



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



*“ Architecture is produced by ordinary people,  
for ordinary people; therefore it should be  
easily comprehensible to all. ”*

-Rasmussen  
(1959, p.14)

fig. 01\_ woman

theoretical approach to architecture\_00

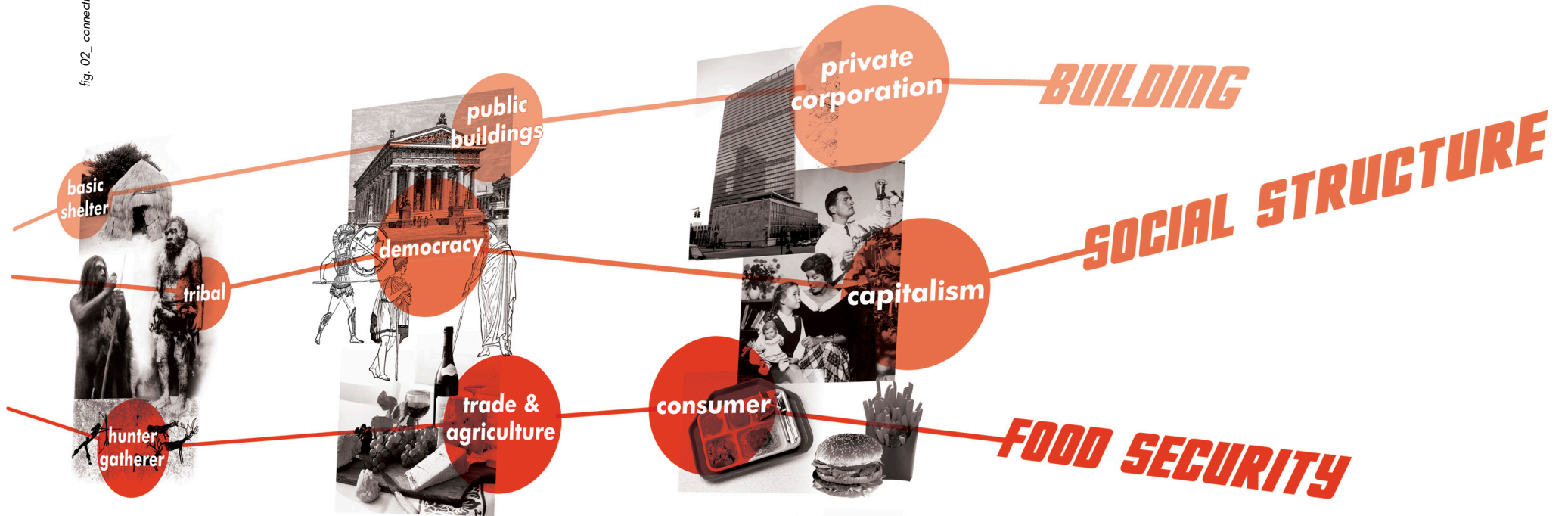
According to Norberg-Schulz(1980, p.5) the aim of architecture is to give man an “existential foothold”. Thus, the role of the architect in society is to plan and structure a suitable habitat for humanity. Humanity’s ability to create habitats has evolved over centuries from basic shelter to technologically advanced architecture, as it is known today.

Although the built structure and process has changed dramatically, in essence, our built habitat still addresses our basic human needs. Our buildings protect us from the elements and are planned according to the social structure

associated with the program of the building. When contemporary and historical buildings are compared, it becomes evident that the architect creates habitats that best respond to the needs of the time. The built environment therefore stands as a testimony of our time and as response to our social needs. Architecture can thus be seen as a barometer of social sophistication and development.

To create suitable environments for humanity in the 21st century is no easy task. As our social structure and daily habits become refined, they become more complex. Sequentially, so does the requirements for our habitats to sustain these activities and way of life.

fig. 02\_ connection between humanity's social structure, food and building



There exists no absolute definition or rule to create suitable environments. It is however the opinion of the author that the most important aspect to address, is the well-being of people in buildings. Architecture is about creating spaces for people. When architecture exists without people, it ceases to be architecture and becomes something else; a lifeless monument, a sculpture. It is therefore important that the spaces are designed to be enjoyed and appreciated by everyone. The uniformed public should be able to enjoy the building without an explanation or justification for the building's existence. Architecture is for people,

it belongs to everyone, and therefore it should reveal itself to all people.

The essence in creating architecture of well-being, to a large extent, lies in the successful manipulation of space and the manner in which it is presented. It is the way we experience architecture every day, our 'genus loci' (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, p.5). Architecture reveals these spaces, through different light intensities and allows comprehension of the

*“ Architecture does not necessarily achieve art, but it can combine an understanding of human scale, the body, light and how it can penetrate form. Really great architecture is about creating wellbeing, the best decoration a building can have ”*

- Antony Gromley

(Cited in Melvin, Barlow & Ritchie, 2002, p. 87)

spatial composition through movement. The architect's ability to create alluring spaces within and around the building, to create spaces for work and spaces to relax, should be given great consideration in the design process.

However, the approach does not imply that all buildings should be spatially expressive and overly indulgent. Norberg-Schulz (1980, p.5) argues that there does not exist different

types of architecture, but rather different situations that require different solutions in order to satisfy humanity's physical need. Architecture should thus be a reply to a social and physical demand. Good architecture could also be very rudimentary; it depends on how the architecture chose to reply. A bike shed could be architecture, and a church could merely be a building. Thus, in order to create good architecture, the architect should establish a search to identify these social and physical demands. The question of what the building needs to respond to, should inform the design.

### **conclusion\_**

The aim of this dissertation is to create inviting and interesting spaces for people, without limiting the pragmatic program nature of the building. And vice versa: the pragmatic program of the building should not force the design to become dull and seem planned as opposed to being designed. The focus will thus be to consider both the pragmatic program and creative design as informants for the design process and aid the design in creating spaces for people.



fig. 03\_boy