Medio Ambiente y Comportamiento Humano
2003, 4(1), 15-32.
ISSN 1576-6462

New Partnerships for Action. Building on the Capital of Environmental Psychology and Architecture

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Abstract

Involving community groups in the design process concerning their city or neighbourhood, can play a constructive role in creating responsive environments and, as a result, achieve a higher level of satisfaction for communities.

This calls for stronger and more pervasive focus upon building communities (from a social, economic, environmental, technological and public policy perspective); designers are ideally suited to lead such efforts, but not alone. Professional education is an especially valuable training camp in that it shows, explains, encourages, challenges, questions, leaves freedom of expression, reinforces thoughts and provides discipline. This paper argues that engaging students of architecture into live design projects with community groups can help develop in students important intellectual, critical, professional and social skills of support and reinforcement to the discipline, have a positive impact on the community groups, and finally it can have positive effects of the perception that society has of academic institutions. The paper also shows that the collaboration between students of different disciplines can enrich this learning process; presenting a joint project developed by students of architecture and of environmental psychology, it shows the potential long-term strengths and impacts of such a collaboration.

The experience illustrated had significant implications on students' academic performance and on the spirit of some of the participants involved in the work. Implications for students' education and training and on the development and reinforcement of the community's capacity building will be discussed and suggestions for curriculum development presented.

Key-words: Partnerships, Environmental Psychology, Architecture.

Introduction: the need for connections

Urban scenarios are always challenging professionals with complex problems: the revitalisation of entire deprived communities is one of them, and requires major changes at the social and political level, which

will in turn determine physical transformations. Those affected by such changes are increasingly advancing the right to have a say in the transformation process, to prevent the mistakes of the past (Towers, 1995), to identify, reinforce and stabilise new roles, to become doers rather than those done-to (Forester, 1999). These pressures make involving clients in the design process an increasingly strong requirement for designers, architects and planners.

Design has a strong effect on people and should maximise the quality and responsiveness of the environment (Romice, 2000b). For this to happen, it ought to be based on sound principles and on a deep understanding of the relationships between people and the environment. It is time to reinterpret, challenge and answer Rapoport's attack on architecture, i.e., it has failed to create environments for users, and to reflect on education and practice and their future development (Rapoport, 1987).

Architecture is a challenging and wide field of action; so wide, that there is some agreement on the fact that it is not a discipline. Still, it bears a responsibility of producing environmental systems that work and enhance life; very little can be left to chance and architectural responsibility ought to be optimised. It is not necessary here to get trapped in the debate as to whether architecture is a craft or a science, but it is vital to rethink architecture and what it should mean.

Architecture – and design in general – is in desperate need of intellectual instruments, which can strengthen and make it less accidental. The question to ask is: where does the understanding of the principles that can put architecture at the real service of people lie and how are these principles transmitted? Architectural education very seldom relies on a history of failures to understand problems, analyse causes and effects, consider conditions and variations, or devise solutions. Looking at failures should not be mistaken for a perverse attitude. It is, instead, a sane desire to better understand and devise solutions without simply relying on accepted strengths and attitudes. When this is done (from an urban and an architectural point of view, see Lynch, 1960; Jacobs, 1961; Newman, 1972; Venturi, 1972), the potential impacts are valuable and powerful.

The distinction between *intellectual* and *cultural* capital in architectural education has perpetrated the disconnection between

architecture and other disciplines. Traditionally, architectural education tends to encourage the latter, an attitude that becomes self evident when we consider the state and process of advancement of architectural knowledge and discourse. Architecture academic departments constitute only a small fraction of the total discourse on architecture; their academics exercise far less power in the field than those in other disciplines; architecture is little influenced by the academic world, the main journals of architecture being often disconnected from the academic production; intellectual influences rarely penetrate architecture (Stevens, 2001).

The environmental community is increasingly realising that the interaction with communities is the key to achieving such an involvement and carry out the resolution of disputes at the briefing, planning or perhaps even design stage, rather than once actions have been taken. It has long been argued that this process can be optimised through the establishment of connections between disciplines and fields of research that have experience in observing and analysing environment-behaviour relations (Gifford, 2002). A way to develop architecture more comprehensively such that it responds to its limitations is for it to engage in a dialogue with other fields by means of an equal and not subservient relationship. Environmental psychology is an ideal partner for designers. This paper will focus on the partnership between architects and environmental psychologists.

As an architect working closely with students and community groups on the design of *responsive environments* I believe that the inventory of approaches, methods, new technologies available within the field of environmental psychology - developed to understand what influences people's relationship with their environment and what effects derive from that - could have significant repercussions on the quality of architectural design and planning. This should attract much more consideration than is typically given today; education and practice are *sitting on a treasure* without even noticing it; it is fundamental that more is done to learn how to use this great treasure.

My work aims to explore ways to bring architectural education and environmental psychology together, and to invest its spin-offs within deprived urban areas. It mainly focuses on two areas: 1) an educational one, that explores how to make students of architecture familiar with

environmental psychology principles and to use them as a generative part of the design process; and 2) a consultancy area, where I am working on the development of a framework to support a meaningful and constructive involvement of local communities in urban renewal actions. In both cases, group communication by various means is developed, and a combination of environmental assessment techniques and informative activities are linked to encourage community groups and professionals to work together on the development of observational and analytical skills.

A working scenario

This paper reports on a joint programme of work between two academic departments and an inner city community: Architecture from the University of Strathclyde, Environmental Psychology from the University of Surrey and Govanhill community from Glasgow.

The case study shows how research developed by environmental psychology can be applied to teach students of architecture how to be considerate, responsible and innovative professionals and to involve community organisations in debate on the design of their own environment. The potential effects of these proposals are currently under investigation, but the immediate impact they have had is considerable. The partnership between the Departments of Architecture and of Environmental Psychology derives from the interest generated by my doctoral thesis and from an application of its ideas – the application of a combination of principles/theories (cognitive, behavioural mapping, personal construct theory, questionnaires, Post Occupancy Evaluation) to investigate communities' perception and desires for space and use them in its design, as a learning process between communities, designers and psychologists. This partnership was realised in a joint project between the Department of Architecture in Glasgow and Sighthill community in Glasgow (2000-2001)[1]. The Sighthill experience, which started as a purely academic exercise, had interesting repercussions on students, on the community itself and on the perception of the general public.

[1] Sighthill is a neighbourhood rather close to Glasgow city centre, but physically and socially disconnected from it; it lacks basic services, and has one of the highest concentration of immigrant population in the UK. The neighbourhood has witnessed – even recently – high levels of racial intolerance and generally a deep lack of communication and interaction between residents. The housing conditions are poor, and the social facilities available not sufficient to respond to a population of over 7000 inhabitants with different needs and requirements.

Implications for students' education and training, the development and reinforcement of both fields, and community's capacity building will be discussed; suggestions for curriculum development and community training will be presented.

An educational experience in Govanhill

Engaging students in live design projects with community groups can generate a number of important intellectual and critical spin-offs and can in turn have long-term effects on the development of young professionals and of community capacity building. In particular, it can 1) expose students to a practical view of the profession that is not traditionally promoted in built environment schools (Gurel, Potthoff & Tse, 2000); 2) have positive concrete impacts on the community groups (in terms of services/activities provided), and 3) have positive effects on the perception that the society has of academic institutions (Reardon & Shields, 1997). But this is not enough. In order to guarantee a prepared ground for successful interventions; design professionals must co-operate with experts from other fields and let other forms of knowledge permeate and reinforce the design solutions.

This case study will focus on the educational potentials of collaboration between architecture and psychology students and community groups within a participatory design context. The Govanhill project is set up in an inner city neighbourhood in Glasgow. The experience is fully described in the group's Website.

Establishing a working partnership

For a number of years the Department of Architecture from the University of Strathclyde has been interested in social design – the design of more human environments - (Gifford, 1998) through partnerships with local community groups in the city. My input – focussed on the application of methods belonging to the field of environmental psychology to design - started around 3 years ago. My aim was to create an action process to support students throughout site investigation, brief development and design stages.

In 2000 the Community Design Unit was set up; its first complete experience was the development of new visions and design proposals

involving a local community in Sighthill and concluded with the Exhibition *Building Communities on the Edge*.

In September 2000, the local Tenants Association from Sighthill invited the Community Design Unit to work with the various resident associations, youth, language, elderly, sport, mothers' groups in the area, to try to devise development strategies that would account for the joint needs of the diverse population. Students worked for one year to establish contacts with all groups, develop trust and dialogue with them and among them, reinforce their interest in, and concern for, their neighbourhood. To do so, students joined design and environmental research to principles of environmental psychology and participatory design. The experience had significant implications on students' academic performance and on the enthusiasm of some of the participants involved in the work. Detailed description of the project can be found on the website (http://hampden.arch.strath.ac.uk/Sighthill/startOK.htm). In general, students consulted the population – through the use of mental maps, interactive models, sensory walks, personal constructs theories, interviews, semantic differential and other environmental assessment techniques – to devise planning strategies for the area. These strategies were based on the issues raised during the consultation process, such as transport, public facilities, housing alternatives, open spaces and landscape.

This project was well received by: the community groups involved (who took part in numerous visits and reviews in the department, and commissioned the Design Unit a local exhibition and a report then presented to the planning department); the University who considered the year an extremely valuable experience for the students; the profession (the UK Centre for Architecture and Design hosted an exhibition of the Sighthill Community Design Unit and the Glasgow Institute of Architects awarded two of our students with the prize for the best final year design due to its architectural sensitivity and its social contents) and finally by the media, who covered this experience in a number of articles and on the TV news.

Despite this overall positive response some main issues remained unsolved. The interpretation of clients' needs/wants is complex and requires preparation to prevent gross assumptions. Moreover, designers need a good degree of precision in searching for – and making use of -

information to build a design scenario and to make informed choices: despite the specificity and the contextuality that each of their commissions should posses, they ought to rely also on the quality and quantity of available knowledge on space and people, as much as on the technical education that they receive in schools.

The community consultation carried out in Sighthill provided students with significant information; nevertheless, it was soon realised that only basing design on such information and on students' architectural experience was not a secure determinant for good results. When only confronted with students' ideas, residents' demands often ended up being treated as strict design requirements, compromising the overall quality of the design outcomes: students' responses to such demands were not critical enough to elaborate from them.

Hence the idea of another layer of data and inputs was introduced, relying on a third party in the design process, environmental psychologists, who receive training in - and have the skills to - understand human behaviour in relationship to space and can help translating this into design requirements. Since September 2001 the Department of Architecture of the University of Strathclyde has established an experimental working partnership between its students and students from the Master's course in Environmental Psychology at the University of Surrey[2].

By this time, the Community Design Unit was contacted by Govanhill community and invited to devise ideas for the future development of the area involving its population. A design team constituted by architects-to-be, environmental psychologists and community members was established.

Govanhill: the settings

Govanhill is a mainly residential area ¾ miles south of the River Clyde and Glasgow City Centre, with interesting variations in the urban pattern and in the population mix. It houses a close-knit community of working class with a strong Pakistan contingent, which characterises the cultural diversity typical of many such areas on the periphery of the city centre.

The housing redevelopment of the area has been undertaken by the local community-based Govanhill Housing Association who steadily, over the past 25 years, has established a fine track record for rehabilitating

[2] Prof David Uzzell is the co-ordinator of the environmental psychology team.

old stock and building new houses. Govanhill has the potential to become a viable urban neighbourhood and a desirable place to stay on the edge of the city centre, but needs to come to terms with several problems such as the following: a considerable proportion of the housing stock is still below tolerable standards and the amount of social facilities and public services available are not yet proportionate to the population.

Govanhill needs to address *second generation* development issues such as gap sites and large single-user sites that are redundant and derelict, access, transport and identity. Glasgow has 10% of its land area within the city boundary requiring such land renewal - one of the highest rates in Europe. Moreover, Govanhill has considerably higher unemployment than the rest of the city and its life expectancy is among lowest in Europe. In this respect Govanhill is typical of many urban European neighbourhoods.

Collaborative and participatory design approach

The Govanhill design team has worked to devise plans for the development of the area, and to demonstrate that the design of spaces needs to be more than the bare provision of physical settings. That is, it must achieve liveable environments that can inspire their users, instilling pride, comfort and confidence in them. It has exposed students to a high degree of reality: the educational approach is conducted on the principles of 1) action learning[3] –confronting students with realistic and not just theoretical scenarios - and 2) participatory design – confronting students with a heightened responsibility for their responses by having to address a client group. The realism stems from working with a real client, and from encouraging collaboration between two groups of professionals: architects and environmental psychologists.

[3] Action learning - pioneered by Professor Reg Revans - involves real problems, focusing on learning and actually implementing solutions (Levy and Delahoussaye, 2000); it provides a well-tried method of accelerating learning, which enables people to handle difficult situations more effectively. Action learning is a process of inquiry, beginning with the experience of not knowing 'what to do next', and finding that answers are not available through current expertise. When expertise fails to provide an answer, collaborative inquiry with fellow learners who are undergoing the same questioning experience is always available. To be effective, this partnership in learning needs to be both supportive and at the same time challenging, caring yet questioning. Such partnerships actually create themselves when different people with different ideas, and expertise (clients', architect', environmental psychologists') engage whole-heartedly with each other to resolve each other's problems.

People's evaluative image of the city is hierarchical (Nasar, 1998): they have images of their region, city, neighbourhoods, roads and houses; to each of these images corresponds a level of detail, which expands with familiarity of the place. Time and movement also play a role in perceiving places: changes within the day, seasons, age of perceivers, purposes can have significant repercussions on the images constructed.

Several evaluative methods are available to study the process of environmental experience, from immediate perception, to the formation of symbolic, functional and spatial hierarchies, to the criteria that observers consider more important in a space, to actual preferences for design alternatives. However, none of these methods on their own will generate a complete assessment of an area's qualities and deficiencies, and none of them will on their own assist in generating a comprehensive improvement plan for urban areas. A structured approach to the gradual elaboration of criteria, values and judgments that lead to an area regeneration brief is needed.

The Govanhill team uses a sequential combination of such methods – the Multi Modal Strategy (MMS) - and in particular mental maps, open-ended questions, sensory walks, multiple sorting techniques and semantic differential scales (Romice, 2000a). Based on the above spatial and cognitive hierarchy, it can study actions in relation to places, establish roles in specific contexts, be dynamic and recognise and adapt itself and its procedures to changes in patterns and meanings of places and activities (Canter, 1977). The MMS is based on the idea that none of the above methods on their own will generate a complete assessment of an area's qualities and deficiencies, and none of them will on their own assist in generating a comprehensive improvement plan for urban areas. Furthermore, the use of methods such as semantic differentials depends on the pre-definition of assessment criteria that will form the basis of the polar lists and of the resulting value-judgments. If these criteria are generated by persons outside the community, e.g. by a designer or a facilitator alone, there is the danger that these imported criteria will *contaminate* the exercises because the criteria may represent views and interests of outsiders rather than the community. It is therefore paramount that criteria are generated first inside the community before it can confront the views and concepts of outsiders. All this necessitates a structured approach – the MMS as a series of linked steps - to the

gradual elaboration of criteria, values and value judgment that lead to an area regeneration brief.

For this purpose, the structure of the MMS consists of two phases. The first involves, in a rather intense commitment, a small team of representatives of a local community and designers. This phase is *issue specific*: the team collects, confronts, analyses and organizes information on an area of action and identifies the major issues of concern regarding its urban features; then, it identifies criteria, parameters and priorities for their evaluation. The outcome is a range of factors and scales for the assessment of the issues identified. The second *contextual-phase* uses these criteria, parameters and priorities to capture the view of larger portions of the community. Design parameters are developed from these results.

Over the year, the design team has carried out the following steps:

Input/ commitment	Architecture – environmental psychology: methodologies used
Establish a working team with rules/ roles which brings together a representatives of the various groups in the local community; have regular meetings with them and keep all team members constantly informed about developments	Parr's theory[4] for sample selection; establishment of a ***virtual design studio*** to which all the three main contributors – students and community groups - can access, add information/ comments, get updated.
Design consultation tools for involving the community in discussion about the site are an ongoing process that is used throughout all the design stages	
Build a comprehensive image of the area including students and residents' views, based on evaluation and assessment techniques developed in the field of environmental psychology;	Interactive models, goal setting, mental maps, sensory walks, open-ended questions, photographic surveys, condition surveys.
Develop area strategies responding to the current trends of the community, to its ideas for future development and/ or device alternative proposals, including transports, gap sites, brown field sites, housing, facilities; these have been liased with the association itself, which is currently pursuing a ***green agenda***;	Personal construct theory (and in particular, Multiple sorting task), semantic differential, emotional loading profile, MSA (potentially to be used in the following phases of design).
Design the range of facilities identified as needed in the base of existing research and recommendations from the field of environmental psychology;	MST, SD, POE on currently available resources.
Constant feedbacks between community groups and design team	Exhibitions, work reviews, symposiums, lectures.

The architecture students meet regularly their clients over the year, while they spend most of the collaboration with the environmental psychology students in virtual settings and come physically together three times, to visit Govanhill (Glasgow, January 2002); to visit potential examples similar to those devised for Govanhill and to agree on specific design requirements for them (London, February 2002); to present the final projects to clients and academics (Glasgow; May 2002).

The project started in September 2001 and concluded in June 2002 with the production of a number of fully resolved design solutions that take into account the three experts' contributions.

The client groups from the community have – by the end of this process - available the full range of student work; they organized it in an exhibition and kept it available for future plans. There are chances that this work will be of use to the community: many of the sites addressed by students in fact are currently under observation for development (the north part of the area for mixed development including retail and housing; the north east part for experimental housing; the local baths; the retail areas and all the housing backcourt; two main open spaces and the *gateway* to the area from the city center).

Individual projects include: housing development for households in needs, and to respond to consistent shortage of typologies, together with neighborhood squares, parks, play facilities; community facilities (community centers, training-centers; public squares); retail facilities; small scale industry and work/live units; a local market, unique to Govanhill – to encourage its development as a unique area in the city; implementation of public transport, development of traffic claming initiatives and general re-structuring of the pedestrian and vehicular traffic systems; sustainable center with training and recycling facilities to be re-incorporated in any physical redevelopment of the area; a local museum to celebrate Govanhill's traditional industrial background.

More detailed information on each step of the project can be viewed at the address: http://hampden.arch.strath.ac.uk/govanhill/. So far, students have publicly exhibited their work in a number of community meetings and community conferences. Community members have

[4] For Parr, different age groups may have different environmental needs, so he suggests to include in research/investigation different age groups which may have different environmental needs connected to 5 stages of urbanity: childhood, adolescence, adult domesticy, adult emancipation, the old age (Downs and Stea 1973).

throughout the year been regularly invited to reviews, tutorials, dinners in the Department of Architecture. At the same time, students constantly feedback their work directly to specific groups in Govanhill; in particular, each student, according to the specific projects he/she is working on, has set up a *steering committee* with which he/she collaborates.

With the project concluded, and throughout a good collaboration between the students and the community, it is possible to attempt some conclusions.

Some reflections on the experience

The approach of the Govanhill team to research, design and creativeness must face the challenges and constraints of existing and realistic scenarios and proof itself against a number of obstacles and restrictions. Although the experience of joining communities and universities is still at its initial stages[5], it is possible to list a number of challenges, risks and limitations that need to be addressed and resolved in similar experiences. Further developments will be presented in the new year.

[5] The Department of Architecture, University of Strathclyde has got long tradition of collaboration with local communities; this started in 1969, as a joint project between Raymond Young and a local housing association, and culminated in the establishment of Assist, a practice of professional designers working with local communities on the renovation of the existing tenemental stock. Although members of the Department have, since then, always collaborated with communities (in particular, through the research units USDU, offering expertise in Urban Design and EDAS, offering expertise in sustainability and energy), large scale projects started increasing in size and ambition only in the late 1990s, through collaborations between the Urban Design Unit, then renamed 'Community Design Unit'.

	Repercussions on Education/ students	Repercussions on Community groups	Repercussions on Environment
Positive sides of teaching collaborative projects and social design in schools			
PRIDE Sense of having contributed to the design and development decision process instilled in participants.	Pride for their research/ design work; confidence in its foundations	Pride in having a say on the discussion about their environment	Place attachment, sense of belonging, recognition
RESPONSIBILITY More interest in taking responsibility on what has been done.	Students work with a client, must deliver work, respect ideas and deadlines	Ideas and actions must be respected and defended	More interest in looking after things after contributing to their creation
TEAM-WORKING Share of responsibilities amongst participants, role setting (intra and inter-group collaboration): participants learn how to be reliable, to ask and offer advice.	Collaborative work	Development of trust and establishment of links/ connections within the area	
SUSTAINABILITY The design proposals suggested have a good chance to hold a strong degree of sustainability.	Students contribute with technical knowledge, enthusiasm and time	Community groups are the experts of their area, and can enjoy the 'free' contribution from technical experts[1]	Outcomes are more responsive to a) the context; b) the users; c) the local resources and building capacity
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT Potential joint effect on the neighbourhood and its population, on academia and on the professional development of students.	Development of interactive, contractual, presentational, social and intellectual skills.	Community groups develop evaluative and critical skills, confidence in discussion and 'gain' in-depth, comprehensive knowledge of their area. They are exposed to original ideas and they are left with a range of valuable scenarios for development. Various groups in the community (schools, residential organisations, social groups, elderly, youngsters etc) receive informal training on environmental issues; their horizons are widened and mature debating and questioning attitudes.	
Risks that the collaborative/ participative process can generate			
EXPECTATIONS Risk to raise expectations in participants: goals and realistic scenarios of what can be achieved must be clearly stated immediately.	Students project very rarely can deliver concrete and finite outcomes.	Academic priorities must be clear; clients must be aware that what they can obtain from this experience is – for the moment – simply a repertoire of ideas. Further developments are expected to be produced, but this will require time and experience.	
SKILLS Not everyone will be willing – or capable – to contribute to the process with equal skills.	It is important to define roles, competencies and levels of commitment within the team.		

	Repercussions on Education/ students	Repercussions on Community groups	Repercussions on Environment
Limitations and practical issues to take in account			
ORGANISATIONS The community group identified should have an organisation structure. During the process, new relationships and groups can - and almost surely will - be formed, but an initial central core helps and prevents from spending vast amount of time in identifying potential community leaders, locating target groups etc. On the other side, starting from scratch can also have benefits; leaders must in this case do a lot of networking and research in advance.	Saves time management and helps organising meetings; but risks being less open to students' contribution.	Existing grass-root groups can be reinforced; new ones can be formed.	Can reinforce the local networking and link the neighbourhood/ group to other resources/ organisations.
BALANCE Often users' requirements and goals won't coincide with academic requirements and goals.	Both parts should be made aware of this at the beginning of the process; this should work as a selection criteria for the community group that is willing to open up to a student group. Professionalism and quality of the outcomes instead must not be affected by this.		Students and user groups will work in a very realistic environment and the nature of the issues, problems and goals faced must be treated in consequence.
COMPROMISES/ AGREEMENTS When working with large communities do not assume that those willing to be directly involved will accept to overcome social, racial, cultural, political barriers and get along well together.	Accept to address your work to different groups at the same time, using different tools, in different places, but share results among groups.		
RESPECT AND GOALS	Students must always be clear about goals, aims and objectives of the process, and be comfortable and respectful of the client group. When this is the case, then trust students to develop the right tools for working with the clients: they must feel responsible and perceive that they are playing a significant role in the process.		

	Repercussions on Education/ students	Repercussions on Community groups	Repercussions on Environment
SOCIAL RITUALS Add to meetings a 'social' aspect: communal meals distract participants from the seriousness that raises when different groups meet. Also, use common and self-prepared meals amongst students: it is very useful to keep them joined throughout the year and is also a moment when work can be discussed more openly.	Teach students how to distil relevant information from informal communication	Let community members discuss informally and offer experiences/ stories; there is a lot of information and knowledge in them	
BONDING between disciplines.	Students from both architecture and environmental psychology develop a stronger confidence in their own discipline thanks to the view that they get of the other one.	Links amongst groups	
CHANGES IN THE STUDIO CULTURE students show increased confidence in developing their ideas and design proposals (feeling that these are backed up by a more complete and realistic understanding of conditions). Still, they often find it hard to adjust to this new condition.	Traditional studio culture rarely encourages students to specialise on issues; rather, it often induces them to base design choices on stylistic and personal approaches which become hardly justifiable when their experience and scholastic culture is just starting. As a result, even in these changed circumstances, students tend to be defensive and patronising.		

[1] As a consequence of the Community Design Unit's involvement, Communities in Action (see next section), has been contacted and requested to collaborate with Housing Co-operatives in the area, in conjunction to the current Housing Stock Transfer.

Govanhill has been a valuable experience for the students, the community and the academic leaders that have delivered the course; with no doubt, it has enjoyed the lessons learned in Sighthill, and has established since then regular contacts with the community groups, reinforcing the design aspect of the work, and basing it upon (parts of) the psychology and architecture curriculum. Although this collaboration is at the very initial stages, it is common intention to develop it further; the two Departments are currently liasing on the possibility of setting up a joint Master course between Architecture and Environmental Psychology, which would use that of social design as a common ground to conduce research, test it with its users, and develop it according to shared and agreed requirements. There is no doubt that both professions will manifest resistance to such a collaboration, but it is about the time that such resistance is overcome and put aside by the demonstration that both disciplines need each other in order to fully achieve what our societies are asking for.

Conclusion

Since the early '60s attempts have been made to link the two fields of environmental psychology and architecture; however both fields are still severely disconnected (Gurel, Potthoff & Tse, 2000). In Europe and the United States the original hope for architects and psychologists to work together has not materialised, at least to the degree anticipated. The growing concern for sustainability increases the scope for, and interest in, further developments and continuation of work to facilitate their connection. Of particular importance is the focus on education and urban regeneration, to prepare future professionals and to give voice and skills to end-users. These aspects need further commitment and work, results and their applications must be studied, shared and implemented.

Although the interest in their collaboration is wide awake, and has achieved successes, such as an enhanced attention to the quality of the environment and its implications for people, and the encouragement of innovative initiatives. Great opportunities lie in both developed and developing countries, wherever resources are scarce, mistakes cannot be afforded and therefore intervention should not be accidental, where strategies should be precisely targeted to maximise the few resources available and where people's interaction with the physical space should

be unequivocally used to induce all those processes that can self-generate sustainable performance and use of space. Professionals, end-users and decision makers should take on board any ongoing development and potential programme and evaluate its applicability in their countries. Gramsci's definition of project – in terms of economic rationality – is true in these circumstances more than anywhere else: a programme of operations aimed to achieve set goals using the minimal quantity of resources available (Ponzo et al., 1992).

Perhaps, the objectives of environmental psychology and architecture should be joined to address what Forester calls *the organisation of hope*: planning.

The objectives are not only to develop a set of programs and initiatives that address basic (practical, immediate, physical) *concerns, but to do it in a participatory fashion so that folks can continue doing that kind of creative problem solving on their own. The outcomes we are looking for are not only improved physical conditions, but also an increased ability on the part of the local community-based organisation to do planning and programming and an increase in the number and quality of community leaders in a position to facilitate this process* (Forester, 1999: 121).

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