

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

A JOURNEY TO BUILD IN UGANDA

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PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

Fazil, what are you dreaming about?

Mmm, to be honest Rahel I would love to run a Creative Space back in my village. That will serve as a collective culture space where all people, the children, youth and elderly can get together, share, network and grow in line with our tradition and evolving global culture. When you look at it, the old culture in rural areas is gradually dying out and a lot of our new generation is growing and missing out on this culture, I feel the need for a creative and cultural space that could foster continuity in cultural heritage.

This is a wonderful idea but why in your village and not in the capital Kampala where you are living at the moment?

Since I'm the firstborn son in my family, I inherited from my father and from my uncle quite a lot of land in the village. I want to take advantage of the fact that I have land on my disposal, because land is very expensive to buy in the city Kampala and there is a free alternative for me in my village.

In my culture "village" means the place where my family originally comes from and often a part of the extended family still lives there and it's the place where you are getting buried. It indicates as well to which tribe you belong; in my case it is the Iteso. My village is called Atuturi and is in Eastern rural Uganda in the Kumi District. There are just very few people in the village



Map Uganda-Switzerland

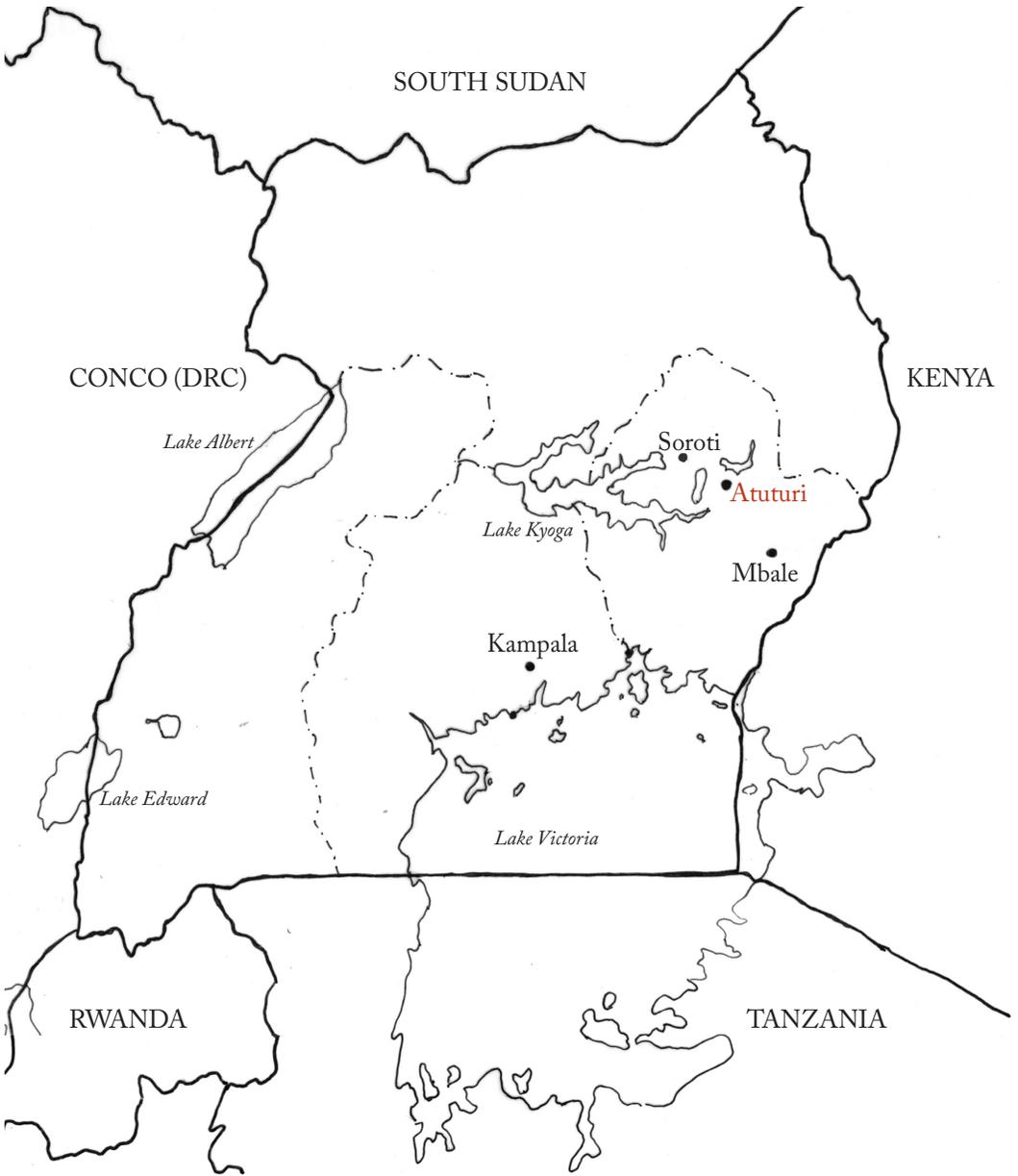
which have a job in the formal economy. Agriculture plays a significant role in their live hood, finger millet and sorghum are traditional food crops and also cassava, women cultivate the vegetables garden while men herd and graze cattle and other animals.

Young people often leave the rural area and hope to find a job in the city. We have few big urban centres in Uganda, out of the five regions (east, west, south, north and central) each has a big town which is highly populated with mostly young people, however statistics show that the majority of the Ugandan population is still living in the rural areas of the country. The government is always improving the infrastructure in the urban centres hence neglecting the majority people residing in the rural areas, so I would love to setup this space in my village which I feel is much needed there, more than in the city in which a few institutions with such spaces already exist.

I understand now why you want to build the Creative Space in the rural area. Felwine Sarr says in his book “Afrotopia” that the African people are in today’s world pulled between the tradition, with which they are not totally familiar with anymore, and the modernity, which pushes from the outside like a destructive force.¹ Since you are a dancer, I wonder if you could tell me more about the role of dancing in your culture? Could that be a way to bring these diverging forces closer again?

Dancing plays a very virtual role in the preservation and heritage of culture in my community. Culture is passed on from one generation to the next through different stories that are visualized through tribal dances accompanied with folk songs that are narrative. Each ritual has its own dance. Cultural knowledge gets passed on through music and dancing, particularly for cultures with strong oral traditions like the one in Uganda. The gestures, stories and symbolisms, passed from generation to generation, and across borders, help us to connect and to understand our own and others’ histories.

1 Felwine Sarr, *Afrotopia*, trans. by Max Henninger, Erste Auflage (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2019), p. 35.



0 km 100 km

Map Uganda

Dancing has the power to connect people from different cultures similar to other sports like football. But how is dancing integrated in the today's everyday life of the local population in your village Atuturi?

Dancing is mainly integrated into the community as a part of rituals to commemorate traditional or cultural ceremonies, and these vary with tribe, region, religion and culture. It's learnt both formally and informally, it basically starts by being socialized at home and in the community and later at school. The Music, Dance and Drama (M.D.D) class is compulsory for every child in Uganda.

In my village, the community used to meet at the end of the afternoon, starting at around 4pm until the sunset (around 6:30), in order to dance, sing, narrate and play together. Dancing together was at one hand entertainment, but as well as a celebration and part of rituals. We all agree it was part of the culture in our community. The place in which they dance is a square in the centre of the village under a big tree which provides shelter and protection from the sun and therefore from the heat. The floor is out of compressed earth and finished by cow dung to decrease the amount of loose dust.

During these meetings the older generation teaches the younger one in a very playful way cultural values and stories through repetition of traditional dances and stories. For every major life event we have a different dance. Normally they are accompanied by one or maximum two traditional instruments. The Iteso are known to be very well skilled in fabricating these instruments. Each dance has its own song. The short and repetitive texts are an important part of teaching in the oral culture.

Since there is no roof, during the rainy season the people tend to stay at home. Hence with globalization new ways and trends of leisure and entertainment have started to build up. The most popular is watching the football games during the evening instead. Football especially the English premier league and the Bundesliga are very popular here. As a consequence, today even in the dry season there are the less and less people participating in the daily meetings.

I think this is a shame because to know the own culture

could increase the self-confidence. Furthermore, dancing can be a medium to express one's opinion. Children can be taught discipline through dancing, to stick to something even though sometimes it's hard. In addition, it can enhance skills of perception, observation, and concentration which will undoubtedly help students in all of their school subjects. Personally, dancing gives and gave me so much and it also taught me a lot for my everyday life. I learned to work hard and commit if I really want something.

You do not learn everything in school, especially values, self-motivation and the power of endurance are skills that are often learnt outside of school during free time. I see that for you it was dancing that taught you all these life lessons.

At the moment, there are a lot of changes of habits in the everyday life of Ugandan's. When I was in Eastern Africa, I was surprised by the simultaneous coexistence of several reference system. Personally, I found it hard to experience at the same time a traditional rural lifestyle and watch a European football match. Based on this context of constant tension between local and global why do you think dancing is still relevant in today's world and especially in Uganda?

People have a tendency to think of dancing as something purely physical and perhaps as an entertainment but often not as something intellectual and cultural. But when we separate movement from the intellect and culture, we limit what dancing can do for the world. When we accept that our bodies think, move, translate, react - often in conjunction with linguistic thought or prior to it - we can use dancing as a tool. To me dancing has a lot of values and importance in almost every aspect of society and its elements of culture. Below I will explain some of them:

dancing is a very relevant tool and a way of advocating and creating awareness about social issues and driving for positive social change in our society. dancing being a universal language of the body, it makes it easy to talk about social themes and issues in performances hence not just entertaining people but addressing and creating awareness on urgent subjects as education,

gender equality, early marriages or sanitation. For example, Ananya Dance Theatre's Ananya Chatterjea, who recently created Shyamali as a tribute to women across the world who have stood up against oppression. We relate to others not just with language, but with gestures and physical contact.

Through dancing, we can embody a brighter future: On a community level, dancing has been successfully used in reconciliation processes in previously divided or war-torn countries, such as Rwanda, Australia, South Africa and Colombia. As well here in Uganda, especially in the north after the independence on the 9th October 1962 there were guerrilla wars which ended as today's presidents gained power. However, the inequalities still exist and are even increasing.

Knowing that in Uganda the differences between the very rich and very poor are immense don't you think that institutionalizing a common cultural good as dancing introduces an even stronger segregation within the society of Uganda?

It is already happening that dance, or to be more precise the rehearsal spaces, get institutionalized. As I told you before, not many people are working in the formal economy therefore people are looking for other ways to generate an income. One way is to rent out space for reunions or rehearsals. Before there were several spaces, for instance in churches, which people could freely access in order to dance together. These were like partly communal spaces, but they have been constantly disappearing since they get rented out in order to generate a stable income.

I would like to have a space which is open to everyone where all generations could come together and dance, have a cultural exchange, network and interact. During certain time there will be classes for the people who would like to train in a more formal way. This means during most of the time the space will be open to everyone, but at certain periods it's closed for certain groups.

Rahel, there are few funds and grunts, especially from NGO's around, which support local cultural institutions

but in order to be able to apply for them you need to have the infrastructure and a formal setup. It is a lot easier to get funds or grunts for projects which have their own base or location point. In this way I would like to institutionalize the infrastructure but not the access to it. Would you help me to do such a formal setup in order to present it to get a fund or grunt?

Yes, I would love to. I now understand why you would like to construct the cultural centre, but I have still one more question. Why are you asking me to do that and not a local architect? Felwine Sarr expresses in his book “Afrotopia” the urge that, especially after the dark history of colonialization, African should define and articulate their own future.² Based on this background is it for me, as an European, morally justifying to working in Africa?

Rahel, is it morally acceptable to help a friend who asked you for your help?

I think we all need each other, no one is an Island, we only need to have good and pure motives behind our actions.

I agree with Felwine Sarr but you need to distinguish between a project whose initiative comes from Africa and one coming from the occidental part of the world. I don't ask you to do a project of development, but we need to stay realistic there would be no one else who would help me to do it.

Thank you Fazil. I am going to help you to plan the Creative Space as part of my master project.

A cultural centre in Eastern Uganda, which next to dance classes could host as well other programs like a library or theatre classes. This sounds very exciting to me but at the same time there are so many open questions in my mind like for instance “How do I build in a different cultural context?” or “How are buildings traditionally done in Eastern Uganda?”.

Fazil Onyu



“To me dance is a space that gives me sense of belonging, a sense of value and relevance, that I can contribute something to this world as an artist.”³

Fazil Onyu is a dancer and choreographer from Kampala. I met him during my internship in Rwanda and we became friends. Thanks to a scholarship Fazil could study Dance in Cologne. He would like to share with the whole community the knowledge that he gained during his formation in Germany. Since it is difficult to sustain on a long term as a dancer and choreographer, at the moment he is studying psychology at the Makerere University in Kampala in order to have second pillar in the future.

INTRODUCTION

As introduced in the prologue my friend Fazil Onyu asked me to do a proposition for a Creative Space, mainly a Dance School, in his home village Atuturi in Eastern Uganda which will possibly be constructed in the future. Since I'm not familiar with the local context neither with the local way of construction this preceding *énoncé théorique* gives me the opportunity to develop my personal attitude on how to practice as a foreign architect in eastern Uganda. The aim is therefore to elaborate a method of planification that I find coherent within the context of Uganda.

In will begin the *énoncé théorique* with an examination of the Ugandan context in order to give the reader, a general overview of the situation. It is followed by a discussion of several African architectural positions: namely the architect David Adjaye, the author Flewine Sarr and the architecture professor Mark R. O. Olweny. Similar architectural positions have existed in Europe, which will be explained in detail in the second part of the of the chapter. The best-known representative is Kenneth Frampton. However, there are different architects all over the world working with a similar attitude. In order to understand in detail the method of the site-specific architecture I will analyse the approach of one representative, namely the Swiss architect Gion A. Caminada in the third chapter. He has mainly worked in Vrin, in the Val Lumnezia, in Grison (Switzerland) that is near my hometown. The understanding of the method is followed by an examination of the social and architectural context in Eastern Uganda, where the Dance School will be located.

Different colours will guide through the *énoncé théorique* and visualize the interweaving of the subjects; Uganda in orange, Grison in green and the connecting theoretical elements in yellow. I welcome you to join me on this journey.

DIVING INTO UGANDA

DIVING INTO UGANDA

(Facts) Uganda is located in Eastern Africa and has no sea connection. The country is surrounded by the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) in the West, by Sudan in the North, Kenya, another former British colony, in the East and finally Rwanda and Tanzania in the South.

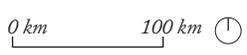
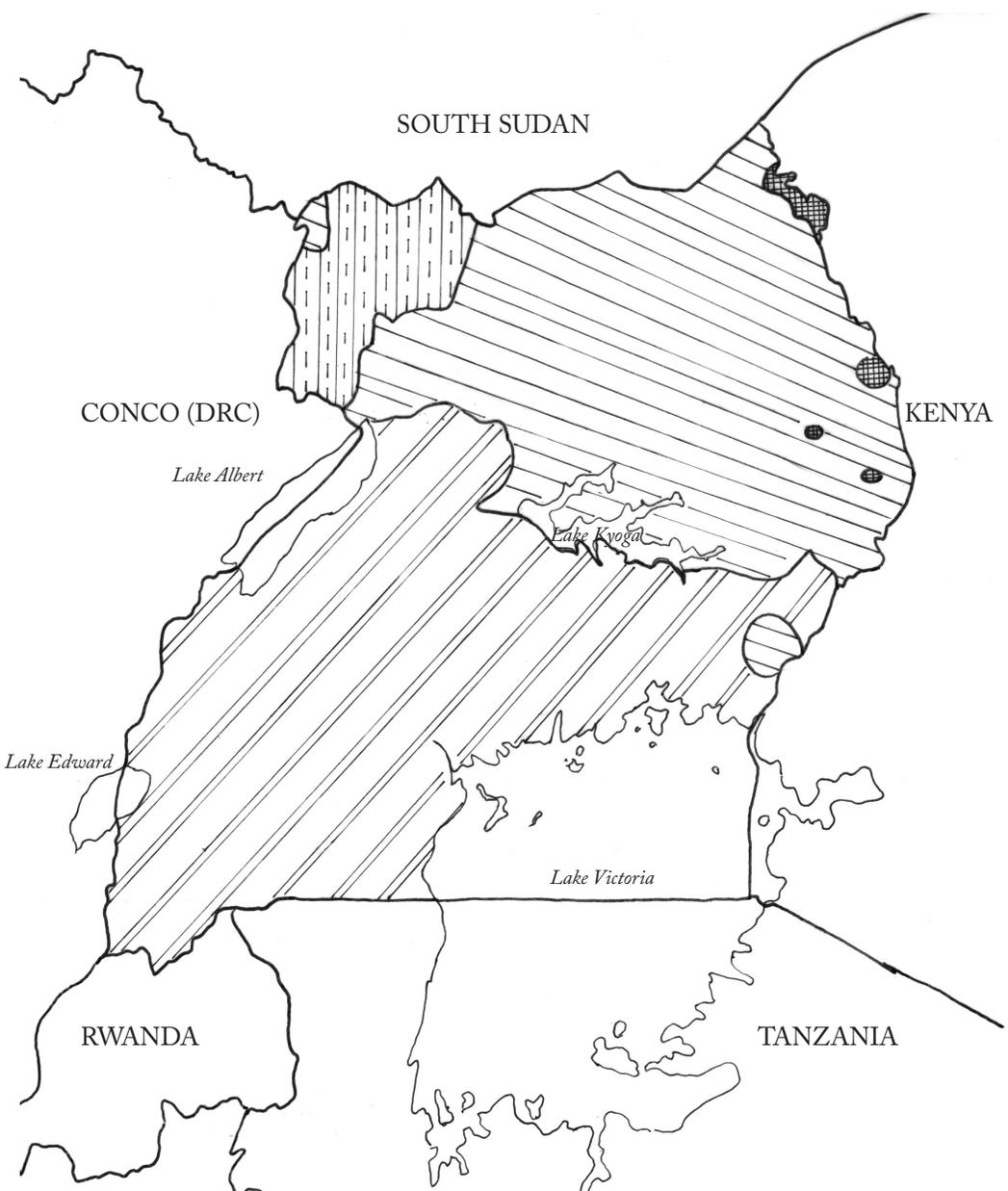
I want to start by several comparisons of the two nations Uganda and Switzerland in order to get a better idea of the African country. The total surface of Uganda (199.8 km²) is five-time larger than Switzerland. Furthermore, it is the home of around five times the population of Switzerland (around 45,000 Million people). Even the population growth is at the moment about five time higher in Uganda. Another striking number that is worth to be pointed out, is that unlike in Switzerland where 74% of the population are urban, in Uganda there are just 25%. Consequently, the majority of Ugandan's population are still self-supporter and live from agriculture and are therefore not part of the formal economy. Uganda has a very young population; the medium age is 16.1 years whereas in Switzerland it is 42.5 years.⁴ These numbers reflect a typical image of a so called “developing” country.

(Boarders) Uganda is a former British colony. The boarder of Uganda got mainly defined during the Berlin Conference of 1884 - 1885, in which Africa got divided between the different colonial empires without paying attention to the ethnical groups. As a result, Uganda is an artefact of colonialism. Today it gives home to at least forty distinctive tribes⁵ that speak over thirty-three languages which can be subdivides into four major language groups:⁶ the Bantu, the Nilotic, the Atekerin and the Sudanic. This huge ethnic diversity makes Uganda more

4 'Uganda Population (2019) - Worldometers' <<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uganda-population/>> [accessed 14 December 2019]; 'Switzerland Population (2019) - Worldometers' <<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/switzerland-population/>> [accessed 14 December 2019].

5 Mark R. O. Olweny and Jacqueline Wadulo, *Architecture and Identity*, Chapter Search for Identity: Architecture and Urbanism in Uganda, ed. by Peter Herrle and Erik Wegerhoff, Habitat-International (Berlin: Lit, 2008), pp. 177–80.

6 Richard Nzita, Mbaga-Niwampa, and David Mukholi, *Peoples, and Cultures of Uganda*, 4th ed (Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 2011), pp. 1–2.



Language groups in Uganda

a colonial paradox than culturally homogeneous.⁷ Even though all the different tribes share the dramatic history of colonization, there is no strong unifying link between the different ethnic groups. The colonialization is not a strong enough argument to create a common identity, especially since the whole continent shares this aspect. Consequently, there is not one common Ugandan culture.⁸ Like most of the African countries Uganda gained independency in the early sixties, to be more precise on the 9th October 1962.

(Tribes) The different tribes are still very present in the everyday life. People generally refer and identify themselves more with their village, the place of origin of their family, than with the place they actually live or grew up in. In case of death the person usually gets buried in the village where each family has its own cemetery. This strong relation to the tribes provokes often social and political conflicts. The cultural dilemma of a huge diversity, created during colonialism, still affects today's Africa's perception of itself.⁹

(New Ugandan Identity) Since the independence over 55 years ago various governments wanted and still want to invent a new common Ugandan identity with the help of art, architecture, clothing and music to legitimize the country. This is surprising to me since they apply the same tool as the former colonial empire had used to impose a common memory as the professor Elleh Nanmdi points out well: *“Architecture served as a tool for formulating collective colonial memories among distinct African ethnic groups, unifying them into exploitable states.”*¹⁰

(Architecture as a postcolonial legacy) Architecture, as a profession, was brought by the colonialists to Africa. This is also underlined by the fact that in Uganda the first training course of architecture started in 1989 at the Makerere University in Kampala and was a collaboration with the university of Gent.¹¹ Consequently the first local trained architects graduated in 1992 (Bachelor) and in 1994 (Master). Since there is not a long written African architectural theory practice the theoretical courses are still mainly based on the occidental theory and history. However, it is changing since 1999 they integrated a new course in the curriculum about the local earthen architecture and low-cost housing.¹² This is important since the housing situation, especially for low income household, is precarious in Uganda.

In 2000 a second faculty opened at the Uganda-Martyrs-University in the more rural area where still the majority of Uganda's population lives.¹³ However,

7 Olweny and Wadulo, p. 177.

8 Nzita, Mbagwa-Niwampa, and Mukholi, p. 1.

9 Herrle, Wegerhoff, and Technische Universität Berlin, p. 178-79.

10 Olweny and Wadulo, p. 177-180.

11 Afritecture: Bauen mit der Gemeinschaft ; [anlässlich der Ausstellung 'Afritecture - Bauen mit der Gemeinschaft' im Architekturmuseum der TU München in der Pinakothek der Moderne, 13. September 2013 bis 12. Januar 2014], ed. by Andres Lepik and others (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2013), p. 179.

12 CRAterre Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, Earth Architecture in Uganda: Pilot Project in Bushenyi, 2002-2004 (Grenoble, Villefontaine: CRAterre-ENSAG, 2005), p. 6.

13 Lepik and others, p. 179.

the profession of Architect is still today not widely known within the society. During my stay in East Africa I often needed to explain what an Architect is.

(Architecture situation today) In 2019 there are 204 architects registered in Uganda.¹⁴ As a result the majority of the houses are either built in the traditional way by a skilled craftsman and the local population, without an architect, or planned by a foreign architect. Furthermore, a lot of the construction projects, particularly housing projects, are paid by abroad living Ugandans who sent money back home. Therefore the contemporary Ugandan architecture is rather determined by foreigners than by local forces¹⁵ which brought in “*new ideologies, new aesthetics, new materials and techniques, new social organisations.*”¹⁶

(Hybridisation) In comparison to occidental cities African cities are rather horizontal. The in between spaces are essential for the social life. As a result of the enormous ethnical diversity in combination with all the influences through colonialization, globalisation and trades there is a huge hybridisation in Uganda, or even in general in African cities. They don't have one identity, it is more a superposition of different lifestyles, architectural styles which together don't create an image of a coherent whole.¹⁷ When walking through Kampala I had the impression to experience the history of a European city of the last hundred years within one day since the character of the different neighbourhoods are so divers. In one city there is simultaneous a financial district with glass towers, very dense slums areas, where each heavy rain flushes away buildings and villas which are often decorated with antique elements like columns. These former European architectural ornaments are still very commonly used, especially on residential buildings in order to express power and wealth.

(Colour) In the hybrid building context, most of Uganda's constructions are either done by earth material or are painted in earth colours, like orange, beige or yellow ochre. This gives a unified expression of the buildings and is in a strong contrast to the mostly white buildings in the western world. One of the reasons why the just mentioned colour range is used, is that the red-ochre dust turns white buildings beige within a short time period. In order to keep a building white, it needs to be regularly repainted which is not economical.¹⁸ The traditional Ugandan architecture is gradually disappearing and getting replaced by foreign models. The wealthier part of the population can afford the more expensive materials like concrete while for the majority it is inaccessible.¹⁹

(My experience) The journey through Uganda was for me a very intensive experience. It is a very vibrant, alive and colourful country. Everywhere people are selling small things. Buses, cars and motorbikes are finding their way through the crowd while they are constantly hooting. I experienced the feeling of freedom, of joy and at the same time it was tiring. The feeling of freedom was provoked by the

14 Architects Registraion Board, 'Registered And Practicing Architects 2019', 22.

15 Olweny and Wadulo, p. 179.

16 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 2.

17 Sarr, *Afrotopia*, pp. 138–145.

18 Olweny and Wadulo, pp. 184–85.

19 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 2.

fact that everything is allowed in Uganda unlike Rwanda where there are a lot of rules that have to be followed. The feeling of joy came from the cultural exchange. While seeing the other way of living I understood a lot more about myself and the European lifestyle. Finally, it was tiring since it was a constant fight to be treated in the same way as the local population. Western lifestyle and beauty model are still sold as the dream to be achieved. However, I felt an increasing proudness especially at the younger generation. Still it stayed a challenge to have balanced and equal friendships with locals since they automatically subordinate themselves or they saw just the money in my European appearance. Both do not suit me. I believe equality is a fundamental right.

African Positions

*"I wanted to understand the impact of climate on the lifestyle of the people, their attitude to place, and how they occupied space in response to the prevalent conditions. My conclusion is that the way of life in these places [Africa] is a precise response to climate, and shows how buildings can adapt to climate without becoming overly dependent on technology"*²⁰

David Adjaye

*"Architecture should underline the singularity of a place and as a result its identity. Therefore, next to the functional questions an architect needs to give answers on a social, esthetical and philosophical level. [...] To do that a construction needs to be linked to the culture, the society and the climate, local way of using spaces and give answer to ecological questions. The aim is to construct spaces that reflect its own specificity and that are in alinement with its world view."*²¹

Flewine Sarr

*"Identity, as we know is determined by our understanding of who we are, where we are and what we are, thus the importance of understanding the principal components of architecture: materials, customs, climate and traditions of a particular place and time. An understanding of these issues should therefore result in buildings that are relevant to their locale."*²²

Mark R. O. Olweny

20 David Adjaye and Peter Allison, *David Adjaye: Constructed Narratives* (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2017), p. 15.

21 Sarr, *Afrotopia*, p. 142 translated by Rahel Dürmüller.

22 Olweny and Wadulo, p. 182.

(Introduction) In the last chapter we have seen that Uganda's building fabric is very hybrid. To me this raises the question how to build within this enormous variety? In order to be able to give an answer to this question in this section I will examine different African architectural positions. My goal is to understand the requirements on architecture expressed by African people. On the previous page there are three options listed.

(David Adjaye) The first citation is by David Adjaye, a Ghanaian architect who grew up in Tanzania. Today he has offices on three continents Africa, America and Europe in order to be able to develop precise local solutions in collaboration with the on-site craftsmen. This is important since for him he succeeds "*when [a] building is adopted into the pattern and ritual of people's lives.*"²³ For David Adjaye the central aspect of architecture is the climate since it changes the locally available construction materials and influences the traditional geometry of buildings which are directly interlinked with the way spaces are appropriated by the people. His book "Adjaye, Africa, Architecture" is an inventory of African cities classified according to their climatic zones. It is for him a tool for designing and underlines the importance of the climatic conditions in his work.

Flewin Sarr, a Senegalese author, agrees with Adjaye on the significance of the climate. It needs a precise understanding of the climate to integrate naturally resourced solutions instead of mechanically.²⁴ This makes the local population less dependent. In case of a problem of devices from overseas, the time of repair takes a long time and it is quite expensive.

(Earth architecture at university) The curriculum of the architectural studies at the Makerere University in Kampala emphasize as well significance of the understanding of the local conditions and the following adaption of architecture according to them. This can be seen as the course "*Earthen architecture*" is compulsory in third year and every two years there is a post graduate diploma in which one of the major subjects is "*Earthen architecture*".²⁵ "*The philosophy of the school is: "In search of a sustainable and contextual architecture."* The department of Architecture aims at being responsive to and finding appropriate solutions for the local social, economic and physical environment while remaining relevant in the global professional context."²⁶ The architectural study emphasises therefore next to knowledge of construction and aesthetics of design, the impact of architecture on the population. Buildings should integrate characteristics that embed them into the culture of Uganda's civilisation and the predominantly western idioms and technology. They are aware that architecture can play an important role in the development especially in the rural area where people are often very poor.²⁷

23 Adjaye and Allison, pp. 187.

24 Sarr, *Afrotopia*, p. 142.

25 Sarr, *Afrotopia*, p. 142.

26 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 12.

27 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 13.

(Identity) Flewin Sarr's and Mark R. O. Olweny's attitude is in alignment with the previously presented way of architectural training. In their citation identity is highlighted as the central aspect in order to create local relevant architecture. The architecture professor Mark Olweny suggests that identity means the understanding of oneself and the local context and therefore it is important to know the social, climatic and architectural situation in order to plan a suitable building.²⁸ In a similar way Flewin Sarr says that architecture needs to reflect the specificity of a place in order to underline its *Identity*.²⁹ In order to acquire a more holistic point of view of the notion identity I want to integrate as well other definitions into the discussion such as the one of the Cambridge dictionary in which identity is described the following way: "*who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others.*"³⁰ Ulrike Fischer, a German architect, interprets identity within an architectural context in a similar way. For her it is the combination of characteristics and qualities of a specific geographic region which by its inhabitations are consciously seen as positive qualities and differ from one region to another. Therefore, identity is a constant alternating tension between the "*internal*" and the "*external*".³¹ I think it is crucial to understand that there is the need of differences in order to create identity. This unites people within a certain group and distinguishes them from another. In order to be able to identify these specific characteristics it is important to be able to have a critical external view on a region. By comparing different regions, the strengths and the weaknesses are becoming obvious. It is the combination between cosmopolitan point of view and the very local acting. This tension can create a new independent architecture that is on one hand a contemporary architecture and on the other hand related to the tradition.³²

(Region) Region seems to be of great importance in the context of identity. Coming back to the Cambridge dictionary who defines Region as "*an area of a country, especially one that has a particular characteristic or is known for something.*"³³ However the limits of the area are often not clearly definable, and they can change over time. They are often a historic result of social and political interaction.³⁴ In Europe I have the impression that, apart from some exceptions, the cultural and the political regions correlate. In the context of Uganda whose border got defined in the Berlin conference in 1884-85 without paying attention to the cultural diversity, this is not the case. As we will see later the tribe Iteso was thereby divided. As a result, today the majority are Ugandan citizens, but a part of their tribal area belongs to Kenya.³⁵ Consequently, it is difficult to define the limits of the region since the tribal and therefore the cultural and the political limits do not correspond.

28 Olweny and Wadulo, p. 182.

29 Sarr, *Afrotopia*, p. 142 translated by Rahel Dürmüller.

30 'Cambridge Dictionary' <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/>>.

31 Ulrike Fischer, *Regionalistische Strategien in Der Architektur Graubündens: Von 1900 Bis in Die Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Wasmuth Verlag, 2016), p. 19.

32 Fischer, pp. 245-46.

33 'Cambridge Dictionary'.

34 Fischer, p. 29.

35 Joshua Okurutu, *The Teso*.

(Relations) The inhabitants within one region share the feeling of belonging to a certain group. Therefore, regional identity is not based on vernacular buildings but on the positive effects of social relations which are related to the place of living as Irma Nosedá points out. The goal is not just an aesthetic integration but as well social and cultural.³⁶ This corresponds again to the opinion expressed by the Senegalese author Flewine Sarr at the beginning of the chapter as he says that architecture needs to give answers not just on an esthetical level but as well on a social and philosophical level.³⁷

(Against uniformization) To emphasize the local identity is an expression of resistance against the global uniformization and standardisation. Flewin Sarr is strictly against mimicry since it is a reproduction that is in alignment with someone else's culture and not with the own. Surely it is easier to follow a clear predefined path than to find and create its own. In addition, it gives the feeling to be part of the global community. However, it would have the consequence that the local specificities, symbols and cultures would disappear.³⁸ As we have seen it is exactly these specificities which are important in order to create an identity.

(Conclusion) To conclude, we could see that all quoted individuals ask more or less directly for buildings that integrate the local identity and cultural specificities (climate, social pattern, material). On one hand it is a way to express who they are and on the other hand it is a resistance against globalized construction methods which are often inadequate for the African context. I think it is important to emphasise that even though they underline the importance of understanding the local elements, no one asks for reconstructions of vernacular buildings. This would be a step back into the past and would not correspond to today's needs. It is essential to integrate new architectural elements and design languages which are linked to a local context but express the cultural and social shifts as well as the changing lifestyle. The local specificities need to be understood from a global viewpoint. In this tension between local and global the new architecture gets created.

36 Fischer, p. 46.

37 Sarr, *Afrotopia*, p. 142 translated by Rahel Dürmüller.

38 Sarr, *Afrotopia*, pp. 127–29.

European Positions

(Introduction) Similar attitudes like the just examined African architectural positions existed in Europe. One tendency was the Regionalist, which wanted to combine the global modernist language with specific local elements.

(Regionalism definition) Regionalism is a theory developed cross-disciplinarily in the occidental part of the world. It is a very vast theory and there are many different interpretations in several domains like architecture, literature and other. *“In architecture Regionalisms commonly refers to the establishment of connections between new works and pre-existing local and regional characteristics.”*³⁹ However the definition and the interpretation of *“pre-existing local and regional characteristics”* can be very different. Often named aspects are the climate, the topography, local material as well as the social context. The difference between vernacular architecture and Regionalism is that vernacular architecture is a direct expression of the life conditions of a certain place at a certain time (existed until the 19th century), Regionalism on the other hand is a choice. Today we have the possibility to use different material and construction technics nearly all over the world.⁴⁰ Before the 19th century it was difficult to transport material, especially over long distances.

(First appearance) The regionalist tendencies are often a reaction to profound changes which were provoked by external influences. The outside forces normally produce a hybridisation of the local context. The attitude has for its aim to protect the local identity and culture. A form of “Regionalism’s” appeared in Switzerland for the first time around 1900. It was a reaction to the radical changes introduced by the industrialisation and the new road network. The second linked closer the different villages and cities. It was as well around this time that research about vernacular typologies and traditional construction methods started in Grisons.⁴¹

(Modern + Local) At the end of the 70’s Tzonis and Lian Lefavre introduced the Critical Regionalism which got commonly known by Kenneth

39 *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*, ed. by Vincent B. Canizaro (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), p. 21.

40 Fischer, p. 11.

41 Fischer, p. 30.

Frampton in the beginning of the 80's. This time it was a reaction to "*The modernist approach [that] has had always the tendency to make us believe that human can free himself of its natural environment.*"⁴² Kenneth Frampton however advocates to think a building as a part of a certain region. Therefore, the global modernist language needs to be adapted to the local context by introducing specific local elements. This "*brings the tactile immediacy of spatial experience, the necessary response to climate and topography, a sense of reality to the cultural meaning of architectural form, and the possibility of engaging local labour and skills in architectural production.*"⁴³ Consequently, this approach is a continuous research on the local elements, their meaning and their way of production in combination with global influences. The result are buildings which express the hybrid situation of cosmopolitan awareness and the local production.

(Against the uniformization and flattering) The comeback in the 80's is a reaction to the uniformization and flattering caused by the post-war modernization and globalisation.⁴⁴ Consequently the theory can be seen as resistance against globalisation and standardisation. Frampton criticised strongly the superficiality and the fakeness of the Mies van der Rohe structure covered by a Louis XIV façade by the postmodernist.⁴⁵ This is an architecture that is "*populist, commercial and devoid from social meaning*". Frampton developed his ideas in the text "*Towards a Critical Regionalism*" that was published in 1983.⁴⁶

(Architects) There are several Architects from several parts of the world that worked or still work in this way for example Aldo van Eyck, Alvar Aalto, Balkrishna V. Doshi.

(Critics on critical Regionalism) The critical Regionalism is one of the most controversial theories. Paradoxically one of the most expressed criticisms is the opinion that it is just an empty, superficial and formal approach. Two of the critics are Bruno Reichlin and Martin Steinman. In their opinion regionalist buildings often reproduce a predefined historical image which gets composed by a limited number of selected elements. This can be certain forms, colours or ambiances. Consequently, the traditional forms and motives are isolated as it is just a reproduction of the external form of a traditional building without a deeper understanding of its origin and historic and cultural context. This fallback peruses a sentimental and superficial goal to reconstruct a past image of a certain landscape.⁴⁷ Despite the fact that this kind of (mis)interpretation exists I have the impression that Frampton has a quite sensitive attitude concerning the connection to the local context. I am aware that there is a fine line between reproduction and reinterpretation.

42 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 2.

43 Canizaro, p. 374.

44 Christophe Van Gerrewey, *Choosing Architecture: Criticism, History and Theory since the 19th Century*, 2019, p. 120.

45 Canizaro, p. 377.

46 Gerrewey, pp. 119–20.

47 *Architecture and Identity*, ed. by Peter Herrle, Erik Wegerhoff, and Technische Universität Berlin, Habitat-International, Bd. 9 (Berlin: Lit, 2008), p. 183.

(Africa-Europe-Caminada) The last paragraphs demonstrate that the previously elaborated African positions have many similarities with the just discussed European theories. One architect who works with this attitude is the architect Gion A. Caminada who lives and works in Vrin, Grisons. His work is based on a deep examination and understanding of the local circumstances. However, he does not identify himself as a Regionalist. He explains the reasons therefore in the interview with Ulrike Fischer: *“In the regionalist construction I feel an aesthetization, [...], working with images which does not go deep enough. It's like a form without content. To just display recognisability, isn't enough for me.”*⁴⁸ Nevertheless, in his work regionalist characteristics are present. Caminada explains his work in the architectural biennale in Venice 2018 in the following way:

*“Architecture wants to be an architecture of relationships. Relationships arise through a closeness to people and things. In understanding them, the essential questions of architecture are answered: the approach to topography, construction and material, the meaning and value of building types and their hierarchies. Beyond their material character, these things are embedded in meanings, emotions and events. Architecture does not come from an autonomy limited to itself, but from a rich autonomy of the place – an autonomy that is determined by the local context and its characteristics, as well as external influences. Autonomy and proximity create free space – for an architecture that has resonance in its specific place.”*⁴⁹

(Similarities Caminada & African positions) It seem to me that Caminada's approach has a lot of aspects in common with the African architectural positions developed in the last chapter. Even though geographically they come from completely different parts of the world all emphasise the importance of local identity, culture, society (Relationships) as well as the on-site present natural factors like the climate, the topography and the construction material. Furthermore, all believe that great architecture gets created in the tension of local and global alinement.

(architectural position vs expression) Based on these insights I think an architectural position can be global contrary to the architectural result that changes every time. The main difference between the two is that the first one is composed by abstract immaterial values and personal reflections however the second is a material translation of the just mentioned values at a certain time and at a certain place.

48 Fischer, p. 256 Translated by Rahel Dürmüller.

49 *Cul zuffel e l'aura dado: Gion A. Caminada*, ed. by Bettina Schlorhauser and others, 2., erweiterte Auflage = (Luzern: Quart Verlag, 2018), p. 192.

LEARNING FROM
VAL LUMNEZIA

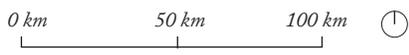
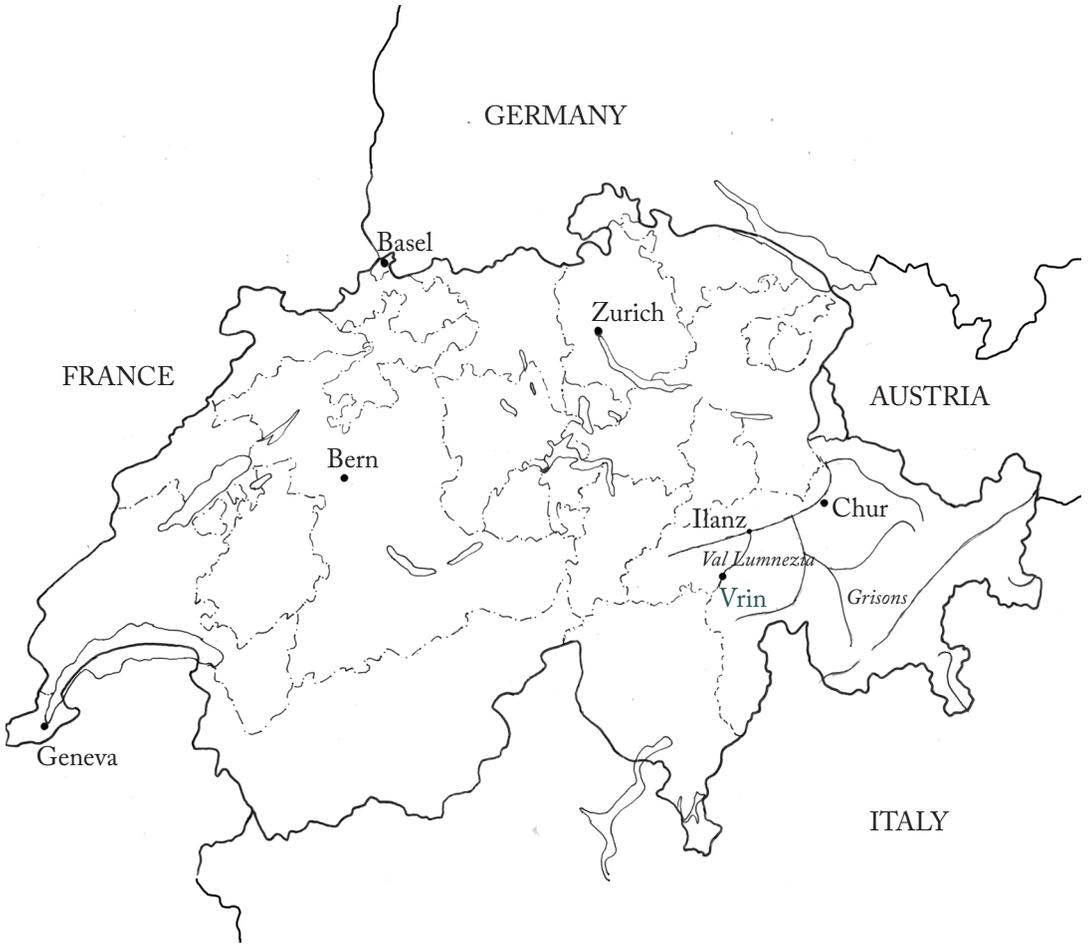
LEARNING FROM VAL LUMNEZIA

(Introduction) Based on the fact that the attitude of Gion A. Caminada and the examined African people are very similar in this chapter I will elaborate in more detail Caminada's approach. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the procedure within a familiar context so that afterwards I will be able to translate and adapt it to the unfamiliar context of Eastern Uganda.

Since the local context is fundamental in the site-specific attitude the first part will be a familiarization of the social, climatic and architectural context. In the second part I will present Caminada's approach which will be explained with the help of two of his major projects the *Repair of the agricultural economy* and the *Stiva da morts*.

(Gion A. Caminada) Gion A. Caminada was born in 1957. He grew up in the village of Vrin where he did an apprenticeship as a carpenter and joiner. Later on, he studied at the college of applied arts, followed by postgraduation studies in Architecture at the ETHZ before opening his own architecture office in Vrin. Caminada is Professor at the ETHZ since 1998.⁵⁰

50 Schlorhauser and others, p. 288.



Map Switzerland

Social Context

(Introduction) Vrin is located at 1448 meters above sea level at the end of the Val Lumnezia, a Rumantsch speaking valleys in the Alps in the canton Grisons in Switzerland. A large part of the canton Grisons is covered by the Alps which separates the German part of Switzerland from Italy. As a result, the inhabitants of Grisons speak partly German, Italian and partly Rumantsch.

(Climate, Topography) The Val Lumnezia is North-South oriented. The topography is rather steep. Nearly all the villages are placed on the west side of the valley in order to capture the maximum of sunlight. The climate is harsh. The summers are short, cold and wet, the winters on the other hand are long, freezing, and snowy. The weather is mostly partly cloudy. During the year, the temperature varies between -12°C and 16°C , rarely it goes above or below. During more than a third of the year it rains, especially in the summertime, however the humidity stays low due to the wind that blows either coming from the south or from the north.⁵¹

(Farmer) The majority of the population lived from agriculture, especially cattle, sheep and goats. The summers are short in the high mountain valley, consequently there was not much time to cut enough hay for the winter. Also, it was a difficult work due to the steep topography. The inhabitants adapted themselves to these harsh conditions thanks to the three phases of the production which structured their years and their lives.

(Three production phases) The “*three production phases*” was composed by three levels which took place simultaneously on different altitudes: planting crops in the valley, dairy products on the lower Alpine meadows in the summer and cattle grazing at higher altitudes. In order to survive the hard and long winters the farmer cut the “*Hay [...] on steep mountain meadows that lay up to 2000 m above sea level and stored it in the small barns that are still a typical feature of the Lumnezia Valley landscape. [During the wintertime] Cattle were driven from one barn to another, to be fed in the so-called “vertical system of herding” This continued until well into spring, when cattle were put out to graze on the Alps. Whilst shepherds and herders looked after*

51 ‘Average Weather in Vals Platz, Switzerland, Year Round - Weather Spark’ <<https://weatherspark.com/y/63416/Average-Weather-in-Vals-Platz-Switzerland-Year-Round>> [accessed 23 December 2019].



0 m 500 m 

Dense villages and spread out stables

*the cattle and produced Alpine cheese, the rest of the population mowed the grass and laid up stocks of fodder for the coming winter.*⁵²

This way of living was practiced until 1900. In the 20th century most of the farms switched to animal husbandry. However, the Landscape of most of the Val Lumnezia and its identity still is determined by the traditional lifestyle of the farmers. During the 50's the rationalization of agriculture started due to the increased mechanization which was as well called the industrialization of agriculture.⁵³

(Landscape) For Caminada the "Mahd" (meadow), as an act of cutting hay as well as the end product, is one of the most important elements of the region's traditional culture. Until today it is expressed and present by the *"soft-rolling" meadows and the "numerous huts characterized by a stone foundation wall for the stall and a wooden construction with a dirt-floor."*⁵⁴ These construction technics of stalls were repeated many times on the sloped landscaped in the Val Lumnezia.⁵⁵

(shaped Caminada) Since Caminada grew up as a son of an agriculture family he experienced by himself the *"three production phases"*. This lifestyle required a very strong community, in which the different families collaborated and supported each other. In addition, it creates a strong relationship with the surrounding landscape and nature. This sensitivity, and his love for the landscape are strongly present in Gion A. Caminada's work until today.

52 Schlorhauser and others, p. 13.

53 Schlorhauser and others, p. 14-15.

54 Schlorhauser and others, p. 14.

55 Schlorhauser and others, p. 14.



0 m 50 m 100 m



Vrin

Architectural Context

(Introduction) In this chapter we will study the traditional houses and stables. Vernacular architecture is a direct reflection of the local lifestyle in combination with the local available construction materials and the climate at a certain time. As a consequence, all the profane houses are built in a similar way. It was quite difficult and expensive to construct with external materials due to the transport and the need to import the know-how too. This large effort was just invested into special buildings such as churches or palazzi.⁵⁶ Unlike the residential houses they were built completely in stone often by Italian craftsmen. In the following paragraphs I will concentrate mainly on the profane constructions.

(Urbanism) As a reaction to this harsh climate the houses and stables of the villages are built close together and stay in a big contrast to the agricultural huts spread-out all over the landscape. In the Val Lumnezia the residential homes and the farm outhouses are separate which is uncommon in alpine areas. Normally the ground floor is occupied by animals and the upper floors are the people's home. In the Val Lumnezia *"one farm is normally composed by a residential house, one or several stables or barns and a garden."*⁵⁷ Particularly in the core village ensembles are often incomplete. Either one element is placed further away or replicated. These variations are due to lack of space or are the result of parcel subdivision. The agricultural buildings are normally a vertical superposition of a stable, a hayloft and a threshing floor. They were rarely separated.⁵⁸ The buildings were usually placed on the most unfavourable area of the parcels in order to save the most precious part for agriculture and other outside uses.⁵⁹

(Limits) Limits are important, it separates the private from common spaces. In addition, they define the spatial quality.⁶⁰ The plots of land are rarely fenced. The buildings are quite small, and the in-between space do not host asphalted

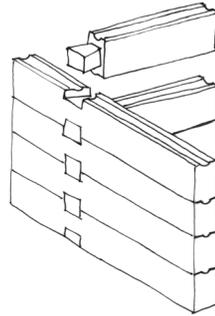
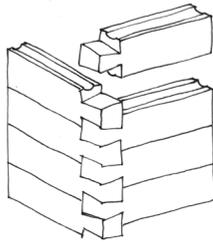
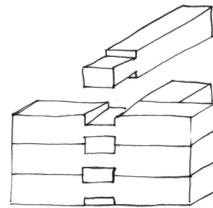
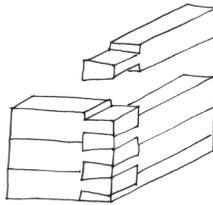
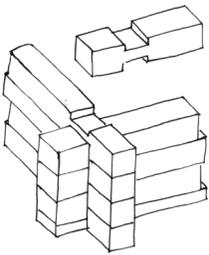
56 *Stiva Da Morts: Gion A. Caminada: Vom Nutzen Der Architektur*, ed. by Gion A. Caminada and others (Zürich: Gta, 2003), p. 32.

57 Schlorhauser and others, p. 110.

58 Schlorhauser and others, p. 110.

59 Gion A. Caminada and Florian Aicher, *Unterwegs Zum Bauen: Ein Gespräch Über Architektur Mit Florian Aicher* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2018), p. 72.

60 Caminada and Aicher, p. 69.



streets but rather paths, alleyways and grass surfaces.⁶¹ The different surfaces define different degrees of intimacy. They are spaces which are open for different activities. Each one defines the space they need.⁶²

(Material) The two main local construction materials are, like in most of the mountain areas, stone and timber. Since the topography is steep the footprints of the houses are normally fairly small in order to minimize the difficult excavation work. It is common that just the front room has a basement. Together with the foundation they are made out of stone in order to protect the upper timber construction from humidity that could otherwise rise by capillarity. The most commonly used stone is Tuff.⁶³ Complete stone constructions are the exceptions.

(Log Construction) In the region, nearly all upper levels of the profane buildings are timber constructions. The most commonly used technic is the log construction in which timber elements are horizontally layered and interlinked on their end in a ninety-degree angle in order to increase their stiffness. The basic construction module is a space which is composed by four walls with the length of a tree trunk (normally around 5-6 m). The stiffness of these modules is high enough that in the section the walls do not need to be aligned.⁶⁴ The trunks can be shaped into different forms such as round, squared or half circled.⁶⁵ The hayloft, on top of the stable, are for example made of timber spars (rounded timbers) and squared timbers which were knitted together.⁶⁶ The corners have a strong plasticity and a high recognition factor. It is possible to read the plan of a log construction building from the outside thanks to the protruding walls.

(Openings) The main façades are often oriented either towards the south or the east in order to capture as much sunlight as possible. Some parts of the facades are decorated with sculptured detail.⁶⁷ The windows are traditionally quite small and grouped to two or three. The doors are often executed in timber.

(Roof) The roofs are traditionally covered by the local crystalline slate,⁶⁸ that were put on a timber construction. The angle of the roof is more or less the same for all buildings; steep enough so that the water and the snow run off but not too steep so that the stones don't fall down. The angle is important since normally the stones aren't fixed by external elements like nails, just by superposition or in other words by their own weight. Today it is often mandatory to construct stone roof in the core zones.⁶⁹

61 Schlorhauser and others, p. 111.

62 Caminada and Aicher, p. 71.

63 *Wirtschaftsbauten*, ed. by Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, Die Bauernhäuser des Kantons Graubünden, hrsg. von der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde; 2 Bd. 2, 2., unveränd. Aufl (Bern: Stämpfli, 1987), p. 17.

64 Caminada and others, p. 34.

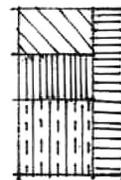
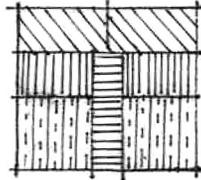
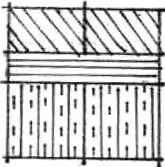
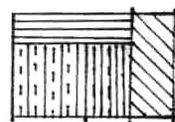
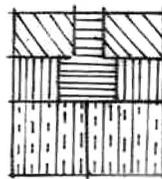
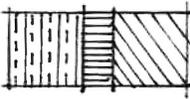
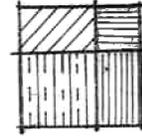
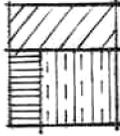
65 Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, pp. 21–23.

66 Schlorhauser and others, pp. 110–11.

67 Caminada and others, p. 32.

68 Schlorhauser and others, p. 37.

69 Schlorhauser and others, p. 37.



Kitchen



Living room



Vestibul



auxilliary Living room

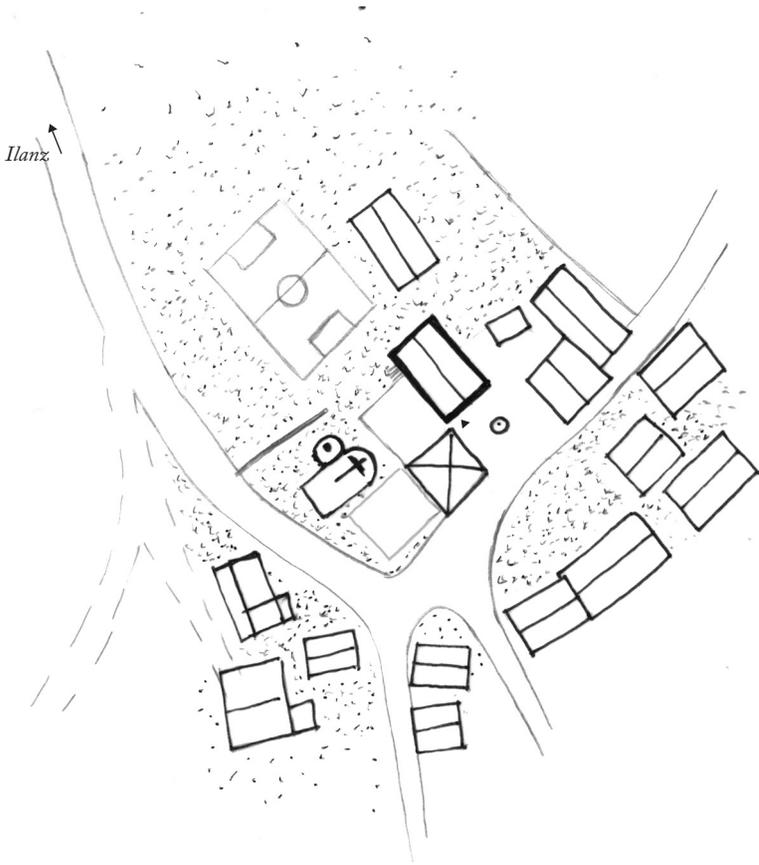
traditional Typologies

(Typology) The typologies are mainly determined by the log construction since its basic unit is a room with dimensions of a tree trunk. The vernacular buildings were composed by juxtaposition of the just mentioned module. However, we need to distinguish between two types of houses: The first one separates the kitchen and the living room by a third small room which is not a corridor in the traditional sense. There are two fireplaces, one for cooking and a second one in order to heat the living room.⁷⁰ In the second typology type is composed by two rooms, the kitchen and the living room, which are juxtaposed and share one fireplace.⁷¹ Both types mostly have their entry on the main façade in the direction of the roof ridge.

(Transition) As Caminada came back after the architecture studies at the ETHZ this was mainly the context that he was confronted with. After the familiarization of the local context in the Val Lumnezia in the next chapter I will elaborate Caminada's Approach.

70 Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, pp. 116–17.

71 Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, pp. 128–29.



0 m 50 m Ⓛ

Duvin

CAMINADA'S APPROACH

Architectural Strategies

(Introduction) There are several strategies which recur in Caminada projects. In my opinion we can subdivide them in to three groups: the Urbanistic, the Socio-Economic and the Atmospheric approach.

(School Duvin) After having elaborated each strategy I will illustrate it by the example of the comprehensive School in Duvin which Caminada built in 1995 after having won the competition. Duvin is a small village with around 90 inhabitants in the valley of Vals, which runs parallel to the Val Lumnezia. The school is a three-level building with a multifunctional room on the ground floor, the main schoolroom on the first floor and smaller rooms for manual work and religious education on the third floor. In front of the building there is sports square with a splendid view.

Urbanistic Approach

(Weiterbauen) Caminada has the opinion that buildings should to be part of their context and never just single objects.⁷² Therefore, new constructions need to be sensitively integrated into the existing cultural landscape.⁷³ His intention is to start to build where someone else has stopped in order to go a bit further.⁷⁴ However it is important to never replicate old images.⁷⁵ He calls this process *Weiterbauen*⁷⁶ (continuous to build).

(Limits) *Limits* is a second important aspect in Caminada's work. In Vrin the different properties are rarely fenced or surrounded by so called hard limits. The interstices between the rather small buildings are not asphalted but covered by grass, tiled or are gravel surfaces. The change of material, also called soft limits, defines different thresholds of various degrees of intimacy from private to public.⁷⁷ According to the architect, spaces which can adapted themselves to changing

72 Caminada and others, p. 30.

73 Schlorhauffer and others, p. 53.

74 Schlorhauffer and others, p. 36.

75 Caminada and Aicher, p. 125.

76 Schlorhauffer and others, p. 97.

77 Schlorhauffer and others, p. 111.

activities are better than fixed community spaces, since they are deliberating.⁷⁸

(Method) Caminada's *Weiterbauen* is always based on two preceding analyses: The first one is a study of the local context and the present architectural elements.⁷⁹ The second analysis is a collaboration with the future inhabitants to define precisely their needs. The continuous and intensive dialog and debate with the local community is an important tool for Caminada even though it is sometimes tiring and uncomfortable.

(Rules) The repeated work within the same context raised three rules on how to construct in the Val Lumnezia:

1. If it is possible, new constructions only in the core village in order to densify the centre.
2. New constructions need to be integrated to the existing stock therefore it needs to be paid special attention to Limits (soft or hard, how to express), ensemble of buildings, placement of the building within a parcel and junctions.
3. If it needs to be constructed outside of the core village the new volume needs to be visually integrated as good as possible. Therefore, new larger constructions should be placed at the lower end of the village in order to make them less visible from a higher point.⁸⁰

(Position) In the School in Duvin the Urban strategy is implemented in the following way. The building is oriented North-South at the entry of the village with a splendid view into the valley. The interstice with the post office and the municipality administration building is very small. The church with the cemetery is as well located in close proximity. When entering the village, the clocktower is the first element that is noticed and therefore it functions as a landmark. The three public buildings form together an ensemble.⁸¹

(Limits) The School is set back from the street in order to create a public area with a fountain in front. At one moment it can just be transition space and the next a playground for the children. The goal was to integrate the building into the village in a way that still allows to freely move around. In Duvin minimal distances between buildings are not defined by law. Urban densification is a normal, but unplanned development.⁸²

78 Caminada and Aicher, p. 71.

79 Schlorhauser and others, p. 18/109.

80 Schlorhauser and others, p. 118.

81 Schlorhauser and others, pp. 77–78.

82 Schlorhauser and others, p. 79.

Socio-Economic Approach

(Differenzen schaffen) “Creating holistic locations must also be the aim of architecture even in such circumstances”⁸³ is the opinion of Caminada. There is not a precise recipe for it but the leitmotiv of such a stance is “Differenzen schaffen” (differences) with the goal of added value for living. *Differenzen schaffen* means to create integral places through a quantum of the nearly the same. Unlike the exact same, which would be monotonous, nearly the same creates strong places with an intense identity and a feeling of belonging.⁸⁴ The architect learnt this lesson from the existing anonymous buildings⁸⁵ which were repeatedly constructed in a similar way, thereby they were improved, adapted and brought to perfection. However, a new building was never the reconstruction of an existing one.⁸⁶ By changing the common a little bit it becomes uncommon and vital, it is not the big gesture but “*une recherche patiente*”.⁸⁷ This implies to first acquire a deep understanding of the locally present constructions, decomposing them and analysing the relationships of the different elements. The small introduced shift to adapt the vernacular architecture to the contemporary needs is often inspired by foreign solutions. The result is a symbiose of global and local. Progress is something in between innovation and traditions. He is against ideologies such as just building with timber. Authentic architecture is based on the climate, topography and history of a certain place.⁸⁸ In this context Typos and Topos are important.⁸⁹ Each place has its specific topography and a certain type of houses that got developed over centuries. He does not believe in contrast. His goal is to plan buildings for the long term which can be inhabited by several generations.

(Local) The *recherche patiente* has positive effects on the economy especially in peripheric regions like the Val Lumnezia. In the sense of Immanuel Kant “*A good Idea is something that brings an advantage to the majority*”⁹⁰ Caminada’s buildings, which are mostly built with the log construction technic, use local materials, namely timber and stone, and are produced by regional craftsmen. Beside that regional resources are ecologically worthwhile they add local value since their workmanship creates jobs in the rural area and as a consequence the money stays in the region. In addition, the knowledge that got developed over generations stays alive and with it a part of the local identity.⁹¹ The just described way of construction creates relationships between local material, constructions, the landscape⁹² and people. The repeated collaboration with the same craftsmen builds a relationship of mutual trust which allows to collectively develop further the construction technics and the typologies. Therefore, architecture reflects the local way of living and regional economy.⁹³

83 Schlorhauser and others, p. 282.

84 Schlorhauser and others, p. 282.

85 Caminada and Aicher, p. 60.

86 Schlorhauser and others, p. 120; Caminada and Aicher, p. 77/104.

87 Schlorhauser and others, p. 53.

88 Schlorhauser and others, p. 135/143/180.

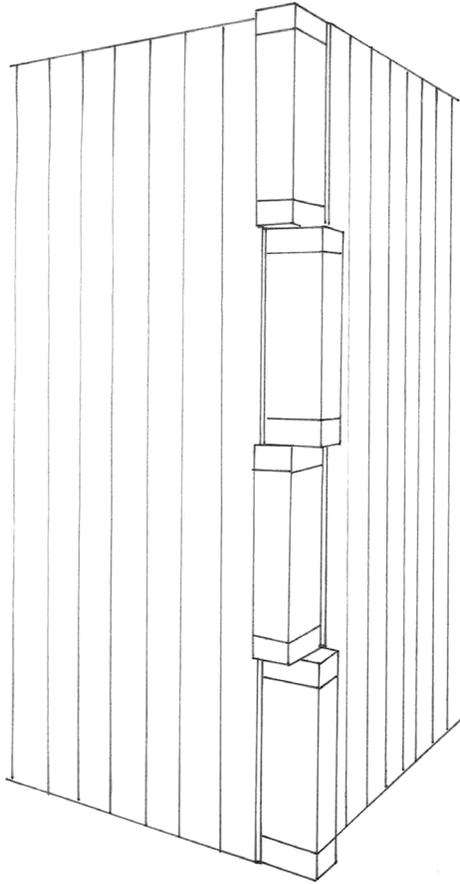
89 Caminada and Aicher, p. 94/132.

90 Fischer, p. 257 translated by Rahel Dürmüller.

91 Schlorhauser and others, p. 81/238.

92 Schlorhauser and others, p. 115.

93 Schlorhauser and others, p. 14.



bottom frame construction

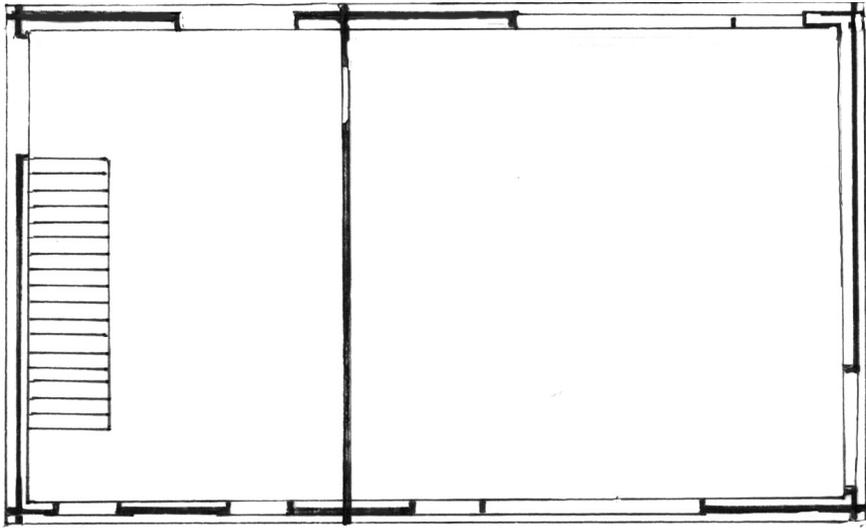
(Duvin) The School in Duvin reflects it as it has the traditional subdivision of basement and upper floors. The traditional stone plinth got replaced by concrete. The upper floors are still a timber construction but not in traditional log construction anymore. The new dimensions of up to 9m demanded a new constructive solution.⁹⁴ Instead of tree trunks Caminada used bottom frame panels that are knitted together. Bottom frame panels come from the United States. With the new construction system, the distinctive corner connections still exist and are still recognizable. The interior spaces are still readable from the outside. Furthermore, it has the advantages to be easily built, to have a good price value ratio, it can be prefabricated, and it is completely loadbearing.⁹⁵ It is possible to integrate large horizontal windows into the panels which give the building a contemporary expression. The ceilings are a combination of timber and concrete due to static, acoustic and fire protection reasons. The lower part of the slab, which is under tension, is a knitted timber construction. On top of the slab a 14 cm layer of concrete was poured. Four holes were drilled into each timber element so that the two materials can work better together.⁹⁶

Atmospheric Approach

(Story) *“How can I make a house that tells a story?”*⁹⁷ asks himself Caminada. He is convinced that the quality of life is the collection of stories.⁹⁸ They can be told either through connection to local rituals, symbols or through a familiar atmosphere. For David Adjaye narrations are important as well. For each building he creates a scenario that connects with the people’s immediate experiences so that they are more likely to engage with the edifice. An experience can be the atmosphere of a place, the character of the landscape, or the nature of the urban conditions.⁹⁹

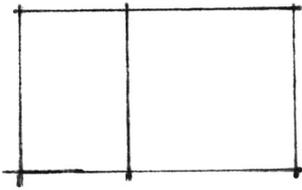
(Atmosphere) Caminada wants tells stories through known atmospheres or character. He defines at the beginning of each project the atmosphere of the spaces. This can be adjectives such as open, introverted, closed or calm¹⁰⁰ as well as feelings such as mourning (Stiva da Morts) or the feeling of security (Disentis). In the ensuing planning process, all the decisions need to align with first defined ambiance.¹⁰¹ Metaphors and symbols can guide a way and help to translate the atmosphere, but it is important to transcript them rapidly into space and not to get caught by an image.¹⁰² The spaces should stimulate all senses¹⁰³ and not just stay a

94 Schlorhauser and others, p. 78.
 95 Schlorhauser and others, p. 122-123.
 96 Schlorhauser and others, p. 77-81.
 97 Schlorhauser and others, p. 177.
 98 Caminada and Aicher, p. 135.
 99 Adjaye and Allison, p. 190.
 100 Schlorhauser and others, p. 176.
 101 Caminada and Aicher, p. 120.
 102 Caminada and Aicher, p. 75.
 103 Caminada and Aicher, p. 133.

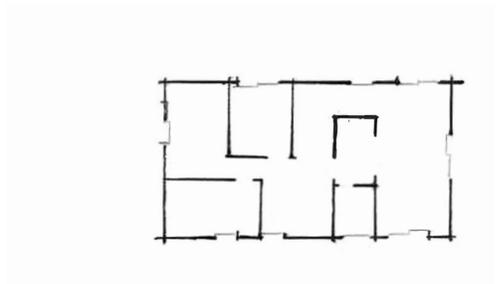


0 m 5 m

Plan School in Duvin



Plan traditional House



Plan House Schmitt, Vals

Atmospheric Approach - Plan School in Duvin

visual effect. Intensity of architecture is a quality.¹⁰⁴

(Space) Caminada works with spaces and interstices rather than with walls. Notions like strength, mass, plasticity and meander are important in this process. This way of planning goes hand in hand with the mainly used log construction and is probably strongly influenced by it. In order to further develop the traditional typology, Caminada has broken down the rigid logic of juxtaposing basic units. He places them with more freedom and plays with spaces and interstices. The goal is to adapt the traditional construction to the contemporary needs without destroying the Typos. One striking example that shows this development is the Schmit House in Vals.¹⁰⁵

(Duvin) The School in Duvin is built around the notion “*Schulstube*” (school-parlour). Back in the days, in the rural area the small classrooms, in which children were educated, were often called this way.¹⁰⁶ Eine Stube (a parlour) is linked to the feeling of belonging and security. In the Duvin School this atmosphere is generated at one hand by the use of the familiar material timber, which is used for the interior finishing of the domestic spaces and on the other hand by the use of the traditional “*two spaces typology*” in the plan which was explained in the chapter “*architectural context*”. The subdivision of service and main space stays the same.

(Conclusion) Even though Caminada says he is not a regionalist; the elaborated approaches integrate quite a lot of elements raised by Frampton. Both share the opinion to think a building as part of a certain region. Therefore, the global language needs to be adapted to the local context by introducing specific local elements. Furthermore, the importance of the atmosphere and the tactile experience is another common aspect. A building need to “*respon[d] to climate and topography, [...] to the cultural meaning of architectural form, and the possibility of engaging local labour and skills in architectural production.*”¹⁰⁷

I find it interesting that each approach is predominant on a different scale. In other words every strategy adds a layer which enriches the project. The use of local materials acts on a regional scale, the urban attitude is important for the scale of a village or mostly just for an ensemble, the atmospheric approach is treated on the size of a house or a room and finally the construction is worked in the details. All together creates the holistic approach, with which Caminada works. The following two projects will exemplify it. These two are his most popular projects.

104 Caminada and Aicher, p. 151.

105 Schlorhauser and others, p. 56/175.

106 Schlorhauser and others, pp. 78–79.

107 Canizaro, p. 374.

Repair of the agricultural Economy

(Introduction) During the first part of his career Caminada built nearly exclusively in Vrin and was very much engaged in strengthening the local identity. The previously elaborated strategies, especially the first two, are strongly influenced by the following project.

(Vrin) The oldest houses in Vrin were built in 1733. During the rest of the 18th century and the first decade of the 19th century there was a great building activity in the region. The majority of today's buildings come from this period. However, between 1850 and 1900 just three more houses were erected.¹⁰⁸ Around 1950 Vrin still had 500 inhabitants, the majority were farmers and therefore practically self-sufficient in grain, milk and meat.¹⁰⁹ Between 1950 and 1990 the population of Vrin halved. The architectural substance of the village stayed nearly unchanged during this period. *“Intact groups of houses and the old stables and narrow alleyways that interlink them seemed to have been frozen in time.”*¹¹⁰ The continuously economic expansion within the industrial centres led to a rural exodus. In combination with the declining birth rate the population of Vrin decreased to 270 inhabitants by 1990. Peter Rieder, an agrarian economist at the ETH in Zurich, says that *“places with fewer than 500 inhabitants, who make use of public and commercial services such as schools, guesthouses, businesses, dairies and similar, are unable to survive.”*¹¹¹

(Childhood) Caminada grew up in Vrin during the time as the population strongly decreased. This process weakened the local community. Consequently, the feeling of belonging decreased and with it the practice of the local traditions and customs.¹¹²

(“Pro Vrin”) Caminada returned to Vrin in the end of the 80s after having studied at the ETHZ. The young architect saw a chance in the fact that the architectural substance stayed frozen. With the goal to protect this substance the

108 Schlorhauser and others, pp. 36–37.

109 Schlorhauser and others, p. 103.

110 Schlorhauser and others, p. 103.

111 Schlorhauser and others, p. 17.

112 Schlorhauser and others, p. 16.

foundation “Pro Vrin” was founded based on the motto, “Preservation by Design” in 1979.

(Business model) As a member of the *Pro Vrin* Foundation Gion A. Caminada developed in collaboration with Peter Rieder and the local population (mainly the farmers) an economic model “for the village, which is based on recognizing the fact that cultural and social aspects of life commonly blossom when they are grounded in a healthy economy.”¹¹³ The business model indicates the required size and types of future farms in order to be profitable. Gion Caminada was leading in the implementation of guidelines for future constructions and the planning of new stables and barns which satisfy the economic needs and integrate themselves at the same time into the architecture and the landscape of the village.¹¹⁴

(Gesamtmelioration) The Migration diminished thanks to the “Gesamtmelioration”. In this process all the small parcels were united and cut into larger parcels which were again distributed among the farmers. As a result, the productivity increased, the costs decreased and therefore the farmers became more competitive. The Gesamtmelioration was based on a preceding holistic analysis of Vrin whose result was the, yet unpublished, report with the title “*Vrin: Wirtschaftsbauten und Melioration – Inventarisierung und Entwicklungsstudien*”. “It comprises an inventory of properties used for commercial purposes as well as various proposals for further development in the village.”¹¹⁵

(Expanding of local economy) The redesigning of the stables and barns increased demand of local craftsmanship. All the local businesses expanded, new jobs were created and the village economy stabilised. Local production increased the local added value. Later on, the inhabitants started building new houses as well as renovating the existing ones, always supported by the expertise of Gion Caminada.¹¹⁶ As a result, since 1990 the population has stayed stable. Today one half of the inhabitants lives from farming the other half works either in the construction industry or the service sector.¹¹⁷

(Conclusion) Gion Caminada used a holistic approach which goes far beyond the traditional architect’s business of building houses. He calls this process “repair of the agricultural economy”.¹¹⁸ For him this project was fundamental and his whole career is based on it. Personally, I really appreciate his sensitivity to identify different challenges and the globality that he exhibits while developing solutions. However, I think it’s difficult to do something similar in Uganda since the process took place over years and more importantly Caminada was part of the community.

But still there are several points that I take out of this example that can help me with my future work. The first one is that in a weak economic context a new building needs to be planned as part of the whole local network. Depending on the design and the way of construction a building can work as a catalyser. Furthermore,

113 Schlorhauser and others, pp. 103–4.

114 Schlorhauser and others, p. 104.

115 Schlorhauser and others, p. 109.

116 Schlorhauser and others, p. 105.

117 Schlorhauser and others, p. 38.

118 Schlorhauser and others, p. 109.

I think it is important to keep in mind that our profession is not building houses but rather creating spaces for living. Therefore, it is a collaboration with the future users who are specialists of their needs. Another point that I appreciate about Gion A. Caminada's approach is its human centred attitude. I find it striking that planning is for him an act of service for the community. He sees himself, but as well his building, as part of a larger group. Since the community is so important to him, he tries to strengthen it through his integral approach, after having experienced the rural exodus and the decrease of the community feeling during his childhood.

Stiva da Morts

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A Community Mortuary

(Introduction) The rural exodus changed the community structure and the solidarity between the different members. Traditions and rituals were less practised. One of them is the mourning ritual. The population of Vrin wish for a change with the contact of death and therefore the creation of a public place to take leave of a deceased person. More and more people are leaving the village at the end of their life in order to live in a nursing home.¹¹⁹ It has also become uncommon in Vrin that the younger generation takes care of the parents when they get older and or ill.¹²⁰ For the new way of practicing the ritual a new building the “*Stiva da morts - A community mortuary*” was needed.

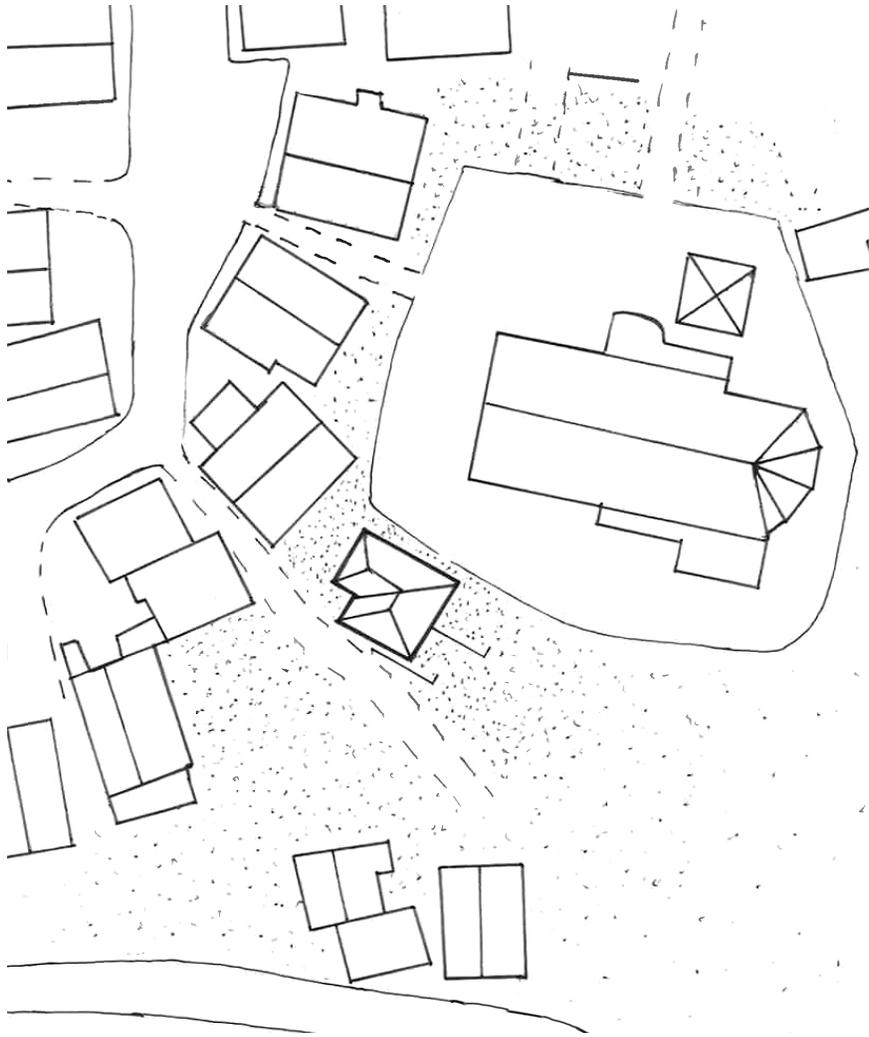
(Ritual) Each death is announced by the bells from the church tower. Traditionally in the three following days the deceased person lays out in his house in the middle of the living room under the window. The bereaved people have the possibility to take a seat on the chairs surrounding the coffin. The different spaces within a house permit each person to define individually the distance or the closeness to the deceased person they wish to have. One can decide to sit in the living room or to just have a glimpse from outside of the living room on the coffin. The kitchen plays an important role, it is the room where visitors share anecdotes and stories about the life of the deceased person. Regularly this changes the point of view on the person’s life, since end of their lives often has been defined by illnesses and suffering. During lunchtime the locals come together for praying. The bells ring as a sign of honouring the person’s life.¹²¹ On the day of the funeral, the priest first prays at the home. Afterwards, they walk to the church in a funeral procession. The distance between a bereaved and the deceased person reflects its social relations; family, friends, neighbours and at the end the community. The choir, where the funeral takes place, represents the end of the procedure. The deceased person goes from the profane life to the sacral space during the funeral procession. The funeral dinner marks the endpoint of the ritual as it is as well the transition back to the normal course of life.¹²²

119 Caminada and others, p. 14.

120 Caminada and others, p. 23.

121 Caminada and others, p. 19.

122 Caminada and others, p. 20-24.



0 m 5 m 10 m ☉

Stiva da morts

The ritual gives space to the anger, the pain due to the loss, to disavow reality. Rituals need space where they can take place. The space defines to a certain point what will happen in it. The mourning ritual needs space which keeps the community grounded and strengthens them in this difficult time. It structures the time, indicates sequences of actions. The ritual reflects social structures, religious and cultural values of the society. The ritual needs to be ingrained in the community and it needs to be repeated on a regularly bases.¹²³

(Situation) Since people leave for nursing home there is no private living room anymore where they could be layed out during the compassionate leave. In addition, the way of dealing with the death of someone within the community has changed. To take time does not correspond to the spirit of time anymore. A group around Caminada invited the whole village for discussions about the theme “*death and how they would like to interact and deal with it within the community*”.¹²⁴ They spoke about rituals and their sense and meaning.¹²⁵

The goal with the *Stiva da morts* was to create a space for the death but also for the people that are alive. There should be space to tell stories and speak about the life of a deceased community member.¹²⁶ When it is not used for the laying-out time it should be able to accommodate as well other uses.¹²⁷

(Urbanism) The *Stiva da morts* is sensitively integrated into the existing cultural landscape. It is placed just outside of the cemetery on a slope with the wall of the cemetery in the back. The parcel is on the boarder of the village in between the church and the profane houses. The chosen location represents the transition of the life before and after death.¹²⁸ It can be accessed from both directions. Even though its volume is similar to the profane houses it is not part of a traditional ensemble. The conscious decision to not follow the traditional urbanistic setting of the domestic houses in Vrin underlines its special position within the village and it introduces a new level in the hierarchy of buildings.¹²⁹ It looks toward the church and at the same time towards the valley.¹³⁰ On both sides there are grass surfaces however in the front is a gravel path connecting the centre of the village with the ensemble of the newer and larger stables.

(Construction/Material) The *Stiva da morts* has the traditional separation of plinth and the upper timber construction. Unlike the vernacular horizontal separation, the plinth follows this time more the topography since it is divided into several steps which opens the building towards the Valley. The upper timber construction is built in the log construction however Caminada doubles it in order

123 Caminada and others, p. 21.

124 *Stiva Da Morts: Gion A. Caminada: Vom Nutzen Der Architektur*, ed. by Gion A. Caminada and others (Zürich: Gta, 2003), p. 14.

125 Caminada and others, p. 14.

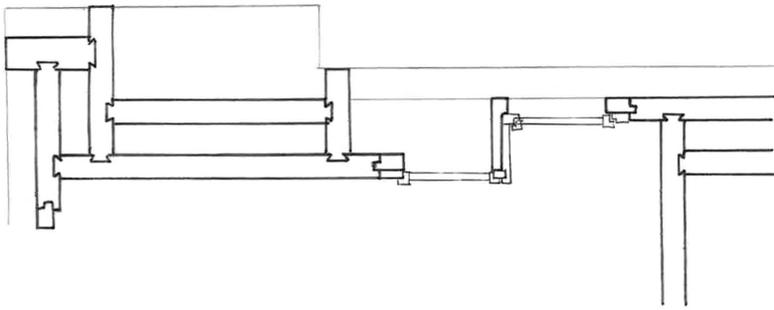
126 Caminada and others, p. 15.

127 Schlorhauser and others, p. 43.

128 Schlorhauser and others, p. 40.

129 Caminada and others, p. 57.

130 Caminada and others, pp. 30–32.



0 50 cm 100 cm

Stivo da morts - Construction

to achieve a higher plasticity, especially in the corners.¹³¹ This uses more timber but since it is locally resourced and processed it has an added value for the whole region. The facade is painted with casein, a mixture of chalk and curd, which gives the building a whitely colour, but the timber structure is still recognizable. It looks faded, sometimes white, sometimes grey or slightly yellow, depending on the light. This gesture, inspired by the Pietà, connects the Stiva da morts to the church. As a result, the refinement of the material connects it to the church however the choice of the material links it to the profane buildings.¹³² The roof is another element which expresses the connection between the Stiva da morts and the church as it retakes the cornice. The traditional symmetry of the corners corbels was given up in favour of a radial solution.¹³³ In the inside most surfaces, the walls, the ceilings and most of the floors, are treated with shellac. The floor of the main space is in sealed massive timber. The shellac is a refinement of the material similar to a violin.¹³⁴ The surfaces became reflective and interact therefore with the light.¹³⁵ The windows are split into two part; one which is fixed and another sash that can be opened. The fixed part is flush with the exterior façade the second one with the inside. A window on two levels is a very special way of construction that creates a big depth. The openings were conceived to prevent people from looking in and generate therefore intimacy.¹³⁶

This example illustrates well what Caminada understands by *Differenzen schaffen* (difference). Take onsite present elements and recompose and adapt them to the program, to the context and to the needs and enrich them by external elements such as the paintings.

(Atmosphere) The story that Caminada wants to tell in the Stiva da morts is strongly interlinked to the ritual. The notion he chose is “*Trauer*” (mourning). Since the ritual was initially practised within the domestic spaces the typology retakes the mainly used rooms during the ritual, the living room and the kitchen. On the upper floor there is the kitchen, the entrance from the cemetery and the bathroom. On the ground floor there is the viewing area and the connection to the village.¹³⁷ Light falling through the window next to the upper entrance helps to install a connection between the two levels. Despite the virtuosity of the construction it is not the main subject anymore it is rather the result of the aimed atmosphere. This defined the different heights of the spaces, the choice to double the log construction and to suspend the ceiling on a double beam.¹³⁸

(Conclusion S.d.M.) The *Stiva da morts* is a reaction to the changed community structure. It is programmatically and visually well integrated into its context even though it incorporates a lot of new elements in all aspects. Unlike

131 Caminada and others, pp. 30–32.

132 Caminada and others, p. 56.

133 Caminada and others, pp. 30–32.

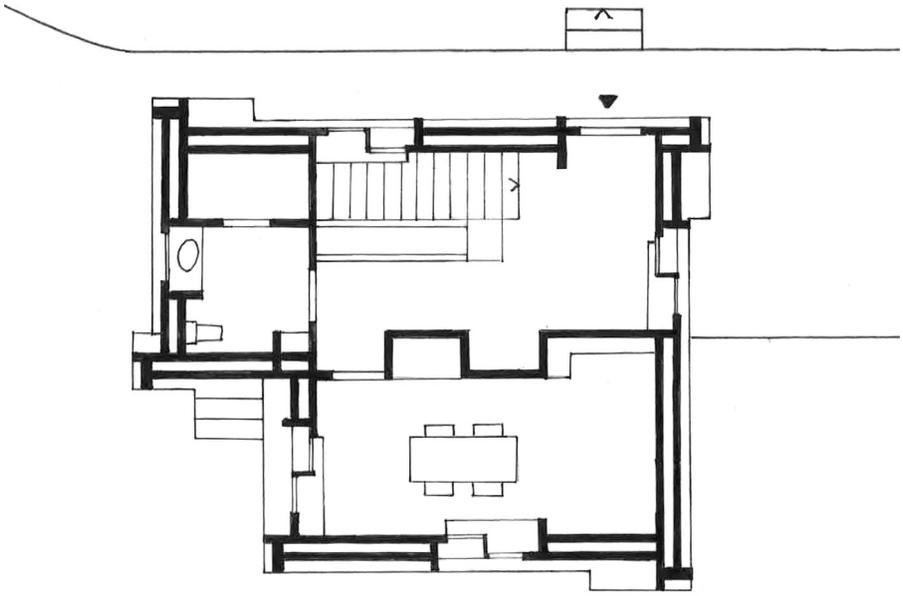
134 Schlorhauffer and others, pp. 41–42.

135 Caminada and others, pp. 38–39.

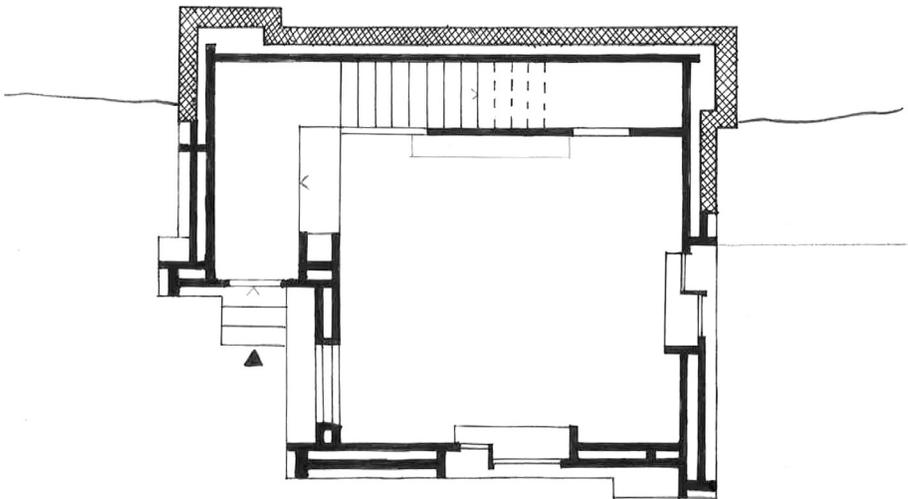
136 Schlorhauffer and others, p. 42.

137 Schlorhauffer and others, p. 42.

138 Caminada and others, p. 36.



first floor



ground floor

0 1 m 2 m 3 m

Stiva da morts - Plan

most of Caminadas buildings it does not follow the traditional urbanistic forms of ensembles. The local timber was still used for its construction however the details are not the vernacular anymore, neither are its visual expression due to the surface treatment.

(Conclusion) Caminada's work combines a deep understanding of the local context with all its actors with global influences in order to introduce progress. The result is a soft hybridisation. The construction and the typologies have been enriched with new elements, however the atmospheres and the urban relations are in most cases rather traditional. The two previously discussed projects were community-based and they both have the aim to strengthen the local community which got weakened during the rural exodus and through today's individual lifestyle. The first one is more on a regional level and responds to economic changes the second one more to cultural and traditional transformation. However, the solutions are not at all backwards oriented but try to find the best solution for the contemporary context.

Grisons



Val Lumnezia





Val Lumnezia







tradional Hause



traditional Stable





Stiva da morts





Stiva da morts - interior





School in Davos

Uganda





Kampala





Atuturi





suggested Parcel



Dance meeting square



Dance and traditional life





production of Adobe bricks





Constraction: Wall





Constraction: Roof



Adobe House



Wattle and Daub House



Brickhouse in Atuturi



Traditional House in Atuturi





Homestead in Atuturi

CONTEXT IN
EASTERN UGANDA

CONTEXT IN EASTERN UGANDA

(Introduction) After having elaborated Caminda's attitude within the context of Grisons in this chapter, I will investigate the context of Eastern Uganda. Before examining the Social and Architectural context of the Itesos I want to analyse the local climate in Eastern Uganda. As we have seen in the last chapter the climate influences the architecture as well as the people's lifestyle. Strong relationship between society, culture and the environment are also common throughout Africa.¹³⁹

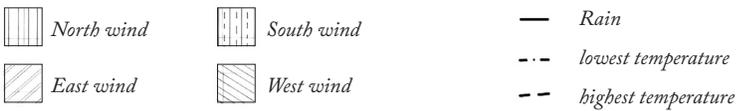
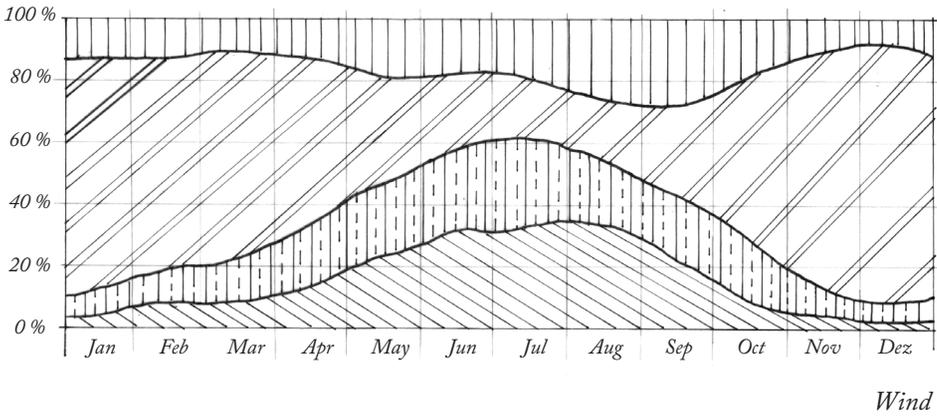
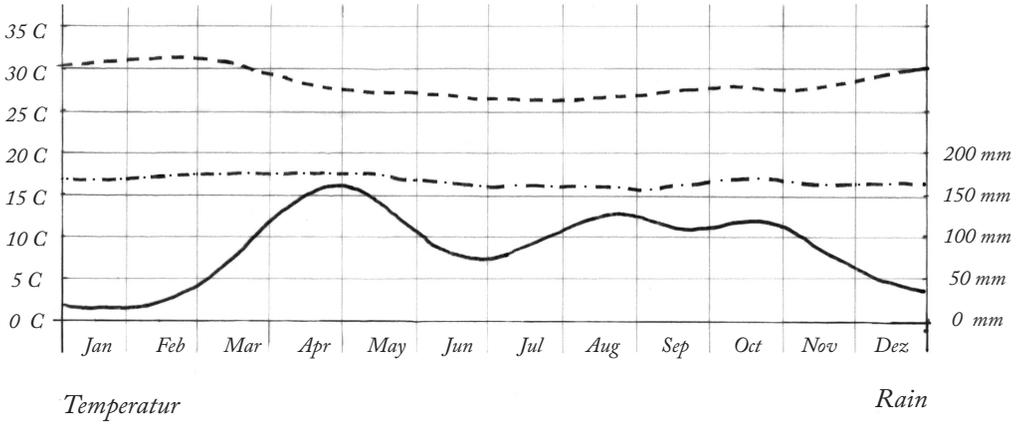
(Climate) Eastern Uganda has a tropical savanna climate, which is very pleasant. The equator crosses the country therefore the climate is relatively constant. The temperatures are normally between 16 and 32 degrees and the monthly average temperature changes just by 2.4 degrees throughout the year. There are two rainy seasons and two dry seasons, in both cases a longer and shorter one. The large rain season is normally from April to May and the smaller one from August to September, but nevertheless it rains occasionally throughout the whole year. During the wet season it often just rains for a shorter time period but intensively. It does not necessarily rain every day. The hottest and driest period of the year is from December to March. Whereas the coldest temperatures are measured between June and September. During the long rain season, from April to May, it can get muggy due to the humidity produced by the rain in combination with the high temperatures.¹⁴⁰

(Sun) The sun shines more or less constantly for 12 hours and is in a vertical position at midday since the equator is nearby. As a result, the East and West exposed facades getting the majority of ray of sunlight, mainly during the sunrise and sunset, while the North and South facades can be easily protected from the vertical sun by porch roofs.

(Wind) The east wind predominates from October to May. However, between June and the September, the wind turns and comes mainly from the west. During the transition period the northern and southern winds are blowing the

139 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 2.

140 'Average Weather in Mbale, Uganda, Year Round - Weather Spark' <<https://weatherspark.com/y/98126/Average-Weather-in-Mbale-Uganda-Year-Round>> [accessed 20 October 2019].



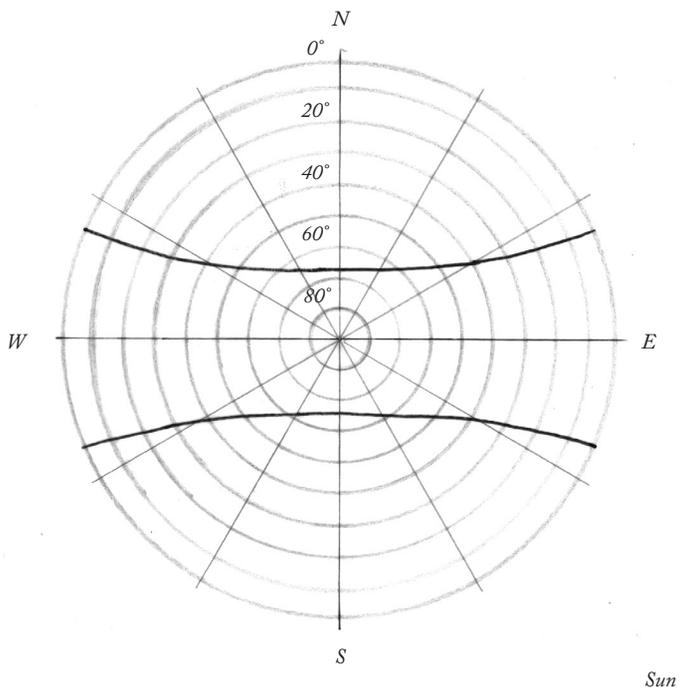
strongest. But nevertheless, the main wind direction is east-west. In consequence, in order to have an effective natural cross ventilation, the building should have openings in the Eastern and west facade.¹⁴¹

(Conclusion) To conclude according to the sun a long and thin building that is east-west oriented with porches along the northern and southern façade would be the most advantageous. Unfortunately, it does not correlate with the ideal orientation for the winds which would be north-south. Thanks to the pleasant temperature during the whole year the buildings do not need to be isolated. Their main propose is to provide protection against the rain and sun and increase safety, especially during night time.

(Topography) The topography in Atuturi is flat. It used to be covered by rainforest. However, the majority has been deforested as a result of increasing agricultural and construction activities. One of the consequences is that the rain digs deep gorges into the farmland.¹⁴² I experienced it still as a fairly green and fertile area, especially during the rainy season. The strong colours are very present; the green of the plants, the blue of the sky, the red ochre of the earth. Together with the sunlight, especially during sunrise and sunset, they create very beautiful atmospheres.

141 'Average Weather in Mbale, Uganda, Year Round - Weather Spark'.

142 'Exploring Vernacular East African Architecture: Lessons for the Modern World', p. 58 <https://greenscale.crc.nd.edu/buccellato/docs/research_gs/11_gs_association_of_collegiate_schools_of_architecture_2013.pdf> [accessed 25 December 2019].



Social Context

(Iteso) Fazil's village, Atuturi, is located in the district of Kumi, where the Iteso tribe lives. This ethnic group, who speaks a Nilotic language, lives in eastern Uganda and western Kenya. Originally, they came from Abyssinia (Ethiopia). Through Kamojand¹⁴³ they moved south over a period of centuries. There were various factors which motivated the movement such as "*conflicts, the search for water, fertile land and pasture for themselves and their animals.*"¹⁴⁴ The exact time of this movement is unknown. However, there were two waves of migration towards the south: The first one was family based and peaceful. The second was a more extensive and aggressive migration after which the Iteso controlled a territory which extended to the western highlands of Kenya around 1850.¹⁴⁵

(Relation to other tribes) In the precolonial time the relations with other societies were alternately peaceful and acrimonious. As a result of spatial intermixture and intermarriage, elements of the Iteso customs can be found among neighbouring peoples and vice versa. The ethnic identity probably got hardened during the colonial period while resources such as land were newly defined as "*belonging to tribes*".¹⁴⁶

(Life and political units) The members of the tribe live in territorial units of increasing scale: household – neighbourhood – clans.¹⁴⁷ The tribes were composed by six main clans, the *Ikaribwok*, *Irirak*, *Ikatekok*, *Ikomolo*, *Igoria* and *Inomu*, which were the basic political and social unit. "*A clan is group of families coming from one man or place as their common ancestor or origin and are governed by particular cultural norms and taboos. A clan shows people who are relatives.*"¹⁴⁸ Each clan had its leader, called *Apolon ka Ateker* (during colonial time he was called *Omusalatuo*), which was

143 Nzita, Mbaga-Niwampa, and Mukholi, p. 140.

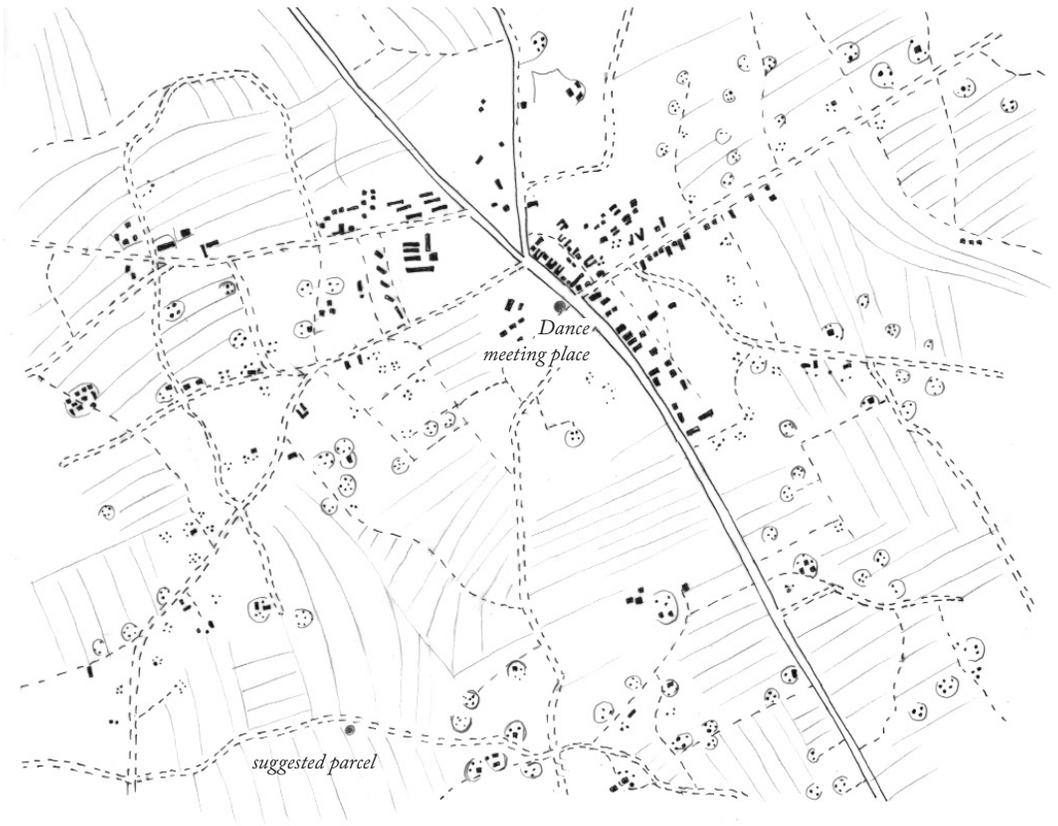
144 'Iteso-Clans-Directory-Atekerin-Nuka-Iteso.Pdf', p. 9 <<http://land-in-uganda.org/lemu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Iteso-Clans-Directory-Atekerin-Nuka-Iteso.pdf>> [accessed 25 December 2019].

145 Joshua Okurutu, *The Teso*.

146 Okurutu.

147 Okurutu.

148 'Iteso-Clans-Directory-Atekerin-Nuka-Iteso.Pdf'.



0 m 200 m 400 m 

Plan Atuturi Region

a person of courage impartiality and wisdom that was widely respected. He was elected by the elders. Today it is more a system of “Kingship”¹⁴⁹ that does not have political power anymore.

(Marriage) For the Itesos marriages are on one hand an alliance between two people and on the other hand between two clans. The first partnership is a practical arrangement to set up a household whereas the second is more spiritual expressed in rituals and healing practices.¹⁵⁰ There are two ways to get married: Either the parents arrange the marriage, sometimes even without their children’s knowledge, or the boy asks the girl directly. If she accepts, she informs her mother and spends from then on most of her time with her future husband. As soon as this behaviour is noticed by the girl’s clan, they express their complaints. After the boy’s clan has introduced themselves the negotiations can start. The girl approves a marriage by accepting the proposed present of her future husband. If she refuses it the whole arrangement ends.¹⁵¹ More than one-third of all men and a majority of all women are married polygamous. Since the mid-twentieth century the bride-wealth is a widespread practised custom, but the time span to hand over the ten to fifteen cattle has changed.¹⁵² Since a child belongs to the whole clan the girl’s family can chose cows from every member of the boy’s clan. Initially the day of handing over the cows was the beginning of the marriage. A marriage is a huge celebration that includes a lot of eating, dancing and singing.¹⁵³ The woman becomes afterwards a member of her husband’s family. The man has the duty to build a house so that they can start their common life.¹⁵⁴ Official divorces are very rare, however it is possible that a couple lives separately.¹⁵⁵

(Agriculture and food) The Iteso have never been transhumant or nomadic, they have mainly been cattle keepers.¹⁵⁶ Since they are still self-supporter, agriculture plays a significant role in their social and economic life. *Eleusine* (finger millet) and sorghum are major food crops. Cassava was introduced in the 1920s by colonial officials. Women cultivate gardens next to their house where they plant vegetables like pumpkin or peas. Furthermore, they gather various wild foods, especially mushrooms and flying ants a delicacy.¹⁵⁷ In addition they eat beans, ground nuts, berries, milk, butter, meat of their animals.¹⁵⁸ The men’s duty is to herd cattle. Until the late 1960s early 1970s grazing of animals was regarded as a commonly right however since then there have been conflicts over the right to graze. As a consequence, some people have fenced their fields.¹⁵⁹

149 Nzita, Mbagá-Niwampa, and Mukholi, pp. 140–41.

150 Okurutu.

151 Nzita, Mbagá-Niwampa, and Mukholi, pp. 142–43.

152 Okurutu.

153 Nzita, Mbagá-Niwampa, and Mukholi, p. 143.

154 Nzita, Mbagá-Niwampa, and Mukholi, p. 143.

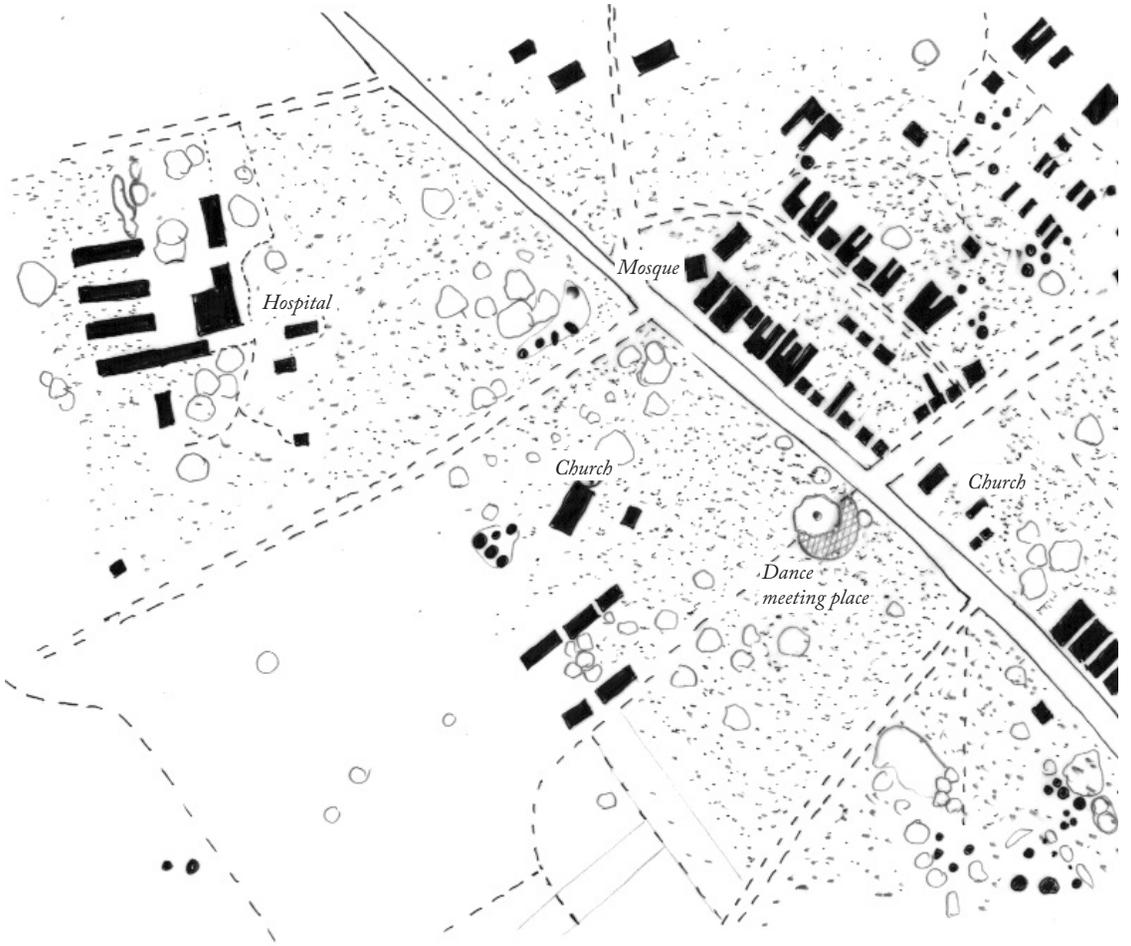
155 Okurutu.

156 Nzita, Mbagá-Niwampa, and Mukholi, p. 144.

157 Okurutu.

158 Nzita, Mbagá-Niwampa, and Mukholi, p. 144.

159 Okurutu.



0 m 50 m 100 m ☉

Atuturi Centre

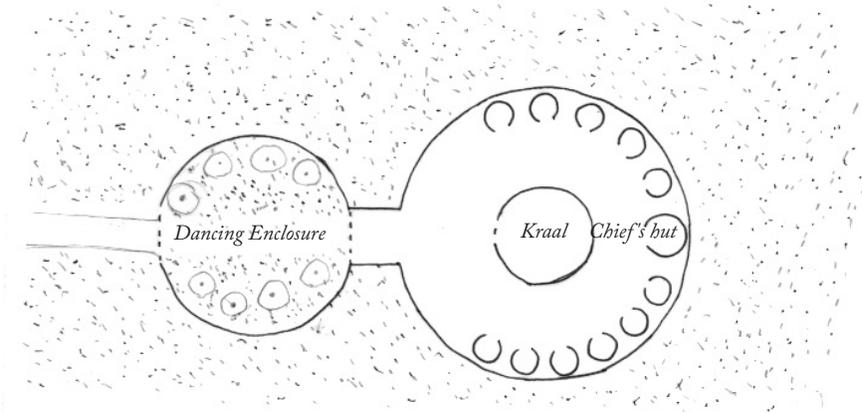
(Incomes) In order to generate an income during the short rainy seasons, men and women separately cultivated cash crops, primarily cotton. The labour demands for cash crops does not conflict with the subsistence farming. Newly introduced cash crops such as maize and tobacco are grown during the long rains and have caused considerable concern about how people will manage the conflicting demands of cash and subsistence farming. The primary commercial activities of the Iteso are trading in cattle and owning small shops.¹⁶⁰

(Dancing and Music) The last aspect I want to discuss is dancing and music even though it was already partially discussed in the Prologue. There are three ways how dancing and music are integrated into the society of the Iteso. Firstly, they accompany every major event like marriage, birth of twins or funerals. As already mentioned in the paragraph about marriage, these events are often paired with a lot of eating and drinking. Secondly, there is a social event that includes dancing in which boys can potentially sport their future wife. Consequently, dancing is part of every major social ritual and event. The third way how dancing is integrated into the society is more spiritual since it is about bringing people into trance so that they can get in contact with their ancestors.¹⁶¹

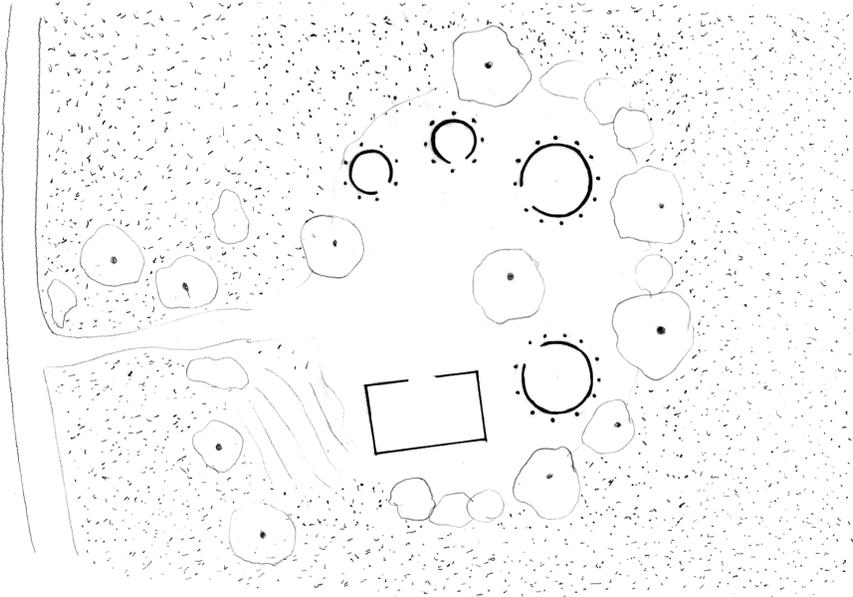
In the early evenings before sunset (around 4 pm to 6:30 pm) the community of Atuturi traditionally came together in the centre of the village under a huge tree in order to exchange and to practice the dances in a playful way. The dances are accompanied by one to two drums and chanting. The songs are normally short and heavily repented. Their texts have a teaching function within the society.

160 Okurutu.

161 Nzita, Mbaga-Niwampa, and Mukholi, p. 144.



traditional Homestead



contemporary Homestead

0 m 5 m 10 m

Homestead

Architectural Context

*“The quintessential Ugandan traditional building is a round grass-thatched mud hut in a homestead. Having evolved over centuries, it has responded to existing materials, technologies, skills and cultural practices and attitudes.”*¹⁶²

Urbanism

(Former homestead) Unlike in the Val Lumnezia where the villages are very dense, in Eastern Uganda the homestead are widely spread all over the territory. One cluster was normally the home of one extended family and was composed by two circles. The first one, the dancing enclosure, was equipped with trees that provide shade for a pleasant resting climate.¹⁶³ The fact that one of the two circles was dedicated to dancing underlines its importance’s within the culture. The people normally danced within the cluster when a special person arrived.¹⁶⁴ In addition, in the evening the cattle gather there while they get milked before passing the night in the Kraal, the middle of the second enclosure. The houses were placed along the stockade or euphorbia hedge which surrounds the whole homestead. The fence just had one small defendable opening, large enough for one cow to pass. The chief’s house was placed on the opposite side facing the main entrance of the homestead. All entrances point towards the centre. The number of houses depended on the number of wives.¹⁶⁵

(contemporary homestead) The contemporary homestead is still composed by several independent huts. One house normally has one main function. Some are commonly used, such as the “kitchen” or the “bathroom”, others are for private purposes like sleeping. There are three different kinds of sleeping huts in which up to five people sleep; a larger one for the parents (that includes an inside living room), and smaller ones that separate boys and girls. It is common to sleep on

162 Tom Sanya, ‘Ugandan Architects Struggle with the Dilemma of What’s Appropriate’, *The Conversation* <<http://theconversation.com/ugandan-architects-struggle-with-the-dilemma-of-whats-appropriate-61034>> [accessed 25 December 2019].

163 J. C. D. Lawrance, *The Iteso Fifty Years of Change in a Nilo-Hamitic Tribe of Uganda*. (Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 108–9.

164 Onyu.

165 Lawrance, pp. 108–9.

the floor with or without mattresses.¹⁶⁶ Unlike the traditional homestead where the huts are placed in a strike circle, they are now more freely placed but still in a cluster.¹⁶⁷ The space in the centre has become something similar to our living room where the families gather, do most of their daily housework and where the children play.¹⁶⁸

(Limits) In the contemporary homestead the euphorbia hedge is replaced by other plants either fruit trees like mango trees or flower plants such as cassia. Nevertheless, nature plays an important role since it separates the family area from the public space comparable to the facades of our houses. It provides privacy and security to the inhabitants and at the same time it increases the comfort level thanks to the produced shadow and the fact that it lets the winds pass through.

Construction and Material

(Life span) Unlike Switzerland where buildings are built to last for a long-time span, in Uganda houses were traditionally abandoned at the latest after one generation. “*The erection of enduring monuments was unknown in most African cultures.*”¹⁶⁹ Another major difference between the two countries is that in Switzerland the price of a house mainly depends on the labour costs while in Uganda the choice of material is the decisive price factor. This is due to the fact that in Uganda besides that the salaries are a lot lower, the majority of the people construct their own houses, especially in the rural area. Local construction materials are clay, timber and grass. In the rural areas there are mainly three construction technics present.

(Wattle and Daub) The most common widely spread construction technic used to be Wattle and Daub. The majority of the population lives in such houses. It is a timber frame structure with an earth in-fill. The walls and the floors are plastered by a mixture of cow dung and clay in order to fix the dust. The roof is a timber structure covered by a thick layer of grass. The life span of this construction type is around 25 years, due to the degradation of the timber structure.¹⁷⁰ The big advantage of this construction it that people can do it easily by themselves. The technical knowledge has been passed from one generation to the next.

(Challenges of W&D) However it has some disadvantages too: Firstly, its high consumption of wood contributes to deforestation. Secondly, due to the absence of bracing in the construction it lacks structural stability.¹⁷¹ And thirdly, it has a rather limited life span due to timber rotting caused by the direct contact with the ground and degradation by termites. Regular reconstructions of structural elements are inevitable. Wattle and Daub houses are maintenance intensive. Mud-plaster needs to be reapplied at least three times a year in order to prevent structural failure and to keep the houses clean. As a result, Wattle and Daub houses are time

166 Onyu.

167 Lawrance, p. 108.

168 Olweny and Wadulo, p. 179.

169 Antoni Folkers, *Modern Architecture in Africa* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boom / SUN, 2010), p. 24.

170 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 7.

171 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 8.

consuming which prevents the local communities to invest this time into other activities like trade and education.¹⁷²

(Adobe) The second material is Adobe which has become increasingly present in rural areas. Adobe are clay bricks produced mainly by the women and dried under the sun.¹⁷³ The raw sticky earth is gathered from ant hills, mixed with water and sometimes with sand or organic material. It gets shaped by a timber mould to form prismatic bricks. However, since it is not an industrialized construction material there are no standard sizes. In order to cure the bricks well, they need to be humidified regularly and rest covered for several days. This construction method allows to construct only during the dry season, since the bricks are dried in the open-air areas by the sun. However, water is less available during this period and needs to be carried to the construction site. During the curing period the inhabitants have time to buy grass (for example *Asisinit*) and timber (either *Eucalyptus* or *Elera*) for the roof construction.¹⁷⁴

(Rarity of materials) It is common to have *Elera* trees in one's own garden. Back in the days everyone had enough grass growing on their own land. Today, however, grass can be an income generator for local people. It is normally planted in the interstices of two gardens or fields and can be harvested twice a year. In the recent years the traditional building materials have become increasingly rare and therefore more expensive. This is mainly due to two reasons: Firstly, the rising temperatures and the more and more irregular rainy seasons caused by climate change have an impact on the grass, used for the roof, and the trees, used for the structure. They do not grow as fast as they used to anymore. Secondly, the growing population forces the farmers to cultivate more land in order to produce a sufficient amount of food. As a consequence, there is less fallowed land where the grass and the trees can grow.¹⁷⁵

(Construction) When the bricks are dried for about three days, they can either get burnt or the construction can start. The houses are normally round, which is not the most ideal form climatically but the easiest for the roof construction.¹⁷⁶ The diameter of a house is around 3m for the children hut and normally in between 4.5-5.5m for the parent's home.¹⁷⁷ The first brick layer is placed in a depression in the ground. At 15cm above the ground a barrier is added which prevents termites and water to rise further up. The walls normally reach a height of about 1.8 – 2m. The floor is out of compacted earth therefore the ground area first needs to be excavated in order to be then filled up with compressed earth. The walls and the floor are traditionally finished by a smearing of a mixture of cow dung and clay. In recent times cement plaster is sometimes used instead which is a lot more expensive but lasts longer.¹⁷⁸ This process of smearing is repeated daily mostly by

172 'Exploring Vernacular East African Architecture: Lessons for the Modern World', pp. 58-59.

173 Onyu.

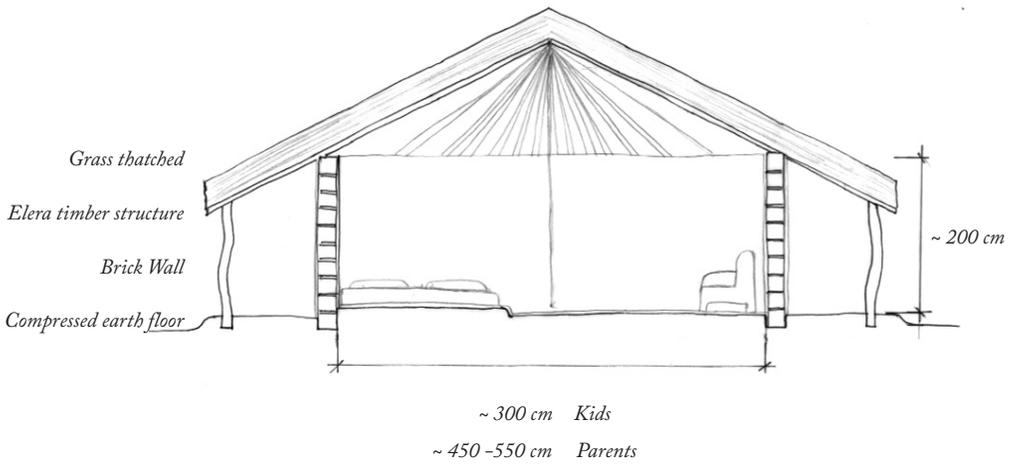
174 Peter Akol Soyce, Local craftsmen from Atuturi, 2019.

175 Onyu.

176 Francis Odallo, Local craftsmen from Atuturi.

177 Akol Soyce.

178 Odallo.



0 m 1 m 2 m

Section traditional House

the women in order to diminish the amount of dust. The openings in the wall, the small windows and the door, have a finishing of timber frames to protect the earth construction. Doors are mostly made out of wood.

(Roof) In order to construct the roof timber posts are placed in a regular interval around the wall at a constant distance. For stabilisation reasons another post is placed in the middle of the house which is removed again later. The timber beams are placed in a radial manner from the middle post over the wall to the outside post. The timber beams are fixed with each other in the centre and with a spiral fixation of grass. If it is a small hut the different timber beams are fixated with each other on the side. The whole roof structure is afterwards placed as one element on the wall. In both cases the timber structure is traditional covered by a thick layer of grass. However, for rectangular shaped houses iron sheets become more and more common even though they are still more expensive, and the living comfort decreases compared to the traditional roofs. This is due to two factors: Firstly, when the rain falls on an iron sheet, it is very loud and second, it become a lot hotter inside the hut. Good natural ventilation is therefore compulsory. In addition, they corrugate especially since they are in contact with water (rain). Hence leaking rooves are common. Also, unlike the traditional roof, the iron sheets are not compostable.

(Advantages Adobe) When constructing with Adobe it is important to very design the technical details and finishings well. The Adobe constructions have the advantages to be cost effective and environmentally friendly since they do not need firewood for its production. The construction is labour intensive. Since it involves a significant amount of people it can be a way of poverty reduction and can lead to improved living standards.¹⁷⁹ The inhabitants have the possibility to adapt their houses to their needs since all the materials and knowledge are locally available. Therefore, the communities do not get dependent on faraway manufactured suppliers which strengthens again the local community.¹⁸⁰

(Material for the poor) Earth constructions are probably the oldest construction material. However, it never really became institutionalised which could have led to improvements and innovations. It is a construction material of the informal economy and has therefore been neglected in favour of more industrialized building technologies.¹⁸¹ Today traditional materials and construction methods have the reputation to be the *“material for the poor, a retreat to a “stone age way of living, [and are not seen as a material and method] both effective in their environment and reflective, of their physical and cultural surroundings.”*¹⁸² The main challenge is therefore that the involved artisans and owners are proud of their achievements.¹⁸³

(My experience) In my experience earth architecture is under certain conditions socially accepted. The brick houses that I helped to plan during my internship in Rwanda were not seen as architecture for the poor by the local community since they had two or more stories. Usually just the upper class can

179 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 14.

180 Sanya.

181 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 10.

182 'Exploring Vernacular East African Architecture: Lessons for the Modern World', p. 57.

183 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 9.

afford buildings of two stories since they are often built in concrete. Cement is one of the most expensive materials and is not very eco-friendly. Behind the industrial construction materials there are huge lobbies that try to sell a dream. A feeling to have reached a certain social status by using a certain material. However, people start to recognise that the traditional architecture produces a higher living comfort since they are better adapted to the local climate. For instance, it is a lot more comfortable to live under a grass thatch roof than an iron sheet. Consequently, I think that traditional materials are accepted if the construction and the shape have a contemporary expression.

(Modern variations) The Adobe brick can be replaced by more modern variations of earth construction materials like fired bricks or compressed earth blocks in order to increase quality and consequently the life span of a construction. The just mentioned materials are less present in the rural areas since they are more expensive.

(Fired bricks) Fired bricks are the most popular material for public infrastructures such as schools. However, for the majority of the private households it is unaffordable to build their house with fired bricks. Unlike Adobe, that are normally produce by the future inhabitants themselves, fired bricks need a brick stove for their production. The energy intensive production contributes as a major factor to deforestation in Uganda.¹⁸⁴ The traditional brick stove works exclusively during the dry season due to the zenithally opening through which the smoke escapes. Informal brick stoves need a lot more firewood than formal ones. In addition, the quality of the bricks, and consequently of the construction, varies strongly.

(CEB) Compressed earth blocks (CEB) can be seen as an alternative to fired bricks. A CEB wall with the same quality is 20% cheaper than a fired brick one.¹⁸⁵ CEB are produced out of a mixture of earth, sand and water which is afterwards compressed mechanically into shape unlike the Adobe bricks which are put into the moulds and compressed by hand. However, CEB are not burnt and have therefore a less energy intensive production than fired bricks.

(Deforestation) As already mentioned within several paragraphs, deforestation is a major problem in Uganda. Wood is a widely used as a construction material; firstly, for structural elements (for example the roof structure), secondly as firewood in order to burn bricks. It required a least 16 m³ (this is a volume of 2m x 2m x 4m) of wood to fire the necessary quantity of bricks to complete a single classroom.¹⁸⁶ As a result, the building activities are one of the main factors for deforestation in Uganda which has big consequences on the local environment. This problem is not only a topic in Uganda; for example, the Kenyan government has forbidden the production and use wood charcoal even though the majority of the population cooks with firewood.

(Reproduce) Construction is a normal collective community activity. Everyone in the rural area knows how to build a local house, however there are

184 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 7.

185 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 9.

186 Centre de recherche et d'application pour la construction en terre, p. 6.

local craftsmen which are more experienced. They are normally called to help and supervise a construction site. Constructing houses is often a process of copying or reproducing what already exists. Usually a client approaches a local craftsman and says that he or she would like to have a house similar to the one he is pointing at. Consequently, building houses is a constant process of repeating and rearranging the elements on-site which generates a strong uniformity of the built fabric. The result is similar to the one of Caminada's process "Differenzen schaffen". In the case of Caminada it is a conscious and savant choice, in Uganda however it is a necessity since it is often unaffordable to build differently and secondly the skills are not present on site.

(Improving skills) As already shown in the European context the continuous repetition of construction by the same material improves the local skills. In order to develop a local industry, you need to repeat and improve the on-site existing elements. However, Integrating outside influences can lead to improvements. Too many changes have the consequence that new technics need to be learnt each time instead of deepening and improving the knowledge of one material.

(Discontinuity) In Uganda it is common to start to build and to stop in the middle of the construction process as soon as the house owner runs out of money. As a consequence, there are unfinished sometimes nearly ruin like buildings standing in the landscape which after a certain while get slowly conquered by nature. As an architect, planning an entire building which will afterwards be built in several phases can be challenging. But since there are so little architects in Uganda the majority of the buildings planned by architects are completed in one go.

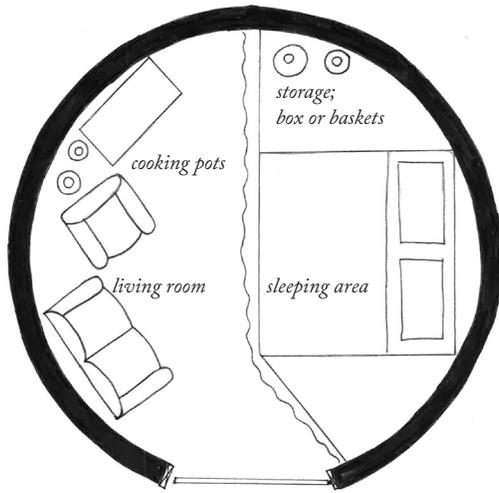
Typology

(Form) As a last point after the examination of the urbanistic forms, the materials and the construction methods I will analyse the typologies. The traditional houses are mostly round or oval but in some cases rectangular. The form is mainly defined by the construction of the roof, as described previously and is not a reaction to the climate nor has it any symbolic meaning.¹⁸⁷ A house usually has one single inside space which is mainly used for sleeping but can be as well host other activities, especially during the rainy season. In some cases there is a separation of the space which can be in form of a fabric curtain or similar. The precise place of different activities within a hut is often indicated by sculpting the floor.¹⁸⁸ For example to indicate the sleeping area the floor is raised by about 10 cm.

(Limits, Interstice) The Iteso spend most of their time outside thanks to the pleasant climate and their major economic activity (farming). The houses are mainly used for sleeping and as a protection against rain and animals. This is as well expressed in their architecture. Traditional houses have very small windows or none at all. Inside the houses it is rather dark since just little light comes through the door opening. Compared to Europe the external walls of traditional houses are rather low so that the inhabitants often need to bend down while entering their house. However, at the inside it is possible to stand upright thanks to the conical

187 Akol Soyce.

188 Lawrance, pp. 111–13.



0 m 1 m 2 m

Plan traditional House



0 m 1 m 2 m

Plan modern House

roof. The spaces under the extended eaves, which are going around the whole buildings, are intensively used by the inhabitants for different activities. Therefore, they have a high value for the local population, especially since they are in the shade which provides a very pleasant climate. Sometimes these areas are elevated by a step that separates them from the central space that functions like a living room. Furthermore, it is part of the different degrees of privacy which changes gradually from the very private sleeping areas, inside the huts, over the porch and the common “living room” to the completely public outside space outside the hedge of plants. The limits between inside and outside, between private and public spaces are very precise but at the same time blurry.¹⁸⁹

(Climate – Space) To me the most striking aspect of these typologies is the precision of the special arrangement of the traditional houses and how it expresses the local climate and lifestyle. This confirms as well the citation of David Adjaye’s in the chapter African architectural positions *“I wanted to understand the impact of climate on the lifestyle of the people, their attitude to place, and how they occupied space in response to the prevalent conditions. My conclusion is that the way of life in these places is a precise response to climate, and shows how buildings adapt to climate without becoming overly dependent on technology”*¹⁹⁰

(Modern typology) The lately built houses composed by several rooms (bedrooms, kitchen, indoor living room) are rectangular similar to occidental one-story houses. It has to be pointed out that it is a drastic change from the traditional houses to the rectangular ones. The way people appropriate the spaces and with it their lifestyle shifted completely. The gradually change from the private core spaces to the completely public spaces has disappeared. The limits between private and public are a lot more strict and abrupt. The important outside spaces under the porches do not exist anymore which goes hand in hand with a social impoverishment. The common meeting place got split in two; one for each core family inside the house, and another one for the whole community outside the house.

(Polygamy - Monogamy) Traditionally polygamy lifestyle is common or even the standard in the community of the Iteso. In the former homestead every wife had her own hut. The men lived together with their wives and their children in one cluster which was the home of one extended family.¹⁹¹ The new special arrangement makes the polygamous lifestyle more difficult in which different women lived at the same time independently and together. The stronger limits between inside and outside introduced a special separation between the different core families. I think this accelerated the tendency that today it becomes today more and more common to live monogamously. Therefore, we can conclude that by adopting the special arrangement of the occidental world, they adopt the occidental family structure.

(Flexibility) Another important notion which was influenced or even has been lost through the change from single-space to multi-space houses is the

189 Olweny and Wadulo, p. 179.

190 Adjaye and Allison, p. 15.

191 Lawrance, p. 109.

flexibility. Unlike the rectangular houses, in which several rooms form one entity, it is simple to add a room/hut in the traditional architecture. The possibility to adapt the traditional houses easily is due to its geometry and its special arrangement, but as well due to the fact that the inhabitants build their own houses, which is not the case anymore in the new type. The flexibility creates a strong link between the users and their house since the traditional houses reflects and adapts themselves to the community like a living organism.¹⁹² The larger size of the rectangular brick houses, the geometry and the used material make it harder to build a brickhouse for the future habitants.

(Aldo van Eyck) While visiting the Dogon people in Mali, West Africa, the Architect Aldo van Eyck became fascinated by the flexibility of their houses. Thereupon he criticised the rigidity of the European houses. The way how architecture, dancing, sculpture, religion and society are interwoven attracted him. The Dogon society had the ability “to accommodate individuals within a large group – to create communities in which individuality is respected.”¹⁹³ Even though that the Dogon people live on the other side of the continent and their traditional houses are completely different, I think it is interesting to see that notion of flexibility is apparently as well present in Mali and is one of the strengths of earth architecture. In Europe flexibility and adaptability is present in form of open space plans, developed and theorized? mainly by the modernist. This allows to easily change the inside of a certain volume while keeping the outside limits constant. In contrast, in African countries flexibility is more interpreted by the possibility to add an entire unit. Therefore, it starts with what is needed at a certain time and then adds or removes entire units depending on the present needs. This way of construction is obviously just possible thanks to the pleasant climate in Uganda.

(Mimicry) To conclude the traditional urbanism is an expression of the *Ubuntu philosophy* “I am because we are”. The new houses however are more an expression of the western individualism. The Western urbanity and building typologies are often seen as superior to the traditional African forms and building culture even when they are incompatible with the environmental and cultural context.¹⁹⁴ As already mentioned Felwine Sarr calls the imitation of European structure Mimicry and criticises it strongly in his African Manifest *Afrotopia*. For him it is the end of creativity. Imitating is always worse than the original and means that one is behind someone else. He asks the African people to reinvent and regain their social, political and economic system based on their traditions. It is important that African people put themselves again in the centre and do not run behind the occidental world.¹⁹⁵

192 Folkers, p. 159.

193 Gerrewey, p. 100.

194 ‘Exploring Vernacular East African Architecture: Lessons for the Modern World’, p. 57.

195 Felwine Sarr, *Afrotopia*, pp. 45–46.

CONCLUSION

How do I want to continue?

(Weakening of the Community) In the last chapter and in the Prologue we saw the change in the recently built environment as for example the change of habits to watch football in the evening instead of dancing together as mentioned in the beginning. These factors in combination with the rural exodus, which is happening in Uganda at the moment, since the younger generation tries to find work in the urban areas, risk to weaken the community. This is a normal phenomenon that happened as well in Vrin between the 1950's and 1990's. Being socially connected and embedded into the society is a lot more important in Uganda than in Switzerland that has the social system of the State. However, in Uganda there is no such social system of the state therefore the society replaces the state and is consequently essential.

(Example Vrin) With the goal to strengthen the community Gion Caminada founded the association “Pro Vrin” that helps modernizing the economic structure of the village what allows the inhabitants to stay. Furthermore, he created a new meeting place for the murmuring ritual with the “Stiva da morts”. In this way the tradition was adapted to the contemporary lifestyle and allowed the ritual to still be practised. As a result, Caminada had two strategies to strengthen the local community, firstly to build up a healthy local economy and secondly to create new spaces for the traditional rituals. Based on the experience seen in Vrin and the discussions with Fazil I think it does make sense to plan a cultural meeting space for the community in Atuturi.

(Approach) The initial question “*How do I, as a foreign architect, want to practice in eastern Uganda?*” still needs to be answered. The building context in Uganda is very hybrid especially in the cities. In the chapter “Positions on Architecture” the investigated African positions and the education philosophy of the architecture studies at the Makerere University in Kampala plead that buildings need to respond to the climate, the topography, the social and the architectural context in order to be relevant. The British architect and theorist Kenneth Frampton has nearly the same attitude. At the end of the 70's beginning of the 80's he theorized it under the tendency of Regionalism. The architect Gion A. Caminada integrates the majority of the principals of the Regionalists in his projects. Since architects from two different parts of the world have a very similar architectural positions I concluded that an architectural position can be global

contrary to the architectural result that changes every time. The main difference between the two is that the first one is composed by abstract immaterial values and personal reflections however, the second is a materialistic translation of the just mentioned values at a certain time and at a certain place. As a result, I believe that it is possible to adapt the elaborated approach of the architect Gion A. Caminada within the context of Uganda. Gion Caminada worked in the beginning of his career nearly exclusively in his home village Vrin. This allowed him to patiently develop his approach. However, after the turn of the century he started to build as well in other regions. He says that he *“can make use of the experience garnered from the “Strickbau” typology also in relation to other materials; insofar the method itself is the most important aspect.”*¹⁹⁶ Consequently, he confirms that a method is not tied to a certain place. As a result, I suggest for the project during the second semester to combine the methodical aspect from Gion A. Caminada with the on-site existing architectural elements of Uganda. In other words, to combine local and global elements. The core aspects of Caminada’s projects are the same as the one expressed by Flewin Sarr, Marc Olweny and David Adyje. In addition, the fact that he works in a familiar context facilitates me to understand his method. Consequently, he plays a connectional role for me.

There are three aspects which stand out to me from Caminada’s approach: the precise analysis of the context, the local productions, and the “human centre” attitude.

(Analyzation) Similar to Caminada in the beginning of the second semester I want to do a more precise analysis of the context in order to acquire a deeper understand of the place and the needs of the population. I hope to collect all the required information during my journey in Eastern Uganda in February. In addition, I think to produce a precise “actor network” that indicates all the different on-site involved actors and their relations to each other will be helpful in order to be able to embed and connect the project with its context.

(Urban) In order to integrate the Creative Centre into the existing stock it needs to be payed special attention to Limits (soft or hard), ensemble of buildings, placement of building within a parcel and junctions.

(Construction) In my opinion ecologically, economically and socially it does make sense to use local material for the construction since it reinforces the local identity, create jobs, improve local construction skills and preserve their independency. However, I do not want to reconstruct a traditional building. The goal is to produce a contemporary building which is a part of its context. In this way the local architecture adapt itself to the today’s needs but is still embedded in its cultural context. It is important to carefully chose the new architectural elements which I will introduce since in their tradition, the Iteso copy and repeat what exists on site. Therefore, it is possible that these elements will be reproduced in the future.

(Social) *“Creating spaces for human life which don’t tell people what to do but rather, give them pleasure [...]”*¹⁹⁷ I really appreciate how Gion A. Caminada sees

196 Schlorhauser and others, p. 177.

197 Caminada and Aicher, p. 122.

his work as a service in order to try to create the most comfortable living conditions for the inhabitants. In order to understand their needs long and continuous dialogues are inevitable. In my case the cultural differences will make it probably more challenging to have these dialogues than in the context of Vrin but at the same time even more important in order to be able to precisely understand their needs.

(Atmospheric) I think the idea to try to tell a story with the building is appropriate for this project especially since the Iteso have a strong oral culture in which stories play an important role. As David Adjaye says that a scenario that connects with the people's immediate experiences can facilitate that the users engage with the edifice. Similar to the Stiva da mortos it is likely that the story for the Creative Space will be linked with the dance ritual.

(Uganda) As a last point I want to highlight several notions of the traditional Ugandan architecture that have stood out for me. It is possible that these aspects will reappear during the design process in the second semester. Before discussing the architectural aspects, I would like to remind that Uganda has a very pleasant climate. The roof is the most important element since it protects the user from the rain and the sun.

(Architectural elements) The first architectural element that caught my attention is the flexibility. It allows to adapt the buildings to the present needs. I love the idea of a building that expands and shrinks. The pleasant climate of Uganda allows to have walls which are less massive and static then in usual buildings. The second interesting intuition of the Iteso is to sculpture the floor and through it to define different spaces and occupations. The last aspect are the fluid inside – outside relations. This is connected to the different degrees of privacy, the various kind of limits and the importance of the interstices. The inside outside relations are very precise in the traditional houses of the Itesos. The outside spaces are very important in Uganda due to the pleasant climatic condition. Therefore, they need be designed with the same attention and preciseness as the inside space.

At the moment the local community dances under a tree on a compacted earth floor. Already this few elements create as space and as Anne Lacaton says, who started her career in Nigeria, "*Space is not created by the material but by the use*".¹⁹⁸

In this sense I am looking forward to the second part of this journey next semester.

198 Marc Angéilil and Anne Lacaton, Ringvorlesung Entwurf Und Architektur: Affinity Architecture Africa, 2019 <<https://video.ethz.ch/lectures/d-arch/2019/spring/063-0502-00L/30744498-8797-440c-a89d-75e762b4c728.html>>.

ORIGINAL CITATION

Citation Nr 21: Felwine Sarr, Afrotopia, trans. by Max Henninger, Erste Auflage (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2019), p. 142

„Jenseits der notwendigen Auseinandersetzung mit Fragen der Funktionalität benötigen wir auch eine ästhetische, soziale und philosophische Reflexion über unsere Städte. [...] Ihre Kunst erhält ihren vollen Sinn erst dann, wenn sie sich mit der Kultur, der Gesellschaft, dem Klima, der menschlichen und physischen Geografie der Räume verindet, an d denen sie ins Werk gesetzt wird.“

Citation Nr 48: Ulrike Fischer, Regionalistische Strategien in Der Architektur Graubündens: Von 1900 Bis in Die Gegenwart (Tübingen: Wasmuth Verlag, 2016), p. 256

„Im regionalistischen Bauen spüre ich eine Ästhetisierung, mehr Zutat, mit Bildern arbeiten, ein bisschen an der Oberfläche kratzen... So wie eine Form ohne Inhalt. Erkennbarkeit zur Schau stellen, das ist mir zu wenig.“

Citation Nr 90: Ulrike Fischer, Regionalistische Strategien in Der Architektur Graubündens: Von 1900 Bis in Die Gegenwart (Tübingen: Wasmuth Verlag, 2016), p. 257

„Eine gute Idee ist etwas, was vielen Menschen einen Vorteil bringt.“

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Interview

Onyu, Fazil, Conversation during the semester, 2019

Odallo, Francis, Local craftsmen from Atuturi, 2019

Akol Soyce, Peter, Local craftsmen from Atuturi, 2019

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