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Urban Morphology in Portugal: Searching for an identity.

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Abstract. The foundation, the development and the goals of the Portuguese-language Network on Urban Morphology, PNUM, a Local Network of ISUF, are here presented. Moreover, analyses of the several drivers that have guaranteed the consolidation of a Portuguese Local Network of ISUF are here introduced. Complementary, based on research conducted by Teresa Marat-Mendes and Maria Amélia Cabrita about the foundations of Urban Morphology in Portugal; this paper argues that the heterogenic cultural background that seems to characterize PNUM is not entirely novel; as it seems to reproduce a Portuguese characteristic or Identity that is strongly built over the ability to build connections and integrations between Portuguese individualities with international bodies, institutes and universities, over time. Moreover, such connections and integrations seem to have contributed to deliver the most innovative knowledge regarding the study of urban form in Portugal. Therefore, it is imperative to PNUM to assure within ISUF the continuity of such connections and integrations and establish new connections between ISUF members and local networks. Furthermore, it is hope that such interest can contaminate ISUF itself, and promote the opening of new bridges among ISUF members and local networks, but also to reopen former ones, so that a truthfully collective project with interest to the study of urban form can grow and contribute to fully acknowledge the Identity of ISUF itself.

Keywords: Identity, ISUF, Portugal, PNUM, Urban Morphology.

The formation of a Portuguese Local Network of ISUF, the Portuguese-language Network of Urban Morphology (PNUM) was proposed on August 2010, at the Seventeenth Conference of ISUF. It was at the ISUF Council meeting at that conference that a proposal for the PNUM Constitution was presented by Teresa Marat-Mendes and Vítor Oliveira.

The constitution proposal included: i) the designation of the Portuguese ISUF local network; ii) the main objectives of the group; and issues related to iii) the membership, and the group organization. A list of fourteen founding members integrated such proposal. These members were mostly academic and research staff, which belonged to different Portuguese university institutions with a common interest, which was to establish in Portugal a research network within the study of urban morphology. Three preliminary meetings occurred between September 2009 and May 2010, in Portugal, among some of these members wherein the preparation of the group and the Constitution of PNUM itself were delineated.

The fourteen founding members of PNUM, registered in alphabetical order, were: Elisabete Silva (Cambridge University); Jorge Correia (Universidade do Minho), Jorge Gil (Universidade de Lisboa), José Duarte (Universidade de Lisboa), Mafalda Sampayo, (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa ISCTE-IUL), Manuel Teixeira (Universidade de Lisboa), Mário Fernandes, (Universidade do Porto), Mário Kruger (Universidade de Coimbra), Miguel Bandeira (Universidade do Minho), Paulo Pinho (Universidade do Porto), Teresa Heitor (Universidade de Lisboa), Teresa Marat-Mendes (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa ISCTE-IUL), Vitor Oliveira (Universidade do Porto) and Walter Rossa (Universidade de Coimbra).

As an appendix to the PNUM Constitution presented by Teresa Marat-Mendes and Vítor Oliveira to the ISUF Council, on the 19th of August of 2010, it was included the paper ‘The study of urban form in Portugal’ by Vítor Oliveira, Magda Barbosa and Paulo Pinho (2011). This paper introduced one of the first attempts to review what research on urban morphology was being conducted in Portugal.

The main goals for the foundation of PNUM were to: 1) promote in Portugal the study of urban form; 2) to establish and develop in Portugal, a research network in the field of urban morphology, through the organization of meetings and conferences, the publication of a newsletter, and the development of joint applications for national funding; and 3) to establish a privileged relationship with ISUF, through the collaboration on ISUF initiatives of debate and promotion of urban morphology, and the development of joint applications for European funding.

It is most rewarding that this network has attracted so much interest from colleagues in Brazil. Such interest has been testified through the number of Brazilian members attending the various PNUM Conferences but also the involvement of Brazilian colleagues in PNUM activities. It would be in 2014, at the PNUM Scientific Council, four years after its constitution, that PNUM would officially integrate in its designation 'Portuguese-language Network of Urban Morphology' (*Rede Lusófona de Morfologia Urbana*) the reinforcement of the Portuguese-Brazilian alliance. Moreover, PNUM Scientific Council, previously constituted by Vítor Oliveira (2010-2016), Teresa Marat-Mendes (2010-2016), Paulo Pinho (2010-2013) Jorge Correia (2010-2015), Mário Fernandes (2010-2013) and Miguel Bandeira (2014 -2016) would now integrate two Brazilian colleagues, Stael de Alvarenga Pereira da Costa and Frederico de Holanda.

PNUM activities

Over the past five years of the PNUM existence a number of activities and initiatives have been conducted by PNUM, greatly supported by the enthusiasm and the energy of its members, as recorded in the various reports prepared by PNUM and published at Urban Morphology (Oliveira, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014; Marat-Mendes, 2015).

At present PNUM integrates 865 members, belonging however to fifteen different countries. Namely: Angola, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Cape Verde, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland,

Italy, Mozambique, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and Vietnam. Much of PNUM's rapid growth is attributable to its annual conferences, which have served as important forums for debate on urban morphology.

Five international conferences have been already promoted by PNUM. The first PNUM Conference '*Morfologia Urbana em Portugal: Abordagens e Perspectivas*' was hosted by the Departamento de Geografia (Faculdade de Letras, Universidade do Porto) in June 2011. The second PNUM Conference '*Morfologia Urbana nos Países Lusófonos*' was chaired by Teresa Marat-Mendes and hosted at the Instituto Universitário de Lisboa ISCTE-IUL between the 5th and the 6th of June 2012. The third PNUM conference '*Forma Urbana nos Territórios de Influência Portuguesa: Análise, Desenho, Quantificação*' was chaired by Nuno Norte Pinto and hosted at the Universidade de Coimbra between the 27th and the 28th of June 2013. In 2014, Portugal hosted the 21st International Seminar on Urban Form, 'Our Common Future in Urban Morphology', which was chaired by Vítor Oliveira at the *Faculdade de Engenharia* from the *Universidade do Porto*. The fourth PNUM conference '*Configuração Urbana e os Desafios da Urbanidade*', was chaired by Frederico de Holanda and took place in Brasília, Brazil, between the 25th and the 26th of June 2015. This fourth PNUM conference constituted the first edition of PNUM conferences outside Portugal, thus reinforcing the Portugal-Brazilian alliance. A fifth PNUM Conference entitled '*Os Espaços da Morfologia Urbana*' will be hosted in Guimarães between the 15th and 16th July 2016, and is chaired by Jorge Correia and Miguel Bandeira.

Apart from its annual conferences, PNUM has also promoted the development of yearly Workshops. The first one took place in Porto, at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto, between 30th June and 4th July of 2015, under the theme 'Different approaches in the study of urban form'. This Workshop counted with 30 participants, including students, academics, researchers and practitioners from public and private sectors in the fields of architecture, engineering and archaeology, from Brazil, Portugal and Spain (Oliveira, 2015). A second workshop is being prepared for 2016.

Apart from the organization of conferences and workshops, PNUM has promoted its activities and the study of urban form in Portugal and Brazil through the use of a Newsletter (2011-2012), a Website (<http://pnum.fe.up.pt/pt/>), and the publication since 2013 of the *Revista de Morfologia Urbana (RMU)*, with two issues per year. Edited by Vítor Oliveira the *Revista* constitutes a major channel for the discussion of ongoing research and viewpoints about urban morphology among PNUM members. In addition, the inclusion in *Revista* of Portuguese translations of seminal papers originally published in English in *Urban Morphology* is a notable feature (Marat-Mendes, 2015).

A major publication, that is already available, is the book entitled '*The study of Urban Form in Portugal*', edited by Vítor Oliveira, Teresa Marat-Mendes and Paulo Pinho (2015). This book includes a foreword by Jeremy Whitehand and eight chapters which introduce different disciplinary, methodological and conceptual approaches to the study of urban form, by fourteen Portuguese researchers, most of them PNUM founding members.

It is important to recall that PNUM embraces a number of members, which do not necessarily share the same disciplinary background, methodological or even conceptual approaches, in what relates to the study of urban form. That is possible to be registered in the book *The study of Urban Form in Portugal*' (Oliveira, Marat-Mendes, Pinho, 2015). Nevertheless, it is precisely this variety of points of view, thoughts and ways of perceiving urban form that definitely contributes to build the contemporary Identity or the character of PNUM group.

Thus, more than trying to identify or define a specific Portuguese-language School of thought of Urban Morphology, which so far has been concluded that it does not exist (Oliveira, Barbosa, Pinho, 2011; Marat-Mendes and Cabrita, 2012), PNUM has contributed to identify different approaches to the study of urban form in Portugal. Certainly, several other more Portuguese, Brazilian and Lusophone ways of approaches to the study of urban form do exist, and are becoming to be organized and systematized, and therefore deserve all our attention.

It is indeed in this variety of approaches that one can identify PNUM's contribution to the consolidation of a heterogeneity of the Portuguese cultural background as argued by Marat-Mendes and Cabrita (2012). To better explain this topic, this paper follows with a brief analysis into the results of a research conducted by Teresa Marat-Mendes and Maria Amélia Cabrita about the foundations of Urban Morphology in Portugal, and whose results were first presented at the second PNUM Conference '*Morfologia Urbana nos Países Lusófonos*' and published in the proceedings book, available online, of that same conference (<https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/handle/10071/3633>) (Marat-Mendes and Cabrita, 2012).

Urban Morphology in Portugal: a review

The work conducted by Marat-Mendes and Cabrita (2012) aimed to identify in Portugal, how did urban morphology evolved in Portugal and was assimilated by a specific generation of architects, more precisely between 1960's and 1970's. Such generation seems to have shared an interest to the study of urban form that integrates a conceptual basis of urban morphology as also identified for the three schools of Urban Morphology, according to Moudon (1997).

In order to do so, during 2012, Marat-Mendes and Cabrita conducted eight interviews among Portuguese architects and other personalities whom have belonged to a Portuguese generation present in the Portuguese architecture and on the study of the Portuguese city during the 1960s' and 1970's. These were architects Bartolomeu Costa Cabral, Fernando Gonçalves, Francisco Silva Dias, José Charters Monteiro, Joaquim Braizinha, Luis Cunha, Nuno Portas and the sociologist Vítor Matias Ferreira.

Although the number of interviews is very few to witness an eventual Portuguese reality, Marat-Mendes and Cabrita (2012) could conclude that the results of these interviews revealed in Portugal, during the 1960's and 1970's the existence of an urban morphology basis mostly anchored on an intuitive nature. This basis seems however to match with the same principles defended by the three schools of Urban Morphology, as recognized by ISUF. Notably through

sociological orientation basis witnessed by sociologist Vicor Matias Ferreira and architect Luis Cunha, but also informed by urban design concerns and housing typologies, as witnessed by architects Francisco Silva Dias, Bartolomeu Costa Cabral, Nuno Portas and José Charters Monteiro.

The results of the interviews do also allow concluding that during the period of time under analysis, Urban Morphology in Portugal revealed a very obvious link between theory and practice. This was certainly grounded on the education of the Portuguese architects but also historians, geographers, sociologists, among others, whom was being conducted or complemented abroad in European Universities and Institutions, mostly in France, Italy, United Kingdom and Germany, among other countries. Such international training was only possible due to the financial support of the Portuguese Government in collaboration with institutions such as *Instituto Nacional da Habitação* (INH), the *Federação de Caixas de Previdência*, the *Laboratório Nacional de Engenharia Civil* (LNEC), the *Fundo de Fomento da Habitação*, or also through the research activities promoted by Portuguese architects with the financial support of the *Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian* (Marat-Mendes and Cabrita, 2012).

The link between theory and practice seems to have worked better during the years 60-70 than today. At that time, teaching staff and students from the Lisbon and Porto Schools of Architecture shared their works and programmatic issues with the Portuguese Municipalities or other governmental institutions such as the LNEC, the INH among others. Their reflections about the city and housing issues, in coordination with the study of urban form, allowed to explore new research findings of work that was being conducted in Cambridge, at the Centre for Land Use and Built Form Studies (LUBFS), in Italy, with the Italian School of Urban Morphology, but also through the sociological studies derived from the French School of Urban Morphology. However, over time, that morphological practice, which was identified by the interviewed architects seems to have vanished from Portuguese Architecture and Urbanism. However, it seems that such morphological practice has become assimilated in the memory of those who have used it, as Nuno Portas whom registered it throughout his written works (Portas,

2005a, 2005b). However, that seems to be less evident on the continuation of a pedagogical and methodological legacy in the generations of architects that have followed these later ones. This appears to be an important issue, as at present the Portuguese Schools of Architecture are being subject of research (Coelho, 2007; Moniz, 2011; Silva, 2011) in order to contribute and clarify the history of the teaching of architecture in Portugal, but revealing yet a number of fragilities (Marat-Mendes and Cabrita, 2012).

As revealed from the interviewed architects and sociologist, the research practice in Portugal, with regard to the study of urban form, was very much influenced by the contacts established between Portuguese Architects with European Schools and Institutions. Moreover, the conceptual and methodological approaches appear to have been mostly intuitive, as they have never been established within the pedagogical compendiums of the Portuguese Schools, at least in a systematized manner. Nevertheless, such intuitive character seems to have influenced a generation of professionals, and built an heterogeneous background, in what regards the study of Urban Form, that so much reflects the Portuguese cultural character. Italy, France and the United Kingdom seems therefore to incorporate the main international influential backgrounds of Portuguese architects regarding Urban Morphology, mainly through the flows of information, publications and personalities between these countries and Portugal (Marat-Mendes and Cabrita, 2012).

Further research into the foundations of urban morphology in Portugal seems therefore important to be promoted, as a manner to clarify the identity of Portuguese Urban Morphology itself, one of the local networks of ISUF, PNUM.

Finally, it is imperative to PNUM to assure within ISUF the continuity of such connections and integrations and establish new connections between ISUF members and local networks. Furthermore, it is hope that such interest can contaminate ISUF itself, and promote the opening of new bridges among ISUF members and local networks, but also to reopen former ones, so

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