TOWARDS A NEW BUILDING’S ETHICS

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Guest Editors: Antonello Sanna, Giuseppe Di Giuda, Lavinia Tagliabue
asanna@unica.it
giuseppemartino.digiuda@unito.it
lavinachiara.tagliabue@unito.it

Special Issue Brief

One of the many effects of the recent pandemic is the renewed attention to the relationship between humanity and nature, intended as a discontinuity of a linear development process based on the market economy in its multiple interactions.

The idea behind the European Commission’s Renovation Wave Strategy for the built environment focuses, perhaps for the first time, on the importance of the lifestyle quality combined with the anthropic transformation of places, according to three main action lines: greening our buildings, creating jobs, and improving lives.

Considering the issue of lifestyles, production, and consumption as a prerequisite for implementing operational choices, including technical ones, means focusing on the ethical dimension assumed by this approach. The individual’s caring, placed as a priority by the health emergency for protecting human lives, nowadays acquires an extended value compared to the entire ecosystem that characterizes the physiognomy of the contemporary city. There is also a second aspect that pertains to the ability to govern the complexity of this system of relations and represents the central paradigm of the new modernity, that is the combination of economic development and social protection, technological innovation, and environmental sustainability.

The two tracks on which economic and financial support policies are currently being routed are, in fact, those of ecological transition and digitalization of processes. Both tracks are an integral part of a cultural trend the construction sector is also bound to embrace as a prerequisite for identity and a matrix for development.

This new trend leads us to orient ourselves towards a profound paradigm shift, which involves, on the one hand, the skills profile and, on the other, the definition of tools and methods that allow the operational implementation of actions. In this sense, the time variable is strategic for the effectiveness of shared solutions, which are essential, according to the almost unanimous assessments of the most accredited international scientific bodies, to counteract the climate and environmental challenges threatening us with increasingly faster acceleration.

To the extent of moving from the idea of “resource accounting”, implicit in the concept of sustainability as a “limit to development”, to a more customizable and complex version of the social use of techniques, which derives from the concept of resilience/anti-fragility and involves not only “adaptation” and “resistance”, but “improvement” and co-evolution within and beyond crises.

Three main topics have been identified:

1 - Managing the complexity

• A critical and epistemological approach to the social use of technologies in post-Fordist modernity.

2 - Resilient/anti-fragile built environment

• The linear model to the circular model transition for an “anti-fragile” built environment after the pandemic.
• The inhabited space: from the crisis of the hyper-specialized approach to the “new multifunctionality” between urban concentration and low density.
• New Bauhaus and Renovation Wave: the new horizon of the ecological transition for the built environment, between education, research, and design.

3 - New frontiers for cognitive building.

• The Green Digital Twin for built environmental sustainability.
• BIM-based life cycle assessment perspective.

4 - Space & Society. To be living with crises.

• The variable of occupancy on the energy and environmental impact of buildings.
• Anti-pandemic resilience for health emergency and social fragmentation: spatial rules and the role of digitalization for the variable distribution of shared spaces and living.
• Digital and ecological transition for the built environment.

5 - The building assets in the “Knowledge Society”: implementing new Information Systems for design and management.

• The evaluation of people flows in relation to space attractiveness and internal environmental quality parameters.
• Empathic Building as a human-centered digital service that improves the end-user experience and increases customer loyalty.