

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

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Governing liveable cities: a question of agency? Public housing and neighbourhood communities in the city of Bologna

- **Format:**

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- **Author(s) Name:**

Giulia Ganugi; Manuela Maggio

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

University of Bologna; University of Bologna

- **Abstract (300 words):**

European cities are struggling with global and local pressures. On the one hand, technologies and mobility make people's connections around the world easier; the space of flows seems to overtake the space of places, undermining local identities and decreasing the traditional socialization function of public spaces. On the other hand, urban governments are moving toward forms of participatory and horizontal governance that involve the civil sphere in the decision-making of local-scale issues.

Regarding the two aspects of the conference – communities and homes – local governments need to face two different issues, both included in the individuals' need of "housing". The first one is guaranteeing the right of a house to the people considered needy; the second is dealing with communities of active citizens who care for urban public spaces.

Focusing on the city of Bologna, but addressing two completely different situations, this paper aims to address the problem of citizens' agency that can be favoured or

disfavoured by local government. One case regards the housing need and how the municipality of Bologna tries to answer the pressure of housing demand. The (im)possibility of asking for a house depends on periodic changes in access requirements. Additionally, being on a waiting list does not immediately guarantee receiving the “advantage of a house”. The second case concerns the Social Street groups that facilitate the activation of new relations and the participation of residents within a limited urban area. A direct consequence is an improved attitude of caring for the territory, which the Bologna public administration has already acknowledged, establishing collaborative acts with the citizens and according them part of the responsibility in caring for the city.

The methodological perspectives for the analysis of these two phenomena in reference to ongoing doctoral research projects will also be presented.

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

Giulia Ganugi is a PhD researcher in the Department of Sociology and Economic Law at the University of Bologna. Her research addresses the Social Street phenomenon, through the lens of Social Innovation, assuming these neighbourhood groups as actors of socially innovative local development. The project focuses on public spaces as commons, on social citizenship and on new forms of urban governance. The case studies are three Italian Social Streets analysed with a qualitative approach, mainly based on semi-structured interviews, focus-groups, participant observations of both the virtual groups on Facebook and the real ones in the “street”. She is now studying at the Department of Architecture, Planning and Development Unit, at KU Leuven, for deepening the knowledge about social innovation and territorial development. She holds an MSc in Social services and polices and a BSc in Sociology.

Manuela Maggio is a PhD researcher in the Department of Sociology and Economic law at the University of Bologna. Her research explores the change of the social morphology, through the lens of Public Housing in Bologna, assuming this branch of welfare policies as a tool to focus on the modifications and the impoverishment of local population. The project focuses on the relation between demand and offer of public houses to outline the underlying processes of neighbourhoods’ creation in Bologna. The case study of Pilastro, a district of one neighbourhood in Bologna, is used to explore a typical microcosm of a socially mixed community created (consciously or not) by local housing policies. She holds an MSc in Criminology, a BSc in Social work and a BSc in Law.