

This article was downloaded by: [Politecnico di Milano Bibl]

On: 03 September 2013, At: 08:47

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Urban Research & Practice

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rurp20>

### Living together privately: for a cautious reading of cohousing

Francesco Chiodelli<sup>a</sup> & Valeria Baglione<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Gran Sasso Science Institute, L'Aquila, Italy

<sup>b</sup> Inter-university Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning, Politecnico di Torino, Torino, Italy

Published online: 02 Sep 2013.

To cite this article: Urban Research & Practice (2013): Living together privately: for a cautious reading of cohousing, Urban Research & Practice

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2013.827905>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

## Living together privately: for a cautious reading of cohousing

Francesco Chiodelli<sup>a\*</sup> and Valeria Baglione<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Gran Sasso Science Institute, L'Aquila, Italy; <sup>b</sup>Inter-university Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning, Politecnico di Torino, Torino, Italy

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.

**Keywords:** cohousing; private residential communities; housing policies

### 1. Introduction

Cohousing is not a new phenomenon. From the 1960s, it spread through most of the countries of North Europe; in the 1980s, it propagated outside Europe, in particular in the United States and Canada (and later in Oceania and East Asia); over the last decade some examples of cohousing could also be found in some countries of southern Europe.<sup>1</sup> During its development over the last 30 years, it has been accompanied by a very optimistic public interpretation (Krokfors 2012); for instance, it has been interpreted as an innovative answer to today's environmental and social problems, a way to build a better society, to reintroduce into urban life relationships based on solidarity, sharing, toleration, 'to go beyond the market economy and recreate social and practical links among people' (Lietaert 2010, 580). The literature about cohousing has mirrored this stance: actually, a great deal of the books, academic papers and newspaper articles dealing with cohousing tend to emphasize almost only the positive aspects of cohousing. However, in our opinion, this stance is not accurate. Cohousing certainly has many positive aspects, highlighted by its supporters; nevertheless, it also has problematic aspects that could have potentially negative effects on the urban context. As we will argue, it is important to highlight these potential negative aspects, not only for theoretical reasons but also for policy reasons.

To understand more clearly the potential negative effects of cohousing, a comprehensive analysis of it is useful. To this aim, in our paper we propose to interpret it as part of a wider (and growing) phenomenon of new forms of collective but private dwelling (i.e. private residential communities). As we will argue in detail later (see Section 3), by 'private residential communities' we mean territory-based organizations, privately owned

---

\*Corresponding author. Email: [francesco.chiodelli@gssi.infn.it](mailto:francesco.chiodelli@gssi.infn.it)

and governed by their internal private rules, that provide collective goods (services and facilities) for the settlement's inhabitants.

This interpretation of cohousing generates useful knowledge about cohousing with reference to at least two points. First, from an analytical-descriptive viewpoint, it draws attention to the fact that cohousing may engender some of the same problems usually associated with other kinds of private residential communities (e.g. social, ethnical and ideological homogeneity of inhabitants; lack of integration with surrounding neighbourhoods). Second, from a policy viewpoint, it sustains a more cautionary approach to cohousing: some scholars recommend public support for cohousing, and many public authorities have supported the development of cohousing; however, in our opinion, these recommendations and policies are a little hasty (for instance, because of the possible negative effects of cohousing).

The paper is organized in three main parts. In the first part (Section 2), we provide an overall descriptive view of cohousing (in particular, we identify the five characteristics that, in our opinion, are constitutive of the cohousing phenomenon). In the second part (Section 3), we contextualize cohousing within the phenomenon of private residential communities. In the third part (Section 4), we consider some problematic points related to cohousing and to policies devoted to supporting it that arise from considering cohousing as a type of private residential community.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Cohousing: constitutive characteristics

As we have mentioned, cohousing is not new. Even if its origins can be traced back to the secular history of utopian communities and communitarian movements (Jarvis 2011; Vestbro and Horelli 2012), its current form originated in the mid-1960s, related to the realization of the community of Skråplanet in Denmark (McCamant, Durrett, and Hertzman, 2011). However, despite its decennial course, cohousing is a quantitatively limited phenomenon (Fromm 2012).<sup>3</sup> Today, in the United States, according to Cohousing Association of the United States, there are 120 completed (or retrofitting) cohousing communities (around 3000 housing units in total) and 85 projects in various stages of formation and construction – the total number of US cohousing residents is currently around 6000–7000, that is to say 0.002% of the national population.<sup>4</sup>

In Canada, in 2013, the Canadian Cohousing Network cited about 24 cohousing communities, some of them in construction ([www.cohousing.ca](http://www.cohousing.ca)). In Europe the diffusion varies greatly from country to country, but, in any case, even in those countries where cohousing is much more frequent, cohousers constitute a tiny fraction of the total residents (Vestbro and Horelli 2012). For instance, in Denmark, the country where cohousing is most commonly found, the amount of total population living in cohousing is about 1% (ibid); in Sweden there are 43 functioning cohousing settlements (Vestbro 2012), hosting 0.05% of the national population; Ache and Fedrowitz (2012) report 500 projects (about 20,000 inhabitants) in Germany.<sup>5</sup> In southern Europe cohousing is less frequent – for example, in Italy there are four completed cases of cohousing settlements (Chiodelli 2010; Baglione 2011).

However, what is cohousing for exactly? What are the constitutive characteristics of cohousing? In the literature, there are different definitions. A number of them seem too broad or rather vague,<sup>6</sup> so they are not very useful for pinpointing specificities and constitutive features of the phenomenon.

According to our studies, it is possible to recognize five characteristics that are *necessary and sufficient* to define a settlement as cohousing.<sup>7</sup> These are: (i) communitarian

multi-functionality, (ii) constitutional and operational rules of a private nature, (iii) residents' participation and self-organization, (iv) residents' self-selection and (v) value characterization.

*Communitarian multi-functionality.* Cohousing communities are always characterized by the coexistence of both residential functions and communal spaces and facilities. These are intended for the community members<sup>8</sup> and are directly managed by them. The quality and quantity of collective spaces and facilities are defined according to the needs, preferences and financial capacity of cohousers. The most common facilities (usually located in the Common House) are kitchen, dining room, laundry, meeting room and play space for children.<sup>9</sup> Common spaces and facilities do not usually replace private ones, but do lead to the reduction of private housing areas (approximately 5–15% compared to traditional housing) (Stewart 2002; Fromm 2006). The purpose of cohousing is, in fact, to maintain a large degree of privacy, besides sharing some spaces and aspects of daily life (Abrahams and Middleton 1997).

*Constitutional and operational rules of a private nature.* Cohousing communities are characterized by rules of a private nature introduced by residents to guarantee and defend the specificity and working of the community.<sup>10</sup> The rule system can change, for instance, according to different institutional contexts, residents' preferences and community life stages. However, it usually comprises a two-fold structure (Fenster 1999):

- (1) Statutes<sup>11</sup>: general and permanent rules that define the general aspects of the community – for instance, the ownership regime and the organizational form – as well as the owners' rights and responsibilities; the statutes are consistent with public legal requirements;
- (2) Bylaws: more specific, private rules (that do not need to be filed with a public agency) that give direction to particular aspects of community life, such as the decision-making process, the participation process, the management of collective spaces, etc. It is this system of rules that defines the community's specificity and daily functioning. Unlike the statutes, these rules can easily be modified by cohousers to enable the community to adapt to new needs and conditions.<sup>12</sup>

*Residents' participation and self-organization.* An essential characteristic of cohousing is the high degree of participation of the residents in the cohousing community's life. Generally speaking, this is true both in the community's constitution phase and in the daily management phase.

In the constitution phase,<sup>13</sup> the manner and degree of the residents' involvement are quite different according to the development model adopted; however, in the great majority of cases, the residents are involved to some extent. Traditionally, cohousing is considered to be characterized by a resident-led model (Fromm 1991, 1993; Cooper Marcus 2000). In the resident-led model, cohousers directly manage all the constitutional steps of community, from recruitment of new candidate cohousers to the physical design of the settlement.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, over time, because of the burden and the risks in dealing with the real-estate process, a partnership approach has become more popular. In the partnership model, a developer is hired, particularly in the planning and building stage, whereas cohousers deal directly with the recruitment phase and define the planning and design guidelines (Williams 2005a, 2008).<sup>15</sup>

In the daily management phase, residents are always quite deeply involved (regardless of the model according to which the community has been developed). All the residents take part in regular collective meetings, in which they address questions related to community management.<sup>16</sup> As Fenster states, ‘cohousing’s processes of resident development and self-governance sacrifice the efficiency that comes from delegating responsibility of property management and maintenance for an ideal of procedural and substantive democracy that both encourages and demands the participation of members’ (1999, 7). Daily activities (cooking for the community, cleaning of collective spaces, etc.) are also carried out by small volunteer groups, which in turn deal with specific needs.<sup>17</sup>

*Residents’ self-selection.* The creation of a cohousing community is achieved through the self-selection of future residents, generally, before the physical realization of the settlement. The recruitment of aspirant cohousers is carried out according to informal processes, of almost an empathic nature. For example, the core group of cohousers may meet aspirant cohousers in informal situations, such as in a coffee bar or at dinner, and try to understand their motivations, values and attitudes towards community life. The aim of creating a close-knit, interactive and dialogic community leads to the search for affinity among residents, since, as Fromm argues, ‘this kind of life is not for everyone’ (2006, 75).

*Value characterization.* The cohousing community is created and developed on the basis of certain values, more or less powerful or explicit according to the situation. This value characterization is essential to reach the aim, typical of all cohousing, to create ‘a strong and vibrant communit[y]’ (Williams 2005a, 200).<sup>18</sup> Generally, the cohousing communities stress values such as solidarity, inclusion, social activism and mutual support (Sargisson 2000). A number of communities are also characterized by an emphasis on environmental sustainability, expressed in particular through a sustainable lifestyle (Meltzer 2000; Scotthanson and Scotthanson 2005; Baker 2007). In all cases, the values characterizing the group are stated in the constitutive documents of the association, particularly in bylaws. These constitutive values are instrumental in grounding the selection of residents.

### 3. Cohousing as a type of private residential communities family

#### 3.1. *Private residential communities*

In recent decades, privately governed residential communities have become a common feature of many countries’ urban development (Webster, Glasze, and Frantz 2002; Ben-Joseph 2004; Glasze, Webster, and Frantz 2006a). Their spread is particularly evident in the United States. In 1970, only 1% (2.1 million) of Americans lived in a residential community association; it is now almost 20% (about 63.4 million Americans).<sup>19</sup> Since 1970, in the United States approximately one-third of new housing units built have been within a private residential community. Nowadays, in some US states nearly all new housing is in a private residential community (see Gordon 2003; McKenzie 2005; Nelson 2004).

As the spread of the phenomenon suggests, a great variety of private residential communities exist. For instance, we have retirement communities,<sup>20</sup> religious communities,<sup>21</sup> sports and leisure communities,<sup>22</sup> new towns,<sup>23</sup> enclaves for the rich and famous,<sup>24</sup> and gated communities<sup>25</sup> (see Blakely and Snyder 1997). It could be said that as many different kinds of private residential communities can exist as there are varied residents’ desires and expectations.

Their diversity is a relevant fact to be highlighted. Actually, quite often, the phenomenon of private residential communities is traced back to that of the gated communities or fortified enclaves (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Lang and Danielsen 1997; Low 1997; Caldeira 1999; Rifkin 2000), that is private neighbourhoods intended for well-off people, characterized by a low degree of accessibility, many controls and many security devices. This is an analytical mistake: only a minority of private residential communities is fortified.<sup>26</sup> In fact, there are several reasons guiding the choice to live in a private residential community; personal safety and security are only two reasons, and are not necessarily the most relevant (Brunetta and Moroni 2012). As Glasze, Webster and Frantz argue, ‘The spread of privately governed and secured neighbourhoods has been associated with a growing local security problem [...]. However, the empirical bases for these assumptions have been for a long time rather superficial. [...] security is only one of the services the residents want and usually in conventional and private neighbourhoods it is packaged up with other services. Locational choice can be made on the basis of subjective evaluation of bundles of civic goods’ (2006b, 1–2).

Thus, there are several kinds of private residential community and several different reasons for choosing to live within one.<sup>27</sup> Usually, researchers do not examine cohousing as part of private residential communities. However, our thesis is that cohousing can be properly considered a kind of private residential community; the reason is that because all its constitutive characteristics are shared by the other types of privately governed communities. Before arguing this thesis, a specification about cohousing property regimes is necessary.

### 3.2. *Cohousing property regimes*

Cohousing communities are not characterized by a typical ownership regime<sup>28</sup> (Scott Hanson and Scott Hanson 2005). In some cases there is a mixed form of ownership that integrates private ownership of housing units with a collective property of common spaces (i.e. condominium). In some other cases the owner is a non-profit organization or a residential cooperative, the members of which are all the residents, or a private society in which the board members are all the residents (White-Harvey 1993; Fenster 1999). Regardless of the specific property regime, all these are forms of *private property*, that is the owner is represented by private legal persons.<sup>29</sup> Cases in which the property is public (i.e. the owner is the state, at various levels or through a public agency) are more rare. Even if a detailed survey of cohousing property regimes is lacking, from our literature review and fieldwork studies we can deduce that publicly owned cohousing settlements are quite limited (cohousing is privately owned also in cases in which there are some forms of public support to cohousing development; see for instance Ache and Fedrowitz (2012) on Germany). Our ensuing discussion about cohousing as a form of private residential community refers properly to privately owned cohousing; the differences among property regimes within private ownership are not relevant to our discussion. Actually, what is relevant is that cohousing is *privately* owned and not publicly owned; therefore, as a result, cohousers are, for instance, allowed to set their own internal system of rules governing the community, or they are entitled to decide who, from outside the community, is allowed to enjoy the use of communal spaces. Private property is essential because it allows ‘controls on membership and restrictions on alienation of interests in private units, [which] are [. . .] main hallmarks of cohousing’ (Scott-Hunt 2007, 3).<sup>30</sup>

Private ownership is a feature common to all kinds of private residential communities; in the next paragraph, we analyze other characteristics shared by them.

### 3.3. *Common features of private residential communities*

*Communitarian multi-functionality.* Communitarian multi-functionality is a typical characteristic of every kind of private residential community. The quality and quantity of communal spaces and facilities depend on the choices, needs, characteristics and finances of residents; however, a private residential community *always* offers, in addition to more traditional residential functions, some community services and facilities, for example streets, parks, sports and recreational amenities, snow removal, garbage collection, street lighting, etc. (Gordon 2003; McCabe and Tao 2006).

The difference among different kinds of private residential community is in the type of these services and facilities. For instance, in cohousing they are aimed more at supporting daily home life (e.g. common laundry, dining room and kitchen) and promoting interaction between residents; in gated communities they are aimed more at providing safety and security (e.g. fences, security patrol, etc.)<sup>31</sup>; in sport and leisure communities they are connected in particular to sports (e.g. swimming pools, tennis courts and golf courses, etc.).

*Constitutional and operational rules of a private nature.* All private residential communities are governed by a system of private laws (both statutes and bylaws), introduced by communities components, for assuring their specificity and functioning (Ellickson 1982; Foldvary 2006). These rules deal with both the institutional arrangements (the association's administrative organisms, functions, purposes, economic resources, etc.) and the rights and duties of the residents with reference to both private and collective spaces.

All kinds of private residential community are governed by a system of private laws; the specificity of each kind of community rests on the contents of these laws (Fenster 1999). For instance, in many cohousing communities, 'the residents are requested to carry out some compulsory tasks in the units of the self-work model. This is usually specified as part of the contract. The most frequent compulsory task is cooking' (Vestbro and Horelli 2012, 328); this specific kind of commitment is usually absent in other types of communities, where there are duties of other sorts (for instance, related to the aesthetic aspect of houses). In some other cases, on the contrary, the internal rules of cohousing are quite similar to the rules of other kinds of private residential communities, for instance rules about the use of common facilities (Scott-Hunt 2007).

*Residents' participation and self-organization.* Participation and self-organization are characteristics typically associated with cohousing. As we have argued, cohousers are deeply involved in the cohousing life, for instance in the day-to-day management of the community. Nonetheless, residents' participation in the management of the community is also a characteristic of all other types of private community. The management of private residential communities is, in fact, always committed to residents who, through both collective meetings and elective boards, constitute a sort of 'private government', dealing with practical matters related to daily life (for a discussion of the basic tasks of these boards, see McKenzie 2005; Brunetta and Moroni 2012). As McKenzie (2006, 90) states, 'They make and enforce rules, collect assessments from all owners, maintain property, and in essence function as private governments for development'. With regard to these aspects, the difference between cohousing and other private residential communities lies only in the form of internal organization of this 'private government' and in the degree of inhabitants' involvement, but not in the fact that the community is privately governed by the residents.

*Residents' self-selection.* A distinctive feature of all private residential communities is the possibility to select not only who has access to the area and to the common services, but also to select the community residents. This is due to the private nature of space and organizational form (Le Goix 2002). They are usually private settlements on private land, so they are based on the right to exclude, which is typical of private ownership.<sup>32</sup> This is true not only for those kinds of communities more oriented towards exclusion (such as gated communities or retirement communities<sup>33</sup>), but also for cohousing: even if cohousers sometimes open up their communal spaces to the local community (Stewart 2002; Margolis and Entin 2011; Fromm 2012), normally cohousing communal spaces and facilities can be used only by the residents (and, in any case, they remain spaces of private property, and not of public property).

With regard to the selection of the residents, the peculiarity of cohousing rests only on the mechanism of this selection, and not on the fact that there is a selection process. In cohousing, selection of residents' takes place mainly before the establishment and building of the settlement; this selection is based on informal processes and unwritten principles of an almost empathic nature. Usually, in other kinds of private residential community, the selection of residents occurs mainly after the establishment and building of the settlement, and rests on impersonal rules written in the constitutive documents of the association (e.g. age for retirement communities, or willingness/ability to pay for communal facilities and services and for residential association fees in other kinds of communities).

*Value characterization.* The choice to live within a private residential community is quite often related to functional reasons, for example better services, real-estate investment protection, greater environmental quality, safety, etc. (Glasze, Webster, and Frantz 2006b).<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, value reasons are also quite important. This is particularly true in cohousing, where shared values are at the community core. These values are, for instance, interaction, sociality, mutual support, environmental sustainability and sense of community (see Margolis and Entin 2011). However, value characterization is not absent from all other types of private residential community, even if the values at stake are different (for instance, a value driving the choice to live in a gated community may be the preference for ethnic or socially homogenous communities characterized by safety and security). We can state that all types of private residential community are characterized by some values shared by the residents. The differences are the values at stake and the role of these values in the community formation and characterization.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4. Conclusions

As we have argued, cohousing can be properly considered a variety of the private residential communities' family. This is relevant for two closely related reasons.

*First reason.* In many countries, the popularity of cohousing led to a very optimistic interpretation of the phenomenon. Actually, a great deal of the literature dealing with cohousing tends to emphasize in particular its positive aspects.<sup>36</sup> Certainly, many cohousing communities have much of the positive aspects mentioned by the literature. However, in our opinion a more cautious interpretation is needed: cohousing, in fact, has or may have some problems to consider.



These problems are:

- social, ethnic and ideological homogeneity of cohousers. Cohousing communities tend to comprise white and well-educated middle-class people. As Williams (2005b, 154) states: ‘cohousing residents (in the US at least) are diverse in terms of interest, ages, religion and household types but not in terms of affluence, social class, race, education and attitudes. [...] Ethnic and low-income groups generally tended to be excluded from living in cohousing communities because of lack of affordable accommodation or because of personal preferences’<sup>37</sup>;
- lack of integration with surrounding neighbourhoods. Cohousing communities run the risk of auto-segregation from the surrounding area, due to their functional and relational self-sufficiency (Williams 2008).<sup>38</sup> A lack of integration could exist from a physical point of view too: even if they lack gates and fences, in some cases their spatial organization is ‘introverted’, with common spaces often located at the centre of the community, so entering into and crossing of the area are discouraged (see, for instance, cohousing site plans in: Meltzer 2005; McCamant, Durrett, and Hertzman 2011).

It is worth noting that these problems are the same problems usually highlighted with reference to other kinds of private residential communities.<sup>39</sup> Actually, as we have argued, despite some peculiarities, cohousing shares the constitutive characteristics of private residential communities. As a result, it may be possible that cohousing also shares some of the problems that are so often emphasized in the literature on private residential communities, such as segregation and social exclusion. For instance, despite the good intentions of some cohousers, the principle of the self-selection of cohousing residents according to informal principles could lead to the same results of exclusion typical of other kinds of private residential communities (such as gated communities and retirement communities). The same holds for cohousing collective facilities: they could sometimes also be open to members external to the cohousing community; however, they are mainly conceived for and enjoyed by members only (as in the case of other kinds of private residential communities).

Moreover, one could also question whether cohousing represents a way to build a better society based on solidarity and sharing or, conversely, could be considered a soft version of the ‘secession of the successful’ (Cashin 2001) and of the ‘retreat from society, from neighbourhood and from responsibility’ (Low 1997, 67), which, according to some critics, characterizes private residential communities. It is not easy to answer this question: it is difficult to state whether the emphasized reconstruction of a sense of community and responsibility – which cohousing clearly refers to – is a progressive reaction to the increasing social atomization of urban life or whether it is (or can easily become) a neo-communitarian reaction deepening the fragmentation of the urban context, both socially and spatially. Empirical evidence is lacking and thus does not allow this question to be answered.

What we aim to highlight with these arguments is that it seems to us that, while waiting for more strong evidence about cohousing, a more balanced interpretation of cohousing is needed. For instance, what fails to convince us is the fact that cohousing is usually interpreted in an almost totally contrary manner to other varieties of private residential communities (e.g. retirement communities, religious communities and gated communities), even if, as we have argued, it shares a lot of characteristics and risks with other kinds of residential private communities.<sup>40</sup>

This leads us to the second reason why considering cohousing as a type of private residential community seems to be relevant.

*Second reason.* Some authors (see for instance Williams 2005b; Lietaert 2010) argue for public intervention to facilitate or support the development of cohousing. The rationale is linked to the (presumed) beneficial effects of cohousing in terms of participation, civic engagement, solidarity and pro-environmental forms of behaviour. In fact, in some countries (especially in northern Europe), public institutions have widely both directly and indirectly supported the development of cohousing (Brenton 1998; Williams 2005b; Ache and Fedrowitz 2012).<sup>41</sup>

However, these claims and these policies do not fully convince us. This is not only true if we assume a purely liberal stance, in which a public administration should treat all the residential choices of individuals in an equal manner (assuming, of course, that they do not produce any evident and direct nuisance to others, as is the case, generally speaking, of every kind of private residential community).<sup>42</sup> This is also true if we accept that a public administration can provide some kind of positive discrimination to promote some particular form of residential community. The reason for this statement is related to what we have previously said: even if *some cases* of cohousing are surely characterized by participation, civic engagement, solidarity and pro-environmental behaviours, cohousing *per se* does not seem to be necessarily characterized by these features; moreover, cohousing communities can be characterized by negative features such as social, ethnic and ideological homogeneity of cohousers, and lack of physical and relational integration with surrounding neighbourhoods. If cohousing does not *necessarily* and *automatically* guarantee positive outcomes for the city and urban life, and if it runs a risk analogous to other kinds of private residential communities, why should it be selectively promoted? Today, in our opinion, it seems that there is a lack of strong, clear and widely accepted reasons to publicly treat cohousing in a manner different from all the other types of private residential communities.

Another problem related to public policies on cohousing is that it is not always easy to decide what is and what is not cohousing. Cohousing can be just a label utilized for marketing reasons: in some cases, housing projects that simply provide some communal spaces and facilities – but with no resident participation and self-organization, no value characterization and no resident selection – are labelled as ‘cohousing’ (see, for instance, the case of Italy: Baglione and Chiodelli 2011). Should these projects be publicly supported?<sup>43</sup>

For all these reasons, policy recommendations demanding public support for cohousing seem to be a little hasty. On the contrary, in our opinion, it is necessary to have a much more detailed analysis of cohousing, to better understand its real potentialities and problems, before implementing selective policies for cohousing promotion.

## Notes

1. About cohousing diffusion, see Meltzer (2000, 2005) and Williams (2005a).
2. Our arguments are based both on an extensive literature review and on a 4-year-long fieldwork research on cohousing and other types of private residential community (gated communities, religious communities, eco-villages).
3. Ellickson (2006) argues that a reason for this fact is related to high transaction costs of cohousing.
4. Source: [www.cohousing.org/directory](http://www.cohousing.org/directory) (accessed July 15, 2013).
5. In the United Kingdom, according to the UK Cohousing Network, there are almost 15 completed cohousing communities and about 30 communities under plan ([www.cohousing.org](http://www.cohousing.org)).

- uk, accessed July 15, 2013). In Belgium there are about 15 cohousing communities ([www.samenuizen.be](http://www.samenuizen.be), accessed July 15, 2013).
6. See, for instance, Vestbro and Horelli (2012, 315): according to them, cohousing is simply ‘housing with common space and shared facilities’. A well-known list of the constitutive characteristics of cohousing is provided by McCamant, Durrett, and Hertzman (2011, 38–43): (i) participatory process, (ii) intentional neighbourhood design, (iii) extensive common facilities, and (iv) complete residents’ management. Nevertheless, in our opinion, this list too is not sufficiently comprehensive.
  7. From a physical point of view, many cohousing projects have some similarities. For instance, cohousing communities are quite small (they are made up of few housing units, typically ranging from 10 to 50 (Fromm 2000; Rogers 2005)); they are mainly located in urban and suburban areas (see Meltzer 2000; Margolis and Entin 2011); housing units are of more limited dimensions than the average (Fromm 2006). However, in our opinion, these physical characteristics are not necessary to define a community such as cohousing.
  8. In particular cases some of these spaces and facilities are open to people who are external to the community (Stewart 2002).
  9. In some cases there are further amenities: a garage for DIY, sports equipment, greenhouse, vegetable garden, kindergarten etc.
  10. Cohousing communities do not have a typical legal structure (Fenster 1999; Scotthanson and Scotthanson 2005). However, cohousing communities usually organize themselves into some form of association (for instance, a homeowners’ association) to which all the residents belong. It is this association that legally establishes the community’s constitutional and operational rules.
  11. According to different cases, these are called the ‘Master Deed’ or ‘Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions’.
  12. About the difference between statutes and bylaw, see for instance Fenster (1999, 8): ‘While the bylaws need to be both accessible and stable as rules and provisions that are central to the operation of the group (generally requiring a supermajority or a consensus decision to be changed), they are also more easily amended than the declaration, which plays an important role in the resale of the property and in securing financing’.
  13. The community constitution phase is the phase during which the core group of residents is formed and the settlement is planned and built. It can last for many years: ‘The most active members are likely to attend one to four meetings a week for one, or sometimes, several years. The process can be long and frustrating, but those now living in cohousing communities universally agree that it was well worth the effort’ (McCamant, Durrett, and Hertzman 2011, 40).
  14. If necessary, they can have recourse to expert consultation for support in particular operations (e.g. the architectural project).
  15. Only in a very small number of cases is there any type of cohousers’ participation. Processes are autonomously started and directed by a private or public developer according to a top-down procedure; the participation of residents is limited to the management stage. For a more detailed typology of development models, see Williams (2005b).
  16. Usually, at these meetings, every decision is taken by consensus; only in particular cases, when it is not possible to reach consensus, decisions are taken by majority or super-majority voting (see Margolis and Entin 2011, 10).
  17. According to Fromm’s (2000) survey of the US communities of Winslow, Pioneer Valley and Puget Ridge, 90% of residents are members of some working group or committee (50% of more than one and 20% of three or even more). The whole community meets at least a dozen times per year.
  18. Actually, the spatial organization of the settlement is usually planned to promote the interaction between the residents (Torres-Antonini 2001; Williams 2005a; McCamant, Durrett, and Hertzman 2011).
  19. Homeowners’ associations account for 52–55%, condominiums 38–42% and cooperatives 5–7%. Data source: *Community Association Institute* ([www.caionline.org/info/research/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.caionline.org/info/research/Pages/default.aspx) accessed May 12, 2012).
  20. A retirement community is a particular form of private residential community devised for elderly people. See Lucas (2004); McHugh and Larson-Keagy (2005); McHugh (2007); McHugh, Gober, and Borough (2002).

21. See the case of the Ave Maria community in Florida, which was founded for the principal purpose of establishing an all-Catholic residential community (Reilly 2005; Bollinger 2009).
22. Sports and leisure communities are private residential communities characterized by specific communal services related to sport and leisure (e.g. swimming pools, golf greens, tennis clubs, etc.).
23. New Towns are suburban, large residential developments, also including services, commercial/industrial and retail activities, which work as independent towns. They can have many thousands of residents: for example, Reston, in Virginia, has 56,000 inhabitants (Boudreaux and Holcombe 2009).
24. 'They are small compounds of privacy for celebrities and the gated summer communities for the very rich... [They are] highly exclusive, often hidden and heavily defended' (Blakely and Snyder 1998, 61).
25. About the diffusion of gated communities in many countries all around the world, see for instance: Blandy (2006) on England; Stoyanov and Frantz (2006) on Bulgaria; Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002) on the Arab world; Coy and Pöhler (2002); Salcedo and Torres (2004) and Alvarez-Rivadulla (2007) on Latin America.
26. According to Nelson (2005), this is approximately 10% of US residential community associations, that is 20% of the total population of residential community associations (see also Ben-Joseph 2004).
27. It is worth noting that not only is the typological variety of private residential communities high, but their social and ethnic variety is too: they are not inhabited only by affluent and white residents; for instance, in the United States there exist many communities inhabited by ethnical minorities (e.g. Hispanic) or low-middle-income people (see Ben-Joseph 2004; Sanchez, Lang, and Dhavale 2005; Vesselinov, Cazessus, and Falk 2007).
28. About property regimes, see, for instance, Krueckeberg (1995).
29. For instance, cohousing are privately owned in the United States (Fenster 1999), Italy (Chiodelli 2010) and the United Kingdom (Scott-Hunt 2007); this is true also with reference to northern Europe, where private ownership is well diffused, for instance in the form of condominium ownership (Scotthanson and Scotthanson 2005; see also Ache and Fedowitz (2012) with reference to Germany).
30. See also Scotthanson and Scotthanson (2005, 5): 'In cohousing, people intend to live together, but the ownership structure allows for private ownership and private control of what is privately owned'.
31. It is interesting to note that there are 'no significant differences between gated and ungated communities in the provision of recreational amenities' (McCabe and Tao 2006, 1148).
32. On the thorny issue of the limits of the private residential associations' right to exclude, see Moroni and Chiodelli (Forthcoming). On this issue, it is interesting to consider the US Supreme Court sentences (see, for instance, Kennedy 1995; Epstein 1997; Siegel 1998; Rahe 2002; Chadderdon 2006; Franzese 2008; Bollinger 2009).
33. Some retirement communities apply an age threshold for admission of both members and temporary guests.
34. 'Reasons for initially joining a cohousing group were community aspects (45%), a good place to raise children (28%), with other reasons being friendship, support, simplifying their lifestyle, sharing resources, availability of meals, and the location' (Fromm 2000, 101).
35. Cohousing communities usually promote themselves as not ideological. However, cohousing is probably the type of private residential community in which shared values have a more significant role (for instance in the formation of the community, in the choice of residents, in the organization of daily life).
36. See, for example, Fromm (1991); McCamant, Durrett, and Hertzman 2011; Meltzer (2005). A more critical view is provided almost only by Williams (2005a, 2005b, 2008).
37. On this topic, see also Meltzer (2000) and Rogers (2005). Actually communitarianism tends to enforce homogeneity (Young 1991).
38. For a different opinion, see Fromm (2012).
39. See, for instance, Atkinson and Flint (2004); Bauman (2000); Blakely and Snyder (1997); Caldeira (1999); Cashin (2001); Low (2003); Vesselinov, Cazessus, and Falk (2007).
40. It is worth highlighting that we do not deal with whether the reported criticisms about private residential communities are convincing or, as some authors argue, are exaggerated or not true at

all (Ellickson 1982; Webster 2001, 2002; Salcedo and Torres 2004; Webster and Le Goix 2005; Brunetta and Moroni 2012). We just argue for the necessity of an analogous interpretation of a different kind of private residential communities, whatever this interpretation is.

41. ‘Twenty-six municipalities [in Germany] were found to be supporting co-housing projects. The support ranges from simple offers, like a website with information about local housing companies or other interested persons, to more comprehensive approaches with the provision of special funding or building plots’ (Ache and Fedrowitz 2012, 405). See for instance the case of Hamburg, where ‘since 2003 the city has run a special support agency for co-housing projects. [...] The agency supports groups from the inception of the idea to the final stage of moving to the new project. [...] To tackle the lack of building plots, the city reserves 20% of the publicly controlled land zoned for housing for co-building projects’ (ibid, 407). In Italy, see for instance ‘Dalla rete al cohousing’ [*From network to cohousing*], a project for the realization of a cohousing community devoted to people under 35 years old; the project has been co-promoted and co-financed, among the others, by the Municipality of Bologna and by the Italian Ministry of Youth Affairs ([www.comune.bologna.it/retecohousing](http://www.comune.bologna.it/retecohousing)).
42. Some authors have argued that private residential communities have direct negative effects on surrounding neighbourhoods (for instance, in terms of crime, Helsley and Strange 1999); however, these statements have been rebutted (see, for instance, Blakely and Snyder 1998; Salcedo and Torres 2004).
43. It is worth mentioning that some authors maintain that a share of units within a cohousing community should be publicly financed and owned (see, for instance, Lietaert 2010); the rationale is that, in so doing, low-income people could have access to cohousing, and that social mixing of the community could be enhanced. However, it seems to be problematic to have public housing within a cohousing community: as we have said, cohousing is not for all – residents must have a flair for communitarian life; moreover, the creation of a strong and well-functioning community requires an accurate selection of inhabitants. All these needs could collide with the selection of residents for public housing according to objective criteria such as income and social vulnerability.

## References

- Abrahams, K., and D. S. Middleton. 1997. “Cohousing Development: Creating Genuine Communities.” *Urban Land* 56 (9): 32–35.
- Ache, P., and M. Fedrowitz. 2012. “The Development of Co-Housing Initiatives in Germany.” *Built Environment* 38 (3): 395–412.
- Alvarez-Rivadulla, M. J. 2007. “Golden Ghettos: Gated Communities and Class Residential Segregation in Montevideo, Uruguay.” *Environment and Planning A* 39 (1): 47–63.
- Atkinson, R., and J. Flint. 2004. “Fortress UK? Gated Communities, the Spatial Revolt of the Elites and Time-space Trajectories of Segregation.” *Housing Studies* 19 (6): 875–892.
- Baglione, V. 2011. “Cohousing. Riconoscimento e classificazione di un modello di comunità contrattuale.” *Urbanistica* 146: 104–107. [In Italian.]
- Baglione, V., and F. Chiodelli. 2011. “Esperienze di cohousing a Milano e Torino.” In *La città intraprendente. Comunità contrattuali e sussidiarietà orizzontale*, edited by G. Brunetta and S. Moroni, 33–42. Roma: Carocci. [In Italian.]
- Baker, B. 2007. “Green Cohousing.” *Urban Land* 66 (6): 70–75.
- Bauman, Z. 2000. *Missing Community*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Ben-Joseph, E. 2004. “Double Standards, Single Goal: Private Communities and Design Innovation.” *Journal of Urban Design* 9 (2): 131–151.
- Blakely, E. J., and M. G. Snyder. 1997. *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- Blakely, E. J., and M. G. Snyder. 1998. “Separate Places: Crime and Security in Gated Communities.” In *Reducing Crime Through Real Estate Development and Management*, edited by M. Felson and R. B. Peiser, 53–70. Washington, DC: Urban Land Institute.
- Blandy, S. 2006. “Gated Communities in England: Historical Perspectives and Current Development.” *Geojournal* 66 (1–2): 15–26.
- Bollinger, J. M. 2009. “Homeowners’ Associations and the Use of Property Planning Tools: When Does the Right to Exclude Go Too Far?” *Temple Law Review* 81 (1): 269–302.

- Boudreaux, D. J., and R. G. Holcombe. 2009. "Contractual Governments in Theory and Practice." In *The Voluntary City. Choice, Community and Civil Society*, edited by D. T. Beito, P. Gordon, and A. Tabarrok, 289–306. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Brenton, M. 1998. *We're in Charge: Co-housing Communities of Older People in the Netherlands – Lessons for Britain?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- Brunetta, G., and S. Moroni. 2012. *Contractual Communities in the Self-organising City: Freedom, Creativity, Subsidiarity*. London: Springer.
- Caldeira, T. 1999. "Fortified Enclaves. The New Urban Segregation." In *Theorizing the City*, edited by S. M. Low, 83–107. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Cashin, S. 2001. "Privatized Communities and the 'Secession of the Successful': Democracy and Fairness Beyond the Gate." *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 28 (5): 1675–1692.
- Chadderdon, L. J. 2006. "No Political Speech Allowed: Common Interest Developments, Homeowners Associations, and Restrictions on Free Speech." *Journal of Land Use* 21 (2): 233–264.
- Chiodelli, F. 2010. "Enclaves Private a Carattere Residenziale: Il Caso del Cohousing." *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia Urbana* 51 (1): 95–116.
- Cooper Marcus, C. 2000. "Site Planning, Building Design and a Sense of Community: An Analysis of Six Cohousing Schemes in Denmark, Sweden and Netherlands." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 17 (2): 146–163.
- Coy, M., and M. Pöhler. 2002. "Gated Communities in Latin American Megacities: Case Studies in Brazil and Argentina." *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 29 (3): 355–370.
- Ellickson, R. C. 1982. "Cities and Homeowners Associations." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 130(6): 1519–1580.
- Ellickson, R. C. 2006. "Unpacking the Household: Informal Property Rights Around the Hearth." Yale Law School Faculty Scholarship Series. Paper 402. Accessed March 13, 2013. [http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss\\_papers/402](http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/fss_papers/402)
- Epstein, R. A. 1997. "Takings, Exclusivity and Speech: The Legacy of *PruneYard v. Robins*." *The University of Chicago Law Review* 64 (1): 21–56.
- Fenster, M. 1999. "Community by Covenant, Process, and Design: Cohousing and the Contemporary Common Interest Community." *Journal of Land Use and Environmental Law* 15 (1): 3–54. Accessed March 13, 2013. <http://www.law.fsu.edu/journals/landuse/vol151/fenster1.htm>.
- Foldvary, F. 2006. "The Economic Case for Private Residential Government." In *Private Cities. Global and Local Perspectives*, edited by G. Glasze, C. Webster, and C. Frantz, 31–34. London: Routledge.
- Franzese, P. A. 2008. "The Twin Rivers Case: Of Homeowners Associations, Free Speech Rights and Privatized Mini-Governments." *Rutgers Journal of Law and Public Policy* 5 (4): 729–768.
- Fromm, D. 1991. *Collaborative Communities: Co-Housing, Central Living, and Other New Forms of Housing with Shared Facilities*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Fromm, D. 1993. "Collaborative Communities." *Progressive Architecture* 74 (3): 92–96.
- Fromm, D. 2000. "American Cohousing: The First Five Years." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 17 (2): 94–109.
- Fromm, D. 2006. "Aging Together." *Urban Land* 65 (5): 72–76.
- Fromm, D. 2012. "Seeding Community: Collaborative Housing as a Strategy for Social and Neighbourhood Repair." *Built Environment* 38 (3): 364–394.
- Glasze, G., and A. Alkhayyal. 2002. "Gated Housing Estates in the Arab World: Case Studies in Lebanon and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia." *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 29 (3): 321–336.
- Glasze, G., C. Webster, and C. Frantz. eds. 2006a. *Private Cities. Global and Local Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Glasze, G., C. Webster, and C. Frantz. 2006b. "Introduction: Global and Local Perspectives on the Rise of Private Neighbourhoods." In *Private Cities. Global and Local Perspectives*, edited by G. Glasze, C. Webster, and C. Frantz, 1–8. London: Routledge.
- Gordon, T. M. 2003. "Crowd Out or Crowd In? The Effects of Common Interest Developments on Political Participation in California." *The Annals of Regional Science* 37 (2): 203–233.
- Helsley, R. W. and W. C. Strange. 1999. "Gated Communities and the Economic Geography of Crime." *Journal of Urban Economics* 46 (1): 80–105.
- Jarvis, H. 2011. "Saving Space, Sharing Time: Integrated Infrastructures of Daily Life in Cohousing." *Environment and Planning A* 43 (3): 560–577.

- Kennedy, D. J. 1995. "Residential Associations as State Actors: Regulating the Impact of Gated Communities on Non-members." *The Yale Law Journal* 105 (3): 761–793.
- Krokfors, K. 2012. "Co-Housing in the Making." *Built Environment* 38 (2): 309–314.
- Krueckeberg, D. A. 1995. "The Difficult Character of Property. To Whom Do Things Belong?." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 61 (3): 301–309.
- Lang, R. E., and K. A. Danielsen. 1997. "Gated Communities in America: Walling Out the World?" *Housing Policy Debate* 8 (4): 867–899.
- Le Goix, R. 2002. "Les gated communities en Californie du Sud, un produit immobilier pas tout à fait comme les autres." *L'Espace Géographique* 31 (4): 328–344.
- Lietaert, M. 2010. "Cohousing's Relevance to Degrowth Theories." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 18 (6): 576–580.
- Low, S. M. 1997. "Urban Fear: Building Fortress America." *City and Society* 9 (1): 53–71.
- Low, S. M. 2003. "Construire l'exclusion à travers les communautés fermées." *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine* 93: 149–158. [In French.]
- Lucas, S. 2004. "The Images Used to 'Sell' and Represent Retirement Communities." *The Professional Geographers* 56 (4): 449–459.
- Margolis, D., and D. Entin. 2011. "Report on Survey of Cohousing Communities 2011." Cohousing Association of the United States. Accessed November 9, 2012. [http://www.cohousing.org/docs/2011/survey\\_of\\_cohousing\\_communities\\_2011.pdf](http://www.cohousing.org/docs/2011/survey_of_cohousing_communities_2011.pdf)
- McCabe, B. C., and J. Tao. 2006. "Private Governments and Private Services: Homeowner Associations in the City and Behind the Gate." *Review of Policy Research* 23 (6): 1143–1157.
- McCamant, K., C. Durrett, and E. Hertzman. 2011. *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.
- McHugh, K. E. 2007. "Generational Consciousness and Retirement Communities." *Population, Space and Place* 13 (4): 293–306.
- McHugh, K. E., P. Gober, and D. Borough. 2002. "The Sun City Wars: Chapter 3." *Urban Geography* 23 (7): 627–648.
- McHugh, K. E., and E. M. Larson-Keagy. 2005. "These White Walls: The Dialectic of Retirement Communities." *Journal of Aging Studies* 19 (2): 241–256.
- McKenzie, E. 2005. "Planning Through Residential Clubs: Homeowners' Associations." *Economic Affairs* 25 (4): 28–31.
- McKenzie, E. 2006. "Emerging Trends in the State Regulation of Private Communities in the US." *GeoJournal* 66 (1–2): 89–102.
- Meltzer, G. 2000. "Cohousing: Verifying the Importance of Community in the Application of Environmentalism." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 17 (2): 110–132.
- Meltzer, G. 2005. *Sustainable Community. Learning from the Cohousing Model*. Trafford: Victoria.
- Moroni, S., and F. Chiodelli. Forthcoming. "Pluralism in Private Spaces: Homeowners Associations, Clubs, Shopping Malls." In *Space and Pluralism*, edited by S. Moroni, and D. Weberman, Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Nelson, R. H. 2004. "The Private Neighborhood." *Regulation* 27 (2): 40–46.
- Nelson, R. H. 2005. *Private Neighborhoods*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
- Rahe, L. T. 2002. "The Right to Exclude: Preserving the Autonomy of the Homeowners' Association." *The Urban Lawyer* 34 (2): 521–552.
- Reilly, A. 2005. "City of God: Tom Monaghan's Coming Catholic Utopia." Boston Phoenix. Accessed November 9, 2012. [www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/news\\_features/top/features/documents/04761831.asp](http://www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/news_features/top/features/documents/04761831.asp)
- Rifkin, J. 2000. *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism, Where All of Life is a Paid for Experience*. New York: Tatcher/Putnam.
- Rogers, B. 2005. "Living Together." *Urban Land* 64 (2): 69–73.
- Salcedo, R., and A. Torres. 2004. "Gated Communities in Santiago: Wall of Frontier?" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28 (1): 27–44.
- Sanchez, T. W., R. E. Lang, and D. M. Dhavale. 2005. "Security Versus Status? A First Look at the Census's Gated Community Data." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 24 (3): 281–291.
- Scotthanson, K., and C. Scotthanson. 2005. *The Cohousing Handbook*. Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.
- Scott-Hunt, S. 2007. "Cohousing for Stages of an Aging Britain." Paper presented at ENHR – International conference "Sustainable Urban Areas", Rotterdam, June 25–28. Accessed March 19, 2013. <http://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/4295/>

- Siegel, S. 1998. "The Constitution and Private Government: Toward the Recognition of Constitutional Rights in Private Residential Communities Fifty Years After *Marsh v. Alabama*." *William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 6 (2): 461–563.
- Stewart, D. 2002. "Habitat et écologie: Le co-housing aux États-Unis." *Revue Française d'études Américaines* no. 94: 113–128.
- Stoyanov, P., and K. Frantz. 2006. "Gated Communities in Bulgaria: Interpreting a New Trend in Post-communist Urban Development." *GeoJournal* 66 (1–2): 57–63.
- Torres-Antonini, M. 2001. "Our Common House: Using the Built Environment to Develop Supportive Communities." PhD diss., Graduate School of the University of Florida. Accessed October 6, 2012. [http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0000360/torres\\_m.PDF](http://etd.fcla.edu/UF/UFE0000360/torres_m.PDF)
- Vesselinov, E., M. Cazessus, and W. Falk. 2007. "Gated Communities and Spatial Inequalities." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 29 (2): 109–127.
- Vestbro, D. U. 2012. "Saving by Sharing – Collective Housing for Sustainable Lifestyles in the Swedish Context." Paper Presented at 3rd International Conference on Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity, Venice, September 19–23. Accessed March 19, 2013. [http://www.venezia2012.it/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/WS\\_13\\_FP\\_VESTBRO.pdf](http://www.venezia2012.it/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/WS_13_FP_VESTBRO.pdf)
- Vestbro, D. U. and L. Horelli. 2012. "Design for Gender Equality: The History of Co-Housing Ideas and Realities." *Built Environment* 38 (3): 315–335.
- Webster, C. 2001. "Gated Cities of Tomorrow". *Town Planning Review* 72 (2): 149–170.
- Webster, C. 2002. "Property Rights and the Public Realm: Gates, Green Belts, and the *Gemeinschaft*." *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 29 (3): 397–412.
- Webster, C., G. Glasze, and K. Frantz. 2002. "The Global Spread of Gated Communities." *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 29 (3): 315–320.
- Webster, C., and R. Le Goix. 2005. "Planning by Commonhold." *Economic Affairs* 25 (4): 19–23.
- White-Harvey, R. J. 1993. "Cohousing: A Scandinavian Longhouse, or a Traditional Approach to Modern Housing?" *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 13 (1): 69–82.
- Williams, J. 2005a. "Designing Neighborhoods for Social Interaction: The Case of Cohousing." *Journal of Urban Design* 10 (2): 195–227.
- Williams, J. 2005b. "Sun, Surf and Sustainable Housing – Cohousing, the Californian Experience." *International Planning Studies* 10 (2): 145–177.
- Williams, J. 2008. "Predicting an American Future for Cohousing." *Futures* 40 (3): 268–286.
- Young, I. M. 1991. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.