changing homes, changing society: carbon-neutral housing solutions through design

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Household at the core of legislative changes in Malta

- 2004: EU Member State
- 2011: Divorce
- 2015: Gender Identity Act
- 2016: Cohabitation Act
- 2017: Marriage Equality Act
- 2019: Private Residential Leases Act
- 2020: Pre-1995 Residential Leases Act
Alternative Domesticities

• Shrinkage of the domestic setting.
• Increasing low fertility.
• Increasing life expectancy rates (Formosa, 2018).
  ○ Maltese population aged 65-plus reached 18.7% of the total population (NSO, 2019).
• Contemporary domestic norm comprises of
  ○ female-led single households, inter-generational households, shared professional households, solo living, living apart and blended families & LGBTIQ families.
Social housing applicants (2021)

- 75% females;
- housing needs (affordable, autonomous & independent, family-friendly housing);
- social policy and legislation (namely access to benefits, conjugal law, employment, family, health, rent reform, salaries and transitional policy);
- social welfare (concerning employment, family, health, and general social wellbeing);
- interior domestic redesign needs.
Smaller households tend to increase (direct and indirect):

- energy and resource consumption,
- domestic waste,
- production of CO2, and
- biodiversity losses across a range of national contexts.

(Liu et al., 2003; Mackellar et al., 1995; Moll et al., 2005, Yates., 2016)
Towards Common Resource Use

- People living alone do, own, make and consume resource-intensive things alone rather than together.
- Increased solo living fundamentally affect domestic life and domestic resource consumption.
- Larger households appear to share resources more effectively.
GOVERNANCE & HOUSING

Shift towards green principles that re-imagine our homes as:

1. generators of human flourishing
2. connectors to open and green spaces
3. foundations of political, environmental & economic resilience
4. a right to housing
How can carbon-neutral housing practices promote sustainable consumption while keeping wellbeing at the centre?
Putting social relations & resource sharing at the centre
How can a housing system promote carbon-neutral solutions?

- Changing households as a unit of analysis.
- Social & Environmental factors included at planning stage.
- Common resource use through sharing.
Q 3. Advice on replicating best practices

1. Understanding the type of society that you are working in.
2. Social & environmental thinking at planning stage.
3. Household-in-flux as an analytical category.
4. Shift towards common resource use in new housing developments.
5. Health value of domestic space.
Carbon-neutral housing solutions through design

The social and environmental dimension in urban planning and housing policies is often side-lined and the emphasis has been more on the importance of the hardware of cities and its economic outcome. Less attention has been granted to social relations and the key role they hold in determining the wellbeing of urban communities.
Thank you!