Editorial

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Planners and practitioners have long recognized the notion of community and its significance for urban design. The writings of Clarence Perry on the neighborhood unit and Clarence Stein and Henry Wright's New Town concept explore the nexus between people and place across different scales. The former model portrayed a small-scale notion of community, reminding decision-makers that people should not be left out of the equation whenever planners or architects design settlements. Besides auto traffic, walkability and access to various amenities (both visually and physically) matter. The latter scale, however, epitomizes planned communities (e.g., Radburn, New Jersey) based on Ebenezer Howard's Garden City concept. Decades later, in the 1960s, Mel Webber's dichotomy between face-to-face interaction and community without propinquity reconceptualized its complex and multilayered attributes. Webber's nonplace urban realm reminds us that physical proximity or accessibility in the public realm does not constitute the only way to establish community networks. Over half a century later, social media now play major roles in establishing community loyalty, albeit virtually rather than physically.

But how have all these social and physical transformations affected planning in general, and urban design in particular? This volume presents four articles surrounding the notion of community and this ongoing transformation.

Del Gaudio's article—"The challenge of time in community-based participatory design"—explores the challenges related to engagement in the public participation process in urban design. The plurality of community members highlights differences in their background, role, and motivations. These differences can further hinder or delay the implementation process. This article focuses on the elements of time in the evolution of the design process in the Brazilian context. They articulate four attributes of time associated with the design practice: local rhythm, which varies from the designers' speed for physical change; the time required for how physical change entails social change; community participation speed, which highlights the time differential for people to get

involved in the design process; and timing norms of partners, e.g., those of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that support the project but at their own pace.

Li focuses not only on the role of time in the realization of community engagement, but also seeking a balance between tourism and protection of shared community spaces in "Classifying community space at a historic site through cognitive mapping and GPS tracking: The case of Gulangyu, China." This tension becomes even more critical in the case of historically significant sites and spaces. The author explores this problem further by seeking an optimal point where a balance between the two attributes can be maintained.

Medved examines a different aspect of the notion of community at the local level in "The essence of neighbourhood community centres (NCCs) in European sustainable neighbourhoods." By focusing on the essence of neighborhood community centers (NCCs), he explores a deeper question regarding social sustainability; That is, he seeks to examine the nexus between the NCC and social cohesion, local identity, and sense of place as the essence of social urban sustainability in the European context.

Finally, in a somewhat similar vein, Hemani seeks the linkage between urban form and social sustainability in "Influence of urban forms on social sustainability: A case of Guwahati, Assam." This is a critical question as India becomes increasingly urbanized by 2050. Using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, she finds that local spatial fabrics with an integrated street network, higher access to recreational space, higher mixed use, higher density, and smaller urban blocks foster higher levels of social cohesion and social sustainability.

Reference

- Webber, M. (1964) The Urban Place and the Nonplace Urban Realm in M.M. Webber, J.W. Dyckman, D.L. Foley et al., *Explorations into Urban Structure*, pp. 79–153 (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press).

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