



Human Settlements and Environmental Design

AAAS Symposium • 28–30 December 1969 • Boston

Historically speaking, man's ways of living and settling down were spontaneous; they were shaped by impinging natural environments. Early man exhibited little capacity for the deliberate organization of his surroundings. During the ages of our cultural evolution, however, we have become increasingly capable of intervening with nature.

We are now assisted by a technology which is able to make us live and function in environments (for example, outer space) totally alien to those that shaped us. The initial exhilaration that the image of technical omnipotence may have brought us is being dampened by two concerns. In the first place, man in his subjective experiences still relies on mechanisms of his early physical evolution. The way we breathe, feed, move, and are aware of our senses is that of Cro-Magnon man. To what extent will man cease to be the measure of all things in an artificial technical world? In the second place, nature has certain ways to maintain a balance between her constituent elements. To what extent is man threatening his survival by technical interference which produces results intolerant of nature's self-regulating mechanisms? Overpopulation, the threat of a final nuclear war, pollution, each of these results of our cultural progress, if unchecked, is capable of extinguishing human life.

It is against this background that our AAAS General Symposium intends to highlight some of the considerations entering into environmental planning.

The intensity and complexity of emerging dysfunctions in man-environment systems has produced a historical situation in which we are, by necessity, becoming a planning culture. Planning, the process of satisfying a multitude of conflicting demands toward specific human goals, is intrinsically difficult in our particular form of democracy. The political and economic milieu which pro-

duced our technological sophistication is very often the same one which makes its effective utilization impossible. Thus the "technical" solution is rarely commensurate with the political and economic impingements which operate on environmental decisions. This is essentially the planner's dilemma. Identifying decision processes which bring about viable environmental states clearly represents one class of technical issues requiring attention of the scientific community. There is yet another class of issues which also require intensified study. Successful environmental design and management requires not only effective decision methods, but also a more comprehensive understanding of functional relations wherein the social and behavioral consequences of particular environmental orders can be explained, predicted, and controlled toward the realization of individual and collective goals.

Environment is a ubiquitous term employed as a conceptual convenience by several disciplines as they set about to understand the effects of one system upon another. The environment of man is of primary and immediate concern, but this environment is composed of many interdependent subsystems with their own internal causal structures. Each discipline identifies environment as consisting of a particular set of variables and at various levels of analysis, for example, a region, a city, an organism, a neuron. An integrated understanding of the ecology of man presents a formidable problem indeed.

The need for more sophisticated organizational tools for ordering man-made environments—for systematically relating these to "natural" ecological systems—is manifest. Of equal concern is the interdependent need for an integrated, functional understanding of the effects of man-made and natural environments upon human social and be-

havioral outcomes. Specifically we must become more competent in understanding the interface between the various interacting environments and individual and collective human processes. Like individual and social behavior itself, this interface is frustratingly complex and difficult to deal with in the context of existing knowledge. Understanding of human biological and extrabiological phenomena required that man be taken apart; the task at hand requires that he now be put back together. We are thus witnessing an abundance of attempts to identify strategies for applying a disparate set of scientific and technical resources toward the resolution of physical and social dysfunction, for such is the multivariate nature of the problem. The objective of this general symposium together with related AAAS meetings in the section on "The Design and Nature of Cities" is to develop an overview of our environmental problems and possibilities, with emphasis upon the human arts and sciences, the environmental design disciplines, and methods whereby these resources interrelate toward a common purpose.

The sessions are organized somewhat chronologically, that is, how our present sociophysical state evolved, what has gone wrong, what kinds of research are needed to respond, and some proposals for future environments.

Session I will explore the origins of present environmental structures and ideologies; the evolution of physical expressions of community and privacy. Our dichotomized thinking about nature and culture will be discussed and comparisons and contrasts will be made between this and other cultures with regard to man-environment organizations and interactions.

Session II is intended to identify extant environmental structures as these bear upon conflicts among existing behavior patterns. Also to be explicated are disparities between these and broader social objectives.

Having identified the disparities between human intentions and their accomplishments as these are affected by extant environmental structures, session III turns to certain areas of behavioral research as a basic resource in identifying means whereby more humanly relevant environments can be developed. Session IV then explores the implications of empirically derived behavioral measures upon environmental organization in a particular domain of current

Past

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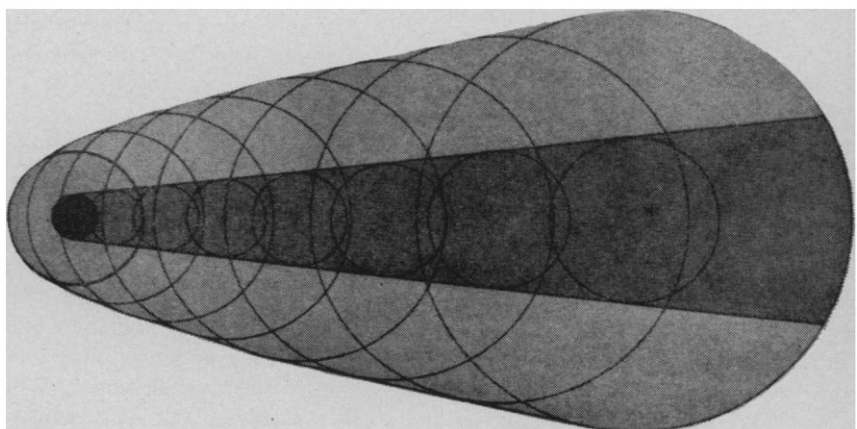


Present

[New York City
Convention and
Visitors Bureau]



Future



The simplest form of the ideal Dynapolis. The expansion in one direction allows the center to expand without difficulty. [C. A. Doxiadis, in *Cities of Destiny*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1968]

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social concern. It will focus on the socioenvironmental factors influencing the organization of and personal involvement in various life settings. The essential nature of home life, work, leisure, and recreation will be explored as a basis for the discussion.

Session V addresses issues related to new environmental orders which move

outside conventional configurations. These new systems offer alternatives to human settlements as we know them. The emphasis in these discussions is on the implementation of emerging scientific and technological developments in the behavioral, biological, and social sciences, and the integration of these with insights from artistic intuitions, subject-

ive viewpoints from our experiential world, and environmental design and management approaches.

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Speakers and Topics

Arranged by Aristide H. Esser; Gyorgy Kepes (M.I.T.); David Lowenthal (American Geographical Society); and Raymond G. Studer.

28 December, Morning

Session I: *Historical Perspectives*, David Lowenthal, chairman.

Conflict and Concordance in Explanations of Nature, Clarence J. Glacken (University of California, Berkeley).

Environmental Ideals versus American Institutions, Leo Marx (Amherst College).

Nature, Art, and Utility in the Making of the Landscape, Hugh A. Prince (University College, London).

Dysfunction East and West: Comparison and Contrast, Yi-Fu Tuan (University of Minnesota).

Panel Discussants: J. Ralph Audy (San Francisco Medical School), Marvin W. Mikesell (University of Chicago), and William Koelsch (Clark University).

28 December, Afternoon

Session II: *Social Dysfunction and Environment: Some Harbingers of Catastrophe*, Aristide H. Esser, chairman.

Some Juxtapositions: Urban-Rural, North-South, Black-White, Small Communities-Large Societies, Harold Haskins (Temple University).

Racially Changing Communities, Peter Labovitz (Harvard University and Arthur D. Little, Inc.).

After Private Enterprise—What Next?, Robert Choate (Choate and Associates).

Panel Discussants: Matthew Du-

mond (National Institute of Mental Health), Nathan Glazer (Harvard University), Bernard M. Kramer (Tufts University), Florence Shelton (Harvard University), Constance Perin (University of Chicago), Stephen Carr (M.I.T.), and John Buggs (Urban Coalition).

29 December, Morning

Session III: *Research into Environment and Behavior*, Lawrence Heideman, Jr. (University of Pennsylvania), chairman.

Environmental Factors in Growth and Development, Richard Chase (Johns Hopkins University).

The Human Environment as Manifest Behavior, Israel Goldiamond (University of Chicago).

The Impact on the Design Community of Research into Environment and Behavior, Bernard Spring (C.C.N.Y.).

Panel Discussants: Irwin Altman (University of Utah), Kenneth H. Craik (University of California, Berkeley), Ido de Groot (University of Cincinnati), Andrew F. Euston, Jr. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development), Bernard Kaplan (Clark University), and Kevin Lynch (M.I.T.).

29 December, Afternoon

Session IV: *Living Environments for Work and Leisure*, Beverly Driver (University of Michigan).

Recreation: A Generic or Specific Form of Behavior?, Rolf Meyersohn (Herbert H. Lehman College).

Influence of Early Environment on Recreational Behavior, William R. Catton, Jr. (University of Washington).

Vacation Homes, Environmental

Preferences, and Spatial Behavior, Larry W. Tombaugh (U.S. Forest Service and North Carolina State University).

Panel Discussants: Samuel Z. Klausner (University of Pennsylvania), William R. Burch, Jr. (Yale University), James G. Kelly (University of Michigan), Hugh C. Davis (University of Massachusetts), John B. Lansing (University of Michigan), and Roy I. Wolfe (York University, Ontario).

30 December, Morning

Session V: *Future Environments*, Jerome Wiesner (M.I.T.), chairman.

Comprehensive Designs for Rural Living, Hassan Fathy (United Arab Republic).

Integrated Environmental Control Systems, James Marston Fitch (Columbia University).

Social Planning and Action in the Light of Alternative Futures, Donald Schon (M.I.T.).

30 December, Afternoon

Technology and the Future City, John McHale (State University of New York, Binghamton).

The Artists in Environmental Participation, Gyorgy Kepes (M.I.T.).

Panel Discussants: Topper Carew ("New Thing" Art & Architecture Center, Washington, D.C.), Hermann H. Field (Tufts, New England Medical Center), Carl O. Hodge (University of Arizona), Karl J. Ingebritsen (Reston), Alfred Kazin (author), Donlyn Lyndon (M.I.T.), Michael Michaelis (Arthur D. Little, Inc.), and Raymond G. Studer.