

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



Housing and Proximity.

The main objective of the International Workshop will be to analyze or rethink the status and design of the contemporary domicile in **densification processes** in European (sub)urban landscapes.

Besides existing theories and practices of the compact city as a way to preserve the natural landscape, 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 will be equally considered during the workshop.

This workshop focuses on the relation between the housing typology and its (sub)urban surrounding and stimulates critical reflection about recent phenomena on an international level.

Proximity

The workshop will start from the idea that urban space is based on **models of proximity**: on a small scale, as well as on a bigger scale. Nevertheless, we should ask ourselves: what does proximity refer to?

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 personal education and cultural references. However, proximity can refer as well to the built environment itself.

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 till the front door, from the entrance door till the living room, the distance between the kitchen, as the heart of the dwelling, and the bedrooms, being the more intimate territories within the domicile. 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 as well refers to a social dimension: sets of distances define the level of collective use within a project, from the scale of the domicile, till the scale of the neighborhood. Distance can become social distance.

Lately, social distance is increasingly understood as a buffer, a safety measure: distance became a device to guarantee separation and segregation. The question remains: have territorial mechanisms, based on individual use of space, responding to fear for insecurity and a desire for people to distinguish themselves socially from their neighbors, taken over initial collective strategies?

Outcomes

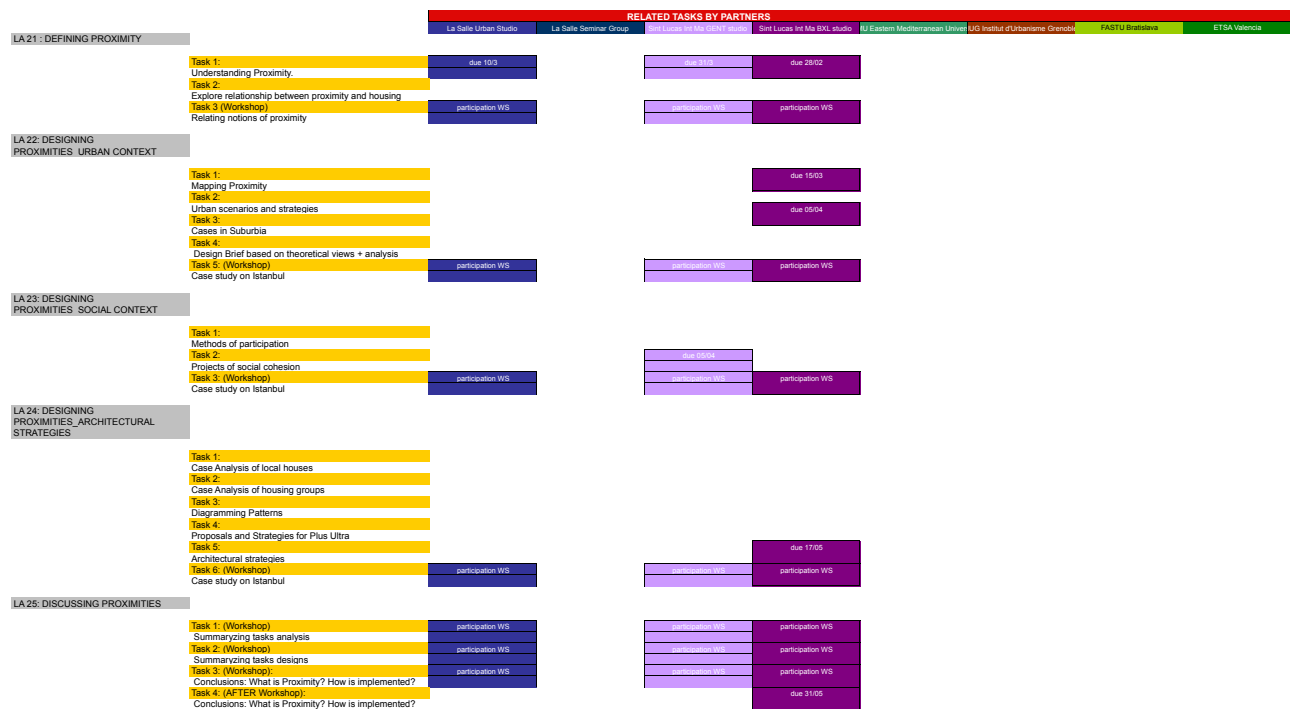
The proposed outcome of the workshop will be multiple:

- a critical reflection on housing and proximity in a contemporary landscape
- a comparative study of previously studied areas in different European cities (Brussels, Cyprus, Barcelona...) This first part will be explained on the first day of the workshop, to introduce and compare different experiences and to define possible methodologies for the in situ project
- an in situ **project**: a selected area within the metropolitan area of Istanbul (Turkey). This will be the main part of the workshop activity and includes visits, input sessions and introduction to local agents.

For the two last cases, we will focus on reading of the environment and the formulation of alternative **design strategies**. The challenge is to deal with aging population and its resulted isolation, with mobility problems on different scales, the fragility of the natural environment and resources and its decreasing productivity. Special attention will be given to models of proximity: from measured (social) distances and proportions of spaces within the domiciles themselves, till tactics of distance regulation at the scale of the neighborhood, or the issue of access to urban facilities for its population.

A critical comparison and evaluation of the different readings and proposed interventions will take place during four days of working sessions, and completes with a day of presenting conclusions.

Integration with Learning Activities



The joint workshop and related Learning Activities can be seen as a way to analyze, compare, discuss and evaluate the theme of housing and proximity.

The Learning Activities are integrated and structured according to different themes, independent from the partner's local organization or their geographic position. In this part of the Oikodomos project, the Learning Activities are set up as **transversal themes**, to be discussed and further developed during the workshop itself. Some of the LA's relate to more conceptual issues, other are more project/design related.

The Learning Activities related to the workshop are:

- LA 21: Defining Proximity (ongoing tasks...)
- LA 22: Designing Proximities: Urban Context
- LA 23: Designing Proximities: Social Context
- LA 24: Designing Proximities: Architectural Strategies
- LA 25: Discussing Proximities

Within each Learning Activity, a list of tasks is defined, where each partner can decide to plug in the local activities. Some tasks can be common tasks, others can be specific for each partner activity. (see spreadsheet attached and document in google docs, to be completed and updated by all partners)

Activities before workshop: (1)

All partners will work on three types of Learning Activities before the workshop:

1. **Concept:** Housing and Proximity: a critical review of the concept and its relevance to the contemporary (sub) urban landscape (eg. reacting to project blog, concept of proximity)
2. **Project:** related to a specific local site (eg. Brussels, Barcelona, Grenoble...) (each partner defines this local site), to be mapped and analyzed with a proposal for intervention, to reconfigure an existing area and to densify (optimize) the existing urban fabric.
3. **Workshop Project:** introduction, preparation and interpreting of information related to the Workshop Site (around Istanbul)

All partners and their participants should follow-up closely all integrated activities and interact: above all, the Oikodomos project is about the integrated study of housing in a contemporary landscape, of which the workshop is only a perfect excuse to generate this study and discussion.

During workshop:

The contents of the workshop are multiple and follow the Learning Activities Integration strategy:

1. **Concept of Proximity.** Presentation of results of the LA's before the workshop (1) (first day), seen as general introduction.
2. Working sessions on a chosen site within the metropolitan area of Istanbul, to be mapped and analyzed with a proposal for intervention, to reconfigure an existing area and to densify (optimize) the existing urban fabric. This part could have the following sequence:
 - Urban Context.**
 - Social Context.**
 - Architectural Strategies.**
3. Comparison, conclusions and reflections. **Discussing Proximity.**

Proposed Calendar:

day one: Monday May 2nd, 2011

morning: arriving, settling

14h00: welcome,

14h15: **Concept of Proximity.** Introduction general theme. Relation to outcomes first task.

14h45: **Urban Context. Social Context. Architectural Strategies.** Presentation sessions LS, SL, EMU, FASTU, UIG (6x15 min. session to present resume of tasks outcomes) of previous (local) case studies.

break

16h30: intro site, context, background

19h00: dinner

day two: Tuesday May 3rd, 2011

10h00: visit Istanbul site, contacts site

13h00: **Urban Context.** Working session on site Istanbul, based on previous experiences (1)

17h00: lecture ITU

day three: Wednesday May 4th, 2011

10h00: **Urban Context. Social Context.** Working session on site Istanbul, based on previous experiences

13h00: **Urban Context. Social Context.** Working session on site Istanbul, based on previous experiences, +

17h00: lecture ITU

19h00: dinner (informal evaluation session)

day four: Thursday May 5th, 2011

10h00: **Urban Context. Social Context. Architectural Strategies.** Working session on site Istanbul, based on previous experiences

13h00: **Urban Context. Social Context. Architectural Strategies.** Working session on site Istanbul, based on previous experiences

day five: Friday May 6th, 2011

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

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

13h00: lunch, free/travel

After initial presentation of the pre-workshop outcomes (one presentation per partner), the 60 participants (24 Oikodomos participants+36 participants selected after international call: see call) will be divided into 10 groups of 6 students (each group will be represented by all partners) to work on the specific site.

total 60 participants

total 10 groups of 6 participants

As a preparation to the workshop, all partners inform the other partners in the workspaces platform and build on each others preliminary results, the external participants (selected after international call) will have a “critical review” during the workshop sessions and continue working on the initially proposed results.

After workshop:

outcomes and conclusions are integrated in workspaces, blogs, compendium...

presentations are made in external institutions/universities

follow-up of last tasks

Istanbul Site description

To be defined...