

## EDITORIAL: TRANSDISCIPLINARITY, PEOPLE-ENVIRONMENTS, AND DESIGN RESEARCH

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This issue marks the beginning of the third year of Archnet-IJAR life. In the first two years, over 85 quality contributions by 70 scholars, academics and practitioners from 27 countries have been published after a rigorous review process followed by leading journals. Due to the high demand on Archnet-IJAR, the issue is divided into three refereed sections in addition to the review and trigger articles section. This issue is thus adding another dimension where many papers from countries not represented before are included to address the transdisciplinary nature of architecture, and people-environments and design research while exhibiting the international dimension of the journal.

The first section accommodates 9 papers selected from IAPS 19th – the 19th conference of the International Association for People-Environments Studies which was held in Bibliotheca Alexandrina in September 2006. The typical norm of the IAPS conferences is that complete papers are submitted for publication after the conference in a post conference book, and they are subjected to a strict review process. The scientific committee of IAPS 19th

selected 31 papers for inclusion in the post conference book. However, due to the limited size constraints mandated by the publisher, 9 papers were not included. Based on discussions of Archnet-IJAR chief editor, the scientific committee of the conference, and IAPS board the nine papers are published in this issue.

The second section includes three papers on Traditional Public Baths-Hammam- in the Mediterranean, which represent a continuation of the previous special issue. Thanks to Dr. Fodil Fadli in giving those three papers the opportunity to see the light through an intensive translation and editing process since two of them were originally written in French. While the third section includes five papers submitted and refereed through the typical review process of Archnet-IJAR--offering a wide variety of topics and themes, the review and trigger articles section encompasses four submissions in the form of a review article, symposium abstracts, and book and conference reviews.

Reflecting on some contributions in this issue, it is believed that while not stated explicitly, transdisciplinarity appears to be at the heart of

the essence of these people-environments and design research. Theorists and practitioners have been discussing the issue of architectural and design knowledge for several decades. Recent years, however, have witnessed intensive debates in built environment literature (Salama, 2008). Donald Watson attempted to define a demand for knowledge in architecture and the built environment. He argues that: "The discipline of architecture needs a rigorous knowledge base by which to support its premises and principles that define the relationship between human and community health, and between building and urban design," (Quote from Boyer and Mitgang, 1996). Henry Sanoff confirms this view when he argues that architecture should be based on knowledge of people needs; it should not be based just on the creative impulses of architects (Sanoff, 2003).

The design discipline, planning and architecture, like other fields of vocational expertise, can be classified as professional disciplines, especially when we regard them as fields of inquiry (Becher, 1989). Ulf Sandström has followed the development in profession-related studies since he identified two trends in research and knowledge production in the field of professional expertise: one which is oriented towards the production of mono-disciplinary academic knowledge, and the other which is directed towards subjects derived from concrete life situations, these being solution-oriented (Dunin-Woyseth, 2002). King and Burnell offer a broad and convincing representation of what constitutes an academic discipline. They propose several aspects that include a community, a network of communications, a tradition, a particular set of values and beliefs, a domain, a mode of inquiry, and a conceptual

structure (Becher, 1989). Another definition, by Toulmin, focuses more on epistemological considerations, presenting disciplines like this "...each is characterized by its own body of concepts, methods and fundamental aims" (Becher, 1989).

The work of Klein, 1998; Ramadier, 2004; and Lawrence and Depres, 2004 suggest that transdisciplinarity is envisioned to tackle complexity while challenging fragmentation. As a mode of knowledge production, it is characterized by its hybrid nature and non-linearity — transcending any academic disciplinary structure. Transdisciplinary knowledge is a result of inter-subjectivity — a process that includes practical reasoning of individuals within the constraints of social, organizational, and material context, requiring continuous collaboration between different disciplines (by crossing their boundaries) (Dunin-Woyseth and Nielsen, 2004). Transdisciplinarity entails making linkages not only across disciplinary boundaries but also between theoretical development and professional practice, addressing real world problems and contributing to their solution. As a practice-oriented approach, transdisciplinarity is not confined to a closed circle of scientific experts, professional journals and academic departments where knowledge is produced. Through mutual learning, the knowledge of all participants (from different disciplines) is enhanced, including local knowledge, scientific knowledge and the knowledge of concerned industries, businesses, and non-governmental organizations (Nowotny, 2004). The sum of this knowledge is greater than the knowledge of any single partner. In the process, the bias of each perspective is also minimized.

To date, the development of rigorous theory/ knowledge building has been at the edge of the profession and frequently marginalized as something separate from the professions of architecture and planning, that is: environment-behavior studies, building sciences, environment-technology studies, etc. As a result, most practitioners are not well equipped or even interested in understanding the value of their professional services. Concomitantly, the standing of these professions is being marginalized in the eyes of the public (Salama, 2008).

Sophia Chatzicocoli and Athena-Christina Syrakoy adopt the premise that the study of precedents can enrich the understanding of a healthy city's historical background and can help in learning from the past. They introduce the Greek paradigm where the idea of the creation of healthy cities seems to be central in the Hellenic (Greek) culture, the first anthropocentric culture developed in Europe. The conceptions of a healthy city were supported by the Hellenic Mythology, Philosophy, Art and Science. The principles of the planning and design of healthy cities were expressed through various applications concerning the Greek cities and, especially, through the creation of specific settlements devoted to the restoration of health. In essence, the intersection of all of these disciplines exhibits a transdisciplinary discourse.

In their contribution, Yasemin Alkışer, Yurdanur Dulgeroglu-Yuksel, and Gulcin Pulat-Gokmen through an in-depth analysis of the Urban transformation projects within the context of Turkey, argue that architects, researchers and other professionals in the field, when they design

such large-scale urban transformation projects, must understand the issue of the rapid growth of developing cities, which are at the same time trying to become global cities. In this respect, their argument is based on the value of integrating environmental, economical, and societal issues when dealing urban transformation projects. However, they also argue for integrating other dimensions that include legislations and bylaws at the local level that enable the realization of these interventions.

In an attempt to define guidelines amenable to the recovery of the architectural and scenic values of villages in almost abandoned Pyrenean valleys in Catalunya M<sup>a</sup> Rosa Bonet, Miquel Domingo, and Miquel Marfí present another transdisciplinary argument and case are presented where efforts of two teams with background in physical planning and social research. Their study involved several layers including geographical, urban, and architectural aspects of these villages in order to establish and prioritize a number of factors that help envision different degrees of decay and the level of revitalization and intervention strategies in those villages.

Anis Ur Rahman and Bushra Anis offers a study in the context of Lahore, Pakistan that covers historical and contemporary theories and understandings of gated communities, their role in shaping the urban fabric of the city, while conceptualizing the impact and challenges facing these communities in achieving a true sustainable development processes. This work is transdisciplinary in nature as it covers historical and temporal dimensions while at the same time bridges the boundaries of disciplines such as planning, architecture, and social sciences.

In his intensive study of the notion of "Neighborhood Sense of Community" Yasser Moustafa offers an integrated framework for understanding reciprocal relationships of social, cultural, and physical issues that achieve a sense of community. Arguing for the indispensable aspects of theoretical frameworks, Yasser proposes a framework that establishes links between the notion of the sense of community and community characteristics and the instrumental and symbolic roles of the built environment in achieving the sense of community. While the framework does not explicitly address the role that environmental design may play in the constructive integration of the local community in the larger society, he argues that this could be an important area for future research and explorations.

While the study of Gabriel Rodriguez and Daniel Siret offers an intensive analysis of the evolution of people's preferences of single family dwellings, they conclude that evolutionary preferences are taking place in two important aspects exemplified by the utilization of spaces and the understanding of comfort. On another front, Peter Kellett and Peter Collins offer a conceptualization which underpin the various user responses and offer a critique of the design language of the current healthcare buildings. They present a transdisciplinary piece on the attribute of "Homeliness" in hospital environments. The fact that the two authors are from two different yet related backgrounds in Architecture and Anthropology reflects a transdisciplinary understanding. In essence, they rely on anthropological and architectural frameworks to analyze the data which consists of extensive interview transcripts complemented by photographs.

The research team from Sweden, composed of Mauritz Glaumann, Åsa Svenfelt, Tove Malmqvist, Göran Finnveden, Ola Eriksson, argues for the need of developing responsive assessment tools where the scientific community together with stakeholders are actively engaged. They present the first phase of a research project, entitled Building-Living and Property Management for the future. In this respect, the dialogue they propose offers another transdisciplinary dimension where researchers, professionals, and public officials are involved. Ulla Westerberg on the other hand investigates habits and attitudes related to climate and outdoor activities. In the context of Nordic cities she concludes that demands on comfort are on the rise and the presence of climatically pleasant outdoor urban environments is critically needed.

The three papers on Traditional Public Baths in the Mediterranean offer another dimension for transdisciplinarity where historical aspects, urban issues, decay, environmental concerns, social factors, and conservation and revitalization efforts are all integrated in discussing and analyzing such a unique building type. Aspects that pertain to crossing the boundaries of typical disciplinary discourse are also reflected in the regular papers which offer a wide spectrum of issues that range from general urbanization and sustainable development to integrating sustainable planning and design dimension in education, and from privacy, comfort and social behaviour to a rethinking of history through education in a specific region.

Further understanding of transdisciplinarity is evident in the reviews and trigger articles section where the abstracts of the symposium on Cities, cultural Diversity, and Design Pedagogy are

presented. They explore mechanisms and aspects by which the people environments paradigm can be fostered. Such a symposium was organized jointly by IAPS Culture and Space and Education Networks and convened by Hülya Turgut Yıldız, Ashraf M. Salama, and Peter Kellett—as part of the 20th IAPS Conference: Urban Diversities, Biosphere and well-being that was held Rome, Italy in July 2008.

While the full potential of transdisciplinary research and knowledge is not yet realized, Archnet-IJAR encourages submissions that cross the boundaries of disciplines, that foster dialogue between the professional and academic communities and that invigorate yet demystify the complexity of people-environments and design research.

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