

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

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Testing the theory of 'planned communities': an exploration of the link between community design and everyday life through a participatory approach

- **Format:**

Written paper

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

This paper examines the architectural theory of 'planned communities' through a cross-disciplinary reading of Basil Spence's Claremont Court Housing Scheme (1959-1962) in Edinburgh. At the turn of the 1960s, Team X's theory of 'planned communities' echoed contemporary thinking in the social sciences about community design, by linking spatial arrangement and social behaviour. In particular, housing schemes' enclosed arrangements (such as the street, the square or the green) were believed to foster a sense of belonging to a community (Smithson and Smithson, 1962).

Drawing from the theory of 'planned communities', Claremont Court was designed as an inner-city development structured around two landscaped courtyards in order to foster a sense of community (Campbell et al., 2012). This original examination of the role of its communal spaces in nurturing community structures relates to a broader discourse on the linkages between architectural arrangement and social behaviour in post-war housing developments (Coleman, 1985; Newman, 1972). An initial stage of this work is

based on Coleman's 'design variables' (eg. type of corridors, position of the entrances, spatial organisation etc.), but its originality relies on a cross-disciplinary methodological approach. The research is qualitative in nature, and draws from various methods, including visual methods, open-ended interviews, and a participatory workshop with residents, in which the participants were asked to sketch their 'mental map' of the scheme, highlighting positive/negative aspect attached to these through simplified symbols.

A first analysis structured around Coleman's variables was followed by a second analysis of the data gathered through the participatory workshop. The findings of this examination allowed us to test the original intention of planning a community in the '60s with the current community life in Claremont Court. This work contributes to the still open debate on the idea of 'planned communities' (Moran 2012).

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

Nadia Bertolino is an architect and theorist, specialising in spatial practice and social engagement. She holds a PhD in Architecture from the University of Pavia, Italy. Nadia joined Northumbria University in 2016, having previously led the MA in Architectural Design at Sheffield School of Architecture, and taught at University of Pavia, Tongji University in Shanghai and Polytechnic of Milan. She has been guest lecturer and keynote speaker at a number of international HE institutions including the School of Architecture at Harbin Institute of Technology, the College of Architecture at Indian Education Society in Mumbai, the School of Architecture at the University of Seville, the Department of Environmental Design at the University of Padua, the Oslo School of Architecture and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Lisbon. She is editorial board member of the 'Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs' and reviewer of a number of international academic journals, including 'Environment and Urbanization', 'Urban Design International' and 'Journal of Urban Planning and Development'. Nadia's current research explores topics concerning spatial practice and social engagement with a special focus on the role that the collective production of space plays in the process of urban regeneration. A major strand of her activity focuses on the role of activists and self-organised communities to challenge conventional practices of spatial development and consultation processes.

Sandra Costa Santos completed a European PhD in Civil Engineering in 2006, after studying Architecture and graduating from Universidad de A Coruña (Spain) in 2000, The research carried out was multidisciplinary and involved collaborating with the ETSAC School of Architecture in Spain and the School of the Built Environment in Napier University

(Edinburgh). She registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) in 2002 and with the Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Galicia (COAG) in 2007. Practicing architect since 2000, she has also been research active since 2007 and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy since 2015. Sandra is currently leading the AHRC-funded project "Place and belonging: what can we learn from Claremont Court Housing Scheme?" that brings together a team of researchers from Architecture (Northumbria University) and Social Sciences (Manchester University) in order to explore how place influences our sense of belonging to a community. This question is the basis of a unique cross-disciplinary approach that studies both physical and lived space, using as a case study Claremont Court housing scheme in Edinburgh.