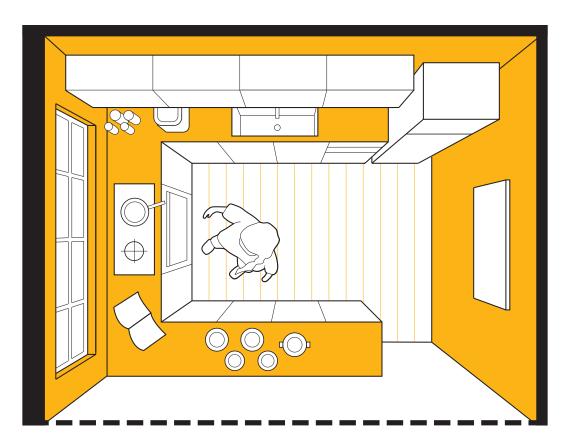
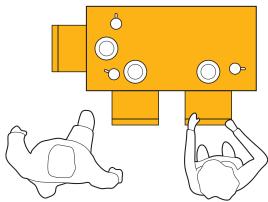
### **KITCHEN:**

# From Meal Preparing to Social Making



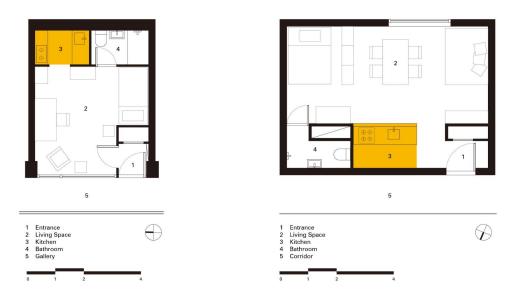


Hsiu-Ju Chang 5069874 TU Delft. Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment AR3AD100 Advanced Housing Design (2021/22 Q1) November 2021

#### **Research Motivation**

My research motivation for kitchen in dwelling space came from my personal experience living in Dutch student housing. When I first arrived in the Netherlands, I moved into a student house built in the 1960s. The kitchen is located on a tiny corner of the studio room as a separate space, connecting the living area with a gate. The compact living unit with predetermined furniture and functions is suitable for only one person. Any extra user would interfere with the movement of the dweller. (Fig. 1) Because of such a layout, I seldom invited friends over. It was a difficult and isolated moment for me during the lockdown.

After living there for eight months, I moved to another student house. Apart from the fact that the room is much larger, the arrangement of the kitchen and bathroom allows the units to have greater spatial flexibility. The kitchen is next to the entrance, separated from the living space with a low wall at chest height. The kitchen has a good view over the whole room, which allows the person who cooks to continue interacting with people in the living space. Furthermore, the kitchen has a long working surface. It is then possible to have two people preparing food at the same time. (Fig. 2) The kitchen indeed lays the foundation of social interaction and sharing the domestic tasks in a house. The experience with these two kitchens inspired me to explore kitchens in different housing types and further introduce the knowledge to future housing design. Mainly, I aim to work with the Fat Type housing typology rarely seen in the Netherlands. I am intrigued by the stable, cohesive spatial quality that the Fat Type brought about. I believe such character could potentially strengthen the idea of the social making of kitchens.



(left) Fig. 1 Floor Plan of Previous Studio Room, made by the author (right) Fig.2 Floor Plan of Current Studio Room, made by the author

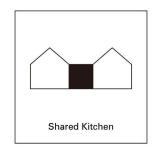
#### 01 Introduction

#### The Three Types of Kitchens

Among all the spaces in domestic life, the kitchen is the space that has experienced the most drastic shifts through modern history. In order to answer the

In this research, based on the relationship of the users and the spatial hierarchy of the kitchens, I categorized the kitchens into three: private kitchens, shared kitchens and public kitchens. Each category reflects a historical moment when certain ideologies, cultural connotations and technology were introduced. These aspects highlighted by these three kitchens are still very relevant to the kitchen and housing design for kitchens nowadays.





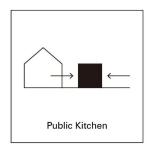


Fig. 3 Diagram for The Three Types of Kitchens, made by the author

#### 1. Private Kitchen

I define the private kitchen as the kitchen inside a private household, exclusively used by the members in the house where it is situated. The spatial organization and materiality of private kitchens have a strong impact on the quality of housing units. Kitchens, by definition, are a place for meal preparation, thus inevitably dealing with issues of smell, sound, heat, water, and hygiene. Serving as a "workplace at home," private kitchens were culturally associated with housewives, where the issue of social gender roles could be evidently observed.

At the beginning of the 20th century, women started to work as production laborers, such as caretakers in hospitals or factory workers. This had created a conflict between the traditional social reproduction role of women and their new identity as paid workers. Inspired by Christine Frederick, in her Frankfurt Kitchen (1926), Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky emphasized that the goal of housework must be a maximum

performance with the least amount of effort, just like working in a factory. (Fig. 4) Instead of challenging the fundamental gender inequality, Frankfurt Kitchen aimed to solve the dilemma for women by making their domestic tasks more efficient. Frank Lloyd Wright, on the other hand, had a different approach. In his Willey House (1934), he designed a half-open kitchen where Mrs. Willey, a working woman who needed to deal with domestic tasks herself, could have constant interaction with guests while preparing food and drinks. The modernist private kitchens designed reflected how the industrial revolution had impacted domestic lives in both technological innovation and social reform. I would like to investigate how the issues related to the social gender role of women had a spatial impact on kitchen design in this period.

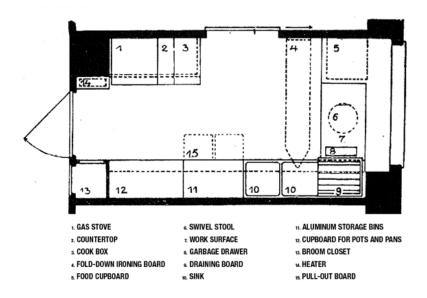


Fig. 4 Plan of Frankfurt Kitchen and the Labor Saving Features

#### 2. Shared Kitchen

I define the shared kitchen as an independent kitchen shared by multiple designated households. A shared kitchen is often connected to a shared dining space. It has a strong connotation of collectivity—the idea of collectivity, care, and sharing lies in the center of the shared kitchen.

The first cohousing project Sættedammen (1972) in Denmark, was established with the idea of "children should have a hundred parents" to create a new way of living together with the provision of care at a neighborhood level. Twenty-seven family houses are built around a communal car-free garden where children can freely play—an independent common house with a shared kitchen and dining space located in the center of the plan.

Wolff, Paul, director. The Frankfurt Kitchen, 1927, www.filmportal.de/video/die-frankfurter-kueche-1927.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Graae, B., Børn skal have hundrede forældre. Politiken: Arhus; 1967

Weekly base collective dining had become a critical bonding moment for the neighborhood. (Fig.5) In response to the increasing number of women in the public sphere and the shortage of public service since the 1970s, a Swedish group BIG (Bo I Gemenskap, Living in Community) argued that cohousing is an "intermediate level" to fill in the gap between private households and the public services. The first cohousing following the principle proposed by BIG is Stacken (1979) in Sweden. The star-shaped plan was divided into five households. The private spaces are smaller than traditional family homes with shared facilities run by the residents collectively, including a communal kitchen, communal dining room, and playroom for children. The cohousing during the 1970s to 1980s highlights the notion of care, social support, and social exchange around the shared kitchen.

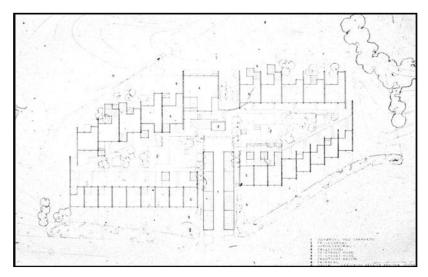


Fig. 5 Plan of Sættedammen

#### 3. Public Kitchen

I define the public kitchen as the kitchens situated inside the neighborhood, used and shared by people from or sometimes outside the community. The connections built upon the public kitchen are on a metropolitan level. A public kitchen can provide communal, social, and commercial functions on a non-speculative basis.

Anna Puigjaner, a Spanish architect and researcher, pointed out the "urban kitchen" phenomenon as an answer to the late-capitalist society and an impact on the digital sphere in the last decade.<sup>3</sup> These urban kitchens share food with people in need and build up strong social support networks. The Children's Cafeteria (Kodomo Shokudo) in Japan is an excellent example. Initiated in Tokyo in 2012 (after the economic crisis and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Puigjaner, A. *The Kitchenless City*, The Berlage Keynote, April 2021, https://theberlage.nl/events/the-kitchenless-city

the 311 Earthquake in 2011), the initiative tried to alleviate poverty among children by providing free or cheap meals. Children's Cafeteria took place in different cities and various places, depending on the availability of the venues and the donation of food from local communities. The local founder will cook together with volunteers and serve food to children and their parents. Thus, a public kitchen could become a place for social welfare and could be connected with other community care providers to achieve social inclusion.

#### The Fat Type<sup>4</sup>

In order to bridge my research on the three types of kitchens with housing design, I need to look for a suitable building type to host these social connotations in three spatial hierarchies. Considering the challenges on my design plot of Blijdorp, such as noise pollution and the mixture of users on-site, a robust building type with a welcoming urban setup like Fat Type is an ideal stage to experiment with. (Fig.6)

"Fat Type" is a nickname for the mid-rise building in the shape of an oversized cube, up to 30 meters in depth with a relatively substantial volume. It is similar to a traditional closed city block but too small to create a proper courtyard in the center. The Fat Type is a successful building type in the "Zurich Model" of cooperative housing with social solid motivation. In her article Wer teilt, hat mehr (Those who share have more), architect Anne Kaestle, co-founder of the Duplex Architekten, argued that a new type of housing which balance between private and shared areas should be the answer to the less affordable and increasingly densified housing situation in Europe. 5 In 2009, Duplex Architekten proposed a group of Fat Type buildings in the competition for Cooperative Mehr Als Wohnen, Zurich, to demonstrate such manners. The Fat Type buildings are 32 meters deep, standing 9 meters next to one another, creating small and large squares. (Fig. 7) A similar cluster concept of the building volumes also can be found in their planning for cluster apartments. Each autonomous unit is connected by a series of "gaps" that reminds people of the streetscape of Rome. (Fig. 8) Because of the thick volume of the Fat Type buildings, inner streets could be implemented both vertically and horizontally, resulting in a multi-functional good quality space for social interaction, circulation, lighting, and ventilation.

The Fat Type building is so far a rarely seen housing type in the Netherlands, perhaps due to its difficulties with lighting and efficiency on floor areas. The possibility of bringing in the Fat Type housing in the Dutch context is yet to be explored. However, the Fat Type is more common in the commercial buildings. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, people are now looking for a more flexible way to work, leaving empty office buildings in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "dicke typen" in German

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Kaestle, Anne, Wer teilt hat mehr. Neue Standards Zehn Thesen Zum Wohnen. Jovis, 2016. p.125

cities. Many office buildings in the future might apply a similar strategy as The Lee Towers (1970s, 2016) in Rotterdam, reoriented to provide housing functions as a Fat Type building. The research Fat Type in Dutch urban context could contribute to future office regeneration projects.

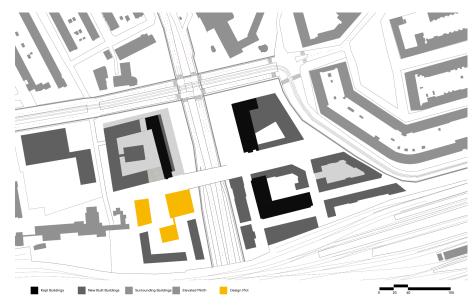


Fig. 6 Design Plot with Urban Situations in Blijdorp, made by the author

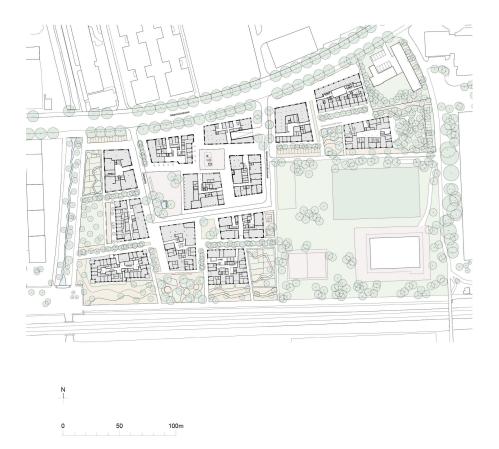


Fig. 7 Masterplan of Cooperative Mehr Als Wohnen by Duplex-Architektur



Fig. 8 Floor Plan of Cluster Apartment in House A by Duplex-Architektur

#### **Research Statement**

The kitchen is a stage for argumentation. The kitchen is political; it is where feminists argued for gender equality and the "kitchen Debate" took place. The kitchen is economical; it is where the conflict between production and reproduction workers meets and where all the kitchen manufacturers try to sell their products to. The kitchen is social; it is a mirror that reflects people's everyday lives in society, a projection of how people want to live in the future, individually and collectively. The function of a kitchen is not only meal preparing but also a place for social making.

Fat Type, a rarely explored housing type in the Dutch context, has a solid position regarding housing affordability, the distance between individual and collective, and the concept of sharing. Moreover, urbanistically, Fat Type has a considerable potential to adapt to its surroundings and shape urban space with a human-scale approach.

<sup>6</sup> Kitchen Debate is a political event that took place between Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow, 1959.

#### **Research Question**

The research will be divided into two parts: The Three Types of Kitchens and The "Fat Type." The research structure helps to build up the understanding of the kitchen as a spatial element to demonstrate social and cultural context as well as the kitchens in the housing of the Fat Type. I would then have two main research questions to answer:

### 1. How can the private, shared, and public kitchen provide gender equality, social interaction, and support to the community in the 2020s of the Netherlands?

- How did the concept of gender equality and the shift of social gender roles shape the modernist private kitchen from the 1920s to 1940s, and how are these perspectives relevant nowadays?
- How did the concern of care and sharing in the 1970s to 1980s Europe contribute to the cohousing in this period, and how can these concepts be further applied in housing design nowadays?
- How did the public kitchens respond to the late capitalist society and the development of the media sphere since the past decade?

## 2. How does the potential of the three types of the kitchen and the observer's perspective from the kitchen towards the practice of dwelling impact future housing design in the Fat Type buildings?

- What urban characteristics and spatial qualities of the Fat Type buildings can successfully deal with the challenging locations in Dutch cities?
- How can the properties of Fat Type buildings provoke new design concepts for the kitchens in housing design?

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#### **Potential Target Groups**

Based on the behaviors and interactions I expected to accommodate in the design of three kitchens, the potential housing typologies and target groups could be discovered. For example, domestic tasks should be shared among members in the private kitchen, thus being implemented in family apartments. On the other hand, users are welcome to cook and dine collectively in shared kitchens, so it would be suitable for solo dwellers, students, young starters, and active older adults to live together in a cluster apartment or shared house. Public kitchens are then open to all the people in need but not necessarily linked to any housing typology.

#### 02 Research Framework

#### Theoretical Framework

The theories I would apply to my research are mostly feminist theories, based on the traditional precondition of social reproduction belonging to women. Based on different historical backgrounds, various feminist theories would be introduced. Below I enlist the most relevant ones I have discovered so far:

#### 1. Material Feminists

Dolores Hayden called a group of feminists who "dared to define a grand domestic revolution in women's material conditions" in her book *The Grand Domestic Revolution*. In the late 19th century USA, material feminists argued that only the spatial transformation of the domestic workplace could bring women true social equality, economic justice, and environmental reform. These transformations should happen in both the household and the neighborhood. The social reproduction labor who does housework should be paid. Their proposals are based on centralizing the domestic work such as kitchens, childcare and laundry, and separating these functions from home. These proposals had a strong influence on cohousing in Europe in the 20th century. The concept of material feminists can help me build up an argument for the reform of the kitchen in contemporary housing design.

#### 2. The BIG Group

In the late 1970s, a feminist group in Sweden established the group BIG in response to the critical issues of social reproduction and how the urban design did not meet people's needs, especially women and children. They called for a physical reform in the cities as well as the domestic realm. They argued that an "intermediate level" of the caring system should be introduced through cohousing, a new level between the private sphere and society. They published a book *Det Lilla Kollektivhuset* (The Little Collective House) in 1982 as a guideline for cohousing. I want to take the concept of "intermediate level" of social service to strengthen the need for providing shared and public kitchens in the neighborhood of Blijdorp.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Hayden, Dolores. The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities. MIT, 1982, p.15

<sup>8</sup> lbid, p.18

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Mattsson, H. *The Cohousing Movement's Stockholm*, The Berlage Session, March 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qb1W-gLtWA

#### 3. Feminist Analysis

Feminist Analysis was proposed by famous feminist architect and activist Jos Boys in 1984, aiming to "expose the ways in which the world is male-defined, and to show the ways in which women do not define it". <sup>10</sup> I would apply Feminist Analysis to my case studies of the three types of kitchens to reveal how the kitchens were designed, for whom and why.

#### 4. Food Axis

In her 1996 essay Transforming the Food Axis: Houses, Tools, Modes of Analysis, Elisabeth Collins Cromley, an American scholar of architecture history, introduced the concept of the "food axis," which refers to "a series of spaces in a dwelling used for food collectively—a constellation that incorporates indoor and outdoor spaces for storing, preserving, and cooking food, and the serving of meals." The food axis provided an analytical view for morphological research on the kitchens and to identify how the meals were prepared, served, and consumed at home. Through the elements in the food axis, the women's role in a family, the utility systems, and the dining culture could be observed. I would expand this concept from private kitchens to shared and public kitchens to compare the users' flow and spatial organization.

Boys, Jos. "Is There a Feminist Analysis of Architecture?" The Built Environment, vol. 10, no. 1, 1984, pp. 25–34.

Cromley, Elizabeth Collins. *The Food Axis: Cooking, Eating and the Architecture of American Houses*. University of Virginia Press, 2010.

#### **Methodology & Methods**

To conduct this research I will apply a combination of historical research and morphological research through a series of case studies.

#### Historical Approach

The historical research aims to understand the specific historical settings of the critical moments of the three types of kitchens.

For the private kitchens, I will first take literature review on the modernist kitchens from the 1920s to 1940s to investigate the feminist perspective highlighted by these projects. The potential cases would then be Frankfurt Kitchen (1926), Willey House (1934), and Unité d'Habitation Kitchen type 1(1948). Responding to the challenging domestic tasks for women, three architects had different strategies.

Carry on with the feminist approach of gender-egalitarian ideology, I will then look at the cohousing projects in Europe during the 1960s to 1980s, as well as the earlier communist architecture that the cohousing projects inspired from. The pioneering concept of living together and political control can be seen in Russian communal apartments such as the Narkomfin Building (1928). The first cohousing project Sættedammen (1972) in Denmark, exemplified how common cooking and shared meals in their shared kitchen became the pivot of common activities. Stacken (1979) in Sweden demonstrated the idea of the "intermediate level" of care and sharing.

As the public kitchen serves both social support and commercial opportunities for the neighborhood, I would take reference from both purposes. These cases provide programming ideas as well as the socio-economic context of the emergence of these kitchens. Urban kitchens such as Children's Cafeteria (2012) show the flexibility and adaptability of food preparation. The venues could be small local restaurants, shops, and temples. The more commercial approach to the public kitchen could be the Kitchen Studio SUIBA (2019), where cooking and dining space would be rented out for startups, food tasting, or family reunions.

Having a historical approach for my thematic research, I intended to explore how kitchen design had preserved certain social functions and further investigate the potential solutions for contemporary housing issues.

#### Morphological Approach

The case studies serve as an essential source of knowledge to thematic research on kitchens and the spatial organization of "The Fat Type" in urban situations. Most cases selected for historical research (as mentioned above) will also be examined with morphological analysis to link the cultural, ideological intention with the spatial production.

Another critical aspect of morphological analysis is to study the urban situation for architecture design in the next stage. In order to introduce the Fat Type on-site, I will study the Cooperative Mehr Als Wohnen (2015) in Zurich, where the Fat Type buildings are the dominant building type on site. With a similar geometry, Mehr Als Wohnen established different housing typologies, including single apartments, family apartments, cluster apartments, and hotels. With the predetermined principles, five groups of architects produced thirteen playful, divert yet harmonious buildings. Other projects that exemplify the complex urban situation, the Fat Type buildings, and dwelling design are Zwicky-Süd (2018) and Zollhaus Zürich (2021) in Switzerland. Even though rare, some buildings in Dutch cities are by their volumes indeed Fat Type buildings. One good example is Piraeus Building (1994) by Kollhof and Pols Architecten, which could be an intermediate example for localizing the Swiss design.

#### List of Case Study

- 1. Frankfurt Kitchen, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, Germany, 1926
- 2. Narkomfin Building, Moisei Ginzburg & Ignatii Milinis, Russia, 1930
- 3. Willey House, Frank Lloyd Wright, USA, 1934
- 4. Unité d'Habitation Kitchen type 1, Charlotte Perriand, France, 1948
- 5. Sættedammen Cohousing, Theo Bjerg, Denmark, 1972
- 6. Stacken, Siv Carlsson, Sweden, 1979
- 7. Piraeus Building, Kollhof and Pols Architecten, Netherlands, 1994
- 8. Children's Cafeteria, Japan, 2012
- 9. Cooperative Mehr Als Wohnen, Duplex Architekten, Switzerland, 2015
- 10. Zwicky-Süd, Schneider Studer Primas, Switzerland, 2018
- 11. Kitchen Studio SUIBA, Schemata Architects, Japan, 2019
- 12. Zollhaus Zürich, Enzmann fischer Architekten, Switzerland, 2021

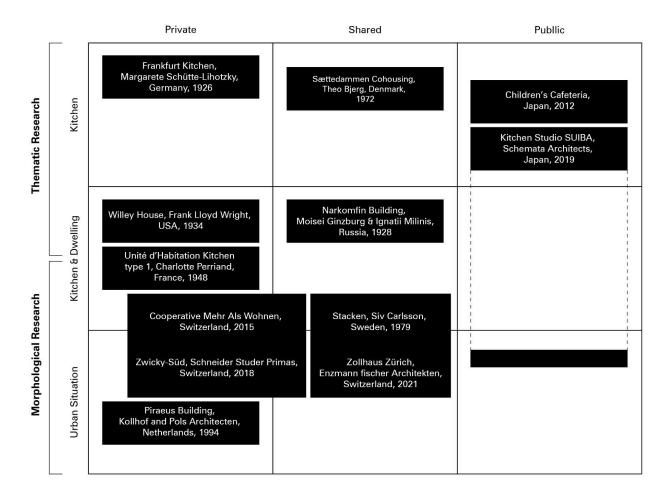


Fig. 9 Categorizing the case study, made by the author

#### **Research Diagram**

"I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose." I took the concept of brain-attic from Sherlock Holmes and combined it with my research proposal to produce a new type of "mind space": The Brain-Kitchen. (Fig. 10)

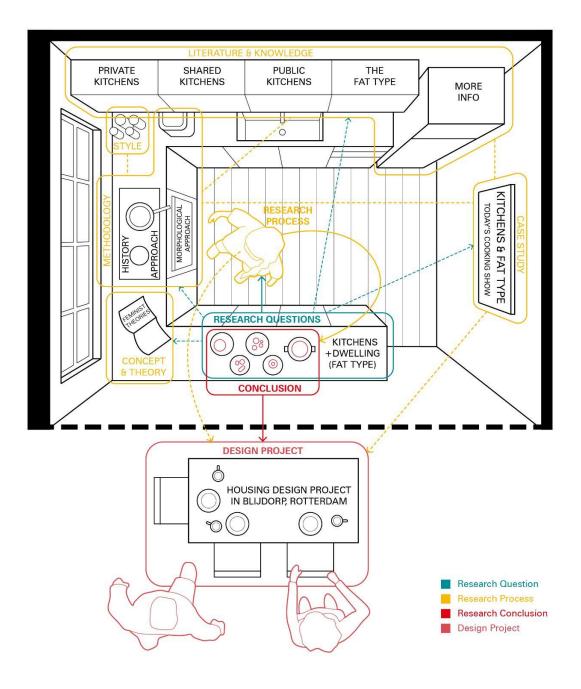


Fig. 10 Research Diagram: The Brain-Kitchen, made by the author

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Doyle, Arthur Conan. Study in Scarlet. Penguin, 2011.

#### 03 Preliminary Conclusions & Relevance

I aimed to respond to post-pandemic society housing conditions, particularly with redesigning kitchens in private, shared, and public spheres in Fat Type buildings. By placing the kitchen in the center of the investigation in housing, I expect to conclude with a new type of dwelling. Combining the urban situation of Fat Type buildings, a new urban experience with human scale could be explored. (Fig. 11)

On an architectural level, mainly deals with the kitchen design inside the housing, the research questions should be answered with the spatial organization, measurements and proportion, programs and activities, materiality and spatial quality. These outcomes could then become a guideline for future architecture design. On an urbanistic level, which relates mainly to the Fat Type building, the research should form a set of rules for facade lines, shared space, voids on volumes, and programs. As in the urban plan, I have three buildings to design. The rules should be easily adaptable to all of them.

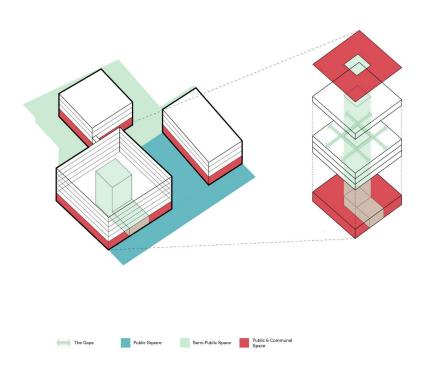


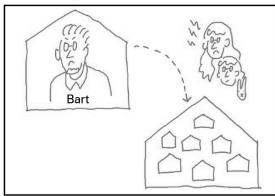
Fig. 11 The Urban Situation with Fat Type: Horizontal and Vertical Streetscape

#### **04 Graphic Novel**

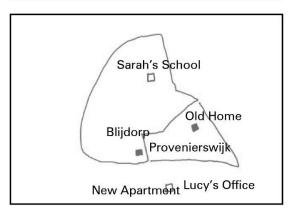
1. Single mother Lucy (40) and her daughter Sarah (8)



This is Lucy (40), and her daughter Sarah (8). They are moving into a new apartment. Why?



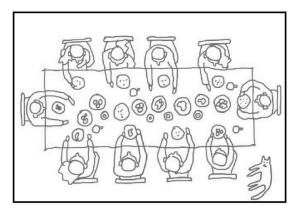
2.
Because Lucy just devorced her husband, Bart.
Now Lucy and Sarah is moving from their
home, a social housing to a new built cluster
apartment.



3.
Luckily, the new apartment is in Blijdorp, very close to their old home in Provenierswijk. Lucy and Sarah can sill live in where they are familiar with, and have their work, schools and friends near by.



4.
Lucy and Sarah are looking for a new life:
new friends, new lifestyle. She hopes the neighbors can all help each other, as everyone lives so close to each other.



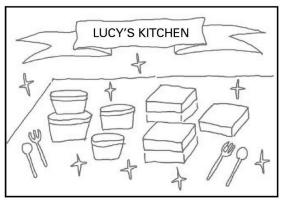
From time to time, Lucy and Sarah eat with every member of their cluster apartment. It is an important moment for them to know each other.



6. Lucy's neighbors thinks Lucy cooks so well that she should start her own business. The public kitchen in the community is available to small startups.

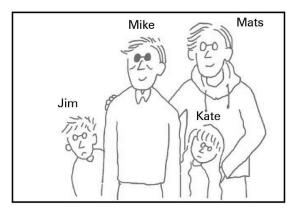


7.
Lucy rent a small counter in the public kitchen, and works there every Saturday.



Now Lucy is regularly providing pre-cooked food to the neighbors and the cafe near by.

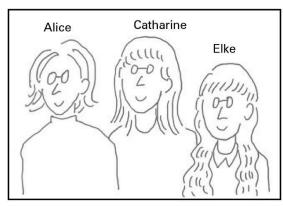
#### 2. Other Future Characters



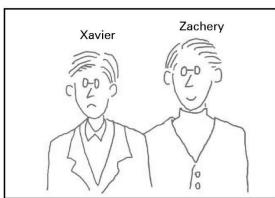
Mats (35) lives together with his children, Jim (6) and Kate (5) and his father Mike (60). Mats is a Barista in Blijdorp, and Mike is retired, spending his day mostly with the two grand children. They currently live together in the family apartment, but considering moving to a cluster apartment now.



2.
Becky (70) is a hard chord chef in charge of the public kitchen. She cooks for residents and occasionally public events. Not a fan of kids. Becky has alcoholic issues.



3. Alice (21), Catharine (24) and Elke (25) are international students studying in Rotterdam. They live in studio apartments. Alice has a part-time job in the public kitchen as cooking assistant. The other two sometimes help looking after childeren in the neighborhood.



4. Xavier (30) and Zachery (25) are young starters working in Rotterdam. Xavier commute to city center to work, while Zachery works from home. They are living in a one bedroom apartment.

#### Annex

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- 7. Berg, Elly. Det Lilla Kollektivhuset: En Modell for Praktisk Tillampning. 1982. (looking for English version)

#### <u>Image</u>

Fig. 4 Plan of Frankfurt Kitchen and the Labor Saving Features MoMA, Counter Space, Frankfurt Kitchen https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/counter\_space/the\_frankfurt\_kitchen/#highlights

Fig. 5 Plan of Sættedammen Royal Academy Library for Architecture, Design and Conservation, Sættedammen, https://www.arkitekturbilleder.dk/bygning/saettedammen/

Fig. 7 Masterplan of Cooperative Mehr Als Wohnen by Duplex Architekten Fig. 8 Floor Plan of Cluster Apartment in House A by Duplex Architekten Danish Architecture Center, Knowledgebase, More Than Living, https://dac.dk/en/knowledgebase/architecture/mehr-als-wohnen/

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