and abstract submission, two online video meetings are organized, aiming at providing feedback for young planners. During the workshop, the main activities consist of presentations, Q&A sessions, and a plenary meeting, while after the workshop, participants are given more time to elaborate on questions raised and prepare final papers for an eBook. The chair and the coordinator of the Workshop is Professor Vladan Đokić, of the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture.

This year's Biennial was held in Plymouth, UK and its theme was *Planning on the edge*. The 'edge', as the focus of the Biennial, was to be perceived as physical, political, or social. The event was organized by ECTP-CEU in co-operation with The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Plymouth City Council, University of Plymouth School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Destination Plymouth. It focused mainly on coastal cities due to their underdevelopment, deprivation, depopulation, and unemployment. At the same time, many participants were concerned with presenting new opportunities for cities on the edge, where the edge can become the link or a connection.

There were four keynote presentations and 33 presentations which were discussed in eight different sessions. The main sessions included: Political borders, Public sector in coastal regeneration, Urban-rural fringe 1 and 2, Urban spaces on the edge, Marine planning, Waterfront regeneration, Climate change and Coastal planning. The Biennial gathered practitioners from the public or private offices (7), organizations and planning bodies (18), scholars working in academic institutions (9), and PhD students (2). Additionally, since the young planners were included in the main programme, PhD students and lecturers (7) and practitioners (10) also participated. A total of 18 scholars and 35 practitioners oriented the Biennial towards new projects and implementation strategies and

included personal attitudes towards influencing government and policymakers.

Even though the Biennial dealt with both spatial and urban planning, the relevance of the event to the field of urban morphology can be perceived on two levels.

First is the event's location in Plymouth, a city with a long history as a seaport with lessons to be learned from its post-war reconstruction, was an ideal location for the conference. A presentation dealing with the formation, modification and implementation of Paton Watson and Abercrombie's 1943 Plan for Plymouth opened the conference. It envisioned a completely new street layout, modernist architecture, re-siting stores and transfer of landownership from freehold to leasehold. It produced 300 objections from local citizens in the mid-1950s, but has produced a much wider debate in subsequent years on urban form. Secondly, the topic of cities on the edge also implied the notion of the fringe, and it contained two urban-rural fringe sessions where both established scholars and young planners researched the relationship between re-densification within urban tissues and market pressures for new housing developments (Knippenberger; Djordjevic, Pesic and Milojevic), green belts in relation to the English housing crisis (Goode) and the effects of green belt policies on city development (Morphet and Norman).

In the plenary session for young planners, the Executive members of ECTP-CEU emphasized the need to provide solutions in order to justify the profession, to balance between different scales, and to respect the planning hierarchy. Finally, the executive members highlighted the need for new knowledge, new energy, new cross-border and cross-national collaboration in the belief that young planners can have an important role in these activities. Progress will be followed in years to come.

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