



A Mother's Plan

Housing with collectivised household labour
for in(ter)dependent mothers

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Abstract

Independent (i.e. single) mothers are stuck in a trifold of problems regarding housing, resources and labour after divorce, separation or unwedded childbirth. The lack of adequate permanent one-parent family housing puts them in a vicious circle of structural disadvantage. The inequality of opportunity has long term effects on the mother's sense of self, her parenting style and the opportunities for her child(ren), who is more susceptible to end up with the same problems.

This thesis is an exploration into the socio-spatial housing needs of independent mothers and to what extent collective living arrangements could provide an opportunity to balance work and family life effectively, through redefining traditional household structures. Through the lens of second wave feminist theory, the nuclear family is deconstructed, and the concept of collectivised household labour is explored. Drawing examples from other forms of non-nuclear households, including matriarchal tribes, self-work hotels, and eco-communities, the benefits of shared responsibilities of social support systems and efficiency are remarked. This theoretical study is juxtaposed against the practical research, consisting of interviews with assistance professionals, architects and empirical experts, from which a tight balance between community and privacy becomes significant. Thus, it is concluded that collective living arrangements have the possibility to empower independent mothers by expanding the meaning of a household, through dispersing the workload and sharing among each other. However, it remains important to realise that sustainable and supportive communities require room for the individual, like-minded people, rules and work for it to be effective. Collectivised household labour exists within a trade-off between radical intervention and practicality.

Overall, this research aims to contribute to the discourse on housing design by advocating for imaginations that empower, instead of stigmatizing and incorporating the voices of the people you are designing for.

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1. Introduction

Since the Industrial Revolution household structures have vastly transformed due to demographic, technological and cultural changes. While then, the main focus resided with housing the 'traditional' nuclear family, the main focus of housing today is focused on housing on the rapidly increasing one-person and elderly households. In between these developments, a type of household has slipped through the cracks, and is often overlooked: one-parent households. Mostly, headed by mothers these households have found difficulty navigating a system that has always been built on the notion of a household consisting out of a male-headed breadwinner, a female-subordinate domestic worker and their children. This notion has implications for all parts of the system, including housing.

When a woman leaves the isolated, single-family house she finds very few appropriate housing alternatives available to her. The mother is ought to juggle both income, housekeeping and childrearing all by herself. This accumulation of problems mothers have to deal with is commonly referred to as the 'triple bind'. With often a limited social support system, diminished income and too little time, the women are more likely to find themselves in vicious cycles trying to balance these acts by themselves. With the privatisation of the family life, and the still determinative premise that the woman fills all her time with household labour, the infrastructure for the independent mother, who has to now take on the role of both husband and wife, is missing.

Too often only the symptoms of the failing system are addressed, which leads to solutions that do not aid these mothers, but only further infantilizes, stigmatises or erases them. To give the independent mothers their fair chance at creating a life for themselves and their children it is important to deconstruct the traditional concepts attached to the household and home. Sharing child raising, living with people that can provide mutual support, bring community and provide a social support system for both the child and mother. In such a way weight is not only carried on one mothers' shoulders anymore. In such a way one's expected self-reliance is becomes distributed as a co-reliance among multiple.

Learning from the architectures beyond the nuclear, from communal living to sheltered environments and non-traditional households, different forms of living together and their spatial implications are discussed. Through the feminist lens notions of self-reliance, gender roles, the privatised home life and domestic chores are dismantled, and an appropriate form of housing for in(ter)dependent mothers is conceptualised.

1.1 Problem statement

Independent mothers are stuck in a trifold of problems regarding housing, resources and labour after divorce, separation, being widowed, or unwedded childbirth. The mothers are forced to balance work and home life by herself in a home that is designed with the idea of the nuclear family and privatised family life. The lack of adequate permanent one-parent family housing, places them in a vicious circle of structural disadvantage. The inequality of opportunity as a result of this, has to long term effects on the mother's sense of self, her parenting and the opportunities for her child(ren), who is more susceptible to end up with the same problems.

1.2 Definitions

Independent mother

Mothers who raise their children without the presence of a father are generally referred to as single mothers. Opinions on the stigmatizing nature of this term are varied, but many do acknowledge the inherent negative connotation that is often attached to this label. There are many other terms used to define the single mother, i.e. *one mother*, *unwed mother*, *solo mother*, which are each contested or appropriated in their own way. In the context of this research, this group will be referred to as *independent mothers*.

Self-reliance

The ability to depend on yourself and your own abilities. In the context of this research, this term is used to describe a person's ability to manage all aspects of personal, home, work and social life by themselves.

Co-reliance

In the context of this paper this term is used to describe a group of people managing personal, home, work and social life together. Most important is the notion of interdependence.

Hard and soft services

Hard services provide aid in basic needs for income, housing, employment, child- and health care. Soft services entail personal counselling, assistance in child development and stress etc.

1.3 Theoretical framework

The modern feminist movement, formally started with a rally at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, challenged the prevailing notion of women being irrational, dependent second-class citizens. Using art, debate, propaganda, arson and collective disobedience, women plighted for equality and for their right to vote in a world that was predominantly if not entirely male lead (Witte, 2020). This suffrage movement was an anomaly for its time, as it united women from all walks of life to a single goal. The instalment of female suffrage was the first step to women's equality in all segments of society and laid the groundwork for broader campaigns for equality (Ware, 2019). This historical backdrop of

women's suffragists attacking the status quo and imagining new realities, forms the foundation through which the established forms of housing, households and living can be questioned and reimagined for independent mothers.

With the concept of the nuclear family emerging post-World War II, women were stimulated to withdraw out of the workforce to make place for the men returning, gender roles became increasingly segregated. The male-head ought to be the sole breadwinner, his wife responsible for homemaking, together acting as an autonomous unit. While this traditional ideal has long been demystified in evolutionary anthropology, as children have consistently been reared in cooperative networks of people, e.g. the extended family, it is important to understand the engrained notion attached to idea of 'the family' (Sear, 2021).

Deconstructing the family even further as exemplified in queer culture's concept of the 'chosen' family, who create interpersonal relationships of care and intimacy beyond kinship and the (hetero)normative society (Swainhart, 2022), it is possible to re-evaluate the existing housing structures in their current form. The privatization of the family life to their nuclear units, as denoted by Hayden, showed its implications for the architecture of the home: a serene dwelling for the man in which he is taken care of physically and emotionally by his wife (Hayden, 1980).

Accompanied by utopian socialists like Charles Fourier, feminist thinkers identified the isolated nuclear family dwelling as the greatest obstacle for the position of the women. Among these alternatives liberating the women from the burden of household labour was the kitchen-less housing, envisioned by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, through which all domestic labour would be outsourced and capitalised on (Hayden, 1978) Her co-operative 'family hotels' included centralized services: e.g. cooking and dining facilities, roof gardens, nurses and teachers as a socialized approach to domestic responsibilities and challenging the traditional household structures.

However, critiques of this model, acknowledging the privileged position of the residents and potential exploitation of lower-class women service workers, mark the importance of equitable housing solutions for all classes. The '*Bo i Gemenskap*' movement's anti-modernist interpretation of the household work as a valuable societal contribution presents an alternative perspective, suggesting that sharing responsibilities and communal living can redefine the dynamics of domestic labour (Jarvis, 2017)

Contemporary feminist thinker Iris Marion Young (2005) recognizes the complexities of household work. While acknowledging its potential for subordination, it is important to coincidingly see the expressions of love and care embedded in it. This perspective put forward a holistic understanding of

household labour beyond its burdens, emphasizing its role in preserving personal and collective identity.

In researching housing for independent mothers, the theoretical framework draws inspiration from feminist movements, their critiques of the traditional family and alternative proposals for collective living. Through integrating this lens, it is possible to reimagine housings solutions that challenge existing norms, foster communities and empower independent mothers.

1.4 Hypothesis

Through deconstructing the notion of the nuclear family and privatised family life, collective household labour has the possibility to alleviate mothers in the balancing act between work and home life.

1.5 Research questions

The goal is the form that housing for independent mothers should take on, in order to best cater to their needs and relieve them from the overwhelming amount of domestic work and provide them opportunity to participate on the labour market. Considering this goal the following questions are relevant:

- *In what way can we reimagine the household and collectivise household labour in housing for independent mothers?*

First it is important to understand what the independent mother's desires as it pertains to housing. It is essential to know what struggles she is generally facing.

- *What are the spatial and social needs of an independent mother as it pertains to housing?*

It is important to understand what lies at the foundation of this struggle. Through the feminist lens the current situation the mothers can be further analysed and be foundations on which to imagine how household labour could be collectivised.

- *What entails the domestic labour; and which ones and to what extent could these be collectivised?*

To imagine what housing for independent mothers could be there is a lot to learn from other non-nuclear household structures.

- *What lessons in socio-spatial lessons of housing and collective spaces (pertaining to household labour) can we learn from non-traditional living arrangements?*

1.6 Methodology

Through literature study the second wave feminist's lens will be set up as a framework from which to develop further ideas and concepts for housing of independent mothers. A focus on the nuclear family and individualised family unit are central. Specifically, the works of Dolores Hayden, who theorised about the implications and collectivisation of domestic labour will be used to set up this framework.

The needs of the mothers will be gathered through both literature study and semi-structured interviews with independent mothers and an (empirical) professional care workers working with independent mothers. Favourably, the former would be set up as a focus group, to be able to establish an average of what the mothers societal and spatial needs are. Through literature study it is investigated what the household labour entails exactly, and what level of privacy is generally preferred when doing these. All interviewees will be given the opportunity to react to the chapters in which they appear and can opt out being named at all times.

The lessons from shelter will be analysed through semi-structured interviews with professionals, which include an architect specialised in shelter design and care workers.

The lessons from other non-traditional living arrangements will be analysed through literature and a case-study, that will analyse socio-spatial aspects regarding functions, routing, privacy and housing units. Each case study will be a different form of living to have a wide palette of inspiration and references to take from.

2. One-parent families

2.1 Mothers, specifically

The Netherlands has witnessed a significant rise in one-parent households over the past few decades, as a result of increased rates of divorce, separation and births out of wedlock, and the numbers are steadily growing. A one-parent household is characterized by its sole provider and caretaker at the head of the family, with no (active) involvement of second parent (NJI, 2014). Larger cities generally have a higher concentration of one-parent households. Rotterdam is at the top with 36,1 percent of children living with a sole parent percent (CBS, 2023).

Sixteen percent of the Dutch youth grow up in a one-parent household. It is estimated that these children are more perceptible to live in poverty and diminished circumstances. The risk is twice as high in households lead by women, as they on average experience a significant income loss (about a quarter) after divorce or separation compared to men (around two percent) (SingleSuperMom, n.d.). This financial strain often makes it challenging for women, especially on their own, leading to increased chances of poverty, diminished health and lower well-being for both mothers and their children. Given that almost nine out of ten children in one-parent families live with their mothers, it is critical to emphasize and dress the hardships faced by these women specifically.

2.2 Tri-fold of problems - resources, labour and policy

While a small group of women consciously choose to raise their children independently, the majority of single mothers find themselves unexpectedly navigating sole responsibility after divorce, separation or being widowed. The mother now has to juggle care, maintenance and income all by herself. Nieuwenhuis (2018) has defined this phenomenon as the 'triple bind' between resources, labour and policies. In an interview with Isra Lee, director of the (non-government-supported) foundation SingleSuperMom, focused on establishing equal opportunities for independent mothers and their children, this trifold of problems is discussed.

Independent mothers often face discrimination in both the job and housing market, with one in three mothers not earning enough money to provide for their family. Limited or diminished social support, particularly after divorce or separation, add to the difficulties of combining both working and homemaking. Additionally, day care is often too expensive and only available within working hours, which leads to most mothers only working part-time in between the full-time job of child rearing. (NJI, 2014) With no hours to spare in a day, independent mothers often find themselves physically drained and socially isolated, not finding time or energy for herself or others outside of her home (Coorevits, 2003).

Lee notes that the self-reliance supposed of single mothers is nearly impossible to achieve, with limited subsidies, aids and policies that assume 'traditional' family structures. Institutions she feels could help prevent independent mothers from falling into a spiral of problems, are now merely providing help and temporary housing when they have reached their lowest. From her own experience struggling as a young independent mother, she describes how she used to wish for a more escalated situation, so she could be accepted into a shelter home. But once her situation was categorised as not severe – without immediate danger of abuse - she had to move across country, away from anyone she knew, find a room to sleep in and was obligated to follow work trajectories while she and her son remained houseless. Lee spiralled into depression and isolation.

Whether the mother has the capacity to cope in her new situation is not merely dependent on external factors. Internal factors such as self-image, ability to trust and life experience are also critical. The stigma, prejudices, and belittlement from society, institutions, and individuals contribute to low self-esteem and confidence (Funnekotter, 2020). Shame and anxiety of child services intervention are prevalent reasons for mothers to avoid seeking out help.

Lee asserts that appropriate housing is crucial for independent mothers to effectively overcome the trifold of problems they face. Welfare and hand-outs alone remain insufficient; mothers need a supportive social network, access to services and ability to go to work (Schreuder, 2023). Housing should aid in providing in these needs. She contends: *'If elderly and students have specific housing built to their needs, why can we not do the same for independent mothers?'*

3. *Designing for one-parent families: What works?*

The notion of changing household structures and the need for different housing is a recent development. In the United States studies addressing the specific housing needs of one-parent families became especially significant in the 1980s, as it became evident that a significant portion of the new generation consisted of female-headed families living in precarious circumstances. As the search for affordable housing was difficult, mothers often ended up in substandard housing in deteriorated parts of cities, and in worse cases, to homelessness (Anthony, 1991).

Cook states that appropriate housing can empower independent mothers and their children, enabling them to take control of their lives, plan for the future and reduce reliance on temporary professional services. It is crucial, however, to recognize the diversity of one-parent families in the design question. She categorizes these households into three types: *the developmental resident*, emerging from crisis and traumatic experiences, requiring both hard and soft support services; *the self-help resident*, seeking a social support system and soft support services; and *the non-organizational resident*, valuing privacy and self-sufficiency the most (Cook, 1991). What type one household belongs to can change over time, as they can transition from type one to the other depending on their circumstances.

In between these types there are overlapping needs and desires to take into consideration when designing for one-parent families. These were outlined by Leavitt, who worked on the New American House which an unbuild project specifically designed for one-parent families: fitting in with the existing neighbourhood, ensuring privacy, encouraging a sense of community, providing flexibility and having the opportunity for self-management. He also suggested that women should live together in groups of 5 to 9 in order to maintain a healthy living environment. Larger groups lead to chances of more disagreements and smaller groups do not provide one's free choice of picking who to hang out with within the larger group (Cook, 1991).

3.1 Fitting in with the neighbourhood

The location of housing for mothers is crucial, considering her limited means in transportation and time. As mothers often rely on public transport, proximity to public transport lines and well-connected neighbourhoods are vital (Anthony, 1991). Additionally, the neighbourhood should offer convenience stores and full-service grocery stores, recognizing that female heads often shop in smaller quantities and thus more frequently. Other essential amenities such as schools, places of employment, medical facilities (especially GP's), low-cost clothing stores and government agencies should be close by or be accessible by public

transport. Parallels from this concept can be drawn to the 15-minute city of Carlos Moreno.

In terms of housing design, the housing should always relate with its surrounding buildings. Adequate (green) outdoor space for the children to play in is a must. Fostering an appreciation for the home and a shared sense of belonging from both the residents and the mothers are crucial for integrating the housing into existing neighbourhoods (Leavitt, 1984).

3.2 Ensuring privacy

Community building, sharing and cohousing are considered effective models for permanent housing for independent mothers, provided that certain conditions are met. The primary requirement in designing for one-parent families is the provision of individual apartments. The private home is seen as a sanctuary for refuge and privacy, and should allow the mother to withdraw from the outside world, her children and vice versa. This means a minimum of two bedrooms is required (Anthony, 1991)

In general, mothers prefer to share apartments units with one or two people over larger forms of congregate living, in which all amenities are shared among the group. Undesirable features of the building include long internal corridors without natural lighting, as they offer little privacy and become unwanted play areas. Transitional spaces are important, both inside and outside, favourably with distance from the street to ensure the safety of the children.

3.3 Creating a sense of community

Conversing is an important activity between women. Sharing amenities such as laundry, kitchens, and living rooms could be beneficial to encouraging a sense of community and double as gathering places for parents (Gelbspan, 1991). Common play areas, both indoors and outdoors, are essential to bring families together outside of the individual homes. The ability for mothers to supervise, without interrupting their own activities, is favourable.

3.4 Providing flexibility

Day care is the most important amenity a mother needs to manage work and home responsibilities. Proximity to day care, ideally within walking distance or even within the same building, minimizes the child's separation from the familiar, which will establish a sense of security. As teenagers are frequently forgotten when designing for one-parent families, separate spaces should also be incorporated. Day care spaces in the building, could turn into teenage hang out spots in the evenings (Vegelman, 1991).

3.5 Opportunity of self-management

The concept of 'homeliness' should not be overlooked. Avoiding an institutional feeling and incorporating features of traditional one-family houses are essential to garner a sense of appreciation for their homes. Personalization of the shared spaces and buffer zones are important in creating a sense of home (Vegelman, 1991).

4. *The household work*

Housework is a major component of everyday life. It is first experienced in childhood in the form of chores and continues well into retirement. It encompasses activities such as cleaning, cooking and child-rearing. To get a full scope of what household work entails and identify what chores are typically part of an individual households, this chapter provides a brief overview. The activities are categorized following the concept of role-sharing in egalitarian marriages, used in sociological studies, as an act to de-gender the household work (Haas, 1980)

Domestic role	Maintenance role	Administrative role	Childcare role
(Grocery)	Yard work		Supervising
Shopping	House maintenance	Paying bills	Tending
Meal preparation	Car maintenance	Bookkeeping	Tutoring
Washing dishes	Repairs	Opening mail	Playing
House cleaning	Mending		Pickup/Commute
Washing clothes	Storing		

Household work carries both positive and negative meanings. While often seen as unpleasant and burdensome, it can also be an expression of love and affection. Similarly, it can symbolize power or represent powerlessness in a marital relationship, depending on whether one likes the work they are doing (Kroska, 2003). With the implementation of collectivised domestic labour, it is important to consider privacy. It is essential to assess which household activities individuals prefer to do alone, which activities can be done alongside each other in common spaces outside of the home, and which activities could be performed collectively or divided among a larger group. Herein, it is important that everyone feels the same level of responsibility for the task at hand. Establishing a social contract therefore is crucial when sharing responsibilities.

4.1 The domestic role

Basic human needs are met through a handful of activities, each requiring a different degree of privacy. Cooking – and washing the dishes - is a social activity at its core, often done together or divided among household members. It is viable that collective household labour includes this activity. However, it can be questioned whether individuals would be comfortable doing each other's laundry, as this could be perceived as rather private (Paes, 2017). This activity could however be done alongside each other, sharing the amenities and space for the washers.

In order for people to clean a space a certain level of felt responsibility is necessary. Cleaning the private spaces collectively might be too invasive when collectively orchestrated. However, cleaning the communal spaces is an activity that could be done alongside each other or with a schedule. Shopping, an activity

outside of the home, can vary in its collectiveness, with larger shopping trips done together, while more personal needs are done individually.

4.2 The administrative role

Activities like administrative work require a certain level of knowledge. While it may be possible for individual from different household to share or divide the activity of these tasks, it is debatable whether this should remain a private matter. This collaborative approach of administrative work could, however, aid the process of filling out form without the needs of external assistance or outsourcing.

4.3 The maintenance role

Maintenance-related activities can happen outside of the home and are in some cases outsourced to others. It is viable that these activities can be collectively divided among individuals. Activities such as yard work or gardening are also double as opportunities for people to informally meet and converse together (Paes, 2017) House and car maintenance, repairing and mending, however, require a level of knowledge to be executed.

The willingness to share objects is not only influenced by their value but also by their purpose. Personal items are best kept in the private home, while larger objects that are rarely used could benefit from collective storage and sharing.

4.4 The childcare role

Child-rearing, including playing, supervising and tutoring, have great potential to be shared or divided between households. Instead of bringing children to day care, childcare could be shared among the collective, akin to leaving a child with extended family. Considerations pertaining to different parenting styles, should be discussed beforehand. Depending on the age of the child, the level of solitude – privacy – while playing differs. As the child grows older, interest in playing alongside or with others increases (HSE, 2022). The option for children to play by themselves should always remain available, respecting their need for alone time.

5. Lessons from shelter

There are limited housing projects are built specifically for independent mothers. Most are temporary housing and linked to assisted living. One of these typologies is shelter. Minke Wagenaar who has extensively studied and advised women's shelters in the Netherlands for over three decades, highlights the socio-spatial problems she encountered while researching these sheltered environments.

5.1 An interview with Minke Wagenaar

When a woman has to leave the home due to severe domestic abuse or unsafe situations, she must overstep a boundary of time and place to get into the safe haven of the shelter. Socially, this experience can be compared to the liminality of *communitas* (Wagenaar, 2008). Once inside the shelter, the woman becomes detached and isolated from the outside world, left with no option but to spend time and form mutual understandings with the other women in similar situations.

Women entering these shelters often have completely distorted views of boundaries, self-worth and self-esteem. Inside they are encouraged to gradually reestablish their own boundaries. Wagenaar highlights the paradoxical nature of many early shelters, where women and children lived in congregate living arrangements, sharing living spaces, kitchens, sanitary facilities, and even bedrooms. These so-called living groups were based on the therapeutic model that assumed shared living would provide support in their shared experiences. However, this model fully dismantled the individual households of mothers and children, merging separate families into one. Consequently, the mothers played conflicting roles: one towards the established group as a whole and another to her own child, often leading to friction.

Over the years, it has become evident that individuals in critical mental and physical states do not benefit from total shared living. Wagenaar concedes that through this, the environment intended to teach the women to reset their boundaries, ironically fails to provide them with the literal room to explore these boundaries. Her assertion is that every female resident should have at minimum her own room, with a front door and the ability to lock it, offering a sense of self-regulation and privacy.

Children were second focus for change. Shelters should provide adequate play areas, that are structured gradually from indoor to outdoor spaces. Similarly, the buildings should incorporate what Wagenaar coins the 'internal public space' - a zone between the private domain and the public street. Spatial interventions such as atriums, wide hallways, and private courtyards can be used to safely allow residents to rebuild, experiment and explore the world outside of their individual unites without leaving the comfort and safety of the shelter.

The last crucial aspect are common spaces. She recalls a shelter in Leiden with two separate communal kitchens, so if two residents were in a fight, they would be able to separately cook their meals. These kitchens were shared, meaning the residents can only cook in these kitchens. Wagenaar argues that common spaces should be collective, i.e. provided as an extra, preserving the social aspect while maintaining the residents' ability to choose. Self-governance, she concludes, is the most important element above all.

5.2 A visit to shelter

For this research two shelters in Rotterdam were visited. The first was a women's shelter that housed both women and mothers in an intramural setting, second was a type of transitional housing for families (mostly mothers). As both institutions had similar set-ups and the transitional housing is more applicable in the context of this research, a visit to the latter will be discussed in this chapter. There was limited ability to take photos, as some of the rooms were used by residents using the space. Of these spaces there are no pictures.

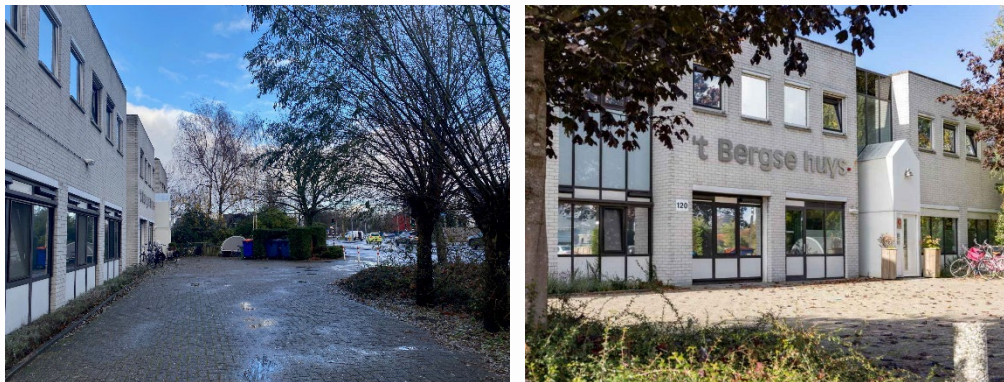


Image 5.1: Driveway and entrance of the shelter 't Bergse Huys

Situated on the outskirts, along a busy road, the shelter resembles an office rather than housing. The fully paved surroundings, contribute to its bleak and uninviting exterior.



Image 5.2 & 5.3: Communal living room and play area downstairs

The ground floor houses the shared kitchen and living room. The living room is frequently used, due to the small individual private units. The second floor has an additional living room with a balcony. The care worker notes that teenagers

have the most struggle finding space for themselves here, as there is no space specifically accommodated for them. The kitchen is adjacent to the living room. Twice a week one parent cooks for all families. The common rooms are all decorated by the staff, which creates an institutionalized atmosphere. All the rooms are connected through internal corridors. On the second floor there are shower and bathroom areas that three families share each, leading to occasional disputes over cleanliness.



Image 5.4 & 5.5: Outdoor private garden

There is a large backyard, with a large play area containing a playhouse and large swing for children. There is a picknick table, that is often used by the families in summer and a fire pit that get used during the colder months. Outside also leads the shed in which the washing machines are situated.

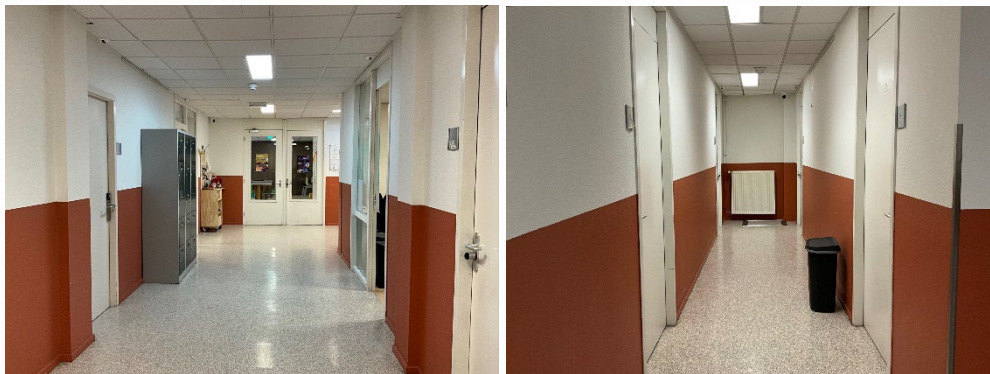


Image 5.4 & 5.5: Internal corridors leading to the communal area (left), and the rooms (right)

The private rooms are individual, lockable and only accessible by care workers through knocking. One of the residents allows entry but for privacy reasons interior photos are restricted. The narrow yet deep room includes a kitchenette with a sink and fridge but is without a stove top. The mothers are not allowed to cook inside their units. There are two beds situated on either side of the wall. One side for the mother, the other for the son, marked by a Spiderman duvet cover. Behind the beds, there is a small living space created, with space for a small two-seat couch, tv and a closet. Pictures and posters fill the wall behind the couch. The care worker clarifies that this is an exceptionally large room, most rooms only have space for the beds.

6. Other non-nuclear households

One-parent households are not the only type of non-nuclear households. While the nuclear family may be the norm in our Western civilizations, many Latin American and Asian cultures often involve extended family cohabitation, e.g. grandparents living with the family and contributing with child rearing and helping with household chores. These multi-generational homes can take on many forms. Likewise, African cultures are known to have polygynous households, where a male lives with multiple wives and children. This chapter discussed three other types of households, challenging the conventional notion of the nuclear family.

6.1 Matriarchal tribes

There are only a few matriarchies in the world, with the Musuo people in China being a notable example. In this tribal, agrarian community marriage is traditionally non-existent and women often have multiple partners while staying single. Grandmothers form the core of the households, living together with their own children and grandchildren, following the matrilineal line. Biological fathers reside in their own matriarchal family homes and are uninvolved in raising their children (Booth, 2017).

The courtyard dwelling is most common among the Musuo. The grandmother's house serves as the central place for daily activities, such as eating, gathering, receiving guests and child rearing. Traditionally, it also functions as a sleeping area for elder women and the young children of the household. Every adult female woman has her own private room, while the adult men seek accommodation with a female partner or sleep in the shed. Domestic labour is divided, with the elderly handling childcare and cooking while the adults are out in the field and tending livestock (Feng, 2019).

6.2 Wohngemeinschaft

WG, for short, is a prevalent household arrangement in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Similar to the concept of 'studentenhuizen' in the Netherlands, unrelated families with children often share housing to reduce living costs and share childcare responsibilities. A partial sum of these WG's also house one-parent families. Unlike cohousing, where common spaces are shared by multiple households, WG residents form one large household, with each family having its own room or part of within the house (Honigberg, 2019). The scale is similar to multigenerational housing.

Establishing rules is crucial for harmonious living in these WGs. This may include a cleaning and cooking schedule, implementing silent hours etc. Given the close proximity to other residents, a social contact is vital to prevent conflict between household members and balance the communal living with functioning individually.

6.3 Eco-communities

Eco-communities, founded on the principle of the commons, embody communitarian ideals by sharing resources, objects, spaces, skills and care. Besides sharing the physical, residents are expected to invest time, knowledge and in some cases even money. Mostly, it is about acknowledging the interdependency of humans with each other and nature, and mutually taking care of each other (Pickerill, 2015).

The established micro-societies vary in scale from small groups to over 500 people living together in eco-villages. The built form of eco-communities Liftin calls ‘architectures of intimacy’. Lack of fencing, open communal space between the housing and use of circular buildings reflects their values of sharing, equality and communication (Liftin, 2014).

Often times operating autonomously, these communities provide housing, food and energy with minimal environmental impact, while emphasizing progressive values and collective sharing. Through this, they develop new forms of interpersonal relationships and care beyond the nuclear family, each member contributing based on their own strengths and knowledge which allows increased efficiency over more traditional household structures. However, the necessary boundaries needed to provide space for such experimentation, may potentially lead to estrangement from the outside world. Keeping the community porous is therefore a critical factor in keeping residency fruitful (Pickerill, 2015).

7. *Designing for one-parent families: Mothers tell*

The following chapter is a summation of three conversations held with two mother Illona, ongoing conversations with care worker Manita, and a round-the-table talk with the organisation of the Dijkhuis, which is concept for a women's shelter focused on long term assistance of mothers who have gone through domestic violence. During these conversations the needs of independent mothers were central, discussed within the framework of permanent shared housing. Through the needs, reflections on living together were discussed and in what way this could aid or hinder improved living conditions. Questions about location, wishes, daily routines, shortcomings and personal experiences, laid the foundations of what mothers themselves want to see in housing that is catered to their needs specifically. This chapter functions as an addition to the explorative study of the chapters before, and thus only yet undiscussed remarks will be highlighted.

7.1 Social needs

In all conversations, the desire and necessity of guidance and companion from those with shared experiences were clear. Illona expresses how she wishes she would have met a role model, a mother to look up to, when she was younger. *‘[...] Someone to tell me: these were the steps I took, do not go down the same road. Instead learn now from the things I did to better the life of myself and my child.’* Another mother states how her social network today still consists mainly out of mothers she met during her time in shelter. Returning from the shelter, stepping back into daily life it can be difficult to start new relationships with people that can never fully understand you. Living together, when executed correctly – remaining autonomous and sharing as an addition – can create informal surveillance among the mothers. That way it is more likely struggling times can be recognized and handled with early on.

7.2 Assistance preferences

(Professional) childcare remains as a most important requirement for the mother's development and freedom. Without, it is more difficult for a mother to start working or go out of the house, which makes her more susceptible to isolation. Illona describes how not only mental but also very practical issues should be addressed from the start. Budgeting, paying bills, childrearing and homemaking were all duties she did not learn from her parents. It is not uncommon for women to find themselves in similar circumstances as the ones they grew up in. It is therefore important that there is training regarding these themes. However, these should always remain voluntary.

Another suggestion was the implementation of a housing contract that facilitates a gradual transition from subsidized to self-funded living, thereby providing stability and a safety net against failure.

7.3 Housing preferences

One mother relents her own living arrangement at the moment. She and her shelter companions have all been given housing through an urgency program at the edge of Rotterdam. She contends that she only has one park where she can take her daughter to play, as her own close surroundings lack sufficient green spaces. She also inability to travel easily to the city centre. Illona describes how she is terrified of letting her daughter play outside alone. Living in a high rise building, she wishes there was an opportunity for her daughter to play somewhere inside the building or have a communal gated garden, from which she would be able to watch her daughter play.

A place of rest and a place to withdraw are other words used to describe the ideal living complex. This while remaining in a place that is well connected to the city and has many amenities close by. Also the possibility to exercise is necessary for one's mental being.

7.4 Reflections on sharing

The kitchen and living room are seen as places to have conversation. Cooking together is seen as a good opportunity for bonding while sharing workload. From time spent in the shelter, one stresses the importance of making rules and a schedule. As some mothers were not keen on keeping the shared spaces clean, she had to do more work cleaning up after them. She does remember grocery shopping in pairs, which worked out very well. Illona recalls how she had to share an apartment with three other women while being part of an assistance program. While she generally like living together, sharing bathrooms with other children and mothers she hopes to never have to do again.

As a closing statement, Manita describes how assistance and a mother's 'vulnerability' exists on a large scale. A mother woman who divorces her husband is vulnerable, just by the fact that she suddenly becomes alone. In this case assistance outpatient assistance would be preferred, aided by informal support. Women however, with more precarious trauma and mental problems, require a time out, one step before making their forever home again. Women in the right state of mind and with adequate minimal skills to take care after themselves and their children will be able to successfully lead a household or share one among others.

8. Case studies

In this case study, six distinct projects have been selected to gather diverse insight into the spatial configurations of non-nuclear households and the different ways of organizing the home. As established in previous chapters, function, routing and organisation of collective versus private spaces are crucial factors when designing for independent mothers. Through these aspects the projects will be analysed and compared, with each one corresponding to a type of housing discussed in this research paper.

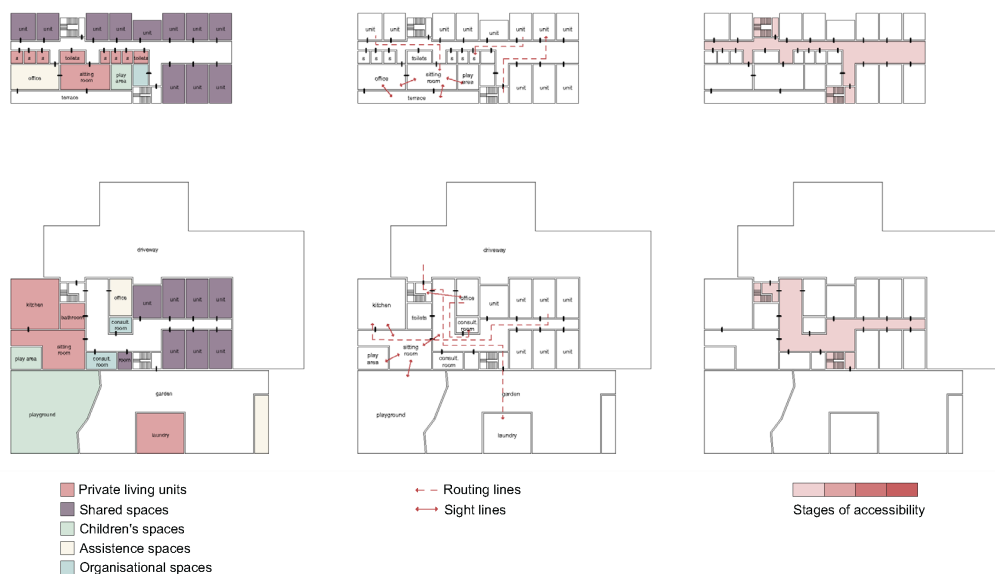
8.1 Shelter

Housing project: 't Bergse Huyse

Location: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Number of units: 18

't Bergse Huys houses a short-stay shelter program which can be entered by a referral of Central Onthaal. The private units range in size, from 14 to 20 m² and used for sleeping. It is possible for both men and women and their children to stay at this facility. The care workers provide assistance in parenting and administrative work.



Functions

The kitchen, living rooms, and bathrooms are shared. The laundry area is accessed through the garden. Inside there is no separate play area for children, but a large play garden for children is located at the back of the property.

Routing

There is only one entrance to the building, which goes past the care workers' office space and communal areas. The play area is in the same room as the living room which creates short sight lines between parents and their children.

Graduality of collectivity

The private units are connected by narrow internal corridors, along which shared amenities are also situated. There is no gradual transition from individual unit to the collective area.

8.2 Transitional housing

Housing project: Hubertushuis

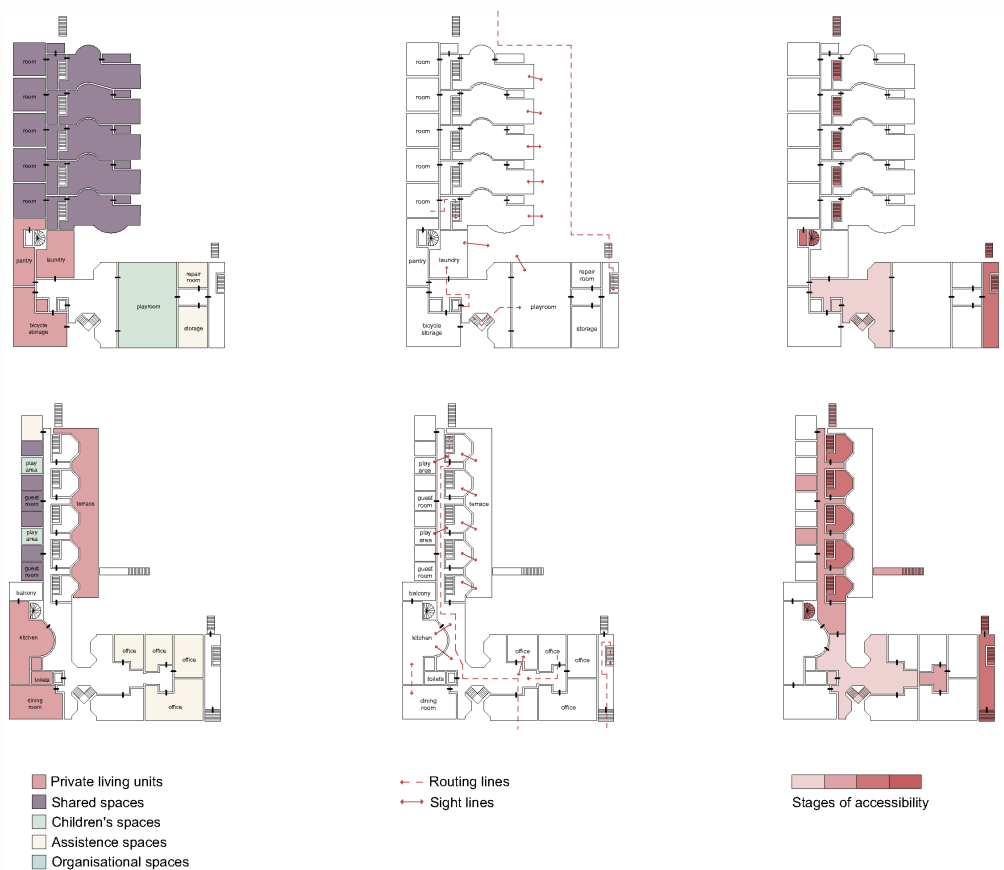
Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Year built: 1984

Architect: Aldo van Eyck, Theo van Bosch

Number of units: 16

The Hubertushuis functioned as transitional housing for independent mothers and orphans. The building is located in the centre of the city, as a means for anonymity and protection. The mothers had their own individual units in the attic, while the children slept at the back of the building on lower floors. The first floor of the house situated all the communal areas, above were all the consultation rooms.



Functions

Kitchen and living space are shared. Besides the large separate playing area on the first floor there are smaller play nooks throughout the building. The building also houses a repair room, shared laundry space, doctors' office and on-site staff apartments.

Routing

Throughout the building the relation to the inner courtyard - the play area for the children - is evident. Residents had to walk past the shared kitchen to access the hallway to their own individual units. There were also separate entryways for the staff.

Graduality of collectivity

The services and common areas were located at the front of the building. Different hallways separated by doors aided in the gradual transition between collective and private space.

8.3 Matriarchal tribe

Housing project: Amaci Dwelling

Location: -, China

Year built: -

Architect: Amaci Family

Number of units: 4

This courtyard dwelling houses a family of the Masuo tribe. The dwelling consists of three separate building, each serving their own function and housing different parts of the family. The individual units are around 15 m² each.



Functions

The largest building - grandmother's house - contains the shared kitchen and sacred space. This space doubles as a sleeping room for the children at night. The living rooms are situated at the other side of the courtyard. Individual residences are clustered in two buildings around the courtyard.

Routing

With the courtyard typology and lack of internal walls everyone is in view of each other. All houses look out to the inner courtyard. To enter the intimate inner courtyard, one has to pass through the outer courtyard or the public shop.

Graduality of collectivity

The dwelling as a clear transition from public to collective to private space. From the outer to inner courtyard, one has to step unto the patios before entering one of the houses.

8.4 One-parent family housing

Housing project: The Fiona House

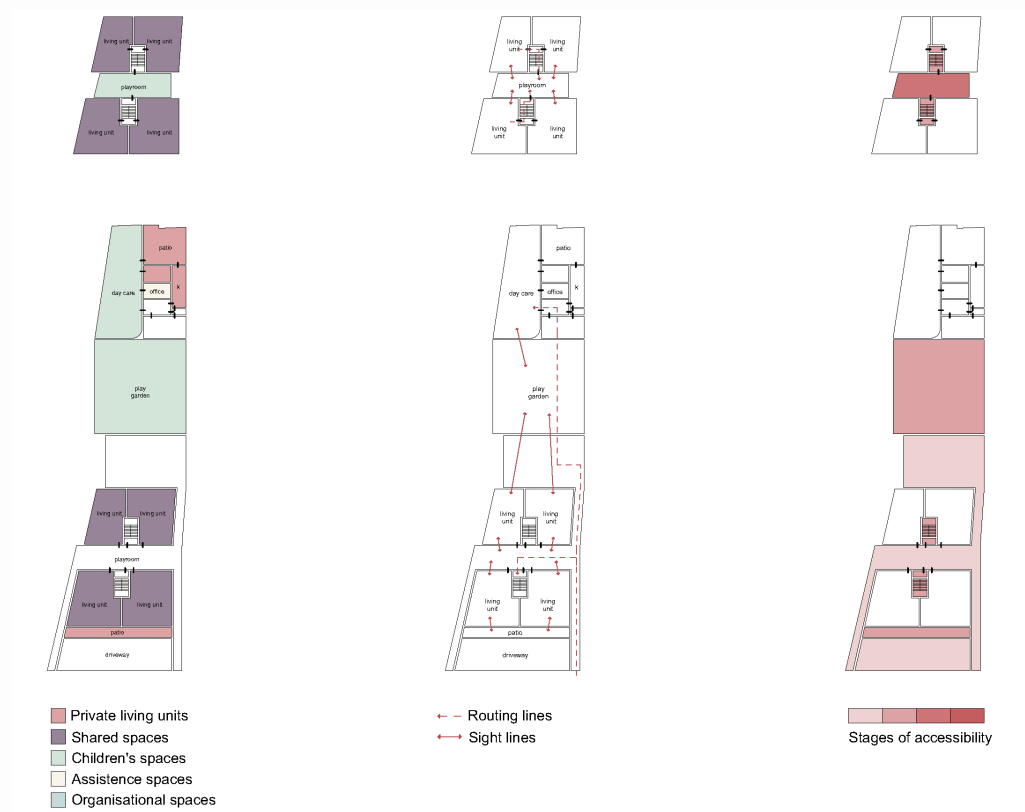
Location: London, The Netherlands

Year built: -

Architect:

Number of units:

The Fiona House was one of the first residential complexes specifically designed for independent mothers. This apartment block has the capacity to house twelve families. The private units had two bedrooms, functioned as normal homes containing a kitchenette and bathroom and ranged from 34 to 45 m². Mothers had the option to work in the on-site day care, that was also open to children in the neighbourhood.



Functions

Kitchen, bedroom and living room are all included in the private unit. The communal areas are child-centred: entailing a playroom, outdoor play area and a day care.

Routing

The internal corridor that provides access to the private units, doubles as a shared playroom, from which the mothers could view their children play out of their kitchen window.

Graduality of collectivity

Each cluster of four homes has its own staircase. The entrances are situated away from the street, which provides privacy and safety when entering and exiting the home.

8.5 Overview analysis

Below, the overview of the analysis shows that in almost all cases the kitchen and living area combined with the rooms for chores are shared. In two cases it is impossible to enter the individual unit without passing through or by the collective space. The number of units sits at an average of 12. It is important to note that within these units there are subdivisions of mothers living together. For example, in the Fiona House there are four mothers sharing a playroom on each floor. Another important aspect are the on-site services, which are available in all cases except for the Amaci Dwelling.

	<i>'t Bergse Huys</i>	<i>Hubertushuis</i>	<i>Fiona House</i>	<i>Amaci Dwelling</i>
Collective spaces	KIT BA LR LDRY PA	KIT BA LR LDRY PA GR RR	PA	KIT LR STO BA
Sight lines mother and child	LI → PA	all → CY	KIT → PA	all → CY
# entryways to private unit	2	2	1	3
Does one omit the collective spaces	no	yes	-	no
Unit size	14-20 sq m	- sq m	34-45 sq m	15 sq m
# of units	18	16	12	4
Activities in private room	S LO PL	W S LO PL	E W S C LO	S
Activites done collectively/shared	E W PL LO C	E W LO C	PL	E W LO S PL C
Graduality transitioning space				
On site services?	Yes	Yes	Daycare	No

Figure 1. Overview analysis case study. Legend: S = sleeping, LO = lounging, PL = playing, E = eating, W = washing, C = cooking/cleaning,

9. Conclusion: Societal needs and spatial desires

All literature study, case study and practical study will be combined and will be discussed through the feminist framework, in order to come to a design brief (See chapter 9) of how and to what extent collectivised household labour could be implemented into housing for independent mothers.

- *What are the spatial and social needs of an independent mother as it pertains to housing?*

It has become evident that a mothers' social needs entail a support network, access to services and efficient time management to balance both work and family life. With her juggling of these factors, and not receiving the help from the system in place, she often becomes isolated in her home. Through the feminist lens it has become evident the concept of the nuclear family is fundamental for many of mothers' struggle. The spatial answer to this problem lies in the dismantling of this family, through a form of co-operative housing.

Adding collective amenities to housing for mothers will not only cut costs and restrain time, but also provide the vital social network between the mothers. Besides the collective, the provision of choice and refuge and remain essential for a mother's self-regulation and control. Therefore, separate bedrooms between mother and child are essential to ensure personal space and privacy and a clear distinction between the collective and private are important.

The housing should be located in close proximity to public transportation and daily amenities, such as grocery stores, schools, healthcare facilities and clothing stores. A quiet, tight-knit neighbourhood, with buildings designed at human scale would be most safe for their children. It is supposed that a lot of the spatial desires for mothers will coincide with their children as they stand continually stand in relation to one another. As this research primarily addressed the needs of mothers, the needs for children identified are limited to their time of play.

Additionally, access to childcare is fundamental in enabling mothers to work, making it imperative to include some form of day care within the housing, especially during the early years of a child's life. Following the concept of the self-work family hotel mothers can share the child rearing tasks among each other, akin to the extended family household.

- *What entails the domestic labour, and which ones and to what extent could these be collectivised?*

Domestic labour entails various tasks that can be categorized into 4 roles: domestic, child-rearing, maintenance and administrative. Through the research it has become clear that sharing the child-rearing roles could be the most effective for the mothers, as these could be either shared or divided among the group. The extent to which house labour can be collective is influenced by both spatial arrangements and the social commitment and shared felt- responsibility among residents. Examples such as the self-work family hotel demonstrate the potential benefits of shared responsibilities in creating a sense of community, cutting costs and lifting the burden of restricted time.

Learning from eco-communities, the importance of a binding contract that promotes sharing and collectivity is evident. As collective domestic and administrative chores, such as laundry and paying bills, could feel like an infringement on privacy, sharing objects and spaces can at least optimize efficiency and reduce costs. Doing the work alongside each other can double as a means to create community. The following chapter (9) specifies with domestic labour and correlating amenities are shared, as concluded through this research.

- *What lessons in socio-spatial lessons of housing and collective spaces (pertaining to household labour) can we learn from non-traditional living arrangements?*

The scale of housing plays an important role in expanding the nuclear unit beyond its private room. Examples like eco-communities and WG's showcase potential for multiple families living together. However, taking from the sheltered environment it is clear the dismantling of the individual households could have implications for one's self-governance and privacy. To ensure some level of autonomy every individual should be provided their own private bedroom and private unit should contain all basic amenities, i.e. a small kitchenette and a bathroom. Subsequently, when creating private units with minimal required space, the use of the communal areas is stimulated.

Furthermore, the design of the internal circulation forms a crucial aspect of the house. The 'hallway' should be understood as the extension of the private unit, onto the communal living space that could resemble a large living room. The courtyard typology could provide an inspiration of how to cluster units along a common space, while avoiding the use of internal corridors, creating seamless, but well defined, transitions from private units to collective areas.

Children suffice adequate (green) open spaces for outdoor play, serving as a secure buffer between the private and public domain. Providing common areas within the complex where children can play together can foster a sense of community.

- *In what way can we reimagine the household and collectivise household labour in independent housing for mothers?*

In reimagining housing from the perspective of independent mothers, it is crucial to break free from ingrained norms and preconceived ideas that have shape our built environments. Rather than viewing independent mothers, women, as recipients of help, they should be seen as individuals deserving adequate resources to facilitate a better life for themselves and their children, empowering her in own being.

The design of a residential complex plights for a radical intervention inside the established structuring of the house. Concurrently, it is important for residents to not become outsiders, or feel alien to their surroundings. A balance between radicality, practicality and homeliness lie at the core at the core of designing residential housing from the perspective of independent mothers. Ultimately, the envisioned housing should offer resources, support, and a fruitful environment in which mothers can thrive and are empowered in shaping the lives for themselves and their children. Embracing feminist ideals, the notion of the self-reliant nuclear household unit can be challenged, making it possible to reconsider the household labour as a collectivised meaning-making activity.

10. Discussion

The exploration of housing needs and collective living arrangements for independent mothers brings a new perspective on housing, aiming to redefine traditional household structures. From literature, case studies, and practical research, this thesis discusses the spatial and social requirements of independent mothers and proposes possible co-operative solutions. It stresses that designing for one-parent families necessitates incorporating their voices, and answering to their need of social support networks, childcare access, and efficiency.

The concept of collective household labour, exemplified by eco-communities and self-work family hotels, highlights the benefits of shared responsibilities in realising community and efficiency. Reimagining domestic labour in a collective approach has the ability to create social support systems and empowerment to balance work and family effectively. In addition, the challenges of reimagining household structures also become evident. A balance between radical intervention and practicality is in place. Maintaining privacy and autonomy in communal living spaces while fostering social interaction is essential.

The practical research, considering the interviews with the mothers themselves remains preliminary. Further research could explore how independent mothers could actually synthesize living in community, by discussing collectivised living arrangements in focus groups, garnering a more nuanced understanding of how mothers could live in community effectively. This may include individual lifestyle and cultural variations and its possible implications on spatial arrangements and social dynamics.

Another important aspect in creating such collective living arrangements for independent mothers are affordability and feasibility. Further research could focus on existing housing policies or programs and explore opportunities to implement housing solutions that are effective for the mothers and also viable for contractors. Looking at precedent case studies of housing associations in collective living arrangements could give insights to a turning a imagination into a workable reality.

11. Design brief

A residential complex with an integrated childcare facility on the ground floor, that can be used by the independent mothers and neighbours. Within the residential the household labour will be shared among residents, particularly pertaining to the child rearing activities. The private units are kept to a minimum, so usage of the collective spaces is stimulated.

Location requirements

- Proximity to public transportation
- Adequate green space in the surroundings
- Room to establish transition space from the street
- Daily amenities (School, grocery store, health care facilities) close by
- Quiet, safe, tight knit neighbourhood
- Buildings and streets built in human scale

Design principles

- No internal corridors
- Creating intimacy through courtyard typology
- Mothers share all child-rearing activities
- Mothers and children have uninterrupted views to their children from their homes
- Communal spaces are situated in the heart of the building
- Collective groups of no more than 9 mothers
- Homely atmosphere, room for personalization
- Circulation as 'internal public space'

Below a program of requirements for the residential complex is described. The square meters per room are based on the rooms of the case study and reference projects used outside of this research paper.

Residential complex

<i>Private spaces</i>		<i>m²</i>	
14x	Two-bedroom unit	45	containing a kitchenette, bathroom, sitting
6x	Three-bedroom unit	55	containing a kitchenette, bathroom, sitting
<i>Collective spaces</i>			
3x	Kitchen/living room	30	containing a large dining table and living
3x	Play/Childcare area	20	
3x	Laundry room	15	containing a washer, dryer, clothing lines
3x	Guest unit	15	containing a bathroom
1x	Storage room	100	containing shared large objects
1x	Meeting room	10	containing a desk, chairs and storage
1x	Silent room	10	situated in quiet part of the building
<i>Public spaces</i>			
1x	Hand-me down room	25	situated on ground floor

Day care

<i>Children's spaces</i>		<i>m²</i>	
2x	Baby room (0-2 y/o)	60	
2x	Baby sleeping room	15	containing 5 beds
2x	Toddler rooms (2-4 y/o)	60	
2x	Toddler sleeping room	15	containing 5 beds
4x	Pantry	6	
2x	Children's bathroom	10	
 <i>Supportive spaces</i>			
1x	Central hall	40	main entrance to building
1x	Office	20	containing space for three desks
1x	Laundry room	10	containing a washer and dryer
1x	Staff's bathroom	4	
1x	Toy storage	20	
1x	Outdoor toy shed	20	

Outdoor

1x	Yard	200	containing playing area
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12. Reflection

[What is the relation between your graduation topic, your master track and your master programme?]

The studio topic of the Veldacademie Studio is about resilience and well-being. My topic aims to lay out about the structural disadvantages independent mothers face, which inhabits their overall health and well-being, and how it is related to the current system on which the built environment is based. For my graduation topic I wanted to choose a topic that I felt should be highlighted more. Reading through the 'Woonvisie' of the municipality of Rotterdam, the struggles independent mothers were briefly addressed but not elaborated on further. I knew then that this should be my graduation topic. During my master track of Architecture, I have tended to courses that are involved in critically questioning how we do architecture (e.g. Theory thesis) and telling the stories of the unheard (e.g. Building Stories Elective), so my choice felt fitting.

[How did your research influence your design recommendations and how did the design influence your research?]

My initial approach was to design a women's shelter, or a halfway home that could give mothers a place to start over again. Early on in the process however, it became evident that the temporary nature of this type of housing, fails to address the deeper lying issues that keeps mothers susceptible to vicious cycle of structural disadvantage. From conversations with independent mother's activist Issa Rae and professional assistance worker Manita van Dijk, I learned that mothers are often dealing with a trifold of problems, in which finding appropriate housing and establishing social support systems are the roots of these. The balancing act between having to carry out all childrearing and breadwinning tasks by yourself is a burden that would be hard for anyone. From this perspective was inspired to imagine housing specifically catered could alleviating these burdens, while fostering social networks, but through emancipation and empowerment, instead of infantilization and stigmatization. From this I stumbled upon second wave feminist theorists, such as Doloros Hayden, who focused on relieving the burden of motherhood through the means of collective household labour through deconstructing the idea of the traditional nuclear family in order to establish collective living arrangements. From the feedback on my research plan this theory was used as a lens through which I could imagine temporary renditions of housing for independent mothers, with household labour as main factor. The literary research and case study was an explorative one, gathering socio-spatial insights from other non-traditional households and living arrangements to see which one's could also work for independent mothers.

Feedback given by my mentors was mainly concerned with how this form of housing differs distinctly from other types of co-housing, an aspect that also I

struggled with throughout the design process. How does it differ spatially, what is especially important to the mothers. From my conversations with the mothers themselves, I garnered that creating the feeling of home and fostering a health mother-child relationship is up most important. From this input, I decided to have concept of the collective living arrangements focus on the mother's need (in sharing), but the elaboration of the design to be more child-centred (in playing).

[How to you asses the value of your way of working?]

The explorative nature of the literary research laid a good foundation to come to a preliminary design brief, as only during this process of the research it became clear what such proposed collective living arrangement entailed and how this could look like. Alongside the literary study, I interviewed professional assistance workers, visited a shelter and talked to an architect specialized in designing for mothers in need. These all proved to be fruitful inspirations and insights in my design process. During my design process I had ongoing conversations with professional care worker Manita van Dijk, which was a constructive manner to weigh on my design choices against a practicality and help me choose the right synthesizations of collectivity according to mother's needs.

In retrospect, I would have wished to have reached the mothers themselves earlier on in the process. Establishing connections and setting up appointments was more difficult than expected, but totally understandable considering the already overfilled days independent mothers lead and the perhaps heavy conversations they would have to go into. Additionally, it would have been fruitful to talk to mothers in group formats alongside individual interviews. Considering my project is about collectivity, this set-up could have led to more natural conversations about sharing, privacy, with opposing opinions leading to addressing issues head on and gaining a more well-rounded, nuanced perspective.

[How to you assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?]

My thesis sets out to offer insights into the spatial and social needs of independent mother and explore spatial configurations of non-nuclear households in a building environment that – although the household demographics have long been shifting - is still mainly based on two-headed households. Through this exploratory nature of the research, including literary studies, case studies and practical study, my project aim to provide tangible solutions to the real-world challenges faced by independent mothers, while also addressing the broader systemic shortcomings that are at the root of many of the existing issues.

Throughout my research autonomy and privacy were important factors in determining the collective housing arrangements for independent mothers, but also in handling the conversations with (empirical) experts. Drawing from spatial configuration of other non-nuclear households, I garnered design principles that would enhance the well-being of the residents. Through interviews I was able to further tailor these needs to the needs of the mother. As this subject is packed with a lot of stigmatization and trauma, it was important to approach the conversations from a place of empowerment and acknowledgment.

The societal value of my research lies in its potential to be used for policy making and empower activist (self-help) organizations and marginalized communities. By shedding light on the spatial and social needs of independent mothers in particular, it is given the possibility to influence housing policies or development initiative and address the needs of diverse family structures. In this case, housing solutions that are empowering and inclusive and work on long-term establishing off well-being of independent mothers and their children.

[How to you assess the transferability of your project results?]

The underlying principles and methodology could be implemented in various other settings involving (collective) living arrangement in different geographical or socio-cultural contexts for independent mothers, or other marginalized groups. Exploring different typologies and weighing their principles against the needs of the group designed for, can lead to new insights and imaginations of (collective) housing. The emphasis on giving voice to the stakeholders themselves, ensures that the proposed solutions are answering to the unique needs and preferences, making it more transferable in its specificity.

12.1 Own questions

[Considering the evolving nature of societal needs and housing, what are other possible directions for further research?]

This thesis focused on the spatial and social needs of independent mothers specifically. Addressing the socio-spatial needs of other less explored marginalized non-traditional households, e.g. single fathers or LGBTQ+ households, could provide more insights in designing for inclusive housing solutions. Also investigating long term sustainability and workings of co-housing models on community could contribute to a more rounded understanding of their effectiveness for independent mothers. In a world of technology, it could also be interesting to look at how smart design could aid (collective) living arrangements for independent mothers. Lastly, a more in-depth examination of the housing policy, building initiatives and housing associations could aid in turning the research findings and proposed collective living arrangements into feasible and workable projects.

[How does your thesis address the intersectionality of race, class, and gender within the context of independent motherhood and housing design, and what are potential implications in this analysis?]

My research has been mainly focussed on the gendered aspect of motherhood, juxtaposing a female-headed household against a male-two-headed household. The findings of my research show that independent mothers are aided by being provided with a social support network and alleviation of burdens. This thesis however, by the limited time span of the project, regards independent mothers partly as a monolith. Further examination in addressing opposing views, the practicality of sharing with different values and the influence of class, morals and parenting styles is needed to garner a more comprehensive understanding of the varying needs within the group of independent mothers. In the end collective living is not a traditional housing arrangement which will certainly deter many mothers but has the opportunity to have great benefits for all people involved, if implemented well. Depending on the people involved, the outcomes of each case will differ.

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