
EDITOR'S DESK

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Welcome to the special issue: *Saudi Vision 2030 - Habitats for Sustainable Development*. Led by Dr Yenny Rahmayati of Prince Sultan University, Saudi Arabia, this issue presents a range of responses to the ambitious project inspired by Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman: 'Saudi Vision 2030'. As a guide to diversifying the oil-based economy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Vision 2030 encompasses a range of initiatives in all areas of development. These can be understood through three key themes relating to society, the economy, and the nation. In short, Vision 2030 aims to facilitate the creation of a vibrant, thriving, and ambitious kingdom.

Dr Rahmayati focused the special issue on the intersection of the theme of 'A Vibrant Society' and the desire to maintain a thriving economy. The contributors to this issue have thus explored the impacts of urban renewal and (re)development, and their effects in terms of sustainability and other measures related to Vision 2030. Adaptive reuse and renewal of Saudi heritage buildings takes pride of place in this initiative, as does the question of how to create a vital and happy society through the transformation and branding of urban spaces. Three key questions recur in the issue: What role do Saudi heritage and national identity have to play in the tourist industry and the fostering of liveable cities? How can the diverse needs and ambitions of Saudi communities be brought into harmony with one another? How can the ideals articulated in Vision 2030 be effectively realised through global and local initiatives?

Saudi Arabia does not present a utopia that can be funded through oil reserves, and the salient need to diversify and invigorate the economy has been recognised. Vision 2030 is not an idealist dream, but a more pragmatic approach to transforming the Kingdom with an eye firmly on the future.

In 1975, C.A. Doxiadis, founder of Ekistics, addressed a similar project in his work *Building Entopia*. While anticipating the course of global urban development, 'entopia' was identified as a worthy goal. That is, in contradistinction to 'utopia', Ekistics aims to facilitate the deliberate creation of a realisable urban environment to primarily benefit Anthropos (Man). Although this narrowly human-centred project could be debated (especially in light of the Anthropocene and our understanding of ecology), the fundamental question remains: How do we collectively envision the cities of the future and how can they be realised? Dr Yenny Ramayati's special issue provides a starting point for responding to these questions. Finally, I would like to thank all the contributors and members of the editorial team, including Dr Ricardo Arribas, for their support in creating this, the fifth special issue of *Ekistics and the New Habitat*.

Dr Ian Fookes
Deputy Editor | *Ekistics and the New Habitat*.