

# Urban Infrastructures and Sustainable Social Practices

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“**I**F you want your subordinates to do or not to do certain things, build a city” Machiavelli might have recommended to his prince. Indeed, there are numerous historical examples of purposively designed urban technologies and infrastructures that (are meant to) facilitate or prevent certain behaviors. Numerous authors have discussed, some even explicitly recommended, this strategy. Norberg-Schulz, for example, talks about “physical control” through built forms, Brodey praises “intelligent environments,” and Sommer endorses “design for behavior change.” While Lipman (quoted in Joerges) considers the behavior of people as “determined by the physical environment,” Becker and Keim see the urban environment more cautiously as a “potential impulse for collective behavior.” Moos is ready to utilize this mechanism: “The design of environments is. . . probably the most powerful technique to influence behavior.”

Sommer 1969

Joerges 1977

As the dates of these publications indicate, the 1960s and 70s witnessed a wave of ideas related to what may be summarized as “social engineering” or “environmental programming.” Since then, many of these approaches have been stripped of their mechanistic naïveté, often under active contribution of authors in the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) who emphasize the two-way-nature of the relationship between technologies/infrastructures on the one hand and human behavior on the other. The most prominent metaphor for this view is maybe Hughes’

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