Governance

(20982) - SOCIAL HOUSING UPGRADING CONSIDERING RESIDENTS' NEEDS: HOW TO COPE WITH GLOBAL CHALLENGES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN FOUR DIFFERENT CULTURAL CONTEXTS

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Background and objectives

Current systems of Social Housing (SH) delivery are relatively slow in incorporating the dynamics of social and technological change. The existing stock of SH offers a unique opportunity to intervene through innovation to alleviate social costs and in many countries housing deficits while improving sustainability performance and general comfort conditions for low-income tenants and owners. The elevation of SH to sustainable standards is urgently needed, in view of challenges such as climate and demographic changes. Social costs represent strong non-economic arguments for the introduction of change in existing SH. Housing quality, affordability, and project location are closely related to social challenges such as stress-related health risks, isolation, negative social behaviour, neighbourhood instability, and abandonment. Inadequate housing conditions and a lack of adjustments to the dynamics of ways of living affect wellbeing at both the dwelling and the community levels in SH neighbourhoods. However, upgrading programs can also lead to social exclusion, gentrification, and increased social polarization of residential areas. Thus, social housing estates can experience further stigmatization. Therefore, cautious planning and execution of renovation, refurbishment in terms of upgrading of the SH-stock, and participation of residents become essential. To pursue this aim, the living lab approach will be used.

Based on the transatlantic research project uVital dedicated to this topic, experiences and insights of four different case study areas will be presented and compared. The aim is to check the transferability of local solutions and insights as well as the limitations due to the specific cultural context.

 The symposium will begin with an introduction to the research project and its main objectives. Then, four presentations from four case study areas in four countries (Brazil, UK, Netherlands, Germany) will describe the local findings and integrate them into a common project approach. All four presentations address three questions: a) What is your specific design for studying SH upgrading? b) How do you explore the differentiated needs of residents in the upgrading process? c) Which particular challenges did you face and which surprising issues have emerged? Afterward, the conveners will formulate "lessons learned" in terms of research content, methods, and international comparative studies in times of pandemic and invite the audience to discuss the outcome and insights of the symposium.

Significance for the advancement of People-Environment relations

The symposium delivers new insights into interdisciplinary and international collaboration in a highly topical research field of people-environment studies. It provides very appropriate methodological and empirically sound research results with regard to global challenges and their local impacts. The symposium will discuss experiences and recommendations for comprehensive research projects in times of the pandemic.

Palavras-chave : Social housing upgrading, Living Lab, international comparative studies, transferability