EDITORS' NOTES PRESENTATION OF AND COMMENTS ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS

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This mixed issue presents a total of eight contributions, four of which are scientific articles. The Forum section of the journal includes four contributions: an academic essay, a debate article, a review of a doctoral dissertation, and a book review. We hope that you enjoy reading all the contributions.

The first scientific article in this mixed issue is written by Dr Tiina Merikoski, Dr Aija Staffans, Dr Pilvi Nummi, and PhD candidate Simo Syrman. This contribution is called "Transdisciplinarity in Practice: Experiences from Finnish Planning Organizations". Dr Tiina Merikoski is a researcher currently based at the Lundén Architectural Institute, Dr Aija Staffans and Dr Pilvi Nummi are both researchers at Aalto University, and Simo Syrman is an urban sociologist affiliated with Aalto University. In the article, the authors address and examine transdisciplinary and how it might be realized in planning organizations. They discuss the co-productive practices of planners and base their article on an interview study conducted in Finland's six largest cities. The results show that implementing transdisciplinary knowledge production is challenging, as planning is considered inherently collaborative and interactive – something that cannot be done alone. Additionally, the study indicates that planning practices that lack transdisciplinary approaches pose risks; for example, alternative scenarios may not be analysed effectively, and research materials and scientific knowledge may remain underutilized. The conclusions indicate the need for a transdisciplinary mindset, as well as better practices and tools to support transdisciplinary knowledge creation.

They also suggest that the priorities of planning should be revised in light of the urgent need to address the global climate crisis.

The second scientific article is titled "From Theory to Practice: Enhancing Planning Theory Education Through Active Learning and Peer Collaboration". The authors are Dr Hossam Hewidy and Dr Christine Mady, both senior lecturers at Aalto University. They examine how a student-centred pedagogy can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world planning dilemmas. Hewidy and Mady note that Anglo-American planning education has been widely influential in Europe. This is, however, a problem, since the Nordic welfare states offer a different planning context, characterized by comprehensive state-led social services funded through taxation and investment in human capital and social infrastructure. This statement seems to be one major reason for testing an alternative pedagogy approach at Aalto University, one that fosters student autonomy, critical thinking, and deep learning. Despite emerging market forces, Finnish planning practice is still characterized by institutional structures, leaving fundamental issues open for debate. Planning theory has been taught at the Department of Architecture at Aalto University since 1999. A redesigned seminar course in planning theory in 2024 is at the centre of the article. The findings demonstrate the success of an interactive pedagogical approach. The authors particularly point out that peer learning, seminar formats, and case study analyses play a crucial role in bridging the gap between theory and practice in planning theory education. The findings also suggests that future planning theory courses should incorporate structured peer-learning mechanisms, encourage applied analytical exercises, and integrate local planning case studies in order to enhance contextual understanding.

The third scientific article, by Dr Anne Tervo, PhD student Sanna Meriläinen, and Dr Johanna Lilius, is titled "Floor Plan Analysis of Kitchens and Dining Areas in Small Urban Homes". All three authors are affiliated with Aalto University, where Tervo is a senior lecturer and Lilius is a senior scientist. The topic of Meriläinen's doctoral research is housing design, domestic space, and architectural typologies. In the article, the authors investigate the design quality of kitchens and dining areas in small apartments in Helsinki, Finland. The empirical data comprises 948 floor plans from forty-seven apartment buildings that received building permits in 2020. The criteria for assessing the design quality of kitchens and dining areas in the article are based on the updated Finnish design guidelines. Apart from being widely used, this guidance reflects existing design quality criteria as well as housing preferences. The method for floor plan analysis has been employed in previous studies. It involves measuring built-in kitchen units and assessing furnishability and daylight access using dining area symbols. The analysis also examines alternative apartment configurations by adding non-loadbearing walls to separate the kitchen from the living room. In the concluding discussions, the authors

note that the integration of the kitchen and dining area into the main living space has become the new norm in domestic architecture. On a conceptual level, an open-plan kitchen can be interpreted as both a reflection of contemporary lifestyles in Helsinki and a design strategy for reducing the floor area in apartments.

The fourth scientific article in this issue is called "Net Apartment Area Efficiency in Finnish Mid-Rise Timber Blocks of Flats". The authors are PhD student Antti Tuure and Dr Hüseyin Emre Ilgın. They are both affiliated with Tampere University and start their discussion by pointing out that the European Union's environmental programme identifies timber construction as crucial for mitigating carbon dioxide emissions in the construction sector. Finland is a country with wooden towns in vernacular architecture, extensive forests, and large timber exports. However, only a small number of flats are being constructed in timber buildings in Finland, less than 2 per cent of the total production of contemporary housing. This is a surprising fact, even though there is an increasing amount of wooden architecture and housing projects in timber, motivated by renewable resources and a low carbon footprint. In the article, Tuure and Emre Ilgın examine the impact of structural and architectural design features in fifty-five apartment blocks in timber. By shifting the focus from space efficiency to net apartment area efficiency (NAAE), the authors aim to contribute to more accurate assessments of how design decisions affect the economic viability of buildings. Data were collected through applying a case study strategy. The NAAE in the fifty-five cases examined ranged from 62.3 per cent to 82.8 per cent. Key factors influencing NAAE are (1) the structural system, (2) the construction method, (3) the construction material, (4) the building form, (5) the type of building core, and (6) the corridor type. The findings may help architects, engineers, and building stakeholders make informed decisions that improve the efficiency of residential spaces.

Forum

This section of the journal includes the following four contributions: The section starts with a debate article in Swedish by Dr Anders Ekholm, Professor Emeritus in Design Methodology in the Department of Structural Engineering, Lund University. Ekholm has twenty years of experience as a professional architect and as a researcher at Lund University. Since retiring as a professor, he has been responsible for the development of industry-wide systematics on behalf of the Swedish Transport Administration. His research at Lund University has dealt with the development of concepts for the description and architectural design of the built environment with applications in, among others, the Swedish BSAB system and the international standard for building classification ISO 12006-2, as well as in systematics for interoperability with BIM, applications for model-based representations of social systems, and applications for

architectural design. In the article, Ekholm discusses and critically reviews various basic concepts related to urban design and planning in a space syntax perspective presented by Lars Marcus in his book *Städernas stenar* (The stones of cities). The main message of the book in Ekholm's reading is that the built environment and the city form a street network that steers human movement patterns and that this impact can be analysed and quantified using methods developed within space syntax. At the end of the book, Marcus criticizes architects for a lack of insight into the importance of the urban form for urban life. One reason is that there is too much focus on the artistic design of cities. However, Ekholm finds this critique to be a considerable simplification of artistic ambitions in urban design, as it lacks reflection on modernism's approach to zoning and the separation of motorized and nonmotorized traffic.

The next contribution is an academic essay called "Avoiding Fortification: A Note on Preventing School Shootings" by Dr Charlotta Thodelius at the University of Borås. She is an Associate Professor of Criminology and works as a senior lecturer in criminology at the Faculty of Police Work at the University of Borås. In her doctoral thesis, "'Rethinking Injury Events': Exploration of Spatial Aspects and Situational Prevention Strategies" (2018), she focussed on risk environments for youth, particularly unintentional injuries in the home, violence in school environments, and suicides in public outdoor spaces. Her research since receiving her doctorate has also dealt with the interaction between individuals and the environment, with a focus on particular situations: lethal school violence, ongoing lethal violence, suicide issues, and the relationships between crime, deviations, and environment – whether environments on the internet or physical places, situational prevention, or method development in the field of criminology. In the academic essay, Thodelius presents various observations on spatial aspects in school shootings, which, in turn, make the contribution important for architecture as a discipline and practice, a subject for education, and a field for research. Her aim is to contribute novel aspects to school safety and security through environmental design. Thodelius notes that perpetrators of school shootings are driven by an institution-oriented motive; the school building itself plays an active role in the attack. School shootings represent a specific kind of architectural design-oriented violence, in which the perpetrator attacks his or her own educational setting. For this reason, it is important to reflect on how architectural design can contribute to protecting students and staff and minimizing the impact of school shootings.

The third contribution is a PhD review by Dr Magnus Rönn. Stefan Ahlman is the author of the doctoral dissertation, published by Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture. He is a practicing architect in Helsinki and has had an architecture firm since 1981. The design tasks range in scale from large to small, according to the homepage, and the architectural projects from holiday homes, villas, group

construction, and renovations to residential districts, urban planning, public buildings, and concept solutions. The entire spectrum is thus represented, which is typical for a medium-sized architecture firm in the Nordic countries. Ahlman has been appointed as a juror in competitions approved by the Finnish Association of Architects. His dissertation focusses on ten competitions for designing housing for the elderly, in which architectural quality is a key concept. The concept is clarified through analyses of competition documents (programmes and jury reports) in the dissertation, in which Ahlman also compares architectural quality in competitions with quality of life as seen from the perspective of care science, where the physical environment is intended to meet the needs of the elderly.

Author: Stefan Ahlman
Title: *Två kvalitetsbegrepp som ler och långhalm. Arkitektonisk kvalitet gentemot faktorer för förbättrad livskvalitet inom äldreboenden* (Two concepts of quality: like two peas in a pod? Architectural quality versus factors for improved quality of life in nursing homes)
Publisher: Aalto University

The final contribution in this section is a book review by Dr Anders Lasson of the Swedish University of Agricultural Science (SLU), Alnarp, where he works as a researcher and senior teacher in the Department of Landscape Architecture, Planning and Management. His main field of interest is comprehensive planning and planning processes, particularly the connection between urban and rural areas. He has many years of teaching experience, particularly in the Landscape and Sustainable Urban Development programmes at the university. He has been a board member of ECLAS – European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools, and is currently a member of the board of the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry (KSLA).

Authors: David Chapman, Kristina Nilsson, and Jennie Sjöholm
Title: *Planning and Urban Design for Attractive Arctic Cities*
Publisher: Routledge