



I visited collaborative housing developments in Oslo, Norway; Stockholm, Sweden; Rotterdam, Utrecht and Delft, Netherlands; Rennes and Angers, France and London, England.

Housing and social (in)justice are tied together, even if unaware of this. The American single family home and the suburban neighborhood have become normalized conditions. After two generations accustomed to this standard, other housing alternatives that are successful options have become unfamiliar. One way to look at resolving social inequities and creating healthy society is to reconsider the family home.

How shelter for a domestic life is shaped and relates to its surrounding community affects how individuals experience their everyday life. Even today, with the relative comforts and higher standards of living due to technological advances and wealth based on exploitation of resources and people, throughout the classes, many find their experience of life not satisfying in many basic ways—including housing and social interaction.



Collaborative Housing in Scandinavia and Western Europe

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Project Information

I visited both collaborative homes for independent persons and families as well as group homes for those needing assistance. I visited homes in urban centers, in rural outskirts and in small villages. I was offered group meals and guest rooms and shared apartments, within collaborative developments, as well as guest stays with architects and sociologists involved with the design of collaborative housing developments. I was also able to meet with developers, architects and with many residents of collaborative housing communities, as well as with directors and care providers in assisted collaborative homes.

Hosts

Norway: Knut Isachsen, Sweden: Dr. Dick Urban Vestbro, Dr. Ingrid Sillen, Holland: Dr. Anna Dijkhuis, France: Samuel Lanoe, UK: Ivan Kirby

Outcomes

As designers, planners, architects and policymakers, the desire to shape a good life, a healthy community, and to support an just society, cognizance of what makes people healthy, and supporting that with building patterns is a complex challenge. Decoding wellbeing, human social behavior and housing typologies to provide successful housing pattern elements that will support social capital that has been increasingly lacking today, will give us the criteria for designing our future.

I created an article comparing the impetus for, and the main differences of collaborative housing between the countries visited. In my field placement I then facilitated a community housing assessment using Photovoice for the residents of Detroit's Lower Eastside and presented the participants with urban planning and housing typologies including collaborative housing for their consideration.



Skills

Research, Program Development, Leadership, Evaluation

Classroom Connections

Theories of Urban Design
Policy and Evaluation
Community Organization and Management
Comparative Cross National Analysis
Design Activism and Social Entrepreneurship

Lessons Learned

Positive aspects that I witnessed in the housing developments were social cohesion and a lack of isolation, childcare support for families and single parents, networking for many topics like employment, services, sharing vacations and cultural or shopping excursions, along with meal-sharing and hobby groups. There is a cost benefit to living in a smaller private domain in order to afford sharing many amenities as a group, which might otherwise be beyond the budgets of each individual resident. Social capital can easily be developed.



Career Connections

I hope to foster humanitarian values as a design activist and social entrepreneur influencing how the built environment affects wellbeing and social cohesion and capital. Working toward social systems policy that will support healthy living for individuals and the environment, I see working with the federal government as a possibility.



Advice

If you are interested in exploring a non-traditional topic, be prepared to spend a lot of time on the internet making inquiries. Find a great advisor to help you understand the parameters of making an independent study and assist with references for scholarship applications. Apply for all scholarships for which you are eligible Be heroic.

Acknowledgments:

The Center for Women's Study, Weiser Institute, EUC and the Office of Global Affairs

For assisting with my project development kudos to my faculty advisor: LM Gant PHD.