

## Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Why can't we live together? Stockholm – Vienna's large court blocks

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Written paper (3,000 words) and Conference presentation

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

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- **Abstract:**

The purpose of this paper is to look back on some valuable accomplishments at the beginning of the XX century, built in Stockholm (1916-1930) and Vienna (1919-1933). Far from a mere process of revising history, those first dwelling attempts demonstrate how housing turned into a core-concern from that time. Selected case studies of the two cities – analysed through original items and the re-drawings of plans done by the authors – provide a clear framework to retrace the origins of an emphasis on building community units.

Planning policies and dwellings responded to the accelerated metropolitan growth and acute housing shortage. Housing started to become a public utility, part of a wider and multifaceted social view as well as considered fundamental elements for the construction of the city. The attention and the responsibility of planners, architects, co-operatives, and politicians went to poor social ladders. Secchi identifies in those European town plans a common ground in the search for adequate forms of living together and an expression of democratic ideals. Besides broadening the limited understanding of these instances, we examine their inspiring and still convincing qualities concerning morphology and spatial sequences. Large court blocks - *Storgårdskvarteret* in Swedish and *Höfe* in German - interact with the irregularities of the topography and the surrounding urban fabric. The results show two sides of the same coin: a peculiar synthesis of Sitte and Unwin's theories, which presents matching points.

Although, the two experiences were designed almost one hundred years ago, they offer key suggestions for today's housing initiatives. Indeed, in Europe we have recently been observing the progressive crisis of the social concept and architectural connotation of "collective house". As Elias and Bauman claim, in our individualistic society it becomes even more crucial the role of the collective dimension of the city and common living.

- **Authors Biography:**

Chiara Monterumisi and Alessandro Porotto are architects and belong to the research staff of the Construction and Conservation Laboratory (LCC) at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland). They are conducting complementary research projects – fully funded by Swiss National Science Foundation –, which deal with urban policies concerning European social housing complexes during the interwar period.

Monterumisi is Post Doc researcher and B. Sc.'s teaching assistant. Her current research project is focused on the Scandinavian "soft" interpretation of the modern's mythical image about urban morphology, typology and designing urban spaces. She completed the Ph.D. degree in Architecture (2015) at the Università di Bologna (Italy); due to the topic she spent extend time at Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan i Stockholm (Sweden). Her thesis "Genius loci and urban memories. Stockholms Stadshuset-Nämndhus and villa Geber" explores urban transformations in Stockholm, particularly through two less-known projects by R. Östberg (1866-1945). She received the M.Sc. in Architecture (2011) at the University of Bologna.

Porotto is PhD Candidate. He received the M. Sc. in Architecture (2012) at the Politecnico di Torino (Italy). Through the Erasmus Placement Program he worked in an architectural office in Berlin, dealing with urban history and housing topics. His doctoral research focuses on the morphological, typological and greenery design comparison between social housing models in Vienna and Frankfurt in the 1920s. The objective is to establish a new critical approach to observe the European social housing experiences with the highest degree of comparability. Since 2014 he is also B. Sc.'s teaching assistant at the Housing-Design Studio.