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Against the 'Tyranny' of Single Family Dwelling: Insights on Sharing from Christiania at 40

Abstract

Ownership of a single family dwelling remains the dominant aspiration in market-led economies. In a hyper-privatized landscape it is widely assumed that people will not share housing except in extraordinary circumstances. Yet, there is a long and rich history of counter-cultural groups who imagine and practise alternative forms of shared housekeeping and collaborative dwelling. This paper draws on first hand observations of daily life from the counter-cultural community of Christiania, in the Danish capital of Copenhagen, at a critical moment in a 40 year history of state threatened 'normalization'.   Christiania is an intriguing lens through which to re-imagine affordable, adaptable, sustainable homes and neighbourhoods- because sharing, mutuality and innovation thrive at multiple scales of home-making and community-building. Exploring evidence of social and material 'infrastructures of daily life' suggests lessons for mainstream transitions away from single family dwelling, towards greater sharing, in pursuit of more sustainable, gender democratic living arrangements.

Keywords: Christiania, sharing, housing, family, alternative, sustainability

Against the 'Tyranny' of Single Family Dwelling: Insights on Sharing from Christiania at 40

Introduction

Ownership of a single family dwelling remains the aspiration of a majority of households in market-led economies around the world. In this hyper-privatized landscape, individuals and families struggle to 'balance' or reconcile income generating activities with the rest of life, under constant pressure to coordinate multiple time-limited tasks. Yet, the notion that individuals and families might lessen their scheduling burden or reduce the need for as much income generation by pooling their efforts and resources, is typically met with suspicion and fear. As Hemmens et al. (1996, 11-12) observe:

> 'the conventional ideal of the single-family dwelling diminishes the social meaning and practical value of shared accommodations. The stigma of residential sharing flows not only from (the) presumption of involuntary necessity, but also from association with other forms of group quarters such as dormitories, barracks, jails, prisons, halfway houses, group homes, shelters and nursing homes in which institutional caretakers and rules organize residential sharing'.

Arguably, the 'fit' between conventional owner occupied housing (new and existing stock, tenure, mortgage finance, location, specification and affordability), and socio-demographic diversity has never been good. Today we are witnessing greater mismatch than ever between unimaginative housing and more varied household structures, non-traditional families, diverse patterns of mobility and increasingly complex transitions and changes in household composition over the life course (Duncan and Smith 2002). Patterns of family life across Europe indicate that the most striking and consistent trend is the reduction in average household size (Kuijsten 1995, 60). Yet the common perception is that people do not (will not) share housing except in extraordinary circumstances (Hemmens and Hoch 1994, 17).

There is nevertheless a long and rich history of counter-cultural groups who imagine and practise alternative forms of shared-housekeeping and collaborative dwelling. Feminist scholars have been instrumental in bringing the most significant community experiments of

the nineteenth and twentieth century's to light, examining periodic efforts to challenge gender divisions of space and human work (Hayden 1976, 1981, 1984; Matrix 1984; Roberts 1991; McDowell 1983, 1999; Sargisson 2000). In 1830, for instance, Charles Fourier identified the isolated single-family dwelling as one of the greatest obstacles to improving the position of women, inspiring followers to establish cooperative colonies committed to the socialization of domestic work (Hayden 1978, 275; Hayden 1976). Today, eco-feminists similarly identify the single family dwelling as a fundamental impediment in the transition to a low-carbon future (Buckingham 2004; Hobson 2006; Crabtree 2006, 2006a).

Notwithstanding this legacy, the 'multiple tyrannies' of single family dwelling (to paraphrase C.P. Gilman in 1903) receive limited attention in contemporary debates on social justice and sustainability. This silence proceeds to an extent from a disciplinary 'disconnect' between cultural enquiries focusing on the meanings of home, on the one hand, and empirical studies exploring social cohesion and low-carbon housing on the other (Quinn 2010; Dowling and Power 2011; Pickerill and Maxey 2009; Meijering et al. 2007). Despite important contributions from community-led low-carbon initiatives, including Transition Towns (Seyfang 2010; Jackson 2009), a gap in understanding remains between discrete bodies of work concerning the social as well as material barriers to sharing (Evans 2011; Vesergaard 2006). The lack of research in this area is surprising, given that we are witnessing renewed interest in sharing in the form of cohousing and eco-villages. The existence of this alternative groundswell can be understood, in part, as a yearning for communality which has never really been extinguished by neo-liberal emphasis on individual self-reliance. For example, a persistent thread of nostalgia, resistance and experimentation can be traced back to 1970s counter-cultural communities, many of which endure to this day (Hayden 1976, 320; Cock 1979; Fromm 1991; Metcalf 1996; Fallesen and Hind 2008). One of the best known counter-cultural communities to have endured from this period is the 'Freetown' of Christiania in the Danish capital of Copenhagen- the subject of this paper.

The paper is structured in four parts. First, Christiania is introduced as a lens through which to re-imagine affordable, adaptable, sustainable homes and neighbourhoods of the future. Second, a critical gaze is cast upon the flawed ideal of single family dwelling through a series of interventions looking at oppression, isolation and waste. Third, the complexities and ambiguities of privacy and property are explored in relation to personal projects and tacit codes of collective living in the case of Christiania. Finally, conclusions are drawn which

pertain both to the specific case of Christiania and to broader debate. Critics are keen to point out, for instance, that Christiania is not in practice a fully functioning, classless, inclusive society. It would be as damaging to Christiania's legacy to romanticise the achievements as it would be to deny wider social relevance.

Magical, Marginal Christiania

The self-governing community of Christiania was established in 1971 by squatter-activists motivated in part by an acute shortage of affordable housing in the capital city, Copenhagen. Pioneer-squatters occupied a barracks complex within a 35 hectare (85 acre) lake-side site which had been vacated by the Danish army three months earlier. The intention was 'to build houses and organise a society', to create 'a classless urban commune' 'a small town, a village in the city', where there was 'freedom enough for everybody' (quotes from Vest 1991). Christiania represents the longest surviving illegal alternative lifestyle community to have emerged from the 1970s. Remarkably, it operated outside the legal framework of modern Denmark for nearly 40 years until February 2011 when the Supreme Court in Denmark upheld an earlier lower court decision, ruling that it was the state that held the legal right to the squatted land. Rather than to send in the bulldozers, as threatened so many times since 1974 when the conservative government wanted to demolish 66 'irregular dwellings', the Danish state proposed a 'take it or leave it' deal whereby Christiania as a collective entity would purchase the site and buildings on favourable terms, on strict conditions that it would 'normalize' the allocation, management and construction of new and existing homes on the site. In effect this proposal allows Christiania 'to become a miniature municipal council' (Heppenstall 2011, 17).

This paper does not dwell on what has been a lengthy and controversial political battle (see chapters in Thörn et al. 2011 for an overview). Instead it draws insights from evidence of home-making and family life in Christiania to explore the mainstream possibilities of cultivating shared space and mutual values. Parallels are drawn with less radical contemporary 'intentional communities' where the purpose or intention is to make it easier for individuals and families to retain a necessary degree of privacy while routinely participating in communal facilities and self-governance. Christiania is an important case because it clearly demonstrates multiple and diverse sites and scales of home-making, community-building and creative means of livelihood. A multi-scalar understanding of shared space and collective endeavour resonates with debates in urban studies concerning

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public space and civil society (Mitchell 2003). For example, when Sophie Watson (2006, 5) celebrates the 'magical urban encounters…of buzzing intermingling….. (in the) scruffy, unplanned and marginal public spaces' to be discovered in cities across the globe, she could as easily have been writing about Christiania as about a city farm in London. This suggests that autonomous community spaces, such as Christiania, harbour valuable insights with respect to incubating vitality and resilience.

A significant but neglected story of the countercultural movement that inspired Christiania was distaste for the emphasis on privacy and personal attachment to material possessions attributed to the conventional western nuclear family and home (Cock 1979; Manzella 2010). Print media reports from the 1970s convey what was an uneasy mix of disgust and admiration publicly expressed toward Christianites who 'rejected waste and impersonal welfare':

> 'nearly everyone lives on a low level of consumption. The general store will sell you a teaspoonful of sugar if that is all you need. An old garage has been turned into a flea market and furniture repair shop dedicated to the rehabilitation of drug addicts. A riding hall has become one of Copenhagen's most successful theatres, specialising in anti-capitalist satire. A former powder plant is now a blacksmiths shop based entirely on recycling and doing brisk business turning oil drums into stoves' (Duus 1976).

Fast-forward 30 years and Christiania attracted quasi-credible kudos in 2006 as recipient of the Initiative Award of the Society for the Beautification of Copenhagen. Known locally as 'a place where nothing goes to waste' (author's interview data) the Local Agenda 21 endorsed Christiania's Green Plan for actively pursuing sustainable goals and a democratic, participatory design process. Starkly polarised perceptions of lawlessness and squalor versus green social inclusivity fail to accurately reflect complex contradictions in practice. Nevertheless, Christianites arguably cultivated the art of 'down-shifting' and 'compacting' long before these terms captured the imagination of the largely middle-class movements of 'voluntary simplicity' and 'slow living' which proliferated in the 1990s (Grigsby 2004).

The sense in which Christiania resists the hyper-modernity and hyper-privatisation of mainstream market-led urban neighbourhoods is suggested in the award winning 1991 film anthology *Christiania, You Have My Heart*. In it, one resident explains that:

'When you enter Christiania it is (as if) time slows down, as if the pace is not as hectic as it is outside in Copenhagen. In some ways it is a bit like a rural village in the middle of the big city, and it is nice to live in a village where you have a large social network and where it is good to raise your children. It is very safe and you know a lot of people. Everyone knows everyone more or less" (Vest 1991).

The discussion below considers the extent to which the unique social and material conditions of collective living in Christiania fulfil long-standing feminist family-friendly ideals- such as those of the Nordic 'New Everyday Life' housing and community project (Horelli and Vepsä 1994). This vision highlights the neglected significance of a 'social architecture' to correspond with the priority usually given in orthodox (arguably androcentric) planning to the design and layout of the built envioronment (Booth and Gilroy 1999; Miles 2008; Jarvis et al. 2009; Jarvis 2011a).

As timely as it is at this critical moment in Christiania's history to reflect on the creative initiatives and collective support Christianites routinely engage in to resolve the multiple threads of their home-work-parenting identities, it is equally relevant for mainstream debate to revisit the problems of single family dwelling. Consequently, this paper engages with issues which are of widespread contemporary relevance. A compelling case is made for recognising the insights that counter-cultural communities have to offer those institutions and organisations seeking to de-emphasise privacy, isolation, competition and oppression in housing and community development.

Multiple Tyrannies, Multiple Challenges
The damaging effects of 'isolated, over-privatized, energy consuming' individual dwelling have attracted extensive critique over the course of many decades (Hayden 1981, 171; Parker et al. 1994). One way of interpreting and organising this literature is to recognise three particular challenges to the flawed ideals (tyrannies) of single family dwelling, each articulating discrete (but arguably co-constitutive) benefits of shared housekeeping and collaborative dwelling. First is literature highlighting the oppressive impact single family dwelling has on gender divisions of social reproduction; second is literature highlighting the social isolation resulting from this flawed ideal; and third is literature demonstrating the wasteful and inefficient use of finite resources.

Overcoming Oppression

Claims of a historically entrenched mix of state policy and cultural expectation regarding family life, gender relations, public health and motherhood have been recurring themes of socialist feminist writing, prompting ongoing research and development along the lines of inclusive urban design (Matrix 1984; Roberts 1991; Addams 1996; Greed and Roberts 2001). In 1903, Charlotte Perkins Gilman wrote of the 'tyranny' and 'arrested development' of single family dwellings 'threaded like beads on a string'. She deplored the deception of the 'home as haven' which confined women to perform myriad privately intensive domestic tasks. Her thesis inspired the architect Ebenezer Howard to propose a form of 'cooperative quadrangle' to release women from household drudgery in the private home, arranging garden apartments around a collective kitchen, dining room, and open spaces (Hayden 1984: 90).

Despite persuasive feminist critique and evidence of viable alternatives (notably the Israeli Kibbutz and the extended family compounds typical of many African and Central Asian countries), patterns of dwelling and the internal arrangement of domestic space in the northern hemisphere have remained conservative and inward looking. Much has been made of the persistence of Anglo-Saxon cultural traditions (Banham 1973) and the human capital sacrificed to expectations of privacy, comfort and cleanliness (Shove 2003; Campion and Cox 2007). Recent analysis emphasises the fluid boundaries between private and public domestic practice (Mills 2007) as well as widespread exclusion and neglect of vulnerable individuals, non-traditional families and an ageing population (Wekerle 1978; Kamerman 1979; Watson 1986; Trice and Merrill 2010).

Challenging the androcentrism of single family dwelling has led feminist scholars to research a wide range of utopian experiments in urban design. These experiments typically emphasise collective housekeeping and housing with shared facilities (Fromm 1991). Indeed, Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1976, 331) provocatively argues that 'cooperative households in cities are as valid a part of the American tradition as suburban picket fences'. Dick Urban Vestbro (1997) usefully differentiates between two periods of experimentation in collective housing in Sweden that reflect broader shifts in feminist thinking. First, the modernist collective housing unit or 'family hotel' featured a clear division of labour between occupants and employed staff (Caldenby and Walldén 1979). Feminist social reformers actively promoted this model in Sweden from the early 1930s to liberate (middle class) women from housework and enable them to pursue careers outside the home (Vestrbo 1992). State hostility toward the

'dissolution of the family' and accusations of elitism saw new construction abandoned in 1949 and the last of the 'family hotels' were disbanded in the mid 1970s (Vestbro 1997: 4). Second, the 'self-work' model of resident-led (social rented or cooperative) *kollekivhus* developed from the early 1970s. This arrangement, combining modestly apportioned private space with common facilities for shared daily use and non-hierarchical collective self-governance, was inspired in part by the Danish 'housing-cum-neighbourhood' model of *bofællesskab* (living togetherness) (Bamford 2001: 2).

The ethos of cooperative 'self work' resonates with feminist ideology of the 1960s which emphasised the emancipatory power of solidarity in collective activity. Whether or not in practice communal kitchens are emancipatory remains the subject of debate (Schroeder 2007). Nevertheless, 'solidarity in belonging' can be viewed as a dimension of community resilience. Drawing on the work of Maffesoli (1996), notions of solidarity and autonomy help distinguish the vision of sharing and participation in a multi-focal community setting such as Christiania, below, from historical examples of totalitarian or ideologically exclusive communes. Multi-focal community settings introduce a broader vision of sharing to that of either the nuclear family or the tribe (Manzella 2010: 42; Maffesoli 1996). This is evident below in examples of co-parenting following separation.

Overcoming Isolation

A central theme of this second body of literature is the role of domestic architecture and residential landscape in promoting urban vitality, social cohesion and community resilience. While rarely addressed through explicit opposition to single family dwelling, this approach emphasises the need to consider new ways of fostering shared public space and mutuality through daily social interaction in close-knit residential arrangements. This is evident in academic literature and policy with respect to housing density and scale, mixed land uses, shared public space, proximity to shops and amenities, and the extent to which streetscapes exclude or invite walking and recreation (Talen 1999; Duany et al. 2003). It is evident too in public health circles where there is growing concern for the mental health risks of a lonely society (Griffin 2010; Ahrentzen 2003).

The social doctrine and aesthetic quality of what is widely known as the new urbanism has intuitive appeal: it emphasises the small-town feel inherent in traditional neighbourhood design (similar to descriptions of Christiania above) not only as an architectural paradigm but as 'a social synthesis' intended to cultivate a sense of community rooted in trust and

reciprocity (Krier 1991, p.119, cited in Talen 1999: 1362). Arguably, belief in the possibility of reconnecting people and place through architectures of social interaction has shaped the debate on sustainable communities in damaging as well as benign ways (Williams 2005). This is because intentions are complicated by the interplay of popular yearning for an 'ideal home and family life' and instrumental top down interventions by institutional actors who appear to exploit this nostalgia in deterministic ways (Jarvis and Bonnett 2012). A crucial distinction is therefore made between the engineering principles of social contact design underpinning the new urbanism and similar emphasis on shared space in cohousing where the latter is predicated on participatory design and management (McCamant and Durret 1994). In short, the new urbanism harbours disconnect between a 'master-planned' image of close-knit affiliations (with spaces allocated for social encounter and interaction) and a lack of appreciation for the 'soft' infrastructures (of reciprocity, trust, social time and a moral economy) necessary to cultivate and sustain attachment and affiliation. By contrast, feminist scholarship highlights multiple 'soft' infrastructures of human attachment, memory, belonging and yearning which confound 'top down' efforts to reduce these to instruments of political 'usefulness' (Jarvis and Bonnett 2012).

Overcoming Waste
Finally, a third body of literature draws attention to the carbon footprint associated with single family dwelling. It is well known that the richest 20 per cent of world population consume 80% of global resources whereby inequality is driven by the accumulation of excess 'stuff' along with its packaging, storage and transportation (Molotch 2003; Lane and Gorman-Murray 2011). Jennifer Wolch (2007) traces the growth of new social movements which function to resist and ameliorate the waste of over-consumption. Thus, connections are made between social movements of voluntary simplicity and alternative lifestyle communities such as cohousing and eco-village initiatives. In this sense co-presence and affiliation actively facilitate instrumental sharing to reduce waste (Ahrentzen1996: 50) whereby efficiencies can be gained from establishing communal access to infrequently used household and garden appliances.

Conventional urban structure cultivates neither the interaction and trust nor the practical mechanisms necessary for neighbours to collectively purchase and manage shared tools and appliances in order to overcome the problem excess 'stuff', storage and waste. Unlocking this potential in the future appears to require either off-grid development, which is typically

limited to small-scale projects in rural locations (Pickerill and Maxey 2009; Pickerill 2009; Meijering et al. 2007), or investment in social infrastructures that facilitate sharing (Jarvis 2011a; Seyfang 2010).

In summary, beyond concern for energy reduction and resource conservation, the challenge of overcoming waste is clearly linked to efforts to overcome isolation, just as it is bound up with persistent structures of gender inequality, as a function of oppression. This highlights the importance not only of tackling the tyranny of single family dwelling through an integrated understanding of sustainability (environment, economy and equity) (Pickerill 2009), but also through multiple scales of dwelling and livelihood (Crabtree 2006a). In this respect, Christiania offers an ideal case study site. First, however, it is constructive to situate practices of sharing in Christiania relative to the most common categories of shared and collective dwelling found in market-led economies of the global north.

Shared domestic space and practice: towards a classification
Table 1 offers a simple classification of the most common forms of shared domestic space observed in market-led economies such as the UK, USA and Australia, as well as the more socially progressive Danish context. This classification differentiates between dwelling arrangements that are 'community-led' (intentional), those indicating involuntary sharing (boarding/lodging, group quarters and shelters), and those representing commercially managed common-use facilities. To put this spectrum into perspective, approximately 50% of Americans are suggested to live in housing with some form of shared facilities or open space, such as with condominium ownership where there is private ownership of the dwellings and common ownership of the land (Fromm 1991, 158). Yet few would recognise any similarity between US condominiums and Christiania, or indeed Danish cohousing, because the former is developer-led, master-planned and largely built with privacy, not communality, in mind (Fromm 1991, 158).

The characteristics noted in each of the columns in Table 1 show sharing to involve multiple, complex factors, including; architectural space, social time, income, livelihood, housekeeping, care, coordination, beliefs, values, property, power and decision-making. The implications of physically sharing domestic space vary from non-exclusive use of kitchen and bathroom facilities in a communal house, collective ownership and participation in communal facilities (for example a common house allowing for shared meals, laundry, crèche, tool store), and shared recreation space managed by paid staff or Home Owners Association

(HOA). The scale of sharing also varies from a small number of individuals, to a small number of households (typically 30 households in US purpose built cohousing) to populations of several hundred individuals of all ages. Social support and caretaking may be limited to joint responsibility for common spaces and amenities, establishing a minimal reciprocity by adopting practices of propriety, cleanliness, and security ('some' in the table) (Hemmens et al. 1996, 9). Where it is strongly supported ('yes' in the table) it reflects a value-based commitment to collaboration.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Methodology

The remaining discussion draws on first hand observations and oral histories from a fortnight as researcher in residence in Christiania in 2010 and three subsequent visits to participate in community activities. Secondary data includes a thematic review of Danish newspaper articles on the subject of Christiania (translated into English) alongside English-language articles and reports and both oral and electronic correspondence with residents who provided regular updates on the local impact of negotiations with the state.

Primary data included 14 interviews (9 recorded and transcribed verbatim, 5 compiled from recall following impromptu conversations). Inhabiting the community as a lone mother (accompanied by my school-age daughter) and in a respected capacity (as researcher in residence) I was able to participate in shared meals and working bees, casual encounters and conversations with residents and visitors. The homes visited spanned a number of dwelling types representative of the 14 discrete areas that Christiania is organised into (e.g. Figure 1); large rooms on a shared floor of Fredens Ark (e.g. Figure 2); studio apartments fashioned out of the distinctive acute angle buildings on the rampart promontory; self-built chalets (e.g. Figure 3), adapted site-huts and original stone buildings variously situated along the ramparts, in the wooded areas and on the edge of 'Christiania town'. Observations were made by attending public festivals, such as Christiania's 'alternative' *Grundlovsdag* (Constitution Day), as well as a more intimate community fund-raising event at the *Operaen*. Much was gained from everyday routines: cycling the length and breadth of the 85 acre site many times; shopping for groceries at the *Indkøbscentralen* and *Grønsagen*; attending the children's facilities and theatre; and frequenting the community cafes and eating-places.

Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the rights to anonymity of individuals interviewed. All personal communications have been conducted in English (where this is a fluent second language for a majority of residents).   Interviews and photographs were taken on the basis of informed consent. Interviews were transcribed for thematic coding and narrative analysis. The interview quotes which are included in the discussion are selected to illustrate and represent significant themes which emerged from a close reading of the complete body of data. A detailed picture is pieced together of the infrastructures of sharing in daily life; in the built environment, across the social institutions and in the local moral cultures of shared space and collective action.

Sharing in Christiania

Cultures of sharing in Christiania are shaped to a considerable extent by the absence of a real property market: individuals have the right to occupy but never to own or benefit financially from transferring the rights of use of their home or business premises to someone else. This functions alongside a vital 'do-it-yourself' culture of sweat equity and collaboration in home-making. From its early days, home construction and renovation reflected an experimental, constantly evolving, entrepreneurial quest for freedom- *flere fristeder* (more free space): a retreat from authority, individualism, private ownership and mass market merchandise. At the same time an unspoken rule was that buildings were to be adapted rather than torn down. While incremental adaptation meant that Christianites could invest in materials and cultivate essential skills as and when they had the time and financial capital to do so, ad hoc development has reduced the opportunity to transform domestic space for the express purpose of collaborative housekeeping. Indeed, the immediate impression most visitors would have is that the majority of Christianites, especially those in the green areas outside the 'town', continue to live in single family dwellings even if these are quirky and original in their appearance. Appearances can be deceptive and observations within and beyond individual homes reveal diverse experiments and innovations in sharing. At the same time, the absence of purpose built shared domestic space appears to refute the idea that challenging unequal gender divisions of social reproductive work was a primary motivation of home-making and community-building in the 1970s or since.

When the Bådsmandsstræde Barracks site was first occupied there were approximately 150 existing buildings, including the substantial, half-timbered, commander's house (*Fredens*

Ark), 17th and 18th century powder magazines on the bastions, a large indoor riding arena (*Den grå hal*) and a smaller riding house (*Den grønne hal*). These historic buildings, which now have conservation status with the National Heritage Agency, were unused and very run-down when squatters took up residence in 1971. The following years saw the original buildings incrementally modified and upgraded and approximately 175 new buildings added. By 1975, the resident population was 850-900, similar to what it is today (National Museum 1975). By the same year, Christiania had organized significant shared facilities for communal use such as a bath house and laundry, a nursery and kindergarten, garbage collection and recycling, and numerous cooperative businesses including shops, bars, cafes, a blacksmith (now a bicycle factory and separate women's smithy), craft workshops, theatre and gallery. Multiple economies of dwelling, reciprocity and livelihood have always been intermeshed here (see Gibson-Graham 1996), although many more Christianites today earn a living from off-site employment.

Without doubt the collaborative institutions of Christiania represent a sophisticated social infrastructure of communal facilities, humanistic welfare, participatory governance, networks of reciprocity, all of these 'lubricated' by the daily debate which goes on privately as well in Christiania's public space. The community has invested considerable sums from the Common Purse in the maintenance of the grounds, modernisation of the sewerage system and a range of social welfare including a health and social work consultancy (*Herfra og Videre*-Onwards and Upwards), machine hall, economic administration, children's institutions for all ages, internal post office, radio station and free weekly newspaper. The annual budget is determined at the Common Meeting (the largest and ultimate decision-making entity in a series of meetings comprising Christiania's self-governance). Each adult citizen pays the same rent, irrespective of the size and condition of the dwelling they inhabit. Access to a vacant dwelling is not restricted by income, as it would elsewhere, but neither is it managed through a waiting list. Instead, the transfer of occupation is determined by the Area Meeting, or in the case of rooms available in one of the large shared houses, at the House Meeting (Thörn et al. 2011). Local decisions are made by consensus in monthly meetings for each of the 14 geographical areas. These can be overturned by the Common Meeting, where consensus decision-making operates regardless of whether the meeting is poorly attended. For some Christianites the absence of a system based on a majority vote has created a powerful sense of unity in struggles against the state. For others, especially on issues relating

to the allocation and renovation of housing, the experience of unresolved conflict can be acrimonious and exhausting (Starecheski 2011: 265).

There is limited evidence of the kind of shared housing Denmark is generally famous for. With one or two notable exceptions where large houses function as communes (for instance *Stjerneskribe*, The Star Ship, which is a form of hostel), there is limited scope in the way existing buildings have been sub-divided into apartments and new dwellings built at individual expense, for separate households to subscribe to collective housekeeping on any regular basis. There are many examples of shared meals, communal dining and shared childcare, to be sure, but new homes have not been built around communal kitchens.

The best known communal eating place in Christiania is the Fælleskøkkenet (the communal kitchen) which functions both as a low-budget café and a free 'soup kitchen' at certain times of the week. Then there is the novel practice of having table settings set aside for Christianites in the up-market restaurant Spiseloppen (The Flea): on one side tables are set for commercial service; the other side is simply furnished with unreserved refectory tables and benches for Christianites who can buy a 'house meal' for a nominal payment to eat alongside any other Christianite who cares to show up. The idea is similar to that of the 'family hotels' which eliminated the need for individual cooking space by serving family meals for communal dining (Vestbro 1992, 1997). In principle, communal dining cultivates social capital, reduces the burden of unpaid (feminised) domestic work and reduces energy consumption. In practice, on the occasions observed, participation tends to be limited to single persons and couples and social interactions are limited between different parties. Arguably, it is important not to romanticise opportunities for social interaction in a small community such as this. As Birgitte observes:

> We take more care now; we allow people their privacy too; actually it's very important not to be too intrusive – and if you have a neighbour you don't like it's best to stay quiet, because it's not like you can sell your house and move on, you know, so you have to get on and make it work

This illustrates the way sharing practices are shaped by the interdependence of social and material opportunities (shared space and social time) and constraints (feeling 'trapped' in situations where inter-personal conflict can threaten all aspects of dwelling). This highlights

the importance in planning for convivial social architectures, to allow scope to retreat from inter-personal conflict.

Home-making and fluid families

Christianites flout not only urban policies but also traditional gender roles and aesthetic conventions (Hellstrøm 2006). Hypermodernity is actively resisted through a post-material interpretation of reclaimed, reused, home-made authenticity. Saffi, for instance, differentiates the process of making a home 'as a place to live' from simply squatting. She moved into her home (the empty shell of a chemical store) in 1974, taking it over from squatters 'who just crashed here, slept on hammocks in the building as it was'. She explains how it took many years to incrementally improve or replace walls, roof, and windows and to add heating and plumbing, as well as the brightly painted trim used to locate her home in the absence of street names and numbers. This laborious process of self-build, combined with reciprocal networks of knowledge, ideas and the extra pairs of hands required, suggests the emancipation of home-making from its conventional confinement to a feminised interior and masculinised exterior definition of skills. Inhabiting what is in effect a public park results in a paradoxical collision of 'love and chaos' (to rehearse the 1976 exhibition and happening *Kærlighed og kaos*) and a blurring of domestic distinctions. Making a home, literally, from salvaged materials is a way of reclaiming from androcentric 'experts' and 'commerce' the intimate significance of habitation.

Cultural expectations of gender-democracy in adaptation, mindfulness, and reclaiming extend beyond home-making to household composition and cultures of parenting. A frequent narrative among those who have raised families in Christiania is one of fluid family living arrangements. In the study, Mia, Saffi, Dorete, Ulrike and Anton (four mothers and one father) each claim that living in Christiania enabled them to negotiate the consequences of separation, divorce, single-motherhood and transition to a blended family arrangement in more flexible, humanistic ways than they believe would have been possible 'outside' in mainstream urban social structures. Dorete explains:

> I came to live here together with my boyfriend in 1974… we went on to have two children…and that was back in the time when we had no electricity and we had no water inside the house, so we had to carry water in and waste out; we had no toilet either, so that was tough. We had a stove with chopped wood so a lot of our time was taken up with all those everyday things. It was hard but we chose (that way of life);

and it gave us time to be with the children when they were small. When the children were 7 and 3 their father and I separated and I went to live in another place. We both wanted to stay in Christiania; we wanted to stay close to each other for the children, so Christiania made it possible for us to separate but still to raise the children together. We stayed good friends so we didn't have those fights in that way.

We learn from a variety of experiments in shared living arrangements elsewhere that collaborative housing offers practical as well as social support for the upheaval of household transitions such as separation from a lover or spouse, adult offspring leaving home, caring for elderly parents (Maxey 2004; Manzella 2010). In Christiania, this local practice of co-parenting from separate dwellings reflects both a counter-cultural motivation to 'loosen traditional family ties' and 'create new forms of family' (Manzella 2010: 40) and an uneven, inconsistent shift in gender politics.

On the one hand it is apparent that fatherhood is increasingly central to men's identity in Christiania, as in Denmark generally. Bekkengen (2002) uses the expression 'child oriented masculinity' to describe the close relationship many men want with their children. On the other hand, the 'negotiated family' fails to challenge, or necessarily change, underlying gender relations. Further tensions are apparent in the 'love and chaos' variously negotiated for individual freedom and convivial, collaborative ideals. On the one hand, Birgitte and Mia describe a rich infrastructure of support for 'women without fathers for their children' managing collectively in *Børneengen* (the children's field); as a place where 'you just open your door and there are people everywhere (to) make food and eat together, the children played together'. On the other hand, they acknowledge that they each define themselves through their rejection of the mainstream and by individual freedom to 'do one's own thing' (Amouroux 2006). The result is an ambivalent outcome for the 'myth' of the 'democratic family' (Ahlberg et al. 2008). Conflicts arising from this balancing act can result in verbal assault and violent, criminal acts which the community infrastructure often fails to resolve or mediate fairly, as expanded below with respect to gender inequality in consensus decisions.

Adaptable, flexible dwelling
The culture of do-it-yourself home-making suits fluid family composition in part because individual dwellings can be adapted or allowed to expand or shrink in a way that is not possible with conventional housing market models. There are two different approaches. First are wagon-built 'exploded' homes that have grown incrementally like petals round a bud as

the occupants first make do with one wagon and then add more as their circumstances change and they have time and materials to invest in further construction. Here there are parallels with the complex ways that home owners in mainstream markets exploit housing consumption services (inhabiting a basement, attic, garage or constructing an accessory dwelling) to privately deal with debt and the rising costs of family care (Rudel 1984; Hare and Guttmann 1984; Jarvis 2009). Understanding the creative ways that housing, welfare and livelihood intersect, whether or not through the mechanisms of a real property market, helps explain why the state ban on further home construction (modifications as well as new building) had such a severe negative impact on family life in Christiania in recent years.

Second are open-plan interiors which break with the conventional pattern of domestic spaces sub-divided into daytime living and sleeping areas. Space efficiencies are made, and opportunities for social interaction increased, through the widespread use of multi-purpose (open-plan) space, temporary dividing walls and furniture which can be cut down or extended according to changes in household composition. Arguably it is easier to abandon the 'wasteful' practice of 'symbolic' spaces for formally receiving guests (Lawrence 1982, 110) in a community where social occasions and casual meetings are encouraged in streets, cafes and communal spaces. Whether post-material cultures of home-making in Christiania liberate women from housework to enable them to pursue alternative, autonomous income and livelihood strategies on equal terms with men remains a moot point. As previously noted, the reconfiguration of domestic arrangements to de-emphasise privacy and property frequently introduces a new layer of 'home-made' social reproduction work.

In addition to the way interiors are adapted, there are reported cases (Johan, Adam, Jasmin, Ulrike) where the space allocation of individual dwellings have been increased or reduced by shifting party walls in sub-divided buildings: for example creating two apartments out of three when a middle room became vacant. In each case, proposed adaptations went before the Area Meeting to be decided by consensus. For example, Jasmin originally occupied a slender room which could only accommodate one person. When she was dating Poul and contemplating him moving in with her she needed to increase her living space. Her immediate neighbour (in the large building that had previously been a factory) had a much bigger apartment. When he moved out she went to the area meeting to discuss the possibility of extending her place sideways. Jasmin and Poul undertook the demolition and repositioning of the party wall with help from neighbours in their geographic area. This

practice of shifting party walls resonates with Sherry Ahrentzen's (1996) discussion of different ways that the party wall can be conceived where this may reflect different types of sharing; co-presence, affiliation (social-oriented interaction), or instrumental (task-oriented exchanges). It is possible to harness both the connecting and separating qualities of the party wall in Christiania because property is collectively negotiated, rather than traded as a private commodity.

Gender inequalities in participatory practice

Perhaps inevitably, the social and material networks that cultivate conviviality and sharing in Christiania are not always benign or indeed sufficient to combat persistent gender inequalities. By now it should be apparent that the infrastructure of daily life in Christiania (as indeed in other close-knit community settings) incorporates tacit moral codes concerning, for instance, sharing, participation, innovation, tolerance and freedom from hierarchical authority. Although there are lessons to be learned for housing and residential neighbourhoods which lack meaningful social interaction and the participatory framework needed to cultivate a collaborative ethos (Jarvis 2011), communal living arrangements and self-governance do not guarantee equal participation or social cohesion.

While home-making and parenting are less constrained by conventional capital assets (housing, utilities, income and savings/debt), other powerful social capital attributes (such as confidence and communication) assume greater significance as the components of unequal power in participation. For instance, direct democracy places greater emphasis on face to face oral communication which puts those who lack particular communication skills (speech/hearing/vocabulary) at a disadvantage. In the absence of 'leaders', Christiania comprises many discrete interest groups that live together, in conflict as well as cooperation, rather than as individuals committed to being part of a bigger project of social transformation.

Over time, the tone and effectiveness of participation in consensus decision-making in Common Meetings has been influenced by combative, 'macho', adversarial communication practices. Indeed, the infrastructure of governance itself (the when, where and how mechanisms of participation) shapes the composition of those who actively feel recruited and represented. For example, Common Meetings begin at 8pm and they run long and late into the night. This practice excludes those who are caught up in the temporal constraints of child-care (notably, but not exclusively, single mothers) or those who would compromise their ability to make a living if they went without sleep. Ulrike admits that she rarely attends the

Common Meeting because she is intimidated by the 'angry and hostile' tone of debate. She finds it easier to discuss the really contentious issues with other women rather than in the open meetings. This reflects the way women-only meetings have mobilised in the past to resolve conflict by 'taking care of each other' and focusing on the practical business of daily life (Jarvis 2011; see also Starecheski 2011).

Conclusion

This paper has drawn attention to a number of unmistakable distinctions, as well as many more subtle ones, between visions and practices of home and family life in the counter-cultural community of Christiania compared with mainstream market-let residential neighbourhoods. Attention has been drawn to the 'soft infrastructures' of 'openness, care, preservation, communal living and anti-consumption' (Thorn et al. 2011: 248) that make Christiania 'difficult to leave' and 'a good life to live' for parents with young children in particular. There is evidence that this mode of living shields Christiania from the hectic pace and brashness of hyper-modernity, cultivating instead an intimate scale of dwelling and diverse, locally distinct patterns of livelihood. Interestingly, this reveals significant points of resonance with the espoused aims of less-radical 'smart growth', 'new urbanism' and 'slow living' agenda (Pink 2008; Mayer and Knox 2006). For instance, the stated aims of slow city development, quoted below from a 2011 international general assembly, resonate with those cited above for squatter-settlers inhabiting Christiania in the 1970s:

> (Cittaslow seeks) to protect local distinctiveness and a *slow counter-culture* by regenerating small towns in the modern world, to *seek comfort and ease through co-production* in opposition to the dominant ideology of larger cities and globalization as engines of growth. Cittaslow towns serve the role of a laboratory to test the *resilience of small communities* and the capacity to rebuild trust, social capital and *a vital scale of solidarity and collective responsibility*, paying attention to social justice and dialogue between younger and older residents. (Quoted from oral presentations made by representatives of the Cittaslow International General Assembly, Lidzbark Warminsky, May 2011- author's emphasis).

This resonance suggests the potential value and significance of unplanned, marginal community sites as laboratories for uncovering the hidden, multiple, complex constituents of slow living, co-production, resilience and solidarity – lessons which would appear to have wide appeal among civic leaders and activists seeking to understand and promote humanistic

urban design and governance. The potential transmission of innovations from the margins to the mainstream is illustrated in the 'deal' the state struck with Christiania over the conditional purchase of the squatted site and buildings. This 'deal' reflected the conundrum that while Christiania represents a way of life that functions in opposition to the neo-liberal state; it also serves as a magnet for overseas visitors, trading in the 'brand' of Danish liberal-minded tolerance. Consequently, a representative of the National Heritage Agency (SES) admitted to reporters after the court case that 'there must be room for different communities' (REF).

This paper sought to challenge the cultural ideal of the single family dwelling by identifying the way sharing practices thrive in alternative, autonomous, intentional community settings. Advocating more experimental, collective and collaborative systems of housing does not anticipate wholesale abandonment of the single family house. Rather, this agenda highlights the need to dismantle 'unnecessary social, legal, and political barriers to (alternative) development' (Hemmens et al. 1996, 12).

Evidence from the autonomous community of Christiania highlights the intersection of housing, welfare and livelihood. It sheds light on the multiple and complex influences underpinning a cultural shift from privacy to sharing. One reason why it is possible to live well on a lower income in Christiania, with positive benefits for the environment and community engagement (volunteering), is the existence of alternative, collective welfare institutions that provide support in times of crisis. These alternative social systems are especially vulnerable to state imposed 'normalization' including the increased cost of modifying and maintaining dwellings to a universal standard. In Christiania, post-material cultures of home-making are intended for the benefit of the entire community, not for personal use (Hellstrom 2006). Experiments in dismantling the 'tyrannies' of privacy and property have been used to justify the illegal occupation of public space, with mixed results. Arguably, unequal gender relations persist because solidarity has been mobilised more effectively in conflicts with the state than in mediating gender bias in competing priorities and consequences of everyday home-making.

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Table 1: Simple (generalised) classification of sharing structures, property and power for the main types of (intentional, private and institutional) shared domestic arrangements (as observed in the market-led economies of e.g. UK, USA, Australia and Scandinavia)						
	Sharing structures			Property and Power		
	Shared dwelling Space (e.g kitchen)	Collective food production	Social support & caretaking	Tenure	Income Pooling	Governance (decision-making)
Commune	Some	Some	Yes	Cooperative rental	Yes	Self-governance consensus
Eco-village	Common House	Yes	Yes	Strata title owner occupation	No	Self-governance consensus
Cohousing	Common House	Some	Yes	Strata title or LLC owner occupation	No	Self-governance consensus
Housing Cooperative	Yes	Some	Yes	Cooperative rental	Some	Cooperative
e.g. Condo	Unlikely	Unlikely	Some	Strata title owner occupation	No	Home-owners association
e.g. Boarding/ Rooming	Yes	Unlikely	Some	Private rental	Some	Property owner
e.g. Congregate/ Shelter/ Group Homes	Some	Some	Yes	Social rental	Unlikely	Management Committee
Note: 'some' means occasional sharing **Source**: author's matrix adapted in part from Hemmens et al. 1996: Figure 1, page 8.						

Figure 1: Aerial photograph of Christiania, Copenhagen, annotated by the author to indicate 14 discrete residential areas

Figure 2: Fredens Ark with accommodation varying from single room apartments to an entire floor which is shared communally by multiple unrelated adults and families; the 'Christiania bicycle' is used to variously transport children, groceries and locally recycled building materials

Figure 3: One of many innovative self-built dwellings- this one 'floating' on the lake in the Nordområdet area of Christiania