

Editorial

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This issue as a whole holds once more, as you may expect from our journal, a plea for the importance and improving the effectiveness of the disciplines of Urban Design and Planning, and the research therein. As the last occurs largely in universities, the authors of the four papers include scientists, but this time also students reporting from their Master theses. Though the topics are international and the locations they describe are all over the world, by coincidence three of the papers are from the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, and so am I, author of this editorial. Not by coincidence, the papers in varying degrees stress the relevance of context and history in our disciplines, and in the daily life of the world's ever increasing urban population. The first paper is focused on street improvements, the second on segregation reduction, the third on rapid urbanisation, and the fourth on design education. The first presents research on urban functioning, the second planning proposals for urban regeneration, the third planning and design for rapid urbanisation, and the fourth stresses the importance of context and history for – students of – the design discipline.

The opening paper, *Miscalculated opposition of businesses to street improvements*, deals with the general misconception by businesses on commercial streets that improvements in public space, directed at greater comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists, lead to loss of trade through decreased accessibility for cars, researched for a street in Los Angeles, USA (Toker and Palasani-Minassians, 2018). The research shows that, in reality, the intended shift in transportation mode shares generally improves trade. Even more: the improvements attract customers, which then attract new businesses. The paper explains the positive role of residential density and proximity between residents and commercial services, as well as of TOD (Transit Oriented Design) in reducing car use. TODs are defined as 'pedestrian-friendly mixed-use developments within walking distance of core commercial and rail transit areas' (Toker and Palasani-Minassians, 2018: p. 56). The effects are on both the environment and health. One might add (without research but from experience): also on the use of public space and thus on community building.

The second paper, *Multi-level strategy for segregation reduction; the case of Ray-Tehran*, reports from a Master thesis inspired by Henry Lefebvre's (1996) explanation of segregation as 'a type of detachment that destroys the totality of a complex, tears the city apart and brings formlessness and isolated information' (Torabi Kachousang *et al.*, 2018: p. 61). The paper shows how urban deterioration and social and economic segregation are closely related, using the case of the old city of Ray, now incorporated in Tehran, Iran. It holds a plea for working against fragmentation and segregation through creating urban cohesion based on 'endogenous characters, properties and potentials' (Torabi Kachousang *et al.*, 2018: p. 61), strengthening the social and cultural structure of the city. Here too, pedestrian accessibility and TOD are included, as are the design of public space, visual attractiveness, and redevelopment of industrial and waste areas, 'proposals that aim to achieve an improved vision for Ray's future [...]'.

Urbanisation control lab: Icelandic perspective on urban planning for rapid urbanisation, also a student's paper, researches an example from the practice of urban design and planning for its relevance for rapid urbanisation in a small country, Iceland, distilling aspects relevant all over the world, including developing countries that need it most (Eboli, 2018). The author states that the relevance of Iceland as a case is that it is one of the countries with the highest proportion of urban population in the world, which is also highly suburbanised. The research is looking for ways to counter 'the threat [...] of] urban sprawl, housing and infrastructure shortages, social segregation, and exclusion' (UN-Habitat, 2016: p. 2), to which it adds environmental and health threats and overexploitation of (natural) resources. We all know this by now, of course, but what can we do? Again: a plea for the relevance and importance of urban design and planning.

The last paper is referring back to the June 2017 themed issue of *Urban Design and Planning* (170(3)) on Urban Design Education, and in it the Delft contribution: *Teaching urbanism: the Delft approach* by Steffen Nijhuis, Egbert Stolk, and MaartenJan Hoekstra (2017), the last one being also one of the authors of this paper: *The Delft fundamentals: integration*

of disciplines, projects and analysis (Bekkering *et al.*, 2018). The focus now is on one particular course in the Bachelor curriculum, the so-called Fundamentals. This course combines the teaching of the basic concepts in architecture, urban design and landscape architecture with the histories of these disciplines, as an integrated study programme based on a fourfold educational goal (Bekkering *et al.*, 2018: p. 87)

- (a) The oncoming designers should build up a 'catalogue' of 'proven' design solutions as a field of reference for their own design work.
- (b) Knowledge and awareness of history and theory should come primarily from studying concrete projects instead of abstract texts.
- (c) Students should develop analytical skills following the Delft method of typo-morphological project analysis.
- (d) Students should be encouraged in integrated design thinking, where architecture, urbanism and landscape architecture reinforce each other.

One of the means for this is a 'canon' of 160 projects from all periods in history, that students have to be able to draw analytically, this way learning their meaning and content, and also the Delft typo-morphological approach to design analysis. Five of these cases are presented at the end of the paper.

With this, the last paper has a structure different from the usual papers in the journal, as it presents a larger number of illustrations. This is an experiment that we call a 'graphic contribution'. It is the result of a discussion in the Editorial Advisory Panel on how to increase the attractiveness of the journal for designers, that in its title even mentions design before planning. The intention is to develop a specific review procedure for the graphic contributions that should present

subject matter like designerly ways of thinking, design research, research by design, and individual urban designs and the results of urban design competitions. The panel welcomes any comments or suggestions you would have regarding this experiment.

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