Editorial

Sustainable Real Estate and Resilient Cities: Management, Assessment and Innovations

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1. Introduction

Production and consumption activities have determined a weakness of the sustainable real estate economy. The main problems are the subordination of public decision-making, which is subjected to pressure from big companies, inefficient appraisal procedures, excessive use of financial leverage in investment projects, the atypical nature of markets, income positions in urban transformations, and the financialization of real estate markets with widespread negative effects.

A delicate role in these complex problems is assigned to real estate appraisal activities, called to make value judgments on real estate goods and investment projects, the prices of which are often formed in atypical real estate markets, giving ever greater importance to sustainable development and transformation issues.

Furthermore, during recent decades, the overestimation of demographic growth has highlighted the need for the restructuring of urban planning processes by limiting the area's building potential, mitigating the loss of place identity with high environmental and cultural value, and preventing uncontrolled land use. Restructuring may also occur through the valorisation and recovery of the existing heritage. In this context, economic, social, and environmental demands are combined with uncertainties about the near future, related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In the outlined framework, the focus on sustainability issues also has significant relevance in the financial sector: EU Regulation 2019/2088 requires an effort to evaluate the investments risks in relation to their ability to promote environmental and social sustainability. In this sense, the European Commission highlights the stress between a short-term approach based on the exclusive profit pursuit, and the need for long-term investment that is aimed at sustainability objectives. This is referred to as an ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) investment rating, oriented to assess the contribution of a financial product and/or a real estate project for improving environmental, social and governance quality.

The main topics of this Special Issue include the following: (i) building management, (ii) building costs, (iii) mass appraisal methods, (iv) econometric models, (v) real estate risk management, (vi) economic valuation of real estate investment projects, (vii) real estate market, (viii) social housing, (ix) urban economics, (x) land, (xi) transport economics, (xii) real estate economics and finance, (xiii) sustainable building transformations and economic effects on environment, (xiv) green buildings, (xv) resilient cities, (xvi) COVID-19 pandemic and (xvii) Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG).

A total of one-hundred and one papers written by academic and scholars from universities and research institutes has been submitted. Following a rigorous procedure of peer review, twenty-five papers have been accepted and published: in particular, nineteen papers in *Journal Sustainability*, four in *Journal Buildings*, two in *Journal Urban Science*.

Furthermore, among the total twenty-five papers, twenty-one documents are classified as Article, three as Review, and one is a Commentary.

With reference to the different countries of the authors' affiliation, the Special Issue has been characterized by a strongly international nature, by pointing out the significant role assumed by the overall topic addressed in the Special Issue at global level. In fact, the universities or research institutes affiliations to which the Authors belong are distributed throughout the world: in the Europe the authors come from Spain, France, Portugal, Netherland, Germany, Belgium, United Kingdom, Poland, and Hungary; in Asia from China, Korea, Russia, Malaysia, and United Arab Emirates; in South America from Colombia and Chile; in Africa from Ghana; and in Oceania from Australia.

In Figure 1, the countries affiliations of the Authors of the published papers are reported.

Figure 1. Countries affiliation of the Authors of the published papers.

A more detailed description of the papers is carried out in Section 2 and the conclusions related to the main issues dealt with by the documents collected in the Special Issue are drawn in the Section 3, by including some wide-reaching and general indications for policies, practices and researches on sustainable real estate theme.

2. The Topics of the Published Papers

The main topics discussed in the papers are consistent with the objectives of the present Special Issue. They attest the relevance of disseminating knowledge and innovations related to the most recent real estate evaluation methodologies applied in the fields of architecture and civil, building, territorial and environmental engineering and to the current tools to guide the sustainable urban planning decision-making processes. In particular, in Figures 2 and 3 the two main categories of the topics dealt with and their declinations are defined and the number of papers referred to each is reported.

A brief summary of the contents of each paper is illustrated below.

In "Research on the Evaluation of Resilience and Influencing Factors of the Urban Network Structure in the Three Provinces of Northeast China Based on Multiple Flows", He Liu, Xueming Li, Shenzhen Tian, and Yingying Guan analyze the resilience of the urban network structure and explore the influencing factors of resilience in the three provinces of Northeast China by using the Gephi profiling social network analysis tools based on the Baidu Index, road mileage, statistical data, other multi-source data, construction information, and the transportation, innovation, and economic multiple linkage network, in order to propose suggestions and strategies for the optimization of urban network structure resilience and the healthy development of the territory [1].

Figure 2. Number of papers concerned the "Real Estate Valuation" issue.
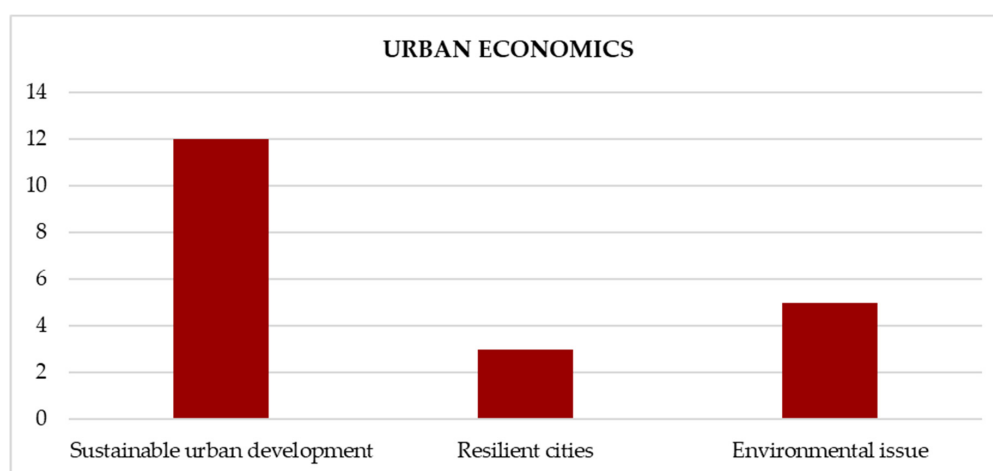

Figure 3. Number of papers concerned the "Urban economics" issue.

The paper by Maarja Meitern, entitled "Does Access to Regulative Exemption Reduce Barriers for Energy Communities? A Dutch Case Study", investigates the set-up of local energy communities issue within the processes of energy transition, by describing the Dutch policy related to local energy initiatives and by providing a starting point for policymakers to define valid energy governance and finance models [2].

The same topic of energy transition connected to the energy resilience is discussed in "Nationwide Evaluation of Urban Energy System Resilience in China Using a Comprehensive Index Method" by Ziyi Wang, Zengqiao Chen, Cuiping Ma, Ronald Wennersten, and Qie Sun: in the paper, 309 Chinese cities are evaluated using a comprehensive Urban Energy System Resilience (UESR) assessment framework composed of 113 indices that measured vulnerability and capabilities of resistance and restoration, by showing that China's UESR is distributed unevenly and that cities in the eastern region generally have higher resilience than those in other regions. The findings of this study may support municipal and provincial decision makers for enhancing overall UESR and its continual assessments could offer policy makers valuable information on energy transition and urban development [3].

With reference to the geographical context of China, Hongqiang Wang, Qiaoyan Lin and Yingjie Zhang in "Risk Cost Measurement of Value for Money Evaluation Based on Case-Based Reasoning and Ontology: A Case Study of the Urban Rail Transit Public-Private Partnership Projects in China" develop a prediction model for estimating the risk cost in the phase of Value for Money (VFM) evaluation through a combination of Case-Based

Reasoning (CBR) and ontology technology. The analysis intends to improve the efficiency of risk cost assessment, by promoting the accuracy and feasibility of the risk cost measurement of VFM evaluation and by proposing several suggestions for risk data accumulation in the process of project management [4].

The cooperation between the public and private sector constitutes the key idea of the research developed by Joanna Węgrzyn and Anna Wojewnik-Filipkowska and entitled "Stakeholder Analysis and Their Attitude towards PPP Success". In particular, in the study the central role played by public-private partnership (PPP) to combine the competencies of the public sector and both the financial and managerial commitment of the private entities in the process of delivering infrastructure, to fulfilling social and economic needs, to rise the quality of life, and to support sustainable development, is recognized and, then, a conceptual model for the identification and classification of stakeholders in this projects typology, is developed and tested [5].

The research entitled "Effect of the Standardization of Service Platforms for High-Involvement PropTech Services" by Jinmin Kim, AhRam Cho and Jaeyoung Kim focuses on the innovation resistance to information technology service acceptance, that is changed after the COVID-19 pandemic, and, on the basis of a survey of property technology (PropTech) service users in Korea, aims at the development of an extended technology acceptance model that implements a standardized service platform by considering the variables of the information system success model and analyzing the effects of specific parameters [6].

In "Environmental Footprint and Economics of a Full-Scale 3D-Printed House" by Hadeer Abdalla, Kazi Parvez Fattah, Mohamed Abdallah and Adil K. Tamimi, the assessment of the eco-efficiency of 3D printing compared to conventional construction methods in large-scale structural fabrication is carried out. By selecting a single-story 3D-printed house in the United Arab Emirates, the authors implement the life cycle assessment (LCA) framework to quantify the environmental loads of raw materials extraction and manufacturing, as well as energy consumption during construction and operation phases; the authors also identify the economics of the selected structural systems through life cycle costing analysis (LCCA). The aggregation of the results obtained shows that houses built using additive manufacturing and 3D printed materials represent the optimum and most eco-efficient alternative [7].

The changes in residential sector due to the modifications in cities inhabitants needs mainly related to the incorporation of technology in spaces and to the remote working spread, accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis, are the focus on which the research "Data-Driven Methodology for Coliving Spaces and Space Profiling Based on Post-Occupancy Evaluation through Digital Trail of Users" by Alicia Regodon, Maxime Armand, Carmen Lastres, Jose De Pedro, and Alfonso García-Santosis is addressed. In particular, the research intends to propose a methodology to understand and improve the use of co-living spaces based on remote Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) analysis of the digital trail generated by the users; the authors conclude that the analysis of the available data from the digital infrastructure of co-living buildings can support and upgrade the future design of residential spaces [8].

Weiwu Wang, Jingyi Liang, and Jie Niu use big data analysis technologies including Python and ArcGIS to reveal the distribution characteristics of Co-Working Spaces (CWSs) in Hangzhou (China) and develop an indicator system of factors affecting site selection of this typology of office that innovates the traditional workplace model; to do this, they promote the realization of efficient utilization of office buildings and the sustainable development of spaces and aiming at provide a scientific basis for the rational planning of CWSs [9].

The issue of urban resilience represents a critical aspect for cities and the identification of preliminary elements of attentions for its improvement plays a central role to oppose the rapidly changing world and potential disasters. In this context, Min Chen, Yujie Lu, Yi Peng, Tingting Chen, and Yiye Zhang in "Key Elements of Attentions for Enhancing Urban Resilience: A Comparison of Singapore, Hong Kong and Hangzhou" compare the

fundamental elements of attentions for enhancing urban resilience among Singapore, Hong Kong, and Hangzhou (China), by carrying out a questionnaire survey to collect data to assess their significance level and to identify comparison factors [10].

The research "Thinking Critically through Key Issues in Improving the Effectiveness of Waterlogging Prevention and Control System in China's Historic Districts" developed by Shuai Si, Junqi Li, Yuzhen Wang, and Lian Liu analyzes the waterlogging prevention and control system in historic districts in China, considered as a systematic project, which cannot be completely solved only from the engineering and technical aspects, but it involves the cultural relic protection, the planning, the urban construction, the environmental protection, the urban management, the development and reform, in order to promote the protection of existing historical heritage and to support efficient management systems. Starting from the examination of the status quo of drainage systems, the paper proposes a series of countermeasures for the upgrade of the efficiency of waterlogging prevention and the control systems in the context of protection and renewal of historic districts to coordinate the protection of architectural heritage and the improvement of the quality of life of residents [11].

In "Barriers to Offsite Construction Adoption: A Quantitative Study among Housing Associations in England" Andrew Agapiou studies the perceived barriers within Housing Associations (HA) towards the use of Off-Site Construction (OSC) and their comparison with the perceptions in the wider housing sector, with reference to the territorial context of England: a quantitative survey is implemented through a questionnaire submitted by an online platform, by concluding that the cost-related barriers are perceived to be the most significant barriers to OSC use for HAs, followed by the capacity of suppliers and by the end-user preferences for traditional construction [12].

The paper entitled "Determinants of the Economic and Financial Feasibility of Real Estate Development Projects: A Comparative Analysis between Public and Private Development Projects in South Korea" by Heecheoul Shim and Jaehwan Kim analyzes the key factors involved in the selection of a development site to guarantee the financial and economic feasibility of a public development real estate intervention and, in the presence of competing facilities, to avoid duplicate investment issues. Through a direct comparative analysis between private and public projects, the characteristics, similarities and differences between the two types of initiatives are investigated. Given the public and private sectors different goals and business development methods, with the scope of improving operating balance, the measures to increase the economic and financial convenience of development projects are explored [13].

The environmental topic related to the pollution inflicted upon different ecosystems by anthropic activities is dealt with in the research carried out by Mario Fernando Castro Fernández, Ileana Romea Cárdenas Manosalva, Ramón Fernando Colmenares Quintero, Carlos Enrique Montenegro Marín, Yeffer Edilberto Diaz Cuesta, Daniela Escobar Mahecha, and Paula Andrea Pérez Vásquez. The paper is entitled "Multitemporal Total Coliforms and Escherichia coli Analysis in the Middle Bogotá River Basin, 2007–2019". With reference to Bogotá River in the Cundinamarca department of Columbia, highly affected by effluents and uncontrolled domestic, industrial, and/or commercial wastewater, in the paper the quality of its water is assessed using microbiological indicators and data provided by the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cundinamarca, in order to determine the pollution levels and to highlight the importance of implementing new sustainable treatment alternatives aimed at improving water quality [14].

In "Design of Social Responsibility Incentive Contracts for Stakeholders of Megaprojects under Information Asymmetry" Feng Xue, Guangyu Chen, Shanming Huang, and Huan Xie approach the issue related to the social responsibility for the sustainable development of megaprojects. Through a quantitative method, the goal of the research concerns the comparison and analysis of the single-stage revenue-sharing model under symmetric and asymmetric information from the perspective of incentive contract design, in order to pro-

mote a transparent information-sharing mechanism for supporting the general contractors to encourage subcontractors to fulfill responsibility and to improve project efficiency [15].

Within the Russian Federation, the need to develop new strategic management initiatives leads Margarita Panteleeva and Svetlana Borozdina in "Sustainable Urban Development Strategic Initiatives" to propose a strategic roadmap for the sustainable development of housing and communal service facilities, in order to ensure a comfortable living environment for citizens. The developed tool represents a practical reference for the state and municipal authorities on the main reproduction forms of capital construction objects of housing and communal services and allows to make operational management decisions within the framework of identified or anticipated socioeconomic problems of cities, in line with the goal of the strategic development of urban facilities [16].

Starting from the sustainable development goals (SDG) and Local Agenda 21 introduced in Malaysia in 1999, the paper "Indicators of the Public Participation Exercise for Designing Public Parks in Malaysia: A Systematic Review" by Ungku Norani Sonet, Mustafa Klufallah, Michael D. Peters, and Timothy J. Dixon, develops a set of variables and indicators to propose a public participation framework in designing public parks in the Asian country. In this sense, the study aims at tackling two critical issues detected in Malaysia concerned the underutilization of public parks and the weakness of the present top-down development policy, by promoting an innovate integrated design framework [17].

The phenomenon of the shrinking city is examined in "Fading Attraction of the Shrinking City: An Empirical Study from an Urban Resource Perspective" by Yuanping Wang, Mu Lin, Jingxin Gao, and Zhaoyin Zhou, in order to define the Urban Resource Degree (URD) model to measure and select the influencing factors on this urban dynamic. Given the spillover effect and heterogeneity of the influencing factors, a Spatial Durbin Model (SDM) and a Spatiotemporal Geographically Weighted Regression Model (GTWR) are implemented with reference to the context of the Northeast China for proposing policy implications to support the decision-making processes intended to the strengthening of competitive industries, to the implementation of urban transformation and upgrading and to the increase of investment in science and technology [18].

An interesting review of commonly used machine learning (ML) methods use in land use planning along with their advantages and disadvantages is illustrated in "Machine Learning Algorithms for Urban Land Use Planning: A Review" by Vineet Chaturvedi and Walter T. de Vries. In particular, in the comparative study several ML algorithms (Support Vector Machine, neural network, Markov random field, GANS and random forest, etc.) are tested for their performance on different kinds of datasets for land use classification and simulation of territorial planning processes. Moreover, for the purpose of mapping and growth projections of land use, simulation models (Cellular Automata, Statistical modeling, Agent-based modeling, etc.) are described, for modeling, assessing, qualifying, quantifying and predicting the degree/extent/direction of soil exploitation changes and increases [19].

Another paper entitled "Mining the Built Environment: Telling the Story of Urban Mining" gives a general overview of the literature body related to circular economy connected to the reuse and recycling of construction materials that positively impact the natural environment and resource efficiency, leading to sustainable cities. The authors Faisal Aldebei and Mihály Dombi investigate the development of urban mining, i.e., the exploitation of material stock, through an extensive review of reference literature from conception until present day state of the art. They analyze the main researches included in academic databases and classifying them based on research objectives according the categories of waste management, production and consumption, environmental impacts, and urban mining and secondary resources, in order to identify the current research gaps and the potential future studies directions [20].

In "Statistical Modelling of the Market Value of Dwellings, on the Example of the City of Kraków" Elżbieta Jasińska and Edward Preweda analyse a database of 8812 dwellings that are traded on the primary market in Kraków (Poland) through a multivariate analysis to investigate the basic characteristics that influence the transaction property prices. Thus,

different methods are implemented to detect outliers, to identify those to be deleted and to validate the results obtained. Moreover, by using the classification tree methods, further analysis allows to distinguish homogeneous urban areas in terms of price dispersion and, for which, a specific set of influencing factors on real estate prices is determined [21].

According to the research by Sally Adofowaa Mireku, Zaid Abubakari, and Javier Martinez, the urban blight phenomenon is investigated through a qualitative method and a case study approach to identify the contextual reasons of degradation in East Legon first-class suburb of Accra-Ghana (Sub-Saharan Africa) and to evaluate its effects on the territorial development. In this sense, the distribution of urban blight in the study area is analyzed and the perceptions of different stakeholders are described, in order to contribute to fill the gap on the root causes of urban blight in the global south, specifically in prime areas, that currently exists in the reference literature [22].

Arlindo Madeira, Teresa Palrão, Alexandra Sofia Mendes, and Ernesto López-Morales, in their study "Perceptions about Tourism and Tourists in Historic Neighborhoods: The Case of Alfama" analyze the tourist-led gentrification, aiming at identifying the local people tourism perceptions in Alfama (Lisbon). In the research, a questionnaire to old long-term residents is defined, to determine the negative and positive effects of overtourism on population everyday experience in the neighborhood. For this purpose, through the questionnaire responses exam, the perceptions that range from a generalized acceptance for the benefits related to an improved safety associated to an increased street-life and a cleaner neighborhood and, on the other hand, the grievance for the loss of a pre-existing community, are observed [23].

In a further paper, Dongyoung Kim, Sungwon Jung, and Yongwook Jeong develop a crime prediction model that reflects the influence of surrounding areas and geographic characteristics on criminal events. With reference to the administrative districts of Seoul, named Dongjak-gu, in South Korea, the study applies the spatial clustering technique to predict the location of crimes more microscopically, using a grid unit, with the wider scope to help to improve the effectiveness of crime prevention by distributing control measures in a more efficient way [24].

Peter Newman, Sebastian Davies-Slate, Daniel Conley, Karlson Hargroves, and Mike Mouritz present a paper entitled "From TOD to TAC: Why and How Transport and Urban Policy Needs to Shift to Regenerating Main Road Corridors with New Transit Systems" that learns from century-old experiences in public–private approaches to railway-based urban development, along with innovative insights from the new integration of historical perspectives, entrepreneurship theory and urban planning, to introduce the concept of a "Transit Activated Corridor" (TAC). Finally, in the study five design principles for delivering a TAC, three principles from entrepreneurship theory and two from urban planning are illustrated [25].

3. Conclusions

The spread of knowledge and innovations through scientific contributions that improve the reference literature field on the most recent real estate assessment methodology approaches and tools for supporting the decision-making processes related to the urban transformation dynamics assumes a key role in this Special Issue. The published papers analyze different aspects of sustainable development of territory (economic, social, environmental), aiming at providing a different point of view on one of the most relevant and current topics dealt with in the debate concerning the effective urban policies definition. The social, economic, cultural, environmental, energy issues [26–31] are fundamental to achieve an always increasing awareness on the importance of developing efficient supporting tool able to analyze and monitor the sustainable urban growth. In all published papers, the city is the main research focus, and the numerous topics dealt with are studied by the authors by implementing different methodological approaches and techniques to investigate specific issues related to the real estate and urban mechanisms in various international geographical contexts, connected to detected phenomena.

During the recent years, the rapid changes observed in the real estate sector connected to the significant variations on urban development have led to a growing need to increase the scientific references in order to define the appropriate investigation of sustainable urban and building evolution processes. The analysis and the interpretation of urban phenomena—on different scales—carried out in the papers included in the Special Issue have allowed us to determine specific methodologies and techniques to support the current debates on sustainable real estate and resilient cities. The prestigious papers, written by international researchers and academics, broaden the frontiers of knowledge on the issues addressed and represent a relevant contribution for effectively pursuing the goals of the 2030 Agenda [32], demonstrating the current interest at a global level, in accordance with the mutable needs of the communities and the international legislative frameworks.

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