

Urban Design and Planning: One object – Two Theoretical Realms¹

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While architectural theory – in as far as it deals with the shaping of urban space – and urban design theory are difficult to distinguish, planning theory is more distinct. There is a historical reason for this: the disciplines of urban design and planning have both branched off from architecture. But while planning has been defined as an independent discipline for about a century (Friedman, 1987), urban design only emerged as an independent discipline with its own distinct body of theory from the mid-1960's and on, as a reaction to the shift of focus within planning from the physical qualities of built space to land use, infrastructure and social issues (Middleton, 1982).² And because of the widespread institutional divide between the educational environments of architecture and urban design on the one hand, and urban planning on the other, theorization is to a large extent divided into separate realms.

The practice of urban design and planning, however, mostly takes place in the same realm, that of public planning and the city. As there are different definitions of the purpose and scope of urban design and plan-

ning as fields of activity, despite their related nature, this may lead to blur and confusion in their practice. The related nature of urban design and planning means that the practice of urban design, from a planning point of view, may include objectives that may be secondary, or even irrelevant, from an urban design point of view. If the practice of urban design is not informed by planning theory, it may lead to contested views of the purpose of urban design, which may ultimately reduce the quality of its outcomes.

In order for urban design theory to inform the practice of urban design it therefore has to relate to urban planning theory. This article outlines a number of different normative positions within the fields of urban design and planning theory, by examples of different normative positions within the respective fields.³ In the first part, three positions within normative urban design theory: societal, formal, and environmental theories of urban design, are defined and exemplified. In the second part, three normative positions within normative planning theory; planning for the status quo, planning for radical transformation, and planning for

moderate change, are defined and exemplified. In the conclusion, the differences between urban design and planning theory are discussed, followed by an outline of a number of perspectives for urban design research and education.

URBAN DESIGN

Normative theories of urban design deal with the question of how to create the best urban environment, or, as Lynch (1981) puts it, 'how to know a good city when you see one'. However, what is best is a question of values, as well as how cities are conceptualized in terms of what they are for. For some, the most important aspect of a city may be its aesthetic qualities. Although aesthetics may be valued very differently by different people, this quality of a city has a high rank for most people. Others may look at a city primarily in terms of its capacity as a place to do a particular kind of business, and yet others may prioritize how a city meets their social, economic or cultural requirements to everyday life.

And like people in general, normative theories of urban design also have different foci of interest, as well as different normative bases. Some theories deal with the city as an expression of society and operate mainly on the large scale, while paying little attention to aspects such as environmental fit or aesthetics. Others may focus on aesthetic or sensory aspects of urban form, and pay no attention to functional or social aspects. And yet others may put special emphasis on one or more selected aspects, whether it be traffic, spatial identity, energy conservation, or something else.

In other words, most theories of urban design are partial theories; that is, they do not cover all aspects of urban design. Furthermore, even when different theories are dealing with the same aspects of urban design, they may be based on quite different sets of values. For example, Wright's Broadacre City and Le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse are both visions of society and both rational in their approach, yet they are like night and day, when it comes to their underlying values. Whereas Le Corbusier (1947) sees the historical city as an impediment to business as the driving force of society, which requires modern cities of high densities, Wright (1935)

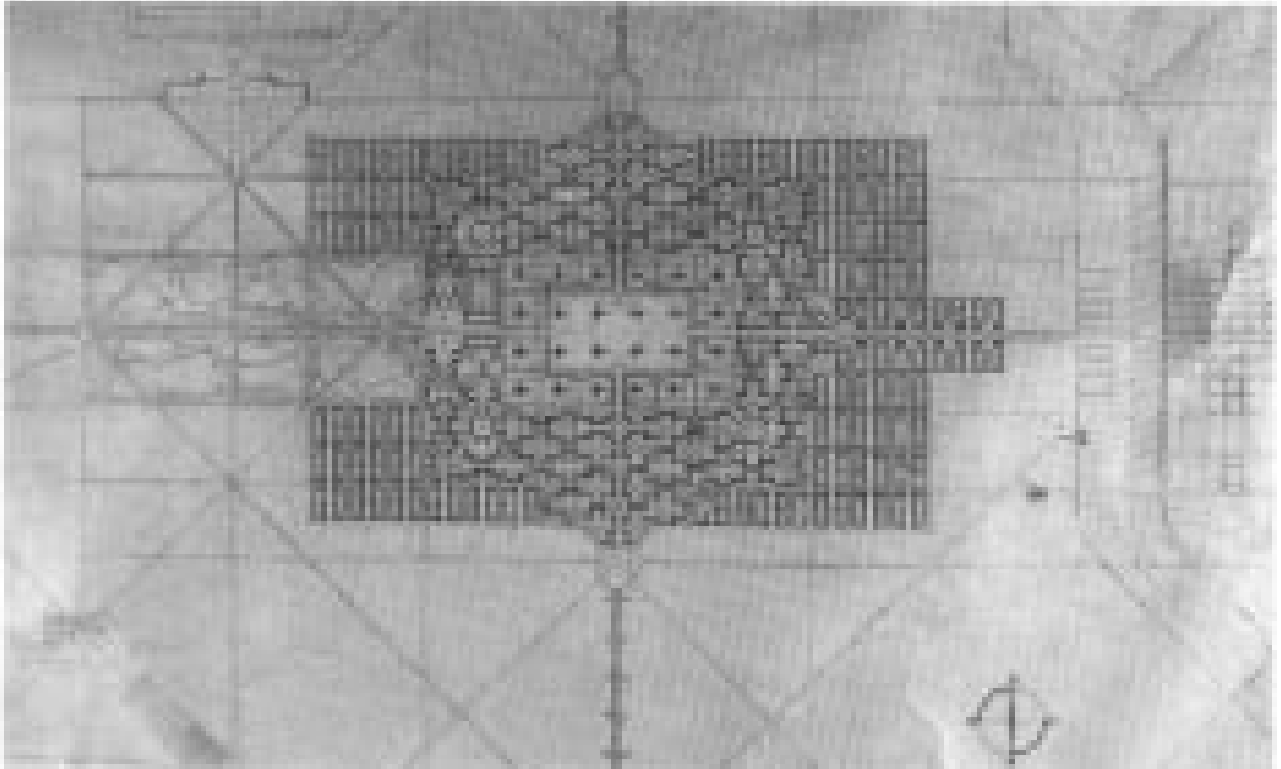
is critical of the very values that Le Corbusier cherishes, and quite contrarily rejects the dense metropolis in favor of a dispersed and rural environment, and a decentralized social structure based on use value rather than exchange value.

In order to highlight the differences in normative content among different theories, the following examples are structured according to the different incentives that motivate them. Firstly, this allows for an understanding of the different aspects of urban design that are covered by the different theories. Secondly, it will make it easier to evaluate different theories that deal with the same aspects of urban design, but on different normative bases.

The first example (Le Corbusier's The Contemporary City) represents a group of theories that views urban design as a means to embody a certain vision for society in space. Because their ambition is to change society through the changing of space, such theories may also be called urban utopias (Fishman, 1982). Their focus on society at large also makes them focus on cities at large, although they do include considerations on a smaller scale also. The second example (Rossi's notion of Urban Artifacts) represents a group of theories that sees urban design as the application of particular 'paradigms of order' (Hubbard, 1996) to the built environment. Such theories focus on the aesthetic, formal, or conceptual aspects of the urban environment, either within singular spatial settings or the city as a whole. Finally, the third example (Jacobs & Appleyard's notion of Livable Streets) represents a group of theories that focuses on environmental aspects of the urban environment. Here, the main interest is how the urban environment responds to the different functional, as well as emotional needs of their inhabitants. The neighborhood is the primary scale of interest to this group of theories, although they also may include considerations at both smaller and larger scales.

SOCIETAL THEORIES OF URBAN DESIGN

Societal theories of urban design focus on the city as an expression of society. Like most other normative theories, they are critical of the existing city, but because this critique is not only spatial but also social, they



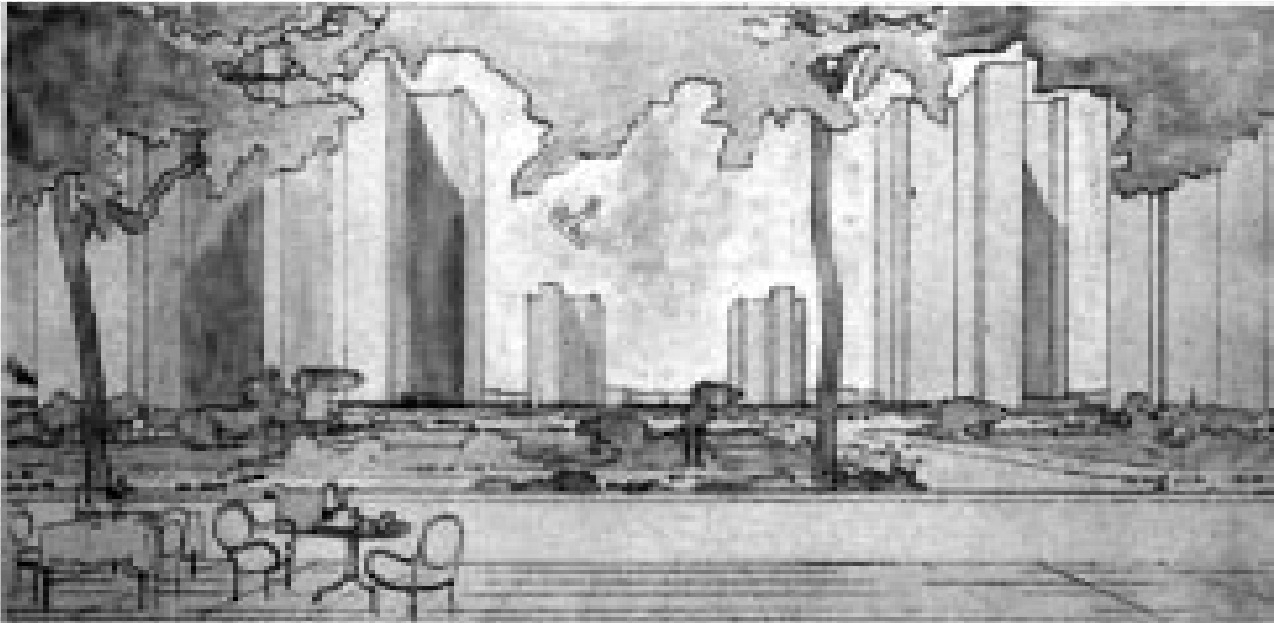
devise more than purely spatial solutions. On the contrary, they believe that a reorganization of space must go hand in hand with a reorganization of society. And because their critique of the existing city and society is radical, the reorganization of society and space, which they devise, is equally radical.

Although different societal theories of urban design may be founded on highly different normative bases and therefore quite different as to their analysis and critique, and thus also as to the solutions they devise, two main characteristics make them share a common nature. One is the linkage between society and space, and the idea that, just as changes in society may lead to changes in space, so can changes in space also be a means to change society. And the other is their radical nature. Because of these characteristics, they may be called utopian theories of urban design (Fishman, 1982). Apart from Le Corbusier's *The Contemporary*

City, which is discussed below, Howard's theory of the *Garden City* (1885) must also be considered a societal theory of urban design.

The Contemporary City

For Le Corbusier (1887–1965) who published his theory of *The Contemporary City* in 1924, the biggest deficiency of the old metropolises in terms of stimulating business and the wealth of the nation – the most important issues to Le Corbusier concerning urban design – was their inability to accommodate car traffic. In the years succeeding World War I, Paris, where Le Corbusier lived, experienced an immense increase of car traffic. This radically changed the experience of the urban environment, whose pulse had previously been paced by horse carriages. And Le Corbusier felt an immense discrepancy between the narrow urban



structure of the city and the energy of this new means of transportation:

Its power is like a torrent swollen by storms; a destructive fury. The city is crumbling, it cannot last much longer; its time is past. It is too old. The torrent can no longer keep to its bed. It is a kind of cataclysm. It is something utterly abnormal, and the disequilibrium grows day by day.

(Le Corbusier, 1947, p. 15–16)

For Le Corbusier, the mess of disorderly congestion which was the result of this development, was not just displeasing, but detrimental to the proper functioning of the city as he saw it. In his formulation therefore, urban design is a remedy to alleviate the problems associated with car traffic and a means to organize the city in the most rational and efficient manner, both in terms of its function and its construction. Le Corbusier's definition of function is utilitarian: 'A town is a tool' (ibid., p. 13), whose function is to make its inhabitants accomplish their work, and use its amenities, with the least effort. And as much of this effort is associated with circulation, much of his attention is paid to the rational organization of traffic.

The car is cherished as the means of transportation par excellence of the twentieth century, and therefore the best possible conditions must be offered for its use. Thus, streets must be wide, straight, and possibly unintersected. In contrast to the congested and narrow streets of the existing city, parking spaces must be abundant, and close to travel destinations. The provision of uninhibited access for cars is so much of Le Corbusier's concern, that he proclaims the congestion of the existing city to be 'the very first problem of town planning' (ibid., p. 108).

As business is the vehicle for all progress and development, and thus for the growth and prosperity of the metropolis and the entire nation, urban design must facilitate business. As businesses are dependant on adjacency to other businesses, offices must be located in the center of the city, at high density, and accommodated in spacious, well-lit spaces with a view. And under the recognition of the need for free flow for car traffic, these requirements are accommodated perfectly well in Le Corbusier's well-known cruciform tower blocks.⁴

Le Corbusier claims that his approach to urban

design is scientific, and that his proposals 'rely on the sure paths of reason' (Le Corbusier, 1947, p. 17). Only through the application of the principles of science is it possible to reach an urban design which is free from the nostalgia and romanticism of the *Städtebau* of Sitte, or the Garden City designs of Unwin and Parker, both of which he criticizes. Nostalgia and romanticism, in his view, are the very virtues that have led to the crisis of the existing city, and essentially, he argues, "it is in this way that cities sink to nothing and that ruling classes are overthrown" (ibid., p. 30).

Underlying his seemingly rational and scientific approach, however, he has a strong predilection for geometry per se, which he associates with civilization, sanity and nobility. He praises Louis XIV, and the ancient Romans, as 'the only great town planners of the west' (ibid., p. 26), the latter of whom set their colonial cities 'amongst their barbarian subjects', based on 'preconceived and predetermined plan[s]' (ibid., p. 106). The existing city of Paris, which is the concrete object of his critique, on the contrary, is described as a 'dangerous magma of human beings', and an 'eternal gipsy encampment' (ibid., p. 43).

The most well-known example of this praise of geometry over randomness and irregularity, is probably the quote about the pack-donkey:

The winding road is the pack-donkey's way, the straight line is man's way.

The winding road is the result of happy-go-lucky heedlessness, of looseness, lack of concentration and animality.

The straight road is a reaction, an action, a positive deed, the result of self-mastery. It is sane and noble.

(ibid., p. 30)

Le Corbusier's affection for order and clarity also makes him critical of the way cities grow. He sees the blurring of the city boundary through the development of adjoining suburbs as a serious loss of clarity. This issue (which is widely shared by the urban design profession up to the present day),⁵ is so much of Le Corbusier's concern, that he sees the creation of 'a zone free for development' as 'the second problem of town planning' (ibid., p. 110).

Only on one point does Le Corbusier acknowledge certain shortcomings of geometry. While the straight road is 'eminently architectural', the winding road, he admits, is more picturesque. And as he also acknowledges that scenery is a relevant feature for strolling paths, these should be laid out in winding patterns. Otherwise, however, he reduces non-geometric forms to a matter of 'pure aesthetics' (Sitte) or to 'a symbol in themselves of the Garden City' (town planners in general).

Le Corbusier's conception of the city and the life of the urban dweller, expresses a mechanistic attitude. Unlike the mainstream of early modernism in its concern for social issues, Le Corbusier views the city as a system, whose primary function is to serve business. Work as well as leisure, are seen as mere functions, which must be accommodated by the urban structure in the most rational manner. The city, thus, is likened to a machine, whose parts serve different functions. Urban life is programmed and choreographed to fulfill the overall purpose of the machine. The urban dweller must act in accordance with the function of the machine, and hence becomes a part of it.

Framing urban life in this way, it seems natural to allocate different areas of the city for specific purposes and people: business in office towers in the center, and factories for production on the fringes of the city. And in between, a residential district in the form of a garden city of apartment blocks, set in a park. And according to their class and the functions they perform, the inhabitants commute between their garden city homes and the business district, and the factories respectively.

In Le Corbusier's view, leisure activities are also a matter of utility. Sports activities are carried out in order to preserve health, and spaces for these activities must be abundant and close to the dwellings (in contrast to work places which are remote). As every part of a machine serves a specific function, so must every part of the city. The concept of the private garden, which may serve a number of purposes, must be replaced by rationally structured, communal vegetable gardens and sports grounds. To exercise by tending a private garden does not fit with the idea of the machine age:

Some people may call all this a healthy form of exercise.

On the contrary it is a stupid, ineffective and sometimes dangerous thing. The children cannot play there, for they have no room to run about in, nor can the parents indulge in games or sports there. And the result of this is a few pears and apples, a few carrots, a little parsley and so on. The whole thing is ridiculous.

(Ibid., p. 215)

Le Corbusier is fascinated by the rationality and rigor of science. But it seems that his artistic soul does not quite get to terms with his rationalistic mind, as when he claims that 'statistics are the Pegasus of the town planner' (ibid., p. 119). And even though he motivates his geometric forms as scientifically deduced, he also maintains the importance of (his) intuition. For Le Corbusier, intuition is 'a categorical imperative which nothing can resist'. But as it is based on 'rational elements', intuition can be described as 'the sum of acquired knowledge', which 'every man has earned for himself'. Hence (Le Corbusier's) intuition is rational in itself and therefore unquestionable (ibid., p. 51–52).

The arrogance of this argument pervades Le Corbusier's entire theory of urban design, as well as his view of the role of the urban designer. His theory of urban design must be accepted as a *fait accompli*, simply because he knows best. And therefore the urban designer, or master planner, must hold the power to execute his plans independently of government and democratic decision. Le Corbusier's personal efforts to implement his urban design theories in practice were a long and unremitting attempt to obtain such autocratic power. Something however, which he was never granted (Fishman, 1982).

FORMAL THEORIES OF URBAN DESIGN

Contrary to the societal theories of urban design, formal theories of urban design do not deal with society at large. Their focus of interest is the formal quality of urban space, and their ambition therefore, is to establish specific aesthetic or conceptual paradigms of urban design. Although equally critical of the existing city, the critique of formal theories of urban design is typically directed towards a perceived deterioration of urban space, as caused by non-architectural intervention or what is considered wrong paradigms of architec-

tural intervention.

Because many of the formal theories of urban design see the present state of urban space as deteriorated from a better, historical state, their approach is typically conservative or nostalgic. Urban design, in other words, is seen as a means to repair the urban fabric, to restore the quality of urban space to some undeteriorated, previous state. This, of course, is largely a critique of modernism, and formal theories of urban design are mostly a postmodern phenomenon. An undercurrent of rejection of functional or social aspects of urban design is therefore detectable within many of the theories in this category, which, in addition to Rossi's notion of Urban Artifacts discussed below, also includes theories such as Camillo Sitte's *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (1965), Rowe & Koetter's notion of collage (1978), and Alexander's notion of wholeness (1987).

Urban Artifacts

In the 1960s the architectural movement *Tendenza* emerged in northern Italy. *Tendenza* was critical of the modern movement and its maxim of 'form follows function'. Instead, it wanted to redefine architecture 'on its own terms', to set up architecture itself as the measure of architecture. The key postulate of the movement, in other words, was that architecture could be defined as an autonomous phenomenon (Turan, 1998).

One of the most prominent theoretical works in this tradition is Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* (1982). Despite a rather abstruse style of writing, the book became a bestseller, and was translated into several languages. But although it is often referred to as such, it is not a theory of urban design in any conventional sense of the notion.

Rossi sees the city as 'total architecture' – as 'a gigantic man-made object' – and to deal with the city, for Rossi, is therefore to deal with the architecture of the city. The architecture of the city is constituted by two categories of 'urban artifacts'. One is the 'study areas' – a term borrowed from the Chicago school of sociology – which signifies urban districts, or the neighborhoods of the city, which in their totality constitute the bulk of the architecture of the city. The other is the



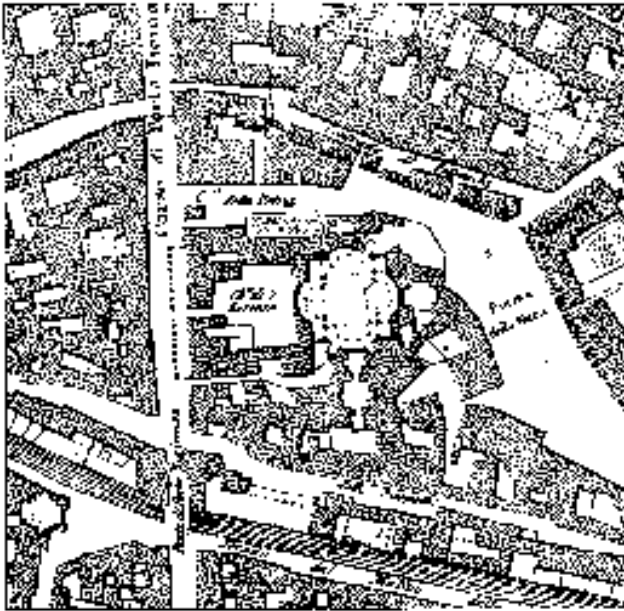
more distinct manifestation of architecture, in the form of monumental buildings, or monuments, and so-called 'primary elements'.

Because the architecture of the city constitutes the city as a physical reality, to Rossi, the essence of the city – *l'âme de la cité* – or its quality, is embodied in its architecture. And as the architecture of the city is the carrier of transient values, which constitute the city as a collective fact, the monuments play a special role "... because [as] the city is preeminently a collective fact it is defined by and exists in those works that are of an essentially collective nature" (ibid. p. 126).

Rossi's seeming enterprise is to define what constitutes the urban artifacts. Most of his attention is paid to its monuments, and, in his opposition to modernism,

he argues that what constitutes a building as a monument is not its function – as over time, monumental buildings may serve different functions than those originally intended – but solely its form. To view the various parts of the city merely as embodiments of functions is therefore dismissed as 'ideological', and an expression of 'naïve functionalism', which is "... suppressing the most important values implicit in the structure of urban artifacts" (ibid. p. 66) and "... prevents an analysis of what is real" (ibid., p. 46).

In order to develop a 'scientific' theory of architectural form, he turns to the French architectural treatise writers of the enlightenment. They, like Rossi, wanted to develop the principles of architecture from 'logical' bases, and from them he draws the concept of the ar-



chitectural type. Typology is a formal way of categorizing architecture, which "... presents itself as the study of types of elements that cannot be further reduced, elements of a city as well as of an architecture" (ibid., p. 41). Typology, in other words, is seen as a 'constant' which constitutes form; "... the very idea of architecture, that which is closest to its essence" (ibid., p. 41).

In terms of the 'study area', or urban district, Rossi makes two a priori statements. Due to the way the city is created, it cannot be reduced to a single idea – a masterplan. On the contrary, the city is made up of numerous different 'moments of formation', and it is the unity of these moments, which constitutes the city as a whole. Furthermore, urban intervention should operate only on a limited part of the city, because it is the most 'realistic approach' in terms of the city's program and the knowledge which we have of it.

Hence his focus on the districts, which – although he uses a variety of sociological categories – study area, dwelling area, or residential area – are not socially defined. Rossi sees an important relation between the monument, or primary element, and the district in

relation to the dynamics of urban development. By reference to a selection of historical examples, he argues that some primary elements function as nuclei, as a sort of grains of condensation, which spark the urban development around them, just as the relationship between them "... is responsible for configuring [the] city in a specific way" (ibid., p. 95).

Despite conceptual references to the Chicago School of sociology, his rejection of any functional criteria is also a rejection of social criteria. Although he acknowledges the role of power and economics in the formation of the city, his social considerations remain oddly detached from his theorizations. Not even his recognition that technological development, first through industrialization and later through individual transportation, which increasingly questions the traditional notion of a city as a distinct, spatially defined entity, is capable of shaking his strictly formal view:

[W]e want to contest ... that this 'new scale' can change the substance of an urban artifact. It is conceivable that a change in scale modifies an urban artifact in some way; but it does not change its quality.

(ibid., p. 160, emphasis in original)

Although Rossi bases his theorization on different concepts such as monuments, primary elements, study areas and others, he never explicitly defines these concepts. And while establishing the framework of typology as the 'true' measure of architecture, he does not attempt to isolate any concrete types. As such, his theory only suggests that there is 'something' there, which, allegedly, is the essence of architecture. The various concepts therefore appear rather fuzzy. And as Mo (1995) points out, this fuzziness is reinforced by recurrent contradictions, ambiguities and circular references between the various concepts, which indicate unclear or unfinished thinking.

This leaves the theory vastly open to individual interpretation, and it is therefore little wonder when Rossi states that his concept of the architecture of the city, in his mind '... has been ... cited both appropriately and inappropriately' (Rossi, 1982, p. 165). But the fuzziness of the theory may also be a strategy which, as Mo (1995) suggests, through 'a certain vagueness or deli-



berate mystification' serves the purpose of inspiration, rather than constituting a coherent theory in any academic, let alone scientific sense.

Notwithstanding the aim of the theory, the question remains whether Rossi's approach to architecture and the city is at all feasible in the poly-cultural society of contemporary western democracies. To demand adherence to certain typologies is not only to claim supremacy for a specific architectural style, but also to demand a view of architecture as *technê* (Turan, 1998). Like in ancient Greece, the architect's role becomes that of a craftsman, interpreting – more or less skillfully – a given set of rules. Such games may be played by a number of architects, and their individual

achievements may well be enjoyed by many people. But to claim that a given set of rules could exist as a mystical 'collective' (Mo, 1995) which could function as a general principle for the development of cities would require a degree of historical and cultural unity, which is hard to discern in present day urban society.

ENVIRONMENTAL THEORIES OF URBAN DESIGN

Parallel with the postmodern trend towards formal approaches to urban design, another line of development has taken a more environmental point of departure. Rather than dealing solely with formal issues of urban space, environmental theories of urban design see urban space as a living environment, which must

meet a range of requirements in order to be a pleasurable place to live. Although formal and aesthetic issues are also a concern of these theories – but often with different preferences than the formal theories – this is seen as only one of a range of aspects of urban space pertaining to the quality of urban life.

Particularly the concepts of community and public space are central to this group of normative theories of urban design. Space, hence, is regarded with regard to its (ostensible) capacity to foster community and support public life. But also more physical and quantitative aspects of urban space, such as traffic and the functional distribution of space play important roles. As such, the ambition of environmental theories of urban design may be categorized as mid-way between the societal and the formal theories of urban design: While urban design is regarded as more than a matter of formal aspects of space, the social, cultural and economic aspects of urban design can still be improved without major changes of society. Both Leon Krier's notion of urban quarters (1981) and the concept of New Urbanism (CNU, 1993) are examples of this approach to urban design, as is Jacobs & Appleyard's notion of livable streets, discussed in the following.

Livable streets

In the mid-1980s, Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard summed up what may be characterized as the mainstream of environmental urban design thinking in a tentative urban design manifesto (2000). Their manifesto identifies what, in their minds, is the problems of modernist urban design, and establishes their goals for urban life as well as a set of means for achieving these goals.

The primary object of critique for Jacobs & Appleyard is the modernist view of the city as epitomized in the CIAM Charter of Athens, because of its focus on buildings and their internal functions, rather than urban space and its role for public life. The Garden City Movement, however, is also problematic, as its focus on 'garden' rather than 'city' has produced low-density suburban environments, which are equally devoid of the urban qualities they seek.

Moreover, they find little consolation in the post-

modern developments within the design professions and their "... withdrawal from social engagement back to formalism" (ibid., p. 494). Architecture, on the one hand, has become "a dilettantish and narcissistic pursuit ... finding its ultimate manifestation in the art gallery and the art book", while city planning, on the other, is too immersed in administration "... to have any clear sense of direction with regard to city form" (ibid., p. 494).

In their critique of contemporary urban design, Jacobs & Appleyard point out some major problems. 'Giantism' and the large scale of intervention are negligent of the human scale, and tend towards a sense of lack of control. Consumerism and its focus on the individual, along with the spread of cars, has led to privatization, internalization, and segregation of urban space, while public space – particularly in American cities – has become fragmented and an 'empty desert', leading to a loss of public life and leaving little room for different social groups to meet each other. As a result, alienation has led to a widespread social segregation, and the division of the city into homogeneous enclaves of housing, production and consumption. Furthermore, what is left of historic urban environments is destroyed by tourism and economic exploitation, while the placelessness of the rest of the urban environment is alienating and incapable of inducing any meaning to us. Finally, the infrastructure of most cities is unjust, leaving the rich disproportionately better off than the poor.

Apart from these problems pertaining to the physical structure of the city and the organizational structure of society, Jacobs & Appleyard also identify design professionals as part of the problem. Embedded in their professional culture and unconscious of their own value systems, they make too little inquiry and too much proposing, and often devise solutions, which are out of touch with the individual contexts in which they operate. Additionally, planners have no visions and no arguments to counter the pressures of capitalism.

Although Jacobs & Appleyard are in favor of participatory planning, they argue that urban designers must still have a vision, and a sense of what is right, which, although it may be vetoed, can serve as a basis for ur-

ban design. In their vision, they formulate some goals, whose fulfillment is essential to the creation of a good urban environment.

A fundamental goal is livability. Cities must provide for people to be able to live and bring up children in health and comfort. The urban environment must therefore be relatively free from nuisance, danger, and pollution. The urban environment should also invoke a sense of attachment and responsibility to the people living there. It should therefore be designed with regard to use value rather than exchange value, and encourage participation, in order to reduce alienation and anonymity, and strengthen the sense of identity and 'rootedness'. Cities should be more than just functional entities, providing merely for utilitarian needs. Apart from offering a variety of housing and job choices, cities should therefore also be a stage for culture and pleasure, including cultural experiences, excitement, theater and magic. And cities should be authentic and meaningful, "... express the moral issues of society and educate its citizens to an awareness of them" (ibid., p. 496).

Cities, as the physical embodiment of society, should "... encourage participation of their citizens in community and public life" (ibid., p. 497). And rather than being a battleground for different interest groups, they should "... breed a commitment to a larger whole..." (ibid., p. 497). Hence, public life should be encouraged, not only through the city's institutions, but also through its public spaces. Finally, cities should be more self-sustaining with regard to energy and resource consumption, as well as socially just.

Jacobs & Appleyard identify five 'physical characteristics', or means, which they deem essential to the fulfillment of their goals. These physical characteristics can be summarized as livable streets and neighborhoods, minimum densities, functional integration and proximity, positive urban space, and human scale and variation.

Jacobs & Appleyard contend that although livability, in terms of high standards for sunlight, clean air and open space, as well as strict limits for noise and pollution, is a primary goal in modernist urban planning, too strict norms can also reduce livability because of the

unintended implications of these norms. Hence, strict norms for the layout of streets and buildings, as well as for the compatibility of different uses, often result in dull and fragmented urban spaces. They therefore make a plea for 'reasonable' rather than 'excessive' livability standards.

For streets not merely to be 'stage sets' but a framework for "human exchange, public life ... diversity and community", a certain density of people is required. For this reason, and in order to increase the viability of mass transit, Jacobs & Appleyard therefore suggest minimum densities (as a supplement to maximum densities) for most parts of the city, that are radically higher than those for traditional detached housing. In addition to a certain density, urban areas must have a certain mixture of uses in order to generate life. Jacobs & Appleyard therefore call for a high integration of both housing, workplaces, shopping and leisure – if not always within the same area, then at least within walking distance.

As the potential for interaction in urban space is related to its physical quality, buildings should be designed with this regard. Buildings that define and enclose public space are therefore preferable to buildings that 'sit in space'. Furthermore, urban space should form a connected system of public ways and public spaces, designed for pedestrian use. Finally, buildings and open spaces should generally be small in order to increase variation and complexity, as well as to avoid big inward oriented developments, which turn their back on public space.

While Jacobs & Appleyard's tentative urban design manifesto is much more argumentative than the bulk of normative urban design theories, it too has its measure of postulate. It may be that they file in with the mainstream understanding of the causes of the problems of the modern city and their remedy, but their chains of argument, nevertheless, are somewhat short and unexamined. Although this may be ascribed to the brief format of the manifesto, it seems ironic as one of their major critiques is directed towards the lack of self-reflection among the design professionals.

Another critique is directed towards the narrow focus of others, whether it be the CIAM Charter's focus on

buildings rather than urban space, the Garden City Movement's focus on garden rather than city, or the design profession's occupation with formalism. But in fact, Jacobs & Appleyard themselves adopt a narrow view in their focus on livability, as aspects which do not pertain to their notion of livability (a concept which, in itself, is only briefly discussed and therefore only vaguely defined) are not part of the manifesto.

Jacobs & Appleyard share the critical stance towards modernism of their contemporaries,⁶ although their goal is a different one. But having identified some major problems, such as 'giantism', privatization and internalization, and the resulting placelessness and alienation, they seem negligent, not only of interests other than those of people as dwellers – the livability for whom is their concern – but also of the socio-economic and structural factors that might shape the condition that they criticize. Hence, the remedies they devise seem biased towards their (unexamined) notion of livability, while leaving the suspicion that they may not provide a full response to the problems they identify.

SUMMARY ON URBAN DESIGN

Normative theories of urban design, as the above examples may hint, constitute a motley body of ideas. They are not immediately commensurable, as they define the object of their inquiry quite differently. As such, this rather blurry theoretical field encompasses large epistemological differences as to what aspects of the physical environment are the focus of inquiry, and for what reason. Although not elucidated in the context of this article, there is also a vast span of normative positions within each group of theories. Different normative theories of urban design, in other words, express different views of the task of urban design as well as different world-views.

A feature common to most of the theories, however, is the linkage between a specific normative position and specific urban form. These linkages are often speculative or postulatory as it mostly remains unexamined whether given forms will actually accomplish their accredited effects. Ever so often it may even seem that formal preferences come first, and that accredited ef-

fects are used as a reverse argument for their validity. Speaking with Lynch, normative theories of urban design are characterized by dogma and opinion, as they represent "no systematic effort to state general relationships between the form of a place and its value" (1981, p. 99).

The postulatory character of the argument of many of these theories makes them vulnerable in relation to more quantitative or well-established value sets, based on economic, technological and environmental argument, or cultural practices. When it is fuzzy what such theories are actually good for, or hazy whether they will invoke their alleged effects, the power of their argument is weakened. And not unimportantly, to the extent that their normative bases are not broadly accepted, they are likely to be deemed unimportant or irrelevant.

Another feature, common to these theories – even the societal theories of urban design – is that they each deal with only a subset of the problems pertaining to urban design. They are partial theories, and therefore they cannot stand alone as single bases for urban design in practice. As Hubbard (1996) points out, the proper potential of (normative) design theory⁷ is "... to propose conceptions critical of, or alternative to, those the larger world gives us" (p. 163). But this, as Hubbard continues, is only possible because those discourses – or rationales – which are not central to the theories can be suspended in theory. However compelling such theories may seem, it is therefore problematic if they are applied in the understanding that the issues that they deal with are more important than the ones they leave out.

The viability of any normative theory of urban design in practice depends on its ability to relate to other rationales. But because normative theories of urban design do not only have a particular view of the city but also adopt particular normative stances – whether it be aesthetic, social or political – they are likely to be exclusive rather than inclusive; that is, they require the adoption of their particular views in order to be operational. Because urban design in practice must negotiate a plurality of views and interests, it cannot meaningfully be based on a narrow normative position, that does not negotiate

– or even demands the exclusion of – other rationales. In that sense, ironically, the very normativity of these theories – what constitute their theoretical content – is what most likely stands in the way of their application in practice.⁸

To demand the adoption of particular views in a democratic setting is obviously problematic. Unless normative theories of urban design accept coercive means for their realization, they therefore have to be responsive to contesting views and values. And to claim autonomy, or even superiority, in relation to other values will ultimately lead to either irrelevance or oppression (Harvey, 2000). Normative theories of urban design therefore cannot meaningfully consider themselves autonomous, but must incorporate a larger context of theorization about society and the city.

The field of theorization which is most related to urban design theory is planning theory. Like urban design, planning deals with the organization of urban space. But while urban design focuses on aspects of urban form, planning is more oriented towards the distribution of uses and services in space. What constitutes the best distribution of uses and services, however, is equally determined by norms and values, as the question of what constitutes the best urban form.

URBAN PLANNING

Urban planning has taken on many different forms throughout the history of its practice. It has been conceptualized as acting solely upon space, as well as acting upon society at large. It has been viewed as a purely scientific endeavor, as well as intrinsically political. It has been seen as a utilitarian means for the implementation of sanctioned policy, as well as a means for social change. And it has been regarded as a paternalistic top-down approach, based on synoptic knowledge, as well as a democratic bottom-up approach, based on pluralistic discourse. Although many of these paradigmatic differences in the definition of planning can be partly ascribed to the evolutionary history of the discipline,⁹ planning remains an ‘essentially contested concept’.¹⁰

What binds the many different conceptions of urban planning together, and thus makes it meaningful

to speak of one distinct concept, is a general understanding, that planning is future oriented and “seeks to connect forms of knowledge with forms of action” (Friedman, 1993). As such, planning can be described within the paradigm of the design disciplines (Needham, 1998). Central to any design discipline is the role of normative theories in its practice (Needham, 1998; Næss & Saglie, 1999). Planning, in other words, has to have an idea – a vision – about the future, and how to implement it.

In this context, the question of normativity in urban planning is framed within a political context of power, or, in Friedman’s words, whether planning should work for the maintenance of established power relations, for a gradual system change or for a radical transformation of society (1987).¹¹ This approach largely positions the question of why to plan, as a question of for whom to plan.

As planning is a future oriented activity, it must be founded on a vision about how this future should be. A conservative vision would want it to be little different from the present, and would see planning as a tool for system maintenance. A radical vision, on the other hand, would want it to be much different from the present, and would see planning as a tool for system transformation. Mediating between these extremes, a moderate vision would want things to alter gradually, and would see planning as a tool for gradual system change (Friedman, 1987).

Different planning styles may accommodate these positions more or less distinctly, and some may even be ambiguous about them. Some are formulated explicitly in favor of a certain role for planning, while others only implicitly sustain a given position. Whereas system-maintaining planning is generally bureaucratic and articulated by the state, system-transforming planning is a form of autonomous action in opposition to institutionalized planning. System-changing planning, by nature, may encompass aspects of both (ibid.).

Despite these ambivalences and differences, the different roles for planning as either system-maintaining, system-changing, or system-transforming represent fundamentally different conceptions of why to plan. And as the question of whether the established

order should be maintained or changed is intrinsically linked to the question of power, they also express different views of whom to plan for.

In the following, the conservative, or system-maintaining, approach to planning is exemplified by Lindblom's notion of incrementalism. Other system-maintaining approaches to planning incorporate the concepts of strategic planning (Kaufman & Jacobs, 1987) and public-private partnerships (Squires, 1991).¹² Radical, or system-changing, approaches to planning incorporate Davidoff's notion of advocacy and pluralism in planning discussed below, as well as the notion of feminist planning (Liggett, 1996; Ritzdorf, 1996; Sandercock & Forsyth, 1996). Finally, moderate, or system-transforming, approaches to planning have been subject to substantive theorization by Friedman, Forester and Healey as discussed in this context, as well as by others.

PLANNING FOR THE STATUS QUO

One of the most significant critiques of the synoptic planning model was presented by Charles E. Lindblom (1959) and was pointed at the impossibility, in practice, to obtain an overview of all aspects relevant to the formulation of comprehensive plans. In his famous article 'The Science of Muddling Through', he therefore suggested the adoption of an incremental approach to planning (or, in fact, to public administration in general), by which any aspiration to comprehensiveness was deliberately declined upon, in favor of step-by-step action, defined by a 'realist' apprehension of what is feasible.

As planning is generally viewed as a deliberate process leading to the implementation of specified goals (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1996), incrementalism has largely been viewed as a non-planning approach, based on laissez-faire premises (Alexander, 1979; Fainstein & Fainstein, 1996). However, even though incrementalism may be regarded as the opposite of planning, it has gained much attention within planning theory, as "it produces the fruits of planning in its results" (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1996, p. 272).

The central argument in Lindblom's critique is, that although the rational-comprehensive method of synoptic planning, with clarification of values and sub-

sequent policy formulation on the basis of comprehensive analysis of alternatives, may be preferable in theory, this method is impossible in practice. The reason is, that it is impossible, in reality, to establish an information base for analysis that is truly comprehensive, and therefore it is impossible to take all relevant factors for decision making into account.

Instead, he argues in favor of incrementalism, or what he calls 'the successive limited comparisons method' as superior to the rational-comprehensive method in solving complex problems (such as planning problems), because no ultimate goals are defined, but only solutions within reach are considered. The fundamental difference between the two approaches is that while the rational-comprehensive method approaches problems 'by root', the successive limited comparisons method approaches problems 'by branch' (Lindblom, 1959).

This however, is not a problem, Lindblom argues, because, in reality, choosing between values is only possible when concrete policies, which offer a different weighing of values, can be compared. Hence, values cannot be evaluated in beforehand, but only chosen between during the process. And thus, specifying the goodness of a policy is relative, as it becomes a matter of its preferability to other policies. Furthermore, because politics in reality are always incremental, there is no reason why radical alternatives should be evaluated, because they are unrealistic, and therefore politically irrelevant.

As choosing between policies in practice is often a question of, in a sense, choosing between lesser evils, any given policy may be preferred simultaneously by more conflicting parties, as the best possible solution, although for different reasons. Hence, fundamental disagreement can be resolved in practice, as means do not necessarily correspond to only one end. Agreement, then, becomes the practice test for the goodness of policy, and "therefore it is not irrational for an administrator to defend a policy as good without being able to specify what it is good for" (ibid., p. 160).

Because social science is not capable of fully predicting consequences of policy moves, the rational-com-

prehensive method does not work in reality, and may even be deleterious. Therefore, planning is better off choosing a method of incremental change, as it would otherwise risk 'lasting mistakes' (ibid., p. 165). The incremental approach, due to its ability to adjust along the way, is also more capable of catering for the fact that policy is a continuous process and not made up once and for all.

Finally, while the branch model works by comparative analysis of incremental changes, any attempt to precursory policy formulation requires abstraction, as "man cannot think without classifying" (ibid., p. 165). The root model, therefore, relies heavily on abstracted 'theory'. Theory, however, is often of little help to practice, because it is greedy for facts – as it can be constructed only through large data collection – and insufficiently precise for processes that move through small changes.

Although Lindblom's critique of rational-comprehensive planning is certainly relevant in many ways, his 'realist' approach shares the view of the rational-comprehensive approach to planning as something merely applied to politics – however intertwined with politics in its application, and thus as devoid of normative content in itself. Nonetheless, because of the deliberate rejection of any radical policy scenarios, the nature of incrementalism is conservative. When working 'by branch', only minor adjustments can ever be achieved, and the system as it is, is generally maintained. This may be a very workable approach, but by nature, working for radical, or even moderate change, is working against the current. While floating with the stream is always the easiest thing to do, being mainstream is basically to accept the way things are.

Although 'the way things are' is always an expression of the existing power relations, this does not worry Lindblom at all. While, in the most bureaucratic sense, taking the administrator's point of view, he is not interested in why planning is carried out, but only in how it can be carried out with the least effort and the highest level of integrity on behalf of the administrator (or planner):

Since the policies ignored by the administrator are politically impossible and so irrelevant, the simplification of

analysis achieved by concentrating on policies that differ only incrementally is not a capricious kind of simplification. In addition, it can be argued that, given the limits on knowledge within which policy-makers are confined, simplifying by limiting the focus to small variations from present policy makes the most of available knowledge. Because policies being considered are like present and past policies, the administrator can obtain information and claim some insight. Nonincremental policy proposals are therefore typically not only politically irrelevant but also unpredictable in their consequences.

(ibid., p. 162)

An obscuring factor in revealing the conservative nature of incrementalism is, that by stressing the 'realism' and the operational virtues of the approach, it may appear to be purely positive. However, describing planning as it is (positive theory of planning), rather than as it ought to be (normative theory of planning) does not mean that planning as it is, is not normative. It might only suggest that it is so implicitly, rather than explicitly.

In sum, although incrementalism – or non-planning – may not explicitly be meant to be conservative, it produces the fruits of conservatism in its results. Or, in the words of Alexander: "To the extent that one agrees ... that the status quo is good and needs only minor changes, ... he or she will accept nonplanning to some degree" (1979, p. 122, emphasis in original).

PLANNING FOR RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

As planning deals with the allocation of space and resources for different purposes, it can be framed within the classical definition of politics, as a question of "who gets what, when, where, why and how" (Davidoff, 1973, p. 292). In this view, it is clear that planning may favor some more than others. And as conservative planning approaches are favoring the established powers in society, they are unlikely to respond to the needs and desires of underprivileged and politically unorganized groups in society (Etzioni, 1973).

This contention is the motivation for Davidoff, in his call for advocacy and pluralism in planning (1973):

The just demand for political and social equality on

the part of the Negro and the impoverished requires the public to establish the bases for a society affording equal opportunity to all citizens. The compelling need for intelligent planning, for specification of new social goals and the means for achieving them, is manifest.

(*ibid.*, p. 277)

Two basic obstacles, in Davidoff's view, are in the way of a just planning which would cater for alternatives to the established views of planning. First, traditional planning is centralized within public planning agencies which hold a planning monopoly. This leads to narrowness in the definition of possible planning scenarios. Second, the underprivileged groups in society have no established channels for their points of view. Therefore, their opinions about planning have no voice. The measure that Davidoff suggests as a means to remove these obstacles, is to make planning more pluralistic, offering broader alternatives for evaluation, and to make planners deliberately advocate the views of the underprivileged.

Because plans always have different social and economic consequences for different groups of people, they are always politically contentious. To charge a single planning agency with a planning monopoly is therefore undemocratic, as it is likely to be biased in favor of the established order of things, as well as the technical rationality of the planning profession. And even if several planning alternatives are offered, they are likely to be narrowly defined within the same paradigm, as the parameters for variation are still set up by the same body of planners.

By opening up for other planning agents to produce planning proposals in a pluralistic planning situation, would allow for genuinely different planning views to enter the discussion. A plurality of plans representing a wider range of views would form a more informed base for political discussion, which in turn would improve the level of rationality in planning. Furthermore, the critiques of established planning would find a medium by which to render constructive, enabling citizens' organizations and others critical of central planning, to become proactive rather than reactive, as they are likely to be under the traditional planning system.

In order for alternative and especially underprivile-

ged views of planning to be present in the discussion, they must be solicited by the professional planners. Instead of making claim to a meaningless value-freedom, planners, in Davidoff's view, should therefore not only make their underlying values explicit, but wholeheartedly engage themselves in favor of what they 'deem proper'. The metaphor of this approach is that of a lawyer advocating his client's interest in a lawsuit:

The idealized political process in a democracy serves the search for truth in much the same manner as due process in law. Fair notice of hearings, production of supporting evidence, cross examination, reasoned decision are all means deployed to arrive at relative truth: a just decision.

(*Ibid.*, p. 279–280)

Advocate planners, in other words, should present the arguments of the groups they represent in a language understandable to the decision makers. In this view, an important task of the planner is to act as a mediator between different views. At the same time, the planner should inform his clients about the effects of different planning proposals, as well as legal and organizational aspects of planning. This attributes the planner with a double role of both educator and informer, much different from that of a technical expert, devising the proper remedies for planning problems.

The concept of advocacy and pluralism in planning is based on an inclusive definition of planning, which not only acknowledges the inherently political nature of the discipline, but also requires a fundamentally different approach than traditional planning. It is not just a question of making planners and planning agencies act differently; it has consequences for the entire structural organization of planning. As Davidoff acknowledges, resources must be allocated to advocate the views of groups and organizations which would otherwise not have a voice in the planning process. But also different forums for communication, as well as other decision-making processes would be required.

As such, the call for advocacy and pluralism in planning is also a wish to fundamentally change planning to be something else than it has traditionally been. It is therefore not a 'realist' view of planning, but a radical view,

by which planning must be changed, in order to change the outcomes of planning.

PLANNING FOR MODERATE CHANGE

A third way of planning, positioned politically between the conservative styles of incrementalism and strategic planning, and the radical forms of planning such as advocacy planning, suggests moderate change, on the basis of democratic planning processes. While most forms of radical planning attempt to redefine planning to meet particular interests of specific groups of people, whether it is the interests of the poor, of minorities, or of neighborhoods facing problems of gentrification or redevelopment which is not in their interest, and therefore tend to be in opposition to the established planning system, democratic planning theory attempts to redefine institutionalized planning itself.¹³

Criticizing both traditional technocratic forms of planning and partial planning styles, democratic planning theory focuses on the planning process, and particularly on communication, as a means to enhance democracy in planning. On the one hand, traditional planning is criticized for giving priority to economic rationality over the needs and wishes of the citizens as well as the regard for the environment. More fundamentally, though, the hegemonic power of scientific reason over other realms of knowledge in planning is questioned, as it represents an a priori exclusion of alternative discourses (Healey, 1996).

On the other hand, the advocacy approach, by which planning is conceptualized as a power game, is also criticized. By putting hard against hard, and treating each interest as a power source, and the planning process as a bargaining process aiming at creating “a calculus that expresses the power relations among the participants” (ibid., p. 250), it excludes the possibility of mutual learning, which depends on communication and dialogue.

One of the first to address the question of communication in planning was John Friedman, who developed the concept of transactive planning (1973). Friedman contends that one of the major problems in planning is, that the planners and their clients do not speak the same language. The differences in thinking

and language between planners, who rely on processed (technical) knowledge, and their clients, who typically rely on knowledge which is based on personal experience, represent a communication barrier, which makes it difficult to rationally link knowledge to action. Because of this problem, seemingly rational planning efforts are at risk of rendering irrational (Forester, 1980; Friedman, 1973).

Whereas processed knowledge is based on theories about narrow aspects of the world, which can be generalized (although only under limited circumstances), personal knowledge is richer, but less generalizable. As such, different ways of knowing constitute different cultural realms which mold people’s approach and behavior. In order to improve communication, it is therefore not enough just to ‘speak in simpler terms’; the very relationship between planner and client must be changed.

Hence, transactive planning focuses on planners and clients as individual persons, and the way they interact, in order to establish a setting in which communication, mediating between different ways of knowing, can ultimately lead to meaningful planning:

If the communication gap between planner and client is to be closed, a continuing series of personal and primarily verbal transactions between them is needed, through which processed knowledge is fused with personal knowledge and both are fused with action.

(Ibid., p. 177)

Because planners might not be able to give useful advice if technical rationality is deployed in a detached manner, it is important for them to be able to understand the reasons behind the tasks they are asked to solve. This involves a process of mutual learning, where personal knowledge and technical knowledge is exchanged and both undergo a change, so that a common image of the situation can emerge, and a new understanding of the possibilities for change can be discovered.

In this view, planning is not guided by common fundamental ideas or principles about what is good and bad (Healey, 1996); on the contrary, these definitions must be constituted during the planning process. In

order for this to be achieved, the planning process must be founded on an acceptance of otherness, openness, and a readiness for change. It requires accept of conflict, as agreement may not always be achievable, but also implies mutual preparedness for continued dialogue (Friedman, 1973).

Therefore, the planning process cannot be forced, neither should it be. As transactive planning is based on communicative rationality, its primary task is to guide the process of planning. The views of the client must be respected, although they may change through the process of mutual learning. However, understanding and behavioral change takes time. Hence, the role of the planner is neither political – to want things to happen, nor implemental – to make things happen (ibid.).

Although later contributions to this view of planning are largely congenial with Friedman's concept of transactive planning, they make more explicit reference to critical theory and the notion of communicative action, as developed by Habermas (Forester, 1980; Healey, 1996). Building on Habermas' universal pragmatics, Forester stresses that, acts of speaking must be comprehensible, sincere, legitimate and truthful, for communication to be meaningful. This understanding, he contends, is crucial in planning (as in other aspects of life) because the contested nature of planning easily leads to distorted communication, which may ultimately lead to counterproductive, as well as undemocratic planning decisions (Forester, 1980).

Whereas Friedman stresses the importance of undistorted and meaningful communication on the interpersonal level, Forester argues that it is equally important on the organizational, as well as the political and ideological levels, as they constitute the larger framework of discourse, or thought-worlds, within which communication takes place. In this picture, the contribution of critical theory to planning is to develop "pragmatics with vision – to reveal true alternatives, to correct false expectations, to counter cynicism, to foster inquiry, to spread political responsibility, engagement, and action" (ibid., p 283).

As the vision of planning, in this view, is one of democracy and a just planning process, democratic planning in itself does not have a vision about substantive

goals. Clearly, as the very idea of democratic planning is that planning goals must emerge out of a communicative planning process, any preemptive formulation of substantive goals would be adversary to its conception. Hence, the goals of democratic planning can only be recapitulated from its application in practice.

SUMMARY ON URBAN PLANNING

System-maintaining theories of urban planning argue along lines of realism and feasibility. Lindblom argues for an incrementalist approach to planning (as opposed to the rational-comprehensive approach) by which only solutions within reach are considered, as a means to raise the predictability of the outcomes of planning. But the rejection of radical scenarios, in essence, is conservative, as it only allows for minor adjustments to the status quo, while the overall system is generally maintained.

Not surprisingly, system-transforming theories of urban planning are critical of the narrow scope of the system maintaining theories. On the contrary, Davidoff, with his notion of advocacy and pluralism in planning, argues for broadening up the rationales for planning.

Radical planning theorists argue that traditional planning values are likely not only to be in favor of the established order of things, but also to reflect the technical rationality of the planning profession. Hence, they are conscious of the aspect of power in planning, as they argue in favor of giving voice to the underprivileged and the impoverished.

The more moderate system-changing theories of urban planning are critical of both of the former approaches. While conservative or traditional planning styles are criticized for putting hard, technical, and economic issues over soft, social and environmental issues, the radical approaches, such as the advocacy approach, are criticized for putting hard against hard, leaving no scope for mutual learning.

The system-changing, or democratic, planning theories of Friedman, Forester and Healey focus on interaction on the personal level. Planners, in this view, must be capable of fusing their own, technical knowledge and insight with the personal knowledge of

clients. Therefore communication and mutual learning becomes paramount, as planning problems cannot meaningfully be solved without a broad understanding and consensus among stakeholders.

While system-maintaining theories of urban planning are generally not conscious – or reflective – about their own embedded normativity, system-transforming theories are very explicit on the issue of normativity, as they take a very clear standing in favor of the groups which are marginalized by established planning. System-changing theories of urban planning, on the other hand, are equally explicit about not defining a normative base, as this should be constituted through the planning process. As such, the normativity of the latter is a meta-normativity, as the issue of concern is how the normative base should be constituted, rather than what it should be.

Although planning, despite its recurring reformulations, has consistently been dealing with the shaping of the physical environment, its attention has shifted from immediate physical design to the distribution of uses and the provision of services. Furthermore, a growing awareness of the importance of the physical environment for the quality of life for different social groups has made the political nature of planning more explicit and subject to increased attention.

With this dual shift in planning, towards function and use on the one hand, and towards social issues and the question of power on the other, the practice and purpose of planning has grown increasingly alien to architecture, which, in its central focus on form, is more concerned with the design of urban space. This alienation, in many ways, triggered the formation of the contemporary field of urban design within architectural thinking, as an attempt to reintroduce the aspect of urban form in the shaping of the physical environment.

Yet, notwithstanding the importance of theorizing the aspect of urban form in the shaping of the physical environment, when it comes to urban design in practice, it cannot stand alone. In practice, urban design is always embedded within a socio-political context which must be negotiated. The theoretical foundation for urban design in practice therefore must include con-

siderations about the socio-economic and political aspects of urban design. In this regard, urban design theory can draw a lot from planning theory. Thus, broadening up the epistemological basis for urban design by incorporating aspects from planning theory, seems necessary in order to link urban design theory better to urban design practice.

In their shared object of the shaping of the physical environment, none of the disciplines of planning and urban design can be negligent of each other's aims. After all, uses and services cannot be distributed in space without resulting in some kind of urban form; as little as urban form can be designed without consequences for the distribution of uses and services and their implied consequences for the quality of life. As planning and urban design are two sides of the same matter, their objectives must be joined in action.

CONCLUSION

Normative theories of urban design generally take a critical stance towards the status quo. Thus, the societal theories of urban design are critical towards the existing society, envisaging new concepts for society and its organization in space. The more radical the critique, the more utopian the theory.

Formal theories of urban design are generally narrow (and intentionally so) in the sense that they practically only deal with the issue of form. Most theories in this category are postmodern. As such, they are critical not only of the formal language of modernism, but also of its universal approach to urban design as well as the modernist notion of 'form follows function'. Most radically, Rossi explicitly champions a narrow approach in his aim to define architecture as an autonomous phenomenon by setting up architecture itself as the measure of architecture.

Between the societal theories of urban design dealing mainly with urban design on the large scale, and the formal theories of urban design dealing with the concrete appearance of the built environment, stand the environmental theories of urban design which deal with the quality of built space as a place to live.

While urban design is concerned primarily with the form of urban space, regardless of whether the aim

is to achieve societal, formal, or environmental ends, urban planning is more concerned with the spatial distribution of uses and the provision of services, or, in the words of Davidoff, with the question of who gets what, when, where, why and how. Hence, urban planning is oriented towards social issues, as well as the question of power. And as such, urban planning – like urban design – is inherently normative, as it must always confront the question of why to plan.

Most planning theory, however, deals with the question of how to plan, or different planning styles, thus masking the question of normativity in planning. But as all planning styles are means to certain ends, normativity is always present, whether implicitly or explicitly. So, when Hudson (1979) argues for a pluralist application of different planning styles, depending on the planning task at hand, this is not as innocent as it may seem. What planning does, essentially, depends on how it is carried out.

As urban planning is concerned with social issues and power, it is inherently political. In this article, examples of different approaches to planning have therefore been discussed with regard to their political stance, as either system-maintaining, system-changing, or system-transforming. While system-maintaining approaches to planning are conservative in nature, system-transforming approaches are radical. Between the two, system-changing approaches are in favor of gradual change.

If the ambition of urban design is to create distinct urban form, it is luring to have recourse to 'pure', or narrow, theories of urban design, which deal with the formal aspects of urban design. Yet, in the practice reality of urban design, concerns for environmental and social aspects are always present and must be taken into consideration. If not, attempts to achieve these other concerns are likely to hamper the concern for the formal aspects of urban design.

This does not mean that urban design practitioners must decline on ambitions to create distinct urban form. Rather, they must have the ambition to achieve more than that. It is a misconception to believe, that if other aspects must be incorporated into an urban design it will inevitably lead to less distinct urban form.



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On the contrary, if they are not, the practice reality of urban design will force aspects, which have not been taken into consideration to be negotiated. And this is far more likely to lead to less distinct urban form.

Urban design must be based on a founding vision. But while narrow theories of urban design may constitute valuable contributions to the theoretical discourse on urban design, they do not suffice as the only basis for urban design in practice. Here a broader perspective is necessary in order to cater for the plurality of interests, which pertain to the creation of the built environment.

Regardless of whether normative theories of urban design address societal aspects, the built environment essentially represents the physical expression of society. Urban design in practice therefore has to be responsive to societal aspects, as it might otherwise lead to unanticipated results.

A similar case can be made for the environmental aspects of urban design. If urban designers have no concern for them, someone else probably will. And if the urban design is not responsive to them, the likely result is poorer urban design with respect to all aspects, or no urban design at all, as areas might fail to develop if the urban design is considered too restrictive.

It can be argued that formal and aesthetic aspects of urban design are a professional matter, as they belong to the realm of art which, by nature, cannot be made entirely subject to democratic decision, nor to rational reason, without losing its artistic qualities. This is not the case for social and environmental aspects of urban design however. While urban designers may have the professional knowledge to assess the environmental or social qualities of different urban design concepts, it

is not a professional matter to judge what social or environmental qualities are preferable to others, even though urban designers might well have their own personal preferences on these issues.

This raises the question of who should define the founding vision of an urban design. While it is the professional task of urban designers to formulate how certain ends may be reached through a particular urban design, it is not a professional task to define what ends should be achieved. Just as building architects get commissions from clients for building designs, urban designers, in principle, are commissioned by the general public to design the urban environment. Qualified urban designers may suggest ways to accommodate the task, which are quite different from the expectations of the 'client', and they may even suggest designs

democratic aspects of how to define the good city.

While these aspects are absent within urban design theory, they are indeed present in urban design practice. When practicing urban design it is therefore necessary to turn to other realms of theorization, in order to achieve an awareness of the question of who should define the good city and how. And in this field, normative theory of urban planning has a lot to offer.

But again, just as the definition of urban design values is not a purely professional matter, the choice of planning style and the implied scope for planning as either system maintaining, changing or transforming is not a purely professional one either. Regardless of the personal and professional preferences of urban designers and planners, they must relate to the institutional and political context in which they operate.

This does not mean that urban designers and planners should necessarily accept established planning paradigms. As well as it may be considered a professional task to introduce new ideas for urban design, it may be relevant to introduce new ways of planning. But without the necessary political and economic backing, new ideas – in urban design as in planning – easily become wishful thinking, as all that urban designers can do is to merely hope for their realization. And urban design based on hope is basically hopeless.

In sum, the normative aspirations as well as the

that go beyond their commission, just as building architects may do. This is all part of the professional task of urban designers. But when the client is the general public, what urban environment is desirable is essentially a political question.

The normative theories of urban design discussed in this article have very little to offer on this issue. Even postmodern normative theories of urban design which are critical of modernism's formal paradigm and universal approach, seem to adopt the modernist conception of the urban designer as an omniscient professional, and the task of urban design as a purely professional matter which may be solved on behalf of the public without consulting it. The normative theories of urban design discussed in this article, in other words, do not provide any guidance to the political and

procedural approach of urban design must relate to the needs and interests of all the actors of the urban development process, to the institutional and political setting of its practice, as well as to the different aspects and scales of the societal setting in which it operates. Therefore, urban design practice must be conceptualized as an embedded activity rather than a 'pure' activity, as an interdisciplinary and political activity, as well as an inter-scalar activity.

This has implications for urban design research and theorization. The theoretic field of urban design as it is generally constituted today, emerged in the 1960's as a branch within architecture. To a large extent the formation of the field took place out of discontent with urban planning which since the Second World War had become increasingly occupied with the distribution of land use, services, and infrastructure, and less with the morphological quality of built space. Still today, urban design and planning often constitute separate realms, in theory and research as well as in education – even within the same institution.

While theoretically defined within architecture, urban design in practice is in many ways more related to urban planning. There is no clearly defined designer-client relationship. Like urban planning, urban design

mostly takes place in the public realm, either within the setting of public planning offices or in collaboration between public planning offices and private consultants. The 'client' therefore, is the general public, represented by the City council.

This discrepancy between theory and practice calls for the development of normative 'theories for practice', drawing from elements of both urban design and planning theory. The fundamentally different practice settings of architecture and urban design have implications for how urban design may be conceptualized and what it can do. Normative theories of urban design cannot meaningfully focus on what it aims to achieve – a certain quality of built space – without considering how it can be achieved. As with planning, what urban design does depends on how it is carried out. Equally important, normative theories of urban design must consider the question of how the normative bases for urban design should be constituted as it is done within normative planning theory.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 The Contemporary City. Plan drawing by Le Corbusier. In: Eaton, Ruth: *Ideal Cities: Utopianism and the (Un)Built Environment*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2001

Fig. 2 The Contemporary City. Perspective drawing by Le Corbusier. In: Eaton, Ruth: *Ideal Cities: Utopianism and the (Un)Built Environment*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2001

Fig. 3 Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. Photo. In: Rossi, Aldo: *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982

Fig. 4 Basilica di San Lorenzo and surroundings. Plan. In: Rossi, Aldo: *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982

Fig. 5 Haarlemer Houttuinen Housing, Amsterdam. Photo. In: Hertzberger, Herman: *Lessons for Students in Architecture*. Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 1991

NOTES

1. This article is based on chapter 3 and 4 of the PhD-thesis 'Vision, Plan and Reality: Urban Design between Conceptualization and Realization (Steinø, 2003).
2. Although there are earlier examples of theories which may be characterized as urban design theory – as exemplified later in this article – it was not until this point that urban design was regarded an independent academic field, distinct from architecture and planning, and that theories about the three-dimensional shaping of urban space were consistently referred to as urban design theories.
3. A full discussion of the question of normativity within the fields of urban design and planning theory is offered in chapters 3 and 4 of my PhD-thesis (Steinø, 2003).
4. Later it becomes clear to Le Corbusier that the business community does not share his ideas of what is best for business and therefore fails to support him. Out of disillusion, he reformulates his urban design theory. In his proposal for *The Radiant City* (1935), a residential district is substituted for the central business district, and the office towers have been displaced to a less prominent place, at the fringe of the city (Fishman, 1982).
5. At the annual assembly of The Federation of Danish Architects, December 1999, a discussion on urban planning was concluded with the statement that this was 'one of the most important issues to be dealt with' (Personal notes from the meeting).
6. While the only other postmodern theorist discussed here is Rossi, this also goes for Rowe & Koetter, Alexander and Krier (see Steinø, 2003, chapter 3).
7. Hubbard's focus is architectural design, but the argument is equally valid for urban design.
8. This is not to say that narrow urban design concepts have not been implemented in the past. In fact, the ideas of Le Corbusier, Howard, or the concept of the linear city for that matter, have been implemented to varying degrees throughout the 20th century. This has taken place in a particular power context, however, and the setting for urban design within contemporary western democracies does not provide the same amount of power for the implementation of narrow urban design schemes as in the past.
9. A brief account of the past 150 years of planning is offered in chapter 4 of my PhD thesis (Steinø, 2003).
10. The notion of essentially contested concepts is developed by W. B. Gallie, and signifies concepts whose existence is generally acknowledged, although a general definition cannot be agreed upon. This includes concepts like art, democracy and the city (according to Albertsen, 1999)

11. For a further discussion of the question of normativity in urban planning from an economic and a historical perspective, see chapter 4 of my PhD thesis (Steinø, 2003).
12. Strategic planning in this context, refers to the planning approach originally developed in the corporate world, building on SWOT-analysis, which was applied to urban planning in many places in the 1980s. This approach should not be confused with the kind of strategic planning unfolded through the so-called planning strategies which are currently being implemented in Danish municipal planning.
13. Democratic planning is used here as a common denominator for Friedman's concept of transactive planning (1973) and Healey's concept of communicative planning (1996, 1999).

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