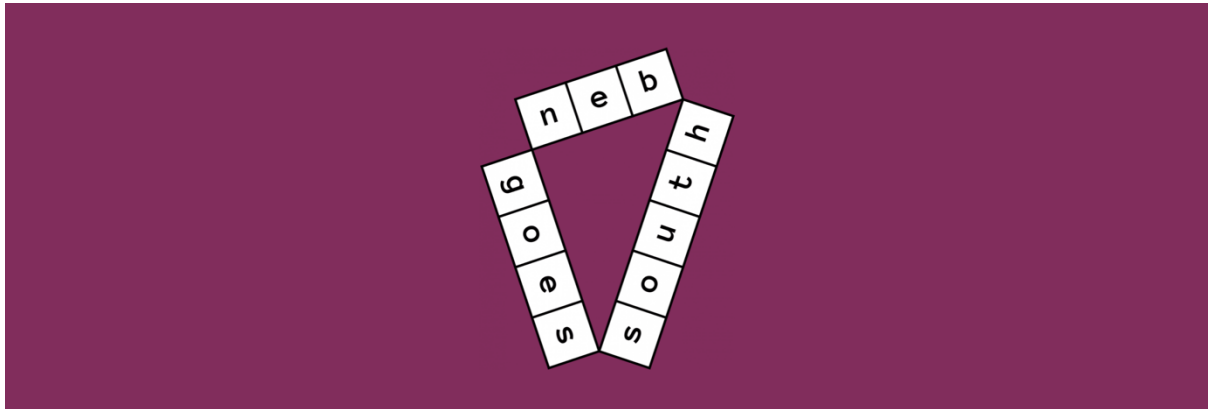


NEB GOES SOUTH | The Question of Housing

<https://www.up.pt/neb-goes-south/the-question-of-housing/>



Parallel session # 3 _Resilient Modes of Inhabitation

(NEB GOES SOUTH _The Question of Housing | 29.09.2021)

Session recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4uF3SP0HeQ>

#3 Resilient modes of inhabitation

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Inhabiting is a shared apprenticeship that shapes everyday life in a specific time or place. In this sense, it is an act of incorporation, i.e., *culture*. To build (not only physical structures but also the know-how of its appropriation) is an as-well cultural process, handed down from generation to generation, naturally enhanced by experience.

On the one hand, this material (construction) and immaterial (ways of living) knowledge-in-action has a background, i.e., *tradition*, which people have nurtured without discontinuities and which today seems scattered among discourses and measures of action. In that sense,

1_How to take advantage of local construction culture to enhance resilient modes of inhabitation?

2_How can NEB contribute to a greater inculturation of the inhabitants into the built environment knowledge?

3_How to establish the patterns of comfort for the “well-tempered” southern house?

On the other hand, housing is facing renovated challenges accelerated by the ageing population and climate changes. The urgent need to develop long-lasting, sustainable and inclusive solutions is generally accepted, supported by "Inhabitant-centered" approaches and active participation of local communities. Adaptability seems to arise as a critical way of resilience.

4_How can NEB bring together cultural habits, tradition and native ways of living and intersect them with health, inclusion and built environment?

5_How to quickly adapt housing to dynamic changes in inhabiting [namely ageing in place, changing needs, dynamic family size/structure]?

6_How to provide tailored housing solutions to specific inhabitants' needs on a large scale basis?

Keywords:

lifelong housing; ways of inhabiting; resilient inhabitation; cooperative housing; local construction culture; adaptability; low impact living; ageing in place; smart working; comfort and living conditions

MODERATOR

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Session JOINT REPORT

The session counted six speakers from four countries (Portugal, Italy, Croatia, Greece) and six different schools of Architecture. It started evoking two keywords: Inhabiting considered an act of appropriation connected with diverse living forms. And Resilience, that is, the ability to adapt quickly to change. The inhabitants and the building structures need to negotiate this process.

The moderator made a specific provocative statement at the beginning of the session: not all housing stock will be refurbished shortly, especially in Southern countries, which implies such intermediate solutions to deal with changes in the life course, and most of all cooperative interactions within the local communities.

In some way, we positioned ourselves in the other extreme of the retrofitting paradigm, keeping in mind that we are discussing vital aspects to guide design solutions.

For this to happen, inhabitants must understand and take advantage of their buildings' inner characteristics, and housing buildings need to be able to incorporate different levels of transformation, that is, to adapt to changing life patterns, ageing, changes in the household structure, among others.

Within the NEB flags, "Shaping more beautiful, sustainable and inclusive forms of living together", and keeping in mind the local identities, traditions and culture of the Southern European countries, the participants of our session want to state that:

Regarding (Point 1) resilience as an adaptation to change

There's an urgent need to adapt housing to changing conditions, including many local specificities. For instance, in Croatia, in small towns, constant population drops pose a threat for newly-planned housing that can become obsolete very quickly. Solutions that merge built and natural environments need to be considered.

More specifically, in the design of the apartments, changes in the ways of living point out solutions where communal parts in the buildings regain interest and could be articulated with service providers.

Regarding (Point 2), inhabitants and the built environment knowledge

Architects should work together with media-savvy agents to disseminate, via widely spread media outlets, a set of good practices that are based on scientific data. These actions would help people see concrete, effective ways to approach their homes' maintenance and minor improvements.

Furthermore, architects should create adaptive solutions and somehow tackle our cultural use of the house with the loss.

Regarding (Point 3) participatory processes, cooperation and resilient communities

The development of housing solutions through the collective engagement of its citizens is already an ongoing process in many countries. The "energy community concept", for instance, was pointed out in our discussion, where the main idea is to consume on-site produced energy. This subject has been debated in the Italian context and could be further explored in other countries.

We also pointed out the subject of Collaborative housing, which includes a wide range of collective self-organised housing, such as co-housing, new residents' cooperatives, and self-building approaches. These housing forms should be further explored in the NEB context, especially in Southern European countries, as the foundation principles of Collaborative Housing and NEB are coincident: environmental sustainability, affordability, and social inclusion.

To finish, we want to remember that the New European Bauhaus, as a policy initiative, should gather the knowledge of several research projects and intra-national initiatives that stand on the same goals and that are already going on, also at a European level.