

# Domestic Mutations in the Age of the Sharing Paradigm

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## Project Overview

*Domestic Mutations* investigates the consequences of the “sharing paradigm” on architectural organization and expression. With the discipline slow to see the potential for rethinking domestic space as it relates to novel conceptions of private and public life, the project develops a series of innovative collective typologies to question the hegemony of the single-family house.

Current collaborative models are having a distinctive effect on the domestic realm including co-living, multi-generational homes, food sharing and co-working. Design processes have yet to substantively interrogate the typology of the detached dwelling affected by these sharing programs, contesting the accepted delineations between permanent and transient residents, work and leisure, nuclear family and post-familial models. Freelancers, entrepreneurs and writers are increasingly giving up homeownership and living an itinerant life. These “digital nomads” are dwelling in different cities throughout the year and seeking affordable collective live/work scenarios.

In response to this, my proposal develops four architectural schemes that test different organizational and formal strategies for hybridizing co-living and co-working programs at the middle scale between house and housing. Developed as four morphologies – *clustering, nesting, pooling and looping* – each scheme is designed to produce a particular character on one hand (topological relations of space), and engender social interactions on the other (programmatically adjacent and mixed). All of the proposals accommodate up to twelve residents with a combination of individual spaces for sleeping and bathing, and shared clusters of space for collective activities. The different schemes also incorporate a micro-public co-working arrangement along with other community amenities accessible to the neighborhood such as a charging station or media space, reintroducing hospitality (refuge for strangers) as part of the domestic sphere.

Typical divisions between public and private realms are questioned by reimagining devices like the veranda, courtyard and building envelope that blur the boundary

between where the exterior world ends and the interior world begins. Improvisational and porous, the four morphologies allow for choice vis-à-vis levels of communal participation and access. Thus redundancy presents itself as a recurrent trait, alongside competing forms of collective and individual expression.

## Project Context

In *Seven American Utopias*, Dolores Hayden traces examples of America’s preoccupation with experimental communities – from the Shakers in the late nineteenth century to Drop City in the late twentieth – that marry utopian social aspirations with pragmatic environmental organization. A common impulse in these experiments was the will to challenge the hegemony of the nuclear family and capitalist mechanisms. Themes such as self-sufficiency (agriculture, manufacturing), self-awareness (religion, group identity) and community outreach (publications, good works) laid the groundwork for the current sharing paradigm. Fueled by both the economic crisis in 2008 and the emergence of entrepreneurial collaborative models, communitarian practices have been reimagined where the modern Internet promises a new form of engagement between individuals, collectives and the physical world.

Ronda Kaysen, in her *New York Times* article “The Millennial Commune” contends people have been “pooling resources and talents to create ad hoc communities for generations, and that’s not even taking into account boarding houses and residential hotels”. Along with the proliferation of app-enabled opportunities for sharing space and resources – from renting a hot desk in common workspaces (The Wing), to dining in stranger’s houses (Feastly), to short-term living arrangements for digital nomads (Roam) – novel collective dwelling and co-production programs are being formed to grow unique social and spatial scenarios. Despite these developments, a convincing case has yet to be made for how this new cultural landscape impacts the discipline’s core. This project investigates architecture’s agency in addressing its principal tenets of typology, form and aesthetics as they relate to the contemporary intersection of private property and shared commons. If the dwelling has always been a preoccupation for architecture’s disciplinary research, then current economic and social trends demand we interrogate the single-family house’s autonomy and contest the habits that it has institutionalized in order to discover alternative collective models.

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