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This was Tomorrow! The ‚colonial Modern' and it's blind spots

The ‚colonial Modern' and it's blind spots

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After the Second World War, modern housing and urban planning projects in Europe acquired a symbolic function for the future-oriented reorganisation of modern societies and their ways of life under Fordist conditions. By the mid-1960s, the social housing complexes built for hundreds of thousands of families in France, England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland and the U.S.A. had already become, and would remain, international symbols of the failure of modernism. Described as inhospitable because of their strict functional separation of work, leisure and housing and their isolation from city centres, post-war modernist architecture and above all social housing represents a frequently cited negative backdrop (Mitscherlich 1965). In Germany, the law on social housing was recently amended and abolished, while in France, following Sarkozy's 'hard line', post-war modernist mass housing is

associated above all with the struggle of young migrants against discrimination, deportation and social inequality.

At the same time, architectural theory has also seen a reversal in attitudes towards mass housing in recent years. This is particularly evident in publications, research projects and exhibitions on post-war architecture, most of them dealing with the projects and protagonists of Team 10.

Team 10 were a group of architects who emerged from the CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne). The group acquired the name 'Team 10' because at the ninth CIAM congress in the summer of 1953 they were charged with organising the tenth congress. The ninth CIAM Congress in the early 1950s already ended in conflicts with representatives of the older generation such as Le Corbusier, Gropius and Giedion. Team 10 criticised the functional separation between housing, work, leisure and transport in urban planning called for in the pre-war 'Charta of Athens', propagating instead the interconnectedness of housing, street, district and city. The context for this discussion was a presentation by the architects George Candilis and Shadrach Woods at the congress. There they introduced a grid, a sort of explanatory chart with pictures and text, in which they showed not new architectural or urban planning designs but a *bidonville* or shantytown that Moroccan internal migrants had erected on the outskirts of Casablanca. This shantytown was presented as a teaching model for the architects and town planners of the next generation. The young architects were also able to present their colleagues with a completely planned and realised building that they had constructed alongside the shantytowns in Casablanca as a sort of experimental structure for 'Muslims'. This structure and the presentation of the 'gamma grid' had a lasting influence on the younger generation of architects worldwide, since modernism

appeared here to have adapted to local climatic and 'cultural' conditions and abandoned its universalist path. The new ideas of Team 10 and their critique of the older generation ultimately led to the dissolution of the CIAM as an organisation, and the members of 'Team 10' began to develop their projects and organised meetings independently up until the death of Jaap Bakema in 1981.

In the past three years, a large travelling exhibition called 'Team 10 - A Utopia of the Present' (1953-1981) and an extensive catalogue have taken a fresh look at and documented Team 10's work.[1] The equally interesting follow-up projects and historical research, too, however, tend to leave wholly unexplored the context in which these plans and photographs, which circulated in countless international journals beginning in 1953, were able to arise.

Even in current historiography, they also largely ignore the broader planning structures in which Candilis's and Woods's Casablanca construction project was embedded, as well as the resulting follow-up projects and inhabitation after Moroccan independence, or its influence on urban planning today. The architect's view and the authorship of the object of his/her analysis and planning also remains unquestioned, along with the question of the representation of architecture itself, which is generally photographed in the uninhabited state of its first completion. Above all, however, there is no explanation of the motives behind the building activities in North Africa. This was already the case in the 1950s, when the Swiss journal *Werk* introduced the Moroccan and Algerian plans in 1957 as 'Building in France', although Morocco was once again independent. The colonial and anti-colonial conditions in which it arose were also forgotten in the discourse about European post-war modernism, whether it was being vilified or historically reconceptualised.

The exhibition project that opens on 29 August 2008 at the House of World Cultures will address these omissions.[2] It will cast a light on the colonial modernism of post-war architecture that also inquires into the origins of the 'anthropological turn' in post-war modernism, as well as the possible outcomes, a form of memory work in which the modernist project is understood not as a pure power relationship, but also as a space of negotiation among diverse actors with differing privileges.

The City of Tomorrow

'The principles of the Athens Charter shall now be applied to Morocco. There is virgin soil and it would be inexcusable not to use it for urban redevelopment.' (*Arts*, August 1949)

In 1956, the year the foundation stone was laid for the Hall of Congresses in West Berlin as a counter-project for the Stalinallee in East Berlin, Morocco was ushering in the end of the French protectorate. The port city of Casablanca, which the French occupiers had started to develop in 1912 and through intense construction activity in the 1940s and 1950s turned into a model of modern urban architecture embodied the vision of a 'city of tomorrow', of the type that was to be discussed at the 1957 International Building Exhibition Hansaviertel, in Berlin. (The Hansaviertel district is not far from the House of World Cultures.)

Casablanca was not the only city to assume a special position in architectural discourse, other North African cities such as Algiers, Oran and Tunis played a similar role. For European architects these cities became canvases on which the dreams for a large modern metropolis could be projected and above all realised. Hence, Algiers

served not only as a projection surface for Le Corbusier's Plan Obus in 1933, but also became in the 1950s the locus for the realisation of new urban projects by architects like Fernand Pouillon and many others.

The master plan for Casablanca – branded 'monstrous' at the time – is beyond doubt the largest and most representative example. It was designed in the 1950s by urban planner Michel Écochard and realized in cooperation with young architects who were trained in France and Switzerland, including among others Marcel Lods, Georges Candilis, Victor Bodiansky, Shadrach Woods, Pierre Emery, Jean Hentsch, André Studer, Jean-Francois Zevaco.

The realisation of the Casablanca plan did not only depend upon the new ideas of architects and urban planners, but also upon the capacity of a large series of engineering and construction firms from France, Spain, Germany and Italy that regarded the colonial territory as a space of expansion.

Under 20th century colonial rule North Africa served as a laboratory for European modernisation projects and projections. The city of Casablanca was not only the locus of Europe's first underground car park and the largest American-scale swimming pool, but also became the testing ground for several modernisation strategies during and after the Second World War. Some of these were subsequently implemented in post-war Europe: the management of the migrating rural population and its urbanisation in new housing projects and, related to this, educating this population to accept new forms of industrial production and mass consumption, as well as new modes of dwelling (Bourdieu 2003). Hence, colonial modernisation was not only directed at and against the colonised, but it also played a major role within the

modernisation projects in Europe's metropolises: 'If there was a civilizing mission, its target was the French.' (Rabinow 1989, 286)

Housing and urban planning projects acquired a symbolic role in the constructions for a new society and a modern way of living that several European countries initiated after the Second World War. The innovative role of post-war planning and architecture in North Africa, particularly in Morocco, and its influence on the revision of modern architecture and urbanism are the subjects of the exhibition and public events of **In the Desert of Modernity**, to be held at the House of World Cultures. The project will reflect a paradigm shift in post-war modernism: from the acknowledgement of the pre-modern through translation into modern forms, to the recognition of everyday practices as basis for planning methodologies. This shift from a morphological perspective of Modernism to the gaze on local actors and everyday practices in architecture discourse took place in the space and time of anti-colonial struggles, the emerging moment of liberation. Hence, the project's aim is to show that the transformations in architectural discourses resonate simultaneously with the colonial and the anti-colonial project and likewise were pushed forward due to migration. Here the **In Desert of Modernity** offers a shift in perspective, as it will not focus on the colonial conditions of Modernity as based on traditional distinctions between civilized/ uncivilized, ruler/powerless, specialist/layman, but rather on the historical conjuncture of modernity and its internal critique in which colonial Empires fall apart and anti-colonial liberation movements entered the stage of history.

Colonial Modernity

‘The colonies constituted a laboratory of experimentation for new arts of government capable of bringing a modern and healthy society into being.’ (Rabinow, 289)

The relation of modern architecture to North Africa has often been explained as a matter of interest in the ‘cubic forms’ of ‘white houses’, which architects and artists had been identifying as a specific formal repertoire throughout the Mediterranean area from the late 19th century on. Educational tours by Europeans to North Africa, as well as the associated orientalisms, exoticisms and erotic fantasies, are not only to be found in Le Corbusier’s travel descriptions, but encouraged generations of western artists and architects to project their ideas onto this region (Said 1994, Gödecke 2006).

In the Desert of Modernity aims to investigate in greater depth the relationship between the modern movement in architecture, North Africa and colonialism. While in post-war Europe architects and planners were asked to design projects that complied with viable standards and swift realization, in North Africa the visionary statements and models of the modern movement were tested, developed and realized. The project holds that the post-war development of the modern movement cannot be thought without the experiments and experiences of architects and urban planners in North Africa.

The territory of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco became under Italian or French rule a true testing ground on which buildings and housing estates were realized, often on a vast scale. Hence, several modern architects, who met regularly through the CIAM (*Congres*

Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne), developed and employed their epistemological, discursive and design tools for mass housing under colonial conditions in Africa and not in Europe (Baghdadi 1999, Mumford 2000). The possibility to further experiment with the 'theoretical and radical models' of European Modernism in North Africa from the 1940s onward, as well as the possibility to revise, or adjust them have rarely been considered as the ground for post-modern architectural thought. In combination with the confrontation with colonial modernity and the era of global de-colonialisation the building practices in North Africa evoked a variety of new approaches and considerations for mass housing projects in the 1950s and 1960s.

Thus, **In the Desert of Modernity** argues that there is a deep relation between colonialism, anti-colonialism, modernity and post-modernity, as many post-colonial scholars have vividly expressed, but what have been rarely debated in the architectual discourse. On the one hand colonialism played a central role for the constitution of the modern European subjectivity which was formulated against the background of non-european and traditional societies. Moreover, the ideological concept of Modernity could only be conceived by constructing a scaled time in which non-european societies were declared pre-modern (Osborne 1995, Jameson 2002). On the other hand it is precisely this act of structuring time as part of a project of epochalisation that was increasingly challenged and relegated – especially by the colonised themselves – during the 19th and 20th century. Even so, this structuring of time has continued up to the present and repeatedly reappears as a subject of political and philosophical dispute till today.

Major modernists concepts such as Le Corbusier's *Plan Obus* for Algiers ignored functioning housing structures or inhabitants who might have had their own logics of settlement. This abstraction of the everyday context as a Tabula Rasa, as an uninhabited and/or 'uncivilized' space is a characteristic feature of the territorial imaginations, practices and representational policies of colonial modernism (Overy 2005). In Casablanca this attitude could already be encountered in the plans of the French, after they belligerently took over the administration of Morocco in 1910, to create a port for Europeans where 'as few Moroccans as possible lived' (Cohen/ Eleb 2002).

Nevertheless, the idea of projecting into an 'empty territory' as well as the concept and technologies to develop, plan and order it, is not bound to colonialism only, but to the very emergence of modern urbanism and capitalist societies. This understanding of architecture and planning as a bio-political tool to generate new relations between space, body and health, was from the beginning of the industrial urbanisation process related to ways in which the new working classes (mostly rural migrants) were governed and controlled. Mass-housing projects that developed in Paris, New York, London and Berlin in the 19th century were based on arguments borrowed from the prevailing hygienist discourse and were inspired by the desire for order.

Thus, our inquiry does not place the colonial roots of the emergence of Modernity on the African continent but try to understand the heterogenity of colonialism and modernism, as a constant flux of domination and resistance, sometimes located in simultanity and dependency and/or in the chronotopes of transnational migration of people, thoughts and practices.

Becoming Great Numbers

One of the major issues that architects in Morocco and Algeria were confronted with from the 1930s on was in fact rural migration to the industrial cities. In Morocco the *Service de l'Urbanisme* of Michel Écochard which co-operated with ethnologists, geographers and sociologists, was asked for a response to the improvised construction by the rural population, of hut settlements – so-called Bidonvilles – at the outskirts of cities like Casablanca and Rabat. These new areas – somewhere halfway between rural and urban life – were not at all anticipated by the protectorate administration and soon became perceived as sites of unsanitary conditions and revolt. Finding solutions to accommodate this 'greatest number' of rural migrants became the matter of the day.

The strategies of the S*ervice de L'Urbanisme* varied from the re-ordering of the bidonville (*restructuration*) to temporary rehousing (*relogement*) and finally to the creation of new housing estates (*habitations à loyer moderé*), based on the standard Écochard grid. All of these strategies were continuously located in the field of tension defined by the emancipatory goals to improve the everyday life of people and the search for appropriate governing tools that complied with these intentions. Hence ambiguous attitudes emerged towards the existing territory and its inhabitants.The Écochard plan applied notions of 'culturally-specific' dwelling that took existing dwelling practices as a point of departure and resulted in different dwelling typologies for different categories of inhabitants. These categories where indeed built upon already existing definitions of cultural and racial difference. However only under colonial rule they were reinforced and turned into governmental power technologies.

The new housing complexes - the Ain Chok, Carriere Centrale, El Hank and Sidi Othman, among others - were divided into developments for Muslims, Jews and Europeans. The estates for „Muslims“ were built farther away from the colonial European city on the edge of an empty intermediate zone known as the ‘Zone Sanitaire’. It had been created by the protectorate and was bounded by circular roads and the motorway. This striking spatial segregation was a legacy of the colonial apartheid regime, in which Moroccans were forbidden to enter the protectorate city unless they were employed as domestic servants in european households (cf. Cohen and Eleb 2002, Abu-Lughod 1980, Celik 1997). The buildings constructed for Moroccan Jews, were also placed outside the city centre, but in a sort of intermediate zone within sight of the French population, located on the Corniche, between the exclusive residential area of Anfa and the old Medina.

This spatial organisation of the residential and urban planning projects of the 1950s was hierarchical. It divided the Moroccan population into religious groups (Jews, Muslims), while the Europeans remained a universal category. Obviously the Europeans were divided by class affiliation. Factory workers the so called ‘poor whites’ or ‘mauvais colons’ were spatially segregated from the bourgeois inhabitants too. They lived apart from the colonial city in the quartier Maarif , many of them had fled dictatorship and persecution to seek refuge in Casablanca. Even though, the protectorate avoided the language of class position created by colonial and capitalist rule, it discovered the Moroccan population as a new, cheap labour force and was only able to realise its modernisation project precisely because of the diverse migration from inside Morocco as from precarious econimical or political regions in Europe.

From the Machine for Living to Habitat

“’We regard these buildings in Morocco as the greatest achievement since Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation at Marseilles. Whereas the unité was the summation of a technique of thinking about 'habitat' which started forty years ago, the importance of the Moroccan buildings is that they are presented as ideas; but it is their realization in built form that convinces us that here is a new universal.’ (Alison and Peter Smithson, 1955)

Ill. Advertisement for the offices of ATBAT-FRANCE and ATBAT-AFRIQUE in L’Architecture D’Au Jourd’ Hui, May1951

One of the starting points for **In the Desert of Modernity** are the paradigmatic buildings planned during the post-war period, such as the Sidi Othman project (Casablanca, Morocco 1951) designed by Swiss architects André Studer and Jean Hentsch and the Cité Verticale project (Casablanca, Morocco 1952). This last project was designed by the young architects Georges Candilis and Shadrach Woods together with Victor Bodiansky that became acquainted on the building site of Le Corbusier’s Unité d'Habitation in Marseille and afterwards worked for ATBAT Afrique, one of the engineering and construction firms that played an important role in the development of modern projects in North Africa.

The *Cité Verticale* consisted of three high-rise buildings and was erected as one of the ‘test projects’ in Michel Écochard’s *Cité Horizontal*, a low-rise urban scheme that was applied for several extensions of Casablanca. The project of Candilis and Woods was situated in the direct vicinity of what was then one of Casablanca’s largest Bidonvilles: the *Carrieres Centrales*. The *Cité Verticale*

project was explicitly directed at the so-called 'evolué'; a Moroccan inhabitant that was heading towards a modern way of life and dwelling. It coupled evolution in the modes of dwelling to new architectural approaches of the dwelling environment.

The Bidonville, that epitomised for large parts of the Morrocan population the effects of colonial modernity on everyday life, played an important role in the definition of these new architectural approaches. As a dwelling environment the Bidonville was not only the locus of the first encounters and negotiations with the modern city for a lot of people coming from rural areas, above all it was also the spatial expression of a non-planned way of organizing an urban environment. European architects like Candilis and Woods declared the Bidonville as a full-fledged study object and investigated this environment in an anthropological manner. They 'learned' from the inhabitants of the bidonville how everyday dwelling practices enabled an urban neighbourhood through self-organisation.

The force of dwelling practices, discovered in the improvised urban environment of the bidonville, gave rise to new concepts for the dwelling such as *habitat*. The notion of *habitat* – which deliberately differed from modernist notions such as 'Machine for Living' – indicated that new dwellings were adjusted to accommodate culturally defined dwelling practices. Distinctions were made between the 'population of European origin requiring a European-style *habitat*' and the 'Arab population' that was accustomed to 'a *habitat* of special layout and construction'. The 'modes of habitat' of the migrants from rural areas were articulated into the ensuing urban plans of the housing estates and the ground plans of the dwellings.

This anthropological approach of the dwelling represented a critique to earlier rigid notions such as 'Existenzminimum' held by the *CIAM*, which had barely, if at all, taken into consideration the actual appropriation of space. In marked contrast to their modern forefathers, some young architects from *ATBAT Afrique* recognised that the territory was already inhabited (Cohen & Eleb 1997, Avermaete 2005), in the truest sense of the word.

The *Cité Verticale* and the insights gained in Casablanca thus played a very important role in the international discourse on *Another Modernism* (Avermaete 2005), as conducted later by a new generation of avant-garde architects within Team 10 (Risselada & Van den Heuvel, 2005). During the 1950s international architectural journals, as *l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and *Architectural Design* paid ample attention to the notion of *habitat*. Ultimately, the presentation of the Bidonville in the so-called *GAMMA Grid* and the inherent critique expressed at the penultimate *CIAM* meeting in Aix-en-Provence in 1953 led to the dissolution of the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne*. Commenting on the specific approach that emerged in North Africa, Alison and Peter Smithson, as well as Georges Candilis and Shadrach Woods (all members of Team 10), wrote that: "this work had allowed a new architectural language to develop that had initially been created by the structures of inhabitation." (Smithson 1968)

All this took place, however, against a background of a growing military presence in the streets of Casablanca, where resistance to the French administration had long since assumed an organised form. The national strike of 1952 announced the beginning of independance. Bombings and demonstrations became daily occurrences. The Bidonville of the *Carrieres Centrales* and the *Ben M'sik* were one of the main bases for these actions.

However, despite resistance and war the French administration kept on planning modern housing estates. In Algeria these dynamics continued until the very end of the war in 1961. The particular relationship between architectural projects and war in North Africa is best expressed in the now famous remark by the first *Résident Géneral* of Morocco, Hubert Lyautey: 'A new construction site is worth a battallion, a finished building a victory.'

Opération Million

"The notion of the '*Habitat* for the greatest number' without unit, implies an original way of thinking. Numbers are replaced by facts." (Georges Candilis, 1960)

Even before the 1960s, progressive modernisation and colonial liberation struggles had begun to trigger the next movement: migration from the South to the North – to Europe. Not only people moved from rural areas to cities, or emigrated from the former colonies to France, Belgium, England and Germany. The specific approach to dwelling environments, which emerged in North Africa also migrated from the North African suburbs to the peripheries of the European cities, where HLM buildings were frequently erected on or alongside migrants' settlements. It was then that the first of post-war Europe's *Grand Ensembles* – so familiar to us now – came into being.

The resulting new housing estates can be considered as the spatial articulation of the modernization model of Western Europe in the 1950s: Fordism. This model held that the organization of labour and the systematic redistribution of the gains to all social classes, would engender entrance to mass consumption and thus to new

life styles. Housing was believed to play a pivotal role in this access to consumer society. The house was regarded as the site for the accumulation of typical products of Fordism: machines, household appliances, etc. Moreover, it was considered as a social stepping stone whose structuring role justified an extensive public financing policy, direct or through privileged access to credit. Investment in mass housing became a generally accepted modernization policy throughout Western Europe in the 1950s that resulted in numerous urban programs, financial policies and architectural competitions.

Against this background, the insights on dwelling and 'building for the greatest number' that had been gained under colonial conditions found their way into suburban planning in France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany (Fourcaut 2004) from the mid-1950s on. In France these methods were used to overcome a delapidated housing stock in need of modernization and large populations in the Bidonvilles that were found in most large cities. In 1954, Candilis' team won the *Opération Million*, a competition which aimed to reduce the production cost of a two-bedroom apartment to one million francs (half the standard cost), launched in 1953 by the French Ministry of Reconstruction and Urbanism. Teams of constructors, engineers and architects were asked to develop innovative solutions for dwellings.

The winning project by Candilis-Josic-Woods was based on the experiments of the architects in North-Africa and envisaged the development of new dwelling typologies that allowed for change and diversification in dwelling practices. Over the next twenty years, the team of Candilis, Josic and Woods built more than 10,000 low-rent flats, especially in the banlieues of big cities like Paris, Toulouse and Marseilles. Though these new housing developments were often planned to replace the bidonville and

were often built with labor force from the bidonville the inhabitants of the new housing estates belonged mainly to the lower middle classes. It is only when the Grands Ensembles began to experience the exodus of their wealthier residents that the inhabitants of the Bidonville moved in, facing rapidly deteriorating social conditions and a further impoverishment of amenities available to them.

Throughout France, and in several other European countries, the approaches for Building for the Greatest Number were applied at large scale –affecting not only numerous peoples dwelling environment but also large parts of the territory. In 1961, the team of Candilis-Josic-Woods won the competition for the satellite town Toulouse Le Mirail. In 1963, construction started on the town, which had to house 100,000 people (Avermaete, 2005). These buildings hit the headlines: not only because of the 'greatest number', but also because, in 1998, it was in one of these banlieues that the first riots broke out after the police had shot youngsters.

Today political groups from the French banlieues call themselves the 'Indigène de la République'. With this self-description, they not only condemn the social conditions in the banlieues as being the administration of people and social relations and thus as analogous to techniques of colonial rule. They also aim at the core of the janus-faced character of modernity, since as the colonized, or as Jacques Rancière has put it, the "uncounted" in general, by claiming their rights represent the true meaning of democracy. Thus, with their critique, they go beyond the conclusions of research into colonialism which demonstrates that certain techniques of rule are (post-)colonial re-imports. What they rather put on the agenda is the tension within modernity between the governance of people as populations and their appellation as autonomous subjects, as citizens.

Learning from…

Looking back upon the rationale of observation, the empiricism of ATBAT-Afrique in North Africa, it appears as an uncritical validation of the ethnological and anthropological regimes and artistic narratives of the 19th and 20th centuries on the African region. Candilis, Woods and Bodiansky applied ethnological methods in order to build accommodation that complied to the dwelling practices of local inhabitants. In doing so they transfer improvised dwelling practices, which, like migration itself, are a type of survival strategy, into planning concepts for architectural and urban environments. Moreover, with their concept for 'culturally specific' dwelling typologies, the architects used an essentialized notion of (dwelling) culture. In their everyday practice, however, the inhabitants transgressed these typologies and entered by appropriating the built environment a process of what can be called a "negotiation" with modernity – changing the ground plot, inserting windows, building extensions are ways of negotiating in the sense of an intermediation.

Neverthless, these new concepts of post-war architectural modernism – and especially their focus on the force of dwelling practices – are strongly related to the praxis of population groups that had become mobile, and which planners and architects had sought to regulate and control with the planning instrument of architecture for the 'greatest number'.

As, within the specific case of the post-war Masterplan of Casablanca's outskirts, the architects George Candilis and Shadrach Woods integrated modern and pre-modern practices and intervened simultaniuosly in the authoritarian gesture of technocratic planning and modernization practices in Europe. Here

again, Modernism constituted and transformed itself by integrating the „premodern“ as „modern“ but in opposition to the fathers generation by acknowledging the everyday life and the inhabitation of the territory by people that fight for their rights as citizens. Colonialism – in its different articulations and phases – turns out to be a precondition for the realisation of not only modernism, but also ‘Another modernism’ of the post-war era. This other modernism engaged with the locus of anti-colonial liberation movements – the Bidonville – and drafted from there a new perspective that focussed on dwelling practices and hence was critical of previous modern approaches of the dwelling.

The results of the research done in the shanty towns on the outskirts of cities and the buildings that consequently arose in Casablanca and Algiers had a lasting impact on the generation of architects of the 1950s and 1960s. The CIAM Meetings and the grids were merely important media for circulating these ideas. Articles in architectural magazines, exhibitions and competitions internationalised these concepts. Cultural expressions and techniques which had hitherto not been regarded as modern, but as pre-modern, were now assiduously studied by architects. The act of dwelling was described (with the eye of the researcher on that which is essentially human [Ur-Human]) as evolutionary (Baghdadi, 1999). On the one hand the term *habitat* has become the standard term internationally for both housing-estate architecture and dwelling. On the other the ‘learning from vernacular architecture’ has transformed the pre-industrial city and nomadism into important influences for design, research and planning methods. Such references can be found in the influential exhibition *Architecture without Architects* (Bernard Rudofsky, MoMa 1964), and in the works of Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, Giancarlo de Carlo, Moshe Safdie and Yona Friedman, and many of the architects in

the post-colonial world who adopted or continued to develop these approaches and perspectives (Scott 2000, Hughes/Sadler 2000). So far, little attention has been given to this strain of anthropologically motivated post-war modernism, which synthesised the pre-modern and the modern, neither attempts have been made to situate it internationally or transnationally, nor in relation to its specific form of Euro-centrism. The allusion to the kasbah and the bidonville as models for the conception of a HABITAT, should be reconsidered and debated from it's morphological, culturalising and ethnicising perspectives.

Architects, critics and theorists have only marginally questioned the relation between ethnographic perspectives and the prevailing colonial and post-colonial conditions or identified them as conditions. If anything, they have confirmed ethnographic regime in which the debate of post-war modernism arose. But at the same time the struggles of the anti-colonial liberation movements were excluded and thus also excluded the post-colonial subjects from being subjects of modernism (Crinson, 2003). Instead, the method of 'learning from...' has been celebrated since the 1950s as a turn towards daily life and use. To this very day, there has been no questioning, in terms of the theory of power, of the notion of 'learning from...', which is still regarded as signifying 'better' or more ethical planning (and is still considered the more ethical way of practising art, e.g. Rem Koolhaas, 2007). The project at the House of World Cultures wants to proceed from this point. The House of World Cultures is an appropriate place not at least because it itself raises this question of who, when and why something becomes the subject or object of knowledge.

Modernity and Migration

The promising designs with which the members of Team 10 challenged the universalism of the first generation modern movement architects like Ernst May, Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier, have today become the loci for social and political struggles over migration and citizenship in the banlieues and the suburbs of Toulouse, Nanterre and elsewhere. They have become sites of resistance (Abdallah 2000). Retrospectively, this can be looked upon as a way for the emancipatory promises of the modernists to re-surface: through the social movements in the banlieues, which frequently situate themselves in the context of post- or neo-colonial relations. In this sense, the banlieues are a reminder that 'the denied colonial history of the European city has long since come *home*.' (Gödecke, 2006)

The intention of architects and urban planners that wanted to revise modern architectural and planning approaches by integrating knowledge on dwelling practices and habits into urban planning and architecture, was ambivalent, because ethnographic knowledge is ultimately based on specific production conditions – on conditions that might even lead to a fundamental epistemological 'misrecognition' (Appadurai, 1996). This assumption is sound to the extent that colonialism creates an 'ethnographic state' (Dirks, 2001), in other words: it subjugates the colonised on the basis of ethnographic knowledge. What is epistemologically misrecognised is rather the status of living conditions and the way the colonised live: instead of taking anthropological knowledge about the lifestyles of the colonised at face value, anthropology – including the anthropology of the 'other' modern – must itself be interpreted as an arena of colonial struggles. (Mudimbe, 1998)

A first sign of this relationship already exists in the link between the Bidonvilles and modern buildings: for those who settle in the Bidonvilles are mostly migrants moving within a country, in other

words: people who change their life situation by migrating for a great variety of reasons (some of which are the results of colonialism). However, immigrants and migrants are not simply 'character masks' of the push and pull effect to which they are subjected, but rather a 'real social movement, analysis of which must always include the subjective side too' (Mezzadra 2000, 286). Thus, the founding father of German sociology, Max Weber, sees migration as the expression of a conscious endeavour to escape both the patriarchal system of the countryside and the despotism of the large landowners. For Weber, the flight from the land is a form of 'mobilisation for the class struggles' a 'latent strike' (Weber ...XXI/4, 452) which helps to bring down an entire socio-economic system. Furthermore, present migration from and through Africa cannot be reduced to the catastrophic conditions under which it inevitably takes place. The notion of forced migration, or of migration controlled by mafia-type smugglers, has more to do with the humanitarian legitimation of controlling migration than with the reality of African migration (de Haas 2007).

Considered from this perspective, what Candilis and Team 10 claimed to identify as 'culture-specific housing' (Cohen/Eleb 2002) turns out to be more of a dynamic encounter with the social conditions of a 'Moroccan identity' – even to the point where it becomes a flight from it. Consequently, the envisaged exhibition asks whether the transnational social space of migration, which undoubtedly started to establish itself the moment colonial relationships began forming between France and North Africa (and subsequently included countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany, through its recruitment of guest workers) also communicates with the 'journey' taken by urban and architectural concepts.

Abdemajid Arrif might provide a clue here. In his ethnographic study on the resettlement of the inhabitants of Bidonvilles in Casablanca, he speaks of a dialogue souterrain' between the districts of 'Ben M'sik/Hay Moulay Rachid, Bethnal-Green/Greenleigh et le 13eme arrondissement de Paris' (Arrif 1991, 219). The Robin Hood Gardens, designed by the Smithsons, are in Bethnal Green and the Ben M'Sik, a Bidonville where since the 1980s struggles around rehousing took place, lays right next to the *Sidi Othman* project by Studer and Hentsch. But rather than by it's architects these places are linked to one another by both: the fact that each of them represents a different technique of governing populations and that people in differents ways reacted to this governance. In this sense they are part of a transnational space of migration in which concepts of modernism circulate alongside practices of appropriating buildings and of resisting being resettled.

Consequently, the exhibition aims to link the modernisation myths of the 1950s and 1960s with the social conflicts and representational politics surrounding the Bidonvilles and 'recasement' in France and North Africa during the 1950s and 1960s – up to and including the conflicts over workers' hostels for immigrants in France during the 1970s (Fourcaut, 2004).

Negotiating Modernity

So far, there has been little research into the extent to which migration induced by urban and architectural changes has structurally affected social and political relations between the colonised and the colonisers on the one hand, and transnational migration on the other. If one interprets the social re-ordering of these buildings around the Mediterranean region as a spatial form of disciplining and addressing the inhabitants, then one could,

from today's perspective, discuss a wide range of new questions about the way such planning schemes have been received locally, and how such schemes have changed during and after liberation struggles – right up to the present. The social, political and physical spaces that comply with these different forms of negotiation we coin with the working title ‚cité(s) d'urgence'. These urban zones, that range from bidonville to cité de relogement to the HLM, are the result of colonial spatial politics and resonate on different levels with interior and international migration as well as with conflicts inherent to the colonial bio-politics and power structures.

One aim of the present project is to present migration and localisation and the reciprocal effects and transnational influences of modernism as a new map of influences and relationships between continents and concepts. It is a process in which the ideas of modernism are not only passively received, as it were, by Europe, but move in different directions, circulate and are renegotiated. The concept of negotiation detaches itself critically from those approaches which regard modernism and modernisation (even in a colonial context) solely as impositions. The negotiations over modernity (in the colonial context too) have taken and are still taking place not only in the form of different types of artistic expression, planning techniques and development of modern housing, but are also the product of encounters between different actors, as in the case of the utopian projects of architects, sociologists and planners with (colonised) inhabitants and their equally modernising modes of appropriating the corresponding buildings.

Conceiving of North Africa as a laboratory of modernism therefore also means reflecting upon this ambivalence within modernism. Modern projects are not always and not exclusively concerned with

domination and oppression. Furthermore, recent research on imperialism and colonialism shows that colonial relationships are not to be seen as asymmetrical power relations between two unchanging parties (Cooper/Stoler, 1997). As Edward Said and others before him have clearly pointed out, the modernists and their inherent emancipatory potential have also enabled anti-colonial liberation movements to constitute themselves successfully in their struggle against the colonial powers in the post-war period. The fact that some of the state projects that have arisen as a result have often been unable to realise their promise and frequently metamorphosed into the successors of the colonial powers is equally attributable to the dialectics of modernism. In actual fact, in response to the global liberation movements in the post-war era, the critics of imperial Europe started to write a different modernism, one that exists outside the realms of dominance, control and discipline (Enwezor 2001)

Modernisation gripped everyone (for example, through the influence of Marxism) and unleashed a wave of critical projects worldwide – including, not least, the political and cultural 'revolution' of 1968 in the West. Europe continually redefines itself through colonial space. At the same time, the imaginations and experiences also cause fractures and evoke criticism. Existing narratives are revised and challenged; new actors enter the stage of history.

Research on the project started in 2007. The chosen method involved revisiting paradigmatic buildings in Morocco, France and Germany. The project then examined the ambivalences, interrelationships and transnational relations of modernism from the perspective of immigration/migration and anti-colonial liberation movements. Urban sociologists, historians of architecture, artists and activists from Morocco, France and

Germany gathered for a trans-disciplinary dialogue in a workshop entitled Colonial Modern at the *House of World Cultures* (HWC) in November 2008.

A conference entitled *Colonial Modern II*, conceived as a sequel to its predecessor, will be taking place at the *HWC* from 23 – 25 10 2008. The conference takes up these aspects and expands upon them. The central issue will be the relationship between the governmental practices of the aesthetic regime of modernism on the one hand and the colonial project of modernisation on the other. In both colonial and post-colonial situations in which modernity arose and transformed itself, it is above all the result of conflict-ridden and contradictory appropriations and reinterpretations.

The tensions within the modern project have not been resolved because too little attention has been given to the roles played by the decisive actors in transforming modernity.

The different ways in which the various spheres of modernity – socio-economic, artistic, and political, etc. – are interrelated have been and still are regulated by a regime that changes through negotiations, conflicts and struggles. The project and, in particular, the closing conference, will thus investigate – among other things – the question as to which modi, at which locations, through which actors and forms these negotiations on modernity have taken place and are still taking place, and which conclusions we can draw for current – cultural, scientific and political – problems and perspectives.

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[1] http://www.team10online.org/

[2] The exhibition 'In the Desert of Modernity. Colonial Planning and After' and an accompanying programme of events will take place from 29 August to 2 November 2008 in Berlin at the 'House of World Cultures'.