

THE EMERGENCE AND SPREAD OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN PLANNING

This chapter deals with the emergence and spread of contemporary, or modernist, urban planning. It also examines the various innovative or new approaches to urban planning which are being attempted in both developed and developing countries. 'Modernist planning' refers to the approach to urban planning which developed in the post-1850 urban industrial period in Western Europe and other advanced capitalist countries. The innovative approaches discussed in this chapter should not be viewed as models that can be applied in all contexts. While planning has common purposes, tasks and types, the form these take will be shaped by the social and cultural norms of particular places.

EARLY FORMS OF URBAN PLANNING

Urban planning is as old as human settlement itself, and archaeologists have uncovered evidence of urban planning in the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Middle East is home to some of the oldest cities in the world, and Old Jericho is believed to be the first city on earth. A considerable degree of planning competence was necessary to produce materials such as the sun-dried bricks that were used to construct the houses, the large trench, tower and other structures found within Jericho as well as the wall that enclosed and protected the town from external threats. The ancient cities of the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia attained the peak of their development about 2800 BC. One of the best known of these, Uruk, covered an

area of about 1,100 acres and contained as many as 50,000 inhabitants.

Cities in Greece and Italy show the earliest evidence of urban planning in Western Europe. The location and physical structure of towns in these two civilizations were largely influenced by military concerns. For instance, Athens was located on an isolated fortified hilltop. In addition to the encircling wall, there was the Acropolis, which was a large citadel, and the Agora, which served as the centre of socio-political and economic life. Streets in Greek cities prior to the advent of the 'Hippodamian grid', which later became a dominant feature of cities in the Greco-Roman world, were irregular. The streets were deliberately made to meander for military reasons. It was not until the 7th century BC that the gridiron street pattern was introduced in Greek colonies.

Latin America had urban civilizations of great antiquity such as the Maya, Aztec and Inca civilizations. Located in the Yucatan, the Mayans became prominent around 250 AD in present-day southern Mexico, Guatemala, western Honduras, El Salvador and northern Belize. The Mayans were already living in urban settlements by 2600 BC. The Inca Empire stretched for about 2,500 miles from Quito in present-day Ecuador to the Maule River in Chile. Evidence of an elaborate ancient architecture includes temple-pyramids, palaces and observatories. The urban infrastructure of the Incas includes 14,000 miles of well-planned and maintained footpaths.

Cities dating back to about 3,500 BC existed in Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus Valley and at Harapa in the Punjab. These cities had sophisticated spatial design structures, well-designed systems of covered drainage and

broad paved streets. In ancient China, cities were typically constructed around a gridiron street pattern. Cities were often enclosed within walls as in ancient Greek cities. Up until the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), urban planning in ancient China was rigid and highly centralized. A more decentralized form of planning emerged following the demise of the Tang Dynasty.

Many towns and cities flourished in Africa prior to the colonial era. These include Meroë, Axum, Kumbi-Saleh, Timbuktu, Djenne, Ife and Gao in north and west Africa, and Great Zimbabwe, Kilwa, Sofala, Mombasa and Zanzibar in the south and east. Meroë was established about 560 BC and served as the capital of the Black Kingdom of Kush. Some of these cities were surrounded by walls of stone or earth. Walls surrounding these ancient cities had three main purposes: defining the settlements, controlling growth and protecting the inhabitants from external threats.

East and Central Europe also has a history of urbanization dating back thousands of years. Nesebar (in present-day Bulgaria) is one of Europe's oldest cities. The city's spatial structure was largely influenced by the Greeks who colonized the region. This explains urban design features such as the acropolis, a temple of Apollo, an agora and a wall with Thracian fortifications. Dubrovnik is a historic city founded in the 7th century. As far back as 1272, Dubrovnik had well-developed urban planning regulations, which included elements addressing matters of general welfare, health and sanitation.



Old Jericho is believed to be the first city on earth

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THE EMERGENCE OF MODERNIST PLANNING

Modernist planning emerged in the latter part of the 19th century, in response to rapidly growing and polluted cities in Western Europe, brought about by the industrial revolution. From the outset, it was influenced by two sets of factors: technical and ideological. The first set of factors accounted for planning's efforts to combat the negative externalities of industrialization and urbanization. Planning was used as a tool for attaining political and ideological goals by the state, or by the ruling class. It was not uncommon for middle and higher income groups to use planning as a way of maintaining their property values and excluding 'less desirable' low-income residents, ethnic minorities and traders from their areas.

Three components characterized planning for most of the 20th century.

- It was seen as an exercise in the physical planning and design of human settlements, and hence while it responded to social, economic or political issues, it was not seen as the task of planning to intervene in these matters.
- Planning involved the production of master plans or layout plans showing a detailed view of the built form of a city in its ideal end-state.
- It was viewed as a normative task that should be driven by a particular set of values which described the ideal living environment.

Early British town planning was strongly influenced by the radical and utopian socialism of the time and a nostalgic longing for the village life of medieval England. One of the most influential planning forms of the time, the Garden City, developed by Ebenezer Howard, represented an attempt to recreate this village life through bringing 'green' back into towns.

In France, the ideas of Le Corbusier in the 1920s and 1930s established the ideal of the 'modernist' city. The ideal city was neat, ordered and highly controlled. Slums, narrow streets and mixed use areas were to be demolished. In the United States, visions of the ideal city were different. Frank Lloyd Wright's solution to the problems of rapid industrialization in New York took the form of low density, dispersed cities with each family on its own small plot.

While the spatial forms promoted in the planning visions tended to vary, the nature of the master plans which produced them had more in common. The close partner to the master plan was the development control system, which



One of the most influential planning forms of the time, the Garden City, was developed by Ebenezer Howard

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was the legal tool through which it would be implemented. This modernist concept of planning, which emerged in response to a particular and context, spread throughout the world.

THE GLOBAL SPREAD OF MODERNIST PLANNING

The planning systems in many parts of the world have been imposed or borrowed from elsewhere. In some cases, these *foreign* ideas have not changed significantly since they were imported. Planning systems are based on particular assumptions about the time and place for which they were designed, but these assumptions often do not hold in other parts of the world and are often inappropriate in the context to which they have been transplanted.

Modernist planning ideas were imposed on, or adopted in countries in developing and transitional regions. The main conduits for the spread of urban planning ideas were colonial governments, educational and scientific institutions, professional associations and journals, and international development agencies and consultancies.

Transitional countries: Eastern and Central Europe

Industrialization and urbanization came later in Eastern Europe than it did in the West. But by the early 20th century, countries in Eastern Europe were looking to the West for

planning solutions to address their growing cities. The Soviet Union was keen to avoid the uncontrolled urban growth seen in the West and planning ideas which offered: "...decentralization, low density and even shrinkage were perceived as desirable alternatives". Ebenezer Howard's Garden City model was therefore particularly attractive. Besides the Garden City model, the comprehensive planning scheme developed by Patrick Geddes and the master plan were adopted.

Latin America

French planning ideas had the most influence on the form and structure of major Latin American cities during the last century. For instance, traces of Le Corbusier's ideas are visible in many urban structures in the region. One of the best known projects influenced by Le Corbusier was Lucio Costa's plan for Brasilia, which demarcated city space into functional zones, the use of superblocks and tower blocks, the generous provision of green space, and the priority accorded to motorized vehicular traffic. Costa incorporated the ideas of Le Corbusier into the design of the Gustavo Capanema Palace (*Palacio Gustavo Capanema*) located in downtown Rio de Janeiro, and his plan for Brasilia. From the 1900s, the cities of Latin America were expanding at an alarming rate, and sprawling suburbs developed as the middle class sought new residential locations. To remedy the situation, authorities modified the Garden City model to take the form of the 'garden suburb', located within cities rather than outside them.

Southeast and East Asia

Some of the more important planning influences came through countries which were not colonizing powers. Prominent in this regard is the US. The City of Baguio, Philippines was the first major human settlement with design roots in the US to be established in Asia. It was designed by the famous Chicago architect, Daniel Hudson Burnham, the founder of the City Beautiful movement. Another American urban planning invention, the neighbourhood unit, later found its way to China.

British colonial authorities established new human settlements and influenced the development of existing ones in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and the Maldives. The British introduced urban forms that were previously unknown in the region. Thus the concept of racial spatial segregation, which sought to separate Europeans from 'racial others,' was foreign

in the region, even in societies such as India that practiced caste-based segregation. Institutionally, the British contributed to the development of urban planning in the region by introducing their legal and institutional frameworks for formulating and implementing planning policies.

Middle East and North Africa

European colonial authorities were largely responsible for introducing Western urban planning concepts and models in the region. They encountered well-developed densely populated Islamic walled cities with no room for expansion. Consequently, they developed new layouts based on European principles to serve as exclusive European enclaves. In Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, the layouts reflected the French urban planning style. The new towns contained broad straight boulevards separating city blocks, minor feeder streets and plots dividing the blocks and high density multi-storey buildings concentrated in terraces within the centre. Italian and British colonial planners developed plans that were less elaborate than those of the French.

These Western urban planning models usually resulted in two separate urban entities. The Islamic towns (*medinas*) continued as they had prior to colonization, and the new towns (*villes nouvelles* or *villes européennes*) served the needs of the European community. This brought about de facto racial residential segregation.

Sub-Saharan Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa, diffusion of planning ideas occurred mainly through British, German, French and Portuguese colonial influence. Imported planning systems were not applied equally to all sectors of the urban population. For example, towns were zoned into low-density residential areas for Europeans; medium-density residential areas for African civil servants or, in Eastern and Southern Africa, for Asians and mixed-race people; and high-density residential areas for the indigenous population. Spatially, the low-density European areas were set at a distance from the African areas, apparently for health reasons.

Planning laws and zoning ordinances in many cases are exact copies of those developed in Europe or Britain in the early 20th century. Many African countries still have planning legislation based on British or European planning laws from the 1930s or 1940s, which have been revised only marginally. Post-colonial governments tended to reinforce and entrench colonial spatial plans and land management tools.

Problems of modernist urban planning

Growing criticism of modernist planning has emerged from the same part of the world in which it originated (Western Europe and the US). While some countries have made concerted efforts to develop alternative approaches, modernist planning is still practised throughout the world, including countries where it has been strongly criticized. Modernist planning remains the dominant form of planning in most parts of the world.

There are several problems associated with modernist planning:

- It fails to accommodate the way of life of the majority of inhabitants in rapidly growing, and largely poor and informal cities.
- It fails to take into account the important challenges of 21st century cities.
- It does not involve communities and other stakeholders in the planning and management of urban areas in meaningful ways.
- Complying with regulatory aspects of modernist urban planning imposes significant costs that are too high for the poor and is usually complex and time-consuming.
- In cities in developing countries, it is not uncommon that architects of master plans are either consultants who are based in developed countries, or who have been trained there. Many have little understanding of the dynamics of poverty and the peculiar nature of urbanization in cities in developing countries, or alternatively adhere to the older modernist belief.
- A further problem with physical master plans prepared by outside experts is that neither the plan nor the process of implementing it is embedded in the local institutional culture.
- The spatial forms which are supported by modernist planning tend to reinforce spatial and social exclusion, and produce cities which are not environmentally sustainable. In many cities, modernization projects involved the demolition of mixed-use, older, historic areas that were well suited to the accommodation of a largely poor and relatively immobile population.

The problems associated with modernist planning and the changing urban, economic and environmental contexts, have in part, led to the emergence of more innovative or contemporary approaches to urban planning.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO URBAN PLANNING

The purpose of presenting these approaches is not to suggest models or solutions which can be taken ‘off the shelf’ for implementation. Rather, they offer ideas generated from ‘situated’ experiences which can be considered in relation to the specific urban planning issues in other places. The new approaches are grouped under seven broad headings (see Table 4). There is considerable overlap: some approaches emphasize process and others outcomes, and sometimes these are combined.

Strategic spatial planning

Strategic spatial planning emerged in Western Europe in the 1980s and 1990s partly in response to the problems of master planning. A strategic spatial planning system contains a directive, long range, spatial plan, and broad and conceptual spatial ideas, rather than detailed spatial design. Being strategic, the plan focuses on only those aspects or areas that are important to overall plan objectives.

One problem has been that the new strategic plan is often abandoned when a new political party or mayor comes

into power, because to continue it might be seen as giving credibility to a political opposition. Where the strategic plan is not integrated with the regulatory aspect of the planning system, and does not affect land rights, as is usually the case, then there may be little to prevent the strategic plan from being frequently changed or discontinued.

Spatial planning as a tool for integrating public sector functions

The problem of integrating different functions of urban government is an important role for spatial planning. The new British planning system, which introduces Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, focuses on decentralized solutions, as well as a desire to integrate the functions of the public sector and inject a spatial or territorial dimension into sectoral strategies. The purpose of the new spatial plans, which is “shaping spatial development through the coordination of the spatial impacts of sector policy and decisions”, is very different from the purpose of the previous planning system. In South Africa, departmental integration has been a central goal of the new Integrated Development Planning system in local government.

Category	Type	Characteristics
Strategic spatial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic spatial planning in developed countries Strategic spatial planning in developing regions The Barcelona model of strategic spatial planning 	Implications for planning processes and the nature of the directive plan; Barcelona model has implications for urban form: large, well-designed urban projects.
Spatial planning as institutional integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new British planning system Integrated development planning 	Implications for planning processes and the nature of the directive plan. Planning's role in government is important.
Land regularization and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatives to evictions Influencing development actors Managing public space and services 	New approaches to regulatory aspects of planning; focus on accommodating informality.
Participatory and partnership processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory planning Partnerships 	Focus on planning processes and state–community relations.
International agency approaches and sectoral concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Urban Management Programme Sector programmes 	Implications for planning processes and institutional location. Sector programmes are issue specific.
New master planning		New processes and regulatory approaches; implications for land market processes.
New spatial forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ‘compact city’ New urbanism 	Focus on urban form, less on process. Reaction to modernist and unsustainable cities.

Table 4

New approaches to urban planning

Approaches to land regularization and management

The most challenging issue for urban planning in terms of land regularization and management has been how to address the issue of informality. The expanding informal areas of cities in developing and transitional regions are usually regarded as undesirable and in need of eradication and/or planning control. Yet it is now well-recognized that such an approach simply worsens poverty and exclusion. New planning ideas suggest alternatives to the removal of informal settlements, such as regularization and in-situ upgrading of such settlements; public investment in trunk infrastructure to influence the pattern of development; working with informal economic actors to provide services and manage spaces, rather than either forced eviction of street traders or relocation to formal markets; and capturing rising urban land values for redistributive purposes.

Participatory processes and partnerships in planning

Participation and public-private partnerships have become important elements in all the innovative planning approaches. Potentially, participation in planning can empower communities and lead to better design of urban projects. Successful participation is dependent on certain pre-conditions relating to the political context, the legal basis for participation and available resources. At the neighbourhood scale, there has been some success with Participatory Urban Appraisal and the more inclusive Participatory Learning and Action, followed by Community Action Planning. At the city scale, one of the best-known innovative participatory



Potentially, participation in planning can empower communities and lead to better design of urban projects

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approaches is Participatory Budgeting, which first occurred in Porto Alegre in Brazil and has since been attempted in other parts of the world.

Approaches promoted by international agencies

Over the past two decades, several international agencies have attempted to address the problems of modernist urban planning by introducing special programmes and processes into local government systems.

■ The Urban Management Programme

The Urban Management Programme, established in 1986 by the World Bank in partnership with UNCHS (UN-Habitat), is the largest global urban programme to date. The programme focused on providing technical assistance and capacity building in five key areas: urban land, urban environment, municipal finance, urban infrastructure and urban poverty. In common with other recent ideas in planning, it attempted to shift the responsibility for planning to the whole of local government rather than being the responsibility of only one department, to promote participatory processes in local government decision-making, to promote strategic thinking in planning, and to tie local government plans to implementation through action plans and budgets.

■ Sector programmes

The most important of these have been:

- *The Localizing Agenda 21 programme:* This emerged from the 1992 Earth Summit. It offers a multi-year support for secondary cities, as the means to introduce or strengthen environmental concerns in their plans.
- *The Sustainable Cities Programme:* A joint initiative by UN-Habitat and UNEP, it was designed to build capacities in environmental planning and management through urban local authorities.
- *The Safer Cities Programme:* This was initiated by UN-Habitat to tackle the problem of urban crime and violence by developing the crime prevention capacities of local authorities.
- *The Disaster Management Programme:* This was established by UN-Habitat to support countries recovering from natural disasters or wars.
- *The Healthy Cities Programme:* Initiated by the World Health Organization, this programme aims to improve, promote and maintain conducive urban environmental health conditions.



Promotion of gender mainstreaming issues in local government and planning is important

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- *The Global Campaign on Urban Governance*: This was launched by UN-Habitat in 1999 to encourage urban planning to be pro-poor and inclusive. Its vision was to realize the inclusive city.
- *The Global Campaign for Secure Tenure*: This was launched by UN-Habitat in 2002 to improve shelter for the urban poor by promoting security of tenure in informal settlements.
- *City Development Strategy*: Promoted by the Cities Alliance, City Development Strategies encourage local governments to produce inter-sectoral and long range visions and plans for cities.
- *Gender responsiveness*: This has included promotion of gender mainstreaming issues in local government and planning. Examples include Gender Budgeting and Women's Safety Audits.

New forms of master planning

In some parts of the world, traditional master planning and regulatory systems continue, but these instruments are being used in innovative ways. In Brazil, 'new' master plans are seen as different from the old ones, in that they are bottom-up and participatory, oriented towards social justice and aim to counter the effects of land speculation. One important new regulatory tool is the Special Zones of Social Interest. This is a legal instrument applied to areas with a 'public interest'. It intervenes in the dynamics of the real estate market to

control land access, secure social housing, and protect the poor against down-raiding and speculation, which would dispossess them.

New urban forms: The 'compact city' and 'new urbanism'

While low-density, sprawling cities are the norm in most parts of the world, there is growing support for 'compact city' and 'new urbanism' ideas. At the city-wide scale, the 'compact city' approach argues for medium to high built densities. Urban containment policies are common, often implemented through the demarcation of a growth boundary or urban edge designed to protect natural resources beyond the urban area and to encourage densification inside it.

New urbanism adheres to similar spatial principles but at the scale of the local neighbourhood. It promotes a vision of cities with fine-grained mixed use, mixed housing types, compact form, an attractive public realm, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, defined centres and varying transport options. Facilities such as health, libraries, retail and government services cluster around key public transport stations and intersections to maximize convenience.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Human beings have always acted to consciously plan their settlements, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. However, over the last century, planning has been bound up with global processes of colonialism and imperialism, and has been used for purposes other than the creation of well-functioning and sustainable urban centres. Consequently, inappropriate models of planning have been adopted in various parts of the world. The problems of modernist planning have in turn led to the emergence of more innovative approaches. An overview of innovative approaches to planning from various parts of the world has been provided, not in order to suggest new universal solutions which can be applied in all contexts, but to see if there are common ideas which are emerging from various parts of the world. This chapter suggests that there are such commonalities, and that city governments in all parts of the world can consider whether or not these may be useful in their particular contexts.