

Retracing the Emergence of a Human Settlements Approach

Designing in, From and With Contexts of Development

Viviana d'Auria

A human settlements approach is a key conceptual instrument for the (development) process, and indeed it has been said that national planning through strategies for settlements is a means of humanizing and socializing the whole development process. The human settlements approach sees man in its totality—in work, in play, at home; and in relationship with nature and the environment. Its objective is to ensure the spread of development efforts—the quality of life—to the people. The major components are to promote productivity, through spatial considerations, and public service delivery systems, for human welfare.

(Carlson 1978, 173)

The celebratory synthesis made by the head of the Human Settlements Program at the United Nations Environmental Program in 1976 is a most obvious testimony of the extent to which a human settlements approach to development was under intense promotion by the late 1970s. At this point in time, international aid actors and national planning bodies alike were compelled to endorse human settlements as an integrated approach to development. Aligned with human settlements' conceptual propositions, homonymous agencies were founded, conferences were launched, and technical reports, charters and institutional frameworks were drafted, as shown by Figure 5.1. While discussions around the term had already begun earlier, and in part had been covered during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, politicians would first become familiar with the concept of human settlements four years later (Turin 1978, 191). The 1976 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements—also known as Habitat—generated three main outcomes, among which sixty-four recommendations represented world consensus on the objectives governments should follow in their human settlements policies. Alongside the official UN event, a multitude of NGOs participated in the Habitat Forum, which contributed to the general recognition that the most needy had not been catered to by the formal housing provision system—whether private or public (Turin 1978, 190).

As a means for rendering development more socially acceptable, environmentally sound and culturally tailored, the emergence of a human settlements approach placed emphasis on a more



Figure 5.1 The use of human settlements as a reference term epitomizing a shift from a purely economic idea of housing to a holistic approach inclusive of housing is illustrated by UN publications devoted to the Africa region dating respectively from 1965 and 1976.
© United Nations.

integrated and human transformation, where economic criteria alone could no longer stand as the measure of a prosperous development practice. Even if human settlements never became defined in a meaningful programmatic way (Carlson 1978, 171), development was to stop being “ecocidal” (Weissman 1978b, 180). In retrospect, three conceptual underpinnings can be distilled from Carlson’s opening summary: firstly, that of development itself, questioned in its societal and environmental impact but not in its foundational premises and general aspirations to improve existing conditions in a “worlded” globe; secondly, the significance of development’s humanization; and lastly, that settlements themselves were to be at the core of such humanized and holistic transformation, situated at the nexus of environmental and developmental forces.

The built environment’s prominence is hardly surprising at a time in which urbanization was being heralded as planetary. The human settlements approach was therefore posited as a tool capable of handling rapid urbanization, societal change and ecological tutelage in a swiftly changing world. Relatedly, the implications for how spatial knowledge and practice were to be crafted and disseminated in the context of a recalibrated relationship between resources, institutions and design were remarkable. Solicited to the forefront by such ambitions, architecture and urbanism could hardly remain unconcerned as potential contributors to the articulation of a developmental process under readjustment. More than the mere physical manifestation of developmental objectives, design was epistemologically entwined with the reconceptualization of spatial production envisaged in the name of a human settlements approach.

A concern for patterns of how people use, organize and create space as part of a single and integrated focus on the spatial distribution and organization of human activity became therefore primary concerns for development experts. Cultural practices, labor dynamics, local geographies and the specificity of natural resources were considered as dynamic shapers of spatial relations across various scales and contexts. Methods to chart insight from a variety of contributing fields became much needed, leading to several attempts to integrate social and spatial knowledge into increasingly complex grids and matrixes (Doxiadis 1968; Tyrwhitt 1985). In the most idealist interpretations, the disciplinary boundaries of those fields contributing to development (anthropology, economics and planning among several others) were expected to disintegrate and merge into one con-disciplinary science of human settlements (Doxiadis 1968).

The trajectory enabling human settlements to become an acknowledged conceptual tool for redefining development through a revised approach that included the design disciplines was the outcome of a multifaceted liaison between capital, humanitarian aid, architecture and urbanism. As transcultural exchange it involved, among other professionals, architects and urbanists from a plethora of cultural and geographic backgrounds (Nasr and Volait 2003; Stanek and Avermaete 2012; Lagae and De Raedt 2013). Amid global experts and displaced emigrés whose work was often grounded in firsthand experience in the so-called Third World, an array of progressive practitioners and politicians were directly engaged with liberation struggles and decolonization in their territories of origin or residence. Undoubtedly, the work of ‘development experts’ did not escape questions of positionality (Muzaffar 2007). These have been partly discussed and debated, including the dubious impact of present-day benevolence (Indaba 2010; Johnson 2011; Watson 2012) and the aid industry’s political economy.

Without denying the insidiousness of developmental thinking and the array of consultancies and commissions that careering in the international aid sector guaranteed to an increasingly select group of professionals, this contribution aims to discuss relations between design and development with a different focus. The investigation posits human settlements as a key urbanism paradigm that was constructed in, from and with the so-called Third World, with all the nuances, tensions and ambivalences that transcultural exchange entails. By means of a critical selection of projects, personalities and texts, the exploration retraces how human settlements formed a new conceptual framework rooted at least in part in the efforts of transculturally engaged design professionals and planners.

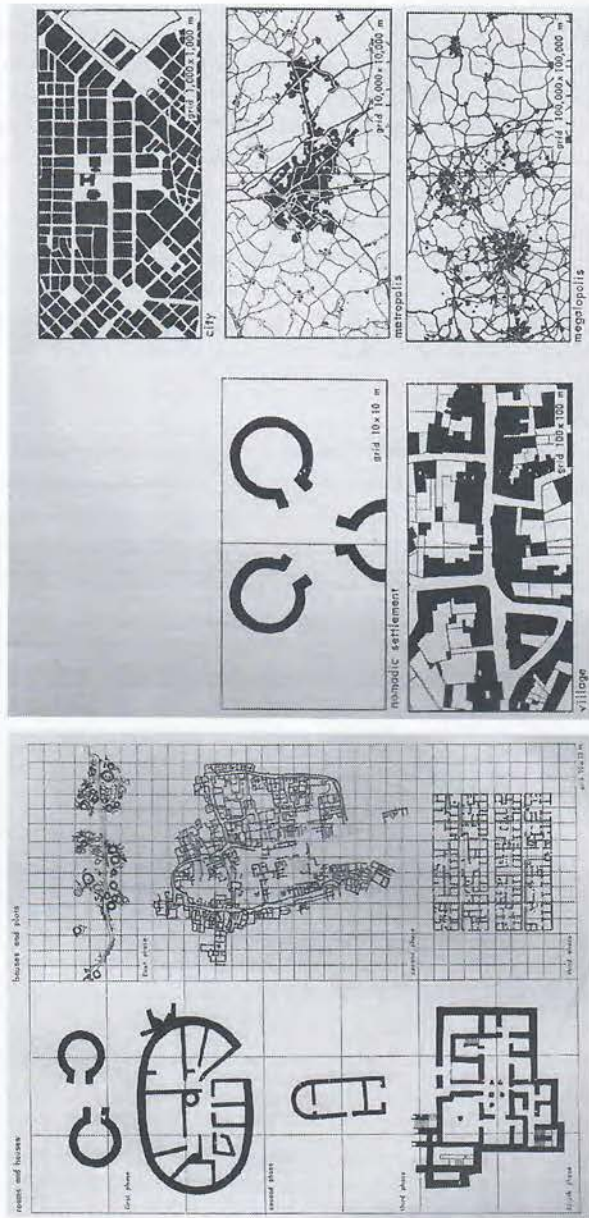


Figure 5.2 C. A. Doxiadis, founder of ekistics, the science of human settlements, based his con-disciplinary approach on a comparative understanding of morphologies that could be synthesized to achieve an evolutionary anatomy of human settlements. From *Ekistics: An Introduction to the Science of Human Settlements* (1968), pp. 108; 188.

As indeed was noted by Ernest Weissmann, director of the UN Centre for Housing, Building and Planning (1965–1966), it would take nearly three decades since the end of World War II to partially repair the omission of the fields of human settlements and the environment from the original UN structure as worldwide problems deserving a specialized agency status (1978a, 227). Reconstructing this narrative supports ongoing efforts to understand the transcultural history of urbanism and design without negating the pervasiveness of neocolonial activities occurring in the name of development's self-perpetuating prophecy of improvement yet-to-come. While not a linear process but rather the output of exchange and tensions between distinctive practitioners, scholars, government officers and educators at work in various contexts and fields, by the early 1970s a combination of environmental and pro-poor movements heavily condemned the reductive conflation of development with a one-size-fits-all techno-economic growth. As part and parcel of this endeavor, the delineation of a human settlements approach supported a holistic understanding of a multiplicity of cultural, social, economic and spatial forces at work in the environment. After a long struggle for identity, by 1976 human settlements would after all be considered the principal manifestation of welfare and environmental development (Turin 1978, 187; Weissmann 1978a, 237).

Building a Science of Human Settlements on the Ruins of Modernism

The entwinement of modern architecture and urbanism with colonialism first, and with development later, has been the object of intense scrutiny in the past decades (Wright 1991; Heynen 2005; Lu 2011). The varied trajectories of modernists in exile, nomadic experts and local architects and activists have been explored as part of a multifaceted process of encounter and exchange (le Roux 2004; Verdeil 2005; Jackson 2013; Shoskes 2013; Lee 2015). Even before the eye-opening CIAM IX of 1953, where Morocco-based contributions on “habitat for the greatest number” and explorations of Algerian bidonvilles would challenge the tenets of the Athens Charter, design professionals involved in late colonial urban planning had already begun questioning the applicability of modernist principles across distinctive cultures, climates and urbanization rates. As planning models and design ideas were hybridized, transmuted and even abandoned, development's cultural and social side effects were increasingly displayed. The seeds of a critical and internationalist kind of modernity were therefore being sown while professionals travelled across the globe as colonial advisors or consultants in search of a commission (Bonillo et al. 2005; Crimson 2011). The emergence of human settlements as a revised approach to city making became inherent to the deconstruction of modernism and the disciplinary refoundation of urbanism and architecture.

In this context, functionalist abstraction lost credibility whereas the everyday increasingly became a source of inspiration, whether in East London or in the West Indies. From 1949 onwards until its disintegration a decade later, discussions within CIAM on the idea of developing a new charter around the contentious notion of ‘habitat’ sparked divergences in many guises. Discussions ranged from emphasizing the unviability of universal guidelines to the necessity of extending research on everyday environments beyond dwelling space (Mumford 2000). Generally speaking, the built environment began to be understood through social practice, with housing conceived as an evolutionary and adaptive process. Though the charter would never see the light of day, the debates on ‘habitat’ would continue through exchanges between former CIAM members, such as Tyrwhitt, Sert and Giedeon, as well as through interaction with international aid agencies, with which CIAM had attempted collaborations since 1947 (Linorter 2012).

In fact, the humanist turn was hardly a prerogative of the most established modernist architecture networks, but was extensively present in the discussions and recommendations of international and regional aid agencies. Exemplarily, the Inter-American Centre for Housing and Planning founded in Bogotá in 1951 underscored the importance of the human factor for inner-city slum improvement (Albano 1957). The initial focus of the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration

on low-cost, low-income housing throughout the 1950s was superseded by an increasing concern for contextual and cultural specificities, reflecting a broadening in scope that the human settlements approach epitomized. Twenty years later, human settlements would be internationally acknowledged in Vancouver as a concept enabling housing, building and planning to be considered relationally and in connection with environmental change and international development (United Nations 1976). The shift was also made obvious by institutional renaming, marking a step further in the process from when the UN Centre for Housing, Building and Planning had been founded in 1965. By 1976 remnants of CIAM's engagement with the term were left to the hands of Josep Lluís Sert, who presented the 'Habitat Bill of Rights' in collaboration with the Iranian government at the United Nations Conference in Vancouver, following which "Habitat," the UN Centre for Human Settlements, was earmarked as a new global institution devoted entirely to the field.

One of the professionals who would deliberately attempt to extend the 'habitat' debates articulated within CIAM and in the context of international aid was the Athens-born architect Constantinos Doxiadis. At the heart of several networks related to his global practice with commissions by the UN, IBRD and Ford Foundation, he launched the Delos Symposia as an instrument to create a community of practice, including core members of CIAM as well as new participants from the aid world, such as Barbara Ward and Charles Abrams, in addition to representatives from emerging nations, such as the Ghanaian Alfred Rhule Otoo (d'Auria 2015). Bringing different networks together was paralleled by efforts in bridging disciplines summoned during development's enactment. This integrative aspiration was translated into expectations for technological, social and design-based fields to merge in one overall science of human settlements capable of dealing with "planetary housekeeping" (Ward 1976, 125). For Doxiadis such discipline was to be called ekistics, a new field capable of apprehending past and present environments so as to guide urbanization and relationships between all units of space and time, from man to Ecumenopolis, the City of the Future. Most of his ideas found shape as new town master plans and national housing programs in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa, where an amended modernism enabled intensive construction to appear more palatable by means of essentialized and culture-specific design components (d'Auria 2010).

Making Squatter Architecture Work

The relevance of both 'habitat' and ekistics discussions for the 1976 Conference in Vancouver and the establishment of the UN Centre for Human Settlements in Nairobi in 1978 did not mean that Doxiadis's con-disciplinary science and amended modernism were picked up as major drivers for refining the development agenda. Rather, the Greek architect's advocacy for a multi-scalar method of urban design faded in the light of seemingly people-centered approaches to urban transformation, such as aided self-help. Indicatively, even Doxiadis himself felt compelled to acknowledge winds were changing; in the course of a decade-long involvement in Ghana, for example, the design of neighborhoods in the new industrial town of Tema shifted from fully finalized experimental dwellings in 1962 to self-help schemes for the urban poor in 1968. Indeed, while Doxiadis convened colleagues, potential commissioners and other interested parties at biennial events in Greece, research and educational institutions, such as the New School in New York and the Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies, assembled somewhat the same crowd as the Delos symposia, with the important integration of 'barefoot' practitioners, such as John Turner. Relatedly, Ford Foundation funds followed the flow, enabling the Urban Settlement Design Program at MIT's School of Architecture to be launched in 1965 under the guidance of Horacio Caminos.

Interest in Latin America, where aided self-help housing had been first promoted after its inception in California and Puerto Rico under Jacob Crane's endorsement in the 1930s (Harris 1998, 1999), met with Turner's experience of self-organized urbanization in Peru. Bridgeheaders' quest for a house of their own was particularly congenial to those thinkers who thought individual home

ownership was a panacea to all urban evil, and well aligned with U.S. development policy abroad. As such the idea of residents transitioning from individual units to collective high-rise typologies—once social transition was complete and urbanity would be a fully fledged lifestyle—as advocated by professionals with a modernist derivation, such as Ecochard and Doxiadis—lost accountability when compared to the reassuring idea of incremental growth. While *Ekistics: An Introduction to the Science of Human Settlements* (Doxiadis 1968) was more of a closing line than the celebration of a widely practiced method to tackle rampant urbanization across the globe, the same could not be said of *Urban Dwelling Environments: An Elementary Survey of Settlements for the Study of Design Determinants* (Camino, Turner and Steffian 1969), published only a few months later. While both volumes presented trans-scalar and comparative studies across urban morphologies and typologies, the first looked to the historical accumulation of morphologies, biological metaphors and megalopolitan growth, whereas the second emphasized self-builders' city-making process and everyday efforts. It did so by combining area plans from above with photographic insight from below, as shown in Figure 5.3. The MIT-based threesome invited professionals to intervene where people were thought most vulnerable: neighborhood planning and service infrastructure layouts were key actions to enable the auto-construction of shelter that urban pioneers could instead handle well. Consequently, in the eyes of Camino, Turner and Steffian, neither house-specific nor citywide reflections appeared crucial for the effective implementation of a process-sensitive urbanization.

The new town of Ciudad Guayana marked the shift away from ekistics even if the Venezuelan initiative had all in common with Doxiadis's working sites premised on high modernist ambitions. Typically, Ciudad Guayana featured a hydroelectric project centered on damming the Caroní River and the industrial potentiation of the already existing Puerto Ordaz. Together with Venezuelan counterparts, a group of advisors from the Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies was in charge of the town's layout and organization. Among its most well-known contributors, the advisory group counted Lloyd Rodwin, Willo von Moltke and Kevin Lynch. Ethnographic insight by Lisa Peattie, the only anthropologist on the team, emphasized how squatters based in the rapidly growing informal settlements of Ciudad Guayana perceived the new town's development and its impact on social inequality in the region (Peattie, 1968). Mismatches between developmental planning, neighborhood design and the actual conditions of workers flocking to the city were an obvious verification of how prioritizing economic targets could hardly be conflated with the inclusion of the urban poor and the redistribution of wealth.

Nonetheless Ciudad Guayana would also be the location where 'Progressive Urban Improvement Units' would be implemented on an experimental basis in 1963 before incremental development would become the most noticeable approach to low-income housing in the 1970s and 1980s (Reimers 2002). Planned progressive development intersected, at least in part, ideas on self-management, dweller autonomy and mutual aid that were derived from the actual practices of squatters and slum dwellers (Laquian 1983). Accounts by Charles Abrams (1965), John Turner and William Mangin (1963) and Elizabeth and Anthony Leeds (1970) are the most recognized works having revealed the dynamics of housing provision by self-organized communities and the affordability questions that progressively developed dwellings entailed. They were neither the first nor the only to do so (Ward 2012), yet the time had become ripe for these accounts to inform policy, first and foremost that of the World Bank, who rapidly tailored sites and services projects into its free-market ideals. Following the principle of 'affordability, cost recovery, replicability,' international donors turned wholeheartedly to planned progressive development. Also approximated with sites and services, this approach was a major protagonist in Vancouver together with on-site slum upgrading. The recommendations of the UN Conference on Human Settlements favored in fact spontaneous settlement reorganization and sites and service schemes. As the Self-Help and Low-Cost Housing Symposium running parallel to the conference testified, aided self-help was to play a lead role for human settlements. The recommendations sanctioned an ongoing process, whereby the World Bank alone would fund sixty-eight

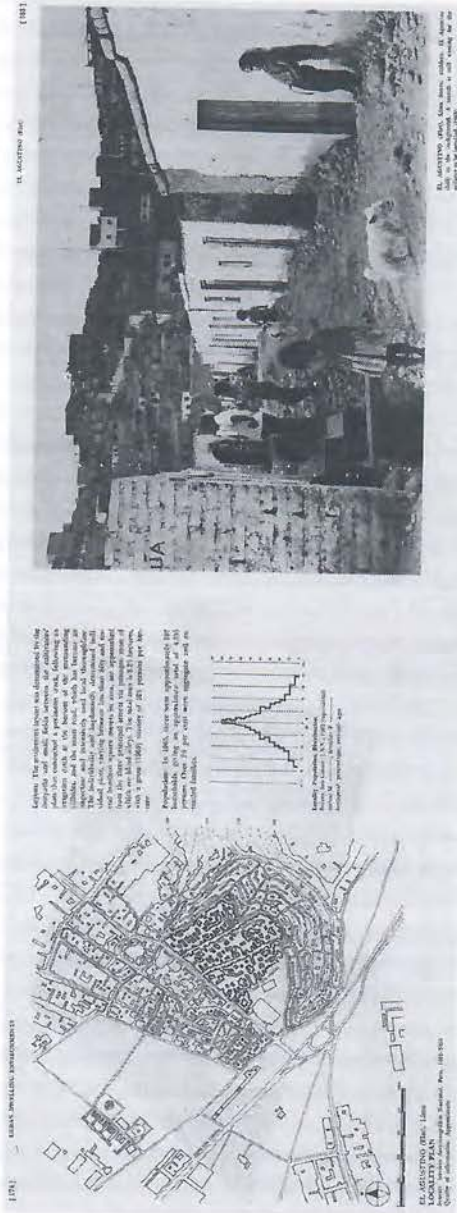


Figure 5.3 In their seminal publication, Caminos, Steffian and Turner compared settlement structures from both rapidly urbanizing and 'developed' contexts by means of a systematic trans-scalar documentation at different scales. From *Urban Dwelling Environments* (1969), pp. 174, 183. © MIT Press.

projects between 1972 and 1984 after placing its weight behind the sites and services agenda (Mayo and Gross 1987, 302; Reimers 2002, 17).

This seemingly novel approach carried the fresh promise of escaping the incongruities of hard-core modernism, however critical it may have been in its amended intentions. Rather, most projects avoided large-scale master planning, and considered only the overall organization of the intervention area. This would frame the design of ingenious housing types expected to evolve over time by following architectural specifics rather than being left to the celebrated ingenuity of self-build processes. Commissioning architects from the context itself appeared to reflect a general consciousness toward the inappropriateness of expertise provided by practitioners away from their region of origin. Typically, architects embedded in the context of intervention, like Mutiso Menezes International in Nairobi, or Ahmedabad-based Balakrishna Doshi and the Vastu Shilpa Foundation in Indore, were charged with important sites and services projects. The approach increased in palatability as a key ingredient of development policy abroad, not only by the United States but also by Great Britain. In Egypt the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction and the British Ministry of Overseas Development funded core housing in El Kehr and Abu Atwa as part of the Ismailia Demonstration Project, featuring Clifford Culpin, Aziz Yassin and Over Arup as planners. The World Bank's shift from housing to urban projects during the 1970s also meant that several sites and services became significant tools to reorient citywide development, as the case of Nairobi's 1973 Metropolitan Growth Strategy exemplifies.

Other experiments occurred both within the framework of leading aid agencies and outside of it. After participating in the PREVI competition launched through the joint initiative of the Peruvian government and the United Nations in the late 1960s (see Figure 5.4), Christopher Alexander continued to work on ways to combine standardized building components with individually self-built insertions as a means to restructure the entire decision-making process. He could test his idea of the "architect-builder" in practice in Mexicali, under the sponsorship of the governor of Baja California (Alexander 1985). Alexander was persuaded that building houses with a small group of families would effect a fundamental transformation in dwellers' quality of life (Alexander 1984, 77). The experiment condemned the abstraction of modern housing and the non-transformability of living environments. While this position owed much to John Turner's ideas on dwellers' autonomy and control, Alexander had a more prominent confidence in the accumulation of morphologies and patterns from which design principles could be extrapolated and endlessly reused as a procreative code. In both Lima and Mexicali the coexistence of low-tech solutions within industrially manufactured building components would be developed in response to the challenge of "producing modernization without Westernization" (Fromm 1985, 48), aligned with emerging ideas on appropriate building techniques and intermediate technology. The idea of a generative grammar found its culmination in *A Pattern Language* (1977), where 253 patterns were illustrated so as to provide a manual for a 'do-it-yourself' city.

During this time, the critical role of architecture and planning was not only being questioned in the so-called developing context but also being challenged in European and North American cities. The act of building as a means of self-expression could not be separated from its physical outcome, and vice versa. While progressive development and self-build construction made incremental design, land subdivision and the attendant infrastructure provision key ingredients of a revised approach to 'Third World' urbanization, encompassing 'informal' city making became important for the 'developed' parts of the globe as well. John N. Habraken, based in Eindhoven but strongly influenced by a childhood spent in Indonesia, founded Stichting Architectuur Research (SAR) in 1964 within the context of post-reconstruction in the Netherlands. Looking for alternatives to mass housing, SAR premised its investigations on the working hypothesis that a distinction could be made between "support structure" and "infill package" (Habraken 1961, 1972). In consultation with SAR, Nabeel Hamdi and Nick Wilkinson advanced related efforts by conceiving Primary Support Structures and

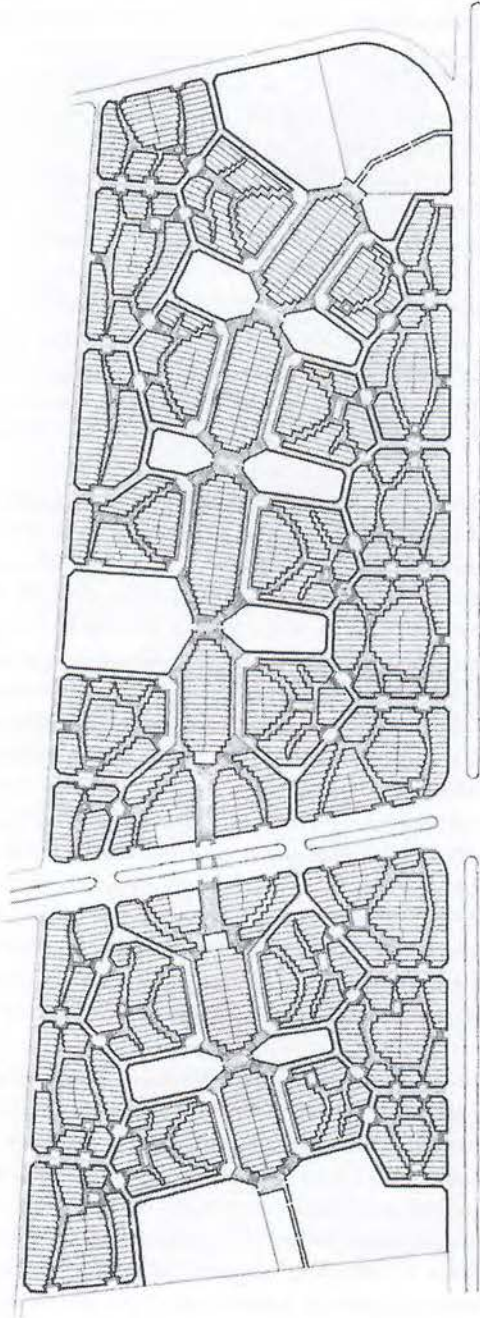


Figure 5.4 Christopher Alexander's final entry for the UN PREVI competition would be based on the study of sixty-seven patterns enabling the design of a double-coded urban architecture merging 'formal' with 'informal' fabrics.
ININVI (1979).

Housing Assembly Kits that were expected to enable London residents to design the layout of their own dwellings within an already designed envelope (Hamdi 2010, xv–xvi). In later stages of SAR research, comparisons of old and new fabrics in terms of function and morphologies would help define tissues as tools for urban plan formulation. In both Alexander's and Habraken's views, systematizing design-related decisions and placing them in the service of communities would enhance adaptability and participation, disentangling design from the exercise of hegemonic power.

From 'Small-House' Critiques to the New Urban Agenda

While the World Bank steered away from sites and services with the beginning of the urban management era in 1986, efforts to "design" a solution to the housing question" (Mumtaz 1988, 18) became the object of critiques by a number of architects who had been involved in contexts of development. Commenting in retrospect on the experience, Nabeel Hamdi concluded that architects and planners became preoccupied by the technically rational design emphasis characterizing sites and services: "these projects lacked art. They were ignorant of context and resentful of culture" (2010, 4). Indeed, in the attempt to lower costs and rationalize the planning process, sites and services had also reduced shelter to the most bare of material manifestations. Babar Khan Mumtaz, writing in *Mimar: Architecture in Development*, denounced for example how "small-house development led naturally first to smaller rooms, and then parts of a room and finally to nothing" (1988, 19). *Mimar*, the journal hosting Mumtaz's reflection, was first published in 1981 as the only international architecture magazine of its kind, "aimed at exchanging ideas and images between countries which are developing new ideas for their built environment" (Khan 1984, 7). The focus on architecture in the developing world was reflected in contributions not only on self-built urban housing projects and the richness of vernacular artefacts but also on the demythologizing of colonial architecture (Taylor 1984) and on expressions of regional modernism (Khan 1984). In the course of its forty-three issues, *Mimar* voiced debates produced from deep within the "developing world," accommodating articles by Charles Correa and Udo Kultermann, and on the work of William Lim and Hassan Fathy.

Some of *Mimar's* contributing authors would also voice their concerns in the pages of *Habitat International*, established at the UN Habitat Conference in Vancouver in 1976 with the principal aim to publish original research, review articles and case studies relevant to the implementation of Recommendations for National Action adopted at the conference (Marbach 1986, 167). With land, water, shelter, transport and institutional change registered as the five key topics for human settlements (Turin 1978, 189–191), *Habitat International* devoted its issues to monitoring the agenda's advancement. The articles published were authored by many of the individual specialists, private professionals and researchers who had contributed to the studies and seminars and provided direct assistance to governments as part of the aspiration to establish a permanent, intergovernmental agency within the UN structure devoted to the field of human settlements only. The questions raised by this broad group of practitioners not only focused on institutional rearrangement but also were related to the emergence of a new kind of project. As Weissmann noted, the inclusive initiatives that professionals such as Abrams, Atkinson, Tyrwhitt, Koenigsberger, Doxiadis and Tange had in mind were built on

the conception of an inextricable relationship between urbanization, environmental development and overall national development. . . . In all these projects, socio-economic aspects of environment and culture were closely integrated with those of technology, administration and management.

(1978a, 236)

While the multidimensionality of human settlements projects proposed by the array of professionals mentioned by Weissmann can hardly be disagreed with, there remained substantial divergences

between the ekistics of Doxiadis and Koenigsberger's approach to tropical housing and building, not to mention Kenzo Tange's design proposals for Skopje's post-earthquake reconstruction in 1963.

The significant differences between Abrams and Tyrwhitt, Koenigsberger and Doxiadis, Atkinson and Tange can hardly be downplayed; they, however, testify to the nebulousness of the human settlements approach as a direct consequence of rapidly changing development paradigms and the multiplicity of exchanges within UN agencies and global aid players. After all the 1976 UN Habitat Conference may have well been the biggest event of its kind, but it was also "the first conference that managed to be held without defining its own terms of reference: nobody provided a definition of 'human settlement'" (Turin 1978, 186). For this reason even the most enthusiastic advocates of human settlements' all-encompassing definition claimed 'habitat' to be more effective as a concept to harness widespread action (Carlson 1978, 171). The haziness of its terminology can easily be associated with development's slippery nature itself, viewed by many post-development scholars as the key to its pervasive success. Nonetheless, just as development persists as a phenomenon that is "reflective of the best human aspirations and yet . . . liable to be used for purposes that reverse its original ideal intent" (Peet 1999, 2), so 'habitat' is reminiscent of a reformist agenda. This agenda inherited the placing of housing and shelter at the core of their action from modernist urbanism, within the aspiration to provide minimum standards to a large majority, including the most vulnerable and least wealthy.

To this end, a wide-ranging and versatile concept of human settlements became instrumental for negotiating the position of modern architecture and urbanisms in the changed setting of postwar and decolonization. However, humanitarian-labeled concerns also set the modernist agendas of authoritarian colonial regimes, in the context of which 'development' first appeared as a guiding notion. Likewise, the tools to co-opt the poor into internationally sanctioned systems of trade and production under the aegis of development—and the implacable logic of economic globalization—have been many.

Human settlements, however, were initially launched as an approach able to amend a developmental ideology focused solely on economic goals. In contrast with development itself, they became a somewhat open-ended methodology rooted in the exchange of knowledge on housing, planning and the environment. The transculturality of human settlements' production makes the bundle of ideas associated with its approach significantly different from when 'development' was founded within the particular history and culture of U.S. foreign policy. By continuing to recover a transcultural narrative of the formative years that led to Vancouver and extended efforts well into the twenty-first century, human settlements can also be recognized in their core project to operate holistically and across social and spatial complexities. Moreover, expanding research on the range of contributors to the formulation of a human settlements agenda over time is bound to provincialize the role of 'Northern' and 'Western' professionals within this constellation of critical practitioners further.

Ultimately, human settlements originated from an attempt of architecture and urbanism to enlarge their disciplinary spectrum in order to address the growing challenges of settlement worldwide. Over the decades, due to the prominence of social and economic fields and the rise of urban management, the spatial dimensions of projects have unfortunately taken a back seat. This remains a loss for human settlements' foundational conviction that space remains the medium that allows the integration of social, economic, cultural and ecological dimensions of transformation. In fact, land was already declared a finite resource in 1976, making it a key issue of human settlements. The situation today can hardly be described as improved in terms of the scarcity of space, which compels us to be reminded of human settlements' early ambitions. The outcome of Habitat III, the New Urban Agenda, is expected to guide policy for the next two decades through universally applicable goals, formulated for the first time without marked distinctions between 'worlded' geographies across the globe.

One should nonetheless remain vigilant with regard to the plethora of recommendations, however wide a consensus may be reached, since the Habitat Agenda remains a nonbinding declaration of intent. As Jorge Hardoy skeptically commented once the 1976 Habitat Conference was over,

Many left Vancouver convinced that the sequel would be more important than the Conference. Anyone who reads the post-Conference reports will probably . . . have the same concerns I have now: how serious, how real is the commitment of governments? . . . For many who attended the Conference, the fact that it took place and that there was a general agreement about human settlement policies was a step forward. But for the world's poorest, who comprise 60% of the world's population, for the people who live in the badly built, badly equipped houses, in the unsatisfactory surroundings of the urban and rural settlements of the poor regions of the world, the Vancouver Conference meant nothing. Many of those poor will die of disease or malnutrition before governments decide to act.

(1978, 166)

If, once again, much will be determined by the qualms of single governments and institutions, for the design-related professions operating in the context of 'development,' this may be an open invitation to recover the emancipatory ambitions of particular projects, events and texts foundational for the human settlements agenda. If we are to believe Alejandro Aravena and his statement as director of the 2016 Architecture Biennale, there is still a frontline of the built environment where several battles need to be fought, and several frontiers that need to be expanded in order to improve the quality of the built environment and people's quality of life (Aravena 2016).

References

- Abrams, C. (1965) *Man's Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Albano, J. (1957) *El factor humano para la rehabilitación de los tugurios*, Bogotá: CINVA.
- Alexander, C. (1984) "Mexicali Revisited," *Places Journal* 1 (4), 76–77.
- Alexander, C. (1985) *The Production of Houses*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alexander, C., et al. (1977) *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Aravena, A. (2016) 15th International Architecture Exhibition 'Reporting from the Front', Special Preview Day, Venice, 25 May.
- Bonillo, J.L., et al. (eds.) (2005) *La modernité critique: autour du CIAM 9 d'Aix-en-Provence—1953*, Marseille: Imbernon.
- Camino, H., et al. (1969) *Urban Dwelling Environments*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Carlson, E. (1978) "A Note on Post-Habitat Action," *Habitat International* 3 (1–2), 171–177.
- Crimson, M. (2011) "Modernism Across Hemispheres, or, Taking Internationalism Seriously," in W. Lim and J. Chang (eds.) *Non-West Modernist Past*, Singapore: World Scientific, 47–58.
- ƆAuria, V. (2010) "From Tropical Transitions to Ekistics Experimentations: Doxiadis Associates in Tema, Ghana," *Positions on Modern Architecture and Urbanism* 1 (1), 40–63.
- ƆAuria, V. (2015) "Taming an 'Undisciplined Discipline': Constantinos Doxiadis and the Science of Human Settlements," in T. Avermaete et al. (eds.) *Crossing Boundaries: Transcultural Practices in Architecture and Urbanism*. *OASE Journal for Architecture* 95, 8–21.
- Doxiadis, C.A. (1968) *Ekistics: An Introduction to the Science of Human Settlements*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Fromm, D. (1985) "Alternatives in Housing, 1: Peru: Previ," *Architectural Review* (1062), 48–54.
- Habraken, J.N. (1961) *De dragers en de mensen: Het einde van de massawoningbouw*, Amsterdam: Scheltema & Holkema.
- Habraken, J.N. (1972) *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing*, New York: Praeger.
- Hamdi, N. (2010) *The Placemaker's Guide to Building Community*, London: Earthscan.
- Hardoy, J. (1978) "The Recommendations of the UN Conference on Human Settlements and Their Viability in Latin America," *Habitat International* 3 (1–2), 161–166.

- Harris, R. (1998) "The Silence of the Experts: 'Aided-Self-Help Housing', 1939–1954," *Habitat International* 22 (2), 165–189.
- Harris, R. (1999) "Aided Self-Help Housing, a Case of Amnesia: Editor's Introduction," *Housing Studies* 14 (3), 277–280.
- Heynen, H. (2005) "The Intertwinement of Modernism and Colonialism: A Theoretical Perspective," *Modern Architecture in East Africa around Independence. ArchiAfrika Proceedings*. Dar es Salaam (27–29 July), 91–98.
- Indaba, J. (2010) *World of Giving*, Baden: Lars Müller.
- ININVI (1979) *Documentación del Proyecto Experimental de Vivienda—PREVI*, Lima: Ministerio de Vivienda y Construcción del Perú.
- Jackson, I. (2013) "Tropical Architecture and the West Indies: From Military Advances and Tropical Medicine, to Robert Gardner-Medwin and the Networks of Tropical Modernism," *Journal of Architecture* 18 (2), 167–195.
- Johnson, C.G. (2011) "The Urban Precariat, Neoliberalization and the Soft Power of Humanitarian Design," *Journal of Developing Societies* 27 (3–4), 445–475.
- Khan, H-U. (1984) "Regional Modernism: Rifat Chadarji's Portfolio of Etchings," *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 14, unpaginated.
- Khan Mumtaz, B. (1988) "The Housing Question (and Some Answers)," *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 28, 17–23.
- Lagae, J. and K. De Raedt (2013) "Global Experts 'off Radar,'" *ABE Journal* 4. Available at: <https://abe.revues.org/743> (accessed 14.01.2016).
- Laquian, A. (1983) *Basic Housing: Policies for Urban Sites, Services and Shelter in Developing Countries*, Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- le Roux, H. (2004) "Modern Architecture in Post-Colonial Ghana and Nigeria," *Architectural History* 47, 361–392.
- Lee, R. (2015) "Otto Koenisberger: Transcultural Practice and the Tropical Third Space," in T. Avermaete et al. (eds.) *Crossing Boundaries: Transcultural Practices in Architecture and Urbanism*. *OASE Journal for Architecture* 95, 60–72.
- Leeds, A. and E. Leeds (1970) "Brazil and the Myth of Urban Rurality: Urban Experience, Work and Values in 'Squats' of Rio de Janeiro and Lima," in A.J. Field (ed.) *City and Country in the Third World: Issues in the Modernization of Latin America*, 229–285.
- Linorter, C. (2012) "Habitat: The Unwritten Charter." Available at: <http://transculturalmodernism.org/?layer=10> (accessed 12.01.2016)
- Lu, D. (ed.) (2011) *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity*, London: Routledge.
- Marbach, C. (1986) "A Review of Ten Years of Habitat International," *Habitat International* 10 (4), 167–205.
- Mayo, S.K. and D.J. Gross (1987) "Sites and Services—and Subsidies: The Economics of Low-Cost Housing in Developing Countries," *The World Bank Economic Review* 1 (2), 301–335.
- Mumford, L. (2000) *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Muzaffar, I. (2007) *The Periphery Within: Modern Architecture and the Making of the Third World*, PhD diss., MIT.
- Nasr, J. and M. Volait (eds.) (2003) *Urbanism: Imported or Exported? Native Aspiration and Foreign Plans*, Chichester: Wiley.
- Peattie, L. (1968) *The View From the Barrio*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Peet, R. with Hartwick, E. (1999) *Theories of Development*, London: Guilford Press.
- Reimers, C. (2002) *After Sites and Services: Planned Progressive Development Strategies in Low Income Housing During the 1990s*, MSc. Thesis, MIT.
- Shoskes, E. (2013) *Jacqueline Tyrwhitt: A Transnational Life in Urban Planning and Design*, London: Ashgate.
- Stanek, L. and T. Avermaete (eds.) (2012) "Cold War Transfer: Architecture and Planning From Socialist Countries in the 'Third World,'" *Journal of Architecture* 17.
- Taylor, B.B. (1984) "Demythologising Colonial Architecture," *Mimar: Architecture in Development* 13, 16–25.
- Turin, D. (1978) "Exploring Change: What Should Have Happened at Habitat," *Habitat International* 3 (1–2), 185–195.
- Turner, J.C. and W. Mangin (1963) "Dwelling Resources in South America," *Architectural Design* 33, 366–370.
- Tyrwhitt, J. (1985) "Planning Tools and Grids," *Ekistics* (52), 314–315.
- United Nations (1976) *The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements: From the Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements*. Available at: <http://habitat.igc.org/vancouver/van-decl.htm> (accessed 12.10.2016)
- Verdeil, E. (2005) "Expertises nomades au Sud: Eclairages sur la circulation des modèles urbains," *Géocarrefour* 80 (3), 165–169.
- Volker, W. (2004) "Talking Squares: Grids and Grilles as Architectural Tools for Analysis and Communication," in D. van Heuvel and G. de Waal (eds.) *Team 10 Between Modernity and the Everyday*, Delft: TU Delft, 181–189.

- Ward, Barbara (1976) "The Home of Man: What Nations and the International Must Do", *Habitat International*, 1 (2), 125–132.
- Ward, Peter M. (2012) "Self-Help Housing Ideas and Practice in the Americas," in B. Sanyal et al. (eds.) *Planning Ideas That Matter: Livability, Territoriality, Governance, and Reflective Practice*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 283–310.
- Watson, J.M. (2012) "Aid, Capital, and the Humanitarian Trap," *Thresholds* 40, 238–244.
- Weissmann, E. (1978a) "Human Settlements—Struggle for Identity," *Habitat International* 3 (1–2), 227–241.
- Weissmann, E. (1978b) "The Next Step," *Habitat International* 3 (1–2), 179–183.
- Wright, G. (1991) *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Further Reading

- Viviana d'Auria et al. (2010) (eds.) *Human Settlements: Formulations and (re)Calibrations*, Amsterdam: SUN Academia.