

At the peak of the Great Depression, Lewis Mumford states in the catalogue accompanying New York MoMA's *International Style* exhibition that «the building of houses constitutes the major architectural work of any civilization. (...) The laying down of a new basis for housing has been (...) one of chief triumphs of modern architecture.» After tightening the connection of housing and modern architecture, Mumford further outlines a «new community», planning and inhabiting houses which have «a firm outline, determined by the nature of things (...) [and by] the positive results of science, disciplined thinking, coherent organization, collective enterprise (...).»¹

What Mumford demands here is American publicly subsidised housing, based on the European model of settlement which sets the example for an *International Style* giving the exhibition its title. While he sings the praise of technocratic administration in modern bourgeois-capitalist society, the quiet tones of ideology are nevertheless hearable when Mumford states that «the modern house is a biological institution», meaning a part of an *organically* organized institutional complex.² Catherine Bauer's *Modern Housing* of 1934 is a systematic analysis of European inter-war housing, making a similar call for American public housing.³

With this volume we want to address modern housing – stately subsidised or propagated by exhibitions, advisory bodies, scientists or political parties – as governed by various internal regimes. With regard to Mumford and Bauer that means a techno-bureaucratic *organic* order prevails in administering housing to the masses. Whilst claiming the leading role of the modern architects in aesthetics, the sociologist suspiciously adds the «modern community planners».⁴

Regime is defined by the Oxford dictionary as a «system of government or administration» or as a term to «cover norm-bound interactions relating to issues such as the global environment or human rights».⁵ Understanding stately subsidised housing this way, the history, sociology and anthropology of urban planning have devoted much research to planning mechanisms producing a «rule of experts» applying governing principles via urban and national infrastructure.⁶

An example for the implementation of housing provision as a systematic mode of governance – or as a regime – is the study *Homeland: Zionism as Housing Regime, 1860–2011* by Yael Allweil, one of the editors of this volume. There, she approaches Zionism as a «massive housing project, (...) employing housing as the key mechanism for forming subjects (Zionists) and place (Zion)».⁷ Housing here is understood as «the cornerstone of the state-citizen-contract in Israel».⁸ Allweil traces the evolution of Zionism as housing regime in a broader historiographic perspective, starting with analysing the consequences of changes in Ottoman laws in 1856, allowing landownership of non-Ottoman-citizens. That was when Zionist proto-state and

nation-building began, premised on housing as the building block of the regime. Further on, Allweil employs two competing housing regimes, that of the Zionists and that of the Palestinians, and demonstrates their constant intertwining. In doing so, she challenges the mainstream historiography of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In German architectural research on inter-war and post-war housing, it sometimes seems that we involuntarily believe in what Peter Marcuse defined as the «myth of benevolence», characterizing our notion of (appropriate) behaviour of the state towards its citizens.⁹ When we study modern middle class housing, especially such as the *Gartenstadt*, or mass housing of the welfare state, our conclusions in some instances deploy a, let's say, *triangle of goodness*: within this relationship, the architect, the civil servant, and the house owner and/or tenant act together, rather undisturbed for the good of the public. But is this really the case? Even studies of civic protests against demolition and improper construction do not challenge the unspoken notion of housing, so as to successfully establish *wohnen*. The implication of the German verbum *wohnen* as actively inhabiting a house, sustains that notion. *Housing*, unlike *wohnen*, includes the sense of the German verb *behausen*, which brings the estate's and the land's provider back into the picture. That is, the modern state (and its jurisdiction and building law), and its overarching goal of nation-building and establishing nationalism. Understood this way, housing has a double linguistic denotation and enables one to understand the production of «houses» and the subjection of its inhabitants to a regime or even competing regimes, like that of East and West Germany during the Cold War.

This shift in terminology has its impact on methodology and is reflected in a concomitant split in German and Israeli research. While architecture studies on *wohnen* commonly focus on town planning and architectural housing design, housing studies in Israel often comprise a broader realm of research fields and methodology. Via the discussion of building-related fields, the articles in this volume seek to bridge the gap. These discussions include the extension of the modern state and its building institutions into public space, the bureaucratisation of architecture and the emergence of architectural discourse, for instance via building exhibitions and their differing communication strategies, especially if female actors are involved. Finally, yet importantly, they show their dependence on state and private capital and landownership, which form the housing market, housing estates and their social structure.

Notes

1 Lewis Mumford, *Housing*, in: Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., Philip Johnson, *Modern Architecture. International Exhibition*, exh. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1932, p. 179-189, p. 179-180.

2 Ibid., p. 183.

3 Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing*, Cambridge/Mass. 1934.

4 Hitchcock/Johnson 1932 (as Note 1), p. 180.

5 Charles Jones, *Regime*, in: *A Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations*, ed. by Garrett W. Brown, Iain McLean a. Alistair Millman, 4th ed., 2018, <https://www.1oxfordreference-1com-10012af4t080b.>

emedial.bsb-muenchen.de/view/10.1093/acref/9780199670840.001.0001/acref-9780199670840-e-1143?rskey=HLsyv&result=1370, last accessed 2 April 2020.

6 Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts. Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2002.

7 Yael Allweil, *Homeland. Zionism as Housing Regime, 1860–2011*, London/New York 2017, p. 5.

8 Ibid.

9 Peter Marcuse, *Housing Policy and the Myth of the Benevolent State*, in: *Social Policy*, 1978, Vol. 8, no. 4, p. 21-26.

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