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Stigma: Re-imagining Affordable Housing through Pre-Fabrication

Affordable housing, public housing, subsidized housing. When mentioned, each of these terms has a stigma associated with it. Most likely, negative. When we associate these terms with their negative connotations, we further excentuate the stigma of affordable housing.

The great steps that architecture has taken in the past decades have ignored affordable housing. Whether is it out of fear of public failure, like many projects prior, or for the glory of a budget, it is uncertain. It is clear though, that affordable housing in the United States has been left in the past.

My proposal is to investigate how the design process of traditional housing can be augmented, through prefabrication and customization to create sustainable affordable housing. These are important due to the economic incentives of prefabrication and the sense of ownership tied to customization, two key elements in affordable housing.

In the brief time the I have already been in Copenhagen, I have had the opportunity to see a number of different housing types. From traditional worker housing from the 1880's to traditional Danish Kollegiums and to BIG/PLOT/JDS housing of VM, Mountain and 8. While each of these studies has been brief, they present an opportunity for case studies, to determine the succeses and failures of each project. I have also reached out to a professor, Henning Thompsen, to act as an advisor here.

The research will mainly take place through a series of case studies, readings and projects done here in Copenhagen. A preliminary set of case studies and texts can be found below.

Case Studies:

Vildrose Project- ONV  
grøndalsvænge- ONV  
Habitat 67- Moshe Safdie  
Mountain House- BIG  
Unité d'Habitation- Le Corbusier  
Quinta Monroy- Elemental  
Marcus Garvey Houses  
The Stack- Gluck +  
Carver Houses- Kahn & Jacobs

Texts:

Total Housing-Alternatives to Urban Sprawl

The Affordable city :toward a third sector housing policy- Davis, John Emmeus

Affordable housing : twenty examples from the private sector - Douglas Porter

Prefabricated Systems Principles of Construction- Ulrich Knaack

Prefab architecture : a guide to modular design and construction- Ryan Smith