Guest editorial

Interfaces/intersections in architecture and urbanism

Introduction

This editorial offers a brief review of the papers with distinct themes and approaches published in this issue. The papers focus on borders/interfaces/intersections/in-betweens in architectural and urban scales in tangible and intangible forms. There are 9 papers with 12 authors. An examination of their frameworks and approaches demonstrates that they can be grouped under the following four themes that have permeable boundaries in-between that reflect various approaches used to convey the focused theme in today's architecture and urban agenda: the dichotomy of boundary as a spatial element that separates or bounds; in-between spaces of private and public in housing; intangible boundaries between nature and the built environment; and re-looking into traditional construction, its relevance in contemporary production. The papers discuss architectural and urban borders with an intention of challenging disciplinary borders.

Themes

Theme 1: the dichotomy of boundary as a spatial element that separates or bounds

There are two papers that represent articulations on this theme, (Baloğlu, 2020; Ceylan, 2020). They develop a framework that looks into the physical element – the wall – questioning its boundary while advocating its presence. Baloğlu (2020) discusses flexibility issues on primary education and its spatial reflection on school building design. She addresses a very current issue faced in countries where there are large numbers of student population that need schooling with ever-changing educational policies. The author looks into the issue of flexibility in Turkish elementary schools through the users; for example, teachers' responses on how they use the space and spatial deficiencies they face with. Fuzzy analytic hierarchy process method was utilized to generate a hierarchical order between the various themes on flexibility of school buildings. Children's interaction with their educational environment, reconsideration of boundaries to the changing needs of school buildings and the role of boundaries as separation and communication are examined through the selected examples of school buildings in Bayrampasa district in Istanbul. Extending the learning activities beyond classrooms and outdoor spaces are the central concerns that are discussed. Ceylan (2020) looks into retail design within the changing trends of consumer behavior as leisure shopping. He analyzes and compares street retail and shopping mall retail spaces where business strategy, marketing and communication require diverse approaches to design the interface between the interior and the exterior. He emphasizes the atmospheric tools and corporate identity in the retail design in shopping malls by analyzing 14 shops in terms of their physical parameters of the storefronts and corporate characteristics. Based on the changing dynamics of consumer behavior on shopping trends, he discusses the importance of corporate identity and the case-specific character of border/shop front in relation to changing trends.

Theme 2: in-between spaces of private and public in housing

Design of housing and housing environments in Istanbul have been a current issue of interest for many due to the quantity of new production mostly lacking the required needs, with questionable quality. Two papers address this issue on a building scale and at the intersection of interior and exterior space. Tunçer Yıldırım (2020) discusses the transitional spaces, namely balconies in urban housing, comparing the transformation of transitional

spaces in traditional, modern and contemporary housing in Istanbul. She analyzes the boundaries between the housing and its urban environment within a frame of an interface that maybe considered more of an in-between space. She approaches to this from a private space, home perspective, and discusses the means of creating a bond with the exterior through projections and recessions, over the course of urban history of Istanbul housing. She pinpoints a trend of change, decrease in these in-between spaces relating it to somewhat changing life styles. Mangut and Özsoy (2020) address the intersection of open spaces and the housing units on ground levels and examine the dynamics and potentials of this intersection and define it as an "interaction space of public and private." They articulate on territorial behavior's role on defining spatial zone that strengthens the borders of a zone.

Theme 3: intangible boundaries between nature and the built environment
While the two papers by Osama (2020) and Topcu (2020) appear to present natural contexts in their papers, they may be addressed under the theme of intangible boundaries. Topcu, emphasizing the immaterial border between the genders, discusses how behavior is influenced by the setting and social reality. She analyzes how the use of urban space in the case of a neighborhood park on the Asian side of Istanbul varies according to gender. Topcu (2020) captures the limited usage of green urban spaces by women addressing to the previous research studies on the subject in Turkey, pinpointing the importance of sustainability of social relations in urban spaces especially in the information age. Her case study outcomes were contrary to the previous research, where she proposes upgrading of the green urban spaces for different behavior settings for various user profiles. Osama (2020) starts with a conceptual proposal of combining architecture and nature for a potential relief of one's soul by proposing a cave-like structure – a place of refuge – and speculates on the role of architecture and design of the environment on linking the body and the soul. Designing a bridge between a desert and a mountain is a reversible figure/ground relationship to enjoy the beauty of nature and human society and a place of refuge for the soul.

Theme 4: re-looking into traditional construction, its relevance in contemporary production
The following two papers by Yazıcıoğlu and Alkan (2020) and Vatan Kaptan (2020) expand the discussion on the design and construction potentials of traditional/vernacular architecture for contemporary and future inspirations. Yazıcıoğlu and Alkan (2020) examine a specific building type, "Serender" – grainary – located in Rize, on the northern part of Anatolia.

"Serenders," which are designed as storage spaces specific to that context, serve as examples of cultural heritage that are under threat of change and disappearance. This building type sets a good example of a building that has developed out of its context and function, and climatic and geographic responsive architecture. The authors make a thorough analysis of its form, constructive elements and material for the sustainability of social, cultural and architectural character. Vatan Kaptan (2020) uncovers low energy consumption, climatic responsive design strategies of vernacular housing of Erbil city and proposes an adaptation of passive solar design strategies for the vernacular buildings of Erbil to the contemporary constructions that do not utilize those strategies in the initial design phase. She sets a frame of features such as orientation, solid-void relationship of vertical enclosure and use of garden space of vernacular buildings and examines these qualities in the context of lowering energy consumption with increased energy efficiency. While traditional and contemporary design and construction are viewed as two separate itineraries, due to the changing dynamics of the industry, the author proposes that the border between the traditional and contemporary becomes more permeable when knowledge behind the traditional architecture has to be recorded and conveyed to the contemporary world. This opens way for sustainability in all senses. Contrary to this proposal, permeability or change is sometimes not as easy as proposed. Due to the

complexities of architectural design, production and implementation, the so-called conventional models have strong boundaries that are not open to change as expressed in the following paper. Girginkaya Akdag and Maqsood (2020) discuss the adaptation strategies of BIM implementation in architectural design practice in the case of design offices in Pakistan. The survey among architectural professionals in Pakistan was carried out to see the extent of use of BIM in the industry. The outcomes of the survey demonstrate that integration of BIM to broader scope of building design, construction and operation activities are limited due to the lack of BIM education and related professionals.

Concluding remarks
Papers in this issue address "Interfaces/intersections in architecture and urbanism" with the aim of discussing borders, interfaces and intersections that are revealed in tangible and intangible forms. According to Schoonderbeek and Havik (2014) borders in spatial disciplines emphasize two distinct features in the twenty-first century as segregation of political, ethnic and religious contexts and as performative zones where borders influence their hinterland. Borders, interfaces and intersections can be attributed to deeper meanings and emphasis. Each may imply separation, a boundary or coming togetherness of two opposites, a meeting line, platform and can be one of the keywords that architects use when designing and giving meaning to what they design. Heidegger (1951), in defining space, claims that "a space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary." Accordingly, boundary can be considered a spatial element that separates. Architects border interior space from the natural environment, attributing meaning to the bordering element as an interface or an intersection. They speculate on the dialectics of interior or exterior space: "in and out," "in-between," "overlapping" space or as spaces of encounter, threshold space or as presented by Schoonderbeek and Havik (2014) "a place of origination, space of differentiation, zone of performance and space of simultaneity", with each being indicative of some meaning. With globalization and digital networks, meanings of borders require continuous interrogation and redefinition. Today with digital networks, information can be shared instantly without any border, almost not unreachable. In essence, the digital world created its invisible borders. Although invisible, they may be quite effective such as in the case of boundaries of electronic systems where they replace the physical barriers in security sensitive buildings.

The peer reviewed papers that are presented in this issue reveal current subjects of discussion in architectural and urban fields that may initiate from social disciplines and find material and immaterial form in the social and physical worlds. Within this context, they generate important research questions on the subject, opening the way to the multi-faceted nature of design disciplines, research and education for more permeable borders.

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