Chapter 5
Not Madness but Business:
A Green Paradigm Shift in Architecture and Building Industry

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to shed light on the nature of the current paradigm shift in the field of architecture and building sector towards a concern for environmental problems, ecological awareness, and thus, sustainable design, green technologies, and materials. Having conceived architecture and building practices as one of the leading economic activities globally, this chapter elucidates the role of architecture in creating business opportunities. The chapter tackles the subject from the perspective of technology and it analyzes the recent debates as well as developments in theory of architecture and building practice in construction industry. This chapter mainly argues that the ongoing paradigm shift moves beyond mere concern with environmental issues and creates an industry and economy of its own. The chapter introduces key concepts in the fields of green building and green architecture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the events that laid the foundations of industrial revolution, the human species have rapidly transformed their relationships, and therefore, gradually lost their genuine connection with the complex flows and cycles of the nature and universe until recently we all discovered that the way we have tried to control, change and dominate the nature eventually fired back on us. The way we have organized our systems of production and consumption proved to be incompatible with the dynamics of nature and caused a constant state of crisis which manifests itself in every field from economy to arts and culture. Thus, nature seems to have warned us to reconsider our relationship with it. This harsh warning found its response through in almost all aspects of life and

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in all sectors of economy and industry whereby building and construction industry is no exception. In fact, it became one of the leading sectors in the recent phase of transformation of production technologies and processes from exploiting and destructive solutions to ecological, sustainable and environmentally friendly approaches. In that recent cultural context, the development of green technologies and business practices emerges as a vitally significant issue particularly in a leading industry like building construction. However, certain reservations must also be hold definitely with a skeptical and critical stance in regard to both its use in overdose and superficiality of its implementation.

Along this perspective, this chapter looks into the fields of architectural design and building sector in regard to green issues in business and the role of information and building technologies by analyzing recent developments in theory and practice. The aims of this chapter is to shed a light on the position of architectural design in regard to both the green management of the building industry in the 21st century and the well-being of all the citizens in the world.

It is discussed here that the current flux of shifting the attention of the whole industry and its market towards green architecture and building, at the level of a '*green madness*' is, in fact, not only conditioned but rather imposed by the dynamics and mouth-watering motives in '*green business'*. Hence, it is also argued here that the current paradigm shift may appear as either strategies for introducing new products and new branding into the exhausted market or well-disguised and polished moves to re-shuffle and re-distribute the customer demand among the competing actors in the field as a solution to the current inflation of supply and stagnation of the building and real estate markets.

This sudden and over excitement with integrating our buildings to nature not only brings together concerns and doubts about the sincerity of this movement but also raises questions in regard to how and to what extent this shift will be accomplished as well as in regard to what it will be the outcomes in terms of plausible losses and disadvantages. In that sense, all this mayhem around ecological, environment-friendly and green technologies may, at times, seem to move beyond a mere concern for energy-efficiency, environment and sustainability. By the same token, all these initiatives may, again at times, appear to be implemented for the sake of satisfying the needs of another industry as well as serving another green cartel. As a matter of fact, the prevailing strong winds of green technologies may arouse such a suspicion that if these comprehensive and well-integrated efforts were genuinely intended merely for the reversal of the process of environmental damage caused by the ongoing economic systems throughout the last two centuries, then the emphasis would be on reducing the over-consumption on which the economy and culture of our era is based and returning to the basic needs and conditions of living peacefully on the surface of the earth for the well being of all the citizens in the world. However, the prevailing paradigm shift appears to foresee a system in which greening is organized only for its certain components while subtly retaining the status quo in terms of economy and its main driving force, that is to say the over consumption. With particular reference to the ongoing greening process of the building construction industry, various and obvious inconsistencies reinforce these concerns. Especially the way cities are planned and the way our urban morphologies are still created despite minor attempts to reduce energy consumption at the scale of single buildings and vehicles seems to conflict with each other. To be more specific, planning of cities encouraging sprawl on much larger scales that is based on maximized commuting and the encouragement of private automobile ownership as well as expansion of the car production industry may show clear inconsistency with the policies of environmental sensitivity. Nonetheless, the green technologies significantly contribute to the