THE ARCHITECTURE OF HOUSING

Exploring Architecture in Islamic Cultures
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# Contents

Foreword  

Chapter 1 Issues  
Housing Development and Culture  
*His Highness The Aga Khan*  
Modernity and Development  
*H E Ali Hassan Mwinyi*  
The Dilemma of Housing  
*Said Zulficar*  
Architecture of Housing: The Issues  
*Ismail Serageldin*  
Comments  
*Saad Eddin Ibrahim*  
Discussion  

Chapter 2 Informal Housing  
The Development and Morphology of Informal Housing  
*Mona A Serageldin*  
Innovation and Success in Sheltering the Urban Poor  
*Tasneem Ahmed Siddiqui*  
Comments  
*Arif Hasan*  
Discussion  

Chapter 3 Mass Housing  
The Architecture of Mass Housing  
*Suhha Ozkan*  
Comments  
*Colin Amery*  
Discussion  


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Aga Khan Unit for Housing and Urbanization, Harvard University Graduate School of Design p. 55.
AKAA Archives: p. 127, 128.
Anwar Atta: p. 123.
Chant Avedissian p. 175 (bottom)
Rasem Badran: p. 122 (bottom)
Collection of Prof. Laila Ali Ibrahim p. 48
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A. Goldenberg p. 23 (top).
Rehay Günay p. 173
Assia Khellaf p. 66.
Mihail Lari: p. 69.
Jimmy Lim: p. 179 (bottom)
Christopher Little: p 25 (top), 29, 175 (top).
Pacific Consultants International: p. 122 (top)
Planning Lamm (Sirava and Pulver) p. 171.
Robert Powell: p. 121
André Ravereau p. 125.
Dominique Roger/UNESCO p. 25 (bottom)
Mona Serageldin: p. 54, 60, 68 (bottom).
Ismail Serageldin: p. 28, p. 48 (left)
Tasneem Siddiqui: p. 76-78, 80-81.


Aygen Torunev p. 126.

C.L. Worreth p. 22.

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On behalf of the Government and the people of Kenya, let me extend a warm welcome to all the international participants in the AKAA seminar.

I feel particularly pleased and satisfied to note that Charles Correa’s lecture on “Shaping Our Built Environment” and the seminar that will follow thereafter in Zanzibar is coming immediately after the observance and celebrations marking the World Habitat Day which took place on 3rd of October, 1988. This is yet another vehicle for maintaining the momentum created by the activities of the World Habitat Day that have played a very important role in creating and enhancing awareness of the global human settlements and environment problems, the past development, the constraints encountered so far and the need to take action for the future.

Because of the important role architecture plays in the development of human settlements and environment all over the world, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture’s long term pre-occupation with the search for efficient solutions in this area must be congratulated and supported for where there is the will there is hope.

Well-planned human settlements and environment play an important role in enhancing the quality of life of people in both urban and rural areas. They provide security, privacy and protection as well as promoting the health of the people. They are also an important basis for the future agenda for social and economic development.

Despite this recognition of the social and economic importance of human settlement and environment, the situation all over the world and particularly in developing countries leaves a lot to be desired. As a result of rapid population growth and urbanisation, most of the cities in the developing world are now characterised by the mushrooming of unplanned settlements and slums. The rural population where most of the people live is also continuing to grow. This development both in urban and rural areas in turn generates the need for more services such as water supply and
infrastructure as well as community services, the provision of which require the utilisation of our scarce resources.

As architects and planners, this is the challenge ahead. The lessons we have learned over the last two decades during the implementation of our human settlement programmes and projects are too many to recapitulate. We may however mention some of the important ones.

We have observed that many of the obstacles to the provision of shelter are man-made. Left alone, almost the first thing a family does is to put up some kind of roof under which the family can shelter. This is what they do even now in the rural areas and in the unplanned settlements and slums in the urban areas. If they cannot get better and affordable services, it is because of insistence of unnecessarily high standards, lack of access to finance or lack of title deeds to their holdings and non-existent forward planning. Removing these hurdles should therefore be our immediate preoccupation.

While Governments have got an important role to play in establishing the necessary enabling climate for better and efficient planning and implementation of the human settlement and environment programmes, planners and architects should on their part endeavour to understand Government policies and strategies as well as the needs, the culture and the traditions of their clients.

In the search for low-cost affordable options, the best place for architects and planners to start is to have a close, hard look at the traditional architecture, the construction methods and the climate of a country. This should go hand in hand with the incorporation of local building materials and community participation in the planning and implementation of the projects. In doing this, due consideration must be given to the management and preservation of our environment in order to ensure future development. This is not a new message but we need to keep on reminding the new and up-coming professionals in this area.

I must emphasise one point that is usually neglected by most of our architects and planners. The success of housing projects depends heavily on the involvement of the beneficiaries
irrespective of their social and economic status. Like the rich people, the low-income earners are just as interested in the kind of house they would wish to build, the materials to be used, and the kind of neighbourhood to live in.

Getting their co-operation involves consulting them at all stages of the project planning and implementation. Only then will they be prepared in turn to accept your advice, and in this way you will be assured of maximising their satisfaction.

We in Kenya consider the development of human settlement and environment to be of great importance. In this connection, my Ministry has started a programme of development of all the slum areas starting with Pumwani and Kibera. This programme will be spread to all the towns where slums and unplanned squatter settlements exist. It will be an additional programme to the already on-going shelter and urban development programme in our main towns such as Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu and the secondary towns such as Kitale, Nakuru, Eldoret, Thika and Nyeri. In these towns, we have a comprehensive housing, infrastructure and community facilities improvement programme that also incorporates employment generating projects. A small town housing programme is also underway covering more than 30 towns spread all over the country. These small towns are important because they provide administration and market facilities for the rural community where the majority of our people live.

In addition to this human settlement development in the urban areas, the Government through the National Housing Corporation has been giving loans to individuals in the rural areas to assist them in the improvement of rural housing. It is the intention of the Government to improve on this rural housing programme in order to benefit as many people as possible. In this connection, my Ministry and the Housing Research and Development Unit of the University of Nairobi has been carrying out research on the utilisation of locally available building materials and construction techniques. We have now moved from the research to the demonstration stage in order to test the applicability of the researched local materials and the results are very positive.
Further to this development, my Ministry is sparing no efforts in accelerating the programme of land survey and issuance of titles. The implementation of the revised housing by-laws will also be accelerated.

It is the intention of the Government to continue streamlining the necessary legal, financial and institutional framework for the development and management of future human settlement and environment programmes. In this connection, the Estate Agents Act and the Sectional Properties Act have already been enacted. His Excellency the President, Honourable Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, has already appointed the National Co-ordinating Committee on Urban Land Use Planning and Development to look into the issues of present and future urban development. The Rural Development Strategy is in full operation and my Ministry is in the process of revising the National Housing Policy for Kenya which will cover both the urban and the rural areas.

In this regard the forthcoming seminar will give us further insight into the development of planning and architecture that is related to an important section of our population. I understand the aim of the AKAA is to make architects and others concerned with the built environment aware of the vitality of Islamic culture while encouraging architecture appropriate to the rapidly evolving context of the twentieth century. I am, therefore, grateful to have the opportunity to participate in this important function and to have the honour to officially welcome the AKAA.

Rueban Mutiso
Vice-President of the African Union of Architects
The environment which we inhabit and the process of living form a totality consisting of non-physical and physical elements. The non-physical elements include the different relationships which comprise the political, social, economic and psychological dimensions of our lives. The physical elements are the natural world, the material basis upon which all aspects of life rest, and the structures and objects which we produce. Man is an integral part of the total environment.
The total environment, physical and non-physical, is the ever-present context for undertaking those tasks concerned with securing material and social welfare for ourselves and our families, as well as pursuing our search for and the celebration of meaning in our lives.

The total environment is experienced as a unitary field. It can have the effect of supporting or inhibiting each human being’s efforts to secure material and social welfare; to develop as an autonomous, creative, fulfilled human being; and to contribute to society’s collective development. We are thus, at least, partial products of our total environment and live in a reality that is materially and socially produced.

The built environment, of which human settlements are a part, is the primary tangible outcome of our actions within the total environment. As such, the built environment is both a product of the ongoing process of interaction as well as an active influence on that process. The influence of the built environment on man’s activities will vary according to particular conditions at a given time. This influence, however, will never be absent.

The built environment in giving tangible form to the total environment may reflect characteristics of it. If the total environment acts restrictively on efforts at human development, then the built environment is likely to be impoverished. If the total environment is supportive of human development then the built environment is likely to have characteristics which indicate social health and economic viability.

Human settlements, as our primary 'habitat', are a vital part of the built environment and are thus the focus of much conscious attention and action. It is of first importance to any society that settlements should show characteristics which indicate social health and economic viability — that they demonstrate opportunities for a good quality of life. There are strong moral, political, social and economic reasons why the achievement of these conditions should be the primary focus of purposive action directed at the formation of settlements.

The professional — educator, planner or architect who is directing action towards the formation of socially healthy and
economically viable settlements is engaged in social practice and is, therefore, constrained to be socially responsible in his actions. In dealing with settlements the most widespread error with the gravest consequences results from a confusion between means and ends; buildings and settlements are means to a fulfilled life and not ends in themselves.

Socially responsible building and settlement formation are likely to occur only when the particular opportunities and constraints of a specific situation are considered in the light of their broad context; ideological, political, economic and social. Actions taken to address these opportunities and problems must be informed by critical theory.
Reuben Mutiso  
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The Africa Union of Architects binds together all architectural professional societies in Africa. There is much to learn in Africa and the rich culture of the people contributes to the product of architecture. There are many similarities in the problems we face and we can learn much from the experience of others. That is one of the reasons why in 1980, the Africa Union of Architects was inaugurated.

The Africa Union of Architects seeks the broadest possible involvement of the public in solving environmental problems in the world. Architecture should be communicated to the people and the people must become well acquainted with architecture and the built environment.

The Africa Union of Architects stands for integration of the cultures of the African people. Architects should take note of the culture of the people in delivering appropriate architecture. Only in this way will there by any relevance in the product.

We are grateful to His Highness The Aga Khan for the unwavering support that he has provided to The Africa Union of Architects and indeed to the entire profession of architecture throughout the world.

The President of The Africa Union of Architects wishes total success to this seminar.

Ambwene Mwakyusa  
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On behalf of The Association of Architects of Tanzania, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome His Highness The Aga Khan, the Representative of The Africa Union of Architects, the invited guests and delegates to this seminar.

We are greatly honoured that our country has been chosen as the venue of this conference.

We are fortunate that our country has a number of buildings which were not constructed by applying modern technology and principles. Apart from depicting the history and tradition
of our societies, there is much to be learned from such buildings, and the preservation of them is of some importance. The Aga Khan has given this endeavour his positive encouragement.

The seminar will be discussing the Architecture of Housing, a theme which is most appropriate at this time. It will touch upon the alarming growth of the population, the need for shelter and the slowness of planning procedures.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture has selected this precious island as the venue for this seminar. We have here a number of buildings which reflect our traditions and our customs. The Association of Architects of Tanzania is committed to preserving or adapting our heritage to a new socio-economic order rather than destroying it completely.

Our cultural heritage is a most precious asset which cannot be overlooked or discarded as an unimportant part of our lives. Rapidly developing societies like Tanzania and many other countries in Africa are presently going through an identity crisis. The fact is that most architects in emerging African nations have been trained overseas and the foreign styles are thus favoured at the expense of local architecture. The local architectural identity is fast disappearing, and this emphasises the need to retain the valuable history within our heritage.

I wish to express our pleasure in having the Aga Khan Award for Architecture organise a seminar in this country. It is a reinforcement of the Association’s objectives. We also thank the Government of Tanzania for supporting this seminar. It is my sincere hope that ideas will emerge which will help us to develop a new and more responsible outlook towards the architecture of housing in this country.
Titus da Costa
Grave injustices would have been done to human civilisation had the slow but inevitable destruction of the Stone Town continued unabated. A new dawn was heralded in 1985 when the government instituted The Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority under the Ministry of Water, Construction and Energy. Since then the Authority has been involved in an uphill struggle to repair the consequences of human neglect.

Activities, Achievements and Goals
In 1985 it was clear that all the government buildings in the Stone Town were in a pathetic condition. Even more so, the residences and godowns rented to private people. Thus the first positive step towards restoration, was to convert the tenants into private owners by offering them the opportunity to buy the houses at reasonable prices in the belief that proper attention would immediately take effect under private ownership. The selling itself was done in no uncertain manner. Only houses in really poor condition without architectural significance or rich historical background were sold. Upon buying, the new owner is required to repair the house during a fixed period in a manner prescribed by the Authority. Some 135 houses have been sold. The result is an outright success.

The funds realised through the selling of the houses are spent in restoring other government buildings within the Stone Town. This money forms the basis of the Authority's budget. So far, four buildings have been restored, including the Authority's office premises, currently in the final stages.

For the rehabilitation to be a real success, and more importantly to ensure the bleak period of the Stone Town history should never recur, it is important that society should realise its true value and therefore participate in the rehabilitation process.

A visit to the restored office buildings and their influence on the restoration of other houses would suffice to show how the Authority tackle this issue. The Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority also offers consultancy services to
restoration activities undertaken by government institutions and the private clients.

The rehabilitation is so diverse that the government cannot cover all the financial, technical and social aspects. It is imperative that greater efforts should be exerted from both within and outside the country to pursue the restoration efficiently and effectively.

The Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority is engaged in coordinating cooperation with various national and international organisations. Notable among these is the United Nation's Development Programme which has just initiated a pilot project.

NORAD has also assisted in restoring one of the said four buildings which now houses workshops for the typical Zanzibar craftwork. The Institute of Housing Studies in the Netherlands and the Aga Khan Foundation have also helped in training two staff members, currently enrolled in Rotterdam and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology respectively. One other staff member has just completed studies in Rome under the sponsorship of UNESCO. Currently 10 more staff, under the Authority's own sponsorship, are in various academic institutions in Tanzania. Hopefully more organisations will help train them further so as to realise the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority's long term goal of self-reliance in manpower.

The German Volunteer Service has also provided the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority with technical expertise. The French Government, the United Kingdom based Intermediate Technology Development Group and the European Economic Community have also expressed their interest in joining forces.

For a firm rehabilitation base, it is necessary that Stone Town's history should be well-known and its existing situation well-documented.

The Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority is currently trying to unearth the role of various buildings while also engaged in detailed inspection, documentation and monitoring of the conditions of all the buildings.
Furthermore, the Authority is currently constructing ten houses outside the Stone Town as shelter to temporarily accommodate Stone Town residents while their houses are in the process of restoration.

Setbacks
Needless to say, the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority’s work is not without problems. In this present period of transition, when traditional heritage is being rediscovered, when new experiments are being made to combine modern technology with cultural continuity, and when there is an urgent search for socially responsive forms of architecture for the poor who are in the majority, the restoration of Stone Town is lacking in almost all that is needed to pursue its aims.

We lack manpower. Resources like building materials and traditional technology are yet to be fully exploited. Materials and equipment are locally unavailable and hard to come by given the tough economic situation. The population keeps on increasing, leaving even smaller resources for the rehabilitation. In all fairness however, the development of The Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority is at least an initial concrete step towards the complete restoration of this international patrimony.

Mankind should therefore support the process. Not just to serve the town but also to create the awareness of the renaissance of the Stone Town as part of preserving the cultural heritage. We have to bear in mind that development, environment and architecture are interdependent.

We should therefore never deviate from our task of creating proper space for man’s development through a synthesis of social, economic, technological factors and three dimensional forms. God bless the day, when man can confidently look back with pride.

Erich F Meffert
United Nation Development Project Leader
I would like to read a short quotation from Amos Rapaport’s
"Human Aspects of the Urban Form". In the chapter about environmental perception, the diversity of cities is discussed. About New York, for instance, he says "To visit nineteenth century New York, was almost like a trip to Europe because of the many specialised areas, some just a block in extent, others the size of a small town, each with different religious lives, languages, newspapers, restaurants, holidays and street lives".

Then he turns his attention to Zanzibar. I quote once more "Another example is provided by Stone Town versus N’gambo in Zanzibar". (N’gambo means — the other side of the creek — which is the African town.)

"The former of tall stone houses with narrow streets and alleys is separated by an old creek from the latter, with free standing coral house, arranged randomly under a screen of coconut palms. The grain is different, one is inward turning, the other outward facing. The two areas are also inhabited by different populations and have very different street lives and activities reinforced by sounds, smell, light and shade, temperature, air movement and so on".

He continues, "a city like Zanzibar consists of areas homogeneous by race and religion with separate lives. They are very different visually and specially in terms of trades, smells, music, populations in all modalities. And the transitions are clear. A number of things are working together to reinforce noticeable differences. Variations in houses, street patterns, and open grounds, ethnicity, lifestyles, activities and the accompanying motives. The result is great richness and it is one of the reasons for encouraging the presence of different neighbourhoods in cities".

This description is now history. It was already history when Rapaport published his book in 1977. Since then a number of changes have taken place in Zanzibar. Some of them are very much evident, others less visible. The creek does not exist anymore. It was already filled up in the 1950’s. The "screen of coconut palms" has gone. The trees that are left can be counted on two hands and I almost dare not mention Michanzani flats which replaced them.
The life as described has gone. This did not occur by slow evolution over time. The change took place very quickly.

A new generation has grown up since then, facing a heritage neglected to the extent of almost total destruction — but still vaguely recognisable.

What to do? Are the remains still of any value to anybody? People faced with severe day-to-day problems can hardly be blamed for being more interested in the present than in the past. The visible efforts to save the surviving treasures of the past are therefore even more commendable.

It is said that man cannot exist without history and Zanzibar is no exception. A young generation left for many years with little information about the past is again exploring its history. Such an approach developed into an attempt to master again Zanzibar Stone Town's destiny and to put a stop to just being a victim of circumstances. This has been recognised by the international community and gained its support.

There is the economic potential of Zanzibar in terms of tourism to be considered which however can be a means only for a more substantial end. Rehabilitation of Zanzibar's Stone Town does not mean to restore everything as it was before. The hope for the future is that the eyes will be sharpened to the values being reflected again in the reappearance of the past.

The goal is to fill the Stone Town again with meaningful life, to make a functioning township out of it which turns it once more into a home to the residents, not just a mere shelter. The UNDP/UNCHS (HABITAT) rehabilitation project of assistance to the Stone Town should be seen in this context. The project will fail however if it looks into buildings only. First come the people. The rest will follow. Therefore, the general housing issue is of top priority. If there is any chance assistance can be started in this seminar, please allow me to suggest some sort of architectural competition — in order to find out a suitable solution and at the same time avoid the failures of the past.

Some of the buildings in Stone Town are historic. There is the Hamamni Bath which has been renovated. The features of motifs on the building are somewhat Persian since it was built
by a Persian builder and by its side is the Persian Bath. This was the only bath in Stone Town which was for public use although there are quite a number on the island of Zanzibar. It was built in the nineteenth century by Said Baraghash, the Sultan of Zanzibar between 1870 and 1888.

Quite a number of buildings in town are Indian in style with balconies, galleries, and Indian doors and windows. Some have a combination of a bit of Indian, a little bit of Persian and some Arabic. Sometimes the arches in a building are Arabic, a dome Indian. There is a Hindu temple in the very heart of the old Stone Town.

A Roman Catholic Church was built in about 1897, designed by a French Father who had earlier designed a Church in Marseilles in France. The building is Romanesque. In 1970 the interior was restored and repainted.

Karume House was built in the early 1950’s as a Town Hall, with a typical Indian style door. This type of door is numerous in a street which today is called Gizenga and is continued as Hurumzi and Darjani. Originally the name was Portuguese probably because the Portuguese Consulate was there.

Later it was carried on as Chor Bazaar to Hurumzi and to Modi Bazaar. The street is actually one continuous street snaking from the old Post Office to the Darajani. In this street, most of the Indians had their shops and residential buildings which are quite unlike the buildings which are on the seafront facing north. Most of the buildings facing north on the seafront; the People’s Palace, the Custom House, the Court and Marine House, the old British Consulate building are typical Arab architecture, built by Arab businessmen before the buildings of the Indians. From the tower of Beit al-ajaib, the “House of Wonders”, one can see the Old Fort which is now being renovated and next to it the orphanage building which was formally the Muslim Academy and prior to that the Sir Ian Smith Madrasa.

The funds for the School were contributed by His Highness The Aga Khan in about 1933. Nearby is the Jamhuri Garden which was once called the Jubilee Garden to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Victoria.
Along the seafront facing the north coast you see typical high Arab houses extending up to the harbour. One such building was the Grand Central Hotel. Until recently the building was the Ministry of Culture.

There is also the ‘second’ British Consulate. In this building Henry Morton Stanley lived for a short while during his journey to the East African Coast and Central Africa. It now houses the Department of Finance and the Workers Comission.

The Tembo House was the residence of the famous Indian businessmen Kowasjee Dinshaw and Brothers. The building was built in 1885. It is very easy to remember the date because it is very conspicuous on the door at the front of the building. It faces the sea.

Also facing the sea is the ‘first’ British Consulate building. David Livingston’s body was brought to this building for identification. Also, explorers like Burton and Speke at one time or another lived in the building. It was later taken over by the famous firm of Smith MacKenzie and Company and it now houses the Zanzibar State Trading Corporation.

The Ministry of Education building was at one time used as an international maritime slave trade bureau until about 1893.

A number of buildings are being demolished. They are structurally weak and are going to be replaced by new buildings. We hope they will adhere to the old architecture of the Stone Town. There are many other buildings and elements of interest; the Customs Building, a carved Arab dome, the castilated wall of the People’s Palace formerly the Sultan’s Palace, the Friday Mosque, the towers at the old fort, the old dispensary, and the Bannara Mosque one of the oldest buildings in the Stone Town. The minaret is believed to have been built about 1822.

1 The delegates to the Seminar on the Architecture of Housing were priviledged to be given a conducted tour of the Stone Town restoration. This paper is a short introduction to the work of the Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority, which preceded the tour.
A Brief History of the East African Coast

Selma al-Radi

We know very little about the early history of East Africa. However, the earliest remains of hominoids, dating from about one and three-quarters million years ago, have been found in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. It therefore seems most probable that it was from East Africa that early man, as a hunting mammal having developed the use of tools, moved to Asia and Europe during the long period of the Stone Age.

Towards the end of the Stone Age, new immigrants coming from the north and north-east began to push southwards the original Bushmanoid hunters and gatherers who had lived for millennia in the Kenyan and Tanzanian Highlands, the Rift Valley and along the shores of Lake Victoria. These newcomers, probably southern Kushites from modern Ethiopia, were most likely the first people to bring the knowledge of iron tools to this area; they were hunters and herders. From about 200 BC, other immigrant people, the Bantu, arrived and introduced their own ways of life — they were cultivators and farmers. Thus began the settled, farming communities of East Africa. Better agricultural lands were slowly taken over from the hunters and gatherers, who were forced to retreat into the interior but who nevertheless maintained, through the centuries, a symbiotic relationship with the farmers. Between 500-1000 AD, more Bantu peoples came into East Africa from the west and the centre, organising themselves into kingdoms with traditional religions and cultures, and trading with their neighbours and across the Indian Ocean.

The coastal region had been in trading contact with the outside world from at least the middle of the first millennium BC, with the Kingdoms of Southern Arabia, Saba, Ausan, and later, Himyar, as well as with the Greek and Roman Empires. These trade routes were already well-established by the time an anonymous Greek wrote the “Periplus of the Erythrean Sea” (a contemporary name for the Indian Ocean) sometime around 110 AD, for therein is given a detailed description of the islands and ports as well as the people of “Azania”. The “Geografia” of Ptolemy, written in the second century AD, also describes trading routes and ports along the Somali and Kenyan coastlines.
By the 5th-6th century AD, trade with East Africa was almost totally monopolised by traders from the Red Sea area and the Persian Gulf. Between 620-1000 AD, Arabs and Persians (especially Shirazis), fleeing from religious conflicts in their countries of origin, settled in East Africa which they called Zanjabar — the Land of the Black People. Most of them belonged to the Sunni Shafe’i sect and when the Shirazis, who were Shi’a came and settled alongside, they put aside their conflicts, learned the local language, and married local Bantu women and converted them. This merger of the customs, religion and languages of these diverse people became the Swahili culture (the word Swahili itself coming from the Arabic sabil meaning coast).

The raison d’etre for the success of this civilisation on the East African coast, stretching from Mogadishu in the north to Madagascar and Sofala in the south, was mercantile. It depended on the import of goods from overseas, which were exchanged for those from the mainland, and which in turn were exported to home markets or elsewhere. On the profits of this trade, a solid and comfortable bourgeois society grew and flourished. There were 37 medieval towns along the East African coast built on islands or on the mainland itself. They were never united into one kingdom, as rivalries and differences were frequent occurrences between the settlements. However, the most important towns — Mogadishu, Zanzibar, Kilwa and Sofala — remained the capitals of their respective kingdoms until the advent of the Portuguese in 1488, which drastically altered the balance of power in East Africa.

The goods that were traded in East Africa were:
Imports:
From China — porcelain and silks;
From India — textiles, beads, metal objects, spices;
From Iraq, Iran and Arabia — glass, daggers, tools, iron pots and pans.
Staples such as wheat rice, ghee, oil and dyes were also imported from abroad.
Figure 1: East Africa's trade with other lands. (Taken from: Were and Wilson, East Africa Through The Ages, p3).
Exports:
From Zimbabwe — gold, shipped via Sofala to Kilwa;
From the mainland — Ivory, rhinoceros horn, animal skins, 
tortoise shell and copper (Zambia);
From the mainland — slaves, shipped out from Kilwa, 
Zanzibar and Mogadishu.

The Arabs did not penetrate into the interior of Africa; 
goods were exchanged through intermediaries and traders at 
Kilwa, at Sofala or at Mogadishu. As a result, these cities 
became wealthy from the taxes imposed on all goods leaving 
their shores. From these major entrepots, goods were shipped 
out to Aden and Muscat, and from there to India, Iran or 
further afield in the Indian Ocean.

This state of affairs would have continued indefinitely had it 
not been rudely interrupted by the entry of the Portuguese 
into the Indian Ocean into 1498. The three "caravels" under the 
command of Vasco de Gama changed the history of Europe and 
the East. The Sultan of Mozambique, not having the slightest 
idea who these foreigners were, greeted them with warm 
hospitality; further up the coast at Malindi, the Portuguese 
were even able to find an Arab pilot, Ahmed bin Majid, who 
agreed to show them the route to India — and thus began the 
trading voyages of the Portuguese in the East. Almost at once 
these voyages turned into colonial expansion, as the Portuguese 
learned that to secure their goods and supplies they had to 
control the trade routes and the major ports.

Between 1500-1510, the Portuguese subjugated the coastal 
towns of the Indian Ocean with great cruelty. Most of them 
gave in quietly and agreed to pay tribute; those that resisted, 
like Kilwa and Mombasa, were destroyed. By 1509, Pemba, 
Zanzibar and Mafia were captured, too, and for the next 
hundred years the Portuguese virtually ruled the Indian Ocean. 
Their troubles began in the 17th century, first with Turkish 
pirates and the Ottoman navy, and then with the Dutch and 
the British who sought a share in the lucrative trade. Portugal 
began to lose some of its captured territories: Persidi regained 
Hormuz in 1622, the Omanis won back Muscat in 1650, and
by 1660, they were attacking the Portuguese fortresses along the East African coast. Fort Jesus in Mombasa fell in 1698, exactly 200 years after the entry of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. The Omani's freed the East African coastal states, only to add them to the Sultan's Empire; they ruled for the next 200 years and were almost as unpopular as the Portuguese.

Added to and superimposed on local rivalries was the factionalism of the two leading groups of the Omani ruling families, the Mazrui or Mazaria (based in Mombasa) and the Busaidi rulers in Muscat and Zanzibar. The infighting continued until 1840, when Sultan Sayid bin Said finally tricked the Mazrui in Mombasa, claimed the whole territory as his, and made Zanzibar the capital city. Meanwhile, trade continued. The ivory and slave trade grew and grew; Kilwa and Zanzibar were the main market towns for both Arab and Indian slave traders, while the French bought from Kilwa only. The British, who were the leading slave traders in West Africa, changed tack in 1807, making slavery illegal for all British subjects in that year. Portugal followed suit in 1815, France in 1818, and Spain in 1820. The last official slave market, that of Zanzibar, was closed on the 5th of March 1873, when Sultan Bargash, under British pressure, signed a treaty to stop the shipment of all slaves from the East African Coast. A fierce hurricane had swept across Zanzibar and completely destroyed the island in 1872, and the Sultan had no choice but to acquiesce to British demands in order to obtain their aid in rebuilding his economy. Nonetheless, illicit trading in slaves was carried out by Arab and Indian traders in the Indian Ocean until well into the 20th century. By the 1890's, most of East Africa was under British protection (symbolic "puppet" Sultans were kept in place) while most of Tanzania (Tanganyika) was under the Germans. By the end of the Second World War, Britain reigned supreme, and remained so until the 1960's, when the East African states finally gained independence and became free states under the leadership of their own people.
Major Towns

Kilwa (Kisiwani)  The town was probably founded in the 10th-11th century AD, and by the 13th century was the most important trading town on the East African Coast under "Shirazi" rulers. It retained the control of the gold trade until the 16th century when Mombasa became its strong rival. Strongly Muslim throughout it made major efforts to convert the mainland to Islam.

Zanzibar  The first island to be settled by the Arabs, it was independent of Kilwa and governed by its own Sultans until the Portuguese occupation in 1509. Freed by the Omanis in 1699, it remained part of the Sultanate to the end of World War I, when it was swallowed by the British Empire. It was the major trading port for gold and slaves, and after 1818, for cloves. Most of the old Stone Town of Zanzibar was built during the 18th-19th centuries under the Omanis and shows wonderful examples of Indian Ocean architectural styles.

Mombasa  Probably founded in the 12th century AD, as an exporting centre for slaves and ivory, it remained a small settlement until the second half of the 15th century. By 1490, it was a fortified town and began to challenge Kilwa. Its rulers were Swahili with strong African ties. The Portuguese took it in 1502, but could not keep it; they finally destroyed the old town in 1589 when they were aided unintentionally by members of the Zimba tribe who ate up all the survivors. Construction of Fort Jesus was begun in 1593, and the Portuguese continued to rule Mombasa until the Omanis took it in 1698. The Mazrui faction controlled the town and trade until 1884, when it was officially ceded to the Busaidi of Zanzibar by the Anglo-German Treaty, from whence it became part of the British Empire.

Lamu  The site was settled probably by the 9th century AD, although the present town was probably founded in the 13th-14th century. By the 15th century, it was a thriving
trading town mainly dealing in ivory, mangrove poles and timber. In 1505, it came under the Portuguese who, in turn, were expelled by the Omanis in 1698. Then began a period of great commercial revival and expansion — most of the traditional stone houses and mosques were built during this time. The abolition of the slave trade and the loss of slaves to work the mainland plantations at the end of the 19th century resulted in an economic decline from which it never recovered.

**Mogadishu** The earliest and most important Muslim town in East Africa, already a major trading town by 1000 AD. It was always pre-occupied with its contacts to the Arab world and never interfered in events on the coast further south.
Appendices

Background Papers

Brief History of the East African Coast
Selma al-Radi

The Stone Town of Zanzibar
Titus da Costa and Eric F Meffert

Seminar Opening Ceremony
In Kenya:
Hon Darius Mbela
Rueben Mutiso

In Zanzibar:
Rueben Mutiso
Amuwene Mwakyusa

Selected Bibliography

Participants
It has been for all of us a very challenging experience to come to an island with such a multiplicity of history and to be able to listen to the problems of building in the developing world and how they are dealt with.

The fact that the President of Tanzania was willing to open the seminar and that the President of Zanzibar was also there with his Chief Minister is ample evidence of our shared beliefs that housing the increasing populations of the developing world is a major issue. I wish to thank all the contributors to the Award seminar. I know there were many difficulties to overcome to organise this seminar, to get everyone to Zanzibar, to enable them to stay and to move around. Without the support of many people, this seminar would not have occurred.

I wish to express my admiration to the Government of Zanzibar for having taken the initiative to sustain and enhance and support the Stone Town. This is an exciting initiative, one which I would hope to see replicated with success throughout the Islamic world. The restoration of these historic cities should not be an exercise exclusively in cultural continuity but an exercise in economic rehabilitation and the provision of new economic opportunities for people who did not have that opportunity before.

In preparing for this seminar, one of the concerns that the Steering Committee had was that the papers should be of the highest quality possible and available to the participants early enough so that there would be the possibility to read them, to reflect over their contents and to make the seminar discussion as constructive as possible. I wish on behalf of the Award to thank all the contributors for a set of papers which I considered outstanding. They were absolutely excellent and without doubt enhanced the quality of the discussions.

If anything has characterised this seminar, it is the feeling that housing is the essence of individuality. It is probably the built form that is most often and most consistently individualised by every family however poor or however rich.

I ask myself the question therefore — what are the processes which will enable housing to be individualised at all levels of need and this seminar has addressed this problem creatively and
effectively. It has rejected the concept of numbers. It has, in other words, said that it is simply not possible to treat thousands of families as numbers on a piece of paper. They are not numbers, they will never be numbers and if you produce shelter for them on that premise, you are way off the mark.

Secondly, the seminar has said if you cannot deal with issues on that basis, what are the structures, what are the systems, what are the processes that need to be put in place so that numbers become manageable, needs become comprehensible, aspirations can be served and there can be a dialogue between those who are responsible for producing housing and those who are going to be the recipients of housing?

The seminar has also underlined the fact that there are many roles for the architect and they probably differ substantially between the industrialised world and the Third World. In the years ahead it may well be necessary for areas of specialisation. That has happened in most other professions, particularly the ones which are increasingly technological and that is probably a direction in which the architectural profession will need to go. In fact it is already happening in the industrialised world with specialities in high-tech areas such as hospital design.

But the most fundamental role that I felt was underlined here was the role of the architect as communicator and the need for the architect to comprehend the individual, or the family, or the families, or the constituencies for which he is building. If that comprehension is not established ultimately he is likely to find the wrong solution because the diagnosis of the problem has been incorrect. It is one of the most interesting aspects of this seminar. The architect must not only be a master of form, he has to be a communicator and I hope this seminar has given architects the possibility to communicate at many different levels and on a variety of subjects. In doing so I trust they will be able in the years ahead, more successfully to address one of the greatest challenge facing the human race which is to build for itself in quantity and quality, appropriate shelter.
Charles Correa set the stage for this conference with a lecture in Nairobi by reminding us all of the values of vernacular housing, its adaptation to climate, open-to-sky space, local materials and communal lifestyles. Of course, he damned mass housing. I offer only one counterpoint — what about the evidence referred to by Saad Eddin Ibrahim that the poor will kill to live in these places? What about land costs and the densities engendered by land costs? How will everyone who wants to live and work in urban areas have a little house? I ask this question of Charles Correa?

Ismail Serageldin’s paper and address expertly sorted out the issues of the seminar and made a clear distinction between the technical domain of mass housing, land services, credit, finance and urban planning, a domain which as a member of the World Bank, he understands very well. The domain of cultural authenticity, he refers to is usually left to historians and the domain of architecture. Specifically he touched on the architect’s contributions to the domain of housing and how they should be critically assessed. Later he noted how architects dream. How wonderful from the down-to-earth chap at the World Bank to talk about architects’ dreams. We heard Ismail Serageldin’s flip side and it was worth it. But of equal value to the Award, I think would be a study of all the ways architects presently work in the field of housing in the developing Muslim world.

We know and admire the works of such gifted architects as Geoffrey Bawa. But what is life like for the so-called barefoot architect? Who hires him and how is he paid? What is life like for the lower-echelon architect or bureaucrat in the housing authority? Who listens to him? What does he do? By what standards should the work of these and others be critically assessed? How much of it really is of a standard to merit critical effort? This question should be looked into further.

Mona Serageldin’s papers are invaluable documents because she does her homework. Every paper she has ever given and every paper I have ever read has been absolutely superbly documented and detailed. Her paper and slide presentation convinced me that informal housing is here to stay. Like Oleg
Grabar I am moved by the sheer quantity of human physical energy, invested in the forms and agglomerations and the great struggle to survive that they express.

Three sentences of Mona Serageldin’s lead to an urgent question however, and I will quote her. She said “On the one hand the illegalities and violations, that characterise informal development cannot be condoned. On the other hand its contribution to the solution of the housing shortage cannot be ignored. In most labour exporting countries, informal housing today accounts for over 60 per cent of the housing stock”. But since the area of land within daily commuting distance of urban centres keeps increasing, will the day eventually come when the show will be over for the informal home owners? The land illegally held and subdivided — will it somehow be made legal by skillful manipulators and by well-financed developers who are served by the best lawyers? I have this suspicion, perhaps because I come from New York city. But I do raise this as a possibility. Is there not a great danger that these informal home owners will become squatters again?

There is another question raised by Mona Serageldin’s paper. She notes that practising architects fail to share academics enthusiasm for informal housing. It must be pointed out however in fairness to architects, that academicians are paid to study informal housing. Informal housing builders on the other hand cannot be expected to understand that they should hire barefoot architects and pay them at least to buy shoes!

Suha Ozkan’s paper told us what mass housing has accomplished in all three of its categories, public housing, private sector housing and cooperative housing. His slides consisted mostly of what he and the Award considered to be good work. Most projects were visually attractive. The time constraints however did not allow him to give us sufficient information on how they work, whether the populations that they were designed for actually live there, whether densities are within the described norms and where the dwellers come from, what their jobs are and what percentage of their incomes they pay in rent? Such questions are essential to any critical analysis of the architecture of housing.
Hasan-Uddin Khan in collaboration with Charles Moore gave us a splendid slide lecture of house after house, being among the most beautiful I have ever seen. Are there any links between the houses of the rich and the houses of the poor? Can these wonderful houses have anything to do with informal housing, squatter settlements, contractor-built mass housing? I would like to think so. But when we consider as Saad Eddin Ibrahim reminded us, that the political, administrative, financial and architectural planning problem is the accommodation of several billion people who inhabit urban settlements, I do not have the answer to that question. I would just like to rephrase it — Can transformations of the architectural qualities found in these beautiful houses be applied to mass housing? And then another question — Can we truly not be bogged down by the mundane?

With time to ponder, I would like to say more about Hasan-Uddin Khan’s venture into semiotics and I agree with Oleg Grabar that it is very important to transfer the ideas in that paper to a wider community.

Now to move on to the last of the major papers — The Role of the Architect by John de Monchaux. He pointed out that the architect, despite all the skills that he must bring to his task, including knowledge of finance, marketing and urban planning should not forget that his principal task, with his unique ability, is that of form giving. I agree with this but how is the architect to work with the poor? As he points out the process and institutional mechanisms by which the architect interacts with the poor, need new designs. He then said another important thing; that the poor client, the user of the housing should have the same relationship to the architect as any better endowed client. That is true. But I must ask how in political terms can this be arranged? How could the poor acquire the services of an architect for themselves? Unless the architect functions as an unpaid or marginally paid volunteer.

What kinds of institutions are required and how can they help architects directly serve the poor? What kinds of help do such institutions need? How could these organisations be created? Now to refer directly to the past history of the Award
— in the first Award cycle — an award was given to a school and dwelling complex in Senegal designed by an architect who came from Belgium who developed an appropriate technology with local craftsmen. The award was shared by a European Catholic religious group named Karitas who sponsored the project. Here we have one of the types of institutions that fund advocacy architects.

To my knowledge the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, is the first architectural programme that ever singled out and honoured such an institution and parenthetically, in making its choices to honour all the forces that taken together contribute to the making of architecture the Award is unique. I have been an architectural journalist for many years and I admit that one of the things we do is write up architectural awards. So you must believe me when I say that except for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, honours always go to individual architects and to what juries consider to be almost perfect works of architectural art or in the cases of say the annual Pritzker Award to leading architects with a lifetime of such creations. The Aga Khan Award for Architecture has honoured clients, preservation organisations and preservationists and such craftsmen as masons.

The Award seeks not to honour perfected work of architectural form but to discover and support promising initiatives, directions and searches in architecture. Notably the Award has accomplished this recognition while keeping the role of the architect in sharp focus. And the Award in this seminar and others have served as a bridge between the architecture of form and the architecture of social and economic objectives. It is now time for the Award to follow the lead proposed by His Highness the Aga Khan in a comment he made earlier in this seminar.

His Highness urged the Award to pay even more attention than it has in the past to the institutions and processes that govern the architect’s role in relation to the poor. Now the architect whose greatest skill, we have been told by John de Monchaux and others is form giving must begin to find his way into the world of mass housing but he must do it within
an institutional framework. The poor urban migrants who must house themselves need him, picturesque slides notwithstanding, there is no way the urban poor can get it right without a good and dedicated architect to help them at whatever level Ismail Serageldin so ably described. I will take as an example the level of working immediately with an urban migrant community. This is a man or woman who must leave their arrogance back at the AA or MIT for he or she will not make money and will not live in much comfort especially if they are spending long months close to the site and the people.

I am now describing what I have always considered to be a heroic role. No one is saying every architect should practise his or her profession in this modest and humane realm. But the poor can be greatly served by those who do.
Conclusions

Summary of the Contributions
Mildred Schmertz

Future Directions
His Highness The Aga Khan
Charles Correa
John de Monchaux was talking about the architect and the classic virtues of firmness, commodity and delight that are the central role of the architect or let us say his central responsibility. As he moves away from that to understanding finance, and understanding other things, he actually weakens his position. But what Hasan Poerbo seems to be saying is that in the Third World the imperatives of the human condition forces the architect to start moving in that direction. In fact the phrase John de Monchaux used, was that when the architect moved in that direction, he gave “a total performance” which seems to give a higher value to that than a specialised performance. In other words, the architect is an evangelist who creates conditions for his own performance. If you look at the history of architecture, even in the west, and at the people who were concerned with these virtues of firmness, commodity and delight, a man like Louis Sullivan, actually was an evangelist who created the conditions for his own performance.

Kazi Khaled Ashraf
What I have is a list of parallel and disjointed observations which have been repeated over and over again and some of them I will repeat.

The first scenario, is the dimension of the rural to urban exodus. It is a demographic shift of historical proportions. In the next 20 or 30 years, every major city of the so called Third World is going to face such a phenomenal pressure on its land, its resource and infrastructure that it will paralyse our existing urban system.

The new urban frontier is in the Third World. If the first scenario is alarming, the second one is chilling. There was a recent conference of environment scientists, that was held in the United States, on the global warming trends, with increasing greenhouse effects and wide scale global deforestation. Scientists believe that the earth is entering a period of soaring global temperature, rising sea levels and disruptive climate changes. Scientists also predict that within the next hundred years or so the rising sea level and flooding will lead to
countries like the Maldives totally disappearing. Much of the Nile Delta and the Bengal Delta will be permanently under water. Do we ignore these warnings, or do we think about the effects of these catastrophies on our settlements.

The third scenario is of an ideological and cultural tension that is going on in our societies between traditional and contemporary parts, between the regional world view and the borrowed world view. This has been articulated many times before by Mohammed Arkoun. Parallel to the great urban metamorphosis we are also witnessing a period of immense transformation of perceptions and values. The result is that on one hand we have been yet unable to sketch out a collective vision of how we want our habitats to be and on the other hand we have found our existing typologies inadequate in containing this transformation.

This leads to the next scenario which is at a more micro-level and within a more understood domain of architecture. The architectural effect of the cultural tension is the loss of empathy with typologies which gave definition and spirit to a place. Moreover new typologies have not been contemplated in response to this transforming human conditions.

There are other scenarios of the nature of our political state in the Third World and of limited resources, but I have mentioned enough scenarios to incite the adrenalin.

Against the scenarios, I see the role of architect in three major ways. They are not mutually exclusive and there are many areas of overlapping. Number one is the role of the architect as visionary. This is the domain of images and of prophecy. Number two is the role of the architect as activist, as mediator, as catalyst and this is the domain of process or dialogue. And thirdly, there is the role of the architect as maker — maker and conveyor of cultural and collective consciousness. This was what Ronald Lewcock observed. This is the domain of architect’s iconography — the visual world.

The major task of the leading, thinking architects, should be the articulation of a vision, the crystallisation of a new ideology of habitation and as Charles Correa said the creation of an urban context.
We know that the Award does not entertain, what we can
call pure ideas and rightfully so but it is also true that the
domain of envisioning, the formation of some guiding
philosophy, the collective ideology has hardly been approached
in shaping our environment. Whilst we must demythologise
the ivory tower of architects, we cannot undermine the
visionary role. It is in the capacity of the architect to internalise
the dimension of the present crisis with an awareness of the
future and to sketch the outline of an environment.

We look upon vision as some kind of strange disease but we
have already been paralysed by the immensity of the urban
phenomenon and the cultural crisis. In times of crisis we need
imagination — imagination for the totality and not only
piecemeal solutions. It is unfortunate in our societies, we do
not see that visionary. The only example I can remember is
Charles Correa's plan for Bombay.

Europe did produce Le Corbusier but as Colin Amery
mentioned, it produced Ebenezer Howard too. The urban
vision of Le Corbusier, disastrous as it may have been captured
the imagination of two generations because Europe since the
beginning of the urban upheaval in the eighteenth century was
hungry for a driving idea. The problem was not a vision but
that vision. Also we cannot deny the compelling power of this
vision which Ismail Serageldin mentioned. Before we talk
about mass housing, we surely must talk about mass vision of
how we are going to live, an ideology that will ensure a human
and enabling environment.

Of course there are real problems here, which need
immediate healing. The stopping of human degradation and a
ray of hope for millions of people who need work and shelter
now. This is the domain where architects can play the leading
role in catalysing a positive change. Architects in our societies
can no longer operate passively from a quarantine environment.
They must participate actively in the transformation process.
As Colin Amery said, we must enter the problem. This is the
domain of the architect as activist, as catalyst, as agent.

How and where can the architect act in this context? I think
this was well spelled out by Tasneem Siddiqui earlier and by
Hasan Poerbo. It will depend on each particular context and condition. But the crux is in the Third World, there is evolving a new frontier which is diffusing the boundary as we knew it of the architectural domain. In general it engages issues like how can architectural activity contribute to the national economy? Can one intervene through architectural means in the rural urban migration process? How can new growth centres be conceived? Jobs be generated? Shelter be provided? How can the subsistence level of living of so many millions of people be improved? How can paralysed communities be organised and motivated towards self-sufficiency?

There is a third domain. It is operating at what we will call a micro level. It is in the production of artifacts that architecture enters into the highest intellectual realm of art. In line with Mohammed Arkoun’s earlier comments, I would like to reiterate that this is not a question of pictorial sensation. It involves the basic spirit of man, the transfer of consciousness from one generation to another. This is how one feels an affiliation to a place, a sense of identity.

Here I would like to build upon two notions which John de Monchaux mentioned, and which need a little elaboration. This is the making of form and the idea of well-being. I would like to think that this is the fundamental aspect of architecture which has either eluded us or has been understated in our discussions. A well-meaning house or housing is not merely a collection of stone and brick or mud and thatch and neither is it purely economic activity. It is ultimately the space-order which the dweller relates to physically and achieves a sense of well-being, a kind of mental security. I believe that Johan Silas equated the house with comfort and peace.

This is very close to the idea that Charles Correa always talks about — colonising a space. This is also what one calls an existential space in the limitless world. This is the psychological and fundamental dimension of architecture which resists exteriorisation and verbalisation.

When a dwelling is felt unselfconsciously by people, its’ existential desire is already inherent there. But now with the institutionalisation of architecture — with the need for
verbalising and quantifying, this fundamental aspect has been ignored. I wonder if this is not the reason why the nature of architecture has continued to elude us. This is why architecture has become so alienating to people.

For me it is a personal struggle how to engage this intangible mythic dimension in our formal process. I do not have a solution as to how this can be converted into a methodology. But it seems a modest approach would be the typological approach. This has two sides, retrieval of types which still have deep resonance in our consciousness and which lie submerged under the debris of cultural tension. The gouache drawings of Hassan Fathy are a close approximation of this approach. Those exercises are not only personal pleasure, it is a kind of struggle to rediscover. By the notion of the architect as an inventor, what I understand is the exploration of a new typology or an expression based on an old typology in response to new unprecedented conditions. In terms of examples, I can think of Kamran Diba’s work in Shustar and some of Balkrishna Doshi’s housing projects.

In conclusion, I would like to recount a point that Professor John Habrakan once mentioned. He wondered why we always see the architect as sociologist, as economist, as historian and where is the architect as an architect? In our societies which are themselves undergoing massive upheaval, the role of the architect is yet to be formed. Yet it is this present ambiguity of our role which allows, if we want to, to add the possibilities and responsibilities which have not been borne before.

**Charles Correa**

Your roles for the architect as visionary, as catalyst, and as maker are very interesting. Let me make one comment — visionary is a word that can be understood in two ways. The first is someone who foresees the future but the word ‘visionary’ or the word ‘vision’ can also mean, another way of arranging the same pieces. The reason why Mahatma Gandhi is called the Architect of the Nation and not its engineer or historian is because an architect is supposed to have the skill, not in inventing new pieces but rearranging them. He goes from
overview to detail. That is what I understand by the word ‘visionary’ — it is not someone who looks into a crystal ball and says — We are going to be using some new form of energy. There is a wonderful story of Hindermuth who was asked “How do you compose your music?” which is a stupid question but he answers it. He says “It is like standing at a window in a thunderstorm and it is all black and you see nothing and suddenly there is a flash of light and you see everything and yet you see nothing”. What we call composition is the slow recreation of that landscape, stone by stone, tree by tree. The visionary aspects of an architect is not to foresee the future but to propose what might have been.

Rueben Mutiso
My comments will be from one who is a practising architect who acknowledges we have to operate at a political level. The architect has a social responsibility to bring about architectural values aimed at social order. The adequately trained architect should be able to resolve problems in housing with utmost efficiency. Architectural solutions should show the architect’s concern for society’s cultural expectations and further be congruent with the environment.

The architect should take the responsibility of a custodian of material culture and therefore assist in:
• the preservation and revitalisation of the historic environment ensuring a harmonious co-existence with contemporary realisations.
• the creation of urban environment capable of sustaining the diversity of local ethnic culture. Technology should only assist to support life and not to destroy identity. An architect should be able to exercise a balance in the application of technology.
• the maintenance of the interdependence of rural and urban environments and appreciation of the ecological problems of our times.

The architect in exercising these roles should be able to find a truly culturally meaningful language of mass housing with regard to its construction and should act as a designer but also
as an educator. But how can we have mass housing when we do not have a mass culture or where mass culture is non-existent. In such a case, the architect should be able to understand the group dynamics particularly in urban settings.

The architect has a role to play in acting as a coordinator of inter-disciplinary teams in the decision making, and in the development and the control of an organisation. In this process the architect should operate with economists, politicians, planners, public servants, the users, financiers and owners. He should understand them all to be able to relate intelligibly.

Above all the architect must be an artist. He must employ therefore artistic expertise to produce architectural visions for the future, bearing in mind, the people’s relevant abilities and their future expectations.

The world badly needs bright, original and practical architects capable of realising the hopes of society. After all this, can an architect really be called an architect? It was noted earlier that an architect who is negotiating with the local authority is not practising only architecture. He is practising something else as well. Similarly the architect who is negotiating for funds with a financier, or with women’s groups, or with a corporative society, is practising something else which is part and parcel of the practice of architecture in the Third World, at least where I come from.

The architect who stays on site and who assists in the construction is a builder. This is a role architects must take seriously. What special qualities then should an architect have? Apart from the obvious knowledge that an architect should possess, it is necessary that an architect should acquire a knowledge of the anatomy of houses and housing. After all, how can the architect arrive at artistic ideas when he does not understand the anatomy of houses and housing. How would he be able to advise on how to build.

An architect who, out of necessity, has to cover all those roles, should be able to listen to others and receive criticism.

An architect above all should be absolutely informed on all societal changes. It appears then that an architect should be a continuous student. He should continue learning new techni-
ques, and understanding society because an informed architect can deliver relevant solutions.

Ambwene Mwakyusa
The paper on The Role of the Architect dealt mainly with his or her role when handling conventional projects in totality. Developing societies would simply like to know the role of the architect specifically in solving housing shortages.

What role can the architect play in eradicating or reducing the growth of squatter slums? This has been touched on when dealing with mass housing.

How can the architect play a role other than producing new designs and supervision of building construction? When we talk about housing problems in Africa, we mean *lack of shelter* rather than typology, function, form and the arrangement of a house which we have been discussing.

In Africa today, it is not the shortage of competent architects which prevents the continent from solving its housing problem. Lack of finance indisputably remains the main reason but there are other factors which multiply the problems, which could probably be solved.

To a certain extent, the paper presented delineated the architect's role but more light is needed on this. The paper needed to be extended to get closer to such programmes, although I agree at the same time, that the architecture of housing is more than this. Are we realising the purpose of this seminar? Solutions to housing programmes in the context of the shortage should have been at the centre of our discussion.

Looking at housing problems in this context, I see form giving as possibly the least of the roles of the architect. The architect must work within a given society and his role will differ in some aspects from one society to another.

One question has been raised several times during the course of the seminar and that is, who is in charge of housing? The way I interpret this question is, who is to initiate housing in terms of financing? Who has the power to say a housing project should be carried out or started on a given plot? Probably that is where the architect should intervene and take on an
additional role. I admit it is not easy for architects to join the
decision-making club for these are government or political
decisions made either through national budgeting or through
government bodies. But it is necessary to promote it as a path
which may lead to solving housing problems.

I will give an example. In Dar es Salaam, it takes ages for
the city council to give approval for any proposed construction.
Consequently the construction commences without approval
being given. Similarly acquiring a vacant plot in Dar es Salaam
is almost impossible but because there is plenty of empty land,
squatters waste no time putting up a shelter on any unplanned
or unsurveyed area. We have seen the mushrooming of squatter
settlements. To control such a situation one of the roles of the
architect is to look for ways of working closely with the
government departments involved in housing development in
order to provide the necessary advice directly to the govern-
ment. The application of social sciences and cultural considera-
tion are essential in designing housing and other professional
disciplines in the building industry should be involved.

Babar Mumtaz
We have heard of the architect-designer, as the problem-
solving generalist. The assumption is that if something needs
building then any architect, should build it or could be
involved in building it. Charles Correa pointed out that he
found it very strange that an architect can travel from place to
place, parachute down as it were and produce a solution. What
I find equally strange is that if you go to any architect and give
him any problem, few would say this is not their specialisation.
In fact we train them in that way — right from the beginning
we teach everybody that — no other profession that I know of
has this kind of arrogance.

We no longer have general geographers, we no longer have
general economists — we have specialists within each
discipline — we have within the geography discipline,
economic geographers and regional geographers. Can we have
architects who similarly specialise? Can we have architects who
are specialists in dealing with housing problems? We have
heard about the "total" architect and that is really expecting god-like qualities.

In an earlier session there was this notion that not every architect can do all of these things and it is time to stop talking about the architect as an all encompassing person. We should start talking about the architect in terms of the specialisations we have heard about and understand the roles and the functions ascribed to the architect. We have talked about the necessity for the architect to be the producer of the exemplar or if you like the architect as the decision maker. I distinguish here between, the politician or the bureaucrat, or the client as the decision taker. It is for the architect to create the range of choices from which the person who is paying for his services can actually take the decision.

What we also need is what I earlier called the society architect, the architect that designs within and for a society. You need the architect that specialises in designing the voids. We have heard a lot about the architect that designs the solids, what about the architect that designs, not the buildings — leave the buildings to people's individual endeavours — but architects who design the conditions that allow for such individual infilling. We need specialist architects who provide the supports for housing — not just physical housing supports but supports in the sense of creating, developing and extending or understanding the range of materials that could be used. Or put it another way, designing the elements and the components. We often leave those things to other people but that is a role that architects should take much more seriously. Another role is designing and extending the legislation and the forms of finance that will allow individuals to express themselves within an overall matrix.

All of these things also mean changes in the training of architects. We cannot expect to see a change or an architect specialising or responding to these changing roles without a change in their training. As a teacher myself and having been involved in looking at the way that teaching is done in schools of architecture, the paucity of ideas and the dearth of imagination is amazing.
I have seen in one particular university, a sort of corporate architecture, where the curriculum is designed by aggregating the teaching experiences that all the members of staff have. Somebody who had been to Poland said that in my first year I had four hours of design, two hours of mathematics and one of physics. Somebody who had been to America, said I had three hours of design, so the average was three and a half hours.

It is amazing how outmoded our training of architects is. On top of that unfortunately, architects’ education has locked itself into the worst of education bureaucracies. Why we ever went into universities I do not understand. But we are locked into it and even if teachers want to make changes, the education bureaucracies make it impossible to achieve.

We have talked about taking architecture out of schools and that certainly is something that has to be done. Some 15 years ago at the DPU (Development Planning Unit), we launched what we called the extension service which tried to do this and it succeeded to some extent. We have heard from Johan Silas who is taking his architectural students into the field as part and parcel of their work. Hasan Poerbo said the same thing. The University in Karachi which Arif Hasan is involved in is also doing that. We should try to make the real world part of the classroom experience. But that is not enough. It is being done at a piecemeal level. To revert back to Karachi — I understand that at one point it was suggested that students should work in the slums of Ferrangi in the upgrading work instead of doing the design thesis whereupon the members of the design jury said that this was not architecture and how can you possibly give somebody the qualification as an architect when working in the slums.

We have heard some of these problems expressed by Arif Hasan. Johan Silas said they had solved it by setting up an independent association of architectural graduates regardless of what they actually do. It is time that we change and if seminars like this and the AKAA are going to have an impact on the changing role of the architect, then we must reinforce architectural education. I do not mean by this that we extend the spider’s web from MIT or from London and we say
everybody come to us, that we have got the expertise. We should perhaps establish regional courses for architects within a region. One of the problems we have is that teachers of architecture cannot afford to do it. It is a profession but architects can make more money in practice.

We have a situation where the schools themselves are too poor to afford the kind of specialisations that we are striving for as a necessity for architects to carry out their roles. I am suggesting that if there was a regional course for architects, then you could develop a situation where the specialisation could be shared between a group of schools of architecture. We could have for example somebody who specialises in, community involvement who could spend time in three or four different schools of architecture and travel between them. This kind of travel will not only reinforce the teaching staff but would improve the quality of teaching within the schools, and would do something for the teachers themselves. It would give them confidence and it would develop the necessary network to operate on a more efficient level within the schools.

Charles Correa
The suggestion about architectural education was a very practical one. The specialisation that you are talking about is really not in building types but it is really about activities and it falls quite neatly into Kazi Khaled Ashraf’s three categories of visionary, activist and maker. There were, in the past, architects who could combine all three just as there were great musicians. What John de Monchaux’s paper stressed was the architect as maker, as the form giver, using the bank of signs which Mohammed Arkoun mentioned. As Babar Mumtaz was speaking, I was thinking that a great scientist, a great physicist like Einstein did not create the conditions for his work. That is made by someone else. It may be necessary also in architecture to separate these things so that the great makers of form are not necessarily also going to be the evangelists. It may be worthwhile that we recognise this and realise that we distort these people by making them fight for the conditions which allow them to work.
Saad Eddin Ibrahim

I was going to make some substantive comments but then one third through the session, I decided instead to take the list of adjectives of what everybody expects the architect to be and I listed about 40 adjectives.

These ranged from the visionary, the artist, the professional, the maker, the custodian, and under the custodian there are several things all the way to the manipulator of form, the mediator, the activist, the futurist, the negotiator, the builder, the continuous student, the problem solver and so on. I can go on — the list of about 40 qualities would in the end actually make the architect a SUPERMAN!

We have various typologies of what the architect’s role is and the typologies start with a minimalist typology which John de Monchaux has stuck to — the irreducible minimum of what the architect is. Thereafter the list expanded. In this expansion everybody is reflecting his agonies, his sufferings, his conscience, his society’s needs. Therefore we have to reduce that to an imaginable typology. If the architect is going to help the society preserve an identity or promote an identity, he should probably start with himself. The typology is not dissimilar from the typology that Mohammed Arkoun and Ismail Serageldin sometimes propose. The analogy is from the world of politics. We have the politician, we have the statesmen and we also have the saint. Charles Correa mentioned Gandhi. Gandhi was a saint in many ways but he was a saint who worked with the possible. There is also a statesman, who tries to preach the truth with the possible but with willingness to make some compromises. Then there is the politician who tries to deal with the possible but with a lot of compromises. Finally there is the demagogue who is willing to forget integrity altogether and appeal to the lowest common denominator. Within this range or this typology we can probably place an architect. We have two extremes, we have sainthood and we have demagogue. We have to navigate between these two and navigate hopefully closer to sainthood.
Kamau Karogi
In the key presentations by John de Monchaux and Hasan Poerbo, two clear and distinct definitions of the role of the architect have emerged. John de Monchaux says that the architect should be the form giver and Hasan Poerbo says that the architect should be the total performer. These two clear, distinct definitions represent the realities of the two worlds from which these two gentlemen come.

For those of us who come from the Third World, we cannot say that the architect of vision is any less than the architect as a total performer. In fact, our task is much more onerous in the sense that we have no choice but to bestride the two.

The architect is fashioned by the school he comes from. We must not decrease intellectual input into architecture courses such as philosophy, literature and the other arts. For a person to be a visionary, his intellectual base should be generally elevated for architecture is but one facet of life.

An example of this, is this very discussion here. There is no question that this is one of the most stimulating discussions I have ever been in and one of the most important and there is a reason for this. We have inputs from various professions — sociologists such as Saad Eddin Ibrahim, theoreticians such as Ismail Serageldin, philosophers like Mohammed Arkoun and various architectural journalists. To be able to produce a visionary we should not only give him the architectural tools but also an enlightened intellectual base.

In that context, we have a curriculum in our School of Architecture which gives no options. I am aware that schools of architecture in the USA offer this concept of options. We do not have options because we feel that the first degree should provide a basis for what the graduate later specialises in. He has to have certain basic knowledge. To try and get the architect to be a total performer, we aim in our curriculum to help develop mass culture. Rueben Mutiso touched on that concept and why a lot of what we call mass housing is failing is because neither the architect, nor the owner or the tenant is clear where he is coming from or where he is going. That is not to say that that knowledge of our culture does not exist.
It merely needs to be articulated in one way or the other. We feel that through our very elaborate process of distilling cultural constants through research it is not improbable that we can achieve a certain measure of definition of what our proposed goals are and what directions the urban culture is likely to take.

It has also become clear that the place of the architect is a bit ambiguous because in the Third World he has tried to assume the traditional role taken in Western European countries. We believe that it is now necessary to try and redefine the role of the architect and to review his relationship with the builder and the craftsmen.

In public housing projects we achieve a very low level of craftsmanship. This is not because there are no craftsmen. People are willing but the whole process of building has changed and so has the relationship between the architect and the craftsman. We have to develop an ethic of building where the mason takes pride in his masonry, the carpenter takes pride in his work and somehow we have to reduce this rush to erect buildings because we finish up with anonymous houses if the craftsmanship and the finishes are not taken care of.

We also have to develop an architectural idiom. This is an idiom for both an individual house and for mass housing. We have to go through a sensitive process of analysing the general and built environment in our situation, or if you like a process of decomposing the environment so that you can understand it. There is a process of decomposition or if you like synthesis. To those of you who come from cultures that are stable you must appreciate the problems of somebody who does not know whether to use an arch or a dome. These societies left their traditional hut types — the traditional typologies a long time ago but now they are not quite sure whether they want to go back to that. We believe that through a careful process of internalising our architectural heritage, the student can be equipped with the idiom. We feel strongly that our curriculum in Nairobi — we are in the process of revising it — should provide our students with a way of seeing which is different from what they had previously. An “eye” which goes to the tradition and tries to discover, to decipher, to distill of what
importance that tradition is to us. In this connection, we are trying to introduce cultural anthropology in our undergraduate programme in the hope that over time that we will not only produce architects but anthropologists so that they can discover sources of value to the people and use them. We are trying to get a post-graduate programme established. You can only have a few visionaries in architecture. All architects cannot be visionaries. Through our post-graduate programme, when a person has been through the first degree of architecture, he then can become a specialist — he is still an architect but he can take a specialised course. He takes hospital design — hospitals in our part of the world are a special problem. He takes housing, housing too is a special problem or he takes school design, schools are a special problem. All institutions are beginning to demand very careful attention and careful interpretation and in certain places what you need is not a building, it is something else.

Here, I strongly underline Hasan Poerbo’s concept of the total architect but on the other hand there is need for focussing.

Charles Correa
We should agree on our terminology. Kazi Khalid Ashraf defined the terminology well. He said there are three roles of an architect, one is as a visionary, the second activist and the third as maker. A good example of a visionary architect is a man who has a vision of how the pieces can be rearranged. Ebenezer Howard would be a very good example. He did not predict the future. He just said “why not rearrange the scenery in a specific way?” The second role is an activist, or a catalyst. The third is the maker of form and the mastery of form. I suppose what we are calling a total performer is somebody who can give all three. If we can agree to use these terms, then we would understand what we are talking about because what Professor Karogi was really talking about was the architect as catalyst and maybe even as a visionary and that the form maker is only one third of this role. This really would depend on the society. In the west at the moment they have no time for visionaries and they don’t need activists and catalysts, but they do feel that
they need makers of form — people who have access to that stock of signs which Mohammed Arkoun spoke about. Whereas perhaps in Indonesia, or in India or Tanzania you have other priorities.

Ismail Serageldin
I would like to try to rise to the challenge that we should relate this discussion on the architect’s role specifically to the previous seminar sessions. See diagram (Figure 1).

On the left hand side is the process. Very clearly when we talk about housing, whether we are dealing with spontaneous housing or dealing with mass housing or even at the micro scale of an individual project, there is a process that you go through. Generally speaking you start with large undefined images and aspirations, which are then concreted to something called goals. At that level there is a function which an outsider brings in, which is the function of a catalyst.

It catalyses the aspirations into goals including for example the involvement of the government who may set a goal to improve the living conditions of the lower 40 per cent in the country. The next step is to have objectives which are to translate this, mapping out the numbers, the magnitude, the resources required into something that is achievable; something that gives a sense of what is possible. For this you need technical skills. That is a bit of compromise from sainthood down to a statesman. The next step is to choose policies — how these objectives are going to be achieved.

Here is the crucial choice that we have talked about so much including for example whether the government is going to take on the function of building slab blocks. Is it going to approach the problem with sites and services? Or, is there to be disaggregation of the problem which Charles Correa is advocating? There are policy options at this level in the process and here, John de Monchaux was quite right in saying there is a professional function of an adviser — to open choices that exist for people and what the meanings of these choices are. Once the choices are made then you need to define programmes and projects to actually carry them out. Here the function of
Figure 1 — The role of the architect
coordinator comes in. You can take one sub-part of that — if there are credit lines to be set up for people to build their housing, if there are road works to be laid out, if there are land tenure arrangements to be made, then you need to sub-coordinator to make sure that these actions take place.

Finally you have the implementation — making things happen on the ground. Here you have an administrator. The administrator can be a participatory type of administrator — Tasneem Siddiqui gave us an excellent example of that. Or they can be an authoritarian individual like an accountant who administers, based on the cost considerations and without involving the users. Hopefully with all these, you end up moving towards a better future. With this process, the skills that are required from the architect-planners are different at different stages. I would submit that if we look at the right hand side of Figure 1 we are talking about architect-planners in the physical sense so that they are all related to form. The four lower ones are really what one would call the competent professional or what John de Monchaux referred to as being a responsibility of a form giver or the maker to use Kazi Khalid Asraf's terminology. At a minimum level, architects should be able to master all the matters pertaining to form and building. They have to know about building, they have to know about costs of building and schedules and the like.

There is another function which is that of catalyst. This is not something that can be taught but it is something that is more inate involving interpersonal skills. Some people are very good at it and are not very good at other things.

A prime example from the United States is somebody like Jesse Jackson who is an marvellous catalyst in talking to a community and making them expect their aspirations and their goals but he is not a very good administrator as the PUSH programme showed in Chicago. It is not necessary that the same individual brings all those skills to bear.

Looking next at the activist intervention. Those of us who have argued for the engaged professional, the involved activist usually emphasise three points which are marked with an asterisk in the diagram. These are the nerve points of
intervention both in the formulation of goals, initially as a
catalyst, the adviser on choice of policies, the advocate of
particular policies and the manner in which the implementa-
tion is carried out, participatory or not. These are the three key
intervention points of the activist architect, the activist
planner, the activist social individual or social intellectual.

Above and beyond this there are the dreamers or the
visionaries (note the arrow on the top left hand side of the
diagram) — the image making role. I agree with John de
Monchaux that the image making role permeates the whole
process since we are talking about the physical form, not about
economic policies. It permeates the whole thing but it is most
powerful in helping give concrete form to the undefined
images and the aspirations of people. That is how it gets
defined, by the work of the architect who gives physical form
to a vision of reality.

I do not think it is a matter of excluding one type of activity
or another. There are those who will be capable and competent
as activists and by all means they should do it, there is a
function that is crying out for this. They are competent
professionals who usually are going to be graduates of
architectural schools. There are also those who are good at
inspiring those images and the visions and I do not think any
one of these is necessarily less than the other.

One last word on the image making function. During the
Spanish Civil War, for example, André Malraux felt that he
had to volunteer on the side of the Republicans and to fly
airplanes for them as an engaged intellectual. He felt that for
his own integrity he had to do this and participate in it. On the
other hand, one could argue that Pablo Picasso by painting
"Guernica" did more for the cause of the Spanish Civil War
than he could ever have done by joining the ranks.

So there are different ways of contributing to this task. They
are complimentary and we should recognise that not one
individual will do them all but there are different ways of
serving the overall purpose that we have been discussing.
Abdelbaki Ibrahim
Most of us in the developing countries are adopting the curricula of western countries and we endeavour to teach the student everything — mathematics, construction, sociology and economics. As Saad Eddin Ibrahim says, “we want him to be a Superman”. But he emerges perhaps as a Miniman rather than a Superman!

In the process of training the architect, he is not exposed adequately to housing problems. Most of the projects the student designs are theatres, social centres, museums and so on and have very little to do with housing. At the same time we know that the majority of the built up urban areas are composed of housing. There should be a separation in the training of the architect between those who design public buildings and offices and those on the other hand who design housing. It is not just specialisation in the sense that there is specialisation in schools, specialisation in theatre design and in hospital design but this requires a very special sort of course. Housing is not a final product. It is a continuous process.

The architect in the field of housing should not necessarily expect to be the master of the job. He is part of a team, I imagine the architect with the sociologist and the economist working together specialising in housing projects in developing countries, especially for the masses.

Tasneem A Siddiqui
The first problem which we face is that the sort of thing we are doing in Hyderabad is not accepted by the architects, nor by the engineers. It is not accepted by the town planners and the government is hostile to us so we are in a very vulnerable position. The best thing that architects can do is to accept such a programme and such an approach and we have been trying to get that acceptance at a national level. We have been to the Institute of Architects in Karachi and other places, explaining the process to them but we have not yet met with any success. So if forums like this can support us, this would be good.

Architects and others do not support our efforts because it is not in their textbooks! For example if I call an architect and ask
him to advise us how to reduce cost, he says that this is not possible because this is sub-standard. There is a prescribed standard for laying sewer lines and if I suggest that the design of the manhole and the manhole cover are changed, the architects say no, it is not possible.

So we obtain support from our sister organisation in Karachi. We send our engineers and our architects there and we are fortunate in having them in Karachi which is about 90 miles from Hyderabad. I sometimes have a hard time with our own engineers who are working for us. I am the Director-General of the Hyderabad Development Authority. I am their boss but they see me as a general administrator and that what I am saying is incorrect. So you see the best possible support which we can expect from forums like these, or receive from international agencies, is to advise the Government of Pakistan and to advise the Institute of Architects in Pakistan and to make some basic changes in the university syllabus. I do not blame the students, I do not blame the architects or the engineers. They have never been taught differently. When the teachers do not recognise the need for new initiatives, how will the students?

We want to have research schemes and training of extension students. We have started nearly all the functions that are in Ismail Serageldin's list. Apart from giving technical advice we are already performing all the functions. We are capitalists, we are advisers, coordinators, and administrators. Now we need technical support because we do not want poor people to waste their money. If a family has 10,000 Rs, we want to be sure that they are advised, according to their needs, of the best methods of providing a roof. If they do not have this technical advice, they might waste their money. We have seen people waste money on boundary walls, on bigger gates and pine walls. We are not technical people ourselves and we do not want to just give them models. We want to assist them and we want to give an idea of what sort of construction they could have. Some people are needed, expert engineers and architects who can advise them what they can achieve within a broad range of possibilities.
John Silas

I want to use the diagram provided by Ismail Serageldin to illustrate the Kampung Improvement Programme in Indonesia. What is happening in the field is exactly the reverse of the process described. People start by implementing the housing programme. People start building houses, so they in effect start with the implementation and then later on there is programme of slum upgrading or kampung improvement. Later we have a policy and much later we have the goals. We include these in the guidelines for national development in Indonesia. So what is really happening in the field is the reverse of the process.

In the schools of planning we were taught to first make a plan and then service the plan and then build the plan after which units will be occupied but what happens in the field is that people start to occupy land. They build their houses and then later on it is serviced. The plan is then regularised. So the difficulty is that what is taught in the schools, is again exactly the reverse of what happens in the field.

The role of an architect should be entirely different. Students should learn from the people — first see what the people do.

The second thing we have experienced is the role of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The recognition by the Award has helped to speed up the programme and speed up the policies. So we need more of the kind of support we presently get from the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The process of enabling is important, not only enabling the people but also enabling the decision makers, and enabling the academicians and the experts.

Now what would Vitruvius do if he attended this seminar? What would he promote? I do not think he would promote firmness or would he promote delight or accommodation but he might talk about housing as a process. Whose process and where are the people in the process? We have heard too little talk about the people as the end-user — the one who has the need in the housing process and we talk too much about the architects, the schools and so on.
Ismail Serageldin
Just a clarification point. You will note on the left hand side of Figure 1 that there is an arrow from implementation towards programmes, policies and objectives based on the evaluation. This is what usually happens because whenever a plan is put in place and it is not functioning, then things happen on the ground which force people to rethink their policies and programmes. Johan Silas is absolutely right that this has happened in Indonesia. This is what the left hand side of the diagram really implies.

Arif Hasan
I would like to sympathise with Tasneem Siddiqui that the architects in Pakistan have not responded to him but I would also like to say that he has had full cooperation, from the Orangi Pilot Project which is mainly controlled and operated by architects so there is an understanding on our part of what his project means and we have, assisted in some ways.

The three roles that have been mentioned, namely visionary, activist and maker must be seen against the background of the relationships between the individual and society. The three roles have to be understood in this context. The activist’s role has to be extended to politics and economics as well. We have had quite a debate at the Department of Architecture in Karachi on what architectural education should aim at. The reason the debate was initiated was because teaching students the architect’s traditional role has absolutely no effect on the environment of the city as such because it plays almost no role in creating that environment.

After considerable debate we came to the conclusion that much greater emphasis has to be placed upon the factors that create the environment. It is only with a full understanding of all the factors that create the environment especially the economic constraints, the administrative problems and the political issues that you should get into design. This is very difficult but in the first year we have promoted a course on the environment with visits to the city studying different areas and their infrastructures before students get into design.
There is a problem that arises because teachers generally like to teach what they have been taught and it is difficult to change this system. We have not really been successful, except that we have given our recent graduates some understanding of what is going on in the city. They understand a little better what the political and economic factors are that control the physical environment. So this process should begin and a very strong emphasis should be made on the factors that create the built environment.

Sirin Ali Karoonfiloghu
I would like to comment on the categories that the architect is put in, one being the visionary, the second a catalyst and the third, a form maker. My comment is on the latter.

Babar Mumtaz mentioned that our school systems need some reform in order to prepare the students better for the real world. There are some very good schools preparing young architects, giving them the technological background and the design abilities to join this real world and be the image maker, and the form maker of a single house or mass housing.

The architect actually has two roles as the form maker. One is as the artist, after all architecture is an art form as we have seen in the beautiful examples shown by Hasan-Uddin Khan or even if he is involved in mass housing. The second role of the architect as form maker is to be a professional and to survive in this world. We have to make a living and we cannot always be choosy about a project. We have to be paid for what we do. That is a very strong reality we all face. Can one afford to be a poor artist creating beautiful architecture? Isn't the reality that we are forced economically to earn money?

Charles Correa
That is not very encouraging! I understand Arif Hasan's point to mean that you cannot be the form maker if you have not understood the environment and the real issues of housing. He implied that you have to do a certain amount of work in the middle category of catalyst, or activist to really understand the overall problem.
Arif Hasan
I was really saying that when we design something, there are a number of factors in the physical environment that shape and form it. They form not only the house itself but also influence the way houses relate to each other. They differ from place to place, even within a city they differ, as income groups differ. An understanding of the factors that have shaped the environment are thus essential.

There are social factors, there are economic factors, there are factors related to materials and the manner in which they are used — these are the factors that shape and form the environment. An understanding of this is necessary. We take a group of students into a particular area and study how it functions, how the people live, how they build their houses, what the institutions are that have created the environment, what is their relationship with the administration and the constraints of creating this environment.

The whole process is extremely important if you are going to produce something that is appropriate, something that is relevant. You should be able to know that in this environment there are constraints that affect how we should behave or act in this particular area. We should have an understanding of these facts at the very outset. You can define your role according to the environment you are in. This is what is missing in the training of architects. This can easily be done in the first year — this understanding develops and grows, one can consolidate it, build upon it perhaps, or ignore it but this understanding, this realism should be there.

Ronald Lewcock
Tasneem Siddiqui and Arif Hasan are in many ways talking about the same issue, namely research. I want to take the focus away from the training of the architect, towards what is really needed in the profession. I want to talk about research.

What is characteristic of our society and the architectural profession are certain kinds of mind-sets. These mind-sets are introduced in the training of the architect and they stay with the professional throughout his life. They are fixed mind-sets
mostly in the Cartesian logical system dealing with facts and procedures which are acquired from experts and which they accept. I would like to think that architects would join the ranks of people in many other fields and become observers, inquirers, thinkers, innovators, much more than they are at present. It seems to me that this is one dimension of the profession that we really have not talked about and it is a very important one.

Looking at old buildings, has taught me that we are grossly ignorant and superficial in our understanding about architecture. We are superficial about techniques. We are also superficial about many of the possibilities. We just are not learning from what is around us, in front of our eyes.

We are not systematically mining the rich fields of experience that exist in the world of built form. We are failing to learn from it in the way that other professionals for example in medicine and in astronomy continuously make major discoveries by observations of the environment.

Talking to material scientists and behaviourial psychologists it is the same story. There are all sorts of new understanding that they have, which people in the architectural field never get hold of, which are capable of absolutely transforming the understanding and thinking within our profession.

There is the whole question of cheap and indigenous materials which are thrown out because they are not fire resistant, they are not water proof, they have short lives or they are difficult to maintain and so they are not accepted by the governments, by the building municipalities or by the building regulations. There are a profusion of new possibilities which are simply not being exploited.

Let me go on to another analogy which is obviously worth making though it might be thought to be whimsical. It is an analogy with the bicycle. The bicycle has been around for over 200 years. It was invented in 1770 but it transformed the world in the 1880's. It took a hundred years for people to realise that this could be a major way of benefitting ordinary people; providing a whole new range of possibilities for them in their lives. That is a very simple example but I believe that
there are a whole lot of possibilities waiting for us to discover. We could make a major breakthrough, not only in techniques, but also in the way in which environments are formed.

Kamau Karogi
I am sorry that I have to keep on hammering this issue of the Third World but, for us who come from the Third World, it is important for us to understand the role of the architect from that point of view. It is with this in mind that I would like to look at the role of the architect.

Before looking at it from that Third World point of view, I think that the role of the architect will vary from time to time and from place to place and it is difficult to pinpoint any one specific role other than the traditional accepted role as the creator of space.

The problems that we have, have been caused by the questioning of the traditional role the architect has always performed within his environment. The tradition has always been there to back him up and make his work relevant. With the societal developments in the Third World today, the role of the architect has changed. There are more demands placed upon him and we can no longer look at the architect as an individual, who can single-handedly produce solutions.

He is part of a society and part of a process. As a skilled professional whether in a historical or contemporary context, he must of course possess all the necessary skills in order to manipulate and create form. This question of context is very apparent and we should ask, is the socio-political context in which we operate as manipulators and creators of form ideal? Is it the right context for the architect to plant his visions of the future or to rearrange the pieces? If the context is not right then does the architect have a responsibility to change this socio-political context and make it better? This is a selfish point of view but it is an important one.

Should the architect than participate in a process that will enable him to get the right kind of context, the right kind of climate for him to practise his profession. If this is so, then he must be a politician and this is very relevant in Third World
societies because without the ideal socio-political climate, however skilled the architect may be as a designer or as a manipulator of space and as a manipulator of form, he still finds it difficult to realise his dreams and his visions. Even as a maker of form, there is a problem for the architect because architecture as a product, can be viewed as a product of high culture and as an inappropriate response, for example, to mass housing. Architecture must of necessity fulfill some of the basic needs. Architecture must also be able to communicate at several levels — at the level of signs and symbols, at the level of form for us to appreciate the platonic qualities of forms. It must also be able to provide food for intellectual stimulation and thought. This same architecture must at the same time be able to relate to the common man on the street.

When we build a building, we who are privileged, because of our education and knowledge, to rationalise the architectural product must also relate it to the common man who experiences this building. At his level too he has to relate to the product of architecture. This is the basic problem all of us have who are concerned in shaping a better environment for society. It is the most important thing, at least for us in the Third World that we must be part of the process. Only in that context can we define the role of the architect.

Charles Correa
If we want to rearrange the pieces, if we want to have a vision of what might be, it implies immediately a moral position which is inherent in the role of the architect in the Third World. We are not living in a situation where one can be complacent about what is happening and that is an advantage to us because it allows us to grow.

The position that John de Monchaux defined in America if I may say so, is one of diminuendo. America was a more heroic place in the 1920's. It was a more heroic place in 1870 when Sullivan was around. It is not a great sacrifice we make in the Third World. We have a chance to grow as architects by trying to create the conditions which allow us to do our work, as part and parcel of being an architect. No one will do it for you. And
in architecture it is not that difficult to create your own conditions. I wonder whether we are not really witnessing a great opportunity in these Third World countries we are talking about to grow as individuals and as a profession.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim
I wish to comment on the statement that architects probably need to do more research and to do more observing and to do more mixing with people. Isn’t this in fact asking architects to descend from their Superman status and become ordinary human beings like other professionals who find research essential for the promotion of discipline in practice. This is a soul-searching question that has to be directed to the architect. I sometimes hear architects say “We are willing to integrate with society. We would like the politicians to be educated, we would like the decision makers to be educated, or we would like the clients to be educated”. But they rarely see it as necessary for themselves to be educated except by their fellow architects in schools of architecture.

So the integration process it appears is accepted in principle, so long as the rest of society, from the top policy makers down to the client are willing to integrate on the architect’s terms. I am really pushing this point to the absurd in order to let architect reflect on it themselves and to see if this may not be what is at the back of their minds — integration with society, so long as it takes place on the architect’s terms?

John de Monchaux
There has been a wonderful exposition of the terms and the meanings of the terms underlying the role of the architect. I would like to scan the different meanings that are attached to the concept of the “role” of the architect. In each of the definitions, we find some comfort, we find some hope, we find some challenge. I would just enumerate a few of these dimensions.

The role has been described, in terms of a place in the sequence of events attached to the housing situation. We had a call for an intervention by the architect very early in the
process; to provide some of the visions. Ismail Serageldin has outlined very deftly appropriate input to each stage in the process whilst Johan Silas argued that the intervention occurred but in the reverse sequence. So it is appropriate to mention the situation and timing of any intervention by the architect.

Secondly there are skills in the role of the architect, the skills of coordinator, of technician, of capitalist. There is, thirdly, yet another dimension to this role and that is the stance or the posture of the architect in the sense that the architect has to advocate a certain moral order.

There is a fourth way of seeing this role, in terms of the categorisations or subdivision of the role in relation to speciality. Barbar Mumtaz reminded us that the task is a complex one and expertise in the consequences of particular forms of intervention has to be gained patiently, and thoroughly and deeply.

Each of these attributes, the time, the skill, the stance and the specialisation are all slices across the concept of the role of an architect. It will not surprise you to hear that I do feel as Saad Eddin Ibrahim detected that there is an irreducible core of knowledge about form which must inform each one of these slices and I have already given you a four dimensional space, not just a three dimensional space in which to define this role.

Hasan Poerbo in his comments used one particularly fine phrase about the concept of education as a cradle for us all including architects. It leads me to two ideas that bear on how effectively we can play this role described in its many dimensions. The first is to not underestimate the abilities of the child to learn from its environment in that cradle. There are a great many things that are going on in that cradle to which we need to attend very deliberately and it is not only what we say to the child. It is also what the child learns from its immediate environment.

Let me go to the other end of the scale of education. Education is a profession and I would echo the call that Ronald Lewcock made for research and for a knowledge base in the practice of architecture. If I may mix the metaphors, if education is the cradle, research is the trampoline. It is the way
in which we can leap forward with the insights and understanding; taking much bigger steps, much longer leaps in terms of the contribution that we can make as architects.

Let me turn to the very important distinction which a number of commentators made between the role that should be exercised, and I am still using the word "should", by architects, in the developing world and the role which should be exercised by architects in our impoverished developed world and I mean that in a serious sense.

There are apparently about 500 architects in Tanzania. By my arithmetic that is one architect for every 40,000 people. In the USA we have one architect for every two and a half thousand people. There is a massive difference in this and it is a difference which in many ways I do envy because the chances of getting the 500 architects in Tanzania together and to have them sharing in this discussion and sharing in this debate, seems to me to be an enviable and marvellous opportunity. Even if you do not all agree it would be a wonderfully empowering opportunity.

I was struck also by Hasan Poerbo's description of what is a characteristically deft Indonesian solution to a problem of the architectural graduates who could not be members of the architect's institute. They created an equal and just as powerful Association of Architectural Graduates. This type of lateral thinking does represent the type of leap and the type of advance which can be made in a place like Tanzania or in a region like East Africa where you do not have to be encumbered by the institutions and shackles which we have given ourselves in the course of our development in the West. I applaud the enrichment of the definition of the role of architects.
It is a challenging task to respond to such a thoughtful presentation. I have been trying to relate this to my experience as an educator and as a practitioner in housing for the poor.

It is perhaps not precisely what has been experienced in various countries where you have the classic debate whether the architect should stick to his profession as a designer of buildings and spaces or whether the architect can get into other equally important activities to do with housing with the danger that his unique skills become diluted.

I am reminded by an event in my country when we were young architects. There was a debate about whether the role of an architect in practice should be a defined one or whether he could go into other related occupations and still be called an architect. There was a feeling against what you could call perhaps "unpure" architects. Unpure architects at the time were looked upon as being second-rate architects and this created a protest from these people who were called second-rate architects because they felt that they were being unfairly looked upon as people who were escaping their responsibility as designers. They claimed that they had of their own free choice, entered other occupations as contractors, or bureaucrats because they felt that they could contribute more in that field.

It was a complex situation at that time. After 20 years, it was resolved in a way that very much supports what we are discussing here. In addition to the Indonesian Architects Association, whose members are skilled architects, we have also got what is called the Indonesian Association for Architectural Graduates which includes people in other walks of life. There is a potential here whereby people according to their capabilities and commitments can go into any profession they want to, stemming from their education as architects and designers. It is our education as architect and designer which perhaps gives us the potential to deal with complex problems which are being posed in the field of human settlements and in housing.

No other profession looks at human settlements in the way that the architect has been educated to look at it, from various perspectives and with an ability to translate that in a synthesis. What is being confronted by architects in developing
countries, is a problem of magnitude and complexity without any historical precedence. The problem of housing for the masses in the west differs significantly from what we are being faced with in developing countries. In the west you have got the institutions to employ architects as designers in a process which results in housing construction.

In developing countries, we are confronted with the problem that there are no such mechanisms. For instance, we are confronted not with organised client systems but individuals within the low-income groups who are living together and who are not able to organise themselves to employ architects. This is one of the most difficult problems which we are confronted with if we want to serve these people. They are not organised to be served. You have to create out of these individuals a planned and organised system. The cooperative movement is something which can help in organising people like this to become a client system for architects who are designers. Otherwise there is no way to communicate except on an individual basis.

There are several commonalities in the issues of housing in developing countries which determine the role of the architect. Governments have limited resources, financially as well as managerially. In Indonesia, amongst NGOs especially we are rejoicing that the government has few funds because what it means is that the government now has to rely more and more on the capability of communities to mobilise their resources. So there is a role there for the NGOs. Here is a situation, from the point of view of the NGOs which is seen as more rewarding. The housing delivery system by governments, private developers and the cooperative sector combined is still inadequate to deal with housing needs. For Indonesia only 7 per cent to 10 per cent of the housing need is being supplied by the formal housing sector. Informal housing is the only effective method which is affordable by the poor but it has the propensity to erode the quality of the environment.

There is also the problem of land as a strategic resource in housing. It becomes more and more inaccessible and unaffordable for the masses of the poor people. The future holds no hope that urban populations will not increase. It will continue
to increase at a more rapid pace. There will be an increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

The number of architectural graduates is still very limited on the one hand and on the other hand, many are underemployed. There is the dilemma; on the one hand we have got many graduates, on the other hand they do not have work. But there is a great need for housing for the poor so there is something wrong with the education system and also with our practice. I see that there are perhaps obstacles in the attitude and perception of graduates which makes them unemployable in this situation.

I have been working with my former students who have become very interested in the field of housing for the poor, and I see that those who have become interested in development studies and techniques in public-participation become more effective. So we have introduced participatory-action research as part of our education to see how far students can understand the complexity of working with people.

We have been experimenting with public housing. We were asked to advise the public housing authority to look for ways in which they can cut production cost and develop layouts where communities can be involved in maintenance and operation. So it is a special interpretation of the social structure and through that came the idea to organise them as communities whereby maintenance and operation can then be given over to the communities. We have also experimented with central area redevelopment where people have been moved from an area because of a fire. The problem there is how can you help people who have been pushed off their land by fire to come back again in a situation where the government has no funds. These people have lost everything but what they did not lose was the place where they are working.

We employed design consultants who understand the roles of NGOs in making what you call social preparations and cooperating with a developer who understands also that he has to restrain himself and not get too much profit. The NGO did the social preparation informing a group of what we call Kaki Lima. Kaki Limas are peddlers and small traders. They have
been formed as a cooperative and then they became the client. The consultants are helping them with everything, from establishing the cooperative down to preparing designs, getting the permit from the local government and also getting credits from the bank where the developer became the guarantor. So it was the kind of consultancy which the population needed, I call them development consultants — where the potentials of the architect as a designer can be utilised to the full. That project has resulted in one of the finest designs for central area redevelopment in Indonesia, with the cheapest investment which has created the opportunity for the traders there to get twice the daily income they formally had.

It is something which goes beyond ordinary design and is a result of a total performance. It is this kind of approach, which I would like to advocate. I agree fully with what has been presented by John de Monchaux on the architect as designer because indeed he can be very powerful. But what is needed in situations that we are faced with, is the institutional infrastructure and the climate for design which is not usually there. It has to be created. It is not the designer who decides directly for the client but a process is developed that becomes interactive.
The Role of the Architect

John de Monchaux

I am here to consider with you the role of the architect: and because we are focussing on housing my remarks are geared to that area of the architect's activity. To focus on housing calls immediately to attention the realms of financing, planning, service provision and indeed the very imperative for housing itself. These are critical aspects in any consideration of housing provision. and if we are to meet housing needs, they certainly have to be addressed in a direct and creative manner. If housing opportunities are to be enhanced throughout the world, capable, compatible attention must be given to each and every condition bearing upon their achievement. I stress this at this point because in concentrating as I do upon the role of the architect I want the basis of my remarks to be understood at the outset. I am not arguing that skills other than the strictly architectural are not vital and prime. Neither am I making a case for a drawing back from architecture to any "purer" role.

My argument is that architects should in fact be closely involved in the making of housing. In being so, however, what their work should be called upon to utilise more emphatically are the specialised problem-solving skills which architects can uniquely bring to the task. These are the skills which involve the manipulation of form and space to achieve particular and supported ends. Specifically in terms of housing the special contribution of the architect is to prescribe the forms for housing that will please its users and persuade the rest of us that particular kinds of problems can be elegantly and handsomely solved.

I should deal here with the exceptions which will undoubtedly be cited. Clearly there can be no absolutes and in any event the architect retains the right — within professional ethics — to practise as he wishes. I simply want to influence his choice. Any debate around a professional role has to assume a common context or structure within which particular positions are defended. Sometimes the contexts are not common and the arguments therefore not valid or they are too broad for those arguments to be persuasive. Even if I confine my remarks to the context of housing, or ever more narrowly to housing for the poor in the Islamic world, there are still bound
to be qualifications and exceptions. I want to stress therefore that I am speaking here to general principles which I believe should underpin all our activities as architects, and those exceptions which will inevitably occur should be identified with respect to those principles and not adopted as activities justified in their own terms.

In speaking to the architect's role in terms of what the architect can uniquely bring to the housing task I need also to make it clear that I am talking about every architect who does or may work on housing; and I am talking about every architect who by virtue of his professional qualifications practises as an architect, from the newly-graduated student with his Bachelor of Architecture to those whose work is considered seriously for an award in this programme. Indeed if I am to imagine the kinds of emphasis on form in architecture that my arguments call for, then I am in fact speaking more of the role of the tens of thousands of architects who may never make the international league but who are attentive to their craft and thoughtful in their profession of it.

There are several useful positions from which to examine the role of any professional. In general they involve what "is", what "can be" and what "should be" that role. I want here to use the first two to articulate the last. That is, I want to look at what architects on a day-to-day basis do and then at what they appear capable of doing under special circumstances and use this to explain what should be the proper role of architects.

Any reference to "should" raises questions about the moral order of the world and you may well ask what authority I call upon to justify the positions I take. I could simply say it is my grey hair. More seriously however, it is an informed and increasing concern developed over years of practice with and observation of architects, coupled with my more recent experience as an educator.

Let me begin then, with the kinds of things architects do. They live in a very different world from that conveyed by a classical view of the architect drawing up plans for great palaces, forts or temples. As salaried or self-employed practitioners they design, document and supervise the con-
struction of buildings in a period of rapid social change, increasing if badly distributed wealth, huge amounts of rapidly distributed information, and new and complex technologies — some of which are seen to challenge the very need for architectural skills as the world in general understands them. The financial rewards for these efforts are rarely substantial and the architect’s central concerns for form are often ignored by those who pay for or view the product of the architect’s labours. In adapting to such a world, the architect sensibly attends to the impact on his work of this changing social and economic setting. The architect thus becomes familiar, and in the end capable, in areas of skill such as finance, marketing, and urban planning to the point where they become assumed to be the kind of skills architects can and in some cases should, bring to the tasks they are given. In all of this however, I would contend that the skills, sensitivities and problem-solving techniques which the architect uniquely commands become diluted and lose their power to contribute what the architect uniquely is capable of contributing to the world. I will return to this later.

Now let us look at what the architect can do. The architect is a professional, educated, skilled member of society’s agents of change. Even at the humblest level of operation the architect cannot achieve what needs to be achieved without employing certain collateral abilities, such as considerable negotiating, mediating and advocacy skills. To the extent that much of the architect’s time is spent applying and honing these skills, it is not surprising to find that such skills are expected. What fails to be noticed is that much of the time their application has little or nothing to do with architecture. An architect member of a team who is negotiating with a local authority on access to a particular water source or on the acceptability of an on-site drainage arrangement is not practising architecture. That architect is practising politics.

Now it would be naïve in the extreme to suggest that anyone operating in the realm of public policy should not be conscious of the need for political skills. But the point I want to make is that what architects can do simply by virtue of the
realm in which they find themselves should not automatically become what they should do or be expected to do. Indeed I would go so far as to say that an architect who significantly attends to mediation, negotiation or advocacy, for example, becomes one of those hybrid professions who function at the operational transitions of society. the doctor-teacher, the activist-planner, the musician-critic. These functions are vital: they offer opportunities for and are a response to change and in identifying them I am not for one moment suggesting they are somehow lesser functions. The point is that to the extent that architects are called upon to operate with skills outside what for the moment I will call the strictly architectural, the more attentive do we as a profession have to be to the consequences to the operation of skills uniquely identified with that profession: and it is these skills that I now want to address to make the case for what I believe the architect should do in the practice of a profession.

If I have to sum up the unique skills of the architect, I would do so around the notion of "form". I would stress the particular problem-solving mode of the architect which is to manipulate form and space to achieve what is being sought — on the basis of a wide range of other kinds (financial, social, ecological, etc) of information — information which from his perspective is subsidiary to his own special task.

Before I elaborate on this, I sense that you may think I am making a call for conservatism and a retreat from any wider role for architects in the world of public policy. I am doing neither. All I want to do is make sure that as the profession responds to the world, its unique potential gift to that world is not diluted or even lost, and that we actually make use of that unique potential in the most creative and diligent way possible.

The role that the architect should play — and is uniquely able to play — is that of the master of form. Configurations of solid and void, of path and place, of light and shade, of structure and materials are the 'stuff' of architecture. In the built environment, however modest, or however grand, the qualified architect is able to articulate the manipulation of these systems of form, and their critical consequences. In doing
so, architects are able to describe and advocate those which meet given goals and objectives including those which are social and economic. These qualities of the architect's unique skills needs to be evident in theory and in practice, to provide the architect with the conceptual language with which to argue form and defend his advocacy of it.

It may be helpful to recognise this role for the architect in terms that parallel the Vitruvian triad of firmness, commodity and delight wherein mastery of form would be seen in the ability to:

- understand form in terms of the making of buildings, the properties of materials and assemblies and the consequences of their use;
- know form in terms of its capacity to host human activity;
- deploy form in ways that go beyond the expected and the known to ways that bring surprise and pleasure to those that experience architecture.

Before I suggest for you some of the wider implications of the role of the architect as the master of form, let me bring the idea into relief by looking more directly at the architecture of housing for the poor in terms of such a role.

In the attention that has been given to the role of the architect in housing, particularly in housing for the poor, two stances appear to dominate. The first argues for what amounts to virtually no role for the architect and the second sees the architect's role necessarily as a multi-dimensional one, with the strictly architectural activity as one facet of that role.

The first school of thought takes the view that architects should stay out of the arena altogether and simply let the poor — with suitable institutional support — get on with the job of building for themselves. The arguments that have fired this position on the whole come from two perspectives — both a consequence of well meaning but often ineffective efforts to help the poor. One is the design perspective which has criticised the various — or not so various — form of public housing, and the other is the social perspective which conveys the insensitivity on the part of designers to the needs and cultural behaviour of those for whom the housing is designed.
Whether because of a general indifference for the poor, or of a political imperative to use every dollar as effectively as possible, housing for the poor in most western communities has tended to be on cheap (ie inaccessible or uncongenial), land, and built in a form which identifies it immediately as something negatively outside the mainstream of traditional or preferred housing forms. The effects of this, compounded as they have tended to be by insensitive policies and practices relating to tenanting and management, have given public housing and particular public housing forms a bad name. Because tenants and/or their advocates have been vocal and often articulate the view has emerged that there should be greater consultation of their wishes and needs as well as sensitivity to those needs in the design of public housing.

This translates first into the notion that the residents should be allowed a say in design and then into the possibility that they should indeed do the designing. This latter stance is visible not only in western societies but in the non-western world. Here the notion and practice of sites and services development — which has many merits but not I would contend an automatic architectural merit — has served the position that given a modest framework of resources the poor can manage very well on their own, without architects. Indeed, such a process is often advocated as a preferred approach to the massive problem of Third World housing because of the proprietorship and sense of achievement which self-help and self-building give.

What may well have even further fuelled the argument against a role for the architect are those instances where architects have tried to embody notions of local custom and behaviour into housing design and there is evidence that the outcome in fact has lost all such qualities and indeed in some case been explicitly rejected by residents. While the real question behind such an experience may lie in the kind of information given to designers and architects and its true reflection of design-relevant housing features — how vital, for example, is a seemingly important cultural behaviour when space constraints are removed; or what is the real function of
some design relevant behaviour and how acceptable or even sought for might alternative provisions be — the case illustrates an extreme view of the architect’s role in one important area of housing provision and design — namely the claim that they have basically no role!

I cannot take that position: though I will take the position that the degree of architectural intervention may vary.

I believe that the institutional mechanisms within which the architect exercises a role in the design of housing built by the very poor themselves need new designs. Ideally those mechanisms should guarantee that as clients — if in most cases, indirect clients — of an architect, those who build such housing should have exactly the same basic relationship to the architect as any better endowed client. The arguments are two-fold. First on grounds of equity, it is at least disrespectful not to inform housing efforts for the poor with those same qualities of firmness, commodity and delight which we advocate in other areas of the environment. Secondly there is the argument of basic professional responsibility. Just as no one would argue with the basic notion that the doctor has a professional responsibility to heal the sick, and aid the suffering, it is as basic a responsibility for the architect to attend to the achievement of those qualities of the designed environment wherever changes to it are made. They are the qualities which are uniquely attributes of the architectural imagination. That we have few enough examples to demonstrate the potential brilliance of that imagination is testimony to the way we have for defensible but inadequate reasons, adopted new modes of operation without enough thought to the consequences to our responsibility as a profession.

The “multi-role” view of the architect’s place in the housing of the very poor argues that such a role should be focussed on the collaborative technical support, or political support, of the process that provides an urban context for self-built housing, that is as professionals that help ensure the availability of land, finance, materials and services. Such a role is certainly fitting but is not sufficient. There will be opportunities for those that build their houses in such a setting to make choices, for
example about a more or less advantageous siting of key parts of the house, about a more or less costly choice of materials, about a more or less sensitive arrangement of spaces and other options where form is a key or even marginal influence on resident well-being. To render a professional service in this setting may well require new modes and ways of sharing architectural knowledge and judgement. But the need for new modes of articulating and supporting professional advice does not deny a role for the architect in the architecture of housing by the poor; it simply shifts the imperative to the search for and development of such arrangements.

Let me now turn to some of the implications of the role I have suggested for the architect, upon which there should be greater emphasis in the theory and practice of architecture.

If, above all, every architect is to bring to every building situation a mastery of form, there are implications for research and education in architecture, for the mode and practice of professional relationships, for the realm and focus of architectural criticism, and for the expectations of those who seek to judge the merits of the work of architecture.

For research and education in architecture, there is the need for a stronger knowledge base and more telling predictive theory about the making and effects of form. There is also the need for a pedagogy that reinforces the exploration of and experiments with form as well as the more rigorous search for plausible evidence about the consequences of form.

In terms of mode and practice, the responsibilities that characterise the architect-client relationship need to shift towards a discourse that poses problems and issues to the architect rather than solutions. By this I mean that all too often the architect is presented with a brief that has been processed or refined by the problem-solving skills of other professionals and identified by them with forms which are assumed to be appropriate. Put cryptically, the briefs are more likely to identify purpose-specific rooms rather than functions with overlapping and/or conflicting elements to which form based solutions should be sought and might offer fresh perspectives on the functions themselves. The programme or brief for a
building, in my terms, would become much more a statement of performances sought and criteria for resolving trade-offs and less a listing of required spaces. On this basis the client/architect discourse would allow the architect to respond more creatively to problems at the same time it might even allow a perceptive architect to suggest that a building may not be the solution at all to some problems.

For the criticism of architecture, an emphasis on the mastery of form as the architect’s role will give criteria for, and sources of, a new focus. It would call attention to the fluency and wit of the formal repertoire deployed by the architect. It would address the spareness or elegance with which issues of form are resolved and would explore the range and depth of meanings that might be carried in the forms of buildings, their assemblies and their relationships to their settings.

The implications for us, as the custodians of an award for architecture, are to encourage the search for, and recognition of, those buildings and places in which we see the presence of a gift of form from the architect. A gift goes beyond the ordinary expectations with surprise and delight, it carries a telling meaning about where and when it is offered, it reaches the mind and heart of its recipient through its associations and deeper references to a culture that is shared or admired, and it speaks to the fruits of past relationships between the giver and receiver and to promise of the future. These are the qualities of form we must search for in our awards for architecture.
The Role of the Architect

John de Monchaux

Comments
Hasan Puerbo

Discussion
Razia Grover
I have tried to understand what it is that makes it possible to have individual houses in the first place and secondly what it is that gives a house its individuality and how it is that individual houses combine to create the rich and varied texture of the city.

I will base my comments on my own personal perceptions because I am not an architect, nor a designer, nor a sociologist, nor a bureaucrat. I am only an inhabitant and part owner of a house. There are certain common motivations which make people desire a house of their own apart from the need to merely have a roof over one’s head. For the rural migrant or the poor who come to the city, the situation is most often that he either shares a one room tenement or he builds a shack wherever he can find people in similar circumstances which is often miles away from his work. The pressures of urban life are so tremendous on such a person that he can barely keep body and soul together; trying to work, travelling for hours everyday and trying to retain his job.

Can the poor who come to cities and live under these stress conditions really afford the time, energy and luxury of building or creating homes of their own which have traditional memories as Hasan-Uddin Khan suggested? Or are they not much better off in ready-made houses or rooms. Leaving aside the poor, how many of us, would not prefer to get the basic ready-made structure of a house, within which we will then be free to create a habitat, the way we wish it to be.

This brings me to the second point; that of identity. Why do people make habitats for themselves so different from each other and yet so identifiable within a specific culture, class, profession or locale. To my mind this is precisely the desire to conform on the one hand and yet the need to keep expressing individual personalities, or character traits, or individual aspirations which become more selective with wider exposure and experiences. My own home, I can honestly say, could be classified as a type notwithstanding the physical form, the style of living, the furniture and decor and the location, and perhaps even the people who visit us. At the same time it has a very different flavour to the houses of my friends and relatives,
precisely because of the inputs of its inhabitants. This leads me to the conclusion that it is just as much the interior organisation of spaces, which architects often cannot control, which creates a feeling of well-being and harmony with one’s immediate environment.

Secondly for those of us who can afford architects, it is possible to combine traditional and modern symbols. Most of us do not live traditional lifestyles. We enjoy our modern conveniences so why not plan for them in our contemporary structures? We also need to look at new materials that are being experimented with. These new materials need not necessarily be equated with insensitive or *nouveau riche* values if sensitively used.

Thirdly, I think there is a place for the single unit house and the duplex apartment as well as the high-rise building, though I would limit this to not more than four or five floors, in a city fabric. The constraints of security, maintenance and cost in our modern life often compel people to live in community housing or apartment buildings rather than in individual houses. The problem of designing these habitats or architecturally expressing them in a manner which creates a beautiful soul uplifting environment is that of professionals and the bureaucrats who frame the rules and I leave that issue for such people to comment on.

**Selma al-Radi**

There is truth in what you say. If you talk to any of the people who live in the blocks of flats that we pass every day in Zanzibar, or in the housing units that Ismail Serageldin showed in the Yemen, they like living in these places. One may say that they have no choice but they actually prefer and they like it. So maybe one should not just say, “no”, to the slab blocks. There is a certain feeling of security that people get from living together in a community.

**Esin Atil**

I would like to comment on three of the issues. Firstly, the individual house represents three social and economic levels.
- The architect-built house for the upper classes which allows a freedom of expression and creativity since no expenses are spared by the client
- Middle-class housing which can be single units or town houses or attached units in high-rise or low-rise structures. Although frequently clones of a single type, there can be variations in plans, configuration and decoration attempting to individualise the units. This too seems to be related to the economic status of the owners. Upper-middle class housing invariably displays more individuality than the housing of the lower-middle class.
- Housing for the poor built by the owner himself to suit his needs is representative of his particular taste.

The second issue appears to be the concept of authenticity versus reproduction or originality versus a copy or revival. This issue is of great interest to me since I am an art historian and I deal with works of art. A work of art whether an object or a structure has to be an original expression of an individual or of a tradition that can be understood and appreciated by different people at different times. In addition it has to achieve a certain level of aesthetic and technical competence that supercedes contemporary examples.

Although originality is important, there are certain works of art that fall into another category that can be just as creative. They may display an elaboration or perfection of existing themes and forms revealing a new interpretation and excellence of production.

Let me illustrate these points with examples. I have chosen examples from religious architecture since we will all be much more familiar with them, but secular architecture does employ similar issues. Take the Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya) in Istanbul built in the sixth century which is a work of art with its monumental dome and interior space that became an ideal model for the Ottoman architects.

Then there is Sinan's Selimiye Mosque in Edirne built in the 1570's. It utilises the existing forms but creates greater monumentality. It is a splendid work of art representative of its age and the individuality of its creator.
Finally there is the Demirtepe (Maltepe) Mosque in Ankara. It repeats the same structural features. It is definitely a reproduction, a copy of the sixteenth century type having no relation to the artistic traditions of its age.

This leaves me to the third issue namely the evaluation of the product, to use Hasan-Uddin Khan's terms. When does a structure become a unique work of art that expresses the creativity of its maker as well as the ambitions and achievements of society?

Geoffrey Bawa
The deepest impression I have got from this seminar is the enormous capacity architects have to either enhance or diminish the quality of life for a large number of people. It is a huge responsibility which has to be taken very seriously.

Any involvement architects may have has to be total from the very beginning to the end result. It is very difficult for me to think of mass housing as different to individual houses because ultimately it is the end product that matters. We have seen a lot of images of mass housing but very little information has been given to us on the user reaction to various solutions people have proposed. It is very important for an architect to consider mass housing with the same intensity as a private house. In mass housing it is just as important in giving shelter to a person — to give shelter to the mind of that person, to give him the opportunity of pleasure, and the opportunity of committing himself to the place he lives in.

Even if one uses the simplest of all materials, a wood structure for example, with a corrugated roof, if these are arranged satisfactorily, and if a certain amount of thought is given to landscape as well, it can give a sense of belonging and pleasure. Pleasure cannot be omitted in these solutions. It is just as important as shelter from the rain. You must be given the opportunity to enjoy life, otherwise what is one doing this for, making houses which no one enjoys.

I agree with Charles Correa that architects should not take on more than they can do. I have not taken on any mass housing because I could not cope with the huge responsibility
Ultimately whatever one builds has a physical form but what gives it life is what is done in and around it. Its treatment, maintenance and ultimate life depends on its acceptance by people.

**Saad Eddin Ibrahim**

I like Charles Correa very much; every time he speaks on a subject, I listen to him avidly, with all my senses and as an individual I cannot disagree with him. But as a social scientist, who is living in the Third World, in the last part of the twentieth century, despite my personal liking and the appeal of everything the architect says, I find that they are actually marginal to the realities of our time.

It is tough, I personally have tried to build a house to reflect my individuality and my culture, and I can say with some feeling that it was a torturous experience.

May I ask Hasan-Uddin Khan, Charles Correa and everyone who is placing importance on the authenticity and the individuality of the individual houses to reflect on their own life. May I ask these middle-aged accomplished professionals, at least those who were not born aristocrats, to reflect on their own biography. How did they start? What kind of an apartment did they live in, in the beginning? The people who are living in the flats that we look at every morning here in Zanzibar like to live in those flats, they are happy to get one of those flats. I know that. I know that my relatives ask me to intercede on their behalf when they come from villages and from houses that you would probably regard as exemplary.

They come from the villages which are very nice and very amenable. Yet when they come to the city they will strive, struggle, they almost kill to get one of those inhuman, alienating flats. This is the reality. What I am saying is that there is an element within all of us that requires such needs and there is an element that simultaneously strives for maintaining cultural simplicity.

The challenge for today’s architect, before they become totally irrelevant is to provide the alternative that satisfies the need and the desire. There is a need and there is a desire.
Hasan-Uddin Khan mentioned that there are houses of necessity and there are houses of desire. In the last part of the twentieth century on the eve of the twenty-first century, how do we accommodate several billion people who are residing in urban conglomerates. They are going to double or treble in the next 20 or 30 years. This is really the quest. It is not that we are disagreeing on the value of the individual house. An individual house is what we all desire. But those who need a shelter or a house have a different kind of problem.

Charles Correa
People do not move from villages to towns because of the attraction of the accommodation but because they need jobs and they need access to education. It could be that despite the hazards of living in an apartment, they are willing to make a sacrifice because of access to the city. I do not have to point out that is relevant at any income level. Here in Zanzibar the example given is interesting. Why would people want to live in these apartments? I understand that they get electricity and water and other privileges.

I was suggesting that we must have a habitat which is malleable so people can then choose — they can live in an apartment if they prefer, and whatever they get they should be able to change it and rearrange and put their own stamp upon it. I am not talking about flexible walls. I am talking about the kind of gestures people make; public gestures, sacred gestures.

Mohammed Arkoun
Some of us in a seminar like this must try to preach different positions and I am happy to speak up for my friend Saad Eddin Ibrahim to try to reach his position which I understand and the position taken by Hasan-Uddin Khan whose paper I liked very much. It was a very rich paper because he tried to do something which is very rarely done in our seminars. He tried to describe the creative process in architecture, not on the superficial level, as we say in our semiotic language but on the deep level of signs. He quoted Umberto Eco saying “absolute unreality becomes the unique reality”. This statement is not a
philosophical statement as many would consider. It is
definitely a semiotic statement which means a "concrete"
statement. What does this mean for us, for our work? What is
between absolute unreality and what he calls true unique
reality. What is there between these two things?

There is the whole unlimited space of signs. Any artistic
masterpiece produced in architecture, in painting, in sculp-
ture, in music, in literature, in philosophy; anything produced
by human spirits is produced in this space of signs. It is a stock
of signs at the disposal of each individual.

We come from the absolute unreality to what we present as the
reality through the personal individual combination of signs
which each of us has at our disposal. And this work is done by
which psychological faculty? It is not done by reason, it is not
done by rationality. It is done by imagination in this unlimited
space where all the stock of signs are at our disposal. This is
manipulated in a very positive way (I am using a very semiotic
language); manipulated by imagination, by the creative
imagination of the artist. Bawa is an artist. I admire the silence
of Bawa. He is reluctant to speak. I admire this silence because
he has a personal relation to the stock of signs which he
manipulates with his sensitivity and poetical imagination and
creates what he creates. That is why his silence is wonderful. It
is expressive.

I must explain what I mean by rupture, it is not just a
rupture on a superficial level. It is a rupture on the level of the
relationship between our imagination and the stock of signs.
What has happened with what we call rationality; with what
we call secularisation? What has happened precisely in the
history of thought in Western societies, in Western culture and
civility? We must analyse what has happened and make a
bridge between individual houses in which you can invest your
personal decisions through your personal system of signs and
mass housing. When we come to mass housing all these totally
disappear. What we do is just work on the superficial level to
give a shelter for people. There is no more space for
imagination to work. There is the rupture.
Furthermore what is the function of religions? I am not speaking only on Islam, but any religion? Religion had the wonderful function to open the space, between the absolute unreality and the unique reality. When Umberto Eco says unreality, he speaks from the epistemological position, the physiological position using modern reason looking at believers who will never speak of unreality about God. They will say God is the absolute reality. The believer will start from that whilst the secularised reason starts from unreality to the reality. This total reverse is made in our mind, in our reason, looking, at the problem of knowledge. How do we come to know anything? If we want to bridge the gap, between the individual houses and mass housing, we have to seriously consider firstly how we come to know anything as human beings and secondly how we come to create anything as artists.

Oleg Grabar
Having lived the first 18 years of my life in apartments, I do not feel dehumanised. My relatives have always lived in apartments and it is not so bad. One should perhaps modulate the anti-apartment note in our discussions.

What Hasan-Uddin Khan showed us in his presentation was a series of buildings which eventually will enter into our history books. They will form what will eventually be called, the art of building houses at a certain period of time. That is fine and that is one of their roles.

What is more important for our purposes is to define what their role is within the cultures in which we live. Hasan-Uddin Khan talked very beautifully about the notion of a "fortress of solitude". Who in our societies does not need loneliness occasionally? Who does not need meditation or communion with something?

My second point is related to authenticity. How does one determine what is authentic? At what point is authenticity something which is genuine and eventually replicable? This is a problem. What are the means by which one transmits the knowledge one has acquired? Mohammed Arkoun called this the level of signs between reality and unreality. How does one
transmit the character of these so-called authentic buildings? Not necessarily to replicate them in other buildings but to make society, culture and nations, aware of their meaning and significance. Who makes that transmission? At the moment the transmission is made primarily by schools of architecture. Architects transmit to other architects their analysis of such buildings. It is done to some extent through professional magazines which publish photographs with very little text and no critical vocabulary most of the time.

Who is going to develop the critical vocabulary by which these houses, which are works of art, admittedly sponsored by the rich, can be judged. Who is going to transmit the important meaning. It is not a luxury, it is a search for spaces that are meaningful to the population. This is where I would put a question to the media who are amongst us. What do they need to know in order to transfer to the mass media the ideas, thoughts, and interpretations that are developing among critics, historians and architects dealing with buildings. How do we transfer what Hasan-Uddin Khan presented to a whole country, to a whole culture. To say simply that a rich man has built himself a beautiful house and has a golden bathroom will not do. This is not what is important about these buildings. What is important is the way in which they establish quality and authenticity within certain cultures. The process of transferring this to the “mass” and not limiting it to professional groups is one of the key issues.

**Babar Muntaz**

I want to go back to some of the comments that were made by Razia Grover and Saad Eddin Ibrahim who said that people when they come into cities may perhaps want an instant solution. They may not want to be involved in the process of building their own houses.

I want to react to that. What Hasan-Uddin Khan was showing us was that where people have the means to build an individual house they do exercise that choice. They do involve themselves with an architect who develops an option that is, to his way of thinking right for his client and a particular place.
In the case of a lower-income house whether the person wants a ready-made house or wants to gradually build his own house, the essential thing that should remain, as a constant between the different income groups is the right of choice. Not every rich person necessarily gets his house designed. There are rich people who will by choice buy an apartment block or a ready-made house. But there is essentially this right to choose and to be able to decide how one wants to live. Architects and bureaucrats as soon as they think of housing for the poor, assume that the choice is not for the individual to make but for the authority or organisation providing the house to make.

This notion has become engrained. For example we have been working in Sri Lanka for the last six years on what is called the “Million Houses Programme”. The programme tries to leave the choice on the design of a house, the shape of a house and the form of a house to the individual that is going to occupy it. We started off by saying that there should be no type plans. We found that even though there were to be no type plans, the architects or the building technicians that were responsible for translating the reality of the individual household, were nevertheless designing houses which were very similar in each case. The architect was still asking the builder or the occupier to build more or less to a type plan. We then resorted to stipulating that there should be no drawings done at all for the house. We found that the drawing itself forced the technicians because of their limited notions of what could be done within a space to produce a house that is similar in each case. We are now telling the architects on site that they should not do a drawing before the house is built.

The house is planned using pegs and strings on the site and using furniture. In this way people can fashion their own house. We are finding that nevertheless there is emerging a similarity of house design produced by the master mason. The limitations of the master mason as to what one can do on a certain size of plot is also affecting us. We have a strange dilemma where the programme is designed not to have repetitious housing but because of the limited imagination of people that translate the realities, there is this repetition. This
comes back to the models, the exemplars and the notions that are being demonstrated in the individual houses. These need to be translated and we need to widen the training and the imagination of the people. This applies right down to the lower income levels. Charles Correa said that architects are in a sense negating or destroying the master masons work or the craftsman’s work. He said that we are asking them to do things in a certain way and not allowing them the freedom of expression. The implication was that if we allowed such freedom then we would get a lot of articulation in different forms. My worry is that we have already done that in many places and particularly in urban areas, where we have introduced new materials, new technologies, and new lifestyles. We now do not have the masons or the craftsmen with the required skills. When we talk about what ought to be done in the training of architects, we need to take this further down the line and look at the training of the craftsmen as well as the education of the user.

Selma al-Radi
Babar Mumtaz brought up a very interesting point, that the craftsmen, by the very fact that they are traditional craftsmen, are very limited in their knowledge. Within their own culture they have very strict limitations on the kind of houses that they can build. There is no free-for-all among traditional craftsmen. They do have a limited repertoire.

Abdelbaki Ibrahim
We are still talking in a very general sense about architecture of individual houses and mass housing. This sort of discussion could be done anywhere and is not directly related to Islamic architecture.

Throughout the discussions we see that the individual house is looked upon as having a certain identity and satisfying certain desires and needs. It is a piece of art and if we put a number of these good examples together in one place, it would look like a museum of fine art. Every one of them has its own identity and represents its own culture. There are two sides of
that expression of identity. The person is not an individual isolated from the society. He is part of society and his identity is expressed on the inside but not on the outside. Architecture on the outside is the architecture of the society and not the architecture of the architect as an individual, or even the owner as an individual. On the inside everybody expresses their individual desires and needs and culture.

In Islamic towns, the outside expression is an architecture of the society. Its homogeneity controls the urban design. It is a process controlled by the social relationships between people. So the homogeneity is there which also is an Islamic value. We have two parts; we have the architecture of society which is controlled by the society and its aspirations and we have the interior architecture which expresses the individual.

Turning now to mass housing, we could have a social architecture of the “outside” leaving everybody within this mass housing in his own domain. The architect should confine himself to the architecture of the society and give freedom to the owner on the inside. There should be a combination of the mass housing and the individual house. Everybody wants to see the sky but with the shortage of land, this can only be achieved by having a type of housing which expresses the individual from the inside and satisfies his needs but is in the form of a mass housing structure.

Habib Yusuf Thariani
I am from Bombay and we have five million people living in the slums in Bombay. I do not know how we could provide accommodation for five million people with individual houses. Perhaps the only answer lies in the multi-storey slab block. But we have to incorporate in these structures individuality and cultural continuity so that it can become more meaningful for the people living there. If we can do that we will have provided the answer which we are all groping for.

John de Monchaux
I would like to return to the question that Oleg Grabar raised. I would like to rephrase it. How do we learn what to expect of
architects and how do we, as the designer learn, a richer palate of solutions to meet those expectations? I challenge Charles Correa over his example of Mikanos because the individual who builds an increment of housing in Mikanos has available to him a very rich learning experience as well as a constrained one. He has a relatively small range of solutions, but he would have evidence of infinite variety in exercising and deploying forms to achieve a solution.

The world that Hasan-Uddin Khan and Charles Moore have described for us is a different world. It is a world in which the range of expectations is wider, and in which the influences, the pressures and the constraints are more numerous. We need to turn in part at least to the media to help us with the task of learning. Learning in a classic pedagogy and certainly the Socratic method has shown itself to be of lasting value in that regard. My challenge to us could be to become better at asking the questions and indeed to become richer and more defined in the responses. There is in architectural journalism a tendency just to describe buildings; just to describe the form and not to question what that form is an answer to.

I would welcome hearing more from some of our journalist friends on this. Is there a way of introducing a more Socratic approach to the means by which we learn about architecture?

Colin Amery
There is no point in describing anything if you cannot apply a critical approach and the essence of good journalism must be that it asks the right questions. From time to time it also provides some answers.

Journalists are no different from architects or any other professional person except they have one advantage. They are, courtesy of all sorts of people and mainly newspapers, allowed to see a great deal and make coherent comparisons, when it comes to a discussion like this. We have a privileged bird’s eye view. To take up John de Monchaux’s point on the Socratic dialogue, it is something that anyone can do not just the media. It is simply a matter of learning to ask questions rather than accept everything that is put in front of you. That is the
challenge for all of us, to ask questions on behalf of people who are less able to, and to put those questions to the right people. That is a role not just for newspapers but for television, local radio and local village meetings, from the primary level to the national level. To do that you do need to have political freedom and you do need to have a tradition of debate and question and answer from the government downwards. That is a very big question and we perhaps need to address our remarks as well to politicians especially in certain parts of the world.

Selma al-Radi
The only people who "describe" buildings are art historians and archaeologists. It is our business to describe them because sometimes we do not have a whole lot remaining. But we are the only ones who actually describe buildings, stone by stone.

Architects have been responsible for creating a dream. The dream has been sold via the media, particularly via television to masses of people. It has filtered down through the top levels into the bureaucracy and to the poorer people. The poorer people now, if they think in terms of modernity, or coming-up in the world only think in terms that are represented on television and in the cinema. Everybody in Egypt sees Egyptian films set in apartment houses. It becomes the thing to own an apartment block. Similarly with Indian films. The image that comes down to the people, is that to be modern is to live in one of these apartment buildings. Therefore it is probably up to the architects to change that image and give an alternative to the slab block.

Ismail Serageldin
This is a very rich point in our discussion and I think it will lead us to the role of the architect.

Abdelbaki Ibrahim made a very compelling point, about the difference between the external and the internal message. People live inside their houses and therefore the organisation of space is private. Their "fortress of solitude" is a space they experience on a day-to-day basis. The external facades are the images projected to society.
But from what Selma al-Radi was saying, we have another notion which is that the interior of that space has been “invaded”. It has been invaded by the media, by films, by pictures which convey an image of what the interior of the space should be like, and this image is very, very powerful.

The presentation that Mona Serageldin gave showed an apartment building in Cairo in the informal sector. The spaces were perfectly suitable for much more malleable and small-scale furniture but, with the introduction of furniture that is really copied from the lifestyle of the upper-middle class, congestion has been created within the living space that was not foreseen before when you sat on pillows. So even the interior space which is the private realm has now become influenced by the images that confront people and define their desires for a living space.

This brings us back then to the impact of the exemplars. What can we do? What is the impact of the exemplars on this space? This is fundamentally what Mohammed Arkoun was talking about when he discussed the quotation from Eco. There is the unique physical reality and there is the unreality and there is this space of signs. Unfortunately, what we have today is a largely degraded set of signs and as a result of that, it is imperfect and the ability of both users and artists to draw on that domain to fashion a new consciousness is missing. What can we do about that specific aspect. It is important not to ignore the power of the physical symbols or signs around us.

Take two examples we all know well — Le Corbusier and Hassan Fathy. In many ways their architectural contributions have been in setting up exemplars, liberating the architectural imagination in Corbusier’s case with the Villa Savoy or the Unite d’Habitation block in Marseille. Today Le Corbusier’s city planning contributions are totally discredited. Nobody believes that you raze entire cities and build La Ville Radinse anymore, yet the typology and forms that he gave us survive. They survive in a very powerful fashion.

In the same way Hassan Fathy’s contributions have remained and become thoroughly internalised in terms of self-help. The enabling function of it has survived but much of the specifics of
the proposals that he made are no longer applicable. The vocabulary that he gave us — the re-legitimation of the vernacular as a source of inspiration, the re-validation of the authentic cultural expression of the people as something noble and worthwhile has remained with us. What we now need is for architects to take up this challenge and look at our cities today and give us the exemplars, and forms that will enrich that domain of signs and will effectively enable people to know that there are other options.

Kazi K Ashraf
I would like to raise the notion of the house as a unit of a deeply-integrated system. The house cannot be perceived in isolation — not even when it is a free-standing bungalow type house. Any type of house has a particular relationship with the larger context. This in turn has collective implications which we cannot overlook.

The issue of the house in the rural areas cannot be equated with the house in the city. In terms of the ideological implications the house in the city raises fundamental questions about the mechanism of our societies and the dynamics of economic forces which are just nice words for class domination — who will live where and how?

Hasan-Uddin Khan lightly mentioned this when he said something about vested interest. We should discuss that too. Architectonics must be reviewed against its many not so visible implications. If we look at the morphology of most of our cities, especially those in the Indian subcontinent we seem to have retained not a heritage of an ancient past but the baggage of the immediate past which is the colonial experience. The nature and the maintenance of it is an almost unaberrated continuation of the colonial system.

How are the prime, strategic chunks of livable lands inside the city used? It seems mostly that so-called housing societies take up this land, divide it into individual plots and distribute them to high officials and bureaucrats at subsidised rates. These are the people who do not really need a subsidy. Moreover all the institutional structures support this. Besides
this we have the cantonments taking another huge chunk of land. Once the Englishman lived there to control the local people and now it seems that there are local people out there trying to control the still restless natives.

We think of the rural migrant as invading urban land illegally. It seems the privileged class invades land too — legally but certainly not morally. What kind of houses get built on this kind of land? Usually it is the image of the free-standing bungalow on a large site with high walls, somewhat detached from its surroundings. This is the ideal image, the ultimate paradigm of an urban dwelling. I am not demeaning the nature of the building type, the free-standing house. The question is where do we want these houses — in the heart of the city? Within what urban system?

The houses that do get built mostly are intrusions on the cultural landscape also. The iconography; the process contributes nothing in overcoming the historical discontinuity which has occurred and which we are living through — the rupture that Mohammed Arkoun talked about.

This leads me to believe that we are basically suffering from a lack of vision — of how we are going to live collectively. This is generated on the one hand by ideological anaemia and on the other by cultural amnesia. Ideological anaemia because most of our nations have been independent from colonial rule for many years and some of us even boast democratic structure but in reality we have not yet been able to project for ourselves a whole vision of how we are going to live and behave. A vision which will sustain a less exploitative urban or rural life. Or an urban paradigm which will be reflective of the human egalitarian condition that reconciles the deep consciousness and the contemporary realities. At the same time we are suffering from cultural amnesia. By ‘we’, I mean the elites, the decision-makers and “we”, the architects, whose alienating products become overwhelming models for mass adoption.

We blame external forces for our cultural discontinuity but we have to blame ourselves for continuing if not aggravating the discontinuity. I have seen Geoffrey Bawa’s work and Hassan Fathy’s attempts at erasing that amnesia and restoring
that traditional memory and understood typology. Charles Correa showed us the most compelling example. It showed a vital, humane, urban system within which there is still the possibility of the fortress of solitude.

Oleg Grabar
We are escaping from Hasan-Uddin Khan’s initial point and in order to make it dramatic, I wonder if his initial point may have been irrelevant. He argued, in talking about the rather extra-ordinary unique houses built in a number of locations, that they can express the essence of certain cultural interpretations of today. He argued they are cultural interpretations and are appropriate exemplars for others to transform into something else. As an example I would mention Hassan Fathy, the “children” of Fathy and now the “grandchildren” of Fathy and the endless series of houses they have created all over the Arabian Gulf.

There was a counter-point in Hasan-Uddin Khan’s talk which is that those places are the places of individuals who are alone and separate from the worlds in which they live. From the discussions that followed, I gathered the latter may be more important in our general view than the former. In other words the houses are wonderful and we would all like to marry the daughter of the owner but they are irrelevant to the real issue.

I am exaggerating the point but what I am trying to say is that perhaps there are no lessons from these beautiful houses, they are not pertinent to the culture in the housing crises at this particular moment.

Ismail Serageldin
I disagree with Oleg Grabar on this. They are not irrelevant. They are supremely relevant even though they are not specifically replicated. There is a big difference. It is not a model that will be cloned and replicated but they are supremely relevant to the extent that the Villa Savoye and Falling Water are relevant in a different context. Nobody replicated those but they are an inherent part of the consciousness of all architectural students because through the
schools of architecture they have become part of the domain of signs on which all architects draw today. The presence of such exemplars even if they are not replicated is what defines both the aspirations of people and the consciousness of architects. Ultimately it is what helps fashion a reality out of that unreality and the irrelevance of it.

The problem of the Muslim world specifically and the Third World generally is the tremendous pace of modernisation. This has created a situation where the internal space has been impoverished. It is the function of architects, as well as intellectuals generally to resymbolise that particular environment, to give it a new dimension. I think we would be doing the houses, a disservice if we do not recognise their value not as examples that would be replicated but as key elements that fashion the consciousness in society of what is desirable. It also fashions and broadens the horizons of architects to go beyond the mediocrity that exists around them.

**Ronald Lewcock**

To respond to my colleague from Harvard and to amplify what Ismail Serageldin has just said, I remember a fascinating essay by Albert Camus about the Moorish house.

This is a fascinating early essay in which he describes the depths of his reaction to the traditional Moorish house and how it helped to spark his revolutionary career. Camus saw the courtyard house as imbued with the culture of countless generations — the dark shadowy entrance filled with promise, the wide gloomy corridor, winding apparently aimlessly and timelessly. Then the sudden emergence into the bright sunlight of the courtyard. The peace of the cool reception rooms, the splash of water in the bright fountain on a hot day. The rain dripping from the leaves onto the pavements of the garden. The garden terrace overlooking the town, the houses jostling each other down to the sea, the contrast of the quietness of the house and the bustling noisy colour of the narrow streets of the souq. He contrasted this with the dead, empty faces of the modern houses. I think the words he used were, “Grey houses, I hate you!”
The point of the essay was the struggle he experienced to find the meaning of the deep reaction produced in him by the Moorish house. Finally he tried to distill meaning in the following ways — the contrast between action and inaction; between life and death; between culture and nihilism. Ultimately Camus found in the Moorish house a strong incentive to mentally revolt against the stultifying, uncreative and unimaginative bourgeois world. There are many parables in his essay — intentional and unintentional. He is showing how culture works as a signifying system through which values of one generation and one society and one individual are communicated to another to be experienced and explored. The immense poverty that results when culture is lost and ceases to use its artifacts in a significant way. That seems to me to be as true of mass housing as of the individual house.

Raymond Williams in his study of the operation of culture draws attention to the different ways in which houses operate as signifiers in society. They denote relative social position, lifestyle, conformity or non-conformity, the taste and preferences of the occupants. He says “Within and beyond this, domestic architecture becomes a conscious art and in addition to specific aesthetic considerations house dwellers participate in deliberate kinds of enhancements, from decoration (of the building) to gardening”. It comes from his book on “Culture” written in 1981. I believe the architect has to operate in society by assuming his full responsibilities as a creator, a conveyor and an enabler of significant experience.

I remember something that Saad Eddin Ibrahim said — the architect may not be able to afford to particularise needs but he can afford to particularise tastes. In this sense the architect plays one of the key roles in establishing and maintaining the culture of society — not merely its cultural expression. It is a very important distinction. It is a responsibility that grows in importance as the pressures against it increase.

The architect has a further role to build into his work life enhancing qualities, emotive feeling, understanding, enthusiasm, delight and love. In this sense the topics of this seminar seem to focus on a common theme. There is no
difference in ultimate value whether the architect is working as the designer of individual buildings or playing a role in a community to create a new environment.

Baljit S Malik
The best thing for me to do would be to just give an example of something which I saw recently. I travelled out to some of the drought and famine stricken areas in Rajasthan in India, south-west of Delhi. I arrived in a tribal village where for the last ten years, a very sophisticated Tamil lady from the deep south of India has been living and working with the tribal people. She has been interacting with them and trying to intercede for them with the administration to tackle some of their problems. It was fascinating to see the kind of house she has decided to live in. She had a choice in building a house for herself. There was plenty of land, available in that area although it had been degraded by soil erosion where the trees had been cut down by forest contractors. There is no clustered village in that society, everybody lives on a hillock separated from each other. She got hold of a hillock which the people gave her and the house that she built with the village people with whom she was working was a typical tribal home but an upgraded one. That is the solution that she came to. She did not transplant into that area something which she brought along with her experience from the city. I was struck by this and it is difficult to understand why we are not able to do this on a mass scale, in the villages where most of our people live. What she did in her house was to provide a basic sanitation system and to keep the courtyard and the land around it clean and paved with the local material available there. She managed to get electricity into that village from the main road which was about 15 miles away.

So there was a housing pattern, a housing culture which her experience in those ten years had told her really requires very little intervention from the outside. The housing pattern there gives scope to the village people to practise their own skills. It is a house and as Tasneem Siddiqui has been telling us, that house is also a workplace. Many of the people who are coming
from the villages into the urban areas are artisans who are self-employed people or the husband is doing a salaried job or a factory worker’s job. The women remain in the home — the wife is herself a self-employed person pursuing some kind of occupation for additional income. Our architects and our planners are somehow not able to respond to this kind of need — to see the house as a workplace as well as a living place and I would just like to emphasise that. This is the kind of imagination we need. It is a very simple form of imagination which we need to bring to this work. Why is it that electricity cannot be taken into the villages? Why is it the sanitation system cannot be brought to the villages?

I was in another village in the same area where there was a group of 20 to 25 potters. Each house had a beautiful arrangement of space where they had their kilns in a very small amount of space and they do their cooking, socialising, sleeping and eating. It was also beautifully clean in the house but the moment you came out of that house, it was disaster. There was slush, there was garbage, there was no proper road, there was no electricity, no sanitation system. That is perhaps where we need to bring our creative energies into play.

Arif Hasan

We should remember that probably only 5 per cent of housing is designed by architects. Probably 90 per cent of all housing in our cities are individual houses whether this housing is on legal land or illegally acquired land. The main issue is the availability of land as Charles Correa has reminded us. These houses are built with materials that are easily available and the materials that are easily available today are very different from the materials from which traditional architecture is built.

This brings me to the question of upgrading skills and/or finding alternative materials that can be popularised, not materials that cannot be popularised. Building a mud house with traditional technology in the area in which I work in Karachi would probably be far more expensive than building a house, made of concrete block and asbestos roofing which is the common way of building houses.
As far as culture is concerned, a new vernacular culture is developing. We have seen it in the slides that Ismail Serageldin and Mona Serageldin showed us. It is there and it is a culture that is alive and it is growing and expanding. It may be a hybrid, but it needs support, sympathetic support and sympathetic understanding which we are not willing to offer. We see this culture not only in housing but in the way trucks are painted, in the manner in which festivities are conducted today, whether they are religious festivities or social festivities.

All these things must be seen on a bigger canvas of the social, political and economic life of the modern city and our modern society.

This comes back to the question of what role the architect can have in building or in assisting the creation of this new environment. This is a very difficult question because as architects, we look at things in a narrow context — that of building alone. Even when we look at the other aspects, we always look at them through the context of building

Mohammed Arkoun
Camus who was quoted by Ronald Lewcock, is an Algerian writer and he played a great role in the literary expression of Muslim civilisation in Algeria. His wonderful literary expression of the qualities of architecture has been neglected and was rejected by Algerians themselves during the war and after the war. Camus has been hardly discussed by Algerians. This point is very relevant to our discussion, relevant to the reaction of Oleg Grabar, relevant to the reaction of Saad Eddin Ibrahim. It shows how an artistic process for creating a masterpiece or for creating and environment can be totally shifted to ideological thinking.

The question is now — how to think about the masses without forgetting that we have to think about promoting man, of promoting culture, of promoting the spirit for man. This is the problem and we cannot do it because we are always oppressed by masses and we are oppressed by masses led by states. Here emerges again the problem of the state in our society today because the state is manipulating these masses in
an ideological way and not in the way of promoting the culture, something to which of course the architect is contributing on the level shown by Hasan-Uddin Khan.

Mona Serageldin
How can we provide for the masses? Charles Correa has said that we need to have buildings that are not impervious to being colonised and that good housing solutions, are only possible up to certain densities. My question is what densities? Are these densities compatible with the realities in urban areas today where the dynamics of growth are pushing land values to the point of rendering obsolete any static solution and forcing a constant transformation of whatever has been built? The whole landscape on any street is changing almost continuously.

This is a question that architects should address. What densities and up to what densities? If architects can come up with these solutions, then planners can try to deflate urban land values by directing urban growth to the point where these densities can be maintained.

The second one is regarding the building envelopes. We need buildings that are not impervious to colonisation. But we also need building envelopes that are amenable to successive interior transformations. Now this is where we look again to the architects. Can architects come up with solutions that are amenable to these successive transformations and if so can planners take up these envelopes and try to look for methods to make them affordable?

M Mturi
I accept the needs for architects to use traditional buildings or memories to come up with new forms, and the examples shown were intellectually and culturally pleasing. They are masterpieces of exemplary forms. But their aim is not to remain as monuments to the architects or monuments to architecture as a profession. They are supposed to be usable as livable places. They must contribute to solving the problem of housing.

My problem is — how do we handle such a process so that at the end of the day the exemplars help solve the larger problem
of providing the housing needs of the majority. If we don’t do it, all we are saying is that the poor have only two alternatives — to go into mass housing or to live in slum areas.

Charles Correa
Both these things are related and Mona Serageldin’s question is a very relevant one. Taking an individual site of say 50 square metres (the project I illustrated in an earlier session had sites of 45 to 70 square metres) you get a density of 500 persons per hectare, using only half the site area. The other half is allocated for social and other amenities. I am just talking about densities and this is regardless of how you design the houses. These are very high densities. If you have an additional tenant on the same site as Mona Serageldin suggested, then the densities can go as high as a thousand per hectare. Those are very high densities indeed. One of the first things our Commission did in India was to see what are the densities in cities and which part of which city is most dense. Very few cities in India, which are very crowded, cross a line drawn at one thousand persons per hectare. Furthermore in Bombay hardly 5 per cent of residential land used, crosses that line. So we are really talking about very few people who create the images, images so blinding that some people have suggested it is the only way to house everybody.

We know that we do not have the money for 5 million people to be housed in that fashion. There is no way; even the World Bank cannot do that for us. We have got to find another way to do it. What do we have to do to change this? Now is the time to scan the options because we really do have a choice right now. We are not going to go slowly and incrementally like New York, we can almost see a quantum jump of four fold in the growth of cities.

We must decide what patterns we want, the preferred lifestyle and the things we can afford. I am not trying to ban apartments. On the contrary, I am saying “Do not close the door to low-rise high-density development.” Hassan-Uddin Khan’s paper demonstrated that the individual house could be applicable to the poor. I do not entirely agree but I do see that
the architect is much more inventive when he deals with the individual house, much more sensitive. I was reminded that if you understand the problems at that scale, it is much easier to design a building for mass housing.

Each of us should look at our own societies, we should establish what are the densities and we should examine whether we are not closing the door on an option, which has tremendous advantages, which is this low-rise high-density solution. Let me just list these advantages very swiftly. Apart from the economy, which many people mentioned, including Tasneem Siddiqui, it is incremental. To me that is a political imperative. If all we can give the poor in India today is one room and it can never grow, what are we talking about? Political revolution due to rising expectations? As soon as you have a situation where the house can grow you immediately have a safety valve.

Pluralism is very important. We are not talking about monolith cultures. We are talking about many religions, many societies and many aspirations. Obviously low-rise high-density is much more amenable to this. I have already mentioned open-to-sky space and the whole system of spaces that make a town which Kamran Diba mentioned when he said we should design the neighbourhood.

We are also talking about why people come to cities. They come to cities for jobs. One of our friends from Bangladesh was asking about the political implications. When we talk about large building blocks, we are talking about the very few architects who can design them and the very few construction companies which can build them. That money goes straight to these companies. In another situation it would go to the masons, and the carpenters who work in the vernacular — what one might call the bazaar economy. This is really crucial. It is of tremendous political importance. All the money we are getting for housing could go directly to the semi-skilled labourers, the very people who are coming to the cities.

I am not saying that this is the panacea but I happen to believe in this. I am saying, do not close the door on this option. On the contrary, if people have the money or they have
the desire to live in apartments, I would never stop them. But
do not let us think that the alternative solution is not viable. It
is eminently viable and it is a tremendously crucial decision we
have to make because of the four-fold growth in the next two or
three decades. Thirty years from now no one will blame us for
the number of children which have grown in the country
because it is beyond our immediate control. But they will hold
us responsible for not having exercised this option, and not
having made it come true, if indeed it is a truly viable option.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim
I would like to consider the dialogue that has taken place. I say
dialogue and not debate. It is a dialogue that should build up
and come to a reasonable conclusion of this very important
seminar. When we talk about the responsibility of the
architects to play a crucial and decision-making role in meeting
the need for larger scale housing, it is to avoid the continuing
vulgarisation of the urban house.
I could not agree more with Hasan-Uddin Khan — the discussion of the house is not a side step, it is the essence of the issue.

What is housing but houses. The very fact that we may think it is something else, shows how wrongly we pick up the problem. When we think of the numbers to be housed, if there is a way we could disaggregate this issue down to the end user which is the single house then you would have a totally different attitude.

In this process of disaggregation the essence as Mona Serageldin pointed out is a shortage of land. Tasneem Siddiqui in his very fine paper, shows how the land is being given so slowly and in such negligible amounts to the squatters, that the prices rise and it becomes a commodity which the rich buy and speculate in.

If the government policies change, you immediately come to what Hasan-Uddin Khan is talking about. We have disaggregated it and now we want to know what the individual house can be because that is what each family will live in. There are three very important things that the individual house can teach us. One is by definition it deals with open-to-sky space. Whether it is for the very poor or very rich this is tremendously important. About 70 per cent of the people are very poor and if you give them one room or two rooms, this open-to-sky courtyard or terrace becomes an additional free room. Calculations can be done; there is a production cost of the land, and there is a production cost of a built room and you can see that this is very effective and economical for the poor. And for the rich people too in any country who like to sit on lawns and to have receptions. Which people do not need open-to-sky space? I do not know. Maybe the 10 or 15 per cent in-between. So you can hardly avoid open-to-sky space in an individual house and much of the impact of Hasan-Uddin Khan's images was due to the fact that they had this wonderful relationship of graduated space from covered to open.

The second thing is that it gives us a "typology of continuum" so we do not polarise our society into one typology for the rich and another typology for the middle-class and then a ghetto for the people who live in what we call slums. We
have a continuum. There is no difference between a site and
services scheme and suburban America. These are also sites and
services. You could call it informal or you could call it formal.
Many of them go to architects and they have a house designed.
It is done within a context so we have much to learn from this.

The third thing is very important. Geoffrey Bawa’s house is
probably the most beautiful house I have ever seen and the
sensibility is discernible at every moment. Every inch of it
makes a nuance and we know the nuances. When we try to
design a hospital, we don’t have that feeling for the problem.
When we try to design 500 houses simultaneously, we lose
those nuances. It really is tremendously important and that is
why almost no architect can do a bad house even if he is fresh
out of school. Whether he makes it out of aluminium or mud,
puts it upside down, or hangs it from a tree, it is going to be
real, because he is making real decisions. The individual house
is a continuously differentiated programme, as you go from
room to room, the needs of the room, the quality of life and the
privacy is changing and the architects respond to that. As
opposed to that a 500-room hotel is a “dumb” programme. By
that I mean it is almost impossible to arrive at as intelligent or
as fine an answer as for a house. I do not think it is just the size
of the programme; a palace for instance can be large, but it can
be wonderful because it is a differentiated programme. So,
there are these three things; the open-to-sky spaces, the
continuum of typology and the third aspect, is the sensibility
the architect brings to bear on the problem.

The question is how do we repeat these things so that they
reach many, many people as opposed to the single family? I
would like to give you just two images. This point is
important and it concerns the need for repetition. Using just
two different typologies the variations are infinite and that is
totally different from cloning.

The reason why this happens is that decisions are not all
made at one time by one person but there are layers of decision.
It is like looking at a tree. Every leaf has the same principle and
yet every leaf is different. We do not know how to reproduce an
artificial tree and that is precisely the problem of housing. We
do not know how to make decisions all at once and so we do not end up with the modern equivalent of these models.

Another thing is the malleability of the environment. That is very, very important. Cultural expression can come from an architect's dictatorial decisions or it can come through an environment which is so malleable that people can express their gestures, not only in the public realm but in their private realm and in the sacred realm, both religious and primordial, that lies within them. If we give too hard a context, the people cannot express this. The individual house gives you that feeling. It is a starting point for any architect who has to design housing.

My other image illustrates exactly the opposite — a totally unmalleable environment. It is central New York. The scale is really frightening. On the other hand, the fact that Mildred Schmertz who works there stays human and humane tells us that we are perhaps exaggerating the power of architecture in our lives. One probably develops a sense of humour, having to work in such an environment. What interested me when we took a drive around Zanzibar Island was that there were a number of houses made of mud and bamboo and thatch. There were also a growing number made of concrete blocks and asbestos roof. I have no doubt that the people who built those houses do not worry about identity, they do not have any such insecurity. I am sure that after six months or two years those houses will be totally East African or Zanzibarian because of their scale. It is very important because these people work on an individual basis.

There is something further which the poor bring to their houses and that vernacular architecture also possesses and that is ingenuity. With a rich client, an architect has more flexibility but there is less demand on this particular aspect of his imagination. If you think for instance of a typical house, like the ones we see in rural Zanzibar or all over India which is a poor country, or Pakistan or Bangladesh, nothing leaves a village. The leaves which fall from palm trees are used for the roof and it is incredible the amount of recycling that happens in a perfectly balanced eco-system. We have to learn that. We talk about these things but there is no architect that I know of,
who can do it as superbly as it is done in the vernacular through the villagers. We must realise that self-help is only one form of the vernacular, in fact it is not really vernacular. Vernacular is much richer because it has tradition, and it has this experience. All the things which we are concerned about, the economy, the balancing of the ecology; all these exist in the vocabulary of people. The only unfortunate thing is that the urban context in which these solutions will be viable does not exist. It is for us to create that urban context and that is basically a matter of density because these solutions are absolutely viable up to certain densities.

In such a process the architect as site planner and as the builder of prototype units could play a tremendous role. In such housing other determinants would be the tradition, and the craftsmen; the carpenters and masons. They have their own ideas and could also contribute. In this, aspirations are tremendously important and what an architect tries to do is not only heed the past but also heed the future. That is tremendously important in the Third World. We can perhaps avoid imitating industrialised countries and not go through the misery they went through.

In other words most of us in the Third World start with individual houses. Maybe we do not have to go through the terrible dehumanising process of mass housing only to come back to individual houses. Maybe there is a way we can take these skills, this vocabulary, these traditions, and go straight to housing which is really a collection of houses.

In that process, I would limit the number of houses any architect is responsible for. Hassan Fathy once said that the trouble with architects is that they design too many houses. If you take the greatest surgeon in the world and ask him to operate on 200 people in one day, he would kill them all.
The Architecture of the Individual House: Understanding the Models

Hasan-Uddin Khan and Charles Moore

The failure of mass-housing — the numbers game can only lead to disaster: a Mimar Cartoon by R L Miller.
In a conference on housing, any discussion of a single family house is generally regarded as an excursion, a pleasant but not very important side trip. But we hope to make you think otherwise. This presentation will alter the direction in which we have been going, away from housing to houses and not only to houses but the houses of the well-to-do: We shall be looking at these houses as models. For this session, we shall perhaps rather cruelly send off the barefoot architect to other regions and look at — dare I say it — design and joy in the architecture of houses. Here at last we can get away from the mundane to forget problem-solving and look at aspirations, manifested in that rather old-fashioned architectural phrase: "firmness, commodity and delight." Although the conversations to date have stressed the need for understanding the process of housing, of enabling and acting, our emphasis is going to be just the opposite — it is the product we shall extol — it is what exists that matters and not what is hoped will be realised — for the product makes all apparent and able to be interpreted.

Not only will we be examining product but also one word used several times in this seminar — authenticity. For both in houses and housing, there seems to be a great concern about authenticity especially when dealing with the historic cities and that which we see as "our architectural heritage".

The "top-down", or macro approach to housing by governments, deemed necessary to "solve" the housing "problem" has led to a quantitative approach to the issues, with governments saying "This year we will build so many thousand houses". The numbers game can only lead to failure as demonstrated by the many examples we know. The more successful schemes do two things; they try a bottom-up approach by disaggregating the elements of housing as a process and they involve people, the end users, in the process. In short, they attempt an integrated approach.

One such element in the disaggregation of the process is the actual dwelling unit itself. It has generally been accepted that a single family house, or a compound for an extended family is desirable but it is unachievable due to pressure of land, economics etc. especially in the rapidly increasing urban areas
of the Third World. Here we are going to make the case for the individual house or clusters of housing as the right way to look at the problem and perhaps by overstating and simplifying the case somewhat, pose an alternative approach to the problem of housing large numbers of people.

In the late twentieth century, single family houses seem possible for the very rich and the very poor (in bastees, favelas and shanty towns on the urban fringe). Everyone else is expected to fit into slab blocks of three to six storeys and occasionally more, surrounded by open land. These slab blocks have appeared everywhere across the world, unstopped by the discomfort and the anonymity of life within them.

Attendance at a few horror movies, such as the Body Snatchers, is enough to convince one that these housing blocks so remarkably similar across the world are placed amongst us by evil bureaucrats infiltrating from another planet! A drearier but perhaps more plausible explanation is that the anonymous slabs are so easy to draw, to site and to profileate that we accept the anonymity of life in them and their desperate unsuitability to warm climates.

But for most people in most traditional societies, the house has been an extension of the human body an outer layer of clothing, not altogether unlike that of other peoples' but capable of accommodating an extra amount of effort, of care, of ornament and of self-expression that lets its occupants inhabit it. In countries across the Third World, people with hardly any means at all construct shelters of their own rather than moving into the deadly anonymity of state-built housing blocks.

In the developing countries, the houses of the poor are indeed indicators of what the city is like as some 80 per cent of our cities are made up of housing in the lower and lowest income sectors. On the other hand the houses of the rich have always been the major indicators of architectural change. Through them the aspirations, the reflections of self-image are made most apparent. They also act as models for others in a filtering down effect.

Are indeed the houses of the rich and the poor incompatible models? At first sight they appear to be so but perhaps there
are many more similarities than we would give credence. At least when people are given a choice, they will build houses, not flats and will live in surprisingly similar ways albeit with very different space standards and materials.

Seventeen years ago, Charles Moore took a class of architectural students to Europe as far as Istanbul to look at places — dwellings made by people who could have exactly what they wanted, expecting the students to return to the USA to rewrite the Minimum Property Standards of the American Federal Housing Authority. The experiment did not work. Most of the students never did see the connection, and he decided not to push this analogy further. However, it seems increasingly clear that there is a connection between the dwellings in the history books and the glossy magazines, and the goals we formulate to try to imagine how housing might help people lead more attractive lives.

Moore's experiments with the students is an interesting one. Could they have extrapolated from the rich the elements, desires and standards that could be translated into rewriting minimum standards? I fear he had not taken into account an important element when sending American students into a foreign culture — the jump was too much. It would be interesting to use the same device within one's own country and see what students come up with. Seeing the links between the rich and poor would be seeing housing, not only as a process but as a continuum of cultural expression.

I am reminded here of a painting by Gauguin who asked "Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?" There he was asking a cultural question related to change in Tahiti which he questioned and expressed in his magnificent painting. It is the same question we can ask through the architectural expression of the house.

Charles Moore and I discussed this presentation in an attempt to illustrate the ideas by actual examples, to link not only the houses of choice (that is, houses for the rich) and the houses of necessity (that is, houses by the poor) but also learn from the modes that connect house design to city patterns — from house to neighbourhood. We spent time speculating about
what could happen in the future to the house and the city if it were to run out of energy for air conditioning. What does contemporary technology do to the perception of the home? What distortions to authentic values does the economy make — so dramatically illustrated in the 1960’s and 1970’s in the oil rich countries of the Middle East? What models are “exported” (to use the kindest phrase I can think of) to other cultures? How is the image for housing developed? For example; could the vernacular earth buildings, associated with rural dwellings and with the poor become fashionable if they became houses for the rich? It would appear so. Can one take the timeless technology of earth and transform it into being acceptable as “modern”?

A somewhat eccentric experiment was conducted by the architect Nader Khalili in Mexico where he presented the idea of earth building for lunar bases to NASA and received a great deal of support! Imaginative solutions need leaps of perception. But in the end we decided to limit our presentation to
Concentrating on the few points we have made and to describing models that would be apparent to both architects and clients alike.

In his notes Moore says that when he last made a trip around the world with time to look at buildings, the two buildings, both houses, which were the highlight of the trip were an elegant house in Ahmedabad in India built using cow dung (and lived in sparingly by Gauthum Sarabhai’s family) and Isamu Noguchi’s eighteenth century farmhouse in Takamatsu, Japan. This is not to argue that everyone has the artistic skills of the Sarabhais or of Noguchi, but the really accessible fabric of traditional houses give dimension to a place that a dwelling without memory simply cannot provide.

Among the architectural qualities on the endangered list which may be best executed by way of houses are scale, variety, and the level of complexity that begets further complexity, which allows the inhabitants to take part in their world. Old houses in Baghdad carefully adapted to the climate and to their occupants have marvellously intricate plans that encourage exploring and sections just as rich, based on half-level increments. Cities in Islam, planned by the cooperation of neighbours maintain the kind of complexity and intimate scale that the wide boulevards of western intervention have threatened or maimed. In Lamu, the broad waterfront has the same kind of rich variety within a simple framework; that intimate scale that we find so hard to achieve in the late twentieth century. With this intimate scale comes a domestic monumentality which is rare in our countries. Houses in Lebanon with their courts and iwan are powerful examples as are the clustering of houses with other buildings in Zanzibar.

The model that Charles Moore postulated was that of looking at the “traditional memory” of building in cities to see the possibility for high density building. He felt that this illustrated the aspirations of the poor and could give rise to useful models that could be applied to the growing cities. This is Moore’s optimistic model. I refer to it as an optimistic model because it takes that which is positive in the design of a desirable dwelling and projects it to the needs of the city at
large — the city of the poor. It is at the same time a pessimistic model which does not recognise the limitations of finance, know-how and space or vested interests in the process of housing. But in order not to be bogged down in the mundane and to have a vision for and of a possible future, the optimistic model is well worth examining.

Within this wide lens through which to look at housing there are a number of ways in which we can filter our perceptions. I refer to the interpretation of traditional memories (whose traditions?) which have given rise to a number of house typologies. I have taken this idea to explore the main models that I perceive exist in the Third World. These could be considered generic house types through which the individual house is integrated into the issue of the city, creating neighbourhoods.

Today’s models for individual houses stem from two main streams of conscious plucking of two cultures: the “modern” (international) and the “traditional” (vernacular). The modern is usually uncompromisingly western and speaks of advanced technologies, the good life and of McLuhan’s shrinking global village. The second interprets tradition through one’s own vernacular or through someone else’s (Greek Mediterranean Villages, the Spanish Villa, etc) and brings them together in an often eclectic ensemble. This is even more true for the interior decoration which speaks of “identity” and the craft tradition, of place and timelessness but all within an essentially western plan layout of single-use rooms — the living rooms, the dining rooms, the bedrooms and so on.

Occasionally the multi-purpose space is introduced (the family room) and sometimes attention is paid to ‘special needs’ like the need for privacy for women in Islam interpreted by segregating the house into sections.

Whatever the inspiration and the model, the house becomes the individual’s statement or a family statement — and often a woman’s statement. The house gives rise to a number of factors that create the image of the family and then of society at large.

What comes to mind as the overriding factor? Let me give a personal view which will lead to the subject of authenticity.
Above and right: Tradition interpreted — the thatch hut (from Botswana) is given a new lease of life as the house for a European family at Lake Baringo, Kenya. Bill Meyerhoff transforms the circular plan into compartments for modern-day living in a sensitive use of space and materials.
The houses, perhaps we should call them homes, bring to mind one of America’s greatest twentieth century symbols and I do not think you will guess the one I have in mind. Superman. Why Superman? You may recall that Superman, that embodiment of triumph of good over evil had like his predecessors a castle (a man’s home is his castle). He had a retreat and he called this retreat The Fortress of Solitude. We have discussed the concept of what makes home of the different house typologies — I feel that the common factor is that of retreat or solitude. I believe that this has become more so in this rapidly changing world. We need something to hold on to. It is the extension of the idea of security of tenure for the poor, brought into the realm of the American Dream; we are the master of all we survey, the home of the heart and the overriding image of the doll’s house with its red roof and chimney with smoke. It is amazing just how many children will come up with this image when asked to draw their ideal house, regardless of which culture they come from.'
This idea of home as sanctuary is taken up in another later super-heros’ retreat: Batman has his Batcave, but this time he shares it with his companion Robin. Sharing the house with ‘family’ extends the idea of home to include others while still excluding ‘outsiders’ from the inner sanctuary. This model is surprisingly similar to the fourteenth century Cairene houses, the eighteenth century Lamu dwellings with their off-street visitors nodes and the pendopo (pavilion) structures of Javanese tradition. Christopher Alexander and Serge Chermayef also illustrated these realms of penetration into the house from the public to semi-public to the private through their studies. ⁶

Interpretations of space are of course not limited to the exterior but are expressed even more strongly in the interior in a personalised interpretation of cultural image in the choice of decoration and adornment — the house as a second skin.

Here we enter into question of taste — the taste of mass culture, of the young and of today and not the world that we the middle-aged elite would like to believe. This touches upon what Mohammed Arkoun has referred to as popular and populist expressions. ⁷

We will take two examples to illustrate this, one, architectural and the other not. Taking first the non-architectural from the world of fashion. There is high fashion, the taste makers, the Yves St Laurents, Christian Lacroixs and others of the fashion world and then there are the consumers of “ordinary” clothes.

These have existed and this duality has existed through time both in the East and in the West. However, not so long ago the haute couture designers realised that they were missing out on a huge market and although their images filtered down they were not able to participate in the goodies (the money) from this market. So they created a link by manufacturing a mid-range of ready-to-wear clothing with designer labels — their success is phenomenal and much imitated from Hong Kong to Spain. The Swatch-watch, that trendy Swiss invention takes the same approach.

Taking this into the realm of architecture we refer to John Portman who set new standards for modern hotels when he
participated as an architect and developer in the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta with a 22-storey atrium. The architect changed his role from that of the gentleman designer to that of the developer. The architect till then had remained aloof from the process and gradually became a bit player with the major roles taken over by accountants and lawyers. It is the process that is relatively new in Developing Countries (Shirin Ali Karonfiloglu described this with reference to Turkey) but it is one that has shaped urban America through developers such as the Rouse Company. I do not want here to enter into the role of the architect (the subject of the next session) but merely refer to it in that it touches cultural imagery and role-playing.

Let us return to the *Fortress of Solitude*. The most amazing such structure was erected in Austin, Texas by President Lyndon Johnson during his own lifetime, a monument, a pyramid, as a personal mausoleum. I am not referring to the modern structure or even all the documents it contains but the mass of souvenirs, the honeymoon snaps, the non-stop series of films, the wax statues of his daughters, the almost full scale reproduction of the Oval Office, even the hat worn by Carol Channing in *Hello Dolly*! The Lyndon B Johnson Library is a true Fortress of Solitude, an example of narrative art, a wax museum, a cave of robots. It suggests that there is a constant in the average American imagination and taste, for which the past must be preserved and celebrated in full scale authentic copy, a philosophy of immortality as duplication.

Is this the taste of America? Certainly not the taste of Frank Lloyd Wright or Mies Van de Rohe but perhaps closer to that of Robert Venturi and Charles Moore in his New Orleans Plaza. It is the America of a supra-reality which is not that of Pop Art, of Mickey Mouse or even Disneyland. It creates somehow a series of references and influences that finally spread into the products of high culture, communications, and the entertainment industry.

Is it unfair to characterise the Bawa house or the Benjelloun house in this way — different though they are? Are those interpretations of the vernacular or the craft traditions authentic — are they real? Constructing building, using the
Above and below: Reinventing tradition — at first glance the houses by Geoffrey Bawa appear as though they have belonged to the landscape for centuries but a closer look reveals a masterly use of space and materials which is highly designed. Bawa’s own house in Lunuganga near Colombo, Sri Lanka, an amalgam of several structures over time, is an example of his brilliance.

same materials the same colours, the same vocabularies as that of the “tradition” we referred to but with everything more sophisticated and polished means that the historical information, so absorbed assumes the aspect of a reincarnation.

What relationships does this architectural expression have to the real thing — the vernacular born of the tradition of a hundred years? Or is this the real thing? Today’s real thing — a leap of artistic genius? Here I would like to quote from an essay by Umberto Eco who said “To speak of things that one wants to connote as real, these things must seem real. The ‘completely real’ becomes identified with the ‘completely fake’. Absolute unreality is offered as real presence”.

The aim of this reinvented vernacular is to supply a “sign” that will be forgotten as such, the sign aims to be the thing, to abolish the distinction of reference, the mechanism of replacement. Not the image of the vernacular but its cast in plaster. Is this what Fathy did? Is this what the Benjelloun house and the Cakirhan house do? Is this what Bawa’s marvellous Garden House does? Their buildings are convincing as improvements on the vernacular. Their philosophy is not that we are giving you the reproduction so that you will want the original, but rather we are giving you the enhanced reproduction so that you will forget the original. The
Above. The Reinvented vernacular — the traditional Malay house is based upon an evolved system of construction based on rules, regulations and a well understood construction module based on the human form. Sometimes these elements are reused to ‘reinterpret’ the vernacular as with the Walian House in Kuala Lumpur of 1985 by the architect Jimmy Lim.
reproduction has become an original and architecture has transformed the past.

How then can these images of the house, these transformations relate to the city? Have the Fortresses become “Towers of Silence” — in the apartment buildings of New York and Bombay? Has the image of the city, Charles Moore’s nightmare of the building block become irreversible? Will Donald Trump triumph? Is Fritz Lang’s prophetic film Metropolis becoming a reality? We have passed 1984 and although Huxley seemed almost right the human spirit has not quite succumbed.10

There is a sign that the information age will bring with it decentralisation and the large city will give way to smaller cities. Babar Mumtaz made the point that people will be able to work out of their own homes. Here again, I refer back to America and ask; do we in the Third World have to go through the same process, make the same mistakes or can we now grapple with the computer age and go straight into the twenty-first century having skipped the twentieth century? And within this construct the model of the house becomes an even more powerful image. It becomes a tool with which to shape the future.
Left and right: Taking this one step further, the Turkish architect Sedad Eldem accepted the idea of the traditional sofa (central room) and the proportioned division of the wood frame structure to produce a totally contemporary Turkish house. The Suna Kirac House was built on the Bosphorus in Istanbul in 1965.

Plan type with an oval central hall or oval sofa from Türk Evi 1, Istanbul, 1984
Sixty years ago cities seemed crowded and airless and Le Corbusier dreamed of skyscrapers in the parks. We have learned to do the skyscrapers but the parks have eluded us. We can keep trying to find the parks, where the dust is flying around stunted slabs, in the mass housing schemes, in the informal sector settlements. Or we can dig into the traditional memory and look again at houses on the ground — in Asia, in Africa and elsewhere where there are densely populated cities to try and find, in our new programmes, the intimate scale, the variety and the complexity, the qualities of the single family house that will give a chance for the inhabitants of mass housing truly to inhabit their dwellings.

Footnotes

1 The phrase was first used by the Roman architect and theoretician Marcus Vitruvius Pollio who discussed architecture in the 1st century BC (46-30 BC) in his treatise: “Ten Books on Architecture”.

2 The Minimum Property Standards of the Federal Housing Authority of the USA are meant to describe minimums. In an inflationary era they end up describing maximums as well.

3 Gauguin’s painting of 1897 (in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston) is a monumental and mythic work designed to embody a total philosophy of life and civilisation.

4 The Sarabhai family of India, textile scions, are famous patrons of architecture. A house by Le Corbusier sits in their family compound. The artist Noguchi (who died in December 1988) owned a simple eighteenth century farmhouse, furnished with his lamps and sculpture.

5 The cultural anthropologist Hildred Geertz reinforced this view through her work with children in Java, Indonesia and North Africa in a paper presented at the Aga Khan Award for Architecture seminar “Architecture as Symbol and Self-Identity” held in Fez, October 1979.

6 Christopher Alexander, Serge Chermayef et al., in their book Community and Privacy study such models to understand patterns of development.
7 Mohammed Arkoun, the Algerian born Professor of Islamic Thought at the Sorbonne, Paris, has in the past decade been writing about Islam facing modernity and its cultural expression. In his work Arkoun examines issues of authenticity, thinking and political action by the elite and the mass culture. In trying to understand meaning in action and expression Arkoun differentiates between popular (from the people themselves) and populist (gestures for/to the people). His interpretation of cultural expressions could be extended to ideas of *taste* and hence could assist in defining real needs for housing particular groups of individuals.

8 Umberto Eco in his essay “Travels in Hyper Reality” 1975.

9 The “Towers of Silence” are structures in which Parsees (Zoroastrians) place their dead to be cleansed by vultures before the bones are cremated. Perhaps the image is unfair in the realm of mass-housing but we think that it makes the point.

10 Both Fritz Lang’s legendary futuristic masterpiece made in 1926 and set in the year 2026, and George Orwell’s great dystopia 1984 basically are concerned with whether truth exists or whether it is arbitrarily invented by a power system within which individuals fight to retain the possibility of plurality in life. Orwell was rather pessimistic about the matter whereas in Metropolis the confrontation ends on a much more optimistic note.

Note: This paper is an elaboration of a joint discussion by the authors, and was presented on their behalf by Hasan-Uddin Khan to the seminar in Zanzibar.
The Architecture of the Individual House:
Understanding the Models
Hasan-Uddin Khan and Charles Moore

Comments
Charles Correa

Discussion
Mohammed Arkoun
Each project illustrated by Suha Ozkan needs to be considered not only from the architectural point of view but from many other aspects, sociological, political, psychological and historical. I presented a study on the socialist villages in Algeria four years ago in the AKAA seminar in China and I tried to show how these villages were initially conceived in the context of the agrarian revolution.

It is very important to see the impact of an ideology on architectural and urban processes. This is one aspect. Another is how the Algerian peasants, uprooted culturally and socially from their traditional culture and environment, have been transferred to these villages. It is extremely interesting almost ten years later to ponder upon what has happened through the architecture which has been conceived in this concept. This is what I mean by a search to understand the deep mechanisms which are at work in society, through architecture and urbanism. This is our ambition. It is a great ambition because there is no other possible way to approach Muslim societies as a whole. When we do it through architecture, we really approach the deep mechanisms which work in each society, especially in the last 30 years of the historical revolution in the Muslim world.

Through all the seminars organised by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, we are attempting to elaborate a new vocabulary and to understand through architecture what is happening in Muslim societies. This is much more important and a wider responsibility than the subject of architecture per se.

To understand what is happening in Muslim societies which are so diversified in their historical, sociological and cultural situations we need to work as social scientists, architects, philosophers, and historians are working, to understand these societies as a global reality. It is a large task, an important one because there are many demands raised by these societies.

Ismail Serageldin started to elaborate some concepts and he had the didactic concern to do it with slides. Therein lies a problem. How can we use slides if we want to go beyond the study of architectural forms. Is it right for example to illustrate
with slides the three concepts which are keys to understanding, not only what is happening to architecture, but what is happening in Muslim culture, in Muslim society and in Muslim history today? Symbols, signs and signals; these are the three keys. Ismail Serageldin inflated the concept of signal only because it is very easy to illustrate it. But the concept of symbol cannot be illustrated with slides because symbol does not have any reference to an object, to a concrete thing. It is an approach to a reality which frees our spirit, as well as our reason, to understand the realities and to produce our culture. It cannot be put in a slide.

As an historian and as a philosopher, I hear my architect friends using the words "symbol" and "myth" without any clear definition of what these words are signifying when they are used to analyse societies. We do not speak the same language.

Sirin Ali Karanfiloglu
I would like to express my own experiences as an architect on mass housing issues and problems of Istanbul which is similar to cities in the Third World facing fast urbanisation.

I would like to concentrate on the product — architecture, and how it comes about rather than the process of housing. Suha Ozkan has shown examples of successful mass housing developments and unsuccessful mass housing developments. Most of those illustrated from Istanbul were in my opinion unsuccessful because of the way they were developed and the way they were designed.

Whether public housing, private sector development or corporate housing all of the examples lack cooperation between architect and planner, and lack good design.

Everybody is rushing to build. The results of this are huge mass housing blocks built with multiple lift slabs, tunnel form work or with conventional construction methods; all lack individuality, cultural identity and cultural expression. They do not even reflect or express what function or spaces lie behind their fortress-like facades or even what kind of people live behind their walls. Looking at these buildings, they could equally well be office buildings and be in any city in the world.
They tell us nothing about the culture. Varying in height from eight to fifteen storeys, the housing blocks are like fortresses with small punched opening and with no life outside the building. Ismail Serajeldin showed us the expression of individuality and the additions by people to their housing in different circumstances. Those structures however, do not allow extensions outwards.

Sometimes small balconies are found on the facades but they are not sufficient for Turkish families. Turkish families are very hospitable and like living and entertaining in open spaces. The weather allows this type of activity.

When one takes a close look at the mass housing apartment buildings, they are placed on the site in the manner that one throws dice on a table. Traditional courtyard concepts are not considered nor are they used as a space organiser. The random placement of buildings creates unusable spaces, pulling the residents of the town apart from each other rather than encouraging interaction among children and families. There is great need for architects and planners to come together to create good architecture and urban spaces and to work with the municipalities who set guidelines for development.

The architect’s role and the planner’s role is to help people understand the floor ratios and the densities and how just as many units could be accommodated in low rise and traditional ways rather than in these huge slab block forms. We must educate the contractor who hires the architect in most of the cases in the private sector in Turkey. The contractor hires the architect and their main interest is: What is selling? How fast can we build? How much profit can we make? How little can we spend on design and engineering? I will mention one large project which is being built upon urban land outside Istanbul. It is a satellite town of 26,000 units. A masterplan has been prepared and we are working on the design of the units.

Construction material prices are escalating at a tremendous rate in the underdeveloped countries and the faster the contractor builds, the more profit he will get. In such cases, there is no time allocated for design. No time is given for the development of architectural ideas. The contractors use the
fastest possible construction system, not the cheapest. Widely used multiple slab and tunnel form systems are expensive, and the tunnel system is very restrictive in terms of openings and different architectural expressions. Not only are the units being repeated but the room sizes are being repeated which creates very monotonous results. The architect is not given the opportunity to explore and develop ideas.

Units are selling because of the shortage of housing despite the fact that the kind of spaces people require to carry on traditional living or even modern living are not provided. User's opinions are not sought and demand for certain types from previous sales sets the programme for the future. Thus an apartment unit widely used without reappraisal is one with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a completely closed kitchen and connected dining/living spaces.

In order to accomplish our goals and achieve good housing projects in terms of architecture and urban design, we architects must work with all supporting professions — planners, landscape architects and interior designers especially in those Third World countries where this has not been the common practice.

Usually, planners prepare the masterplan, then the architect comes in to work on the approved plan. Architects cannot contribute to the plan because any changes will need to go back to the municipality and will take too long to be approved which will reduce profits for the contractor. It is our job to educate administrators and the contractor, developer or client about the architectural process and strive for good architecture in our cities.

Murat Karayalcin
We are here to evaluate the role of three sectors in mass housing and the role of architects in those three sectors. There are various definitions of success in mass housing.

In mass housing, of course, the architectural works are important but we should also take into consideration the number of houses completed as one definition of success.
If you are in a country where you have a gap between the demand and the actual construction, then the completion of houses and putting the people into those houses becomes an important definition of success.

Turkey has a population of 55 million and each year, it is increasing by one million. The rate of increase of population is 2.6 per cent annually. The rate of increase of requirement for housing is 3.2 per cent annually. The annual requirement is 300,000 houses and the response that can be counted by the construction permits issued is around 200,000. There is an important gap.

Turkey had been meeting its urban requirement until 1980 by building in the existing urban spaces, but after 1980 Turkey started to meet its requirement by planning new cities. The cooperative sector became the leading sector in this process. I believe that there should be many scenarios and there should be as many markets as possible. I do not believe in only one solution. One cannot say that the state will solve it or the private sector will solve the housing problem, if either of those sectors have demand in the market, they will continue to produce houses. In recent years the public sector has almost left the housing market in Turkey. It has taken the role of just creating funds and collaborating with the private sector.

The housing market is left almost entirely to the private sector and cooperative sector but it is the cooperative sector that is leading the way. Co-operatives, as everywhere in the world, organise groups who have a capacity to save.

The co-operatives should have a very important role in meeting housing requirement in Turkey. However, the formula that Suha Ozkan mentioned in his paper: that architects design and contractors build, has two weaknesses.

In the private sector, the architects work within construction firms or the construction firms ask architects to prepare projects which they then construct.

This is disadvantageous for the potential dwellers because the contractor chooses all the materials, they choose the construction, techniques and other things in such a way that they unnecessarily maximise profits. That is one danger
The second point is that for us, in the cooperative sector our cooperation starts when the physical construction has ended. The participation of the individuals is more important after the construction, when the settlement has started than at the very outset. Of course, the participation at the project preparation level is important but it is much more important after the settlement is completed.

I confess that architects have several problems when they are working with us in the cooperative sector in Turkey. The volume of housing we want and the time we give to our architects has caused very many problems. In our case, we plan to start the construction of 5,000 dwelling units every year and we plan to complete at least 2,000 dwelling units every year. When we gave this target to our architects, they said this is not confectionary; we are not working in the textile industry, we cannot do it. But we have to do it. We have to reach that target. It is very urgent. People have been waiting for a long time and the inflation rate is very high so we have to start immediately, you have to start many houses and you have to finish them as soon as possible.

After six years, we have completed 12,000 dwelling units and approximately 50,000 people are living there. On reflection perhaps we should not start 5,000 dwellings every year in a one project area. It is a very heavy load. But in spite of that, I believe that the cooperative sector in the final analysis, is the best sector for architects to work with.

Mohammed Arkoun
The situation in Turkey can be generalised for all Muslim countries, especially the increase of population. The rate of demographic increase has already changed the scale of the problems. This is a most important point and allows me to introduce problems which we have not tackled sufficiently.

We are here in Zanzibar, in East Africa, but we are not speaking enough about this place. Also when we speak about demographic increase, we should discuss the distinction between popular culture and populist culture. All architects have to face this dilemma when they work with generations of
people born in the 1960’s and 1970’s. 60 per cent and in some countries like Algeria and Morocco, 70 per cent of the population are less than 25 years old.

Which kind of culture do these people have and what kind of demands do these people make? It is important to make a distinction between popular culture and populist culture which is growing according to this demographic increase.

The other point I would like to reintroduce was raised by Saad Eddin Ibrahim when he spoke about the state and the many problems raised by the state in Muslim countries since the 1960’s and the 1970’s. It is a totally different thing to the state in Europe and in western societies. This has to be elaborated upon.

He mentioned the civil society opposing the state. I raised the question with him — do we have a civil society today in Muslim societies? It is a great problem, precisely because architects are working within this situation. It is a problem of intellectual elaboration. I introduce it again in order that we can keep it in mind to enrich our horizons in our endeavours to find answers.

Kamran Diba
I hate the title of today’s discussion “Mass Housing”. I think it is a totalitarian expression and it is inhuman. We have a problem of communication when we talk about mass housing. Housing represents only one component of the environment.

Housing does not constitute environment. Environment is made up of neighbourhoods and the community where people live, work and collaborate. When we talk about housing we automatically quantify, that is exactly what we are fighting now because we fear the quantification of housing but housing in a sense is always quantified.

We should stop thinking housing and start thinking and designing neighbourhoods, and perhaps towns. I will give you an example, in the old days countries had a Ministry of War because their intention was to go to war but later they decided this not up to contemporary standards of community and international relations, so they changed it to a Ministry of
Defence. Similarly, when we have a Ministry of Housing, the intention appears to be to build only houses.

The second issue, is that of imaginability. The so called 5 or 6-storey walk-up or slab block has a very strong, simple image which is embedded in the minds of every bureaucrat who dreams of solving the problems of housing. We have to decode and we have to destroy this image if we want to attack the problem of slab blocks. Why is it so attractive this image of the high rise block. It is because it is understood by everybody. Every technocrat can dream of his apartment and then figure out the costs and the units of one block and then quantify it.

It is much more difficult to work with an architect or with a group of intellectuals or with an interdisciplinary team to arrive at a solution which is creative and embodies a sense of community. That vision cannot be easily transformed or communicated to the client.

Also when a politician thinks of a high rise block he knows that he can cut a ribbon within his political lifetime. In other words, he is not starting a project which others will get the credit for. So that is even more attractive.

Recalling one of my personal experiences. When I started doing housing projects for a developer in the USA, we decided to build two units to get the consumers’ reaction. Of course, I had designed the whole project but as we went along we received feedback from the users and I started re-adjusting and redesigning. Eventually the project was successfully completed but we were unhappy about the whole experience.

Later, however, I thought about it and it dawned on me that I was doing a product design. I was not trained for it and I had never done a product design. The product design is something for the shelf to be consumed and in a market like that in the USA you have a competitive situation where people may not just pick up your box from the shelf. But in a developing country where the state has a total monopoly and a captive-user whatever is produced as a product, the user has no choice but to take it — because of lack of choice.

The architect is always trained to deal with a private client where he can communicate, make trade-offs and compromise.
and provide something which the user needs and desires. In a project commissioned by the state for low-income housing, you have a particular target group. If you have an architect who is sensible to the situation he will identify very clearly and work with the target group to create an environment which is conducive to their lifestyle and way of life.

When we talk about quality in architecture, quality is very abstract. I recall a friend of mine, an architect, once told me that a client came to him who wanted a house. As he had built a number of houses, he wanted to show his client these houses, so he took him by car to one of his housing projects. As they were driving along, the client said “Isn’t this a beautiful house?” and they went a little further and the client said “Isn’t that a beautiful house?” By the end of the street my friend realised that he didn’t want to go to his project because he knew by the standard of taste and judgment his client was applying he was going to hate the project. So, one man’s quality project is another man’s poison.

To address the civic issue further; the aesthetic of the high rise and the vertical distribution of units becomes a problem, because we stack up poverty and we put it on view. In the case of low income housing, it is much more visually tolerable to horizontally distribute houses. Many of the pretty housing projects that were shown by Suha Ozkan, I am afraid were at the pre-occupation stage. When people move in they leave their mark and the architectural environment is transformed to a new environment that is not recognisable.

Mohammed Arkoun
Whether we like it or not the expression “mass housing”, is a fact. It is there. Can architects come up with some architectural solutions. That is the nature of our search and it is questionable. Are architects able to face this demand which will increase in the next ten years, and which is a mass demand? Can they face it with architectural tools and means? It is a problem and we have to discuss it.
Kamau Karogi

When we are talking about Eastern Africa, we are talking about, in a broad sense Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Tanzania. We are also talking about countries which we generally consider as Eastern Africa such as Zambia and Zimbabwe. That geographically is a very large area. I want to highlight the fact that there is a very clear distinction between the coastal area of Eastern Africa and the interior. Zanzibar is one representation of a coastal town. It is a cultural meeting point. Mombasa is another good representation of the East African coastal settlement and Lamu is yet another but there are clear distinctions between Zanzibar, Mombasa and Lamu.

The problem of Lamu is conservation of the existing housing stock. Throughout history it has responded to certain cultural aspects and it has very stable building and planning ideas. The problem is now to preserve Lamu. It is a problem made slightly difficult because one is trying to superimpose, to a certain extent, a different culture on the houses to that which was there originally. It originated from a different culture. Lamu can be called a Swahili town. It is quite an old town and it has influences from the Middle East, from India and also an interesting Islamic tradition. Now you find the people from the interior coming into Lamu. It begins now to become a problem of re-interpretation of the use of spaces.

Mombasa is also an old town which was built with influences from the Middle East and India and also local traditions. We also have the same situation in Lamu although Lamu is different from Mombasa in the sense that Mombasa is more cosmopolitan. Other people have already come in from the mainland, and they also beginning to influence what is going on there. When I walk around Zanzibar, I see the difference between Lamu and Zanzibar although Lamu and Zanzibar are close in the sense that they are dense monolithic settlements which seem to have one basic consideration in terms of their growth.

I want to raise the problem that must be encountered by anyone who wants to do some conservation work or some development work. The issues here are firstly the improvement
of the building fabric and secondly making sure that the houses are able to fit a multiplicity of cultures or conversely that a multiplicity of cultures are able to utilise both the restored residences and the new developments.

Going inland, the biggest problem is one of numbers and quality. From my experience in Nairobi, there is no single mass housing scheme which seems to work in terms of retaining those people who were meant to occupy it. In these mass housing estates the concept of “home” was not addressed. One such project is the large World Bank project in Dandora. Our experience is that the majority of plots there were purchased by rich people and tenants are in most of those units.

We have a big dilemma in terms of housing, especially in the creation of communities. One problem is how to inculcate in the people, the concept of permanent urban living, to convince them that for the rest of their good days they are going to live in the town. The rural routes, for a lot of people, are still open. People look back to where they came from, they have their relatives there, and there is close cultural interaction between towns and the rural areas.

A classical example, not long ago, was of a prominent lawyer who died and a major issue developed as to whether he should be buried in Nairobi or back home in Western Kenya. It was a debate that highlighted the complex problem of cultural definition, and of instilling into people the idea that urban homes are permanent places and they should live there.

There are differences from place to place. During the colonial days, there were some places where due to reasons of control, the colonial power found it necessary to consolidate and adjudicate land, in which case traditional clans were split. In those situations (it happened in the rural areas of Central Kenya) you find that people tend to accept urban life more readily. In places where adjudication or consolidation was not done, there is still a common thing that binds a clan. That is the common land. Their links to the rural area are stronger.

The problems we have to address or try to address so far as mass housing is concerned in Eastern Africa is how does the person coming from the rural area fit into the town? What
cultural components does he retain and how much of this
cultural content does the house truncate in forcing him to
conform? This is the biggest problem and the biggest
dilemma. There are indications that if you make sure that the
people are involved in the process of construction and the
process of choice their tendencies are to create communities.

One big problem we have in Nairobi is that we have
dormitories — we do not have communities. This is because
people do not feel that they belong to whatever neighbourhood
they live in. They don’t care about it, the turnover is very high,
people move from one place to another, and that is a problem.
But we have also found in the old housing schemes especially
where there is subsidised rental, a very high level of stability in
those communities. How do you explain that? I do not know,
but I think the component of affordability has something to do
with it. We are really on the one hand talking about providing
houses rapidly in large numbers and on the other hand trying
to somehow devise approaches which can ensure that people
feel that they belong to those houses and they take care of them
and they form urban communities. That is the problem.

M Mturi
I am not an architect. I am an archeologist and an architectural
conservator. I deal with conserving and maintaining the
existing housing stock rather than new buildings.

There are a number of problems in this part of the world.
Firstly, there is contradiction between modernity and what
exists. The tendency has been to demolish and build anew
whether the old buildings were of historical significance or not.

This is a problem of how we came to understand what
modernity means. In most urban areas, when we talk about
development the policy adopted has been to demolish and
build anew. Of course building anew means high rise blocks.
There is a need for conserving historical buildings but also
conserving existing housing stock for continued use.

There is no need to demolish an existing unit which
provides a service. We should retain it, properly maintain it for
continued use and use the resources which go into demolition
to build extra housing stock. This is something we should understand in this part of the world. I am not only talking about historical buildings which to a lot of people means monumental buildings. Urban conservation is much wider than that. We talk about conserving the totality of the built environment, as a living environment. We must examine what is still usable and continue using it. This is the thing we have been lacking and we must change our perceptions.

We talk about creating new, rather than saying: What do we have here? How best can we play this resource called the housing stock? What additional requirements do we need? This philosophy is gradually permeating among our planners and among our architects, and reaching our policy makers but it is still not rooted in our planning system. This is still operating on the concept of major development; demolish and build a new vision. Who's vision I do not know. Is it the planner's vision, the architect's vision or the user's vision?

One approach is represented by the Stone Town in Zanzibar. The Stone Town is more than a few monumental building. It represents a major investment in resources. The building stock of more than 2,000 buildings is a major investment. What do we do with that investment? Should we retain the Stone Town or eradicate it and build anew? We have all agreed now that it must be protected. Firstly, as an historical resource but also as a housing resource which should be properly managed to continue to meet the various housing needs of Zanzibar. But this is a new concept in East Africa. The same applies to Lamu. (Details of the Stone Town in Zanzibar are contained in the Appendices — Editor).

A similar approach is being taken in Mombasa. We are still debating what to do in Dar es Salaam. If left to our planners, all the inherited housing stock which is labelled "colonial", would have gone by now.

But we still use them. A lot of our senior officers stay in the former colonial government buildings. Most of the government ministries are still housed in colonial buildings. They are using them because they do not have enough money to build new buildings. If the resources were available today, most of
those buildings would be pulled down and we would build, what might be called, modern functional buildings. Functional to whom, I do not know. It is historically speaking, painful — you do not throw out a colonial master and then start praising what he did. That is the root of the problem here. LOOKED at another way however, it is a resource, a building, a house, an investment. So, inherit it and use it properly.

When we talk about conservation, we should not only look at monumental buildings, like the ones in Zanzibar. Our people have their own buildings. We were talking in Session II about informal squatters. What are slums? What are squatters? Most structures build by the people utilise the knowledge and skills which they used in the rural areas before they came to the urban areas. So they use the type of materials they used previously; they use their skills and build their own shelter on the outskirts of cities.

We used to say, that the squatters should be removed. But we do not talk any longer about slum clearance or squatter removal. The term now is "upgrading and improvement". We improve what the people already have. We upgrade it to meet certain standards, though there is a problem in that the building standards and codes were framed by the colonial power and they did not take into consideration what we are now talking about.

Accepted that problem, the policy now is not to demolish, but to up-grade and improve. This policy was tried immediately after independence — in Dar es Salaam. Historically, Dar es Salaam is divided into three main sectors — the European quarter, where the European civil servants lived. The Asian quarter, which was residential and commercial. And the quarter which with the exception of a government quarter, was mostly made up of "Wattle and daub" building with a roof of Macurra. Macurra is woven palm leaves. These are what we call a Swaheli building with six rooms opening onto a common corridor and a courtyard providing common facilities.

Now within this dwelling unit would be several families renting rooms. The first major housing improvement exercise was up-grading of this type of building. They were not
demolished. They were remodelled with "modern materials" which meant cement blocks and corrugated iron sheets. Provision of water, and electricity was done on a tenant participation basis.

The buildings were then given back to their owners who repay the cost out of the rent they collect. That method however does not increase the number of housing units, it just improved what was existing. It was concluded that this does not get us over the problem because there is no increase of housing stock. That idea was gradually abandoned. In another project, funded by the World Bank, infrastructure was provided. People were permitted to build their own houses. That was a good approach but the end result was problematic because the sites did not go to the people who were supposed to be the beneficiaries. Once the infrastructure was put in, the status of the area and the value of the plot appreciated and instead of the plots going to the needy, they went to those who could afford them. That did not help the people who were living in the slums. It benefitted the people basically in the business community and those already in employment with higher incomes. But the idea is good; the government should provide the services and the infrastructure and then let the people gradually improve their own houses.

Here I would like to say that the architect is not the only player. Much as the topic here is architecture and housing, housing is only one development activity within the overall system, whereby we have to use our resources to meet people's needs. Architects in any given situation, will have to work with other people. We are talking about community and providing housing to the community. We are talking about more than just providing a building. We are talking about managing an environment. If we are going to solve the problem, what is basically required is an organiser to assist the community in meeting its own housing needs. We are talking about a barefoot architect or what I would call a community architect who organises the people to provide their own housing needs.
The government cannot abdicate its responsibility. The government has a role to play but it is not the only institution to provide housing. The private sector, the employers, as well as the government should play a role in providing housing.

Rueben Mutiso

Mass housing is a reality in this part of the world and we can learn some lessons from the recent past. In Nairobi, Kenya, the World Bank housing project at Dandora, is an example of mass housing. In this particular case, the people themselves were involved, services were provided, plans were prepared and the plans were given out to the allottees. A time limit was given within which the units were to be erected. There were technical officers supervising the construction, because the plans were prepared by an architect. The result of this, is an estate that is extremely exciting with much variety and beautiful stone work. People “collected” materials from many different sources despite the fact that material loans were provided. Paint came from different suppliers and in the end there was great diversity which makes the estate relatively more interesting.

Contrast that with a nearby Commonwealth Development Corporation project in Nairobi. Five thousand dwelling units were produced. But this time, there was a total participation of the professional architects and the notion that if you paint five thousand units the same colour the units will be cheaper — that is false economy. All the buildings were painted white which is quite unnecessary in Nairobi. The roofs are similar and what we have is a totally boring environment, apart from the courtyards.

The owners have now decided to create interest, and they have just done this by erecting dividing walls. So that they can at least identify their building from their neighbour’s.

Another site and service project — the Miritini Housing Project, in Mombasa, has produced an interesting environment which has been created by the people themselves.

I am involved in a project in Naikuru. We did the physical planning and the delivery of services and to a limited extent
supervised the construction. Once again, what is being created in that project is an interesting environment.

Then there are the "Turnkey operators". The turnkey concept is absolutely alien in this part of the world. They are being imported from the North. Their main purpose is to make a quick profit and in the process deliver units for an unknown client. In the other examples, the allottees are known. You know who you are building for. In the case of the turnkey operators, they come, land is made available, and they put up boxes one on top of another.

What is created is an environment that is unacceptable in this country and yet you find the units being occupied simply because people must live somewhere and there is lack of housing. In conclusion, everywhere where the people themselves have been involved in mass housing, an interesting environment has been delivered. Where the client is not known and the issue is purely economics, we witness disasters.

Ismail Serageldin
It is important that we recognise that this is a large problem but we have to cut it down into smaller parts in order to make headway and we should not be going backwards and forwards reminding each other that it is a very large problem and that it is interlinked. We have several subsets of this problem and what we are trying to address in this particular session is what one would define as the architect designed, contractor built, institutional client, subset of the problem.

We discussed in an earlier session the informal sector which may or may not also use contractors. I would propose that we clarify for purposes of focussing the discussion whether we are talking about process or product. We all recognise for the larger scale of mass housing we have to deal with the process. Ultimately we have to change the process, change the mindset, empower the people so the role of the architect becomes supportive. Mona Serageldin gave us all the reasons why the informal sector is vibrant and indicated the government policies that will deal with the bulk of the problem.
Putting aside this particular question, we have a problem with the provision of specific products and Murat Karalaycin gave us a real example of the constraints involved with delivering a product on a large scale. These are real — is there room for improvement or is there not? Suha Ozkan showed us some examples of cases where there is room for improvement, some of them are too expensive to be replicated, others are not necessarily so. The Hafsi project that he showed us is of the same cost as built by the Public Housing Agency in the same town. So this much we do know.

One last point that we should keep in mind is that sometimes above and beyond the issue of cost, there is also room for the provision of the occasional product that serves the function of enlarging the expectations and images that people use to define what is desirable. These are legitimate parts of the problem and it would be helpful if we pursue the discussions of these, and we do not go back to how vast the problem is.

**Anthony Mtwi**

My concern is the cost of housing. This is critical and we have to find out ways in which architects can produce cheaper housing or the shelter required by the population.

Architects should place more emphasis on ways of reducing the cost of housing. How much time is devoted during the process of planning and designing a project to studying ways of using local resources, building materials and technologies?

Architects should look at ways of using the existing regulation or even recommending to government the repeal of regulations which are prohibiting cheaper housing.

In the training of architects, an orientation towards the problems of people with different social circumstances and social problems should be emphasised in our universities. Architects should realise exactly what local resources are available and what to use to reduce the cost of building construction. I understand that architects charge fees for their work as a percentage of the cost of the work. This is a dangerous approach and discourages the objectives which we want to achieve of getting houses that are affordable.
Finally on the question of research. Architects are doing independent research and there is a fragmented approach to things. Perhaps those who are working in the same region on the same problems could develop a research methodology and could disseminate ideas to tackle problems and reduce costs. Perhaps we could identify a university where we could gather all this knowledge and benefit from it as a group.

Charles Correa
I realise we all come from different backgrounds but I did not realise that I was so different from Colin Amery. He said that the first session left him with despair. I was left with great hope. We were talking about 60 to 70 per cent of the people — the real mass of people. The hope emanated from Tasneem Siddiqui’s paper and the images, of people “on the move”. It made one realise what actually is going on, on this planet.

Let me put it this way. The images I saw in Suha Ozkan’s presentation are of middle class housing. The people in that earlier presentation would be servants in the building which Suha Ozkan showed. They would not be occupying it as owners in any country I know of in the Third World. So it seems that it is not an either/or situation. We need both, if anyone is dealing with housing as a massive issue. I, like Kamran Diba object to the words mass housing. I object on grounds of the accuracy of the words.

Mona Serageldin’s paper was on the informal sector and we looked at projects such as that mentioned by Father Jorge Anzorena in Peru, where the land is dissagregated into smaller plots. That is the key to the solution and then an architect can step in and design the spaces, which should include open-to-sky spaces and come down to the individual typologies. I would not call such a man a “barefoot” architect because he needs all the skills of a fully fledged architect.

Looking at Suha Ozkan’s examples I would divide them differently. The criteria we were all using, and Suha Ozkan was using it implicitly, was the aesthetic and the cultural criteria because we were not told densities or cost or anything like that. On the cultural issue there were three simple categories. First
are those designs which were sublimely oblivious to culture that come at you as the final solution. The second ones were the architect designed ones which were sensitive to culture but were too didactic. They were impervious to being colonised by people. That is very important for you can do a brilliant building but it may be impervious to change and even to people. The third kind were the ones which were malleable. The people can take over. There is no way you can build in many countries and certainly in Pakistan and India and I think Sri Lanka without the bicycles, the cows and the political slogans taking over. These are the sacred gestures, which I see all over. We have to learn to move towards them. That is where the culture comes in.

There is a real role for the architect laying out these houses and there is also the freedom of choice. If for example, 300 people decide to live in an apartment block, let them do so. We don’t have to stop them. But I think from this would come a new vernacular because it would take into account people’s aspirations. If we want this territorialising, with cultural expression, and a sense of belonging, we need to disaggregate the problem. That is really important. We aggregate the problem only to get the adrenalin working in our systems and for politicians to understand the scale of the issues. But if we could diseggregate our response — now there lies the difference between calling the session mass housing and a massive housing issue.

Mass housing is not a problem it is a form of a solution. The problem is the massive amount of housing needed. But the term mass housing implies a centralised response. Let me put it this way. There is a massive amount of food to be cooked tonight in this very city, mass feeding is a response but it doesn’t mean you have to have one or two big kitchens. By disaggregating the thousands of kitchens across this city or any other, we have edible food. What we are talking about is a change and it seems we have to repeat it again and again and again, to break this mind-set. Mass housing is actually a technique. It is a state of mind and it has delivered certain solutions which we find inedible.
John de Monchaux
I would like to continue the discussion on the architect’s role. It is central to our discussions. If the images that accompanied Suha Ozkan’s paper were an answer to a question — what could that question have been? What was the question to which those buildings were the answer? A very important part of the role of an architect is the period of dialogue between a sponsor and an architect and to improve that dialogue, to improve the questions and the answers during a design process. We heard from Murat Karayalcin about the constraints of time on that dialogue. There are other constraints on the quality of that dialogue. The hallmark of quality dialogue is that it has both intensity — as well as range — range in depth and range in topic covered.

The ingredients to achieve intensity and to achieve range certainly include time and I would assert that part of that dialogue can take place in seminars such as this one and even before the architect is commissioned but part of it must take place during that period when the architect is engaging with the community, or with the sponsor of the housing. There is another ingredient for the quality of that dialogue and that is the skill and the judgement of the architect. And for that educators have to take a special responsibility.

The third ingredient is patience. There must be a capacity to listen to ideas that are silly and be tolerant of them and to recognise that you may have to come back again to the table. The final ingredient to improve that question and answer process is to be ready to accept as an answer the unexpected. I have a hunch that some of the best examples that Suha Ozkan showed us were not expected by the client or the sponsor when the dialogue began. They were indeed the product of the most patient, the most painstaking, perhaps the most time consuming debate that could be imagined. So I would make a plea for a quality of dialogue that gives us better answers as well as better questions.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim
I would like to make three remarks but before I do, let me
clarify a concept that seems to have been misunderstood — the concept of the barefoot architect. I did not mean literally a barefoot man going around with some papers trying to help people. What I meant was the spirit of going barefoot, meaning somebody who is with the people, who does not frighten them, does not alienate them, who can communicate with them. Tasneem Siddiqui as he was elaborating his scheme, looked to me like a barefoot architect, even though he is not trained in architecture, because he is the functional equivalent of the village mason. In the village everybody knows who can help him build and the mason, like the mason who won an AKAA award in Mali — is a barefoot architect in a way. We need an equivalent to him in the city where things are anonymous. Where the dwellers or the seekers of the service may not know a mason or an architect, you need to provide a functional equivalent. I used the words as an image, as a metaphor and not to be taken literally. This is to clarify a concept that apparently gets misunderstood.

The difficulty in our dialogue, is that we are talking about three different kinds of consciousness. One consciousness is very basic — the first level of consciousness, which was dealt with in part of the paper by Mona Serageldin and the commentaries by the three discussants. That is where people are really looking for as speedy as possible a solution for the most basic shelter in our rapidly growing urban centres. For those people the question of taste, of aesthetics and so on is secondary. Not that they would not welcome a nice design that humanises their environment but that is not really a major concern. That is one level of consciousness — looking for fulfillment of basic needs. Here the barefoot architect or a nice architect with a good consciousness may go to a settlement or an area and do two or three prototypes that could be emulated in an inexpensive way.

The second level of consciousness is the so called mass housing but which is not directly supported. It is directed to the lower-middle class and the middle-class in most Third World countries and I dare say that much of that housing ends up in the possession of the bureaucrats. The characteristic of
that level of consciousness and practice is that somebody can deal in formal signals or signs, can deal with the bureaucracy, can fill up an application; somebody who has connections, who knows how to go to a politician and get his name on the roster or on the line or whatever. That is a class that is growing in our Third World countries. It is a class that is concerned with acquisition. Of course there is a need for housing but it is a need for slightly better housing than what they have or housing for their children who are about to get married.

In the 1986 census in Egypt, despite all the talk about the shortage of housing, it turned out there were one million vacant housing units in Cairo alone. This is a city of 40 million people with a severe housing shortage and yet there are one million vacant housing units. It turned out on further investigation that many of these are owned by absentee landlords or people who already have one housing available to them for their living requirements but they are saving for the future and investing. Many of these one million units were public housing subsidised by the state in one form or another.

The third level of consciousness which is of great concern to us is that given that we have to live with mass housing, collective housing, large-scale housing, call it whatever you wish; is there a possibility of upgrading its cultural authenticity to make it humane. I think that is a concern of a very small minority, even among architects. The majority of architects live like bureaucrats. They are concerned about getting work and getting commissions. The concern for the aesthetics of the individual, of cultural authenticity are the concern of a very small number of architects and other people in society. The challenge is how to influence this third level of consciousness. Here we may have to really work hard on smuggling some of the ideas in gradually.

My other point is about the political/economical milieu. Colin Amery noted that there are societies that have gone through similar problems to those under discussion especially Europe in the nineteenth century. This sparked off movements like the Garden City approach, the Fabian society approach, the anarchist approach, the cooperative approach. All this
really grew in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century in reaction to a similar problem. The scale was different. The stage of development and the nature of economy was different but there was a demand and there was a problem of a similar nature if not of similar scale. There were all these reactions some of which found a way to be implemented, some of which remained utopian and purely visionary.

**Tasneem Siddiqui**

In most developing countries, the government policies are not working successfully in providing shelter to the urban poor.

What we have seen in the illustrations of mass housing does not give us much hope and we should not keep pursuing that line of action. What is happening in most developing countries, for example in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka is that the housing backlog is so huge that government at first cannot tackle this problem.

In Pakistan in the late 1950’s money was arranged through the World Bank and low-cost small housing units were provided to the poor but the cost recovery was so poor that even after 25 years, 75 per cent of the money has not been recovered. This approach has not worked, the solutions have not been appropriate, so they should not be discussed again and again in the context of countries like Pakistan.

Perhaps this form of public housing can work well in Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuwait and other small countries. But in countries like India and Pakistan there must be innovative and imaginative approaches to solve the problems with community participation. Little finance will be required, only land has to be made accessible to the urban poor. The tendencies in these countries is that the rich are holding enough land for everybody’s needs. The richer people hold land for their future needs because land can be sold on the open market at a premium. They hold the land for the dowry of their daughters and to hedge against galloping inflation. The policies of developing countries have to be changed because there are a lot of wastages. When poor people go to the spontaneous growth areas and the subdividers, this activity is
treated as a crime. They are not treated as dignified citizens of the state. Land is not being provided for them by the state and when they find affordable options, they are treated as criminals. These things have to be kept in mind whilst we talk about solving the housing shortages in countries like India Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Mona Serageldin
When architects design houses, for better or for worse they provide the images that shape the visions of what is desirable, for those who cannot afford or do not have access to the architect-built buildings. When a person in an informal settlement buys a plot or when a beneficiary of a site and service project gets his site and demolishes the core wall that is on it and starts building, no matter how long it takes him to achieve his dwelling, it is very clear from my work that he already has very clear vision of what he wants. He may want a balcony, he may want a tiled roof. There is a very clear image of what is desirable and that comes from the architect-built housing and that is why it is important.

The second point that I want to make is that there is a high degree of overlap between the formal and the informal sectors and they should not be dichotomised. The people in the informal settlements who are building albeit chaotically are very much socio-economically of the same groups that are in cooperatives. They can be formalised through the cooperative system and there is a high potential for interaction. That is an avenue that we should pursue more.

Babar Mumtaz
I will concentrate on this particular segment of the problem which is looking at mass housing. In the presentation by Suha Ozkan, the question was asked why is the slab block persistent as a response to mass housing? What is the answer to this?

One of the reasons why the slab block as a response to mass housing persists, has to do with the power of images and the persistence of a myth long after the reality has passed. Most people’s images of a house is a basic pitched roof with a door
and two windows and that persists even though nobody actually lives in such a house. In the same way we have an image of a city and the city’s image is of the tower block and when a politician or a government goes in for slab blocks, it is responding to that image. It is not just a matter of being able to cut a tape, that you can do in a low-rise housing development as well. But when you are told that there is a housing crisis and that the housing crisis is caused by the shortage of land, then a high-rise building they feel must represent high density, and consequently that must be the right image. It is that image that comes to you, and it is one of the reasons why such solutions persist.

The reason needs to be questioned, because the whole notion of urbanisation and urban development in the future is changing. When we talk about an increasing rate of urbanisation, it will go on until a balance is reached. The balance is not 50-50. The balance is 97 per cent in urban areas, 3 per cent in rural areas. That is going to come and that is the balance that will be reached around the world. We are not talking about the growth of other cities. It is not that the whole rural population will come to the cities as much as the rural settlements of today will become the urban settlements of tomorrow. Simultaneously there will be new images. When we talk about 97 per cent of the population of America living in cities, they will not all be living in New York. A very large proportion will be living in middle America and though the middle American towns do have the odd slab block a lot of it is low density housing. When we look at mass housing we must not and should not confuse it with the tower block imagery. We must look to alternative images for the future city.

Mass housing must not equal mass construction. Mass housing must begin to be the creation of conditions where it simply means housing by the masses and in that the role of the cooperatives is crucial. Murat Karayalçin mentioned the notion that as a cooperative you are able to open up land. As Suha Ozkan said for a private developer the opening up of land outside the existing settlement is a complicated process but as a cooperative you can open up land. But then I understand the
problem that you can face by having to get the commitment of 5,000 or 10,000 families to move to a new piece of land which a private developer does not have.

Why then presume you have to go to one architect and have one construction site, why not create the sort of conditions that Tasneem Siddiqui has been creating for housing by the masses.

Robert Powell
Singapore may not be relevant to Pakistan and India but I wonder if it has some lessons in terms of institutional frameworks because it is in some ways a success story. I am not a Singaporean but I have been resident in Singapore for some five years. It is a small island, 640 square kilometres with 2.65 million people with a diverse racial mix, 75 per cent Chinese, 15 per cent Malay and 8 per cent Indian. The island achieved independence in 1965 and the Housing and Development Board (HDB) was set up.

The housing situation at the time of independence was not dissimilar to the problems faced in many parts of the Third World. There was a substantial housing problem. Many people lived in substandard accommodations without adequate sanitation, without fresh water and so on.

Now, 25 years after the formation of the Housing and Development Board, 80 per cent of Singaporeans are rehoused in 2, 3, 4 and 5 room apartments. That is about 2 million people rehoused in 25 years. The average monthly income is around US$300. Nearly all the public housing is high-rise slab blocks of about 15 storeys. The elevators all work. They are maintained regularly, the refuse chutes are all emptied regularly, the maintenance is very good. The units are sold to the occupants upon completion who finance the deposits drawing on their CPF savings. The CPF is the Central Provident Fund.

Everybody in the population contributes part of their monthly incomes to this Central Provident Fund. I contribute 25 per cent, my employer also contributes. To take an example, my house servant and her husband have just bought an apartment for S$54,000 (approximately US$27,000).
Everything is provided by the Housing and Development Board who acquire the land with land acquisition powers and eliminates all land speculations keeping housing prices at a subsidised level. They provide all other amenities as well, sports fields, area offices, markets and so on. The system is fair, methodical and totally pragmatic.

I have three short questions that arise out of this — Is this model unique to Singapore or is it replicable? The second big question is, what will happen when 80 per cent of the housing stock of the nation built in a short period of 25 years becomes old and in need of major maintenance? What happens in 50 years’ time? I see that as a problem. The third question is more fundamental, what are the long term effects of removing individual self-expression or what could be termed, cultural expression from mass housing?

His Highness The Aga Khan
I want to take up some points that were made by John de Monchaux and many delegates from Kenya and from Tanzania. It is the necessity for the community to be an integral partner in the development process of the housing, and the need for there to be a dialogue between the community and the people responsible for developing the product. A question which is delicate and difficult to answer is how does the architect determine who is his partner in this dialogue? Is that dialogue partner qualified to talk about the issues of concern to the community, is the dialogue partner dealing with a quantum of people that is manageable or a quantum of people that is unmanageable. When you talk about 5,000 or 10,000 housing units, what is the process of information that needs to pass from the constituency that you wish to house to the people who are responsible for the project? This gets back to the question how you organise communities to articulate their needs in an organic and structured manner and in language which people can respond to? That is perhaps one of the most delicate issues in developing housing in the Third World because communities are not necessarily organised and they are not necessarily articulate. In an industrialised world, one simply does not live
with that sort of problem. I want to underline that issue as being one that is small but nonetheless fundamental to the whole process.
Without flattering our host, it needs to be said that the extraordinary value of the AKAA organised by the Aga Khan Trust is that it has in its first 10 years shown the world how standards can be raised.

It has also shown, that there is encouragement to be found in the architectural profession. We should not point to the architect or the planner or the academics simply as the scapegoat, who imposes solutions. We have seen, principally it must be said in the Mediterranean world how architects can through the virtues of their training and their skills as designers, produce solutions. But they cannot produce these solutions on their own.

I was most interested in the third part of Suha Ozkan’s paper which was a glimpse of the cooperative movement. I sense that though I wasn’t present in Jakarta when the Award last discussed the subject of mass housing that there is an enormous “wind of change” blowing through the whole question of mass housing. It is something we ought to be able to grasp and perhaps even to put down on paper at the end of this seminar. Not literally a declaration but a view that there is this wind of change. It was an English politician Harold McMillan who came to Africa and talked about a wind of change many years ago. He was then talking about politics but it cannot be forgotten when you are talking about housing. The “wind of change” is that we can learn from perfectly ordinary people, very poor people, very humble people, people who have faced up to the day by day problems. We can learn as His Highness pointed out by looking at the process. This is an important midpoint in the seminar. We have shown the success of the architects and the involvement of the Award, in promoting high standards but let us consider what we are doing in this seminar. It seems a good point to pause, and ask a few more questions. The fundamental question that we have to ask is “Do we see a way ahead?”. It is also important we think back to what has been said already and try to evolve a concrete context so that we can go home with something coherent.

We have learned already the value of talking to each other. We have learned as architects and professionals that the only
way to deal with problems is to share them. There must be a way ahead, out of this enormous problem, the problem of architecture of mass housing.

If we are going to find solutions we have to enter into the problem and into the culture of mass housing today. We have to enter into this as fully as possible.

At the end of the second session, Oleg Grabar asked — who is in charge of housing? It is too important, he said for governments and architects, too complicated for ordinary people and yet we have seen that when ordinary people are in charge of their destinies, even with the most minimal resources, they are not overwhelmed. It is us who bring in the academic complexity and the architectural complexity.

Ordinary people find it perfectly easy to create simple and effective solutions. True this is often a solution that is borne out of desperation but often only to the eyes of westerners and the educated elites do these solutions appear to be inadequate.

We must be very careful before we make too many judgements and too many generalisations. At the end of the day this seminar must produce imaginative vision, some practical help and ideas to energise effective change at the level both of the ordinary person and of the government.

Said Zulficar gave us some frightening statistics at the opening of the seminar. The urban populations of the world will be quadrupled by 2025. It is not very far away. Do not be lulled into thinking this is just a Third World problem. It is a problem for mankind. We can perhaps redefine some of our ideas about home and housing and how these objects ought to be achieved.

The President of Tanzania asked us to consider ways both of encouraging modernity and of protecting our roots. One would think that those two things are absolutely poles apart but the Award has shown that it is not impossible to modernise the world, create workable living environments and protect tradition in the Muslim world.

The Aga Khan advised us to avoid the trap of the mass solution. We have to look at the process. How can governments provide the decision making process? We know
Third World governments simply do not have the money to consider housing. They may not have the money but they have to have the political will, they have to provide the decision making and they have to provide support. It is only with government support that we can achieve the local autonomy to make it possible for people to build decent houses for themselves or to have housing provided for those who cannot provide for themselves.

The mood of the conference thus far, has been both inspiring and depressing but it is very important that we are not overwhelmed by this problem. The mood is clearly against reviving any kind of imposed solution on the housing problem. It is more, a mood of learning from the initiatives of the poor and to find ways for governments and professionals to enable the poor to expand these initiatives. It must be the poor that we think about all the time. In some ways the world has seen this problem before, not in this part of the world but in nineteenth century Europe and America when the industrial revolution brought exactly this kind of population explosion. There was a rush to the cities, land reform, the advent of machinery, wealth for a few and labour for large numbers. In the nineteenth century too there was plenty of informal housing and some model solutions. In the nineteenth century there were pioneers. I would mention briefly one Englishman who was a pioneer and went out on a limb and thought out many of the problems we are talking about. Ebenezer Howard wrote a book at the end of the nineteenth century which we now know as Garden Cities of Tomorrow but when he wrote it, he was not so modest and he called it The Peaceful Path to Social Reform. It is that peaceful path that we should be on today.

Howard saw then how fatal it was for governments and indeed for architects and professionals to think in compartments and with respect Suha Ozkan’s paper was rather compartmentalised. It was the product of an architect’s mind. I know that Suha Ozkan is well aware that there are other problems. But it is very important to remember as Ebenezer Howard pointed out, in the nineteenth century that you cannot separate housing from work. Similarly, you cannot separate
man from nature; you cannot separate all the facilities that go to make up a full life from politics and economics and all those things beyond the home. Ebenezer Howard did not just write tracts, he actually built and with others he bought land and set up two model communities based on simple principles like work, housing and nature, being brought together.

Of course in a way he was an escapist, he did not feel these things could be dealt with in the nineteenth century urban setting. He built new communities outside cities which were self-contained and self-sufficient. But he had an impact; showing how model solution can work and he had an impact on the British government and indeed on the French government. Many others have now adopted New Town philosophies. I am wondering whether it is too late to stop architects from living totally in compartments.

We have suffered in the twentieth century from the compartmental philosophy of architects like Le Corbusier who produced a vision. I think history will look back on that vision and adjudge that we went through a moment of madness. It was a vision of the city which we now see was a nightmare.

But let us not waste time looking for scapegoats. Ismail Serageldin warned us that designers’ dreams fashion our consciousness. Let that be written on the wall, “Designers Dreams Fashion Our Consciousness”. Make sure that it is the right designer!

In the United Kingdom, the designers’ dream certainly did cause enormous social problems.

I know for a fact, that the government in England looked to architects after the second world war to find solution to housing problem. It was architects who said the solution was the high rise block. This is absolutely documented in England and in America. The architects, linking with the prefabricated building contractors produced a solid dream which was immediately alluring to politicians because you can see a high rise block. You can count the votes floor by floor of the number of houses which you build. That was a designers’ dream, fashioning the consciousness of the politician. So choose your designers carefully. Interestingly enough the examples shown
of designs selected by the Award, were largely low rise and that is very encouraging.

Mona Serageldin has shown us that the consciousness of those who live in informal housing is a very direct one. They are the consumers and the producers, so they can really in some ways only blame themselves if they are not happy about the design results. I would like to put a new slogan on the table. We have heard about deschooling of architects. We know about non-government organisations. We know that we must respect and listen to ordinary people. The slogan is a very simple one, "With privilege must come responsibility."

We were told earlier to look at the process. It is simpler than that. The people are the process and it is from homeless people that we can learn most of all.
The Architecture of Mass Housing

Suha Özkan

Juxtaposition of three modes of housing production on the outskirts of Ankara.
Informal housing (gezekondu), entrepreneur developments and large-scale developments in the foreground, middle and background respectively.
Introduction

In Muslim countries, most large cities are experiencing urbanisation problems that are similar to those found in the rest of the developing world, where townscapes are disfigured as a result of rapid and uncontrolled growth, primarily due to a mass rural exodus. We therefore witness the co-existence of a variety of housing production modes, a phenomenon worthy of closer examination. The expansion of informal settlements on the fringes of important urban centres has been discussed by Mona Serageldin. This paper will focus on the architecture of mass housing in its more organised and, above all, institutionalised expressions. This subject could be approached from different angles, ranging from the study of income groups and population densities to construction techniques and climatic zones. However, the present analysis will distinguish three main phases in the process of housing supply: decision making, generating capital and organising construction. These will in turn be viewed through three different perspectives, namely building initiatives arising respectively from the public and private sectors as well as cooperatives.

Public Housing  Governments are still considered to be responsible for providing housing for the population at large. In actual fact, and for a number of reasons, they fall short of these expectations and even fail to effectively manage or control the various public bodies acting on their behalf. Notable exceptions are the Singapore Housing and Development Board and the “Million Houses Programme” launched in Sri Lanka; otherwise, in this domain, success is limited to relatively wealthy states such as Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries, where large amounts of money can be devoted to housing schemes. In these few rich countries, the provision of new housing by the respective governments is still mainly under the control of state bodies. There are nonetheless examples of governmental institutions handing over their prerogative to the private sector when the scheme on hand is technically feasible, and all the more so when it is profitable.
The initial step of land acquisition, and then obtaining a construction permit do not usually pose major problems to the public sector. Indeed, governments still own substantial amounts of land, and when appropriation is resorted to, it represents an administrative rather than a financial issue for state affiliated bodies. Likewise, the creation of infrastructure, an important obstacle for informal settlers, developers and cooperatives alike and an indispensable asset to secure the initial investment, can be more easily prompted by public sector bodies. These institutions usually have a say in defining priorities of basic services wherever it is politically desirable.

Governmental approaches to housing issues are expressed in quantitative terms based on the family unit. In most instances, living conditions and the quality of life are either overlooked or not expressly stated as priorities. The general policies embarked upon often seek to generate as many housing units in a short a time as possible. Architectural design is therefore reduced to a rudimentary exercise, and the construction technology to be used as well as the contracting procedure to make it available become determining factors. It ensures that the entire design process is defined by the choice of a particular technology, and
Above and right: Naiga Housing Complex, Doha, Qatar.
The Gulf countries have achieved some success in public housing. Large amounts of money can be devoted to housing schemes.
the result is bound to reflect only the basic performance of that technology. Exploring the possibilities of a given technology in a creative way with a view to improving living environments is systematically avoided as it implies taking risks — be they of a social, economic or cultural nature — a situation not readily ventured into by decision makers because of the increased responsibilities involved.

However complex the decision making mechanism might be, it is the power structure which ultimately determines the selection of technologies. In most cases, there is undoubtedly a great deal of goodwill to provide housing using the quickest possible means. Centrally planned economies can easily introduce innovative techniques, regardless of their social or cultural relevance; this often results in a built-up environment made up of identical parts assembled on a production line.

On the other hand, some governments are politically pressured to employ local expertise and materials and cannot indicate their preference as to the technology used, for fear of depriving local companies of contracting opportunities. Built with locally available techniques and know-how, the finished constructions are often of poor quality. In both instances, the outcome of over-simplified designs is devoid of any societal meaning and reduced to the horizontal and vertical movements of cranes lifting prefabricated blocks.

State involvement in the expansion of existing housing stocks is usually meant to provide dwellings for social groups that cannot afford prevailing market prices. However, due to a discrepancy between supply and demand, the objectives stated at the outset are often re-defined and, in most situations, these accommodations are allocated to financially and professionally more privileged layers of society.

Politicians and decision makers often conceive of mass housing as 4-5 storey high walk-up apartment blocks which eschew the use of heavy structural systems and are easy to maintain, because of the unsophisticated building parts and materials used in their construction. Furthermore, these solutions do not achieve population densities greater than any other alternative, be they formal or informal settlements.
Government lead initiatives are usually triggered off by one of a combination of the following factors:

- To control urban growth, housing compounds are built on the fringes of cities, or take the form of satellites, with a view to absorbing an ever increasing demand. By completion time, it becomes more profitable for governments to sell the units, or to accommodate their own employees in them. As a result, the initial target population is deprived of the new dwellings and continues to exert undue pressure on urban growth. Areas occupied by public sector housing soon become islands surrounded by informal settlements.

- State authorities are sometimes called upon to adopt emergency measures to cope with problems arising from natural disasters or mass movements of populations due to political causes. Such undertakings suffer from the rapidity of the decision making process, and there have even been instances when the beneficiary populations have refused to move into these new shelters.

Contrary to the overall failure of many government urban housing schemes, a relative degree of success characterises similar initiatives in the rural context, where the needs of the communities concerned are expressed more forcefully and can therefore not be overlooked.
Requirements for rural settlement projects are usually put forth in such a way as to involve the direct participation of architect-planners in the design of better defined social, economic and cultural entities.

To sum up, housing provided by the public sector, whether it involves rapidly assembled and foreign, or slowly produced and local technology, is geared towards quantititative rather than qualitative results — two criteria which are not a priori mutually exclusive — in total disregard of societal needs. This is why questions pertaining to decision making, architectural expertise and building technologies deserve a more in-depth and thorough examination in order to re-evaluate the importance of cultural and architectural concerns in the decision making processes.

Private Sector Housing Most Muslim countries accord private companies the right to participate in building activities. These range from the construction of a simple block on a plot duly registered in a city master-plan to developments of virgin land extending beyond the outer limits of urban centres into “new territories”. Although not a widespread phenomenon, high-rise, clandestine constructions on the peripheries of towns have been built in total disregard of any legal framework or technical control. Examples can be found in capital cities such as Ankara and Cairo. This points to a logistic vacuum in the enforcement of law and, more dangerously, threatens the inhabitants’ safety, as only a bare minimum of technical standards and precautions are taken in the construction of such structures. These cheaper flats are put on the market by contractors determined to make maximum profits.

When erected on designated and serviced urban plots, these new projects are not significant in terms of cultural or architectural value, as the developer’s ultimate goal is to achieve the quickest and the greatest possible returns for their investments and efforts. This implies stretching the limits of building codes to a maximum and creating as many units as possible within the permitted building volumes. Therefore, the end-products do not depart from differently-sized, ordinary
blocks executed in a tedious and dreary architectural style. In such exercise, architects have to implement and comply with a given set of regulations, the expectations of the clients and prospective inhabitants are not given much consideration. Unfortunately, societal concerns cannot reform building codes beyond air rights, already designed to allow the largest dimensions and recesses in all directions.

Contrary to this when building schemes are undertaken within cities, where returns are based on high land value, only large companies can afford the development of virgin plots. Indeed, the acquisition of stretches of land with little or no infrastructure requires important capital resources, preferably coupled with political influence. These operations yield high profits, because lower land prices minimise the initial dead investment and the introduction of modern technologies shortens construction periods. Again, this market targets the economically privileged social strata. In these ventures, the decision mechanism aims at making the prospective occupants’ expectations, hopes and even dreams economically and technically feasible. Hence the necessity of a considerable architectural input to create built-up environments reflecting
Top and above: Cooperative Housing Batikent, Ankara.
Right: Cooperative Housing Dar Lamane Housing, Casablanca
prevailing lifestyles. On these premises, developers can argue that they best cater for an existing demand.

Only one factor would direct such initiatives to serve economically less privileged groups: a market saturation affecting the higher-income levels of society; naturally, such situations are quite unlikely to occur. Otherwise, it takes the intervention of the public sector, usually in the form of subsidies and presented through the intermediary of cooperative societies offering entrepreneurs a participation as contractors, not as developers.

**Cooperative Housing**  Housing supplied through cooperatives has proven to be the most effective and socially relevant way to generate dwelling units. Cooperative enterprises organise the demand and combine the economic means of small groups, in order to increase the negotiating power of individuals and reduce the final cost by supplying for many. This type of initiative involves projects ranging from the construction of 15-30 dwelling units to the creation of new satellite settlements. The smaller schemes are generally carried out by building companies, and the cooperatives are entrusted with raising and distributing the necessary funds. Such projects do not fall within the scope of a study on “mass housing”.

Large scale cooperative projects are widely supported by the public sector, as they represent an effort to tackle housing problems, and financing institutions offer them favourable loan opportunities. The first and crucial step is the acquisition of some land which will act as a guarantee to raise a construction loan. Given that serviced sites within an urban context are both scarce and expensive and that the development of new areas without basic infrastructure is equally costly, most cooperatives fail to secure this first investment. Furthermore, as they owe their economic power to the savings of individuals, accumulating enough initial capital is always a much longer process than is foreseen at first; increasing land prices and inflation are additional discouraging factors.

However, once cooperatives own some land, negotiations to obtain construction credits to provide the necessary infrastruc-
ture can start. The latter process, as it normally involves the participation of the public sector, is of a more political nature. On the other hand, building credits, mostly allocated against a mortgage, can only be handled by registered construction firms on the basis of contracts approved by the authorities. The issue of the control of funds earmarked for the cooperatives is usually resolved by giving contractors holding rights, while the cooperatives retain financial control in compliance with the contracting documents.

This implies that the architectural studies produced at the outset to obtain credits become the binding documents determining the shape of the structures to be built. Unfortunately, the quality of architectural input often remains minimal at this stage, as these projects are mostly conceived of as legal documents. There are nonetheless examples of a close cooperation between consulting architects and cooperative members which result — as might be expected — in successful realisations, at least in terms of the harmony achieved between the communities and their environment. It nevertheless remains a fact that numerous poor quality — and very seldom innovative — constructions are built in this way; this points to a necessity to seriously re-think the architectural involvement in such projects.

Interestingly, similar initiatives are used to cater for the demand for secondary residences and holiday homes, obviously involving an economically strong strata of society. The architectural quality displayed in these schemes is far greater and this cannot be explained by the economics of these projects only. It would seem that more time given to the decision making process as well as better defined expectations regarding holiday or retirement environments contribute to their greater success. Architects can consequently create buildings well adapted to a non-urban context both in terms of volumes/shapes and construction materials. However, such a discrepancy in the architectural quality seen in these two modes of housing — urban versus secondary homes — built through similar cooperative organisations is a curious phenomenon that certainly deserves further study.
The Architecture of Mass Housing
Suba Özkan

Comments
Colin Amery

Discussion
Johan Silas
I want to try to uncover the essentials of housing, and its relation with architecture.

I want to touch upon four issues and allow me to explain the first issue. I want to elaborate further what Mona Serageldin has explained about the role of Informal Housing and the solving of the housing problems. Indonesia is in a very unique position. Compared to other developing countries, Indonesia was probably the last to start a public housing programme.

Indonesia only started effectively implementing a public housing programme in 1976. Before 1976 there was no effective housing programme whatsoever. What has happened in ten years, since the implementation of a serious form of housing programme? What does it contribute to the increase of housing stocks? I have tried to make some calculations based on census figures from 1971, 1976, 1980 and 1985. Effectively the formal housing programme contributes no more than 7 per cent of the annual housing needs. In other words, the majority of the housing stock that is needed is fulfilled through individually constructed houses and 90 per cent of the individually constructed houses are in what we call the informal housing sector.

Informal Housing Let me explain what is meant by informal housing. There are many definitions but I want to stress two important things. In informal housing, the owner, the user, the builder and the designer is most likely to be one person. He can hire artisans to do part of the work but the decision making is controlled by one person.

Another aspect of informal housing is that the owner is the producer of housing and the consumer. This too differentiates between the informal and formal. The number of rooms that exists in the informal housing is increasing. The number of houses with only one or two rooms has decreased. Over the years 1971 to 1985, houses that have only one or two rooms, decreased in percentage whilst houses with three, four, five, six, seven rooms increased. Over the same period, household sizes decreased.
Floor area per household, or *per capita*, is also increasing in the informal sector. Interestingly, the government uses the standard of 6 or 7 square metres per person and builds formal public housing with a floor area of 35 to 45 square metres. This is paradoxically the size of dwelling that is decreasing in the informal housing sector where the number of houses larger than 50 square metres is proportionately increasing. Toilets, building materials used, drinking water and ownership of housing have all increased in the informal sector over these years. So in the context of Indonesia, the informal sector is the producer of housing. Indonesia does not depend on the formal housing factor to fulfil the housing needs every year. Therefore I do not agree that we should consider informal housing as only a temporary solution. Indonesia has therefore put more emphasis on the improvement of existing settlements and the Kampung Improvement Programme.

The discussion we have had up to now is what housing is rather than what it does. We have been showing slides on what it is but very little has been said about what it does. I asked Jorge Anzorena to describe the Japanese word for a house. The word “house” consists of two parts in the Japanese script.

It is a roof and a pig. If you have a roof and you have a pig, you have a house. A pig symbolises an important offering that man gives to the Gods, in the Japanese and Chinese context. Food also symbolises that you are wealthy otherwise you cannot have the pig as your offering.

So, the Japanese, the Chinese, or the Korean has a certain perception of a house. Now this is entirely different to Indonesia. In Indonesia, the word “house” — *Rumah* — relates to women and to family. So if you have a house, you should have a family and a wife. You cannot have a house if you do not have a wife and a family. In the Indonesian context, the meaning of the word “house” is entirely different, even, contradictory to the Japanese usage.

Now what happens to the word “house” in another language. There is a book recently published in English by a Polish writer. He describes very interestingly, what he misses in the house is “comfort”. So in the context of house and home,
he emphasises this "comfort". This is what many architects have been trained to design into a house.

My point is this. The Japanese, the Chinese, the Indonesian world; in effect perhaps one half billion people, have a superimposed meaning from a few hundred million people in the world. What has been superimposed is the meaning of a house onto the word in Chinese or Japanese or in Indonesian or maybe also in Hindi. This is my second point about the misconception of imposing the meaning of a house into an entirely different social, cultural and economic context. This is the reason why over and over again architects build the wrong houses for the people. These houses continue to be built.

This is a rather bizarre yet true story that relates to the meaning and the perception of a house. When public housing was built in Bali, I did a study on its impact. I warned the people in the Office of the Public Housing Corporation that they should pay more attention to the local context when building houses in Bali. But ultimately, the design and the planning are centralised. You cannot see any difference in the formal public housing built in the east, in the central region or in the west of Indonesia. All are exactly the same. A year after the housing complex was finished and occupied a tragedy occurred. A 14-year old girl killed three of her younger playmates; 12 and 13 year olds, who were her friends. They used to play together. She was brought to court and the judge asked her "Why did you kill your friends?". She replied that at the time she represented a God that had influence in that area of Bali. The public housing in that area of Bali was not built according to the ritual where you should first have a religious ceremony by giving an offering before you start the ground breaking for building. Only after that is done would the Balinese dare to live in the housing complex. So the offer had been done by killing three innocent little girls. This is a true story from Indonesia.

I have another anecdote, not so sad, about walk-up flats which were built in Palembang, the fifth largest city in Indonesia. A central low-income settlement burned down.
About 2,000 families lost their houses and the government decided to rebuild the area for the people using “new concepts of housing”. They built 3,600 walk-up flats. After 4 years, no more than 600 are occupied. The remaining 3,000 flats are empty. I made some small calculations. If the money used to build those flats had been put in the bank, with the interest alone one could improve all the Kampungs in Palembang within one year to three times the present standards.

That is not the whole story for if an architectural student in Indonesia designed such walk-up flats, and proposed that kind of solution, I am sure that the student would graduate with flying colours.

So where does the architect come into low income housing? The architect has first to go through a deschooling process and a re-education by the people and by the community. If I reflect on my own experience, I would say I have had to do that. Of course at the time I was trained at the School of Architecture, we had Dutch professors, so I have someone to blame. My question is “Will my students say the same thing about me?”

E Jorge Anzorena
In the last 12 years, I have spent most of my time in slum areas in Asia and Latin America, trying to find out how the poorest 30 per cent or 40 per cent of the population, people who have incomes of 30, 40 or 50 US dollars could improve their habitat. I say habitat because they do not have water, toilets, electricity or security and are continuously evicted. One definition of habitat is “a place of survival”. People need to work, they need to be near to their work, they need to be able to live with security and not to be evicted. They need to be able to live with some dignity. It is extremely important that housing should allow people to grow, and give them more dignity than previously. There are common elements in all communities or in people who are organising themselves to improve the situation.

First of all, someone must expend many hours with this problem; with the slum dwellers and with the squatters, many hours living in the place, listening to the problems, finding the
solutions. These people must respect the poor, see the values that exist in the culture, respect the judgement of the poor, even if they are illiterate. They must be people who believe that change is possible and who see that change will come from the poor. There are many reasons why poor people do not have a secure place to live with dignity. Partly it is because the poor are competing for things which have a commercial value. In the countryside where the land is commercially valuable, it is taken away. Similarly in the cities. They are deprived of their culture and the possibilities of jobs. But even street dwellers in Bombay, for example, have devised practised solutions by starting home industries. They have some answers to their problem, the problem of the neglect of society.

One problem is, how to get cheap housing? There are many models. One group in Chile has produced about 100,000 houses in the last few years. Each house costs about US$10 per square metre. Half of the population of Santiago live in this type of house which is produced from wood panels. A minimal house of 10 square metres made of such panels, can be assembled in two hours. The group can produce 300 houses per month and in times of emergency, this could increase to 1,000.

In Bombay, one group began with women-pavement dwellers. The question was how to pave their dwellings. Six hundred women have already been trained and they are able to transfer their knowledge to other poor people.

In Indonesia a minimal house can be constructed of bamboo for US$120 for people who otherwise would be living in the streets. They have the potential to be considered as citizens. In the background of all these projects is a community organisation. If the people are not organised, nobody will recognise their rights.

Through organisations, people can acquire better toilets, collection of garbage and water. Very few architects work in this field except on very large projects but there are examples in Korea where a group of about 200 young architects are questioning government policy and trying to find a role for architects in this strata of society. One is not only an architect for your client, but an architect has responsibilities to society.
Another model comes from Thailand. Here one finds a process of landsharing in Bangkok. About 5,000 families in the biggest slum of Bangkok are landsharing.

I am drawing examples from the informal sector, the formal sector and mass housing. I have a tremendous interest in how the 30 to 40 per cent of people with the lowest income can have a decent house in which they can live with security. In Kerala, the government has experienced failures in massive projects. Now they have asked the voluntary agencies to work through them and in the first year, one project has produced about 25,000 houses, using a decentralised process. There is a satisfaction because the people are controlling their own house construction and it is a completely decentralised project.

There is another project in Lima, Peru in which architects were involved in an incremental way. This project is for 12,000 families. Most of the people come from the mountains. They are very poor and earn US$30 as casual workers. Here the architects have devised ways in which the project can begin with a very low profile. This is a bankrupt country and cannot provide services to each plot which will normally cost US$1,500.

The architects also provide practical planning assistance on how to develop the project over 10 to 15 years. The community is divided into groups of 60 and each group together with an architect design the allotted space. Each community will receive about one hectare of land. The government provides services at one point of the project. This is how they begin.

How then can the architect be integrated into this society? An architect should grow continuously. He is a person who should know the history of his country, the culture, the social problem, the economics, the corruption and try to make an assessment of what is going on. He should have an ideal, an ideal that everybody should have a decent shelter. With his training in architecture, he could produce something new, something completely revolutionary. In many of these projects, there are no architects. But the moment an architect appears, something changes and I wish more and more architects would get involved.
Oleg Grabar
I would like to give my impression of the subject and to identify ten levels of thinking that occurred in my mind and emphasise the ones that seem to deserve particular attention and discussion.

The first level I would call "the level of statistical description"; that is, the number of houses and the number of people. We can get all this factual information from tables. We all know it is an important problem but it need not dominate our discussion here.

The second level, I call "the level of technology". I would like to skip this too, in the sense that how people build or don't build; what materials are available or not available; when should electricity and transportation come in are technical problems. They are important but they are not for the immediate discussion.

The third level is what I call "the level of local specificity". Issues in Indonesia for example are different from Morocco. We know this is true and this has to be taken into consideration.

These three levels are important but perhaps not pertinent to our discussion at this point.

The next three seem to be more important for us. We have talked about them, skirted around them and sometimes said some fascinating things about them, but mostly avoided them.

I call the fourth level, "the level of government" in a political sense. What is the nature of political decisions that have to be made in order to produce housing for large numbers of people? Those decisions will vary from country to country and from area to area but perhaps there are certain political decisions that belong to government. For instance what degree of control should a central government have? What degree of autonomy should exist? What degree of mixing of groups should a government decree in countries that have different ethnic stocks? What level of practical logistics should the centralised government provide? What political decisions belong to a government?

My fifth level is to do with government also; Government in this case as a "form of rule". Essentially this varies from
situations where people avoid governments until the very last moment to other situation where people always go to the government. Can we determine the way in which government should operate in a practical manner?

The sixth level, I would like to identify is “the level of socio-psychology”. What is the nature of the socio-psychological mix that is created when large numbers of people construct their housing together and live together. Mona Serageldin gave us an example of a 3-storey apartment building, with three families of different social and financial status living together. How did they react together? What are the oppressions and the strengths? The story that was recounted about somebody killing another person because the right sacrifice was not made at the outset is a version of the hatred that can exist when people live next to each other. What is the criminality of these areas? Nobody talked about criminality, but the risk of criminality can be high or it can be low. These are extreme examples of social-psychological relationships that exist.

The seventh level would be the level of what I call “the manufacture of space”. What fascinated me in the examples that were given by Mona Serageldin, and a number of other people as well, is where the constraints of contemporary life are such that any space given is immediately occupied. Once you put in beds, tables, the television, the bathroom, the kitchen and so forth, there is no room to turn around. You have no place for children to play for instance. In other words, do spaces that architects and planners conceive of as the minimum necessary take into consideration the new constraints of contemporary life? A television set appeared at the second floor window of one of Mona Serelgeldin’s examples. The occupants may not have much money but they have a television.

The third floor occupant may not have television yet but will have it next year. This immediately creates a whole set of spacial arrangements which have not been taken into consideration. This is one aspect of the manufacture of space. The other one is what Mona Serageldin calls decoration and which I would prefer to call “the freedom of expression of taste”.
The decoration that appears on all these buildings is important and fascinating for one very important reason; it is addressed to others and not to oneself. There is a visual image projected of one's own space to others. The decoration of the facade is something you never see once you are inside your own house. It is something you project for others to see. Why? What is it that you are telling others? I would like to know what that message is. Perhaps more will be said about that.

The ninth level is “the level of replication of successful solutions”. There is a slight divergence between those who argue that each place is its own solution and if it becomes replicable, it becomes a useless bore or unnecessary, and those who say on the contrary that any good scheme has a way of being transformed into something replicable, I want to mention in this context the communication or lack thereof in making the activities of each housing sector available to others within the culture or outside the culture. Somebody talked about the necessity of getting a lobbyist; somebody who will know where to go in order to get something done. This is on a practical level. For our purposes, what is interesting is, can one transfer the inventiveness and the imagination that exist in these activities into professional journals, the press, to television programmes? Is there a way of communicating this activity to the world? Should there be another definition of a professional between the architect, that semi-divine figure in his office, and the practical person on the spot who helps somebody build. Is another professional needed here?

Finally, I come to “the level of solutions and expectations”. That is, how fast can one accomplish things and beyond defining the issues, what can one do to speed up solutions?

**Saad Eddin Ibrahim**

I will address my remarks to some of the points Oleg Grabar raised and I would like to subsume all my remarks under something his last comment inspired, namely the barefoot architect. Mona Serageldin's paper with its richness, its completeness, and its propositions, suggests that if the title of this conference, Architecture of Housing, is to be taken
seriously, and if the bulk of the housing problem is in the lower-income Third World, then the architecture of housing must be directed towards the group of people which make up probably three quarters of mankind. That definitely would require a barefoot architect if we can work towards this end.

My first remark under this title, is the relationship between the state and society. One very suggestive paragraph, in Mona Serageldin’s paper, says the inability of public authorities to capitalise on the dynamics of the informal market is due in large part to legislative paralysis because of the divergence in view points of decision makers, responsive to particular constituencies. It is also due to ambivalent attitudes among professionals profoundly disturbed by one or another of its negative manifestations. That summarises a good deal of the problematic relationship between the state apparatus and the civil society.

I was very impressed by the presentation by Tasneem Siddiqui because he is telling us how the civil society is trying to deal with the problem despite the state. The problem in the Third World basically is a state problem. The state is in debt, the state is a victim of all kinds of mismanagement. The state is full of corruption and therefore the state cannot solve its own problem. Therefore it will be too utopian to expect the state to solve the housing problem on the massive scale that we have heard about. Therefore, in our search for the barefoot architect, we must understand the nature of this relationship between the state and the civil society.

We, especially the architects among us, must re-define our own conception of such things as what makes a slum. We have borrowed these words from the First World — slum, squatters and so on. What makes a slum in the Third World? By all definitions, if I had seen the buildings shown by Tasneem Siddiqui without his explanation, I may have called these slums. But I consider that, given the process of people searching for solutions to deal with their own problems, I would not call them slums. A slum has a meaning of powerlessness, and impotence plus physical misery. There may be some physical misery in what he has shown us, but
definitely there is no feeling of powerlessness. That is the cutting edge between a slum and just a poor neighbourhood. I therefore call for Mona Serageldin to respond to two questions.

One is whether we are able to develop the concept, or a profession or an ideology that will produce in the Third World a barefoot architect. Second, whether we can make that barefoot architect a lobbyist for the powerless and a designer for the poor.

The people who are building their own houses definitely can use some architectural advice. But is the training of architects in the Third World able to provide that kind of advice. Oleg Grabar asked what do the people want? Can we find out what the people want? Yes, we can indeed find out what people want. Ismail Serageldin and myself did a study several years ago on the Bedouin in Saudi Arabia who the government wanted to settle. We asked them what they wanted. Some of them wanted to settle. Some of them did not want to settle. Those who wanted to settle, specified the kind of housing that they wanted and specified the kind of communities they need. Therefore it is quite possible to find out what people want.

Now, what people want may not always be affordable and may not always be implemented, but definitely again, the barefoot architects that we were talking about would be able to give the best advice under the prevailing circumstances for the masses of urban poor.

The last point is that people throughout history have built for themselves. They will continue to build for themselves. Therefore maybe the job of architects and the job of all enlightened people in the Third World is to keep the government out of the way of the people. Many of the problems are solvable if you just let the people deal with them. Bureaucracies controlled by the government, often hinder the search for solutions that the ingenuity of people in every society can realise.

Babar Mumtaz
I wish to start with this notion of the role of the architect and what it should be.
Almost by definition, an architect has always been a society architect. By that we generally meant a high society architect. Our image of what constitutes society therefore determines the image of the architect. The architect was the one who wore the tie and the builder was the one who did not. That image of society is changing and therefore this sort of image of the architect will begin to change too. We now understand society as the mass of people that make up that society. Those people are largely "barefoot" and it is quite right that our image of a barefoot architect should follow that. What we should be talking about however is not so much barefoot, but "society" architects, who accept that they must respond to, and build for, the society in which they are living.

That takes me to my second point. In the presentation by Mona Serageldin followed up by the three discussants, it struck me that here we had in a very clear and articulate manner the two perceptions of informal housing. On the one hand we had the notion of informal housing as something that is done by people coming together as communities. We have the notion of the individual householder working in harmony with his surroundings and his neighbours and building a sharing, caring house as part of a sharing, caring community. This was the kind of image that was presented by Jorge Anzorena and by Arif Hasan. The notion was that individuals want to build their individual space and that they should be helped and that the way the architect can intercede in this kind of informal housing was by being a "society architect". That is to say by living and being part of the family or household that is building the society. How can an architect zoom in to another city, place or another culture and design? You must be part of the society and this notion stresses that if you want to prevent the kind of situations that have arisen of badly designed houses, then housing units must be built by architects who understand and live in a society. That is one view of informal housing that is perfectly understandable and acceptable.

What it misses out, is the vibrancy and the dynamism that came out of Mona Serageldin's presentation. We are not talking about just small groups of people. Those small groups
of people are part of a very, very large phenomena. The magnitude of urban development that we are talking about cannot be solved by this image of the single house or a group of 20 or 30. I admire people like Arif Hasan who work in those situations but we must now give our attention to what happens in large urban areas. Ismail Serageldin talked about the ubiquitous slab blocks and we reject that as a solution. However, that is an urban phenomena. If you get the kind of growth that we have in urban areas, then the notion of informal housing changes, to the kind of informal housing that Mona Serageldin was talking about. She made some very telling remarks. She said that the problem was not one of shortage of money, but a shortage of land. It was not even a shortage of land in the sense that the land intrinsically was not there but whether it was being made available or was suitable for the kinds of development required in urban areas.

Most public housing, whether informal houses or illegal subdivisions, in fact would not be allowed by the building planning and zoning regulations. These require you to have land left over on the sides of your house and so on. We have to think about different types of building and construction. We ought not to skip over the perceptions of informal housing that were presented here because our perceptions and our understanding of what that process is will determine how we proceed. I suggest that we focus this debate on those perceptions and definitions of informal housing.

Ismail Serageldin
I have two observations and a question.

The first observation is that we are in danger of over-romanticising the image of the barefoot architect in the same way we romanticise the barefoot doctor in China. They were at a low level below paramedics and the system represented the political will of a government. At the same time, it also had its limitations. It is very important since Saad Eddin Ibrahim raised the image of the mass orientation of a government service as as a potential model to know that it has serious limits. The same government of China reached those limits
quickly and found the need to re-orientate and in fact to re-emphasise the value of the top professionals again. The absence of the top professionals in society rapidly became a constraint. We should not lose sight of architectural excellence and architects as professionals in the search for a romanticised vision of an architect as a community worker, as a partial social worker, partial lobbyist and partial social psychologist. In all probability he would do most of those jobs poorly. This is not to say that there is not a function to be performed there. There is certainly a function to be performed, as there is a function to be performed by hundreds of thousands of people who are draughtsmen and site supervisors and so on. But the notion that architects should be turned into this image on a large enough scale required to cope with the massive numbers involved, would disorient the profession significantly.

One can say that every architect should have an exposure to history of art and history of culture but not necessarily to become an art historian. Therefore we do need this function but it is not necessarily the architect who has to perform the function. There is another function which I was trying to raise in my paper which is the notion that what people want is determined by what people see. With the exception of a few individuals who can imagine out of nowhere new realities and dreams, most people define what they want by combinations of elements that they have seen elsewhere. It is in this area that architects in the Third World have been failing to provide exemplars and models that will help upgrade the vision and the desires and aspirations of different masses, usually workers.

This is the thing that the profession as a whole used to provide and recently has not provided sufficiently.

The second basic point is to endorse a theme that is emerging from Mona Serageldin’s presentation and which Saad Eddin Ibrahim put very forcefully which is the notion of getting governments out of businesses that they are not capable of doing. The modern state has become both too large and too small. It is too small to cope with broad, international currents such as the drop of commodity prices and therefore governments are unable to service individual needs. Recognising that
reality, we are all leaning more and more towards the notion that what is needed is an enabling environment; words that His Highness The Aga Khan coined, in Nairobi, a few years ago. This would allow the informal sector and this vibrancy that exists within it to be legitimated. The solution is as simple as that. It is not so much trying to invent new ways to capture this vibrancy within the straight jacket of the existing bureaucracy but it is indeed to allow it to be legitimated.

Increasingly we are finding that this is happening in many other domains. Structural adjustments are sweeping the African economies today and the supply side in productive sectors has responded dramatically. There is no reason to assume that this will not happen in housing too. I would like to address a question to Mona Serageldin. She raised a very interesting observation when she showed us the Paris settlements of a century ago. We know what happened to them but they were on a different scale, as she rightly said. Now, given what I was saying about the legitimation of the informal settlements, she might wish to comment about what the future of this very large and dynamic informal settlement pattern and informal market is and where it is going to go.

Abdelbaki Ibrahim
I have two cases to present.

The first which I was involved in was in Aswan city in the south of Egypt. The government encircled the city with land subdivisions of equal size and these were given freely to the people in order to control the development of informal housing. This helped to prevent a very informal pattern.

The other case in which I was involved, was very much similar to that described by Tasneen Siddiqui. I would like to add to what he said. I am afraid that with the system he outlined, it will end with the settlement becoming a slum area. What we added when we established a programme for new settlements to the east of Cairo was a cooperative store where people could buy building material, windows, bricks and so on. Also we provided a workshop which could produce pre-cast columns and roofs which could be implemented
whenever required. This was to control the quality of the building. The people go everywhere to look for boxes, aluminium anything to build their houses, but if you have a corporative shop or store, they can buy building materials on a subsidised basis and this will control the building quality. Also on that project, we did not isolate people living in the informal housing from the other sectors of society. In the overall plan, there was a mixture of that economic level and the level which was immediately above it or higher. This created a social coherence which did not isolate people of different groups.

Rueben Mutiso
Since you are in Africa it is relevant that I mention the African situation. Mostly it is about rural housing. The provision of a house in the rural areas, even for the financially disabled and the physically disabled rests squarely with society. What happens when people move to the urban areas is that they get into a straight-jacketed situation, where there are controls. Lamentably these controls have been imposed by the governments in Africa. Governments use absolutely alien building codes; building codes inherited from foreign masters. These building codes are tough and difficult.

Land is the other issue. Land is not delivered to the people as they move to the urban areas quickly enough to keep pace with their urban migration. They come to the towns for various reasons, and they get into a situation where there are problems of lack of shelter.

For these problems to be arrested in Africa, the architect and the planner must move from the drawing board and get out to work with the urban poor and assist as much as possible. This has been done elsewhere.

The architect in Africa must also be trained in politics because that is where things happen.

This is an area where we must seriously consider getting involved. It is surprising that very few architects are in either civic leadership.

It is important that architects move into this political arena and with due respect, get politicians to understand the right
priorities. The future of the people of this continent does not rest on the purchase of armaments for war. It is important to establish the correct priorities.

Murat Karayalcın

It appears that in the housing sector, we can differentiate between three subsectors — slum housing, informal housing and formal housing. There are similarities and differences among the factors affecting the development of these three subsectors. Babar Mumtaz has mentioned that land is one of the main issues affecting these three subsectors, but for informal settlement to be unique, there are presumably other factors. I would ask Mona Serageldin what are these other factors. Is it a lack of an appropriate market or is it the lack of a legal framework or are there other reasons such as those mentioned by Arif Hasan, such as ethnic considerations?

My second question is: How are they financed? Are they financed in an informal way. What are the ways of financing the development of informal sector housing in those countries that have been mentioned?

Al-Noor Kassum

I am a member of a government in one of the world’s least developed countries. We therefore have problems which are quite significant and which have to be taken cognisance of, in trying to devise a policy which is going to be meaningful.

During the days of the petro dollars, which went in their billions into banks all over the world, money was freely available to us. There were a lot of countries which wanted to be kind to us for political reasons and we built monstrosities. That cash is no longer available.

Today the problems of the Third World are debt, recovery programmes, how to rehabilitate the economies, and how to make sure they are self-sufficient in their needs for food.

Housing will not be and cannot be a government responsibility for some time to come and that is a fact which we have to recognise. Therefore what is the solution? Non-governmental organisations, professional organisations like
architects and civil engineers have to devise ways of helping us to innovate an approach to housing problem which involves the community directly with advice from government, rather than direct governmental involvement.

In trying to find housing solutions, you have got to go back to basics. We must not build houses for the sake of houses but houses which mean something to the people who live in them.

Karnau Karogi
There is a need for a very thorough review of existing policies. In the 1970's when the self-help movement gained currency, it was taken up by official bodies like the World Bank, as a way of solving shelter needs. But we have experienced certain problems and one of the problems, at least in Kenya, in Nairobi in particular, is changing people's attitude to accept that they are urbanites and probably for the rest of their good days, they are going to live in towns. This has been difficult in the sense that when they were allocated plots, they often sell them because they anticipate one day when they grow older, returning to the rural areas. Here the government has a problem in trying to limit rural-urban migration and to stabilise the situation so that you are dealing with a constant or near constant.

The emphasis seems to be self-help, but it is beginning to become very clear, especially in Nairobi that rental housing has a role especially subsidised rental housing. One notices quite a stable occupancy. People tend not to move out as often. It is now becoming very clear that there is a role to be played by houses-for-rent.

My government has introduced a bill in Parliament whereby you can own a unit, a room and not "houses". We now have to begin redefining what a house is. This becomes very important because the traditional African has no concept of a flat for instance or a condominium. It has therefore been very difficult to convince him that you have a house, when you have a flat, particularly when it is not sitting on the ground. There has been a gradual recognition of this and now people are beginning to own flats and condominiums.
Another problem is what we are looking at housing as a problem in isolation from ordinary life. What we need to do is to consider housing as a component of everyday socio-economic life, like food or clothing, so that it sets its own dynamics.

In Nairobi we have a certain set of dynamics in terms of delivery of food, from the rural areas to the towns and there are dynamics of distribution. Somehow we do not find the means of integrating housing. We need to look at housing not necessarily as a building conceived out of self-help. We need to look at it as an economic unit of use — like clothing. Nobody complains that the urban area of Nairobi has problems with clothing because somehow we have found a way of producing clothes, selling them and everybody can buy at whatever level they can afford.

We have to change attitudes. Architects have got to stop thinking that what people need is a charitable attitude; that you are helping those poor people out there. We have got to change this philanthropic attitude towards housing. People need housing and people have got to get housing to support urban life. It is not a charitable thing that you give them but it is a thing that they have got to have, if life in urban centres is to perpetuate itself. We must change our attitude from a feeling that we are doing them a favour. It is our necessity that they are housed, not their necessity, because if they are not housed, we have a lot of problems.

There is another component. I am glad that there is a recognition of the role of the informal sector in housing. In my country, the President had felt it necessary to put emphasis on the growth of the informal sector by introducing a Ministry which will ensure informal housing is an on-going activity.

A P Mushi
Mona Serageldin introduced some very interesting aspects which many architects will realise are often overlooked.

The final design and the completed house is not the house that will be there for all time. Many balconies are turned into rooms. Flats are modified to a great extent showing that when you draw the "last line", it is perhaps not really the end. There
is really a need to involve more sociologists and other
disciplines in the course of our designs and developments in
order to achieve the most ideal or the most appropriate
solution. This could eventually solve a number of problems
that seem to be occurring.

Most of us here will find that more then 90 per cent of our
people live in rural areas and they have been building all the
time. In fact, their biggest problem sometimes, is us. When
we go there with new ideas, they quickly assume that here
comes the education, here comes the technology, here comes the
modern way of life and they forget all their traditional skills
only to find at the end of the day, that they are wasting a lot of
food because they no longer use the traditional means of storing
their food. They also loose their livestock because they
construct large insecure openings.

We should as an international community try and look for
simple affordable means of providing shelter and to upgrade
this in conjunction with sociologist and the local culture.
What is equally important, is to look for ways of solving the
problem of costs. Whatever concepts that we offer, there is an
element of cost and these costs continue to rise.

Prices are rocketing to the extent that we are building fewer
houses, not because governments are not supportive or because
the rural man does not like to build a house that has got a
permanent roof, but because the corrugated iron sheets that he
was buying a year ago for say 100 shillings (US$1) now cost
US$15. This makes it impossible for him to buy. We have to
look for means of reducing the costs of materials that we
propose in our own designs. Once a person realises that he can
get a permanent roof over his head and he doesn’t have to
re-roof his house every year when it rains, then he will certainly
appreciate the solutions.

The second thing that we could do would be to improve
whatever local technologies exist. I am still addressing the rural
sector where the majority of people live.

There are artisans with a knowledge of technology and this
technology offers some degree of permanancy. People were able
to use these facilities but these technologies are very quickly
being replaced by new technologies and the introduction of new materials. There is a need to rethink these developments to see whether there can be a solution.

Turning next to the 10 per cent that live in urban areas. Here, architects have got two major roles to play. One is to work much more closely with urban planners in order to generate appropriate solutions to existing land problems.

Often, the town planner finishes his work and the architect begins from there. Sometimes, you get an appropriate town planner and sometimes you get a town planner who only knows town planning in terms of one aspect, such as housing. If that is the case, then the other features that go with urban planning, like development areas, the location of industry and the location of social facilities are neglected.

There is a need too for architects in the developing world to come much closer to the whole system. Architects in the housing sector should plan houses that can continue to grow.

Charles Correa
I cannot help reacting to what the Honourable Minister Al-Noor Kassum said. It seems to me that in most cases and certainly throughout India, it is not that our government does not do anything; it does the wrong thing most of the time. Let me get back to the key issues which Mona Serageldin called the shortage of land.

That is the key thing. We are in this mess because we don't have sufficient urban land with access to jobs. People are coming to cities not for housing but for employment. We have let demand outstrip supply. The distress migration which we are going through right now all over the Third World is of historic proportions and cannot be stopped. I believe, although we should have much better policies in the rural areas in order to make people happier there, that even with those policies we would continue to have a certain amount of urban growth before we stabilise. Therefore what is government's role in this? I see the positive side of urbanisation; it gives people hope; the landless labour coming in from the village to the cities, at least in the case of India is moving towards a better life.
The role of government is in two crucial areas. One is to identify new growth points. If we just sit passively by, the people will come to the bigger urban centres which already have the major investments. Of all the cities in India which are growing, only two big ones are growing faster than the national average. One of these is Delhi because of the investment made by the government there.

There are however many, many small growth centres which are growing faster. If we start putting our money there and start generating jobs, people will start moving there. That is a governmental responsibility. There is no way it would be done at Tasneem Siddiqui’s level.

The second thing, is of course in any given centre, once you have identified it, is to generate more land. That comes through the deployment of jobs and transport. These are tremendously important. Look at the way, for example, that people live along the railway track in a place like Bombay. I am sure it is the same in Cairo too. It is in order that they have access to jobs. Now it is completely within government’s power and responsibilities to open up more urban land in any given centre. Many things follow as soon as you have enough urban land with access to jobs. You give a whole package of land to a particular number of people, say 300 — 500 families per hectare. At that moment, the architect’s role will become very clear. It is to take that space and make it usable for 500 families. That means not only laying it out in terms of site planning, but also creating a system of open spaces which makes life livable in our part of the world and which takes advantage of the climate.

The second role of the architect would be in an enabling role for the people, as Tasneem Siddiqui said. Just the presence of the architect seems to lift their spirits!

The third role, is to suggest new typologies. Not by designing all 500 houses but by designing new prototypical models which take into account the old and which also take into account people’s aspirations. These are purely suggestive and may be used by three or four families and others would build on that. In my opinion if 300 families all want to live like
East Germans in the kind of super blocks we have here in Zanzibar, I would let them. I do not think we need stop anyone doing what they want to do. Once we have specified this is the place for 500 of you, then you do what you want, including big apartment blocks.

I was very impressed by the techniques developed by Tasneen Siddiqui. They are incredible. He has broken right through, as a government agency, in order to reach the people. I wish however they were not so tough on the people with regard to money. You should give them matching funds in some proportions that would encourage them to save and certainly you will have to spend on roads anyway. Making them responsible, is of course a great advantage.

Lastly, if we do all these things, the people themselves with their use of the space, identifying with it, being highly motivated, will colonise that space in the best sense culturally. They will put up the kind of gestures we find in all our cities.

You see there is a public realm, there is a private realm, there is a sacred realm. I do not just mean religious, I mean sacred, in the sense that it is what society is about. Those are the gestures you see for example in Cairo. I do not want to single out Singapore, but that is what is missing in Singapore. Just like birds’ nest, people build their habitat and if you give them freedom, and all of us, including architects, get out of the way, they make the kind of habitat which they need.

Al-Noor Kassum
I was not trying to shirk government responsibility in planning and trying to make land available. We are a country of about one million square kilometres with a population of about 22 million people. The amount of land we have got is endless in terms of availability except there are parts which are not fertile. But what I was trying to say is that the Government per se does not have the funds to build the houses which are required for the people.

The rest of it, I accept entirely. If government doesn’t plan, who will?
Tasneem Siddiqui

Three or four important points have been raised. Earlier I was not able to give all the details of the Hyderabad scheme. There are many more aspects, for example the housing loans which we arrange. But the basic point I want to take up is the role of the government. There is confusion about that.

What I was trying to emphasise is that within the government framework, the regulations and rules are very rigid and policies are centralised. Urban development policies could reach the urban poor but houses are often provided for people who do not need them.

What we have shown in Hyderabad is that without government resources, without any loans, without any experts from the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank, the people themselves with slight help from an urban development policy like ours can succeed. We manage this scheme with only 4 or 5 people. It is entirely self-financed; not a single penny comes from government and surprisingly, there has been hostility from government. As Charles Correa said government policies are wrong. They are stereotyped. They are unimaginative. They are fixed, they are rigid and they are not ready to change because the government is dominated by elites. When you have everything for yourselves and poor people have no constituency, there is no pressure. There is no accountability. Between Karachi and Hyderabad, one hundred thousand plots are lying vacant. They were meant for the poor. Money has been sunk in those plots but nobody is going to ask any questions from the government.

One remark was made that governments are inefficient. They cannot tackle problems of this scale but my point is that the problem is so gigantic and the backlog in housing is so massive, unless government comes forward, this problem will never be solved. If you leave it to the non-government organisations (NGO's) or to the informal sector, the problems will multiply. The rate of growth in Karachi for example is 6 per cent and the government is failing in all respects. So there is need to put pressure on the government. Surprisingly this pressure can come from international agencies. Govern-
ments go to borrow money from international agencies and international agencies and banks can put pressure on governments that require them to change their policies. There is a need for urban land reform. There has been no land reform in the rural sector because the feudal lords are very powerful, but those feudal lords are throwing people out of villages. They have no jobs. This process is almost irreversible. It is good in some respect that people are coming to the cities. The money is there and in some cases, the land is also there but the policies are unimaginative. There is no accountability. Nobody asks any questions. Those are my views on the role of government. I am very emphatic about that because we are doing a lot of good work, but it is not going to solve the problem. The problem is of enormous proportions.

A point was made about cooperatives. We are trying to form cooperatives for specific purposes. For example the carpet weavers. We are looking at how to eliminate the role of the middleman. Regarding building material, we have tried that, but it has not worked. What we are trying to do now is to provide technical assistance to the people according to their needs. We have a sort of “building clinic” consisting of an architect and a junior engineer. They go to the people and ask what they want. Our engineers and architects go and help them on the spot. They do not have to come to us and we will not force our models on them. This answers the query about the cooperative and building material.

In some places there is shortage of land and land is very expensive. In such cases money from the government can come in for subsidising the cost of land but I emphasise that this money should be recovered in the later years. For example, we are recovering money in 8 years but the land is not very expensive. Land is very expensive in some other places and there the period could be increased to 15 years. People are ready to pay but they want to pay at their convenience.

Lastly I would say that housing for the poor is not “a house”, it is a process of economic stabilisation. It is the basic unit of economic activity. If you want to postpone it for today, you are depriving poor people of all things that go with it. For rich
people and for upper-middle class, it may mean only a house but for the poor it is not a house — it is *everything*. So you can't postpone it and if you postpone it, you ultimately postpone economic development.

**Johan Silas**

We criticise the government for doing the wrong things and we are always blaming the government but who is the government? To me, the government consists of people. They are not ghosts. They are people and generally we can define the people in the government into two categories. Firstly the politicians — we cannot do anything with politicians but they are one category. The second category in government are the technicians and some of the technicians are architects. They are the providers of ideas for the politicians to make the decisions.

How far have we prepared these architects in order that they can include informal housing in the housing provision for the people? Indonesia has a population of 172 million people. In only two out of maybe 50 Schools of Architecture in Indonesia are students exposed to the process of how people build their own houses. So you can imagine what happens with the majority of graduates who do not know about what we call informal housing.

It is very important that we should pay attention to how architects are being trained if we say that informal housing is important. I am doing small experiments in the city where I work, the second largest city in Indonesia. In Surabaya I have the help of the planning board. They are mostly people who have worked in the slum upgrading projects. They are graduates and we actually influence the whole decision making process of the city toward the informal housing sector. My point is that we should pay attention to the kind of architect that we are training because they have the opportunity to make something of the informal housing sector.

**Arif Hasan**

Our societies have changed so much and so quickly that the old institutions that provided housing for our communities have
completely vanished. In my country the cash economy has completely finished off the old artisan system. New institutions are in the process of being created; they are informal institutions and since the demand is much stronger than the supply, these institutions create an unequal relationship between the people involved in them.

These institutions are not recognised or supported by the government. Thus land, credit, advice and skills are all available in the informal settlements, at least in Pakistan. Services are not available. They have to be lobbied for and they are far too expensive and hard to reach. If they are available, the cost of maintenance and operation comes in for governments can neither maintain them or operate them.

Then there is a question of environmental control which cannot be done through the legislature and laws but can only be done through an awareness among the people as they live together. This is a process that has to be helped. These institutions have to be helped. The relationships in them have to be made more equal. More than anything else State policies have to recognise them and incorporate them in their plans and in their thinking or there will always be a friction between them and the State.

In this whole struggle the question is what role can the architect play and does his traditional training enable him to play a role? The question that Johan Silas has raised is a very, very valid one.

**His Highness The Aga Khan**

The whole discussion has been very interesting in the sense that there appears to be a consensus that we are talking about process more than we are about form.

We are talking about how the processes can be organised and enhanced and encouraged by governments so that they release the capability of populations to build for themselves. Mona Serageldin’s paper showed the risk of disorganised processes and another paper showed the result of organised processes. If you make a comparison with health care, the curriculum of the specialist in primary health care is a different
curriculum from the specialist in tertiary care. I wonder whether this is the area where the intervention of the architect and the role of architect should be reviewed because in the debate, it seems to me that the role of the architect is to impact the process and not the product.

The impact on the product will be the result of impacting the process. Whereas in the individual house or the tertiary health care problem, it is the professional dealing with one individual it would be worthwhile, asking the question — what can governments do to enhance the creation of the process? That appears to be a whole area for discussion. Governments and bureaucracies are generally bad social organisers. That is not their role and to say to government — get out, is fine, but it is not going to solve the problem. There have got to be energies released which allow organisations to come into existence in whatever form these may be, so that the process can accelerate.

Mona Serageldin
I am very happy that this interesting discussion has been generated. I am going to return to just two issues.

Firstly, the dynamism of informal settlements. Why are informal settlements spreading so widely? Why are they so dynamic? What is it in this process that differs from other processes, whether it is Non-Government Organisation(NGO)-run or government-run? Why are we experiencing these dynamics? Secondly, where do we go from here?

The reason informal settlements are so dynamic is because the geographic range in which they can occur is very wide. They occur in the outlying areas of a city or at the edge of the urbanised area. A different type of settlement develops in terms of speed of development and of building materials, but the end product in 25 years would be very similar. This very wide range means that it can occur anywhere and everywhere, outside the existing urban agglomeration and as we have seen, it can occur inside through squatter development.

The second reason it is so dynamic is because of the variety of buying arrangements that allow you to enter into the process
wherever you can afford to buy the land. We are not talking here of the lower 20th percentile of the population. They are not in the market for the informal settlement at all. But for those who can afford home ownership, the lower their income the more towards the outlying area they will locate.

The third reason is the flexibility of tenure arrangements which allow you to be accommodated as a renter even if you cannot enter the market as an owner. We have seen some examples. This allows you to reach a wider array of socio-economic groups in an informal settlement, after the first buyer has bought the land and started building.

The fourth reason is the credit system. The credit system is very disaggregated. The land owner asks for a down payment but finances part of the purchase. That is you make a down payment and keep paying in instalments until he has got back all of his money. At the same time, once you start building, the contractor asks for a down payment but finances the second part of the construction. Normally that down payment covers the price of the building materials of the stage that is being built. Tenants can also finance part of the premises and the improvement to the premises they occupy as tenants. So when you take into account this flexibility, it has its tremendous dynamics.

Where do we go from here? What can governments do? We have a problem because of these dynamics. It is creating its own problems. Informal housing is expanding in every single direction where there is land, that can be accessed, or where water can be accessed. Governments find it exceedingly difficult to deal with informal settlements because we have already run out of serviced urban land. Municipalities cannot afford under the current circumstances to expand infrastructures in all of these directions simultaneously. So some of these resources will go to waste in that they will deteriorate before being serviced by retrofitting them with infrastructure.

Governments can look at informal settlements in terms of the immediate action and the long term action. In the immediate action period, we are in a situation of crisis management. What governments try to do is to prevent
encroachment on key sites. They need to preserve in the old
cities the visual settings of monuments; to prevent encroach-
ment on sensitive areas or on natural resources that they want
to preserve. It is a question of containment of key areas where
much will be lost by allowing informal housing to develop.

In the long term, one can look to a fully integrated informal
settlement in a rationalised housing delivery system. It is the
intermediate range that is going to be the key. There will be
sporadic clearing and redevelopments of prime areas in cities
that are growing rapidly. Some settlements will be cleared and
redeveloped because the location has a better use.

We need a new land development strategy that bridges the
growing gap between income and seed capital required to enter
the housing market. This is very important because if you can
make the market accessible to an increasing proportion of the
population, this proportion can be removed from the list of
those who need a government subsidy to access housing. The
important thing is that we remove them as a burden on the
government. This release of unserviced land (other than water
points) planned in a manner conducive to incremental
upgrading of services will not only minimise the cost of
retrofitting but it will allow the government to keep control of
where development is to occur.

Interestingly, Morocco has experienced this and had to stop
the experiment. The reason they have stopped it is because
politicians with different constituencies started to interfere to
get their constituency serviced first. The municipality had a
scheme whereby if you bought in one area, you were going to
be serviced in 15 years, in another zone in 10 years, in yet
another in 5 years; all at different prices. Then city councillors
started interfering to get those in the first area serviced in 5
years and thus played havoc with the plan. The experiment
subsequently broke down.

However, it pointed in the right direction. This is the kind
of land policy we should be looking for.

Oleg Grabar
I am left with two feelings. The first one is an extraordinary
sense of awe, admiration and humility towards the fantastic effort that goes on right now around thousands of cities of all kinds of men, women and children building things, putting things together. We have seen perhaps .001 per cent of what goes on and the sheer admiration we share for the masses of people at work at this very moment, is something which is one of my strongest impressions.

But I do not want to end on a purely romantic note, even though it is a valid one. Many years ago, Clemmanceau said that war is too important to be left to generals and I wonder if housing is too important to be left to governments and architects and too complex to be left to the people. So who is in charge of housing?
I wish to raise certain specific issues and in raising these issues, I will draw from my Karachi experience, simply because it is the only city I know well.

What Mona Serageldin refers to as squatter settlements, we call unorganised or invasion settlements. What she calls informal housing, we call illegal subdivisions. Unorganised invasion ceased to be created in Karachi in the early 1960’s. Their place has been taken by illegal subdivisions and there are two reasons for this.

Firstly, after 1959, it became impossible for people to occupy land in the city centre and settle on it. We bulldozed such settlements.

The second reason is that land developed for the poor by the formal sector is not accessible to them for a number of reasons. One, it is unaffordable; two, the procedures are cumbersome; three, one has to wait for many years after application to get possession of it whereas the poor want land immediately.

Even after possession, no technical advice or credit is available for housing construction. Often no transportation exists to the places of work. So this land is purchased by speculators or the middle classes, and it lies empty for years. We all know the reasons for the failure of government schemes in the formal sector and the governments also understand and recognise these reasons. Yet we have not found viable alternatives and where they have been found, in small instances, they have not been replicated. There does not seem to be any move towards replication. Why is this so? This is a question that should be addressed very seriously.

I would like to turn to the process whereby illegal subdivision takes place in Karachi and in various other cities throughout the world.

Illegal subdivision in Karachi are developed mainly by middlemen. We call them the lals. By involving relevant state official and the police in a “business transaction”, they illegally occupy state land, subdivide it in accordance with the local government regulations and sell it at a price that people can afford. They control speculation of this land by forcing the new owners to build within a month of purchasing the plot. If they
do not build within a month, the plot is confiscated. They also arrange for water and for transportation through their connections in the government. They invite contractors and building component manufacturers to give technical advice on building materials and they also arrange for credit. A credit system operates. They form a welfare organisation of all the people they sell the plot to and with this welfare organisation they lobby officials in government agencies for services and improvements. For this process, they hire a lawyer for legal advice on various issues and even hire journalists to project and explain to the people at large the plight of their area.

The difference between unorganised or invasion settlements and illegal subdivisions is as Mona Serageldin has explained.

There is a major difference between the two. Housing in the squatter colonies or the unorganised settlements varies from house to house. In the case of the illegal subdivision ones, it is fairly uniform.

Services in the squatter settlements were acquired through visible lobbying, demonstrations and contacts with politicians. In the illegal subdivisions, they are acquired very quietly through the action of middlemen and welfare organisations. Something that is very important to us in Karachi, is that the unorganised settlements are ethnically and class-wise homogeneous, whereas the illegal subdivisions are diverse, both ethnically and class-wise.

Here you have a model of development and professionals have again and again stressed that this should be incorporated into efficient planning. There have been attempts at that, but somehow we have not really succeeded in incorporating this model and we should discuss why that is so. What are the constraints? What are the reasons that prevent this model from being a part of efficient planning, and what are the adverse effects, if it does become a part of efficient planning? That is the second issue.

The government has decided to regularise and to develop all squatter colonies on state land in Pakistan whether they were established through unorganised invasions or through illegal subdivisions. However there has been a very poor response
from the residents with the result that after ten years and at enormous expense, only 5 per cent of the population has received development and 12 per cent has been regularised.

Meanwhile the illegal subdivisions increase at the rate of 7 per cent per year in the urban areas to a 4.8 per cent total urban growth. So, by the year 2000, we will have 60 per cent of the population in Karachi and in Pakistan's other urban centres in non-regularised colonies if this state of affairs continues, and they will all be without any services.

There are a number of reasons why regularisation does not take place. One is that in effect, security of tenure is already there, so the new security of tenure is not required. The cost of regularisation is too high to be paid in one go and since it is too high to be paid in one go, international funding is required for it and when it does come, usually the cost of development becomes much higher than when it is done through normal funding and the money cannot be recovered. For example, the initial Karachi housing projects of the 1960's were failures. There was no recovery of investment. There are other factors such as the residents do not trust government agencies. They feel that even if they pay the development charges, development may not follow. So this is the third issue.

Are there other ways of developing these areas? There are models that have been developed but somehow again their replication has been non-existent. I would like to know why that is so. Surveys reveal that in the inner city areas only plots that give good commercial returns have been regularised, immediately after the regularisation process began. However, only 13 per cent of such plots remain with original owners. The rest were purchased by merchants from the overcrowded squatter city and built upon in much the same way as Mona Serageldin has explained. I do not know exactly how this development can be controlled or if it should be, or how it could be made to create a better environment. This is a fourth issue for discussion.

Three types of houses emerge in the illegal subdivisions in Karachi. There are Kacha, or temporary houses. These are owner built and only 4 per cent of the housing begins in this
manner. They are dangerous to live in, they collapse in storms and frequently they are washed away in the rains.

Then there are *Bukka* houses or permanent houses. They have reinforced concrete roofs, plastered walls, reinforced concrete structures. Most of them are contractor built and 3 per cent of houses begin in this manner. Then you have houses which are semi-permanent — 93 per cent of houses begin in this way. They have plastered, precast, concrete walls. As these are the most numerous, I will deal with them in more detail.

Surveys that have been carried out show that 87 per cent of these houses have taken materials on credit from the local building component yards and the larger percentage of the ones who have received credit, are of better quality than the ones that have not received credit. 6 per cent have also taken cash credit. 62 per cent have hired a mason and provided unskilled labour themselves. These semi-permanent houses have a large number of physical defects. I will not go into the design aspects because that is something that right now would be irrelevant. They have a lot of physical defects because of the use of bad materials from the building manufacturing yards. They use bad materials, defective aggregate, bad concrete mix, and so on. There is also poor workmanship because of a lack of knowledge and incompetence on the part of masons. Since the hereditary system is dead, it has been replaced by the apprenticeship system and all the bad apprentices seem to find their way into the low-income areas. There is an attitude that this is a poor man's house so almost anything will do. There is another reason for it and that is the unequal relationship that exists between the building component manufacturing yard and the owner of the house. Also, the unequal relationship that exist between the mason and the owner of the house. Because of this unequal relationship, bad relations develop very early during the house construction. This unequal relationship is there because the owner does not know what to expect from the mason or what to expect from the house since the old tradition is dead and he does not know how he is going to deal with the new materials, or new building systems, that he is exposed to. The final reason is that 15 per cent of the cost of the house is
for tools that have to be hired from the building component manufacturing yard. It is a very large proportion of the cost.

Here we come to the next question. Can the quality of construction of these houses be improved and has the architect any role to play in this? This question I will answer myself to some extent because we are involved with giving advice to the building component manufacturing yard to improve their products and the quality of construction and we have introduced numerous roofing systems through them. We have also made tools available at a cheaper price. But the most important part is that the user has to be educated in construction supervision and management so that his relationship with the building component manufacturer and with the mason is a more equal one and a more equitable one. To do all these things, one must have access to these people and to the institutions that function in these areas and here the question arises as to how can this access be created? We need access, not a superficial access, and a real understanding. The other question is whether the architect should work not only in these semi-legal settlements but also in completely illegal ones?

I will touch upon a few other aspects of the Karachi case but all these three types of houses that I have mentioned have certain features in common. They all have courtyards and all the toilets and bathrooms are on the exterior — on the street side so as to facilitate cleaning by the scavengers or alternatively they are connected to a sewage pit.

There is a difference between the Karachi situation and what Mona Serägeldin has described. Our surveys have shown that about 67 per cent of the people come from inner city areas into these fringe areas, and only 19 per cent come from other parts of the country. Also 70 per cent of them belong to the 20th percentile and below.

There are many defects in houses, foundations being eroded, opening up of joints, walls not properly bonded, poor masonry quality, floors sagging, inappropriate technology, cracks where the house has been extended, corrugated iron sheets held down with stones which are blown off when there is a storm. The sewer pits eventually overflow because as the
density increases, you cannot have this form of drainage. Although water can be brought to the settlement, the problem of sewerage remains and also that of garbage. Of course after these systems are installed, the problems of their maintenance and operation remain. The authorities cannot possibly take care of them and they have somehow to be taken care of by the community itself.

In conclusion, it is very difficult to theorise about informal settlements, their requirements and the directions that they should take on the basis of observation or research that takes place through questionnaires, interviews and contacts. The architect has not contributed to these settlements. Very often they have been created in defiance of policies that he has been instrumental in supporting and it is only in the last few years that he has become interested in these settlements. So, if there has to be any theorising it can only take place after a prolonged association and after a considerable amount of practice.
Innovation and Success in Sheltering the urban Poor
Tasneem Ahmed Siddiqui

Housing for urban and rural poor is not only shelter but the basic requirement of all economic activities. It is the starting point for a person to organise his actions, stabilise his mind and undertake plans and programmes for doing something meaningful. Even simple housing for the homeless who live in shacks made of thatch and leaves or tin roofed huts increases the productivity of the inmates several fold.

Like most developing countries, urbanisation in Pakistan during the last 30 — 35 years has been unprecedented. But unfortunately neither its economic and sociological dimensions have seriously been studied nor have efforts ever been made to link the investment in housing (which some argue is unproductive) to other development objectives by dovetailing educational, motivational, social, economic and environmental inputs with those of construction.

In consequence, what we see today is the urban sprawl of gigantic proportions which manifests itself in high densification of existing urban settlements and the proliferation of slums (with the congenital problems of total lack of all basic services, high rate of unemployment, crime and pollution). Urban crisis in Pakistan is treated as a “law and order” problem and instead of making attempts to understand its contexts and dynamics, our planners talk in terms of security management programmes which aim at refurbishing the police force and the magistracy.

Basic reasons for this mass migration — an exodus of epic, historic proportions are the misconceived development strategies adopted by the LDCs, both in the rural and urban sectors. The land cannot provide the rural poor with a job, so migration in most cases is like a plea for employment, a courageous expression of the willingness to work, more than the poor soil or the unjust society of their home area.

When these poor, jobless migrants land up in cities they find neither jobs nor affordable housing and having no other alternative, tend to become part of the sprawling, ever-expanding squatters’ slums. In some of the countries, half-hearted attempts have no doubt been made to solve the problem by launching low-cost housing programmes for the
urban poor but these policies miserably fail mainly because the
government response to meet the shelter needs of the urban poor is not compatible with their sociology and economics.

In the foreseeable future, the urbanisation trend cannot be stopped, reversed or altered, notwithstanding all high-pitched sloganeering and empty rhetoric. The question is how to meet the housing needs of the migrants? Should we allow them to “squat” wherever they like and make the amelioration plans for them afterwards? Or, should the government meet their shelter needs on their arrival in the cities by providing them with bare necessities and keep on gradually improving their living conditions with their cooperation and participation?

Surprisingly, the ‘informal’ sector has succeeded where most government with all their resources and wisdom have failed. Today, in almost all the LDCs, the shelter needs of the urban poor are being met by the professional land-grabbers, sub-dividers, brokers and the middlemen, call them by whatever name you will.

After having analysed firstly, the reasons for government failure in providing shelter to the urban poor, and secondly, the success of the ‘informal’ sector, Hyderabad Development Authority has come out with an innovative solution to provide them with shelter at prices and at a standard of development within their possibilities. While doing so, it has focussed its attention on important issues which had not received appropriate attention in traditional housing schemes: targeting and affordability; the procedure of allotment and the timelag between allotment and possession of plot.

With emphasis on these basic issues, a project was started, called the ‘Incremental Development Scheme’ which is popularly known as ‘Khuda ki basti’. In this scheme, through a process of trial and error, a new approach has been developed which is capable of overcoming the common weaknesses to an amazing degree.

Basic in the new approach is that the option offered is affordable to the target groups. Therefore, a very low “down payment” (Rs 1000) is required. The development of the scheme is incremental. Initial services are limited to the
absolute minimum: at the start, only communal water supply and public transport are provided. Only in the longer run, house-to-house water supply, sewerage, road paving, electricity, and gas will be provided as the allottees pay their monthly instalments ranging between Rs 50 to Rs 100. Also, standards prescribed pertain only to items that cannot be changed later. Thus, only the lay-out of the scheme is fixed otherwise absolutely no standards are prescribed as to the quality or plan of the house. The allottees are rather encouraged to innovate and improvise. They can start with a *jhuggi* if they like. The critical factor is the guaranteed and assured title to the land. Once people have that, it is amazing how resources are pooled by the family to gradually make a respectable structure.

Secondly, just as is the case with illegal developments, the timelag between allotment and occupation has been eliminated. Development takes place while the allottees are residing in the scheme.

In order to achieve all these, the allotment procedure is crucial. It is especially in this respect that new ways have been developed to reach the target group and to exclude those who do not intend to live in the scheme after acquiring their plot.

A reception area has been provided at site where the shelterless family is registered for allotment of a plot, only if it brings all its members and entire belongings, with it. A regular plot is allocated if they stay in the reception area for about a week.

**Replicability**

The scheme has all the possibilities and potential of replicability because:

- It is entirely self-financing — there is no element of subsidy, formal or non-formal — the entire cost of the developed plot (which is Rs 9600) is being borne by the beneficiaries in instalments spread over a period of eight years.
- It is amazingly simple in approach and all procedures are transparent — no paper work is involved — no experts are needed — only 3-4 junior officials manage the scheme.
- It is highly flexible from planning to execution —
modifications and adjustments can be made keeping local conditions in view — only the basic concept has to be adhered to.

- Provision of services has been linked with cost recovery. Therefore, there is no risk of losing the money which generally happens in public housing schemes.
- Cheap technology is used for construction of houses keeping in view the local climatic conditions and socio-economic status of the allottees — who are encouraged to innovate and improvise (in the process a learning atmosphere has been created for other activities as well like income-generating schemes, home schools etc).
- Flexible planning and building control standards are used — no restrictions are imposed on autonomy to build. Allottees can start with a reed hut if they like.

**Sustainability**

The scheme is sustainable in the long run because the community is involved from planning stage to execution of development work, maintenance and cost recovery.

The community is organised at block level (ie about 200 houses). Separate accounts are maintained for each block, which are jointly operated by the block’s nominee and the HDA’s project manager.

**Community Participation**

Block residents indicate their priority for desired services in open gatherings. If enough money is available in the block’s account, estimates are prepared by the HDA’s technical staff and a contractor is appointed from amongst the community. Since the community is involved in supervision and the community contractor works on marginal profit (and there are no kick-backs), it has been observed that development cost is reduced by about 25%.

The block organisation is also responsible for maintenance of services, conservancy and action against defaulters and absenteeees. Their services are also used for disbursement of small loans for house improvement/income generation.
An attempt has been made to enhance the institutional capacity for meeting the housing and development requirements of the urban poor so that investments and policies are effectively channelled to those in need. The HDA has shown that housing activity can very easily be used as a starting point for an overall community development process. Through it people can also be organised into strengthening community solidarity and to mobilise group motivation and initiative so that the tempo of growth can be sustained.

**Employment Generation**

1000 people have already found new jobs in the scheme which clearly shows that investment in housing has tremendous impact on income and employment through multiplier linkages. According to a recent World Bank research publication (Housing For Low-Income Urban Families) first round effects are the direct increments to income and employment generated by construction activity. The rate of employment creation in housing construction is higher than that for manufacturing and close to that for the economy as a whole. In Pakistan, the income multiplier of housing construction is estimated at 2 and 14 additional jobs are created for every US$10,000 invested in housing, the publication adds.

Efforts are afoot to start more income generating projects in the scheme with the help and cooperation of the Women's Division, Government of Pakistan, Appropriate Technology Department, and the Sind Small Industries Corporation.

This scheme which was launched in November 1986, is at the nascent stage right now, but after overcoming the initial difficulties, over 2,500 allottees have already occupied their plots and are building their houses as they live there.

This experiment has shown that even without bringing about basic changes in the power structure of the society; without changing the unequal relationship between government and the slum dwellers and even without any definite political programme in favour of the "wretched of the earth", development authorities can successfully assume the role of the
informal' sector as its strategy is perhaps the only answer to provide shelter to the urban poor at affordable prices.

Small Loan Scheme
The HDA has obtained a bulk loan of Rs 5 million from the House Building Finance Corporation of the Government of Pakistan which will be used for improvement of existing house structures as well as for income generating schemes.

The existing practices and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures make it almost impossible for the low-income groups to get such loans individually. Simultaneously the rate of repayment is dismally low.

The HDA has evolved an innovative system for disbursement and recovery of this loan. Instead of giving this loan to individual beneficiaries, the loan will be given to the block organisations which in turn gives this money to the individuals after ascertaining their need and repayment capacity. The loan ceiling has been kept flexible. It may vary between Rs 1000 to Rs 10,000. But in deserving cases this can be further relaxed if the beneficiaries satisfy the block organisation that the loan will generate enough income so as to ensure timely repayment.

Instead of complicated procedures, simple guarantee forms and promisory note proformas have been devised. The beneficiaries do not have to run from one office to another and waste their time. All formalities can be completed by the HDA staff, while accounting is done by a commercial bank which has opened a booth in the area.

The loan is given to those allotees:
- who are members of the block organisation and have formed groups of ten families. Initially the loan will be given to the first five. The remaining five will get the loan when the former group starts making satisfactory repayments according to the prescribed scheme;
- who have raised some sort of construction on their plots and are living there with their families;
- who have cleared all development charges outstanding against them;
- who have fixed a WC pan in their latrines;
• who approach HDA technical staff before raising further construction, especially roof casting;
• who have planted at least one tree in — or outside their plot and have also made conservancy arrangements in their land; and finally
• who satisfy the block organisation that they have been able to increase their income after coming to the scheme and their present income enables them to repay their loan.

The incremental development scheme was launched in November 1986. Since then no loan facilities have been available to the allottees. They constructed their houses according to their need using their own resources. They also used their hidden capacity to mobilise resources because the house provides them a life-time security. Some people borrowed money from their friends and relatives, others sold their ornaments and jewellery.

While 70 per cent were able to raise some sort of construction, the remaining 30 per cent are still living in reed huts or by simply stacking bricks. The first category needs money to have a weather-proof roof. They need around Rs 5000 for that purpose. The second category needs small amounts of money to generate more income. Various surveys have shown that even an amount of Rs 2000 can increase their monthly income by Rs 400 — 500 which can then be used for improving their housing conditions.

The disbursement of the loans was intended to start from 1st September 1988 and we hope that the recovery rate will be around 80 per cent. If this happens, it will be a major breakthrough in reaching the target group and at the same
time effecting recovery from them at a satisfactory rate. The money thus recovered would be recycled and given to the remaining allottees.

Clockwise: Cost recovery is linked with provision of services. The residents collect the money and the HDA acts as a lobbyist with the authorities.
Out of 2700 families, there were 250 handloom carpet.
Cottage industries have sprung up — garment manufacturer and shoe repairers.
There are now provision stores, restaurants and construction material shops.
The Development and Morphology of Informal Housing

Mona A Serageldin

Background
The involvement of architects and planners with housing for lower income groups began in the 1950's and 1960's when national governments in the post-colonial era embarked on slum eradication programmes. Slum dwellers were to be rehoused in public housing estates. To the designers of these first projects, the overriding concern was decent shelter and sanitary conditions and not affordability. That their vision was influenced by prevailing international norms was the natural outcome of their professional training. Their failure to foresee the implications of demographic and economic trends over the next two decades invalidated their approach. Their efforts were overwhelmed by population growth, surplus labour, and an influx of rural migrants which could not be checked.

Throughout the 1960's housing shortages worsened and slums proliferated. Frustrated authorities turned to legislative controls, a politically expedient short-term remedy. The longer term impact were devastating. Stringent controls accelerated the deterioration of the regulated stock, distorted private production, undermined the tax base, hampered residential mobility and warped occupancy patterns.

The low cost shelter solutions advocated in the 1960's and 1970's produced a variety of expandable core housing prototypes to meet the needs of the urban poor. They were valid models in parts of Africa and Asia where the process happened to coincide with local practices as in Khartoum and Dakar. Elsewhere, the lack of enthusiasm among housing authorities for these approaches stemmed from an accurate perception of their unsuitability as a housing solution for the middle classes, the only client group of political consequences. Leverage and funding from international agencies launched projects in many countries which otherwise might have never experimented with minimal shelter programmes. The improvements provided were on a scale too small to be meaningful in relation to the magnitude of the problem or noticeable in the midst of sprawling chaotic cities. By the mid-1970's their demonstration effect had lost its significance.
The shock waves in world economics and the resultant movements of labour and capital transformed the character of urban growth throughout the Third World. By 1981, 15 million expatriate workers funnelled between 25 and 35 US billion dollars of foreign exchange back to their home countries. As the bulk of these remittances found their way into real estate, the urbanised area of cities doubled or tripled in extent shaped by uncontrolled housing construction on an unprecedented scale. Functionally defective and aesthetically chaotic environments became the dominant feature of cities, whose annual rate of expansion of 4 per cent to 7 per cent outstripped the capacities of municipalities to provide urban services. As a result, their efficiency was impaired and there has been a sharp deterioration in the quality of life.

The massive infusion of capital drove up prices in one of the worst inflationary spirals ever experienced by urban real estate. When it did taper off after 1982, the levels reached frustrated the housing aspirations of large segments of the population, including the bulk of the civil service. Hence the ambivalence of public policy which oscillates between attempts to control and efforts to regularise. On the one hand, the illegalities and violations that characterise informal development cannot be
condoned. On the other hand, its contribution to the alleviation of the housing shortage cannot be ignored. In most labour-exporting countries, informal housing today accounts for about 40 per cent of the standing stock but over 60 per cent of the starts on site.

Slums and squatter settlements are old phenomena. As far back in history as we can go we find evidence of quarters where poor citizens and disadvantaged migrants lived in dilapidated structures under crowded and unsanitary conditions. Historians and chroniclers have left us graphic descriptions of such areas in ancient Rome, medieval Cairo and Ottoman Istanbul. By contrast, informal housing is a relatively recent phenomenon. It is fundamentally sound housing built incrementally on illegally subdivided land with the help of contracted labour. Both informal and squatter settlements occur on the urban fringe. They are, however, quite distinct.

Homeowners in informal settlements have purchased their plots in good faith from individuals who rightly or wrongly claimed legal ownership of the land. They do not feel that code violations pose a real threat to their tenure. Squatters on the other hand know that they have no legal right to the land they occupy. Their makeshift shacks reflect their fear of eviction.

Socially, squatter settlements house newly arrived rural migrants and poorer segments of the population who cannot afford other forms of shelter. The only exceptions are the older settlements which at one time grew on the fringe but are now embedded within the urban core. These settlements tend to retain groups who choose to trade off decent housing on the periphery for the advantage of more central locations. The contrasts between the shabbiness of the dwellings and the value of their contents testify to the paradox of slum residents who are relatively well-off.

When squatters are given legal tenure under various upgrading programmes, the settlement starts to reflect its newly acquired status. Shacks are demolished, replaced by housing built with durable materials. It is in all respects identical to informal housing but constrained by the small size and odd shapes of lots in squatterised areas.
The Douars of Morocco and the Kampons of Indonesia are striking examples. A turnover of 20 per cent to 30 per cent is to be expected as beneficiaries for whom housing is not a priority prefer to sell their land and settle elsewhere.

Planning authorities find it difficult to face market dynamics which simultaneously promote:

- Accelerated densification of the existing urbanised zone through infill of vacant plots, greater ground coverage of plots and increased height of structures;
- Proliferation of informal settlements through fringe development and leapfrogging;
- Speculation on land and development ventures.

Code enforcement authorities are unable to deal effectively with the multiplicity of violations or muster the degree of control needed to contain them. A growing rift between a stagnating formal sector stifled by cumbersome regulations and a thriving informal sector fueled by speculation and lack of controls threatens the precarious balance which allows the two to coexist as parallel markets as in Algeria, Baghdad and Casablanca. When the sheer magnitude or soaring rates of growth tips the balance, development regulations break down as they did in Cairo in the 1970's.

Until recently, architects had for the most part ignored informal housing, disenchanted by what perceived to be an overwhelming absence of quality and a concentrated dose of bad taste. During the past few years, the profession's interest was rekindled by research and analytical studies undertaken by university professors and their students. The practitioners were slow to follow and failed to share academia's enthusiasm. A keener awareness of local politics, social issues and planning concerns and a greater reticence to accept disturbing features as expressions of vernacular forms accounts for their persistently critical attitude.

The Site Development Process
Informal housing emerged as a planning and architectural issue in many Third World countries in the late 1970's when the explosive proliferation of uncontrolled settlements over-
whelmed cities already stretched to the limit of their absorptive capacity by internal migratory movements and growth patterns. In less than 15 years, the urbanised zone of most large cities doubled in extent, the area added is roughly comparable to the expansion experienced during the previous century with the major difference that this new development was for the most part unplanned, unregulated and unserviced. Households with more limited resources are pushed further out to unserviced fringe locations where small scale entrepreneurs reap windfall profits selling illegally subdivided land.

The seed capital needed to enter the informal market remains well above the means of the average urban household. Typically, it represents savings accumulated over 5 to 7 years by an expatriate worker. A local wage earner would require 15 years to accumulate a similar sum. Yet limited income groups benefit also. They find accommodation under a variety of tenure agreements in the structures built by their more fortunate peers. Those who are left out because of lack of means or lack of entrepreneurship crowd in shacks and dilapidated structures or double up with relatives while waiting for public housing allocations. When waiting lists grow longer by the day shattering expectations, this politically potent group is often vociferous in venting its frustrations.

Expressions of appreciation for the inherent qualities of popular housing are associated with settlements in the early stages of development. The shortcomings of unplanned layouts and hybrid forms are masked by their low rise profile, the apparent continuities with vernacular traditions, a sense of community, and a semblance of self-help.

Processes of incremental transformations soon raise densities above the holding capacity of the site and the ceilings of low cost sanitary options. Gradually, the drawbacks of compact layouts with built-in rigidities are revealed: water-logged soil, latrine overflows, garbage and waste heaps and narrow alleyways flanked by towering structures. The appreciation in land values, a function of the settlement’s location and of general expectations as to the prospects of servicing drives the densification process. The greater the pressure for develop-
Informal housing development process

Source: Aga Khan Unit for Housing and Urbanization, Harvard University Graduate School of Design
ment, the more rapid the maturing and the gentrification which ensues. One after another, features which gave the settlement a pleasant aspect are obliterated, overshadowed or disrupted by excessive height, haphazard repetition, incongruous juxtapositions and oppressive intensity of use. Underlying the priority given to expansion over finishing is the ability to translate additional space into income-generating shops, apartments and rooms. The receipts are recycled right back into further construction in order to speed up completion of the project. With reinforced concrete building systems densities can climb very quickly from 100 to as much as 600 persons per hectare.

In large, overcrowded cities like Karachi, Dhaka and Cairo, where the housing shortage is particularly acute, structures can reach over 6 storeys in less than 5 years, raising densities from under 400 persons per hectare to over 1000. At saturation, the levels reached are comparable to those prevailing in the older traditional quarters irrespective of city size as illustrated by development patterns in Cairo and Fez.

The buyers of plots in an informal settlement belong socially to the middle classes. Their characteristic is newly acquired wealth through being directly or indirectly affected by the changing wage structure in the labour market. Desire for the outward display of affluence is only tempered by economic considerations.

Religion and cultural tradition continue to play the dominant role in shaping individual and communal behaviour. Yet lifestyles are changing. Technological innovations and improvements in transport and utilities are transforming daily life. Age-old routines and the customs associated with them are swept away. New modes have to be accommodated in terms of organisation of space and social conventions. The contrasting features of new environments are admired and emulated from streets and sidewalks to kitchens and bathrooms.

The quasi-rectilinear layouts of informal subdivisions encompass dual grids integrating vehicular and pedestrian circulation. They clearly anticipate infrastructure networks which are expected to reach the settlement within a time
horizon which is dependent upon location and political clout. To a large extent prior land use affects the layout. Long narrow alignments reflect the elongated shapes of agricultural holdings. Radial patterns reflect the topography and physical features of wastelands.

The geometry of street patterns seeks simultaneously to give car access to every structure and to fulfill traditional functions as a delineator of social spaces, activity spines and neighbourhood boundaries. Lack of planning and uncoordinated development means that the resultant network of roadways can at best only partially meet these diverse needs as shown by examples drawn from Cairo, Fez, Tunis and Abidjan. The disappearance of visually identifiable transition thresholds forces a reliance on community-wide acceptance of new definitions of social space. Mounting densities, shifting household activities from courtyards to alleyways and spillover of commerce onto streets generates bottlenecks, ambiguities and conflicts which strain relations between competing parties.

Arguments over disregard for precedence in shared areas, illicit appropriation or misuse of semi-public rights of ways and alleged violations of recognised social space are a major source of friction among residents.

The lack of free standing structures and the absence of front yards are the consequences of the need to fully utilise a limited amount of land purchased at high cost and to prevent encroachment in a situation where control demands constant vigilance. In countries like Sudan where the built-up area of a dwelling is small and great use is made of open-to-sky space, a high fence running along the lot boundary serves this dual purpose of safeguarding property and privacy. In a marked departure from tradition, in all but the most densely settled urban areas, skyrocketing land values are forcing a reliance on vertical expansion and the restriction of space consuming elements. This happened in Amman, Algiers, Casablanca and Fez. It is happening also in Baghdad and Rabat.

Central courtyards are the first element to be affected. Their value as raw land rapidly exceeds their utility as an activity space. In crowded and dense environments such as medieval
Cairo, the walled city of Lahore, Victorian London or nineteenth-century Paris, courtyards disappeared from middle-class residences. Their climatic functions were taken over by light wells and ventilation shafts and their service function shifted under roofed spaces to permit the stacking of additional stories. It should be no surprise to witness a similar evolution in the Maghreb. Stunted size, marginal placement and vestigial shafts reflect adaptations to new economic realities.

When courtyards do occur in informal areas they are associated with an unusual predominance of rural lifestyles in settlements growing around village cores, in regularised squatter areas and low-cost housing schemes. These courtyards are later totally or partially covered and built over. Notable exceptions are found in sub-Saharan Africa. In Dakar and Abidjan, close to 70 per cent of the urban population live in multi-family compounds. Rooms constructed in concrete blocks and wood are grouped around a central yard shared by the owner and his tenants.

When land is at a premium, intensity of use is very high. Informal housing is the embodiment of this principle. Density of development and internal utilisation of space are stretched to the limit, well in excess of design capacities defined by planning and architectural standards.
In countries where lots are delineated by enclosing walls, metal gates are particularly appreciated. In Sudan and Yemen, they are lavishly decorated and end up consuming an inordinate part of the housing budget.

When lower density developments prevail, residents who can afford larger lots often create token front yards to emulate the designs of upper class villas. This space is of little use but offers the possibility of simultaneously displaying the gate to the property and the entrance to the building.

Design and Construction
Constant exposure to cross-cultural influences through travel, mass media and telecommunications have changed perceptions and aspirations. An array of increasingly affordable novelties and appliances soon come to be viewed as necessities. The more expensive symbols of status and modernity such as colour TVs, elaborate refrigerators and VCRs are highly valued and conspicuously displayed. The automobile has become an integral part of their world as a community even when it remains beyond their reach as individuals.

The environments they create seek to fulfill their vision of urbanity. Forms, materials and appointments associated with the rural habitat are discarded. Paradoxically, rural activities such as raising poultry linger on. They are integrated in the urban dwelling by relegating them preferably to terraces and balconies but if need be to bathrooms and kitchens in order to keep them out of the habitable rooms. New construction from elite villas to public housing estates project an image of modernity that is widely appreciated. It provides models, setting the standards of design and aesthetics which shaped the new popular architecture from Morocco to the Philippines. Given the magnitude of the investment relative to earning capacity, buildings, in informal settlements should not be viewed as merely fulfilling shelter needs. The immediate objective is access to homeownership rather than housing per se. The long-term goal is monetary return on investment through the addition of rental units and, whenever possible, commercial uses. In some countries, horizontal expansion is the norm.
Adequate differentiation and articulation of space ensures the desired degree of privacy and interaction among users sharing the premises or the compound. This is well illustrated by examples from Abidjan and Tunis and Morocco. Where land values are high, economic and cultural factors combine to foster vertical expansion. The potential for income generation and/or the distaste for living quarters on the ground floor prompts homeowners to add extra stories and to convert the ground level to commercial use or rent it out to families of more modest means as in Cairo, Karachi and Fez. The social profile of an informal house can thus cover a broad range of middle income groups. Households on the threshold of entry into the market are relegated to the least desirable locations, crowded in on the ground floor to the back of lots or in unfinished rooms on the terraces lacking water points and latrines. The more fortunate occupy intermediate locations, larger quarters and better amenities. The owner of course reserves the prime area for his own use.

Households contract out construction to workers in the building trades. They retain control of the rate of build up, set the priorities, choose from alternatives and decide on the sequencing of works. This rational response to efficiency in income generating opportunities puts in question the validity of self-help programmes in urban areas. Frequently, the small contractors and master masons have learned their trade as construction workers on public projects or jobs for higher income groups in the country or abroad. They freely replicate, adapt and blend building techniques and styles. The choice of materials and systems is dictated by economy, practicality and expediency. The choice of motifs and colours is conditioned by the preferences of both builder and client. They share a dislike of the old-fashioned and a conscious admiration of the new.

They have perfected prototypical layouts that permit a variety of incremental transformations. The key elements ensuring this versatility are.

- A building system which can accommodate additions and repartitioning. A reinforced concrete frame with brick or concrete block infill is the most widely used structural
Incremental development of new house,
Douar Down, Rabat.
system. It is cost-effective in terms of the desired level of safety, durability, flexibility and ease of maintenance.

- A ground floor plan amenable to successive conversions to different uses. The floor must accommodate three generations normally living together as the owner’s extended family, other households renting living quarters and commercial uses taking up space in the building. The layouts typically encompass a distribution space. Its location is governed by street access and lot shape. Centrality is maintained whenever possible but not at the expense of practicality. Priority is given to safeguarding street frontage and building corners for immediate or future commercial use. There are no links between the commercial and residential parts of the structure, even in modest one-story houses where the shop is operated by the owner himself. This feature, which may anticipate future expansion, also perpetuates a long-standing tradition of segregation among uses sharing the same building envelope.

- A staircase to future upper floors conveniently located relative to street access in order to allow internal partitioning of the floor area into independent units.
1 Room
2 Courtyard
3 Kitchen
4 W.C.
5 W.C & Shower
6 Shop
7 Warehouse
8 Partially covered courtyard
9 Guest reception room
10 Storage
11 Light well

First floor  

Roof  

Ground floor  

Facade B  

Facade A  

Basic core unit 8m x 8m

Transformed courthouse, Takkadoum Housing Project, Rabat.

63
The stability of climatic conditions and the strength of cultural traditions do tend to promote continuity in domestic architecture. Yet traditional solutions are collapsing under the pressures of limited space, technological innovations and changing lifestyles. The enthusiastic adoption of European style furniture by the middle classes has brought about major changes in the internal organisation of space. The evolution of new patterns is very much in evidence in the interiors of informal houses.

As an indicator of social standing, the value of furniture is unsurpassed as an object of admiration and as a source of inspiration. It allows the emulation of elite houses. The image of urbaneity it projects and the attractive prices at which it can be machine manufactured have made furniture the most important item in the negotiation of marriage contracts and dowries. Ornate wooden furniture, carpets and crystal chandeliers are showpieces reserved for the reception areas.

Treasured appliance such as refrigerators, air conditioners, colour TVs, cassette recorders and VCRs are placed in the most conspicuous locations possible.

The bulk, fixity and rigidity of beds, cupboards, tables and chairs contrast with the compactness, mobility and flexibility of mats, chests, folding stands, trays, cushions and rugs which they replace. They entail a need for more space to accommodate the same household activities and a functional specialisation of the available space. Traditional multi-purpose rooms are replaced by bedrooms, sitting rooms, dining rooms and a reception. Even when living quarters are reduced to a single room, the cramped space is organised into distinct zones separated by light or symbolic partitions.

Understandably, there is a marked dislike for open-type plans. The floor space is divided into separate rooms opening into a distribution space. There are no interconnections between rooms. The importance given to the reception which invariably has the best street view and is disproportionately large relative to the size of the dwelling reflects both the cultural value attached to the tradition of hospitality and the desire for ostentatious display of wealth. The very lavishness of
the room restricts its use. Most of the family's daily activity occurs in the distribution space which is often zoned functionally by the arrangement of furniture and partitions. Curiously enough, it is smaller than the formal reception room and because of its central location, often lacks light and ventilation, particularly when it exceeds four storeys.

Rooms are barely big enough for the furniture they are expected to accommodate. Pieces are lined up against the wall maximising both the number of items fitted in a room and the residual free floor area. Similarly wall space is put to use by stacking up additional furniture and an array of storage containers over the larger pieces. The smaller the dwelling the more cluttered the rooms, balconies and terraces. The dearth of unencumbered space can be oppressive.

Spaces have to be provided for new amenities which acquire additional importance because of their absence from older housing types. Bathrooms with colourful tiles and porcelain fixtures are the ultimate expression of luxury. Kitchens with an array of appliances and a corner for a washing machine are benefits of modernity particularly appreciated by the working housewife. The TV marks the focal point in a house. It is around the TV that families gather for entertainment. Close friends and relatives are often invited to share the informality of this sitting area which contrasts sharply with the formal reception room.

Space consuming activities have to occur outside the crowded dwelling, on terraces, stairs, landings, and the building's entrance, eventually spilling over into the alleyways. Children are expected to play in the street. A self-imposed set of social controls regulates the use of common areas and friction can be kept within limits but never totally eliminated.

The role of entrances transcends their function as a threshold separating public and private domains. They signal status and prestige. Great care is taken in selecting their size, material and ornamentation. Steps and projections enlarge their scale. An impressive entrance enhances perceptions of quality in the building. Iron gates are favoured because of their durability and the sense of security they convey.
Exterior Design and Decoration
Perceptible changes in attitudes towards privacy are transforming the external aspect of houses. Transition spaces integrated into the structure ensure the desired level of privacy and social interaction with other occupants within the building and neighbours along the street. Old and new elements combine to serve this purpose. Fences, doorways staircases, landings, windows, balconies and parapets create varying degrees of enclosure and openness. Windows and balconies open up facades to the outside world. They reflect a desire to be in contact with the exciting life of the city. Bent entrances and permanent obstruction of the street view are omitted. 

Claustros, fences, parapets and screens are symbolic of this refusal to be confined within the enclosure of a dwelling. The privacy of family life is safeguarded by more opaque but less rigid protective shields such as shades, awnings, shutters and curtains which can be removed at will.

Street facades command the special attention they deserve as prominent indicators of social standing. Funds are set aside for finishings and ornamentation. Even in the early stages, when resources are needed to expand the structure decorative accents limited to balconies, entrance door and strips around windows highlight this facade.
Ornamentation blends, more or less successfully, new motifs with more traditional ones. Interestingly, only modern materials are used to express both patterns. Paints and glazed tiles relieve the massiveness of large wall surface. Decorative motifs highlight the perimeter of metal-framed glass windows. The special treatment reserved for balconies testifies to their importance in the daily life of residents. They are valued as the
only private open space left to apartment dwellers. They are truly multi-functional spaces where all activities requiring open air must somehow coexist: from toddlers at play to poultry cages and from laundry drying lines to garlic and pimento strands. It is only under conditions of extreme overcrowding that families consent to give up their balconies and enclose them to convert them to additional room space. This loss is bitterly resented as it forces increased reliance on shared areas and such inconvenient arrangements as having chickens in the bathroom and laundry lines projecting out of windows.

Perhaps the most striking feature of informal house exteriors is the lavish and ostentatious display of colour. As soon as plastering becomes feasible and affordable, coloured paints are used to differentiate architectural elements. Expensive materials and facings are reflected in a modified expression and at a fraction of the cost. More importantly, colour is the most cost-effective method by which occupants can individualise the exterior of their living quarters whether it is a whole building or part of a building to express their identity.

Finally, a common strategy is to inscribe the name of God Almighty, “Allah”, in the brickwork above the doorway on the facade as a deterrent to building inspectors from issuing orders to demolish structure violating codes and regulations.

Conclusions
Today, the production of public housing is far too little and too slow to make a dent in the shortages afflicting the more populous countries. The sharp inflation in construction costs has eroded prospects of increasing affordability by lowering design standards. The subsidies required to bridge the widening gap between cost and ability to pay tripled on the average between 1973 and 1982 despite an upward shift in social targeting. Attempts to curb costs have affected the quality of the built environment rather than the built form itself. Yet, in a segmented market, shortages in one segment are not necessarily affected by gains in another. However, allowing those shortages to be blown out of proportion masks important market shifts and warps public policy in an
unrealistic and often counter-productive manner. By excluding informal development from the equation, the housing crisis can loom much larger than it ought to.

Exclusive reliance on government-owned sites has implied increasingly marginal and distant locations. Discarding land consuming low rise prototypes has added to the overwhelming monotony of projects. The use of prefabricated systems presumed to accelerate production and cut costs have undermined even further livability and human scale.

Despite huge front end investments and long delays, large public projects continue to command the attention of decision makers and capture the imagination of citizens because of the vision they offer of a better future. Architects and planners can deplore the aesthetics of this vision but they cannot deny its appeal. Designs widely held to be unadapted to prevailing lifestyles continue to embody the housing aspirations of the middle classes. Informal housing replicates these designs in forms adapted to incremental construction.
Informal development has amply demonstrated that funds can be mobilised for housing if planning controls are not allowed to stifle entrepreneurship. Security of tenure and access of home ownership have long been identified as crucial incentives. Interestingly enough, the flexibility of tenancy arrangements has not received the attention it deserves despite its importance as a proven mechanism to reach further down the income distribution.

The range of tenure agreements encountered in informal housing documents the creativity brought to devising formulae for financial cooperation in situations where price variations occur suddenly and unpredictably. Joint ventures between associates neither of whom has sufficient funds to enter the market on his own show an infinite variety of mutual adjustments. One approach consists of a first stage in which one associate secures the land and the other builds the house to accommodate both families. Similarly prospective tenants are induced to invest funds to construct additional rooms by negotiating arrangements granting them guaranteed privileges of occupancy. There is an imperative need to harness this potential in order to prevent resources from being ultimately wasted as mature unserviced settlements deteriorate into slums before they can be salvaged by retro-fitting. This requires a capacity to market buildable, albeit unserviced, land in locations which reinforce sound development patterns and at prices which are attractive to families seeking housing in the informal market. The reluctance of municipalities to release unserviced land on the urban fringe is perplexing since they can neither hope to direct growth nor to prevent encroachments without doing so. The more intractable problems stem from the inability to overcome the effects of speculation. The loss of valuable agricultural land and irrational development patterns are cross-sectoral problems which can only be addressed in a context broader than housing.

The inability of public authorities to capitalise on the dynamics of the informal market is due in large part to legislative paralysis because of divergent viewpoints among decision makers responsive to particular constituencies. It is
also due to ambivalent attitudes among professionals profoundly disturbed by one or another of its negative manifestations.

The architect’s notion of housing for limited income groups differs from the housing which people have built for themselves. The finished product offered to them is too rigid to be adapted to different needs and lifestyles, too anonymous to satisfy a deep-rooted urge to express identity and too small to accommodate changes in household composition and activities. The breakdown of controls in many housing estates following the transfer of ownership of the dwelling units to their tenants has led to surprising informal transformations which render those projects unrecognisable to the great distress of their architects. Examples from Cairo, Tunis and Rabat testify to the creative talents of residents and their contractors.

Whenever middle income groups displace the poorer strata as beneficiaries of minimal shelter solutions, an increasingly common occurrence, the original cores are usually demolished or sometimes integrated within the informal buildings sprouting on the serviced sites. Good examples are found in Dhaka and Rabat. In the instances where serviced lots are offered as the most affordable shelter option, conveniently ignoring the funds needed to build some type of habitable space on the plot, the scarcity and market value of the land results in a high turnover and the result is the transformation of the project area into a prosperous informal settlement at a bewildering speed.

Informal housing has penetrated deep within the city core, surfacing through spot redevelopment of lots embedded in the urban fabric. Unchecked, these incongruous insertions can threaten the integrity of historical quarters and destroy the visual setting of monuments. In labour exporting countries novelties quickly reach the rural areas through the participation of millions of villagers as labourers in work overseas. The image of success, health and modernity projected by the new buildings they erect upon their return has led to widespread emulation. Traditional rural architecture is losing out, eradicated by an unshakable image of backwardness. The significance of this transformation has yet to be assessed.
Informal housing is neither a mutant descended from historical domestic architecture nor a distorted offshoot evolved from imported alien models. It is a hybrid integrating contemporary technology, new forms and reinterpreted traditional elements. It can be bland, awkward or whimsical but it is always rational, practical and expedient.

Despite similarities of forms and symbols, the array of physical elements, proportions, motifs and colours give a distinctive regional identity to informal housing. Combinations of visual elements created by builders and residents individualise every dwelling in a settlement. Imbalances and excesses can be deplored but the legitimacy of the quest for better living conditions cannot be denied.

**Selected References**


**Acknowledgment**

Research Team: Samir Abdulac and Oussama Kabbani
Graphics: Richard Khan
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The Development and Morphology of Informal Housing
Mona A Serageldin

Innovation and Success in Sheltering the Urban Poor
Tasneem Ahmed Siddiqui

Comments
Arif Hasan

Discussion
Kamau Karogi

What was presented in the paper by Ismail Serageldin substantially comes from the Middle East which has a fairly stable and developed culture, so that it is possible for the architect or whoever is concerned with housing to decide the culture. One of the general points which we must address ourselves to is how to decode the deeply set cultural codes? — and then to reuse them for housing incorporating marginal evolution that must happen over time.

This tends to propose to those of us who are in educational institutions — that we must begin not to rely on an individual architect’s vision. We must develop very broadly based, theoretical models of understanding our society and their priorities so far as housing needs in spacial terms, housing needs in cultural terms, housing needs as a symbol in society are concerned. Here in Africa, a few studies have been done, in Lamu for example. We have done quite extensive studies to appreciate things like privacy gradients in Lamu town. We have also done extensive surveys and the group which is working on revitalisation and rehabilitation of the town has been consulting us. Still we cannot say, that even for such a small place, we have a very comprehensive theoretical framework as to how to use what is in Lamu to build anew.

The next problem is how to develop a theoretical model of decoding the deep structure of a society which is in transition, like the African society. Whereas there is no question that there is a need for doing that, there is also a need for incorporating a component within our thinking that takes care of very rapid change, economic change, cultural change etc. The problem is to distill the important elements. We have to make a distinction between the needs of a stable culture and the needs of a culture in transition.

The next important problem we are facing in my country is the role of architect. In a traditional society, the architect or whoever wanted to build was part and parcel of society. The deep cultural structures were part of him; he was a receptacle. But the modern (western) training suggests there is a distance between the architect and the rest of society.
He is overseeing the contractor and trying to fulfill the needs of the client, but he is alienated from the word go, from society. Some way has to be found to reintegrate the architect within society. A very serious rethinking in architectural education has to be undertaken. It is very important for us to address ourselves to the organisation of the profession. An architect in Kenya is sometimes referred to in a derogatory manner as one who simply draws plans, because society does not quite see what the architect does. They understand what a contractor does but it is a little difficult for the layman to understand what the architect does. So there is a serious problem of how to integrate the architect within society. We are talking about solving the problems of housing, by looking at some positive projects by architects. But it cannot be a question of hit or miss. It has to be integrated in education.

We all know, in the history of mankind, there has been a danger of the all-embracing theoretical model. Some time ago, we had Karl Marx who gave a blue print of how societies should develop from an economic point of view. We had the Modern Movement which gave us a theoretical all-embracing statement of how we should continue with our architecture. We must address ourselves to the dangers of the all-embracing theoretical model. It should have a built-in component of evolution, although it is a model. We also have the danger of having no model at all. It is quite clear that there is something lacking, and I do not think we can rely on a hit or miss solution by the brilliant architect. We must do something in the way of education and my contribution has been a suggestion of an issue that we need to address.

Murat Karayalcin
Firstly, I am afraid, I am going to defend apartment blocks. The Jeddah example was bad but what is to be criticised is not the apartments but the architect or the developer. If there is no demand for apartment blocks from the people of Jeddah and you make apartments there, then you have not done your market research properly but the Singapore example is really quite good. What is privacy, and why are apartments unable to
secure that privacy? If conditions were appropriate people would probably prefer to live in houses near the ground but there are so many cases where they are not able to. If you choose to live in an apartment you may still retain your privacy. There are various means developed; for instance in Ankara, people use balconies for that purpose.

Many plants, small ornamental trees and flowers are cultivated and they take these plants and insert them into their balconies and thus develop a living pattern that satisfies them.

Secondly and related to that, is the issue of privatisation and socialisation. In Middle East countries, privatisation has come to an important level. Ismail Serageldin has shown an example from Egypt where the people are painting their walls. I can give similar examples from Turkey. It seems that we pay special attention to our living units but that we do not attach much attention or importance to their physical context and the social environment. Now, here is a role for the architect.

Architects, in addition to their vitally important role of shaping the form of buildings, should give special attention to the development of places that will assist us in our socialisation process.

Babar Mumtaz

I was glad that Kamau Karogi brought the discussion around to the role of the architect and training of the architect.

I was slightly worried that he was projecting a new villain of the piece which was going to be the West. I hope that is not going to be the case and we can restrict ourselves to keeping the architect as the villain or if you like, the hero of the piece and look again at what we mean by the architect and his role.

Ismail Serageldin introduced a number of very interesting concepts, when for example, in praising the Cakirhan House, he said that the definition of an architect was not someone that had a particular qualification but was simply somebody instructing somebody else to produce a preconceived or preferred end results. If you accept that as a definition of the architect, then there are far more architects then we give credit to. Many of the buildings that we see are built in this way, and
I am now referring to the lowest cost, the squatter houses that are indeed built in that fashion. Very often, people, although they use self-help also instruct other people. People go through a process of modifying and developing a house until it becomes something closer and closer to their preferred reality. It is the experience of everybody who is living in a shanty town. It is the experience of everybody who is developing their own architecture, piece by piece towards a preferred reality. If you take that as a notion then they are all architects.

Ismail Serageldin talked about the spontaneous settlement and if spontaneity is a desirable criteria, simultaneously is an undesirable criteria. When we try to produce ten thousand houses at once, in the form of a big project, that we begin to get the massive slab blocks.

The other notion that Ismail Serageldin introduced, relates to the same dilemma, or dichotomy that Charles Correa has pointed out. How do you move from houses to housing? All the examples that we have seen of good architecture have been good houses. How do you get an architect to do housing not just houses? As Charles Correa has said, even if you have got one good individual house, multiplying it by 10,000 does not necessarily produce good housing.

The thing that we are looking for is not just architecture. Maybe, within the area of housing, the individual should remain an architect, in the Cakirhan sense and the architect is the professional should create conditions where things can happen spontaneously and not simultaneously as in a big project?

**Charles Correa**

The villain of the piece is not the architect, but the process. It is the mind set as Babar Mumtaz pointed out. A friend of mine once said that we have the ability in life to say no and yes. We say no, our school system does not work, yes, we want more schools. We say no our housing does not work, yes, we want more houses. We mix up the verb and the noun. We have to go back and re-examine that mind set, the thinking and the process. If we go in this way, we are going to produce more and more of this kind of pollution of our cities, the worst
pollution in the form of the buildings we build. It is not because the architects are untalented, or because they are villains, it is because of the process.

The other point mentioned was about architects not being able to generalise. You have to distinguish here between a typology and an actual design. All the houses in Mikanos, for instance follow the same typology, yet all of them are individual. That is true of villages in Egypt and India too.

What architects try to do at their best in a large housing complex is understand the basic underlying typology and then allow a great deal of variation. A very good example is in the United Kingdom — Byker Wall by Ralph Erskine — where he allowed a great deal of variation and individuality, which he decides to some extent and is partly through participation.

There are other ways of bringing it about through sire planning, and through people participating. It does not have to be self-help, it can be any kind of architecture. There are many ways but what we really want is the pluralism of Mikanos, with the simplicity of the typology, with the uniformity of the typology, with the consistency of the typology because that comes from culture and from human things. It comes down to the architect’s contribution to help find new typologies. It comes about, not just by looking backward but by looking forward as well.

People’s aspirations, even if it is neon signs and plastic buckets and things, like TV antenna, and the film industry in India — these are the new — I will not call them myths — but the new compulsive images which create our lives. A great architect like Frank Lloyd Wright invented the way middle-income America lives because he understood aspirations. He built very few houses, but he totally changed what American suburbia looks like. Now, that is what we are looking for. He did not have to design the whole of American suburbia. He just did a handful of houses.

I do not care how these houses enter the system, they can come in from the top-down or from the bottom-up. In this kind of society it is usually better when they come from the top-down because if my Prime Minister lives in a mud-house, I
am much more likely to live in a mud-house myself. If he drives a Mercedes, I am much more likely to have those aspirations. This is why it is very important that the people at the top play their role. I would like us to address the possibility that architecture has to do with aspirations and not merely the symbols from the past.

A P Mush

In our discussions, I have realised the diversity between the analysis of the issues and the responses. I have one major observation. The architect serves only a very small portion of the community because of the fee structure, the set-up of the bye-laws and so forth. Ismail Serageldin has gone slightly deeper and explored certain patterns and practices that are related to housing to see what values can be incorporated into modern thinking.

I would appreciate it if this seminar could re-direct our thinking towards the larger community that we offer our services to, so that we can come up with a model that eventually will be able to assist the poor man right in the centre of the Serengeti who will not see an architect for the next 50 years. It should also be able to assist the poor here in Zanzibar, who will not be able to afford the services of an architect. We should try and suggest solutions at a seminar like this. Most of us, went to schools of architecture or universities and we learned about Mies van de Rohe and other great modern architects. We have adopted some of this architecture; some has had good results. Some of it has not been good because people prefer something more related to their way of life. For example, the modern house one sees in Paris or in London if built it in the centre of Zanzibar would have to have several modifications for it to be suitable. Here in Zanzibar, women are not supposed to come into the sitting room. That is the culture. I therefore support the idea of Ismail Serageldin for us to visit the past and use it as a driving force for the future.

Oleg Grabar

I have been struck by a whole series of things that have been
said and I would like to start with the funniest one. I love the idea of re-integrating the architect with his society. I relish the thought that the architect has somehow escaped from society. Maybe he has. I think the art journals, the art schools and the whole internal self-praise of the profession had removed him from society, but that is a very minor point. I would like to get to two more significant ones.

The first one is the use of the past which Ismail Serageldin noted in particular. I do not think the past is significant for housing. The contemporary world has become so different from what it had been, that with all due respect to his wonderful slides, the history of the mosque does not bear a significant relationship to contemporary housing. It may bear a relationship to building mosques today, but housing is a really different issue. I detect a circular argument going on among many of us which looks at a building and if it is (a) we say it dehumanises and it is (b) we say it humanises but we never ask the people involved to say if it dehumanises or if it humanises them. For all I know people in apartments can be very happy and a lot of them are very happy and people in nice neighbourhoods hate each other because one has a swimming pool and the other does not have a swimming pool.

It is a question really for Saad Eddin Ibrahim — can the social sciences provide a methodology for architects to find out what people's values are?

Soap manufacturers know what soap will sell by making market surveys; in the same way can we find out what are the values of the users. I feel that what we are doing is imposing our own set of values, however developed and however creative. We are imposing them on the users and saying that these are the values they have got to have. I do not know whether there are existing survey methods that can detect taste; not among the wealthy for we know what they want and how to deal with it. But what about the larger percentage of the population? It would be interesting to develop this. This is one point that occurred to me — to find out more about the users, rather than impose our vision upon them.
Let me make a small point before I get onto the second broad issue. It was alleged that bureaucrats make all the decisions and that they are responsible for these walk-up blocks that exist everywhere. There is some truth in the fact that bureaucracies are always based on budgets and anything that is beautiful is suspect. Our culture has developed in such a way that only the ugly seems cheap and therefore budgetarily acceptable. Anything that is beautiful seems somehow to be wrong if not somewhat evil. That is a minor point but then I have a thing about cost accounting and nearly all accounts.

Now let me go back to the more important issue that concerns all of us. That is the question of education and the process of training architects. A lot of progress has been made here but let me talk about another kind of education — the education of taste. How is it that one acquires certain tastes? Why is it that, for instance in this seminar, I suspect no one would be willing to defend very strongly, the high-rise apartment blocks and yet they are built. I am talking not about education in schools but through the media. In other words the ways in which most people acquire their information, their knowledge and their tastes. It is no longer through newspapers, or magazines or radio but through television and related features. What is the taste, not simply of the people who are the makers of and the users of architecture, but the taste of a 20-year-old? In the world we are talking about, 60 per cent of the population is under 25. Therefore the taste is not the taste of a 45-year-old professor, architect or bureaucrat but the taste of the 20-year-old. What is the 20-year-old's taste today in the Third, First, or Second World? This is a problem.

What is the environment that young people would like to have? Educating them and ourselves is essential.

Abdelbaki Ibrahim
We have to learn from the past. In the field of housing, in Islamic architecture, the house was not built by an architect but the owner and the master builder developed the building together. This was the process which created houses. In the past, there were social values connecting all the people
together; defining how to build together. There were rules and regulations which controlled growth. How do we reflect this in the present?

If I may relate an experience of mine: I was asked to plan and design a satellite town east of Cairo. I tried not to design or to plan but to create a planning process and a building process whereby a newcomer to this settlement would come together with the architects stationed in the settlement and work together in an organic way, to build their environment. In this way they might create a sense of community and build their own houses with their shared contribution. There would be community participation, not only in the building process, but also in the management of the settlement. I tried also to get some Islamic values into the spatial definition of the neighbourhood unit. Upon exposing these ideas to the minister and his advisors he said it was a very good idea but he wanted to immediately build 10,000 units using a prototype. So in reality the decision-maker demolished all our ideas.

Ismail Serageldin
We have already succeeded in starting a healthy debate which will be enriching.

First, in response to queries that have permeated some of the discussion, I emphasise that we are not about to create a new theoretical model that will be all encompassing. Nothing could be further from the truth. If the Award has distinguished itself by one particular feature, it has been the creation of a space of freedom whereby multiple ideas can grow and generate new areas of search. That does not mean that we should let go of analytical rigour or that we should collectively not try to understand more from each other. This requires developing a better conceptual understanding of the philosophical constructs that underlay the “mind-sets” of people.

Coming specifically to the comments that have been made. I would like to comment first on two misconceptions. I am surprised that people say that I am nostalgic and that I am promoting the past. On the contrary I am a great believer that we should address our time and think of the future.
I firmly advocate that we should develop a modern contemporary architecture. But it does not have to be one that is equated with what I refer to as the "blah". It is not true and highly dangerous to make a dichotomy, as my friend Saad Eddin Ibrahim did that assumes that you can have a shack with a spirit of community and/or better housing without it, and that we must make that choice. It is not a choice! This is the same error which occurs when you say to people that you can have modern slab blocks with electricity and water and sewerage or you can have those nice "quirky" things without electricity and water. It does not follow that you have to take a package that is indivisible. In fact, this is part of the task of decision-makers, intellectuals and architects, to redesign the package, and to multiply the options.

Secondly, I would like to address the notion of the role of the architect and how it relates to the spirit of the age. I am not making the architect the scapegoat nor do I believe that he is a villain. I believe along with Charles Correa that it is very much the prevalent mind-set that is reflected here. The mind-set of those trying to solve a particular problem, using architectural means. Here, architects have a major role to play. They are the ones who end up designing buildings, those particular buildings in any city that become landmarks, that can be identified, that create a sense of place.

When we talk about a city like Paris, the images that come to mind, the particular boulevards and the particular buildings, are the deliberate creations of individuals. This is very different from the artistry in solving 10,000 houses. It is not the same thing. The role of the architect is in developing those particular elements that organise space, that gives us a sense of identity. The elements that indeed become the witness of our time, much as we look at a particular structure and say "This was one of the great buildings of the nineteenth century".

The fact that great architects do not get great commissions does not necessarily mean a thing. Frank Lloyd Wright built over 500 buildings and I believe he had only one public commission in the USA which was in Marin County in California. All the rest were private clients.
The reason is partially due to the bureaucratic process, which has budgets and committees and unless you have a specific intervention or a very high official who can override these processes, like M. Mitterand, you end up most of the time by taking the lowest common denominator. This is not however, what constitutes good architecture. There is nothing devious or unusual about it. It is common practice. But it is the same as saying, for example, that there are a few outstanding novels that define the literature of the twentieth century in England. I am sure that there are hundreds of thousands of popular novels and essays and journalistic articles and so on, but they are not the ones which define the spirit of the time. I am not against apartment buildings incidentally; there is nothing wrong with apartment buildings. I am not only for individual houses. But if we are going to respond to the challenge of our time, to provide the alternatives then we need to go beyond what the masters have given us.

I do believe that the Unité d’Habitation in Marseille is a great building. There is no question that if you read the history of architecture in the twentieth century, that block is one of the buildings that is going to be mentioned. But that does not mean that the cloning of that good building on a very large scale by less competent people is going to be the solution.

Architects today are being called upon, especially in the Third World, to create a more meaningful set of symbols that are relevant to this time. There is nothing wrong with the neon sign but what is wrong is the implication that this is the only way you can do it.

Architects have a responsibility in society to try to create and to try to interpret those elements that we all need today. Precisely because society is moving and changing rapidly we need to re-symbolise our present environment; enrich it, not degrade it. Here I disagree with Oleg Grabar. The reason I used the examples of the mosque is because it is accessible to everybody without necessarily referring to a context of a particular country that people may know. I could show similar examples of housing of a particular country using the vocabulary of the housing of that country and you see the same
degradation taking place. It is however most vividly represented by the mosque examples which I used.

Architects have a major role to play and cannot abdicate their responsibility by simply saying “What is the alternative?” The challenge is to search for the alternative. The first step towards creation of that alternative, comes from the correct definition of the problem. Defining the problem, is half-way towards the solution. If we avoid defining the problem we are bound to remain locked into circular arguments and we would not proceed further.

Tiny minaret shows how a key architectural element has been transformed to a mere signal.
Ismail Serageldin has two quests as I understood it. One is to restore a sense of community in housing. The second, and this is related to the first quest — is to generate a healthy debate, in the hope that we can from this evolve a critical theory of architecture in general and a critical theory of Islamic architecture in particular.

My first comment is about the language of the discourse. In order to start an interdisciplinary debate between architects and other members of the social science family, there has to be a common language. The first requirement for a common language is to control our expressions. Ismail Serageldin in his pursuit of Paradise Lost, used some very strong, value-loaded words. For me as a sociologist and a social scientist, I wonder what they really mean. They have very appealing connotations and could mean different things to different people. Much of what he damned in architecture and design was made by other architects like himself. I wonder what they would say if they were giving a similar presentation, using similar or a different set of slides. So there is the question of value-loaded judgements among architects from the same culture. I am not talking about architects cross-culturally but from the same culture. This may mean that a consensus on aesthetic values will elude us.

Ismail Serageldin used words like degradation, dehumanisation, inhumane and rupture when elaborating upon his paper. These words could mean different things to different people. So, to conduct a healthy discourse, we need to know what these terms mean. I will take one example. He and Mohammed Arkoun talk about rupture and use slides to illustrate this concept. They show something completely different from the past; breaking sharply with the past. The example used really was showing me something else. It shows me cultural distortion. A picture, from an urban district, with modern Coca Cola or Pepsi Cola or Sony advertising really reflects not a rupture but a distortion, just like a Mosque with a small minaret or a small dome against a background of highrise housing. It is an example not of discontinuity but of a distorted continuity. The people are hanging on to something from the
past, yet trying to cope with the present or even with the future without losing that past.

In trying to do that, they may produce strange forms or what I call distorted forms, but definitely I would not call them cases of rupture.

My second remark has to do with the use of terms regarding housing *per se*. The word "shelter", the word "house", the word "home", indicate different things. I was not sure exactly what they indicated in Ismail Serageldin’s presentation — these three words were used interchangeably, sometimes broadly with each time a different slant. From this I gather that "house" is a little bit more humane than "shelter" and "home" is a little more humane that "house" and furthermore "home" is a unit of a community as Ismail Serageldin would hope to recreate it or recapture it. I would agree with that, but I want to make sure that this upgrading from "shelter" to "house" to "home" is what he had in mind.

Overall, I found that the paper, the presentation and the slides were a helpful contribution to the two quests of Ismail Serageldin, except that there are three possible pitfalls.

The first pitfall is the "pitfall of nostalgia". When he showed a slide from Mauritania — with a group of people carrying their shack from one site to another, he did not talk about the shack as a design. He actually used the slide to illustrate the spirit of the community. But you can not pick and choose. That is the package. The shack was the spirit of community, but maybe there is a trade-off. Maybe people are living in a poorer environment, in a simpler way, with less greed, with less ambitions and so on. Maybe there is a great deal of what we call community spirit. But he used the slide in a very selective way. He did not talk about how beautiful the house is from an architect’s point of view but he used it as an illustration of the collective self will — how people got together and move a house. It so happens that this is not just an image, of an integrated community but also one that is suffering from extreme poverty. Does he want to restore that community spirit, which seems to fascinate him in this Mauritanian environment, even if the price is to be extreme poverty? That is
a question. That is an example of a pitfall I found in the presentation, the “pitfall of nostalgia”.

The second pitfall is the “pitfall of eliticism”. Here we find that the houses that seem to have captured the imagination of Ismail Serageldin and all of us, and probably the AKAA Master Jury’s of previous years, seem to be elitist houses.

I know that one year that was not the case but most of the AKAA winners seem to be elitist. Only the rich can afford them. Ismail Serageldin faced that dilemma. In fact his whole philosophy was directed towards the poor in the dump, who are being monopolised or at least utilised or employed by the rich. I would not object to that line of argument because I think that part of the cultural distortion in some Muslim societies is due to the distortion of the upper class. In a few Muslim societies, the elite maintain an authentic house form. In Morocco for example, the Moroccan upper class have maintained a good deal of the authenticity of their houses and provide a continuity with the past. When they live like this, I think it should be commended, but nevertheless, we have to face the reality of the twentieth century and of the twenty-first century and that is the nature and the spirit of our age, a point that I would come to shortly.

The third pitfall that I found, is the “pitfall of relevance”. After Ismail Serageldin’s presentation and his slides, I keep asking myself, where does this really get us? Brilliant architects and thinkers, like Charles Correa, and Ismail Serageldin, have been dealing with these things for a number of years, ten years at least, and probably others have said all these things before in different words and expressions. Yet the ghost keeps pursuing Ismail Serageldin. The slab block building keeps multiplying, keeps coming back, and therefore what is the alternative? We have not yet had any model that could provide policy makers with an alternative. The bureaucrats are not without spirit, the policy makers are not without spirit. If they see something workable and economically implementable, they may be persuaded to do it. The absence of an alternative model to the things that are being criticised is a problem that we face.
That brings me to the second group of comments which have to do really with the "spirit" or "the nature of our age". In order not to delude ourselves that we are able to recapture the Paradise Lost, we should face the nature of our age. There is a tendency, throughout the world, for standardisation.

Internationalisation, standardisation, the assembly line paradigm, the fast food paradigm, the hamburger paradise; it is spreading all over the world. I am using these as metaphors, not to be taken literally. You have an increase in the so-called middle class, the modern middle class, the new middle class, all over the world with an internationalised taste — an internationalised frame of reference, an internationalised value system. They may have their own peculiarities as Egyptians, as Indonesians, as Indians, as Chinese and so on but an increasing share of that package of values that the middle class is adopting is internationalised. Often it takes its clues from the mass media, through travelling, magazines, and all kinds of things. Moreover, our architects, our professors, our universities also share this movement toward internationalisation.

I am trying to find an answer, a reasonable answer to the world that pursues the slab block, the equivalent to the fast food in the food industry. Whilst the hamburger stands mushroom all over the world, whilst the blue jeans proliferate all over the world, there are a number of things that we as an older generation or a middle-aged generation, (we used to call ourselves the young generation until recently) have to face as reality, whether we like them or not.

I do not think that we will be successful in looking for something, to humanise our environment if we ignore that spirit of the twentieth century and twenty-first century.

If we take that as a reality we have to distinguish between, individualised needs and individualised taste because lurking in the back of this paper or in the background of Ismail Serageldin’s presentation is a confusion between individualised need and individualised taste.

If you take what I said about increasing internationalisation and increasing standardisation seriously, or if it is true at all, then I would say that one’s needs are partly organic but they are
also partly contrived. There is an hierarchy of needs. Somebody who is starving would not fuss about the kind of food you give him and likewise somebody who is in dire need of housing, is not going to fuss about the style or the aesthetic dimensions.

When do we begin to fuss about style? Once we fulfill the first layer, in the hierarchy? I definitely disagree with the quotation from Hassan Fathy. Can we escape his dictum that architects cannot provide generalised solutions to specific individualised needs? I think that is an inaccurate dictum. What the architect does and should do is to cater to needs that are not really individualised. There are common denominators in the needs of all mankind for certain basic things and housing is one of them.

When do we begin to individualise? I suggest when we move to the second layer of needs or the second desire — that is taste. So you can individualise style but you don’t individualise needs. Otherwise ten times the resource of the world will not be sufficient to individualise needs.

My final remark is the question of community. One of the major questions that struck Ismail Serageldin and I fully empathise and share and support him is for the preservation of community spirit, wherever it exists and in restoring it whenever it is lacking. If we build housing projects or mass housing, we must as architects and social scientists and decision-makers take advantage of this massive opportunity to rebuild communities. But let us again control our use of the world community. What does the word mean? It literally means a territorially based group of people living together and cooperating in their actions together. That is the original meaning of the word community.

Can we do that in our modern complex life? Aside from company towns where people and housing are close to the place of work or in traditional communities, where you have craftsmen living very close to their work and where their place of residence and place of work may even be in the same structure, it is very hard to restore community — that is community defined as organic and territorially based; a group of people living together. What you can do is to bring many
features of community to any new housing project that we embark on. This is something that could be done. The restoration of community spirit — could be effected through certain designs. The collective courtyard or communal space in housing and mass housing projects could bring us closer because once you make a collective courtyard for every three or four or five apartments, then you are bringing back some elements of what used to create that symbolic community spirit in traditional cities or traditional towns.

I would like to end these remarks by a word about the architect. In every seminar like this we must, of course, look for a scapegoat. It looks like our scapegoat in this seminar is going to be the architect. All the examples that Ismail Serageldin showed of modern buildings are by architects. What type of architects are they? They are graduates of modern schools like the school he attended. Maybe they were schools of lower quality, but nevertheless they are architects and they seem to have enough of a reputation or renown to build these tremendous structures — so the question is as follows.

Is there a professional aesthetic code that architects must abide by and who is it made up by? It seems to me with my little knowledge of architecture, but with my connection with some architects, that architecture is one profession where art and science combine and to the extent that it is a science there are common rules and common ground and things that are common to any precise science. But to the extent that it is an art, there is a huge range of value differences and tastes.
The Architecture of Housing: A Survey of the Issues

Ismail Serageldin

Sana'a, historic high-rise structures that are precursors of today's tall buildings.
Introduction

Housing is by far the most common form of building in the world and has, in many ways, received considerable attention from decision-makers, architects, planners and critics alike. Yet, in the Muslim world today, the debates around housing seem to have drifted into two domains that seldom meet:

- technical discussions about the problems of mass housing: land, services, credit, finance and urban planning.
- stylistic discussions of the cultural authenticity of individual structures, usually residences of the elite. While recognising the merits of each of these two questions, it behoves us to recognise that these are but small parts of the problem from an architectural point of view, and that we should seek to enrich architectural thinking by focusing critically on the architecture of housing in the Muslim world. This is distinct from the demographic, economic, social, political, financial and city-planning aspects of the problem. Without diminishing the relevance of these other dimensions, the unique contribution of this seminar should be in improving architectural criticism of architects' contributions in the domain of housing. To do so, we should start by asking a few fundamental questions:

- The historic evolution of the building type: whether individual home for the wealthy or multi-family apartment structure, the precedent is there. It is also there from high-rise towers to low-rise courtyard designs. Yet discontinuities in space and time abound. Can one talk of building types, generic or time/space specific with any meaning in the Muslim world today?

- Housing as the locus of interaction between the building, the individual and society: From Le Corbusier’s "La maison est une machine à habiter" to Alexander and Hall’s "Community and Privacy", to Marc’s "Psychology of the House", the questions remain vital, challenging and acutely relevant. What are the differences between a “housing project” and a “community”, and how do they interact? The sense of community that makes neighbours cooperate is independent of wealth and surroundings. One can find this even in the
poorest surroundings as when neighbours collaborate in moving a house in a Mauritanian refugee camp.

- Housing as medium of self-expression: No other type of building affords as much opportunity for self-expression. How is this fact being “read” and understood by different actors on the scene?

By addressing such questions, this seminar will try to take a thought-provoking, critical direction rather than a descriptive catalogue of problems and projects.

As a means of addressing these questions and taking into account the vastness of the material at hand, we propose to organise our discussion around a taxonomy of Housing as it exists, namely:

- Non architect-designed mass housing, usually spontaneous, self-help, or community built.
- Architect-designed, contractor-built mass housing.
- The individual, architect-designed, contractor-built home, usually for the rich and well to do.

The first two are the challenge of mass housing. The last has a unique niche in the array of architectural practice since it provides architects with some of the best vehicles both for artistic expression and for enriching society and culture as well as the vocabulary of world architecture.

*Organic quality of spontaneous settlements Gezhouba, Turkey.*
Let us now raise some issues about each of these in turn, hoping to return to each in the more detailed presentations of the subsequent sessions of the seminar.

Spontaneous Settlements
The vast majority of the built environment is composed of spontaneous settlements, many of which are dismal slums with miserable and unsanitary conditions. Yet many of these settlements have also evoked the admiration of architects for their “organic” qualities. Indeed, one does frequently find a certain lively quality that contrasts sharply with the sterility of the bare geometry of repetitive slab blocks so characteristic of public housing everywhere. Why are we unable to combine the healthy, serviced environment with the individualised organic quality of the spontaneous settlements? Are these “organic” aesthetic qualities maintainable over time? These two questions can be restated as follows:

- Institutional, political and socio-economic issues
  Beyond the factors of economics, whether addressed by technology of materials or construction, or addressed by the skill of the master architect who innovates to create an aesthetically pleasing, humane environment that remains affordable to the poor, there are institutional, political and financial factors that impede the access of the poor to adequate housing. The issues are well-known. The solutions, also well-known, are tantamount to empowering the weak and disenfranchised members of society to take their destinies in their own hands. Some schemes of this type are AKAA award winners. Why do they remain the exception rather than the rule?

- Aesthetics, poverty and change
  A fundamental problem in most of the Muslim world is that the exemplars that have defined the historical and cultural standard of aesthetics have usually been monumental and rich structures, while the pervasive reality of the Muslim people today — from Mauritania to Indonesia — is one of poverty. This conflict finds its resolution through the development of vernacular or popular modes of aesthetic
expression, some of which are remarkably ornate. How does this duality manifest itself in a time when demographic explosion, large-scale population movements and systematic cultural disorientation have contributed to the degradation of semiotic frameworks in the Muslim countries, where the historical rupture of Muslim societies makes it impossible to produce a coherent notion of cultural continuity?

The artist, the critic, the intellectual and the decision maker must all ponder these questions. Housing contributes as much as 65 per cent of the built-up areas in our cities today. And our cities are growing by 4-8 per cent per annum. The future of the built environment of Muslims, not only the quality of their shelter, is at stake.

**Architect-designed, contractor-built mass housing**

By far the most complex and challenging issue in the domain of
building today, the problems of mass housing can be looked at from many different angles. For purposes of this discussion, however, five specific issues deserve to be mentioned:

- The walk-up slab block as building type
  From the remotest deserts of Africa, to the frigid cold of Scandinavia, to the humid forests of South East Asia, the much deplored walk-up slab block seems to be the preferred solution of most decision makers at all times and in all places. The very ubiquitousness of the phenomenon, in the face of countless architectural and design critiques, deserves reflection. What does this say about architects’ and critics' abilities to provide viable alternatives? Why are we unable to draw upon the vast reservoirs of present creativity and past legacies to supplant it? Should we try?

- The contributions of technology
  That technology of housing construction would one day provide the key to affordable housing for the masses of the poor needing shelter has been an elusive dream. Is it time to forego the pursuit of the technological solution to twenty-first century housing needs? Is it time to declare that “small is beautiful” and to enshrine vernacular approaches and local materials as the way of the future as well as the past? Or are these traditional building techniques increasingly unsuitable due to demographic explosion and ecological considerations (e.g., brick building in Egypt)?

- The Master Builders and Demonstration Projects
  How about design for the masses by elite architects which thereby rise above the mediocrity of the vast bulk of standardised public housing that appears as a total and seemingly unavoidable blight almost everywhere in the world? Can such architects as Correa and Diba provide suitable solutions? How about the great demonstration projects: the Weissenhofsiedlung (Stuttgart, 1927), Interbau (Berlin, 1957), and the UN Low-Cost Housing Project (Lima, Peru, 1968)? What is the track record of such efforts? What have we learned since Pruitt-Igoe? Can we escape Fathy’s dictum that an architect cannot provide generalised solutions to specific, individualised needs?
• User’s contributions to Public Housing
Perhaps one area which has been insufficiently studied is the changes that users make in the housing types that public authorities make available to them. What do these tell us beyond the desire for more space? How do they reflect an evolving taste among the users of this housing?

• The aesthetics of mass housing
Few mass housing projects have been able to develop aesthetic standards that have satisfied designers while maintaining costs at levels that could ensure affordability and replicability. This basic difficulty has not been resolved in any but the richest countries, and even then, for the Muslim world in particular, the ability of designers to articulate a contemporary aesthetic that has an authentic cultural resonance has proven particularly elusive. What can we say to the designers of today to help them address this particular hurdle?

The Individual Home
This theme can be easily illustrated from the many winners of the previous three cycles of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, but we can provide additional examples for counter-point. Specifically, I would raise three questions:

• Modernity, tradition and lifestyle
From the Ertegun house (a partial restoration), to the Halawa House (a recently built structure using a traditional vocabulary), to the more modern examples, with or without echoes of local culture, each house makes a statement about its time, its place, and its owner, as well as its designer. The key, from an architectural critic’s point of view, is to work out the relevance of the architectural statement as well as its content. In the Muslim world today, the issues of modernity, tradition and lifestyle are at the heart of social and intellectual discourse. What are architects saying?

• The power of example
Residences for the wealthy and the powerful have always been major trend-setters, defining “taste” and transmitting it in a “cascading” fashion through the different social strata.
Today, this has been complemented, if not supplanted, by the use of a building as an architectural "statement" that may influence entire generations of young architects, if not their potential clients. A link back from the discussion of the individual house to the problem of mass housing can be made here by remembering the role of demonstration projects. Why do some small houses acquire this hold over the imagination while the demonstration projects have failed to dent the supremacy of the stubborn walk-up slab block?

- From individual house to community

The link between an individual house and its surroundings, and the ability of these links to constitute a community, is in the domain of the overlap between architecture and urban design. Too frequently, individual houses are assessed without reference to this off-site dimension.
The Role of the Architect

Inevitably, every discussion about architecture must come back to this theme. At the time when sheer numbers dictate that the bulk of housing in the Muslim world will not be built by architects and when the "architecture without architects" of the traditional villages and the squatter settlements is being extolled, a careful assessment of the role of the architect in the domain of housing is certainly a pertinent way to conclude this introductory essay.

If architects are unable to cope with the sheer magnitude of the demand, and if economics preclude in interventionist solution to mass housing, architects are nevertheless the custodians of a society's self-image, the articulators of its aesthetic norms and the form-givers who erect the exemplars that will bear witness to their times. It is the product of designers' dreams that fashion our consciousness, and that provide the landmarks that help us map out our environment. Architects practising in the Muslim world today should be encouraged to live up to that demanding role. This seminar will hopefully make a contribution in that direction.
The Dilemma of Housing

Said Zulficar

The aim of this seminar is to formulate guidelines to be pursued by architects and physical planners for the design of dwellings that harmonise living space and enhance the quality of life.

We hope to demonstrate how architects and housing specialists by amplifying their knowledge of the architectural design process can conceive a culturally relevant architecture.

We shall also discuss the cultural aspects of design or, in other words, the development of appropriate styles and forms which are the expression of indigenous cultures in harmony with residents' life-styles, and which are not mere replicas of forms, methodologies, and techniques imported from abroad and arbitrarily imposed by official housing authorities.

Hitherto, governments in the Third World have been content with improving the built environment by purely technical methods primarily aimed at securing a high volume of construction without particular regard to cultural and social factors. Their housing programmes have been determined, not by a thorough analysis of real housing needs, but by the meagre financial resources at their disposal and by the productive capacity of their construction industries.

The dwelling areas that have in consequence arisen in our countries tend to be lifeless settlements, drawn up by professionals who are often lacking in design sensitivity and in consciousness of the cultural identity and social habits of the residents for whom these dwellings have been built.

But design is only one facet of a much more complex problem, and for the majority of the fast growing populations of the Third World, it is not the crux of the matter. Consequently, the focus of this seminar on the design aspect of housing must not lead us to overlook the global dimension of the housing phenomenon. In the Third World this phenomenon is characterised by chronic shortages in housing and by deplorable conditions in much of the existing stock.

Housing and food are the two basic necessities of life. Major efforts have been made in recent years in Third World countries to overcome hunger and malnutrition. In the field of housing however, the situation can only be resumed as
 alarming. Accelerating population increases and uncontrolled urban migration far outstrip the provision of new dwellings: this has resulted in an escalation in homelessness and overcrowding and a constant deterioration of the quality of life for the majority of the populations of the Third World.

A glance at the statistics is hardly reassuring: It is frightening. There are at present more than 1,000 million people who live — or rather subsist — in substandard and overcrowded housing conditions. As the gap between population growth and urban migration, on the one hand, and the supply of dwellings, on the other, continues to widen the situation in the cities of the Third World worsens further to the point that developing countries will have to build an additional 10 million dwellings each year, just to keep pace with present substandard conditions. Even this theoretical target is far from being reached. In 1950, Cairo was the only city in Africa with a population of more than 1 million. In eleven years' time, by the end of this century there will be sixty such cities in Africa alone. In 1983, the total urban population of the Third World was estimated at 1,200 million. By the end of the century, this figure will have reached 2,100 million or double the figure four years ago. If present growth rates continue unabated, the urban population of the Third World will double again by the year 2025 to reach the horrific figure of 4,100 million people living just in the cities of the Third World. Consequently planners must not only concern themselves with the present billion people who are inadequately housed, but must simultaneously cater for the hundreds of millions of homeless individuals who will be added to this number in the next few years.

Yet the situation, grim as it appears, is not totally hopeless. Admittedly, governments have so far been bound by other priorities essential for survival, such as food, energy and economic growth. In the field of housing there has been, on the part of most governments, a lack of firm commitment to undertake large scale remedial action.

As the acuteness of the housing shortage becomes more dramatic, governments are beginning to realise the magnitude of the housing situation in their respective countries. Indeed
the problem of housing is likely to become the prime issue confronting most countries in the Third World.

Awareness that the problem exists, is only one part of the question albeit an essential part of that question. The next step is a firm political will to tackle the consistently deteriorating situation. Political will implies giving a higher priority to housing on the list of governmental concerns. It implies recognising the crucial role of housing in the promotion of overall economic and social development. As government strategies will have to integrate housing policies and physical planning programmes into economic and social development planning, political will must above all be exercised with imagination. If we are to come up with new formulas, with new advice, housing strategies have to be practical, affordable for weak economies and replicable within the cultural and social context of each region. As the philosopher Albert Einstein so rightly said "in times of crisis, imagination is more important than knowledge".

There are no clear-cut, ready-made, uniform solutions to the housing crisis, but there are imaginative ways of seeking the rational and efficient use of scarce resources and of mobilising individual initiatives and potentials such as self-help, self-reliance, communal participation.

It is now quite evident that government controlled mass housing programmes have not been able to eliminate the chronic housing shortages that afflict our countries. After all, between one-half and three quarters of all the dwellings that are being built are built by the people themselves, without any government support. It is our contention, as some of the case studies to be presented in the seminar will demonstrate that individuals and people — when they are organised on a community basis — can significantly reduce the housing shortage. This is provided the situation or the environment in which they live is conducive to individual and communal initiatives aimed at improving or constructing their own dwellings. That is if people are allowed free access to essential resources such as land tenure, building materials and credit facilities to build. Where this condition has been fulfilled, in
some few cases, people, either individually or on a communal basis, have succeeded in building five times more dwellings than the governments have with the same amount of funds and, what is more, they have done so according to standards better adapted to their needs and to their lifestyles.

Regretfully, however, these initiatives and policies — one might call them enabling policies — have been thwarted by prevailing vested interests, administrative planning regulations and by bureaucratic red-tape.

In the few cases where these restraints have been eliminated there is ample proof that local initiatives undertaken by individuals, or by community groups and by non-governmental organisations have been able to put into practice housing alternatives that the beneficiaries can afford and which correspond to their real needs.

This under-estimated and under-used potential which is inherent in private communal organisations, can considerably relieve pressure on government housing programmes. However local community endeavours can only be successful if institutional and infrastructural support is provided by governments, the reason being that individuals and local community groups are not financially or technically capable of providing infrastructures, utilities or services on their sites.

If this premise becomes the accepted norm in housing policy, governments, in order to be more cost-effective, should reduce expenditure on centrally organised turn-key housing projects and spend more on the installation of infrastructures and services. At the same time they should introduce institutional reforms enabling easy access to resources such as land, materials, and credits.

The role of governments in housing should thus change from being the provider of dwellings or the supplier of dwellings, to that of being the supporter of local community-based housing programmes. Governments would therefore complement what the community is not able to provide.

Finally, this premise implies that we have to have more faith in the capacity and ingenuity of local communities in controlling their own destinies, as they know best what their
needs are. We must avoid arbitrarily imposed solutions that are considered replicable anywhere in the world, irrespective of each country's specific problems.

Each community must seek out viable and practical solutions that are relevant to its particular cultural and ecological context.

If this seminar is able to incite reflection and exchange of ideas on housing design; if it is able to demonstrate the common factors governing the housing crisis in the Third World and make realistic guidelines regarding possible solutions that are neither arbitrary nor uncritically imported from abroad, then this seminar will have contributed significantly to the debate on the subject.
Modernity and Development

His Excellency Ali Hassan Mwinyi
President of the United Republic of Tanzania

The choice of Tanzania as the venue for a seminar on housing is most appropriate because it represents cultural crossroads of remarkable fertility and importance. Here in Zanzibar for over a thousand years exchanges between the Arabian peninsula and East Africa continued on a daily basis. A century of colonial rule could not erase the cultural bridge that Zanzibar represented and still does.

Zanzibar is the intersection of the Arab and African cultures. It is the meeting place of Muslim and non-Muslim expression. Buffetted for centuries by the winds of trade and commerce, it is also the point at which east and west, north and south have not only met, but profitably enriched each other’s culture. The vestiges of that rich past are all around us. In Zanzibar and indeed in Tanzania and Eastern Africa, because of the historical past, the influence of a variety of cultures, both occidental and oriental has been profound and continues to be so.

Yet the pressing demands of a modernising world, eager to make up for the lost time, has strained its continual existence. We have, however, to remember that the preservation and enhancement of the indigenous heritage is very important. It is pleasing to note that much effort is being made in this direction. Two examples come immediately to my mind, in which His Highness The Aga Khan has some interest. I refer to the Bahari Beach Hotel in Dar es Salaam and the Serena Beach Hotel in Mombasa. I would also like to mention here that the Mosque at the University of Dar es Salaam, that was donated in the sixties by His Highness The Aga Khan, is an outstanding example of retaining the excellence of Islamic authenticity within modern concepts.

The subject of the seminar, housing, is most pertinent to our present needs. It provides an opportunity to reflect and to consider the demands of the community at large in the rural and urban areas to have inexpensive homes. It would be a pity if we build row upon row of matchboxes and call them homes.

We should focus our attention on the need for privacy, the desire for beauty, and the serenity of a harmonious environment. These timeless human needs should not be hostage to fashion and technology. There is much to learn from the
experience of earlier generations, gathered by centuries of trial and error, before we seek to discard this legacy for the often illusory promise of solutions imported from the western world. This is not to deny the importance of remaining open to what is best in the world around us, no matter from which country it originates. It is simply to underline the importance that we in Tanzania attach to self-reliance knowing who we are and standing proud to defend our identity.

My government, dedicated as it is, to promote modernity while protecting the cultural heritage and roots of our people will do everything possible to try to preserve the parallel existence of an earlier time. This constant struggle to find the right balance between stability and change, between modernisation and tradition, between internal and external influence is a dilemma that all governments in the developing world face today.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture has in its decade of existence established itself as the most important force for the cultural revival of an authentic architecture in the entire developing world. It is the first major architectural enterprise to focus exclusively on the problems of the Muslim world. It also recognises that the Ummah is diversified in terms of climate, culture, history and economic conditions. The work done by the Award, therefore, is applicable to all societies — Muslim and non-Muslim alike. That is why the Aga Khan Award for Architecture has achieved world-wide recognition.

It was the first such enterprise to extend without prejudice or political favouritism, international recognition to the great Third World architects who have devoted their lives to creating an authentic architectural expression that respects the ethos of their societies and yet opens the door to a future full of modernity and promise. It is the first award that not only permeated architecture but also gave societies pride in their own culture.

To us in Tanzania, who have long championed cultural authenticity and self-reliance, it is most appropriate that the Aga Khan Award for Architecture should come to our country for this major seminar. It has brought together an impressive
array of distinguished specialists in the many different aspects of housing. The fruits of their deliberations will, with frankness and candour, help the whole world with one of its most intricate problems.
Housing Development and Culture
*His Highness The Aga Khan*

Modernity and Development
*H E Ali Hassan Mwinyi*

The Dilemma of Housing
*Said Zulfiqar*

Architecture of Housing: The Issues
*Ismail Serageldin*

Comments
*Saad Eddin Ibrahim*

Discussion
*Kamau Karogi, Murat Karayalcin, Babar Mumtaz, Charles Correa, A P Mushi, Oleg Grabar, Abdelhaki Ibrahim, Ismail Serageldin*
Housing Development and Culture

His Highness, The Aga Khan

It is many years since I last visited the historic island of Zanzibar, whose name alights all that is romantic in the imagination. It is with eagerness and gratitude that we will enter, even if only for a few days, into the culture and the historic buildings of Tanzania and Zanzibar to learn from them and to equip ourselves for our debate.

We are here to discuss one of the most vital development issues of our time — housing. I speak to you on this subject with a sense of urgency, for I am deeply persuaded that the lack, and deterioration of human habitations, as economies grow, urbanisation accelerates and demographics explode, pose some of the greatest practical and ethical problems that developing countries face.

As the Imam of a widespread Muslim community, I have long been actively concerned about housing. Members of the Ismailli community are a cross-section of the world: they make their homes in the stone and chalk houses of mountain villages, the housing societies of some of the world’s fastest growing cities, and the most modern dwellings of the west. My concern for the quality of their habitation, and the housing of the wider communities around them, had much to do with my establishment of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture a decade ago — a decade of tumultuous change in the shifting and the sheltering of populations.

In the seamless web we call national development, housing is only one factor influencing the quality of human life. But how vital it is to health and human safety, still more fundamentally, the state of a person’s home touches deep chords in the human spirit.

It can make him proud or ashamed; give him light and a sense of hope or deepen his despair. It is his statement to his children and to the world about his control over his life, and his aspirations for the future. It is not too much to say that to the extent a man is a householder, he is also a citizen, with a permanent interest in the stability and progress of his country. Still more important, housing has historically been created by families. The African or Asian village, like most other traditional settlements, is not an abstraction, but an architectu-
eral expression of a social reality, the way people relate one to another — often as an extended family. These settlements reflect human bondings and community spirit. They can foster families and their ties to other human beings; or they can express human alienation as the extended family disaggregates.

It is into this deeply personal relationship between a human being, his family and neighbours, and his environment, that the state, with the best of intentions, has entered. Often it has had little choice. The sheer magnitude of homeless thousands, has required large scale responses. Limitations of available capital, materials, management, and technical know-how seemed to dictate that governments adopt quick, low-cost solutions in the form of mass housing for low-income groups. No wonder, given the size of the problem, governments have concentrated on bricks and mortar. But even when conceived by geniuses, these solutions have rarely proven successful. Europe, North America, and the developing world all abound in failures, slum clearances and mass housing schemes that have not worked as human settlements, and have become instant slums and centres of despondency and crime.

What can be done? The sheer immensity of the problem, and — even where there has been a political will to solve it — the proliferation of overlapping agencies dealing with housing, can confound both policy maker and beneficiary. What frames of thought can be of assistance to those leaders who earnestly feel the responsibility to build more and better housing for their citizens?

It is fashionable to say that individual initiative will provide the solution. Optimists can point to the Geceondus of Turkey, the Favelas of Peru, the Kampungs of Indonesia, and the Bastees of India as evidence of the inventiveness and vitality of private enterprise. And so they are — the poor tend to know how to build their houses more economically than public authorities. Their success in approaching housing incrementally, improving their homes as family resources permit, reflects a degree of flexibility not found in the large scale formal sector. But, for the squatters in cities and on the urban fringe, these ad hoc, private solutions are of desperation not of choice, and they
frequently incur high social costs in disease and crime. Even the self-help process needs encouragement if it is to flourish.

I deeply believe that the developing world is entering a new phase, in which the limits of centralised direction and control are now accepted, and the opportunities for alliances between the public sector and non-governmental entities have never been brighter. The state must still see things "in the round", overseeing the interlocking parts of the national economy and the social system. But governments and leaders of thought, both inside and outside the apparatus of national and local governments, must continue to grow in sophistication about the nature of what I have often called the "enabling environment". Governments are indispensable to the creation of this environment as "enablers", through their judicious action — to empower others, as well as themselves, to mobilise capital, establish legal entities to channel it to qualified borrowers, and supervise cost recovery. But, the critical institutions in the design of truly effective housing solutions are surely those that have an interface with the community — with the people whose housing needs are to be solved.

What should be the form of their community structures? What powers should they have, and what capacities must they develop if they are to be responsible and effective bodies?

Organisations with which I am associated have experience with this community link. The Aga Khan Housing Boards have erected numerous housing colonies. They have discovered that identifying a needy population, building sanitary, well-designed housing units, and transferring families into a promising new environment are very far from being enough. Everything about the architectural design may be right, but unless there is a sense of continuing responsibility by the community of occupiers, there will be no maintenance of the buildings, sanitation, or discipline in the payment of rents. A project will fail both economically and socially. Job training, education opportunities, health services, and social workers must buttress the community organisation of people who have been demoralised and atomised and who need to recreate or transplant their family and community ties.
Our health services in Asia and Africa have taught us other lessons — a given population suffering from illness and high mortality frequently thinks its greatest health need is for a hospital. In fact, invariably the greatest need of such a population is not for a building, but for assistance in identifying its health problems and in designing solutions to them. In becoming part of the quest for answers to its health problems the community becomes part of the solution. Villagers learn, they are willing to pay health workers and to change their behaviour and to adopt better health practices.

The goal, I am persuaded, also in the field of housing, is not to teach people answers, but to teach them to ask the right questions. Price, comfort, durability, the long-term value of a house — even aesthetic merit: People of little formal education can grasp these vital concepts and pose questions about them.

Our question is tough and practical. What systems of organisation, technical back-up and most important of all, formal or informal education, can be designed to empower individual human beings or communities to grasp and use these ideas? What are the architectural inputs that must be harnessed in the creation of space, climate control, structure, appropriate materials, land use, and others? The answers to all these questions will, underlie successful interventions in the field of housing.

The broad point I wish to emphasise, is that, confronted by the appalling magnitude of the problem of inadequate housing — estimates that one-fifth of the human race is without decent housing, of whom one hundred million do not even have a roof over their heads — one must avoid the trap of the mass solution. Government resources and political commitment to a solution are indispensable: but they will be effective only to the extent that they mobilise as part of the solution the people for whom housing will not be merely shelter but a source of community and of a better life. This will take infinite care and powerful imagination, for the institutional models will vary with regions and cultures, but I deeply believe there is no substitute for them.
How does the Aga Khan Award for Architecture fit into this perspective? It focuses on design solutions to challenges of the built environment. This seminar therefore is on the Architecture of Housing. But the Award, from its beginnings a decade ago, has consciously avoided the “ivory tower” of plans and pure ideas.

Every structure or project that has been honoured must have been in existence, and used by people, for at least two years. Solutions must involve an effective unity among several factors: design, appropriate materials, suitability to the environment, and sensitivity to the culture of the user. In short, the Award recognises architecture that “works” for human beings and their communities, as well as exemplifying first class design.

This practical orientation determines the character of our seminars. When the Award first looked seriously at the subject of housing, professionals working in the Islamic world and in Third World countries were hampered by a lack of communication among scholars, historians, social scientists, design professionals, and decision-makers. All of these professionals, with their particular skills and visions of the truth, are needed. I strongly hope that this seminar on housing will refine the questions we must ask and suggest some courses of action, to help free human energies to solve problems of human shelter.

Within this context the question of cultural identity has become a major issue addressed by the Award.

From it, we have learnt that with the immense diversity of Muslim and other populations today, there can be no single cultural identity. Housing, like other building forms, should express the plurality of the world’s peoples. There are regional models, however, and serious tested approaches to housing, which can be learned from and generalised upon. This is why we expect the seminar’s deliberations to profit powerfully from its presence in East Africa. This is why the seminar is being held in Zanzibar.

The East African coast provides a rich cultural background against which we may examine housing solutions. Three civilisations — the African, the Asian-Indian and the Arab — have given this region its culture. The architecture, be it of
Madagascar, the Comores, Mombasa, Lamu or Zanzibar itself provides a rich tapestry into which solutions of human habitation have been woven over the centuries.

Tanzania, notably, is a country in which Muslims and non-Muslims live and express their ideas, and this diversity has also provided a number of lessons on the mixing of peoples and the building of the physical environment.

Finally, it is my strong belief that East Africa, the cradle of civilisation, has the possibility to apply a sensitive humanistic approach to housing that may give an example to other countries that must mobilise different peoples and cultures in devising solutions to their housing challenges.

The Award Steering Committee and I believe that the sheer attractiveness and fascination of East Africa, and the welcome we knew we would find here, made this the perfect location for listening and learning regarding the subject of housing.
Housing Development and Culture  
*His Highness The Aga Khan*

Modernity and Development  
*H E Ali Hassan Mwinyi*

The Dilemma of Housing  
*Said Zulficar*

Architecture of Housing: The Issues  
*Ismail Serageldin*

Comments  
*Saad Eddin Ibrahim*

Discussion  
*Kamau Karogi, Murat Karayalcin, Bahar Mumtaz, Charles Correa, A P Mushri, Oleg Grabar, Abdelhaki Ibrahim, Ismail Serageldin*
The value of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture seminar in Zanzibar was in the exchange of ideas on how housing can be provided on the massive scale that is required in the growing cities of the Third World by harnessing the individual and corporate efforts of people. We learned about the processes in the housing sector.

We became aware that we were defining models of city growth which fall outside the usual perceptions of planners and architects who in many parts of the world operate within codes and regulations inherited to a large extent from the colonial era and which are inappropriate for the majority of situations.

The key to the provision of housing for the poor centres around the availability of land and community involvement.

We saw this well demonstrated by examples from Pakistan and Indonesia. High land costs inevitably means high density urban housing and the debate on the issues was stimulating and informative.

The concept of the “barefoot” or community architect was discussed coupled with the inadequacy of the architectural education system to produce architects of vision equipped to tackle mass housing. It was suggested alternatively that the architect has no role or that the architect has a multi-faceted role, as facilitator, coordinator and enabler. The role of the architect in the Third World needs to be redefined.

The task of editing the seminar proceedings has been deeply rewarding. It would have been impossible without the assistance of Pat Theseira who has supervised the production whilst simultaneously overseeing other Award publications.

Robert Powell
Editor