

# EDITORIAL

This issue (5.1) of Transactions of AESOP brings together a selection of papers submitted to recent rounds of the Best AESOP Congress Paper Award and an invited paper by Tuna Taşan-Kok the Chair of the AESOP Congress Paper Award Committee. They provide original and insightful contributions addressing key themes in contemporary planning research and practice.

The first paper by Tuna Taşan-Kok explores new relational understandings of city building and argues that reading dynamic landscapes of spatial governance requires an understanding of regulatory efforts as they refer to the relational behaviour of state, market, and community actors. This linking of regulatory efforts to relational behaviour, is seen as providing new opportunities to provide comprehensive understandings of city development under market-driven conditions.

The second paper by Susa Eräranta and Miloš N. Mladenović considers the impact of actor-relational dynamics on integrated planning practice. The latter is understood to involve an increasing number of actors with the aim of creating synergy between multiple knowledges in communicative settings. The paper explores actor-relational dynamics through social network analysis and qualitative methods, focussing on a four-year strategic spatial planning process in Finland. The paper concludes that attention to actor-relational dynamics opens up promising avenues for new research and requires new methods for bridging research and practice.

The third paper by Wei-Ju Huang investigates city-county consolidation and the (re)conceptualisation of urban-rural planning in the context of Taiwan. City-county consolidation is seen as an effective method to strengthen national competitiveness and to balance regional development. The paper proposes a typology of regional planning concepts to capture how consolidated governments (re)construct their urban-rural planning concepts and presents a comparative study of Taichung City and Tainan City. It concludes that an overemphasis on competitive city regionalism to balance regional development at the national level may lead to a widening of rural-urban disparities at regional and local levels.

The fourth paper by Nicolas Lavoie, Christophe Abrassart, and Franck Scherrer considers how the city of tomorrow might be imagined through foresight and innovative design that regenerates urban planning routines. The paper reports on how new planning options were developed for an urban district in Montreal, Canada, using the so-called Definition-Knowledge-Concept-Proposition (DKCP) process. It is argued that innovative routines should include the scope of possible innovations, the search for intriguing knowledge, and disruptive design activities, and that the desire to tackle the complex challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century cities can lead to a new professional identity: the 'innovative urban planner'.

The fifth paper from Nicholas Ardill and Fabiano Lemes de Oliveira considers emerging Places of Social Innovation (POSI) as a conceptual framework for socio-spatial innovation in cities. The paper identifies four major processes of socio-spatial innovation in the co-production of space: identification of human needs or societal challenges to sustainable development; development of social relations in systems or structures; provision of opportunity for social empowerment; and, reflection of socio-spatial development practice. It then considers six cases of urban green infrastructure as emerging 'POSI' across two cities Brighton & Hove and Portsmouth (UK).

The sixth, and final, paper by Federica Appendino, Charlotte Roux, Myriam Saadé, and Bruno Peuportier examines the circular economy (CE) in urban projects through case studies of current practices and tools. It notes that research has tended to focus primarily on the macro-scale (cities or eco-parks) and the micro-scale (manufactured products or construction materials), but that the meso-scale of the built environment

is also expected to play a crucial role in the transition towards a CE. The paper reviews four cases of 'circular neighbourhood' projects across Europe in the Netherlands, Finland, and France. The results demonstrate a diverse representation of the CE paradigm and the growing role played by assessment tools in such projects.

Collectively the papers reflect the current dynamism of planning research and its constant engagement with new concepts and practices including, relationality, innovation, rescaling, green infrastructure, and circular economies. This is particularly welcome at this time (July 2021) when normal academic life and exchanges are still being disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also encouraging to note more generally that the academic life of the planning academy and AESOP community continues. This is well-illustrated by the ongoing series of events being organised by AESOP Thematic Groups; the heavily subscribed AESOP 2021 Online Conference on the theme of *Adapting Planning: Rethinking planning practices* (12-14 July 2021) organised in partnership with the Faculty of Architecture, Gdańsk University of Technology, Poland; the AESOP 2021 PhD Workshop on the theme of *Post COVID-19 recovery as a part of transformation to industry 4.0* (22-25, June 2021) hosted by the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Slovakia; and, collaborative ventures with the International Planning History Society (IPHS), ACSP, Regional Studies Association (RSA), and the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), which have fostered opportunities for international exchange. The Editorial Board of Transactions of AESOP look forward to future contributions to the journal arising from all these activities! We would also like to remind readers that the journal is open to submissions from all those who would like to share their research and practice in the planning discipline.

Finally, we would like to thank the authors, reviewers, Transactions Editorial Board members, design team, and proof reader who have worked on the production of Transactions issue 5.1.

**Olivier Sykes**

Editor in Chief of Transactions of AESOP