

see which sorts of services and forms are bankable, and which are not. In capitalist situations, disciplines of unemployment and bankruptcy ensure that it is only the bankable services and forms, and the ideologies which support them, which are widely replicated. Through their own responses to market signals, therefore, most of the actors in this complex division of labour get themselves into line, with no need for overt shows of force. All this makes sense in the abstract, but it ignores the practical difficulty of controlling all the experts in the development 'team' once they have been hired. Believe me: as an ex-property developer myself, I know how difficult this is.

The difficulty arises, at least in part, because of a mutual ignorance and antipathy between the various members of the development team, a state of affairs which arises through the process of increasing specialisation itself. As each new service is offered as an innovation in the marketplace, it has to be seen by potential buyers as being distinct from the other services which are already on offer: it has to develop its own 'unique selling point'. This means that the promoters of each new service have to emphasise the differences between that service and its possible competitors.

One result of this process is that many of the actors in the development process carry out their work according to different value-systems. The British economist Ralph Morton, for example, points out that, although architects and structural engineers both emphasise the fundamental importance of design in their work, 'they each mean by "design" an almost totally different activity', with architects stressing the art dimension and engineers the scientific. In contrast to both, he argues, surveyors often have 'a primary concern with market efficiency and value for money where value itself is defined in monetary terms'.⁶

Within this general situation, there seems to be a particularly strong conflict between the values of most architects and those of many of their patrons. In the context of capitalism, where most buildings are produced in speculative markets, and many patrons' objectives are primarily financial, we find that many architects nevertheless have non-commercial values. Comparing his own results with those of Anastasi, Mackinnon, for example, showed that US architects were far less motivated by financial considerations than ordinary citizens, let alone (presumably) property developers.⁷ Interestingly, the divergence is particularly marked in the case of the prestigious 'leaders' of architectural culture.

Mackinnon carried out his study in 1962, but the situation is probably not changing very fast. In a 1990 review, Ralph Morton shows how limited is the teaching of economic matters in UK schools of architecture, suggesting that this 'seems to stem partly from a belief that the subject is peripheral and there is simply no time for it; but it stems also from a fear that contact with the philistine world of the economist will contaminate the creative imaginative world of the young architect'.⁸ This situation is further complicated by a range of studies which clearly show that there are also considerable divergences in the evaluation of urban places between architects and non-architects⁹ and between architects and town planners.¹⁰

At first sight, this situation seems fraught with potential disaster for all concerned. Patrons do not have the knowledge to design buildings themselves, whilst their professional advisers are difficult to control and also – particularly in the case of the architect – are often actively hostile to the sorts of objectives which many patrons have, in so far as they understand them at all. Morton himself certainly sees this as a negative situation, remarking on 'the failure of the built environment professions to use their enormous collective skills and knowledge to a common purpose'.¹¹

All this means that it is extremely difficult for patrons to control the experts' work in any detail. Even if the patron and the design professional were to share the same objectives, so that the professional was consciously trying to implement the patron's stated policies, still a degree of autonomous professional action would in principle be unavoidable, because no policy can ever be stated in a form which is detailed enough to be directly applicable, without interpretation, to every individual design situation. In the real-life situation of the development process, where the objectives of the patron and the expert are in conflict, it is even more difficult for the patron to exercise close control, as Dietrich Rueschemeyer reminds us:

*Where complex knowledge is used in the performance of work . . . it makes control and supervision very costly if not impossible since detailed control of experts requires equally well-qualified controllers. 'Lay' customers – however rich, prestigious or powerful – cannot themselves exercise control because they often do not know enough even to define what their problem is, not to mention monitoring its solution.*¹²