

Living Patterns

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THIS magazine, in announcing the series, "The New Face of Man," stated that never before has man been subject to such a kaleidoscopic environment as today's. One reason for this changing and highly charged environment is the modern city in which most of the people in Europe and the Western hemisphere live. And in Asia, also, the population is becoming urbanized at a rapidly increasing rate.

There are those who think man is inherently rural; if so, somewhere along the line he has lost that trait. Man may have remained closer to nature if during the evolutionary processes he had retained his tail and his body had kept a complete cover of hair. Just imagine a society composed of people of this description! What kind of economy would be required to meet their consumer needs? And what a task it would be for city planners to plan cities where the people could swing from house to house like monkeys in trees!

Urban and rural differentiation according to appearance or place of residence is not a valid one because the cliché still holds that you can take the boy out of the country but you can't take the country out of the boy. The fundamental difference between the urbanite and the ruralite is in their respective sense of security. The ruralite looks to the land for security. The more productive the land and the closer he is to it, the more secure he feels. The urbanite, in contrast, relies on the group for security and in the city there are numerous groups to which he may belong. The city is by no means "the lonely crowd" where one may be lost through anonymity. It is not implied there are no rural groups. The rural groups are mostly small primary ones and here, too, the group, as well as the individual, looks to the soil for security. This feeling dominates all agrarian societies.

Urban communities, like rural communities, are a way of life as well as a way of making a living. The corollary to this does not always hold that all small towns are embryo cities. Cities are competitive. The principal things for which they compete are power and markets. All small towns cannot become cities, mainly from the lack of "know-how" and the unwillingness to pay the price in both money and human energy.

There is no satisfactory definition for the city. Numerous definitions have been offered but each one has so many exceptions which almost render it invalid. City definitions may be classified under the following heads according to purpose: demographic, geographic, political, or functional. There are those who place social organization as more important than size, including area and population, density and legal status. The trend today is



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away from trying to define cities as such except for census purposes or to establish political boundaries. The standard metropolitan area which includes the central city, its satellites and general area of domination, is forging into the foreground as more representative of the urban way of life than the city, *per se*. And in the near future the standard metropolitan area will probably be forced to yield to the megalopolis as the densely populated area from Norfolk, Virginia, along the Atlantic seaboard to Boston, Massachusetts, has been described.

But regardless of the definition employed, we know that urban areas are places where there are concentrated super-organic, and inorganic units. The fact that the super-organic are included means that the dominant elements in this concentration are groups of human beings.

The urban community is heterogeneous and highly complex. There is little that is static about urban life. It is highly dynamic. It is a flow unlike Caesar's River Arar whose current was so slow the eye could not detect its direction.

The flow of urban life is very rapid and the urbanization processes are increasing in geometric proportions. These, in turn, have accentuated the demand for urban planning and urban planners for which the supply does not even begin to satisfy. Every week we receive requests for city planners for jobs that pay higher salaries than the faculty.

Also, there is no unanimity as to definition for urban planning.

We cannot agree with our genial Irish friend, Dennis O'Harrow, executive director of the American Society of Planning Officials, who said, "The best definition of planning I have heard is, it is intelligent cooperation with the inevitable. It seems to me there is nothing as inevitable as population."

THIS definition is too fatalistic. Actually, planning includes the study of current causal forces and the prescribing of the directions they shall take. Therefore, if we believe in planning we are not likely to be fatalists.

We cannot afford to deal too much here in a philosophy of planning because like all philosophy when taken in large doses, it is highly toxic.

Urban planning is nothing new. It is as old as cities. We have records of city planning going back to antiquity. Had the

much maligned Emperor Nero had as efficient public relations counsel as Julius Caesar, his name would have more prestige with the present generation. It is said he fiddled while Rome burned. Probably, if the truth were known, he acquired his infamous title from disgruntled landlords.

According to some recent historians, the Roman slums in Nero's time stunk to high heaven. He exerted his last ounce of authority and influence in efforts to get the owners of the slums to undertake an urban renewal program on their own initiative and according to their own plans, because at that time the doctrine of the right to private property and private enterprise was beginning to develop but the correlative responsibilities were not as far advanced as they are among most property owners today.

The incomes from these holdings were too lucrative, and the landlords were not about to undertake expensive urban rehabilitation projects with little or no promise of increased revenues. Nero couldn't budge them.

As a last resort he had to rely on direct action and did some realistic planning on his own. He bought quantities of food and other supplies and established a camp down the river for evacuees and procured boats for their removal. Slum dwellers, like other people, are not so easily moved because of the inconvenience regardless of how bad the prevailing situation may be. This principle has been demonstrated time and again in modern renewal projects.

He had no trouble evacuating the area. When provision had been completed for the evacuees he ordered his men to set fire to the slums. After the smoke had cleared away he saw to it that decent housing was erected. Since his plans were completed and while the slums were ablaze, there was little he *could* do but play his fiddle. Nero was not so terrible as some historians would have us believe.

There are a few who confuse urban planning with urban aesthetics. The city beautiful is desirable and civic design is a function of urban culture. It is important, too, because like an open book, it is exposed to view.

But beautiful cities are like beautiful women, dangerous unless clothed with high moral character.

Civic beauty is also sometimes misleading and its appearance belies its soul. It brings to mind a conversation—"This is such a lovely town, so beautifully laid out!" "Yes, isn't it too bad they didn't bury it?"

This university, ten years ago on recommendation of President George L. Cross,

with approval of the Board of Regents, took formal action to meet the challenge of urbanization, especially insofar as its impact relates to Oklahoma; because more than fifty percent of this state's population is urban. A graduate program in regional and city planning was established. The enrollment has not been large because city planners are a selected group. With the assistance of the University Guidance Service a vocational interest profile was made from data we assembled from leading planners in the United States and Canada. This guide is used by various schools over the nation.

The methods of training planners vary from those for training scientists. Everyone has heard the old cliché that the doctor of philosophy is one who learns more and more about less and less. We could say with a tongue in the other cheek that the planner is one who learns less and less about more and more.

IN planning, the emphasis is placed on the synthetic processes rather than the analytic. It is recognized, however, that before the problem can be understood it must first be analyzed.

A city is a super-organic entity composed of many moving parts. The job of the planner is to know how these parts relate to each other and how each is supposed to function. He must have the mind of the scientist and the soul of the artist. He cannot be a jack-of-all-trades, but he must know how to coordinate the work of specialists. He must know how each discipline contributes to urban life. He must be able to detach himself, also, from the urban scene so that he may see it in its proper perspective. The planner is one whose educational background must be all-inclusive. His sympathies must be broad and understanding. He must love people.

Our studies with the Guidance Service and the analysis of our data by John R. Morris, practicum supervisor, show that the interests of the planner resemble most those of the minister, which means that his interests are more with persons than with things.

The parts of the city are incorporeal as well as corporeal, intangible as well as tangible, spiritual as well as material. The planner must be both a dreamer and realist, because he must see his urban environment as it is and as it ought to be. He knows that the future city is now an embryo in the hearts and minds of the present generation more than in our material resources; and it is this embryo that demands all the nurture we can give it. The source for this nurture is in our schools of urban planning.