

**Professional practice and the middle ground:
AN UNDERSTANDING OF ORDER IN PARTICIPATORY HOUSING INTERVENTIONS**

by

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1979

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

February, 1987

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture on January 12, 1987
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the professional involved with participatory housing interventions needs a new way to practice. The improvement of housing demands a constructive dialogue in a working context that defies rigid ways of solving problems. Meaningful contribution hinges on the professional's abilities to communicate in this unpredictable environment. The clear explanation of ideas and a willingness to develop them with others, requires a new understanding on which to base professional actions.

The argument is built on two issues. A discussion of different ways to get things done explores the issue of order. Procedures and methods order decisions when goals are fixed and interests are easily managed. If these controls are not possible, an approach offers flexibility not found in more regular ways of ordering. The context that requires an approach is the second issue. This is the middle ground, where decisions are ordered by the participation of those involved. Change is assembled piecemeal, as participants meet, discuss and make informed decisions.

Order and context are developed in the argument that follows. Housing is presented as a complex subject that avoids simple definition. It changes naturally over time; a characteristic that reflects the needs of users, but has proven a nemesis for those intervening. A brief history of intervention evaluates the housing order that has resulted. It is concluded that natural change requires those affected to also take part in making decisions. This participation means the sharing of control, a condition outside of the present norm. For housing interventions to be participatory, a new context must be recognised - the middle ground.

The last section speculates on professional practice on the middle ground. In addition to traditional expertise, the professional must learn to support change. Interactions with a variety of participants require new skills that explain ideas legibly, and then facilitate their development with others. It is proposed that this new understanding is needed in participatory housing interventions.

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ISSUES:

This paper begins with a discussion of operational order - ways to get something done. Procedures and methods are explained as ways to order that are comparatively regular. Each relies on some control over decisions, in case interests and goals differ. An approach is argued to be more useful when there is less control. It offers flexibility; goals can be continuously adjusted in practice.

An approach supports order in a context that is described conceptually as the middle ground. It is a place where those with related interests can meet, discuss and make informed decisions. There are conditions that affect decision, but their interpretation is often open to debate. In this climate of uncertainty, an approach gives an understanding of order to the individual who chooses to participate.

1983 Co-ops Fair Poster by Clifford Harper, from *The Education of Desire*, London: Anarres, 1984, p.62.

An approach; ordering in uncertain circumstances.

We all seek a certain amount of order in our lives. Many people put their clothes on each day in the same sequence. I eat breakfast at the same restaurant about once a week. While I don't always go on the same day, I always eat the same thing. Its not even necessary for me to order anymore, it just shows up in front of me.

At some point, order takes on a recognized structure that is useful for others. A common way of making order regular is the making of a method. My dictionary calls a method: "A means or manner of procedure; especially, a regular and systematic way of accomplishing anything".⁽¹⁾ If we delve a little farther into the word's origin, the dictionary tells us it comes from the Greek *methodos*, which is to journey (*hodos*) after (*meta*), so there is a clear emphasis on the pursuit of an outcome.

In this paper the issue of regularity in pursuit is an important one. Dressing in the morning can illustrate this in simple terms. The actual sequence of dressing is flexible providing the desired outcome is met. Clearly putting one's socks on after one's shoes would demonstrate that limits exist – but as long as one looks "sharp" when all is said and done, the conditions of regularity in the order have been met.

A few more examples further illustrate the issue of regularity in ordering, beginning with a more strict interpretation. Tying a necktie can be done in various ways. Each gives a slightly different result and must be selected on the basis of the tie's material, type, and the owner's desired appearance. Once selected a strict order must be followed to get to the result that has already been determined. Each method is so linear, that it might be more appropriate to call them procedures, a word that stems from the Latin, "to go forward".

(1) *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1975, p.826.

Does the directional insistence impose a sequential order that is more regular than a method's? Is a procedure a particularly strict form of a method? More complex ordering examples help to clarify differences in regularity.

Consider the building of a wall as a goal. The masonry trades have developed several ways to establish vertical closure (stone, block, etc.). In this case brick is selected. What are the conditions of regularity in its construction? Bounds are clear, but it is not as regular as the tying of the tie. Laying the corner bricks may precede those between, if labor is divided among those of various skills. Likewise, the pointing of the mortar joints may be delayed for someone with different skills, or if an unusual mortar is to be used for its appearance. Here then is a method with component parts (both materials and actions) that can go together in a variety of ways in the pursuit of an outcome. The regularity of their ordering is the result of two things – the identification of the specific outcome, and the limited ways in which the method's component parts can be assembled. What happens to a way of ordering when the assemblage of parts becomes more variable and complex?

Another example: this time the building of walls and roof are selected as the outcome. The same masons are available and are able to use some of their more prestigious methods – the arch, vault and dome. There are another set of methods available however: The carpenters are offering their post, beam and truss. How is the pursuit ordered?

In this example, the identification of the specific outcome (physical closure) is still straightforward. A management method that assembles from the masonry and carpentry methods can be established on the basis of physical criteria such as material availability, dimensional capacities and projected durability. The ordering of the methods' parts is likely to be more complex than when planning for the wall. But because the outcome – vertical and horizontal closure – is still predetermined, an ordering of methods (in effect, a "method of methods") can be established. Its regularity is quite high because of the physical standards that are imposed by the known outcome. If the masons and carpenters disagree about

something, they are overruled by the regularity of the management method.

As long as the outcome is identified in advance, the component parts can be assembled by the regularity of management. In the last example, potentially conflicting interests are subordinated to the management method, the method of methods. But what if the pursuit is to include the interests and goals of the component practitioners? What happens in the last example if the identified outcomes are not only physical, but also economic and social? Is it possible to manage all materials, actions and interests without the use of subordination?

The previous example involved a reasonably small number of participants. If the outcome is to incorporate the resolution of their collective interests, including the additional economic (bidding procedures?) and social (job training?) considerations, ordering can be imagined that uses consensus. Consensus works with the general agreement of those involved. Negotiation or bargaining precedes consensus if it is necessary to resolve differences. Because the outcomes are to include the collective resolution of interests, the various component parts can be ordered through bargaining. The rules of agreement are a part of the predetermined regularity – one of the conditions that limits the pursuit. As long as all interests abide by these conditions, there can be progress.

Imagining the use of a procedure in this case seems overly rigid. Even though all participants have agreed to abide by consensus, a sequential order is too complex to plan. Every point of decision that required agreement would have to be mapped out so that the outcomes were still met. At each point, potential alternatives would have to be arranged to converge at the desired end. And what if the decision points were erroneously anticipated? What if consensus demanded a direction that was not considered in the original assembly of order? Even if possible, the procedure seems like too much trouble when there is a wide range of interests to be resolved.

Structuring a management method seems a better option. Without the linear regularity of the procedure, the method can still assemble component parts in the pursuit of the desired

outcome. It is not necessary to arrange decision points sequentially, providing the rules of agreement are maintained as the pursuit progresses. If established from the beginning, these rules are able to manage conflicts as they arise, because those involved have agreed to them as a condition of participation. The walls and the roof can get built, the carpenters and masons can be satisfied, if outcomes are known, and potentially conflicting interests can be managed by consensus.

One more example will bring the illustrations of order to a close. Again the carpenters and masons are present. Understandably, they are lobbying for their individual interests – materials, actions, procedures, methods and so forth provide a variety of interests that may be in some ways conflicting. The problem now is that the specific outcomes can not be identified before the pursuit begins. There are two reasons for this. The first reason relates to the nature of the actual project they are working on. There is only partial agreement on what should be done. Some feel enclosure is most important, and should be made in an inspiring form (which also happens to be the most expensive). Others feel that a more economic means of building would produce more enclosure, and therefore be more successful. And there are some who believe the available resources are best used if invested in training other people to be carpenters and masons. In the long term, they are convinced that training is of greater benefit than building enclosure right away. Each of these groups have decidedly different goals, so the predetermining of outcomes seems very unlikely.

The second reason is related to the first, and makes resolution all the more difficult. Several of the goals that have been identified are likely to take a long time to complete. It is recognised that during this time the interests of those involved may change somewhat, and it is important that they be allowed to reconsider their positions as this happens. Some may retire, or perhaps find better work elsewhere. Is it possible to order a pursuit like this so that all interests, both now and in the future, can be considered?

Even the most flexible means of ordering – the management method – does not appear

up to this task. It is the least regular introduced thus far, yet it is still too rigid. Subordination and consensus both manage interests, but only when the people involved abide by their rules. What happens if someone new comes onto the job and does not like these earlier conditions? Similarly, how does a management method incorporate a change in goals? Perhaps the first goal will be to train more masons and carpenters. What happens later when these newcomers want to build an inspired form of enclosure?

In this example ordering goals and interests is not straightforward, because there are not pre-established controls. Controls regularize a pursuit by placing rigid conditions on it. Identifying a specific outcome is the first kind of control that was discussed. The later, more complex examples have illustrated that the managing of interests is a control that can work with either subordination or consensus. In this last example, neither outcome nor interests can be constrained by controls, so a management method is not up to the task.

Because the component parts of this pursuit are characterized by their potential differences, and because their combinations in practice can only be ordered as the pursuit evolves; I return to the dictionary for reference. An **approach** stems from the Latin meaning "to go nearer to", or more commonly in today's usage: "The act of coming or drawing nearer . . . an approximation".⁽¹⁾ The preciseness of an approach is the quality of uncertainty. An approach is always getting "nearer to", but is never charged with arriving. If it makes order, it can only do so without the control of final results. Because its regularity is not outcome oriented, it provides a continuing framework for operational order.

This is not to say that an approach does away with outcomes – a characteristic that could only be considered as stifling progress. On the contrary, much as a management method assembles more rigid methods and procedures, an approach's framework supports the use of rigid ordering techniques in pursuit of component goals. It is in understanding the use

(1) *ibid.*, p.64.

of these more regular techniques, within a broader continuing context, that an approach has its value. Outcomes are not anticipated as absolute. Progress is measured in a relative way, because the complexity of the component parts and their interactions demand it.

The last example provided a context without the total control of interests or outcomes. As examples get increasingly complex, it is proposed that an understanding of order must take the form of an approach. Because an approach is not described by rigid controls, it is more difficult to illustrate. Much of its description is dependent upon the specifics of the particular situation. To get a better idea of an approach's nature, the next section consider's the characteristics of a context that is not reliant on a prescribed sequence, the fixed management of interests, or the over simplification of outcomes.

The middle ground: A conceptual context for an approach

The previous illustrations involving the masons and carpenters are relatively simple ones. Actual situations involving ordering are often very complex. Assembly-line production of cars is a complicated procedure. Creating large buildings requires the resolution of millions of factors contained within the concerns of appearance, structure, cost, use, and so forth. Managing these efforts is likely to combine procedures and methods in many ways. But in each of these cases, while there is almost always the risk of discontinuity (the stereotypical "lemon", or the cost over-run), the final outcome remains in focus (the "bottom-line"?), and is realized unless the system of order breaks down entirely.

This paper is concerned with a context that does not always share these characteristics. The interests involved focus on several "individualized" outcomes. These goals may change before they are achieved. Order avoids a comprehensive description. It is a context that avoids extremes. There is both consensus and subordination, but a prescriptive mix is not possible or perhaps even desired. Controls, when imposed, are not so rigid as to specify outcomes or resolution of interests. Imagining the environment where this takes place is presented as a conceptual problem. The atmosphere is marked by change; decisions are made without the extreme controls of absolute authority or universal agreement. Participants meet, discuss and make decisions that are based upon a dialogue of interests. This conceptual meeting place is the **middle ground**.

Issues involved in the making of decisions are of critical importance on the middle ground. Who, what and when are part of any decision and clearly affect the nature of progress. Decision making might be imagined on a neutral turf where all those with involved interests meet freely, exchange ideas and forge well informed plans. But the likelihood of this becomes slim as participant interests increase, particularly in light of the previous discussion about consensus. If all details were showered down upon all those involved, without some understanding of order, it might just precipitate chaos. The opposite condition seems no

better. If participant interests and ideas are not shared, decisions are unavoidably based on generalization and ignorance. Without specific "local" information, deciphering interests and arriving at appropriate judgements is reduced to a game of chance. Some kind of "givens" must be available on the middle ground that help order progress without limiting it.

The givens are groundrules, and are the conditions of regularity found on the middle ground. They may be unique considerations of the time (high interest rates?), local setting (a lack of clay for bricks?), or both (monsoon season?). It is also possible they are imposed as conditions from outside of the local setting. Legal imperatives (material tariffs?) and regulatory mechanisms (building permits?) are examples. In each of these cases, interpretation may not be precise, and can pose another variable for the participants' scrutiny. A brick's strength can be determined, but its use is variant, so that exposing it to weather may alter the original perception of strength indoors. The walls and roof of the last example about ordering may always form enclosure; but deciding to sleep inside or out leaves the definition of the "bedroom" up to the inhabitant. Similar options can be imagined for most legal, financial and physical rule systems that are given as conditions of the context.

Groundrules may also help to order participants and their interests. Control over some decisions will be found in different levels of authority. If the brick wall needs to be built, the masons' authority will be recognised because of their expertise. And within their ranks, there will be some individuals whose skills or judgements will legitimate their interests in the eyes of others. Like other groundrules however, the traits of individuals and groups may not be universally interpreted, and are another uncertainty on the middle ground. All of these variables mean that decision making is effected by a framework of controls involving who, what and when. In each case, the groundrules must be integrated with other participant interests, if the nature of change is to be understood. The groundrules act as controls on the middle ground, but their value and use is not always fixed.

Changes on the middle ground tend to be assembled piecemeal. Participants come and

go as their interests are alerted, goals are established and outcomes are either met or transformed. While an individual is likely to leave when his interests are satisfied, the meeting place remains as long as there are changes to be discussed. Because of this, the size of the middle ground varies directly with participant interest. If it is useful to have more support, interests may rally together to provide the strength of numbers. Conversely, if others can be convinced not to participate, then acting alone may provide a single voice with more volume. The middle ground is a meeting place for its participants to discuss change – when there is no interest in change the middle ground doesn't exist.

Participation on the middle ground is largely an individual's responsibility. Someone may be convinced or obliged by others, or find himself there unknowingly, but the actions of the participant are finally a personal decision. Motivations can be complex and are also subject to change. Interests have their value, and are sometimes open to negotiation. Because all interests are not fixed on a particular outcome, they can be interpreted in different ways. An individual may have interests in himself, family, friends, community, and so forth. They may be broader still, and involve ideas of vocation, religion or state. Regardless of their source or combination, an individual's contributions are based upon personal decisions of participation.

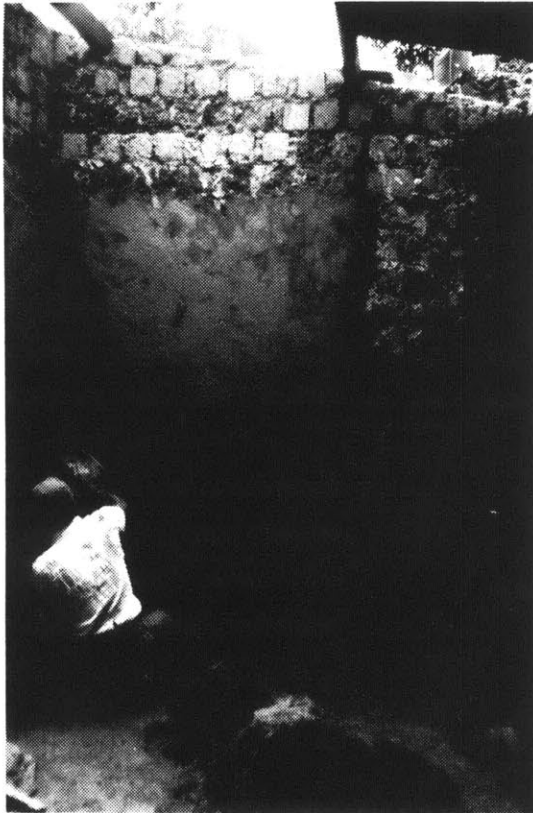
This paper will argue that an approach's flexibility is needed by the professional involved with participatory housing interventions. Within this context, he faces the issues of the middle ground. He is not able to regularize his practice with the control of predetermined outcomes or an easily managed variety of interests. Decisions must be made in coalition with others – control is unavoidably shared. The professional's expertise comprises only a portion of the groundrules found within his working context, and will have to be brought in concert with other conditions of regularity. He must find a way to understand an environment where goals are frequently redefined, and the cast of participants seems to always be changing. On the middle ground, the professional needs an approach based upon the explicit expression of his ideas, and his active support of their change in practice.

QUESTIONS:

The last section illustrated the issue of order in a series of simple examples. An approach was found to offer flexibility without a need for rigid controls. The middle ground was introduced as a context for an approach. Groundrules affect decisions on the middle ground, but the final order is formed by the participants' dialogue about goals and interests.

Both order and context are important to the professional who practices in housing interventions. Additional meaning is given to these issues in this section. A brief sketch links the author's background and intentions to the issues, so that the reader can better evaluate the ideas presented.

Housing interventions will be considered in the terms of an approach and middle ground. How they relate, and what this means in practice, are the questions presented in this short section.



Sri Lankan craftsman, photo by the author, August, 1985.

What it is about: Background, intentions and questions.

This paper is motivated by my concern to better understand the professional's role in housing interventions. The work and education I have experienced over the last ten years might be considered a "crash course" in several aspects of housing – from carpenter to architect, from tenant to landlord. Each facet has introduced new concerns, and ultimately convinced me of a career interest in housing.

As a part of my admission application for MIT, I wrote a statement of intent that reflected my perceptions before enrollment. It began:

Today's architect acts apart from those who build and use our built environment. People live, work and play in places designed without their input. Similarly, builders complain bitterly about architects' aloofness and mechanical ignorance. Builders and users see architects as distant and unconcerned.

I believe that an architect must work to reduce these incongruities. He must consciously seek to be a student and teacher of both parties. Listening, as well as directing, is the only way to obtain complete information and respect. Accountability to the user must exist.

My education at MIT has not diluted these opinions. A mix of architecture and planning classes has broadened my understanding, while summer employment and research opportunities in Sri Lanka, Chile and a few neighborhoods in Boston have increased my practical experiences. What has become increasingly clear, is that architects are not the only professionals involved with housing that can be seen as "distant and unconcerned."

Throughout this time, my interest in bridging the gap between "those who build and use our built environment" has grown, and I have become better informed. Forrest Wilson has written that "those who will suffer from design decisions have the right to influence them."⁽¹⁾ This statement is not just a slap at the professional's exclusive nature; it also reflects his

(1) Forrest Wilson, *the Joy of Building - Restoring the Connection Between Architect and Builder*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979, p.7.

belief that the creative rewards of design should be available to everyone, and not just the privilege of the designer. He concludes that:

The professional designers that today profess to possess the esoteric knowledge and unique skill that will assure the quality of the built environment were spawned at precisely the moment that the responsibility and intelligence of work had been wrenched from the craftsman.⁽¹⁾

These rather pointed statements present the professional designer as divorced from a traditional model of creativity – the craftsman – who once possessed the creative resources found in a more "ordinary" environment. This is not a new argument of course. Many people have described a better, and more simple version of reality that often requires the dismantling of someone else's view of progress. As comprehensive models they are utopian, a direction that is not meant to be followed in this writing. Instead, the intention is to explore a way to link two things that have not been linked very well before – the original nature of ordinary housing, and the expertise of concerned professionals.

This combination does not require much looking backwards. It can be accomplished in the present with a better working communication between these creative resources. The potential exchange between housing and professional is largely a matter of dialogue. This paper is about this potential dialogue and the context in which it could take place. It concentrates on the professional's voice, not as a manager, but as a welcomed visitor with a special expertise. This expertise is loaded with "the esoteric knowledge and unique skill" that Wilson mentioned in a skeptical way. In the new context, it will be the professional's responsibility to turn this into a recognised asset. Understanding this change in professional practice is the intention behind this paper.

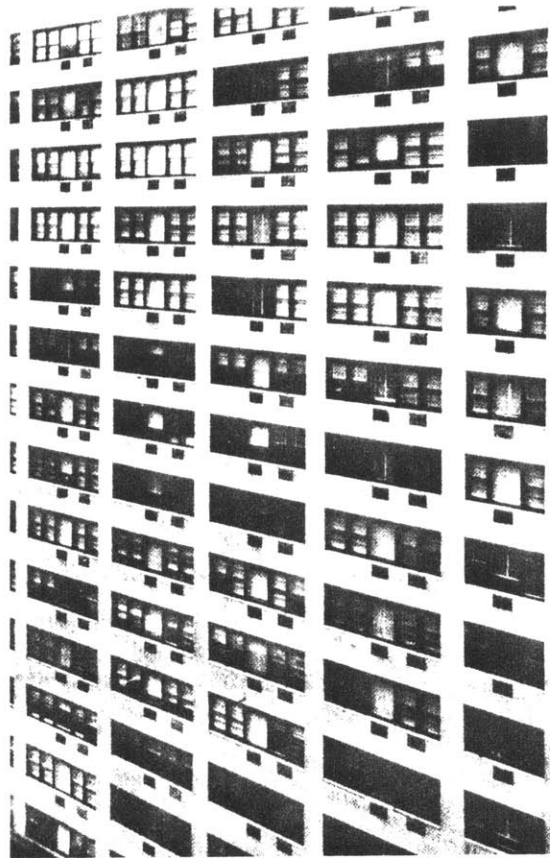
With this in mind, the issues that were introduced in the last section can be re-examined. The middle ground has been explained as a conceptual meeting place for sharing

(1) *ibid.*, p.40.

information and making decisions. It is not governed by rigid controls; the groundrules that are found there have an inherent flexibility that allows the participants an order that supports a diversity of interests. Participation remains an individual's decision. It is a place where change is assembled through discussion and agreement.

The middle ground has been introduced as a theoretical context for the dialogue between housing and professional actors. An argument will be presented in the next section that combines a historical overview of professional intervention with an explanation of housing's diversity and richness. This section will address the question: Is the middle ground the place for participatory housing interventions?

A discussion of ways to organize decisions began this paper. The issue of order involving outcome and resolution of interests was identified as important in getting things done. Ways of ordering had to become increasingly flexible as the controls of outcome and interests lessened. An approach was described as the best way of understanding order when conditions were most uncertain. If the middle ground is the place for participatory housing interventions, what does this mean for the professional's practice? This question is addressed in the last section of this paper, where an understanding of order on the middle ground is used to illuminate the professional's role in housing intervention.



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ARGUMENT:

Thusfar, the issues of order and context have been described and linked to housing interventions and the work of the professional. The middle ground has been suggested as the working context for the housing professional; an approach has been proposed as a way to understand order in practice.

This section argues that housing interventions be developed on the middle ground. Housing is a difficult subject to define. Some see it as shelter, others as a way to make a living - in both cases it changes with time. This has complicated efforts for improvement. Interventions have a history of misconception and poor results. Housing's dynamic nature has been left out; putting it back requires the resources of those involved locally. Their participation means the control of decisions must be shared. If housing interventions are to be participatory, the professional must learn to practice on the middle ground.

Illustration by Forrest Wilson, *op.cit.*, p.2.

Housing; thinking about an object and an action at the same time.

Parts of speech in the English language are not always what they seem. There is a clever (albeit somewhat tricky) device called the "gerund" which takes a verb and turns it into a noun by simply adding the letters "i-n-g" at the end. While the simplicity of such a device is clear, it also leaves the door open to ambiguity: Is the resultant word intended as a verb or a noun? Consider the example "cooking". It can be the subject of consideration: "Cooking is a true art form."; or it can be an action: "I am cooking breakfast."

The same interpretations are evident in the word "housing". The difficulties begin when one person considers housing a verb, another considers it a noun, and both people are intent upon making decisions about it. The confusion really takes off, when the attentions of several concerned disciplines (economists, planners, architects, politicians, etc.) over the last several decades are included. Some of the attention that has been focused on housing has recognised this problem and the practical hardships that have resulted. John Turner is one professional who has pointed out the critical differences between interpretation and resultant effects, and has written about his priorities in dealing with them:

In English the word "housing" means both the stock of dwelling units (a noun) and the process by which that stock is created and maintained (a verb). It is entirely reasonable to speak about the market value of houses. It is also entirely reasonable to speak about the human and social values of housing action, to housing processes. But it is absurd to mix these sets of terms and their meanings. As the cases show, the performance of housing, ie what it *does* for people is not described by housing standards, ie what it *is*, materially speaking. Yet this linguistic inability to separate process from product and social value from market value is evident in both commercial and bureaucratic language.

Social and institutional processes have many more or less quantifiable aspects; but, considered as understandable wholes, they are only partly quantifiable. Monetary or market values cannot be placed on them. And it is a disturbing sign of the decay of language and values in the modern world that official housing, building and planning terminology universally confuses the meanings of housing and of housing

value.⁽¹⁾

Legislated standards in the forms of building and zoning codes are examples of decisions that were based upon a "quantifiable" interpretation of housing. While they are based upon understandable concerns for health and safety, they impose physical realities that may finally result in hardship. Because of their strict interpretation of housing, they are necessarily unable to address the specifics of the local setting.

The contradiction between intent and actuality is particularly evident in the housing efforts of those seeking upward mobility. Turner has illustrated this in his discussions of the "supportive shack" and the "oppressive house" in a study of families in Mexico. The supportive shack, a nightmarish collection of code infringements, is very valuable to its tenant family. Its minimal costs allow the family to save for the anticipated purchase of their own home. Conversely, the family in the oppressive house had been encouraged to accept a standardized housing solution offered by the government - only to find that the costs of rent, utilities and a more expensive commute now threaten their solvency. Turner concludes that housing value must include a local assessment:

Twenty-five in-depth case studies of moderate and lower-income households in Mexico have been methodically selected from surveys to represent the common range of social situations and physical environments. Some of the poorest dwellings, materially speaking, were clearly the best, socially speaking, and some, but not all of the highest standard dwellings, were the most socially oppressive. . . The shack was a highly supportive environment (for some) while the house was an excessively oppressive environment for the others. This apparent paradox, created by false values and confused language, is a very common one, especially in the majority of low-income countries as well as, and perhaps increasingly, in countries like Britain.⁽²⁾

(1) John F.C. Turner, *HOUSING BY PEOPLE - Towards Autonomy in Building Environments*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1976, pp.64-65.

(2) *ibid.*, p.54.

This example is not intended as a sweeping judgement against all central regulation. Instead, it helps to frame the inherent problems of projecting a specific definition upon housing and then basing restrictive decisions on it.



Anonymous housing from "Office of Housing and Urban Affairs; Annual Report Fiscal Year 1985; US Agency for International Development", Washington DC.

Housing; including the dimension of time.

In comparison to many other building efforts, housing does not survive the passing of time. Pyramids, temples and cathedrals are still largely intact, while the housing of their original builders has long since disappeared. Of course the durability of construction explains much of this – monuments were built with the best materials and techniques available. Common housing construction was nearly the opposite, as it was built in the most ordinary ways with the least expensive materials. But there are other reasons for housing's poor "survival" rate that relate to its perception as an activity. Unlike the great monuments which were intended to mark a point in time indefinitely, housing has always been expected to adjust, so as to be responsive to the changing needs, resources and values of the dwellers.

Are today's needs so much different? Dwellers' priorities still change over the years. A practical person looks to minimize costs while maintaining options for the future. It is no wonder that housing has not taken the form of monuments – can one imagine a pyramid with an addition? (In fairness, the "dwellers" of some cathedrals have made continual changes to their "houses" of worship over several centuries.)

The development of housing in a piecemeal fashion is the direct result of incorporating the consideration of time. **Incremental building** is to build in pieces over time. (In Latin, *increasco* means "to grow".) In our modern societies we often overlook this quality, as can be seen in the small "temples" that many people have built in the suburbs. Yet these tract developments offer important incremental mechanisms that are sometimes only recognized in hindsight. Originally planned to maximize affordability, housing was mass-produced with highly industrialized techniques. The rapid evolution of an inexpensive stick (2x4) construction system now facilitates opportunities to add-on or "modernize". The greatest barrier may be in deciding which side of the temple to blemish with addition.

Incremental building is not limited to physical considerations. Financial mechanisms are also illustrated in another unplanned example from suburban development. Frequently these

projects were built in rural areas where the existing infrastructure (water, police, etc.) rapidly proved to be inadequate. Had complete systems been planned and implemented before they were settled, the initial cost of housing would have been much higher. Instead, by neglecting these inevitable needs, the developers allowed the newly established residents to make their own decisions about the levels of services (volunteer vs. professional fire department?) and the creative ways (bond issues?) to pay for them.

Today's appreciation of incremental building is not always exercised in an after the fact fashion. But too often, the considerations of change over time are overlooked. Cloaked in terms like traditional and vernacular, some contemporary housing demonstrates the virtues of incremental building. Examples abound in rural areas, but we seem to celebrate the quaint images, such as the fisherman's house shown on the next page.

The housing of the poor frequently demonstrates contemporary examples of incremental building. Extensive use of found materials and the careful investment of limited resources dictate the piecemeal development of low-income housing. Recent academic research has focused on this natural evolution and pointed out that housing environments often characterized as "blight" or "ghettoes" may be misconstrued. Turning this image on its head, anthropologist Lisa Peattie describes the "slums of hope" where:

The shanties were not housing in deterioration; they were housing in the process of improvement. In particular, the piecemeal system of building afforded great advantages to those who, like most of the poor in developing societies, have great variations in income from month to month. Rather than being demoralized and parasitic, the residents of the shanty towns were seen as active, organised and self-mobilising, and their housing substandard only if looked at at one point in time. In a larger context, it was a stock in progress, on the way to becoming adequate through continuous investment by the individual household.⁽¹⁾

(1) Lisa R. Peattie, "Some Second Thoughts on Sites-and-Services", *Habitat International*, Vol. 6, No. 1/2, 1982, pp.132-133.

The point of these examples is a simple one: Housing can change to meet evolving needs, resources and values. This is a natural characteristic that cuts across all housing such that: "The wealthy suburb and the squatter settlement have something in common: both

contain inhabitants who want to control their lifestyles and are willing to invest in their property for the sake of future generations."⁽²⁾

It is a simple point, but it helps in understanding why housing is hard to define, and holds different meanings for many people. Unlike a pyramid, the people directly involved want housing to be able to change over time. Through these changes they address all kinds of goals – physical, economic, social, and political. As long as these people control the decisions affecting their housing, they control its change. When housing is affected by decisions outside of this direct involvement there is intervention. The extent to which intervention affects change is critical to many people involved with housing. This issue will be discussed next.

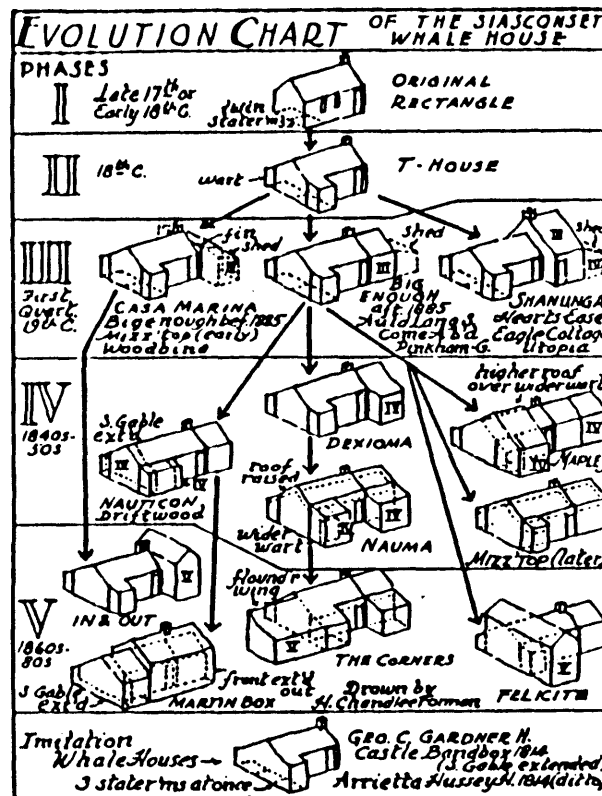


Illustration from an unknown source, copied from Maurice Smith's course description, Level 2/3 Design, M.I.T., Fall 1985.

(2) N. John Habraken, "INTERVENTIONS: Professional and User Inputs", *Openhouse*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1980, p.18.

Interventions; establishing professionals in housing.

To intervene means to "come between" (from the Latin). Without assessing the reasons behind an intervention, it is safe to say that a "coming between" will cause change. What is the nature of such a modification to housing? If housing is assumed as object and/or action, can the consequences of intervention be anticipated? The following example presents an intervention from the late nineteenth century and its later effects.

Consider the actions of the trade journal, *Plumber and Sanitary Engineer* that sponsored a design contest in 1878. They challenged their readers to come up with a housing solution for New York City's standard 25' by 100' lots so that (in their words): "The design which best combined maximum safety and convenience for the tenant, and maximum profitability for the investor, would win." Did the trade journal's staff foresee the impact that the "dumbbell" tenement would have when they selected it as the winner? By the turn of the century, hundreds of these buildings had been constructed and occupied. Did the proliferation of this high-density building catalyse the writing and adoption of "The New York Tenement House Law of 1901"? Within these regulations, further construction of dumbbell tenements was clearly forbidden. But what may be of far greater significance is the extent to which this law later facilitated an increase in the government's active role in housing interventions. Within ten years, four other states had adopted tenement house laws that had been modeled on the New York regulations.⁽¹⁾

Presumably, the authors of the 1878 contest did not fully anticipate the impacts that resulted from their selection of the dumbbell tenement as the winner. Their perspective, as a group of professionals concerned with plumbing and sanitation, likely saw housing as buildings

(1) Lawrence M. Friedman, *Government and Slum Housing: A Century of Frustration*, Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1968, pp.75-76.

(object) that provided them with a way to make a living (activity). Their immediate interests may have been focused on the potential interactions of their trade in a building's construction. Yet the outcome of their contest was no more the "combined maximum safety and convenience for the tenant, and maximum profitability for the investor", than it was the direct proliferation of tenement laws. If the outcome can now be described, it is only possible to do so in the speculative terms of the industrious historian who works with the distinct advantage of hindsight, and explains the dumbbell tenement as a chapter in a continuing story.

The point in this example is that the impact of an intervention – like the housing it modifies – is largely unpredictable. So many people are involved with so many different interests, that even the simplest intention may not be bound to a predetermined outcome. Regardless of the level of understanding that precedes intervention, precise outcomes are difficult to control and cannot be guaranteed. The changing nature of housing is too variant to allow such security in making judgements. The relationship of cause and effect in making interventions has been historically misunderstood.

What follows is a series of historical snapshots to illustrate this gap in understanding. This is not offered as a complete history – an overly ambitious task. Instead, the intention is to demonstrate that interventions can be qualified as either directed or collective – a difference that reflects a division in the understandings that lie at the source of their planning. Interventions are intended to order housing, and like any way of ordering, they impose conditions of regularity. The effects that these controls have had on housing help to illustrate important lessons that have been learned, and begin to show how a division in understanding can be lessened.

Directed interventions are aimed at a limited set of housing issues. Typically, they are initiated following the identification of a specific issue. As such they are reactive and can be assembled piecemeal. In responding to a particular issue(s), they can be either negative or

positive. The previously mentioned laws that forbade dumbbell tenements are examples of negative-directed interventions. Regulations were intended to negate aspects of the housing environment that were seen as undesirable. The proliferation of negative legislation has continued to the present day - building codes are examples of directed interventions that are meant to control physical characteristics of the housing environment. Banking regulations that forbid "red-lining" are examples of controls that are meant to regularize a financial part of the housing order. In any case, negative-directed interventions are intended to keep specific conditions from happening.

There are also positive-directed interventions. An excellent example came with the formation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in the United States. As part of the National Housing Act of 1934, the FHA was intended:

. . .to stimulate the moderate-cost private-housing market. The sponsors hoped to devise a program that would insure low-interest, long-term mortgages. At the time, loans were available only for 40-50 percent of the appraised value of a house, repayable in three to five years at interest rates of 5-9 percent. The FHA on the other hand, provided for loans of up to 80 percent of a home's value, maturities up to twenty years, and amortization at 5-6 percent, payable by small monthly installments. Bankers who agreed to the FHA terms were guaranteed recovery of a certain sum from the government in the events of a default.⁽¹⁾

The limited nature of this intervention qualified a select group (mostly the middle-class) for its use, and as such was highly successful. It was positive because its intervening actions were intended to cause direct improvements in the housing environment.

As negative or positive, directed interventions are meant to affect a specific part of a larger housing order. They may be based upon a larger perception of the housing environment, but they are not intended to do more than change a particular portion of it.

(1) Gwendolyn Wright, *BUILDING THE DREAM - A Social History of Housing in America*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981, pp.240-241.

By focusing on component issues, these interventions can assemble order incrementally, much as housing itself, and so offers a quality of flexibility. Because they are focused, their evaluation and subsequent adjustment is relatively easy. An idea that fails (dumbell tenements?) is regulated; an idea that works (FHA?) may be institutionalized. Regardless, the directed intervention takes aim at a particular aspect of the housing environment. What happens when an intervention imposes a greater set of conditions with the intent of controlling more of the housing order?

The failure of some directed legislation from the beginning of the century was such that by the 1920's: "Awareness was growing that the housing problem could not be solved by restrictive laws alone, without massive rebuilding . . . As housing experts saw it, the problem was not high rentals and maldistribution of the housing stock; rather, supplies of decent housing for the poor were inadequate to the need."⁽¹⁾ The perception that housing problems were ones of inadequate supply pressured government institutions at both state and federal levels, to consider a collective intervention – the construction of complete housing units – that was intended to resolve a variety of issues at once.

The skepticism of directed legislation and the widespread problems of the depression combined so that the federal government in the 1930's began a series of collective interventions that are now generically called "public housing". Again Friedman relates that:

This state of affairs for the first time created a tremendous pressure for government housing – not for merely loans, not merely for a plan to prime the economic pump, but for a program of public building designed for the needs of the decent poor. The creation of a huge, new, submerged middle class may have finally set up irresistible pressure for public housing.⁽²⁾

The "needs of the decent poor" were not limited to issues of physical shelter provision.

(1) Lawrence M. Friedman, *op.cit.*, p.96.

(2) *ibid.*, p.100.

Such a massive constituency also had interests in jobs, investment, transitional housing and the ever present cries to cleanup the "slums". The coalition of interests that assembled behind the omnibus legislation of public housing demonstrates the broad array of goals that characterize a collective intervention. A few later examples illustrate that a wide set of concerns embodied into a few, simplified strategies, brought the central government's ability for decision-making into question.

When the country's economy enjoyed prosperity following the second world war, the collective intervention of public housing was seen as a mechanism that could help the poorer classes, (presumably less buoyant than the "submerged middle class"). The big cities were in trouble economically, as many of their more solvent residents had joined the suburban flight, and were now members of a different tax base. Tremendous quantities of buildings, large areas within major cities, were deteriorating from lack of maintenance and abandonment. Suburban flight seemed to leave urban blight in its tracks. Issues again converged at the federal level as more local authorities could not find the resources and inter-cooperation to tackle these problems.

The acceptance of collective interventions in response to these issues illustrates the awesome scope and inherent limitations of centralized decision-making in a housing environment. The issues embraced reached far outside of a single context, but the effects of urban redevelopment and renewal, through the fifties and into the sixties, had a devastating impact on many local housing situations. It is no wonder that Lawrence Friedman titled his chapter analysing these interventions - "Urban Redevelopment and Renewal: The Ultimate Weapon?". Within this chapter, Friedman reasoned that:

Some renewal controversies are so highly local, they cannot be easily generalized. Probably no one political or social factor can explain why renewal "succeeds" in Newark, "fails" in St. Louis, and is defeated at the polls in South Milwaukee. We would even find it hard to agree on a definition of success and failure. . . But one might guess that everywhere the worst losers would be those with least economic or political leverage - the poor. And indeed, the poor seem to be the losers, even in a program that sometimes claims to be for their benefit.

They lose their homes, their small businesses, their community organization. What they gain, if anything, are hand-me-down houses and a few of the jobs generated by the federal spending on construction and demolition.⁽¹⁾

Friedman points out very clearly that the "worst losers" were those with interests in "their homes, their small businesses, and their community organization" – a combination that forms a reasonably concise object/action description of housing. The evolution of collective intervention has demonstrated two important lessons that are basic to an understanding of any housing intervention.

Broad actions bring broad consequences: The first lesson is that comprehensive planning, as a way of ordering based upon predetermined outcomes, will not work in housing interventions. The housing context is far too complex and dynamic to follow any sort of fixed agenda. The effects of any action are difficult to anticipate, but when several actions are packaged together, the results are impossible to foresee. Evaluation has shown that many of the collective interventions legislated by central governments have gone awry, sometimes leaving their constituents in conditions that may have actually been worse than when they started. Examples are not limited to the United States of course. Colin Ward has written that in Britain:

. . .many of the procedures introduced by government to improve the housing situation have unwittingly complicated it and made it unresponsive to the aspirations of ordinary citizens. The habits of self-help and mutual-aid have been repressed by the habit of reliance on the bureaucratic organization of housing.⁽²⁾

The second lesson has grown out of the first, as those involved with planning and implementing interventions have searched for better ways to assemble them. It involves the recognition and acceptance of a bit of common sense – that people affected by decisions

(1) *ibid.*, p.166.

(2) Colin Ward, "Self-Help and Mutual-Aid in Housing", p.13.

should also have a part in making them. The logic here is relatively simple: There is a unique understanding available from those with local knowledge and experience. The acceptance of this lesson however, and its integration into housing interventions, remains a struggle for those that have been making the decisions and have established an institutional base outside of the local setting.

The next section looks more closely at these lessons and the issues that have developed around them. The devolution of collective intervention runs from Pruitt-Igoe to the present. To see this as the result of an active distrust in "big" government would be an oversimplification. The constituent interests that were assembled behind public housing have gradually been replaced by voices calling for more directed actions. Some of these new interests can be grouped under the umbrella of **participation**, but as the last historical snapshots will show, their interpretations of this concept vary considerably in practice.

Participation; will the professionals mind?

The second lesson of collective intervention holds that local decision making can be a resource in housing interventions. This resource offers two assets – economy and appropriateness. John Turner has summarized that:

Therefore, if the intention is to make better use of resources and to get more for less, then decision-making powers over specific, local and personal resource use must be devolved to levels where persons and the local organizations they control, can make locally appropriate decisions.⁽¹⁾

Putting these ideas into practice is another matter. Bringing local actors into a decision making arena that has been established by non-local individuals and institutions is by no means automatic. The non-local actors have both professional and personal interests in maintaining their positions. The evolution of intervention has provided several generations with their livelihoods. Ironically, the last half decade's examples of intervention have demonstrated that Turner's largely rhetorical question about "what housing is", has actually received a series of rather precise, physical answers through the thoughts and actions of those sitting in the institutions of authority. Because of this, what appears a rather bold-faced question by Peter Hall, is a painfully serious one: "How then can we involve participants in decision-making in such a way that politicians, and designers do not feel that their responsibility and prerogatives are being diminished?"⁽²⁾

The simple question takes housing's natural characteristic to change with its user's needs, and flips it on its head. As a result of intervention, housing change is under the control of "politicians and designers" (among others). Housing decisions are no longer in the hands of those from the local environment. Under these conditions it is no wonder that participation

(1) John F.C. Turner, "New Directions in Housing", 1983, paragraph 4.2.

(2) Peter Hall, "The Planners and the Public", *New Society*, March 22, 1973.

has been viewed dimly by the authorities and has been slow to earn acceptance.

Participation then, involves two central questions that may eventually be resolved as one. On the one hand, there is a need to develop ways to bring the local resources of economy and appropriateness into the assembling of housing interventions. How are local resources identified and used? The second question is a more political one, and involves the continued devolution of authorities' control, in ways that are hopefully less destructive than those illustrated by the scandals of urban redevelopment and renewal. This issue is a more self-conscious one for both the institution and the individual involved with interventions. If qualities of change are only available when decisions are effected locally, will the authorities be able to share their existing control?

To date, the participation of local interests in housing interventions has met with mixed results. As an issue of study, it has been researched extensively, the eight rungs of Sherry Arnstein's "citizen participation ladder" being a fine example.⁽¹⁾ As an operable characteristic of housing interventions however, participation has proved difficult. Arnstein pointed out that participation has actually been interpreted in a broad range, from manipulation of local participants, to their empowerment and substantive control. This is a spectrum of possibilities that can be seen as difficult to resolve in the context described so far.

Examples involving low-income housing are particularly vivid. In the United States "advocacy planners" took up the cause of those lacking a voice in the urban renewal decisions of the earlier decades. By supporting the interests of these disfranchised groups in the interventions that followed, there was some form of participation. The success of these "turf-battles" between local and central interests is uncertain. Robert Goodman has written:

As effective as advocacy planning might be in shifting some planning power to low-income neighborhoods and even occasionally stopping some governmental action

(1) Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation", *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp.216-224.

such as a highway, those communities still have to operate within constraints set by those living outside their borders and whose interests are quite different from their own. To find answers to a community's impotence to effect changes in the way its people live requires looking at a more basic and more traditional dilemma than the lack of planning power.⁽¹⁾

Goodman goes on to relate these "more basic and more traditional" answers as being involved with the distribution of wealth – an argument of global proportion that will have to seek resolution (revolution?) elsewhere. His points do, however, help to illustrate the inherent difficulty faced when local interests are intended to be a part of a housing intervention. In a sense, these planners were helping local interests generate their own negative-directed interventions. To the extent they stopped unwanted actions, they improved their housing with their local political resources. This benefit may have had later payoffs as well, if the organizational actions left the local interests with an empowered position. But their defensive posture was likely to have done little to convince the authorities to relax their controls, or to be more cooperative in supporting the communities' later interests.

There are examples of participation that may be more constructive. Richard Margolis researched self-help housing in the United States and noted that what he saw, "can deal with tenants who will remain tenants, with homeowners who want help but have no need of sweat equity, or with tenants hoping to become home-owners through self-help."⁽²⁾ Margolis' observations about self-help programs that are locally run help to show that resources are available, and may still benefit from some forms of more centralized controls.*

(1) Robert Goodman, *After the Planners*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971, pp.23-24.

(2) Richard J. Margolis, "Self-Help Housing in Urban Areas", A report on self-help housing in the United States, to the Office of Economic Opportunity, Contract No. OEO-4091, January 1968, p.10.

* Margolis approaches these housing efforts from a local level. His interest in self-help is

An example he documents in Washington, DC illustrates this point. A first time landlord agreed with tenants in his dilapidated buildings to exchange their labors for concessions in rent. The tenants felt their abilities were up to the task. But the landlord ended up disillusioned saying: "Everyone in the neighborhood said they knew all the crafts. But it wasn't that simple. What they meant was that they had done some work before, but not necessarily well." He concluded the area was "a neighborhood of second-rate handymen."

Margolis' reaction was more optimistic. He wrote: "Actually, I find it rather hopeful that the neighborhood was full of 'second-rate handymen'. What they needed, it would appear, was first-rate supervision." It might also have been true that the tenants and landlord had different definitions of the work's quality, and had failed to identify and resolve these differences before the situation became critical. Had this been done, the supervision might have come from the local community, or not been needed at all. The landlord's reaction to the problem of delinquent rent collection acknowledged an awareness that this negotiation of responsibility was possible: "We should have helped them to form an association; we should have let *them* collect their own rents and make their own rules."⁽¹⁾

Recognising a local resource and putting it into practice are two separate tasks. Margolis' examples showed the tension between these tasks being resolved by neighborhood institutions with the limited help of more centralized authorities (federal and state grants, for example). The interests found within these more locally based authorities were not in

as a viable resource to improve a range of situations. His emphasis appears to avoid some of the broader political considerations of participation in housing interventions. The richness of thought that has been developed around the political implications of self-help is considerable. I have found the writings compiled in *Self-Help Housing, A Critique*, edited by Peter Ward, to be particularly interesting (London: Mansell Publishing, 1982). In this paper, I will reluctantly duck many of these rather pregnant issues.

(1) *ibid.*, pp.11-12.

complete agreement about how problems should be approached, but their proximity to context helped in resolving differences. Even the most misdirected actions have the best chance of being noticed and corrected by the local intervenor.

In spite of their different focuses, the experiences evaluated by Goodman and Margolis demonstrate the potential strength of local resources. Each had documented urban housing examples from the 1960's in the United States, when participation was an important word in

city planning, but its understanding was still a long way off. Goodman's ideas show the collective strength of local interests, while Margolis' examples characterize qualities of resiliency and self-correction. Both show local successes that operate outside of (or in spite of?) a central authority's use of substantive control. A final historical snapshot from the late seventies, and eighties will illustrate that a central authority can follow local initiative and share its established control of decisions with local interests - and that both interests can benefit from the exchange.

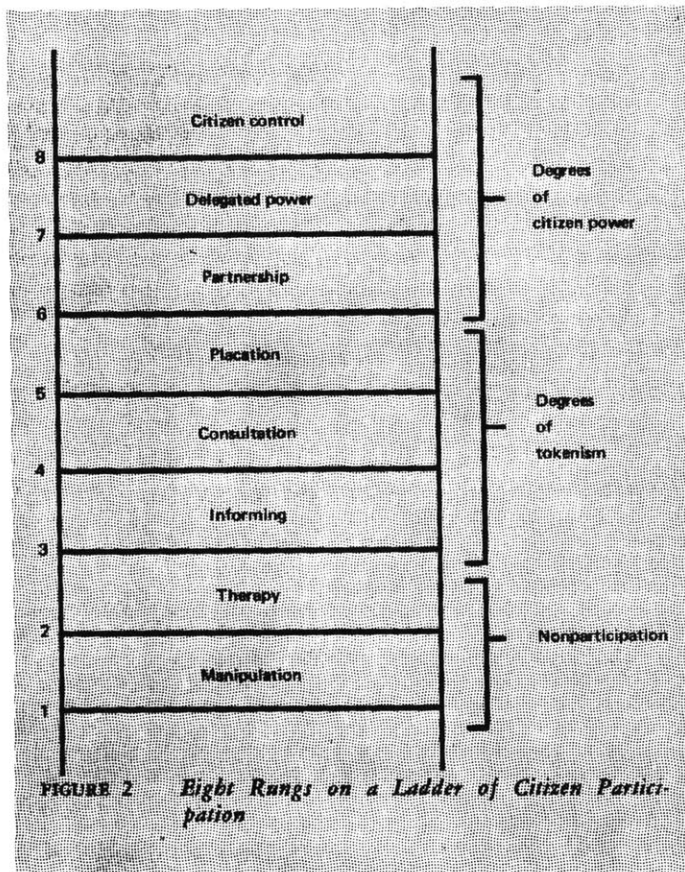


FIGURE 2 *Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation*

Illustration from Sherry R. Arnstein, *op.cit.*, p.217.

Participation; putting housing interventions on the middle ground.

The earlier discussion of collective interventions referenced the thoughts of Colin Ward, pointing out that at its worst an authority's control of housing decisions can suppress the motivations of those affected, such that they develop a "habit of reliance on the bureaucratic organization of housing." Fortunately, this is not a permanent condition. Public housing in the United States has also done much to squelch creative actions; but there are examples of tenants making significant efforts to better their housing in spite of the authorities' controls – only to find that their actions were sufficiently convincing to make the authorities change their organization. The 1202 program in Philadelphia,⁽¹⁾ and the In-Rem program in New York City, have both evolved so as to transfer city control of abandoned, tax-delinquent property to dwellers that have occupied these buildings and shown better ownership responsibility. A short discussion of the In-Rem program follows.

"Tenants had been taking over their buildings from abandoning landlords since the mid-1960's, if not earlier, and by the early 1970's many had found ways to renovate and purchase their buildings as legal cooperatives. Why were they willing and able to take over where their landlord had failed?"⁽²⁾ Elizabeth Strom goes on to answer this question in some detail, as well as describing the actions of both private and public groups, local and centrally located, in making housing improvements in New York City. The In-Rem program is the example she focuses on, where tenant initiative has forced the city government into action.

(1) Beth E. Marcus, "Seduction and Abandonment: Low-Income Housing and Squatters in Philadelphia", Hampshire College: Submitted in Fulfillment of Division III Requirements, May, 1983, pp.93-95.

(2) Elizabeth Ann Strom, "Management of City-Owned Property: A Low-Income Housing Policy for New York City", Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Master of City Planning Thesis, June 1985, p.45.

Institutional control of taxation, foreclosure and other legal mechanisms, is eventually changed to provide these tenants with the support they need. After Strom asked tenants about their remarkable efforts, she relates: "These tenants were proud of what they had accomplished, but seemed surprised that their behavior, which to them is motivated by necessity and self-interest, should seem extraordinary to others".⁽¹⁾

From the tenant's viewpoint then, Strom's earlier question might have read: "Why *wouldn't* they be willing and able to take over where their landlord had failed?" In a sense, the In-Rem program illustrates a different perspective from which to view the two central questions that have been directed at participation. Rather than identifying the local resources and bringing them into the intervention, the authorities' resources are being used for housing as identified by the local interests. Do the authorities mind? In a context as desperate as low-income housing in New York City, the authorities need all the help they can get, so "where there is little private market activity, the handling of city-owned property becomes the neighborhood housing policy".⁽²⁾ It appears though, that the opposite may be even more accurate: How the neighborhood handles property becomes the city's housing policy. In this example, local resource use is far ahead of the authorities, so the real question becomes: How are central resources identified and used?

These examples have been chosen to demonstrate the uncertainty of intervening actions in housing. Housing's indeterminate nature guarantees this. A historical interpretation of intervention bears it out – but also lends insight into the understanding of working in such a context. Interests vary and are apt to conflict; goals are likely to differ, and in all but the most simplified cases will be transformed in their pursuit. Examples where this tendency to

(1) *ibid.*, p.77.

(2) *ibid.*, p.12.

change has been stifled have been disastrous. Only within the last two decades has the federal government in the United States began to look for help locally, in the resolution of problems that seem to have been incessantly misunderstood.

The more successful interventions seem to focus on particular issues. These have been called directed interventions, to differentiate them from the more comprehensive sets of actions that are now falling out of favor. Directed interventions share housing's piecemeal, incremental quality; a factor that doubtless helps in establishing their relative success. Even a mis-directed intervention is more easily corrected than its collective counterpart – perhaps there is less inertia, as fewer interests have been lined up behind it. Directed interventions can also take advantage of the strengths of local participation. In the extreme cases they can react to local actions and formalize intervention in an after the fact manner; a way of ordering that is not so unusual in the arenas of institutional decision making.

In the best of all worlds then, housing interventions take advantage of all resources, regardless of their origin. Central and local resources are available to all interests. The issues of participation have revealed that people affected by decisions are valuable in their making. Participation comes to take on a new understanding when the controls of authority are mediated with local decision making. If responsibility is shared, the need to determine final results is lessened. Progress comes to be measured in terms of successful decision making and less by particular outcomes. This new understanding moves the evolution of housing interventions onto the middle ground.

Participatory housing; understanding interventions on the middle ground.

Interventions are evolving to the middle ground; only to find that housing had always been there. Decisions involving the needs, resources and values of housing participants have traditionally been resolved in this meeting place where order is established without the absolute controls of a limited set of interests or predetermined outcomes. Conditions of regularity do exist. The groundrules of housing are linked to the time, local setting, outside influences and varied levels of participant authority. Interpretation, however, escapes unanimous agreement, so that the making of decisions frequently requires some kind of negotiation. Active participation of local interests supports decisions that are appropriate, economic and flexible. As these qualities have become recognised, the control of interventions has been changing. When interventions forced an act of "coming between" in decision making, housing was forced off the middle ground – it may now be returning.

Academic research, some of which has already been mentioned, has focussed on developing better intervention theory. Much of this work has been aimed at the intervenor's understanding, a concentration that makes sense if housing's local interests are to be seen less as a threat and more as a potential resource. John Habraken likens housing to a growing thing, and sees the efforts of most intervenors in this context as shortsighted:

The professional desire to see an end product is more psychological than economic in motivation. Settlement must be cultivated, and gradual investment over a longer period of time is more economically sound. . . We (the normative professionals) want to complete a big project, not cultivate an environment.⁽¹⁾

Habraken's advice to the professional is clear. Housing has a life of its own which should be respected. Intervention may start something or help it along, but to anticipate conclusion is not in keeping with its nature. Housing continues on its own resources, and so offers the

(1) N. John Habraken, "INTERVENTIONS: Professional and User Inputs", *op. cit.*, p.21.

professional an opportunity. It can be "cultivated" if the involved professional actively pursues a working relationship with local interests:

We cannot and we must not make all the decisions. All cases call for a duality of responsibility: the professional has to help create a physical environment that allows for change by usage, and the users have to act on their behalf as well as participate in the "shared" or community aspects of their environment.⁽¹⁾

If housing interventions belong in a shared, participatory environment, new concerns arise that must be considered from the middle ground: How does the intervenor, as a housing professional, order his practice? How will control of decision making be shared?

Existing institutions and their members will be reluctant to share the authority they enjoy as professionals. They may feel as Hall suggested, that "their responsibility and prerogatives are being diminished" if the institutional structure around them changes. But the potential role for these individuals is promising. It will continue to require their expertise, and it will ask for something more. Again, John Turner's ideas on this issue:

Some imagine fearfully, that there is a special breed of architect who believes that all designing should be subject to user's preferences. This is an extreme kind of social realism which demands a total abdication of the architect's traditional responsibilities. Only a lunatic fringe could believe in it. The rest of us see no conflict between working with and for people – building or improving their living environments – and working with and for organizations that undertake large building works. Nor do we see any difference in principle between working with low income groups and wealthy individuals. It may be that certain personalities prefer to work locally, in close contact with directly participating groups of people. It is true that, in order to do this well, some attitudes and skills are more important than others, but this is not to say that they are intrinsically better, rather it is a question of suitability.⁽²⁾

(1) *ibid.*, p.17.

(2) John F.C. Turner, "Competition Background", International Students Competition of the Union of International Architects and UNESCO, 1983.

The point that Turner makes is critical. The evolution of intervention can be as valuable to those intervening, as it is to those that are locally affected. A variety of opportunities is open where inevitably "some attitudes and skills are more important than others". Those that choose to share the control of decision making – both locally and within the institutions of authority – will need particular capabilities to be able to succeed in such a complex context. Housing environments hold abundant resources of knowledge, experience and opinion. Harnessing and assembling these resources is an additional responsibility that the professional must include in his qualifications. Practice in participatory housing interventions will require more and not less. These additional "attitudes and skills" will not be in conflict with those already possessed, nor will they make them less useful. Instead, the professional needs a broader understanding of order to support their use on the middle ground.

One major finding of special interest is the extent to which local choices -- regarding such things as the kinds of properties to be rehabilitated -- are decisive in determining how much benefit is achieved for a given level of public expenditure. Local government officials and others responsible for implementing rental rehabilitation programs can use the information contained in this report to better understand the impacts of such decisions and as a benchmark for measuring the relative productivity of their own efforts.



Samuel R. Pierce, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development

Excerpt from the foreword of "Rehabilitating Rental Housing: The Benefits and Costs of Alternative Approaches", Department of Housing and Urban Development, Division of Policy Studies, December, 1984.



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UNDERSTANDING:

This paper has argued that the professional's way of thinking about housing interventions needs to change. Interventions have largely stifled progress rather than encourage it. Central to this problem has been the professional's limited perception of what housing is. To expand his understanding, the professional needs to practice on the middle ground.

The final section explores what practice is like in this new context. Expertise is only one of the tools used. The professional must combine what he has with the resources available locally. Assembling their combination is an ongoing process that requires frequent evaluation by others. To facilitate this kind of participation, ideas are explained legibly and with the expectation of change. A professional's approach harnesses these qualities without straining for solution, and so provides an understanding for day to day practice on the middle ground.

Illustration by Forrest Wilson, *op.cit.*, p.3.

Participatory housing interventions; the professional on the middle ground

The preceding sections have described the context of participatory housing intervention. Because it is housing, it is dynamic and indeterminate – it means different things to different people at different times. These characteristics are held as qualities to those involved locally with housing. However, when they are viewed by the outsider they may appear ambiguous. A short history of intervention has demonstrated that the relationships of cause and effect, as anticipated by those interceding into the housing world, have been greatly miscalculated. It is only recently that those involved with intervention have begun to focus on local participation as an available option to insure economy and appropriateness. Integrating this option has not been easy. Participation remains inherently difficult to the intervenor because it means sharing the control of decision making; a notion that flies in the face of many traditional roles. In spite of this, the demands of local interests and the failure of centrally planned actions have combined to make participation an acknowledged strategy in housing interventions.

This paper now turns its attention to the individual who seeks a livelihood in this context as a housing professional. The professional is equipped with the expertise of his discipline and is familiar with the historical context of housing interventions. He recognizes the valuable resources that the local participants possess. His education has also left him with an appreciation of housing's incremental qualities – any contributions will be absorbed into this continuum so he does not have false hopes of creating anything monumental. He wraps all these things into a nearly complete understanding and reports to work.

The professional walks on to the middle ground and is not sure where to begin. He has learned that comprehensive solutions are out, so he will not concentrate on the specific, only to see it later changed. Less rigid, directed actions will be more appropriate in such a dynamic environment. He knows that the people around him are concerned with various parts of the intervention, and therefore have valuable information to share. But assembling it is a difficult task. Information is expensive, surveys prove no better than their questions, and the

changing nature of housing makes conclusiveness hard to comprehend. Several of the people on the middle ground are interested in his help and are willing to work with him. Unfortunately their individual goals are not complementary and will require some compromise before assembly. He is not sure of his role in mediation.

The professional considers the tools he has brought along. Some goals can be satisfied with technical solutions (structural analysis, parking, mortgage financing?) that are easily addressed with procedures. To the professional, this is no more difficult than tying a tie; so he is sure that this kind of tool will be valuable, once he decides where to use it. Similarly, he knows that his professional methods can be of great help. Building or financing a house is more complex, but as long as the outcome is identifiable, he feels confident a method can be tailored for its pursuit. Once interests agree on a goal, the professional knows that his expertise will be put to good use.

But the situation on the middle ground remains puzzling. Procedures and methods are anticipated as useful in the resolution of individual pursuits, but knowing how to order them is still in question. When will he tell one participant about building a wall, or another group of participants about structuring cooperative ownership? Should he tell them all, in spite of the fact that some of their interests are in conflict? And considerations remain about his position as a professional, somehow charged with authority in the ordering of ideas involving his discipline. How to decide which ideas are within his field of interest? Does he owe an allegiance to a greater disciplinary order? Does his role include that of teacher, in which case the training of those not yet on the middle ground may also be important. As if this were not complicated enough, he may also be acting as the representative of a particular institution (the city's planner, the community's architect?), so that the answer to each of these questions now appears to be multiple choice.

The professional needs a way to relieve these worries and order his operations without being prescriptive. Seeing, thinking and acting must be carried out from a perspective that

does not contrive final outcomes. The dynamic nature of housing demands an equally flexible framework of understanding – the middle ground requires order that supports continuing change. The professional must find a position that is always in proximity to change without suggesting that he can control or end it. The traditional tools of his expertise remain valuable for their specific uses, but will have to be combined with other resources to make a meaningful contribution. The housing professional needs a broader understanding of order before he can practice on the middle ground.

Professional practice: Expertise, groundrules and the working habit of change

The professional practices on the middle ground without a map or instructions. Like every other participant, he can be expected to act on his own interests. His choices are those of intent – are decisions going to be made with others; are judgements going to be implicit or explicit? Will information be gathered, evaluated and assembled solitarily, or as an individual in concert with others?

The housing context promises a tremendous (if not rather lumpy) package of resources. The professional must decide how much of this information he wants and how to get it. Hugh Stretton has written that "most information has costs, so the more you spend on knowing, the less you may have to spend on doing."⁽¹⁾ This apparent truism simplifies a substantial realization – the gathering of information, including the evaluation of its value, must be made in cooperation with others if the assets of economy and appropriateness are to be best used. Each participant has a unique relationship to the intervention that relies upon their interests, influences and intentions. These factors will combine in various ways as the housing environment evolves, differentiating the controls of decision making and the relative levels of authority. A strict interpretation of these things cannot be assumed, even within a particular setting. The professional will rely on his interactions with others to gather, evaluate and assemble information in practice.

The structural characteristics of the middle ground are the groundrules. They will offer the professional a complement to the things he brings with him – if a way of combining them can be found. This process of assembly has relied too heavily on the professional's resources in the past, as the discussion on interventions has demonstrated. But additional risks

(1) Hugh Stretton, *Urban Planning in Rich and Poor Countries*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

can be imagined. What if the professional does not take advantage of his expertise, and only seeks improvement through the assembling of the groundrules? Or what if the professional accepts all resources at their face value, and does not attempt to combine them in ways that take advantage of their complementary differences? Whatever the case, the professional's contribution must avoid the premature conclusion. Groundrules must be evaluated without fixing their definition or limits in practice. The same kind of resiliency should be maintained in the use of the professional's expertise as it is applied in the local setting. This section looks more closely at the combination of expertise and groundrules as an important part of understanding the nature of professional practice on the middle ground.

In the examples of intervention that have been given, the combination of professional resources and those of the local setting have had mixed results. Donald Schon, in his writings on professional practice, argues that a deep schism has developed between theory and practice. His ideas are useful in understanding why interventions have not been played out on the middle ground before. The difference he identifies has been institutionalized in our society; enough so that individuals who select a profession for their livelihood are forced to choose between them.⁽¹⁾ The result is a hierarchal ranking of professional interests, actions and status, such that the meaningful combination of theory and practice has become inordinately difficult:

In the geography of professional practice, there is a very dry, high ground where you can practice the techniques and use the theories on which you got your PhD. Down below there is a swamp where the real problems live. The difficulty is to decide whether to stay on the high ground, where you can be rigorous but deal with problems of lesser importance, or go down into the swamp to work on problems you really care about but in a way that you see as hopelessly unrigorous. It is the dilemma of rigor and relevance. You can't have both, and the way in which people

(1) Donald Schon, *THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER - How Professionals Think in Action*, New York: Basic Books, 1983, pp.21-49.

choose between them sets the course of their professional lives.⁽¹⁾

The metaphor of "high ground and swamp" have a curious fit with the middle ground that is worth pursuing further.

Those opting for the higher position find themselves unrealistically distant from the ordinary situations of daily life. In their place, the professional employs a theoretical construct of the everyday, and then relies on it to evaluate ideas and progress. When things don't go well, "they must find ways to cut off pieces of problems that don't fit their models,"⁽²⁾ and therefore risk becoming even more distant from the actual realities they are trying to address. The more complex the model, the greater the inherent liability. Italo Calvino extends the metaphor, with his character Mr. Palomar, who is grappling with similar risks:

To construct a model – as Mr. Palomar was aware – you have to start with something; that is, you have to have principles, from which, by deduction, you develop your own line of reasoning. These principles – also known as axioms or postulates – are not something you select; you have them already, because if you did not have them, you could not even begin thinking. . . . In a well-made model, in fact, every detail must be conditioned by the others, so that everything holds together in absolute coherence, as in a mechanism where if one gear jams, everything jams. A model is by definition that in which nothing has to be changed, that which works perfectly; whereas reality, as we see clearly, does not work and constantly falls to pieces; so we must force it, more or less roughly, to assume the form of the model.⁽³⁾

The liability for the professional on the middle ground is clear – if groundrules and/or

(1) Donald Schon, "The Architectural Studio as an Exemplar of Education for Reflection-in-Action", *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Fall 1984, p.3.

(2) *ibid.*

(3) Italo Calvino, *Mr. Palomar*, San Diego; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985, pp.108–109.

expertise is assembled in an overly rigid order, housing is bound to a predetermined definition and loses its capacity for change.

This point is illustrated by the earlier examples. The pursuit of collective interventions is a clear case: The planners of urban redevelopment and renewal, as well as those attempting mass housing solutions for the low-income (now branded as "projects"), were all seeking the implementation of comprehensive housing models. Their relative success is legend.

From another point of view, the negative-directed interventions can be interpreted as the intervenor's attempts "to cut off pieces of problems that don't fit," by simply forbidding a condition that is undesirable. Zoning and construction codes may result in the kind of paradox that John Turner contrasts in the supportive shack and oppressive house illustration. The supportive shack's construction of found, surplus materials may fall short of institutional regulations, but if the dweller's find it "an admirable support for their actual situation and a vehicle for the realization of their expectations,"⁽¹⁾ then there are local resources in use that should be appreciated.

Conversely, if the family living in the oppressive house is spending a disproportionate part of their income to maintain a living condition that is not appropriate for them, there is something wrong. In part, their housing may be expensive because regulations involving light, ventilation, utilities and construction quality are too high. In reacting to very real concerns of public health, central authorities may have established a set of standards for an entire population that does not allow for individual differences. In this sense, a comprehensive housing model receives comprehensive alterations – and disables the possibilities of local change in the process.

These examples help to show that the mutual consideration of local and central resources is important to the professional's practice. Expertise and groundrules can not be separated as

(1) John F.C. Turner, *Housing by People, op.cit.*, p.60.

theory and practice have been in Schon's analysis. The professional who builds his ideas outside of practical environments is risking insensitive and ultimately damaging results. Treating pieces of models as universally representative is just as unrealistic as trusting entire comprehensive models. The territory of the "high-ground" is the turf of the housing theorist, planning interventions on the basis of his expertise without an adequate connection to the local setting.

Unfortunately, the professional who has decided to work in the "swamp where the real problems live", may find things no less hazardous. What happens when he concentrates his efforts on the local resources without trying to take advantage of the qualifications he brings to the job? This is the situation where the groundrules predominate, and expertise is used only in hindsight. The In-Rem program in New York City demonstrated this. Here, the professional actions of policy are so belated, that the city planners' follow the residents' lead. Their solutions represent a great improvement, but isn't it possible that a more imaginative use of central resources and expertise could have been combined with the tenants' efforts earlier and been even more successful?

It can be even worse, if the professional never pursues change, whether from his expertise or the local context. In the extreme, it is like a mechanic that always uses a hammer because that is the only tool he is familiar with. If a hammer has always been used to drive nails into things, the appearance of a screw, even with a screwdriver, will likely get the same treatment. If the mechanic was accustomed to thinking about the nature of tools, and had participated in the hammer's development, he might "theorize" the screwdriver. But without a familiarity with theory, that includes a hands-on appreciation of change, it seems unlikely to happen. The professional needs to develop a working habit of change that supports the creative use of all resources on the middle ground.

On the middle ground, the working habit of change must consider expertise, all resources and their potential combinations. Interpretation and creative assembly will be central

to the professional's success. The advocacy planners that Robert Goodman writes about did very well on a crowded middle ground. Participants represented a broad range of interests at every level of authority (residents, judges, federal administrators, corporate lobbyists, etc.). Each of these interests fought for their own goals. When the "stopping of some governmental action such as a highway" was the only immediate success, some people were understandably disappointed. But in retrospect, these accomplishments were impressive in the wake of urban renewal. Professionals had used their tools of process and organization, in conjunction with the groundrules of law, policy and local interests, to assemble an important success.

The combination of the professional's contribution with what already exists in the local setting is a central concern of housing interventions. Yet thus far, the only ways to describe the relationship of cause and effect has come in hindsight. Can the professional imagine the nature of his contribution on the middle ground before it happens? The anticipation of a job's rewards is an expectation that everyone needs. How can this new environment be described to better prepare the professional's working habit of change? The last part of this paper will focus on these questions so as to give a better idea of what practice on the middle ground means for the professional.

Professional practice; an approach on the middle ground

The driving force behind this paper has been to better understand the professional's role in housing interventions. Much of this effort has been spent in studying the present state of housing interventions and how it has come to be as it is. In the pages that remain, professional practice as it might look will be described. The conceptual nature of the middle ground requires it also to be speculative. Its proportionally shorter length results from an intentional emphasis: Any role on the middle ground will be based upon one's personal values and interpretation of the past, and will only find specific meaning in the actions of the local setting.

Housing has been explained as a potentially natural process. This appears not to be the case today – at least not for those without privilege. The preceding sections have argued this need not be the case. A diverse selection of housing interventions has demonstrated that the capacity for creative change is immense – unfortunately, it is rarely harnessed. The middle ground has been posed as the context for a more natural housing order; it is primarily a meeting place for the exchange of information by participants.

If the professional's place on the middle ground is to be imagined, it will have to include his part in this exchange. Professions are often associated with individual actions; how will his contributions fit in such an interactive environment? The middle ground is based on change; what does professional practice look like in this context?

An approach has been identified as the professional's understanding of order on the middle ground. Its regularity accepts an uncertainty of outcome: Goals are adjusted according to circumstances, so that an operational order is able to benefit from change rather than be threatened by it. To maintain this flexibility, an approach retains a separation from two common conditions of regularity. It is not controlled by predetermined outcomes or the rigid managing of interests. Free of these constraints, an approach can offer the professional an understanding of order that can support housing's indeterminate nature.

What this means to professional practice is of fundamental importance. The professional is traditionally equipped with the tools of problem solving, assets that can be used when specific problems have already been identified. But his equipment to find and identify these problems is less clear. Consider the architectural profession. Architects call this programming, a skill that has developed to be a discipline in itself. Stated simply: "Programming is a process leading to an explicit statement of an architectural problem. It's the hand-off package - from programmer to designer."⁽¹⁾ This definition needs more flexibility if it is to have meaning in an indeterminate context. The same authors outline a five step method, and then try to clarify its use in more complex circumstances:

The five steps then are not inflexibly strict. They usually have no consistent sequence nor is the information scrupulously accurate. . . . The sources of information are not always reliable, and predictive capabilities may be limited. As such, even good programming cannot guarantee finding the right problem, but it can reduce the amount of guesswork. The method is just as good as the judgement of the people involved.⁽²⁾

Reluctantly it seems, the authors return to the "judgement of the people involved" as the final order. If this is the traditional way of identifying problems in architecture, the professional on the middle ground will have to look for a descriptive picture elsewhere.

The implementation of public policy is a much less regular pursuit, and is a better reference to understand the nature of practice on the middle ground. Public policy was among the groundrules that the advocacy planners used creatively in their practice. Robert Goodman's experiences have been referenced as an illustration of the middle ground where a community might "intervene" in city planning on its own behalf. Goodman's bitterness at not

(1) William Pena, *PROBLEM SEEKING - An Architectural Programming Primer*, Boston: CBI Publishing, 1977, p.80.

(2) *ibid.*, p.26.

being able to effect change is quite clear:

Contrary to popular mythology, planning did not bring socialism – in fact, it became a sophisticated weapon to maintain the existing control under a mask of rationality, efficiency and science.

Advocacy planning and other citizen-participation programs could help maintain this mask by allowing the poor to administer their own state of dependency. The poor could direct their own welfare programs, have their own lawyers, their own planners and architects, so long as the economic structure remained intact – so long as the basic distribution of wealth, and hence real power, remained constant.⁽¹⁾

Goodman concludes that the framework of society must be restructured, including "the basic distribution of wealth", a change that must have seemed unlikely at the time. In his view, the advocacy planners should leave the middle ground because change was not complete.

Polemic views of public policy and progress are not unusual. Goodman's words show a clear distaste for the kind of change he saw. It was too slow – if it was headed in the right (left?) direction at all, so he left the middle ground.

There is a different interpretation of successful practice that might have convinced some planners to stay on the middle ground longer. It also describes the nature of progress in public policy, but in a way that seems much more useful in developing an image of the professional's working habit of change. Martin Levin and Barbara Ferman have researched the relationship of policy and implementation in the youth employment programs of the late seventies in the United States. They observed that the most successful programs were those that used implementation experience to inform and update policy design. A natural evaluation loop resulted, if the administrators of a program were able to effect later changes in policy. As a result, implementation became less an attempt to derive exacting solutions, and much more of a self-conscious attempt to "make errors fast enough. . . (so that) the implementation process facilitates and telescopes the learning and feedback process; it speeds

(1) Robert Goodman, *After the Planners, op.cit.*, pp.171-172.

up the process."⁽¹⁾

With this interpretation, professional practice takes on a different meaning. Rather than focussing on change in large increments ("the basic distribution of wealth" in the extreme), it is seen as piecemeal. Progress is incremental; success is available on a step by step basis. Levin and Ferman go on to relate the nature of goals in this kind of a context:

Better policies or progress occur through a process of *problem succession*: problems are not so much solved as superseded. Our goal should not be to move from problems to solutions, because that usually is not possible. Our goal should be *problem substitution*: to move from less preferable problems to more preferable problems.⁽²⁾

From this perspective, an advocacy planner might have felt joyous. A "stopped highway" is a much more "preferable problem" than one that is not, and if there were other organizational payoffs within the community, so much the better.

With this outlook, a morass of problems begins to look less threatening. Change that is incremental is easier to handle and easier to understand. Defining and redefining problems seems a more approachable job than finding the right solution in uncertain circumstances. If comparatively smaller goals are pursued, fewer interests will be involved so that the exchange of information will be less complex. Once problems are identified, improvements should be easier to measure and success more likely to be felt as progress. The working habit of change is the professional's means of progress – a process of assembling continual improvements. If creative reward is available from this perspective, how is it found in day to day practice? How does the professional interact with others so as to effect progress?

The professional must reach outside of himself to gain an understanding of context.

(1) Martin A. Levin and Barbara Ferman, *THE POLITICAL HAND - Policy Implementation and Youth Employment Programs*, New York: Pergammon Press, 1985, p.15.

(2) *ibid.*, p.19.

And he must do so repeatedly, if he is to stay abreast of change. Donald Schon begins to give a description to this part of practice, when he describes the professional's position in an uncertain working environment:

In a practitioner's reflective conversation with a situation that he treats as unique and uncertain. . . Through his transaction with the situation, he shapes it and makes himself part of it. Hence, the sense he makes of the situation must include his own contribution to it. Yet he recognizes that the situation, having a life of its own distinct from his intentions, may foil his projects and reveal new meanings. . . He must act in accordance with the view he has adopted, but he must recognize that he can always break it open later, indeed, *must* break it open later in order to make new sense of his transaction with the situation.⁽¹⁾

Schon is describing a sense of give and take that develops between the practicing professional and his work. As a "reflective conversation with a situation" it takes on a human significance that makes sense on the middle ground, where the exchange of information between participants is so critical. It may be that the professional is not used to making his expertise conversational. While it can be put into words, it may be that it usually is not; or when it is, he uses professional terms that are hard to understand for the layman. If expertise is traditionally used with problems that are precisely identified, there may have been little need for discussion, just the "hand-off" of information.

If one of the intentions on the middle ground is to "make errors fast enough", then the professional will need to welcome change. Sharing information on the middle ground will be much more like "brainstorming" than preparing for the defense of a solution. He will have to reach outside of himself to communicate with others; but before this is possible he will need to know himself very well. Turning an individual pursuit into a cooperative one demands this. If ideas are to be shared with the intent of qualification they must be legible.

John Habraken has said that in housing:

(1) Donald Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner*, *op.cit.*, pp.163-164.

. . .the architect is not making all the decisions but instead contributing to the overall process. Of importance in this context, would be the ability of the architect to *explain*, rather than *defend*, a whole range of alternatives. The alternatives would make it possible to enter into a discussion with participants and to get closer to the correct solutions.⁽¹⁾

Architect, planner or banker, this seems no less true for any professional.

The professional must develop an approach if he wants to contribute to meaningful change on the middle ground. This may mean re-examining his traditional understanding of practice. His workplace will be ordered through the continuing exchange of information. Decisions will be made without rigid controls as constraints. The professional must develop a working habit of change that identifies problems before declaring solutions – a process that will place the professional's ideas and perceived responsibilities on the table.

Discussion on the middle ground will rely on the abilities of all participants to express themselves clearly. Explanations, rather than defenses, will have to be made in the most legible ways, so that the greatest participation can be realized. The professional's approach must be based upon making his intentions explicit, and then supporting their transformation in practice. Professional practice on the middle ground will require the individual to know himself and his ideas very well, and to share this knowledge within his working community. It may be that an intervention can find the most meaning as the result of leaving a process and not a product behind.

(1) N. John Habraken, as paraphrased by John Dale in *Framework Studies for Settlement in Sri Lanka*, MIT: Architecture Workshop of Nabeel Hamdi and Reinhart Goethert, Spring 1985, p.10.

AFTERWORDS:

Hermann Hesse wrote:

"I can not tell you what the other thing is, my friend. You will find out, perhaps you already know. I am not a learned man; I do not know how to talk or think. I only know now to listen and be devout; otherwise I have learned nothing. If I could talk and teach, I would perhaps be a teacher, but as it is I am only a ferryman and it is my task to take people across this river. I have taken thousands of people across and to all of them my river has been nothing but a hindrance on their journey. They have travelled for money and business, to weddings and on their pilgrimages; the river has been in their way and the ferryman was there to take them quickly across the obstacle. However, amongst the thousands there have been a few, four or five, to whom the river was not an obstacle. They have heard its voice and listened to it, and the river has become holy to them, as it has to me."

He once asked him, "Have you also learned that secret from the river; that there is no such thing as time?"

"Is this what you mean? That the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere, and that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past, nor the shadow of the future?"⁽¹⁾

What do you think?

(1) Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, New York: New Directions, 1951, pp.86-87.

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