The Transnational Housing Research Project
— Reconsidering the Relationship Between Immigrants and Housing —

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Abstract

The Transnational Housing Research Project fosters discussion of the transnational living styles of Mexican migrants to the United States in two indispensable aspects, the architectural and the anthropological. From the architectural point of view, we analyze the architectural styles of migrants’ houses, including design, use of traditional construction processes, and structural engineering, especially of houses that are constructed in Mexico using money sent from the U.S. In the anthropological field, we focus on the social and economic impact that the construction of these houses has on their communities — for example, on local construction guild — as well how the houses are used. Based on these analyses, we examine what it means to the migrants to have “houses.” Based on this research, we urge the introduction of an interperspective approach to the examination of the ongoing phenomenon of “transnational housing” characteristic of the lifestyle of Mexican migrants.

1. Introduction

In globalized contemporary societies, although migrant workers move away from their country of birth and relocate the center of their lives to another country, they form a new lifestyle in which they frequently and continuously return to and maintain ties with their home country. The domain of the lives of people who choose to live in this way is not divided by national borders; however, it can be understood as a new domain that comes into existence from transnational connections.

A specific example of people maintaining ties with their hometowns while living as migrant workers in the country to which they have relocated is house building through overseas remittance to sending societies. Examples of migrant workers saving money while abroad and using this money to build houses can be observed in all regions of the world. The houses that they built have a considerable influence in reconstructing the regional cultures of sending

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societies, including urbanization, regional economies, construction processes, and house design. On the other hand, in the hometowns of immigrants that experience urbanization due to this house building, we observe considerable sociological impacts, such as the dissemination of the vast houses of immigrants not being used for long periods of time, escalating land prices, the mixing of traditional architecture and modern architecture, and the formation of gated communities.

The objectives of this house building cannot be understood solely from perspectives such as “a dwelling place where family members are left behind in their hometown” or “a dwelling place where migrant workers live later in life after having stopped working as migrant workers.” Houses are the most fundamental and important built environment for people, and there are several intertwining factors that come into play when selecting a house. We have to gain an understanding of houses as an overall result that includes a shared awareness occurring at certain times and in certain groups, such as changes in family structure and kinship systems due to immigration, social networks between immigrants, the manifestation of status in the form of prosperity in the country of immigration, returning to their hometown for events such as festivals, a behavioral pattern in which partners are sought from the same hometown, lifestyle trends due to advertising, and the reaffirmation of identity.

In Mexican-American migrant studies, research relating to the economic impact of house building through overseas remittance on the hometowns of migrant workers, and the sociological impact on receiving societies of the expansion of residential areas due to the increase in Hispanic populations has been conducted mainly in the disciplines of economics and demographics. In addition, analysis regarding the reconstruction of cultures has been conducted in a wide range of individual research, including on identity and a person’s political nature, and these studies were conducted with the keywords of spaces, geographies, and places in fields such as sociological approaches that employ quantitative analysis using data from existing social surveys, anthropological participant observations of transformations in the lifestyles of immigrants, as well as cultural studies. New theories of space surrounding immigrants that accompany globalization have several notable accomplishments focusing on the themes of “time-space compression,” such as the ways in which communities of migrant workers are using virtual spaces and networks. However, on the other hand, sharing these results with residents in study regions is rare; moreover, research that specifically applies new spatial constructions premised on immigration that is based on shared results is seldom seen. Fundamentally, from an architectural perspective that assumes spatial constructions, classification relating to characteristic events in the houses of immigrants, such as the ways in which immigrants use living spaces, house planning, building construction, and interior plans, are only being conducted individually.

By considering housing as its central issue, which is the most familiar setting for the lives of
immigrants, the Transnational Housing Research Project will promote the coordination of debates that until now have been segmented in each field. By considering the application of a new spatial construction that considers the conventionally pluralistic perspectives of fixed domicile residents and immigrants, the project aims to debate mutually critical issues that have until now accumulated with residents.

2. The Transnational Housing Research Project

In keeping with the framework of environment-behavior studies, and using an approach that combines the perspectives of architecture, city planning, and anthropology, the Transnational Housing Research Project aims to shed light on the relationship between immigrants and housing, and by making use of visual images, to reconsider this relationship from pluralistic perspectives. This project will form the theoretical foundations for the building of an environment centering on residents. The three points outlined below set out the fundamental themes of this research.

1) What kinds of social and cultural characteristics of immigrants manifest explicitly and implicitly or what kinds of characteristics manifest in the built environment?

2) What kinds of characteristics of the built environment have an influence on immigrants and when, why, how, and under what kinds of conditions?

3) As stated in 1) and 2), when interactions are witnessed between immigrants and the built environment, what are the mechanisms that link these together?

3. Housing as One Part of an Overall System

The fundamental targets of research in this project are the houses that immigrants have come to live in. The reason for this is firstly because all groups inevitably have specific spaces relating to housing and living, it is therefore possible to compare these spaces; second, houses are the most fundamental places where people lead their lives (e.g., sleeping, preparing food, eating, and engaging in conversation) and are the most important structures for viewing ways of life; third, dwellings account for a large majority of the several buildings in society; and fourth, the cultural characteristics of residents are reflected in dwellings. However, when considering the behavioral patterns of immigrants, we cannot understand these by referring only to their relationship with houses. We have to consider how houses function as one part of an overall system.

For example, let us consider the case of Dwelling A (Fig. 1). In this instance, the processes of activities carried out in Dwelling A are all conducted within the setting of the house. This type of case can be considered to be one in which a region has extremely cold winters. Next, let us consider the case of Dwelling B (Fig. 2). In this instance, among the processes of activities
carried out in Dwelling A one activity is conducted within the house and the rest are dispersed, i. e., being conducted outside the house. In this case, if making only Dwelling B the target of investigation, we cannot gain an understanding of the relationship between residents and activities. By investigating the kinds of processes that exist in activities, and where they are carried out in settings both inside and outside the house, it then becomes possible to gain an understanding of Dwelling B.

It is not only one house that forms the setting for the lives of immigrants. For example, houses built and lived in by Mexican immigrants can be considered as comprising three different types of new houses built in the hometowns of immigrants using overseas remittance: 1. Houses built using the traditional architectural style in which immigrants spent their childhood in their hometown; 2. Urban houses that they live in, in the U.S.; 3. Designs imitating the houses of middle-income families in California. It is also necessary to parallely investigate these houses.

Houses that perform an important part of the processes relating to certain activities must be recognized as further being part of large units comprising groups of houses, neighborhoods and settlements. These are important elements that are directly related to houses. When immigrants select a certain house, they not only select elements related to an individual house but also at the same time select elements of scale, including specific city blocks, sites, neighbourhoods, districts, and furthermore, large urban areas.

4. To grasp the relationship between people and houses

Research that deals with the relationship between people and their environment is included in a broad sense in the research field of environment-behavior studies. Environment-behavior studies is a form of research that treats environment and behavior as influencing one another while being closely interrelated, and it tries to gain an understanding of the mechanisms behind these interactions.

With regard to the fundamental themes set out in 1) and 2) above, the interrelationship
between people and houses cannot be observed while society and culture remain abstract concepts. Amos Rapoport\(^1\) states that the reason why the characteristics of the relationship between culture and environment cannot be established is mainly due to the extremely high level of generality and abstractness contained in the term culture, and that only by deconstructing this abstract context can the interactions between design and culture be clearly indicated (Fig. 3).

With regard to deconstructions of culture for eliminating excessive abstractness, Rapoport sites elements such as kinship systems, family structures, roles, social networks, status, identity, and facilities to be ever more specific expressions; moreover, as classifications of culture for eliminating excessive breadth and generality, he sites worldviews, images, regulations, lifestyles, and activity systems to be more concrete and potentially observable social expressions. In addition, these deconstructed elements are considered to exert an influence on a certain proportion of the built environment depending on era and conditions.

There is a major issue with this kind of approach. It is the assumption that it is possible to deconstruct elements that are limited by culture and that these independently exert an influence on a certain proportion of the built environment. In cultural anthropology, culture is not a tree structure in which certain limited elements can be deconstructed; however it can be seen as being a semi-lattice structure in which each element is related. The elements that Rapoport

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deconstructs do not exist independently but act on each other. These kinds of elements are not fixed, there are some new elements that are added and some that are eliminated through investigation. In addition, demonstrating an objective index of the proportion to which certain elements exert an influence on the built environment is extremely difficult. Although it is possible to gain an understanding of kinship systems and family structures regarding specific families, it is not possible to gain an understanding of the complex relationship between immigrants and houses by focusing solely on the relationship between individual elements and houses.

In this project, by treating houses using the three perspectives of A) Perspectives that look at individual cases through architectural and anthropological investigation; B) Perspectives that look at group cases through anthropological and sociological analysis; and C) Perspectives that look at the relationship of trade-offs of elements involved in the formation of the built environment, I would like to consider what kinds of elements exist in houses and how interacting elements exert an influence on the built environment.

A) Perspectives that look at individual cases through architectural and anthropological investigation

I will seek to gain an understanding of things such as house plans, designs, construction methods, construction processes, relationship with neighbourhoods, land management, and forms of utilization of houses through architectural exploratory investigations regarding certain individual houses. In addition, at the same time, through anthropological participant observation, I will focus on specific families and seek to gain an understanding of elements such as kinship systems, family structures, roles, social networks, status, and identity, as well as the kinds of relationships that each element has with houses. Gaining an understanding through site reconnaissance of the spatial elements of houses and the cultural elements associated with these as physical sensations will be immensely beneficial when conducting interviews. With regard to fundamental themes 1) and 2), I will gain an understanding of this relationship from example cases of individual houses. In addition, at the time of conducting investigations, I will strive to gain an understanding of as much information as possible, including elements not considered to be directly associated with houses.

B) Perspectives that look at group cases through anthropological and sociological analysis

Cultural anthropology is characterized by intensive individual investigations using participant observation and certain generalizations drawn from these investigations. In sociology, using questionnaire surveys and data from existing publicly available social surveys, certain trends are analyzed based on the quantitative analysis of extensive data files. In the event that immigrants are treated as groups, it is difficult to generalize their behavioral patterns using only the
common denominator of international migrant workers. Therefore, in this project, considering “nostalgia” — meaning thoughts relating to specific places — as a keyword, I will search for measures that look at the relationship between immigrants and dwellings on a group level in regards to fundamental topics 1) and 2) (see Chapter 5).

C) Perspectives that look at the relationship of trade-offs of elements involved in the formation of the built environment

It is necessary to investigate the relationship between trade-offs, such as what kinds of elements are pursued or sacrificed, in the formation of housing environments. For example, consider the trade-off between the location of construction and dwelling size. When immigrants select inner-city areas that have a high degree of convenience, inevitably they have no choice but to select housing complexes over single-family houses, and even in the case of single-family houses, it is extremely difficult to obtain large houses. Although there may be a number of possible reasons due to which certain elements are emphasized, when considering the act of house building as being carried out among financial restraints, we can consider certain judgments as being expressed in a visible manner, such as the elements of dwellings. Under the conditions for trade-offs, what is required is the consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of specific choices from a range of angles and subsequently making a decision. With regard to fundamental theme 3), by investigating the kinds of decisions that immigrants make under different types of conditions, and furthermore, the kinds of influences that certain conditions exert on the decisions, it will become possible to gain an understanding of the realities of certain interactions between immigrants and the built environment.

By comparing the perspectives of A) and B), it becomes possible to discover the commonalities and differences between individual perspectives, and perspectives shared in groups. Houses are on the one hand extremely personal existences, but simultaneously, they are also social existences; therefore, there is a need to compare the above two perspectives. In addition, perspective C) looks at the conditions and relationship in the trade-off between what kinds of cultural elements are more often pursued in houses, and conversely what cultural elements are sacrificed. As stated above, it is not the case that all the behaviors of residents are reflected in the built environment, and it is difficult to indicate the proportion of the kinds of cultural factors that exert an influence on the built environment; however, by adding perspective C) to the investigation results of A) and B), it creates a momentum for understanding the types of cultural elements that characteristically exert an influence on houses.

5. Migrants and Nostalgia

Motives for constructing and reinforcing ties with hometowns are described as nostalgia by
several researchers. In original psychiatric parlance, nostalgia refers to “a trauma in sufferers that involves a desire to return to their hometown, but with the fear that they may never be granted the chance to see it again.” At present, the word nostalgia has largely lost its medical connotations, and is used in people’s daily lives. According to the dictionary definition, nostalgia is when “people imagine a certain period in the past to which they travel back temporally or a place that is spatially removed from their current location, and then subsequently create values that include sentiments of ‘the good old days’ that target these specific times and spaces.” Typically, there are several cases in which the negative aspects of the target are omitted, and a convenient image is reconstructed. In addition, regardless of whether he or she has had an actual experience of that time or space, it is possible that the person in question makes recollections based on information from third parties, and holds feelings that are tinged with the imaginary. Nostalgia that occurs with this kind of general meaning is not limited to immigrants who have crossed national borders but also exists among domestic immigrants who have moved from farming villages to cities. There is also an indication that these domestic immigrants experience a more intense sense of nostalgia from a consciousness of being separated from their hometowns for the first time. What are the differences between immigrants who have crossed national borders to live their lives and domestic immigrants? Along with this, there are considerable differences in the way in which nostalgia is narrated between younger and older generations. For example, for young second and third generation immigrants, the hometown is, for instance, a place in which love is found; however, as this is nostalgia for a romanticized hometown that they have heard about from their parents, there is a high possibility that it is not connected with physical spaces, or, as they search for their traditional masculinity, they feel nostalgic only at specific times and in specific places in which events and festivals take place. When considering that the existence of narrating nostalgia is more prevalent in men than woman, there may be a large difference in the images of cities that give rise to nostalgia depending on the sex. Nostalgia is not a single consolidated concept but it is diverse, depending on the generation and sex.

Therefore, by defining nostalgia as “thoughts felt towards the hometown so as to recover an ideal self and life”, is it not possible to discover the common denominators of nostalgia that transcend generation and sex? Several immigrants in receiving societies feel that they are minorities. In other words, they feel blocked from elements such as the landscape, customs, traditions, ways of life, human relations, gender, and social identity of their hometown that define their ideal self and life, and they are unable to attain these elements in the receiving society. By defining nostalgia as thoughts felt towards the hometown so as to recover an ideal self and life, it is possible to talk about certain immigrants on a group level.

Since the 1980s, nostalgia among immigrants to the U. S. has manifested in extremely specific forms. This is because of a number of reasons, one of which is amendments to immigration laws.
Particularly, the establishment of the Immigration Act of 1990 further increased legalized immigration. These conditions in which people became legally separated from their hometowns can also be considered to have played a part in manifesting nostalgia among immigrants. Moreover, in Mexico, it was once a commonly held national sentiment that immigrants were betrayers of their country, although it is possible that this national sentiment has gradually changed due to the increase in legalized immigration, which resulted in the creation of an environment in which immigrants who left their hometowns are accepted back home again.

Since the 1980s, churches, the business sector, and intellectuals have begun to use nostalgia as a form of discourse. There are also movements in their hometown Mexico that consider whether it can be established as economic development projects on national, regional, and city levels. This kind of nostalgia as discourse that is intertwined at an economic level creates a certain entrenched nostalgia in regard to the second and third generation immigrants. By examining local posters, pamphlets, and speeches, it is possible to classify the images of nostalgia held by immigrants, and to elicit the kinds of relationships these images have with the physical reality of hometowns.

With regard to nostalgia, we must also bring into perspective comparative operations between immigrants, local residents, and conservative classes. Statements such as “our hometown was ruined by the foreign culture that immigrants brought in from America” and “we yearn for the good old days” often appear in local magazines. In this case, what exactly is the traditional image of conservative classes and local areas? In addition, old types of masculinity, gender, a sense of belonging, nostalgia cherished by elderly people, and a landscape of farming villages that young people consider as a space where they can play freely, some of these may become tied with the built environment of cities in a tangible way whereas others may not have any concrete tangibility. Along with this, there is most likely a need to focus attention on the relationship between images of cities in Mexico and present nostalgia as national discourse that has been constructed in Mexico until now.

6. Architectural Anthropology

The result of Transnational Housing Research Project should be shared by the researchers’ and residents’ perspective through the use of visual images for the building of an environment centering on residents.

6.1 Reconstruction of Anthropological Practice

Rather than constructing a new ethnographic practice amidst the framework hand over from anthropology, architectural anthropology is an experiment of recreating the framework of anthropology itself. The first thing is to define “architecture” in architectural anthropology. In Japan, there is no word that fits Western European architecture. While the concept of
architecture may have been imported with the advance of modernization following the Meiji era, as long as we see the translation “method of construction” or “construction of houses,” our attention shifts toward the technical aspects. We do not get an accurate perception of the original meaning of the term in Western Europe, where architecture is a non-plural abstract concept that can be clearly distinguished from “building” in concrete terms. Architecture as an abstract notion should be perceived as a high concept that refers not only to structure as hardware such as floors, roofs, and ceilings and spaces composed of all these, but also to the nuances of “composition and the drive to create.” The “architecture” within the context of this essay is an even larger concept (architecture in the broadest sense) that refers to buildings as visible material objects, their interiors and the spaces between them, the sense of location created in places or neighborhoods where people come to meet, and even architecture or spaces as images depicted within people’s minds.

The second thing is to arrange the parties involved in the anthropological study. The following are three parties in cultural anthropology: The first is “others,” (A) which is then followed by the intermediary role of the “anthropologists,” (B) and then finally the “readers and audience” (C) who receive the anthropologists’ information (Fig. 4). Putting the relationships between these three parties into shape, we can see that the anthropologists’ works are to construct an argument depending on fieldwork associated with the culture that others belong to, arrange phenomenon, and then analyze them within their own cultural framework. With others creating new intellectual frameworks as subjects, we can refer to their activity as “production.” At this point, anthropologists must also naturally recognize what sort of power system is created by his own political position and the framework he uses to analyze others. This then gives rise to the act of anthropologists conveying their findings to the reader or audience. Next, anthropologists transmit the information to readers or audiences. One of the methods of

![Fig. 4: The Framework of Cultural Anthropology](image-url)
delivery could be to translate the findings of their fieldworks into his native language, write it as ethnologies, and then publish them. At this time, forethought must be given to various theoretical issues that arise when translating to another language, i.e., for whom the translation is done and for those who are the subjects and objects of the analysis. Translation “circulates” the results of the fieldwork among the general public. Meanwhile, the outcome of this is that very little is returned to others who served as the objects of the fieldwork. When the result of the fieldwork should be plowed back into the target society, we need to present the result as indigenous language, as it has been argued in recent years, while at the same time, translating it into English, Spanish and French is inevitable if anthropologists require the largest audience. After this, the findings of the analysis are “consumed” as the ethnology or published content is reused by the people to understand or explain others.

The system that protects this anthropological practice came into existence amidst the reality that anthropologists are scholars or researchers belonging to academism, while the readers or audience are people from the culture of the anthropologists, or at least the people who understand the culture that the anthropologists belong to. Once the translated ethnology attains recognition amidst academism, anthropologists are recognized as a scholar for his achievements and a participant in the reproduction of this system. In other words, within the system of academism intent on understanding others, ethnographical practices in anthropology are a means of analysis and practice using the intellectual framework that has developed as a filter in the modern Western world. On the other hand, some have chosen the more practical place concerning the development and environmental problem as they think it doubtful to participate in the academism. If one is to make a living as an anthropologist in the broadest sense in the world outside academism, there are a variety of different methods of conveyance, and while the targets of the said conveyance may also have grown extensive, it should be noted that the three-party relationship does not change.

The concerned parties within the framework of architectural anthropology are described in Fig. 5. There are two basic parties in architectural anthropology: Others (A) and Anthropologists (B). The third party of readers and audience, which was formerly the target of the anthropologists' reports, exists outside the framework. Anthropologists build an argument based on fieldwork considering architecture in the general sense, while others interpret themselves according to their own contexts. The work of “production” that occurs between anthropologists and others is a mutually critical comprehension. The intermediary at this time is the “visualized image” that we will discuss later. This is then “circulated” through others' society through collaborative architectural practices based on mutual interpretation. Architecture has a social impact by existing over a certain period of time within the society. After this, Architecture is “consumed” as a space or a place newly interpreted by the people of the target society. New understanding of others becomes possible for others and anthropologists.
through collaboration that accompanies the architecture and architectural process. The key point is that the subjects of production, circulation, and consumption in architectural anthropology are both others and anthropologists. Those who are included under the definition of readers or audience can consume the architecture by actually going to see it first hand. With that in mind, those involved in architectural anthropology can no longer be said to only fit into the system of academism. We need to play an active role in their lives and the formation of their community. In other words, in the sense of trying to understand others, it will become necessary for anthropologists to become architects, city planners, and social workers as well.

6.2 The Methods of Architectural Anthropology

Architectural anthropology suggests "place" that creates new intellectual frameworks, by replacing the pre-existed system of academism through the collaboration with intellect of non-academism and within the academism, and then tries to find a new way of understanding others. The method of cooperation between anthropologists and others in architectural anthropology is composed of three phases.

The first phase is "reading the architecture." In order to perceive the family structure, changing cityscape, daily lives, and diverse residential situations of people within the context of the global social phenomenon, anthropologists, instead of focusing only on architecture as a material objects, grasp the dynamic aspects of various residents with regard to architecture in the broadest sense. This does not mean that anthropologists need to interpret the context in the same sense as the residents, but rather that they need to catch sight of the dynamic
movements that evoke new human relationships among the residents themselves or the places they share within the community.

The second phase is to “present the architecture.” This is the process of sharing the results of the fieldwork grasped during the first phase with others. This “visualized image” is an intermediary step for inviting mutual critical understanding between anthropologists and others. This framework is a method of communication. However, it must be considered from the viewpoint of its practical effectiveness and theoretical aspects.

The third phase is “making the architecture.” This is the actual construction of the architecture on the foundation of the sharing conducted in the second phase. Anthropologists actively participate in the community and conduct his architectural practices in cooperation with others. The architecture completed during phase three, it supports a new residential life and becomes a new foundation as a target “reading the architecture,” thus returning the cycle back to the first phase. Through the recursive process of progression from stages one to three, architectural anthropology is assumed to become a new format for understanding others.

6.3 Visualized Image

This section examines the “visualized image” framework for anthropologists and others to share their understanding and tries to find a way to put the framework into practice. The primary idea of this framework was derived from the participatory workshop in the depressed area improvement project. The framework is a footing that will serve to bridge second phase to third phase of “making architecture” by sharing the results of the anthropological fieldwork and residents’ interpretation. The “visualized image” is a concrete expression, for instance, of “the actual place and the scene”, “the way of living and recognition of the city”, and “architecture or spaces imaged within people’s minds.” More concretely, the framework takes the form of plane expressions (drawings, sketches, mappings, plans), solid expressions (models and architecture), and video expressions.

Studies on the relationship between communication and visualized image often use cooperation, citizen participation, and communication actions as keywords, with some earlier studies, including those conducted by Jürgen Habermas, John Forester, Patsy Healey, and E. Judith Innes. Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s terms, when used in this way the drawing provides a basis for a truly “dialogic” discourse. The “heteroglossic” languages of the many actors associated with

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the architectural act are unified, for a particular moment, in greater communicative and cultural whole. He identified the linguistic properties of drawing as well as its potential for sharing. Meanwhile, anthropologist Edward Robbins\textsuperscript{vii} refers to the significance of drawing together with its social functions.

Equally important, drawing serves as the memory of architectural conversations between client and architect. Often the drawing is used to cement and contract agreements between individuals involved in different aspects of the making of a building and serves as a memory of those agreements. (Robbins 1994 : 37)

Stefanie Dühr indicates that the mapping expression works effectively as a tool to communicate the significant information in the workshop of urban planning (Fig. 6). Dühr said that the point of difference between the residents and the administrative officials was clarified by the visualized image, and as a result, they came to an agreement\textsuperscript{viii}. In the methodology of strategic spatial planning, the workshop centering on visualized image facilitates the collaboration with the residents\textsuperscript{ix}. There are numbers of study about the visualized image as a facilitator to bring out an agreement, such as Barrie Needham’s study of Friesland in Netherlands\textsuperscript{x} and Michael Neuman’s study of Madrid in Spain\textsuperscript{xi}.

In “Why Architects Draw,” Robbins interviews 11 architects during analysis of the social functions of drawing. According to Robbins, “Conception and development of the design are most usually illustrated through drawing. Most articles about theoretical aspects of architecture

![Fig. 6 : Mapping](image)

Source : Dühr (2007 : 80)

consist of words and drawing”, he indicates the significance of drawing as a way of expression of the internal image. Referring to the architect Edward Cullinan’s project of Pulross Intermediate Care Center, London, he argues that drawing worked effectively. Community-oriented approach was required in the design process because the community hospital, located in Lambeth, London, takes on the responsibility to offer the community-based medical welfare service. Cullinan’s office started to plan the facility in accordance with the client’s policy, as the client had already made meticulous preparation of the program, and determined the management policy and the arrangement of the rooms, etc. before they asked Cullinan to draw up the project. As a means of communication with the client, Cullinan’s office used drawings at all discussions throughout the process, from the concept making to the construction, which led the collaborative project to a success.

Although he identifies the importance of drawing as a means of symbolizing internal images, Robbins also refers to inconsistencies in the role of drawing. He claims that drawing is not always guaranteed to invite equal social dialog; there is a possibility that it could be used against the backdrop of certain power relationships.

When we look at architectural practice today, even if only in a cursory way, we find that drawing plays many and even contradictory roles. On the other hand, it is crucial to the cultural conceptualization and manifestation of a design. The drawing is pivotal to arriving at a sense of the design and to mastering all the intricacies of a final work of architecture. It also provides a common mode of discourse with which to deal with the many, varied and complex aspects brought to an

Fig. 7 : Drawing

Source : Robbins (1994 : 66-77)
Note: They are the initial drawings of the ergonomic variation and the extent of movement (left), and the plan of structure and lighting (right). It is important that these drawings were used not only for the communication between staffs of Cullinan Office and the residents, but also among the residents themselves.
architectural project by the many different actors who are a part of any architectural making. On the other hand, drawing is used to order and structure who participate in a design project. It sets social hierarchies, defines a social agenda, and provides an important instrument through which the social production of architecture is organized. (Robbins 1994: 4)

Plans or ideas can be clarified between those who do not share cultural dialog through drawing. In this sense, drawing can be perceived as a language. There are various arguments regarding this linguistic aspect; however, the core problem is in the ambiguity of drawing. Robbins believed that because of its ambiguity and visual nature, drawing was a communication tool for facilitating mutual understanding. Meanwhile, Stefanie Dühr revealed that when a drawing is actually being used, there are many different images existing concurrently within the minds of people who see the drawing; she also indicated recognition issues of differing interpretations of images by individuals or organizations. Drawing also brought to light issues of ambiguity and relativity in interpretation. Common to nearly all of them was the impossibility of incorporating all phenomena into the presentation, as well as many arbitrary choices coming into play when making the presentation, and a high degree of dependency on occupational ability and experience on the part of the interpreter.

As the examples from the processes of architecture and urban planning demonstrate, “visualized image” framework can be the foundation of the critical interpretation among different parties and would play an important role in order to share interpretations and ideas between anthropologists and others. However, we must examine the unsolved issues through further case studies from the both practical and theoretical perspectives.

7. Conclusion

The Transnational Housing Research Project is an endeavour through which I wish to transcend “the boundaries of existing academic disciplines” and “the boundaries of the researcher and the subjects of research,” and to provide a site for discussion that includes a plurality of perspectives.

In addition, as a future vision, I aim to apply the results of this investigation to actual urban environments. In order to achieve this, it will be necessary to share the results gained from the Transnational Housing Research Project with immigrants, fixed domicile residents, and the people in charge of the local government, and to propose a specific built environment. The Transnational Housing Research Project believes that it is possible to create an urban environment in which fixed domicile residents and immigrants living in cities can live in comfort and cooperation.
8. References