

# **Dissenting Designers: A Sociological History of Activism and Advocacy in Architecture**

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## Author bios

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Shawhin Roudbari, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in Environmental Design at the University of Colorado Boulder. He studies contentious political engagement by design professionals. Through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and analyzing texts, Shawhin investigates ways activists shape and organize power for justice causes—particularly those grappling with race, class, and gender inequities. Shawhin's work contributes to histories and theories of activism in the spatial professions and relies on ethnographic methods.

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## Abstract

The history of American architecture includes many examples of activists and reformers who sought to make the profession more inclusive, just, and socially engaged. However, architectural scholarship leaves important questions about these efforts and their effects unanswered. This article provides a targeted literature review of academic texts to identify the themes and gaps in work on activist architects. After an initial period of growth and consolidation in the profession, contemporary forms of social engagement emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Subsequent decades have seen many of these efforts continue, or be revived, as well as an increase in academic interest in the topic. The article then reviews three areas of sociological research that could be applied to fill the gaps in scholarship of socially engaged design, focusing on historic change within the profession, the “logics” that guide architectural work, and the relationship of the profession and the academy.

Keywords: Social architecture, activism, architectural history, architecture profession, sociology

To talk of socially engaged architecture is surely to talk of a given. All architecture is socially engaged. Period.<sup>1</sup>

What is called *social* architecture is the practice of architecture as an instrument for progressive social change. It foregrounds the moral imperative to increase human dignity and reduce human suffering.<sup>2</sup>

To challenge or expand the conscious goal of architecture, the practitioner must also challenge or expand the rationality designed to realize this end. Thus, the creation of humanitarian and activist architecture is not simply a matter of offering services to new clients. It is a matter of creating a new field.<sup>3</sup>

## **Introduction**

These quotations suggest a paradox within architectural scholarship on socially engaged design. While scholars and practitioners make frequent statements in support of practice that is robustly engaged with progressive social values, designers face institutional barriers when it comes to transferring these ideas into practice. “All architecture” may be, by definition, “socially engaged,” but architects have to make a living in a system that does not necessarily support “progressive social change.” There are other signs that the tension between the ideological and practical positions on socially engaged design has become thoroughly institutionalized. A 2014 report of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) finds evidence of significant barriers to architects’ participation in public interest design projects, including a lack of jobs in public interest design, lower pay in jobs that do exist, and a lack of meaningful training in these practices.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the report highlights many successful examples of such projects and widespread belief in their value. Despite its long history and prominent place in the

contemporary field, socially engaged architecture continues to face significant challenges to implementation.

This article comes out of an interdisciplinary study of activism and advocacy among architects, undertaken by scholars of environmental design and sociology. As we embarked upon empirical research into activism among present-day architects, we noticed a gap in the scholarly literature: while architects are passionate about social responsibility, the ways in which these passions find institutional support within the field—or not—are not well understood. Historical and sociological studies of activist architecture are few and do not provide a clear analytic framework from which contemporary scholarship can proceed. How might architecture change that would allow it to fulfill a socially progressive mission? What does it mean to “create a new field,” as the third quotation, above, demands? This article provides a view from outside architecture in order to begin answering these complex questions. First, we provide a targeted review the scholarly literature to investigate the place of socially engaged practice within the architecture field. Then, we review sociological theories that we believe can help architecture scholars fill the gaps in this literature. Throughout the article, we approach socially engaged design as a broad category of practices, spanning design practice in the public interest—such as affordable housing, pro bono work, and humanitarian projects—as well as efforts to reform the profession itself, including advocacy around social justice issues such as racial and gender inequality. We focus on the Anglophone literature and the U.S. as an empirical site due to the scope and mandate of our research, but our goal is to present concepts and questions that can inform scholarship of the built environment in any social context.

### **Social Engagement and Dissent in Architectural History**

### *Early History (1850s-1950s)*

The first century of American architecture was a period of establishment and growth, as the organizations and modes of practice that are now conventional began to cohere. Historic studies reveal little information about forms of social engagement among architects until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; academics have provided few studies of social advocacy prior to the rise of modernism, and document few instances of dissent among early architects. Professional organizations first formed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century; academic degrees and state accreditation policies soon proliferated, along with the profession's first formal codes of conduct.<sup>5</sup> Although AIA faced early challenges from regional organizations seeking to represent the profession, the profession cohered along a "professional project" that is well documented by scholars like the sociologist Magali Sarfatti Larson.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the period spanning the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the emergence of large, corporate architectural firms that would come to dominate the field.<sup>7</sup> With it, scholars argue, came a shift in the understanding of the public that architects serve. Bernard Michael Boyle writes: "[L]ike the older professions it imitated, the new profession of architecture replaced the ideals of society with the ideals of the profession itself. For the ideals of the profession, the modern architectural office in its turn substituted service to the firm, as in other modern businesses."<sup>8</sup>

Architectural scholarship reveals very little about forms of socially engaged practice in this early period. While other professions are the subject of historical studies of reforms in America's early 20<sup>th</sup> century "progressive era," this effort has not extended to design professions.<sup>9</sup> Instead, historical works within architecture define this as a period of new modes of form and method, as illustrated in how Bauhaus modernism dramatically transformed American architecture's aesthetics and pedagogy when it reached the U.S. in the 1930s. Modernism is

characterized by its aim of using industrial technology to improve quality of life on a mass scale; thus, it is in discussions of the modernist movement and its legacy that socially engaged design comes into focus among architectural scholars.<sup>10</sup> Historical studies focus on the thoughts and works of modernist icons who sought to re-shape the built environment on both intimate and grand scales of work; less is known about how these ideas shaped the practice of most architects in this period and how these ideas might have mixed with pre-existing understandings of socially engaged design.

For sociologists, a central factor in a profession's development is the identification and consolidation of jurisdiction: the set of problems that the profession's members are trained to address. Historic processes of professionalization are marked by expansion of jurisdiction, as groups increase their power; at the same time, however, members pursue increasingly specialized jurisdictions in order to distinguish themselves from other practitioners.<sup>11</sup> Architectural scholars have noticed that their field does not contain a well-developed specialization in socially engaged practice, prompting the question of how architecture's development as a field was different from that of medicine or law.<sup>12</sup> For example, public health split from mainstream medicine in an early-twentieth-century schism; in contrast, the legal profession continued to contain its most socially engaged practitioners, as the state-mandated role of public defender became a specialization rather than a distinct occupation. The end of this early period, then, can be interpreted as a time of lost opportunity for American architecture, which could have developed a more public-facing domain of practice in the field of mass housing. Urban redevelopment and suburban expansion reshaped the American built environment during the post-World War II period. While architects played a lead role in developing early plans for suburban homes and developments, this practice remained a small part of the profession's mission and business model.<sup>13</sup> Architects' absence in

developing the American housing market left civic and business leadership in this sector to other occupations and building trades.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Revolt and Reform (1960s-1970s)***

As in many American professions, the 1960s were a period of profound upheaval in architecture, giving rise to new ideas and ways of organizing that would have lasting effects on the profession and its practices. The spirit of the times manifested itself in strenuous critiques of the profession and organized protest by and among architects and architecture students. Protests addressed architecture's role in urban redevelopment and the profession's internal power structure.

Examples of activism during this period include: the formation of advocacy groups by architects of color and women<sup>15</sup>; diverse forms of community-engaged urban design<sup>16</sup>; the development of environmentalism in the profession<sup>17</sup>; informal publications presenting radical and visionary design<sup>18</sup>; and student activism that spurred the development of progressive pedagogic practices in architectural education.<sup>19</sup> These efforts frequently developed in tandem. For example, community design initiatives began in 1963 with the Architectural Renewal Committee in Harlem; these centers brought together progressive architects and architecture students seeking meaningful engagement with disadvantaged urban communities, rather than imposing design upon them.<sup>20</sup>

From a sociological perspective, this period represents an explosion of new organizational forms in the architectural field, innovations within existing institutions, and a new wave of progressive and radical students moving into the profession with hopes of making a difference. Many of these changes reflect the absorption into the profession of ideas about fairness and justice characteristic of broader social critiques, as expressed in the Civil Rights movement, New Left social movements, and urban uprisings.<sup>21</sup> Simultaneous to this explosion of

new ideas and new practices in architecture was the continuation of conventional forms of practice; as a result, the period's contribution to the development of socially engaged architecture is complex. While many of the new practices would become institutionalized in new organizations and policy initiatives, others faded away, rejected by a profession that was willing to reform rather than radically shift its priorities and practices.

### ***Retreat and Rebuilding (1980s-90s)***

The subsequent historic period saw a cooling of the spirit of rebellion of the 1960s and 1970s, with certain key ideas about fairness in the profession and the built environment finding newer, more institutionalized modes of expression and others fading away. The 1980s and 1990s saw a continued rejection of modernist formalism and its agenda of social reform. But what took its place? Some scholars saw the postmodern era as a retreat from social engagement. Thomas A. Dutton and Lian Hurst Mann, writing in 1996, argue: "During the past three decades [the] progressive social imperative in the field of architecture has lost its moral authority and its momentum."<sup>22</sup> They identify several distinct forms of "disengagement"; most of these advance formal development as a metric of architectural success, although Dutton and Mann also recognize "socially responsible practice" as a form of retreat. In their critical perspective, the institutionalization of social engagement represents a taming of once-radical ideas, and the use of design to accommodate established power structures rather than to dismantle them.<sup>23</sup> Margaret Crawford was even more pessimistic, writing in 1991:

[T]he answer to the question "can architects be socially responsible?" is, as the profession is currently constituted, no. Both the restricted practices and discourses of the profession have reduced the scope of architecture to two equally unpromising polarities: compromised practice or esoteric philosophies of inaction. After nearly a hundred years of professional existence, architects have almost completely surrendered both the tools and the ideological

aspirations that might allow them to address the economic, political, and social concerns posed by modern life.<sup>24</sup>

In a sociological perspective, the “retreat” of progressive ideals into new organizational forms is an important manifestation of change. While some scholars see in this period an abandonment of the revolutionary motivations of the 1960s, others see a rebuilding of institutional forms of socially engaged practice in the 1990s. Rural Studio, which would become a world-famous model for community engagement in humanitarian design, was founded in 1993, while Sam Davis’s influential text, *The Architecture of Affordable Housing*, revolutionized that sub-field by envisioning low-cost domestic building as aesthetically worthy in 1995.<sup>25</sup> The period also saw soul-searching in the profession concerning architectural education, a theme highlighted by the publication of Ernest L. Boyer and Lee D. Mitgang’s extensive report on the topic in 1996.<sup>26</sup>

Some architects used new forms of institutional support during this period to translate activist ideas into viable professional practice. For example, the Women’s Development Corporation (WDC) was a non-profit housing developer created by members of the Women’s School of Planning and Architecture, “a radical pedagogical project.”<sup>27</sup> WDC members took advantage of a federal government funding stream to develop housing using feminist notions of domestic design, implementing several projects in the Providence, Rhode Island. Their example demonstrates that some activists were eager to put ideology into practice, but also illustrates their dependence on institutional resources to provide the means to do so. Another example is the community design model, which developed a loosely institutionalized organizational form from a grassroots beginning. Mary Comerio describes the history of community design centers in two phases: the first, “idealistic”; the second, “entrepreneurial.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, the 1980s and 1990s saw some radical activists channel their efforts into new ways of working that allowed them to work

in solidarity with underprivileged communities while also nurturing successful projects and careers.

### ***Pragmatic Resistance and Renewed Interest (2000-present)***

The early 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen renewed interest in social engagement in both scholarly architectural discourse and institutional forms of organizing and practice.<sup>29</sup> For example, members of the Architecture Lobby—an activist organization pursuing several social justice causes in the field—published a series of provocative essays in 2016, putting focus on the issues of fairness and inequality facing young architects.<sup>30</sup> Another recent book profiles innovative teaching practices at Portland State University in Oregon, a leader in bringing progressive architecture into the architecture curriculum.<sup>31</sup> The general picture is of a profession that is reckoning, gradually, with its mission to serve broader publics. Incentives to do so, however, lag behind many architects' expressed commitments to use their work altruistically. Jay Wickersham explains:

[T]he 1987 version of the AIA Code of Ethics contained a non-binding clause that urged architects to render public interest professional services, although it was not until 2007 that the language of the non-binding ethical standard was clarified to explicitly include “pro-bono services”, such as “for indigent persons, after disasters, or in other emergencies.” But we have seen only limited changes in the structure of professional practice to make design services more widely available to the poor and the middle class.<sup>32</sup>

Wickersham usefully contrasts contemporary architectural practice with that of law. While the professions share a similar range of public interest practices—encompassing “free clinics, pro bono services by for-profit firms, and non-profit advocacy organizations”—architecture's versions of these institutions lack the official sanction and significant public funding support of public interest legal training and practice.<sup>33</sup> Still, highly motivated architects continue to find diverse ways to incorporate social ideals into their work. A recent text provides

examples of nine distinct forms of public interest architectural work in the U.S.: design as political activism; open-source design; advocacy design; social construction; collective capability; participatory action research and practice; grassroots design practice; pro bono design services; and the architect-facilitator.<sup>34</sup>

One clear trend is a wave of interest in social justice and social problems in the academic discourse on architecture. Published works since 2000 cover a wide range of related topics, including humanitarian design<sup>35</sup>, public interest design<sup>36</sup>, participatory design<sup>37</sup>, and ethical issues in architecture.<sup>38</sup> In addition, a number of recent works address the critique of capitalism and architecture's structural and intellectual implications with power structures of the contemporary economy.<sup>39</sup> Finally, several recent books reveal the histories of the field's radical tendencies; these include Sharon Sutton's *When Ivory Towers Were Black* and William Richards' *Revolt and Reform in Architecture's Academy*.<sup>40</sup> The depth and breadth of recent publication indicates renewed interest among Anglophone academics, publishers, and practitioners alike in the past, present, and future of socially engaged design practice and architecture's responsibilities to the public.

### ***Architectural History and the Spirit of Self-Critique***

The targeted history presented here demonstrates shifts in American architects' understanding of their potential contribution to society. These works demonstrate that architectural scholarship is rich in self-critique, as a number of essays note the field's failure to adequately address social problems both within the profession and in society at large. The divorce of architecture's standard self-narrative—one of formal evolution led by the epoch-defining work of great men—from the mundane practice of its professional membership and the social contexts in which architects work is one of the great tensions that defines the field.<sup>41</sup> Support for critical

scholarship appears to be encouraging, but important questions remain unanswered. Why does socially engaged practice remain on the sidelines? What is stopping architecture from becoming a force for good? In order to answer these questions, architecture scholars could develop a fuller sense of the field's social role, functioning, and context. To that end, the next section of the article presents three themes in sociological research that can arm architectural scholars with an expanded toolkit for asking, and answering, critical research questions about the profession and its impact.

## **Unanswered Questions: Sociological Tools for Addressing the Gaps in Architecture**

### **Scholarship**

Seen from the outside, academic discourse in architecture appears to concern itself far more often with formal considerations than socio-political ones; as a result, it more closely resembles a body of critical humanities scholarship than one in the social sciences. In addition, there are gaps in the historical knowledge of architects' social and political engagements that may prevent or slow the development of new models of activism, as well as scholarship. This section of the article introduces contemporary sociological constructs that may be helpful to architectural scholars researching the past, present, and future of socially engaged architecture. We present three thematic issues in brief, providing ample references for those who wish to read further.

### ***Institutional change***

The first sociological theme involves change in a professional field: how do new ideas and practices come to be accepted by the mainstream? Particularly germane to the topic of socially engaged architecture is the question of how social movements influence a profession and its practitioners. Sociologists define social movements as “networks of informal interactions

between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities.”<sup>42</sup> However, sociologists’ tendency to treat movements as sources of external change that act upon a profession ignores the involvement of professionals who are already participating as activists. One of the few studies that treats a professional field as itself evolving with the times looks at the expansion of Black Studies departments in American universities. Its author concludes: “[M]ovement-inspired organizational forms are often hybrids combining new politics with old values.”<sup>43</sup> The implication of this finding is that new ideas from outside a field result in new kinds of organizations: hybrid forms that merge conventional with unconventional practices. Once they are established, new forms tend to be copied by other organizations.<sup>44</sup>

A related concept is “identity movement,” in which members of an occupation apply internal pressure to transform the conventional way in which work is done. A prominent example of this phenomenon comes from a study of *nouvelle cuisine* in France, describing how “activist” chefs identified problems with the traditional model of French cuisine and began to break from it.<sup>45</sup> The concept of identity movement may also be extended to other aesthetic transformations, such as Larson’s sociological study of the rise of postmodern architecture.<sup>46</sup> Professions are large, diverse constituencies; their members are likely to hold competing ideas about what matters most in the work and how it should be practiced. The identity movement approach gives architecture scholars a way to analyze the efforts of reformist architects in light of their socio-political contexts, paying close attention to the ways that participants leverage resources to overcome the resistance of those who seek to maintain the status quo.

Studies of the architecture field should involve detailed accounts of the rise and fall of activist movements in the profession, particularly instances in which those practices “go

mainstream,” gaining widespread acceptance and the official imprimatur of leading organizations like AIA. A sociological approach to this research would highlight the web of influences both within and beyond architecture that enable leading practitioners to shape the field as it exists today. For example, the emergence of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards in the 1990s is an important innovation that has received little attention from scholars. Did LEED arise from external pressures, i.e. market demands that enabled environmentalists within the profession to act with greater influence? Or were eco-conscious architects able to exert this influence internally, once growing awareness of climate change increased their numbers? Sociological research on institutional change and identity movements suggests that interplay between these factors probably led to the development of LEED, but to our knowledge this question has not been researched in detail.

The converse question is also important: why do many activist movements that challenge a profession disappear without gaining broad institutional support? The exhibition series “Now What?!” provides myriad examples of activist organizing among American architects in the past 50 years.<sup>47</sup> Few of these small actions led to the development of independent organizations that could carry on activists’ work. This may be a normal occurrence, in that professions are able to withstand such challenges without making significant changes. Indeed, many young professionals who begin their careers as radicals may eventually find traction in a more moderate role, becoming reformers who work within official structures of power. A sociological study of 1960s activism argues that a “more conventional version of the radical professional” exists in most professions: a professional with “a critical stance and an intense interest in social change” who also enjoys the rewards available to him as a member of the profession.<sup>48</sup> Examples of this reformist model of professional activism come from a study of the women in the military and the

Catholic church who use “unobtrusive mobilization” to transform their workplaces incrementally.<sup>49</sup> But the question remains: what is distinctive about how these processes unfold in architecture? Studies of social movements within architecture have yet to draw upon sociological research to understand the field’s activist history.

### ***Conflicting logics***

A second set of sociological work that informs studies of socially engaged architecture concerns the multiple, competing “logics” that coexist within professional fields.<sup>50</sup> These logics include taken-for-granted understandings that guide conduct and shape participants’ identities.

Sociologists suggest that a “constellation” of four primary logics—market, state, corporation, and profession—shape professional practice; within a given field, this constellation varies in composition over time.<sup>51</sup> Expertise is always central to the experience of professional work, as professionals define themselves and are defined by others as practitioners with the skill to solve particular kinds of problems.<sup>52</sup> The logics guiding professional practice are first instilled in the specialized training programs that distinguish elite professions like architecture from other occupations. For example, one study highlights the tension between “science” and “care” logics that both play key roles in U.S. medical schools.<sup>53</sup> Sociologists apply the concept of logics primarily in studies of organizations and occupations, making them highly relevant to the case of activism and advocacy in architecture.

Just as important as expertise to the practice of professional work is the logic of public service. A leading sociologist of professions writes: “The professional ideology of service goes beyond serving others’ choices. Rather, it claims devotion to a transcendent value which infuses its specialization with a larger and putatively higher goal which may reach beyond that of those they are supposed to serve.”<sup>54</sup> An open question is whether logics of public service are shared by

members of a profession—thus serving as a source of collective identity—or are themselves a source of conflict, given the diversity of environments in which professionals work. There is evidence that conflicting interpretations of the public service logic shape how professional activists accomplish change. Recent research on the rise of “green chemistry” finds that chemists who advocate for ecologically sensitive practices target distinct audiences with different ways of framing the issue.<sup>55</sup> Thus, the public service logic can be tailored to the ways that specific groups understand the concept.

Several studies of architecture note conflicts between the guiding logics of creativity and business that define practice.<sup>56</sup> Architecture is not alone in this, as sociologists have also studied chefs as an occupational group whose work is shaped by the conflicting demands of aesthetic excellence and practical matters of time and cost of materials.<sup>57</sup> Larson—one of the few American sociologists to study the field in depth—argues that architecture’s artistic legacy also animates disagreement among architects: “What distinguishes architecture” from other professions, she writes, “is that cultural plurality is permissible in the arts, but not in science or the law.”<sup>58</sup> Larson postulates that standards of quality vary among architects who work in different sectors of the field. Two recent sociological studies support this claim, finding that architects working in different sectors endorse different attachments to the public service aspects of their work.<sup>59</sup> These findings spur a number of new research questions regarding the methods used by architects who bring social justice motivations into their work. How do those working in different roles and sectors enact logics of professional service? Do activist architects tailor their messages in an effort to broker broader changes in the field? The answers to these questions would represent important steps toward a fuller understanding of the depth of architecture’s public service agenda and the challenges that advocates face in advancing this agenda.

### *Profession and university: Linked ecologies*

A third area of sociological research has to do with the relationship between the profession and the society in which it is embedded. Of particular interest for both architects working on making the profession more socially engaged and for sociologists who study professions is the relationship between the profession and the academy. The roles of the academy in nurturing and disseminating critique and transforming it into practice are often presented as an important consideration among critical architecture scholars, but a lack of concrete studies of the relationship between the two limit the efficacy of these critiques.

Sociologists have developed a number of models for analyzing the social role of higher education. The authors of one review article note that higher education tends to act in four ways vis-à-vis society at large: as a sieve, sorting students based on race, class, and other criteria into social strata; as an incubator, inculcating students with skills and other resources they apply later in life; as a temple, in which the pursuit of abstract knowledge is consecrated as sacred and therefore worthy of protection; and as a hub, connecting educational institutions to the state and markets.<sup>60</sup> Although each is useful, the incubator and hub models are particularly pertinent to the question of academic architecture's relationship to socially engaged design practice. Several studies show how academic environments have stimulated activism among students that then expanded beyond campus; examples range from the founding of The Architects' Resistance in Chicago in 1969 to the formation of Black in Design at Harvard GSD in 2015. In addition, architecture school incubates pedagogic strategies that may influence professional practice beyond the academy. Two examples of this phenomenon from recent scholarship are: Lawrence Kocher, the Carnegie and Black Mountain College professor who advocated for architects' involvement in creating quality housing for the masses and invented design-build pedagogy; and

Sim Van der Ryn, the Berkeley, California professor whose support of Freestone Collective and other early ecological design practices played a key role in publicizing their methods.<sup>61</sup>

The hub metaphor also provides other useful ways to understand academic practice's relationship to the rest of the field. The concept has been most thoroughly developed in the work of Andrew Abbott, the foremost American sociologist of professions. Abbott defines professions as complex "ecologies" rather than stable, cohesive entities, and pays close attention to the ways that ecologies are linked to others—including the university and corporate firms. Abbott highlights the practices of professionals who move across institutional contexts and redefine professional work as they do so, using the novel terms "hinge" and "avatar" to conceptualize these practices.<sup>62</sup> These ideas provide a useful framework for investigating the purpose and efficacy of social-justice-oriented training programs in architectural education, as well as the role of academic architects in bridging two social spaces. Students benefit from a wide range of practice models, many of which are ideologically motivated by progressive values of doing social good through design. However, the ways that this training may affect later professional work are unclear. How, concretely, do ideas learned in architecture school translate into later career practices? How do academic architects who emphasize public service or humanitarianism navigate between teaching and design work in their own careers? Academic training provides a space for professional work in which prestige is prized above all other resources, in which design is sheltered from the bottom-line pressures of commercial markets.<sup>63</sup> It is important to understand how ideas and practices that are cultivated in academic architecture might translate back into the mundane realities of building through the work of dedicated practitioners.

## **Conclusion**

The history of American architecture reveals different ways in which architects have understood and acted upon a mission of public engagement and social improvement. Although frequent critics of the profession itself, architecture scholars often do not identify workable solutions to the problems facing architecture that prevent it from fulfilling this mission. The profession's early years saw the formation of key organizations and standards that remain in place, even as public service became synonymous with client service. The new corporate form of practice conflicted with Modernism's ambitious goals of social reform through design. In the 1960s, new social movements and a new wave of young professionals brought new practices of social critique to the profession. These ideas live on today, if indirectly, finding expression in pragmatic forms of organizing as well as a renewed burst of recent energy puts the spotlight back on contemporary forms of architectural idealism.

If architects are more motivated than most professionals to embrace a critical view of the profession and to imagine new modes of practice, they also face stiff institutional barriers to enacting these goals—barriers that remain little understood, both in architecture and in sociology. This article presents three bodies of sociological theory to architects, in the hope that a view from outside will help build a critical view of the profession in its social context. Sociological work on institutional change, social logics, and the profession-university relationship provides further opportunities for framing and researching the dynamics shaping architectural production. Once a topic of considerable attention within sociology, architecture can now benefit by learning from the field's recent advances. In discussing these works, we indicated some ways in which the scholarship can contribute meaningfully to architecture's future development. Only by developing a stronger sense of the social institutions and meanings

of work that animate design practice can architectural scholars realize long-held goals of moving their profession toward a more just and sustainable future.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Till, “Forward,” in *The Routledge Companion to Architecture and Social Engagement*, ed. Farhan Karim (New York: Routledge, 2018), xxvi.

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<sup>3</sup> Scott Shall, review of *Design like You Give a Damn: Architectural Responses to Humanitarian Crises* by Architecture for Humanity and *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*, by Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford, *Journal of Architectural Education*, 62, no. 4 (2009), 132.

<sup>4</sup> Roberta M. Feldman, Sergio Palleroni, David Perkes, and Bryan Bell, “Wisdom from the Field: Public Interest Architecture in Practice” (New York: Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, 2014).

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<sup>6</sup> Mary N. Woods, *From Craft to Profession: The Practice of Architecture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1999); Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Boyle, “Architectural Practice in America, 1865-1965”; Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1983); Jay Wickersham, “From Disinterested Expert to Marketplace Competitor: How Anti-Monopoly Law Transformed the Ethics and Economics of American Architecture in the 1970s,” *Architectural Theory Review* 20, no. 2 (2015).

<sup>8</sup> Boyle, “Architectural Practice in America, 1865-1965,” 334.

<sup>9</sup> For an early discussion of architecture’s responsibility to the “public interest,” see M. B. Medary, Jr., “Public Interest and the Architect,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 101 (1922).

<sup>10</sup> Boyle, “Architectural Practice in America, 1865-1965.”

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas R. Fisher, *In the Scheme of Things: Alternative Thinking on the Practice of Architecture* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Goodman, “Making Prefabrication American”; Robert Gutman, “Architects in the Home-Building Industry,” in Judith R. Blau, John La Gory, and Mark E. Pipkin, editors, *Professionals and Urban Form* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1983); Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Modern Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873-1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

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