

# **Architecture and planning under different political systems**



**ARC • PEACE**

**International Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility**

Dick Urban Vestbro (editor)

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Cover photo: <http://www.wallpapergate.com/wallpaper40714.html>

Graphic design: Ingrid Sillén, Migra Grafiska, Stockholm

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# FOREWORD

**This book was initiated** at the beginning of 2013 by Sven Thiberg, the co-founder and former chairman of ARC•PEACE (International Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility). He then submitted an application for funding from the Swedish Association of Architects, which granted us a sum of USD 1000. This allowed us to arrange a panel debate on Architecture and Planning under Different Political Systems in connection with ARC•PEACE's General Assembly meeting in Vienna in April 2014. (It covered travel costs for panelists with scarce resources plus some administrative costs).

Later on an invitation was sent out calling on ARC•PEACE members to send contributions to this book. There was a tremendous response, resulting in no less than 15 willing authors. In order to support the contributors, an editorial committee was formed composed of:

Prof Emer Sven Thiberg, Sweden  
Prof Emer Dick Urban Vestbro, Sweden  
Dr Osman El Kheir, Sudan  
Dr Lina Suleiman, Sweden/Palestine

All the papers have been examined by the editorial group. In some cases chapters were sent back to the author for revision, minor corrections or shortening.

In order to ensure that the papers would be presented in proper English, the Swedish/South African journalist Madi Gray was approached. We extend thanks to her for doing the valuable work of thorough corrections. We also thank Ingrid Sillén for offering to do the layout and final editing, and for offering to use her company for publishing the book, including marketing and taking care of orders. Her costs have been covered by a donation of SEK 10000 by the Head of Department of Urban Planning and Environment at KTH. The donation was made "in honour of our long-time co-worker Dick Urban".

Stockholm November 2014

Dick Urban Vestbro

# Introduction

## **Architecture and Planning under Different Political Systems**

This book is meant to make a contribution to the international debate on architecture and physical planning, on the tasks and ethical responsibilities of architects and planners in the political systems in which they work.

### **ARC•PEACE – a network of committed professionals**

“At the 1987 congress of the International Union of Architects (UIA) in Brighton, representatives of Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) in USA, the Soviet Union Institute of Architects, Architects against Nuclear Arms in Sweden and colleagues from Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Kenya, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, UK and other countries decided to form International Architects Designers Planners for the Prevention of Nuclear War, IADPPNW. The decision was supported by UIA, and many official national architect associations/institutes decided to become members. The name of the organisation was influenced by the existence of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, whose statues were copied to some extent.

However, already at the meeting in Stockholm 1988 – when our organisation was formally founded – proposals were made to widen the scope of IADPPNW to include work against all arms of mass destruction and for the environment. A working group was appointed to make a proposal, which was presented at the meeting in Prague 1989. The meeting recommended the Charter to include these ideas, to change the name into Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility and to revise the Charter also with respect to a more effective administrative structure. The meeting in Montreal 1990 adopted the name “ARC•PEACE Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility” and the meeting in Chicago 1993 adopted a new Charter reflecting these proposals.

At the beginning of the 1990s most of the official architect organisations ceased to be members of ARC•PEACE. Instead ARC•PEACE became more of a network consisting of activist groups and individual members. After the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, at which ARC•PEACE participated actively, our network gained status as a Non-Governmental Organisation in consultative status with ECOSOC (economic, environmental, social and human rights issues).” (ARC•PEACE Charter 2014)

### **A book on professional responsibilities**

The background to this book is that ARC•PEACE experiences that the market forces our professions to neglect both human rights and citizens’ right to influence their own environment.

We also note that basic claims to environmental sustainability are disregarded when fast urbanization is requested. The intention of the book is to draw attention to these facts and to mobilize resistance.

Hereby, we utilize the international network of ARC•PEACE members. These committed professionals are able to highlight the challenges and potential that physical planners and architects can exercise to promote human rights, citizens’ influence, and democratic planning processes in professional work in the societies in which they participate.

After a preparatory seminar in Vienna in April 2014, we now have this volume with fifteen contributions.

### **Three themes**

We have tried to organise the book along dominating themes. It was not simple to group the contributions in sharply divided categories because of the variegated and creative material. But three perspectives are still prominent.

#### **From modernism to neo-modernism**

The reader will find a basic analysis of the shift of paradigms within architecture and planning from modernism to neo-modernism as a consequence of the social and economic changes in societies. This could be a framework for all the presentations in the book.

Theory-oriented papers deal with global neo-modernism as political dogma and thereby as a prerequisite for architecture and planning in both North and South.

#### **On professional and personal ethics**

A determining factor and the key question for this publication is: Which competence and ethical integrity are our professions able to and prepared to mobilize when they meet strong political resistance against Human Rights and sustainability in practice? Some papers deal especially with professional vs. personal ethics as a philosophic question, but the theme is present as an underlying challenge in all contributions.

Experiences indicate that personal/professional ethics are essential in projects in developing countries and in conflict areas where the struggle for democratic planning systems is urgent.

#### **Planning and politics in different environments**

The overall theme of the publication – the relationship between planning and political systems – is discussed directly or indirectly in all the papers. Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, Latin America and USA are represented. The presentations deal with both regional and national conditions, with reference to both historical roots and on-going political processes.

Together, the different contributions form a source of understanding of how similarities and differences between political systems exert an influence on architecture and planning and what professional and ethical challenges architects and planners meet in their own environments.

Hopefully this book will function as a source of knowledge and a point of departure for debate in both basic and further education within the professions and in public discourse.

Herewith we would like to thank all the committed and persevering authors who have participated in realizing the project.

Stockholm in November 2014

Dick Urban Vestbro

Sven Thiberg

# From modernism to neo-modernism

# Paradigm Shifts in architecture

## Architecture and Planning

Dick Urban Vestbro

**By paradigm** we usually mean a set of practices associated with a scientific or professional discipline at a particular period of time. In this chapter, an attempt is made to trace paradigm shifts, i.e. the development of architecture and planning as a result of social and economic change. It is concluded that both classical modernism and neo-modernism are incompatible with today's demands for sustainable development, which is regarded as the relevant paradigm to address climate change. In the paper no strict distinction is made between architecture and town planning. Although there are considerable differences, it is assumed that building design is an integral part of urban design and that urban design is an integral part of town planning.

### **Architecture – a public concern**

Among the many existing definitions of architecture I find the one presented by the conservative philosopher Roger Scruton to be suitable for the purpose of this paper. In his book *The Aesthetics of Architecture* Scruton argues that architecture is not only art and technique, but also a public object and a utility. In contrast to paintings and sculpture, architecture has a use function. It is also place-bound and immovable. It has a public character, since it is part of an urban or rural landscape providing a basis for human activities (Scruton, 1979).

Many maintain that architecture should be defined as a result of an aesthetic ambition and that only buildings designed by architects should be regarded as architecture. Such a definition is problematic. What about the many boring standardized buildings designed by professionally trained architects? And what about all the beautiful buildings produced traditionally in pre-industrial societies?

Well-documented descriptions of building in traditional societies have been produced by Paul Oliver, Amos Rapoport and many others. When Bernard Rudofski produced the exhibition *Architecture without Architects* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1964, it attracted great interest. The modern movement was still in full swing and traditional culture had a low status. But 'international style' and other expressions of modernism led to counter-reactions. One of them was to look for forgotten qualities in traditional buildings.

It is estimated that at least 95 percent of all buildings on Earth are produced without the involvement of a professionally trained architect. Should we consider all these buildings to be non-architecture? To answer this question we need to define what an architect is. The literal meaning of 'architect' is *master builder*. Such people have existed long before formal training of architects was introduced. If we include the self-trained artisan and the work leader in charge of a construction in our definition, then virtually all buildings must be regarded as architecture.

Today we usually associate architecture with creativity and the search for the unique. In vernacular architecture, such drives are not important. The one who learns the skill of building from his father is taught about the good solution, and not to invent something new. Considering the fact that vernacular architecture is a result of adaptations to climate and other

local conditions over a very long period of time, it would be silly to disregard this type of architecture.

In the anthology *Vernacular Architecture*, 14 of the most prominent writers on the subject presented their ideas. One of the most interesting chapters is the one written by Delbert Highlands. He maintains that buildings are always the result of choices between various options. The one in charge of the construction (whether trained by his father or at the university) needs to take decisions about possible alternatives, even if choices are limited. Highlands finds no principal difference between traditional and modern master builders = architects (Turan, 1990).

### **Planning to solve problems of industrial society**

In his book *The Origins of Modern Town Planning* (1967)<sup>1</sup> Leonardo Benevolo argues that town planning was developed in order to address problems of early industrialization in Europe. Dramatic changes took place in England and France from the end of the 18th century. Technical innovations led to the concentration of production and thereby, to the formation of urban centres. To meet the demands for labour in the new factories, peasants were pushed off the land in rural areas. The workers were accommodated in privately owned low-standard tenements or in informal settlements, both of which lacked adequate control and planning. The hygienic conditions were miserable.

This situation is described in Friedrich Engels' book, *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*, published in 1844. Engels argued that the industrial revolution made workers worse off. He showed that in large cities, mortality from diseases were higher than in the countryside.

Later the English Conservative Party leader Lord Salisbury wrote an article entitled "Labourers' and Artisans' Dwellings", in which he argued that the poor conditions of working class housing were injurious to morality and health. He showed how working-class people had been displaced and proposed a new law to improve the conditions of the working classes (Royal Commission, 1885).

Benevolo refers to the disastrous hygienic conditions in Manchester as a driving force behind modern town planning. He identifies two schools of thought: a) the utopian socialist idea of a self-sufficient, coherent organism and b) endeavours to remedy each urban defect individually by introducing new health regulations and social legislation in existing towns (Benevolo, 1967).

The utopian socialists worked out their ideas as reactions to the brutal capitalist exploitation of workers. One of the most famous utopianists was the English social reformer Robert Owen. In 1789 he started a small factory in New Lanark in Scotland. He improved conditions of the workers, increased their salaries and introduced shorter working hours. He provided for schools and stimulating leisure time activities for the children. Today, New Lanark is classified as a cultural heritage and is open to tourists (see <http://www.newlanark.org/>).

Based on these experiences Owen developed ideas of model societies, in which the evils of industrial exploitation would be overcome. These settlements would comprise 500 to 1500 persons, who should be engaged in both agriculture and small industry. Everything would be organised collectively. There would be common spaces such as central kitchens, dining halls, schools, a library, a meeting hall, a clinic, guest homes, laundries and many other shared facilities.

Owen and his disciples were considered a threat to the ruling class and were therefore not allowed to implement their ideas in England. Therefore, they went to America to build their



19th century housing conditions in Manchester.

ideal community. The project, *New Harmony* in Indiana, lasted only a short period in the 1820s and Owen went back to England to start what is considered to be the first trade unions for workers and the first consumer cooperatives in history (Benevolo, 1967).

Even if the ideas of the utopian socialists were banned in Europe, they influenced thinking on planning for a long period of time. The visions of a more rational society became prominent features of both the garden city movement and of modernism almost a hundred years later.

Was early planning developed to improve the conditions of the poor? A number of housing charities were created to improve working class accommodation, but they constituted exceptions to the general rule of laissez-faire. In 19th century Europe there was no popular movement strong enough to enforce general housing planning for the health and comfort of the poor. The role of the architect continued to be one catering for the rich.

Before trade unions and the political labour movement became strong, industrialists did not have to worry about the health of the workers, because they could easily be replaced by new recruits. However, when some industries became so advanced that they required skilled labour, capitalists had a reason to cater for those workers who got training and thus became essential for maintaining the quality of industrial production. This kind of consideration lay behind the planning of settlements such as Port Sunlight in Liverpool and the Workers Colonies of the Krupp factories in Essen. These settlements borrowed features from the utopian socialists, but did not incorporate collective ownership of the means of production. Instead they were characterized by a paternalist top-down approach. Workers who engaged in radical political activities could not only be dismissed from their jobs; they could also be evicted from their homes.

Benevolo makes the point that planning for better sanitary conditions was not mainly motivated by a concern for the poor, but rather by the fact that cholera and other diseases had a tendency to spread to the quarters of the rich (Benevolo, 1967). The discovery of the detrimental role of bacteria on health sparked off a debate on how to use town planning to improve health

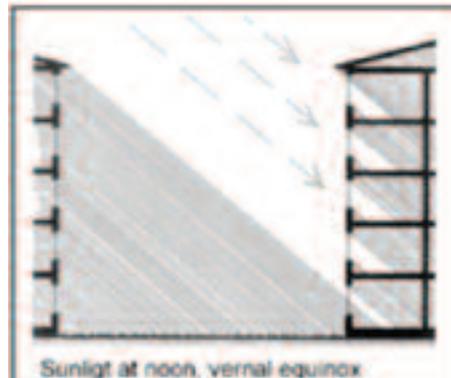
Sketch illustrating the Swedish regulation for 18 m wide streets and eaves at the a maximum height of 19.5 m, thereby providing for bacteria-killing sunlightrays at reaching the ground floor on the Northern side of the street.



A model for Owens ideal society, to be implemented in America. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Owen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Owen). (First published in Italian 1960 and then translated into six other languages. It has been reprinted 18 times.)



The Kronenberg workers colony in Essen, built by the Krupp company 1872-74. Each family was given a private plot and a house of its own in order to keep skilled labour and prevent workers from striking. Source: <http://www.kunstgeschichte-ejournal.net/archiv/2010/2647/>.

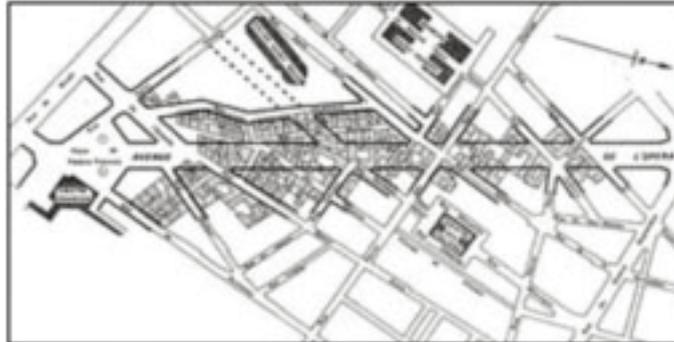


conditions in European cities. One example is the Swedish planning law of 1874, in which it is stipulated that streets must be wide enough to allow sunlight to reach the ground floor on the opposite side of the street. This rule strongly influenced the spatial pattern of Swedish cities until the birth of modernism in the 1930s.

An additional reason to introduce rational planning was the desire to curb riots among workers. The French revolutions of 1789 and 1830 provoked debates on the best way to prevent new rebellious activities. This ambition is well documented in Benevolo's book. Another researcher who has explored this phenomenon is the Swedish professor Sten Gromark. In his book (in Swedish) on the "disciplinary settlement" in 19th century France, he shows how the upper classes in France implemented various designs with the aim of preventing workers from meeting and planning riotous activities, and to install a sense of ownership by making the settlements more spacious and family oriented (Gromark, 1987). Similar observations have been made by authors writing about colonial planning (Southall & Gutkind, 1957; King, 1976).

### **Military purposes in planning and architecture**

Military purposes were strongly behind early town planning measures. One example is the planning of Paris from 1850 and onwards. Napoleon III commissioned Georges-Eugène Haussmann to redesign the French capital to modernise and to provide easy access for military vehicles to the working class neighbourhoods.



Haussmann's plan for part of Paris. Wide boulevards were drawn right through the quarters of the workers.

The Russian architect Vjacheslaw Glazichev has made a remarkable analysis of the military aspects of architecture and planning. He was one of the speakers at the important ARC•PEACE meeting in Prague in 1989, which took place the same week as when the Berlin Wall began to be dismantled. Among other points, Glazichev said that environmental protection in the Soviet Union was subordinate to military control and that certain infrastructure investments were kept secret for military reasons. Even if perestroika was on its way, such statements were sensational at that time.

According to Glazichev, a military character of architecture and planning was not unique for to the Soviet Union. On the contrary, he maintained that our profession has a long tradition of designing for military purposes. He referred to ancient Egypt, Assyria and Peru, and to "grand designs" of European emperors, mentioning examples such as the Versailles parade square, St. Petersburg's palace square and Unter den Linden in Berlin. He also referred to Albert Speer as a producer of designs that promoted Nazi power, "*a dark spot in the history of our profession*".

Interestingly Glazichev found the early modernists to be inheritors of the militarist tradition. He refers to Le Corbusier and Gropius<sup>2</sup> as advocates of "technicist ideology" when designing their barrack-like buildings. He found that the functionalist "machine for habitation" (Le Corbusier) follows the same logic as the design of Nazi extermination camps. Based on this analysis,



Edwin Lutyens' layout of New Delhi 1925-31.

Glazichev asks for a “*perestroika of our profession*”, giving Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch as positive examples (Glazichev, 1990).

He also noted that militarized architecture was exported to the colonies. A comprehensive analysis of this subject has been carried out by the British sociologist Anthony King in his book, *Colonial Urban Development*, focusing on the new capital for India, the British ‘crown colony’. The aim of colonial planning was to show that Great Britain was bringing civilization to the colonies and to permit swift military access to possible trouble spots (King, 1976).

### **Modernism – whose kind of logic?**

Rapid industrialisation increased the need for rational approaches to planning with order and health as prominent aims. The garden city movement was a response to these demands. The movement was initiated by the publication of *Garden Cities of To-morrow* by Ebenezer Howard in 1898. He advocated well-planned self-contained communities surrounded by greenbelts. Similar to the socialist utopianists he wanted to combine good elements of industrial and agricultural society. One important aim was to provide for working class households an alternative to ‘crowded, unhealthy cities’ (Howard, 1902). Howard’s ideas were implemented in many parts of the world at the beginning of the 20th century, but this development was interrupted when modernism took over as the leading paradigm in architecture and planning.

When the Ford factory in 1913 introduced the conveyor belt and other scientific methods to increase productivity, the costs per produced car could be reduced so that workers, for the first time in history, could afford to buy a car of their own. This was observed by early modernists, who became so enthusiastic, that they transferred industrial thinking to architecture. Modernism can be seen as a response to the ethos of the machine age, especially the period of mechanization (when manual labour was replaced by machines). Buildings should have abstract forms with most of the materials being industrially produced and with extensive use of mechanical systems for servicing. The early modernists believed that industrialization would spread throughout the world, thereby bringing welfare to all. Design and planning were seen as instruments for building a just and prosperous world.

In many countries modernism became the leading principle in architecture and urban design after the 2nd World War. It was most successful in the countries of Northern Europe, where the Keynesian method of building welfare states complied with the modernist program. New town planning legislation was introduced, with health and comfort as guiding principles. Mass housing programs were adopted, based on industrial building techniques, standardisation and building codes specifying minimum requirements for light, noise, services and spatial standards. Modernism also introduced science as a basis for design and planning. This is evident in the writings of Walter Gropius and the Swedish architect Uno Åhrén, both members of CIAM (International Congresses of Modern Architecture).

In many countries modernism was accepted with little opposition. Interesting critique was, however, articulated by some radical authors. One of them was the Swedish architect Gun Sjödin. In 1936, she wrote an article where she argued that the type of society the modernists wanted was “*a capitalist type of rationalisation*” enforced by the changing power structure in favour of big capital. She added that the modernists fell for anything that looked new and different, without any regard for the workers’ own tradition of self-built houses and community halls. She found that the old planning procedures had become obsolete for the big private developers, adding that the modernists made a virtue out of necessity (Sjödin, 1936).

US anthropologist James Holston Another articulated another interesting critique of modernism. In his book on Brasilia he finds that modernism is oppressive, despite its clear aim towards the opposite. He shows how much the early modernists hated the street. It was considered to be a place for “*corrupt civic order*”. In order to promote what was considered as a modern lifestyle the pre-industrial link between the private and the public ought to be broken. Therefore streets in Brasilia were removed disregarded as social spaces. Instead they were



A housing block inof Brasilia (left) and Parma town in 1830 (right), in the same scale. The former is mono-functional and has no spatial qualities while Parma is multi-functional and full of social activities, according to Holston.

designed for vehicular traffic and stripped from of sidewalks. Holston shows that developments in Brasilia since the 1960s has gone in a direction the opposite direction to the original aim; towards informal settlements, corner shops, local cultivation and illegal extensions of the large stereotype residential blocks (Holston 1989).

The success of modernism in some industrial countries meant that the avant-gardism was gradually transformed into established order. This process opened up for a critical discussion. Critique was levelled against large scale, stereotypical housing constructions, against functional separation and against the anti-urban character of city development (Jacobs 1961; Newman 1973; Coleman 1990). From the 1970s modernism started to lose its hegemony in those countries where it had been established. The state as a provider of housing and other services for everybody was questioned. The idea of basic needs and the demand for standardisation was rejected in favour of individualisation and variety.

### **Post-modernism and neo-modernism**

Assuming that modernism in planning is a reflection of industrial development during the mechanization phase, combined with state intervention policies, the Finnish sociologist/planner Katarina Nylund finds it logical that modernism comes into a crisis when industries introduce new methods of production and state regulations are replaced by market forces (Nylund, 1995).

Post-modernism is often rejecting the idea of linear development towards higher stages of development and the belief in human reason as a basis for progress. Instead of eternal truths, science is expected to produce only temporary truths, or truths that are valid only for individuals. The post-modern philosophy fits well with the ideology of the market economy, since it maintains that quality cannot be assessed by objective criteria. Nylund notes that post-modernism prefers image before function, variation before rationality, and market forces before social goals in planning (Nylund, 1995).

The shift to post-modernism can also be understood as a result of society's development towards an increased role for mass media and information technology. Through the use of media, manufacturers can sell through advertising, even if the quality of their products is dubious. The logo has become more important than the product itself. In media society, citizens become customers. In such a society it is less important who one really is compared to than who one *seems* to be (Klein, 2000; Boëthius, 2001).

Since the 1990s there has been an upsurge of a new type of architectural modernism, which fits well in media society. The new buildings expose display hard and cold building materials and forms that are often difficult to understand. The neo-modernists do not mix styles of the

past as in post-modernism yet on the contrary they often distance themselves from post-modernism. The neo-modernist ideologist Rem Koolhaas writes, for instance, that post-modernism robs us of our present and obliterates our future by moving backwards and by imitating elements of the past (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995).

In classical modernism the idea of building with a long-term perspective was as strong as in pre-modernist architecture. This thinking is strongly questioned in post and neo-modernism. Instead, the short durability of consumer goods in modern capitalism spills over into architecture. I find it logical that the buy-tear-throw character of the manufacturing industry, described by Klein, fits well with neo-modernist architecture. Like consumer goods, buildings can be designed for a short lifespan.

Under globalisation, capitalists demand mobility of labour and commodities. Therefore it is logical that design turns away from architectural forms that may promote local rooting. In his work about the “network society” Manuel Castels postulates that the new “society of flows” makes architecture historical and cultural. He finds neo-modernist architecture to be a relevant expression of the network society (Castels, 1996).

This thinking is well illustrated by the writings and designs of Rem Koolhaas. He writes scornfully about the ambition to take local traditions into consideration. In his long personal dictionary he does not even include the word “tradition” (Koolhaas & Mau, 1995).

### **Sustainable development**

Climate change has made sustainable development a necessity. The dangers of flooding, desertification and famine have contributed to the goal to limit global temperature increase to two degrees centigrade up by 2050. In order to reach this aim, measures have to be taken within all sectors of society. In the construction sector conventional practices affect health and biodiversity negatively, and deplete natural resources. In Sweden this sector accounts for 40% of the energy and material used, 50% of the use of electricity and 10% of transport. It is estimated that the use of resources in this sector must be reduced by 75 to 90 percent before 2050. At the same time renewable resources must increase with up to 80 percent (Svane, 1999; Glaumann & Malmqvist, 2004).

In connection with the climate conference in Copenhagen 2009 ARC•PEACE published a statement in which we said:

Recent research shows that it is possible to build with substantially less use of energy and non-renewable materials. Available knowledge is only scantily utilized in practice, however, because of the big gap between research and practice, the lack of political will and the construction sector tending to resist change, ARC•PEACE wants these professional groups to be more proactive. We must improve our competence in environmental planning and design, and participate in the general debate about climate change. <http://arc-peace.a3d.se/NewARC-Peace/Statements/COPstatement09.pdf>

Many architects have no competence in eco-design or do not find it important to meet environmental goals. One example is Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm. An ambitious



Seattle's Central Library designed by Rem Koolhaas.

environmental program was worked out for the whole residential district of 20 000 inhabitants. The aim was to reduce environmental impacts by 50%. Despite this, the developers and the Stockholm planning office approved big apartment sizes and oversized windows, which lead to for unnecessary heat losses. The architects found aesthetic aims to be more important than the environmental ones. Architecturally Hammarby Sjöstad is influenced by the ideals of neo-modernism, with its strong admiration of glass, steel and other metals, a fact that contributes to excessive use of materials and energy (Vestbro, 2006). The result is that several of the environmental goals have not been met. No attempt was made to influence inhabitants towards environmental-friendly behaviour (Vestbro, 2006). Later a local network was formed to repair these mistakes (see <http://hs2020.se/>).

In recent years models for environmental classification systems have been worked out. One benefit of these (LEED, BREEAM, Green Building) is that many factors can be combined into a coherent system for measuring environmental effects. Effects can be estimated already in the design phase. The whole life cycle of buildings is taken into account. BREEAM is even developed to measure effects at the neighbourhood level (<http://www.breeam.org/>). It is unclear to the present author to what extent architects have competence in these types of environmental assessment. Planners are bound to use these models as soon as political decisions exist to do so.

A factor not included in these models is how to make draft plans that facilitate neighbourly cooperation such as cohousing or neighbourhood units with spaces for community cooperation. Sizable savings can be made by sharing resources (Meltzer, 2000; Vestbro, 2012).

In many parts of the world most of the buildings are already in place. Here the architect has the challenging task to take care of the existing building stock, for instance by taking responsibility for refurbishment, reconstructions and adaptations to the new demands for sustainable development. In quantitative terms such measures are more important than the design of new buildings (Svane, 1999).

### Comparing paradigms

In the table below an attempt is made to summarise the main elements of three important paradigms in architecture and town planning. The analysis is based on the assumption that paradigm shifts in architecture and town planning can best be understood if related to political and economic factors.<sup>3</sup>

<b>Classical modernism</b> (1930-1975)	<b>Post/neo-modernism</b> (ongoing from 1975)	<b>Sustainability paradigm</b> (a goal since 1992)
<b>Perspective on society</b>		
Nation building	Globalisation	Sustainable development
Developmental optimism	Developmental pessimism	Survival strategy
Industrial (mechanisation period)	Industrial growth (computerization period)	Degrowth (ecological modernization)
State intervention	Market orientation	Logic of nature
<b>Perspective on humankind</b>		
Humans superior to nature	Humans superior to nature	Nature superior to humans
Universal needs	No basic needs	Basic needs
Consumerism for all	Over-consumption for the rich	Anti-consumerism
Anti-tradition	Anti-tradition	Respect for traditions
<b>Architecture</b>		
Anti-style	Unique designs	Eco-design
Global design	Global design	Place-bound design

Functionalism	Anti-functionalism	Functionalism
Instant building, long-term design	Instant building, short term design	Continuous building, adaptability

#### Town planning

Anti-density, anti-street	Pro-density, pro-street	Compact and green
Non-defined public/private areas	Non-defined public/private areas, gated communities	Well-defined public/private areas
Separation of activities	Mixture of activities	Mixture of activities, walkability

### Perspective on society

The analysis above shows that classical modernism reflects the logic of industrial development. It expresses a strong belief in progress through science and technical innovation. In the new phase of industrial development (the network society) development is still based on technical innovation and scientific progress. While there is optimism about the development of the computer industry and its associated services, there is disillusionment over the prospects for improvements of ethical standards and social relations. Neo-modernism does not assume that economic development will produce social progress for the majority.

In his famous book *All that That is Solid Melts into Air* Marshall Berman explains how modern capitalism produces pessimism and nihilism, i.e. a situation where “*honour and dignity... get incorporated into the market, take on price tags and gain a new life as commodities. Thus, any imaginable mode of human conduct becomes morally permissible the moment it becomes economically possible*” (Berman, 1982). In architecture the nihilist attitude is well expressed by Koolhaas. He sees the architect as a seducer and a provocateur. He rejects concerns for context and identity. He praises the new communication media for “*destabilising the true*” (Koolhaas & Mau 1995).

Sustainable development needs to regain optimism. It is a question of survival strategy. Social development must follow the logic of nature. The Society as a whole society must be transformed, moving away from the doctrine of capitalist growth. See further, below.

### Perspective on humankind

Economic changes in society are reflected in different perspectives on humankind. Modernism sees man (a male perspective is taken for granted) as superior to nature. Although development during the hitherto relatively short life of post-modern society has reversed some of the worst aspects of industrial destruction of nature, it is assumed here that the economic growth logic of the network society basically produces the same kind of attitude to nature as in earlier industrial society.

While classical modernism was based on the idea that industry would bring wealth to all, this ambition is virtually absent under post-modernism. The strengthening of market forces has led to increased social stratification. Consumerism has become the privilege of the middle class.

Since the 1960s, social and cultural developments show that urban lifestyles are manifold, constantly changing and not as much related to social class as earlier. This does not mean that the idea of basic needs has to be rejected. Whereas neo-modernism pays little attention to basic needs, the sustainability paradigm has to base itself on the recognition of such needs as long as it accepts the idea of “environmental justice”. This idea is expressed by the Rio conference and in various UN documents.

I find that the strong antipathy for tradition in both classical modernism and Neo-modernism has met with strong popular reactions, which have forced decision-makers to be more careful with our common cultural heritage. Under the sustainability paradigm it is necessary to be more respectful towards both nature and the existing built environment.

### Perspective on architecture

On the basis of the analysis above I find it justified to label both classical and neo-modernism as anti-style, while the style issue is unimportant under the sustainability paradigm. Here it is most important to let design be determined by climate goals. This implies that design must be place bound like in vernacular architecture. We can learn much from qualities in the vernacular, but features of appropriate climate etc. cannot be transferred to dense urban situations without careful considerations and modifications. To meet climate goals, architecture should provide for adaptability in a process of continuous change. Just like Turner said in the 1960s, housing is a process, not a product (Turner, 1976). This could be the case also for other building types.

As shown above, functional qualities are less important for the neo-modernists. Their main objective is to “be different”, to cause amazement and to be published in architectural journals.

### Perspective on planning

While classical modernism can be considered to be anti-urban, the neo-modernists are pro-urban, pro-density and pro-street. Classical modernism was based on far-reaching town planning legislation, strict building codes and state intervention. With the fall of classical modernism, town planning has been liberalised. “Negotiation planning” has replaced strict regulations and supremacy for the public sector. Negotiations tend to favour big corporations. Neo-modernism goes hand in hand with the liberalisation of town planning regulations.

Sustainable development must by necessity have strict regulations for town planning, since environmental demands will be put on all kinds of urban activities. It is likely that road tolls or other severe restrictions will be introduced on car transport. Instead collective means of transport will have to be strengthened. For this purpose many cities will have to be re-planned. Because of demands for energy-saving and reduced depletion of natural resources, strict regulations will also be required for the planning of neighbourhoods.

### About the author

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- 1 First published in Italian 1960 and then translated into six other languages. It has been reprinted 18 times.
- 2 The present author finds that Walter Gropius had a much stronger user-focus in his designs, compared to Le Corbusier, who postulated what was good for mankind from a rather doctrinaire perspective.
- 3 This section is an updated version of a text published in ARC PEACE’s book “*Architecture as Politics. The Role of Design and Planning for Peace and Sustainable Development*”, 2002. The table shall be seen as a model of thought, not as the definite truths about the various paradigms. In reality differences are considerable within each paradigm.

# Planning under Neoliberalism

Lina Suleiman

**We all know through our work**, whether as academics or practitioners, that planning is an act of governmentality and policymaking. It is driven by what kind of political ideologies and rationalities are at play. Thus, to understand the development of planning under neoliberalism, the political ideologies before and after neoliberalism have to be briefly described.

Keynesian policies advocated public spending, fiscal programmes and expert-driven central planning. They were heavily criticized from political and economic points of view in the 1970s. During this period, central planning processes were the norm of national policymaking, led and driven by experts in their field (Planners).

As an alternative, Neoliberal ideas and the agenda driven by Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek came in to demand political and economic renovation. Neoliberalism's agenda, which bases its claim on Adam Smith's ideas of a free market economy, considers the free market, instead of the state, as the driving force for social wellbeing. It employs a radical form of a laissez-faire capitalist set of ideas. Neoliberalism advocates policies of economic liberalization, free trade and open markets, privatization, deregulation, removal of state subsidies, and an overall reduction in government control of the economy.

Since then, Neoliberalism has become a dominant political ideology. According to Antonio Gramsci, hegemony happens when particular groups succeed in establishing that their interests are the same thing as the general interests of a society. That is the case under neoliberalism. Free market logic and interests have not only become dominant over social and environmental concerns, but have also made states retreat and become submissive to capitalism. To understand the extent of the hegemony and the dominance of Neoliberalism, the book "The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism" by Naomi Klein is essential reading.

## **The social dimension is lost**

As experience shows, the outcome of the hegemony of Neoliberalism has resulted in two main deficits: social and democratic deficits. In addition it is accompanied by a scarcity of natural resources, environmental risk-taking and uncertainty and injustices.

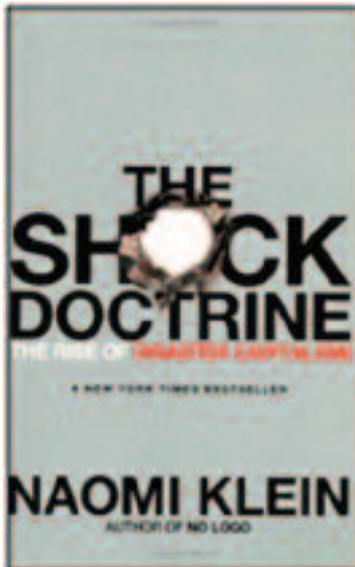
The social deficit manifests itself in the social inequity and economic gaps between the few rich and the many poor people, due to the colonisation of the state by corporate interests. The article "Development: The Rise and Decline of an Ideal" by Wolfgang Sachs is very relevant reading that reflects on both the social rifts and the environmental constraints.

The democracy deficit is also tangible due to the fact that, despite the minor differences in political rhetoric, there are no substantial differences in the political ideologies of right and left-wing parties. The role of the market in providing goods, services and employment has been convenient to politicians when they lack alternative political philosophies. As such, market economy ideas and capitalists' interests have dictated public policy at the expense of the general interest. Both the liberals and social democrats have lost commitment to the social dimensions and have become loyal to market rationalities; an issue that has been referred to as "A crisis of representation". People in Western societies do not find any party to identify with. Thus we have witnessed a loss of legitimacy of democratic institutions. To learn more about this issue, one can

read the writings of the political scientist Chantal Mouffe. In a nutshell, the social outcomes of Neoliberal policies have not been socially acceptable everywhere and therefore generate public protest.

The dilemma for politicians has become: how to justify the erosion of welfare services, and how to deal with social inequity and the democracy deficit? How can they reinstate state legitimacy before its citizens, while still not fundamentally challenging Neoliberalism? We have to remember that there are no alternative political ideologies.

To do so, the state has to invent governing modes that legitimize neoliberal policies and achieve political stability. It is here where the positions of planning theory and practice fit in today. Planning has been one of the political instruments used to maintain hegemony and Neoliberal policies. How has the neoliberal hegemony affected and been affected (or supported) by planning?



Academic studies argue that when political philosophy changes, the means of how to rule should change accordingly in order to rationalize the new modes of governmentality and be publicly acceptable. Therefore, the new political philosophy of neoliberalism has to cover up the social rift, and deal with environmental uncertainty and risks and the crisis of citizens' representation. It has to be put in a positive ethical context and, in some way, should gain general blessing.

Planning theory and practice have played an important role as a legitimizing political activity to govern people and to dress-up market economic policies with good ethics. Theoretical arguments on how planning should be done, have given support to the new modes of policies.

But, before describing how planning theory has supported Neoliberalism, let us review first few of the main claims made

by social science that affected planning under Neoliberalism.

Social scientists such as Beck, Ulrich, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash claim that contemporary society is characterised by connectedness, the absence of class and social structure, in which social interaction is governed by ideas of reflexive modernity. According to this concept, individuals are assumed to be pragmatic, able to eliminate their passions and are detached from social values and background, and make choices and decisions in a 'rational' and secular manner.

These ideas were picked up by scholars and fed into planning theory and practice.

The ideas were understood by planning scholars as individuals, in a network and in globalised society, as they face both environmental risks and high uncertainty, they have the right to represent themselves and defend their interests in the policymaking arena. They are rational and knowledgeable and through communicative rationality, argumentation and persuasion, consensus in planning processes in the form of "stakeholders" can be built up to decide on what is best for the general interest.

According to this mainstream understanding, planning scholars have argued that an expert-driven approach to planning is an outdated tradition and cannot cope with contemporary society. In an information and risky society, people's values are in dynamic change while state institutions are static and thus cannot survive the dynamics of social change. Based on ideas of social change and the absence of structure and classes in network society, capitalist, state, and civil society actors are assumed to be equally powerful and standing on an equal footing to plan and govern. Patsy Healey, a well-recognized academic icon in planning theory, puts forward the argument that "we all know" and we should all be able to govern.

These theoretical positions fitted conveniently with the interests of politicians and came in time to legitimize neoliberalism's policies. Through the inclusion of citizens, planning practices respond to neoliberal specifics of dominance. When citizens are included in some form of governance arrangement including state and market actors (state-market-civil society), planning practices are likely to co-opt public protest and resistance – under the claims of consensus-building modes of planning processes, participatory planning and network governance.

Accordingly, planning legislation has required consultations with the public. However, in reality, the aim is to manage the public for legitimizing neoliberal hegemony and co-opt counter-hegemony movements. Ironically, planning legislation has squeezed planners between a rock and a hard place and lost professionalism. As my discussions with planners in the UK reveal, planners have to follow rigorous consultation procedures with the communities, but they should also secure no public objection while maintaining market interests. Due to these imposed challenges, planners are publicly looked at as dependent, foolish, and unprofessional.

The word “participatory” has become orthodoxy in planning ethics, theory and practice. Those who dare to challenge the accepted view and want the state back as a main driving actor for social wellbeing are accused of being against democracy. Maybe it is not exaggerated to conclude that the claim of the attachment of high levels of democracy with participatory planning and network governance in political discourse is deliberate.

Under Neoliberalism, discourses replace concepts; government is replaced by governance, citizens are replaced by stakeholders, social equity by social inclusion, renewal and integration, representative democracy by post-democracy (participatory or deliberative democracy), political by post-political, and planning by collaborative and participatory planning. Planners' roles change from experts to facilitators for consensus building in the management of collective affairs.

Empirical experiences of planning processes and network governance, however, challenge the theoretical claims of the absence of social structure and the equal power of market and civil actors in planning. Scholars show that planning processes are overwhelmed by hierarchies, exclusion, and technocratic managerialism. In reality the powerful state, capital and classes continue to dictate planning processes and public policies.

To complete the picture, it is worth highlighting that the mode of network governance policy in the form of state-market-civil society has not only dominated the planning field, but has also spread. It has taken over at all geopolitical scales and epitomises the celebrity mode, through which the hegemonic strategy of neoliberalism is organised. As Davies Jonathan argues in his book, “networking is proselytised as the way to conduct governance, intergovernmental relations, management and relations between government and civil society – and indeed as the best way to organise resistance”.



In the whirl wind of neoliberalism.

The question that may be asked here, of relevance to this article is: For how long will planning under neoliberal policies continue? To give a simple answer: Planning will be dictated by market interests as long as neoliberalism self-perpetuates.

However, drawing on Gramscian thoughts, no hegemony perpetuates itself when it is partial and incomplete. Neoliberalism will be challenged and resistance to its domination is imminent. Social movements, such as we are witnessing nowadays, should be seen as counter-hegemonic strategies. Planners as citizens and, according to their professional ethics, as academics or

practitioners, should be part of these movements and consciously take up the struggle against neoliberalism. To learn more about such social movements, it is relevant to read the book “What is Radical Politics Today?” by Jonathan Pugh.

#### About the author

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# Challenging neoliberalism

Geoffrey Payne

**Many thanks to Lina Suleiman** for addressing a central issue facing planners and other professionals and raising issues, which deserve a wide discussion. I am not sure how individuals will be able to successfully challenge the current neoliberal orthodoxy when both democratic governments and a majority of voters have been so seduced by their doctrines. We need to understand how neoliberal theorists managed to capture the political agenda in order to see how it can be challenged and replaced by an alternative economic model which is more socially and environmentally sustainable.

1989 witnessed the sudden collapse of state managed economic systems under the Soviet Union, leaving North Korea as the only unreconstructed communist state, now that China and even Cuba have embarked upon a process of change which recognises that private enterprise has a place in development.

After a short period of triumphalism (e.g. Fukuyama, 1992; de Soto, 2000), 2008 exposed the structural flaws in unrestrained market capitalism with the ‘sub-prime’ scandal, which triggered a global recession. The scale of financial mismanagement due to weak regulation has not led to any significant change so far. Market capitalism is now being propped up at vast cost through creative financial mechanisms such as ‘quantitative easing’, by which governments print vast sums of money to enable banks to build up their reserves.

Five years on, the banks have not learned their lesson. As Lina notes, the political elites in all major economies have bought into the neoliberal agenda and are now completely isolated from the mass of voters. Record low interest rates are punishing the thrifty and encouraging economic growth through increased consumption and speculative short-term investments in equities. Public and private debt is now so great that even a modest increase in interest rates is likely to promote a full-scale crisis in the global economy.

## Participation co-opted

Does it need a crisis to bring us to our senses? Experience suggests that each generation learns these lessons first hand and we are destined to repeat past failures. I agree with Lina that participation processes have often been co-opted to realise the aims of neoliberal interests, though her hope that “planners, like others, should consciously take up the struggle against neoliberalism” is not likely to be enough to achieve success unless part of a wider movement.



Demonstration November 2011. Source: The Louisiana Libertarian.

I suspect that too many people have an interest in protecting what they have (e.g. equity in property) that they will be too scared to put themselves at even greater risk than they are already. This is not to say that another ‘Occupy’ movement and other forms of popular protest will not emerge to challenge the status quo. However, just as communism collapsed from within due to incompetent and corrupt economic management, so market capitalism may also collapse from an excessive focus on short term profits and personal gain at the expense of the long term public good – not to mention the environmental impacts.

If this prognosis is even partially correct, it behoves those of us involved in planning and the built environment professions to contribute to more socially progressive and environmentally sustainable ways of managing economic activity. An extremely valuable lesson in this respect is provided by Mitchell (2009), who describes how neoliberal theorists, such as Hayek captured the political, professional and media agendas and bent them to their views. Hayek argued that political power could only be achieved by first altering the intellectual climate and he regarded academics, journalists and teachers as “second-hand dealers in ideas and information” who needed to be given a commodity (knowledge, facts, evidence) based on the efficiency of markets in meeting social needs. To this end he established and helped launch think tanks dedicated to



generating data and case studies illustrating the merits of a neoliberal approach.

Hayek and his followers, such as Friedman (1962) and de Soto, can look back with satisfaction at the scale of their success. So powerful now are multi-national corporations like Amazon, Google, Apple, etc, that there is even talk of Chief Executive Officers making state visits to countries where they will be regarded as equal in status as heads of state! However, it took the neoliberals the best part of three decades for them to change the intellectual climate and capture the political landscape. That was, of course, before the Internet, which has accelerated social and economic change exponentially and put politicians of all persuasions (and none) playing catch-up. Social movements now are as volatile as markets themselves and there is an increasing literature (e.g. Sandel, 2012; Skidelski & Skidleski, 2011) questioning the viability, or even desirability, of the neoliberal approach.

### **What can planners do?**

So, what options are available to planners and other professionals involved in the built environment? I suggest we have several options, any one of which may help trigger a major movement towards a more sustainable approach. The aim should be to learn from both the strengths and weaknesses of state managed and market driven economic models and ensure that markets are harnessed to meet the needs of society, not the other way round, as at present.

Options include:

- Leading by example. Proposing and, if possible implementing, projects, which generate improved benefits for residents and local authorities, whilst ensuring a reasonable return for developers/investors. Market forces can also be harnessed to demonstrate that people do better through collaboration than pursuing short-term individual interests. We need examples to demonstrate this.
- Encouraging professional institutes to demonstrate politically viable options for ensuring that all private investment is required to maximise the public good and maximise environmental sustainability
- Taking every opportunity to publish examples in mainstream media of projects which expose the negative outcomes of market driven approaches on society, the economy and the environment and examples where a more socially responsive approach has achieved benefits
- Presenting ideas and proposals in ways, which are politically persuasive.

It may take us some time to change perceptions and policies, but we need to start now, as time is short.

#### About the author

**Geoffrey Payne** is a housing and urban development consultant, researcher and trainer and the director of Geoffrey Payne and Associates. During a career spanning more than four decades, he has focused on issues of housing policy and project design, land tenure and property rights, regulatory frameworks for urban planning, public-private partnerships and disaster mitigation and has worked in all regions of the world. He has published widely on these issues and contributed to numerous conferences. A central tenet of his work is contributing to local professional capability in addressing housing and urban issues. See [www.gpa.org.uk](http://www.gpa.org.uk) for more details.



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## On professional and personal ethics

# Architecture and right action

Graeme Bristol

*“. . . you are not a profession that has distinguished itself by your social and civic contributions to the cause of civil rights, and I am sure this does not come to you as any shock. You are most distinguished by your thunderous silence and your complete irrelevance.”*

Whitney Young, Jr. (1968:47)

## Introduction

There is an ethical environment in which all professions operate. In their decision-making process, professionals are affected by events or conditions that are beyond their control yet they must make responsible decisions. That responsibility is integral to the concept of professionalism. The awareness of the conditions that affect decisions and of the tools for making responsible decisions is important to the professional. The most important of those tools is found in a set of ethical principles. There are general principles which apply to all human action<sup>1</sup> and more specific principles which apply to specialized actions such as professional services.

The architect functions in the arena of development – a rather broad term that can refer to anything from childhood development to sustainable development or curriculum development. Even within the context of the work of architects and engineers, it can refer to anything from an addition to a house to the planning of cities. The responsibilities that the architect must carry result from the parameters that come with development. Medical doctors, for example, are faced with special responsibilities and the discipline that studies and refines them is bioethics. In architecture, this specialized field does not yet exist. However, the issues of ethics and development must be addressed by professionals. In so doing, a number of issues must be examined: the role of architecture in society, the responsibilities of the profession, the parameters of development, and the basic needs that architectural expertise can address.

## The role of architecture

The role architects play in society has been contested by architects over the history of the profession but no more so than it was in the civil rights movement in the sixties.

With riots in Watts, in Detroit and Newark, even such a cloistered profession as architecture could see that something was wrong. People were burning cities down – cities architects were building up. What was going on? No doubt such questions were in the minds of the organizers of the 1968 AIA convention when they invited Whitney Young Jr., then executive director of the Urban League, as their keynote speaker. He presented the assembled was suggesting to the architects of America that their silence on these social issues of the urban environment was, or should be, a source of some shame for professionals. The AIA, for its part, was not entirely silent. There were some in its membership who were active in the streets of the city. The majority, though, in architectural circles were headed in quite another direction.



Alabama state troopers using billy clubs to break up a civil rights voting march in Selma, Ala., March 7, 1965. In the foreground, John Lewis is struck in the head, for which he is later hospitalized.

At the same time as the urban streets were burning down, Robert Venturi was quickly becoming the latest star in the firmament of architecture with the publication of his 'Gentle Manifesto', *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. Certainly this was not the first time that an architect has paused to reflect on the nature of architecture. In this century alone, from Adolph Loos and his contentious

opinions about ornament and crime, to the modernist search for a Platonic architecture that would take society beyond mere style, architects have been looking for the architectural answer to society's salvation. What made *Complexity and Contradiction* unusual in this array of manifestos is that it ran in quite the opposite direction to the temper of the times and yet, for such a modest exercise, it seemed to redirect, almost single-handedly, architectural design for the next 20 years. And not just design but the perceived role of the architect in society – a significant narrowing of their responsibilities, really, to formalism.

At the same time, the profession was witnessing the erosion of their professional domain with the increased specialization of the building industry. Encroaching on the traditional scope of the architectural profession were building designers, engineers, architectural technologists, code specialists, fire code specialists, facility planners, and so on. Similar conditions applied in the late 18th century as the Industrial Revolution created extraordinary demands for housing and new kinds of space (factories, railway stations). Architects were motivated to establish what was to become the RIBA. They did so, in part, to distinguish and elevate the work of architects from other designers working in the field of housing and urban development and, with that elevation, to create a monopoly on those services. With that monopoly, came the protection of the name 'architect' and the services which could be provided only by an architect. The protection of turf is an oft-told tale in the professions.

But what is being protected? Is it merely a business monopoly on a certain set of services? Surely there is more to a profession than that.

### **Responsibilities of the profession**

I have suggested elsewhere<sup>2</sup> that the profession's retreat into formalism began as far back as Alberti but it seems to me the rationale for referring to it as a retreat derives from a more contemporaneous source – again, Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction*.

*"The architect's ever diminishing power and his growing ineffectualness in shaping the whole environment can perhaps be reversed, ironically, by narrowing his concerns and concentrating on his own job. Perhaps then relationships and power will take care of themselves."* (Venturi, 1966:20)

What we have here is a retreat from the political sphere and, as I see it, from responsible citizenship. He wants to be left out of the political sphere (it will 'take care of' itself) so he can concentrate on his own job. What is that job? The design of the elaborate and expensive historical jokes of post-modernism? It is little wonder that Whitney Young Jr. admonished the



CIAM meeting 1959 at Kröller-Müller Museum in Hoge Veluwe National Park. Dissolution of CIAM. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congrès\\_International\\_d'Architecture\\_Moderne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congrès_International_d'Architecture_Moderne).

AIA members about their 'thunderous silence' and 'complete irrelevance'.

It was not always such. The modern movement, for all its formalistic demands, was also strongly focused on what amounted to utopian thought. Though there were many earlier concepts of utopian communities, those of the late 19th century and early 20th century were much more focused on a response to the terrible

social and physical effects of urbanization in the earlier part of the 19th century. Howard's Garden City in the UK (1902) was one such response, as was Tony Garnier's *Cité Industrielle* (1904) in France. Le Corbusier has his *Ville Contemporaine* (1922) and *Ville Radieuse* (1924) and Frank Lloyd Wright had his *Broadacre City* (1932). Though there were many differences, all were trying to address broad social problems (often expressed in 'worker housing'). Many of these political/social ideals for the city were articulated through the *Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), particularly in its 'Athens Charter' of 1933. This is a far cry from Venturi's desire to be left to do his job far away from the influence of politics and power – effectively removed from the responsibilities of citizenship much less the greater responsibilities of the profession.

This degraded notion of responsibility continues to be expressed by 'starchitects'. Zaha Hadid was recently asked about the deaths of migrant workers on the site of her Al-Wakrah stadium in Qatar: "I have nothing to do with the workers," said Hadid. "I think that's an issue the government – if there's a problem – should pick up. Hopefully, these things will be resolved."<sup>3</sup> A statement that echoes Venturi's from nearly 50 years before.

However, even as the profession seems to be deliberately reducing its scope and responsibilities, the fact remains that society itself expects something more from professionals than technical competence or artistry.

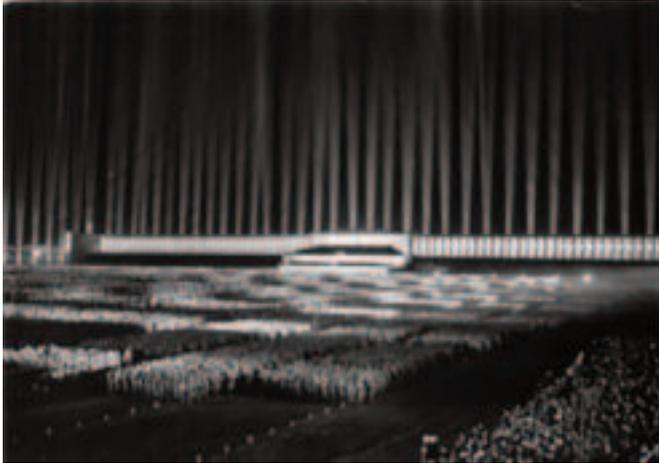
Society entrusts the professional with the formidable responsibility of using the professional's specialized knowledge – a 'guilty knowledge'<sup>4</sup>, as Herrick called it<sup>5</sup> – for the welfare of society. In turn, "every profession is legitimated by the good faith it keeps with the people it serves." (Smith & Churchill, 1986:85) Under those circumstances ethics becomes an imperative of professional tradition, not a luxury better suited to late-night reflection. Without a constructive ethical standard, the professional can, and occasionally does, lapse into exploitive behaviour in using his/her specialized knowledge.

The depths of exploitive behaviour were based on many variables. Two of those conditions: the absence of a constructive ethical standard and the narrow definition of the professional as being merely technically competent. During the Second World War, the death camps exterminated millions,

*"... under the most rationally planned and controlled conditions. The goal was to exact the greatest output of labor for the smallest input of food, clothing, and services. . . . even more poignant than the sheer magnitude of the slaughter is the fact that professionals were largely responsible for the planning of the atrocity. The agents*

*of death were not simply Nazi thugs. Management professionals were involved through the I.G. Auschwitz Company, a subsidiary of the I.G. Farben Corporation. Medical professionals examined and classified prisoners, selecting those for work in particular occupations. They helped to determine the maximum output obtainable at the least expense.” (Reeck, 1982:25-6)*

Architects, most notably Albert Speer, were also professionally involved in these atrocities. As Speer remarked, *”For the commission to do a great building, I would have sold my soul like Faust.”* (Speer, 1971:62) Similarly, Mies van der Rohe worked at both ends of the political spectrum in his early career in Germany. He provoked the comment by Philip Johnson, *”How apolitical can you get? If the devil himself offered Mies a job he would take it.”* (Jencks, 1973:40). Clearly,



technical expertise is not a moral agent here. Nor is artistry. This ‘guilty’ knowledge can be directed towards enabling or exploiting society. It is only when we develop and maintain our moral heritage through professional ethics that this expertise can be used for enabling ends.

Albert Speer’s designs Cathedral of Light.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert\\_Speer#mediaviewer/File:Bundesarchiv\\_Bild\\_183-1982-1130-502,\\_Nürnberg,\\_Reichsparteitag,\\_Lichtdom.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Speer#mediaviewer/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-1982-1130-502,_Nürnberg,_Reichsparteitag,_Lichtdom.jpg).

## Right action

*“[Man] has only one thing to consider in performing any action - that is, whether he is acting rightly or wrongly, like a good man or a bad one.”* Socrates (Apology, 28b)

It seems clear, though, that our professional ethics are quite narrow in their scope. We tend, as professionals, to meet our stated legal/contractual obligations and leave it at that. But this can’t be the full extent of professional responsibilities. Anyone who enters into a contract – not just professionals – is expected to honour it. Society expects more from a professional.

I suggest there are four levels of responsibility – that of birth, of knowledge, of legal responsibility and, finally, of the self.

## Birth

Some obligations are thrust upon us. By the accident of birth, many professionals were born in and/or work in the industrialized nations, countries of great wealth. This wealth was acquired, typically, at some considerable expense to the physical and social environment. In addition to having such enormous resources at our disposal, we, as design professionals, often have the power to influence how these resources are utilized. Available resources can be used effectively<sup>6</sup> or wastefully. They can be used to advance the welfare of society or to impede it. Because the flow of these resources and the influence of power can be felt transnationally, these obligations, too, flow beyond borders.

Such statements are easily said but poorly understood, particularly in the face of the mystery of birth. It leaves some children beginning their lives picking through piles of garbage in the

outskirts of Manila, selling trinkets in the streets of Jakarta or their bodies in Bangkok. Some children are born, through no fault of their own, into injustice. Others are born, through no divine right, into privilege. The privileged accept as 'rights' – that is, society's responsibility to individuals - those opportunities for which others often must fight and die. While we are not responsible for having been born into such privilege, do we, as a result of such serendipity, have the fundamental responsibility as human beings to use the advantages and opportunities afforded us to resolve these persistent inequities? I believe we do.

As members of a world community, we, as individuals, communities and nations, have obligations to the social and physical environment that we all share. As members of the resource-rich minority in that world community, the obligations towards distributive justice should rest with those of us who have rather than those who have not. In simple terms, those of us who have been taking out of the collection plate, have an obligation to put something back in.

### **Knowledge**

Knowledge is the vehicle through which we, as professionals, enact our broader human responsibilities. Unlike birth, about which we have no choice, each of us makes a decision about the pursuit of knowledge. Responsibilities flow out of that choice. We choose to become architects, engineers, interior designers, planners, doctors or lawyers. The availability of the knowledge of these professions is only as a result of the existence of a society that is capable of providing and supporting the education systems - schools, books, training programs - that supply that knowledge. As such it is a benefit provided by society. What we do with knowledge, then, involves the repayment of a debt to society. It is a debt that goes beyond student loans and vestigial alliances with alumni associations. The student and society enter into a tacit agreement by which the student expects to get knowledge from society. Sometimes, as with professionals, this is a special knowledge that presents potential dangers to society. Design professionals have attained this knowledge<sup>7</sup>. What does society expect in return?

Although, as individuals, there is a 'return' in the form of taxation, there are additional expectations that society has of the professional. It expects two things: that this potentially dangerous knowledge is used without malice by its holder and that it is used for the betterment of society. We are obliged, therefore, to use knowledge to its highest and best use. What we mean by highest and best use is, of course, contentious in exactly the same way that the uses to which our tax dollars are put are also controversial. As professionals, entrusted by society with 'guilty knowledge', we must address how we use and misuse the knowledge with which we have been entrusted, what that highest and best use might be and who decides.

These questions must be addressed by each of us as professionals and it must be addressed by our representative institutions. A good example of that inquiry is the boycott of prison design initiated by Architects, Designers and Planners for Social Responsibility.<sup>8</sup>

### **Professional**

Relative to the broader ethical issues arising out of birth and knowledge, those that arise out of contracts are clear and resolved with relative ease (although at great expense) through the legal system. Although these documents are open to wide interpretation, there is something written concerning the extent and the limits of responsibility.

If we look again at the architect's oath<sup>9</sup>, we are reminded that our obligations to society are minimal and are enacted through the profession itself. In other words, if the individual acts within the parameters of 'professionalism', as defined by the profession, then the individual is acting ethically and professionally. The main responsibility, then, that the architect faces is to uphold the limited values of the profession itself. Most of these values are defined by the scope of service and that, in turn, is defined in the standard contractual documents. These documents describe the professional obligations to: clients, consultants, and contractors. The responsibility

to the users of buildings is seen only in tort, not in contract. Even here, though, in these areas of narrow 'legal' ethics, problems can arise that begin to extend the existing limits of responsibility. An action by Probe International – an environmental organization based out of Canada – against the Association of Professional Engineers illustrates how these limits can expand.

Probe's challenge was based on the Code of Ethics of the Bylaws of the Association of Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia. In Section 2 (d) of the Code, the engineer is called upon to "guard against conditions which are dangerous or threatening to the environment". In those projects that can have a detrimental effect on the environment such as, say, nuclear reactors or pulp mills, the engineer can easily be placed in a position of conflict between his duties to his client and his obligation to uphold the Code. Under such circumstances, the engineer's duty to the public takes precedence over his duty to his/her client. If the client continues on a course of action that exacerbates this conflict, the engineer,

*"... may be required to inform his employer or client that he is ethically bound to present his concern to the governing body of his professional association or to an appropriate public authority and perhaps even to disassociate himself from the project." (McLachlin, 1987:38)<sup>10</sup>*

Architects suffer under no such codified restraint. In Canada, only the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland have any provision in their By-laws concerning the professional's obligations to the environment. In Newfoundland the architect must be conscious of the relationship of his/her project to the environment. In Quebec the architect is required to take into account his obligations towards man and his environment. Only in Quebec, then, is there any reference in the by-laws to the architect's obligation to the public and to the environment. Unlike the engineering profession, the architect's obligation to the public is one of tradition rather than decree. Perhaps, given the nature of the specialized knowledge that defines the profession of architecture, this is as it should be. On the other hand, the public, which, through legislation, gives the right and responsibilities of practice to architects, does have the right to know where the profession stands in regard to its responsibilities to society and the environment - both built and natural.

Architects have, throughout the modern movement, designed office buildings without natural ventilation. The dependence on mechanical ventilation has led to increased energy loading on buildings (with its consequent effects on global warming) and to a variety of health problems from chronic headaches to Legionnaire's disease. While there is growing recognition



Office building in Vancouver.  
Photo: Dick Urban Vestbro.

of the relationship between sealed indoor environments and health problems, most architects still persist in maintaining the curtain wall as the sine qua non of aesthetic judgment. They then depend on the mechanical engineer to provide improvements to their systems to overcome air circulation problems and airborne contaminants. Why? Is it aesthetics? Is it client demand? It certainly isn't user demand. It is not that great a leap to argue that such acts of design constitute possible exposure to liability for professional negligence, particularly given the consequences to health, much less the longer term possible consequences to global environmental conditions. To persist in designing systems that have such potential repercussions, is little different from the stance taken by design engineers at Ford with the recognized design flaws of the Pinto.

The Probe action, though, went further and suggested professional negligence for a feasibility study – a written

document. Nothing had been built here. In fact, little, if anything had been designed. The claim of negligence concerned recommendations that may or may not be acted upon by the client. Because the engineers' recommendations describe an intention to do what Probe would consider grievous harm to the environment, the question of negligence concerns the contradiction between those stated intentions, however sincerely maintained, and the Code of Ethics by which the engineers are bound. Did they not consider the Code at all? If they did consider it, was their interpretation of it that radically different from Probe's interpretation? The Association of Professional Engineers has yet to publicly address these questions.<sup>11</sup>

For architects, however, such questions do not arise. There are no admonitions in the Bylaw or the Act that govern architects to suggest that, as professionals, we have any more responsibility to the public than technical competence<sup>12</sup>. As a result the only commitments that the architect makes to society will arise from a personally felt responsibility that is determined by the individual's definition of the professional and the role that the professional should play in society. Given that the public has conferred the right to establish the architects' "monopoly of competence" (see Blau, 1983:4), they do have a reciprocal right to expect a more concrete statement concerning the architect's responsibilities to the environment and society. They have a right to expect more than technical competence as indicated by standard contractual documents<sup>13</sup>.

### Self

Our responsibility to ourselves is quite different from 'selfishness'. What I mean here comes more from Socrates' Apology, his defence against the charges brought by his three accusers. He explained to his fellow citizens his actions and convictions that led him to be charged with corrupting the morals of youth. He declared:

*"... that to let no day pass without discussing goodness and all the other subjects about which you hear me talking and examining both myself and others is really the very best thing that a man can do, and that life without this sort of examination is not worth living..."* (Apology, 38a)

These were convictions held deeply enough that he was prepared to give his life<sup>14</sup>.

As professionals we bring a body of knowledge that is informed and directed by this unique perspective. Society places these attributes in a context out of which flows a reciprocal responsibility between the individual and society. The way in which we respond to these conditions and the extent of responsibility that we are willing to carry will depend, in part, on the depth of our convictions. It will depend as well on the circumstances in which these convictions are tested. There may be a tendency to believe that these conditions must be



Graeme Bristol with the Portable School project.

extreme, giving rise to acts of heroism that would display the individual's depth of conviction. A countervailing tendency might be the belief that one is not excluded from the possibility of right action simply because one is unable, for any number of reasons or obstacles, to act so dramatically. In architecture we could come to the mistaken conclusion that right action is narrowly defined and easy to judge. So, those

architects who work for the poor in Africa would be ranked more highly on the morality scale than those architects who work for community organizations in the rich countries of the West. In turn, they would be rated more highly than those who design homes for the rich. This hardly seems to be a fruitful conclusion to make about right conduct for professionals.

Such judgments are not meaningful or useful. Each of us does what we can with whatever it is we have in whatever circumstances or obstacles confronting us. It is only as individuals that we can we ask whether what we do is appropriate or enough, given our unique conditions. This is not to say, though, that we can define wrong action out of existence by saying that such an action is the inevitable result of these unique conditions. We can and do make judgments about people's actions or inaction. I am suggesting here that when we make these judgments, it is helpful to do so through the fulfillment of these four levels of responsibility. That said, though, while the first three levels of responsibility are externalized, only the individual can make judgments about those responsibilities to the self. We can see evidence of right action through an individual's acceptance of responsibility. Conversely, we can see evidence of wrong action through the denial of responsibility or failure to act on recognized obligations.

### **Conclusion**

Acting rightly does not require us to become saints. It only requires that we act responsibly. It has been suggested that this is a definition of adulthood. Right action can occur, of course, at many different levels.

Some will engage their modest financial contributions to help adjust distributive inequities by donating some small sum to their favourite charity. Singer suggested setting a standard that is not so high as to be counter-productive to action. He chose, on the basis of the traditional tithing, that 10% of one's income is appropriate.

*"No figure should be advocated as a rigid minimum or maximum; but it seems safe to advocate that those earning average or above average incomes in affluent societies . . . ought to give a tenth of their income to reducing absolute poverty. By any reasonable ethical standards this is the minimum we ought to do, and we do wrong if we do less. (Singer, 1980:181)*

There is still a sense, though, of disengagement or of distance with such actions. Even with these voluntary contributions there is a deliberate distance between those who give and those who receive, between those who act and those who are acted upon. Except for the voluntary aspect of this form of redistribution, this is little different from submitting taxes to a government that, in turn, uses this money for the redistribution of wealth through an agreed-upon set of regulations that establish 'fairness' and also maintain anonymity.

*"My encounters with [the poor] are a parable of moral relations between strangers in the welfare state. . . . The mediated quality of our relationship seems necessary to both of us. They are dependent on the state, not upon me, and we are both glad of it. Yet I am also aware of how this mediation walls us off from each other. We are responsible for each other, but we are not responsible to each other. (Ignatieff, 1986:10)*

This disengagement provides a level of comfort and we may believe that the acceptance of responsibility need only go as far as it is comfortable to us. This brings to mind 'the widow's mite':

*"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.*

*And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:  
For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.” (Luke 21:1-4)*

Responsibility is not meant to be comfortable. The widow gave all that she could. She gave, in fact, *”all the living that she had.”* To give all the living that one has is to be fully engaged. For the professional that means more than simply the anonymous donation of money to an organization that will further distribute it. Right action for the professional involves greater engagement in the world than a simple recognition of distributive injustice. What is called for in responsibility is engagement not distance and anonymity. It is only through engagement that we can avoid the dehumanization of others as objects of charity. It is only through engagement that we can face responsibility directly rather than hide behind the skirts of anonymity and make private decisions about the acceptance or avoidance of responsibility. This means that all one’s faculties are committed to the fulfillment of responsibility: one’s humanity (wealth, compassion, justice); one’s knowledge (expertise); one’s profession; and one’s self.

With all our faculties committed we can be said to be ‘living well’. This does not mean, however, that we must all strive for sainthood. It only means that we have used what resources we have to meet the responsibilities that we can.

Our special skill is architecture. The architect’s fulfillment of obligation must be seen through actions in the world - as social beings/citizens, as professionals and as individuals. The degree of our engagement will depend, in part, on our abilities and in part on the circumstances that are presented to us. Within those parameters, we go as far as we can and we go beyond comfort.

This responsibility is heightened and much more public for the professional. Architectural institutes have often engaged in polling the public about its perception of architects and architecture – often in an effort to better market architectural services to the public. Surveys often conclude that the public must be better educated about the value of the profession and they also mark changing trends about which the savvy architectural firm should be aware. The problem is not in the trends or the ignorance of the public, it is in ourselves. We have established a profession with the intent of protecting the public from the misuse of ‘guilty knowledge’ – from wrong action, but we have yet to determine the extent of right action in the profession. I suggest two conclusions:

- ***That right action entails the fulfillment of these four levels of responsibility.***
- ***That we must redefine or expand the definition of the profession of architecture to include not only the professional level of responsibility but the other three levels as well.***

If the profession is increasingly invisible to the public then it is not because the public is ignorant of its value, but because the profession has been defined so narrowly that the public can no longer see it. If the profession wishes to be seen, it must be seen to be responsible to society in more than just the legal or professional sense. It, and, by extension, its membership, must become more fully responsible. These architects are, to borrow Sam Mockbee’s phrase, ‘citizen architects’<sup>15</sup>.

#### **About the author**

Graeme Bristol, a Canadian registered architect, is the founder and executive director of the Centre for Architecture and Human Rights, a Canadian-registered international foundation advancing a rights-based approach to development in the practice of architecture through research and education programmes as well as ongoing demonstration projects, including mobile schools/community facilities for migrant construction workers and their children in SE Asia. Currently, he is working with King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thailand on

establishing a UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Community Architecture. He has lectured in Europe, South and SE Asia, the US and Canada on issues of architecture and society.

In addition to a BA in English and Philosophy from the University of Western Ontario and a professional degree in Architecture from the University of British Columbia, he holds a research Masters (MASA) in architecture from UBC and an LLM in human rights law from Queen's University Belfast.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Very loosely we could categorize these as: Aristotelian ethics (virtue), Kant and duty, Rousseau and rights, Mill and Utilitarianism. Each has their limits and there is much to be said elsewhere about their value in specific areas such as medicine or the development of the built environment.
- <sup>2</sup> Bristol, "Human Rights in Architectural Education", paper presented at the 2011 UIA Congress, Tokyo.
- <sup>3</sup> Riach, James. "Zaha Hadid defends Qatar World Cup role following migrant worker deaths". The Guardian, 25 Feb 14
- <sup>4</sup> Just what 'guilty knowledge' is in architecture will, of necessity, remain open. The domain of architectural knowledge continues to be disputed and redefined and, indeed, attacked by other organizations involved in the built environment. As Schon understates it: "*the boundaries of architecture are continually shifting*." (Schon, 1983:77)
- <sup>5</sup> Reeck gives the example of guilty knowledge: "*The surgeon, for instance, has 'guilty knowledge', because he can remove an organ from a living body . . . the psychological therapist can shape the human mind . . . [Professionals] are ones whose decisions potentially have enormous, even frightful, impact on other human beings and on the environment.*" (Reeck, 1982:17)
- <sup>6</sup> 'Effectively' here means to me the reduction of unmet needs. The full chapter expands on this concept. This follows Roosevelt's 'Four Freedoms' and in particular 'freedom from want'.
- <sup>7</sup> A number of questions are raised here that cannot be answered in this context. The first con-

cerns the knowledge base of the profession of architecture. What is it that the professional architect is expected to know? It is again the question of the nature and extent of the 'guilty knowledge' that the architect possesses. The second question concerns scarcity. Are architectural resources - that is, professional knowledge - scarce? While numbers may indicate that there are fewer architects serving the population than doctors, that doesn't necessarily say anything about the scarcity of a professional resource. Scarcity, by definition, means that there is not enough of something that is desired. As Winslow points out, "if only one mosquito arrives at a picnic, it is unlikely that anyone will speak of a scarcity of mosquitos." (Winslow, 1982:40) In other words, if it is not desired, it certainly wouldn't be considered scarce. To ask, then, if architectural resources are scarce is to ask not only about the availability of the service where it is needed, but also about desirability of the service. Both of these questions are somewhat contentious, particularly given the difficulty in defining the boundaries of architectural knowledge. Can this footnote be shortened or removed?

- <sup>8</sup> Read more: <http://www.publicinterestdesign.org/2012/11/14/adpsr-prison-design-boycott-re-gains-steam/>
- <sup>9</sup> I am referring here to the oath taken by architects upon registration in British Columbia. It is Bylaw 9.0 in the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- <sup>10</sup> McLachlin points out further that where a conflict arises between the public concern and the specific concerns of the paying client, the engineer is expected by this oath to discontinue any course of action that is harmful to the environment. (McLachlin & Wallace, 1987:38)
- <sup>11</sup> More information about the Three Gorges project: <http://journal.probeinternational.org/three-gorges-probe/>.
- <sup>12</sup> I am referring to the British Columbia Act and the Bylaws of the Architectural Institute of BC. A reading of selected Acts and Bylaws from other jurisdictions suggests similar oversights in those regulations as well. The Bylaw of the Architectural Institute covers some of the general responsibilities of the professional to society, but these are quite general in nature as indicated by the Oath (see 2.2). The Architects Act itself only gives power to the Institute to govern the affairs of its members and states the requirements for that membership. Can this footnote be shortened or removed?
- <sup>13</sup> The standard construction documents, such as CCDC 2 in Canada outline the architect's responsibilities to the client and the contractor. The standard contract form CCAC 6 governing the agreement between client and architect covers the extent of responsibility between the contracting parties. The International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) has similar standard construction documents for use in international construction projects.
- <sup>14</sup> Socrates' position is not as severe as it may first appear. At the 1991 conference of Habitat International Coalition, several Salvadoran architects who had attended the conference had lost colleagues to the death squads. They pointed out that to work with the poor in obtaining housing brands one a communist. Such subversive activity is punishable by death. Yet these architects made that choice and they made the choice to return.
- <sup>15</sup> See <http://citizenarchitectfilm.com/> for more on Mockbee and the Rural Studio.

# Dangerous Architecture: Human Rights and Designers' Responsibilities

Raphael Sperry

A prohibition on the design of spaces intended to violate human rights – specifically execution chambers and spaces for prolonged solitary confinement in the context of the United States today – can improve professional ethics for architects and help to support the broader importance of human rights within the design professions.

In many countries, architects assume that designing to meet the local building code assures that their buildings are safe for the public. But what if a building's harm is not in the risk of the building falling down, but in the building performing as intended? Can a building be a human rights violation? If so, what should an architect – or the design professions more collectively – do about it?

In the United States, execution and the use of prolonged solitary confinement are widespread. In a country that has devoted recent decades to developing “tough on crime” policies such as lengthy criminal sentences for routine crimes, “three strikes and you’re out” laws, and a “war on drugs,” people convicted of crimes are demonized – with clear racial undertones as part of the process – and increasingly harsh treatment of people in prison has become commonplace, reaching its extreme with policies of execution and solitary confinement.

On the other hand, this harsh treatment is also widely criticized: Amnesty International and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture (among many others) have condemned U.S.



“Supermax” prisons are complex buildings intended to hold hundreds of people in solitary confinement for extended periods of time. They use rigid geometries and integrated electrical, mechanical, surveillance, and control systems to reduce human contact and environmental stimulation. Photo credit: Christoph Gielen

practices. Disturbingly, even though American doctors and other medical professionals refuse to participate in state-ordered executions, U.S. death chambers and isolation cells are designed by licensed architects. In response Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility, where I am president, is petitioning the American Institute of Architects (AIA, our main professional organization) to amend its code of ethics to specifically prohibit members from designing spaces intended to violate human rights, much as medical ethics already require.

First off, AIA is to be commended for already having a requirement that members “*uphold human rights in all their professional endeavors*” within its ethics code. Despite the damage done to human rights by U.S. government projects at Guantanamo; at “black sites” in Poland, Romania, and elsewhere; and in domestic prisons; in the English-speaking world neither RIBA (the Royal Institute of British Architects), the Australian Institute of Architects (whose code does emphasize “social justice” and “*being fully mindful of the effect of their work on the interests of all those who may reasonably be expected to use*” it), nor the various Canadian architectural codes take such a strong position on human rights. Neither does UIA (the International Union of Architects) with its model code of ethics. But AIA’s aspirational (and, one notes, sadly unenforceable) language has clearly not been enough to guide members when faced with clients demanding design assistance at or across the line of human rights violations.

### **Human rights apply in everyday life**

Human rights treaties were introduced to protect people against harm by oppressive governments, and civil society has long been a bulwark of their strength; governments seem naturally inclined to resist international oversight or accountability. Architects are part of civil society and our freedom and well-being rise and fall with everyone else’s human rights – just as Pakistani lawyers marching for the return of their chief justice in 2010 were fighting not only for their fellow professionals but for the rights of everyone in the country. But human rights do not only apply in moments of constitutional crisis, but in everyday life as well, when the work of architecture is generally conducted. Architects must be aware of human rights standards to avoid what Hannah Arendt famously called “the banality of evil” — the subtle trajectory from accepting a morally questionable project to becoming familiar enough with a problematic client that one stops questioning their programs.

The problems with execution chambers are well understood in most of the world, and even in a minority of US states. Because people have a right to life enshrined within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, governments (among other actors) cannot kill people. No matter how horrible a crime someone may have committed, human rights demands that we refrain from treating justice as a matter of revenge.

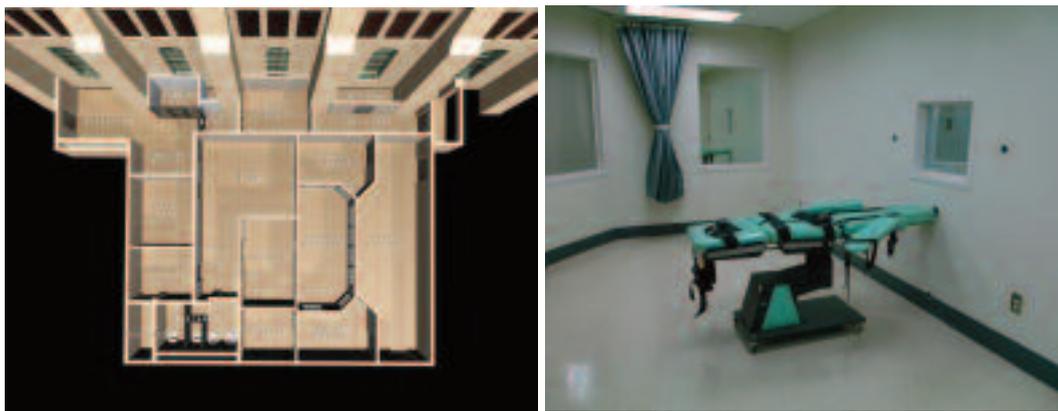
Prolonged solitary confinement is a human rights issue that has become of concern more recently. In American prisons (where it is officially referred to by names such as “segregated housing” or “security housing unit”), people are kept in small windowless cells for up to 23 hours per day; allowed out for one hour for solitary exercise in a barren, high-walled concrete yard; and denied any meaningful forms of environmental stimulation and social interaction for years or even decades in some cases. This treatment is extremely degrading to mental health – among other symptoms, people in solitary confinement frequently hallucinate, cut themselves, and smear their feces on themselves and their cell walls. While only 4% of U.S. prisoners are in solitary confinement (which is actually a shockingly high percentage compared to many other countries, and accounts for 80,000 people on a typical day), over 50% of prison suicides occur in solitary confinement.

In 2011, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture declared that solitary confinement should never be used on juveniles or people who are mentally ill, and should be limited to 15 days for healthy adults. However, the average stay in solitary confinement within some American states

is 4 years or more. Human rights include a prohibition on torture of other “cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment” – thus even if one does not necessarily find isolation to be a form of torture (and many observers do find this), there is widespread consensus on its cruelty and inhumanity. Pelican Bay State Prison in California includes over 1,000 cells specifically designed for prolonged solitary confinement; and there are over 40 other similar “supermaximum” prisons in other parts of the country. These buildings can not be used as intended without causing human rights violations. Along with longstanding objections to the death penalty, this is the basis of ADPSR’s proposal that AIA members be prohibited from designing executions and prison spaces intended for prolonged solitary confinement.

While ADPSR’s proposed amendment to the AIA ethics code is primarily concerned with addressing the problematic parts of the US prison system, the proposal would have international benefit as well. The United States has been a world leader in innovative penology since the early 19th century and the U.S. continues to use its imperial position to coerce and cajole other countries around the world to make use of American models (although the “tough on crime” trend in the U.S. has cooled interest in American innovations in Europe and some other parts of the world). Specifically, American prison architects and planners have long been providers of design assistance to developing countries seeking to adopt “modern” prison designs. Iraq’s notorious Abu Ghraib prison was designed by American architects in the 1950’s, when the United States worked to build a compliant regime that would favor business with American oil interests in the region and include a semblance of democratic government. More recently, US firms have worked in Mexico, Colombia, the United Arab Emirates... places where a prison “interrogation suite” on an architectural program today may well be on the visit list from Human Rights Watch tomorrow. Not coincidentally, these are also countries where the U.S. supports military and paramilitary forces in the so-called global “War on Drugs” and “War on Terror.” The infamous secret CIA “black site” prisons outside the U.S. were built with prefabricated U.S.-made cells, and while it’s not clear if US architects were involved, would it have been any better (or worse?) if local architects did the job? To prevent these kinds of projects from happening, no one should be designing them in the first place, and restricting the participation of American firms in this kind of work through the AIA Code of Ethics could be a first good step.

Of course it is not only American architecture firms that may design human rights violating prisons, just as it’s not only the United States government that causes human rights violations. Recognizing the tremendous need for progress in protecting human rights all over the world does not require a morbid contest to see which countries have the poorest human rights record. And while many would agree that U.S. government leadership in human rights is rather tarnished (with the Iraq War being only the most recent and most obvious example), many



This CAD model (see rendering) was used to design a new execution chamber in the State of California’s San Quentin State Prison (photo). The same tools that most architects use to make the world a better place can be used to kill people. Rendering and photo credit: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

American and U.S.-based civil society organizations continue to support human rights. Leadership by AIA on human rights within the sphere of architecture could well be the impetus needed to get other countries' architectural organizations and the International Union of Architects (UIA) to add human rights to their model code. As architecture becomes an increasingly globalized practice human rights must be shared internationally, so that it becomes impossible to recruit design professionals from anywhere in the world to design spaces with the intention of violating human rights.

### **A minimal level of decency**

People in prison are a hard group to argue for. Outside of the unjustly imprisoned (a surprisingly high percentage in the U.S., even on death row, where their cases receive the most scrutiny), people in prison have broken the law, often harming others, sometimes horribly. But prisoners' human rights are not about their crimes, but about protecting our societies from falling below a minimal level of decency and ensuring that we continue to aim for our highest aspirations. As President Obama said of Nelson Mandela, "*he was fighting for the freedom of the prisoners but also for the freedom of the jailers.*"

For architects, this means that when we design prisons, we take responsibility not only for the conditions of prisoners and guards on the inside, but for the status of freedom of everyone on the outside as well. While legislators, governors, and prison staffers hold the greatest responsibility for prison conditions – after all, any room can be used to torture someone, not just one intended as a solitary isolation cell – the share for designers is too great a burden for the architects who devote their careers to this task to handle alone. This is why ADPSR is asking AIA as a whole to speak clearly and forcefully for human rights. It is also why ADPSR and AIA should ask our counterparts around the world to adopt similar measures.

The good news is that embracing human rights supports the ethos of architecture as a profession. Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and you will find that all people have a right to housing, education, and medical care: the need for dignified buildings in which these activities will take place makes architecture implicit in the Declaration. What's more, people have a right to "*freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement*": that is, they have a right to be architects (among other things), and architects' cultural expression is protected from political retaliation. Human rights envision a world of peace, equality, and prosperity – the world that architects strive to build every day. Turning our backs on projects that would violate human rights is an essential move towards realizing that vision.

*Note: a version of this piece first appeared in The Architectural Review, April, 2014*

### **About the author**

**Raphael Sperry**, AIA, is president of Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility – USA. He researches the intersection of architecture and planning with a special focus on human rights related to prisons and jails. He advocates for design professionals to play a larger role in supporting human rights in the built environment. He is a licensed architect and a sustainable design consultant. He has taught courses on green architecture at Stanford University and California College of the Arts. He holds an M.Arch. from the Yale School of Architecture and a B.A. summa cum laude from Harvard University.



# Professional Practice absent an Ethical Framework

Paul Broches

**How can we pursue** the practices of planning and architecture without a commonly held ethical framework that holds human rights, economic and social justice sacred?

To read the United States Constitution, one would think that Americans are in good hands. But so often we as a nation have disappointed: we have the death penalty, torture, prolonged incarceration; one of the highest poverty rates in the world; voter suppression; unabated racism, cowboys on the subject of gun control, weak on women's rights we could go on. While the tenets of the Constitution are a strong foundation for civil society, it is shocking to witness the extent to which they are ignored. Nevertheless, there is an ethical framework established in the Constitution that allows us to measure our failures. There is a gap between public policy and enacting that policy that cripples most institutions even though these policies are in place to protect our mutual interests. At least there is a document to which we can refer to try to bring reason to our government.

Similar disappointment and frustration are evident in far too many political systems. Most struggle with the dialectic between those in power and their "constituents" – the haves versus the have nots. They are either overtly oppressive or exercise control behind veiled liberal ideals.

How can that be? As fellow ADPSR member, Raphael Sperry, reminds us, as early as 536 BC,



The tower of Babylon. Source:  
<http://www.wallpapergate.com/wallpaper40714.html>

in Babylon, Cyrus the Great freed slaves, declared freedom of religion and racial equality. The table was set properly long, long ago. How is it that so many political systems and nation states have abrogated fundamental human rights, periodically reinstated them under pressure from the disenfranchised under class, only to allow them to be buried time and again. Our current fascination with a "global vision" further dilutes the heart of the matter.

Democratic governments will claim fundamental human rights as their base line value, however, when called upon to integrate those values in their political systems or to join the international treaties that will set standards and provide oversight, few of the major powers will

sign on. International organizations under the UN umbrella are unable to impress these values upon their members, largely because some of the most powerful countries managed by politicians and technocrats have the most egregious records. Even the UN related aid organizations, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and regional development banks fall prey to the questionable practices of the beneficiary nations.

### **Work for empowerment**

History tells us that "top down" authority frequently leads those in power to lose touch with their plaintive, poor and suffering subjects. It is my position that "bottom-up" empowerment is more hopeful at matching intentions with need. Grass roots development is by its very nature more capable of formulating appropriate strategies and persuading those with investment capacity that their vision is sound.

Architects and planners who aim to create better environments that can help to provide the foundation for better social conditions and better quality of life for underserved people are constrained by the same forces that oppress those they want to help.

While the financial and political leverage needed to accomplish change remains an uphill struggle, strong local initiatives provide critical hope for success. Within the ARC PEACE world, we can speak to several very successful models to build on community commitment to

overcome inequality and social injustice.



Luz Maria Sanchez of ARC-PEACE Peru addressing members of a poor community.

In Peru ARC PEACE co-chairs Luz Maria Sanchez, Director of a Peruvian NGO, Estrategia, leads a grass roots organization that works toward securing land and property rights for squatters living in hillside favelas surrounding Lima. Rising land values and development pressures threaten the hillside residents for whom there were no legal remedies. until Women United for a Better Community was formed.

Faced with more than 600 settlements around Lima without land titles, Ms. Sanchez developed a

strategy to form manageable communities of families, relying on the women to understand the dilemma, develop the skills necessary to argue their case against land grabbers and government to obtain housing and access to land. Over time these communities had already obtained assistance from international organizations to obtain water, sewage systems and a system of retaining walls to adapt their houses to the steep hillsides. What they lacked was control over the property.

*"The problems start when the private sector without land titles themselves, demand high payments for land occupation from the occupants"* states Sanchez. Once she made contact with vulnerable communities, they understood in short order that by organizing as a group they would have a chance to take control of their destiny. The first step for Luz was to identify the leading member(s) of a number of communities and to bring them together for training and given her conviction that women would perform best in the effort to gain land titles to get them comfortable in this role. Her ultimate goal was to empower them to go back to their communities and "recruit" more women to take on leadership roles in their communities. Once the leadership team was in place, they received training on how to negotiate with the

government, take possession of the land and raise money necessary to obtain land titles at a fair price. They also learned sophisticated skills to predict and overcome obstacles that might otherwise derail their efforts.

The Women United made a presentation of their intentions at a UN HABITAT conference in Nairobi in 2008 and on the strength of that exposure were able to obtain UN funding to start a pilot project in Lima. A condition was added to their funding agreement that would provide additional funding to work on a national level if certain metrics were reached with their pilot project. To succeed, the process includes teaching each other to build retaining walls on hills and staircases to facilitate community engagement and daily living – a critical instrument for other forms of community building. Since its inception in 2009, the program has gone national, including communities in the High Andes. Even in areas where the women have limited education the program has been successful. Scaling up from the pilot project was planned carefully ”spread the word” in every way possible.

### **Enabling methods for survival**

What we have learned from similar examples discussed among ARC PEACE members is that direct engagement with disenfranchised people and gaining an understanding of their coping devices and strategies for survival before proposing seeking funding and other enabling methods promises greater likelihood for success than applying “universal” strategies.

Another example in a different part of the world was presented at a recent bi-annual meeting of ARC.PEACE in Vienna by Philippine architect, Andrea Fitrianto, an ARC PEACE member active in the Asian Coalition for Community Action. As the ACCA describes it, *“The ACCA has set out to transform development options for Asia’s urban poor by supporting a process of community-led change in 150 cities in 15 Asian countries. The program’s activities build on established, successful models of people-led community development and are helping scale them up by repeated replication. Urban poor communities are the key doers in this process, as they tackle problems of land, infrastructure, social and economic development and housing at scale. The program began in November 2008. By 2014 it had expanded to 165 cities in 19 counties”*.\*

Fitrianto describes an elegant project executed in a poor sector of Davao City in the Philippines, as an important teaching/learning experience for the community who came to understand that their most available resource, bamboo, could become a key sustainable, renewable and outside of the economy construction tool for the construction of houses, but for



The Matina footbridge in the Philippines, built by bamboo within a project of the Asian Community Architect Network.

*and connected to achieve a unique and amazing piece of architecture and engineering. Together, these bamboo members form an arched bridge with a span of twenty-three meters over the silent and very unpredictable Matina River”*.\*

their civic projects, as well. Left to mature, the bamboo has remarkable strength and resilience.

The Matina Footbridge project became an amazing symbol of unity and hope for three communities that became connected when the footbridge was constructed to join the communities by crossing the Matina River.

*“Each bamboo member of the bridge represents each member of the association who are joined*

To sum up, planning for change can succeed when plans are arrived at in unison with a collective vision. Start at a scale where a local social fabric is strong and there is mutuality of purpose: a sound social program, a responsive political mandate and a community ready to take it on. Consider “Scaling up” if and when the local effort gets traction.

#### **About the author**

Paul Broches is a senior partner at Mitchell/Giurgola Architects in New York where he has practiced for more than 40 years. At the firm, Mr. Broches leads design teams on a wide range of civic, cultural and education projects, primarily in New York. He is a Fellow in the American Institute of Architects, active in the Committees on Urban Design and Architecture for Education. Of particular importance to his work is collaboration with artists, a commitment to the craft of building and, above all, a dedication to architecture as a social art.



In 2013, Paul was elected to the National Academy of Design in recognition of his significant contributions to American architecture. He has published articles in a variety of publications, including “*Beyond Zuccotti Park: Freedom of Assembly and the Occupation of Public Space*,” published by the New Village Press in 2012. He is also a member of the Berkeley Prize Committee, an international awards program for undergraduate architecture students intended to promote architecture as a social art through research, writing and criticism. This competition draws entries from more than 40 countries.

Mr. Broches is a long time member of Architects Designers and Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) and a member of the Board of ARC PEACE, representing the NGO at the United Nations in support of human rights and social justice.

# Sustainable Development as an Export Article: Ethics and Dilemmas

Øystein Grønning

## Introduction

In 2010, Norplan<sup>1</sup> won an international competition for the Mutrah Redevelopment Master Plan (MRMP). I was a full-time Team Leader for this Master Plan from early 2011 through 2012, with recurring follow-up assignments through 2013. In 2012 I was engaged by a national aid agency for university-based cooperation<sup>2</sup> to review the programme for a Rural Development project in Palestine, between a European university and a Palestinian counterpart university. In 2013 I was re-engaged to review the project's Progress Report. In both instances the task included recommending programme adjustments if seen as necessary to meet project goals.

Both assignments focused on sustainability. This has provided a basis for reflections on the topic of Sustainable Development as an export article, in particular on the relations between specialist and recipient, and on the difference between aid programmes and commercial international consultant contracts.

## Palestine: Capacity Building for Rural Development

The name of the project is self-explanatory. In an abstract, the aid agency in this case states: *“It is necessary to evaluate the rural environment status in Palestine, its main profile, and the danger resulting from environmental deterioration to formulate strategies to protect the Palestinian rural environment.”*

The aims and goals of the project are *”to make their (i.e. the Palestinian recipient university's) spatial planning curricula and research relevant, improve the teaching/learning approaches and enhance the competence of their graduates in problems of rural planning and community development”*.

This is a foreign aid project aimed at environmentally sustainable rural development. No reference is made to the Israeli occupation (except in the project name), nor the ongoing colonisation and the continued state of war. This is a decisive flaw: the one overriding factor is omitted, namely the occupation. At the UN Habitat conference at An-Najah University in Nablus, Palestine, in March 2012, it was widely held that sustainable spatial development is void of meaning as long as the Israeli occupation and colonisation continues. Under these extreme circumstances the focus must be on protective territorial strategies and defensive tactical measures.<sup>3</sup>

The Palestinian territorial situation is dominated by an occupation where Israel continually grabs Palestinian lands for Zionist<sup>4</sup> colonisation. Therefore it does not make sense to isolate environmental and sustainability topics from the fact of the occupation, as this particular aid project seems to do. One can also ask, albeit rhetorically, what it is that enables specialists from a peaceful European nation *“to make their spatial planning curricula and research relevant, improve the teaching/learning approaches and enhance the competence of their graduates in*

*problems of rural planning and community development*”, given the fact of war and colonisation.



Illegal colony on the West Bank foothills. Typical architecture: larger colonies are built in a fortress fashion.

### Dilemmas

The obvious critique set aside, the case calls for a more general discussion of dilemmas. Here are two:

A. Disparity between Donor and Recipient: The Palestinians have been subject to numerous aid programmes since the Oslo Accords, many aimed at capacity building. To the Palestinians, the programmes have become a

way of upholding a minimum of activity in ministries, directorates, universities and NGOs. To question such programmes would be to counteract their means of sustenance. For donor countries, the motivation is presumably more complex. A core motive is surely about helping out. But from experience I know all too well that there are others. One is about subsidizing domestic export of consultant services and industry, through enforcing industrial and other standards that will bind recipient to donor. It is a well-known fact that foreign aid budgets are massively used to strengthen home businesses. Palestine has been no exception.

The dilemma, then, can be summarised in a rather blunt question: who is actually aiding whom?

B. Sustainable occupation: In the case of Palestine we must look critically on more than two decades of massive aid. The so-called peace process has brought the Palestinians very little in terms of actual progress, with the possible exception of international recognition as a people and nation. The situation on the ground has become continuously worse. Israel has increased the colonisation of Palestinian lands, knowing that they can do so without risking international sanctions. Twenty years of aid programmes on territorial planning have not brought Palestine

any closer to control of their own territory, which is the basic objective of spatial planning. On the contrary, the Palestinians are losing this battle too.

The dilemma must therefore be formulated as this: is the function of the aid programmes to maintain a minimum of activity for Palestinians, whilst also guaranteeing Israel’s intensified occupation, colonisation and ethnic cleansing? The Israeli critic Miko Peled maintains that this, indeed, was the goal of the Oslo Process, and that the Oslo Accords therefore have been a success: Israel has won. He stated this at a conference in Oslo in June 2014.<sup>5</sup>



Ma’ale Adumim, one of the largest Israeli colonies, east of Jerusalem. The colony has expanded substantially and now holds 40 000 inhabitants. Ma’ale Adumim is home to the production of SodaStream, widely exported globally. Photo taken 1996 by author.

The donor countries are financing civic society and thereby life in the occupied country, contrary to International Law, which explicitly says that this is the obligation of the occupier. The international community is indirectly paying Israel's war bills. One could actually ask if our leaders may have an interest in maintaining status quo. As long as Palestinian leaders are obliged to remain true to obsolete agreements, hopelessness is widespread. And hopelessness breeds revolt, which in turn transforms Palestinian lands into a permanent experimental field for weapons innovation. This adds an interesting dimension to the conflict. One should probably not underestimate it when one asks what makes Western leaders so reluctant to confront Israel's violations of UN resolutions and International Law.

The initial review pointed out the need to base the programme on the fact of the occupation, and recommended an adjustment of the focus of sustainable rural development accordingly. The Progress Report reflected no such programmatic adjustment but seemed to pursue the programme as if the situation was "ordinary", as seen from the domestic perspective of the donor country's specialists.

### Conclusions/

My concluding critique is that the programme fails to offer an alternative to conventional



Daily life under occupation. Zionist colony minors under IDF protection harassing locals in Hebron. Picture copyright: Hebron Rehabilitation Centre.

(Western) ideals in sustainable development planning. It fails in investigating what territorial countermeasures to Israel's colonisation could signify in terms of academic training. This is a war and an occupation. Nothing in the programme or the Progress Report reflects this fact. I find no trace of an academic or aid-relevant approach to confronting Israel's "creating new facts on the ground" policies with territorial and environmentally defensible countermeasures.

A subsidiary conclusion would be that the true aim of the programme is to export conventional

European/Western thought on sustainable and environmentally friendly planning, in this case on rural community development. In the context of the prevailing war and colonisation, the effect is that the programme maintains status quo, i.e. sustains the occupation. That is certainly not in the interest of Palestinian society, neither on the rural community level nor the national. Irrespective of its initial ambition and the cooperation established between European and Palestinian academia, the programme fails to address sustainability in a way that makes sense.

### **Oman: the Mutrah Redevelopment Master Plan (MRMP)**

Mutrah is part of old Muscat, reputedly the warmest capital city on earth (annual average) and situated in a climatically arid zone. The population is around 32 000.

In this example, the consultant team answered to local authorities. Muscat Municipality and the publicly owned water- and sewerage company Haya Water were the clients. They represent considerable expertise and were professional in their ways of handling consultants. There was a strong element of parity between client and consultant throughout the project period. Client staff members were mostly local but also consisted of experts from many countries. Students from one university joined the consultant team for baseline studies (questionnaires) and as interns, as part of a knowledge transfer element (on-the-job training).

During initial discussions between client and consultant, an agreement was reached on the issue of sustainability: one of three core objectives of the Master Plan was to be environmentally sustainable urban development. What precisely this implied became the topic of a series of early

workshops, where client and public authority stakeholders participated together with the consultant team (generalists and specialists, plus university staff and students).

The challenge was to conceptualise sustainability in the specific context of Mutrah, targeting the strategic plan level of goals, measures and interventions.

### Sustainability Concept

The sustainability concept is specific and aimed at defining not merely workable interventions but also measurable effects. Region, city, village or community within a larger urban context represent different levels of geography. They may depend on interventions on a higher geographic level for environmental sustainability. Some challenges are simply not effectively



The Sur Alawatiya waterfront in Mutrah: a ghetto element of some 400 years' standing, home to the Indian Shi'ite Alawati community. Discussed for potential UNESCO World Heritage status in the Master Plan.

addressed on a limited scale such as Mutrah. This clearly goes for public transportation, which must be solved on an urban regional scale. Mutrah could hook on to a system that serves greater Muscat. But measures in Mutrah can precede large-scale solutions, and even serve as examples for the capital region to follow. This was a basic common ground for the work.

Mutrah's strongest quality in terms of sustainability is the low ratio of private car use. This is due to two important factors, the city's high physical and population density, and the fact that a large proportion of the people who work in Mutrah also live there (70%, according to our surveys). People live there, work there, go to school there and shop there. It is basically a working-class community. The starting point, therefore, was that Mutrah stands out as a positive sustainability example in an urban region characterized by ever growing sprawl and dependency on private car use. Interventions in order to reduce car use, typical for conventional Western thinking, would thus not be a priority in the MRMP.

The sustainability concept targeted effects and interventions were categorized accordingly, with a priority for high-gain interventions. These do not exclude interventions with low gains or effects that are not easily measured. All interventions, however, were related to a specific category, so that each one stood out in terms of specific goals and assumed effects.

Different categories of interventions were defined, all activated within the Plan area.

#### Category 1: High-gain Interventions

Type: Technical and infrastructural interventions.

Goal: Measurable and substantial positive effects on the environment.

Effect: Reduction of emissions.

#### Category 2: Low-gain Interventions

Type: Tangible interventions focused on urban environments, but difficult to measure.

Goal: Improve urban environmental conditions in terms of walkability and bikeability (outdoors activities during the hot season).

Effect: Increased urban comfort, reduction of heat-island effects (protection from excessive heat).

#### Category 3: Experimental Interventions

Type: Interventions that are needed on a regional scale, but justifiable for experimental,

educational and symbolic reasons in the Mutrah context.

Goal: Demonstrate effective use of new environmentally friendly technology, raise knowledge, awareness and pride.

Effect: Reduction of emissions.

More to the point, the interventions were aimed at reducing consumption of energy, reducing consumption of potable water, using renewable energy for electricity production, recycling of solid waste, and increasing pedestrian qualities.

In the context of the MRMP Project the sustainability concept had five steps:

#### Definition of measurable goals

1. Brief *analyses* of electricity use, waste generation, water consumption and transport, generating an estimate of greenhouse gas emissions per inhabitant in Mutrah.

2. *Solutions*, divided into sub-sections energy, water, waste, transport, microclimate and building materials.

3. *Improvements*: recommended interventions (solutions) were summarised. Tables gave overviews of objective, action, evaluation criteria, target for 2020 and expected gain by 2020 for each intervention.



Survey with architecture students from the collaborating university. Typical residential street in Mutrah, too narrow to allow car traffic.

4. *Implementation and follow-up* plan to ensure that goals are to be met.

5. *The focus of the sustainability concept* is on environmental issues. Social and economic issues are covered elsewhere.

#### Dilemma

Two dilemmas emerged during our discussions on sustainability.

A. The consultant team faced internal disagreements. They were interesting in that they reflect current diverging methodologies. Since the consultant team consisted of collaborating international consultancies headed by Norplan, two opposing views on “conceptualising” emerged. One group, which had been given the responsibility for environmental issues, came up with “Walkable Mutrah” as the answer to

conceptualising sustainability in the Mutrah context. In contrast to this slogan-based proposal, a different group maintained that a concept must be transparent and accountable for proving that effects can actually be substantiated. A decision was made to go with the latter; the client wanted to be able to prove that measures actually had effects.

B. Two traditions emerged. The former is a post-modernist one, where appearance plays a marked role, here as slogans and corresponding measures (mainly microclimatic ones). The latter can be seen as a systemic tradition, a systemic pragmatist approach that focuses effects as measurable, transparent and substantial. This approach has given the client a tool for controlling that the consultants for the detailed plans, and later the contractors, will follow up on sustainability ambitions. Sloganising is far more elusive, but possibly more easily marketed, in line with general post-modernism.

1. A commercial consultant is, by priority, commanded by a client. Differences of opinion are discussed, whether they are on goals and objectives, or on interventions and measures. In cases where differences in opinion seem unbridgeable, the client “wins”, often in the form of a compromise. This is part of client-consultant ethics: it is, after all, client moneys that the

consultant is spending. But it is also the ethical plight of the consultant to point to the consequences of the client's choices. This is the role of the planner.

2. If the project is found disagreeable one simply does not enter the competition. If one wants to win, however, one's professional profile and values are made clear in the bid document. With sustainability as important, one must convince the client of professionalism and willingness to really investigate sustainability as an option, not merely regurgitate conventional "sustainability" thinking and bland, unsubstantiated preconceptions.

## Conclusions

Sustainability as a concept underwent thorough equal-base, open discussions between client and consultant. The only dictation was the client's decision on making sustainability an objective for the Master Plan. We didn't mind.

The dilemma, in other words, is resolved by clear ethics on the side of the consultant. The element of "export" of sustainable development became a matter of matching international professional expertise with professional client agencies. This is developing through learning as a matter of principle.

Ethical dilemmas will always be present and often apparent in cases such as the two discussed here. On a general level one could say that work must always be guided by professional ethics, including a healthy intellectual curiosity.

International aid has some weaknesses that are easily pinpointed. Nowadays these are targets for much criticism. One can probably conclude that the example of Palestine shows inability or unwillingness to adjust the programme according to the reality of Israel's occupation and colonisation of the land that is home to the rural communities the project intends to study. There is an astonishing lack of intellectual and academic curiosity in this example. The project is a failure. What is even worse is that it upholds Palestinian dependence on aid in a situation where this rids the occupant of her obligations. Less money spent on the conquered population means more money for military force and land grabbing. One could moralise on this, but morals kept aside, one would be wise to never underestimate the business interests of the international aid community, neither that nor those of the expert communities involved, nor those of the countries that push "aid" for the purpose of promoting domestic industry.

The example of Oman shows how professionals from both client and consultant sides can, under conditions free from of the donor-recipient relationship, establish a teamwork ruled by investigative curiosity and innovation. The ethical imperative is no different in the two examples, but the power relations certainly are. It is hard to be a recipient ruled by desperation, and simultaneously insist on maintaining professional integrity.

## About the author

**Øystein Grønning** has been an adviser of long standing for the Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Planning, under the Oslo Agreement. He has lived in Gaza, and the West Bank - Jerusalem off and on from 1995 to 2005. In addition, he has been a consultant specialist on Jerusalem for the Negotiation Support Unit of the PLO under the Road Map for Peace 2003 - 04. In 2011 -13 he was Team Leader for the Mutrah Redevelopment Master Plan, a strategic physical plan for revitalizing the old port city of Mutrah in Muscat, Oman<sup>6</sup>.



Grønning lives in Oslo Norway, where he presently is Special Adviser on Urbanism and Sustainable Urban Development with Ramboll<sup>7</sup> Norway. He also maintains his own studio, migrant AS architecture+urbanism.

<sup>1</sup> International consultancy company based in Norway, branch offices in, a.o., UAE and Oman

<sup>2</sup> The name and country of the agency are withheld for reasons of anonymity, as are the names of the universities.

- <sup>3</sup> The author was a keynote speaker at the conference, invited to speak on the prospect of environmentally friendly and sustainable development in Palestine.
- <sup>4</sup> Zionism, in this context, means the particular geopolitical concept of exclusive land rights for Jews on lands historically settled by what is known as Palestinians. In other words a religious category (Jews) versus a national one (Palestinians, which includes many religious communities including the Samaritan Jews. Palestinians, now predominantly Christian and Muslim, have converted from Judaism throughout the centuries).
- <sup>5</sup> See also “The General’s Son. Journey of an Israeli in Palestine”, Miko Peled, Just World Books 2012.
- <sup>6</sup> Mutrah, also transcribed to Mattrah, old port city adjacent to old Muscat, pop. ca 32.000. Port city for at least 500 years. Cosmopolitan with traditionally very mixed population, with Omani, Baluchi, Indian Alawatiy (Shiite) and Hindi as dominant groups, but also African, Pakistani, Iranian and others.
- <sup>7</sup> International consultancy company with branch offices in 22 countries, based in Denmark.

# Exclusive Plans: Israeli Architecture and the Jewish National Fund (JNF)

Abe Hayeem

## The JNF and the Architects

The Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet Leyisrael in Hebrew, JNF-KKL) started buying land for exclusive Jewish settlement in 1901 “to be held in perpetual trust for the Jewish people”. Arab resistance to Zionist settlement in remote parts of the country began to increase, culminating in the Great Arab Mutiny in Jaffa in 1936. At the same time, Zionist organisations developed a settlement offensive plan, to create a chain of settlements throughout Palestine on JNF purchased land. These were fortified against attacks using a form of pre-fabricated construction called the ‘Wall & Tower’ (Homa Umigdal in Hebrew).

This settlement model, the earliest evidence of Israeli architecture initiated by the JNF, set the pattern for settlements after 1948, and for the future fortified outposts and settlements



Early Zionist Watchtower.

throughout the West Bank post 1967- including the Separation Wall of recent years with its massive battlements and circular watch-towers. Homa Umigdal was invented in 1936 by members of Kibbutz Tel Amal in the Beit Shean valley, but particularly by Shlomo Gur, and developed by the architect Yohanan Ratner. Gur was responsible for planning the defence and construction of many settlements including the Old City.<sup>(1)</sup>

The purpose of Homa Umigdal was to establish a presence on land that had been purchased, but was not yet populated. These fortified settlements were to be erected quickly, easily defended, and within sight of other settlements. The same strategy of civilian-military planning was employed throughout Israel after 1948 in the form of the mitzpim (lookout settlements) on land confiscated from existing Arab towns and villages. The Jewish settlements took commanding positions, overlooking the neighbouring Arab communities. This process continued after 1967 with the development of illegal settlements on hilltops in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, in line with Ariel Sharon’s edict to “grab every hill”, whose radial designs along the contours, described in Eyal Weizman’s “Hollow Land”, enabled visual observation and monitoring of the Palestinian neighbourhoods, to deter “terrorist elements” and to “inform the authorities of any suspicious movement.” Thus the Israeli government was:

*“enlisting its civilian population to act as its agents alongside state power and serve the state’s security aims. The task of the civilian settlers is to help turn the occupied*

*territory into an optical matrix radiating out from a proliferation of lookout points/settlements scattered across the landscape’ “<sup>(2)</sup>*

The first Homa Umigdal outpost in Kibbutz Tel Amal in the Jezreel Valley was built to ward off and remove armed Bedouin who were grazing the land around the kibbutz. The land had been purchased by the JNF from Arab landowners outside Palestine. Thus began the pattern of driving the indigenous population off the land and the expansion of Jewish settlements. Today, settlers of the West Bank, supported by Israel’s Civil Administration in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), continue to expropriate Palestinian lands, often terrorising them of f their fields.

### **The politics of Israeli architecture**

The synergetic link between the JNF and the acquisition and expropriation of land, the military and defence forces (later the Haganah and then the IDF) and the Israeli architects (adrichalim) of the kibbutzim, moshavim (agricultural villages), towns and cities, is what makes every act of building so political and controversial in Israel and the occupied territories. Again, as Eyal Weizman says in *Hollow Land*:

*“Most Israeli architects building in the West Bank do not see the panorama as constituting a strategic and defensive category. They have simply internalised the security discourse of the state and have learned to use it when discussing matters with state agents in order to get their projects approved. When they have designed neighbourhoods and settlements overlooking the surrounding landscape, they have generally done so in order to provide residents with views of the landscape”<sup>(3)</sup>*

Zionist veteran and later Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion recognised the importance of the adrichalim when he placed the state Planning Department directly in the Prime Minister’s office in 1948. He oversaw the work directly; ever since, every act of building in Israel and the OPT has been politically charged. As Zvi Efrat has written, Arie Sharon, an architect of the Bauhaus school, was:

*“... commissioned to establish ... an overall master plan for Israel ... providing temporary housing solutions for the masses of new Jewish immigrants and settling the country’s borderlands in order to stabilize the 1948 ceasefire lines, prevent territorial concessions and inhibit the return of the Palestinian war refugees. The planners accomplished this by drafting a state-wide network of civil frontiers composed of transit camps and agrarian outpost settlements, as well as re-settling deserted Arab villages with new Jewish immigrants ... a long-term mission, for the country’s intense and comprehensive development which would reach all its corners ... with the moral and material support provided by the world’s superpowers for the new state ... a project of construction (and obliteration) – more daring than any of its imagined precedents”<sup>(4)</sup>*

The Israeli architect and writer Sharon Rotbard has commented especially regarding the Western trained architects who responded to this highly politicised situation where they were mobilized to serve the Zionist project.

*“They attempted to allow political ideology to infiltrate through the architectural forms and enabled architectural doctrines to express themselves through programmes inspired or even dictated by politics. In Israel, political ideology and architectural doctrine are dependent on one another and are in a constant and complex dialogue*

*of justification and argumentation ... besides relinquishing the universal viewpoint held by Western (and some Eretz Israeli architects) that was rooted in the dialectics between theory and practise, the Israeli 'Adrichalut' is rooted between politics and architecture ... and lacks a reflexive, comprehensive view of itself; mobilized by the political ideologies, it establishes facts cast in concrete that are inherently political, but lacks political awareness entirely".<sup>(5)</sup>*

This is why Israeli architects never seem to question the morality or methods by which the land on which they are building was acquired, or that what they are building consolidates and entrenches an apartheid system that dispossesses and denies land and property rights to Palestinian citizens of Israel and the OPT.

### **Land acquisition and building**

Prior to 1948, the JNF (and its predecessor the Jewish Colonisation Association) was the main instrument of land purchase, mainly from absentee Arab landowners residing in Beirut, which "necessitated the forced removal of the Palestinian peasantry... by heavily armed paramilitary groups"<sup>(6)</sup>. Then, only 5.5% of Palestine (approximately 3000 sqkm) was under Jewish ownership. In 1948 the highly trained Haganah carried out Plan Dalet<sup>(7)</sup> under the leadership of Ben-Gurion and the Israeli generals, fighting rag-tag Arab armies and amateurish, ineffective village resistance. The geographer Salman Abu Sitta became a refugee and was a witness to the events: 675 Palestinian villages and towns were destroyed, their inhabitants driven out, making 750,000 refugees<sup>(8)</sup>.

At the end of the 1948 war, 93% of Palestinian land on the Israeli side of the armistice line was sequestered to the Israeli state using a whole series of 'Kafkaesque' forms of legislation (e.g. the Absentee Properties Act, The Present Absentees classification, Land Acquisition Orders). The best real estate, mainly from the destroyed villages and their farmland, was acquired or 'sold' to the JNF (about 13 percent of all the land, with funds from Diaspora Jewry). 'Internal' refugees were denied return to their villages and land which were allocated to kibbutzim. A close alliance between the state and the privately-owned JNF was formed, so the JNF collectively owns and manages all the 93 percent, in tandem with the state - owned Israeli Land Administration, on which it has half the seats on the board.

In May 1948 the Jewish population of the new Israeli state numbered 650,000, scattered over some 305 towns. 235 of these towns stood on JNF land. The land sequestration has no validity under international law. This applies to the "no-man's land" in Jerusalem, yet after the 1967 war, Israel treated this area along the interim armistice Green line, as if it owned it, and illegally annexed East Jerusalem and the Old City. Major developments here, like Mamilla (once a thriving 'mixed' town mostly demolished) in Jerusalem were carried out by the world famous architect Moshe Safdie. As Ilan Pappé says:

*"The JNF also owned land in the Greater Jerusalem area –after the 1967 war. In the early eighties this land was passed on to Elad, the settler's NGO, devoted to the Judaization of East Jerusalem ..who stated openly that it wanted to cleanse Silwan from its original Palestinian inhabitants"<sup>(9)</sup>*

This unfortunately is now proceeding in leaps and bounds, aided by Israeli architects and archaeologists under control of Elad, to establish the "City of David". Moshe Safdie is also designing the 'King David Park' in threatened Silwan, involving mass demolition of Silwan residents' housing to create parks and routes linking all the sites relating to Jewish biblical narrative, that will encircle or exclude Silwan residents.

These important facts show that it would be difficult to find any development designed by Israeli architects and planners that does not involve the JNF, which, instead of being dissolved

after the foundation of the Israeli State, in fact plays a key function in land ownership and development on both sides of the Green Line. It even played a central role in establishing the first modern Jewish city Tel Aviv. The JNF was also involved in establishing new Jewish settlements on the lands of destroyed villages.

### **Non-state Jewish organisations**

Like the JNF, the Jewish Agency, is part of the parent World Zionist Organisation of Israel and the Jewish diaspora. These organisations are not state agencies; they operate parallel to the state. The Jewish Agency promotes and manages *aliyah* (Jewish immigration) to Israel and settlements in the OPT, purchases land in Israel for settlers through the Jewish National Fund, and often decides the location of new settlements. Susan Nathan writes about these non-state organisations:

*“... they have the power to exercise great control over the management of resources but cannot be held to account through the normal channels ... This means that the JNF can act without penalty as a kind of bullying overlord towards the country’s Arab citizens, constantly seeking to confiscate private land on the flimsiest pretext and transfer it to its own or state ownership for the sole benefit of Jews. There are few restraints on the JNF’s behaviour and even fewer recourses to law open to Arab citizens when it behaves in an arbitrary fashion.”<sup>(10)</sup>*

Today, 93 % of Israel’s land is reserved for Jewish Israeli citizens only to lease or buy. In 2004, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that it was illegal for the Israel Land Authority to refuse to sell or lease land to an Arab. The Attorney General held that this ruling also applied to the JNF. However, the Israeli government has been introducing new legislation to counter these developments. The Knesset passed the first stage of the Jewish National Fund law, which reverses the Supreme Court’s ruling and allows the JNF to continue selling and leasing land only to Jews<sup>(11)</sup>.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz recently reported that the Jewish settlers have been busy taking over agricultural lands and preparing them for new plantings for the illegal settlement Ofra, “establishing facts in fields”. When challenged:

*“the Civil Administration responded that Ofra Plantations is located in an area registered to Himanuta (a subsidiary of the Jewish National Fund) which transferred it to the government authority for the West Bank. They then leased the land to a Jewish Agency department, which transferred it to settlers from Ofra.”<sup>(12)</sup>*

The Ministerial Committee for Legislation rejected a bill proposed by MK Ahmed Tibi (Ra’am-Ta’al) proposing that the state enforce equal allocation of land to Jews and Arabs.

Yet again, the Israeli government has proven that it is avoiding the principle of civil equality, Tibi said in response to the ruling. *“The government ... ignores Arabs’ rights, and hasn’t approved the building of a new Arab village since 1948. Tibi’s proposal was intended to counter a bill that states that reception committees of Israeli communities can decide who will reside in their towns. One consequence of that bill is that Israeli Arabs would not be able to live in those towns if the reception committees decide so.”<sup>(13)</sup>*

Relating how in fact even the small percentage of Palestinian owned land is under threat, Susan Nathan describes how a Palestinian neighbour of hers, in the village of Tamra near Haifa, was harassed endlessly by a JNF official to sell off his precious land on the edge of the village. This land bordered the Jewish-only cooperative settlement Mitzpe Aviv, and was the remnant of already partly- confiscated land that had not been cultivated, planted with the JNF signal brand of pine trees, to define the Jewish homeland. Devious methods were used to ban him from

accessing his land, which to prevent its takeover, he planted with olive trees, which Palestinians identify as a symbol of their steadfast connection to the land. Against all odds he was determined to resist. <sup>(14)</sup>

Pine trees and olive and other fruit trees usually demarcate the extent of either a Palestinian village or an Israeli settlement. These pine forests, as described by Eyal Weizman in “Hollow Land” were planted on areas declared as ‘state land’ mainly around Greater Jerusalem, to prevent Palestinian planting, and to create land reserves for new settlements or the expansion of existing ones. The fruitful mixed planting on the lands of bulldozed Palestinian villages were planted over with pine forests by the JNF, to create ‘pine deserts’ which due to the acidic deposits of pine needles, made the land unusable for Palestinian shepherds by depriving their flocks of pasture. <sup>(15)</sup>

### **Judaisation of the Negev Desert**

This same method is now being deployed on the massive ‘judaisation’ plans for new Jewish-only towns in the Galilee, and more extensively in the Negev Desert <sup>(16)</sup>. The JNF (for the US) website proclaims:

*“Today, the long-term vision for Israel’s future is being realized through Blueprint Negev, JNF’s 10-year, \$600 million initiative to revitalize, develop, and preserve the Negev Desert, 60% of Israel’s land mass but home to only 8% of its population. JNF is supporting a new generation of Israeli pioneers in fulfilling David Ben Gurion’s vision of making the desert bloom, ensuring Israel’s vitality for generations to come.”* <sup>(17)</sup>

This will be done in conjunction with huge programmes for reservoirs, afforestation (with pine forests) and water conservation. None of this will benefit the 150,000 Bedouin citizens of Israel living in the Negev, 50 per cent of whom live in villages that the government deems ‘unrecognized’ <sup>(18)</sup>. This means that there are no rights to building permits or other government services (running water, electricity, roads, sewer systems and trash removal). There are minimal education and health facilities. Many Palestinian villages in Israel are classified by the government as “unrecognized”, and lack even the most basic government services and support.

Being “unrecognized” also means that they are deemed illegal, and that their residents are not allowed to build new structures without permission – a permission that is never given.

The objective is to force the Bedouin off their ancestral lands and to concentrate them in urban townships, regardless of their wishes or their culture. Yet there are no options for living in the ‘recognized’ towns that the government has built. As the families of the Twail Abu-Jarwal village discovered, there are no available plots of land for them to build on. Therefore the government can ‘legally’ demolish the homes of 80,000 Bedouin, while they cannot build one ‘legal’ home.

Many of the unrecognized villages have been ruthlessly demolished by the IDF, before the JNF forest planting begins <sup>(19)</sup>. This policy is also the background to the “Negev Challenge”, which the JNF Charitable Trust in the UK is supporting <sup>(20)</sup>. To raise funds for these projects, advertisements were placed in the Jewish press, claiming that the JNF “since 1901 has helped build a country out of nothing” and that their “vision is ... to move thousands of families from the overcrowded cities of central and northern Israel down south into the 60% of the country that remains virtually uninhabited – the Negev Desert.”

### **Professional codes of conduct**

Like other developments in Israel and the OPT funded by the JNF, the new communities being created in the Negev are exclusively Jewish. Israeli architects and planners design the new settlements and towns, which require that the Bedouin be ethnically cleansed from the 'unrecognized' villages.

Israeli architects have gone along with this situation without protest. Their professional body, the Israeli Association of United Architects (IAUA), has displayed a chilling detachment from the consequences of their work. They deny any political involvement, when in fact the whole agenda of building supports occupation, including the use of overwhelming military force to grab land, to displace and oppress Palestinians.

The International Union of Architects (UIA) has recently condemned such projects. Currently a Motion to support the suspension of the IAUA from the UIA is under consideration for the UIA General Assembly in Durban in August 2014. The breaches of ethics and international law is its basis.

*“The UIA Council condemns development projects and the construction of buildings on land that has been ethnically purified or illegally appropriated, and projects based on regulations that are ethnically or culturally discriminatory, and similarly it condemns all action contravening the fourth Geneva Convention”*

This should bring home to the IAUA and Israeli architects that unacceptable and long-standing breaches of professional and ethical practice, brings the humanitarian aims of architecture into disrepute. Further they operate within a highly racist and discriminatory system of oppression against a whole people. The situation gets worse by the day, in an agenda of total impunity and arrogance, reminiscent of apartheid South Africa.

Western support for Israel is strong – clinging to the mythology of 'plucky little Israel' standing with, and closely allied with western imperialism, and against the 'war on terror'. The same respect holds for institutions like the JNF, which is seen as synonymous with Israel. The British Prime Minister is a patron of its UK arm, the JNF Charitable Trust. Despite our protestations against such support, the myths will be difficult to dislodge. The work is cut out for us and it will be a long struggle to get a response to all this evidence and achieve justice for the Palestinians, and an equitable peace for all in the Middle East.

### **Summary**

This paper highlights the Jewish National Fund (JNF) as the beneficiary of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian towns, villages and land, and Israeli architects the beneficiaries of the JNF. Thus, the illegal apartheid practice of architecture that discriminates against Palestinians pertains not only in the Occupied West Bank, but extends to the other side of the Green Line, where the 'Judaisation' policies of the Israeli state, are displacing thousands of Bedouin in the Negev and the destruction of 'unrecognised villages' to create new Jewish-only settlements, and for new Jewish towns in the Galilee. Arab neighbourhoods in all the cities like Jaffa, Acre, Haifa, Lydda and Ramle are also being infiltrated by extreme religious settlers, while in general, planning policies restrict or prevent the building of new Palestinian homes, or even to extend and improve existing homes. Thousands of homes within Israel and the OPTs are still scheduled for demolition. The erasure of Palestinian heritage, culture and civil life goes on apace.

## About the author

Abe Hayeem, an Iraqi Jew born in India and settled in the UK, has been an architect, writer, and peace activist since the 1960s. He has written for the Guardian, Electronic Intifada, Building Design, the AJ, Red Pepper and other journals. He has worked as an architect for London local authorities, mainly building social housing, schools and community projects. He was active in the anti-apartheid movement, and helped to found UK Architects Against Apartheid, which campaigned for the exclusion of South African Schools of Architecture from its RIBA links as part of the professional boycott.



He joins with the solidarity movements for justice for Palestinians and adherence to international law which are the key to peace and justice in the Middle East. This includes the Right of Return for the Palestinian refugees. He is a founder-member of Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine, (APJP) which campaigns against the building of the illegal settlements and the Apartheid Wall, and the projects that dispossess the Palestinians under Occupation and within Israel itself. APJP works for a just peace in Israel/Palestine, and as part of the BDS movement, has campaigned for the suspension of the Israeli Association of United Architects from the International Union of Architects, due to their members practice of architecture based on the displacement of Palestinians, and against professional ethical codes, international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.

## Notes

- 1 Note: Shlomo Gur was later involved in the plans for the Hebrew University and the Knesset.
- 2 Eyal Weizman “Hollow Land”
- 3 Again, Eyal Weizman in “Hollow Land”
- 4 Zvi Efrat “The Plan” from “A Civilian Occupation” ed. Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman
- 5 Sharon Rotbard, “Wall and Tower, The Mould of Israeli Adrichalut”, *Territories* (Exhibition Catalogue), ICA Berlin, 2003
- 6 Jeff Halper “An Israeli in Palestine” – he notes the beginning of the Zionist policies of ‘transfer’, that also began the resistance to Zionist colonisation.
- 7 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plan\\_Dalet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plan_Dalet)
- 8 Film: Salman Abu Sitta, “The Geography of Occupation” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJrW-BhgMx0>)
- 9 Ilan Pappé, “The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine”
- 10 Susan Nathan, “The Other Side of Israel”
- 11 JNF Bill <http://www.adalah.org/eng/jnf.php>
- 12 Akiva Eldar, Natural Grape growth, *Haaretz*, 18 Aug 2009 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108326.html>)
- 13 Jonathan Lis, “Knesset rejects bill for equal Arab-Jewish land distribution”, *Haaretz*, 7 Jan 2010 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1140380.html>)
- 14 Susan Nathan, “The Other Side of Israel”
- 15 Eyal Weizman “Hollow Land”
- 16 Erez Tzfadia, “In the name of Zionism”, *Haaretz*, 21 Sep 2008 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1022588.html>)
- 17 <http://www.jnf.org/about-jnf/history/index.html#100th>
- 18 <http://www.theunrecognized.org>
- 19 Ben White, “Shattering Israel’s image of ‘democracy’”, *The Guardian*, 3 Dec 2009 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/dec/03/israel-negev>)

# Planning and politics in different environments

# The Politics and Architecture of Housing in the African City

Peter A. Makachia

## Introduction

Architecture can assume both liberating, empowering roles as much as also serving as oppressive, under different political systems in African countries and especially in their post-colonial capital cities and other secondary urban settlements. Indeed, the colonial legacy had ingrained oppressive and suppressive objectives as part of the colonial project. As political scientist Mitchell (1988) narrates, the British spatial facet, for instance, was aimed at imposing the values of the coloniser to the subjects and this was best exemplified in the urban plans and other architectural forms. In Kenya, this was evident in Nairobi within the African housing strategies (Makachia, 2011), urban planning and iconic buildings (Myers, 2003). At this stage, some assumed a racist agenda meant to be redressed with political independence. The post-colonial agenda was meant to redress this anomaly but often failed and mostly perpetuated the same spatial strategies but now tinged in economic segregationist strategies. This thesis is most evident in the housing strategies and their outcomes in Nairobi city.

The chapter summarises the chronological spatial evolution of African housing in Nairobi since city's emergence as the spatial and political nexus of the present-day Kenyan state. Through political and policy orthodoxy, housing strategies were used to realise architectural resultants that, *a posteriori*, can be perceived as mostly oppressive to the majority dwellers of the city. The governments of the Kenyan post-colonial state made a conscious choice to pursue policies similar to the British colonial ones in most urban planning and housing sectors but differed to the extent of giving opportunity to all races unlike the racial segregationist colonial ones. Thus, institutions like Central Housing Board<sup>2</sup> (CHB) were emasculated with more powers and financial wherewithal, while others were created to support housing and building production, by a UN team (Abrams & Bloomberg, 1964). Indeed, in practice<sup>3</sup>, no ideological realignment has ever been adopted in Kenya since the advent of the British capitalist system at the turn of the 19th century.

The term 'architecture' must however be understood beyond the Vitruvian (1960) classical definition perpetuated by modernist (Frampton, 1992) paradigms of permanence and pedigreed architects' buildings. This, in itself, is disenfranchising as it excludes popular housing and architecture preferred by some including Oliver (2003) (1997) (1991) (1978). The fact is that African cities are dominated by self-generated architecture that remains the main housing consumption model that matches spatial values and economic wherewithal of the majority. This, however, often occurs at cross-purposes of policy orthodoxies leading to the illegalisation of these legitimate spatial choices. The position here is that political systems that adopt a non-accommodative stance towards a people-centred practice in architecture and planning ought to be tasked to change. A full-blown encompassing of slums and dweller-initiated transformations (Makachia, 2013, 2011 & 2012), the antithesis of conventional architecture, is not my stance. Instead, a research and design approach that revalorises predominant spatial and architectural trends within people-generated architecture should be adopted as a basis for redevelopment and upgrading of informally generated settlements within these cities.

Using the conventional definition of architecture in a city like Nairobi downgrades the utilitarian attributes of architecture to the largely morphological and aesthetic-attributes that mostly secondary to the majority poor. Since most African governments have underperformed on the economic front, production of conventional housing has mostly stalled and thus accorded the dwellers to house themselves and elaborate the preferred spatial qualities. Conventional architecture can therefore be observed only in middle and higher-income housing, whose statistical insignificance makes them unrepresentative in defining the role of architecture in political systems.

**African housing architecture – orthodoxy, strategy and outcomes in Nairobi city**

In discussing African housing architecture-policy orthodoxy, strategies and outcomes- I evaluate their applicability and hence endorsement by the users in the case study city of Nairobi. This is formatted around the chronological periods of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras.

**The Colonial era<sup>4</sup> and before**

The housing problem originated and was ostensibly created by the inevitable urbanisation and modernisation during colonisation of Kenyan, largely rural landscape. For Nairobi city, the origins of the ‘urban settlement’ was ostensibly, as a result of colonialism, but more directly it aided in the construction of the railway line to Uganda and the hinterland. This landscape was then characterized by dispersed settlements (Burton 2002, 4) prior to the 20th century. The existing spatial pattern was traditional settlements of the various ethnic groups and was defined as cellular in form respecting cultural patterns of life. The building process was also defined by customary practices (Andersen, 1977). The settlement architecture reflected a stability that suited the inhabitants of the dwellings for the era of traditional systems guided by African cultural spatial use and evolution practices. Figure 1, illustrates a possible built-form that preceded the Nairobi metropolis of today.

For the Africans, the early interaction with the city was commuting from these rural settlements to work in the new town. Due to increased demand and long-time un-sustainability of the routine of daily footing from their distant homes, this was succeeded by the emergence of informal dwelling formations on the city’s periphery (Hake 1977; Hirst & Lamba, 1994), and was definitely as a direct consequence of the exclusionist policies. These were informal outcomes, were pragmatic solutions based on the meagre resources and were prohibited as they were of ‘temporary’ material shelter (Fig. 2),

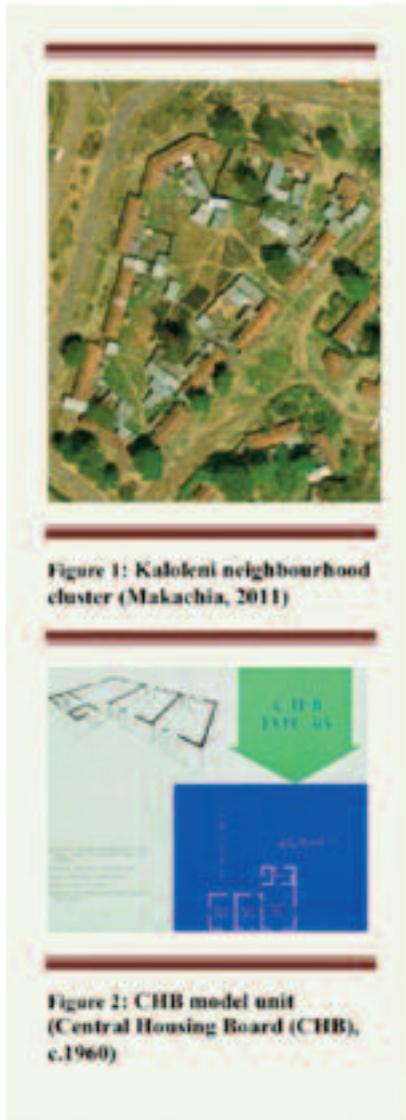


**Figure 1: Traditional Kikuyu dwelling (Hake, 1977)**

**Figure 2: Informal dwelling (Hake, 1977)**

**Figure 3: Pumwani Swahili settlement (Makachia, 2011)**

leading to demolitions and translocations of the African populations (Hirst & Lamba, 1994). I posit that, the form, space-use, materiality and layouts were hardly African and were imposed by the exclusionist political policy and spatial orthodoxy rather than a reflection of the African values of the dwellers.



Whereas the informal settlements were hardly a strategy but only an end result of the slighted policy, the creation of an ‘African location’ at Pumwani, to the east of the city centre, was purposeful and perceived as a direction towards addressing the native’s role in the paradigm of urbanity (Varsey, 1950). In the location, dwellers were permitted to build their houses along coastal ‘Swahili’ typology (Makachia, 1995) on serviced plots (Fig. 3). Though this typology was African, it was still alien to non-coastal Africans and it still reflected an imposed spatial paradigm. Its later use and occupation was mostly negatively perceived by up-country Africans because of the prevalence of anti- African urban practices of prostitution (White, 1990) and criminality among the dwellers. Later house typologies ignored the African spatiality as in housing estates and the first official African housing estate at Kariokor and Neighbourhood Unit Concept (NUC) enshrined in the 1948 master plan for the city.

A first official housing ‘estate’ for the Africans in 1929 at Kariokor which was the beginning of an token appreciation of the need to house the natives of the city location. The basic concept was shared space occupancy by individual dwellers, mostly male, and not households and thus enshrined and further objectified the ‘transient’ African status in the city. Mostly hated, the concept was abandoned of this essentially dormitory block meant for adults, and was in fact later demolished because of the negative reception by the supposed dwellers.

The Neighbourhood Unit Concept (NUC) was a key recommendation in the proposal for a master plan in the *Master Plan for a Colonial Capital* of 1948 by a

South African consultancy team (Thornton-White et al., 1948). The NUC enshrined the sense of a community as the heart of model settlements akin to other 19th century experiences and practices that formed a basis for garden city developments in the UK (Towers 2005). To the Africans, it was meant to inject modern values, a ‘civilising’ effect for the urbanizing community. For master plan framers, the NUC premise was that the labour force needed to be stabilized to remove the migratory attitude associated to them (Nevanlinna 1996, 171). The closest operationalization of the theoretical concept was in Kaloleni estate that was planned with expansive ‘green’ courtyards (Fig. 4), ‘treed’ streets, and was self-contained with social and commercial amenities (Makachia, 2012; Ogilvie, 1946). However, it provided meagre spaces in the dwelling units that were unresponsive to the African family set-ups and, as later-day observations illustrate did not anticipate the informal economy impetus of the contemporary African city. Thus couched in benevolence, the NUC was hardly consultative and reflected the un-democratic values and the dictatorship that was the colonial political system. This is amply reflected in informal transformations that characterise Kaloleni (Fig. 4) and other African

estates in Eastlands zone (Hake, 1977) that was meant to house the population.

In an effort to address some the shortfalls and themes highlighted in the early strategies (or lack of them) in the early efforts, a notable development in post-2nd World War period occurred when the Central Housing Board (CHB) was established by the Housing Ordinance of 1953 ostensibly 'to help local authorities in their housing problems' and more specifically 'to foster provision of adequate African housing throughout the country' (CHB, 2). Probably because the board composition included Africans, it conceived more emancipatory and more sensitive housing design strategies that were be applied. Examples included; extendable houses, family dwellings and with neighbourhood amenities (Fig. 5). Remnants of these schemes exist and vestiges of good design and planning (even if non-consultative and un-democratic) are evident in most of them. However, these positives have now been overwhelmed by the reality of African urbanisation. The reality includes informalisation encapsulated in the phenomenon of Dweller-Initiated Transformations (DITs) and the advent of the informal economy spatially defined in these extensions (Makachia, 2012).

### **Post-colonial housing**

Post-colonial housing strategies had a uniquely invidious environment to operate. On the one hand, there was the relaxation of movement by all citizens leading to rapid urbanisation. The problem was thus quantitative and one appreciates the enormity that inevitably led to the informal settlements. A more fundamental problem was qualitative. Independence, to be meaningful, connoted a culturally-driven move to African spatial values long suppressed by the colonial government. The reality was different as housing implemented in this early periods of independent government, was often donor-supported<sup>5</sup> and aspired for donor standards, unlike the people's cultural imprint.

A key actor in the design and implementation of housing is the National Housing Corporation (NHC). A predominant theme in all NHC strategies remained affordability for the lower income earners. Her strategies were based on the (1) physical – the form, (2) the mode of access – the ownership, and (3) the housing delivery process. Some outcomes are illustrated in Figures 5 and 6. The forms were always derived from western concepts of dwellings. Thus, we had grouped dwellings in apartment blocks as well as singular maisonettes on plots. Others included detached and semi-detached dwellings. These morphologies were always imposed as no dwellers were consulted nor were any references made to indigenous spatial systems and dwelling patterns.

The access to houses was often through modern financial models including mortgage, rental and tenant-purchase schemes. These financing systems always had strings to ensure an architectural spatial quality that would not, seemingly, compromise their collateral value to the financiers.

The delivery process was mostly as complete houses, mimicking those in the 'provider' paradigm (Hamdi, 1991). One process preferred in 1970s was significant in changing housing perceptions and the forms. It was a participatory strategy that entailed engaging in the self-help building in Site & Service (S&S) estates. This was in league with Hamdi's 'supporter' paradigm (Hamdi, 1991). It was rooted in the 'basic needs' approach fronted by Breton Woods Institutions of the World Bank and the IMF (Syagga, 2003). The philosophical basis was Turner's (1969; 1972; 1977) writings on his experiences in Latin American cities that enshrined participation of dwellers in their housing solutions. These were process-based solutions that negated the provision of complete houses. Another process-based strategy, the shelter and infrastructure upgrading programmes went further from the S&S strategy, where intervention was targeted to an existing location. The upgrading intervention strategy was meant to exploit the pre-existing socio-economic capital in improving the physical environments of the same. The strategy was minimalist as only services framework was introduced meant to order an existing settlement.

Table 1: Summary of policy, strategy and architectural outcomes in African housing in Nairobi

	<b>ORTHODOXY</b>	<b>HOUSING</b>	<b>ARCHITECTURAL RESULTANT</b>		
		<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>FORM</b>	<b>OWNERSHIP</b>	<b>PROCESS</b>
Pre-1900	African cultural practices	Traditional architecture	Cellular units in homestead	Culturally defined	Self-instantiated, communal support
1900-1920	Colonialism, 'exclusionist approaches'	Prohibition and demolitions	Informal settlements	Transient, informal	Spontaneous, self-instantiated
1920-1930	Social accommodation as social control	'Native location' concept, Pumwani	'Swahili' house typology, grouped dwellings	'Stand' ownership rights	Self-help...
1930-1950	Modernization - 'Social housing'	'Housing estate' concept	'Bed-space' concept in attached blocks	Employee housing, council rental housing	'Complete' units, 'provider' concept
1950-1960	Modernization-'Inclusive' approaches, CHB	NUC, 'garden city, Kaloleni	Grouped, courtyard formations	Rental, (some Tenant Purchase)	'Complete' units, 'provider' approaches
1960-1970	Postcolonial modernization	Modern estate solutions	Grouped, apartment typology	Rental and tenant purchase	'Complete' forms, provider approaches
1970-1980	'Basic needs' and income distribution	Participatory strategies	Singular plot typologies	Tenant purchase modes	Self-help processes
1980-1990	Neo-liberal economic policies, liberalization, SAPs	Settlement upgrading, no formal housing provisions, Enablement formal housing provisions, Enablement	Disintegration of the morphological provisions of formal housing	Ownership modes, mortgage, tenant purchase, direct ownership	Mixture of formal processes of housing production, small-scale contractor, self-management, production and building

1990-2000s	'pro-poor' growth, poverty reduction, the 'informal' economy	None! collapsed state	tenement blocks, compounds	hybrid systems	hybrid systems
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The virtues inherent in the NHC strategies were always secondary to the state's failure to comprehensively and globally address the housing scenario. Thus, whereas, the NHC strategies were mimicked 'social housing' solutions in western cities, minimal protection was accorded the low-income earners from invasion by the more affluent. As a result of weak enforcement structures higher incomers always economically invaded these schemes in support of their petit bourgeoisie tendencies. In site and service schemes, for instance, original poor plot owners sold them to middle or higher income speculators who in turn created rental tenement accommodation (Huchzermeyer, 2006) (Fig. 7). In 'complete' housing, DITs are the trend, and these mutated the architectural intention of the implementers, probably consonant with the dwellers' democratic and pragmatic spatial intentions and aspirations.

Indeed, the neo-liberal policies of the 1980s have furthered the dweller-empowerment strategies as they assume greater responsibilities and built informally within formal housing and process-based schemes. This was in tandem with 'liberalisation' economic policies, which in housing often led to converting residential areas in multi-functional area for business and work additional to the core housing functions. The consequence has been informalisation of the formal, for middle and higher income estates. For the poorest informal settlements were the predominant evidence of liberalisation. Table 1 summarises the discussion in this section.

### Conclusion

Architectural strategy as reflected in housing solutions seem to have gone full circle with self-provided housing the predominant and overt paradigm mimicking the case before colonisation in traditional African settlements. Thus in informal settlements, which constitutes above 60% of the dwellings in the city, one clearly sees individually generated housing but within the tragedy of urban conditions wanting state provision of basic services. This leads to the slum conditions prevailing and predominant in African cities. To some, this is the true, ordinary and real city and possibly setting standards future in urban living (Koolhaas, et al., 2000; Robinson, 1990). Indeed, in formal housing for the low and middle-income, dweller-initiated transformations are predominant and this reflects the dwellers' democratic choice. Whereas the pre-colonial case was generated through cultural norms, the present-day self-housing is a consequence of liberal economic policies of want and depravity. The intervening strategies seem to have had minimal impact because of the gravity of the problem and other factors relating to the politics and administration of the African state. The role of architecture should be to empower the dwellers within a physical environmental framework. This has to go together with political policies that promote the rights, values and economic aspirations of the people in solving housing problems. Policies in Kenya have ignored these tenets leading to the dearth of quality prevalent in the built-environment. The solutions lie in integrating, by the political class, the rights, values and economic aspirations of the majority dwellers in cities in Africa.

### About the author

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The definition of political systems in this chapter is taken as empowering dwellers or otherwise of the citizenry. This is not in line with the grand ideological debates of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that encompassed themes like; capitalism, socialism and communism and other 'isms', which I feel are now mostly irrelevant.
- <sup>2</sup> CHB was a post-WW2 organ, created by the Housing Ordinance of 1953 ostensibly to help local authorities in their housing problems and to foster provision of adequate African housing throughout the country (Central Housing Board (CHB), c.1960, p. 2).
- <sup>3</sup> In my view, the major policy paper titled: 'African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya' (Republic of Kenya (RoK), 1965), was unlike its 'socialist' title as it created institutions meant to be the basis for a capitalist state. These institutions however, are not dissimilar to ones in social democratic governments like the post-war British Labour governments.
- <sup>4</sup> The colonization of Kenya by the British coincided with the advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and ended with political independence in 1963.
- <sup>5</sup> The donors were rooted in former colonial governments and their derivative institutions like the Breton Woods ones.

# Omdurman and Khartoum, coexisting disparities

Osman M Elkheir

## Abstract

This article is a narrative of the dramatic internal and external factors that shaped Sudan and resulted in the current chaotic urban situation. Very distinct planning patterns co-exist in the capital city, from the traditional organic pattern to the chess board gridiron system to the garden-city like gated communities. These are described and set against the political systems and socio-cultural settings that generated them.

## Introduction

Greater Khartoum is called The Three Towns, because it consists of three towns in a triangle intersected by the White Nile, the Blue Nile and the River Nile (Fig 1). Omdurman, to the west, was once the capital of the Mahdist state that succeeded in removing the Turkish rule of 1821 to



Fig 1 The Three Towns, Capital of the Sudan

1885. The Mahdi himself, named Mohamed Ahmed, was a spiritual leader. Though a follower of the Sunni sect, he believed, or was made to believe, in the Shiite idea of the Awaited Mahdi. He proclaimed himself Imam al Mahdi and led an army of devoted followers who bravely fought under his guidance until the slaying of General Gordon Pasha. Khartoum was demolished as a remnant of the colonizers. Building materials were transported by boat to the west bank to build the new national capital that grew in a short while from a small town of a few thousand to an agglomeration of hundreds of thousands of warriors<sup>1</sup>. When their families arrived, there was an appalling situation ensuing from overcrowding and a lack of infrastructure.

## Omdurman, the National Capital

After the sudden death of the Mahdi, his successor Khalifa Abdullah was faced with the immediate need to house an army and create a functioning township for permanent living. Only traditional knowledge of planning and construction was available to him and there were no surveying or even measuring equipment at hand. He used the European and Egyptian prisoners of war to design and erect a shrine for the Mahdi and a house for himself but the rest of the town was improvised largely through popular ingenuity.



Fig 2 An extended family house in Omdurman<sup>2</sup>

They used methods such as spear throwing to determine allotments, or running horses for a wider stretch. Boundaries were drawn using sticks or merely ones foot as a measure. Neighbourhoods were assigned and named after his army generals according to rank and these were subsequently subdivided among the families of their clans. Family plots were then subdivided, possibly for more than one wife's quarters, and with time, elder sons and married daughters and their offspring. The settlement grew in a labyrinth formation that may entail passing through one or more plot boundaries to emerge on the nearest road (Fig 2).

### The Organic Pattern

The Mahdist outlook on life was that of ascetic Dervishes who despised material wealth and worldly pleasures. Their clothes were made up of multi-coloured pieces of cloth sewn together and their buildings were humble, predominantly small single storey mud cubes, except for the two-storeyed Khalifa's house, with fired brick facing, and a few others such as the prison and government buildings made of stone. Stone was transported from nearby hills via extensively long queues of volunteers acting as human conveyor belts handing over blocks one after the other. Roads were narrow winding dust lanes, resembling the natural pathways of donkeys, horses and camels and following the terrain and topographical features. There was, however, one very wide straight road for the army parade ending at an out-of-scale open space reserved for communal gatherings and prayers and surrounded by the Khalifa's house, the shrine and the mosque. Otherwise the urban fabric was dense and intricate, as much as the social network that generated it. Omdurman developed its organic form as a reflection of the extended family structure with its intricate relations and hierarchy (Fig 3). Moreover, its shabby appearance and lack of amenities were a reflection of the dervish view that life is merely a transient phase to the hereafter, not worth celebrating.

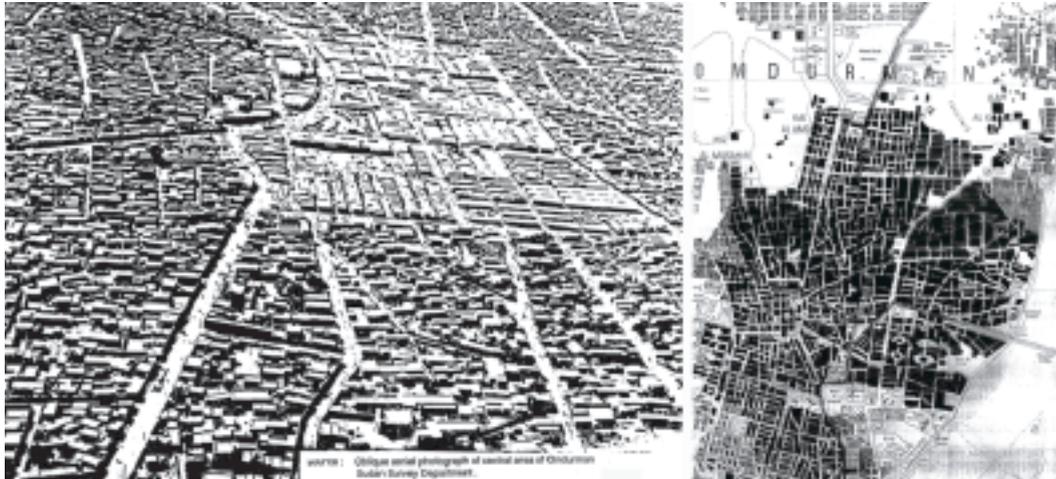


Fig 3 Omdurman organic form, an aerial view and a layout

### **Khartoum, the Colonial Capital**

Unlike Omdurman, Khartoum became a professionally planned and designed colonial city, intended to be one of the finest cities in Africa, (not surpassed except perhaps by Alexandria and Johannesburg)<sup>3</sup>. When the Khalifa's army was brutally massacred in a few early hours of the 2nd. September 1898 (Fig 4), General Kitchener temporarily settled in Omdurman. He visited the derelict ruins of Khartoum after two days to pay tribute to Gordon Pasha and raise the British and Egyptian flags, then returned to live in the Khalifa's house for a month.



Fig 4 The battle of Omdurman

During this time, the best colonial city planners were deployed to embark on an extensive but hasty project to rebuild the city in one year. In about ten years, however, Khartoum was a fully grown city with wide greened asphalted roads, electricity and water networks and a properly designed surface drainage system, tramway and a railway line, a bridge over the Blue Nile, an aerodrome, a city with gardens in houses and public buildings, landscaped open spaces and green beds along roads in addition to a flood control embankment along the Blue Nile<sup>4</sup>.



Fig 5 Khartoum in the making

Though sanitation relied on a bucket system, it was flawless and the city was kept clean of garbage and roaming animals.

Roads were built wide from the start, yet buildings were still set back and bounded by green hedges to allow for any further possible expansion<sup>5</sup> (Fig 5).

### **The Articulated Gridiron**

The plan, however, targeted the elite foreign community, who took advantage of the water front at the northern and central locations, while excluding the natives in shanty towns beyond the

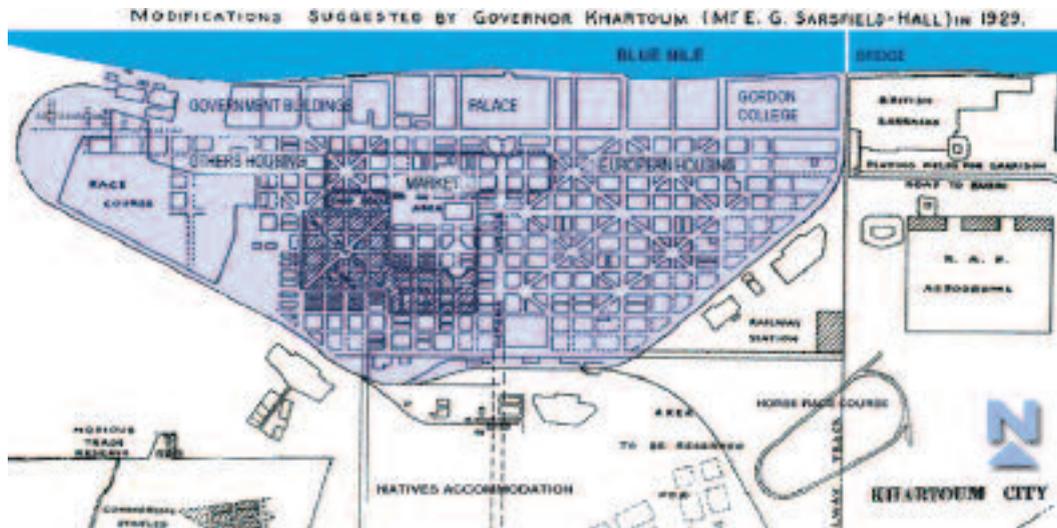


Fig 6 Kitchener colonial Khartoum layout, revision by Sarsfield

railway's high embankment to the east and south and the acacia forest to the south and west. One foremost concern, it seems, was security. The plan was basically a grid iron pattern but articulated and was actually later bounded by garden city type clusters in the east and west ends. Diagonal roads were introduced resulting in nodes capable of providing surveillance points for eight roads at a glance (Fig 6). Connected to that, it was stipulated that roads in the natives' quarters should be double the width of a plot and boundary walls were forbidden for a long time.

Colonial standards of space zoning, segregating barracks, market places and residential zones according to rank and ethnic origin, were adopted. Omdurman was ignored, left to demonstrate the primitive example in contrast to the city proper. There was some intervention in Khartoum Bahri as it was important as a terminal railway station (before the Blue Nile bridge), a river dockyard and an industrial area, especially for war-driven production as two world wars were looming. Among the three towns, Khartoum alone was given attention. It was the jewel of the British Empire in darkest Africa, bearing some similarities to New Delhi, the diamond in the crown of the Empire. Its urban fabric and spirit reflected the strict and disciplined mentality of British colonizers. Their disregard of Omdurman and the native quarters was an outcome of colonial discriminatory policy.

### National Rule

The postcolonial era, starting with reasonably ambitious plans, soon degenerated into chaos. The recent political history of Sudan is a chain of short democracies interrupted by 3 authoritarian coups with a balance of 48 years of dictatorships and 10 years of democracies. Public administration suffered political manipulation and continuous reshaping.

At independence, Sudan seemed a promising country that inherited a good civil service system and enjoyed abundant natural resources. With the extraction of oil, it seemed at the brink of an economic boom when the country achieved a significant 11% rate of growth. In actual fact, oil provided financial surety<sup>6</sup> for more loans, financing non-productive expenditures and the war machine. The national debt rose from 11 to 40 billion USD in a few years, while agriculture and industry were neglected and crippled. Oil also brought in a new level of corruption and created extreme social polarization. Furthermore, it added to the grievances of Southerners and their feeling of being exploited. The short-lived welfare dream gave way to the separation of the South and the loss of 70% of oil revenues. War, however, continued in Darfur, the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile State. There are three crucial factors, the presence of any is said to be capable of wrecking the economy of a country, war,

corruption or lack of production. Sudan is suffering from all three of them, together with their combined effect.

All in all, the country descended into mismanagement, poverty, corruption and conflicts. War with the South, which broke out first as a conflict in 1953 and then as a full-fledged war in the early 1960s, continued intermittently up to 2005, syphoning resources to armaments, creating havoc on the environment and inflicting human losses and large-scale displacements. Added to that, development schemes of mechanized rain-fed agriculture frustrated and brought about profound changes in the lives of nomads and rural population, resulting in the intensification of rural-urban migration at sweeping rates. The overwhelming urbanization, or rather ruralisation of capital in the true sense, confused all official plans and rendered the four master plans that followed Kitchener's a failure. They were abandoned before taking off. Urban-biased development, desertification and droughts, tribal conflicts and civil wars were factors that fuelled dramatic swift waves of migrants heading straight for the capital, sometimes in hundreds of thousands camping around its peripheries in a few days. Moreover, Sudan bordered eight countries, five of which were troubled and exported millions of immigrants. Khartoum became the primate city exceeding the next biggest urban agglomeration by about 13 times<sup>7</sup>. It stretched to nearly a hundred kilometres north south and about seventy kilometres east-west and provided accommodation for nearly 30% of the population of the vast country (Fig 7). 40% of these were once considered illegal and lived under miserable conditions<sup>8</sup>.

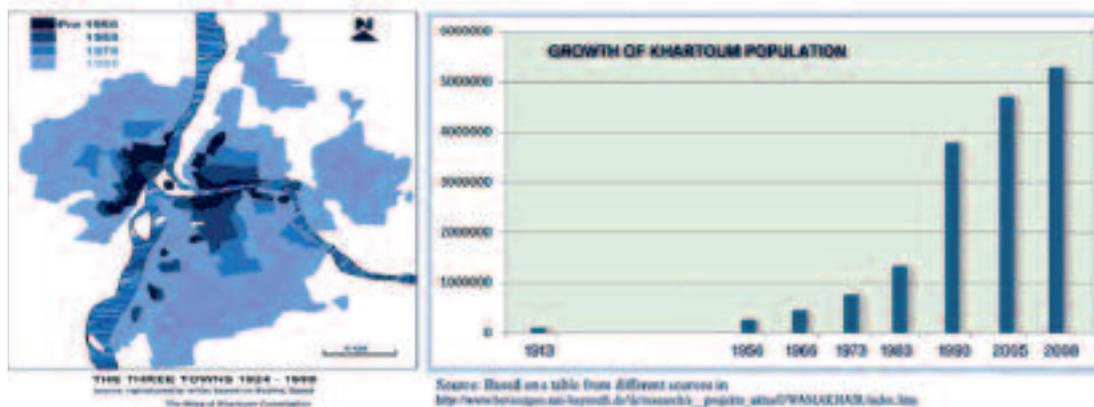


Fig 7 Population Growth of Khartoum

### Perpetuation of the Checker Board

The authorities could hardly catch their breath most of the time with moments of fierce confrontation and casualties among 'illegal' settlers. In the face of enormous demand, planning was reduced to the mere perpetuation of the easy-to-layout and service grid iron, site and services projects were reduced to site and no services, and housing plans were reduced to plot distributions. In spite of all, squatter settlements sprawled over agricultural land, dumping locations, water courses and old cemeteries, occupying whatever available open space and using whatever discarded material. While these followed no pre-planned patterns, the gridiron pattern dominated the map of the Three Towns overall (Fig 8) and was actually copied and pasted on all other town plans across the country. Even squatters and villagers, expecting imminent planning, learnt to pre-align their plots and adjust to a chessboard arrangement in a plea to minimize possible demolition and trimming (Fig 9). In some instances the gridiron and the organic random pattern existed side by side at the forefront of the planning process or where the chessboard had to surrender to reality (Fig 10).

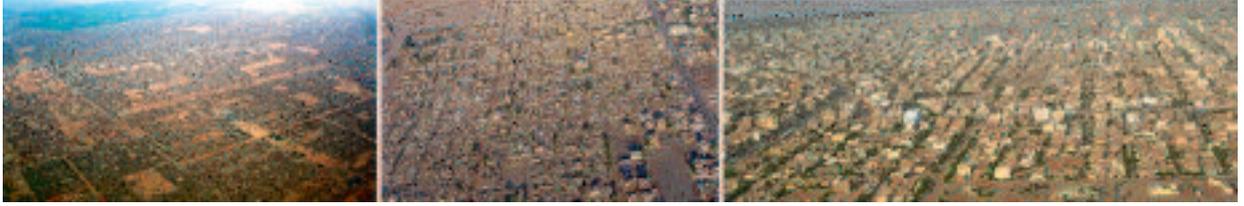


Fig 8 Extensively applied gridiron pattern



Fig 9 Coexisting structured and non-structured patterns

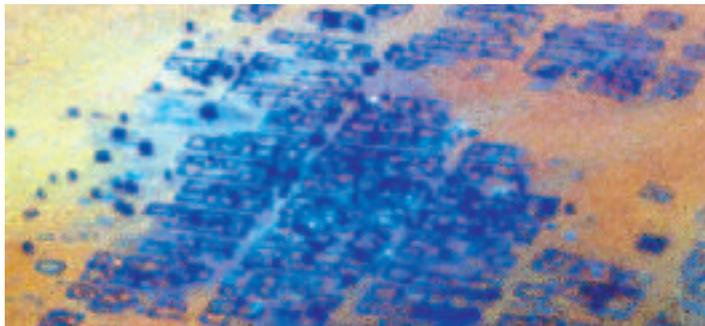


Fig 10 Even villagers learned to adjust to the grid

### **Emerging Patterns**

Neoliberal policies, inspired by the World Bank's prescription, resulted in privatization of the public sector, lifting subsidies, reducing expenditure on education, health and welfare and led to hyper-inflation (the US Dollar value increased about 33,000 times since late seventies). Access to, and distribution of, wealth was not fair and bank facilities, taxes and customs were used to favour some groups and remove competitors. An extremely rich elite group emerged, while about ninety per cent of the population were engulfed by the poverty belt. This was reflected in all aspects of life including the urban scene. Social polarization brought about new ways of living and encouraged consumption trends. New attitudes, inspired by a Gulf-motivated model of buildings and life style, prevailed. Amidst the predominantly low skyline, aluminium and glass-clad high rise structures and lavishly designed villas emerged. Planning patterns also revealed new tendencies.

### **Gated Communities**

Sudan, after 2005, witnessed the biggest UN deployment of Advanced Mission Forces, to serve in the South and Darfur with headquarters in Khartoum. The number of working International NGOs rose to thousands and a huge international community was rapidly accommodated therein. This did not only affect the rental market, but also led to noticeable interest in effecting modifications in the design of rented units to suit the specific requirements of this category of tenants. Furnished studio flats became desirable, but more so were apartment blocks for

communal living. In addition to facilities like in-house parking lots, swimming pools, tennis courts, and the like, these encouraged the provision of additional security and surveillance measures. Several gated compounds started to appear within the fabric of Khartoum, creating a sharp contrast with the traditional open setup. With the upsurge of residential demand for foreign expatriates and native elites or Sudanese expatriates in Gulf States or otherwise, foreign developers came in with projects of sometimes complete townships, landscaped, facilitated, cautiously protected and isolated from their surroundings. After a while, plans by local developers started to follow suit (Figs 11 and 12).



Fig 11 Gated communities pose a sheer contrast to their context.



Fig 12 A gated community layout



Fig 13 The multi-centred donut morphology

### Concluding Remarks

Whereas Khartoum had, and still has, a potential for being a liveable city, its current overall picture is one of heterogeneity and continuous loss of identity. The parts that have retained their character do not receive enough attention to strengthen and promote this spirit. New developments, on the other hand, do not reflect any respect for their physical, social or cultural context. The end result is disparity and a discordant mixture of architectural styles and planning patterns.

The morphology of the city has inherited some problems. It is multi-centred while having no efficient communication system. It is excessively elongated north-south flanking the Nile. This has contributed to a number of associated problems, among them unfavourable orientation of buildings and a linear type of development. The city is also characterized with having a donut shape<sup>9</sup>, with an extensive void in the very centre – the rural eye<sup>10</sup> of Tuti, resulting in further detachment of its three centres (Fig 13).

Ruralisation of life is evident in the way people use space, in the way traffic flows and in the way city greening and cleaning are affected. The topography and geology of Khartoum, added to bad surface drainage, generate severe chaos during the rainy season. Extension of services lags behind the continuous sprawl of the city. The city structure, in spite of several master plans, seems to require reshaping. Life in Khartoum is arduous and though strife for basic amenities comes first, people are increasingly concerned with the question of identity.

#### About the author

A private practitioner with experience in teaching, research, supervision of research as well as planning, design and supervision of various types of building projects. Contributed to projects of master plans and led design and construction supervision teams. Contributed to the Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World, Cambridge University.



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- 4 An interesting account can be found in:  
Babiker, 'Khartoum: past, present and the prospects for the future.' Working Paper - B. (2003), University of Durham, Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Durham. 2006.
- 5 Mirghani, G., of the Institute of Sudanese Civilizations, explained this, in several lectures with convincing argumentation.
- 6 Abdel Ati, 2009, in City Limits: Urbanization and Vulnerability in Sudan, Khartoum Case Study, Sara Pantuliano et al, ODI, 2011.
- 7 El Batthani, A, is said to have stated that in the mid-1990s, the number of inhabitants of Greater Khartoum corresponded to the total population of the next 32 largest urban centres. See: [http://www.bevsozgeo.uni-bayreuth.de/de/research/a\\_\\_projekte\\_aktuell/WAMAKHAIR/index.html](http://www.bevsozgeo.uni-bayreuth.de/de/research/a__projekte_aktuell/WAMAKHAIR/index.html)
- 8 Elkheir, O. M., Technological Aspects of Popular Settlements in Greater Khartoum, an unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Khartoum, 1990.
- 9 Reference to the description by Babiker, B. T., Dr., University of Khartoum, the Institute of Urban Studies.
- 10 Reference to the description by Davis, H. R. J., Dr., University of Wales, Dept. of Geography.

# The Changing Role of Architects and Planners in the Indian Political System

Bijay Misra

## Background

The recent news, if true, is disturbing. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) appealed to the International Union of Architects (UIA) to suspend the Israeli Association of United Architects (IAUA), but was side-tracked. If it happens, the UIA may violate its own ethics, and the illegal involvement of Israeli architects in un-ethical building in the West Bank, the occupied territories, will continue. This brings home one reality in our profession and the way its guardians violate their own ethical guidelines. It underscores two things; that it is hard for our profession to shake off the influence of the political systems within which it operates and, at the same time, there is no doubt that a strong voice is being raised against such injustice and un-ethical practice. Like ARC PEACE, many other like-minded organizations would join to raise a collective voice. This case provides a good background to what is being said in this paper.

## The Issue

The profession of architecture and planning needs to be more realistic and responsive to the society. As architects and planners we are more directly involved with the lives and livelihood of people more than other professions. We are also part of the work within a political system and its social norms and values. We are expected to have strong social responsibility and that should be reflected in our practice. Promotion of a sustainable built environment, response to climate change and facilitating better access to a livelihood and living environment for the poor are our frontline tasks. But, why do many feel that our profession is losing this focus and is getting alienated from the needs of the common people? It is also felt that architects and planners do not stand up against social injustice and the violation of human rights. Personally, I subscribe to this view.

The reason probably lies in the education & training we go through. The influence of the political systems and crony capitalism within which we often practice should also be a contributing factor. This paper attempts to review the influence of the Indian political system on the practice of Indian architects and planners. With reference to three cases the paper is a humble attempt in that direction to do so.

## Scope of the paper

The scope of the paper, however, is limited. The observations are based on the author's personal judgement and experience, not on statistical analysis.

I assume that in the context of social responsibility, the political system significantly influences the real practice of architects and planners both positively and negatively. The influence should vary in different political systems. Misplaced policies and strategies that go counter to the interests of the poor, misuse of public funds and, more importantly, politicisation of the development issues that adversely affect both the poor and sustainable development do pose professional conflicts for the socially responsible architects and planners. By this I mean

those architects and planners who do value professional ethics, human rights and care for the poor. Socially responsible architects and planners, however, are in the minority. On the other hand, I realise that a majority are either totally alienated from social responsibility or are apathetic, thinking that they cannot be agents of change in the particular context. Therefore, perhaps we do not find architects and planners, except a few, who raise their voices against adverse policies. Instead, I see, many prefer to fall in line with the system and protect their income. The net result is lopsided priorities in development, neglect of the needs of the poor and expanding threats to the built environment.

Democratic political systems, in some way, provide a positive influence, especially through the policies and programmes that help the poor, as one finds in India. However, not many architects and planners practicing outside the government want to get involved in such projects. They think perhaps that such government projects do not pay well and do not help them to earn an easy income.

### **The Indian democratic system and helping the poor**

Let me talk briefly about the Indian democratic political system. Politically speaking India is a robust democracy, the largest democracy in the world. However, the influence of the robust democracy is largely limited to political decisions. Its impact on economic and social systems is rather low. Too much politicization of local development issues due to 'vote bank' politics often goes against the good intention of the programmes especially for the poor. Projects such as provision of affordable land for housing for the poor and relocation of slums and squatters on high value public lands are directly affected. At the same time, 'regularisation' or 'up-grading' of slums with better facilities and tenure rights have dragged foot along due to faulty planning and corruption. This point is elaborated in one of the three cases referred to in the paper. At the same time, Indian robust democracy promotes total freedom of expression and the press. Media is almost totally free. But, how effectively do architects and planners make their voice speak out in the media against social injustice? Often this is regarded as an uncomfortable task. Perhaps education and training do not inculcate this ability in them. Concern over the issue is widely felt recently, yet, changes in the system are slow. Views of graduate students of architecture and planning in this regard should be useful. The paper includes a review of views of graduate students on how they see their role in the real world profession in the context of a political system.

Some argue that the work of architects and planners are more influenced by technological advancement. The power of construction or information technology has transformed the way we look at the future of the built environment. Advancement has significantly changed the paradigms that guide development. Durable and stronger construction, smart buildings, technologically improved methods of planning for basic services, and management of waste are all with us to be adopted. They are all outside beyond political influence.

Yet, ironically, we have not effectively used the knowledge to improve the living conditions of those with low incomes and the poor. Why, do most of our efforts concentrate in benefiting the narrow class of rich and the elite? In India nearly 400 million people earn less than 2 dollars a day. Poverty persists. Does the Indian political system motivate the architects and planners to benefit the poor? This paper tries to address some of these questions through a review of three site-specific cases and real-world views.

### **Lessons learned from working with the poor communities**

I would like to share some experience gained by ARC PEACE India's involvement in assisting two vulnerable grassroots communities, Rajiv Gandhi Nagar and Kala Killa in Mumbai. The project (2009-13), which was internationally funded, involved six poor communities consisting of more than 20,000 poor families with the aim to improve the livelihood and built environment to promote safer and sustainable living by reducing the risk of flood disasters.

I coordinated and advised the project. The 2005 flash flood disaster almost devastated the communities. We were working on three thrust areas: a) planning for enabling strategies that would help the families to retrofit their houses against flood and fire, and improve sanitation and reduce incidence of disease, b) help organize community leadership and increase awareness about scientific facts on vulnerability, in order to enhance the community's bargaining power with the city government, and c) to assist the community to get fully prepared for meaningful participation in the city government's redevelopment plan for the area focusing on per capita space, tenure and access to services.



Discussion between Bijay Misra of ARC PEACE and the Core Action Group of the two communities, December 2013.



Working with the women of the two communities 2013.

It is important to note that the engineers and planners of the city government (MCGM) were almost totally oblivious about the degraded living conditions of the poor families. The government even did not have a layout plan for the area nor socio-economic data for the families. However, the democratic government had proclaimed pro-poor development and our project was not refused assistance. ARC PEACE India could run the project without government support but did obtain support from the city government. This was important for us when working closely with the grass roots communities. The project got full support from the free media. This directly helped us to bring the survival issues of the highly vulnerable communities to the public by joining hands with the local NGOs and the social media. The issue of legitimacy from the humanitarian point of view could be made a frontline issue, which the powerful city government could not ignore anymore. The project revealed the vital contribution that communities can make to improve their built environment for safer living, and also the fact that architects and planners can meaningfully use the democratic stance of a political system if determined to.

### **Building bridges of trust and confidence in social responsibility**

Two of several close interactive sessions we had with the residents, their representatives and the local NGOs during the second half of 2012, were devoted to building bridges of trust and confidence between ARC PEACE India members and the grassroots communities. The events were held just before the team was preparing to exit at the end of the project in March 2013. Some most informed and vocal community representatives remarked "*If you don't consider it your responsibility to work with us and help us to have a better life, how can you be meaningful in your profession? Will our children talk about you and your profession as a part of exploitative crony capitalism?*"

I was struck by this strong comment. ARC PEACE India was convinced that working with the poor and improving their living can be a very rewarding effort. ARC PEACE India decided to continue to work with the poor and the highly vulnerable.

In hindsight, ARC PEACE India realizes that, but for the democratic political system of the

country, it would not have been possible to operate at the grass roots level the way it did. The case may appear small and humble, yet, it provides great insight into how architects and planners can do meaningful social projects and bring our profession closer to the poor and the common man.

### **How graduate students, young professionals understand the issue**

I think that better insight on the issue should be expected from the young professionals. I refer here to the open discussion I had with my graduate students on the topic in a seminar which I organized. I share here opinion of a group of bright graduate students of the School of Planning & Architecture, New Delhi on the following question.

Does the political system really matters in making architects and planners socially responsible? The answer of the students is overwhelmingly 'yes' provided the system is democratic and promotes freedom of thinking and keeps the social media free. Almost all students view social responsibility as a generic human and professional value. They view social responsibility in two dimensions; engaging in social projects in real world practice and standing up against social injustice as social responsibility and engaging in public writing, participating in public debates and working with the poor for improvement of their livelihood. Unfortunately, the profession they enter often does not provide the opportunity to get involved in social projects that helps the poor and disadvantaged.

The young generation realizes the irony. Given the opportunity they want to be more socially responsible and work for the poor in the profession. But, the reality is otherwise. For most of them, the profession of architecture and planning, more the former than the latter, in reality, is shirking social responsibility especially in addressing the needs of the common man and his aspirations and expectations for a reasonable and sustainable living. Why it is so?

### **Real world elitist approach in the profession**

According to the students the reason lies in the real world profession and also in the contents of the training they are put through. Most graduates in India get jobs with private firms for higher emoluments. A small minority get absorbed by the government. Most job openings are in the private sector. Private firms are almost invariably engaged in top-end real estate development projects including housing, malls, tourist and recreation centres, and corporate buildings etc. catering to the growing environment of consumerism and crony capitalism. Other private sector projects are in government – sponsored mega – infrastructure projects such as design of subway stations, multi-modal logistic hubs, IT-parks, city projects, development plans etc. There lies the easy money for the firms. India's political system does not have any regulatory control over the architecture and planning by private firms on what projects they should

undertake. A recent rule though is an exception. A large corporate house and/or a large real estate developer firm needs to spend at least 2 % of its profit on social projects. The rule is yet to be fully implemented.

Those who work with the government do get involved in various social development programmes that include preparation of city master plans, housing for those with low incomes, and rehabilitation of slum families, basic urban



Final Year Graduate Students, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi.2014.

services projects, etc. But, the number of architects and planners engaged in this sort of practice constitute a small minority.

The other aspect the young professionals emphasize is the content of the training they get. More so for the architecture education than that of planning, professional training, consciously or un-consciously, professional training is largely elitist. Less than 10 % of time is spent on low cost technology, use of traditional construction material, slum up-grading and working for the grass roots communities. During their training, the students have practically no opportunity to work with poor communities. All this, they say, orients them to elitist design and planning away from the common man.

### **The problem and a positive trend**

Students say they work for the private sector not only because most jobs are there, but also because the sector pays higher wages. The private sector largely engages in elitist projects. NGOs in India do provide some jobs for architects and planners. But, except for a very few, they work with fixed objectives of their funding agencies and do not provide attractive real world practice for architects and planners. The problem is that the Indian political system in many ways discourages social responsibility among professionals. While the media is free, few architects and planners strongly raise their voices against social injustice and violation of human rights. Students are very active on the issue in debates and seminars but not in public forums. Student members of ARC PEACE India, now over 60, besides preferring social development jobs, pledged to be strongly vocal in public forums on the issue and to write more in journals.

A positive trend is that government wages for professionals recently have increased significantly and the gap is shrinking. Government jobs are also increasing, thanks to the economy, and that the private sector is slowly getting more engaged in social projects, and more importantly, there is a positive shift in the minds of young professionals to be more socially responsible in practice.

Another positive aspect is that demands for architecture and planning training is soaring. In SPA we are encouraged by this trend. We realize that the growing demand is not so much charged by economic factors as by the fact that the training would help the youth to be trained as innovators and creators, work for the societal development and be agents of change. The students in SPA strongly urge the authorities to bring change in the content of education and also in the methods of training to enable them to be more socially responsible in practice. As a member of the SPA Academic Council and ARC PEACE I do my best to promote this. The younger architects and planners in India are surely becoming more influenced by the democratic political system and freedom of expression and want to be an agents of change.

### **Lessons from involvement in helping a squatter community**

Let me examine the issue with reference to another live case in Delhi which illustrates the politicization of social development and help to the poor to improve their living environment. The case refers to a 25- year old squatter cluster of about 800 poor families huddled in a public piece of land of less than 4,000 sqm. The land is valued at about 2,500 USD per sqm and lies along a major arterial route of Delhi. A family of 6 lives in a space of less than 10 sqm space and most families are forced to build a second storey even onto the shanty type structure, thus endangering safety. I live adjacent to the site in a planned residential complex for architects and planners. Women from the squatter site help us in household chores and boys wash our cars. Though some rudimentary electric power and potable water is available to the residents, there are no proper toilets, density is extremely high and the environmental squalor is starkly visible. Most residents want to shift to a relocation site if provided with residential plots. Politicization of this social development project site has forced the residents to live in extreme squalor.

ARC PEACE India thinks that a workable and politically acceptable solution for helping the poor can be found. Since resettlement is almost ruled out due to lack of availability of land,

planned redevelopment of the site should be possible. A public-private partnership project is economically viable by raising funds for redevelopment through commercial development on a third of the site by the private sector. ARC PEACE India has offered to the local government that it can provide a workable solution. Taking the advantage of the democratic political system and its policy on eviction, ARC PEACE India has



Inside view of the squatter settlement 2014.

taken the task to publicise the case through writing in newspapers and joining hands with some like-minded NGOs. We have started creating trust and confidence among the poor families to cooperate and be part of the development which will benefit all. ARC PEACE India, if permitted by the government, will develop a workable in-situ development plan jointly with a private firm. The idea is to use a part of the strategic and high value land for up-market commercial use and thereby raise enough money for meeting the cost of redevelopment and housing for the residents. Acceptable low-cost housing norms will be followed and about 25 to 30 sqm of living space can be provided to the residents at affordable rates.

### **Some final observations**

It is not difficult to understand why the architects and planners should be more socially responsible. What is critical is how to transform it into actual real world practice. Related questions need to be addressed. Should social responsibility be taken as an integral part of the professional charter, which cannot be violated? Can the professional responsibility be separated from the responsibilities of architects and planners as citizens of a society?

I think, therefore, in this context, three factors should be considered: in our professional work; our education and training must change, so should the professional code of conduct we work with. In addition, the political system must provide better opportunities for architects and planners to take up social projects. All three are interrelated. Education and training and a professional code of conduct may not be the products of a political system. But, in actual practice, a professional is significantly influenced by the politico-administrative system within which the professional has to work. Otherwise, it is hard to understand why architects and planners undertake illegal and socially irresponsible tasks, like some Israeli architects. Thus, when the political system forces you to work in a way you and the profession at large consider illegal, you should have the courage to stand against the injustice.

After all, we the architects and planners are mandated to build sustainable as well as socially acceptable living environments. Creativity in our profession comes as much from using technology sensibly as it comes from making ourselves meaningful to the needs of the poor and common man.

#### About the author

**Bijay Misra** is a Professor Emeritus of the School of Planning & Architecture (SPA), New Delhi. He was educated at SPA and MIT, USA. He joined the faculty of SPA in 1966. He has over 45 years of practice in urban planning and design, environment and disaster risk management. He has worked internationally in various capacities, including about seven years of professional work in Japan, three years in China and a year in Thailand as visiting professor, international expert for the UNDP and UNDESA and also as invited researcher. Misra worked as the team leader of many national projects in India and some recent ones include Community-led Disaster management, Mumbai, Green Cities Design, West Bengal and National Guidelines on Urban Plan Preparation and Implementation. He is Co-Chair of ARC PEACE International and active in ARC PEACE India.



# Planning as a Social Indicator – Sweden from Welfare Policy to Neo-liberalism

Sven Thiberg

This paper has two objectives:

- To describe, to an international audience, Swedish housing policy from 1920 up to modern times, focusing on how architecture relates to housing needs and expectations. The question is: Why has Sweden lost its social responsibility for sustainable housing?
- To describe, in general, the relationship between the planning profession, the political and ideological “climate” of Swedish society and its expression in terms of economic theory. The question is: Why did Sweden adopt a neo-liberal approach to planning when Thatcherism was already on its way out?

## **“The People’s Home” as idea and icon**

One can’t describe today’s Swedish model without mentioning where it came from. To understand the contrasts between now and then, one has to describe the rise and fall of “the Swedish model”. In particular, one cannot understand Sweden without having contemplated the concept of *Folkhemmet* (“The People’s Home”), as an idea and as an icon.

In Sweden the period of enlightenment began with the parliamentary reform of 1809, but modern Sweden was only established by the breakthrough of industrialism towards the end of the 19th century. An agricultural society, built around small villages and manors with “cotters” quickly turned into an urban class society with a small upper class, merchants and shop and industrial workers.

In 1928 the social democratic Prime Minister, Per Albin Hansson, coined the phrase *People’s Home* as the term for the societal model the party wanted to create. Everyone would participate and be given good and equal conditions of life based on “fellowship and a sense of community”. The societal model was built around a democratic state with a central governmental power as well as independent municipalities and institutions. A postulate was an ethnically homogeneous population with a relatively small upper class and a discrete and “kind” investing sector of industrial capitalism in mutual understanding with the workers unions. “A spirit of consensus” was the term of the day.

Public funding systems, connected to planning standards and quality control, were considered necessary to remedy housing distress and to make residential construction possible for the whole population. The municipalities took the overarching responsibility and legislation was tailored with respect to planning and implementation of housing, including facilities for schools, health care and commercial services. The model included economic resources, municipal acquisition of land, municipal taxing rights, municipal housing companies, competent municipal officials and an advanced local democracy.

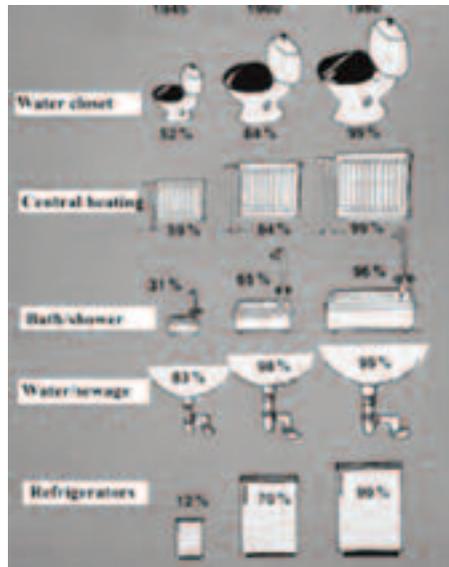
These systems turned out to be sustainable over a long period of time. Dismantling them only began in the late 1980s.

Since then conditions have gradually changed. Municipalities' economy has been degraded, and building initiatives have shifted to the executives of the marketplace with their own planning competence and on their own terms, not controlled by the need for housing. Municipal planning competence has gradually been eroded. And especially: the state's financial support has disappeared although it deals with irreversible policy changes and sets the stage for the building industry's rationalizations at the expense of local housing needs and ambitious environmental goals.

*Originally having been an idea of everyday democracy, the People's Home eventually became an icon in the political and ideological debate. Now the term is being torn apart in the struggle for interpretative privilege between investigative social science and xenophobic political tendencies.*



Local Stockholm politician sowing the prototype lamella type of housing that was developed through social engineering.



Housing standards as developed during the post-war period, resulting in the total elimination of slums by 1980.

### **From welfare state to neo-liberal market society**

When neo-liberal policies began to be implemented, the concept that replaced the People's Home was the "Welfare State". A reasonable assessment of the time of the transition from rise to fall of the People's Home would be the late 1980s. Then Sweden had experienced "The Record Years", another term for the economic situation of strong growth and expanding conspicuous consumption.

In the early 1990s an economic crisis paved the way for the deconstruction of the welfare system, with the rise of distinct class divisions, the dismemberment of the system of housing supply, and market capitalism as the economic model. The transition was not only a result of the long lasting social democratic grip on power being broken by a couple of short-lived right-of-centre administrations, but also of how social democracy redefined itself to adapt to market solutions in the form of cautious adjustments to the models of Milton Friedman and Margaret Thatcher.

The previous right-of-centre four-party government (2006–2014) continued in the direction of more and more explicit market models, including planning. The Centre party that is currently in charge of the Ministry of Enterprise primarily represented this. The watchmen-state is combined with a state that financed the welfare market through private "entrepreneurs" and profit maximizing venture capitalists as its cherished operators.

*In the midst of society, a new class is emerging – “the Precariat” – society’s disregarded or never integrated individuals and groups, those cut off from benefits, unemployed youth, people dependent on social benefits, i.e. the socially excluded – defined as such by the upper class. One might say that it is a matter of taste when you refer to a blue and yellow neo-liberalism.*

### **Palace architect round trip – about the architect’s role as a social indicator**

How does one describe the architect’s role over time in relation to the surrounding society? I choose a depiction of a non-independent professional in the ligaments of the powers of society. It happened when the architect liberated itself from the role of master-builder and the design task became a clearly professional role. The transition happened step-by-step and at different times, in different cultures and contexts. I deem that the role grew out of palace architecture for the glorification of the various societal powers – the church, the state, and the owners of capital.

Eventually a bourgeois, urban middle and upper class developed. In the cities housing development made room for architectural profiling, using inherited styles and ideals. New architectural tasks emerged in a broader market. Paris is the European archetype, but Stockholm also has its bourgeois city centre from the late 1800s.

With the labour movement in Germany, housing developments started and spread all over Europe before 1900. Sweden got its *People’s Home* architects and its sociological housing research. This dramatic change was illustrated by the Stockholm exhibition in 1930, as a sign of the breakthrough of modernism. Classicism was thrown out. Architects were given a new employer. A functionalism-architecture modified by social democracy emerged.

One example: The expansion of the subway system in Stockholm started during the Second



Vällingby, built in the 1950s around a subway station.

World War. Along the radial subway lines, suburbs emerged: Confined development areas with varying types of housing, schools, social and commercial services. *Vällingby*, inaugurated in 1954, became internationally known as a successful example of the Swedish Model of residential construction for all social classes, as opposed to the “social housing construction” in continental Europe and England. Today, Vällingby is

one of the “problem areas” that surround Stockholm with a growing number of immigrants and low-income earners, while the “stone city’s” gentrification is fully underway.

In the mid-1960s the next period of great city building began. As a result of the rapid social transformation from farming to manufacturing and service industries in small, medium sized and especially large cities, new homes were needed in new places. Once again the professional architect became a servant of a new authority – the creators of quickly growing residential areas in collaboration with a building industry under complete technical re-examination and coalition: The large-scale “Million Homes Programme” 1965-1975 (a million apartments and houses were built in ten years) was pushed through with state subsidies, favourable loans, and support of the rationalisation of the building industry.

In the early 2000s the financial conditions of housing production changed once again, from an expense item in the state budget to a tax cash cow, with devastating consequences for social development. Only expensive tenant-owned apartments were built, developed by a few large companies bent on profit maximisation, in spite of the fact that people looking for homes were

asking for cheap rental apartments.

Development in the major cities has become a competition of condensation and stacking of grid neighbourhoods without space for anything but commercial buildings. School yards are “forgotten” in the planning process. This is far from what could rightfully be referred to as planning of habitat. It might be symptomatic that the Swedish language lacks a word for “human settlements”.

*Thus my prediction has come true: the architect has once again become a palace designer within the new category of “Logo Architecture” (or Branding) landmarks, as speciality. Architects have lost their innocence, and possibly their honour, and have placed themselves in the dunce corner, facing the wall. As I will demonstrate, they are still standing there today.*

### **The architect who didn't become a community builder and the community planner who became a consultant**

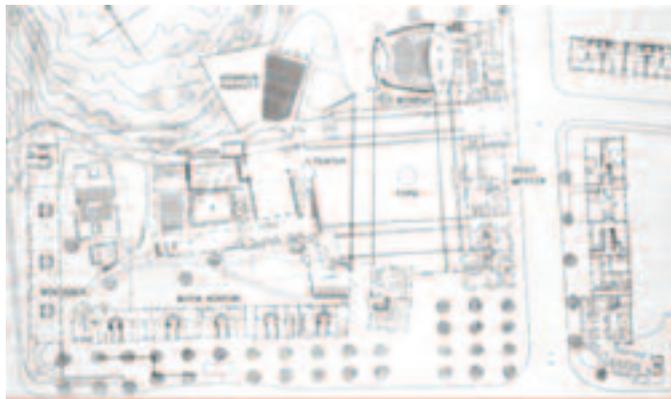
Architecture and municipal planning has today become an odd pair in a profession of mutuality. How did that happen, why, and what are the consequences? Historically the architect and the municipal planner have different origins and skills. The architect designed buildings, the planner planned settlements. Many of history's planning-related tasks were military; the mission would be to design bastions and communities within fort walls. Cities of the Middle Ages consist of centres with well-planned squares, thoughtfully located churches and palaces, and the resulting, unplanned boundary settlement for assorted trades.

This structure can be found in today's third-world urban environments. At least passably planned inner city structures surrounded by more or less spontaneous boundary settlements, often organised on its own terms. The megacities that are growing in China seem to be precisely planned in their cores of gigantic residential towers. Will any spontaneous boundary settlement be allowed, or needed to support the inhabitants of the skyscrapers like in the old developing countries?

Swedish architecture education was originally focused on building design. Planning was a profession for engineers or a side-mission for housing architects. Municipal planning became a subject of education during the post-war period. For a short time architect education at the Royal Institute of Technology was split up after two years, into a building design and a municipal planning major. Planning was eventually given lower priority and practically disappeared during the 1980s. A new programme of design-oriented planning was introduced by the Blekinge Institute of Technology in 1989. Today it is the most important recruiting ground for physical planners. Since the 1950s, investigative planning education is available at the social science institutions of the universities.

What has happened to the planner? The truth is that this role has been degraded as the municipalities' role as initiating instances, planners and executives of social development has become more and more marginalised. Suggestions for development often come from the

outside through big building companies with their own planning and executive capacity as developers.



*The planner has become a consultant to an independent developer, and is no longer a*

Site plan of Årsta from the 1950s, planned according to the neighbourhood unit concept.

*municipal official integrated in the municipal administration with local backing and awareness. This relationship may very well contribute to the standardization of planning and building design, which is so present in today's construction.*

#### **"To earn one's role?"**

My interpretation is that the planning profession ends up as an onlooker in the municipal community-planning environment, and that it can no longer take the social responsibility that used to be its justification and incentive. The planners themselves are also spectators, available merely as advisers with international planning ideals as their benchmark.

A revealing study by a municipal planning researcher, Kristina Grange, verifies that I am onto the truth. With in-depth interviews of architects/planners and developers under the headline "To earn one's role?" Grange reveals that the architects feel pushed aside, and what is worse, they no longer see opportunities to exercise the role in society they thought was their purpose.

*It's far too easy to blame the profession. As has hopefully been demonstrated by my text, it is a long process with many different phases. How a meaningful role for social planners is to be reclaimed is a different matter, which involves political effort and ability.*

#### **Final comments**

When I've pondered my text and received valuable input I feel obliged to include three apologies:

- Ideologies and ideas regarding societal models appear and continue to develop long before they are occupied by financial powers that turn them into tools of politics. In my text the economic theories have been given a commanding role in the depiction of the welfare society's rise and fall. Let us return to the debate of ideas and the arrogance of political will.  
*Reinvent the welfare state!*
- That the architect and the community planner are tools of the authorities – which they very well might be - is a consistent theme in my exposition. At the same time I mock them for not breaking out of their subordination and creating the welfare society they have the competence for. It is not decent to discuss such a difficult matter of occupational ethics so flippantly.  
*Formulate the rules of ethics that strengthen the professions' roles as creators of ideas and visionaries of the future!*
- My text is very pessimistic and lacks positive suggestions for changes in political and professional implementation. It shouldn't finish like that.  
*Formulate a new urban design policy as a basis for democratic and sustainable community building!*

#### **About the author**

**Sven Thiberg**, born in 1931, obtained his degree in architecture in 1955. He worked as a designing and planning architect 1954–1964, as a researcher at the Swedish Building Research Institute 1961–1971, as a professor of Building Function Analysis at the Royal Institute of Technology 1971–1996. He supervised many PhD students and led many research projects. For a long period he worked with European standardization of interior fittings and furniture, with universal design and consumer research policies. He chaired the special committee for accessibility within the international research coordinating body CIB. He also acted as a coordinator of the Nordic eco-labelling model 'Svanen'.



During his entire career he participated actively in the public and professional debate on social and ethical issues. For many years he acted as the chair of the NGO Swedish Form and of ARC•PEACE.

# Public Participation in the Spatial Planning Process and Representative Democracy!

Agneta Sundberg

Nowadays when people in several countries in various parts of the world do not seem to appreciate the democratic way of governing a country through parliamentarism and representative democracy, I would like to present some ideas about how we as planners can address the issue of democracy and how we can interact with the public and encourage participation in spatial planning.

During the past decade there have been many protests when governing bodies decided to change the environment without inviting public participation. One of the latest is the protest in Turkey against the urban development plan for an existing park, the Taksim Gezi Park in Istanbul. In Germany there have been big projects that have upset people and made them go out in the streets and protest against the changes. One example is Berlin's new airport that is to replace the old one – Tempelhof. In Stuttgart people have protested against the building of an expensive underground railway station. Yet another example is the protest against the building of a new concert hall in Hamburg.

## The battle of the elm trees

In 1971 in Sweden, a famous historic battle took place when a large group gathered in the park of “Karl den XIIIs torg”, to defend a group of elm trees from being cut down in order to make room for a new metro station. The battle of the elm trees had an impact both on the project itself, and also influenced the development of Swedish society and its governance.



Celebration in 2011 of the 40th anniversary of “the battle of the elm trees”. The trees in the background were considered diseased in 1971, but are today still alive and healthy. Photo: Dick Urban Vestbro.

As a result of the protests, the metro station was moved to another place with easy access for travellers. The elm trees are still standing in the park. In Sweden this was a turning point away from a centralized type of planning, driven by experts and politicians, towards a more interactive type of planning. Nevertheless, it would take until 1987 before one could

notice a sustainable change in the planning and building act towards an increase in participation by the citizens and not just by the developers.

Since the full emergence of liberal democracy, in Sweden from 1921 to the change that began in 1971, the main form was for the citizens to vote while the politicians ruled with help from

experts. The elected politicians had earned the right to make the decisions during their mandate period for all other citizens. Planning and building legislation also expressed these liberal ideals during this time.

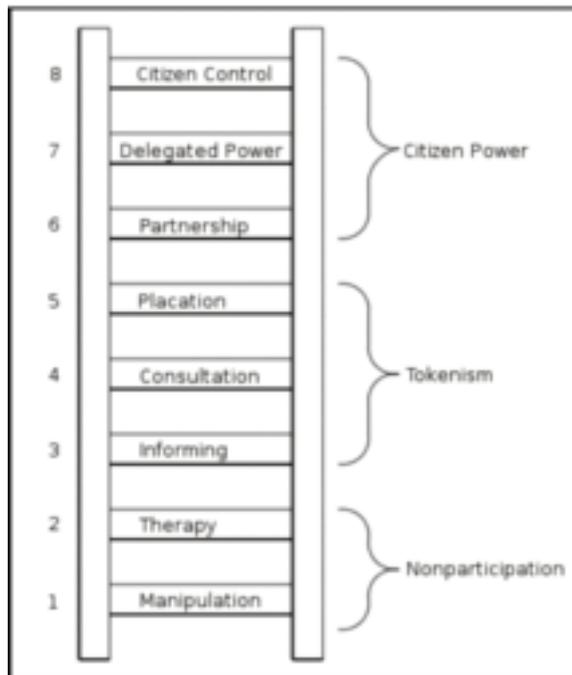
### Ladder of participation

Based on conditions in the USA of the 1960s, Sherry R Arnstein constructed a theoretical ladder with 8 rungs for the analysis of public/citizen participation in spatial planning. The ladder has since been used as a method to analyse who has the power when important decisions are being made in spatial planning. It has had a renaissance in the late 1990s, which indicates that the principles are still applicable.

Arnstein's ladder is organized in three main levels:

- The highest level is the **Citizen power** with the rungs – *Citizen Control* – *Delegated power* – *Partnership*.
- The second main level is **Tokenism** with the rungs – *Placation* – *Consultation* – *Informing*.
- The lowest form of participation is of course the level with **Nonparticipation** which has *Therapy* and *Manipulation* as the two rungs.

A huge problem with public participation in spatial planning is to know which groups and what part of the society are participating in each particular case. That is why there are a lot of difficulties with the highest level, Citizen Power. For me it is a kind of un-utopian idea to let this level decide, because of the problem of who is representing whom. In Sweden we reach the second main level in the practicing of public participation.



Arnstein's ladder of participation. Source: A Ladder of Citizen Participation, AIP journal 1969.

### Involve as many as possible

The objective of participation should be to involve as many groups of citizens as possible in the planning process at an early stage. I think a lot of planners have found another way to handle the planning process compared to the earlier period. Many have realized that it is better to invite people to meetings and activities to discuss what problems should be solved, instead of presenting a solution to the problems that the planner has defined. Planners who embrace this

methodology are often more successful with their plans compared to those who try to practice the lowest level, Nonparticipation.

I would like to see communicative planning develop and representative democracy to become more sensitive to the different forms of public participation. Sweden has an excellent opportunity to be a role model for public participation in spatial planning, if national and local authorities continue to find new methods to communicate with actors in the planning process, including the public.

#### **About the author**

**Agneta Sundberg**, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in Spatial Planning at the, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden.

She also has experience from the public sector at both the municipal and the state level. Agneta Sundberg has worked as Head of the Department for Environment and Community Planning, as a planning architect, and at the Swedish Consumer Agency with research about the indoor and outdoor housing environment. She studied architecture and gained a PhD degree from KTH, the Royal Institute of Technology.



# Half a Century of Planning and Architecture in Cuba

Dania González Couret

## Introduction

Cuba is a developing country, which has been carrying out a Social Revolution since 1959. It is an archipelago located in the Caribbean with a main island, a tropical (warm – humid) climate, and around 11 million inhabitants.

For four centuries Cuba was a Spanish colony, and during the first half of the 20th century it depended politically and economically on the USA, until the triumph of the Revolution in 1959. From that moment, the country has been under an embargo imposed by the United States, which has affected Cuba and its social system.

As a result of its history, the economy was traditionally based on agriculture, mainly sugar cane, almost a mono-culture. Among the new economic activities developed during the last 30 years, scientific and technical services as well as biotechnology and the pharmaceutical industry, generate important incomes, although not yet enough with respect to the requirements for social development.

Original Cuban architecture developed by the aborigines, continued to be the reference for the rural areas, but the first cities were developed by the Spaniards according to the Mediterranean Model, predominant in all historical city centers up today. Cuban Architecture's evolution followed different cultural influences, but preserved an essence linked to the context.



## Social revolution from 1959

The Social Revolution carried out over more than half a century focused on reducing the differences between the cities and the countryside, between intellectual and manual work, as well as between social classes. The intention was to develop a more just and equitable society.

More attention was paid to the less developed regions as well as more importance being given to the builders as manual workers in comparison to the architects as intellectuals, as a result of which construction has been more important than design, affecting the architectural and urban

quality. At the same time, construction activity deviated from the urban areas relative to the countryside, and thanks to that, cities were not changed or destroyed by the demolition of ancient historical buildings to build new modern ones, as happened in most of the cities in Latin America. Hence, the historical centers of Cuban cities, despite their deterioration as a result of the lack of maintenance over decades, preserve their cultural values, and many of them have been recognized as world heritage sites.

New urban developments from the 1960s followed the open modern urban model, based on the use of repetitive block type building projects. In order to minimize differences between the cities and the countryside, as well as to improve the quality of life, this model was also used in isolated rural settlements, where it was proposed that farmers should live in four or five stories concrete buildings.

In order to satisfy the massive social housing demand, some prefab high building technologies were introduced, and with them, the use of repetitive typical projects, in open peripheral urban development. The



Unidad Vecinal "La Habana del Este", 1961.

The intention was to promote a social architecture (not market oriented), the industrialization of the construction process based on the repetition of a building model, as well as the recognition of the constructors (instead of the architects) as protagonists in the production of the built environment. It impacted negatively on the diversity, specificity and cultural identity of architecture and settlements.

The process of the "social production of habitat" by people, who could not gain access to the formal housing market, generated informal settlements in most developing countries. In contrast, in Cuba housing is a right, the State still has the main responsibility for providing housing for people, and self-construction is only possible for families wealthy enough to afford it. Most families have housing assigned to them by the state or through participating in a "micro-brigade"<sup>1</sup>.

However, various policies have stimulated self-construction of housing during the last twenty years in Cuba, as an alternative to the social housing provided by the State. The "Architects of the Community Program" was created in the 1990s, to assist people in building, repairing, transforming, extending, improving or maintaining their housing. Although this program was created to assist people in self-construction, it constitutes a professional activity more similar to private practice in market economies, based on the direct relationship between the architect and the client. To understand this it should be known that private practice of the profession is not allowed in Cuba, since education (tertiary or higher education included) is free for everyone.

Contrary to the predominant tendency up to the 1980s, self-construction and local production of building materials have recently been recognized as the main way to produce and maintain housing, despite the fact that they generate an extended low-density urban model. The Faculty of Architecture in Havana has carried out research focused on proposing progressive solutions to take advantage of urban land by a partnership between the government and the population, in an equilibrated management process.

Since the Historic Center of Havana was declared a "World Heritage Site" in 1983, the

cultural importance of the historical cities was recognized and a conservation process started in every city center. The main difference between interventions in the urban areas with recognized patrimonial values in Cuba and in the rest of the region consists of its social character that allows the inhabitants to participate in the process and to continue living in the place, instead of being forced to move. Thus, the authentic social and cultural city life is preserved and gentrification is avoided.



Plaza Vieja, Historical Center of Havana.



New eclectic vernacular architecture in Camarioca.

During the last two decades it has been difficult to avoid the influence of foreign architectural models coming from developed countries whose climate, culture, as well as economic and technological development, are totally different from Cuba's. Some glass buildings have appeared in the urban landscapes, sometimes related to real estate and foreign investments.

On the other hand, there is a new popular preference for a combination of classical and traditional decoration, and a new eclectic vernacular architecture has emerged. This phenomenon might be influenced by the eclectic architecture in some tourist developments, promoted by foreign investments or international chains from the 1990s, but it may also express a popular reaction to the uniformity and lack of identity of peripheral urban development.

### The present

At present, the Cuban economic model is being adjusted in order to promote more decentralization and participation by endogenous local processes, aiming to achieve a more "prosperous and sustainable socialism", which confers more importance to physical planning. New Housing Policy and Housing Law are being elaborated based on a more integrated approach. To enhance the role of scientific research in social and economic development is another important principle promoted, as well as rescuing the cultural value of architecture and the built environment.

### About the author

**Dania González Couret** graduated as an architect in 1979. Later she specialized in Design and Industrialisation. She got her PhD in 1994 and became Doctor of Science in 2007, both at the Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría (ISPJAE ) in Havana, Cuba. During 1996-99 she studied at the Lund Centre for Architecture and Development for Habitat Studies, Sweden, focusing on housing, energy and environment. She has been a professor in the Faculty of Architecture at ISPJAE since 1979. She has served as Head of the Department of Design, as well as Vice-Dean for Research and Postgraduate Studies. She is currently Director of Postgraduate Studies at



ISPJAE; coordinator of the Master Program in Social Housing as well as the Doctoral Program in Architecture. Dania González Couret is a member of the Board of Cuba Solar and ARC•PEACE, and a member of the National Academy of Sciences, among other national and international institutions. She had many articles and books published and has received several national and international awards including the National Habitat Award in 2014.

**Notes:**

- 1 Micro-brigades for housing construction are organized by labor centers. The tasks corresponding to those of the workers participating in the brigade were shared by the collective that remained in the labor center, so a new labor force was not needed. Once the building was finished, apartments were distributed and assigned to any worker of the center (whether participating in the brigade or not), according to their necessities and merits, by the public vote of the workers' assembly.

# Urban Planning in Latin America: A Timeless Challenge

Oscar Margenet Nadal

## Introduction

Socially responsible architects, designers and planners were invited *'to analyse the challenges of our professions in the fast urbanizing world under political and environmental stresses.'* To respond to this inescapable challenge the present author offers an overview - understandably incomplete – of the Latin American (LA) context.

Maya culture was three millenniums old when Spanish conquerors invaded their territory. Europeans needed only a span of one hundred years between the 16th and 17th centuries to develop *'an operation of such magnitude and extent that is unmatched by any other colonial process in the history of the humanity'*<sup>1</sup>.

Initially perceived as a huge 'island', the 'adelantados'<sup>2</sup> were entitled to possess and dominate all the territory and live as they wished, to manage them from towns founded by the hundreds. That strategy *'had two immediate consequences; first, it limited from the outset the possibility to fix territorial borders as used by North American settlers; and second, it consolidated the supremacy of the city over the rural field.'*<sup>3</sup>

Other European empires were also attracted to the New World by the stories of 'El Dorado country' riches. Seemingly, a timeless Colonial Era began.

The United States of America's independence from the British Empire, the French Revolution, and the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizens' encouraged local urban bourgeoisie to become independent of the Spanish monarchy, at the beginning of the 19th century.

However, LA republics were symbolically free due to their links to ancient exploiters. Furthermore, laying railways and building infrastructure, like sea and great river ports, water and electricity supply, roads and main public buildings, strengthened LA independence from the European metropolis. Two centuries would pass before 'one continental big nation' materialized, the dream of 'libertadores'<sup>4</sup>.

WW I and II introduced an unjust export-import model; LA nations were reduced to producing raw materials and exchanging them for industrialized products with great added value. In general, this continues today.

## Pre-Columbian Urban Planning

According to Jorge E. Hardoy *'The population of indigenous agricultural villages grew slowly during the second millennium and the first half of the first millennium B.C.'* It was only *'after the flourishing of regional states that some indigenous cultures came to an urban stage and then to the "big city" in Mesoamerica and South America.'*

The *'real designers of those wonderful ritual centers and squares, sober paths and monumental engineering works remain anonymous. Unknown architects, artists and artisans left samples of their skill and imagination (...)* People followed orders; did not comment about what was done. The

urban planning during the pre-Columbian period, then, was a public attitude resulting from a decision of the State and its scope reflected the need to manage government programs regarding the availability of labor and construction materials<sup>5</sup> Hardoy points out.

LA's first nations were violently subdued by 'Conquistadores'<sup>6</sup> after Columbus disembarked in La Isabela in 1492. Although the conquerors confiscated and destroyed whatever they could, Maya, Aztec, Inca and Quechua cultures fortunately left behind a number of impressive urban footprints, e.g:

**Teotihuacan** is an Aztec anthropological reserve about 48 km northeast of today's Mexico City. With around 125,000 inhabitants this was the largest Pre-Columbian city and the world's sixth largest city during its epoch.



Teotihuacan.

**Machu Picchu**, the 15th-century Inca site located at 2,430 meters above sea level, on a mountain ridge above the Sacred Valley – 80 kilometers northwest of Cusco – in Peru; is currently being restored.



Machu Picchu.

**Tikal**, located in Guatemala's *Tikal National Park*, is one of the largest archaeological sites and urban centers of Pre-Columbian Maya civilization.

**Quilmes**, a Diaguita tribe dwelling on Tucumán's pre-Andean foothills, in northwestern Argentina, whose 2,000 survivors were sent 20 km south of Buenos Aires to Quilmes city.

Indigenous urban planning integrated buildings with the natural environment through the use of local materials and deep respect for the landscape.

### Colonial Urban Planning

The 'Columbian territorial organization' (1492) was the first law regulating the nature of the new Spanish Crown settlements. The 'Seven Certificates Codex' states *'land belongs to the first who populate it'*. Anyone founding an urban settlement without that legal title was punished with death.

*'Unlike the English, the Spanish in America were febrile founders of cities' says Brewer-Carías. 'The "tidy town" was the Spanish American colonial great creation and urban cultural heritage in the New World (...) which materialized in an urban model (...) always developed from a major or central plaza and laid to string rule, with departing streets laid out in a straight line, forming an urban plot in blocks generally equal, like a checkerboard.'*<sup>7</sup>

Colonial cities were categorized as: administration centers, international ports, regional ports, mining centers, indigenous centers, agricultural centers, prisons, and border military or religious centers. *'Best of all recent-cities of the New World was La Isabela, because it was stone or masonry, (...) has a Church, a Hospital and Christopher Columbus' strong house (...) he*

*distributed plots of land, ordered streets and a main public square (encouraging) everyone to make own home of stone, mud, wood and straw as best prospered (...).*<sup>8</sup>

Four other colonial models basically followed Columbus landmarks, e.g.

**Ovandino:** Santo Domingo, Veracruz, Campeche, Panamá, Cartagena, Santa Marta and San Juan;

**Antonio de Mendoza:** Mexico City, 1535, (right picture), Puebla de los Ángeles, Valladolid and Antequera de Oaxaca;

**Felipe II:** New Veracruz, designed by Bautista Antonelli in 1590, Guadalajara, San Luis Potosí, and insulars Santiago de Cuba and Santo Domingo; and

**Carlos III:** Villa de Leyva, Tunja and Zipaquirá, San Francisco de Quito; Santa Fe de Bogotá historic center, and Havana.



Rediscovered in the Renaissance, this urban planning was used by the Crown to strengthen their rule over the conquered lands. The “Urban Management Plan for the Indies” created the ‘encomiendas’ on the natives’ villages now called ‘reducciones’. Natives’ labour force, led by the tribal chief, was organized by ‘encomenderos’. However, Bartolomé de las Casas denounced the cruel treatment of natives, dedicating his life to writing and lobbying until the slavery system was abolished in the early 1800s. The famous Valladolid Debate, considered the first defense of human rights<sup>9</sup>, contributed to abolish the Encomiendas and inaugurate the New Laws.

*‘Most townships founded in any part of the Spanish Empire in America before the various parts became independent countries were planned according to the Laws. These include many townships with Spanish names located in what is now the United States.’*<sup>10</sup>

Colonial urban planning excluded the natives. This kind of social structure marked LA culture over the years. Intermarriage between natives and Spaniards spawned generations of LAs who grew up wanting to participate in decision-making levels. These nationalist feelings were nurtured by Illustration intellectuals who often used social gatherings to discuss the end of colonial dependence. Though many were denounced as conspirators they never gave up their ideals, but encouraged the revolutionary movement finally achieved by civil and military patriots.

After the French-Spanish coalition was defeated at the battle of Trafalgar (1805), LA patriots decided to take control of the streets. The continuing story of independence began simultaneously in many LA regions.

### **Neo-Colonial Urban Planning**

LA’s squirearchy kept strong ties with Europe; e.g. European qualified architects came to LA to serve local landowners. Under the influence of L’École de Beaux Arts à Paris, neoclassicist designs progressively shaped LA’s most important official buildings, imitating the trend in USA.

French academicism and ancient oligarchies shared deep sympathy for authoritarian instruction. Hated by common people, non-conformist French writer Émile Zola (1840-1902) described it as *‘the opulent bastard of all styles’*.

LA state governments were neo-colonial administrations. Furthermore, the military justified some ethnic cleansing operations as ‘self-defense actions’. Indigenous settlements were burned and their land distributed among the soldiers as payment for their services<sup>11</sup>. A new landlord class was thus built; one that was the base for future military dictatorships.

La Plata city was founded to separate provincial functions from Buenos Aires when this

became the federal capital. Governor Dardo Rocha commissioned Pedro Benoit – architect, engineer and urban planner – the son of a French engineer who settled in Argentina, to design the new city, inaugurated in 1880.

A strong resemblance with the Paris reformation plan by Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann (1852–1870) is observable. *(Right)*

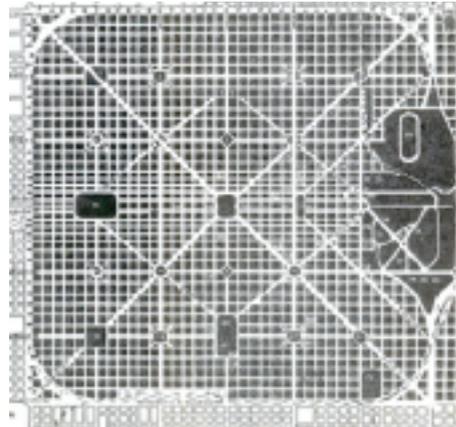
These initiatives responded to the capitalist economy dominating the western world; they acted as a temporary remedy by the occupying labor force, and prevented riots in protest against the lack of job opportunities and inhumane social conditions suffered by the working class.

The foundation of ‘Sociedad Central de Arquitectos’ (Architects Central Society), Buenos Aires, 1886, led to the creation of other LA professional associations.

University Reform shook conservative education immediately after WWI. While universal suffrage, after hard struggles, was gaining popular adherents in LA at the turn of 20th century, a youth movement demanding the democratization of higher studies was initiated in Córdoba, Argentine (1918).

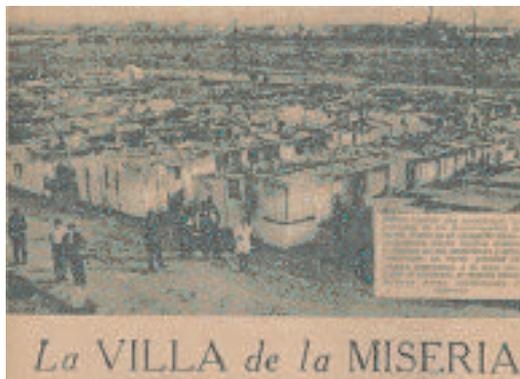
Reformists defended free education for all, active participation in the academic curricula and co-governance of the higher studies House, influencing other LA universities and arriving in USA and France decades later.

The Great Depression was deeply felt by rural citizens who began to migrate towards metropolitan areas. Informal settlements began to multiply with entire families arriving from impoverished regions and neighboring countries; e.g. cities like Buenos Aires had neither urban plans nor human volition to house thousands



of roofless families; thus, hundreds of spontaneous urban settlements emerged through the direct participation of people.

The land occupation process – oddly enough – repeated the conquerors’ process, only it was a bottom–up action this time. People acted with no architects or urban planners, driven only by their basic unattended needs. Thus, Villa Miseria was born to expand<sup>12</sup>. *(Left)*



Socially responsible citizens began to organize syndicates, mutual and neighbors’ associations and cooperatives in large LA cities, to offer social services neglected by authoritarian rulers, e.g. credit, housing and consumer benefits.

‘El Hogar Obrero’ (The workers’ home) is an Argentine cooperative with an amazing century of history (1905).

It has survived all dictatorships and still builds hundreds of low priced, high quality housing with beneficiaries’ participation<sup>13</sup>. *(Left)*



As a student, this author had Urban Planning tutors who created the Rosario Masterplan (1929); consequently, he was

involved in surveying informally built environments in the 1960s as part of the academic curriculum. Thus socially aware professionals were formed; some became activists and others entered the public administration sector. They opposed official 'eradication plans' of 'illegal settlements' (later euphemistically renamed 'relocation plans'), instead advocating true social housing.

With the advent of populist governments<sup>14</sup> the military regimes began to retreat in many countries. Before long what was a jubilant welcome became a new form of authoritarianism, and democracy a way to build a political clientele. Roof sheeting, mattresses, food and other goods were used as perks to gain votes.

Opposed by the urban oligarchy, political patronage became a sub-culture in LA countries. Poverty, unemployment and all social injustices justify the official discourse in which people rule. In practice, replacing the three republican powers, presidential personalism gave birth to demagogic aristocracy.

One prominent LA populist politician was Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina; favored by a strong economic situation from food exports during WWII he denounced USA interventionism in LA politics, was elected president by the working class and started national development the British way.

The National Mortgage Bank was created and numerous housing schemes were officially designed and built on long term-low interest loans.

Perón used demagogy to consolidate internally and face external pressures. Professionals were forced to affiliate to the official party in exchange for jobs and were absorbed by the omnipresent political structure.

To defend the professions from external intromissions, in the 1960s architects and planners created provincial associations, like platforms to become social actors. Progressively, professions strengthened, codes of ethics were legalized; clients were represented and new citizens-government lobby relationships began.

### **Imported and national urban planning**

The world's leading capitalist economies recovered postwar. Keynesian economics became a widely accepted tool for government regulation, particularly in the birthplace of the industrial revolution and in friendly countries. State expansion was accompanied by an increasing development of the social sciences. Trends later known as 'post-industrial society' and 'welfare state' became popular.



A few LA governments brought spells of hope; e.g. Juscelino Kubitschek (Brazil 1956–61) and Arturo Frondizi (Argentina 1958–62) – both democratically elected presidents – focused on national development as an alternative to liberalism and statism by supporting state planning with no official intromission in business, and a market economy that respected democratic institutions.

This author was a young building technician when he visited the largest LA country, a few months before Brasilia was founded. Rio de Janeiro citizens were upset by the autocratic decision that made them

fear the economic collapse of their traditional capital. Planned to generate a process of demographic balance in a country historically overcrowded on its shores, Brasilia (page 104) designed by Lucio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer and Roberto Burle Marx is the best example of Le Corbusier's ideas applied in full to top-bottom state planning with no citizenship participation.

A long list of unbelievable practical problems generated strong questions from all civic sectors including the dwellers of forgotten 'favelas'.

Far away from the Republican motto '*liberté, égalité et fraternité*' deep social contradictions surfaced in Brazil through the new capital's modernist project, which '*may not be so unique in a world of legalized privileges and legitimated inequalities*', as James Holston remarks<sup>15</sup>.

The late 1950s witnessed the birth of LA 'guerrilla' armies, leftish armed youth opposing military regimes and state corruption associated with "imperialism". They pioneered the birth of LA socialist national governments. LA students-workers revolutionary movements sprang up simultaneously in LA urban centers.

The escalation of military-student confrontation commenced in Argentina when the regime took over governance of national universities in the 1960s. Democratically elected rectors and deans were replaced by 'facilitators'. Frequent student assemblies discussed actions to oust the secret police's undercover agents from classrooms. They were dark days with many schoolmates falling in prison, being tortured and killed. Architect and urban planner A. Pérez Esquivel denounced State terrorism, contributed with criminals' judgment. He received the Nobel Peace Prize (1980).

South of the Colorado River all LA countries were treated as the 'USA's backyard'. Industrialized countries, signers of Bretton Woods's international monetary system (1944-1971) succeeded in imposing their planning models of dependency, e.g. 'Radburn Pattern', on most LA countries. This model of planning was one of the favorite 'for-export' models mercilessly implanted on many LA gridiron pattern cities. (Right)

Local architects and urban planners were hired by US Corporations to act just as site-works supervisors; i.e. their 'professional' responsibilities were to give solutions to contractors' and clients' complaints.

The oil crisis laid a dark mantle over developed countries by 1973. Fuel was rationed for car owners. Economists like Ernst F. Schumacher were consulted, but real estate experts and politicians trusted the 'neoliberal' recipes of F. Hayek and M. Friedman. External politics produced immediate consequences in LA nations. The 'Chicago boys' and the 'Trilateral Commission' emerged almost simultaneously and installed monetarism as the alternative to Keynesianism.

Urban planning became a commodity supplied by the School of Economics specialists, where many LA professionals went for post-graduate studies. After overthrowing the Chilean President, Dictator General Augusto Pinochet was the first LA to adopt monetarism (1973-1990)<sup>16</sup>. This was further developed by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, unexpectedly becoming close friends due the Malvinas/Falkland Islands war (South Atlantic, 1982) out of which both regained political power, while the Argentine military regime would soon come to an end.

Still under dictatorship, academic and professional institutions managed to work jointly with citizens associations, persuading provincial authorities to design and build housing schemes with stakeholders' participation. Some interesting initiatives helped to improve the quality of popular housing in Argentina; e.g. the First National Workshop on Evaluation techniques applied to Housing, organized by the Rosario National University, September 1981<sup>17</sup>.

Hired to act as Head of the Provincial Architectural Board, in his home town of Santa Fe, this



author was in charge of more than 3,600 provincial buildings and public open spaces. Then he learned that large sums of public money were shamelessly diverted to the budgets of electoral rallies, and decided to make a difference through 'Community Technical Assistance'. This was an initiative to meet the main city stakeholders at some of the nineteen departmental capital cities to help them find in-situ solutions via private-public joint actions; a specific case study explaining this approach was presented at the ARC•PEACE Stockholm meeting, 1988<sup>18</sup>.

### **Participative urban planning**

The cold war came to an end, the Berlin Wall fell and the USSR collapsed. All this encouraged US economists to exhibit 'remarketed capitalism' as superior to a planned economy. With no enemies in sight they introduced some changes to capitalist model; e.g. the adoption of agreements like *The Washington Consensus*.

John Williamson<sup>19</sup> wrote a set of economic policies, which were soon considered the best economic program for LA countries to boost growth by the USA, international financial institutions, and economic centers in the 1990s.

It prescribed public budgetary discipline to avoid deficits, reorganized public spending to prioritize subsidies in sectors that promote growth and services for the poor, e.g. education, public health, research and infrastructure.

It also recommended a tax reform with wider bases and moderate marginal rates. It encouraged the removal of barriers to foreign direct investments and liberalization of international trade with the reduction of tariff barriers.

The new approach of capitalism prescribed diminishing administrative bureaucracy by privatizing public enterprises and state monopolies, with market deregulation to improve consumption and it recommended protection of private property. This produced conflictive situations in LA countries used to face unemployment by creating jobs in the public administration.

Later, LA business and political leaders gathered in the World Economic Forum (WEF) held at Santiago de Chile (2007) to update the situation after a decade of USA recipes. They suggested raising educational quality; instead of mechanical systems focusing on methodological aspects, i.e. *how to do it*.

WEF also recommended an immediate stop to the savage exploitation of natural resources; returning to Nature's regenerative cycles, improving waste recycling, strengthening protection of the natural alimentary chain and improving production of wind and solar energy. Finally, they advocated investing more in research and development; encouraging innovative projects; and rewarding those who supply appropriate technology to solve problematic situations with the participation of stakeholders.

In 1995 this author organized PARS ('Architects for Social Responsibility Program') made up of fifteen professionals participating in a course on 'Training Architects to Train People to Build their own Houses'. A couple of hundred needy Argentine women were helped to become bricklayers and to build their homes. A video of this bottom-up planning was shared at the ARC•PEACE seminar at Habitat II, Istanbul, June 1996.

Since 'Our Common Future' recommendations (1987), the environment and development have seldom walked hand-in-hand. Both people and the environment suffered important losses due to irresponsible developments, e.g. the 2007 real estate bubble crisis.



An international citizens' movement called the *Barcelona Consensus*<sup>20</sup> started in 2008 and proposes alternatives to worn-out models by “*focusing on people, and having the satisfaction of social needs as main objective*”.

Unlike the Washington and Santiago declarations, this model allows individuals or groups to participate and deliberate, by selecting actions from thirty-five shared goals leading to transitional process changes. It was precursor of the ‘Movimiento de los Indignados’, or M-15, a massive Spanish protest against housing evictions due to mortgages being in arrears, in 2011<sup>21</sup>.  
(page 106)

The Barcelona Consensus fosters legislation on environmental sustainability to stop speculative activities, which produce irreversible environmental damage; e.g. economies based on massive tourism. A socially equitable and sustainable economy is proposed, as advocated in the bestseller, ‘Small is Beautiful’<sup>22</sup> in the early 1970s. Its arguments contrast with ‘bigger is better’, and champion appropriate technologies that empower people rather than using machines for mass production, e.g. ‘economy serving man’ and ‘sustainability = enoughness’.

It proposes non-speculative financial systems, i.e. mutual banking, promoting savings and investing a proportion of the capital in community initiatives; e.g. sustainable education programs and actions, alternative ecological tourism; and favors the inclusive principles of ‘sharing knowledge’ in opposition to the exclusive higher education business.

Peruvian Nobel Prize Winner, Vargas Llosa, pointed out the contradictions existing between highly technological development and miscommunication among individuals, people and nations. Biased media information conditions public opinion, creating pockets of anxiety and gloom, confusion and false antagonisms.

While aiming at a democratic and plural global governance, the Barcelona Consensus clearly criticizes EU politicking practices that prioritize global economic issues, while postponing peaceful integration of diverse cultures. This participative planning strongly advocates the end of the arms race, wars and all forms of violence.

The golden rule of planning is to respect neighbors, communities, nations, countries, and continents, whatever their ethnic origin, beliefs and traditions.

## **Conclusions**

A number of challenges for our professions can be identified from LA historical facts and the present scenario in order to plan and work for a better common future.

LA’s anonymous actors of Pre-Columbian civilizations were followed by European adventurers whose actions had unsuspected outcomes. The actors of the New World’s colonial models were known. LA independence led to a neocolonial urban planning that was developed under successive national governments. With a few exceptions, LA dependence on different versions of capitalism was supported by the upper social classes, which historically prevented the development of lower and middle classes.

LA planning actors are the State and civil society organizations. The architectural and planning professions grew with the challenge of choosing which side to serve.

National, Regional-Provincial and Municipal States regulate land use and public works budgeting; however Municipalities enjoy an increasing participation in urban planning. Some cities are acquiring more economic importance and hold new roles both nationally and internationally, encouraged by NGO-UN programs.

The civil society organizes the grassroots, community, professional and by-affinity associations; and the private business sector. They are clearly divided into non-lucrative and lucrative organizations; the former depending exclusively on membership fees or donations.

Top-down urban planning, imposed by ruling minorities over oppressed majorities, challenges professionals to help people draw positive lessons from their common cultural heritage; i.e. remembering the past to avoid repeating old mistakes. LA professionals should dream of defeating inhumane dependence with worthy interdependence. Building a bottom-up

culture must keep professionals awake. Self-centered kitsch needs be replaced by an education that shapes socially responsible architects.

Creating collective awareness regarding citizens' human rights is a big challenge. To prevent all form of brain-washing coming from state propaganda or privately owned media, e.g. false 'democratic communication', 'the official story', State propaganda and autocratic media business; all must be denounced and rejected. Designers and planners must use professions as political tools to democratically solve social problems without renouncing local diversity, traditions, wisdom and culture.

The underprivileged and the poor are two large segments in urban areas in LA. Deregulation of urban land price and real-estate values have worsened the condition of the lower classes. National budgets seem to never have enough resources for providing reasonable housing for the neediest. Here the synergy of workgroups should replace strong individualism and magical solutions proclaimed by politicians. The challenge is to work with grassroots organizations for bridging the gaps left by national authorities and greedy developers. One paradigmatic example of 'working with people rather than for people' is the sustained work of ARC•PEACE Peru and Estrategia in their joint efforts with Lima and Andean local authorities, which have received awards from UN organs.

'Having more' endeavours to relegate cooperation aimed at 'being better'. The challenge is to stop competing with each other and create inclusive public debates on the roles of community architecture and planning for building sustainable societies; creating networks to connect individuals and organizations in constructive discussions about professional competence, ethics, transparency, and social responsibility. Some positive results of participative planning have been achieved by ASF (Architecture sans Frontières), ARC•PEACE International, and national LA member organizations, e.g. ARC•PEACE Peru and ARQ•PEACE MEXICO, FIU (Ibero American Federation of Urbanism) and ARCADIA, a platform bridging Architecture and Cooperation.

The Latin American continent suffers from the effects of climate change that severely condition social development and community planning. Climate change and human greed are interwoven; to date planned efforts have been insufficient to stop catastrophes or prevent their effects. The magnitude and speed of these changes far exceed our limited capacity to deal with them.

The challenge is to promote actions to raise collective awareness and a sense of responsible ownership in opposition to greed. Architects and planners are challenged not to consider territory like assets to be used for the sake of profitable developments, but like delicate living processes helped by the principles of Re-use, Reduce, and Recycle.

Biggest of all the timeless challenges is to build societies formed by men, women, youth and children, driven by peaceful intentions and solidarity independently of their ideology or creed, who advocate global disarmament and resolution of conflicts through pacific, non-violent means.

#### About the author

Argentine born, **Oscar Margenet Nadal** holds diplomas in Building Techniques (EIS, 1960), and Architecture and Planning (UNR, 1970). He studied at The Architectural Association in London (1973-74) and at the Urban Design Unit, Faculty of Architecture, Victoria Manchester University, under Prof. Peter Dovel (1974-75). Nadal became a Charter architect and elected member of RIBA (London, 1974) and designed and built diverse projects in Wales, England, Kuwait, UAE, Nigeria and Argentine among other countries. Prof. E. F. Schumacher entrusted him with the Spanish version of 'Small is Beautiful' (1977). He is a co-founder of ARC•PEACE



(Brighton, 1987). He lives in Spain as an activist, speaker and writer on disarmament, peace, sustainability, architecture and cooperation issues.

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