

RECIPROCI**UDAD**
DESIGN DIPLOMACY IN SEVILLE

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RECOLECTORES URBANOS EDITORIAL

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The support of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) deserves special mention here, which endorses the ambitious research project within which the contribution from Seville, Spain, is presented. The University of Seville also contributed with institutional resolution and financial support for the event through its Research Plan.

The School of Architecture of Seville provided the necessary facilities and hosted the Seminar as one of its most important academic events in a 2020 that became paralysed by the pandemic no sooner had the event ended. Fortunately, the University is resilient in these times and our School will be hosting more events of interest before the end of the year, even if the traditional ways of sharing spaces are not allowed.

This book is also a recognition of the silent and painstaking work carried out by the director of the Master's Degree in Sustainable City and Architecture, Domingo Sánchez Fuentes, on the tenth anniversary of his appointment. Precisely because he does not expect such credit, he makes himself worthy of it.

Carlos Tapia
Alban Mannisi

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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UK, USA, Canada, Germany and Spain, and published over 250 articles, reports, presentations and case studies on their website. These have been visited over 400,000 times by nearly 240,000 readers from over 190 countries, and include *The Truth about Grenfell Tower* (2017), *The Costs of Estate Regeneration* (2018), *For a Socialist Architecture* (2019), and *COVID-19: Implementing the UK Biosecurity State* (2020). ASH has appeared in several film documentaries, including *Dispossession: The Great Social Housing Swindle* (2017), *Concrete Soldiers* (2018) and *Timeline of a Disaster: Grenfell Tower* (2020), and has exhibited work at numerous galleries, including the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2017) and the Serpentine Gallery (2019). In 2019 ASH took up a month's residency at the 221A Gallery in Vancouver.

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Domingo Sánchez-Fuentes. His scientific career has focused on advancing knowledge of the cultural dimension of sustainability in three priority lines of research: the sustainability of the coastal tourist area, the cultural landscape as a sign of social identity and innovation in the processes of citizen participation. From its research group HUM-700, it has developed competitive projects financed within various international networks. He has directed eleven doctoral theses and 23 final master’s projects. Under the principles of applied research, the researcher has transferred the results of the research to the preparation of six general urban planning plans obtained through competitive procedures, among which the General Urban Planning Plan of Almonte, in Doñana, a finalist in the European Urban Planning Award 2008, stands out. He has been a professor at the University of Seville since 1990 and has been an associate professor at the Politecnico di Milano since 2010. He has taught on four international doctoral programmes and nine master’s degrees. Since 2007 he has been coordinator of the University of Seville’s Master’s Degree in Sustainable City and Architecture (MCAS).

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PROLOGUE

RECIPROCIUDAD. DESIGN DIPLOMACY IN SEVILLE

ReciprociUdad_Design Diplomacy in Seville contains a perspective developed between Carlos Tapia and I through our symposium held in Seville in 2020. The overall framework is an extension of the *Design Diplomacy* initiatives generated in collaboration with Charles Anderson. The seminar has attempted to probe the complex maturing of the hybrid Sevilla's cultural landscapes, with a desire to decipher the fiery welcoming city that set me wondering at my last visit.

The Andalusian capital city resonates with many singularities. It remains a challenge to the usual socio-economic prediction made through the earlier crises. At the heart of the global economic crises of the past decade that hit Europe and especially Spain, the city of Seville shines as if these torments were irrelevant; its architectural heritage resplendent like few other European cities, its open spaces testifying to new landscape dynamic competing to blend its territorial legacy and environmental concerns, its social capital facing a growing tourist economy with profound dignity. At the time of social cohesion improvement and the difficult maintenance of intangible cultural landscapes identities, Seville presents an intriguing example of what is now called a Sustainable City.

To consider those sibylline conditions contradicting current predictions, and to meet the Design Diplomacy aims, exchanges were established between Carlos Tapia and myself, resulting in the creation of the ReciprociUdad Seminar. (The title ReciprociUdad was coined after a conversation with Charles Anderson on his anticipated Reciprocity lecture. City: Ciudad in Spanish).

The ReciprociUdad Seminar aims to better understand the urban and territorial policies implemented by the Andalusian region and the design/planning actions/projects undertaken/implemented in light of these policies, in order to identify the specificity and particularity of the resilience challenges and opportunities of this region in achieving a resilient city/territory. Through this policy initiative, the team of both local and international experts observes and discusses the territorial policy put in place by the region, as well as the suite of projects undertakes over the last few decades. Similarly, local geopolitics are questioned to better estimate how the

regional decentralisation inherent in its history has allowed its region to avoid the ruin caused by the escalation of European crises. Finally, from the analysis of its social capital, the capacity of its inhabitants to conjugate Iberic arts of living with the requirements of a major tourist centre, the team questions the suitable character of the Andalusian communalism.

The ReciprociUdad Seminar is a part of the international seminars series *Design Diplomacy*¹ which aims to provide an overview of the current Seville Social Cohesion and Environmental Justice achievement; develop critical tools and methodologies of engaging in this arena; provide a systematic compendium of case studies of these complex phenomena for the enthusiastic new generation of landscape architects, planners, and environmental designers concerned with the ethical behaviours towards humans and non-humans.

Founded in 2019, Design Diplomacy also held 'Hokkien Mee Diplomacy' in Malaysia/Singapore. Its work has been presented at the exhibition 'Super Tight' in Australia and Singapore Architecture Biennale Archifest 2020 'Saving Our World', including the Academic Journal Special Edition of 'Citizen Participation Pedagogy' in Korea. It is now our honour to exhibit and discuss the ethical philosophy of this approach in the Italian Pavilion during the Venice Biennale 2021.

Alban Mannisi,
Elwood, Australia

[1] www.scapethical.org/design-diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

Utopia is the country of reciprocal care and attention. H.G. Wells. A Modern Utopía (literal translation from Spanish version).

H.G. Wells. A Modern Utopia.

If it is a certainty that there can be no research without dissemination, it is no less true that in every researcher there are circumstances that stimulate creativity, that promote a change of approach and the need to establish new beginnings. These circumstances become even more valuable when exchanges are reciprocal and a community with a vocation for the future is formed. The future must be understood as a willingness to act, a belief in collaborative work, an intergenerational and educational transfer, and disinterested enrichment. This is the only way to create a place for the construction of mutual knowledge.

The fact that this statement can be mentally and grammatically structured does not imply that it is possible to achieve it through mere verbalization. For this reason, the pages presented here deserve to be conditioned in their reading by the fortunate opportunity of this meeting that has made their existence possible. Like that defined future, this has been, is and will continue to be a place in which to develop ideas about the city where productivity and dissemination are of the highest quality.

The contributions of the researchers gathered under the idea of ReciprociUdad as applied to urban formulation in all fields admittedly constitute an initial framework, but it comes with a precision that makes it a reference point from which to extend the exchanges to more interlocutors over the course of this project.

The original idea by Alban Mannisi and Charles Anderson, professors at the RMIT in Melbourne, in a trajectory that puts each hypothesis to the test by exploring different approaches in very different parts of the planet, has had a case in Seville. The peculiarities of that case, even in its necessary incompleteness, would undoubtedly stimulate the keys for reading the cities included in the research

project that stemmed from a meeting in this Spanish city. The experience of the teachers and researchers at the University of Seville, mainly from the School of Architecture, and the experience of 14 years of the university master's degree in Sustainable City and Architecture, which organised the meeting and the resulting publication, in addition to the contributions of the guest speakers from the United Kingdom, Brazil and Uruguay, with undergraduate and postgraduate students from all over the world, provided a fruitful exchange of notions, openings and directions, the results of which are compiled in this book.

These keys have been organised in this book into 4 content sections according to the designation given to the Seville team in Mannisi's plan. It was necessary to reflect on the general scope, project diplomacy, and to redefine reciprocity in its focus on the great meanings of the contemporary city, and to test these meanings on a previous diagnosis of the city of Seville. This book has therefore been divided into four chapters: Contexts, Reasons, Opportunities: a philosophy of action; ReciproCity; Diplomacy Design; and Seville, ReciprociUdad.

The first chapter is an initiation to what is developed in the following three sections, where in addition to reflecting on the ReciprociUdad Seminar and on the problems of social cohesion and sustainability in Seville, Alban Mannisi constructs a new vision of post-globalisation that could go beyond the epistemological liaisons of our time. The chapter also clarifies the foundations of the Design Diplomacy seminars and evokes what ReciproCity seeks when it refers to new philosophies of action.

In the following chapter, five differential vectors establish five comprehensive keys to what can be understood as ReciprociUdad. It begins with Professor Kaminer arguing that the various modes of government planning –economic, spatial and social– are related, and that planning necessarily means producing a plan, and not a “vague framework” of regulations or rules. For Kaminer, planning is not an administrative process, but an act of preparation for the future by deciding on the direct allocation of resources. After tending his own vector to reach May 1968 and its legacies, and then turning to a concise discussion of the key characteristics of the social, economic and urban transformation that can be detected, he closes his reflection by addressing the question of current spatial planning.

A second vector arises at the antipodes of the location of the city of Seville, but rather than merely touching the surface, it pierces the (fragile) globe of our conscience, and is signed by Professor Anderson from Melbourne. The stiletto used comes in the heartbreaking shape of a couple of stories, as he himself says. First, he gives a brief history of the colonisation of Australia, followed by an equally short history of Melbourne. Both highlight the expropriation of Aboriginal land and the relentless destruction of social, environmental, economic and cultural ecologies. Both stories also contain a critique of urbanism as a continuation of the colonial project defined by its extractivism. Beyond that, what is questioned is our relationship with the world. Anderson proposes an urgent need to rethink this relationship, and to discuss some effects that such rethinking may have on the way we approach the design of our urban environment, or rather, what he calls “our terrestrial habitation”.

Continuing with lessons learned through reciprocal encounters, in spaces and times, Professor Carlos García Vázquez focuses on the Spanish case, specifically with regard to housing typologies as one of the main causes of the current obsolescence of the so-called “polígonos” (social housing). These housing estates were relatively homogeneous, given that they were the result of processes determined and controlled by laws, rules and government regulations, mainly in the 1950s. The author argues that the architectural typologies derived from these estates are contributing to their obsolescence because they no longer fit in with contemporary social and cultural conditions. His chapter identifies and analyses the five main mismatches between housing typologies and contemporary needs.

The fourth vector addresses the notion of inclusiveness and the appropriateness of bottom-up decision-making in urban planning. In this chapter, such extensive work manages to unravel the proverbial ambiguity with which urban decision-makers have treated this idea of inclusiveness. According to its authors, Manoel Rodrigues Alves, professor at the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of São Paulo, together with PhD candidate Maíra Daitx, the inclusion of all groups and individuals in decision-making processes is a basic concept of social equality and should be pursued. However, finding ways to achieve this fairly remains a challenge.

The fifth vector, like all the others, has a different resonance when read within the chapter block than if it is read separately. It composes what we could call a notion of field, in the sense used by Bourdieu. I would recall that, for this French sociologist, the concept of field is linked to that of habitus but also to that of capital. Thus, any analysis becomes more integrated in order to characterise micro- and macro-social phenomena. In this sense, the contribution to the field of reciprocities made by ETSAS professor Marta Pelegrín with Fernando Pérez (partners in the “mediomundo arquitectos”), demonstrates the importance of teaching research (reciprocal, of mutual learning) by sharing her international experience in the “Positive Emptiness Workshops”. Here, a practical research methodology is put to the test, proposing an integral, cooperative and participative management of empty houses to be incorporated into the residential, environmental, energy and infrastructure provision system of the neighbourhoods where they are located and, thus, to meet the needs of the population on a temporary or permanent basis. The case study on the city of Montevideo also formulates a quantification and evaluation of the definition and use of common or collective spaces (not only housing) to improve the quality of life and the generation of social fabric and citizenship.

In the section dedicated to characterising what is understood by diplomacy for architectural and urban practice, based on the point of convergence which is the context of discussion of the city of Seville, I myself dedicated a few months of work. Apparently, the invitation in the RMIT project to reflect on this term was far removed from what I had on my desk. However, the challenge of having to respond, truly and sincerely, fulfils what was said at the beginning; after all, hitting an arcade machine as the ball moves may be punished with a penalty, but sometimes an exciting play can be obtained even if it means breaking the rules. That is what I have felt when researching diplomacy to associate it with architecture, though I

conclude in my chapter that perhaps I am overconfident in doing so. If there were a possibility, it would be illustrated –and, indeed, it has been– by the professional practice of the London-based design office “Architects for Social Housing, ASH” run by Geraldine Dening and Simon Elmer. This chapter is related to analysing a necessary resistance against the neoliberalisation that really exists, a reflexive base on which the arguments of the Brazilian case already described rest. These teachers, whose involvement in architectural action is of the utmost importance, conclude, from the unmitigated observation provided by their experience, that the effects of the economic crisis, no longer transitory in the prevailing model, have led to the systemic destruction of urban communities and cultures and a large part of the working class in order to obtain short-term financial benefit at the expense of increasing social and economic inequality and environmental degradation. London is suffering the direct consequences of this model and, paradoxically, houses one of its most important drivers.

Professor Jorge Minguet questions the present by focussing on a symptom characterised by one of today’s sharpest and most prolific architectural theorists, Tahl Kaminer, who, as we have already mentioned, has participated in the beginning of this book. Such a symptom questions and clears the current trends in architecture, most of which are based on more or less evolved theories from the 60s and 70s about participation and radical democracy. The questioning is literal, with an exchange of questions that, like incisions, open up answers that emanate from the wound: We are living in a moment of transformation of society that pushes architecture as a practice, as a discipline, to start laboriously changing what it does, how it does it and what it believes in, i.e. its statute.

These three sections comply with the premises that had conceptually been proposed as the objective of this meeting between researchers. One remained to be situated, which supported endorsing the assumptions that made Seville stand out from among the cities that treated equity in particular and sustainability in general as unavoidable objectives.

And it is here that the team from the master’s degree in Sustainable City and Architecture deployed a broad and diverse critical reflection, starting with the experienced urban planner and professor Pedro Górgolas. Acknowledging progress, their conclusion is not complacent, but quite the opposite. The tendency of the traditionally urban organisation to become metropolitan was failing to recognise, through municipal managers and economic actors, the inheritance of years of forced administration or the possibilities of a challenge like the one that has to be faced. Professors José Enrique López-Canti and Félix de la Iglesia show how the concept of a bioregion is particularly enriching in the metropolitan area of Seville and how social participation, of which Kaminer spoke, would be an example to observe its evolution. From a cartographic approach at different scales, this is perceived with a certain definition. In order to add to the general understanding that this book aims to show, a reflection was commissioned based on the visualisation of the Open Access information available, thanks to the fact that the team that is developing a study on metropolitan areas around the world, commissioned by the European Union, is mostly from the SCA master’s degree programme. Thus, the three-year

work of professors Emilio Mascort and Blanca del Espino, supported by technicians Francisco Hidalgo-Sánchez and Miguel Ángel Gutiérrez and led by urban planner Domingo Sánchez –who is also the director of the SCA Master’s programme–, shows a characterisation of Environmental Justice, with which Professor Mannisi was highly impressed, as he himself states in his prologue.

It was all about reciprocity, we said at the beginning of this introduction. The workshops led by professors Julia Rey-Pérez, María Carrascal Pérez, María Prieto Peinado, Macarena Gross Ariza, Paula Fernández San Marcos, together with the 23 SCA master’s students and many other graduates and undergraduates from other universities, have enthusiastically highlighted the fertile work of the teachers, the overflowing creativity, the originality of discourse, and the excitement of re-starting that contradicts Wells, whom I quoted at the beginning. No, there is no need for the realm of impossible longings to exist so that mutual exchanges have a place. Perhaps it is because Wells never said such a thing; the Spanish translation invented it in an implausible way. If not even a translation offers guarantees of reciprocity, the fact that this book has explored and achieved a glimpse of mutual exchanges is to be celebrated. *It had to be Seville.*

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