

A Framework of Minds: Translating Existing Knowledge into Emerging Practice

Architects face increasingly complex theory and practice concerns including pluralist aesthetic and ethical issues about built environment futures and the profession's role in shaping it (Stevens et al. 2009, 2). Some sources argue architects, as creative spatial designers, have a "particular knowledge base" (Till 2008, 4; Lawson 2006) and "system of constructs" (Wilson 1996, 33) through which they understand and evaluate the environment differently from non-architects. This paper examines how architects perceive their own knowledge and the "different systems of dispositions they have acquired" from the professional and academic field of architecture (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 102). In this context knowledge refers to the fusion of academic and non-academic practice and discourse applied to inner-city projects and the quality of urban space.

The paper presents a theoretical framework and methodology for architectural research that locates and extracts individual accounts from architects identified as critical leaders, artists, and thinkers about how architectural knowledge might be better applied in dynamic inner-city development contexts. The paper discusses methods to translate individual tacit knowledge to inform knowledge practice based on concepts of transformative knowledge, linked to process and transformative vocation (Unger 1987). The paper compares and contrasts this approach with more instrumental knowledge, linked with products or proprietary architectural research for specialized problem-solving (Wortham 2007, 46). These are aspects of knowledge and research in architecture whose definition and value have been evolving, contentiously at times, from the post-war era into the twenty-first century (Stevens et al. 2009, 1–2; Robinson 1990).

(Word Count, excluding references: 247)

References:

- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lawson, Bryan. 2006. *How Designers Think: The Design Process Demystified*. Elsevier/Architectural.
- Robinson, Julia W. 1990. "Architectural Research: Incorporating Myth and Science." *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-) 44 (1) (November 1): 20–32. doi:10.2307/1424972.
- Stevens, Jim, Philip Plowright, and Anirban Adhya. 2009. "Rethinking Models of Architectural Research." In *ARCC Journal: Selected Papers of the 2009 ARCC Research Conference*, 06 (2):25–32. San Antonio, TX, USA:University of Texas: Philadelphia, PA: Architectural Research Centers Consortium. www.arccweb.org/journal.
- Till, Jeremy. 2008. *Architectural Research: Three Myths and One Model*. Position Paper for RIBA Research Committee. What Is Architectural Research? London: RIBA. www.architecture.com/.
- Unger, Roberto Mangabeira. 1987. *Social theory, its situation and its task*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilson, Margaret A. 1996. "The Socialization of Architectural Preference." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 16 (1) (March): 33–44. doi:10.1006/jev.1996.0003.
- Wortham, B.d. 2007. "The Way We Think About the Way We Think: Architecture Is a Paradigm for Reconsidering Research." *Journal of Architectural Education* 61 (1): 44–53. doi:10.1111/j.1531-314X.2007.00127.x.