Editorial

Débora Domingo-Calabuig

If research in architecture and urban planning was not so diverse and varied, we would not be constantly asking ourselves what it means to do research in our field of knowledge. Going back to the original question is something we do recurrently, to the surprise of any scholar from other disciplines. There is no debate about the resources, methods, impact or evaluation of research that fails to address the question *'what is architectural research?'*.

One thing is clear: architectural research is basic and applied, quantitative and qualitative, combines different media and revolves around design. However, what position does architectural design occupy in our research? Exactly what role do architecture and urban planning play? Is this role determined by the way in which architectural material is displayed (drawings, models, and photographs, etc.)?

Reading through this issue of the journal *Architecture Papers of the Faculty of Architecture and Design STU* allows us to answer these questions.

The fact that the aim of research is architectural design may seem obvious—research is carried out to make better architecture—but it is not evident with regard to the characterisation of the outcome. Architecture is a professional practice that responds to functional and contextual requirements and, consequently, not all architecture can be considered an innovation or a contribution of new knowledge. However, when a research process shapes the architecture, it acquires an added value.

In the case of the article by Anika Imraana Sohaana and Md Arifur Rahman, *'Challenges in sustaining resilience in the coastal settlements of south-eastern Bangladesh: Achieving self-sustenance through architectural synthesis'*, the process of analysis of the existing architectural material, and subsequent synthesis and interpretation of the results, is perfectly evident. Here, the architecture appears at the end (plans, layout diagrams, grouping tests), as a proposal resulting from all the arguments that are put forward and evaluated (by means of graphs, charts, and diagrams).

The technical-functional side of architecture provides, in itself, a whole exploratory direction for research. Isolating a component—in this case, light—and studying how it performs in a particular typology is the work of Ahmad Moghaddasi, Mohammad Hossein Moghaddasi and Seyed Behshid Hosseini in *'Iranian innovation in mosque lighting techniques: A historical survey'*. Architecture is seen here from a very specific perspective, and the graphic material is therefore specialised and complemented by figures from other disciplines. Unlike other approaches, the nature of this type of work is applied research, with a significant presence of quantitative methodologies.

Comparing architecture to elicit new knowledge: this is one of the most common methodologies in academic architectural research, and is put into practice with the article *'Restorations in post-war period'*. A case study is an investigation that examines a phenomenon in its real context using multiple sources of qualitative and (or) quantitative evidence. The application of this model to the field of architecture has been analysed by Groat and Wang **[1]**, who explain the advantages of a method that combines multiple strategies: argumentation and logic, historical interpretation, qualitative research, correlational research, experimentation, and simulation. Martina Jelínková studies three churches referring to similar time periods and sharing other similarities by analysing the same construction variables of the before (origin) and the after (reconstruction). The graphic material (plans and elevations) and photographs are the sources to

make the comparative exercise possible, and they are the basis for the rigorous and objective nature of a research project.

Architecture takes on a different role in Gabriela Smetanová's article. In fact, architecture is now a representation of a much broader scope, and is the basis for reflection on an artistic conception and, ultimately, a particular thought in a particular place and time. *'Overview of former and current discourse on VAL'* presents a research project that uses archival material to reconstruct the evolutionary sequence of the production of a Slovak artistic group, where the social and political context becomes particularly relevant. The drawings and photographs are not in themselves the object of study, but are instead the basis for the interpretative narrative. In this research, architecture is the starting point of a study that transcends the boundaries of the discipline itself.

Something similar occurs in the article *'River as a flow of commodities: The reasoning behind the third Danube regulation in Bratislava by Enea Grazioso Lanfranconi'*. In this research, architecture represents only one of the voices in a dialogue that takes place between it and the urban policies implemented in the Slovak capital. Monika Bočková's work shows that the discipline is at the service of society and that it can be used for very specific purposes. Design is a tool for modifying the territory and, depending on this, our cities, our houses, and our lives in particular will be affected. In this case, architecture is not the end, nor does it need to be isolated or compared according to certain parameters: here architecture is analysed as an important physical point of reference (deriving from the actual physical layout of the river in this case) for urban policies.

The five articles in this issue reflect the diversity of architectural research, and yet they have two things in common. On the one hand, they all advance knowledge and can be revisited by future studies, thus validating their research status. On the other hand, underlying all the texts is a historical perspective, as if architecture has constantly insisted on positioning itself between art and technique, between the humanities and science.

REFERENCES:

[1] Groat, L., Wang, D. (2002) 'Architectural Research Methods', John Wiley and Sons Ltd., New York, USA