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COMMUNICATIVE ETHICS IN HOUSING

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'ANOMIA' REVISITED

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There is more to housing than shelter, because housing itself is but a mean to life long experiences of dwelling, among others, of intimacy and solitude, joy and sorrow, trust and fear. Housing may enable people to dwell poetically on earth, but such is not always the case.

Actually, the greatest failure of public housing may be that it has fallen short of allowing its inhabitants the freedom to make sense of their lives in their abodes. Echoing such remarks, one often hears critics denouncing the *anomia* that reigns in large housing estates. It is indeed even considered as the origin of irresponsible, unpredictable and dramatic behaviors that contribute sometimes to social disruption. Nevertheless one seldom discusses *anomia*. Observers are easily satisfied with noting its existence, and rarely feel committed to an analysis of its dynamics. That does not help construct social processes leading out of *anomia*

It is our endeavor to show that, whereas shelter and amenity-oriented housing policies are unlikely to help restore social bonds in an *anomic* neighborhood, a housing policy geared to social-development might. Such a policy should be concerned with providing inhabitants with an experience of group dynamics as well as physical facilities. This discussion of housing policy stems from the pervading critique levelled at 'capitalistic simplification of the process or

rationalization (to use Weber's terminology)' by Habermas (1981) among many others. His writings on communicative action proceed from concerns about the historical process of increasing purposive-instrumental rationalization of the world towards an analysis of the conditions under which human beings might bring the full potential of their reason to bear on the problems of their social and political existence (White, 1988).

Habermas's model of 'communicative ethics' raises fundamental issues about public policy. While avoiding to enter into a purely philosophical discussion, we shall show that *anomia* can be taken as a token of the failure of purposive- instrumental rationality to act as a guide for public housing policy, and that several examples of 'cohousing' are pointing to a variant of Habermas' model that would enable people to move out of *anomia*.

All members of a social group share judgments or points of view that attribute a value or a common meaning to public acts. *Anomia* designates the loss of these common orientations (Conan, 1992). It prevails when members of a social group feel uncertain about the norms and sanctions of public behavior so that they neither know how they should interact with others, or how their acts will be evaluated and sanctioned or rewarded by other group members. *Anomia* is the central concept of Durkheim's thesis on the division of labor. He further developed it in his famous essay on suicide. He takes *anomia* to result from social processes fostering conflict where cooperation had existed, and doing away with commonly shared values or purposes.

Thus when social change destroys social regulations fixed by tradition, or when it lifts collective prohibitions, or when it compels individuals to adapt to a new culture that rips the foundations of traditional solidarity, it creates situations of conflict and sources of collective demoralization.

According to these sociological analyses, the quality of individual life depends upon the existence of stable social frameworks that put a limit to individual desires and strivings and that rule social intercourse. Advocates of mass consumption who think that the satisfaction of individuals results from the pursuit of their selfish interest within the limits set by their resources would strongly disagree. If one follows Durkheim, such a pursuit of selfish interest favors the development of *anomia*, while limits that shared norms and values imposed on their pursuit shield individuals from the disruptive impact of *anomia*. At least one may agree with a weaker statement: the pursuit of selfish interests ushered by mass consumption does not foster the development of shared norms and values.

One perceives immediately implications of this point of view for a housing policy. Most housing policies aim at providing shelter and at fulfilling related needs such as providing cooking, cleaning and washing facilites, a minimum square-footage per person and sunlight in most rooms for a limited level of costs. This functional approach to housing seeks to provide lower or middle income groups with an equal access to a certain amount of floor space in a physical facility that they might not be able to afford if all housing resulted from privately financed production, and no more. But if housing aims solely at providing satisfaction derived from mass consumption, it cannot be expected to counter the development of *anomia*. If on the other hand, it contributes to the development among inhabitants of a community of purposes and values as a group, it may. That does not mean that consumption of housing is supposed to create *anomia* by itself, but rather that it is certainly not a palliative. Let us consider a counter-example in order to avoid over-simplification. Housing is an object of conspicuous

consumption for many people who are not likely victims of *anomia*. Focusing attention on housing itself in order to understand the development of *anomia*, one risks losing track of the other disruptive effects of daily life experiences.

Thomas and Znaniecki have studied Polish immigrant families in the United States (Habermas, 1981). When thrown amidst social groups whose values, norms and roles differed from theirs, these families went through a period of deep social disorganization. This tended to bring about the demoralization of their members: neither future prospects, nor daily life seemed to have any more sense for them.

The concept of *anomia* stresses the weakening of reciprocal expectations that provided a social bond. Generally speaking, defining what was just and what was not, what was allowed and what was forbidden, what was favorable and what was harmful to the collectivity of Polish immigrant families grew more and more difficult. Moral issues became increasingly blurred, because each person felt submitted to contradictory influences and felt exposed to uncertainty in its everyday intercourse with other people. The weakening of shared moral obligations and values aroused demoralization and nostalgic over-estimation of ancient solidarity ties based on strong common moral principles.

Some sociologists have read this as a warning against social change. They have argued that *anomic* situations, that could be created by the introduction of social change in a group tightly knit by a set of common norms, mutual expectations, and an established system of rewards and sanctions for public behavior, would restrict their freedom of interaction and create personal feelings of insecurity; hence a call for a conservative pace or change, if any were to be introduced. Yet the analysis of the development of *anomia* only shows that social transformations do not produce a spontaneous adjustment of moral culture. It invites beyond any analysis of *anomia* to further study of the redevelopment of a moral culture. The example of a few contemporary endeavours towards organizing residential life will make this point clearer.

HOUSING BEYOND SHELTER

We shall proceed with the description of four cases: UHAB in New York City, housing cooperatives in Canada, Bofaelleskaber in Denmark, and Kollektivhus in the recent years in Sweden. In each case, inhabitants who where exposed to expanding effects of *anomia*, albeit for very different reasons, have been helped to pool their efforts in order to take control of their common housing situation.

In New York City, the total supply of housing has quickly declined since the sixties in the poorer neighborhoods such as Harlem (Leavitt and Saegert, 1990). The city has become the largest slum landlord and has been unable to upgrade or even to maintain the residential stock it has inherited through tax foreclosure. Poverty and crime have driven many neighborhoods into deep reaching social disorganization. The city had launched several programs under the pressure of housing activists in order to improve this situation. Some were calling upon self-management by tenants' associations, and others upon cooperative retrofitting and management of a building unit by a small group of families. In a fascinating study, Jacqueline Leavitt and Susan Saegert (1990) compared the reactions of very poor people to both possibilities. They conclude that:

Figures 1 and 2. Helen's Court Housing Co-operative, Vancouver, Canada by Roger Hughes Architects: Site Plan and Floor Plans.

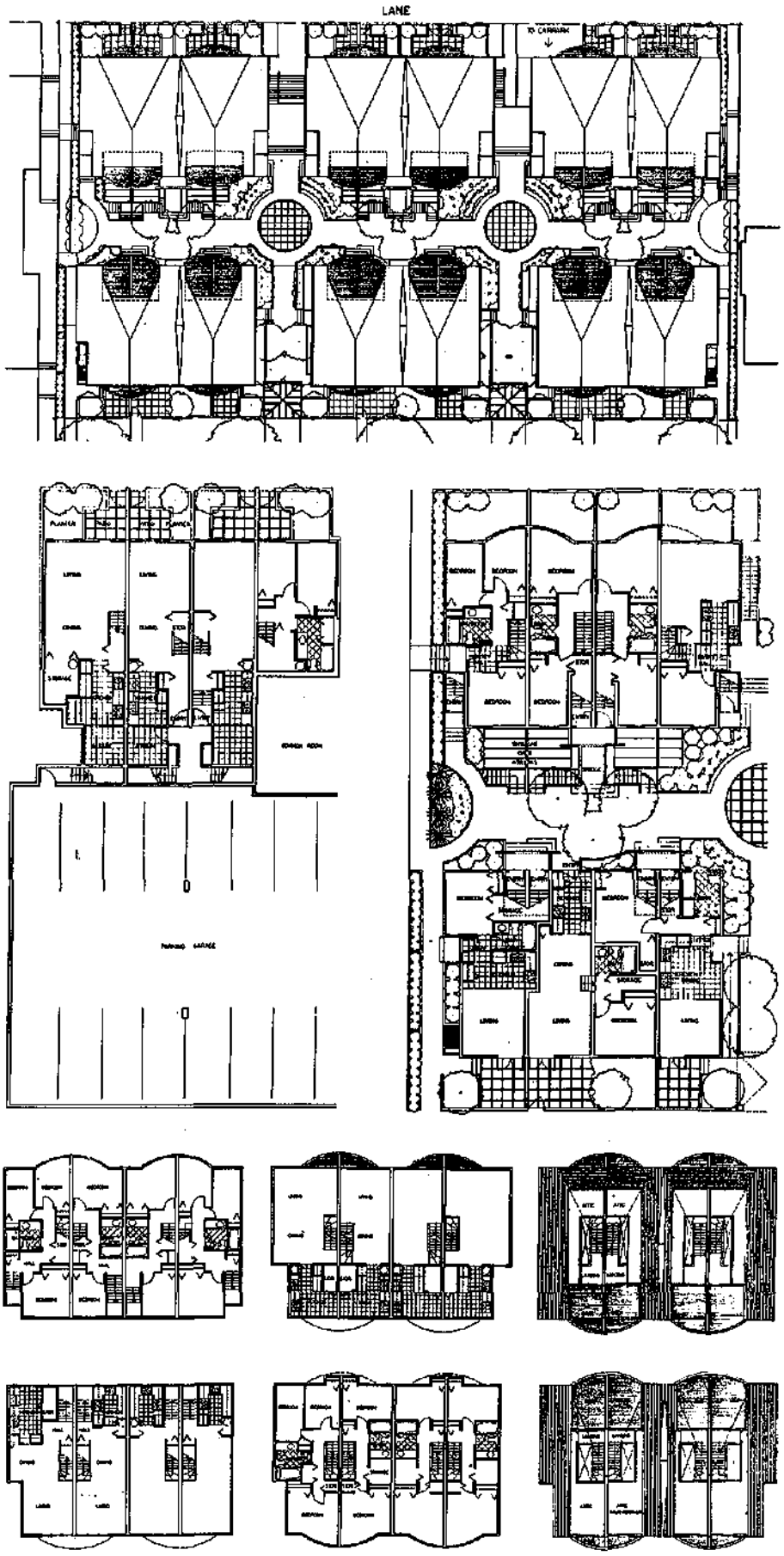


Figure 3. Helen's Court Housing Co-operative, Vancouver, Canada by Roger Hughes Architects: Exterior View.

Figure 4. Helen's Court Housing Co-operative, Vancouver, Canada by Roger Hughes Architects: Section.

In contrast to the stories told by tenants in rental buildings, tenant co-operators saw the renovation of their homes as the result of their own effort, leading not only to improved shelter but also to a measure of empowerment for themselves and their community (Leavitt and Saegert, 1990).

In Canada, public housing did not meet all the expectations that it had raised. In particular, a lack of satisfactory social life in public neighborhoods seemed to be a common issue, and more significantly perhaps the less integrated people in the population were not adequately served if they were served at all (Dennis and Fish, 1972). This situation prompted members of the strong cooperative movement to propose to CMHC (the public agency in charge of housing) a financial scheme allowing any group of people to create a housing coop. This coop was meant to buy land, manage housing construction, and provide all these people's families with homes and common grounds that were to be maintained and managed according to democratic rules that they had the responsibility to institute.

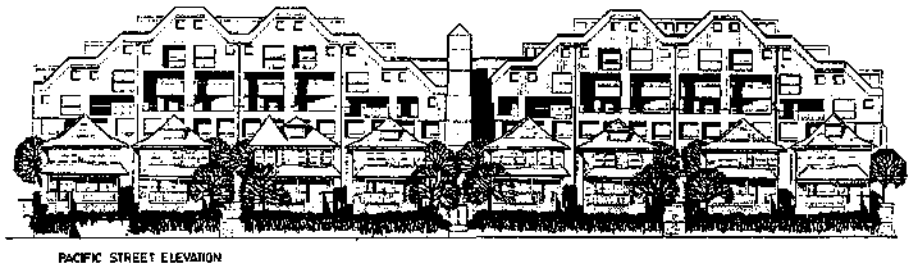
Moreover, rights of access were income controlled and a minimum of 15 % of these families were to be below the poverty level according to Canadian standards, and 5% at least of the housing were to be below accessible to the handicapped (1). Since this was putting a lot of responsibilities on people who were usually unprepared to shoulder them, they were entitled to a special loan in order to purchase outside expertise of their own choice, under the condition that part of this money would be used for training a few of their members into housing management according to very specific tutoring programs. Henceforth coop members had to define their needs for training in housing management, building law, group leadership, clerical skills and accounting practice, as well as the outline for the development of their building project. One might say that the main thrust of this program was enforcing collective bargaining upon a random group of poor and middle income families in order to lead them to achieve a common good.

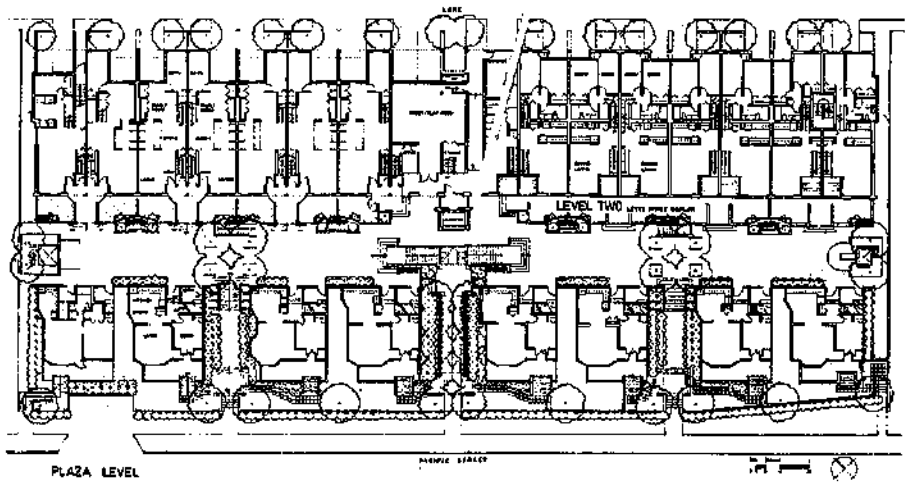
A new kind of housing cooperative was started in Scandinavia during the mid-seventies. They are called Bofaelleskaber in Denmark (Andersen, 1988), and Lilla Kollektivhus in Sweden (2). These names cover a variety of situations in the two countries and they have been serving the interests of slightly different constituencies over time, due to changing attitudes of housing policy makers at local or national level. They share a number of distinctive features with the preceding examples. Inhabitants have to take initiative in order to design, build or retrofit their future homes, and they have to set up an organization in order to manage it as a group once they occupy them. But they also share a rather distinctive feature: flats are somewhat smaller than usual in their respective countries, so that some money can be put together in order to provide shared rooms and services. The most striking feature usually is a common kitchen and dining room where inhabitants take turns to prepare meals for every body, several evenings a week. This may be the closest as an organization, to the Greek agora that has been devised in the twentieth century.

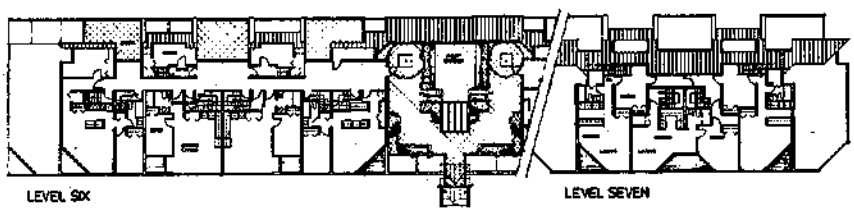
1. This information is available in the draft report on the 'Evaluation of the Federal Coop Housing Program' prepared by the Program Evaluation Division of CHMC, September 1990.

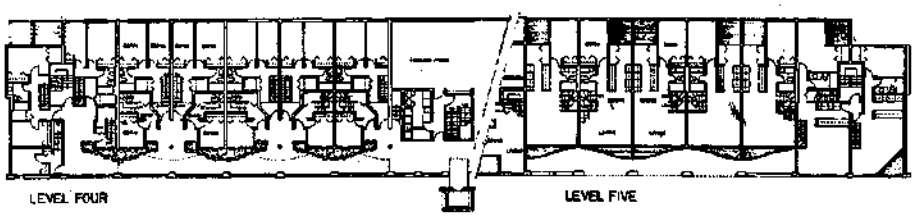
2. Further information is available in the Danish Publication of **'Big Gruppen: Det Lilla Kollektivhuset**, En modell för praktisk tillampning. Byggför-skningradet', 1982.

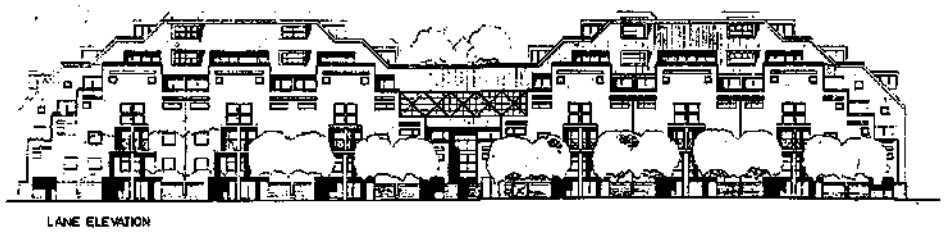
Figures 5 and 6. Pacific Heights Co-op, Vancouver, Canada, Roger Hughes Architects: Plans and Elevations.

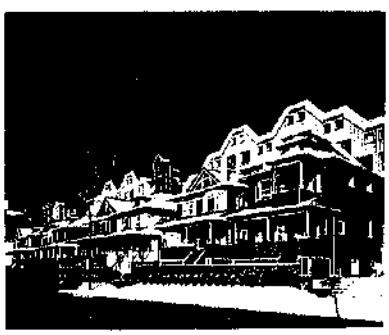












Figures 7. Pacific Heights Co-op, Vancouver, Canada, Roger Hughes Architects: Exterior View.

LEARNING HOW TO COOPERATE

Whether one lives in cooperatives or in *kollektivhus*, cultural differences can create social distance between inhabitants and problems of everyday life may crop up with neighbors in similar fashion. On the other hand, community agreement on public behavior and management specify ways and means through which they can be dealt with because they institutionalize processes yielding a shared sense of what constitutes the common good. Of course, from one neighborhood to the next in the same country, these processes occur in a different way and produce a different impact. Yet, as a whole, they seem to proceed from two sources of inspiration which are strikingly different, even though they are not altogether incompatible.

The first one is to be found in Canada, the second in Scandinavia. The examples from New York show that many kinds of cross-breeding may take place between the two. In Canada, one may witness the insistence on starting with the development of a body of jointly-agreed rules for the cooperative by a democratically appointed group of representatives of the future inhabitants; in Scandinavia, mutual exchange about disagreements or about differences of approach to a problem is given preeminence. The Canadian way of doing things can be said to proceed from the emulation of democratic rule, and the Scandinavian from a communication process reaching for mutual acountability of all inhabitants.

Everyday life experience in these neighborhoods cannot be reduced to a shared effort towards defining a common good. It could be said that no-one really thinks about it in this way. It happens rather that the common good is planned for, through the pursuit of a whole lot of different activities such as attempting to save time and money through joint order for food or services or devising ways to save energy, or organizing outings for the toddlers, or preparing for spring cleaning. It can be worthwhile to note that all of these activities call for a lot of planning, and for alot of practical discussions which encourage exchanges of points of view about actions that are supposed to contribute to the common good. Thus the social construction of this common good is achieved through an unplanned sequence of decision-making processses and the development of a neighbory culture takes place even though this hardly crosses the mind of the inhabitants.

Canadian cooperatives, for example rest very much upon democratic rules in order to organize collective life in every respect, and of course, in order to set limits upon the expression of conflict and to discipline debates, clerical work, decision making, so that they ease the way towards efficient cooperation. It is typically a formal process that allows a very precise definition of the social roles of the various members of this neighborly organization (chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary, task group member, stake holder in the constituency, *etc)*

It calls for the development of a set of behavioral rules which allow disagreements to be aired at times of conflict in a civilized manner, that is in a way that is acceptable to this community, by ruling how the floor can be taken, and how a decision can be put to the vote, for instance. during recent years, there has even been a growing number of Canadian cooperatives which have gone to great length in their prescriptions of rules specifying how to settle disputes through mediation or negotiation, either between their own members when they happen to quarrel one another or between the coop itself and one of its members whenever a breach of rules has taken place.

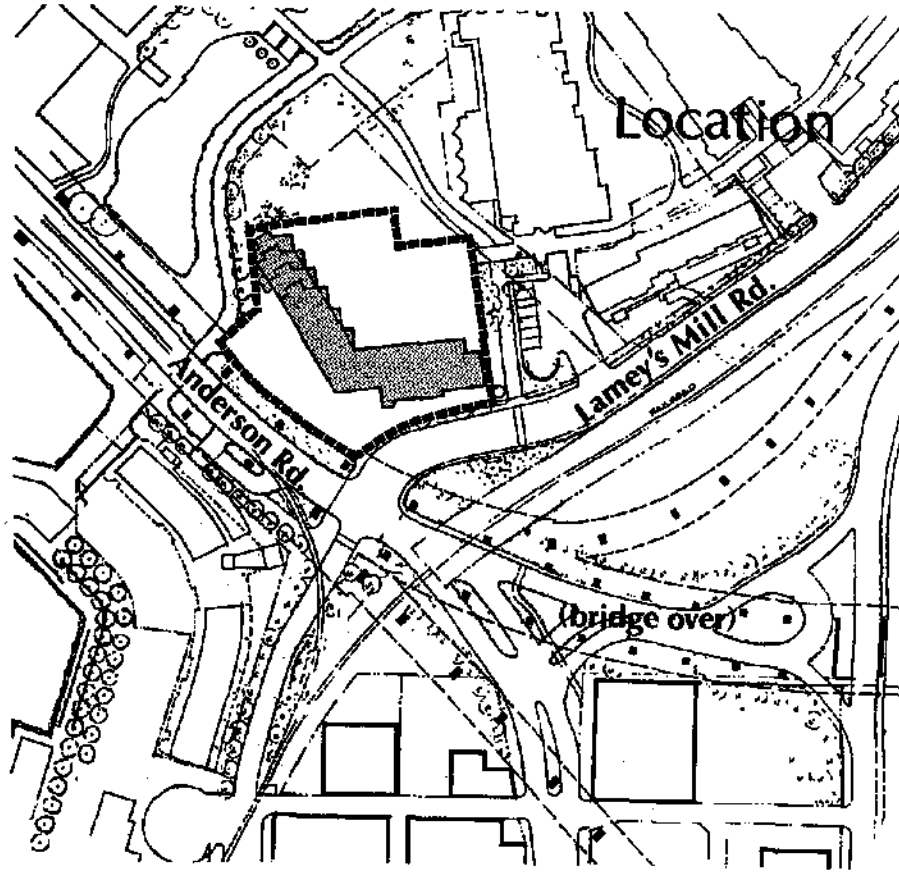


Figure 8. Creek View Housing Co-operative, Vancouver: Site Plan.

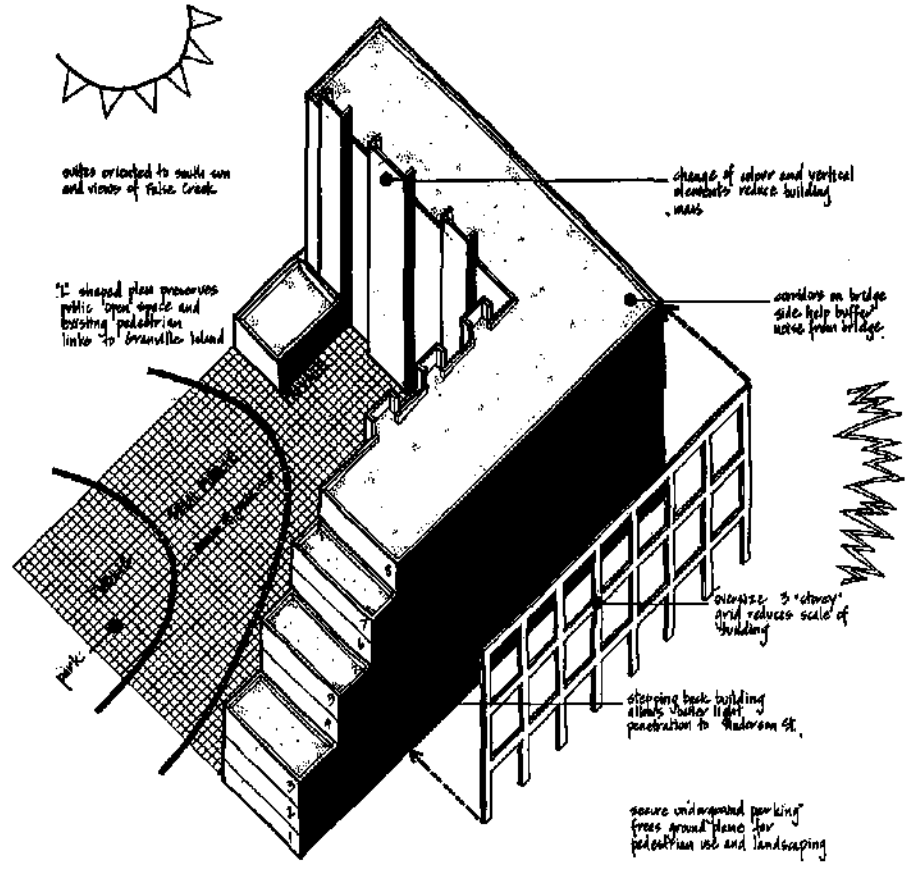


Figure 9. Creek View Housing Co-operative, Vancouver: Massing Principles.

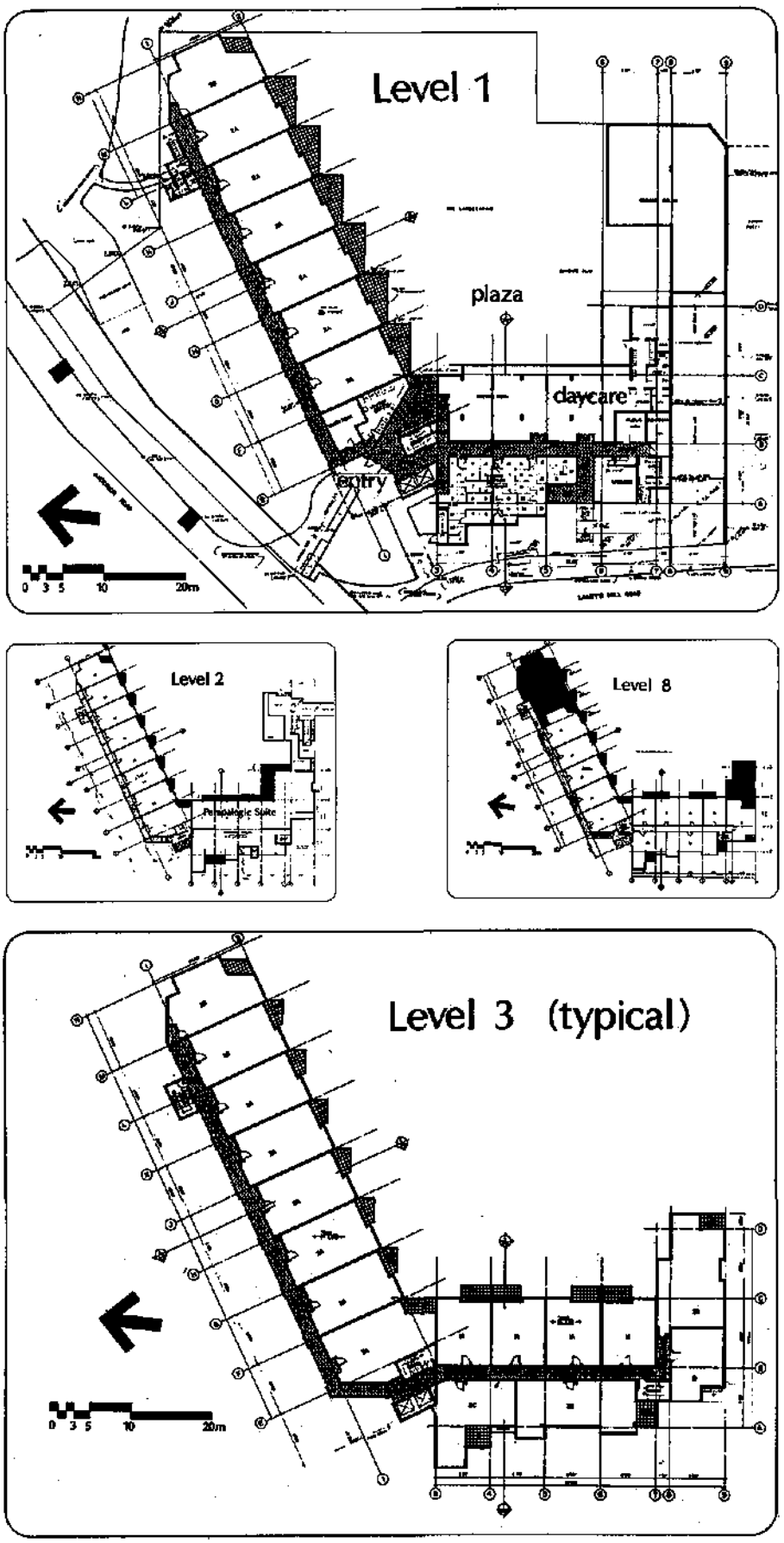


Figure 10. Creek View Housing Co-operative, Vancouver: Floor Plans.

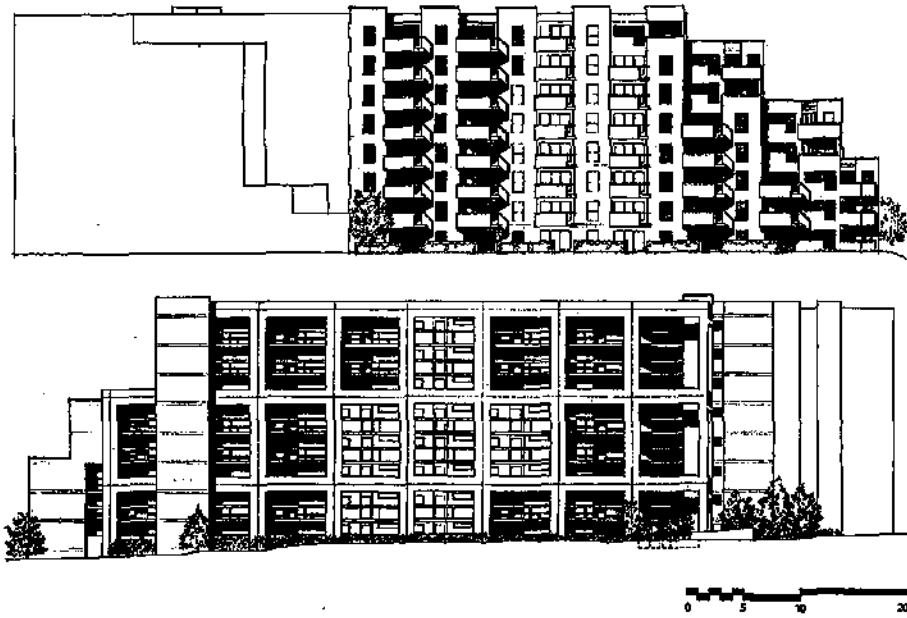


Figure 11. Creek View Housing Co-operative, Vancouver: Elevations.

Writing the rules erects a set of common rights and duties, yet it does not insure that all coop members share moral values contributing to the achievement of the common good they are aiming at. It takes more than a law in order to seed the roots of morality. As the most casual observer can ascertain, prohibitionist or anti-racist laws do not always succeed in promoting the kind of moral attitudes that they should attempt to make common. Resource groups which are instrumental in setting up housing cooparatives in Canada are well aware of this fact. Actually this is the reason why they set so much value upon a preliminary negotiation. Between future coop members, of the main principles to be agreed upon before any residential experience has taken place. They hope for this joint endeavor to bring about a large number of discussions allowing opposing views to be aired and argued and countered until they result in written statements that carry everybody's agreement or at least reflect and carry the force of the majority rule. The common rule is then to be written in a commanding way so that anybody may check that it is dutifully followed, or that it could be modified if circumstances demanded it. Yet they entertain first and foremost the expectation that these debates will bring about a strong commitment on the part of all future inhabitants towards a shared definition of the common good. Does it actually happen?

The course of events leading to the founding of a housing cooperative has been changing over the years. Five or six years ago, cooperative members had to take responsibility for every aspect of the development, from site selection to choice and supervision of the contractor in charge of building their houses after the plans of the architect they had selected. They had to join forces in solving a number of difficult and sometimes vexing issues, and to take together the brunt of adversity. Usually only a few of the initiators of any project made it to its fulfillment. Hammering their way against unexpected assaults they would really build a common project.

Once built, their houses did stand as a testimony to their community of intentions. This changed four years ago. Coop members are only called upon to get together a few months before the end of construction on a site which they have not taken responsibility to select, in order to develop in democratic fashion the set of rules that should prevail in their organization and in their neighborhood. Suprisingly, experts from the resource groups which are called upon to assist

them in the task of achieving a viable organization do not seem to notice any marked difference between these two periods. They have discovered that it was more important to help future coop members enter into an in-depth discussion of basic principles of their future covenant rather than to let them engage into a log-winged discussion of pros and cons in pursuit of a detailed set of rules. They retreated from their former demands for lengthy and exacting discussions of a book of rules for the coop as if they felt that reaching for *a priori* sharpness were an exercise in futility.

Follow-up of previous projects has taught them that any group is bound to experience practical problems that were totally unforeseen, both to its members and to them. They tend to stress the earnestness of enabling the group of coop members to nurture a common culture under this period of mutual adjustment when they are settling down and putting to the test their capacity for autonomous group conduct and behavior, *qua* home owners.

This amounts to saying that neither the establishment of a common covenant, nor the erection of houses as a community symbol are enough to endow a group of home dwellers with a set of norms and values which would insure the development among them of a sense of their common good and a practical view of the interests they share. On the other, hand one is led to believe that the everyday issues they experience when moving in, and settling down in a new neighborly relationship are at the origin of social interactions of fundamental import for the future course towards group autonomy.

Watching the development of Bofaelleskaber or Kollektivhus in Scandinavia leads to closely similar observations. In case after case, early meetings held after moving in, bring about debates about the practicalities of everyday life that had escaped previous notice and that come to the fore in the most obvious way once a setting for debating them has been created. They concern such trivialities of home life as preparing meals, looking after the children, cleaning passageways, disposing of trash, dealing with the neighbor's pets, and other common pests. When having to cope with one another, inhabitants discover new issues of neighborly living. It helps them water down some of their early expectations and evolve a new approach towards establishing a way of life in common.

Everyday life does not actually conform in every respect to their *a priori* expectations. This carries practical consequences. For instance many groups have decided that ancillary work should be shared among community members according to an egalitarian principle that allowed no difference between men and women. Yet, it did turn out times and again, that some kind of inequalities subsisted within the family circle between husband and wife and between parents and teenagers, which forced exploitation of the least equal by the community.

Another common example has to do with pets. They are major source of disagreement. Some people are so fond of them that they cannot imagine dispensing with their company. Others are stridently opposed to them for health or emotional reasons. When a group gets together some people have pets, other don't. They may reach an uneasy agreement that everbody is entitled to only one pet, so that whoever has several should not replace any of them until they have all died out. But no group is prepared to deal with the charming little widow who had two cats and one dog, and yet did buy a new puppy when her only dog died on the claim that no cat can replace a dog. So true, and so absurd. These are but two examples showing how efforts at defining moral principles, *a priori*, are bound to be shattered on the rocks of practical life experience in the most unexpected, not to say the silliest, way.

Why is there such a limit to reaching an efficient and reliable joint-agreement? And is it possible to provide a more rational approach to the development of a covenant between inhabitants that would protect them from such unpleasant experiences? This is certainly an important question since morals are meant to enable the choice between different courses of action, and in particular between different behavioral intercourse with neighbors. Unless there is a commonly acknowledged morality there is no way that other people's behavior or sentiments could be anticipated in any stressful circumstance.

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF THE COMMON GOOD

The Canadian cooperative endeavor, and to a certain extent the Scandivanian as well, aim at defining *a priori*, that is before inhabitants move in, behavioral rules that should be abided by all inhabitants deriving from a common agreement that they should have reached according to rational principles to which each of them subscribes. For such an attempt to succeed, it would be necessary that each action or each behavior could be characterized in such a way as to exclude all other possible characterizations, that is in such a way that its relationship to rules and values could be stated without any ambiguity for all persons concerned whatever their own lifeworld. In other words, it demands that it should be possible to infer from each action all the intentions that it may imply. Yet this is beyond our reach because any interpretation of an action is fraught with ambiguity for at least two reasons. First, simply because it is impossible to ascertain that the inventory of all intentions that are called into play by such an action has been achieved. And secondly, because in order to characterize unambiguously an intention that it implies, one has to rely solely upon rational deduction could be offered.

Such an event may happen if somebody uses an economic rationale and another person offers a legal rationale or a technical rationale which suggest that the same features could be traced to a set of different intentions. This means that the interpretation of these features would be fraught with ambiguity unless there is a universal argument that may be used to criticize all of these partial interpretations and replace them by a unique statement. Yet it is impossible to demonstrate the universality of any particular concept of rationality. This may sound a little bit too abrupt. Is not mathematical logic an embodiment of a universal rationality? Of course not, since their are several kinds of logic to be used depending upon the kind of problems that one is dealing with (propositional calculus, predicate calculus, *etc.*). This is simply a reflection of the fact that logic is but an aspect of human praxis. We can observe that different spheres of human activity are predicated upon different rationalities, such as technical rationality and legal rationality, theological rationality and democratic rationality which may be conflicting with one another. Any of these may be called upon to characterize a given action in a residential neighborhood, and in the absence of a unique universal rationality to which all of them could be shown to be subservient in all their aspects. It is impossible to expect that this action could be characterized in a unique way (Zwiebach, 1988).

We should probably at this point insist on the difference between Habermas' perspective in his theory of communicative action and ours. He has proposed a process that should allow the development of a unique conception of human reason which would be more comprehensive than purposive-instrumental rationalities that we have mentioned above. He claims that any speaker who intends in good earnest to understand another person (that is any person who

engages in communicative action in Habermas' words) raises and must be held accountable for three rationality and validity claims: truth, normative legitimacy and truthfulness or authenticity. In an ideal speech situation, he may convince his hearers that his speech is rational if he follows three rules:

1. Each subject who is capable of speech and action is allowed to participate in the discourse.
2. (a) Each is allowed to call in question any proposal.
   (b) Each is allowed to introduce any proposal into the discourse.
   (c) Each is allowed to express his attitudes, wishes and needs.
3. No speaker ought to be hindered by compulsion (whether arising from inside the discourse or outside of it) from making the rights secure under (1) and (2) (3).

This implies that the speaker will respond by accounting for the truth, normative legitimacy, and authenticity of any aspect of his speech that is challenged. But in cohosing such conditions are not always fulfilled in tense situations when inhabitants have to face disagreement about facts of life. To the contrary, it can be observed that in critical situations inhabitants do not compel others to account rationally for everything they say. And yet this does not preclude that people may reach common agreement upon the interpretation of current actions in daily life. They may even achieve this result through a rational argument, even though this is not a general requisite. It so happens because our actions, as well as many of our intentions are predicated upon widely shared cultural processes of meaning-making. But, of course one would not expect that a universal rationality would be likely to be reached under culturally dependent pre-conditions!

Let us come back to the core of our topic in plain speech. Since it is impossible to characterize any action in a unique way, there is no hope that any effort, however sincere and supposedly rational, done by a group of people in order to write the ways and means of achieving their common good, might escape ambiguity. Moral concepts are not rationally derived, but they are acquired through interaction with others when dilemmas force an effort of self clarification of one's intentions. It is at times of doubt, or guilt, or uncertainty as to which of several possible course of actions should be pursued, that moral concepts can be put to test through interactions with other people. Ideas about the common good and justice are being clarified. Joint interpretation of situations may be achieved paving the way for further development of intersubjectivity, and for implicit agreement in the interpretation of ambigious actions or situations. This amounts to saying that shared experiences which enable discussion of moral dilemmas are the primary sources of the construction of a moral culture.

This can be restated in a slightly more formal way if we borrow the vocabulary of Intentionality Theory (Searle, 1983). Such shared experiences allow the development of the intentionality network upon which is based moral culture. Only those people who share a sufficient number of experiences with one another will have derived a similar intentionality network. But even these people cannot share all experiences in common. Thus it is unlikely that all interactions between them will always make sense for them in an unambiguous way. Moreover it means that whatever effort they make at communicating to one another, the meaning of an action will always rest upon a background that is beyond their grasp. Any value judgment they utter encompasses meanings that exceed the ones they can invoke to account rationally for it. This does not imply that human societies should renounce striving for the development of a universal morality, but it stresses two things at once: such a project rests upon our ability to create networks of interaction, and it is never ending.

3. This formulation was proposed by Robert Alexy after the original formulation by Habermas. See White (1988).

TWO CONDITIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON GOOD

Indeed, interactions within a group allow the development of an intentionality network that makes common interpretations possible. Such a process of meaning making based on shared experience can be accelerated by an effort at constructing a rational interpretation of as many experiences as possible. This work rests on the imagination and the conceptual creativity of the group members. It calls upon their ability to provide an encompassing interpretation of principles that were more or less clearly at work in their course of action. Trials can be pursued until members of the group are satisfied that a coherent, unified and controlled argument has been provided that describes, explains and justifies all aspects of a domain of action.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to underline that this agreement does not result from a rational demonstration resting upon a universal reason, but that it proceeds from the force of persuasion carried by the argument within the group. The group creates its own rationality and sticks to it. It does not argue it through mere deduction.

But, when an argument is acknowledged as rational within a group, it helps integrating all experiences that it accounts for in the common culture. Then it is no longer necessary for each member to live each experience in order to make sense of it. This is a piecemeal process, since this rationality is obviously limited to the domain of empirical experience it comes from: a rational way of handling misbehaviour with young children may prove inefficient when tried with teenagers. So that new experiences may help discover limits of any newly discovered rational argument and force its revision or even full fledge modification. Thus a certain praxis of reflexive communication within a group may foster the development of a moral culture and of principles (the rational of moral action) that allow and facilitate appropriation by its members.

First let us notice that this communicative praxis will not yield moral concepts unless the group deliberately puts its imagination and its capacity for critical thinking to this end. It means that the development of moral thinking can only be attained by a group of free subjects already committed to the development of a shared morality.

Morals in a free society are meant to prevent violence that might surge between its members when acting free willingly. Therefore a system of imposed rules cannot be confused with a moral system. But it is precisely such a confusion that threatens residential cooperatives in Canada. It turns out that the majority rule makes it possible for a clique to be elected and to monopolize power and use the majority rule to impose its choices and values, while suppressing the liberty to refute the rationality of its position to minority members of the cooperative because they have failed to overturn them at the polls.

Indeed most decisions in a residential cooperative do not demand the introduction of a new moral principle; and government by majority rule in the cooperatives does not, *ipso facto*, entail moral coercion of minority groups by arrogant majorities. It is rather rare actually but it happens, and it points in a dramatic way to a limit of the model of local democracy to enable a group of people to define its common good.

We have noted that subjects should be free for a communicative praxis between them to achieve a moral culture. It is also necessary that they intend it, that they feel the urge to define the common good. One can sit at a negotiation table and debate with other persons without ever seeking to define such a common good; instead one may for example seek a course of action that satisfies the participants' respective interests irrespective of any common value judgment.

Commitment to a moral project is required for the coop to succeed and yet there is no compelling reason for free participants to engage themselves. This is one of the fundamental difficulties of the construction of a shared meaning of residential life. Success rests on the will of actors to pursue such a purpose, while the anomia which they experience persuades them of its inanity.

Nevertheless, the reply to this dilemma is not as learned as one could have feared. The idea of justice is spread widely enough in our societies for each one to understand when it is put to the discussion. The question is therefore, only to know why someone would choose to be committed in such a debate. It depends upon previous life-experiences. Anyone who has experienced, once or several times in a row, difficulties that lead him to wish he could live free of conflict with other free subjects (rather than, in order to exploit their weaker sides) may choose to commit himself.

This is not a matter of interest to be settled by a contract. It builds upon trust, upon developing confidence in other inhabitants' ability to pay respect to one's liberty. This can be all the more difficult, the more one feels deprived of its liberty at work or as a consumer (Habermas, 1981). Reaching a sense of reciprocity is necessary. Therefore a lapse of time allowing placement to the test of mutual confidence could be necessary before a lot of persons may choose whether to commit themselves in a such project. And some people may be expected to back down. In a word, this choice can only be achieved thorough an experience of confronting other free subjects.

It is necessary therefore to be able to try and to be able to retract. Have we now achieved a satisfactory definition of this praxis of communication when asking that is takes place between free subjects sharing the will to develop a common good? Certainly not. One would like to know, for instance, whether it supposes that each one has to provide a fully argued justification of his stand in any ordinary situations leading to debate among fellow members, as it would be expected of an inhabitant who comes to this project with a perfect faith in Habermas' theory of communicative ethics. If I purposely abstain to fulfill some obligation to the group, am I under the moral obligation to account for my behavior or to defend it with sensible arguments or to expose my own prejudices, or otherwise to exclude myself from the construction of this community of residents?

Should a free-rider be accepted aboard a steamship (4)? The reply sounds obvious. Thus, in a group bound together by the will to develop a common morality, any member who engages in interaction with others, accepts implicitly to be held accountable for his behaviour and to argue his stand truthfuly and sensibly with any other who challenges it. Refusing this liability would entail, as a rule, his withdrawal from the group.

Habermas' sophisticated foundation for ethics seems to follow intutive judgment. Yet actual practice in these residential communities does no abide by this rule (Dennis and Fish, 1972). Indeed it falls short of taking lapse of time into account. It turns out that once the group feels liable for a common project, it

4. This links to the questions about cooperation which are raised by the theory of public goods. See Olson (1965) or Mac Lean (1987).

settles down for quite a while. Each one feels engaged in a project under way, the outcome of which is not yet defined. In such perspective a group could without any doubt conceive of a project that would deny the right to evade accountability to all of its members. Then it would be put at great pain to avoid some kind of authoritarian ruling such as the obligation of public confession which was to be found in several christian communities.

In the recent past, communities based upon a shared intimacy such as neo-agrarian communities have been plagued with the difficulty to avoid emotional pressures being exerted upon any of their members when he would withdraw into silence rather than overtly express disagreement, leaving him only the choice between lying about his feelings or leaving his friends.

One observes entirely different attitudes in Sweden, Denmark and Canada. If a group-member fails to uphold his accountability, a double-pronged process takes its course: an attempt to reach a common understanding of his attitude by other members of the group, and the adoption of a new communication form with him. The former can drive the group to seek his departure, or it can lead to some kind of a negotiation helping him to resume his place in all of the group's debates, or it may simply give him the right to a 'sabbatical' leave from group obligations. The final stand taken by the group depends upon the outcome or the common effort to understand the free-rider's attitude.

Everyone may rather willingly acknowledge that any one may follow different lines of life according to times and circumstances, changing guiding principles and rationale altogether. And everyone knows that the demands of group life may create momentarily insuperable difficulties to any of its wilful members. Divorce, mourning the death of a family member, unemployment, mental illness can be at the origin of such momentary gaps, when the basis of personal life seems to be crumbling hopelessly. The group may be led to avoid passing judgment on this particular person for her refusal to be held accountable, and it may move to a deeper analysis of social and psychological causes of her situation. Thus the group is bound by its commitment to a search for a common good to ponder as much about its social environment as about its free-riding member.

Studying such tense situations in a neighborhood reveals two important features of this group life at times of group debate. First, equality reigns supreme among all members. Secondly, they care for each other in a dispassionate way. This is not true at any times of residential life. Children are not held to be equal to their parents at home, and women are not always granted equal status to their husbands when home chores are to be dealt with. But equality at times of interaction within the group outside the family circle brings about mutual attention in any social exchange.

Thus a feeling of mutual concern builds up as a consequence. The departure of a member would put some stress on the sense of care of the whole group, calling its identity into question. It might weaken each one's confidence in the group's capacity to avoid brutal confrontation among its members. A member's departure is a show of defiance to the group, and as such, it threatens the peaceful development of a common good unless it is met with care by the group as a whole. Inhabitants in these neighborhoods very often underline that they have taken a stand, in favour of another member who was under criticism in spite of their personal dislikes, only because they felt that they should uphold anybody's right to a personal view point different from their own.

PROCESSES OF MUTUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

Conflicts are certainly crucial points in time, but one should turn to a study of ordinary communication practice in order to elucidate its main differences to other approaches of the resolution of moral dilemmas. Members of Canadian cooperatives and inhabitants of these Scandinavian dwellings meet very seldom in general assemblies, and they seem to devote almost no time at all to formal writing of commonly devised moral rules. But on the other hand, they do meet one another very often in small groups according to established rites of common group life, or at times of leisure when chance encounters allows to engage in a chat on any topic, and to explore mutual attitudes without feeling pressed to take a public stand. They may create opportunities for mutual probing of opinions with respect to any aspect of social life and move, in a step-wise fashion, towards a deeper understanding of each other. This may help bring to the fore areas of disagreement as well as areas of agreement. To the difference of an assembly voting over an issue, these debates do not aim at reaching a common rule that should be followed for ever afterwards, but only to develop a process of mutual understanding.

It is fair to say that this does not happen to the same extent in Canada and in the Scandinavian countries. In the Canadian cooperatives opportunities for informal chats and in-depth debates about any aspect of social life are much rarer than in the dwellings where half the residents share one or several meals a week together. In Canada such chat take place mostly after or before statutory encounters. Discussions take place as well during formal meetings, but it is slightly more awkward to express dissent or to pursue a discussion for its own sake when rules demand that a decision be reached. Discussions are geared to reaching formal agreement rather than a firmly shared belief.

To the contrary, the second aspect is strongly stressed in the Scandinavian groups. During an evening discussion nobody cares whether the group is a fair representation of the whole of the inhabitants, because there is no will to achieve a decision before going to bed, but rather a will to reach a point where every opinion on the topic among these group members has been expressed and argued in such a way that everybody is satisfied that his point of view has been clearly presented and that he understands the other ones.

This may lead to a shared opinion of this small group and eventually develop into a set of shared beliefs by the whole community or it may simply map differences of attitudes. Some situations may demand a formal commitment on the part of the group as a whole. Then a general assembly may convene, in order to formally acknowledge commonly held views that have been reached through this process of mutual enlightenment. It fosters a deepening of each members's moral judgments through an informal discovery of moral reasoning followed by other persons. It should be stressed that this broadens the scope of individual freedom simply because everyone may adjust to his neighbours' feelings once they are known even without sharing them, and may as well express a different attitude without being suspected of attempting to impose it upon others. But it enforces the development of a rationale for interpretation of social life which broadens its scope with time as an ever larger domain of social issues deriving from common experience in the dwellings, or more broadly in society. This common rationale provides the basis for a systematic development of a shared understanding of the common good.

REDEEMING NEIGHBORHOODS FROM ANOMIA

What is to be learnt from these unusual neighborhoods in Canada and in Scandinavia? How useful are such examples, if we are to deal with common place *anomia* in post World War II public housing in crisis? Does it point to a practical way of allowing reconstruction of a shared morality by a large population of people?

First, let us conclude from these examples that the morals of everyday life cannot be drafted like a state constitution and that majority rule is not a sufficient guarantee for its appropriation by every single inhabitant. It seems more likely that its development results rather from processes of mutual enlightenment of the inhabitants predicated upon group discussions about practical dilemma, raised by a shared experience. The content of the common good rises slowly out of the string of difficulties experienced by all members of the group in making a shared sense out of divisive issues. A lack of shared experiences makes very unlikely that a sense of the common good shall be devised.

We have also noted that such a group should comprise subjects who enjoy their free-will, sharing a sense of equality of each other, and paning for a conflict free community life of their own. People who are thrown together by the chances of economic opportunity and bureaucratic decision can hardly be expected to constitute such a group. How many of them can feel free in the choice of the people they are to live with? They are unlikely to share a desire to live together with neighbors they had never met before, and moreover they may feel prejudiced against them because of differences of geographical or social or cultural origins in such a way that they may refuse to acknowledge them as their equals.

Thus, it is clear that *anomia* is likely to develop rather than to recede whatever the formal rules that are implemented: whether you decide to segregate inhabitants according to income or hairdo, to refurbish the entrance hall or to install short-circuit television between the flats and the entrance door, will not alter significantly social prejudices, or alleviate fears of social contact among neighbors. Instead a transformation of their situation is necessary in order to allow a process of recovery to take place. It should enable them to feel free to choose to enter of their own accord in any redevelopment process, and to get from the very beginning a sense of belonging to a group of autonomous persons. The establishment of such groups should therefore allow all of their members to make at trial before they commit themselves, and to be alllowed to back down at any time.

The comparison of the Canadian and the Scandinavian experiences has shown the respective roles of mutual enlightenment and formal establishment of rules. Mutual enlightenment is a communication process which is more efficient when people can find more opportunities in their everyday life to engage in open discussion, without any pressure to reach a final point, provided they always care for mutual understanding. Thus, we should stress that it is most important for such a group to be structured around a number of joint activities which call upon the self-organized participation of all its members. Of course, this is totally at variance with the current idea of housing policy which is supposed to limit deliberately itself to shelter and facilities provision. Under these conditions it becomes possible for each member, provided hi is willing to respect the freedom of others, to reach a mutual enlightenment with the others, about their cultural differences and their common concerns, as they are revealed by the pace of

unexpected events in the course of time. In such a way, any group may assemble in piecemeal fashion the basis for a shared sense of the common good. Such a process would be extremely slow and demanding upon the inhabitants, if there was not, at the sametime, a continuous effort to unravel the rationale behind different situations and to formalize them in some kind of local covenant between all community members.

KONUTTA İLETİŞİMSEL ETİK

ÖZET

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Son otuz yıl içindeki toplu konut uygulamaları ile kimi konut yerleşkelerinde farklı kültür kökenli insanlar bir araya getirildi. Bu gruplar her türlü zorlukları aşarak toplumla bütünleşme çabalarında, giderek derinleşen bir toplumsal *anomi* etkisi altındadırlar. Söz konusu yerleşkelerin fiziki ve toplumsal sorunlarını çözmeyi amaçlayan sosyal politikalar, daha üstün fiziki konfor düzeyleri sağlayabildi ise de, komşular arasında toplumsal güvensizlik, korku ve duygusal tepkilerin ve *anomi* etkilerinin giderilmesinde yetersiz kaldı.

Öte yandan, tek tük de olsa, grupların bu tür bir akıbetten kurtarılabilmiş olduğu fiziki düzenleme örnekleri bulunmaktadır. Bu yazı, Kanada'da uygulanan bir deneysel toplu konut ile, iki yeni tür konut topluluğu biçiminin yaşandığı, Danimarka'da Bofaelleskaber ve İsveç'te Lilla Kollektivhus örneklerini karşılaştırmalı olarak inceleyerek, bu beklenmedik ve hedeflenmedik başarılarının nedenlerini araştırmaktadır.

Her üç örnekte de, yerleşkede yaşayacak hanehalkları, ortak yaşamın kurallarını tanımlamak girişiminde bulunmuşlar; ortak yaşamın istedikleri niteliklere sahip olabilmesi öngörüşüyle yapım öncesinde mimar ve yapımcı ile iletişim kurmuşlardır. Burada yapılan tartışma, yapım öncesi girişimlerin, Habermas'ın iletişimsel eylemlere ilişkin önermelerine uymadığı yolundadır.

Herhangi bir eylemin tek bir biçimde tanımlanamaması nedeniyle, ortak doğruları önceden belirleme çabaları, ne kadar haklı ve akılcı olursa olsun, belirsizliklerden uzaklaşamayacaktır. Değer kavramları, akıl yoluyla değil, karşılıklı etkileşimlerle ve insanların çıkmazlara ve niyetlerini açığa vurma gayreti içine itildikleri ortamlarda netleşir. Değer kavram ve yargılarının sınanması, hangi yöntemin izleneceği konusunda kuşkuların yoğunlaştığı; başkalarıyla etkileşim içinde suçluluk ve belirsizlik duygularının yaşandığı durumlarda yapılır. Bu durumlarda ortak çıkar ve haklılık kavrayışları açıklık kazanır. Sorunların ortaklaşa yorumlamaları ile 'bireylerarası öznellik' ve belirsizlikler taşıyan durumlara ilişkin bir anlayış birliği geliştirilebilecektir. Değer yargılarına ilişkin açmazların görüşülmesini olanaklı kılan 'paylaşılan deneyimler', doğru ve yanlışları belirlenmiş bir kültürün oluşmasını sağlayan bir ana kaynaktır.

Örneklerde, yerleşkeye taşınmazdan önce önerilmiş olan kuralların, sonradan düzeltmelere uğradığı görülmektedir. Bu kuralların bir bölümü kullanımsız kalmış, bazıları yeniden düzenlenmiş; ayrıca zamanla eklemeler yapılmıştır. Ancak, ortak doğruların tartışılması ve belirlenmesi süreçleri, Kanada ve İskandinav örnek-lerinde çok farklı yollar izlemektedir.

Kanada'da bu görüşmeler genellikle yerel yönetim modelinin izlendiği, konut kooperatiflerinin yönetim kurullarında yapılır; çoğunluk kararlarıyla yeni kurallar belirlenir. Böylece ortaklaşa kabul gören, yasal düzenlemelere dayalı bir kültür gelişir. İskandinavya'da ise, bu sürecin kendisi biçimsel kurallardan uzaktır. Yerleşkede oturanlar dilledikleri zaman birbirlerini sorgulama yöntemine başvururlar. Bu görüşmelerin, bir kuralın tanımlanmasıyla sonuçlanması da aranmaz. Ancak görüşmeler kuşkusuz bir ortak doğrular kültürünün gelişmesini yönlendirir.

Günlük yaşamın kuralları herhalde bir anayasa metni gibi yazılamaz. Çoğunluk oyuna uyulması ise, bu kuralların her birey tarafından benimsenmiş olduğu anlamına gelmez. Uyumluluğun gelişmesi, ortak deneyimlerin ve yaşamın pratik sorunları üzerinde sürdürülen grup görüşmeleri ve karşılıklı bilgilendirme süreçleri yoluyla sağlanacaktır. 'Ortak doğrular'ın içeriği, bireyleri ayrıştıran konularda karşılaşılan zorluklar üzerinde ortak duyarlılıklar geliştirmeyle yavaş yavaş ortaya çıkar. Birlikte yaşanan deneyimlerden yoksunluk, ortak doğrular bulunması olasılıklarını zayıflatacaktır.

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