



# TRIALOG 107

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Urban Development  
and Spirituality

# Editorial

*Spiritualität ins Zentrum von Architektur, Stadtplanung und der internationalen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zu rücken, ist nicht nur für TRIALOG ein Novum, sondern auch im Hinblick auf die Berufsfelder und Diskurse in diesen Disziplinen. Das Vordringen in unbekanntes Territorium ist immer eine Herausforderung, doch in diesem Falle ist es ein besonders gewagtes Unterfangen, da es sich hierbei um ein Thema handelt, welches weithin mit Attributen wie esoterisch, irrational, okkult, New Age oder ähnlichem als irrelevant abgetan wird. Ein Grund dafür ist sicherlich unsere mangelnde Vertrautheit mit Spiritualität, was noch verstärkt wird, wenn es darum geht, diese innerste Dimension unserer Existenz in die Öffentlichkeit zu tragen. Denn sind wir nicht seit unserer Kindheit und Jugend so enkulturiert worden, dass wir unsere innersten Erfahrungen und Emotionen von den äußeren Wirklichkeiten der Welt klar zu trennen versuchen?*

*Bislang wurde Spiritualität in der Stadtentwicklungspraxis und -theorie wie auch im Entwicklungsdiskurs praktisch kein Raum gegeben. Allerdings zeigt die Realität in Entwicklungsländern – sowohl im als „traditionell“ empfundenen Dorfleben als auch im „modern“-orientierten urbanen Milieu – eine Vielzahl von empirisch belegbaren Beispielen für die Bedeutung von Spiritualität im Alltagsleben. Zusätzlich zu diesen Belegen für die Relevanz von Spiritualität scheint sich auch in der westlichen Welt eine Wiederbelebung von Spiritualität und Glauben zu vollziehen – oft als kritische Reaktion auf die Dominanz einer verwissenschaftlicht-materialistischen Weltanschauung. Diese kritische Reaktion kann sich unter anderem auf Denkströmungen beziehen, die sich mit der Integration bzw. Vereinheitlichung unserer hochspezialisierten und fragmentierten Wissenssysteme beschäftigen.*

*Dies ist der Ausgangspunkt des einführenden Artikels von **Christoph Woiwode**, der bezogen auf den urbanen Kontext versucht, einen breit angelegten Blick auf zeitgenössische Aspekte der Spiritualität zu werfen. In einem weiteren theoretischen Beitrag entwickelt **Marilyn Hamilton** einen höchst originellen Ansatz zum Verständnis einer urbanen Spiritualität, die von Spiral Dynamics und der Integralen Theorie des Philosophen Ken Wilber inspiriert ist. Im Gegensatz dazu nimmt **Carl Fingerhuth**, ausgehend von seiner eigenen Biografie, den Leser mit auf eine Reise durch die Welt und die Jahrhunderte, um in der von ihm so bezeichneten „Zeit jenseits der Moderne“ die Notwendigkeit der Re-Integration von Spiritualität in das Denken und in die Leitlinien des Städtebaus zu demonstrieren. **Gail Hochachka** präsentiert ein NGO-Projekt zur Entwicklung von Führungskompetenz in Nigeria. Aufbauend auf Habermas plädiert sie für einen post-säkularen Ansatz in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, der eine Integration der spirituellen mit der weltlichen Sphäre ermöglicht. **Lydia-Sophia Wilmsen** untersucht die Relevanz intentionaler spiritueller Gemeinschaften, wie etwa von Auroville in Indien oder der Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén in Chile, für die Raumplanung und eine nachhaltige Lebensweise. Ihre Studie wird von **Aryadeep S. Acharya** thematisch fortgesetzt, der kühn für eine paradigmatische Führungsrolle von Auroville als universellem Stadtmodell argumentiert, und zwar nicht nur, um den Herausforderungen der indischen Städte zu genügen, sondern auch, um der globalen Urbanisierung angemessen zu begegnen. Eingebettet in einen historischen Kontext diskutiert **Genet Alem**, inwiefern in Addis Abeba Orte entweder als sakrale oder als öffentliche Räume angeeignet und genutzt werden. In seinem zweiten Artikel stellt **Christoph Woiwode** mehrere Fallstudien aus der ganzen Welt vor und wirft ein Licht auf die Rolle von Spiritualität in der Quartiersentwicklung und Planungspraxis sowie auf die Rolle der Planer.*

*Damit ist deutlich geworden, dass diese Ausgabe von TRIALOG eine explorative Mission hat, die letztendlich wohl mehr Fragen als Antworten aufwirft. Der vordergründige Zweck dieser Ausgabe ist es denn auch, einen völlig vernachlässigten Aspekt der Planung im Bereich der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zu thematisieren. Insofern muss erst die "Büchse der Pandora" geöffnet werden, um die Möglichkeiten, Potenziale und natürlich die Schwierigkeiten zu erörtern, die durch die Berücksichtigung von Spiritualität in der Stadtplanung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit entstehen.*

Putting spirituality at the centre stage in the context of architecture, urban planning and international development is new not only for TRIALOG, but also for the professions and discourses in these disciplines in general as well. Spearheading a largely unknown territory is always a challenge, but in this case it is also a particularly daring venture because we are dealing with a topic that has been and still is widely dismissed as esoteric, irrational, occultist, New Age, and so forth. One reason for this is the unfamiliarity most of us have with spirituality in general, and with elevating the interior dimension of our existence into the public realm in particular. Has our upbringing and enculturation not taught us to clearly separate our deepest inner experiences and emotions from the external realities of the world?

Hitherto, spirituality has been conspicuous by its absence in urban development practice and theory as well as in the international development discourse. However, the empirical reality in the developing world – both in the perceived "traditional" rural village setting and in the "modern"-oriented urban context – exhibits plenty of examples of the significance of spirituality as well as its importance to people. In addition to this empirical evidence that spirituality matters in people's lives across the world, there seems to be a revival of spirituality and faith (especially in the Western hemisphere) as a critical response to the predominance of the scientific, materialist perspective of the universe. This development is linked to philosophies and theories that emerge around the issue of integrating/unifying our specialised and compartmentalised knowledge systems.

This is the starting point of **Christoph Woiwode's** introductory, conceptual paper that attempts to develop a broad perspective on contemporary aspects of spirituality in relation to the urban context and praxis. In another theory-based contribution, **Marilyn Hamilton** develops a highly original approach to urban spirituality that is inspired by spiral dynamics and philosopher Ken Wilber's Integral Theory. In contrast, setting out from his own biography, **Carl Fingerhuth** takes the reader on a global journey through the ages to demonstrate the need for a re-integration of spirituality in thinking and in the making of towns in what he calls the "time beyond-the-modern". **Gail Hochachka** presents an NGO project on leadership development in Nigeria and, by building on Habermas, makes the case for a post-secular approach in international development work bringing forth the notion of integrating the spiritual with the secular. **Lydia-Sophia Wilmsen** explores the relevance that intentional, spiritual communities such as Auroville, India, and the Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén, Chile, could have for spatial planning and sustainable living. Her study is further emphasised by **Aryadeep S. Acharya**, who boldly argues for a paradigmatic leadership role of Auroville as a universal township model not only for the urban challenges faced by India but by the world. Embedded in a historical context, **Genet Alem** discusses how places are appropriated and contested either as holy places or public spaces in contemporary Addis Ababa. In his second article, **Christoph Woiwode** presents several case studies from across the world to throw light on how spirituality matters in neighbourhood development, planning practice, and the role of planners.

Obviously, this issue of TRIALOG is on an explorative mission probably producing more new questions than answers. Hence, the purpose of this TRIALOG is to introduce an altogether neglected aspect to planning practices in development. By considering spirituality in urban planning and development, this issue of TRIALOG rather opens a "Pandora's box" in regard to figuring out possible opportunities, potentials and, certainly, difficulties.

*Christoph Woiwode and Wolfgang Scholz*

## Urban Development and Spirituality

Volume Editors: Christoph Woiwode and Wolfgang Scholz

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# Urban Development and Spirituality: Treading on New Ground

Christoph Woiwode

## **Stadtentwicklung und Spiritualität: Neuen Boden betreten**

*Spiritualität spielte bisher in der Stadtentwicklungsplanung keine Rolle, weder in der Praxis noch in der Theorie. Der Artikel greift die wissenschaftliche Entwicklung in den sogenannten „neuen“ Wissenschaften auf, bei der sich in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten eine zunehmende Annäherung von naturwissenschaftlichen Ergebnissen und geisteswissenschaftlichen Erkenntnissen beobachten lässt, hin zu einem besser integrierten Weltverständnis, welches die Vielschichtigkeit des Menschen und der Realität honoriert. In diesem Sinne ist der Ausgangspunkt dieses Beitrags die Aussage, dass sich der Mensch von seiner intrinsischen Natur her nicht nur - nach Aristoteles - als soziales Wesen, und auch nicht lediglich als rationales Wesen, sondern ebenfalls als spirituelles Wesen begreifen muss. Die Integration dieser Dreifachigkeit macht den Menschen aus, und zwar nicht nur epistemologisch, sondern ontologisch im praktischen Alltag. Spiritualität als schwer fassbares, sehr facettenreiches Konzept kann etwa als Sinnsuche verstanden werden, die dem Leben eine tiefere, existentielle Bedeutung zukommen lässt. Zudem ist Spiritualität typischerweise charakterisiert durch ein Gefühl der inneren Verbundenheit mit anderen Menschen, Lebewesen, der Natur und dem Kosmos. In jeder Persönlichkeit kann dieser tiefere Sinn entwickelt werden. Diese Aspekte von Spiritualität können für die Praxis der Stadtentwicklungsplanung konkrete Auswirkungen haben. Exemplarisch wird dies für die Bereiche des Quartiersmanagements, der Stadtökologie und der sozialen Konstruktion von sakralen Räumen erläutert. Dabei wird deutlich, dass die Integration von Planung und Spiritualität methodisch, konzeptionell und in der Praxis noch in den Anfängen begriffen ist.*

## **Unravelling 'Homo Spiritualis'**

It has frequently struck me that spirituality is anathema in international development practise and theory. Yet, wittingly or unwittingly defying an intrinsic element of the human condition does not necessarily lead to its irrelevance in practical life. While Aristotle described our existence as 'zoon politikon', social beings, more than 2000 years ago, the enlightenment brought about the dominant thinking of a through-and-through rationally acting, profit-seeking individual, thus turning us into 'homo economicus'. What happened along this way to modernity was, in Max Weber's analysis, the 'disenchantment' of the world. A little more than a hundred years on, upon reflecting on the impact of the modern way of life, production and reproduction on people, environment and the planet as a whole, it seems there is an urgent need felt by many (scholars and ordinary people alike) to reassess this statement.

The sheer amount of accumulated, interconnected and globally relevant risks (e.g. Beck 2007, Homer-Dixon 2006)

in various areas that also touch our daily lives – such as the economy, environment, food, society, and geopolitics – seems to trigger a growing awareness of largely neglected dimensions of human nature, namely that we need to recognise equally the emotional, psychological and spiritual being within us: we are 'homo spiritualis' as well, holding within us an immense spiritual potential. We need to honour and appreciate all of these three beings, for they are all part and parcel of the human condition.

Hence, I argue that a human being is complete only if these three spheres of life can be expressed in each lived situation. It is not coincidental that they converge with three major types of capital that have emerged in philosophy and social theory in the past four decades expanding the narrow concept of (economic) capital (Table 1).

In the context of above-mentioned global conditions, a number of authors observe an emerging significance and re-positioning of religious and spiritual values, not merely as a "re-enchantment" in Europe, but in all parts

Type of Human Nature	Realms of Capital
zoon politikon (Greek: ζῷον πολιτικόν): the political, socio-cultural being	social, cultural/symbolic capital (Putnam et al. 1993, Bourdieu)
homo economicus: the economic, rational being	physical/financial capital (in classic economic terms)
homo spiritualis: the emotional, psycho-spiritual being	religious/spiritual capital (see Baker 2009)

**Table 1:** Human Nature and Realms of Capital (Source: author)

of the world, with their own very specific local characteristics (e.g. Bucher 2007; Knoblauch 2009: 27-31; Raman 2009).

In virtue of this prelude, this contribution, like the entire *TRIALOG* issue, wants to take spirituality "head on" to make it explicit within the urban and development planning agenda and community. Its principal purpose is to try to provide a generic discussion guided by several questions directed towards the interface of urban development and spirituality. Why is spirituality just now becoming a phenomenon in various realms of our life and professions? What is the meaning of spirituality in general, and within an urban context in particular? How can the urban profession incorporate spirituality in planning practise and education?

### ***A Changing World, an Emerging Worldview: (Re-)appreciating Religion and Spirituality***

Combining urban development and spirituality in today's world does not seem to be an obvious theme among the urban profession and international development. At the core of understanding why this theme is gaining more clout in the modern world is the process of scientific and technological progress itself, and socio-cultural shifts, which have resulted in a severe critique of modernity and on scientism in particular.

Dramatic scientific advancements during the 20th century first seem to confirm Weber's statement of the disenchantment of the world, but ironically these same scientific insights seem to direct our investigation towards a re-integration of the spiritual, pointing towards a grand synthesis (McIntosh 2007), or what some would call "a theory of everything". As Laszlo (2004: 14) comments: "[...] The new cosmology discovers a world where the universe does not end in ruin, and the new physics, the new biology, and the new consciousness research recognise that in this world life and mind are integral elements and not accidental by-products."

Nothing demonstrates this paradigm shift more than the epistemological and ontological implications brought about by quantum physics over the past hundred years. Along with it came the emergence of the 'new sciences' and the recognition/observation by scientists of the convergence of formerly separate and distinct disciplines, particularly the life, neuro and mind sciences, where the inter-connections of physical and immaterial phenomena cannot be ignored any longer. A new language also reflects this intellectual shift; some of the popularly known key words are "emergence", "dissipative structures", "autopoiesis", "evolution", "consciousness", "holism", "complexity", relationship of unity-diversity ("oneness"), and many more. Central to this shift of viewing the world is that everything is connected, or entangled (a perspective emphasised by virtually all wisdom traditions before the factual confirmation by quantum physicists). As a consequence, philosophical monism and non-duality, a blurring of the object-subject separation and redefinition of their relation, wholes and parts in a holonic universe, are the resulting discourse issues that emerge. In the same vein, one important aim of the effort of these thinkers is the (re)creation of the unity and harmony of man and nature in the new era.



◀ **Figure 1:** Lived everyday spirituality - Buddhist shrine in Bangkok, Thailand, near a main road junction. Photo: C. Woiwode

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This critique of modernity and sketching of the emergence of a novel worldview has been practised by a number of writers and scholars emanating from various disciplines (e.g. Prigogine and Stengers 1984). Since the critique on scientism aims primarily at pointing out the inadequate and limited perspective of science, which does not take into account meaning and value, or personal judgement of the scientist in finding the truth, a major theme in this discourse is how a reconciliation of science and religion/spirituality can be achieved (Nicolescu 2002, Raman 2009, Wilber 2001). This critical revision of modernity – and post-modernity as well – has led to the notion of a newly evolving, cultural era that is not clearly defined yet. On the contrary, it has multiple faces and voices, as is mirrored in the myriad of attributes such as the transmodern, post-postmodern, post-industrial, postsecular (e.g. Habermas 2001, King 2009), integral (e.g. Wallmann 2006, Wilber 2000) or otherwise. Thus, the evolutionary dimensions of human development – individual and collective – assume greater significance as we now attempt to make this transition consciously. Such evolutionary levels are described and labelled in many different ways, like premodern, modern, postmodern, and then integral/postsecular/transmodern, planetary.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years this discourse has also been taken up in relation to the urban context. Beaumont and Baker (2011) note that there is "[...] the widespread belief that the twenty-first century is evolving in a significantly different way than that of the twentieth, which witnessed the advance of human rationality and technological progress, including urbanisation, and called into question the public and cultural significance of religion. In this century, by contrast, religion, faith communities and spiritual values have returned to the centre of public life, especially public policy, governance, and social identity" (Beaumont and Baker 2011: 1). Only recently, urban life in its countless varieties has become the way of living for the majority of humankind, marking a significant transformation of the human condition.

**1** A number of scholars from developmental psychology have developed such evolutionary schemes, e.g. Gebser, Piaget, and Wilber.



**Figure 2:** Advertising for Jesus, Kumasi, Ghana. Photo: C. Woiwode

## 2

It is not possible here to discuss in detail the concept of 'nature', in particular how the relationship of 'culture'- 'nature' keeps changing over time in various cultural settings, and concomitant consequences.

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**Figure 3:** A Yoga Ashram in South India attracting mainly Westerners for meditation and yoga teacher's training. Photo: C. Woiwode



Urbanisation, like industrialisation, was and is still seen as the epitome of modernisation and 'development', which, in the Western world at least, left hardly any space for spirituality. The *de facto* absence of spirituality in Western cities is visible in an almost total neglect of any link between urbanisation or urban development and spirituality in the literature. Likewise, the revival of spirituality in the West has hitherto not entered the field of urban planning theory or planning practise. One reason why it is so hard to re-define, re-think and re-imagine the city in terms of the spiritual might be that "large modern cities, as centres of human endeavour, tend to regard themselves as centres of the universe and have effectively declared their independence from nature", as commented by Girardet (2008: 5).<sup>2</sup>

### **Higher Realms, Down to Earth: What Is Spirituality?**

Spirituality involves a myriad of meanings depending on the practitioner's and observer's perspective and the social, cultural, historical and political context. It is important

for this paper to delineate possible features of distinction between as well as the interface of religion and spirituality. In all its fluidity and vagueness, variety and complexity, spirituality may be understood in its widest sense as "the search for meaning" (Cilliers n/d) and "creating connectedness" (e.g. King 2009). Beyond this, spirituality is also often viewed as being related to religion in some way or the other, either being considered a part of religion or vice versa, but not necessarily always identical with religion. Knoblauch (2009: 41) notes that in the European context of religion as a changing social phenomenon, spirituality seems to avoid the rigid organisation of the Church and has a holistic orientation emphasising the subjective experience of transcendence.

The *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines 'spiritual' firstly as "relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things; having a relationship based on a profound level of mental or emotional communion"; and secondly as "relating to religion or religious belief". Religion, on the other side, is "the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods"; but it also describes "a particular system of faith and worship". These notions indicate another distinction often applied demarcating spirituality as 'esoteric', an emotional, personal, non-formal, inner experience, versus religion as 'exoteric', i.e. a structural, organised, formal, theological outer phenomenon.

Bucher (2007) discusses several qualitative properties of spirituality based on notions of social groups as diverse as psychologists, cancer patients, nurses, theologians and lay persons. Accordingly, spirituality can be seen...

- as connectedness and oneness
- as relationship to God or an ultimate entity
- as connectedness with nature
- as relationship with other beings
- as self-transcendence
- as relationship to the self
- as praxis, especially prayer and meditation
- as paranormal experience and capability.

An evolutionary perspective on spirituality is brought forward particularly by integral theorists (as applied by Hochachka and Hamilton in this issue), wherein the type of spirituality is culturally embedded in the predominant worldview of individuals and/or a society respectively. According to Wilber (2007), such a concept includes a developmental perspective both in terms of human evolution and the individual development of a person (developmental psychology). McIntosh (2007: 120-30), for example, outlines the salient features of the diachronic development of spiritual traditions (Table 2).

The face of contemporary spirituality is certainly manifold. But with view to the noted revitalisation of religion and spiritual values and practises in public perception and life, it is possible to carve out a few salient aspects that stand out as common. The first and probably most profound is the trend of a spiritual pluralism present in postmodernism: "Our collective sense of spiritual pluralism and our awareness of varieties of spirituality has definitely become more sophisticated in the last forty years" (McIntosh 2007: 123). As a second aspect we may consider the issue of public and private:

- a) In Europe it relates to the observation of a personalised spirituality that is increasingly removed from its religious and collective origins. This seems to be visible in the new syncretism where people merge elements of various wisdom traditions like Buddhism, Hinduism, Christian and Islamic mysticism, shamanism, Neo-Paganism and others to create their own personalised spirituality.
- b) In other parts of the world, collective spirituality is perhaps more prevalent in movements such as Christian Evangelism. With spirituality being such an elusive concept, the question arises whether it can be integrated with urban planning in the first place and, if yes, in which way.

### Putting Spirituality on the Agenda of Urban Development and the Planning Profession

Making spirituality an explicit idea in the processes of modern urban planning is a novel approach and a

challenge. It is important to clarify at the outset that at this point this interest does not focus on a historical perspective of the significance of spirituality (and religion) in cities, urban and settlement designs.

Plenty has been written and researched about cities and urban layouts being embedded in a sacred, spiritual cosmology. As outlined in the introduction, while this type of spirituality still exists, it does not reflect the contemporary concern with "going beyond" (post-)modernity.

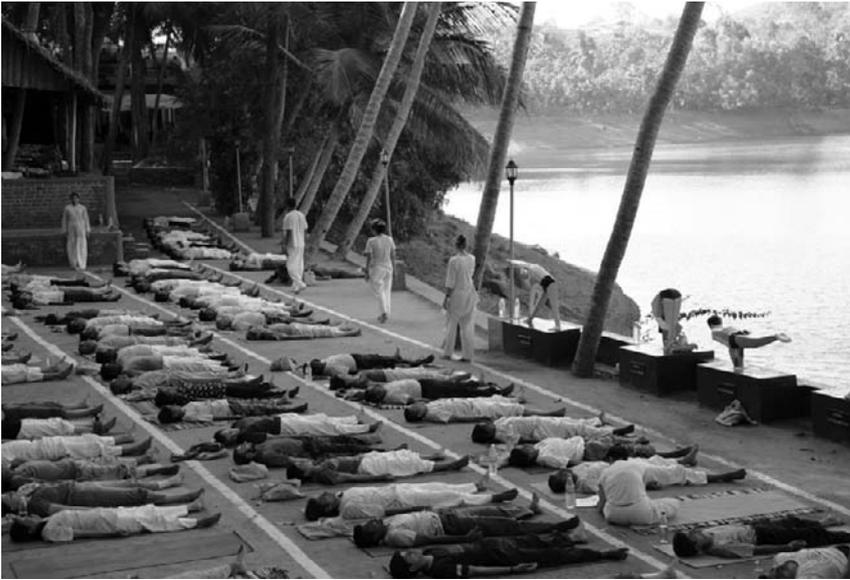
These historic examples from all over the world are part of what has been called the mythic or premodern stage of human consciousness or worldview. On the contrary, the novelty and hence challenge lies in re-integrating spirituality with (post-)modern achievements – valuing scientific advancement, pluralism, gender, human rights, social justice, etc. – a process Wilber (2000) calls "transcend and include".

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Worldviews/stages of consciousness	Characteristics of the type of spirituality	Spiritual falsehoods	Everlasting spiritual truths
<b>Tribal-warrior consciousness</b>	Nature is alive and spirits are everywhere Pantheon of gods provides ethnic identity, strength and courage	Vengeful gods and evil spirits	The enchantment of nature Childlike innocence in the approach to the spirit world
<b>Traditional consciousness</b>	With some exceptions, most peoples in the world followed all major religions & their civilisations: Judeo-Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian-Taoist	Claim of exclusivity: only one true way	The world's great wisdom traditions themselves (philosophy, spiritual practises, etc.) Sense of certainty, its assurance of the ubiquitous presence of invisible spirit Conviction about the goodness of the universe
<b>Modern consciousness</b>	Partial rejection of religion and spirituality; rise of atheism, existentialism; partial subordination to the scientific worldview	The universe is a purposeless accident	Courageous commitment to follow the truth wherever it may lead Recognition of self-evident natural law Inherent rights of every individual
<b>Postmodern consciousness</b>	Religious dialogue, rediscovery of spirituality (New Ageism): ancient and esoteric spirituality, tribal spirituality, Eastern spirituality; ecospirituality	All forms of spirituality are equally valid	Affirmation of the undeniable reality of the spiritual (by whatever name) Interest in and basic respect of all forms of human spirituality
<b>Integral consciousness (emerging)</b>	Emergence of a "public spirituality": growing agreement about the importance of spiritual experience Transcending all earlier stages, including all everlasting truths	.... ??	.... ??

◀ **Table 2:** Types of Spirituality According to Worldviews throughout Human History (Adapted from: McIntosh 2007, pp. 120-30)



**Figure 4:** A Yoga Ashram in South India. Photo: C. Woiovide

### 3

In this issue probably the most sophisticated, original effort in this respect is the concept offered by Marilyn Hamilton.

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In light of this, a series of questions arises for planners and the context of urban development when considering spirituality:

- a. How are religion and spirituality different? What is their relationship/interface?
- b. What does spirituality mean in the context of planning, planning theory/practise and the practitioner? Is it another analytical category for practitioners or an inherent dimension that needs to be practised in some way?
- c. What are the potentials of spirituality for the planning profession and urban development planning?
- d. How and why do city dwellers take recourse to spirituality? What are or might the role(s), potentials of spirituality be for urban societies?
- e. In what way is spirituality expressed in an urban context in different parts of the world? What can we learn from collected case studies in different regions of the world? What are "best practises" demonstrating the role of spirituality in urban development?
- f. Is it feasible at all to integrate spirituality with urban development? What is its role in relation to practical approaches and instruments such as governance, participation and communication, and analysing and understanding the city and its inhabitants?
- g. How is spirituality related to (human) development? What is or might its role be in international development?

Apparently, only a handful of academics and practitioners acknowledge the significance of spirituality in urban life, pro-actively pioneering to establish a link with urban planning theory and practise (Anhorn 2006, Hamilton 2008, Sandercock 2006 and 2011, Wight 2009 and 2010). Two recent publications, *Urban Prayers* (metroZones 2011) and *Postsecular Cities* (Beaumont and Baker 2011), are another sign of a growing awareness among scholars and

practitioners of the need to address a topic that seemed to be lost along the path of secularisation, modernisation and urbanisation. The aforementioned authors and publications provide evidence that we have to review a prevalent notion suggesting that processes such as urbanisation are inevitably linked to the secularisation of society. On the contrary, it appears there are some movements that have taken place – for example in African Christian spirituality – not only in spite of but through urbanisation itself (Cilliers n/d: 3).

There are initial attempts by planners and urban researchers to define spirituality in relation to the contemporary city, the urban, and planning.<sup>3</sup> Sandercock and Senbel (2011: 88) contend: "Spirituality, then, in the context of urban life and the urban/land professions, we will interpret as a radical practise of connecting with awe: connecting to other people, and reconnecting to the natural world. The paradox at the heart of planning is that we do not discuss what makes that heart beat. We suggest that it is some sense of a relational politics, informed by love." In a similar vein, Anhorn (2006: 71) writes: "Spirituality in planning is not about ideology or theology. These are aspects of religion that lie outside of planning practise. Spirituality as it applies to planning is a way of being in the world rather than a particular ideology. It shapes how we interact with others in a process of building relationships, building connections." Clearly, spirituality, if practised wholeheartedly, permeates all action and thought; therefore, one may argue that the significance for a spiritually inspired and informed planning practise and theory needs no justification. Nonetheless, for illustrative purposes I want to briefly outline three areas to exemplify the relevance of spirituality.

### ***Spirituality for/in Urban Community and Neighbourhood Development***

Spirituality may play a vital role in many areas of urban development, for example for community health, a safe city and neighbourhood, and leading a secure and happy life. Some urban development initiatives such as, for example, the Healthy Cities programme of the WHO claim to apply a holistic perspective that also encompasses psychological and spiritual health, but in reality most of the projects are concerned with infrastructure or other physical health-related issues. Spiritually inspired approaches also follow a distinctly holistic approach, yet explicitly include the application of methods of inner healing. In these instances, the notion of illness and disease is applied to the social level (the community), where entire communities are considered especially mentally susceptible on account of their living conditions such as poverty, deprivation, violence, high unemployment, social exclusion, and other factors. Case studies presented in my other contribution to this issue from Germany and the US provide examples that demonstrate how powerful such approaches can be. As we shall see, community development is radically reframed in these two case studies.

### ***Spirituality for/in the Urban Environment and Ecology***

Generally, spirituality has received more attention in relation to the environmental crisis and climate change, in particular the challenge of sustainable living on planet

### Excerpts from the Earth Charter Cities

The Earth Charter City focuses on quality: engage exactly those values that allow us as humans and as a society to be more, instead of to have more. Especially policy makers must be aware that their local decisions have far-reaching effects on others, on nature and on the climate.

All Earth Charter Cities together contribute to a global partnership with the world community, with the Earth, with nature and with our future generations. An individual Earth Charter City has a partnership with its ecology, the urban community, people and nature in its immediate (peri-urban) environment.

The city is an ecosystem as intricate part of the Earth and ecological integrity is an important guideline. As an economic engine, the city is committed to develop meaningful values and a sustainable economy that includes everyone. Such cities offer many new opportunities to build a democratic and a humane world. The social, cultural, political and spiritual challenges are respectfully intertwined. Together they lead the way to unprecedented innovation and value added solutions.

The Earth Charter City contributes carefully and actively to the respect and the care for all life forms.

The Earth Charter City contributes strongly to the intrinsic dignity of all people and to the intellectual, artistic, ethical and spiritual potential of humanity.

The Earth Charter City cares for all life forms with understanding and shows compassion and love."

Source: Walas Concepts (n/d)

For more information: <[www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/categories/Religion and Spirituality/](http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/categories/Religion%20and%20Spirituality/)

Earth. In this context, spirituality is often assigned a potential force to enable the evolution of consciousness from an ethno-centric "us" toward a world-centric "we" perspective that respects global interconnectedness (e.g. UNDP 2007: 60-61). The Earth Charter Cities, endorsed by hundreds of cities and local governments around the globe, indicate such an evolving world or planetary consciousness (see Box). It is inspired by and associated with the Earth Charter Initiative, which seeks to promote the transition to a sustainable way of living strongly emphasizing ethical values.

My own recent work focuses on the links between urban climate change, urban lifestyles, quality of life, and development in relation to spirituality (Woiwode 2011a). This research is based on the assumption that hitherto the objectifying, natural sciences dominate the assessment of climate change, which results primarily in a socio-technical response to the problem. However, such a notion does merely encompass a systemic (inter-objective) perception of the external world while largely omitting interiority, i.e. the cultural (inter-subjective) and cognitive psycho-spiritual (subjective) dimensions. Evidently, consciousness development is a close companion of spirituality, for it is part of spiritual transformative practises. But consciousness is regarded as a significant, if not the most vital, factor in terms of the global ecological crisis, a theme already taken up by the authors of *The Limits to Growth* in 1972. Many observers assert that the current global crises are due to failures in human consciousness and (environmental) ethics (e.g. Frawley 2006, Gidley 2007, Goulet 1995, Wilber 2000). Consequently, if humankind wants to come to terms with the threat of climatic change, a fundamental process of both exterior and interior transformations needs to take place fully acknowledging the human conditions and their potentials.

### Spirituality for/in Place-Making

Another interface of spirituality with planning emerges from the notion of place-making. Sacred places are an age-old but, in contemporary industrialised societies, generally forgotten concept; especially the notion of a symbolic landscape of sacred places such as buildings and natural landmarks like mountains, trees, rocks. Thus, rediscovering and incorporating "the sacred" in terms of places is one way to acknowledge the continuum connectedness of human-spirit-nature. The relevance of

this is significant in a planning approach that takes social diversity and a pluralistic society seriously, for example by responding to the cultural frameworks of Australian Aborigines (see the case study presented in my other article), but obviously also in relation to issues of sustainability, environmental degradation and climate change.

Wight's integral approach to place-making and well-being brings in spirituality from another angle, as he argues: "Well-being may be conceptualised as a product of integrally-informed place-making, engaging body, mind and spirit – the hand, head and heart of some formulations (e.g. McIntosh 2008). Place may be conceptualised, in integral quadrant terms, as the integration of physicality, functionality, community and spirituality. If planning and the related policy and design can be re-conceptualised as integral place-making, they may come to play a more significant role in delivering and sustaining well-being – a fundamental public policy concern" (Wight 2010: 2).

### Summary and Conclusions

The main purpose of this article was to look at a broad and cursory perspective in terms of the significance and relevance of spirituality in urban development and the planning profession as well as to sketch why this topic has emerged now. To structure this quest, I had asked three questions at the outset

- relating to shifts in scientific epistemology and ontology (Why is spirituality just now becoming a phenomenon in various realms of our life and professions?);
- throwing some light on various concepts and notions of spirituality (What is the meaning of spirituality in general, and within an urban context in particular?); and finally
- discussing the relationship of spirituality and urban planning (How can the urban profession incorporate spirituality in planning practise and education?).

From the previous discussion it is clear that at this point urban planning practise and theory are still on a discovery tour to explore the opportunities and potentials of incorporating spirituality methodically, conceptually, and in practise.

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# Integral Spirituality in the Human Hive: A Primer

Marilyn Hamilton

## **Integrale Spiritualität im menschlichen Bienenstock: eine Einführung**

*In diesem Artikel untersucht die Autorin von „Integral City“ urbane Spiritualität auf der Grundlage der von ihr angewandten Metapher des menschlichen Bienenstocks. Sie geht von der Annahme aus, dass Spiritualität zur reflexiven Kapazität in der Stadt beiträgt und dadurch Einfluss auf Gestaltung, Planung und die gebaute Umwelt ausübt. Spiritualität wird dynamisch als involutionärer und evolutionärer Impuls verstanden, dem die Entstehung aller Lebensformen, einschließlich der bisher komplexesten menschlichen Systeme wie die Stadt, zugrunde liegt. Spirituelle Veränderungen beeinflussen kirchliche oder religiöse Strukturen, was einerseits produktive Kapazitäten freisetzen, andererseits aber auch zu Konflikten – etwa in den Bereichen Bildung, Gesundheit oder Regierungsführung – beitragen kann. Abschließend wird ein neuartiger Entwurf zur Wirkung und Dynamik dieser Spiritualität im Spannungsfeld von Ort und Raum dargestellt.*

*"Humans are Gaia's reflective organ."*

*James Lovelock*

This paper explores spirituality in the human hive using Integral City's four maps. It proposes that spirituality contributes to the quality of reflective capacity in the city with influences on design, planning and building. As an involutory/evolutionary impulse, spirituality underlies the emergence of all life forms, including the most complex human system, the city. Changing worldviews at the ego-ethno-world-kosmo-centric stages of development recapitulate the meaning of spirituality to individuals and cultures. Spiritual change impacts structures in churches/synagogues/temples that contribute capacities as well as create conflicts within and across the silos of education, health and governance. Spirituality in the human hive cycles through source, field and re-source integrating Truth, Goodness and Beauty into Love that makes Grace, Place and Space. In conclusion, a fifth map traces the presence and flow of the spiritual pulse of the Human Hive.

*Take Care of Yourself.*

*Take Care of Each Other.*

*Take Care of this Place.*

This master principle is an injunction for practising spiritual wellbeing in the human hive (Hamilton 2010a: 49). This article is a primer for tracing spirituality with an integral compass, building on the spirit that inspired the framework proposed in Integral City (Hamilton 2008).

## **What is the Human Hive?**

The human hive (our species' version of the honeybee's hive) is the most complex system humans have created. In all its dignities and disasters, it is the deepest expression of Gaia's most reflective organ (Lovelock 2009). But what are the qualities of a reflective organ and why would evolution call forth such a capacity in individu-

als or cities? In 1901, Nobelist (beekeeper) Maeterlinck (1954) observed that the purpose of humans, like all evolutionary beings is "read in [their] distinguishing organs ... [where] the ... spirit ... of 'cerebral substance' ... spreads over the universe as an "incomprehensible flame".

Now that more than 50% of humans live in cities (Glenn, Gordon, & Florescu 2011), we may have created opportunity to release love as a prime force of cities (Beasley 2009), thereby creating a natural habitat for spirit and spirituality because they are inborn qualities of who we are as a species.

## *Four Maps that Reveal Spirituality in the City*

Before we examine a definition of spirituality, let us consider the evolutionary complex adaptive living city as a "reflective organ" that is dynamic, fractal, holographic and morphic in nature. To do so, we will use a meta-theory that integrates four essential maps (Hamilton 2008).

Each map gives us a different view of the whole city and helps us to understand the interrelationship of individuals, groups, sectors and sections. Although each map offers only a partial perspective, together they can be conceptually (and technologically) hyperlinked to give us a more comprehensive picture of the interconnected human hive. A brief description follows of the contribution each map reveals about spirituality in the city.

## *The City as Holon – The Four-Quadrant, Eight-Level Map (Map 1)*

This map shows that reality in the city arises from both an individual/collective and an interior/exterior expression (Wilber 1995). The intersection of these two polarities reveals four city realities (table 1) :

**Table 1:** Four Domains of City Realities

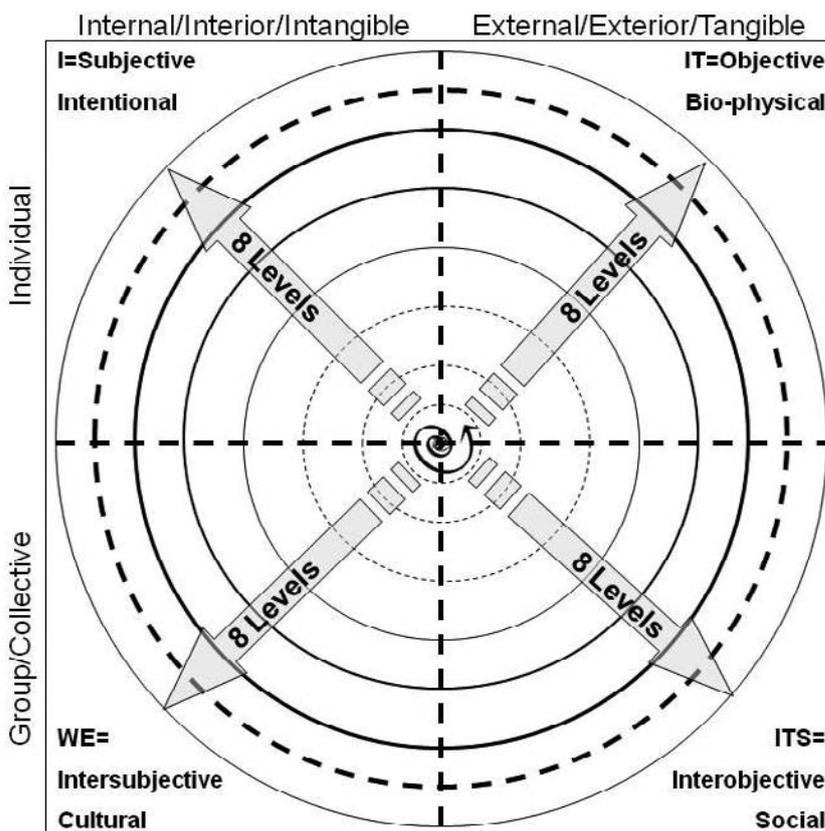
<p><b>1. Upper Left (UL): individual beliefs</b> interior/ internal/ subjective/ intangible</p>	<p><b>3. Upper Right (UR): individual actions</b> exterior/ external/ objective/ tangible</p>
<p><b>2. Lower Left (LL): collective culture</b> interior/ internal/ intersubjective/ intangible</p>	<p><b>4. Lower Right (LR): collective systems</b> exterior/ external/ interobjective/ tangible</p>

Our institutions of higher learning have organised the domains of knowledge into four perspectives (or voices) common to all languages (I, We, It and Its, shown in Table 2) (Wilber 1995, 2006; Zimmerman 2005).

**Table 2:** Domains of Knowledge and Related Voices

<p><b>Upper Left (UL):</b> aesthetics and fine arts (I)</p>	<p><b>Upper Right (UR):</b> life sciences (It)</p>
<p><b>Lower Left (LL):</b> humanities (We)</p>	<p><b>Lower Right (LR):</b> social sciences (Its)</p>

Map 1 is analogous to a "plan view" of the human hive and provides the coordinates for what Wilber calls "cosmic addresses" (Wilber 2006). The value of Map 1 to seeing spirituality in the city is that it situates not only perspectives but methodologies for seeing the city as a whole living system. It locates the parts, partial views and fragments of the city so they can inform one another and be viewed as an integrated system where what happens in the LL cultural values of the city can be linked to the LR systems of safety, family law and recreational facilities, as well as individual UL beliefs and UR actions. It has a series of "growth rings" that spiral out from the centre along the diagonal axis of each quadrant, representing the eight stages of complexity discussed in Map 4.



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◀ **Map 1:** The Integral Map (Source: adapted from Wilber 1995, 1996)



The value of Map 4 is that it shows spirituality can be organisationally expressed at multiple evolutionary levels. Moreover, each LR structure is related to a LL spiritual value system which allows us to correlate all the ego-ethno-world-kosmo-centricities spiritually alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century city (see Box).

### Combining the Maps into a Spiritual GIS System

Aligning multiple views of the human hive, DeKay (2011) guides designers to integrate "perspectives, prospects, shifts and deep connections", which distinguishes an integral approach from any non-integral approach because the designer (whether planner, engineer or developer) can see his/her personal interiority both distinct from and connected to collective interiority and the city's exteriority. Such combinations are more powerful than mere Google Earth© views from outer space, as they reveal the inner space of a Global Spiritual Information System (GSIS) for the whole city that is tetra-arising, holarchical, evolutionary, developmental, adaptive and dynamic.

### What is Spirituality?

Now that we have an integrated mapping system to appreciate and locate dynamic spiritual realities, we can ask, what is spirituality? How might unpacking the meaning of the "reflective organ" that manifests "inflaming cerebral substance" reveal spirituality?

On a never-ending quest within an ecology of integral lineages, I consider spirituality to be a universal life force that cycles through existence as an involutory and evolutionary impulse (Wilber 1995). The first stage of the cycle, called involution, originates at the non-dual "source" that lies at the centre of existence where it descends from the invisible to the visible; from the immanent to that which is presenced; from the unmanifest source to manifest "re-sources". The second stage of the cycle, called evolution, attracts all creation back to source so that it ascends from the manifest to the source; from the visible to the invisible; from gross physical bodies to subtle and causal energy fields to non-dual source. Spirituality is not outside of city creation but embedded in it as the source, flowing through it as energetic fields and manifest in its emergent re-sources.

### Nine/Four Levels of Spirituality in the City

*Spirituality in the city has developed as consciousness itself has evolved (McIntosh 2007) into nine levels in four clusters of bio-psycho-cultural-social worldviews. These reframe discourses into a scaffolding of spiritual concerns (Beck & Cowan 1996: 302) (DeKay 2011; Wilber 1995, 2001, 2006).*

#### Ego-Centric Traditionalists

- Level 1 senses the spirits of the city's land, sea, air and life forms
- Level 2 honours spiritual places and ancestors
- Level 3 identifies itself with spiritual "Power Gods" and enforces right with might

#### Ethno-Centric Modernists

- Level 4 installs spiritual authority and demands all follow the "One Right Way"
- Level 5 positions individual success to impact spiritual spheres of influence

#### World-Centric Post-Modernists & Integralists

- Level 6 considers how the greater community can express spiritual caring for all members
- Level 7 asks what level of the evolutionary spiral is active in any situation and what are its spiritual needs
- Level 8 considers the spiritual needs of all life on earth and in the city

#### Kosmo-Centrists

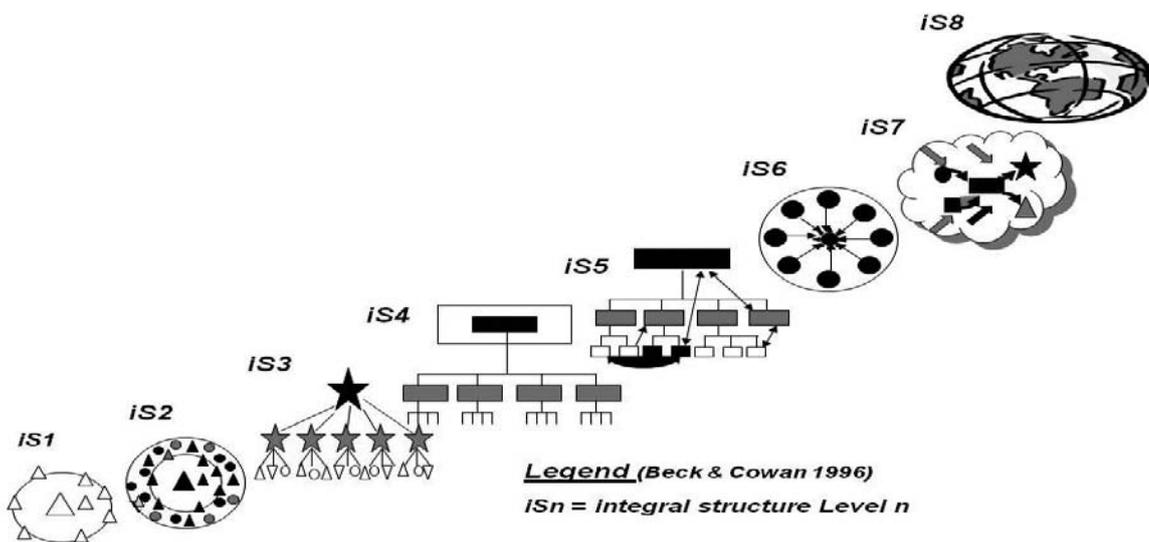
- Level 9 integrates spirituality as transpersonal, translocational, transenergetic, translife

Although the city planning literature seems devoid of spiritual grounding (Wight 2010; Woiwode 2011), examination of how a spiritual cycle started preoccupies much scientific and cosmological speculation (Abrams & Primack 2006; Capra & Steindl-Rast 1992; Cohen 2011; Kauffman 1995; Mitchell & Williams 2001; Wigglesworth 2006; Wilber 2006, 2007), nicely summed up by the question: "If the Universe began with a big bang, perhaps ... a consciousness ... guided the pushing of the plunger that set it off?" (Beck & Cowan, 1996: 285)

Ken Wilber (2001) has despaired for much of his career that empirical science has reduced spirituality to simple explanations grounded in the Integral Model's objective/interobjective right-hand quadrants. But Wilber (2001, 2006) points out that it is a methodological fallacy to use the right-hand epistemologies of poesis (both auto and social), empiricism and systems to know reality in either of the left hand quadrants. Instead he emphasises (Wilber 2007: 155) that "[...] 'Spirituality' can be used ... to refer to quadrants, levels/stages, lines, states, and types. ... Each of these usages is valid, but we must state which aspect of spirituality we are referring to, because otherwise our conclusions are all diametrically opposed to each other and end up deeply contradictory."

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Map 4: The Complex Adaptive Structures of City Change (Source: Beck and Cowan 1996)

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As reflective organs we may know spirituality (or God) in all four quadrants of our integral reality: as spiritual experience (UL) (Wilber, Patten, Leonard, & Morelli 2006); action flow state (UR) (Csikszentmihalyi 1991; Murphy 1992); collective ecstasy or ethos (LL) (Peck 1987, 1993, 1997; Wight 2011b); and collective creation (LR) (DeKay 2011; Esbjörn-Hargens & Zimmerman 2009).

Spirituality is also a UL and LL intelligence (or line) that is capable of growing from ego to ethno to world to cosmic levels of development for individuals and cultures (Wigglesworth 2011a). As well (paradoxically), it is the Absolute source of stillness at the centre of existence (Map 1) and the Relative evolutionary impulse that drives all city manifestation (Maps 2, 3, 4).

### *Absolute Source of City Spirit*

Combs (2002) explains that individuals experience reality differently depending on their levels of consciousness development, suggesting that highly developed people may feel the "gravity of the Absolute pulling him or her forward, toward greater identity with the ultimate non-dual condition" (Combs 2002: 149). He suggests spiritual experience matures from the gross realm to the subtle, causal and finally to the non-dual realm and as it does so a person is more able to access Absolute Source.

In contrast to Combs' stage explanation, intuiting city spirit may be akin to a deep state experience accessing "the earth-sky-water-human continuum that is the existential ground of Aboriginal dreaming" (Sandercock & Lyssiotis 2003: 225).

Cohen (2011) transcends both stage and state explanations, describing the Source as the evolutionary impulse and "the energy and intelligence behind the evolving universe" (Cohen 2011: 49). He reiterates it is the ground of being from which "something has come from nothing".

Source can be accessed by learning (structures, states and stages), stillness (practises) and appreciation as discussed below (McIntosh 2007).

### *Evolving Re-Source of City Container*

The spiritual qualities and cultures that are revealed in quadrants and levels become integrated when we see the city is a container for spirituality. A container is a holonic structure that holds qualities, elements, configurations and other wholes.

Each of the spiritual levels located in Map 1 (that Wilber calls cosmic addresses) has dignities – core values that add to healthy spiritual expression – and disasters – core shadows that detract from healthy spiritual expression (Wilber 2001). In order for the city to develop with alignment for purpose, values and plans, the spiritual dignity of each level must be transcended and included as the next stage of complexity emerges (while the disaster must be recognised and released). When this is done, the meaning of spirituality is essentially recalibrated into a larger container (of space, time and moral influence) and takes on an expanded mission in the city.

Spiritual containers in the city can be considered in three key scales (DeKay 2011):

*Self*  
*Culture*  
*Nature*

The **Self** as a spiritual container is governed by the cosmic address of the person and is governed by their UL attention, intention and UR actions. Personal, subjective spiritual containers are defined by individual belief and behaviour boundaries. Wilber (2007: 199) proposes that Self represents the first person/face of God – the UL "I" in Map 1 of the city.

A multiplicity of Selves make up the spiritual container of **cultures** in the city. In this respect we can think of city culture(s) as the cosmic address(es) of shared spiritual values and visions of the group or social holon that holds them. They tend to represent a centre of gravity extending across about three developmental levels (see Box 1). As such, the cultures are inter-subjective spiritual belief systems whose boundaries are invisible but are understood by all who belong to them and (often easily) inferred by many who don't belong.

These LL spiritual cultures are fundamental to the structural containers which are their LR analogues as spiritual institutions. LR spiritual structures include the denominational temples, churches, mosques and places of worship where all the LL dogmas, religions and spiritual worldviews are practised. Wilber calls spirit as culture the "Great Thou" or the 2nd person/face of God (Wilber 2007: 199) – the LL "We" in Map 1 of the city.

The third spiritual scale of the city is **Nature**. Natural law governs all manifest life in the biosphere and non-life in the physiosphere in all its evolutionary magnificence. Wilber calls Nature the "Great Web of Life" and the 3rd person/face of God (Wilber 2007: 199) – the UR "It" and LR "Its" in Map 1 of the city.

The city as spiritual container holds not only the spiritual lives of citizens at three scales, but also the artefacts of spiritual expression including all the systems, structures and infrastructures within the LR-built city. And although we tend to point at the cathedrals, mosques and synagogues as centres of spiritual life, in fact the "soul" of the city is expressed in all its built form and business. This very business incites people to seek places of spiritual refuge away from the over-stimulation of the senses, which create spiritual disconnection.

DeKay (2011) links the UL inner-development of designers to their capacity for LR design of structures. Alexander (1977, 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c) has developed an architectural philosophy and methodology that explains how the city's aliveness (and therefore its spiritual manifestation) can be heightened by careful attention to the design and relationship of centres. This echoes practises common to all spiritual systems of centring prayer, meditation and chant. Thus it appears that extrinsic centring is intrinsic to spiritual connection for Self-centring (e.g. meditation rooms in the airport); culture-centring (e.g. labyrinths in pocket parks) and nature-centring (e.g. community gardens, public parks and nature trails).

## Emerging Field of City Spirit

As the city matures through the exchange of energy between spiritual source and re-source, a spiritual energy field emerges. When we admit all three faces of God as the essence of spirit in the city, we make room for an ever evolving field of spirituality.

Evidence about spiritual behaviours, attitudes, shared practises and systems, suggest that a field effect is emerging in the city (McTaggart 2001; Sheldrake 1988). The field probably arises because the city as container causes the multiplicity of chaotic exchanges within and across holons and social holons to converge into patterns that sustain. Florida (2005, 2008) and Landry (2007) recommend proactively valuing creativity to produce creative and artful cities that attract more people who value creativity. A kind of "spiritual groove" becomes carved in the energetic field, which through repetition reinforces itself.

Sheldrake (1988: 113) describes the co-emergent influences of UL mental activity, UR human behaviour, LL cultural and LR social systems as morphic fields which contain an inherent memory. Within the framework of spirituality in the human hive, it may be that the morphic fields are the cumulative subtle and causal energetic fields exhibited by individuals and groups. They may become accessible as transpersonal spiritual "stores" by those who are especially bonded in the convergent space and place-making container of the city (McTaggart 2011).

What Wilber, Combs and Beck and Cowan frame is that different individuals and cultures operate at different levels of development (that will only mature at the pace determined by their life conditions). As a result, cities will always have a developmental spectrum of spiritual practises that span the spiral of spiritual concerns (see Box 1).

The spiritual health of the 21<sup>st</sup> century city is challenged to find a way that reconciles these different LR religious structures and UR spiritual practises, especially where egocentric and ethnocentric views conflict. We see such schisms in Jerusalem (with the clash of all three Abrahamic religions), Calcutta and Mumbai (where Hinduism threatens Islam) and Jakarta (with clashes of Islam, Buddhism, Animism and Christianity).

In general today, the variety of spiritual expression depends as much on the city's governance system, transnational immigration and refugee policies as on its cultural history. Even Scandinavian cities' homogenous cultures have been challenged by new spiritual incursions; whereas Paris, Copenhagen and Amsterdam, have toxic mixes of indigenous and immigrant cultures resisting peaceful bridge building.

The relevance of spiritual development to the whole field of city wellbeing influences how the city develops its purpose, identity, vision, values, cultural relationships and even its infrastructures. A few cities like Singapore have governance systems that embrace multiple ethnic groupings, celebrating all spiritual holidays, while enforcing common denominators of respectful behaviours, national service and strict rules of law and order (Beck & Cowan 1996: 306).

When a city can be aligned around core spiritual values in an explicit way (like storytelling instead of non-inclusive city planning practises), it can more easily sustain quality of life for all citizens (Sandercock 2000). Cities like Curitiba, Vancouver and Songpa improve quality of life by aligning qualitative and quantitative sustainability indicators ("Globe Sustainable City Awards" 2011). Furthermore, visionary leadership from mayors (like former mayor Jaime Lerner in Curitiba) and city management (like Sadhu Johnson in Vancouver) demonstrates that spiritually-inspired leaders can translate resiliency principles into sustainability practises (Brown 2011; Wigglesworth 2010).

## Spiritual Practises Grow City Spirit

The perennial values that all spiritual wisdoms share appear to contribute to the human hive as a reflective organ. Spiritual guides see Beauty, Goodness and Truth as core values that imbue spiritual life at all expressions of Self, Culture and Nature (DeKay 2011: xxvii; McIntosh 2007: 300; Wilber 2007: 70).

McIntosh (2007: 141) explores inner and outer polarities of this trio in ways that reveal a holographic quality to spirituality. He suggests that Beauty (relating to UL) is accessed through the interiors as appreciation and manifested through the exteriors as expression. He proposes that Goodness (LL) is accessed through the interiors as stillness and manifested through the exteriors as service. He sees Truth (relating to UR and LR) is accessed through the interiors as learning and manifested through the exteriors as instruction (and I would add construction). Within an integral frame these values co-arise and their interior and exterior modes seem to cross-connect and rotate or even interchange as they stimulate multiple routes to the emergence of Grace, Place and Space (Below we select one path to illustrate spirit's rich process). Although, the deep integration of Beauty, Goodness and Truth may be most simply apprehended as the meta-value of Love.

## Spiritual Appreciation & Expression @ Grace Making

Spirituality in the city is dynamically manifested through each city actor and their capacities present in all of the quadrants, levels, lines, relationships, and structures of the Maps 1,2,3 and 4. Thus implicit and explicit spiritual practitioners generate spiritual capacities – or "Grace" - in many ways .

DeKay (2011) has developed injunctions both to appreciate and express the capacity of Beauty to release greater Goodness and Truth. He invokes the designer AS nature to create architectural spaces that are sustainable because they are magnificent expressions of natural Beauty.

Sanguin (2007) recognises Beauty as a strong principle of the evolutionary impulse, calling it the "aesthetic principle". As activist-thought leader in both the church and city, he inspires congregations through "Darwin, Divinity and the Dance of the Cosmos". Sanguin (2007: 121) leads his congregation to express their core purpose and design their UL and LR systems of service to the city's food banks, environmental initiatives and healing practices, with deep appreciation of "the hidden wholeness, the non-coercive intelligence ... nudging ... formations of increasing elegance, beauty and diversity."

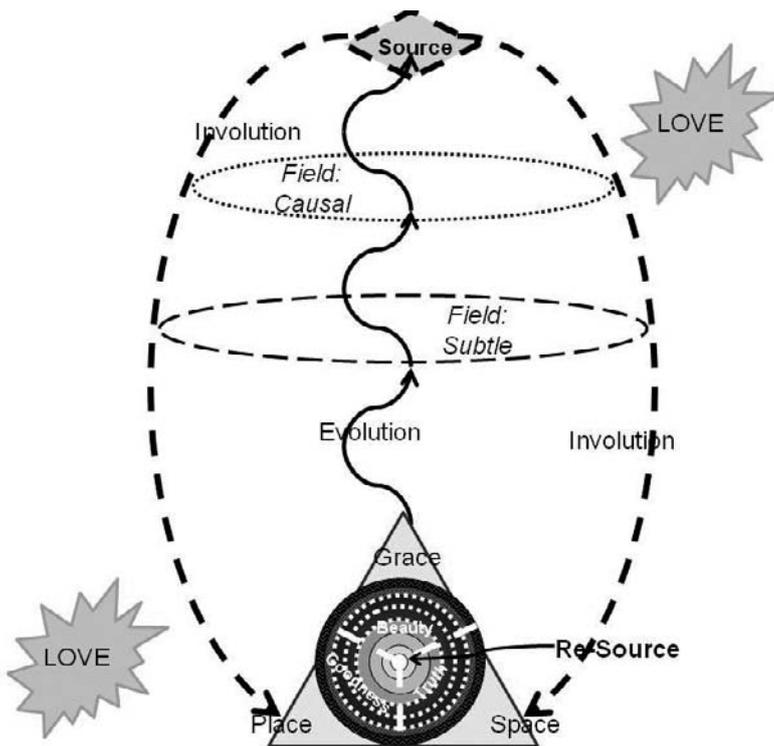
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**Map 5:** Spirituality in the Human Hive Apprehended as Love



Framing the knowledge, skills and abilities of spiritual intelligence, Wigglesworth (2002, 2004, 2006) has defined it as "the ability to behave with Compassion and Wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace (equanimity) regardless of the circumstances" (2004: 4). Wigglesworth's assessment technology parses spiritual intelligence into four quadrants with the integral themes of UL Higher Self Awareness, UR Higher Self Mastery, LL Universal Awareness and LR Social Mastery/Spiritual Presence, measuring each spiritual skill on a scale of 1 (basic understanding) to 5 (advanced mastery).

*Spiritual Stillness & Service @ Place Making*

Integrally informed spiritual activists touch, align and weave together the spiritual lives of stakeholders, habitats, practises, and resources in very subtle ways because their integral frameworks allow them to be effective "meshworkers" (Beck 2010; Hamilton 2008: 221). Meshworkers and meshweavers enable practitioners to evolve to their next natural step of spiritual development. They practise both the change the world needs done and have the maturity as world-or-kosmo-centric activists to access the power of stillness as "wonder, awe, reverence, humility, unity and a refreshed value for simplicity ... [monitoring] both self and situation as a participant-observer ... [where] life is the most important thing there is; but my life is unimportant" (Beck & Cowan 1996: 291).

The Integral City is becoming a convergence vessel where religious plurality is bridging, integrating and evolving spiritual practise into an integral or even universal ecology (Patten 2010). Patten says that "integral evolutionary spirituality both accommodates and resolves the apparent contradictions among the diverse forms of wisdom it integrates. It embraces the paradoxes of theistic and non-theistic spirituality, of 1<sup>st</sup>-person, 2<sup>nd</sup>-person, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-person mysticism" (Patten 2010: 4).

One aspect of Wight's (Wight 2002, 2005, 2010) approach to place-making relates it both to wellbeing and the ways that people make meaning together in body, mind and spirit. Represented in the ecology of place-makers are pastors, rabbis and imams speaking for their spiritual traditions, and citizen activists and civil societies defending diverse spiritual rights. Wigglesworth offers glossaries of neutrally languaged spiritual intelligence as well as translations for Christian, Jewish, Islam, Atheists and other spiritual traditions (Wigglesworth 2011a, 2011b). Even some planners suggest that citizens will act sustainably only when they realise their love for their city (Beasley 2009).

As a unique evolutionary Christian example, Sanguin (2008: 94-97) recognises the spectrum of sacred LL rituals in the city's spiritual places (and spaces). He dares to ask "What Colour is Your Christ?" and explores the whole spiral of spirituality that arises from serving the Tribal Christ, the Warrior Christ, the Traditional Divine Scapegoat Christ, the Christ as CEO, the Egalitarian Christ, the Integral Christ and the Mystical Christ.

Less recognised spiritual supporters are institutionalised in city hall as managers of UR city facilities and LR infrastructures that enable congregation of citizens, both publicly and privately (Sandercock 2000). Similar actors come in the guise of integral educators and health system evolutionaries (Dea 2010; Esbjörn-Hargens, Reams, & Gunnlaugson 2010). Further evidence indicates that ordinary citizens "appropriate spaces ... to tend the spirit" and nourish the soul (Sandercock & Lyssiotis 2003: 226).

Thus we see an expanded spectrum of helpers in the city, from the traditional spiritual leaders with positional office, to modern coaches in the psychotherapy room and business organisation, to postmodern counsellors, doctors and somatic instructors, to integral spiritual directors, life coaches and curators of online sanctuaries (Patten 2010).

*Spiritual Learning & Instruction/Construction @ Space Making*

Hamer (2004: 23) demonstrates the UR genetic basis of spirituality in aspects of self-forgetfulness, transpersonal identification and mysticism. Likewise, it appears that UR/LR altruism is not only UR hardwired, it fires a pleasure centre in the brain, thus reinforcing the practise every time it is repeated - "being selfless is ultimately the most self-serving option because it feels so good to give" (McTaggart 2011: 107).

Such explorations of practical spiritual behaviour point to the immanence of spirituality in all key sectors of the city. Using the sectors of Map 2, spirituality runs like rivers through all of them connecting them in the spiritual ocean of the city. These tributaries undoubtedly impact the design of the human hive from grandest structural expression in streetscapes and cathedrals, to sensitive reflective collective intelligence, to small daily acts of personal kindness (Alexander 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; DeKay 2011; Hamilton 2008; Wills, Hamilton, & Islam 2007a).

Essentially, from a sustainability perspective all of the sectors of the city form an ecology of wellbeing (Wight 2005), like different organs (or eco-selves [Esbjörn-Hargens &

Presence Zones	Interactive Spiritual Values	Core Integral Quadrant	Interior Portals of Access	Exterior Practices of Enactment	Co-Emergent Outcomes	Meta-Value
Source or Ground of Spiritual Abundance ~~~~	Beauty	UL	Appreciation	Expression	Grace	L  O  V  E
Field of Spiritual Memory ~~~~	Goodness	LL	Stillness	Service	Place	
Re-Source or Container of Living Human Hive	Truth	UR/LR	Learning	Teaching/ Constructing	Space	

Zimmerman 2009: 227) integrally forming the body of the whole. The spiritual DNA of city wellbeing (as Truth, Goodness and Beauty) aligns sectors into evolutionary intelligences (Hamilton 2008) with such integrated qualities that we implicitly resonate with all the possible combinations of Beautiful/Good/True values contributing to any and all Space/Place/Grace outcomes.

The role of city hall should be to align all of the sectors in service to the wellbeing of the whole human hive. An absence of spiritual aliveness in any of these sectors undermines the wellbeing of the city. On the other hand an embrace of spiritual aliveness in any of them (and especially at city hall) can catalyse the entire wellbeing of the city (Wight 2005, 2009, 2010; Wills, et al. 2007a; Wills, Hamilton, & Islam 2007b).

#### Map #5: Spirituality in the City

In tracing the cycle of spirituality in the human hive, we come to a final spirituality map that reveals Grace, Place and Space as outcomes from the dynamic interconnections of Beauty, Goodness and Truth. Perhaps it comes as no surprise that the integration of these core spiritual values is apprehended as the meta-value of Love in all the horizontal and vertical zones of the Integral City (illustrated in Figure 1 and summarised in Table 2)?

The **Source** Zone of city spirituality exists as the Absolute, ever-present non-dual infinite ground of spiritual abundance. Here the core value of Beauty may be accessed through the Interior Portal of Appreciation and enacted through the Exterior Practice of Expression. This results in the spiritual outcome of **Grace**.

The **Field** Zone of city spirituality arises through the subtle and causal memory patterns created by evolutionary spiritual practise. Here the core value of Goodness

may be accessed through the Interior Portal of Stillness and enacted through the Exterior Practice of Service. This results in the spiritual outcome of **Place**.

At the **Resource** Zone of city spirituality emerges the relative manifest qualities of the evolutionary container of the human hive. Here the core value of Truth may be accessed through the Interior Portal of Learning and enacted through the Exterior Practice of Teaching and Construction. This results in the spiritual outcome of **Space**.

#### Conclusion

This paper has acknowledged that spirituality in the human hive is driven by an involutory/evolutionary impulse; that it reveals itself in individual and collective lives as qualities, cultures and containers that can be situated in five integral maps. Our exploration of the cycle of spirituality in the human hive discovers the core values of Beauty, Goodness and Truth. And it opens the door for future inquiry about: spirituality applied in the professions (eg. what would a practise of spiritual engineering look like?); deeper research into the qualities of Gaia's Reflective Organ (Lovelock 1972); the epistemologies of spirituality (eg. what and how do we perceive holographically?); and evolving, developmental paths that re-source and transform (Wight 2011a). As an affirming indicator, this primer suggests Love is the spiritual pulse through which Gaia's Reflective Organ makes:

*Grace – In Taking Care of Yourself.*  
*Place – In Taking Care of Each Other.*  
*Space – In Taking Care of This City.*

Table 3: Spirituality in the Human Hive

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# The Town beyond the Modern: A Debate about Space, Time and Spirituality

Carl Fingerhuth

## **Die Stadt jenseits der Moderne: Eine Debatte über Raum, Zeit und Spiritualität**

*Ausgehend von seiner eigenen Biographie zeichnet der Autor die Veränderungen von urbaner Gestalt in Raum und Zeit über einen Zeitraum von mehr als fünfzig Jahren nach. Dabei richtet sich der Blick von Europa über Afrika bis in den fernen Osten Chinas. Hauptthese ist, dass sich die Stadt über die Moderne hinaus bewegt, in eine neuartige Welt, den Rationalismus des Westens transzendierend und gleichsam Emotionen und Spiritualität wiederentdeckend. Wir treten in eine neue Ära, wir sind mitten in einer radikalen Transformation unseres Bewusstseins. Eine der vielen Veränderungen, die diese Verschiebung mit sich bringt, ist die Wahrnehmung unseres kollektiven Selbst, vom physischen Körper als Inkarnation des Selbst hin zu unseren Seelen als Teil unseres kosmischen Ursprungs. Dies erzeugt ebenso eine Verschiebung dahingehend, wie wir unsere Städte wahrnehmen. Diese werden nun nicht mehr einfach als Steinhaufen betrachtet, sondern als "Körper" der Gesellschaft gedacht, der mit seinem kollektiven Bewusstsein und seinem kosmischen Ursprung verbunden ist. Den zentralen Bezugsrahmen dieses Ansatzes bildet die Gestalttherapie. Wobei die Gestalt der Städte mit den neuartigen Energien, die nun besser wahrgenommen werden, verbunden wird: Emotionalität, Sensibilität und Spiritualität in unserer heutigen Welt. Ziel ist hierbei, die Spaltung zwischen der Gesellschaft und den Technikern unserer Städte zu überwinden, um diese nach den Bedürfnissen, Wünschen und Visionen ihrer Bewohner zu entwickeln.*

## **A Biography as a History Book**

Working with towns and their space so that they become an intense reflection of their inhabitant's needs, goals, and dreams – in other words, creating and maintaining meaningful town space – has been my lifelong preoccupation. Towns are where I gained experience, learned, and developed.

In my professional life, from 1956 until today, I have had the opportunity to experience from within the framework of towns this dramatic change in human consciousness as we transition from the modern time to the current era. I came of age just as the modern dogma was coming into question. In this sense, my biography can be read like a history book of the urban design of the last fifty years (Figure 1 – 8).

During this lifelong process, I became more and more drawn into the interaction and interdependence between the new emotional and spiritual world of our current times and the physical manifestation of our towns. It appeared in talks about Feng-Shui lines in Kunming, China, when I was invited to join discussions about space and spirituality at universities or how to develop new forms of dialogue in processes connected with taking care of the transformation of towns. And that's where I still am.

### *The New World*

Saul Steinberg's drawing (Figure 9) is a wonderful reflection of the challenge of our time. Here we are in the middle of nowhere. How do we get back to earth? How do we

bring our society's new consciousness, new sensuality, emotionality and intuition into the physical world? How do we transform into gestalt that which is formless, within the stomachs, hearts, and minds of today's people?

Steinberg's drawing fascinates me in another respect. It tells in one picture one hundred stories, each story with ten thousand words. Words are hard sounding and often one-dimensional. Pictures are open and multidimensional. (If I were permitted to rewrite the Bible, I would propose changing the wording of John 1:1 from: "In the beginning was the word" to: "In the beginning was the picture.") Towns do not use words. They show themselves and tell their story with pictures, with gestalt – form and structure with a meaning.

All four towers displayed (Figures 10 – 13) have a square ground floor. All four dominate their surroundings, but each one tells a different story.

The tower in Thailand (Figure 10) is a spiritual symbol. It reminds man of the unity of Earth and Heaven. On the way up to the sky the square form of the ground floor, as a symbol of the physical, transforms itself into a circle, as a symbol of universal unity, which then dissolves itself in form of a pointed needle in heaven into pure spirituality.

The Tuscan tower (Figure 11) refers to political power of a worldly sovereign. It was a stronghold, unapproachable and without windows. It defines a territory and is symbolically closed for any stranger.

This Basel high-rise apartment building (Figure 12) scoffs at 19<sup>th</sup>-century city housing blocks and shows off the



**Figure 1:** 1954 – I started by being a modern architect in Geneva.  
Photo: City Administration Geneva

**Figure 2:** 1960 – I reversed to the past by working as an Archaeologist in Egypt. Photo: Carl Fingerhuth



**Figure 3:** Coming back to Switzerland, I set up my own office for town and country planning, Master Plan, working in Europe . . . Photo: Carl Fingerhuth



**Figure 4:** . . . and in Africa. Photo: Daily Star, Owerri, 10 December 1976, front page



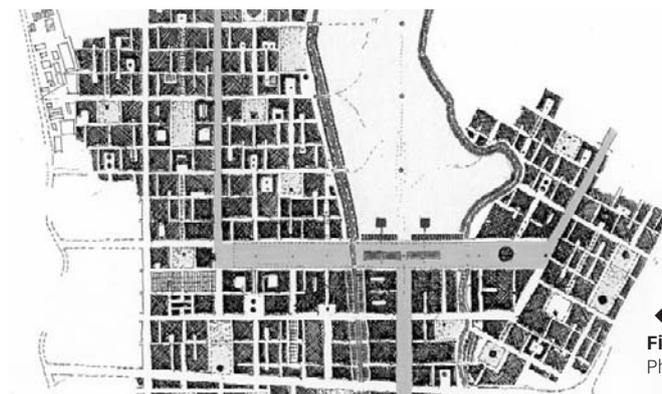
**Figure 5:** In 1978, I finished my time as an "expert" and was given political responsibility by being elected Chief Architect of Basel . . . Photo: Hochbauamt Basel-Stadt, Switzerland



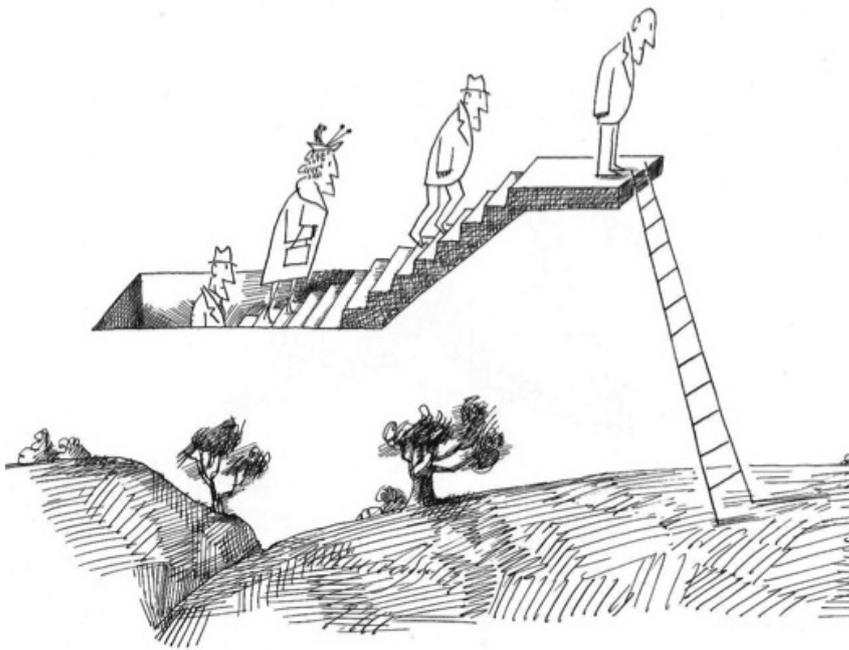
**Figure 7:** Becoming 56 years old, I quit my job in Basel and went back into the world teaching . . . Photo: Andreas Wolf



**Figure 6:** . . . in a place imbued by contradiction and complexity. Photo: Carl Fingerhuth



**Figure 8:** . . . designing and monitoring. Photo: Carl Fingerhuth



▲ **Figure 9:** The new world according to Saul Steinberg, 1965. Source: New Yorker, 24. April 1965, page 41

boundless potential of the modern world. The inherent promise is that modern technology will eliminate all boundaries and social inequalities. It promises a glorious new town that will replace the dark old city and its restrictions.

The World Trade Center in Manhattan (Figure 13) was the ultimate symbol of the importance and dominance

of the economic power of Western civilisation, reducing the statue of liberty to a puppet, and becoming the main physical focal point of the whole of Manhattan, indeed, of the Western world. It did not make friends and celebrated through its gestalt the power of rationality and perfection. It did not have a "crown" like the Chrysler Building. It was prepared to continue growing right up into the sky.

The structure of Mexcaltitan (Figure 14) could be a reflection of the inner world of the Aztec civilisation. The universal circle was structured by an orthogonal order, as a first symbol of humanity, that human beings control the world.

The intersection of Broadway, part of an old Native American Indian path connecting the Hudson River to the ocean, and Fifth Avenue, is a silent reference to the roots of New York (Figures 15).

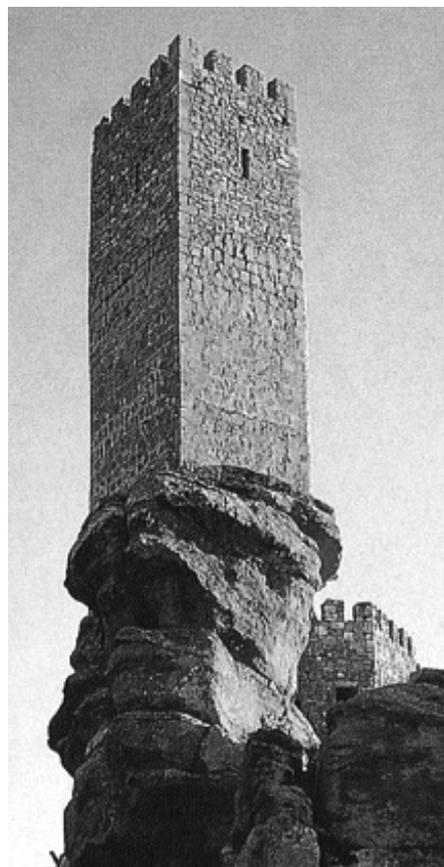
We are entering a new era; we are in the midst of a radical transformation of consciousness. One of the many changes this shift entails is the perception of our collective self, from the physical body as incarnation of the self, to our souls as part of our cosmic origin. This produces a similar shift in how we perceive our towns. They are no longer regarded as simple piles of stones. Thus, towns are thought of as the "body" of society, connected to its collective consciousness and its cosmic origin.

### ***Common Phenomena of Mankind, Town and Cosmos***

Bookstore display windows are filled with books about our inner and outer world. There are books about the ego, morphogenetic fields, polar ice caps, the difference



▲ **Figure 10:** A tower in Thailand. Photo: Carl Fingerhuth



▲ **Figure 11:** ... in Italy. Photo: Unknown photographer



▲ **Figure 12:** ... in Switzerland. Photo: Carl Fingerhuth

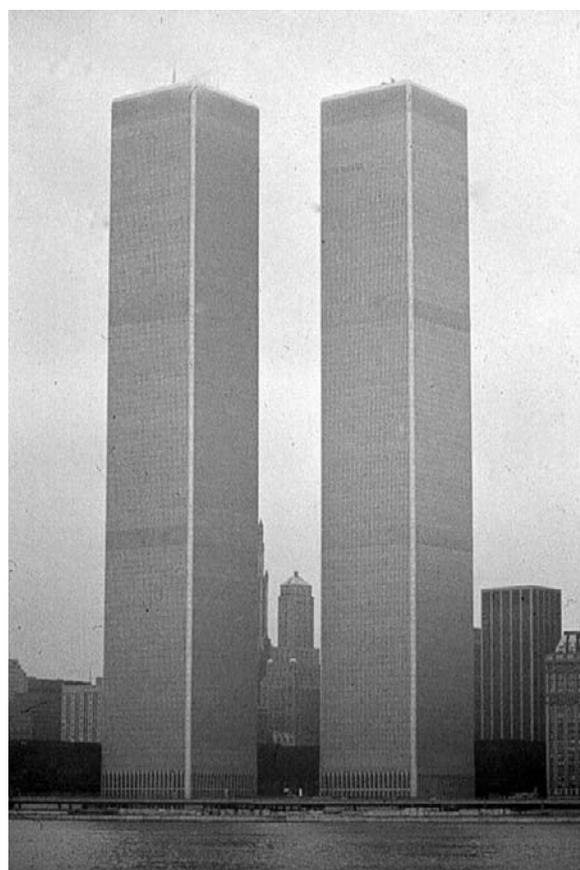
between Islam and Christianity. The subject of towns is rarely integrated into any of these books. There are books about towns but mostly they are picture books, monographs, and guidebooks. They show images of the world or praise the latest hero of architecture.

My approach is different; gestalt is my frame of reference. I seek to connect the gestalt of towns to the new energies which show themselves: the emotionality, sensitivity, and spirituality of our world today. Bridging the great divide between society and the technicians of our towns will allow cities to develop according to the needs, wishes and dreams of their inhabitants.

There is a fascinating coherence of phenomena between mankind, town, and the cosmos. Phenomena are defined as "facts that are observed to exist, especially those whose cause is in question" (Oxford Compact English Dictionary 2003: 848). These particular phenomena are not new but they were buried, or discredited, because they were a nuisance in the context of the dogma of the modern era.

I use the word "mankind" in a multidimensional way. It stands for the global and the individual. Today's change of consciousness is a global one, with ramifications across many different cultures. But at the same time there is a strong reaction to the globalisation, which reactivates specific local energies.

The term "town" refers to space that has been transformed by human intervention. It includes not only the densely built-up areas of the common towns but also all the transformation of nature inflicted by modern civilisa-



▲ **Figure 13:** . . . and in the USA. Photo: Carl Fingerhuth



▲ **Figure 14:** Mexcaltitlan, Mexico, probably the first capital city of the Aztecs. Photo: Georg Gerster

tion: ski resorts in the Alps, shopping centres and gas stations along highways, electrical high-tension lines and pipelines.

"Cosmos" refers to the physical universe but also to mankind's inner world.

The common phenomena of mankind, town and cosmos are all organised in holonic structures. Every element is part of a more complex element and contains in itself less complex elements. A house is not a house if it doesn't contain rooms and a town is not a town if it doesn't contain houses.

They all require structure and form for their organisation and identity. Language is ruled by grammar and orthography. The grammar of towns is defined by its systems: the sequence of its open spaces, public transportation stations, or the main pipelines of the sewage system. Houses and gardens are the words.

They are all a palimpsest with old, irrelevant text scraped off, replaced by new text. The old text is mostly imperceptible, but it is still there.

Awareness of the polarity between all things was essential for all pre-modern philosophies. The era beyond the modern reintegrates this knowledge. It is no longer a matter of right or wrong, but a consideration of less or more. Too much change in a town creates a feeling of insecurity. Not enough change leads to a feeling of decay and hopelessness. Caring for the transformation of the town in the time beyond the modern means balancing these two polar energies.

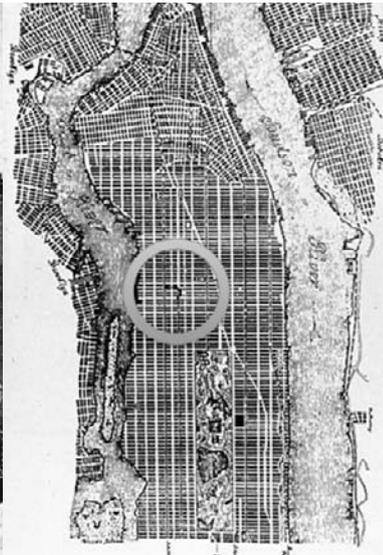
I will focus on the subject of evolution. Both in theory and practice, integrating the new beyond-the-modern paradigm into how we care for our towns is an extremely neglected subject.

### **Evolution**

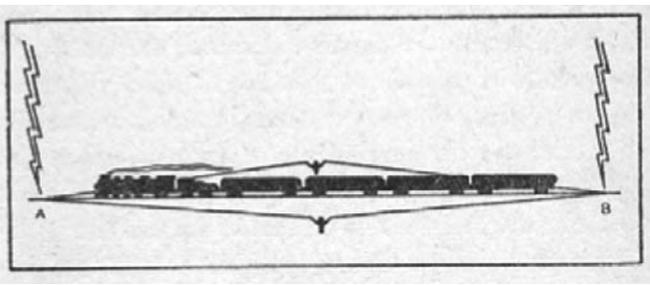
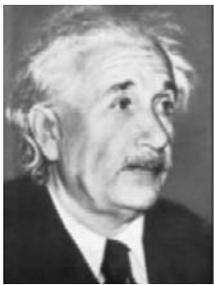
The Polish philosopher Jean Gebser's description of the steps of evolution (from archaic, to magical, to mental,



▲ **Figure 15:** Flat Iron Building at the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. Photo: Historic picture, Manhattan in 1921. Source: Historic plan



▲ **Figure 17:** Tai Shan, the holy mountain in the east of Shandong and the town Tai'an. Source: Schinz, Alfred; "The Magic Square, Cities in Ancient China", Axel Menges: Stuttgart, 1996, p. 416

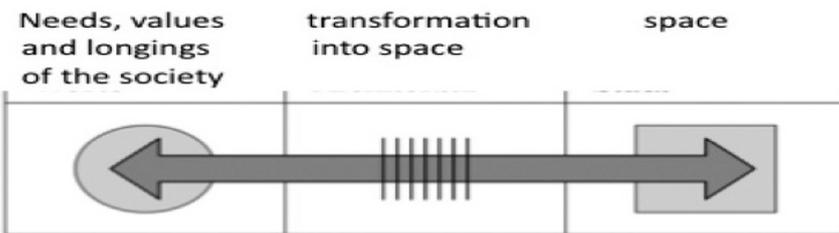


▲ **Figure 18:** Illustration of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. Source: Barnett, Lincoln; "Einstein und das Universum", Fischer, 1952, p. 59.



▲ **Figure 16:** Advertisement of a shop for footwear. Source: Unknown

### Giving form to the formless



▲ **Figure 19:** Giving form to the formless. Source: Carl Fingerhuth



▲ **Figure 20:** Le Corbusier designing the monastery La Tourette in France, 1956. Photo: René Burri



▲ **Figure 23:** Friedensreich Hundertwasser's building at the Löwengasse in Vienna. Photo: Carl Fingerhuth

and eventually to what he called integral consciousness) has become a standard interpretation of human evolution – and works wonderfully to understand towns.

Gebser uses different "structures" to explain the steps of evolution. He begins by looking at our consciousness of space. Mankind's understanding of space has evolved from a nonexistent awareness of spatiality to a four-dimensional consciousness. Five-dimensional consciousness is next; one day, we will have to find a term for that era!

I eschew Gebser's term "integral" for the current age. It sounds too final. There is no evidence that evolution will not go on. As a society, we do not yet have a fitting term for the current era. We used to define it as postmodern. Unaware of how autonomous and powerful these changes would become, architects discredited the word. Therefore, I prefer to characterise our time as the era beyond the modern.

### The zero-dimensional space of the archaic time

The only physical clues we have of that time are some footprints in the East African soil (Figure 16).

### The one-dimensional space of the magic time

Very sophisticated paintings of animals appear out of nowhere, painted thirteen to fourteen thousand years ago. Mankind starts to perceive the world and memorise its gestalt. Human beings begin creating places in space.

### The two-dimensional space of the mythical time

About 4,000 years ago, settlements appear around the world, structured along lines corresponding to astronomical information. In India, China, Italy, Mexico, town layouts transform from organic sprawl into circles, then into rationally defined squares (Figure 17).

### The three-dimensional space of the modern time

Around 2,000 years ago, a new consciousness develops worldwide that embraces the third dimension of space. Our perception of planet earth morphs from flat to globe-shaped. Towns begin building towers, and artists like Albrecht Dürer (around 1500) discover perspective.

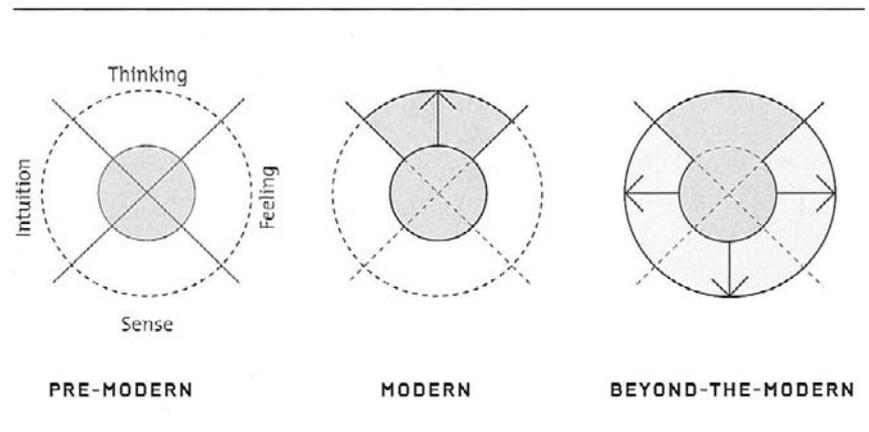
### The four-dimensional space beyond the modern time

With Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, the limitations of three-dimensional space disappear and are replaced by a time/space continuum. Space is now seen as a dynamic system. Einstein's drawing with a person on top of a train and a person standing next to the train refers to the connection of time and space. The two persons will perceive the flashlight atop the speeding train at different times. If the train is running at the speed of light, the observer on the train will never see it. Simultaneusness is relative (Figure 18).

Caring for the transformation of towns beyond the modern must integrate this change from a static perception of space to a dynamic perception of space.

Structure	Dimensioning	Perspectivity	Emphasis	Settlement
Archaic:	Zero-dimensional	None Pre-temporal	Prespatial	Cave
Magic :	One-dimensional	Pre-perspectival Timeless	Spaceless	Village
Mythical:	Two-dimensional	Un-perspectival Natural temoricity	Spaceless	Town
Mental:	Three-dimensional	Perspectival Abstractly temporal	Spatial	Agglomeration
Integral:	Four-dimensional	Aper-spectival Time-free	Space-free	Global City

▲ **Table 1:** Space and Time Relationship according to Jean Gebser (last column added by author)

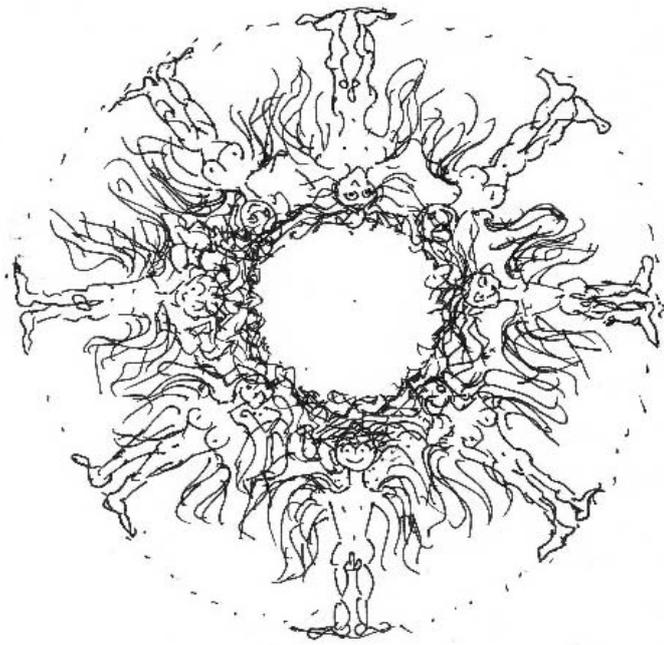


The evolution of human consciousness from the pre-modern to the beyond-the-modern era

▲ **Figure 21:** Expansion of human consciousness. Source: Carl Fingerhuth



▲ **Figure 22:** Installation by the Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist in the church of San Stae in Venice at the Art Biennale of 2008. Photo: Unknown photographer



▲ **Figure 24:** Drawing by the Author for SEHNSUCHT, The Book of Architectural Longings, German Pavilion at the Architecture Biennale 2010 in Venice. Source: Fingerhuth, Carl; in SEHNSUCHT, The Book of Architectural Longings, 2010, p.178

### **Understanding the Time beyond the Modern**

The needs, values, and longings of our world are changing dramatically. Our consciousness is more complex. We must integrate the new realities into the gestalt of our towns and find the appropriate form and structure. We must give form to the formless (Figure 19).

One of the major problems of our time is that in architecture, urban design, and town planning, politicians and professionals hesitate to acknowledge or even discredit

this paradigm shift – the new set of values that define our collective thinking, feeling and sensing, today (Figure 20).

### **The Expansion of our Consciousness**

The modern era was an expedition into the depths of our thought potential. This obsession was so strong that other potentials – feeling, sensing, and intuition – were neglected or even aggressively discriminated against (Figure 21).

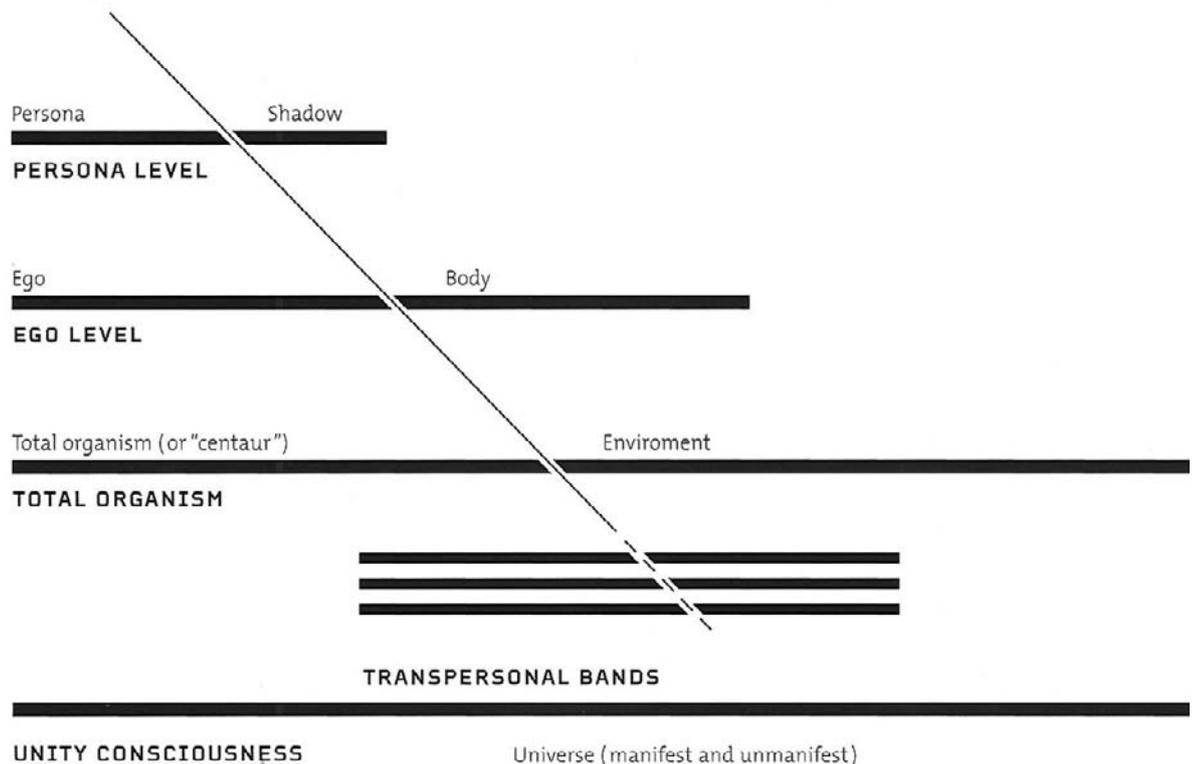
Today, more and more phenomena appear which point to the overbearing focus on our rational potential of the modern time.

Strong energies appear which draw our attention to this default. The scientific world is scared by these phenomena. I will try to point out some of the main themes of this new quest. Due to the limitations of space for this article, they will only be spotlights on a vast territory.

In his work the Swiss psychiatrist C.G. Jung stressed the importance of this task over and over again, as this quote, written in 1931, illustrates: "I can only take the reaction which begins in the West against the intellect in favour of Eros, and in favour of intuition, as a mark of cultural advance, a widening of consciousness beyond the too narrow limits set by a tyrannical intellect" (Wilhelm and Jung 1990: 64).

### **The longing for the reintegration of feeling and sensuality**

Our collective yearning for the reintegration of feeling and sensuality has a tremendous impact on how we deal with our towns. One of the huge challenges of our time is to qualify this longing, to transform spatial "pornography" and coarseness into sophisticated and loving sensuality (Figure 22).



▶ **Figure 25:** Dimensions of consciousness. Source: Wilber, Ken, "No Boundaries", Shambhala: Boston, 2001, p.9.

In 1972, the Austrian painter Friedensreich Hundertwasser started painting houses as wonderful colourful fantasies. Then he proclaimed that the painters had to build the houses, because according to him beautiful houses had disappeared. In 1977, the city of Vienna asked him to build a house on the Löwengasse (Figure 23). In the first years it was visited by more tourists than the castle of Schönbrunn.

The title of an exhibition he had in 2005 in the German Museum for Architecture in Frankfurt was "Built Dreams and Longings". In the review of the exposition, the journalist Dieter Bartzko wrote: "Irritating like a dilettante but accurate like a caricature, Hundertwasser's orgies of kitsch denounce the lacks of today's architecture. One does not have to take the buildings seriously but reflect on their popularity" (Bartzko 2005: 35).

**A Longing for the Reintegration of Spirituality**

Spirituality no longer represents the opposite of materialism (Figure 24). Instead, it symbolises a new consciousness of the unity of all things; a dream that embraces all aspects of life. As such it becomes a comprehensive term for all the potentials of mankind. This newly emerging spirituality is independent of all religions. The religions are no longer dogmas but paths to a spiritual consciousness of the holiness of all things.

In this understanding the town is not any more just a pile of stones. Accepting the concept of the holonic structure, it is a reflection of our self on a comprehensive level. We have to take care of the town in the same way as we take care of ourselves.



**A Longing for the Unity of Man and Nature**

This schema (Figure 25) is copied out of a book from Ken Wilber with the title "No Boundaries". He describes this specific theme of separation in the modern society: separation of persona and shadow, body and soul, mankind and nature. Our new spirituality feels different. We are longing for union on all levels including in our towns.

The town beyond the modern faces the same challenge. Apartments crave to have loggias, balconies or terraces. Houses would like to have gardens. Towns long for trees and parks (Figure 26).

▲ **Figure 26:** Housing project in Freiburg i.Br., ca. 1990. Photo: Unknown photographer



◀ **Figure 27:** Left top: Jesus and the Devil, ceiling of the church in CH-Zillis, 1114. Left bottom: The town of Shibam in Yemen. Middle top: Lhotse on his buffalo riding west. Middle bottom: Housing in India. Right top: Chief Seattle in 1864 in Washington. Right bottom: Housing in West Virginia, USA. Photos: Left above: Hannes Vogel. Left below: Jacques Feiner. Middle above: Historic picture. Middle below: National Geographic Magazine. Right above: Historic picture. Right below: Carl Fingerhuth

**Figure 28:** The flying French painter Yves Klein around 1950. Photo: Unknown photographer



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## Carl Fingerhuth

Carl Fingerhuth's preoccupation has always been the town – as an archaeologist in Egypt; with an office for town planning in Zürich; as the state architect in Basel; as a travel expert in Europe, Asia, Africa and America; and as a teacher in universities in Switzerland, France, Italy, Germany and the USA. His main interest is the quest for the "gestalt" of the town beyond the modern, recently documented in his book "Learning from China – The Tao of the City". Contact: <carl@fingerhuth.com>

## About the Origins of Separation

Preparing a speech at the Japanese-German Institute in Berlin, I found a fascinating approach to this theme (Figure 27). In 1948, the Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro (1997) wrote about the interaction between climate and religion. He described religions as a product of mankind's trust in nature.

Christianity has its origin in the climate of the desert. Nature was hostile. Man will not be fed, if he doesn't work – "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground" (1. Moses, 3.19). Man had to create his own urban paradise, with walls to protect him from nature – its physical and spiritual dangers. He built churches like fortresses and towns with stone walls around them.

The religion of the North Asian, European and American continents had its roots in what Tetsuro called the meadow climate. Nature was friendly. Man was sure that in spring the apples and nuts would again grow for him. He was not chased out of paradise, so he did not need walls to protect himself. The holy place was in nature, under the tree. As he was part of all, he did not need to separate himself from nature.

Buddhism was a product of the monsoon climate. Nature provided food and water in abundance. But you could not trust it. Periodically nature became so destructive that everything was washed and blown away. The settlements on earth were an unsecure and provisional place. The best solution is to try to find your way to Nirvana, a "place of oblivion to care, pain or external reality" as fast as possible (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary 2003: 799). So there was no reason to invest in a solid town.

In our time beyond the modern, religions are gradually replaced by a global spirituality. In this consciousness, nature is basically not regional but global. The climate is seen more and more as the earth's situation. Important is the status of the seas, the forests, the overall temperature

or the ozone shield. Everything is interdependent. The global nature provides the energy, the sun, the wind, and the tides and the rain.

I am fascinated by the presence of these different cultural backgrounds in the North European discussions about urban design and town planning. In an exhaustive publication about urban design and town planning in Switzerland (Diener et al. 2006: 149), two of the most prominent Swiss architects, Jacques Herzog and Marcel Meili, express their disgust about Swiss mankind: "They lack an urbanisation of their souls. They prefer trees to walls!" It seems very clear to me that Swiss people prefer trees. Their "souls" emerged in the meadow climate and not in the desert.

## The Impact of the Four-Dimensional Perception of Space

In four-dimensional space, there are many different points of view and each has its own reason. We know things are changing dramatically but we are only slowly beginning to grasp the ramifications (Figure 28).

## The New Challenge

Caring for beyond-modern towns is not radically different from how we cared for modern towns. Clean water and sewage are still delivered and removed in the same way. What is changing is our consciousness. As we confront new energies, we are developing:

- an awareness of the polarity of all things,
- an awareness of the complexity and contradictions within towns,
- an awareness of the imprints of past cultures within our towns,
- an awareness of the importance of reintegrating the potentials of the self (sensuality, emotionality, spirituality), discarded by modernism, and
- a need to heal our separation from nature.

This will change how we care for our towns. Architects must stop complaining that they are no longer heroic creators. They have to accept that they are midwives, translators, transformers working for the benefit of the population.

We are moving toward awareness without dogmas, where people accept the complexity and contradictions of our world, where they want to understand what is going on in Cairo, Stuttgart, or Beijing, and where they want to be respected and not exploited. This will require new gestalt in form and structure of our towns and it will call for new "software", new instruments, methods, and procedures, as we are entering a new era beyond the modern.

Meaningful towns are aesthetic not anaesthetic, they are beautiful not banal, they are in accordance with the needs, values, and longings of people. When they are all these things, they will also be spiritual towns. This is one of the big challenges of our time.

# Integrating Spirituality in a Post-Secular Approach to Development

Gail Hochachka

## **Die Integration von Spiritualität in einem post-säkularen Verständnis von Entwicklung**

*In diesem Artikel wird die Frage aufgegriffen, warum Spiritualität bislang weder in der Stadtentwicklungspraxis und -theorie noch in der internationalen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und ihrem theoretischen Diskurs eine Bedeutung zugemessen wird. Die Autorin folgt einem post-säkularen Verständnis von Spiritualität, das anhand einer Fallstudie in Nigeria vorgestellt wird. Dabei stellt sie die These auf, dass der städtische Kontext bisher die treibende Kraft neuer Ideen in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit war – insbesondere in Fragen des Glaubens und der Diversität im öffentlichen Raum. Sie kommt zum Schluss, es sei durchaus möglich, in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit Raum für die tieferen menschlichen Dimensionen zu schaffen, die etwa erklären, was es bedeutet, ein Mensch zu sein. Dazu muss jedoch das Dominanzverhältnis von „Säkularität über Spiritualität“ bewusst überwunden werden, hin zu einem Gleichgewicht von „Säkularität und Spiritualität“ oder eben einer „Post-Säkularität“.*

This paper takes up the issue of how spirituality has become practically absent in urban development practise/theory, as well as in international development practise and its theoretical discourse, by examining the idea of a post-secular approach to spirituality and by looking at a case study in the developing world. The urban context has historically been the driver of ideas in international development, particularly on matters of faith and diversity in terms of public as well as civic space. It is in this sense that I explore the urban trends in the discourse on spirituality and secularity that are then brought into practise elsewhere in the field of international development.

Since the word "faith" has been linked to religion, it tends to carry a certain weight in social discourse; it is often interpreted with (slight or overt) disdain, and is often put aside as being an earlier expression of care in development. One might hear, for example, statements like, "Oh,

he works for a faith-based organisation," which almost discard or discredit the work immediately in a secularised discourse. In this article, I critically look at the word faith and expand its meaning by drawing on the research (1981) of the Harvard psychologist James Fowler, which reframes "faith" as "ultimate concern". Fowler's research looked at how what humans are ultimately concerned about develops over one's life (Table 1).

Relating this with Gebser's (1985) stages in cultural development and Wilber's (2006) worldviews of concentric care and concern, a trend can be seen from exclusively self-centric faith toward greater spheres of inclusion. The field of international development seeks greater inclusion, tolerance, and wellbeing for all, which on the one hand means that development practise aims to achieve the later reaches of this graph. On the other hand, since development through these stages takes a long time (Ke-

**Table 1:** Stages of Faith Related to Worldviews and Expressions of "Ultimate Concern" in International Development (Adapted from Wilber [2006, figure 2.5], with the final column, the author's own addition, based on field experiences in international development).

<b>Stages of faith (Fowler)</b>	<b>Relation to Gebser's cultural worldviews</b>	<b>Wilber's worldviews</b>	<b>Ultimate concern as expressed in development</b>
Stage 1: Intuitive-projective faith	Magic	Egocentric	Animistic
Stage 2: Mythic-literal faith	Mythic	Ethnocentric	Theistic
Stage 3: Synthetic-conventional faith	Rational (modern)	Worldcentric	Secular
Stage 4: Individuative-reflective faith	Pluralistic (postmodern)		Secular + interfaith dialogue
Stage 5: Conjunctive faith	Integral	Kosmoscentric <sup>1</sup>	Post-secular (spiritual and secular integrated)
Stage 6: Universalising			

**1** Ken Wilber refers to the Kosmos spelt with a "K" to distinguish his view of the cosmos which includes matter and interiority, from the cosmologists' primarily materialist interpretation of the cosmos. "In choosing to use the word Kosmos (spelled with a capital K), he was referring explicitly to the traditional understanding of the world which encompassed not only the physical reality perceived by the senses – the domain of science – but also the realms of life, soul, and spirit" (Visser 2003: 180).

gan 1995), a large part of development work also includes fostering the healthy expressions of all of these stages, including the lower stages, particularly since they are where the majority of the world's population comes from. In fact, in the practise of development, all of these expressions of ultimate concern are expressed in one form or another and, I submit, warrant our attention if we are to reach the worldcentric development objectives we seek.

In the last column, I have shared trends in how faith is held in international development based on my experience working in developing countries with NGOs for the past 15 years. Over this time, I have been curious about the interface between secularity and spirituality, and have attempted to find ways to integrate truths and insights from both in a post-secular approach. Habermas is a key proponent of the expression "post-secular", using it to describe modern societies that have to reckon with the continuing existence of religious groups and the continuing relevance of the different religious traditions even if the societies themselves are largely secularised. He said, "We may call 'postsecular' the situation in which secular reason and a religious consciousness that has become reflexively engaged in a relationship" (Mendieta2010: 5).

In this article, I explore what the post-secular approach to spirituality might look like in development.

### **Challenges of Bringing Faith into Development Work**

In international development work one often encounters various expressions of faith simultaneously present and intersecting. Some indigenous communities retain traditional animistic beliefs (*intuitive-projective faith*) while the majority of nationals subscribe to religions (*mythic-literal faith*) of one type or another. The field of international development has historical faith-based roots that are today retained in some of the large non-governmental organisations, either explicitly or implicitly, such as World Vision, Primates Relief Fund, Catholic Church Organiza-

tion for Development and Peace (CCODP), and even OXFAM. However, the discourse of the field is secular, as is represented in the contracting, legal frameworks, and aspects of development theory that inform project design, etc. Also, many international development practitioners were educated in modern knowledge building and bring a secular worldview to the practise. Some may hold a *synthetic-conventional faith* or an *individuate-reflective faith*, and others, for the most part, hold a worldview stripped of spirituality altogether.

In other words, the development practitioners, who are mostly educated in urban centres and then extend their service work to villages and communities, predominantly operate in a secularised field with a *synthetic-conventional* or *individuate-reflective faith*, even as the beneficiary communities they seek to support are made up of religious people with *mythic-literal faith*. This secularised discourse of international development holds implicit assumptions that faith is childish and must be out-grown. These assumptions were part of the rise of modernity. The separation of church and state marked the shift from a predominantly religious governance of life to the emergence of a secular state that governs the public space. Eventually science became the sole perspective of interpreting reality, and spirituality was exiled from public and civic space, and from development work, to the personal, in the name of secularity.

Perhaps resulting from this, over the past 15 years in my field experience working in Latin America and Africa with four NGOs and interfacing with many more, I have witnessed an implicit expectation that development practitioners from the North and South should undertake a secular approach to development practise, one that is, for the most part, shorn of spiritual referents. Perhaps a prayer is allowed at the start of a meeting, but the core essence of spirituality does not seem to be explicitly welcome in the predominant secular social discourse that guides this field. Ironically, in many cases, the spiritual dimension of this work is precisely what motivates local

**Figure 1:** The leaders open a neighbourhood meeting on good governance with a prayer, illustrating the need for our team to be open to the integration of spiritual and secular themes. Photo: One Sky



people in the South to engage in it (held as a faith-based charity, as a spirituality-inspired service, or as a modality grappling with the deep issues of our humanity).

This article proposes to critically question this blanket application of secularity in development practise. First, although religious interpretations and dogma are prone to complications and divisions, the core essence of spirituality intends to provide insight and meaning and to evoke compassion and love. These are very things we need more of in international development, not less.

Second, the number of adherents to congregations worldwide far outweighs the non-religious secular populations, and the very beneficiaries of development and humanitarian aid are often the very people who self-identify as religious. Out of respect for those beneficiaries of development projects, out of care for their meaning-making frameworks, and out of the realistic need to work with (not avoid or ignore) the evolution of faith in these communities, I question this ubiquitous secularity in the field.

Third, the assumptions of secularity common in the field of international development are in fact taken from a place of privilege and are not compassionate to people's reality. That is, can we, living in the comforts of the urban centres or in the developed North, so easily make proclamations of what should and should not be included in development practise while the vast majority of beneficiaries who self-identify as people of faith grapple with day-to-day realities of unimaginable poverty? In places where the curtain between life and death is flimsy, there is good reason to align yourself with the deepest source you know.

Fourth, specifically in times of difficulty and change, one's sense of ultimate concern – or, faith, however it is held – is often where one's sources of strength and resilience lie. With the complexity of global issues overwhelming our tried-and-true approaches to problems, turbulence may define the next decade more than any other. In this atmosphere, the field of international development would do well to assist in enabling people to reconnect with their ultimate concern (however interpreted for their current worldview), as it may strongly assist them in being resilient to change. A spiritual dimension is simply present in the human experience, regardless of whether it is downplayed by a secular modern approach, and it has been, is, and can continue to be a source of great resilience in addressing global issues today.

That said, surely valid and critical concerns exist in terms of religious influence in development, particularly in regions of the world that have not yet stabilised democracies. Pre-modern, traditional and mythical forms of faith can have a deleterious effect at a particular point in a nation's development, literally fostering tribal and religious divisions in which a national-identity struggles to emerge. So, although I critically question a blanket secularity, I also recognise the caution in bringing spirituality back into public space. Secular perspectives and values need to be retained as these questions are examined, lest the fundamental viewpoints encroach on hard-won modern and postmodern values, such as liberty, equality, opportunity, and tolerance for all.

How could a post-secular approach to spirituality transcend and include the insights from both spiritual traditions as well as from secular life, both the practises that are concerned with the Absolute, and the values and norms that are concerned with the temporal, relative world we live in? What would it feel like for practitioners to be able to practise development without having to check their ultimate concern at the door? What aspects of human resilience, inspiration, and insight do we actually risk *losing* in cutting spirituality out? Rather than treating people of faith in developing countries like their engagement with religion is wrong, childish, or outdated, how might we find a more skilful and respectful way to engage the spiritual dimension of what it means to be a human being as part of international development practise? And, with the history of inter-faith strife and conflict in mind, if we are going to open the door to faith and spirituality in development, what essential secular truths need to be emphasised to do so in a healthy, positive, tolerant way?

Below I examine these questions looking at a case study from Sub-Saharan Africa to describe how the Canadian NGO One Sky has been engaging a post-secular spirituality in international development practise.

### **Case Study on Post-Secularity: Nigeria**

The NGO One Sky: The Canadian Institute for Sustainable Living carried out a three-year leadership development project in Nigeria from 2009-2011, entitled *Leading from Within: Integral Applications to Sustainable Development*, with a group of 30 participants from 27 different civil society organisations who were emerging leaders in the field of development. This was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. The project idea grew out of eight previous years of programming in environmental capacity development in the urban and rural areas of Cross River State, Nigeria, in which participating NGOs noted the need to support a cohort of new generation leaders in civil society organisations who could take the social-change efforts in the state to the next level. The project held four leadership retreats annually, with participants working in groups to apply their learning and enact breakthrough initiatives in a specific area of development. Seven *breakthrough initiatives* were carried out across the state on topics that ranged from microenterprise with widows and vulnerable women, HIV/AIDS awareness training, climate change adaptation strategies, conversation of biodiversity through sustainable livelihoods, and more. The group of participants formed the African Integral Development Network to be a vehicle for continued leadership training, conferences, and dialogues.

In the last year of the project, participants shared that one of the most valuable aspects of this programme came from its very title: "Leading from within". The project was designed to foster *leading from within* by learning how to draw leadership from one's deepest recesses of being as well as how to connect with the inner selves of the people they serve and engage. The title also reflected One Sky's philosophy supporting the leaders within the country of Nigeria to redefine and engage their own development process, versus bringing in external consultants to engage those processes.



**Figure 2:** Participants express their viewpoints about religion and tolerance. As they see all the viewpoints written down together on the board, the group practises listening, understanding, and practicing tolerance. Photo: One Sky

Since the larger cultural milieu is religious and we were encouraging participants to share their interior experience, invariably issues of faith arose. This was not only because many are deeply religious. It was also because they are working with villages that are predominately religious and are also negotiating with international donor agencies that are predominately secular, and so many have questions about how to hold their faith in this work. Their very lives illustrated the issues at hand: the need for deep meaning, the search for translation points between scales of engagement and beliefs, the interface of the spiritual and the secular. In acknowledgement of that, One Sky sought to be open to the conversation to spirituality if and as it arose in the trainings, alongside the other secular values of development practise.

Though One Sky is a secular NGO and is not and never has been faith-based, *Leading from Within* included an overt space for exploring and expressing interiority, including issues of ultimate concern and other spiritual referents within and beyond the frames of secularity. Our team of practitioners (both Canadian and Nigerian) found that including spirituality served to open participants to a larger purpose of why they were there and what most inspired them. Sometimes the ultimate concern that people sourced for inspiration was a theistic or animistic faith, but secular themes also arose, such as a deep value for human potential, a profound sense of trust and positive thinking, and a recognition of our interconnectedness. Participants reported that this aspect of One Sky's approach was very resonant for them.

Nevertheless, our team of practitioners knew that if we wanted to include spirituality, we had to hold a clear secular container to do so. In Nigeria, the northern Muslim population and the southern Christian populations have long histories of inter-religious violence. It is a country that is struggling to stabilise democratic rule (the country ranks 123<sup>rd</sup> on the Democracy Index and is listed as an authoritarian regime, according to the Democracy Index 2010: 6), continues to face inter-tribal conflicts, and has hovered on the brink of becoming a failed state more than once over the past few decades. The religious sentiments, often coming from ethnocentric worldviews, overlap and interface with the struggling democratic process. For example, on a recent trip in 2010, in the capital city, Lagos, one of the One Sky team reported the pre-election atmosphere in the city:

"There were massive billboards pronouncing that a vote for the new president 'Goodluck Jonathan' is sanctioned by God himself! On the TV a conference on political leadership was televised with the basic message being that Nigeria must pray. The logic being that since the Second World War was won because someone prayed for three hours with Winston Churchill, then if everyone in Nigeria just prays, the country will 'rise from chaos and evil' as did the triumphant Britons."

In a culture as religious as this, when One Sky wanted to include spirituality in its project, it had to do so in such a way that integrated the important insights of secularity. Yet, for the secular themes of democracy and good governance to be meaningful, the process also had to touch base with what is of "ultimate concern" to these people, namely religious faith. Figure 1 illustrates this paradox held in the One Sky process. Throughout this project, the One Sky team had to address the underlying ethnocentrism at the core of this inter-religious strife, and assist in building skills towards worldcentrism.

### From Whahalla to Worldcentrism

*"My heart feels for the people in my community, state, nation, continent, and the whole world. I want us to have a better life and live in peace and do well in entrepreneurship. My legs will trample the values and cultures that will not encourage development."*

(NGO participant of One Sky's Leading from Within project.)

The above quote reflects the tension of moving from ethnocentric (care for us) to a worldcentric care (care for all of us). She began with worldcentric care which includes herself and her family as well as all families and communities of the world, and then digressed into an ethnocentric statement about trampling others who disagree. There exists a deep impulse to care, yet it can get pulled into us versus them dynamics. In this group of participants, which is reflective of the emerging civil society in the country, care clearly extended not just to one's tribal or ethnic group, but to include the country, continent and world. However, this worldcentric care is hard to sustain when the larger national discourse falls prey to ethnic conflicts and one's church and mosques preach for in-group conformity and sometimes support interreligious strife. How could the One Sky leadership programme help to support these 30 NGO leaders to navigate this tension and hold this worldcentric care?

Here I share one example of an actual process our team used to engage this delicate and complicated terrain in a post-secular manner. In the following section, the key points relevant for other people working in development cooperation are articulated.

One Sky's approach to navigating this tricky tension between religious (often ethnocentric) and secular (often worldcentric) care has been to not shy away from the difficult conversations in which these leaders can creatively express and examine this tension. In November 2010, the topic of religion, beliefs, and the question "Where do you draw a line in the sand?" arose in a heated way during a leadership workshop. The proceeding session reflected

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the central challenges of including spirituality in development work and elucidated the key points of how One Sky is engaging in a post-secular way.

The heated debate arose in the midst of a discussion about the move from ethnocentric group bonding to worldcentric care for all in regards to what constitutes a healthy social movement. One particularly dynamic fellow brought up his personal dedication to Jesus and posed the question to the group, "Where do we 'draw the line' on tolerance?" Although posed as a question, his intonation was that they, as Christians, should be evangelising, not only working on development problems. The house exploded in a heated debate, or a *whahalla*, as they call it in Nigeria.

This *whahalla* was reminiscent of the debates on inter-religious strife on the north-south border, equal in passion and conviction and differing in degree. The One Sky facilitator immediately called a break, realising that he would have to face this directly and engage these themes that, at this point, could no longer be swept to the side. During the break, he rearranged the seating into a circle and then wrote the following phrases on the board slowly:

*God is Dead!*  
*Yahweh is the only God*  
*Jesus is the Way*  
*Muhammad is the only true prophet*  
*Creation is True*  
*Evolution is True*  
*There may or may not be a God*  
*The Sky God is the only real God*  
*Jesus is just an inscription*  
*One God but many intermediaries (spirits) to God*

Shining back to them the very kinds of convictions that can provoke religious strife, the room became silent as participants took it in. The One Sky facilitator then wove the ensuing discussion around the theme of conflict resolution, using this as a teaching moment not only to explore the content at hand, but also to highlight how religious sentiments are linked to conflict, and to have them apply their understanding of conflict resolution during the discussion.

Participants were asked to recall the basics of conflict resolution as they could remember it and then they were asked to briefly express, one by one, where they stood on the issue of personal faith and where they would draw the line in the sand when it comes to the question of tolerance. This group of 30 participants was made up of pastors, born-again Christians, Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, former Muslims, and Pentecostals, most of whose families formerly practised a tribal animistic faith. The essence of each person's beliefs was written on the board (see Figure 2).

The process demonstrated tolerance by creating a space in which everyone could express their sentiments on this topic and then looking for orienting patterns and themes in people's expressions. The process also created a safe space for people to express emotion, and then worked

with the answers in such a way that each person could see themselves and each other in a wider circle of consideration. It did not so much create an interfaith dialogue as it did underline the universals within these beliefs, as well as to seek the deeper patterns behind what people said. And, importantly, the entire conversation was embedded in a secular engagement of conflict resolution, helping people to hold the tension of religion and secular-ity in their work.

This was only one of many similar efforts in this leadership training that sought to engage a process around the issues of faith and development. There are many other methods and techniques that could be used to engage these issues as well. Given the disorienting dilemmas these practitioners faced (and continue to face) – working in the secularised discourse of international development, holding religious beliefs themselves, and working in deeply religious villages – we can only appreciate that this project may have given them a post-secular container to find new ways to be leaders in civil society in Nigeria.

### **Lessons for Development Cooperation**

This case study is among many others in a larger inquiry into how a post-secular approach to spirituality may be included in development cooperation. This article suggests this is important for several reasons, and articulates several key points for practitioners of development cooperation.

First, unlike other exclusively secular approaches, a post-secular approach to spirituality directly and wholeheartedly engages the issues at hand without shirking away from them or pretending they are not important. Even a cursory understanding of human psychology suggests that when issues are pushed aside and not directly worked with, they nevertheless seep out unexpectedly. The psychological term is *shadow* for this un-integrated material that is pushed out of awareness for being too difficult, intense, or misaligned with one's sense of self. These shadowed, disowned aspects will tend to be projected outward often in unhealthy ways, perhaps through

**Figure 3:** In this photo, participants hold up prayer flags (which is actually a Buddhist practise from Asia) they created in an intention-setting exercise at the start of a retreat. As they lifted the flags into the air, the group spontaneously began to sing a Christian song as they did so. The one Muslim man in the group chimed in with the song without hesitating. Later, we debriefed this in the larger group as an example of the kinds of tolerance Nigeria needs more of. It is an example of how the One Sky team sought to provide exercises for practicing tolerance by bringing practises together from other faiths in an atmosphere of equality and tolerance. Photo: One Sky





**Figure 4:** One Sky's process was to include spirituality and religious themes if and as they arose, in ways that were held in relationship to secular values, capacities, and institutional frameworks. In this photo, the judge of Cross River State addressed participants about the need for justice, democracy, and ethics in a country that's suffered for too long without them. Photo: One Sky

conflicts, illness, or aggression. If an exclusively secular approach to development pushes away these religious themes, they risk becoming (what we might call) a *cultural shadow*, which nevertheless arises elsewhere, perhaps in the election violence, inter-religious tension, or corruption in the private and public sector. Also, if these domains of spirituality and faith are not included in development processes, even though they are important dimensions of what it means to be human, then those domains of human interiority risk becoming colonised by other forces, such as, terrorist groups and religious fundamentalism. There is value in directly facing and overtly including these spiritual themes, so that everyone present can all healthily express, digest, make meaning together, and release the tension around them.

Secondly, tolerance between faith-based views is something that people have to learn through practise, especially in religious social contexts where it is not highlighted. One way our team found to do that was to encourage dialogue and explicitly discuss spiritual themes, so that then, using a post-secular approach, they can be situated alongside other viewpoints in a process that emulates tolerance. That is, if we are going to open the door to hear one person's beliefs, we need to hear everyone's beliefs, and since no one wants their voice to go unheard, they need to listen to all others. In a secular view, personal and private are collapsed, so that spirituality is personal and exists in a private domain that should not be shared. A post-secular approach discerns between personal and private, and sees that spirituality actually can be personal as well as publically shared with others, giving rise to greater mutual understanding of others' worldviews as well as emulating a tolerance of listening and accepting others' beliefs (see Figure 3). In other words, practitioners in development cooperation cannot simply expect people to spontaneously "get" tolerance, particularly in contexts where religious ideas are heavily influential. Rather, as part of development practise, we can build processes and exercises for partners and beneficiaries to work out what tolerance actually means to them in their lives.

Thirdly, in inviting in religious themes, invariably the discussion becomes heated perhaps because these themes really do touch people's sense of ultimate concern –

ultimate in the sense that there is nothing they care about more. Perhaps that risk of heated debate, which can and has slipped into overt conflict, is the reason secular approaches veer away from such conversations. A post-secular approach attempts to engage the topic head on, yet in a facilitated container, using tools from secular society, that does not let the group slide back into ethnocentric or interreligious strife, so that the very discussion becomes a way to practise worldcentrism (see Figure 4). In this case study above, the entire conversation was as much about conflict-resolution training as it was about spirituality and beliefs.

Finally, if people seek a way to bridge their faith with their secular engagements, they need opportunities in which to work out how to do so. Opportunities in which to grapple with and untangle the many dimensions of this – such as, in Nigeria the various expressions of intolerance and tolerance, the debates about evolutionary theories and religious beliefs ("What happened to all the people who lived before Jesus came along?"), as well as other conflicting sentiments about tribal faiths, like the Yoruba and Efik animism, whom many grew up with. Not to mention, the other critical questions that families in modern urban contexts face when their children go to university, interact with new ideas about spirituality, and then discard the family's religion ("What do you do if your own child, 'your own flesh and blood' does not believe and conform to a traditional, religious faith?"). One Sky's post-secular approach to spirituality gave people a way to overtly discuss their feelings and to integrate this emotion in a controlled environment. These types of processes have the potential to help practitioners to develop clearer, healthier ways to hold their spirituality and their secular values together in the context of their development work. They need not check their spirituality at the door, but they must find ways to hold it in relationship with secular ideas. All this was part of a larger process of providing emergent ground for moving through the earlier stages depicted in Table 1 to worldcentrism.

### Conclusion

With these and other experiments in practise, I conclude that the field of international development can make space for these deep dimensions of what it means to be human. My sense is that the field will need to move beyond its secularity-over-spirituality, towards a secularity-and-spirituality –or, a post-secularity. As we've found in Nigeria, it may involve hard work, with many difficult questions to answer, new ethical spaces to delineate, and more freedom from the stranglehold of our own preferences and cultural assumptions. Yet, this interior domain of the self, including our spirituality, is already a well to which people draw water in times of difficulty, in times of innovation, and in times that require interconnection. The field of international development would do well to recognise that and do the hard work to make room for it in practise. As spirituality and secularity are transcended and included, we come closer to a viable way to bridge traditional faiths with modern lives and postmodern ideas. If the objectives of development are to support society to develop from traditional, to modern, to postmodern realities, then assisting people's ultimate concern to navigate this path will surely help the rest of their actions, culture and systems to do the same.



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# Spatial Planning and Spirituality: The Impact of Intentional Communities

Lydia-Sophia Wilmsen

## **Raumplanung und Spiritualität: die Bedeutung intentionaler Gemeinschaften**

*Die Bezeichnung "Intentionale Gemeinschaft" ist ein Oberbegriff für alternative Lebensmodelle, ein Phänomen, das sowohl in der Öffentlichkeit als auch in der Wissenschaft zunehmend Beachtung erfährt. Auch wenn kommunitarisches Leben seit Jahrhunderten existiert, z.B. in vormodernen Stammesgesellschaften, in mittelalterlichen Dörfern oder in Klöstern, gibt es ein neu aufkommendes Interesse an diesem Thema. Dabei kommen wahrscheinlich verschiedene Faktoren zusammen, etwa die wachsende Zahl von Menschen auf der Suche nach alternativen Lebensformen sowie verschiedene wissenschaftliche Disziplinen, die über soziale, ökologische und wirtschaftliche Nachhaltigkeit forschen und damit moderne gemeinschaftliche Lebensweisen in den Fokus ihrer Arbeit stellen. Jene Lebensgemeinschaften sind auf der Suche nach neuen und nachhaltigen Wegen im Umgang mit der Natur, den Mitmenschen und dem Raum, während sie gleichzeitig mit verschiedenen spirituellen Richtungen experimentieren. Die Autorin betrachtet das Phänomen anhand zweier Fallstudien zu einerseits Auroville in Südindien und andererseits der Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén in Chile. Sie kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die Erfahrungen dieser Gemeinschaften bislang in der Planungstheorie und -praxis weitgehend unbeachtet blieben, obwohl sie wichtige Orientierungen geben könnten für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung.*

Intentional communities are a phenomenon upon which the public as well as the scientific community are paying increasing attention. Even though communitarian life has existed for centuries – i.e. premodern tribal communities, medieval villages or monasteries – there is a newly arising interest in this topic. This may be fuelled by both the increasing number of people looking for alternative ways of living, as well as by the different scientific disciplines that pursue research on social, environmental and economic sustainability and thus are beginning to focus on modern communitarian lifestyles.

## **Intentional Communities**

In an overview on the concept of intentional communities is given by the Fellowship for Intentional Community (n.d.), they define the term "intentional communities" as "an inclusive term for ecovillages, cohousing communities, residential land trusts, communes, student co-ops, urban housing cooperatives, intentional living, alternative communities, cooperative living, and other projects where people strive together with a common vision".

For further clarification, the two components of the expression shall be examined, beginning with the term "community", which has a wide variety of meanings in everyday language. To narrow down the focus to the meaning employed in this paper, several characteristics can be listed (Dierschke 2003). The members of a community share collective values, which may be based on affectional or traditional bonds; in this paper, however, the former is focused upon. These collectively shared values may include issues such as the right way of living, land use, sustainable behaviour towards people and nature, or spiritual expression and worldview. These values form the

basis of a group identity that is existential among members of a community. This "culture of sharing" ranges from collective property and capital, shared living space, collective meals, collective child-rearing, social life and common ideas or worldviews and leads to a high standard of commitment between the members (cf. Metcalf and Blömer 2001). In general, it can be stated that the more areas of life that are commonly shared, the more intense the type of cooperation. In order to develop the mentioned characteristics, time is an essential component. This means that communities are constituted by their commitment to continuity or by their formation for at least a certain length of time (cf. Tönnies 1979).

**Figure 1:** Culdees Ecovillage  
– Scotland.  
(Photo: L. Wilmsen)



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Another important element in regard to intentional communities is best described as a kind of voluntary self-commitment to build a reliable social connection. This voluntary self-commitment, as a deliberate decision to be part of such a community and to live an alternative lifestyle, puts an intentional community in contrast to other forms of communities such as the family, which one is born into, or traditional communities, which are often based on inherited obligations.

## Spirituality in Intentional Communities

Many intentional communities have implicit or explicit spiritual practices corresponding with their original founding motives as spiritual communities, ecovillages, or cohousing communities.

Members of intentional communities live closely together and hence interact more or less intensely on a daily basis. Therefore, they are continuously forced to refine existing or invent new forms of verbal and non-verbal communication as well as conflict resolution. Many of these processes of interaction usually relate to a higher vision of life in harmony both with other humans and with nature. This can be described as lived spirituality, as in the mode of action and behaviour in which spiritual experience and relevance becomes visible (cf. Büssing 2006). Bucher (2007) similarly defines spirituality as an attitude towards life with a search for meaning and sense, and a connectedness to something bigger than mankind as well as an attitude amongst people themselves and with nature.

On their homepages, some intentional communities are explicit in expressing their general spiritual interests, leaving it completely up to members whether and which spiritual form they want to follow. Others focus in their public appearance on a specific spiritual belief – i.e. practicing methods, rituals and ceremonies of shamanism, Zen

Buddhism, yoga, Tantra, pagan or nature mythology – but on the personal level endorse freedom of choice to their members. Further intentional communities implicitly show spiritual core values in their social coexistence, such as integrity, nonviolence, gratitude, respect, tolerance, cooperation and harmoniously living with nature.

In the thesis project by the author of this article (Wilmsen 2011), in Germany an empirical analysis was conducted in which the belief and value system of young adults brought up in intentional communities was investigated. It showed underlying structures in everyday behaviour that can be characterised as spiritual attitudes according to the above-cited definitions of Bucher and Büssing. In general, the young adults expressed a high concern and care for their environment, be it in regard to nature or social relations. They showed a highly developed level of social competence, which was manifested in their longing for compassion, tolerance, openness and recognition of the importance of mutual support. Furthermore, they endorsed the significance of personal development. This was actually shown by their answers to the interview questions, where a profound reflexion and awareness on many issues in life became visible, almost reaching a level that could be interpreted as wisdom. In combination with high levels of learning ability, be it on a personal level or in regard to disadvantages and deficits of their community demanding proactive solutions, they have developed holistic thought patterns. This indicates the presence of spirituality in form of awareness of the connection to other people and an affinity to nature.

Whilst they perceived the shortcomings of the society around them, they asserted that the above-mentioned values were developed by their upbringing in communal structures – stating that these values emerged from daily interaction and worldviews represented in their communities.



**Figure 2:** Findhorn Ecovillage – Scotland.  
(Photo: L. Wilmsen)

## Value for Society

To integrate intentional communities into the context of an increasingly individualised society (cf. Beck 1986), the concept of liminality shall be used. It is a concept that was introduced by the anthropologist Turner (2005) for the transitional state between two phases and the accompanying rites of passage, where individuals or groups neither belong to the past state or the society they came from, nor are they yet reincorporated into the prospective state or society.

Intentional communities can be such spaces of liminality, set up in between the norms and structures of the original society and the intention to practice an alternative lifestyle beyond the "rites" and boundaries of that society (cf. Meijering 2006). In other words, they grow out of situations of discontent with the actual condition of the world, with its increasing ecological, economic and social insecurities, and hence build a place based on their vision of a better world with "rites" differing from everyday life.

In that state of liminality, a mere individual identity can develop into a collective identity induced by a strong solidarity. This collective identity can stand for an evolutionary and integral answer to individualisation and isolation in society.

There are different ideals regarding intentional communities. One common ideal is "a community within the community" (Reese-Schäfer 2001), meaning that society shall be composed of various communities bound together in one big, society-embracing community. This allows a coexistence of different moral concepts, in which each individual can decide without any form of coercion where to participate in compliance with their own worldview and ideals.

Another perspective sees communities as pioneers for a dispersion of their goals and visions into the surrounding society – especially when they enter the phase of reintegration, following the phase of liminality. Ecological awareness may serve as one example which, instead of being an excluding criterion, nowadays has gained increasing attention and has even become integrated into the life of the modern population. This leads to another benefit of intentional communities, namely that they are generally a good indicator of existing problem areas in a society, when reversely observing their goals and visions.

Historically seen, they have always been a reaction to the current state of society. They have typically been established in an attempt to find ways on a smaller scale to correct deficiencies of that same society, and thereby show alternatives to established lifestyles. In that context, they can serve as "laboratories" and give conclusions on possibilities and potentials for social development through an intensification of communal structures. They set an example of alternative approaches in many different areas, empowering people to more self-responsibility, proactivity, and public participation. By doing so, they open up the opportunity to transform established thinking and living patterns for individuals as well as the whole community. In trying new ways of living, they may serve as catalysts for change, and that is one reason why they are becoming interesting for spatial planning.



## Relevance for Spatial Planning

In order to analyze the relevance of intentional communities for spatial planning, a short overview of the phenomenon shall be given. Currently, the numbers of quantity and distribution of intentional communities can only be estimated. The Fellowship for Intentional Community assumes that between 5,000 and 25,000 intentional communities exist worldwide (cf. Nolte 2001). The uncertainty of this data is due to the situation that valuable information can only be retrieved through scientific research.

In the case of intentional communities as a new area of interest in different scientific disciplines, this is still in the early stages. Published work, as well as the sources from internet, i.e. databases, can provide information too. This, however, depends on the degree of cooperation between communities and their interest to unite in networks and share their presentations externally. In many countries, such networking structures do not yet exist and therefore there is no information available. Yet, that does not mean that such communities do not exist in those regions.



▲  
**Figure 3:** Lebensgarten Steyerberg – Germany. (Photo: L. Wilmsen)

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**Figure 4:** Reforestation in Auroville. (Photo: L. Wilmsen)



**Figure 5:** Innovative Building Design in Auroville.  
(Photo: C. Woiwod)

Lastly, the high fluctuation of community projects, with many of them dissolving before reaching a phase of stability, makes it difficult to calculate exact numbers (cf. Dierschke et al. 2006).

Geographically seen, the current focal point of community building is still in the USA and Israel. This can be explained by the historic relevance of specific types of community that have shaped the formation and history of those countries. In Israel, it has been the Kibbutz movement, and in the USA, religious communities (ibid.). Making conclusions about the existence of intentional communities in other countries is rather difficult, based on the current data, but research does confirm their presence in Australia, Japan, India and Europe (cf. Dierschke 2003). Primary research in online networks (<http://www.ic.org/> and <http://gen.ecovillage.org/>) also produced results in Latin-American and African countries.

### Examples of Existing Intentional Communities

#### ... In Rural Areas

Many intentional communities, especially ecovillages, can be found in rather rural areas or at the fringes of urbanised regions. Presumably, this is due to the fact that rural areas hold certain advantages when it comes to principles like sustainability, self-sufficiency, ecology and proximity to nature. Urban areas are still a lot less environmentally contaminated, there is space for agricultural activity, nature is close by, land can be purchased for lower prices, and the potential of conflicts with neighbours is somewhat lower.

Auroville, a famous international spiritual community in South India, may serve as a model for an intentional community in a rural area or on the fringe of a big city. It was founded in the early 1960s by Mira Alfassa (referred to as "the Mother" by Aurovilians), based on the philosophical

and spiritual ideals of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It was built on wasteland surrounded by some impoverished villages, approximately 19 km north of Pondicherry and 120 km south of Chennai. Today, it consists of a little over 2,200 people from more than 45 nations (of which about one-third are Indian). The average age of the members is 30 years, but all age and social groups are present. Auroville wants to be "a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities" (Auroville n.d.a). It is seen as an internationally recognised ongoing experiment in human unity and transformation of consciousness, "concerned with – and practically researching into – sustainable living and the future cultural, environmental, social and spiritual needs of mankind" (Auroville 2011).

The spiritual principles of Auroville are centred on the concept of inner-consciousness, simplicity, harmony and the unity of body, mind and nature. Correspondingly, the design of the community is laid out around a large open "Peace" area, with the "Matrimandir" as its spiritual epicentre (see Acharya in this issue).

In addition to the spiritual core values, a main principle of the community is sustainable development. Organic agriculture and farming, the use of natural and renewable resources in form of solar, wind and wastewater technology, and natural architecture are promoted (Figure 4). In the 40 years of its existence, wide areas have been reforested and more than two million trees and shrubs planted (Figure 5).

Besides the huge positive ecological impact Auroville has had until today, the social outreach is significant. More than 5,000 people from the surrounding villages are employed in Auroville in many different fields (Auroville n.d.b). Schools and vocational programmes have been established, and technology transfer into the villages is pushed. Examples in this regard are the permaculture workshops held with inhabitants of the villages to raise awareness on health and food issues, as well as to promote ways to generate income (via selling the produce) and improve community life through cooperation and teamwork.

The impact Auroville has had so far has been of interest to local and national planners, who attend workshops and seminars there to discuss future sustainable planning policies in India and worldwide, whilst conjointly putting alternative consensus models into practice. The project Auroville has been approved by the Indian government and endorsed by UNESCO since 1966. In 2001, a master plan was approved by the Indian Ministry of Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation.

Nevertheless, Auroville is confronted with many challenges. The fundamental one is sustaining the daily life of the community itself and making community participation work from day to day. The land prices are on the rise, due to the spread of Puducherry, an agglomeration with more than one million inhabitants. Furthermore, there is the ongoing threat of an invasion of real estate development companies, compromising the spirit and ethics of Auroville, since less than half of the area is yet in possession of Auroville. Another challenge that the community faces

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is the creation of sustainable employment opportunities for its growing population as well as for the people from the villages.

"Much more still needs to be done, but real long-term change can only be achieved when it is allowed to emerge from within, naturally, gradually, organically. Auroville can only plant the seeds" (<http://www.auroville.org/economy/economicimpact.htm>).

### ... In Urban Areas

There are also examples of intentional communities in urban areas. However, in urban proximity or even inside of cities, intentional communities may face some considerable disadvantages. Land prices usually rise up to a much higher level and decisions on land use have to be made in agreement with government bodies and administrative departments, where decision making still follows hierarchical models. Restrictive regulations have to be taken into account in relation to population density, the infrastructure, and interfering political goals (i.e. real estate development to attract a certain population stratum). Furthermore, it is probably much more difficult for associations or organisations – or any other union of likeminded people – to purchase larger complexes of land in order to set up some form of intentional community. Nonetheless, there are cohousing and ecologically motivated communities in cities or in suburban areas, due to the re-use of larger plots of abandoned industrial areas or the natural process of being incorporated into a city as it grows into its suburban areas.

Situated in eastern Santiago de Chile in the neighbourhood of Peñalolén is the **Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén**, which may act as an example for an ecological community in an urban area (Figure 6 and 7). Founded almost 30 years ago by a group of friends who shared the vision of living with nature instead of against her, it now counts roughly 340 families (more than 1,000 people), with 35% of the inhabitants already born in the community. The people who live there are co-owners of a total of 22 plots of land, which are contracted with the community so as to prohibit real estate speculation by individuals.

The main goal of the community is to advocate sustainable and environmentally friendly urbanisation (cf. Comunidad Ecológica 2012). Much focus is put on the vegetation via reforestation and preservation of the typical natural environment, as well as limiting pollution through light and waste. They experiment successfully with different types of natural architecture (i.e. based on wood, earth, clay, and recycled materials) and sustainable construction techniques.

In this community, which may better be referred to as a self-managed neighbourhood, the communitary lifestyle is expressed in the sharing of services, mutual care, and frequent collective spiritual, cultural and artistic events. Spaces of spirituality (i.e. a Hare Krishna temple) and ancient rituals have been developed, as well as locations of healing (a therapeutic community centre in form of an NGO was founded), to work with the body and personal development. Until now, a lot of creative energy has been generated within the community, spanning from music, theatre, arts, crafts and science up to the formation of



schools with alternative and innovative approaches (i.e. a Montessori and a Rudolf Steiner school).

The impact on the neighbouring areas is considerable. Through workshops on the techniques of ecological construction, renewable energy and the creation of backyards with organic agriculture, the knowledge accumulated over the years is being shared with the neighbours. Solidarity organisations, like a shelter or the therapeutic community centre, have been founded. Student exchanges between the youths of the community and local schools take place. Architects from the community and those of the vicinity work together and share their knowledge.

While all this sounds rather pleasant, the reality is somewhat challenging. In current times, the Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén has lost parts of its initial communitarian intentions, whilst it still preserves the philosophy of living in harmony with nature (cf. Torralba et. al 1999, Marion 2011). There has been an increase of families in the Comunidad Ecológica who have chosen the community as a green and ecological living space, but have less

▲  
**Figure 6:** Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén Alto.  
(Photo: L. Wilmsen)

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**Figure 7:** Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén Alto. (Photo: L. Wilmsen)

interest in engaging in a communitarian lifestyle. Furthermore, there have been and continue to be challenges by the planning authorities and people with a certain political agenda (cf. Comunidad Ecológica 2012). Depending on one's own viewpoint, this can also be held responsible to the Comunidad Ecológica and their exclusive attitude against others (cf. Mardones Arévalo 2009). Naturally, one main characteristic of a city is the notable higher population density compared to rural areas. The Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén tries to incorporate the growing city in a slow and steady and harmonious process; nevertheless, the green way they promote appears to be in conflict with the relatively higher urban densities.

Especially since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there have been political plans by the government to introduce buildings for social housing, which would open backdoors for building high-rise condominiums for the upper-class, further densifying the neighbourhood. Environmental problems are expected due to a higher volume of traffic, soil sealing, and an unsustainably enforced change in the social constitution of the neighbourhood (cf. Comunidad Ecológica 2012, Mardones Arévalo 2009).

All these challenges may also be some of the reasons why the phenomenon of communal living occurs much less in cities than in rural areas.

### Conclusions

As can be derived from the above examples, the relevance of intentional communities for spatial planning is manifold. Firstly, they are a microcosmic picture of society and therefore can serve as research objects or even pilot projects. On the one hand, they show new and sustainable ways of dealing with nature and ecology, especially in rural areas. On the other hand, they may demonstrate alternatives and, to some extent, spiritual approaches to social coexistence that are contrary to the increasing alienation, meaninglessness, loneliness and even violence in modern, human daily life. Auroville, for example,

contains a huge variety of different people from all age and income groups. Creating a peaceful coexistence is an everyday challenge that has been part of the community's life since its beginnings. Therefore, they may offer 40 years of hands-on experience in the field of sustainability and ecology, as well as in the practice of living together, making all-beneficial communitary decisions, and overcoming challenges.

This relates to the second point, namely, that the experimentation in intentional communities with new ways of decision making and new communication skills and methods can be interesting and enriching for the processes of everyday planning. Bottom-up principles, civic participation, heterarchic and consensus decision making, focus on personal responsibility, mediation and non-violent communication are just some key characteristics that have been partly developed and put into practice in intentional communities. Many of these approaches admittedly are already part of current planning practice. However, the author of this paper is positive about the even higher degree and much longer trial period of these principles practiced in intentional communities, even though she is also aware of the persistence of challenges, especially in regard to the communication between community members and externals. The founding motives of the two given examples of intentional communities circulated on spiritual, humanitarian and ecological core values and beliefs, which in general sort of constitute the survivability of such experiments of alternative ways of living. Planning authorities, on the contrary, can oftentimes rely on hierarchical solutions of decision making, in case other ways do not work out (i.e. missing support of affected citizens).

Thirdly, community activities often focus on having an impact on neighbouring areas, be it ecological awareness or poverty reduction, through teaching best practices, self-help and empowerment. Both case studies show interest in developing their surrounding area. Especially Auroville has put into practice – based on their spiritual and ecological creed – the need to teach the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, i.e. in form of courses on permaculture, social awareness, health and agriculture. The approach of the Comunidad Ecológica has been more a cultural one, with workshops and exhibitions in the field of the arts, but also in ecological awareness and sustainable construction methods. The topic of knowledge transfer is especially interesting in "developing" countries where that human potential could be used and supported by local planning authorities. Therefore, planning authorities should acknowledge those grassroots movements, work together with them, and support them.

Nevertheless, the frequently existing bias and animosity should be mentioned here. Many intentional communities suffer from accusations and defamation, i.e. as being sectarian or divisive. On the other hand, many communities still stay very exclusive and are not fully open to the public. So, on both sides work needs to be done. In general, support for people who are motivated to change things and have a positive impact on the world must be considered very important. In the common thrive for an ecologically, economically and socio-psychologically sustainable development of society, there should and could be beneficial cooperation between spatial planners, politicians and members of intentional communities.



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# Town Planning for Transforming India into a "Right Kind of Giant" – A Study in Sri Aurobindo's Light

Aryadeep S. Acharya

## **Stadtplanung für die Transformation Indiens in einen "Giganten wahrer Größe" - eine Studie im Lichte Sri Aurobindos**

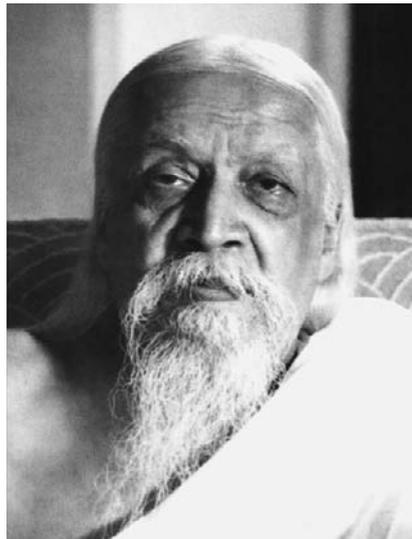
*Dieser aus zwei Teilen bestehende Beitrag befasst sich mit einem der nach Ansicht des Autors wichtigsten Politikbereiche, in denen Indien ein umfassendes, weitsichtiges, mutiges und entschlossenes Vorgehen benötigt, um sich in der Welt als aufstrebender "Gigant wahrer Größe" zu entwickeln, nämlich der Stadtentwicklung. Der erste Teil der Arbeit wirft einen kurzen Blick auf das zukünftige urbane Szenario in Indien und zwei als wesentlich erachtete Grundsätze für die Gestaltung urbaner Zentren: die Notwendigkeit exemplarischer Stadtmodelle sowie der Fokus auf Klein- und Mittelstädte. Der zweite Teil präsentiert eine Idee für die Richtung zukünftiger Stadtentwicklung Indiens, die aus Sicht des Autors notwendige Bedingungen für Indiens Aufstieg generieren könnte. Dabei wird Auroville als spirituelle, evolutionäre Modellstadt vorgestellt und auf die Lehren Sri Aurobindos zurückgegriffen, dem berühmten Mystiker, Philosophen und Visionär einer neuen spirituellen Evolution der Welt sowie seine Mitstreiterin Mirra Alfassa, allgemein als „die Mutter“ bezeichnet..*

In March, 2003, a prominent Indian news magazine, India Today, organised at New Delhi a conclave, "India: Global Giant or Pigmy?" Among the eminent economists, thinkers and futurists, business and political leaders who were invited to speak at the conclave was William Jefferson Clinton, former President of the United States of America, who gave the keynote address. Speaking via satellite from New York, Mr. Clinton began his speech by saying "The world cannot afford for India to be a pigmy. You have to be a giant and the right kind of giant" (Clinton 2003: 22).

This paper, in two parts, addresses one of the major areas in which India will need to develop a comprehensive, far-sighted, bold and determined approach to emerge in the world as a "right kind of giant"; namely, the planning of her cities going forward and the remodelling of the existing ones. The first part takes a brief look at the emerging urban scenario in India and at two of the essential principles for designing the urban centres. The second part presents an idea for India's urban development which, in my view, could create conditions for India's emergence as a "right kind of giant". In doing so, I will primarily draw upon the guidance of Sri Aurobindo (Figure 1), the renowned mystic, philosopher and visionary of new spiritual evolution of the world, and his collaborator Mirra Alfassa (Figure 2), known universally as the Mother, who envisioned a new India founded on her true national individuality and genius, and dedicated to her true role in shaping the human destiny.

### **Part 1 The Emerging Urban Scenario in India**

India is regarded as a developing country. This means that compared to the widespread prosperity and affluence of the developed countries, India lags behind and is striving to catch up. This is primarily understood in the context of the economic, technical and material development of the



▼  
**Figure 1:** Sri Aurobindo, 1950



▲  
**Figure 2:** The Mother

country, and the attitudes, institutions and infrastructure required for such development. Worldwide, one of the major results of economic development has been the migration of people from rural to urban agglomerations. "Urbanisation is the sociological and spatial counterpart to economic processes that shift workers away from subsistence agriculture to more productive sectors" (Sanyal 2008: 166).

According to the *Provisional Census July 2011* released by the Government of India, nearly 70 percent of India's 1.21 billion population lives in rural areas, mostly in hamlets and villages with a population of less than 5,000 people. However, the census also noted that "for the first time since Independence, the absolute increase in population is more in urban areas than in rural areas" (Chandramouli 2011:05). This trend, in the wake of the economic growth of the country, is going to increase. It is estimated by some economists and urban systems researchers that

nearly half of India's 833 million rural population – some 400 million people, a number equal to the population of the USA – will migrate to cities in coming decades! (See website of IHS.) Moreover, India will also need to rehabilitate its slum dwellers – "170 million, which alone surpasses all but five countries in the world" (Nilekani 2008: 220) – if she really seeks to be called a developed nation. "The challenge of scale" (Nilekani 2008: 231) is immense, but so is the opportunity for bold experiments to build a new India, new urban forms of life, a new future, not only for herself and her people but, because of the nation's sheer size and strength, for the entire world. The phenomenon of India's urban development is going to be so vast, so radically transforming to the Indian landscape, so consequential for India's future, that it can rightly be termed as "India's approaching urban revolution".

### **Need to Develop Exemplary Models of Urban Development**

It is high time that we – all those who are interested in India's future – ask ourselves some fundamental questions. The answers may help us develop an understanding of the most appropriate urban development for the country.

What should be the central purpose of organised human settlements? Progressing from a prehistoric nomadic life to the Agriculture Age, which gave rise to hamlets and village settlements, then to the Industrial Age, which transformed those early forms of human settlements into modern metropolises, what should be the next mode and purpose of the organised human habitation in the post-industrial era?

The predominant element of agricultural society was matter: it lived primarily on the physical level. The predominant element of industrial society was life: it lived primarily on vital level i.e. at the level of life itself. The predominant element of the digital age is mind: it lives or seeks to live primarily by ideas, information and innovations (Malik 2009: 51-51). The knowledge society talked about by futurists and management thinkers is the result of this development. Writes Peter Drucker in *The New Realities*: "This is a logical result of a long evolution in which we moved from working by the sweat of our brow and by muscle to industrial work and finally to knowledge work" (Drucker 1994:173). Could it be that the knowledge society is only a stage and a preparation for something beyond it – a still greater cycle of human progression awaiting its hour?

According to Sri Aurobindo, these three – body, life and mind – are like ministers, while the King – or, in the terminology of his Integral Yoga, psychology and philosophy, the psychic being or soul personality, which is an evolving entity in human beings – dwells deep inside, almost exiled from its kingdom.

**Sri Aurobindo:** "If the psychic entity had been from the beginning unveiled and known to its ministers, not a secluded King in a screened chamber, the human evolution would have been a rapid soul-outflowering, not the difficult, chequered and disfigured development it now is; but the veil is thick and we know not the secret Light within us, the light in the hidden crypt of the heart's innermost sanctuary" (Aurobindo 2005: 925).

What little influence the "King" – the soul or the psychic entity – exercises in human life is indirect and in proportion to what the three "ministers" allow. Could we build cities that not only facilitate the well-being and prosperity of all the peoples but also foster the emergence of the psychic being of the people – cities that help in the coming forward of the "King"; cities that help to thin the veil between man's external being – a construct of nature – and his inner being, which contains his true individuality and its spiritual potentialities?

The question is all the more important for India because India has, from the early dawn of its civilisation, a profoundly spiritual constitution ingrained in the very marrow of its being. The following extracts from a conversation with Sri Aurobindo explains this vividly:

**"Disciple:** Do you think that it is easier to live a spiritual life in India than in any other country?

**"Sri Aurobindo:** It is not a question of my thinking, it is a fact. Because we have been doing that work for the last four to five thousand years the whole past is living in a remarkable way, so that the slightest touch can open a man to it if he has anything in him which supplies the necessary material.

**"Disciple:** Why is it that the spiritual life is more difficult in Europe than in India?

**"Sri Aurobindo:** Firstly, because the Europeans never had it in such a degree as the Indians; and secondly, what they had is far away from their mental and vital life, and so it has receded behind. Perhaps it is coming back now there as well. That is why Europeans who have got a spiritual aspiration turn to India. It does not mean that they turn to Indians, but to the accumulated spiritual force that is here...

**"Disciple:** Are Indians more spiritual than other people?

**"Sri Aurobindo:** No, it is not so. No nation is entirely spiritual. Indians are not more spiritual than other people. But behind the Indian race there is a past spiritual influence" (Aurobindo 1995: 402).

It is because of this "accumulated spiritual force", which is "living in a remarkable way" "behind the Indian race", that Nolini Kanta Gupta, an Indian philosopher and a foremost disciple of Sri Aurobindo, writes: "Other peoples may be the arms and the feet and the head of humanity, but India is its heart, its soul..." (Gupta 1988: 160). This also explains the Mother's answer when asked to sum up in one sentence her vision of India's future: "India's true destiny," she wrote, "is to be the *Guru* of the world" (Mother 2004: 358).

The original sense of the Sanskrit word "guru" means one who has evolved into "a true consciousness that is aware of the Divine and the Truth and does not look at things from the Ego – it is wide and calm and strong and aspires to union and surrender – it is many things besides but this is the essential" (Aurobindo 1978: 170). Such a person, then, is in a position to inspire and guide those who seek that same consciousness. If India is to emerge as the guru

of the world, the collective consciousness of the country should have pre-dominantly psychic characteristics (Mother 2004: 370).

**Sri Aurobindo:** "The psychic part of us is something that comes direct from the Divine and is in touch with the Divine. In its origin it is the nucleus pregnant with divine possibilities that supports this lower triple manifestation of mind, life and body" (Aurobindo 1978:120).

The predominantly psychic characteristics of people would gradually generate in the country the attributes of the psychic being – the nobility and purity of character, of thoughts and outlook and understanding and action; the realisation of "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity" (the three great "cries" of the French Revolution); the inner sense of solidarity with fellow human beings and with all creation; selfless love, right thought, right feeling, right perception, right attitude in all things, turning of all life into a field of learning, progress and transformation on the foundation of "sincerity, will and perseverance" (Mother 2004: 254). Also, it is through the psychic being that one discovers the true national genius, identity and individuality (Mother 2004: 370).

Of course, such a generalised collective evolution into a predominantly psychic consciousness depends upon the appearance of an increasing number of individuals who are TRULY led by their psychic and spiritual consciousness and who, by their example and inspiration, nurture the collective environment for such an evolution in all aspects of human life – art, culture and literature, education and economy, architecture and town planning, social sciences and polity. It is only then that India will qualify to lead the world to the world's luminous destiny and fulfil her mission.

**Sri Aurobindo:** "The free rule, that is to say, the predominant lead, control and influence of the developed spiritual man – not the half-spiritualised priest, saint or prophet or the raw religionist – is our hope for a divine guidance of the race" (Aurobindo 1997: 182).

Fundamentally, the human imperfections are the result of the incomplete emergence of consciousness. Thus, one of the essential tasks faced by the responsible and forward-looking individuals of the country would be to develop urban models which, besides securing economic, material, social, cultural and political well-being of all its citizens, would also create conditions for the growth and emergence of true consciousness. Such exemplary urban models would then become a source of inspiration for the rest of humanity.

### **"Small-town India Holds the Key"**

This is the title of an article by Sanjeev Sanyal, an Indian economist, urban systems theorist and author of *The Indian Renaissance*. In this and in his other articles, Sanyal advocates reviving the small towns and building new ones for "inevitable urbanisation" of the country (see Sanyal 2009, also Sanyal 2008: 165). But Sri Aurobindo, too, basing himself on human history, advocates relatively small human communities for a healthy, happy and progressive human civilisation, as the following sequence of quotes demonstrates:

"[C]ollective life is more at ease with itself, more genial, varied, fruitful when it can concentrate itself in small spaces and simpler organisms" (Aurobindo 1997: 281).

"If we consider the past of humanity so far as it is known to us, we find that the interesting periods of human life, the scenes in which it has been most richly lived and has left behind it the most precious fruits, were precisely those ages and countries in which humanity was able to organise itself in little independent centres acting intimately upon each other but not fused into a single unity" (Aurobindo 1997: 281).

"The small human communities in which all can easily take an active part and in which ideas and movements are swiftly and vividly felt by all and can be worked out rapidly and thrown into form without the need of a large and difficult organisation, turn naturally towards freedom as soon as they cease to be preoccupied with the first absorbing necessity of self-preservation" (Aurobindo 1997: 358).

"A certain democratic equality is almost inevitable in a small community; ..." (Aurobindo 1997: 359).

"[E]verywhere the root of this free, generalised and widely pulsating vital and dynamic force ... was the complete participation not of a limited class, but of the individual generally in the many-sided life of the community, the sense each had of being full of the energy of all and of a certain freedom to grow, to be himself, to achieve, to think, to create in the undammed flood of that universal energy" (Aurobindo 1997: 361).

In the light of these words from one who envisions a new dawn of human civilisation; who is widely regarded as a forerunner, as a "teacher of mankind" (Singhvi 1999: 3); who has, in the words of Dr. Helmut Kohl, the renowned statesman and former Chancellor of Germany, "successfully synthesised matter with spirit" (Kohl 1990: 36), the importance of small towns or "little independent centres of life" for India's urban development cannot be over-emphasised.

## **Part 2**

### ***Auroville – A Spiritual Township: An Idea for the Ideal Urban Development of India***

"Just imagine, 20,000 full-grown Aurovilles would be enough to contain India's entire population while occupying not even 20% of its territory; the country would look quite different then – no urban sprawl, no slums, and a lot of space for nature reserves!"

The above statement, posted in October 2006 on Auroville Intranet, the internal website of Aurovilians and close associates of Auroville, comes from Christoph Fischer, a sociologist and former resident of Auroville, currently residing in Tuscany, Italy. It was written by way of comment to an article on Auroville's planning and development by Paulette Hadnagy, a senior Auroville resident and multifaceted researcher from the same country, Italy.

The statement drew my attention because, having lived in Auroville for 21 years and having seen things from close quarters, I am convinced of the immense and unparal-

leled relevance and potentiality of Auroville for India. Living in Auroville, in close proximity to people from some 40 countries, I feel as if I am living in an international army headquarters of India! Not an army that fights at the physical frontier of a country, but the one which, within its very humble means, resources, capacity and size, fights virtually at every other frontier: the frontier of economy and business, the frontier of art, culture and literature, the frontier of education, social change and evolution, rural development and, above all, the frontier of intellectual, psychological and spiritual strength and stamina of the country! This is so because the international population of Auroville has, to a varying degree in varying individuals, imbibed the influence of two visionary leaders who stand not only for world progress, world evolution, world transformation, but also for India's progress, India's evolution, India's transformation. "Sri Aurobindo represents Indian philosophical thought as it has developed over thousands of years in its most modern form and concept" (Malhotra 2000: 04). The vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is like a double-edged fire – one edge for the world renaissance and the other for the Indian renaissance, which must precede the world renaissance. Consequently, "what Auroville represents in the earth atmosphere" (Revi 2007: 03) has also its double-edge, a double-poled mission: one aims at human advance towards its highest destiny and another at India's advance towards her highest destiny.

**The Mother:** "And the clear vision: the same thing which in the history of the universe made the earth the symbolic representation of the universe so as to concentrate the work on one point, the same phenomenon is now taking place: India is the representation of all human difficulties on earth, and it is in India that the ... cure will be found. And then, that is why – THAT IS WHY I was made to start Auroville" (Mother 1981:41).

I regard it as my sacred task to communicate the relevance and potentialities of Auroville to those concerned about India's future. I was and am still researching and writing a book in this context and have been developing my ideas – "my dreams" – for realising Auroville's potentialities. However, that the Auroville township model itself has such an extraordinary relevance for India's urban development was something completely new to me. I have been therefore enquiring into it on and off over the course of the last five years and, in this part of my paper, present some of my understandings. In doing so, my stress will be on examining the validity and value of the idea rather than on developing an action plan for its implementation.

### Elaborating the Idea

To begin with, I asked Christoph Fischer to elaborate his statement of 20,000 towns based on Auroville model. Below I quote from his email reply to me.

"If this idea should have any real impact on India's future urban and social development, it has to offer some very practical, innovative and attractive solutions for the social and environmental problems the country is facing. Personally, I have no doubt that Auroville is meant to be a model city, to be replicated all over the country, first of all as a solution to accommodate in a beautiful and pleasant way the enormous demographic growth, which would

otherwise be flowing into ever larger areas of almost uncontrolled urban sprawl. Secondly, these cities would be an excellent instrument to achieve and maintain a positive oxygen-CO2 balance of the country through the green area that surrounds the city-centre. Thirdly, an economic system centred on basic needs satisfaction should serve as a tool to eradicate totally poverty and underemployment. Last, but not the least, an administrative system to organise the collective affairs will allow and encourage the participation of as many citizens as possible.

"Channelling the urbanisation of India into the planned creation of many small townships could help solve the crucial problems concerning population, poverty, pollution and participation. I call them the four crucial Ps, which have to be solved if the course of human evolution is to be put on a right and sustainable track."

It must be mentioned here that four months after Christoph Fischer mooted the idea, one of the foremost Indian development planners and the director of the prestigious Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS), Aromar Revi, echoed it out of his own vision of things in his brilliant research paper on Auroville, *Auroville Mission Note (12th Feb. 2007)*: "Very few settlements have been created to serve as vehicles for evolution. Auroville is one of them. It is therefore, both a living system and an evolving one... It is anticipated that other networked towns of similar size could develop based on the principles and processes that are materialised and tested in Auroville" (Revi 2007: 03-08).

### Three Clarifications

Before we proceed to study the concept and the impact of the Auroville Universal Township model for India, I would wish to make three brief but important clarifications.

At first glance, the idea may appear to some as creating uniformity in the design of town planning and demographic set-up, thus undermining the diversity in human settlements. While a deeper inquiry into the idea will reveal a picture far better than what has emerged so far in terms of urbanisation, still it must be made clear at the outset that the idea in itself is only a broad pointer to a bright possibility. Wherever necessary, it can and must modify itself, adjust itself to ground realities, integrate experience and insights from other urban systems researchers, town-planners and architects who have a comprehensive and long-term view of the country's future. For, the goal is not to realise an idea but to realise the noble aspiration and vision behind it: the aspiration and vision of a beautiful and bountiful country – open, bright, vibrant, forward-looking, free from the bondage of tradition yet retaining its best elements, a country that offers innumerable opportunities and the environment for a free, healthy, happy, energetic, creative life for all its citizens.

Secondly, the idea of 20,000 towns should not be taken as a fixed number, a numerical target. It is being put forth as a concept and principle worthy of study and exploration, primarily for the fresh overall urban development of the country.

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Thirdly, the concept of zones in the Auroville township model is not a rigid compartmentalisation of life. It is a flexible concept which incorporates apparently non-zone-related but relevant activities and developments – a "mixed land use" system (Murthy 2009: 105) – within the framework of an urban set-up that is itself a close web of walkable or easily reachable places of work, living, education, industry, recreation, etc.

### **Understanding the Concept by Imagining the Idea**

"Just imagine" – these are Christoph Fischer's opening words. Let us follow in their wake to grasp the concept of Auroville township model and the implications of the idea. For, as Paul Romer, the founder of Charter Cities, puts it: "There's no impediment, other than a failure of imagination, that will keep us from delivering on a truly global win-win solution" (Romer n/d).

Imagine that there are 20,000 towns in India based on the Auroville model, with each having its inspiring charter that embodies the highest dreams, aspirations and values of its collective existence!

Imagine that there are 20,000 towns, each having an area of about 20 sq. km., with an urban area of 5 sq. km. and 15 sq. km. as greenbelt, each having a population of about 60,000 people, and that all these 20,000 towns could accommodate India's 1.21 billion population while occupying less than 20 percent of India's 3,277,590 sq.-km. territory! What an all-round rejuvenating transformation of the country they could bring about!

Take, for example, the impact on energy usages – a vital ingredient for healthy ecology. Speaking about the greatly beneficial impact of the well-designed and compact urban density on energy savings, Sanyal writes:

"The problem with so-called green codes is that they exclusively focus on maximising the efficiency of individual buildings whereas the real gains come from the overall design of the city: Is the city dense or sprawled? Do people live in apartments or free-standing houses? Is the city designed for public transport? For instance, energy use drops by over 30 percent just by moving people from houses to apartments even if we ignore the green codes. Similarly, public transport systems do not work efficiently when the city is spread out and commuters cannot easily walk to the bus/metro stop.

Atlanta has a metro network of 74 km while Barcelona's is 99 km. These may seem comparable, but per capita CO2 emissions for Atlanta are ten times Barcelona's. The difference is mostly explained by urban form. Barcelona is compact and dense, while its American rival is spread out. The longest possible distance within the latter city is 137 km, while in Barcelona it is only 37 km. As a result, less than 4 percent of Atlanta's population lives within a reasonable walking distance of a metro station compared to 60 percent for Barcelona. Not surprisingly, a large proportion of Barcelona's citizens walk or use public transport while in Atlanta one is forced to use a car.

Interestingly, the very same factors affect environmental, economic and social sustainability. Manhattan is not just the densest urban area in the US, it is also an economic

powerhouse, a lively socio-cultural centre and has the lowest per capita ecological footprint in North America. In Asia, we see the same factors at work in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Singapore" (see Sanyal 2009).

Imagine that there are 20,000 residential zones in 20,000 towns of India providing a refreshing and integrated living environment, easy access to places of work and worship, utilities and services, sports and recreation, health and hygiene to all the citizens. What a gain it would be for a happy and healthy, efficient and energetic India!

Imagine that there are 20,000 industrial zones in 20,000 towns producing things for a bountiful and beautiful human existence while encouraging "local businesses that honour community values and serve community needs" (Korten 2009). What an inspiring environment it could generate for the flowering of the entrepreneurship, which in turn would open up vast opportunities for worthwhile employment for millions of youth about to enter the Indian stage in the coming decades!

Imagine that there are 20,000 cultural & educational zones in 20,000 towns of India dedicated to the integral growth of the students and the teachers. What a gain it would be for developing a learning society, a knowledge society!

Imagine that there are 20,000 national & international zones in each of the 20,000 towns of India researching and encouraging all that is best and unique in other states of India and other countries of the world. What a gain it would be for national and international goodwill, mutual understanding and appreciation and unity on the foundation of a rich vibrant diversity!

### **Mrs. Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India:**

"Auroville is an exciting project for bringing about harmony among different cultures and for understanding the environmental needs for men's spiritual growth. May Auroville truly become a city of light and of peace" (message on the occasion of the Auroville foundation on 28th February 1968).

Imagine that all the four zones of the 20,000 towns of India are surrounded by green belts providing health-enhancing organically grown fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy requirements of the town as much as possible while offering at the same time forest and parks for recreation. There will be clean air, a clean environment, a healthy ecological balance and opportunities for developing the resources for a sustainable society.

Imagine that all these 20,000 towns have at their centres 20,000 sublime buildings – the souls of the towns: they may be called "Pavilions of New Consciousness" or "Pavilions of Mother India" or "Pavilions of Perfection" or "Temple of True Life" – surrounded by equally sublime gardens and a lake which not only adds to the aesthetic charm of the township but also meets the water needs of the town! How their silent, majestic and inspiring presence will slowly penetrate people's deeper understanding of life, its *raison d'être*, and broaden their outlook on things.

**Sri Aurobindo:** "In ancient India the temple and all the communal things were at the centre – and the whole

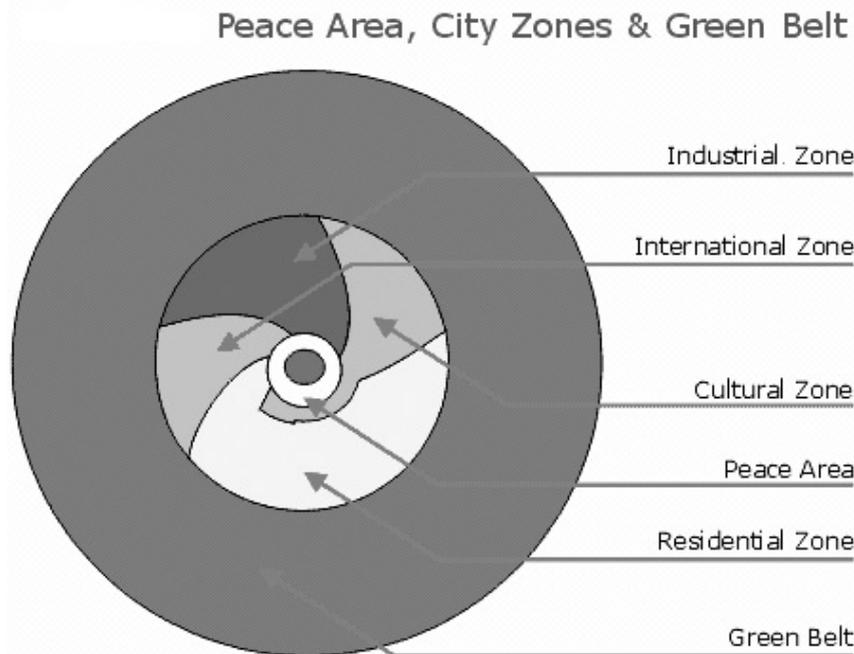
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**Figure 3:** Diagram of Auroville Universal Township (Source: Auroville Universal Township Master Plan 2025, Auroville Foundation, <www.auroville.org/av\_brief.htm>)



town was so arranged as to have easy access to the centre" (Aurobindo 1986: 40).

Imagine there are 20,000 empowered municipalities with 20,000 elected mayors – a nimble administration reaching out easily and efficiently with its helping hands to all the people of the town.

Last, but not least, imagine the vast areas of the country that would become available for large-scale production or for heavy industry, for agriculture, for higher and specialised education, for defence, environment and forestry.

**Sri Aurobindo:** "Poverty of the people can be removed only by a large-scale production. Big machinery does not necessarily mean all the evils of industrialism. ... New forms of social organisation will rise with the advent of large-scale production. The evils of industrialism are bound to disappear. The different ideas and schemes suggested in Europe show that people are trying to correct the defects. Unless one enters into it, how can the evils be overcome? ... Why should India wait (for industrialism) until other countries have solved the problems so that they (Indians) might imitate them afterwards? ... Let them (Indians) acquire wealth – without wealth they cannot expect to make any progress?" (Aurobindo 1986: 39).

**The Structure of the Auroville Universal Township Model**

It must be clear by now that the Auroville township model has two major components: the urban area and the green belt. The urban area is constituted of four zones and a centre called Peace which contains the Matrimandir – "the soul of Auroville", "a place for concentration", "a place ... for trying to find one's consciousness" (Mother 1970: 281-289) – while the green belt encircles the urban area as shown in Figure 3.

The city area has a radius of 1.25 km. (491 hectares or approx. 1200 acres) which comes to 5 sq. km. while the surrounding green belt has a radius of another 1.25 km

(1090 hectares, approx. 2700 acres) which comes to 15 sq. km. Thus, a radius of 2.5 km. from the centre creates a town of a little less than 20 sq. km. (1581 hectares, approx. 4000 acres) for a targeted population of 50,000 people.

The township has an in-depth, inspiring and comprehensive body of thought, visions, ideas and ideals – all coming from the world-view and life-view of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (Figure 4). I mention below one of the texts, the Charter of Auroville, with a display of the Auroville Galaxy plan (Figure 5), a close-up of the central building Matrimandir (Figure 6), and the plan of its gardens (Figure 7).

**Charter of Auroville**

1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.
2. Auroville will be the place of unending education, of constant progress and a youth that never ages.
3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.
4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.

Commenting on the structure of Auroville township plan, Aromar Revi writes:

"Many cities, temples and monuments have been built in history to symbolise, mirror or amplify the power of a sacred geometry and an aspired timelessness. Most have quickly returned to the dust that they were built from. Others have become ossified shadows of the aspiration that created them... Auroville's galactic symbol; the material celebration of the emergence of the supramental from the subconscious; the four aspects of the Mother; her crown and lines of force provide an arena in which many forms of the music of transcreation will be played over this century... The challenge will be to build a bridge between inner and outer education and not being captured by the deeply entrenched culture of mediocrity in the contemporary Indian bureaucracy and academia" (Revi 2007: 08-09).

**Could the Auroville Township Model Make India a Developed Country?**

I will try to answer this question briefly from four angles:

1. Mindset for a developed country
2. Education and motivation
3. Administrative efficiency
4. Role of middle class

## Mindset for a developed country

Economist C. K. Prahalad once said to N. R. Narayan Murthy, the founder of the renowned Indian multinational software company Infosys, "Being a developing country is just a mindset" (Murthy 2009:11). It is my humble contention that anyone who takes sincere trouble to understand the Auroville township model together with its vision content will acknowledge that it helps create a mindset for things Mr. Murthy regards as indispensable for India's emergence into a developed nation: "high aspirations" which "energise ... to overcome limitations ... engender and sustain hope, the main fuel for progress" and "build civilisation", "openness to accept, evaluate, adapt and adopt new ideas", freedom from "ego, vanity and contempt for other people", "work ethic" (Murthy 2009:12-13). The Auroville township model ignites the human imagination for an ideal human collectivity. It is a summons to man's love for progress, for an uplifting and enriching culture and creativity, for cultivating sincerity in actions and aspirations, for the growth of solidarity with fellow human beings on the basis of new consciousness where such a solidarity is self-existent.

## Education and motivation

In his book *Nature of Mass Poverty*, the renowned economist John Kenneth Galbraith points out with penetrating case studies how education and motivation are the two major ingredients that propel people to strive for prosperity. The Auroville township model is a small-town model geared towards making the life of its residents a field of "unending education" and "a youth that never ages". The combination of these two factors – small town with a broad and inspiring vision – generates the quality and quantity of a "free, generalised and widely pulsating vital and dynamic force" (Aurobindo 1997: 361) of individual and collective life. Such a model motivates its citizens to strive for innovations, for creative imagination, for learning new skills and producing new and better things, for making new experiments in economy, in art, culture, literature and education – a celebration of life, of life's fullness, progress, prosperity and perfection.

Dr. Karan Singh, an Indian savant, statesman and the current Chairman of the Auroville Foundation, was so impressed by the pulsations of creative life-force in Auroville that he once observed: "Auroville has a population of about 2000 people but the creativity of 20,000 people." This supports Sri Aurobindo's point about "small but free communities" generating a "full vigour of the common life".

## Administrative efficiency

Another important result of India's urban development based on Auroville township model will be the ease in disseminating benefit programmes and projects meant for the underdeveloped or poorer sections of society.

Sri Aurobindo: "[T]he active and stimulating participation of all or most in the full vigour of the common life, which was the great advantage of the small but free earlier communities, is much more difficult in a larger aggregate and is at first impossible. In its place, there is the concentration of the force of life into a dominant centre or at

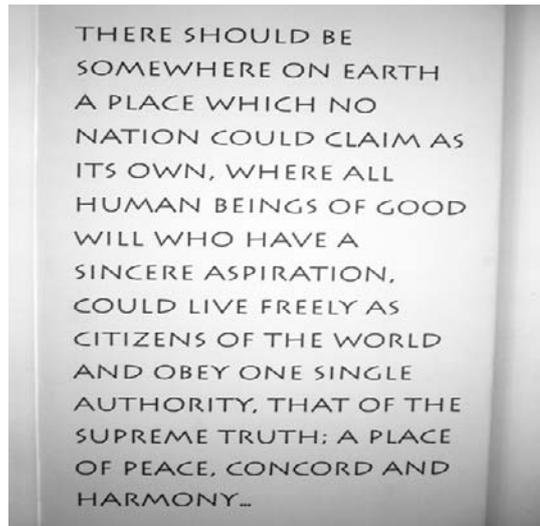


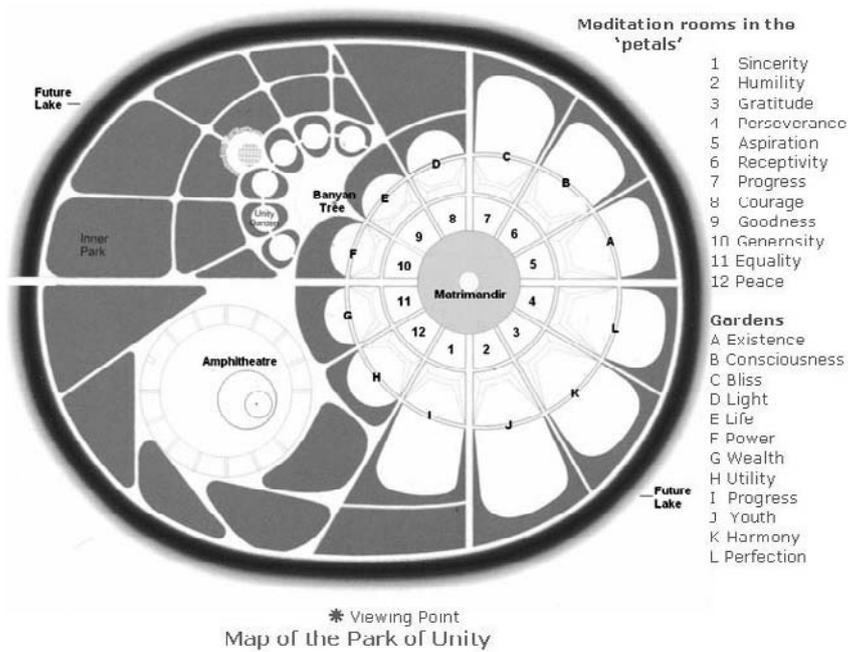
Figure 4: Auroville Vision Statement (Photo: C. Woiwode)



Figure 5: Galaxy Model of Auroville's Urban Area (Source: Auroville Universal Township Master Plan 2025, Auroville Foundation)



Figure 6: Matrimandir – "The Soul of Auroville" (Photo: C. Woiwode)



▲ **Figure 7:** Layout of Matrimandir Gardens (Source: <[www.auroville.org/thecity/matrimandir/mm\\_access\\_nov08\\_it.htm](http://www.auroville.org/thecity/matrimandir/mm_access_nov08_it.htm)>)



▲ **Figure 8:** Louis Building, Auroville



▲ **Figure 9:** Agni Jata Building, Auroville

most a governing and directing class or classes, while the great mass of the community is left in a relative torpor and enjoys only a minimum and indirect share of that vitality in so far as it is allowed to filter down from above and indirectly affect the grosser, poorer and narrower life below" (Aurobindo 1997: 358).

**Role of middle class**

A century ago, in 1909, Sri Aurobindo foresaw the crucial role the Indian middle class must play in shaping the country's future:

"For good or for evil the middle class now leads in India, and whatever saving impulse comes to the nation, must come from the middle class, whatever upward movement begins, it must initiate and lead. But for that to happen the middle class must by a miracle be transfigured and lifted above itself; the natural breeding ground of the bourgeois, it must become the breeding ground of the Samurai. It must cease in fact to be a middle class and turn itself into an aristocracy, an aristocracy not of birth or landed possessions, not of intellect, not of wealth and commercial enterprise, but of character and action. India must recover her faculty for self-sacrifice, courage and high aspiration..." (Aurobindo 2005b: 1108).

Today, the Indian middle class is a widely recognised and emerging social and economic phenomenon and force. Economists, business and political leaders are counting on it for India's resurgence. But, as Sri Aurobindo pointed out, unless the middle class becomes a bearer and an embodiment of "character and action", of "self-sacrifice, courage and high aspiration", it can easily turn into "a breeding ground" for a way of life which, to say the least, would be far from inspiring or uplifting.

On an infinitesimal scale, I have seen the middle class in Auroville and among Auroville associates, and I am reminded of what Sri Aurobindo wrote in *The Human Cycle* while discussing "conditions for the coming of a spiritual age":

"[E]ven if the condition of society and the principle and rule that govern society are opposed to the spiritual change, even if these belong almost wholly to the vital, to the external, the economic, the mechanical order, as is certainly the way at present with human masses, yet if the common human mind has begun to admit the ideas proper to the higher order that is in the end to be, and the heart of man has begun to be stirred by aspirations born of these ideas, then there is a hope of some advance in the not distant future" (Aurobindo 2005a: 248).

Auroville stands for "ideas proper to the higher order", while Aurovilians, in my view, represent, in a miniscule and symbolic way, humanity. The members of this Aurovilian humanity have, to a varying extent, admitted to their minds the "ideas proper to the higher order". To a varying level of intensity, their hearts, too, have "begun to be stirred by the aspirations born of these ideas". As a result, I see in Auroville a hope for "some advance" towards what Winston Churchill said in one of his World War II speeches: "broad, sunlit uplands" of the human civilisation (Churchill 1940). In other words, I see in Auroville a

distinct possibility of the gradual emergence of a spiritually inspired and evolved human society.

Of course, many would say this is more easily said than done and I will not disagree. Earlier in this paper I said that living in Auroville I feel as if I am living in an international army headquarters of India, but this does not mean that the imperfections inherent in human nature are not be found in Auroville. It is something like a great composer composing an inspired music, but if his/her orchestra is just at the level of an apprentice, the music will not be that great and divine. It is something like climbing the Mount Everest collectively – "a city upon a hill" – you cannot expect to climb at one go. An Aurovilian writer once called Auroville "the spiritual kindergarten" (Herbert 1993: 9). That says it all. However, the vision, the roadmap, the inspiration for advance towards "a high school, a college, a university of spirit", are very much there. The challenge before Aurovilians and the friends of Auroville, then, is to keep intact the vision, the roadmap, the inspiration to the "core of their consciousness" (see Singhvi 1999: 3) and never give up.

One of the results of India's urban development based on Auroville Universal Township model would be that the middle class would become "a breeding ground" for nurturing "Samurai": the aristocracy "of character and action". It would help them "recover ... faculty for self-

sacrifice, courage and high aspiration". Such an inspired middle class would put its strengths and resources behind those efforts and actions and dreams which would make India a developed country. It would support progressive individuals and movements, reject beliefs and systems that hamper growth, reform the obsolete social institutions, create new institutions of vision, efficiency and innovation, and wipe out mass poverty. India would then emerge as a "right kind of giant": there would be a glorious renaissance of the spirit of this ancient country in "a new disposition of the life plan", a "fresh creative activity" spoken of by Nolini Kanta Gupta in the following quote:

"We do not believe that India was ever completely dead or hopelessly moribund: her soul, although not always in front, was ever present as a living force, presiding over and guiding her destiny. That is why there is a perennial capacity for renewal in her and the capacity to go through dire ordeals. And to live up to her genius, she too must know how to march with the time, that is to say, not to cling to old and past forms – to be faithful to the ancient soul does not mean eternising the external frames and formulas that expressed that soul one time or another. Indeed the soul becomes alive and vigorous when it finds a new disposition of the life plan which can embody and translate a fresh creative activity, a new fulfilment emanating from the depths of the soul" (Gupta 1978: 199).

## Acknowledgment

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Figure 10: Auroville Visitors Reception Centre



## Aryadeep S. Acharya

Originally from Ahmedabad (Gujarat, India), discovered his inspiration in the vision and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in his early youth and became a resident of Auroville Universal Township ([www.auroville.org](http://www.auroville.org)) in 1990. There he managed certain small productive units, and has written several papers and many smaller articles on Auroville. In 1997, he started the newsletter COLAAP ("Collaboration for Auroville Area Protection"). Contact: <[aryadeep@auroville.org.in](mailto:aryadeep@auroville.org.in)>

# Holy Places or Contested Public Spaces?

Genet Alem

## **Heilige Stätten oder umstrittener öffentlicher Raum?**

*Der Begriff "öffentlich" bedeutet, dass „die Allgemeinheit“ Zugangsrechte zu bestimmten Stadträumen innehat. Mit der Art der Nutzung von öffentlichen Räumen geht eine Bedeutung einher, die mit der spezifischen räumlichen Lage verknüpft ist. Zugleich symbolisiert eine solche Nutzung die gemeinsame Identität der Nutzer. Spirituelles Leben ist ein wesentliches Element, das die Nutzung öffentlicher Räume bestimmt, und tatsächlich wurde die Entstehung öffentlicher Räume in der Vergangenheit oft von Riten beeinflusst, die mit spirituellen Aktivitäten einhergehen. Davon ausgehend beschreibt dieser Artikel, wie in Addis Abeba öffentliche Räume einerseits als geografische Orte soziales Engagement positiv beeinflussen können, dass dieses Engagement andererseits jedoch auch ein Mittel zur Vereinnahmung von Stadträumen sein kann. Religiöse Aktivitäten sind wichtige Faktoren, die zum sozialen Engagement im städtischen Leben beitragen. In der Regel ist Religiosität mit einer Praxis von spirituellen Riten in der Öffentlichkeit verbunden. In Äthiopien sind solche Riten ein wesentlicher Bestandteil des städtischen Lebens. Deshalb ist Religion ein wichtiger Faktor bei der Produktion von sozialen Räumen, die den öffentlichen Raum sowohl prägen als auch wandeln.*

Public spaces are venues where the aspiration, identity and power of any society are expressed. Mark Gottdiener (1985:123), discussing the production of space, says: "Space is both the geographical site of action and the social possibility for engaging in action." Hence, this article discusses how public spaces, as a geographical site, enhance the possibility of social engagement and, also, how this engagement could result in being a means of contesting urban spaces in Addis Ababa. Religious-related activities are important factors that enhance social engagement in urban life. Usually, being religious involves practicing spiritual rites in public. In Ethiopia, such rites are part and parcel of the urban life. Therefore, religion is an important factor in the production of social spaces that shape and transform public spaces.

## **Public Spaces and Spirituality**

Theoretically, the term "public" implies that the public owns the particular spaces. Hence, everyone who belongs to the public has the right to use it (see Caves 2005: 374). In practice, municipalities, or similar kinds of public administrative units, manage public spaces, an act of management that compromises the aforementioned use right. The given administration unit dictates the conditions in which the public space should be used and the kind of activities permitted to be exercised there.

Further, to reduce costs, the management can be privatised and with that the inclusiveness of the public space might become reduced. In most public spaces in Western cities, authorities put up information boards on which prohibited activities and conditions of use are listed. Otherwise, such spaces are apparently open to anyone.

Public spaces include city squares, parks, streets and other forms of space outside the domain of private ownership. In most cases, depending on the type of physi-

cal environment and type of traffic flow, the mentioned spaces are venues of various cultural and economic activities. Most importantly, they are where people (outside the small family circles) build networks to work on common interests, share their experiences, and develop civic culture and identity (see Amin 2008: 5).

The act of using public spaces links important meaning to a particular spatial location. At the same time, the use symbolises an identity shared by the users. Spiritual life is one of the essential elements that is symbolised in the process of using public spaces. Indeed, rites attached to spiritual life have influenced the emergence of public spaces throughout history (see Sennett 1990: 269-272).

People constructed different kinds of public spaces to celebrate their gods and to illustrate the greatness of their beliefs. Public spaces such as Saint Peter Square are difficult to perceive without their spiritual meaning for Roman Catholics. Saint Peter Square represents the glory of the Catholic Church in the past and its sacredness for the followers of the Catholic faith. The gathering in this square expresses the significance of being present on that particular location and time in the spiritual life of the people.

Sandercock and Senbel (2011: 88) refer to spirituality as an experience of connecting with other people and nature. Public spaces are in this sense the venues where people express this experience of connection with each other. In fact, this extends the concept of spirituality beyond the small circle of religion. Spirituality is a connection between people who share common values and the identity established on the shared values. For instance, the Arab Spring in 2011 showed how the Friday prayer in public spaces contributed to the revolution. The public spaces in the aforementioned case operated as a means of gathering, while the gathering for prayers yielded into a spiritual union to deal with the common problem.

Public spaces as squares attached to royal residences were important urban elements in the history of Ethiopia. In fact, reserving a space for an "Adebbabay", an Amharic term similar to square, was part of the procedure in the foundation of administration centres and temporary royal camps. This square was then the central market and a venue of important activities such as the public hearing of legal announcements and criminal trial processes. In addition, it was the place of public debate where the learned and holy men discussed the interpretation of the Holy Bible, and a site of religious feasts (Alem G. 2011: 130).

Consequently, public spaces have always been the traditional centre of spiritual and socio-economic life of Ethiopian cities. Public celebration of religious festivals is the continuity of this tradition in present times. Indeed, such feasts are important factors influencing the meaning and use of public spaces in Ethiopian cities. Furthermore, in the Ethiopian context, religious public gatherings are unique in being free of censorship and participatory.

### **Public Spaces in Addis Ababa**

Squares and parks that can be accessed without fees could be said to be a luxury in cities like Addis Ababa. The management and high land-value costs make such places rare. Africa Park, in the centre of the city, is one good example. The park was a normal open street park, but it is now closed to the public since its restoration in 2004. The reason is said to be high management costs (see Kassa 2008: 10).

Still, there are some public spaces that can be classified in three levels. The first ones are public spaces with socio-cultural significance for the city and the whole country. These public spaces are open for everyone. City squares, principal roads and stadiums (during religious events) belong to this group. At the same time, these public spaces are important traffic junctions and centres of the city's trade, business, and recreational life.



▲ **Figure 1:** Gated Access Road Bole Sub-City. Photo: Genet Alem, 2009

The significance of public spaces of the second level is limited to the part of the city in which they are located. Football and Timket (Epiphany) fields as well as yards of worship belong to the second hierarchical level of public spaces in Addis Ababa. In addition to their size, the dimension of daily and occasional activities in such public spaces does not have city-level magnitude; however, one can observe the same type of activities in similar pattern and time in different parts of the city.

Small neighbourhood green areas and access roads belong to the third level of public spaces. The use and significance of such spaces are mainly neighbourhood level. Hence, such public spaces are mostly used and controlled by residents in the immediate surrounding area. Indeed, the public use of green areas and small access roads is continuously deteriorating. Firstly, the shortage of buildable land makes small greenery spaces and neighbourhood sport fields attractive for investment opportunities by the city's administration. On the other hand, the shortage of open spaces for private use and the strong community involvement in the upgrading of access roads and other infrastructure development encourage



◀ **Figure 2:** Timket Parade Addis Ababa, Wondwosen Begashaw. Photo: Genet Alem, 2010

**Figure 3:** Riding Cycle as Part of Timket Feast, Addis Ababa. Photo: Genet Alem, 2010



residents to use public spaces as semi-private. In recent years, gated access roads and fenced public spaces have become common in Addis Ababa (Alem G. 2011: 185-186).

The public spaces discussed in the above paragraphs could also be classified differently. Apart from their hierarchical level, some public spaces are mainly associated to shopping activities and are intensively in use in everyday life. Others have a different pattern of activities, and their use depends on the particular time of the day or dates of the year. Though both types of public spaces are important for the development of civic life and cultural identity, in most cases the latter have meanings attached to the spiritual life of the residents.

#### **Public Spaces Protected and Contested by Holy Meanings**

Every year on different occasions, religious events transform important public spaces in Addis Ababa into holy grounds. Public spaces reserved for such occasions and major roads connecting the different parts of the city to

the venues of the events become a symbol of religious freedom and cultural identity. Timket (Epiphany, around the 19<sup>th</sup> of January) and Meskel (Feast of Exaltation of the Holy Cross, around the 27<sup>th</sup> of September) are major public events of the EOC (Ethiopian Orthodox Church). The other religious events that involve rites in public spaces are Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha in September and November respectively. The following discussion highlights how these events manifest spiritual life and influence the process in contesting and maintaining public use of urban spaces.

#### *Timket (Epiphany)*

The celebration of Timket begins on its eve. Though the official holyday is only one day, for EOC followers the celebration takes three days; the eve and the day after are also part of the holyday. Around noon on the eve, most Orthodox Christians start flocking to nearby churches to accompany the parade of their church to the reserved public spaces. Some only go to the important streets of the city where several church parades meet to proceed to Timkete Bahir (Sea of Epiphany). In the afternoon of the eve, most of the important streets in Addis Ababa are closed to let the parades pass to their destination. The same situation happens in the afternoon of the official holyday of Timket and the day after, as the parades return to their churches partly on the official holyday, partly on the following day.

For this religious holyday, several public spaces are reserved. The major one is the so-called "Jan Meda", or Field of His Imperial Majesty. In former times, this used to be the sole venue of Epiphany in Addis Ababa. Today, "Jan Meda" is where the Patriarch of the EOC, the Tabots (a replica of the Arc of the Covenant and an important part of the altar in the EOC) of the churches in the inner city of Addis Ababa, and their priests gather for this holyday. Similarly, the followers of the EOC celebrate Timket in the same day and manner in different public spaces. There is at least one open space reserved for Timkete Bahir (Sea of Epiphany) in each of the ten sub-cities of Addis Ababa.

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**Figure 4:** Demera (bonfire) at Meskel Square. Source: <www.blogabay.worldpress.com>



On the eve of Timket, after the arrival of the Tabots at the Timkete Bahir, some people return to their homes. However, quite a number of people stay overnight. There are two reasons for this. First, many of those who stay overnight are very religious and want to follow the prayer ceremony all through the night. The second reason is that several young people stay overnight to enjoy the music, dance and games. It is part of the tradition that other activities such as dancing, music and different kinds of games run parallel to the religious ceremonies. Consequently, for quite a number of young people and families with small children, the religious ceremony is not always the priority. According to my experience as a resident of the city and a researcher, I noticed that most people celebrating Timket in the reserved open spaces are busy entertaining their children and themselves. Riding rented bicycles and motorcycles are part of the common leisure activities.

Traditionally, Timket is also an important social event where young girls dressed in their best costumes meet boys. In former times, this holyday constructed a social space for breaking the usual barriers between people. People of different backgrounds, men and women, could sing, dance and play games. Nowadays, this religious event plays an even more important role than in the past. Hence, the occasion of the Timket holyday intensifies and extends the public life and the use of public spaces.

#### *Meskel (The Feast of Exaltation of the Holy Cross)*

Meskel, or the Feast of Exaltation of the Holy Cross, is the other religious festival that involves ceremonies and processions in open public spaces. The aim of Meskel is to celebrate the discovery of the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. The most important part of the celebration is the bonfire, which is called "Demera". In contrast to Timket, Meskel is celebrated in one single place, i.e. Meskel Square. This fact makes this celebration the biggest open-air festival in Addis Ababa. The ceremony includes parades by different churches, prayers and a kind of play. The Demera, which is the highlight of the event, is lighted at the end of the ceremony.

The other interesting character of Meskel is that the celebration does not end at the square. At the end of the public ceremony, everybody goes back home and continues to celebrate with others at home. Normally, earlier in the day, people would have prepared a small Demera in a private compound or communal compound (where several households share a single compound), or on access roads or small public places. Particularly in Addis Ababa's newest neighbourhoods, small public places left for neighbourhood parks are used for such activities. This makes neighbourhood public spaces an important asset for the spiritual life of the residents. During my research in 2009, some of my interviewees told me that they celebrate Meskel in the small parks near their house. In addition, the fact that they celebrate Meskel is one of the strong defences used by their association (a kind of community-based organisation) for protecting the green areas from privatisation (see Alem G. 2011: 172).

Meskel Square is a symbol of a long-lived Christian tradition that the followers of the EOC reaffirm once in a year. The implications of such symbolisation of religious identity enhance the ownership feeling of the residents toward



▲ **Figure 5:** Football in Meskel Square. Photo: Nadine Appelhans

the square; hence, any intervention in this square is a concern of the general public. Particularly for the followers of the EOC, the name of the square, its physical appearance, and its annual function as a place of celebrating Meskel are a constant manifestation of their right to the city. Consequently, the publicness of this square remains sacred. Every day in the morning, this square also functions as the biggest sport field accessible to everyone free of charge. Occasionally, Meskel Square is also a venue of public concerts and political demonstration, which is why it is also a site for a number of advertisement actions.

#### *Eid-Al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha*

Since the enactment of the Public Holidays and Rest Day Proclamation (No. 16 of 1975), Muslim holidays are public holidays in Ethiopia. After the amendment issued by Proclamation No. 29 of 1996, the National Stadium became a venue for the celebration of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid-al Adha. This was done to affirm religious equality without creating conflicts in the use of public places by Orthodox Christians.

On the days of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid-al Adha, the roads to the National Stadium are transformed into spiritual spaces. On these occasions, the chanting of the Muslims on their way to the National Stadium is the dominating sound of the whole city. On both holydays, the objective is to pray and celebrate the day with other Muslim brothers. Similar to Friday prayers, it is part of the Muslim spiritual life to be part of public prayers on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid-al Adha. For the Muslims, it is not only an act public prayer, but also an act that renews and strengthens their brotherhood. The National Stadium, during these holydays, is a public space where people try to connect with each other and their God. The multitudes flocking towards

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**Figure 6:** Compound of Holy Saviour Church, Bole Sub-City. Source: Tazanesh Alem, 2012



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the single prayer location on these days express their right to the city and the production of their own space (see Fenster 2011: 71-72). Moreover, the celebration of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid-al Adha serve to symbolise the presence and significance of Islam not only in Addis Ababa but also in the country.

**Public Use of Worship Places**

As it is mentioned in the first part of this article, public spaces with free access are rare in Addis Ababa. Most public parks are accessible only to people who can afford to pay the entrance fee. On the other hand, gardens within the compounds of places of worship are freely accessible all over the city. In the case of Orthodox churches, the public use of yards extends to activities that are not related to religion.

Most of the Ethiopian Orthodox churches own large compounds surrounded by trees and fences. In the design and construction tradition of the EOC, there is a strict rule on the type and use of space inside the church building. The use of indoor spaces has religious requirements that must be respected by the visitors, while the outdoor spaces are open to anyone without any conditions. Apart from during prayer ceremonies, the church compounds stay open during the day. This situation offers the residents additional public spaces for activities that do not contradict with general religious values. These activities include small meetings of formal and informal associations (community-based organisations). In addition, elders who are expected to settle conflicts between married couples usually meet in the shaded sitting area of the given church yard to discuss the problem. It is common to find students who use the yard to study and discuss group projects. During a research project in 2009, my interviewees explained to me how the quality of the church compound, in terms of greenery and outdoor furniture, is important for their socio-cultural life.

The church compound is an inclusive public space accommodating small social gatherings as well as a place

where one can meditate and enjoy the comfortable environment.

**Conclusion**

In this discussion, we have seen the role of religion and spiritual life in the provision and contesting of urban spaces. On one hand, public spaces are provided to celebrate religious events in public. This is the case of Meskel Square. As per tradition, Meskel Square came into existence because of the religious celebration, though currently it is a multi-purpose square. On the other hand, the National Stadium as a venue of religious event indicates that the demand for more public spaces obliged the city administration to change the function of stadium into a public space for the particular occasions. This is similar to the provision of public spaces for the celebration of Timket in other parts of the city.

In all cases, it is about a right to meet and express cultural identity. It is about the right the residents have to their city. Through the activities and occupation of a physical space, the residents manifest their right of the use of urban spaces. On the other hand, the materialisation of socio-cultural symbols on a particular site ensures the protection of the right on the use of urban spaces. Within this, religion or practicing religion in public reinforces the spiritual connection between individuals, which in turn contributes to the empowerment of the residents in defending their right.

In contrast, the role of religion as an institution is stronger when it comes to the public use of places of worship. Here, it is more about the sense of ownership. Apart from the fact that the churches and their compounds are the legal property of the EOC, in the eyes of the residents they are another form of public space. Anyhow, in Addis Ababa, a number of the EO churches are constructed with the contributions of the followers. This implies that in practise the church as an institute is both part of the public and, vice versa, the general public is to be seen as a part of the religious institute.



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# "Urban" Spirituality Grounded: Some Selected Case Studies

Christoph Woiwode

## "Urbane" Spiritualität geerdet: Einige ausgewählte Fallstudien

Das Anliegen dieses Artikels ist es, das Augenmerk auf ausgewählte Fallbeispiele für die Verankerung von Spiritualität in der Stadtentwicklung und der Planungsprofession zu richten, also auf Beispiele, die an der praxisorientierten Schnittstelle von Spiritualität und dem Urbanen liegen. Dabei werden sowohl drei verschiedene Themenbereiche betrachtet, nämlich das Quartiersmanagement, die Planungspraxis und die Rolle des Planers, als auch im Sinne einer interkulturellen Perspektive Beispiele aus drei sehr unterschiedlichen Ländern gewählt: aus Deutschland, Australien und Indien. Mit dieser thematischen und regionalen Streuung unternimmt der Beitrag den Versuch, die Bedeutung von Spiritualität als intrinsische *conditio humana*, die auf der ganzen Welt beobachtet werden kann, aufzuzeigen. Spiritualität kann eine treibende Kraft für menschliche Entwicklung sein, momentan stehen wir jedoch lediglich am Anfang des Verständnisses davon, in welcher Beziehung Spiritualität mit unseren urbanen Lebensformen sowie unserer kollektiven und persönlichen Entwicklung stehen kann. Letztendlich müssen Stadtplaner, Entwicklungsexperten sowie auch die Ausbildung in diesen Disziplinen Möglichkeiten eröffnen und Raum schaffen, um Spiritualität anzuerkennen und zu integrieren.

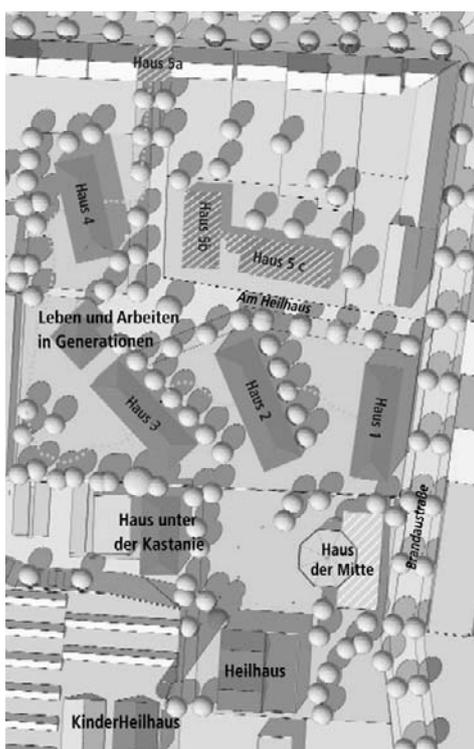
In this essay I intend to move beyond the theoretical, conceptual aspects outlined in my first article in this publication. Grounding spirituality in urban development and the planning profession means to spotlight a few cases on the practical intersection of spirituality and the urban. This will be done by the selection of three different thematic areas, namely neighbourhood management, planning practise, and the planner's role, as well as from a cross-cultural perspective with cases from three countries: Germany, Australia, and India.

## Neighbourhood Management and Social Work to Create "Healthy Urban Communities": Germany

The "Heilhaus" (healing house) movement was founded in 1990 by Ursula Paul in the German town of Kassel.<sup>1</sup> This initiative is not aimed at urban development, but has instead had such an impact on the adjacent neighbourhood due to its location in the city. With Kassel as its centre, today the "Heilhaus" movement spans a spiritual network across Germany and Switzerland in more than thirty places. The "Heilhaus" envisions integrating the life cycle of birth, living and dying in a community of everyday life (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Healing is redefined in this context as meaning "[...] to go within ourselves in search of remembering who we really are and what prevents us from being and

**1**  
The following content is based on the published events programme of the Heilhausstiftung 2012 and [www.heilhaus.org](http://www.heilhaus.org).

**2**  
In this sense it might be viewed as an intentional community (see Wilmsen in this issue) even though it is not considered an ecovillage.



◀  
**Figure 1:** Entrance to the multi-generational House of Healing ("Heilhaus"). Photo: Courtesy © HEILHAUS-STIFTUNG URSULA PAUL

◀◀  
**Figure 2:** Map of the "Heilhaus" settlement. Photo: Courtesy © HEILHAUS-STIFTUNG URSULA PAUL



▲  
**Figure 3:** Residential buildings in the Heilhaus settlement follow a colour scheme according to the chakras. Photo: Courtesy © HEILHAUS-STIFTUNG URSA PAUL



▲  
**Figure 4:** Everyday community life of old and young in the settlement. Photo: Courtesy © HEILHAUS-STIFTUNG URSA PAUL



▲  
**Figure 5:** Everyday community life of old and young in the settlement. Photo: Courtesy © HEILHAUS-STIFTUNG URSA PAUL

becoming healthy in a holistic sense. Healing means to unite the severed parts of our psyche and our body with the core of our soul and to act accordingly" (Heilhausstiftung Urso Paul 2012: 9).<sup>3</sup> Holistic healing in this context encompasses various activities such as guiding people in medical, therapeutic, social and spiritual terms.

Over the years a small settlement has arisen around the "Heilhaus" (Figure 2). Community life, mutual support, taking part in social and cultural activities of the neighbourhood, creating community, and spiritual practise are an inbuilt part of the everyday life. Integration is thought of as total social inclusion, which permits everybody – the physically and mentally disabled, those with social crises, special needs and care, or in their final phase of life as well as the birth of new life – to be embedded in a social environment and to live a self-determined and dignified life. The residential buildings are aligned in radial order towards the upcoming "Haus der Mitte" (House of the Centre). Each building is designed in a specific colour in accordance with the chakras (energy centres) of the human body: red for the first house, orange, yellow, green and blue the other buildings (Figure 3). Shading devices on the balconies, transparent glass panels on the front of the buildings, and walls in the stairwells are decorated in the given colour as well. Even the choice of plants and trees is based on this colour scheme. Arcades on one side and continuous balconies on the other side of the buildings create spaces for communication and encounters in everyday life (Figures 4 and 5).

So far, 54 apartments and the house "living and working in generations" are completed and in use. Currently, the waiting list is getting longer, which shows the desire of many people for life and living forms in connection with spirituality and community. In response to this demand, the "Heilhaus" cooperative plans further expansions in the vicinity of the settlement.

Through the presence and activities of the "Heilhaus", the adjacent urban neighbourhood is changing as well. The borough where the "Heilhaus" is located, Rothenditmold, is an old industrial estate ridden by unemployment, poverty and social issues. Yet, harbouring many children and adolescents and a multi-ethnic population, it is a lively neighbourhood with a great development potential. The "Heilhaus" movement has a commitment to playing an active part in this, following its guiding qualities of hope, compassion and community. These values provide the impulse for its educational and cultural work, promoting health and economic development for instance through generating new jobs. In these efforts the "Heilhaus" foundation is financially supported by the Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung<sup>4</sup> within the national programme "Soziale Stadt" (Social City), not only in Kassel but also at other locations such as Berlin-Neukölln.

The "Haus der Mitte" (House of the Centre), still in the planning process, will be constructed in the years to come as a spiritual centre. Being connected to the "Heilhaus", it is to serve a holistic notion of recuperation and healing of body, mind and soul by providing a space for meditation, consciousness development, the search for self-realisation, and ways of life that value respect for creation and lived compassion. The heart of the new building will be a large octagonal room stretching across

two levels. This "room of life" will be reserved for meditation and events. Above this room will be the "Mehrgenerationenhospiz" (Multi-generational House of Healing). A large glass dome will permit the light to flow in through the upper floor into the meditation room. Thus, the different lifeworlds will be connected and allow exchanges: the ill and dying will take part of life on the ground floor and, at the same time, visitors who attend events and meditation will witness dying and caring as an integral part of life. This confluence of the lifeworlds enables understanding and compassion to grow at the same time generating respect for the cycle of life.

The spiritual practise of the "Heilhaus" movement is inspired by Ursa Paul, who is considered the spiritual teacher and guide of the "Heilhaus" network. According to her, on the path of mystic spirituality the fulfilment of spiritual needs and responsible action in today's world are inseparable – in this sense meditation, social engagement and active being in compassion shape spiritual praxis. Ursa Paul emphasises the importance of "creating community" (Gemeinschaftsbildung), which is "[...] an attitude of connectivity with other human beings and with life itself. The ability to see the world also through the eyes of others is the prerequisite for developing respect, willingness to compromise, compassion and trust – the foundations of community. The power of united action enables people to find answers to social issues, to develop new ways of living and working, and to shape the future" (Heilhausstiftung Ursa Paul 2012: 18). In conclusion, it may be said that Ursa Paul lives and teaches a contemporary spirituality which adapts elements of the great spiritual and mystic traditions as well as insights of the modern sciences. Thus, in its essence it is a post-secular spirituality.

Community development and health is achieved by emphasising the inner sphere of each individual through self-awareness and personality development (attitudinal change),<sup>5</sup> which is linked to communal harmony and well-being. There are many other similar initiatives also drawing from various philosophical and spiritual traditions, for example the Mother Om Mission (MOM) in the USA and Guyana, founded by Mother Maya, which primarily works with at-risk urban communities. MOM's programmes are dedicated to the teachings of holistic health education and the restoration and preservation of wholesome community lifeways. MOM teaches the individual person how to transform violence, poverty, and disease into nurturance, harmony, and health through empowerment of community members with the education and tools needed to reclaim self-awareness. This is called inner-medicine education, an educational model based on the tradition of Mother Maya's Wise Earth School of Ayurveda utilising, among other things, yoga, food and meditation for community development.<sup>6</sup>

### Repositioning Planning Practises: Australia

In the Australian context, planners have increasingly been challenged by the existence of Aboriginal notions of time, space and place, which are grounded in a spiritual values system. Australian planners have thus begun to recognise the limitations of their modernist, fact- and evidence-based planning norms and practises that are frequently in conflict with Aboriginal notions of the landscape and management of the environment and its natural resources.

### Aboriginal art depicting a spiritual landscape by Edith Nangala Brown Kapi Tjukurrpa entitled "Water Dreaming"

This story relates to the Water Creation or Dreaming Ancestors. In this painting the circles represent important water or rock hole sites. The background design symbolises the landscape after the rains when the earth has been replenished with new growth. The rock holes collect the water during the rains. Knowledge of where to find water is handed down from generation to generation to ensure survival in the desert. The U shapes are the women sitting around the rock holes. The Ancestors were honoured by Aboriginal people in corroborees performed at sacred sites where the spirit of the Ancestors had become part of the landscape, or turned into entities such as water holes, rocks or trees.

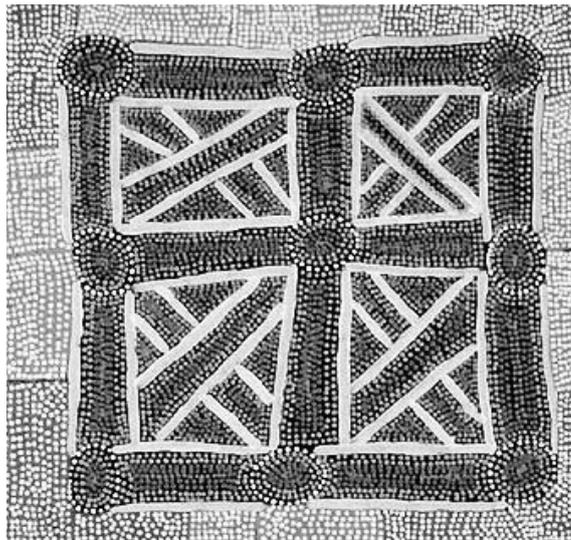


Figure 6: Edith Nangala Brown - Kapi Tjukurrpa (Water Dreaming), Australia, 61x61 cm, Source: With permission from <www.ochreleura.com.au/art.htm>

es. It appears that in Australia, planners cannot escape engaging with indigenous cultures and their values through which an otherwise neglected set of data such as art, oral history, poetry, music and dance, and spirituality is introduced in the planning process, all of these encompassing expressions of subjective and inter-subjective interiority.

A study undertaken by the Urban Research Program at Griffith University attempts to identify and incorporate indigenous landscape values into the conventional regional planning process (Low Choy et al. 2010). Even though this is not an instance from the urban context, it is instructive in terms of the integration of the spiritual dimension with planning practise. This study found that the "spiritual landscape" was one of seven natural landscape elements or values whose spiritual connections are established through dreaming, ancestors and ceremony (Figure 6). The authors state that "Members of the indigenous community identify the spiritual landscape through their sense of belonging and connection to country. The physiological connection and adaptation to the landscape forms an important component of indigenous identity, for example where people's memories are, where people feel safe and where people came from. Thus, cultural lore and history has a role in identifying the spiritual landscape" (Low Choy et al. 2010: 24). It is on this basis that spirituality is considered a profound element perpetuating all indigenous landscape values, which are constructed around both historical and current contexts. The latter diachronic dimension is rooted in the notion that indigenous people

3 Author's translation from German.

4 Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development

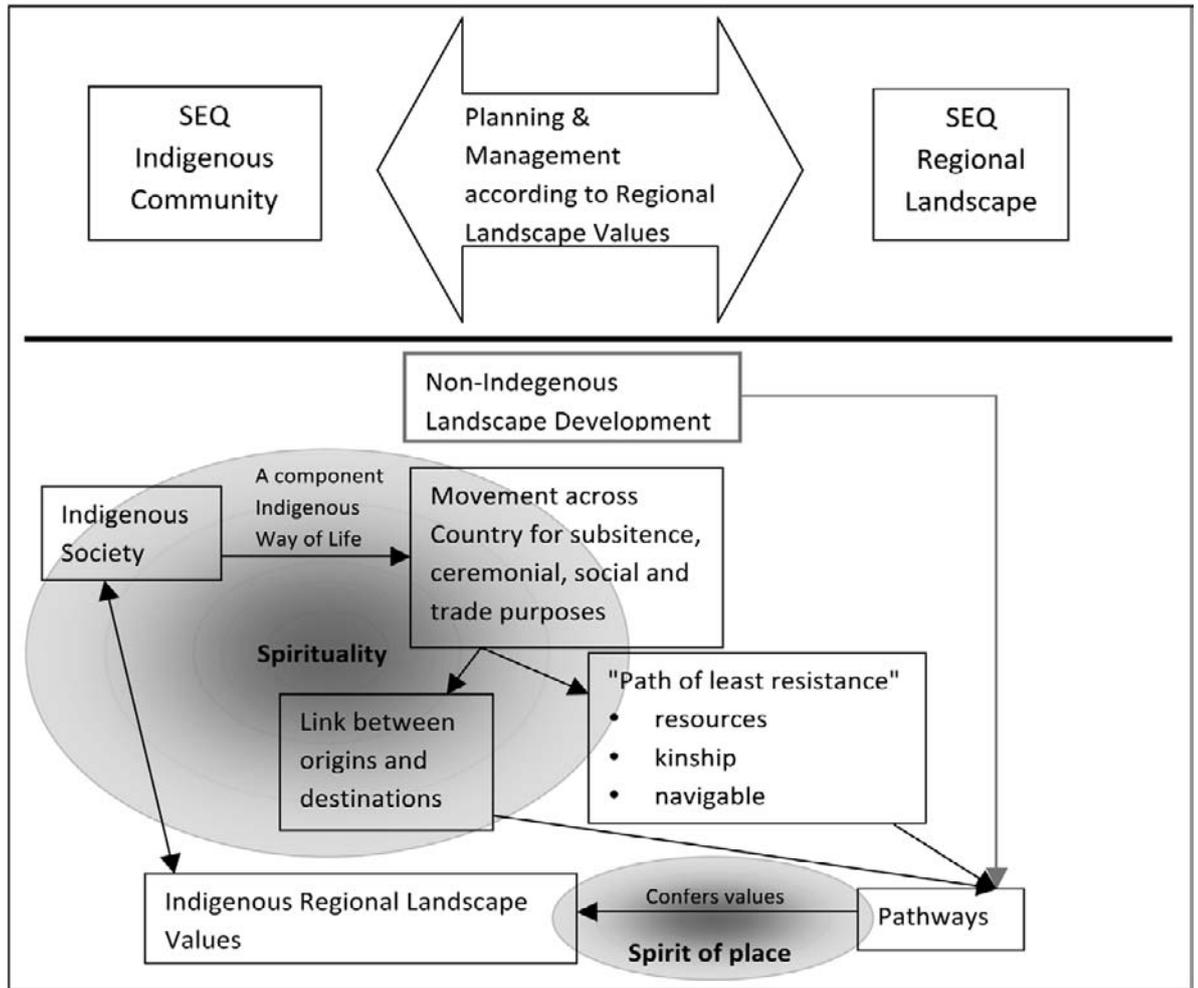
5 See in this respect the crucial role a value-inspired attitudinal change plays in the Indian Svadhyaya Movement (Woiwode 2011b).

6 Information on Mother Om Mission based on www.motherom.org.

**Figure 7:** Conceptual diagram for pathways. Source: Low Choy et al. 2010: 33

**7**  
See also Hochachka in this issue.

**8**  
See Aryadeep on Auroville in this issue.



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and their ancestors are viewed as comprising a part of the landscape. This sacred landscape influences social connection to the country, but also shapes indigenous identity and belief systems thus directly influencing appropriate ways of being and operating in the present.

In terms of planning application, the task is to link the identified landscape values with the conventional, non-indigenous regional development planning approach. How this connection may be established is illustrated in several figures by the authors (see the example in Figure 7), but eventually no concrete suggestions are made in this respect. In fact, the next step would be to apply these findings probably in an action research approach to study how these values can be incorporated and where the difficulties are. Obviously, this process is still in the initial phase.

**Repositioning the Planner: India**

A spiritually grounded urban development planning practise would need a serious review of current planning curricula. Planning education needs to play a crucial role for the planning profession to sincerely take into account spirituality as an inherent realm of the human condition. This is about learning a new "language", the language of introspection, of self-analysis, of looking inwardly in order to consciously act according to the notions and values of interdependence and connectivity, love and compassion. It involves practises planners are usually not so familiar with and have normally not received any training in, i.e.

addressing the interiority of our existence, the aesthetics of being, the art of living. This methodical challenge occurs wherever an integral approach is followed, as Hochachka (2005) points out within the context of international development practise. Likewise, urban planning practitioners need to build their own consciousness and personal transformative practises (prayer, contemplation, meditation, psychotherapy, introspection) in order to be capacitated to work with and address interior dimensions of development when working with other people. In our planning education, we have learned to study objective facts, say, of the built environment; over time, we have also recognised the inter-subjective dimensions of participation and the cultural realm of meaning making, but we are not trained in the subjective language of human interiority. Emotions, feelings, and spirituality are not (yet) part of a standard planning curriculum.

Here I will only pinpoint some areas which are relevant for the incorporation of spirituality into planning education. First of all, we may need to formulate the foundational, conceptual framework that permits the integration of spirituality with the existing types of knowledge and perspectives. Integral approaches to education carry a great potential to guiding us in this direction. Gidley (2009) makes the case for a planetary pedagogy that accounts for consciousness development "beyond the formal, intellectual, abstract mode toward a postformal, integral, more spiritual mode". Her publication covers a very wide range of idealist philosophers including Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo and Montessori who, in their educational

visions and practise, acknowledged the integration of the spiritual. In essence she explains her project as follows: "What I am clustering as postformal alternatives [to formal] include aesthetic, creative, imaginative, integral, holistic and transformative approaches; critical, postmodern and poststructuralist pedagogies; and approaches which foreground complexity, ecology, futures studies, spirituality and wisdom" (Gidley 2009: 536). There is a lot we could learn from such an educational perspective for the training of planners in order to provide concepts and methods to deal with ever-complex (global) planning issues.

Within the planning community, Wight (e.g. 2009) has explored the nexus of spirituality and professionalism in planning education. He outlines some areas which may assist in bringing in spirituality such as the historic roots of planning about 200 years ago when the separation of spirituality/faith from scientific methods was not yet as sharp as it is nowadays. Yet another central area is that of linking spirituality and ethics, which is slowly being taken up in planning education (Wight 2011). While current discourses of planning ethics emphasise rules and pluralist representation, they neglect spirituality, which "has to do with virtues and values, self-actualization and communication" (Thomas 2006: 94). Another field in which there is a clear interface comprises spirituality and leadership development.<sup>7</sup> Management literature and theories discovered spirituality already some time ago on account of its potential for the well-being and job effectiveness of employees, as well as due to its being a leadership quality that fosters empathy, emotional and psychological guidance and last not least personality development (e.g. Edwards 2010, Chakraborty and Chakraborty 2008). In planning literature, there is rare attention paid to this aspect of professional self-development. Hamilton (2008: 119-123), working with integral theory and spiral dynamics, explicitly includes spirituality in a leadership development programme for city decision makers and planners.

Thus, self-reflexivity, self-awareness, a critical review of one's own standing, role and acting in the world is required if we – as (development) planners – want to explicitly work with and incorporate spirituality in planning practise, what Anhorn (2006: 73) calls "self-nourishment" within a spiritual planning practise. It demands a whole new way of approaching planning and, even more so, in teaching and educating planners in an area largely unexplored. It is crucial for a serious approach to spirituality, as pointed out by several authors (Sandercock 2006, Anhorn 2006). Such a holistic, integral approach to the human being and the professional is envisaged in the ideal of the "urban practitioner" by the newly founded Indian Institute for Human Settlements. Taking its conceptual ideas from Indian philosophical traditions of Integralism, it builds among others on Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga.<sup>8</sup> In essence, it posits the Self in relation to various guiding, ethical principles (see Box). Fascinating as it is, this programme is not running to date and it remains open how and when it will be implemented.

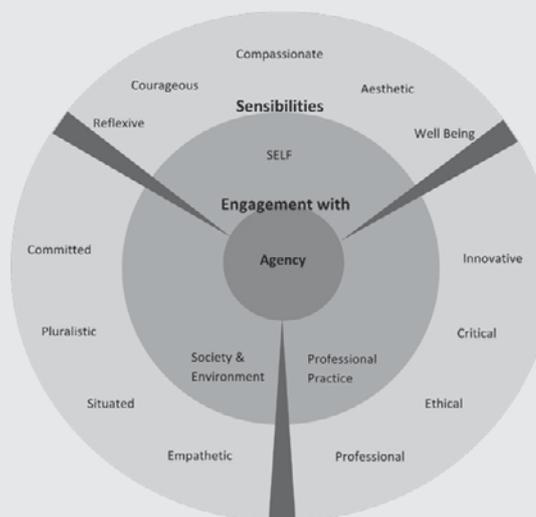
## Conclusions

By utilising examples from different corners of the world, this contribution attempts to demonstrate the importance of spirituality as an intrinsic human condition that can be observed across the world. This has manifold implications

### Indian Institute for Human Settlements Creates Integral Vision for Urban Development Practise and Practitioners

*The IIHS seeks to create a new profession and a new kind of practitioner via a multi-dimensional series of learning experiences. Many of these experiences are outside a formal teaching-learning environment, especially the IIHS's focus on an integrated humanistic education that has all but disappeared from India's competitive and fractured formal education system. In this sense India can build on its own longstanding philosophical tradition of integral thinking (which is also utilised by Western integral thinkers like Wilber). IIHS builds on a century-long tradition of integral education pioneered by Tagore, Aurobindo, Krishnamurthy, Ambedkar, Azad and Gandhi along with hundreds of other innovators across the landscape of pre- and post-independence India.*

*Apparently, in India there is no such hesitation as to exclude the spiritual from public life and one's own practise. Consequently, the core of the curriculum of the Master in Urban Practise is also imagined as a process of engagement with the learner as an individual situated in India's rich social, political, ecological and spiritual environment.*



*The Core – a set of experiences, workshops, interactions and even courses that attempt to build a set of capacities and sensibilities in the learner – is conceptualised as a series of engagements with:*

- The Self
- Society and Environment
- Professional Practise

*Agency is the essence of urban practitioners who are not only equipped with appropriate knowledge and critical perspectives but also see themselves as collective actors in co-evolving socio-cultural, political and institutional landscapes.*

*Based on: <http://english.iihs.co.in> (old website accessed in 2010)*

*New website with slightly different content:*

*<[www.iihs.co.in/programmes/academic-programme/mup/](http://www.iihs.co.in/programmes/academic-programme/mup/)>*

for the planning profession and the role planners and other policy makers can assume in the planning process. Spirituality can be an outstanding force for human development, yet currently we are standing only at the beginning of understanding in which ways spirituality is related to our urban forms of life and our collective and personal development. Urban and development practitioners alike as well as the professional education in these fields need to create the opportunities and the space to acknowledge spirituality. Thus, we still have a long way ahead of us.

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# TRIALOG

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## Book Reviews / Neue Bücher

### Stadt und Spiritualität

**Justin Beaumont, Christopher Baker (Eds.). Postsecular Cities: Space, Theory and Practice. 276 S., ISBN 978-1-4411-4425-6. Continuum International Publishing, London and New York 2011.**

Diese Publikation widmet sich dem zunehmend relevanten Thema der Wiederkehr von Religion in das öffentliche Leben. Mit der postsäkularen Stadt, so die beiden Herausgeber in der Einleitung zu dem Sammelband, wird der erstarkenden Bedeutung von Religion, Religionsgemeinschaften und spirituellen Werten in Politik, Regierungsführung und sozialer Identität Rechnung getragen, denn „rapidly diversifying urban locations are the best places to witness the emergence of new spaces in which religions and spiritual traditions are creating both new alliances but also bifurcations with secular sectors“.

„Postsäkulär“, ein von Jürgen Habermas geprägter Begriff, verbindet das Säkulare mit dem öffentlich Religiösen, und markiert damit einen deutlichen Gegensatz zum vergangenen, säkular-rationalistisch-naturwissenschaftlich geprägten Jahrhundert, so die grundlegende These des Buches. Die insgesamt vierzehn Beiträge dieses Bandes sind gekennzeichnet durch ihre idiosynkratische Vielfalt an Blickwinkeln und Fallstudien, was als Beleg für das bisherige Fehlen einer gemeinsamen Herangehensweise an den Themenkomplex interpretiert werden kann. So ist denn auch der erste, explizit theoretische Teil des Buches mit einem einzigen Beitrag der dünnste, wiewohl der Autor Gregor McLennon mit seiner Analyse einen interessanten Streifzug in von Planern teilweise wenig beachtete Theoriefelder wie Roy Bhaskar's „Critical Realism“ unternimmt.

Teil 2 „Competing Experiences of Postsecular Cities“ befasst sich mit mehreren Spannungsfeldern wie Postkolonialismus und Religion (Baker und Beaumont), Markttheorie und Theologie (Goh) und einer feministischen Kritik der postsäkularen Stadt (Greed). Besondere Erwähnung verdient der Artikel von Sandercock und Senbel über Spiritualität, urbanes Leben und die Profession der Stadtplaner. Obwohl die Publikation angibt, nicht nur Religion im Fokus zu haben, kann man kritisch anmerken, dass kaum ein Versuch unternommen wird, systematisch Religion von Spiritualität zu unterscheiden. Auch die Diskussion um die „urban professions“ sehe ich als zentral im Umgang mit dieser öffentlichen Religion/Spiritualität an, da sie die grundlegende Frage aufwirft, wie denn damit in der Stadtentwicklungsplanung umgegangen werden kann.

Die beiden folgenden Teile „Postsecular Policies and Praxis“ und „Theological and Secular Interpretations“ widmen sich zum Teil bekannteren Themen wie Multikulturalismus (Eade) bzw. der Frage, welche Modelle des Managements in pluralistischen Gesellschaften verfolgt werden können (Ashworth).

Aus meiner Sicht können zwei zentrale Kritikpunkte zu dieser Publikation vorgebracht werden. Zum einen wird durch die Wahl des Titels sowie die behandelten Fallstudien (Amsterdam, Jerusalem, Sydney, Tokyo, Vancouver) mit einem Schwerpunkt auf britische Städte eindeutig eine Eingrenzung auf westliche Gesellschaften vorgenommen, ohne dass dies notwendig wäre. Vielleicht aus eben diesem Grunde muss man zum anderen die unterbleibende Differenzierung von Religion und Spiritualität bemängeln, einem Aspekt dem in unserer heutigen Zeit jedoch enorme Bedeutung zukommt, wie u.a. das vorliegende Trialogheft zu zeigen versucht. Trotzdem kann die Veröffentlichung als Beleg für die Aktualität dieser Thematik betrachtet werden, was in der zunehmenden Anzahl von anderen Publikationen zu erkennen ist (s. Buchbesprechung „Urban Prayers“). Sie ist auch deshalb als Einstieg sehr empfehlenswert, da die beiden Herausgeber durch frühere Publikationen ausgewiesene Fachleute sind.

*Christoph Woiwode*

**metroZones (Hg.). Urban Prayers: Neue religiöse Bewegungen in der globalen Stadt. 277 S., ISBN 978-3-935936-78-1. Assoziation A und metroZones, Hamburg und Berlin 2011.**

„Urban Prayers“ ist gewissermaßen das nahezu zeitgleich erschienene deutschsprachige Pendant zu „Postsecular Cities“, und setzt sich zugleich in mehrerer Hinsicht deutlich von diesem ab: 1. durch den Schwerpunkt auf neue religiöse Bewegungen und deren globaler Einbettung, 2. einer stärkeren Betonung der politischen Dimension von Religion und des Engagements von Religionsgemeinschaften, wie sie sich in Städten manifestieren, und 3. durch eine alle Kontinente abdeckende Auswahl von Fallstudien, die explizit die Entwicklung in nicht-westlichen Gesellschaften thematisiert. Trotz einer kurzen Diskussion und des Verweises auf den Begriff der postsäkularen Stadt in der Einleitung wird dieser Unterschied unter anderem auch dadurch ersichtlich, dass z.B. Habermas in keinem Artikel als Quelle genannt wird.

Die zehn Beiträge des Bandes wollen „die Relevanz neuer religiöser Bewegungen für aktuelle urbane Konflikte und Transformationen in verschiedenen Städten und im globalen Zusammenhang“ erkunden und verstehen. Darüber hinaus ist neben dem eigentlichen Inhalt auch die methodische Vielfalt bereichernd, da zusätzlich zu Artikelbeiträgen auch Interviews abgedruckt sind, die den Themen eine erhöhte Authentizität verleihen. Insgesamt wurden drei Gespräche geführt, mit Enrique Dussel über Pfingstkirchen und Befreiungstheologie, Julia Eckert über die Hindu-nationalistische Partei Shiv Sena in Mumbai sowie mit Leo Penta und Werner Schiffauer über Politik und Praktiken religiöser Gemeinschaften in Berlin. Diese allein geben bereits einen Eindruck

von der möglichen thematischen Bandbreite, mit der eine solche Publikation konfrontiert ist. In ähnlicher Weise beeindruckt die anderen Beiträge, von denen drei sich den schnell ausbreitenden Pfingstkirchen widmen, diese jedoch in sehr unterschiedlichen gesellschaftlichen Kontexten in Lagos (Ukah) bzw. Rio de Janeiro (Birman) und Buenos Aires (Semán) betrachten. Während in Nigeria die Religion das andauernde staatliche Machtvakuum zunehmend ausfüllt, wird in Lateinamerika die Ausbreitung der Pfingstkirchen in Beziehung zur weitverbreiteten urbanen Armut untersucht. Einen Fokus auf städtische Armut stellt auch der Beitrag von Klaus Teschner dar, der als einziger Autor den Diskurs über für das Thema zentrale Begriffe wie Säkularisierung, Moderne, Religion und Fortschritt/Entwicklung führt, um dann Religion und städtische Bewegungen in Nairobi und Durban zu analysieren. Trotz des (beabsichtigten?) Schwerpunktes in dieser Publikation auf die Pfingstkirchen gibt es zwei Beiträge über den Islam. So schreibt Bayat über islamistische Gruppierungen in den Armenvierteln Kairo und Teherans und Hussain über die Islamisierung der Bangladeshi-Communities in London. Doch ist es schade, dass in diesen beiden Artikeln und jenen anderen, die sich mit Hinduismus befassen (Arif; Eckert), vordergründig die negativen Effekte der radikal-fundamentalistischen Strömungen behandelt werden. Diese Aspekte urbaner Ethnizität/Religiosität sind nicht unbedingt neu (ebenso nicht die Hindu-nationalistische Bewegung mit ihrer „Hindutva“-Ideologie, zu der die Shiv Sena im engeren Sinne jedoch nicht zählt, da sie mit ihrem regionalspezifischen Marathi-Patriotismus hauptsächlich in Mumbai verankert ist). Auch ist es verwunderlich, wenn nicht gar irreführend, die Shiv Sena als eine politische Partei im Kontext religiöser Bewegungen zu diskutieren, obwohl es offensichtlich ist, dass diese Religion lediglich als Vehikel für ihre Zwecke instrumentalisiert. Im Umkehrschluss wäre das in etwa so als bezeichnete man die Pfingstkirchen als politische Parteien; hier werden Äpfel mit Birnen verglichen. Gerade in Indien haben sich jedoch innerhalb des Hinduismus moderne religiöse/spirituelle Bewegungen um charismatische Yogis wie Baba Ramdev gebildet, die weite Teile der indischen Bevölkerung, besonders jedoch die indischen Mittelschichten, über das Fernsehen mit Wellness, Yoga- und Meditationsangeboten erreichen. Auch diese greifen zuweilen politische Diskurse auf, wie im Falle Baba Ramdev's die Korruption. Hier hätte sich eine Möglichkeit angeboten, neue religiöse/spirituelle Bewegungen im indischen Kontext des 21. Jahrhunderts zu untersuchen. Dass dies nicht geschehen ist, liegt vielleicht einerseits an dem explorativen Charakter, den diese Publikation hat, und andererseits, dass wie in der vorhergehend besprochenen Publikation ebenfalls Religion und Spiritualität weitestgehend undifferenziert synonym verwendet werden bzw. letztere in erster Linie als Teil von Religion wahrgenommen wird. Trotz dieser Kritikpunkte lohnt sich die Lektüre, weil sie neues Territorium erschließt und u.a. der planungspraktische Bezug nicht gänzlich

außer Acht gelassen wird, z.B. im Hinblick auf das Verhältnis religiöser Gemeinschaften als aktive zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure (Penta's „community organising“) mit Stadtentwicklungsprogrammen und Behörden. Abschließend bleibt zu erwähnen, dass die Veröffentlichung im Rahmen eines von metroZones initiierten Forschungs- und Kulturprojektes „Global Prayers - Redemption and Salvation in the City“ entstanden ist. Es bleibt also zu hoffen, dass es in Zukunft mehr darüber zu lesen gibt. Mehr Informationen sind zu finden unter <www.globalPrayers.info>.

*Christoph Woiwode*

## Stadtentwicklung

### Smith, Cynthia et al (eds.) Design with the Other 90%: Cities. 234 S. Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York 2011. <www.cooperhewitt.org>

Bereits im Jahr 2007 hatte das Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt Nationalmuseum für Design in New York eine Ausstellung und Publikation zum Thema „Design with the Other 90%“ vorgestellt, die sich auf für die Armen in Entwicklungsländern entwickelte „innovative Gebrauchsgegenstände“ (z.B. Solarkocher, Wasserfilter, Solarbeleuchtungen) ausrichtete. Es war ein gewagtes Thema in einem primär auf die Erste Welt hin orientierten Kulturbetrieb der Weltstadt New York. Vier Jahre später wurde die zweite Phase dieses Projektes vorgestellt: Der Bau von Städten, gebaut durch die städtischen Armen, zumeist unter informellen Bedingungen. Die Kuratorin des Museums hat einige der bekanntesten Siedlungsprojekte in Brasilien, Indien, Thailand, Kolumbien, Südafrika und Venezuela besucht. Es handelt sich um eine Auswahl der progressivsten Siedlungsprojekte des letzten Jahrzehnts, u.a. von CODI in Bangkok, die Arbeit der Shack/Slum Dwellers International, die Arbeit von praxisorientierten Architekturschulen (z.B. in Buenos Aires), Starterhäuser in Chile, innovative und alternative Billig-Bautechnologien (Plastik-Formmaterialien für Betonhäuser; ungebrannte Ziegel, Bambus-Baumaterialien), dazu immer wieder neue Technologieprodukte für Wasserversorgung, Energieerzeugung, intensivierten Gartenanbau, bis hin zur hochmodernen Seilbahn, die vormalige Armutsgebiete im Nordostens der Stadt Medellín, Kolumbien, erschließt. Dem Ideenreichtum sind keine Grenzen gesetzt. Die Bedeutung dieses Buches liegt auf der Hand: es handelt sich hier um die Zukunft unserer Städte. Etwa 1 Milliarde Menschen leben heute bereits in Slums und im Jahr 2030 könnten dies nach Schätzungen bereits 2 Milliarden sein. Darum sind sozial akzeptablere, besser geplante und besser gebaute menschliche Siedlungen ein wichtiges Ziel. Das Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt Nationalmuseum für Design demonstriert mit dieser Ausstellung und mit der gut illustrierten Publikation, dass ihm an dem Entwurf von „Inclusive Cities“ gelegen ist. Eine ernstzunehmende Herausforderung für alle Berufsparten, die mit der Zukunft der Städte zu tun haben.

*Florian Steinberg*

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# Forthcoming Events / Veranstaltungen

## **April 16-19, 2012 in Istanbul, Turkey**

XXXVIII. IAHS World Congress on Housing: 'Visions for the Future of Housing', organised by International Association for Housing Science (IAHS). Contact: Prof. Derin Ural, Congress Co-Chair Vice President, Istanbul Technical University, Fax: +90 212 285-6935, E-mail <iahs2012@itu.edu.tr>, website <www.iahshousing2012.itu.edu.tr/>

## **April 20-21, 2012 in Hamburg, Germany**

'Soziale Bewegungen in der Stadt – städtische soziale Bewegungen'. Tagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie (DGS), Sektionen 'Soziale Probleme und soziale Kontrolle' sowie 'Stadt- und Regionalsoziologie'. Contact: E-mail <tagung.hamburg@web.de>, website <http://disurbanism.wordpress.com/2012/04/03/20-21-apr-12-soziale-bewegungen-in-der-stadt-hamburg/>

## **April 23-24, 2012 in Doha, Qatar**

Arab Future Cities Summit 2012: 'Smart Solutions for Sustainable Cities', organised by Expotrade Middle-East FZ-LLC, under the patronage of the Minister for Municipality and Urban Planning, State of Qatar. Contact/more information: <www.arabfuturecities.com/>

## **May 14-16, 2012 in Schwechat, Austria**

17<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society (GeoMultimedia 2012): 'Re-mixing the city towards sustainability and resilience?', organised by the Association for Promotion and Research of Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society. Contact/more information: <www.corp.at/>

## **June 5-6, 2012 in Eschborn, Germany**

15. Eschborner Fachtage: 'Transformation gestalten – Die Stadt als globaler Akteur', organised by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Contact: phone +49 69 2470 6544, E-mail <eschborner-fachtage@giz.de>, website <www.giz.de/de/SID -50B71F95-8E034617/ueber\_die\_giz/3803.html>

## **June 11-15, 2012 in Vancouver, Canada**

World Indigenous Housing Conference, organised by the Aboriginal Housing Management Association. Contact: phone: +1 604-921-2462 | North American toll free: +1-888-921-2462, E-mail <reception@ahma-bc.org>, website <www.ahma-bc.org> or <http://indigenous2012.com/agenda.php>

## **June 14-17, 2012 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil**

ICLEI World Congress 2012, including 3<sup>rd</sup> International Urban Research Symposium, organised by ICLEI: Local Governments for Sustainability. Contact: phone +49 228 97 62 99-00, E-mail <world.congress@iclei.org>, website <http://worldcongress2012.iclei.org/>

## **June 15-23, 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

People's Summit Rio+20 (Cúpula dos Povos na Rio+20), organised by the Brazilian Civil Society Facilitating Committee (CFSC). Contact: E-mail <contato@rio2012.org.br>, website <http://cupuladospovos.org.br/en/>

## **June 20-22, 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20, organised by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Contact: E-mail <uncsd2012@un.org>, website <www.uncsd2012.org/> or <http://rio20.net/en/>

## **June 17-24, 2012 in Tallinn, Estonia**

22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the International Network of Urban Research and Action (INURA): 'Active Urbanism', organised by INURA and Linnalabor (Estonian Urban Lab). Contact: E-mail <inura2012tallinn@linnalabor.ee>, website <http://inura2012tallinn.wordpress.com/>

## **June 24-29, 2012 in Glasgow, Scotland**

22<sup>nd</sup> IAPS Conference: 'Human Experience in the Natural and Built Environment: Implications for Research Policy and Practice', organised by the International Association of People-Environment Studies. Contact: E-mail <IAPS2012.glasgow@gmail.com>, website <www.iaps2012.org.uk>

## **June 25-30, 2012 in Kampala, Uganda**

Sustainable Futures Conference: 'Architecture and Urbanism in the Global South', organised by The Faculty of The Built Environment, Uganda Martyrs University. Contact: phone +256 79 323 1010, E-mail <secretariat@sfc2012.org>, website <http://sfc2012.org/>

## **July 1-4, 2012 in Singapore**

World Cities Summit 2012: 'Liveable and Sustainable Cities – Integrated Solutions', organised by Experia Events Pte Ltd. Venue: Marina Bay Sands, Singapore. Contact: phone +65 6542 8660, E-mail <info@worldcities.com.sg>, website <www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg>

## **July 3-5, 2012 in Edinburgh, UK**

RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2012: 'Security of Geography/ Geography of Security', organised by the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). Contact: E-mail <AC2012@rgs.org>, website <www.rgs.org/AC2012>

## **July 11-15, 2012 in Ankara, Turkey**

AESOP 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress, organised by the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP). Contact: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ela Babalik-Sutcliffe, Department of City and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture METU, phone +90 312 210 2263, E-mail <aesop12@metu.edu.tr> or <ebaba@metu.edu.tr>, website <https://www.arber.com.tr/aesop2012.org/index.php/home>

## **August 6-10, 2012 in Dublin, Ireland**

8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Urban Climate (ICUC 8) and 10<sup>th</sup> Symposium on the Urban Environment, organised by the International Association for Urban Climate (IAUC) and the American Meteorological Society (AMS) Board of the Urban Environment. Contact: phone +353 1 400 3626, E-mail: <info@icuc8.org>, website <www.icuc8.org/>

## **August 26-30, 2012 in Cologne, Germany**

32<sup>nd</sup> International Geographical Congress: 'Down to Earth', organised by the International Geographical Union (IGU) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geographie (DGfG). Contact: phone +49 221 470-4142/1943, E-mail <info@igc2012.org>, website <www.igc2012.org>

## **Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 2012 in Prague, Czech Rep.**

11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Urban History: 'Cities & Societies in Comparative Perspective'. Contact: phone +420 284 001 444, E-mail <eahu2012@guarant.cz>, website <www.eahu2012.com/>

## **September 1-7, 2012 in Naples, Italy**

World Urban Forum 6: 'The Urban Future and Prosperity of the City', organised by UN-Habitat. Contact: E-mail <wuf@unhabitat.org>, website <www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=672>

## **September 6-8, 2012 in Bochum, Germany**

'The History of Social Movements – a Global Perspective' Conference, organised by Institut für Soziale Bewegungen, Ruhr-Universität Bochum. Contact: phone +49 234 32 24687, E-mail <stefan.berger@rub.de>, website <www.isb.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/forschung/tagungen/konferenz\_history-of-social-movements.html.de>

## **September 10-13, 2012 in Perm, Russia**

48<sup>th</sup> Annual World Congress of ISOCARP: 'Fast Forward – Planning in a (hyper) dynamic urban context', organised by the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP). Contact: phone +31 70 346-2654, website <www.isocarp.org/subsites/isocarp-congress-2012/home/>

## **Sept. 16-19, 2012 in Gothenburg, Sweden**

56<sup>th</sup> IFHP World Congress: 'Inclusive cities in a global world', organised by the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP). Contact: E-mail <ifhp2012@stadshuset.goteborg.se>, website <www.ifhp2012goteborg.se/en/index.html>

## **Sept. 17-19, 2012 in Durban, South Africa**

5<sup>th</sup> Planning Africa Conference, organised by the South African Planning Institute (SAPI) and the African Planning Association (APA). Contact: phone +29 83 3789 883, E-mail <KarenF@match-hospitality.com>, website <www.sapi.org.za/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=62>