Editorial

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Economist Albert Hirschman's (1984) seminal article on the downsides of "parsimony" and benefits of complicating the economic discourse over thirty years ago left a great legacy for academics and practitioners alike. For economists, it was time to deal not just with the tangible and the obvious, but also with the intangible and the sub-text, yet albeit, real. Until then, economists focused on, in Hirschman's words, the distinction between "work" and "pay" or "effort" and "reward;" essentially, the unambiguous distinction between cost and revenue, where the former goes to the negative side and the latter into the positive side of the account. His examples of each of these categories clarified what he had in mind: the distinction between the means and ends, or costs and benefits. But as Hirschman explains, due to humans' complex nature, not everything can be measured in those terms. What is known as "the labor of love" and the satisfaction one gets for doing what he or she wants, regardless of its monetary compensation cannot be easily tallied through process utility or cost-benefit analysis. By distinguishing between 'tastes' and 'values' or "instrumental" vs. "non-instrumental" values, economists should aim to complicate the economic discourse to theorize complex issues such as "sacrifice," "benevolence," or "collective action" as opposed to solely pursuing self-interest.

Essentially, Hirschman's wake-up call for complicating the run-of-the-mill black and white distinctions in the calculus of utility and outcomes has been welcomed and discussed ever since. Urban designers and planners also arguably deal with similar issues. It is perhaps a truism that urban design goes beyond what is visibly tangible and physically present. There are many things in the realm of urban design that affect the planning and design process without being readily noticed. What we understand today from the notion of physical determinism attests to the idea that certain physical urban form decisions entail undeniable social or cultural ramifications. But delving deeper into these hard questions that go beyond the obvious reveals the necessity of deeper insights and more complex analytical rigor well beyond what meets the eye.

The present volume introduces a few articles that foster thinking deeper about the values of complicating the urban design discourse. The selected articles cover broad themes from mega events and zoning to urban image building and space syntax. At first blush, finding a common theme among the selected topics in this issue seems awfully difficult. However, taking a hard look at these papers reveals the (conscious or even unconscious) desire for complicating seemingly straightforward matters.

The first paper on mega events and urban planning by Simona Azzali tends to complicate the discourse between urban planning and development. Hosting mega events can thrive urban planning and capacity building by strategizing the transferring knowledge and expertise from one context to another. Certain experiments and advancing new prototypes and urban templates, according to the author, cannot be done by implementing small-scale projects. Doha's 2030 Qatar National Vision, which includes the country's comprehensible blueprint, has stirred heated debate among planners and policymakers, and has reached a point where the adopted decisions can be made and analyzed with much greater insight as opposed to enacting more typical plans. In this sense, Doha's plan serves to complicate urban design discourse.

The second article by Per-Johan Dahl, focuses on Neil Denari's HL23 condo tower in West Chelsea, New York, to negotiate bulk restrictions and architectural form. Here again, the complex problem is how to probe the relationship between building form and zoning regulations. The complex relationship between the two variables makes the role of negotiation key and crucial. By unraveling complex and implicit relationship between profitability, design, zoning regulations, the role of design becomes all the more important. Site analysis and the relationship with all the restrictive elements of the work show tremendous lessons that can be learned through negotiation, flexibility, and zoning amendments.

Ponzini and Arosio, on the other hand, focus on the role of towers on urban imageability in Doha

and Barcelona. The French architect Jean Nouvel designed both buildings in two cities with completely different historical and cultural backgrounds. This article criticizes popular branding strategies that put a great deal of expectations on the image building values of two towers. By complicating the role of branding, this article goes beyond the simple visual effectiveness of two distinguished towers in Doha and Barcelona and calls for more critical methods of image making and visual enhancement techniques.

Leung *et al.*, use the notion of complexity in the utility of podium in urban form and architecture. While on some level, podiums segregate closely located residential space from daily commercial activities, they also maximize internal use below the residential areas. They create a semi-public space in addition to the street level plazas and public spaces. Wide podiums also enhance safety and create a separating role from the hustle and bustle of the street wall. These features complicate the interplay between public and private space as well as creating invisible walls or barriers between the public realm and internal use.

In the last article on space syntax as a contribution to geo-design, Ye *et al.* underline the nexus between three things: space syntax, space matrix, and mixed index, and their roles in measuring street network configuration, building density, and functional mix (use). Form Syntax contributes to geo-design and complicates traditional site analysis, idea evaluation, and proposal evaluation phase of urban design practice. A GIS add-in has been developed to enhance the appeal of form syntax by combining quantitative tools with traditional intuitive tools of design and to enhance a more realistic vision of the degree of urbanity of a place before an urban design decision is made.

These five different examples of complicating the urban design discourse helps both urban design professionals and academics to think more critically about the urban design process and also

post-occupancy evaluation. Concepts such as imageability, city branding, zoning regulations, and even transfer of planning knowledge from a source country to a host country, all have explicit and obvious as well as hidden dimensions that need in-depth analysis and reflection. The contributors to this volume have shown a few of those analyses that help urban designers to think about the softer rather than just the hard side of the urban design praxis and discourse.

New to this issue is the 'Practitioner's Reflections' segment aimed at providing an opportunity for practitioners to analyze the processes and outcomes of their projects within a critical framework. In this issue, Dr Nick Falk of URBED, discusses URBED's winning entry in the UK's Wolfson 2014 Economic Prize looking at how to build New Garden Cities for the 21st Century that are visionary, viable, and popular. Falk revisits Ebenezer Howard's historic garden city principles and applies them to the contemporary context of York and Oxford. Central to URBED's hypothesis is the need to extend existing settlements and use the uplift of land value to fund improved local infrastructure.

Reference

- Hirschman, A.O. (1984) Against Parsimony: Three easy ways of complicating some categories of economic discourse. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 37(8): 11–28.

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