

Critical mapping: Rote Wien, an X-RAY of Vienna's social housing

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Abstract:

"Rote Wien, an X-ray of Vienna's social housing," presents an in-depth critical mapping exploration into the esteemed social housing system of Vienna, Austria. Drawing parallels between maps and X-ray images of urban space, this study delves into the intricate process of critical mapping, elucidating Vienna's multifaceted approach to social housing. Through meticulous analysis of historical data and contemporary policies, the research examines key factors shaping Vienna's housing landscape, including affordability, ownership, housing quality, and proximity. Rooted in the principles of affordability, high quality, social cohesion, and socioeconomic integration, Vienna's social housing model traces its origins back to the visionary initiatives of the "Red Vienna" era following the First World War. However, despite its exemplary status, Vienna confronts challenges arising from shifting national and regional neoliberal ideologies, budget constraints, and the influx of international real estate investment. By dissecting the evolution of Vienna's social housing from its inception to present-day adaptations, this study provides valuable insights into the city's resilience and innovative strategies in the face of urban housing crises. Moreover, "Rote Wien" serves as a seminal resource for architects, urban planners, and policymakers, offering a blueprint for addressing contemporary housing challenges in cities worldwide. By examining the successes and shortcomings of Vienna's social housing model, this critical mapping endeavor not only elucidates the intricacies of urban housing dynamics but also provides a framework for fostering inclusive, sustainable, and livable cities for all residents. Through its comprehensive analysis and nuanced insights, "Rote Wien" offers a compelling narrative of Vienna's social housing journey, underscoring the pivotal role of critical mapping in understanding and reshaping urban landscapes to promote equity, accessibility, and social cohesion.

In this critical mapping study, multiple types of maps and graphs were used. A chrono-style mapping and temporal analysis (Figure 1) was used to deploy a historical study through the use of chrono-style maps, which visually represent spatial configurations over different time periods. This map was complemented by timelines that intricately link spatial developments with temporal dynamics, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the evolution of, in this case, Vienna's social housing system. By overlaying historical data with geographic representations, this form of mapping facilitates the identification of patterns, shifts and continuities in the urban landscape over time. This approach allows researchers to uncover the historical processes that have shaped Vienna's social housing policies, from their inception during the 'Red Vienna' era to their adaptations in response to contemporary challenges. This temporal analysis provides valuable insights into the long-term trajectories of social housing development, highlighting key moments of transformation, continuity and divergence within Vienna's urban fabric.

1 MAPEAMENTO AN X-RAY OF VIENNA'S SOCIAL HOUSING

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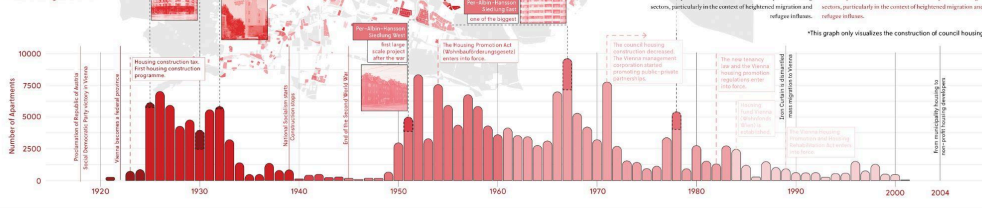


Figure 1: Page 1 and 2, chrono-style mapping and temporal analysis

In addition to historical analysis, a network map (Figure 2) was used to elucidate the complex interrelationships within Vienna's social housing system. This non-spatial map visualises the connections between the various actors, institutions, policies and spatial configurations that make up the social housing landscape. By identifying nodes, linkages and flows within the system, network mapping allows researchers to analyse the structural dynamics that underpin Vienna's approach to social housing. By mapping the intricate web of relationships within the social housing system, researchers can identify points of intervention and leverage to increase its effectiveness and resilience. Furthermore, critical mapping offers an invaluable tool for international researchers seeking to understand and potentially replicate Vienna's social housing model in other contexts. By elucidating the underlying principles, mechanisms, and strategies that have contributed to Vienna's success in providing affordable, high-quality housing and fostering social cohesion, critical mapping facilitates knowledge transfer and cross-national learning. These insights empower policymakers, urban planners, and community stakeholders to understand how the system works.

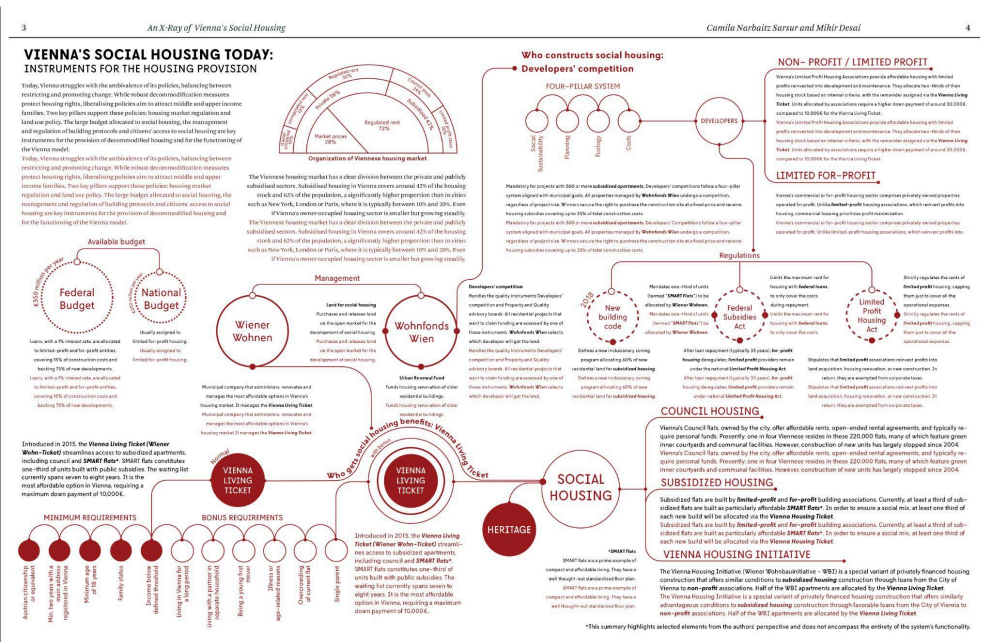


Figure 2: Page 3 and 4, network map analysis

This critical mapping was extended beyond the boundaries of Vienna to engage in cross-national comparative analysis of social housing systems worldwide (Figure 3). By juxtaposing Vienna's social housing model with those of other cities and countries, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of its strengths, weaknesses, and unique characteristics. Through comparative mapping, critical researchers can identify common trends, divergent approaches, and innovative practices in social housing policy and implementation. This comparative perspective allows for a nuanced assessment of Vienna's social housing system in relation to global contexts, shedding light on its distinctiveness, adaptability, and transferability. By analyzing the experiences of other cities, critical mapping provides valuable lessons and benchmarks for enhancing Vienna's social housing model and informing policy decisions on a global scale.

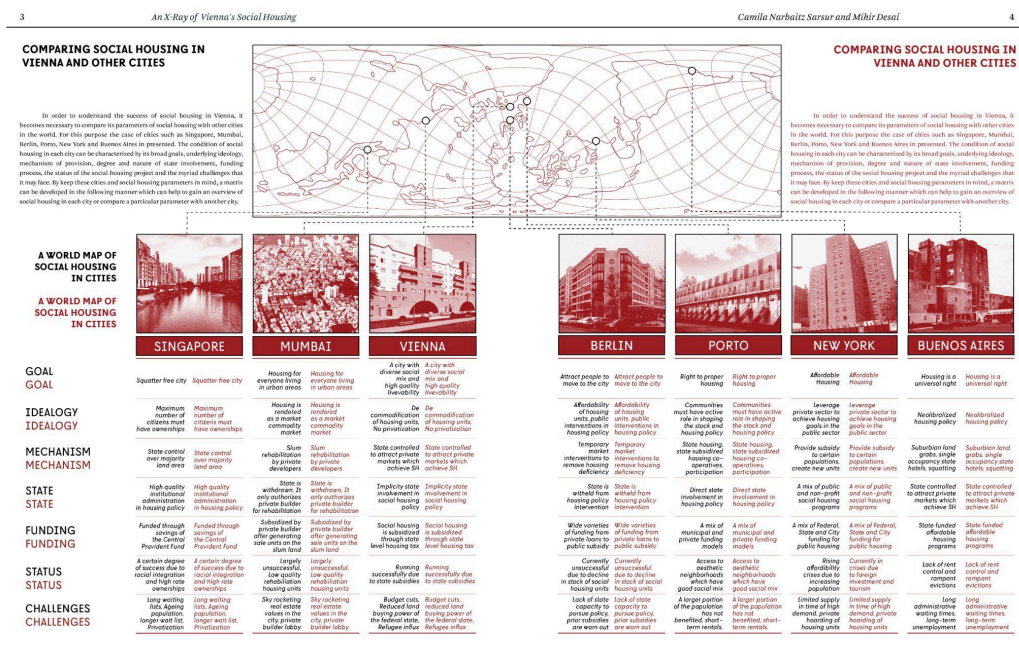


Figure 3: Page 5 and 6, comparative analysis of social housing systems worldwide

Lastly, for the critical mapping was used a proximity spatial analysis mapping equity with the integration of radar graphs (Figure 4) to capture additional parameters, enriching the understanding of spatial dynamics within Vienna's social housing neighborhoods. By incorporating diverse datasets encompassing factors such as income levels, demographic composition, and service provision, critical mapping enables a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted dimensions of urban inequality and accessibility. Through the synthesis of multiple parameters, researchers can develop composite indices that provide a holistic view of spatial disparities and social exclusion within the urban landscape. These indices facilitate the identification of priority areas for intervention and the formulation of targeted policies to address systemic inequalities. Moreover, employing innovative visualization techniques can better represent the complex interplay of multiple parameters in a spatially explicit manner. Radar graphs offer a dynamic visualization platform that allows for the simultaneous representation of various dimensions, such as proximity to green spaces, access to public transport, and socio-economic indicators, within a single graphic interface. By transforming multi-dimensional data into intuitive visual representations, radar graphs enable researchers to identify patterns, correlations, and outliers across different spatial contexts.

