RPL Cluster 6: Buildings & Support Facilities, in Cities, Streets and Neighbourhoods

Prof. Hajo Neis[1,2] Pamanee Chaiwat[1],

[1] PUARL-CIU, Department of Architecture, School of Architecture, University of Oregon, the United States

[2] Department of Architecture, School of Architecture, University of Oregon, the United States

Abstract

This paper is part of a larger project, the 'Refugee Pattern Language.' In chapter 6 we present patterns of buildings that help refugees to survive and give shelter, start a new life. Buildings of various kinds are critical for migrants and refugees lives and help in their different functions and uses but they also limit life in the dialectics of control and freedom. (see TOC as appendix) Research is based on field work, literature, and PL methods.

***Keywords**: Pattern Language, Buildings and Typo-Morphology, Refugees and Migrants, Integration*

Introduction

Buildings can be understood as types of buildings depending on their purpose of use or function and cultural understanding or depending on social relations (Markus, 1993). They also can be understood and elaborated as patterns, in which case they have to follow the definition of a pattern as a solution to a recurrent problem using the minimum format of 'recurrent problem – discussion – solution' (Alexander, 1979). Sometimes, in this paper, the pragmatic 'problem – solution' format had to suffice or even a single title might contribute to the creation of a pattern language.

When large numbers of refugees arrive, or are invited by a friendly country (Merkel, 2015), numerous recurring problems will occur. The first and largest problem is how to take care of many refugees needs with regard to their health, housing, living support, freedom and safety. Many of these recurrent problems can be taken care of within the existing building infrastructure system and facilities, such as temporary structures, empty apartment buildings, medical support facilities, work places, education spaces, and other support places. But with an increasing number of refugees existing buildings and shelters may not be enough anymore to house all refugees and provide all services in existing facilities. In this case new solutions including new buildings may be needed to solve the manifold recurring problems.

6.1 Immediate Shelter: Hotels, Apartment Buildings, Factory Halls, Ships, and Tents

Problem: **When refugees arrive in large numbers of thousands in a new city, creating an urgent need for shelter and housing and care, a city has to look for all kinds of options to accommodate exhausted people, anxious children, and ailing men and women. Solutions include using the existing empty stock of housing in a city, especially utilizing vacant building infrastructure, such as old warehouses, unused**

airports, factory halls, and even more exotic places like old military garrison buildings, ships, and wine cellars. It might also include simple or sophisticated tent structure camps that can be made available in a short period of time for between 150-350 occupants.

Therefore: **Cities, Towns and communities need to prepare plans at all levels of scale and modalities to not only house refugees and support survival but also to begin to integrate refugees into the new society. Refugee buildings need to be connected to an infrastructure and communication network of health, learning, work opportunities, life necessities and amenities.**

6.2 Discovering, Occupying, and Exploring Buildings and Facilities

Links: While the need for immediate housing and living is paramount as in IMMEDIATE SHELTER RPL 6.1, something else is going on in parallel. It is different from finding shelter on the long escape journey, where any shelter is welcome to get closer to the 'promised land.' It is different because it is the human need to find freedom, dignity, and well-being in a new way and a new land, city and NEIGHBORHOODS WITH REFUGEES RPL 5.9…

Figure 1. *Refugees Welcome*

Problem: **Social relationships and power structures permit or forbid the use of buildings in full or in part in any city or society. It is important for new inhabitants, migrants, and refugees, to discover, explore, use, and occupy buildings and their uses in order to become familiar and also better integrated into a new land, country, region, city, neighbourhood, building complexes and buildings. This is also important for finding and establishing a better understanding of a new place to belong to.**

Discussion: Here it is helpful to introduce the work of Thomas A. Markus, who in the title of his book already refers to the problem at hand: 'Buildings and Power – Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types.'(1993) Based on the work of the German Architect Theorist Paul T. Frankl 'Die Entwicklungsphasen der Neueren Baukunst' (1914), he asks the question 'Why can we use buildings? Referencing a number of more contemporary writers, who see buildings as social constructs, such as Henri Lefebvre in 'The Production of Space' (1974), Marcus develops Frankl's work to its consequences of buildings being primarily built on social relationships.

Markus develops a typology of buildings, that is not only built on art history, technology, and functionality, such as by Nicholas Pevsner (1976) but also, is primarily founded on social relationships and power that asks the dialectical question of freedom and control. The building typology Markus started to develop includes a number of categories: Buildings and People, Buildings and Knowledge, and Buildings and Things. 'Buildings and People' is the most relevant category when dealing with migrants, refugees, and displaced

people. The sub-categories are 'Formation' (kindergartens, schools), and 'Reformation' (hospitals, and prisons). These are categories for which the state and government largely take responsibility for, that is people who have to be formed, reformed and 'indoctrinated,' because they cannot take care of themselves, and for people who have done wrong and need to be corrected. The more technical space syntax analysis of buildings, originally developed by Hillier and Hanson (1984) is used to support the argument by using the categories of levels of depth, penetration and gates of control to give a topological picture of a building that is used by the controllers and the controlled in quite different ways. (example of prison and refugee camp)

It is not difficult to see how forced migrants and refugees fit into this picture in many ways, such as in controlled camps where they quite often live for a long time. They might also live in all kinds of controlled buildings, sometimes even prisons or prison like conditions. In order to become whole again, refugees and displaced migrants may need to recover the use of regular buildings, by living in their own apartments, becoming owners of their own house, buying in their own shops, or better selling from their own shops vegetables, or clothes, or running their own travel business company. And finally, they may need to learn to use all kinds of buildings to the fullest of their rights and not end up in Kafka-like situations.

Therefore: **When migrants and refugees start to live in more stable conditions within any place, city, town or countryside, it is important that they begin to discover and explore buildings and support facilities. These buildings and facilities are partially public, partially private, and partially semi-private. Private buildings can be used in form of apartments or buying a house for oneself. Semi-public buildings like shops can also be rented or bought and hospitals can be used. Public buildings belong to the public and therefore should be confidently visited and explored such as libraries and town halls. By participating in public life in buildings, refugees can much better be integrated in a place and its people, and they may rediscover their freedom and dignity in a new situation.**

Links: Patterns that may enhance the use of buildings and facilities and the development of more confidence, freedom and dignity, may include MOSQUES IN THE OCCIDENT (RPL 6.12), THERAPEUTIC GREENS (RPL 7.4), TRANSCENDED SPACE (RPL 7.6), MIXED USE-LIVE WORK (RPL7.7), GUEST REALMS (RPL 7.8), CULTURAL DISPLAY (RPL 7.10)

6.3 Appropriate Short Tenure in Temporary Building Structures

Problem: **One of the most problematic aspects of temporary refugee shelters and camps is the length of stay for refugees in such facilities. The longer people stay in short term camps and shelters, the more their mental and physical health deteriorates, and their perspective of life becomes negative if not hopeless. Additional problems that may arise include first upkeep of the camp, deterioration of infrastructure, water supply, toilets, hygiene and cleanliness, general overflow of holding capacity, health problems and diseases, infection and contagion in a pandemic, and many other related problems such as social unrest.**

Therefore: The use of most of these temporary refugee shelter and camps solutions should be restricted to a limited time no longer than one and at most two years to not create new additional problems for already highly burdened refugees. Existing specific regulations for limited time of use should be followed or established where not existent, based on scientific evidence and ethical considerations. Camps always need to be kept clean and liveable including with help and participation of refugees.

6.4 Permanent Buildings for Permanent Living

Problem: **For refugees to find and occupy permanent housing in permanent buildings is one of the most critical objectives for finally establishing a foundation for a settled and peaceful life.**

While a 'first response' to a refugee crisis, can be defined literally as the very first direct response to a catastrophic danger or event, a 'second response' might be considered a more lasting response in providing or finding a permanent place to live in, a final home to stay. And all of this possibly after several kinds of difficult experiences in different places and different times, conceivably on a long escape route with different stations and experiences on the road.

To provide permanent housing in permanent buildings can also be considered a 'secondary response' appropriate to a large housing emergency caused by disaster. It might be considered the endpoint of all first and secondary responses combined. Permanent housing in permanent buildings, houses, clusters of houses, apartment buildings, housing complexes, and housing hills, also means permanent living in one place, and a choice of permanent living in one place or another, it essentially means freedom, reliability and security.

To achieve a regular life with pleasant permanent housing in a well-connected and embedded neighbourhood, a decent job, education for children and oneself, as well as health care, and freedom to move and enjoy life, is the most precious jewel one can fend for in life.

Therefore: **Try to provide or find permanent housing in existing buildings as soon as possible for refugees. Make sure that these permanent places are well connected within a building or building complex, but also to the outside neighbourhood with good urban infrastructure, job opportunities, transportation connections, parks, and sports facilities. If necessary, also build more permanent houses or apartment buildings in various forms such as clusters of housing, housing complexes, and self-organized forms such as coops including participation and hands on.**

6.5 Cluster of Houses for Families with Children

Problem: **At a more mature state, and in a new land, when refugees have been accepted with official refugee status and the right to find their own home, they may start looking for their own house to rent or buy (APL 79 Your Own Home). Others may start to consider not only living in a single house with family and children in a new neighborhood, but as groups of families they may also desire to live close together possibly even in a cluster of houses (APL 37 House Cluster).**

When a group of refugee families desire to live together in adjacent houses in a part of a city or neighborhood, they can look for alternatives to live close by in a neighborhood or they can also live very close together in a cluster of houses. Possibilities of renting and later purchasing a house in an existing neighborhood together with a small group of families may start with simply two families living house to house next to each other. The simplest cluster of houses within an existing street pattern with single houses on each side of the street facing each other can be formed by five houses two opposite each other, one on each site of the main house, and another house in the connecting to the backside of the house. In this arrangement each house is the center of one cluster of forming the center of the cluster of five houses with the street as communal space. (Gans, 1967)

When the opportunity of building a new cluster of houses opens up, refugees may be more deeply involved in the design and building process of a free-form cluster arrangement with a core of a communal space at the center or on one side of a pocket neighborhood (Chapin, 2011).

Therefore: **Support, whenever small refugee groups try to live close to each other. It might happen in a cluster of houses, very close together in an existing regular housing street arrangement with five houses forming a cluster. It also could be built as a new kind of cluster of houses in a pocket neighbourhood or free arrangement with more than five houses and with a community hall. This may also happen on a regular site in a neighbourhood, or on a rather irregular site with its own challenges and opportunities.**

6.6 Cluster of Low Density Two-Three Story Apartment Buildings

6.7 Housing Complex with Internal Support Facilities

6.8 Center for Unaccompanied Minors (under 15)

A large number of refugees consists of unaccompanied minors and youths. These young populations need special care and treatment because of their needs in physical and mental health, housing and living needs. Minors who are considered 0-15 years of age or sometimes 0-18 (UNHCR) years old, need particular attention because they have no family to take care of them. This means that they need also housing and care in buildings with support facilities appropriate to their needs. Children, with young teens included, are particularly vulnerable and need very special care in a new place and without parents and family.

Therefore: **Take special care of young people, children, and youths according to their needs and age. In particular, take care of unaccompanied minors (age 0-15) according to their particular needs in their age group. What these young people need is something close to their family, something like guardians and role models. They are the most vulnerable refugee populations, but they also carry great hope for the future.**

6.9 Youths Centers for (15-24)

Figure 2. L: Integration of Refugees through Shared Housing mixed with students, Startblock, Amsterdam, Netherlands (https://world-habitat.org/world-habitat-awards/winners-and-finalists/startblok/), R: Munich Refugee Youth Centre 2016 (http://www.makingheimat.de/en/refugee-housing-projects/database/young-refugee-centre-muenchen).

6.10 Dining Halls and Eating Places
Problem: **Coming together for eating is one of the fundamental social functions in any community, be it a family, or a group of refugees or even a large event with many people. (COMMUNAL EATING APL 147).**

For refugees with no or partial family the event of eating with other groups takes on a new meaning.

6.11 Community and Meeting Places – Café Hope

6.12 Mosques in the Occident
All religions need prayer facilities and buildings for pursuing their religious beliefs, mental well-being, and identity as people. This is also true, or particularly true for refugees in a new land.

Figure 3. L: The Great Mosque in Rome (Photo: H. Neis), M: Myanmar Refugees in Akron, Ohio, build a traditional temple (https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/mon-refugees-from-myanmar), R: Sri Kamadchi Ampal Tempel in Hamm, Germany built by refugees from Sri Lanka (Photo: Dirk Vorderstraße / Wikimedia Commons).

People need to pray according to their religion, and they need communal buildings and places to pray and congregate as a community. Religious places in the Diaspora are special and always should be protected. Because of religious freedom in democratic countries all religions have their rights, and that includes religions that are introduced or reinforced with refugees from different cultures. In the case of migrants and refugees coming from Islamic countries, mosques have been introduced to Europe and other parts of the world. These

mosques range from simple prayer places within buildings, to regular buildings that have been transformed into mosques, to larger new buildings such as gorgeous mosques with minarets within major European cities, and cities of the world. Italy with about 500 mosques of these different kinds for example, also houses one of the largest and most beautiful modern mosques outside of any Islamic country. This beautiful mosque outside the Roman walls in a forested area of Parioli is one of the religious beacons for refugees in Italy. It was designed by the Iraq architect Sami Mousawi and the Italian Architect Paolo Porthoghesi, who was also the architect on-site. The fact that Islamic groups are not always respecting the western democratic rules and laws should not be a reason to deny all refugees with Islamic background the freedom pray.

Therefore: **Support the provision, and accommodation of prayer space, for refugees and migrants of all religious denominations. With very large numbers of refugees of Islamic background help and support the design and building of new mosques in ways that are also acceptable to the host culture. And make new buildings for all denominations modest and beautiful, according to context.**

6.13 Hospitals and Health Facilities

6.14 Libraries and Language Learning Facilities

6.15 Working Places and Space for Starting a Business of Your Own

6.17 Weekend House in Allotment Garden

6.18 Kleiderkammer – Place for Donating and Sharing Clothes

Final thoughts:

In Cluster 6 we have investigated buildings and facilities mostly within but also outside, that primarily serve refugee needs and purposes, but which are also relevant for people of the home-country alike. They serve as places where refugees can live and they support important aspects of life, such as housing, health, education, work and work learning opportunities.

According to Thomas Marcus these buildings and facilities are also places of power between the host and the visitor, in which the host controls where visitors are permitted to go and how they can use a building and its space. It is important in this process that refugees themselves can grow into positions where they can become users and owners of buildings and facilities with equal rights as users, renters or owners.

Acknowledgements

References

1. Markus, T. A. (1993). Buildings and Power – Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Buildings. Routledge.

2. Alexander, C. (1979). The Timeless Way of Building. Oxford University Press

3. Karnitschnig, M. (2020) *5 Years on from Angela Merkel's three little words: 'Wir schaffen das.'* https://www.politico.eu/article/angela-merkel-wir-schaffen-das-5-years-on/

4. Frankl, P. T. (1914). *Die Entwicklungsphasen der Neueren Baukunst.* B.G. Teubner, Leipzig und Berlin.
5. Lefebrve H. (1991). The Production of Space. English Translation. Blackwell Publishing. Original 1974 Edition Anthropos.
6. Pevsner N. (1976). A History of Building Types. Princeton University Press.
7. Hillier B. and Hanson, J. (1984).The Social Logic of Space. Cambridge University Press
8. Reference to mental and physical damages of too long camp life
9. Reference to first response
10. Gans, H. (1967). The Levitowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community. Columbia University Press.
11. Chapin R. (2011) Creating Small Scale Community in a Large Scale World. Taunton Press.
12. Statistiches Bundesamt: *Statistisches Jahrbuch -Deutschland und Internationales 2019*. DSTATIS. 2.3 Migration 2.3.1 Bevoelkerung in Privathaushalten mit Migrationshintergrund pp. 41-51.
13. BRYCS- Bridging Refugee Youth$ Children's Services https://brycs.org/clearinghouse-resources/
14. Example of a Youth House in Munich http://www.makingheimat.de/en/refugee-housing-projects/database/young-refugee-centre-muenchen/
15. UN. Department of Economice and Social Affairs: Definition of youths and children: https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/what-we-do/faq.html__;!!C5qS4YX3!WWOHnFicrAtIjJCtOnuuu9VPeAYH93cZp6qHHeIqhG3pSj1mo-NnIbA-mgOAQWMdwg$
16. The Great Mosque of Rome. https://www.romeing.it/mosque-of-rome/

APPENDIX A: THE SUGAR IN THE MILK – A PATTERN LANGUAGE FOR REFUGEES (RPL)

Part I: Refugees Arrival and Amendment

> *Preface and Introduction*

Cluster 1: THE REFUGEE FAMILY
Cluster 2: LEAVING PLACE – ESCAPE JOURNEY
Cluster 3: WELCOME COUNTRY - ARRIVAL PLACE
Cluster 4: ARRIVAL CITY – Urban Life and Infrastructure
Cluster 5: REFUGEES IN NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES
Cluster 6: BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES, IN CITIES, STREETS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

> *6.1 Immediate Shelter: Hotels, Apartment Buildings, Factory Halls, Ships, and Tents…*
> *6.2 Discovering, Occupying, Exploring Buildings and Facilities*
> *6.3 Appropriate Short Tenure in Temporary Building Structures*
> *6.4 Permanent Buildings for Permanent Living*
> *6.5 Cluster of Houses for Families with Children*
> *6.6 Cluster of Low Density 2-3 Story Apartment Buildings (HN-UO Studio F2021)*
> *6.7 Housing Complex with Support Facilities*
> *6.8 Center for Unaccompanied Minors (under 15)*
> *6.9 Youths Centers for 15-24 Years*
> *6.10 Dining Halls and Eating Places*
> *6.11 Community and Meeting Places – Café Hope*
> *6.12 Mosques in the Occident ……………………….. and more 6.13-6.18*

Cluster 7: HOUSING, LIVING, AND LIVE WORK
Cluster 8: WORK AND WORK LEARNING
Cluster 9: THE PROCESS OF BUILDING – STRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION