Developing an Authentic African Architecture

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Abstract

The idea of the existence of an African Architecture has been problematic over the years since the onset of European occupation. Early scholars of non-Western built forms saw them as not constituting architecture but as shelter or mere dwellings (Oliver, 1987). Others classed these built forms as primitive or indigenous architecture (Guidoni, 1987 Gardi, 1973)while others have classed built forms on the African continent as African Architecture (Kultermann, 1969).Globally, most indigenous societies build their structures using local resources and quite often adapted to the climate of the locality. In addition, traditional built forms tend to respect historical precedents and local customary practices. In this regard, it can be argued that traditional architecture is green architecture without the benefits of sophisticated technologies. The above notwithstanding, most Western architecture imported to the continent, had little regard for local practices and quite often ignored local climate. In attempting to train architects for contemporary practice, this paper argues for hybrid architecture. This is because there is no current pure African architecture in existence. What happened over time was the Africanisation of Western and Eastern architectural models to suit the African condition. The resultant architecture has been a hybrid of these various architectures, what Mazrui refers to as the Triple African Heritage. This architecture is a spatial counter form for the contemporary African society and can be seen to be authentic.

Key words: colonialism, africanisation, transformation, hybrid, traditional

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Effects of Globalization in Training Architectural Design;
A Case for a Pedagogical Shift in African Schools of Architecture
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Abstract

The training of an African architect is still rooted in obsolete Western European traditions. This makes the trained African architect unable to solve context-specific design challenges or explore context-specific design opportunities that Africa offers. This paper analyses some of the basis of western training that have had structural impacts on architectural design training in Africa. It also explains how the design studio at the University of Nairobi is trying to deal with this dilemma through a studio experiment.The paper further explores how the position of the human is being expanded beyond the object oriented traditional approaches to an approach that takes cognizance of the human as an emotional being and also considers the emotional context of the design. Further, the paper puts a case for African constructionism to compliment western abstract representation a case for design principles based on nature, arguing that organic architecture can also help refine the locally trained architect who will also be relevant globally. The paper finally argues that these approaches among others would help reconnect the trained African architect with his / her context and his / her client.

Key words: critical regionalism, african architectural training, african architecture, pedagogical shift.

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   - **From Western abstractionism to making of architecture**
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Developing Resources for the Training of Architects

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Abstract

Development of resources for training architects is an ever occurring phenomenon whether at institutional or individual level. Changing demands for the services of architecture within the building industry require that the training of architects be tailored in a manner that conforms to these changing trends. In this paper, the Department of Architecture and Building Science of University of Nairobi is used as a case study. The resources required for the training of architects have been highlighted.and broadly categorized as the curriculum and teaching methods, human resources (staff and student), equipment and amenities including physical spaces and computer software among others. The individual elements within these broad categories have been reviewed and the opinion of students sought to find areas where improvements can be made and new developments introduced to enhance training. In carrying out this study, the author has relied on the Department of Architecture and Building Science Strategic Plan (DABS) of 2008-2013, together with the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) training accreditation blue print of 2007. These two documents have been reviewed through the perspective of the students of architecture to get insights of how the resources of training of the architect can be developed to meet current and future challenges in the versatile field.

Key words: training, teaching methods, curriculum, facilities, equipment.

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    - **Staff and Students as a Resource**
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Dissemination of Architectural Knowledge among Research, Training and Practice

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Abstract

Within the field of architecture, architects and scholars appear to have difficulty making sense of one another's experience and the relationship between practice and research is often uneven and unclear. In addition, those who identify themselves as scholars of architecture tend to be closed in their academic spheres and vice versa for those who are practitioners. The professionals and scholars seem not to have adequate interchange and reconciliation of the profession. This has not helped much in developing a unifying framework for research and practice of architecture. The scholars and the practicing architect have yet to produce a comprehensive institutional framework capable of directing the profession toward the demonstrable improvement of the architectural practice; training and research. Survey is used as the research design. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from archiects in practice and those in academia, students of architecture and educational administrators. The practicing architects were randomly sampled from the Board of Architects and Quantity Surveying (BORAQS) register. Forty practicing architects were selected. Twenty lecturers and fifty students were interviewed while four administrators were administered questionnaires. Qualitative techniques were used to analyze the responses from the field. This paper has unraveled the minimal relationship between scholars and professionals; the information flow between them and presented the way forward.

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   - **Dissemination of Research Information**
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Infrastructure Development in Global Economic Meltdown;

The Real Estate Professionals' Responses
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Abstract
The current global economic meltdown has major roots in real estate with the construction subsector being a very important economic indicator but also reacting faster to a recession arising from the usual resultant credit squeeze. As a response to recession, economic theorists recommend, among other things, investment in public goods such as infrastructure which itself is part of real estate. In agreement and to cope with the meltdown, this paper reviews the peculiarities of developing infrastructure and recommends the appropriate role for the built environment, and especially, real estate professional from a developing country perspective.

Key words: infrastructure, real estate, economic meltdown, development, real estate professional.

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3. **Conclusion**
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Alleviating Gaia's Poly-mess;
An Archetypal Eco-ethical Product Design Outlook
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Abstract
The deplorable state of the environment has lately become a major issue nationally and internationally. A major contributor to this sorry state is polythene (plastics). Towards better understanding of this issue, this paper cites myriad existing literature that decries the effects of polythene waste and its innumerable effects on health, habitat and future generations. The paper further apportions currently available methods of assimilating environmental aspects into product design and the product life cycle. On the Kenyan situation, the paper cites the incapacity and apathy in dealing with environmental issues and documents the growing crisis of haphazard heaps of solid waste, especially plastic waste. Using a multiple case study approach, a study whose objective was to evaluate the design process with the aim of investigating the level of incorporation of eco-ethical consideration in design of product designers was carried out. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected from primary and sources and analysed. Results revealed designer omission of eco-ethical strategies in the design process, a ruined environmental living dispensation and apathy and ignorance of eco-aspects. Based on these findings this paper recommends integration of eco-ethical aspects all along the product design process.
Key words: eco-ethical product design, sustainability, environment, polythene waste, product design

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Variations in Policies on Urban-rural Relations and the Evolution of Different Patterns of Urban Sprawl in World Cities; *Evidence from Selected Case Studies*

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Abstract

Classical theories of urban sprawl are based on the assumption that peri-urban formation evolves in a homogeneous rural-urban space surface. As a result, urban sprawl is mistakenly viewed to take place in the form of 'invasion and succession' and that by necessity; such sprawl would be triggered by the forces of 'leapfrog'. In this paper, it is demonstrated that the rural-urban space is not homogeneous everywhere and therefore there are other forces which create urban sprawl. The said forces and variations in rural urban space relationship are also determined by land use policies. The result of such variations in rural urban space relationship is the emergence of numerous forms and patterns of urban sprawl. Policy approaches in agrarian economies for example tend to create a duality/ dichotomy between the rural and the urban space economies while industrial/urban economies often enact policies which create a rural-urban continuum. The variation in such policies and by necessity variations in rural urban space relations would, therefore, further create variations in the pattern and manifestation of urban sprawl in different societies.

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-   **Agrarian and industrial stages of societal development and variations on policies defining the urban and the rural space economies; Evidence from theory.**
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-   **Industrial/Urban stage of societal development and Policies which create a continuum between the urban and the rural areas.**
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-   **Policies creating rural urban duality and rural urban continuum and variations in patterns of urban sprawl: evidence from the case studies.**

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-   **Agrarian societal level of development, City rural dichotomy relationship and sporadic appended urban sprawl: Evidence from the case studies.**
-   **Agrarian stage of development, the UK City rural Dichotomy policy and formation of 'Sporadic Appended Urban sprawl'.**
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-   **Industrial/Urban stage of societal development, City rural Continuum Land use Policies and the evolution of various patterns of urban sprawl.**
-   **City Rural Continuum Policy Model and planned urban sprawl in the USA.**

Merging Indigenous African and Western Knowledge Systems;
Implications for Architectural Education in East Africa
*Allan Birabi

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Abstract
Since colonial times, Euro centricism has eroded development and modernization of not only indigenous African architectural design values but also other Sub-Saharan, socio-cultural heritage knowledge and practices. From onset of colonialism, a large quantity of these heritages underwent disparagement for allegedly possessing lower cultural value. It was born in Europe's mental faculties to monopolize claims to architectural beauty. Apparently, the problem is that formal architectural education in East Africa follows the Bauhaus and Acole de Beaux-Arts curricula and indigenous African aesthetics, creative impulses and imagination seem little appreciated. Furthermore, there is minimal interest in including them in the curricula. Hence, the thrust was to make a case for revitalization, of indigenous African design-based knowledge systems in contemporary East African architectural education.The topic was worth researching given the need for Africa to reassert its place in contemporary education. The social science approach of historical analysis coupled with the mixed grounded theory-led exploratory, descriptive and explanatory pathway of investigation was preferred for this paper. Spanning results the Paper does not advocate for 'either-or' choices between foreign and indigenous perspectives. Rather, in its findings and major conclusion it asserts that it is time for East African architectural knowledge gurus to adopt merging marginalised indigenous African architectural design values with Western knowledge. Thus, it recommends that hybridization of the dominantly Western architectural education with indigenous African design and associated building arts/crafts is a better way forward for a win-win situation for both worlds of wisdom in training contemporary architects in East Africa.

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The Role of Architecture in Kenya Vision 2030;
A Case of University of Nairobi
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Abstract
This paper develops two lines of thought about how the discipline and profession of architecture can become critical players in the delivery of Vision 2030 in Kenya. The first dimension argues for the recognition of creativity as a critical input in the delivery of the mission. The paper sees the Department of Architecture and Building Science as an important facilitator in the development of creative thinking at the University and calls for the strengthening of this aspect. The paper also sees the profession of architecture as the other key player. For the organized profession, the paper urges an embrace of urban design as a strategically important part of the profession, and the application of this to the growing settlements. To tie the two together, the paper urges an adoption of a media strategy to help raise awareness and harness public participation.

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