



Social justice and adequate housing: Rights, Roma inclusion and the feeling of home, Volume 1, by Silvia Cittadini

London, UK, Routledge, 2021

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impacts. Within this context of adaptation as principal action, the task for cities is to find ways to continue as best they can, mostly by becoming more self-sufficient.

Interestingly, the book envisions the period 2060–2090, rather than the time between now and then. Onaran presents it as a manual that outlines principles and strategies to adapt built environments for a time when climate disasters are expected to proliferate. Its emphasis is on a form of radical localization. Speaking to a future where large-scale systems are no longer reliable, the author emphasizes ways for local communities to achieve diverse economies and governance models to strengthen resilience.

The overarching objective is “equilibrium in localization”—an idea that sets localism as the key platform of resilience. Onaran conceptualizes adaptation as inherently tied to local-scale urbanism. Noting that localism is a lesser focus of contemporary urban planning activity, Onaran argues that the rolling disaster of climate change will force a scalar downshift over time. The adaptive solution for places where resilience is impossible is managed relocation; some communities will have to move to survive, whether they want to or not. Unfortunately, the book lacks a thorough discussion on the limitations and economics of relocation, particularly in cases where millions of people may need to be relocated from major cities.

One of Onaran’s core constructs is the “adaptation village.” It envisions tight communities where residents are involved in productive activities for mutual benefit. Water is collected, energy is produced, food is grown, and waste is managed, all at the local scale, within a 15-minute walking shed. With the adaptation village as principal settlement form, the book covers all the associated factors in reasonable detail: size, density, design, material flows, energy, water, food, and production.

The concept is like a contemporary return to the villages of pre-industrial societies, with the assumption of modern civility and high levels of social capital. Apparently, the threat of climate change will compel people to want this model. This is a questionable logic. The logistics are also shaky and not satisfactorily considered. Quite how billions of urbanized people can be resettled into adaptation villages is not satisfactorily addressed, unfortunately. It might work for the few, but it will not suit the many.

Urbanism for a Difficult Future spins a good tale but is short on discussion of complex pragmatics. Adaptation villages are a charming idea but if the climate emergency becomes as serious as this book suggests it might, then orderly transitions are unlikely at scale. It’s like there are two, unreconciled worlds at the heart of this book: the nightmare of climate change and the utopia of adaptation villages. The core problem is that the book does not convincingly reconcile fantasy with reality. It’s not a bad read, I just didn’t find it offered anything too meaningful by way of real-world problem diagnosis or solution.

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Social justice and adequate housing: Rights, Roma inclusion and the feeling of home, Volume 1, by Silvia Cittadini, London, UK, Routledge, 2021

This extraordinary book presents a crucial analysis of the concept of “adequate housing” and makes a significant addition to the literature on Roma. The word *Roma* refers to many different sub-groups such as Kalderash in southeastern Europe; Romanichals in England; Kalé in Wales, Finland, Spain and Portugal; Gitano in Spain; and Sinti in Germany, France and Italy. These Roma communities name themselves differently according to their history, language, culture and professions. In accordance with the many historians, Roma’s ancestors first came to Europe from northern India and then slowly spread across continental Europe from the 9th century onward. The word *gypsy* is used as an insult in languages in the countries where Roma people live, and the term, *gypsy*, is rejected by Roma organizations. The term *Roma* was adopted by representatives of the Roma communities in 1971.

Previous work on housing adequacy has looked at housing policies, the treatment of housing in the legal system and the right to shelter. *Social Justice and Adequate Housing* encourages us to look at the concept of adequate housing from multiple perspectives: urban poverty; migrants; and minorities/indigenous groups. Silvia Cittadini shows us how the Roma and Sinti, as indigenous and minority communities in Italy, have adopted the nomadic lifestyle for centuries and have built their culture on this way of life. She focuses on Roma inclusion in Italy as a starting point for reflecting on social justice and adequate housing. But what does *adequate housing* mean? Cittadini critiques and analyzes this concept and shows how social justice considerations have been utilized in the development of housing policies that appeal to the Roma, one of the least researched minorities in Europe. In doing so, she identifies ways this concept can be used for housing policy formulation.

Cittadini seeks to answer four questions. First, what is adequate housing? Second, who decides what is adequate or not? Third, does imposing a housing policy on a group represent a form of violence? Finally, is it possible to distinguish the right to housing from the right to a home?

The book, which consists of five chapters plus an introduction begins with an introduction to the concept of adequate housing. Housing is one of the leading sectors addressed by the European Union (EU) and EU institutions have focused on the housing situation of Roma in recent years. Roma-related research has focused on both segregated/integrated housing and inadequate/adequate housing. Cittadini discusses how an understanding of housing adequacy can be used to study groups such as Roma, who have been excluded from decision-making. In the next three chapters, Cittadini focuses separately on three major housing projects that have affected Roma lives in three Italian areas: Pisa (Chapter 2), Messina (Chapter 3), and Trento/Rovereto (Chapter 4).

Pisa is a town in the Tuscany region. Five hundred Roma and Sinti individuals lived in Roma camps (called nomad camps) before the project “Citta Sottili” was built between 2002 and 2010. Citta Sottili (Thin Cities) aims to achieve the closure of all local nomad camps with alternative housing solutions, such as supporting Roma in gaining “empowerment,” in acquiring autonomy, and in participating in social life through access to schooling and jobs. Cittadini conducted 16 interviews in this village in 2016. The results varied widely based on the personal history of the those interviewed and their needs and desires. However, all those interviewed were dissatisfied with conditions and the solutions offered by the village. Interviewees expressed a “call for normality,” that is, to have a home like everybody else. They also wanted the locality to allow Roma families to find a job, to be able to send their children to school, and in general to escape the stigma they feel on the street or in Roma camps.

Messina is in Sicily; it’s Roma population mainly came from Montenegro and Kosovo between the end of the 1980s and 1990s but in recent years, the city has attracted Roma from Romania. In 1992, the city established the Roma camp, “San Ranieri,” which was thought to be a short-term solution for the Roma. The city relocated all the families living in the nomad camp into housing units located in converted public houses. The project relied on the through the self-build method and the active participation of the Roma. The city also aimed to increase the employment ability of Roma residents by creating a cooperative in the

construction sector. The 13 interviews conducted in 2017 showed divergent opinions. Some regarded the new housing conditions as a substantial improvement compared to the camp, but others claimed that their old lives were better in San Ranieri. Unfortunately, informal jobs were not replaced by new job opportunities. Although the project aimed to develop two cooperatives based on gender, the project's sudden closure prevented this from happening.

Both Trento and Rovereto, in Northern Italy, have Roma and Sinti populations. The Roma from Istria who have lived in the area for many years are identified as the Sinti, and this population with 500 members is larger than the Roma group. Two nomad camps were established in the 1990s that hosted a limited number of Sinti. The Roma from what had been Yugoslavia were not placed in the camps but instead, were assigned to public housing. Additionally, most Sinti who lived in these camps had already moved to private flats or accessed public housing. The interview results for Trento and Rovereto provide new insights into the processes of housing inclusion, how moving into new structures was not a priority for everyone.

The last chapter offers three main conclusions: (1) the importance of considering all aspects affecting housing choices, (2) the need to include the Roma in formulating housing policy, and (3) the importance of developing the concept of housing rights for Roma policies, based on the concept of homemaking provided. The fairly high level of residential dissatisfaction among the Roma is attributable to the failure to provide solutions that meet Roma housing needs. In Trento the problem is that the proposed solutions have not been implemented. Cittadini highlights a critical point in this book. The Roma are a heterogeneous social group and as a result, policy responses cannot be standardized.

This book should be especially beneficial for scholars and students working in three areas: human rights, Roma studies and ethnic/minority communities. When I teach a course on Roma housing, I intend to adopt it.

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The many geographies of urban renewal: New perspectives on the Housing Act of 1949, by Douglas R. Appler (ed.), Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press, 2023

The urban renewal program operated from 1949 to 1974 in over 1,200 communities, and it is widely seen as among the worst domestic programs ever sponsored by the federal government. The program was created in the Housing Act of 1949, motivated by a need to revitalize urban slums. The process was relatively benign, but its implementation was not.

The process called for a city to designate a slum area for renewal. Once approved by both the local and the federal governments, the land was acquired by the local Urban Renewal Authority, cleared, given new infrastructure and resold to developers for redevelopment. The costs were shared between the local government paying one third and the federal government paying two thirds. The premise of the program was to clear slums and make the land more valuable by consolidating parcels into single ownership and by improving the infrastructure. The problems with the program were not with this theory of redevelopment but with the process of designating a slum for redevelopment. Too many of the areas designated for redevelopment were occupied by low-income minority households and