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PREVIEW

**Ayodele, Raimi Olukunle**

**PERCEPTIONS OF ARCHITECTS AND CLIENTS AS RELATED TO THE  
NOMOTHETIC ROLE OF ARCHITECTS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS  
OF PROGRAMMING AND PARTICIPATION OF THE SIGNIFICANT  
OTHERS AT THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF ANALYTICAL DESIGN**

*The University of Nebraska - Lincoln*

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By

Raimi Olukunle Ayodele

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Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 1982

**TITLE**

Perceptions of Architects and Clients as Related to the  
Nomothetic Role of Architects in Decision Making Process  
of Programming and Participation of the Significant  
Others at the Different Stages of Analytical Design

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My special thanks go to my wife, Clara, to my mother, Limota, and to all my children for their patience and understanding.

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My special thanks go to my wife, Clara, to my mother, Limota, and to all my children for their patience and understanding.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Context of the Problem

The traditional approach to the practice of architecture has received sharp criticism from many experts (Grans, 1977;<sup>1</sup> Sanoff, 1978<sup>2</sup>). Participative or collaborative design widely known as programming and called a dozen other names, but technically referred to as an extension of analytical design, has been in use as far back in history as the early sixties. Its progressive development since its inception with minor setbacks in the seventies is fortified primarily by economic, social and political forces.

By definition programming is an architectural process of conceptualizing and problem solving through problem seeking from group(s), public, community, corporate or private users and owners, and pertinent others in any given architectural or environmental project(s). From literature<sup>3</sup> it is gathered that programming employs the collaboration of most of the foregoing groups along with consultants, architects, and other connected agencies from conceptualization of the project to final solution. It can, therefore, be summed up that programming or collaborative design (CD) is a modern design tool employed by the architects to elicit a group-sensitive or majority-oriented (democratic) architecture.

Public awareness of the obligations of the client(s) and responsibilities of the architect is very shallow (Griffin, 1982).<sup>4</sup> Architects'

obligations are dictated primarily by what the clients and the public perceive to be the clients' roles which can be as (1) served ones or (2) assisted ones. Many exponents of modern role have emphasized the needs for architects to assume both serving and assisting responsibilities with more of the latter towards their clients as an alternative role to either serving or assisting. Traditionally, clients' roles used to be the first employer of architects' complete service with little or no input from the clients into the process until the final product was achieved. This has made the work of the architect product oriented and, equally, architects' work has always been judged that way.

Advocates of analytical design programming suggest that this traditional role should change and it is changing, which makes architects' work process oriented more and more. Advantages attached to the use of analytical design are quite phenomenal. Not only does the method increase aesthetics of built environment, it also enhances the creative ability of the participating architect. It also serves as an escape from loneliness for the architect and provides transition from a "messianic" role to an acceptable one.

Any change process often encounters resistance, and it is no exception with the use of analytical design. Firstly, analytical design lacks a consistent direction and a succinct professional framework. The literature revealed that attitude on the ethical significance of analytical design to architecture varies from the beneficial (Lee, 1982) to the chaotic (Lewis, 1979).<sup>5</sup> Often it becomes a problem for the architect, after struggling to define what is to be achieved through analytical design (as a design tool for collecting design data), who the users are, or how such users can be reached effectively. The question then arises, how many architects are analytical design? A follow-up question



then should be, how many effectively use analytical design? Or put another way and in a more concise format, how many architects "honestly" use analytical design?

As one expert observes, architects encounter problems dealing with their clients because people lack ". . . appreciation of quality and their ability to make real choices are not adequate for them to be responsive to the architect" (Hirshen, 1982).<sup>6</sup> Then the question arises again — this time differently: how is decision made in analytical design? Or— What kind of communication goes on in analytical design? Or— To whom does the architect listen, owner or users? Or— Is there an apathy in the process? Better still, What is the role of the architect in analytical design/programming?

#### Architect's Prescribed Role

The values, beliefs and judgements of the architect which have been acquired from the previous training and peer group (Gans, 1977)<sup>7</sup> predetermine what the architect wants from the participation of clients or users in design. A second factor is related to change — nothing that moves is stationary — society consists of dynamic subfactors like user's needs which keep changing from time to time. Consumable resources, such as energy depleting at an astronomical rate, place tremendous burden upon the creativity of the architect, who in turn looks up to the society for a quick, easy answer which may or may not be there. Fifteen years ago an average 25-year-old American would have been contented with a bottle of beer or a stick of cigarette, but today drug hemp and paraphernalia have taken over. "Self" is substituted for patriotism, and sexual practice is taking a new dimension. Such value-changes and beliefs prescribe the architect's role, and search for new methods of doing things.

Analytical design process prescribes several roles for the architect in order to achieve an ecologically balanced design and a majority-sensitive environment. In dealing with the client during the programming stage of an architectural design, David Straus and Michael Doyle suggest a "third party intervention" role for the architect. This prescribes a very neutral role between owners and users. The intervention role, according to Straus and Doyle, includes facilitation and process management. This, according to Straus and Doyle, is the "...science of planning and implementing processes of collaboration in which a significant number of people move collectively through all the phases of problem solving from problem identification and definitions to evaluation and final decision making."

#### Architect as Teacher

Participation of client/user is a design tool with great potential for achieving social justice and bridging any existing economic gaps (architecturally) between social classes of our society (Griffin, 1982).<sup>8</sup> The prescribed role of an architect here is utilization of participation as a tool for educating masses on architectural issues, neighborhood awareness, and for generating a positive attitude toward built-environment on the one hand and overall architecture on the other.

#### Architect as a Learner

The role of a learner is integrated in participation for an architect (Lerup, 1979).<sup>9</sup> Analytical design process, if carefully employed, generates greater awareness of the deeper implications of governmental regulations and policies as they impinge upon the users of all categories (handicapped and non-handicapped, the able and the disabled alike).

It is rewarding to the architect as he benefits from skills from other disciplines. It also brings the architect closer to the realities of development (Thomas, 1978).

### The In-between Roles

Between being a teacher and being a learner at the same time, there are other mid-roles an architect must play for a successful and effective use of analytical design. The learner's role, the teacher's role and in-between roles are all prescribed. What are the roles? This question remains the problem for both practitioners and critics of the profession. Unless a clear definition and adequate listing of the roles are carried out, expectation (institutional dimension) may be too high or too low for the profession of architecture.

### Statement of the Problem

Role in programming/analytical design is influenced by some major factors, viz., (1) purpose for which analysis has to be carried out, and (2) the involvement of certain role senders as significant others in decision making. These factors often gratify the relationships between those owners who have commissioned the projects and architects who have been commissioned to execute; such relationships, although often presumed, are never given.

It is, therefore, the main focus of this study to assess the consensus or difference of perceptions among the architects, clients and experts on the functions of architects and clients in analytical design process. The second concern of this study is to illuminate the ideal role set through the assessment or rating of individuals or groups whose participation is essential at the different phases of decision making

in analytical design by architects, clients and experts. The third main focus of this study is to examine the philosophical base for programming through an assessment of consensus of perceptions between architects and experts regarding the purposes of programming.

### The Broad Problem

Despite a strong plea from experts, sociologists, social psychologists and others for research intensification in the areas of client and architect relationships, and especially the nomothetic role of the latter, very little has been done up to date expressive of that request. Despite all the lip service showered on significance of analytical design, studies have been very few and inadequate on the manifold elements helpful to the understanding of the meaning of programming and the functions of an architect in this vital aspect of architecture.

Architecture, a complex social process, often experiences a larger force of limiting change due to lack of succinct theoretical frameworks capable of providing laconic direction for utilizing analytical design to achieve aesthetics and ethics.

### Statement of the Questions

Role is best explicated through the perceptions of the experts, the servants and the served ones. Thus, to provide a concise direction for this study, some questions were excogitated and pertinent research framework formulated. Such questions vital to this study include:

1. How do clients, experts and architects view the purpose of programming?
2. What is the consensus or disagreements on the purpose among the experts, the clients and the architects.
3. How do architects, clients (owners and users), and experts view

the functions (nomothetic role) of an architect in a programming?

4. What is the consensus on architect's nomothetic functions among the experts, the clients and the architects?
5. How do architects, clients and experts rate the importance of clients' nomothetic role in programming?
6. What is the consensus on the nomothetic role of the client among the experts, the clients and the architects?
7. Who should participate at the different stages of programming?
8. What is the participation importance of each participant at the different stages?

### Significance of and Justification for the Study

Architect-client relationship has metamorphosed from independent into a symbiotic affair with client providing information and support while it looks up to the architect to utilize such information for a quality-bound, user oriented design.

Juan Pablo Bonta (1978)<sup>10</sup> and a host of other experts have made a strong plea for the total abandonment of architects' "self-fabricated, messianic role" for a more transactional and facilitatory role (Straus, 1978).<sup>11</sup>

More and more pleas are being made by sociologists (Gans, 1971), social psychologists and other experts, to architects in adopting a role that will be responsive to the plurality of clients (Lee, et.al., 1982).<sup>12</sup> By so doing, architects are likely to conquer "... their long-standing fascination with ready-made solutions. . ." (Bonta, 1978).<sup>13</sup>

The current literature and other professional activities exemplify the increasing interest that the social work profession has been showing in analytical design (Bonta, 1978,<sup>14</sup> Burns, 1977,<sup>15</sup> Straus and Doyle,

1977).<sup>16</sup> Satisfying the needs of the plurality of clients is not as simple as it sounds, especially in an analytical design situation where confrontations, arguments and conflicts are inevitable. In fact, it is easier said than done. Not only does such a process increase burden on the architect, but it precludes the use of "expressionism" or individual expression of inner self which has been developed through education.

With the need for the collapse of the messianic and traditional roles of architecture, more and more demands are placed on understanding the new role of architect by architects themselves, sociologists, social workers, government, the public, the community of users, and the world at large.

Participative design has never stayed this long in the history of its existence. Hence, the study of its mechanics and ethical implications for the practice could not have come at a much better time. The significance of this study bears consideration for the schools and agencies charged with providing skills and training for future architects. The future of the profession can be shaped now, and the more we know about our roles, the better the relationship with other professions at large.

The interests of sociologists in the practice of architecture are based heavily on ethics as rightly noted in McLaughlin's (1978)<sup>17</sup> assessment of design process as having ". . . become ego centered, dominated by the architect and guided by his predilections. Frequently, the process consists of first designing a solution and then seeking a problem that fits, or, rather, to defining and redefining the apparent problem so it seems finally to fit. . . ." This notion of predetermined design solution availing architectural practice has been observed by many other writers and researchers (Hirshen, 1982,<sup>18</sup> Lee, Smith and Hack,

1982)<sup>19</sup> as architectural determinisms as opposed to architectural relativism.

Herbert Gans perceived a serious need for research studies to focus on users' participation and its relationship with practice. He (Gans, 1927)<sup>20</sup> noted that the ". . . professions have been largely peer oriented; practitioners have worked mainly for the approval and respect of their peers and colleagues; only secondarily have they been concerned with clients' own wants or needs . . . " Finally, in their educational programs, the professions have tried to train students to "advance" the profession; that is, to be original, innovative and prestigious--by peer standards--although, in fact, many of the students have wound up in fairly prosaic jobs with very little or no opportunity for innovation.

#### Basic Assumptions

In studying the nomothetic role of an architect in a collaborative design process, the following basic assumptions will be made:

1. Architect has some roles vital to the process of analytical design.
2. Every participant will give an honest view regarding the nomothetic roles of an architect and clients in programming.
3. The instrument designed for measuring these roles will be an accurate reflection of the purpose of the study.
4. Regardless of the varying social complexity of various architectural projects, there exists a common domain for the architect's nomothetic roles.
5. There is a global base for defining programming/analytical design.
6. Programming is constant for all projects regardless of size or complexity.

### Delimitations

1. The study will focus on nomothetic roles of the architect and client's definition of and participation in programming.
2. Data will be collected from three groups, two of which consist of practitioners in the field.
3. Experts will be selected by their award records as indicated in the American Institute of Architects registries.
4. Interviews of practicing architects will be limited to Omaha and Lincoln, the major cities in Nebraska.
5. Survey instruments for data from clients/users will be limited to Omaha and Lincoln.

### Definitions of Terms and Phrases

For this study, the following terms and phrases will be used to mean:

1. Participative design process: A process of architectural conceptualization that employs group(s) of public and/or community of users for problem identification to problem solving in a given architectural project.
2. Programming: An architectural process for eliciting and assembling data in a given architectural project.
3. Using client: Any individual or group of individuals, community, government, public (owner and non-owner) who will eventually be using buildings or architectural space(s) created.
4. Paying client: Any individual or group of individuals, community, government or public (owner and non-owner) who require and pay for the services of an architect or architectural firm for the purpose of creating (designing) building(s) or space(s).
5. Analytical/programming design process: See Participative Design Process above.
6. Design process: Summ of architectural activities undergone by the architect or architectural firm and others who may contribute from the conceptualization of the problem to the final solution about a given architectural project(s).
7. Role: "...the pattern or type of social behavior. . .situationally appropriate to an individual. . . in terms of demands and expectation of those in his group" (Sergent, 1951).