



## **EDITORS' NOTES ON STRATEGIES FOR PUBLISHING RESEARCH IN ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN THE**

Downloaded from: <https://research.chalmers.se>, 2026-04-03 06:23 UTC

Citation for the original published paper (version of record):

Rönn, M., Gromark, S., Fiskevold, M. (2023). EDITORS' NOTES ON STRATEGIES FOR PUBLISHING RESEARCH IN ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES, No 1-2023. Nordic Journal of Architectural Research(No 1-2023): 4-15

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published paper.

## **EDITORS' NOTES ON STRATEGIES FOR PUBLISHING RESEARCH IN ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES**

**STEN GROMARK, MARIUS FISKEVOLD AND  
MAGNUS RÖNN**

---

This mixed issue presents four scientific articles and three book reviews. The articles have been supplemented by a survey on strategies for publishing architectural research in the Nordic countries. To provide a background picture of how research is disseminated, we have asked the architecture and landscape architecture departments at universities in the Nordic countries if they have formulated a publication strategy for research. Several of them have kindly responded substantially to our request. Overall, the responsibility for disseminating research seems to be a concern for the individual researcher rather than the institution. Each scholar at the university or school of architecture must on their own behalf identify the best publication channel for communicating research findings to potential target groups as part of their public outreach activities.

Before discussing the findings, we will present a background and provide a short overview of the situation in the Nordic countries based on articles, research reports, academic guidelines and a questionnaire. The objective of our survey was to learn more about the contemporary research landscape.

There are in all sixteen schools for education and research in architecture and landscape architecture in the Nordic region. A majority of these institutions are faculties, departments and divisions or units at universities.

**Finland** has three institutions for higher education and academic research in architecture and landscape architecture: the School of Architecture at Oulu University, the School of Architecture at the University of Tampere and the Faculty for Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Interior Design and Urban Studies & Planning at Aalto University.

**Norway** has four institutions for architecture and landscape architecture: the Faculty of Architecture and Design at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, the Bergen School of Architecture and the Oslo School of Architecture and Design. The institutions in Bergen and Oslo are independent and are not part of a technical university, in contrast to those in Finland. The Department for Landscape Architecture is part of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

**Denmark** has two institutions for architecture: the Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation and the Aarhus School of Architecture. Neither of these schools is part of a technical university. Landscape Architecture and Planning is a unit at the University of Copenhagen.

**Iceland** has one institution for studies in architecture: the Iceland University of the Arts has a small Department for Design and Architecture.

**Sweden** has institutions and divisions for architecture at four universities: the School of Architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology, the Department of Architecture and Built Environment at Lund University, Umeå School of Architecture at Umeå University and Chalmers University of Technology. At the last of these, the former Department of Architecture has recently been divided into three separate divisions: Building Design, Urban Design & Planning and Architecture History & Theory. Landscape Architecture is a separate department at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and is located on two different campuses in Uppsala and Alnarp.

This short overview indicates that the contexts for architectural research in the Nordic countries are widely varied. In Finland, Sweden and to some extent in Norway, research in architecture and landscape architecture seems to be governed through publication channels at universities dominated by the natural and technical sciences. In contrast, Denmark can be assumed to have a publication policy for research that is closer to the tradition within the arts and humanities. At schools of architecture, this division in academic traditions can be seen in the identification of manuscripts in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland as either scientific articles or academic essays.<sup>1</sup> The same difference in vocabulary has been transferred to the two peer-review templates used by NAAR, the Nordic Association of Architectural Research: one is applied to scientific articles and one to reviewing academic essays. However, the

1 See: [Editors' Notes in Nordic Journal of Architectural Research, 31\(2\), 5-8.](#)

two formats – article and essay – are considered contributions of equivalent scientific value.

## Steering of Resources

One reason why scholars should take an interest in publication strategies is that the allocation of resources for education and research at Nordic universities is increasingly based on the production of degrees, processes and the number of published articles (Hicks, 2012). The focus on measuring performance at universities developed simultaneously with the deregulation processes of the 1980s in the Nordic countries. This market orientation was part of a wider transformation of societies. For the publicly funded universities, this idea meant that they should be governed by performance-based indicators, which in turn is a fundamental steering policy in New Public Management (NPM). The underlying assumption is that the state (government) ought to increase its control over how education and research are financed at universities and that competition for resources leads to more cost-effective operations (Henning, 2013). Typical examples of performance-based measures in research are the number of doctoral degrees, external funding and bibliometric research indicators for measuring scientific success (Research Excellence Framework). The effects of applying NPM on public sector performance are still very controversial after nearly thirty years of reforms (Verbeeten & Spekle, 2015). This becomes evident if one takes a closer look at the universities' publication strategies.

Since 2009, the *Swedish Research Council* has been commissioned by the government to present bibliometric data as a basis for state funding of universities. Henning (2013) points out that government research funding to universities in Sweden has increasingly been based on performance-based indicators. One of these is the bibliometric measure, which primarily consists of the number of citations in the databases of Scopus and the Web of Science. *NJAR*, for example, is for this reason indexed in Scopus. Görnerup (2013) notes that 6 out of 10 universities in Sweden applied performance measures as a foundation for the allocation of financial support to faculties. At the same time, the requirements for reporting and measuring different activities increased at the university department level: 34 out of 37 departments received funding based on performance. Bibliometric data have been used as one of the key measurements for the allocation of internal resources for research among university departments.

From Chalmers University of Technology we received reports showing a very complex system for calculating scholarly achievement and financial compensation based on publications (Chalmers, 2022). The scholarly output in Scopus for the period 2012–2018 at the Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering at Chalmers includes the following publicati-

ons: articles (669), papers in proceedings (268), book chapters (47), books (4) and others (4). Of these 205, 21 % have been published through *Gold open access* (Rahman & Thörnström, 2020).

In 2022, the *Swedish Research Council* was commissioned by the government to update the use of indicators for scientific production and citations as support for allocating 2023 governmental grants to the universities.<sup>2</sup> The report shows an overview of the subject area used for funding according to bibliometric performance indicators. However, architecture and landscape architecture are not mentioned in the Swedish presentation of academic subjects. Architecture is seen as a subject within the humanities, hidden under art. Architecture may also be found under technical science, concealed behind the subject of civil engineering. But the humanities and the technical sciences are very different research fields of knowledge and have separate traditions. Furthermore, landscape architecture has been classified as a subfield of biology and is in this context a part of the agriculture sciences.<sup>3</sup> As disciplines and academic subjects, architecture and landscape architecture are made invisible by the *Swedish Research Council*, hidden under different subjects, despite their long-acknowledged history of providing expressions of cultural identity for citizens in the form of, for example, buildings, public spaces, parks and infrastructure.

In Norway, a new system of bibliometrics as part of a performance-based system for governmental grants to universities was introduced in 2006. This system has influenced a similar development of models in Denmark (BFI) and Finland (JUFO) for identifying and ranking publication channels. These models include bibliometric research indicators. Performance-based management has been criticized on good grounds and for many reasons.<sup>4</sup> In 2021, the BFI model in Denmark was surprisingly and suddenly closed, but it later returned in the form of a platform called NORA, *National Open Research Analytics*.<sup>5</sup> The performance-based BFI model for distributing financial compensation will no longer be applied in Denmark since its replacement by this new general infrastructure concept, which is being marketed with a promising future vision.<sup>6</sup> According to the website, NORA will provide information about Danish research, from publications to patents, from datasets to funding, etc. The future will tell if NORA is a better operating system for reducing the administrative burden on scholars, departments, university libraries, national authorities and governments responsible for research and higher education.

In Norway, the performance-based system for classification and ranking of research publications has been operating for sixteen years. The *Directorate for ICT and Joint Services in Higher Education and Research* developed the system in close collaboration with the National Board of Scholarly Publishing.<sup>7</sup> The scoring of performance is a product of the choice of *publication channel* (publishing house, journal, series, website)

2 See: <https://www.vr.se/analys/sa-arbetar-vi-med-analys/bibliometri.html>

3 See: <https://www.vr.se/download/18.3025964718093ee33a1cf81/1652889022112/Bibliometriskt%20underlag%20of%20C3%B6r%20medelsf%C3%B6rdelning.pdf>

4 See: <https://scholarlypublications.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2729179/view>

5 See: <https://forskningsportal.dk/>

6 See: <https://medarbejdere.au.dk/en/pure/bfi>

7 See: <https://npi.hkdir.no/organisering/npu?id=1109>

and *publication form* (conference paper, article/essay, chapter in an anthology, monograph, etc.). The publications are classified from 0 to level 2 according to their scientific importance for the subject at hand. Level 2 is for publication channels that are top-ranked and have a leading position in their research field. In Norway, financial compensation to the institution is based on the classification of the publication channel and its ranking of publications, not on the quality of the individual contributions published in journals, proceedings and anthologies. The choice of publication channel determines the amount of remuneration to the scholar's home institution. The point here is that the production of research findings is built into the system to be used for calculating financial compensation within universities.

The nomination and selection of journals at the highest scientific level with the largest distribution of performance-based compensation will of course be embedded with conflicting interests. This ranking of publication channels in Norway is done by a panel of peers representing the specific academic area of knowledge – in this case architecture, landscape architecture and design. Their recommendation is of great importance for researchers, editorial boards and publishing houses. However, the architectural schools in the Nordic countries have been surprisingly silent about this emerging transformation of competing interests in the fields of architecture and landscape architecture and their research communities.

The Finnish forum (JUFO) for classification of publication channels was created by the Finnish scientific community to support the quality assessment of academic research. The publication channel operates under the *Federation of Finnish Learned Societies*. The ranking of publications has three levels and is done by an expert panel, as in Norway. Level 1 covers publications that fulfil basic scientific demands. The best and most powerful publication channels are at levels 2 and 3 in the Finnish system. In 2020, an updated instruction was published for the ranking of publication channels and publications due to misuse of collected data on scholarly achievement. Information in JUFO has been applied by the universities for evaluation of performance and comparison between departments, divisions and research groups. JUFO had even affected participation in conferences, even though the classification of publication channels was not originally intended to become a reward system on an individual level triggering financial consequences (Publikationsserie för ansvarsfull forskning 9:2020). The expert panels in JUFO are supposed to make scientific judgements based on an analysis of how different publication channels are internationally appreciated and of their impact according to the global research community. After four years in action, the peer judgments by the panels are going to be re-evaluated, and scholars will have the opportunity to comment on the ranking of publication channels and their impact on different research areas.

If we leave the overall level at universities and turn to the schools of architecture and landscape architecture, the responsibility for communicating research becomes vague, unclear and individual. There are no policies specifically for architectural research and its need for appropriate publication channels. The recommendation in guidelines to scholars is that “you should aim at getting read, cited and published where your publication is likely to be found by your fellow researchers. Journals and conference proceedings indexed by Scopus or Web of Science are quality-controlled publication channels in which researchers usually search for and read publications” (Chalmers, 2019, p. 5). The response from the Faculty of Landscape and Society at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences can be seen as another typical example of recommendations: scholars are supposed to display their latest academic articles, book chapters and books on the university’s website. The responsibility for the selection of publication channels appears to be an individual matter and the scholar becomes a singular actor in their research field. The support focus is set on how scholars should correct and register their contributions. From this point of view, the policies for communicating research in architecture and landscape architecture seem to be quite weak. Is there also a lack of collective interest among the research community in the topic? Generally, it is up to the individual scholar to choose the publication channel, and to identify and be in touch with target groups, as indicated by the following comments retrieved from our enquiry:

*... so far, we haven't had any written publication strategy at our department. We encourage researchers to publish only in journals which are ranked ..., but it is up to researchers which channel they use. We get funding according to the level of the journals in which we have published, so it is crucial for the economy of the department and the promotion processes toward tenure that the publications are high level.*

*Experienced researchers are especially encouraged to submit their papers to publications which have a higher rank... [The publication channel] is also used as a tool to evaluate the quality of research in ... universities, and also as one of the criteria for basic funding.*

*There is no actual, separately written publishing policy that we know of. Research results are published in the university library's publication forum... Researchers are responsible for keeping their research information up to date there. Well, this is a policy of sorts, of course.*

*It is up to the individual researcher to choose where to publish and how to communicate their research. We have a minimum requirement regarding the annual number of publications per person, and we encourage the researchers to seek peer-reviewed publication, but it is not a demand. Some years ago, we produced a list of recommended journals for publication, but it has not been updated for many years. The dominant channels of dissemination are articles, conference papers and contributions to monographs.*

*No, we have not had an institutional strategy or policy for research publication other than that all publications must be entered into [the university website]; it is up to the individual researcher or research group. Generally speaking, you can perhaps say that there seems to be more [emphasis on publishing] peer-reviewed articles also within architectural research, but that is not a stated strategy we have had.*

The editorial comments in this issue of *NJAR* will hopefully contribute to the discussion of publication strategies within the research community and the need for scholars to communicate architectural knowledge to target groups. The question is whether architecture and landscape architecture can be regarded as a coherent subject for research and postgraduate education that deserves its own proper publication strategy. Does the subject have significant characteristics that should be highlighted, or should architecture and landscape architecture be communicated in the same way as other subjects in the humanities, technology and biology? We don't have a definite answer to the specific character of architecture based on this investigation, so we hereby refer the question to the research community for consideration. However, what we can say with full confidence is that architecture/landscape architecture indeed constitutes a discipline of singularity, a research subject and professional practice that needs to be developed in a mutual exchange of valid knowledge between practice, art and science.

The scientific journals provided by university libraries in the Nordic countries, including *NJAR*, are measured by the performance of scientific production, regardless of how we think the system functions for architecture as a broad field of knowledge. The bibliometric measures are used for the distribution of resources. Although run by an independent, non-profit association, NAAR, this mixed issue of the *NJAR* will contribute financial resources in kind to institutions in Norway, Finland and Denmark by publishing four scientific articles and three book reviews.

## Articles

The first article contribution by Eivind Kasa is called "Tropes in Hannes Meyer and Hans Wittwer's Project for the League of Nations". In this text, the reader is offered a surprising and intriguingly critical interpretation

of great depth, revealing and deciphering hidden dimensions of meaning and summarized by the general key design concept of *tropes*, of types and typology, or the figurative concepts in effect behind design actions. Kasa refers to Kenneth Burke (1969), who describes the four master tropes as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony. In this case, the concept is related to and applied to a major prestigious and pivotal competition on the global level in 1927.

The article is lavishly illustrated with drawings from competition entries by the two pioneering architects.

The second contribution is Jonas Malmberg's "Säynätsalo Town Hall – a Stage for Art". Malmberg has been employed at the Alvar Aalto Foundation since 2012. He is presently preparing his thesis as a PhD student at Aalto University. In this article, the author's focus is on Alvar Aalto's entry for an architectural competition in Finland – the Säynätsalo Town Hall, which was eventually completed in 1951. The town hall is one of Aalto's most celebrated works and an example of the integration of art and architecture. The project is a result of a winning design proposal in an architectural competition held in 1949. In presenting the implemented design in 1953, Aalto only briefly mentioned a sculpture and a painting among the building's art. However, his vision of this relationship is seen as revolutionary among scholars: the artworks were intended to be an integral part of the building so they could be fully appreciated at specific positions within the overall architectural, structural and lighting context.

Although the article celebrates the Säynätsalo Town Hall and underscores its unique status in Aalto's work, the project also carries disappointment as a companion. One reason for this, according to Malmberg, could be that the architect's great attention to detail in the project was not fully understood by the local stakeholder. Aalto felt that the municipality as client had ignored his advice concerning some suggested alterations. The kind of design conflict we see in the realisation of the Säynätsalo Town Hall is not unusual. Controversies between client and architect are a well-known phenomenon in projects with high architectural ambitions (Wærn, 2015).

The third contribution is by Heini-Emilia Saari, Oscar Person and Matti Vartiainen, and is called "Uncertainties and Possibilities: Exploring Innovation in Architecture Based on Open Design Competitions in Finland". The authors critically examine the understanding of innovation in architecture and urban situations. Thirty-seven open design competitions in Finland are analysed within the context of a long-standing and active commitment to design competitions. The investigated period is between 2013 and 2017. Three main types of innovation are distinguished in competition programs and jury reports, and are classified as a) conceptual

innovation, b) functional innovation or c) integrated innovation. Based on these categories, the authors discuss how the open design competition promotes and cultivates innovation in contemporary Finnish architecture.

The open competition has been regarded as a professional laboratory or an experimental arena that supports innovation by giving young architects and unknown professionals a chance to present fresh ideas and creative solutions to design problems. In competitions, innovation may be shown in many forms, such as urban space, buildings, design concepts, procedures for inviting competitors, support for the evaluation of proposals and rules for implementing winning designs. In the final part of the article, the authors present some critical findings. As a major, astonishing conclusion, the article notes that the popular image of open competitions as a vital tool for novelty, a widespread myth, is largely contradicted by empirical findings.

Finally, we have a fourth contribution by Katrina Wiberg entitled “Catchment Neighbourhoods in the Urban Landscapes of the Anthropocene”, with the subtitle “Connecting Municipal Planning Levels with Waterscapes and Atmospheres Through a Landscape-strategic Approach”. Departing from the perspective established by the notion of the Anthropocene, the age in which mankind’s activities predominantly dictate environmental conditions that provoke natural disasters, the author suggests planning procedures must take these conditions seriously. They should prepare for the worst-case scenarios, such as extensive flooding due to massive rainfall that can instantly create new waterscapes in the rural and urban landscape, but also to establish a renewed relationship to nature by searching for a new atmospheric experience of the landscape. The concept of the “catchment neighbourhood” is essential to actively handling the situation, creating space and strategies for sudden waterflows to temporarily take alternative and sometimes destructive routes. These conceptual keys are applied to related and thoroughly analysed municipal planning situations as part of an action-oriented avenue of approach argued for in the context of a transdisciplinary research project.

## Book Reviews

The two volumes of *Architecture in Effect*, called *Rethinking the Social in Architecture: Making Effects* and *After Effects: Theories and Methodologies in Architectural Research* are reviewed by Associate Professor Leif Daniel Houck at NMBU, the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. The two large volumes document the national research initiative, which in the period between 2011 and 2016 enabled a shared arena for research interaction in the Swedish schools of architecture. As the title indicates,

the main focus of the diverse investigations carried out in this period was the social impact in, on and through architecture.

Gromark, S., Mack, J., & van Toorn, R. (Eds.). (2020). *Architecture in Effect, Volume 1: Rethinking the Social in Architecture: Making Effects*. Actar Publishers.

Frichot, H., Sandin, G., & Schwalm, B. (Eds.). (2020). *Architecture in Effect, Volume 2: After Effects: Theories and Methodologies in Architectural Research*. Actar Publishers.

The book *Architectures of Dismantling and Restructuring: Spaces of Danish Welfare, 1970–Present*, by Raahauge, Simpson, Søbørg and Lotz (eds.), is reviewed by Professor Antti Ahlava of Aalto University, Finland. The book gives a series of approaches to the spatial links between public decision making, social norms and welfare. The authors claim that even the concept of welfare has changed from tendencies of emotional equality to existential insecurity in society. However, it is not apparent if and in what ways this necessarily can be traced to the physical design of architecture itself.

Raahauge, M. K., Simpson, D., Søbørg, M., & Katrine Lotz, K. (Eds.). (2022). *Architectures of Dismantling and Restructuring: Spaces of Danish Welfare, 1970–Present*. Lars Muller Publishers.

The recently published book *Sted, fellesskap og framtid*, by Clemetsen and Asmervik (eds.), is reviewed by Professor Anne Katrine Geelmuyden, at NMBU in Ås, Norway. The book is about the Norwegian planner Erik Lorange and gives a picture of Norwegian regional planning from the latter half of the 1900s to today. In the eleven chapters, the contributors highlight both historical planning ideals and visions of more sustainable planning in line with the challenges of our time.

Clemetsen, N. & Asmervik, S. (Eds.). (2022). *Sted, fellesskap og framtid*. Universitetsforlaget.

## References

- Burke, K. (1969). *A grammar of motives*. University of California Press.
- Chalmers. (2019). Best practice in publishing@Chalmers. Chalmers.
- Chalmers. (2022). Fördelning av departementsmedel till institution – Forskning 2023. Bilaga 1 Modell för fördelning av fofu-medel. Chalmers.
- Görnerup, E. (2013). Från departement till doktorand: På vilka grunder fördelas de direkta statsanslagen för forskning? Svenskt näringsliv.
- Henning, K. (2013). Bedömning av publikationskanaler i de norska och danska biblioemetiska modellerna – konsekvenser för humaniora och samhällsvetenskap. Göteborgs Universitet.
- Hicks, D. (2012). Performance-based university research funding systems. *Research Policy*, 41(2), 251-261.
- Instruktion för publikationsformklassificering 2019*. (2020). Delegationen för informations spridning (TJNK) och Vetenskapliga samfundets delegation (TSV). Publikationsserie för ansvarsfull forskning 9:2020.
- Rahman, J., & Thörnström, P.-E. (2020). *Scientific impact and excellence: Dept. of ace*. Chalmers.
- Redovisning av Statistiska underlag 2 enligt Regleringsbrev avseende budgetår 2022*. Beslut 2022-04-23. Vetenskapsrådet.
- Verbeeten, F., & Speklé, R. (2015). Management control, results-oriented culture and public sector performance: Empirical evidence on New Public Management. *Organization Studies*, 36(7). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840615580014>
- Wærn, R. (2015). Bygge och bråk: konflikterna som format staden. Bokförlaget Atlantis.