

Editorial: Opening a new page for *Ekistics and the New Habitat*

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The International Journal of *Ekistics and the New Habitat*, since its evolution from the renowned *Ekistics* journal in 2019, has proven itself as an active global platform for systematic, international, and comprehensive publication. Undergoing a restructuring in the new leadership during the first half of 2023, the journal now operates on a two-pillar management system, consisting of a core executive board of editors and a substantial editorial advisory board, both characterized by diversity and distinction, including prominent scholars and experts spanning various continents and disciplines. *Ekistics and the New Habitat* journal presently prioritizes expanding its global academic community and enhancing visibility, through raising its standards to attain higher rankings in recognition of its commitment to excellence.

Inspired by Constantinos A. Doxiadis (1913-1975) whose international outlook and a mission to enhance the quality of human settlements founded *Ekistics*, this general issue presents a new perspective for *Ekistics and the New Habitat* journal by focusing on a variety of crucial subjects associated with human settlements, spanning both theoretical considerations and diverse developmental contexts in regular and themed issues. It features four scholarly articles authored by renowned academics, encouraging further reflection on different facets of cities and urban environments. Additionally, another esteemed scholar presents his viewpoint in an article of that nature - a recently introduced submission format for the journal.

The profound impact of industrial and technological advancements since the 1960s, coupled with the ongoing process of globalization over the past two decades, has significantly shaped human settlements. Within this framework, urban planning and design solutions that demonstrate sensitivity to local contexts and harmonize with the community's needs are crucial for fostering the creation of sustainable settlements on a larger scale (Oktay, 2020; Oktay 2017; Oktay 2004; Oktay & Pontikis 2008). In the first article on the critical subject of contextualization, Roderick J. Lawrence (Lawrence 2024, 4) brings to light the persistent prevalence of abstract, dogmatic, normative, and universal approaches from the 20th century in architecture and planning and discusses how the suggested solutions to societal challenges by international initiatives have overlooked essential aspects of ekistics. Emphasizing the diminishing significance of Ekistics theory, that integrates economic, social, political, technical, and cultural factors, Lawrence advocates for a reassessment of the factors driving rapid urbanization, underlining the need for tailored solutions within specific contexts. Ultimately, he proposes the adoption of Living Labs, innovative real-world environments that explicitly connect knowledge and practical application in human habitats. The author contends that this approach can effectively address the current deficit in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 11.

The second article by Jon Lang (Lang 2024, 11), questions the appropriateness of paradigm-driven approach to urban design and delves into the clash between rationalist-hypermodern and empiricist-neotraditional paradigms. The article traces the evolution of design paradigms from post-war rationalism to contemporary approaches and scrutinizes these contrasting paradigms through two significant cases in Manhattan, New York: Battery Park City, reflecting a cooperative and empiricist approach, and Hudson Yards, adopting a modernist and hyper-modernist design paradigm. Lang, drawing on Colin Rowe's question (Rowe, 1983), underscores the dilemma within the professional sphere by considering the impact of unforeseen forces and the political and investment contexts of the projects. He posits that in the realm of urban design, architects often choose to replicate or imitate generic design solutions formulated by leaders in either the rationalist or empiricist domains, resulting in a paradigm-driven approach to design. In contrast, city planners and urban designers typically lean toward a program-driven, problem-solving approach, which involves clearly defining ends and means at the outset, with adjustments made as necessary during the development processes. Ultimately, Lang seeks to address the question: What are the opportunity costs associated with adhering to a paradigm-first approach to design?

The third article by Ruşen Keleş (Keleş 2024, 22), delving into pressing challenges, i.e., rapid urbanization, global disparities in living standards, climate change, natural disasters, the recent upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Ukrainian-Russian War, underscores the urgent need for a paradigm shift, advocating for a global partnership to safeguard and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In this context, the author highlights the need for harmonious urbanization and balanced



territorial development, and explains the relevance of Ekistics principles, established by Costantino A. Doxiadis (1913-1975), as a comprehensive framework supporting his idea. The article aims to prompt a reconsideration of current strategies and policies, especially at a time when critics argue that sustaining the capitalist system poses challenges to achieving harmonious urbanization, balanced territorial development, and the preservation of natural, environmental, and cultural values.

Recognized as the pioneer of the pattern language movement, Christopher Alexander, best known for his seminal work 'A Pattern Language' (1977), presented theoretical viewpoints in architecture that sparked widespread controversy among experts. While some hailed his theories as the most comprehensive contemporary approach to advancing building development, others viewed them as reactionary postmodernism. Yodan Rofè's article (Rofè 2024, 30) delves into 'The Nature of Order', the culmination of Alexander's lifelong work. In an effort to demonstrate the impact of Alexander's ideas, Rofè conducts a survey within the Building Beauty International Master's Program in Sorrento, Italy, exploring the extent to which students' perspectives on the world have changed after exposure to Alexander's books and discussions. The author underscores the significance of Alexander's perspective, which advocates for the integration of life and spatial configuration, eliminating the divide between self and the objective reality of the world. This viewpoint is seen as holding the potential to align human building processes with the living processes of the natural world, providing a holistic solution to contemporary crises. Further, this vision resonates with *Ekistics and the New Habitat*'s mission to systematically enhance human settlements.

Everyday urbanism acknowledges that a city's success extends beyond grand architectural landmarks, emphasizing the importance of the functionality and accessibility of its everyday spaces (Chase et al., 1999). The viewpoint article authored by Mark Childs (Childs 2024, 35), assesses the existence of such spaces, specifically parklets, both in physical structures and narrative representations. It uses examples such as the Bilbao Guggenheim and San Francisco's parklets to illustrate how places are documented and assessed in tangible forms and through stories. The focus is on the diffusion of parklets, particularly in San Francisco, as a well-documented phenomenon, exploring how urban design ideas spread. Additionally, the article suggests investigating the role of narrative in the training of urban designers. It also touches on the comparison of parklet emergence to other urban patterns and raises questions about lessons learned and potential changes in response to evolving technologies.

The contents of this edition, while comprehensive, may not cover every aspect of interest related to settlements. However, they unquestionably present an insightful perspective on various relevant issues. This compilation holds value for academic researchers, students, policymakers, developers, and citizens, providing a unique viewpoint that fosters further exploration in future research, development, or redevelopment initiatives within urban and architectural environment.

Please note that *Ekistics and the New Habitat* currently has a [call for papers](#) for a themed issue on 'Human-centered Planning and Design: From Doxiadis's Ekistics to Contemporary Approaches to Sustainable and Inclusive Settlements' planned for May 2024. An upcoming themed issue on 'Cultures, Communication, Communities: Re-imagining the city - legacies, challenges, possibilities' is planned to be released in September 2024, in addition to regular issues of the journal.

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