

The Square and Its Statue: How a Dictatorship Shaped Tradition and How Architecture Reshaped It in Guarda, Portugal

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This article examines the transformation of the Old Square in Guarda, Portugal, within several different political frames. During the mid-twentieth century Portugal's dictatorship sought to instill social harmony through a redesign of the square, an effort that included the installation of a statue of King Sancho, a figure of historic legitimacy and past continuity. But since Portugal's political democratization began in 1974, the square's built environment has come to be surrounded by controversy and debate. Two positions have emerged in this debate, which in some regards reflect the different spatial and visual experience of citizens and trained experts. And today, even though a new architectural design for the square has opened it to collective use, disagreement continues over the square's transformation.

This article focuses on the transformation of the Old Square in the Portuguese city of Guarda — specifically, how imagined traditions of political domination were established there during Portugal's dictatorship and revised under the present democracy. A historical overview and critical analysis of the construction of the Old Square will serve as background for understanding how structures of authoritarian memorialization there have since been reorganized. However, the article will also argue that comprehending how authoritarian regimes shaped space in the past, and how these spaces may now be deconstructed, requires more than technical expertise (such as my own as an architect and researcher). It also requires engaging with the city, its officials, and citizens as political

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subjects to make them aware of the dimensions and consequences of such spatial transformations. And this discussion must be overtly political and public, based on dialogue as well as dissent.

In 1982, Michel Foucault argued that even though architectural production may serve as an instrument of discipline, its effects cannot be guaranteed. Its use to bring about liberation, empowerment and freedom may thus only be possible, “when the liberating intentions of the architect[ure] coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom.”¹ This article aims to clarify how and why different political regimes have valued the space of Guarda’s Old Square, and what the role of professional architecture has been in this process. To that end I will attempt to describe discourses of value-production related to the square and the way these have been challenged over time. This will allow me to show how architecture has shaped the democratic present of the Old Square — but in a way that avoids excluding the material evidence of the past.

THE PROBLEM OF THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

The role of urban design under Southern European authoritarian regimes has previously been addressed by such authors as Mia Fuller, Carlos Sambricio, and Margarida Lôbo.² However, the ways that present-day regimes have dealt with this legacy has yet to adequately explored. At the same time, the musealization, erasure, and redesign of public spaces and memorials from the region’s mid-twentieth-century fascist period has recently been surrounded by controversy.

On the one hand, these discussions have involved political reflection on the kind of measures that should be taken to maintain public buildings, urban designs, and memorials built by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. This has given rise to specific questions: Should that patrimony be preserved, or transformed? And how might its status as a record of the past be distorted during the process? On the other hand, authoritarian constructs have in many cases already been contested and rearticulated under new democratic regimes, creating new subjectivities. And the rearrangement of public spaces and memorials may have been a consequence of such contestation and debate. Thus, the unfolding of new interpretations of the past, as evident in the redesign of these spaces, may celebrate a different kind of power relations.

The present discussion of the Old Square in Guarda may be seen as part of this more general debate about how to deal with former public spaces, monuments, and symbols of fascism across Southern Europe. In Italy, for example, scholars have pointed to the state’s inability to deal with the fascist and imperial legacy.³ Yet, as political and ethnic frictions between anti-fascist and neo-fascist movements have shown in the case of the South Tyrol Victory Monument in Bolzano, there is a great need for such a discussion.⁴ Joshua Arthur’s

account of the historical processes and debates that led to the survival of Benito Mussolini’s Foro Italoico sports complex in Rome likewise reveals why it is necessary to engage with and critically reflect on the meaning of preserving such heritage.⁵

Meanwhile, in Spain, the Law of Historical Memory recognized the victims of the Civil War and established certain entitlements for the descendants of its victims and the victims of the dictatorship of Francisco Franco.⁶ Yet this law also acknowledges the disconnect between political and social memory, and how the latter is frequently focused on the need to recover from traumatic events.⁷ It thus establishes the basis for the removal of Francoist names and symbols from public buildings, streets and spaces — even if this endeavor is now entangled in political struggle, resistance and debate, with court decisions both in favor of and opposition to the removal of these symbols.

In one such case, in 2014, in response to an action brought by the Association for the Recuperation of Historical Memory, a court allowed the removal of a statue of the fascist politician Primo de Rivera (1870–1930) from Bibataubín Square in Granada — against the wishes of the city council, then controlled by Spain’s main conservative party, the Partido Popular (PP).⁸ And considering the unresolved future of Spain’s biggest funerary monument, the Valle de los Caídos [Valley of the Fallen], such controversies will persist for years to come. As the recent battle over the exhumation of the remains of Franco, buried in that cemetery in 1976, shows, the Civil War remains a delicate subject in Spanish society.

Much as in Italy, debate in Portugal remains muted over urban transformations made by former authoritarian regimes, even though almost every Portuguese city was subject to such interventions, especially with regard to classified national monuments. As Tiago Castela has also argued, in Portugal’s present postcolonial framework, a pedagogy of inequality remains with regard to the representation of bodies in colonial memorials. Despite being a form of spatial violence, such representations have not been subject to necessary political scrutiny because memorials are typically seen as unharmed and inoffensive.⁹ Indeed, public debate among intellectuals has only recently emerged over the need to re-think the violence of Portugal’s former dictatorship and its imperial legacies.¹⁰

Such discussions resonate with recent actions refuting and questioning the meaning of this heritage. One such action recently involved the vandalization and defacing of the Monument in Memory of the Portuguese Colonizing Effort, in Porto’s Empire Square, with graffiti using the word “oppressor” and calling for the monument to be dismantled. However, other significant installations that fail to acknowledge the memory of colonial violence have not been similarly criticized.¹¹ Notable among these is Portugal dos Pequenitos [Portugal of the Little Ones], a children’s theme park built under the dictatorship in Coimbra to celebrate an imaginary Portuguese and Afro-Brazilian imperial world.¹²

To address these questions as they relate to the Old Square, I have divided this article into three parts. First, I will focus on the way the dictatorship gave shape to a tradition of domination in the square by means of a redesign which sought to establish a clear hierarchy of authoritarian symbols. This tradition was then reinforced through a campaign of representation in the media, at the same time that these historical representations were being criticized by members of the country's intellectual elite.

Second, the article will focus on debate over the redesign of the square in the present democratic context, an effort initiated by a local weekly newspaper during the 1990s. The dominant framework of the media in such debates is well known. Media attention may heighten pressure for the transformation of public space by creating textual and image-driven rationales for it. However, the article will also show how two separate subjectivities eventually arose out of media debates over the square — that of technical expertise, and that of the people themselves. And it will attempt to explain how a full democratic repossession of square must account for both. This investigation also raises questions about the nature of popular visual and spatial experience. Thus it uncovers how popular interpretation of the square's redesign seems to reveal a lack of understanding of the dictatorship's construction of a tradition of domination there. And this might ultimately have led to its acceptance, without recognizing the need for change.

Third, the article discusses how architectural expertise has played a role in reassembling and disabling dictatorial constructs within the new democratic framework — thereby creating a spatial setting for new subjectivities and practices in urban life. In this regard, since the late 1960s the work of Henri Lefebvre has provided a new perspective on urban space, illustrating the way it is built by social dynamics. Likewise, Michel de Certeau has observed how the meanings and power of place can be continuously constructed and reconstructed through their use. As he has written, “Like Words, places are articulated by a thousand usages.”¹³ Hence, although the architectural design of the Old Square in Guarda may still retain material features indicative of its formerly constructed meanings, those meanings have largely been overturned in the present by new practices of everyday life. This, in turn, reveals how structures of power do not remain inertly fixed in space.

GIVING SHAPE TO A TRADITION OF DOMINATION

Guarda, with a population of approximately 27,000, is the capital of the Beira Interior Norte region in the hinterlands of northeast Portugal. It was founded in the twelfth century as a mountain-top border town, and its subsequent growth was supported by its intrinsic military and religious importance.

The present shape of its Old Square was largely established by the end of the sixteenth century. That process began

in 1390 with the decision to begin construction of a new cathedral, which created a decisive landmark influenced the subsequent arrangement of other buildings inside of the city walls. After a series of rearrangements, the permanent outlines of the square were solidified beginning under the influence of the Ordinances of King Manuel the First (1512) and extending through the end of the Philippine Dynasty (1581–1640). By then the square had taken a sloping trapezoidal form, surmounted by the granite cathedral. When the building was completed around 1520, it created a showcase of Portuguese late Gothic style (also known as the *Estilo Manuelino*), which reflected a culmination of the period of Portuguese global expansion. The majority of the buildings that today surround the square, including the Council Chambers, several manor houses, and an arcade building at its lower end, were then completed from the late fifteenth century onwards (FIGS. 1, 2).

Reflecting what Benedict Anderson has described as the emergence of nationalism in Europe, Guarda's cathedral eventually came to represent a symbol of Portuguese (but also local) identity.¹⁴ And, concurrent with the development of this belief, the Public Works Ministry adopted a protectionist attitude toward such monuments. As part of this effort, it nominated the architect Rosendo Carvalheira (c. 1864–1929) to conduct a study of the cathedral in Guarda and take the lead in its restoration. Imbued with the ideas of the French architect Eugène Viollet Le Duc, Carvalheira subsequently supervised its restoration.¹⁵ And this work that continued after his death, through 1957, under the supervision of the *Direcção dos Monumentos Nacionais* (DMN) [Directorate for National Monuments]. The DMN was a division of the *Direcção Geral de Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais* (DGEMN) [Directorate-General for National Buildings and Monuments], created during the military dictatorship (1926–1932).¹⁶ And its work continued to have great influence through 1974 under the dictatorships of António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970) and Marcelo Caetano (1906–1980).

Under the dictatorship, the symbolic importance of Guarda's cathedral and its square became instrumental to nationalist rhetoric, as supported by the *Política do Espírito* [Politics of Spirit]. This ideological project, initiated by Minister of State Propaganda António Ferro (1896–1956), was inspired by the efforts of other European dictatorships to stage themselves and professionalize their campaigns of propaganda.¹⁷ Focusing on the historical significance of the Portuguese spirit, the need for moral renewal within society, and the greatness of the Portuguese nation, the project promised to strengthen modern Portugal while retaining traditional values under the maxim “*Deus, Pátria e Família*” [“God, Fatherland and Family”].

As part of this effort, the SPN (Secretary of State Propaganda), along with the DGEMN, promoted the construction and restoration of symbolic buildings and urban spaces as evidence of the Portugal's moral power. This then served as the basis for establishing the “*história única*” [“one historical

FIGURE 1. *Luís de Camões Square (Old Guarda Square). Photo by author, 2017.*



FIGURE 2. *Guarda Old Square, balcony buildings in the background, December 2006. View from behind the relocated statue of King Sancho. Photo by Rui Jacinto.*



truth”]. The use of architecture and urban design toward this end, however, embodied a conflict between the ideas of Ferro and Salazar; thus, the propaganda minister had been influenced by the way other countries — notably, Italy — had adopted modernist discourse, while Salazar maintained a less cosmopolitan position.¹⁸

In Portugal and in its colonies, the authoritarian state nevertheless implemented this new governing subjectivity by establishing a body of architectural expertise aimed at reinventing the constructed environment and establishing a hegemonic view of national history.¹⁹ Until the late 1940s this body of expertise was partly developed in collaboration

with the Parisian School of Urbanism.²⁰ After World War II, however, other external influences — from Italy and the United Kingdom, to name a few — also influenced Portuguese architecture and urban design, allowing it to become more globalized.

In Portugal, this effort relied on the design and restoration of historical spaces seen to commemorate the Portuguese aristocracy. And this naturally emphasized the symbolic atmosphere of sixteenth-century monuments, such as those on Guarda’s square.²¹ In addition, memorials to Portuguese history were seen as integral to creating a unified notion of Portuguese architecture and planning, especially as these could

be incorporated into designated heritage areas. Just such a strategy was implemented in the cities of Guarda, Guimarães, Viseu, Portalegre and Silves, to name a few. The program was carried out exclusively by the authoritarian central state, giving local government only limited decision-making power. Helena Elias has thus demonstrated how deliberations by the Public Works Ministry would focus on selecting an artist to design a memorial, and on ensuring its historical accuracy based on a design assessment by the Portuguese History Academy. The DGEMN would then take the lead in realizing the memorial by overseeing attendant architectural restoration projects, urban plans, and necessary public works.²²

Throughout the 1950s, at the same time that the cathedral restoration was ongoing, DGEMN technicians thus supervised the implementation of an “Urbanization Plan Surrounding the High School and Cathedral in Guarda.” This work aimed to isolate the cathedral from its surroundings under the pretext of ensuring automobile accessibility to the city center and returning the cathedral to its original appearance (FIG. 3). It also established what was considered an appropriate site in the center of the Old Square for a memorial to King Sancho the First (1154–1211).

The statue, itself, was designed by António Duarte (1912–1998), a leading Portuguese sculptor whose work was highly sought after at the time in both Portugal and the colonies. The decision to memorialize King Sancho had in turn been based on his significance in local history. As the second Portuguese king, he had been responsible for expanding the kingdom by conquering Islamic territory, and for strengthening state administration and settling the population. He was also responsible for granting Guarda’s first charter in 1199, establishing its bishopric in 1202, and contracting for the construction of its first cathedral.

By means of recasting monuments and historical figures, the state sought to use programs such as these to instill social harmony between classes, promoting behavioral norms as well as moral, political and ideological values. In



FIGURE 3. Urbanization Plan Surrounding the High School and the Cathedral, 1943. Source: Adriano Rodrigues, *Monografia Artística da Guarda* (Guarda: 1958). Reprinted by permission.

relation to Guarda’s square, this meant shaping a tradition of domination — or, as Eric Hobsbawm has described such cultural inventions, “attempt[ing] to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.”²³ The dictatorship’s effort to memorialize the surroundings of Portuguese historical monuments was deeply rooted in this idea of historical continuity. And in one of his books Ferro wrote that “. . . people only recognize authority to those who live away from them, to whom they make statues. . . .”²⁴

Following this precept, most of the statues installed in Portuguese towns at the time portrayed medieval kings, followed by navigators and a few selected writers. And the creation of scenic compositions featuring such statues set against a background laden with historical value was a formula repeated in several provincial cities.²⁵ Thus, just as a statue of King Sancho was installed in Guarda, a statue of the King Duarte (1391–1438) was planted in the Square of the Cathedral in Viseu, following the restoration of surrounding buildings dating from the twelfth to the nineteenth century. Born in Viseu, Duarte was known as an intelligent and cultivated man. But his short kingship (1433–1438) made him suitable for memorialization primarily because it was marked by a continuation of the politics of maritime exploration established by his father, King João the First (1357–1433), and by conquests in North Africa (FIG. 4).

Clifford Geertz has shown how national politics are frequently framed by fictions such as the Divine Right of Kings.²⁶ Thus the dictatorship sought to build its legitimacy by invoking the sacredness of the sovereign power of the Portuguese aristocracy and the tradition of domination embodied by its early kings. However, the construction of this imagined tradition relied on the iconicity of the portrayed



FIGURE 4. King D. Duarte statue in the city of Viseu. Source: Vitor Oliveira/Portuguese_eyes.



FIGURE 5. Frame from the television show *Viagens na Nossa Terra* [*Travels In Our Own Land*]. Source: RTP Historical Archive (1963). Reprinted by permission.

kings — and this led to remarkably static designs. Indeed, a more dynamic design for Guarda’s statue of King Sancho was apparently rejected because it depicted the king in the company of a child who carried the city’s charter.²⁷ As a result, restoration work on the cathedral and the redesign of the square were also needed to create an act of properly anthropomorphizing power (to paraphrase Geertz). A transformation of the entire area was thus needed to complement the placement of the king’s statue, since they helped establish a new hierarchy that would appear natural, just and proper.

As this ensemble took shape, its message was also reasserted and given discursive embodiment through a television documentary called “*Viagens na Nossa Terra*” [*Travels in our Own Land*] (FIG. 5).²⁸ Broadcast in 1963 by the government-censored Radio and Television Portugal (RTP), this opened with a series of images of historical sites in Guarda, followed by an aerial view of the city square. Framed from behind the statue of King Sancho, this view seemed to indicate his continuing presence as a careful observer of city life. The historical significance of the city was then tied to ideas of progress and social control illustrated through images of institutional architecture and social housing built by the dictatorship. In the words of the narrator:

But Guarda isn’t just a historic city, it isn’t just one of the oldest Portuguese cities. Today it is a vibrant city, modernized and confident in its future. . . . The city’s population, orderly and hardworking, has full consciousness of the current progress that its land is living. Men and women of today, as those of tomorrow, fight doggedly, so that Guarda can remain what it always has been: one of the main Portuguese cities.²⁹

The construction of these state subjectivities in space, however, was soon questioned by the Portuguese intellectual elite. And one of the most acute criticisms was made by the Portuguese architect, artist and cartoonist João Abel Manta (1928-). In a cartoon “*As Estátuas*” [“*The Statues*”], he satirized the historical frame built around the heroes of the Portuguese Ultramarine Expansion.³⁰ In it, three statues of Portuguese navigators are being carried by a party of workers, but the workers’ effort is shown to be so extreme that several are being crushed by the “historic” burden (FIG. 6).

A more circumscribed criticism of this tradition of domination can be found in the work of the writer Virgílio Ferreira (1916–1996). The existentialist meanderings of his crime-romance novel *Estrela Polar* [*Polar Star*] use Guarda as a background, and its Old Square as its central arena of activity. However, overlooking the square is a fictional modernist building, a “mechanic building, of an inhumane dryness . . .” higher than the cathedral, inhabited by the novel’s protagonist.³¹ And as the story unfolds, the square becomes a metaphor, personifying a gloomy, silent, ancient city, made up of old and dark granite houses. Ferreira describes the square as a place of silence, where the statue at the center is “almost graceful in its briefness.”³² This omission of the statue’s function as a memorial seems deliberate. For Ferreira, whose work was subject to censorship, it was important to explore the contradictions between modern living, in steel and glass construction, and the moral stability of a traditional and provincial town. The city, its square and statue, its secular granite houses, and the cathedral thus morphed into a built metaphor for an authoritarian, oppressive, religious, conservative and moralistic society.



FIGURE 6. “*As Estátuas*” — João Abel Manta. Collection of the Museum of Lisbon. Museu de Lisboa/Câmara Municipal Lisboa — EGEAC. Reprinted by permission.

RESHAPING A TRADITION OF DOMINATION UNDER DEMOCRACY

The way this authoritarian state subjectivity became inexorably mediated by urban form confirms how urban design may be both a product and a producer of power relations. Such arrangements, as noted above, were subject to elite criticism during the authoritarian regime. But a full appropriation of such a critical subjectivity did not take place until the democratic revolution that followed the military coup of April 25, 1974. Thereafter, however, the Old Square became a place for popular political expression, not only by people supporting the presidential campaign of the first elected president, Ramalho Eanes, but by those demanding that the promises of modern urban life — such as for roads, water and electricity — be fulfilled (FIG. 7). In Lefebvrian terms, the square became a place where democratic participation could occur and claims for specific rights could be made, thereby disassembling its former representations of authoritarian power.³³

Though the dismantling of these constructs resulted from the square's appropriation as a place to make popular demands, newly elected local officials also raised the question of its redesign to overturn its former meaning. As justification, they cited both its historical importance as a center of gravity for city activities and the predominance then being given to its use by automobiles. However, as result of the sudden growth of the city in the 1980s, the focus of local government turned toward improving housing and infrastructure in the city. And it was only as a result of funding from the European Union, aimed at developing new urban policies, that its rehabilitation and restructuring became a possibility. Thus it was not until 1995 that the rehabilitation of the square was included as an objective in Guarda's Strategic Plan.³⁴

Strategic planning only became a general practice in Portugal in the mid-1990s under the influence of a state program called PROSIURB [Program of Consolidation of the Urban National System and Support to Master Plan Execution]. PROSIURB was developed with the assistance of the E.U.'s URBAN Community Initiative, which sought to boost local development and citizen potential through new forms of participation, governance, and project management. The program itself was thus positioned within the context of globalization, and it sought specifically to improve the economic competitiveness of midsized cities. Its goals included the revitalization and modernization of urban centers (within both a Portuguese and European context); a consolidation of their social equipment; a deepening of social and economic cohesion; the development of fruitful cooperation between private, local, regional and national institutions; and the safeguarding of built heritage.³⁵

Following PROSIURB, the main goal of Guarda's Strategic Plan was to enhance its competitive position on the Iberian Peninsula, both for residents, business interests, and visitors. And it was within this strategy that the rehabilitation and redesign for the Old Square was brought up for public discussion in 1996. This discussion had been initiated by the weekly newspaper *Terras da Beira*, which dedicated a full page to the project under the title "*Praça Velha vai ser alterada «Nós não temos nada contra o D. Sancho!»*" ("Old Square will be changed «We have nothing against King Sancho!»").³⁶ The newspaper also presented a draft proposal for the square's design, with a caption that read: "1. Future location of King Sancho Statue, 2. Light Source Fountain, 3. Pedestrian Area." The drawing and the caption summarized the main design ideas for the square, and the article explored some of these in greater depth: a decrease in vehicle traffic and parking, the



FIGURE 7. Demonstrations at the time of the visit of state officials to the city in the early 1980s. Source: Arquivo Histórico do Jornal do Fundão. Reprinted by permission.

creation of an outdoor area for cafés, relocation of the King Sancho statue, and the installation of a light-source fountain (FIG. 8). The article reported comments by Guarda's mayor justifying the redesign on the basis that "... «the project regards people»."

Recognizing the potential controversy involved in the redesign, especially regarding the displacement of the statue, the newspaper called for readers' opinions. And in subsequent issues two main positions appeared in its debate

section. One, which I refer to as the subjectivity of experts, expressed the agency of political, technical and intellectual expertise: municipal councilors, archeologists, historians, architects and planners. This expounded on the virtues of the square — its age and historical importance, the importance of its main buildings, and the need to rehabilitate them. It also approved of largely clearing the square of traffic, which was seen as a way to free space for collective use and appropriation. However, it also criticized what it considered to be

PRIMEIRO PLANO 3 • 2 de Maio de 1996

«Praça Velha» vai ser alterada

«Não temos nada contra o D. Sancho!»

O Projecto de Reabilitação da "Praça Velha" está pronto, mas pode não ser o definitivo. Uma coisa parece certa: D.Sancho I vai mudar de sítio. A Presidente em Exercício da Câmara da Guarda, Maria do Carmo Borges, garante que o projecto vai dar mais vida ao centro Histórico e afastar os carros de uma vez por todas. Quanto ao fundador da cidade mais alta, a autarca tem a certeza que vai ficar muito bem no novo pedestal.

Não vamos impor nada que a Guarda recuse», garante Maria do Carmo Borges, a presidente em Exercício da Câmara da Guarda, ao referir-se ao projecto de reabilitação da Praça de Luís de Camões, mais conhecida por "Praça Velha". Ainda o projecto não é do conhecimento público, já se ouvem reacções da opinião pública. Em casa, e no oratório das atenções, está a mudança da estátua de D.Sancho I (naquela local desde 1953) para outro sítio da Praça, concretamente junto à escadaria da Sé, no enfim da Rua da Torre.

O projecto está pronto mas vai entrar em fase exploratória e as propostas podem ainda ser alteradas. A Câmara vai estudá-lo e dar, eventualmente, novas sugestões. Da mesma forma, e tratando-se de uma obra importante para a cidade, o assunto deverá ser discutido em breve na Assembleia Municipal ou mesmo em debate público. Maria do Carmo Borges tem consciência que «a obra nasce com os sentimentos das pessoas da Guarda» mas a proposta de mudança da estátua aparece por forma a que se acentue o efeito de perspectiva da Praça e liberte os ângulos de visão sobre a Sé Catedral. «O D.Sancho tirou um pouco da beleza da Praça Velha e cortou todos os ângulos», considera a presidente em Exercício que vê com bons olhos esta alteração porque, adianta, «vai dar mais sentido histórico à Praça e, além do mais, o local escolhido não é menos digno, pelo contrário». Para que não fiquem dúvidas e más interpretações, Maria do Carmo Borges sublinha que «não temos nada contra o D.Sanchos». Convinçada de que as eventual

reacções negativas resultam da falta de informação, a autarca acredita que o projecto de Reabilitação da Praça de Luís de Camões, da autoria de Delfim Silva com base em estudos anteriores, vai dar mais dignidade, «mais vida ao centro histórico» porque, sustenta, o projecto «tem em conta as pessoas».

A Praça é dominada pelo automóvel e a sua própria estátua de D.Sancho está "adogada" entre automóveis, sem qualquer relação com o meio envolvente e não contribui para organizar o espaço» diz a mensuradora do projecto.

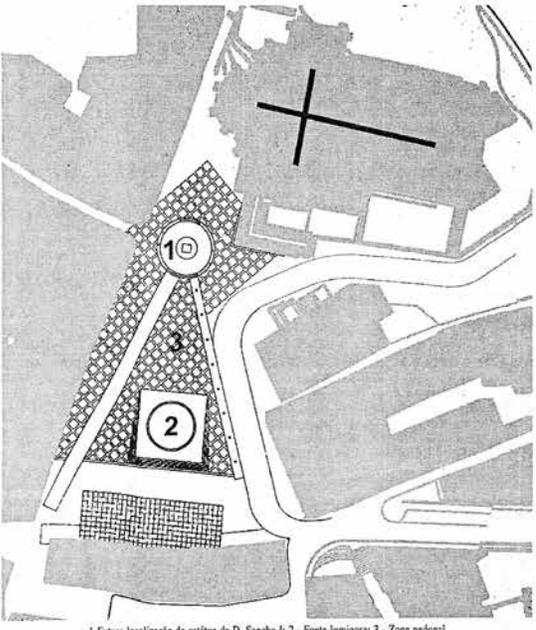
Praça Velha virá nova

As mudanças neste espaço principal do velho traçado medieval são significativas. Isto, claro, se o projecto passar tal e qual está nesta fase. Assim, propõem-se a redução do trânsito automóvel de atravessamento, eliminação dos estacionamento no interior da Praça e garantir absoluta prioridade aos peões já que, actualmente, as zonas pedonais se resumem a pequenas faixas junto aos edifícios laterais. Por outro lado, e para além do destaque de elementos visuais importantes na caracterização do espaço, o projecto prevê a fixação espontânea da população. Para além de uma zona fixa de esplanadas, frente aos balcoões, está previsto a instalação de uma fonte ornamental ou luminosa ligeiramente abaixo do sítio onde está erguida a estátua do fundador da Guarda. Um sinal de modernidade ou uma adesão espontânea à moda das dispendiosas fontes luminosas! Maria do Carmo mostra-se um pouco reticente em relação à ideia e adianta que preferia ver ali qualquer coisa menos esbanhafosa. Mas... logo se vê!

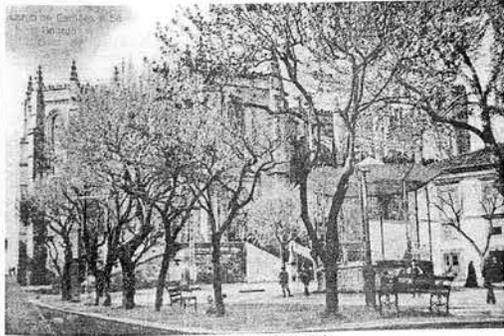
O pavimento da Praça também muda. A proposta avança no sentido de ser repavimentada com lajetas de granito e calçadas intercaladas, conforme se pode ver na planta de localização aqui reproduzida. A iluminação vai aumentar com a instalação de, pelo menos, oito candeeiros ao longo de uma zona pedonal que parte do futuro lugar de D.Sancho até às esplanadas.

As alterações de fundo predefinem com o trânsito. É o regresso à fórmula antiga. Isto é, a Rua 31 de Janeiro passará a ter apenas um sentido de tráfego, possibilitando uma banda de estacionamento, sendo proibido o trânsito na Rua do Comércio. O único eixo viário que a Praça deverá comportar será a ligação da Rua 31 de Janeiro com o largo Dr. Amândio Paul. Pelas características do espaço imediato à Sé, a ideia que se fará transmitir é a de que o automobilista abandone o uso da viatura em troca da deslocação a pé.

1-Futura localização da estátua de D. Sancho I; 2 - Fonte luminosa; 3- Zona pedonal



A Praça Velha no princípio do século



Terras da Beira lança desafio

O que pensa a Guarda sobre o assunto?

A estátua de D.Sancho I, o fundador da Guarda, vai mudar de sítio. Isto porque, há um Projecto de Reabilitação da "Praça Velha" que prevê alterações de fundo e que mexem com toda a organização do espaço, conforme explicamos nesta edição.

O que pensa, o caro leitor, desta mudança? Que opinião tem sobre o passado, o presente e o futuro da "Praça Velha"?

O *Terras da Beira* abre as suas páginas ao debate para que os cidadãos se pronunciem, tomem posição e digam se concordam ou não com a futura posição de D.Sancho I e quais as alternativas.

Envie a sua opinião, por correio ou via fax, para: *Jornal Terras da Beira - Rua Socorro Viegas 2-B - 6300 Guarda - fax-223112*

TERRAS_BEIRA

FIGURE 8. «Não temos Nada contra o D. Sancho!» [“We have nothing against King D. Sancho!”] Source: Journal Terras da Beira, May 3, 1996.

a general lack of awareness and sensitivity toward the square in the design proposal. And it criticized the provincialism of ideas such as the light-source fountain as indicative of a lack of control over public expenditure. Thus, according to the archeologist Lidia Fernandes,

*As a space for everyone, created a long time ago and lived on a multi-temporal dynamic, we don't want to create a modest center . . . a canvas of provincial vanities which will be simply ridiculous.*³⁷

And according to the architect Maria José Abrunhosa,

*In a city where public space is generally absolutely destitute, and where there is a lot to invest in, to spend money ruining what is right and could be improved with little, is something that steals sleep from everyone with good sense.*³⁸

From here emerged a range of opinions about alternative ways to redesign the square. One South African urban planner presented an alternative proposal that sought to spur debate on what a good redesign might look like.³⁹ Historians and architects cited also the importance of assigning the redesign to licensed architects to guarantee its final quality. Abrunhosa likewise argued that the municipality's design proposal lacked the necessary critical distance to produce a good outcome.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, all these opinions encouraged debate about urban design and an openness to controversy needed to encourage democratic participation.

Yet, as a result of the dialectic discourse among experts within this subjectivity, another position emerged on a subliminal level. This involved a largely unarticulated interpretation of the square's visual environment, reflecting the views of citizens concerned about the displacement of the king's statue.⁴¹

Expert opinion dismissed such a focus on the king's statue as potentially clouding the democratic transformation of the square. In general it was seen as inhibiting political discussion about the city and its collective future. Thus, according to Carlos Baía, a former city councilor,

*King D. Sancho was uplifted to the condition of an untouchable divinity. . . . Painfully, we must conclude that the surrounding reality only affects us when it includes symbols, which have an inherited affective meaning, without having stopped for one moment to judge their significance. . . . [T]he bronze figure of D. Sancho pulls the discussion away from the essential, sending it to a foolish symbolism which overshadows clairvoyance and good sense.*⁴²

Nevertheless, in the opinion of a few citizens, as published in the newspaper, the king's statue was a perfect match

to the square's monumentality, and did not affect its collective use. And although the statue was an integral part of the rhetorical construction of the dictatorship, not all citizens perceived it as such. They instead thought of it as simply contributing to the granitic monumentality of the square and its medieval imagery.⁴³ Such views, however, also revealed how the tradition of domination, constructed by the dictatorship, remained inscribed in the spatial experiences of some citizens, affecting their interpretations of space. And such interpretations likewise reflected a conservative and provincial understanding of the city that resembled its depiction in the novel *Estrela Polar* by Vergílio Ferreira decades before.

Later, in July 1996, the newspaper described the long-awaited public debate on the topic sponsored by the municipality. This was participated in widely by both experts and citizens. And, according to its article, these same two positions reemerged.⁴⁴

Despite such interest in its redesign, the square's rehabilitation was delayed due to lack of funds until the early 2000s. It was then that the municipality invited the MVCC architecture office to redesign the Old Square.⁴⁵ MVCC is an award-winning architectural firm, which at the time was involved in the rehabilitation of downtown Porto. One of its main partners, Camilo Cortesão, had also previously been engaged in urban studies and architectural projects in Guarda.⁴⁶ Portuguese legislation contains a general mandate that municipal governments follow open procedures for the award of contracts for outside services (including architectural proposals). However, in this case, the city was able to take advantage of an exception that allowed it to pursue a directly awarded contract.⁴⁷

After it was incorporated in Guarda's Strategic Plan, MVCC's proposal for the redesign of the square was included in a program of state-led urban rehabilitation and environmental improvement for the city. Called the Polis Program, this initiative had been started in 2000, and had been developed under the influence of neoliberal urban policies originating from the E.U. These policies reflected reforms and ideologies of interurban competition, entrepreneurialism, and the involvement of the private sector in urban regeneration initiatives — as blended with ideas of environmental sustainability, technology, conservation of cultural heritage, and economic and social cohesion.⁴⁸

The Polis Program was likewise built on the results of EXPO'98 and its success in Lisbon's rehabilitation. Following this effort, the effort was extended to target rundown, inner-city areas of midsized Portuguese cities, where it was intended to focus on the quality of open public spaces and their infrastructure, the upgrading of which was seen as necessary to create the conditions for contemporary multigenerational, multicultural urban life. In this regard, although Polis was designed in line with neoliberal E.U. discourses, it deviated from a simple focus on privatization and state intervention to facilitate capitalist accumulation.⁴⁹ Polis was seen

rather as a means of triggering private investment through the rehabilitation of public space, creating conditions for the renewal of surrounding private property and the creation of new businesses and employment opportunities.³⁰

Guarda was one of 39 cities in which the program was implemented. But the effort was cancelled in 2008 before its completion, as a result of budget cuts and the effects of the economic crisis. And, despite the conclusion of the Old Square rehabilitation project in 2006, the desired trigger effect did not occur the way policy-makers and local authorities had intended. As a result square is still surrounded by a significant number of vacant and derelict buildings.

Implemented between 2001 and 2006, the square's redesign followed some of the ideas already discussed in 1996. As the project description stated:

The spaces that constitute the surroundings of Guarda's Cathedral, of great patrimonial interest, were seriously damaged . . . by an unregulated use of space, by the

pavement's degradation, by the presence of infrastructural elements, in facades and pavements, and by an unqualified urban design which resulted from the juxtaposition of different and contradictory interventions of different epochs.³¹

The design strategy adopted to mitigate these conditions consisted of a reduction of vehicle use, the renewal of infrastructure, resurfacing of the square with granite pavers, and the introduction of bench-steps to address changes of level. This last feature in particular was intended to reinforce the use of the square as a place to stay. According to the same document, the statue of King Sancho was to be relocated to a site closer to the cathedral's southern facade to allow a more autonomous reading of the cathedral and other buildings around the square (FIGS. 9, 10).

Criticism of these design moves appeared in the media during and after the completion of the project. However, the architect Camilo Cortesão, publicly argued in favor of his de-



FIGURE 9. Guarda Square construction work, April 2005. Photo by Rui Jacinto.



FIGURE 10. Guarda Square. View from the top of the Cathedral, July 2017. Photo by Rui Jacinto.

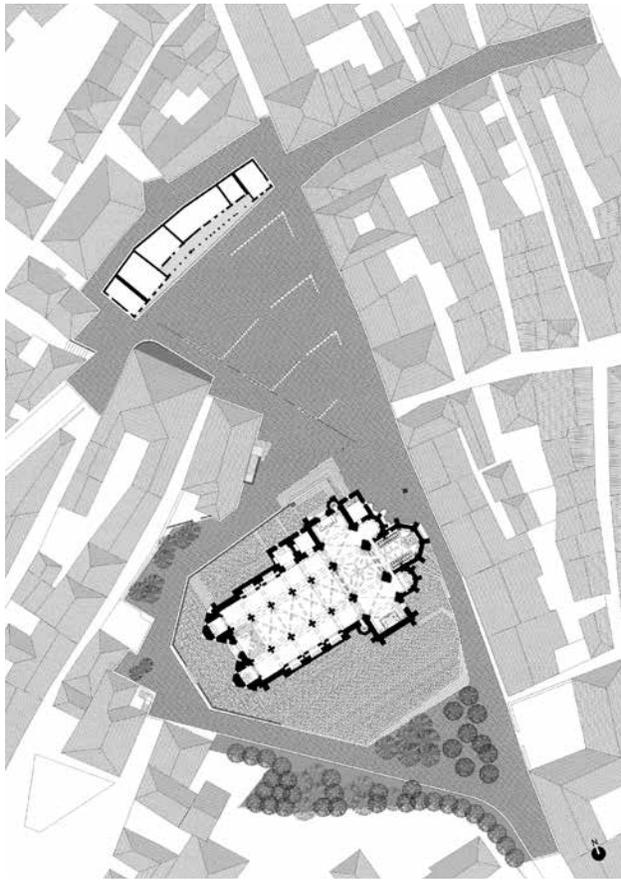


FIGURE 11. MVCC architects, design proposal for the square. Source: MVCC architects.

sign. He explained that the statue was only the latest element to be added to the space, and that its new location was more suitable and dignified. He also argued that the total program of changes to the square would reinforce the quality of its existing buildings, while at the same time creating a barrier-free space that would be open it for more modern social uses and provide space for outdoor cafés and popular spectacles (FIG. 11).⁵²

Later, Cortesão also explained how he believed this criticism had emerged as a result of a lack of local political engagement. And he faulted the process of critical reflection over the uses and future of the space:

... one thing is to intervene in public space; the other is to intervene in space. There is no point to intervene in public space without having a policy which can make space be used. . . . The transformation of an emblematic public space such as Guarda's square, only works if there is some coherence between the project's stance and the political one of the municipality. . . . A slower discussion is needed, until people want the transformation; otherwise, there's no point in doing construction works.⁵³

RESHAPING A TRADITION OF DOMINATION?

Did architecture have a say in reshaping this tradition of domination? Though it seems the square's design remains an unresolved problem among Guarda's citizens, its openness for collective use would argue otherwise. The square is now a place suited to democratic protest and contestation. It also serves as a location for the practice of urban customs such as the *Madeiro de Natal* [Christmas Fire], the Saint John Fair (a June festival originating in medieval times), the carnival custom of burning the rooster, and concerts and other popular activities (FIG. 12). Thus, unlike the objectual resignification of space under the dictatorship, the MVCC redesign has given new importance to the built environment of the square as a backdrop for public life. And this has been achieved without compromising or removing the authoritarian legacy. Indeed, this legacy is part of the design.

Yet because architecture alone was unable to achieve a more positive impact on local social dynamics, the public interpretation of the redesigned space has not been entirely positive. A singular focus on the displacement of the king's statue still affects the democratic and political interpretation of the space and its heritage. The work thus carries a warning about the danger of inadequate political debate regarding such urban transformations. This condition was further exacerbated by the inefficiency of state programs and the failure of local political management needed to trigger a corresponding program of local investment.

What people largely see today is that a populated city center, once brought to life by people as part of their everyday activities (despite its representations of authoritarianism), has been replaced by a hollow, derelict, depopulated historic center. On the one hand, the square's architectural redesign has brought it into the democratic present, and in the interest of a desired experience of modernity, it has freed it from the former tradition of domination. On the other hand, if the present use of the square is taken as proof of the suitability of its redesign as a support for contemporary life, then the need remains to continue the political debate around its importance.



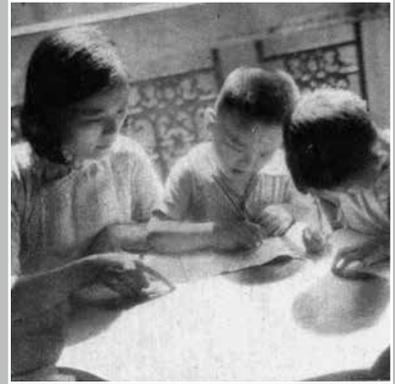
FIGURE 12. *Madeiro de Natal na Praça Velha* [Christmas Fire in the Old Square]. Photo by Rui Jacinto.

REFERENCE NOTES

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- the political and social contrast between the Portuguese absolutist monarchy and a new liberal and refreshed spirit. The substitution of the original pronoun “my” by “ours” in the title of the documentary was an attempt to denote the above-mentioned rhetorical construction of the Politics of Spirit and “its/ours” national portrait.
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Tianyuan Dushi (田園都市): The Garden City, Urban Planning, and Visions of Modernization in Early-Twentieth-Century China

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This article examines how the garden city idea was introduced to China in the early twentieth century and subsequently promoted by Chinese intellectuals and urban administrators as a means to promote urban improvement, economic development, and nation-building. While the grand planning visions conceptualized in this period remained largely on paper, many aspects of the garden city were selectively adapted by philanthropic organizations and real estate developers as “model settlements” that exemplified the norms of a “civilized society.” By examining the multiple interpretations of the garden city and its limited realization on Chinese soil, the article illustrates how a foreign planning concept was disseminated in a non-Western context. It also explores the specific ways in which this concept interacted with existing discourses about the city, the countryside, and the roles of the state and citizens in the construction of competing visions of the urban future.

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The depressed states of Chinese cities and countryside today have become a national disease. The only salvation lies in the development of garden cities.

— Butao (1934)¹

The building of garden cities must begin in earnest in order to make our cities more perfect. This will help advance our cultural development and increase our national strength.

— Yu Jinhong (1937)²

The endless urban expansion and polarization of the city and the countryside today have pushed individuals to become more selfish. . . . The common good cannot be protected without a balanced “town-country system” that enables real social progress.

— Jin Jingyuan (1998)³

In an article entitled “Research on the Garden City” that appeared in the architectural journal *Xinjianzhu* in 1937, the author Yu Jinhong made a forceful call for China to follow in the footsteps of Europe and America by building hundreds of garden cities, or *tianyuan dushi*. It was a step he saw as necessary both to resolve growing problems in Chinese cities and bring much-needed reform to the countryside.⁴ Addressing these twin measures, Yu argued, would help redirect China toward a more productive economy and advance its cultural development, as in the West.

Yu advanced his thesis by referring to England, where the garden city idea had originated, and asserted that the emergence of the concept there and its subsequent development into a worldwide planning movement was by no means an accident, but rather a historical necessity. As the first industrial nation in the world, Yu noted, England was also the first to experience unprecedented population growth, leading both to urban malaise in its cities and the decline of its rural agricultural economy. In this context, the garden city had emerged as a compelling solution because it combined the best aspects of the city and the countryside. Thus could the immorality of city life and backwardness of village life in China be cancelled out, bringing nature into the city and modern conveniences into the countryside and enabling real progress and lasting happiness for all.⁵

Yu’s article was one among many touching on similar themes published in Republican China beginning in the late 1900s, when the idea of the garden city as conceptualized by Ebenezer Howard was first introduced to China via news articles and translated texts.⁶ In the decades that followed numerous studies, manifestos, and policy initiatives, framed as “garden city developments,” appeared in academic and professional journals, advocating the urgent adoption of the garden city as a planning model to modernize the Chinese nation (FIG. 1). While the grand utopian visions proposed in the period remained mostly on paper, aspects of the garden city were selectively adapted in a number of “model settlements” initiated by philanthropic organizations and real estate developers. And, despite the disuse of the term under Communist rule because of its association with the pro-Western urban reform of the Republican era, many physical features of the garden city, such as the provision of a healthy environment, the organization of communal living, and the design of collective public spaces, were carried over in “new village” developments that began to appear in China in the 1950s.

This article, which belongs to a longer-term research effort exploring the production of knowledge in built-environ-

ment disciplines in twentieth-century China, examines how the garden city was promoted in the Republican period as a model for economic development and nation-building. While the advent of the garden city movement in other parts of the world has been well documented in planning literature, there has been no systematic inquiry to date on its trajectories in China, despite the widespread interest in it there and debates over its application. It is argued here that an effort to revisit the Chinese writings during this period will improve understanding not only of the dissemination of a key foreign planning concept in the Chinese context, but also the specific ways in which it interacted with existing discourses about the city, the countryside, and the roles of the state and citizens in development. As elsewhere, the persuasive power of the garden city lay not only in addressing potent issues of urbanization, but also in its openness to appropriation, enabling disparate adherents to project their desired, and often highly varied, forms of settlement into its future without diluting a stated commitment to modernization and social betterment.⁷ This inherent flexibility enabled the garden city concept to adapt to different geopolitical contexts, and is one of the reasons for its ongoing appeal. This study is thus also intended to prompt critical reflection on contemporary reappraisals of the theory in China and how particular assumptions about the role of cities and the urban-rural relationship have been reformulated to support ongoing nationalist development.

The following sections examine these dynamics by tracing how garden city theory was rearticulated by Chinese writers in academic and popular texts between the 1910s and 1930s. Social commentators at this time tended to frame the problems of Chinese cities as part of larger changes to an urban-rural system that accelerated after the Opium War.⁸ These critiques were dominated by concerns of “national salvation,” with the central question being how to overcome the “Western imposition” and engage with development as a transitive process through which China could speed up its development and rise to the status of an advanced modern nation.⁹ A preoccupation with the problems of urbanization also led intellectuals to adopt particular perspectives based on their own urban experiences. This ranged from those who urged that modernity and urban civilization be brought to the provincial towns and villages that, for them, epitomized China’s backwardness, to others who decried the concentration of wealth and power in cities and contrasted this to uncorrupted “village life” in the countryside.¹⁰ These presuppositions and their associated moral claims played a significant role in the conception of specific social visions and planning strategies for achieving them. Despite their divergent political views, intellectuals, government officials, and other development agents invariably embraced the garden city’s technical rationality and polemical views about the need to create a better future. In the process, they also created new sets of cultural vocabularies and aesthetic standards that would become attractive to middle-class urbanites aspiring to live a more comfortable life away from the congested city.

FIGURE 1. A Partial List of Chinese Publications on the Garden City (1908–1939).

Year	Title of Article / Text	Author	Journal / Publisher
1908	田園都市制度 Tianyuan Dushi Zhidu [The Garden City System]	劉石蓀 Liu Shisun	時報 <i>Shibao</i>
1912	貧民之住宅 Pinmin Zhi Zhuzhai [Housing for the Poor]		申報 <i>Shun Pao</i>
1913	田園都市之元祖 Tianyuan Dushi Zhi Yuanzu [The Origins of the Garden City]	日本農業世界 Ribei Nongye Shijie	湖北省農會農報 Hubei Sheng <i>Nonghui Nongbao</i>
	改良城市之理想 Gailiang Chengshi Zhi Lixiang [The Ideal of Urban Improvement]	天翼 Tianyi	進步 <i>Jinbu</i>
1914	歐美改良都市農村說 Oumei Gailiang Dushi Nongcun Shuo [Theories of Urban and Rural Reform in Europe and America]	陳玉潤 Chen Yurui	東方雜誌 <i>Dongfang Zazhi</i>
1919	都市規劃論 Dushi Guihua Lun [A Theory of Urban Planning]	孫科 Sun Ke	建設 <i>Jianshe</i>
1921	英國之住宅政策與都市規劃 Yingguo Zhi Zhuzhai Zhengce Yu Dushi Guihua [Housing Policy and Urban Planning in Britain]	羲農 Xinong	銀行周刊 <i>Yinhang Zhoukan</i>
	改革城市觀 Gaige Chengshi Guan [Perspectives on Urban Reform]	沈怡 Shen Yi	同濟雜誌 <i>Tongji Zazhi</i>
1922	文明生活與造園 Wenming Shenghuo Yu Zaoyuan [Civilised Living and Landscape Gardening]	童玉民 Tong Yumin	中華農學會報 <i>Zhonghua Nongxuehui Bao</i>
1923	俄國之花園都市 Eguo Zhi Huayuan Dushi [The Garden Cities of Russia]		東方雜誌 <i>Dongfang Zazhi</i>
	園城芻議 Yuancheng Chuyi [A Preliminary Discussion of the Garden City]	陳萱 Chen Xuan	東方雜誌 <i>Dongfang Zazhi</i>
1925	田園新市與我國市政 Tianyuan Xinshi Yu Woguo Shizheng [The Garden City and Urban Administration in China]	董修甲 Dong Xiuja	東方雜誌 <i>Dongfang Zazhi</i>
	英國的新村市 Yingguo De Xincunshi [Garden Villages in Britain]	潘公展 Pan Gongzhan	東方雜誌 <i>Dongfang Zazhi</i>
1927	英國田園市 Yingguo Tianyuanshi [British Garden City]	Yuge Shichiro, trans. Zhang Weihai	商業印書館 <i>Commercial Press</i>
	美的市政 Meide Shizheng [Aesthetic Urban Administration]	楊哲明 Yang Zheming	世界書局 <i>Shijie Shuju</i>
1929	英國住宅政策 Yingguo Zhuzhai Zhengce [British Housing Policies]	Tokyo Institute of Municipal Research, trans. Liu Guanghua	華通書局 <i>Huatong Shuju</i>
1930	田園都市 Tianyuan Dushu [The Garden City]	丁明 Ding Ming	時政月刊 <i>Shizheng Yuekan</i>
	田園都市論 Tianyuan Dushi Lun [Theory of the Garden City]	梁漢奇 Liang Hanqi	廣州市政公報 <i>Guangzhou Shi Shizheng Gongbao</i>
	田園都市 Tianyuan Dushi [The Garden City]	張維翰 Zhang Weihai	華通書局 <i>Huatong Shuju</i>

continued

FIGURE 1 (CONTINUED). A Partial List of Chinese Publications on the Garden City (1908–1939).

Year	Title of Article / Text	Author	Journal / Publisher
1931	市政概論 Shizheng Gailun [A Brief Introduction to Urban Administration]	楊哲明 Yang Zheming	道路月刊 <i>Daolu Yuekan</i>
	幽靜舒適的田園市 Youjing Shushi De Tianyuanshi [The Garden City of Comfort and Tranquillity]	徵言 Zhengyan	生活 <i>Shenghuo</i>
	田園都市計劃 Tianyuan Dushi Jihua [The Planning of Garden Cities]	楊哲明 Yang Zheming	復旦理工專號 <i>Fudan Ligong Zhuanhao</i>
	田園都市制度之研究 Tianyuan Dushi Zhidu Zhi Yanjiu [A Study of the Garden City System]	王雍 Wang Yong	社會雜誌 <i>Shehui Zazhi</i>
	英國之花園村 Yingguo Zhi Huayuancun [Garden Villages of Britain]	費福熊 Fei Fuxiong	生活 <i>Shenghuo</i>
1933	田園新市之趨勢 Tianyuan Xinshi Zhi Qushi [Recent Trends in the Development of Garden Cities]	翟宗心 Zhai Zongxin	汕頭時政公報 <i>Shantou Shi Shizheng Gongbao</i>
1934	田園都市的理想與實施 Tianyuan Dushi De Lixiang Yu Shishi [The Ideal of the Garden City and Its Application]	體揚 Tiyang	時政評論 <i>Shizheng Pinglun</i>
	田園都市為今日救國之一方案 Tianyuan Dushi Wei Jinri Jiuguo Zhiyi Fangan [The Garden City as a Means for National Salvation]	步陶 Butao	拓荒 <i>Tuohuang</i>
1935	田園都市之討論 Tianyuan Dushi Zhi Taolun [The Discussion of the Garden City]	琴心 Qinxin	錢業月報 <i>Qianye Yuebao</i>
1937	田園都市之研究 Tianyuan Dushi Zhi Yanjiu [Research on the Garden City]	庾錦洪 Yu Jinhong	新建築 <i>Xin Jianzhu</i>
	公營住宅區計劃之研究 Gongying Zhuzhaiqu Jihua Zhi yanjiu [A Study of the Planning of Public Housing Estates]	李楚白 Li Chubai	新建築 <i>Xin Jianzhu</i>
1939	戰時田園市計劃 Zhanshi Tianyuanshi Jihua [Wartime Garden City Planning]	張國瑞 Zhang Guorui	閔政月刊 <i>Minzheng Yuekan</i>

THE GARDEN CITY AND ITS TRANSNATIONAL CIRCULATION

Recent scholarship in planning history has significantly expanded understanding of the international dissemination of the garden city idea in the twentieth century. Although it originated in late-nineteenth-century Britain, Howard's conception was inspired by ideas that came from other places and times, including earlier writings by socialist utopians as well as efforts to design model industrial villages in America.¹¹ What distinguished the garden city was its seeming practicality: it would be built in the countryside where agricultural land could be cheaply acquired. Each "city" would have a fixed limit of 32,000 people, be provided with a wide range of jobs and urban services, and be connected with an efficient transport system. The ultimate goal was to create a "third socioeconomic system" based on land reform, cooperative

effort, and self-government, which would in turn enable a fairer and more equal society. Within a decade after the publication of Howard's two books, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898) and *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1902), the garden city concept was quickly disseminated to many countries. But, in the process, it also went through significant conceptual shifts, as its original emphasis on cooperative socialism was largely eclipsed by more practical concerns related to the planning and design of the environment. These concerns would be incorporated into emergent practices of town planning in the early twentieth century.

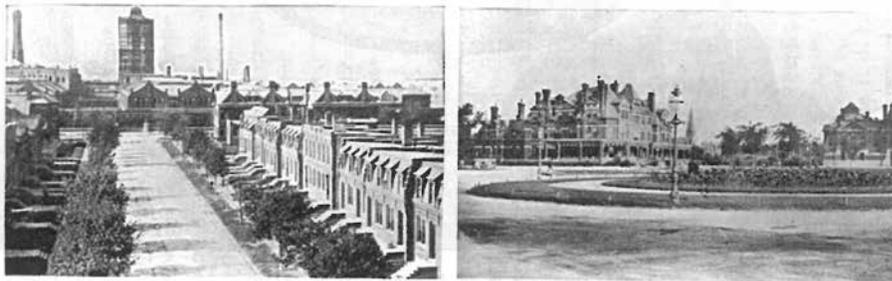
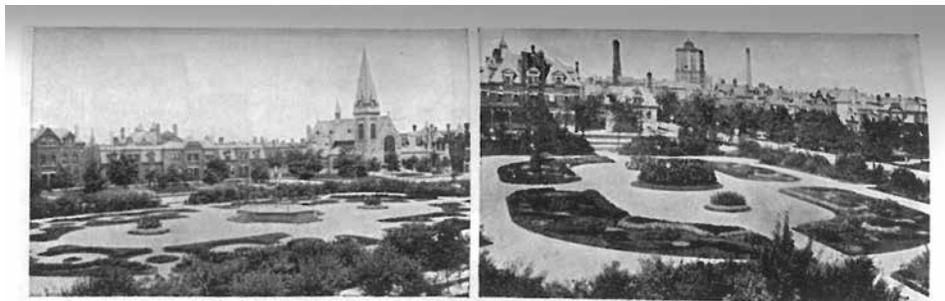
The spread of the garden city idea to colonial territories further diversified the garden city "tradition." Robert Home's study of garden city developments proposed by British planners in Lusaka and Nigeria, for example, has shown how Howard's ideal of providing harmonious communal living for all could be modified to suit existing segregation policies

that protected white privilege under colonial governance.¹² Similar trajectories can be observed in the French colonies in Africa and Asia, where the term *cité-jardin* was used with reference to the creation of expatriate residential quarters featuring private gardens and tree-lined streets.¹³ Meanwhile, other studies have illustrated that the garden city was embraced by indigenous developers in non-Western countries. Like their counterparts in Europe and America, they actively sponsored the construction of garden city projects to attract real estate investment.¹⁴

In his research on garden cities in Japan, Shunichi Watanabe has pointed out that, to gain a fuller understanding of the rationales behind these developments, it is important to trace the ways in which the garden city concept was translated into local languages and reinterpreted by various agents, who then applied them to specific projects on their own terms.¹⁵ Crucial to these processes were also the types of resources available to translators with different training and exposure. As will be discussed later, these factors played an important role in shaping how the garden city was rearticulated and elaborated by Chinese writers, including many who gained their initial understanding of the subject from translated texts. Before discussing these ideas, it is therefore useful to contextualize the Japanese translation of the garden city and its perceived roles in that country's modernization.

Watanabe's study reveals that the idea of the garden city was first introduced to Japan not through Howard's original book, but through one written by Alfred Richard Sennett. A British engineer, Sennett reinterpreted Howard's thesis in a

two-volume text of over 1,400 pages, *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice: Principles of a New Urban Planning*, which was first published in 1905 and arrived at Japan's Local Bureau of the Home Ministry in the same year (FIG. 2).¹⁶ Captivated by the book's rich visual illustrations and technical details, the bureau immediately embarked on producing a Japanese version of it. The hope was to create a set of practical guidelines to facilitate a "local improvement movement" that would help modernize rural village communities and strengthen their support for national development in an emerging Japanese Empire.¹⁷ The Japanese text, entitled *Den-en Toshi*, was completed in 1907 and was republished several times over the next five years.¹⁸ As Watanabe has contended, this text was not a proper introduction to Howard's garden city theory, nor was it a direct translation of Sennett — even though a closer reading suggests that its content and organization followed those in Sennett's text. Like the latter, the book consisted of many illustrations and descriptive details that were easily comprehensible. However, the title of the book, *Den-en Toshi*, conveyed a stronger connection with the term "rural village" or "farmland" than "city." In hindsight this seems to reflect the Japanese government's priority at the time to encourage agricultural reform nationwide.¹⁹ But discussion in the book also related garden cities to "industrial villages," and referred to the examples of Port Sunlight, Bournville, and other company towns that had gained renown in Europe and America. These discussions thus also suggest a sustained interest by state administrators in these towns as models of industrial development that could be adapted in Japan.²⁰



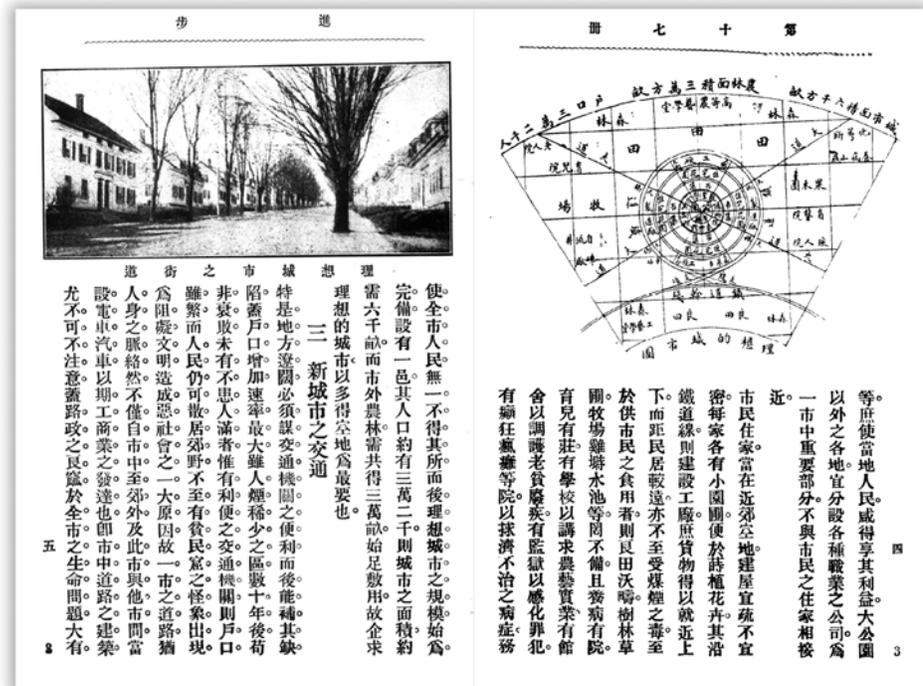
Views in the Garden City of Pullman, U.S.A.

Public Gardens and Church.
A typical Operatives' Avenue.

Public Gardens and Hotel.
The Central Circus and Hotel.

FIGURE 2. Images of the Pullman Car Company's planned town in the U.S.A. appeared in Sennett's *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice*. Sennett included many other examples of industrial villages in Britain, most notably Bournville and Port Sunlight. All of these projects were referred to as "garden cities" or "garden villages." Source: A.R. Sennett, *Garden Cities in Theory and Practice*, 1905.

FIGURE 3. Pages of an illustrated article on the garden city that appeared in a Chinese journal in 1913. This is possibly the earliest reproduction of Howard's diagrams in a Chinese publication. Source: Jinbu, 1913.



It is important to note here that, like *Garden Cities in Theory of Practice, Den-en Toshi* did not discuss the garden city as a means for radical social reform based on the voluntary cooperation and associative democracy advocated by Howard. Rather, it emphasized improving the life of the laboring class through the provision of a healthy, well-planned environment as a way to solicit their support for the state within a capitalist order.²¹ The paternalistic undertone of Sennett, who repeatedly warned against the danger of trade unionism and labor power, seemed to fit well with the perspectives of Japanese officials seeking to legitimize state policies and minimize social discontent, as well as industrialists eager to secure the loyalty and trust of their workers. To the Japanese, Sennett's garden city model — which followed the general planning schemes sketched out by Howard but whose rationality aligned more with that of a company town — thus presented a workable blueprint of modernization within a highly conservative social milieu.²² And, later on, the garden city idea would also be utilized by real estate developers in the creation of “garden suburbs” aimed at providing secluded residential enclaves for the upper class.²³

These kinds of development trajectories could also be found in in China. But, as the following section illustrates, a closer examination of how the garden city idea was elaborated upon in Chinese writings of the period indicates divergences that reflected competing approaches to modernization and the adaptation of foreign models. In the process, notions of history, culture and civilization also became entangled with the conception of different versions of “garden cities of the future.”

The earliest known publication on the garden city in China was a short essay that appeared in the newspaper

Shibao in 1908.²⁴ The subject was further elaborated on in a number of articles published in the early 1910s, including a substantial piece translated from a Japanese specialist journal in agriculture.²⁵ The following years saw an increasing number of writings that engaged with both Howard and Sennett's works. Like their Japanese counterparts, the content of these articles was typically comprised of detailed descriptions of the physical organization of the garden city, as sketched out by Howard (with some reinterpretation by Sennett). Most notably, these included an urban core for 30,000 inhabitants, surrounded by “green belts” along with farmlands and parks, and equipped with a full range of commercial, industrial and cultural amenities (FIG. 3).

There were also discussions of the acquisition of farmland, the forms of houses and gardens, the design of public spaces, and arrangements of cooperative land ownership. These aspects were most fully discussed in two full-length books translated from Japanese to Chinese by Zhang Weihai, who had studied urban administration in Japan in the 1910s and later assumed significant positions in the Guomindang government.²⁶ The first book, *Yingguo Tianyuanshi* [*The British Garden City*], was published as part of a new series on urban administration by the Commercial Press in 1927.²⁷ The second, *Tianyuan Dushi* [*The Garden City*] was a direct translation of the 1907 Japanese text *Den-en Toshi* and was published in 1931.²⁸ Another book, *Yingguo Zhuzhai Zhengce* [*British Housing Policy*], which was authored by the Tokyo Institute of Urban Administration, was translated and published in 1929 (FIG. 4).²⁹ In addition to these texts, many Chinese authors sought to reinterpret the garden city concept in specialist journals focusing on urban planning and admin-



FIGURE 4. Covers of three Chinese texts on the garden city. From left to right: Yingguo Tianyuanshi [British Garden City] (1927), Tianyuan Dushi [The Garden City] (1931), and Yingguo Zhuzhai Zhengce [British Housing Policy] (1929).

istration, such as *Shizheng Pinglun* [Review of Urban Administration], *Shizheng Jianshe* [Civic Administration Periodicals], and *Good Road Monthly* (REFER TO FIG. 1).³⁰ But, curiously, Howard's original 1898 book, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, was never translated. And his 1902 edition, *Garden Cities for To-morrow*, was only translated into Chinese for the first time in 2010.³¹

Closely following the content of the foreign texts, most of the articles in Chinese journals of the time posited the garden city as a desirable model of development that involved the formation of hundreds of newly planned settlements across the nation connected by modern transportation networks, which could more easily be managed than existing metropolises. But to highlight the urgency of implementing a superior foreign planning model, these articles also contained strong criticisms of the backwardness of China's development, which their authors claimed lagged behind the West and Japan. These critiques resonated with other contemporary writings by Chinese intellectuals who blamed

China's national weakness on entrenched cultural traditions and Confucianist thinking that paralyzed any incentives for innovation.³² The perspective was grounded on a growing faith that modern planning based on scientific principles could provide solutions to all urban problems and help revive the declining rural economy.

What the garden city thus offered was a technological, utopian vision of a future in which all Chinese citizens would enjoy good health and modern material comfort in a productive and well-ordered society. The desire to elevate China to a modern industrial nation on par with the West and Japan partially explained the enthusiastic reception of writings such as those of Sennett, who believed that social betterment could be enabled through technological knowhow and industrial paternalism. The means to achieve this was planning, which could put in place a new system of spatial organization without necessarily having to revolutionize existing social organizations (FIG. 5).³³

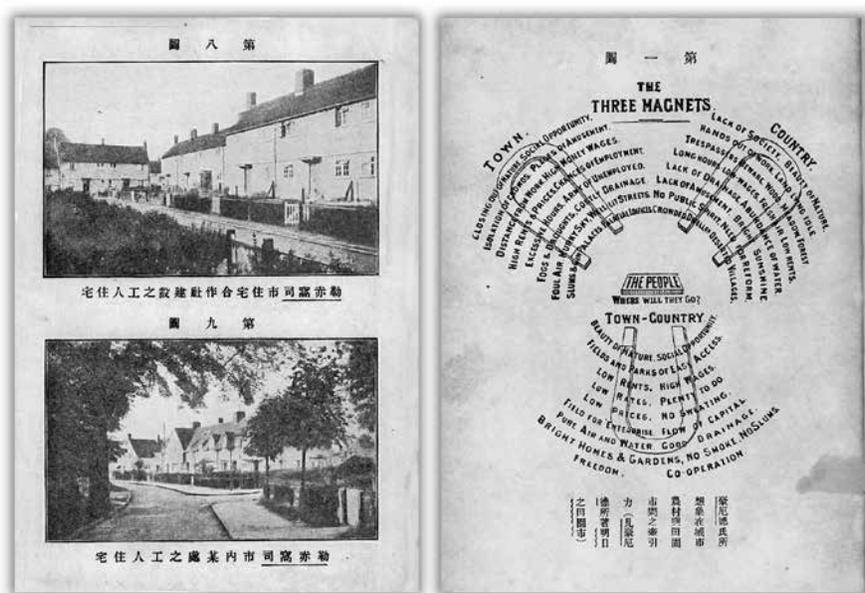


FIGURE 5. Pages of Yingguo Tianyuanshi [British Garden City] (1927), translated by Zhang Weihan.

THE RISE OF URBAN ADMINISTRATION AND THE "AESTHETICIZED CITY" AS A BLUEPRINT OF MODERNIZATION

Authors of articles in these specialist journals were mostly young Chinese men who had received their education in urban administration in America and Japan. And their careers were closely tied to the rise of the new professional field of municipal administration, or *shizheng*, in the 1920s.³⁴ As noted by Jeffrey Cody and others, such development was strongly influenced by emergent ideas of urban planning and municipal progress in America, which emphasized the importance of zoning, municipal annexation, improvements to housing and infrastructure, and better design of public spaces.³⁵ Yet, ironically, many of these ideas had themselves been developed through a transnational exchange of knowledge by which the garden city had evolved into a new "tradition" in America. These transnational influences were strengthened in China by the active role of foreign-trained graduates in municipal administrations, the setting up of professional institutes, and the appointment of American advisors in the implementation of major planning schemes, including those in Guangzhou, Nanjing and Shanghai.³⁶

Keen to apply their modern planning knowledge in China, young Chinese municipal specialists shared the belief that better-designed environments were essential for enabling Chinese citizens to become healthier and more "civilized." This would enable the cultivation of a stronger sense of civic duty, which the specialists saw as an essential characteristic of a national population. As public officials, these specialists also saw the limits of private enterprise in spreading industrialism, and believed that local governments should play a greater role in directing development and urban reform. It was in this context that the garden city was rigorously promoted as a state-led planning model through a systematic assessment of its applicability in the Chinese context.

These discussions were encapsulated in the writings of Sun Ke, the three-time mayor of Guangzhou and son of the founder of the Chinese Republic, Sun Yat-San. Trained in city planning and administration at the University of California and Columbia University in the United States, Sun played a key role in the introduction of comprehensive planning legislation and the construction of "model garden suburbs" in Guangzhou.³⁷ In his article "Dushi Guihua Lun" ["A Theory of Urban Planning"], published in 1919 in the journal *Jianshe*, Sun discussed the advent of modern town planning and presented case studies of garden city development in Europe and America.³⁸ He also highlighted the importance of scientific research in these projects — an example being social and economic surveys carried out by municipal government officials that helped to devise more effective development and housing strategies.

Another important promoter of modern planning was Dong Xujia, founder of the Chinese Association for the Study of Urban Administration, who had worked for the municipal governments of Hankow and Shanghai.³⁹ Like Sun, Dong also received his education in the United States, where he had studied urban economics at the University of Michigan and city administration at the University of California. In his 1925 article "Garden City and China's Urban Administration," published in the journal *Dongfang Zazhi*, Dong sketched out what he conceived of as an ideal municipal governing structure for the garden city that could be applied in China.⁴⁰ Included in the article was a diagram illustrating the organization of an ideal city that was carefully modified from one of Howard's original drawings, and indicating the arrangement of a variety of civic spaces and residential areas (FIG. 6). Dong's diagram generated enthusiastic discussions and was subsequently reinterpreted by several Chinese writers who sought to further elucidate Howard's idea based on Dong's work and to popularize the garden city as a blueprint for development for future China (FIG. 7).⁴¹

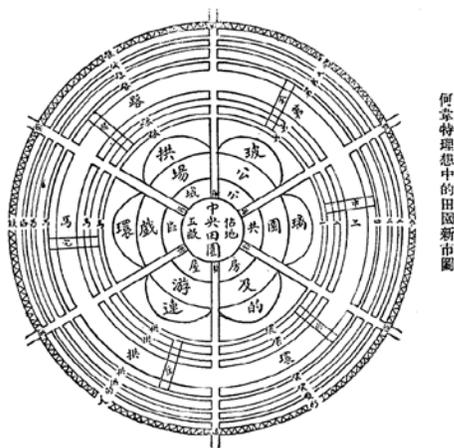


FIGURE 6. Dong Xujia's reinterpretation of the organization of Howard's garden city. Source: Dongfang Zazhi, 1925.

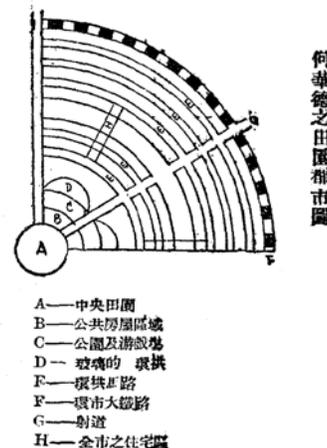


FIGURE 7. An example of the reinterpretation of Howard's garden city diagram in a Chinese journal. Source: Shehui Zazhi, 1931.

Although all of these articles claimed that the garden city would combine the best aspects of the city and the countryside, a closer examination shows that their priority was on maximizing the *urban potential* of the proposed new settlements to help deliver economic and social benefits to residents. This city-centric view could be seen in Dong's numerous writings, in which he consistently posited that cities were centers of the national economy and that China's future would lie on moving beyond the "traditional agriculture-based state."⁴² His conviction that cities were ultimately places where new aesthetic and functional standards would be set for the nation also made clear that his envisioned garden city leaned toward the visual character and positive qualities of the modern metropolis.⁴³

The subjects of urban aesthetics and urban order were addressed in greater detail by other writers who focused their discussions on architecture and urban design. These articles made frequent references to European and American cities that had successfully elevated their international image by implementing meticulous control over every aspect of urban development.⁴⁴ A key advocate here was Yang Zheming, who was the editor of the mass-market magazine *Shijie Zazhi* and the author of several popular "handbooks" on urban planning and design.⁴⁵ In his book *Meide Shizheng* [*Aesthetic Municipal Administration*], Yang argued that the most important function of urban aesthetics was not just to make cities more beautiful, but to foster a modern subjectivity capable of supporting effective urban governance.⁴⁶ This argument was tied to emergent calls from other Chinese intellectuals to integrate humanistic and artistic aspects with scientific thinking in China's modernization project. It was through such efforts that citizens would learn to appreciate the "social dimensions of beauty" that could be found in the public domain of a modern city.⁴⁷ Resembling both Sennett's treatise on the garden city and those of his Japanese interpolators, *Meide Shizheng* also provided detailed guidelines for the construction of a variety of urban fabrics ranging from boulevards to riverbanks to public parks to transportation infrastructure, as well as settings for civic institutions such as museums, theaters and libraries, which were key components of a "civilized" modern society.⁴⁸

Posited as a blueprint for modernization, Yang's "aestheticized city" was based on a cosmopolitan vision emerging from successful urban reform efforts in the great metropolises in Europe and America. It was predicated on the belief that it was possible by appealing to human emotion and appreciation of beauty to establish a new social relationship between the private and public realms.⁴⁹ However, this humanistic vision of advanced civil society enabled by physical planning tended to disregard the historical conditions that continued to shape urban China. It likewise largely ignored the intensifying social disparities and class conflicts in the urbanization process in the country. Indeed, the ongoing fiscal crisis of the Guomindang government and its inability

to address growing housing problems significantly weakened administrators' claims for the need to use aesthetic means to achieve social ends in urban improvement projects. And it was in this context that the idea of the "aestheticized city" appeared regressive in the eyes of those disillusioned with Republican politics.

COMPETING UTOPIAS: NEW VILLAGES, MODEL DWELLINGS, AND GARDEN SUBURBS

Although the radical social vision of Howard was deemphasized in the state-led garden city models proposed by Republican urban administrators, it was embraced by a number of Chinese anarchist groups seeking to experiment with alternative social organizations in the form of "new village communities."⁵⁰ Like other utopian communes that emerged elsewhere, proponents of these communities hoped to create within an insulated "village" environment a miniaturized ideal society based on the principles of mutual aid, common property, and physical labor.⁵¹ The idea was strongly influenced by the Chinese novelist Zhou Zuoren, who was an ardent supporter of the "new village" movement initiated by the Japanese anarchist Mushanokoji Saneatsu.⁵² Although most of these experimental communities were short lived, and had dissipated by the late 1920s, their supporters continued to promote their cause through publications. And it was in this context that the term "new village" became increasingly popularized, not just by way of reference to its original connotation as a radical social organization for replacing the capitalist system, but also as "a new form of dwelling," "a new aesthetic environment," and "a new civilized community," etc. Later on, the term was also deployed in the slogans of different types of development schemes with more moderate agendas, including model workers' housing initiated by municipal governments, philanthropic organizations, as well as in private residential estates built by real estate developers.⁵³

By the late 1920s the terms "garden city" and "new village" had both become entrenched cultural concepts in the popular press, often being used interchangeably, along with such other terms as "garden cities," "garden villages" and "model villages."⁵⁴ Regardless of their orientations, authors of these articles typically began by critiquing the social ills of large cities, and followed by calling for the development of new settlements in the countryside that could offer a better quality of life and help create harmonious communities that were happier, healthier, and more "civilized."⁵⁵ Features of the garden city were most widely adopted in the promotion of suburban development schemes targeted at middle-class families. These projects were sometimes published in the "lifestyle sections" of illustrated magazines, which introduced the latest trends in architecture and domestic living to the population. Here, imagery of idyllic life, associated with the countryside, was coupled with that of modern urban living in



FIGURE 8 (ABOVE). An image that appeared in a 1935 magazine article that sought to promote the Rose Villa as a model village and a perfect environment for raising children. Source: Meishu Shenghuo, 1935.

FIGURE 9. (RIGHT) Image of a child enjoying the spacious green space in the Rose Villa. Source: Meishu Shenghuo, 1935.

an effort to attract urbanites to seek better and more affordable places to live away from city centers (FIGS. 8, 9).⁵⁶

One project whose forms in some ways came closest to those of the first British garden cities such as Letchworth and Welwyn was the Rose Villa, a cooperative housing scheme consisting of fifty detached bungalows on more than 100 acres of land on Ningguo Xiang Xijiatang, on the outskirts of Shanghai.⁵⁷ The project was initiated in 1933 by a Chinese syndicate led by Zhang Yongnian, a businessman who established the Chinese New Village Construction Society as a cooperative agency responsible for its planning and construction. According to the project brief, the conception of the Rose Villa was based primarily on “the form of the British garden city and essence of the Japanese new village.”⁵⁸ It was also significantly influenced by the cooperative housing movement in Britain and Europe, which encouraged subscribers with moderate incomes to become owners of a small landed property by contributing a limited initial payment and monthly rent.⁵⁹ From the beginning, the project was presented as an alternative to other profit-oriented real estate projects by underscoring its commitment to “community development” and the provision of a wide range of social benefits to residents.

These provisions focused on three aspects which were the scheme’s main selling points: 1) a healthy environment for children, who would enjoy full access to nature and good educational facilities; 2) creation of opportunities for women to contribute to the community through the setup of communal workshops for clothes-making, silk-weaving, beekeeping, etc.; and 3) the establishment of cooperative enterprises to



ensure the availability of daily necessities at low cost.⁶⁰ In addition, residents would enjoy the use of communal facilities including parks and gardens, libraries, tennis courts, playing fields, health centers, and nurseries. Like cooperative housing schemes elsewhere, all facilities would be managed by the Construction Society, whose decisions were made collectively by residents, and who assumed full control of its operation.



FIGURE 10. Image of a residence in the Rose Villa. Source: Meishu Shenghuo, 1935.

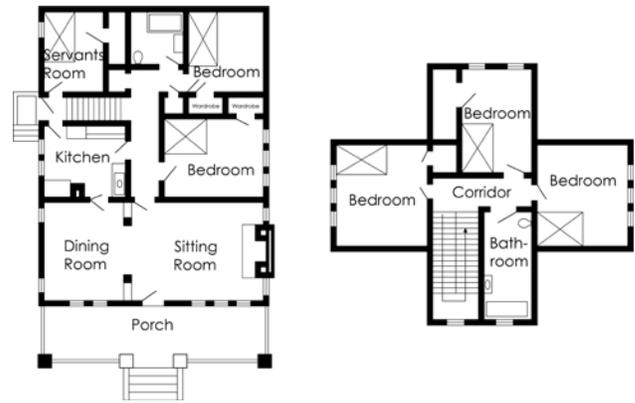


FIGURE 11. Floor plan of a residence in the Rose Villa.

Although the Rose Villa was marketed as an affordable housing project, its planning and design were comparable to those of fashionable “garden suburbs” near Shanghai.⁶¹ The stated goal was to create “a grand and beautiful new village,” in which each house would enjoy the best possible orientation in terms of natural light and ventilation.⁶² The project was designed by the well-known architectural firm East Asia Architects. Following the residential schemes in other upscale expatriate neighborhoods, the houses were categorized into “English,” “California,” and “Spanish” styles, with each equipped with private gardens and a full range of modern conveniences (FIGS. 10, 11). Residential areas throughout the premises were surrounded by landscape gardens with a variety of plants carefully selected by a landscape architect, and with resting places strategically located along tree-lined avenues and river walks (FIG. 12). Notwithstanding its idyllic environment, the Rose Villa was also conveniently connected to Shanghai via a new highway, and it was situated only ten kilometers from the French Concession, apparently a major selling point for attracting potential residents from the city (FIG. 13).⁶³

The inception of the Rose Villa generated immediate interest amongst potential investors and won praise from many social commenters for Zhang’s farsighted vision. However, it also prompted some skeptics to point out that, despite

its claim of bringing benefits to the “common people,” the properties were in reality out of reach of a majority of the Chinese population. Some went further to accuse the Rose Villa of having hijacked the original egalitarian vision of the garden city to promote a scheme with little regard for the peasants living in the “old villages” around the site. It was also criticized for not addressing the problems of the declining agricultural economy and increasing land prices as a result of urbanization.⁶⁴ These criticisms in turn led supporters of the Rose Villa to take to the press to assert that Zhang’s initiative should in fact be appreciated as “an incremental but realistic effort in resolving the housing problem of China.” More importantly, it provided a means for “reforming Chinese society” through the creation of a model village settlement that embodied all the norms of a “healthy community needed for China’s ongoing modernization.”⁶⁵

These aspects were articulated, for example, in an article entitled “The Ideal of New Village” published in the journal *Nanfang Zazhi* by Xiao Bai in 1933.⁶⁶ Xiao sought to clarify the true nature of “model settlements” such as the Rose Villa according to three criteria. First, he argued, it was a cooperative enterprise formed by volunteering individuals aspired to advance social progress without any political agendas. Second, he noted it was an integral part of the Chinese nation and not an anarchist commune. And third, he described it

Planning and Architecture

- Site formation
- Residential house design
- Police station and market
- Streets and bridges
- Drainage and nullahs
- Community hall

Landscape Design

- Parks
- Residential gardens
- Streets
- River banks and paths

Public Amenities

- Water supplies
- Electric lights and telephone lines
- Transportation
- Security
- Domestic amenities
- Sporting grounds

Community Management

- Education
- Production
- Cooperative enterprises
- Social facilities
- Community service

FIGURE 12. The planning and design parameters of the Rose Villa as outlined in the project brief, 1937. Source: Hengshe Yuekan, 1937.



FIGURE 13. A model of the Rose Villa showing the arrangement of houses. Source: Meishu Shenghuo, 1935.

as a place defined by care and mutual respect, qualities that were diametrically opposite to the destructive inclination of the “socialists.” Xiao further argued that the success of these model settlements and the actualization of “new living” within them would be the best means for building the nation and delegitimizing the agendas of the radical socialists who sought to destroy such efforts.

Xiao’s statements reflected the emerging anxieties among intellectual elites and Republican administrators over the growing influence of Communist thought, which was attracting many young Chinese who were frustrated with the entrenched social inequality and widespread corruption under the Guomindang regime. To Xiao and supporters of the government the call to strengthen the norms of a healthy, law-abiding society was seen to be essential — not only for resisting the negative impacts of urbanization, but also to counter rising support for socialism and the danger of revolution. Here, the development of garden cities such as the Rose Villa served as a necessary spatial setting for the creation of a miniaturized “model society” for future China.⁶⁷ This conception, which resonated strongly with the conservative New Life Movement that appeared in the mid-1930s, was built upon the humanistic vision of urban administrators who aspired to advance modernization via well-planned, “aestheticized environments” like those they had seen in the West.⁶⁸ However, the continual failure of the government to address worsening social conflicts made these proposals and their stated ideals appear increasingly regressive in the eyes of radical socialists, who came to see them merely as a means to preserve the bourgeois capitalist urban order.

It should be noted that despite the fact that the Rose Villa fell far short of realizing Howard’s egalitarian ideal, its promoters were not unaware of its limitations (FIG. 14). In a 1939 essay, Zhang Guorui, an investment partner of Zhang Yongnian and co-founder of the Chinese New Village Construction Society, acknowledged that, given their scales and scopes, model villages such as the Rose Villa were unable to achieve the mission of resolving the larger problem of urbanization and reforming social norms.⁶⁹ That said, Zhang strongly believed that the garden city model remained a potent

source for creating a better future China. The essay, titled “War Time Garden City Planning,” was written at the height of the Sino-Japanese military conflict, at a time when there was also growing interest in decentralizing large urban settlements to protect cities from air raids. In addition to protecting the health and safety of citizens, however, Zhang argued that the war had created a rare opportunity to rethink the essence of the garden city. Most importantly, the adoption of decentralized planning would help to reconfigure the urban-rural relationship and create a new network of “social cities” that would lead to a more productive and harmonious Chinese society.

RESILIENCE AND MALLEABILITY OF THE GARDEN CITY CONCEPT

Given the tremendous interest in applying the garden city as a planning model in China in the early twentieth century, it might seem surprising that there have been few systematic investigations of this history until recently. This article has attempted to begin to rectify this gap within existing literature and illustrate some of the changing trajectories of the garden city ideal within the Chinese context. Once posited as a key term associated with urban improvement, economic development, and nation-building, the term “garden city” ceased to be referred to in academic and popular writings in the 1950s. This disuse was possibly a result of changed priorities in national development under Communist rule and the attempt to disassociate its agenda from that of pro-Western and pro-capitalist municipal administrators in the Republican period. Nevertheless, many physical dimensions of the garden city, such as the provision of a healthy environment with good access to nature, the organization of communal living and design of collective public spaces, were incorporated in the design of state-led “new villages” in the 1950s.

As the preceding sections have shown, the adoption of the garden city idea, as with other transnational planning concepts, involved a process of translation through which the original formulation was appropriated to address local contexts and the agendas of local promoters. In the 1920s and 30s, Republican administrators encouraged garden city development with the goal of developing the urban potential of towns and villages across the nation by constructing an aestheticized urban order in the face of new transportation technologies. The idea was also taken up by anarchist groups who wanted to create utopian communities in the form of “new villages” with alternative social organizations.” While most of these ambitious initiatives remained on paper, some aspects of the garden city were realized in the cooperative housing schemes of Chinese businessmen and philanthropic organizations, who sought to develop “model settlements” that exemplified the positive norms of a “civilized” society. These projects were critiqued by some observers on account of their paternalistic nature and inability to address real

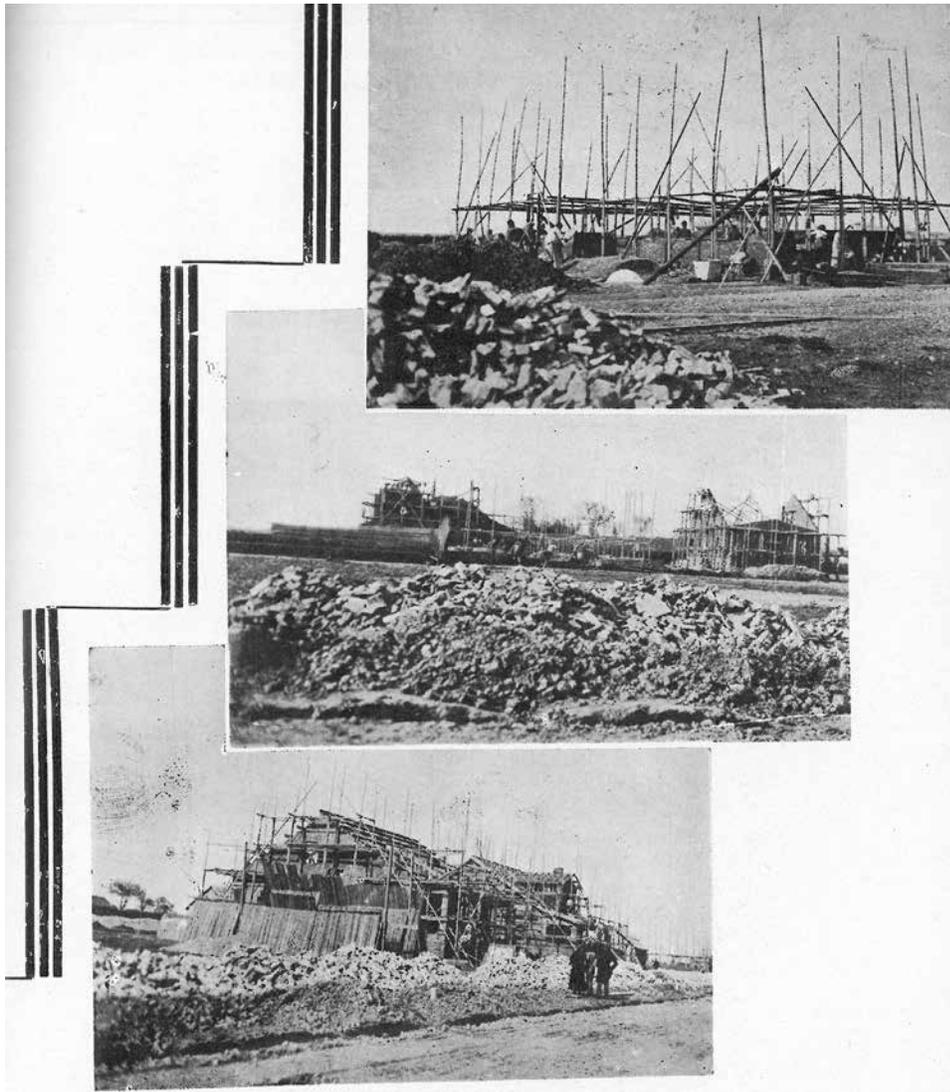


FIGURE 14. *The Rose Villa in the process of construction in 1935.* Source: *The Builder*, 1935.

housing problems arising from the urbanization process. Nevertheless, they became highly desirable places to live in the eyes of many middle-class families seeking to escape the unhealthy environments of city centers.

Although Howard's original vision, which was predicated on voluntary cooperation and associative democracy, was not the central tenet in the proposals of Republican administrators, the underlying polemics of creating a more perfect city and harmonious society retained lasting appeal among supporters of the garden city concept. These included not only intellectuals and educated elites, but also many ordinary urbanites who looked to the garden city not so much as an ideological instrument for nation building, but more as an idealistic image that fostered their aspirations to live a better life by becoming owners of a suburban property in a safe and healthy environment. These multiple, and sometimes conflicting interpretations and motivations, point to both the resilience and malleability of the garden city concept, which

continued to serve as a powerful source for different social actors to construct imaginaries of their desired urban futures.

The historic importance and subsequent disuse of the term "garden city" for many decades also raises questions regarding recent, renewed interest in Howard's work among planners in China, which seems to have been precipitated by the onset of economic reform and accelerating urbanization beginning in the early 1980s. What is the intellectual and moral basis behind the new calls to reconsider the garden city as a development model for China in the twenty-first century?

While a fuller answer to such questions will require more research on development practices over the past decades, some early reflections can be discerned in the writings of Jin Jingyuan, the planning scholar who provided the first full Chinese translation of Howard's *Garden City of To-morrow*.²⁰ In an article entitled "Garden City of Tomorrow — An Emblem of New Age for Urban Planning" published in *Urban Planning Forum* in 1998, Jin argued that despite it having been conceived over

a century ago, Howard's proposed "town-country-system" is more relevant in China today than ever, as the nation confronts increased pressures to control urban sprawl and address other environmental and social problems associated with rapid urbanization.⁷¹ In his opinion, these problems must be understood not only from a technical point of view, but also a moral one. Central to his claim is that the polarization of the city and the countryside associated with urban growth led individuals to become self-seeking and increasingly disinterested in protecting the common good. The only solution, Jin contended, is to create a different urban-rural order, such as that outlined in Howard's garden city, where citizens may live in a humanistic and harmonious environment defined by mutual respect. Jin further pointed out that China is finally poised to fulfill what Howard could not fully achieve at his time, as its socialist system makes it a perfect place to push forward such new planning experiments aided by a strong state.

It is not without some irony that Jin's complaints about urban malaise and insistence on the important role of the state echo those of reformers in the Republican period, since the latter also believed that, if proven successful, garden city projects would be the best remedies for preserving the capitalist state and delegitimizing socialism. Notwithstanding their divergent political positions, both looked to the garden city as a means to project their visions of an ideal society in which current urban problems and social crisis would be eradicated. As this article has shown, a revisiting of the narratives of those implicated could help illuminate the historical processes that shaped these ideas, and by doing so shed light on changing moral assumptions and collective aspirations about urban living and the role of the state in mediating imagined futures such as those represented by the garden city past and future.

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