1. INTRODUCTION
Urban Morphology
An Introduction to the Study of the Physical Form of Cities

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The Urban Book Series

Springer
1 Introduction

1.1 A definition of Urban Morphology

1.2 Lectures 1-9
1.1 A definition of Urban Morphology

**Urban Morphology**
The study of urban forms and of the agents and processes responsible for their transformation.

**Urban Form**
Refers to the main physical elements that structure and shape the city – urban tissues, streets (and squares), urban plots, buildings, to name the most important.

The word morphology was first proposed, in Germany, by:
Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe - 1796
‘the science that deals with the essence of forms’
Carl Friedrich Burdach - 1800
Table 1. Definitions of urban morphology (Marshall and Çalişkan, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td>Cowan (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘The study of urban form.’</td>
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<td>‘The science of form, or of various factors that govern and influence form.’</td>
<td>Lozano (1990)</td>
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<td>‘The study of the physical (or built) fabric of urban form, and the people and processes shaping it’</td>
<td>UMRG (1990)</td>
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<td>‘Morphology literally means form-lore, or knowledge of the form…what is the essence of that form; does certain logic in spatial composition apply, certain structuring principles?’</td>
<td>Meyer (2005)</td>
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<td>Definition</td>
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<td><strong>Focus on the object of study (urban form)</strong></td>
<td>Larkham (2005)</td>
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<td>‘…an approach to conceptualising the complexity of physical form. Understanding the physical complexities of various scales, from individual buildings, plots, street-blocks, and the street patterns that make up the structure of towns helps us to understand the ways in which towns have grown and developed.’</td>
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<td>‘Urban morphology…is not merely two dimensional in scope. On the contrary, it is through the special importance which the third dimension assumes in the urban scene that much of its distinctiveness and variety arise.’</td>
<td>Smailes (1955)</td>
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<td>Focus on the manner and purpose of study</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>‘A method of analysis which is basic to find(ing) out principles or rules of urban design.’</td>
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<td>‘…the study of the city as human habitat…Urban morphologists…analyse a city’s evolution from its formative years to its subsequent transformations, identifying and dissecting its various components.’</td>
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<td>‘First, there are studies that are aimed at providing explanations or developing explanatory frameworks or both (i.e. cognitive contributions); and secondly, there are studies aimed at determining the modalities according to which the city should be planned or built in the future (i.e. normative contributions).’</td>
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   3.1.3 Builders
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   3.2.2 Plan implementation and development control
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  5.2 Marrakesh
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   6.2.3 Space syntax
   6.2.4 Spatial analysis

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   7.1.2 The plan for Asnières-sur-Oise by Ivor Samuels and Karl Kropf
   7.1.3 The plans for Jeddah by Space Syntax Limited
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9 Conclusions
References

Urbanized. Gary Hustwit. 2011

Urbanized is a feature-length documentary about the design of cities, which looks at the issues and strategies behind urban design and features some of the world’s foremost architects, planners, policymakers, builders, and thinkers. Over half the world’s population now lives in an urban area, and 75% will call a city home by 2050. But while some cities are experiencing explosive growth, others are shrinking. The challenges of balancing housing, mobility, public space, civic engagement, economic development, and environmental policy are fast becoming universal concerns. Yet much of the dialogue on these issues is disconnected from the public domain.

Who is allowed to shape our cities, and how do they do it? Unlike many other fields of design, cities aren’t created by any one specialist or expert. There are many contributors to urban change, including ordinary citizens who can have a great impact improving the cities in which they live. By exploring a diverse range of urban design projects around the world, Urbanized frames a global discussion on the future of cities.