EDITORIAL

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This issue comes into being in a disturbed world. Needless to say that the cities are in distress, after the ravaging of the Covid-19, although most serious issues are now part of the history. Cities as conglomerations of people happened to be the worst places to be during the pandemic, because, density was the prime condition for the spread of the infections and social distancing meant that urban spaces were no longer the desired places to be. Staying at home meant that the cities and urban spaces were less visited if not completely deserted. CPP conference was last held online and has not recovered from that unusual meeting. We are not sure as to when the next one will come into being. Nevertheless, the Journal will continue to provide the forum for the exchange of research on cities, people and places particularly in Asia.

The first paper by Bình Nghiêm-Phú from Japan is not disturbed by these events. Instead he looks at how travellers in Japan experience the train stations. Examining the travellers' activities at modern train stations in the Kyoto Station, Japan, he points out that the factors that can affect travellers' activities include station architecture, restaurants, stores, signage, navigation, staff, and information centres, among others.

However, the paper by Reem Sultan and Lakshmi Srinivasan is very much on the issues that they were dealing with due to the pandemic. They look deeply at the emerging consequences of changing social order in India and Bahrain from the lens of the border theory. Examining the bordering processes and the evolution of social borders at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, they show that with the Covid-19 pandemic, more borders are on the rise, and that they are not simply physical barriers. Some of them are predicted to last even after the threat of the virus is long gone. They argue that it is therefore crucial to understand the underlying mechanisms behind the creation or removal of these borders to understand interests they serve and the people they support or oppress.

Anne Jeevana David and Emeshi Warusawithrana on the other hand, do not appear to be disturbed by the pandemic. Instead, they focus their attention on the application of landscape metrics to quantify the magnitude and patterns of urban expansions in the central fragile area of Sri Lanka. Their research points out that the urban expansion of CFA in Sri Lanka has continuously increased from 1997 and the patterns of density, distance, complexity and aggregation are highly significant with types of expansions such as infilling, edge expansion and outlying expansions. They argue that as planners, the detrimental impact of expansion to the natural resources should be mitigated for the sustainability of the CFAs. Rather than generalizing the guidelines for the entire CFA, they say, the findings could be supportive to find the exact location of high-pressure zones and drive guidelines specifically.

In contrast, Chamal Randika Fernando draws our attention to an entirely different issue; the issue of urban residents who use the public spaces for jogging and exercise. His focus is on stress generated by the design of these jogging tracks which has become a new phenomenon in Sri Lanka. Examining the relationships between jogging tracks and stress, he offers insights from the jogging tracks of Colombo and points out that, there are six main factors that affect the level of the stress of joggers: increased temperature, seeing amphibians in the surrounding, excessive traffic noise, vehicle smoke, dust particles in the atmosphere and level differences of the jogging tracks. Undeniably, these findings will help planners to design better jogging tracks in Colombo in future.

Overall, this issue throws light on an interesting array of issues that relate both to the cities in distress either due to the pandemic or the everyday happenings in the cities.

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