DOMESTIC WORK AND DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

Introduction:

It has been complained quite a bit that with the change of the name of IAPS we have discouraged sociologists and psychologists to come to IAPS conferences. Also our presentation at Berlin will be the work of architects who tried as much as they can to collaborate with psychologists and sociologists and who tried to introduce psychological and sociological arguments into their insight and awareness about domestic work and housing architecture. This presentation is also an offer to people from the international housing research network with whom we have already some close contacts from earlier EDNA and IAPS conferences.

Since Dolores Hayden helped us to look at the domestic revolution in the USA, since K. v. Thüng wrote about one-kitchen houses in Europe, we are interested in the productive functions of domestic work and try to rediscover the civilizational process that drove the productive functions out of the dwellings and that lately brought them back again.

Josef Huber called domestic work the quinary sector of our economy. We recognize socially and economically the invaluable contribution of domestic work to our well being and economy. Leberecht Migge, in a time of high unemployment, suggested self-supporting gardening and housing schemes, and the rediscovery of community concepts for the collectivization of domestic work seems to become an important issue for recent housing concepts.

In some papers Peter Gleichmann applied the civilisation theory approach of Norbert Elias to everyday behaviour patterns like sleeping, defecation and hygiene. He showed us the importance of analyzing historic development processes to understand their impact on to-day’s behaviour patterns. At Kassel School of Architecture I tried to apply this approach for the functional analysis of housing. In a series of seminars we looked into the history of the kitchen and domestic work facilities and studied the cooking equipment, storage facilities and supply problems. Also eating habits were included in the analysis.

Students continued this work in projects and diploma theses and some of them now continue in doctoral dissertations of which the interim results shall be presented.

The first paper by SYLVA STÖHR, Kassel, is called "The tradition emerges from the walls" and aims at the socio-historic analysis of residential architecture. This presentation is part of the societal development. It focuses on the historic episode of the mid-eighteenth century, when the segregation of public and private space took place; when the allocation of certain functions to certain rooms, which earlier was not usual, apart from kitchen, store and toilet, could be noticed. In search of the origins of sex role polarization the author found public = male, and private, domestic, family, backbone = female. The appearance of corridors in the floorplans signalized the need to avoid shame and embarrassment by
bypassing rooms which formerly were only accessible one through the
other. Changes in the family and household structure are related to
changing house layouts of the time era.

The other paper by ONSILA LUFFIO is called "The functionalist kitchen
and the modern movement" and focuses on the discovery of domestic work
as work equivalent to industrial work and thus being made subject to ra-
ionalisation under the influence of early labour analyses in the USA.
The paper attempts to make evident how in the twenties this approach to
kitchen planning was absorbed by the architects who designed mass hous-
ing at new minimal standards with new building techniques and with archi-
tectural aesthetics yet unknown to the users. The acceptance of these
new approaches was different in different social classes. The modernity
was more accepted by middle class. The author together with me contin-
ued to evaluate some of the historic references and source material. As
most of these references are not generally available, we have started
to edit an annotated text book on domestic work in the twenties to be
published soon. Already available is a publication on "the function-
alist kitchens and the modern movement", written in 1982 as our first at-
tempt to dig into this field.

Since we have some students from non-european countries who work on our
projects on domestic architecture, we asked them to describe the same
phenomena in their ethno background and to cross-reference their findings
in the European social and civilization history. This was the beginning of
two projects which are still continued as doctoral dissertations.
Both these approaches are our attempt to let non-european students dis-
cover the problems of their home countries by doing anthropological his-
torical studies. This may help them to find their ethnic identity and
to understand the impact of European influence on the architecture in
their countries.

Two other presentations may be introduced at IAPS 1994:

First the paper by GHASSAN EL-RAHMAN from Damascus/Syria on changes in
the Damascus town house and their impacts on the urban pattern and on
the ways of life of the residents. Every building component and space of
the town house is analysed in its Islamic religious ritual meaning, its
functional importance and utilisation, its contribution to climatic
control, to the physical structure and fabric of the house. Also the
choice of material and craftsmanship is analysed in how far they shape
class building elements.

The other paper by GERALD HABANNA from Kenya/Africa on the round
houses of the Luo and Masai tribes in Kenya and Tanzania attempts to ana-
lyse the traditional domestic architecture where its production and
maintenance is part of the women's duties and where the domestic equip-
ment, storage and tools show great similarities to the house forms.

Both papers discuss the importance of the European influences and the
changes to re-establish native elements in post-colonial future architec-
ture.

Both papers show in great detail the close interrelation between house
form, functional arrangement of furniture and equipment and shape and
kind of tools on one side and ethno-sociological issues like rituality.
myths, family structure, power and subordination, the notion of hospitality, sex role differentiation etc. on the other. One of the reasons for presenting the research of the two non European authors in the context of this joint presentation is that we all experienced much insight into mutual impacts of house form and social culture in anyone’s native country by learning through trans-cultural comparisons.

All authors are not anthropologists or social scientists but architects and thus try to apply their awareness drawn from research to improve the standard of design in housing. Since we do research into the history of domestic work we also assess newly designed housing to look into the usability of the plans for domestic work. There are only few schemes which can really be worked in without functional or organismal distraction, without too much distinction and separation of "producers" from "consumers" within the family, without role polarisation and discrimination of women, but with a chance to re-integrate work and leisure and to overcome barriers to neighbours, with the mutual benefit of support and collaboration if this is wanted and found necessary.

This approach to research and to architectural criticism should aim at an architecture with people in mind, an architecture of high use value, but this approach does not find much support in the male-dominated neo-formalist architectural education. Not even the housing schemes for passive solar energy or for biological architecture show great sensitivity for the strain and burden of domestic work and many of them are just not easy and agreeable to work in.

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L*HABITAT ET L*EXPERIENCE DE L*EFFRACTION

Cette etude tente de faire apparaître les traits fondamentaux de l*expérience du chez soi à travers un vécu particulièrement dramatique de l*intrusion, celui du cambriolage. La question qui la sous-tend porte sur ce qui constitue le noyau de l*expérience de la maison, ce qui est vitalement atteint à l*occasion du cambriolage.

Elle s*appuie sur des données recueillies au cours d*entretiens centrés, non dirigés, entrepris auprès de seize hommes et de vingt femmes adultes urbains, vivant en famille et appartenant aux couches aisées de la classe moyenne. Tous ont été cambriolés au moins une fois en un an avant la date de l*entretien. Tous ont été pris au hasard dans le registre officiel des domiciles cambriolés et ont été contactés sur notre demande par un service de la Police.