



Designing cities, planning for people

The guide books of Otto-livari Meurman and Edmund Bacon

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Abstract

Urban theorists and critics write with an individual knowledge of the good urban life. Recently, writing about such life has boldly called for smart cities or even happy cities, stressing the importance of social connections and nearness to nature, or social and environmental capital. Although modernist planning has often been blamed for many current urban problems, the social and the environmental dimensions were not completely absent from earlier 20th century approaches to urban planning. Links can be found between the urban utopia of today and the mid-20th century ideas about good urban life.

Changes in the ideas of what constitutes good urban life are investigated in this paper through two texts by two different 20th century planners: Otto-livari Meurman and Edmund Bacon. Both were taught by the Finnish planner Eliel Saarinen, and according to their teacher's example, also wrote about their planning ideas. Meurman's guide book for planners was published in 1947, and was a major influence on Finnish post-war planning. In Meurman's case, the book answered a pedagogical need, as planners were trained to meet the demands of the structural changes of society and the needs of rapidly growing Finnish cities. Bacon, in a different context, stressed the importance of an urban design attitude even when planning the movement systems of a modern metropolis. Bacon's book from 1967 was meant for both designers and city dwellers, exploring the dynamic nature of modern urbanity.

The two books share an appreciation for historical context. There is an emphasis on physical space, a particularly typical architects' attitude. This is not surprising since both were guide books for architects. However, the writers were also looking ahead and trying to solve the many urban challenges with architectural design solutions. Architectural determinism aside, the books are a testament of the prevailing urban trends and ideas about urban well-being, as well as individual architect's observations about urban space and how it is experienced.

A juxtaposition of the two texts gives an example of how the thoughts about the possibilities for well-being in the urban environment were subtly transformed in the middle decades of the 1900s. Functionalistic planning ideas touched with utopian idealism were still strong influences, the good life defined by those who saw themselves best equipped to plan for it. Cities were understood as organisms, the health of their citizens demanding well-planned living quarters and organized distribution of living and working areas, as well as equally well-planned connections to green spaces and nature. Eventually, planning processes were seen as the combined efforts and influences of many people, with public participation gaining more and more importance. The roles of both the citizen and the architect were evolving, as was the understanding of what kind of living environments cities should be.

Introduction

An idea of the good urban life has often been the background premise in the texts of urban theorists. As urban dwellers the writers have had individual knowledge of what urban living entails, as urban critics their purely subjective viewpoint has been complemented with more objective aims, as well as striving towards an understanding of regional scale and urban growth processes. In describing ills and proposing remedies for cities the writers have assumed the role of an urban physician. Medical metaphors have even permeated the planning language. A well-known user of medical terms was Le Corbusier, who proposed his own type of surgery for the urban illnesses of congestion and disorder (Le Corbusier 1987 [1924], 253-273). The city, as a patient with ailments to be cured, has been encumbered with anthropomorphic qualities, apparent in the choices of adjectives to describe the “sick” or “troubled” city. In recent decades, writing about good urban life has boldly called for “smart” cities¹ or even “happy” cities². In evaluating urban happiness, the attention has focused on the importance of social connections and nearness to nature, or social and environmental capital.

A happy city, according to a recent, well-publicized book by Charles Montgomery, is a city of socially active people who walk or bike to work and school, enjoying the health benefits provided by close proximity to nature. There is something familiar with the mental picture of this commuter, biking along tree-flanked routes, waving to neighbors and acquaintances on the way. Yes, it harks back to the green of the garden city, the combined best of city and country (à la Ebenezer Howard). Also the easy and safe access routes of the neighborhood concept come to mind (à la Clarence Perry), and the social street life (à la Jane Jacobs). With the trendy term *happy city* Montgomery calls for more choice in housing and transportation and more interaction between people, trying to solve very up-to-date urban problems of crowding, sprawl and alienation. However, it all sounds strangely familiar. Similarities can be found between the urban utopia of today and the mid-20th century ideas about good urban life.

Although modernist planning has often been blamed for many urban problems of today, the social and environmental dimensions were not absent from earlier 20th century approaches to urban planning. The importance of the social life of a community can be found already in Howard’s garden city text (Howard 2003 [1898], 22, 24-26) – even if it is best remembered for its applications in Letchworth, Hampstead and Welwyn, the picturesque architecture and greenery forming more lasting images than the original text and diagrams had been able to create. The town-country magnet of the three magnets diagram began with beauty of nature and social opportunity, noting the attractions people would likely consider most important. This list ended with co-operation, the glue that would bind the garden city inhabitants into a close-knit community. In writing their own texts, twentieth century city planners were all influenced by Howard’s legacy. The need for a healthy living environment was echoed in the CIAM declarations, the idea of nature neatly summarized into sun, space and greenery (CIAM’s Athens Charter 1933). This trinity became the essential toolkit guiding housing design, visible not only in the design of many suburban and urban renewal areas around the world, but also in the texts of urban planners.

This paper looks at two different texts by two 20th century planners: Otto-livari Meurman and Edmund Bacon. The juxtaposition of just these two is prompted by their pedagogical roots: both were taught by the Finnish planner Eliel Saarinen. According to their teacher’s example, both architects also wrote about their planning ideas. The aim in the comparative analysis of the texts is

¹ See Anthony M. Townsend’s *Smart Cities* (2013), or the web-pages for Smart Cities Project or European Smart Cities.

² See Charles Montgomery. *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives through Urban Design* (2013).

not in finding essential differences, but rather in showing how ideas could develop in various ways, though starting from the same sources. When comparing the two texts, one sees how the thoughts about well-being in the urban environment were subtly transformed in the middle decades of the 1900s. Both writers acknowledged their teacher's influence (Meurman 1947, 75-76; Bacon 1967, 5); behind their writings one may see the traditional city of enclosed blocks as well as the organically decentralized growth principles proposed by Saarinen. The time and the context of the two texts were different, however, resulting in an individual interpretation of a similar legacy. Whereas Meurman gave specific instructions on how to construct a new, healthy living environment – mostly situated outside the busy town center areas – Bacon focused on the life and spaces of well-functioning urban centers.

Planning for people – Meurman and Asemakaavaoppi

The quote from Koolhaas³ reflects late 20th century attitudes, but in the 1920s to 1940s there prevailed a strong belief in the possibilities of design and planning. If people could indeed inhabit anything, the general consensus among architects was that they were the experts who knew how and what people should inhabit. It was thought that people's well-being was very much influenced by architecture (for example, Le Corbusier 1987 [1924], 186, 198, 215-220, 243-244). This was the context in which Otto-livari Meurman wrote his guide book⁴ for architects and planners in the 1940s. It was published in 1947, answering a pedagogical need at a time when planners were challenged to meet the demands of the structural changes of society and the needs of rapidly growing Finnish cities. The book quickly became a major influence in Finnish post-war planning.

Although the book looks forward and focuses on the current problems of urban planning, it contains a brief look at the history of cities. Meurman (1947, 59) also mentions with reverence his teacher's plans for Helsinki, giving a special mention to the healthy city building and artistic viewpoint that Eliel Saarinen's plans promoted. The Munkkiniemi-Haaga plan (1915) had depicted a traditional city with enclosed blocks and plazas, plenty of greenery and parks, but also monumental axiality. Meurman knew the plan well, having worked on the plan model and drawings at the Saarinen office⁵. The detailed model even inspired him to write an account of an automobile ride through the streets of the finished town (Meurman 1915, 505-512). The description of this imaginary ride gives an idea of the kind of good urban life its writer thought best. In this envisioned future the sun is shining on the spacious yards of the urban blocks and into the rooms of the apartments, which are oriented towards light. Gardens – important for recreation – are linked to the dwelling units. The subway station and the streets bustle with people, many commuters going to work in the morning and returning in the afternoon. It is an urban environment where "health and transportation aspects go hand in hand with esthetic requirements". Meurman's account finishes with an airborne view of the city, as do many computer visualizations of today. The whole has been grasped – the reader and the architect/planner have taken command of the urban situation.

This was not the only Saarinen-inspired background for Meurman's book. He was also familiar with his teacher's ideas about organic decentralization⁶,

³ Interview with Rem Koolhaas by Katrina Heron, *Wired* magazine, July 1996.

⁴ The texts are called guide books in this paper. Text book might be a more proper term, but guide book was chosen since both books have a pedagogical purpose, contain much more than text and try to guide architects and urban dwellers alike to look at and understand spaces and places in cities.

⁵ Otto-livari Meurman came to work in Hvitträsk when the model was being built. One of his tasks was to draw railway tracks in the model. Hausen 1990, 55. Meurman has remembered that he also helped to construct the bird's eye perspective views. Meurman & Huovinen 1989, 97.

⁶ Saarinen explained his idea for the organized growth of cities in his 1943 book *The City – Its Growth, Its Decay, Its Future*. It was a concept of gradually

People can inhabit anything. And they can be miserable in anything and ecstatic in anything. More and more I think that architecture has nothing to do with it. Of course, that's both liberating and alarming.

Rem Koolhaas

having read and reviewed Saarinen's book *The City* soon after it was released (Meurman 1947, 78-84). He had noted the process-like nature of the idea, the aim being in developing a multi-dimensional community, not in creating a two-dimensional, final master plan. The idea was described in a general level, but Saarinen's text also included details that tell about the everyday life of the organically decentralized city. The understanding of what constitutes a good urban life was much the same then as it is today: services within walking distance from home, good public transportation connections and close proximity to nature (Kytö 2013, 22; compare with Saarinen 1958 [1943], 208, 252, 258-260; and Meurman 1947, 253-254, 326, 360-363.). If all of these were in order, the use of a private car was not necessary in everyday travel – an important aspect of a well-functioning urban community, according to Saarinen. In fact, he strongly recommended walking as the basic system of individual transportation. (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 152-153, 208.)

In his own book, Meurman promoted Saarinen's version of decentralization as a sound basic idea for city planning. With it, cities could grow in an organized fashion, forming satellite cities outside the main center, instead of becoming too populated and sprawling out of control. According to Meurman, it was not only a sound idea but a necessary one; a city center was not a suitable place for raising a family. He criticized cities that were too dense, and even spoke of slums – although in the Finnish context the situation in town centers was not nearly as dismal as in the densely populated big cities like Paris, New York or London. All these cities had places that Meurman used as bad examples of overcrowding. (Meurman 1947, 49-54, 75-76, 310-396.) Meurman's rhetoric is similar to that used by Heikki von Hertzen in his book *Koti vaiko kasarmi lapsillemme?* (Home or the Barracks for Our Children?) that had come out the previous year. This was not surprising, as Meurman had helped Hertzen with his book. Both books were campaigning for what their writers considered a healthy living environment, and such environment did not seem to be found in city centers.

A suitable living environment, as Meurman saw it, was in line with functionalist ideals. To stay healthy, a human being needed light and sun, air and warmth in his abode, as well as a chance to move about in fresh air and natural surroundings. It was the task of city planning to provide these, to create a humane society. (Meurman 1947, 12-14.) Organic decentralization seemed to be a good solution for achieving the goal. The organized hierarchy of this concept was also apparent in Meurman's guidelines for housing and traffic planning. He described these in detail, starting with traffic. This is understandable, as the whole concept of organic decentralization depended on fast connections between the various parts of the regional city, the center and its satellite towns. The instructions he gave for planning railway areas, harbors, air fields, highways and roads are specific, complete with sections and tables showing required distances and amounts of passenger traffic. The aim was to provide a well-functioning traffic system that allows people to travel swiftly to and from the city center using public transportation. (Meurman 1947, 106-122.) Meurman was not only interested in large scale traffic systems; he also wrote that everyday services should not be further than 300-400 meters from home. He called this a "stroller distance" – the distance a mother with children could comfortably walk to get groceries for her family.⁷ Meurman saw the actual living environment as clusters of neighborhoods surrounded by recreation areas. The latter were planned parks or natural forests. The houses were situated according to principles of open planning, and apartments were designed with a special emphasis on light and ventilation. (Meurman 1947, 233, 253, 286, 293.) Although the single family house was the preferred form of housing for families,

developing satellite towns, reminiscent of Howard's diagram of social cities. See Saarinen 1958 [1943], 200-213; Howard 2003 [1898], 157-159; Meurman 1982 [1947], 60.

⁷ Meurman 1947, 326. Saarinen had also criticized compulsory daily driving in his book (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 208-209). Walking as a means of travelling was part of the American garden city application; it had been promoted, among others, by Lewis Mumford (1949 [1938], 31).

Meurman wanted a socially mixed structure and warned against creating areas for different classes (Meurman 1947, 306).

Meurman's idea of the "the good city" has been studied by Ulla Salmela in her dissertation. She found an order of regulated spaces for different domains of life, in keeping with modern planning ideas of the time. Residential areas and dwellings were given a special focus, with the single-family home of the nuclear family as the ideal. Salmela has noted that for Meurman, the emphasis on design skills and form gave way to norms and scientific rationalization in the 1930s. (Salmela 2004, 13, 241-242.) By the time Meurman's book was published in 1947, the rational view was certainly prevailing. Meurman's work as a town planner was also characterized by a social responsibility that had already been a part of Finnish urban planning in the interwar years. Then, as in the 1940s, solving a housing shortage was included in the planning tasks. The notion of "general welfare" was present in Meurman's writings already 30 years before his book *Asemakaavaoppi* was published. (Salmela 2004, 244-245.) The notion was linked with social policies and legislation, but in the book it was given a specific, design-oriented definition, easily understood by architects. According to Meurman, well-being was directly influenced by such matters as sunlight, fresh air and closeness to both recreation areas and necessary services (Meurman 1947, 12-14).

Design of Cities – Bacon's view of urban space and the city

Charles Montgomery starts his book on happy cities with a quote from Christopher Alexander's *Timeless Way of Building* (1979, 106). It emphasizes the importance of the built environment, creating a link between the spaces a human being moves in and the inner world of human understanding. Edmund Bacon's book *Design of Cities* (1967) grasped this very same link and explored it through a series of illustrations and accompanying text. Awareness of space as experience meant that one felt connected to a system greater than oneself, and this, according to Bacon, was the source of aesthetic satisfaction (Bacon 1967, 15). Bacon joined a colleague of another generation in bringing up aesthetics and wanting to think beyond the mere design of buildings and circulation systems. He shared Camillo Sitte's interest in collective spaces like plazas and squares, and called for richness and variety in urban space (Bacon 1967, 17). For Bacon, an urban design attitude was important even in the context of planning the movement systems of a modern metropolis (Bacon 1967, 33-35). Many of the ideas he explored further had their origins in the teachings of Eliel Saarinen, a fact which Bacon respectfully acknowledged in the beginning of his book (Bacon 1967, 5).

The fact is, a person is so far formed by his surroundings, that his state of harmony depends entirely on his harmony with his surroundings.

C. Alexander

Like many architect writers before him – Meurman included – Bacon started his book with a historical overview of urban development. He ended with a look at the future possibilities, and between these two poles he explored the dynamic nature of modern urbanity. Bacon took the reader (the participator, the urban dweller) through various parts of ancient and contemporary cities, describing multi-sensory spatial experiences in time. Although Bacon's book was a guide book for architects as well as the layman, he did not give specific rules of action. The attitude was more of a fellow flâneur; he was walking with the reader/participator in the urban spaces he wrote about. Here, the urban plan was an idea implanted in the collective minds of the community, in time implemented by the inhabitants. "The city is a people's art, a shared experience", stated Bacon (1967, 23, 34)⁸. A designer was no longer someone who knew it all; he was one player in the collective effort of creating the city organism. This did not mean that the designer did not have an idea of what was included in a good urban environment. The city Bacon shows his readers is decidedly *urban*. Smoothly flowing traffic of all scales is included in his simultaneous movement systems, therefore, good connections are an essential

⁸ Montgomery expresses a similar thought: "city is an idea to which each citizen contributes". Montgomery 2013, 256.

factor of his ideal urban living environment. The illustrations show trees and parks, so it can be assumed that he thought these were important to the citizen's well-being. Nevertheless, the focus on design was so prominent in Bacon's book, that the functional aspects of his ideal city are not as easily noticeable as they were in Meurman's book.

Instead of the everyday urbanism of suburbia, Bacon is interested in the city center: multi-level shopping areas, monumental public squares and meeting places where the social life of the city is made possible. He shows how these spaces and places came to be and how they evolved. Bacon wrote his book for both designers and city dwellers. For the latter group's benefit he included many descriptive illustrations, which gave his book a pedagogically simple, easily grasped appearance. Movement was framed by architecture, but architecture was defined by movement. As an urban planner, Bacon noted the importance of understanding the workings of large scale systems, but all the scales were present when he wrote about movement systems of the city, from expressways and subways to walkways. (Bacon 1967, 33-34.) These hierarchical systems were in keeping with the concept of city as an organism, where the parts were related to each other by principles of an organic growth process (Bacon 1967, 265). However, Bacon did not write about details like the distances between home and work place or the importance of recreation areas, like Meurman had done. Bacon's view point was not normative; instead, he was trying to instill an environmental sense in the reader. It seems that Bacon saw a consciousness about the environment as a necessary part of human well-being, provided, of course, that the environment was designed with this well-being in mind.

The planning ideas manifested in his book naturally stemmed from Bacon's work as a planner in Philadelphia during the 1950s and 1960s. He was committed to the design of the city center, campaigning against the prevailing trend of suburban sprawl. He saw a need for a necessary reversal, which would transform urban centers into vital cores of cultural activity and enticing living environments. According to him, people needed to be reconnected with the city, and individual experiences reintegrated into planning processes. In these processes the role of the planner was that of a visionary, who created a flexible plan, a concept that was the basis for neighborhood and city development. (Cohen 1991, 572-588.) In his actual planning work one can find details such as pedestrian walkability in the neighborhood scale. The pedestrian-scaled movement system he called "greenways", bringing to mind not just a network of connecting nodes, but also a pedestrian accessibility to elements of nature. (Cohen 1991, 586; see also Sommer 2004, 164.) All in all, Bacon's focus was on the creative aspect of designing cities that had been neglected in the planning of urban renewal in American cities in the postwar period⁹.

Similarities and differences: the architect and the city

The two books compared in this paper reflect prevailing planning thoughts of their time and context. The role of the architect saw changes in the decades studied, and ideas about city form evolved gradually. In addition, several similarities may be found when one compares Meurman's and Bacon's books, in spite of the fact that they answered different needs. Many of the similarities naturally stem from the authors' background as Eliel Saarinen's students. Both writers, in their own context, advocated such aspects as they saw missing from contemporary planning.

Saarinen's legacy can be found in the idea of the urban whole as an organism (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 18; Meurman 1947, 10; Bacon 1967, 265). This organism had a scalar hierarchy that was necessary for an architect to understand whether he was planning the regional city or designing furniture (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 8-12). This meant that the urban design aspect and the

⁹ Sommer even claims that before Bacon, urban design did not exist as a professional activity in the United States. Sommer 2004, 155.

third dimension were very important in city planning (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 7; Meurman 1947, 12; Bacon 1967, 15-18). Urban planning was not just about drafting maps (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 356-358). Respect for history, on the other hand, brought the dimension of time to the design and planning process¹⁰. The processual nature of planning was emphasized; plans were to be flexible, able to mold to inevitable changes (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 374; Meurman 1947, 11; Bacon 1967, 23). And finally, such a small scale detail as encouraging walking as the daily means of movement in the urban environment can be found, to some extent, in Saarinen's, Meurman's and also Bacon's texts (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 208; Meurman 1947, 326; Bacon 1967, 152-253)¹¹. The latter implies possibilities for social contacts, an aspect of urban life that has lately been propagated as an essential part of happy cities¹².

In his book, Meurman focused on a regional scale, although he did give detailed, but rather technical instructions on the dimensions of city plazas, streets and the positioning of houses. It seems that the 1943 book by Saarinen made a great impression on Meurman, who saw organic decentralization as the best suitable way to handle urban growth. The Munkkiniemi-Haaga Plan with its famous model, housing designs and many impressive aerial perspectives had included the scale of urban design, but this earlier influence and experience in design was not given as much emphasis in Meurman's book as the process of controlled urban growth. Bacon, on the other hand, was likely more familiar with Saarinen's book (he had used its manuscript version as a reference already ten years prior to its publication, see Cohen 1991, 102, 114-127) than with the urban design ideas manifested in the Munkkiniemi-Haaga Plan. Nevertheless, it is the urban design scale that he focused on.

Meurman was writing as a master planner, giving instructions to students of planning. Some of the instructions were so specific that actual measurements and dimensions were given. In spite of such detailed instructions, Meurman was of the opinion that understanding the whole urban context and processes of change were most essential. For this purpose, he drew, among other sources, from Saarinen's text in *The City* (Meurman 1947, 75-78). In the context of Finland of the 1940s, Meurman was concerned about the housing conditions of postwar cities. To help the housing situation and promote an ordered growth of Finnish towns, he took Saarinen's version of decentralization, as explained in *The City*. However, Meurman did not forget the artistic side of urban planning. He devoted the last ten pages of his 460 page book to the subject. The artistic quality is something that cannot be created with rules and formulas, stated Meurman, and finished with the words "beauty belongs to all forms of exalted life". Still, even here, the stress is on the large scale: the life of the society was more important than individual details. (Meurman 1947, 440.) Even art had to follow the clarity and hierarchy of organized town planning.

Bacon's book had an educational motive as well. Although he stressed the importance of understanding the regional scale of the whole city, his main interest in the book was urban design, parts that defined the whole. These were matters of detail that Saarinen's organic decentralization concept had not actually addressed, but the principles of correlation, organic order and spatial imagination, which Saarinen had called for, could just as well be applied to urban design as large scale planning (Saarinen 1958 [1943], 13- 17, 53). Bacon wrote of movement systems and spatial issues, with an emphasis on

¹⁰ Historical examples have long been common in texts of urban theory. All three – Saarinen, Meurman and Bacon – indicated an appreciation for historical continuity. See Saarinen 1958 [1943], 29-72; Meurman 1947, 26-54; Bacon 1967, 66-215. In Meurman's case the importance of the historical dimension has been noted by Salmela 2004, 245.

¹¹ In Bacon's case, walking is only implied in his simultaneous movement systems, but more specific references to walking are found in actual design work, see Cohen 1991, 587; Sommer 2004, 164. For a presentation of Saarinen's actual design work from the 1940s – example of a housing area of an organically decentralized community, see Chudoba 2011, 107-112.

¹² Decentralization in its sprawl-inducing form, however, has been seen as a major hindrance to the social potential of cities. Montgomery 2013, 56-58.

experiencing the city. Specific rules were not given, but the ideas were illustrated with pictures and diagrams. We can see both cars and pedestrians in Bacon's illustrations, and it is obvious he was promoting the separation of these modes of travel, just like many of his contemporaries. What we cannot see is where the people would live and how they might travel to the shopping malls. The housing areas or the stage of peoples' everyday lives are not visible in detail; the closest Bacon comes to this is in an illustration which depicts a residential area, with nodes of landmarks and institutions distributed throughout the grid at regular intervals (Bacon 1967, 319). Instead of the everyday spaces of the home, Bacon shows the collective urban spaces of the city center, the plazas and the squares and the shopping streets – the public living rooms. He writes of views, focal points and shafts of space, challenging the reader to not just walk through the city, but to use his senses and understand the city through individual movement of the body. (Bacon 1967, 35, 48.)

The manifestations of urban form and the changes in the actual physical environment are visible in the many illustrations of Meurman's and Bacon's books. The historical overviews still showed the traditional city of enclosed blocks, but the open block plan with parallel lamellas was the contemporary solution for both of them. For Meurman, this was an incentive for breaking with strict regularity, as the open plan allowed the designer to place buildings freely to fit the topography (Meurman 1947, 285-287). The functionalist demand for access to recreation areas had been fused with a Finnish appreciation for nature. Bacon's book concentrated on the city center and thus lacks housing illustrations. The open plan and the modern spatial concept are manifested, for example, in the description of the Brazilian capital. Bacon noted the monumental axes and grand spatial continuity (Bacon 1979 [1967], 235-241). In addition, his simultaneous movement systems showed a spatial understanding where movement – the essence of the contemporary city (Giedion 1967 [1940], 826) – was essential. It was also the key to grasping the whole urban reality. (Bacon 1979 [1967], 252.)

Both architects answered specific timely needs of the society where they worked. Bacon's area of interest was in keeping with the focus of postwar city planning in the USA: the revival of urban centers and older neighborhoods (Cohen 1991, vii). He wanted to give back the urban center to the people; and educating them to appreciate architectural space was part of this task. The postwar context where Meurman worked was different. His main interest was in creating housing and planning for organized growth of Finnish cities. The main focus was not on the city center, but the region and environs. The pedagogical aim of his book was on educating architects – who would be planning this growth – about urban planning issues. For this purpose he chose a normative text structure that draws from the functionalist legacy. A strong belief in the planning system is evident.

Different solutions were demanded from planners as times changed, and concurrently the role of the planner was gradually evolving. Where Meurman was enlightening the reader about what kind of housing environment would be best for well-being, Bacon was attempting to give the reader tools so that he would eventually be able to see this for himself. The role of the architect/planner had changed from a maestro to a visionary member of the team. This change had already been apparent in during Eliel Saarinen's time. He has been quoted as saying: "*I see that during the next half of the century the time of collaboration between the clients, the financier, the lawyer, the politician and the architect-planner will be required to meet the manifold problems which lurk ahead. The heyday of 'signed' architecture is over.*" (Saarinen according to Christ-Janer 1979 [1948], xvii.)

Conclusion

A juxtaposition of the two texts gives insight on the transformation of the role of the planner as well as the ideas about urban well-being in the middle decades of the 1900s. The planner's changing role is linked with the idea of the good urban life. Functionalistic planning ideas touched with utopian idealism were still strong influences at the time, the good life defined by architects and planners,

who saw themselves as best equipped to plan for it. Cities were understood as organisms, the health of their citizens demanding well-planned living quarters and organized distribution of living and working areas, in addition to equally well-planned connections to green spaces and nature. In a postwar planning situation faced by Otto-livari Meurman, such paternalistic attitudes were still prevailing. Edmund Bacon, on the other hand, in a different context two decades later, was seeing the planning process as a combined effort of many people.

Through the course of the 20th century it became obvious that the well-being of inhabitants was not dependent on functional requirements alone. Alexander's claim about the importance of one's surroundings was offset by Koolhaas' observation that happiness does not directly correlate with well-meant architectural aspirations. Citizen participation in the process of planning, or being able to influence one's own living environment, became a part of the idea of satisfactory urban life. Eventually, public participation gained importance. Planning was regarded less as an end result and more as a continuing process. The roles of both the citizen and the planner-architect were evolving.

In addition, subtle changes may be seen in the understanding of what kind of living environments cities should be. Open plans intermingled with the enclosed urban block. The collective urban spaces of the city and the individual home bases, whether in the center of city or on the urban fringes, were connected by movement systems into multi-nodal networks. Movement shifted to connectivity, cities became smarter. Concurrently, the ideas about the good urban life continue to include elements that change surprisingly little: access to services, possibility for social contacts and closeness to nature. Thus, one finds similarities between the present call for happy cities and the famous 20th century urban planning ideas – the garden city, the neighborhood, the social street life, and even the details of organic decentralization. Amidst continuous change there seems to be something constant about the sources of urban well-being.

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