

New Towns & Politics



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The ultimate political act in town planning is the building of a New Town. Governments, developers and planners conspire to create a brand new community on a tabula rasa, based on the latest models of social and economic behavior.

Or is the idea to build a New Town from scratch just proof of a fatal misunderstanding of what makes a city a city? Is it a sign of a gross ignorance on the part of politicians, planners and all those involved in this process of the complexity and the unpredictability of the urban? Whatever the situation might be, New Towns and Politics are closely related, even condemned to each other.

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Wouter Vanstiphout

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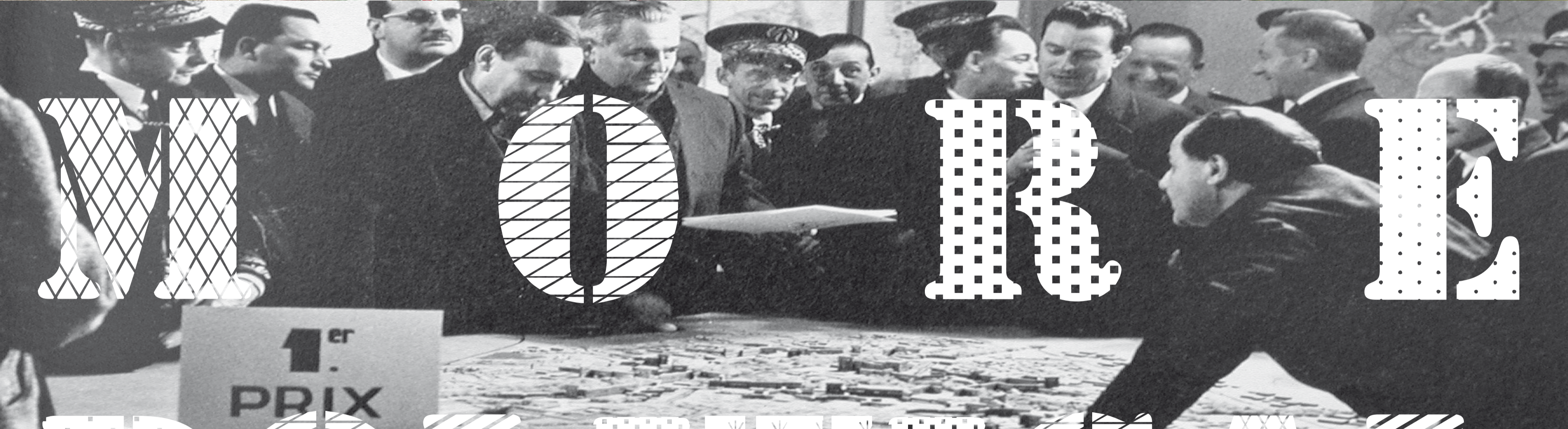
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NOUVEAU



MOBILITE



POUR LA PAIX

NOTHING MORE POLITICAL

Wouter Vanstiphout

Nothing could possibly be more political than New Town planning. Which other collective act has such implications for how people live together, how resources are distributed, how values are represented, and how priorities are chosen? And which other act demands more deployment of classical state monopolies like taxation, regulation, legislation, or even violence?

The planning of New Towns is often criticized as an example of the state's overreach in trying to shape society towards its own ideology, and of being sometimes terminally unsuccessful in creating vibrant urban areas that make sense economically, ecologically, or culturally. The criticism of New Towns is often aimed exactly at the monopolistic presence of government in determining all aspects of urban life. This results in cities that lack the resilience of those that have grown over the years, layer after layer, through the combined efforts of public and private, collective and individual parties.

In 2010 the International New Towns Institute together with the chair of Design and Politics at the Technical University Delft, organized a conference in Almere that touched on precisely this subject: New Towns and Politics. In a dozen or so contributions, New Towns and large-scale modernist projects were put under a political lens. The results were surprising yet strangely foreseeable. Indeed over the past centuries, governments and political ideologies have been translated – often quite literally – into spatial diagrams, urbanistic models, and architectural design. Governmental power has also been used to move hundreds of thousands of people to far-off regions, out of slum areas and into brand new cities. The speed and the scale with which new normalities were created is stunning and offers completely novel environments for the daily lives of thousands of people within one project.

The sacred and the profane

The contributions' vast range included: Mormon town planning on the American Frontier, planning in post-48 pre-67 Israel, the Iranian New Towns in the Shah years, suburban Milton Keynes in the eighties, France's *trente glorieuses* developments in the three first postwar decades, and Almere's present wave

of near-anarchist housing developments. Common in this diversity is the role of highly idealist, nearly spiritual, and sometimes platonic ideas that informed planning. Beneath – or actually floating above – all the technical details and economic rationale of New Town planning is a whole world of values, images, narratives, and symbols that speak of the (secret) mental life of nation states. Each story told at the conference by the scholars and architects from all over the world, revealed not so much the single-mindedness of New Town planning, but the strange combinations of rational and irrational, economic and symbolic, political and spiritual motives and *motifs*.

Dan Handel's research into the Mormon town planning in the nineteenth century – which could be seen as a nomadic proto-state planning – shows how the urban grid that was deployed in all the cities of the Church of the Latter Day Saints existed on two planes, the physical and the theological. The grid played its role as a pragmatic vehicle for the individual infill of the territory, according to collective rules. But it was also a representation of the original 'Plat of Zion', the divinely inspired drawing of an ideal town by Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon cult in 1833, and a prophetic diagram of how the entire world would be caught in a grid before the last days.

Zionists of an entirely different sort were behind the building of a system of dozens of New Towns in the young state of Israel in the first decades following World War Two. Notions from the Bauhaus and Walter Christaller informed these New Towns, planned by Arie Sharon, and they were accordingly based on extremely rational diagrams. But, as Zvi Efrat demonstrated, they were in fact part of a utopian project, that was just as much about the idea of an Israeli state, the image of an alternative to the city, and a narrative about communities held together by a shared culture of progressive Jewishness and protected against the demands of individual materialism or market forces. Efrat also shows the disappointment when a planning project based on wishful thinking breaks down in the face of the harsh realities of economy and individual choice, resulting in "barren garden cities, lethargic development towns, bypassed regional centers.... struggling to preserve their special Class A tax reduction status."

The profane and the sacred interact in similar ways throughout the other contributions to the conference. Kenny Cupers' analysis of the megastructural city centers built in the French *villes nouvelles* not only reveals how commercial project developers imported the American mall as a model for new urban centers, but also a much more irrational, romantic belief in the super-integration

of all possible urban programs under one roof as a tool to sculpt a new modern urban community in response to a “vaguely defined global social need”. And even in the Netherlands the attempts by alderman Adri Duivesteijn and planner Jacqueline Tellinga to radically deregulate housing and planning policies, is not so much a pragmatic retreat of the public sector, but in fact an ideological campaign to emancipate citizens and to liberate them from project developers and housing corporations. Tellinga’s presentation at the conference showed the paradox of the enormous investment in legislation, consultancies, and politicking needed to actually shrink the institutional presence. But behind this obsessive trimming lies an ideological, neo-social-democrat project that aims at delivering ‘the people’ from the evils of developers and planners, and to involve them in a new sense of community, where new bonds between citizens will be forged around the collective building up of the city.

The fascination for New Towns in the nineteenth and twentieth century derives from the very thing that makes them vulnerable and problematic: the mixing in of idealistic dreams of social – or even religious – engineering, with the highly technocratic business of building new cities. New Towns are where states dare to dream, where they imagine in metaphysical terms the destiny of the community that has been entrusted to them, while at the same time demanding of them the most precise financing, planning, policy-making, and design. Nowhere do facts and fictions of statehood come together in a more toxic mixture as in the planning of New Towns.

Regime change

But if New Towns reflect the dreams of states, such as in Israel, France, Holland, and England, what happens when a country has a nightmare, or suddenly wakes up? While we in Western Europe might be accustomed to decades of stable government, with gradual ideological changes to a system that stays essentially the same, some countries have highly volatile political histories, where it is not only the system that can violently collapse and be reconstructed, and where ideologies are replaced by their polar opposite. In these cases New Towns become particularly embarrassing legacies of the past regime, not only because they fail to fulfill the necessary role of providing work and habitation, but because they are also filled with ideological meaning and political symbolism. This places the new regime in a double bind: where some symbols of the past regime, such as monuments and street names, can be easily demolished or replaced, New Towns, on the other hand, perform an important infrastructural task. Where the political context of other technical infrastructure left behind is easily forgotten,

the symbolic value of the housing estates, the public buildings, parks, streets, and squares of the New Town persistently remind the people of their former benefactor.

In Victor Oldiges' research concerning Bauhaus architect Richard Paulick's work in pre-revolutionary China, a pattern arises in how regimes deal with the planned legacy of their predecessors. Paulick's modernist ideas were much welcomed in China around World War Two, as he introduced a whole array of planning principles like Clarence Perry's neighborhood principle, Ernst May's linear city, and Gropius' slab buildings. However when Mao took power, plans from the previous era became vilified. Some however were simply – and brutally – absorbed into the new regime's building policies, which meant being built using the soviet paradigm of industrial mass-production, resulting in heavily mutilated plans, in which the Bauhaus legacy was all but unrecognizable.

Thirty years later in Iran, when the Islamic Revolution toppled the regime of Shah Reza Pahlavi, the Shah regime's built legacy was much more evolved than the sporadic plans in the China of 1949. New Towns like Poulad Shar, Shustar, Shahin Shar, and Malek Shar were already half-finished inhabited New Towns, designed by local and western architects, and veritable showcases of a particular Iranian brand of modernism, mixing elements of Team X and megastructuralism with vernacular ornamentation and typologies. The towns were also carefully calibrated to promote a secular, modern capitalist lifestyle for the new industrial middle class. The reaction of the virulently anti-Western theocracy was to flood the New Towns – and the luxury condos in central Tehran – with pious working class Iranians to whom the Ayatollahs had promised new homes for each and everyone of them. Similar to the Chinese case, the revolutionary Iranian regime sabotaged the planning of the New Towns by opening the floodgates for massive social housing projects.

The way of dealing with the symbolic and infrastructural legacy of the former regime was therefore not one of destruction or abandonment, but of a planned unplanning and a forcible flooding and bloating of the original cores with workers' housing until their original function as harbingers of a new modernity disappeared from view.

Goodbye to state planning

The above shows that while state planned cities are built with all the powers and expertise of government, and should be expected to be exemplary in their

coherence, there are just as many factors in state planning that undercut this coherence, even sabotaging it from within. It seems that even states cannot muster the stability or the control needed to complete a New Town project according to its original design and sustain its performance for more than a decade or two. The combination of technocratic and functional planning, with 'soft', idealistic, and therefore unquantifiable motivations, has made New Towns and council estates vulnerable, unrealistic, and unable to withstand changing economies and cultures.

But sometimes states themselves turn out not to be stable enough to complete – let alone maintain – their own signature projects. The revolutions in China and Iran are just the most spectacular examples of the volatility of statehood. But even within stable states like Holland, England, or Germany, planning and housing policies and cultures might change radically within a decade and a half, even if the planning horizon of many New Towns and large-scale urban projects is thirty to forty years. The 'revolution' that saw Dutch planners change from modernist technocrats who planned for intense economic and demographic growth, to neighborhood planners and participatory architects, ideologically against any kind of industrialization, top-down planning, and further urbanization, took place nearly overnight in the seventies, with devastating effects on the half-finished satellite towns and inner-city urban renewal projects of their predecessors.

The conclusion could be that states themselves are partly rational, partly irrational, volatile entities that generate enough complexity on their own to prevent the coherent, predictable, wholeness that we expect from New Town planning. The West has already gone through several cycles of state volatility and partly failed planning projects. The whole idea of top-down state planning has come under attack also for its constant attempts to force large-scale projects onto the community. With social and cultural arguments of democratization, emancipation, consumer choice, and the efficiency and responsiveness of the private sector, the planning monopoly of states has been largely dissolved. Local communities, entrepreneurs, voluntary collectives, and individuals are deemed to be much better at creating the neighborhoods and urban developments that we thrive in, engendering qualities of diversity, the human-scale, piecemeal development, sustainability, street life, and reflexivity. The obsession with control and large-scale long-term centralized planning that has always hampered state planning, is now – in the West – a thing condemned to history. The emancipated burgher of European and American democracy simply does not have to put up with it anymore; the states are now very well aware of their own limitations

in realizing such schemes; and market parties, who cater to the wishes of individuals, are expected to come up with the alternatives that the consumers actually want, and are willing to pay for.

The biggest surprise of the conference New Towns and Politics, and the seed which birthed the idea for the most recent conference in 2012, New Towns New Territories, was that this simple and logical conclusion does not hold at all.

Total control

In one of the most provocative contributions to the 2010 conference Harvard urbanist James Kostaras talked about a new wave of New Towns highly technocratic in nature, promising enormous levels of security and tightly conditioned lifestyles, innovative technology, and the product of the private sector, with a huge role for tech and digital media companies. PlanIT Valley in Portugal, the new 'smart cities' in the Emirates, and Paul Romer's charter cities for Honduras and Guantanamo Bay, all offered near utopian levels of futurism, high-technology, and indeed creepiness. Romer's charter cities actually entail creating enclaves of well-regulated free enterprise zones that distinguish themselves from the surrounding country by offering unattainable levels of management quality and the absence of democracy. The citizens 'sign up' for the charter city, which then becomes an oasis of entrepreneurialism and innovation, thereby lifting up the region around it, and perhaps the entire nation. PlanIT Valley and the new smart cities offer similar enclaves, cut off from the rule of law, and the political volatility and complexity of the nation states from which they are carved. Kostaras warned his audience of the implication of this type of town planning: that it suspends democracy, that it is untouchable from oversight by governments, and that it is aimed at global elite expat workers, the financial sector, and high tech engineers.

In many ways Kostaras' presentation prefigured the New Towns New Territories conference that was held in the NAI two years later, which was completely dedicated to New Towns being planned and built by private companies. The big surprise of this new wave of New Towns, which is quantitatively at least as important as the heyday of New Town planning from the fifties to the seventies, is that it uses exactly the same type of planning principles as the earlier state planned towns. The market has simply taken up the technology that was once exclusively associated with centralized state planning, and now uses it for its own aims. Even more surprising however is that privately planned New Towns are not at all more diverse, more responsive, more piecemeal, or more conducive

to street life or the human scale. On the contrary: the towns presented already in 2010 by Todd Reisz in Saudi Arabia designed by international consultancies, manage a level of security, determination of architectural detail, and a control of demographics, that was unattainable for states, even in the authoritarian fifties. The projects presented at the 2012 conference took it one step further, with the scariest example being the new Smart City concept for New Songdo where tech giant Cisco is a major investor and exclusive supplier of internet services. But rather than just supply the internet, Cisco, with their keen interest in smart cities, aims to create entire cities built for millions of families whose every detail of daily life will be wirelessly connected to a gargantuan computer system, allowing them to shop, babysit, socially interact, work, and relax through the routers and wiring of Cisco.

In the 2012 presentation of PlanIT Valley, of their now swiftly developing city near Porto, the usage of hexagonal grids, on the regional and architectural scale, revealed a formalist determinism not seen since the state-sponsored megastructures of the sixties.

The shock, first announced in 2010 and brought home in 2012, is that the market is not just capable, but also willing to exert levels of top-down, technocratic determinism, that go from the very largest to the smallest scale, compared to which the state planning of the sixties is almost humble and laid back. While states are still bound to the geographical boundaries of the nation, private companies can roam the globe, injecting and extracting their investments at will. Where the nation state is vulnerable to a volatility coming from changing social and cultural moods and demands, private companies are able to sustain levels of control and can insulate themselves from outside influences. Whereas state planning is forced to take aboard political motivations that might not make sense financially, like housing the poor, the private sector can focus purely on what is rentable. And finally, whereas state planning is always infused with a sense of symbolism, even idealism, that often renders it vulnerable, private companies have learned to harness symbolism and idealist narratives as marketing tools that do not weaken but strengthen the concept.

We are now confronted with an unexpected and dangerous situation where nation states in the West have voluntarily given up the power to plan centrally and from above, out of a belief that the market would deliver more diverse and equitable cities. The market turns out to be even more bent on centralization, total control, the promise of new lifestyles, and the relentless rolling out of

top-down projects over an unsuspecting landscape. It lacks however the vulnerability, volatility, and internal contradictions of the public sector, of which democratic legitimacy, checks and balances, and oversight are just a few examples. The only thing that we can hope for now, is that we as citizens – even in our humiliating state as consumers – are able to sabotage, mess up, abandon, invade, pervert, and subordinate the New Towns of the market as effectively as we have done decade after decade with the publicly planned New Towns of yore.

“ The fascination for New Towns in the nineteenth and twentieth century derives from the very thing that makes them vulnerable and problematic: the mixing in of idealistic dreams of social – or even religious – engineering, with the highly technocratic business of building new cities. New Towns are where states dare to dream, where they imagine in metaphysical terms the destiny of the community that has been entrusted to them, while at the same time demanding of them the most precise financing, planning, policy-making, and design. Nowhere do facts and fictions of statehood come together in a more toxic mixture as in the planning of New Towns. ”

THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

A painting depicting a scene in a forest. In the center, a man with a long white beard and hair, wearing a white robe and a brown sash, stands with his hands clasped. He is looking down at a man in a dark suit who is kneeling on one knee, facing him. The background shows several large, gnarled tree trunks and a forest floor covered in fallen leaves. The overall tone is somber and dramatic.

GRID AND
REVELATION:
CITIES OF
ZION IN THE
AMERICAN WEST

GRID AND REVELATION: CITIES OF ZION IN THE AMERICAN WEST

Dan Handel

Introduction

In the process of colonizing the American West, it is the ethos of a liberating, somewhat haphazard, pretty much wild and extremely individualistic environment that has shaped the cultural imagination. This environment was reflected throughout the latter part of the 19th century in laissez-faire economics on the one hand and manifest destiny public discourse on the other, in what signaled a new phase in the American conception of both space and society. However, this common sentiment was not shared by all Americans; in the thrust of moving west, settlement took many forms, manifesting different ideological stances and ways of life. It is in the friction of these experiments with the overarching structures of habitation that one might find not only a challenge to received historical narratives but also a reflection on the political potential of formal design operations, their nested ideological motivations and techniques for altering their context.

The hundreds of settlements founded by the Church of the Latter Day Saints, mostly in the arid regions of the West, were one such striking experiment, distinct not only in their strict social organization but in their formal compliance to a single schema – Joseph Smith’s Plat of Zion. The plat, which was described as ‘the most important single document in the history of settlement of the West’, not only prescribed the general form of each settlement, but also meticulously specified every element of the physical environment in what became an impetus of a discernable ‘Mormon landscape’. As such, it went a long way in delineating a massive project of New Town building, which, I suggest, accreted into a curious pseudo-national project in the territory of Utah. By looking at a series of these settlements, I propose not only a survey of a unique social organization and its material expressions but the tracing of a history of political antagonism towards a federal government, expressed and operated through urban form.

New Towns

If we can consider the phenomena of New Towns outside of a narrow historical timeframe, beyond their specific role as counteracts to the expanding megalopolis, and define them as planned communities, products of an act of will, with a finite growth capacity, they can then be understood as formalizations of



Figure 1

ideological moments. Under such scrutiny, the Mormon settlement enterprise, initiated around the middle of the Nineteenth Century, with its intricate political context of the unincorporated territories in the American West, becomes a project of New Towns in unprecedented scope, intensity and resonance. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in New York State in 1830, based on the visions claimed by its founder, Joseph Smith (fig. 1). The Mormons, as members of the church were soon to be known, developed social and political concepts that differed from contemporary protestant sects not only in their call for restoration but also in their emphasis on the New World as the chosen geography of redemption. Smith, according to legend, saw a revelation in which an angel provided him with secret golden plates, telling the tale of the forgotten inhabitants of the land. He worked for several months on translating the writing on the plates into English and published this work as The book of Mormon, which described Christ’s presence in the New World and his correspondence with the ancient people of the Americas. Notably, as the book was canonized and perceived by the church and its followers to be an additional volume of scripture, America was transformed for the first time in western culture into a territory of spiritual apparitions; the new ground for Christ and his followers. This conception enabled Smith to overlay biblical narratives on

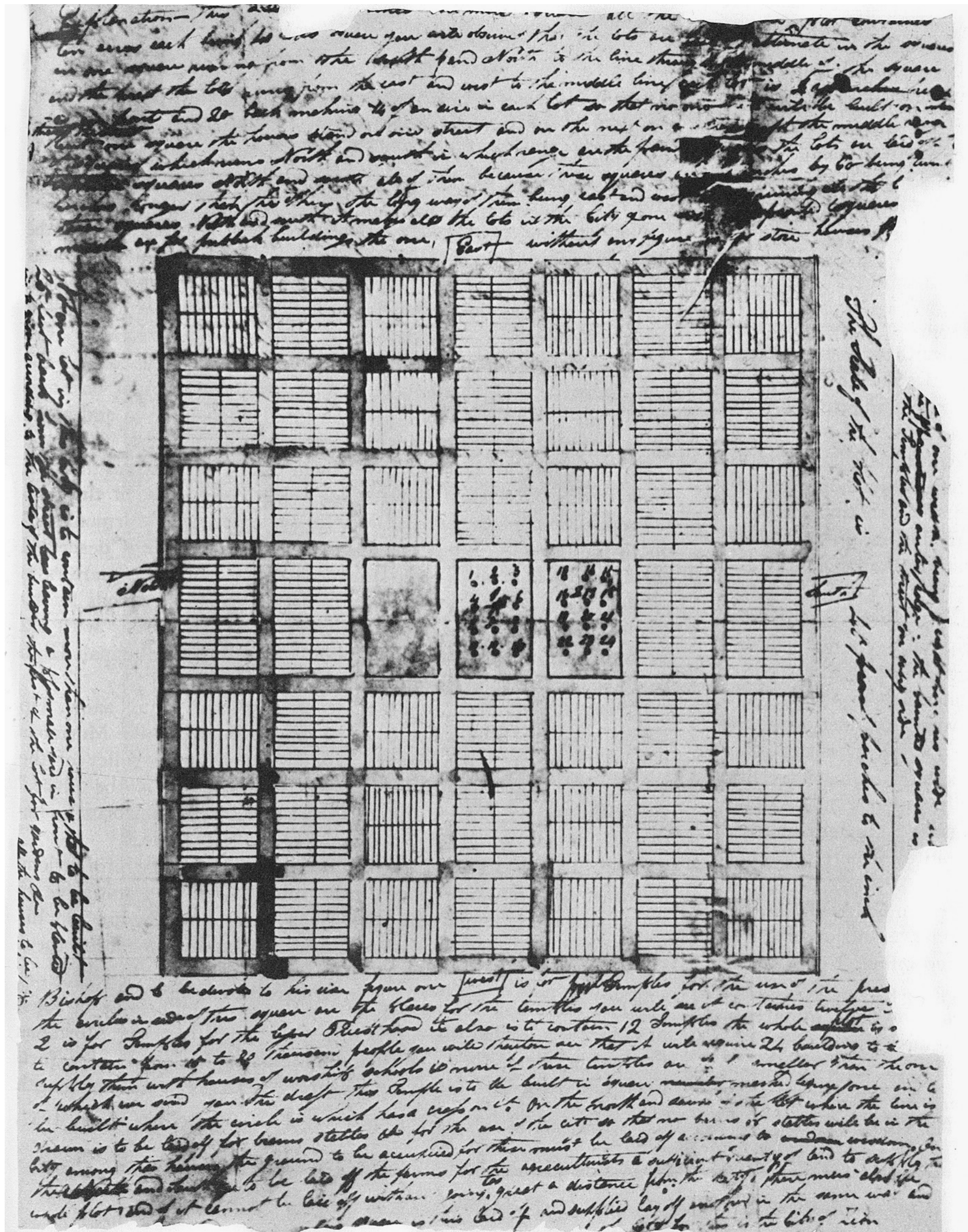


Figure 2

concrete geographic locations and claim, for one instance, that the Garden of Eden is to be found in Jackson County, Missouri. Even more importantly, Smith developed a deep-rooted conviction as of the necessity for his followers – the Latter Day Saints – to build their own towns in preparation for the final judgment. This imperative led him, as early as 1833 to draft what can be understood as an ultimate plan for a model New Town: the Plat of Zion (fig. 2). This plan was from the outset both a doctrinal concept and a geographic location as it represented simultaneously an idealized social organization and a concrete site.¹ Smith, convinced at that point in time that Missouri would be the appropriate place for such an endeavor, sent off his disciples to locate a site for the new city, arming them with his scheme and accompanying text.

Formally, the plat was confined in an area of one mile square and laid out as a combination of square and rectangle lots. Smith divided the town into smaller areas, termed ‘wards’, determined street dimensions, all in the same width, and allocated the plots for ecclesiastical buildings in the middle of the town. Notably, he sought to eliminate the street as a continuous entity in his settlements, introducing an innovative alternating block orientation.² This organization allowed for privacy and minimum frontage and enabled the idea of an inward looking community pattern, which Smith even further defined through the specification of zoning (separating agriculture from dwelling), landscaping (planting groves in front of individual houses) and building materials (brick and stone). The most radical aspect of the City of Zion was perhaps the attempt to legitimize it through historical precedents – referencing the cities of the past in its form and terminology – while at the same time projecting its future growth and reproduction. The former was achieved by reusing elements of biblical models such as the towns of the Levites and naming individual areas in the new settlements such as ‘the order of Melkhizedek’ or ‘Mount Zion’. The latter was established with Smith’s vision of a future: ‘When this square is thus laid off and supplied, lay off another in the same way, and so fill up the world in the last days.’³ In this collapsing of history and projection, in the ambition of a controlled environment and well-defined social relations, Smith could not have been closer to the reasoning and practice of modern New Town planning that would follow in the 20th century. His scheme became the source of more than five hundred settlements and presented a new model for urbanism that differed from both the eastern context of the New England town and the western one of the American farm settlement.

Politically, the attempt to peacefully integrate a new religious way of life within surrounding communities proved unfeasible for the Mormons. In what was to become a recurring pattern, they were repeatedly accused of rebellion and

1 Hamilton, “Nineteenth-century Mormon architecture and city planning”, p. 13.

2 In the text, which accompanied the plat for the city of Zion, Smith wrote: “... you will observe that the lots are laid off alternately in the square; in one square running from the south and north to the line through the center of the square; and in the next, the lots run from the east and west to the center line... so that no one street will be built entirely through the street...”

3 Ibid

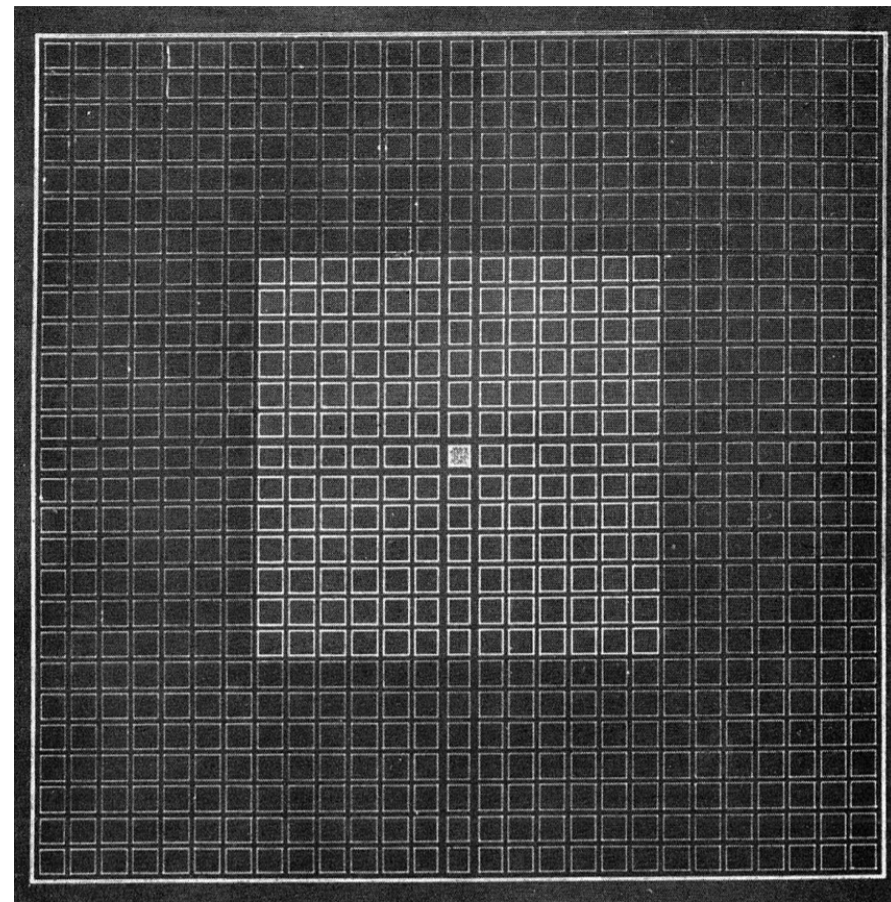


Figure 3

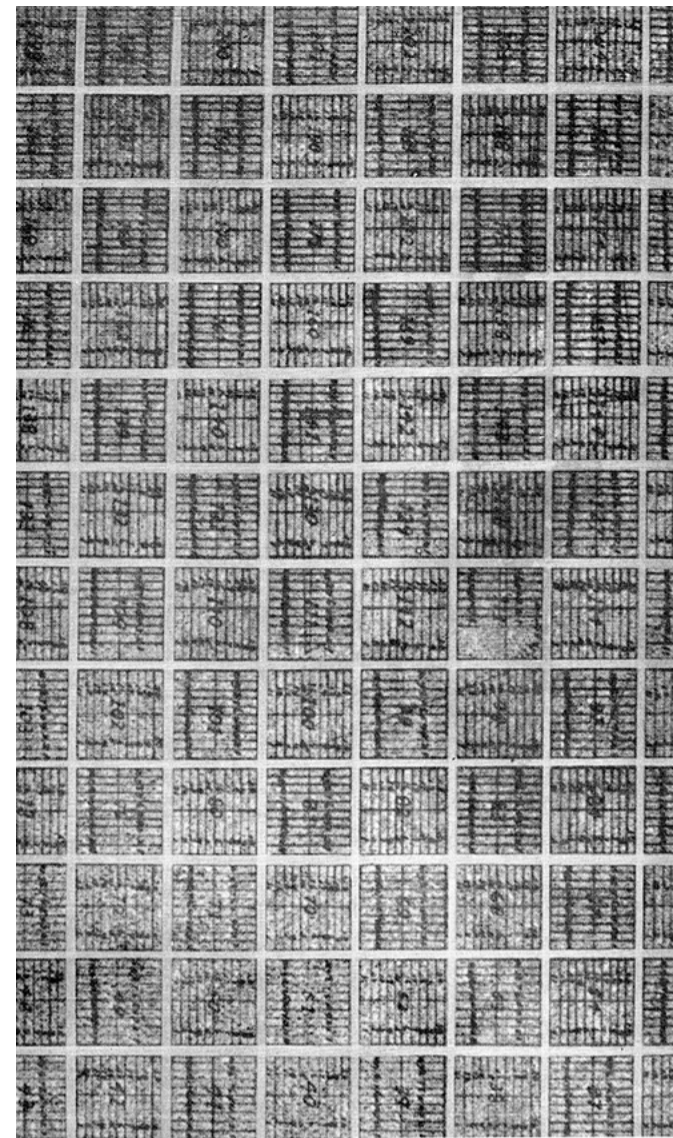


Figure 4

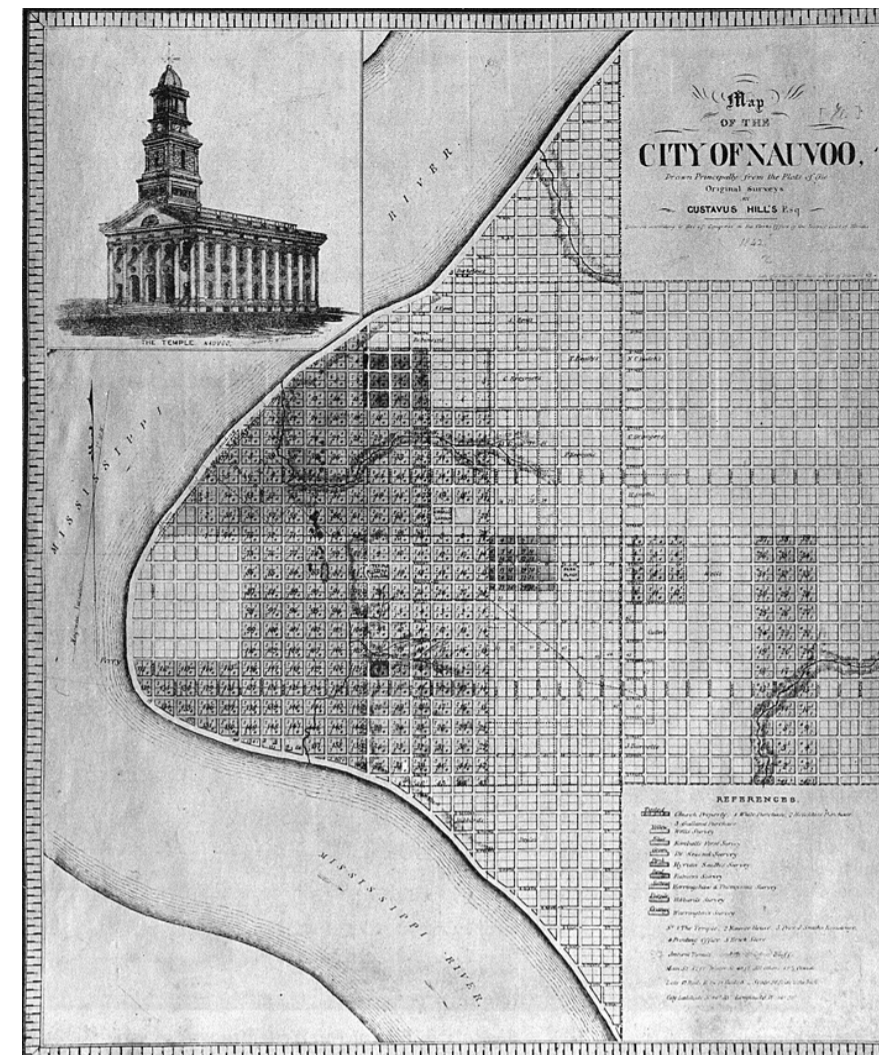


Figure 5



Figure 6

forced to migrate from hosting communities. At the closing of the 1830s, the Mormons were persecuted and expelled, at times with the active threat of militia forces, from the Ohio and Missouri settlements of Kirtland and Far West (fig. 3,4) towards Illinois. There, in the New Town of Nauvoo, (fig. 5) where Smith set his house and constructed a new temple, hopes for a fresh start proliferated. Ebenezer Robinson, writing in 1842, echoed at this moment the essence of the Cities of Zion by intertwining concrete features with spiritual qualities: 'let each citizen fill his spare ground with fruit trees... let the division fences be lined with peach and mulberry trees... the houses surrounded with roses and prairie flowers and porches crowned with the grape and we shall soon have formed some idea of how Eden looked.' However, this optimism proved to be short-lived; in 1844 Joseph Smith was imprisoned and killed by a mob and two years later Nauvoo and its temple burned (fig. 6) With that, a new phase was ushered in for Mormon settlement: as they moved west under the leadership of Brigham Young, the Plat of Zion became the blueprint for exodus urbanism – countless immigrant cities tracing the advance west of persecuted saints on their two-year journey towards a new promised land, (fig. 7) to be found eventually in the secluded Salt Lake Valley.⁴ Upon arrival, Young immediately set out to build a new city, one that would be 'clean, and in order' (fig. 8). Naturally, the general scheme

4 These settlements included Winter Quarters, located on both sides of the Missouri River in present day Nebraska. Winter Quarters, even as it was hastily planned, followed the revised Plat of Zion and gathered 8,000 members of the church to an area that became the staging ground for the great voyage west.

5 The platting of Salt Lake City used the familiar alternating block orientation in the first plot which was followed by two similar plots, B and C, in order to accommodate the growing influx of immigrants.

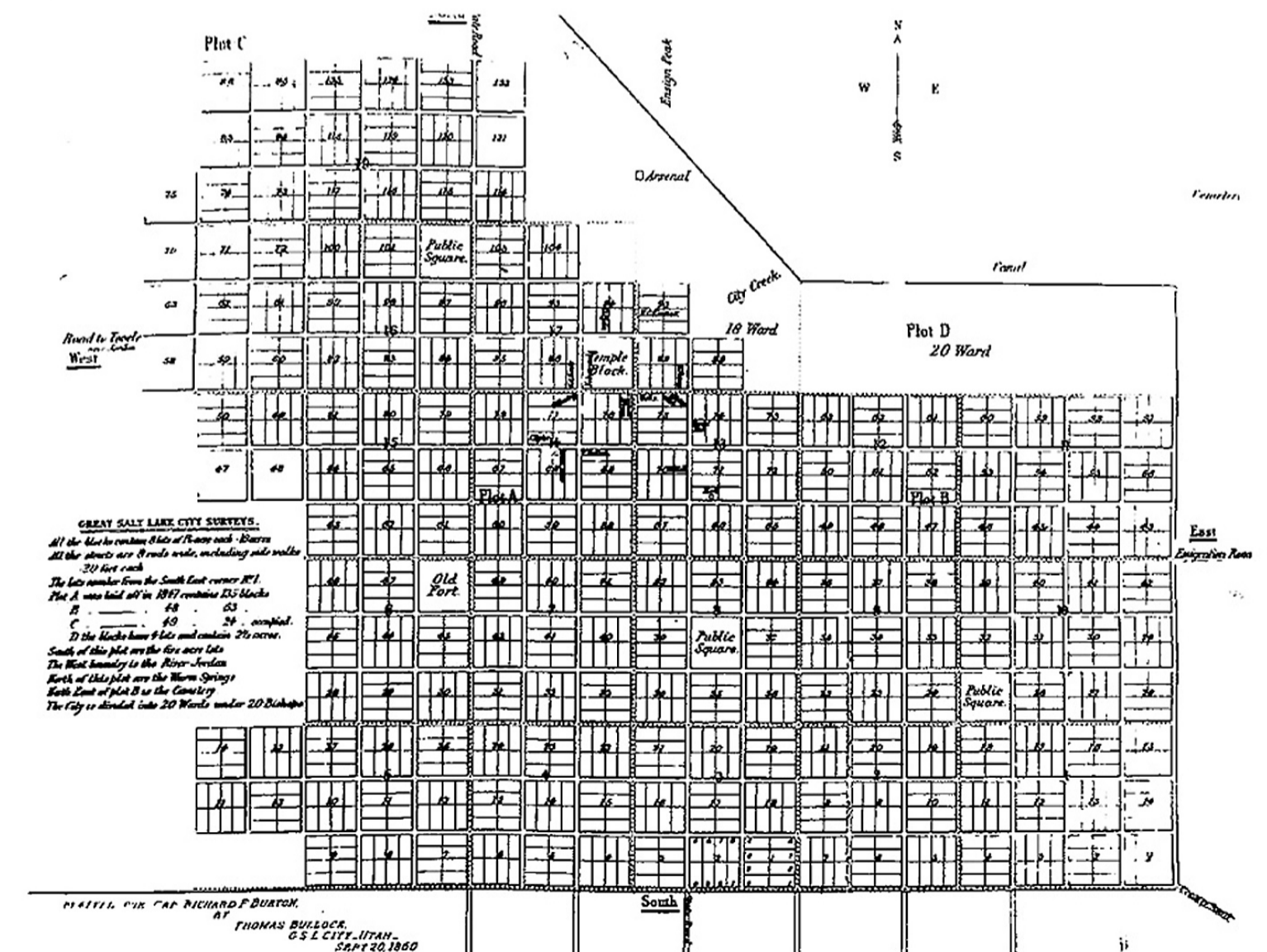


Figure 8

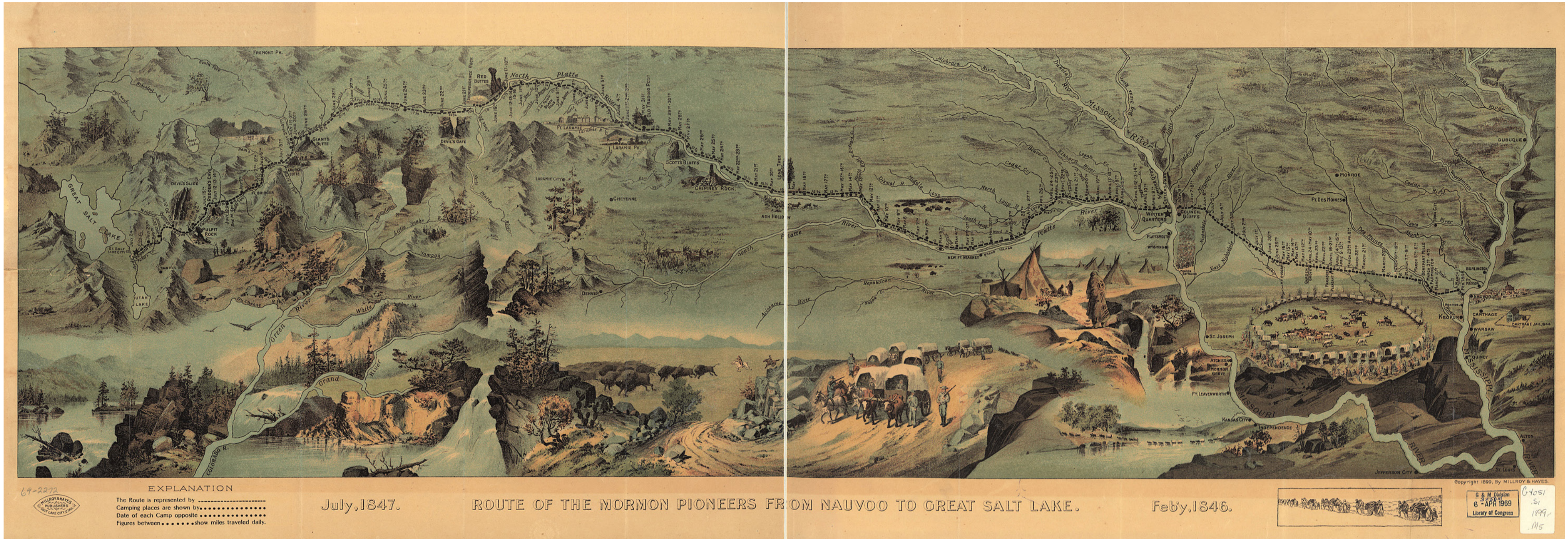


Figure 7



Figure 9



Figure 10

followed the gridded Plat of Zion,⁵ as did the numerous settlements initiated in what later became the Utah Territory (fig. 9,10). With these dramatic events, the model of Zion became an encapsulation of a political position; for that end, its concrete form was most essential. Understanding its workings vis-à-vis the larger context of land distribution mechanisms in America, first and foremost the foundational Land Ordinance, is therefore of major significance.

Continental Grid

The Land Ordinance was enacted by the Continental Congress in 1785 as means of regulating land distribution and acquisition, as well as defining a uniform system by which all of the land west of Ohio could be subdivided and sold (fig. 11). This act was based on an earlier report by a committee appointed the year before and chaired by Thomas Jefferson,⁶ which recommended a division of the 'said territory into townships seven miles square, by lines running due north and south, and others crossing these at right angles... The plats of the townships, respectively, shall be marked into sections of one mile square, or 640 acres'. While the final act changed some of the committee's recommendations, the systematic nature of the Continental Grid was nevertheless established, alongside with a geometric structure of the newly termed habitation patterns that were to proliferate in said territories.⁷ This structure not only allowed for revenue to be collected but also represented an early federal conception of the land (fig. 12). However, I would argue that the grid was never merely a device of formal

6 The committee, appointed by the Continental Congress reported on 1784 "An ordinance for ascertaining the mode of locating and disposing of lands in the western territories, and for other purposes therein mentioned."
7 For an in-depth account on the influences and circumstances that informed the preference of the one-mile grid, see Linklater, "Measuring America: how an untamed wilderness shaped the United States and fulfilled the promise of democracy"

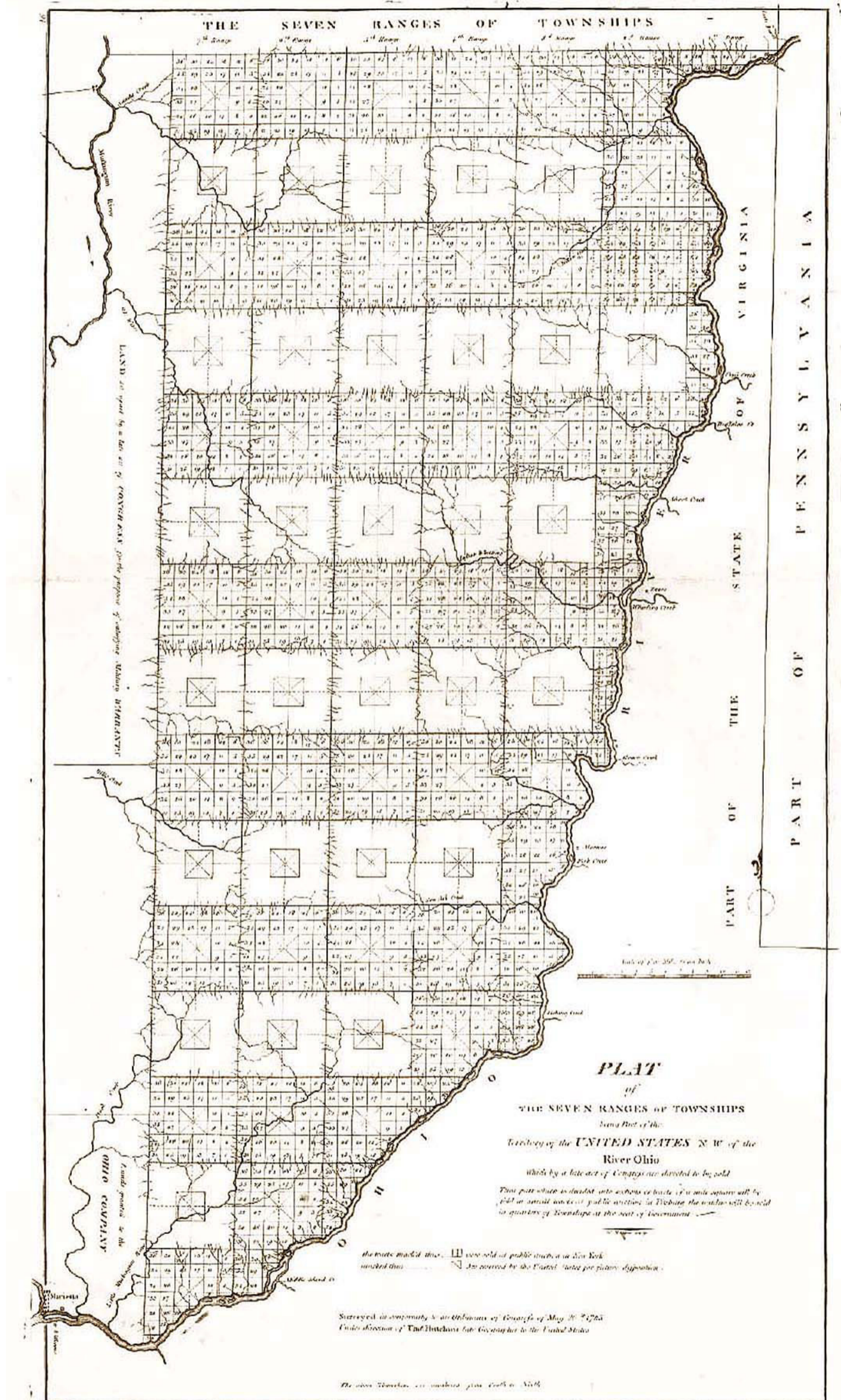


Figure 11

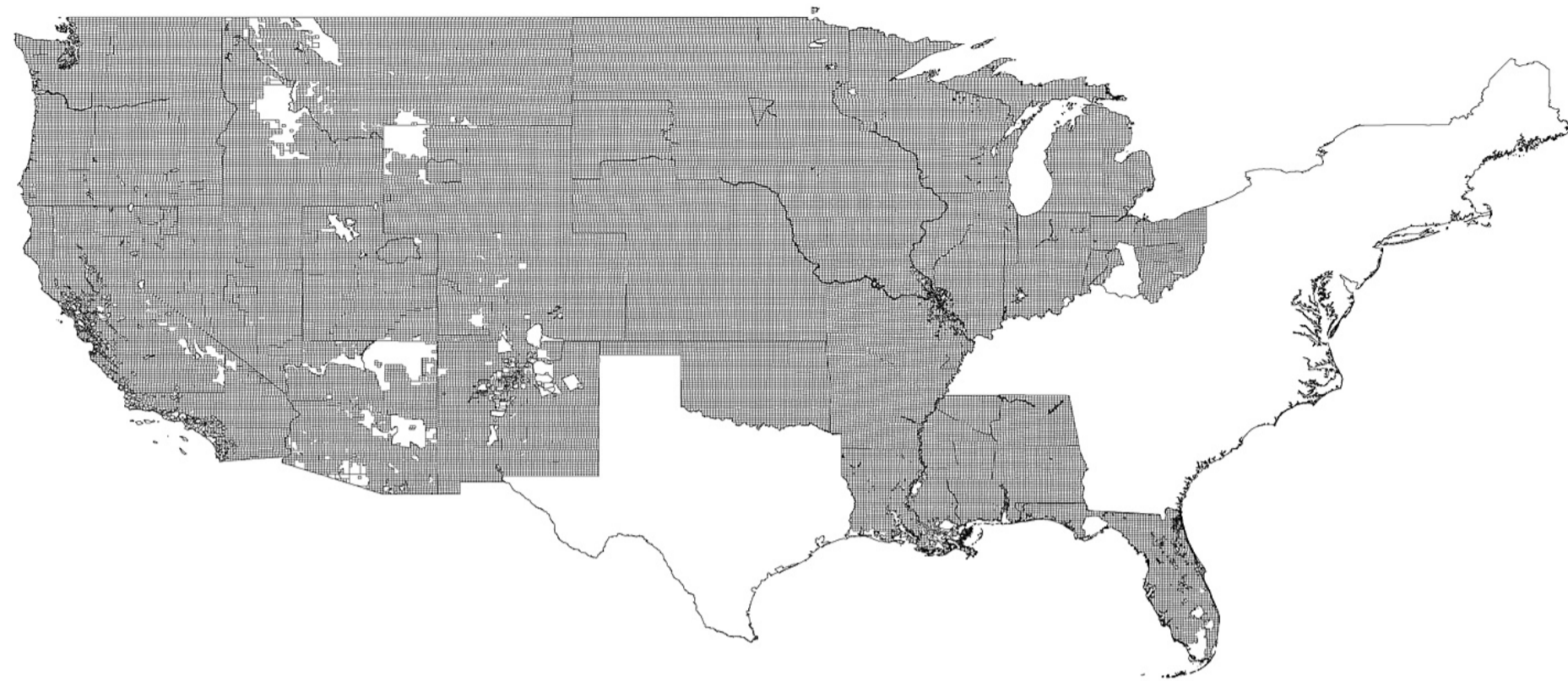


Figure 12

organization per se but also an embodiment of an idealized political sphere; with each conducted survey, the land was not only measured, but potentially distributed to free individuals. As a result, politics in the United States were to be formulated along the lines of a boundless gridded plane, through the encounters of individual interests, rather than around civic empowering and centralized spaces. This process of formation lends itself less to Aristotelian ideas of the city as the locus of the political condition and more to Lewis Mumford's conceptualization of a social sphere in which separated subjects come together to partake in a shared display of the civic. With that, a preliminary form of nomos,⁸ specific to the circumstances of the New World was inscribed in the formal and procedural language of the ordinance. What follows is the understanding that the grid is an enabling framework for experimentation with an American condition. But if the grid poses one ideological assumption, synonymous with that of the federal position, then the City of Zion stands for another. It is in the intricate correspondence of the two that these assumptions are articulated and refined. In other words, choosing to conform or resist the organization of the grid becomes in itself a political stance. In this way, the Mormon towns of Utah were in fact playing an insidious game, which eventually led to an open conflict with the United States.

⁸ Nomos is used here in the sense Hannah Arendt described it; that is, as an enabling social framework for the political condition. The etymological connotation of the term with land holding and distribution is also of importance in this context.

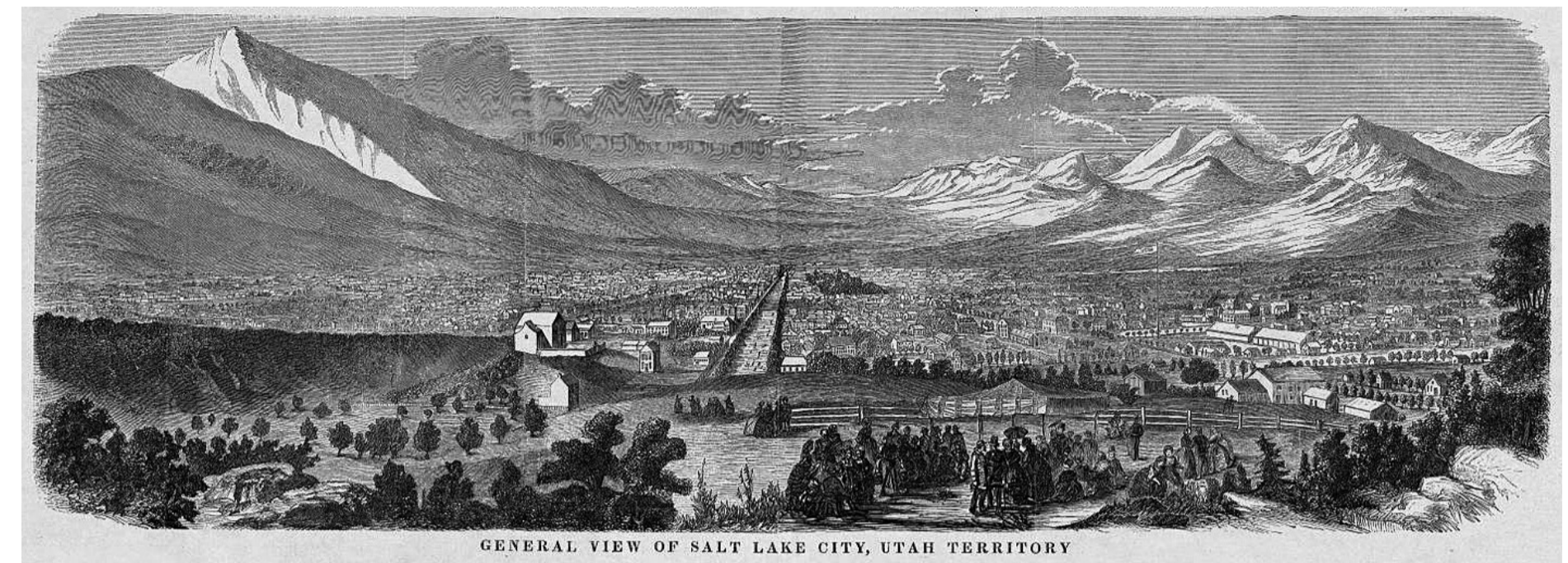


Figure 13

Subversive Forms

On the surface, choosing to conform to the structures of the Continental, One-mile Grid represents an endorsement of its political and social presuppositions. However, the cities of Zion followed the patterns of other American settlements only in adopting the square mile area unit and the orthogonal layout of Jeffersonian logics, while undermining its implied principles with their internal organization. In this subversion of the grid, the Mormon settlements also denounced its values: from a continuous and infinite plane of a democratic liberalism, it was turned into an infrastructure for walled islands of theocratic authority. In the years that followed the founding of Salt Lake City, each and every new settlement echoed this position. In fact, one can say that at this moment Brigham Young was thinking regionally, and town building became something similar to a national project. As if to fuel the suspicion that began to grow in the East, Young put forth in 1850 a proposal for the establishment of the State of Deseret,⁹ encompassing vast areas of land in present-day New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and Utah. This ambitious declaration proved very alarming to the federal government and several years later, with ungrounded rumors on a Utah rebellion, the popular discourse on the Mormon issue quickly escalated into accusations of Mormons being hostile to American values. Senator Stephen A. Douglas

⁹ See Constitution of the State of Deseret, With the Journal of the Convention Which Formed It, and the Proceedings of the Legislature Consequent Thereon, 1849.

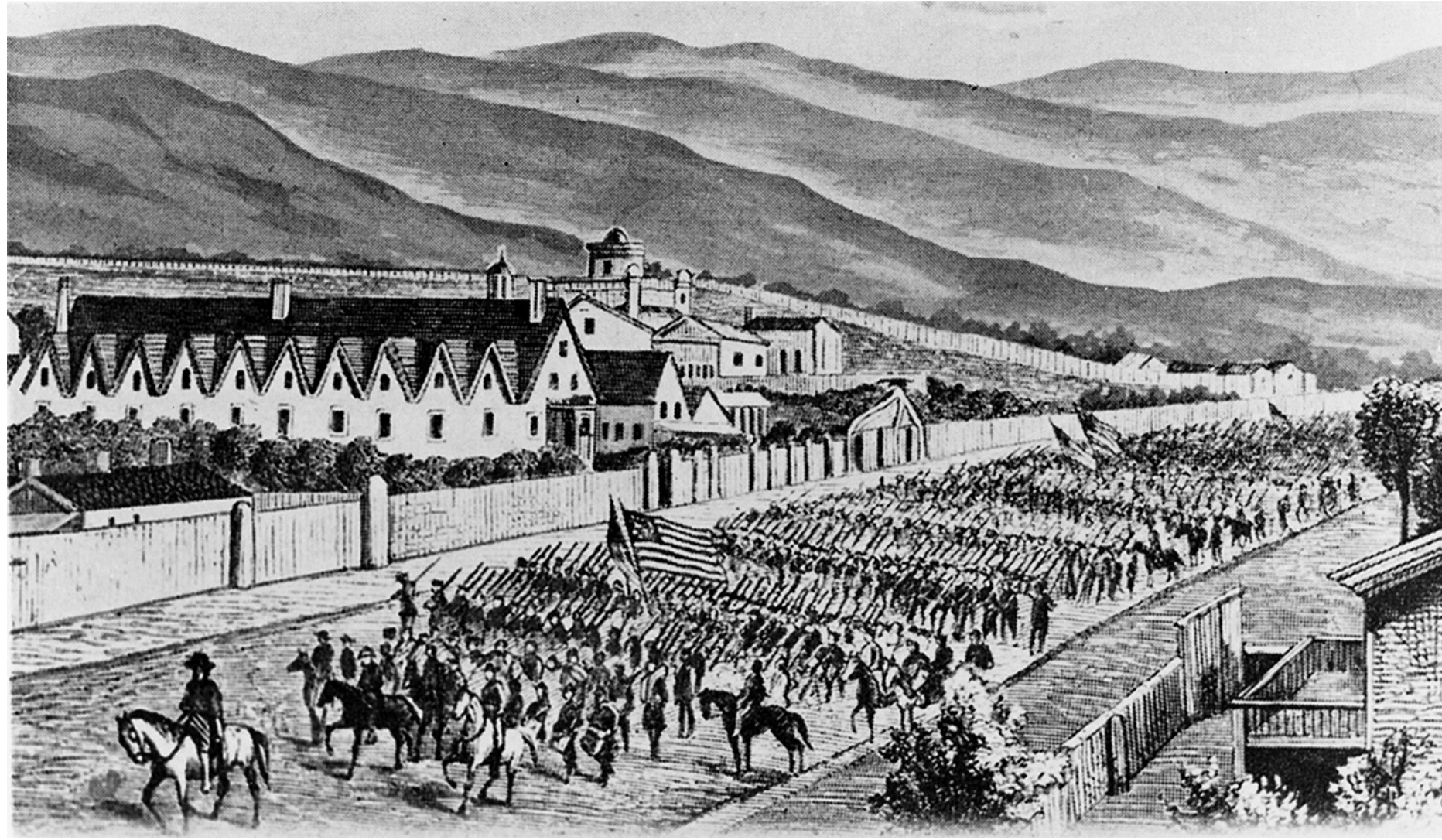


Figure 14

represented this volatile political climate when declaring in a public address: 'The Mormons were erected into a Territory of the United States on the erroneous impression that they were citizens owing allegiance to this Government... it turns out they are alien enemies... the natural course to take... is to repeal the Territorial Act, resume possession of the Territory in the name of the United States, and hold the Mormons liable to the laws of the United States.'¹⁰ This sentiment was enforced by depictions of Salt Lake City as the only gateway to the West, positioning the Mormons in conflict with the national interest of the United States – its manifest destiny (fig. 13). Young, from his side, came to be reminded of previous persecutions, which led to a decree that forbade all armed forces to enter the territory and declared a state of emergency. The territory of Utah formally declared a hostile position towards the authority of the United States. As a response, President Buchanan, in a controversial move, ordered troops to cross the continent and repress the Mormon rebellion. This journey, known as the "Utah expedition" soon turned into a political fiasco back home. Notwithstanding, as the federal army reached Salt Lake City, an agreement was signed with the Mormon leaders and the city was taken with no violence, assigning an agreed territorial governor as Young's replacement (fig. 14). However, even that event did not resolve the irreducible conflict between the

¹⁰ Published in Harper's Weekly, 4 July 1857.

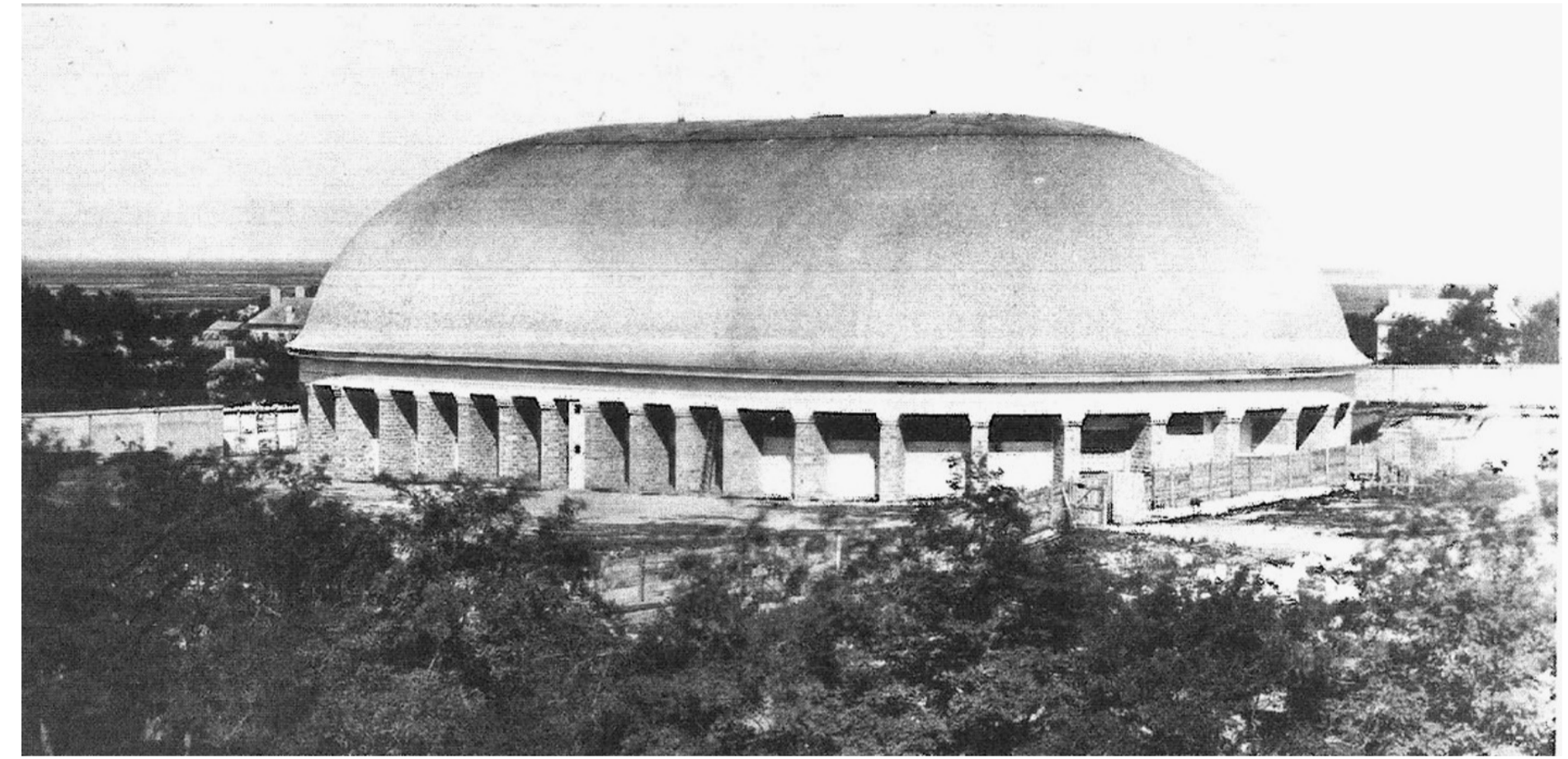


Figure 15

two world-views – between universal, rights-based governance and a sectarian theodocracy. As late as 1895, when Utah was incorporated into a state, it was known that Young and his successors led a shadow government, involved to a certain extent in all of the crucial decision-making processes in the territory. The 'Mormon problem' thus remained an important issue at that point.¹¹ If a line can be drawn between political processes and urban form, then the case of the Mormon settlements, far more than a historical anecdote, demonstrates its double directionality. In other words, Joseph Smith's schema can be seen not only as a consequence, but rather as an active agent in the design of an alternative political sphere. The outcomes, or potential, of this subversive practice can be seen at both the architectural and urban levels. On the first, the Cities of Zion, with their inherent seclusion from immediate context and inward looking community structures, allowed for an original architectural language to be formulated, tested, and remain in some ways relevant up to this day. (fig. 15) As for the second, it proved visionary in many respects, for one can say that turning the Continental Grid into a disconnecting, compartmentalizing, anti-urban apparatus (fig. 16) had come to characterize the post-war American city,¹² long after the Mormon settlements were well in place.

¹¹ See for instance "The Mormon Problem – The Nation's Dilemma": New Methods

¹² Albert Pope developed such reading of the utilization of the grid in "ladders", tracing the ways in which gridded organizations were used to produce closed centripetal figures.

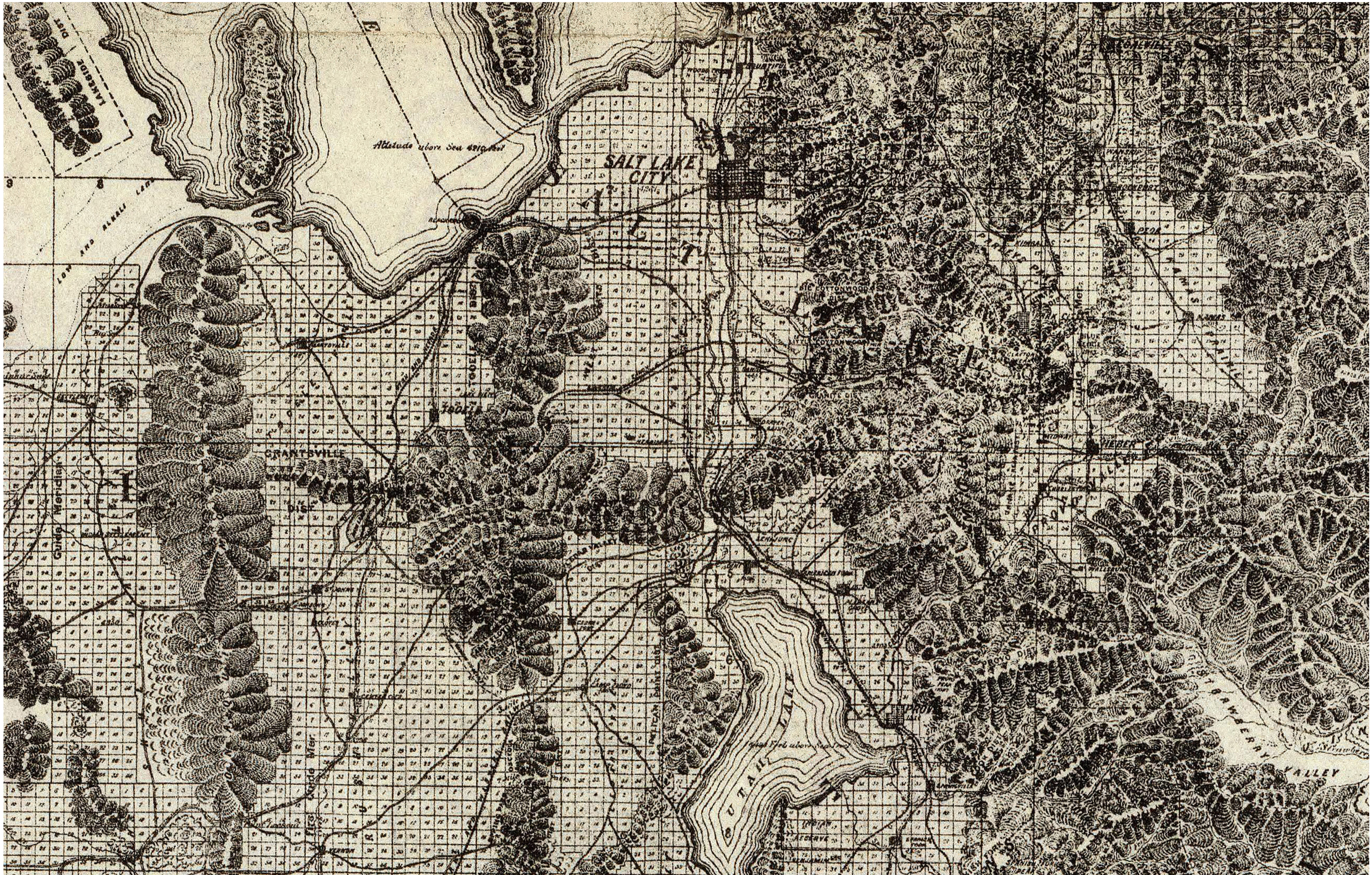


Figure 16

THESE POLI-

TICS OF

NEW TOWNS

IN ISRAEL

THE POLITICS OF NEW TOWNS IN ISRAEL

Zvi Efrat

Israel has been, since its inception as a state over 60 years ago, one of the most prolific proliferators of New Towns. In principle, civilian occupation and the setting up of new settlements has always been construed as Israel's most effective weapon in ongoing territorial and ethnic warfare. Against all economic and social sense and often by various means of population engineering, dozens of New Towns were built and are still being built today, albeit in a slower rate. Like other practices of mass armament, Israel's New Towns policy is a mystified strategy taken for granted as both a redemptive act and a survivalist impulse. It is therefore safe to assume that in the foreseeable future it is highly unlikely to expect Israel to sign any New Town non-proliferation agreement. This would counter its instinctive predisposition of continuous manipulation of its own boundaries as well as constant fragmentation of the future Palestinian state. Allow me then to declare in advance the conclusion of this essay: the notion of New Towns in Israel – within or beyond the "green line" - designates three fundamental and inter-related Zionist pro-active ideologies, or rather ideological practices: The first is the praxis of geographic dispersal and marginalization, to the degree that the state as a whole, or at least most of it, is perceived as frontier, a perceptually precarious zone that necessitates vigilant measures all the way through both public and private realms.¹

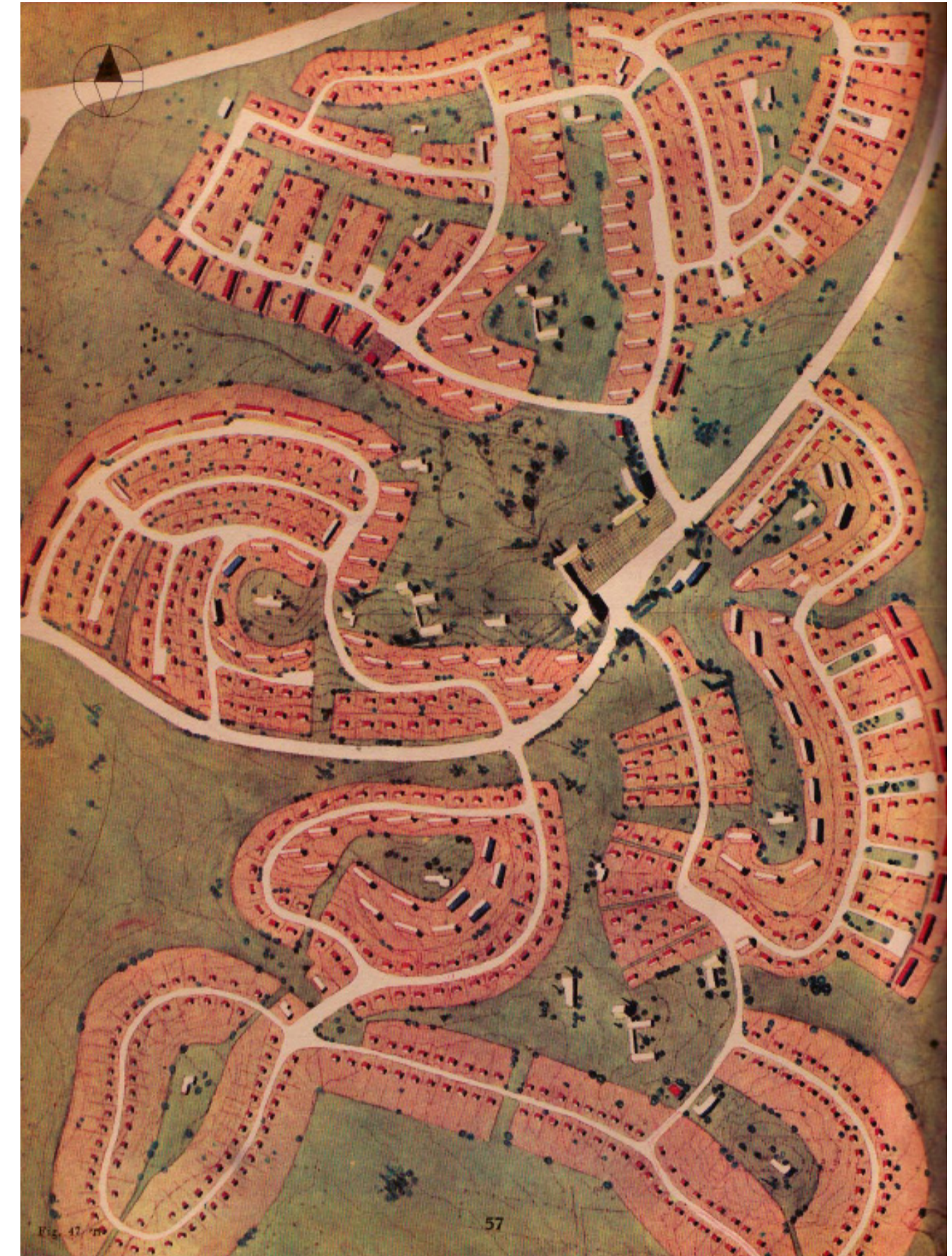
The second is the praxis of gradual ethnification or 'jewishification' of space in ways subtle or blunt. The New Towns of the 1950's, for example, were not only low-cost housing depositories, but also a systematic obliteration of indigenous Palestinian towns. A recent example would be the newest New Town constructed in Israel, the town of Harish at the heart of the Arab area of Wadi Ara. Harish is explicitly designed for Ultra-Orthodox Jews with the double mission of providing an urban solution for the particular needs of this fast-growing community, and creating an instant "demographic equilibrium" in the area.

The third Zionist praxis informing the rate of production and the architectural qualities of the Israeli New Towns is de-urbanization, or more precisely anti-urban urbanization. Simply said, the New Town is conceived as a machine to dissolve not only the native town of the past, but also the big city of the future—or the future of big cities.

I will elaborate on these particular notions and practices later on, but since the term Politics appear in the title of my paper, let me clarify here that for me, in this context, Politics simply means the consolidation and maintenance of these

¹ Building regulations in Israel require a public shelter in every public building, a common shelter on each floor of an office building and a private shelter in each new or renewed apartment.

Figure 1: New Town of Beer Sheva, watercolored axonometry, Physical Planning in Israel (Jerusalem: Keren HaYesod, 1951); architect: Arie Sharon; courtesy of Yael and Ariel Aloni, [Arie Sharon digital archives](#)



practices across the Israeli ideological spectrum, keeping it afloat from Left to Right; from the physiocratic socialism of the State of Israel's formative decades to the neo-liberal or neo-conservative fundamentalism of the last decades; from the workers' Garden Cities of yesterday to the dormitory Gated Communities of today.

Indeed, the architecture of the Israeli New Town has been transformed considerably—mimicking the shifting political tastes and consumption trends—but the very notion of an open process of "towing" has always been kept alive. "Towing" is an entropy of accelerating deterioration, since New Towns are



Figure 2: New Town of Hadera, Physical Planning in Israel (Jerusalem: Keren HaYesod, 1951); architect: Arie Sharon; courtesy of Yael and Ariel Aloni, [Arie Sharon digital archives](#)

doomed to quickly grow old, drained and partially abandoned, in the face of newer towns with ever more enticing tax exemptions, ever more seductive sunsets and ever more indulging infra-structures. So, towning, at least in Israel, is always simultaneously a cover-up operation for an indirect yet highly effective process of urbanicide.

The Israeli New Town was born in 1950 as the highlight of what is known as the Sharon Plan.² Generally speaking, the concept of a New Town is another name for centralized planning and centralized planning is the emblem of the Zionist spirit itself. It emanates from layers of fictional prose, ideological manifestoes or programmatic protocols and has been printed on the landscape over and over again with every new spatial move or architectural tool since the end of the 19th century.

The most conspicuous use of centralized planning—not merely for territorial organization, but rather as an apparatus molding a new ethos—is manifested in the consistent efforts to shift the political, cultural and economic weight from the city to the countryside and from the center to the periphery.

As a rule, it may be said that in its first fifty years, during the first half of the 20th century, the Zionist movement devised and developed a range of pioneering

² The following description of the New Towns of the 1950s and 1960s is based on my research **The Israeli Project, Building and Architecture 1948-1973**, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2005.



Figure 3: Article from the New York Times, Real Estate section about New Towns in Israel, June 1, 1969

models of agricultural settlement supported by sophisticated logistics of manufacture, organization and marketing (the most legendary of those is the Kibbutz), but never imagined, planned, or actually built a city. In fact, the modern metropolitan city was consistently portrayed in both literary utopias and direct propaganda as anathema to the Zionist concept of land redemption; a parasitic growth threatening to undermine the primary values of the re-emerging Hebrew civilization.

Thus, controlled planning and a well-coordinated course of action characterized the Zionist Enterprise from its very outset. However, the country's crucial "conversion" was obtained with the founding of the sovereign state of Israel. Only a few weeks after the Declaration of Independence and during the War of 1948, Arie Sharon, a Bauhaus graduate and one of the prominent architects of Israel's Labor Movement, was commissioned to establish the governmental Planning Department. Within about a year, this department presented an overall master plan for Israel and provided the political leadership of the time with a powerful tool for molding a new landscape and dictating the shape of things to come.

The pressing national task assigned to Sharon and his team of planners was providing temporary housing solutions for the masses of new Jewish immigrants



Figure 4: The first housing blocks in the New Town of Mitzpe Ramon, late 1950s

and settling the country's borderlands in order to stabilize the 1948 cease-fire lines, prevent territorial concessions and inhibit the return of Palestinian war refugees. The planners accomplished this by drafting a statewide network of civil frontiers composed of transit camps and outpost agrarian settlements, as well as by re-settling deserted Arab villages with new Jewish immigrants (mainly those coming from Asia and North Africa). Concurrently, a long-term mission was outlined: preparing a plan for a local population of 2,650,000 inhabitants (a target obtained in 1966), which would be dispersed throughout the country. (The Sharon Plan aim was that only 45% of the urban population would dwell in big cities, while 55% would settle in the new medium-sized and small towns. Today, about 20% of the Israelis live in New Towns, much less than projected by the Sharon Plan, but still a fairly large portion of society).

During the State's first decade, over 400 agrarian settlements were founded according to the Master Plan's guidelines, but its epitome was the creation of the district town—or the New Town, whose optimal size was the subject of lengthy academic discussions among the planners. Over 30 New Towns were built during the 1950's and 1960's. The preferred model was of an intimate town, housing between 20,000 and 50,000 residents, assumed to be exempt from the disorientation, alienation, social injustice, speculative real-estate and other urban



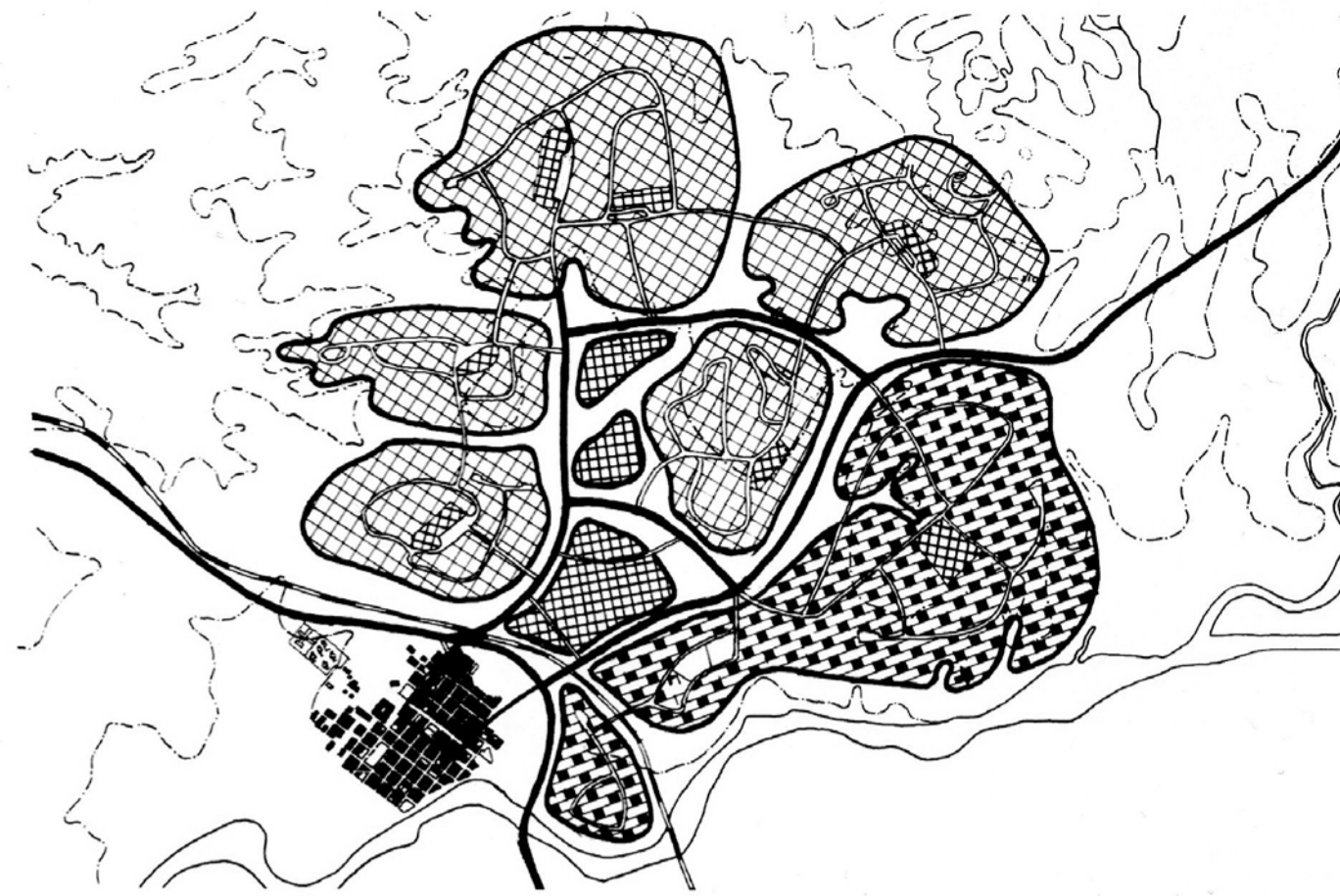
Figure 5: Housing development in the desert town of Dimona, mid 1960s

illnesses associated with the cosmopolitan city.

In order to prevent the development of unruly colonization and socialization patterns typical of New World countries and immigrant societies, the Sharon Plan chose to emulate the European historic layout, whereby the majority of the population dwells in small and medium-sized towns integrated into the agricultural hinterland, and only the minority lives in the big cities.

The planners tried to squeeze this historic process into a single heroic decade, backing their ambitions with intricate pseudo-scientific theories that analyzed the link between settlement patterns and endurance during times of crisis. (An especially authoritative model for the Israeli planners was the "Theory of Central Places", formulated by German geographer Walter Christaller in his 1939 doctoral research and implemented by the Nazis in the occupied regions of Poland).

The general Zionist attitude of activating a regressive revolution, or a pioneering Old World, may be discerned not only in the dispersal of towns and settlements on the map, but also in the attempt to base the architecture of the towns themselves on a conceptual crossbreeding between mechanistic planning methods, striving to render the traditional city more efficient in terms of mass



Beersheba, new town-plan

Figure 6: New Town of Beer Sheva, urban scheme, Physical Planning in Israel (Jerusalem: Keren HaYesod, 1951); architect: Arie Sharon; courtesy of Yael and Ariel Aloni, [Arie Sharon digital archives](#)

housing and motor vehicle traffic on one hand, and picturesque conceptions, on the other, willed to tone down the city by decomposing it into small, autonomous communities, protected from street life, zoned off from industrial sectors and wrapped by green pastoral surroundings.

The Neighboring Units were the structural organizing principle of the New Towns. In theory, they were intimate urban sections with biomorphic contours that rejected orthogonal grids and endowed the instant towns with elasticity and vibrancy. In reality, the separation into autonomous units created a jumbled grouping of disembodied organs containing a limited variety of housing types and totally self-contained in terms of commerce, education and leisure services.

The units' smooth lines, the abundance of open space within and between them; the placement of education and recreation facilities at the heart of the units amidst lawns or woods; the removal of industrial areas from living quarters and their separation by green belts; the design of repetitive social housing on undivided land, rather than normative parceling and speculative construction – all these contributed to the most deceptive illusion of all: the new Israeli town was meant to be a blown-up kibbutz based on homogenous community, collective and egalitarian, without private capital or unanticipated market forces.

However, unlike the kibbutz, or even the pre-State Cooperative Worker's

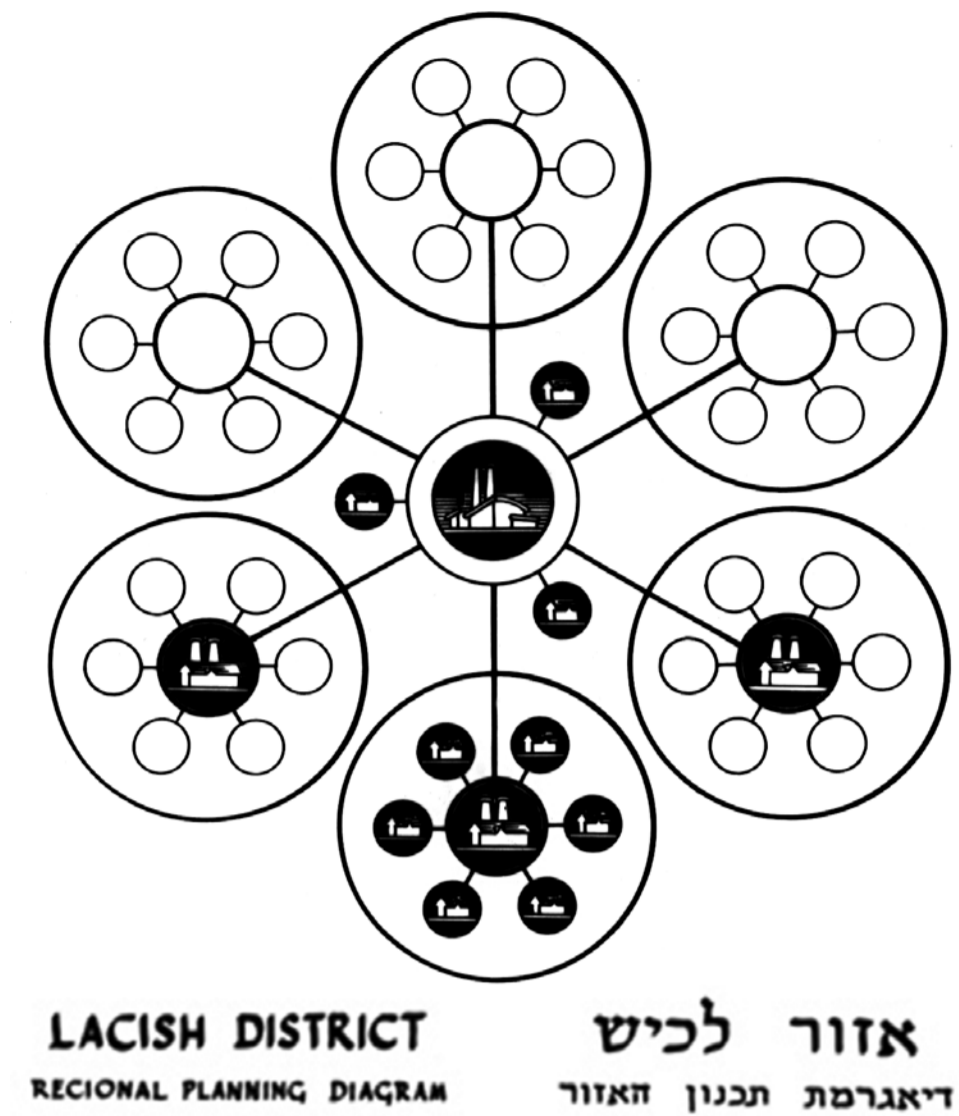


Figure 7: Lachish Region, Planning diagram, mid 1960s

Housing in the well-established towns, which were created as exclusive and hegemonic structures by and for the members of a social avant-garde, the New Town came into being superficially and coercively – a professional and bureaucratic doctrine forced upon a population of unsuspecting immigrants used as passive subjects of a national experiment. With the foundation of the first New Towns, it became apparent that the progressive zoning principles and the generous “ecological” aptitude simply did not work. The detached, sparsely-populated, ready-made towns weighed disproportionately on the national budget due to the huge amounts of infrastructure they demanded. The supply of capital and entrepreneurship required for the creation of jobs in those out-of-the-way locations lagged behind the pace at which the immigrants were sent to the New Towns. Veteran urban populations remained in the cities and ignored the national challenge. The veteran agrarian populations of the kibbutzim already had a well-organized marketing network of its own, having no use for the services provided by the New Towns, and completely discounting the planners' regionalist vision. The vast expanses that had been water-colored green on paper, were totally inappropriate to the climate, the water resources and the maintenance facilities in the country, and in reality became dead zones, severing the urban fabric. The autonomous, inward-looking units and the separation of motorways and



Figure 8: Model of a Neighborhood in Kiryat-Gat exhibited in the Public Housing pavilion, Levant Fair, 1959; model: Michael Hefetz, Dan Ogen, Abraham Hasson; pavilion design: Nachum Miron

walkways, obstructed the development of street-life.

The “alienation, degeneration and low quality of life” in the big city, so consistently denounced by official state propaganda, were replaced in no time with homogeneity, remoteness and deprivation. The citizens of the New Towns who played a historic role in realizing the 1950's rhetoric of Bynian Ha'aretz (building the land), became the propagators of the social unrest and political turnabout of the 1970s, which in turn brought the rise of the Right Wing Likud Party and the Labor Party's first loss of hegemony.

Citizens of "Second Israel", as the New Towners were called, were now in a position to protest the patronizing project of the Left and to demand retribution for their effacement in generic housing projects and for keeping them away from property ownership.

Prime Minister Menachem Begin, Minister of Housing David Levi (himself a North African immigrant of the 1950s), a New Towner from Beit She'an and a former construction worker, responded effectively by launching a nationwide project of 'Build Your Own House'. The satellites created by this project were perplexing from the outset and seemed like a vengeful costume party of former public housing residents, celebrating their new status as landlords and



Figure 12: Desert New Town of Arad, late 1960s

joyfully desecrating the forced solidarity and anonymity of the State's top-down engineered landscapes. Against every conceivable principal of the socialist New Town, it was now enveloped by rings or clusters of subsidized subdivided land and sold in small plots to the town's wealthier residents so they could give shape to their own notion of identity, or at least their own personal protest against the local dialect of modern architecture.

Sure enough, the process of privatization of land and property only increased patriotism and amplified the political power of the Right. While New Towners traditionally voted for the Right (at rates of 70-80%), they did so during the 1950's and 1960's in protest against their marginalization and subjugation. From the 1970's on they could do so as equal participants in a project, not merely national, but overtly nationalist and ethnocentric. In a strange turn of events, owning a villa became patriotic, as if being a landlord had greater symbolic implication; and residing in suburbia now meant living in a 'community settlement', as if a rural setting had some amalgamating effect. The collective neighborhoods and austere public housing projects of the old New Towns became a liability for the old regime, representing urban-scale memorials to the days of Bolshevism.



Figure 9: Transit camps and newly built housing blocks, New Town of Yokneam, early 1950's; (photographer: Amiram Erev)



Figure 10: Desert New Town of Eilat, mid 1950's



Figure 11: New Town of Karmiel, late 1960's



Figure 13: New Jewish Settlement in the West Bank (Photographer: Daniel Bauer)



Figure 14: The New Settlement of Har Homa, "Greater Jerusalem" (Photo: Daniel Bauer)

The proliferation policy was maintained by successive right-wing governments. In fact, the policy was radicalized and used efficiently to push forth their political agenda and territorial ambitions. Drained of its socialist rhetoric, twisted from its origins in Garden City reformist schemes and cut off from the regionalist vision of equilibrium between the urban and the rural – the New Town of the Right appeared as a plain instrument to establish political "facts on ground" and create a permanent and irreversible civilian occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In the West Bank, an ever-expanding network of civilian outposts and colonies of various sizes and complexities was laid out on the hilltops, housing growing numbers of inhabitants, (today they are home to about half a million people). Just as the Kibbutzim spearheaded the old Zionist settlement movement in the past, it was now the ideological and religious settlers of Gush Emmunim who pioneered the Jewish settlement of the West Bank and triggered an ever-increasing migration drift toward and across the 'green line'.

Unlike their predecessors, the new settlements could not rely anymore on social engineering and crowds' mobilization in order to develop and multiply, nor could they expect state-owned industries as instigators of workers-towns or market



Figure 15: Model Neighborhood in the desert town of Be'er Sheva, 1959

forces as generators of company-towns. Beyond politics (and tax benefits), they had to fabricate anew their *raison d'être*, their civic appeal and their urban typology; even if they hardly had a viable economic justification, even if they could not offer local employment, even if their pastoral settings could barely conceal the inherent hostility and danger found in their very inception.

While the ideological settlers took control over the inner West Bank hilltops overlooking Palestinian towns and villages, so-called "dwelling improvers" seeking a better quality of life inhabited the New Towns closer to the pre-1967 border, which were in effect garden satellites of the greater metropolitan area of Tel Aviv. For the price of a small apartment in Tel Aviv, and at a distance of 20-30 minutes drive from the big city, settlers could get hold of their own red-roofed house and benefit from massive government subsidies.

3 Eyal Weizman, **Hollow Land, Israel's Architecture of Occupation**, Verso, London, 2007.

4 Eyal Weizman and Rafi Segal Eds., **A Civilian Occupation, The Politics of Israeli Architecture**, Babel, Tel Aviv, Verso, London, 2003.

Eyal Weizman, in his rigorous studies *Hollow Land*³ and *A Civilian Occupation*⁴, (actually, the only existing analyses of the architecture of the Jewish occupation of the West bank), clarifies the ostensible mimesis between geography and urban layout in the new settlements: "The mountain settlement is typified by a principle of concentric organization in which the topographical contours of the map are retraced as lines of infrastructure. The roads are laid out in rings around

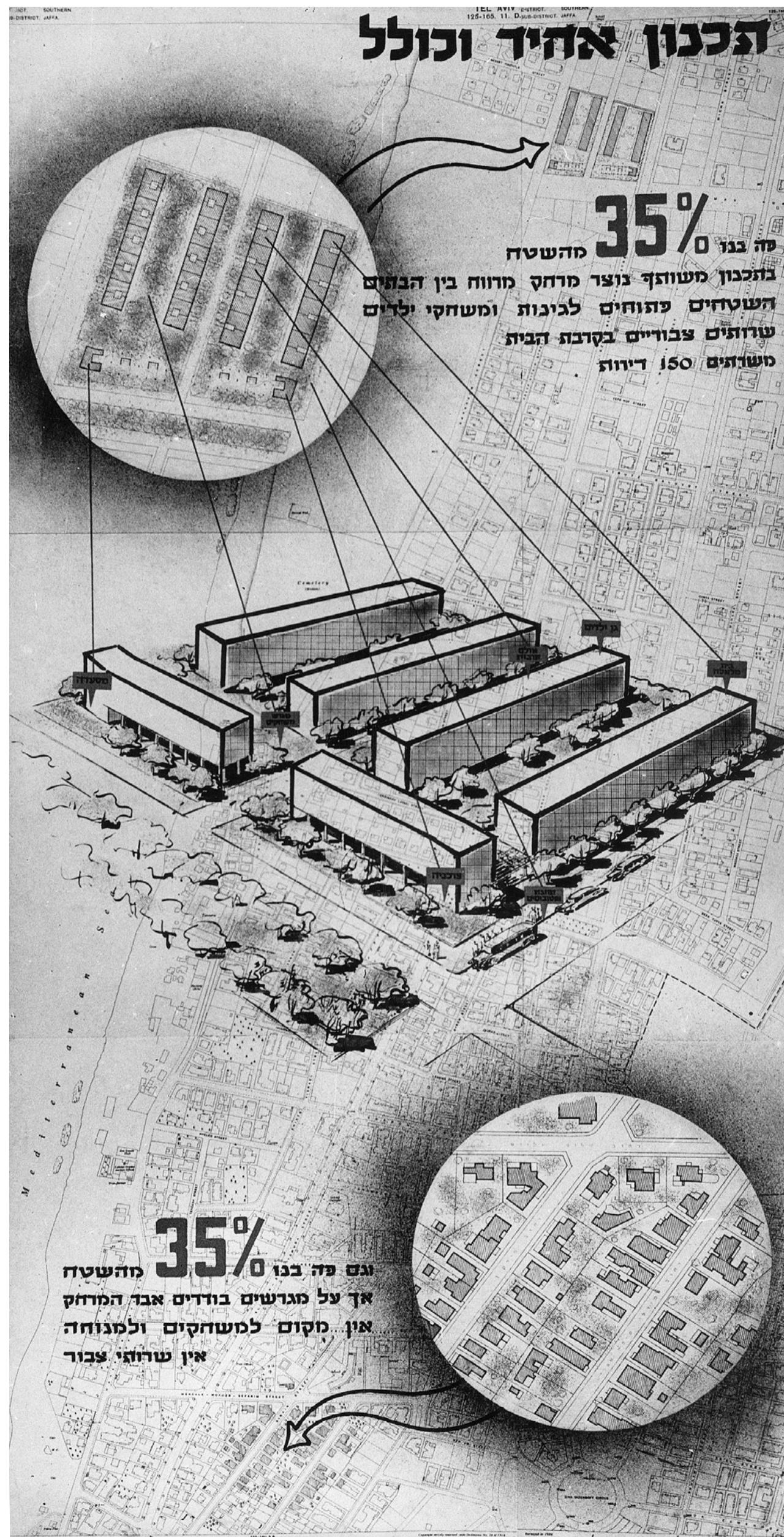


Figure 16: Poster from the National Plan Exhibition, Tel Aviv Museum, 1950: Arie Sharon, Head of the Ministry of Labor's Planning Division.

The Hebrew title reads:
 "Uniformed and comprehensive planning"

Top Circle:
 "Here, we made use of 35% of the lot"
 "Uniform planning enables balanced distances between buildings"
 "Areas are then vacant for developing parks and for child activities"
 "Public services are in reach - and can serve up to 150 households"

Bottom Circle:
 "In this case, 35% of the area was also developed"
 "But on private lots, the qualities of distance between buildings are lost"
 "No place left for child play or recreation- none for Public Amenities"

the summit with the water, sewage, electricity and telephone lines buried under them. The division of the lots is equal and repetitive, providing small private red roofed houses positioned along the roads, against the backdrop of the landscape. The public functions are generally located within the innermost ring, on the highest ground."⁵

Unlike the old New Towns of the 1950's and 1960's (which were often located in desolate countryside with dull scenery and therefore had to assume an arbitrary form), the new New Towns of the West Bank were "the end results of tactical, land use and topographical constraints".⁶ And, indeed, if the old New Towns were meant as municipal crossroads or service centers within a regional network (or at least, a regionalist vision), the new New Towns were devised as 'cul-de-sac utopias', a typology of their own, within a cartographic patchwork of isolated nodes and oversized infrastructure. Sociology, as we read in Weizman's work, comes with the territory and takes its proper shape. Again, unlike the crowding subjects with erased identity of the old New Towns, now pro-active settlers are organized in gated communities:

Socially, the 'community settlements', a new settlement typology introduced in the early 1980's for the West Bank, is in effect an exclusive member's club with a long admission process and a monitoring mechanism that regulates everything from religious observance thru ideological rigor. Furthermore, they function as dormitory suburbs for small communities which travel to work in the large Israeli cities. The hilltop environment, isolated, overseeing and hard to reach, lent itself to the development of this newly conceived utopia. The community settlements create cul-de-sac envelopes, closed off from their surroundings, utopian in their concentric organization, promoting a mythic communal coherence in a shared formal identity.⁷

What is actually new in this settlement typology? Its particular hybridization of various local and imported models, urban and rural settings, civilian and military designs has never been seen before. The postcard dormitory community of New Urbanism is superimposed here with sectarian, often messianic, territorialism. The structural and communal cohesiveness of the Kibbutz is blended into the nouveau rich ambiance of 'Build Your Own House' neighborhoods and re-enacted as the new Heimat iconography.

5 A Civilian Occupation, p.83.

6 Ibid. p.83.


7 Ibid. pp.83-84.

The old New Towns remain more or less as they were originally planned - barren Garden-Cities, lethargic Development Towns, bypassed regional centers, homogeneous melting pots, under-developed urban odds and ends still struggling to preserve their special Class-A tax-reduction status, granted by the various

governments to 'areas of national preference'. In contrast, most of the new New Towns are thriving and are consistently rated among the highest in Israel in terms of living standards, municipal services, education and even security. (In Ariel, one of the biggest urban settlements in the West Bank, there is even a university and a school of architecture). It should be pointed out that sham and superfluous as they may be, these settlements are never referred to as New Towns. As a result, they are instantaneously naturalized and soaked into the Israeli field of vision.



Figure 17: The New Town of Yamit, North-East Sinai. Yamit was built in 1973 and evacuated and destroyed in 1982 as part of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. It was the only Israeli New Town physically destroyed.

An aerial, black and white photograph of a city, likely a university campus, with various buildings, roads, and green spaces. Overlaid on the image are three lines of large, stylized, white text. Each letter in the text is filled with a different pattern: diagonal lines, a grid, or dots. The text reads "CITIES IN", "STARBROOK", and "THE USIA".

CITIES IN

STARBROOK

THE USIA

CITIES IN SEARCH OF THE USER

Kenny Cupers

If the New Towns' golden age coincided with the 'economic miracle' of the postwar era and ended with the global economic restructuring of the 1970s, it also corresponded with the historical triumph of the welfare state. Unlike many of the new cities being built today as global real estate ventures, the New Towns proliferating during the postwar decades were often idealized statements about the relationship between government and population. By building the city, planners intended to build the citizen. While such New Towns were built for the most divergent set of political projects—from the industrialization of Siberia to the national modernization of Brazil—their scale, homogeneity, and idealism speak of the development of social welfare as a quasi-global paradigm. The French New Towns (or *villes nouvelles*), the first of which were proudly inaugurated right before the economic downturn of the mid-1970s, were at once the culmination and the end of this era. As the last move in the international game of New Town swagger, they reveal like no other the paradigm's contradictions.

Like many other European nations, France witnessed unprecedented population growth and underwent rapid urbanization after WWII. Yet in contrast to countries like the UK (which insisted on channeling such growth into newly established satellite New Towns at a considerable distance from existing metropolitan areas), the French government hesitated on its strategy. Then, after 1953, it steered urban development into the construction of mass housing in large estates at the periphery of existing cities. Built by social housing organizations as well as semi-public and private developers, these *grands ensembles* were primarily meant for middle-class nuclear French families. While they were initially celebrated for their democratization of modern comfort and lifestyle, such estates soon came to be criticized for resulting in nothing more than dull suburban dormitories, deprived of urban amenities and public transportation. During the mid-1960s, under the leadership of an authoritarian De Gaulle, the centralized state launched the ambitious plan to create a series of large *villes nouvelles* to orchestrate urban growth and economic development. Based on the British experience, one of the main goals was to overcome the problems of mass housing estates by creating 'veritably new' urban centers that could compete with Paris' traditional city center. Unlike the *grands ensembles*, these new cities would be well connected by public transport, abundantly



Figure 1: Aerial photo of a housing estate in the southern suburbs of Paris, as described by the geographer Jean Bastié in 1964 (Source/Copyright: Bastié, Jean. *La croissance de la banlieue parisienne* (Paris: PUF, 1964): 241).

equipped with the latest amenities, and made economically viable by adding office and industrial developments.

The politics of this plan were fundamentally authoritarian: the placement of the New Towns was decided without consulting the local population, who experienced the arrival of these new cities as foreign objects flown in from Paris. Ironically however, the New Towns soon became the quintessential laboratory for the welfare state's ultimate utopia: citizen participation. Many of the ambitions so vigorously expressed during May 1968 became the government's official motto: 'To change the city in order to change life.' The same architects, planners, and bureaucrats who had steered the country's modernization during the 1950s and 1960s were now to transform this slogan into reality—now with the help of future users. The *villes nouvelles* project provided the primary vehicle to do so. After 1968, the notion of user participation thus became crucial to French New Town planning. The urban designs for Evry and Cergy, the first of these New Towns, both located in the suburbs of Paris, embodied this fundamental contradiction: the creation, from scratch, of a new kind of participatory urbanity by a centralized state bureaucracy.

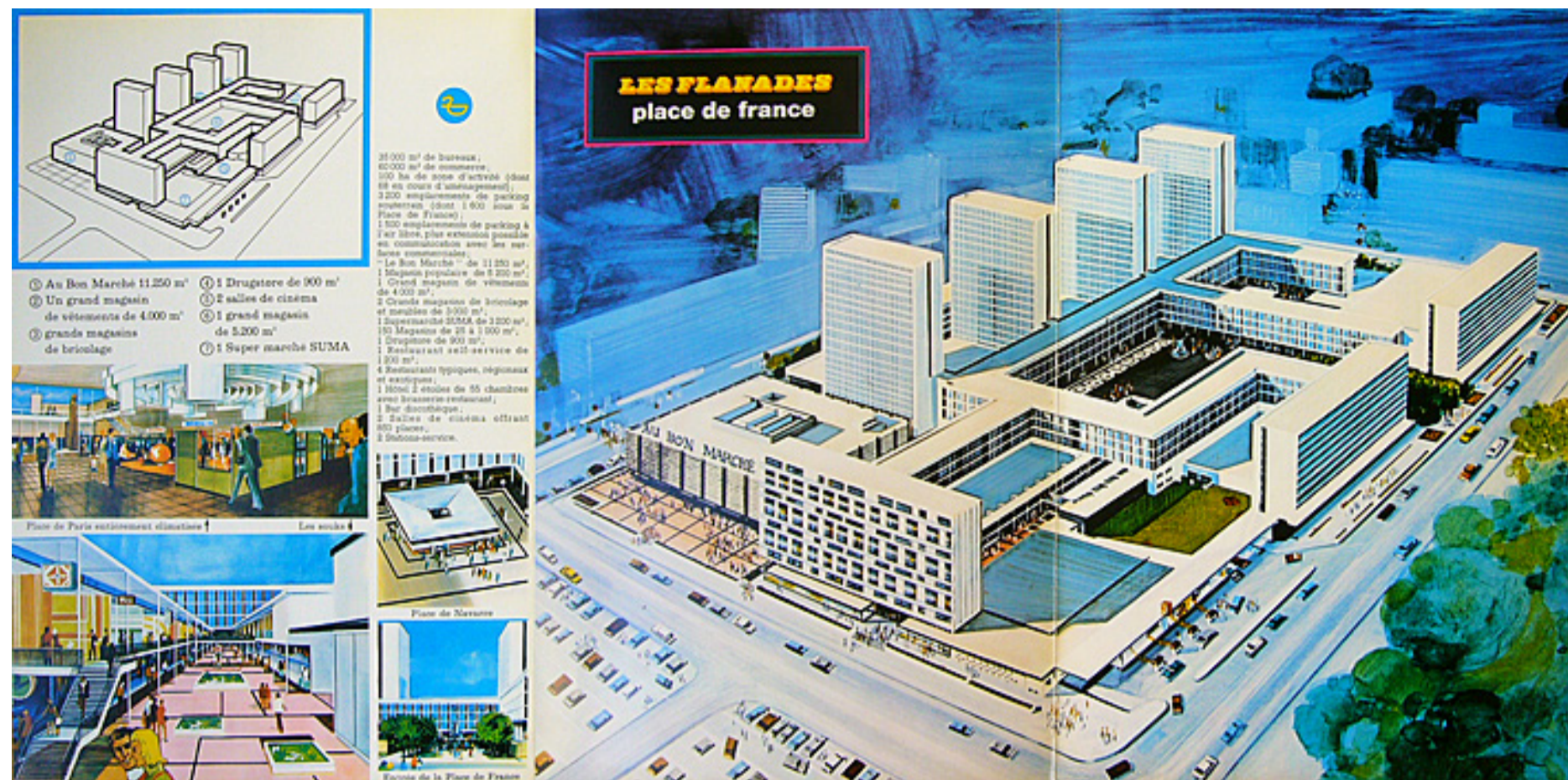


Figure 2: Commercial renderings of the urban center of Sarcelles' grand ensemble, designed by Roger Boileau and Jacques Henri-Labourdette, early 1970s (Source: AD Val d'Oise, Bib D620, Brochure 'Vos bureaux à Sarcelles').

Return to the Center

If one question preoccupied the planners gathering around the villes nouvelles project in the late 1960s, it was how to avoid and reverse the dreariness of the postwar suburbs - and concomitantly, how to recreate the lively urbanity of the traditional city center. In contrast to the proliferating mass housing estates—which were often directed explicitly against the inner city, its density, its lack of domestic comfort, and its chaotic nature—the New Towns were to be dense, varied, and attractive. After two decades of decentralizing mass housing production in isolated estates, the traditional city emerged stronger than ever as the yardstick for future urban development (fig. 1).

Yet, as much as the villes nouvelles planners saw their urban centers as diametrically opposed to the architectural modernism of the grands ensembles, their conception was in fact directly embedded in the ideological and formal revisions of that modernism during the 1960s. Even Sarcelles, the epitome of the grands ensembles and national symbol of everything that was wrong with these 'dormitory estates,' witnessed a slow but certain evolution towards a different kind of urban thinking—one in which centrality replaced the dogma of air, light,

PARIS OPERA - BOURSE

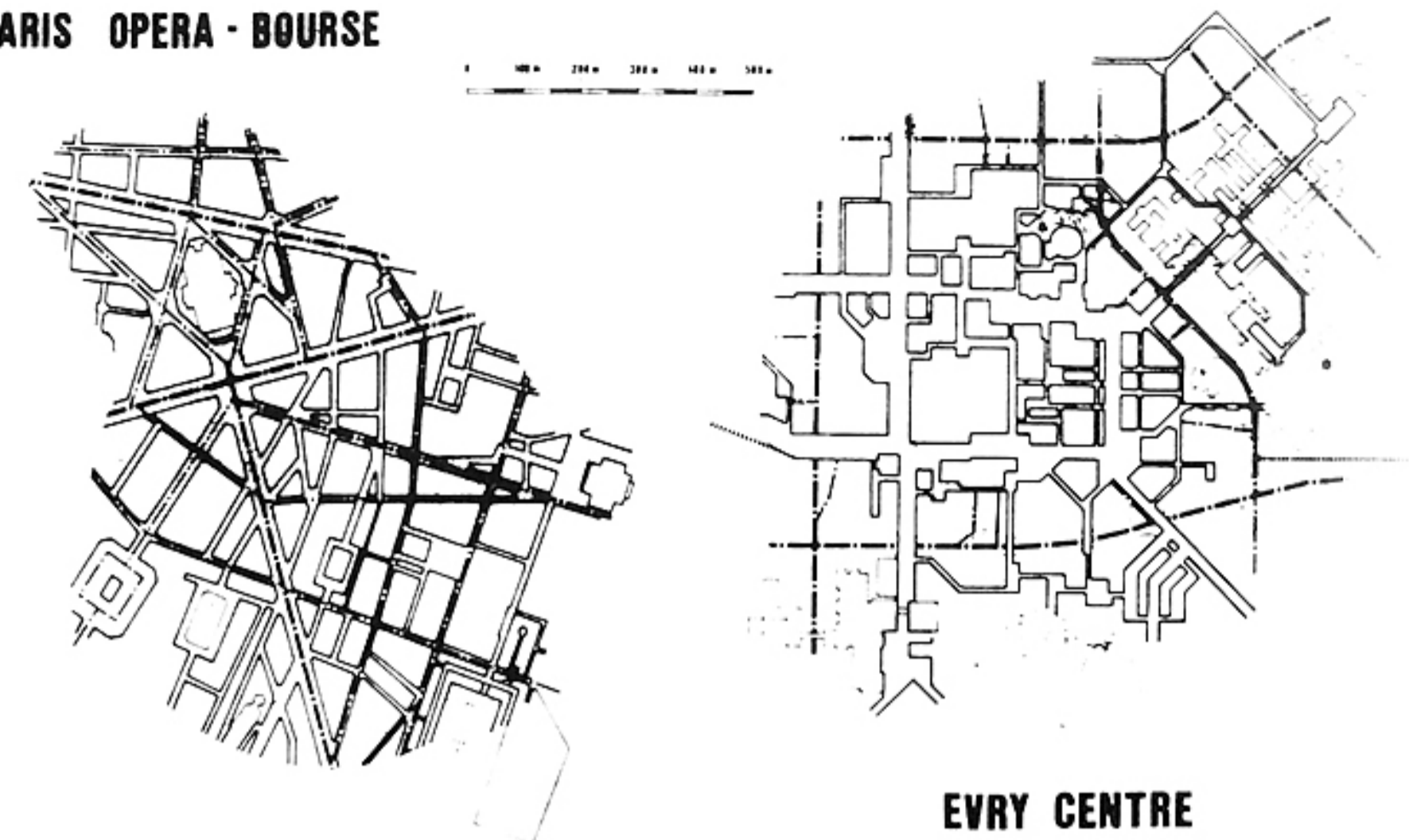


Figure 3: Planners' comparison, at the same scale, of the New Town of Evry and the central neighborhood of Paris around the opera building and the stock exchange (Source: SGGCVN & Institut français du royaume uni, Centre & Centralité dans les villes nouvelles françaises et britanniques (Paris: CRU, 1972): 22. Archives nationales, Centre des archives contemporaines, Deposit number 19840342/335).

and space. Sarcelles grew exponentially during the 1960s as construction phases followed each other at a rapid pace. To satisfy the growing population's need for urban amenities, planners projected an ambitious new urban center that was meant to transform the housing estate into a real city in its own right. The most important new design feature of this project was the dalle or raised platform. It essentially introduced the vertical separation of transportation and parking from other urban functions and allowed the development of large-scale pedestrianized urban spaces (fig.2).

The projection of a new mega-structural environment that would foster social contact and urban interaction resonated with a generation of architectural visionaries in 1960s France, from Yona Friedman to David Georges Emmerich. New Town planners built on these visions, in which personal freedom of consumption, appropriation and mobility went hand in hand with the authoritarian provision of an overarching framework. At the same time planners were increasingly aware of the social and symbolic importance of the traditional city center - Paris in the first place - and their first concern was how to recreate such a sociable, mixed-use kind of urbanity. A pedestrian network of paths,

squares, boulevards, and plazas was meant to become the organizing principle of the French New Towns, much like any traditional city plan. It had to contain not only a dense concentration of shops and collective facilities, but also a lively residential neighborhood. The desired ideal was the vibrant nocturnal atmosphere of the Parisian boulevards. That the French state would now actively plan for bars, cafés and even night clubs in new residential urban developments was not considered especially bizarre. Yet only a decade earlier, it would have been impossible to imagine even a brasserie that served alcohol in many a grand ensemble (fig. 3).

The French New Towns opened doors for architectural and urban planning experiments focused on the creation of street life, urban ambiance, and everyday liveliness. In their attempts, architects and planners were influenced at once by modernist visions testifying to an expansion of architecture to shape a total animated kind of environment, and by a desire for the urbanity of the traditional city center.

The Mantra of Integration

These new ideas about centrality found further articulation in the context of a particular set of experiments in the late 1960s and early 1970s under the banner of *équipement intégré*, or integrated facilities. These were triggered by the perceived need to group together the new social and cultural facilities that were being built across France at this time - social centers, youth centers, schools, cultural centers, and local community centers. Fueled by the expansion of French welfare provision, the basic conviction was that such spatial and programmatic integration would result in a more effective policy of personal and community development.

The idea of integration however went beyond the efficient improvement of state services. Moving away from the functional, divisible, and quantifiable understanding of users' needs, planning experts and state officials now made increasing reference to a vaguely defined 'global social need.' Encouraged by some of the critiques of May 1968, this shift was part and parcel of the desire for a more holistic conception of the individual, beyond its functional enumeration.

This emphasis on the complexity of users' needs and on participation crossed over to architectural discourse, and became a central point of inspiration in the conception of integrated facilities. The user-oriented concept of polyvalence (polyvalence, multi-functionality and adaptability), became the organizing principle for the architecture of new collective facilities. These needed to be

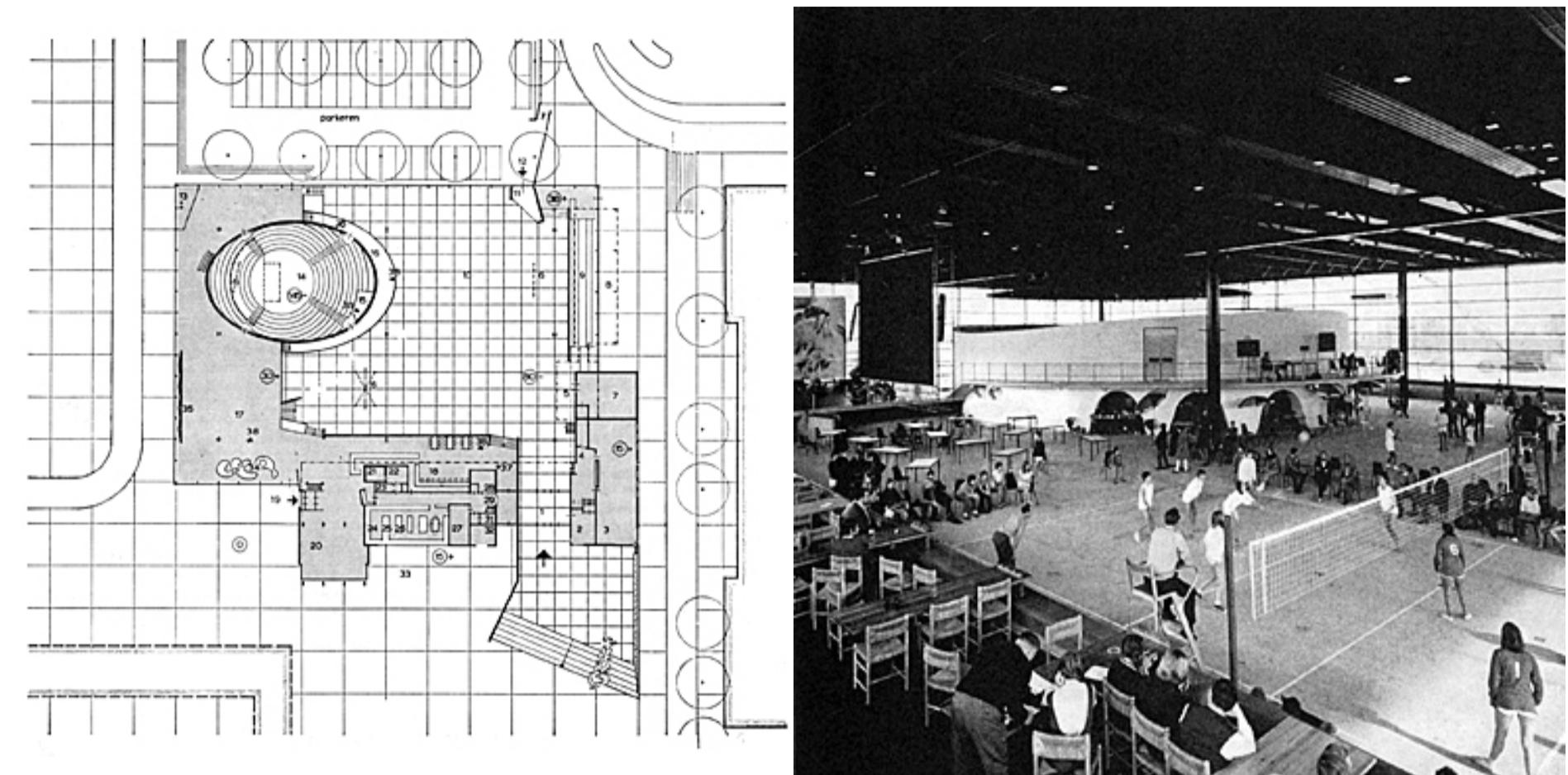


Figure 4: Plan and interior perspective of the Agora in Dronten (Netherlands) by the architect Frank Van Klinger, 1966 (Source/Copyright: Schein, Ionel. *Espace global polyvalent* (Paris: Vincent, Fréal et Co, 1970): 11, 17).

brought 'closer to the citizen:' they could no longer be cold or rigid, prestigious, luxurious, or removed from the everyday and the urban, but instead, needed to be convivial, intimate, and inviting.

One project was key in shaping this kind of orientation, and it was not a French one. When the Agora of Dronten, a large multi-functional community center in the Netherlands by architect Frank Van Klinger, was finished in 1966, it quickly became a staple in French discourse. The project consisted essentially of a large, transparent hall covered by a giant space-frame roof. The only specific functions in this large flexible open space were a theatre, a restaurant, and some office space. The vast open space could be used for an impressively wide range of cultural and sports activities, games and shows - from small gatherings to large public events (fig. 4).

The project resonated strongly with the architectural and urban concerns in the *villes nouvelles*. Building new urban centers around larger, integrated facilities promised to transcend the rigidity and the shortcomings of the *grands ensembles*: it provided the dense mix of social and cultural activities necessary to generate the much-needed liveliness in newly-built urban places. But integration was more than a programmatic element of the new urban center: in some cases, it also shaped the very conception of urban centers in New Towns. While this was most

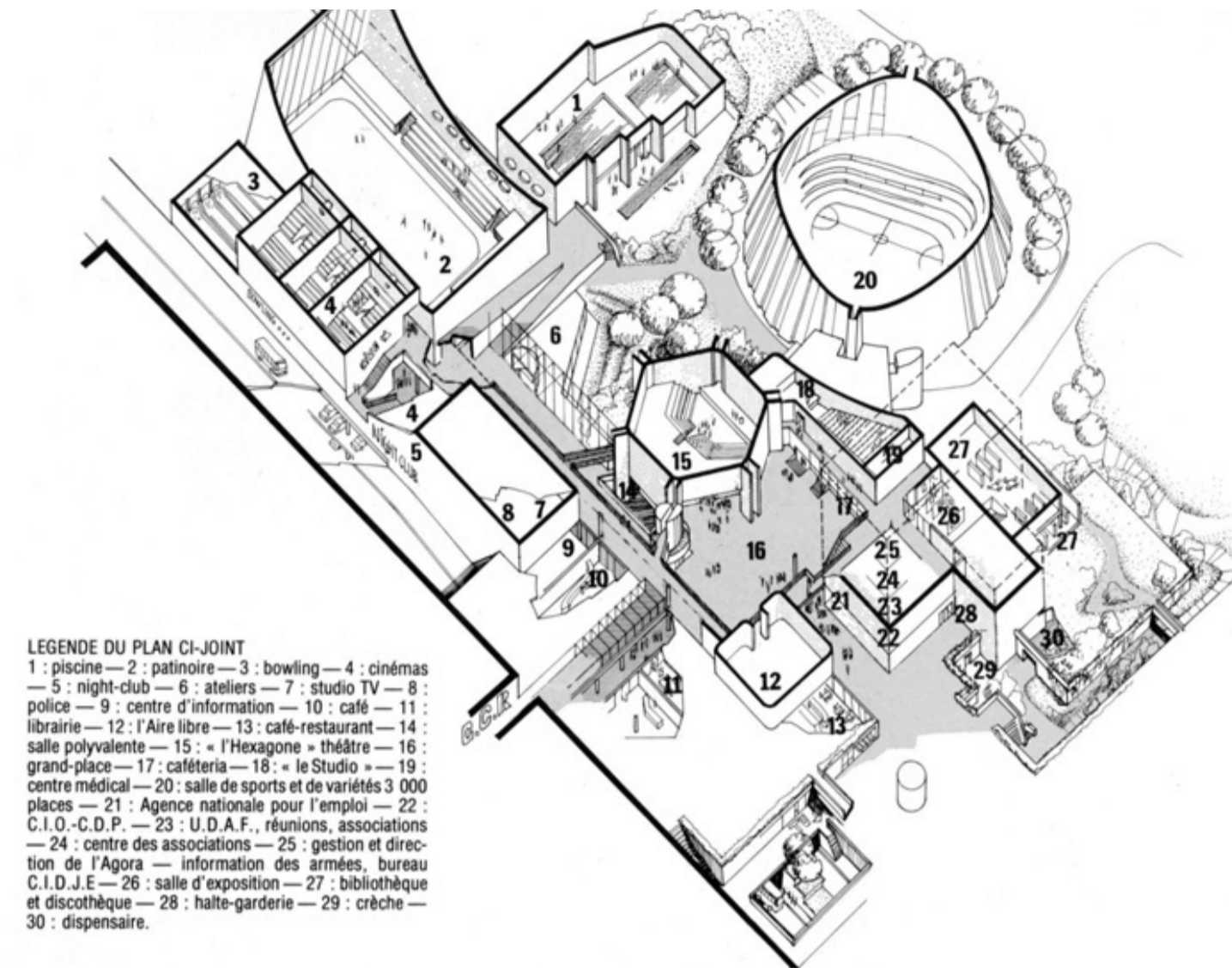


Figure 5: Axonometric showing the diversity of functions at the Agora of Evry (Source/Copyright: Darmagnac, André, François Desbruyères, and Michel Mottez. *Créer un centre ville: Evry* (Paris: Editions du Moniteur, 1980): 87).

pronounced at le Vaudreuil, where the collaborative office Atelier de Montrouge had employed the idea of integration for the overall urban concept, it was also present in other New Towns. The idea to integrate a wide range of urban functions on the dalle at Cergy and to fuse interior and exterior spaces followed the same logic.

The urban center of Evry, designed by the French architect Le Coureur, presents perhaps one of the clearest applications of *équipement intégré*. The entire center was grafted onto a state-sponsored complex of social, cultural, sports and recreation facilities baptized the 'Agora.' This complex included the most surprising combination of state services and urban amenities under a single roof—newspaper agents, cafés, bars and restaurants, a bowling hall and a night club, cinemas, a skating ring and other sports facilities, a theater and a library, a variety of information and social centers, kindergartens, a church, post offices, and so on. They were centered around a very large polyvalent interior space covered by a space-frame roof, not unlike the Agora in Dronten (by which it was obviously inspired). This space was thought about as an urban space rather than a privatized interior space: it was designed to be open and accessible every day and every night. With the Agora, French welfare reached its culmination: it had literally taken on the scale of the city itself (fig. 5, 6, 7).



Figure 6: Aerial photo of the new urban center of Evry, with the Agora in the middle, around 1975 (Source: Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XXe siècle, Paris. Fonds Le Coureur, 187 IFA 44/10).



Figure 7: Photo of the central atrium at the Agora of Evry, around 1975 (Source: Centre d'Archives d'Architecture du XXe siècle, Paris. Fonds Le Coureur, 187 IFA 44/10).

The Must of the Mall

At the same time however, Evry's new center embodied a second, perhaps even more important evolution. Uneasily stuck onto the 30,000m² Agora was a 70,000m² complex of shopping facilities, containing a myriad of smaller boutiques structured by large department stores and hypermarkets. While the social provisions of the Agora catered to the user as an inhabitant and a citizen, this even more elaborate shopping mall met the needs and desires of the contemporary consumer.

The unlikely marriage of shopping mall and state-sponsored facilities at Evry was the direct result of France's delayed but burgeoning development of suburban commerce. When the first hypermarket was opened in 1963 by the now global giant Carrefour in a suburb of Paris, it constituted not only a French shopping revolution, but more importantly, a suburban one. The rapid proliferation of suburban hypermarkets and big box stores that followed rendered the planned commerce of the grands ensembles quickly irrelevant. A concomitant revolution—equally important but more short-lived - was the introduction of the American dumbbell mall, marked by the opening in 1967 of Parly 2, 'the first regional commercial center in France.' The 2 in its brand name expressed the ambition of offering an alternative to the commerce offered by existing city center. More centers soon followed, and with names like Grigny 2, Vélizy 2, and Rosny 2 they all claimed to offer a second, interiorized city center, even better than the real one (fig. 8).

These commercial developments vexed the French New Town planners as much as they fascinated them. On the one hand, they were well aware that the suburban shopping experience was crucial for their New Town plans. The big box stores and malls popping up at the outskirts of Paris and other large French cities generated the crowds they needed to attract to their urban centers. On the other hand, following the judgments of Parisian intellectuals, they perceived them as 'wild' (read: not planned by them) and anti-urban.

Some architects, however, were rather inspired by this new type of space. Lonel Schein, a modernist architect who had designed some iconic supermarkets with his partner Claude Parent during the 1950s, even saw these new shopping mall environments as (commercially oriented) manifestations of his utopian 'polyvalent global space.' New Town planners were less lyrical, but no less fascinated by them. They were aware that such contemporary commercial space was a programmatic must for any large-scale urban development. Over the following years, their efforts would be directed at curbing these 'wild' private developments into a carefully planned new urban center.

The design for new urban centers like those of Evry, Cergy, Sarcelles, Créteil,

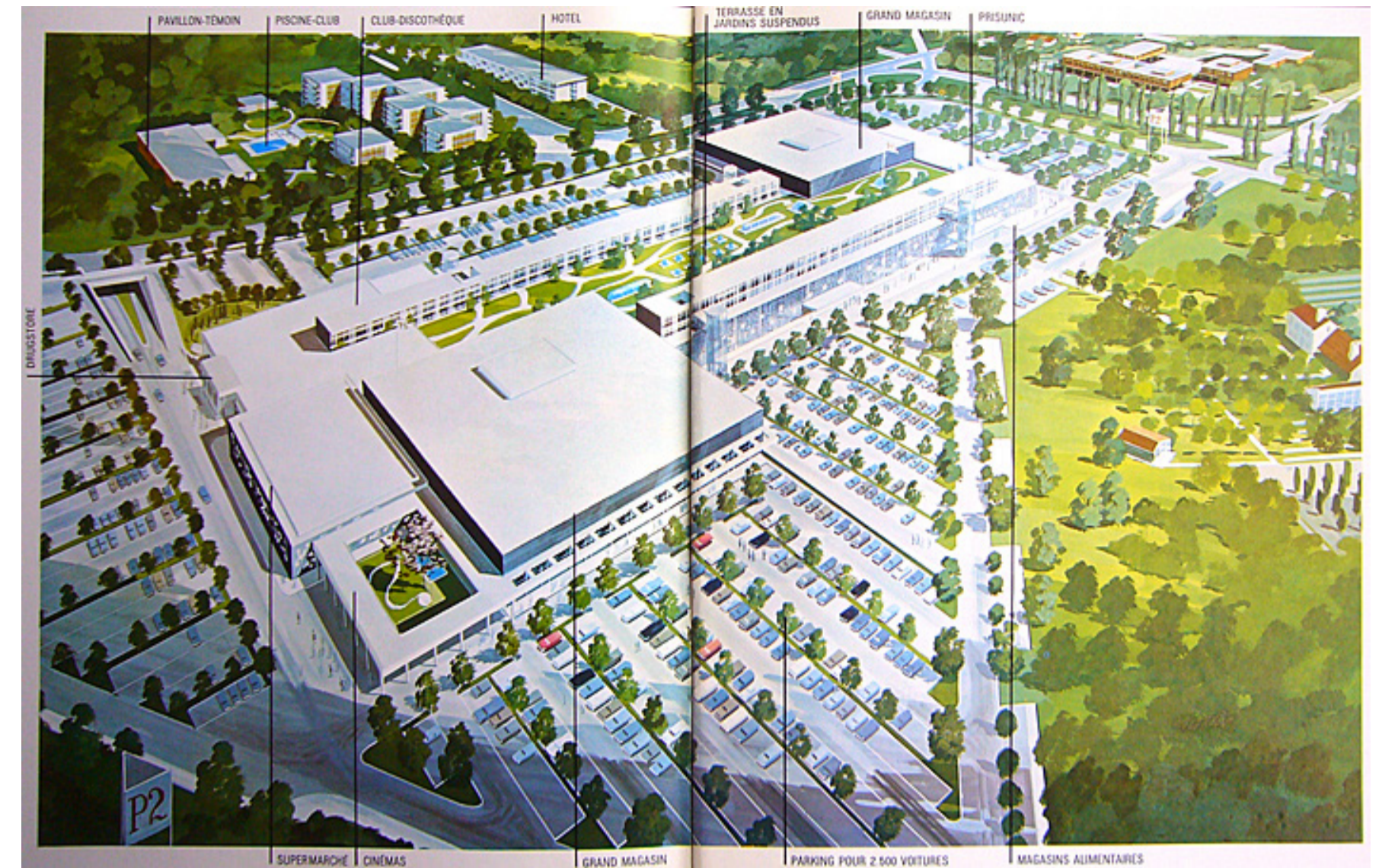


Figure 8: Commercial rendering of Parly 2, late 1960s (Source: Archives nationales, Centre des archives contemporaines. Deposit number 199110585/011: Brochure 'Centre commercial de Parly 2').

and so on, thus combined the urban logic of the pedestrian with the suburban laws of the car and the mall—easy access from the highway, ample parking space, big box retail. The new center of Cergy, for instance, was raised on a platform separating pedestrians from the main road and railway station underneath it. This central pedestrianized heart was intensely urbanized: it was dotted with a variety of socio-cultural facilities, shops and cafés, offices and governmental buildings. On its north-western side, this urban complex was flanked by a large L-shaped shopping mall, into which the pedestrian zone gradually spilled. On the back side of the mall, away from the urban center were the necessary parking lots, directly visible and accessible from the highway running next to it. On its south-eastern side, the urban center blended into the surrounding office neighborhood and the urban park. Pedestrian connections and bridges on all sides linked the urban center to the surrounding neighborhoods. The final product was ultimately a mega-structure in denial (fig. 9).

The User: Citizen or Consumer?

During much of the preceding decades, designers, politicians, planners, and developers had tended to think of users as passive beneficiaries of the new

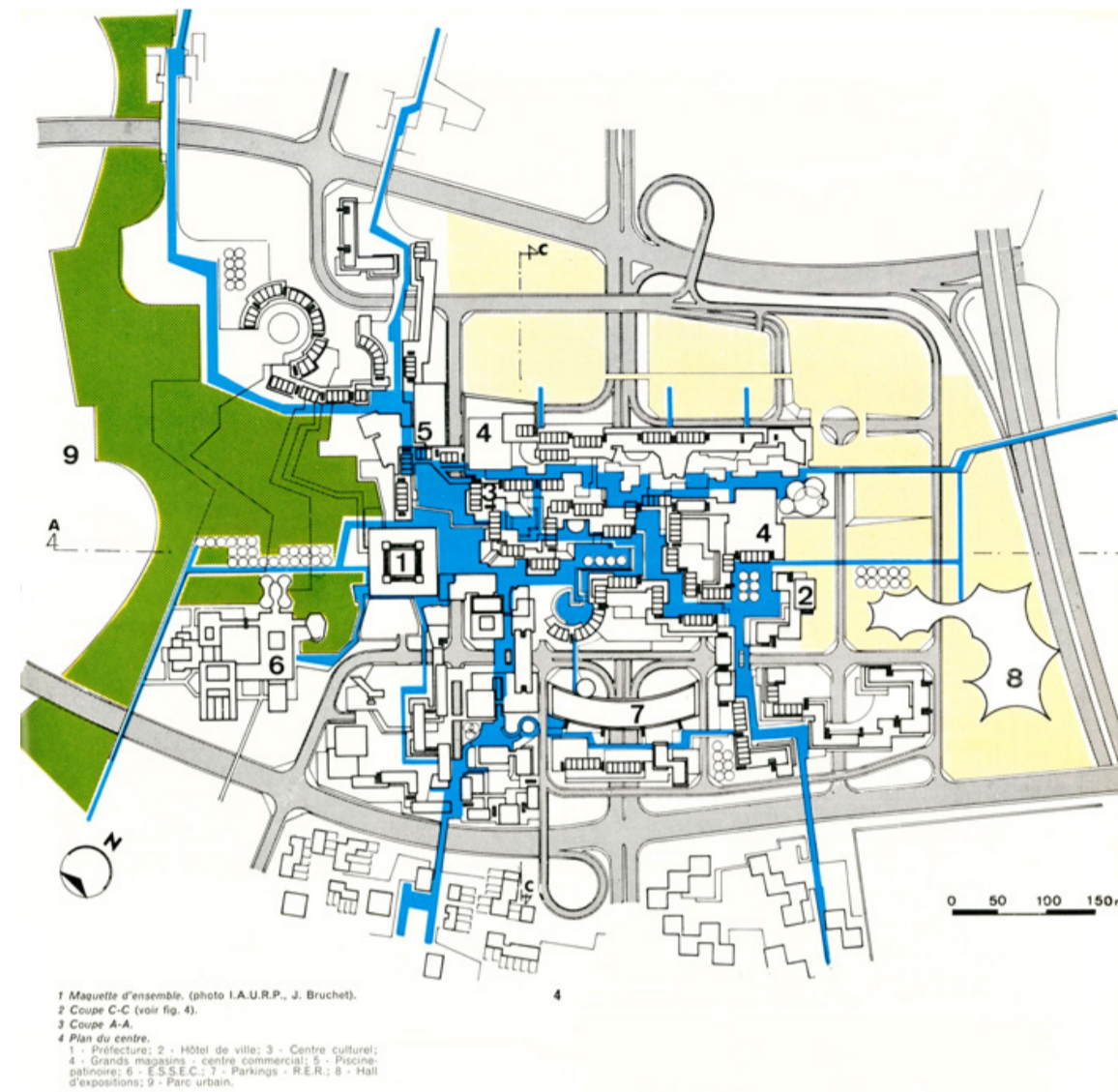


Figure 9: Plan for the urban center of Cergy Préfecture by the New Town planning team, 1970 (Source: *Techniques et Architecture* 32(5) 'Villes nouvelles de la région Parisienne' (1970): 55).

services, goods, and environments provided for them. This attitude, exemplified by the first generation of grands ensembles, was increasingly contradicted, both by a growing consumer culture shaped by middle-class purchasing power and a developing social welfare system infused by the promises of participation. After 1968, planning needed to explicitly take into account people's agency, mobility, and right of choice, and the user - now re-imagined as active participant - became the central category for constructing the urbanity of the New Towns.

The historical moment of the megastructure was ultimately a brief one—as Reyner Banham pointed out. Economically, such expensive large-scale projects simply lost out against the big box stores and in France especially the hypermarkets. The logic of large integrated facilities proved similarly inflexible. During the economic crises of the mid-1970s, such welfare state extravaganza seemed ill-considered if not simply impossible. Participation, however (as a discursive and form-generating device as much as a method of planning), remained the paradoxical core of New Town planning, and perhaps also planning in general.

On the one hand, the French New Town projects can be read as a post-order catalogue of ultimate mega-projects instigated by a centralized state bureaucracy.

On the other hand, these projects were intensely user-oriented: planners took the freedom and satisfaction of its users as the basis of successful urbanism and this would translate naturally into developers' profitability. As modern public services were to speak the language of consumerism - accessibility, availability, efficiency - so they could converge with private commercial developments in the creation of a new urbanity in which architecture was elevated to the main social animator. While that role was soon no longer ascribed to it, the design of the French villes nouvelles still bears witness to that peculiar search for the user at the end of the New Towns' golden age.

This paper is based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation, "In Search of the User: The Experiment of Modern Urbanism in Postwar France, 1955-1975" (Harvard University, April 2010). For specific references, please consult this manuscript at Proquest Dissertations Online, or contact the author via email: cupers@post.harvard.edu.



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SPECIFIC FLEXIBILITY IN PLACE-MAKING - OR - THE LAW OF UNFORSEEN PLANNING

Vincent Lacovara

Introduction

The motives that guide the making of buildings and places are political; whether the expression of an ideology through a building or place's appearance; an intent to improve people's lives; an intent to change the shape of society (for good or ill) or the expression of the many and varied motives of individuals and groups at liberty or otherwise to make their own propositions and make their own mark. However, the really potent politics lies in the freedoms or constraints that are played out through the use and inhabitation of these landscapes over time; freedoms suggested, thwarted, provoked, restricted or enabled.

But what do we mean by freedom? Different interpretations of freedom are at the heart of all politics, and specifically at the heart of the politics of place. Who decides what should be what, on whose behalf, and why? Who has the freedom – and to what extent - to choose and change the results, and at what scale? Who participates? And what are the results of that participation?

AOC, the architectural practice of which I am a co-founder, has a shared interest in exploring freedom, participation and change in the built environment through our practice and teaching. At the scale of individual buildings we hold a long-held interest in what we call 'specific flexibility'. Some of our favorite buildings were designed for one very specific purpose - with briefs driven by very particular ideologies calling for very specific spatial solutions - but turned out to be perfectly suited for other purposes. Examples include the English inter-war semi-detached house and Lucy the Elephant, to whom I will later introduce you.

Specific flexibility - as we define it - is not the endless, sub-dividable, 'one size fits all flexibility' of the neutral modern box (or what Roger Sherman calls the 'lowest common denominator'¹ approach to design), but the flexibility suggested, provoked and enabled by the very specific. 'Specifically flexible' buildings meet initial demands - and sometimes represent very particular ways of thinking - but also offer unforeseen freedoms and potential for change to the people who inhabit and use the buildings over time. This is powerful and is something that AOC tries to learn from and emulate in the buildings that we design. But what about towns and cities? What are the ideologies and intentions that

¹ Sherman, Roger., 'Counting (on) Change' in: **The Infrastructural City: Networked Ecologies in Los Angeles**, Actar, Barcelona, 2009, pp. 180-205.



Figure 1: Lucy the Elephant, Margate, New Jersey, USA (Photograph © Tom Coward / AOC)

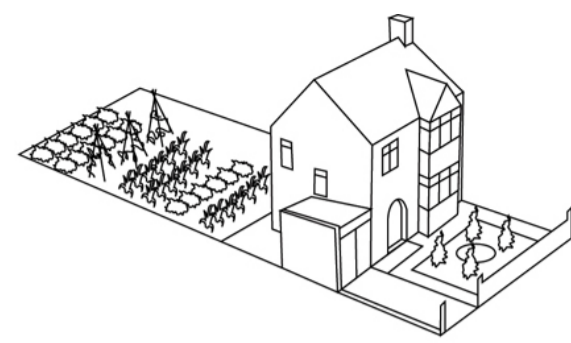
guide the making of new places, and can the same powerfully unforeseen freedoms and potential for change that we find in our favorite 'specifically flexible' buildings be found at the urban scale? Is there such a thing as specific flexibility in towns and cities? If so, can this also be learned from and practiced in the making of new places, in order that we might – as architects and planners - help meet the demands of the here-and-now, but also offer unforeseen potentials for future inhabitants; enabling them to become active and empowered participants?

Lucy and the Semi

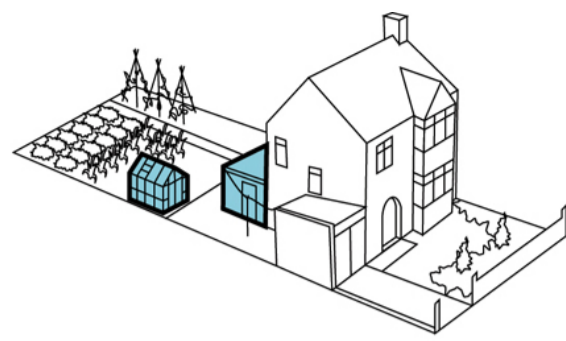
'It's got a raw quality, it's certainly not hi-tech. I like the way Lucy isn't really precious. The important thing appears to be the play between familiarity and otherness.'²

² AOC co-founder Tom Coward in an interview by Building Design magazine on how Lucy the Elephant has inspired our practice: Coward, Tom., 'Architect's Inspirations', in: **Building Design Magazine**, 6th Feb (2009).

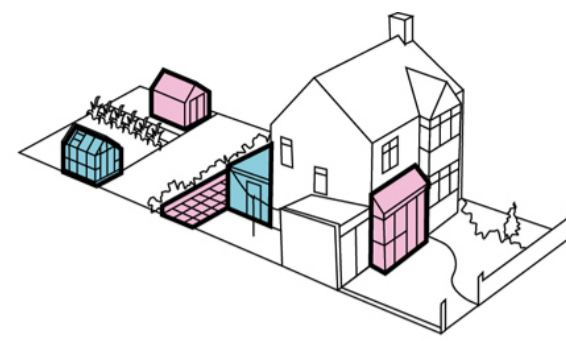
Meet Lucy the Elephant (fig.1), one of AOC's favorite specifically flexible buildings. Standing six storeys high, Lucy was built in 1881 by engineer and land speculator James V. Lafferty with the very specific purpose of promoting the sale of plots for holiday cottages in Margate, New Jersey. A technical feat at the time, Lafferty struggled to find a contractor to build his elephant and eventually relied on local boat builders to construct her attractive double-curves. Once complete,



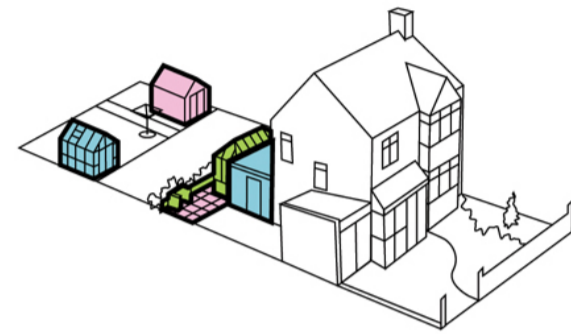
1950 original semi detached home with self sufficient rear vegetable garden and formal front.



1960 improvements in domestic appliances increase kitchen size requirements



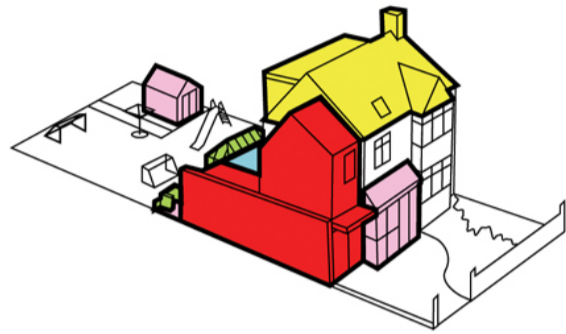
1970 increased standards of living make double bay car driveway commonplace. Patio and porch extend living outwards



1980 leisure time at home typified with the garden patio BBQ and rear conservatory...and the loss of the vegetables



1990 the loft extension gives that extra room...and an ensuite



2000 another bedroom above the garage which underused for years becomes a playroom. An open plan dining area compliments the congested kitchen

Figure 2: AOC, the specifically flexible life of a semi-detached house, 2006 (© AOC)

potential cottage buyers would climb up inside Lucy and view the surrounding plots through her large elephantine eyes. She soon became a popular tourist attraction that satisfied Lafferty's original speculative brief. But since the 1880s, Lucy's role has extended and shifted beyond the one that Lafferty first intended for her, and her exotic elephantine form has gone on to happily and variously invite and accommodate all kinds of humdrum use: a private house, a hotel, a tavern, a café and a museum; her fortunes ebbing and flowing with the uses that found her. In 2006 she was struck by lightning and one of her huge tusks was browned as a result. By the 1960s, Lucy stood abandoned, her future apparently doomed. However, Lucy had become a much-loved part of Margate's community fabric, and her impending loss inspired the formation of the Margate Civic Association and the Save Lucy Committee, whose successful local campaign saw Lucy moved on wheels to a new site and saved. Restored in 1970 and designated a US National Historic Landmark in 1976, she is now a successful tourist attraction. Specifically flexible Lucy the Elephant – initially a speculator's gimmick – turned out to be suitable for all kinds of unforeseen uses, and more importantly, nearly a century after her construction, was a catalyst for civic cohesion and the making of place. A less exotic but possibly more powerful example of specific flexibility in buildings

is the inter-war English semi-detached house or 'semi' (fig.2). More powerful because of the scale at which this still-popular standard building type was repeated across large swathes of England by speculative builders and therefore the way in which it has become a part of millions of individual lives over time and an essential part of popular British culture.

The secret of the semi's enduring success is the way that it has been able to accommodate change over more than half a century, whilst retaining its specificity. The semi, with its space for expansion and sub-division, home-office and secure car-or-cycle-parking (or both), feels as naturally a home of the early 21st century as it did a home of the 1930s.

In a piece for *Architecture Today* in 2008, fellow AOC founder Geoff Shearcroft puts it like this:

"The suburban semi is a spatially generous home. Beyond the basic collection of naturally lit rooms it inevitably has a number of leftover spaces: the airing cupboard, the attic, the cupboard under the stairs... Tight spaces that lack a dedicated function their specific forms actively encourage uses which do not lend themselves to more rectilinear rooms. This spatial generosity continues outside with a range of amenity spaces. Traditionally described as merely the garden these spaces can accommodate all manner of needs, from a self-sufficient vegetable patch to a family cricket wicket... The simple construction of the semi allows it to evolve over time. The relatively low-tech building reduces the need for building professionals to maintain or change the building encouraging the owner to adapt the home to fit. This has the practical benefit of both allowing inexpensive, regular maintenance and actively encouraging adaptation of the building, allowing it to change in response to the residents' shifting requirements."³

The 1970s BBC sitcom 'The Good Life' played on the semi's ability to accommodate the two completely different lifestyles of a set of semi-attached neighbors, and in the 2000s, news items featuring the semi's ability to accommodate all kinds of lifestyles are common.⁴

A recent study on faith in London's suburbs by Professor David Gilbert⁵ and photographs of suburban mosques by Mehmood Naqshbandi⁶ show how the semi-detached house continues to demonstrate its propensity to accommodate uses that must have been unforeseeable by the speculative developers who first built them, supporting new suburban community infrastructures.

However, somewhat ironically, an increasing awareness of the cultural value of inter-war semi – generated by its ability to accommodate and enable change – is leading to areas of semi-detached suburbia being formally protected and conserved by British local planning authorities, potentially constraining the very

³ Shearcroft, Geoff., 'Learning from the Semi' in: **Architecture Today**, Feb 2008.

⁴ Examples of two news items over recent years include one on a reclusive 'nightmare neighbour' who had grown a three-storey-high privacy-providing bush in his semi-detached house's front garden, and a couple who had decorated their house's interior as a detailed miniature recreation of the interior of the Palace of Versailles.

⁵ David Gilbert is Professor of Urban and Historical Geography at Royal Holloway University of London and was speaking at the event 'Creative Edge: Reconceiving Suburban London' at the Royal Academy of Arts on 19 October 2009.

⁶ See photographs at www.MuslimsInBritain.org



Figure 3: Lucy the Elephant, Margate, New Jersey, USA (Photograph © Tom Coward / AOC)

characteristics that make the semi so valuable.

The success of Lucy the Elephant and the semi is based on a number of shared characteristics. Both buildings meet the requirements of the initial brief; they express a familiarity that offers a 'way in' (in one case through zoomorphology and the other through appropriation of popular symbols of the English pseudo-vernacular such as the mock-tudor styling); they express a degree of otherness (in one case a large Elephant with a domestic front door in its leg (fig.3), in the other through the co-joining of two detached houses and the inclusion of localized 'quirky' features which are either original or added by previous owners); they are both clearly adaptable (through the use of materials which are easily capable of being 'knocked around') and through the incorporation of 'suggestive spaces' that express apparent previous change and invite future re-appropriation. The characteristics behind the success of Lucy and the semi - and how they are predominantly focused on the ways in which people might engage with them - relate to what Richard Sennett calls 'engaged material consciousness' whereby people are particularly interested in - and invest thought in - the things that they can change.⁷

As designers, it seems important that we learn from these examples and others in developing speculative design approaches that create specifically flexible,

⁷ Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, Allen Lane, London 2008.



Figure 4: Robert Venturi, Vanna Venturi House, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, USA (Photograph © Vincent Lacovara / AOC)

'suggestive' buildings that meet immediate needs but inspire and enable unpredicted change, and positively engage people's interest and thought. Roger Sherman argues that such a speculative approach to design 'calls for a deceptively simple, if evocative formal conceit that is cleverly embedded with an infrastructural capacity to support a variety of possible futures. Specific shape or surface characteristics create a formal peculiarity that is both highly imageable and at the same time serves as an unlikely point of tangency between the possible constituencies it might attract. Only as the future unfolds does its full formal complexity and political potential become evident'⁸. Here it is important to stress the political potentials that such a design approach might bring. Sherman asks how form might be conceived 'so as to suggest how it might be shaped in a future situation'. As we have seen above, Lucy and the semi provide some clues at the building scale. Sherman describes such a design approach as a 'means of "setting a trap" to capture potential change'. He goes on to argue that to do so 'hinges on the [designer's] ability to operate at the cusp between control and disorganization. Heretofore, however, architects and planners have tended to dichotomize these two conditions - aligning themselves with the former and against the latter...What is needed is a shift to a type of thinking ahead in which, unlike scenario planning (a direct outgrowth of intricate scripting), form comes

⁸ Roger Sherman, 'Counting (on) Change' in: *The Infrastructural City: Networked Ecologies in Los Angeles*, Actar, Barcelona 2009, pp. 180-205.



Figure 5: A suggestive external nook at Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford, UK (Photograph © Daisy Froud / AOC)

first, and becomes a conceit for the unfolding of different unexpected futures'. AOC have explored how other designers have created specifically flexible and suggestive spaces and buildings; where they have knowingly 'set traps' and used specific form for the kind of conceit described above. AOC's Daisy Froud has shown how architects such as Robert Venturi in his Vanna Venturi House (fig.4) and British developer Countryside Properties at Great Notley and Beaulieu Park (fig.5), have used familiar motifs and forms, as well as nooks, crannies and other suggestive spaces to give the impression of time having passed and built fabric having already been manipulated as a way to engender a sense of familiarity and belonging, and as a result provide a kind of suggestive infrastructure for future change.⁹

The buildings that AOC has been involved in designing have often been experiments in creating specific flexibility, variously using suggestive spaces, knock-around fabric and motifs that attempt to engender familiarity, to answer the specific demands of the brief but hopefully setting some traps of our own to enable and invite future unforeseeable reinterpretations (fig.6, 7). We have found that these experiments require a combination of preciousness and rigor during the design process along with a sense of un-preciousness about what might happen once our role as architect has ended. We often describe this as

⁹ Daisy Froud, 'Thinking Beyond The Homely: Countryside Properties & the Shape of Time' in: *Home Cultures*, 2005, vol.1, issue 3, pp. 211-233.



Figure 6: AOC, the Lift, a transportable, demountable meeting and performance space, shown here at the Southbank Centre, 2008. The Lift's very specific shape and external patterned material offers a familiar character and promotes engagement, whilst its kit-of-parts structure and internal deployable roomscape provide endless potential configurations, uses and re-interpretations (Photograph © TBC)

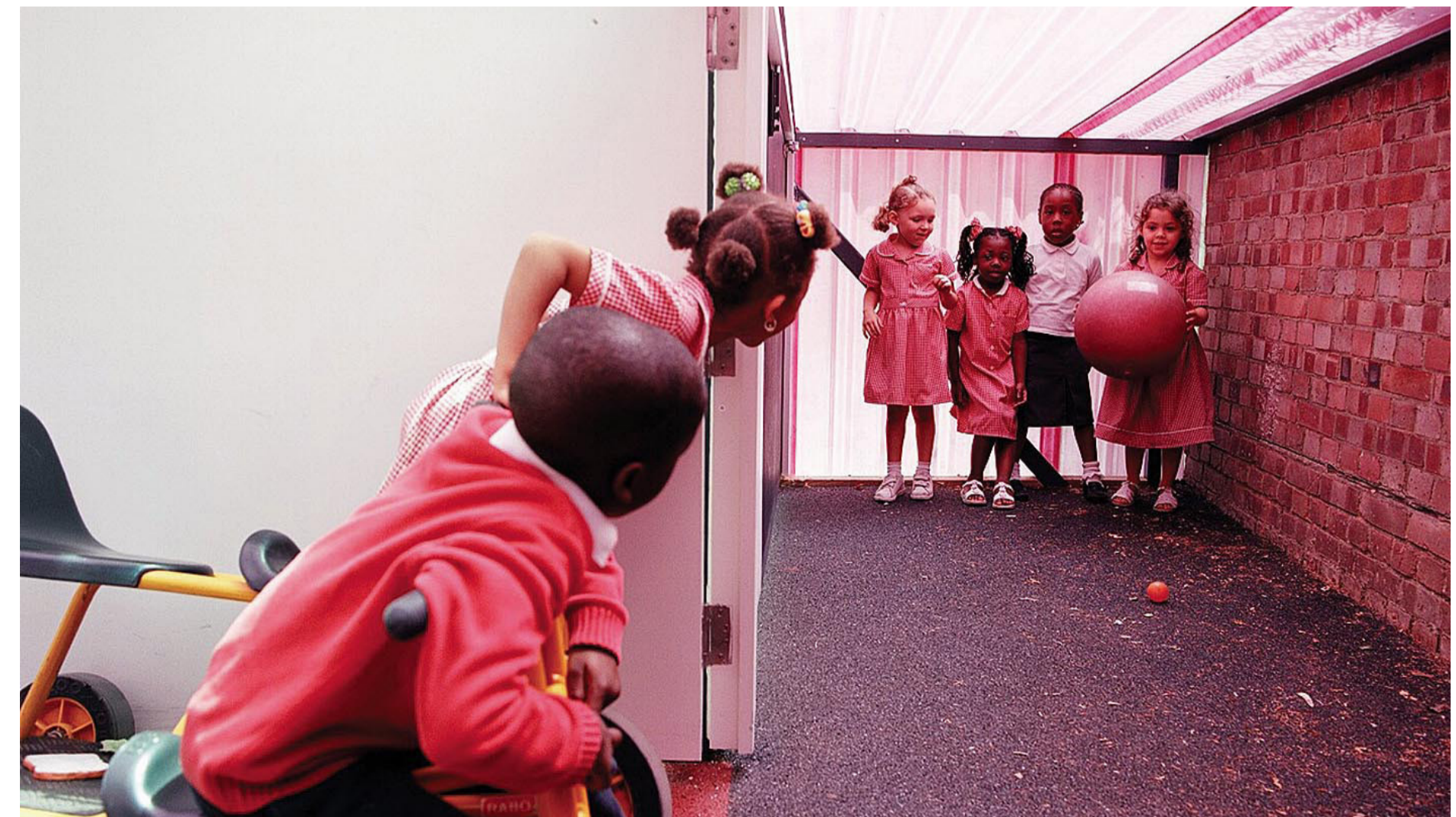


Figure 7: AOC, Janet Summers Early Years Centre, Southwark, UK, 2006. Suggestive space: playground storage doubles up as hideaway (Photograph © TBC)

the ‘art of letting go’. Our experiments, therefore, are experiments in finding the appropriate balance - and operating on that powerful cusp between - freedom and control.

Experiments in Freedom and Control

The UK is a good place to look for examples of experiments in freedom and control, and the balance or tension between the two, in planning, placemaking and architecture. The play between freedom and control and the ambiguous results runs deep through British culture. Britain is a monarchy and a democracy; the home of civil rights and the free market; a welfare state and a mercantile state. The London suburb – that exemplar of the generic habitat for the masses situated between town and country, and the exemplar of individual freedom of choice - creates the cultural backdrop for teenage boredom, dissatisfaction and the punkish political and cultural reactions and creativity that come with that. In the UK, both positive and negative freedom, classical liberalism and social liberalism, are constantly experimented with, practiced, rejected, rediscovered and reinterpreted. Possibly the most tangible results are the apparently British traits of compromise and ambiguity.

This compromise and ambiguity and the play between freedom and control is expressed in Britain’s built environment. The semi-detached house is half free and half ‘attached’. The British planning system, originally brought in with the Town and Country Planning Act in 1947 by the post-war Labour party government, nationalized development rights whilst effectively fixing the status quo in terms of land ownership, in an unlikely alliance between a radical socialist government and the largely conservative land owners. Along with Patrick Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan of 1944 which introduced the concept of the London green belt, and the decentralization of London’s population to a number of planned satellite New Towns, Robert Bruegmann has described the 1947 Planning Act, which still fundamentally forms the basis of the British planning system, as being simultaneously highly conservative and radical.¹⁰

The compromised control embodied in the British planning system has rendered it almost constantly unpopular since soon after its introduction, both amongst those who found it ‘too controlling’ and those who found it ‘not controlling enough’.¹¹

By the 1960s, some voices clearly expressed irritation with the state’s attempts to predetermine the shape of society for the public good through the planning system. In a piece for *Architectural Design* in 1966, the architect Cedric Price made his views clear:

“I doubt the relevance of the concepts of Town Centre, Town and Balanced

¹⁰ Robert Bruegmann, **Sprawl: A Compact History**, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005, pp. 173-179.

¹¹ Ibid

Community. Calculated suburban sprawl sounds good to me.”¹²

Three years later Cedric Price joined fellow radicals with socialist backgrounds Reyner Banham, Paul Barker and Peter Hall to write their seminal proposal ‘Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom’ for *New Society*, the left-of-centre magazine of which Paul Barker was then editor. The premise was that the whole concept of town and country planning had gone ‘cockeyed’. The authors asked: “what would happen if there were no Plan? What would people prefer to do, if their choice were untrammelled?”

They proposed a “precise and carefully observed experiment in non-planning”, taking a few appropriate zones of the country and using them as “launch-pads for Non-Plan”. The intention was to find out what form development would take, and what it would look like, if left to people to choose for themselves. Colin Ward has pointed out that the fact that this was presented as a ‘controlled experiment’ rather than a wholesale rejection of the planning system was useful for propagandists.¹³

In the introduction to the proposal, referring to Melvin Webber, the authors of *Non Plan* pointed out how they saw planning as the only branch of knowledge purporting to be some kind of science that regards a plan to be fulfilled when it is merely completed. In fact, they observed, plans often “turn out to have reasons for succeeding which the planner...did not foresee”.

In particular, they used the example of Welwyn Garden City, where thinly scattered dwellings were initially laid out with health, the growing of food and the ‘good life’ in mind:

“Welwyn Garden City (was) therefore built – and then duly mocked for dull doctrinairism. The layout made public transport almost impossible; the tin and frozen pack rapidly outdated the vegetable patch. But then the spread of car ownership outdated the mockery: those roads lived to find a justification; the space around the houses could absorb a garage without too much trouble; and the garden (as, even, in many inner London conversions of Georgian houses) became an unexceptionable outdoor room and meeting space for children, away from the lethal pressed steel and rubber hurtling around the streets.” The excerpt makes a good description of specific flexibility in placemaking and the law of unforeseen planning.

The *Non-Plan* piece in *New Society* went on to be an inspiration to a generation of left-leaning activists and advocates of participatory design and planning such as Colin Ward.¹⁴ However, as Ben Franks has pointed out, despite the political background of its authors, *Non-Plan* had “much more in common with the New Right than the New Left and shares many key characteristics with Friedrich Hayek, a writer who is not only unequivocally of the New Right, but

¹² Cedric Price, ‘Potteries Think Belt’ in: **Architectural Design**, vol.36, October 1966, pp. 483-497.

¹³ Colin Ward, ‘Anarchy and Architecture: A Personal Record’, in **Non-Plan: Essays in Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism**, The Architectural Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 44-51.

¹⁴ In 1975 Colin Ward proposed the idea of a ‘Do-It-Yourself New Town’. This combined the experience of the pre-war English ‘plotlands’ with the ‘post-war adventure of the self-built settlements that surround every city of Latin America, Africa or Asia’. See Colin Ward, ‘The unofficial countryside’, **Town and Country**, 1998.

15 Ben Franks, 'New Right / New Left: An Alternative Experiment in Freedom', in **Non-Plan: Essays in Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism**, The Architectural Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 32-43.

16 Paul Barker, 'Thinking the Unthinkable', in **Non-Plan: Essays in Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism**, The Architectural Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 2-7.

17 'Open Source Planning' is the name of a policy paper launched by the Conservative Party in advance of the 2010 British general election. The general election led to a hung parliament and a coalition government combining David Cameron's Conservative Party with Nick Clegg's Liberal Democrats.

18 In an article in **Regeneration and Renewal** magazine on 1st June 2010 Jon Rouse writes: 'I was at a dinner with a now cabinet minister a few weeks ago. He was asked by one local authority guest what sort of deal a Conservative Government would want to strike with councils. He looked quizzical. "There is no deal, other than less money, more freedom, get on with it!"'

19 Geoff Shearcroft, 'Learning from Milton Keynes', in: **Building Design**, 2nd August 2007.

20 Richard Llwyn-Davies was a colleague of co-Non-Plan author Reyner Banham at University College

is regarded by both the New Right and their opponents as exemplifying their creed."¹⁵ Indeed, via Peter Hall, Non-Plan went on to find its most tangible manifestation in his proposal for 'enterprise zones' which went on to be taken up and implemented by the 1979 Thatcher government, with the redevelopment of London Docklands and Canary Wharf as the best known results.¹⁶

The play between freedom and control continues to permeate dialogue amongst British architects and planners and also continues to dominate the political agenda. Following fifteen years of Tony Blair's 'Big Tent' of urban renaissance, bottom-up choices and top-down targets, the British public are now being offered David Cameron's 'Big Society' of localism, the decentralization of decision-making, a raft of proposals for 'Open Source Planning'¹⁷ and a clarion call of "less money, more freedom, get on with it".¹⁸

Learning from Milton Keynes

Roughly contemporary with the Non-Plan piece in *New Society* was the planning of the British New Town Milton Keynes, officially designated in January 1967. Milton Keynes was to be the last, largest and most successful of the post-war New Towns.

It has enjoyed continuous population growth, up from 65,000 in 1970 to 210,000 today, creating 60,000 new households. It hosts 7,200 employers, and has been rated fifth of 48 UK cities for overall business environment. Coutts Bank has recently opened a branch in Milton Keynes in response to research suggesting that the city is "a haven for the millionaires of the future".¹⁹

Jonathan Hughes describes the original guiding ideology behind Milton Keynes - which was substantially different to that which had guided the planning of the New Towns that had preceded it - in terms of the concept of indeterminacy, whereby a balance between freedom and control was intended through Richard Llwyn-Davies'²⁰ and Derek Walker's grid-square plan:

'Rather than being planned with the standard post-war solutions of ring and radial road systems, Milton Keynes was to offer a neutral net of communication routes, establishing a grid of 1 km² plots within which any activity could be located. Such a strategy reflected American planner Melvin Webber's notion of a motorized urban environment that no longer required the provision of traditional, centralized, urban focal points. Equally, the design paid homage to the model of Los Angeles' urbanism, a form that had been captivating British critics with a mixture of wonder and horror for the best part of the post-war period. Notably, the plan for the new city made it clear that industrial and residential areas should be freely dispersed about the city, and that the functional designation of individual grid-squares be made as required in response to need rather than some

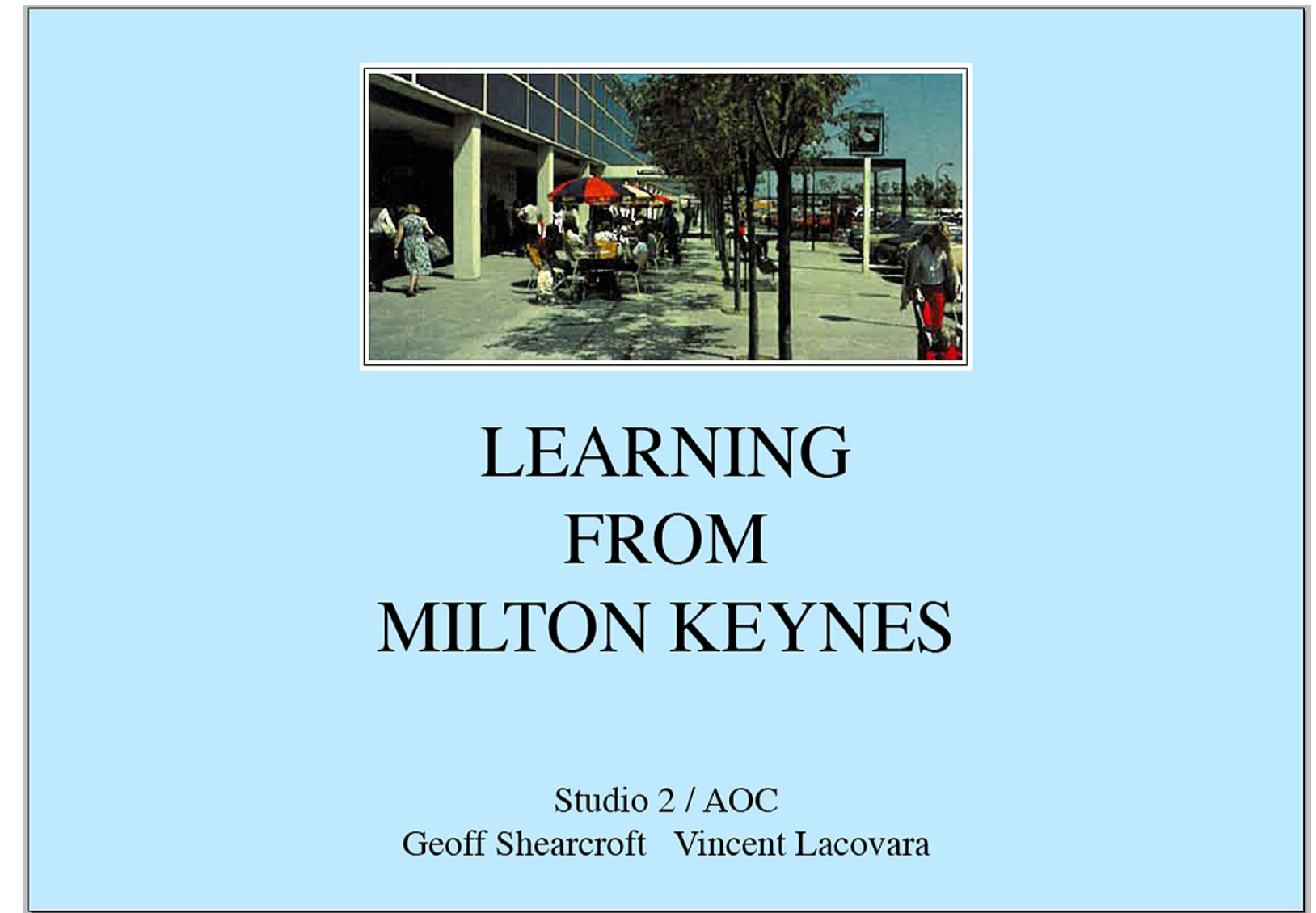


Figure 8: AOC, London Metropolitan University Department of Architecture and Spatial Design, undergraduate design Studio 2, 'Learning from Milton Keynes'. 2008-2009 (© AOC)

London.

21 Jonathan Hughes, 'The Indeterminate Building', in **Non-Plan: Essays in Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism**, The Architectural Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 101-102.

pre-determined zoning strategy. Yet whilst the Milton Keynes plan proclaimed indeterminacy of use, it retained a resolutely planned infrastructure, locating roads according to the planners' wishes and designating such areas as the central business district.²¹

Hughes goes on to describe Milton Keynes - and other examples of experiments in indeterminacy in architecture and planning of the time - as representative of a tension between freedom and control that is indicative of a Welfare State operating in a mixed economy.

In 2008, interested in Milton Keynes' specifically flexible plan, and reports of its apparent success, and despite its unfashionable image as a low density, car-based city par excellence, AOC taught a studio at London Metropolitan University called 'Learning from Milton Keynes' (fig.8). The studio borrowed heavily from the methodology of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's 1968 Yale studio 'Learning from Las Vegas'.

Each of our students was allocated a Milton Keynes grid square to study and map (fig.9), using Learning from Las Vegas style non-judgmental mapping techniques and the dead-pan photographic method of Ed Ruscha. Milton Keynes' grid squares "partition the city into manageable development parcels that can accommodate a variety of typologies, tenures, uses and forms, whilst establishing

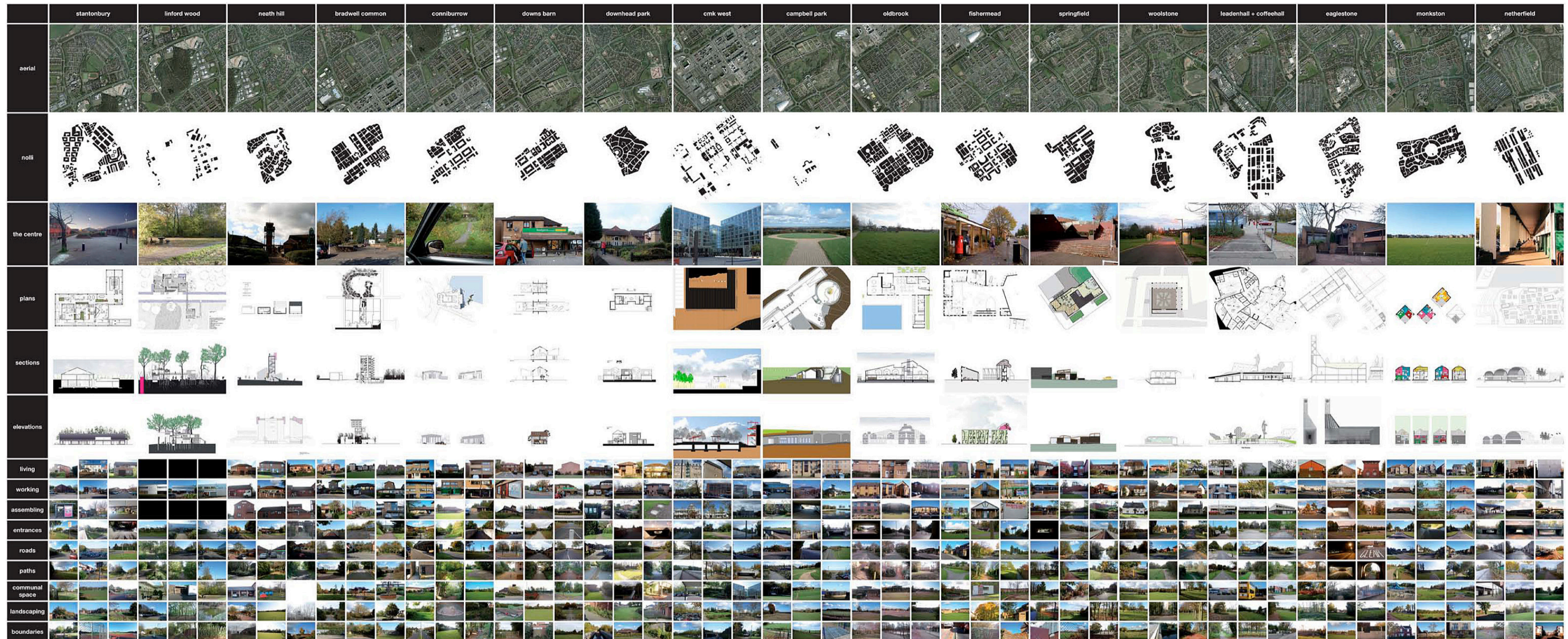


Figure 9: Matrix of student analysis of Milton Keynes grid squares as part of 'Learning from Milton Keynes'. 2008-2009 (© AOC / LMU Studio 2)

a cohesive urban form. A quick glance at a number of adjacent grid squares reveal the heterogeneous richness of such framework - an existing village happily sits between a Dixon Jones-designed linear modernist housing scheme and a Scandinavian inspired development of cul-de-sacs. Creating a framework that actively encourages a diversity of designs prevents the homogeneity associated with much modernist city making".²²

At the scale of the New Town, Milton Keynes was conceived as a kind of specifically flexible city of the future, meeting the immediate needs of the 1970s but with the inbuilt capacity to grow and accommodate the needs of the future. Within the grid squares, our students found some fascinating variations on specific

flexibility and varying degrees of success at the neighborhood scale.

In Netherfield, our student Sanna Rautio discovered that some boldly modernist blocks of housing designed by Dixon Jones in 1971 suffered from a national shortage in bricks and what would now be described as 'value engineering' and were cheaply built. The architects' intended construction methods and materials were replaced with prefabricated construction and cheaper, lightweight alternatives. The resultant poorly insulated and unrelentingly modern-looking housing proved unpopular. However the unintended, cost-engineered method of construction has proven to be adaptable and easy to knock around, with the result that many of the buildings have had insulation retro-fitted, and



Figure 10: Resident customization, Netherfield, Milton Keynes, UK, 2008 (Photograph © Sanna Rautio.)

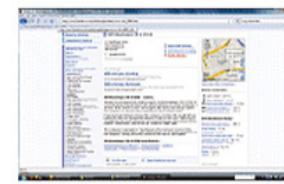


Figure 12: Home business websites and premises in Downhead Park, Milton Keynes, 2008 (Illustration © Jonathan Turney)

contemporary residents have made a variety of ad-hoc customizations (fig. 10) that further compromise Dixon Jones' original modernist design intent, but help make the homes ones that people actually want to live in.

Meanwhile, Sara Dabouni found that what initially appeared to be an over-provision of road space in Central Milton Keynes, actually makes it possible for streets be closed off with limited impact on traffic, making it a valuable location for festivals, events and filming - its low rise suburban setting somehow standing in for high-rise Metropolis in 1987's 'Superman IV: The Quest for Peace' (fig. 11). In Downhead Park, Jonathan Turney found that a seemingly unremarkable low density suburban residential neighborhood of detached homes, cul-de-sacs and buffer landscape camouflages a 'suburban business park' of home businesses and social enterprises - hidden behind net curtains but hinting at potentially valuable community infrastructures and a surprisingly lively local economy (fig. 12).

In Milton Keynes, the 'indeterminate New Town', these ongoing unforeseen evolutions - in part possible due to the balance between freedom and control struck in the original plan and fabric of the place - appear to be common, are contributing layers of meaning, association and value to the place and indicate the potential for further as yet unforeseen opportunities for Milton Keynes' present and future communities.

Agents of Change

To close this essay I would like to return to Roger Sherman, whose recent essay 'Counting (on) Change' makes the case for a design approach that advocates specificity, but accepts risk, assumes change and optimizes opportunities for future re-interpretation by as wide as possible a range of potential communities. For Sherman, if architecture (and I would add planning and place making) is "to recover its social, economic, and political value amidst the instability and uncontrollability of the contemporary city, it needs to be rethought in a manner that assumes risk, not averts it. Instead of hedging its bets, design must provide sufficient looseness with respect to the future scenarios, but actually help tilt the odds in favor of certain of them... Instead of the inclusion of a "Plan B" only as a back up to a preferred plan, their design - which combines top-down and bottom-up thinking - [should] build in several plans of equal value... Such versatility allows a design strategy to spread the risk... thereby lessening its susceptibility to failure or obsolescence due to a change in conditions. But as importantly, by building in the capacity to host a range of future scenarios, it also carries the projective potential to attract a wider set of prospective audiences".²³ New places designed in the way advocated here by Sherman, and learning from examples as diverse as Lucy the Elephant, the semi-detached house and the New Town of Milton Keynes, would meet present needs but also be specifically flexible and suggestive hosts for future 'prospective audiences'. They would not only potentially be socially, culturally and environmentally valuable - and possibly economically lucrative - but also politically powerful, in that they would not set out to close down and constrain choice, but instead seek to find a balance between freedom and control, and provoke and enable unpredictable opportunities and positively empower future participants in ways that we could never imagine.

Those involved in designing and planning for the unforeseen might do well to remember Le Corbusier's perhaps uncharacteristic remark, and one that AOC often quotes, "You know it is always life that is right and the architect that is wrong..."²⁴

²³ Roger Sherman, 'Counting (on) Change' in: **The Infrastructural City: Networked Ecologies in Los Angeles**, Actar, Barcelona, 2009, pp. 180-205.

²⁴ Le Corbusier, referring to the residents' adaptations of his houses at Pessac.



Figure 11: Superman vs. Central Milton Keynes (Illustration © Sara Dabouni)

“ While we in Western Europe might be accustomed to decades of stable government, with gradual ideological changes to a system that stays essentially the same, some countries have highly volatile political histories, where it is not only the system that can violently collapse and be reconstructed, and where ideologies are replaced by their polar opposite. In these cases New Towns become particularly embarrassing legacies of the past regime, not only because they fail to fulfill the necessary role of providing work and habitation, but because they are also filled with ideological meaning and political symbolism. ”

REGIME CHANGE

TRADE SHOWS OF THE
20TH CENTURY IN
THE PLANNING
ON SHANGHAI
NEW TOWNS

TRACES OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN THE PLANNING OF SHANGHAI NEW TOWNS

Victor Oldiges

This paper examines the origins of 20th century urban planning paradigms and how the Western architects invited for the planning of Shanghai's "One City Nine Towns" have reacted to it. 'One City Nine Towns', initiated in 1999, includes ten Western style New Towns that are partially under construction, partially completed today. They are unconventional in terms of cooperation between planners and developers and experimental in terms of spatial approach. The planning prehistory reaches back to 1946 and beyond. These New Towns do not represent the boom of generic New Town development in Eastern China, because they account for only a small percentage of overall suburban construction in the Greater Shanghai area. However, they constitute a study object on the exchange of ideas between China and the West. This exchange is not an abstract transfer of anonymous planning schemes and development trends. On the contrary, it was particular people who have created global continuity in planning even across opposing political systems, because the turbulent 20th century brought forth individual biographies of architects and planners whose escape from their country's political system turned them into cosmopolitans.

Shanghai Urban Housing after Liberalization

The situation in the semi-liberal housing market that preceded the 1999 "One City Nine Towns" initiative was not much different from today. The vast majority of housing projects were determined by a rationalist logic derived from a comparatively homogeneous market. The middle class was still young and had not developed the broad differences in individual lifestyles of the West. Thus, consumer needs were more predictable: a southern orientation, a large number of rooms, a view into a public garden (preferably with some small lake), and a secure apartment in a gated community were the most common and unchallenged demands. While garden design within the gated community was very important, 'place-making' outside the compound was widely neglected. Developers met the demand with generic designs and predetermined building types that they could supply while still keeping infrastructure, construction and planning costs low (fig. 1). The state-supported tabula-rasa approach to urban development allowed for large, orthogonal streets that ignored the existing street



Figure 1: Suburban housing in Shanghai (from: Oldiges: Shanghai – Sijing, 2004)

grid; locals (farmers, villagers or citizens) were relocated, often without adequate compensation. Still, the ratio between land acquisition (including relocation compensation) and construction cost could be up to 90/10.¹

Since the opening of China's economy in the 1980s, the urban development of Shanghai has caught up with the already rapid population growth and influx. The liberation of the housing market in 1985 turned large parts of suburban land into development areas. Urban sprawl necessitated large investments in infrastructure, which then consumed a lot of land in the inner city and led to more sprawl. Suburban developments lacked the density and amenities to give the population an incentive to stay. For those who were relocated to the suburb, the second family income, mostly from informal jobs, fell away, so people were forced to commute into the city, which added to the pressure on the infrastructure. Qualified white-collar workers would not move to the suburbs because of a lack of identity, so there was also very little relief on the downtown market.

¹ Victor Oldiges, *Shanghai – Sijing: Untersuchungen zum Wohnungsbau in der Megacity*, Grin, Berlin, 2004, p. 31.

One City Nine Towns

In this setting, Shanghai mayor Chen Liangyu initiated the 'One City Nine Towns' plan in 1999. Two years later it was implemented into the 2001 5-year-plan for



Figure 2: Slab buildings in Shanghai (from: Oldiges: Shanghai – Sijing, 2004)

the Greater Shanghai area. The key concept was to create independent satellite cities and preserve a green belt around the city in order to maintain agricultural supply at the core city. To make the cities more attractive, they were given national identities. Countries that had already strong ties to Shanghai were invited to participate in the planning: German, Dutch, Spanish, Canadian, Scandinavian, Italian and British architects joined. Two towns exhibit a traditional Chinese stylized theme.² Other satellite cities, such as Lingang New Town and Dongtan New Town, with German and British influence, respectively followed. State-owned developers carried out the ten projects.

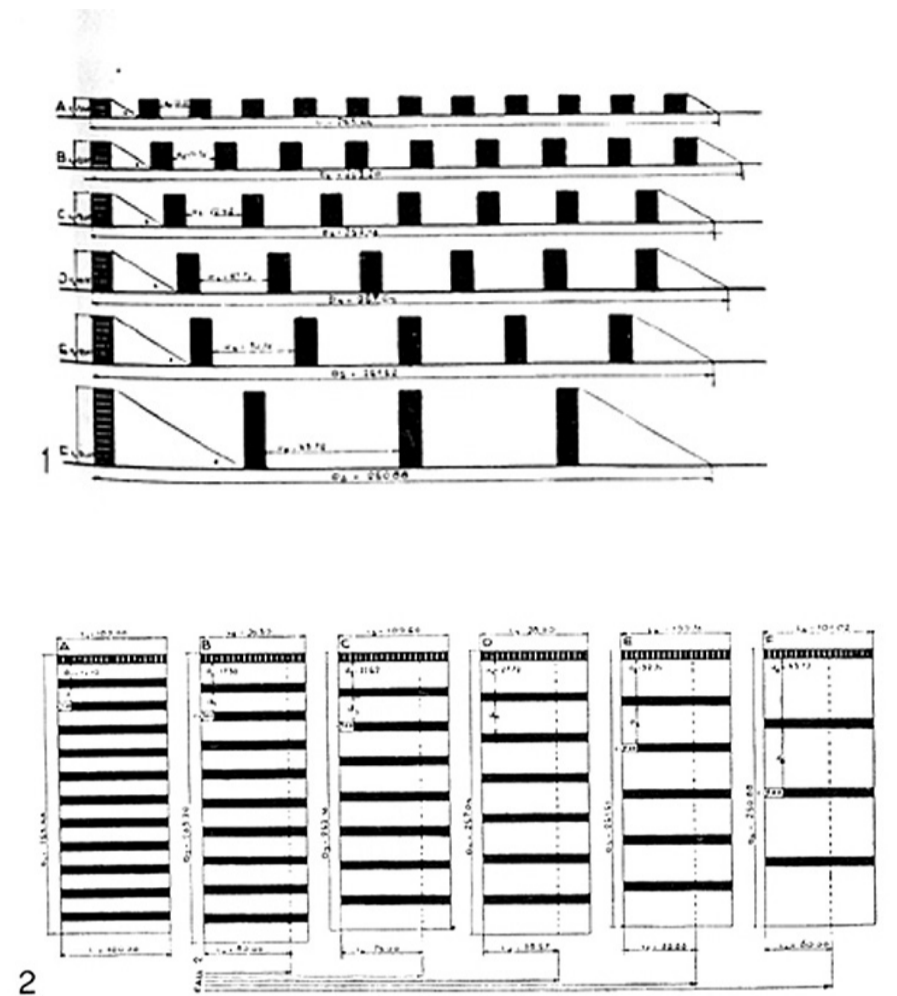
In an early phase, the designers were given great autonomy in design. Still, all of the involved international firms were forced to reflect on the most prevalent paradigms of Chinese urbanism: the slab building, south orientation, the gated community and the neighborhood unit. In addition to that, they had to plan an autonomous satellite city. When Western architects challenge these paradigms, clients often state that these are thousand-years old Chinese traditions that still live on today³. But this is only partially true. Much of what has become a planning dogma today is a product of 20th century modernism.

2 Harry den Hartog, (ed.), **Shanghai New Towns – Searching for Community and Identity in a Sprawling Metropolis**, 010, Rotterdam, 2010, p. 34.

3 Every Western architect who has been through exhausting client meetings knows the nonnegotiable argument that certain things are ‘a thousand year old Chinese traditions’ and are not subject to change by a Westerner.



Figure 3: Dammerstock plan (Stadt Karlsruhe)



2

Figure 4: Sunlight analysis by Walter Gropius (from: Koegel: Rudolf Hamburger und Richard Paulick, 2007)

South Orientation

A quick look at a satellite image of any Eastern Chinese city reveals repetitive rows of slab buildings (fig.2). Western architects despair at the sight of this endless monotony. Of course, this building type is not known in traditional Chinese architecture. Where does it originate from? In the late 1920s, the Weimar Republic suffered from a great housing shortage. It was the time of Neues Bauen and the Werkbundsiedlungen, experimental neighborhoods made to create equal and healthy housing for all. European modernism had already invented the ‘light, air and sun’ dogma decades before, and with it the housing slab, orientated East-West, with an open space in between. But in the Werkbundsiedlungen it was tested for the first time at an urban scale. In 1928, the German city of Karlsruhe commissioned the competition for the ‘Dammerstock Siedlung’ project (fig.3). Head of the jury was Ernst May. Walter Gropius won the competition. Some of Gropius’ sketches show abstract studies of different volumes in relation to the sunlight (fig.4). The ideal orientation was regarded to be East-West. The Dammerstock project consisted of slab buildings aligned in a row with enough space in between to allow for direct sunlight to penetrate into each unit. One of Gropius’ employees, who presumably worked



on the Dammerstock project, was Richard Paulick⁴. He, a Bauhaus academic assistant in the 1920s, had learned directly from Hans Poelzig in Berlin⁵. A known socialist, Paulick immigrated to Shanghai in the 1930s. After years of work as an architect and stage designer, he became a professor at Shanghai's St. John's University and later the head of the urban planning council. Confronted with a housing shortage even greater than that of the Weimar Republic during the late 1940s in Shanghai, he became the leading designer of the masterplan for Greater Shanghai in 1946. In 1949, he introduced some of the ideas of Neues Bauen in his proposal for Shanghai's Zhabei district. The district had great meaning to Shanghai; it was quite central and had been destroyed during a Japanese air raid early in the war.⁶ Paulick proposed a spatially appealing structure formed by amorphous streetscapes and rigid slab buildings. Most of them faced south, just like the existing 1920s typical Shanghai 'Lilong' (fig.5), a type of terraced housing neighborhood, in which every unit includes a large gate and a courtyard and has direct access from a side lane.⁷ His range of housing types theoretically allowed for a much higher population density than the Lilong building type that was high in floor area ratio but low in the number of units (already during the war, most units were occupied by multiple families. Later this situation worsened). 'Light, air and sun' had in fact been key issues in traditional Chinese housing, and the new slab building reflected the ideals of Communist ideology. So Chinese planners warmly welcomed Paulick's modernist ideas. However, when in 1949 the Maoist troops took over power from the Nationalists, nobody wanted to officially tie into the plans drafted under an opposing government. The plans were forgotten for reasons of political ideology, but other projects such as Caoyang village (1950s) (fig.6), a 'National Model Neighborhood', bear the signature of Paulick's successors.⁸ Many of the invited Soviet experts disregarded the spatial qualities of the Zhabei and Caoyang and followed the Soviet paradigm of mass production and industrial satellite cities. From 1957, Minhang was built, a satellite city that blended into Paulick's regional plan, but was inspired by the industrial, linear city that had been introduced in the Soviet Union three decades earlier by Miljutin and – Ernst May.⁹ German modernist biographies thus indirectly influenced Chinese urbanism more than once. Soon, the modernist idea turned into an excuse for the construction industry to build monotonous and low quality housing. Construction fell short of supplying the rising demand fueled by population growth and urbanization in the following decades. In the 1980s and 90s, equality yielded market economy, and the range of housing types widened into variations of the same theme, catering to different incomes. The market showed that south orientation was a requirement for customers. During the 1980s, south orientation was not always given priority over other demands

4 Eduard Koegel, **Zwei**

Poelzigschüler in der Emigration: Rudolf Hamburger und Richard Paulick zwischen Shanghai und Ostberlin (1930-1955), Bauhaus Universität, Weimar, 2007, p. 49.

5 Op. cit. p. 42.

6 Op. cit. p. 81.

7 On Lilong housing see: Lü, Junhua, Rowe, Peter G. and Zhang, Jie (ed.), **Modern Urban Housing in China 1840-2000**, Prestel, Munich / London / New York, 2001.

8 Op. cit. pp. 122-124.

9 Robert Kaltenbrunner, 'Minhang und Hoyerswerda: Die "Neuen Städte" der Fünfziger Jahre as Modell einer "Sozialistischen" Raumentwicklung', in: Vöckler, Kai and Luckow, Dirk (eds), **Peking Shanghai Shenzen**, Frankfurt / New York, 2000.

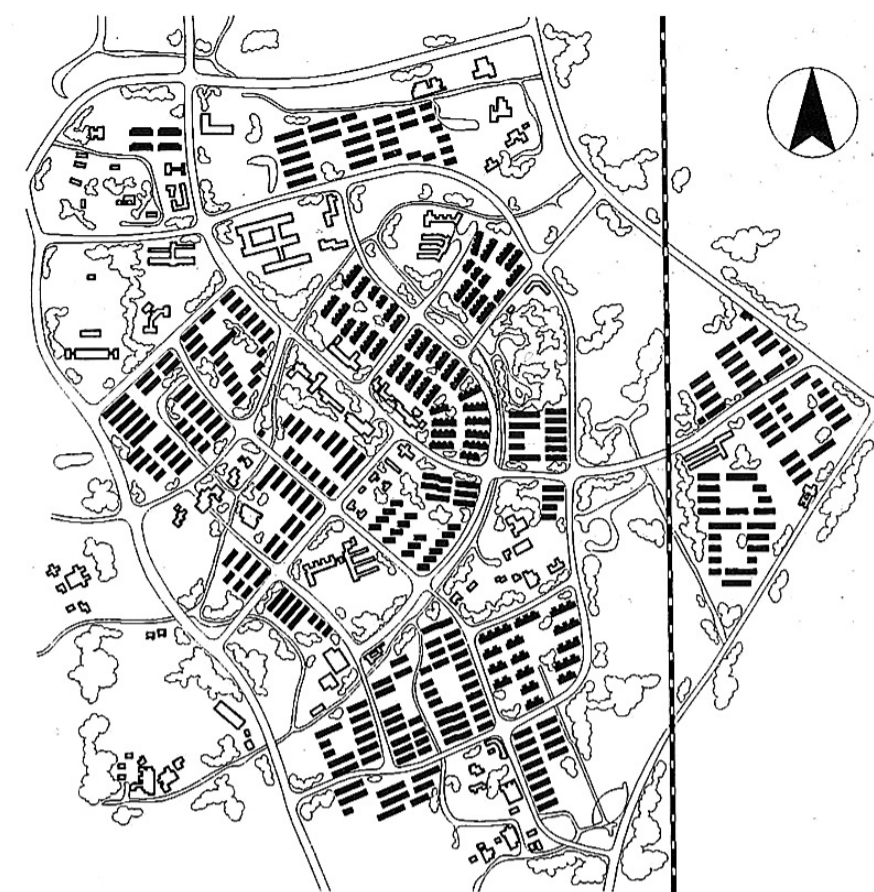


Figure 6: Plan of Caoyang Village (Lü, Rowe, Zhang, *Modern Urban Housing*, 2001)

Figure 7: plan of Lingang New Town (from: Oldiges, Shanghai – Sijing, 2004)

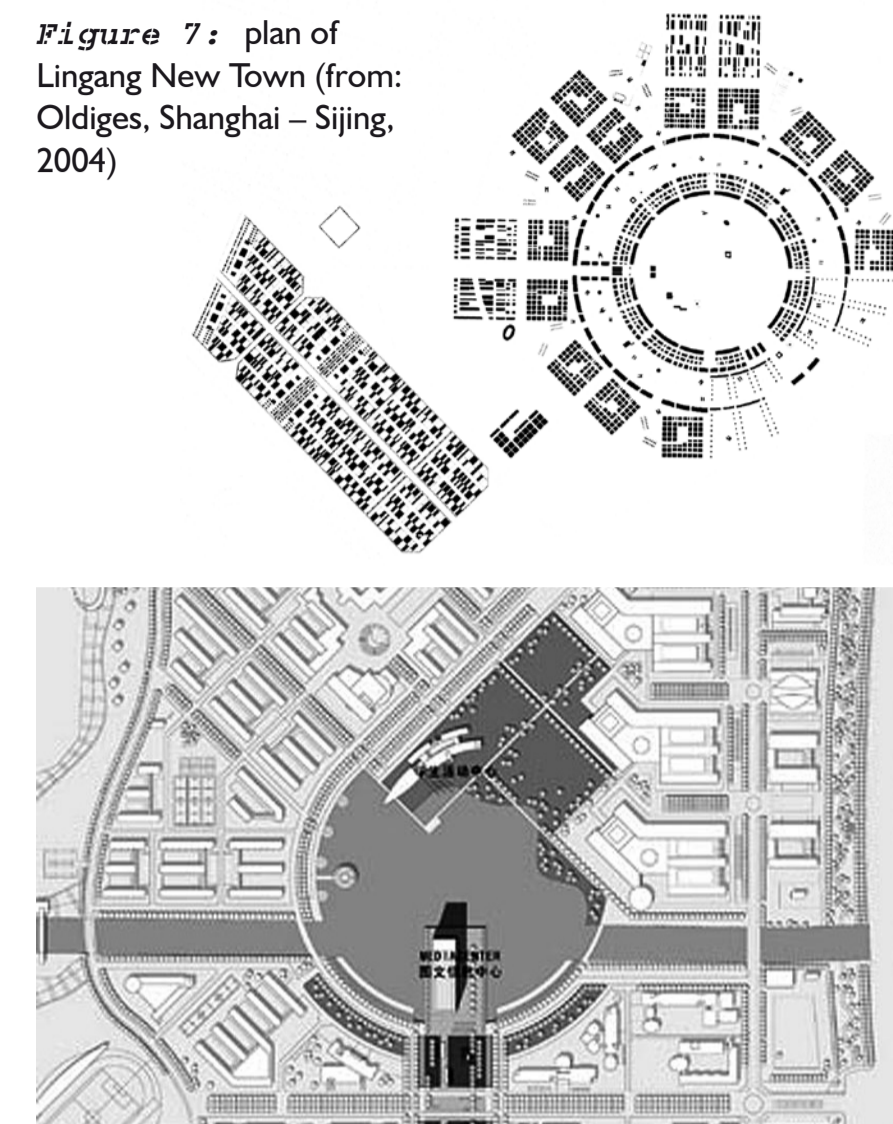


Figure 8: Neighborhood of Lingang New Town (FAR Architecture Center Shanghai)

of planning such as economy and density. When a developer would tear down a street block of Soviet style slabs, he would 'optimize' orientation - the sellable unit would always get priority over other requirements.¹⁰

Challenging the sun

Every Western architect challenged the south-facing slab in a different way. For Lingang, Meinhard von Gerkan of the German firm 'von Gerkan, Marg und Partner' created a large circular lake with a radial main street grid that forms blocks in a range of different radial angles. He hoped that this would render impossible monotonously facing blocks. He was wrong. Today, some of the inconvenient 45-degree-blocks have been redeveloped and are facing south, despite awkward block edges and inefficient alignment (fig.7, 8). Albert Speer of 'Albert Speer and Partners' tried to close the blocks of Anting New Town towards the East and West in order to create European style streetscapes and achieve higher density. His plan did not stay unrevised: his blocks were either stretched to minimize the ratio of East-West facing units, or the East-West facing units were eliminated (fig.9, 10). In essential locations such as squares and plazas, he managed to fight them through. But today it is often

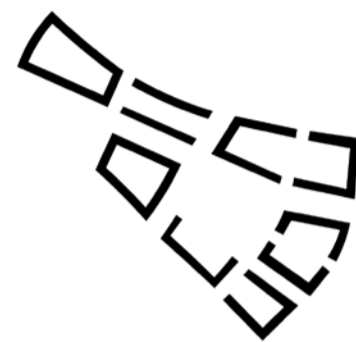
10 In a range of project studies for Ningbo developers in 2005, a Shanghai architecture firm was asked to achieve average azimuth from total south orientation of less than 10° versus more than 30° in many Soviet style neighborhoods.



Figure 11: Pujiang New Town 2006 (photo by Victor Oldiges)



1997



2001

Figure 9: Anting, competition versus execution (from: Oldiges, Shanghai – Sijing, 2004)

these units that do not sell. In terms of marketing success, some medium-quality villas around Anting are sold more successfully than the units inside the project. Vittorio Gregotti, commissioned to design 'Italian Town' in Pujiang, was more successful. He tried to imitate the figure-ground relation of Shanghai's downtown Lilongs: narrow lanes flanked by walled housing units (fig. 11). He even managed to create a mix between low-density and high-rise housing within the same blocks. Of course Pujiang is very close and well-connected to the center, and the majority of units consists of upper class expensive villas. With smaller and denser types, this feeling would have been more difficult to achieve.

Gated communities

Virtually every newly developed neighborhood in Shanghai is a gated community. In most of China, neighborhoods have traditionally been under some social control by their residents. This is partially due to the 'Baojia', which was invented during 12th century Song Dynasty. The Baojia is an administrative system, in which units of 10, 100 and 1000 families are held legally responsible for each other's actions. It was used for political control, taxation and economic survey. The Baojia was turned into a nationwide system during the Manchu dynasty and elaborated in Qing dynasty in the second half of 18th century. More or less successful, it was applied as a tool of self-defense during the Guomindang civil

war government and a tool of oppression during the Japanese occupation. In urban areas, the physical distribution of neighborhoods reflected the subdivision into Baojia units. During the planning of the Master plan for Greater Shanghai in 1946, Richard Paulick and his Chinese colleagues at Shanghai's urban planning council also understood that the neighborhood had to be the backbone of regional planning, but less in an administrative or military sense than in the sense of a functional community that can provide amenities within a walking distance. The idea of neighborhood was in their eyes supranational. The neighborhood units in their 'Plan for Greater Shanghai' were inspired by Clarence Perry's 'walkable neighborhood' of the 1920s. Perry was less of an anti-urbanist than Ebenezer Howard. He rather considered a working neighborhood as a paradigm both for urban and rural areas. This is what made his plans applicable in Shanghai, where urban and rural areas intertwined. The Shanghai plan had a 3-4 times higher population per unit due to the much higher densities in Chinese urban areas.¹¹ Paulick's planning committee profited from the fact that the authorities already had some experience with the Baojia system and were willing to invest in the neighborhood's communal amenities. With the beginning of Maoist rule in Shanghai, virtually any master planning was discontinued. During the 1950s, with the influence of Soviet governmental structure, the Chinese government with the help of Soviet experts introduced the 'Danwei' worker's commune. It was the smallest civil and at the same time political unit, used for controlling civil and political behavior and implementing directives. The model was made use of heavily during the 'Great Leap Forward' as a village work unit. Other policies, such as birth control, which started in the late 1970s, could only be enforced with a nationwide Danwei system in place. In today's urban areas, the structure of many existing neighborhoods still corresponds to the Danwei. In many cases, the administration is still directly linked to state-owned companies, so that workers are controlled both in their jobs and privately. In other cases, the connection between housing and work, especially in the private sector, has been lost. Again, the neighborhood unit usually corresponds with one street block. In the current liberal market, the corresponding unit is the 'micro-residential district'. These districts vary in terms of block size, amenities and population density. The structure is still very similar: a typical block is fenced in, consists of slab buildings of 6 storeys or more, a main gate on the south side, some side gates and a main access lane flanked by amenities such as a clubhouse or lakes, with limited access for motorized vehicles. Some of the administrative functions of the former neighborhood units have been taken over by a private management company that still reports to local authorities.

11 Koegel, op. cit. p. 269.

Figure 10: Anting, competition versus execution (from: Oldiges, Shanghai – Sijing, 2004)



1997



2001



Figure 12: Plan for Greater Shanghai, 1946 (from: Vöckler, Luckow, Peking Shanghai Shenzen, 2000)

Tearing down the fence

In most of the project briefs for 'One City Nine Towns', no exact neighborhood sizes were given. ATKINS, the planners of Thames Town, broke with the concept of gated neighborhoods in favor of the footprint of a medieval British town that knows no 'neighborhood' (fig. 12). Every building is flanked by public space and every unit plays a role in the distinct urban scenery. Today, the entire town serves as some kind of wedding theme park. It is said that most apartments sold within a very short time. But as of 2007, two years after opening, most apartments in the inner ring were unoccupied. Speculation seemed to play an important role. Around the core, there is a range of gated communities with English style villas that have little to do with 'English' urban structure. These villas were occupied shortly after opening. Even if some of the units in the core are occupied¹², the message remains clear: European-style architecture may provide identity to a Chinese town, but rented or sold apartments within a European-style public street-grid will remain an exception.

The concept of neighborhood played an important role in Albert Speer's Anting. The Chinese developers went to see the 'Kirchsteigfeld' project in Potsdam, Germany for their first inspiration (fig. 13). The German architects showed the project in order to prove that modern architecture and traditional spatial qualities were no contradiction. The developers agreed on the basic idea. The Kirchsteigfeld, planned by the firm Krier - Kohl, is one of only a few full-scale 'New Urbanist' urban projects in Germany from the 1990s. These projects were at that time better known from the United States. Just as Richard Paulick did in the 1940s, New Urbanists, such as Duany - Plater - Cyberg (DPC)¹³, often invoke Clarence Perry's 1929 neighborhood plan, again not in the sense of an administrative unit, but as a model for a livable neighborhood with all amenities in walking distance (fig. 14). Perry's 1929 diagram seems to have directly transferred into the Kirchsteigfeld scheme, and from there made it to Anting (fig. 15). In spite of the overlap of historic paradigms, the Shanghai suburban concept of 'neighborhood' and that of Anting differ in their very essence. In suburbia, the single unit defines the shape of the neighborhood; in Anting it is the neighborhood that defines the shape of the unit. In suburbia, a neighborhood is a village among other, unrelated developments; in Anting it is an essential component of a town. Interviews with inhabitants of Anting showed that they enjoy the qualities of the baroque-shaped plazas, but do not see why they themselves should buy the apartment that shapes it. Compared to ATKINS' Thames Town, Anting is the much more truthful project in the sense that there is no scenery, no fakeness. The architects seemed to say: 'if you want a European

12 Den Hartog, op. cit. pp. 120-126.

13 Daniel Walters and Linda Brown (ed.), *Design First*, Architectural Press, Oxford, 2004.



Figure 13: Thames Town 2006 (photo by Victor Oldiges)

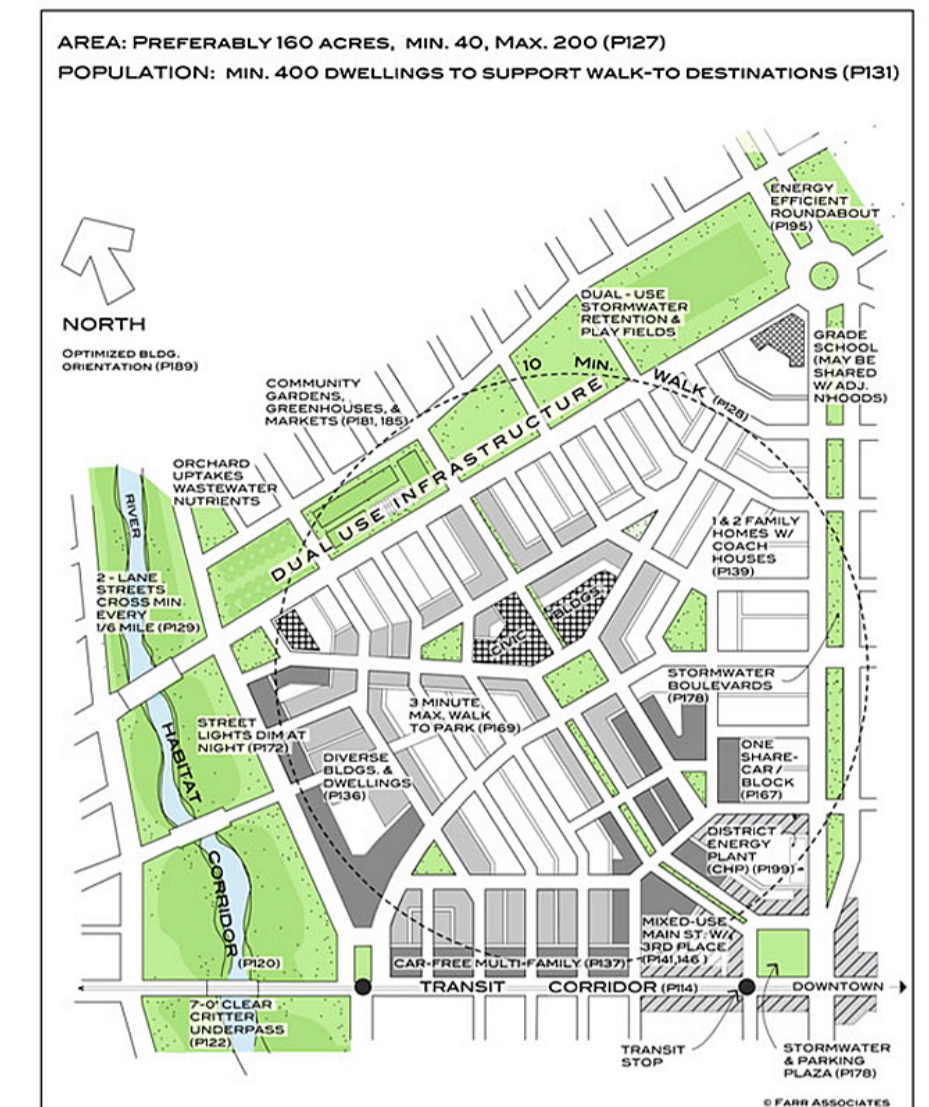
city, you have to be part of one'. ATKINS is much more pragmatic: 'here is your European city. And here are your Chinese buildings. You can have both'.

Planning is cross-ideological

Richard Paulick, Ernst May, Walter Gropius and others left Germany during of the turmoil of the 1930s and spread their ideas in the world. Paulick went to China, May to the Soviet Union and Gropius to the United States. The countries and systems could not have been more different, but all were welcoming towards their modernist ideas. Urban planning concepts such as Clarence Perry's neighborhood unit or Ernst May's linear city also did not stop at ideological borders. But they matured differently in different systems. From 1949 to 1981, China was closed towards any ideas of the West. When, in 1999, Western architects and urban planners came to China and were faced with the difficult task of designing 'European' satellite cities in Shanghai, they were confronted with a totally different mentality towards planning, but with some shared past. Some were more, some less successful in finding a path based on the shared past, not on differences. For planners, the past has always been a reference, no matter



Figure 14: Kirchsteigfeld 1995 (KSP Architekten)



A SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOOD (BUILDING BLOCKS OF A SUSTAINABLE CORRIDOR) V1

Figure 15: DPC's interpretation of Perry's neighborhood scheme (from: Walters, Brown, Design First.2004)

in what system. For politicians, things are different. Paulick's Zhabei project was forgotten simply because it had been designed under the 'wrong' political system. Its idea lived on. Later, nobody wanted to talk about Soviet influence, but today it is omnipresent. Today, the initiator of 'One City Nine Towns', mayor Chen Liangyu is in prison for corruption charges (and presumably because he was an opponent of the Beijing establishment) (fig. 16). The project has suddenly vanished from the memories of some who should know better. But still, all around Shanghai, European style neighborhoods inspired by 'Thames Town', 'Dutch Town' and 'Italian Town' are popping up. Politicians step down, planners stay, and 'One City Nine Towns' lives on.



Figure 16: Anting square 2005 (photo by Victor Oldiges)

REVISITING

IRANIAN

NEWSPAPERS

REVISITING IRANIAN NEW TOWNS

Azadeh Mashayekhi

Urban planning has always influenced and shaped social and economic organization of cities, which means it is not politically neutral. The development of New Towns in Iran, defined as new planned cities, has shifted between different socio-political forms. During the twentieth century, they have hosted several revolutions, movements, a war and economic boycotts—each of which has represented itself through the form of these New Towns. Two revolutions are the focal points of these political forms. The first revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century strongly promoted modernization and westernization, followed by the emergence of comprador capitalism through nationalization of the oil industry and financial markets. On the contrary, the second revolution towards the end of the century cast serious doubts on many aspects of westernization and promoted Islamization. This raises the question: how did the political regimes (state) wish to represent themselves in these two different periods as the makers of New Towns? Hence the complexity of the socio-spatial structure of Iranian New Towns is not only the physical outcome of the subtle interactions over decades between land markets, control of the rapid growth of big cities, infrastructure, and regulations, but also shaped by the overlaying of various socio-political layers.

Key historical moments and New Towns

The beginning of changes in the process of urbanization in Iran can be traced back to the beginning of the modernization process. 'Modern Iran' might refer to the country since the early nineteenth century when it was defeated in an unprecedented, (that is, modern) way, by Russia. It could also refer to the mid-nineteenth century, when subsequent developments led to steps being taken to modernize education and administration. And finally, it could refer to developments since the turn of the twentieth century, when the movement for lawful and responsible (as opposed to arbitrary) government led to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909¹. Since the early twentieth century, along with the process of modernization and industrialization, many Iranian cities underwent successive urban transformations and the emergence of new urban forms. At the same time, the planning and design of Iranian New Towns as new planned cities have been through several waves in relation to the key historical shifts in the socio-economic and political structure of Iran. Throughout the twentieth century, different types of New Towns have been introduced

1 I. Atabaki, 'Constitutionalism in Iran and Its Asian Interdependencies. Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East', **Volume 28**, Number 1, 2008, p.142-153.



Figure 1: From left to right: Abadan (1940), Faldshar (1968), Hashtgerd (1986). (Sources from left to right: Wilson Mason and partners, Naghsh-e-Jahan Pars project Archive, Hashtgerd City Hall Archive)

along four key historical periods² (fig. 1). First, the interwar period (1918-1939); the Reza Shah Pahlavi came to power with the ambition of building a modern nation-state that produced administrative towns. The second period, after the Second World War until the mid-1960s, corresponds to the nationalization of oil, the American-engineered coup in 1951 and the rapid growth of oil and other industries in new economic fields that led to the construction of oil towns. The third period, from the mid-1960s to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, marks the beginning of rapid economic and social change based on the determining factor of the oil revenues that produced the industrial towns. The last period occurred after the Islamic revolution, producing low-income New Towns following the populist language of the Islamic Revolution.

Administrative Town

Reza Shah became the king of Iran in 1925, and today he remains the icon of the authoritarian modernization, in the mind of many Iranians. He believed in the use of dictatorial powers to establish a unified army, stamp out chaos, and build a modern nation-state, on the model of Ataturk's Turkish Republic and post-Napoleonic France, based on an industrial society. Reza Shah's ambition was to transform a traditional, rural and agrarian society into an urban, secular and industrial one (fig. 2). He imposed order in the tribal areas through a major policy to disarm the tribes, unprecedented in Iran's history. Reza Shah's policy of centralizing government power and implementing modernization in Iran was,

2 K. Ziari, 'The planning and functioning of New Towns in Iran, Cities', **Volume 23**, Issue 6, December 2006, p. 412.



Figure 2: (Source: iranpoliticsclub.net)



Figure 3: (Source: Mahmoud Pakzad's "Old Tehran")



Figure 4: (Source: Mahmoud Pakzad's "Old Tehran")

in a sense, a reaction to the widely felt need for authoritarian reform to avoid further humiliation at the hands of European powers.³ Over the sixteen years of his reign, Reza Shah's numerous development projects transformed Iran into an urbanized country. Public education progressed rapidly, and new social classes were formed. A professional middle class and an industrial working class emerged. Administrative modernization that had begun in 1910 after the triumph of the Constitutional Revolution grew rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s. The new civil service extended job opportunities to various levels of urban society, but especially to both traditional and modern middle classes, who increasingly filled the higher bureaucratic offices (fig.3). In the 1930s all state concerns were concentrated in the capital city, Tehran (Madanipour, 2003). The number of civil servants increased rapidly and administrative affairs were dealt with within the capital (fig. 4). For this reason, a considerable amount of the educated middle class from other cities in the country immigrated to Tehran in search of better job opportunities. Ultimately, Tehran developed a new major function, that of administration, which generated new employees at new institutions in search of housing.

The result of the administration function of the city was the policy of making administrative towns close to the existing city to house the employees of each new ministry or institution. In the late 1930s, plans for New Towns like Tehran-Pars, Narmak in the northeast of Tehran and Amir Abad and Gisha in the northwest were proposed and by the 1950s they were mostly executed. These

³ Homa Katouzian, *The Persians: Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern Iran*, Yale University press, 2009, p. 207.



Figure 5: (Source: Azadeh Mashayekhi)

towns were the very first towns in Iran that were designed based on modern urban planning ideas (Tehran report on eight district Detailed plan, 2006). The gridded street pattern typical of modern suburban development at that time was the dominant principle of all these towns, which lacked any similarities to Tehran or other big cities (fig. 5,6).

Oil Town

It was not until the twentieth century that rich oil fields were discovered in the southwest part of Iran. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company was founded in 1908 and started to build their first pipeline terminus oil refineries in Abadan, a small village in the Khuzestan province in southwest Iran. In 1913, Abadan was still a very small village next to the port with only 400 inhabitants. Development of Abadan was controlled by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) from the 1920s until 1951. Abadan might best be described as an oil town or colonial company town and a collection of urban forms gathered around an oil refinery (fig. 7). After the Second World War, up to the mid-1960s, (as a result of the boom in the oil industry) New Towns were constructed in southwest Iran and close to the oil refinery fields. The main New Towns were mostly built in Khuzestan province



Figure 6: (Source: Azadeh Mashayekhi)

during this period, with Abadan and Mahshahr as the most significant examples.⁴ Abadan is the native city of colonial imagination designed by the British firm, Wilson Mason and Partners around 1938 when the construction of the refinery was completed. At that time, it was the largest facility for refining petroleum in the world. The facilities necessitated an equally vast population of more than 220,000 people.

Abadan was, in effect, a colonial company town whose early development combined spacious bungalow compounds for British expatriate workers, barrack-like lines of huts for laborers recruited locally and from India, and a rapidly overcrowded 'native town' under local municipal control.⁵ The planning logic in Abadan was to situate both the managerial technical elite and the labor power close to the refinery, but on opposite sides (fig.8). Although the 'town' remained nominally under local municipal control, Abadan as a whole might truthfully be described as a company town. Most of Abadan was owned and operated by the AIOC, and those parts of it under ostensibly autonomous local control owed their livelihood to the company's activities. As the town developed, the company increasingly provided educational, transport, health and leisure facilities; including its own traffic police.⁶

4 K. Ziari, and M. Gharakhlou, 'A Study of Iranian New Towns During Pre- and Post Revolution', *International Journal of Environmental Research*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 2009, pp. 143-154.

5 M. Crinson. 'Abadan: planning and architecture under the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company', *Planning Perspectives*, 1997, no.12, pp 3, 341-359.

6 Ibid.



Figure 7: (Source: Wilson Mason and partners, Abadan masterplan report)

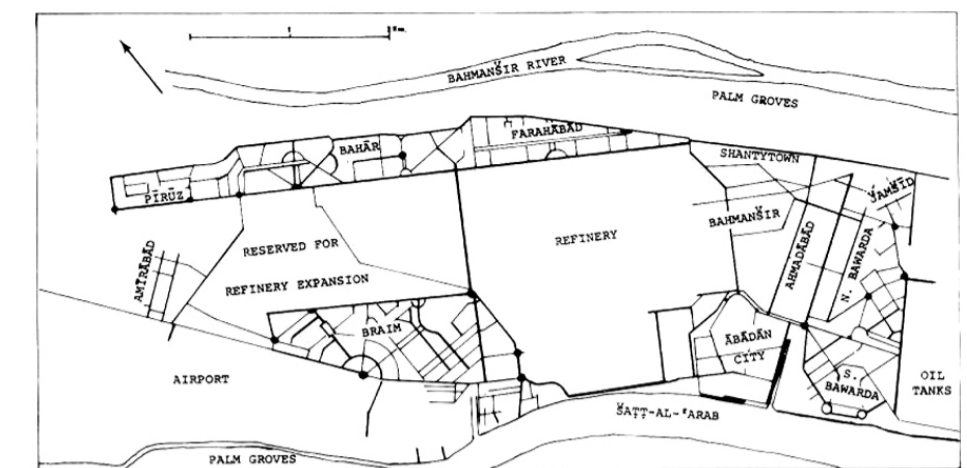


Figure 8: (Source: Wilson Mason and partners, Abadan masterplan report)



Figure 9: (Source: en.wikipedia.org)

Industrial Town

The population of Iran has increased rapidly since 1956. The phenomenon of rural-urban migration that caused the massive urbanization throughout Iran in its present form markedly started in the 1950s and was accelerated during the 1960s.⁷ Following the modernizing ambition of his father, in 1963 Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi declared "The White Revolution of Iran", promoting an overall strategy to modernize the country and covering all aspects from education to economics.

But one message in particular was strongly conveyed to all Iranians: that Iran had to catch up with the leading nations of the world and play side by side with them (Pahlavi, 1967). Land reform programs and abolishing 'Feudalism' were main parts of the white revolution program (fig. 9). The government bought the land from the feudal land lords at a fair price and sold it to the peasants at 30 percent below the market value, with loans payable over 25 years at very low interest rates. This made it possible for 1.5 million peasant families, who had once been little more than slaves, to own the lands that they had been cultivating all their lives. Given that the average size of a peasant family was five members, land reform programs brought freedom to approximately 9 million

7 A. Madanipour, 'Modernisation and everyday life: urban and rural change in Iran', in: A. Mohammadi (ed.), *Iran Encountering Globalization: Problems and Prospects*, Routledge, London, 2003, pp. 137-148.



Figure 10 and 11: (Source: Naghsh-e-Jahan Pars project Archive/Poulad-Shahr)

people, or 40 percent of Iran's population that were less privileged than the rest. The Shah reforms detached rural laborers from their traditional niches, forcing them to seek employment in the newly emerging industrial sector. To maintain the image of a modern Iran, the Shah's regime made consistent efforts to push back squatter-dwellers to the unnoticeable outskirts of the capital city of Tehran and other big cities, never hesitating to use force to achieve such ends.⁸ Since the mid-1960s, the New Town program has become the policy of the state in two different ways in order to cope with modernization processes, migration of the poor and the emergence of an urban underclass. Ultimately, with the policy of making a new, modern Iran, two main development projects took shape; the inner city mass housing project for the middle class, and modern industrial towns outside of the city for working class or poor migrants.

Karaj, Peikan Shahr, Shushtar, Poulad Shahr, Shahin Shahr and Malek Shahr are the first modern industrial New Towns that were designed on the outskirts of the big cities near the new industries. Western firms and local architects educated in Europe and the USA mostly made the designs of these towns and executed them. Thus they inherited certain planning ideals from the West and their plans represented certain ideals of western urban life. While the industrial working class tried to adjust to the new western urban life that was contradictory to their traditional way of life, modern, luxury mass housing high-rises were being planned and designed in the big cities for the middle class. Although in order to pursue the modern ambitions of the state both the plans for the inner city development and the New Towns followed the same modernist ideals of urban

planning, this eventually caused the social exclusion of working class or urban poor and middle class as inner city dwellers (fig. 10, 11).

Ultimately, the fact that the middle class and the rich were the only social classes that had the right to the city and the urban poor were excluded from this right, initiated political unrest. The policy of high modernization in big cities—and especially in Tehran—made the population of urban poor and urban underclass feel excluded from the redistribution of social goods, opportunities (favorable business conditions, locations and labels), and other life chances essential for survival and minimal standards. The message to the urban poor was that modernity is a costly affair and not everyone can afford to be modern.⁹ This class conflict eventually came to the fore as a political issue when a team of the Marxist Fadaian urban guerrillas bombed the municipality building in south Tehran in solidarity with urban toilers and squatter-dwellers.¹⁰ The contrast and duality that was mainly created through urban planning and the socio-economic intentions behind these plans had become stronger than ever before the late 1970s. A conflict that had started long before now culminated in the ideologically inspired Islamic Revolution. The urban poor, with their hope of getting the right to the city back from the middle class and wealthy, poured into the streets and supported the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Low income

In the aftermath of the subversion of the Pahlavi monarchy in Iran, populism and the early revolutionary spirit facilitated the permeation of the urban poor into the big cities and notably into wealthier neighborhoods (fig. 12). In many cases, the new wave of re-migration of urban poor from industrial New Towns and squatter-dwellings to the big cities led to the occupation of the abandoned hotels, villas and mansions that belonged to the former regime's top functionaries. This was the urban poor's first act of reprisal towards the well-off and modern middle class in Tehran and other big cities. As a result, the populist language of the Islamic Revolution uplifted the scorned image of the urban poor by calling them *mustazafin* (a Koranic expression that translates to "deprived society") in an attempt to win over this growing but alienated segment of the Iranian population.¹¹ To give Islam a populist and emancipatory image the urban poor were identified as devoutly religious people with strong ties to traditional ways of life and people who bore the disdain of westernization. As time went on, the urban poor who inhabited the New Towns and squatter-dwellers, almost by default, became the standard bearers of the revolutionary promise. Soon the

⁸ A. Bayat, *Street Politics: Poor People's Movements in Iran*, Columbia University Press, 1997.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ A. Bayat, *Tehran: The Paradox City*, 2009.

¹¹ P. Vahabzadeh, *The Rain Book Review 'Street Politics: Poor People's Movements in Iran*, Columbia University Press, Vancouver, 1997.



Figure 12: (Source: <http://www.irdc.ir> (Islamic Revolution Document Center))

Islamic state's response to the problem of the urban poor mainly hinged on the institutionalization of the relationship between the urban underprivileged and the state.

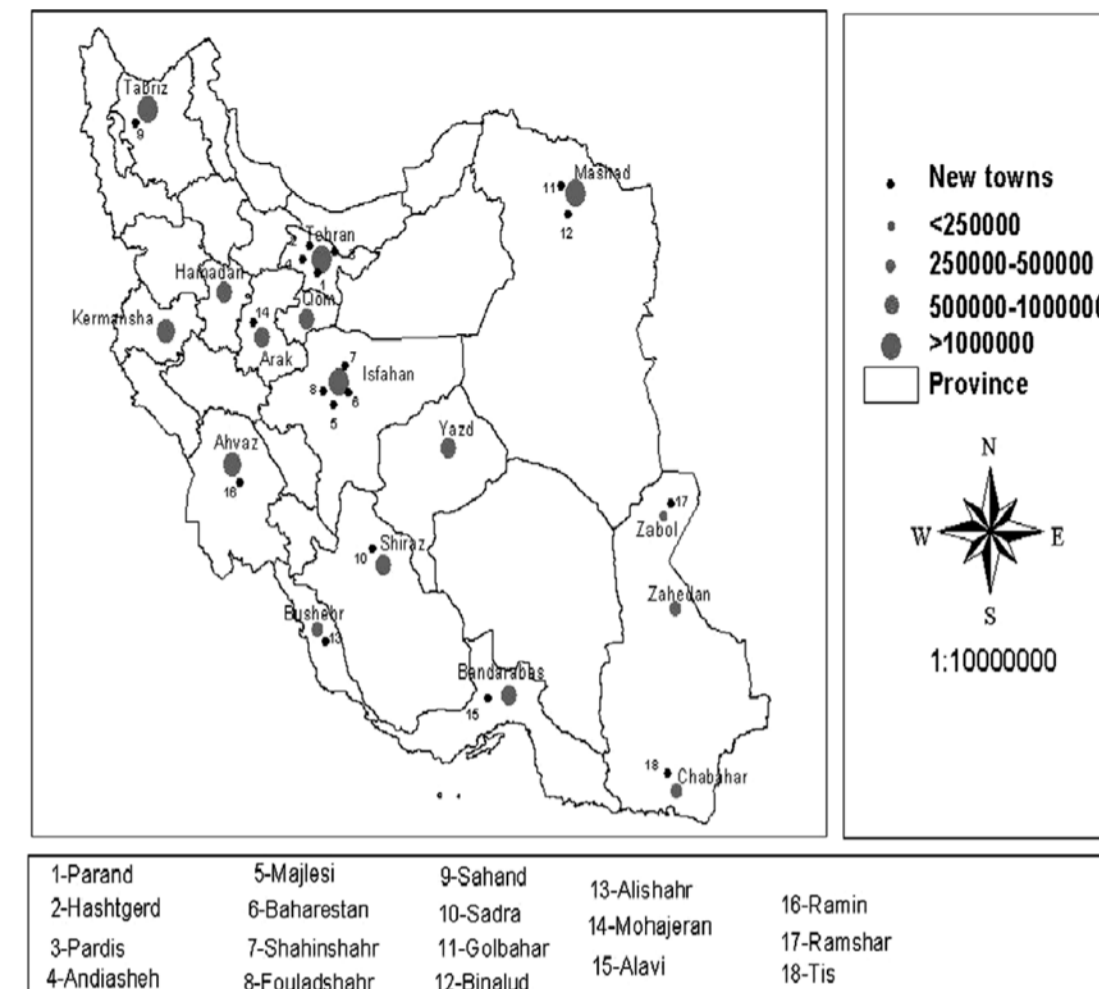
With the slogan asserting that every family in Islamic Iran deserves a house, Ayatollah Khomeini announced the Islamic Revolution Institution for low income and underprivileged society. The aim of this institution was to develop services to help improve the material, spiritual, and cultural life of the oppressed and the poor, giving priority to the direct method. In 1979 this new institution soon became the owner of the modern and luxury mass housing projects in the big cities, (like Atisaz or Mahestan in Tehran) to have control over these properties, thus proving their support for the plight of the urban poor against the well-off and westernized residents of these apartments.

As a result of the war between Iran and Iraq, the first decade after the 1979 revolution was characterized by rapid population growth, weak economic performance and a fall in living standards for the average Iranian household. The urban growth that started in the 1950s began to increase rapidly from the early 1980s on. During this time, an even larger migration to cities took place; some 2.5 million people moved from the war zones to settle in large cities.¹²

As a reaction to this massive urban growth, the State Presidium announced the planning and construction of New Towns as a series of satellite towns around the major urban centers as one of the national strategies in urban development. Following this issue in 1985 the construction of 28 New Towns was included in the work plan of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Development, (though in 2001

¹² F. Atash, 'New Towns and future urbanization in Iran', *Third world Planning review journal*, Liverpool University Press, 2000, p. 73-74.

Figure 13: Spatial distribution of Iranian New Towns and cities with a 500,000 population and more (Source: Construction Company of Iranian New Town (2002) Report on New Towns, Tehran)



the number of New Towns was reduced to 18). Nevertheless, today, none of the projects have been fully completed and the majority of them are only partially built. These towns are still far from job creation and self-reliance and they suffer from the lack of a true urban economy and reliance upon government subsidies.¹³ They are greatly dependent upon their main parent city and are shaped after them. Therefore these towns work as migration platforms; those who cannot afford to live in the bigger cities come to these towns to get closer to urban centers and then migrate to become citizens of these cities. Thus, regarding the objectives to control the rapid and disorderly growth of large cities, absorbing their excessive population, the New Towns have had no major impact. In both spatial and demographic aspects these towns have not helped to reduce the burden of big cities, but, on the contrary, they have contributed to the creation of many social problems and class conflicts in the society. This conflict is not new, but rather deeply rooted in history. The revolt against the well-off city's middle class during the Islamic Revolution hoped to find new ways of solving this conflict, and yet the dichotomy between the urban poor and working class and the city's middle classes still exists. The policy and planning of New Towns has been unsuccessful as a means of managing urban growth, and cannot keep the urban poor from dreaming about moving to the big cities and seeking improved opportunities.

¹³ Construction Company of Iranian New Town (2002) Report on New Towns, Tehran (in Persian).



Figure 14: (Source: Rouzbeh Eliasazar)



**ADDICTED TO
BUILDING: KOREAN
NEW TOWNS AND
THEIR POLITICS
(1961-2010)**

ADDICTED TO BUILDING: KOREAN NEW TOWNS AND THEIR POLITICS (1961-2010)

Kyo Suk Lee

In South Korea, 18.4 percent (almost one fifth) of the entire Gross Domestic Product is produced by the construction industry. This is twice as high as the average proportion of other OECD countries (9.1%). Despite what some might see as an unsustainable solution to development, the Korean construction industry continues to be the core engine driving the entire the country forward. Endless urban development to create a self-perpetuating economy could be seen as analogous to the modern fantasy of the Perpetuum Mobile.¹ Within this tradition, using the construction industry to build New Towns has become the most effective and strongest political device available. Central to this research is how the Korean New Town originated and developed into a perpetual-motion machine, and how politics interrelate with that history. This article will focus on the three evolutionary stages of the Korean New Town, according to the country's geopolitical and socio-economic changes.

1 "Perpetual motion" describes hypothetical machines that operate or produce useful work indefinitely and, more generally, hypothetical machines that produce more work or energy than they consume, whether they might operate indefinitely or not.

2 Park Chung-hee (September 30, 1917 – October 26, 1979) was a Republic of Korea Army general and the President of South Korea (the Republic of Korea) from 1961 to 1979. He has been credited with the industrialization of the Republic of Korea through export-led growth. His rule was ended by assassination in 1979.

3 In Korean, "싸우며 건설하자"

1961-1986: New Town as war

Cold-war Frontline. Divided into capitalist-south and communist-north, the Korean peninsula became a miniature reflection of Cold War politics in the years after WWII. In 1953, by drawing lines on the territorial map, North Korean and American officers negotiated an armistice of the Korean War. Apart from its political significance, this was also the first fundamental step in Korean urban planning.

Construct to Fight! During the war, carpet-bombing completely destroyed many urban environments. In its aftermath, the inevitable chaos demanded a return to order. With his 1961 coup d'etat, General Park² launched 20 years of military dictatorship under his regime. The period could be seen as a prototypical military dictatorship, similar to what happened in Africa and South America after decolonization and civil wars. But Park had an extraordinarily clear vision. Through the construction industry, he found a way to legitimize his military regime. The national slogan of 1969 (conceived by General Park himself) clearly showed this idea: "Fight to construct and construct to fight."³ Reminiscent of a

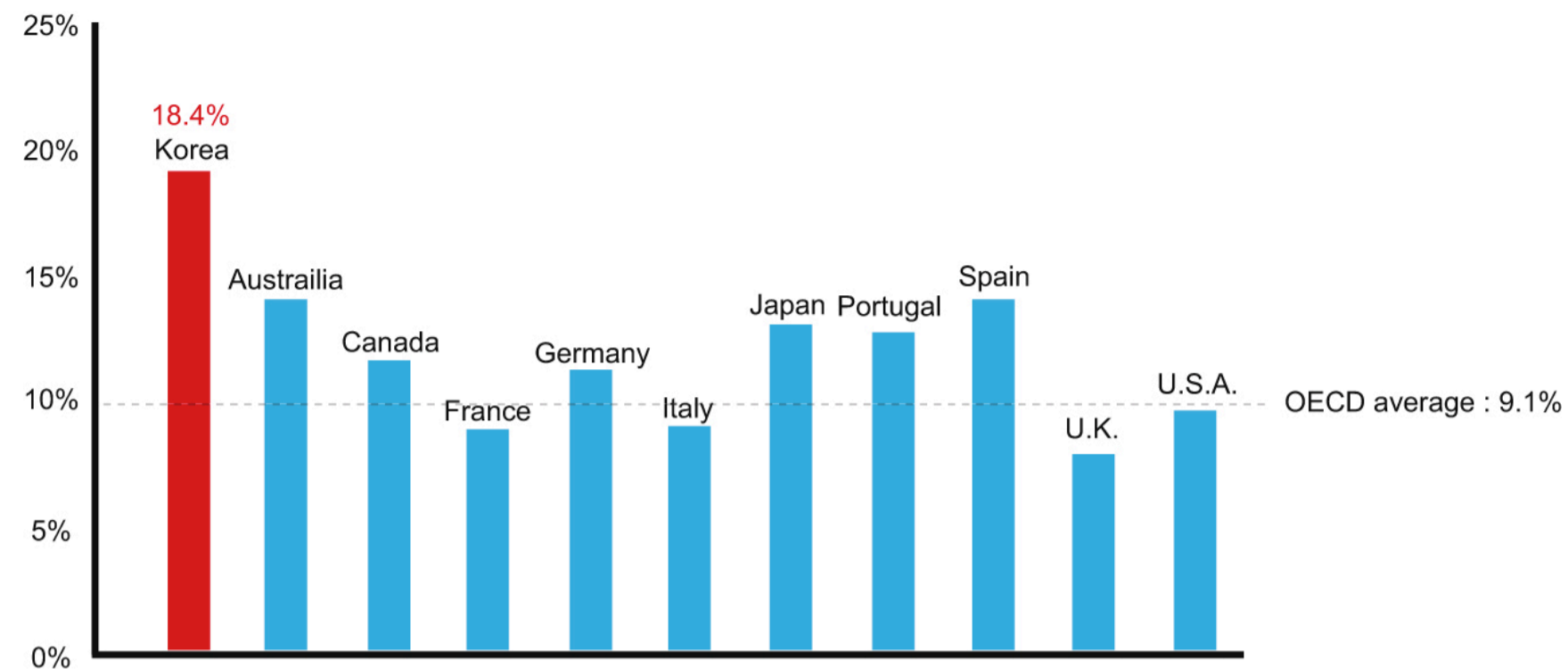


Figure 1: Construction industry within GDP 1995-2006



Figure 2: The Armistice of July 27 1953 Korean War



Figure 3: The brushstroke of President 'Park'

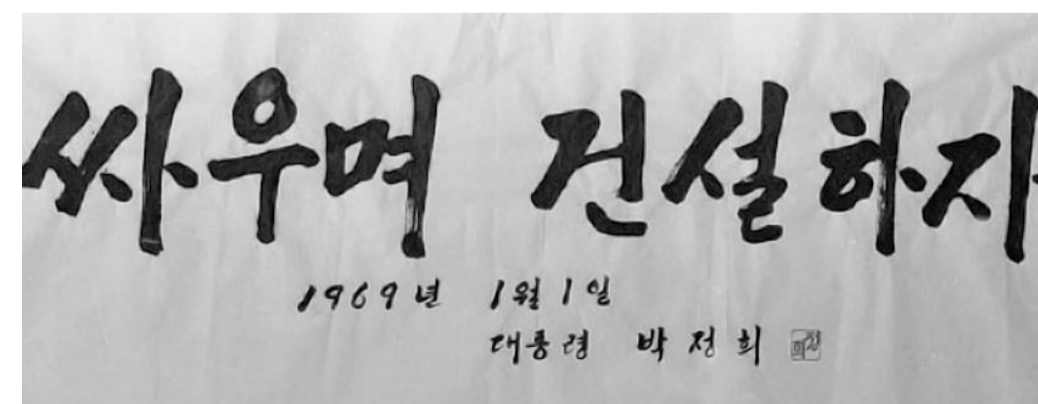


Figure 4: The National Slogan of 1969: 'Fight to Construct, Construct to Fight'



Figure 5: Kim Il-Sung Dictatorship in North Korea (1945-1994)

samurai's spiritual ceremony when preparing for battle, the strong brushstrokes used to emblazon the slogan around the country implied his determined political will. The words also had a double-meaning: on the one hand, they meant that rapid urban development was the best way to compete with the enemy (North Korea), by showing excellence in capitalism. On the other hand, the slogan also meant that a military regime is the most efficient way to achieve rapid urban development.

Under these circumstances, urban planning was conducted in the mode of a military operation. Initiated by President Park, the First National Comprehensive Land Development Plan⁴ was quite successful in terms of its speed and efficiency. Where he drew a line, a highway was built; where he painted color, New Towns sprouted from mountains.

Twin Iconography. Ironically, there was a twin figure in the hostile North: Kim Il Sung's⁵ dictatorship also emphasized urban development as a way to display the excellence of their system. In a way, this competitive relationship allowed both dictators to validate their projects in the eyes of the general population. Through urban development rivalry, they could perpetuate their dictatorships.

Yeouido New Town: Anti-communist Showcase. In 1966, the military government officially announced the New Seoul Whitepaper Plan.⁶ Historically, it was the first New Town planned after the modernization of Korea. Politically, it was intended to symbolize the excellence of democracy and capitalism. Though its organization mimicked modernist, 'Corbusian' New Town planning, its literal form drew inspiration from the national flower (the hibiscus).

The utopian ambitions of the military government continued to inform the Yeouido New Town plan. On a single island adjacent to Seoul, the government intended to combine the political centrality of Washington D.C. with the economic power of Manhattan. To symbolize democracy, the western part of the island was designed purely for politics, with a monumental national parliament. To symbolize capitalism, the east part of the island was designed for bankers, with a shiny, golden high-rise building reserved for insurance companies. Between these two poles, housing complexes were designed to propagate the modern Korean way of life. A linear central open space, the May Sixteen Revolution Plaza, was designed to be the highlight of the plan. The plaza was named after the day of President Park's coup d'etat. This huge asphalt-paved plaza was designed for military parades and anti-communist campaigns. And in emergencies, the president and the parliament could use the square as an escape airport. Yeouido New Town contained main ideological narratives from the military government

⁴ In Korean, "제1차 국토종합개발계획"

⁵ Kim Il-sung (15 April 1912 – 8 July 1994) was a Korean communist politician who led North Korea from its founding in 1948 until his death in 1994. He held the posts of Prime Minister from 1948 to 1972 and President from 1972 to his death. He was also the General Secretary of the Workers Party of Korea.

⁶ In Korean, "새서울 백지계획"

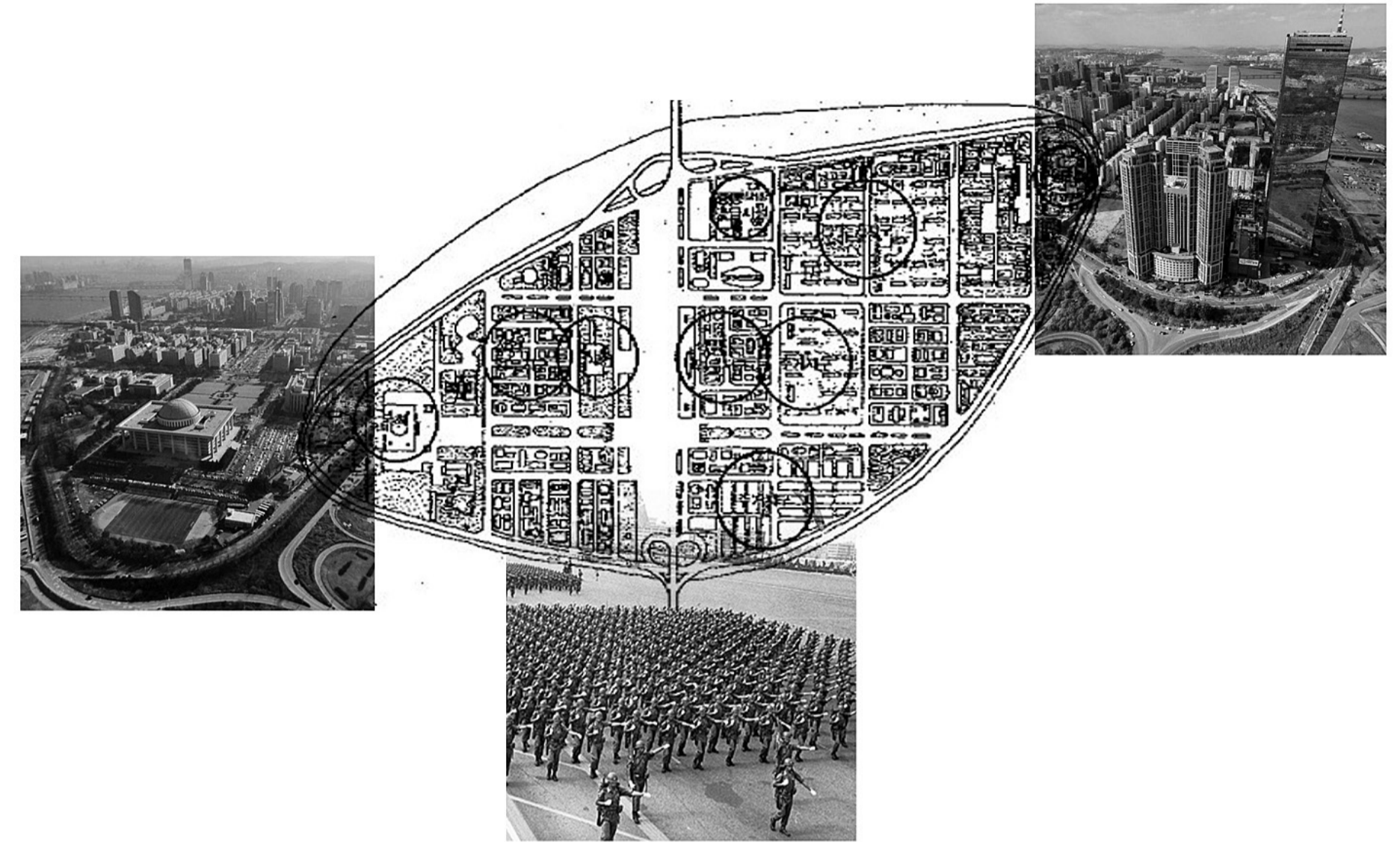


Figure 6: Yeouido Newtown

and it has since become a national symbol of anti-communism and the economic success of Korea.

1986-1997: New Town as celebration

Democratization and De-politicization. The 1980s were the most prosperous and peaceful decade in Korean history. Due to the nation's miraculous economic development, Korea was considered the most successful country to avoid postwar disaster. The 1988 Olympics were prepared as a celebration of this success, while at the same time announcing the victory of American capitalism over the communist regime. The Soviet Union was collapsing and North Korea was starting to become isolated. Although the bid for the 1988 Olympics was initiated by the military government, the Games also brought international pressure to end South Korea's military dictatorship. Finally, in 1986, Korea held its first direct presidential elections.

Ironically and unfortunately, at the very moment of democratization, a de-politicization process followed. In his 1988 election campaign, General "Roh"⁷ (a former member of the 1979 military coup d'etat) brought eye-opening promises to the emerging middle class. He suggested that the nation would build two million new dwellings under his administration (within five years). Dramatically,

⁷ Roh Tae-woo (4th DEC, 1932-), is a former ROK Army general and politician. He was the 13th president of South Korea (1988-1993).

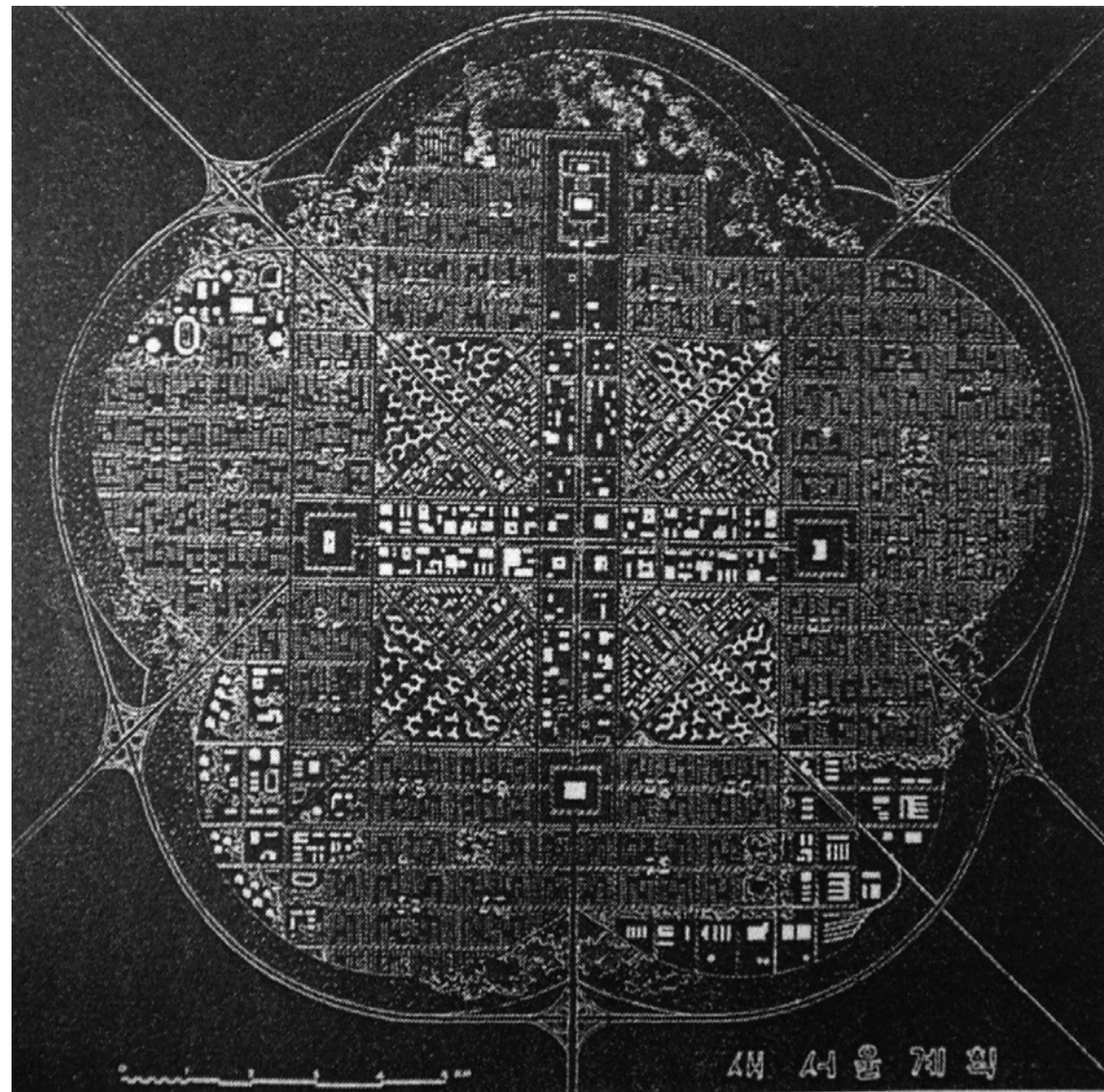


Figure 7: New Seoul Whitepaper plan

the fever for democracy transformed into middle-class conservatism. He won the election and immediately began to execute mass housing construction projects. Mass housing came along with mass-consumption and mass-media. New Towns and housing became a product and the national media used them to represent the new middle class identity.

Merchandizing New Towns. Five metropolitan New Towns around Seoul were the main outcome of this policy.⁸ The British New Town movement (after the 1946 New Town Act) was obviously the main reference, but local influence appeared in terms of density, speed and rigidity. Based loosely on Perry's neighborhood principle, some aspects of the principle were reinterpreted in the Korean context. Due to the flat vertical housing typology, the new neighborhoods were twice as dense as Perry proposed. To execute the project within five years, the Korean interpretation of the neighborhood principle was strictly regulated so that it would be followed without flexibility and diversity—planning elements that cost too much time.

The Korean plutocracy proved to be the best system to merchandize the neighborhoods. The name of the developer became the identity of each neighborhood unit. The new residents were not hesitant to call their

⁸ 5 New Towns include Ilsan, Bundang, Sanbon, Pyeongchon and Jungdong New Town.



Twenty years ago, the world focused its attention on the Jamsil Olympic Stadium in Seoul, seen during an Olympic ceremony in this 1988 file photo. / Korea Times File

Figure 8: 1988 Seoul Olympic

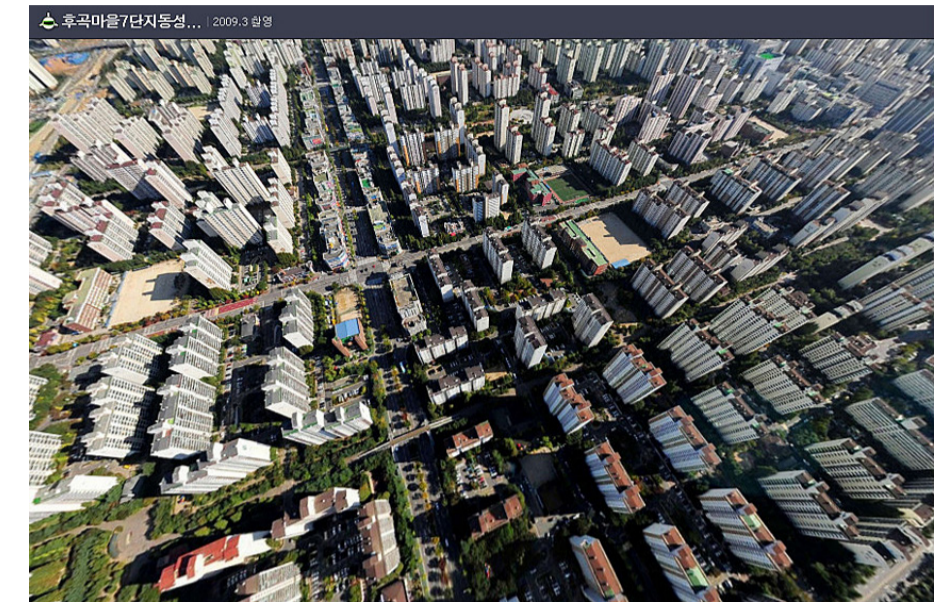


Figure 9: Ilsan Newtown

neighborhoods by the developers' names. It ensured the value of their homes and implied the social class of the residents. Unlike Perry's original intention to make the school into a public function for each community, newly built schools in Korean New Towns became gated. Instead of the school, American-style shopping malls (that also operated by plutocracy) became the main representatives of collective space. Without time to carefully foster individual industries, the Five New Towns quickly became typical bedroom communities; New Towns used only for sleeping and consumption.

Korean Middle Class Dream. For the Korean middle-class, a homogeneous identity ensured the stability of the entire class. Building layouts were optimized for maximum profit. Typical floor plans ensured their value would remain stable. Interiors were the only way to differentiate one family's dwelling from another's. Housing for the middle class thus became an industrial product.

In the 1980-1990s, Korean New Towns developed into a new mechanism of perpetuum mobile. Instead of making small-size social housing, providing gradually bigger housing ensured an automatic shifting-up effect for each income class. As developers gradually built bigger and more profitable houses, middle-class consumption followed the same trend. As a consequence, the average

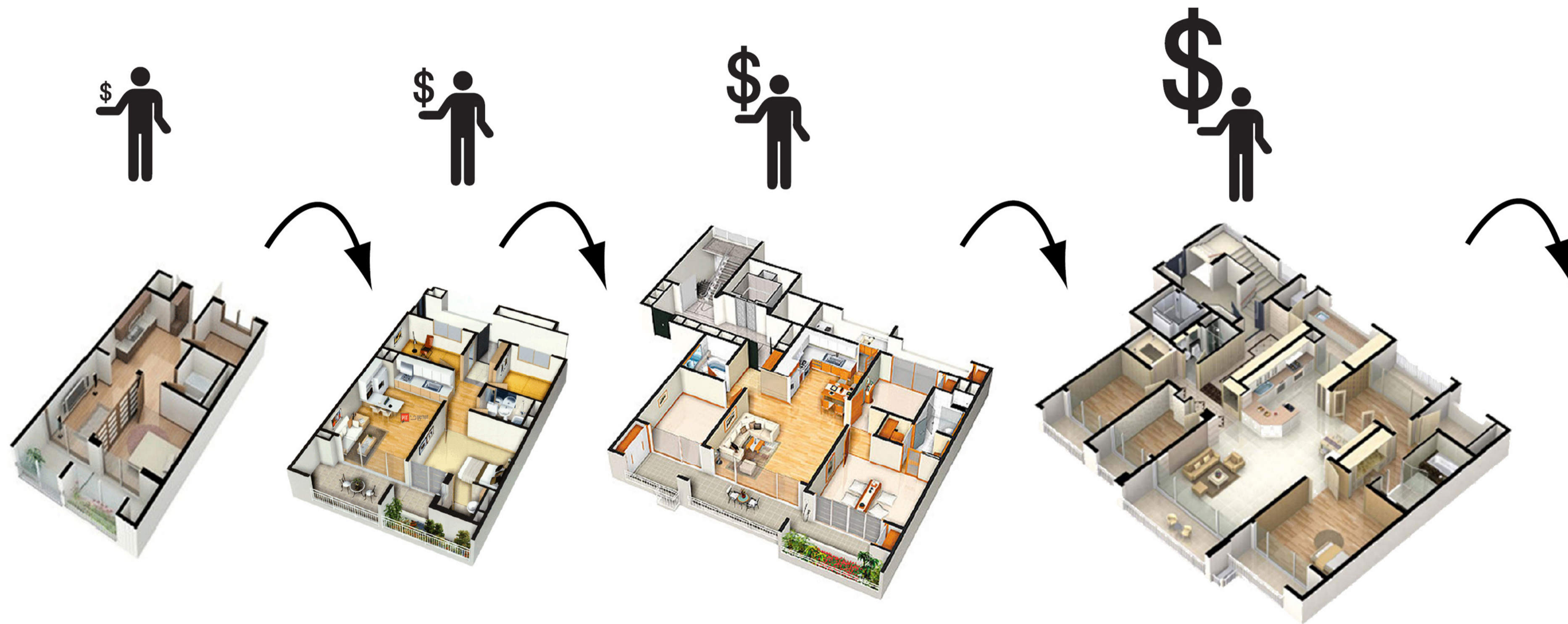


Figure 10: Middle Class Dream



Figure 11: 1997 IMF crisis

Korean housing size almost doubled over these two decades. At the end of the 1990s, construction reached the limits of market capacity, and the housing market started to become over-supplied as the population stopped increasing.

1997-2010: New Town as speculation

Economic Booster. Inevitably, the bubble exploded. The 1997 Asian financial crisis gave Korea a nasty awakening from its sweat dream. Hidden behind IMF (International Monetary Fund) subsidies, a neo-liberal economic regime quickly blossomed in Korea. More than any other sector, the construction industry suffered serious attacks. Vast amounts of people from the industry quickly became unemployed. The whole scenario was reminiscent of the speed and brutality of the 1928 depression in America. In response, the government set up a Korean-style New Deal policy. They decided to promote and accelerate the large-scale construction to mobilize capital and enable laborers to return to work.

In the other hands, globalization has brought a fantasy of speculative urban development (such as Dubai and Shanghai). In South Korea, building global-oriented New Towns is still seen as the best weapon to boost the economy.

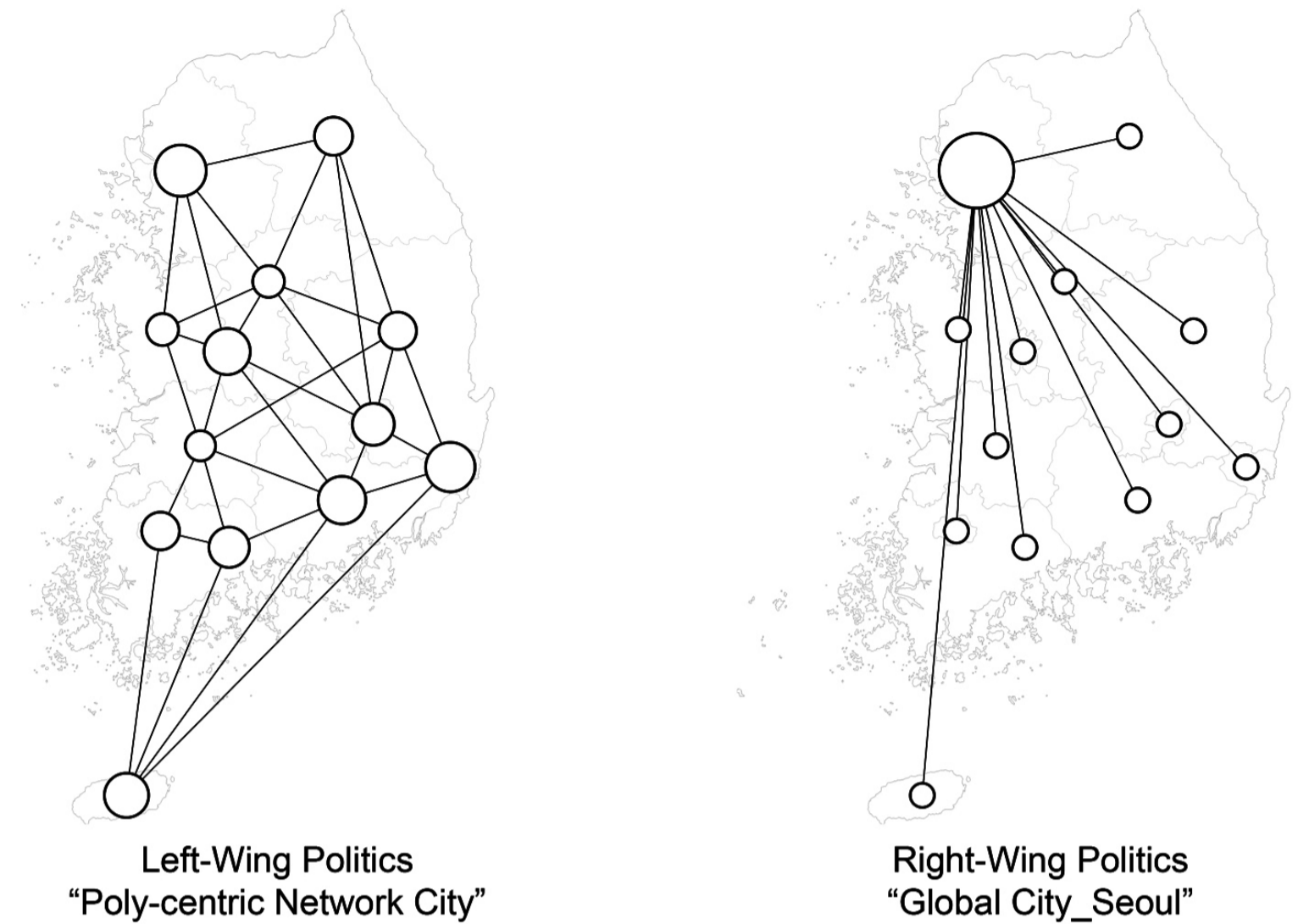


Figure 12: Leftwing and Rightwing

Competing Visions. Today, elections have become the biggest competition for urban visions. Politicians present themselves as urban visionaries. But being visionary only in order to get elected is not about production of a critical New Town discourse, rather, the politicians simply push a New Town fantasy with popular representation. Between 2000 and 2010, in every four-year local governor's election, more than 50 (new) New Town projects were presented to seduce the voters.

Different national visions from each political party lead to thematic variations in the proposed New Towns. Some New Towns were projected to criticize the other party's New Towns. To criticize the conservative political atmosphere of the capital region, the liberal party proposed a polycentric network urban structure over the entire country (similar to the Dutch Randstadt model). The conservatives argued for a more centralized structure, to survive amidst global-scale competition among the major metropolises. Thus, Seoul and the surrounding region should be developed more intensively. The conservatives used the Greater London project as their reference. Without having a chance to discuss those visions in various aspects by multiple disciplines (or in a public forum), the visions began to conflict and politicians manipulated the disagreement for their own political purposes.

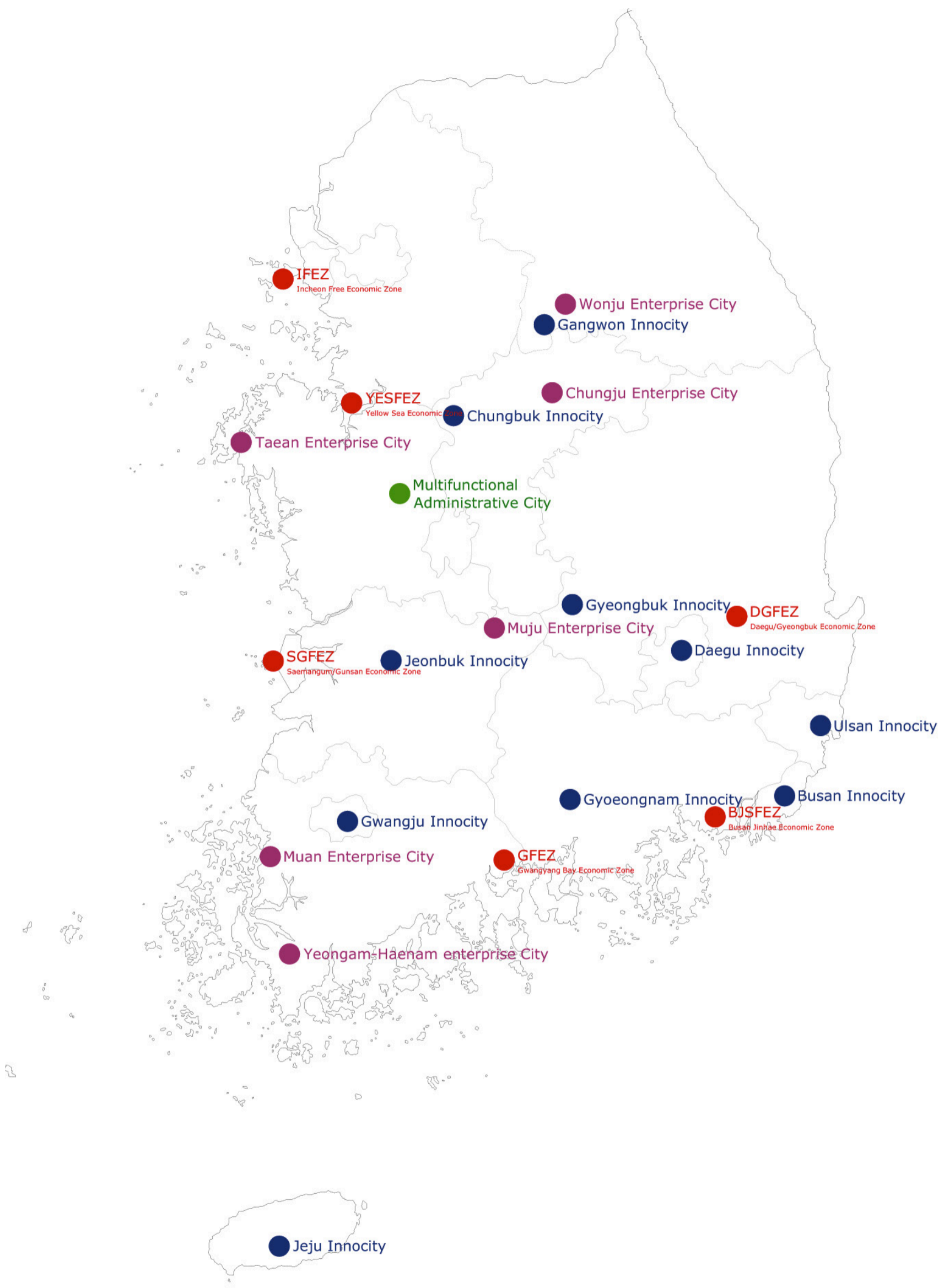


Figure 13: Local Autonomy New City

5 Million More Houses. During the liberal government administration from 1998 to 2007, more than 20 New Towns were planned around country. To redistribute power from the centrality of Seoul, a new capital city was also planned.

The government tried to move the central government's major functions to this New Town. 500,000 inhabitants were expected. As this moment, however, the national government is led by a conservative administration, and now only a few ministries are scheduled to move to the new planned capital. The government also tried to re-distribute semi-governmental institutions. In line with this goal, ten New Towns are currently planned, each with 30-40,000 inhabitants. Private companies have been asked to move their headquarters to these provinces and to give their names to the enterprising New Towns.

After the recent global shipping network restructuring, many existing Korean ports lost their main function. To try and save them, most of the ports were transformed into Free Economic Zones. For example, Saemangeum FEZ, on 50.4 km² of reclaimed land, is scheduled be developed in the style of Dubai: an exotic leisure New Town with a population of 300,000. Incheon FEZ is being developed as a global business center; it is supposed to become competition for Pudong, Shanghai. As a combination of three New Towns built on reclaimed land, the projects' total population would be 500,000 people.

From 2002 to 2010, both the Mayor of Seoul and the Governor of the Capital region were conservatives. Combined, they initiated more than thirty New Town projects in the capital region. Ten more satellite New Towns for the middle class are now under construction. To make social housing for low-income groups, eight more New Towns are planned for the near future. To redevelop the old existing city fabric of Seoul, more than twenty New Towns are currently under construction.

In total, from 2010 to 2020, 5 million new dwellings will be newly provided. That means one third of the national population will potentially live in these New Towns. But nobody is sure of the demand.

New Town Blockbusters. Sustainability issues are also often misused in New Town construction to proliferate business. The Cheonggye canal recovery project, for instance, was successful enough to make people remember Lee Myung-bak⁹, not only as a hero of 1960-1970s Korean modernism, but also as a symbol of the so-called 'green dream'. The Seoul municipal government removed 6km of elevated highway, opened up the existing canal underground and circulated additional water. The entire process took 27 months, including planning and construction. To reward its expensive construction, a large-scale

⁹ Lee Myung-bak (born 19 December 1941) is a South Korean politician and the President of South Korea. Prior to his presidency, he was the CEO of Hyundai Engineering and Construction and the mayor of Seoul.

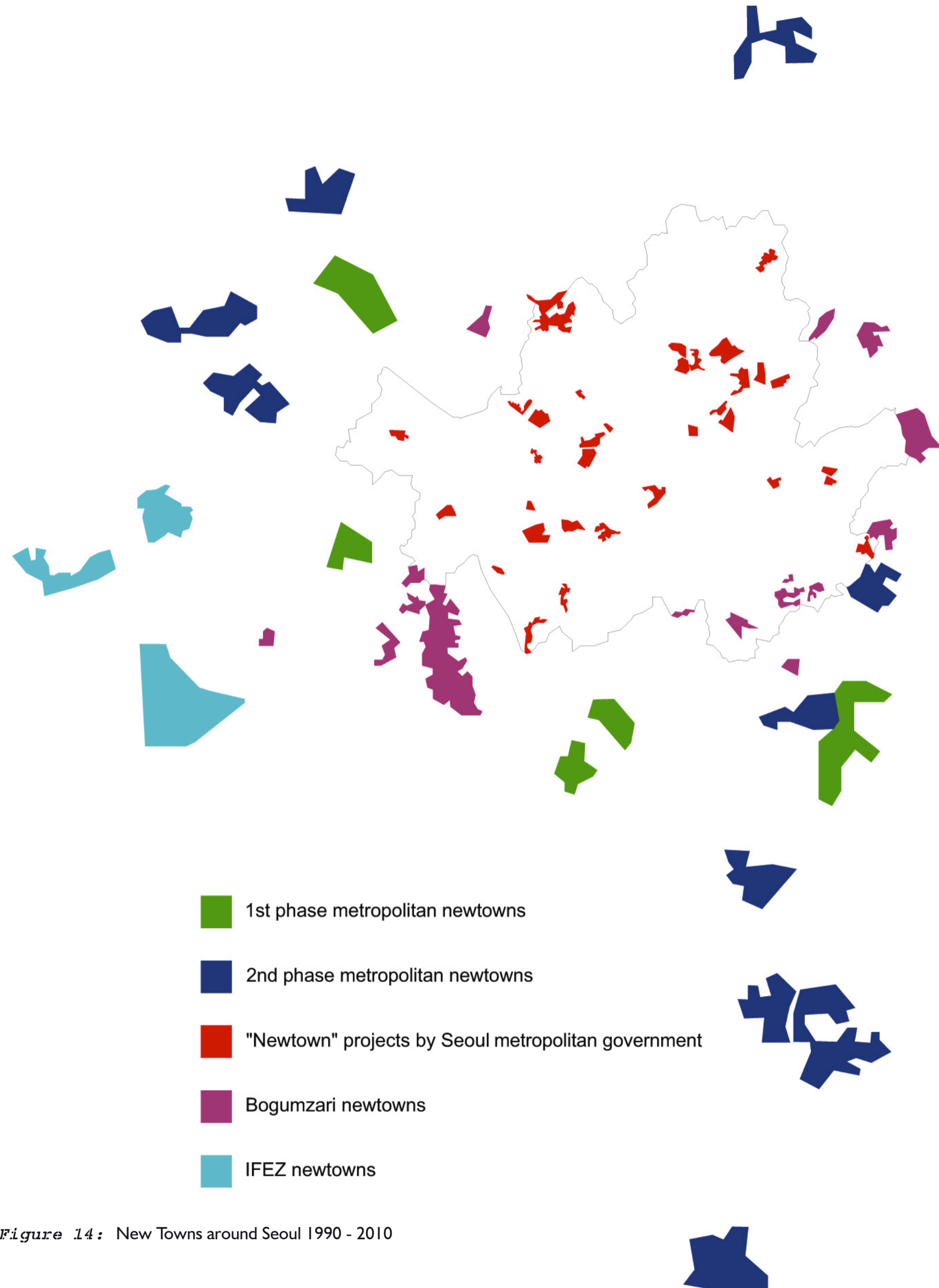


Figure 14: New Towns around Seoul 1990 - 2010



Figure 15: Presenting the Grand Canal Project

urban development along the canal quickly followed. As predicted, the land value along the canal dramatically increased. With this popular success under his belt, Myung-bak was elected president of Korea.

The next mayor of Seoul, Mr. Oh, brought an even bigger water project to the city: along with Han riverbank, huge urban re-developments are now in the planning stages. Since he became president, Mr. Lee's ambitions have grown; he is now trying to make big canals to connect the largest rivers in Korea. Of course, huge waterfront New Town developments are inevitably supposed to follow. The trajectory of Korean waterfront New Towns is much like the Hollywood blockbuster industry. To appeal to spectators (in this case, voters), more and more spectacular scenery is needed. With limited investment and housing demand, each politician has to compete with the others by suggesting different ideas and increasingly large scales for New Towns. This endless competition is what drives the staggering 18.4% construction industry portion of the GDP.

Withdrawal Effects. As might be expected, the third (and current) stage of the Korean New Town evolution encounters its own limits. First, because of exaggerated competition, New Towns conflict with each other. Second, the



Figure 16a: Dubai-crisis

collapse of the 'Dubai dream' clearly shows the inevitable limit of speculative urbanism.

New Town Addiction

Stages of Addiction. The three stages of Korean New Towns mentioned above bear a curious likeness to those of the addiction process. Dr. Julian I. Taber, a retired clinical psychologist, describes the beginning of an addiction as the "delight and discovery" stage. He has written that individuals often recall experiencing euphoric emotions when they describe their initial encounters with the substances or behaviors to which they eventually become addicted. The second stage of addiction is "protecting and promoting". The use of alcohol and/or drugs produces positive, rewarding experiences. The new addict continues to try to promote use among others, convinced that he or she has discovered some great truth.

The third stage of addiction is "defense and denial". The regular user becomes an abuser. There is a self-destructive and compulsive desire to escape to oblivion, or escape from reality. The addictive trigger may now require increased use in amount and frequency. Tolerance for the addictive increases, but the original refreshing high becomes harder to reach.



Figure 16b: Group therapy

Group Therapy. Avoiding typical pessimism, defining the Korean New Town boom as a sort of addiction presents the possibility of recovery: after all, every addiction also has its recovery process. According to Dr. Taber, the first significant step towards recovery must be admitting addiction. Inevitably, the next step is enduring the painful withdrawal effects.

Group therapy is considered one of the most highly recommended ways of escaping from the addiction. By sharing information about their addictions, the group is able to give support, offer alternatives, and comfort members in such a way that these difficulties become resolved and alternative behaviors can be learned. The role of group therapists is essential—they set up the group's cohesion and invoke the patients to support each other. Our question for Korea is: could architects and urban planners become the group therapists for a New Town-addicted society, before it's too late?

“ The obsession with control and large-scale long-term centralized planning that has always hampered state planning, is now - in the West - a thing condemned to history. The emancipated burgher of European and American democracy simply does not have to put up with it anymore; the states are now very well aware of their own limitations in realizing such schemes; and market parties, who cater to the wishes of individuals, are expected to come up with the alternatives that the consumers actually want, and are willing to pay for. ”

GOODBYE TO STATE PLANNING

THE POLITICS OF
PLANNING: FROM
SOCIAL ENGINEERING
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OF CONSENT SCENARIOS
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THE POLITICS OF PLANNING: FROM SOCIAL ENGINEERING TO THE ENGINEERING OF CONSENT SCENARIOS FOR ALMERE, MARKERWAARD, AND NEW NETHERLANDS 2050 (1965-1985)

Christian Salewski

The crisis of 'make-ability' and the image of the future in physical planning and design

Planning and designing inherently means to anticipate the future in a most comprehensive way; that is, to have an image of the future that includes both proposed, projected interventions and expected circumstances for those interventions. Planners, designers and decision-makers make their decisions based on partly explicit and partly implicit assumptions regarding the future course of events. The further the planning horizon recedes, and the larger the scale of intervention becomes, the greater complexity and hence uncertainty on the exact workings of events determining the course. Accordingly, the explicit assumptions of the future change in form. Kees van der Heijden, a futurologist, has suggested a tripartition of the realm of the future: forecasts as adequate images for the short-term future and scenarios for mid-term projects. For the long-term future, the only adequate image is simply hope.¹ In other words, physical planners, designers, and decision-makers concerned with such tasks have to be optimistic.

The planners of the Dutch governmental planning agency for the IJsselmeer polders (RIJP) regarded this optimism as a prerequisite for any planning: "Without the expectation that the future is (for a part) makeable and controllable, for which one has no other means than today's knowledge, any planning is meaningless. If the aim of planning is the pursuit of a better quality of life for future generations, then one has to be optimistic about the possibilities to reach that goal."² The word 'makeable' is a rough translation of the Dutch word 'maakbaar', a concept that extended the skills of engineering one's own territory through large-scale water works to the belief in the malleability of society itself. Well into the 1960s at least, most planners and designers in the Netherlands were trained in this spirit of 'make-ability'. The 'make-ability' of society ('de maakbaarheid van de samenleving') meant engineering in the broadest sense:

1 Kees van der Heijden, **Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversation**, 2nd ed., John Wiley, Chichester, 2005.

2 Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders, "Denkbeeld Voor Een Structuur Van Het IJsselmeergebied. Uitgebracht Aan De Commissie Markerwaard Van De Raad Van Advies Voor De Ruimtelijke Ordening in Aansluiting Op Het Rapport "Markerwaard, 10 Jaar Droog", ed. Rijkswaterstaat, Directie Zuiderzeewerken; Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat (Lelystad 1981). p.9f

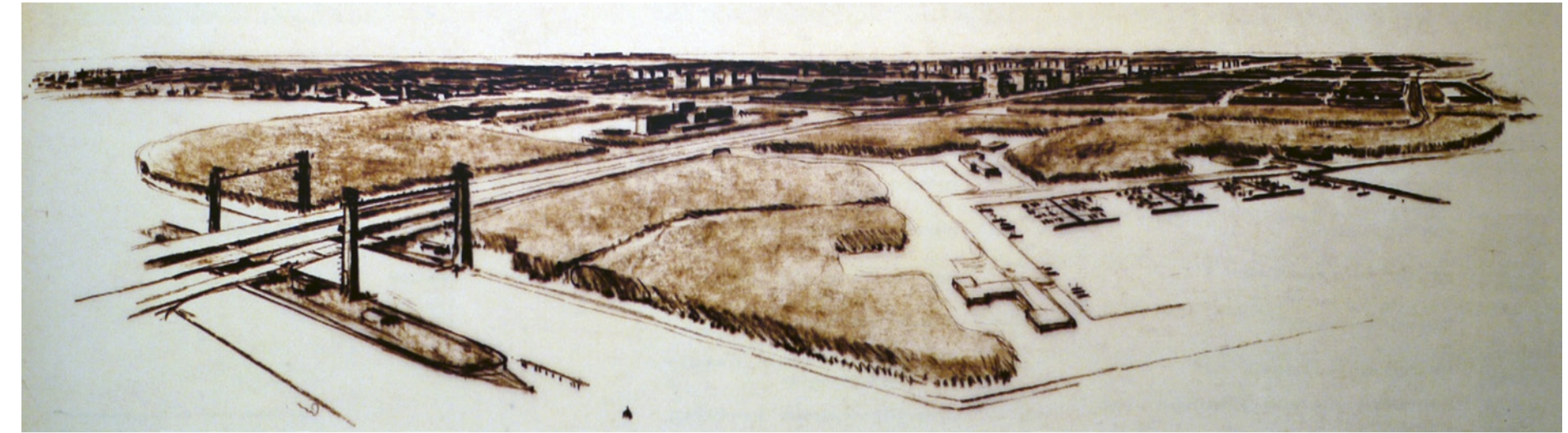


Figure 1: Cornelis van Eesteren, Lelystad, bird's eye view from North-West, 1966 (source: Geurts, André, and Jan Schilder, eds. *Veranderende Ruimte. Kaarten van het Zuiderzeeproject en Flevoland*. Lelystad: Nieuwland, Provincie Flevoland, 2008)

both physically and socially. During the First World War, this concept had become part of the Netherlands' national mythology, as expressed in the inscription of the memorial for engineer Cornelis Lely, inaugurated upon completion of the Barrier Dam: 'A nation that lives builds its own future.'³

But what future was it that the Dutch nation had to build? Traditionally, public administrators saw themselves as benevolent technocrats using scientific methods to evaluate rational ways towards the good of the greatest number. Their pride lay not least in their dispassionate views on politics – government could, and had to, indicate long-term goals and directions, but the experts would prepare their choice, and fill in the equations in its wake. However, the inevitability of experts taking sides had already been noted by American planning professor Melvin Webber and philosopher of science Horst Rittel: "Whichever the tactic, though, it should be clear that the expert is also the player in a political game, seeking to promote his private vision of goodness over others'. Planning is a component of politics. There is no escaping that truism."⁴ Imposing an official vision of goodness was (mostly uncontested) common procedure during the Dutch reconstruction era. Planners had therefore no need to question their methods, their values, or their physical designs beyond their own evaluation methods. The societal changes that started in the 1960s put a halt to this smooth operation of the planning machinery. In the wake of a rising pluralist society and increasing complexity, planners became aware of their role in the political game. Four large-scale projects exemplify the resulting changes in form and function of the image of the future in planning: modern architect Cornelis van Eesteren's comprehensive visionary Leitbild for Lelystad (ca. 1960-65), Almere Planning Office's reduced and abstract models of infrastructure sketches for Almere (ca. 1970-1975), RIJP's colorful alternative extreme program scenarios for the Markerwaard (ca. 1975-1980), and The Netherlands Now As Design's comprehensive futurologist

3 Auke van der Woud, 'De Geschiedenis Van De Toekomst', in: **Nieuw Nederland: Onderwerp Van Ontwerp – Nieuw Nederland 2050, Boek I, Achtergronden**, ed. Stichting Nederland Nu Als Ontwerp and Hans van der Cammen, Staatsuigeverij, 's Gravenhage, 1987.

4 Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning', **Policy Sciences** 4, no. 2, 1973, p.169.

scenarios based on competing political values for New Netherlands 2050 (ca. 1980-1985). Amidst increasing opposition to governmental planning, these projects reveal a transition from planning as engineering to planning as politics. Planners not only had to provide solutions for specific problems, but also organize political and public support – both for the urgency of the problem and the proposed solution. As a component of politics, comprehensive planning divided into two distinct yet connected ventures: pragmatic day-to-day design, and political vision.⁵

Towards pragmatic design: from Cornelis van Eesteren's Lelystad Leitbild to models for Almere

In the 1960s, Willem Steigenga, first professor for physical planning in the Netherlands, firmly advocated the ideal of the civil servant as neutral expert-engineer.⁶ Working out alternative plans had to be a central working method, but only if planners remained indifferent on the desirability of their options and let politicians choose. However, Willem Steigenga's concept went much further than creating options. Realizing the intricate interdependencies of values, societal structure, and physical environment, he proposed to elaborate sets of comprehensive 'social-spatial constructions' for ideal societies instead. This was advanced technocracy for complex issues, based on utopian thinking and a firm belief in 'make-ability'. Willem Steigenga was a planning theorist who emphasized the importance of the process, but he deemed a detailed visualization of possible future states indispensable for making today's decisions. For those visions, architects seemed to be the right experts, since they had not lost their naïveté, and hence the ability for utopian thinking.

In praxis, things went differently. Cornelis van Eesteren's early plans for Lelystad were such a vision.⁷ The architect claimed that they were merely a Leitbild (general model), and not a binding blueprint for a future modernist city of a hundred thousand inhabitants. But RIJP's planning commission regarded the proposals as too inflexible and too little concerned with the process of urbanization, which they considered to be the central task of the commission. Eventually, the architect lost his commission, and the planning commission members themselves began to draw rather abstract structure schemes instead. In the end, these schemes became Lelystad. A commission member later remarked that the main problem had not been the discussion between process and product, but that all participants had not made clear what they meant by talking about a city: what was missing was a comprehensive image of the future: a clear vision of the city-to-be (fig. 1).⁸

5 Christian Salewski,

'Dutch New Worlds : Scenarios in Physical Planning and Design in the Netherlands, 1970-2000', Diss., Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule ETH Zürich, Nr. 19286, 2010.

6 Willem Steigenga, 'Van Sociale Analyse Naar Sociaal-Ruimtelijke Constructie. Rede Gehouden Bij Aanvaarding Van Het Ambt Van Gewoon Hoogleraar in De Planologie En De Demografie Aan De Universiteit Van Amsterdam Op 19 November 1962', Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1962.

7 Zef Hemel, **Cornelis Van Eesteren, Architect Urbanist** / Iv. Het Landschap Van De IJsselmeerpolders, NAI, Rotterdam, 1999.

8 Commenting on the Structure Sketch from 1969. Coen Van der Wal, **In Praise of Common Sense Planning the Ordinary a Physical Planning History of the New Towns in the IJsselmeerpolders**, 010, Rotterdam, 1997, p.183.

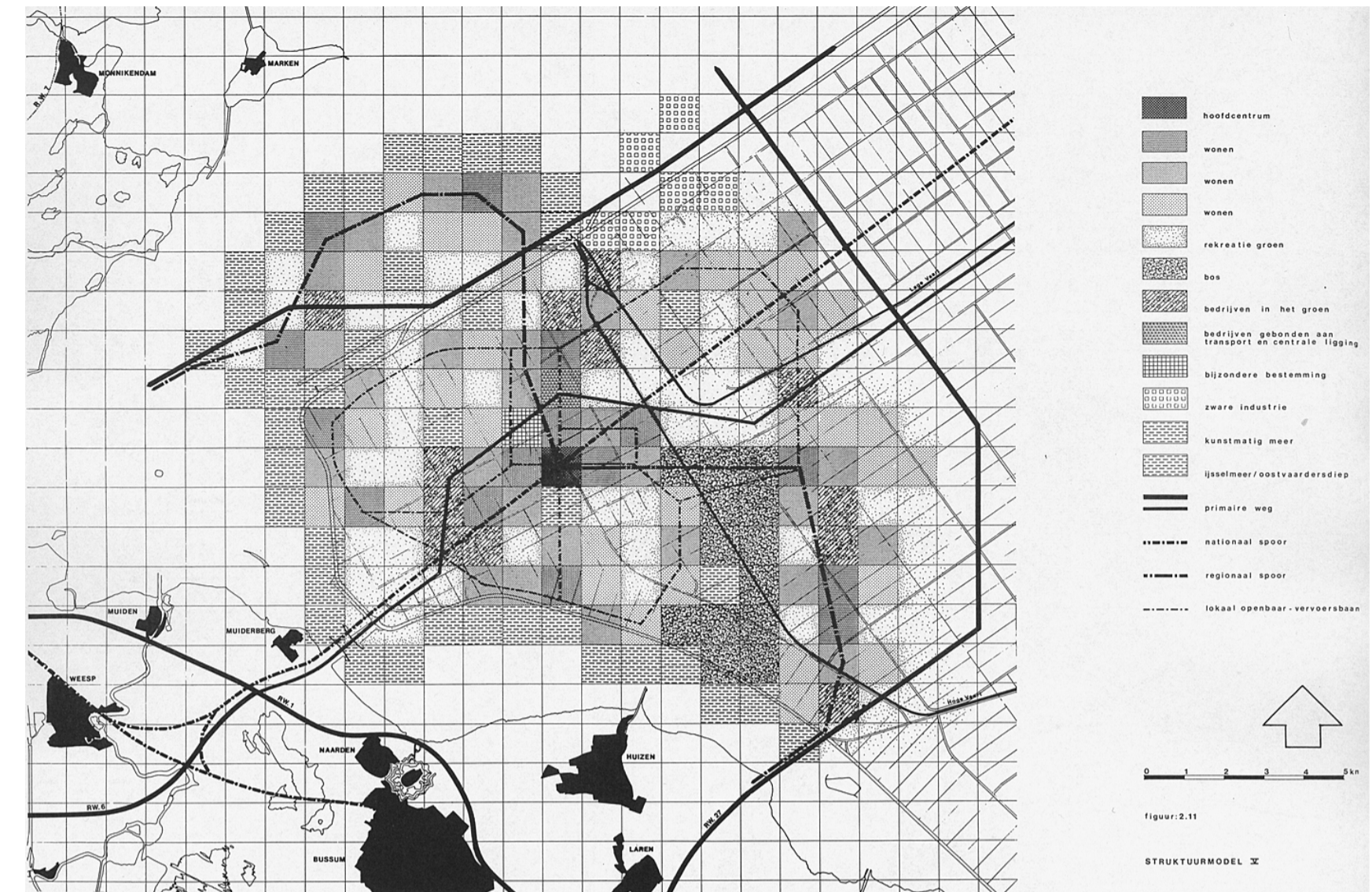


Figure 2: National Planning Agency for the IJsselmeer Polders, Structure Model V, in 'Explorations 2 Almere urban area', 1972

For Almere, the planners wanted to avoid the problem that RIJP had encountered in the early planning phase of Lelystad. Their suggestion was to implement Willem Steigenga's approach of first answering the fundamental questions about society and form before making any decisions on building.⁹ In the real-life grand project of planning a new city, the planners were increasingly marginalized by the urban designers. The concept of first conceiving a comprehensive future image of an ideal society, and then discovering the ways towards this ideal, proved to be naïve. It would not only take too much time and effort in a fast-paced planning and decision process, it also turned out to be impossible due to the complexity of the task, notably as the planners strictly adhered to their so-called scientific methods, such as the newly developed planning tools of cross-impact analyses, balanced score sheets, and the like. Not least of all, it became obvious that experts could not be as neutral as demanded, both politically and regarding principal values. The tight planning schedule demanded quick decisions, notably for starting infrastructure works with long lead times and sand-filling for preparing building grounds. The planners eventually conceded that their task was made impossible by inherent uncontrollable complexities of the project and the fundamental lack of knowledge about the precise relationship between society and space (fig. 2).

9 Ibid.

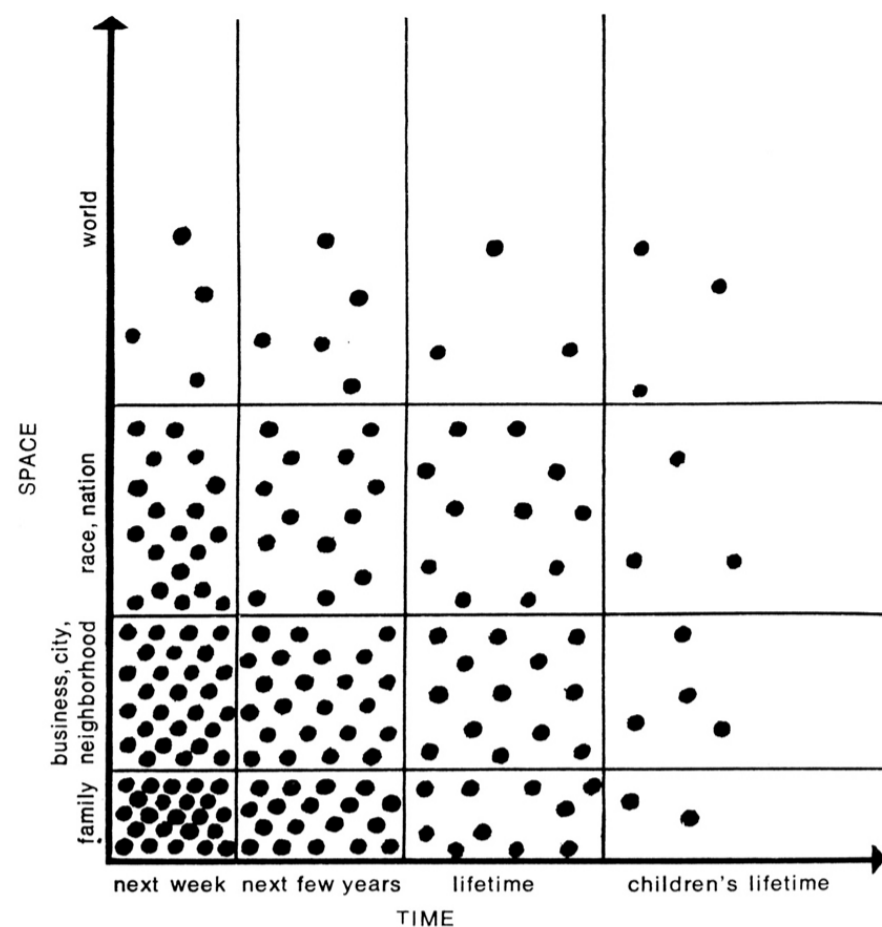


Figure 3.1: Donella H. Meadows et al., Human Perspectives, in 'The Limits to Growth', 1972

10 Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders and Projectburo Almere, **Verkenningen 2. Stedelijk Gebied Almere** (Concept), Lelystad, 1972, p.1.2f.

11 Ibid. p.1.6.

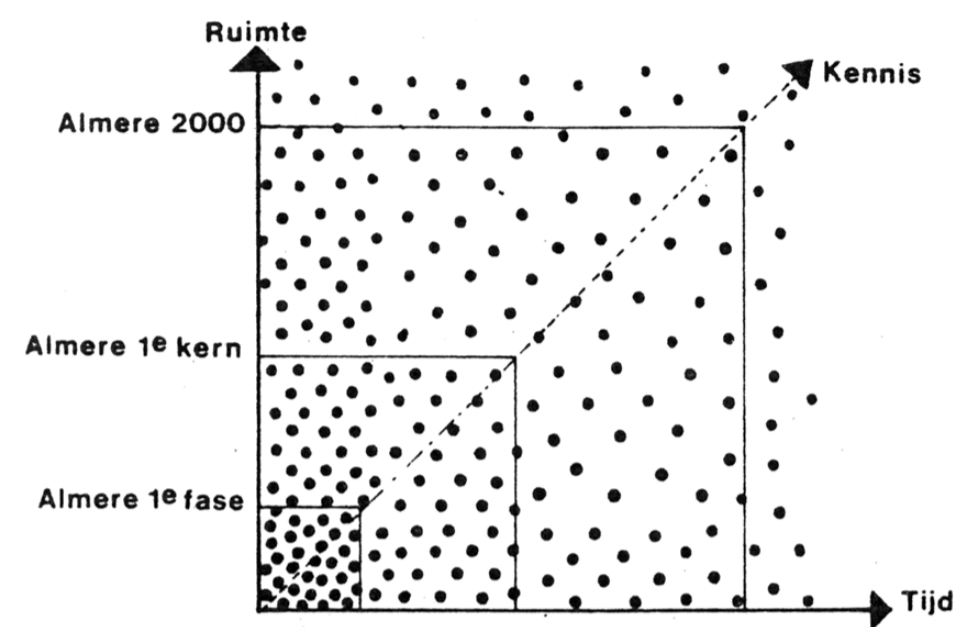
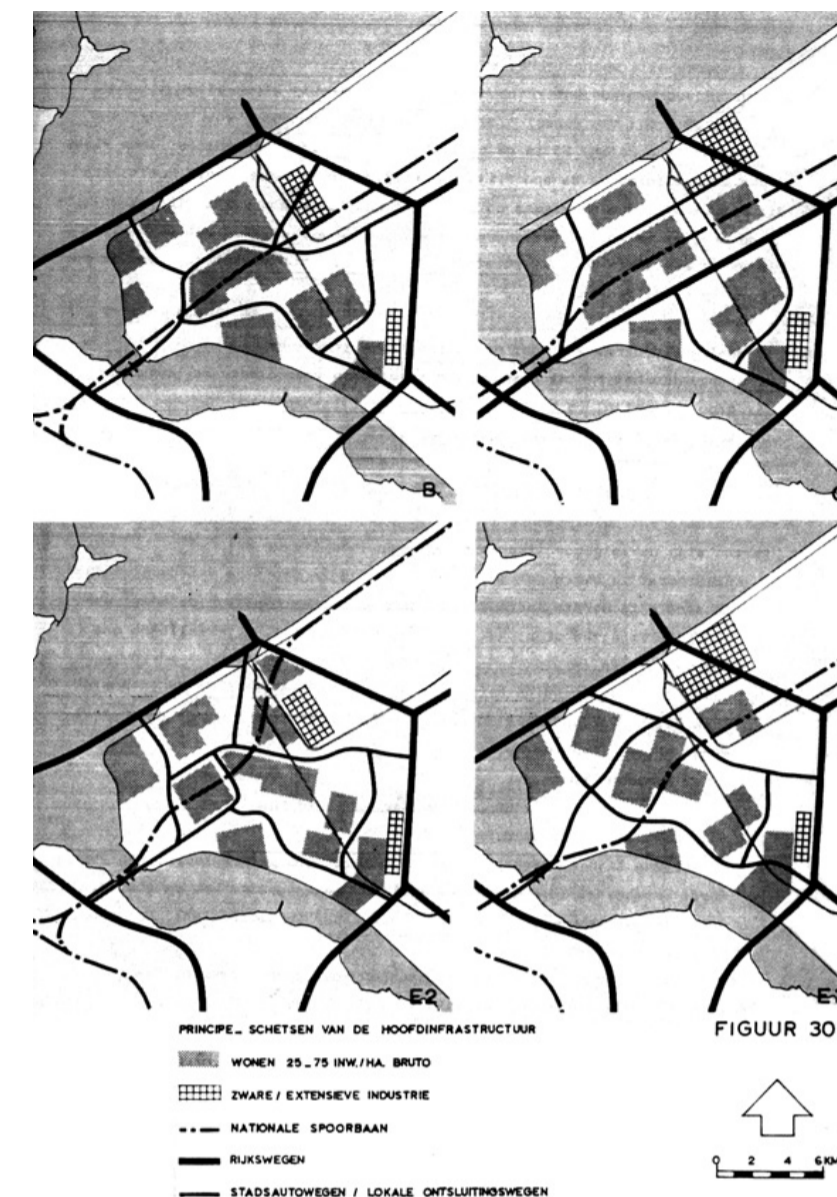


Figure 3.2: National Planning Agency for the IJsselmeer Polders, Relation knowledge, space, time, in 'Explorations 2 Almere urban area', 1972

Almere's planners were not the only ones faced with these problems. The early 1970s were a time of general uncertainty for Western societies. Following the sharp drop in birth rates and the Oil Price Crisis, previously un-thought-of uncertainties surfaced; notably in forecasting population numbers, economic development, energy consumption, environmental pollution, and supply with all kinds of resources. In a diagram that was apparently an adaptation of a diagram in the introductory chapter of the contemporary book *The Limits to Growth*, Almere's planners showed their understanding of the general relationship between knowledge and physical planning. The diagram was a declaration of visionary bankruptcy: it was, in principle, not possible to elaborate a comprehensive image of any long-term, large-scale future. Instead, decisions had to be taken step-by-step without a leading vision. Obviously, this could not answer the question of what future urban society was aspired, nor what the concept city meant to its makers. Accordingly, the planners gave up on their earlier aspirations and instead declared: "It is not possible but also not necessary to define precisely and forever what is understood as a city, urbanity, or urbanization."¹⁰ For the planners, no optimal solution was therefore possible. A "satisfactory realization of objectives for all relevant actors in the urbanization process" would have to do (fig. 3.1, 3.2).¹¹

Figure 4: National Planning Agency for the IJsselmeer Polders, Principal Sketches of the Main Infrastructure, Almere 1985. Approach towards a development strategy 1970 - 1985 - 2000, 1974



12 Ibid. p.1.2.

13 Rijkswaterstaat, Directie Zuiderzeewerken; Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat (ed), **Almere in Regionaal Kader: Ruimtelijke Structuuralternatieven. Discussienota**, Lelystad 1975, p.35.

All the while the planners met up with the limits of their methods, the designers, led by urban designer Teun Koolhaas and landscape architect Alle Hoesper, simply drew those images of the far future. However, they did not draw any comprehensive plans, nor did they state what the future city would be like. Instead, they limited their drawings to the most elemental parts of the city: the main infrastructure, the distribution of built and unbuilt areas and density numbers for the population. These sketches were called models, and their function lay in making decisions based on the comparison of alternative physical forms. That was traditional architectural design logic: a stepwise narrowing down of options, working in a descending order of scales and issues, and an iterative evolution of form, all based on a graphic working method in maps, diagrams, and plan sketches. That the future of the city was unforeseeable seemed justified, since any process of urbanization was unforeseeable as well.¹² The aim was to make Almere an open city for an open society through the provision of as much flexibility as possible. However, there would be a downside that had to be accepted: "The working method has the consequence that one abstains from the characteristics and qualities of an extreme solution. Flexibility is per definition of neutral character (fig. 4)."¹³ This neutrality, as it seems today, may be both one of greatest assets of

Almere's urban structure as well as one of its major problems. The city's early planning documents reveal this increasing antagonism between the planners, trained as social geographers and economists, and the designers, who were architects, landscape architects, and urban designers. Almere was designed very pragmatically, meaning that the designers accepted their incomplete knowledge, rejected a utopian future image, and eventually settled on providing a structure as open as possible for a multitude of possible future social and physical structures.

From extreme programs to extreme politics: scenarios for the Markerwaard and New Netherlands 2050

It was only possible to design a city without any vision or political commitment because Almere was planned for an almost blank slate; the pristine reclaimed lands of the Southern Flevo polder. Without concerned inhabitants or local politicians, there was not much public interest in the plans. But maybe this was less a result of the commission than of timing. When RIJP began to start planning and designing for the last missing Zuiderzee polder, the Markerwaard, the agency was surprised to meet strong resistance to their plans. The opposition came from outside official politics and administration, and it led not only eventually to the fact that the Markerwaard still remains unbuilt, but also to a fundamental change in planning methods for large-scale projects.

The main opposition to land reclamation came from a group of professionals and laymen who had founded the Association for the Protection of the IJsselmeer (VBIJ).¹⁴ Their motives were mixed. Some wanted to keep the large water body of the Marker lake open for fishing, others for recreational sailing, or as a natural habitat. Some feared that the new polder would provide space for hazardous programs such as the second national airport and military training grounds, others saw the historic waterfronts of the old fishing villages endangered. The movement was mainly driven by environmental concerns, general mistrust of large-scale economic and technological projects, and rising critique of governmental paternalism and the societal concept of 'necessary progress'. The protest was fueled by uncertainty about the projects on the side of the government itself. For starting the planning process, The Hague had demanded a report from RIJP that listed all possible variants for the new polder.¹⁵ RIJP included the option of not building the Markerwaard at all, but only the dikes and water works necessary for water management and flood protection. VBIJ took the hint and added another, more radical plan without building anything at all: the Waterlely plan.¹⁶ It was a planning report mixed with evocative photographs and descriptions of threatening future developments, such as the prophecy that after

14 Jaap van der Zwaag et al., **Markerwaard/Markermeer: Witboek IJsselmeer**, Kosmos + Vereniging tot Behoud van het IJsselmeer, Amsterdam 1980.

15 Rijkswaterstaat and Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken, **Beschouwingen over De Markerwaard. Nota Nr. 276**, Rijkswaterstaat, 's Gravenhage 1972.

16 Vereniging tot behoud van het IJsselmeer, **Plan Waterlely**, Edam 1974.

the reclamation of the Markerwaard, the Wadden sea would be next. RIJP's planners and designers, led by urban designers Dirk Frieling and Teun Koolhaas, heard the signals, and tried to counter these claims. The main argument was programmatic: as the new Markerwaard was very easy to make, Dutch society should not miss out on that opportunity. What the new polder would be used for was another question. There would therefore be two different issues: one was whether to build a new polder, and the other was what to do with it. The first had already been answered by parliament and governments, and commissioned to RIJP. The second was open, and RIJP attempted to show that possible future uses came with many options. The Markerwaard was therefore drawn in four alternative scenarios, each corresponding to an extreme program: agriculture, leisure, nature, and urbanization.¹⁷ Urbanization was a euphemism for unwanted industrialization, and more agriculture was demanded by farmers' lobbies. However, leisure and nature were core demands of the opposition. In four somewhat less radical scenarios that combined programs along different main topics, RIJP wanted to give attractive images of the future to ease opposition. At the same time, the design exercise was made to decide on a one-size-fits-all outer contour line for the ring dike. With such a contour, the two decisions could indeed be taken separately (fig. 5).

RIJP's use of parallel alternative images of the future in the form of design scenarios was new. However, the report failed to impress the opposition, who considered the first question of much greater importance than the eventual program in the polder, which they regarded as out of their control. In an increasingly turbulent economic and political environment, the reclamation of the Markerwaard was eventually abandoned. RIJP's planners had not succeeded in securing enough political and societal support for their problem, and their proposed solutions could not convince the critics. After decades of large-scale planning, Dutch land reclamation came to an unexpected premature end, and the agency was disbanded.

For the planners, it was extremely frustrating to face the futility of years of working. Dirk Frieling, RIJP's deputy director for the Markerwaard, put these feelings into words when he gave a lecture to an international audience of design students shortly before RIJP's decommissioning: "As you will know, Utopia is sometimes translated as Nowhere land. And indeed in the present situation, the designated area for Utopia being a lake, there is nowhere land. Since I am a member of the design coalition team that has been commissioned to design this Utopia, you may see me as a real nowhere man, sitting in my nowhere land making all my nowhere plans for nobody."¹⁸ To Dirk Frieling and other planners of RIJP, it had become obvious that Dutch society's implicit consensus on a way

17 Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders, R.J. Brandsema, and M. Spierings, 'Verkenningen Markerwaard', Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken, **Flevobericht**, Lelystad 1975.

18 Dirk Frieling, 'A visit to Nowhereland', in: Max Bruinsma (ed.), **Markerwaard: The Other Side of Design: Water and Land, Myth or Mind**, De Balie, Amsterdam, 1988, p.27f. Italics in the original.

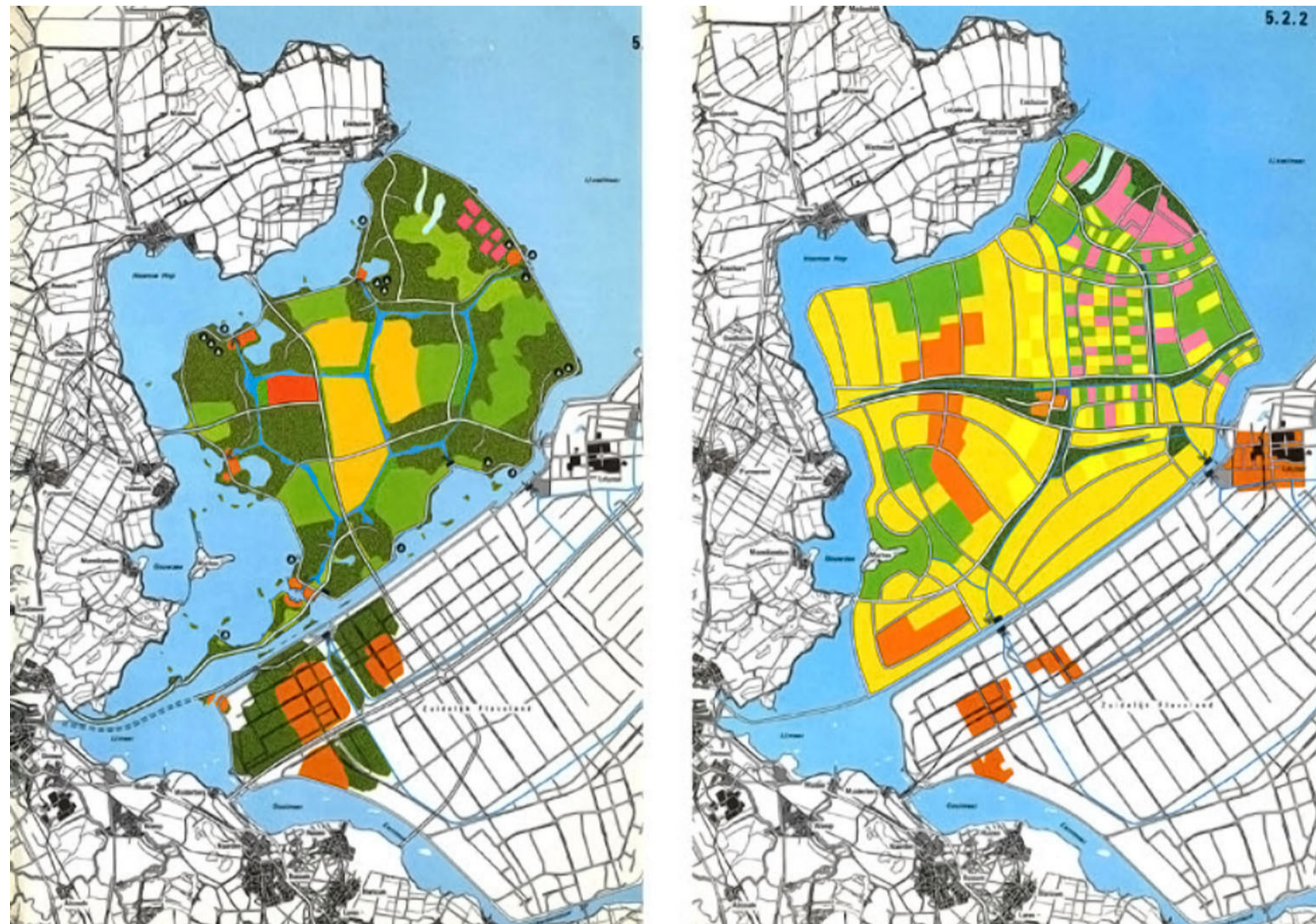
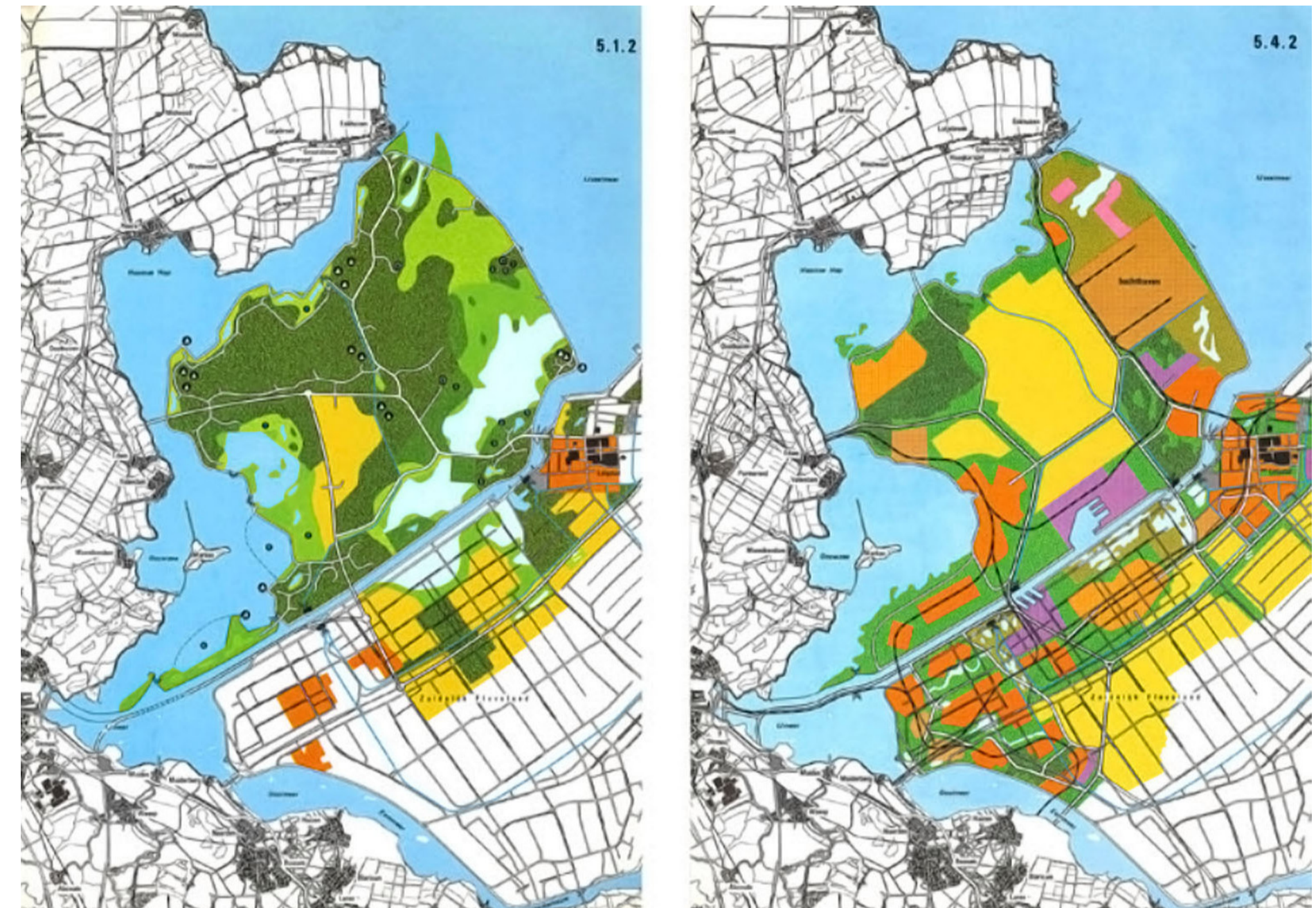


Figure 5: National Planning Agency for the IJsselmeer Polders (RIJP), Scenarios - Markerwaard nature area / agricultural area / recreation area / urban area, in 'Explorations Markerwaard', 1974

into the future based on governmental planning and technological progress had become contested. Considering the scale and the prominent place of waterworks in the Netherlands, it was less of a surprise that the Markerwaard became the battlefield for the turning of the tide. But for planners, turning away from planning for the future was certainly not an option. It was a sign of societal, if not cultural weariness, as urban designer S. J. van Embden remarked: "Now the high-spirited verve of the 70s ebbs away [...] there is little left of the pre-war optimism and belief in the future, which had actually kept, almost uninterruptedly, on the go the entire western world since the Enlightenment. For now, [the cultural sector] is dominated by skepticism, nostalgia [heimwee] for a past that is dreamt of as safe, and above all, a nearly apocalyptic doom thinking, for which most of all the world of natural and technical sciences is blamed. [...] And on top of that [...] the general opposition [weerzin] and the fears, evoked by the inevitable side effects of the persevering industrialization and mechanization."¹⁹ The planners' diagnosis

¹⁹ S.J. van Embden, 'Over Vormgevers En Vormgeving in De Nederlandse Stedebouw Van De 20e Eeuw', in: F. de Jong (ed.), **Stedebouw in Nederland: 50 Jaar Bond Van Nederlandse Stedebouwkundigen**, Walburg, Zutphen, 1985, p.76.



²⁰ Frieling op. cit. p.35.

²¹ Stichting Nederland Nu Als Ontwerp and Hans van der Cammen, (eds.), **Nieuw Nederland: Onderwerp Van Ontwerp – Nieuw Nederland 2050, Boek I, Achtergronden**, Staatsuitgeverij, 's Gravenhage, 1987.

of the failure of the Markerwaard project was not due to any problem on the side of planning. The problem was a societal fatigue, embodied by the Report to the Club of Rome. The cure would therefore not be an improvement to planning (for example through societal participation), rather, planning would have to cure society, since, as Dirk Frieling claimed, "it may in theory be true that there are limits to growth but in practice it is nonsense. For the time being, that is for the centuries to come, we should aim at growth. [...] I should like to suggest that as a follow-up to "the limits to growth" we should take the initiative for a second look at the predicament of mankind which might result in a report called: "the opportunities for growth". For if we ever want to realize Utopia in this world, we can better start to design it, rather than tell each other what it is not."²⁰ He did not only call for action, but had already started such an initiative. It was the five-year non-governmental planning and design event 'The Netherlands Now As Design' (NNAO).²¹ It was a unique collaboration of geographers, planners,

designers and other experts to produce four distinct images of the future: the scenarios of 'New Netherlands 2050'. The aim of the exercise was twofold: to convince society that the future had to be made, and to promote the planning and design disciplines for making that future. In the early 1980s, large-scale and long-range planning and design commissions had become rare in the wake of economic decline and in the rise of liberal concepts in politics (fig. 6).

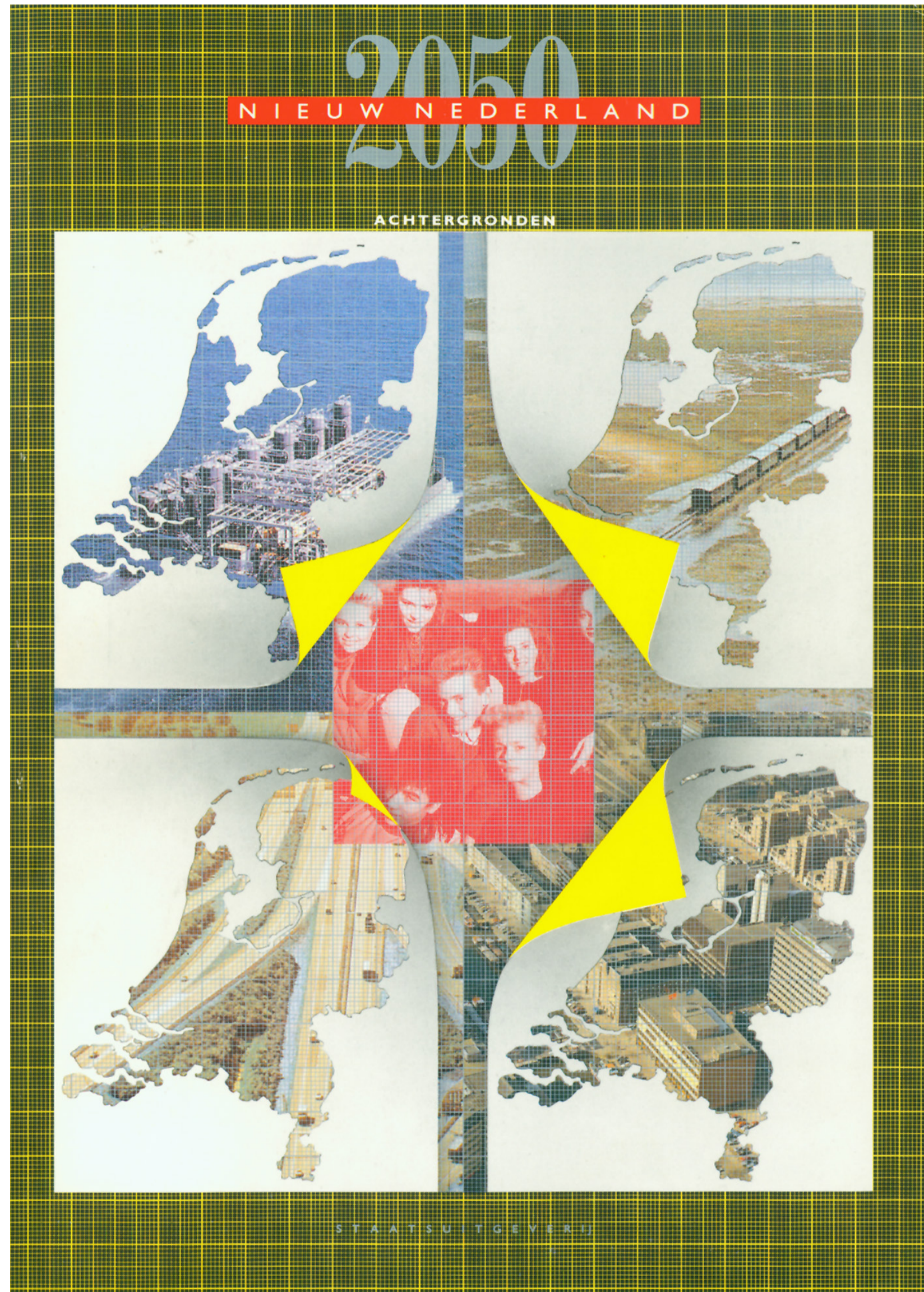
NNAO embraced the spirit of 'make-ability', yet its working method was the scenario method. Whereas the Markerwaard scenarios had been based on alternative programs, the futures of the Netherlands had to be comprehensive images that included both future society and future physical form. Thinking more than seventy years ahead was a venture in the field of futurology, and that is where the long genealogy of the NNAO scenarios had started twenty years earlier.²² The general setup followed Dirk Frieling's idea that the fundamental question which vision a society had to follow had to be answered not by planners, but by politics. This was basically in line with Willem Steigenga, but he argued that the decisions would not have to be simply administered by government. Instead, this had to be done through the proven mechanisms of party politics, at least in the Netherlands and comparable Western societies based on the political concepts of the French revolution. The Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) supported the venture and commissioned the elaboration of three images of the future based on the assumption of continuous extreme political decisions for each. The result was three alternatives: a future Christian-conservative, a future liberal, and a future socialist Netherlands. NNAO added a fourth, which was a technocratic or planners' scenario. These four scenarios were first elaborated as written narratives and rough programs, then handed over to teams of designers and planners who visualized them on national, regional, and local scales (fig. 7).

In NNAO, planners' and designers' neutral expert roles were reestablished, but with a twist: they had to become politically active to prove that they could make the future. What they would make was not their decision. The attractive, comprehensive, and vividly visualized image of the future was not a Leitbild to follow. It merely had to be attractive enough for citizens and politicians to allow planners to make the future at all. The aim of these visions was not any building site, but rather public opinion. In other words, the scenarios of the future Netherlands were no longer comprehensive engineering plans, but an exercise in planners' and designers' new field of engineering consent. However, NNAO's makers did not fully trust politics to take the right decision, and hence added the fourth scenario as their preferred option. This so-called 'relaxed' scenario was a classic utopia.

22 The process was initiated by Herman Kahn's introduction of the scenario method for large-scale images of the future of society, which prompted a critical answer by The Club of Rome that became seminal: 'The Limits to Growth'. Herman Kahn and Anthony Wiener, *The Year 2000. A Framework for Speculation on the Next Thirty-Three Years* (New York, London: MacMillan, 1967). - Club of Rome and Donella H. Meadows, *The Limits to Growth a Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (New York 1972). - OECD, *Interfutures Research Project On "The Future Development of Advanced Industrial Societies in Harmony with That of Developing Countries" Final Report* (Paris: OECD, 1979). - Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, "Beleidsgerichte Toekomstverkenning. Deel 2: Een Verruiming Van Perspectief," in **Rapporten aan de Regering**, ed. WRR ('s-Gravenhage 1983). - Rob van Engelsdorp Gastelaars et al., **Ruimtelijke Verkenningen: Drie Schetsen Voor De Toekomstige Inrichting Van Nederland**, Delftse Universitaire Pers, 1987.



Figure 6: Foundation The Netherlands Now As Design, Catalogue (cover), in 'New Netherlands 2050', 1987



Despite great efforts and large budgets, NNAO was much less successful than its makers expected in drawing large audiences and many visitors. But to many of the participating designers and planners, it became an influential experience for their professional development. Not only did they make first contact with the innovative working method of scenarios, but also with members of other disciplines. Regarding the curious career of the scenario method in Dutch physical planning and design in the 1990s, the greatest legacy of the event seems to have been the rediscovery of utopian thinking in physical planning and design.

Figure 7: Foundation The Netherlands Now As Design, H.R. de Boer, A.G. Hosper, Relaxed Netherlands, in 'New Netherlands 2050', 1987



NEW TOWNS IN

CHINA AND INDIA:

GOVERNMENT-

LED VERSUS

PRIVATE SECTOR

DEVELOPMENT

NEW TOWNS IN CHINA AND INDIA: GOVERNMENT-LED VERSUS PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Steven Beunder

Introduction

Over the past decade, the immense scale and the remarkable speed of the urbanization process in China and the Gulf countries has landed them in the headlines of the global press countless times and triggered an unprecedented interest from the Western architectural profession towards the East. Interestingly enough, countries in the same region like India that have seen their own share of urbanization are still largely unknown territory to many design professionals from the West.

When it comes to comparing the development of New Towns in India—the largest democracy in the world—to their autocratic counterpart China, the built reality on the ground shows as many similarities as there are differences, despite contrasting realities in the planning, design and development process.

China: Keeping Beijing Happy

Chinese New Towns are planned as an integral part of long-term regional master plans that identify the urbanization nodes planned around Chinese cities. While these ambitious, visionary master plans are largely planned and implemented by local planning departments, their actual scope and level of ambition is directly linked to the strong directive political power Beijing holds over the municipal authorities.

The Communist Party sets out detailed economic development goals for each Chinese city in individual Five Year Plans. Local government officials will always ensure the targets set by their leadership will be reached (however ambitious they may be) to safeguard their careers in government. Close personal connections government officials maintain with developers and the stakes they hold in land banks, form other incentives for the authorities to think big and built quickly. With so much money hanging in the balance a great sense of competition has urged local city officials to out-do their competitors. In this political climate, with large amounts allocated for state-of-the-art infrastructure to facilitate the vast green field urbanization process, it is not surprising that the development of large-scale New Towns has taken off with such force all across China.



Figure 1: Songjiang New Town, Shanghai (Photo by M. Hartzell)

Patchwork City. The local Chinese Design Institutes have come up with uniformly large scale and efficient grid patterns of wide arterial roads leaving more or less rectangular super blocks to be assigned for largely mono-functional land uses in order to deal with the reality of fast-paced massive development. The neighborhoods normally get built after the city government has laid out the arterial road system and utility companies have put down power, water and sewage trunk lines. The developer then steps in and buys the rights to build everything inside the blocks, which is typically gated with just one entrance. Communication between developers seldom occurs and is neither mandated nor suggested by the government. Each entire super-block tends therefore to be gated, creating disconnected islands of urban development. A culture shaped by five decades of Communism seems to be reflected in this approach to its New Town development.

That New Towns in China are so often characterized by an extensive grid pattern actually makes perfect sense. A political system that has no qualms about removing local villagers by the thousands from their land at short notice has always considered the sites for New Town development as blank canvases. Site specific topographical elements like natural water bodies and culture-historical





Figure 2: Songjiang New Town, Shanghai (Photo by Y. Wang)



Figure 4: Land Use Plan Lake Reservoir District, Xiamen (Source: Townland Consultants)



Figure 5: Conceptual Master Layout Plan Reservoir District, Xiamen (Source: Townland Consultants)

assets like local farming villages with a vernacular building tradition are not considered valuable assets to be integrated into the new urban fabric. After all, the government and developers' main focus is on building efficiency and speed.

Urban Spatial Segregation . Future residents targeted for the New Towns are mostly the growing middle classes from nearby cities. The rapid emergence of this new Chinese middle class is responsible for the change in functional and aesthetic demands towards residential space. Reflecting upon their own Chinese history is still biased to a certain degree due to the traumas of the more recent history. Contemporary China is drawn to the urban aesthetics of the Western middle class and preferably of the United States. The selling point of Chinese new sub-urbanism is a 'new modern way of life', distinguishing itself from the outdated socialist utopianism.

Although the Western style architecture implies a strong affinity to 'a new modern way of life', as a gated community, the superblock is actually rooted in traditional Chinese residential typologies. The traditional Chinese courtyard house, the hutong, is a form of gated community for extended families. During the height of the Communist era, the residential compound, danwei, was introduced. This was a dormitory style community in which families lived



Figure 6: Gated Community in Songjiang New Town, Shanghai (Photo by D.Deng)



Figure 7: Sign at Entrance Gated Community in Songjiang New Town, Shanghai (Photo by Kathy)



Figure 8: Original Model of Chandigarh (Photo by A. Mallol)

together in an assembly of buildings with their colleagues from the same government institution or factory.

In the post-courtyard and post-compound period, the wealth-gap-widening mode of development of the new middle-classes has once again created a type of fortress-like, enclosed complex. The Chinese authorities have good reason not to abandon the gated community style development. As a result of the widening gap between rich and poor in Chinese cities, the sharp social spatial segregation has become the norm. It's often the spatial segregation that actually helps not only to reduce crime, but more importantly helps to avoid social conflicts and help the authorities to maintain control over the existing public order.

India

On the other end of the spectrum, the planning authority in India is almost completely placed on municipal level. It is the combination of lack of vision by the local authorities, lack of funding and rampant corruption that have let most of the government-led New Town developments fall into the same old traps, resulting in an image of traditional Indian urban chaos. A new generation of entirely privately-developed New Towns (of a different standard all together) is, however, rapidly changing that picture.



Figure 9: Shopping Mall in Gurgaon, New Delhi (Photo by D. Lewis)

From Socialist Ideals to Capitalist Pragmatism. Earlier examples of Indian New Towns built after Independence also showed a more coherent, integrated approach to the development. Until 1991, India's political system was based on a strong socialist-inspired economic model, characterized by extensive regulation, protectionism and public ownership. Urban Development was the sole responsibility of planning authorities that acted not only as the planning and administrative body, but also the developer and builder for the entire project. The most famous Indian New Town of that post-independence era is Chandigarh, designed in the mid-1950s as the new capital for the state of Punjab. The master plan concept was very much based on the notion of a political statement about the new, emerging Modern Nation State India. In its design it needed to move away from signs of power or colonial supremacy, as had been the case with Lutyens' New Delhi expression of Imperialism. The Modernist ideals of planning and architecture by lead designer Le Corbusier were easily accepted as the best way forward for New Town development in India. The typically unadorned spaces and buildings of the Modernists never presented any threat to a religiously pluralistic India that was anxious to create a secular identity. With the changing economic policies and a more open market-driven approach set up by the central government in the early 1990s, more and more private

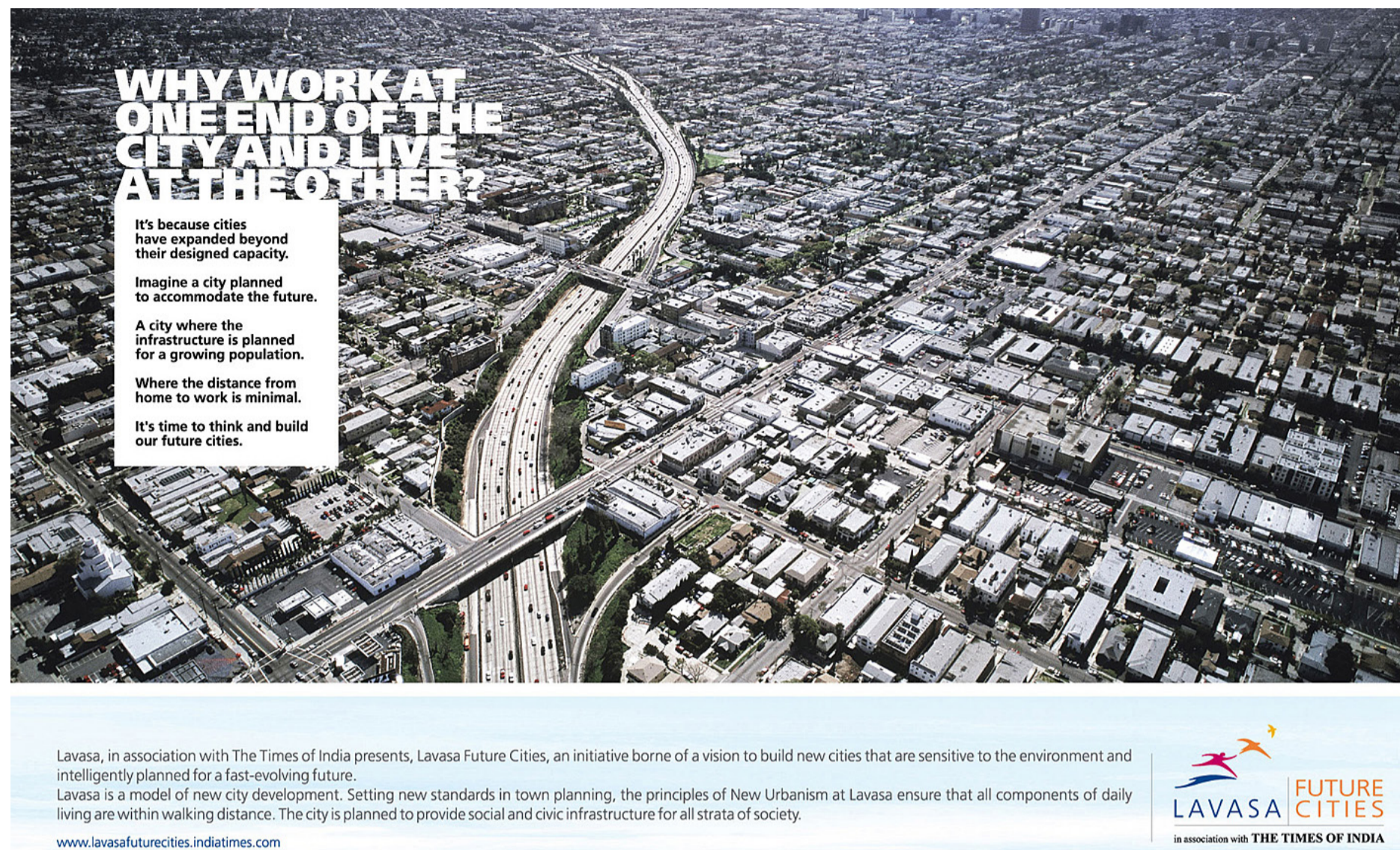


Figure 10: Campaign Ad Lavasa Township (Source: HCC / Times of India)

sector developers came up and started taking interest in developing larger scale areas on the urban fringes of cities. Within the designated new suburban areas of the cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Bangalore, large tracks of land were bought up and since then endless enclaves of gated residential communities and strip malls have been popping up along the main arteries. Detailed master plans or urban designs are no longer part of the planning process; broad Land Use Plans suffice.

Due to a lack of vision, poor planning, gross mismanagement and the lax attitudes of government officials, New Towns like Thane in Mumbai and Gurgaon near New Delhi, (once marketed as 'City of Dreams') have now turned into an urban nightmare. These New Towns have become victims of their own success. Facing an excessive population pressure and over-exploitation of natural resources, both are experiencing haphazard development. With a population of over 2 million people, Gurgaon lacks even properly functioning basic facilities like adequate water and power supply, paved roads, properly functioning sanitation, a modern bus system or a sufficient waste-management system.

The chronic inefficiency and rampant corruption prevalent under government officials in the civic body is not helped by lack of clear-cut demarcation of the authority and responsibilities between government departments. The



Figure 11: Billboard Ad for Township near Pune (Photo by R. Karandekar)

unaccountability of officials for the lack of basic facilities and their incompetence can sustain itself only within a system that keeps its bylaws, rules and regulations complicated and ambiguous.

The Private New Town Phenomenon. India's urban population is set to increase from the current 340 million to 590 million by 2030, a 40 percent increase in the total population, according to a recent McKinsey report. It's a pace of urbanization second only to China. To cope, India needs to add 700 to 900 million square meters of commercial and residential space – the equivalent of a new Chicago – every year. The government alone can clearly not create such planned cities. A different model is required that is executed substantially by the private sector, creating partnerships at different levels from planning, designing, policing as well as carrying out the municipal functions. Over the last few years the private sector has indeed started to step in and has moved on from developing individual building complexes and gated neighborhoods to complete, large-scale, integrated, mixed-use New Towns.

The lack of regional development plans and the complicated and drawn-out land acquisition process still make these so-called Townships awkwardly shaped and insular developments. Land ownership is an especially thorny and complex



Figure 13: Pedestrian-only area Lavasa New Town (Photo by R. Akshay)



Figure 12: Pedestrian-only area Lavasa New Town (Photo by R. Choudhury)

issue when it comes to large-scale green site developments like New Towns. Land titles in India are often not clear or imprecise and landownership is often fragmented into small parcels over many generations. It's the developer that shoulders the responsibility for working through the various regulations to achieve properly zoned, large, contiguous land areas suitable for mixed-use development.

Large-scale land acquisition often brings organized protests from local farmers when they are not compensated properly. The farmers are usually backed by environmental organizations and opposition leaders of the main political parties. Large-scale infrastructural projects – although almost completely funded by the private sector – tend to become a showcase of political accomplishment for local government officials. With land acquisition deals ongoing for many years, a shift in political power after elections often means that prestigious developments are put on hold by the new political leadership. The Tata Nano Car factory in West Bengal and DLF's Dankuni Township are just a few of the more prestigious projects that, despite huge economic gains for the areas, were cancelled at the final stages of the planning process.

Once the developer is successful in getting the land aggregated, approved and zoned, the next challenge is infrastructure, or the lack thereof. The integrated

Figures 14, 15 and 16: Mixed Use Outdoor Mall 'Salt Lake City Centre', Kolkata (Photos by S. Beunder)





Figure 17: Bird's Eye View Central District Nav Surat New Town, Surat (Source: Kalpataru / Townland Consultants)

Townships have the benefit of scale that enables the developer to create an international standard infrastructure from scratch, including water, power, sewage, electricity and communications. The Townships rely on main public trunk lines for sourcing power and water, but most problems associated with India's infrastructure tend to be 'the last mile problems', and can be overcome by private developers stepping in to provide these for themselves.

New Urbanism. The privately developed New Town that is making the most headlines in India is Lavasa. Currently under construction in the hills not far from Pune, with a strong vision based on the principles of New Urbanism, it is the most ambitious of a slew of New Townships being developed by the private sector and aimed at India's growing urban elite and aspiring middle classes. Lavasa's master plan was developed by internationally renowned design consultant HOK, from the USA. Contrary to China, international design experts are being brought in at all development stages, from initial land use planning and master planning to the detailed urban design.

The return of integral designs with the emergence of the private New Towns often leads to a transect urban design model, wherein the development is centered around a densely populated mixed use town center and gets sparser towards the perimeters of the Township. With the entire private New Town basically being one large gated community, the need for gated communities at a block level, (like in China or in regular suburban developments in India) is no longer necessary. With no pre-set Government Land Use Plans to follow, another prominent difference is the integral implementation of the Urban Design Vision, where planning concepts like New Urbanism that stress walkability, mixed-use environments and human scale, are easily adopted and translated into a significantly smaller grain of the urban fabric. Although the concepts of New Urbanism are well received by developers, the strong market-driven approach of the developers also means that allocation of space for recreational and civic amenities and sizeable public parks sometimes have to take a backseat.

Growing Social-Spatial Segregation. With the local government basically playing no role within the development or management of the private New Towns, the project developers have created special Development Corporations for the New Towns. They will be granted by the authorities a special planning authority status which allows privately-appointed city services management to function similarly to a municipal authority. Common democratic processes like public information & participation during the decision making process are therefore no longer open for civic scrutiny. All common facilities like schools and



Figure 18: Campaign Ad High End Township (Source: Sri Sai Associates / Times of India)

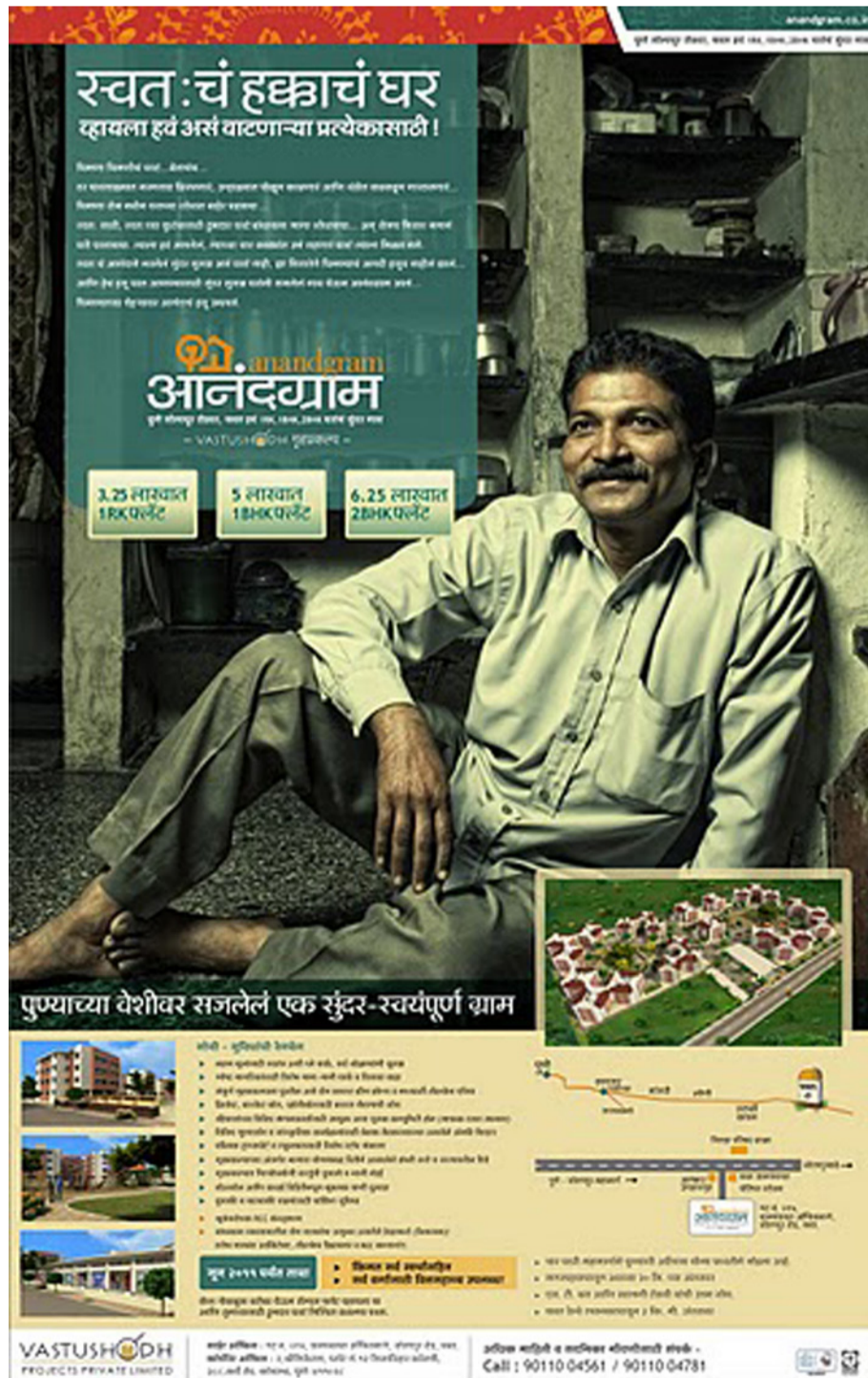


Figure 19: Campaign Ad Township Low Income Groups (Source: Vastushodh / Times of India)

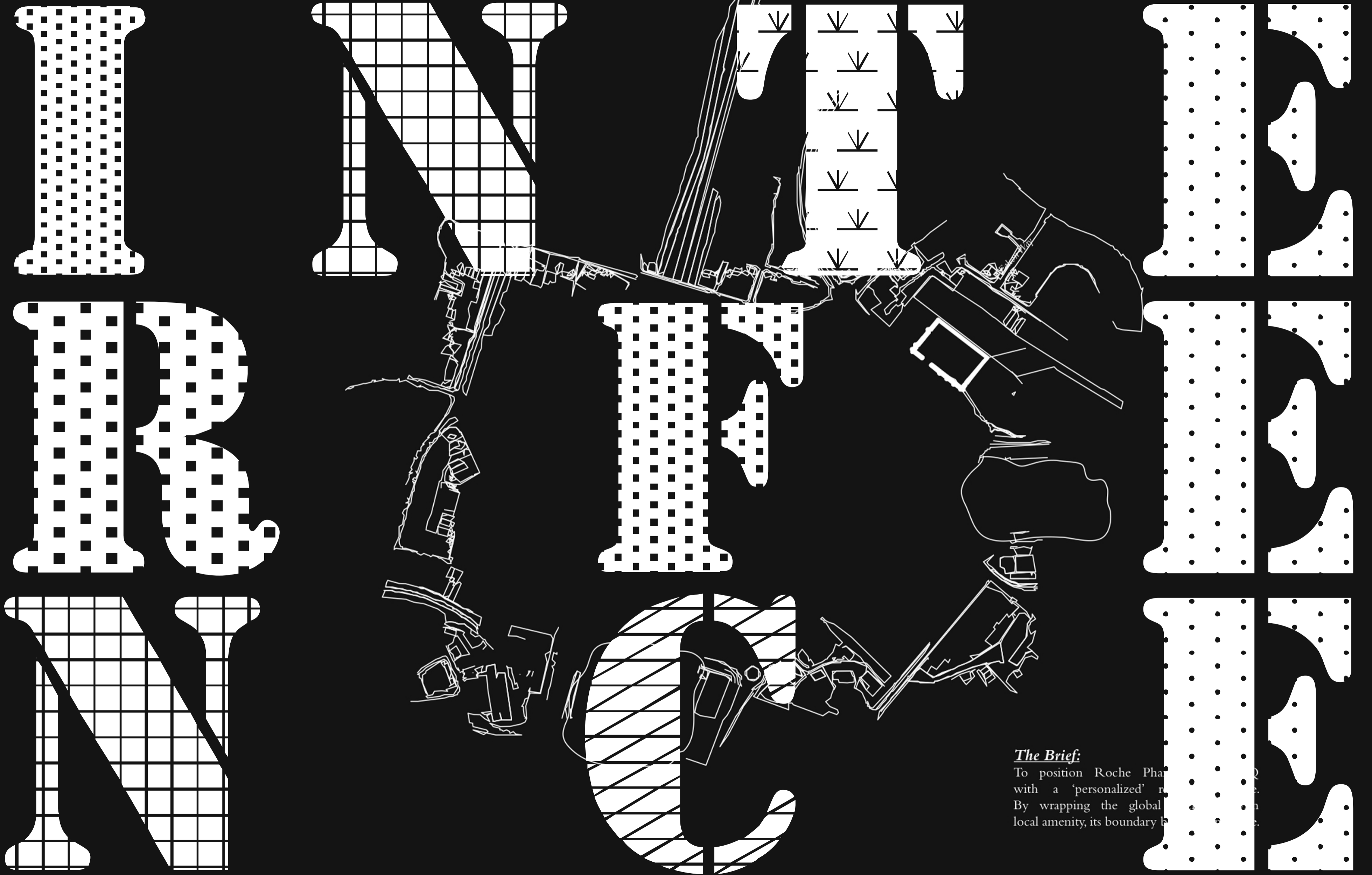
hospitals are also privately operated. With the private New Towns often also privately policed, they effectively become very large private cities entitled to set their own rules and regulations.

The popularity of the private New Town is an indicator that the middle classes in India have had enough with the substandard quality of life in suburban India. At the same time, this trend feeds the growing inequality and emphasizes India's uneven economic growth. Most private New Towns keep hawkers and shanties at bay with gates and security guards at the perimeter of the town, yet rely on a local supply of cheap labor. Townships that are built for the lower income groups are developed as separate entities, spatially segregated from regular New Towns. The difference between earlier government-led New Towns and the recent private New Towns lies in the democratic accountability that actually helped create a planning framework in regular cities to accommodate the underprivileged migrants. In those New Towns, generally 10% of the site area was allocated for the so-called Economic Weaker Section. However, the private New Towns developers choose in most cases to ignore these responsibilities as they are only accountable to their stockholders and investors.

Conclusion

While in China the widening wealth gap in urban society is dealt with by the authorities actively promoting the Gated Superblock model to help maintain the public order, the authorities in India have reluctantly accepted the gated community as the new face of urban development, with the private sector now dictating the face of Indian urbanization.

Considering the private sector's crucial role in meeting demands for urban housing in the coming years, the Indian authorities are not in a position to question the lack of democratic accountability and widening social-spatial divide associated with the emergence of the private New Towns.



The Brief:

To position Roche Pha
with a 'personalized' r
By wrapping the global
local amenity, its boundary b

INTERFERENCE

Maria Lisogorskaya

Location, location, location.

The Thames Valley today, defined by the river's catchment area, is a 215 mile long town-of-towns, as diverse historically as it is demographically and home to 13 million people...a careful documentation and non-judgemental analysis of the Thames Valley is as relevant today as were studies of Haussmann's Paris, Renaissance Florence or ancient Greece to earlier generations (fig. 1).¹

A network of nodes where politics meets urban planning; contemporary means of production are dispersed in its business parks, industrial estates, office villages and live-work networks. Rather than dismissing these New Town utopias, their civic value can be found and extended to the clumsy scale of the every-day.

Welwyn Garden City—an old school model of a British New Town—was Ebenezer Howard's second Garden City, designed before post-WWII housing policy came into effect, and designed to create new employment opportunities in a 'healthy' setting.² An egalitarian, self-contained town, Welwyn was lined with green belts and included facilities for residence, work and leisure. This 'total package' was then used to attract a good skill force. The New Town's coat of arms depicts its aspirations: spelling out W (for Welwyn) with a planner's dividers, decorated with local wheat agriculture, and populated by a hard working bee community on a gold background. Nature and society are ordered By Wisdom and Design; in a conflict between Arcadian Idyll and Capitalist Dream.³

Beyond the expectations of planners or architects, Welwyn Garden City is now enjoyed by train-spotters, horticulture enthusiasts and even TV personalities like Alesha Dixon, once a singer-dancer of the UK garage/R&B girl group Mis-teeq. Despite her early 'urban' street dancing and rapping fame, she now prefers to live in the outskirts of her "green...peaceful...lovely" native New Town.⁴

Although the original centre is still recognizable for its lush public gardens and shops, the relationship between big industries, residents and the notion of a common green has changed. Another Welwyn Garden City celebrity – the landmark (Grade II listed) Shredded Wheat factory, has stopped its cereal production.⁵ Part of an imminent redevelopment plan for the former industrial area, in its place, office paper will be shredded instead. Its spirit lives on though, through the soul and ska punk nightclub Shredded Beats.⁶

Some of the other corporations that made up this industrial vision on Broadwater Road included Young Osmond and Young Electrics, Ardath Tobacco, Suchard

¹ Studio Introduction,

Learning from Thames Valley, 2009/2010.

² Seen through popular propaganda, such as the New Town animation (1948). WGC was planned in 1920.

³ **Learning from Thames Valley.**

⁴ BBC News online, [Alesha Dixon gets tough on new CD.](#) 9 September 2010.

⁵ In 2007.

⁶ For events information, go to <http://en-gb.facebook.com/event.php?eid=118626178204970>

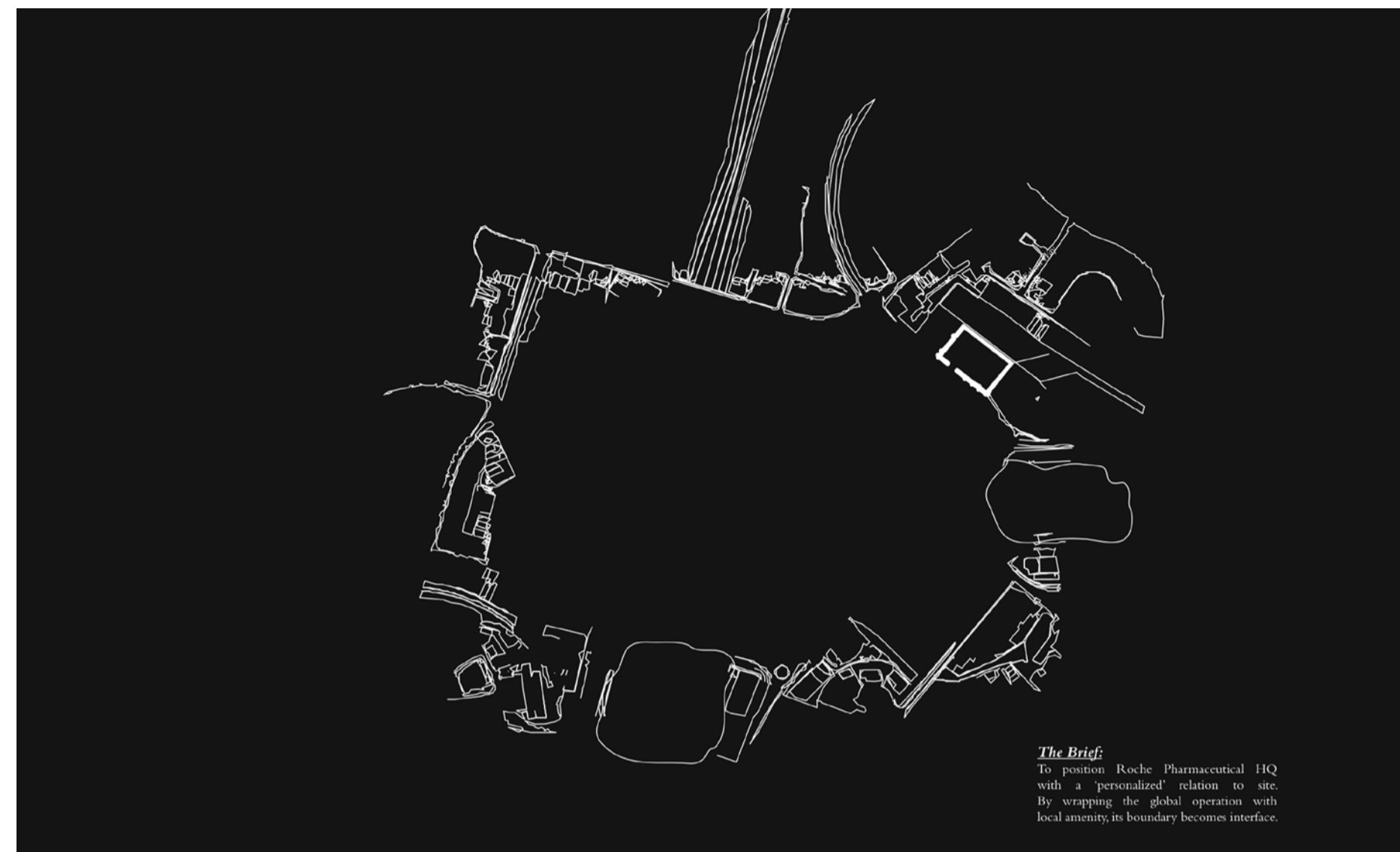


Figure 1: The Brief

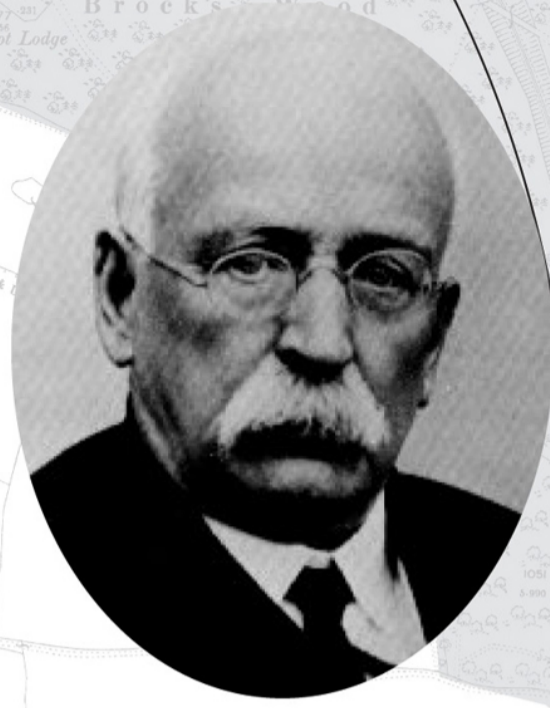
⁷ S.A. Sadeler Forster,

Welwyn : Where Industry Prospers. An introduction to the advantages of Welwyn as a centre of Industry, Welwyn Garden City Ltd., 1938.

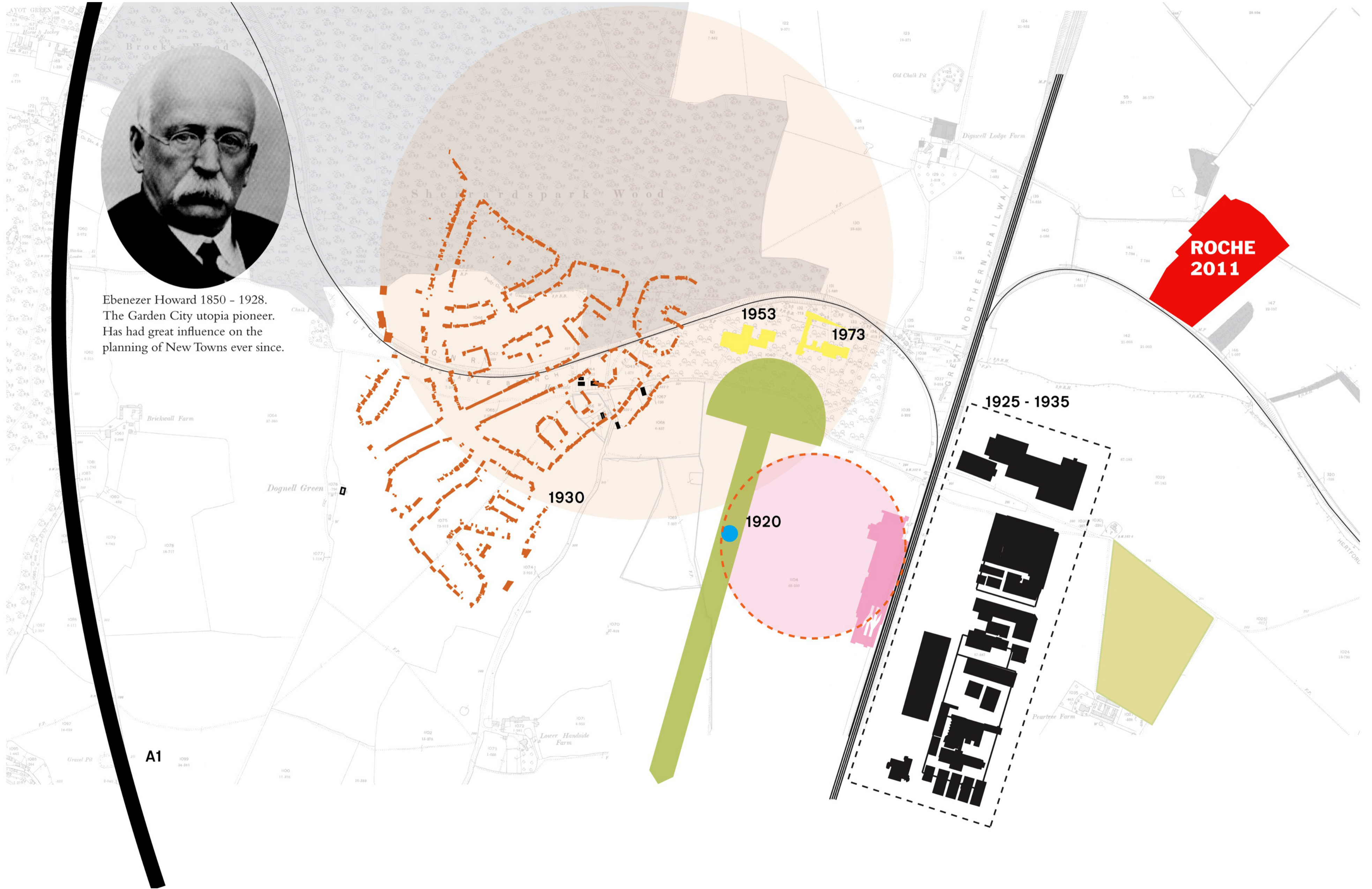
⁸ Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, **Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal,** 2007.

Chocolate and Nivea. Situated close to the well-connected railway station, the corporations were essential in creating the New Town identity. With bright posters seducing Londoners to "The Happy Way to Health!" or to "Live in the sun at Welwyn Garden City", a new skill force was successfully seduced away from the overcrowded nearby capital.⁷ The corporations' role as part of a local life 'package' can be seen in illustrations such as the "My Home Town: Welwyn Garden City" edition of The Dandy magazine, published in 1969. A caricatured face of Sir Ebenezer Howard sat along with faces of a few literary and entertainment celebrities, accompanied by cheerful snapshots of an office day-in-the-life at Shredded Wheat, Nivea and Eylure companies (fig. 2, 3).

It seems the early relationship between the corporations and the New Town public was seen as mutually beneficial. The arrival of British Instructional Films in 1928 for example, provided popular public screenings of silent and talking films; and employed locals to be extras in large film productions, like in the crowd scenes of WWI-themed I Was a Spy. Recently celebrating its 90th Anniversary, WGC-plan nostalgia is expressed at online forums: from appreciation of Louis de Soisson's neo-Georgian terraces and planned open green fields; to concern over the quirky 1930s steel frame poster stanchions, which now stand bare in the town centre (fig. 4).⁸



Ebenezer Howard 1850 - 1928.
The Garden City utopia pioneer.
Has had great influence on the
planning of New Towns ever since.



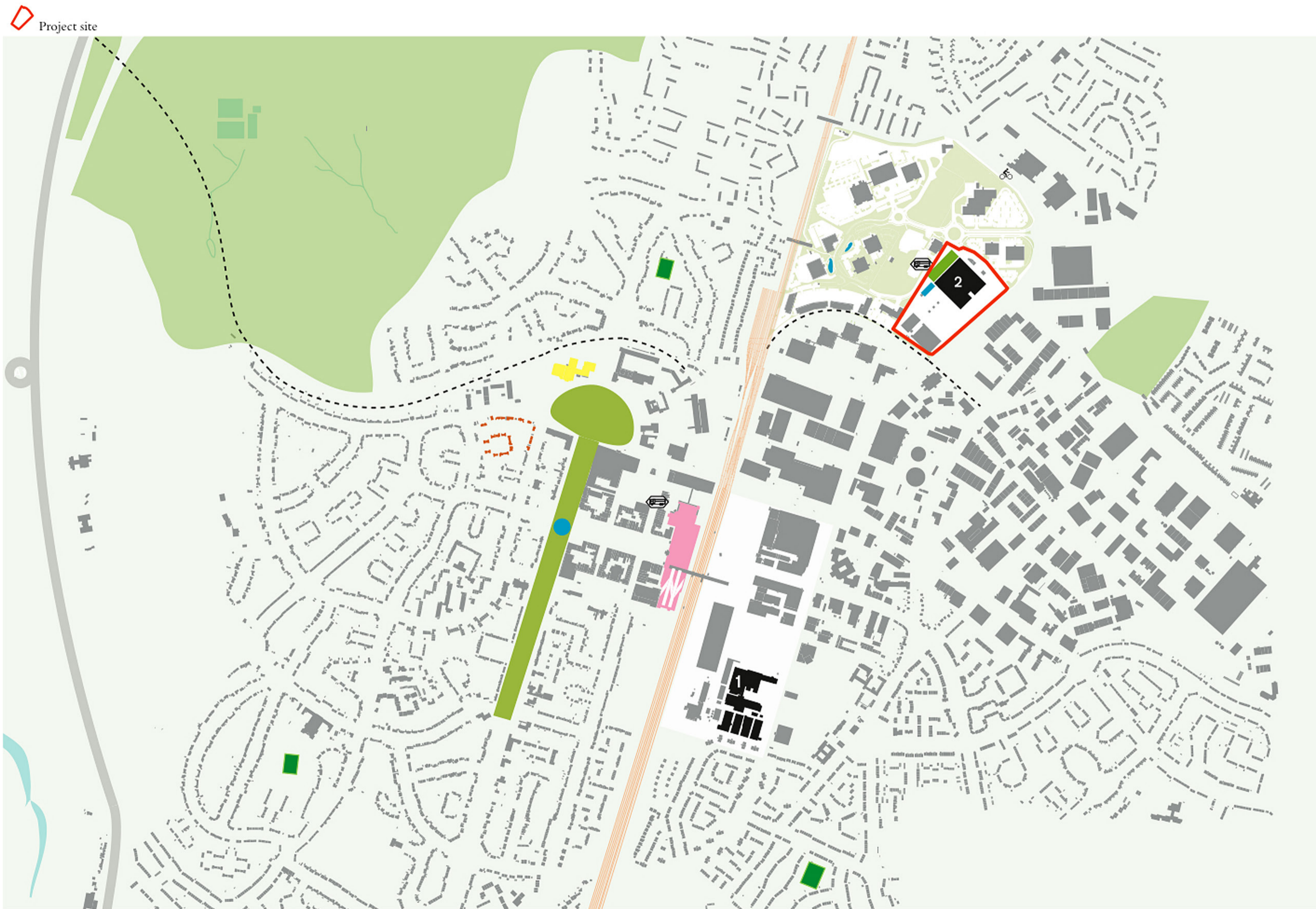
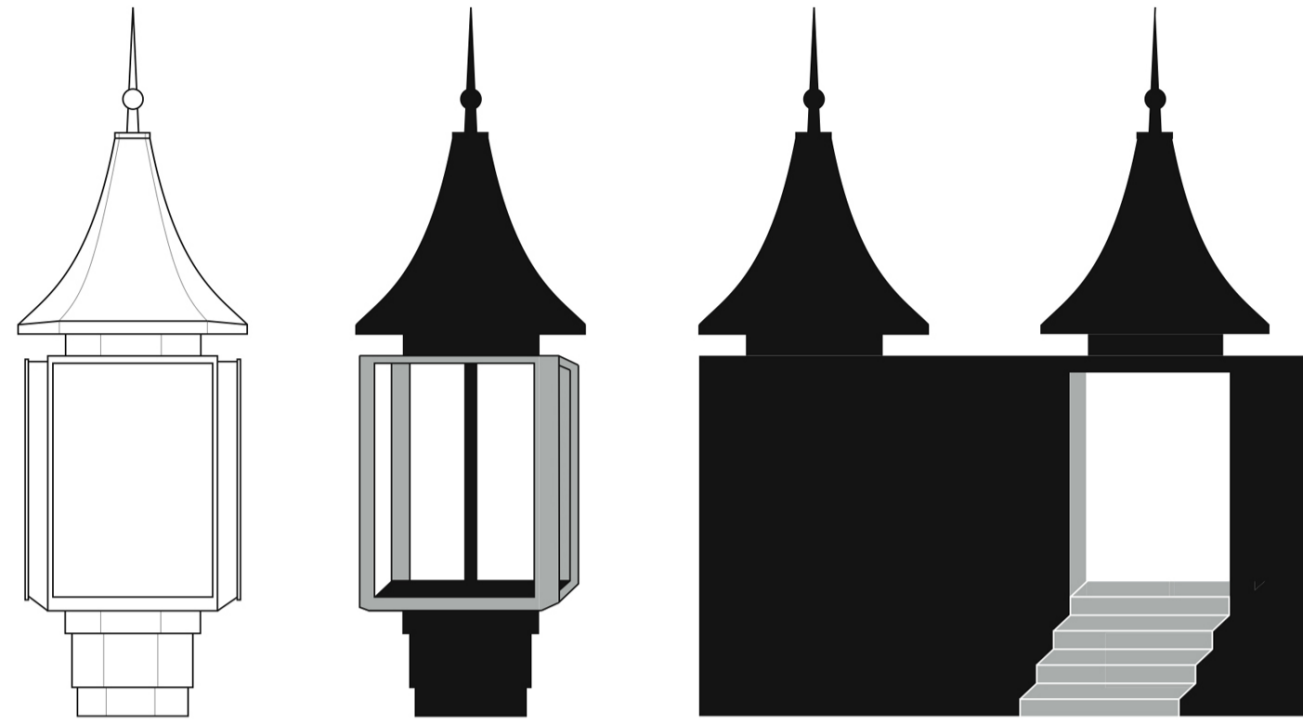


Figure 3: Welwyn Garden City 2011

● Planned public garden
 ■ Public sport
 ● Public water
 ● Industry center
 ■ Commercial center
 ■ Education
 ■ Housing
 - - - Infrastructural history

1 Roche HQ 1939 - 2005
 2 Roche HQ 2005 - present

Figure 4: Adapting Welwyn Garden City Iconography - The Poster Booth



And the remaining companies? Tesco has turned into a developer; converting derelict land into flats. Other companies have turned to IT, pharmaceuticals and speculative office parks, now set up in bushy enclaves, whose workers can enjoy the town on their brief walk to M&S and back.

Swiss pharmaceutical company Roche has been one of the town's essential occupants since its arrival in 1938 (Roche Product Ltd. at the time). Ever expanding, in 2005 it left the listed modernist building by Otto Salvisberg to set up a more fortified headquarters further away from the original centre. "Our site at Welwyn Garden City in Hertfordshire, is a globally important centre for the development of new Roche medicines."⁹ A mini New Town-in-a-Town; it has a gym, café, library, pond, garden courtyard, gallery, security, gardeners and a private bus shuttle. The development only lacks a few civic ingredients, like housing or education. It's accessed through a kind of designer-glass Checkpoint Charlie. The BDP architects' HQ exemplifies contemporary corporate architecture: a 'sustainable' conditioned box, isolated by a wire fence and compound of car parking (fig. 5, 6).

The Roche compound is the slickest in the whole of Shire Park, and its grounds—as well as the actual building—resemble Roche Shanghai offices built in the same year. Its international flags, mesh chain-link and smooth concrete boundaries project the most 'Business' in the whole business park; at odds with an otherwise overgrown, 1980s brick, Thomas Hardy-esque office landscape (fig. 5.1). Positioned on the edge between Shire Park and the town, Roche is also socially incongruous. Through the Bessemer Road it shares a boundary with the Garden City's Peartree borough, which has the lowest employment and is noted as the

9 Roche, <http://www.pharmaceutical.org.uk/roche/>

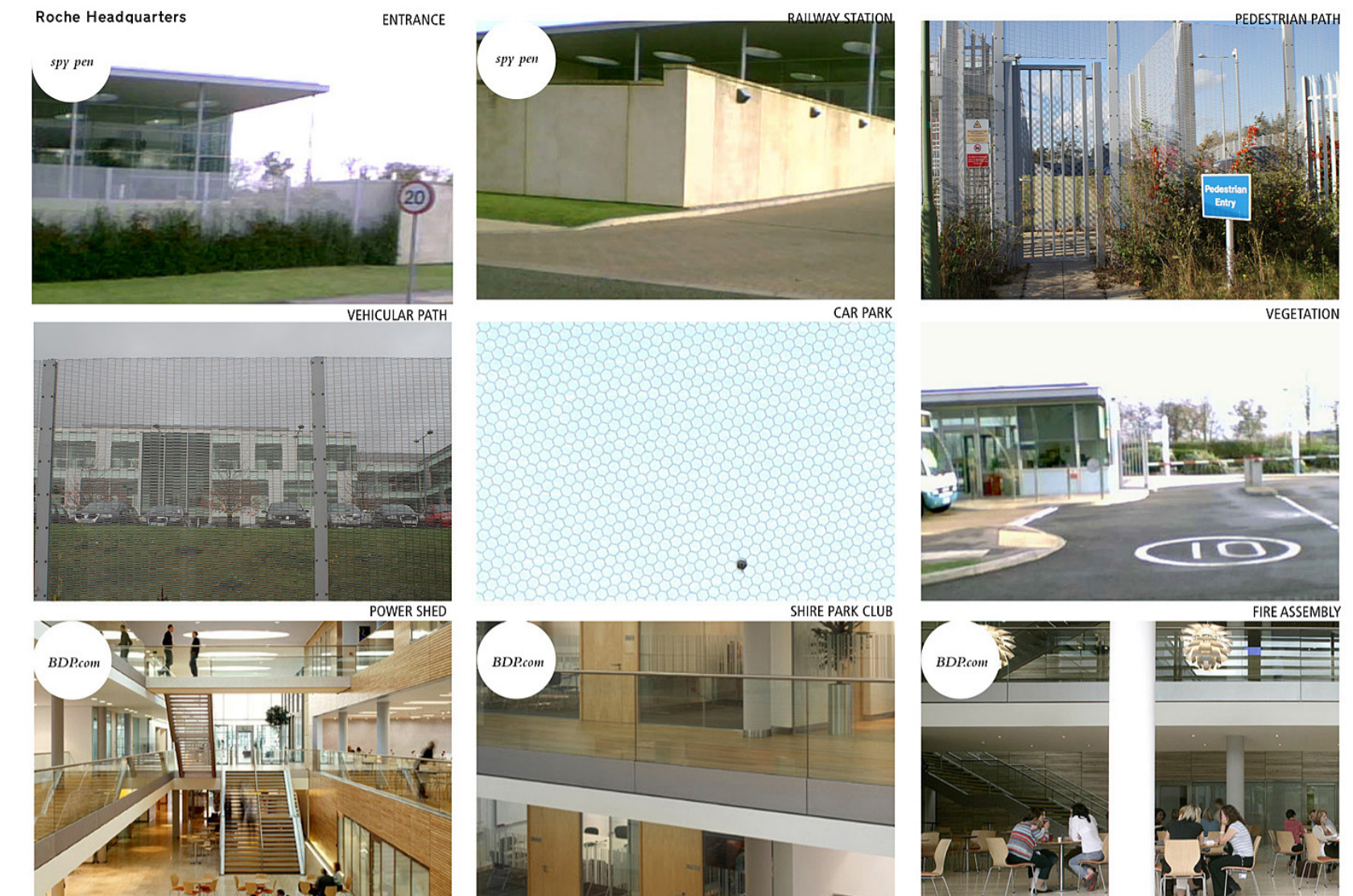


Figure 5.1: Roche vs Shire Park photographic study. Roche

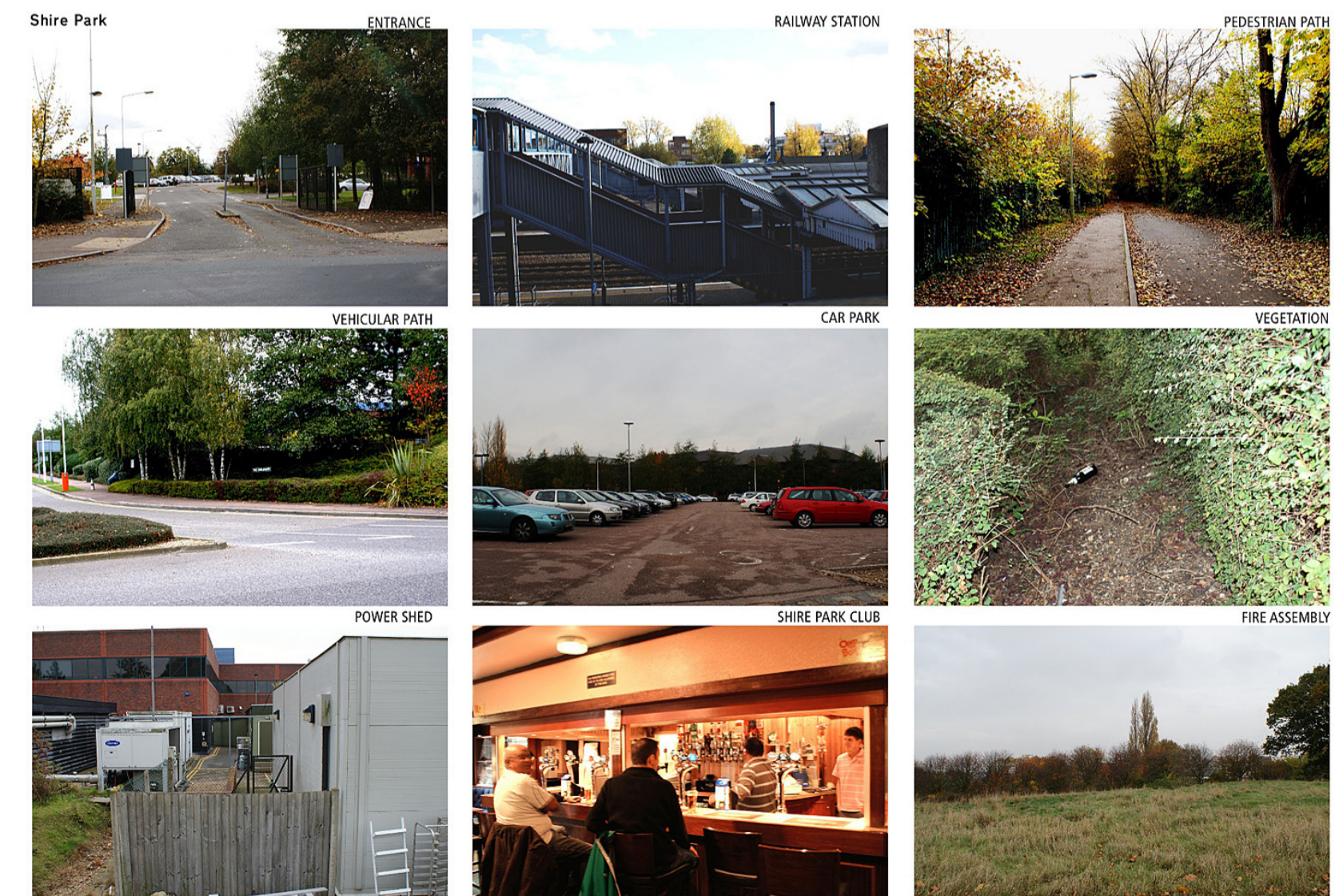


Figure 5.2: Roche vs Shire Park photographic study. Shire Park

FENCES

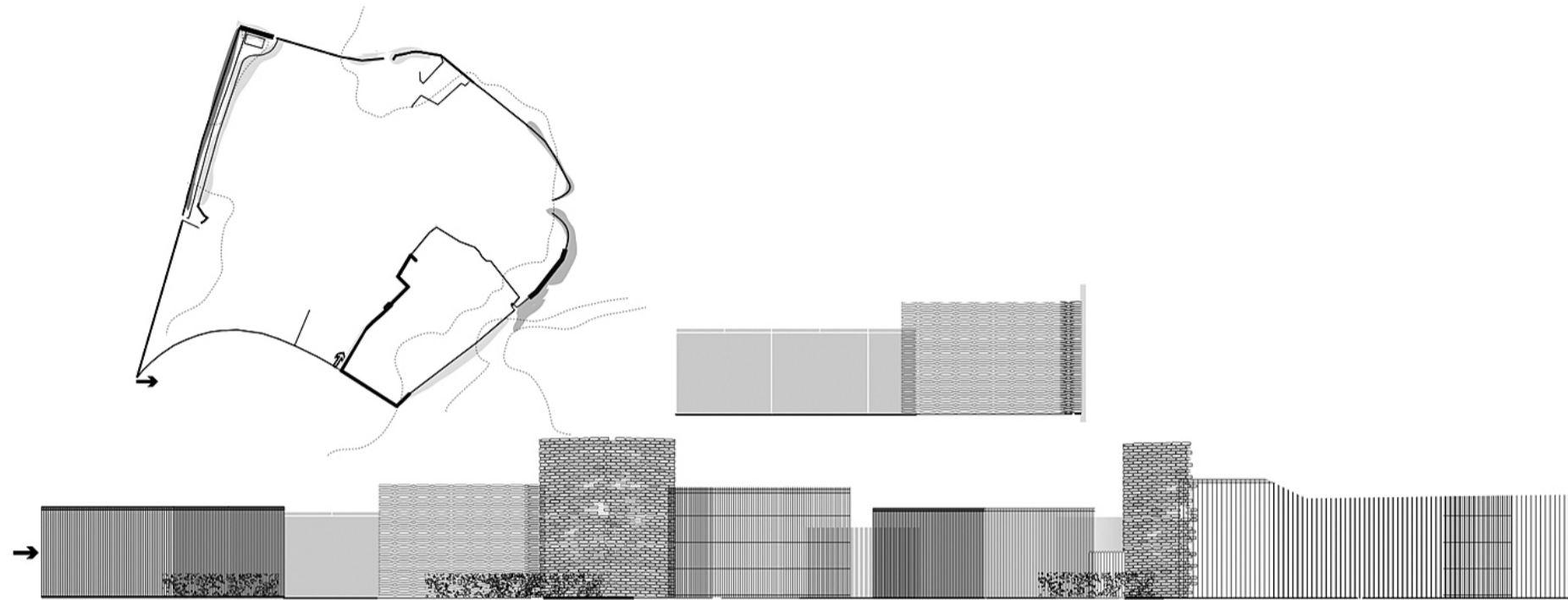


Figure 6: Existing fences

most deprived in WGC.¹⁰ Cut off by the railway, hidden behind the gas works and intermittent building sites, it does not enjoy the same public resources as the wealthier West side. Unlike the Shredded Wheat factory, which exploited its visual proximity to transport infrastructure by architecturally publicizing itself – this new generation industry is hidden from the motorways.

Internally, the Business Park fails to be a park, beyond the parking of cars.

Whilst some New Town public boulevards suffer from lack of maintenance or organization, business land is groomed by specialized planting agencies, secured by CCTV, and yet hardly used. In *Campus, Estate and Park*¹¹ Louise A. Mozingo explains the faux-aristocratic nature of these spaces: “The purported magic of gazing at greenness lies at these landscapes’ conceptual core – magic credited with generating productivity, competitiveness, and public approbation.”¹² Despite apparent civilian emptiness, it is on the bridges, at bus stops, in bushes, backyards, or in the warm underbelly of photocopy rooms that public space is found. Subverting the architect’s plan ‘activities’ do not just find themselves on a rectangle of a cold lawn (fig. 7).

From innovation to bad reputation and profit increase, Roche is now accompanied by extensive philanthropy. Roche advertising has moved from

¹⁰ Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, *Local Development Framework. Annual Monitoring Report*, 2008/2009.

¹¹ Wilson, C. Groth P, *Everyday America: cultural landscape studies after J.B. Jackson./ Campus, Estate, Park: Lawn culture comes to the corporation*, University of California Press, 1 edition, 2003.

¹² *ibid.*

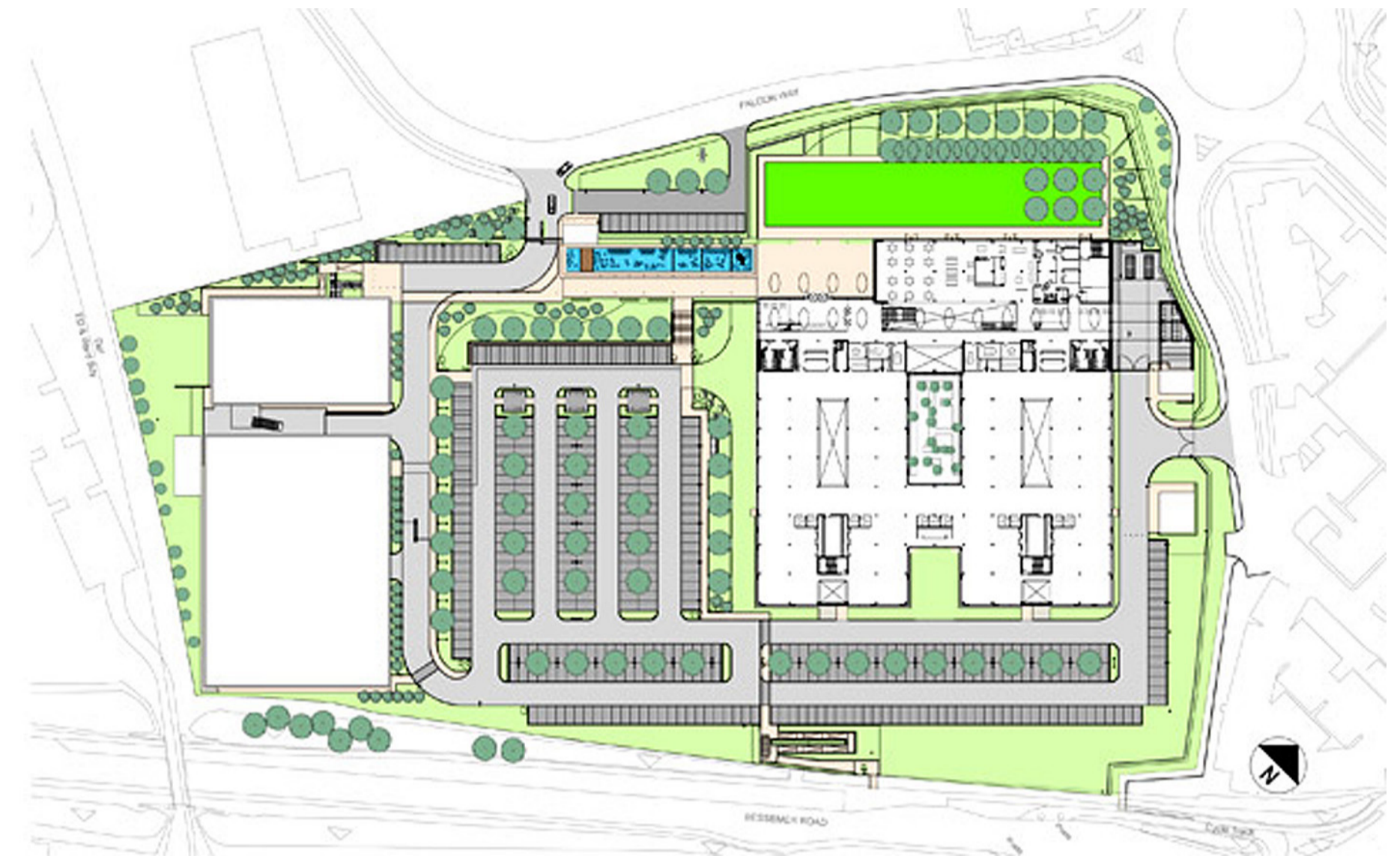


Figure 7: BDP's ground plan of Roche HQ. 2005

representing its products with all-empowering Nature and Religion (in the beginning of the 20th century), to ‘connection with social duty’ in the 1930s, to ‘the individual and his/her uncompromised self’ in the 1960s, to environmental issues today. Echoing the political context, the company’s production (and architectural) image was about standardization. Now it propagates ‘personalized’ medicine.¹³

What effect does this have on urban planning? Can it be more beneficial than the patronizing HSBC local/global campaigns (for example)? This essay tries to tap into the implied desire to localize an audience for a ‘brand’ reputation; meanwhile seeking out possible benefits for Welwyn Garden City, as well as the Roche office staff.

Shire Park Club

A personalized, participatory spirit can be found across the Garden City. A flower man inhabits the Peartree Road junction, cyclists navigate the underpasses of Mundells Roundabout, the town’s abundant fencing is used for hanging bike locks or decoration, and informal picnics take place in intimate dense bushes, away from loud car infrastructure (fig. 10). Back in the business park, due to the Data

¹³ Roche Historical Archive, *Traditionally Ahead of Our Time*, F. Hoffman-La Roche Ltd, Basel 2008 p. 58-62.

Figure 10: Archaeological Speculation. Photo Study



Protection Act, and an on-site nursery, my camera was confiscated by security. Luckily though, I brought with me a USB-video spy pen to record the site unnoticed.¹⁴

There, the only public building I could access was the Shire Park Club. Ironically, it neighbors the gated Roche boundary. The Club steward Ian Smart is not unlike those resilient residents of the Chonqing nail house in China; he has seen land ownership change from local authority (when Shire Park was still occupied by I.C.I. Plastics),¹⁵ to private developers since 1989. Although now used as a pub by Business Park staff, Ian also organizes events for his old buddies across WGC and Hertfordshire: for pool tournaments, Bowls Club meetings, Welwyn Hatfield Chess Society games and cycling pilgrims from Costello's Café in Stevenage. The club is sustained by individuals' unofficial motivations (fig. 11).

In Non-Plan, a case for 'personalized' planning, unexpected diversion from the top down plan is shown as productive. It explains how Welwyn Garden City's large front gardens are misused, because of real habits of consumption, not utopian altruism. Designed specifically for growing food, these agricultural patches limited space for public transport, whilst being rendered useless by the popular modern "tin and the frozen pack". "But then the spread of car ownership outdated the mockery: those roads lived to find a justification; the space around

14 I discovered this compact voyeuristic gadget watching BBC's day-time show 'Something for the Weekend'.

15 In Shire Park 1940-1989.



Figure 11: Shire Park Club networks

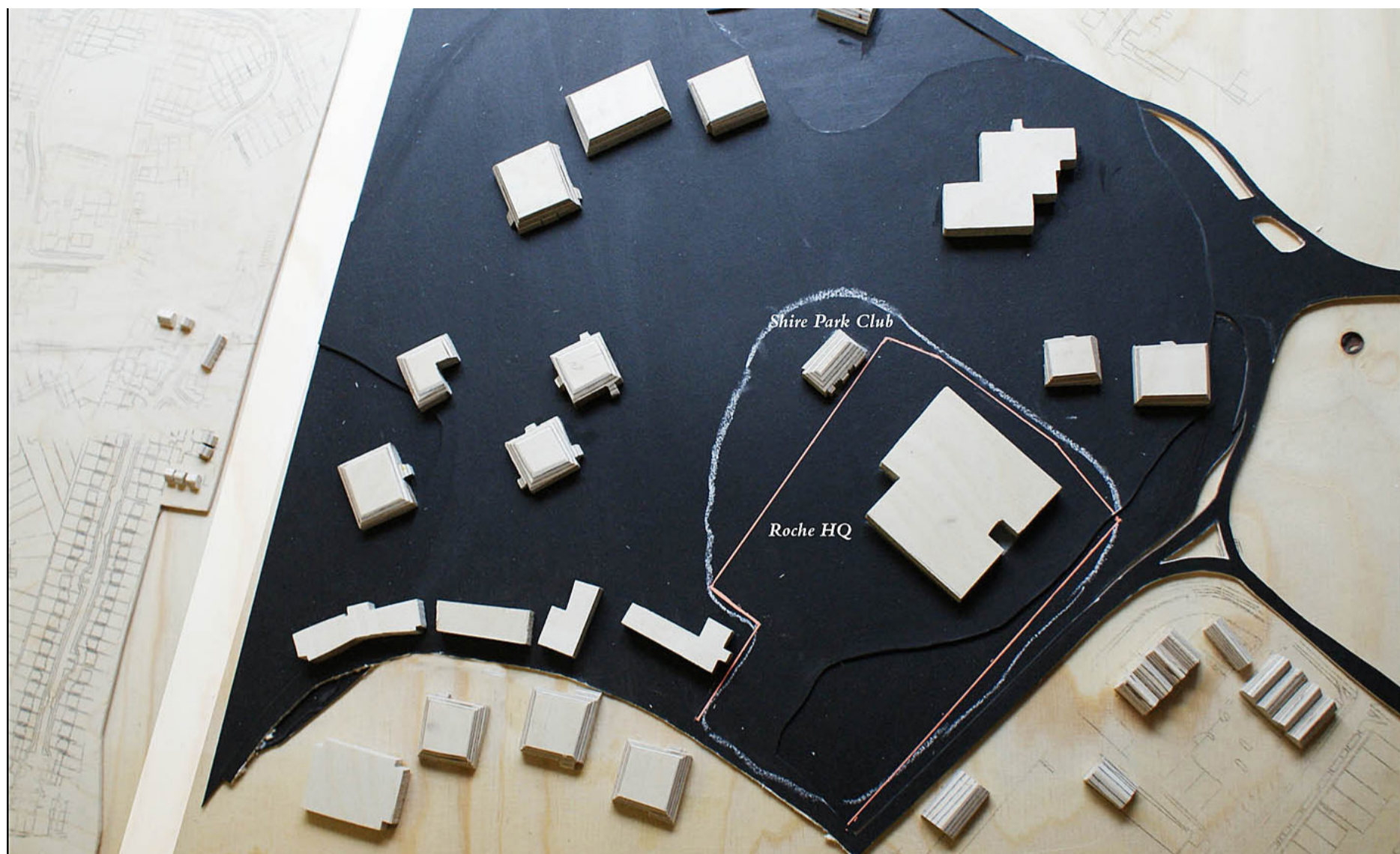


Figure 12: Shire Park Site Model sketch design

the houses could absorb a garage without too much trouble; and the garden became an unexceptionable outdoor room and meeting space for children, away from the lethal pressed steel and rubber hurtling around the streets.”¹⁶

Interference

This spirit of adaptation is a good way to look at the front garden of the new WGC Roche HQ. Its architects designated a green rectangle for common garden space, but in reality it still resembles an empty vector. In the spirit of not accepting “a plan as being fulfilled when it is merely completed”, this project seeks to carry on where the previous architects left off (fig. 12).¹⁷

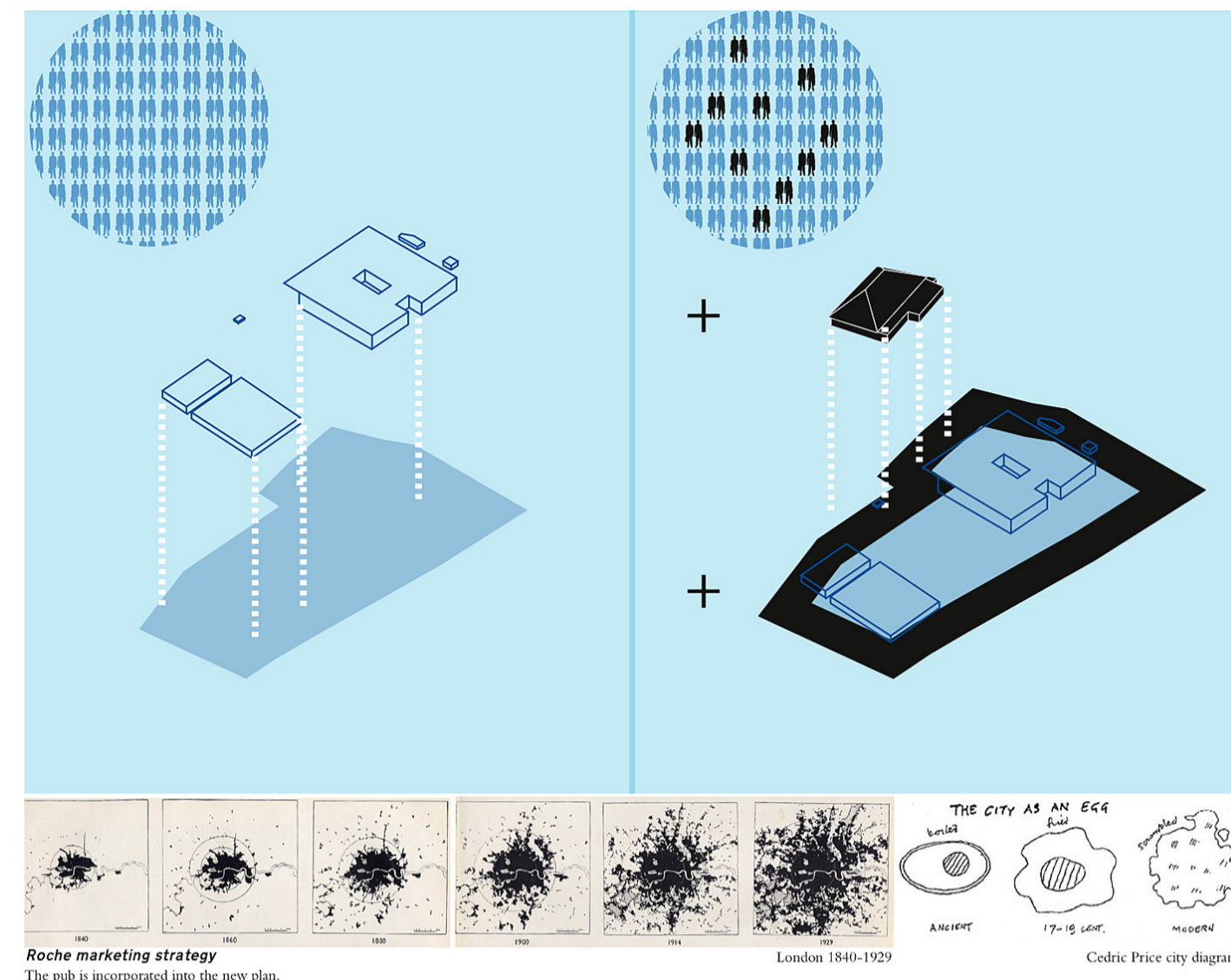
The back of the pub is opened and connected to the Roche periphery fence; becoming a magnet for self-organized social activity. This new corporate-ad hoc garden is a place where the informal backstage life of a pub can meet the front display of a global company HQ. Adopting the language of marketing strategy, and tapping in to the sinister ‘personalization’ of medicine, the architect-planner convinces Roche to let these groups park on its edge (fig. 13).

Re-using existing fence structures by cutting, stretching, layering and sampling, the boundary is thickened with existing Garden City program, whilst staying within Roche land and privacy boundaries. Accommodating a garden boulevard,

¹⁶ Hughes, J. and Sadler.S (ed.), ‘Non-Plan: Essays on Freedom, Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism’, in: Banham, R., Barker, P., Hall, P., Price, C., **An Experiment in Freedom**, Architectural Press 1999.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

Figure 13: Growing Peripheries



Roche marketing strategy

The pub is incorporated into the new plan.

London 1840-1929

Cedric Price city diagram

sport, education, entertainment, amenities for recreational use, as well as the new Roche research program of ‘herbology’, display, performance, sales and informal drugs trade. However, the planner keeps in mind a double-bluff; that this necklace of useful intervention could one day grow into a real park; or even a housing block—beyond the seeming margins of this plan.

In the past, Roche’s local-global patronage has allowed designers to continue their independent ‘avant-garde’ work, as well as welcoming defected scientists, musicians and artists from Nazi Germany, (for example, satirist Walter Trier).^{18/19} The new, inhabited periphery will include amenities for independent work; decorating its edge with innovation.

An interesting example of experimental collaboration between a global brand, artists and local settings are the Shell Guides to the English Counties. Developed by poet/journalist John Betjeman in the 1930s and sponsored by Shell Oil, these travel guides made accessible diverse national heritage through the language of new popular autopia. A participatory Nolli plan meets surrealist consumer fantasies, as they illustrate the “disregarded and disappearing... landscape.”²⁰ Instead of beautiful, well-known sights, for a non-expert reader “who cannot tell a sham Tudor roadhouse from a Cotswold manor”, the corporation and the artists take you through unorthodox tourist routes from Dorset to Cornwall

¹⁸ For example, the graphic designer Jan Tschichold.

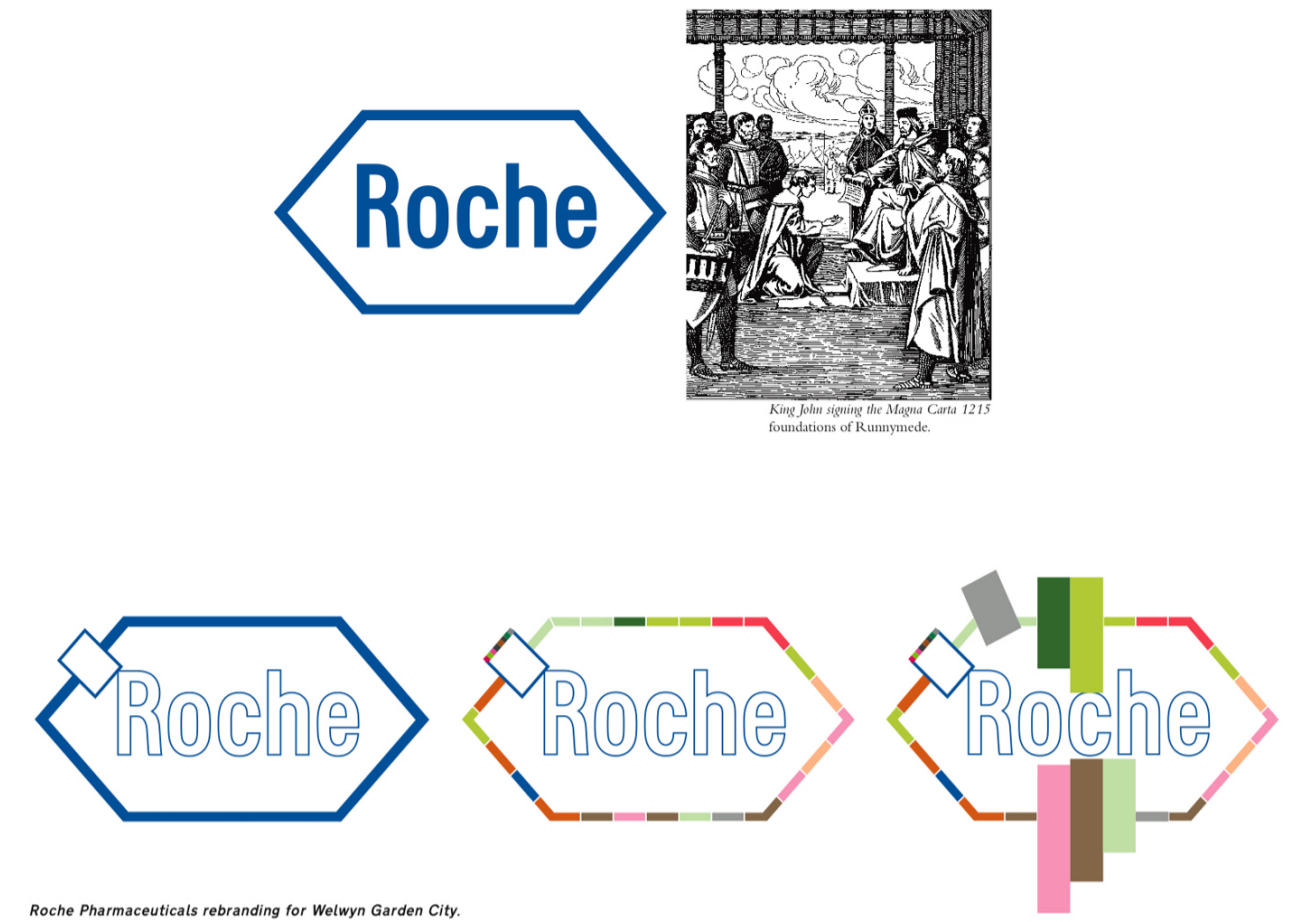
¹⁹ Designed the mural for the old Welwyn offices.

²⁰ Betjeman, J., in: Candida Lycett Green (ed.), **John Betjeman Letters Volumes 1 & 2**, 1994, 1995.



Figure 14: Masterplan

Figure 15: New Boundary Ownership. Logo Strategy



via Essex. The books themselves became collectible art objects. Changing the conventional perception of what sightseeing can be, they are refreshingly non-judgmental and generous.²¹ Similarly, the new Interference map highlights existing assets of the seemingly unspectacular Shire Park (fig. 15).

Infrastructure as Intervention

“New Towns are entirely planned towns in an era in which the government no longer has or wants to have the authority of all aspects of the spatial, social and economic development of a town”.²²

Using the pub to attract existing local groups, the Roche boundary becomes a stage set for personalized activity. The different Garden City user groups (residential, leisure, education, sport, industry) are distributed along a strip of fence and garden (fig. 15). Emphasizing the importance of maintenance and responsibility is seen as an empowering act. Architecturally, adaptations are made appropriate to the existing fence ecology: where it is a concrete wall, thicker buildings emerge, where it is a metal garden fence: a thinner program. The New Town takes an active role in design.

Keeping within Roche property and maintaining the privacy of the core security office, Interference is both infrastructure and intervention. As with the front garden, other existing design elements are re-interpreted for the boundary

21 Also in 1972's **Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles** video, the critic plays with the language of the popular 'tour' to shed new light onto maligned LA urbanism.

22 International New Town Institute (INTI), **Work in Progress 2008-2011**, INTI, Almere 2010.

habitats. The Roche pond is enlarged and transformed on the other side of the fence into a Lido. One half of the Checkpoint Charlie becomes a lifeguard booth; its concrete 2.3m x 3m wall panels are thickened to become changing cubicles. The reflective glass façade of the office building is employed as one side of an added greenhouse, and as a mirror for dance classes during weekends. The internal truss structure of the pub is stretched and cut into a roof for a bus stop. Parts of the fence are cast into climbing walls for the Hertfordshire hiking society, car parking demarcations accommodate guerrilla gardening, a new Busy Bees playground is built on the support structures of theatrical façades.

By formally manipulating the existing fence, opportunities are created for others to interact with Roche workers. New entrances and connections to the fortress are made: civic, secret, speculative, educational, transport-related, potentially residential, sport field competitive, and fake.²³ In the retrofitting of the Shire Park Club, a patchwork of construction methods is employed to achieve imitation nooks and crannies; an extra layer of cozy history and nostalgic reference to the romantic pub interior typology.

The New Town plan, can still be seen in the Business Park layout, and even in the organization of an office day, as well as the original Welwyn Garden City. This acknowledges that messy layering of archaeology is what is needed to make a rich participative place, as people need more than efficient zones of 'work' and 'play'. The inhabited greenbelt strategy could be a prototype for the other business compounds, allowing the workplace to have more involvement in urban life.

Beyond Potemkin village symbolism, Interference attempts a generous, mutually beneficial relationship between the corporations and the areas in which they work, as a reflection of increased political engagement. It anticipates unplanned life. As Alesha Dixon put it: "Last Christmas was a real, real low point. Look at me now, I've learned to dance. I'm happy and I believe it was meant to happen."²⁴

²³ e.g. Optical illusion, printed doors etc.

²⁴ Alesha Dixon, WGC resident, *The Daily Mail*, 2007

A DANDY PRIZE FOR EVERY READER WHOSE ENTRY IS FEATURED ON THIS PAGE

MY HOME TOWN Welwyn Garden City

WELWYN GARDEN CITY is in the county of Hertfordshire, 25 miles north of London. It is one of the capital's "satellite" towns, built to absorb London over-spill, giving them jobs in light industry.

It was in 1920 that Mr Ebenezer Howard founded Welwyn Garden City. In 1923 he had planned the first "Garden City" at Letchworth. At Welwyn he turned a village with no gas, electricity or mains water supply, populated by 700 people, into a modern town capable of housing 43,000.

Two miles from Welwyn, at Ayot St Lawrence, is a house called "Shaw's Corner". It was the home of the great Irish dramatist, George Bernard Shaw, who lived there from 1906 to his death in 1950.

Football star Rodney Marsh was born near Welwyn Garden City. Formerly with Fulham, he was transferred to Queen's Park Rangers. An ace goal scorer, Rodney has helped Q.P.R. to win the Football League Cup and also to gain promotion to the First Division of the English League.

Girls in Welwyn Garden City should have lovely smooth skins—because one of the most popular brands of face cream is manufactured in the town.

When it comes to the crunch, you can't beat the products of one Welwyn Garden City factory. It produces various kinds of crispy biscuits, as well as a very popular make of breakfast cereal.

Cricket Hall, near Welwyn Garden City, has been occupied by several great British poets. The most famous of them was the great statesman, Lord Palmerston, who was Prime Minister for almost ten years between 1855 and 1865. He slept at Cricket Hall in 1865.

THIS WEEK'S WINNER—
TRACEY ANN GROOM (age 10),
17 KNELLA ROAD,
WELWYN GARDEN CITY,
wins a pair of ball-bearing Roller Skates.

Does any famous person live in your town?
Do they make glass eyes in your town?
& any kind of funny festival held in your town?

Write about your home town and win a DANDY prize. Anything interesting or out of the ordinary—that's what to write about. And just two or three items are enough.

Remember to put your name, age and address on your entry and say which prize you would like best from this list.
COMPLETE COWBOY OUTFIT, NURSE'S OUTFIT, BALL BEARING ROLLER SKATES, 21 POSTAL CODE.

SEND YOUR ENTRY TO—
"MY HOME TOWN"
"The Dandy"
18a Hollingsworth St.,
London N. 7.

Next week—My Home Town, Dundee.

Figure 16: The Dandy.14 June 1969

“ We are now confronted with an unexpected and dangerous situation where nation states in the West have voluntarily given up the power to plan centrally and from above, out of a belief that the market would deliver more diverse and equitable cities. The market turns out to be even more bent on centralization, total control, the promise of new lifestyles, and the relentless rolling out of top-down projects over an unsuspecting landscape. ”

TOTAL CONTROL

An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing a dense network of streets and buildings. The image is slightly blurred and has a warm, golden-brown color palette. Overlaid on this background is the text 'NEW SMART CITIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY AND THE END OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE MODERN DEMOCRACY' in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. Each letter of the text is filled with a different pattern, such as a grid, dots, or diagonal lines, creating a textured effect.

NEW SMART CITIES
OF THE 21ST CENTURY
AND THE END OF
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
IN THE MODERN
DEMOCRACY

NEW SMART CITIES OF THE 21ST CENTURY AND THE END OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE MODERN DEMOCRACY

James Kostaras

Technologists are planning and building proto-typical new smart cities that harness technology to adapt to climate change and spark economic growth in impoverished nations. Silicon Valley companies are betting that new smart cities will be highly profitable investments that will rival the Internet.

According to the United Nations report, the world's population will increase by almost 70% by 2050 with a global population of 9 billion. Even as the world wrestles with dramatic population growth in cities, it will confront the cataclysm of climate change. Are the daunting complexities of 21st century problems—catastrophic impacts of climate change, dramatic global urbanization, and growing poverty—beyond the problem-solving capacity of democratic government? Witness the failure of the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen where the world governments failed to make legally binding commitments to reduce CO² emissions. In contrast, technology companies and corporate Silicon Valley strategists are proposing (and in some recent cases financing), “Smart Cities”—provocative programs for proto-typical new cities which integrate innovative technologies—including IT, embedded sensors and ‘green’ building systems—to achieve environmental sustainability and near zero-carbon energy.

The very premise of the ‘new smart cities,’ as currently proposed, has implications for the viability of democracy in the cities of the 21st Century. As conceived, new smart cities make no space for—and, in one case, explicitly reject—civic engagement and participatory democracy. However unintended, the creators of new smart cities embrace a more efficient, autocratic decision-making system of governance and reject the messy, unmanageable, modern democracy that seems to lack the capacity to address the scale of critical problems. Writing in *Foreign Affairs*, American political philosopher Francis Fukuyama and development expert Nancy Birdsall report that, “China’s renewable ability to bounce back after the crisis, a result of a tightly managed, top-down policymaking machine that could avoid the delays of a messy democratic process.... In response, political leaders in the developing world now associate efficiency and capability with autocratic political systems.”¹ In defiance of ‘efficient’ autocracy, a new generation demands democracy

¹ “The Post-Washington Consensus: Development After the Crisis”, *Foreign Affairs*, March / April 2011. Nancy Birdsall is President of the [Center for Global Development](#). Francis Fukuyama is the Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University.



Figure 1: Masdar aerial

and collective decision-making. In 2011, a younger, socially networked generation began demanding democracy and challenging autocracy—even in the most unexpected places (Egypt, Tunisia, Libya). On the other hand, the complex problems of climate change and environmental catastrophe demand urgent and decisive action that some associate with authoritarian government—the antithesis of democracy being demanded.

What are the political prospects of ‘new smart cities,’ as a concept and new form of urbanism, if they require autocratic, top-down corporate systems of governance to function as planned? Will a resurgent new generation with democratic aspirations want to live in a new smart city? Or will future citizens of these ‘new smart cities’ make a Faustian bargain: in exchange for life in a technological and sustainable bubble, protected from environmental catastrophe and guaranteed access to clean water, food, health and renewable energy in the face of impending global scarcity? This essay considers the political implications of several recent concepts and plans for ‘new smart cities’.

Masdar City, Abu Dhabi

Masdar City, designed by Norman Foster & Partners and currently being built by the Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company, or Masdar, is envisioned as a new,



Figure 2: Masdar public court

sustainable, zero carbon, zero-waste city with a population of 50,000.² Masdar City will be the platform from which to launch the commercialization of clean tech and other technologies in sustainable energy, carbon management and water conservation. Masdar City will also be a living laboratory—a \$22 billion global clean-technology cluster that, in principle, will attract companies, researchers, and academics “creating an international hub for companies and organizations focused on renewable energy and clean technologies” (fig. 1).³

Norman Foster and Partners have designed Masdar as a high-density, mixed-use city, that blends traditional planning principles of the Arab walled city with emerging technologies. Masdar achieves environmental sustainability by incorporating sophisticated climate engineering and green building as well as basic low-tech solutions and passive design that replicate the traditional architecture of Arab cities. Masdar will be a ‘car-free’ city, relying entirely on an automated, on-demand Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) below grade, which operates through an efficient grid-like network of guide ways and stations (fig. 2).

PlanIT Valley “Smart City”

Motivated by a shared vision of sustainable urbanization, former Microsoft IT executives launched Living PlanIT, a start-up technology company, to enable

² Andreas Georgoulis, Irina Mladenova, Paul Hunter and Spiro, Pollalis, The Carbon-Neutral, Zero-Waste Masdar City, Abu Dhabi Harvard Graduate School of Design case study, June, 2010.

³ Andreas Georgoulis, Irina Mladenova, Paul Hunter and Spiro, Pollalis, The Carbon-Neutral, Zero-Waste Masdar City, Abu Dhabi Harvard Graduate School of Design case study, June, 2010.

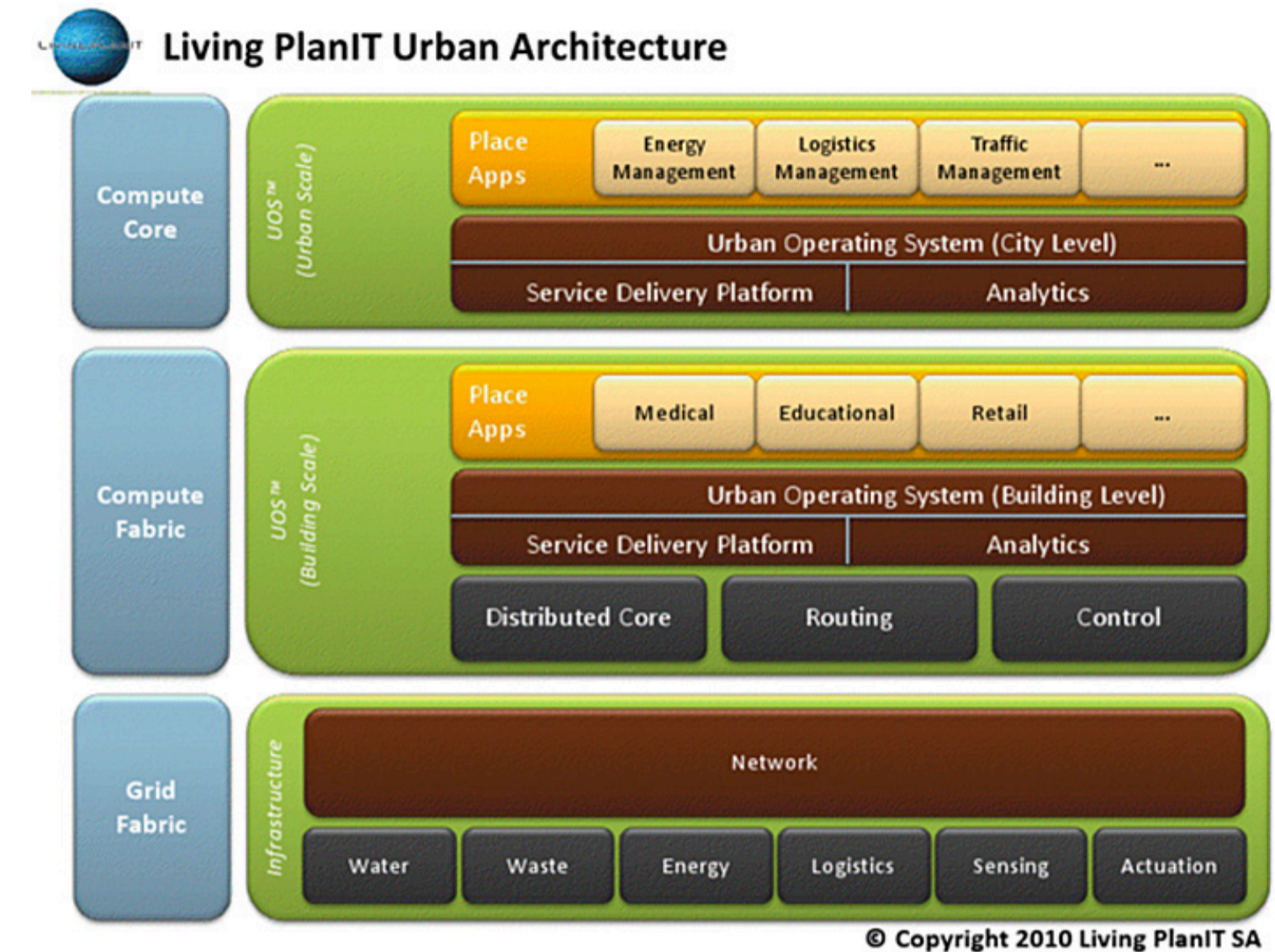


Figure 3: Living PlanIT

“a new generation of intelligent cities and sustainable urban development.” Living PlanIT, in partnership with a consortium of tech companies, including Cisco Systems, Microsoft, Siemens Electronics, McLaren Electronic Systems, Buro Happold Engineering and Accenture Management, will invest \$19 billion in the creation of PlanIT Valley, an instant sustainable ‘smart’ city on site in Paredes, near Porto in northern Portugal. PlanIT Valley will be a living laboratory, combining intelligent buildings and advanced mobility, transport and communication solutions.

Based on the 2007 United Nations World Urbanization Report, Living PlanIT estimates that over 9,400 new cities will be needed as the world’s population increases. The Living PlanIT business model uses the real estate as a “showroom” for evolving sustainable urban technology—a \$3 trillion global market over the next 20 years.⁴ Collaborating across industries, Living PlanIT plans to market its unified operating system and software platforms that integrate energy, water, waste, security, traffic and other city-scale systems with enabling new technologies for the construction and operation of new smart cities across the globe (fig. 3).

⁴ Robert G. Eccles and Amy C. Edmondson, “A Bold New Model for Sustainable Cities”, **Harvard Business Review**, July 22, 2010.



Figure 4: Hong Kong aerial

Charter Cities

Stanford University economist and Silicon Valley software entrepreneur Paul Romer has pioneered the controversial concept of “Charter Cities” to address global urban poverty. According to Romer, the charter city concept answers the fundamental problem that explains poverty in developing countries: bad rules. Ineffective and weak rules of law fail to enforce civil contracts, deter endemic corruption or guarantee essential services like water and electricity—all of which drives away investment that could potentially stimulate economic growth. In Romer’s proposed concept, governments in poorer nations, through a new type of partnership or treaty, will voluntarily surrender sovereignty over uninhabited territory within their boundaries to a well-governed and affluent country—or example, Norway or Canada. The poorer nation will write a charter for a new independent city in this territory, which the affluent nation will then build and govern. Acting as the “guarantor” of the charter, the affluent nation will ensure adherence to contracts, enforce laws against corruption, limit corporate taxes and guarantee essential services. With the full force and legitimacy of the guarantor, the city, in theory, will attract the kind of necessary investment that otherwise eludes the host country where corruption, over-regulation and poverty scares away global investment. With full knowledge of the ‘rules,’ citizens

5 Paul Romer, “Think tank: charter cities are way to Third World prosperity, New communities sponsored by the West can help end poverty,” **The Sunday Times**, January 31, 2010.

6 Sebastian Mallaby, “The Politically Incorrect Guide to Ending Poverty,” **The Atlantic**, July / August 2010.

7 David Wessel, “The Quest for a ‘Charter City,’” **Wall Street Journal**, February 3, 2011.

8 Paul Romer is the Henry Kaufman Visiting Professor at New York University’s Stern School of Business, a senior fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, and the founder of Charter Cities. **City Journal** is a quarterly magazine of urban affairs, published by the [Manhattan Institute](#). Brandon Fuller is the content director and strategist for Charter Cities, a research nonprofit focused on the interplay of rules, cities, and development.

9 Paul Romer, “Think tank: Charter cities are way to Third World prosperity, New communities sponsored by the West can help end poverty,” **The Sunday Times**, January 31, 2010.

of the poorer country will have the unlimited right to live and work in the charter city with the freedom to move in or out.

By an accident of history, Hong Kong is an ‘unintended’ charter city—an enclave with a strong legal system, low taxes, minimal regulation, legally honored and enforced contracts, and protection of property rights (fig. 4).⁵ To illustrate a possible realization of the charter city idea, Romer makes a provocative proposal: Canada develops and administers a Hong Kong in Cuba’s US-controlled Guantánamo Bay that connects Cuba with the global economy while maintaining a “one country, two systems” —similar to Deng Xiaoping’s model in which communist China has maintained a parallel, free market, capitalist Hong Kong.⁶ Although criticized as ‘post-colonialism’ of the 21st century, governments in developing countries have in fact taken an interest in the concept. In February 2011, the Honduran Congress voted to amend the constitution to allow for the construction of a charter city (or ciudad modelo) as a “bold, new economic solution to poverty—creating a charter city from scratch.”⁷

The UN estimates that 3 billion people from the world’s rural poor will migrate to city slums with no running water or sewerage in search of jobs and a way out of poverty. According to Romer. “...People will choose slums over rural poverty if that is their only choice. But charter cities would give them another option.... these cities could give poor people a chance to choose the rules they want to live and work under.”⁸ As an alternative to immigration to Europe and North America (where migrants face discrimination), charter cities would give poor people a chance to choose the rules they want to live and work under. All residents in new charter cities would be there by choice.⁹

How would such a city work? Although the Charter Cities proposal is highly conceptual and mainly describes models of regulation and governance, it privileges certain ideas about urbanism and ideological biases. In theory, City Charters will be self-financing. The governing authority retains ownership of all land, which it leases to private developers to finance public expenditures. Charter Cities are unquestionably premised on the ‘neo-liberal’ economic model that mandates public-private partnerships. With some imagination, a ‘charter city’ could embed the Living PlanIt Operating System and integrate sustainable architectural design into a master plan for a ‘smart, sustainable, zero carbon, zero-waste charter city.’ Predictable rules and clear legal protections specified in the city’s charter will guarantee private investors a long-term stream of fee income, which the charter city authority will regulate.

Romer rejects democracy and public participation in Charter Cities. His radical vision also challenges ‘assumptions about citizenship and democracy.’ Workers in

Romer's charter city, however, will not be full citizens; charter cities will not be democracies. The founding charter would give workers legal protections and a fair system of law without corruption. In fact, a charter city, as proposed, could arguably be a more authentic democracy—one in which people vote with their feet. Millions of immigrants from poor countries exercise a democracy of sorts by 'voting with their feet' as a meaningful alternative to casting a ballot. Sebastian Mallaby, director of the Maurice R. Greenberg Center for Geo-economic Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, contends that, "[I]f people are willing to live as legal or illegal immigrants, with rights that range from limited to none, then logically, they should be even more eager to move to a [charter city]...the opportunity to opt in to and out of a political system can be at least as valuable as the conventional package of democratic rights."¹⁰

Conclusion

What follows is a commentary that posits questions about the political significance of the new smart city concept exemplified by Masdar, PlanIt Valley and the new charter cities. The new smart cities discussed in this paper are emblematic of a dilemma: does the urgency and necessity to deal with crisis require autocratic rule? In the New Smart Cities, can there be civic engagement, democracy and participatory planning? In the final analysis, does the technological and logistical complexity of a proto-typical zero-carbon city modeled on Masdar and PlanIt Valley require an abandonment of participatory democracy and civic engagement?

As centers for innovation, can the New Smart Cities attract creative people without democracy? Social scientist Richard Florida, in his book, *Rise of the Creative Class*, writes that the creative class ("scientists, engineers, technologists, researchers, architects, designers, media specialists and knowledge-based workers whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or creative content"¹¹), is an ascendant force that will drive global economic growth in the coming decades.¹² Florida argues that cities need the Creative Class to be competitive in a global economy. New smart cities—as centers for innovative technology—will require the type of people that comprise the Creative Class. According to Florida, the highly mobile Creative Class looks for places with social diversity and opportunities for individuality when they choose a city in which to live and work (2002). The Creative Class requires a 'street level culture'—"a teeming blend of cafes, sidewalk musicians, and small galleries and bistros, where it is hard to draw the line between participant and observer, or between creativity and its creators"¹³ that accommodates diverse and individualistic lifestyles and creates possibilities for creative class people to participate in the

civic life of the city. Can we replicate 'street level culture' in planned new smart cities? Can Masdar, PlanIt Valley, future charter cities and other new smart cities compete in attracting the essential Creative Class with clusters of innovation such as California's Silicon Valley, Boston's Route 128, The Triangle in North Carolina, Austin, Seattle, Bangalore and Dublin—all places where citizens enjoy meaningful participation in a liberal democratic political process?

Masdar, PlanIt Valley and other newly invented smart cities present a paradox: as envisioned, these cities make no explicit space for true civic engagement. Can these cities attract the creative people vital to realizing the vision of a smart city as a center for innovation? Cities are incubators of creativity and innovation but does this creativity require free governance and civic engagement? Historically, cities have been places of creativity and economic advancement through technology. Cities are also incubators for democracy and the establishment of citizens' rights. A consideration of democracy and civic engagement in Masdar is pointless in the distinctly undemocratic, autocratic United Arab Emirates. The more relevant issue is whether Masdar—lacking in possibilities for civic engagement—will attract the creative and talented people it will require to be a true lab for cutting edge innovation in green technology. Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship may require openness to democracy and civic engagement. Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship—all ingredients for vibrant urban economies—require people who thrive best in free social environments where they can participate in civic life and are empowered to engage in collective public decision-making about their communities in a meaningful way.

Is civic engagement and participatory planning at odds with the concept of corporate and authoritarian-sponsored new smart cities with complex technologies? Democracy and participatory planning in the modern city means that citizens can vote to alter the very idea of the 'smart city' in terms of architecture, urban design and land use decisions of the future phases ---potentially undermining the original concept and purpose of the smart city. A political system that empowers many stakeholders to make collective decisions by consensus about the built environment engenders an incrementally more organic process of city-building over a long period with a more pluralist, individualistic architecture that reflects myriad negotiated decisions and individual investments in private property. The architecture and design of new, totally planned cities (including the new smart cities) reflects a highly unitary vision. The singular design vision of a pre-eminent architect (as evidenced by Norman Foster in Masdar) by its very nature, will not allow for multiple architectural expressions generated incrementally over time. To stay true to a unitary vision,

¹⁰ Sebastian Mallaby, Director of the Maurice R. Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies and Paul A. Volcker Senior Fellow for International Economics, "Future Cities Need to Hand Over the Keys," *Financial Times*, February 3, 2011.

¹¹ Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*, New York: Perseus Book Group, 2002, p. 8.

¹² Op. cit. p. 69.

¹³ Op. cit. p. 166.

do the technological and logistical complexities of proto-typical smart cities built by the private high tech companies and the global financial sector require an abandonment of participatory democracy and civic engagement? This is the paradox: if smart cities are re-conceptualized around a true democratic process including public participatory planning, these very forms of civic engagement might allow current and future citizens to re-think and reject the unitary vision that characterizes these proposed cities. Empowered citizens in a hypothetical smart city, planned and built by a corporate entity, could decide to dramatically change the design of future phases of the city; possibly rejecting some of the city's central ideas about sustainability.

Smart cities as a business proposition

Building new smart cities in the 21st century is emerging as a profit-taking business in which technology companies are competing to build new planned smart 'green cities' for the world's growing urban population. China is planning an estimated 300 new cities—a huge market opportunity for eco-friendly 'smart city' developers and technologists well positioned to sell current projects like PlanIt Valley, Masdar and New Songdo as transferable models and out-sourced operating systems.¹⁴ Wim Elfrink, chief globalization officer of Cisco Systems, the global IT company, estimates that at least \$500 billion will be earmarked for instant cities over the next decade.¹⁵

Gale International, a major real estate company, is building New Songdo, a new smart 'green' city in South Korea. Promoted as an "experimental prototype community of tomorrow" using Cisco System's sensor technologies and advanced interactive city-scale IT systems, New Songdo, at an unprecedented cost of \$40 billion, is the biggest private real estate development in history. Gale International, anticipating an expanding market for 'instant' smart cities, is planning 20 new smart cities in China and India using New Songdo as a template or model. It can also be exported to the developing world. In this example, 'city-building' evolves into a commodification of urban infrastructure and city IT management systems on a global scale.

The profit-motivated enterprise of building instant smart cities represents a very different concept of urbanism, one that is unprecedented because of emerging technology and characterized by a technology-based infrastructure which, in theory, will allow multiple users, designers, and entrepreneurs to propose and create physical and conceptual solutions to the built environment by plugging components (homes, offices, autos, schools), into the grid. Instead of architecture and urban design, platforms for software operating systems and an urban infrastructure (the hardware) comprised of embedded sensors become

¹⁴ Parag Khanna, "Beyond City Limits, The age of nations is over. The new urban age has begun," **Foreign Policy**, September / October, 2010.

¹⁵ Greg Lindsay, "The New Urbanism: New Songdo & Creating Cities From Scratch," **Fast Company**, February, 2010.

the dominant organizing structure of the city. Greg Lindsay writes about PlanIT Valley as the "first city conceived by technologists, for technologists, in which the architecture and urban planning are all but beside the point."¹⁶

Without creative entrepreneurs, new smart cities cannot claim to be innovative or aspire to being dynamic centers of new ideas in technology. New smart cities might have to make room for democracy in order to attract creative people. On the other hand, new smart cities may reject democracy and still succeed in attracting creative and entrepreneurial people by offering other qualities of life—even in the absence of democracy. If so, then PlanIt Valley, Masdar and other proposed Smart Cities may mark the limits of modern democracy and civic engagement and represent a different paradigm of governance in the 21st century.

¹⁶ Greg Lindsay, "The Master Plan: A City in the Cloud," **Fast Company**, August 2010.



DRI

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PIPE DREAMS & REAL DEALS

Todd Reisz

With images like this one (fig. 1), it seemed Saudi Arabia was poised to be the next ‘next Dubai’ — pipe dreams sold as speculative spectacle: a city of light, serenity and financial opportunity. A city, new and crisp, just recently unpackaged. It still smells new. Everything works as it should. It is everything you would expect, and nothing more. This city can be anywhere because it is everywhere. It heeds to ‘international standards’, it promises ‘world-class’. You can call it ‘livability’.

‘Tabula rasa’—or as Ken Livingstone translates it for us, the ‘blank canvas’—as a ruse that late modernism should have put to rest for us.

‘Every architect dreams of being given a **blank canvas**. ... Dubai and the Middle East have redefined the very nature of design allowing those **designing the blank canvas of the Middle East** to push the boundaries of engineering and vision to unprecedented levels.’

Ken Livingstone, former Mayor of London

Blank, untouched land is nothing more than an ego-driven fantasy, an assumption that emboldens Livingstone and his brethren at the expense of others. Likewise the press cannot help itself from tripping over the imagery that tabula rasa can generate.

‘Artificial **cities’ rising** in the Arabian **desert...**’, Foreign Policy 17 Aug 2010

‘urban growth **emerges** from the **sands** of the Arabian **Desert**’
Allianz Knowledge 25 March 2009

‘**Rising** from the **sands**’
MSNBC 21 Feb 2005

‘Super **Cities Rise** from the **Sand**’,
washingtonpost.com

‘**Cities rise** from the **desert sands**’
kmworld.com 2 January 2009

‘New **cities rise** from Saudi **desert**’, bbc.co.uk
11 June 2008

‘**2 Megacities Rise** in **Sand**’, New York Times
24 August 2010

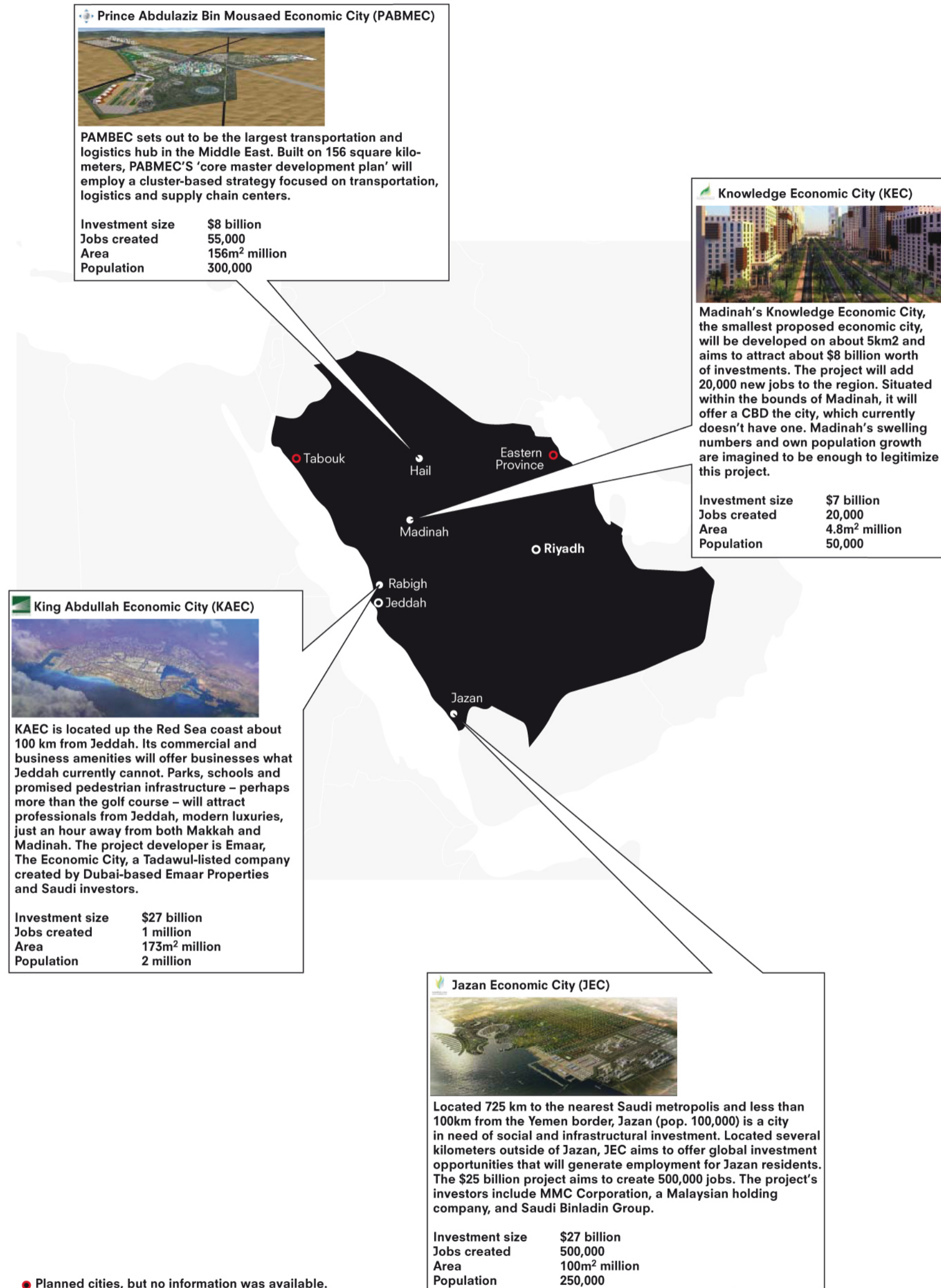
‘The **city** state that **rose** from the desert **sands...**’,
The Independent 7 April 2009



Figure 1

Three-pence poetry that is one-part 1001 Arabian Nights and two parts poorly investigated reporting. Deserts are not emptiness. They have context and shaping forces. They are about time and movement. There are ancient cities, but the most active cities could rise, fall and rise again in the span of a few decades. Modernity determined that cities had to last longer than a generation; it institutes long-lasting governments and power structures; it ensures the means of spreading the word that these are indeed cities.

Saudi Arabia is poised to implement the tools of modernity once again to create four new cities. Through its vision for these new cities, Saudi Arabia prepares for its future. The cities are called ‘Economic Cities’: King Abdullah Economic City is named after the ruler of Saudi Arabia and is seen by many as a solution to nearby Jeddah’s urban ills; Jazan Economic City sits on the kingdom’s troubled border with Yemen and promises jobs to an often forgotten corner of the kingdom; Madinah Knowledge Economic City is located as close as non-Muslims will be able to get to Saudi Arabia’s second holiest city and promises to provide contemporary services for religious tourism and high-tech industries; and Hail Economic City might be an extensive logistics center just north of Riyadh (fig. 2). These cities seem financially realistic because Saudi Arabia can take advantage



of timing. Despite the current global financial crisis, Saudi Arabia's coffers are full. Contracting companies, architecture and engineering firms and all-around global liquidity are hungry for a place to settle. With over \$300 billion worth of urban development projects on the table (and another \$100 billion of energy production projects), Saudi Arabia has become a leader in the region in terms of development zeal. As much as the financial media need a bad-news story, they also need a good news story. Exit Dubai and enter Saudi Arabia.

'Banks **Power** Saudi Index to 2009 **High**', Gulf News 26 September 2009

'Saudi Building Permits **grow 213%**' AME Info 23 December 2008

'Saudi Economy **Flourishes**' Gulf News 3 October 2009

'Foreign Direct Investment in Saudi Arabia **up 33%**' AME Info 24 November 2008

'Beginning of a **New Boom**' Arab News 23 September 2009

'Saudi Banks Post Profits **Despite World Financial Crisis**' AME Info 4 February 2009

'The **Building Superpower**' Arabian Business 3 October 2009

'IMF "**Broadly Positive**" on Saudi Arabia', Financial Times 19 August 2009

'Saudi Arabia **forges** ahead with some of the **biggest** projects.' Arabian Business 3 October 2009

But what is an economic city? All cities have to be economic. Cities cannot exist without an economy; they are often described as economies. The Gulf has continuously challenged us on the notion of what a city is—how large a city must be to be called a city, how many hands are needed to draw a city, what kind of density one must have, what kind of activities one should provide, and even whether a city can exist within another city. One thing development in the Gulf has put into focus is how we can oversimplify the purpose of a city. A city might have once been associated with a specific kind of industry, or perhaps even a brand of industry. But this Saudi initiative never minces words. Cities are an investment opportunity. New cities are IPOs.

'Economic' might be a trigger word to remind us of Saudi Arabia's demographic quandary. Close to half the nation's local population is under the age of 16 (fig. 3). Compared to Western countries bemoaning their greying populations, a young population might seem like a terrific advantage for Saudi Arabia, but currently

Figure 2

Percentage population under 16



Figure 3

Production of oil/gas per national citizen

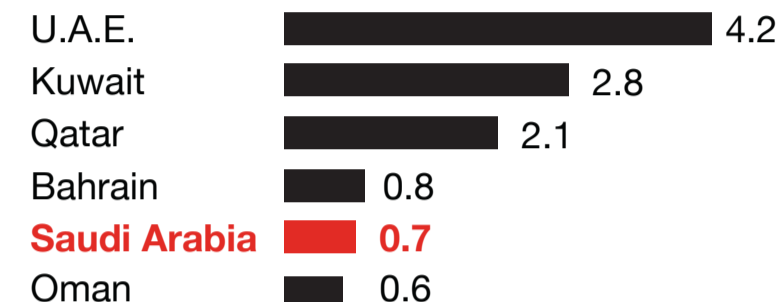


Figure 4

it is a looming crisis. There is a high unemployment rate: officially 12%, but is likely higher, especially if women are included. As it becomes more common for women to have jobs, the number will see a manifold increase. With a population expected to double by 2050, there will be a lot of people without work. One statistic puts the problem in perspective: all 829,000 jobs created in the Saudi private sector in 2009 went to foreigners. The oil industry, and its secondary industries, never proved capable of employing enough Saudis.

Even if you consider that Saudi Arabia is OPEC's largest oil producer, its population is outpacing its production capacity and reserves. Saudi Arabia has poverty, evidence that oil wealth does not spread as easily as in other countries (fig. 4). The Economic Cities are where the world's craving for sound investment opportunities meets the acute urgency to deal with some potentially explosive national statistics. The four Economic Cities are expected to contribute \$150 billion to the country's annual GDP and create 1.3 million new jobs by the year 2020. These are phenomenal numbers, but even if they are achieved on schedule, they represent a fraction of what Saudi Arabia needs. A common statistic in financial newspapers: Saudi Arabia will need 1.5 million new houses by 2015.

In the past, Saudi has built for its citizens. Now it wants global capitalism to



Figure 5

do the job. It is expected that corporations wanting access to Saudi Arabia's wealth, seaports and work force will foot the bill for these cities. This is not about deflecting responsibility. Having a link to international finance presumably means there will be more stakeholders in the city-building process. International stakeholders will ensure that profits are made, jobs will be secure, and cities will remain occupied (fig. 5).

Almost every piece of press coverage quotes the same press release already a few years old: the most advanced of the four cities, King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), will be finished within fifteen years and larger than Washington, DC. It can be no accident that Washington, DC is the comparison; it is another planned city and one that banked on monumentalism to express a national ambition. There is no monumental architecture, however, at KAEC; it is a clash of simplistic structures and strange planar shapes. This is a monumentalism of gusto and enterprise. Capital City is redefined (fig. 6).

These rendered cities might recall Dubai: their irksome palettes of greens and blues; their terraformed curves that elongate the salable coastline and enable one to identify his investment from an airplane. Closer inspection of these Economic Cities, however, reveals less a link to Dubai and more an historical and ongoing approach to cities in Saudi Arabia.



Figure 6

The young kingdom has constantly been racing against the clock in terms of population growth, technological advancement, and the onslaught of a terrific amount of oil wealth. To handle the instability, a city is not seen as an economy but as a tool for an economy.

In a story of exploratory luck and international brinkmanship, Aramco was born as a partnership of American oil companies in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province in 1933. Aramco took oil and gave modernity. Its pipes delved deeper into the Saudi sands than anything else before. Piping was rooting. A sense of permanence was set into motion. Modernity only festered, pining for more permanence. Saudi modernity was of the American sort. Aramco's employees, for instance, brought American style housing with them — often prefab and quickly built (fig. 7). These were the first examples of modern housing in Saudi Arabia. Aramco also found its way into classrooms and influenced general ways of seeing the world. It introduced Saudi Arabia to the geopolitical conditions that oil trade demanded. These very geopolitical lessons shaped how Saudi Arabia would develop. One example was the design and direction of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline built from Saudi Arabia's oil fields in the East to the Mediterranean via Lebanon. Eventually, Saudi planners realized that if the export point was on Saudi shores, then the country could reap more of oil's benefits (fig. 8). To support this

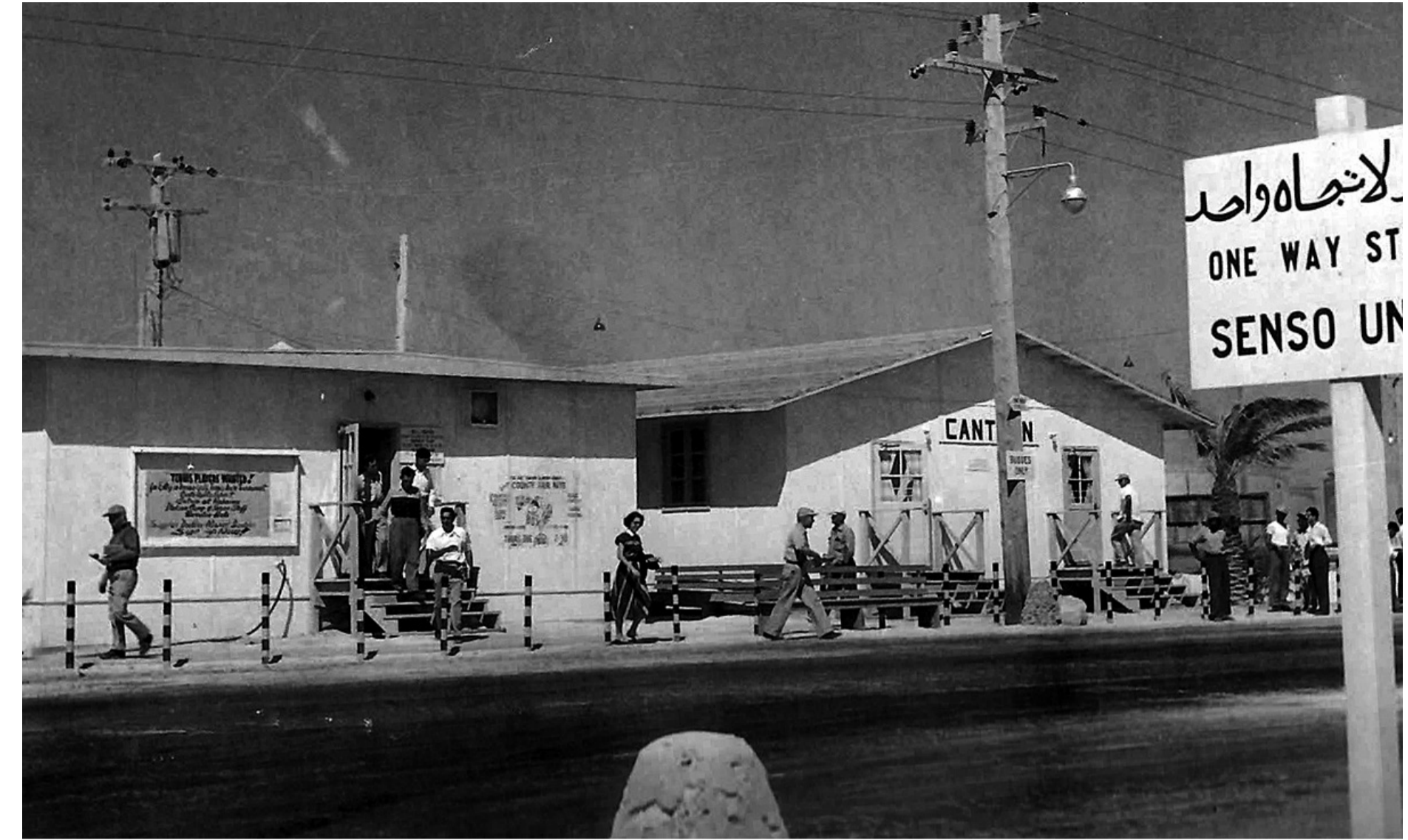


Figure 7

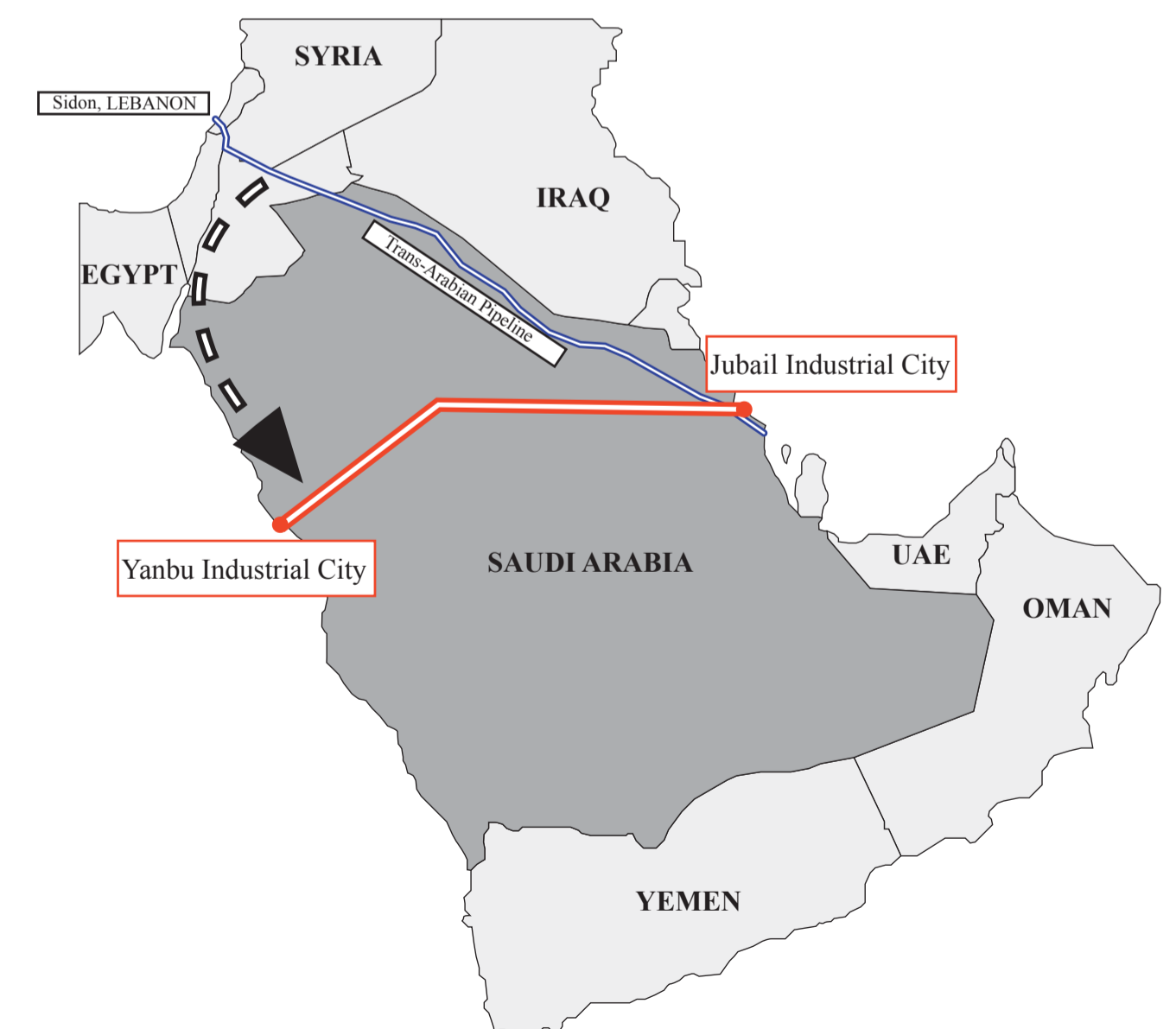


Figure 8

decision, Saudi eventually decided to build two new cities. They would be called 'Industrial Cities': Jubail in the east, where the oil was extracted, and Yanbu in the west, where the oil was exported by sea.

On the East coast, the land around the existing town of Jubail was chosen. Jubail was the Gulf coast's next 'sleepy fishing village' designated for development. The 'sleepy fishing village' has become a Gulf typology, not of what to build, but from where to start. Every coastal town in the Gulf has been described as one, from which it was miraculously transformed itself into a 'world-class city'. Just as commonplace as these terms have become, the story of getting from 'sleepy fishing village' to 'world-class city' is by now a platitude:

- Oil wealth buys it.
- Modernization enables it.
- Geopolitics determines it.
- Vision wills it.

At this point, in the early 1970s, a new kind of entity would design it - Bechtel, an American engineering and contracting company. Planning had been tried before in Saudi Arabia with proper planners, but now it was time to, as the Americans were known to do, 'get things done'. Besides working on the Trans-Arabian Pipeline, Stephen Bechtel's company had helped design (and profited greatly from) the US highway system. He had engineered the Hoover Dam. The company is known for its friends in high places, including Richard M. Nixon and Crown Prince Faisal. Its network is legendarily part of the company's success strategy (fig. 9).

During a visit to the US, Crown Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia visited Bechtel headquarters in San Francisco. He took a tour of Bechtel's port facilities and learned how they had made the Hoover Dam. Bechtel could overcome nature. And Bechtel was invited to Saudi Arabia. Stephen Bechtel took credit for conceiving of two new cities. In 1973 Bechtel presented a "concept book" for the two cities to (by then) King Faisal. Every page was approved. The concept book has since been lost, but it did not seem to matter to anyone.

Stephen Bechtel was more than a pipes-and-steel man. He could be as much the communicator as any good architect. His obituary described how he would sketch ideas on the back of the archetypal envelope for potential clients. But unlike the sketches of important architects, they too have been lost. Again, that did not seem to matter.

One New York Times article could not help but make a reference to the militaristic rolling out of modernity taking place in Saudi Arabia with Bechtel's



Figure 9

oversight. Architects and engineers were 'enlisting' to be part of the effort. The designer was unquestionably Bechtel. By this stage, most town and city planners had read the writing on the wall. The Gulf region should have been a second chance for the planning profession. British planners had indeed tried, but according to some, British professionalism was being pushed out by American go-getterism.

One could chastise the kingdom's centralized government for dismissing the planning tradition, but one should ask if that decision had not already been made by the planners' failure to respond to an unstable economical and political landscape. Saudi Arabia's urgency was not so much to reap the benefits of the oil wells being impatiently tapped by American oil companies as much as it was to ensure that the incoming wealth did not wreak havoc on a country adjusting to modernity's systems, ideas, and materialism.

Jubail Industrial City was conceived, designed and built by engineers. Brawny, paunchy figures embellished the American Marlboro man image with a calculator. A plan for Jubail Industrial City is hard to come by, and not to be found in high resolution. A reason could be that the master plan was nothing more than a working drawing, a means of communication among experts (fig. 10).

In the plan, one can read that the city is divided and organized into distinct

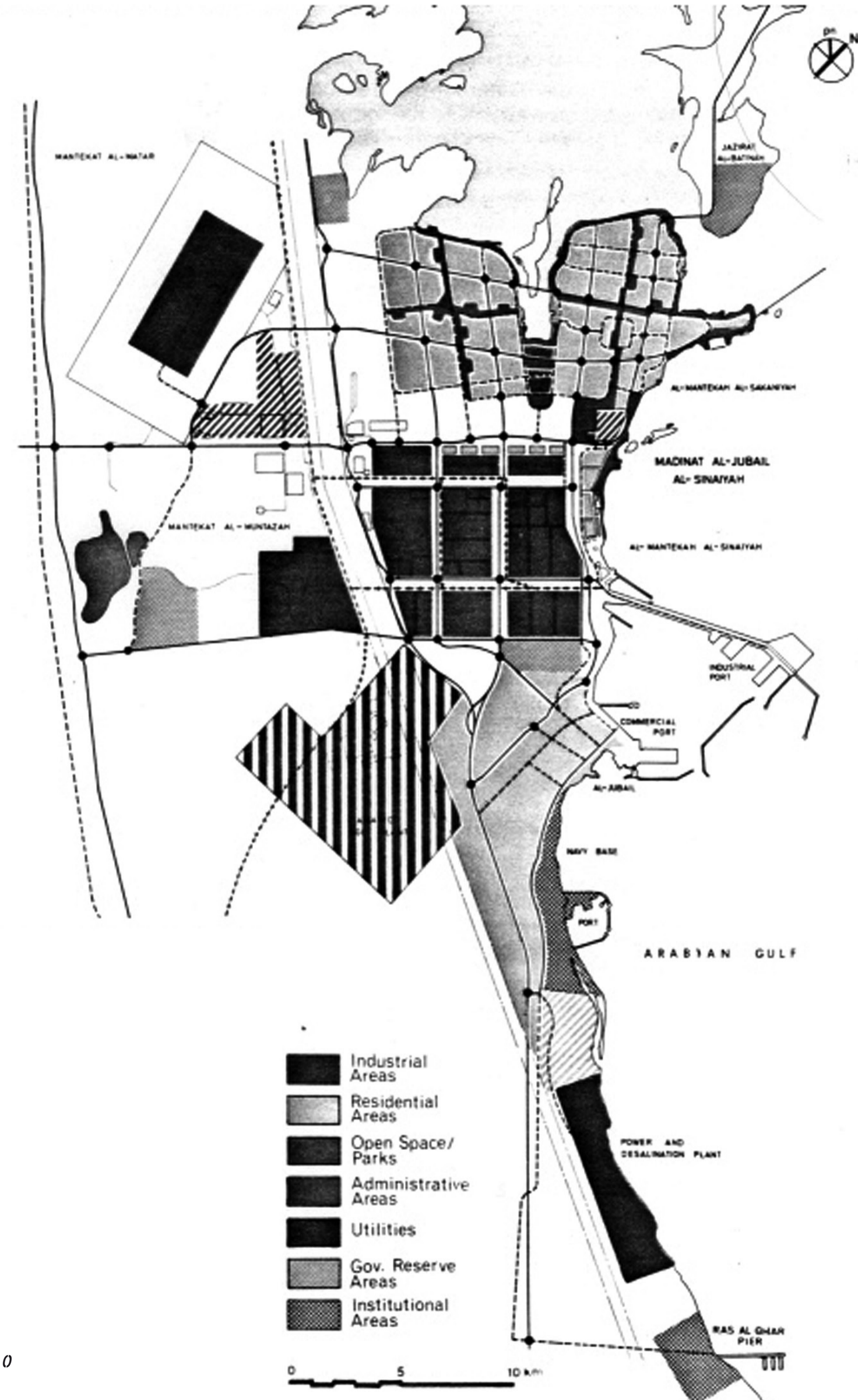


Figure 10

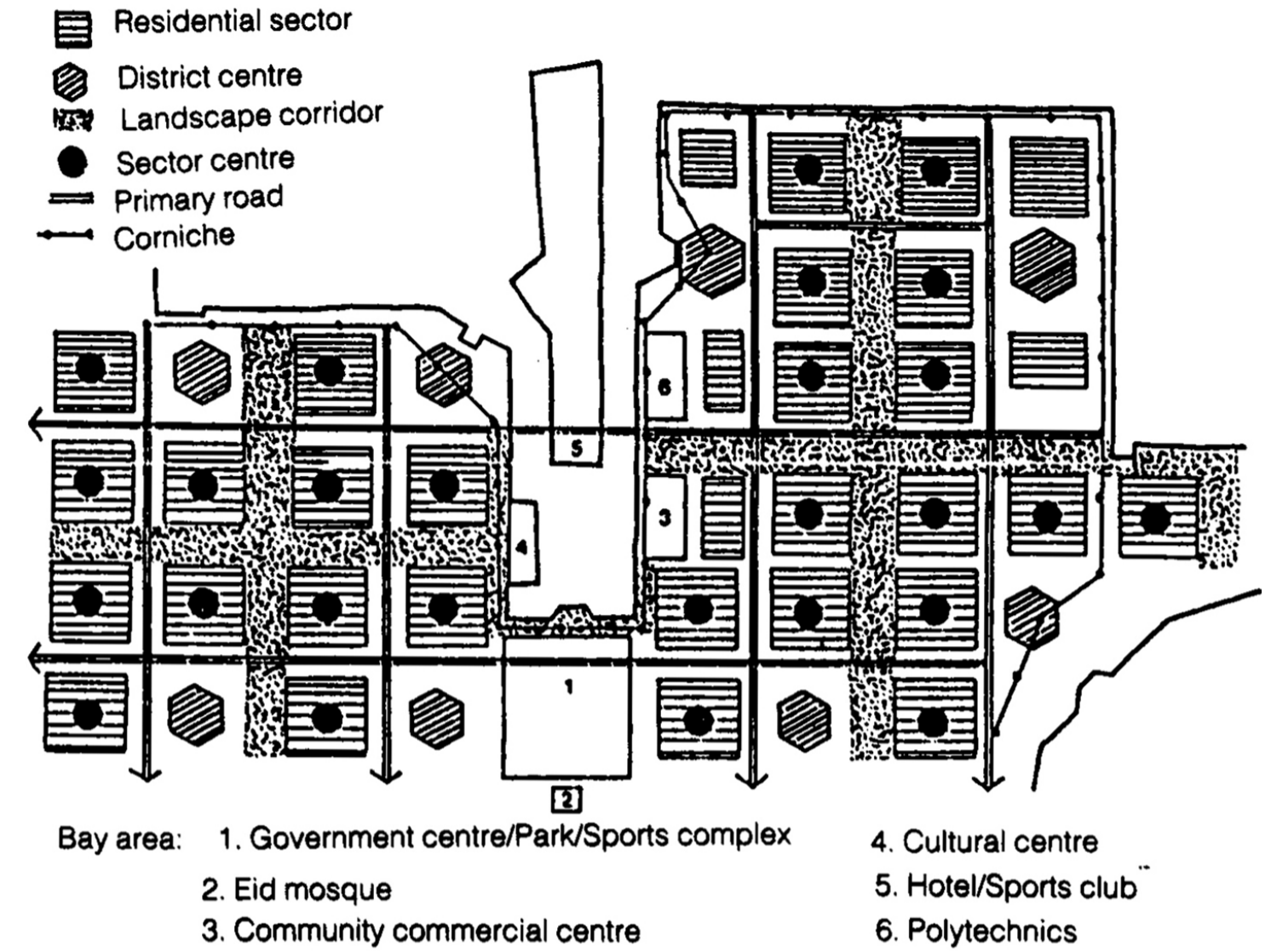


Figure 11

zones, mainly industrial vs. residential. No one wants to live near an oil refinery, so residences were pushed as far away as possible onto a northern shore with refreshing winds. In the residential areas, engineers were concerned with minimizing traffic congestion; the Saudi bureaucrats are concerned with avoiding concentration of residents, maintaining evenly spread property values. Everything has to be dispersed and equal. Houses are divided into communities, which make up sectors and then divisions. Each community has a mosque, a playground, a grocery store, and a big roundabout for seamless coming and going (fig. 11). Some critics try to find influences of Ebenezer Howard in the plan, but this is a useless exercise. Engineering by this time had distilled a couple generations of planning principles into what it found to be common sense. By this time the neighborhood unit was a knee-jerk planning device. Theories were replaced with practical assumptions and traffic analyses. The result is a city that gets built exactly as drawn. And one that holds a Guinness World Record for the world's largest engineering project (fig. 12). Jubail Industrial City was self-admittedly a by-product, not so much of the oil industry, but of a national development plan to ensure that oil wealth did not destroy a kingdom still coming together. The discovery of oil had helped ensure the permanence of Saudi's new ruling family; and modernity and its comforts



Figure 12

would be a way of continuing to keep the kingdom united.

The reasons to build cities in 1970 were the same as in 2006 when the Economic Cities were announced: Saudi Arabia has a booming youth population, it is important to train and employ them, and the profits from petroleum should enable this to happen.

Economic Cities are now the way to solve that problem. However, this round of cities is not designed by engineers. Architects and planners are back at work, but the real designer is McKinsey & Company, the management consulting firm. McKinsey's elemental advice to Saudi Arabia was to shift from one industry, oil, to another, global capital. Just as Stephen Bechtel had presented a concept book for Jubail and Yanbu Industrial Cities, consultants at McKinsey are said to have presented the idea of the Economic Cities to King Abdullah. This time, however, cities are not by-products. Cities are solutions.

The Saudi agency responsible for these cities are not only attracting new foreign investment; they're also investors. And investors need performance benchmarks. McKinsey recommended that the kingdom follow the World Bank's 'Doing Business Index'. The Economic Cities, and the kingdom's establishment of a 'friendly environment' for foreign businesses, represented Saudi Arabia's anchor strategy for making the list's top ten. A top-ten list has likely never motivated



Figure 13

such a huge economy before. At #11 this year, they almost made it. This top ten list drives how Saudi Arabia has chosen to present itself to the rest of the world, but it will not capture the hearts of new potential Saudi residents.

Showrooms have been featured prominently during this conference, and their significance here cannot be overstated; they are what will sell Economic Cities. (fig. 13) The showrooms at King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), the most advanced Economic City, are currently the center of the city under construction. It might sound similar to the argument for the Western tendency toward British New Towns and American suburbs in 1950s and 1960s. Staged interiors sell a peace not found in today's Jeddah, the city with which KAEC is obviously set against. Just as the World Bank establishes international standards, so do purveyors of lifestyle. Windows of soft-hued model apartments look out onto panorama paintings of lawns and playgrounds. For children to run in the streets is only a fantasy in Jeddah. What's more, owning a home in KAEC means you know your utilities won't fail. Water will run clear from the faucet. Life will become 'normal'. As a growing middle-class working for international companies might be the kingdom's only means out of its current predicament, these cities have to prove amenable to middle-class values.

But are these Economic Cities truly cities? Can a city be built up by finely furnished apartments on cul-de-sacs that wind about on awkwardly shaped terraforms? (fig. 14) Critics certainly do hesitate to name them cities. However, Saudi Arabia is confident it is making cities, whether or not you and I are willing to accept them as such.

I am indebted to Joumana al Jabri, Reda Sijiny, Mashary Al-Naim and Ziad Aazam for advice and knowledge that helped me prepare this piece.



Figure 14



THE DREAM OF
A LITESTYLE:
MASTER-PLANNED
COMMUNITIES AND
THE NEW ROOMS
OF EXCLUSION

THE DREAM OF A LIFESTYLE: MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITIES AND THE NEW TOOLS OF EXCLUSION

Tobias Armbrorst, Daniel D'Oca, Georgette Theodore

1 Bill Bishop, **The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart**, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008.

2 Gerald E Frug, **City Making: Building Communities Without Building Walls**, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.

3 Robert Charles Lesser & Co. defines master-planned communities as “large-scale developments featuring a range of housing prices and styles, an array of amenities, and multiple non-residential land uses (such as commercial, hotels, and educational facilities).” Our definition is analogous. See http://www.rclco.com/pdf/Feb222008510_MPC_Press_Release_2-22-08.pdf.

4 Ave Maria’s Marketing Brochure.

5 Tom Monaghan, quoted in **The Angelus** (Ave Maria University’s newsletter), January 2005.

6 [Ave Maria University’s website](http://www.ave-maria.edu/).

7 Referring to St. Theresa d’Avila, the 15th century mystic that fueled much of Counter Reformation

In the Bill Clinton-endorsed book *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart*, Bill Bishop warns that while America is diverse, “the places where we live are becoming increasingly crowded with people who live, think, and vote as we do,” and that “our country has become so polarized, so ideologically inbred, that people don’t know and can’t understand those who live just a few miles away.”¹ Similarly, Gerald Frug, in *Citymaking: Building Communities without Building Walls*, writes that “the overall impact of American urban policy in the twentieth century has been to disperse and divide the people who live in America’s metropolitan areas, and, as a result, to reduce the number of places where people encounter men and women different from themselves.”²

Indeed it’s hard to tell a story about American urbanization without talking about homogeneity and exclusion. One reason for this is that at least until 1968, “reducing the number of places where people encounter men and women different from themselves” was done explicitly, and with the full cooperation of every level of government, as well as the real estate industry.

While most of the tools used to explicitly segregate people by race and religion have been outlawed, a newer set of subtler methods to produce homogeneous communities implicitly has been developed over the past 40 years. This paper will focus on some of the new tactics of exclusion used by developers of private master-planned communities.³

The arsenal of exclusion

Ave Maria is a private master-planned community near Naples, Florida (fig. 1). While ostensibly marketed to “every dream, every lifestyle and every family,”⁴ it is in fact the vision of Ave Maria to create, as the community’s founder put it, “a truly Catholic community.”⁵ Ave Maria features a Catholic university (“the first new University founded with Catholic principles in the United States in the last 50 years!”⁶), a huge churchlike “Oratory” (fig. 2), and street names such as “Pope John Paul II Boulevard,” “Avila Avenue,” and “Assisi Drive”⁷ (fig.3). At the insistence of Ave Maria’s founder, the archconservative businessman Tom

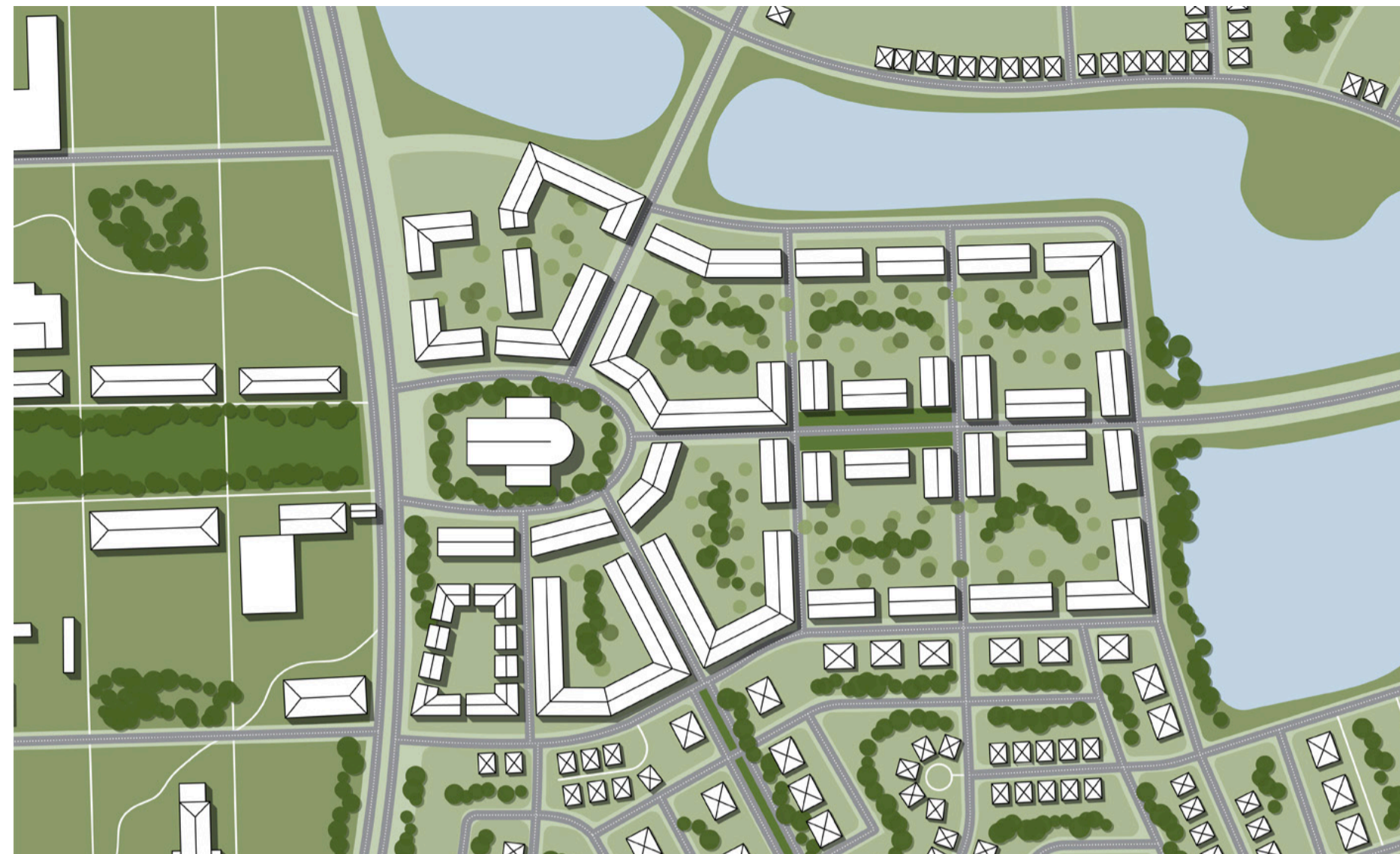


Figure 1: Ave Maria is a private master-planned community near Naples, Florida that was conceived as “a truly Catholic community.”

Monaghan, the community’s retailers are prohibited from selling contraceptives and pornography.

Themed and gated private master-planned communities such as Ave Maria have been a staple of 20th century urbanization in the United States and the creation of homogeneous communities has been the implicit goal of many of these communities. Over the decades, the developers and designers of master-planned communities have assembled a full arsenal of tools to foster homogeneity by controlling access to planned communities.

While what is arguably the first master planned community in the United States—Llewellyn Park—restricted access with a gate, access to early planned communities was primarily controlled through racial deed restrictions and restrictive covenants. Even before the first zoning codes were put in place in the 1910s and 1920s, racial deed restrictions and restrictive covenants on private developments spelled out in detail which uses were and weren’t allowable. Expressions of “fears of almost everyone and everything,”⁸ these covenants not only excluded African- and Asian-Americans, Jews, the working class, and in many cases the middle class: they also prohibited a range of behavior deemed detrimental to the preservation of property values. At least until the Great Depression, when developers tended to be less picky about who to sell their

dogma and St. Francis of Assisi, founder of Franciscan order.

8 Robert M Fogelson, **Bourgeois Nightmares: Suburbia, 1870-1930**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.



Figure 2: Ave Maria features a Catholic university, a huge churchlike “Oratory,” and street names such as “Pope John Paul II Boulevard,” “Avila Avenue,” and “Assisi Drive.”

homes to, the use of racial deed restrictions and restrictive covenants became commonplace, and could be found in almost every American city. To make matters worse, when the Federal Housing Administration (the New Deal agency established to guarantee long-term, low interest mortgages), assessed the credit risk of America’s communities, they looked highly on the use of racial covenants, and typically gave “protected” communities a higher rating, creating a second-wave of the covenants. As David Freund points out, the FHA’s own appraisal manual, working from widely held assumptions that racial integration would undermine white neighborhoods and that properties in non-white or “mixed” neighborhoods were risky investments, required the “[p]rohibition of the occupancy of properties except by the race for which they are intended.”⁹ Gates, racial deed restrictions and restrictive covenants weren’t the only means by which developers of master planned communities restricted access. By stipulating minimum lot sizes and minimum house prices, and by building communities consisting only of single-family houses, developers were able to restrict access to those who didn’t have the means to buy expensive single-family homes on large lots. And it should be pointed out that developers of planned communities benefitted from the exclusionary tactics of others. Prejudiced developers, for example, could count on local real estate brokers—who in

⁹ Indeed as Antero Pietila notes in **Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City**, this worked both ways. Pietila notes that the developer of an early black suburb near Morgan State University in Baltimore called Morgan Park used racial covenants to forbid whites from living there - a tactic that earned the neighborhood what was perhaps the only “B” rating ever given to a black neighborhood by a Federal appraiser.



Figure 3: Future housing sites in Ave Maria.

most cities took a sworn oath to never introduce “inharmonious elements” into white neighborhoods—to “steer” these elements away from their developments. If these brokers didn’t practice steering, they could count on local neighborhood associations to boycott them. Big city churches regularly used the pulpit to warn parishioners about the evils of integration, big city newspapers editorialized in favor of segregation, and homeowners themselves deployed or threatened violence to send a clear signal to blacks brave enough to cross the color or religion barrier. Starting in the 1960s, suburban municipalities learned to use “expulsive zoning,” a strategy that entailed rezoning African American neighborhoods for business, or for low density, thereby preventing neighborhood expansion. In short, prejudiced developers of master planned communities weren’t exactly fighting an uphill battle.

Racially restrictive and religious covenants were declared unenforceable by the Supreme Court in 1948, and then entirely prohibited by the 1968 Fair Housing Act,¹⁰ which outlawed discrimination in the sale, rental, and marketing of homes, in mortgage lending, and in zoning. But as we were painfully reminded by the 2010 census, most Americans still live in environments that are radically segregated, especially by race. How can we explain this? Is segregation merely the legacy of tools—like Racial Zoning or Racial and Religious Covenants—that

¹⁰ In the 1948 Shelley v. Kraemer decision.

Figure 4: Radburn's communal amenities weren't churches or golf courses, but large green spaces in the middle of housing clusters, reminiscent of the village greens in the New England small towns that served as the prototype for RPAA's *Gemeinschaft* ideal.



no longer operate? Or are there newer, subtler tools that continue to produce homogeneous communities such as Ave Maria? This essay supports the latter claim. We will look at three such new tools as they apply to private master-planned communities: Conditions, Covenants, and Restrictions (CC&Rs), Exclusionary Amenities, and lifestyle marketing.

The arsenal of exclusion continued

CC&Rs are the planning codes that govern private communities. A developer typically drafts the CC&Rs along with the plan for a new community. Once built, the community is turned into a Common Interest Development (CID) with a mandatory Homeowner Association. The Board of the Homeowner Association (the de facto private government of the community) is then responsible for the management and maintenance of the community as well as the enforcement of CC&Rs. These codes regulate and restrict allowable uses (Ave Maria's CC&Rs for example prohibit abortion clinics, abortion counseling, facilities "performing embryonic stem cell research or other activity involving the destruction of human embryos or any facility performing in vitro fertilization or human cloning"¹¹ among other things), exterior design (from landscaping to holiday decorations and the types of cars allowed in driveways), age and behavior (ownership of dogs,

¹¹ "Amended and Restated Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions of Ave Maria Town Center I / Core," November 2007.

¹² CC&Rs are enforceable on a state level, as there have been many



Figure 5: The precedent for Common Interest Developments such as Ave Maria can be found in the progressive American garden city of Radburn, New Jersey.

court cases that challenged them and failed. Evan McKenzie writes about a number of such cases, such as the case in Boca Raton, Florida, where a homeowners association brought a homeowner to court because her dog weighed more than the allowable 30 pounds. See: Evan McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

¹³ Jacob Strahilevitz, "Exclusionary Amenity," in: Tobias Armbrorst, Daniel D'Oca, Georgeen Theodore, *The Arsenal of Inclusion and Exclusion*, Barcelona: Actar, 2011.

level of noise, visits by grandchildren, etc).¹²

Aside from CC&Rs, a second, subtler (albeit no less powerful) tool of restricting access to private master planned communities is what the legal scholar Jacob Strahilevitz has termed the "exclusionary amenity."¹³

A typical feature of Common Interest Developments are shared amenities: While the homes in these developments are individually owned, the golf courses, tennis courts or swimming pools are held in communal ownership by all residents. Homeowners pay for the maintenance and management of the amenities through monthly fees to the Homeowner Association. It is through these fees that shared amenities turn into exclusionary amenities: Someone who is not interested in playing golf is presumably not interested in paying for the management and maintenance of a golf course and is therefore not going to move into a community that levies fees for such an amenity. Given the fact that in the 1980s and 1990s only about three percent of American golfers were African American, the golf course became an effective proxy for all-white communities. As Strahilevitz writes: "An exclusionary amenity is a collective good that is paid for by all members of a community because willingness to pay for that good is an effective proxy for other desired membership characteristics," such as race or religion.



Figure 6: In Orange County, CA's Ladera Ranch" development, prospective homebuyers are given a questionnaire aimed at assessing the homebuyers' values.

Ave Maria features an exclusionary amenity par excellence: the huge church-like "Oratory" at the center of the community is a shared amenity, paid for by homeowner's fees. While it is de jure illegal to exclude non-Catholics from settling in Ave Maria, the Oratory de facto makes it very undesirable for anyone who doesn't want to pay monthly fees for the management and maintenance of a giant Catholic church. The Church as Exclusionary Amenity is a tool to create a homogenous, "truly Catholic community."

Ironically, the precedent for Common Interest Developments such as Ave Maria can be found in the progressive American garden city of Radburn, New Jersey (fig.4). Planned in the late 1920s by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright (the founders of the Regional Plan Association of America), Radburn was based on Ebenezer Howard's ideas of communal ownership and became the model for CIDs: the planning and construction of Radburn's shared amenities and individual homes was handled by the (non-profit) City Housing Corporation with the backing of real estate developer Alexander Bing. With the sale of houses and plots, the shared amenities were passed on to the Radburn Association, which in turn charged homeowners fees for the management and maintenance of communal spaces.

Of course Radburn's communal amenities weren't churches or golf courses, but



Figure 7: Marketed as an "ecologically sustainable, walkable, and culturally diverse neighborhood," Serenbe is a 900 acre master-planned community southwest of Atlanta that includes a 25-acre organic farm.

large green spaces in the middle of housing clusters, reminiscent of the village greens in the New England small towns that served as the prototype for RPAA's *Gemeinschaft* ideal (fig.5).

After the second World War, Radburn's model of communal ownership and governance was increasingly adopted by private developers, encouraging the Federal Housing Authority to begin providing mortgage insurance for planned communities in the 1960s. Municipalities increasingly accommodated planned communities through more flexible zoning models such as Planned Unit Development zones (PUDs). In its traditional form, zoning regulates size, use and density of parcels on a lot-by-lot basis. In a PUD, density is aggregated and applies not to individual building lots within a development but to the entire parcel. This creates the potential for areas of clustered buildings at higher densities as well as larger open spaces to preserve natural features or build golf courses (fig.6). PUD also allows for a mix of housing types and land uses, making possible the proliferation of denser, neo-traditional communities during the real-estate boom of the late 1980s. The combination of neo-traditional design, highly restrictive CC&Rs, relatively high residential densities, some non-residential functions and communal amenities such as "nature reserves," golf and polo courses in New Urbanist communities such as Seaside, Florida and Kentlands, Maryland became



Figure 9: Jumbolair, a 380 acre “fly in community” in Florida, was built complete with private runways. Homes have attached hangars in addition to traditional garages.

14 See Paul L. Knox, *Metroburbia, USA*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

15 To really get a flavor of the spectrum of interest-based communities, browse the [Intentional Communities Directory](#), where you will find the following: A few men with a large tract of land in the northern foothills of the Missouri Ozarks are looking for like-minded, agriculturally-inclined, eco-friendly artisans free from the bonds of organized religions and political correctness to join them in establishing a community in celebration of “all aspects of living from the times of our ancestors

the formula for the majority of new planned communities during this time.¹⁴ Since the early 1990s then, the spectrum of planned communities has diversified in astonishing ways. Today, there are not only neo-traditional golf course communities and private master-planned communities for Roman Catholics, but also communities targeted to Muslims, gay retirees, organic farmers, hobby astronomers, civil war re-enactors, wine-makers, and aviation enthusiasts.¹⁵ Each of these communities comes with its own CC&Rs and exclusionary amenities. Serenbe, a 900 acre site southwest of Atlanta, transforms one of the last undeveloped areas in the metropolitan region into what is marketed as an ecologically sustainable, walkable, and culturally diverse neighborhood. Included in the community is a 25-acre organic farm that provides heirloom tomatoes at Serenbe’s weekly farmer’s market (fig. 7, 8). (Serenbe is described as a “visual blend of New England mill town and Southern farming backwater, with a bit of industrial modernism thrown in.”) Jumbolair, a 380 acre “fly in community” was built complete with private runways (fig. 9). It’s important to note that not until fairly recently did developers feel a need to embed things like golf courses, churches, organic farms, vineyards, and runways into their master planned communities. If the CID model and PUD zoning was one factor that led to diversity in product types, another was market



Figure 10: For developers of master planned communities today, it’s not enough to build a plain subdivision: to sell homes, developers often try to manufacture a “lifestyle,” which, judging from the glossy brochures that developers use to advertise their communities, has become an amenity people crave.

before the various diasporas into others lands and modern cultures.” A woman with some acreage outside Indianapolis wonders whether there might be others interested in starting a community “devoted to astral travel and telepathy, and possibly telekinesis.” An itinerant group of a dozen or so followers of “the way of the heart” are advertising availability in a bucolic new residential community called “Adidam.” The catch? To live there, “one must be a formally acknowledged devotee of Adi Da Samraj.” An advertisement for the “Alone Together Hermitage” invites people to join a community “of hermits and loners living together for the mutual benefit and protection

fragmentation. In the post-war building boom of the 1940s and 1950s, master planning a community was in many ways simpler: millions of returning GIs needed a house—any house—and a glut of large, mass-produced, homogeneous subdivisions like Levittown, NY were built to supply the demand. So long as these communities were sufficiently “protected” against “inharmonious elements,” they were likely to find an audience. More recently, however, developers have felt a need to distinguish their master planned communities from those of their competitors. For developers of master planned communities today, it’s not enough to build a plain subdivision: to sell homes, developers often try to manufacture a “lifestyle,” which, judging from the glossy brochures that developers use to advertise their communities, has become an amenity people crave, just like granite countertops, hardwood floors, and three-car garages. Indeed, the extent to which this word “lifestyle” pops up in real estate brochures is remarkable. In a sampling of 316 brochures of private, master planned communities collected and examined for the purposes of this essay, the word “lifestyle” was used 269 times, and was used in over half the brochures (fig. 11). Through soft-focus, often immaculately-staged pictures of people enjoying this or that community’s various amenities, and though elaborate texts that deploy carefully-selected historical references, these brochures are meant to assure

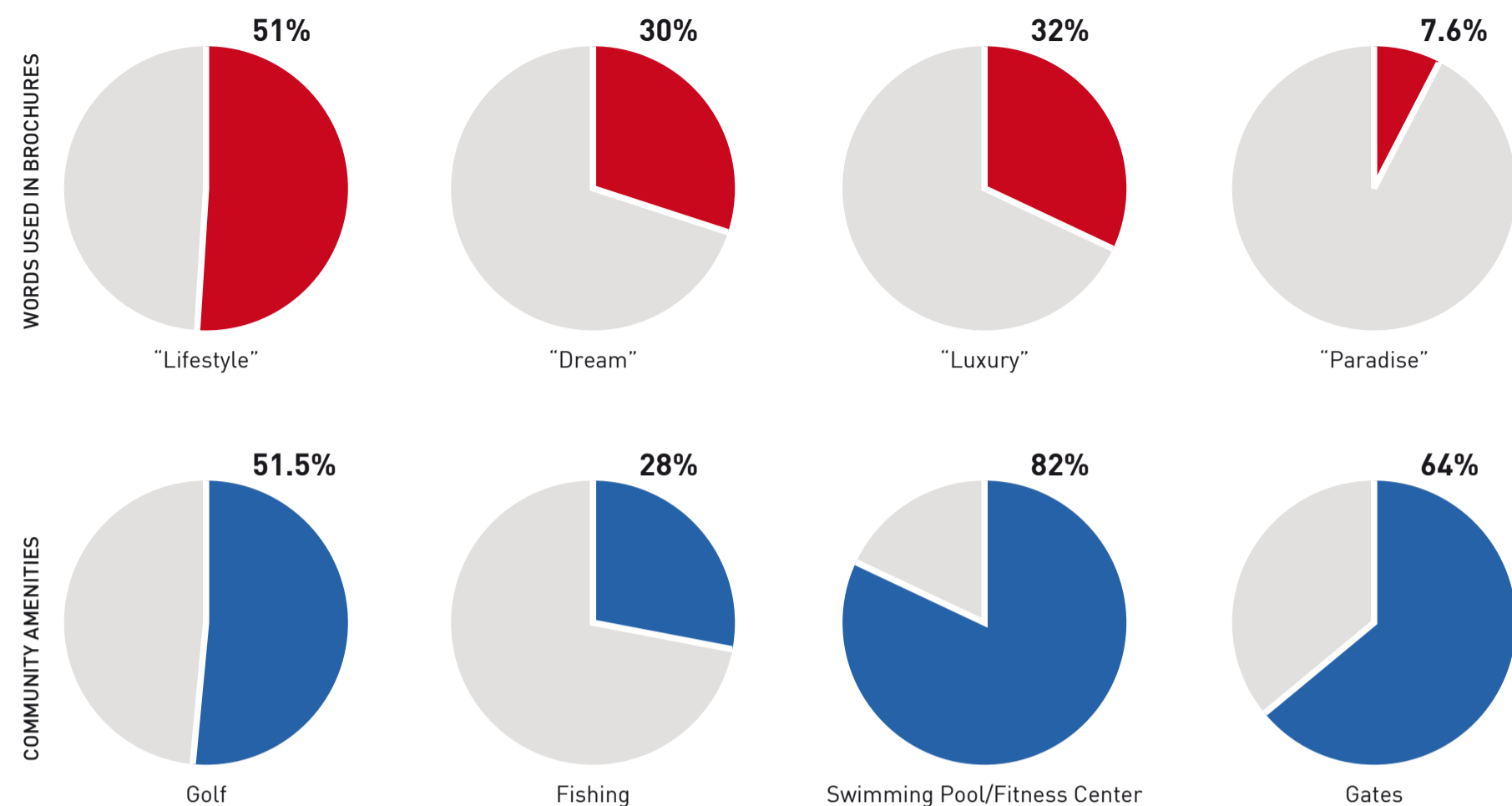


Figure 11: Most real estate brochures for master-planned communities appeal to Americans' seemingly limitless appetite for safety, status, nostalgia, and leisure.

of the whole," where "great efforts are taken by all to ensure that the sanctity of that solitude is never broken under any circumstances," and "a sophisticated process of communication and notification has been developed so that no member is required to interact with any other." And in another neck of the woods, a self-identified loner is looking to connect with "free-thinkers and underground intellectuals . . . afraid to commit to communities" in order to "pool resources and start an outsider's community . . . for those familiar with rejection."

would-be home-buyers that if they moved to, say Ruskin Heights in Fayetteville, AR, they would be living among people just like themselves (in this case, others who might like a John Ruskin-inspired "arts and crafts community"). By including images primarily of children playing unsupervised in pristine natural settings, the brochure for Eagle Springs in suburban Houston suggests that it is first and foremost a safe, non-urban place to raise children. The brochure for Washington's Issaquah Highlands sends a signal to environmentally-conscious home buyers by editorializing that "Living Green (TM) is all about making choices that help us all tread more lightly on the earth," and by foregrounding its energy star-certified homes.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, most of the brochures appeal to Americans' seemingly limitless appetite for safety, status, nostalgia, and leisure. 64% of the brochures sampled bragged about being gated, 32% used the word "luxury," and 30% contained the word "dream" in describing their community. 82% advertised a swimming pool, 51.5% of the brochures advertised a golf course, and astonishingly, 28% advertised fishing as an amenity.

Most of the references to luxury are rather generic (e.g., "welcome to the good life"), but some attempt to connote very specific associations. Portsmouth, RI's Carnegie Abbey, which advertises "old-world elegance and the timeless nobility

of riding," has homes named "The Royal Turnberry," "The Royal Dornoch," and "The Puritan." Carnegie Abbey's brochure has a picture of JFK and Jackie O on its cover, and makes constant references to Newport as playground for the American elite. Cottesmore Village, an "equestrian community" just outside Camden, South Carolina, includes expansive facilities for polo, fox-hunting, dressage, and trail-riding.

Appeals to what Leo Marx called "sentimental pastoralism," and the desire among so many Americans for a non-urban lifestyle abound in the brochures. North Carolina's Falls Cove, for example, is the "place where Peace met Quiet." In Youngsville, NC's Hidden Lake, you can "escape the commotion of the city by coming home to the tranquil surrounding of a breathtaking lake." The brochure for Wolf Creek Ranch in Park City, Utah boasts that Wolf Creek is "where Father Time can't change Mother Nature."

General nostalgia for a time when things were better figures prominently into the brochures as well. The brochure for Georgia's Savannah Quarters explains that in Savannah Quarters, "an unmistakable old-world charm greets its visitors and residents." The Peninsula Neighborhood in Iowa City, IA states that "they don't build 'em like they used to. But we do." The following quote from the brochure for Richmond Hill, GA's Ford Plantation—which sounds like it was taken from Lewis Mumford's 1939 Garden City propaganda film *The City*—sums up the general nostalgia found in so many of the brochures: "Someday soon, you will bring your family home to The Ford Plantation. They'll take to the place as naturally as the heron and ibis take to our marshland. While your kids and ours run barefoot on the lawn, we'll share a pitcher of something cold and a basket of corn bread."

More concrete historical references in the brochures are perhaps more troubling. Many communities merely want to appear old and dignified (the brochure for a newly-completed community called Palmetto Bluff features a timeline spanning from 1524 to the present), but many southern communities take pains to connect themselves to antebellum traditions. The brochure for Fayetteville, PA's Penn National Resort begins by wondering: "If only Robert E. Lee knew what was to transpire around him when he stayed in the White Rock Manor House nearly 140 years before." The brochure for luka, MS' Pickwick Pines notes that "The [nearby] battle of Shiloh, Tennessee reflected all the conflict and valor that have come to represent the Civil War," something that is "worth remembering." The brochure for South Carolina's Mount Vintage boasts that the property was "elevated to one of the grandest plantations of the area in the early 1800's, is now the site of our thriving community," adding that "our focus is to preserve the history and beauty of the Plantation."

As suggested by the high percentage of golf courses and swimming pools found in the communities we sampled, leisure features prominently in the brochures. North Carolina's Champion Hills advertises itself as "an endless vacation." Alabama's The Waters boats "it's not a vacation home, it just feels like one." In Florida's Palencia, "your new lifestyle of year-round resort living begins at the gated entrance to Riviera and never ends." Brochures often choose to emphasize a community's architecture as a means of communicating a given community's lifestyle. The brochure for Dallas's Urban Reserve highlights its pseudo-Modernist, "high design" houses, whose names include Cube House, X-Acto House, Color Clock House, and See-Through House. (All of these are situated on "Vanguard Way," the development's main street.) The brochure for Fall's Cove, NC highlights the community's "unique twist on the traditional Craftsman style home." New Mexico's Nature Point makes a point of emphasizing its "over-sized, hand peeled vigas and massive rough-sawn beams from the nearby Jemex Mountains, you will be awestruck by the beauty of such massive timbers, authentic latillas and corbels will also complement the southwest imagery." Glossy real estate brochures, however, are just one tool of lifestyle marketing. Another is steering. Especially before the Fair Housing Act made the practice illegal in 1968, real estate steering was a tried and true method that was employed to keep communities homogeneous. Racial steering--one famous kind of steering--refers to the practice whereby real estate brokers guide prospective homebuyers towards or away from certain neighborhoods based on their race. Racial steering might mean advising prospective homebuyers to purchase homes in particular neighborhoods on the basis of race, or failing that, on the basis of race, to show, or to inform buyers of homes that meet their specifications. Private Mountain Communities is an Asheville, NC based company that describes itself as a "trusted authority on Western North Carolina living." A broker of sorts, Private Mountain Communities "matches families with communities that complement their personal taste and lifestyle." Two things stand out about this company. One, they have a storefront—or what they call a "state of the art Discovery Showroom"—in downtown Asheville where would-be home-buyers can consult with "independent community advisors," preview community brochures, DVD's and "use interactive explorations tools" to find the community that is right for them. Second, on their website, there is something called a "Community Finder:" an application that "guides you through an easy questionnaire that analyzes your unique interests and lifestyle preferences, such as architectural tastes and preferred amenities, to produce a short list of communities that are right for you." A video on the website underlines the

questionnaire's science, stating that the questionnaire is "an algorithm that really takes you down the right path so that you are getting into a subset where you fit. A concept that represents all the communities in this area in an unbiased way." The questionnaire is actually more benign than it sounds, asking questions like: "Which of the following area activities are essential to your decision to purchase property?" and "Which of the following on-site amenities are essential to your decision to purchase property?" But Bill Bishop describes something much less benign in *The Big Sort*. Bishop writes about a questionnaire that is given to prospective homebuyers in an Orange County, CA development called "Ladera Ranch" whose questions try to get at the homebuyers' values (for example "Do you 'like to experience exotic people and places?' Or, do you believe 'extremists and radicals should be banned from running for public office?"). Here is Bishop: "The Ladera Ranch developers built one section of their subdivision for those who see the Earth as a 'living system.' (It's called 'Terramor' and features bamboo floors, photovoltaic cells and, according to the developer, houses that 'might have a courtyard that conceals the front door...kind of cozy and nest-like.')

Across the way is a community for those the developer labeled 'Winners.' In *Covenant Hills*, houses are more colonial than craftsman."

What is happening here if not steering?

Brochures, Walk-in Storefronts and Questionnaires—like CC&Rs, exclusionary amenities, are a part of a new technology of exclusion, an answer to the question: how do you create homogeneous communities when you have Fair Housing legislation that prohibits you from using all the other methods that succeeded so well previously? The crucial thing here is to shift race and class to things that become a proxy for race and class—usually, something vague and seemingly benign called a "lifestyle". The purpose of these "soft" tools of exclusion is the same: they exclude "undesirables" by inconveniencing them or by making them feel unwelcome.

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