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Co-Housing: Sharing the Common Uses of Daily Life Spaces

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ABSTRACT

Co-housing is a new type of modern housing where residents share interests, intentions but above all share a common living space where they are like a family. It is based on the concept of openness and collaboration; residents benefit from their bedroom and bathroom and share common spaces such as the kitchen, stairs, gym, and working spaces, etc. Through its various common spaces, co-housing offers the possibility of creating a large network of friends, making new acquaintances, and sharing several things with others. Most residences organize various activities and events in the common spaces to integrate the users of these spaces in daily life. This paper will examine, understand, and study Common Spaces and how they are planned out in Co-Housing Projects. The main objective of this paper is to highlight the trend of Co-housing increasing throughout the world and its prime focus would be on the spaces the user shares and how and where these spaces such as Living Areas, Dining Areas, and Laundry Service Areas should be given to have maximum social interaction. The paper will use the method of comparison to study five Co-housing projects from different areas of the world to provide a discussion and understanding of how these common spaces are planned out and provide a platform for human interactions, and how these spaces can make the life of its users easy and comfortable.

Introduction

“Co-living is a residential structure that accommodates three or more biologically unrelated people (Bothell, 2015).” Co-housing is a community living concept whereby young professionals move in with like-minded people, sharing service costs and benefiting from flexible rental terms. In other words, co-housing is a modern form of housing where residents share living space and a set of interests, values, and/or intentions.

This paper aims to highlight the importance of common shared spaces in the Co-living project, as such places provide a platform for Social Interaction. This paper aims to provide an overview of how such common shared places should be designed to maximize social interaction as well as provide easy and comfortable access to its users. The main focus of this paper is to extensively study the interior of commonly shared places and explains different types of shared places such as Essential, Social, and Physical interactive spaces.

Co-Housing And Common Space In Co-Housing Facilities

“Co-living is commonly contained within a single dwelling, sub-divided into a combination of public and private spaces (Chris Scott Hanson, 2005).” Housing architecture has changed over time, typologically, and conceptually. As a result of this change and transformation, the concept of “co-living” has emerged. Co-living is a new variety of present-day housing the place residents with shared interests, intentions, and values share a dwelling area the place they're nearly like a massive family. Co-living is built on the notion of openness and collaboration, with the residents often sharing similar philosophical values (Zulfiqar et al., 2025). This shape of the housing is primarily based on the sharing economy. Residents will typically have their bedroom and washrooms but will share common areas like cooking and dwelling spaces. Co-living projects decrease space per capita, vitality use, and waste creation. (Katz, 2016). Accomplished through the sharing of assets, this diminishes natural expense and ecological harm in light of independence, social stratification, and inefficient customer propensities (Dick Urban Vestbro, 2012). It additionally gives access to shared items, for example, clothes washers, cooking utensils, and amusement offices (Bhatti & Ghufuran, 2020). This, close by the division of lease and administrations, decreases the average cost for basic items for occupants. Further, observational examinations report that contemporary co-living improvements produce dynamic and various networks that upgrade social cooperation and offer aggregate help (Tummers, 2015). Contemporary co-living, at that point, is progressively fit for meeting social and social needs contrasted with customary lodging typologies, with a unique emphasis on equality and diversity. Common spaces are essentially an increasingly directed and sorted out variant of open spaces (Mukhtar et al., 2024). They give all the advantages of open spaces while deducting the disadvantages (5 Compelling Reasons to ALWAYS Include Communal Spaces in Architecture, n.d.). Common Spaces allowed its users to interact with each other at different levels and increase social interaction. Especially in Co-Living facilities, Common spaces are the most essential part. Communal spaces provide additional facilities for users to enjoy, socialize, and relax which, accordingly, increases the functional value of the project. These Communal Spaces can be divided into different categories based on user requirements:

Essential Communal Areas: Some of the essential communal are given following which are used as frame-work in this paper:



Living Area or Lounge, Dining Areas with Kitchens and Laundry Services

Social Interactive and Physical Communal Areas: Some of the communal are given following which are used as frame-work in this paper:

🚦 *Gym and Fitness Areas, Indoor Gaming Areas and Entertainment areas like Cinemas, Movies Rooms or Music Rooms*

🚦 *Multi-purpose Halls, Co-Working Areas, and Communal Landscapes*

Methodology of the Paper

The foundation of the paper would be literature studies, delving deeper into the co-living and relationship of communal spaces. This paper basis its framework based on case studies of already built co-living projects along with research journals and books section on this specific topic. Quantitative analysis of four co-living facilities will be conducted using a mixed-methods approach. This research provides insights into the success of community creation and how improvement in communal spaces can be approached. These studies include an inventory of spaces as well as floor plans, diagrams, and photographs, which describe the layout, adjacencies, and analysis of the urban context. The case studies under discussion provide an extended overview of co-living and the effect and importance of communal spaces in co-living projects. All of the case studies are sub-projects of Co-living Companies providing such facilities throughout the world. As each case studies provide a different perspective but the essential common shared places are provided but the social and physical places may vary from project to project based on the location, users, culture, and norm. The case studies provide a vast poll for studies as each case study is from a different country and follow the norms of its background. The methodology of studying these case studies will be the comparison method. The main focus will be common shared spaces given in the project, studying where such spaces are given in each case study and discuss whether it is the best place. Common Spaces of these case studies will be investigated based on the types discussed above.

For this paper above discussed common communal spaces in co-living projects will be studied through the help of following case studies. The case studies that are chosen for this paper are sub-projects of Co-housing companies to provide and keep a global standard.

Case Study 1: The Collective Old Oak London

Old Oak is one of the biggest co-living projects in the world, having around 175000 square feet area, located in the Willesden Junction neighborhood on the north-west side of London. The site is near a cylinder station with a line to focal London and is situated on the Paddington Arm canal. This region isn't as of now thickly populated yet has numerous tasks as of now under development. (Mairs, 2016).

Program: Old Oak contains 550 micro-units with large amenity spaces on the ground level and additional amenity spaces on each residential level. There are around 12,000 square feet of public space including an exercise center, collaborating space, clothing space, shared kitchens (situated on all levels), housetop patio and ground-level porch, nearby on-site café and bar. Public spaces are themed, including Spa, 'Mystery Garden', Film Room, Game Room, Library, English bar. The building contains a market along with rentable office space on the ground level. (Mairs, 2016)



Figure 1: “Master plan view” <http://www.plparchitecture.com/the-collective-old-oak.html>

Communal Spaces: Most social zones are on the primary floor, lower levels, and mid-level rooftop deck, and all are effortlessly reached using the lift. The auxiliary or cradle zones comprise of shared kitchens/relax on each private floor just as the foyers. Comfort spaces incorporate a library, game room, film room, 'mystery garden' (themed relax space), spa, clothing offices, and a rooftop deck. Figure 4.exhibits the commonly shared spaces given in the facility.



Figure 2: Graphic illustration of Shared Spaces Illustrated by Author

Private Spaces: Most of the units are studios or 'twodios' – every unit containing a bed, TV, work area and seat, closet, washroom with shower, sink, and can, and are around 130 square feet studios have their kitchenette, while twodios offer the kitchenette and a feasting space at the section to the unit. Twodios can be part of studios effectively later on by proprietorship by building a divider, second kitchenette, and including an entryway(Mairs, 2016).



Figure 3: Plan of Twodios <https://www.lucasuk.com/projects/the-collective-old-oak>

Figure 3 and 4,provides an overview of the concept of twodios which is introduced through this project. Allowing its residents to share a Kitchenette individually even though communal Kitchen is given on the lower floor to provide opportunities to promote social interaction with adjoining neighbors.

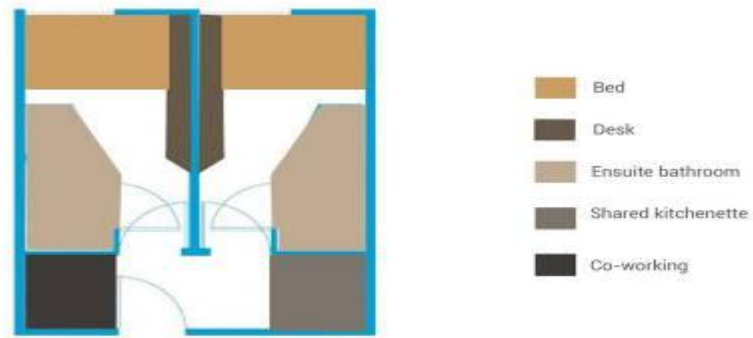


Figure 4: *the collective Old Oak's suite. Illustrated by author*



Figure 5: *Communal Kitchen and Library. Photography is by Amandine Alessandra.*

Circulation & Surveillance: Residents can monitor scheduled activities online but would have to go to individual spaces to observe if people were interacting or something unscheduled was taking place. Residents living on the side of the roof deck would be able to observe if any activity was taking place there from their unit windows(Mairs, 2016).

Case Study 2: WeLive in New York (Wall Street), by WeWork

WeLive is a large co-living company started by WeWork, WeLive offers traditional apartments, and from the studio to 4-bedroom apartments, whereas Wall Street is located in the Financial District of New York City(Osborne, 2018). This is a busy and dense area on the south end of Manhattan.

Program: WeLive Financial district consists of a lobby, with 6 levels of office space below 21 floors of residential, consisting of around 200 residential units(Osborne, 2018). The condos are assembled into sets of 3 stories called 'neighborhoods', associated by a stairwell, which shares a typical full-size kitchen and social space, which goes about as an auxiliary social zone. All the corridor spaces were outfitted and adorned to energize socialization and connection in the passage cradle zones. Private suites are 41 found intermixed on floors with comforts both on the primary luxury floors and the floors above(Osborne, 2018).

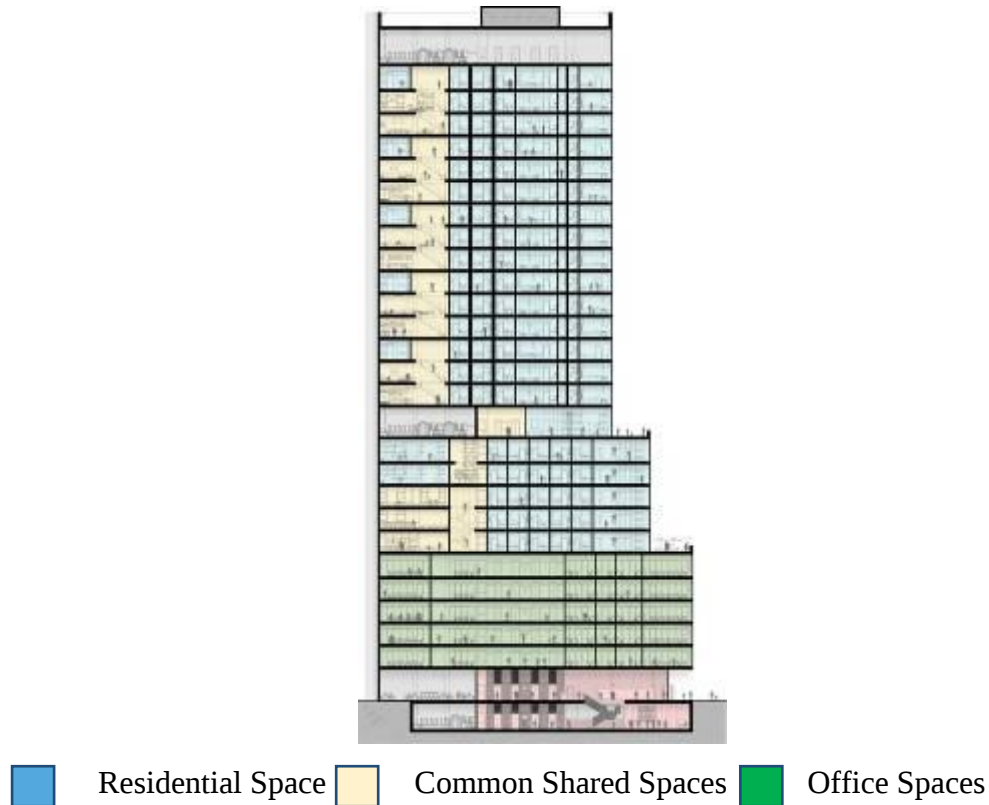


Figure 5: WeLive Wall Street Building Section;
Source;<http://cargocollective.com/assemblystudio/WeLive-on-Wall-Street>

Communal Space: The common spaces for all occupants to share are situated on the seventh to eleventh floors, including a huge kitchen and dining zone, open wellness room, pantry with games, bar, and a rooftop deck with BBQs and Hot Tubs which is exhibited in Figure7. The halls all through element groupings of parlor furniture, fine art, and extras that energize socialization.



Figure 6: WeLive Wall Street; Laundry Room and Dining Room
Room<https://www.dezeen.com/2016/07/08/six-best-co-living-developments-around-the-world/>

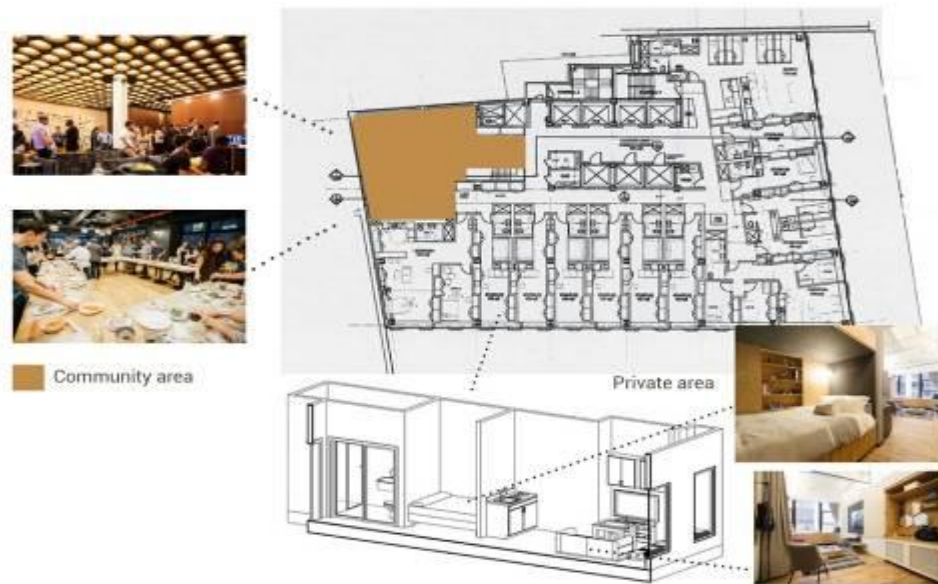


Figure 7: Plan indicating private spaces with an indication of the community area. Illustrated by author

Private Spaces: The lofts extend from studios to 4-room units. Every unit is outfitted with a living space, kitchenette, and at any rate 1 shower. Studios offer murphy beds, and bigger units have niche beds or full rooms. Kitchenettes have cooktop, microwave or potentially stove, sink, and cooler, and are furnished with fundamental cooking supplies and dishes.(Osborne, 2018).



Figure 8: WeLive Wall Street '1 bedroom' with photos. Source:https://www.spareroom.com/rooms-forrent/manhattan/financial_district/100117364

Circulation and Surveillance: Members that reside on the amenity floors can observe activities easily by proximity, but also may have trouble avoiding them if participation is not desired. Members not living on amenity floors would have to make a special effort to visit the space to know if an unplanned or unofficial event was taking place (Osborne, 2018). The community also shares announcements of planned activities, which offer an opportunity for surveillance, allowing awareness, attendance, or avoidance of planned activities by members.

Case Study 3; Roam, Bali

Roam is a travel-based coliving model, providing community and flexible living and working spaces in Bali, Tokyo, Miami, London, and San Francisco, with more locations planned. Roam's goal is to create a subscription living service for nomadic individuals, allowing them to book for weeks or months at a time at any of their locations, and moving on to the next when works for the resident. The total covered area of the building is 1750 m². The project is an example of Re-using as Architect Alexis Dornier converted a Banquet Hall into a Co-living facility.(Roam / Alexis Dornier, 2016).The case study is an example of Adaptive Reusing. As the building was converted from a Banquet Hall to Co-living projects. The Walls and Structure was kept intact and thus providing

Program:The location of the Roam project lined in this paper is in **Ubud, Bali, Indonesia**. The Architect Dornier aimed to create spaces that combine traditional Balinese design with domestic details that are common all over the world. The projects consist of 3 apartment buildings connected through roof decks and bridges, with a central courtyard. The building is two floors high with the ground and first floors of the building now contain a series of bedrooms, each with their private bathrooms and patios.Roam Bali was completed in 2015 and contains 24 rooms(Roam / Alexis Dornier, 2016).

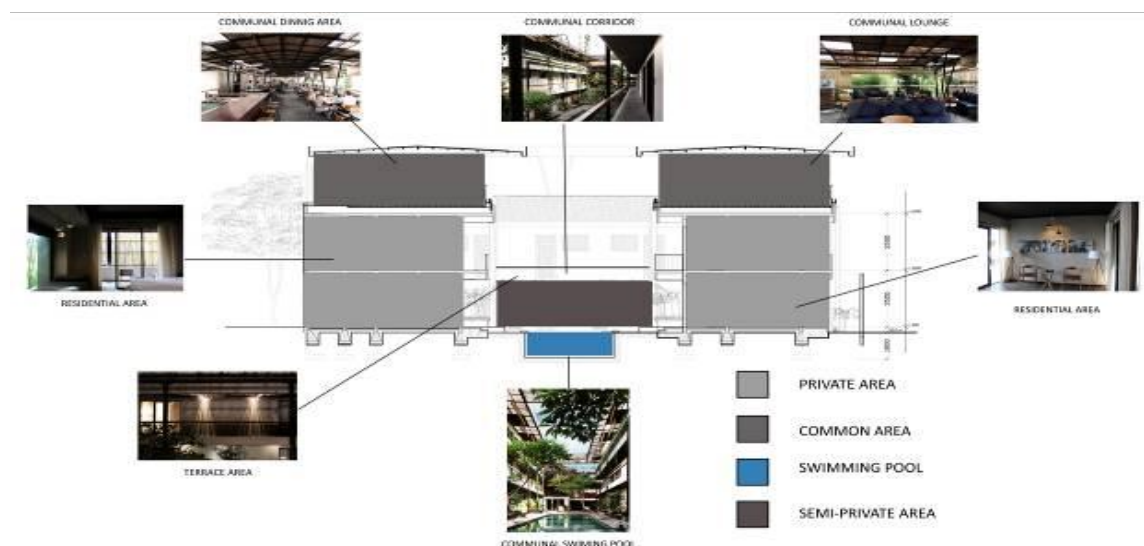


Figure 12 Graphical Representation of Communal Spaces Illustrated by Author

Communal Spaces: The main community amenities are located on the rooftop level. The Communal amenities include Communal Lounges, Communal Kitchen with Dining Areas, Restaurants, extensive deck space, cafe, bar, yoga, and other recreational areas. Secondary amenities such as communal swimming pool, central courtyard, and garden are located on the lower floors. The efficient canopy structure spans across all shared spaces. Different opacities through a range of materials such as bamboo, tin, and polycarbonate turn the place into a light, yet protected outpost high up, overlooking its surrounding(Roam / Alexis Dornier, 2016).The V-shaped columns, the low pitched ceilings, and the clustered segments of the canopy have an Asian, reductive appeal to reply to its surrounding in a contemporary way, rather than mimicking a traditional building style or materials.

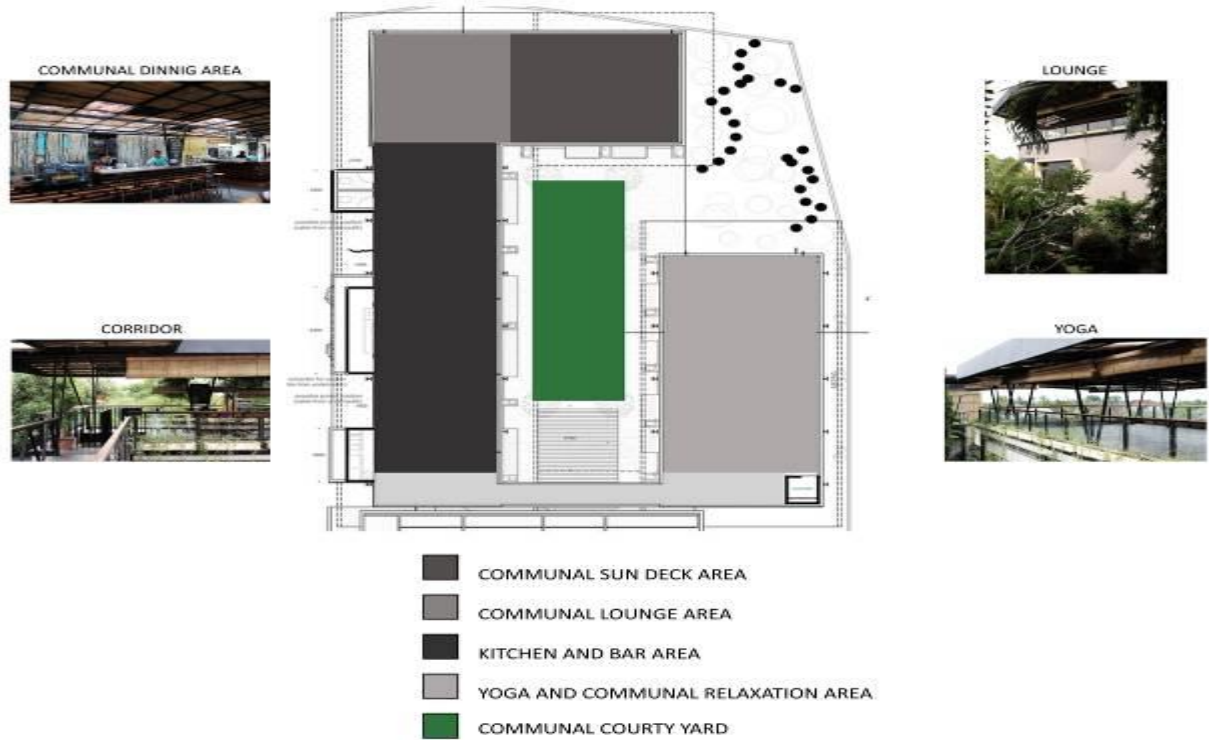


Figure13 Third Floor Plan. Illustrated by Author

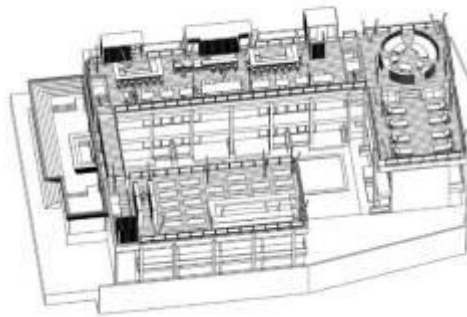


Figure 14: 3-D View of Top Floor Source: https://www.archdaily.com/787696/roam-alexis-dornier/573bcbcf58ecef4d000097-roam-alexis-dornier-image?next_project=no

Private Spaces: The private rooms are given on the ground and first floor with individual patios and balconies on the first floor. Figure 15 exhibits that, all private suites have an ensuite bath with shower, sink & toilet. Each room is furnished at a minimum with a full-size bed and sitting area. Bed linens, towels, and toiletry products are also supplied and are refreshed by housekeeping every week.



Figure 15: Partial Plan of Residential Areas Source: https://www.archdaily.com/787696/roam-alexis-dornier/573bcec3e58ece11ae0000e3-roam-alexis-dornier-plan-cafe?next_project=no

Case Study 4: Yükseliş Öğrenci Residence, İzmir Turkey

Yükseliş Öğrenci Residence is located on University Cad: 68Kazım Dirik Mah.Ankara Asphalt Bornova / İzmir, opposite to YASAR University. It is Co-living Facilities mainly for Students. It is a sub-project of the Yükseliş Hotel(Yükseliş Student Residence, n.d.).

Program: The project is consists of 10 floors, with 8 floors having 96 residential units and 2 floors are specified for communal activities. The residence can accommodate up to 300 people with shared units of 1, 2, and 3 beds. 4 floors are designated for male users and 4 floors are designated for female students.

Communal Spaces:The project consists of a large Communal Living area for both male and female users with indoor games. Other communal facilities include Large Communal Kitchen with Dining Area, Café at ground level, and Laundry with ironing room and Gym in the basement. Communal Study Area with a small Library for students, Guest rooms, and a small outdoor area(Yükseliş Student Residence, n.d.).



Figure 16 Gym and Multipurpose Hall Source: <https://www.yukselisresidence.com/en/residence-resimleri.html#&gid=1&pid=1>

Private Spaces: Residential units consists of 12 rooms on each floor, with room size varying to accommodate 1, 2, or 3 users. Each room has its washroom and a terrace. Each room is furnished with a small refrigerator, cupboards, and study tables.

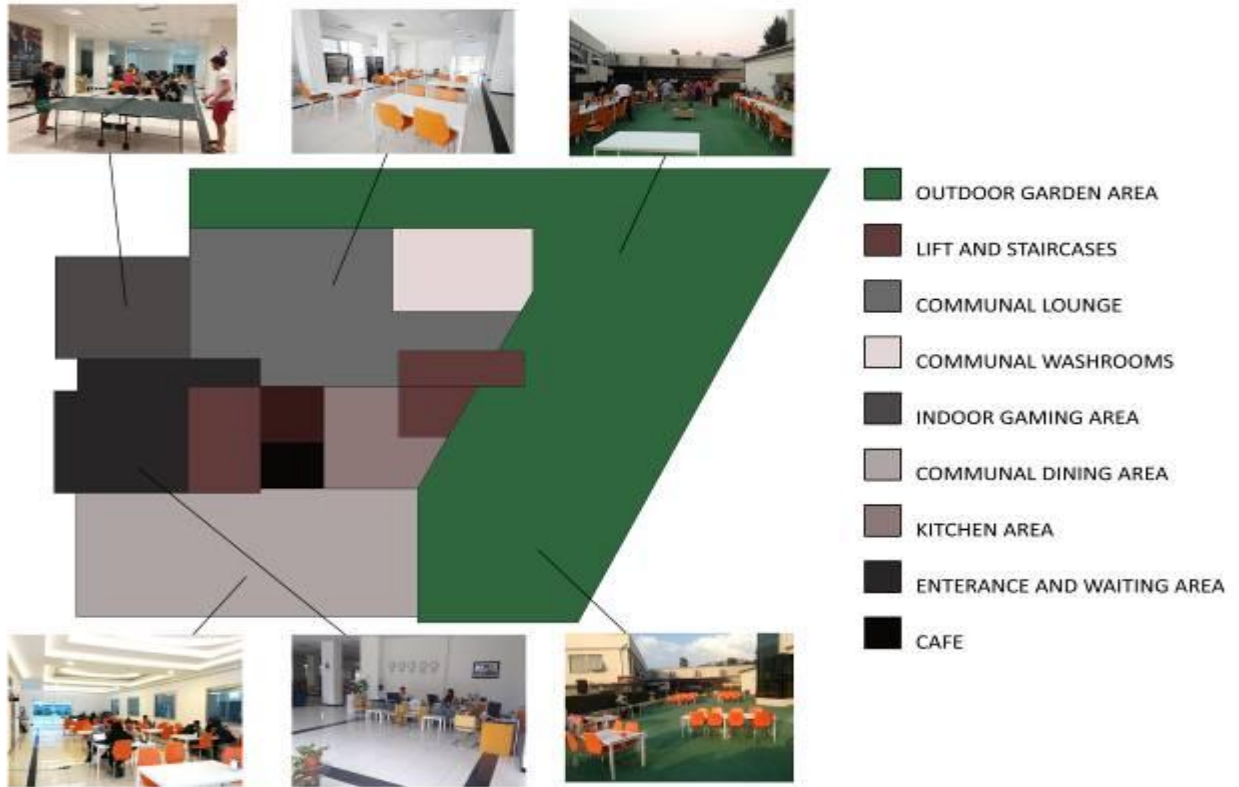


Figure17: Ground Floor Plan Illustrated By Author

Circulation and Surveillance: The project is vertically dominant having 2 lifts (one for male and one for female users) and two staircases. Communal Spaces are given on the basement and ground floor. All residential rooms are connected with one long and centralized corridor(Yükseliş Student Residence, n.d.).

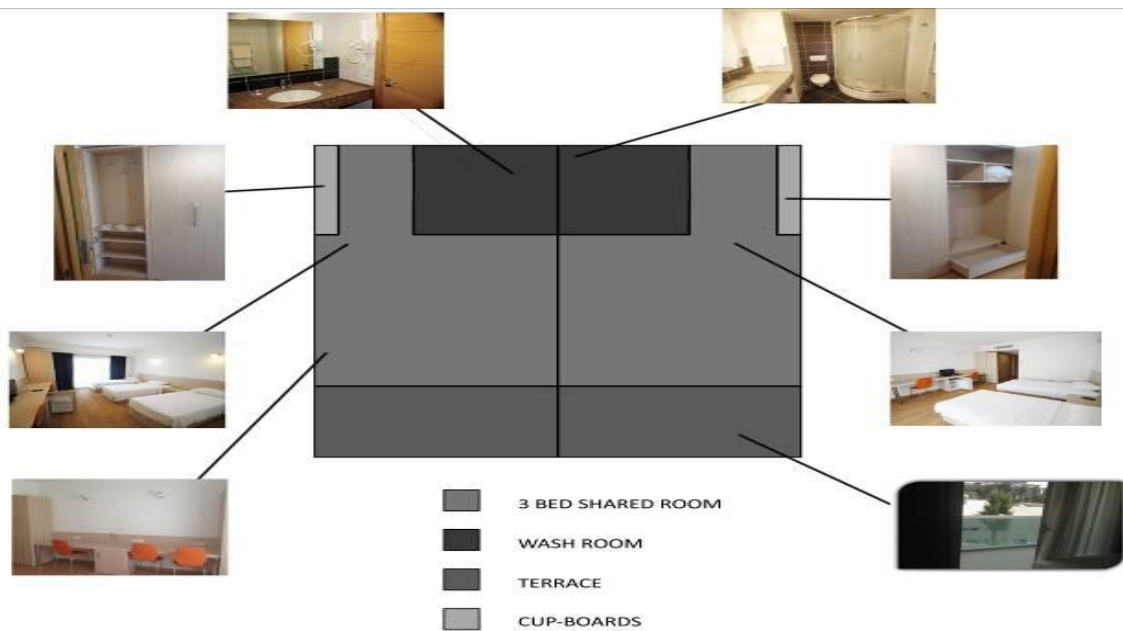


Figure 18 Private Room Partial Plan, Illustrated by Author

Findings

Due to Housing Shortage and rapid increase in population, Co-housing and co-living is the new mode of mass housing. As it provides more housing opportunity and also provide its user with a chance of social interaction through the communal spaces. The findings of this paper are based on these communal spaces and their importance.

Table 1: Summary of Communal Spaces in Case Studies Illustrated by Author

	The Collective Old Oak, London	WeLive In New York	Roam in Bali by Roam	Yükseliş Öğrenci Residence, Turkey
Living Area / Lounge	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dining & Kitchen	✓	✓	✓	✓
Laundry Services	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gym and Fitness Area	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cinema / Movie Room	✓			
Communal Landscape	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indoor Gaming Area	✓	✓		✓
Multi Purpose Hall	✓			✓
Co-Working Area		✓		

By analyzing the above case studies and Table 1.1, the following are the findings of this paper:

- ✚ The most essential communal spaces in any co-housing projects are Living area, Dining areas with communal kitchen or separate kitchen depending upon the users, and Laundry with other daily using services. These places provide the best opportunity for social interaction as these places are most used in a co-housing project. These spaces provide a rigid frame for any co-housing project. These can be considered as primary communal spaces.
- ✚ After these spaces, Social interaction and physical activity spaces such as Gymnasium or Fitness rooms or any other activities such as Spa, Sauna, and Physical activities spaces like an indoor and outdoor games area are secondary communal spaces. These spaces are the second most essential spaces as they provide fitness as well as social interactions for its users.
- ✚ Entertainment spaces such as Movie rooms, Music Rooms, Cinemas, or any other communal spaces which allow the user to relax while being inside the building are also important. Also Recreational activities such as paintings, swimming are good communal spaces that initiate social interaction and as well as provide users activities to relax and spend time leisurely.

- ✚ One of the most essential communal spaces like Living or Dining is Communal Landscaping. It could be a roof garden or a centralized courtyard or any other spaces allowing the user to interact with nature and share that place with its neighbors to create a sense of unity. Such spaces increase the aesthetics and beautify of the co-housing project.
- ✚ Another finding of this paper is that the multipurpose hall or Community hall is also essential for any good co-housing projects. As such spaces allow the user to have a different type of group activities. Co-housing projects like Common or Roam have group activities for their users every week in such halls to provide them a better living standard and also increase the social interaction.

Recommendation and Reflections

Based on the above case studies and their findings we can reflect:

- ✚ Co-Housing should be more advertise and promoted as it can provide cheap and suitable living and could be an answer to the housing shortage problem faced throughout the world.
- ✚ Co-living projects are best for students or short-term residency, as sharing facilities can minimize the spending.
- ✚ Sharing Common facilities provider user an opportunity to interact with human and enhance their social interactions tools and live life more enthusiastically.
- ✚ In-terms of Spaces, Living Room, or Lounge is the most important and used communal space. It should always be the primary concern while planning such projects. Different activities such as indoor games or discussion rooms can be intertwined with such spaces to enhance their usage and to maximize human interaction.
- ✚ After Living, the second-most important common space is Laundry and other daily usage services. Such spaces should be equidistance or provided a place where they can be easily accessible by every user.
- ✚ Physical Spaces such as Gym, Spa, and Sauna and indoor and outdoor games provide an opportunity for the user to be physical and healthy and also fulfilling the main objective of common spaces to promote human interaction between its users.

Conclusion

Coliving is a kind of new concept for living in the community, ideal especially in major European, American, and UK cities. As seen for the 4 cases studied, it is a concept based mainly on the sharing of spaces of daily life, most of the spaces that are repeated in each project are living area and dining areas because these are the spaces where we spend the most time of the day, thereafter we distinguish the kitchen as a shared space along with laundry services. Other areas are shared at these co-living spaces but they are affected by factors such as budget, users, targeted communities, and surfaces. From the above study, it can be concluded that the Effectiveness of any co-housing projects mainly depends on what and how common shared spaces are given. Quality and quantity of such spaces can enhance any co-living projects, so to have a good co-living project such spaces common shared should be given the uttermost importance.

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