

# Whose Habitat? Housing and the Dilemma of Architectural Production, c.1976

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In October 2016 the United Nations held its third Habitat conference, in Quito, Ecuador, with the intent to promote a “New Urban Agenda.” Habitat III: Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, took place forty years after the first Habitat Conference on Human Settlements, in Vancouver in 1976.<sup>1</sup> Between 1976 and 2016, with the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., the world formally emerged from the Cold War, and along with it the reformulation of the First, Second and Third Worlds. The subsequent breakdown of state control in some areas formerly ruled by Communist governments produced new civil and ethnic conflicts, particularly in the former Yugoslavia. But in Central and Eastern Europe, the end of the Cold War ushered in an era of economic growth and an increase in the number of liberal democracies. Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, such as Afghanistan and Syria, new forms of independence brought state failure. It is now evident how the globalization of the Cold War era created the foundations for most of today’s key international conflicts.<sup>2</sup> Yet at Habitat III, in 2016, it was acknowledged that one-third of the world’s population still suffered from inadequate living conditions, making the imperative of Habitat 1976 ever urgent. In response to the recent release of the digital archive of all three U.N. Habitat conferences, this article reexamines the global conversations on human settlements at the first Habitat.<sup>3</sup> By attending to the genealogies of ideas, definitions, geographies and identities, it revisits the moment when architects were in alignment with proponents of a comprehensive governmental approach to issues of human settlement. Crucially, it contends that the ideas behind Habitat offer a microcosm of the overlapping dualities produced in the dominant discourses of architectural modernism, ones that continue to be reproduced today.

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On June 1, 1976, the economist Barbara Ward (Lady Jackson) began her speech at Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements by declaring, “one of the most hopeful developments of the Seventies is the degree to which world society has begun to examine, seriously and together, what one might call the basic facts of ‘planetary housekeeping.’”<sup>4</sup> Two days earlier, on May 30, Ward and 23 other “international experts” had signed the Declaration of the Vancouver Symposium, acknowledging that “[t]he community itself and all its people must become the focus of policy.”<sup>5</sup> The declaration stipulated that the priority of “the people” and “their settlements” — or rather, “human settlements” — demanded necessary and immediate action from governments. It was also evident that the “fourteen priority demands” at the beginning of the declaration constituted the latest authoritative stance of First World environmentalists. Yet, notably, almost all of them emphasized government or institutional control, with the exception of point 10, which called for the “full participation of all residents in the decision-making that determines policies for their settlements.” Implicit in the priority points was thus a demand for *more* government.

With the signing of the declaration and its endorsement by the United Nations, proponents of the event called forth a series of constructions that were being tended to by architects and architectural theorists — even though, at first, the very concept of Habitat (“too vast a subject”) seemed to elude prevailing architectural discourse.<sup>6</sup> Primary among the constructions was an implied human subject, specifically the inhabitant of “residual” settlements. For the congregation at Habitat, this subject, in both developed and developing regions (represented as either authentic premodern survivors or simply those engaged in bare life), was the intended agent of integration into a new socio-political totality. This approach to a total settlements system was to be jumpstarted by international and national policy, believed to be the only possible way to ensure “the task of building the City of Man according to its true dimensions of civilization.”<sup>8</sup> Beneath the optimism and the plethora of well-intentioned policies, however, it is impossible today to miss a totalizing tendency to co-opt all subjects under the rubric of the single civilizing form of the U.N. Such a mandate of inclusion foreshadowed Habitat.

To what extent had Habitat invoked these subjects to participate in the imagination and reimagining of the world in 1976? The relinquishing of the very same subject to a larger global framework had already signaled the isolation of architecture from the socio-technical and sociopolitical forces at work in the discourse of Habitat. In the post-exuberant climate of the Seventies, weary-worn after the battle against the normative pressures of high modernism, architecture’s confrontation with these forces had compelled its withdrawal into disciplinary autonomy.<sup>9</sup>

Two prolific architectural critics, Martin Pawley of the *Guardian* and Peter Blake, the editor-in-chief of *Architectural Forum*, had previously highlighted the dilemma of archi-

ture and housing based on the reformist framework of architectural modernism. Pawley, in his 1971 book *Architecture versus Housing*, had traced the international growth of housing administration and the pressures that had persuaded governments to introduce publicly financed housing projects (which he argued were highly inadequate). And he had urged architects to move away from a functionalist theory of design, toward a new movement of mass housing that would take into account concepts of mobility, systemization, and lifestyle change.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, Blake, who identified himself with “the Third and Fourth Generation modernists,” in the lineage of the “masters,” had refuted the assumption that large urban housing developments were needed to solve “our desperate housing shortages.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, at the time he wrote his piece for *The Atlantic* in March 1974, the last residents of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis were already moving out. And by May 12, the complex with its remaining 33 buildings, which Blake called “a modern ruin,” had been completely fenced off.<sup>12</sup>

At Habitat 1976, therefore, it seemed architectural production had found many exits — expressly through the image and the orchestrated lack of it. How could those same forces and agencies then be employed in a rethinking of the vast problem of planetary settlement patterns through architecture and its representations? Was the U.N.’s invitation to First World representatives of civil society and the Third World *others* an indication of Big Brother’s acceptance of “a singular modernity” (to recall Frederic Jameson’s concept that modernity is always a concept of otherness) in lieu of a global identity predicated on difference? Or did the specter of the modern — represented not least by the pervasive presence of the U.N. and the *invisible* World Bank — signal the return of the repressed lurking beneath nascent discourses of globalization? How did the conversations and representations of Habitat ‘76 put forth the antagonistic conceptions — “developed and developing,” “expertise and nonexpertise,” “governmentality and nongovernmentality,” “homogenization and heterogeneity,” “indigenous and modern,” “formal and informal” — that still resonate in architectural discourse and practice?

#### CONFERENCE VERSUS FORUM

The U.N. Habitat Conference was held in Vancouver, Canada, from May 31 to June 11, 1976. It originated as a direct successor of the U.N. Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972, which had highlighted how the more specialized problems of the built environment needed a world meeting of their own. The underlying assumption of Habitat was the unequivocal pursuit of the goodness of civilization. From the outset, however, the official Conference and its associated Forum (also known as the NGO, or nongovernmental organization, conference) were staged as a double event. Both were intended to focus world attention on the problems

of housing and urban development, but Habitat had a double mission. On the governmental level, the Conference sought to raise the national and international profile accorded to these subjects and generate new forms of aid in the context of economic development, with “human settlements” as its inescapable corollary. Meanwhile, on the nongovernmental level, the Forum’s emphasis was on available solutions, experimentation, and the consequences of failure. It also aimed to facilitate dialogue between professionals, voluntary agencies, and the official Conference.

The official governmental body of the U.N. was in charge of organizing the Conference. The Forum, by contrast, was organized by the country host — the Canadian government — and by the NGO Group on Human Settlements headed by J.G. van Putten of the Netherlands. Its organizers saw the Forum as analogous to the classical organization of citizen participation in governmental decision-making, and they viewed the event as a first international meeting of built-environment NGOs.<sup>3</sup>

An uneasy alliance was visible throughout the event between the U.N., NGOs, and the state. And while attendees worked toward an international consensus on the built environment, this unified vision was continually thwarted by the existing state of world affairs, which revealed itself in the form and content of the two events. Post-Cultural Revolution China did not participate. And the U.S.S.R. was notably silent. But a total of 135 countries did take part, making Habitat the biggest U.N. event ever held. The overwhelming presence of Third World representatives offset the conspicuous meeting of allied First World nations. But as Ian Hogan, who reviewed Habitat for *Architectural Design*, bluntly sum-

marized this new nexus of colonizer and colonized, “for lead players, take the slick technology salesmen of the West (and East) and their love-hate customers, the authoritarian rulers of most of the Third World.”<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, the Canadian public was less than warm in its anticipation of the event. Indeed, until Habitat opened on May 31 with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s widely quoted speech, it was assumed by most Canadians to be either a futuristic apartment building in Montreal or some conference in Vancouver that “the City Fathers didn’t want, apparently because the P.L.O. was coming.”<sup>5</sup> As expected, dissension among the participants was expressed inside by an Arab-sponsored walkout and outside by pro-Israel demonstrators.<sup>6</sup>

The host city must have anticipated conflict. Its organizers planned for the other event, the Forum, to be located far enough away so as not to disrupt the “serious” discussions. Thus, while the official Conference droned away at the Queen Elizabeth Theater and in committee rooms in plush downtown hotels, Habitat Forum participants hung loose at an abandoned Royal Canadian Air Force seaplane base at Jericho Beach, some four miles across town (FIG. 1). Five large hangars left over from World War II had been converted there into a plenary hall, lecture and meeting rooms, theaters, exhibition halls, restaurants, and the world’s largest bar (300 feet long). Attendance at the Forum required no registration or payment of fees, and it featured no official delegates. Essentially open to the public, its estimated attendance of 10,000 eclipsed the Conference’s 2,000 official delegates. Professionals, NGO representatives, and unaffiliated individuals (many of whom were students) mixed amid the smell of roasting salmon and swayed to the sound of American

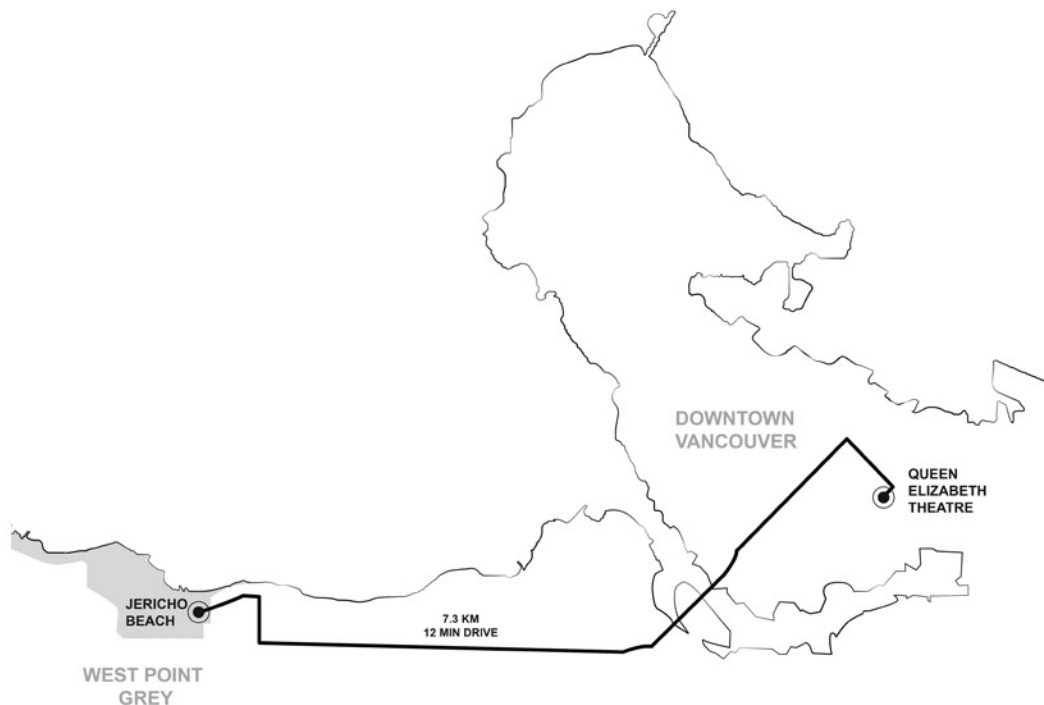


FIGURE 1. Map showing the locations of the Conference and Forum. Drawn by author.

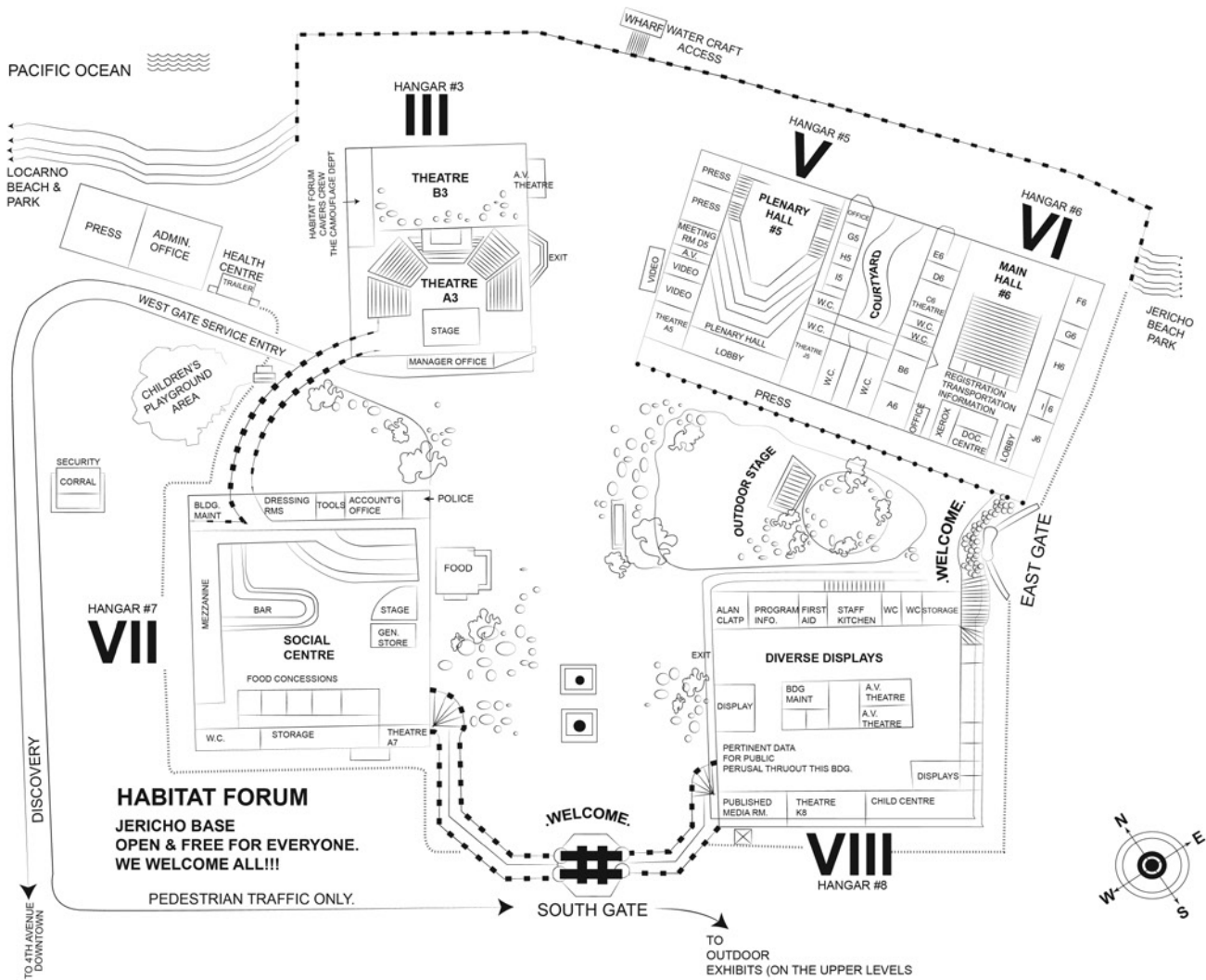


FIGURE 2. Map of the Habitat Forum. Redrawn from Ekistics, Vol. 42 No. 252 (November 1976), p. 282.

Indian drums — a reminder that Jericho Beach had been the original human settlement site in the Vancouver area. This historical detail was made dramatically visible through the painting of traditional northwest Indian motifs on the blank gable end of the plenary hall. And two totem poles erected between the social center and the exhibition hall greeted participants entering from the south gate (FIG. 2).

Closed-circuit TV linked the downtown Conference and the beach Forum so that Forum participants could tune in to the Conference proceedings. Meanwhile, Conference delegates could escape their official agenda through reports of appearances by such Forum stars as Buckminster Fuller, Jean Gottman, Margaret Mead, the Australian trade unionist Jack Munday, Petro-Canada Chairman Maurice Strong, Mother Theresa, and Barbara Ward.<sup>7</sup> But they had no direct window into the Forum, because the closed-circuit TV was a one-way link, so that happenings at the Forum were not available to

them in real time. And, except for a few individuals who were invited to make a double appearance, contact between “the caravanserai at the Forum” and the official downtown Conference was limited, almost nonexistent.<sup>28</sup> Very few official delegates had the time or inclination to visit the Forum site, and those who did were shocked by the “riff-raff” they met there. Notwithstanding, Prime Minister Trudeau had announced on day one of Habitat: “I shall be watching with anticipation as our indispensable trumpeters lay siege to Jericho, to see what cracks they succeed in making in the walls of ancient fears and rigid conservatism.” Nevertheless, the Forum, estranged from the procedural formalities and political issues raised in the Conference, bore the risk of becoming an expendable sideshow.

The technical discrepancy — the one-way broadcast — also exposed the imbalance of political power inherent in the double event. As Frederick Gutheim, who reviewed

the Conference for the journal of the American Institute of Architects, aptly observed, “if not a meeting of the plenipotentiaries to arrive at some international agreement, it was at least a meeting at the ‘ministerial level’ and far more than a ‘meeting of experts’ or a technical seminar.”<sup>19</sup> And, after twelve days contemplating and debating the home of Man at a planetary level, the original fourteen points of the Symposium declaration had increased more than four-fold to 64, a significant achievement considering the extensive “diplomatic nit-picking” over the meaning of words and translations.

In contrast, at the Forum, the official program was only announced at 9 AM each day. Typically, it would consist of between 70 and 100 sessions, ranging from public lectures and regular “workshops” on self-help housing and intermediate technology to sporadic meetings on such subjects as “sandplay for all ages” or “Eckanker, a way of life.”<sup>20</sup> Because of this organic and somewhat ad-hoc structure, a small committee had to meet in private to draft the official NGO resolution. And in terms of collectively endorsed principles and action items, the final unsigned document appeared irresolute, especially next to the official Conference declaration.<sup>21</sup>

A growing tension between cultural homogenization and heterogeneity was also discernible, as demonstrated by discrepancies between the two events. At the Conference, differing agendas were briefly set aside in attempts to present a unified front toward the forging of a global alliance predicated on “the hope held forth by Habitat.”<sup>22</sup> It was in this spirit, and borrowing Lewis Mumford’s concept of dynamic equilibrium, that Ward, an NGO representative, presented “planetary housekeeping” — a merging of “the planet of the rich and the planet of the poor” — as an analogy for maintaining a balanced (read: universal) worldview. To apprehend the vastness of Habitat, the organizers relied on a dictum of an “inclusionary” world and rehashed the category of “Man.” Thus, despite acknowledging the expanded cultural boundaries of the world, delegates at the Conference preferred to debate the evolution of concept and universal thought.

Instead of foregrounding such a universal temporality, participants at the Forum eagerly inhabited multiple pasts and futures. If, at Jericho Beach, the past had become what Arjun Appadurai has called “a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios,” inextricably tied to larger global forces, the Forum presented a vivid microcosm of a world as it imagined itself in its multiplicities.<sup>23</sup> On another level, Habitat as a whole participated in what Appadurai has described as the five dimensions of global cultural flows, or “scapes.”<sup>24</sup> These “imagined worlds,” he has asserted, are “the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of personas and groups spread around the globe.” And, within this schema, the circulation of the image of architecture and its inhabitants constitute one of the components deployed by the imagination that are now “central to all forms of agency and the key component of the new global order.”<sup>25</sup>

## REBUILDING A MODERN NETWORKED WORLD

How did Habitat construct its array of technical and cultural “scapes” to arrive, albeit provisionally, at a consensus surrounding an inclusionary planet Earth? A few forms of consolidation had already taken place, whose intersections were evident at the event. One, operating on the governmental level, involved U.N. programs for technical assistance, such as the Development Program and the Technical Cooperation Program in the Field of Human Rights, set up in 1955 to assist states in building and strengthening national structures. These were often integrated with the efforts of other international agencies like the World Bank. Another, related to the first, was the establishment of nongovernmental organizations like the Ford Foundation to formulate strategies and aid packages to further the social and economic advancement of nation states allied to the First World. And a third was the formation of institutional programs and multidisciplinary groups dedicated to housing, planning, and economic development, particularly in less-developed areas of the world. Most prominent here in terms of housing was José Luis Sert’s program in Urban Design founded in 1960 at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD). The above governmental, nongovernmental and institutional activities were invariably tied to each other. Thus, Sert’s program at the GSD was also to an extent a disciplinary response to the introduction of Area Studies in the United States.<sup>26</sup>

The role of the journal *Ekistics* was likewise important in framing the underlying principles of Habitat. Prior to the event, there was no other journal that graphically showcased research and development in architecture and planning sponsored by the U.N. Technical Cooperation Program. The Greek architect and planner Constantinos Doxiadis and the British horticulturist and planner Jaqueline Tyrwhitt founded *Ekistics* in 1955, and Doxiadis and Associates had executed many of the U.N. program’s projects.<sup>27</sup> Doxiadis had met Tyrwhitt in Delhi during the first U.N. International Symposium on Housing and Community Planning in 1954. Tyrwhitt was then serving as event director, and Doxiadis was a distinguished guest. Both agreed that a journal was needed to keep architects and planners in the developing countries up to date with professional expertise from the rest of the world. The opportune moment to create one arrived the following year when Tyrwhitt joined the GSD faculty and Doxiadis was contracted to produce a five-year National Housing Plan for the government of Iraq under the auspices of the U.N. Technical Program. Doxiadis meant *Ekistics* to be a monthly bulletin to keep his staff, stationed in forty areas across Iraq, informed, but Tyrwhitt felt it should also be sent to the U.N. and to all “experts” working in developing countries.

The editors maintained that the study of human settlements was first and foremost a scientific endeavor, and they claimed that the journal was the first ever to present in-depth research on the central problem of habitation.<sup>28</sup> *Ekistics* de-

pictured a world through the framework of science, as a single planetary community organized by technical knowledge. Each issue was also part of a work in progress to perfect an ekistic grid — a fervent reworking, clarifying and categorizing to reflect the total schema of life itself. Under the scalar order of man (Anthropos), society, functions, nature, shell, and human settlement came subdivisions and further micro-subdivisions.<sup>29</sup> Architecture, divided into building types, fell under the category of “shell,” constituting a small part of the larger system: human settlement.

The covers of *Ekistics* perhaps provided the clearest indicator of its perspective. Doxiadis used Fuller’s dymaxion projection of the world to portray an ekistic view of the community of human settlements, and different versions of these maps fronted early issues.

Building on his success with the journal, in July 1963, Doxiadis also invited thinkers from around the world to convene in Athens for the first of what would be a yearly series of Delos Symposia. After the event, the international team of high-powered professionals, intelligentsia, and representatives of political and cultural groups then boarded the ship *New Hellas* for an eight-day trip around the Greek islands to discuss issues of human settlements in their widest sense. Notable attendees included the lawyer, urbanist, and housing expert Charles Abrams (U.S.A.); geographer and Vice-President of the Regional Science Association Walter Christaller (Germany); planner Jacob Crane (U.S.A.); architect, theorist, inventor, and Director of Generalized Science Exploration Buckminster Fuller (U.S.A.); architectural historian and critic Sigfried Giedion (Switzerland); sociologist Eiichi Isomura (Japan); economist Barbara Ward Jackson (Britain); anthropologist Margaret Mead (U.S.A.); philosopher, media guru, and Director of the Center for the Study of the Extensions of Man Marshall McLuhan (Canada); and Chief Development Officer of the Tema Metropolitan Area Alfred R. Otoo (Ghana).<sup>30</sup>

Polymath Fuller and McLuhan stood out. The aging Fuller, who had first described his vision for a comprehensive dwelling services system modeled on a global electronic network 25 years earlier in his book *Nine Chains to the Moon*, found himself rather overwhelmed by the excitable, “outlandish” Canadian, who was using the event to illustrate his working thesis on “media as an extension of Man.”<sup>31</sup> For McLuhan, “the boat became an amplifier for his argument that electronics is actually biological, an organic system with particular effects.”<sup>32</sup> He saw media as the extension of man’s power to access the world at large: “the evolution of technology is the evolution of the human body.”

Later, however, in an editorial declaring his solidarity with the universalizing agenda of *Ekistics*, Fuller emphasized the importance of general systems theory as applied to contemporary large-scale planning. For him, it was already a matter of fact that the dwindling authority of design was being “replaced by joint private and governmental undertakings in which large teams of scientists and humanists now col-

laborate as the computer informed.” He also argued that the larger the system the more economical: automation had thus not reduced man’s participation in industry as producer, it had increased his importance to the total system’s economic efficiency as a consumer.<sup>33</sup>

The networked environment envisioned by Fuller and McLuhan aligned with Doxiadis’s own understanding of human settlements as evolving organisms that were both biological and technological. The future of all cities would be as an organized world system, which he termed Ecumenopolis, the future city of Anthropos (Man), a concept that first appeared in the February 1966 issue of *Ekistics*. The first Delos Symposium had also concluded with a declaration by its 34 attendees, representing fourteen countries and including three U.N. representatives, affirming themselves to be “citizens of a worldwide city,” united in their commitment to “man himself,” and pledging to bring the issues of human settlements “into the active political dialogue of our local societies.”<sup>34</sup>

It was at this time that Gottman, author of the influential book *Megalopolis*, also began contributing to the journal. Indeed, this 1961 study of the northeastern seaboard of the United States as the “main street of the nation” and the continent’s economic hinge soon formed one of the underlying hypotheses in *Ekistics*. In 1975, in “Metropolis and Megalopolis,” Doxiadis announced, “I am not a historian but a bricklayer dealing with human settlement,” and proceeded to outline the evolution of human settlements from hunter bands, to villages, small towns, cities, the metropolis, and the megalopolis.<sup>35</sup> The next larger territorial organization was simply inevitable. Rather than “just to let it happen,” Doxiadis propounded another road: “to open our eyes in time to foresee the natural trends and to guide them towards the proper solution.” The world, including its future and its past, should be seen as one system, consisting of “Nature, Anthropos, Society, Shells and Networks.” The ekistic framework was to be the “guiding light” toward that “natural city of the future.”<sup>36</sup>

Doxiadis believed that to survive the uncontrollable global city, every aspect of human settlement needed to be networked.<sup>37</sup> Architects, together with the forms and spaces they produced, must be networked with other expert practitioners. Together, “we must become modern scientific practitioners, study our patient carefully as a living human being with a mind and a spirit as well as a body, and learn how to cure and prevent his diseases.”<sup>38</sup> Toward this end, in 1958 he had established the Athens Technological Institute (later the Athens Center of Ekistics) for the purpose of training, research and exchange of technical knowledge pertaining to the development of a universal *polis*. The evolution of cities and urban form was the subject of the “City of the Future” research project started there in 1960, and part of this work involved bringing Gottman’s method of analysis to the study of the Great Lakes region and the Japanese megalopolis. Meanwhile, Gottman himself continued to focus on anticipating the future urban environment, including collaborating

on a two-part article, “Apollonian and Ecumenopolis,” with Doxiadis in 1974 on the impact of time on ancient Apollonian community.<sup>39</sup> In preparation for Habitat, meanwhile, the entire February 1976 issue of *Ekistics* was dedicated to Canada as an urban system, and to Gottman’s outline of megapolitan systems around the world.

In light of this underlying trajectory of ideas, Habitat also seems to have anticipated Bruno Latour’s later formulation of a modern inclusionary framework predicated on hybridized networks. Latour has imagined a reconceptualization of knowledge outside simplistic binary oppositions of nature (science and the knowledge of things) and society (power and human politics), “us” (modern) and “them” (pre-modern). The fact that the Habitat Symposium Declaration closely referenced the earlier Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment was an overt gesture, on the judicial level, to include the natural environment and the built environment within the same set of considerations and conversations. At the Forum, the “motherhood” issues — energy, waste of resources, the need for water, citizen participation, women’s role, appropriate technology — were also discussed “with enthusiasm and an almost total absence of controversy.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Latour’s observation that “networks are simultaneously real, like nature, narrated, like discourse, and collective, like society,” was enacted over the entire two weeks of the event.<sup>41</sup> Hybridities had already been in place since the end of World War II, with the invention of cybernetics, systems modeling, and related technologies. All these were represented at Habitat, not least by Fuller and McLuhan, and presented in *Ekistics*.

Latour would observe, in 1993, that the only universal is local, since universality is simply the product of networks that are made up of lengthened local effects. “There is an Ariadne’s thread that would allow us to pass with continuity from the local to the global, from the human to the nonhuman. It is the thread of networks of practices and instruments, of documents and translations.”<sup>42</sup> Those networks proliferated in Habitat. And the path toward a universal urban network, or Ecumenopolis, was laden with preemptive strategies and past lessons, highlighted by many of the same actors present at the double event.

As incubator of technical expertise, *Ekistics* seemed to be preparing the ground for Habitat, reinforcing the expertise-driven epistemologies apparent in discussions among the architects who yielded to the language of “science.” Key members of the World Society of Ekistics, led by President Buckminster Fuller, also took center stage at the Forum. Fuller’s brief address at a Conference plenary session on June 8 provided a memorial to Doxiadis, who had passed a year earlier. Fuller concluded by presenting the four final volumes of Doxiadis’s “scientific discipline” — *Anthropopolis: City of Human Development* (1974); *Ecumenopolis: The Inevitable City of the Future* (1974); *Building Entopia* (1975); and *Action for Human Settlements* (published posthumously in 1976) — pre-

pared for Habitat in the last two years of the Greek architect-planner’s life.

Doxiadis’s books, illustrated with the usual array of maps, charts, grids and sketch-diagrams of evolving city-forms and figure-ground analyses, were only some of the many volumes published in conjunction with Habitat, however.<sup>43</sup> In *The Home of Man*, Barbara Ward argued for the paramount importance of international cooperation with regard to ecological, social and political systems to prevent global destruction.<sup>44</sup> And, in contrast to Ward’s well-documented volume, the architect and planner Yona Friedman’s *How to Settle on Earth*, an official French contribution to Habitat, offered sweeping statements about different scenarios for the future inhabitation of Earth illustrated by line-drawing doodles of “stick-people.” Its contents, however, recalled Fuller’s idiosyncratic 1969 *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*, which argued for a general systems theory to channel man’s intellect to manage the planet and prevent its impending destruction.<sup>45</sup>

Among the other presentations at the event, *Ekistics* colleague Gottman, having previously attended a conference in Nagoya in March prepared by the Japan Society for Ekistics, spoke on the renewal of mankind’s habitat by presenting an overview of world urbanization trends. He closed by extending an invitation to that country to bring its experience in modern urbanization “to create a more diversified and complex organization of space and society, which will allow for more variety and freedom and a better life in an urbanized environment.”<sup>46</sup> Like the others, Gottman advocated inclusion through a common knowledge base. He was thus less concerned with the daily operations and experiences of the Japanese people than the structural modifications that had transformed Japanese society into a recognizable modern megalopolis.<sup>47</sup>

#### IMAGINING COMMUNITIES: SMALL AND MANY

Inadvertently, it was the younger participants, as they eagerly picked up on the planetary theories of the elders, who exposed the skewed nature of these “top-down” conversations. In particular, with Tyrwhitt as an advisor, Tom Fookes, a geographer, planner, and graduate of the Athens Center of Ekistics, formed a seven-member working group to create an ekistic analysis of the Forum. The analysis, which he presented at the plenary session on its closing day, revealed that there had been little attempt to engage in synthesis or consider the concept of human settlements as a totality. Of the five ekistic forces in the matrix, issues concerning society ranked first, followed by Anthropos, nature and shells; networks received hardly any attention.<sup>48</sup>

Fookes’s conclusion raised a fundamental question that remained unanswered at Habitat — that is, if most of the problems identified during the Forum were separate, independent questions, how could they be effectively dealt

with? His response was to return to the official one-world, one-system “speak,” which was the subject of his critique. “A systematic integrating discipline for the problems of human settlement was needed,” he concluded; and he cited Margaret Mead’s call for “ekistical literacy — an understanding of the relationship between the kind of settlement we live in and how we function as whole human beings in the modern world.”<sup>49</sup> However, implicit in Mead’s statement was the construction of a modern subject, the inhabitant of a world that was already passing onto another and was beginning to acknowledge itself as other than, or beyond, modern. The scientific “objectivity” of Fookes’s analysis was thus pertinent in understanding the paradoxes within Habitat, to the degree that it showed up the “real” limits of the modern networked world envisioned by the U.N. and the proponents of ekistics.

The task of representing the “colorful” spectrum of Habitat — the full-dress display of the “multicultural” *others* — was left to the Forum. The lack of typical conference infrastructure and amenities at the site seemed suspiciously premeditated. Indeed, the Jericho Beach site was in a constant state of construction, as site works and the set-up of the demonstration houses continued into the first week of the activities. Participants sat on cushions atop timber platforms in the unheated plenary hall, only to receive Canadian army blankets after several days of discomfort. Ad-hoc activities included a group of American Indians protesting the loss of land rights and a vociferous group of “Ban the Bomb” enthusiasts who campaigned against the further use of nuclear energy. New religious groups proclaimed peace on earth, and the enthusiasts of Greenpeace made sure their presence was felt. Yet others advocated women’s rights. In the Social Center, various “ethnic” foods were served from wooden shacks for diners who would then gather at the common eating hall for performances by different groups ranging from the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra to indie rock bands.

Habitat foregrounded the uneasy cohabitation of the two worlds: a cooperative United Nations and the uncoordinated work of diffuse NGO groups. The latter were concerned at once with “indigenous” premodern garb, log cabins, and teepees; slum dwellers of developing nations; and domes of sustainable futures. One only had to look at the issues of ecology and environment prevalent at Habitat to find a historical provocation for Latour’s call for a “political ecology.”<sup>50</sup> This new ecological sensibility was beginning to manifest itself in political and regional subcultures, in alternative lifestyles, and the new social movements in Europe.<sup>51</sup> The estranged relationship between the Forum and the Conference was thus symptomatic of the embryonic character of new social forms and the configurations of new knowledge.

Referring to the “new social movements” that emerged in the 1960s, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have shown that “merely cultural” experimentation had profound political and economic effects. The refusal of the disciplinary regime — “dropping-out” or defection, as posited by Paolo Virno —

and experimentation with new forms of productivity were the two essential operations.<sup>52</sup> Active members and “residuals” of these movements entered the Forum *en masse*. The noise, the crowds, and the sheer energy of the various individuals and groups challenged any semblance of singularity or the desire for consensus. Fookes’s scientific analysis hardly described the diversity of situations and spontaneity of the activities.

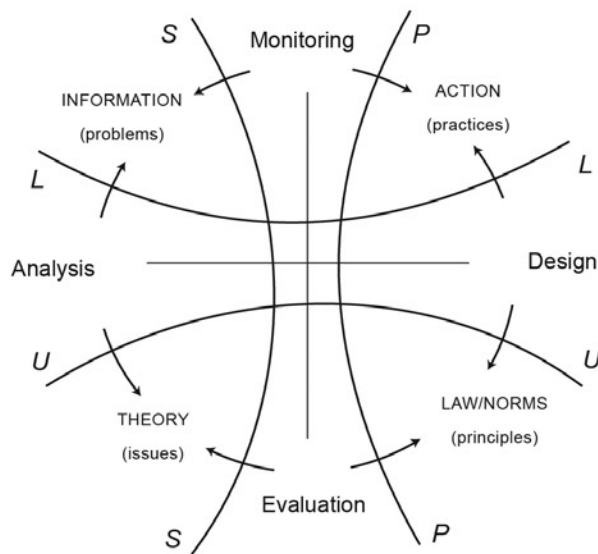
Architectural and planning periodicals and even *Ekistics* were skeptical in their reviews of the Forum and its apparent lack of organization. *Ekistics* admitted that the carnival-like fabrication of the site “worked well for the enthusiastic young and outdoors people,” but proved too much for “many responsible and venerable delegates of important organizations.”<sup>53</sup> *Architectural Design (AD)* named the Conference and the Forum the “official and the fringe.”<sup>54</sup> Commenting on the sheer volume of information presented at the Forum in *AIA Journal*, Joseph Handwerker concluded that the trick was finding “one’s own corner of the action and trying to predict which session would actually happen at the place and time scheduled.”<sup>55</sup> Inadvertently, he thus provided an analogy for the opposing stances toward strategic action inherent in Habitat: governmental control versus popular agency.

John F.C. Turner, architect, author of *Freedom to Build* (Macmillan, 1972), and consultant on low-income self-help housing programs, took the forefront in speaking on behalf of “the people” at the Forum. Under the auspices of *AD*, whose editors decided to dedicate the entire April 1976 issue to challenging the “turgid fare” of Habitat, Turner consolidated his ideas on self-help housing in the conclusion to his “Housing by People” series of eight articles — “A Program.”<sup>56</sup>

As part of its self-proclaimed critical position and autonomy from the event, *AD* advertised Turner’s invitation by Forum organizers to lead a symposium on “self-help and low-cost housing.”<sup>57</sup> Turner maintained that issues concerning human settlements were complex and fissured by conflicting ideologies. And he distinguished three scales of activity in housing: central government, municipal government, and local action. From there, he established three basic principles for housing. The first was that housing provision should be controlled by the users;<sup>58</sup> the second was that technologies should be employed that are appropriate to personal and local resourcefulness; and third, planning authorities for housing should establish limits to private action rather than prescribe development programs.

In reversing the order of importance — users before institution — Turner was in effect contradicting the first of the fourteen points in the official Habitat Symposium Declaration: state control over land use.<sup>59</sup> He called for immediate action on a program based on four methods or tasks: theory to communicate issues, information (facts) on the problems, action in terms of practices, and the formulation of proscriptive law to generate self-governing form and establish principles (FIG. 3).<sup>60</sup>





**FIGURE 3.** John Turner's diagram of the four basic tasks. L-L: local sphere; U-U: universal sphere; S-S: scientific sphere; P-P: political sphere. Redrawn from *Architectural Design*, Vol. 46 (April 1976), p. 229.

Case studies from both the Third World and industrialized nations put forward at the symposium likewise underscored self-help as self-government. An artist in Vancouver lived in a self-builder community on a mudflat in Vancouver harbor. A Jesuit priest in Chile sold low-cost prefabricated housing to earthquake locations. In Dagat Dagatan, a resettlement area in Manila, a scheme for 3,500 people on five hectares with owner-built houses was offered as an alternative to the World Bank's minimum-standard scheme for 20,000 people on forty hectares.<sup>61</sup> Hassan Fathy's domed mud-brick housing in Egypt, built by and for peasants, stressed cooperation in building work.<sup>62</sup> And even though the Indian housing minister presented the demolition and eviction of the Janata Colony in Bombay as physical and social progress, observers sympathetic to the dispossessed described the move as an example of "classic self-build and brutal bulldozing."<sup>63</sup>

The multiple facets of the case studies, however, often contradicted the terse statements of their presenters. Thus, rather than a consensus on self-help, what the symposium revealed was a need to acknowledge the paradoxes inherent in understanding and planning human settlements.

#### IMAGING BARE LIFE

The apposition of self-help and human agency at the Forum to planning and governmentality at the Conference played down one commonality: the disfranchised subjects were largely silent. Yet, these individuals and communities were entrapped at Habitat in institutional verbiage, statistical data, and census charts. And their looks of surprise and "wretch-

ed" living conditions flashed out in photographic snapshots, slideshows, and running film sequences.

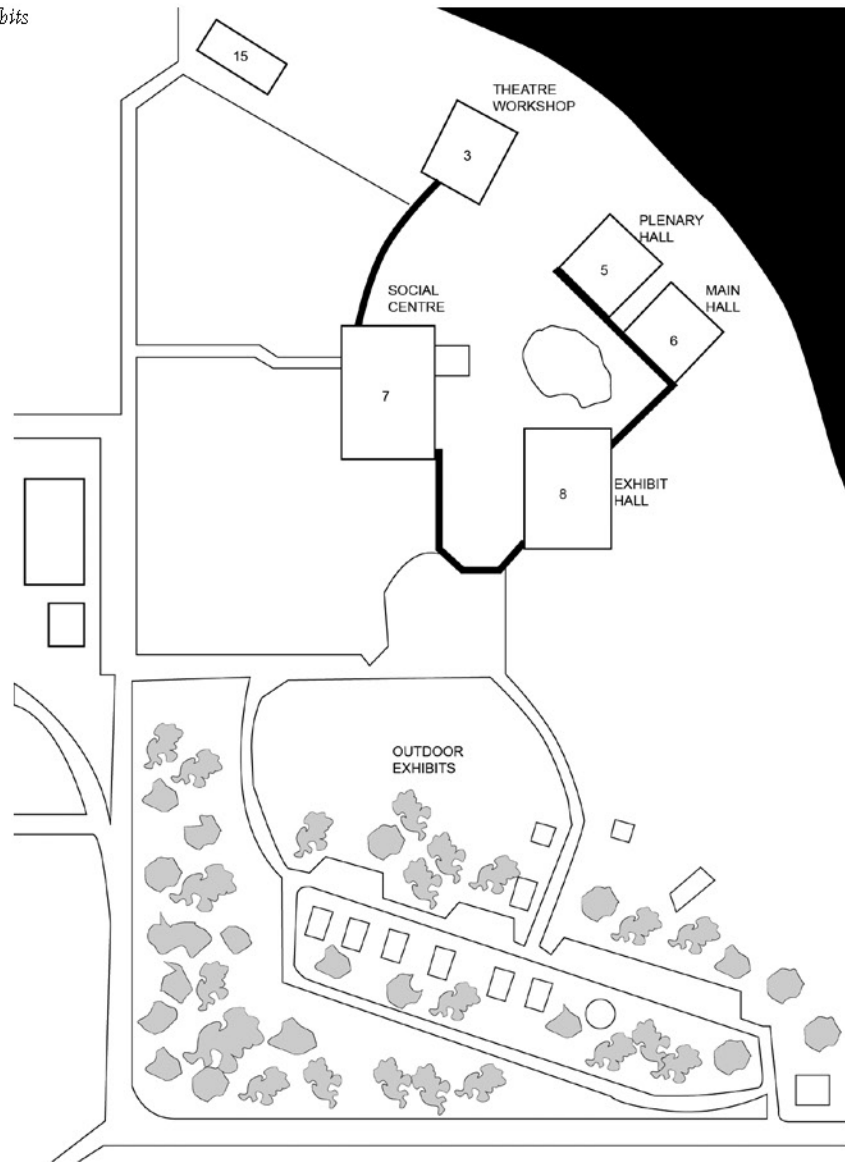
In particular, at the plenary sessions and at the committees, a series of 230 short film excerpts, called capsules, were presented that described problem-solving approaches to housing and planning from each country. These were divisible into two broad categories. Those from the First World described multidisciplinary practices, energy conservation, citizen participation, and advanced innovative techniques. The others dealt with slum solutions, low-cost building, intermediate technology for the reconstruction of war-destroyed territories, Indigenous architecture, and historic preservation. The effect was obvious. As the Polish architect and planner Adolf Ciborowski commented: "The viewer realizes that the problems surrounding human settlements were much more than statistics. We were confronted at that conference with a living, dramatic picture of the world."<sup>64</sup> This imagery of the global village played repeatedly, as the delegates deliberated over the "real" human subjects and their environments. Yet, as far as the representation of these subjects was concerned, the government and civil representatives were in complete agreement.

Where the Stockholm conference had identified the human subject as an inhabitant of the "environment," Habitat took the additional step of charging both states and civil society with extending a lifeline to this subject through appropriate knowledge and economic tools for survival. During the three years between the two conferences — one on the natural environment, the other on the built environment — there had been a proliferation of national and international humanitarian NGOs. All shared in an agenda to identify universal needs and defend human rights. These NGOs conducted "just wars" without arms, without violence, without borders. And, at Habitat, they infiltrated the rambunctious Forum crowds, participating in what Hardt and Negri later recognized as a "parallel strategy from below," presenting the "community face of neoliberalism." Upon reflection, Hardt and Negri emphasized the significance of NGOs in the maintenance of perpetuation of global power:

*What they really represent is the vital force that underlies the People, and thus they transform politics into a question of generic life, life in all its generality. These NGOs extend far and wide in the humus of biopower; they are the capillary ends of the contemporary networks of power, or (to return to our general metaphor) they are the broad base of the triangle of global power. Here, at this broadest, most universal level, the activities of these NGOs coincide with the workings of Empire "beyond politics," on the terrain of biopower, meeting the needs of life itself.<sup>65</sup>*

Writing in 2000, Hardt and Negri, were referring to what had then become a well-established NGO network.<sup>66</sup> But the first international NGO assembly at Habitat was

FIGURE 4. Plan showing location of outdoor exhibits at the Forum. Drawing by author.



already calling into question the inextricable link between “bare life” and politics. Giorgio Agamben has posited that it was this consensus on the bare life of the citizen — the new *biopolitical* body of humanity — between individual states and humanitarian organizations, that led to the separation between humanitarianism and politics. As he observed, refugees or slum dwellers, when categorically called “Man” or “people,” no longer represented individuals but “a mass phenomenon” whose individual rights as citizens could no longer be called upon. In his final analysis, Agamben thus had reason to believe that “humanitarian organizations — which today are more and more supported by international commissions — can only grasp human life in the figure of bare life or sacred life, and therefore, despite themselves, maintain a secret solidarity with the very powers they ought to fight.”<sup>67</sup>

Architects at Habitat attended to this subject of bare life by supplying vivid images of the “shells,” or dwellings, previ-

ously underplayed by the *Ekistics* group. Doxiadis, himself, had focused on cities and the “dynamic development” of architecture. His global projects — comprising major institutional complexes, infrastructures, urban plans, and regional studies in Denmark, Ghana, Greece, India, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Spain, Sudan, Syria, the U.S., and Australia — were thus presented through master plans, maps, diagrams and statistics. The few photographs of buildings in *Ekistics* revealed little of their actual design — except that in aerial perspective they bore an uncanny resemblance to the *existenzminimum* housing of the late 1920s. Such a stark factory-like approach had, of course, been partly imposed by the World Bank’s standard minimum requirements for housing. And this was accompanied by Ernst Neufert’s 1936 *Handbook for Architects’ Data*, by then a prerequisite for all architects — the “foreign experts” who would be called in to help developing countries address their housing crises.

The outdoor exhibits at the Forum stood in stark visual contrast to this view (FIG. 4). They included about a dozen self-built houses, including plastic-covered geodesic domes, a plastic igloo, cardboard disaster housing, a sulfur blockhouse, a log hut, the Tondo competition house, and the Habitat House (FIG. 5).<sup>68</sup> Built and lived in by their inventors, they demonstrated a variety of intermediate technologies such as solar water heating and composting toilets. But for two weeks this outdoor exhibition of hastily constructed shelters resembled the very settlements whose conditions the institutional proponents of Habitat wished to alleviate.

An American and French collaboration sealed the image. The British journal *AD* was not the only architectural periodical to cover unsolicited, self-motivated projects that were part of Habitat. In April 1974, *Architectural Record* (AR) in collaboration with France's *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* formed the nonprofit International Architectural Foundation (IAF) to organize an "International Design Competition for the Urban Environment of Developing Countries — Focused on Manila."<sup>69</sup> The site was a landfill, Dagat-Dagatan, intended to provide a 1,272-acre resettlement area for a squatter community relocated from the adjacent Tondo Foreshore. The competition's aim was to involve architects and planners in the design of a "demonstration project" in "a major city of the developing world."<sup>70</sup> However, of the 476 completed submissions, most came from entrants from developed nations or from "locals" whose formal architectural education had been in "the West." Meanwhile, the jury comprised highly credited individuals, power elites in the international architectural fraternity who were affiliates of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).<sup>71</sup>

The top three winning schemes were from New Zealand, Japan, and Malaysia, respectively. Although the three exhibited different design concepts, the houses they proposed all shared certain similar characteristics: they were basic units with the potential for expansion; they made use of local materials, specifically timber-frame construction and pitched roofs in timber or zinc; and they highlighted alternative approaches to energy or recycling. First prize went to Ian Athfield of New Zealand, whose design for the site included a periphery of linear buildings designed for light industry that also contained centers for community training in alternative energy and recycling techniques, particularly solar heating and composting waste disposal (FIG. 6). The second-prize winner, from Takagi Design Associates, proposed a system of arcades to organize prefabricated modules of timber, precast concrete, and cement sheets (FIG. 7). This design, too, emphasized solar energy and water conservation, locating these features at key modular nodes that combined kitchen and sanitary units with a rain catcher suspended above the roof.

Among these two winners and four honorable-mentions, one of two main organizing principles prevailed.<sup>72</sup> The first employed a hierarchical, tree-like structure, with variations such as commercial arcades (Steven Holl, Joseph Tanner, and John Cropper) or pedestrian colonnades (Takagi Associates).



**FIGURE 5.** (Top to bottom) Self-build houses erected at the Vancouver Habitat Forum included the Now House from Buckminster Fuller's office consisting of plastic-covered domes and a pyramidal solar collector; the Stack-Log House, offering a prototype highly insulated wall for the Canadian north; and the Habitat House, built in one week by students of Fairbairn and Haynes who had helped organize the Self-Help Symposium. From *Architectural Design*, Vol.46 (October 1976), p.586.

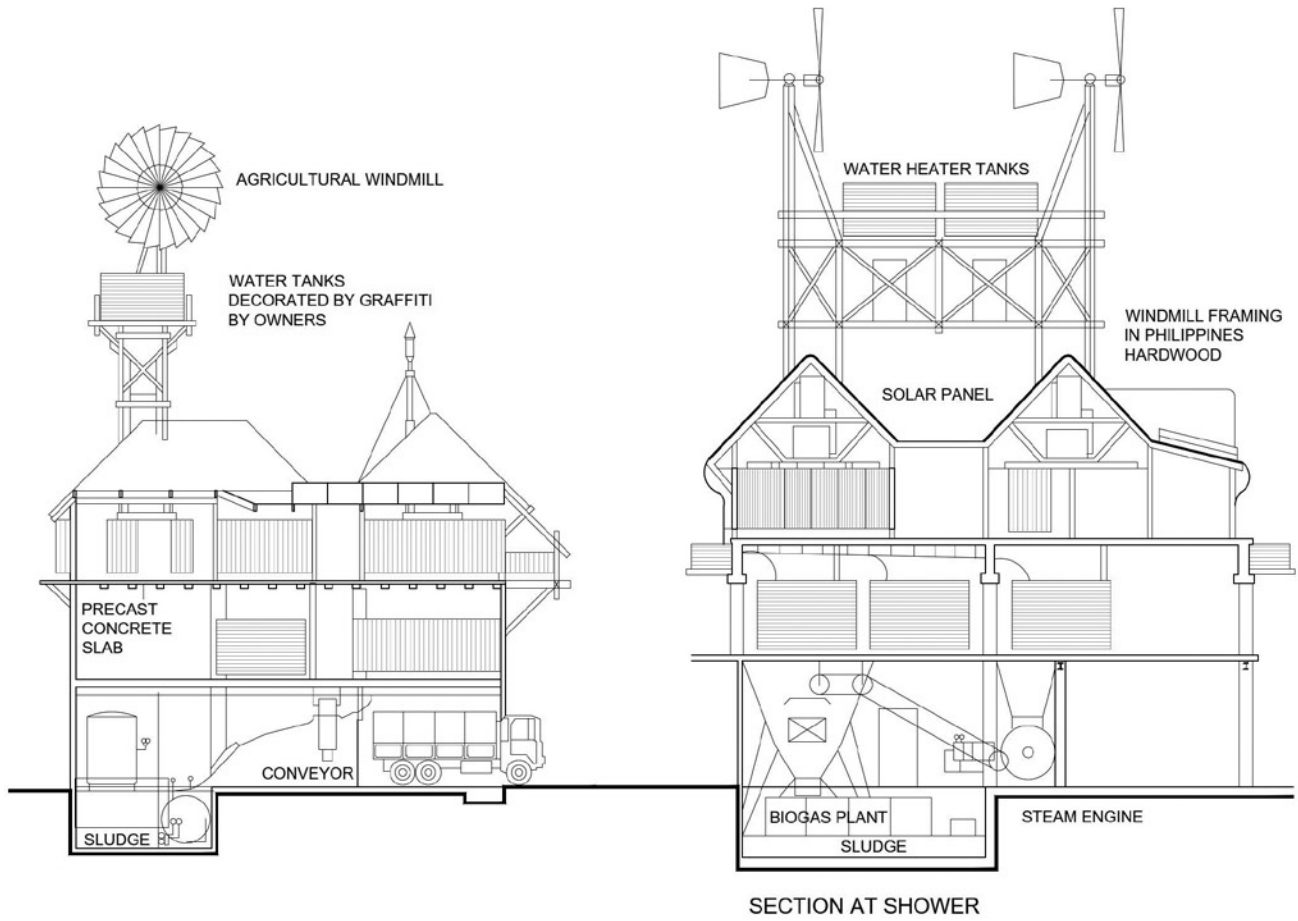


FIGURE 6. First-prize design for Tondo, Manila, competition by Ian Athfield. Redrawn from Architectural Record (May 1976), pp.118-19.

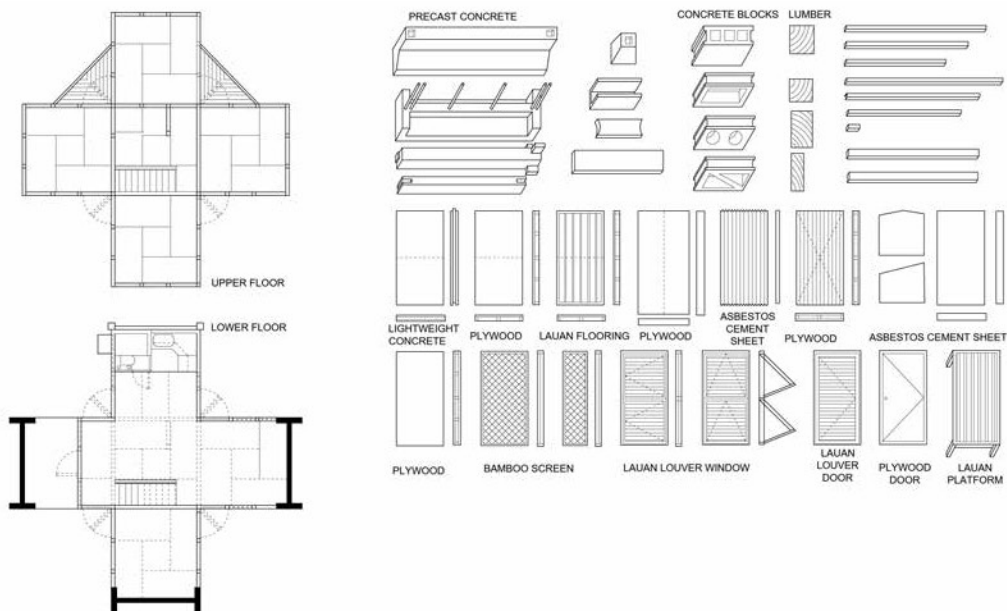
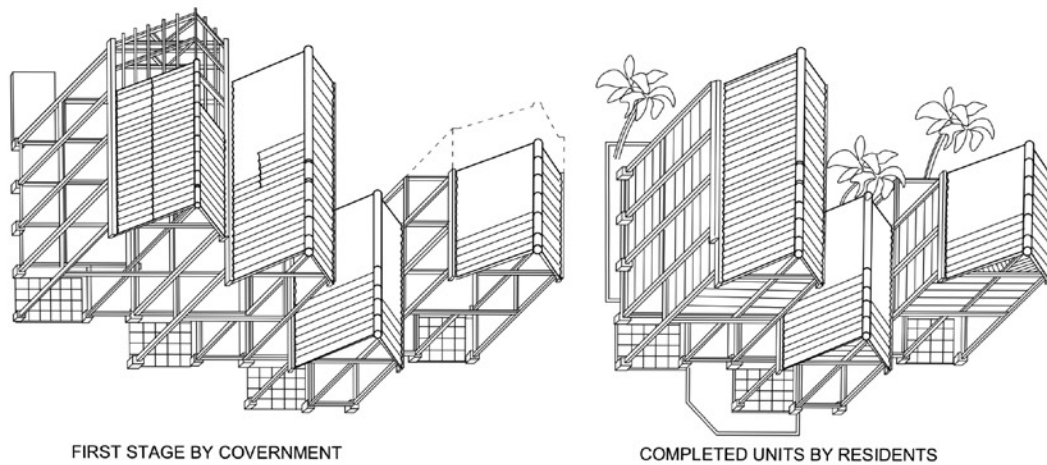


FIGURE 7. Second-prize design for Tondo, Manila competition by Takagi Design Associates. Redrawn from Architectural Record (May 1976), p.125.



**FIGURE 8.** Third-prize winning design for Tondo, Manila competition by Sau Lai Chan. Redrawn from *Architectural Record* (May 1976), p.134.

The other featured cluster groupings that allowed the development of more organic community structures, recalling Christopher Alexander's notion of the "spontaneous city."<sup>73</sup> In either case, they typically relied on prefabrication and modular systems for their construction. Hector Giron de la Peña and a team of Mexican architects developed a triangulated structural system using locally sourced materials intended to resist earthquakes. And a team of Japanese designers led by Akira Kuryu developed an "inexpensive building system" based on a concrete-block module and utilizing "self-helpers."<sup>74</sup> They termed it the "workable group approach."

While many of the showcase designs were thoughtful attempts aimed at anticipating the immediate and future needs of the community, other "self-help" strategies took less interest in individual physical forms and downplayed the role of the state in determining the image of large-scale resettlement. This was evident in the metabolist tendencies of the Japanese entries, such as Kiyoshi Seike's partial-support construction, which required the government to furnish each family with only two in-place precast concrete "core posts" and a linear utility trench. Unlike most others, the Japanese demonstrated hardly any allusion to the romantic image of "tropical huts." Instead, they developed expansive structural and infrastructural strategies to receive the core dwelling units.

While all the schemes would be ineffectual without a government-supplied infrastructure of roads, sewers, piped water, and electricity, it was the third-prize-winning entry, by the Malaysian Sau Lai Chan, that most explicitly called out the role of government (FIG. 8). It presupposed state provision of the core for each house, which would include initial sanitary services, structural frame, and roof. And it proposed a government census (of family size, needs, and available funds) to determine the type, size, and number of stories for each structure to be provided.

#### ARCHITECTURE VERSUS HABITAT: THE HUT, C.1976

*In all, the images left by the Forum are not of construction cranes atop highrise buildings, but of a man building his own house with mud bricks. If a vision of the future did not emerge, past failures were crystal clear.<sup>74</sup>*

As if to dramatize this observation from *AIA Journal*, a prototype of Ian Athfield's Manila house stood on the overgrown hillside at the Forum outdoor exhibition for the duration of the event (FIG. 9). The IAF had intended to build the house using workers and material imported from the Tondo squatter settlement.<sup>75</sup> But when that did not occur, Athfield hired a dozen Canadian part-time workers to erect the house



**FIGURE 9.** Prototype of Ian Athfield's winning scheme for the "International Design Competition for the Urban Environment of Developing Countries — Focused on Manila" at the Forum outdoor exhibition. Source: *Elkistics*, No.252 (November 1976), p.295. Photo by Mildred F. Schmertz.

from available scrap material. The models and drawings of the house and the rest of the design competition entries were also exhibited at the downtown Vancouver Art Gallery, close to the Conference venue. This put the prototypical projects well within reach of the official delegates at the Queen Elizabeth Theater. But the scenarios of cooperative dwelling and communitarian dreams of the IAF were largely distilled into the image of the Manila house at Jericho Beach — which, the *New York Times* reported, was “more a kissing cousin of Abraham Lincoln’s log cabin than of the mansions of Greenwich, Connecticut.”<sup>76</sup>

Despite such a ramshackle outcome, the Conference agenda of learning from the past and strategizing the future, together with the Forum’s presentation of “existing realities,” produced the impression of a clear step forward for the future of human settlements. After all, Habitat as a whole did demonstrate an extensive assemblage of expertise and knowledge, even if the status of the real human subjects in question remained unexplored and their future unclear.

Habitat also ratified the idea that the premodern or Indigenous was more “authentic” than the modern. And as the Conference pored over large-scale societal “fixes” and the Forum worked through innumerable small-scale technical ones, understanding grew that the needs of other cultures, the “non-Western, nonmodern,” must be met by means other than conquest or domination. To take that a step further — to take up Latour’s proposition that “premoderns are like us,” and that “[w]e have both always built communities of natures and societies”<sup>77</sup> — is to acknowledge that real lessons were learned from “the people” and their settlements. Notwithstanding the potential inherent in such an advance, however, neither *Ekistics*, Habitat, nor Latour has offered a way out of this dilemma, or even specific strategies to navigate the networks produced by and inherent in the very system they have attempted to map.

The decade following World War II had seen architects, the most prolific of whom were members of CIAM and Team Ten, search for new strategies to address “the way men should live in this changing world.” Even Le Corbusier felt that the idea of the “town,” or “urbanisme,” was no longer adequate. Indeed, it was he who had offered the replacement term “habitat” — which in French simultaneously signifies the living conditions of any creature and notions of “dwelling” or settlement.<sup>78</sup> CIAM 9: The Charter of Habitat, in 1953, was the transitional conference within the Modern Movement at which this idea was taken up. Indeed, its display of approximately forty grids attempting to capture the full spectrum of human settlements was driven by similar motivations to those at Habitat 1976. Among these, Alison and Peter Smithson’s relational “Urban Reidentification” grid, with a central playful figure, updated the MARS Grid from CIAM 8 and challenged the functional division of cities that had formed a basis for the ASCORAL CIAM Grid of 1947. Meanwhile, Team 10, led primarily by the English and Dutch delegations

(later joined by the Japanese), sought to expand architectural discussions to include human relationships, community, and structures of social organization.

As a further precedent, Bernard Rudofsky’s “Architecture without Architects” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York from November 1964 to February 1965 and Aldo van Eyck’s study of Dogon architecture in Timbuktu in 1961 inducted architects into the built world of “authentic” places and “real” people.<sup>79</sup> Arguing for learning from “primitive” solutions of the past and from the “real survivors,” Rudofsky wrote:

*We learn that many audacious “primitive” solutions anticipate our cumbersome technology; that many a feature invented in recent years is old hat in vernacular architecture — prefabrication, standardization of building components, flexible and movable structures, and more especially, floor-heating, air-conditioning, light control, even elevators.<sup>80</sup>*

Two decades later, the planner and former slum-dweller Aprodicio Laquian guided a similar authentication process as a jury advisor for the IAF’s Tondo replacement competition. His photo essay documenting squatter settlements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America further revealed the two faces of squatting: individual and community innovation and adaptation vs. the rigidity of government intervention. Its message was to recognize the mistakes of the recent past and to learn from the present — particularly the techniques of survival and the evolutionary processes embedded in housing communities.

Thus, the same anonymous subjects identified by Rudofsky and Eyck were now invoked against the backdrop of slums and massive urban renewal. But here the primitive hut might give way to the basic hut — the “core house.” And imbued in its ideology were the potentialities for flexibility and upward mobility: the squatter would be able to enlarge or improve his own dwelling when his life improved. But, as evinced by the case studies and the exhibits at the Forum, without any planned intervention, the image of squatting was easily reproducible.

#### WHOSE HABITAT?

In the final analysis, Habitat I presented a world of overlapping dualities in place of the multivalent one it aspired to bring forth. Habitat’s contemplation of itself, via the imagined, the imaginary, and the image — the network and the hut — revealed hybridized alternatives and alternative hybrids. The Forum was thus more than a fledgling appendage to the authoritative Conference. Indeed, the Forum opened the door to what the Conference failed to achieve, for the larger the map one drew, the smaller and more numerous were its pieces. Was the network — a.k.a. *the home of man* — the

U.N.'s preemptive strike against the proliferation of contingencies that had compelled a continual redrawing of the map? Was the utilitarian core house the NGO's unwitting totalitarian image for the abode of bare life? In rendering visible these "scapes," Habitat's architecture of dwelling invariably became an active participant of a world that imagined itself in multiples against the backdrop of a volatile global economy.

For architects of the developed nations in the Seventies, there was little protest when Charles Jencks pronounced the end of modernism following the destruction of Pruitt-Igoe. In 1976, the same year the project was demolished, Moshe Safdie completed his design for Habitat Tehran, a high-density complex containing 180 upper-income prefabricated apartments, and Habitat Vancouver showcased pre- and postmodern aesthetic variations of collective housing. Yet, architecture, entering the conversation through the image by the back door, exited precisely at the moment when the image ceased to mean anything beyond itself. Was the new primitive hut the architect's response to a postmodern functionalism, a hybrid that anticipated the *biopolitical* citizen? That the hut — rationalized to its sticks and stones and calculated to the nearest dollar unit — was unable to partake in critical discourse was symptomatic of a larger global process at work. It was also a consequence of the technocratic pursuit and the eventual subordination of the architectural image as floating signifier. The architecture of "habitat" could thus be vernacularized/"indigenous" or industrialized/"modern" all at once. Meanwhile, the question "Whose habitat?" was drowned out by the clamor of overlapping dualities, miscommunications, and experts posturing and speaking over each other.

In lieu of conclusion, consider another hut, which the Smithsons presented at the Venice Biennale in the summer of 1976. Contemplating the stages of building assembly, Alison Smithson wrote:

[A]n architecture which is palpably built is the most pleasurable of all. An architecture thought out in terms of its actual materials, its actual processes of fabrication, and its means of assembly. In such an architecture one can sense an ordering from its "Sticks and Stones." From such an architecture one can get many pleasures; from the child's pleasure of feeling able to put together to the grown-up pleasures of consistency of profile . . . the eloquence of fixings . . . the re-enjoying of how-a-thing-must-have-been . . . lifted up and sweetly come together.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to the shelter for the dispossessed others of the developing world, the Smithsons presented a giant poster of the Robin Hood Gardens project in London undergoing construction. Titled "A Ruin in Reverse," they were invoking the image of crudity and rawness that recalled their pedagogical stance on the architecture and aesthetic of daily life that Reyner Banham celebrated in his 1953 article "New Brutalism."<sup>32</sup> They prefaced the poster with a quote: "A building under assembly is a ruin in reverse."<sup>33</sup>

Fast forward to 2018 when a part of that building was presented at the Venice Biennale as the entire project underwent a process of demolition that had begun in 2017 and was completed in 2019. While the project's demise raises the question of social housing in the neoliberal city of rapid property turnover, Habitat's transitional housing projects, in their perpetual state of incompleteness, did actually reflect the conditions of bare life. Thus, just as the fate of a housing project does not represent the end of a social housing agenda, governments, architects, planners, and civil society should recognize the limitations of maintaining a dichotomy between "formal" and "informal" to describe and understand the housing question.<sup>34</sup> To that end, a revisit to Habitat I is a timely rejoinder to the prevalence of dualism in the field of architecture.

## REFERENCE NOTES

The author wishes to thank the two reviewers for their careful reading, insightful comments, and critical suggestions.

1. U.N., "Habitat III: New Urban Agenda," Draft Outcome Document for adoption in Quito, October 2016, September 10, 2016, available at <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/Habitat-III-New-Urban-Agenda-10-September-2016.pdf>.
2. O.A. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). It was in this context that "Habitat" became an overarching term to describe issues and name organizations involved in housing and the environment from a humanitarian point of view. One might note the establishment of Habitat for Humanity in 1976 and Architecture for Humanity in 1999. The latter, a U.S.-based NGO which sought architectural solutions to humanitarian crises (and which brought professional design services to communities in need with the motto "Design Like You Give a Damn"), closed in 2015. As the world's largest nonprofit builder, Habitat for Humanity still works in all U.S. states and in seventy countries across the world to construct, rehabilitate and preserve homes.
3. Habitat II, popularly known as the "City Summit," was held in Istanbul in June 1996.
4. B. Ward (Lady Jackson), "The Home of Man: What Nations and the International Community Must Do," *Habitat: An International Journal* Vol.1, No.2 (November 1976), p.125. A British economist and president of the International Institute for Environment and Development, she was a distinguished speaker at the Habitat Conference. She was also the prime mover of the Vancouver Symposium and its related lecture series, presented at the Habitat Forum, the unofficial NGO conference.
5. "Declaration of the Vancouver Symposium," *Habitat: An International Journal*, Vol.1 No.2 (1976), p.134. Also published in *Ekistics*, Vol.4 No.252 (1976), pp.267–72. An archived copy of the original was accessed September 1, 2020, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20160701035705/http://habitat.igc.org/vancouver/>.
6. This refers to the technological teleology of architectural practice and history in the English-, French-, German-, and Italian-speaking worlds. It was dominated by architects like Le Corbusier, Mies van

der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Alvar Aalto, Frank Lloyd Wright, and their followers. Their work was in turn canonized by historian-theorists like Nikolaus Pevsner, Emil Kaufmann, Sigfried Giedion, Bruno Zevi, Leonardo Benevolo, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Reyner Banham, Peter Collins, and Manfredo Tafuri. And their projects and ideas were disseminated in books and journals like *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, *Architectural Design*, *Architectural Review*, *Architectural Record*, *Architectural Forum*, *Casabella*, and *Domus*.

7. Throughout Habitat, these groups were identified as the ghetto dweller, the deprived countryside dweller, the inner-city migrant worker, and “the most vulnerable groups of society” such as children, youth, the elderly, and the handicapped.

8. “Declaration,” *Habitat: An International Journal*, p.140.

9. Andreas Huyssen has posited that the codification of Western modernism as a canonical twentieth-century design movement took place during the 1940s and 1950s, preceding and at the height of the Cold War. He saw the 1960s to embody the early phases of postmodernism, which were characterized by the temporal imagination of new futures, reminiscences of earlier continental avant-garde movements, attacks on “institutional art” (or a tradition of high art), technological optimism, and the validation of pop culture. According to this intellectual map, the rhetoric of avant-gardism was fast fading in the 1970s. Indeed, by the mid-1970s, “the sense of a ‘futurist revolt’ (Fiedler) was gone.” A. Huyssen, “Chapter 10: Mapping the Postmodern,” in Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp.178–240.

10. M. Pawley, *Architecture versus Housing* (London and New York: Studio Vista, Praeger, 1971).

11. P. Blake, “The Folly of Modern Architecture,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 14, 1974, pp.61–62.

12. *Ibid.*, p.62. The *New York Times* described the project as “the nation’s most monumental failure in public housing.” See P. Delaney, “St. Louis Tests Housing Idea: The Tenants Are in Charge,” *New York Times*, June 1, 1975.

13. The Habitat International Coalition (HIC) emerged from the Habitat Forum. It was initially created as a committee of NGOs to give a central role to civil society during the event Vancouver, but in 1978 an HIC Board and a General Secretariat were established and located in the Netherlands.

14. I. Hogan, “Ladies Bountiful, Tub-Thumpers and Ankle-Biters,” *Architectural Design: Habitat Reconsidered*, Vol.46 (October 1976), p.587.

15. P. Nicholson, “A Personal Assessment: Reflections on the UN Conference on Human Settlements Vancouver, 1976,” *Habitat* (Canada), Vol.19 Nos.3/4 (1976), p.78.

16. “Arabs, Africans, Boycott Israeli Talk,” *The Vancouver Sun*, May 12, 1976, p.24.

17. J. Handwerker, “Meanwhile, the Nongovernmental Habitat Forum Emphasizes Self-Help and Smallness,” *AIA Journal*, August 1976, p.42.

18. The editors included a four-page summary report of the Habitat Forum in the issue dedicated to Habitat.

“Perspectives on Habitat: The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements,” *Ekistics*, Vol.42 No.252 (November 1976), pp.281–84.

19. F. Gutheim, “Habitat: Hard Work Yields Some Useful Statements Despite an Atmosphere of Bitterness,” *AIA Journal*, August 1976, p.38.

20. Editors, “At the Forum,” *Ekistics*, Vol.42 No.252 (November 1976), pp.281–83.

21. Unlike the Declaration of the Vancouver Symposium, the NGO Resolution did not represent a consensus of the 150 participating groups.

22. In his opening speech on May 31, U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim expressed the need to “rebuild the fundamental structure of international relationships” to establish new global strategies to meet global problems,” and to “evolve new global approaches based upon the principles and the reality of interdependence not only among peoples, but the interdependence of the problems they confront.” “Statement by Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the U.N., at the Opening of Habitat: U.N. Conference on Human Settlements,” *Habitat: An International Journal*, Vol.1, No.2 (1976), pp.107–110.

23. A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p.30.

24. These are ethnoscares, mediascares, technoscares, finanscares and ideoscares. They may be explained as the flow of people, images, machinery, money and ideas, respectively. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, pp.33–37.

25. *Ibid.*, p.31.

26. For example, the field of Area Studies — including Middle Eastern Studies, Asian Studies, African Studies, Latin American Studies, Caribbean Studies, and American Studies — was introduced after the end of World War II to better understand regions of strategic relevance to the United States.

27. The inaugural issue on October 1955 and subsequent issues in the early years mostly contained articles by Doxiadis and reprints of articles from other journals. By the early Sixties, however, it had evolved to feature a greater variety of original work.

28. In a foreword to the postconference publication *Aspects of Human Settlement Planning*, Enrique Peñalosa described the future importance of the scientific study of human settlements. “Largely as a result of Habitat,” he wrote, “I believe that human settlements will be more widely recognized as an important branch of social science. This is an interdisciplinary science involving planning, social and political theory, government management, architecture, engineering and many other special fields. It will be a science in which academic and social research in the years to come will be eagerly studied by governments at all levels.” E. Peñalosa, “Foreword,” in Habitat Conference Secretariat, ed., *Aspects of Human Settlement Planning* (New York and Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1978), p.vii.

29. For a detail explanation of ekistics and its applications, see the editorial and Doxiadis, “The Science of Ekistics,” *Ekistics*, Vol.19 No.110 (January 1965), pp.2–38.

30. *Ekistics* certainly was also the dwelling place for aging heroes. Siegfried Giedion was last active in CIAM 9 (also named “Habitat”), where, together with Tyrwhitt, he prepared the handover of the CIAM membership to the younger generation, later known as Team 10. Introduced to ekistics through Tyrwhitt, Giedion brought in another layer of historical precedence — the modernizing ideologies of CIAM. Indeed, the organization of the Delos Symposium, even the meetings on board the *New Hellas* and the formation of an elite new structure of association for “scientists and humanists” to advance their cause against the deteriorating human settlements, resembled the previous CIAM setup. Indeed, CIAM 4, “the Functional City,” had even been held onboard the *Partis II*, which set sail from Paris for Athens in the summer of 1933. This “plagiarism” has been extensively detailed by Mark Wigley. See M. Wigley, “Network Fever,” *Grey Room* 4 (Summer 2001), pp.82–122 (in particular, pp.84–100).

31. McLuhan first presented this idea in 1962 in *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. But his full thesis only appeared in 1964, with the publication of *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*.

32. Wigley, “Network Fever,” p.86.

33. R. Buckminster Fuller, “Why I Am Interested in Ekistics,” *Ekistics: Delos 3 — Symposium 1965*, Vol.20 No.119, (October 1965), pp.180–81.

34. “The Declaration of Delos,” *Ekistics*, Vol.16 No.95 (October 1963). That same year Doxiadis represented Greece on the Housing, Building and Planning Committee of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in New York, and he served as chairman of the session on Urban Problems at the U.N. Conference on



- the Application of Science and Technology for the benefit of the less developed areas, in Geneva. Two years later, the World Society of Ekistics (WSE) was initiated during Delos Three. In 1967, WSE was incorporated as a NGO.
35. C.A. Doxiadis, "Metropolis and Megalopolis," *Ekistics*, No.233 (April 1975), p.216.
36. *Ibid.*, p.213.
37. See in particular "Networks and Human Settlements," *Ekistics*, Vol.30 (October 1970), whole issue.
38. C.A. Doxiadis, "Culture and Ekistics," *Ekistics*, No.234 (May 1975), p.288.
39. C.A. Doxiadis and J. Gottman, "Apollonion and Ecumenopolis," *Ekistics*, Vol.37 No.219 (February 1974), pp.143-48.
40. Handwerger, "Meanwhile, the Nongovernmental Habitat Forum Emphasizes Self-Help and Smallness," p.42.
41. B. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Catherine Porter, trans. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), p.6.
42. *Ibid.*, p.121.
43. *Architectural Design* reviewed seven books published in conjunction with Habitat. See *Architectural Design*, Vol.XLVI No.10 (1976), pp.604-8.
44. B. Ward, *The Home of Man* (New York: Norton, 1976). The book was the second of two commissioned by the U.N. The first, for the Stockholm Conference in 1972, was B. Ward and R. Debos, *Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972).
45. He had asserted that "[o]bjective employment of those generalized principles in rearranging the physical resources of environment seems to be leading to humanity's eventually total success and readiness to cope with far vaster problems of universe [sic]." R. Buckminster Fuller, *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), pp.54-55.
46. J. Gottman, "The Present Renewal of Mankind's Habitat: An Overview of Present Trends of Urbanization Around the World," *Habitat, An International Journal*, Vol.1 No.2 (1976), p.163.
47. 1976 also saw the republication of Kenzo Tange's Plan for Tokyo proposal of 1960 in Reyner Banham's *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), which surveyed the visionary movement in the twentieth century. Central to the book's analysis was the impetus to expand buildings to encompass a range of functions well beyond that of even the most versatile structures, and in the process incorporate variety beyond the architectural ambit in an effort to bring the city inside.
48. T. Fookes, "Habitat Forum: An Ekistic Analysis," *Ekistics*, Vol.4, No.252 (November 1976), p.299.
49. *Ibid.*, p.301.
50. B. Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp.1-8.
51. Huyssen, *After the Great Divide*, p.220.
52. M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), pp.274-75. See also P. Virno, "The Ambivalence of Disenchantment," M. Turits, trans, in P. Virno and M. Hardt, eds., *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp.32-33.
53. The Editors, "Habitat Forum: At the Forum," *Ekistics*, Vol.42 No.252 (November 1976), p.284.
54. I. Hogan, *Architectural Design: Habitat Reconsidered*, Vol.46 (October 1976), p.588.
55. Handwerger, "Meanwhile, the Nongovernmental Habitat Forum Emphasizes Self-Help and Smallness," p.42.
56. J.F.C. Turner, "Housing by People: From the Bottom Up or From the Top Down?" *Architectural Design*, Vol.46 (April 1976), pp.227-229. The articles were then published in J.F.C. Turner, *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments* (London: Marion Boyars, 1976).
57. *Ibid.*, p.27.
58. This is in opposition to the first point of the Declaration: control over land use [by government]. See "Declaration," *Habitat: An International Journal*, p.140.
59. Turner further clarified the points he made in the conference in his essay for the 1978 postconference publication: J.F.C. Turner, "Popular Participation in Housing," in Habitat Conference Secretariat, ed., *Aspects of Human Settlement Planning* (New York and Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1978), pp.268-281.
60. Turner, "Housing by People," p.229.
61. I. Hogan, "Self-help/Tondo, Manila," *Architectural Design*, Vol.46 (October 1976), p.594.
62. H. Fathy, "Self-help/Mud Building, Egypt," *Architectural Design*, Vol.46 (October 1976), p.596.
63. With 72,000 inhabitants managed by nineteen different community organizations, the colony had an autonomously developed economic system matched by a convivial community. Ian Hogan highlighted the five case studies to show a cross-section of self-help strategies that were presented. I. Hogan, "Self-Help Low-Cost Housing Symposium," *Architectural Design*, Vol.46 (October 1976), pp.597-600.
64. A. Ciborowski, "Afterthoughts on the Habitat Conference," *Habitat* (Canada), Vol.19 No.3/4 (1976), p.80.
65. Though they were also quick to qualify that though the activities of many NGOs serve to further the neoliberal project of global capital, this does not adequately define the activities of all NGOs categorically. See Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p.313.
66. The NGOs they cited as being dedicated to relief work and protection of human rights were Amnesty International, Oxfam, and Médecins sans Frontières. See Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p.36.
67. G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, D. Heller-Roazen, trans. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.133.
68. The two-story, 880-sq-ft., Habitat House was constructed of unfinished wood and brick. To absorb solar heat, it included a plastic-covered "green-house" at the back, which also contained a waterless composting toilet and a lavatory. The cost of its materials, local timber with conventional stud-and-plank construction and laminated plywood panels, came up to US\$5,000, or US\$10 a square foot.
69. The organizers were quick to establish U.N. legitimacy. Indeed, development of the IAF competition was assisted by Helena Benitez, director of the Preparatory Planning Group for Habitat, who subsequently became president of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). See "The Winning Designs," *Architectural Record: Building Study Types*, No.488 (May 1976), p.113.
70. The IAF had five main goals: 1) to alert architects and planners to the gravity of the accelerating urban crisis in developing countries; 2) to increase the fund of talent and expertise available for planning human habitations; 3) to involve architects and planners in the design of a demonstration project in a major city of the developing world; 4) to contribute to the success of Habitat; and 5) to act as a catalyst for further contributions by individuals, institutions, organizations and governments to the solution of the problems of housing and the urban poor. See W. Wagner, "A Final Word: With the Competition Complete, What Action Could Be Taken to Follow up?" *Architectural Record: Building Study Types*, No.488 (May 1976), p.160.
71. They included the Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi (Honorary fellow of the AIA, dean of the Center for Environmental Planning and Technology, Ahmedabad); Eric Lyons (president of Royal Institute of British Architects and honorary fellow of the AIA); Mildred Schmertz (*Architectural Record* senior editor); the Israeli-Canadian architect Moshe Safdie of "Habitat" Montreal; William Whitfield (a member of RIBA and the Royal Fine Art Commission); General Gaudencio V. Tobias (acting general manager of the National Housing Authority of the Philippines, executive vice president of the National Housing Corporation,

and chairman of the Housing and Urban Development Team); and Takamasa Yosizaka Dagatan (former dean of Waseda University, Tokyo, and past president of the Architectural Institute of Japan).

72. The first of the honorable mentions was that by a team composed of Steven Holl, James Tanner, and John Cropper. It was based on the notion of “family tenure,” according to which each family would be allocated an individual parcel of land under the assumption that their desire for permanent possession would stimulate them to develop it beyond the bare essentials provided in the design. As a fulcrum for investment they also proposed a series of arcades or paseos through the site as a unifying socio-commercial element.

73. Christopher Alexander had critiqued the tree-like structure as a simplistic and over-aestheticized model for urban form in his 1965 essay “A City is Not a Tree,” arguing instead for an ahierarchical organization not unlike Colin Rowe’s Collage City.

C. Alexander, “A City Is Not a Tree,” *Architectural Forum*, Vol.122 No.1 (April 1965), pp.58–62. Republished in *Ekistics*, Vol.23 (June 1967), pp.344–48.

74. Handwerker, “Meanwhile, the Nongovernmental Habitat Forum Emphasizes Self-Help and Smallness,” p.44.

75. Hogan, “Self-help/Tondo, Manila,” p.95. See also: “NZ architect Wins Slum Design Prize,” *South China Morning Post*, February 9, 1976, p.4.

76. G. Hill, “Dream Houses Become Reality at U.N. Conference,” *New York Times*, June 1976, p.24.

77. Latour, *We have Never Been Modern*, p.103.

78. E.P. Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism: 1928–1960* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), p.218.

79. Rudofsky, then a consultant to MOMA’s Department of Architecture and Design, prepared the exhibition and the accompanying publication, B. Rudofsky, *Architecture without Architects: An Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (New York: MOMA, 1964). Van Eyck’s article on Dogon architecture was first published in America in 1961: A. van Eyck, “Architecture of the Dogon,” *Architectural Forum*, Vol.115 (September 1961), pp.116–21. See also F. Morgenthaler, A. van Eyck, and P. Parin, “Dogon: mand—huis—dorp—wereld,” *Forum*, Vol.17 (July 1967), pp.30–50.

80. Rudofsky, *Architecture without Architects*, p.6.

81. Alison Smithson’s entry at the Venice Biennale was a contemplation of a building in its various stages of assembly: “A building under assembly is a ruin in reverse; at certain phases of a building’s construction, the anticipatory pleasure of ruins is made manifest.” A. and P. Smithson, “‘Sticks and Stones’ Exhibition, Venice Biennale, July–August 1976,” *The Charged Void: Architecture* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2001), p.393.

82. R. Banham, “The New Brutalism,” *Architectural Review*, No.118 (December 1955), pp.354–61.

83. J. Sayer, “The Smithsons’ Robin Hood Gardens Becomes a Cautionary Tale at the Venice Architecture Biennale,” *Metropolis Magazine*, June 5, 2018, available at <https://www.metropolismag.com/architecture/robin-hood-gardens-venice-architecture-biennale/>.

84. Past president of Habitat International Coalition Lorena Zárte highlighted this in her attempt to unpack the global phenomenon of “informal settlements.” See L. Zárte, “‘They Are Not Informal Settlements’ — They Are Habitats Made by People,” *The Nature of Cities*, accessed September 25, 2020, at <https://www.thenatureofcities.com/2016/04/26/they-are-not-informal-settlements-they-are-habitats-made-by-people/>. Zárte stated that since “formal/informal, regular/irregular are ever-changing and mutually-defined categories and not fixed, contrasting entities,” these classifications do not allow for the analysis of the profound, structural causes that explain the creation of precarious and inadequate settlements. For the U.N.’s approach and description of informal settlements, see U.N. Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Informal Settlements and the Right to Housing,” accessed September 25, 2020, at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/Pages/InformalSettlementsRighttoHousing.aspx>.