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Word count: 8355

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This review article reflects on a representative sample of past architecture submissions to the journal *National Identities: Critical Inquiry into Nationhood, Politics & Culture*. The articles reviewed are drawn from those published since the inaugural issue through to date, spanning a period of twenty-one years. Twenty-four articles (of thirty-five initially reviewed) are included and organised into three categories: Typology, Remembrance and Geopolitics. Thematic, conceptual and analytical distinctions and commonalities between articles are highlighted, with the aim of providing an overview of the scholarship and intellectual territory covered. Beyond the particular categories identified, the article identifies the problem of form and context as central to any research interest in architectural nationalism, and suggests future lines of inquiry that may also provide generalisable benefits for the advancement of the discipline more broadly.

Introduction

In 1914, it made sense, perhaps, to talk about "Chinese" architecture, "Swiss" architecture, "Indian" architecture... One hundred years later, under the influence of wars, revolutions, diverse political regimes, different states of development, architectural movements, individual talents, friendships, and technological progress, architectures that were once specific and local have become seemingly interchangeable and global. Has national identity been sacrificed to modernity? (Koolhaas & Petermann, 2014, p. 22)

In the inaugural issue of *National Identities*, the Founding Editors confirmed the intentions of the journal (Catterall et al., 1999, pp. 5–6). Its remit was clear. The journal wished to promote explorations of national identity informed by theoretical frameworks and analytical strategies drawn from a range of disciplinary perspectives.

Key aims of the journal were to reveal 'competing sources of identity' focused upon different 'perceptions and interpretations of nations, regions and localities at different periods of time' (p. 5).   The journal conceded, from the outset, the problematic nature of both 'nation' and 'identity', and so methodological questions of representation and the circulation of ideas promoting national identity were crucial. Of fundamental importance was an emphasis on the situational facticity of national identities and the range of contextual factors influencing their efficacy. As articles in the journal have borne out, whatever the subject or discipline, machinations of national identity are invariably fraught, its manifestations varied and uneven, and the claim of belonging and to citizenship commonly and often painfully contested. Thus, Koolhaas and Petermann's question at the beginning of this article, underpinning the theme 'Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014' at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale, cannot elicit a straightforward 'yes' or 'no' answer.

Given the foundational relevance of 'nation' to 'architecture', particularly to our understanding of the relationship between style, dominion, identity, and belonging, the question of how the discipline may be advanced through the journal has been key. Since its inception, the breadth and natures of architecture-related articles reveal a rich variety of cultural contexts, socio-political, historical, methodological, formal, representational and aesthetic concerns, each offering alternative ways to understand ideas of nation through the medium of architecture. A significant 'architectural moment' in the journal's history was a special issue edited by Carmen Popescu entitled Space, Time: Identity (2006). Popescu's introduction to the issue highlighted the intimate yet often paradoxical relationship between architecture and identity, supported by a 'collaboration of ideology and aesthetics' (p. 189). Drawing upon the work of Heidegger, Norberg-Schultz, Arendt, Kafka, Hegel, Kant, Frampton and Ruskin,

Popescu frames questions of Space and Time, or more specifically the tension which arises from their privileging of place and history respectively. In doing so, she sets out a schema for understanding the creation of national styles and architectural expressions of local identity, while setting the scene for the articles which follow. For clarity, these articles are mentioned further on, split and categorised to achieve a certain conceptual clustering with other articles published at other times. At this point however, it is perhaps useful to highlight that the articles in Popescu's special issue share an interest in the tension inherent within questions of national identity, whether intercultural, geographical or historiographical.

Given the imagined reality of national identity (Anderson, 1983) and the attendant use of power to maintain its illusion, the journal has had a particular interest in the operative nature of national identity. This pursuit has been served particularly well by the methodological range afforded by the journal's multidisciplinary nature. This has produced productive overlaps and tensions between and within disciplines, providing novel insights into the use of power at various scales to sustain the myth of national identity. In this respect, and of particular relevance to the discipline of architecture, one could identify a particular 'flashpoint' in the journal's history: namely *National Identities in retrospect* (Catterall et al., 2011). This special issue offered implicit challenges to the self-knowledge and awareness of the discipline of architecture. The editors – 13 years after the launch of the journal – used their introduction to reassert the journal's focus on identity, acknowledging the increasing complexity of national identity construction within emerging and contested social formations. The editors also confirmed a certain maturation of the cross-disciplinary dimension of the journal while lamenting the fact that submissions from the 'non-west' have not been as forthcoming as they would have liked. The articles underlined the complex conceptual and contextual

challenges regarding national identity, as debated within the fields of social science and the humanities. The retrospective issue represented – in a philosophical and disciplinary sense – 'points of no return' for architecture, indirectly charging the discipline with the task of reimagining its boundaries. Articles of particular interest in this respect include *How Geography shapes National Identities* (Herb & Kaplan), which reflects critically on how geography submissions to *National Identities* have addressed questions of representation within increasingly fluid and shifting territories, pointing presciently towards the impact of escalating mobilities in the literal, virtual and conceptual sense. *Space and identity: constructions of national identities in an age of globalisation* (Carrier & Rembold) examined how the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences and humanities has led to the identification of forms of identity which intersect with or transgress (although never quite usurp) national identity in radical and novel ways. In dealing with representation and space respectively, these two articles identify topics which lay at the heart of architectural discourse, and hint towards a need to further pursue the extended relationality of the architectural object. The importance of the question of interdependency – in particular to questions of epistemology – can be seen in the remaining articles contained in the retrospective. The mutual reliance of national identities and, in-turn, globalisation (Catterall), emergent identities (Jelen), religion (Dingley) or rhetoric (Bruner), clearly point to the need for conjunctural analysis to achieve deep understanding.

Another special issue of more direct interest here is *Architecture and the construction of national identity* (2012), edited by Raymond Quek. As if answering the call of the Journal's Co-Editors for more geographically and culturally diverse submissions, Quek's special issue brought together articles from East Asia to South America. The focus was on how expressions of national identity in buildings from

various typologies are most accurately understood through a transnational lens and intersecting with the formal concerns of modernist architecture. As with Popescu's, articles from Quek's special issue and other architecture articles published discretely in general issues, are discussed below.

Categorisation

Thirty-five architecture articles were analysed, spanning the journal's twenty-one year history. Of the thirty-five reviewed, twenty-four articles are included here as representative of the thematic range of interests. Articles not included from those initially surveyed were omitted only due to limitations of length and the need for focus, hopefully achieved by this article's emphasis on buildings as the primary objects of study. One architecture article not included as a result of this, is an education-focused institutional study of the Bauhaus and its 'role in constructing the interconnective life of a nation' (Deane, 2012). That Deane's article did not meet the criteria of this review (nor fit within the categories identified) speaks of its novelty and possibly signals the need for greater engagement with its field of inquiry. Others not included involved areas of inquiry of noteworthy relation and relevance to architecture. These dealt with exhibitions (Kaiser, 1999; Rembold, 1999; Schrenk, 1999; Smits & Jansen, 1999), landscape (Le Couedic, 2006; Taylor, 1999; Zutz, 2014) and memorials (Freestone & Veale, 2004). Particular articles from other disciplines initially considered, including English, History and Sociology, deal with essential issues of space and identity (although not architecture directly) using frameworks from philosophy (Leonard, 2003), law (Mohr, 2003) and literature (Rosenfeld, 2002). These articles, although not reviewed here, speak of the evolving interdisciplinarity of research into architecture, space and national identity.

The articles which have been included in this review are categorised below in one of the following sections: 'Typology', 'Remembrance', and 'Geopolitics'. While categorisation always risks reduction, it is offered here to tentatively differentiate the concerns of authors, define loose associations and to allow some kind of cognition of the intellectual territory. Predictably, the categories overlap, and the extent to which a paper adheres to its category as opposed to overlapping with another is left for the reader to elicit towards their own purposes. The fuzzy boundaries between the groupings allow the potential of novel and productive connections and contentions between what are otherwise orthodox categories within architectural discourse. Indeed, the work of this article is not simply to categorise the interests of the articles, but views their categorisation as a provisional starting point for further work (beyond the limits of size and scope of this paper) examining how the complexification of such categorisations, so rooted within architectural discourse in particular and prescriptive ways, can lead to new inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary understandings of architectural research paradigms, philosophies and methods regarding questions of collective and subjective forms of identity.

Typology

Concerned with typologies most typically associated with the task of representing national identity (palaces, national theatres, museums, parliament and other civic buildings), these articles focus on architectural design strategies used to (re)assert, reflect or activate forms of national consciousness within specific socio-political contexts. Of potential here, and well beyond normative typological concerns of form, function and configuration, is the shared dialectical emphasis on the cultural and political environment. In this respect, the traditional role of typology as stable precedent is softened, allowing for a less static notion of typology which is approximate

and emergent.

George Epolito (2012) examines the ideas of Italian freedom fighters, intellectuals and professionals, and their impact on the debates surrounding the construction of national identities through architecture in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Italy. Maria Helena Maia (2012) reveals how the *casa portuguesa* movement at the end of the 19th Century in Portugal led to the emergence of later forms which played a significant role in shaping how notions of home and national identity were brought together. Both articles expose how complex discursive contexts and the 'structuring of cultural discourse' (Maia, 2012, p. 243) play a key role in determining the legitimacy of formal and stylistic approaches. Articles by Raymond Quek (2012) and Tatyana Stoicheva (2009) also share a common analytical frame. Quek investigates how Singapore's National Theatre propagated the idea of a multicultural Singaporean nation, while Stoicheva reveals how religious buildings in Sofia contributed towards a re-emerged Bulgaria's reconceptualisation of its national identity in the late-nineteenth / early-twentieth-century. Both foreground the pre-emptive role of architecture in establishing the values of a state yet to be established, revealing contexts concerned with an inclusive national identity advocating 'identity as recognition rather than as suppression of difference' (Stoicheva, 2009, p. 203). Mike Austin (2003) reflects on the question of architectural biculturalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand, critically reviewing opinion on the shortcomings of the Te Papa Tongareva (National Museum of New Zealand, Wellington) with regards to the exclusionary inevitability of any cultural form which bases itself on a bicultural identity. He points to the Maori Battalion building designed by Maori architect John Scott, which combines elements of European 'New Brutalism' and Maori carving traditions, as a useful but overlooked precedent for rethinking the notion of origin as a reference point for design.

A second strand within this category concern those articles which deal explicitly with national identity within discourses of modernism and in-turn how this is complexified by international and cross-national forms. Here, the emphasis is on national identity as a negotiated phenomena, one where the apparent naturalisation of national architectures are analysed within overlapping frameworks of construction. Maiken Umbach's wide-ranging article (2002) examines the concept of Heimat and its relationship to both modernism and the global market in early twentieth-century Germany. It highlights how this relationship inspired the search for modern yet national forms which were authenticated through reference to vernacular culture. Through focusing on the ideas and impact of the Brazilian Architect and urban planner Lúcio Costa's work in the 1940s, Fernando Diniz Moreira (2006) analysed the role of modern architecture in the construction of national identity in Brazil. By 'observing the past with the eyes of a modernist' (p. 271) rather than retreating towards nostalgia or populism, Costa focused on the 'dialectic continuity between colonial and modern' (p. 271) and the essential qualities of both. Moreira also points out Costa's instrumental and skewed use of history to justify and narrate his own programme for a modern architecture for Brazil, reminding us of the always partly imagined and operative dimension of national identity. This instrumental use of history is also evident in Styliane Philippou's (2005) article, which also focused on national identity and Modernism in Brazil. Her sweeping chronicle also includes Lúcio Costa, situated in relation to other architects (including Le Corbusier, Gilberto Freyre and Gregori Ilitch Warchavchik), artists and other cultural and political actors, charting the struggle to establish an autonomous Brazilian national identity through differentiation from European culture. Philippou exposes the paradox of this endeavour, highlighting the reality of Brazil's invention traditions (themselves a product of modernity) meaning that

past and future 'were imagined concurrently and in similar terms' (p. 262). 'Keith L. Eggener (2006) examined American concern with the national origins of modernism during the interwar years. Connecting this concern to the 'national mood' and through a discussion of key actors and institutions, Eggener charts the shift from a universal modernism to 'regionally situated modern architectures' (p. 249).

Remembrance

This second category consists of articles which deal with various strategies of remembrance and confronts the question of what or who should be remembered in the story of a nation. Emblematic of the role of museums in constructing narratives about the past and their relationship to the present, is Ljiljana Radonić's (2017) analysis of the way in which post-communist memorial museums in East-Central Europe commemorate the Holocaust, and in particular how related narratives have been influenced by accession to the European Union. Radonić examines approaches to collective and individual symbolic victimhood, as well as the manner in which historical responsibility is contain or allocated between Nazi and Stalinist regimes. A particular grouping within this category deals with the way in which architecture is instrumentalised within various forms of writing. Antonio Urquizar Herrera (2011) explains how literary references to specific buildings afforded them a certain 'political visibility' (p. 109) and agency in shaping national identity or else overcoming an 'unfavourable' past through reference in hostile narratives (in this case the Muslim presence in the Peninsula, as evidence by Islamic architecture in Spain). Through an interrogation of architectural references in two novels (John Masters' Bhowani Junction, published in 1954, and Salman Rushdie's The Moor's Last Sigh, published in 1996), Peter Scriver (2006) addresses conditions of hybridity as 'salient points of intersection between critical architectural inquiry and postcolonial studies' (p. 207). Scriver

examines how literary fiction here is used to represent 'place' in the emerging nation of post-independent India and proposes that architecture, like literature, provides an ethical heuristic framework for thought. Regarding questions of narrative, a not so obvious bridge can be found between the work of Scriver and Radonić, and the work of Stefan Muthesius (2006). Muthesius's scrutiny of the periodisation of nineteenth-century architectural history in Western Europe, exposes the annunciation of particular stylistic periods claiming genesis in ideas of nation. Muthesius identifies 1840 as the year before which styles emerged authentically from various national or regional groups, and after which they were consciously designed. He points out the value judgements of history writers who 'think it is possible to locate major breaks and fundamental changes of mind at fairly precisely definable moments in the past' (p. 277). Muthesius's concern with political visibility is shared by Karl D. Qualls, who writes of the relatively unknown postwar urban reconstruction of Sevastopol, now part of Ukraine (2003). Qualls critically narrates the 'selective remembrance of the past' (p. 123) undertaken to invent traditions and a sense of community based on nineteenth-century events rather than the revolutionary periods (leading to the historical erasure of diverse cultural communities and building types). Articles dealing with heritage in the built environment include Marta Prista's (2015) examination of the Pousadas de Portugal (a luxury 'traditional' hotel chain) which embodies notions of Portugal's national identity, marketed for tourism through 'official and intellectual reconfigurations of narratives about the nation's past and its culture' (p. 311). With a similar interest in tourism, Knudsen et al. (2014) uses Roland Barthes' concept of myth to suggest ways in which tourism sites (in this case this the Amalienborg Palaces and surround district of Frederiksstaden in Copenhagen) can be understood as national identity markers, with their selection epitomising 'an ideological practice which is infused with ritual and

symbology' (p. 66). Both Knudsen et al and Prista's articles demonstrate how buildings which project a national identity to their audiences, and which remain unchanged in terms of appearance over time, can be re-appropriated through reworkings of 'corresponding mythology and ideological bases, because they are ever and always subject to contestation and the flow of power-relations in a very real and dynamic society' (p. 66).

The contextual and conceptual diversity of articles dealing with heritage and the politics of national remembrance, the conceptualisation of collective memory, and the legitimising force of power and authority could be seen – rhetorically speaking – to coalesce around an article by Hilde Heynen (2006). Heynen questions authenticity as a category of cultural debate, highlighting its paradoxical nature and exemplifying this through a comparison of Modern Movement discourse and value-laden practices of conservation. Interestingly, and citing David Lowenthal (1985), Heynen's reference to the nostalgic longing for a lost unity, harmony and authenticity in architecture, mirrors those traits inherent in the concept of national identity. Citing Lowenthal (1998) again, she affirms that 'Heritage and history rely on different modes of persuasion' and that '…heritage exaggerates and omits, invents and forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error' (p. 298). These observations, along with Heynen's characterisation of authenticity within heritage frameworks as 'doomed to be an illusion' (p. 299) echoes Anderson's definition of nation as a community which is imagined 'regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail' (1983, p. 7). Heynen's case studies explore how different aspects of 'modernist' authenticity clash with authenticity requirements of conservationists. One study, of La Concha Hotel, Puerto Rico, examines this clash in the context of a wider search for an authentic architectural expression in and for Latin America in order to overcome its colonial past and its struggle with modernity. The

aspect of Heynen's article which moves beyond formal analysis, is her account of the

manner in which organisations define 'authenticity' in their guidelines. Beyond a mere

explanation of the regulatory context, the account traces the contested ground of

heritage, revealing contradictory definitions and concepts. This progression past formal

and objectival concerns, to acknowledge the expanded context within which built

heritage is shaped, hints at the wider material and social complexity of architectural

nationalism. The challenge of articulating how this 'expanded field' influences

architectural nationalism in a variety of contexts, and one which represents a further

hardening of the political impulse implicit in the heritage-related articles, is taken up by

authors dealing with the relationship between geopolitics, architecture and national

identity, our third category.

Geopolitical

Articles aiming to reveal the way in which architecture and planning is used to affirm

national identity within contested sites, describe how local experience, decision-making

and values are set within wider national and international geopolitical processes. The

term geopolitics here is understood in its critical deconstructivist sense. The articles

here make vivid the faculty of imagination put to work towards a 'conditioning effect on

the enframing of the meanings and relations of development' (Slater, 1993, p. 421).

Their interest in the intersection of power and knowledge recalls both Foucault (1980)

and Said (1978). Said's *Orientalism,* perhaps the postcolonial text which has had the

most profound influence on critical geopolitics discourse, studied the *'distribution* of

geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical and

intellectual texts' (Said, 1978, p. 12).

However, the spatialisation of such practices often involves the (sometimes

obscure) transgression or reconciliation of a nation's identity with its *own* past, as can be appreciated in the articles by Adriana Diaconu (2012) and Monica Riera (2006). Diaconu's critique of the relationship between political ideology, housing policy and housing design in Romanian state construction reveals how the specificities and contingencies of governing mechanisms lead to a disjunction between official discourse and reality. As interesting as the processes of a state formation (and its impact on social and spatial hierarchies) are, it is perhaps Diaconu's methodology which has greater instructive potential. Following the approach to social history inspired by the Annales French School of historiography, she examines the way in which a long timeline of Romanian architectural history was informed by various nationalist ideologies. In focusing not on political history but on social and urban history spanning a number of political regimes, her study revealed continuities in the way national ideologies were embedded within architecture (in this case, housing) and between seemingly oppositional nationalisms that a conventional reading would have otherwise obscured. Riera's article focuses on the 'style debate' driving the question of how the new Berlin Republic should be rebuilt following the reunification of Germany in 1989, situating her analysis within a wider historical debate on the role of architecture in the construction of national myths. As insightful as Riera's description of state influence, were her accounts of the stylistic preferences, ideological bias, and impact of individual political actors and influences beyond the political sphere (including films and novels) which, as much as the instruments of state, created cultural perceptions that determined what was built in the reconstruction of Germany's capital. Rather than promoting the idea that style has fixed meaning, or that form has unequivocal meaning, Riera raises awareness of the 'impermanent relations between aesthetics and politics' (p. 398), highlighting that national identity 'rarely results from self-definition, but from characterising, often with

little subtlety and great animosity, those perceived as being on the 'other side' of the argument' (p. 389), thus fixing what would otherwise be a fluid set of relations.

Understanding of more explicit attempts to construct socio-cultural, political and spatial boundaries which demarcate domestic national space as separate from an Other, have also been deepened through the journal. James Loughlin (2008) discusses Anglo-Irish politics since 1921 and attempts to create a national identity for Northern Ireland which revolve around one building (Stormont, the parliamentary building for Northern Ireland), and a statue which fronts it (of Lord Carson, the Irish Unionist leader). Loughlin examines the propagandising enterprise of political image-building by Unionists following the constitutional division of Ireland in 1926. This was undertaken to assert Northern Ireland as an autonomous entity and a 'natural part of the national territory' (p. 162) in opposition to the national imagery of the Irish Free State to the South. Loughlin assesses the effectiveness of Stormont's design (and the symbolic efficacy of Lord Carson's statue) to establish loyalties and a sense of institutional permanence.

The two articles which conclude this category – by Mark Levine (1999) and Elliot Weiss (2010) – deal with the same geopolitical context. Based on the premise that the planning of space is a discursive practice, Weiss examines the cultural meanings encoded in the design in the grounds of Terminal 3 of Ben Gurion airport, Israel, by Shlomo Aronson Architects. He argues that the landscaped space was leveraged as an ideological tool to control the symbolic expression of national identity. The article focuses on the 'Seven Species Garden' within the airport and questions its claim to reference the 'local environment'. Rather than a considered contextualism, Weiss points out that the garden 'builds a narrative interpretation of the floral geography of Israel that is incongruous with the actual place it claims to represent' (p.

201.) and argues that the 'allegorical landscaping' (p. 200) of the Seven Spices Garden serves to manufacture 'cultural and historical belongings that mark out terrains of commonality [inscribing] identity while reaffirming alterity for marginalized subjects of the state' (p. 209). Weiss suggests that this landscape constructs an imagined narrative movement through an idealised Israeli landscape, beginning with an emergence from the sea and ending with arrival in Jerusalem, as Weiss puts it, a 'kind of metaphor of spiritual evolution from west to east' (p. 201), reflecting a wider master narrative used towards the domination of a territory through its 'principles of exclusion and inclusion' (p. 202). Mark Levine's article (1999) published in the very first issue of the journal, examines how the city of Tel Aviv, as symbolic of Israel's claim to be a modern and essentially 'Western' nation, reveals a particular connection between modernist architecture and planning discourses and that of Zionism as a national movement. The aim of the article was to disclose the epistemological and ideological foundations of Zionist planning and architecture during the Ottoman and Mandate periods (1909-1948). He does this by scrutinising Tel Aviv's relationship with its neighbouring city of Jaffa, and frames this as a 'microcosm of the larger issues that have defined Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine/Israel' (p. 16). Levine describes the ways in which Tel Aviv and Jaffa were differentiated in official discourse – Jaffa as the 'backward alter ego' of Tel Aviv (p. 15) – and how a misleading understanding of Tel Aviv as being 'built on sand' (p. 17) (in other words, a tabula rasa) was constructed through a variety of popular, scholarly, official and artistic representations of its history. Levine goes on to set out the changing urban planning and architectural approaches used in the development of Tel Aviv, beginning with the influence of the Garden City model, an eclectic approach (a mix of Occidental and European styles, fusing elements of local Islamic architecture with those of neo-classical, neo-gothic and art neuveau) and the

dominance of the International Style. The Zionist incarnation of the International Style, as Levine puts it, was 'an intensification of the new/old, modern/traditional dichotomies which characterised all Zionist architecture and design in Palestine' (p. 24) – a break with the past for an architecture 'that could not root itself in the existing cultural geography of the region' (p. 24). Levine's account of the period is a narrative of gradual estrangement of Palestinian Arabs from a Jewish National Home (p. 19) through an entanglement of symbolic architecture and planning, local bylaws, and discursive representational practices.

Threads

Authors of the articles categorised above from an architectural history background are significantly outnumbered by those from other disciplines and sub-disciplines (which include political science, history, philology, cultural studies, art history, anthropology, archeology, critical studies, geography and social science). 'Non-architecture' contributions have been unencumbered by the internal concerns of architecture and demonstrate a healthy lack of respect for any claim for architecture as an autonomous discipline. This multidisciplinary lens has meant more focus on economic, cultural and political contexts as a constituent part of the subject matter of architecture, demonstrating a 'deep concern with how objects, discourses and practices construct possibilities for and constraints on citizenship' (Nelson and Gaonkar, 1996, p. 7). However, articles written by authors from architecture (Muthesius, Heynen, Quek, Huang and Scriver) are not easily distinguished in this respect. They are as informed by and interested in 'wider comprehensions of cultural production' (Borden & Rendell, 2000, p. 9) albeit with more discernable references to the architectural canon. This blurring of clarity between content and the disciplinary training of authors perhaps points less to an intentional inter- or trans-disciplinarity, and more to the nature and

demands of the research interest. In this sense, the 'attention to the practical bases of

theoretical problems...leads to the transformation in disciplinary self-consciousness

attendant upon transformations in the formulation of the problems themselves'

(Osborne, 2015). The problem of national identity, and of collective identity more

broadly, brings with it a particular and threatening type of disruption to architecture. Its

sociological perspective disorders the necessarily epistemological perspective of the

discipline of architecture (and more specifically, its reliance on form and visual primacy

for its epistemic authority).

A useful yet problematic dilemma arises from the interest in context prevalent

across the articles. Useful, in that it reveals the dependency of architectural nationalism

on wider cultural circuits and sites of cultural production.   It also, crucially, maps the

architectural objects of nationalism as mediators of practices of power. As Dovey

(1999) suggests when writing about tyrannical forms of architectural nationalism, they

involve a silent framing of everyday life, and thus lend themselves to practices of

coercion, seduction and authorisation, designed as forms of 'symbolic choreography' (p.

59) which effectively 'shapes perception and cognition' (p. 11). The problematic aspect

of context here relates to its bewildering and ultimately unmappable complexity.

Borden and Rendell (2000) rightly point out, architecture's problem, 'that of the physical

and social complexity of its arena of action, compounded by the multifaceted

negotiations it has to undertake in order to act at all', and suggest that any study which

does not engage this complexity, preferring instead to consider architecture as an

autonomous discipline, would be partial and lose 'the forgotten peoples, the alternative

practices, the imagined representations that fall outside of the hegemonic realm' (p. 5).

Thus, the inevitable partiality of contextual understanding risks the same exclusionary

tendency as that of national identity. In this regard, in addition to the broader

perspective and frameworks offered by interdisciplinarity, a parallel inward turn to

critically reflect on how architecture could further theorise questions of context in

relation to collective forms of identity may prove constructive. Ironically, the

architectural object may yet harbour the greatest potentiality for further theorisation and

for working through the psychosis of national identity evidently laid bare by the articles

in this review. At risk here, would be the harmony of classical notions of architectural

nationalism, longstanding as the common 'metaphor for similar qualities in the political

order' (Dovey, 1999, p. 68) and antithetical to the evident dissonance of the 'lifeworld'

(Husserl, 1978). Alternative modalities for accommodating dissonance could, perhaps,

include an expansion of the concept of polis, founded on the idea of the many and

which evokes 'the space that exists *in between* individuals or groups of individuals when

they coexist' (Aureli, 2011, p. 3). With reference to architecture's 'political

powerlessness and cultural disillusionment' in recent years, Aureli states that the

'problem of form – that is, the strategizing of architecture's being – becomes crucial'

(p.1). Reworking the problem of form in architectural nationalism – and its complex

bond with spatial politics – presents a challenge which, if met, could have a profound

impact on the discipline more broadly.

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Additional Text for Huang:

Yi-Chih Huang (2012) considers the contrast between the architectural strategies for two museum projects in Taiwan: the National Palace Museum (NPM) in Taipei, designed by Huang Baoyu and completed in 1965, and the 2004 competition-winning entry for the National Palace Museum Southern Branch (NPMSB) in Chiayi, designed by Antoine Predock, who subsequently withdrew from the project. Huang describes the role of the projects in advancing ideas of Chinese nationalism (NPM) and an autonomous Taiwanese national identity (NPMSB). In revealing how design approaches connected to historical typologies, cultural references, and values related to political correlates, Huang reveals the context of postcolonial Taiwan as one fuelled by competing national imaginations.