

Introduction

Public Policies on Middle-Class Mass Housing in Europe and Leveraging Contemporary Architecture Interventions

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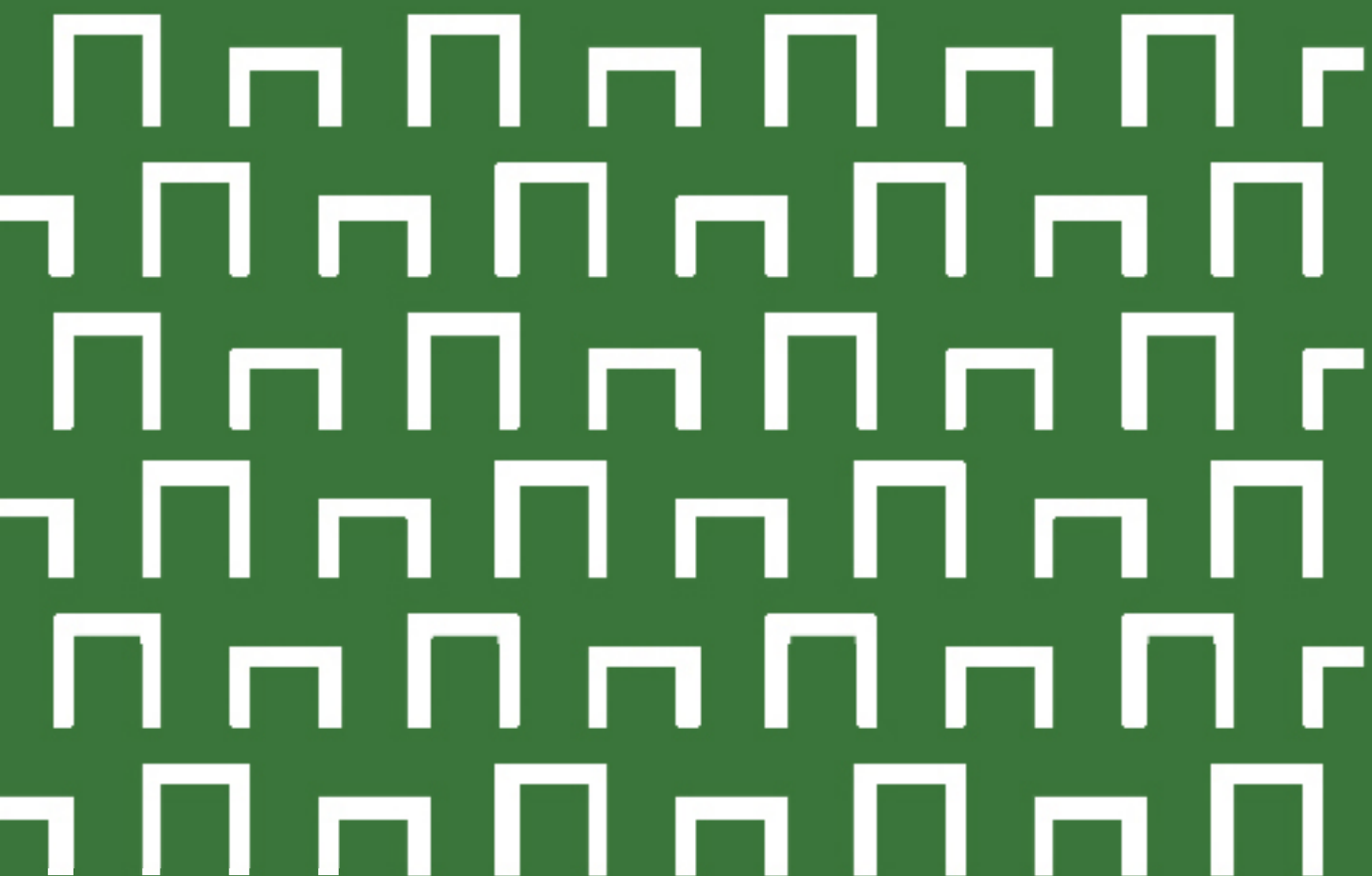
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Working Group 3
MCMH Atlas

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**Edited by
Müge Akkar Ercan and
Uta Pottgieser**

Introduction

By Müge Akkar Ercan and Uta Pottgieser



Middle-class mass housing in Bucharest, Romania (@photo credit, Müge Akkar Ercan, 2023)

Public Policies on Middle-Class Mass Housing in Europe and Leveraging Contemporary Architecture Interventions

MCMH has been generally underestimated in urban and architectural studies, and there is still a lack of comparative analysis and global perspectives. From 2019 to today, the COST Action Middle-Class Mass Housing in Europe (MCMH-EU) has created a transnational network among researchers conducting studies on MCMH sites in Europe since the 1950s. The Action aims to develop a more comprehensive understanding of MCMH sprawl in cities and deepen the knowledge by focusing on the existing cases, public policies, new concepts and research methodologies. Besides the current methods, surveys, and contextualisation that allow us to map the existing cases, the Action also aims to show the diversity and resilience of MCMH in terms of adapting to the current urban and social conditions.

The COST Action MCMH-EU is developed based on the three foci:

- 1) Documenting the MCMH,
- 2) Developing a specific set of (new) concepts for MCMH analyses,
- 3) Leverage contemporary architecture interventions and Public policies.

Working Group 3 members contributed to the Action by studying the MCMH policies of member countries and conducting a Stakeholder Workshop on an MCMH site in Ankara, Türkiye as a COST member and, at the same time, an Inclusiveness-Target Country. Hence, this book consists of two major parts. The first part provides readers with brief historical public policy reviews of the 17 countries on MCMH. These countries include Albania, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Slovenia, Switzerland, The Netherlands and Türkiye.

The second part, focusing on the collective contributions of a group of action members, comprises the contemporary architectural interventions to improve the quality of life and sustainability of the community living in this MCMH site in Ankara. Within the COST Action MCMH-EU project framework, a stakeholder workshop, titled Stakeholder Workshop: Co-designing for Quality of Life, was organised in Ankara at Middle East Technical University in October 2022 on a 50-year-old cooperative housing estate in collaboration with University College London. It gathered a group of international researchers, designers and residents of the housing estate. Twenty-eight experts from 11 countries (Cyprus, Denmark, France, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Pakistan, Serbia, Spain, Türkiye and the USA) and ten residents (three women and seven men) from the hou-

sing estate were involved in the workshop. Located in a highly prestigious and popular middle-class suburb on the West corridor of Ankara, the housing estate, namely Ümitköy Sitesi, was selected as the case study site for the stakeholder workshop due to two reasons. First, the housing site has a lot of regeneration problems. In general, the redevelopment of such housing sites causes urban densification, displacement of the existing residents, social exclusion, and loss of natural and built-up resources that can be used for a while. Using this large typical cooperative housing estate from the 1970s as a case study, the stakeholder workshop aimed to show the possibilities of addressing these problems and finding new and creative solutions through a co-creative process in collaboration with international expert groups, the residents and the local authority. In this way, such MCMH sites can be regenerated, and the residents' quality of life can be improved without destroying and rebuilding such housing estates. The second reason is the enthusiasm and willingness of the management board members of the housing estate cooperative to cooperate with the workshop organisers. It is rare in Türkiye and maybe elsewhere to find such a collaborative, dedicated and enthusiastic community to work in stakeholder workshops.

With the stakeholder workshop, which took three days in Ankara, it became possible to discuss and reveal the needs, problems and challenges of an MCMH community needing help and to create the ground for future architecture and urban design interventions and the development of public policies. The workshop also helped develop alternative improvement strategies and interventions in the MCMH ensemble, reaching optimum solutions to resolve community problems through co-creative means. It also showed that it is possible to develop a collective spirit toward the common benefit of the community by creating such bottom-up endeavours in cooperation with the community leaders, local authorities, universities and civil society organisations to achieve successful and sustainable regeneration schemes for MCMH sites. Five expert groups explained their projects in the second part of this book. They showed how the case of Ümitköy housing estate can be regenerated through different urban design and architectural intervention approaches. These approaches can be exemplary for many similar MCMH sites in Türkiye and elsewhere in Europe and the world. Together with the conference papers, journal articles and, finally, this book, we aim to disseminate existing research results in the scientific community, and within local policymakers and the general public, including the creation of the Action website.

This book was made within the CA18137 European Middle-Class Mass Housing [MCMH-EU], with the support of COST Association.

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