

Summary

The new role of the architect for the new challenges of the built environment

Habilitation thesis

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1. Introduction and motivation

1.1. The title and the direction

The thesis refers to the change of paradigm of building. It continues the doctoral research synthesized in Temporary Architecture. Non-invasive Approaches for the Built Environment. Several chapters of the thesis are referring to elements continued by this new work.

1.2. The new challenges

There are 3 axes structuring the new challenges: the environment, the society, and the economy. These axes are defining the sustainability as a general, global, and holistic approach. The linking element of these axis is culture, also seen as the fourth pillar of sustainability, instead of something horizontal between the other three. An essential common denominator appeared as the UN launched the 17 SDGs. Recent efforts of the architectural profession are revealing the fact that each one of the 17 goals are related with the built environment and with architecture.

1.3. About the new role of the architect

The initial role of the architect is somehow reinterpreted, for the new challenges. The role of integrator is supplemented with the mission of becoming a game changer, beside other partners. The architect is called not only to offer solutions to defined briefs, but also to define the brief by building visions and strategies. Another important augmented dimension of the architect refers to education.

1.4. Short professional biography

There are four perspectives or interlocked layers of the author's professional biography: the professional exercise, the teaching, the organization of the profession in associations and the mentor and inspiration for young people. The biography is structured in three decades of evolution. Currently, the present position is defined by being president of Dico & Țigănaș Design Office, Secretary General of UIA and Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca.

1.5. Elements of continuity in the PhD research

There are several lines of continuity with the previous research, mainly contained in the PhD, such as: the sustainability as response to global problems of the Anthropocene; the definition and redefinition of architecture in relation with its role given by the society; the continuous interdisciplinary connections; the competition for architectural services, as research requested and rewarded by the beneficiaries.

1.6. The actual transformation of the profession of architect

The recent projects are capturing the topic of the new role of architects. The book Designing the Profile of the Future Architect is organising 100 voices of prominent architects we spoke with during almost two years of conferences in ten countries, organized with SHARE Society, the author is presiding. Lately, after 2019 when the book came out, a new study was launched: Transforming the World through Architecture. This one is ongoing. It continues the collection of reflections on the various aspects of the complex mission of architects.

2. Structure and content

2.1. The content frame

The thesis is strictly organized on the frame indicated and requested by the regulations of doctoral school of the TU of Cluj-Napoca. Even if consulting different thesis with similar purposes and remarking deviations from the indicated structure, the author decided to give a special attention to this frame.

2.2. Accents

Different actions, projects or activities are intentions, results, or failures, or mostly a combination of these. The complex nature of the postmodern, post-industrial, and even post human transition encompasses series of research, projects, theoretical findings, and teaching experiences framing and open field.

3. Original scientific results

3.1. Previous results

The results described in this section are contributions to building the culture of researching the profession of architect, the culture of procurement through design competitions and the culture of dialogue for construction development seconded by the continuous professional development. Several studies are marking the time of the research of the profession: Architectural Practice Around the World, in 2002, of UIA; the Sector Study, started in 2006 by ACE, with every two years issue; Architect in Romania, in 2010, as the first sociological comprehensive study dedicated to the profession of architect; The Politics for Architecture, OAR, 2010; Architect's Missions, OAR, 2012, mainly for the education of young architects accumulating professional experience; Future Shapers, a conference and an initiative for sectorial politics, in cooperation with the Government of Romania. The other research fields are populated with other kind of results, such as contributions to the first two volumes of the Dictionary of Architects from Transylvania. In the field of architectural competitions and international promotion of the architectural knowledge the results are also listed.

3.2. Scientific research

The conferences for which the author acted as chair, keynote or speaker are numerous and diverse in the last 4 years; 38 conferences of architecture and urban planning, 17 conferences on the profession of architect and 19 conferences on architectural education. This brings the recent post-doctoral activity to a number of 74 events, at the time of writing this paper, already overtaken by recent developments.

3.3. Teaching activity

The span of teaching activity encompasses projects and actions related to preuniversity stage, admission in architecture faculty, design studio, competitions for students and diploma projects. Some recent books are illustrating some more than 20 years of teaching.

3.4. Artistic creation

Different articles from architectural magazines about the projects of Dico & Țigănaș are mentioned. Architext Design, Zeppelin, Arhitectura and Igloo are the Romanian publications all mentioning our works. The themes of the architectural composition and concept of our works are classified: the oblique counterpoint, the asymmetry with controlled rhythms, the materials and the autonomous textures, overlapping of different planes in depth of the space, the transparencies and translucidities, the major fluid curves and countercurves, the parametric development of elements.

4. Career evolution and future development

4.1. Professional

An extended list of won competitions and received awards is presented, together with published works in different architectural magazines.

4.2. Didactic

The focus is placed on the new programs built or under construction, related with the main topic of this thesis.

4.3. Organizatoric

OAR, ACE and UIA are the organizations where the author served as President, Council member and Secretary General.

5. Coordination of research and teaching teams

5.1. Coordination of research programs

Important transformational projects are revealed in this section. The digital transformation of the architect's organization and the coordination of UIA Work Programmes are central. The first UIA Forum in Baku on Sustainable tourism for historical cities is a recent achievement and the World Capital of Architecture UIA-UNESCO, as well.

5.2. Coordination of research projects

Projects for which the author played the coordination role are described.

5.3. Coordination of teams for teaching activities

Several teaching activities were and are coordinated by the author. The chapter is highlighting the most relevant.

6. The new role of the contemporary architect for the future

6.1. How is architecture changing?

Architecture is changing. It is revealing more and more the importance for people and for a sustainable future in relation to the environment. The future also depends on architecture.

6.2. Architecture, from trends to change urgencies

Everything points to education. Speaking of education, we need to refer to methods, content, and systems.

6.3. How is the role of architects changing?

Several categories of architects based on their attitude towards the changes of the profession are mentioned. Some changes are obvious and already produced, some are foreseen.

6.4. The study of the studies of the profession of architect

The importance of studying the profession is debated and some events dedicated are presented in this section.

6.5. Another kind of study

The SHARE Society is a platform for projects, inspiration, debate, and promotion of the architectural profession.

6.6. Manifesto for architecture

From questioning on what kind of future we need, to answering by a manifesto, and opening a series of manifestoes by relevant architects of the world.

6.7. The project that unites

The recent book *Designing the Profile of the Future Architect* is presented by sections and achievements. What is happening with architecture? Architecture, what is it? Architectural intelligence and artificial intelligence, The future of architecture, The profile of the future architect, The future of architectural education, and Message to the young, are the parts of the whole.

6.8. Transforming the world through architecture

A new project, new challenges. It is about the presentation of the aims of this ongoing project.

6.9. The Sustainable Development Goals

The more and more known 17 SDGs' are not only all related with architecture, as previously presented, but also with the author activities.

7. Conclusions

Every thesis leads to conclusions. This one points on the following traces of the author: professional experience recognised and awarded; pioneering into the study of the profession of architect in Romania, in Europe and in the World; the research in the field of the behaviour of architects in relation with their role and challenges; engagement with public administration and central government processes and the politics of architecture.

8. Annexes

The Summary of the PhD thesis of the author and a visual presentation of collection of publications, awards, and exhibitions by the author's professional practice.