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An Oikodomos Workshop about Housing and Proximity.

International Workshop 2-6 May 2011, Istanbul, Turkey
hosted by Istanbul Technical University, HREC

This OIKODOMOS Workshop provides an opportunity for institutions and students to participate in the design and implementation of the learning activities carried out in the Virtual Campus. Three Workshops have already taken place at the Hogeschool voor Wetenschap & Kunst, Sint-Lucas Ghent (October 2008), Institut d'Urbanisme de Grenoble, Université Pierre Mendès-France, Grenoble, France (April 2009) and the Faculty of Architecture, Slovak University of Technology, Bratislava (October 2009). The fourth international OIKODOMOS Workshop will take place in the Istanbul Technical University (ITU), in May 2011. The workshop is organized by the HERA: Housing Education Research Advisory Center from the Eastern Mediterranean University with the cooperation of the HREC: Housing Research and Education Center in Istanbul Technical University.



(photograph: HERA- archive, Taner Uraz)

The main objective of this International Workshop will be to analyze -or rethink- the status and design of contemporary housing in densification processes taking place in European suburban landscapes. Urban development strategies, as well as architectural interventions, will be discussed and proposed during the workshop.

Next to existing theories and practices of the **compact city** -as a way to preserve the natural landscape, control and limit the urban sprawl, reduce energy consume and consolidate social cohesion, reality often shows a contrasting practice of **low dense landscapes**, conditioning an efficient and sustainable functioning of urban systems. This dual reality of the built environment –compact cities vs. low density suburban areas- will be addressed in the workshop.

Both high and low density settlements can be considered spatial constructions which embody one and the same spatial dimension, which we can name –tentatively– “Proximity”.

What is Proximity?

Proxemic models affect our reading and use of space and refer to an important cultural dimension of the built environment: systems of intimate, personal, social or public distances are based on our education and cultural constraints. Therefore, proximity embraces multiple dimensions (personal, social) and at various scales (domestic, urban): proximity encompasses both the perception of space by inhabitants and the planning of space by professionals.

Manuel de Solà-Morales once stated that urban space can be seen as “a system of relative distances”: systems of distances between housing blocks, between individual dwellings, between leisure facilities and residential neighborhoods, between industrial areas, wastelands and residential development areas. As if they were sets of rules to be decided, coded and decoded at various levels, by various agents. These systems of distances do not operate exclusively on a bigger scale: they penetrate the very domain of the dwelling itself: distances from the street to the front door, from the entrance door to the living room, the distance between the kitchen, as the heart of the dwelling, and the bedrooms, being the more intimate territories within the domestic space. Dwellings could be seen as configurations of distances, where physical distances obtain additional meaning: bigger or smaller distances can mean higher or lower possibility of contact, of sharing space. In other words, proximity also refers to a social dimension: sets of distances define the level of collective use within a project, from the scale of the domicile, to the scale of the neighborhood. Distance can become social distance.

In recent years, social distance is increasingly understood as a buffer, a safety measure: distance has become a device to guarantee separation and segregation. In this context, the following question arises: have territorial mechanisms which prioritize individual identity replaced mechanisms based on strategies to share space?

Integration of the workshop with Learning Activities

Learning Activities are a structural component of the Oikodomos pedagogic model. Each learning activity is composed of a sequence of tasks which are carried out by groups of students from the participating institutions in the Oikodomos Virtual Campus. The objectives of the tasks can be to comment a housing concept, to map a site coherently, to define an urban strategy, to design an architectural intervention or to evaluate previous outcomes to build on. Therefore, the activities to be carried out in the workshop are part of a larger sequence of activities which have started before and will continue after the workshop in the Virtual Campus.

Related to the planned workshop, the Learning Activities created are:

LA21: Defining Proximity:

[understanding the different notions of the concept]

In this Learning Activity, the questions is: what does proximity mean when reading or designing housing projects? What are the constituting parameters defining proximity? What is the theoretical and conceptual framework of proximity?

LA22: Exploring Proximities: Housing & Urban Context

[analysis of existing urban environments at different locations, from the point of view of “proximity”]

Different models of proximity can be used to read a site and propose some coherent interventions. Here, various strategies will be compared and discussed.

LA 27: Implementing Proximities: Social Context

[participatory actions, collaboration between professionals and citizens]

Proximity is related to social dimensions, inherent to the built environment and its organization: from the domestic scale till the scale of the neighborhood, social concerns should be studied and discussed.

LA 24: Designing Proximities: Architectural Strategies

[interventions involving transformations of buildings and urban environments]

Architectural interventions or transformations define in a very precise way how people, activities or buildings relate physically, visually and socially: this learning activity focuses on the architectural implications of proximity.

LA25: Discussing Proximities

A critical reflection of all previous Learning Activities will allow the use of the outcomes in later projects and will provide a coherent reading of the contemporary housing landscape.

The work to be done during the Joint Workshop is integrated in the sequence of tasks carried out within these Learning Activities, before, during and after the workshop. This way, the preparatory work done in the Virtual Campus will serve as starting point of the Workshop, and the results of it will feed the activities to be done afterwards.

Concepts applied to the site

The knowledge acquired in the activities carried out by participants before the workshop will be applied to a case of study in the area of Istanbul.

The selected study area for the workshop activities is the Göksu Quarter in the Anatolian (Asian) side of the metropolis, at a further distance from the city and at the footprint of the second bridge (Fatih Bridge), which connect the two continents. The area is situated around a stream, Göksu, which flows to the Bosphorus and a recreative green park adjacent (this was a famous recreation area in Ottoman times). On the other side of this stream, there is a typical sea-side village with vernacular examples. There is castle called 'Anadolu Hisarı' that relates to the riverside and to the Bosphorus. This area was once a clearly suburban area; but now it has been absorbed by Metropolitan İstanbul. On the hilly sides, with the sea as a horizon of the district, new development can be observed, based on less qualitative architectural strategies. The area is problematic at this very moment but its potentials allow interesting interventions to upgrade its sustainable potential.



Proposed Calendar

all activities are located at the ITU, Istanbul

day one: Monday May 2nd, 2011

14h00: Welcome:

- Prof. Dr. Orhan Hacihasanoglu, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, ITU
- HREC Vice-Director, Prof. Dr. Ahsen Özsoy, Vice Rector, ITU
- HERA-C Director, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Turkan Ulusu Uraz, EMU
- Oikodomos Partner Leader: Prof. Dr. Leandro Madrazo, project framework, integrated activities, workshop calendar, planned follow-up.

14h30: Concept of Proximity.

- Introduction general theme by prof. Dr. Kris Scheerlinck.
- Presentation of Integration Outcomes by mixed groups of student participants

16h00: Tea / Coffee Break

16h30: Lecture: “Istanbul: Uncertainties and Transformations” by Prof. Dr. Gülsün Sağlamer

17h15: Lecture “Housing Typologies in the Process of Change” by Prof. Dr. Yurdanur Dulgeroglu Yuksel

18h00: Lecture by Prof. Dr. Beril Ozmen: introduction to the **Göksu Quarter** site

18h15: Pin-up Projects Exhibition Preparation (related to presentation of Integration Outcomes)

day two: Tuesday May 3rd, 2011

9h00: visit Istanbul site

14h00: **Urban Context.** Working session on site Istanbul.

17h30: lecture “Tale of the City on Water” by Dr. Fatma Erkök

day three: Wednesday May 4th, 2011

9h00: **Urban Context. Social Context.** Working session on site Istanbul.

14h00: **Urban Context. Social Context.** Working session on site Istanbul.

day four: Thursday May 5th, 2011

9h00: **Urban Context. Social Context. Architectural Strategies.** Working session on site Istanbul.

14h00: **Urban Context. Social Context. Architectural Strategies.** Working session on site Istanbul.

day five: Friday May 6th, 2011

9h00: **Urban Context. Social Context. Architectural Strategies.** Final presentations (10x15min sessions per group + comments, presentations uploaded in Proximity Workspace)

11h30: **Discussing Proximities.** Conclusions.

13h00: Lunch