



Tel Aviv

**The new Israeli collective housing;
Between quiet revolution and accelerated Neo liberalism**

New housing typology

Small private apartments beside common communal spaces.

The idea is to **reduce** apartment space, reduce costs and reduce ecological footprint, earning rich community life.

In the urban sphere - blurring the border **between private and public space** and sharing the neighborhood.



Vrijburcht, Amsterdam



Behind the architecture

The trend of collective housing is broad and contains a variety of terms and models.

On the one end there are grassroots cooperatives of Co-Housing.

On the other end, there are business oriented companies operating Co-Living.

Their characteristics and their motivations are different.



Co-Housing

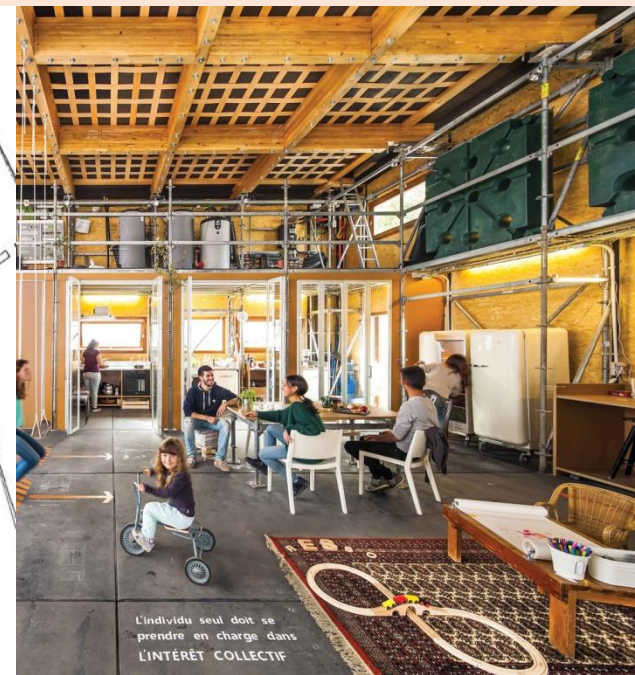
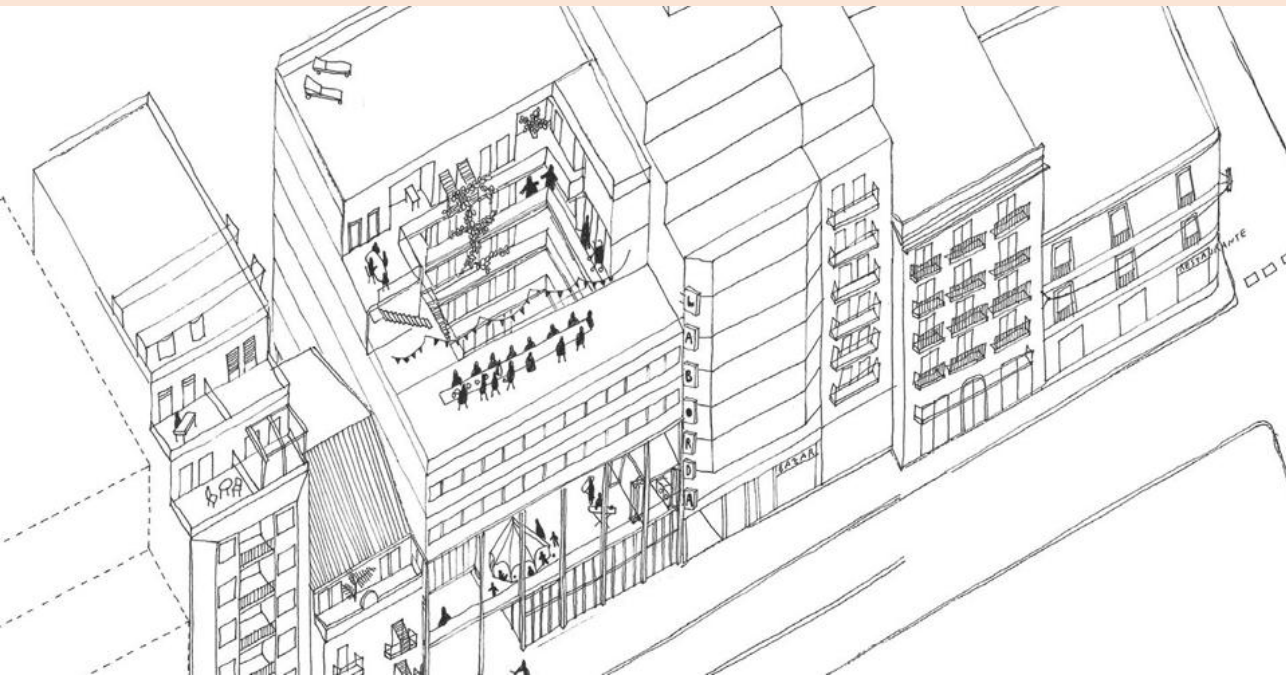
Grassroots communities based on self-management.

They aspire to **stability** and **belonging**.

They wish to have **affordable** and **sustainable** housing and to avoid real estate speculations.

And mainly they want **relationships** between people.

La Borda, Barcelona



L'individu seul doit se
prendre en charge dans
L'INTÉRÊT COLLECTIF

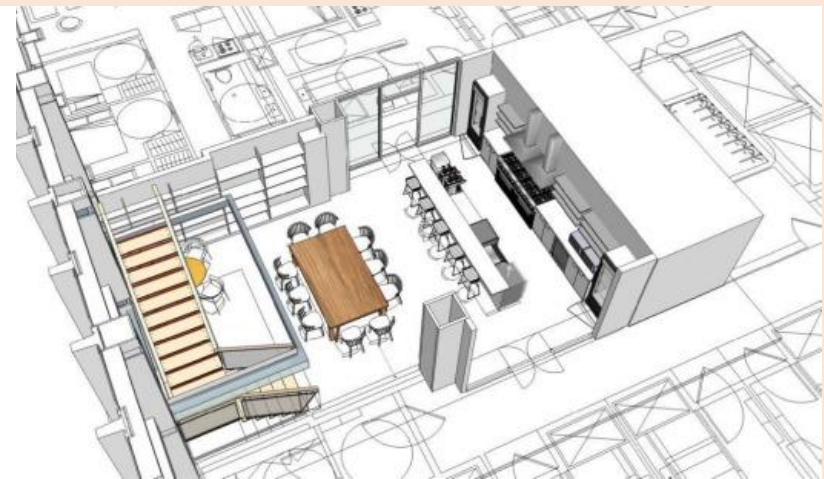
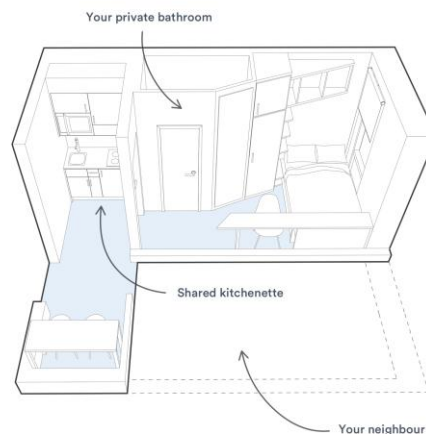
WeLive, New York

Co- Living

An innovative model that relates to housing as a service and appeals mainly to childless young people. The company rents the property from the owners for a long-term period, adapts it and subleases the spaces for flexible periods of times. They offer a “Life package” - mini living space, internet, bills, cleaning services and social activities.

You may pay quite a lot of money for having friends...

The Collective Old Oak, London



y? What are the reasons for the growth of this trend?

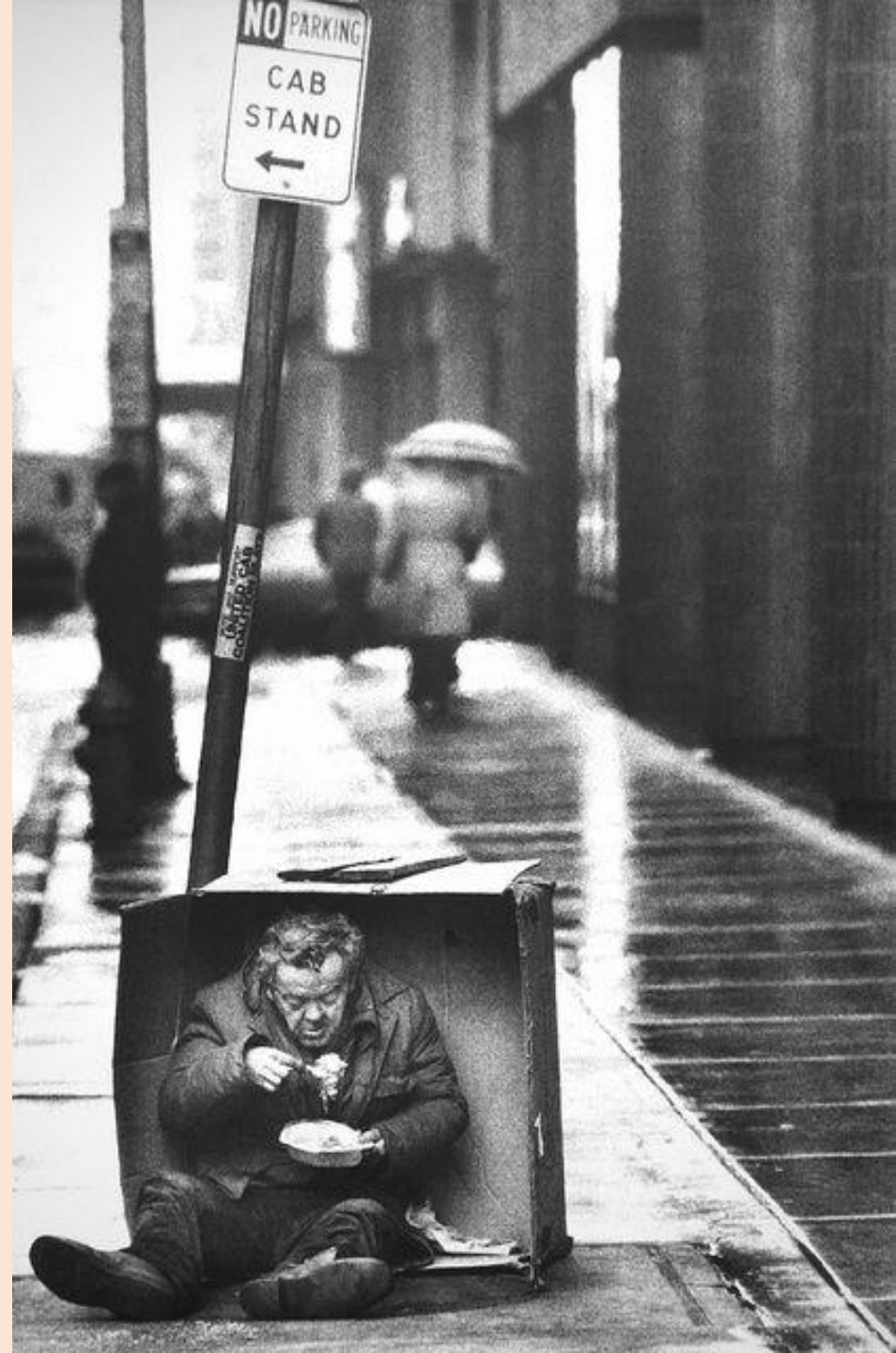
Is it the inspiration of "Friends"?

Or maybe it is people's way to respond to the challenges of this century?



Unaffordable living

There is a need to save space and to lower housing costs.



Loneliness

Demographic changes; The percentage of singles rose. The children rate in Europe stands at 1.5 per family. There are more and more elderly.

In Israel, despite the fact that the average is 3.09 children per family, still women stay single for a longer time.

Many people live alone, experiencing urban alienation.



The sharing economy comes home

It refers to housing as a service and reduces the need for property ownership.

Some see its positive side, as a more egalitarian economy.

Others criticize its business platform and argue that it hurts the labor market and even call it "neo-liberal on steroids".



City For People, Not For Profit

The hegemonic growth machine produces a dominant speculative housing system that does not meet the peoples' needs.

In Israel, although 40% of households are of one or two persons, only 10% of new construction is defined as small apartments.

Recently the world is kicking back, there are more and more social protests and a search for alternatives.



The Israeli Case - Between Socialism and Neo-Liberalism

Dominant historical communal narrative.

The **kibbutz**, the moshav and the urban workers' neighborhoods were pioneering cooperative models that were established under the rule of the **labor movement**.

Since the 1980s, after the **political upheaval**, the contraction of the welfare state and the growth of neo-liberalism, the cooperative enterprise has collapsed and most of the kibbutzim have been privatized.

Israel today has an imposing **free market**.

Israel's government has almost completely **removed its responsibility** for housing.

Kibbutz Degania



A quiet revolution ?

Many see the kibbutz as a dream that has been broken, as a **national trauma** that distances the public from the concept of cooperative housing.

However, since the 1990s, the kibbutz movement and other ideological youth movements in Israel establish **urban cooperative groups** as a correction to the traditional kibbutz.

It is a **unique Israeli typology** which opposes the alienated capitalist culture and works within Israeli society in order to **improve** it.

Today, there are more than **2000 people** living in about **40 groups**. The members are **young motivated socialists**. Many of them already have families and children.

Their models range from **full economic sharing** in all lifestyles to **independent individuals** living and working together.

They are all busy finding decent **housing solutions** for the group.



An **urban kibbutz** in the north of Israel.

It was established in the year 2000 By former members of the youth movements.

Today there are **70 adults and about 40 children** living in full economic and social cooperation. They live in an 8-story building leased from the Jewish Agency, in quite small apartments, with plenty of **common spaces** - library, work space, carpentry workshop, music room, children's home, gym, equipment storage, and a huge yard with a vegetable garden, cooking area, children's facilities and sports fields. All DIY (do it yourself) with limited resources but with the backing of the third sector (the youth movement and the Jewish Agency).

They certainly undermine the neo-liberal agenda, in economics, in planning and in society, but they are still a small point within the large urban sphere.

Urban Kibbutz, northern city



War in windmills

We have few contemporary **co-housing communities** in the making.

They are not ideologues. They grow as a **pragmatic solution** to the cost of living and the loneliness.

Most of them belong to the **middle class**, about half of them are the third-generation.

None of them had been completed so far. They are usually innocent and powerless and they encounter **many difficulties** such as Financing, regulation and bureaucracy.

A pioneering, dedicated group of more than 20 aging, who want to grow old together.

Their manifesto says so: "We aim to provide an **innovative alternative** to the loneliness typical of the **third generation**, in affordable communal housing and to underpin our status as an asset to the large community". I wish them luck!

Two other communities I have talked with, decided to **compromise** and to join a regular real estate project; They will probably live as good neighbors in a multi-story building, but all the dreams about shared spaces that will support a rich community life are vanishing...

Israeli co-housing initiatives



Future residence?

In Israel's big cities, there are at least four **co-living** projects and a few more are on the way.

Most of them were established by ambitious young initiators, among them are **architects and urban planners**.

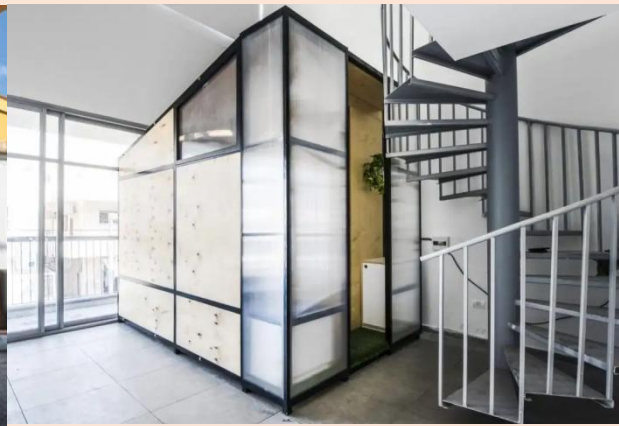
They raised **investors** and convert existing buildings into mini apartments, common spaces and supportive **social businesses**.

They are creative, have a **broad planning vision**, economic knowledge and execution capabilities.

They create interest among **cool young people**, artists and hipsters who want to **live with friends** in the city center, willing to compromise their housing space and privacy for **atmosphere**, experience and friendship. Even if they **do not pay less...**



Tel Aviv



The companies are **critical** of encouraging the **gentrification** processes ... so they told me: "Gentrification is here with or without us and overall we **benefit** our environment".

They are critical of harming **basic needs** for efficiency.

They are critical of taking advantage of the economic insecurity of the **Y generation** and of using their difficulties in creating human connections...

They will answer that these are the **needs of the period**, their clients are happy and in Israel today there is no other way.

Haifa



Research insights

1. The collective housing is **shaped** by its owners and is highly influenced by **local culture**. Despite the similar motivations, projects in Israel differ from each other and differ from their counterparts in the world.
It produces **diversity** as opposed to hegemonic monotony.
2. Israel is a **country of extremes**. For now, two forces are operating: the subversive **ideological initiatives** on the one hand, and the pseudo-social **business initiatives** on the other hand. The solid, **pragmatic co-housing** option is still sleepy.
3. The new co-housing, despite being self-organized, requires external support in the form of land leasing, financing credit and regulation. Unlike some European countries, in Israel, there is still **no government support** which constitutes a significant barrier.
4. One of the fascinating findings of the study are the seeds of **collaborations** that are being developed nowadays. Powerless communities turn desperately to social investors, business initiators and authorities, and an interesting **network of connections** is formed behind the back of the government.

Reflections

What is the power of **sociability**, known as one of the strongest forces in humanity, as opposed to **individualism**, which is one of the strongest forces of this time?

Is the current collective housing a **romantic idea** or a **real urban need**?

Is this an **esoteric phenomenon** or a **significant potential** for improving urban life?

It can be said that the growth of the new **collective housing** in the world began as a **counter-reaction** to the alienated way of life and **to the neo-liberal agenda**, but, while we are talking here, parts of it are conquered and **swallowed** again in this order.

What happens to the one who is swallowed up? And what happens to the swallower?

Is there a **hidden option** here of using the growth ability of neo-liberalism in order to soften it by all those **community values** that we have lost along the way?

May we call it **Social neo-liberalism** ?

