Cohousing Academic Research Bibliography with Abstracts


Objective: The aim of this paper is to elucidate cohousing for older people. Method: The research is based on a literature review and interviews (in English) with residents of seven schemes in the Netherlands and Denmark, a social housing organisation and several researchers in the field (in 1995 and 2002). Results and Conclusions: Cohousing for older people is now well established in its countries of origin--Denmark and the Netherlands--as a way for older people to live in their own house or unit, with a self-chosen group of other older people as neighbours, with shared space and facilities they collectively determine or control. As more such housing is built and occupied it has become easier to choose and assess this option. It remains to be seen how widespread its appeal will be, but cohousing for older people is now a valued housing niche.


This study asks whether cohousing as a form of non-political association has spill-over effects on participation in politics. The civic-society literature has shown that organizational and persuasive activities engaged in by members of voluntary civic associations constitute on-the-job training in political participation skills and can lead to higher levels of participation. Using original survey data on members of nine of the twelve cohousing communities in Massachusetts, I test the hypothesis that the exercise of quasi-political skills among members of cohousing communities leads to higher levels of political participation. I find that involvement in cohousing is positively related to political participation and that involvement in cohousing and political participation are positively related to self-reported change in political participation since joining cohousing. These results, in view of data limitations, suggest limited support for the hypothesis to the extent that members claim that their political participation has changed since moving to cohousing.


In this essay we will describe the main results of a case study carried out on two Cohousing associations that actively promote and increase awareness of cohousing, a model of co-residence that is gradually developing also in Italy. The research, conducted through several interviews with members of the ‘Cohousing in Toscana’ and ‘Coabitare’ Associations and analysis of their narratives, shows that people are really motivated to invest time and resources in collective projects to realize a model of social and sustainable life.


In this essay we will describe the main results of a case study carried out on a Tuscan association which has been active in the promotion and diffusion of cohousing, a model of co-residence aiming to turn urban spaces into new social neighbourhood places. The research, conducted through several interviews to the members of «Cohousing in Toscana» Association show that although this Association has not realised any co-housing settlements yet it's at present carrying out specific planning both in urban and country contexts. The analysis of the interviewees' narratives shows that women are really motivated in investing time and resources in collective projects: their expectations are more complex than men's ones. While women explain their wishes to live together showing a more relational attitude, men express their needs in a more rational and restrained way. If, on the one
hand, for the interviewed women this kind of collective living seems to increase the social interaction, enabling a significant common reality, on the other hand in the male representations the expectation on cohousing indicates a preference for an economical, rational and reflective ethics with clear norms agreed among the partners.


A longer life has not necessarily meant a better quality of life, however, and no one knows this more intimately than the millions of adult children caring for their parents as they struggle to remain in family homes and communities ill-designed for the challenges of aging. Aging in community promotes social capital -- a sense of social connectedness and interdependence -- enhanced over time through positive interactions and collaboration in shared interests and pursuits. Historically, most elders have aged at home for as long they could, with support from informal caregivers, until they died at home or conditions deteriorated to a level requiring hospitalization or nursing home admittance. One thing is certain: the circumstances of where, how, and with whom people grow old are changing. From cohousing communities to Golden Girls Homes to high-rise artist co-ops, baby boomers are redefining their lives -- breaking down the old stereotypes and rules, and building new visions of great places to grow old -- and doing it better, together.


In order learn about planning in a world increasingly characterised by resource interdependencies and a plurality of governing agencies, this paper follows the processes of becoming for two co-housing initiatives. Self-organisation - understood as the emergence of actor-networks - is the leading theoretical concept, complemented by translation from actor-network theory and individuation from assemblage theory. This theoretical hybrid distinguishes four forms of behaviour (decoding, coding, expansion and contraction) that are used to analyse the dynamics of becoming in the two cases. As a result, information is revealed on the conditions that give rise to co-housing initiatives, and the dynamic interactions between planning authorities, (groups of) initiators and other stakeholders that gave shape to the initiatives. Differences between these actors become blurred, as both try to create meaning and reasoning in a non-linear, complex and uncertain world. The paper concludes with a view on planning as an act of adaptive navigation, an act equally performed by professionals working for planning authorities and a case initiator.


Our paper describes the results of a comparative cost analysis of four housing projects in Germany. A common characteristic of all projects is the central importance of mutual neighborly support to meet the demand for the assistance of older residents. All projects share some common architectural features and infrastructural characteristics. Furthermore, in each housing project, some form of support by social workers takes place. Using a propensity score matching approach, we compare for the first time systematically the costs for support of older people in mutual support based housing projects with a control group of people living in conventional settings. Our results, based on a sample of more than 700 residents, point not only to improvements in living satisfaction, but indicate also a huge potential for socioeconomic cost savings. This can partly be explained by better development of residents' health status.


The sociotechnical transitions framework describes how novel practice emerges from marginal
“niche” contexts to the mainstream. Scholars of various fields have used sociotechnical transitions to explain processes of structural change for sustainability, yet little research examines the role of local plans or planners in transition processes. The author offers an in-depth case study following the evolution of an eco-cohousing model from its grassroots origins to its current application in the housing market of Ithaca, New York. Planners used existing planning documents to translate innovative practices to the public, defying assumptions of the rational-linear model still common in planning scholarship.


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This article explores an agenda towards post-carbon cities, extending and deepening established debates around low-carbon, sustainable cities in the process. The label post-carbon builds upon issues beyond those of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, energy conservation and climate change, adding a broader set of concerns, including economic justice, behaviour change, wellbeing, land ownership, the role of capital and the state, and community self-management. The article draws upon a case study of an embryonic post-carbon initiative completed in early 2013 called Lilac. Based in Leeds, Lilac stands for Low Impact Living Affordable Community and is the first attempt to build an affordable, ecological cohousing project in the UK. Its three aspects each respond to significant challenges: low-impact living and the challenge of post-carbon value change; affordability and the challenge of mutualism and equality; and community and the challenge of self-governance. I conclude the article by exploring six lessons from Lilac that tentatively outline a roadmap towards post-carbon cities: the need for holistic approaches that deal with complex challenges, prioritizing self-determination rather than just participation, engaging with productive political tensions, adopting a process rather than an outcomes-based approach, developing strategy for replicability, and finally, embracing a non-parochial approach to localities.


This paper explores the emerging concept of buen vivir – interpreted as integrative and collective well-being – as it is being envisioned and practiced by a network of sustainability initiatives in Colombia. As an example of a transition narrative currently taking place in Latin America and beyond, buen vivir represents a turn towards a more biocentric, relational and collective means of understanding and being in the world. Yet despite the many discourses into buen vivir (many of which tout it as an alternative to neoliberal models of development), there is a general lack of research into its varied forms of application, especially in terms of lived experiences. Drawing on the new ruralities literature, this paper explores the extent to which buen vivir visions and practices represent radical new ruralities – so-called alternatives to development. Data were collected from individuals and ecological communities in predominantly rural areas who are members of the Council of Sustainable Settlements of the Americas (CASA), a network which promotes many of the principles of buen vivir. Through participatory methods, results demonstrate that CASA visions are based on
constructing territorial relations through intercultural knowledge exchange and experimentation into alternative lifestyles. Despite the substantial challenges and contradictions of putting these visions into practice, we argue that lived experiences promote processes of self-reflection on what buen vivir really is or could be. We hold that the inclusive nature of buen vivir offers opportunities for diverse peoples to cohere around shared meanings of the 'good life,' while providing the freedom to live variations depending on social and ecological context.

The paper analyses cohousing as a part of the phenomenon of private residential communities. First, we provide an overview of cohousing and we identify its five constitutive characteristics. Second, we propose a comparison between the constitutive features of cohousing and of other kinds of private residential communities. Third, we argue that the interpretation of cohousing within the context of private residential communities raises some doubts about a completely positive interpretation of the phenomenon and about policies for promoting it.

Although recently it is receiving increasing public attention, cohousing is still a fuzzy contours phenomenon, often analyzed in an hagiographic way. Therefore the paper proposes a critical reflection which, through taxonomic analysis and comparison with gated communities, brings cohousing within the > to which it belongs: residential private community, with which cohousing shares all the well-know problems. The paper is divided into two sections. In the first one, (§ 1) the author provides a descriptive overview of cohousing; m the second one (§ 2 and 3), after a taxonomical classification proposal, the author highlights main topical and critical cohousing characters.

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The paper focuses on differences and similarities between two types of intentional private residential communities: cohousing and gated communities. The academic debate is dominated by the view that cohousing and gated communities are completely different phenomena in terms of aims, goals, nature and characteristics. However, I do not find these opinions entirely convincing: hence, in this paper, I shall discuss some of their weaknesses with regard to the (alleged) differences between cohousing and gated communities in terms of the reasons guiding the choice of the community, openness of communal spaces and the speculative nature of the projects. Some critical perspectives in terms of public policy are introduced in the last part of the paper.

The article provides information on how residents of N Street changed their Davis, California, neighborhood into a resource- and life-sharing community. The neighborhood is known as N Street Cohousing, named after the street along which half the houses are located. It all started when five university students living in a rental house in a suburban neighborhood decided to build a neighborhood cooperative. Since then the cooperative led to meetings of neighbors and fence removals to open up backyards. Through the gatherings, it molded into friendships that transformed the little neighborhood to life-sharing community.

The article discusses the Ecovillage at Ithaca (EVI), an environmentally sustainable housing community in Ithaca, New York, and its relationship to the environmental justice movement. The environmental justice movement largely focuses on advocating for environmentally-sound living for minorities and the poor. While the ecovillage movement and the environmental justice movement
share similar goals, the authors draw a distinction between the two. The authors conclude that while the Ithaca village is environmentally beneficial, its focus on middle-class living alienates minority and low-income membership. As a result, the village's efforts are not entirely in line with environmental justice.


Cohousing schemes were evolved as alternative housing to reduce housework for working women, and to reduce loneliness of elderly people by promoting active mutual relationship with community residents in northern European countries. This article discusses how residents manage their life in senior cohousing projects in Sweden and Denmark. The purpose of this study is to investigate residents' life satisfaction connected with demographic characteristics of residents, physical environment and common activities in the senior cohousing communities, so that it could offer usable information for the establishment of new senior cohousing projects in other countries, as well as an empirical evaluation of the existing projects in Scandinavian countries themselves. Important variables influential to residents' life satisfaction are also discussed in order to improve senior citizens' quality of life. The methods used for the study are literature review, interviews, field trips and questionnaire. Nine hundred and thirty-five postal questionnaires were sent to 28 senior cohousing communities throughout Denmark and Sweden. Of those 536 replies were collected and analysed by SPSS program using frequency, mean and Chi-square test. As a result, it was found out that most of the respondents are healthy, 70-year-olds, and satisfied with their current living in the community. The majority of them also would like to strongly recommend others to move to senior cohousing schemes to improve quality of life in their later years. Residents' intensive concern about building location and design is a noteworthy reminder for designers and architects as well as for professionals and decision-makers who work in the elderly welfare sector.


Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to suggest that it should be possible to devise mechanisms which will enable communities to address the changing assistance needs of disabled and older residents whilst giving younger resident assistants an equity stake in the housing market. The existence of such mechanisms on a national scale would facilitate mobility between otherwise independent communities and maximise the choices available to residents requiring different forms of assistance at different stages in their lives. Design/methodology/approach – The paper draws upon the author's personal experience of exchanging accommodation with a team of assistants. The author considers how this model could be made more sustainable and replicable. Action research is needed to explore similar models within the context of intentional communities. Findings – Two pressing social challenges could have a unified solution. Cohousing provides potential for people to remain within an intergenerational community as they grow older and develop assistance needs, while providing accommodation equity. Today's “baby boomer” generation may contribute to less advantaged future generations by leaving behind them dedicated housing for assistants in order to make sure that such provision is present within communities in perpetuity. Originality/value – As a disabled person, the author had found it interesting to actively explore with younger people the impact upon both generations of issues around housing equity. The author has already, and would like to test further, the potential of nonmonetary exchange within intentional communities.


Traditional housing no longer meets the needs of many communities. In an excerpt from "Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves," by Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett, the ways some Danish communities have addressed the problem are presented.
“Cohousing.” *Futurist* 23.5 : 29-32.

Focuses on cohousing, a Danish trend of flexible, participatory housing communities that meet the needs of all the residents. Reference to the book "Cohousing" by husband-and-wife design team Katheryn McCamant and Charles Durrett that focuses on the Danish cohousing. Basic traits of cohousing communities, including involvement of the community in the planning and design of the community, extensive common facilities, and shared responsibility in the management of the community.


Studied whether greater accessibility of the residential environment leads to a higher perceived residential quality of life for disabled persons. Data were gathered through site visits of 16 housing cooperatives and interviews with residential coordinators and/or key residents. Results indicate that those residents who felt they could influence their co-op the most and those who found that the co-op form of social organization made the most difference to their housing satisfaction also rated their residential quality of life the highest. That is, residents' perceived social control over their residential environment was more important than their perceived physical control in explaining perceived quality of life.


Debates on ecological and social limits to economic growth, and new ways to deal with resource scarcity without compromising human well-being, have re-emerged in the last few years. Central to many of these is a call for a degrowth approach. In this paper, a framework is developed to support a systematic analysis of degrowth in the academic literature. This article attempts to present a clearer notion of what the academic degrowth literature explores by identifying, organising, and analysing a set of proposals for action retrieved from a selection of articles. The framework is applied to classify proposals according to their alignment to ecological economics policy objectives (sustainable scale, fair distribution, and efficient allocation), type of approach (top-down versus bottom-up), and geographical focus (local, national, or international). A total of 128 peer-reviewed articles focused on degrowth were reviewed, and 54 that include proposals for action were analysed. The proposals identified align with three broad goals: (1) Reduce the environmental impact of human activities; (2) Redistribute income and wealth both within and between countries; and (3) Promote the transition from a materialistic to a convivial and participatory society. The findings indicate that the majority of degrowth proposals are national top-down approaches, focusing on government as a major driver of change, rather than local bottom-up approaches, as advocated by many degrowth proponents. The most emphasised aspects in the degrowth literature are related to social equity, closely followed by environmental sustainability. Topics such as population growth and the implications of degrowth for developing nations are largely neglected, and represent an important area for future research. Moreover, there is a need for a deeper analysis of how degrowth proposals would act in combination. We present a review of a selection of peer-reviewed degrowth articles. We identify inconsistencies between the degrowth discourse and proposals for action. Identified degrowth proposals are mainly national top-down approaches not local bottom-up ones. Proposals aim for sustainable scale and fair distribution over efficient allocation. Proposals should be analysed in combination to arrive at a degrowth policy mix.

Abstract Basic aspects of sustainable housing design such as increasing density, mixed use and proximity to public transport are being adopted increasingly in Australian cities. Sustainable building codes such as NSW’s BASIX and Victoria’s Green Star rating systems are also being implemented and advanced. More substantial improvements and endeavours such as onsite food production, energy generation and waste treatment, are being seen increasingly as necessary for urban sustainability, yet little is being done to institutionalise or normalise these through Australia’s housing system. Similarly, concerns about the social sustainability of housing identify the need for mixed, flexible tenure and dwelling types, with again little uptake despite evidence of demand. Given that we seem to know what needs doing to move towards sustainability, this paper investigates two ecologically and socially sound community-based housing developments in Australia, with a view to finding what helped or hindered these efforts and what may further the uptake of sustainable design. Assessment of the uptake of sustainable planning initiatives reveals the prevalence of a decidedly neoliberal agenda which shies away from the more substantial challenges ecocity design and community-based enterprise may represent. Such community-based initiatives must, however, be supported at a broader scale, to avoid possible outsourcing of governmental responsibility or the relegation of sustainable design to the sole realm of the wealthy.


Scholars traditionally conceptualize private law around a commitment to the values of formal freedom and equality. Critics of the traditional view (including lawyer-economists) dispute the significance of a distinction between public and private law, construing private law as merely one form of public regulation. Both positions are flawed. The traditional position is conceptually misguided and normatively disappointing; the critical position confuses a justified rejection of private law libertarianism with a wholesale dismissal of the idea of a private law, thus denying private law’s inherent value. This Article seeks to break the impasse between these two positions by offering an innovative account of the values that should, and to some extent already do, underlie the law of interpersonal interactions among private individuals in a liberal state. Rather than succumbing to the unappealing adherence to formal freedom and equality, private law should openly embrace the liberal commitment to self-determination and substantive equality. A liberal private law establishes frameworks of respectful interaction conducive to self-determining individuals. These frameworks are indispensable for a society in which individuals recognize each other as genuinely free and equal agents.


The article presents information on the concept of cohousing communities, which are a type of intentional communities composed of private homes supplemented by shared facilities, in France. The benefits of these communities, such as the search for social link, more convivial ways of life, help with children care and care for the elderly, are examined.


Purpose – CoHousing provides a new approach in the UK to older people’s housing, and meets a clear demand for similarly minded groups of individuals who would like to grow old together. The purpose of this paper is to explore how a Collaborative Design Process (CDP) can work, as applied to a soon-to-be realised project in North London. Design/methodology/approach – Report by the architects with comment from an end user on a CDP including end users, architect, developer and housing association management. Findings – A group of individuals that has invested in building decision-making capacity can participate meaningfully in the design of their future homes. Research limitations/implications – This research was focused on one development, so work on a wider range
of projects would help test its validity. Social implications – Older Women’s CoHousing (OWCH), and similar projects, demonstrate an appetite for: mutually supportive, intentional communities; planned downsizing and contemporary, sociable design for the third age of life. Originality/value – The CDP developed for OWCH was comprehensively documented. It has already been adapted for further cohousing developments, and is intended to continue to evolve with the demands made on it.


The article presents Chapter 14 of the book "Research in Urban Sociology," Volume 11, edited by Camilla Perrone, Gabriele Manella and Lorenzo Tripodi. It states the increasing interest of cohousing in Italy using citizen participation and territorial activation. It considers cohousing as an international social movement. It notes the essential role of an accurate exploration to the limits and potentialities of the cohousing model to explore the intrinsic points and ambiguities of weakness in the country. Moreover, it mentions the use of institutional active citizenship policies in promoting an ideal ground for cohousing experimentation.


This article presents the author's experience in cohousing. Three years ago, my husband and I lived in a six-unit San Francisco, California apartment building. As is common in high-density living, we lived amongst a cacophony of idiosyncratic noises that floated up through the light-well in our building, including a wonderful operatic tenor from below, frequent late-night parties right above, and from someplace we were never quite identified, a loud and predictable early morning nose-blower. If pressed to do so, I may have been able to pick out my dozen or so neighbors in a line-up, and even named one or two of them. But I could not tell what any of them did for a living, and could only discern any hobbies they might have had from the junk piled up in our garage. Today, we live in equally dense housing in Oakland. The noises we hear have changed, but not their predictability. We regularly hear the cries of our 18-month old neighbor, the barking of the Dachshund across the way, and the turf-wars of many cats who share the same public space. The big difference is, we now have 36 neighbors, and know every one of them personally. We meet together regularly, socialize at a moment's notice, work together on maintaining and upgrading our space, and share meals three times a week.


The author reflects on the significance of Bodhi Farm located on the north coast of New South Wales (NSW). He stressed that it was established out of the social movement youthful idealism in 1960s and 1970s. It is considered to be one of the intentional communities in the country. They are formed to create community life through sharing resources and realizing low cost housing for those on limited incomes. He was also attracted to ideas of using less and in living simple and cheap.


Despite the fact that it has been nearly 40 years since the first residents moved into the first leisure-oriented retirement communities (LORCs), housing issues remain an important component of gerontological discussions. A part of the reason is that although much progress has been made, there still is not a coherent housing policy, nor is it agreed that one is necessary.

The processes whereby intentional communities change are many and complex but change they must if they are to survive the challenges they will inevitably meet. Most communities do not survive the challenges they meet in their first two years. But the Findhorn community in north-east Scotland has survived and grown in the more than 40 years since it began. This article provides a description by two former, long-standing members of that community of the main changes the community has gone through that have enabled it to respond to change and continue to grow. It describes the role played in those changes by key individuals and contends that, without them, the community would probably have stagnated and gone the way of those communities that were not able to respond to the challenges they faced. The authors use these case studies to show how a handful of practical visionaries have ensured the long-term future of the community.


The momentum of the aging in place movement underscores the importance of providing housing, health care, and supportive services that enable seniors to maintain their independence and encourage engagement in the communities in which they continue to reside. Two innovative models for housing and delivery of support services for seniors living in the community which have received a great deal of media and policy interest are senior villages and senior cooperative housing. Senior villages are virtual communities, organized within a defined geographic area, that offer social, health, and assistive services to their members enabling them to age in their communities. Senior cooperative housing offers an alternative model which is a cohousing model. Both models focus on affordable options for aging in the community. Equally important, these models empower seniors and allow for greater self-determination in making decisions as to how and where they choose to age.


Doug Aberley, a conference participant, reports that the urban planners and other officials at the conference showed strong support for such settlements and said they were trying to encourage them in the wording of municipal plans. Nevertheless, a few days after the conference, planners in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) announced a retreat from their programme to increase the density of certain city neighborhoods. This move, Aberley notes, effectively shifted "40,000 [housing] units ... out into the rural Fraser Valley." 2 Cases of twisting the technology abound in the examples of "eco-villages" and communities designed by new urbanists such as Peter Calthorpe. 4 Much of Calthorpe's writing deals with entire cities and their downtowns, but examples of the new urbanism are usually found in the familiar form of subdivisions on the fringes of cities. These developments, including Bamberton outside Victoria, BC, 5 and Montgomery Village near Toronto, 6 have lots of green space (often over half the land), houses that need less energy, concentrated and mixed land use, front porches and narrower streets, and other features to maximize the potential for walking and casual neighbouring. However, residents still need cars to go anywhere else, agricultural land is still being paved over or replaced with golf courses, and the development is still a net importer of energy. 9 See CoHousing, a journal describing many of North America's cohousing projects; Roberta Brandes Gratz. The Living City (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), pp. 107-48; and [EDMUND P. FOWLER], "The Link Between Politics, Policies, and Healthy City Form." *Local Places*, David Bell, Roger Keil and Gerda R. Wekerle, eds. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1995).


American cohousing, transplanted in the early 1900s from a Danish model of private dwellings with shared common facilities, has spread across this country with 24 functioning communities by the mid-1990s. Cohousing has attracted the attention of an American audience as an alternative housing
type that fosters neighboring and a sense of community. This paper is about the first five years of cohousing in America; it highlights the many issues faced by those who have tried and those who have succeeded in creating community. Data from 24 cohousing projects and a post-occupancy evaluation of three communities are discussed. The research topics explore the development process, resident turnover, site planning, functionality of the common house, and private units. The paper also gauges resident satisfaction and residents' sense of community. Looking at those pioneering years reveals that American cohousing can provide a strong sense of community. In many instances, however, the development and group processes have taken longer than expected.

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**Introduction to the Cohousing Issue.** 17 Vol., 2000.

The word cohousing is barely more than a decade old. Yet the pace of cohousing growth in this country has been rapid—too rapid to pause and examine itself with great care. In the summer of 1991, the first community, Muir Commons, opened in California. By the end of the decade, more than 50 communities are functioning, some following the model of similar Scandinavian communities, some hybrids of American and Danish sensibilities. Cohousing is a multifaceted, complex subject that addresses many larger issues beyond housing, some successfully and others not. Clearly, this housing alternative is serving the needs of a growing number of people in providing tangibles such as shared facilities, help with child care, and meal preparation, as well as intangibles such as a sense of community, support, and a feeling of security. Nevertheless, much of the available literature has been centered on advocacy and does not present a complete portrait. Now this growth of new communities needs to be matched by a similar depth of research.


An abstract of Gale Robin Greenleaf entitled Cohousing in the United States: Utopian Ideals in the Twenty-First Century is presented. This dissertation explores a recent variant from Denmark, cohousing, to compare it to past utopian ideas and ideals; in particular, comparing aspects such as architecture, process, relationships with the outside world, and membership.


Social isolation has serious negative public health impacts for older adults. Survey data were collected at three resident-managed elder intentional neighborhoods in the United States (n = 59), to determine if these neighborhoods, each based on the cohousing model, promote development of social resources for their residents. Social resources were measured on three dimensions: social networks, neighborly support, and satisfaction with the neighborhood community. Respondents were White, mean age of 73.3 (range = 63-91), primarily female (76.3%), and generally had high levels of education and self-reported health. Almost half (47%) were never married/divorced and 37% were childless. Inclusion of neighborhood ties ameliorated risk of social isolation. Satisfaction with support and a variety of neighboring behaviors were reported. These neighborhoods are meeting the needs of a potentially at-risk population as an avenue to promote social resources and reduce social isolation. The implications for gerontological social workers include a role in helping to mobilize and support these types of neighborhoods as a way to encourage mutual support among older adults. With the increase in the aging population, such models of proactive interdependence and communal coping have the potential to lessen or delay the demands that socially isolated elders place on social workers.


This initial report details the origin, development, and 'charter residents' of the new ElderSpirit Community, a resident-managed elder-only cohousing community focusing on mutual support and affordable housing. The 33 resident sample was white, 79% female, averaged 70.4 years of age (range = 63 to 84 years), and was more likely to be childless and/or divorced/never married compared to the general older population. Mutual support was significant in choosing the ElderSpirit Community, and this case demonstrates that elders can proactively choose this new option: living intentionally with neighbors to provide an added layer of support. The ElderSpirit Community is important given the caregiver shortage and desire for nursing home alternatives.


Social networks and improved health outcomes are strongly connected, yet many elders face isolation and loneliness. This article presents a study of an elder cohousing community in which residents are dealing with aging-related stresses as a group and creating positive outcomes for themselves. The article posits a conceptual model of how this phenomenon of "aging better together intentionally" occurs and the resulting benefits. What happens when elders choose to live together in a community in which they consciously address aging collectively? Is it possible to age better together intentionally? If so, what does it look like, under what circumstances does it blossom, and how does it improve the aging experience? In-depth interviews were conducted with 26 residents of an elder cohousing community in 2009. Respondents were white, mostly female, and averaged 73 years in age. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts led to a conceptual model of aging better together intentionally. To further explore the model, quantitative survey data were collected from the residents three years later. The framework of communal coping provided the mechanism of aging better together intentionally. Quantitative data supported the existence of mutual support, increased acceptance of aging, and feelings of safety/less worry/lessening of social isolation as benefits of this type of living arrangement. This research demonstrates the agency of older adults, the heterogeneity of the aging experience, and the value of older adults sharing their knowledge of the aging process with each other. Our conceptual model of aging better together intentionally could serve as a basis for interventions in other settings to provide a new way for people to age together with enhanced quality of life.


As an alternative to traditional housing options, the first elder cohousing communities in the United States have recently emerged. This study reports findings from a mixed methods longitudinal evaluation of one such self-managed intentional community. Respondents were asked about the process of community building and the benefits/challenges of living in elder cohousing, using both surveys and in-depth interviews. Despite challenges, respondents indicated feelings of safety and comfort through being part of an interdependent community. Life improved after the first two years, when much foundational work was completed. Their experience reinforces the thought that elders can create and manage their own communities and provide mutual support.


While retirement communities have existed for over fifty years, they have received relatively little analysis. A clear consensus on definition does not even exist. Based on a literature review, we offer a definition that includes several criteria related to the housing units, boundaries, services and/or
leisure amenities, age restrictions, voluntary relocation, and shared space. We delineate the variety of types of retirement communities and address the current and future challenges facing retirement communities. Such a discussion is urgent, given the lack of current housing policy, when both the potential demand and pertinent financial challenges are greater than ever.


Environmental consideration within the Swedish construction sector can no longer be considered marginal. It is here discussed whether the same commitment is extended to facilitate deeper dimensions of sustainability in the provision of housing, beyond simply energy-efficient residential buildings? The paper presents the case of a multi-family 'green' residential area being developed in Göteborg, Sweden. An interview study with the seven housing developers building in the area provides primary empirical insights, further complemented by findings from a workshop with architects involved in the project. Conceptualizations of sustainability in housing are explored, based in discourses among these market actors. Issues identified in the inductive data analysis relate to the ambitions set and measures taken in new 'green' building, as well as market perceptions of housing standards, lifestyles and household configurations that are reproduced in the built environment. The paper shows that interpretations of sustainability in market-led housing development do not radically challenge the normative and resource intense contemporary ideals surrounding the urban home and that the realization of goals undertaken in the case of Kvillebäcken is generally dependent on economic considerations and market assessments. In conclusion, the paper emphasizes the need to formulate an integrative approach to more holistic sustainable residential environments.


When we begin to talk about creating a more healthy and sustainable community, we come inescapably to question our current systems of governance and our structures of government, and talk about how we can have a more truly democratic way of creating healthy and sustainable communities. Ultimately, this comes down to social and political will. Do we have the social and political will to reorder the priorities of our societies and communities, to shift our values, to aspire to higher objectives than economic growth and consumer happiness? Are governments -- who are our representatives, not our masters, we should remember -- prepared to give up central control and share power and resources with communities? Indeed, are they willing to enable those communities to acquire the resources and skills they need? Finally, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation broke new ground by using the links between healthy and sustainable communities as the basis for its review of four recent alternative planning approaches -- pedestrian pockets, neo - traditional design, eco - villages and cohousing.(f.3) In examining these approaches and in evaluating a set of eight case studies, the report's authors used a framework based on the healthy and sustainable community model outlined in the accompanying paper (figure I). The authors' evaluative criteria covered resource conservation, environmental impact, economic viability, social equity, liveability, community and health and safety.
Hasell, Mary Joyce, and John H. Scanzoni. "Social Networks and Network-Friendly Housing in the U.S." International Journal of Comparative Sociology (Brill Academic Publishers) 38.3 (1997): 289-96. Whenever households find themselves deprived of participation in the mainstream Benchmark family paradigm, they tend to be vulnerable to a number of social ills. One solution to their isolation and vulnerability is to construct networks of mutual support. Under certain conditions, those networks may develop into what is called "families we choose" or social families. The question facing today's designers and housing-planners is how to create the sorts of physical spaces that facilitate patterns of "helping out," i.e., network-friendly housing. Many U.S. public housing units are renovated each year. Simultaneously, many self-help groups are organized among public housing residents. This paper argues that coalescing these two realities is in the best interests of those citizens. Public policies are redefined to facilitate the generation and maintenance of social families. Those families are assisted in designing their own cohousing using a state-of-the-art technique for the collaborative design.


This paper reports an effort to apply selected principles from the general cohousing model to a group of low-income mothers reside in a complex owned and operated by HUD. In both its spatial and social facets, cohousing has thus far been the construction of middle-class, i.e., relatively advantaged households. Accordingly, they do not envision their community as a means to enhance their economic self-sufficiency. Our overarching goal was to experiment with the notion of transplanting selected cohousing principles into a HUD complex. We wanted to find out if a small number of African-American lone-mothers, residing with their children, and receiving AFDC and other benefits, would voluntarily consent to participate in a 'connected', or cohousing-like, household lifestyle. That style is sometimes described as 'fictive kin'. We sought to discover if the mothers might want to develop the sorts of 'helping-out' patterns - aimed at benefitting themselves and their children that are characteristic of cohousing communities. Furthermore, we sought to introduce an element that has largely been absent from cohousing, namely, that their collaborative network, or fictive kin, would also be a means to facilitate their development towardseconomic self-sufficiency. Initially, local HUD officials supported our efforts. However, they eventually withdrew their support, and the project faltered. Nevertheless, we suggest ways in which a cohousing-like model based on diversity could facilitate the goal of self-sufficiency. This paper reports an effort to apply selected principles from the general cohousing model to a group of low-income mothers residing in a complex owned and operated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Accordingly, residents of cohousing do not envision their community as a means to enhance their economic self-sufficiency. They see it, rather, as a strategy to ampler and enrich the non-economic facets of their own and their children's lives.


Cohousing is here referred to as a form of housing with communal spaces, shared facilities and activities. Irrespective of the long history of cohousing, it constitutes only a small part of the total housing stock even in countries that regard cohousing as an alternative dwelling choice. Surprisingly, the importance of shared spaces has often been underestimated, although their role in the coproduction of community is significant, which in turn is one of the key driving forces for expanding cohousing into new markets. The aim of the article is to examine and discuss the role of shared space for the building and maintenance of community and its consequences for everyday life from the gender perspective. I argue that shared spaces are important for the building and maintenance of community, but they have a triple role, which together has an impact. Nevertheless, the Community House is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the communal culture and its positive or negative consequences for the gender roles and the residents involved with care.
Jarvis, Helen, and Alastair Bonnett. "Progressive Nostalgia in Novel Living Arrangements: A Counterpoint to Neo-Traditional New Urbanism?" Urban Studies 50.11 (2013): 2349-70. This paper examines the relationship between a desire to create novel living arrangements and yearning for a 'better' past. It is argued that a critical engagement with nostalgia can be used to open up issues of historical persistence and ambiguity. The paper draws on exploratory analysis carried out on examples of three emerging forms of residential space (the new urbanism, home zones and cohousing). The paper seeks to identify the contradictions and paradoxes that can be found in the material development of neo-traditional homes and communities. In contrast to dismissive or purely instrumental approaches, the analysis reveals the diverse and ambivalent ways in which nostalgia resides at the heart of belonging and attachment. In sum, the aim is both to expand the debate on novel living arrangements and to promote greater openness and honesty in acknowledging the role of attachments to the past in refiguring new forms of urban co-existence.

Jarvis, Helen. "Saving Space, Sharing Time: Integrated Infrastructures of Daily Life in Cohousing." Environment & Planning A 43.3 (2011): 560-77. This paper explores the concept of collective housing, notably the North American model of purpose-built cohousing, to understand better the functions of space and time at the neglected scale of collective (colocated) interhousehold collaboration. The defining features of this form of intentional community typically include the clustering of smaller-than-average private residences to maximise shared open spaces for social interaction; common facilities for shared daily use; and consensus-based collective self-governance. This paper critically examines the infrastructures of daily life which evolve from, and ease, collective activity and the shared occupation of space. Discussion draws on observations from eight communities in the UK and USA, using selected ethnographic vignettes to illustrate a variety of alternative temporalities which coincide with a shifting and blurring of privatised dwelling. The resulting analysis exposes multiple temporal scales and innovative uses and meanings of time and space. The paper concludes by speculating on the contemporary significance of collective living arrangements and the role this might play in future sustainability.


Jarvis, Helen. (2013). Against the tyranny of single-family dwelling: insights from Christiania at 40. Gender, Place and Culture 20(8): 939-959 Ownership of a single-family dwelling remains the dominant aspiration in market-led economies. In a hyper-privatised landscape, it is widely assumed that people will not share housing except in extraordinary circumstances. There is nevertheless a long and rich history of countercultural groups who imagine and practise alternative forms of shared housekeeping and collaborative dwelling. This article draws on first-hand observations of daily life from the countercultural community of Christiania, in the Danish capital of Copenhagen, at a critical moment in a 40-year history of state-threatened ‘normalization’. Christiania is an intriguing lens through which to re-imagine affordable, adaptable, gender democratic housing and urban structure: it reveals how sharing, mutuality and innovation intersect at multiple scales of homemaking and community governance. These insights are relevant for provoking new thinking about dwelling and mutuality in the context of a deepening crisis in housing provision and access across Europe.

Johnson, Laura C. "Bringing Work Home: Developing a Model Residentially-Based Telework Facility." Canadian Journal of Urban Research 8.2 (1999): 119. The residentially-based telework centre is a telecommunications-enabled workplace to support telecommuting by local neighbourhood residents. Such a facility is a new idea, not yet built, and to date realized only on the drawing boards of those contemplating future residential environments to accommodate projected increases in telecommuting (Caso 1995; Ferrara Contreras 1995). The idea combines elements of two new existing workplace forms: the satellite office and the telework centre.
While it has not yet taken hold in North America, the residentially-based telework centre is an innovation with the potential to transform both neighbourhoods and places of work. First, the author conducted case study analyses of 20 shared workspaces for a wide range of occupations, including artists and artisans, knowledge and information workers, and other professionals. A shared workspace was defined as an environment that supports independent work activity in a collective setting. The case study workspaces were identified through three principal sources: a review of research on work environments, including two evaluations of telework centres (Bagley et al. 1994; Becker et al. 1993); consultation with key informants in Canadian social housing and workplace design; and an Internet survey conducted over a cohousing discussion list to identify any shared workspaces among amenities in cohousing communities (Johnson 1995-6). Among the case studies were: satellite offices for large telecommunications firms, office suites for self-employed professionals, artists' studios, and business centres used on a drop-in basis. Information on 17 of the case study workplaces was collected through site visits, and personal interviews with managers and users of the facilities. Three other workplaces were contacted via e-mail, telephone and correspondence. A typology of shared work facilities was created to organize the various case study workplaces by key distinguishing characteristics. The typology was adapted from one developed in an earlier study of telework centres conducted by the Cornell University's International Workplace Studies Program (Becker et al. 1993), in combination with two classifications of prototype telework spaces in residential communities (Caso 1995; Ferrara Contreras 1995). The Cornell study had identified two key dimensions of telework centres: type of occupancy (use by single or multiple tenants), and patterns of use (full-time, part-time/assigned days or flexible usage). The present study added two residential dimensions: live/work or not live/work facilities, and whether the live/work was for single family or multiple dwellings. In the focus groups, the majority of participants reacted favourably toward the telework centre concept. While all groups were positive about the value of the idea, the geographically-based group was the most enthusiastic. These participants, who all resided in an older downtown Toronto neighbourhood, suggested specific locations which would be suitable for a telework centre in their neighbourhood. At the end of the session they requested to be kept informed of progress on the feasibility study. Several members of that group indicated an interest in being involved in any subsequent work which WPT might undertake in implementing the telework centre concept.


Cohousing schemes were evolved as alternative housing to reduce housework for working women, and to reduce loneliness of elderly people by promoting active mutual relationship with community residents in northern European countries. This article discusses how residents manage their life in senior cohousing projects in Sweden and Denmark. The purpose of this study is to investigate residents' life satisfaction connected with demographic characteristics of residents, physical environment and common activities in the senior cohousing communities, so that it could offer usable information for the establishment of new senior cohousing projects in other countries, as well as an empirical evaluation of the existing projects in Scandinavian countries themselves. Important variables influential to residents' life satisfaction are also discussed in order to improve senior citizens' quality of life. The methods used for the study are literature review, interviews, field trips and questionnaire. Nine hundred and thirty-five postal questionnaires were sent to 28 senior cohousing communities throughout Denmark and Sweden. Of those, 536 replies were collected and analysed by SPSS program using frequency mean and Chi-square test. As a result, it was found out that most of the respondents are healthy, 70-year-olds, and satisfied with their current living in the community.


Senior Cohousing is a type of cohousing that specifically focuses on adults aged 55 or older by
accommodating varying levels of physical abilities as well as varying levels of financial status (The Cohousing Association of the United States, 2010). The purpose of this study was to examine older adults' motivations and expectations toward Senior Cohousing in a rural community. Environmental assessments were conducted in the current houses of older adults who had decided to move into Senior Cohousing in a rural Midwestern town, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same individuals. The interview transcripts were coded and analyzed inductively by three researchers who then reached consensus on the emerging themes. The most common themes related to the motivations to move into Senior Cohousing were community, autonomy, and downsizing. Regarding older adults' expectations for environmental factors, respondents expected an area for conversation, natural light and a view to the outdoors, neutral color, and energy efficiency for their living environment. This study provided insights into the views of participants in a rural Midwestern community toward Senior Cohousing as a new option for a senior living environment.

Kang, Min Jay. "From Original Homeland to 'Permanent Housing' and Back: The Post-Disaster Exodus and Reconstruction of South Taiwan's Indigenous Communities." Social Sciences Directory 2.4 (2013).

Landing on Taiwanese Father's Day (Aug. 8th) of 2009, typhoon Morakot is considered the most crushing disaster of the past decade in Taiwan. Its record-breaking precipitation engulfed many indigenous 'original homeland' located in the ecologically and culturally sensitive mountain areas of southern Taiwan. The State's post-disaster reconstruction policies took drastic measures to relocate many significant tribes from their 'traditional territories' in high mountains to lower lands and force tribes of different cultural ethnicities to live together as a larger community. Advised by a few large philanthropic NGOs, the policies skipped the provision of transitional housing, which allows the disaster-affected people to self-empower and make collective decisions for autonomous reconstruction, and directly built 'permanent houses' to accommodate tribal environmental refugees and disaster-induced migrants in exchange of the relinquishment of their endangered properties. The controversial reconstruction policies evacuate many traditional territories and uproot tribal communities' attachment with ancestral lands on one hand, and on the other hand, force different tribes to live together and establish a new collective identity based on the government's administrative demarcation. Some of the Taiwanese indigenous tribes are originally organic communities of shared values and collaborative living, the double deprivations of their cultural identities after the catastrophe in the name of ecological sustainability have incurred continuous movements and reflections to restore or renew the concept of cultural sustainability through collective and individual actions. Some tribal members even take their own risks to move back to the impaired homeland and start a more cooperative and organic living with little resources and support from outside. This paper will investigate the on-going struggles both in the original homeland and the new permanent housing of a particular tribe, Davaran, and provide a particular post-disaster lens to look into the less-observed aspect of cohousing.


The monetary value of informal eldercare in the family and voluntary sector has drawn much attention as it concerns a resource of welfare governments and nonprofit organizations try to activate via cash benefits. Studies addressing the issue in order to assess the economic impact of non-market activities and the willingness to accept financial rewards have largely ignored differences in the utility function of caregivers. Applying a behavioral-economic approach, we report a profound and formerly unobserved distinction between care in the household and non-household care for a family member or in a voluntary framework: whereas caregivers within the household perceive care as a burden and a positive shadow price arises, in the non-household context--and particularly in the volunteering case-care extends well-being and leads to negative shadow prices. The results show that non-market activities can only be measured in monetary terms to a limited extent and contribute to explaining the boundaries of monetary incentive policies.

Multi-generation cohousing and community developments have been promoted for more than a decade in Germany. They are confronted with rising expectations of success regarding their effects on the health, care, and well-being of their residents, as well as on local civil society. This article analyses their impact on residents and associational life by surveying eight German developments. The empirical findings underline the relevance of an informal sphere between communities and civil society for welfare and quality of life. However, relevant questions concerning their future funding and their relationship to local civil society merit further discussion and analysis.


Purpose In France and Germany, intergenerational housing is put forward as an option by public authorities. This kind of housing scheme seems like a good solution for seniors and young people, from both an economic and a social point of view. But beyond this common philosophy, there are differences in the way intergenerational housing is being implemented in the two countries. France mainly favours the student-senior home-sharing model whereas the intergenerational collaborative housing (co-housing) model based on solidarity between seniors and families is gaining ground in Germany. The purpose of this paper is to explore the reasons for these differences and present results from field surveys conducted in both countries. Design/methodology/approach The qualitative methodology of the field surveys consisted essentially of semi-structured interviews with the young people and seniors living in these types of housing, in order to understand how they experienced intergenerational solidarity. Findings The authors' surveys revealed that certain conditions are essential for this intergenerational solidarity to be fully effective, notably voluntary participation and commitment to the project, and possibly external support to ensure that it is designed and implemented in the best possible way. Originality/value This paper provides useful recommendations for decision makers who wish to support this type of housing concept based on intergenerational solidarity.


The most pressing issue for young adults with intellectual disabilities served by the LiveWorkPlay (LWP) support organization is independent living. A related concept is cohousing, that is, sharing communal space in cooperative community living. The project On Our Own Together II (OOOT2) provided an opportunity for independent living during one summer. The action-research format investigation involved problem-posing and problem-solving core processes. Four issues – everyday problem solving, morning routine, telephone use, and television viewing – were studied. Most often the 14 participants, without any explicit help, vocally expressed problems encountered. The majority of the participants reported successful completion of morning routine activities. They used telephones daily, while television viewing was minimal. The rich summer experience, hence, gave the participants an introduction to community living making them better informed and more prepared for what lies ahead.


In an interview, Charles Durrett, architect and father of the cohousing movement, talked about cohousing and how 'intentional community' can help get this aging thing right. When asked on why he said that many people in the US, including seniors, are "mishoused, ill-housed, or unhoused," he said in the US, they are exceedingly proud of their commitment to independence and the spirit of individuality, yet too many of the older adults wind up in the most rigid, cold, and soulless types of institutions, dependent and devoid of individuality. On how the big retirement-community developers reacting and adapting to cohousing, he said that they are certainly changing their
marketing approach. Cohousing in general and senior cohousing specifically have affected the marketplace by emphasizing the need and desire for community. Small groups spreading the word, along with media attention, will continue to help cohousing catch on.

Abstract: In a context of ever faster globalisation, citizens and their environment are clearly put under pressure. This article introduces the cohousing movement as a model to make life more social and greener in an urban context. Cohousing communities are neighbourhood developments that creatively mix private and common dwellings to recreate a sense of community, while preserving a high degree of individual privacy. In that respect, cohousing fits perfectly well with degrowth economic theories. Yet, cohousing goes beyond theory as this phenomenon that started in Scandinavia 30 years ago is now spreading in the Anglo-Saxon world since the 1990s, and more recently in the rest of Europe and in Japan.


Purpose The purpose of this paper is to review the literature on UK older people's forums. Forums seek to influence statutory responses to ageing, and enable older people to speak up on matters important to them. The review examined three facets of forums: their membership, structures, and effectiveness. Design/methodology/approach Methods included searching databases, internet, and specialist libraries for materials relating to older people's forums. Key points were extracted and source material described but not subject to quality appraisal. Relevant non-UK studies are included to draw contrast and comparisons. Findings Several studies and reports have explored forum members' socio-demographic profiles, motivations and triggers for joining and the two-way rewards of participation. However, membership remains a minority activity, with only a small percentage of members actively engaged and the review highlights gaps in the literature on widening participation. Both statutory and voluntary sectors have supported forum development and sustainability. There is little data on formal structures but some exploration of the informal communications and behaviours that sustain them has been undertaken. Forums are viewed as effective but resource intensive. The size and representativeness of the membership, strength of influence and deployment of members' expertise are all identified as potential contributors to effectiveness. Research limitations/imlications Some material may not have been accessible and there is potential bias by greater inclusion of journal published materials than other possible sources. Material was not quality appraised, and research literature and self-reporting by forums are presented alongside each other. Practical implications Practitioners should familiarise themselves with current older people's organisations locally to ensure that consultations are broad and reach different groups. While partnerships with voluntary sector health and care providers are encouraged some of these groups may not wish to represent all older people. Wider reach may provide multiple perspectives. Help in kind as well as financial resources may be welcomed by older people's groups, such as meeting spaces, assistance with administration, and briefings that are accessible. Offering to meet with older people's forums to discuss matters regularly may provide insight into experiences of services and changing needs earlier than professional feedback. Dismissing older people's forums as made up of the "usual suspects" is likely to be unfair and unhelpful to building up positive relationships. Originality/value The review provides a preliminary assessment of the size and scope of research and grey literature on UK older people's forums, synthesising points of similarity and difference and identifying clear gaps in the evidence.

Marcus, Clare Cooper, 1934-. *Shared Outdoor Space and Community Life*. 15 Vol., 2003.
The writer identifies the “shared outdoor space” as a valuable setting for community life that has
been overlooked or poorly understood. Shared outdoor space is composed of spaces owned by a group and usually accessible only to that group, and includes community gardens and common landscaped areas of developments, clustered housing, and cohousing. Studies indicate that this category of outdoor space is of great importance in offering a setting for casual social interaction, strengthening social networks at the local neighborhood level, children's play, and enhancing a sense of responsibility and safety in the neighborhood. These findings are especially pertinent in lower-income settings in which residents may not be able to sustain wider social networks or bring their children to areas of public recreation. Other topics discussed include five examples of shared outdoor space.


Senior cohousing creates socially, financially, and environmentally sustainable communities for the second half of life. Common facilities include housing for a caregiver whom residents hire as needed. Members provide mutual assistance for each other (co-caring) that encourages Fangel and aging in place. Like multi-generational cohousing these are intentionally cooperative neighbourhoods where each household owns its small but complete home and spacious common facilities are shared. Well-established in Europe, senior cohousing is new to North America and the UK. This paper focuses on Harbourside Cohousing under development in Sooke, BC, and on the innovative Royal Roads University course that attracts new members to the cohousing and raises awareness of aging options in the larger community. Harbourside will be the second senior cohousing in Canada, the first with a care-giver suite, and the first to require a short course on Aging Well in Community as a prerequisite for membership. Experiential learning in the course helps people to get out of denial about growing older. They explore how co-caring can ensure social connection with their community and help them stay in cohousing and out of institutional care as they age. They become a force for change in the larger society redefining aging and elder housing. Co-caring is a grassroots model of neighbourly mutual support that can help reduce social isolation and promote positive, active aging. It encourages independence through awareness that we are all interdependent. In a senior cohousing community, giving and receiving co-care is entirely voluntary. Members may choose to support each other through such activities as doing errands, driving, cooking, or going for a walk with a neighbour. Being good neighbours helps people age well in community and have fun doing it! The course on aging well in community and the participatory development process at Harbourside are creating community two years before move-in. The paper concludes with lessons learned from this prototype and suggests how to begin scaling up senior cohousing as a radical social innovation to respond to the 'silver tsunami' of aging baby boomers.


Grounded in a theoretical synthesis of social support, social capital, and social sustainability, this study examined cohousing as an innovative community model that may support social well-being. A mixed-methods design was used to explore cohousing residents’ experience of social support and the role which community-related needs play in individuals’ choices to join a cohousing community in the USA. Interviews with 10 cohousing residents yielded detailed accounts of motivations for seeking cohousing and experiences of social support in cohousing, and thematic analysis was used to explore explicit and underlying themes. These qualitative results informed the design of a survey, which was administered to 60 cohousing residents and 65 demographically similar individuals who were interested in cohousing. Findings revealed that cohousing members both gave and received
significantly more socially supportive behaviors than their non-cohousing peers, and that a complex interplay of developmental, societal, and individual factors may inform residents’ experiences of living in cohousing.


Global environmental change is evident, and undeniably it is mostly induced by anthropogenic activities. Several programs fuelling climate-change mitigation were lately implemented; all fostering specific and ambitious targets. Although some improvements were regionally observed, regrettably the expected results are in many cases still out of reach. Contemporaneously, societies experienced a proliferation of grass-roots initiatives calling for individual participation in fostering societal sustainable transition. Scholars advocate that bottom-up activities may outperform top-down policies in reaching sustainability; however, a methodological framework to intelligibly assess CBIs' impact on socio-ecological systems is still unexplored. This paper aims at: illustrating main caveats in assessing CBIs' environmental impacts, proposing a general methodological framework, presenting results from a pan-European research.


The article discusses the difficulty of suggesting real social and political alternatives. According to the author, offering criticism, and even indicating how social and political alternatives are blocked, is easier than suggesting real alternatives. He gives several explanations for why promoting alternatives is so difficult. In the author's view because there are so many possible alternatives, when it comes to specifics it's easier for many people to agree on what they are against than about what they are for. That helps explain why rallies are relatively easy to organize against specific problems, such as the latest war or racist policy. Another factor is that, because one living in the existing world, it is easier to understand the current system and how it operates than to understand a hypothetical alternative. People share many understandings of what exists. Despite differences in perception and interpretation, these commonalities are substantial and provide a basis for protesters to agree on what they are against. But because alternatives, whether they are free schools, cohousing, consensus decision making or towns without cars, are experienced by relatively few people, there is less basis for common understanding.


At about the same time, a group of seniors to the west of Toronto realized that they would have to move, simply because they were getting older. Over the years, their rural village had been replaced by low density "executive" estates, and the region preferred to house seniors in urban "adult-lifestyle" facilities where services could be provided more economically. Instead, these seniors decided to create their own support services by building their own new village. The region is now on board, working with the group to tackle questions of water supply, settlement areas, housing density and, yes, support services. This too is cohousing. Does this make cohousing more expensive? Building in the "extra" spaces and amenities that resident groups demand does cost more, which explains why it doesn't happen more often. But sharing some facilities can mean that individual units can be smaller, reducing costs. Also, since the residents themselves are part of the development, "sweat equity" investments of time, rather than money, in such things as landscaping and interior finishing are more viable. The major benefit of this type of community-based development is that it builds places that explicitly encourage cooperation and that support the informal everyday interactions between neighbours that much of our housing discourages. Cohousing also enables differing levels of interaction by providing a range of middle ground between "public" and "private" worlds. More importantly, it provides a mechanism, through the group, for ownership of that common realm, both psychological and legal.
Drawing on decades of study of communal movements in the United States and around the world, Pitzer observed that movements "that do not adjust their strictly communal efforts or adopt new organizational forms more suitable to changing internal and external conditions and the needs of rising generations can arrest their own development," while those that create "more pliable social, economic and administrative forms usually see their causes not only survive but flourish. The most comprehensive overview produced by the movement is Jan Bang's A Portrait of Camphill, which updates the previously published A Candle on the Hill.7 Founder Karl König has been the subject of one extensive biography and a few biographical studies, and his extensive writings and lectures are being released by the Karl König Archive in conjunction with Floris Books.8 Several volumes present the stories of other Camphill founders.9 A few individual communities have published histories, and a few Camphillers have published autobiographies.10 Camphill is also the subject of several master's and doctoral theses, many by current or former coworkers or persons raised in the Camphill movement.

Purpose The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of a rapid evidence synthesis commissioned by the Diocese of Winchester with a remit to provide an empirical basis for church contributions to large housing community developments. It sought to respond to three questions concerning new community developments. These related to risks and causes of failure; learning from past corporate and intermediate tier interventions at diocesan and equivalent levels by religious denominations; and the transferable learning available from developments described in community health and liveability literatures. Design/methodology/approach The review took a purposive approach to sampling evidence from within academic literature, policy and "think tank" outputs and theological texts. The search was instigated with the use of keywords (including New Settlements, Urban Redevelopment, Diocese, Faith and Community), principally within the SCOPUS, NIHR, PUBMED and Google Scholar databases. A pragmatic snowballing approach to relevant references was then employed. Findings Segregation and separation were identified as the main risk for new settlements. Connectivity is required between and across neighbours, ensuring communal access to services, transport and recreation. Communal places where people can come together for conversation and social interaction are identified as contributing significantly to healthy communities. Churches have a particular positive contribution to make here, through a focus on inclusion, hospitality and common values, rather than single faith-based, evangelical approaches. Practical implications The initial effect of the study has been to increase confidence in and awareness of the diocesan contribution. In the longer term the three areas of practice highlighted for enhanced faith-based contributions are those of public communications, community integration and civic leadership. An evidence-based approach appears to be especially significant in facilitating the latter. Originality/value The importance of "creational narratives" in defining and making explicit the values underpinning new housing communities is identified as a singular source of shared motivation for planning and faith agencies.
communitarianism: the society versus the individual; communal versus private property; unity versus diversity; and withdrawal versus outreach.


Extensive research has detected unprecedented levels of public concern about environmental degradation and broad-based recognition that excessive consumption is a root cause of environmental damage. Yet in the U.S., there is little evidence for substantive attitudinal or behavioral change resulting from professed environmental awareness. Americans, it seems, don't walk their environmentalist talk! Scant research has plumbed the contextual determinants of pro-environmental behavioral change. Cohousing offers that opportunity. Cohousing communities generally have firm pro-environmental aspirations. Their physical and social setting provides support for the attitudes of individuals. To date, no systematic research has determined whether residents have been better able in cohousing to convert their environmental awareness into practice. This paper reports on the behavioral change of 346 households in 18 cohousing communities. It reveals a range of interconnected influences upon environmental praxis and argues for greater acknowledgment of the role of "community" in the transference of environmental awareness into attitude and into practice.


The ideology of individualism undermines the foundation of social work theory and practice. Hyper-individualism drives cultural systems and institutions, rendering the social work profession fundamentally incapable of promoting social change for social justice. A radical communitarian counternarrative provides a critical analysis of the disconnect between the needs of individuals and the capacity of communities to meet those needs. A real-world application of radical communitarian principles is demonstrated in cohousing, a contemporary movement in community building. The cohousing model shows how social work might reorient its vision for professional theory and practice.


This paper presents research that explored the connections between neighborhood characteristics, social capital formation and civic engagement in a new form of common interest development called Cohousing. Cohousing neighborhoods are resident-driven, collaborative projects that cluster homes along pedestrian pathways and employ a range of physical and governance structures aimed at fostering a strong sense of community among residents. This study represents one of the few to examine Cohousing on a national scale. This analysis draws on an Internet-based survey of residents of 57 U.S. Cohousing sites as well as in-depth case analyses of three geographically diverse Cohousing neighborhoods to investigate social capital formation and civic engagement practices in these communities. Survey results indicate high levels of social capital and civic engagement among Cohousing residents, as compared to both nationally representative and demographically similar populations. Preliminary analysis suggests that a range of factors may be implicated in this phenomenon including specific patterns of resident involvement in a variety of forms of community engagement. Social Capital has been much studied in recent years in the fields of urban planning, sociology and political science. Nonetheless, whether and how social capital may be created and supported continues to be vigorously debated. This study contributes to this ongoing discussion by exploring social capital formation and civic engagement within this new form of intentional neighborhood development. Results indicate that a combination of physical design and carefully devised governance structures can indeed have a significant influence on the development of social capital and civic practices of Cohousing community residents. This study highlights both the
potential and limitations of looking to intentional neighborhood development strategies as a way of fostering social capital creation and increased civic engagement.


This paper discusses two distinct interpretations of self-organisation with regard to civic initiatives in urban development. One concerns urban developments in which citizens deliberately organise themselves in order to realise a collective ambition. This interpretation of self-organisation resonates with forms of selfgovernance. The other is embedded in complexity sciences. It stresses the spontaneous emergence of urban structures on a particular scale out of the uncoordinated interactions between initiatives on a lower level. The paper highlights the similarities and the fundamental differences between both understandings of self-organisation. It also identifies implications of these differences for research on spatial planning policy and recommendations for civic initiatives in urban development.


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This study examined the meanings of consensus and a block of consensus for 47 residents of one forming and three formed cohousing communities. Interviews revealed that the groups in this study constructed the meaning of consensus in their communities over time. Residents’ metaphors for consensus revealed a multilayered and often contradictory understanding of consensus as a process that was capable of leading to a decision no member had previously envisioned, to increased
member insight, and to firmer relationships within the group. Descriptions of a consensus block revealed themes related to the motives for blocking and to the pivotal role blocking has in improving the group's thinking, stopping its progress, transforming its energy, isolating members, or building community.

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This study focused on a cohousing community's use of consensus to make a decision about surfacing a parking area. It revealed that the community's use of consensus decision making allowed the residents to balance three goals: making an appropriate decision, meeting members' needs, and maintaining the community's well-being. Reaching agreement, however, was complicated by members' value differences and discontinuity in their participation. The analysis of this case reveals three qualities characteristic of the enactment of consensus: the role of structured communication within and between group meetings, a tension between maintaining process openness and reaching decision closure, and the expectation that group members will work within the consensus process. The analysis also highlights the importance of timing in the interpretation of conflict in a consensus-oriented group and the role of process change when a group reaches the limits of members' commitment to consensus.


A list of Web sites and reading materials for those interested in community redesign and sustainable development is presented. One can find information on topics such as rooftop and vertical gardens, brownfields, cohousing, and new urbanism.


Beneficial effects of social interaction on aging have been studied in humans and other species. We found that short-lived Drosophila mutants of the antioxidant enzyme Cu/Zn superoxide dismutase displayed a robust lifespan extension, with improved stress resistance and motor ability, upon cohousing with active flies of longer lifespan or younger age. Genetic, surgical, and environmental manipulations revealed motor and sensory components in behavioral interactions required for the lifespan extension induced by cohousing. Our results provide a definitive case of beneficial social interaction on lifespan and a useful entry point for analyzing the underlying molecular networks and physiological mechanisms.


This article aims to discuss the possibility that cohousing communities might combine both civil engagement and governance systems in order to simultaneously generate three forms of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking social capitals. Cohousing communities intend to create a 'self-sufficient micro-cosmos', but struggle against the relationships of 'anonymous' neighbourhood. Cohousers build their bonding social capital through the creation of a supportive (formal and informal) network within the community; while at the same time they develop bridging social capital when they try to integrate with the wider context, by organizing activities and making available spaces towards the outside. Finally, when cohousers try to collaborate with external partners (e.g. non-profit organizations and public institutions) they build linking social capital in relation to the ideas, information and advantages obtained through the collaboration with these institutions.

On the basis of the literature (produced mainly by sociologists, architects, and geographers) about gated and cohousing communities, this work analyzes how these communities differ from each other. The analysis suggests that cohousing and gated communities are different in the nature of relationships between residents and in the reasons why they arise, even if there are some points of similarity. The risk of a degeneration of cohousing in the gated type is linked in particular with a complete transformation of the grass-roots model (typical of cohousing) to the top-down speculative scheme (typical of gated communities).

This work aims to assess whether cohousing communities might generate positive effects in terms of social housing. Cohousing projects are "supportive" communities where many types of informal support networks arise, referring to the concept of sharing spaces, facilities, but also properties, the decision-making process, and experiences. The costs of the sites and construction are often higher than a "normal condominium" (especially if they are resident-led communities), and sometimes, they might be responsible for the failure of the groups: inhabitants of those communities born spontaneously, without any kind of public aid, are mainly from a medium-high socio-economic status. However, in the UK, where cohousing follows mainly a grassroots model, some communities are able to keep the costs down, in particular by the creation of mixed tenure systems, collaboration with Housing Associations and self-building processes. The Threshold Centre in England allocates 50 % of the residential units for social housing. The collaboration with a Housing Association produced a "good housing" model, which allowed both a reduction in construction time and a guarantee of the creation of a heterogeneous group (but with a compact identity), as well as the inclusion of socio-economically vulnerable people.

The idea of cohousing is alive in many industrialized countries today. It is seen as an interesting alternative way of living in late modern cities, where a majority of people live in families, couples or single households, but since there is a general lack of knowledge of what it means to live in a cohousing unit there are also prejudices. In cohousing units, the members are bound up to each other not by family ties but as separate persons with different relations. The inhabitants are living in different households and flats and with common spaces. Architecture is important as well as the organization of cooperation and everyday life. This article presents results from a study on "cohousing for second half of life" in the capital city of Sweden. The main question is: What does it mean to live in a cohousing unit and who is living here? Through in-depth interviews, we found that the residents in this type of dwelling underscore the possibility of both autonomy and dependency, privacy and togetherness. Theoretically, the relations in a cohousing unit can neither be characterized as Gemeinschaft nor Gesellschaft but at the same time it could be both/and. This evokes a third social relationship of the Bund – a theoretical concept beyond the dichotomy of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

Connection to others predicts pro-social behavior and personal well-being. Connection to nature predicts pro-environmental behavior and personal well-being. Cohousing is a residential development intended to enhance residents' connection to others and nature, but systematic study of the transformational practices adopted to promote connection has been lacking. Data from a national
survey of cohousers in the US (N = 559) were used to create a typology of cohousing practices; measures of connection to community and nature were regressed on self-reported frequency of participation in the resultant categories of practices. Stewardship of the natural environment and fellowship and culture practices predicted greater connection to nature. Cohousing core, sharing and support, and fellowship and culture practices predicted greater connection to community. The concepts of connection to nature, connection to community, and transformational practices warrant further development in terms of theory and measurement.


There is increased interest in the UK in cohousing as a desirable alternative for older people. The economics of developing cohousing differ from the normal model for residential development; in particular, the participatory nature of the process increases the time required and there are higher risks for both resident/purchaser and developer. We examine the nature of supply and risk using the case of a new senior cohousing community in south London. Given its evident benefits, senior cohousing may eventually become more widespread, and perceived risks will fall. However, the nature of the residential development process means that cohousing will always be at a disadvantage when competing for land in high demand areas like London, and the time required for participatory processes increases costs. To currently increase the small number of cohousing communities in the UK and ensure affordability, targeted measures may be necessary to enable groups to access land and mitigate the higher costs associated with longer term collaborative processes.


Abstract: This article reviews the burgeoning emerging literature on sustainable degrowth. This is defined as an equitable downscaling of production and consumption that increases human well-being and enhances ecological conditions at the local and global level, in the short and long term. The paradigmatic propositions of degrowth are that economic growth is not sustainable and that human progress without economic growth is possible. Degrowth proponents come from diverse origins. Some are critics of market globalization, new technologies or the imposition of western models of development in the rest of the world. All criticize GDP accounting though they propose often different social and ecological indicators. Degrowth theorists and practitioners support an extension of human relations instead of market relations, demand a deepening of democracy, defend ecosystems, and propose a more equal distribution of wealth. We distinguish between depression, i.e. unplanned degrowth within a growth regime, and sustainable degrowth, a voluntary, smooth and equitable transition to a regime of lower production and consumption. The question we ask is how positive would degrowth be if instead of being imposed by an economic crisis, it would actually be a democratic collective decision, a project with the ambition of getting closer to ecological sustainability and socio-environmental justice worldwide. Most articles in this issue were originally presented at the April 2008 conference in Paris on Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity. This conference brought the word degrowth and the concepts around it into an international academic setting. Articles of this special issue are summarized in this introductory article. Hueting, d’Alessandro and colleagues, van den Bergh, Kerschner, Spangenberg and Alcott discuss whether current growth patterns are (un)sustainable and offer different perspectives on what degrowth might mean, and whether and under what conditions it might be desirable. Matthey and Hamilton focus on social dynamics and the obstacles and opportunities for voluntary social action...
towards degrowth. Lietaert and Cattaneo with Gavaldà offer a down-to-earth empirical discussion of two practical living experiments: cohousing and squats, highlighting the obstacles for scaling up such alternatives. Finally van Griethuysen explains why growth is an imperative in modern market economies, raising also the question whether degrowth is possible without radical institutional changes.


"...ecovillages embody the land ethic espoused by Aldo Leopold, which "enlarges the boundaries of community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. Consensus, however, tends to result in decisions that the community can support over the long term. Because consensus decisions must be supported by nearly all community members, decisions that only


Older people consider moving home when there is a discrepancy between actual and desired living conditions. This study builds on the classic push and pull framework described in the early work of Lee and Wiseman by identifying whether or not individual differences among older people can be predictive for certain push and pull reasons (such as housing, health, neighbourhood and social contact). On the basis of data from the Belgian Ageing Studies (N = 35,402), it was found that 13.9 per cent of older respondents had moved in the last ten years (N = 4,823). An analysis of the movers revealed inequalities in the reasons for moving in later life and raises the question of whether a relocation is voluntary (being able to move) or involuntary (being forced to move). Respondents with lower household incomes and poor mental health were significantly more likely to have moved because of stressors pushing them out of their previous dwelling, whereas older people with higher household incomes or home-owners were mainly pulled towards a more attractive environment.


Presents several abstracts on housing. ‘American Cohousing: The First Five Years,’ by Dorit Fromm; ‘The Practice of Cost Recovery in Urban Low-Income Housing: A Discourse With Experiences From Zimbabwe’; ‘From Collective Housing to Cohousing--A Summary of Research,’ by Dick Urban Vestbro.


There is an acknowledged need for buildings and communities to be more resilient in the face of unpredictable effects of climate change, economic crises and energy supplies. The notion and social practices involving 'redundancy' (the ability to switch between numerous available choices beyond optimal design) are explored as an aspect of resilience theory. Practice and Social Learning theories are used as a lens through which to explore the available redundancy in housing and home environments to help prevent performance failure through unexpected circumstances or in response to varying user needs. Findings from an in depth UK housing case study show how redundancy is linked with the capacity to share resources and to learn both individually and collectively as a community. Such learning in relation to resilient low-carbon living is shown to be co-produced effectively through participatory action research. The benefits of introducing extra redundancy in housing design and community development to accommodate varied user's understanding and preferences are discussed in relation to future proofing, value and scalar issues. Recommendations include better understanding of the design, time and monetary contribution needed to implement social or technical redundancy. These costs should be evaluated in context of savings made through greater resilience achieved.


The article offers the author's views on cohousing which offers a structured and collaborative venue for people wishing to live in community. It states that cohousing developments offer practical and social home environment with opportunities for casual meetings between neighbours as well as for gatherings. The author opines that persons who commit themselves to cohousing communities will develop in ways that cultivate sociality, mutual aid, justice and altruism.


Cohousing communities are cooperative neighborhoods where privately-owned, individual households are clustered around a "common house" with shared facilities including a dining room for "common meals." This paper examines the tension between community and family in one cohousing community and analyzes the extent to which communalizing meals helps balance household labor by gender. The findings suggest that communalizing meals has a great deal of potential for addressing both the volume and distribution of household labor for cohousing families as well as those living in mainstream housing.


Uses 1997 interviews with members of developing and established co-housing communities to explore connections between a "cooperative neighborhood" community model and social movement activism.


Six exemplary initiatives for community redesign are presented. Cohousing projects, smart growth, new urbanism, green infrastructure funds, the Écovillage Network of Canada, and the International Brownfield Exchange offer innovative approaches to sustainable redevelopment.


When people are involved in the planning of their own community, they usually choose to include many sustainable practices. For example, the Conservation Cooperative in Ottawa was built on a vacant site near the downtown core. It is a four-storey apartment building that features over 200 indoor bicycle parking spots, and only eight car parking spaces on site. High-efficiency heating, cooling and water systems minimize resource use. Stormwater is collected from the roof and used to irrigate gardens. Hard surfaces on the site have been minimized to allow natural drainage. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has sponsored the testing of a gray water recovery system in eight units: sink and shower water will be used to flush toilets. Finally, building products with recycled content were favoured in the choice of construction materials....


Today’s development of alternative types of housing with communal spaces and shared facilities, called cohousing, has been influenced by utopian visions, practical proposals and implemented projects far back in the past. This article traces the driving forces behind the various models of communitarian settlements, cooperative housekeeping, central kitchen buildings, collective housing and collaborative residential experiments while focusing specifically on the design and gender aspects of these models. An emphasis is given to feminist arguments for cohousing, as well as a discussion of the patriarchal resistance against various forms of housing and living based on equality and neighbourly cooperation. The article includes an analysis of the relief of housework burdens and of the possibility for men to be courageously domesticated through this type of housing. The main research methods comprise analyses of literature and the researchers’ own practical experiences of cohousing. The authors claim that cohousing in Scandinavian and some other countries has contributed to a more equal distribution of responsibilities for housework. However, the number of people living in cohousing is still too small to influence the gender segregation of labour markets. It is furthermore concluded that design factors, such as the quality of shared spaces, easy access to common rooms and indoor communication, are important for the smooth functioning of cohousing.


This article examines the importance of green residential environments to the health and well-being of older adults. The authors place the connection between health and the environment in a historical context and review evidence specifically related to the health of older adults. The authors compare the criteria for green housing and healthy housing and also examine emerging trends related to green senior housing and neighborhoods, including elder cohousing, the sustainable sites initiative, and assessment of health impact.


Does design influence social interaction in cohousing? How crucial is it? What other factors are involved? Can the impact of design be enhanced by the personal characteristics of residents or the formal social structures operating in a cohousing community? How can we design communities to increase social interaction in the future? Cohousing provides a useful case study because it uses design and formal social structures to encourage social interaction in neighbourhoods. In addition, informal social factors and personal characteristics of those living in cohousing communities predispose them to social interaction. Thus, cohousing is a housing form with optimal conditions for social interaction. Cohousing also provides a unique opportunity to study these variables in one setting to determine the relative importance of each and how social and personal factors may help to enhance the outcomes of design.


Cohousing is an innovative form of accommodation. It offers economic, environmental and social advantages over existing forms of development. Cohousing emerged in the USA during the past 20 years as an innovative housing form with a niche market, but adoptions to date have been limited. This paper seeks to determine the future for cohousing in the USA, using innovation diffusion theories. It reviews the factors influencing the rate of diffusion of cohousing (relative advantages, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability). It investigates the impact of path dependencies and the existence of disruptive technologies on adoptions. It considers the potential for cohousing to "cross the chasm" and be adopted by the mainstream. The findings of the research suggest that "grass-roots" approaches to the creation of cohousing communities are likely to result in the greatest number of adoptions in the future.


Increasing environmental problems associated with the domestic sector and the decline of local social capital and resident participation in their locality has led the UK government to seek more sustainable housing models. Cohousing could provide one option. However, cohousing has been relatively unsuccessful in the UK so far. The author sets out to prove that cohousing is a more sustainable housing model (using international examples) and that it in fact achieves many of the sustainability objectives of the new urbanist movement. An international comparison of the experience of cohousing in the UK and California and the factors influencing success and failure of cohousing in both locations are then explored. Drawing on the Californian experience the author
then tries to provide some indication of how the development of cohousing could be encouraged in the UK in the future.