Constructing an Urban Future: The sustainability and resilience of cities – infrastructures, communities, buildings and housing.

• Paper / Proposal Title:

Ethical Dilemmas and Sustainable Urban Design

• Format(s):

In-person presentation / Written paper

• Author(s) Name:

Seyed Mahdi Khatami

• University or Company Affiliation:

Assistant Professor of Urban Design, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Tarbiat Modares University (TMU), Tehran, Iran.

• Abstract (300 words):

In order to analyze and understand the important role of ethics in creating sustainable built environment, this paper firstly defines the key question of ethics and introduce three major approaches to ethical reasoning: teleology, deontology and virtue ethics. Virtue ethics emphasizes good character, while teleology and deontology focus on right action. Deontology focuses on the action itself and considers the degree of harmony between a work and its duty as the standard by which to measure an ethical action. Teleology emphasizes the results or outcomes of actions.

Reviewing the literature in the field of ethics of the built environment could clarify and differentiate the role of different ethical approaches in the built environment. Some scholars, take a teleological view that prioritizes outcomes. For example, in the book
‘Ethics and the built environment’ edited by Warwick Fox, some contributors focus on particular issues such as energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, while others deal with social issues to improve outcome of cities. In this mentality, the development of a City’s form is based on function or its goals and results and the main focus is on outcome and benefit. In this approach, the main question is ‘What does Built environment do?’

On the other side, some scholars, like Karsten Harries in his book ‘The ethical function of architecture’, consider ethics as the character of architecture. The main question of this approach is ‘What should architecture or urban design be?’ rather than ‘What does architecture or urban design do?’

This paper by discussing these different ethical approaches, tries to explain Ethical Dilemmas of sustainable urban design and also analyzes differences of these ethical attitudes toward built environment to clarify their domain of influences to reach sustainable urban design.

Key words: ethics, urban Design, Sustainable Design.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

  Born in September 1980, Tehran, Iran.
  Bachelor of Architecture, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran.
  Masters of Urban Design, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.
  Ph.D. of Urban Design, The university of Sydney, Sydney, Australia.

  Seyed Mahdi Khatami is a member of academic board of Urban Design in the Faculty of Art and Architecture, Tarbiat Modares University (TMU), Tehran, Iran. Dr Khatami has written several papers and three books in the area of ‘ethics of the built environment’ as well as ‘Islamic architecture and urbanism’. He has also presented several papers in different international conferences around the world.

  Dr Khatami has taught different courses for undergraduate and postgraduate students in The university of Sydney, Tarbiat Modares University and some other universities of Iran. These courses Include:

  - The Theory and History of Architecture (Bachelor of Architecture)
  - Urban Design World Experiences (Master of Urban Design)
  - Islamic and Persian Cultural Influences on Urban Structure (Master of Urban Design)
  - Urban Studio (Master of Urban Design)
  - Advanced Research Methods (Master of Urban Design & urban Planning)
  - Urban Law (Master of Urban Planning)
  - City and Globalization (Ph.D. of Urban Studies)