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Modernity and Housing

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Preface

Written in the late 1980s and published in 1993, *Modernity and Housing* focused primarily on a version of ‘modernity’ and two periods of housing production deemed to be modern, largely in an orthodox modern sense both developmentally and architecturally. These were from the late 1920s in Europe and the United States until World War II and the more contemporaneous period from around the 1970s onwards. While much of the book’s content still holds, including the more detailed case studies that are largely historical and critical accounts, in the interim a number of pertinent changes have transpired.

First, the very concept of ‘modernity’ has come under further and more elaborated scrutiny, with the hegemony of the ‘Post-Enlightenment Package,’ as it is sometimes called, being challenged by those adhering to broadened pluralistic concepts of ‘modernities’ and path-dependent variations of the standard definition of modernity. This, in turn, has introduced localized versions and expressions of what it is to be modern in this world, particularly with the rise of Asian developments among others.

Second, the so-called second demographic shift, among other recent trends, has led to both the reality and perception of a more diversified range of household types in the contemporary era, especially in OECD countries, along with a concomitant further diversification of housing types and in housing production in general. These were far less evident a quarter of a century ago when *Modernity and Housing* was written. Also there has been a general rise in the urban density and scale of notable housing projects as the world’s population becomes more urbanized and in many cases with more conscious embedded nests in the urban life of cities.

Third, most of the examples described and analyzed in *Modernity and Housing* were in the international style and an orthodox modernism that responded to the new realities that accompanied architectural production in the early part of the twentieth century. The other more or less equally prevalent modernism referred to as simply ‘moderne’ from Art Moderne and the broad inauguration in the 1925 Paris Exposition, was not recognized nor dealt with in *Modernity and Housing*. Indeed, since the writing of *Modernity and Housing*, I have written a sequel titled, *Urban Intensities: Contemporary Housing Types and Territories* in 2014 with my co-author Har Ye Kan. This sequel explicitly takes up with contemporary versions of housing of various types and is centered around the idea of ‘urban intensity’ embracing density, diversity, and connectedness to urban circumstances. In effect, it responds to the changes outlined here since the writing of *Modernity and Housing*.

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