

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

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Tales from the Residential Subdivision

- **Format:**

Written paper

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

The residential subdivision in Flanders is facing a three-folded crisis. The first is ecological: They are too land and energy consuming. The second challenge is social. They become increasingly socially and culturally differentiated, leading to social tensions. The third is economic. Flanders is heading for a real estate crisis as land supply is much greater than the demand for land. Crisis, according to world-systems theory, announces a period of opportunity for (durable) transition. Still, a freestanding house with garden keeps on being the housing dream for the majority of Flemish. The Buell hypothesis puts it as follows: 'Change the dream and you change the city'. Therefore we argue that there is a need to set up processes where residents, local organizations and authorities can explore alternative and more durable modes of living. In this paper we discuss the exhibition Tales of the Residential Subdivision, which presents five of such processes in five concrete residential subdivisions around five different concerns (underused houses, energy consumption, monotonous housing stock, complex building regulations and obsolete neighborhood facilities). The results of the five processes were visualized in the exhibition and used as starting point for five workshops with professional

experts (i.e. urban administrators, designers, actors from governmental or non-profit organizations) to explore further the possibilities and weaknesses. If we follow the results, then durable transformation will start off with a multitude of small projects and actions. Inherent is that they are created by new alliances which allow individual ambitions to intertwine with wider challenges. We will analyze these alliances and relate them to the measures and norms they acquire.

- **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Barbara Roosen (1978) is an architect and researcher at the Spatial Capacity Building research group ArcK, University of Hasselt. Her PhD research is about the impact of collective initiatives in the context of the residential subdivision. In this topic, she developed together with Oswald Devisch the book and exhibition 'Verkavelingsverhalen' (2016). Within the research group she is involved in several participative research projects. In all of her projects, 'Participatory Mapping' plays a crucial role.