



Editorial

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However you define it, at least a third of the world's population live in abject poverty. An ever increasing proportion of these people live in cities, for the well-rehearsed reasons of pull and push: to take advantage of perceived opportunities to gain wealth and be part of progress; and to escape the (many would say, increasing) insecurity of peasant life, the misery of agricultural exploitation by multinationals, or the substantial destruction of rural habitats for people and the ecosystems of which they are part. There is a fashionable acknowledgement growing, that we too, are part of the global 'ecosystem', but this is not fundamentally recognised by many of the most powerful agents of capital.

We need to line up with those who are questioning the planet-threatening behaviours of some transnational corporations. Some of these – for good or ill – are working closely with local governments, but seldom bother about 'primitive', 'traditional' or disadvantaged rural and urban communities and networks. As urban designers we need to know how and what we can do to improve the living conditions of all who inhabit our nominally plural cities. The first paper in this issue elaborates some of the problems and possibilities of the social and environmental exclusion that exists worldwide, but most acutely in Africa, Central and Southern America, and parts of South and South East Asia.

Writing from Canada, Jutta Gutberlet and Angela Hunter focus on Sao Paulo, Brazil. They review recent policy developments and stress the need for more inclusive decision-making in the ways in which cities have to concern themselves not merely with fresh water and decent sanitation but the sustainability of people and place. As they say, this requires a paradigm shift, and we might say that such a societal shift must be matched by a similar one in the essence of urban design.

Urban coding has become very fashionable in recent years. This is particularly so for development that primarily comprises housing. For many people the revived *raison d'être* for coding reflects the interests of the *new urbanists* of North America, and is often seen as synonymous with a desire to recreate traditional styles of architecture. Andres Duany is always keen in his presentations to emphasise that coding rather privileges good (western) urbanism, and is significantly free of any restriction of architectural style.

Codes in the past have been both inherent in tradition, but not explicitly codified, and formally codified in a variety of ways. In his paper, Besim Hakim presents an example that demonstrates the long history of coding and its role in maintaining urban and cultural values. He focuses on codes from the Byzantine and Islamic civilisations of the Near East that extended their influence further afield around the Mediterranean basin. He concludes that what is remarkable about this coding system and its related decision-making mechanism is that it clearly replicates natural phenomenon and related processes of inception, growth, change, rejuvenation, decay, and re-birth. Thus, he proposes that the system of coding enables a dynamic sustainable system for local communities.

Sergio Porta and his fellow authors explore the use of a process of network analysis: Multiple Centrality Assessment (MCA) in the first professional application of the technique. They use MCA to help them to understand how the movement networks perform that serve a university campus in Parma. They use the same approach to evaluate scenarios for change in the renovation programme proposed for the Campus. Proponents of the analytical tools provided by Hillier's *space syntax* may find this study particularly interesting.

Richard Hayward