

Columbia University
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
A4103-2: Architecture Studio III, Fall 2019, "States of Housing"

Studio Statement, Adam Frampton

Part to Whole, after the Nuclear Family

In New York City, the definition of family is encoded in legislation such as the Housing Maintenance Code, the Multiple Dwelling Law, and the Zoning Resolution. Based on these definitions, the present system of financialized and commodified housing, and its development practices, have further codified the typical formulations of housing for either families or non-families (single individuals). As such, the conventional "parts" of housing have become studio, one bedroom, two bedroom, three bedroom, etc. Each "part" is further assigned specialized yet normative functions, such as kitchens, bathrooms, or sleeping and living spaces.

At the same time, the proportion of people living as nuclear families, defined as two parents and at least one child, represents a shrinking amount of the population. In fact, in Denmark, the statistics bureau has identified 37 different types of family.¹ This studio will consider a set of hypothetical residents and new "family" compositions, including, but not limited to, individuals living alone, single parents and their children, traditional nuclear families, unrelated individuals living together, elderly individuals living collectively, and multigenerational (extended) households. A design approach with specificity towards residents is not intended to result in more specific forms of housing, or suggest design driven by demographics or data, but rather, to promote a more loose and flexible way of thinking about housing.

In considering the continued dissolution of the nuclear family and the increase of other forms of individual living and co-habitation, we will be critically investigating the relevance of existing norms such as studio, one bedroom, two bedroom, etc. The contemporary housing crisis is primarily an issue of quantity and affordability, but often unquestioned is whether the normative parts are qualitatively still relevant to address the ways in which we live now. How might we invent new "parts" of housing and define new models of aggregation? How and where can we share resources and live more communally, and where we do need solitude or privacy?

As a precedent, the studio will examine, in detail, Kazuyo Sejima's Gifu Kitagata, Japan, a 102,000SF building with 107 dwelling units, designed and constructed in two phases between 1994 and 2000. In this case, a relatively repetitive structural system conceals underlying differences in unit shapes, sizes, and types. As such, it is the room (or structural bay), rather than the family (or unit), that forms the fundamental module of aggregation. On the other hand, the project is made whole through its circulation, including unraveled stairs and outdoor corridors, which provide spaces of interaction and collectivity.

Additionally, as a starting point, the studio will examine other actual and utopian housing precedents and types that do not assume the family as the fundamental social or architectural constituent. This may include, but will not be limited to Charles Fourier's Phalanx, the monastery as a type, Mosei Ginzburg's Narkomfin, and Berlin's *baugruppen*² and *mietshäuser syndikat*.³ Although these examples are mostly produced under alternative socio-economic frameworks, they may offer valuable insight for New York City at a moment when the market economy has failed to provide adequate housing. Moreover, the intent of these precedents is to conceptually liberate ourselves from the logic of present norms and to imagine new formats and forms of housing.

¹ Statistics Denmark. <https://www.statbank.dk/BRN12>. Accessed 15 August 2019.

² Maak, Niklas. "Post-Familial Communes in Germany." *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 41, 2015, pp. 80-89. <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/41/post-familial-communes-in-germany/>

³ Aureli, Pier Vittorio, et. al. as Dogma + Realism Working Group, *Communal Villa: Production and Reproduction in Artists' Housing*, Leipzig: Spector Books, 2015.