

Call for Papers

CLARA #10: Inhabiting Collectivity

Themed issue, guest edited by
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Collective housing has gained renewed interest in Europe since the early 2000s (Tummers 2015). This phenomenon was triggered by a widespread housing crisis, an increased awareness of the social and ecological impact of the individual housing model, changing household structures, and, more recently, the social and sanitary crisis provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic (Salembier and Ledent 2021). Especially in large cities, a variety of collective housing projects are being developed (Lenel, Demonty and Schaut 2020). They are carried out by a plurality of actors originating alternatively from citizen initiatives, public institutions, associations or even the private sector, catering to both precarious and affluent target groups. Examples of such projects include self-developed group housing, solidarity or participatory housing (Bernard 2007; Biau 2012; Bresson and Tummers 2014; Lefèvre 2014), student cohousing, luxury coliving, cooperatives (Maury 2009; Carriou 2014), Community Land Trusts, temporary occupations (Dawance 2008), and evolutionary housing (Ledent, Salambier and Vanneste 2019). While some of these projects aim at promoting an alternative to the traditional model of dwelling (Iorio 2015) – more convivial, caring and ecological – others are driven by a strictly financial rationale, promoting “the servitization of housing” (Moussi 2020). Beyond their differences, they share the availability of common spaces meant to encourage interactions among inhabitants, thereby concretizing an imaginary of “good living” and questioning the

strict private/public divide on which standardized individual housing has been built from the early 20th-century onwards (Provencio 2017).

Many of these projects find inspiration in older examples, such as the late 19th-century *Familistère de Guise*, 1930s' Art-déco apartment buildings, modernist collective housing (Schaut 2018), or the 1970s' hippy communities (Lietart 2008). This call for papers invites contributions that examine contemporary collective housing projects, by tracing their socio-political and architectural lineage, but also by highlighting their contemporary spatial, material, social and institutional characteristics. Contributions could for instance address the evolution of historical models over time, focusing on practices of inhabitation and coexistence that they hosted in the past and are still hosting today.

This issue of CLARA pursues a twofold objective. At a larger scale, it aims at shedding light on the context within which collective housing is produced, on their underpinning architectural and spatial models, and on the interplay among the involved actors. At a smaller scale, it questions the intentions underlying this production by investigating its architectural and social mechanisms, and how these can foster or instead hinder certain uses and forms of sociability. Records of concrete experiences or more comparative studies are both welcome. However, contributions should explicitly address one of the following three thematic axes:

1. A renewed interplay of actors?

The various above-mentioned developments and crises have not only pushed actors to increase the supply of collective housing, but have also revealed more qualitative issues such as the evolution of lifestyles or various reference frames (Muller 2015) of a sustainable ecological transition, such as density, proximity, or a circular economy (Pattaroni and Marmy 2016). The ambition to (politically) support innovative projects addressing these challenges and including such principles (Lenel, Demonty and Schaut 2020) has led to the emergence of new, more diversified actors in housing development. Contributions addressing this axis should focus on the context within which these projects have emerged, and on the profiles of the actors who promote them, their explicit and implicit motivations, their work and the obstacles they may have encountered, be they legal, procedural or governance-related. Here, the nature of such actors' relationships with traditional housing actors could be considered too. This first axis is particularly interested in the role of architects and planners and the ways in which they intervene and develop "new ways of doing", through co-production, experimentation and citizen participation.

2. Spaces that foster collectivity?

Ethnographic surveys within community-based housing have shown that the strive to act collectively does not necessarily occur where it is most expected. It can emerge through ordinary, non-formalised practices, such as through the management of daily conflicts over the maintenance of a site (Schaut, Wibrin and Lenel 2020). We welcome contributions that examine the types and material qualities of spaces – public, collective or private – in which occupants effectively socialize, as well as those which are not collectively appropriated in spite of good intentions. Contributions may also investigate the architectural features and material conditions devised to allow participants to retreat from a project's collective dimension

whenever oversocialization may create discomfort. From a pragmatist perspective, proposals may analyse the “affordances” (Gibson 1988) of the space – the architectural characteristics that enhance, constrain or prevent practices of co-habitation (Aernouts 2020) – for instance by interpreting materiality as an “active and constitutive element of a social order” (Chétima 2016, 14). Contributions may also focus on the historical filiations of the studied collective housing and the way these are challenged by contemporary lifestyles. At an urban scale, this second axis is also open to contributions that question the location of these projects within the urban fabric, and their surrounding neighbourhoods’ social and spatial characteristics, as well as the ways in which these projects respond to these characteristics.

3. A plural management of space?

This axis is interested in the devices developed to maintain and manage common spaces in collective housing, such as working groups, general assemblies, caretakers or social workers (Schaut, Wibrin and Lenel 2022; Aernouts and Ryckewaert 2019). We encourage contributions that question interventions within common spaces carried out within the framework of these social and human devices, in particular their social and spatial effects (or the absence thereof). These contributions analyse the characteristics of the spaces, the uses they legitimise or delegitimise, the type of management they request or allow for, their degree of permeability to alternative uses and their potential to allow for a “good” use.

Practical information:

Contributions will first be proposed in the form of an abstract (max. 500 words) to be sent to [clara\[dot\]archi\[at\]ulb\[dot\]be](mailto:clara[dot]archi[at]ulb[dot]be) before March 13, 2023. The e-mail should include a short biography of max. 100 words and the academic affiliation of each of the authors. The attached .PDF file should include a title and an abstract of max. 500 words; it should be anonymized.

Provisional timeline:

February 2023 | Launch of the call for papers

March 2023 | Submission of abstracts by e-mail and pre-selection based on the relevance to the theme

August 2023 | Submission of full papers on the CLARA online platform and double-blind peer review process

November 2023 | Communication of the outcome of the peer review process to contributors

December 2023 | Wherever applicable, submission of amended contributions

Spring 2024 | Publication of CLARA#10

More information on CLARA: <https://clararevue.ulb.be/CLARA/about>

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