



OBSOLESCENCE and RENOVATION
20th Century Housing in the New Millennium

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Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Who is to take over? Renovation and continuity in three housing prototypes from 1970s Copenhagen.

2. Format: Written paper

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4. University or Company Affiliation:

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6. Abstract (300 words):

The role of architects in the betterment of society by a process of redirecting our technological systems in ways inspired by democratic principles has been a recurrent matter of concern of the architectural discipline and profession. At least during the last decades, there has been a recurring will by some architects and a part of the public in many countries of incorporating dwellers and professionals in the conception of housing.

Copenhagen has a proud tradition of both participation in design and housing democracy. This paper discusses three classic housing developments in the Copenhagen metropolitan area representative of three traditions of highly participative processes of housing by non-exclusive collectives of tenants together with architects: flexible housing, co-housing, and communes.

The on-time study of the particularities and invariants of these built utopias of the late 1970s in the light of a coeval representative case of the Swedish model of co-housing, points to the challenges of a twenty-first century architecture of participation: effective non-authoritarian architectural practices, most adequate scales of intervention, and the potential of renovation to improve the environmental performance and the quality of the built stock.

Key moves on the architectural scene of Copenhagen show that the democratisation of the housing processes remains an open endeavour for the local architectural discourse, immersed in a global renewal of interest in the political agency of architecture, while speaking on its popularity outside the professional and disciplinary circles.

The long-lasting experiences of these Scandinavian socio-material assemblies on human accommodation present a valuable pool of knowledge and experiences on democratic housing conception and management. A critical review of them could help to address the demands of the collective transformation of the building environment for the benefit of all that would foster democratic practices in the everyday and regain public influence over urban life.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors):

Rodrigo Rieiro Díaz studied architecture in Madrid, Barcelona, and Budapest. He practised in Madrid, Istanbul, and Copenhagen, and researches a Ph.D. at Escuela Politécnica de Arquitectura de Madrid. He recently completed a research stay at Statens Byggeforskningsintitute in Copenhagen.

Kim Haugbølle conducts advisory services to the government, undertakes teaching, and develops research-based knowledge to improve building environment. He has authored or co-authored more than 160 publications on the role of construction client focusing on innovation, procurement, building performance, life cycle economics, and sustainable design.