Future housing: designing for older people, designing for all

Antonio Carvalho (urban and architecture design), Stefania Sabatinelli (urban sociology)

Improved life conditions and medical knowledge produce to longer life expectancy, but longer life years come with gradual or abrupt losses of physical/mental autonomy. This generates specific policy and design needs, to ensure the better possible life quality and the higher possible autonomy degree. Designing for older people's dwelling implies to assume a universal design perspective and, therefore, designing for everybody. Moreover, it means to be work at different scales: from the urban and neighbourhood scale (eg. *natural occurring retirement community*), to the scale of the building and its surroundings (eg. shared services, accessibility) to the scale of the dwelling. The dwelling scale, in turn, may take many different forms (from the collective structure, to the shared living, to the private dwelling) and differentiated degrees of assistance (from the 24h-assistance health residential house to the independent dwelling). Social analysis and architecture design can work jointly with the aim to pursue the most adequate spatial features to meet the combinations of resources and needs that are specific of each of these cases. Avoid the age stigma and the ghettoization of specific profiles and favour the possibility that different generations meet in the city are essential objectives. The development of innovative architecture proposals for the dwelling of older people is, therefore, the challenge of this Thesis Workshop: designing a community urban space, buildings with new meeting spaces, flats for independence but against loneliness... in brief: designing for the future.
The work will benefit of exchanges with other colleagues, common seminars, mutual invitations at revisions of students' advancements, to enrich the chances of students to receive feedbacks from Professors with different points of view in terms of discipline and thematic specialization.