From Within

Uncovering Cultural Domesticity

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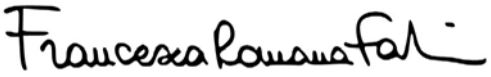
Francesca Romana Forlini



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Abstract

From Within explores the intersecting processes of construction of the home, social and individual identities through domestic practices inside post-war housing. In specific, it examines the design and occupation of domestic spaces as crucial moments for the consolidation of subjectivities, beliefs and ideologies manifested through daily actions that are influenced by normative cultural systems. From the study of these residential complexes' interiors today, a discrepancy clearly exists between their current state and the original intentions of architects. Thus, what guides individual inhabitation choices? What mechanisms sanctioned the break between the architects' envisioned lifestyles reflected in the architectural plan and the inhabitants' experience? This thesis answers these questions by bringing forward a cultural understanding of the domestic based on both the spatial implications of inhabitation practices and the cultural factors that shape the design and use of domestic interiors. It ultimately provides a feminist theoretical framework for the study of the dynamics that determine the occupation and design of domestic interiors in architecture by bridging architectural theory, cultural sociology and gender studies. This study thus opens to a reading of contemporary domesticity based on the spatial analysis of cultural, social and gender dynamics that unfold inside the home.

This thesis' methodology, based on Pierre Bourdieu's social theory, clarifies the mechanisms of interpersonal transmission of tastes and behaviours that constitute enculturated practices that take place in the domestic realm. Feminist theory and criticism of the heteronormative and patriarchal foundations of Bourdieu's theory will open to the representation and production of gender identities inside the home, along with the persistence of spatialized gender hierarchies within these spaces. By focusing on women's lived experience, this research then looks at the consolidation of feminine domestic cultures and how they foster small-scale physical transformations of dwellings' interiors through daily negotiations that define self-identity and interpersonal power relations. These dynamics are referred to as *cultural domesticity*. The latter frames this thesis' investigation of housing interiors as cultural constructs, it also recognises the inhabitants' daily actions and changes as active design processes. Cultural domesticity ultimately clarifies how cultural, social behaviours and architectural form relate. Indeed, contemporary domesticity and interiors are the result of a negotiation between normalizing forces and individual needs with clear material and spatial implications. As a result, housing design is seen as the outcome of normative cultural expectations that are in continuous tension with individual occupation.

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Introduction

The social, political and economic dynamics of domestic space have been a subject of study by scholars from various disciplines, including anthropology, cultural sociology, gender studies, interior architecture and architecture. The latter, together with other spatial and cultural disciplines is, in light of the pandemic that afflicted the world in 2020 and forced millions into their homes, once again questioning the nature and future of domestic space and everyday life. Much of this debate focused on the Western world, but architects that intend on carrying out a study of post-pandemic domesticity must question the pre-pandemic condition first. In this regard, this dissertation investigates the mechanisms that led to the consolidation of the Western home prior to 2020. This research, therefore, aligns with previous studies on Western architectural history, and it does so by focusing on dwellings designed for nuclear, heterosexual families. This conventional approach introduces some of the key critical points raised in this thesis. First, despite social and historical changes that have affected Western countries in the past century, the heteropatriarchal foundations of the domestic space remain largely unchanged, leading to tensions between the inhabitants. Second, Western architectural history is gendered, in its methodology, which influence the criteria for value attribution to buildings and designers, along with the sexist nature of architectural practice, which has a direct impact on housing design. This thesis will, therefore, bring forward a gendered and cultural understanding of the domestic through a critique of the sexual, cultural and spatial normativity of architectural history and practice.

As a female architect, I am interested in issues surrounding identity, sexuality, gendered spaces, gendered cultural and architectural representations. In writing this thesis, I also developed a personal and academic interest in the relationship between lived experience and architecture, which is a subject not only tied to feminist scholarship, but also unconsciously connected to my gender identity and my experience of architectural space. With this research, I am taking a critical and theoretical position in the way I read domesticity and the private realm, which are undoubtedly among the most discussed subjects in feminist literature. However, I move beyond the usual feminist discourse by trying to propose a new theoretical approach for the study of the home, seen as 'at once an idea, a social institution, and a material reality'.[1] It is based on the use and occupation of domestic spaces, specifically, on the relationship between spatial practices and cultures, and the home environment. It is also characterised by a focus on lived experience that considers normative ideas of housing, foregrounding a subjective meaning of dwelling. This thesis, therefore, draws on feminist and sociological theory in order to propose new interpretative lenses that place issues of gender, culture and everyday life at the centre of architectural history and criticism. In fact, placing the formation and consolidation of gender identity at the core of this investigation means delving into individual, personal and even intimate facets of living, which are largely overlooked in architectural history and housing studies.

This thesis' focus on the personal realm intersects with feminist studies, especially Marxist feminism. The latter looks at the role that patriarchy and capital play in the oppression of women, culminating in the famous claim that 'the personal is political.'[2] This sentence has great resonance in this research, reinforcing that the use and appropriation of domestic interiors is politically charged and worthy of scholarly investigation. Specifically, gender dynamics mainly unfold in the domestic domain through spatial and ideological boundaries that create material, psychological, and social division, whether physically or symbolically. Indeed, 'socially produced boundaries between genders are implicated in gender differences, in types and degrees of intimacy' and are, therefore, at the core of domestic life.[3]

The design of dwellings is clearly a charged political and cultural act that may reflect the architect's own history, cultural heritage or gender biases. Given that most of female architects entered the workforce only in the second half of the twentieth century, it is reasonable to say that a large part of the available housing stock in Western countries was designed by male architects that reproduced (either consciously or unconsciously), some sexist biases, thereby contributing to the typical modernist division of 'feminine' and 'masculine' spaces in the home. The gender symbolism associated with the 'public' and 'private' parts of the dwelling is the most important boundary in a dwelling's design, and this dualism mirrors the heteronormative foundations of the Western home. Such binary understanding of sexuality and gender has, therefore, created an architectural and social space of patriarchal hegemonic order that historically led to gender-based discrimination and the psychological and material domestication of women.[4] In fact, architectural theorist and historian Mark Wigley explains in his writings that the home has been associated with femininity and the female body since the Hellenic period.[5] Consequently, 'within the context of feminine domesticity stereotypical images of women and the home were conflated and turned into a single ideal. In response to that ideal, women have formed their own individual and collective identities.'[6] Thus, it is possible to say that feminine domesticity is socially and culturally produced and individually negotiated, but it is also closely tied to architectural space – which brings together the main disciplines that frame this thesis and its theoretical field of research: social, feminist and cultural theory, along with architecture. Women's self-making practices in the home are nuanced, and their spatial manifestations have been only insufficiently explored so far. As a consequence of the institutionalised, physical and symbolic frameworks that confined women to the domestic sphere, they have been historically forced to negotiate their personal identities through embodied and cultural acts, but also aesthetic choices.[7] This research, then, touches upon women's domestic consumption and individual taste in interior decoration and furnishing, expanding on the interdisciplinary literature produced until now on the mediating role that consumption plays in the consolidation of feminine aesthetics, identity and domesticity.[8] This thesis will, consequently, integrate this literature with a close spatial analysis that takes into consideration the architectural implications of interior occupation.

The criticism brought forward in this thesis also includes, once again, the marginality of the political role of the personal in architecture. Form and function still have a bigger resonance in housing and design studies, whereas the personal, the private, even the emotional, are considered less valuable analytical lenses. The contribution of this research thus lies in attributing value to people and use (or to inhabitants and the appropriation of their domestic interiors) in contrast to high-cultural discussions of aesthetics (or housing exteriors). Use-value is also the lens that Marxist feminists use to dissociate cultural artefacts from exchange and symbolic value, which, until now, have respectively legitimised capitalist transactions and the patriarchy and, it is believed here, equally legitimised exclusive choices and exclusionary narratives by art, design and architectural historians. This thesis fully embraces the political dimension of the personal, the aesthetic and design potential of women's inhabitation practices and spatial cultures and, overall, women's cultural production in the domestic realm. These aspects will be referred to as *cultural domesticity*, an innovative theoretical and analytical lens that grounds the study of housing and domesticity. In specific, cultural domesticity describes the cultural, embodied, and spatial production that takes place inside the home. Given women's traditional connection to domestic space as both an enforced confinement, but also the locus for the negotiation and consolidation of female identity,

given also the current theoretical gap in architectural history and housing studies in respect to women's cultural and aesthetic production in the domestic environment, the discussion of cultural domesticity will almost exclusively relate to the feminine domain.[9]

The research also aims to establish a new methodological approach that takes into account the fragmented and multidisciplinary debates that have emerged over the past thirty years on the subject of space, sexuality, gender and the house.[10] In specific, it relies on feminist and social theory to expand existing architectural scholarship on the subject of housing and domesticity, and looks at the role that women play in the design of domestic spaces through lived practices and experiences. Thus, on the one hand this thesis studies the role that women play in the consolidation of the nuclear family and their crucial role as homemakers; on the other, it examines the spatial and design implications of women's domestic practices and cultures, which are becoming more individualised and, therefore, play a substantial role in contemporary domesticity. From this study, a clear disconnection emerges between male, ideological schemes and structures – materialised in the architectural plan and the external appearance of buildings – and feminine cultures and inhabitation practices, which take place inside the home. This tension is particularly evident in housing projects built in the two countries under study: Italy and France.

This research specifically focuses on post-war housing, a massive presence of residential typologies built as part of the post-war reconstruction and the 1960s–1980s economic miracle that boosted the construction industry. With this architectural production now having become historicised, it is possible to situate its architectural typologies within the contingencies of the post-war era and the socio-cultural context in which they exist today. Figures show that at least 40% of French and Italian citizens still inhabit these estates; thus, focusing on such architectural production provides quite a comprehensive picture of contemporary domesticity in these two contexts.[11] Moreover, the spatialisation of cultural practices in both countries can be easily read in plan through a spatial analysis of the evolution of the lower- and middle-class apartment. In fact, post-war housing was not only limited to the working class, but in the contexts of France and Italy gave birth to extensively built yet overlooked typologies (such as the *palazzina* type in Italy) devoted to an emerging middle class. These estates were also mass produced, and their standardised features facilitated the reproduction of domestic practices and spatial cultures that reflect social homologation and reinforced gender inequalities. The focus on this specific architectural era also facilitates typological analysis, which help define internal modifications over time, from pre-Modernist to post-war types. This will enable a close analysis of the spatialisation of cultural domesticity in Italy and France, as contemporary domestic cultures consolidated and materialised precisely inside these estates.

It is worth mentioning that architectural historians played a central role in the exclusion of several aspects of female aesthetic and cultural production in the field of architecture. This includes domestic interiors, their occupation, decoration, and furnishing, but also the implications they have for self-making practices and feminine domesticity. Design historians Penny Sparke and Judy Attfield suggested that suburban residential architecture, the ordinary housing complexes built on the peripheries of Western cities (post-war housing included), should be considered feminine since they are the sites of women's taste par excellence.[12] Attfield, indeed, claims that design historians' 'disinterest [in middle-class houses, furnishings and objects] can also be attributed to a perceived lack of quality

("poor taste") ascribed to the suburban aesthetic within the context of visual culture, often disparagingly referred to as "kitsch".'[13] These harsh criticisms against the feminine middle-class world and aesthetics in the home sanctioned, indeed, the break of high-culture masculine, modernist aesthetic over mid-culture, feminine taste.[14] It was arguably the result of legitimising male, heteropatriarchal, and elitist privilege in the creative fields, architecture included. No wonder that women's spatial and aesthetic choices have been overlooked by architectural and design history and theory, and that women have been systematically excluded from the dominant aesthetic culture.[15] This privilege has been justified as an aesthetic judgement, whose criteria are defined precisely by the elite of male, white men that enforced distinction and defined the boundaries of high culture. Female taste, creative endeavours, consumption choices and, it is argued here, also feminine spaces – like the domestic interior – have been indeed the central subjects of this systematic exclusion, neglect, and contempt. By challenging these dynamics from a feminist perspective, *From Within* places all these excluded categories at the core of its investigation. It, indeed, aims to reposition female aesthetics, cultural practices and spaces at the centre of architectural history, theory and practice.

This research, therefore, focuses on feminine domestic cultures in post-war estates. These ordinary, mass-produced housing projects fall as well into the categories excluded from the high-cultural debate in architecture. They, indeed, have only played a marginal role in architectural history, but also in conservation theory so far: their architectural, aesthetic and cultural value have been largely questioned, leading to large demolition campaigns that still threaten their existence.[16] In fact, an elite of preservation bodies and architectural historians who rely on sexist, high-cultural canons, defines the criteria for the judgement of value of architecture, hence these estates have not only been considered unworthy of attention, but also of a second life. On the contrary, cultural domesticity recognises post-war mass housing as valuable architectures from a cultural standpoint, and this can potentially contribute to filling a theoretical gap in conservation theory and practice. Twentieth-century heritage is, indeed, different from traditional categories, since it is part of our recent history and mainly comprises ordinary, residential estates.[17] It is protected by international institutions[18] following specific criteria,[19] however, these preservation bodies are struggling to define their approach to modern heritage, and cannot find cultural or aesthetic value in ordinary housing projects.[20] Most recent studies on intangible cultural heritage could potentially support the study on enculturated practices that take place inside housing interiors,[21] and the notion of cultural domesticity can contribute to expanding the criteria used to judge the value of housing in both architectural history and preservation.

Parallels will be also drawn between the processes of construction of national, collective identities, the definition of class and gender distinctions and social norms. The relationship between the national and the private is not surprising, as they share the same patriarchal roots that excluded and confined women by defining the gender boundaries of domestic interiors, the aesthetic boundaries of good taste, and outlined good manners and behavioural guides. In short, the same processes of consolidating national identity also impacted daily life with the aim of disciplining citizens. *From Within* will demonstrate that traces of stereotypical cultural and heteropatriarchal codes, norms and behaviours still play a crucial role in contemporary domesticity. A clear example is the enculturated yet sexist practices of preparing meals in Italy, that still confines women to the kitchen. Food, indeed, plays a central role in Italy's national identity and influences not only Italians' daily life, but

also dwellings' design and women's identity. The typological evolution of the middle-class apartment in Italy and France demonstrates that only few social changes were registered by architects, which oftentimes reinforced social conservatism through their architectural plans. This thesis, therefore, provides a detailed study of the nature of domestic space as a symbolic, social, cultural and ideological construction with an impact on processes of self-making, everyday domestic practices, and the design and use of the home. Through this, housing design is ultimately seen as the outcome of extant normative cultural expectations that are in continuous tension with lived experience and interior occupation. In fact, Western homes have long been theatres of tensions, places for the reproduction of stereotypical and heteropatriarchal codes, as well as places of consumption, conviviality and the construction of gender and self-identity.

'As material culture, space is not innate and inert, measured geometrically, but an integral and changing part of daily life, intimately bound up in social and personal rituals and activities.'[22] Material culture, in specific, is a particularly significant subject of study in existing literature on the domestic sphere,[23] and is instrumental for the study of the unfolding of spatial practices and aesthetic cultures. This research also concentrates on the interaction between inhabitants and architectural space and, therefore, the embodied dimension of this study takes on a prominent role. It is, therefore, aknowledged that both material and spatial cultures play a central role in the formation and reproduction of enculturated practices and gender identities – especially female subjectivities – hence, they play a central role in this thesis. With regards to this point Wigley writes that 'the wife learns her "natural" place by learning the place of things. She is "domesticated" by internalizing the very spatial order that confines her.'[24] This internalisation and negotiation is mediated by both architectural space and household objects, and their appropriation and use are historically associated with the construction of feminine identity and domesticity through the exercise of taste via interior decoration and furnishing.[25]

As aforementioned, enculturated domestic practices have an impact on the negotiations of individual identities and interpersonal relationships,[26] and their repercussions on the domestic space have been largely overlooked by architects. This research, therefore, argues for a direct relationship between personal and interpersonal spheres and spatial change in the home. Modifications of the interior dwelling layout are considered as spatial expressions of the personal and embodied dimensions of domesticity. In specific, these alterations can be both physical and decorative in nature – the former can be associated with the modification of the architectural plan through the demolition or construction of walls or openings but also the extension of the living area of the apartment through the addition of new rooms or the enclosure of otherwise open spaces such as terraces or gardens. Decorative changes, instead, pertain to the rearrangement of objects subsequent to a change in use of dwelling spaces – this may include the rearrangement of furniture in order to accommodate new needs of the inhabitants (both functional or aesthetic) or a complete change in the use of a room itself. They also pertain the purchase and disposition of decorative objects in the space and, overall, the construction of a pleasant, aesthetic interior environment.

These alterations can be the result of culture-making and self-making processes that are expected to follow existing social and cultural boundaries, although the latter can be modified and customised by individuals. To put it in different terms, cultural content is produced through the change of a common language (such as institutional culture and domesticity)

and through its daily use (daily activities and domestic interiors). This appropriation of culture allows small-scale physical transformations and adaptations of space through daily negotiations that consolidate self-identity.[27] In short, inhabitation is both a daily cultural form of production and a creative act of design that questions, on a daily basis, existing hierarchies and norms. Specifically, this dialectic can be discussed or identified through the study of lived experience, gendered space, self-expression and spatial alterations.

These considerations then lead to the following questions: Does reading the domestic as transformative, cultural and gendered enable a new analysis of the relationship between housing, inhabitation practices, and design as a continuous, daily process? What insights does a cultural reading of the dwelling plan and current occupation of housing interiors offer for an understanding of contemporary domesticity from a feminist perspective?

A cultural reading of interior occupation is as important as a gendered analysis, because if, on the one hand, Marxist geographers like David Harvey, Edward Soja or Doreen Massey explored how space is socially produced, on the other, anthropologists and social scientists provided the basis for an understanding of architecture as a culturally produced artefact.[28] This applies, above all, to the domestic environment. Furthermore, social science and anthropology see gender, space and culture as closely related, as culture determines the positioning of bodies in space, the symbolic dimension of architecture and the role it plays in the consolidation of gender roles and power relations.[29] At the same time, architects claim that gendered space exists both intentionally and unintentionally: indeed, 'gender is such a concept, underpinned by a spatial logic that is masked in the moment of its application to architecture, as an extra-, or rather, pre-architectural given. The question of sexuality and space here is that of the structure of this mask.'[30] The institutionalised mask mentioned here encompasses the social, political, and cultural values that, as feminists have oftentimes pointed out, reflect the values of the dominant social class, elite groups and, in general, capitalist patriarchy.[31] Architectural space can be also imbued with cultural and gendered connotations because of the architect's own gender and cultural background, his or her conscious or unconscious intentions, or through the use and activities that take place inside.[32] Gender is, therefore, a crucial analytical category for the new study of housing and domesticity brought forward in this thesis.

Within the social sciences, Pierre Bourdieu's use of *habitus* in his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979) proves crucial to the development of this study. In specific, habitus uncovers individual cultural agency within predefined socio-cultural frameworks.[33] It comprises the shared culture and personal history that organise the way people perceive and see the social sphere. It is also a more or less unconscious disposition of the individual towards the external world that acts at the level of the body, it is structured by one's past history and social position (social class) and has the power to influence current practices in the home and choices. This understanding forms a fundamental aspect of this study, as the processes of internalising social and cultural norms and their embodiment through daily practices and spatial changes are considered here as a manifestation of habitus. Moreover, social conventions and expectations, along with kinship systems, play a fundamental role in the transmission of moral codes and behavioural norms that have an impact on daily actions and choices. In fact, it is hypothesised here that Bourdieu's theory of habitus, beyond being formative for the study of identity and inhabitation,[34] has an important yet insufficiently studied spatial component. Habitus indeed describes the

individual's translation of cultural dispositions in everyday life along with mechanisms of interiorising pre-existing cultural dispositions, which lead to the performativity of culture through mundane practices that, as previously mentioned, have spatial implications. Thus, each practice analysed in this thesis will be evaluated against Bourdieu's theory in order to understand the dynamics embedded in domestic occupation. However, a crucial theoretical critique that will be developed pertains to social reproduction and social change, which is one of the weaknesses of Bourdieu's theory that is covered and partially solved by feminist literature.[35] Given the nature of this study, this will focus on two specific domestic practices that have clear cultural and gender connotations, which are respectively the practice of food preparation and consumption in Italy and the enculturated practice of receiving guests in France. They are both not only central in the definition of national, shared culture in each context, but they are also – and not by chance – typically feminine.

To sum up, the interdisciplinary nature of this study is developed in this thesis through a feminist critical and analytical approach based on the social sciences and, specifically, on Bourdieu's theory. This aims to establish a new critical and theoretical connection between feminism, sociology, and architecture for a cultural and gendered study of residential architecture and domesticity. The thesis indeed studies housing as a setting in which personal, gender, class, and cultural identity is received, reproduced, and produced through the use and appropriation of its interior spaces.[36]

The implications of cultural domesticity and the contributions this thesis attempts to make are threefold. First of all, it acknowledges the cultural and spatial relevance of human actions and individual occupation of architectural spaces while elevating women's homemaking and inhabitation practices and arguing that they are culturally and aesthetically valuable. Second, it criticises architectural history's traditional aesthetic values that have so far pushed 'kitsch' domestic interiors and ordinary ('feminine') housing to the margins of the architectural debate. Third, it brings forth a feminist theoretical framework for the study of the occupation and design of housing interior, which includes daily spatial changes and minor alterations that are here considered worthy of further research. These points can be narrowed down to a single epistemological shift influenced by feminism and cultural studies: by challenging the sexist boundaries of high culture in the creative fields, specifically architectural history, cultural domesticity repositions feminine culture (usually considered middlebrow or included in the larger umbrella of midcult) at the centre of an architectural inquiry.[37] In specific, the framing of the thesis through the notion of cultural domesticity is an attempt to subvert existing hierarchies of value-attribution in architectural history, placing feminine spaces and cultures at the centre of its investigation.

The thesis' methodology derives, as aforementioned, from Bourdieu's book *Distinction.*[38] Specifically, habitus reconciles the objective structure – or institutionalised frame – of the architectural plan with the subjective dimension of appropriation and enculturation. Feminist scholars see habitus as a model of the self that partially reproduces problematic aspects of patriarchal oppression, thus feminist sociologists Beverly Skeggs' and Lista Adkins' reflections on habitus will be developed to integrate Bourdieu's theory.[39] A series of mixed research methods – qualitative, typological, historiographical and comparative – lay down the basis for the interdisciplinary approach of cultural domesticity that is complemented by, but also integrates, existing feminist and sociological theory. In other words, typological

analysis will underpin the hypothesis that habitus has spatial implications that can be clearly read in dwelling plans. The combination of methodology and methods drives this thesis' spatial analysis of feminine domestic cultures and practices.

In short, this thesis will integrate the historical and conventional methods found in the field of architecture with previous interdisciplinary scholarly work on domestic space and identity, contributing to the originality of this study. This will provide new insights into the relationship between user and architectural space by specifically combining Bourdieu's sociological, structuralist framework and feminism with an architectural design study. In specific, it will demonstrate that the construction of subjective identity (subjective structures) is tightly connected to architectural space (objective structures), and domestic interiors specifically. The focus on feminine culture, aesthetic and design solutions will also open to the cultural and aesthetic production of overlooked women designers and amateurs. In fact, from this research it emerges a lack of existing literature on the work of women architects and decorators, especially in Italy, a lack that will be directly addressed in this thesis.

Comparative research methods, which imply a comparison between the contexts of France and Italy, but also various architectural plans and housing projects, typological analysis and archival research of original texts and drawings are instrumental for the analysis of the spatial evolution of dwellings in relation to habitus and cultural domesticity. From the comparison will emerge shared reflections on domestic consumption, an emphasis on the aesthetic component of daily life in France (explored in Part I), and a particular focus on the normative and spatial dimension of the domestic sphere in Italy (discussed in Part II). Architectural treatises along with etiquette manuals are also important documents analysed, as they both represent, through the written word and architectural drawings (either explicitly or implicitly), cultural and gender stereotypes as well as societal norms and expectations that shape both class habitus and domestic practices. These documents directly assist in the cultural construction of domestic space, therefore, studying them can uncover the mechanisms of reproduction and representation that characterise this study.[40] Depending on the practice analysed and the spatial and material developments associated with it, case studies from the pre-modern period will be occasionally discussed. Given the focus on reception practices in France, Part I of this dissertation will look at historical examples, concentrating on case studies from the eighteenth century onwards. The narrative around food culture on peasant recipes consolidated in late nineteenth-century Italy, making the rural housing type one of the case studies analysed. The latter will be compared to housing projects built in the following decades, hence part II will concentrate mainly on twentieth and twenty-first century examples, opening up to this thesis' final remarks on contemporary domesticity.

Furthermore, photographs of domestic interiors along with interviews with the inhabitants will be combined in order to delve into the personal dimension of this study and uncover how individual practices unfold in the domestic space, how they spatialise in the cultural contexts analysed, to what extent they trigger spatial changes and whether they still bear gendered connotations. Fieldwork was based on ethnographic practice, with a detailed plan laid out beforehand. A series of relevant housing estates were selected for each country: a pre-war housing complex that illustrates the persistence of pre-modern enculturated practices, oftentimes stereotypical; an exemplary but 'ordinary' post-war estate which hosts both middle- and working-class inhabitants,

or a typically middle-class Modernist estate, designed by a well-known architect and which can be considered anticipating some aspects of contemporary, middle-class domesticity.[41] Social class played an important role in the selection of the six projects, but the design of the standardised dwellings was also crucial in the selection process, as each plan always had to reflect on domestic practices considered in the specific context analysed. In the analysis of French society and social classes, Bourdieu's use of terminology in *Distinctions* (1979) was adopted. 'Petit bourgeoisie' thus refers to the French lower middle class, which is often associated with a tendency to heavily decorate interiors, and 'bourgeoisie' to the upper middle-class élite of French society. In the case of Italy, the more general term middle class is used, as due to a different social history, the distinctions found in France are not relevant here.

Fieldwork took place in the summer 2019, when I spent over a month and a half in Paris and Rome. Through a gatekeeper, usually the porter, I was able to approach a few members of various households, who agreed to a semi-structured interview. I asked the inhabitants a set of four different questions: the first group included general questions on whether they liked the housing estate and their home and why; the second pertained to daily rituals and habits associated with the domestic practices studied; the third set of questions concerned spatial changes and alterations carried on in the house and the reasons behind them; and the last group focused on particularly cherished objects or objects associated with domestic practices. This allowed me to cover all the most relevant aspects of my research, which were both tangible and intangible in nature. Interviews and photographs proved particularly relevant for my research, given the focus on individual experience. It is also worth mentioning that even though I made contact with several inhabitants during my fieldwork, only few agreed to be interviewed; this is probably due to the fact that I did not have enough time to establish a deeper connection, so they did not know or trust me. I found difficulties in Italy where, even though there were no language or cultural barriers, an incredibly strong sense of privacy still persists across all social classes. I was able to interview nine people in Paris and seven in Rome and visited six apartments in each country (two in each housing complex). I also took over 500 photographs, with photos and videoclips taken both inside and outside. The material collected has been archived and a code was assigned to each contribution to provide anonymity.[42] Due to the current pandemic fieldwork could not continue as originally planned, and had to be limited in its scope after 2019. The initially planned ethnographic study was therefore not possible and, to overcome this limitation, interviews and observational studies undertaken as part of this PhD were supplemented by existing ethnographic studies carried out by other in Italy and France.[43] Pietro Melograni's edited volume on the evolution of the Italian family (1988) is, for instance, rich in ethnographic and historic data on food consumption and habits, along with family structures and gender equality that proved particularly useful in this thesis. Similarly, Sophie Chevalier's ehtnograhic study of French domestic spaces (2002) provided fundamental information on the use of French interiors.

In the following, the first chapter will analyse in greater depth the issues outlined so far and discuss the interdisciplinary literature relevant to this thesis. The body of the dissertation is composed of two main parts. The first focuses on France and looks at the 'art of reception', specifically at the practices associated with the visit of guests inside French homes, interior decoration included. The second looks at Italy and the 'art of conserving' objects, which could extend to the conservation and reproduction

of traditional cultural models, especially practices associated with food. In each part, a book, a treatise or manual that defines architectural standards and one object that epitomises the cultural practice studied will be analysed. For France, these are the *savoir-vivre* manuals that were widely published since the nineteenth century on the rules of etiquette, César Daly's architectural treatise *Private Architecture in the 19th century under Napoleon III: New Houses of Paris and its Surroundings* (1864) and the marital bed in France. For Italy, these are the recipe book by Pellegrino Artusi *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well: A Practical Manual for Families* (1891), the INA-casa manuals for standardised dwelling typologies and the dining table. An introductory, historical study of the practice associated with the typological evolution of the middle-class apartment type is always integrated with considerations of women's condition, specifically their aesthetic and domestic cultures, homemaking and self-making practices, along with the evolution of the middle-class habitus. Existing interdisciplinary literature on the domestic sphere and women is always integrated with spatial and typological analysis. The remaining sections of parts I and II are devoted to the case studies visited during fieldwork, focusing on lived, personal experience and spatial modifications. Conclusive remarks will move away from the cultural specificities of each national context analysed and will draw more general theoretical considerations on the role of cultural domesticity in architectural history and preservation theory. They will pertain the interplay between social conformism and social change, indeed 'practices may be said to be so habituated that they are part of the very norms, rules and expectations that govern gender in late modernity, even as they may ostensibly appear to challenge these very notions.'[44] In other words, this thesis will demonstrate that despite the current slow process of women's emancipation from the domestic context, despite a timid process of democratisation of domesticity and a blurring of the gender boundaries of domestic practices, real change has not yet taken place in many Western countries. Nevertheless, the same blurring of gendered practices makes cultural domesticity an even more pertinent theoretical and analytical lens, given that it describes gendered practices, thus can potentially include masculine and queer contemporary domesticity.

This thesis will foremost benefit architectural historians and feminist scholars. Its audience are architects and interior designers, both those in practice seeking to understand new residential designs but also those in academia interested in the pedagogical question of how architectural and interior design history is taught or learned today. The thesis challenges disciplinary distinction between a 'feminine' interior design and 'masculine' architecture established by the first architecture schools,[45] offering transdisciplinary analyses and arguments on domestic space.

Notes

1 Tim Putnam and Charles Newton, *Household Choices* (London: Futures Publications, 1990).

2 Heidi Hartman, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism,' in *Women and Revolution* (Boston: South End Press, 1981).

3 Lynn Jamieson, 'Boundaries of Intimacy,' in *Families in Society Boundaries and Relationships* (Bristol: Policy Press 2005), 198.

4 Mark Wigley, 'Untitled: The Housing of Gender,' in *Sexuality & Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina, and Jennifer Bloomer (Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 327-289.

5 Ibid.

6 Penny Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*: *The Sexual Politics of Taste* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, 2010), XXIV–XXV.

7 Ibid.

8 See the writings of Beverly Skeggs, Lisa Adkins, Judy Attfield, Penny Sparke, Mary Douglas, Sarah Elsie Baker, Irene Cieraad and Alison Clarke, among others.

9 While the theoretical lens could apply to masculine or queer identities as well, these are outside the scope of this research, although they will be briefly mentioned at the end of this dissertation.

10 Several scholars, including Barbara Penner and Jane Randell, believe that *Sexuality & Space*, edited by Beatriz Colomina and Jennifer Bloomer in 1992, is the first book that explicitly addresses the subject of sexuality, gender and architectural space. See Jane Randell, Barbara Penner, and Ian Borden, eds. *Gender Space Architecture: an Interdisciplinary Introduction* (London-New York: Routledge, 2000).

11 The 2001 Italian census reports that about 55% of the total housing stock available in Milan, Rome and Turin was built from the 1940s to the 1970s. De Pieri speaks in detail about it in the book *Storie Di Case: Abitare l'Italia Del Boom* (Rome: Donzelli, 2014), XXIX. In France, over six million dwellings were built inside the so-called 'grands ensembles', or post-war modernist estates.

12 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, 111.

13 See Attfield, 'Space: Where Things Take Place.'

14 It is necessary to point out that the term 'kitsch' is not seen as having negative connotations here. Kitsch is, indeed, considered the aesthetic culture of the capitalist bourgeoisie, starting from the eighteenth century, as described by Norbert Elias in his essay 'Kitsch Style and the Age of Kitsch' (1935). It does not have pejorative connotations, as opposed to when the term is used by cultural critics and design historians, who see it as the epitome of bad taste.

15 See Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*.

16 For France's large demolition campaigns see: Thibault Tellier, 'De l'Humanisation à la Destruction du Béton. La Politique de la Ville des Années 1970 aux Années 1980,' *Métropolitiques* (Octobre 2018); Alexandre Berland-Berthon, *La Démolition des Immeubles de Logements Sociaux. Histoire Urbaine d'une Non-politique Publique* (Lyon: Éditions du CERTU, 2009); Robert Epstein, *La Rénovation Urbaine. Démolition-Reconstruction de l'État* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2013); François Plassard and Isabelle Mesnard 'Faut-il démolir les banlieues? / Should Problem Suburbs be Demolished?,' *Géocarrefour*, vol. 75, n° 2 (2000): 165-172, doi: https://doi.org/10.3406/geoca.2000.2526. About the demolition of UK's 'sink estates', see, for example: Anne Power, 'Council Estates: Why Demolition is Anything but the Solution,' *British Policy and Politics at LSE* (2016); Paul Watt, 'Displacement and Estate Demolition: Multi-scalar Place Attachment Among Relocated Social Housing Residents in London,' *Housing Studies* (2020): 1-24; Ben Campkin, 'Out-of-sync Estates,' in *Mobilising Housing Histories* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2019), 163–176.

17 Hubert-Jan Henket, 'The Icon and the Ordinary,' in *Docomomo: Modern Movement Heritage*, ed. Allen Cunningham (London & NY: E & FN SPON, 1998).

18 To name some, there are the C20 Society, DoCoMoMo, 3f, the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) program for twentieth-century architecture.

19 The 'Madrid Charter', the most complete document written about twentieth-century heritage listing, is still problematically tied to old listing criteria for traditional heritage categories.

20 This citation tellingly summarises the problem: 'Within the field, there is an ongoing discussion as to whether the philosophical approach to conserving modern heritage should be different from that used for the heritage of other eras. [...]

The characteristics of Modern Architecture challenge traditional conservation approaches and raise new methodological and philosophical issues.' The Getty Conservation Institute, *Expert Meeting – A Colloquium to Advance the Practice of Conserving Modern Heritage* (March 6–7, 2013).

21 See Mary N. Taylor, 'Intangible Heritage Governance, Cultural Diversity, Ethno-nationalism,' in *The European Journal of Anthropology* 55 (2009), 41-58.

22 Randell, Penner, and Borden, *Gender Space Architecture*, 101.

23 See, among others, Daniel Miller ed., *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Alison Clarke, 'Designing Mothers and the Market: Brands, Style and Social Class,' in P. MacLaran et al eds. *Motherhood, Markets and Consumption: The Making of Mothers in Contemporary Western Culture* (London: Routledge 2013); Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Attfield, *Wild Things*, and so on.

24 Wigley, 'Untitled,' 340.

25 See, for instance, the work of Mary Douglas, Sarah Elsie Baker, Penny Sparke and Judy Attfield.

26 See Irenee Cieraad, 'Rituels Domestiques au XXe siecle aux Pays-Bas; Habitudes d'habiter' (Domestic Rituals in the XXth century Netherlands: Habits of Dwelling), in *Actes du Colloque Internationale sur les Espaces Domestiques* (Rosny-sous-Bois, 2003).

27 The reference to self-identity relates to Antony Giddens' book *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), but the same concept is also analysed by Lisa Adkins and Beverly Skeggs in their book *Feminism After Bourdieu* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005).

28 See, for example, Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); David Harvey, *Paris, Capital Of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Daniel Miller, 'Appropriating the State on the Council Estate.' *Man, New Series*, Vol. 23, n° 2 (June 1988): 353-372; Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1988), to name few.

29 Pierre Bourdieu talks about this in 'The Berber House or the World Reversed,' *Social Science Information* 9, no. 2 (April, 1970): 151–70.

30 Wigley, 'Untitled,' 330.

31 See Nicole Cox and Silvia Federici's publication *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen* (New York: Wages for Housework Committee, 1976).

32 Randell, Penner, and Borden, *Gender Space Architecture*, 101.

33 Pierre Bourdieu describes 'habitus' in his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010).

34 Skeggs and Adkins in *Feminism After Bourdieu,* but also Sarah Elsie Beker, in her book *Retro Style* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), agree on the fact that it is still valuable.

35 Skeggs and Adkins, *Feminism After Bourdieu.*

36 Randell, Penner, and Borden, *Gender Space Architecture*, 102. In the book they add that 'architecture is continually re-produced through use and everyday life.'

37 Some may argue that this approach aligns with postmodern theory, which is partially true, given the widely acknowledged connection between feminist theory and Postmodernism (Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 8, 20). However, Sparke argues that even though it is believed that Postmodernism overcame the differences between high and low/pop culture, this was, unfortunately, only an illusion. In fact, high-culture manifestations of Postmodernism emerged in the visual and creative fields, reproducing the same mechanisms of distinction and exclusion that had previously pushed women's culture and experience to the margins (Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink,* 163–165).

38 Bourdieu, *Distinction.*

39 Skeggs, 'Theories of Formation of Self in Cultural and Social Theory,' in *Feminism After Bourdieu*.

40 Wigley, 'Untitled,' 350.

41 In France I visited a moderate-rent housing project (HBM) build by the French Public Office for Housing in the 1920s near Porte de Clignancourt in Paris, Fernand Pouillon's successful Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour in Paris (1950s), and Martin Van Treek's Orgues de Flandres in Paris, built in the 1970s. In Italy I visited an early white-collar housing project built in Rome (a so-called ICP complex) in the early twentieth century, Mario de Renzi's Palazzi Federici in Rome (1920s), and Mario Ridolfi's successful housing project in Viale Etiopia, Rome, built in the 1950s.

42 I have been conducting research on French interiors for over seven years now, and had the chance to visit and photograph the interiors of more Parisian apartments. Even though they will not be included in this research, the knowledge gained on the subject informed my analysis. They are, respectively, the Tour Bous Le Prêtre (refurbished by Druot, Lacaton & Vassal), the Jean Hachette Ivry-sur-Seine complex by Jean Renaudie and the housing estate of Meudon-la-Foret by Fernand Pouillon. The data and knowledge collected have been instrumental for the development of this thesis' argument and the deepening of its focus, for instance, I discovered only during fieldwork about the so-called 'art de vivre' (art of life) which the French still mention and care about, which shaped the section of my dissertation on France.

43 Piero Melograni, ed., La Famiglia Italiana dall'Ottocento a Oggi (Rome: Laterza, 1988); Sophie Chevalier, 'The Cultural Construction of Domestic Space in France and Great Britain,' Signs 27, no. 3 (2002): 847–56.

44 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 204.

45 A renowned example is the Bauhas, where women were notably excluded from the school of architecture and were directer to more 'feminine' disciplines such as interior deisgn or textile design. See Elizabeth Otto and Patrick Rossler, *Bauhaus Women: A Global Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

Cultural Domesticity: The Housing of Gender

This chapter focuses on a series of key existing texts on the subject of gender and architecture more in general, and the relationship between the domestic sphere, personal and shared identities, consumption and labour in specific. This research integrates previous existing literature on the home with typological analysis, uncovering the spatial implications of a cultural and gendered study of contemporary domesticity. This is due to the fact that the study of contemporary domesticity in architecture requires a multidisciplinary approach. It is, therefore, important to unpack the most relevant existing theoretical contributions that will support the development of this dissertation. In short, this chapter will outline the feminist basis of cultural domesticity, which will ultimately expose the cultural and architectural value of feminine domestic culture and design.

The literature analysed spans from the early twentieth century up to 2020, with several key studies that were published between the 1970s and 1990s – when the issue of housing and gender took hold in architectural theory.[1] An interesting reflection emerges from the sources studied; it pertains to the general lack of sole-authored critical and theoretical texts on the subject in architecture and, on the contrary, an abundance of publications that focus on the domestic space by social or cultural anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, design historians and interior architects. In this regards, architectural theorist Jane Randell wrote that since the 1970s

> we have seen perhaps fewer sole-authored publications by feminists in architecture than in other disciplines such as visual culture, art history and cultural geography. The recent edited collections which have deepened the exploration of certain gendered dimensions of architectural design and culture have operated in a different mode of authorship.[2]

She explains that feminist architects have mostly published edited collections that reflected each time a different 'trajectory.'[3] For instance, some scholars concentrated their work on the oppressive power of the patriarchy, others looked at the potentialities behind a feminist architectural practice, some focused on retrieving the work of overlooked women in architecture, bringing forth a different type of architectural history, or 'herstory.'[4] Specifically,

> what such books had in common was their multifaceted nature. They were all edited collections, compositions of different voices, which, rather than simply describing the work of female architects or prescribing the architecture that feminists should produce, were characterized by a more speculative attitude toward the relationship of architecture and feminism.[5]

She clarifies that her most recent publications, along with many others that came out in the 2000s followed this path.[6] The 'multifaceted' approach to the subject of sexuality, gender and space was, as architectural critic and historian Beatriz Colomina observed, 'still without title in architecture, that is, it [was] still without a proper place',[7] which meant that 'the issue of sexuality remain[ed] a glaring absence' in the field of architectural history and theory for a long time.[8] The first research on gender and architecture emerged in the 1970s, mainly from a feminist perspective, but 'until recently much of these works have remained internal to the discipline, concerned largely with the architectural profession and issues concerning the "man-made" environment', overlooking fundamental connections with

other disciplines.[9] This lack prompted Colomina to organise a symposium at Princeton that led to the publication of the influential book *Sexuality & Space* in 1992.[10] The volume 'was the first collection of work to bring ideas about gender generated in other fields – such as anthropology, art history, cultural studies, film theory, geography, psychoanalysis and philosophy – to bear on architectural studies'.[11] It was also the first publication that directly addressed the relationship between architectural space and sexuality, providing interdisciplinary grounds for a gendered study of architecture. Randell identifies other key interdisciplinary texts published in the 1990s that are interesting edited collections, which have been useful sources for the development of this dissertation.[12] What emerged from the study of this literature is that first, the architectural debate around the heterosexual family, feminine domesticity and middle-class dwellings and is not exhausted, since this research will demonstrate that enculturated practices have in impact on the design and occupation of these interiors. Second, that architectural history and theory has not yet challenged the criteria for the interpretation of buildings, neither found new objects of study. Rather, than several interdisciplinary, edited collections published by architectural historians in the 1990s and 2000s continued focusing mainly on high-brow case studies, often times reflecting male criteria for the judgement of architectural value.[13]

This thesis tackles this gap in architectural history and theory, and positions itself within existing, interdisciplinary literature that explored issues of gender and architecture in relation to 'production, but also to reproduction through representation, consumption, appropriation and occupation.'[14] It proposes an interdisciplinary, gendered study of the domestic realm through the lenses of cultural domesticity, which combines spatial and typological analysis, hence, architectural research methods, feminist and social theory. *From Within* inserts itself within the emerging body of work on new architectural histories that challenge the white, male canon and concentrate on the overlooked architectural and cultural production of women.[15] In specific, it will look at the cultural, aesthetic but above all architectural design potential of everyday occupation from the standpoint of women amateur designers and decorators, but also architects whose value has not been acknowledged by architectural historians until now.

As aforementioned, feminism and gender theory rely on a set of different disciplines (such as critical theory or psychoanalysis, to name a few); indeed, 'feminism and gender studies have [gradually] become postmodernised, made interdisciplinary and therefore have to be considered as such.'[16] Consequently, a study on the gendered nature of architectural space in the second decade of the twenty-first century inevitably requires a degree of interdisciplinarity. Cultural anthropologists and design historians like Irene Cieraad and Judy Attfield have been reinforcing this argument by claiming that the study of domestic space requires a multidisciplinary approach.[17] In her introduction to the book *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space* (2006) Cieraad argues that 'qualitative research on contemporary Western domestic space is scarce, and interpretations of domestic practices are even more exceptional. The few publications that touch upon these subjects derive from diverse domains of research, such as ethnology, material culture studies, consumer studies, and environmental psychology.'[18]

Three lines of inquiry fundamental to this thesis emerge from Western literature on domestic interiors and women, none of which can be classified as a specific disciplinary approach. Three macro-categories have been identified to clarify how each approach

contributes to the definition of cultural domesticity; however, there is no doubt that other potential categorisations exist. It would be possible, for instance, to divide the selected literature according to the disciplinary background of the authors. The three macro-areas identified touch upon, respectively, housework and domestic labour, social class in relation to domestic consumption and taste and the gendered and spatial separation of spheres and activities. What unites them and frames this thesis is the assumption that not only is the home a social and cultural artefact that has clear heteronormative foundations (and that the idealised family structure associated with it has, for a long time, shaped Western domesticity), but also that the production and experience of architecture can contribute to the production of gender or gender-based hierarchies and discriminations. *From Within* will consider each one of them in relation to domestic interiors and practices, as they all accord with the definition of cultural domesticity.

1. Feminist Critique

Housework and Double Presence

The first approach coincides with the well-known Marxist feminist critique of unpaid domestic labour, which found its apex in 1975 with Silvia Federici and Nicole Cox's publication of *Counter-planning From the Kitchen* that clarified the critical position of the international feminist Wages for Housework movement.[19] In line with Marxist feminist work, this thesis positions architecture within a broader economic and social system that provides the basis for a class-based analysis of architectural space and the so-called man-made environment as systems of gender and class oppression.[20] In this collection of two essays, Federici and Cox most notably discuss the emergence of the nuclear family as 'a specific creation of capital' and the capitalistic roots of women's 'enslavement in the home' as well as capitalisms' meddling with women's identity and self or 'capitalist identification'.[21] The text reflects the perspective of Western, employed middle-class women, as it argues that labour-saving devices do not free women from labour and do not guarantee them the free time they need to struggle against capitalism and the patriarchal system but, instead, supports it. Specifically, 'it is clear that day care and nurseries have never liberated any time for ourselves [women], but only time for additional work […] the situation in the US is immediate proof of the fact that neither technology nor a second job is capable of liberating women from the family and housework'.[22]

Italian politician and sociologist Laura Balbo extended these reflections further and theorised the concept of 'double presence' in her famous essay 'La Doppia Presenza', published in 1978.[23] Balbo studies the living conditions of Western (European) women, who, from the post-war period onwards, entered the job market. She argues that adult women with extra-domestic employment were still deemed responsible for domestic management and maternal duties. This forced them to attend to both family and extra-family work, hence, their double presence. In short, Balbo writes, 'women remain conditioned by the extent and quality of their family work, which defines the possibility, the mode and the time of presence and absence in the labour market'.[24] Each woman experiences a relatively short time of full presence in the labour market (if not married), followed by a full experience of domestic life and labour after the birth of a child. The absence of women from their jobs starts with maternity, as most European countries guarantee generous paid maternity leave, it is then that a woman's double presence unfolds. Right after this cesura, each employed woman

returns to her occupation and moves to a full double presence. This break in a woman's career causes, according to Balbo, a decrease in her chances of getting a promotion, the loss of important professional contacts and, overall, a decrease in her professional growth. These dynamics were especially true in the 1970s Europe and, specifically, in sexist countries such as Italy. But even in today's Italy, only 49% of adult women have an occupation (13.5% less than the European average) – with great discrepancies between the north and south of the country.[25] Furthermore, despite the introduction of paternity leave across Europe, in 2019, the average leave that fathers took across the continent was only three days.[26] This makes Balbo's reflections even more relevant today, as women are still expected to renounce their jobs for longer than men in order to concentrate on their caring role. Caring is seen as a fundamental aspect of domestic labour, since it guarantees social and biological reproduction, an important 'good' that represents the renewal of the workforce.[27]

Balbo also argues that the break in a woman's career caused by the birth of their child is particularly difficult. Young mothers are required to continue carrying out very specific domestic tasks while re-entering the job market. Double presence is, indeed, the 'longest experience in the life of an adult woman', and it is a model that society 'in many ways institutionally favours and proposes, making it reasonably effective'[28] through the introduction of part-time work and a social system that makes women's domestic duties more manageable (including the introduction of new technology and domestic appliances). A double presence demands women's full attention and energy, which makes them less competitive than men in their profession.[29] This is crucial, because even though Balbo was studying 1970s late capitalist societies, women's position in the contemporary advanced neo-capitalist world has not changed significantly: given women's manifest or unconscious knowledge of double presence, they simply decide not to have children or wait until their career prospects meet their expectations. Hence, the double presence can be considered one of the main factors behind the decrease in birth rates in many Western countries. Balbo makes her Marxist point even clearer by stating that the 'capitalist job market thawed a workforce that it needed for its development, namely a workforce that wouldn't cost much, that was flexible, a workforce that capitalism tried to maintain without excessively high costs'.[30] This created favourable conditions to establish a workforce that can take on all major caring duties arising from family life by providing a welfare system that supports the institutionalisation of a double presence. Concerning this point, Balbo argues that domestic labour in late-capitalist societies thus extended beyond the domestic domain, with much of it taking place (and still taking place) outside the home, within various welfare institutions that support women in acquiring the level of professionality required to carry on with domestic duties.[31] The extension of domestic labour into the public domain raises further Marxist reflections on the 'man-made environment,' which is brought forward by feminist planners and architects such as Dolores Hayden and the Matrix collective, who look at feminist practices and spaces that oppose this system.[32]

French sociologist Christine Delphy describes the same dynamic as Balbo but calls it a 'dual labour market', clarifying – just like Federici and Balbo – that the 'labour market plays a role in the exploitation of their [women's] domestic work'.[33] Most notably, she renames domestic labour and refers to it as the 'domestic mode of production', but also of consumption and circulation of goods. She later specifies that consumption patterns reflect mechanisms of patriarchal oppression, impacting women's daily lives. Specifically, Delphy reinforces her point on the instrumentality of domestic labour as 'patriarchy is the system of

subordination of women to men in contemporary industrial societies, […] this system has an economic base, and that […] base is the domestic mode of production'.[34] Interestingly, within her economic analysis of women's subordination and its impact on consumption, she looks at mechanisms of men's economic maintainance of their wives, who provide domestic, wageless labour power in return. In short, 'the specific patriarchal relations of production for married women […] are characterized by dependence' and this is true for both housewives and women with an extra-domestic job.[35] Sociologist Lynn Jamieson reinforces these points by arguing that even in today's dual-earner households gender inequalities are recreated because of a persisting unequal division of domestic labour.[36] Delphy's study raises some of the interpersonal power relations that unfold in the domestic realm and impact women's daily life, which will be studied in the following in the context of cultural domesticity. Indeed, she explores the intimate dimension of domestic living from a feminist perspective, taking into consideration the mechanisms of how status and gender differences within a family are expressed, not only through consumption patterns but also unconscious practices.

More recent studies on the relevance of Balbo's analysis to contemporary society clarify that she referred to a typical modernist division of public and private spheres.[37] It is argued that the boundaries between work and life are blurred, changing the meaning and location of intimate relationships that, until now, were bounded to the private space.[38] The introduction of intimacy to this discourse, however, does not seem to help as it moves away from a Marxist reading and looks at more recent sociological studies on interpersonal and family relationships. In Southern Europe, for instance:

> the progressive penetration of the logic of 'public and productive' time in care relationships remains mediated by the centrality of the family, it does not find a prevalent response on the level of services and social rights – but rather on that of the market and consumption – and continues to be structured around the female figure. […] Paradoxically, the attenuation of the separation between public and private time does not decrease but increases the need for and importance of a skilful direction. Women thus risk being involved in a sort of management of care itself.[39]

Thus, the conditions of double presence have not disappeared, instead, women's lives became even more complex than they were in the 1970s. Although men are taking on more domestic responsibilities, this is still not enough; on the contrary, they benefit from women's hyper productivity and use their free time to strengthen extra-domestic, professional and personal relationships.[40] Double presence, therefore, remains a fundamental component of Western women's life and identity, and despite the contemporary blurring of the modernist public-private dichotomy, women remain at the centre of domestic life and caring.

From Within acknowledges this crucial point in the study of contemporary society by placing female domesticity at the core of its analysis. The Marxist line of inquiry also reinforces this thesis' point on the fundamental immovability of the domestic sphere in Western countries in general, and in Italy and France specifically, since in the past five decades family power dynamics and women's role and presence in the domestic realm have not fundamentally changed. Indeed, Balbo already pointed out that women had to, and still have to, rely on welfare systems distributed throughout the city and homemaking, along with the management of the home are still considered crucial feminine activities.[41] Balbo's

study on the double presence also clarifies that women are not only forced to leave their jobs for a long amount of time to raise their new-borns at home, but also that most are still bound for life to household management and domestic labour.

Man-made Environment

A different type of Marxist line of inquiry pertains to the study of the man-made environment and feminist architectural practices. Socialist and Marxist feminists see architectural and urban spaces as both socially produced and the contexts of social production, reproduction and patriarchal oppression. The latter determines women's position and role in the social division of labour and defines the spatial manifestations of power relations within the built environment.[42] Judy Attfield clarifies that patriarchy 'explains the dominance of masculine attributes trans-historically as a cultural phenomenon […] patriarchy depends on stereotypical definitions of male-female and is basically a-historical', which explains its pervasive presence in the built environment and domestic life across generations.[43] Specifically, a patriarchal social structure perpetuates traditional social conventions and reinforces the ideology of heterosexual domesticity that has, for a long time, confined women to domestic space. The latter, in turn, spatially translates hierarchical and sexist social relations, enforcing women's oppression in the home.

Feminist planner and historian Dolores Hayden published in 1981 the influential book *The Grand Domestic Revolution,* in which she brought forward a historiography of feminist architectural practices based on the spatial analysis of selected case studies. In her book, she looked at socialist, feminist, shared domestic and architectural practices that subvert contemporary patriarchal power dynamics in the domestic realm. She identified design responses to the spatial limitations that the man-made environment imposes on women, from specific urban features to advertisement. Hayden focused her study on collective activities and spaces, specifically on the model of the kitchen-less house, identifying the kitchen as a central space of female oppression and, subsequently, proposing spatial solutions that suit women's needs. Her book is relevant for this research not necessarily in terms of its focus – the book is mainly concerned with framing a feminist critique along with feminist solutions to spatial problems – rather, it is a particularly valuable study because for the first time an architectural, spatial analysis is associated with socio-historical and feminist reflections. This represents an important methodological precedent for this study and a feminist, spatial and typological study of domestic space. The architectural typologies analysed in this thesis differ from those taken into consideration in Hayden's study, so her work will not be mentioned here, yet both studies identify the kitchen as a key space for the unfolding of patriarchal oppression in the domestic space.

Making Space: Women and the Man-Made Environment, published a few years later (1984) by the Matrix collective, tackles similar issues but positions itself very clearly within the context of architectural practice. The book is written by a collective of practitioners, providing design guidance for feminist architectural design practices that involve collective engagement, while at the same time critiquing the sexist basis of the building industry and the architectural profession. The book is a fundamental contribution to feminist and architectural practice, as it acknowledges the sexist nature of the built environment and domestic space and encourages women to join the profession in order to build a more inclusive built environment. Just like Hayden's contribution, the book methodologically

resonates with this research as it looks at architectural space directly though the lenses of feminist theory, but will not be directly addressed in this study.

New Architectural Histories

Critical theory is informed by Marxist thinking, and produced interesting readings of the domestic space that guided me in defining the boundaries of cultural domesticity. Architectural historian and theorist Hilde Heynen has explored new methodologies for a feminine study of residential architecture and modernist interiors. She based her study on the theory of Theodore Adorno, and specifically his negative approach to art and his notion of *mimesis,*[44] which helped her uncovering the deeper and hidden layers of the domestic sphere.[45] She is one among the few architectural historians who brought forward a unitary, theoretical and interpretative lens for a gendered study of domesticity, however, her study concentrates on renowned high-modernist buildings, usually built by male architects.[46] Furthermore, her analysis of the modernist interior is still rooted on typically male understandings of architectural modernism based on the 'absence of dwelling' such as that brought forward by the *neue sachlichkeit* (new objectivity) in art and architecture, specifically the work of Hannes Meyer that investigated the sense of uprootedness in the modern man – an approach that is at the antipodes of the feminine understandings of domesticity that emerged in this research and in other interdisciplinary, edited collections that tackled the same topic.[47]

As mentioned before, the study of domestic interiors is necessarily interdisciplinary, and the same Heynen acknowledged it in her writings.[48] However, what emerged from her confrontation with design historian Judy Attfield and anthropologist Irene Cieraad in the 2001 symposium held at KU Leuven, later published on the *Journal of Architecture*,[49] is precisely Heynen's ineffectiveness in grounding her theory on real life, or recognising the most mundane aspects of feminine domesticity.[50] Cultural domesticity, instead, is based on the study of inhabited domestic interiors, and acknowledges the relevance of lived experience and personal narratives, focusing on ordinary interiors and residential typologies. Unlike Heynen's theory, this thesis recognises the gendered nature of interior occupation and, above all, of architectural history – largely based on the study of the male (Modernist) canon. What also emerges from this dissertation, and specifically the Marxist feminist reading of the domestic sphere, is precisely that the pervasive presence of the patriarchy – at the biopolitical, economic, cultural and spatial level – prevents an analysis of contemporary domesticity outside the gender binaries that it has itself enforced. In other words, a feminist study of domestic interiors and domesticity cannot leave aside the separate spheres paradigm (that will be further discussed later in this chapter), nor ignore the specific feminine and masculine facets of domesticity.

Lastly, Marxist architectural history has long studied architecture as a social product and the outcome of the capitalist mode of production and capitalistic values, which reinforce social and class differences. However, as architectural historians and theorists Barbara Penner and Jane Randell have rightly pointed out, this body of work seldom relies on feminist theory, as it 'does not seek to question conventional architectural historical models or raise methodological issues'.[51] For example, Beatriz Colomina uses new interpretative lens for the study of the work of the great Modernist masters.[52] She certainly changed the methods of architectural historians, yet her study (like Heynen's work) continues to focus

on high culture and, therefore, does not question the criteria by which historians select the objects they interpret and analyse. Once again, cultural domesticity is the framework used to go beyond existing feminist interpretative lenses by redefining the objects of study of architectural history along with the criteria through which architectural value is attributed – including aesthetic choices and architectural typologies that have been largely overlooked. Cultural domesticity, therefore, proposes a methodology for (potentially) a new feminist history and theory of architecture. Penner and Randell identify the attributes of such a fundamentally necessary approach: 'architecture is no longer considered only in relation to the mode of production' but should open to theories of consumption and taste, which leads to the second macro-area of study in this thesis.[53]

2. Appropriation, Taste and Consumption

The second macro-area pertains to a study of taste, interior decoration, domestic occupation and consumption in relation to social class. It touches upon the issue of gendered and differentiated consumption, mainly looking at these practices as crucial steps in the consolidation of identity, specifically female identity. The domestic realm and domesticity are generally at the core of these cultural, sociological, and anthropological studies, however, the spatial implications of these dynamics are never fully explored in these texts.[54] Once again, cultural domesticity attempts to fill this methodological gap by bridging Bourdieu's theory, feminism and spatial analysis.

Key figures within this specific line of inquiry are the design historians Penny Sparke, Judy Attfield and Sarah Elsie Baker; the cultural anthropologists and theorists Irene Cieraad, Rachel M. Scicluna and Michel de Certeau (who was also a historian); the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Monique Eleb, Lynn Jamieson and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, who collaborated with psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi; the anthropologists Daniel Miller and Céline Rosselin, to name few. All of them have looked carefully at the relationship between inhabitants and their homes, focusing on class, consumption, and taste; they sometimes looked at architectural space as well. However, a systematic study of the spatial implications of the phenomena studied is usually missing, nor have been consistently addressed spatial changes in relation to architectural plans – in short, the reference to architectural space, where present, is usually generic.[55] One exception is the incredible work by French sociologist Monique Eleb, who looked at the historical and spatial evolution of the French home.[56] Her typological analysis is enriched by historical and social considerations, including reflections on class differences. However, her work rarely engages with feminist theories, which differentiates it from my research. This dissertation will, indeed, integrate these disciplinary and methodological approaches with a consistent spatial and typological analysis in order to explore the spatial evolution and alteration of middle-class dwellings in Italy and France.

Appropriation

Daniel Miller's influential essay 'Appropriating the State on the Council Estate' (1988) connects the Marxist feminist focus on housing with reflections on class, taste, decoration and consumption.[57] In his text, Miller looks at the relationship between society and its artefacts, carrying out an anthropological study of council housing in the UK and, subsequently, outlining the basic elements of a 'theory of housing', which he believes 'has

to be largely a theory of consumption'.[58] He famously introduced the term 'appropriation' as opposed to 'alienation' which occurs in commodity societies; the former is 'understood as a re-socialisation of the artefactual environment'.[59] Miller sees housing as a product realised for consumption, 'a process by which social groups are formed around activities through which they attempt (with variable degrees of success) to render what is inevitably met as alienating when received through the distributive institutions of the nation-state, into inalienable culture'.[60] So housing occupants receive through the 'nation state' an alienating good that is appropriated thorough activities that take place both inside and outside and is, subsequently, turned into 'inalienable culture'.[61] He goes on to mention that tenants receive a 'blank canvas' that inhabitants 'self-design over the years' and he looks, specifically, at 'the factors which seemed to have facilitated or constrained […] alterations'.[62]

Just like Miller's study, this research sees appropriation practices and alterations as significant cultural acts. Enculturation, however, does not emerge only with interior occupation. Rather, the design and implementation of housing is seen in this research as a cultural act per se. In fact, this thesis adds to Miller's disciplinary focus on inhabitants and material culture – with council housing seen as alienating living spaces imposed by architects and councils – a discussion of architectural space itself. While addressing the issue of the 'failure of council housing', he writes that the 'modernist image of council housing is a reflection of the control exerted by the state in general, and is a reflection of the control exerted by capitalism over both the workplace and the distribution of resources'.[63] This resonates with the 1960s widespread critique of post-war housing and newly built modernist neighbourhoods that laid out the basis for postmodernist architecture and triggered large demolition campaigns throughout Europe.[64] But his study does not take into consideration the cultural value of housing and dwellings, while this research demonstrates that architectural design and the architects' habitus, along with the daily occupation of housing's interiors have crucial cultural implications. On the contrary, Miller sees the relationship between architectural space and inhabitants as antagonistic. Council housing was 'a projection by the tenants in their construction of self-images as victims or combatants'.[65] Inhabitants' responses to these imposed alienating spaces are, according to him, threefold: they either interiorise this alienation and are incapable of appropriating their dwellings' interiors, they alter the façade of their homes, or they totally transform and replace pre-defined spaces or fittings. These dynamics do not differ much from Michel De Certeau's notion of 'resistance' when 'users make innumerable infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules', thereby finding new ways to adapt to pre-determined contexts or 'languages'.[66] Specifically, De Certeau turns his attention to the small daily actions that enable people to manipulate mechanisms of power and control.[67] These ordinary 'tactics' not only allow people to evade such impositions, but also to re-appropriate that same 'space organised by techniques of socio-cultural production'.[68] In both cases, manipulation and the alteration of space is seen as a central moment of appropriation, as a cultural act that transforms architecture from a cultural artefact to a space that suits the inhabitant's needs. As Miller explained, inhabitants can perceive the new space as hostile and feel unable to make a home in it, or they can resist it and negotiate their identity through occupation and inhabitation practices – both of which are culturally loaded acts. This is particularly true for women, whose taste and needs often are not met inside post-war housing.[69]

Before touching upon gender dynamics, it is worthwhile to reflect on the relationship

between housing as a market product and inhabitants' alienation from it, as hypothesised by Marx.[70] Is council housing always alienating? The answer is not clear-cut. Many early Modernist housing complexes, especially those built for the working class, can be read as alienating products due to the sexist, elitist, and paternalistic modernist aesthetic that drove the design of early Modernist housing projects – especially projects considered valuable for architectural historians. Despite few truly alienating projects, this thesis will demonstrate that the design of most post-war housing complexes reflects the architect's habitus, which in turn encapsulates local, culturally relevant practices. An interesting case that is discussed by Miller's is Le Corbusier's first housing project in Pessac, that will be further discussed in this chapter (figs. 2-12). Le Corbusier's housing complex is interesting in respect to the spatial practices of resistance that the inhabitants implemented, which reflect the use and disposition of French representational spaces and the role that welcoming guests plays in French culture. Another interesting case is the peculiar distribution model that developed in Italy around the *salotto* room, a domestic space that is found across all social classes in Italy and in most post-war housing. The *salotto* is a still highly sought-after room by many Italians today.[71] The notion of appropriation brought forward by Miller is ultimately of great relevance for their study, since domestic appropriation is 'a material objectification of certain social resources available in the construction of household identity' which is the result of shared homemaking practices that enable the transformation of council housing's alienating space into an 'appropriated form'.[72]

Miller's appropriation has also important gendered connotations, as 'the evidence suggests that unlike the high arts the aesthetic of the home is exclusively female centred', and women mainly transform their environment through aesthetic choices, rather than the physical construction of new DIY items, which was – in the specific case of Miller's study – British men's main means of expression.[73] The centrality of female aesthetics in the home is true not only for 1980s England but, as we have seen with Balbo's, also for contemporary Western society. Miller makes also another crucial point – shared with Jamieson – that supports the main argument of this thesis, namely that 'despite the pressure of modernist philosophies of equality and feminism which promoted the diminution of sexual distinction, and the increasing presence of men in the home, the evidence suggests that men did not take on any greater share of household responsibilities'.[74] This led to the continuing very present gender disparities in the domestic space and family life, but also to the emergence of a 'neo-traditionalist' perspective of the home, which is not a simple return to a traditional family order or to gendered spatial and tasks divisions but, according to Miller, is a process of family construction 'through the cultural development of relational forms'.[75] To put it in different terms, it is a shared process of constructing a household and gender identity that invokes traditional structures. This final point raised by the Miller aligns with sociological literature that sees household activities as instrumental for the development of personal and shared identity. However, Miller's research differs from other studies, as it acknowledges the central role that women play in the domestic realm and condemns previous social theories that discard housewifery 'for its lack of possibilities and self-actualisation'.[76] This happens, Miller explains, because of the 'refusal at both ordinary and academic levels to regard it as other than trivial'.[77] His valuable reflections on 'neo-traditionalism' resonate with the so-called 'culture of conservatism' brought forward in Sparke's study of women's domestic taste.[78] Both allude to a clear, widespread reconnection of inhabitants with past values, practices and tastes which was, and still is, largely overlooked in architectural theory. Both terms seem to describe most middle-class and working-class domestic interiors today. The

authors also make a clear point on the relevance of women's presence in the construction of household identity and interior aesthetics, but also the definition and consolidation of gender identities.

Cultural domesticity acknowledges these dynamics, but reads this 'neo-traditionalist' or 'conservative' trend as a reflection of habitus, as an internalisation and reproduction of shared history and objective structures: a mechanism that, using Bourdieu's words, 'produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle'.[79] Bourdieu's objective structures are indeed the institutionalised products of objective structures such as language, the economy, or the family, which are reproduced through everyday practice and dispositions.[80] The latter inform taste and have repercussions for domestic interiors.[81] As a consequence, cultural domesticity can be understood as a lens to study a continuous return to more traditional symbols and choices as material reproductions of habitus.

Conservative Cultures

Another important element of connection between the first and second macro-category of analysis is the research brough forward by Judy Attfield. In her publications, including the 1989 essay 'FORM/female FOLLOWS FUNCTION/male: Feminist Critiques of Design' she takes an important feminist stance in relation to design, consumption and cultural studies.[82] Her feminist analysis applies to everyday objects and 'things' and the 'world of people' interchangeably,[83] and her text tackles some important points that resonate with this research. Just like *From Within*, her writings challenge dominant processes of legitimation, which has led to an overlooking of feminist and female-centred topics or, as she puts it, 'normally silent, hidden and unformulated dimensions of design omitted in its conventional study or literature'.[84] She advocates for a feminist critique that is not based on connoisseurship but, instead, 'upon a concern for people'.[85]

Attfield's research, therefore, resonates with this research as they both look closely at lived experience and personal dimensions of interior occupation. She specifically looks at the relationship between people and objects in the formation of subjectivity that unfolds through the attribution of personal meanings to inanimate objects via everyday use, rather than advertising – which imposes specific meanings to goods of consumption.[86] Just like the anthropologist Mary Douglas, who believes in the power of shopping for the consolidation of personal identity, and similar to Miller with his theory of consumption, Attfield suggests the possibility of cultural and social change, along with the improvement of women's conditions, through both design and consumption.[87] She, indeed, suggests that consumer goods are the 'embodiment of culture'.[88] Similarly, Douglas states that 'culture is a contest about decoration as much as anything else'.[89] The enculturated nature of consumption patterns and decoration choices intertwines with processes of the definition of taste and, subsequently, with the consolidation of gender identity. Hence, 'to know what happens to taste, we need to trace its manifestations to a whole range of objects, recognising them as banners in cultural contest'.[90] Douglas summarises the key features of the second macro-category of analysis in this thesis, which looks at the direct connection between objects and subjects in the construction of subjective and shared identities. Women's self-making practices in the domestic sphere seem to specifically comprise caring and household management, domestic consumption, and interior decoration, and all of them concur with

Fig. 1. Interior of Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019). Both the rich interior and clean-cut Modernist exterior are clearly visible.

a consolidation of women's aesthetic culture.

Sparke's work, specifically her 1995 volume *As Long as It's Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste,* connects Miller's findings on neo-traditional living practices and decoration choices and Attfield's feminist considerations on domestic spaces and consumption, providing fundamental insights on feminine aesthetics dimension, taste and domestic practices.[91] Her work indeed contributed to the formulation of this thesis' point on the legitimisation of feminine spaces. Specifically, she argues that the aesthetic canon of the dominant culture is masculine. Consequently, women's tastes and aesthetic choices have been stereotypically branded as 'trivial' – a point shared with Miller – or, worse, 'kitsch'.[92] Aesthetic judgement and value attribution was, and still is, tied to a masculine experience of modernity that has pushed women's aesthetic and architectural contributions to the margins. Architectural and design Modernism indeed reflects, both materially and symbolically, masculine aesthetic.

Sparke's differentiation between feminine domesticity and masculine aesthetics informs this thesis' main problematic: an evident split between post-war Modernist housing exteriors – which reflect the aesthetics of the Modern Movement – and the real conditions of their interiors' occupation, which continue to reflect feminine domesticity and taste (fig. 1). Concerning this point, Sparke eloquently argues that 'modernists evolved a language and philosophy of modern design that was in effect a masculine version of what had previously been referred to as "the aesthetic of everyday life". Modern design effectively marginalised feminine culture and left no linguistic or philosophical space for it to compete with what rapidly became the dominant patriarchal culture.'[93] Consequently, taste 'was relegated to the feminine sphere, where it became the primary means through which women negotiated that private, alternative face of modernity that touched and transformed their lives'.[94] She explains that in the UK women negotiated their modern identities by recovering traditional feminine domesticity. They became guardians of the past and were, subsequently, accused by taste reformers and design experts of being anti-progressive. The same phenomena happened in other European countries, such as Italy, where the entire process of social modernisation was never completed as the Fascist regime brought forward a reactionary campaign that favoured social conservatism and traditional systems.[95] Sparke's so-called 'culture of conservatism' in women, therefore, transcends UK boundaries and describes widespread practices of interior occupation of post-war housing, which emerged in the interwar period and still characterise post-war dwellings' interior occupation. Tellingly, she clarifies that conservative domesticity was promoted through the media and became 'embedded as an ideal across class lines in interwar society. And the particular model of domesticity it resembled was that of Victorian society nearly a century earlier'.[96] This model could not always fulfil women's 'symbolic requirements' and, consequently, led to a 'resistance to the model of modernity that women were being asked to negotiate'.[97] This Janus-faced conservative modernism, therefore, looked both forward, as it represented women's own negotiated face of modernity, and backwards, as it relied on past domestic models: 'inevitably, the bulk of their work resided somewhere in the middle, blending modernist ideals with those of feminine domesticity'.[98]

Conservative modernism and women's conservatism describe women's domestic culture through a feminist lens play a fundamental role in the understanding of cultural domesticity. They acknowledge the centrality of women in domestic, family life, but also their guardianship of past values and tastes. These reflect the '"cultural housekeeping"

undertaken by women of the symbolic, social and cultural capital of their families and their responsibility for its transmission across generations',[99] which is itself a manifestation of habitus. The disciplinary premises behind cultural domesticity and conservative modernism distinguish the two terms, as the latter describes a specific cultural and aesthetic model, whereas cultural domesticity has a strong, spatial focus. Moreover, cultural domesticity sees women's choices as driven by habitus, which is itself an interiorisation of the 'dominant symbolic' system of oppression.[100] It, therefore, looks at 'forms of social action which are understood to be more habitually rooted and hence tied into the constitution and reproduction of the norms, expectations and habits of gender'.[101]

Given the connection with Bourdieu's theory,[102] a series of social actions and everyday practices are carefully scrutinised in this research, and they are not only highly scripted and culturally relevant in the contexts analysed, but they are also clearly gendered. Specifically:

> "practice" can encompass both innovative behaviour and habitual or institutionalised actions consistent with pre-existing scripts. With respect to family practices, individuals typically come into a set of practices that are already partially shaped by "legal prescriptions, economic constraints and cultural conditions". It could, therefore, be expected that many family practices will be processes sustaining the conventional arrangements for partnering and parenting that receive legal, economic and cultural support. Just as family practices might fit with and reproduce conventional scripts, so too might practices of intimacy.[103]

This 'cultural scripting' perfectly summarises the internalised mechanisms that shape women's everyday actions and the practices – both profoundly embedded in ordinary manifestations of the self – that will be studied in this dissertation. Tellingly, when referring to someone involved in a practice, Bourdieu writes that s/he knows the world

> in a sense too well, without objectifying distance, [s/he] takes it for granted, precisely because he is caught up in it, bound up with it; he in-habits it like a garment... or a familiar habitat. [S/]He feels at home in the world because the world is also in him, in the form of habitus.[104]

From Within's analysis is theoretically grounded on habitus, as it shapes women's everyday practices and has direct implications on ordinary manifestations of the self, on domesticity and the domestic environment. The scripted, codified nature of these unconscious actions is determined by larger societal convention, as Western cultures still favour the patriarchal, heteronormative family unit at a cultural, legal, political and economic level.

Unconscious habitus that influences everyday dispositions is also explained particularly well by Delphy in her book *Close to Home* (1984), where she introduces the concept of the 'differentiated consumption' of food during family meals in France.[105] She tellingly describes mechanisms that recall the previous definition of habitus; indeed, she states that although women have the same access to food as men, because of domestic roles as house managers, mothers and wives, they willingly sacrifice themselves during meals: they either choose the least desirable portion of food or eat smaller quantities – sometimes they even choose not to eat at all, if the food on the table is not enough for all diners. Every time, they 'believe they have chosen the piece they are entitled' to and that 'they are responsible for making

their own decision', in other words, that it is their own preference, although Delphy argues it is not.[106] In short, 'restrictions are experienced differently according to the degree of internalisation […] to which they [women] are attached'.[107] So differentiated consumption is nothing but a form of internalised oppression that became part of women's habitus.

Delphy's theory will be applied to other domestic practices analysed in this thesis, as there seems to exist a direct relationship between economic mechanisms of patriarchal oppression, which comprise the transmission of cultural capital and material inheritance and habitus. Furthermore, the parallel between the culture of conservatism and cultural domesticity in the light of differentiated consumption raises the question whether there is any difference between habitus and identity formation, especially the female one. Beverly Skeggs sees habitus as one of the main Western theories of the formation of the self;[108] hence, it is possible to argue that both terms are concerned with women's self-making practices. Yet cultural domesticity has an architectural, operative dimension; through the elevation of domestic practices and female spaces, but also of the processes of inhabitation, appropriation and alteration, it intends to subvert the processes of the legitimation of feminine spaces and architectures.

To summarise, one can say that a series of unconscious acts contribute to the consolidation of feminine domesticity through consumption, taste and, more generally, aesthetic choices. Several of them, however, seem to adhere to heteropatriarchal, stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity: 'women's tastes and the decisions they take are key to the process or selecting objects for the home. And in making that selection, women are also constantly choosing whether consciously or unconsciously either to accept or to reject, stereotypical constructions of femininity'.[109] Domestic consumption plays a fundamental part in the process of consolidation of gendered identity, as material culture acts as a mediator between occupants and domestic space. Overall, it is possible to anticipate that domestic practices and tastes continue to be gendered (specifically in the contexts analysed in this thesis), and this can be explained through Bourdieu's study *Masculine Domination* (1998), which clarifies that gender norms are reproduced through the experience of childhood, when children are usually raised by heterosexual couples.[110] Specifically, Bourdieu's conception of habitus suggests that early childhood experiences of one's mother's and father's bodies as well as the sexual division of labour 'guarantees a "natural" acquisition' of gender dispositions.[111] Bourdieu suggests that the normalisation of gender roles within the family 'is so ubiquitous that it is impossible to escape masculine domination: women misrecognise their subordination, and gay and lesbian couples replicate normative gender roles'.[112]

Lisa Adkins pointed out that Bourdieu's theory is particularly relevant, as it provides the theoretical basis for a study of 'gendered dynamics in the field of cultural production', of 'class femininity' and given his emphasis of embodiment in his theory of practice, it favours the study of the mechanisms of the 'enactment of the past'.[113] The unconscious adherence to backwards, stereotypically feminine aesthetics could also be, as Sparke argues, a means through which women's individual and collective identity is formed.[114] This can be further understood, in De Certeau's terms, as a reworking or reappropriation of official, institutionalised language or, alternatively, the terrain of negotiation of one's personal identity within predefined or stereotypical objective structures.[115] They pertain, respectively, to class habitus, gender roles and national, cultural stereotypes. The interplay between taste, gender and national politics will be discussed more in detail in the main parts of this

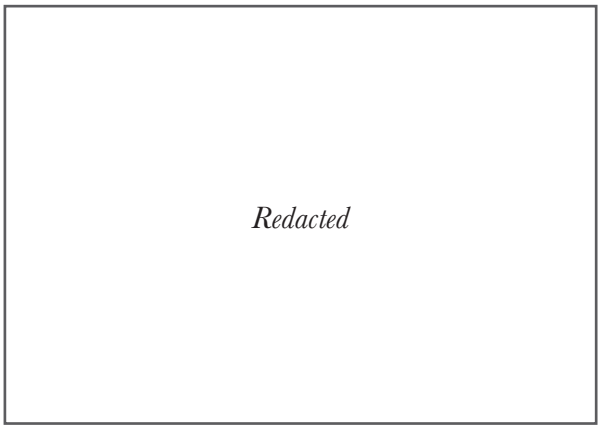

Fig. 2. Le Corbusier and his wife Yvonne in his recently completed Cité Frugès (1921 c.ca).

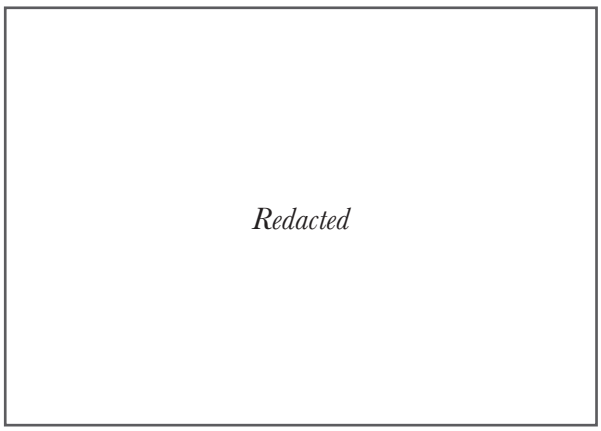

Fig. 3. Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. Axonometric of Cité Frugès, Pessac (1927).

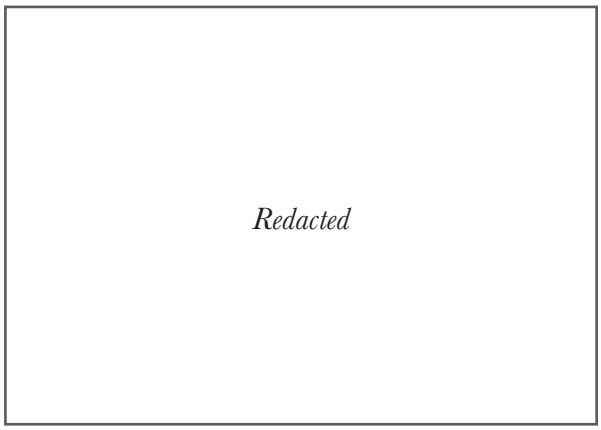

Fig. 4. Photograph of Cité Frugès, Pessac (1926).

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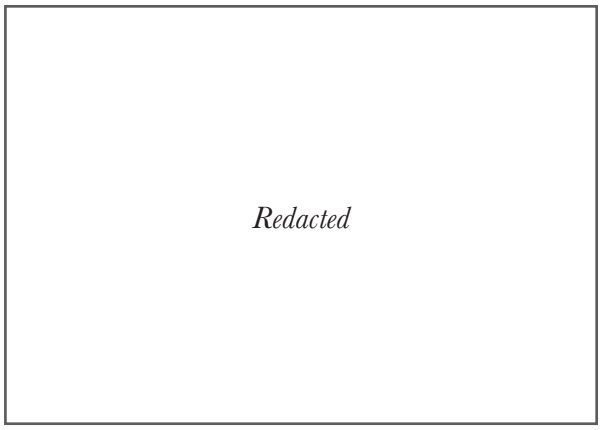

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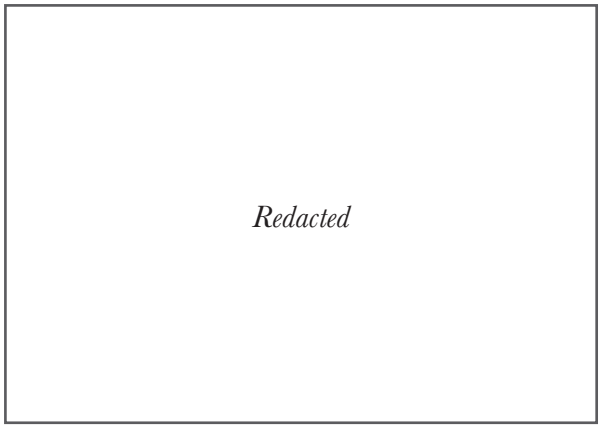


Fig. 5, 6. Still frames of INA documentary *Cité Le Corbusier à Pessac* (1967).

thesis, in fact:

> on the level of popular culture, women continued to make choices based on the dictates of fashion and comfort […], while on the level of high culture – a system of polemics rooted in the masculine sphere and with strong establishment backing – pointed a new way forward. Each system, in turn, was linked back to an idealized image of the nation, the former based upon the concept of the moral family and the latter based upon a national style in the international marketplace.[116]

Modernist Housing

Modernist housing and interiors encapsulate these dynamics, as they represent the battleground between masculine high-cultural values and aesthetics and (reactionary) female tastes, which are confined to mid-cult and pushed to the edges of valued cultural, aesthetic and spatial production. However, it is worth noting that discrimination against women's aesthetics takes on an even larger role in the context of architectural Modernism. Indeed, the latter claimed for the universality of its aesthetic and, although it did not recognise the gendered nature of its forms, by claiming the universality of its language, it branded as problematic, even pathologic, anything that differed from it. The pathologising of female (or queer) taste and aesthetics, even today, is merely one of the many mechanisms of the cultural exclusion of alternative domesticities or identities. 'The split into good and bad taste was the result of a male-directed moral crusade, which began with the mid-nineteenth century design reform movement and which moved into modernist architectural and design theory and modern cultural criticism',[117] and this confrontation has had both visible and invisible results. The latter manifest themselves in the daily practices that take place inside the house, along with tensions that accumulate between inhabitants, which are the clear results of women's oppression. The former are manifest in the aesthetic discrepancy between the exteriors and interiors of both working- and middle-class Modernist housing. In short, masculine, modernist aesthetics rejected feminine taste, which was exemplified by nineteenth-century interior decoration and ornament.[118] It also emerged as a 'reaction against […] bourgeois values' and a 'rejection of the middle-class world in all its manifestations. The cult of domesticity and feminine taste were among the first to be pushed from the centre'.[119]

This is particularly clear in the case of Le Corbusier's Pessac housing complex, also known as Cité Frugès. The project epitomises the tension between institutionalised forms, masculine and austere high-cultural taste and agenda, between the dwelling plan (which reproduces the subdivision of gendered spheres) and the needs of the occupants. These tensions are evident inside its domestic interiors, where the process of inhabitation is almost uncontrollable by the architect. The Pessac project was the first housing project built by the renowned father of the Modern Movement in France between 1926 and 1930 (figs. 2–12).[120] Cité Frugès comprises 51 houses that accommodate the workers of Pessac, a town not far from Bordeaux. It was an experimental project and an example of early Modernist architecture, with the architect intent on educating the inhabitants in a new (masculine) aesthetic and modern lifestyle. Cité Frugès is also the first realisation of Le Corbusier's housing principles defined in the Maison Dom-ino project (1919).

Only five years after its construction, the residential complex was appropriated by the

inhabitants and visibly modified, as shown in figures 5, 6 and 7. They not only occupied the interior spaces with old-style furnishings and decorations, but also modified the architecture by adding pitched roofs over the roof-garden, thus, adding an extra room to the small accommodations designed by Le Corbusier. 'The aesthetic and ideological opposition to modernism demonstrated by those objects served to divorce them from the world of so-called legitimate culture and good taste',[121] and the spatial alterations that followed, which I want to emphasise here, are the tangible results of such opposition. The inhabitants returned to a 'feminine' middle-class domestic and aesthetic model, which resulted in a negotiated version of their modern identities. This femininisation of modernist space caused strong reactions from designers and taste reformers of the time. Le Corbusier, who was still alive when this happened, commented in 1931:

> it is an absolute horror, a most unappealing kind of boorishness… I had thought that after all the sacrifices that Pessac has involved, one would at least have prevented the people from laying their disastrously incompetent hands on it […]. I cannot begin to understand how you, who are aware of the spirit in which Pessac was created, have allowed the villa no. 14 to fall into such a ruinous state, taking on the appearance of the sort of gewgaw architecture seen in pseudo-modern seaside resorts, or that the bricking up of the arcades has been permitted, or the repainting of the staggered rows.[122]

Le Corbusier himself condemned his work as an absolute failure, which caused Cité Frugès to fall into oblivion for a long time (fig. 7). A 2013 documentary shows how the housing complex is inhabited (fig. 9–12). Although the differences with the 1930s documentary in terms of interior occupation are not that evident, it is interesting to hear the comments of an inhabitant, who assures the camera that she left everything as the architect had designed it.[123] This is because of the municipality's campaign to educate the inhabitants on the history and value of Le Corbusier's work. Nevertheless, as is clearly visible from the screenshots of the documentary, inhabitants decorated their homes with heavy furniture and fittings (fig. 9–12).

The interior decoration and spatial alterations of the Pessac project demonstrate a continuous return to a feminine aesthetic and domestic model, with the dwelling's appropriation also reflecting on broader national trends that are historically charged and culturally definable, and extending the cultural forces at play from the individual to a national scale.[124] A very perceptive 1981 article by the New York Times on the Pessac project clearly expresses this, when the journalist describes her entry into one of the dwellings as follows: 'downstairs, a corridor had been created from the front door to the living room, and a formal dining area. There was flowered wallpaper, overstuffed furniture, and the accessories of a comfortable bourgeois lifestyle.'[125] Part I of this thesis will, indeed, demonstrate that the need to reproduce a bourgeois environment is typical of the French middle class and influenced the aesthetic character of feminine domesticity.[126] This can be traced back to the decoration and furnishing of the many bourgeois *salons* with numerous pieces of furniture and objects, a practice that never completely disappeared in France. It is also an appropriation practice that, as in the case of Cité Frugès, altered the architectural space itself through the addition of new roofs, the creation of a corridor and the extension of the living room (fig. 8). This opens up the thesis to the third area of study, which looks at architectural space and the gendered, cultural and symbolic value of the dwelling plan and the inhabitant's alterations.

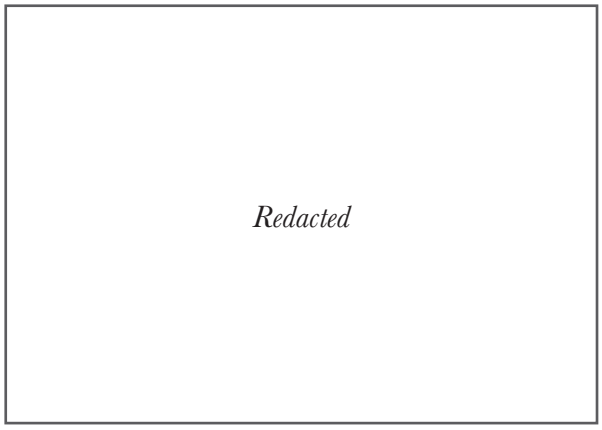
Fig. 7. Cité Frugès was left in ruins until the 1960s, when a refurbishment project started.

Fig. 8. Cité Frugès's spaces altered by the inhabitants before listing. Here are visible new pitched roofs that enclose the roof garden.

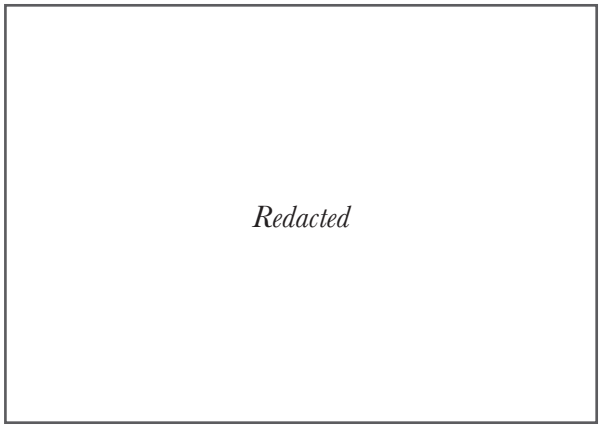
9

Redacted

10.



11.



12.

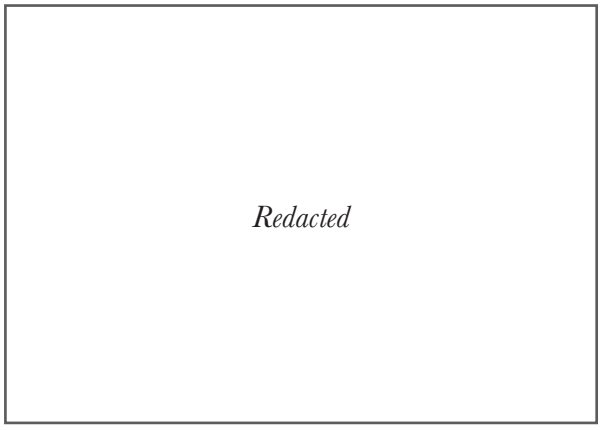


Fig. 9–12. Still frames of the documentary *Le Corbusier de Pessac* by Jean-Marie Bertineau (2013).

3. The Separate Spheres Paradigm

The third and last macro-area of study looks at the spatial and symbolic division of dwellings in gendered spaces, the so-called 'separate spheres paradigm', along with the cultural implications of their design and alteration.[127] The paradigm not only reflects institutionalised categories of sexuality – as it reinforces gender-based oppression – but also shapes masculine and feminine domesticity, along with different experiences of modernity. As aforementioned, 'the origins of this ideology […] is both patriarchal and capitalist'.[128] Gender politics and the maintenance of gender hierarchies are supported by social and cultural definitions of gender that are reinforced by institutions that uphold heteronormative ideals – one of which is architectural design which, in the case of post-war housing, focused on the design of dwellings for heterosexual nuclear families. All these gendered, cultural representations and spaces thus manifest themselves through intentional design, everyday use and interior occupation. Indeed, 'experience has since taught designers that it is impossible to create neutral spaces devoid of cultural connotations'.[129] This reading extends previous considerations on the gendered nature of interior decoration and domestic objects to both architectural space and the inhabitation practices that take place inside it. Within this gendered division of tangible and intangible aspects of daily life, persists the cultural subordination of the feminine. This happens because of the persistence of patriarchal regimes of social control that keep enforcing not only a binary understanding of sexuality and gender, but also women's sexual, economic and spatial control. 'This is problematic for feminists because assumptions regarding sex, gender and space contained within this binary hierarchy are continually reproduced', Penner and Randell write.[130] They believe that:

> the first step in the process of deconstruction [of this binary thinking] would be the strategic reversal of binary terms, so that the term occupying the negative position in a binary pair is placed in the positive position and the positive term is placed in the negative position […]. The reversal of the binary pairing has been key to the work of feminists who have been involved in reassessing the importance of the female side of the binary.[131]

Cultural domesticity operates precisely within this inversion of values, highlighting the positive aspects of feminine domesticity and feminine homemaking practices.

The separate spheres paradigm is inscribed in this binary thinking that, as we have seen in the contemporary reading of Balbo's work, has clear modernist roots. 'Feminism confirmed the very way in which home and everyday life had been understood in modernist thought and, hence the way it banished women to the edges of modernity'.[132] Specifically, modernist binary thinking looks at the gendered division between masculine public space and feminine domestic space. Within the home exists a further division between a more public half, which is open to the public realm and guests, and a private and intimate half that coincides with feminine domesticity and, sometimes, even with women's bodies. Modernist thinking and practice reproduce these binaries, and feminist criticism identifies them as the root of women's oppression:

> this ideology, which opposes the family (or the community) to the factory, the personal to the social, the private to the public, productive to unproductive work,

> is totally functional to our enslavement to the home, which, to the extent that it is wageless, has always appeared as an act of love. Thus, this ideology is deeply rooted in the capitalist division of labour, which finds one of its clearest expressions in the organisation of the nuclear family.[133]

Architectural space has, therefore, played a powerful role in the formation and consolidation of gender identities, especially when it represents social codes and norms sanctioned by the patriarchy. Specifically, 'the spaces literally produce the effect of gender, transforming the mental and physical character of those who occupy the wrong place: "compelled to sit indoors, the body becomes effeminate and the mind loses its strength" […]. Such a spatial confusion is explicitly understood as sexual and is identified with femininity.'[134] Architectural theorist and historian Mark Wigley brought forward the first consistent spatial analysis of gendered domestic space in the book *Sexuality & Space* (1992). He tellingly wites that the domestic space fits within a 'patriarchal grid', which distinctively recalls Bourdieu's point on subjective structures that usually fit within objective structures.[135] This parallel seems to make even more sense when reading Skeggs' and Adkins' feminist, critical reflections on Bourdieu, as they both clarify that it is the fit between habitus and field that habitus is consolidated. Their disconnection, instead, generates the basis for social change.[136]

Cultural domesticity embraces this reading and takes these considerations further by integrating Wigley's reflection with Skeggs' and Adkins' readings of Bourdieu's theory. In other words, it sees the 'fit' or, conversely, misalignment between the architectural plan and the inhabitant as the basis for, respectively, the strengthening/reproduction of habitus, or social and, above all, spatial change. This applies to the macro-scale of larger social changes and the micro-scale of subjective, gender or interpersonal changes. It could also narrow down to the negotiation of self-identity through spatial practices and alterations. These dynamics are very nuanced; they are also culturally charged and reflect gender and power dynamics that unfold within the domestic environment. In this regard, some argue that 'culturally produced space is necessarily gendered' because 'there is an explicit gendering of space through design intentions',[137] and this is partially true, given the pervasive nature of patriarchy and capitalism and its direct impact on architectural design and domestic spaces specifically. However, the everyday appropriation of culture within the domestic environment (i.e. cultural domesticity) might have the potential to deviate from the norm, registering official culture and opening up to epistemological but also practical change.

Architectural design and space retain their disciplinary power as they often reflect interiorised mechanisms of preproduction of modernist, sexist binary thinking that reinforce the split between the genders.[138] Although Wigley believes that 'the house enforces a pre-existing law […]. The law of the house precedes the house' and, therefore, considers this authoritative, disciplinary power a 'pre-architectural domain of social order' claiming that the house is 'ignorant' of the 'violence it appears to frame'.[139] This research sees Wigley's 'pre-existing law' as a manifestation of habitus, specifically the internalised objective structures that are reproduced through architectural design. This could be, alternatively, read through Michel's Foucault theory and, not by chance, Adkins and Skeggs have outlined the connection between the two theoretical approaches.[140]

Nevertheless, the separate spheres paradigm objectified in the architectural plan is, as Penner and Randell state, a problematic binary hierarchy that perpetuate the patriarchal

and capitalist ideological construction of the home and gendered subjectivities.[141] Yet, as previously mentioned in the text, it is unavoidable as the domestic sphere is still theatre of tensions generated by the pervasive presence of patriarchal mechanisms of oppression. Wigley ultimately sees the domestic space as a social agent composed of ideological systems, with gender representations manifesting themselves in the organisation of domestic space, as 'spaces are instituted to construct the specific sense of self'.[142] His point aligns with the theories across the various disciplinary contexts explored, as he describes how sexuality and identity are constructed through architectural space and domestic objects, highlighting the 'patriarchal construction of the place of a woman as the house'.[143] He sees the house as a space of control, specifically of woman's sexuality:

> the social institution of marriage is naturalised on the basis of the spatial division of gender. […] Marriage is already spatial. […] The house is involved in the production of the gender division it appears to merely secure. In these terms, the role of architecture is explicitly the control of sexuality or, more precisely, women's sexuality, the chastity of the girl, the fidelity of the wife. Just as the woman is confined to the house, the girl is confined to her room. The relationship of the house to the public sphere is reproduced in the interior.[144]

This explains the subsequent bipartition of the domestic interior mentioned earlier. Just like Jamieson, who mentioned the complex network of institutional bodies that support heteropatriarchal capitalism, Wigley claims that:

> the capacity of the house to resist the displacing effects of sexuality is embedded within a number of systems of control – mythological, juridical codes, forms of address, dress codes, writing styles, superstitions, manners, etc. – each of which takes the form of surveillance over a particular space, whether it be the dinner table, the threshold, the church, the fingertips, the bath, the face, the street. These apparently physical spaces requiring supplementary control in turn participate in a broader ideological field.[145]

The mechanism of the internalisation and unconscious reproduction of practices brought forward by Delphy, Jamieson, De Certeau and Bourdieu, along with their spatial and objectual manifestation, are also clearly explained by Wigley, who stressed more than once how women internalise the domestic, spatial order that confines them.[146] This reinforces the hypotheses of this thesis that habitus has spatial connotations, which means that the internalisation of practices, tastes and – to put it in Bourdieu's terms – dispositions is spatial in nature, and consequently, habitus itself is also spatial. Therefore, habitus is not only a sociological theory or concept, but also a valuable methodological tool in architectural history and theory.

From Within will contribute to the advancement of current literature and knowledge on the relationship between architectural, domestic space and gender. It will do so by focusing on the spatial dimension of inhabitation practices and cultures and the impact habitus has on the formation of self and gender identities. This contributes to a theoretical understanding of gendered domesticity within the field of architectural history and theory. It does so by taking a clear position on the separate spheres' paradigm which takes into consideration mechanisms of reproducing habitus and gender in the domestic sphere. This thesis,

therefore, acknowledges the relevance of the gendered paradigm especially in the context of Modernist housing, as binary thinking shaped the design and distribution of post-war dwellings in Western countries in general, and in France and Italy specifically. It is, therefore, an effective lens through which existing housing design can be studied and understood. Furthermore, this dissertation will bring forward a feminist agenda that suggests a necessary rupture or epistemological break that overcomes still common sexist value attribution in architectural history and preservation theory. Rigid spatial and symbolic gender divisions in the domestic realm are becoming more blurred and ambiguous, as different types of 'domesticities' are emerging, even in the studied countries with strong heteropatriarchal cultural roots like Italy and France.[147] Unfortunately, social change is thus far almost never associated with spatial change or a change in architectural design, and these are precisely the basis for the study that will be brought forward in the next sections of this dissertation.

Notes

1 Jane Randell, 'Tendencies and Trajectories: Feminist Approaches in Architecture,' in *Architectural Theory Handbook*, edited by Stephen Cairns, Greg Crysler, Hilde Heynen, and Gwendolyn Wright (London: Sage, 2012), 85.

2 Ibid, 96.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid, 88.

5 Ibid, 86.

6 Idem.

7 Colomina, 'Introduction,' *Sexuality & Space*.

8 Ibid. Two publications that are precursors of this book but that have a historical or political imprint are Dolores Hayden's *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), which brings forth the architectural historiography of feminist design practices and is clearly architectural and spatial, and Matrix's book *Making Space: Women and the Man-Made Environment* (London-Sydney: Pluto Press, 1984).

9 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 6.

10 Colomina, Bloomer, eds., *Sexuality & Space*.

11 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 6.

12 See, for example, Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture*; Irene Cieraad ed., *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006); Brenda Martin, and Penny Sparke, eds. *Women's Places: Architecture and Design 1860-1960* (London: Routledge, 2003); Pilkey Brent, Rachael M. Scicluna, Ben Campkin, and Barbara Penner, eds. *Sexuality and Gender at Home: Experience, Politics, Transgression.* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), among others.

13 Two scholars that could be mentioned are Beatriz Colomina and Hilde Heynen. Although they both tried to subvert current architectural history narratives, they mainly discussed the work of famous architects. It can be also argued, but this is not the space to further develop this point, that the theoretical lenses adopted by both architectural historians reproduced the male, high-brow gaze and judgement.

14 Randell, 'Tendencies and Trajectories,' 90.

15 A series of initiatives across universities worldwide recently concentrated on the decolonisation of architecture's curriculum and pedagogy, focusing on diversity, equality, inclusion and civic engagement. This is gradually shifting the debate in architectural education in general, and architectural history in specific. For instance, this is a short piece published on the SAHGB (Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain) and authored by Indujah Srikaran, Katherine Vyhmeister, Sara Honarmand Ebrahimi and Zhengfeng Wang that mentions '"Other Feminist Stories" in Architecture.' Accessed on 22 November 2021. https://www.sahgb.org.uk/features/other-feminist-stories-of-architecture.

16 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 8.

17 Attfield, *Wild Things*; Cieraad, 'Introduction,' *At Home*.

18 Ibid. Even though she wrote this in 2006, some of her reflections remain current: multidisciplinary approaches are still predominant for the study of the domestic space, and qualitative studies are still scarce, especially in architecture.

19 Nicole Cox, and Silvia Federici. *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen* (New York: Wages for Housework Committee, 1976).

20 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 10.

21 Federici and Cox, *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen,* 7–9.

22 Ibid, 5–6.

23 Laura Balbo, 'La Doppia Presenza,' (The Double Presence) in *Inchiesta,* VIII, n. 32 (1978).

24 Balbo, 'La Doppia Presenza,' 3. Author's translation.

25 See the article 'Eurostat, tasso di occupazione in Italia 2020 peggiore dopo Grecia,' in *ANSA* (April, 2021). Accessed 2 May 2021: https://www.ansa.it/europa/notizie/rubriche/altrenews/2021/04/14/eurostat-tasso-di-occupazione-in-italia-2020-peggiore-dopo-grecia_29110219-cf94-4e95-bee6-b8436dbb8ed3.html.

26 Idem.

27 Mentioned in Donatella Barazzetti, 'Doppia Presenza e Lavoro Di Cura. Interrogativi Su Alcune Categorie Interpretative' (Double Presence and Care Labour. Questions on Some Interpreptative Lenses), *Quaderni Di Sociologia*, n° 40 (April, 2006), 85–96.

28 Balbo, 'La Doppia Presenza,' 4. Author's translation.

29 Ibid, 2.

30 Ibid, 5. Author's translation.

31 Idem.

32 See Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*; Matrix, *Making Space.*

33 Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression* (London-Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2016).

34 Delphy, 'Introduction,' *Close to Home*.

35 Delphy, 'Women in Stratification Studies,' *Close to Home.*

36 Lynn Jamieson 'Boundaries of Intimacy,' in *Families in Society Boundaries and Relationships* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2005), 188–206.

37 Barazzetti, 'Doppia Presenza'.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid. Author's translation.

40 Ibid.

41 Barazzetti 'Doppia Presenza'; Jamieson, 'Boundaries of Intimacy'.

42 Judy Attfield, 'FORM/Female FOLLOWS FUNCTION/Male: Feminist Critiques of Design,' in *Design History and the History of Design* ed. J. Walker (London: Pluto Press, 1990), 199–225.

43 Attfield, 'FORM/Female,' 78.

44 In an insteresting essay, co-authored with Fatima Pombo and Wouter Bervotes, she clarifies the relevance of critical theory for the study of 'Inhabitation as a Process'. She clarifies that 'domesticity, states critical theory, is not something that naturally emanates from some essential human need. It is rather an ideological construct, the emergence of which can be traced in history.' Indeed, feminist theory is a form of critical theory and, therefore, the premises of her study do not differ from those of this dissertation. The article was published on *IDEA Journal* (2011): 112-121.

45 See Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique.* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999); Hilde Heynen, and Gülsüm Baydar, eds. *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*. (London: Routledge, 2005), among others.

46 Most of her publications that concentrate on Modernism and domesticity focuse on the work of Adolf Loos, Hannes Mayer and Gerrit Rietveld. See *Negotiating Domesticity.*

47 See, for instance, Sparke, *As Long as it's Pink*; Judy Attfield, and Pat Kirkham, eds., *A view From the Interior: Feminism, Women, Design* (London: Women's Press, 1989).

48 Hilde Heynen. 'Architecture, Gender, Domesticity.' Special Issue of *The Journal of Architecture*, 7:3 (2002): 226.

49 Ibid.

50 Karina Van Herck ed. 'Second Interlude: on the House From all Sorts of Angles,' *The Journal of Architecture*, 7:3 (2002): 281-286.

51 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 232.

52 Colomina, Bloomer, eds., *Sexuality & Space.*

53 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 233.

54 See, for instance, Attfield, and Kirkham, eds., *A view From the Interior;* Attfield, *Wild Things.* Sarah Elsie Baker, *Retro Style: Class, Gender and Design in the Home* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); Csikszentmihaly, and Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things;* Daniel Miller ed., *Home Possessions.*

55 Among non-architects, the publications of Irene Cieraad and Judy Attfield stand out since they have referred more than once to architectural plans. Two specific examples are: Irene Cieraad, '"Out of my kitchen!" Architecture, Gender and Domestic Efficiency,' in *The Journal of Architecture*, 7:3 (2002): 263-279. Judy Attfield, 'Bringing Modernity at Home: Open Plan in the British Domestic Interior,' in *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space,* ed. Irene Cieraad (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 73-94.

56 See Monique Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée* (Bruxelles: AAM, 1990), and *L'Invention de l'Habitation Moderne* (Paris: Fernand Hazan Editions, 1995).

57 Miller, 'Appropriating.'

58 Ibid, 354.

59 Ibid.

60 Idem.

61 Idem.

62 Ibid, 356.

63 Ibid.

64 See, among others, Ben Campkin, 'Out-of-sync Estates,' in *Mobilising Housing Histories,* (London: RIBA Publishing, 2019), 163–176.

65 Miller, 'Appropriating,' 366.

66 De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xiv.

67 Idem.

68 Idem.

69 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*; Matrix, *Making Space;* Aaron Betsky, 'Women in a Man-Made World: The Exteriors of Buildings Are an Expression of Human Sexuality and Power, Historically Determined by Men. We Should Now Design More Holistically, Writes Aaron Betsky.' *Architectural Review* 243, no. 1449 (March 2018): 30–32, among others.

70 'Marx begins with the alienation of the results of man's labour, alienation of objects produced by man. The realization of labour is its objectification, and this objectification is for the labourer at the same time the loss of object, alienation. To the product of his labour the worker is related as to an alien object. Products of his hands constitute a separate world of objects which is alien to him, which dominates him, and which enslaves him. The alienation of the results of man's productive activity is rooted in the alienation of production itself. Man alienates the products of his labour because he alienates his labour activity, because his own activity becomes for him an alien activity, an activity in which he does not affirm but denies himself, an activity which does not free but subjugates him. He is home when he is outside this activity, and he is out when

he is in it.' Gajo Petrović, 'Marx's Theory of Alienation,' *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 23, n° 3 (1963): 420, https://doi.org/10.2307/2105083.

71 Part II of this dissertation will focus entirely on these dynamics. Specifically, this claim will be supported by evidence that derives from fieldwork conducted in Italy. See also Francesca Romana Forlini, 'Salotto Buono: the "Art of Conservation" and the Permanence of an Italian Room', *Interiors: Design, Architecture, Culture* (2021), https://doi.org/10.1080/20419112.2021.1942616.

72 Miller, 'Appropriating,' 368–369.

73 Ibid, 366.

74 Ibid, 367.

75 Ibid.

76 Miller, 'Appropriating,' 370.

77 Ibid.

78 In her book *As Long as It's Pink*, Sparke mentions this aspect quite often, explaining it in detail in chapter 7.

79 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity press, 1977), 84.

80 Ibid.

81 In his text on council estates, Miller mentions Bourdieu's reflections on working-class taste, which he believes is only a 'taste for necessity' and I agree with his position, given that even working-class interiors (across Europe) are often times heavily decorated. During my fieldwork, I was indeed able to visit some interiors that clearly reflect Miller's point.

82 Attfield, 'FORM/Female'. Attfield, *Wild Things*; Baker, *Retro Styles,* et al.

83 Ibid, 81.

84 Ibid, 71.

85 Ibid, 77.

86 Ibid, 81.

87 'If cultural transformations are possible through the material world of mass consumption, design could play a positive role in the lives of women. [...] It can also supply evidence of the changing image of women as made manifest in the material world throughout history. The interactive power of design working through objects and representations has been shown to generate change as well as to reproduce patterns of dominance. Such knowledge is vital if we are to believe in and go on working for equality in gender relations.' Attfield, 'FORM/Female,' 89. These positive reflections could be easily applied to architecture as well.

88 Attfield, 'Introduction,' *Wild Things.*

89 Mary Douglas, *Thought Styles* (NY: SAGE Publications Limited, 1996), 70.

90 Douglas, *Thought Styles*, 67.

91 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*.

92 Regarding this matter, and in line with this thesis' position, Attfield states: 'I want to argue that kitsch is a valid category of popular taste, that it conveys a pleasurable, aesthetic genuine experience, that it applies to many types of object not necessarily those normally categorised as art; but can also apply to design and everyday things and that as such, it has political implications in making culture accessible. Positioning kitsch within a social context of popular taste recognizes popular culture as a more inclusive field of inquiry, it acknowledges the aestheticization of everyday life as a positive aspect of culture and allows the consideration of taste as part of the habitus, the material culture of everyday life.' Judy Attfield, 'Redefining Kitsch: The Politics of Design,' in *Home Cultures* n° 3 (2006), 207.

93 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, 162.

94 Ibid, XXI.

95 Forlini, 'Salotto Buono'.

96 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, 98.

97 Ibid, 99

98 Ibid.

99 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu.*

100 See Delphy, *Close to Home.*

101 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 202.

102 Bourdieu, *Distinction.*

103 Lynn Jamieson, 'Intimacy as a Concept: Explaining Social Change in the Context of Globalisation or Another Form of Ethnocentricism?' *Sociological Research Online 16,* no. 4 (December 2011): 151–63.

104 Bourdieu, as cited by Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 194.

105 Delphy, *Close to Home.*

106 Ibid, 51.

107 Ibid.

108 Skeggs, 'Theories of Formation,' *Feminism After Bourdieu.*

109 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, XXIII.

110 Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

111 Sarah Elsie Baker, *Retro Style: Class, Gender and Design in the Home* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

112 Ibid.

113 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 14.
114 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, XXIV-XXV.
115 De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life.*
116 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, 43.
117 Ibid, XXVI.
118 See Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier's writings, specifically Loos' *Ornament and Crime* (1908).
119 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, 44.
120 Philippe Boudon, *Lived-In Architecture: Le Corbusier's Pessac Revisited*, trans. Gerald Onn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972).
121 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, XXVI.
122 Le Corbusier, letter to M. Vinnat, 16 June 1931, quoted in *Le Corbusier: Les Quartiers Modernes Frugès*, ed. Marylene Ferrand, Jean-Pierre Feugas and Bernard Le Roy (Basel: Birkhauser, 1998), 110–12.
123 *Le Corbusier de Pessac,* documentary by Jean-Marie Bertineau (2013). Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QphgpkVbrWQ
124 This aspect of the research will be clarified later in this chapter.
125 Ada Louise Huxtable, 'Le Corbusier's Housing Project—Flexible Enough to Endure,' in *The New York Times* (March 15, 1981).
126 Georges Teyssot, 'The Disease of the Domicile,' in *Assemblage*, n° 6 (June, 1988): 72-97.
127 An important source on the spatial division of gendered sphere and its relationship with domestic practices is Pierre Bourdieu's text on the Kabyle House, 'The Berber House or the World Reversed,' in *Social Science Information* 9, n°. 2 (April 1970): 151–70.
128 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 104.
129 Cieraad, *At Home,* 76.
130 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 104.
131 Idem.
132 Baker, *Retro Styles*, 162–187. Quote of Johnstone and Lloyd.
133 Federici and Cox, *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen,* 9.
134 Wigley, 'Untitled,' 334–335.
135 Ibid, 331; Bourdieu, *Distinction.*
136 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu.*
137 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 233.
138 Wigley, 'Untitled'.
139 Ibid, 331.
140 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*.
141 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 104.
142 Wigley, 'Untitled,' 346.
143 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink,* 35–36. She explains that one consequence of the gendered separation of spheres in the home was the men couldn't access decoration in the home for a long time.
144 Wigley, 'Untitled,' 336.
145 Ibid, 338.
146 Ibid, 340.
147 See Rachel Scicluna, *Home and Sexuality: The 'Other' Side of the Kitchen* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Furthermore, there hasn't been a proper acknowledgement of their existence across English literature until very recently (the 2010s).

Part I
The Art of Reception and Décor

The universe of everyday life in France is studded with words that ennoble or codify the most banal of everyday actions, for instance, the expression 'way of life' – which refers to the habits, customs and beliefs that characterise the way of conducting one's existence – in French translates as *art de vivre* (the art of living). The idea that common actions such as dressing, eating, conversing can acquire artistic status has served to reinforce social hierarchies and to regulate social conduct through the centuries. It could be considered as almost a 'discipline' per se, as through this knowledge and everyday practice, anyone can learn the art of living and practice it both on the street and at home. It, therefore, had the potential to regulate social interaction and individual actions at the smallest scale. In fact, the concept of the art of living was instrumental for the education of the French people (at first the most affluent, then gradually everyone) and the control of social frictions. Manuals, books and guides of all sorts proliferated in bookstores and homes to instruct on the best ways to behave in all circumstances. Manners, customs, pleasantries and celebrations represented, therefore, nothing but a strict system of social norms that seem to be embellished under the false promise of a life worthy of being exhibited as an artwork.

Part I will study codified domestic behaviours and their aesthetic dimension, focusing on how the French art of living has influenced taste, the appropriation and the decoration of French interiors. The aesthetic qualities of interior practices and spaces will be analysed through the lenses of cultural domesticity along with past and current feminist literature in order to situate women's contribution to the aesthetic and spatial development of French apartments up to the present day. Specifically, this part will focus on the typically feminine practice, still very important in French culture, of receiving guests at home. Although the latter does not qualify the French context in any exceptional way – as receiving guests is undoubtedly very important all over the world – what makes this particularly relevant to this study is the unique relationship between reception practices and the interior disposition of French homes. It is, indeed, possible to say that the codification and organisation of domestic actions and spaces for the reception of guests is exceptionally legible in France. This is evident from a wide range of manuals and treatises on the series of gestural, spatial and design aspects linked to receiving guests.

One can trace the origins of the culture of reception to the great royal courts of the seventeenth century. There, etiquette laws were consolidated along with the centralised power of the king and, at the same time, the reception process was formalised and materialised in the enfilade spaces of aristocratic estates.[1] The most important aspect of this study, however, concerns its development first within the domestic spaces of the French bourgeoisie and later in that of the middle class. This class-based approach reflects the methodology of this research, specifically the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who studied the mechanisms of social and class reproduction through symbolic domination at the cultural and social levels and, specifically, through the exercise of taste.[2] Good taste is, indeed, the prerogative of upper classes, the custodians of high culture, and is instrumental for the consolidation of social and class distinctions, as it differentiates the upper classes – who have no direct contact with daily manual labour – from the working class.

These distinctions are not just class-related but also gendered. In fact, given that modernist good taste is masculine, symbolic domination through (high) culture and taste reinforces distinctions between social classes and excludes both the working class and women. These mechanisms of exclusion are materialised in the domestic space and condition not only aesthetic choices made inside French homes, but also mundane behaviours and the use and disposition of domestic interiors. The middle-class apartment encapsulates these dynamics as taste, along with the codification of practices and the gendered distinction of domestic spheres, not only have a strong gendered and aesthetic component but also clear spatial implications. Furthermore, current statistics demonstrate that most post-war estates in France were designed for, and subsequently inhabited by the middle class, hence the choice to focus on that specific section of French society.[3]

This study specifically looks at the codification of spaces and actions in French domestic interiors, focusing on the dwellings' reception spaces: the living room and – somewhat surprisingly – the bedroom, two rooms often adjacent in France. Both spaces will be analysed in detail, and the public and representative nature of the bedroom will be clarified. This will be joined by a more detailed study of the objects that were historically expected inside this room, with a specific focus on the double bed, a piece of furniture that not only summarises the public character of the room – mainly thanks to its style, decoration and position – but also allows us to trace the evolution of a system of affects and relationships within French families.[4] The role of domestic objects will be reiterated in the second part of this analysis, where another highly codified aspect of French culture will be discussed: décor in relation to class distinctions and representation inside domestic interiors.[5]

The typology of the apartment is central to this analysis and will be studied from its emergence in the nineteenth century up to its implementation in a standardised form during the post-war period. Specifically, the apartment type emerged in France in 1840 and was formalised in the period between 1850 and 1914.[6] The name comes from the 'part' of the house that the landlord could withdraw from, so it was considered as a simple aggregation of rooms that could produce a revenue.[7] With time, the term was used to describe dwellings of both collective residential blocks and rented private houses, until the word 'apartment' started to simply be used to mean the new space of domestic and familial intimacy.[8] This definition is both specific and quite generic, since it does not provide clear indications of the social class that is meant to inhabit it. Nevertheless, it is exactly because of this twofold definition that the apartment is of particular interest here: it clarifies a specific dwelling typology and, at the same time, it refers to a social group linked by affective ties. Affection, specifically, played an important role in the evolution and consolidation of the so-called parents' bedroom. The emphasis on family ties, the presence of a marital bedroom and the widespread application of the term 'apartment' inevitably indicates the middle class, a social class that now represents two-thirds of French society.[9] The apartment's distribution and evolution can be traced back to the *hôtels particuliers* of the Parisian aristocracy and bourgeoisie, the *maisons de rapport* of the burgeoisies and middle classes and the *maisons à loyer* for the middle class.[10] Social distinctions with respect to these various residential typologies play, however, a marginal role in this analysis, not only because the social classes that lived

inside them have often changed over time, but also because it goes beyond the scope of this analysis, which concentrates on the dwelling's organisation and its use. Furthermore, these considerations become less relevant when we begin to concentrate on contemporary domesticity, since the practices of resistance to codified social norms are to be attributed to a gradual dilution of gender and class distinctions in contemporary Western societies.[11]

The work of Monique Eleb has been particularly influential in the development of this research.[12] Her expertise in the historiography of French housing and domesticity, and her decennial commitment in this area has served as a basis for my analysis. Contrary to Eleb, however, my study focuses on the multi-faceted relationship between the internal distribution of dwellings and the daily practices that unfold within them from a critical, feminist standpoint. Since both the spatial and performative aspect have been extensively codified and normalised, especially in the second part of the twentieth century, it has been possible to trace their corresponding, mutual evolution. What characterises the French context is the unconscious conformity – both of inhabitants and, above all, of architects – to these spatial, distributive and social norms. The gendered connotations of specific practices associated with welcoming guests are also particularly legible, including in the symbolic and semantic value of decorations. The unique distribution of French representational spaces introduces a spatial and gendered conflict between feminine and masculine identities within French representational spaces inside the home, with the marital bed partially encapsulating this conflict. Fieldwork conducted inside three twentieth-century housing complexes in Paris analysed how Parisians are aware of these codified behaviours, yet contemporary everyday practices and daily needs induce them to take possession of their space differently than had been foreseen by the architects.

1.1. The Visit, or the Materialisation of Customs

Savoir-vivre

In order to learn and perform the art of living, the French have been historically expected to master *savoir-vivre* (literally translated as 'knowing how to live', or 'good manners'). *Savoir-vivre* was first theorised in the nineteenth century and circulated among the members of the bourgeoisie in the form of small books (fig. 1.1). *Savoir-vivre* manuals were first a peculiarity of the upper classes, and they later became popular among the middle class.[13] These manuals covered any aspect of daily life, suggesting the perfect way for approaching strangers, setting up the table, writing a letter, welcoming guests and so on. Most notably, these books were meant to instruct individuals how to behave in every aspect of social life through codified and ritualised practices, with a legitimisation of good manners adopted from the high bourgeoisie – that, notably, held political power. This also had spatial implications, as each practice was strictly associated with the spaces in which it was performed.[14]

A chapter on 'the visit' is present in every manual, from the earliest examples to the most recent ones, which also look at today's popular aperitifs (fig. 1.1). Some of these reception practices and guides were even republished in encyclopaedias (fig. 1.2).[15] Figure 1.2 precisely

a. b. c. d. e.

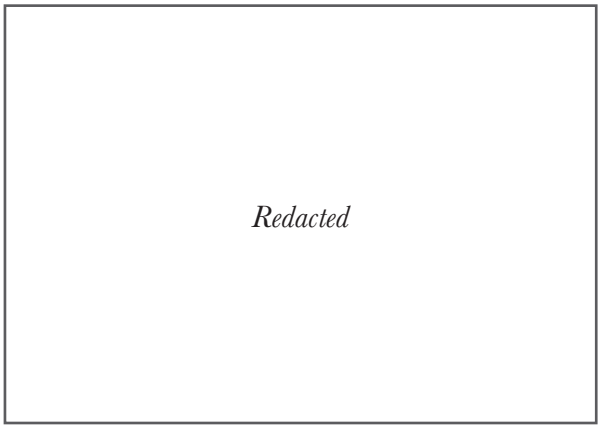


Fig. 1.1 (a-e). Some covers of the *Savoir-Vivre* manuals published respectively in 1879, 1898, 1849, 1860, 2011.

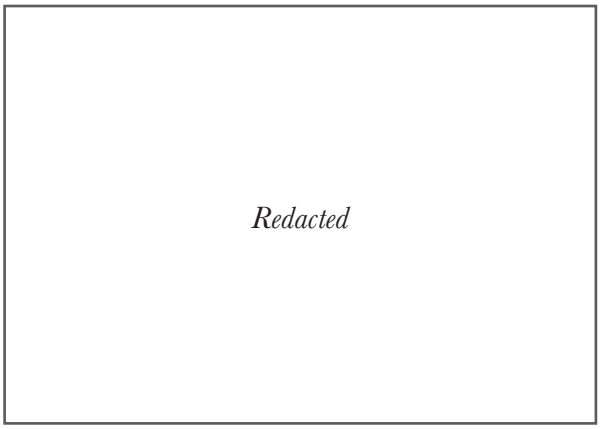


Fig. 1.2. Print that illustrates how to behave during a visit. *Série Encyclopédique Glucq des Leçons de Choses Illustrées*. Groupe IV. Feuille N° 34 (1883).

Fig. 1.3. Reception spaces and furniture inside *Résidence Point-du-Jour* by Fernand Pouillon (1952). Numbers 1–7 show the furniture system arranged in the reception areas.

illustrates some of the important behavioural codes that were to be adopted during a visit. Each image portrays guests and hosts having conversations, both in the salons and bedrooms, with one caption explaining the importance a good conversation plays during the visit (although the conversation should not last for too long). Another stresses the importance of focusing on the guest by postponing other activities such as reading, or reminds one of keeping hats off whilst having a conversation in the host's bedroom. 'Politeness has fixed rigorous terms for some visits; not conforming to them means to lack of *savoir-vivre* […] If you are received in a bedroom, for want of a living room, do not put your hat on the bed, you should keep it in your hand' (fig. 1.2, third illustration).[16] Nineteenth century *savoir-vivre* manuals also clarified that one should not spend more than 20 minutes at someone else's place, or that the woman of the house's gestures dictate each step of the visit, from the entrance to the moments when a guest could sit or speak.[17]

Each action codified in the books on *savoir-vivre* did not detach itself from the unspoken code of 'etiquette' that regulated social interaction among the wealthy classes of French society.[18] In fact, although each social class had access to its own *savoir-vivre* book, etiquette was almost exclusive to the upper classes. Adherence to etiquette rules was a guarantor of social distinction and a manifestation of so-called *convenance* (decorum, propriety).[19] Its adoption, alongside with *savoir-vivre,* defined the complex landscape of social norms that regulated everyday life and, specifically, the protocols that one had to be adopt inside French homes. This spatially unfolded, in the case of the visit, in the representational spaces of the house. It also regulated more intimate family relationships such as, for instance, conjugal relationships or the education of children. In short, *savoir-vivre*, etiquette, convenance and decorum were the means through which social norms were (and still are) defined, legitimised and reinstated in social life to control interpersonal behaviours.

Compliance with etiquette rules is strictly association with morality, which is commonly agreed upon by the members of the leading classes: it is 'the reason-giving force commanding compliance with the imperatives of morality is provided by a part of our fundamental beliefs and interests that includes such notions as duty, obligation, compassion and sacredness of the person'.[20] Most importantly, morality is the instrument through which the governance of behaviour is exercised, giving it a regulative function, meaning that it regulates social conduct and prevents social friction.[21] Etiquette becomes, therefore, the coding of everyday life through which morality is exerted and, by this token, the *savoir-vivre* manuals can be considered the printed and more popular version of the otherwise simply inherited, and therefore exclusive, behavioural codes of the upper classes. Furthermore, morality's effectiveness lies in its underlying symbolic functions, since it 'provides a system of symbols whose semantic content provides for predictability in social relations, especially among strangers. Examples include the rules governing greeting, eating, dressing and restraining bodily functions.'[22]

This is relevant to the analysis of domestic practices, since the laws of morality and decorum have obvious spatial, ritualistic implications, as the repetition of these highly regulated actions defines everyday life's rhythms. With codes and behaviours consolidating

a class' habitus, the systems of codification of both spaces and actions can be said to be 'strategies' adopted by the higher strata of society that are to be performed both in public and private. According to Michel De Certeau, strategies are spatially located actions in a technocratically constructed or institutionalised environment that are considered 'proper' (*propre*).[23] They are rhetorical and symbolic in terms of the language system they produce, and they are anchored to a specific (cyclical) time, with no possibility of deviation from it. Accepting and hosting guests at home is one amongst the various strategies to (re)affirm oneself as a member of a specific social class, constituting an assertion of power over other individuals or groups. Moreover, moral behaviours require a proper *mise-en-place:* a subtle system of material culture and décor-based symbols that follow the rules of decorum. This is manifested both tangibly (in interior decorations) and intangibly (though reception practices and manners).

Norms for social interaction based on *savoir-vivre*, ceremonies based on etiquette and the renowned *bon ton* (good manners) were gradually absorbed by French society and still play an important role in domestic life: 'in the culture of reception today we make the aperitif, especially the upper classes that do it in the salon. The person who cooks often, and traditionally, is the woman who is in the kitchen, and her husband talks to the guests, at least historically [...] and then you go to the dining room, to the dining table' explained to me one of the Parisian interviewees during my fieldwork in 2019.[24] These 'daily rituals of reception' have been largely studied in traditional anthropology, with Céline Rossellin explaining that the crossing of a threshold symbolises the beginning of new status, a transition that is ritually marked across cultures and agreed by a shared 'social and cultural consensus'.[25] She stresses the fact that in France the rituals of reception are still particularly important, confirming what was stated by the interviewee that today. Rossellin goes on by saying that 'when people are coming for dinner at the home of a couple, the man is usually in charge of welcoming guests and the woman is in the kitchen finishing the preparation of the meal. However, social rules of welcoming forbid children to open the door to guests.'[26] This unspoken rule has clear gender connotations, and the simple act of opening the door to guests not only influences the position of bodies in the space of the home, but also defines patriarchal and gendered roles.

Not surprisingly, both Rossellin and the interviewee's descriptions are similar to the practice of visiting described in late nineteenth-century *savoir-vivre* manuals, except for the fact that during the contemporary aperitif food is served. The traditional visit, instead, rarely involved consuming food, and gender roles were generally inverted: the 'lady of the house' played a central role, as she was basically the conductor of a domestic play that was performed during a visit. This introduces some of the key gender dynamics that unfold inside French interiors. The change in the role of women in welcoming guests exemplifies the shift in the mechanisms of women's oppression from the *ancién régime* to modern times. As it will be extensively explored in this thesis, the fall of the aristocracy, the gradual levelling of classes and the absence of domestic servants changed women's condition and role inside the domestic sphere. If in the past their clothed bodies were seen as an extension of the interior *décor* that accorded not only with its pleasing aesthetic, but also possessed a symbolic

dimension, the levelling of social classes and introduction of wives' domestic labour forced them into the kitchen, marginalising their role as hosts. Sociologist Sarah Elsie Baker clarifies Bourdieu's position that considers women 'as aesthetic objects' who 'naturally take charge of everything concerned with aesthetics in the division of domestic labour'.[27] While aristocratic women were in charge of welcoming guests, because they symbolically embodied the home and family (and thus its social status), middle-class women focused on preparing for the visit but delegated the act of welcoming guests to their husband. In short, women's objectification and ceremonial role gradually changed, shifting into women's labour exploitation: instead of blending in with the wallpaper, the modern woman simply disappeared behind the kitchen door.[28]

Women's role as hosts has somewhat persisted; a knowledge of manners is indeed still considered essential, as the previous interviewee mentioned with no hesitation the 'culture of reception', stressing later on in the interview its importance to her daily life, and French society at large. This confirms that codified behaviours have now become common knowledge, even amongst members of the French middle class, which is almost certainly due to the increasing popularity of *savoir-vivre* manuals throughout the twentieth century. In this period, different practices of the traditional visit developed, such as the aperitif, which is very popular across the middle and upper classes today.

Another interviewee clarified that the culture of reception is still upheld in their house, and even though it does not unfold as formally as in the past (or inside wealthy homes), welcoming guests remains a fundamental aspect of French culture. They went on by stating that today 'there is the culture of the aperitif. If you are lucky to have a nice apartment, people who have a nice apartment with double living room culture – we have it a little closed – there you have this dynamic dining room and salon' (see fig. 1.3, number 2 and 3).[29] The aperitif unfolds inside the interviewee's (semi-closed) double salon, just as it traditionally happened among the upper classes (fig. 1.3). The practice may slightly differ from the previous century, but one fixed element remains: the double salon, or the 'double living room culture' mentioned by the same interviewee. The latter is not only a key cultural component of the French apartment extensively reproduced in dwellings' plans, but it is also the space where French cultural domesticity unfolds and the keeper of most middle-class families' aspirations.

To summarise, today's aperitif is a reminder of previous practices connected to the visit. Curiously enough, the 2011 *Petit Larousse of Today's Savoir-vivre* still refers to it, focusing extensively on the modern guidelines to receiving guests at home.[30] French people still perform these practices, as they have been absorbed over time as unconscious acts inherited from one's ancestors. This is true for all generations, especially young adults, who are more conscious of these 'traditions' and find it more appropriate to reproduce them, especially if they have the means to fulfil the middle-class aspiration of a double salon.[31] It is thus possible to state that the art of reception is ultimately a manifestation of habitus. In Bourdieu's terms:

> habitus is this generating and unifying principle that retranslates the intrinsic and relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of people, goods, practices […]. Like the positions of which they are the product, habitus is differentiated; but they are also differentiating. Distinct, distinguished, they are also operators of distinctions: they implement different principles of differentiation or use different principles of differentiation differently.[32]

In France, habitus favours such distinction by virtue of the distinctive character of manners connected to the reception of visitors and the distinctive features of reception spaces, which are tripartite across the bourgeois and middle-class's apartments. By differentiating people and spaces, habitus unfolds through practices that are related to specific rooms of the house, that is the living room and bedroom. Despite their distinctive character and because of a gradual unification of classes and behaviours, these practices have become increasingly modified, partially or totally altered, or simply accepted and reproduced – each action has a spatial response that will be further explored.[33]

Distribution and Representation

Savoir-vivre and distribution treatises emerged in the nineteenth century along with the rise of the bourgeoisie as the leading social class. At that time, architects began to be interested in the new ruling class' daily life, focusing their attention on residential architecture. By the nineteenth century, French architects started to describe the urban bourgeoisie as the norm, establishing a dwelling programme and its spatial organisation based on its members' needs. The 'art of distribution' reflected this interest and become a subject of major nineteenth-century treatises on domestic architecture. Renowned nineteenth-century architects, such as César Daly and Viollet-le-Duc, wrote about distribution basing their analysis entirely on wealthy bourgeois accommodations.[34] In Daly's most famous treatise, *Private Architecture in the Nineteenth Century under Napoleon III: New Houses of Paris and its Surroundings* (1864), he clarified the necessity of a tripartition between the private area (which was more intimate and devoted to the family), the public area (devoted to the reception and representation of the inhabitants) and services.[35] This tripartition, considered as the model for any type of dwelling, was subsequently applied to the so-called *maison à loyer* and *de rapport* types of middle-class apartment buildings (figs. 1.4, 1.6, 1.8). France, more than any other Western country, was the stage for an internal debate among architects on the principles of distribution, with the consolidation of a model type emerging from this architectural debate. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, architects were aware of the ideal model of distribution brought forward by Daly but struggled to translate his principles to middle- and working-class collective housing. They tried to mediate and adjust the interior distribution principles, adapting them to the dimensions of modest dwellings, as in the case of the SAGI apartments (Société Anonyme de Gestion Immobilière, a public limited company for property management), which, despite the reduced sizes respected the distribution precepts (fig. 1.24 c).

Most importantly, though, distribution represented a shift from the previous writings on the 'art of building' that revolved around problems of construction, toward a new major concern for the 'science of life'.[36] With major revolts characterising the second half of the nineteenth century in France, the house became conceived as a place guaranteeing 'social peace' and the architect became 'its builder and guarantor through the design of a space' that could act 'as regulator of social relationships down to the details'.[37] This pervasive new science became a tool for total planning from the city to the household, and was physically implemented through the new art of distribution, spatial devices, compartmentalisation, governance and control. Indeed, the architects' interest was in the definition of a lifestyle that could mediate between intimacy and representation, the two key elements of domestic life.[38] Through the art of distribution the architect assigned to each inhabitant their own place while elements of furniture indicated the function of rooms.[39]

Spaces of everyday life were subsequently constructed, both socially and graphically, thereby becoming forms and spaces of representation. Specifically, the house was understood 'as much the product of texts as its condition of possibility. The new forms of writing both depend on and assist in the cultural construction of those spaces. They are literally part of the spaces.'[40] So, it is possible to say that treatises and manuals accorded to the cultural construction of the French apartment. At the same time, however, 'the house is never a self-sufficient spatial device. It requires a multiplicity of systems which are not simply added to a physical form.'[41] These systems could be, according to Wigley, theories or texts, but also patriarchal systems of representation through which women's sexuality was controlled.[42] Hence, both treatises and manuals were instrumental for the cultural construction of the home as a system of representation that produces, shapes and confines sexuality and gender – they are, therefore, powerful cultural forms of representation. 'Gender difference' as well 'operates as a mechanism in the construction of various cultural representations' that, in turn, guide the architect's hands.[43] In short, the social codes and practices that derive from these documents turn the home into a cultural construct that shapes both gender and domestic space. Architects indeed reproduce stereotypical and normalised gender roles through their design. This means that the material and cultural construction (both textual and architectural) of the home has substantial ideological roots and coincides with the construction of the gendered subjectivities that occupy it. Treatises and manuals, but above all the 'art of distribution' intertwined with the new 'science of life', therefore, they are not simple guidelines for the design of French residential buildings but tools with both spatial and political implications. Architects thus reproduced patriarchal models and specific cultural and spatial forms because they were embedded in a habitus and social status that placed them in a position of power, which in turn legitimised architectural treatises' pedagogical intent. This might explain the (passive) acceptance and reproduction of the distribution model for centuries.

A proliferation of nineteenth-century treatises on the art of distribution or manuals on the art of *savoir-vivre* amongst the bourgeoisie helped establish the heterosexual nuclear family as the social norm and strengthened an ideological system that instrumentalised the French apartment as a model of social conformism. The architectural project of normalising a

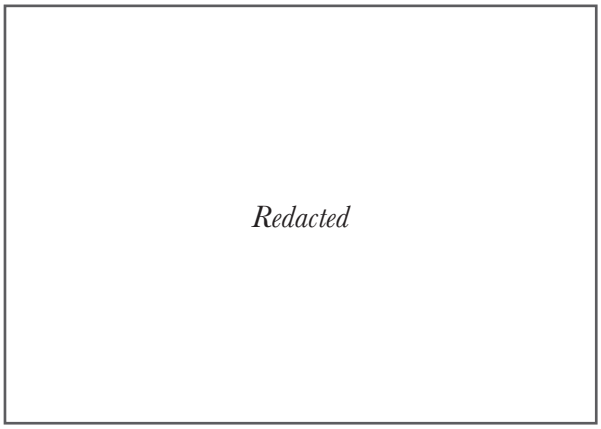


Fig. 1.4. César Daly, 'Maisons à Loyer' in *Private Architecture in the Nineteenth Century under Napoleon III: New Houses of Paris and its Surroundings* (1864).

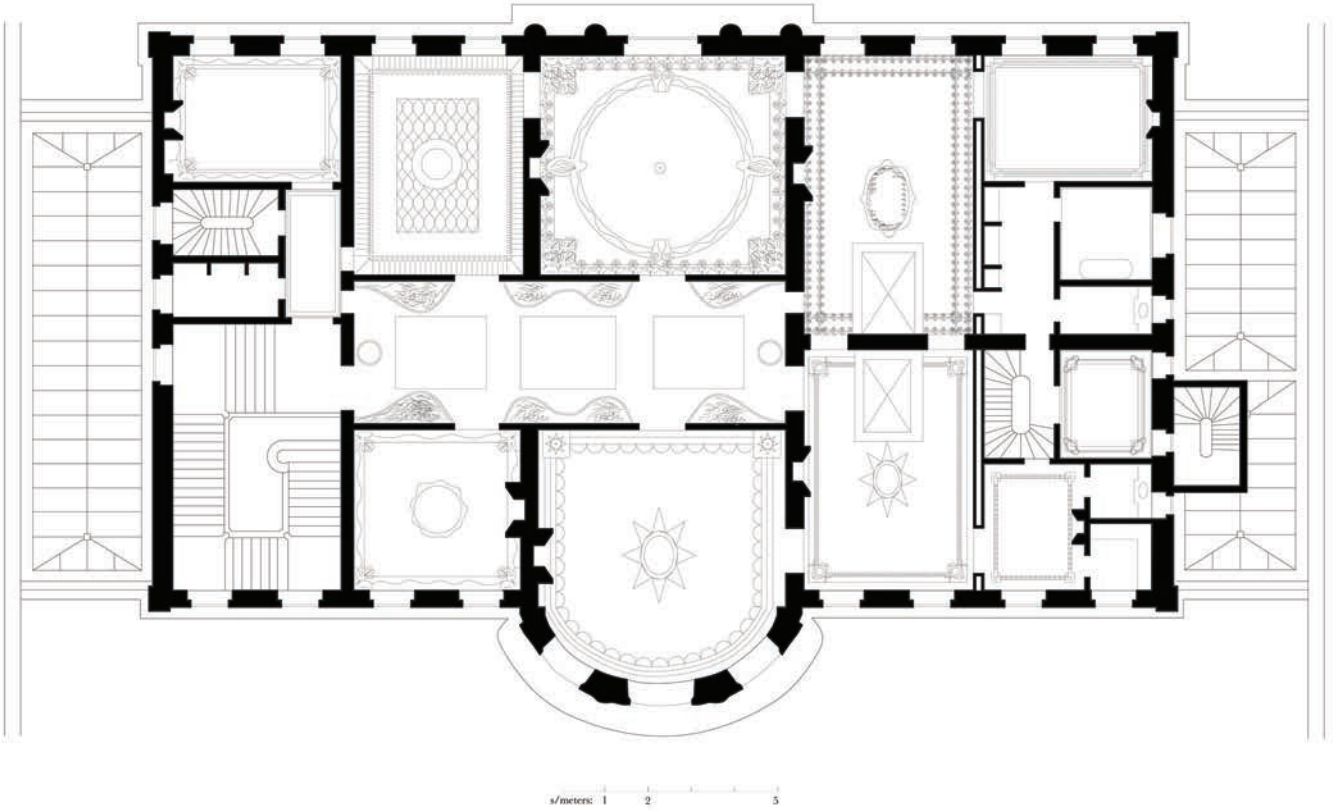


Fig. 1.5. César Daly, first floor of a Hôtel Privé in *Private Architecture in the Nineteenth Century under Napoleon III: New Houses of Paris and its Surroundings* (1864). The bottom half is the space for the Madame of te house, with her bedroom on the right half, and all the *dispositifs annexes* at its right. The bottom half is the Maître of the house's half.

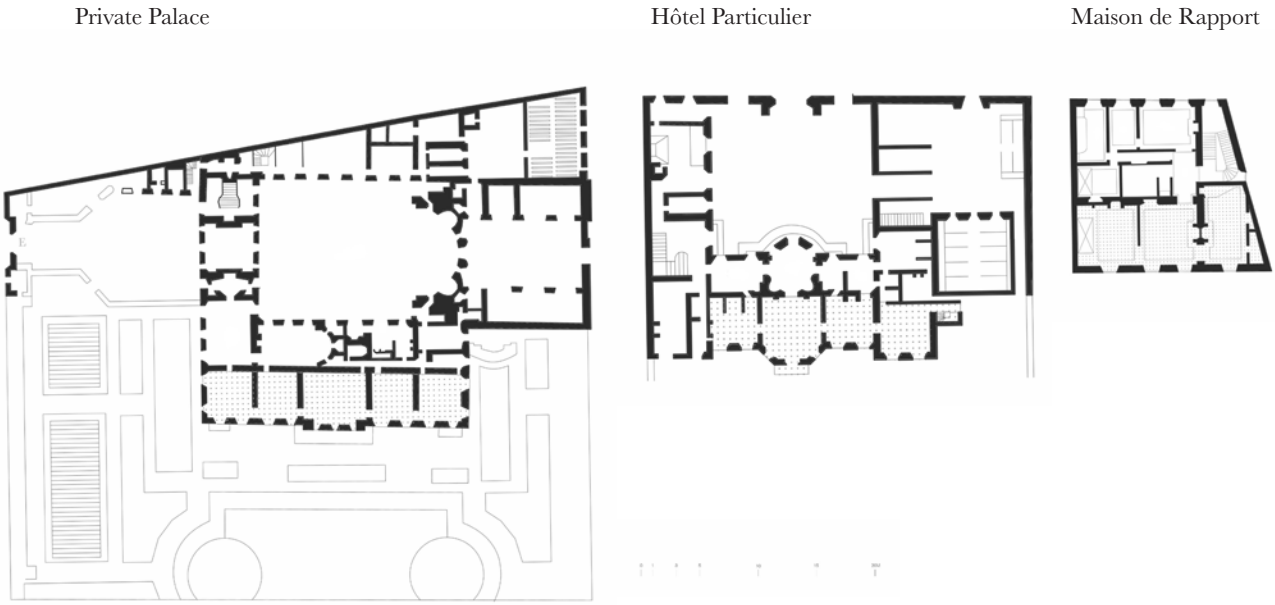


Fig. 1.6. Tripartition of reception spaces (dotted) of a private palace (eighteenth century), a *hôtel particulier* and a *maison de rapport* (nineteenth century).

bourgeois lifestyle was accompanied by an adherence to the rules of decorum, exerting a combined social and spatial control over French citizens. Indeed, the physical effects of codified spatial practices can be analysed in the distribution of reception spaces in residential interiors, ranging from early eighteenth-century aristocratic homes to twentieth-century collective housing. Thence, *savoir-vivre* represented an explicit pedagogical and moral project with great ramifications for the design of domestic architecture.

These considerations can be supported by the feminist theory, as these processes are related to the manifestation of power on a smaller scale.[44] Planning, conceived as a pure political, social and historical construct, branched from the architectural (but also urban) scale to that of the domestic. Like a tree, the hierarchy of power expanded from the government to the individual. A new science of interior distribution resulted in an ideological spatial division within domestic walls, proving that architecture can implement a clear division of both roles and power within the socially constructed reality of the family. In fact, the bourgeois apartment materialised gendered distinctions, consequently separating public and private spaces inside them home. A clear dividing line defined the layout of the house: the reception area was the realm of the master of the house (*maître de maison*) that generally faced the street side, whereas the private one was dominated by the more functional and intimate rooms that were the undisputed realm of the lady of the house.[45] The third element of the tripartition type, the shared spaces for public reception, was itself tripartite: the centre was occupied by a large living room (sometimes accompanied by a dining room) and the two sides hosted the bedrooms for the husband and wife (figs. 1.10, 1.22). Exceptionally in the French case, both bedrooms opened to the living room, with all three combined representing the status of a family (figs. 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.14).

The *hôtel particulier* typology was the typical aristocratic urban residence, usually surrounded by a garden (figs. 1.5, 1.6, 1.16). Some members of the high bourgeoisie could afford an *hôtel* as well, and these are especially interesting examples because they reproduce the distributional plan principles of large aristocratic estates built throughout France. These hotels were called *'particuliers'* because they had to respond to the particular necessities of their inhabitants, yet they also reflected on the traditional distributional principles inherited from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[46] As Eleb highlights in her book *Architecture de la Vie Privée* (1990), in the case of the *hôtel* the distribution of reception, intimate and service spaces was vertical, with the latter located either in the basement or the last floor. The reception areas (composed of a series of *salons* and *salles*) were located on the ground floor, and all intimate spaces were found in the *piano nobile*.[47] The *piano nobile* was characterised by a further bipartition (as illustrated in fig. 1.5) that goes hand in hand with the master bedrooms and their adjoining rooms. The plan shown in figure 1.5 is divided longitudinally, with the female part at the top and the male one at the bottom. The latter corresponds to the main façade, that faces the street and, symbolically, the public realm, whereas the most intimate environments (those belonging to the female) are placed to the rear, facing the garden.[48] The two bedrooms – which are immediately recognisable thanks to the presence of the bed – the only piece of furniture indicated in plan – are separated but communicate. Madame's room is larger in size and the entire *dispositif* (device, apparatus) of her smaller

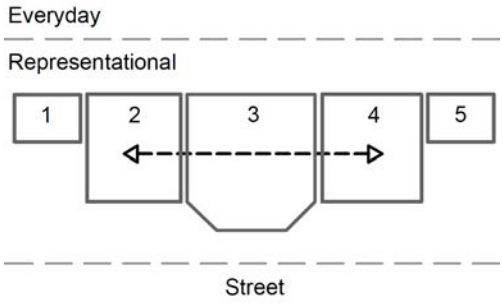


Fig. 1.7. Distribution diagram of representational spaces of an aristocratic or high-bourgeois residence. Number 3 is the central salon, usually connected to other salons or the main bedrooms of *madame* and *monsieur* of the house (2, 4) through an enfilade. Rooms 1 and 5 are *annexes* to the bedrooms.

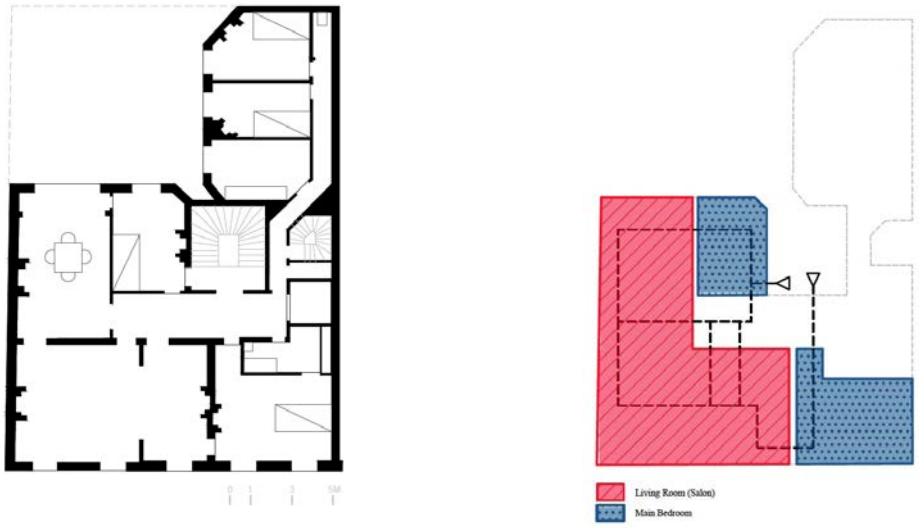


Fig. 1.8. *Maison de rapport* in Rue de Luxembourg, Paris (1886). The bottom half (street facing) of the *piano nobile* is devoted to the reception of guests (with *madame*'s annexes adjacent to her room on the right). Children's bedrooms are in the back of the building and face the internal courtyard.

service rooms is more complex than that of Monsieur.[49] Both bedrooms communicate with two large, central rooms: Madame's salon which is connected through an enfilade to the family dining room and Monseiur's studio. Guests could thus move from the ground floor salons to the *piano nobile* by accessing a vestibule-winter garden that led to yet another (more private) salon or study belonging to either the master or the lady of the house. This is the most clearly and formally gendered division of French private spaces, with annex rooms always placed next to the master's and lady's of the house bedrooms (figs. 1.6, 1.7).

In his treatise, César Daly remarks on the fundamental difference between the bourgeoisie and the lower classes' apartments: 'objects, forcedly movable in the middle-class apartment, become fixed in the *hôtel*, and by virtue of this disposition, they do confer to the same dwelling a much higher and serious character, less ephemeral'.[50] Indeed, the profoundly rooted structure of the bourgeois family was entrenched in the internal distribution of domestic space and in the fixity of its furnishings. He focuses his attention on a private villa of the wealthier class (fig. 1.5), categorising the different typologies of *hôtels privées* (private hôtels) by dividing them into classes, but he also looks at the various typologies of the *masisons à loyer* for the middle classes (fig. 1.4).

As mentioned earlier, the members of the bourgeoisie lived also inside large *maisons de rapport* (fig. 1.8), where architects applied the art of distribution based on the tripartition to a single-storey apartment. The reception, intimate spaces and services were organised following the diagram in figure 1.10.[51] Like the *hôtels*, the most public spaces devoted to hospitality overlooked the main street, private rooms faced the internal court and services were either pushed to the back of the building or were located next to the private rooms. Servants slept in small bedrooms (the so-called *chambres des bonnes*) located right under the building's roof, and hence, these occupied the last floor of multi-storey *maisons*. The twentieth-century solutions differ only partially from these nineteenth-century examples; in fact, since domestic servants gradually disappeared, service areas were pushed closer to the reception spaces as the size of apartments became less generous (fig. 1.10).

The tripartition rule continued to play a fundamental role in the distribution of the upper classes' private residences, moreover, a clear distinction between the circulation of servants, guests and inhabitants was taken into consideration by nineteenth- and twentieth-century architects (in figures 1.5, 1.6, 1.8 and 1.16, we can clearly see the two systems of stairs and corridors in plan). Another fundamental design choice pertained to the dimensions of the main salon, which had to reflect the social rank of the owner in a spatial response to the rules of decorum that dictated interior and exterior decorations.[52] Indeed, the décor, that is the sum total of the parietal decorations and objects distributed in the domestic interiors, had to be as rich as the owner. It was not possible, according to the decorum rules, to adopt décor solutions that belonged to different classes than one's own.[53] Décor was, therefore, a semantic expedient that not only informed guests of the wealth and social rank of the owner, but also provided information on the use of each room, as the furniture and decoration style differed according to a room's function.

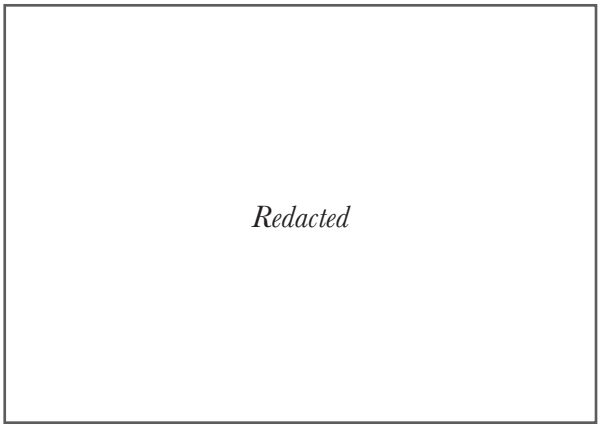


Fig. 1.9. Felix Vallotton, *Interieur avec Femme en Rouge de Dos* (1903).

Within the social framework of décor, the enfilade played an important role in the overall experience of the interiors because it not only facilitated the circulation of guests in the reception spaces, but also favoured the enjoyment of the artistic décor solutions chosen by the architect and decorator.[54] The enfilade generally connected a central salon with one or two more salons (in aristocratic and high bourgeois residences) and master bedrooms (figs. 1.6, 1.7). This subdivision of reception spaces dates back to eighteenth-century aristocratic estates, where there was a direct sequence of openings from the most public space of the salon to 'public' bedrooms. These three rooms (fig. 1.7) generally faced the main street (and, therefore, coincided with the main façade), with each bedroom – just as in the Daly's plan (fig. 1.5) – corresponding to a series of annex spaces (*dispositifs*) that varied according to the users' needs. In general, the lady's bedroom was associated with the boudoir, while her husband was associated with the smoking room, which all functioned as adjoining reception areas (fig. 1.7).

The tripartition of the reception area, the access via an enfilade and the public character of the bedroom seems to be remnants of eighteenth-century aristocratic practices of receiving more intimate guests in the bedroom. The design solution combining everyday use and etiquette clearly persisted in nineteenth- and twentieth-century bourgeois apartment types and became popular through *savoir-vivre* manuals which, not by chance, tackled all aspects of reception in the bedroom spaces. Furthermore, the public character of the room was emphasised by the distribution of pieces of furniture and the proliferation of chairs that indicate the potential number of guests that could spend time in the bedroom with the host (figs. 1.11, 1.12). The plate of Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine in *Collection of Interior Decorations* (fig. 1.12) illustrate the richness of the interior decoration of upper-class bedrooms, justifying their public character through a multiplicity of furnishings and a unifying aesthetic language. These rooms were indeed filled with matching sets of decorations and objects (figs. 1.11, 1.12), which produced an 'aesthetic surplus', that is an abundance of repetitive designs inside these interiors.[55] The marital bed stands out, as it is the largest piece of furniture in Percier and Fontaine's illustration, but the boundaries of the podium upon which it sits seem to reinforce a representational role by echoing the setting of *ancién régime* aristocratic bedrooms. The extensive use of decoration – which in the images shown are of the so-called Empire style – opens further reflections on the semantic role and meanings associated with these interiors, functioning as a pedagogical tool for the dissemination of good taste as opposed to the 'industrial arts' that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century.[56]

1.2. Between Privacy and Publicity

The Marital Bed

A close analysis of a tripartition of the French apartment's representational spaces help situate the reception practices performed inside, indeed the ceremony associated with visits unfolds in three spaces, which are easily accessible by the guests and adjacent to one another,

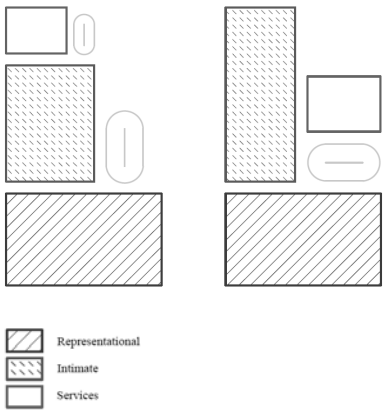


Fig. 1.10. Diagram of the distribution of French bourgeois apartments. Nineteenth century high bourgeoisie model on the left (with domestic servants' separate staircase), twentieth century bourgeois or high middle class model on the right. Representational spaces remain tripartite and face the street. An internal courtyard is usually located in the top right corner. Intimate zones and services usually face the courtyard.

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Fig. 1.11. Diagram of a state bedchamber at the Hôtel de Soubise.

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Fig. 1.12. Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine, perspective of a bedroom in *Recueil de Décorations Intérieures,* plate 13 (1801–1812).

with no corridor separating the various rooms. The salon remains, as previously discussed, the space of reception par excellence, along with one or two adjoining bedrooms. Although it maintained its public character throughout history, the marital bedroom was mainly devoted to the reception of close friends (fig. 1.13). As shown in the painting by Francois Louis Joseph Watteau, the lady of the house and her friends spent time there during the visit, with the room filled with tea sets and lounge chairs (fig. 1.11). The bedroom, however, has a very rich and controversial history.

During the Third Republic, in the second half of the nineteenth century, a new idea of being *chez-soi* (at one's own home) gradually began to emerge among the various layers of the middle class. It was a completely new, low-cut concept detached from the sheer representation of status. Its adherents began to marry for love and smaller dwelling spaces limited the number of servants, forcing the ladies of the house to take care of domestic work and gradually changing the relationship between parents and their children. As for the middle class, a crystallisation of the dwelling typology occurred (fig. 1.22), and reflected the project of the normalisation of French society that took place in the twentieth century.[57] The emergence of this new idea of conjugal affective ties, alongside the necessity of architects to adapt the distribution principles to smaller dwellings (the *maisons à loyer*), led to changes in the use of the representative rooms. This is especially reflected in the development of the marital bed, which as a single piece of furniture summarises major social changes in French society up to the present, when an increased need for privacy challenged the public character of the bedroom.

Honoré de Balzac in his book *Physiology of Marriage* (1829) tellingly writes that 'the bed is the entire marriage', showing that the harmony of the family group was linked to the peaceful sharing of a piece of furniture, which, until then, had been used in a completely different way.[58] He describes three ways to sleep with one's wife: with two twin beds in the same room, in two separate rooms and in one room and in the same bed. Although it seems that each couple could freely choose among the three types, it is evident that owning two rooms or sharing a bedroom were essentially choices dictated by the dimensions of the dwelling and, thus, the social class and economic prowess of the couple. However, it is possible to grasp the radical difference from the previous centuries:

> from there and from many other causes, such as economy, fear and misunderstood jealousy, it came the cohabitation of the spouses; and this custom has created the periodicity and simultaneity of waking up and sleeping [...] Here, then, the most capricious thing in the world, here the most eminently changing feeling, [...] here is love, finally.[59]

From this point on, romantic intimacy matched the couple's feelings, and the bed gradually lost its former quality of sumptuousness, becoming instead the space of domestic intimacy par excellence. Indeed, by the end of the century, the quantity of bed types and styles increased dramatically before the simplifying revolution in the following century.

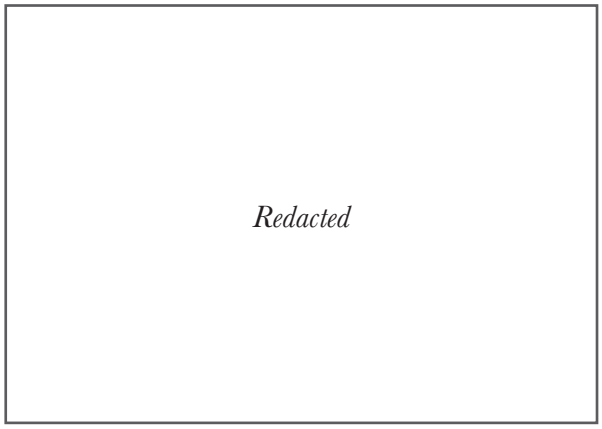

Fig. 1.13. Francois Louis Joseph Watteau, *La Toilette* (1778).

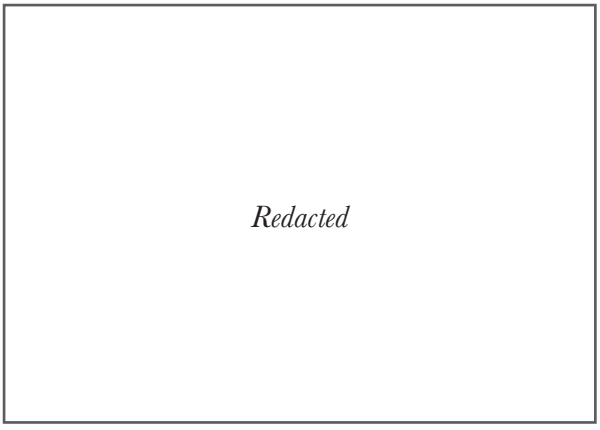

Fig. 1.14. Edouard Vuillard, *La Comtesse Marie-Blanche de Polignac* (1928-1932).

Until that moment, the size of the room had been regulated by that of the bed, as major treatise writers considered it the main piece of furniture of a house, so its shape and arrangement determined those of other furniture pieces.[60] A small canopy above it marked the bed's specific space in the house. The most popular type of curtain bed was called *lit à la duchesse* (fig. 1.15), its curtains were suspended from the ceiling or anchored overhanging the wall. The *lit*'s design implied its specific placement within the bedroom space, leaning against the wall from the bolster side (figs. 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.15). This way, it was possible to understand the canopy's façade, clearly visible to the guests that entered the bedroom. Remarkably, such sumptuousness did not receive but the emptiness of ceremonial gesture, no one really slept in these pompous beds. The actual bedroom was smaller and even welcoming in contrast, often adjacent to a large representative room that was arranged, as every other, in an aristocratic enfilade. The rooms dedicated to the withdrawal from courtly rituals were indeed much smaller and intimate; often wardrobe rooms or cabinets served this purpose.[61]

The architecture and decoration of the bed gradually evolved from the curtain bed to the marital bed, finally placed in what we commonly call the 'parent's room', the symbol of the nuclear family. Just as in the canopy bed, the intimacy associated with the family was an integral part of representational devices associated with the social conventions belonging to every age.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the largest and most important room (the one with the double bed) belonged only to the woman of the house, while her husband found sleep in a separate room, often in a single bed. A good example, highlighted by Monique Eleb in her writings, is that of the Hôtel de l'Avenue de Ségur (fig. 1.16). The lady's bedroom functioned as conjugal room and was located in the middle of the representational spaces facing the main street, whereas that of her husband was moved to the back, with not even a bed drawn in plan to indicate its use.[62] The husband, indeed, slept either on a single bed or a removable one. So, if he had the will to spend some intimate moments with his wife, he was forced to move into the room of his spouse. This is an interesting moment in the development of the French apartment since, different from previous dwelling layouts, the wife's bed coincided with the marital bed. This had great consequences for women at large: the gradual consolidation of the marital bedroom as an evolution of the previous tripartite organisation went hand-in-hand with the loss of their fundamental spatial independence. This dynamic can be inscribed within the complex balance between the emergence of intimacy and conjugal love, and the consolidation of personal identity in relation to the family nucleus.

The public character of the bed, along with that of the room that contained it, is rooted in the organisation and role of the *ancién régime* family, 'a *plexus* of dependent relations that were indissociably private and public, a social linkage that organized individuals around the possessions of an *état* (at the same time a trade of professional, a privilege, and a status) which was granted and recognised by larger social groupings. Hence it was the smallest political organisation possible.'[63] As a matter of fact, 'the modern sense of the family emerged in the

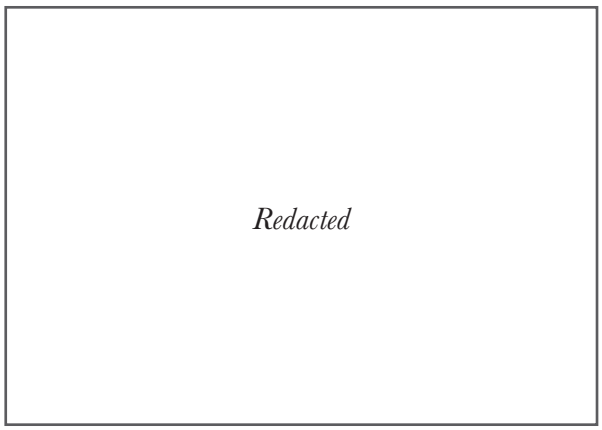

Fig. 1.15. Daniel Marot, *Lit à la Duchesse* from the *Second Livre d'Appartements* (1702).

bourgeois and aristocratic strata of the *ancién regime*, then spread in concentric circles to all social classes, reaching the proletariat at the end of the nineteenth century'.[64] What seems to be characterising the Western, modern family is this combination of individualities, the sense of unity generated by both political and class concerns and, obviously, power relations. With the extension of this modern sense of family to the middle class, with the modern family emerged the sense of intimacy as both a concept and practice with clear spatial implications. The concept of intimate practices is built, according to sociologist Lynn Jamieson, on the family practices that

> focus on the culturally and historically variable practices people use to "do" family, to create an experience of particular places, relationships and events as meaning and expressing family. "Practices of intimacy" refer to practices which enable, generate and sustain a subjective sense of closeness and being attuned and special to each other. Practices of intimacy and family practices overlap in cultures which valorise families and intimacy and take it for granted that intimacy is an aspect of family life. […] With respect to family practices, individuals typically come into a set of practices that are already partially shaped by legal prescriptions, economic constraints and cultural conditions […]. It could therefore be expected that many family practices will be processes sustaining the conventional arrangements for partnering and parenting that receive legal, economic and cultural support. Just as family practices might fit with and reproduce conventional scripts, so too might practices of intimacy.[65]

Family and intimate practices, just like other sets of practices analysed here, participate in the reproduction of cultural scripts and stereotypes, but also gender and class differences, the normalised heterosexual and nuclear family being the most evident one.

Family relationships are instrumental for the definition of narratives of the self and the social production of self-disciplined bodies, to put it in Michel Foucault's terms.[66] Self-construction is indeed dependent, according to Jamieson, on the cultural emphasis of self-making found in Western countries. As aforementioned, social theory identifies the emergence of modernity in the material and ideological separation of public and private spheres; this separation coincided with a 'renewed emphasis on individualism, conceptualising individuals as having unique inner selves',[67] so both the separate spheres paradigm and the modern sense of subjectivity and personhood have historically laid out the basis for the consolidation and codification of intimate practices. Not by chance the distribution of the husband and wife's bedroom in France related to both the definition of their individualities – materialised in the form of a single object (the bed) – and their position within the family. The very delicate balance between individuality and shared intimacy is clearly identifiable in plan, and characterises the hybrid condition of the husband and wife's bedrooms. They are the individual, private harbours where each occupant can cultivate his or her own self – the famous 'room for one's own' that Virginia Woolf advocated for – but also representational spaces that served both the consolidation of larger social ties and the establishment of social class association through decoration.[68] Intimacy, therefore, plays a fundamental spatial role

within the French apartment. It is crucial for the consolidation of interpersonal and family ties, but also for the establishment of individual selves.

Social theory clarifies that emphasis on self-making was also instrumental for the development of the 'possessive individual' type – the proprietor of his own self, the capital-accruing self as Bourdieu or Adkins would put it or, alternatively, the patriarchal capitalist.[69] The conventional, heteropatriarchal family was, thus, a product of social processes that centred on the individual – specifically the one that held power within the family unit: the head of the family. Not by chance the home was seen as a place where the *pater familias* would rest from work, hence, his well-being, isolation and recovery were not only the central concern and duty of his wife, but also crucial for the strengthening of his position in the family, social and economic spheres. Indeed, the spatial and gender boundaries that have been historically produced in France not only reinforced gender differences, but also defined various degrees of intimacy within the domestic space. The bipartition of the public and intimate halves of the French apartment is but an example, the children's bedroom (usually next to the kitchen) being the locus of daily practices of intimacy between the wife and her offspring another (fig. 1.32).[70] Conversely, conjugal intimacy, sought after by both members of the bourgeoisie and middle class, had to find its place within the representational half of the house. As aforementioned, members of the wealthier classes maintained social conventions, which resulted in a failed negotiation between representational and intimate dimensions of living.[71] The absence of a space devoted exclusively to conjugal intimacy led to hybrid spatial solutions, resulting in hidden, temporary strategies, as in the case of the Hôtel de l'Avenue Ségur (fig. 1.16).

As described, the newfound sense of conjugal intimacy was the cause behind the loss of the second, front-facing bedroom, later on replaced by a second living room, which became the model of middle-class layouts (fig. 1.22). The struggle between privacy and publicity in the French bedroom still plays an important role in the context of contemporary domesticity. Not by chance, the inhabitants of the apartments visited during my fieldwork oftentimes felt the need to alter the existing layout of their homes in order to accommodate their needs, implementing each time different spatial solutions (figs. 1.40, 1.49). What stands out from this analysis is the direct connection between spatial, architectural solutions and family, intimate models and cultural scripts. Each historical or contemporary solution is the result of a negotiation between the married couple, social conformism and individual needs. This process exemplifies the unfolding of gendered power dynamics within the domestic sphere, which sometimes resulted in the loss of women's spatial independence, and in other cases, the construction of new areas of the home where they were able to create a space for themselves – an aspect that will be further investigated.

During my fieldwork, I visited the HBM (Habitations à Bon Marché or affordable housing that include the SAGI projects) Groupe Ney (1928) in the north of Paris (fig. 1.17). These HBM were some of the first affordable housing projects built after the demolition of the peripheral route that surrounded Paris, the small railroad that was later on replaced by the Boulevard Péripherique, a high-speed belt. They are the result of large early-twentieth-

Fig. 1.16. Hôtel de l'Avenue de Ségur, Paris (1880 c.ca). On the top right corner (2) the study can be converted into *monsieur*'s bedroom. (1) *Monsieur*'s *annexes* and (3) *madame*'s *annexes*. At the centre the marital bedroom, right next to the living room and directly accesible from it.

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Fig. 1.17. Ground floor of Groupe Ney, Paris (1927).

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Fig. 1.18. Photograph of the front-facing rooms of the HBM type, living room on the left and bedroom on the right.

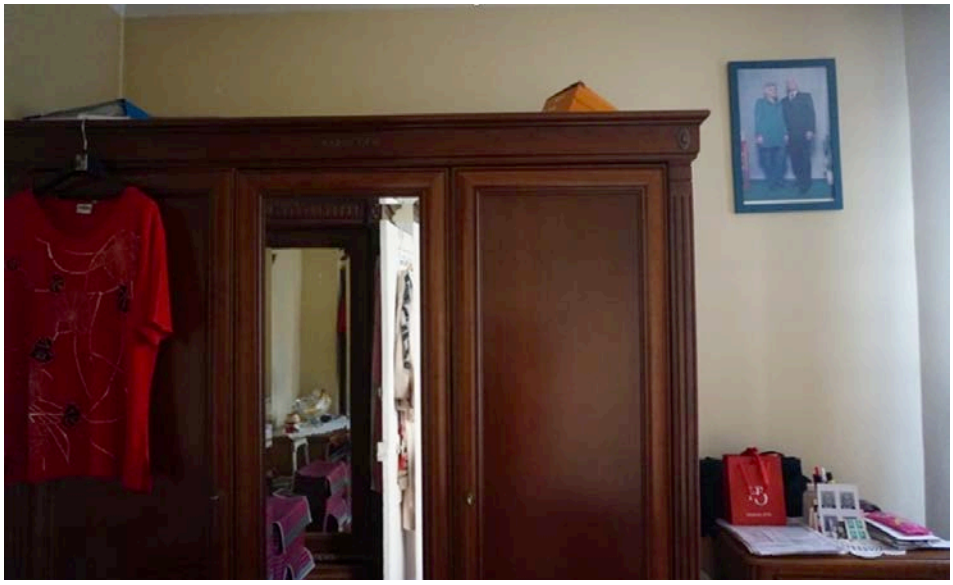

Fig. 1.19. Bedroom, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.20. Sewing machine in the bedroom, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

century campaigns to demolish unhealthy housing blocks in the outskirts of Paris.[72] Figures 1.19 and 1.20 show the interiors by one of the few original occupants living in the housing complex (she moved in with her husband at the beginning of the 1940s). The plan of this apartment is the same standardised type shown in figure 1.24 (b, the second one), it has two bedrooms, one is adjacent to the living room and front facing, now the wife's bedroom and her workspace (fig. 1.20), and the other is today the conjugal bedroom in the back of the house (fig. 1.19). Originally – and in line with French distribution rules – the front-facing bedroom was meant to be the main bedroom, and figure 1.18 shows precisely the threshold between these two spaces. The occupation of these specific bedrooms today is quite peculiar, but although it is a reversal of the high bourgeois model (fig. 1.16), with the woman seeking spatial independence in a separate bedroom and the husband relegated to the marital bedroom (here moved to the back of the apartment), it still clearly reflects the dynamics between the intimate, gendered and individual dimensions of domestic living discussed. First of all, middle-class conjugal intimacy as materialised in the double bed, is moved to the intimate (rear-facing) half of the house, reflecting a more contemporary sense of privacy and, secondly, the woman interviewed clarified that she resisted conventional distribution by creating a space for herself (which merged both sleeping and her hobby, in this case, sewing) right next to the living room (fig. 1.20). Part of the interview took place in that room, where she spoke extensively about her network of affective ties beyond her family nucleus, demonstrating that that room was not only a personal but also a social space. She somehow recreated – at a definitely more modest scale – the old aristocratic model that combined bedroom and annex spaces, particular activities related to the care of the self and the strengthening of interpersonal ties beyond the family nucleus. These considerations lead to further reflections on women's strategies for the appropriation of domestic spaces that will be further explored in this text.

From 'Chambre de Parade' to 'Chambre Principale'

The passage from the more overtly public qualities of the bedroom to more private qualities can be easily summarised in the use of the two terms: *'chambre de parade'* (parade room), adopted in seventeenth-century French aristocratic mansions, and *'chambre principale'* (main room), an early nineteenth-century version of the so-called marital bedroom. The genesis of this characterisation of the bedroom dates back to the Middle Ages, when rooms did not respond to specific functions and many people shared the same space. The bed itself, with its imposing structure and heavy curtains, guaranteed privacy and heating, making up for the lack of an isolated, private room. Interestingly, in France, the void left between the bed and the wall was called a *ruelle* (small street).

These conditions favoured the development of the canopy bed type, considered an integral part of this process of monumentalising furniture. The canopy bed embodied fundamental architectural qualities, it sheltered and protected from indiscreet eyes, assuming an objecthood similar to that of a house. This typology persisted in time, up to the sumptuous forms of the *lit à la duchesse*. The Baroque period, specifically, represented a culmination of interior pretensions with spectacle privileged, decorative forms exaggerated and fictional

rituals pervading every aspect of aristocratic life, turning it into a real ceremonial act. It extended from the courts of France to Europe's courts and aristocratic mansions. In these circumstances, the bedroom turned into the so-called parade room, and the public space of the interior moved from a simple 'small street' to the sumptuousness of a central street, where the court parade was performed daily. Members of the aristocracy started to receive guests in their bedroom precisely in that period. Interestingly, to each room corresponded a specific theme. Each adjacent space was consequent to the previous, as the decoration followed the logical thread of a narrative that appropriated allegorical subjects and accorded to the semantic interplay of signs and decorations that characterised interior décor. As previously mentioned, all designed artifices aimed to convey sensational messages that directly informed the onlooker about the owner's wealth and status. In fact, the symbolism of each piece of furniture was conceived especially for its owner. The spectacle was, indeed, directly linked to communication and persuasion. The bed can, thus, be considered as an integral part of the semantic system constituted by furniture at large (figs. 1.12, 1.21). More specifically, during the seventeenth century it turned into a symbol of social status. In France, different canopy sizes corresponded to particular ranks and specific allegories embedded in the decorations were directly related to the social position of the occupants (fig. 1.12). For instance, the longer the bed curtains were, the more prestigious was the title of nobility.

At the end of the nineteenth century French noblewoman Baronne Staffe described that 'most often, the bedroom is made up of a bed [...], a lounge chair, armchairs, comfortable seats, pretty sideboards or cabinets to lock up jewellery or precious memories, a writing table and a cute desk' (figs. 1.12, 1.21).[73] The system of furniture associated with the bedroom was linked to sociability and intimacy, encompassing the double status (public and private) of the bedroom. The objects associated with the former aspect were chairs, chaises longue and *fauteuils,* but also tables for games and tea or coffee sets, whereas an important element that represented intimacy was the wardrobe with its mirror (fig. 1.11).[74] In the *hôtel particuliers* type, where the relationship between user and architect was direct, various solutions were adopted in the disposition and arrangement of the bedroom. If most couples conformed with the eighteenth-century tripartition in plan (figs. 1.9, 1.10), more rarely some opted for a conjugal bedroom with two beds and differentiated services (or adjunct rooms) (fig. 1.16) and, in the rarest cases, couples asked for a common room with double bed (*grand lit*) and common services (fig. 1.24 b).

As aforementioned, at the beginning of the twentieth century the extension of the middle class and its intimacy stimulated a change in the distribution of representational spaces in French homes. Architects at the time opted for modifications to an apartment's layout, with one of the two bedrooms gradually disappearing at the turn of the century, making space for a second salon or a dining room. Figure 1.22 shows that although it was still adjacent to the salon, the bedroom stopped being part of an enfilade (fig. 1.6). The relationship between living areas remained direct, but the conjugal bedroom became accessible from both the corridor and a door located at one end of the salon's wall (fig. 1.22). Architects continued to base their design of French apartments on the art of distribution. The interior

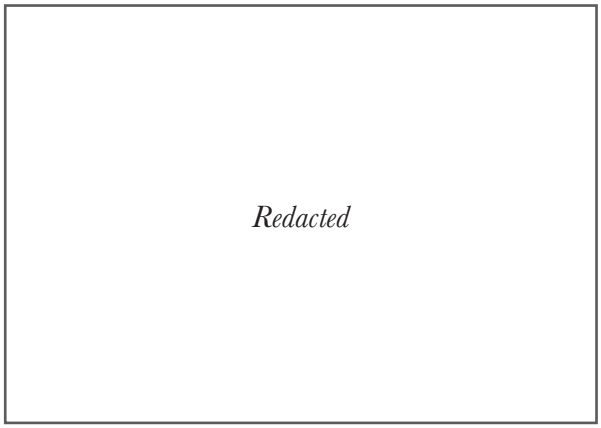

Fig. 1.21. Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine, details of the bedroom's decoration in *Recueil de Décorations Intérieures,* plate 15 (1801–1812).

layout remained as codified as the gestures that had to be carried out within the home, but some changes could be introduced thanks to the new building technologies that allowed greater distributional freedom.

The distributive solutions shown in figure 1.22 were the most widespread amongst the members of the middle class, mostly because of the limited space in apartments (fig. 1.16). Interestingly, the so-called 'conjugal room' was accepted in most *savoir-vivre* manuals, and its presence sparked a lively debate amongst architects. Indeed, at the start of the twentieth century French architects were commissioned by philanthropists the design of affordable housing for workers and the clients explicitly asked them to follow the distribution rules, which were based on high bourgeois codes.[75] Sociologist and historian Jacques Donzelot clarifies that nineteenth-century philanthropic endeavours perpetuated paternalistic control over Frenchmen. To him, philanthropy was a 'deliberately depoliticising strategy for establishing public services and facilities at a sensitive point midway between private initiative and the state' that impacted individuals at a biopolitical level and ensured 'the development of practices of preservation' of social order, 'and formation of the population' as docile subjects.[76] It is, therefore, not a surprise that vast housing schemes replicated the old distributive (and disciplinary) model of the bourgeois apartment. Indeed, despite obvious spatial constraints of the working-class dwelling, architects applied the same upper-class layout to all new dwelling types. The distribution of representative spaces was replicated as the conjugal bedroom became the norm, and just like the bourgeois type, it was flanked by the living room (fig. 1.22). Both the HBM and SAGI models presented a standardised social housing type (figs. 1.24, 1.17, 1.18) in which the parents' room was adjacent and open to the living room (figs. 1.23, 1.17, 1.18).

The family then suddenly became the target of state control across social classes; both the home and its inhabitants were 'agents for conveying the norms of the state into the private sphere', hence, the valorisation of the family that occurred in the nineteenth century was not seen as the 'triumph of modernity, the profound mutation of sensibilities, but as the strategic result of […] philanthropic strategies' as a conscious biopolitical project.[77] The social control exerted over the lower and middle classes took shape through a mass organisation of the family that was masked as a promise to improve standards of living through philanthropic initiatives and, above all, through housing and the French apartment specifically. This way, the state could insert itself into people's everyday lives by fostering a social model inspired by the wealthier classes, that is a patriarchal family structure that adhered to bourgeois morality, with both the family unit and its inhabitation designed to reproduce the established order both materially and symbolically.

The debate over the distribution of representative spaces inside working-class dwellings at the beginning of the 1900s extended to intimate models as well. Due to the emergence of conjugal intimacy, the direct opening of the marital bedroom towards the living room was no longer considered appropriate, with architects trying to provide more privacy whilst remaining faithful to traditional distribution principles. The solution found was quite simple (fig. 1.22): architects moved the door from the former central position towards the exterior

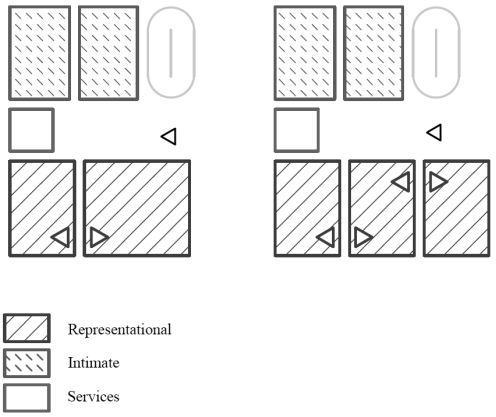

Fig. 1.22. Diagram of the distribution of a twentieth-century middle class apartment with two different solutions for the representational spaces. Left: large living room and master bedroom next to it (room on the left), with direct access. Right: double living room (room at the centre and the right) with central opening connecting the two spaces, and adjacent master bedroom (room on the left) with direct access from the central living room.

Redacted

Fig. 1.23. Bedrooms of an HBM housing project.

wall (figs. 1.6, 1.7, 1.18). This solution was used in different apartment types throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (fig. 1.24), from the model *maison à loyer* shown in Daly's treatise (a), with one of the main bedrooms – most certainly that of Madame – next to a smaller bedroom (likely belonging to the couple's offspring), up to the early affordable housing projects (HBM, figs. 1.24 b, c and 1.18). The schism between private bedrooms (belonging to children and servants) and representational bedrooms is evident in the late nineteenth century *maisons de rapport*, where a conjugal bedroom was located in the representational front of the building and a series of smaller bedrooms were pushed to the back of the apartment, into its intimate area (figs. 1.16, 1.24 a).

Despite the formal similarities in the plan organisation of the various dwelling types, the marital bedroom acquired different meanings and roles depending on the social class that was inhabiting the apartment. It was, for instance, open to shared daily activities in the small flats of the working class, it gradually acquired the status of private and intimate room for the members of the middle class and it remained an important reception space amongst the members of the bourgeoisie. Its importance and role differed also between members of the same family. As previously mentioned, it played a fundamental role in the *madame de la maison's* life. Indeed, she was the fulcrum of the visit ritual and the bedroom or, oftentimes, the *boudoir,* was the loci of her social life par excellence (fig. 1.13). Her personal space was indeed devoted to the unfolding and strengthening of social relationships and the development of her gender and self-identity (fig. 1.14). In fact, the bedroom was not the only space inside French apartments in which women negotiated their modern identity and role within the patriarchal family; *savoir-vivre* manuals, advice books and magazines guided women in their development of selfhood, mediated by gestures and tastes but also by practices of homemaking and intimacy. Their activities and choices had repercussions on the architectural space both at an aesthetic and spatial level, as in the case of the Pessac housing project. As Miller would put it, women were offered the alienated and highly codified space of the French apartment,[78] a loaded social, cultural and political construct aimed at governing bodies in space, but also a device that facilitated the reproduction of values and order through domestic practices and the gendered division of spheres. Social control was also exerted through publications and media, nevertheless, women managed to gradually carve out a space for themselves, consolidating over time tactics to appropriate the domestic space rather than endure the mechanisms of control discussed so far. By operating within the boundaries of the system aimed at repressing them, women were able to find patterns of resistance through inhabitation, appropriation and alteration. The French interior becomes, therefore, the space in which cultural domesticity gradually emerges.

To summarize, the French distributive models of the 18th century aristocratic court were the enfilade and tripartition, which emerged in parallel to the public character of the marital bedroom. This was formalised in the 19th century and adopted by the bourgeoisie, who reproduced the tripartite aristocratic model. At the same time, architects tried to translate the same distributive principles to middle-class housing, whereby the idea of conjugal intimacy emerged. This resulted in hybrid combinations of the marital bedroom in relation to the living room, depending on the needs of the inhabitants. These spatial solutions persist still today.

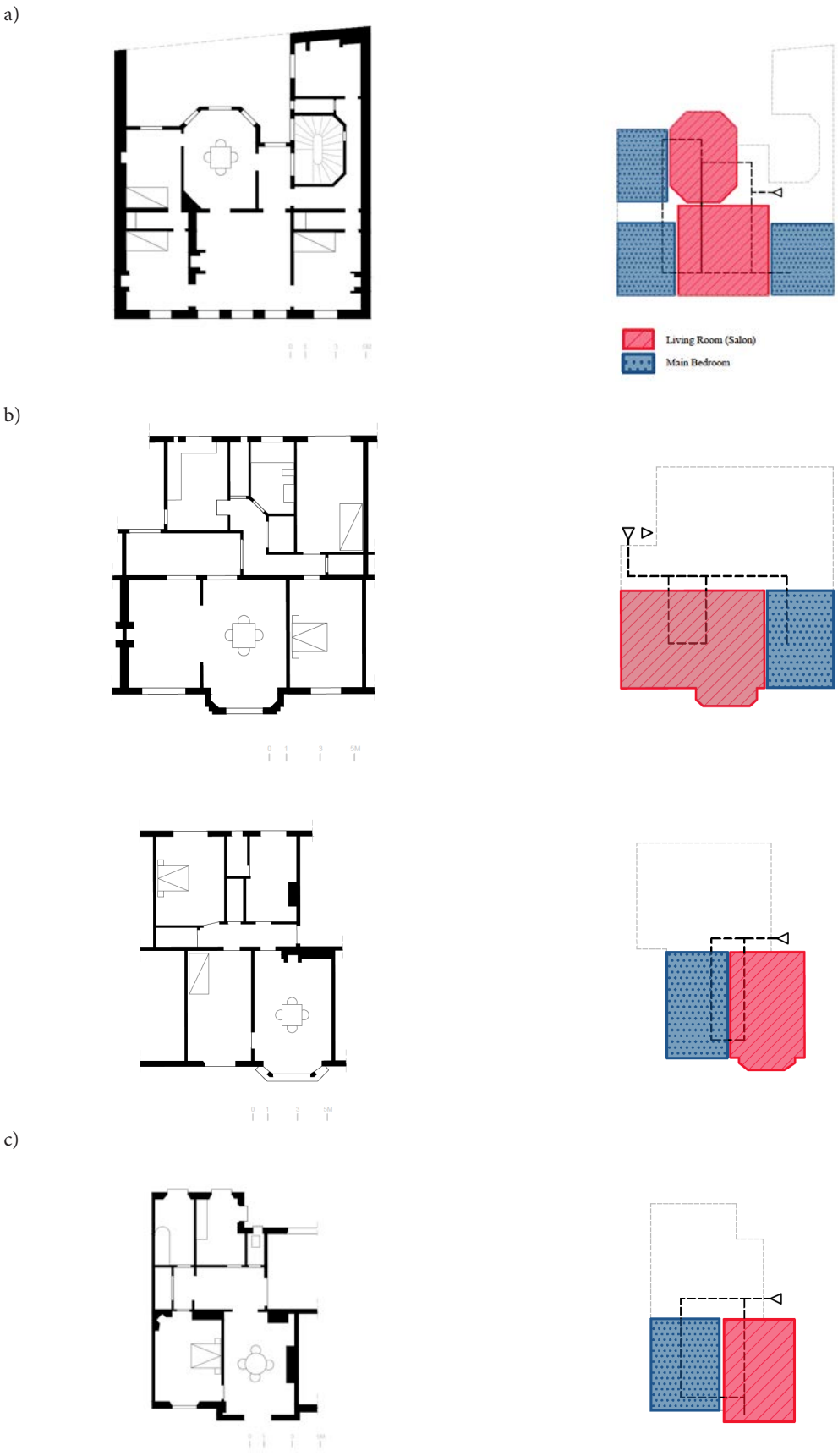

Fig. 1.24. Middle class dwellings from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, which exemplifies the persistence of the main bedroom-living room distributive model despite the simplification of the plan and its gradual reduction in scale.
a) *Maison de rapport* (1850s)
b) HBM (1920s)
c) HBM SAGI (1930s)

1.3. The Feminine Interior

Women, Décor and Domestic Consumption

The representational spaces of the French apartment were the stages upon which the dynamics discussed so far unfolded; they were both spaces of social and cultural conformity, rooms in which women and men would perform the choreographed practices of the visit according to hierarchical roles and pre-defined codes, but also rooms in which modern and gender subjectivities were negotiated and consolidated. Women played a key role in both the spatial and aesthetic appearance of these spaces that represented the success of the husband and the social status of the family. Each woman of the house was in charge of taking care of the decoration in the reception spaces (often without formal training) and she, herself, with her jewellery and dress, was considered part and parcel of the *décor* (figs. 1.25, 1.26).[79] Women's personal territory, therefore, extended to the entire house, which started increasingly coinciding with herself.[80] This happened both symbolically and physically, not only because the domestic space became the female realm but also because it was expected of her to manage and, above all, decorate domestic interiors. Elements of interior décor such as wallpapers, curtains and tapestry oftentimes matched her clothes, crowning a process of mimesis that has historically received the favour of the patriarchy (figs. 1.25, 1.26).[81] Across the middle class, this association became even clearer when, with the disappearance of domestic servants, women started performing domestic chores. As previously illustrated, this change coincided with a complete vanishing of women's individual space.

Feminine taste and style are often expressed inside domestic interiors by amateur housewives who started engaging with decoration from the eighteenth century onwards. They informed themselves through newspapers or books and followed the advice of the expert *ensembliers*. French eighteenth-century aesthetics and interior decoration were embedded in a 'overtly feminine world of luxury and elitism' which, according to Sparke, influenced the emergence of a feminine interior aesthetic.[82] The codified and decorated eighteenth-century French salon was an exemplary space of this aesthetic devoted to the reception of guests, a true platform for quasi-theatrical performances. The disposition of objects and bodies in space and, hence, the combination of movements and gestures, along with the ways in which both inhabitants and guests were supposed to use the available pieces of furniture concurred to the visual, aesthetic effect of the interior (fig. 1.27). Indeed,

> because of its physical distribution and visual coherence, a *meuble* [piece of furniture] was probably the most instantly legible feature of a room. Thus, upon entering a space that was decorated in this way, a visitor could assess at a glance the extent and arrangement of the matching upholstery and immediately begin to determine what kind of spatial and social circumstances she was facing and what type of conduct would be most suitable in that setting. For example, a room saturated with red velvet upholstery and filled with seats set in rows was likely ready for a formal reception, while a room equipped with chairs that were variously covered or arranged in clusters signalled an opportunity for more informal conviviality.[83]

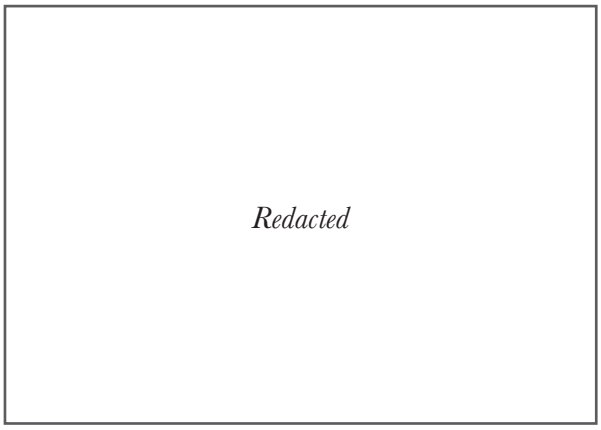

Fig. 1.25. Unknown, drawing of the *Bourgeois Décor* (1880 c.ca).

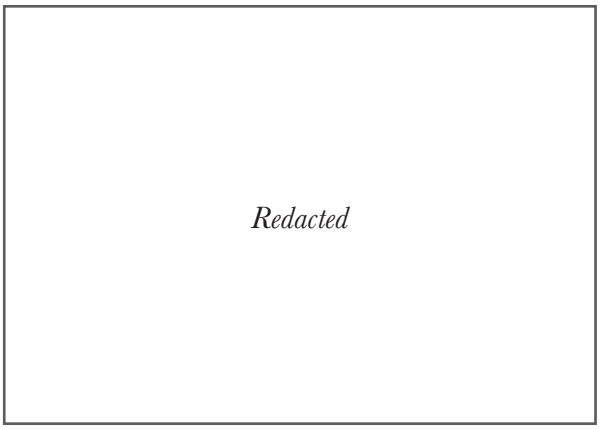

Fig. 1.26. Paul Lacroix, *An Interior in the Reign of Louis XVI. Illustration for The XVIIIth Century* (1880).

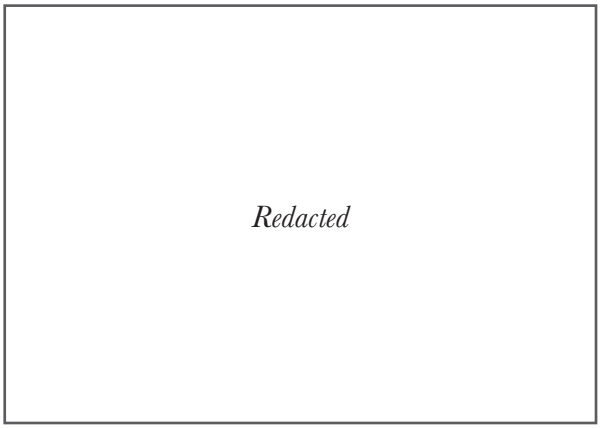

Fig. 1.27. Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune, *Have No Fear, My Good Friend* (1775).

(fig. 1.27)

Convenance and good manners suggested that each person, during a visit, had to 'convey a sense of ease and fluidity in all forms of bodily movement and verbal communication, to constantly adjust their behaviour in response to a multitude of variables that shaped the definition of appropriate interaction' so 'the presence of such visual clues could make the difference between an elegant entry and an awkward one, and thus between the success or failure of a social performance.'[84]

While allegoric decoration signalled the owner's status or clarified the use of a specific reception area, furniture also played a strong semantic role in creating a visual unity and pleasing aesthetic, as well as expressing social hierarchies. Specifically, 'formal differences within the set, notably the distinction between (superior) armchairs and (inferior) side chairs, allow hierarchical relationships to be expressed within the collective'.[85] In short, furniture design – which, in the case of eighteenth-century France was serial, with the furniture, household items and parietal décor matched (fig. 1.28) – 'was a crucial site for the enactment of élite self-fashioning, an eloquent representational system that elicited performances of social mastery'.[86] Art historian Mimi Hellman clarifies that the abundance of decorations inside aristocratic interiors somewhat reflected a social anxiety to continuously assert one's social position and privilege, given that the large amount of serial objects that were purchased and displayed but rarely used had 'signifying power'.[87] She called this the 'aesthetics of surplus' and further clarified the close connection between interiors, reception practices and class identity under the larger umbrella of the 'art of living' that qualifies French domestic culture:

> The aesthetics of surplus was just as integral to the process of social formation as the dynamics of vision and interaction, and once again it was something that could be achieved only by serial design. Far more than an assemblage of visually unrelated objects, a concentration of numerous similar or identical items asserted the presence of sheer quantity, the possession of material abundance for its own sake. Allowing potentially functional objects to become purely decorative or unavailable for sustained engagement was a gesture of privilege and leisure that was consistent with the drive to aestheticize that informed many areas of élite social practice. Decorative surplus can be understood as the design equivalent of activities such as conversation and dance, which were fundamental to self-fashioning precisely because they yielded artful formal patterns that were essentially nonproductive. The […] use of the body to produce elegant, repetitive movement both demonstrated leisured cultivation and was appreciated in and of itself as an exercise in formal possibility. Similarly a roomful of sets, with its aesthetics of surplus, announced the élite luxury of sublimating necessity into art.[88]

The climax of the 'widespread production, dissemination and consumption of the aesthetic interior' was in the nineteenth century, when historicism and eclecticism prevailed.[89] These fashionable solutions – cultural and socioeconomic symptoms of the modern condition –

changed depending on the styles proposed by the market. The richness of choice led to the definition of the 'style room' in the upper bourgeois *hôtels*. A different style was, therefore, adopted for each function of the room: 'Rococo for the living room, the Moorish for the smoking and pool one, Renaissance for the study'.[90] In this respect, renowned intellectual David Lowenthal writes: 'we have partially domesticated the past, where they do things differently, and brought it into the present as a marketable commodity'.[91] Thus, the figurative appropriation of a historical vocabulary and its commodification became vehicles of ostentation for the elite's possessions. However, mechanised, mass-produced goods were much more available to the market than antiquarian furniture, in a contrast between obsolescence and innovation that led to a rethinking of the concept of authenticity.[92] In fact, if, on the one hand, the aristocracy of the *ancien régime* was accustomed to highly refined artisanal pieces of furniture and objects that would last for generations, the bourgeoisie could afford newly produced copies of the same types at much cheaper prices. The objects' aesthetic appearance and the belonging to a certain figurative code conveyed an ideal of luxury and aspirations of belonging to a higher social class, the aristocracy. This semantic value of furniture did not change, despite a revolution in production processes.[93] Thus, everyone (and this represents exactly the egalitarian nature, or promise, of industrial reproduction) could appropriate the idealised codes of interior decoration.

Within this peculiar context, two concepts were challenged: that of luxury and that of taste. In fact, to the permanence of a rigid social structure (inscribed in the upholding of traditional internal distribution in apartments) was opposed the ground-breaking change in consumption enabled by the Industrial Revolution, along with a greater accessibility of seemingly luxurious items. If in the past only the elite could afford them, luxury goods became more widely available. What continued to distinguish the elite was their claim to authenticity, an effortlessly knowing of the syntax of domestic *décor* and manners as well as owning 'authentic' pieces. Thus, they denigrated the newly industrially produced pieces of furniture as goods that conveyed nothing but a *'faux luxe'* (false luxury),[94] criticising the taste of the *nouveau riche* (newly enriched) bourgeoisie and, hence, enforcing a new narrative of distinction that could continue to justify their superior social position. This dialectic can be easily explained through Bourdieu's theory, who identified the mechanisms of class distinction – enforced by the convenance laws – via cultural, symbolic and economic capital and the reproduction of habitus, exemplified here by both décor and manners. Class distinction and privilege were, thence, expressed through both taste and luxury, and enforced through aesthetic criticism: by defining the exclusive boundaries of good taste, the higher strata of social classes also reasserted their power. Thus power narratives around taste and aesthetic are crucial for the definition of class differences.

The taste reform in the twentieth century was not very different in its aims, as the bourgeoisie in power tried to redefine the contours of good taste and high culture by criticising female aesthetics – which relied heavily on the consumption of mass-produced furniture and fittings – and by exerting paternalistic control over the middle and working classes through the design of housing. The main difference lies in the gendered character of high-cultural manifestations. In fact, if on the one hand eighteenth-century French interior design

reflected feminine taste as it exalted the aesthetic over the functional (which influenced ideas of décor until the nineteenth century) and symbolic meaning over honesty, on the other hand, twentieth-century modernist and functionalist high art and architecture qualified as masculine, explicitly rejecting feminine taste and interiors.[95] By outlining the boundaries of twentieth-century good taste, taste reformers marked not only the distance between the bourgeoisie in power and the lower classes, but also between male and female tastemakers and creatives. It is no wonder then that there is still little mention in art and architectural history of women designers, architects and decorators working in the twentieth century.

The definition of French modern taste is rooted in major social and economic changes taking place over the past two centuries. Throughout the twentieth century mass production led to mass consumption, which along with *savoir-vivre* manuals, books and mass media led to an extension of reception manners and aesthetic interiors. These processes included their symbolism of distinction and taste that, consequently, extended to the middle class and, therefore, to the majority of French citizens. Recognised by the state as means of control, they characterised French domestic culture as the art of reception is still very present across all strata of French society. It indeed became part and parcel of the middle class' habitus, influencing everyday life as well as the design and appearance of domestic interiors. It also favoured the process of normalisation of French society through the consolidation of the heteropatriarchal family inside the apartment type, transforming homemaking and domestic sociability (both within the family unit and external guests) into incredibly defined, codified and time-consuming practices. These dynamics had a crucial impact on the domestic space; not by chance do 'we still express ourselves symbolically in the spatial arrangements and decorations of our houses' today.[96]

'The 1870s and 1880s saw middle class women taking more responsibility for the decoration of the home, aided by the new advice books. Indeed, a significant number were written by women.'[97] Publications such as that of Fontaine and Percier along with Thomas Hope's 1807 *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*, 'marked the emergence of a modern concept of interior decoration that was accessible to people from an extended range of social backgrounds'.[98] Magazines, booklets, department stores and fairs – such as the *Salon des Arts Ménagers* in France – were incredibly popular throughout the twentieth century (figs. 1.21, 1.28, 1.29) and were instrumental for the education of bourgeois and middle-class housewives, initiating a process of production, dissemination and consumption of the aesthetic interior. Although the twentieth century saw the emergence of the professional figure of the interior decorator, women kept practicing their homemaking skills through interior décor.[99] 'As the movement moved down the social ladder, however, women became the active agents of its entrance into the middle class home, albeit implemented with more conservative values and intentions than their progressive male counterparts'.[100] For example, interior designer Elsie de Wolfe defined a style that merged past decorative solutions with her present ones, pioneering a 'conservative modernist' approach that inspired middle-class women's taste and is still highly influential today.[101]

Sparke's Janus-faced 'conservative domesticity'[102] became widespread throughout the

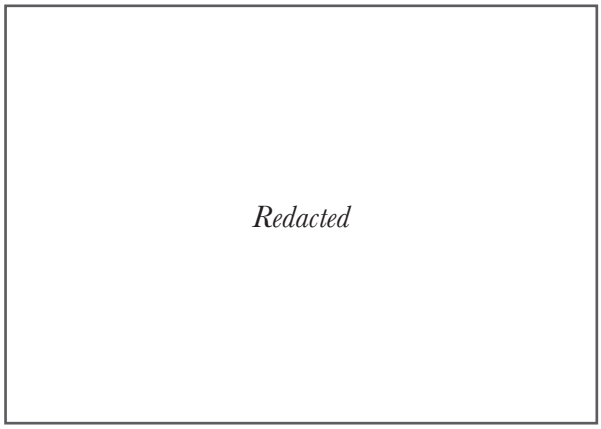

Fig. 1.28. Photograph of *Le Salon des Arts Ménagers*, Paris (1923).

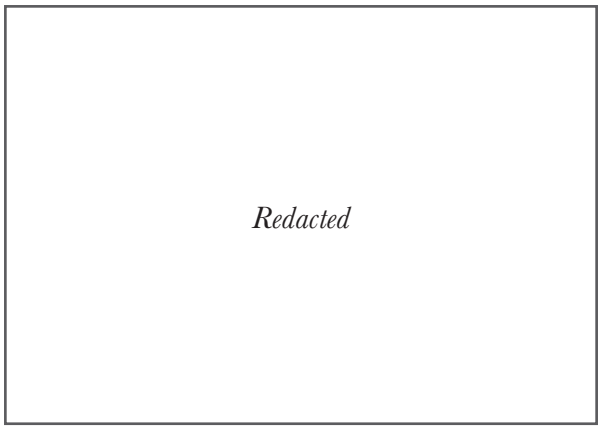

Fig. 1.29. Photograph of *Le Salon des Arts Ménagers*, Houseware show, CNIT centre (1961).

twentieth century and it was probably due to the fact that the 'government's reconstruction programme included the resocialisation of domestic labour. Women were being encouraged to reassume the roles of wife and mother with a new favour and enthusiasm […]. The welfare state was set up partly to support and maintain the family as a social institution and as an economic unit, following the disruptions of wartime.'[103] This had great repercussions on women's lives across Western countries and Europe in specific. The restructuring of social, heteropatriarchal models, indeed, was not only favoured by central governments, it also recalled old, traditional domestic models that were to reassure inhabitants after the tragic events of the war.

> Owing to the revalorization of educative tasks, a new continuity was established for the bourgeois woman between her family activities and her social activities. She discovered a new missionary domain in which to operate; a new professional sphere was opened, consisting in the spread of the new welfare and educational norms. She could be at once the support for a transfer of the inheritance within the family and the instrument of cultural diffusion on the outside.[104]

Women were, therefore, responsible for the transmission of both norms and inheritance through a reproduction of habitus. In fact, 'the interactive power of design working through objects and representations has been shown to generate change as well as to reproduce patterns of dominance. Such knowledge is vital if we are to believe in and go on working for equality in gender relations.'[105] The Janus-faced nature of domestic consumption and decoration needs to be, therefore, analysed from two key perspectives. On the one hand, it favours the reproduction of habitus and the reproduction of patterns of dominance on a spatial, embodied and objectual level – this point is also supported by sociological and feminist literature that see consumption as a passive activity of subjugated and dominated women.[106] On the other, there is a body of social and feminist theory that sees consumption, appropriation and interior occupation as fundamental to the expression and consolidation of feminine values and domestic cultures.[107]

Within the first lens, it is necessary to acknowledge Bourdieu's theory and understanding of consumption in the formation of taste across the various classes of society. Baker clarifies that both the production and consumption of interiors is indissolubly related to Bourdieu's class analysis and notion of cultural capital, seen as the 'knowledge, values and practices that are valuable within a given field' that were 'inherited through social position, objectified in material objects and legitimated by educational qualifications'.[108] Class habitus thence justifies the reproduction of patterns of dominance through consumption: codified norms and behaviours that are representative of one's cultural capital. Specifically,

> individuals occupy social space through accumulating resources (capitals) that can be converted into status (symbolic capital). […] Economic capital consists of an individual's financial resources. Social capital is formed of the social networks that can bring advantage. Cultural capital exists in three forms: as objectified in cultural objects, in an embodied state (implicit knowledge and practices) and as

institutionalized through educational qualifications.[109]

Habitus, therefore, qualifies the reception practices discussed by informing taste and generating class distinctions linked to cultural capital. 'Objectified cultural capital' or objects and 'embodied cultural capital' or practices are fundamental for the position of individuals within their social space.[110] The former materialises social status, so objects embody symbolic power as they reflect the cultural and economic capital necessary to their consumption. In their consumption patterns, upper classes distance themselves from objects of 'necessity' and the 'stylisation of life'. The latter, instead coincide with habitus, as it is precisely embodied cultural capital, or the internalisation of objective structures that influence behaviour. Baker ultimately highlights that Bourdieu 'suggests that because members of particular classes have common features in their habitus they are likely to participate in similar cultural practices and possess similar lifestyles. From this perspective, taste, as a product of habitus, is one of the areas in which class relations are played out.'[111]

Cultural categorisations, lifestyle choices and more general distinctions are, then, crucial for the making of class. Cultural capital is, indeed, a fundamental category for the understanding of the governance and position of people in the social space as it reproduces social hierarchies and power relations. One can, therefore, say that women might have been reproducing, historically, patterns of dominance through habitus, and the upper classes' adherence to etiquette, convenance and the visit protocol can demonstrate that. In fact, the high-bourgeoisie and aristocracy have historically distanced themselves from the middle and lower classes through their habitus and cultural capital. It is also probably true that gender differences within the domestic domain were consolidated precisely through this conformism. However, with the growth of the middle class, the emergence of conjugal intimacy and the advent of mass consumption, the prescriptions of both *savoir-vivre* and good taste gradually lost their strength, mitigating markers of distinction and qualifying different forms of taste. Specifically, they gave women the means and space to consolidate their own taste and express themselves.

Bourdieu's theory reproduces the separate spheres model according to Beverly Skeggs.[112] In fact, he sees women as 'capital-bearing objects who are markers of taste rather than capital accumulating subjects who are markers of it', suggesting that 'masculinity exists in the public (via the economic) and femininity in the private (via forms of cultural reproduction)'.[113] The aristocratic woman that would showcase the family's wealth through her clothes, manner and the decorations she chose for the house was, indeed, seen as a capital-bearing object, one amongst the many objects that symbolised the family's social position. Feminist literature subverts this notion by advocating for the agency of women in the accumulation of cultural capital and definition of taste. In line with Skeggs' point, cultural domesticity moves beyond the masculine, high culture version of cultural capital. In specific, by devoiding culture of its economic and symbolic value and concentrating on its use-value, it considers feminine taste and aesthetic as important cultural assets for women, or active markers of feminine culture. This is the basis for the epistemological shift advocated in this thesis, on which the notion of cultural domesticity is built and through which the value of feminine spatial

and material cultures is brought forward. Feminine culture and taste, that until now have been marginalised in both architecture and art history, become central to the analysis of contemporary domesticity and housing. In short, interiors like the one photographed inside the Groupe Ney (fig. 1.30) are not considered trivial, the result of mere reproduction of patterns of dominance or passive consumption, they are neither synonym of bad taste, nor unworthy of attention. Instead, they are key to a cultural reading of the domestic.

Feminist theorists see consumption and decoration as fundamental steps for the consolidation of feminine identity and culture.[114] Mass consumption affected women's lives, as it replaced women's productive labour (such as the production of clothing or food), becoming part and parcel of their housework.[115] However,

> women are not born with a natural ability to be consumers. It is a skill which is learnt together with the formation of taste through a process which starts in the home and goes on through life. Although taste is apparently a purely individual matter it is generally a means of identifying with a social group. Females acquire their discriminating skill through a number of cultural channels: peer groups, girls' and women's magazines, the media and advertising generally.[116]

The feminine formation of taste is, therefore, not only informed by pedagogical tools like publications, courses of home economics and large departments stores, but also by social exchange. Women's consumption is, therefore, not a simply passive activity:[117] the department store was at the same time a temple to capitalist consumption and a 'cultural space' in which 'shopping was integral to the identity of the new woman'.[118] To Mary Douglas, shopping was a liberation, an integral moment of the formation of women's identity.[119] In her feminist text on forms and function, Attfield reinforces this point as she looks at the 'material world of mass consumption' and how domestic consumption could potentially have a positive impact on women's life via interior appropriation thorough decoration.[120] Angela Partington goes even further by explaining that the purchase, use and display of 'commodities and cultural objects' is instrumental for the assertion and celebration of femininity.[121] Indeed, designed objects say

> more about the designer's self-image than it does about the female consumer's needs […]. Chairs, for instance, were being designed as if sitting down was the only use they had, whereas the female consumer was using them to represent her relations with friends, with husbands and children, with inlaws and herself […] demonstrating the consumer skills she had acquired in a variety of contexts and situations. She used all design objects to make meanings; the fact that these objects also had ostensibly practical functions was irrelevant.[122]

This is a crucial point, as the different use and meanings attributed to functionalist design objects – just like modernist, functionalist interiors – is an act of resistance of women towards the paternalistic, patriarchal and pedagogical nature of male modernism. Indeed, 'exactly how, and under what circumstances, women consume goods and services is

Fig. 1.30. Detail of the living room, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

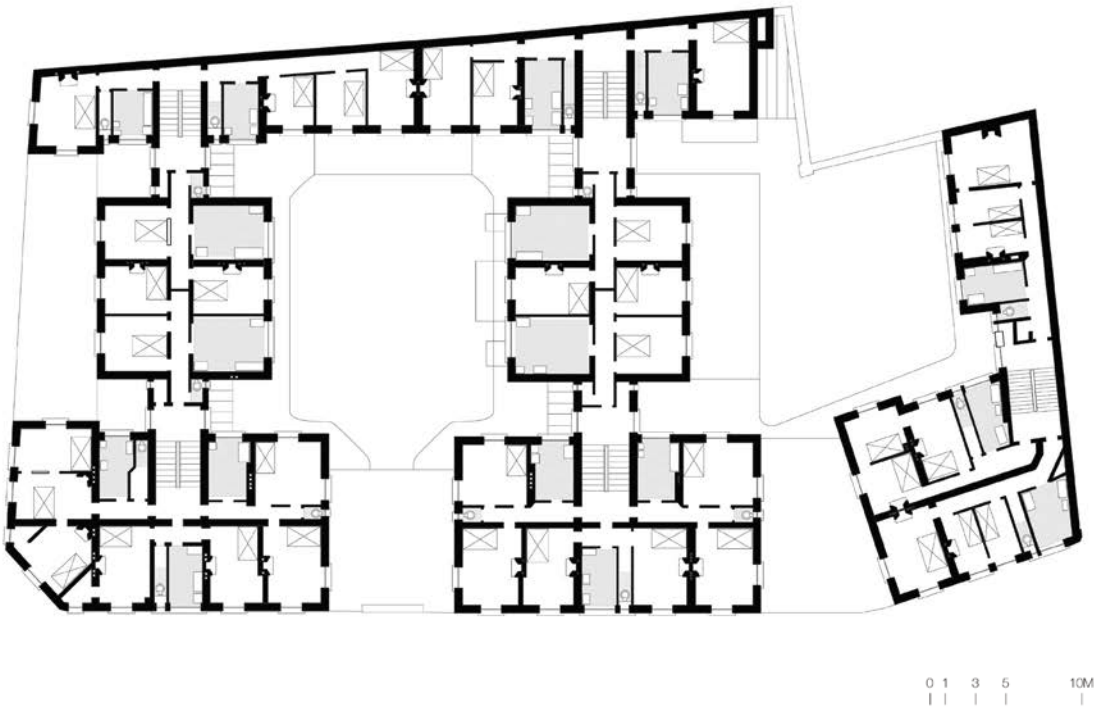

Fig. 1.31. Social housing project commissioned by the Rothschild Foundation, 117 Rue de Belleville, Paris (1908).

crucial to the ways in which meanings are articulated in feminine culture'.[123] This act of resistance is, therefore, generative of female domestic culture and aesthetics and is key for the formation of women's identities, which are filtered by processes of meaning-attribution, an extension of individuality to the inanimate words of objects and architecture. 'Women's misappropriation of commodities as evidence of resistance' is often unconscious, it pertains the reworking of shared cultural norms, yet it is the first step towards the acknowledgement of feminine cultural domesticity.[124] The chair is also a particularly relevant case, as Partington's description recalls the role that chairs have usually played inside French interiors across centuries, especially when they embody female sociability inside the home.

The tension between the prescriptive codes of male design and consumption is, therefore, countered by an individual reaction of women consumers and decorators which may or may not reproduced shared, cultural practices and norms, may or may not appropriate new forms and symbols. Regardless of the patriarchal ideology associated with the object or practice acquired, the use, meaning, and values attributed to them by female consumers, inhabitants (and decorators) generate resistance and inform feminine culture. Indeed, 'it is precisely through consuming that feminine knowledge was articulated', along with feminine meanings and values, which are part and parcel of a feminine enculturation of domesticity.[125] Feminine consumption inserts itself within the larger arena of gender conflict within the domestic sphere, the space where gender politics unfolded. Just like the appropriation or alteration of the alienated form of the mass-produced dwelling, consumption can be, therefore, seen as a different form of appropriation aimed at the more positive activity of homemaking, along with the more personal processes of meaning attribution and construction of narratives of the self.[126]

The Appropriation of the Grand Ensemble

Considering the French case, it is necessary to analyse the specific case of the city of Paris, the centre of the country as well as a pioneer in urban design and architecture. Like all cities that underwent a process of industrialisation, Paris experienced, at the end of 1800s, a housing crisis due to the mass exodus of population from rural areas to the cities. Because of the subsequent rapid emergence of unhealthy blocks, slums, and epidemic diseases, revolutionary ferment began to animate these neighbourhoods that forced the state to improve housing conditions.[127] In parallel, philanthropic movement developed and, brought forward economic, paternalistic and, overall, governmental interests.[128] The size of accommodations was minimised to prevent promiscuity and shared spaces were limited; the number of stairways was multiplied in order to reduce gatherings and socialisation, which were seen as potentially political dangerous.[129] Low-cost housing was also conceived as a device for the moralisation and the education of the worker through the multiplication of public spaces, schools, cultural activities, and more generous spaces for personal hygiene (fig. 1.31).[130]

In the early 1900s, however, much of the Parisian population was living in overcrowded conditions, the so-called *ilôts insalubres* (unhealthy blocks), which proliferated in the city.

Pressure from radical socialists forced the state to intervene through its municipalities, resulting in the law of July 13th, 1912 that led to the public *habitations à bon marché* programme (HBM). Each dwelling had one to five rooms with a kitchen and separate toilet; a studio had a minimum area of 18 sqm, a two-room apartment 25 sqm, a three-room apartment 35 sqm and a four-room apartment 55s sqm. Designers were asked 'to design a housing unit small enough so that no "outsider" would be able to live in it, yet large enough for the parents to have a space separate from their children, so that they might watch over them in their occupations without being observed in their own intimate play'.[131] Both state-led and philanthropic social housing thence played an important role in the consolidation and control of the nuclear family and the domestication of women:

> the strategy of familiarizing the popular strata in the second half of the nineteenth century rested mainly on the woman, therefore, and added a number of tools and allies for her to use: primary education, instruction in domestic hygiene, the establishment of workers' garden plots, and Sunday holidays (a family holiday, in contrast to the Monday holiday, which was traditionally taken up with drinking sessions). But the main instrument she received was 'social' housing. In practice, the woman was brought out of the convent so that she would bring the man out of the cabaret; for this she was given a weapon-housing – and told how to use it: keep strangers out so as to bring the husband and especially the children in. The social housing that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, its major form being the *habitations à bon marché*, was the result of numerous studies of the working class carried out in the course of the century.[132]

Housing design was part of a larger state project aimed at re-centering the heterosexual, nuclear family across social classes as it ensured control over the citizens.[133] The disciplinary model of the head of the family, in fact, granted compliance to social norms of the members of the family group, along with the confinement of women in the home. The middle and working class were the main targets of these mechanisms of control, implemented through both architecture and the consolidation of the behavioural norms previously discussed.

Twentieth-century housing for the lower and middle class were called *habitations à loyer modéré* (HLM, or moderate-rent housing). In the 1920s and throughout the 1930s many HLMs were built in Paris, creating an opportunity to rethink the internal organisation of the dwelling unit. The accommodations in new HBM and HLM housing were offered by the Public Office for Public Housing. The state held various competitions and four types of housing were proposed by the Public Office, each one providing a different degree of comfort. The more affordable types provided minimum comfort (the Herni-Bracque type), the more common or 'normal' ones had a kitchen and a shower, the housing typology for the wealthier middle class provided, instead, all conforts available at that time (fig. 1.44). Remarkably, the old dwelling arrangement of the *hôtel particulier* seemed to persist, especially in the last HBM type for the middle class (figs. 1.37 d, 1.24). The triad 'bedroom-salon-bedroom' is clearly readable in plan, as well as its placement on the dwelling half that faces the street. This fourth type (fig. 1.37 d) can be also compared to the renowned, luxurious

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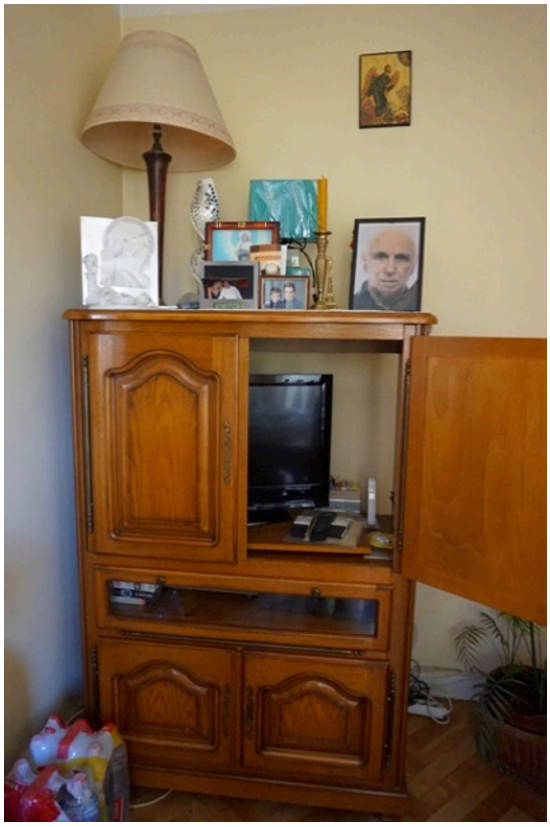
Fig. 1.32. Masterplan, Groupe Ney, Paris (1928).

Fig. 1.33. Photographs of Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.34. Living Room, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).



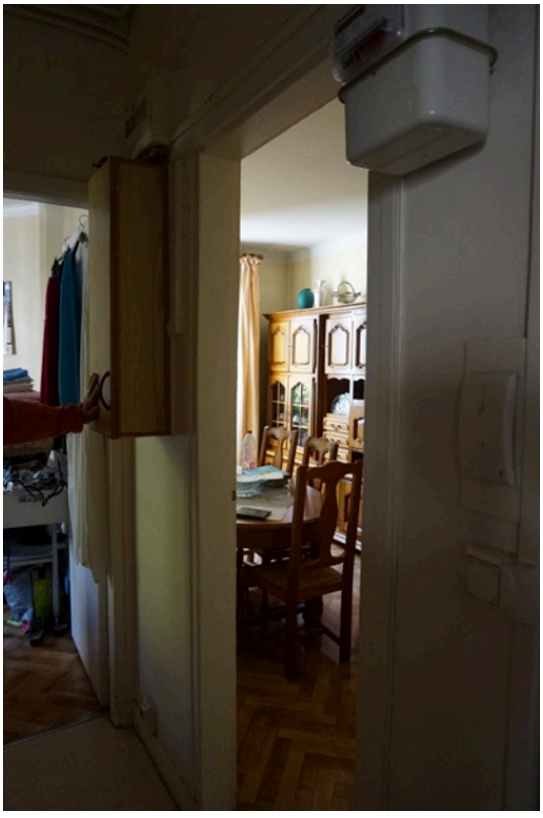


Fig. 1.35 (left). Detail of the living room, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).
Fig. 1.36 (right). Interior, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

apartments built by Auguste Perret (1874–1954) in rue Franklin (1903), completed just a few decades before and still representing the persistence of the distribution principles. Overall, there would be no substantial changes to the organisation of the dwelling layout up to the 1950s.

The Groupe Ney and Marcel Sambat projects, built in 1927 by the Public Office (figs. 1.17, 1.32, 1.33), were part and parcel of the early HBM projects built around the old city walls of Paris. During fieldwork, I was able to visit two 'normal' type apartments (figs. 1.37 b, 1.21). Both households owned the apartment, and the first one was still inhabited by the original old couple (figs. 1.19, 1.20, 1.30, 1.34, 1.35, 1.36). The quality of the architectural exteriors and shared public spaces is very good, as highly refined brickworks and decoration are coupled with generous courtyards, greenery and services (fig. 1.33). The flats themselves are not big, but all inhabitants I spoke to expressed their satisfaction with the neighbourhood, the architecture and the apartments. Given that these housing complexes are still considered social housing, they are inhabited – like most post-war housing projects – by both middle-class households (usually the first inhabitants or their offspring) and working-class families, achieving the mix of social classes (*mixité*) much sought-after by French architects and planners.

Figures 1.34, 1.35 and 1.36 show the interior of the apartment of the old couple I interviewed, amongst the first to occupy this building. It is possible to see here both the interior decoration of the front-facing living room, a clear expression of feminine taste – with a closet that hides a brand new television set in an effort to conceal whatever threatens the overall visual and stylistic unity of the room (fig. 1.35) – and the wall that divides it from the front-facing bedroom, the boundary that separates the two main representative rooms of the house (fig. 1.36).

The 'normal' apartment visited is the model that inspired the F4 (figs. 1.22, 1.37 b), the accommodation type that was the most replicated type in French mass housing ensembles, the so-called *grands ensembles* that were built in the second half of the twentieth century and mirrored the previous HBM examples. The dwelling, together with all aspects of daily life, became a key element of the process of normalisation of post-war French society.[134] France indeed became to a total 'planning state' in which 'the user – whether as an abstract universal, a statistical entity identified with the nuclear family, a normative figure subject to modernisation, an active participant of neighbourhood life, a free consumer, or a protesting militant – was at once a policy and design category of policy and an agent of the built environment'.[135] Tellingly, 'the norms, codes, the *savoir-faire* and the dwellings' chain of production ended up producing a characteristic French type of dwelling',[136] meaning that the typical apartment for the nuclear family clearly materialises the social norms and codified behaviours that make it French, hence, the peculiarity of the French context and the cultural specificity of the typical post-war dwelling (fig. 1.22).

The realisation of *grands ensembles* was part and parcel of welfare-state policies that favoured the growth of a middle class, influencing everyday life and starting from the basic cell of

the household. F4 represented, therefore, the dull repetitiveness of the normalised and stereotyped heteropatriarchal family and domesticity, typical of modern mass-produced houses. The 'model family' that inhabited F4 dwellings was the founding element of the social reform of a post-war nation, in which state intervention became increasingly evident in the social and material realm of everyday life. The architects' main aspiration between the 1940s and 1950s was to achieve a *'logement exacte'* (exact dwelling) that improved on the notion of 'minimum dwelling'. In fact,

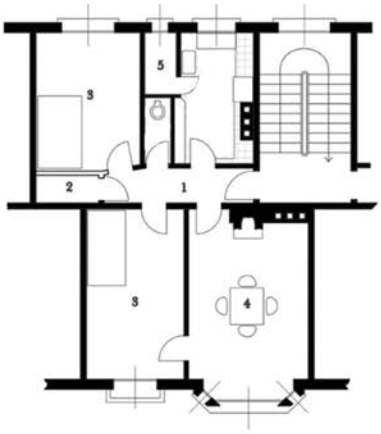
> from the 1950s they did not consider the notion of "minimum dwelling" because it had a pejorative connotation, but they adopted the idea of an average dwelling for the average family which was composed by the father, the mother and two or three children; this was the ideal type of French family which was highly advertised in France from 1950s to 1970s (a period in which 95% of French new public housing were realised).[137]

This ideal of the family is part of the patriarchal and pedagogical project to reform society and taste that was persistently advertised in architecture magazines but also on television, in women's magazines and in national newspapers, which enthusiastically praised this new and modern way of living, fully equipped with most modern technologies.

Because of the need for rapid realisation and reproducibility, as in every other European context engaged in post-war reconstruction, the only necessarily static elements in plan pertained to the circulation of water and its discharge, that is the bathroom and kitchen. Surprisingly, however, it is possible to note that the internal organisation of these dwellings, rather than taking advantage of new construction techniques, remains linked to more traditional distribution systems (figs. 1.10, 1.22).[138] The main narrative around the internal distribution of post-war housing followed a logic of bipartition. This bipartition was not only technical and functional, but also included the division of the inhabitants' daily activities into typical 'day-night' areas (fig. 1.22). Despite the necessary simplification of the plan, some of the practices mentioned so far were still considered, especially those regarding the reception of guests. Therefore, despite the simplification of the layout enculturated practices persisted, as the role of reception spaces did not change.

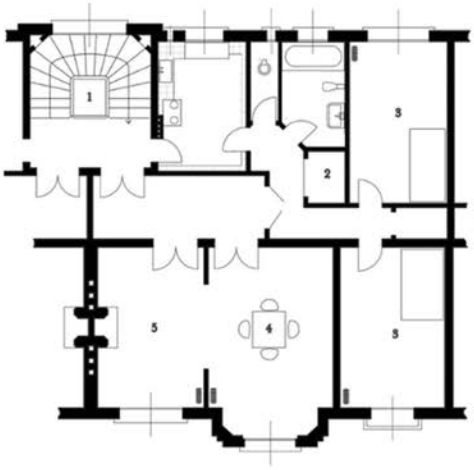
The permanence of both distributional and social norms was due to the actors, who, from the post-war period onwards, dealt with the design and construction of collective housing in France, that is engineers, construction companies and architects. These technocrats approached the design of dwellings with limited criticism and, therefore, reproduced systems and habits that they themselves had inherited. Cost reduction and compliance with construction standards (that normalised the user) influenced the design, which, however, sharply contrasts with the experimental and totally new solutions proposed by prominent architects of that era.[139] In fact, the F4 dwelling type detaches itself greatly from the high-Modernist projects designed by the fathers of the Modern Movement in the first decades of the twentieth century. Despite its ordinariness, this model nonetheless represented masculine values, as it perpetuated patriarchal power and divided the space into gendered

a. **Henri-Bracque apartment**
1. Acess
2. Common area
3. Shower
4. WC
5. Room



b. **Normal type apartment**
1. Acess
2. Storage
3. Room
4. Dining room
5. Shower

c. **Intermediary type apartment**
1. Acess
2. Storage
3. Room
4. Dining room



d. **Middle-class apartment**
1. Elevator
2. Wardrobe
3. Room
4. Dining room
5. Salon / living room

0 1 3 5 10M

Fig. 1.37 (a, b, c, d). The four types of HBM dwellings (1930s).

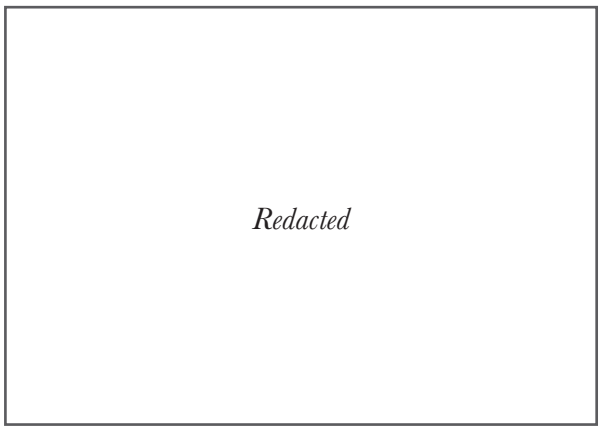


Fig. 1.38. Still frames of the documentary *Sarcellopolis* by Sébastien Daycard-Heid and Bertrand Dévé (2015). The images show the inhabitants of the *grand ensemble* Sarcelles, Paris, that start occupying their apartments.

spheres. Just as in their consumption of male-designed furniture and fittings, women used and appropriated the masculine spaces of the F4 apartment, negotiating and consolidating their role within the patriarchal family, but also their taste and modern identities (fig. 1.38).

The projects visited during fieldwork, along with those analysed so far, prove that the design and use of the representational spaces of the French home have not substantially changed since the nineteenth century, when a bourgeois lifestyle became the norm, underlying the distribution of French dwellings. The interplay between a gradual codification of manners and behaviours via the *savoir-vivre* manuals made some reception practices popular, and the domestic space of the lower and growing middle class were designed to accommodate practices that formerly pertained only to the high bourgeoisie. The spatial relationship between the salon and the master bedroom, their use and decoration and the reception rituals that went along with the visit, reinforced the centrality of the female figure as the protagonist of both the intimate and representation sides of domestic living. As aforementioned, this relationship was strengthened by the consolidation of the heteropatriarchal, nuclear family model and women's role as consumers, decorators and domestic workers, which went hand in hand with the post-war implementation of mass housing.

The Résidence Salmson Point-du-Jour was designed by architect Fernand Pouillon in 1957 and is located in the district of Boulogne-Billancourt, in the western outskirts of Paris (fig. 1.39).[140] It was considered by the architect an example of a 'monumental urban ensemble', not only due to the extended size of the plot (8 hectares) but also to the monumental features of the architecture.[141] The complex is composed of approximately 2,300 dwellings, a series of gardens with fountains, basins, bridges and various services (shops, garages and so on) (fig. 1.39). It is worth noting that journals of the time advertised the housing complex to the so-called *classe moyenne 'supérieure'* ('superior' middle class), who were more likely to become homeowners.[142]

Pouillon designed another collective housing neighbourhood in the outskirts of Paris called Meudon-la-Forêt (1961), devoted to middle and lower classes. The second project is stylistically and compositionally similar and, most importantly, the distribution of the dwelling layouts does not differ much from Point-du-Jour's. Both cases, indeed, present similar solutions in the location of the master bedrooms. As we can see from the original drawing (fig. 1.40), which represents a fragment of the building floorplan, the *séjour* (living room) space is always flanked by a bedroom (indicated here by 'CH', which stands for *chambre*, room). The dwellings located at both ends of the plan even provide the possibility to turn part of the living room into another bedroom. This solution is found in the towers as well, making it evident that these plans have the distribution logic of figure 1.22, with a tripartition of the front of the building, a double salon and bedroom, or a double bedroom and a salon in the middle.

Image 1.41, which was meant to advertise the estate, clearly shows the intent of the architect to move the living room and master bedroom towards the south-east façade. Indeed, the advertisement states 'the living room and the master bedroom are illuminated by a 10-meter-

Fig. 1.39 (a, b). Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).

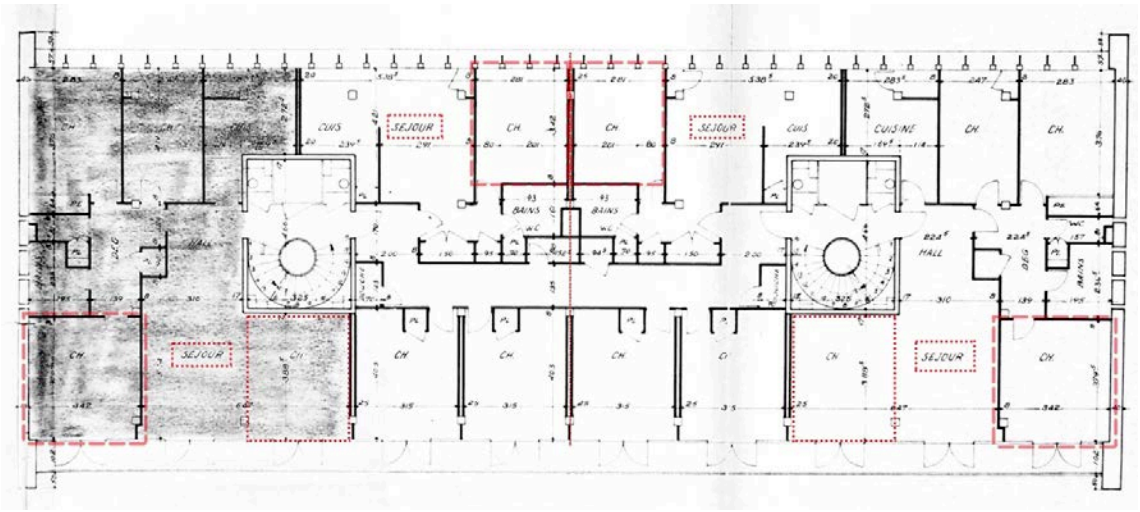


Fig. 1.40. Fernand Pouillon, plan of Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (1957). Annotation in red added by the author.

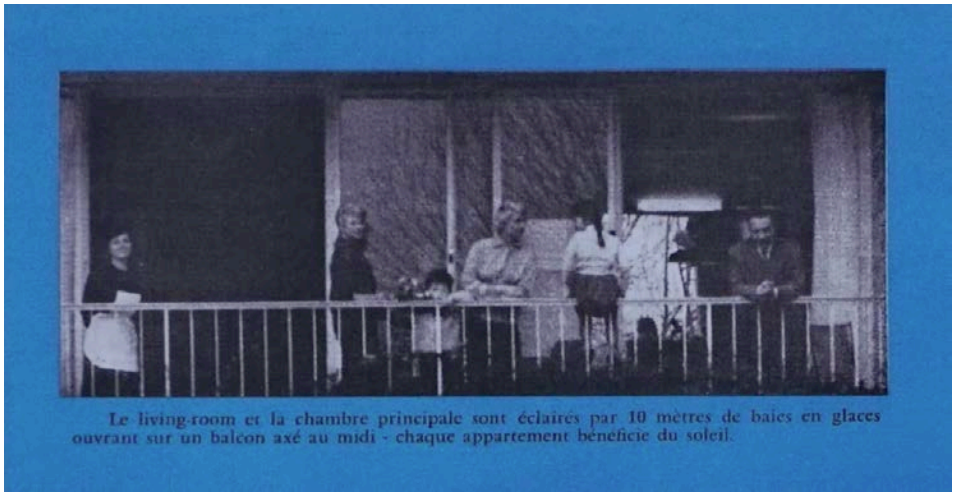


Fig. 1.41. Advertisement for the sale of dwellings at the Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019). The real estate agents used the term 'living room' instead of *'salon'*, which may indicate that French buyers were interested in a more 'international' way of living.

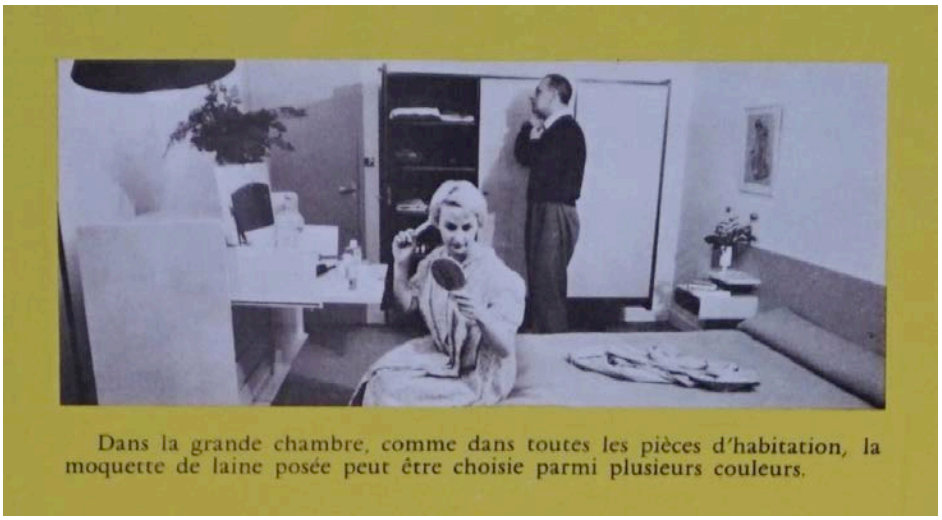


Fig. 1.42. Advertisement for the sale of dwellings at the Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019). Interestingly, the marital bedroom is called here *'grand chambre'* (big room).

long glass surface that opens onto a balcony that faces south – every apartment enjoys the sun.' The similarities with nineteenth-century principles of distribution are striking, since at that time those rooms were the ones that faced the main street and acted as an extension to the public space, serving thus as representational spaces. Another picture shows the master bedroom of a show flat (fig. 1.42), and states 'in the master bedroom, like in the other rooms, the woollen moquette can be chosen amongst several colours.'[143] Just like most of the 1960s show flats, it was possible to customise interior finishes.

Because of the technological solution adopted by Pouillon, consisting of a reinforced concrete structure and no structural partitions (beyond the circulation core), great flexibility was granted to the inhabitants, who immediately started modifying the interiors according to their wishes and needs. This freedom was also facilitated by the fact that almost all inhabitants were owners.[144] One of the residents interviewed explained at great length her story and that of her family: her parents owned two adjacent flats which they acquired as soon as the neighbourhood was completed. They decided to join the two flats, demolishing the dividing wall that separated the two living rooms. As the daughter grew up, her father died, and her own family started occupying one of the flats; at this time, they decided to rebuild the original dividing wall:

> When we all lived together, the living room made this room here and there [she pointed out the diving wall]. We only had the dining room in this part [her flat], a passage here [he second salon adjacent to the other flat] and the living room there [in the other flat], and when my father died, we closed it off. There were 150sqm, three bathrooms and a kitchen, and my mom set up a kitchen-diner on the other side.[145]

The great flexibility, along with the fact that most of flats were owned by the inhabitants, allowed greater freedom of occupation, which makes this housing estate an interesting case study for the understanding of the contemporary inhabitation of post-war estates.

The inhabitants of the towers benefit from an incredible view of the surroundings. In the specific case of the flat shown in figure 1.43, the relationship between the living area and the parents' bedroom, which is left exactly as Pouillon envisioned it, is very clear. The picture, taken from the flat's entrance area, shows the direct relationship between the spaces: the entrance door is located on the left (outside the frame), whereas on the right-hand side, there is access to the intimate half of the house, comprising the children's bedroom. Access to the kitchen was once located elsewhere and it did not face the living room but the entrance, however, the inhabitants decided to move it there since this provided greater space for the distribution of the kitchen appliances (see fig. 1.43 a). On the contrary, the inhabitants of another flat located a few floors down (fig. 1.44) decided to close off the diving wall between the salon and the main bedroom, which is now accessible via the intimate and more private half of the house.

The inhabitants of the previous flat (fig. 1.43) made clear that they accepted the apartment's layout as they received it (as Pouillon designed it). They were also particularly proud to show

Fig. 1.43. Interiors, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).
a) Living room. It is shown here the direct relation between salon and marital bedroom, which has no direct access to the intimate half of the house. Annotations added by the author.
b) Marital bedroom inside the same apartment.

Fig. 1.44. Interiors, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).
a) Living room. There is no connection here between marital bedroom and salon.
b) Interior, corridor leading to bedrooms. The master bedroom, at the end, is separated from the salon and is connected to this intimate half of the house.

the amazing view from the bedroom's window to me and said that they did so to all guests (fig. 1.43 b). In fact, the family that lives in the flat particularly enjoys inviting friends for parties and during those occasions, the main bedroom's door remains open as if it were a continuation of the living room. They allowed me to freely take pictures inside the home and were, therefore, less concerned about privacy.

The inhabitants of the second flat (fig. 1.44), by contrast, had a very different attitude towards reception spaces and privacy. Picture (a) is taken exactly from the same point as figure 1.43 (a) of the previous flat, but here, the double living room is not an open, extendable space but rather an enclosed one. This is due to the fact that instead of keeping the direct relationship with the master bedroom, the inhabitants wanted more privacy. Thanks to Pouillon's flexible design, both solutions can be implemented: depending on the inhabitants' preferences, walls can be closed off and circulation can be changed. The bedroom is the least accessible room among the private, intimate spaces of the house and is located at the end of the corridor that leads from the entrance to the intimate areas of the house (fig. 1.44 b). As it is the most private room, the inhabitants asked me not take pictures of it.

To the question 'do you like the building and the neighbourhood where you live?', I received a very interesting answer from one of them; before moving to the Résidence Point-du-Jour they lived in a typical nineteenth-century bourgeois apartment (Haussmanian building) and liked it very much. For personal reasons. they had to relocate and hated Modernist architecture (they still do) as they still associated it with the dangerous, working-class Parisian *banlieue*. However, once they experienced the flat *from within*, they realised it suited their needs and moved in.

> I have lived in Boulogne [Parisian neighbourhood] for 40 years, and each time I passed in front of this big tower I found it very ugly. I said, "I will never live there!" And then one day I visited an apartment, by chance, and when I arrived in this apartment – here, precisely – which was completely empty, completely white, with the view (it was very beautiful day that day), I did not think about the exterior at all. I always find the outside to be very ugly, honestly, but when I'm inside I don't think about it anymore.[146]

This answer is first of all symptomatic of the class habitus of the interviewee, which informed their taste. The Parisian bourgeoisie's highest aesthetic standard is the *hôtel particulier* type, or, alternatively, the Haussmannian block. Both are symbols of status as opposed to the Modernist tower, which is associated with the lower classes. This is a consequence of the widespread criticism of *grands ensembles* brought forward by French intellectuals and the government.[147] In fact, although *grands ensembles* were originally intended for the middle classes – they were considered spaces expressing a new modern taste, so they were accepted by its members after the taste reform – they soon started being associated with the working class. This was due to the fact that in the second half of the twentieth century immigrants from the French colonies started occupying some of these estates.[148] The criticism of these

estates was twofold: first, French intellectuals saw the early projects as sites of Americanising mass-consumption that threatened French cultural identity, second, from the 1960s onwards they became the scapegoat for a nation seeking to erase the horrors of its colonial past.[149]

The housing projects analysed here are the ones designed and inhabited by the French middle class, but the mixed feelings about this architecture still persists among its occupants. Those more curious about the history of their home c which I met both inside Puillon's two Parisian housing projects and Jean Renaudie's Étoiles project in Paris – learned to appreciate the unusual exteriors and found fertile ground for the expression of their bourgeois aesthetic inside their apartments. The Modernist exterior is indeed associated with a fairly traditional interior configuration, which, not by chance, suits petit-bourgeois households like the one interviewed, a family that felt at ease in such spaces, regardless of their class prejudices. This proves one of the points raised in this research, that little changes have been made in the French apartment in the past two centuries. This specific flat, for instance, is filled with family heirlooms and inherited furniture, while the living room's interior decoration is characterised by the presence of little sculpted birds and Japanese dolls: two personal collections of the inhabitant that make it a true contemporary petit-bourgeois interior (fig. 1.45).[150] In terms of reception practices, almost all people interviewed (comprising the inhabitants of this last flat) agreed that the aperitif is quite an important aspect of French art of reception, followed by dinner . Only the interviewee of the petit-bourgeois flat mentioned the practice of inviting friends in the afternoon for coffee or tea, which has been present in the *savoir-vivre* manuals since the nineteenth century.

The term 'petit-bourgeois' was used extensively by Pierre Bourdieu in his analysis of this class' lifestyle and habitus in France, which is based on the 'propensity for the accumulation in all its forms' (not only material or economic, but also of cultural capital), a focus on upwards social ascension through one's descendants and the propensity to enclose oneself 'in a tightly knit but narrow and somewhat oppressive nuclear family'.[151] It is clear that the interviewee mentioned before was afraid of a social downgrade, as living in post-war housing in France is associated with the lower and working class; however, as mentioned earlier, the generosity of its interior spaces – designed precisely for the nuclear family and the possibility of carving out a personalised space within the walls of a 1950s tower block – favoured the recreation of the petit-bourgeois interior I visited during fieldwork. This space is independent from the outer shell, as tellingly explained by the inhabitant during the interview. Thus the architecture welcomes the reproduction of petit-bourgeois taste and practices. Consumption, instead of limiting typically French practices and cultures, facilitated the expression of the inhabitants' personal and cultural identity through the tasteful dispositions of the objects contained inside the homes I visited. Homemaking practices were particularly meaningful for the women interviewed inside all housing projects visited. Part of the interview conducted centred around the role that objects play for the consolidation of the inhabitant's identity. Indeed, I asked questions about meaningful objects, inherited objects and practices, and objects that informed the visitors about the inhabitants' personality or status.

a)

b)

c)

Fig. 1.45. Details, Résidence Salmson at Point-Du-Jour, Paris (2019)
a) Embroidery set in the living room.
b) Japanese doll collection.
c) Display cabinet in the living room.

Figures 1.45 (a), (b) and (c) represent cherished objects of the interviewee. Specifically, the first one is a set that displays the personality and interest of the lady of the house that inhabited the flat shown in figure 1.43. She was particularly proud to showcase her embroidery set, pointing at it with no hesitation when answering the question 'is there anything in the entrance or living room that tells the visitor something about you?'. The question triggered a very long answer, in which the lady explained in detail how embroidery connects her to her extended family and friends, as she mainly creates embroideries for them. She was physically and metaphorically weaving a web of interpersonal connections through her embroidery. The latter is perhaps the most studied case as it was often associated to the making of the feminine.[152] Concerning this point, designer Candace Wheeler tellingly wrote:

> We can deduct from these needle records much of the physical circumstances of woman's long pilgrimage down the ages, of her mental processes, of her growth in thought. We can judge from the character of her art whether she was at peace with herself and the world, and from its status we become aware of its relative importance to the conditions of her life.[153]

Embroidery as a process, an act of design and a decoration is, therefore, instrumental for the consolidation of personal and feminine identity. Although not visible in the photographs, the interviewee showed me a series of embroidered surfaces (pillowcases, blankets, doilies and so on) scattered around the apartment. Her presence in the house was very clear, as she was certainly in charge of its decoration; her homemaking materialised through embroidered pieces, extending her presence to the physical space of the house. This case is particularly relevant to this study as a typically feminine manifestation of culture, usually overlooked in art and architectural history it is, instead, central to a cultural reading of the domestic.

The second photograph (fig. 1.45 b) portrays part of the interviewee's personal collection of Japanese dolls. When I asked her about the reason behind the collection she answered that there wasn't one – she later explained that a friend visited Japan and brought her one doll as a souvenir, she liked it and kept collecting these dolls although she never went to Japan herself, does not intend to visit the country and is not interested in Japanese culture. She explained that she collects those dolls simply because they are beautiful to her, since they are very well-decorated and are carved from a single piece of wood. This particular collection reminds me of a Parisian interior I visited in 2016 inside the Modernist tower Tour-Bois-Le-Prêtre, famously refurbished by the Pritzker Prize laureates Anne Lacaton and Jean Philippe Vassal (fig. 1.46). Just like embroidery, dolls are typically feminine, and in both cases, they played an important role in the apartments' interior decoration. Their pervasive presence is particularly visible in figure 1.46, but a series of dolls was also displayed on various shelves of the apartment showed in figure 1.45. This is an important element of this analysis because symbols of feminine domesticity and taste are recurring elements of all middle-class, post-war housing interiors I visited in France since 2016, so they are not exceptions at all, rather they represent the average. This means that contemporary

Fig. 1.46. Living room, Tour Bois le Prêtre, Paris (2016).

domesticity inside French middle-class apartments still reflects feminine values, or that the domestic sphere remains a space for the expression of gender and class identity.

Once again, objects play an important part in this process. According to anthropologists and social scientists, objects are signs or elements of a communication process that allows the construction of meaning and identity within the symbolic environment of the house, but also the neighbourhood and the city.[154] The domestic space indeed forms an essential part of the individual self as well as the social self, since the home provides, on a small scale, a space for action and interaction between individuals, the architecture and the objects located in between.[155] Specifically, ordinary things 'once they enter the realm of the ordinary they evade notice and become absorbed into peoples' lives where they are no longer "a taste thing", but become part of an individual's personal possessions that go towards forming a sense of individuality within a group that share the same values.'[156] We have seen, in fact, that domestic items serve to define status, which is a measure of the owner's role within the social group. For instance, furniture is a symbol of stability, since it presupposes a surplus exchange power and a settled lifestyle. Domestic interiors are, therefore, socially constructed symbolic universes where objects symbolise social integration and can be interpreted according to the cultural context in which they are analysed. Specifically, cultural meaning associated with objects (but also practices) can be transmitted to the next generation, it can be also modified and recreated; this way it has the potential to express new meanings in either traditional or new forms.[157]

To sum up, the process of appropriating interior spaces is necessary for the cultivation and definition of selfhood and the construction of cultural meaning through the relationship with material possessions that symbolise one's personal identity or family's status. The role of women within the family, indeed, has been instrumental for the transmission of habitus in the form of embodied practices, material objects or immaterial cultural heritage. Indeed, the cultivation of the self is at the heart of shared cultural life, a continuity of meaning is achieved by internalising and refining moral standards and norms that belong to the social group. The symbolic value of kinship systems in Western countries is indeed still extremely important:

> The best we can accomplish for posterity is to transmit unimpaired, and with some increment of meaning, the environment that makes it possible to maintain the habits of decent and refined life. Our individual habits are links forming the endless chain of humanity. Their significance depends upon the environment inherited from our forerunners, and it is enhanced as we foresee the fruits of our labours in the world in which our successors live […]. We can retain and transmit our own heritage only by constant remaking of our own environment.[158]

As discussed, this task of transmitting habitus within the walls of their homes was given to women. Another inhabitation practice that can be included among the mechanisms of transmission of cultural meaning and value is collecting. Ordinary and individual collecting not only follows individual narratives, the family transmission of things, behaviours, and memory where the accumulated properties and goods once exhibited produce symbolic,

cultural meaning.[159] In France, this happened through the transmission of reception practices – as discussed by the mother and daughter mentioned at the beginning of Part I – or the transmission of inherited pieces of furniture, that many of the interviewee described as meaningful objects inside their homes. These dynamics become even more evident in Part II, where mechanisms of parental transmission determine the design, use and appropriation of Italian domestic interiors. In this regard, anthropologist Pietro Meloni writes:

> The selection of objects, the ability to display them, to create pleasing installations transform the anonymous consumer goods into meaningful works. And, together with the goods, objects part of the family transmission and domestic memories coexist, objects and memories that are handed down or that remain inside the houses and are inherited even if not wanted. In this sense, selection is also an act of patrimonialisation, of recognition of symbolic, aesthetic, economic and emotional value […] the appropriation of objects makes manifest the biography of people and things, which are rewritten in a work of negotiating places and identities.[160]

Domestic display thus allows the construction and production of a different type of cultural representation of the self, where the object is capable of organising and impressing its presence in the space.[161] Objects are ultimately used to negotiate identity and change both at an individual and social level. The display of the dolls collection is a clear example of such dynamics (figs. 1.45 b, 1.46). A collection of tea sets can be also found inside the piece of furniture displayed in photo 1.45 c, a family heirloom that is positioned in the living room of the petit-bourgeois household. It is, indeed, a piece of furniture the interviewee cherishes very much because it is the only inherited piece of furniture she had in her home. It reminds her of her father, as the first tea set inside was given to her by him on her wedding day. All the objects and pieces of furniture pointed out by the lady interviewed are, therefore, not only generative of personal meaning but also contribute to her positioning within the domestic environment in a way that creates continuity with her past, her culture and her status. The narratives associated with each object accord with the definition of her individuality, as through each object, practice and space, she can tell me each time a more detailed fragment of her story, her life and her personality.

As a woman, I felt very connected to her story; I also discovered that she seeks continuous connections with the ladies in the neighbourhood, often inviting them home for tea. It would not be, therefore, hazardous to think that a combination of both her homemaking practices (through decoration and object-related narratives of the self) and her reception skills and good manners are fundamental for the establishment of her affective ties among family members, her past and, above all, her social networks among women neighbours and friends. The Japanese dolls might connect her to foreign countries, the embroidery connects her to her family and friends and the importance that reception practices play in her life is also relevant – these all exemplify the meanings associated with each of her choices. Her personal story is, therefore, particularly valuable in the context of cultural domesticity. This is true, first of all, because her story is personal; secondly, because it pertains to the female sphere of domesticity – which in the context of the heterosexual, French nuclear family

extends to the entire domestic sphere; thirdly, because it exemplifies feminine taste.

To summarise, despite the clearly gendered division of spaces in her home, despite her adherence to both the middle-class patriarchal family model and the *savoir-vivre* protocols that inform her petit-bourgeois taste, this lady was able to negotiate her own identity and individuality within the domestic sphere through both the use and appropriation of her home and the social connections she established, which are cultivated through recurrent visits to her apartment. Once again, it is possible to argue that feminine cultural domesticity has the potential to manifest itself within the boundaries of oppressive and codified systems and hierarchies. It is through daily negotiations (between occupants, individuals and objects, individual and architectural space), interior occupation and appropriation that new personal meanings are created. The latter accord with the consolidation of women's selves, which takes place through both appropriation and use, and has both objectual and spatial implications. In spatial terms, women's individuality extends to both the entire space of the home with small decorative interventions or spatial alterations. It also manifests through the re-creation of a somewhat lost spatial independence; the French women interviewed all found different ways to recreate their own, personal space within the domestic sphere. The lady in the Groupe Ney project, for instance, used the front-facing main bedroom as both a bedroom and workspace for her vocation as a seamstress (fig. 1.20).

The different configurations in the relationship between the master bedroom and living room in the last two apartments discussed (figs. 1.43, 1.44), clarifies the still unresolved relationship between the master bedroom and living room. Since the nineteenth century, architects have tried to negotiate a spatial solution that could make both rooms directly connected (as the old distribution principles dictated) accommodating, at the same time, an increasing need for privacy that gradually emerged. This analysis demonstrated that this spatial problem remains unresolved. Nevertheless, from my fieldwork I could observe that users do not seem to have any issue in modifying the internal layout by closing off walls or add openings based on their needs.

An interesting example of this is the Orgues de Flandre housing estate, built in the North of Paris by architect Martin Van Treek in 1974 (figs. 1.47, 1.48, 1.49, 1.50). This massive brutalist estate is composed of different dwelling typologies. I was able to visit three of them, of which two had changed the layout of the original plans (fig. 1.49 a, b). In the flat on the left (fig. 1.49 a), someone living there before the current occupant decided to demolish the small partitions that enclosed the bedroom, creating a true open space/studio. The current occupant is a young lady, this is her first home that represents to her independence (fig. 1.51). In the second case, the inhabitants explained why they chose to close off the wall (we can see photographed in figure 1.50). Apparently, instead of the original configuration with the bedroom's entrance door located towards the entrance, the wall perpendicular to the small balcony and opposite to the entrance was not there, making it an open space just like the other flat. The inhabitants, therefore, explained to me they decided to close off the wall and create a small opening, which is visible in the picture. They did it themselves and told me they still needed to complete some finishing touches. They did not seem bothered by this

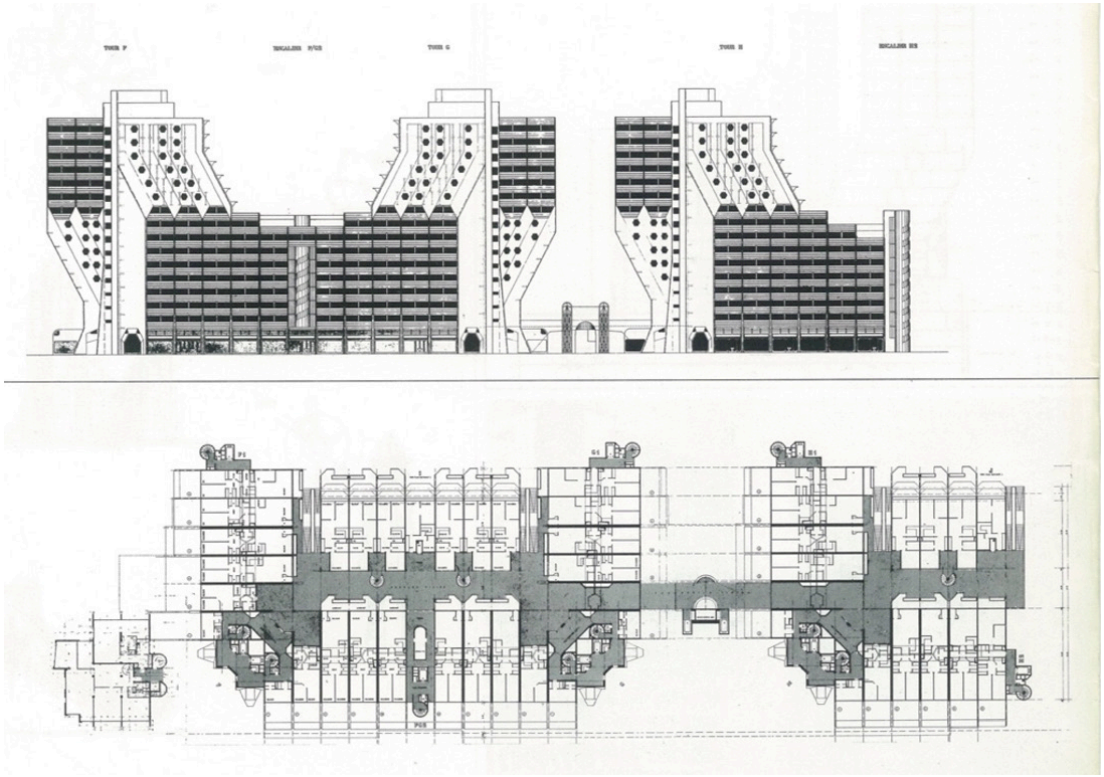


Fig. 1.47. Martin Van Treek, plan and elevation of the project Orgues de Flandre, Paris (1974).

Fig. 1.48. Orgues de Flandre, Paris (2019).

process, instead, they appropriated their domestic space and modified it according to their needs. The direct relationship between the bedroom and living room is still present, yet the need for privacy is satisfied by adding a wall and a door.

As explained by Jamieson, the emphasis on self-making qualifies the intimate practices that take place inside them home; hence, the processes of the individualisation of its occupants have both personal and spatial implications.[162] The personal spaces I identified during my fieldwork are very different from each other: one coincides with the house itself (fig. 1.51), the second one coincides with the main bedroom of figure 1.20 and 1.21. In the case of the petit-bourgeois household (fig. 1.43), a bedroom used formerly by the young children of the couple was transformed into a small studio for the lady of the house (fig. 1.52); her personal collection of dolls is partially displayed there (fig. 1.45 b). The third personal space identified during my fieldwork is the flexible living room of the first household mentioned at the beginning of Part I (figs. 1.3, 1.53, 1.54). The 'double living room culture' mentioned by the interviewee is present in this apartment, which is occupied by pieces of furniture and objects that facilitate the pleasant reception of people (fig. 1.3). Not only do the living rooms have a very interesting visual and decorative coherence that clearly reflects the lady of the house's taste, but she also decided to add panels that would enable her to convert part of the living room into a studio (fig. 1.54). She indeed explained to me that she is a food and nutrition expert and sometimes works from home, hence, the need to create an office corner, which she cherished very much. These are all clear examples of the mis-appropriation of rooms of the house, that reflect previous considerations on the mis-appropriation of consumption objects as a means through which women negotiate their gender and personal identity. These are indeed small acts of resistance that emerge from lived experience that usually overlooked by architects, which instead play a central role in the study of cultural domesticity.

Few important conclusive remarks, therefore, emerge from the study of French cultural domesticity. First of all, cultural domesticity is based on social, cultural and feminist theory. These disciplines, therefore, play a decisive role in the study of domestic interiors. However, cultural domesticity integrates previous studies on the social, cultural, and gender dimension of the interior with a spatial and typological focus, combined with fieldwork and a focus on lived experience and personal histories. Part I brought forward a feminist reading of the spatial and typological evolution of the French dwelling based on habitus, gendered spaces and practices – including the visit and homemaking (like interior decoration). The cultural manifestations of French domesticity discussed are closely interconnected as they concur to the aesthetic, spatial and performative dimension of the French home. Feminine domesticity positions itself within these codified dynamics, but it is through the reworking of known, shared culture and codes, through the conscious or unconscious mis-appropriation of objects, practices and spaces, that women consolidated their identities. These processes had, as shown through historic and contemporary examples, both aesthetic and spatial implications. In fact, from fieldwork it emerged that the alteration of domestic spaces

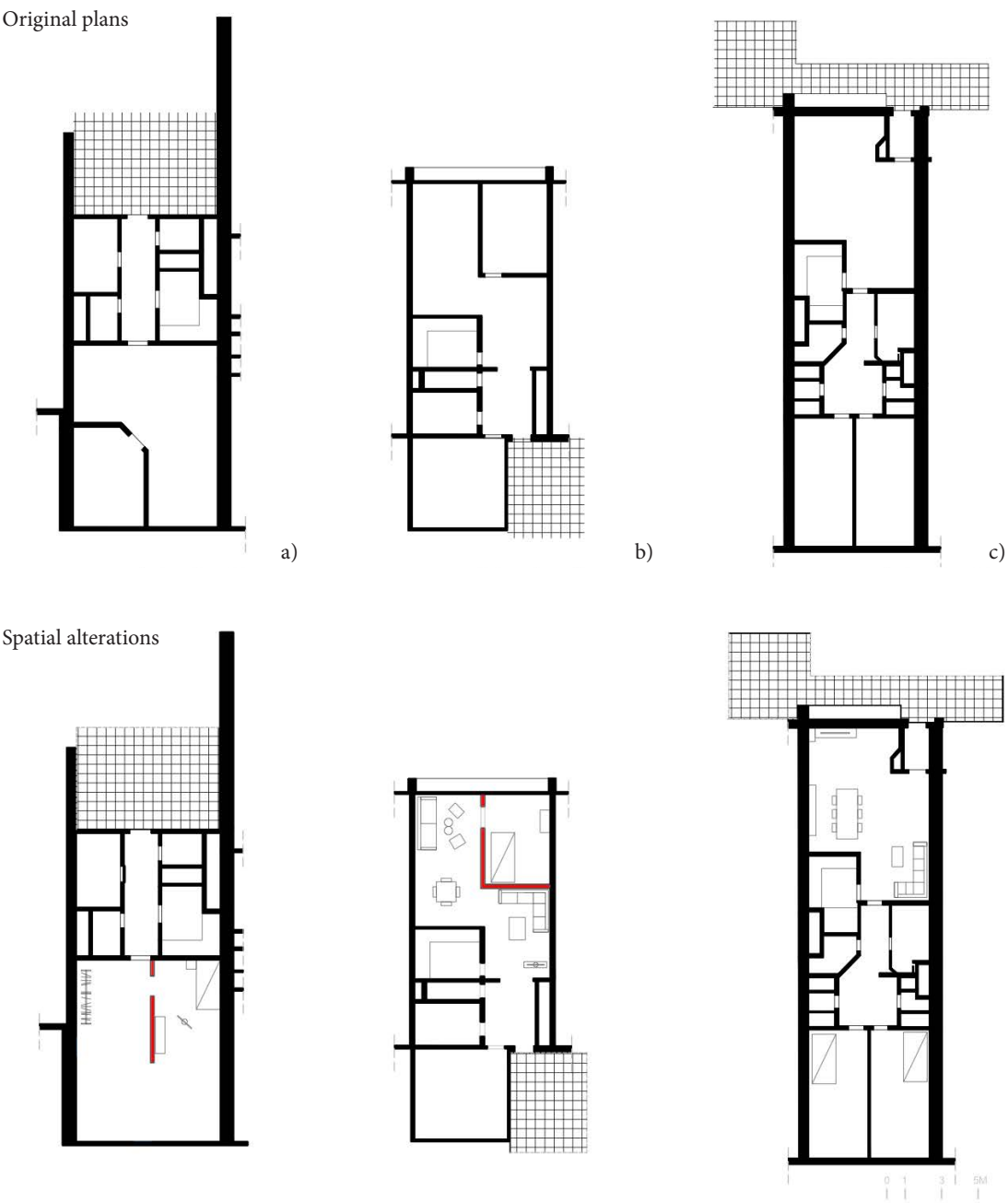


Fig. 1.49 (a, b, c). Plans of the dwellings visited, Orgues de Flandre, Paris (1974-2019). In red the spatial alterations of the inhabitants.

Fig. 1.50. Interior apartment fig. 1.49 b, Orgues de Flandre, Paris (2019).

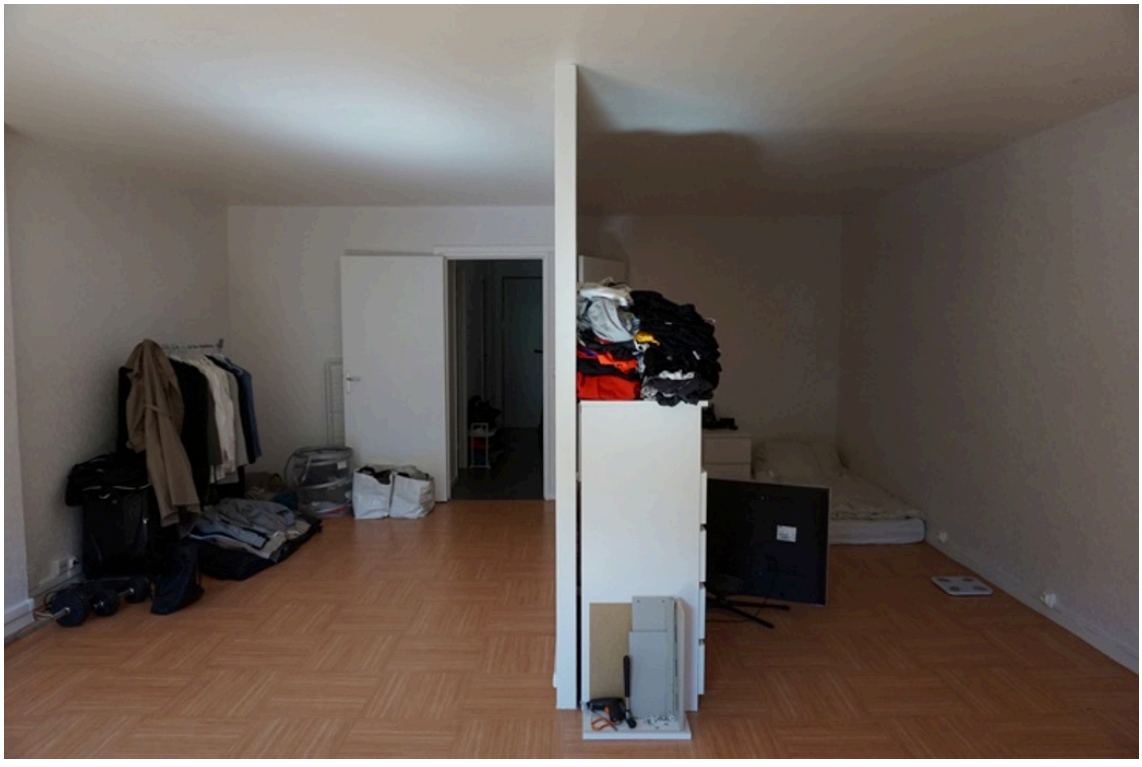


Fig. 1.51. Interior apartment fig. 1.49 a, Orgues de Flandre, Paris (2019).

can occur if the original layout of the dwelling does not match the needs of the inhabitants. Specifically, the closure or opening of the master bedroom towards the living room exemplifies the inhabitants' attitude towards the art of reception. Part II will further expand these findings, clarifying the nuanced manifestations of feminine cultural domesticity in Italy. It will touch upon subtle mechanisms of conscious and unconscious resistance, more active design solutions proposed by Italian women, along with further reflections on the relationship between domestic labour, interior occupation and women's 'double presence' inside the home.[163] It is, therefore, necessary to delve further into mechanisms of women's oppression in the domestic sphere in order to explore how women could spatially, symbolically and politically break free from cultural scripts and gender, economic, and spatial constraints.

Fig. 1.52. Study, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).

a)

b)

c)

Fig. 1.53 (a, b, c). Living Room, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).
a, b) Photographs of the bookshelves and folding screen separating the living room. They recreate the 'double living room' and, when needed, separate the living area from the studio space.
c) Living room, detail.

a)

b)

Fig. 1.54 (a, b). Living room-studio, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).
a) Convertible studio space.
b) Detail of the livingroom-studio.

Notes

1 See Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée.*

2 Bourdieu, *Distinction.*

3 See Marie-Hélène Bacqué, and Stéphanie Vermeersch, 'Les Classes Moyennes Dans l'Espace Urbain: Choix Résidentiels et Pratiques Urbaines' (Middle Class in the Urban Sphere: Reisdential Choices and Urban Practices), in *Sociologie et Sociétés*, 45(2), (2013): 63–85. https://doi.org/10.7202/1023173ar

4 The topic of the relationship between material culture (not specifically the bed) and the idea of family has been explored, among others, by anthropologist Sophie Chevalier.

5 See, among others, Antoine Picon, *Ornament: The Politics of Architecture and Subjectivity* (Chichester: Wiley, 2013).

6 See Teyssot, 'The Disease of the Domicile'.

7 Idem.

8 Idem.

9 Richard Venturi, 'Up Against the Wall: The French and American Middle Classes' in *France Stratégie* (2016).

10 These two typologies are very different, the first one being larger, more luxurious, generally developed over three or more floors and circumscribed by a garden. The second one is, instead, smaller, less decorated and develops over a single floor.

11 This does not mean that there is no social inequality in France, but since the second half of the twentieth century France saw, like other European countries, an expansion of the middle class. Caroline Piquet, 'Visualisez si Vous Etes Riche, Aisé, "Moyen", "Populaire" ou Pauvre' (See if you are Rich, Medium or Popular), in *Le Figaro* (2014).

12 Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée.*

13 Most of the publications that came out in the twentieth and twenty-first century addressed the middle class specifically, such as the one shown in fig. 1.1 (e).

14 The focus on *savoir-vivre* and its relationship with the domestic space have not been analysed in-depth until now; this chapter will, thus, uncover the relationship between architectural treatises and manuals focusing on the practice of the visit.

15 This material has been retrieved from the BnF (France National Library) archives.

16 Jules Clément, *Traité de la Politesse et du Savoir-vivre* (Paris: Bernardin-Béchet, 1879), 130–135. Author's translation.

17 These are just some of the points raised by the several manuals retrieved from the French National Archives that have been consulted during fieldwork in Paris. Manuals consulted have been published from the late nineteenth century until today.

18 Judith Martin, 'A Philosophy of Etiquette,' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 137, no. 3 (September, 1993).

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid, 351.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid, 354.

23 De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

24 Interview with a resident, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris. August 2019. Author's translation.

25 Cécile Rossellin, 'The Ins and Outs of the Hall: a Parisian Example,' in *At Home: an Anthropology of Domestic Space*, ed. Irene Cieraad (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 53–54.

26 Rosselin, 'The Ins and Outs,' 56.

27 Baker, *Retro Style.*

28 This aspect will be at the core of Part II's analysis, which will focus on the Italian context but will also refer back to this specific point, comparing mechanisms of women's oppression in both countries.

29 Interview with a resident, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris. August 2019. Author's translation.

30 *Le Petit Larousse du Savoir-Vivre Aujourdh'hui* (Paris: Larousse, 2011).

31 Interview with a resident, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris. August 2019. Author's translation. The interviewee was a young adult and could provide interesting insights on her generations' aspirations, see quotes at the beginning of this paragraph that refer to the 'double salon'.

32 Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 24.

33 The attempt to make a comparison between the spatialised practices codified in the *savoir-vivre* manuals and the good designs proposed by the treatises is at the core of an in-depth understanding of cultural domesticity. They also uncover how codified practices and spaces are part and parcel of a normalised and stereotyped cultural model that was partially adopted by architects and inhabitants (who sometimes rejected it or slightly modified it).

34 César Daly, L'Architecture Privée au XIXe Siècle sous Napoleon III (Paris: Chez A. Morel, 1864).

35 See Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée*.

36 Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (NYC: Pantheon Books, 1979).

37 Ibid.

38 Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée,* 37–61.

39 Monique Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée,* 88.

40 Wigley, 'Untitled,' 350.

41 Idem.

42 Wigley, 'Untitled.'

43 Randell, Penner and Borden, eds., *Gender Space Architecture,* 105.

44 Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution.*

45 A gendered analysis of domestic interiors has been brought forward by several architecture historian, anthropologists and social scientists. Some relevant research has been done by Monique Eleb, Irene Cieraad, Penny Sparke, Beatriz Colomina, among others.

46 See Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée*.

47 Smoking rooms, pools' salons, large dining or dancing rooms, style rooms (with eclectic decorations), etc. were very popular in that period.

48 The *maisons à loyer*'s apartments were organised in a similar manner.

49 Michel Foucault, 'The Confession of the Flesh,' in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. Colin Gordon (NY: Pantheon Books, 1980), 194–228.

50 Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée*, 106–107.

51 The tripartition of the French apartment plan in intimate, service and reception areas and the tripartition of the reception spaces have been explored by both Monique Eleb and Christian Moley in his book *Regard sur l'Immeuble Privé* (Paris: Moniteur, 2000).

52 See Picon, *The Politics of Ornament*.

53 Ibid.

54 The figure of the interior decorator emerges precisely in France in this period and will be further discussed later in the text.

55 Mimi Hellman, 'The Joy of Sets,' in *Furnishing the Eighteenth-Century* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2010), 147–148.

56 Jean-Philippe Garric, ed., 'Documenting the recueil de décorations,' in *Charles Percier: Revolutions in Architecture and Design* (New Haven: Bard Graduate Center in collaboration with Yale University Press, 2016).

57 As a response to modernisation and later on post-war reconstruction, the French government started new public housing campaigns that fostered standardisation. Like other Western countries, these residential projects were designed to host the heterosexual, nuclear family.

58 Honoré de Balzac, *Physiologie du Mariage* (Paris: M. Levy, 1829), 170.

59 Ibid, 198. Author's translation.

60 Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée.*

61 See Ursula Paravicini, *Habitat au Féminin* (Lausanne: Presses Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes, 1990).

62 Monique Eleb, *L'Invention de l'habitat Moderne: Paris 1880-1914* (Paris: Hazan et Archives de l'Architecture Moderne, 1995).

63 Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, 48.

64 Ibid, 5.

65 Lynn Jamieson, 'Intimacy as a Concept: Explaining Social Change in the Context of Globalisation or Another Form of Ethnocentricism?' *Sociological Research Online 16,* n° 4 (December 2011): 151–63.

66 See Michel Foucault, Luther H Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H Hutton, *Technologies Of The Self* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1988), and Michel Foucault, *The History Of Sexuality* (Westminster: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012). See also Jamieson's 'Intimacy as a Concept' and 'Boundaries of Intimacy,' in *Families in Society Boundaries and Relationships,* ed. Linda MCKie, and Sarah Cunningham-Burley (Bristol: Policy Press 2005), 188–206; Antony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

67 Jamieson 'Boundaries of Intimacy.'

68 The origin of the separate bedrooms is associated to the different nature of marriage in the *ancien régime*, it is common knowledge, indeed, that marriage was a social contract aimed at the establishment of political alliances and the continuity of family linage. No wonder that master and lady of the house conducted separate lives. The conjugal bedroom and the intermediate spatial solutions described so far define precisely the moment of transition from the aristocratic model to the bourgeois one, which later extended to the middle class. As described, in that period concepts of conjugal love and family intimacy both consolidated this new social and spatial model, at the same time reinforcing the heteropatriarchal family model and the social prescriptions associated to it.

69 See, among others, Lisa Adkins and Beverly Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*.

70 See Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée.*

71 The lack of proper intimate spaces became a central spatial problem for architects that engaged with the design of middle-class dwellings in the twentieth century. The solutions proposed will be discussed in the second half of Part I and will demonstrate that this spatial problem was never fully resolved.

72 Le Corbusier proposed his renowned project *Ilôt Insalubre Number 8* as a utopic solution to the problem of, precisely, those unhealthy blocks. His solution was, notably, a fragment of his Radiant City (1930).

73 Baronne Staffe, *Usages du Monde. Règles de Savoir-vivre Dans la Société Modern* (Paris: Victor Havard éd.,

1896). Author's translation.

74 According to Jean Baudrillard in his book *The System of Objects* (New York; Verso, 1996), the mirrored wardrobe was the epitome of bourgeois narcissistic identification.

75 Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée*, 152.

76 Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, 56.

77 Ibid, 58

78 Miller, 'Appropriating.'

79 Paravicini, *Habitat au Féminin*, 53.

80 See Wigley, 'Untitled.' In this chapter the author refers to the 'woman-plus-house' to describe the almost mimetic condition of women and the domestic sphere. Artist Louise Bourgeois also illustrated this almost symbiotic relationship in her series *Femme Maison* (1946-1947).

81 In her book *Habitat au Féminin*, Paravicini describes in detail the similarity between the female figure and interior decoration.

82 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, 103.

83 Hellman, 'The Joy of Repetition,' 145.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid, 146.

86 Ibid, 147.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid, 148.

89 Renato De Fusco, *Storia dell'Arredamento* (Milano: Francoangeli, 2004).

90 Ibid.

91 David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

92 See Teyssot, 'The Disease.'

93 See Baudrillard, *The System of Objects.*

94 Teyssot, 'The Disease.'

95 See, among others, Loos's publication *Ornament and Crime*.

96 Cieraad, 'Introduction,' *At Home*.

97 Sparke, 'Taste and Trends,' *The Handbook of Interior Architecture and Design* ed. Graeme Brooker and Lois Weinthal (London: A&C Black, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 559–69.

98 Ibid.

99 Sparke, *As Long as it's Pink*, 103; Angela Partington 'The Designer Housewife in the 1950s,' in *A view From the Interior: Feminism, Women, Design*, ed. Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham (London: Women's Press, 1989).

100 Sparke, 'Taste and Trends.'

101 Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink*, 103–104.

102 Ibid, 98.

103 Partington, 'The Designer Housewife,' 206.

104 Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, 45.

105 Attfield, 'FORM/Female,' 89.

106 Partington, 'The Designer Housewife'. In the text the author describes how that literature needs to be revised, as consumption could also be a positive activity.

107 See, among others, Sparke, *As Long as it's Pink*; Attfield, 'FORM/Female'; Partington, 'The designer housewife'.

108 Baker, *Retro Style.*

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 Idem.

112 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, supported by Baker, *Retro Style.*

113 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 22.

114 See, among others, the writings of Attfield, Patrington, Sparke, Douglas, but also Clarke, 'Maternity and Materiality.'

115 Partington, 'The Designer Housewife,' 206. Existing literature, including this chapter, stress the narrative of the emergence of home management, its similarities with factory work and the required expertise asked of women for the management of the household. These are all important aspects of the changes that occurred in several Western countries (in France they took place through specific State-led programmes for the education of housewives). This point on domestic labour and double presence will be tackled more in detail in Part II.

116 Attfield, 'FORM/Female.'

117 Douglas, *Thought Styles;* Partington, 'The Designer Housewife,' 206.

118 Attfield, 'FORM/Female'.

119 See Mary Douglas, *The World of Goods* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1982).

120 Attfield, 'FORM/Female'.

121 Partington, 'The Designer Housewife,' 209–210.

122 Ibid, 210.

123 Ibid, 206.

124 Ibid, 211–212.

125 Ibid.

126 These aspects will be further developed in the next paragraph. See Miller, 'Appropriating'; Csikszentmihaly, and Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things*; Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*.

127 See Eleb, *Architecture de la Vie Privée*.

128 Kenny Cupers, *The Social Project: Housing Postwar France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

129 Jean-Francois Cabestan, *La Conquete di Plain-Pied* (Paris: Picard, 2004).

130 See Cupers. *The Social Project.*

131 Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, 42.

132 Ibid, 40.

133 See Donzelot, *The Policing of Families;* Georges Duby, *Histoire de la Vie Privée* (Paris: Seuil, 1985-1987); Louis Delzons. *La Famille Francaise et son Evolution* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1913).

134 Cupers, 'The Social Project.'

135 Ibid.

136 Eleb, *Vu de l'Intérieur,* 23. Author's translation.

137 Prof. Lionel Engrand in an interview with the author, Paris. 13 April 2015. Author's translation.

138 Jacques Lucan, *Eau et Gaz aTtous les Etages, 100 Ans de Logement* (Paris: Picard Editeur, 1992).

139 An interesting case is the experimental and innovative work carried out by Candilis, Josic and Woods. Specifically, their flexible solutions inspired by the habitat of the former French colonies, the so-called *'habitat évolutif'* proposed for the *Opération Million*. See Francesca Romana Forlini, 'Plan de (la) Masse' (MPhil, Architectural Association, 2015).

140 The building was commissioned by the CNL, *Comptoir National du Logement* (National Housing Counter) and was built on a plot previously occupied by the Salmson factory, an aeronautical factory.

141 A previous monumental housing project by the architect was the Climat de France in Algiers. In this specific case, Pouillon was inspired by the monumentality of the Rockfeller Center in NYC. Bernard F. Dubor, *Fernand Pouillon* (Paris: Electa Moniteur, 1986), 90.

142 Jacques Lucan, *Fernand Pouillon, Architecte* (Paris: Picard, 2003), 101. In his book, Lucan describes the complex history of the estate, in fact, during its construction, Pouillon was incarcerated, and architect Jacques-Henri Labourdette became the architect in charge of the construction works (page 129).

143 Both images were provided by the only real estate agency inside Point-du-Jour during fieldwork. The agency that still owns Pouillon's original drawings (some of them are shown here) and the original advertisement panels that were showcased at the opening of the estate in 1957. Author's translation.

144 There is no statistical data about this, but almost all residents I met, both those that I formally interviewed and the ones that I spoke with informally during my visit, agreed with the fact that almost every flat is owned. It is a quite lively neighbourhood, and the residents are oftentimes part of neighbourhood associations. During my visit, I could perceive that there are very strong bonds among them; in short, they seemed to be quite aware of each other.

145 Interview with a resident, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris. August 2019. Author's translation.

146 Ibid. Author's translation.

147 The grands ensembles' story is also intertwined with French colonial history, in a cultural, social and class struggle that resulted in the 2005 revolts of the *banlieues*, although I will not explore this aspect further here, as it deserves much space and attention and diverges from the main scope of this thesis. See Francesca Romana Forlini, 'Plan de (la) Masse' (MPhil, Architectural Association, 2015).

148 See Urban Florian, 'The Concrete Cordon Around Paris,' in *Tower and Slab: History of Mass Housing* (London-New York: Routledge, 2012), 37-57.

149 See Francesca Romana Forlini, 'Field of Objects: The Preservation of the Domestic Condition' (Master Thesis, Harvard Graduate School of Design, 2017).

150 Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 351. In his analysis of the French petite-bourgeoisie Bourdieu describes the 'complete realization of the petite-bourgeoisie' as the development of the 'cult of autodidactic effort and the taste for all the activities whose common feature is that they chiefly demand time and cultural goodwill (making collections, for example).'

151 Bourdieu, *Distinction,* 331-339.

152 Rozika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, 4th edition (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), ix.

153 Candace Wheeler, *The Development of Embroidery in America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1921), 5.

154 See Csikszentmihaly and Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things.*

155 Ibid.

156 Attfield, 'FORM/Female' and *Wild Things.*

157 Csikszentmihaly and Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things.*

158 John Dewey, quoted in Csikszentmihaly and Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things,* 35.

159 See Sharon Macdonald, 'Collecting Practices,' in *A Companion to Museum Studies* (Chichester: Wiley-Backwell, 2011).

160 Pietro Meloni, 'L'Uso (o il Consumo) dello Spazio Domestico' (The Use or Consumption of Domestic Space) in *Lares*, Vol. 80, no. 3, Monographic Volume: *Culture domestiche. Saggi interdisciplinari* (September, 2014), 433. Author's Translation.

161 Ibid.
162 Jamieson, 'Intimacy as a Concept.'
163 Balbo, 'La Doppia Presenza'.

Part II
The Art of Conserving and Culinary Traditions

The study of France's inhabitation patterns and cultures demonstrates how social conventions, habitus, class and gender divisions have been formative to the design and appropriation of housing interiors, but also how they facilitated the expression of women's identities, tastes and aesthetics through inhabitation practices and consumption choices. Part II will further explore some of the topics just partially mentioned in Part I such as the relationship between national, shared, stereotypical and normalising culture, class habitus and the unfolding of domestic practices, including their spatial and material manifestations. In Italy, the nationalized project of construction of a collective, national identity intertwines with the consolidation of personal and gender identities, impacting women's lives and the use and distribution of dwellings' spaces. In specific, food culture plays an important identity and spatial role inside Italian domestic interiors – influencing both the design and occupation of the home. The patriarchal and spatial system that has been trapping women inside stereotypical, sexist and backwards roles is even more evident in Italy than France. Nevertheless, it is precisely through women's subtle reworking of traditional models and spaces that they have been able to express themselves. Through the study of the middle-class Italian apartment, Part II looks at the spatial and symbolic role of Italian living, dining and kitchen spaces which, like the French salons and bedrooms, encapsulate the cultural dimension of domesticity.

The neo-traditionalist turn that Italian politics has recently taken is not but a manifestation of a slow process of consolidation of traditional gender and family relations across Italian society that directly impacted domesticity and the design of middle-class dwellings.[1] Italian women have, unfortunately, paid the cost of Italy's cultural involution, as they have not been able to break away from their traditional domestic role. Despite their entry into the workforce over the past fifty years, they are still expected to take care of the house, so they have been forced to a 'double presence' in the workplace and the home.[2] Italian women had, therefore, no other choice than reworking traditional roles, spaces, practices in order to reaffirm themselves and their individuality. These dynamics led to numerous tensions within the family unit that are also the outcome of an imposed, fictitious, male cultural narrative that reinforced patriarchal systems of oppression that materialised in the architectural space of the home. In short, if on the one hand Part I looked at the historical evolution of domestic cultures, aesthetics and taste, this second part insists on the relevance of the political, cultural and socio-spatial dimension, with greater focus on the twentieth century and the contemporary condition, and with an even stronger emphasis on the family and women's condition. Hence Part II explores more closely domestic labour and the consolidation of women's habitus, women's inheritance, their role as both amateur and professional designers in the domestic sphere and, lastly, the broader topic of contemporary domesticity.

Differently from the French case, the Italian apartment had an involutional, regressive path rather than a more-or-less positive evolution, meaning that it facilitated the return to traditional models rather than reflecting the social change that affected Western countries in the twentieth century. The few interior alterations discussed, therefore, play an even more important role, as the materialisation of heteropatriarchal structures and stereotypical

culture is clear and strong in Italy. For instance, etiquette manuals in 'post-unification Italy have as a noble objective the identification-construction of the national character of what is Italian, the Italian woman, the ideal model of an Italian family',[3] so the emphasis of Italian biopolitics is not, as in the French case, solely on the discipline of individual bodies, it is rather on the construction of a national character based on strong gender hierarchies and the cornerstone of Italian identity: the Catholic, nuclear family. This process of national, and cultural unification took place through the consolidation of Italian culinary culture and the homogenisation of social classes towards the model of the renowned *'Italiano medio'* (average/middle class Italian), a process that started with the unification of the peninsula and found its apex during the Fascist regime. Twentieth century middle-class Italians were indeed characterised by 'extraordinary homogeneity and rigidity of behaviour in the organization and scanning of the day: not only did they wake up and go to sleep more or less all in unison, but also each led a life that was always the same during the year, with every minute of the day organized in the exact same way'.[4] Indeed, 'the evolution of inhabitation cultures is the outcome of a process of uniformization that is both a mass homologation (as it goes beyond class boundaries) and national uniformization (as it is supra-local).'[5] This led to the standardisation of domestic life and spaces, which led to little or no changes inside domestic interiors, hence the peculiarity of the Italian context.

This research specifically studies the architectural production that pervades the bourgeois city, the one built during the slow and late process of urbanisation and modernisation of the Italian peninsula. It began with the national unification of 1861 and ended with the post-war national plans for affordable housing, or 'Piani di Edilizia Economica e Popolare' (PEEP), brought forward until the end of the 1980s.[6] Despite the use of the term 'popular' meant to indicate the 'working class', it should be noted that this type of housing was designed and built largely for the middle class, hence the term 'bourgeois city' as discriminatory in terms as in substance.[7] Both historian Enrica Asquer and architectural historian Filippo De Pieri agree that the middle class and urban bourgeoisie are the social classes that accessed the benefits of post-war housing, in fact 'affordable housing for the working class' were 'often unable – in terms of costs and characteristics – to solve the housing problem of the poorest sections of the population'.[8] The predominance of the middle class, both numerically and culturally, also explains the focus of this analysis. In fact, the latter has been establishing itself as the social and cultural model of the country since the end of the nineteenth century and was, subsequently, the protagonist of major societal changes after the Second World War.[9] It was also the catalyst of the nationalisation and bureaucratisation of Italy, which began with the unification and was reinforced during the Fascist era.[10] Therefore, not only the 'average' and 'minor' housing production hosted, and still hosts, the majority of Italian citizens[11] – those now belonging to the white-collar and professional middle class – but most of its dwellings were purchased by members of that class as a result of the financial stimuli and fiscal concessions implemented in the years of the 'economic miracle'.[12] For this reason, a focus on this portion of Italy's built environment provides a sufficiently accurate picture of contemporary Italian domesticity, specifically, that of the generation of retired homeowners that now inhabit post-war housing.

The reasons behind architectural, class and cultural uniformization, along with its continuity in time are religious, social, political, and economic, and they are related to the importance of the heteropatriarchal, nuclear family. The latter is fundamental for Roman Catholics, as heterosexual marriage is a sacrament and religion has the power to impact daily life.[13] Furthermore, 'in [Italian] history, the fear of society has always operated in addition to the fear of God, that is the fear in social sanctions aimed at punishing anomalous behaviours. There is no doubt that the continuation of the family has always been, and continues today, to be favoured by social control.'[14] Although the fear of God and society has been mitigated in the past decades, historian Piero Melograni argues that it persists across social strata, as the heterosexual, nuclear family model persists, along with the mechanisms of parental transmission of values and lifestyles.[15] The aforementioned neo-traditionalist trends confirm his argument. On the political and economic level, traditional roles and spaces persist because its exists a widespread discontent and distrust in the power and efficiency of the state and political parties across Italian society.[16] This makes them subordinate to the family, which plays also an important role for income and savings – this becomes quite clear when reading the data on youth unemployment and the alarming number of people under 35 that still live with their parents today, which corresponds to approximately 80%.[17]

The social basis of this standardizing project were the nineteenth-century civil servants – an urban class that embodied the unification of the country and established itself as the model, both at a social and architectural level, given that the homes built for this section of the population embodied national stability and culture.[18] Middle-class identity was based on a good work ethic and sobriety of consumption, which impacted the use and appropriation of these interiors and is also at the basis of Italian food culture. This model differs greatly from the French one, which is based on an aristocratic lifestyle. It also became apparent in my research that class differences play a greater role in French society; social classes are a much looser concept in Italy where, for instance, 'social diversity is not signalled by the house itself, but possibly by a series of values added to it, which can change according to very subjective and changing assessments'.[19] The refined aesthetic model for interior decoration that all Italians aspire to, as I will further describe, coincides with the more generic category of the *casa agiata* or 'wealthy home', which has no clear class connotations; this difference with France leads indeed to a different spatial and aesthetic focus, especially in terms of domestic consumption and interior decoration.

It is worth noting that the blurring of class boundaries does not seem to be the outcome – like elsewhere across Western countries – of postmodern mass-consumption, nor of the levelling forces of globalisation, as both major social and economic changes happened after the (already concluded) process of normalisation of Italian society.[20] This does not mean that economic and wealth differences disappeared in the country – current data suggest that approximately 65% of the Italian population belongs to the middle class and 10% to the upper-middle class (usually associated with the CEOs of Italy's renowned small and medium-sized family-owned enterprises, the industrial backbone of the country).[21] It rather means than class distinctions are crucial for the definition of shared identities. Social distinction, as described by Bourdieu,[22] manifests itself through the presence of specific

rooms inside the home, spaces that symbolise the belonging to the middle class and the reproduction of the 'wealthy home' aesthetics in terms of interior decoration.

The adherence to the average, middle-class Italian ideal is also clarified by the relevance of food culture and food-related practices across Italian society. This distinctive element of Italian domestic (but also national) culture differs from the French case, where the aesthetic dimension of everyday life is emphasised. Food preparation and consumption is indeed a typically middle-class practice, rooted in the fictional narrative of peasant culture. Specifically, Italian cultural and culinary heritage finds its roots in the pre-modern folklore and fictitious traditions of post-unification Italy. This process of identifying a unitary culinary heritage – in what was considered a non-homogeneous cultural context – emphasises a purely worldly aspect and, thus, calls into question the distinctions between high and low culture in the formation of Italian national identity. Taste, here, is directly associated with the taste of food, which Bourdieu studied in detail in *Distinction*.[23] In his book he indeed attributed great importance to food as it represents the archetypal relationship to a cultural asset, clarifying that the 'style of meal that is offered is an indicator of the position occupied in the economic and cultural hierarchies'.[24] His 'taste for necessity' that qualifies the working class, however, coincides with the sober culinary and aesthetic taste of the Italian, Catholic middle class.

To summarise, both the reproduction of practices associated with food preparation and consumption (with peasant roots) and the presence of specific rooms in the home (which certify belonging to the middle class) play a central role in the definition of the heteropatriarchal middle-class family identity and domestic culture. These points summarise the core of this analysis, which focuses on the importance of the space of the *salotto* (a typically Italian living/dining room) for the consolidation of domestic cultures and interpersonal relations in the domestic sphere, along with the role that food plays in the unfolding of social and gender dynamics. The latter materialises in the kitchen; hence, Part II's spatial analysis concentrates on the relationship between *salotto* and the kitchen, as it encapsulates Italian cultural domesticity.

> The *salotto* and the kitchen functioned respectively as a limelight and backstage of the domestic space, highlighting the places of ordinary intimacy (for services, cleaning, rest, private sociality) and the places of celebrations of family history, as well as the symbols of the family's public identity.[25]

This sentence summarises the recurrence of the separate spheres model within the Italian apartment, which, like the French one, is divided into intimate and private spaces, hence, between the feminine and masculine parts of the home – with the representative side of the home remaining the prerogative of the female sphere of influence and care. Two distinctive material and spatial elements symbolise the dominance of the head of the family inside the Italian domestic interior: the wall that confines the woman in the kitchen and the *tavolo delle ricorrenze* (dining table for exceptional and recurring, special events). Both are central to this study as they uncover the tensions and power dynamics that unfold inside domestic interiors, along with the processes of negotiation and consolidation of female identity within the

repressive structures of both Italian society and dwelling spaces. It is worth noting that the symbolism of the wall that divides kitchen and living room is shared across various cultural contexts, however, the materialisation of enculturated practices and the mechanisms of women's oppression are particularly clear in the dwelling plans found in Italy, where the distribution of the spaces of the kitchen and *salotto* played a fundamental role in the post-war architectural debate. Historian Enrica Asquer indeed speaks of 'domestic modernity' when she discusses the negotiations of new subjectivities inside post-war housing in Italy, a process that was, however, slowed down by the 'persistence of granitic social and family roles' that caused interpersonal tensions that exploded with the May '68 revolts.[26] Just like the French counterpart, Italian women expressed themselves through the decoration of domestic interiors because it served 'to differentiate and tell their experience in the process of consolidation of middle classes'.[27] Hence, domestic consumption and interior decoration returns as an important moment of consolidation of feminine identities and domesticity.

As mentioned above, Bourdieu's theory uncovers the deep relationships between class formation and food preparation and consumption.[28] The analysis in his book *Distinction* is detached from the 'arrogance' of the 'cultural judgment' of the high bourgeoisie, thus, he breaks with previous classification through a simple gesture, that is to reconnect 'the elementary taste for the flavours of food' to the 'elaborated taste of the most refined objects'.[29] In fact, he combines an element of mundane life with artistic productions such as cinema, music and art, tracing a map of the tastes of the various social classes and focusing on the importance of the inheritance within the family nucleus as a fundamental cause of the reproduction of distinctions. As a matter of fact, he challenges the definition of the judgment criteria of any cultural product, usually considered to be of good taste by specific 'institutions of legitimization',[30] such as museums, universities, etc. The latter not only define the modes of consumption of culture, but also distinguish high culture from mass culture. Bourdieu's attitude can be compared to the one that is driving this research, whose purpose is to subvert the current judgement criteria of architectural and cultural value. Therefore, this research aims once again to ennoble worldly practices and related everyday objects that go beyond expert, bourgeois, or male values and judgments.

In specific, it is believed that the *ricorrenze* table is an explanatory case since it is the emblem of family unity in the Italian cultural context. Indeed, it incorporates rituals that are associated with certain types of dishes that, as Bourdieu explains, mark social and class identity. The type of food consumed also leads to what Delphy called 'differentiated consumption', which affects women directly.[31] They unconsciously place themselves in a position of inferiority and tend to eat the least desirable parts of a meal, favouring their husband and children in the distribution of food.[32] This simple behaviour highlights the importance that habitus plays on everyday life – including the preparation and consumption of food – and how this reinforces gender disparities. Once again, food plays a major role in the study of Italian domesticity and the construction of shared and individual identities. The following sections uncover the aforementioned mechanisms from the larger scale of national identity to the individual scale of everyday lived experiences inside post-war housing.

2.1. The Invention of a Culinary Tradition

Forty-six per cent of Italians today believe that food and traditional cuisine are the most representative aspects of national identity.[33] In fact, the so-called culinary cultural heritage shared throughout the Italian peninsula was invented in conjunction with the unification of the country. The first Italian prime minister, Massimo D'Azeglio, tellingly said 'Italy is done, now it's time to make the Italians.' In fact, the country, until then divided into a multitude of independent states, was for the first time forced to address the problem of the construction of a national identity. It was, therefore, decided to reinforce the idea of Italianness through the kitchen, through a unification of local differences.

> *The Science of Cooking* did more for the unification of Italy than *The Betrothed* ever did.[34]

The principles of this contradictory process are exemplified in a book. A former member of the Giovine Italia[35] as well as a wealthy man from central-northern Italy called Pellegrino Artusi decided to write the first recipe cooking manual for a unified Italy entitled *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well: Practical Manual for Families* in 1891 (fig. 2.1). From the first pages of the book it is clear that it is addressed to the emerging Italian bourgeois class, specifically wealthy women, who until then had delegated the preparation of meals and who were slowly beginning to take care of even the most mundane aspects of domestic life. Artusi wrote his book with the aim of unifying the multitude of Italian culinary identities in the national language. It became, with the support of its bourgeois readers, one of the best-selling books in the country and is still an essential part of every Italian kitchen. It is often given to brides as a wedding present and jealously guarded between the shelves of one's kitchen. When, today, Italians refer to traditional cooking of popular origin, the so-called 'grandma's cooking', they always refer to the recipes in Artusi's book.[36] Thanks to this publication, the founding myth of the common tradition of Italian culinary experiences was born. I speak of myth since Artusi, who claimed to reunite all dishes of the popular tradition, never toured throughout the country but only travelled to some areas of central and northern Italy (specifically Romagna, Emilia and Tuscany). Moreover, the peasant population of that time still lived in extreme poverty and rarely could afford the dishes that Artusi described. Although the dishes were very simple, many of the raw ingredients were simply not available to the overwhelming majority of the population, who, at most, consumed very little rations of them during holidays. Moreover, it was the writer himself who invented the rule of three main courses in Italian meals (as opposed to a single course common in the working and peasant population), in open contrast to the typically French buffet. As previously mentioned, Italian meals were characterised by parsimony and ethics. This culinary culture indeed reflected the main qualities of the Catholic middle class: simplicity and cost-effectiveness – which referred to an overall call for sobriety. And finally, it seems that the same Artusi helped to consolidate the stereotype of the Italians as *mangia-maccheroni* (macaroni-eaters), which developed around that same period (fig. 2.2).

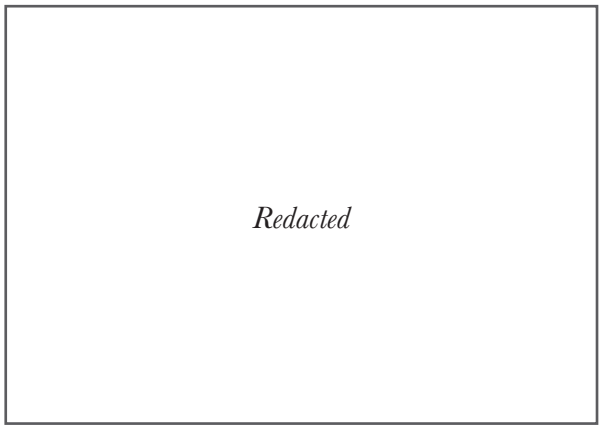


Fig. 2.1. Pellegrino Artusi, first pages of the book *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well: Practical Manual for Families,* 1st ed. (1891).

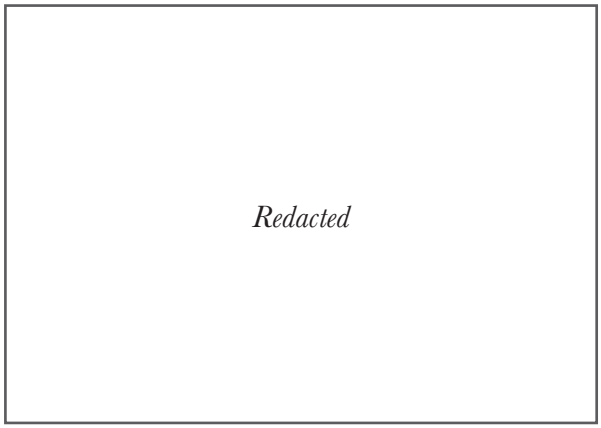


Fig. 2.2. Roger Viollet, Spaghetti eaters in Naples at the end of nineteenth century (1880 c.ca).

The goal of Artusi, regardless of his conduct, was to collect in a single volume a series of popular dishes that were simple and devoid of the pretentions that characterised, for example, French cooking. Aware of the supremacy of high-alpine cuisine, he simultaneously wanted to distinguish Italian cuisine from the French, and strengthen a national, cultural identity that was rooted in peasant and popular traditions.[37] Thus, the Italian taste had to be popular (or 'national-popular', to use a term that was so eloquently coined by Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci) or at least had to be rooted in a popular culture that could represent the majority of the country. It also had to be bourgeois, or representative of the social class that was leading Italy. In his political and pedagogical rather than simply literary project, he aspired to bring together the city and the countryside, popular culture and the elite to unify a country deeply divided through a common culinary culture. In short, Italian cuisine became a national language even before Italian:

> The cuisine that the old merchant, banker and landowner offers to the varied Italian bourgeoisie is not "refined" but "simple", "tasty and, at the same time, balanced", reasonably healthy, practical and thrifty, programmatically alien [...] from "waste, unusual splendour and extravagance". Modelled on the ethical, cultural and I would say genetic code of the class that most identifies, for better or worse, with the country and represents its greatest glue. Artusi's cuisine will quickly become the gastronomic paradigm of the Italietta [middle class Italy]. So much so that much of the twentieth-century home cooking, as well as the so-called "traditional" and "popular" cuisine, derives directly or indirectly from the Artusian bible, or is in varying degrees marked by it.[38]

French historian Pierre Nora, who studied in detail the processes of forming collective memories and fictional histories, argues that at the moment when history and memory unite with the idea of a nation, 'narrative' and 'invention'[39] are used to create fictional, collective memories that legitimise the political powers by inventing a national narrative of identity.[40] The instrumentality of memory, as illustrated by Nora, is key for understanding cultural dynamics associated with the preparation of food and the sharing of meals that take place in Italy. In fact, just like historiography, the process of selective memory affects narratives of identity (both shared and individual) that play a fundamental role in the definition of culture. 'Memory is not necessarily authentic, but rather useful',[41] and because of its unreliable nature memory implies not only forgetting (which is a selection that eliminates pure objectivity from the narrative) but also something that can be manipulated and totally distorted, in what Nora calls the 'invention of tradition', a practice commonly used by rulers for the ruled in order to create bonds between different people.[42] Nora's theory applies to the formation of an Italian culinary identity: the need to legitimise a nascent nation found its solution in the invention of a narrative that established fictional collective memories that became assimilated with daily life, influencing not only rituals and family structures, but also the type of food eaten. Indeed, the mundane act of sharing meals is still loaded with political, symbolic, gendered and cultural meanings. They can all be reconducted to the process of legitimising a unified cultural identity that encompasses Italian cuisine in terms of recipes, timing, portions and actions. As we will see later in this text, this fictitious

narrative still creates tension within Italian domestic interiors.

Gramsci was the first scholar to outline the boundaries of Italian national culture. He identified that Italy's cultural identity and historical anchorage is rooted in pre-modern peasant and bourgeois culture; both are associated with what he calls 'traditional folklore'.[43] This is true even of the great intellectuals and representatives of good taste and culture. By acknowledging this, he somewhat elevates low culture and, hence, folklore, to a mass aesthetic culture. Gramsci's point is particularly relevant to this research, because the distinction between high and low culture is blurred in the Italian cultural context. Both cultural domesticity and Gramsci's critical theory are aimed at reconsidering the value of non-institutional and, hence, overlooked manifestations of culture. In the case of this research these usually coincide with women's domestic cultures, which may lead to confusion. If Italian cultural identity is based on peasant, mid- and low-brow culture, what precisely characterises feminine culture? In what ways does it differ from the fictitious, masculine narrative? Part II will tackle these points, but the answers won't be clear-cut. Indeed, Italian feminine cultures are based on a nuanced reinterpretation of traditional, official codes with clear spatial implications.

Furthermore, Gramsci distinguished between 'organic folklore' and 'traditional folklore',[44] and he deemd the latter 'fossilised', that is, reactionary, devoid of criticality, and not projected towards the future and change – which characterise, instead, 'modern folklore'.[45] Traditional folklore, indeed, seems to perfectly summarise the conditions of Italian dwellings: they are composed of the residue of high culture deposited on the ground of popular culture, that reflect the past and are, therefore, mainly passively received. In this regard, Bourdieu adds that the choices of furniture and meals are purely conditioned by the aesthetic canons imposed by a dominant social class, and distinguished by good taste. Thus, traditional folklore seems to coincide with the cultural residues that have sedimented inside domestic interiors, along with the passive acceptance of the aesthetic canons of the wealthier classes. Not by chance are today's domestic interiors often a mix of traditional symbols and new aesthetic and spatial solutions.[46]

Artusi's combination of high and low culture affirms the points raised by Gramsci. Indeed, food culture is part and parcel of Italy's national cultural identity and is now assimilated by Italians. This leads to the notion of folklore and pre-modern culture as an example of this mixture of high and low culture, between material and immaterial culture handed down by local people and unified under the umbrella of Italian food. The invention of Italian culinary tradition, as defined by Nora, was rooted in fictional collective memories instilled by wealthy classes, aimed at unifying a fragmented country through the mundane vehicle of food. The latter reinforces family unity and social bonds as much as it reaffirms class distinctions; it also characterises everyday life, the organisation of time and the arrangement of dwelling spaces. This mean that the political project of Artusi has not only been successful, but also became an integral part of Italians' everyday lives. In fact, the Italian meal is nothing but a fossilisation of residues of high culture in the popular and middle-class context: it fictitiously emerged from below but in reality consolidated in the

wealthiest classes. It is neither progressive nor does it provide fluidity and change; on the contrary, it reinforces social structures that are now half a century old. Therefore, although this heritage is attributed to popular folklore, it is nothing but the utmost expression of 'traditional folklore' arising from traditional intellectualism that still defines the criteria to judge the value of material or immaterial manifestations of culture.

Ernesto de Martino, the renowned Italian philosopher who based most of his reflections on ethnographic enquiries conducted in Italy, introduced the important concept of *appaesamento* (which can be read as 'familiarisation' or 'adaptation').[47] His reflections are instrumental for understanding the cultural dynamics that unfold within Italian domestic interiors. The attachment to objects and spaces can be reconducted to his notion of 'presence', the process of constructing meaning in the world that manifests itself in the relationship with things and people who share a common horizon of meaning in a specific cultural context. It is marked by psychological and existential boundaries based on a narration that is sometimes inscribed in memories or in a familiar environment that makes it possible to define one's identity. This process consists of the construction of a known, obvious domestic reality that prevents one's sense of loss in the world. This existential activity, linked to *appaesamento*, is deeply rooted in the individual, and is one of the reasons why the processes of construction of meaning through the appropriation of domestic spaces can be basically considered an ontological act. Concerning this point, cultural anthropologist Carla Pasquinelli argues that 'furnishing a home is the act by which we spatialise ourselves in the world and we inhabit it, becoming ignorant protagonists of a sort of domestic ontology that can give or remove order and meaning to our lives.'[48] It is, therefore, possible to say that the process of attributing meaning to things and spaces is a fundamental need. The security of a predefined cultural horizon puts individuals at ease, as if they were inside their home. The ontological need for *appaesamento*, therefore, leads to security of belonging to a certain cultural context or social group. The adherence to socio-cultural conventions dictates, for instance, how food is to be consumed and prepared, so *appaesamento* ultimately seems to be as necessary as food itself.

The arrangement of domestic objects, as already discussed, takes on a symbolic dimension as it is based on the image that people intend to give of themselves to the outside world, often coinciding with class conventions.[49] Each of them refers to a certain ideal, which is almost always different from reality. In this specific context, the ideal of the reunited Italian family is, for instance, associated with the dining table and the sharing of meals inside the kitchen (fig. 2.3).[50] A couple interviewed during fieldwork conducted in Rome in 2019 explained very clearly what has been described so far. For instance, they eat

> for breakfast jam and rusks, vegetable milk, then in the morning a fruit. At lunch we eat pasta with a side dish, later a snack with yogurt and fruit and then we have a full dinner in the evening. The classic Italian culinary tradition has remained for family celebrations, we care a lot about it […] The meal is a moment of family gathering [...] At dinner there is the meeting around the table, [we ask] what did you do? The television should be turned off, it's time for a family reunion.[51]

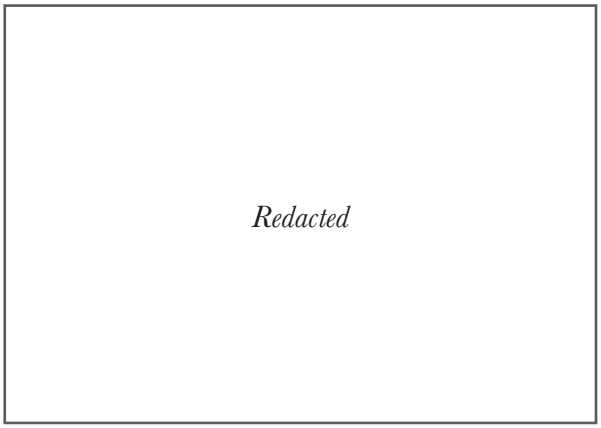


Fig. 2.3. Still frame of the movie *A Special Day* by Ettore Scola (1977).

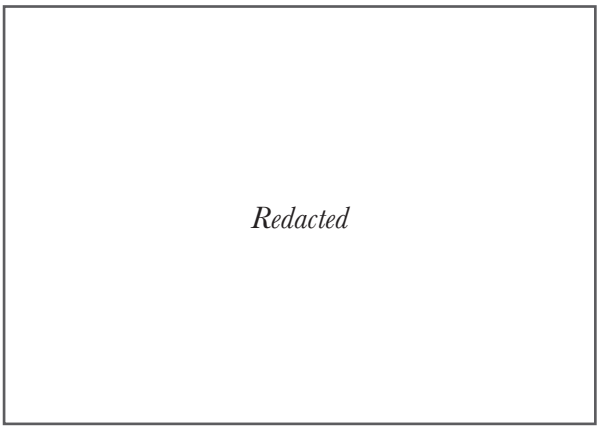


Fig. 2.5. Gabriella Mercadini, Women's protests in 1960s Italy. Banner states: 'We break our backs with work, but we are still unemployed' (1976).

Meals, just as in the past, not only mark important moments in the life of a family, during the day, the weekdays and religious festivities, but also represent a certain social status that carries traditional meanings and values. This tenacity in preserving this ritual, as explained by sociologist Jean Claude Kaufmann, is a way to bring the group together and preserve the family image.[52] In fact, it is part of the intergenerational transmission of behaviour and part of a deep social memory – of habitus. This social memory is the outcome of a long process of assimilation by the citizens of crafted memories and social norms that are essential for the legitimisation and consolidation of both the family and cultural identity. Food, indeed, reinforces the idea of the family and the perpetuation of traditional values established by strategic narratives. The symbolic value of meals leads to the affirmation and reinforcement of bonds and precise hierarchical relationships within the social and family group. This includes the role of the woman, who is still relegated to the kitchen for the preparation of meals.[53] It is, indeed, worth noting that this is a particularly sensitive topic in feminist theory:

> the home can be identified as a significant sphere of the construction of gender difference, in other words, that it is instrumental in teaching women the ideal of femininity which places them in the home as their "natural" habitat, rather than in the outside world of paid labour. This, […] does explain how gender-specific some types of activity become.[54]

Cooking is precisely one of these activities that, along with homemaking, housework and 'emotional labour' – Cox and Federici term it – contribute to the enslavement of women in their stereotyped roles, gendered spaces and activities.[55] Patriarchy is, according to them, supported by capitalism and the welfare state; indeed, 'day care and nurseries have never liberated any time for ourselves, but only time for additional work', preventing women with an extra-domestic job (those that experience the challenges of Balbo's double presence) to find the time for personal development and their struggle against patriarchy and capitalism (fig. 2.5).[56]

As aforementioned, Christine Delphy associates unpaid housework or, as she calls it, 'the domestic mode of production', with women's economic maintenance, a subtle economic mechanism of control and coercion by the patriarchy. Economic dependence is, for feminists, one of the main mechanisms of dominance and control – even French women were affected by it. Donzelot, for instance, connects this economic dependence to the dowry, which was unaffordable for working-class women: 'it could not be a sum of money, as they were too numerous; so it would have to be their labour, their domestic labour, requalified, given added value, raised to the level of trade […] it would allow a social expense to be replaced by an additional quantity of unpaid labour',[57] hence Delphy's theory. She adds that since they are economically dependent on their husbands, housewives have a particular approach to consumption. Her theory seems to bridge previous theories of consumption to feminist theory by arguing that consumption is connected to production (women's domestic mode of production, or domestic labour), which leads to an 'unequal sharing of goods' that is 'not [physically] mediated by money' – although their control sanctions women's

subjugation – but by interpersonal, hierarchical relations within the patriarchal family structure.[58] She goes on to say that maintenance differs from wage precisely because it does not have a monetary counterpart, creating distinctions between 'self-selected' and 'non-free consumption', which do not depend on the value of the consumed goods. This has an impact on women's consumption patterns and can even lead to deprivation, and hence to women's subordination. This mechanism of 'differentiated consumption' not only has an impact on women's daily lives, it also contributes – in line with Bourdieu's theory – to the expression of status difference.[59] Interestingly, she analyses the different standards of living that manifest themselves within the same family group as a consequence of differentiated household consumption, which includes food preparation and, obviously, its consumption: being the former a service of care and work usually provided by women.[60]

Delphy's theory is of particular interest to this analysis, as differentiated consumption plays an important role in interior occupation and food culture in Italy. The Italian apartment becomes, therefore, the site of gender struggle but also cultural expression, as the relationship between its inhabitants, food, objects and the architectural space directly impacted the design and occupation of dwellings, along with the formation of personal and collective identities within Italian households.

Ubi Domus Ibi Familia[61]

In order to understand the unfolding of the dynamics discussed above, along with the 'ancient tradition'[62] of sharing meals in Italy, it is necessary to unpack the social context in which this practice was reproduced. Specifically, the subject of analysis is the family, whose definition changed radically from the Renaissance onwards, up to the consolidation of the conservative, Catholic, middle-class, heteropatriarchal family at the centre of this study. The latter is the outcome of a long process of national and social unification that took place in Italy from the nineteenth century onwards, which partially explains its persistence through time:

> the attempt to unify the prevailing family models is presented in this context – due to the limits of hegemony of the dominant elites – as a project of ideological pressure aimed at imposing a model that is in fact foreign to Italian society. And it is precisely in the progressive accentuation of the role of the state in this process that the origin of a petty-bourgeois character of the intimate conjugal family must be sought.[63]

Italian historian Marzio Barbagli provides a comprehensive overview of the different types of families, along with the development of the Italian family over the centuries, in his book *Under the Same Roof* (1984).[64] In order to provide a definition of family, he distinguishes between 'family structures' corresponding to 'a group of people living together under one roof, the breadth and composition of this aggregate of correspondents, the rules with which it is formed, transformed and divided', 'family relationships' comprising 'the relationships of authority and affection existing within this group of co-residents, the ways in which they

interact and are treated, the emotions and feelings they feel for each other' and 'kinship relationships' or 'the relationships existing between separate groups of co-relatives who have ties of kinship, the frequency with which they are seen, help each other, elaborate and pursue common strategies to increase or conserve their economic resources, their power, their prestige'.[65] All these aspects that contribute to the definition of the family are very important, and the balancing of one or more of them has characterised the differentiation of family conceptions over the centuries.[66] Worthy of note is the fact that the timing and modalities of change were different for each social class. Just like the families of other Western countries, the Italian family changed into a 'modern family' (for each social class) in the period between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The most substantial change occurred from the old traditional patriarchal family to the so-called 'intimate conjugal' family. The latter was defined by Barbagli as 'a type of family that, whatever the structure, is characterised by a flexible arrangement of roles'; unlike the patriarchal family, it is 'less related to sex and age and in which the relations of authority are more symmetrical'.[67] The intimate conjugal family model emerged with the modernisation of Western countries and later extended to parts of Italian society, which unfortunately still struggles to modernise, as it has historically been characterised by a conservative Catholic thrust that has allowed the perpetuation of hierarchical and patriarchal family models. These dynamics will be ultimately central for the understanding of contemporary domesticity in Italy.

The history of the Italian family explained by Barbagli provides an overall picture of the Italian condition. Interestingly, he clarifies that the appearance of the nuclear family in Italy took place long before the appearance of the intimate family. Indeed, it manifested itself in the urban context as early as the fifteenth century, when many nuclear families (purely artisans) lived in Italian cities, all following a 'neolocal' model – meaning that young couples moved into a house different from that of their parents. The poorer classes, instead, lived in families without structure or alone, whilst the aristocratic classes followed a model of 'patrilocal' residence (that is, the new conjugal unit moved in the house of the husband's parents) made up of multiple families. In the countryside, families had a more complex structure. In terms of family relationships, the patrilocal model of the countryside was associated with the authoritarian figure of the head of the family, who had decision-making power over his children and their respective families. The transmission of property and changing affective models ran in parallel. Patrimonial transmission also played a historically important role in the subordination of women. According to Delphy, in fact, the transmission of goods through patrimony was regulated by the rules of inheritance that, in a patriarchal system, exclude women. Indeed 'domestic circulation (the rules of inheritance and succession) here flows directly into patriarchal relations of production', as patrimony reproduces the capitalist patriarchal system across generations.[68] Women were, therefore, dispossessed of their economic means, which, along with domestic labour, contributed to women's exploitation and oppression.

It is worth noting that Italy remained a rural country for a long time; modernisation started later than in other European countries and at the time of its unification the majority of

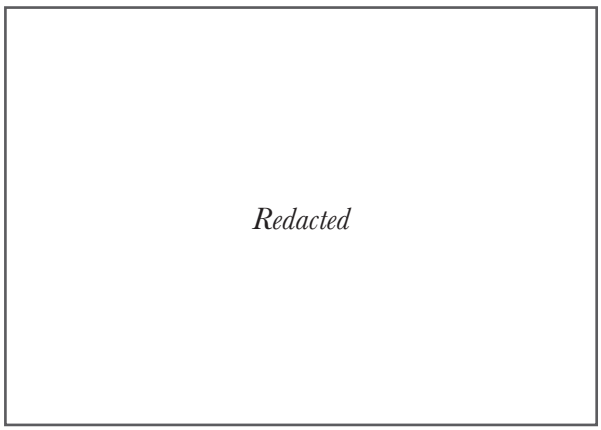


Fig. 2.6. Francesco Martinelli, plan of a rural residence, ground floor (above) and first floor (below), Apulia (1800 c.ca).
cam.: Bedroom; mag.: Storage; stalla: Stable; cuc.: Kitchen; pass.: Corridor; poll.: Hen-house; corte: Courtyard; tett.: Ceiling

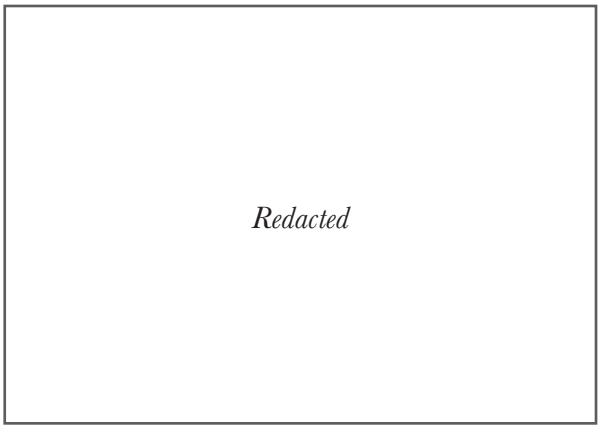


Fig. 2.7. Francesco Martinelli, typical plan of a rural dwelling in central Italy, (1800 c.ca).
ga.: Hen-house; a.: entrance; S.: stable; ca.: cellar; Sm.: Storage; l.: bedroom; m.: storage; C.: kitchen

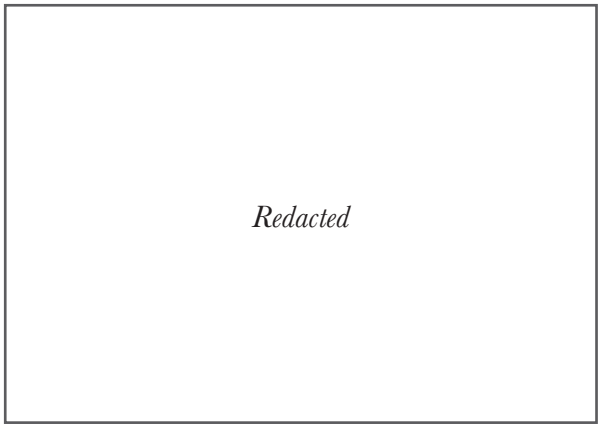


Fig. 2.8. Photograph of a nuclear, middle class Italian family. The head of the family, in the middle of the picture, is very formal and well dressed (1880 c.ca).

the population still lived in the countryside. The rural residential type was slightly different throughout Italy, depending on the system of production and power structure that pertained to farmers and their superiors. Although I will not explain the types of rural organisations and rural family structures, it is important to note how the single-family farm model impacted the design of working- and middle-class dwellings – including domestic practices related to food preparation and consumption (figs. 2.6 and 2.7). As one can imagine, the majority of daily activities were located on the ground floor, comprised of spaces devoted to the care of animals, storage and sometimes even the kitchen (fig. 2.6). The first floor hosted the bedrooms (sometimes these were just single rooms with multiple beds) and, in other cases, the large kitchen was located on the first floor and functioned as space for socialisation (fig. 2.7). The distribution of the dwelling in figure 2.7 seems to foreshadow the distribution of post-war typologies in figures 2.35 and 2.46. Instead of referring to high-bourgeois or aristocratic models, as in the French case, the Italian apartment seems to echo the distribution of rural types, which might be due to social and cultural factors that will be further explored in the following.

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, a gradual decrease in urbanisation rates occurred in Italy. Following the First Industrial Revolution, an inversion of this trend took place, leading to an increase of nuclear families in all social classes and contexts. This period also marks the transition from the architectural typology of the Italian urban palace with private rooms and a succession of representative rooms, up to the beginning of the assignment of a specific function to each room developing at the end of the eighteenth century. The apartment type was born later, and prevailed throughout the twentieth century.[69] Furthermore, Italians that lived in cities married not only at a later age, but thanks to the neolocal system, they could establish a nuclear family relatively disconnected from their family of origin. It is assumed that the middle-class urban, nuclear families (mainly artisans) occupied the dwellings of the historical urban centres, modifying the medieval structures of historic dwellings. At this point, it cannot be said that there was an urban housing typology associated with the middle class, at least not until the early twentieth century, when the massive internal migration to cities created a new housing problem.

Regardless of the various housing typologies, the model of patriarchal authority dominated across both urban and rural family systems. Power was concentrated in the hands of the male head of the family, to whom were subordinated wife, children and other family members. This led to a rigid separation of roles and work within the home, and children were subdued and raised with the awareness of being inferior. There was, therefore, no exchange of affection between parents and their children. In the photograph above (fig. 2.8), it is easily understandable the role that the head of the family plays in the overall family dynamics. The atmosphere of the photograph is formal; the father is the guarantor of family's order and conduct.

This affective model persisted for a long time, especially in the middle class, and specifically those born right after the Second World War, who now own and inhabit the post-war housing projects that are at the centre of this analysis. The traditional family was the norm until

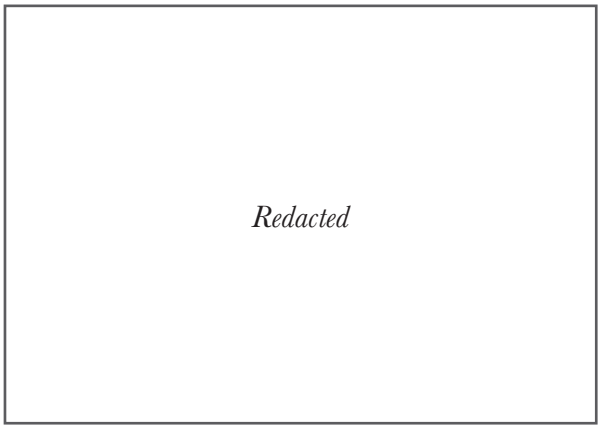


Fig. 2.9. Martina Moscarelli, ICP Testaccio, Rome (2014).

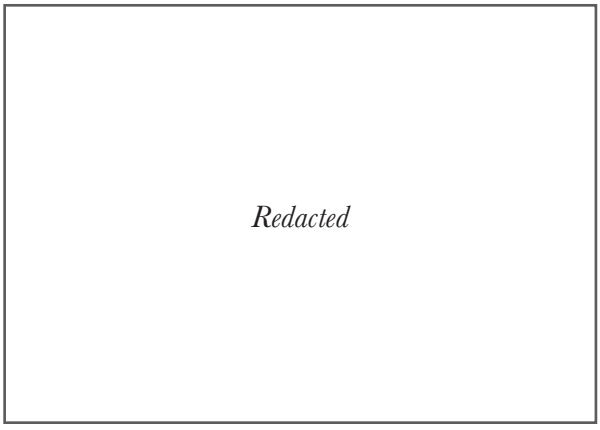


Fig. 2.10. Quadrio Pirani and Giovanni Bellucci, masterplan, ICP Testaccio, Rome (1911-1917).

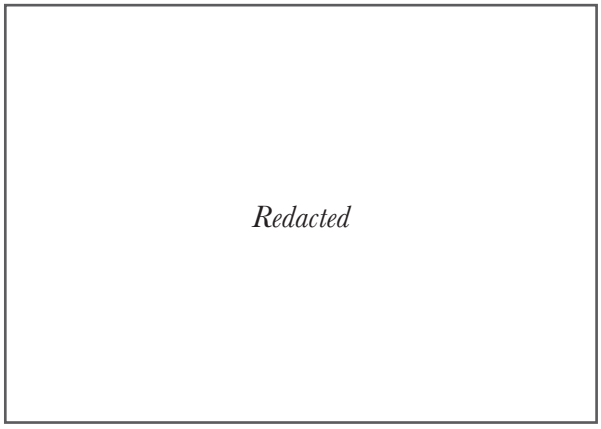


Fig. 2.11. Quadrio Pirani and Giovanni Bellucci, first floor plan of the building in Via Rubattino, ICP Testaccio, Rome (1911-1917).

the 1950s, it was 'pervaded by Christian morality' and had the following characteristics: '1) sexual relations permitted only between spouses; 2) marriage was considered a union for life. To these we add: the asymmetry of the two sexes regarding family roles; the child-oriented attitude of the couple due to the value attributed to children; a strong kinship bond'.[70] Both Barbagli and Melograni mention the gradual emergence of the 'intimate conjugal family' in the 1970s, a decidedly less hierarchical model. However, the same Melograni admits that despite the emergence of this new family type, in Italy it 'resists the model of the past, a hierarchical conception of the family, there is a persistent asymmetry in the relationships between spouses and between adults and children, female subordination also remains.'[71] Hence the asymmetric family model persists across all strata of Italian society still today, impacting contemporary domesticity and feminine cultures.[72]

Urban Models

With the capital moving to Rome at the end of the nineteenth century, the city had to expand to the north, where numerous new neighbourhoods were built to accommodate citizens who had recently migrated there. In 1903, the *Istituto Case Popolari* or ICP (the Institute for popular housing) was created to provide 'homes and housing for employees'. An example is the ICP Testaccio (figs. 2.9-2.11), where the distribution system is representative of housing blocks for white-collar families of that era. The accommodation consisted of numerous rooms; one of these, usually the largest, was divided into a bathroom and kitchen. The kitchen was often very large and served also as a dining and living room, since the other rooms – all very large and deep and, therefore, quite dark – were used as bedrooms. The subdivision of the spaces is regular, and the distribution takes place through a small corridor, which could be easily converted in a room. This type of distribution is very reminiscent of the raised floors of rural housing because the rooms, all of equal size, are occupied based on necessity (fig. 2.6). While the architectural layout is reminiscent of the patrilocal, patriarchal, rural model, the interior became the arena for the expression of middle-class identity that would gradually become the model and backbone of Italian society. The 'bourgeois and petty-bourgeois homes […] aimed at maintaining the decorum through the conservation of the emblems of the civilian family, the living room, the tub for the bathroom, the period furniture', and like the French counterpart, it slowly consolidated 'a type of house that was as coveted as it is despised by the rationalisers of the dwelling, who saw it as the permanence of an old-fashioned domestic model.'[73]

The *palazzina* residential typology is characteristic of the Italian context, since it is halfway between an urban *palazzo* and post-war Modernist housing. As the middle class grew across the country, new solutions were proposed, and the *palazzina* emerged as the building type of the Italian middle class par excellence. The residential typology was born with the Royal Decree 'R.D. n. 1937 of December 16, 1920', which permitted increasing the surface of the areas devoted to small villas as defined in town-planning schemes. With the 1931 masterplan of Rome, the *palazzina* was institutionalised and its main characteristics defined. For instance, a maximum height of 19 meters and an obligation to design all the elevations. In short, the *palazzina* is a small building unit that lends itself to formal experimentation and

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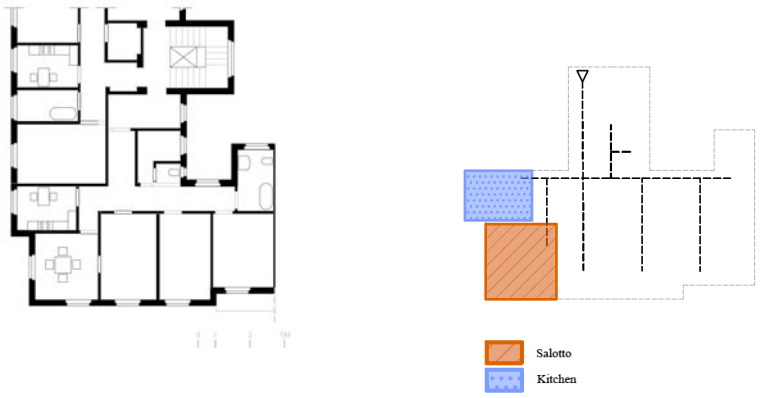

Fig. 2.12 (a, b). Ludovico Quaroni and Giuseppe Francisi, Palazzina Corso Trieste 142 and 146, Rome (1937). Original drawing and diagram of one apartment.

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Fig. 2.13. Palazzina Corso Trieste 142 and 146, Rome (1937).

is now present in large numbers in all Italian cities. Furthermore,

> a widespread interclassism and a generic drive for uniformity have made the attribution of the "bourgeois" qualification to the architectural characteristics and typologies of a house risky. However, the sections of the bourgeois city built in the past evidently keep their message: those created by the Umbertine bourgeoisie, such as those of state officials or large industries of the thirties and forties [ICP models], or the districts composed of post-war *"palazzine"* let one grasp the taste of a society that had made the *facies* its greatest sign of distinction.[74]

A typical example of *palazzina* is the Ludovico Quaroni's project at Corso Trieste in Rome, built in 1937 (figs. 2.12, 2.13). In Quaroni's plans, the distribution between kitchen-bathroom and other rooms is clear; figure 2.12 shows where the living room and kitchen are located. In addition, a series of rooms of more or less the same size are placed side-by-side and facing outwards. The basic organisation of the plan is undoubtedly similar to the large ICP complexes, with the exception of the living-dining space, which is here indicated by a dining table. The presence of a living-dining space is exemplificatory of the increasing wealth of Italian families, thanks, above all, to the economic boom or 'miracle' from the 1960s to the 1980s that followed the war. What catches the eye, however, is a small dining table is indicated in each kitchen, distinguishing the six dwellings found on each floor (fig. 2.12). The dining tables, as shown here and in figures 2.3, 2.26, 2.34, 2.39, 2.50, 2.51, 2.54 and 2.55 represent the cultural and intimate heart of Italian middle-class homes.

> The famous "Roman *palazzina*" by Moretti, Passarelli, Gorio, Aymonino – along with the very banal ones designed by many anonymous designers – attacked the city, also creating evident imbalances. Built in central or intermediate areas, the bourgeois *palazzina* has accompanied everywhere, indifferently, the disorder of the growth of the contemporary city. Given that the so-called "good neighbourhoods" were saturated beyond belief, the bourgeois house followed the urban expansion; it found itself in increasingly peripheral areas coexisting with mass housing, from which it no longer differs even in terms of recognizable architectural language.[75]

The ICP blocks and the *palazzine* are some of the housing typologies that housed the emerging middle class in Italy. Most conventional Modernist towers and slabs were also implemented across Italy. In fact, with the end of the Second World War the need for rapid reconstruction was shared between Italy and other European nations who were devastated by bomb damage and, subsequently, lacked housing. The Fanfani Law started the Italian post-war reconstruction, and the INA-casa institute took care of preparing dossiers that suggested the types of housing to be built, leading to a standardisation of life. It also is worth noting that

> the aspiration to modernity, a commonplace of the period, meets with two powerful mediators, the state and the market. The new datum of these years is represented by the centralisation and nationalisation of the "modern" dwelling model, whose

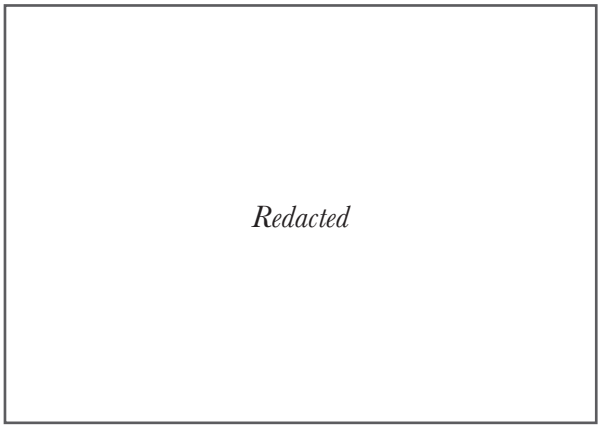


Fig. 2.14. Plan, INA-casa housing in Corso Grosseto, Torino (1953).

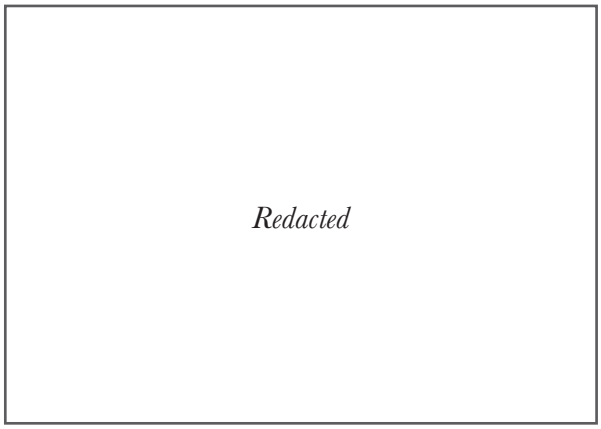


Fig. 2.15. INA-casa housing in Corso Grosseto, Tourin (1953).

Fig. 2.16. Green areas, Towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.17. Internal courtyard, Palazzi Federici, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.18. Details of a *salotto*, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

> construction and furnishings are invested by technicians and professionals, screened through national competitions and public tenders or by an increasingly vast and uniform market.[76]

As in the case of French post-war reconstruction, several engineers and technocrats were employed for the construction of new, Italian residential buildings. Just like their colleagues in Fance, they ended up perpetuating traditional models.[77] It is shown here an example of a popular housing complex INA-casa in Turin (figs. 2.14, 2.15). The coupled 'lunch-kitchen' space remains dominant in the internal distribution, there is no living area or living room, but the word to describe the space is just '*pranzo*', which literally means 'lunch' in Italian. Interestingly enough, that room is characterised by the specific action (eating) that is meant to be performed inside.[78]

Like the French *grands ensembles*, by virtue of their standardised features, these buildings and their apartments also facilitate the reproduction of the domestic practices and spatial cultures. The latter have influenced not only the inhabitants, but also the architects that designed them. Indeed, both have more or less consciously adapted canons and lifestyles that reflect wider projects of social homologation and the reinforcement of the gender inequalities embedded in the heteropatriarchal family model. Interviews and photographs taken in these interiors in 2019 support this analysis, illustrating the common traits and differences between the layout, furniture and use of domestic spaces of post-war estates by the middle class. The very rich interiors (fig. 2.18), inextricably linked to preconceived values and lifestyles, contrast with unadorned exteriors, which, in their simplicity, become bearers of the new messages of modernist architecture (figs. 2.16, 2.17). This contrast exemplifies the evident detachment between architects and inhabitants, which is even more apparent in a fundamentally reactionary cultural context in which modernity, however imposed (during Fascism) or advertised (through the media in the post-war period), was never fully assimilated.

2.2. The Middle-Class Family

> Not always, indeed almost never, are we the ones who lead the game. To decide are those invisible rules, those codes and the encrypted language that the space owes most of its symbolic effectiveness in automatically and unconsciously guiding our behaviour.[79]

The *salotto buono* is a central space in Italian middle-class homes. It eludes any distinction or categorisation generally associated with domestic living spaces – it is not fully an English living room and much less a French salon. While remaining a representative space, the *salotto* also includes the dining room, the purest expression of Italian national and domestic culture in which food and the rituals associated with it are central. The *salotto* is, consequently, a unique space from a cultural and architectural point of view, but is also a synecdochic space in relation to Italian society and culture. It is important to notice that the history of the Italian *salotto* has a beginning and an end, a moment of spatial evolution that coincides

with a social involution, and it is the setting in which contemporary Italian domesticity plays out. This regressive path unfolds on two different scales: the micro-scale of objects and individuals, and a larger one characterised by the process of defining a national identity in a country as young and conservative as Italy. The history of the *salotto* has, therefore, led to political implications with direct repercussions on the creation and definition of individual, gender and class identities. The latter manifested in the multiple ways in which the domestic space was used, altered and furnished.

Imitation

The hybrid space of the *salotto* was born as a purely representational room, rarely used even by the middle-class inhabitants who, instead, preferred eating and gathering in the kitchen. The area is heavily decorated and includes the formal dining room, which is used – like the rest of the *salotto* – only on special occasions. The design of this space is the result of a series of adjustments that refer to the model of the *casa agiata* in an effort to capture its inhabitants' social aspirations and distinguish them from the working class, as previous distributional models for the middle class were based on the rural dwelling type (fig. 2.7).[80] The construction of middle-class identity went hand in hand with the introduction and evolution of the space of the *salotto*, which became a cornerstone of middle-class domesticity. The kitchen and *salotto,* then, embody the two sides of middle-class identity: the kitchen symbolises the spatial roots of the rural dwelling as the central space of socialisation and intimacy but also Italian culinary culture, while the *salotto* represents middle-class aspirations and its gradual affirmation as the dominant class. Both rooms also symbolise the most regressive aspects of Italian patriarchal culture, as their use and decoration are feminine prerogatives.

> The only civilian house that was known in Italy was the '*casa agiata*'; and of that wealthy house every family aimed to have at least one icon, a domestic representation […]. In Italy the model of the wealthy house won in every social class, and if this model could not be achieved in the envelope, where the bargaining power of the inhabitant family is decidedly less, it could be pursued inside, where the staging was almost within the reach of every family and everyone was guaranteed the opportunity to exhibit at least a few tranches of the wealthy house.[81]

The space devoted to the exhibition of these icons is, according to Casciato, precisely the *salotto*. Hence, the housing model associated with this space as well as the symbolism of the objects inside it are imitated and emulated by lower and middle classes, in a process of constructing a class identity that is divided between aspirations for social ascent and conformism to models imposed by the state.[82] This double inclination is inherent in the mechanisms of imitation explained by the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde, who places them both at the centre of social and family life.[83] In his book on *The Laws of Imitation* (1903), he not only explains how imitation is a natural mechanism in societies of all kinds, since it allows for a system of similarities and analogies that strengthen interpersonal and social bonds, but also explains that the desire to imitate is hereditary. In fact, it is associated with mechanisms of transmission between the beliefs of one person and another (generally between parent and child), knowledge and desires, which subsequently favour the imitation and reproduction of customs, manners and rituals. Class identity (but also

national identity) is consolidated precisely through these processes. Imitation is 'a practical reactivation that is opposed to both memory and knowledge – tend to take place below the level of consciousness' and is literally an 'enactment of the past' or embodied (personal and collective) history that connects an individual to their cultural roots, thus, imitation is a 'conscious effort to reproduce a gesture, an utterance of an object explicitly constituted as a model'.[84] Tarde recognises the values of these processes and connects imitation both to the need for conventionality in men and to the materialisation of this need in architecture and domestic interiors. In fact, he writes: 'architecture requires its followers to become more and more servile in the repetition of the consecrated types that are for the time being in favor'.[85] Therefore, thanks to its cyclical nature, predetermination and ubiquity, imitation creates the conditions for success of standardised dwellings – those that respect a certain distributive criteria for the purposes of the reproduction of shared practices – which become attractive to a certain social class, whose daily life is conditioned by the mechanisms of imitation.

As mentioned above, imitation more often relates to the tastes and manners of the upper social classes, so 'when one person copies another, when one class begins to pattern its dress, furniture and its amusements after those of another, it means that it has already borrowed from the latter'.[86] These mechanisms, previously encountered in the French context, are similar across Western countries and are instrumental for the consolidation of class identities. Tarde's observations take on an even more relevant dimension when the imitated social model is that of the class in power, and since imitation is nothing more than a 'passive adherence to the idea of another', it is possible to affirm that imitation is a powerful instrument of discipline and control.[87] This is exemplified by the use and decoration of the *salotto*. The latter, indeed, encompasses this struggle between passive imitation and the creation of a collective identity, which condemned the Italian middle class to be branded as conformist, conservative and closed within their private and family sphere. To sum up, the process of homologation and standardisation that unfolded throughout the twentieth century makes the middle class the object of a mass disciplinary and cultural operation that conditioned lifestyles and domestic practices, finding its concrete manifestation in post-war housing estates.

> The conquest of the *salotto*, this superfluous space because it is extraneous to the use and custom of most, will symbolize the social redemption and will mark, like nothing else, the access of the family into the reassuring anonymity of the middle class. The *salotto*, whose diffusion is destined to gradually expand, with the uniformity of ever wider layers of the population to an average and urban life model, will become a recurring topos in treatises on domestic life.[88]

The middle-class family was the social actor most prone to own and preserve the space of the *salotto*. As aforementioned, this social class was, and still is, 'a cornerstone of the country's stability and a model of citizenship for other classes'; its status was consolidated through the 'conquest of the *salotto*' and the ownership of a house.[89] More than the language or the subsequent development of mass media, it was the mobility on a national scale of the white-collars belonging to the middle class – inextricably linked to the state, as it belonged

to its bureaucratic apparatus – that brought to completion the ideological project of the standardisation of the family and housing models of the unitary state.[90] In fact,

> the typical middle-class Catholic family embodies an ideal type imposed from above; a relationship governed by a serious and severe father; a mother entirely devoted to the care of the home and family; strictly hierarchical domestic relationships; a thrifty but decent menage are the criteria of a family model that must support from below what the state was trying to strengthen from above.[91]

This segment of Italian society was, therefore, the easiest target of this bio-political project, as the state managed to insert itself into the process of construction shared and personal identities. For example, historian Giovanni Montroni suggests that by providing free access to school, it created an unfavourable context for autonomous cultural production.[92] Consequently, these processes stimulated a propensity to imitate and adopt behavioural standards and adhere to imposed norms. The nuclear family emerged as a social and cultural construction, with Bourdieu – surprisingly, in line with feminist theory – understanding 'the family as a fiction and a social artefact, a well-founded illusion because it is produced and reproduced with the guarantee of the state and operates as a central site for normalization and naturalization.'[93] Yet feminists point out that

> this illusory identification does not save Bourdieu from normalising his own conception of the family by defining it the universal norm […]. He argues that the family functions as a field in which normalcy or the ability to constitute oneself as the universal and the capital. This enables normalcy to be both a kind of capital within the field of the family and a form of symbolic capital that represents accumulated privilege in other fields.[94]

Therefore, the reasons behind the strength of the middle-class family lies precisely in its normalcy, seen as a form of symbolic capital and, consequently, social status.

The Nationalisation of Customs

Historians Mariuccia Salvati and Enrica Asquer carefully describe the process of the nationalisation of middle-class customs that began in Italy under the pressure of Fascist propaganda and culminated in the material and cultural mass homologation of the economic boom. The nuclear family was the target of these processes,[95] as it was the core of the ordered Italian Catholic society[96] and was characterised by hierarchical roles, the subjugation of women and parsimony (figs. 2.12, 2.20). [97] As mentioned above, this family model is still valid and has endured over time, as it has been able to adapt to social changes in the last century.[98] Indeed,

> according to a tried and tested strategy, the family has managed to assimilate old qualities (adaptation, arbitrage, combinatorial dimension, etc.), as it did not consider them ancient and obsolete components of the collective culture, but it

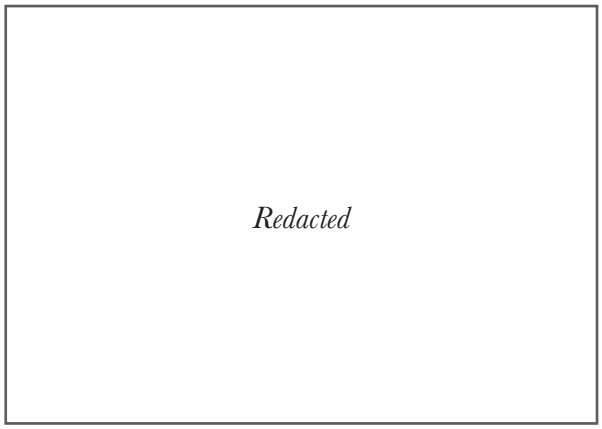


Fig. 2.19. Postcard depicting the ideal Italian family (1910 c.ca).

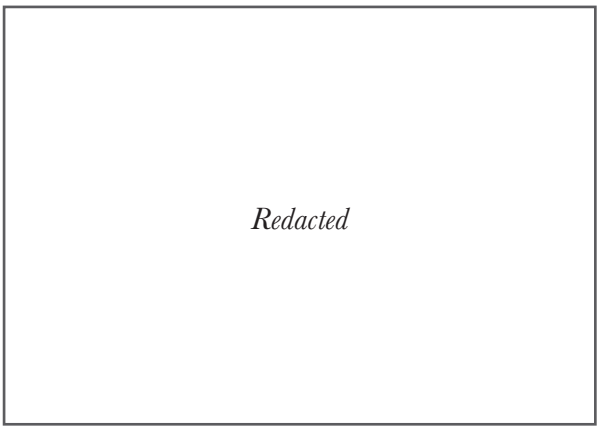


Fig. 2.20. Billboard. Image of the family according to the political party *Democrazia Cristiana* (Christian Democracy), or DC (1965).

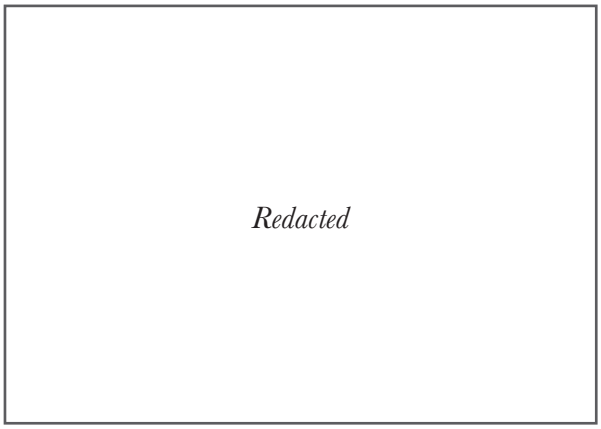


Fig. 2.21, 2.22. Liliana Barchiesi, *Le Casalinghe* (the housewives), Milan (1979).

> took them up and valued them as tools for dealing with and mastering the new problems that it faced in recent decades: in essence it used tradition to adapt to vast structural changes.[99]

In line with previous reflections on Tarde's writings, it is, therefore, possible to say that adaptation is nothing more than a manifestation of conformism and imitation (based on intergenerational transmission) aimed at the preservation of social order. In fact, the strengthening of the family unit took place mainly thanks to the renewed vigour of behavioural rules dictated by religion, the social control it exercises and the constant scepticism of Italian citizens towards the state, which has repeatedly led them to seek shelter or help through kinship ties.[100] The reasons underlying the resistance of the traditional, nuclear family over the centuries should, thus, be ascribed to the mechanisms of parental transmission of values and lifestyles and to the cycles of restoration and legitimisation of the traditional Catholic family by the state. In fact, it was the Fascist regime that first restored them, by strengthening the patriarchy and extinguishing the enthusiasm of young Futurist women, the first feminists and the women who entered the labour market during the interwar period (fig. 2.23).[101] The Fascist government was responsible for the birth and consolidation of the ideology of the housewife, or *massaia,* responsible for the care and growth of the white, heterosexual, Catholic family (figs. 2.21, 2.22). Furthermore, the post-war government was led for over forty years by the centrist party Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democracy, 1943–1994), which promoted a 'pervasive paternalist and familyist rhetoric', defined as 'pastoral Catholic' (figs. 2.19, 2.20).[102]

This widespread 'culture of reconstruction' affected not only the physical aspect of Italian cities – which were rebuilt after the bombings of the Second World War – but also the private, domestic sphere. In fact, the generation of young couples that settled during the economic boom preferred to take refuge in traditional family values, the Church and authority in general. It was especially men who reinforced these dynamics as a reaction to the large-scale entry of women into the job market, and they did so by returning to strong normative and moralistic beliefs (fig. 2.23).[103] In fact, throughout the 1970s, the embodiment of the full-time housewife was still the most widespread and preferred model, both on an ethical and regulatory level (figs. 2.21, 2.22).[104] The preservation of gender privilege has, therefore, played a fundamental role in domestic and social realms, slowing down and perhaps even stopping the wave of modernity that influenced other countries' housing interiors in a more decisive way.[105]

Moreover, we know that in the same period the French government brought forward a similar political narrative that favoured the return to the asymmetric, nuclear family model, which directly impacted domesticity. The physical reconstruction that followed the trauma of the war, therefore, coincided with the restoration of the heteropatriarchal family, as it provided a sense of certainty, of a predefined socio-cultural horizon that does not detach itself much from the ontological need of *appaesamento* theorised by De Martino.[106] On an aesthetic level, this reactionary campaign had repercussions for domestic life across Europe impacted both French and Italian women, who negotiated their modern identities through

a 'conservative domesticity'. In the Italian context, as in the French, women's conservative tastes both perpetuated habitus and patterns of dominance, but also favoured domestic appropriation, which was instrumental in the consolidation of selfhood.

Overall, it is possible to say that social, political and cultural 'conservatism' describe the elements that make up the history of Italian society and domestic culture, including the *salotto* space. It pertains, above all, to the conservation of a patriarchal model of society supported both politically and culturally by Roman Catholic morality. In fact, despite changes brought about by the two World Wars and the social developments of the last fifty years, the family has been subject to choices that have cyclically favoured the restoration of traditional models. Secondly, it was the conservation of class privileges and class distinctions by middle and upper classes through taste and material culture carefully positioned inside the *salotto.* The post-war housing heritage has also been preserved, indeed, it is predominant in Italian cities today and is now part of collective memory.[107] Furthermore, the persistence of a conservative spatial distributive logic continues to separate female and male identities through ideological and physical barriers that still limit women's emancipation and access to the job market.[108] This eventually led to the permanence of the *salotto*, or the idea of the *salotto* and the social aspirations it epitomises, which, consequently, foster the scrupulous conservation of the objects and habits associated with them.

While these dynamics have caused the stigmatisation of an entire social class, criticised by Italian intellectuals for its obsession with 'family respectability's and its 'petty-bourgeois conservatism' as the result of a broader and more complex homologation project, this has also favoured the emergence of some peculiar characteristics, which, over time, have become archetypes of Italian family culture.[109] The most important one concerns the fear of loss of acquired well-being, and this is justifiable by the economic circumstances of Italy, which has always been less wealthy than other Western countries.[110] Economic stability is, then, for Italians, something that must be obtained at any cost, and home ownership represents security. This justifies the theme of sobriety, contained in this maxim: 'temperance is not an end in itself, but the handmaid of savings. The truly rich do not spend, and in all cases they do not waste, they reinvest' (fig. 2.24).[111] Sobriety and the necessity to avoid waste have clear religious roots, which play a fundamental role in the construction of middle-class identity.

Obviously, this has a very important implications for the use and appropriation of the *salotto*, the room devoted to the representation of the household. As Asquer explains, the influence of Catholic morality stimulated, in the period of the economic miracle, both a critical approach towards models of American consumption and a refuge in so-called 'useful consumption', that is the purchase of dependable and durable domestic goods.[112] This approach to consumption detaches itself greatly from the French case, where the abundance of aristocratic interiors influenced middle-class taste. As previously mentioned, Bourdieu distinguishes in French context between the 'taste for necessity' of working-class families as opposed to the other classes. However, since the roots of Italian cultural identity – which revolves around fictional collective memories – can be traced to pre-modern peasant and bourgeois culture (or Gramsci's 'traditional folklore'), consumption and aesthetic choices

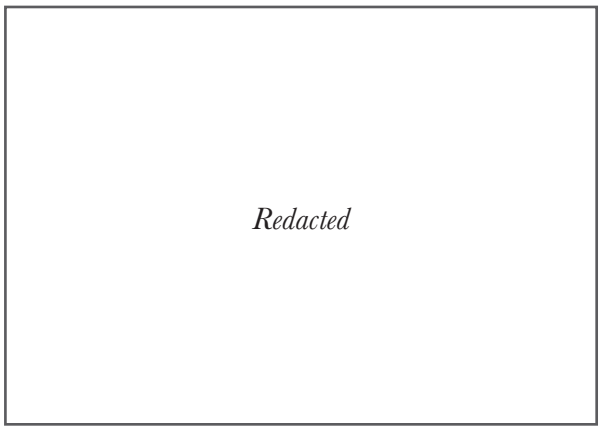


Fig. 2.23. Still frames of the RAI documentary *Passato e Presente: La Donna che Lavora* (Past and Present: The Woman at the Workplace) (2018).

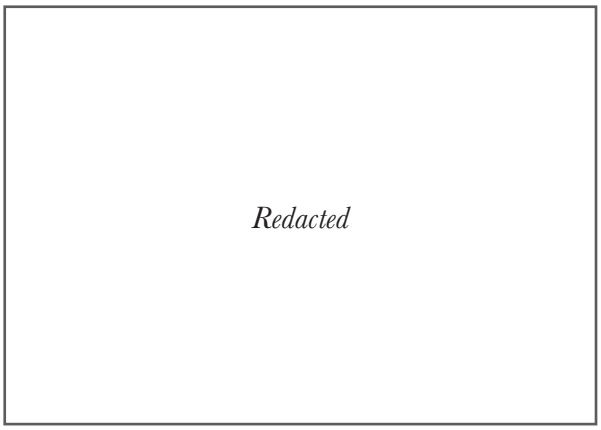


Fig. 2.24. Advertisement. 'Savings Day' by Savings accounts Trevigiana Bank (1948).

are limited to necessary and durable goods even across the middle class. This frugality is indeed part of a culture focused on the construction of certainties and the preservation of acquired well-being, which finds its clearest manifestation in the purchase of a home within one of the many post-war housing projects made available at that time. Once again, the generation of Italians who still own apartments in post-war housing complexes maintained 'a deep need for stability and peace, to be enjoyed first and foremost in the private sphere' and decided to build security through the solidity of their purchases.[113]

2.3. The 'Average' House and Consumption

> The normal type of dwelling for the middle class is reduced to a *salotto* with an adjoining kitchenette, an anteroom, a bathroom, a bedroom for the parents and a number of bedrooms, mostly one or two, depending on the composition of the family.[114]

The *salotto* established itself as a central room of Italian apartments after a long process of consolidation of class identity that started with the national unification, continued during the twenty years of Fascism, and slowly consolidated in the post-war era. The 'normal' dwelling mentioned in the quote above is, indeed, the outcome of large social and political dynamics that invested Italian society throughout the twentieth century. Specifically, the Modern Movement in architecture began to take hold and spread throughout Europe between the 1920s and 1930s, and played a fundamental role in post-war housing design. In Italy, however, this process was filtered by the Fascist Regime which embraced this new architectural movement but at the same time insisted on the restoration of traditional family models.[115] Italian modernist architects had to mediate between the reformist impulse brought by modernism and the authoritarian and reactionary proclamations of the regime. This resulted in contrasting architectural and distributive solutions and a never completed modernisation of Italian society.

The House I'd like to Have

During the decades of Fascist rule, the topic of interior furnishings started to play a major role, as the government replaced artisanal production in an attempt to strengthen the countries' industrialisation. Within that period, Italy saw the first attempts to rationalise the domestic plan, in line with other European countries: 'in 1927 the *Opera Nazionale del Dopolavoro* [Institutional body of the Regime aimed at the planning of workers' leisure activities] announced regional competitions for the affordable furnishing of the house – aiming to start, through education in modernisation, the overcoming of the characteristics of regionalism and classicism of taste still prevailing in domestic furnishing' it also 'encouraged the industry to produce new furniture for the working class'.[116] Furthermore, 'household items would have allowed the expression of personality, while the "cult of the house" would have supported the stability of the family'.[117] This approach exemplifies the profound inconsistencies in the Fascist social and cultural reform: the momentum towards modernisation was countered by regressive social policies. This process was aimed at the

construction of new consumers, the start of a national market of interior furniture and, also, the consolidation of a 'typically Italian furniture style': simple and humble. Casciato, however, summarises the failure of this project:

> This humility was difficult to accept precisely by those less well-off classes to whom this type of furniture was proposed; but in general, this simplification was ill-accepted by all classes, to the point of constituting a real transclassist constant: in the Thirties the Italian house, while transforming itself, did not lose sight of that constant reference to the wealthy house that constitutes, in the differentiations of the different vulgarizations, the imperishable model par excellence of the way of living of the Italian family. Thus that formal and semantic simplification of pieces of furniture, which also took place in most countries across Europe – and produced in Italy objects with a refined design, but with limited circulation – found strong resistance in the nascent market, to the point of causing despair of legions of rationalist architects.[118]

Although the modernist furniture design gradually established itself in Italy, it can be associated with the male, modernist aesthetic that frames the exteriors of post-war housing. What Casciato did not take into consideration in her analysis is the gender dialectic embedded in this discourse and, specifically, the role that women, the first Italian consumers, played in this context: the few, durable objects purchased referred to the wealthy home aesthetic model as they rejected simple, modernist forms. Domestic consumption here, like in France, contributed to the definition of their class and gender identity. The few spatial alterations of Italian dwellings can be included in the overall engagement of Italian women in the design of domestic interiors. Both amateur decorators and professional designers started engaging in the design of new spatial models. The first women architects and interior designers (the two disciplines are usually merged in Italy)[119] started proposing housing models that have been totally overlooked in architectural history (figs. 2.25–2.29). Some of them mediated between the bourgeois and popular pull of Italian culture, with a peculiar interpretation of the modernist style (figs. 2.25–2.27). Writers and journalists like Irene Brin and Lidia Morelli translated into words their dissatisfaction with the proposed (masculine) models, imagining their ideal solutions (fig. 2.29).[120] In short, Italian women took clear and strong positions towards housing and domesticity, proposing interior design, decorative, and spatial solutions that contribute to the definition of Italian cultural domesticity.

Here a glimpse of their argument:

> We don't want to know about the inhospitable house that looks like a clinic or a shop, we don't want to know about the house-machine because we are not machines; not even we can endure for long a house that is a continuous polemic cry, be it a theorem or a gimmick of the spirit. Our home must be able to welcome us even when we are grieved. The humanized home suits us better; it must adhere to our life, agree with our spirit, belong to a society of free men and at the same time respond to numerous and tacit taste needs that our culture and history have impressed on

> us, no less alive than practical and vitalistic needs. Modern architecture must be national, provincial, individual.[121]

This quote exemplifies the humanistic and personal approach of feminine design in Italy, with its strong anchorage to culture and history. While many male architects of the time embraced without hesitation the theme of experimentation on the minimal and technological house – enjoying moderate success among the upper-middle classes in the Northern regions – the first female architects, and, later on, the architects and engineers involved in Italy's reconstruction, created hybrid housing typologies more in line with societal expectations of the time. Tellingly,

> women are the main detractors of the minimal house: their words reveal the awareness and experience of what it means to spend most of the day at home. The closer they get, the more the sense of physical and psychological constraint increases.[122]

Three unrealised projects clearly illustrate what has been discussed so far, that is the House of a Modern Quarter of the 1920s published in the *Almanac of the Italian Woman* of 1921 (fig. 2.29), The House I'd like to Have, designed by architect Alessio Frampolli under the guidance of writer Lidia Morelli (who described the house in a book published in 1933) and Casa del Dopolavorista (1930) by Luisa Lovarini. The latter was exhibited at the sixth Milan Triennale (1933) as part of the ongoing research on middle-class habitat in Italy. Some parallels between Lovarini's and Franco Albini's proposals can be drawn, as both projects were exhibited in the same Triennale. He exhibited an abstract grid and an open-plan solution that could have potentially inspired the Italian Radical architects such as Superstudio and Archizoom. The house is indeed an installation with no architectural boundaries. Lovarini's project is, instead, anchored in reality; she proposed a full-scale model exhibited in the Triennale's gardens. Albini's project is a sequence of modernist furniture that qualify the spaces of the house, whereas Lovarini's architecture includes custom-designed pieces of furniture (she designed each one of them). Each piece is simple, yet detailed and somewhat nostalgic, as it recalls traditional, artisanal furniture (figs. 2.26, 2.27). Her work can be, indeed, considered part of the aforementioned conservative modernist trend. Figure 2.27 also shows the presence of a *salotto* (composed of a dining and living room), the typically middle-class room that was despised by modernist architects and taste reformers. Overall, her design seems to be informed by first-hand experience, that of an Italian woman in the 1930s. Conversely, Albini's project is a formal experiment aimed at showcasing the refined taste of the heroic, male modernist architect, demonstrating his distance from cultural domesticity and, above all, lived experience.

The second project, the House for a Modern Quarter, was designed in 1921, and represents a transition phase from the nineteenth century (rural) to the twentieth century (urban) model. Like the rural projects shown at the beginning of this analysis, there is no central corridor for the distribution of rooms, yet the spaces are decidedly more generous. It was 'the first domestic project designed by a non-architect woman and tailored to women'.[123] It

was a 110sqm home for a young married couple, designed for a housewife with no domestic servants, which was the norm even for wealthier Italian women. The house incorporates the study and a guest room, the dining room and kitchen are the biggest rooms (fig. 2.28). The *salotto* space is not fully formed, as the dining room and kitchen merge into a single environment (they occupy the right of the plan). The heart of the domestic, intimate sphere is the kitchen, which, thanks to its generous size, can turn into a space for socialisation.[124]

The House I'd like to Have, conceived by prolific writer Morelli in the 1930s, is another ideal project conceived by a woman who had no previous background in architecture, and which demonstrates Italian women's active engagement in the design of domestic spaces (fig. 2.29). The project described in her book is a negotiation between the writer's fascination with architectural Modernism and her attachment to nineteenth-century domesticity, with a decidedly upper-class, traditional outcome.[125] Concerning this point, Salvati clarifies that in the post-war period, well-off apartments retained more elements of the nineteenth-century type than any other social class, and this project illustrates precisely that.[126] Furthermore, the spatial solution seems to recall the French distribution model, with a clear tripartition of reception spaces (fig. 2.29). The relevance of this book (and the project that emerged from it) stands in the direct engagement of the author in architectural design, as she used her voice to publicise women's valuable contribution to the discipline. In fact, the same Morelli wrote: 'I would like to be allowed to give credit to the intervention of women in the design of a plan, the choice between various projects, and the acceptance of a neighbourhood where the arrangement of the premises has already been established'.[127] She advocated for the recognition of women's role in architecture, praising Lovarini's work, among others, in her writings. At the same time, together with her colleague Irene Brin, she criticised Italian male modernist architects, who reproduced 'tombs' driven by their fascination – never supported by critical thought – for European modernism.[128] Morelli and Brin's position summarises the tensions between masculine modernism and feminine culture; as women were pushed to the margins of high culture, they used all possible means to express their lucid dissent. Morelli's point on women designers is also a particularly strong, feminist stance, given Mussolini's opinion on women in architecture, pronounced only six years before: 'Has any woman ever designed architectures in the past centuries? You may ask her to design a hut, not even a temple! She can't. She is foreign to architecture, that is the synthesis of all arts, and this is a symbol of her destiny.'[129]

The first woman graduate in architecture in Italy was Elena Luzzatto Valentini, who received her degree in Rome in 1925. In 1935, only 13 women were practicing the profession, but even if numbers continued to grow in the following decades, the work of Italian women architects did not receive any recognition until two geniuses, Lina Bo Bardi (who graduated in 1939) and Gae Aulenti (who received her degree in 1954) gained public commissions, respectively in the 1950s and 1980s – and, in both cases, abroad. Journalist Anna Maria Speckel contributed to the discussion on Italian women in architecture with an article in the *Almanacco della Donna Italiana* titled 'Modern architecture and women in architecture' (1935), in which she illustrated the work of the women architects that were operating in the country, partially responding to Mussolini's delirium: 'if it can be true, up to a certain point,

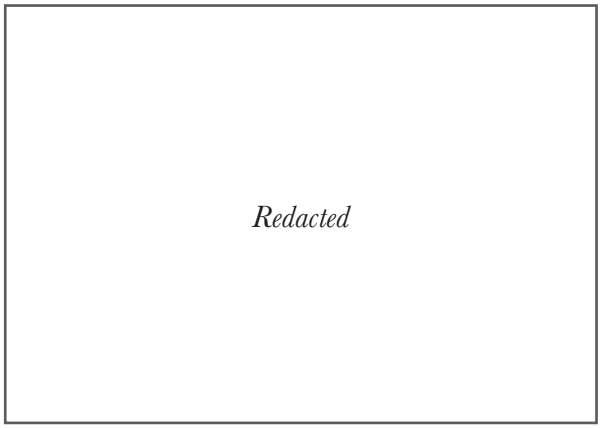


Fig. 2.25. Bombelli Girolamo, photo of Casa del Dopolavorista by Luisa Lovarini in the Triennale's gardens, Milan (1930).

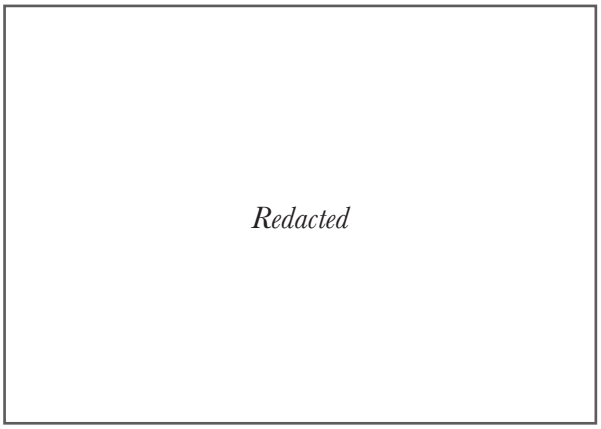


Fig. 2.26. Bombelli Girolamo, photo of the kitchen of the Casa del Dopolavorista by Luisa Lovarini, Milan (1930).

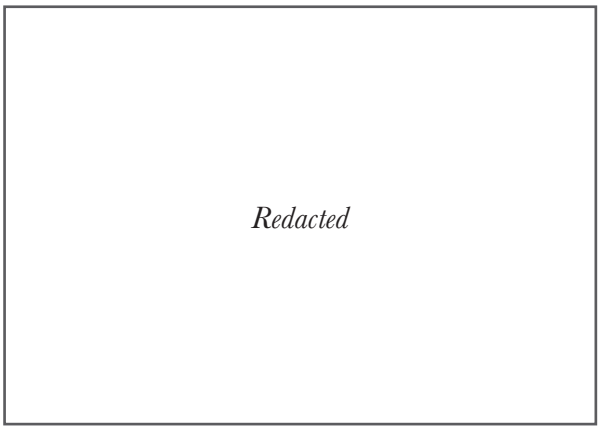


Fig. 2.27. Bombelli Girolamo, photo of the salotto (dining and living room) of the Casa del Dopolavorista by Luisa Lovarini, Milan (1930).

that women find it difficult to grapple on the grandiose or the monumental, one cannot doubtlessly deny her the absolute success in the field of the house, be it a simple home or a *palazzo*, for on this ground she brings the precious contribution of her analytical logic, her common sense and her practicality'.[130] Not by chance both the Modern Quarter project and the Dopolavorista House were considered virtuous by both the public and critics, as they were modern and practical homes, and both had sober furnishings.[131] Despite the quality of the women architects' proposals, none of these noteworthy projects were implemented on a large scale, and this was certainly due to the lack of legitimisation of female architectural production, a lack that persists in the Italian architectural panorama and in architectural history more in general, as the discipline of architecture is still far from achieving gender equality.

Speckel's point on women's ability to translate their sensitivity, knowledge and expertise into the design of domestic space describes precisely the feminine domestic cultures analysed, as design in the home is both a combination of conscious and unconscious decisions that have the potential to alter architectural space. As aforementioned, design in the domestic context is seen here as a continuous process informed by daily experience, which makes the work of both inhabitants and amateur designers architecturally valuable. This process can be either conscious or unconscious, as previously discussed. Hence, regardless of the profession, education or degree of intervention, each design choice studied demonstrates a facet of feminine culture. The projects described – which are doubtlessly just an infinitesimal portion of the architectural production of Italian women architects and amateurs in the interwar and post-war period – are incredibly valuable, as they not only testify to the conscious engagement of women in design, but also because they illustrate the value of women's input in residential architecture. Through the proposal of spatial solutions, which might be seen as traditional, backwards, or even 'minor', these women established the boundaries of women's taste, needs but also spatial and domestic culture. Morelli tellingly summarised some of the principles behind such an approach: 'the house should never dominate human existence. It can have a character of its own, it can bear the traces of the person who conceived it, but it must not exert any selfish constraint on the individual character of the one for whom it was made.'[132]

Morelli's point is clearly in contrast with the taste reform brought forward by the keepers of high culture across Europe. From the interwar period onwards, renown architecture and design magazines such as Domus began advertising a certain type of interior design in Italy, captivating readers with a new taste in home interior decoration based on simplicity and modernity of style. The new design, including the new housing, were intended to educate citizens in a new way of life. However, two fundamental factors interrupted this project. The first was the failure of the middle and lower classes to economically afford modern furniture and objects, as they quickly became luxury goods.[133] The second pertains to the resistance by the middle and working class to the simplifications brought about by European modernism, the form adopted by all major Italian architects and designers of the post-war period.[134] Brin ironically wrote 'the refined [individuals] inaugurated the tube chairs exactly when the unsuspecting installed the red damask of the false fifteenth century',[135]

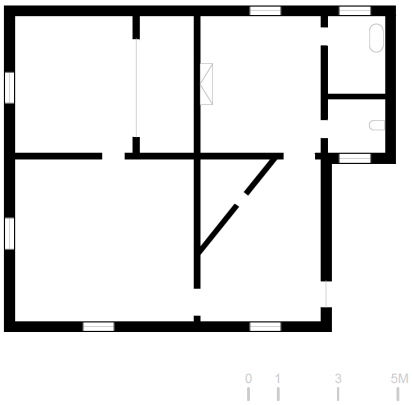


Fig. 2.28. House for a Modern Quarter (1920s).

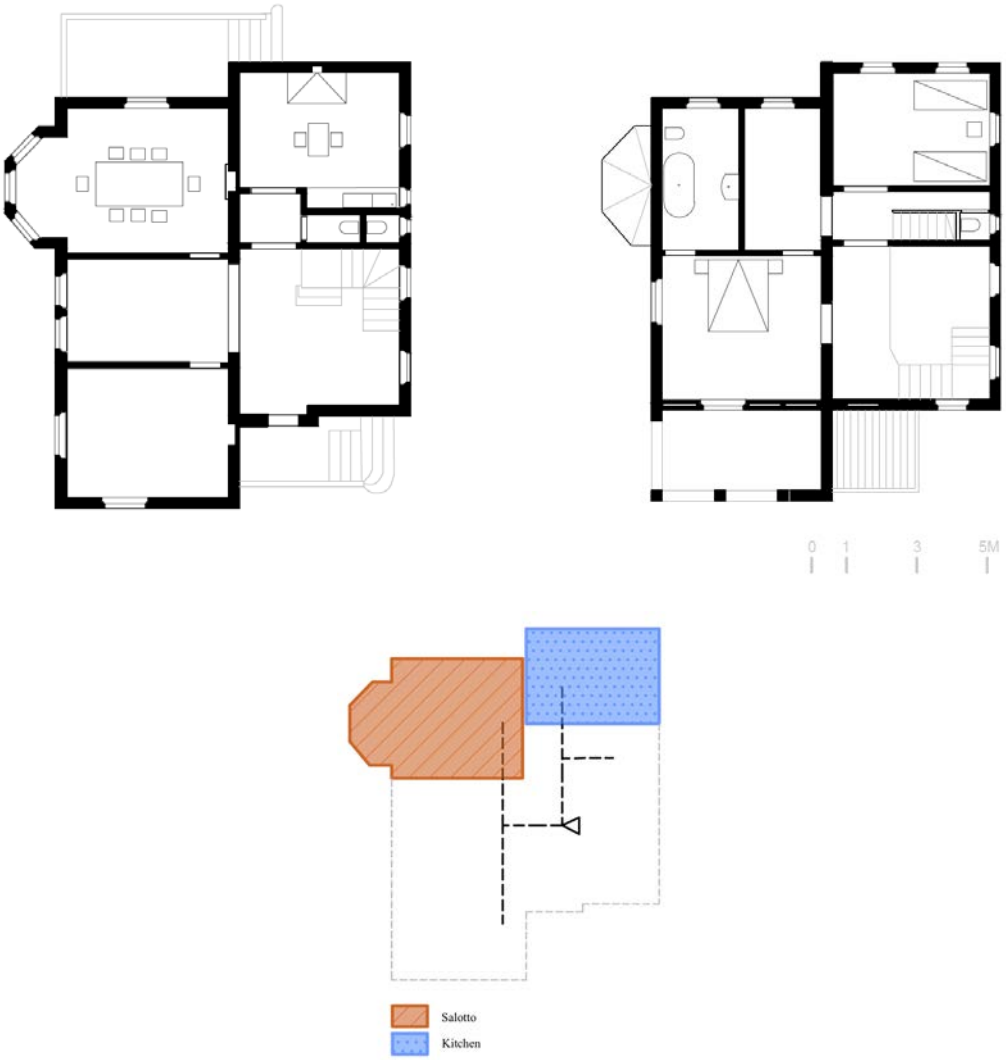


Fig. 2.29. The House I'd Like to Have by Lidia Morelli (1933).

and Casciato clarified that while Italy was becoming an industrialised country,

> a singular event takes place: the birth of a cultural model in the furnishing of the family's house that is not in harmony with this transformation. Meaning that it does not incorporate, if not marginally, the transformative values of rationalisation connected to the renovated productive process. It maintains, instead, its own aesthetic and ideal value, with a diffusion [across social classes] and continuity that no modernist iconoclast has ever managed to really affect.[136]

Needless to say, she is referring to the middle-class family model, the 'conservative' one.[137] The plan to disseminate a new taste in the decoration of interiors through specialised magazines and national exhibitions took initially hold of the upper classes, especially in Milan. This social group not only had the financial resources to buy these new pieces of design, but also adopted – even if just in part – the modern style to furnish their *salotti*. This choice was probably made to distinguish themselves from the middle class, which at the time had begun to imitate precisely those same well-off domestic interiors.[138]

The widespread rejection of modern taste in interior decoration triggered the reaction of architects, technocrats and taste reformers, who wrote with frustration: 'if families persist in wanting a distribution of space with "noble pretensions" – the *salotto*, the studio – even in petty-bourgeois and craftsmen's environments, the remedy can only be the construction of social housing that lead to this "simplicity" of taste. From this point of view, the partitions are a valid help!'[139] The masculine approach to housing and domesticity is in contrast, once again, with the processes of daily appropriation of domestic interiors, even – and above all – inside post-war housing. The taste reformers' failure to modernise Italian society, as well as the persistence of old furniture and highly decorated interiors across almost all social classes, can be partially attributed to the failed modernisation of Italian society, which, as was shown, was then already hit by the regressive wave of restoration of the Catholic, patriarchal society and family. This favoured the persistence of traditional domestic practices and symbols, which still populate post-war domestic interiors today.[140] In fact, it is possible to trace the similarities between two interiors in terms of language and decorative choices, even though they belong to members of two different social classes and two different buildings (figs. 2.30, 2.31). Specifically, the photo of interior 2.30 depicts the living room of a lower middle-class dwelling, while figures 2.31 and 2.32 show an upper middle-class interior in a building from the early twentieth century. In all cases, both the surfaces of walls and floor are characterised by decorative motifs, either the picture frames or the borders of pieces of furniture have golden details. In each case, the sofa establishes a visual dialogue with the surrounding decorations (especially in terms of colour palette). Domestic objects and interior decoration thus maintained their cultural value. As in the case of France, they remained instrumental for the assertion and consolidation of feminine identities and cultures within the domestic sphere.

> On the level of popular culture, women continued to make choices based on the dictates of fashion and comfort […], while on the level of high culture – a system

Fig. 2.30. *Salotto*, Palazzi Federici, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.31. *Salotto*, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.32. *Salotto*, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

> of polemics rooted in the masculine sphere and with strong establishment backing – pointed a new way forward. Each system, in turn, was linked back to an idealized image of the nation, the former based upon the concept of the moral family and the latter based upon a national style in the international marketplace.[141]

Masculine and feminine domesticity, along with narratives of national culture, are intertwined in Italian domestic interiors. These narratives emerged from the consolidation of fictional, shared memories and histories that influenced daily practices; to put it in Bourdieu's terms, they shaped habitus that is 'the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures […] to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions'.[142] Habitus indeed 'carries the concept of history – both personal history and social, or collective history' and is 'embodied history' and, hence, has a direct influence on daily life.[143] The push of the national rhetoric around sobriety and savings, the conquest for the necessary countered by the conquest of status symbols, the conservation of the values of the heterosexual, Catholic family that manifested spatially inside the post-war apartment, were at the core of Italy's cultural values. They were also accompanied by a push towards the simplification of aesthetic forms exemplified by Italian Modernist furniture and objects' design, along with post-war housing exteriors (including *palazzine*). Both high cultural manifestations occurred in tandem with the consolidation of a typically Italian approach to architectural and objects' design, which made Italy famous worldwide.

Italian women found themselves, therefore, nailed to granitic roles and structures, and reacted to them in various ways. If some, like Brin, used their voice to criticise the typically masculine approach to architectural modernism, others, like Lovarini (but also Giuliana Genta and Stefania Filo Speziale, to name few),[144] proposed a more feminine interpretation of domestic spaces and furniture. Ordinary women found their way to self-expression through domestic consumption and homemaking, rethinking their positions towards housework, including cooking and food culture.[145] Tellingly, some educated women developed a rejection of cooking as 'the refusal of food camouflages that of the kitchen, the home, marriage, motherhood and, in short, the traditional role of women'.[146] In short, they reacted in different ways to the oppressive system that kept forcing them into stereotyped roles, rethinking both the architectural space, enculturated domestic practices, and consumption choices. In fact, they were 'not only housewives, consumers', but they saw 'consumption as a spaces for self-expression and creative identity resource'.[147]

This led to a peculiar approach to homemaking that reflects the singularity of the Italian context. Lisa Adkins' social theory, based on a feminist reading of Bourdieu, opens up to further reflections on women's reaction to backwards roles and oppressive systems in 'late modernity' which, according to Anthony Giddens, coincides with the twenty-first century.[148] Adkins argues that the movement of women into the labour market and the subsequent 'feminisation of public spheres of action' led to 'a critical reflexivity on the part of men and women via-à-vis gender norms to a detraditionalisation of those norms'.[149] This is a particularly sensitive aspect of her theory, as it introduces the potentiality of

social change within existing structures, specifically a 'reworking of the social categories of gender', problematising the gender spheres paradigm and influencing gendered practices.[150] This is certainly true for women like Brin and Lovarini, who directly engaged with the systems that oppressed them. But Adkins' point can indeed extend to women at large, as the detraditionalisation of gender leads to substantial changes in both habitus (embodied dispositions) and field – that is, in both social and domestic behaviour.[151] Furthermore, as demonstrated earlier, habitus has spatial connotations, so the mechanisms described by Adkins have the potential to impact architectural space through both conscious and unconscious design choices. The centre of these dynamics remains the *salotto*, as it is the room that encapsulates both the national project of consolidation of cultural identity and women's process of emancipation from their position within the Catholic family and the home. These reflections will be further extended in the last part of this study, that will be concentrating on the spatial implications of detraditionalisation inside Italian domestic interiors.

Salotto Buono, Soggiorno, and Kitchen

Modernist architects, as previously discussed, designated the *salotto* as the scapegoat for the failed project of modernisation. A curious aversion to this room grew in the 1930s, as it was denounced not only as a symbol of the privileges of the bourgeois class – in stark contrast to the populist rhetoric of the Fascist regime – but also as an impediment to the advent of modernity. It has been so to such an extent that the 'salotto, even when it is only a salottino [small salotto], displays the most tangible symbols of the myths and aspirations of this social group in front of an audience of relatives, friends, acquaintances who frequent the house'.[152] Thus, a campaign for the suppression of the *salotto* quickly followed, yet differing in intentions and results to that of other European countries' and with a decidedly different outcome. In France the reduction of the post-war apartment brought on a simplification of the tripartition of receptions spaces; nevertheless, the dichotomy living room-bedroom persisted, reproducing hierarchies, roles and practices that characterise French cultural domesticity. In Italy, architects decided to substitute the *salotto* with the *soggiorno* (living room). The former was meant to be a purely representational space of both status and interpersonal power relations; it was hardly used and abundantly decorated. The latter, by contrast, had to, supposedly, host the family's everyday activities and become the intimate centre of the home. But this transition never really took place in Italian apartments, as their occupants kept reproducing the *salotto* model. In fact, although the end of the *salotto* and the advent of a new modern space of the *soggiorno* were promptly announced, Italy saw no substantial changes in the use, decoration and disposition of this room. The *soggiorno* retained the *salotto*'s main characteristics as key representational space, while fostering a further retreat towards the patriarchal, nuclear family. Hence, the campaign against the *salotto* and the introduction of the *soggiorno* were the result of the regime's political rhetoric. Most importantly,

> the abolition of the *salotto* in the years between the two wars symbolizes a more general *deminutio* of the private sphere, which is now enclosed entirely in the family

> circle. Replaced the salotto with the *soggiorno*, in fact, the centre of the house shifts from "external" and "internal", from "public" and "private", to an infra-family dimension, to a set of relationships enclosed in the domestic nucleus. Its substitute, the *soggiorno*, will never aspire to be a space of "sociability" (however fictitious), but only the place of the exasperated "representation" of family relationships. […] The adoption of the *sala* or *soggiorno* in Italian social housing risked turning into a field for the exercise of extremely hierarchical family relationships (between sexes and generations), a natural reflection of the Catholic values prevailing in this country.[153]

It is worth noting that the *deminutio* mentioned by Salvati in this passage also refers to spatial and symbolic consolidation of the middle-class apartment in Italy's post-war social housing projects. In fact, considerations on the metaphorical reduction of the private sphere also apply to the spatial alteration of the *salotto,* which was reproduced in most housing projects from the 1950s onwards. Middle-class' identity and sociability were already limited to the nuclear family, closest relatives, or few friends, resulting in a clear closure of the family within the home and the subsequent development of social relations mainly outside the domestic realm. This leads to the conclusion that there is no clear practical distinction between *salotto* and *soggiorno*, and by virtue of the social and spatial homologation that has invested middle-class and post-war housing, the abolition or modernisation of the *salotto* – and its subsequent transition into a *soggiorno* – remains an unfinished project. This clarifies the main difference between France and Italy, as the evolution of the apartment in each context reflects either continuity or resistance to social change, impacting both the design and use of dwelling interiors. In fact, if on the one hand, the evolution of the apartment's layout in France organically follows social change across centuries and sectors of French society, on the other, social and spatial change in Italy are continuously in tension, leading to Italian dwellers' distaste for, or even resistance to, modern architecture and new, Modernist layouts. This is largely due to the regressive policies, cultural and religious narratives brought forward by the Fascist Regime and later Italian governments.

Mario Ridolfi's Modernist housing project in Rome (1955) (fig. 2.16) is a particularly interesting case. It was considered by many a successful project, as the architect perfected some of the architectural solutions experimented in previous projects.[154] The eight rectangular towers are 31m high (9 to 10 storeys high), which granted a high population density while enabling a proper lighting of the generous green areas designed between the buildings (fig. 2.16). The dwellings had either one, two or three bedrooms, with an additional 'service' bedroom for a full-time maid.[155] While being interviewed in 2019, the inhabitants of this estate, specifically the apartment at the top left of the plan in figure 2.33, summarised very clearly what it meant to have a *salotto buono*:

> One couldn't live in this room. When I was young […] this was like a sanctuary, immaculate. On practically every surface there were at least twelve photos, on this table there was a green poker table cover, on top of it there was a huge white lace thing, and then a centrepiece, three stone ashtrays. It was impossible to remove them […] – and these objects were all condensed on one surface. There was a

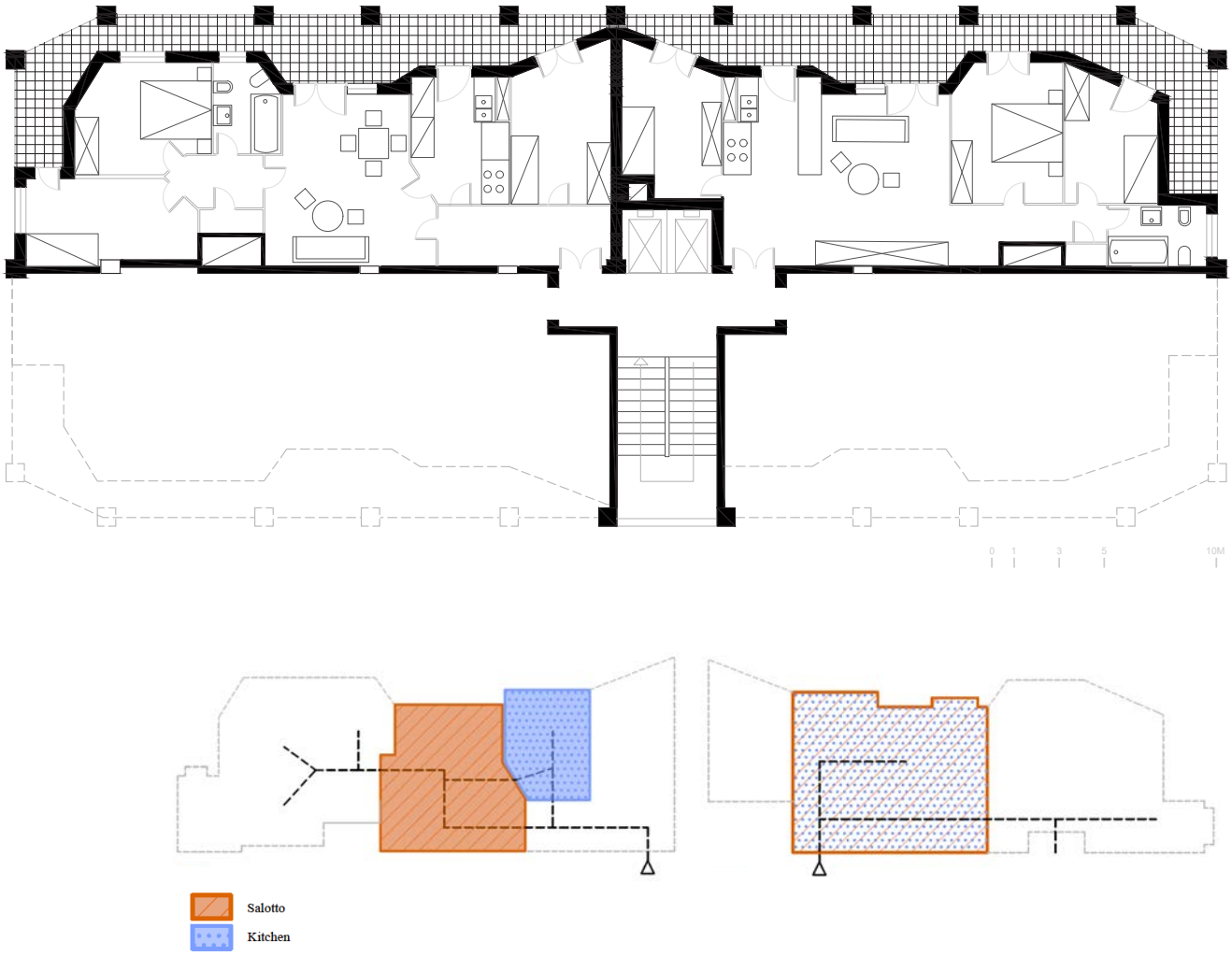


Fig. 2.33. Mario Ridolfi and Wolfgang Frankl, towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome (1949-1955). The plan and diagrams show two apartments visited during fieldwork.

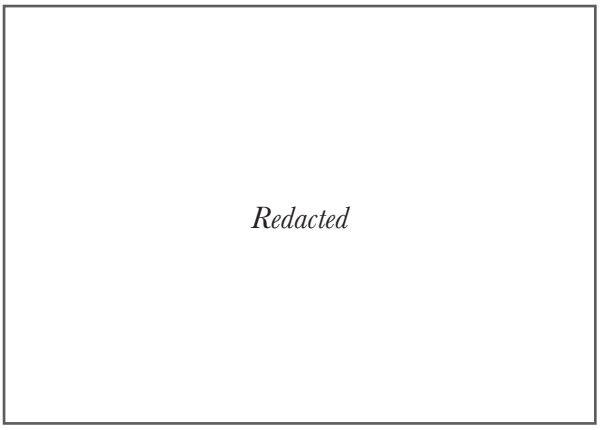


Fig. 2.34. Federico Patellani, photograph of a woman and her daughter in the kitchen (1977).

> piano, which we then gave away […] The doors to the salotto were always closed that is, you came from there [entrance door to the living room from the corridor] to go there [bedrooms] you had to close the doors, because everything happened inside the kitchen. In that small table that you see under the window, which is retractable and extendable, 5–6 people ate there, tightly, when we had such a space [the *salotto buono*] that no one could touch! Only on great occasions, holidays, could it be used… otherwise it was always closed. I remember it was always dark in here.[156]

Ridolfi's building hosted members of the middle class that immediately found space for the *salotto buono*, which could be easily isolated (fig. 2.35). In fact, as clarified by the inhabitants themselves, even though they had to pass through the *salotto* to reach the bedrooms, it was strictly forbidden to stop over and spend time in it unless there were guests to welcome. As shown in the diagram of the apartment on the left, in order to access bedrooms, the inhabitants had to cross the *salotto*; nevertheless, that space was hardly used and family life took place mainly in the small kitchen (figs. 2.34 and 2.8). The maid's bedroom was designed right in front of the main entrance, clearly symbolising the social status of the occupants since the early design stages, and making Rifolfi's project a typically middle-class post-war housing type.

The doors that separate the *salotto* from the kitchen is considered a particularly important symbolic and physical threshold. It is, indeed, a

> mental boundary that has preserved the *salotto buono* up to now. It was preserved for guests but also for the inhabitants, for that need to feel part of a wider social dimension, identified in the "moral theatricality" of bourgeois decor. The latter has been able to preserve itself since the daily disorder, the needs of the body, intimacy, had a place to express themselves.[157]

These mental and symbolic boundaries coincide with the Italian separation of gendered spheres in the post-war apartment. The *salotto* – qualified by the central symbol of the patriarchal family, the *ricorrenze* table – is as untouchable and unreachable as the head of the family. The room is devoted to the representation of the social class and status of the family, which coincides with the social status and occupation of the husband and father. Delphy clarifies that 'the specific patriarchal relations for married women […] are characterised by dependence. And […] [it] is only as dependants that women are seen to belong to the social class of their husbands.'[158] Hence, the presence of this hierarchal family structure, along with the presence of the *salotto* and the central table, symbolise precisely the stability that all Italian families aspire to.

The use of the *salotto* remains, therefore, limited to important events and is characterised by a large table for the *ricorrenze* positioned in its centre, often under a large chandelier, representing the heteropatriarchal, Catholic family and the centrality of Italy's culinary traditions (figs. 2.8, 2.21, 2.22, 2,27, 2.40, 2.44). As previously mentioned, the arrangement

of this piece of furniture is highly symbolic, and is associated with reunited patriarchal family during meals,[159] which has a particularly strong cultural and religious meaning. In fact, it is the space where all elements of Italian culture converge: it symbolises the strengthening of Catholic ideals, as the sharing of meals evokes many aspects of Roman Catholic rituals and sacred scriptures; it consolidates the centrality of Italian food culture at the centre of domestic life; and it strengthens gender and interpersonal hierarchies within the patriarchal family. Indeed, 'the furnishing of a house is the equivalent of a cosmogonic act, the foundation of its order, which will regulate the space and the life of those who live there putting everything in the right place'.[160] This order is highly symbolic, since the arrangement of domestic space (and specifically, the *salotto*) is based on the image to be projected to the outside world, which coincides with class conventions and structured interpersonal relations. Places at the dining table in the *salotto* are, for instance, clearly define and explicitly reflect gender hierarchies: the head of the family always sits in the best place, which is usually next to the main guest, whereas his wife's seat is the one closer to the kitchen, as she keeps bringing food (which she prepares) from the kitchen, barely having enough time to eat.

This is connected to what Delphy calls the 'ideology of sacrifice' that is an 'integral part of feminine nature'.[161] This leads to differentiated consumption as a form of subordination of women and children in the patriarchal family. In her historical research on food habits in working-class families, she discovered that there existed, for instance, a form of 'coercion by height' that took place in the kitchen in order to prevent children from accessing the food: the latter was placed in high-up places or hidden in the master's bedroom. These spatial solutions clarify the manifestation of hierarchical power relations on an ordinary, daily scale. Delphy goes on to say that women have the role of founding and maintaining differential consumption, which becomes a customary act, or a manifestation of habitus, and the 'benefit of such repression is the monopoly of a prized commodity', that is food.[162] Food prohibitions are connected to women's ideological role of wife and mother who 'should always preserve the privileges of the husband and father, and "sacrifice" herself'.[163] But Delphy concludes that despite recent social changes, differentiated consumption (as a manifestation of habitus) persists, as women tend to eat less than their husbands and usually choose the worst part of the meal.[164] This happens during Italian special, recurring events, when the meal is served in the *salotto* space; given the little time left to the wife to eat her own food, she usually eats smaller portions and she chooses the less valuable, tasty, and nutritious parts of the meal.

> I was left speechless, because I understood that the kitchen was the only place in the whole house where that woman really lived, and the rest, the rooms adorned and continually brushed and waxed were a kind of work of art, into which she poured all her dreams of beauty.[165]

Gender dynamics not only materialise through the positioning of bodies in space, they are also connected to the spatial distribution of the *salotto* and the adjacent kitchen.[166] Feminist architects such as Dolores Hayden and the Matrix Collective identified the kitchen

as the room that exemplifies the confinement and subordination of women, the locus of domestic labour and the gendered division of spaces in the home.[167] It is also the place where Delphy's differentiated consumption manifests itself, and in the Italian context, is the room where the Artusian bible is stored and recipes prepared. It is the place for the transmission of ordinary, culinary knowledge, which in Italy is gendered and transmitted from mother to daughter. Grandmothers are considered the embodiment of Italian culinary culture, the true custodians of genuine Italian tradition, which is as fictitious as the alleged inferiority of women. It is precisely within the arena of culinary culture, food preparation and consumption that new social change is emerging today (fig. 2.34).

The first and most obvious social changes across Western countries took place between the 1960s and 1970s, when middle-class women began to enter the labour market en masse. Despite the extra-domestic occupation, they were still expected to carry out their unpaid housework. As aforementioned, Laura Balbo called this condition 'double presence' (1979), which 'indicates a working condition (continuous intertwining between work and domestic needs), a disposition to act and think in a transversal way with respect to the different worlds – both material and symbolic – previously conceived and practiced as separate, in opposition to each other'.[168] This meant that women continued performing their caring role: 'the sexual division of labour, although dialectical, become objectified in the caring labour of femininity, which is institutionalised beyond the family (state welfare, education, labour market) and impacts upon household organization'.[169] Double presence, then, on the one hand demonstrates the emergence of a new, social order that moves beyond the modernist paradigm of the separate spheres, and on the other, acknowledges the persistence of mechanisms of subjugation and control of women's lives. It would be legitimate to think that this social change was followed by a spatial change, and new spatial solutions were explored. But fieldwork, recent sociological literature and statistical data have shown how unfortunately Italy still remains anchored to the past. Furthermore, as mentioned in the first chapter, the condition of double presence still disadvantages women in the labour market, causing a constant underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. However, it allowed women to rethink their traditional role and carve out space for personal development. Historian Lucetta Scaraffia indeed clarifies that based on these premises, 'an élite of women has begun to give voice, both in public and in private, to self-reflection. They have begun to build in the first person, at least in part, their own social image. This work of redefining one's own identity starts from the very roots of the perception of reality.'[170]

The mechanisms of oppression of women materialised, once again, in the domestic sphere, where the dynamics of double presence weighted the most on women's lives. The positioning of the kitchen within the space of the home played a fundamental role in the spatial and symbolic isolation of Italian women and started a lively debate among post-war architects.[171] The location of the kitchen, *salotto* and dining room represented, in fact, a crucial design problem for modernist architects. It was at the centre of the post-war Italian architectural debate aimed at identifying new lifestyles for middle-class families. The INA-casa institute, responsible for the implementation of new housing, took care of preparing dossiers that suggested housing and dwelling types, leading to the standardisation of life.

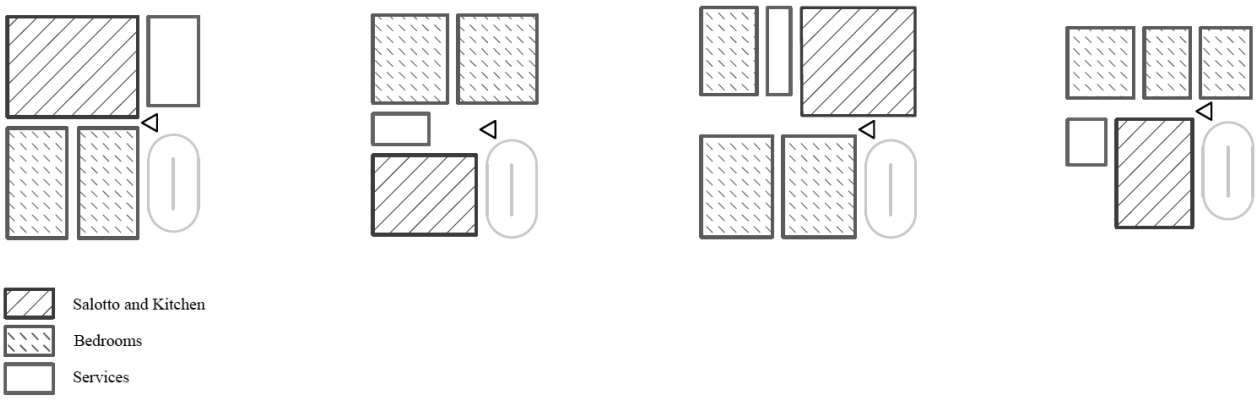


Fig. 2.35. Diagrams n° 1, 17, 30 and 31 for the internal distribution of dwellings, *INA-casa Dossier* n° 1 (1949).

Redacted

Fig. 2.36 Irenio Diotallevi and Franco Marescotti, diagrams describing the problem of the 'disorganisation and absence of method' in the design of dwellings, and the solution that reflects 'organisation and method' (1948).

As can be seen from the diagrams shown in the INA-casa dossiers (fig. 2.35), architects developed different spatial solutions, which were considered 'rough guides' that 'bent to the needs of users to divide the space into a more traditional *salotto buono*'.[172] Most of the options given in the dossiers reflect traditional configurations in which the *salotto* is clearly separated from the kitchen. This spatial solution fostered the division of roles and the production and reproduction of normative gender hierarchies within the domestic environment, as food preparation continued to be seen as a purely feminine activity, consolidating the heteronormative and patriarchal foundations of the home. It also reflected the broader social and political project aimed at the restructuring of the traditional, Catholic, heterosexual, and patriarchal nuclear family that took place in the post-war years. The *salotto* inevitably played a central role in the representation and perpetuation of these gendered dynamics, as it was the space around which the new symbology of the middle class had slowly been built. Once again, the persistence of the *salotto* reflects the restoration project that, at that time, influenced all aspects of daily life.[173] It is, therefore, possible to say that more or less consciously, architects and members of the middle class moved towards the same conservative direction defined by the state. This conformity is manifest in the *salotto* through the display of objects and, in general, the permanence of this room in the overall distribution of dwellings.

In figure 2.36 a male architect describes the core of the architectural debate that was taking place in Italy. Unlike their French colleagues – who at the time were discussing the private nature of the marital bedroom and its subsequent relationship with the living room – Italian architects identified the relationship between kitchen and dining-living room (*salotto*) as the central problem of post-war housing design. The author described an overall 'disorganisation and lack of method' in terms of the interior distribution of Italian dwellings. As visible from the diagram, the circulation system was chaotic and, above all, the movement of food from the kitchen to the dining room was not rational. He proposed, instead, a linear connection between kitchen and *salotto*. This spatial solution is quite interesting because the suggested tripartition on the main facade (with a balcony) recalls that of French representational spaces. The emphasis given to the two different sets of rooms in each cultural context (respectively the living-bedroom in France and kitchen-*salotto* in Italy) exemplifies the spatial dimension of cultural domesticity – as reception practices in France and domestic practices associated with food in Italy are central in each context – and that the normalised subject meant to inhabit post-war housing was specific to each cultural context. Each national, cultural and bio-political agenda was associated with a social model, usually the conformist middle-class, nuclear and heteropatriarchal family. Habitus kept framing individual disposition within this pre-defined framework, favouring the reproduction of enculturated and gendered practices peculiar to each context.

Fig. 2.37. Marital bedroom, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

Redacted

Fig. 2.38. Mario De Renzi, Palazzi Federici, first floor plan, Rome (1931-37).

2.4. Sobriety and the 'Art of Conservation'

> The bedroom becomes the shrine of affections and over time the place of the house destined for religious life; a sign of a faith that is increasingly private, more intimate, often even reserved, which cannot be loudly proclaimed. The intimacy of the spouses, their affections run under the complacent gaze of Madonnas, Christs and blessing saints.[174]

The photograph of figure 2.37 shows an Italian bedroom inside an Italian post-war estate taken during fieldwork in 2019, which clarifies the centrality of religion, both in the domestic sphere but also in the consolidation of masculine and feminine identities. It is precisely the interpersonal relationship between husband and wife that exemplifies the unresolved tensions within the domestic sphere, a tension that still exists today Italian domestic interiors.[175] The presence of religious icons not only establishes the pervasive role of religion in Italian society, but it is also a symptom of the frugal religiosity of women.[176] This opens up further reflections on the process of consolidating Italian feminine identities. Scaraffia suggests that nineteenth-century women's inferiority was acknowledged and, hence 'justified their domestic confinement', although they were valued as mothers and keepers of the home. [177] Thus, on the one hand they were considered 'psychically inferior' and, on the other, each woman was 'given more responsibilities'. Furthermore, while 'her biological specificity of procreation was emphasized' but at the same time 'her sexuality was denied, combined with a profound religiosity and fidelity to her husband' – no wonder that this ambivalence led to crises and tensions within the family nucleus.[178] The rigid separation of roles and responsibilities for both men and women was supported by the Catholic church as 'a particularly coercive pattern of behaviour weighed on both sexes'.[179] The slow increase in the presence of women in the public sphere in the twentiety century sanctioned a rupture with the past that impacted the home. At the same time the first wave of feminism emerged, culminating in Italy with the first National Convention of Italian Women in 1908, starting glimpses of social change that affected the domestich sphere.

Femininity and Social Change

Social change in Italy emerged from women, specifically their break from traditional habitus and field of action (the domestic), which, according to Bourdieu is at the basis of transforming practices.[180] According to Adkins, Bourdieu connects social transformations to a heightened awareness and critical reflexivity that emerges precisely 'when there is discord between the previously routine adjustments of subjective and objective structures'; hence, habitus and field are asynchronous, because the field of action changes – in this specific case, from the domestic to the public sphere.[181] This movement, that started with the First World War, was interrupted by the strong reformism of the Fascist regime in Italy. Benedetta Marinetti, the wife of the renowned Italian Futurist, became 'the standard bearer of a return to order and family values' in the 1940s, sanctioning the end of Italian first wave feminism.[182] The strong reaction to social change was particularly evident in Italy, as both the church and Fascist regime intervened in a period of 'profound identity crisis

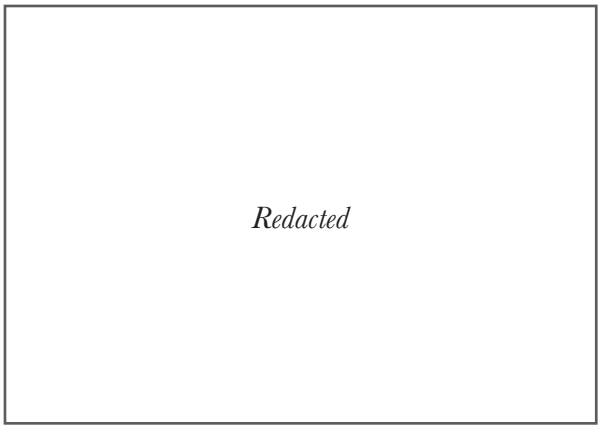


Fig. 2.39 – 2.40. Still frames of the movie *A Special Day* by Ettore Scola (1977).

and loss of both sexes',[183] due to the questioning of the models and certainties generated by this rupture. Indeed, the regime operated 'for a redefinition of male and female identities on the basis of more traditional models, trying to make even the most modest signs of change that occurred before the war disappear'.[184] This was possible thanks to its direct intervention in the domestic sphere. It, indeed, subverted the intimate-collective dichotomy by making public the private realm of the home. Specifically, women were responsible for the upbringing of the nation, hence the emergence of the myth of the *massaia* and the establishment of mandatory courses in domestic economy. Surveillance entered the home, literally, as agents of the regime accessed private homes to verify the disciplined reproduction of the domestic precepts established by the regime.[185]

The haunting presence of the late days of the Fascist regime is lucidly illustrated in Ettore Scola's movie, *A Special Day* (figs. 2.3, 2.39, 2.40), filmed inside architect Mario de Renzi's housing block Palazzi Federici (1931), a lower- and middle-class mass housing project built in central Rome but now inhabited by the higher middle class (figs. 2.17, 2.38), which I visited during fieldwork. The movie, filmed entirely inside the housing block, clearly shows the typical day of an Italian housewife (figs. 2.3, 2.39). Unable to leave her concrete cage, she lives 'a special day' when she meets a neighbour on the roof terrace of the building. Both share secret desires and aspirations (he is homosexual and she wants to break free from her oppressors) that cannot find expression within the physical and metaphorical walls of the regime, as they are trapped in stereotypical feminine and masculine roles. That day, they break free while remaining indoors. *A Special Day* is a movie about the complicity and solidarity between two victims of Italian regressive culture and politics, but it also clarifies how gender and personal identity are constructed and negotiated within the boundaries of Modernist housing and beyond heteropatriarchal gender roles.

According to Skeggs, femininity is ambiguous and Sofia Loren's character embodies precisely that ambiguity. The term is used to define 'selfless social practices such as caring, highly regulated domestic practices and appearance',[186] yet it can be many things: it can be defined by embodied dispositions or it can be a resource of or qualify gender identity. However, according to Bourdieu's sexist social theory, it is not a form of cultural capital, as women are 'capital-bearing objects' only.[187] As previously discussed, 'it is women's role to convert economic capital into symbolic capital for their families through the display of tastes', so they accrue cultural capital and value of the family rather than being 'capital-accumulating subjects' like their husbands.[188] Furthermore, 'the "cultural housekeeping" undertaken by women of the symbolic, social and cultural capital of their families' is crucial for the family nucleus, along with their 'responsibility for its transmission across generations', which explains the connections between culture and gender, along with women's cultural conservatism and aesthetic choices.[189] Cultural competence is indeed informed by aesthetic dispositions and taste, which are manifested through people's relationship with objects and practices, leading to social, class but also gender distinctions. The patriarchal narrative that sanctions women's inferiority, therefore, extends to the aesthetic sphere. Cultural capital coincides with high culture and, given that feminine culture is usually associated with mid- and low-brow art or midcult, feminine cultural practices and classifications are

excluded from cultural capital. In other words, feminine aesthetic and spatial cultures are underestimated, minimised and forgotten. Women are economically inferior to men, as they are prevented from increasing their cultural capital through typically feminine aesthetic dispositions and cultural competence.[190] For instance, although considered bearers of Italian culinary culture and secrets, Italian women are seldom able to turn that competence into a profession, especially at the highest professional levels, as reaching that level of high-cultural competence is usually reserved to men.[191]

Stereotyped versions of femininity and masculinity persisted in Italy, even after the trauma of the Fascist regime and war. Asquer clarifies that within Italian families, there existed an 'intertwining of ambivalent and painful feelings, which nailed many Italian women to domesticity'.[192] Specifically, men 'were all a bit torn, because they had come out for centuries of total supremacy, so they did not dare to say "you stay at home!", but that was what they wanted'.[193] So, domestic roles and hierarchical family structures did not change. Just like the process of modernisation of Italian society, the process of social transformation never fully took place, despite the entry of women into the workforce throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In fact, women remained, as lucidly explained by Federici and Balbo, pigeonholed in their role as mothers and wives.[194] Notably, the changes caused by Italian women joining the labour force are at the root of the aforementioned sense of nostalgia for traditional society that was 'seen as a more coherent and stable world'.[195] This nostalgia qualifies the middle-class conservatism of the generation of homeowners that inhabits the post-war housing studied. The current skyrocketing rates of domestic violence in Italy could be explained by the reactionary, traditionalist pull of Italian heteropatriarchal society and women's constant negotiation of their social position vis-à-vis social change and conservatism, torn between the adherence to the secure horizon of the tradition and their personal aspirations.[196] The institutionalisation of double presence represents today a mediation that guarantees a continuation of women's traditional role, and it is precisely this continuity that characterises women's aesthetic choices in interior decoration.

The 'Art of Conserving'

> The great old-fashioned chandelier that hangs in the middle of the *salone* and dips in the quartz the good things of bad taste, the cùcu of the hours that sings, the chairs decorated with crimson damask... I am reborn, I am reborn in the one thousand eight hundred and fifty![197]

Miller explained that household activities do not prevent self-actualisation, and the emergence of 'neo-traditionalist' or 'conservative' aesthetic trends in the domestic realm does not necessarily entail a passive reproduction of habitus and traditional family hierarchies, instead, this research demonstrated that it is precisely through the reworking of traditional structures that it is possible to construct or rethink gender and self-identities.[198] Women's 'negotiated face of modernity' could be understood through the lenses of Adkins' and Skeggs' theory, as femininity encompasses an 'ambiguity at the heart of gender and

Fig. 2.41. Bedroom, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.42. Bedroom, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

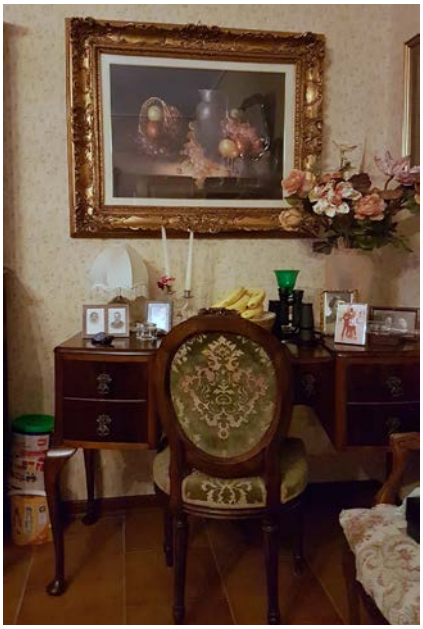


Fig. 2.43. *Salotto*, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

sexuality reproduction'; it is also characterised by an effort in producing 'comfort (via home, estrangement, boundary maintenance) or ontological security to overcome the ambivalence that beats the heart of being human'.[199] De Maritno's *appaesamento* can be, therefore, understood within the boundaries of self-making and gender practices. In other words, the process of appropriation of domestic interiors is instrumental in the formation and consolidation of gender identity.

> The critique of the "superfluous" and consumerist fever in the boom years coexists with the memory of the crystal cabinet, with Napoleon's canopy and the pride of memory, with the many objects hanging on the walls, each with a story […] the critique of yesterday's and today's consumerism coexists with a material culture rich in details, which loves to preserve and collect rare objects, knick-knacks, trinkets that have not been functional to everyday life in the strictest sense of the term […] next to the house and the appliances conquered with bills of exchange, the preserved objects are not real "consumption": they are made to last, to crystallise over time a passion, a belonging, a status, even if they are defined only as tools for ostentation, that would be an understatement.[200]

This summarises Italian women's peculiar manifestation of feminine domesticity characterised by the typically Italian adherence to a sober lifestyle and search for stability at all costs. The conservatism of the middle class is followed by the physical conservation of spaces and objects as a leitmotif of the history of the *salotto*, the so-called 'art of conservation' mastered by Italian women. Specifically, women take great care of household objects, boasting of their ability to keep them in good condition. This is linked to the still-cumbersome presence of numerous pieces of furniture and large-cut objects that are now outdated, out of fashion or considered antiques.[201] To Asquer,

> female identity, the domestic role of women and the conservation of objects over time seem, therefore, to be strongly intertwined at the heart of this model of domesticity. Within it, the sense of progress associated with the story of the house has to do with the conquest of a space and objects capable of communicating and preserving decorum and well-being. The central values are therefore undoubtedly duration and order, both immutable.[202]

Gender and national identities are formed and consolidated through the reassuring dimension of domestic interiors, with a propensity for stability and connection with past values and objects and the enactments of traditional practices (as manifestations of habitus). As seen in Part I, it is precisely through consumption choices that feminine culture is articulated. Italian women's rejection of rampant American-style consumerism and 'inclination to the conservation of order and maintenance of durable, consumer goods'[203] is a reason for personal gratification and, although included in the macro category of unwaged housework, it remains an important practice of resistance aimed at the definition of personal narratives and gender identities, but above all, feminine domestic culture.

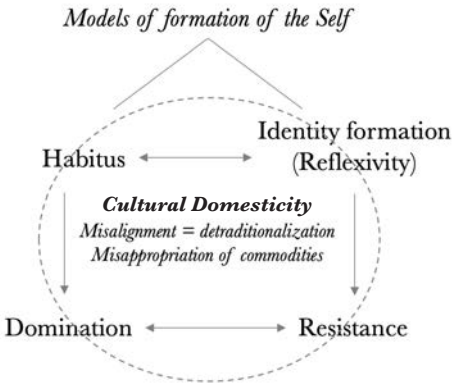
To summarise, political rhetoric, religion, patriarchy, housing and culture concurred to the formation of middle-class habitus to quell the social change that has affected women (which started from the divergence between habitus and field). What emerges from this clash is a combination of the double presence model and the 'art of conservation' inside domestic interiors, along with the propensity to keep the *salotto* space. The physical conservation of objects, in this case, is a form of resistance to imposed models of consumption (which usually reflect modernist, paternalistic and technocratic rhetoric) that, along with other manifestations of feminine domesticity studied, foster the consolidation and negotiation of Italian women's feminine identities. They are all framed within conservative cultural and social models that are specific to the Italian context, and are also materialised more clearly in the *salotto*, a room that epitomises the conservation of middle-class status. These dynamics reflect that cultural and aesthetic 'conservatism' that emerged in other European countries in the post-war period.

The parallel with French 'art of life' at this point is obvious, not only because it was chosen, in both cases, to describe an aspect of everyday life as an art form – which necessarily underlines its aesthetic dimension – but also because in both circumstances, systems of oppression and normalisation are intertwined with women's attempt to establish meaningful domestic practices. The latter are aimed at the consolidation of their gender identity and, more generally, their individual selves within well-defined spatial and cultural boundaries. The choice of the term 'art' is also telling because it seems to claim the important cultural and aesthetic dimension of each practice. From the point of view of cultural domesticity, both the 'art of life' and the 'art of conservation' reach the artistic, aesthetic and cultural level that has been attributed to them by women. From their position of cultural subordination, women indeed have become central to the analysis of housing and contemporary domesticity.

Sociologist Steph Lawler adds a further level of analysis, which questions the nature of resistance and domination by arguing that 'there is no "innocent" position: no resistance that is not some way complicitous with power'.[204] In specific, she cites an interesting passage in which Bourdieu problematises this relationship and provides a bleak response:

> When the dominated quest for distinction leads the dominated to affirm what distinguishes them, that is, that in the name of which they are dominated and constituted as vulgar, do we have to talk of resistance? In other words, if, in order to resist, I have no other resource than to lay claim to that in the name of which I am dominated, is this resistance? Second question: when, on the other hand, the dominated work at destroying what marks them out as "vulgar" and at appropriating that in relation to which they appear as vulgar (for instance, in France, the Parisian accent). Is this submission? I think this is an insoluble contradiction: this contradiction, which is inscribed into the very logic of symbolic domination […]. Resistance may be alienating, and submission may be liberating. Such is the paradox of the dominated, and there is no way out of it.[205]

Lawler partially agrees with Bourdieu and, provocatively, asks 'how liberating is to cast off these marks of difference and to adopt a normalised (middle class) habitus?'[206] Feminine cultural domesticity plays out precisely at the intersection between resistance and domination, but 'there is a clear difference between individual forms of accommodation and resistance, and the overthrown of systems of domination',[207] meaning that it is possible to operate individual forms of resistance while remaining confined within systems of domination. Specifically, Adkins locates 'change in regard to a shift in the conditions of social reproduction'.[208] Cultural domesticity inserts itself precisely at the core of these dynamics, acknowledging that both spatial and patriarchal systems have framed gender identities for centuries and, therefore, women had to find form of resistance within these oppressive systems, within existing mechanisms of social reproduction (Diagram 1). The detraditionalisation of gender, which emerges from a new reflexive approach towards gender norms and the separate spheres paradigm and, hence, towards the construction of self-identities, is still embedded within pre-existing gender norms. That 'reflexivity should not be confused with (or understood to concern) a liberal freedom to question and critically deconstruct rules and norms which previously governed gender', but 'is linked to a reworking or refashioning of gender […] [it] is perhaps better conceived as a habit of gender in late modernity'.[209] A reflexive approach toward one's own gender identity and individual self, the reworking of it – within pre-existing rules and norms – is, therefore, at the basis of contemporary self- and gender-making practices and, consequently, contemporary domesticity.



Digram 1. *Cultural Domesticity* and the interplay with the different modes of formation of the self.

Only the current emphasis on individualism has the potential to undo traditional rules and norms, yet it is in direct contrast with feminine identity, specifically:

> despite women's entry into the labour force, certain conventional arrangements of gender have not necessarily been dismantled and indeed may have become more entrenched. For example, McNay argues such moves have not freed women from the burden of emotional responsibilities […]. Instead they have made the process of individualization for women more complex since the ideal of performing an individualized biography – "living one's own life" – is in sharp conflict with the conventional expectation of "being there for others".[210]

Fig. 2.44. *Salotto* and *ricorrenze* table, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.45. The sewing machine as significant objects, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Adkins' point clarifies women's constant push and pull between habitus, traditional roles and the will to change, which coincides with the enhancement of one's individuality and selfhood. Much of this process takes place through the use and disposition of domestic objects and spaces, which makes women active design agents and protagonists in the construction of their own (reflective) narratives of self that is framed at the level of the unconscious, of the passive reproduction of habitus.

Each object carefully conserved in the Italian middle-class apartment (and exhibited in the *salotto*) is, thus, associated with a narrative of the self.[211] Conservation practices, emotional attachment and connection with the family's history extend women's individualities, contributing to the consolidation of their personal and shared identities. The interviews conducted during fieldwork in Italy partially focused on objects narratives, and each inhabitant spoke at length about one particularly cherished object that was the subject of much attention and looked as new, even after decades. For example, a woman interviewed clarified she is prone to the maintenance of objects considered 'durable' and purchased to be such, and when asked about cherished objects, she stated without hesitation:

> I am emotionally attached to all [the objects inside this house] because I connect them to my family. For example, my father's paintings, my grandmother's piano […] I care about it so much. I don't know how to play it, but there are all these things: this handcrafted table was in the house in Sorrento. Anything in this house reminds me [of something]: this painting, I can't tell you how old it is, it was given to my mother when she got married. I don't even know if it has value or not, in any case I am very attached to it […]. That valance has been there for sixty-three years and no one should touch it, even if they say that "it's old, it's ancient, you should have something more modern", no! I want it there as it is![212]

The interviewee continues by talking about the objects that belonged to her ancestors, mentioning, among other items, a sling bar from her grandfather, 'my grandmother's Singer, her jewellery box […]. Let's say that the sling bar is the oldest object. My mother bought the furniture when she got married, so we are talking about sixty-three years ago; this table, these consoles, even that pink sofa, also that one is sixty years old' (figs. 2.31, 2.44, 2.45).[213]

These considerations open to the '*tesaurizzazione* [capital preservation] mechanisms', they are 'usually interpreted as typical of the relationship with real estate', and 'seem to have also been applied to consumer items, such as the first large appliances, jealously guarded for years and remembered today, especially for their capacity to last over time'.[214] Domestic objects are treated as the most important durable good, that is, the house itself, in a cyclical process of conserving the status and order of things, which affects all aspects of daily life. The 'art of conservation' remains nonetheless fundamental for the construction of feminine domesticity. Once again, cultural domesticity manifests itself via the cultural and material reproduction (or conservation) of objects and habitus, as women's main form of gendered cultural capital.[215] In this regard, Bourdieu writes:

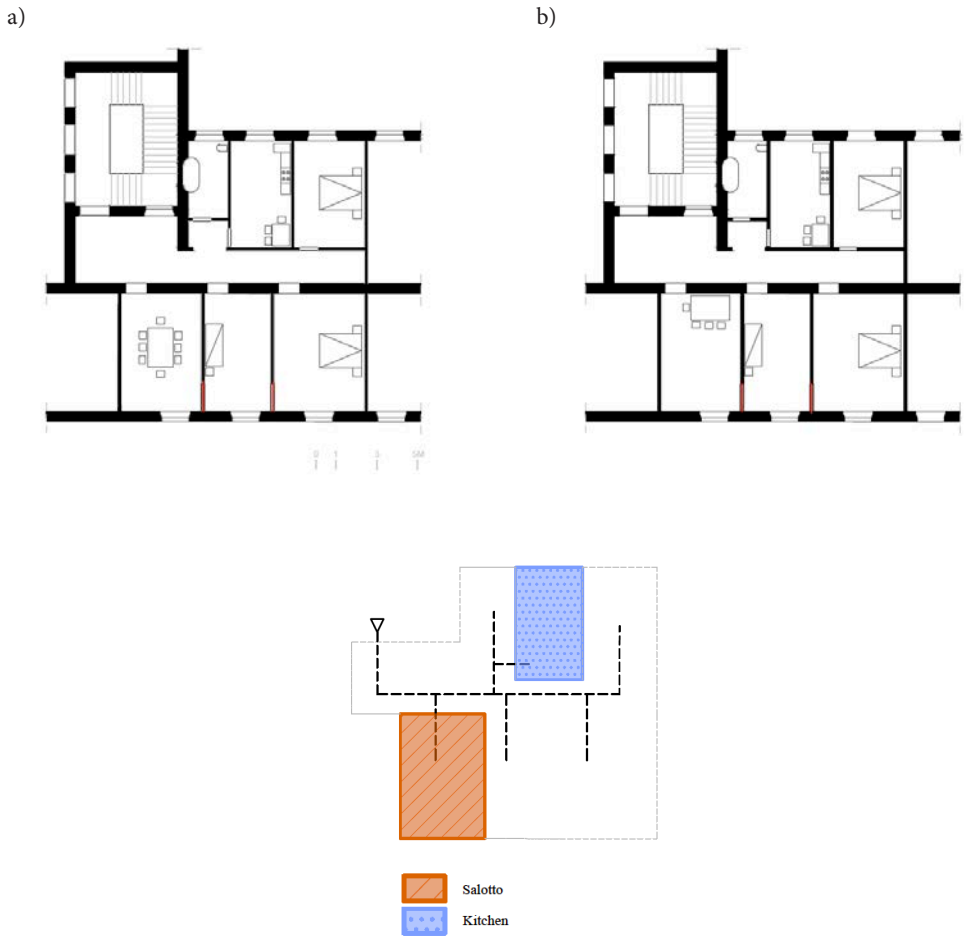


Fig. 2.46. Plan, ICP housing, Rome (2019). Marks in red indicate spatial alterations.
a) Central *ricorrenze* table (fig. 2.47).
b) Today's disposition of the *ricorrenze* table (fig. 2.44).

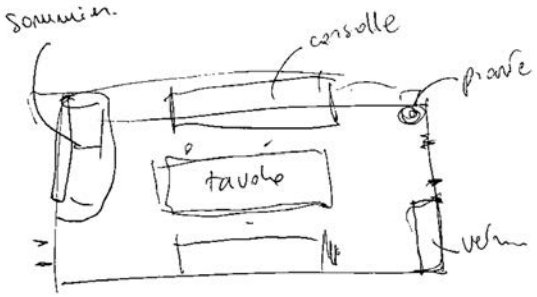


Fig. 2.47. Sketch of the disposition of the *ricorrenze* table, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

> every material inheritance is, strictly speaking, also a cultural inheritance. Family heirlooms not only bear material witness to the age and continuity of the lineage and so consecrate its social identity, which is inseparable from permanence over time; they also contribute in a practical way to its spiritual reproduction, that is, to transmit values, virtues and competencies.[216]

This summarises the processes addressed so far as the result of a cyclical reproduction of habitus, value systems, and family structures that strengthen family ties, social order and foster the physical permanence of objects and spaces like the *salotto*. From my fieldwork, it emerged that the conformist Italian middle class made fewer spatial alterations than its French counterpart. The ICP case study (fig. 2.46), however, clarifies some of the points raised until now. Visited during fieldwork, this ICP housing project – originally built for the white-collar families that were occupying Italy's early national institutions – was a collection of bedrooms, some of them connected by an enfilade. The latter was soon closed off by the inhabitants, who then created a *salotto* and two bedrooms. The alteration is decidedly less disruptive than previous examples, yet it is coherent with middle-class' aspirations and overall acceptance of pre-established systems. Plan (a) shows the original plan as retrieved from the national archives; plan (b) shows the position of the furniture (especially the large *ricorrenze* table) reconstructed during the interview (fig. 2.47). Image 2.47 is a sketch I made impromptu during the interview, guided by the interviewee, which reconstructed the arrangement of the *salotto*'s furniture when she was a child. Plan (b) illustrates the configuration of the apartment today (fig. 2.44). Interestingly, the distribution diagram shows the relationship between the very large, habitable kitchen (it is almost as large as the *salotto*) and the *salotto*, exemplifying the model criticised by rationalist architects (fig. 2.36).

Most notably, plans (a) and (b) encapsulate the processes described so far. In the 1960s and 1970s, the traditional, single-earner patriarchal family model was still widespread in Italy, and this is reflected by the central presence of the *ricorrenze* table in the middle of the *salotto*. The interviewee explained that with the passage of time and the death of her parents, she decided to move the table adjacent to a wall, freeing up the central space under the chandelier in the living room. This seemingly trivial passage is, however, a very important sign of the detraditionalisation mentioned by Adkins, which is the consequence of a more or less conscious reflexive attitude towards the self and, in general, one's relationship with existing structures (the family) and symbolic objects. The *ricorrenze* table is, indeed, not only one of the most important durable goods conserved by Italian women inside the home, but it is also the object that symbolises the patriarchal order, religion, and Italian culinary culture. The loss of the table's centrality within the *salotto*, therefore, symbolises the gradual loss of centrality of the patriarchal family. On this subject Lidia Morelli captured the first signs of this very slow change:

> the traditional centre of the room is thus abolished, the centre from which the light descended on the central table from the one large chandelier. The table is therefore moved to a corner, the sofa and armchairs are placed in the corner facing each

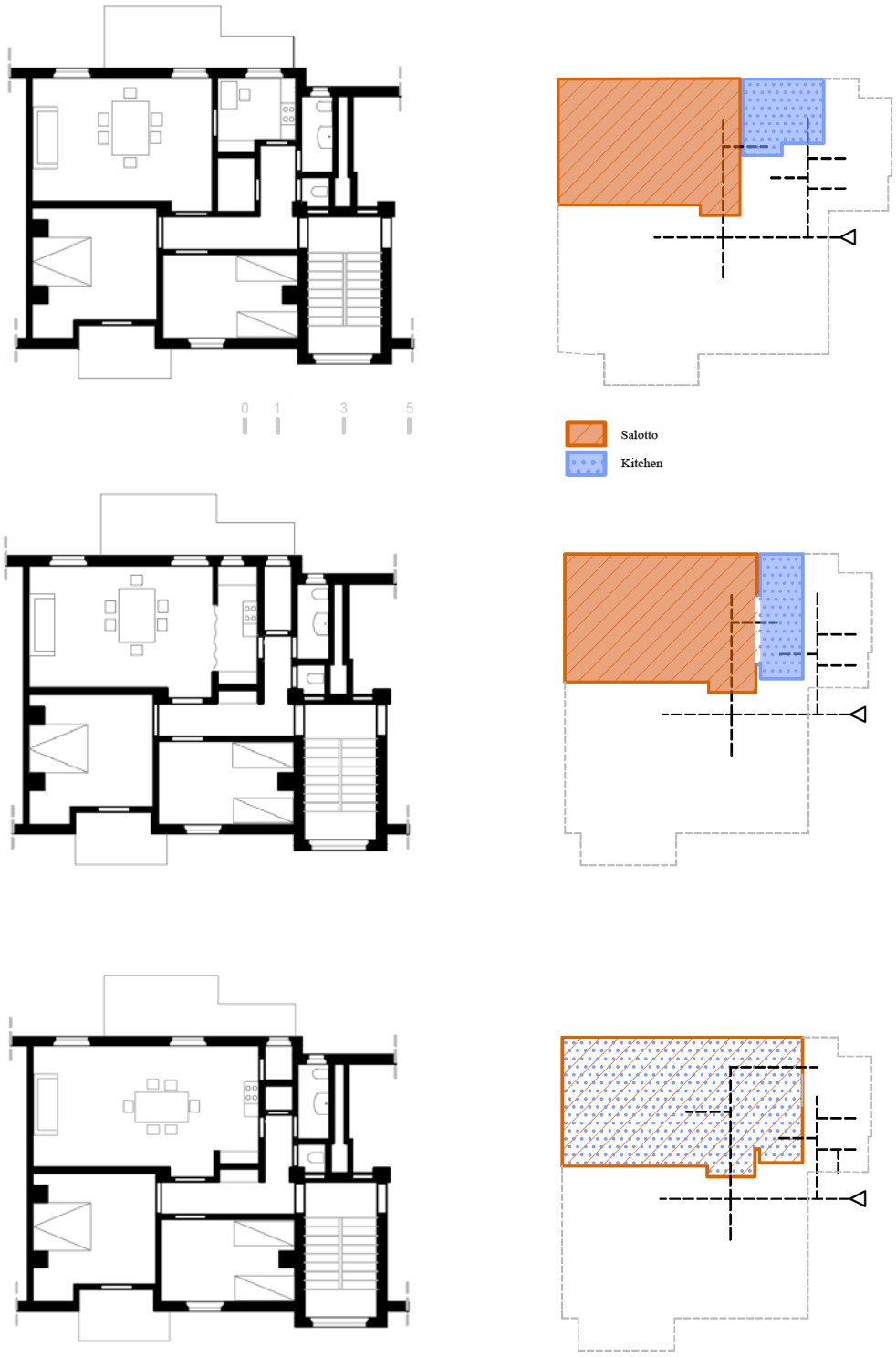


Fig. 2.48. Lorenzo Chiaraviglio, three different proposals for the distribution of the INA-Casa's dwellings, Vercelli (1953-1955)

other, they may seem to the traditionalists a somewhat daring innovation; but I suggest that they try, and instead see how the room and living in it will benefit from this change.[217]

2.5. From Mass Homologation to Detraditionalisation

Two Dining Tables

Italy's projects of construction and consolidation of a national, middle-class identity based on the centrality of both food and the patriarchal family had repercussions on the design distribution of post-war dwellings. The three most important aspects of this process, the establishment of a cultural narrative that formed disciplined citizens, the consolidation of a normalized social class with a clear identity, and the strengthening of gender hierarchies, spatialised in the kitchen and *salotto* of the post-war plan. Given the centrality and the symbolism of these spaces and the objects contained in them, post-war architects proposed several solutions, each of them suggesting a different role and position of women within the patriarchal grid, consequently each poses a different social and spatial change. The plans in figure 2.48 show the three major spatial solution explored at the time (parallels can be drawn with fig. 2.36). The first plan shows a more traditional configuration that separates the kitchen from the *salotto*, comparable to Ridolfi's original solution and corresponding to the apartment on the left in figure 2.33. The third plan shows instead the most radical solution of an open plan kitchen-living space, that emerged in the United States in the 1950s with the addition of the so-called 'island' that de facto replaced the *ricorrenze* table (still present in this plan).[218] It became popular in Northern Europe in the late 1960s,[219] but is only emerging now as a viable solution inside Italian homes (see fig. 2.33, apartment on the right, recently refurbished). The second plan shows, instead, a hybrid kitchen-alcove opening into the *salotto* (fig. 2.49), reminiscent of some early central European working-class housing typologies. The first solution exemplifies the hierarchical spatial model of the patriarchal family, while the third plan proposes a new, more symmetric vision of family relations, although the *ricorrenze* table persists as central element of the ordered, heteropatriarchal family. Each plan shows a particular moment in the history of the brief evolution of the Italian post-war apartment, with one major spatial element that symbolically materialises the spatial division of gendered spheres and roles in the home; it is the wall that divided the kitchen from the *salotto*, its presence or absence determining the relationship between habitus and field inside the Italian home. It is precisely in the complex interplay between practices and spaces, social models and negotiated identities that a possibility for change in Italian society emerges.

The kitchen seems, therefore, the only room of the post-war apartment open to change. The 1950s dwelling typologies usually had small kitchens with a small table that served for both food preparation and consumption and was occasionally used by children to study or play under their mothers' supervision (fig. 2.34). As wellbeing continued to grow in Italian society thanks to the economic boom, the kitchen space also tended to increase in size, making room for a *'cucina abitabile'* or eat-in kitchen, 'habitable' indeed and, therefore, intentionally

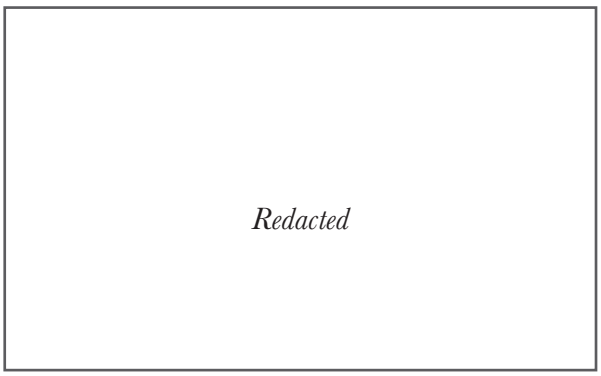


Fig. 2.49. Photograph of a kitchen-alcove inside a minimal house (1930s).

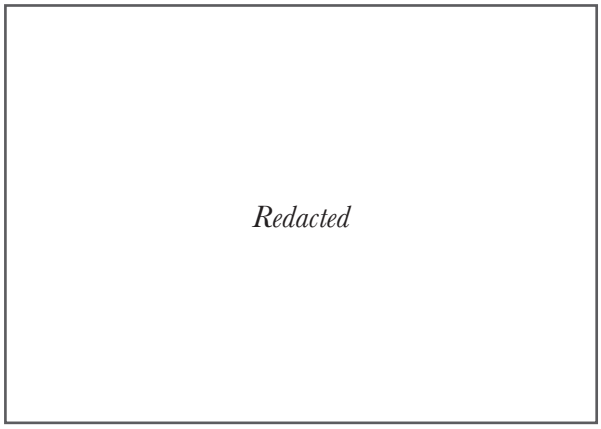


Fig. 2.50. Loconsolo Silvestre, *Marcella Scabbia, Civil Servant, and her Family Having Breakfast* (1978).

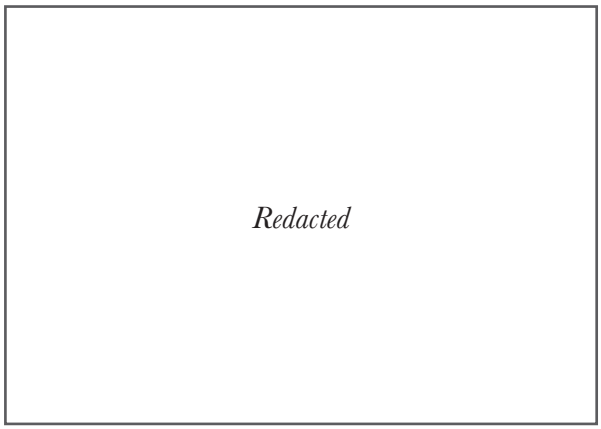


Fig. 2.51. Nino Migliori, family dinner inside a kitchen-dining, Bologna (1957).

costumed to host the family. This space was recognised at the time as the centre of the intimate conjugal family (fig. 2.50). Barbagli noted that the phenomenon of nuclearisation of the family grew until the beginning of the First World War.[220] It stopped in the interwar period, and then resumed (in line with the rest of the countries affected by the war) from the 1950s up to the 1970s.[221] The affirmation of the nuclear family went hand in hand with the change of the Italian family into intimate conjugal. This new model of family relationship was characterised by the reduction of the social distance between the head of the family, the wife and offspring with a looser separation of roles and a substantial change in the reproductive behaviour of the family. The number of children in fact decreased, along with the type of education given.[222] These first timid social changes reflect the processes described so far, and refer to the identity crisis that men were living right after the fall of the Fascist regime, resulting in an overall return to the heteropatriarchal model that granted stability and provided certainties. The eat-in kitchen model materialised the persistence of asymmetries and gendered spaces and practices in the Italian apartment, with Asquer arguing that the eat-in kitchen became the 'realm' of women,[223] that is, the intimate core of the house and the locus of the material reproduction of Italian culinary culture. Food was prepared and consumed directly in the kitchen, completing a process of spatial 'involution' that saw the return to the traditional model of the peasant kitchen-dining space shown in the photographs 2.51 and 2.55 (that is a kitchen of an ICP block, based on the rural model).

Far from the representative qualities of the *salotto*'s *ricorrenze* table, the kitchen table is the centre of family intimacy or Jamieson's so-called 'practices of intimacy' that have two important implications: 'intimate relationships are implicated in innovative individual efforts to change biographies and histories but they are also implicated in protective responses to enforced change and in the re-creation of tradition.'[224] So, on the one hand 'intimacy is built through a dialogue of mutual self-disclosure between equals, revealing inner qualities and feelings, simultaneously generating a self-reinforcing narration of the self' meaning that intimate relations foster the consolidation of the self and social relations but, on the other hand, they are also instrumental to the reproduction of social order as a reaction to potential changes.[225] Practices of intimacy are, therefore, an important aspect of cultural domesticity, and they also play an important role in the development of feminine identities. Women may, for instance, keep reproducing traditional models whenever they take full charge of food preparation in the home, or when they decide to consume the least desirable portions of meal (as described by Delphy), however, when they sit on the kitchen table with their (intimate conjugal) family and converse informally sharing their thoughts and feelings, they reinforce – to put it in Gidden's terms – their self-reflective autobiographical narration that is the basis (for Giddens, Jamieson, Adkins and Skeggs) of personal and, above all, social change.[226]

It becomes, therefore, evident that within Italian post-war but also contemporary middle-class apartments exists a tension between a propensity to change – that partially manifests in the opening of the kitchen wall and is materially symbolised by the kitchen table – and a retreat in past, traditional roles, exemplified by the *salotto* and *ricorrenze* table. Tellingly, both spaces are characterised by the presence of a dining table. These two objects with identical

Fig. 2.52. *Ricorrenze* table, Palazzi Federici, Rome (2019).

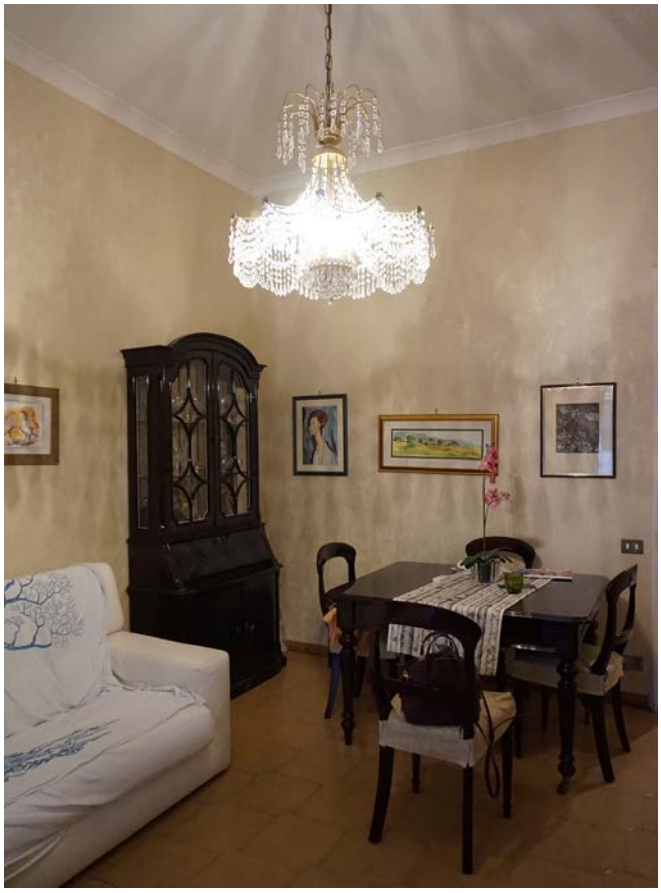


Fig. 2.53. *Ricorrenze* table, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

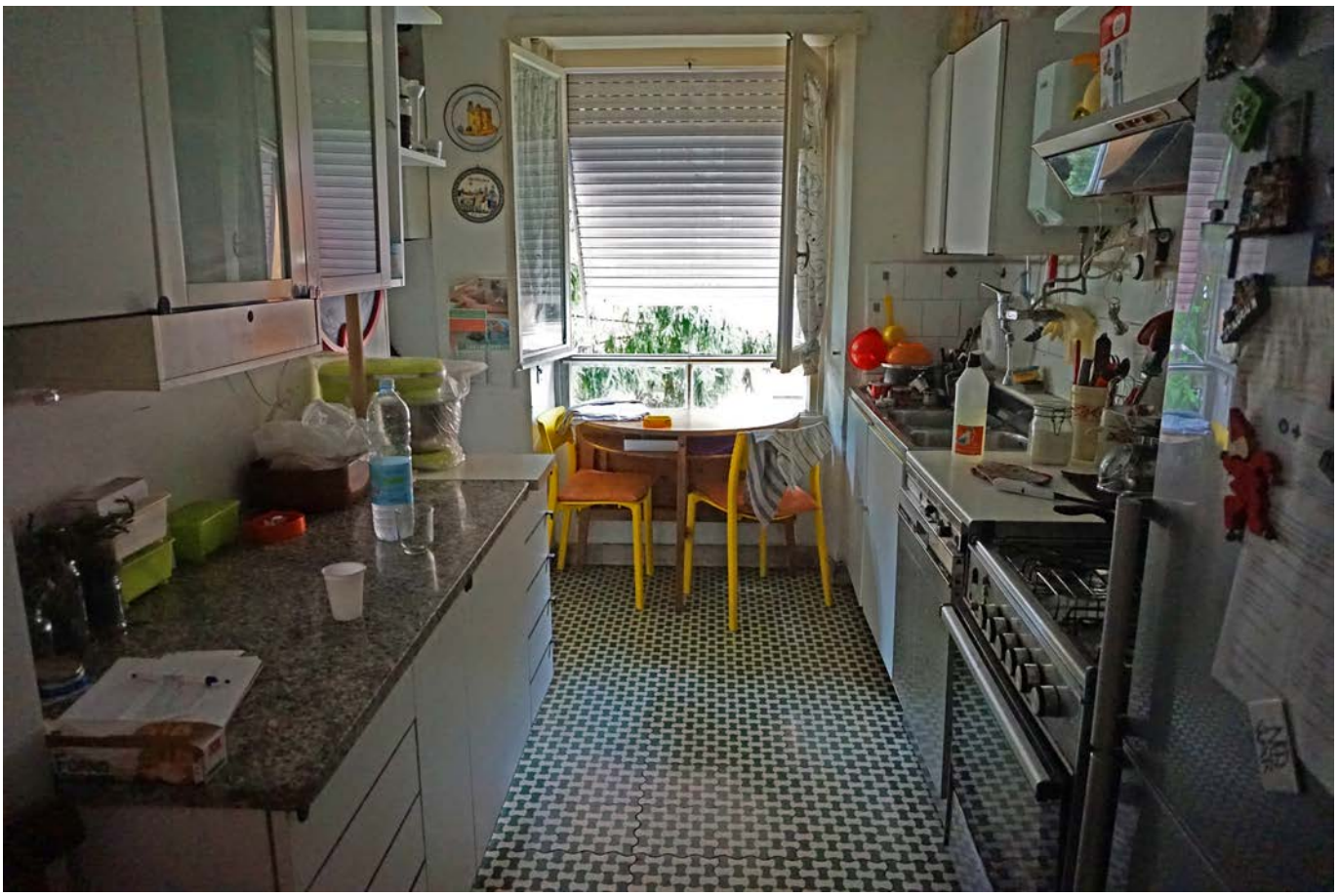


Fig. 2.54. Kitchen and kitchen table, Towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.55. Habitable kitchen and kitchen table, ICP housing (plan fig. 2.46), Rome (2019).

function exemplify the split between intimate and representational spaces of the Italian dwelling in which food, as a axis of Italian culture, plays a central role. The persistence of this dichotomy coincides with the subdivision of the Italian home into separate, gendered spheres, and it becomes also clear that it is precisely at the intersection of these spaces and practices that social but also cultural change can take place. The cultural and gender reproduction (through food preparation, intimate and self-making practices) that emerge from food consumption and the conservation of material culture, as well as their embodied, spatial and material reworking and negotiation, therefore, constitute feminine domesticity in Italy.

Interviews conducted during fieldwork clarified some of the points raised. One inhabitant of Ridolfi's project (fig. 2.33, plan on the left and fig. 2.54) clearly explained the contrast between the representational *salotto* and the kitchen:

> everything took place inside the kitchen. In that small table that you see under the window, which widens, we ate in 5-6, tightly, when we had such a space [the *salotto buono*] that could not be touched! Only on great occasions, holidays, could it be used, otherwise no. I remember it was always dark in here. [227]

Another woman interviewed states when their family used the *ricorrenze* table:

> [we used it] during our Christmas gatherings, during holidays, my father's birthday. When was his last birthday? It was in January, and we had dinner here, I moved this sofa and all of us had dinner here. [...] This was the space for parties even when I was a child, my mom used to organize parties here with canapés, sweets. It was always here in this room.[228]

The interviewee later added:

> While with my mother and the whole family we all tended to eat tightly in the kitchen, I changed this habit – I can't stay there, it's always hot – and so we always eat here [*ricorrenze* table].[229]

This subtle change could be compared to the gradual movement of the *ricorrenze* table from the centre of the *salotto* (figs. 2.52, 2.53), in both cases it its symbolic role as centre of the heteropatriarchal family decreases without disappearing. Figures 2.52 and 2.53 show the interiors of the two ends of the spectrum of the Italian middle class, encapsulating what has been discussed so far.

Contemporary Domesticity

People interviewed during fieldwork showed a propensity to respect past values and traditions, existing spatial distributions and cherished inherited objects but, sometimes, they also demonstrated a will to break free from constricting spaces and rules. The *salotto*

buono resists change in most of cases, yet some of the spaces visited seemed to be inhabited on a daily base, just like the *ricorrenze* table was used as a dining table by the woman cited earlier. Double presence, hence the decrease of the female presence at home has brought, for instance, some men closer to the kitchen space. Both women's life outside the domestic sphere and their intimate and domestic practices concurred to the consolidation of their inner selves, that is the outcome of not only interpersonal exchange but also a reflexive attitude towards their position in the social world and the family nucleus.[230] It is widely acknowledged, however, that in today's dual-earner households an unequal division of domestic labour persists, with a noticeable absence of Italian men in caring and emotional labour.[231] Male privilege is reproduced while the conditions for social change manifest themselves, indeed Jamieson clarifies that 'local and national variations in conventional gender differences in conduct of family and personal life and the degree of institutionalised support for men's authority over women persist and are reinstitutionalised as well as subverted through practices of intimacy'.[232] She also adds that

> gender differences and divisions continue to have implications for intimacy among heterosexual couples although the situation has changed radically since the mid-twentieth century. Intimacy, domesticity and femininity are not as routinely discursively produced as coterminous boundaries. Men and women both talk of seeking intimacy and equality although they invest differently in the work of sustaining relationships and households.[233]

It is true, in fact, that globalised family models are more democratic and equal, yet the unequal share of domestic labour keeps forcing women into their traditional roles, as clearly captured by Laura Balbo. Irene Cieraad, who carefully studied the domesticity in the Netherlands, identified the open plan living as a symptom of these changes (that took place in her home country between the 1960s and 1980s)[234] and tellingly wrote:

> In its open setting it glorified the then-praised democratic values of social equality between men and women, between parents and children. Nowadays, more and more family men even like to cook. Especially at the weekends they treat their family and friends to exquisite dinners. The aspirations of these hobby cooks demand the purchase of expensive, professional kitchen equipment, similar to a full-blown restaurant. Men's professional aspirations may well explain why private investment in kitchen renovation and the expenditure on kitchen equipment is still rising. Besides, the latest trend in kitchen design, a so-called 'cooker island' causes a complete and costly restructuring of the former kitchen nook. As dish washing has been delegated to a dishwasher, the performance of cooking has become the focus of attention. It is staged around the central cooker island in the back of the living area.[235]

Few Italian men have developed an interest in food preparation in Italy[236] and only one of the men interviewed during fieldwork demonstrated an interest in cooking that materialised in the open plan living arrangement described by Cieraad. He is a homeowner who recently

inherited his childhood home inside Ridolfi's housing complex, admitting that he never liked the building because, just like the women interviewed inside Poullon's estate, it did not reflect his social aspirations (he probably associated Modernist housing with the working class, although Ridolfi's building was designed for the middle class). He, therefore, decided to refurbish the apartment and renovated it according to his aspirations (fig. 2.33 apartment on the right). The open plan living is rather radical in comparison to his neighbours and, overall, all the apartments visited during fieldwork. What stands out is the complete absence of a dining table, both the kitchen and *ricorrenze* table are replaced by a large island (figs. 2.56, 2.57). When asked the reasons behind these changes, he replied:

> [It is due to] the need to have the space as open as possible. It is not dictated by fashion, I think it is a need rooted in us, a new generation that needs a little more space of conviviality. I don't like the closed kitchen. This is because the centre of the house has actually become the [open plan] kitchen. [...] Now the centre of the home and of conviviality is the kitchen. So having the island, for example, and this fact of being close, chatting, drinking and cooking, is something you couldn't do before. Because you were closed in the kitchen, or everyone went into the kitchen – but it was narrow – so maybe this is the reason behind this need for openness, it's only for that in reality. Then also because there is more light, beyond everything, there is a need for light.[237]

A man who lives inside the same residential complex demonstrated an interest in renovating his home. He even shared with me some renderings of the renovation plan that he intends to carry out inside his apartment (figs. 2.59, 2.60). The interventions consist of the demolition of the kitchen-*salotto* dividing wall, the creation of an island, just like the previous apartment, and the persistence of a *ricorrenze* table (fig. 2.59) and a large, heavy wooden display cabinet that was inherited and conserved in time currently located right in front of the *ricorrenze* table (figs. 2.58, 2.59)

His answer to my question on the reasons behind this renovation was particularly meaningful:

> I knock this wall down because otherwise you won't spend time in this *salotto*. If I stay in the kitchen cooking, the others are not suffering the heat with me, they are over there [in the *salotto*] conversing. So you end up here alone, at best with someone who keeps you company, who maybe feels sorry for you [...]. Things change substantially if I tear the wall down, it becomes a true living space, usable, where you can really do everything you want, where there is no longer the problem that one feels isolated from the world [...]. And then there three doors separate the *salotto* from the kitchen [...]. The fundamental factor is that the things have changed: it is no longer the same as before, when the woman was in the kitchen and stayed there.[238]

The consciousness towards the gendered nature of the practice, the identification of a spatial problem is crucial, as it is part of a reflexive process of identity formation that

Fig. 2.56. Open plan living, kitchen island, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, right), Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.57. Open plan living, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, right), Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.58. *Ricorrenze* table, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, left), Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.59, 2.60. Rendering, renovation project, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, left), Rome (2019).

overrides, although still too rarely, stereotypical notions of gender and gendered practices. In fact, it is precisely when the man starts preparing meals that he realises the oppressive nature of domestic space. The embodied act, the gendered habitus by changing its field of action generates change, and this change invests both female and male identities. It is no wonder, once again, that hints of social change take place inside the kitchen and are, therefore, characterised by the changing dynamics of food preparation and consumption. The cultural and gendered dimension of these processes is embedded in the spatial and individualized manifestation of cultural domesticity. Therefore, the series of alterations and aesthetic changes discussed so far, along with their direct connection to the practice of food preparation and consumption – which is seemingly becoming less gendered because of double presence – reveal the apparent shifting gender boundaries of contemporary cultural domesticity. The latter, however, retains its main spatial, cultural, social and gender connotations. In fact, the following paragraph demonstrates that gender difference persists and it is tightly connected to the spatial alteration of the home.

Furthermore, tearing down the kitchen wall is particularly relevant in this study. Indeed, before the rupture the kitchen was the enclosed space where raw food was handled, a space to contain smells and turning nature into culture before entering the representational-ritualistic realm of the *salotto*.[239] There, the cultural dimension of food intertwined with the rituals of *ricorrenze*, festivities and celebrations.[240] As Bourdieu explained in his writings this subdivision is gendered,[241] hence the modernist division of spheres. With the symbolic and material collapse of this division (and the creation of the kitchen-island for 'hobby cooks'), to the cultural and ritualistic aspect of this practice is associated a performative dimension: culinary knowledge and the preparation of food becomes indeed an act seen by the guests invited at home and is, therefore, turned into a sign of distinction. What formerly exclusively qualified feminine culture, with the collapse of the wall becomes, for men, a form of embodied cultural capital. In other words, when men cook for their guests in the open plan living they showcase their culinary knowledge, which becomes embodied cultural capital and, therefore, a distinctive sign. In this regard Skeggs clarifies that habitus was initially a means through which Bourdieu could decentralise the notion of the self, yet it 'offers both a model of disciplined bodies […] in which the habitus is the product of strategies objectively co-ordinated by mechanisms unknown to the individual, but also the future-projected, strategizing, accruing, exchange-value self'.[242] So food preparation as embodied cultural capital is a manifestation of habitus that allow for the accumulation of personal value (capital) that is instrumental in the formation of the self. Cultural knowledge, or the reproduction of enculturated acts is 'cultural property' that 'can be stored in the self'.[243] This reinforces points raised earlier on the subordination of feminine practices and taste: feminine culinary culture and knowledge is ordinary, it has been branded for a long time (just like household chores and consumption) as passive,[244] but when performed by men it becomes, instead, an active mental and manual exercise that aspires to becoming a high cultural act.

The entry of men into the realm of food preparation in the domestic sphere, therefore, has the potentiality to keep reproducing the mechanisms of cultural subordination of women,

especially if spatial change is not followed by social change. In fact, due to the stereotypical association between femininity and the preparation of meals in the home as an ordinary manifestation of their caring labour, and because of women's stereotypical role as vessels for the symbolic reproduction of cultural capital, they risk being excluded from the process of cultural capital accumulation through culinary practices (and subsequently cultural and class distinction). This exclusion can lead once again to their cultural subordination, which mirrors the past exclusion of feminine aesthetic culture (inside domestic interiors) from high culture. However, as it has been argued previously, women's culinary knowledge and practices are valuable manifestations of domestic culture and feminine identity. Cultural domesticity aknowledges the important process of detraditionalization that is slowly taking place inside domestic interiors, with the understanding that spatial change relates to social change and, therefore, that the position of women vis-à-vis gender relations, habitus and self-making should be equal, otherwise – as Adkins and Skeggs rightly pointed out in their texts – after detraditionalisation will follow a retraditionalisation.[245]

Furthermore, Cieraad points out that 'the success of father's home restaurant may lead in the end to a large, but more or less separate dining kitchen. And although father's weekend gastronomy reversed a traditional gender divide, it also tended to overshadow mother's less-obtrusive catering service during weekdays.'[246] She concludes that even minimal change can and should be applauded – along with the spatial outcome that emerged from it. It is indeed part of an overall 'feminization of masculine taste'[247] and practices, including interior decoration and homemaking practices that, in my opinion, should be acknowledged when studying contemporary domesticity in Western countries. Most notably, both men interviewed took the decoration of their houses into their own hands. For instance, the first man interviewed custom-designed some bookshelves, that he used also as a display for his multiple personal collections, including miniatures, CDs, and his father's hats (fig. 2.61). Interestingly, previous considerations on collections and the display of objects can be now attributed to the construction of male identities.

It is undeniable that these first manifestations of change in the domestic sphere, even in a country as conservative as Italy, are encouraging. However, gender equality in the domestic sphere remains yet to be achieved. Despite women's entry into the workforce over the past century, they are still expected to take care of the house, leading to tensions within the family unit.[248] The remnants of these dynamics are evident in the interviewees' answers and materially deposited inside contemporary domestic interiors. As discussed in the first chapter, although men are taking on more domestic responsibilities it is still not enough, on the contrary, they benefit from women's hyper productivity and use their free time to strengthen extra-domestic, professional and personal relationships (even inside their 'home restaurants'). To conclude, double presence remains a fundamental component of Western women's life and identity, and despite the contemporary blurring of the modernist dichotomy public-private, women remain the centre of domestic life and caring.

Fig. 2.61. Bookshelves, detail of the hats' collection, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, right), Rome (2019).

Notes

1 See Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (New York: Zone Books, 2017). Furthermore, the rise of neo-traditionalism in Italy is exemplified by the recent rise of neo-conservative parties led by politicians Matteo Salvini and Giorgia Meloni.

2 Balbo, 'La Doppia Presenza.'

3 Melograni, ed., *La Famiglia Italiana*, 263.

4 Enrica Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi: Una Capitale e Una Periferia Nell'Italia Del Miracolo Economico* (Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 2011), 86. Author's translation.

5 Mariuccia Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto: L'Abitazione Piccolo-Borghese nell'Italia Fascista* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1993), 21. Author's translation.

6 Maristella Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici' (The Dwelling and Domestic Spaces), in *La Famiglia Italiana dall'Ottocento a Oggi*, ed. Pietro Melograni (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1988), 568.

7 Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto*, 86.

8 Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi*, IX; Filippo De Pieri, Bruno Bonomo, Gaia Caramellino, and Federico Zanfi, eds., *Storie Di Case: Abitare l'Italia Del Boom* (Roma: Donzelli, 2014), XVII. Author's translation.

9 Lucetta Scaraffia, 'Essere Uomo. Essere Donna' (To Be a Man and a Woman), in *La Famiglia Italiana Dall'Ottocento a Oggi*, ed. Piero Melograni (Roma: Laterza, 1988), 214.

10 See Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi* and Melograni ed., *La Famiglia Italiana.*

11 According to architect Filippo de Pieri, the so-called 'public and average residential building,' 'market residential building' or 'post-World War II ordinary building' 'until now have not been subject to historicization nor are they particularly known to a specialized public'. He, too, shares – in line with this thesis – that these are buildings worthy of investigation because they are representative of shared practices and social values in Italy. De Pieri, *Storie Di Case*, XV.

12 'Average' and 'minor' housing production refers to the ordinary post-war mass housing projects built in Italy in the second half of the twentieth century. These are relatively unknown estates in contrast with high-modernist masterpieces. In this regard, the 2001 Italian census reported that about 55% of the total housing stock available in Milan, Rome and Turin was built from the 1940s to the 1970s. De Pieri, *Storie Di Case*, XXIX.

13 Pietro Melograni, in his introduction to *La Famiglia Italiana*, clarifies: 'The belief of an omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God eliminated any possibility of escaping punishment and gave great effect to the rules of conduct.' Melograni, 'Introduction,' IX. Author's translation.

14 Melograni, , 'Introduction,' IX. Author's translation.

15 Ibid.

16 See Cooper, *Family Values.* Statistical data reported by the society *Demos* show that until 2017 the trust of Italians towards political institutions has been plummeting. 2017 report available here: http://www.demos.it/a01472.php

17 Melograni, 'Introduction.' *Eurostat* 2018 report on young people living with parents showed that 86% of Italian young men (18-34 years old) and 83% of young women still lived with their parents in 2018, which is one of the highest rates in Europe. Data available here: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Young_people_-_social_inclusion#Living_with_parents

18 Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto*, 13.

19 Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 526. Author's translation.

20 Ibid.

21 ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics), 2017 Report. Available here: https://www.istat.it/it/files/2017/05/RA2017_cap2.pdf

22 See Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid, 70.

25 Asquer, *Storia Intima*, 44. Author's translation.

26 Asquer, *Storia Intima.*

27 Ibid.

28 Bourdieu, *Distinction.*

29 Ibid, XXIX.

30 Ibid.

31 Christine Delphy, *Close to Home; a Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression* (London-Brooklyn: Verso Books, 2016).

32 Ibid.

33 Data reported by the survey 'Un'Italia Frammentata: Atteggiamenti Verso l'Identità Nazionale' (A Fragmented Italy: attitiudes Towards National Identity) 2018 report by *Ipsos*. Avilable at: https://www.destincommun.fr/media/vm2nwl1z/italy-it-final_digital.pdf

34 *The Betrothed* is a renowned Italian classic by Alessandro Manzoni published in 1827. Quote by Piero Camporesi, at page XVI of the introduction to the 1970 reprint of Artusi's book. Author's translation.

35 *Giovine Italia* was a political group led by Giuseppe Mazzini who brought Italy to unification.

36 Piero Meldini, 'A Tavola e in Cucina' (At the Table and in the Kitchen), in *La Famiglia Italiana Dall'Ottocento a Oggi*, ed. Piero Melograni (Rome: Laterza, 1988), 417-464.

37 The need to distinguish the culinary culture of the peninsula from the French one is at the base of what today is called in legal terms 'food sovereignty', that is the decision to political and strategic self-determination in order to safeguard its commercial security in the field of agriculture and food production. The relationship between political power and food is parallel to that of the definition of Italian food as an element of cultural identity to be protected, valued and regulated. It is inserted within the nationalistic rhetoric of a common culinary identity that does not take into account, nowadays, the cultural differences of ethnic minorities present in the country.

38 Meldini, 'A Tavola e in Cucina,' 442-443. Author's translation.

39 Ibid.

40 Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire.' *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 7-24. Nora focuses the second part of his essay describing the French case.

41 Ibid.

42 Nora, 'Between Memory and History.'

43 Antonio Gramsci, *Arte e Folclore* (Rome: New Compton Editori, 1976).

44 To Gramsci, folklore is seen as the manifestation of an artistic and aesthetic culture typical of the lower classes, he thus elevates these secondary artistic manifestations to the status of culture. Gramsci, *Arte e Folclore*.

45 Gramsci *Arte e Folclore*. On the basis of these reflections, it is possible to hypothesize that feminine domestic cultures are particular forms of 'modern folklore,' however, I will not expand on these reflections as they go beyond the scope of this research.

46 Carla Pasquinelli, *La Vertigine dell'Ordine: Il Rapporto tra Sè e la Casa* (Milano: Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2009), 64.

47 See Ernesto de Martino, *La Fine del Mondo* (Milano: Einaudi, 2002).

48 Pasquinelli, *La Vertigine dell'Ordine*, 66. Author's translation.

49 Ibid, 55.

50 See Milani and Pegoraro, 'Tra pentole e legami familiari.'

51 Interview with a couple, ICP complex, Rome. August 2019. Author's translation.

52 See Jean-Claude Kaufmann, *Casseroles, Amour et Crises: Ce que Cuisiner Veut Dire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005).

53 In an article published on Italian newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano* it is reported that 60% of Italian men never cook, and women are those that always prepare meals. The author reports the words of Italian sociologist Lorenzo Todesco: 'it is a "gender ideology" that causes women to do housework and care for their children with self-denial, and they do it to respond to the social expectations that are passed on by the family.' Author's translation. Stefania Prandi, 'Stirare, Cucinare o Fare la Spesa: Ancora "Cose da Femmine" per gli Uomini Italini,' *Il Fatto Quotidiano* (2014). Available at: https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/06/19/stirare-cucinare-o-fare-la-spesa-ancora-cose-da-femmine-per-gli-uomini-italiani/1032139/

54 Attfield, 'FORM/Female FOLLOWS,' 83.

55 Cox and Federici, *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen*.

56 Ibid, 5.

57 Donzelot, *The Policing of Families,* 35.

58 Delphy, *Close to Home.*

59 Ibid, 52-53.

60 Ibid, 53.

61 Stands for 'where the house is, there is the family' that is a Latin motto carved on the main façade of a post-war housing complex in Montesacro, Rome.

62 Milani and Pegoraro, 'Tra pentole e legami familiari,' 21.

63 Giovanni Montroni, 'La Famiglia Borghese' (The Bourgeois Family), in *La Famiglia Italiana Dall'Ottocento a Oggi*, ed. Piero Melograni (Rome: Laterza, 1988), 136. Author's translation.

64 See Marzio Barbagli, *Sotto lo Stesso Tetto: Mutamenti della Famiglia in Italiana dal XV al XX Secolo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984).

65 Ibid, 15-16. Author's translation.

66 According to historian Peter Laslett there are five types of family structures: 'simple' or 'nuclear', or formed by a single conjugal unit (either complete or incomplete); 'without structure', that is a family without conjugal unity and, therefore, formed by people with kinship relationships or acquaintances; 'solitary', or families made up of a single person; 'extended', that is families with a conjugal unit and one or more cohabiting relatives; 'multiple families', which are composed of two or more conjugal units; and finally 'complex families', which are formed when multiple and extended families live together. Barbagli, *Sotto lo Stesso Tetto,* 15.

67 Barbagli, *Sotto lo Stesso Tetto,* 19. Author's translation.

68 Delphy, *Close to Home.*

69 Barbagli explains that throughout the seventeenth century past family structures remained stable across all social classes and contexts. Despite the spread of epidemics and the corresponding reduction in the complexity of families, there was always a tendency to return to previous family structures. Stability over the centuries, however, was interrupted by two significant structural events occurred between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this case, there was a re-strengthening of the differences between city and countryside, and a flattening of urban family structures. So, if on the one hand the complexity of agricultural

households increased, from the seventeenth century on, the aristocratic families began to assume a nuclear-type family structure, which brought them closer to the intermediate classes. Barbagli, *Sotto lo Stesso Tetto.*

70 Melograni, *La Famiglia Italiana,* 347. Author's translation.

71 Montroni, 'La Famiglia Borghese,' 136-137. Author's translation.

72 See Melograni, *La Famiglia Italiana;* Asquer, *Storia Intima.*

73 Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 573. Author's translation.

74 Ibid, 568. Author's translation.

75 Ibid, 572. Author's translation.

76 Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto,* 101. Author's translation.

77 Idem.

78 Similarly, the Italian expression '*andare a tavola*' (go to the table) means to eat, hence the centrality of the dining table in the Italian apartment.

79 Pasquinelli, *La Vertigine dell'Ordine,* 45. Author's translation.

80 Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto,* 86; Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 573.

81 Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 585. Author's translation.

82 Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto,* 51; Montroni 'La Famiglia Borghese,' 135.

83 Gabriel Tarde, *The Laws of Imitation* (New York: Herny Holt and Company, 1903).

84 Steph Lawler, 'Rules of Engagement: Habitus, Power and Resistance,' in *Feminism After Bourdieu*, eds. Lisa Adkins and Beverly Skeggs (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 111-112.

85 Tarde, *The Laws of Imitation*, 191.

86 Ibid, 197-198.

87 Ibid, 197.

88 Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 576. Author's translation.

89 De Pieri, *Storie Di Case*, XVIII.

90 Montroni, 'La Famiglia Borghese,' 136.

91 Ibid, 135. Author's translation. These words recall previous reflections on the asymmetric family.

92 Montroni, 'La Famiglia Borghese.'

93 Skeggs, 'Context and Background,' *Feminism After Bourdieu,* 21.

94 Ibid, 21-22.

95 See Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto;* Asquer, *Storia Intima.*

96 Barbagli, *Sotto lo Stesso Tetto,* 19.

97 Antonio Golini, 'Profilo Demografico della Famiglia Italiana' (Demographic Profile of the Italian Family), in *La Famiglia Italiana Dall'Ottocento a Oggi,* ed. Piero Melograni (Roma: Laterza, 1988), 347.

98 Ibid.

99 Melograni, *La Famiglia Italiana,* 415. Author's translation.

100 Melograni, 'Inroduction,' VIII-IX.

101 Some Italian Women Futurists: poet Emma Marpelliero, painters Olga Biglieri, Leandra Angelucci Cominazzini, Bice Lizzari, sculptor Regina Cassolo, and many other – just recently discovered – talented artists.

102 Asquer, *Storia Intima,* 127.

103 Ibid, 127-129.

104 Asquer, *Storia Intima,* 132-135.

105 Barazzetti, 'Doppia Presenza.'

106 De Martino, *La Fine del Mondo.*

107 De Pieri, *Storie Di Case*, XI.

108 See Barazzetti, 'Doppia Presenza;' The reasons behind 'the disparity between employed women men extends beyond the pandemic. It is an endemic problem and is linked above all to parenting: only 53.5% of women with children are employed, compared to 83.5% of men on equal terms. For singles, the employment rates are 76.7% for males and 69.8% for females.' Author's translation. Letizia Giangulano, 'L'Italia Sta Lasciando Indietro le Donne' (Italy is Leaving Women Behind'), in *IlSole24Ore* (March, 2021). Available at: https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/l-italia-sta-lasciando-indietro-donne-AD4t44NB.

109 Some famous critics of the Italian middle-class conservatism were Pier Paolo Pasolini, directors Bernardo Bertolucci and Michelangelo Antonioni, along with writer Alberto Moravia, to name few.

110 See Melograni, *La Famiglia Italiana.*

111 Meldini, 'A Tavola e in Cucina,' 429. Author's translation.

112 Asquer, *Storia Intima.*

113 Ibid, 168.

114 Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto,* 50. Author's translation.

115 Italian Rationalism in architecture characterizes this era but played a relatively marginal influence on the design of the housing projects analysed in this text. Few highly refined housing projects that reflected Rationalist aesthetics – such as those built by architects Giuseppe Terragni, Giuseppe Pagano, and Edorardo Persico – were countered by several modernist mass housing projects. An example is the housing complex Palazzo Federici, built in the 1930s.

116 Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 582. Author's translation.

117 Ibid, 583. In the text she quotes V. De Grazia, Consenso e Cultura di Massa nell'Italia Fascista (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1981), 177. Author's translation.

118 Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 583. Author's translation.

119 Interior architecture and design in Italy is called *architettura degli interni* (which translates, literally, 'architecture of the interiors') and is part and parcel of architectural education.

120 Lidia Morelli, *La Casa che Vorrei Avere* (Milano: Hoepli, 1933); Irene Brin, *Usi e Costumi (1920-1944)* (Roma: De Luigi, 1944).

121 Katrin Cosseta, *Ragione e Sentimento dell'Abitare: La Casa e l'Architettura nel Pensiero Femminile tra le Due Guerre* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2000), 16. The author quotes Nicola Fasola, *Ragionamenti sull'Architettura* (Città di Castello: Macrì, 1949) 275-301. Author's translation.

122 Cosseta, *Ragione e Sentimento,* 62. Author's translation.

123 Ibid. 52. Author's translation.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid, 62.

126 Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto.*

127 Morelli, *La Casa che Vorrei Avere*, 58. Author's translation.

128 Cosseta, *Ragione e Sentimento,* 54-57.

129 Mussolini (1927), cited by Cosseta, *Ragione e Sentimento,* 69. Author's translation.

130 Ibid, 126. Author's translation.

131 Few parallels can be drawn between the prototypes designed by modernist male and female architects. In fact, even though female architects embraced the overall project of simplification of interior furnishings, the domestic spaces showcased demonstrate a greater interest in recreating a cosy environment, more in line with feminine taste and domesticity. The interiors of the Dopolavorista House, which was a temporary structure realised for the V Milan Triennale (1933), are very different, for instance, from those designed by Giuseppe Terragni in his Casa sul Lago per Artista, showcased in the same exhibition. Many interesting projects designed by notable female architects have been forgotten; however, they pave the way for a new analysis of the architecture of women architects in twentieth-century Italy.

132 Morelli, *La Casa che Vorrei Avere,* 60. Author's translation.

133 An exemplary case is the story of Charlotte Perriand and Le Corbusier's furniture, which was meant to be affordable, but soon became exclusive luxurious goods. Perriand herself described this process: 'These pieces of furniture, before giving them to Thronet, I tried to give them to Peugeot, since it was doing bicycles for everybody, I thought it would have done also sofas for everybody. On that point we were definitely wrong. Because at the beginning there were only few sophisticated intellectuals able to buy them, and at the end even today there's just a few people able to afford them. It is exactly the contrary of what we had set. They are luxurious pieces of design.' Marcello Di Puolo et al, eds., *Le Corbusier 1925/1929: L'Idea dell'Architettura Verificata Attraverso gli Elementi di Arredo Presentati al 'Salon d'Automne' del 1929* (Roma: De Luca, 1976), IX. Author's translation.

134 Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 583.

135 Brin, *Usi e Costumi*, 186. Author's translation.

136 Casciato, 'L'Abitazione e gli Spazi Domestici,' 573. Author's translation.

137 Sparke, *As Long as it's Pink.*

138 Luigi Bigiaretti, 'L'Arredamento della Casa' (The Home's Furnishing), *Grondaie* n° 2 (1935). Quoted in Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto*, 10. Author's translation.

139 Ibid. Interestingly, this passage recalls Le Corbusier's words mentioned in the first chapter. Author's translation.

140 See Sparke, *As Long as It's Pink.*

141 Ibid, 43. Author's translation.

142 Bourdieu, *Distinction,* 85.

143 Steph Lawler, 'Rules of Engagement: Habitus, Power and Resistance,' in *Feminism After Bourdieu*, eds. Lisa Adkins and Beverly Skeggs (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 110-129.

144 The last three names are almost unknown in Italy, they emerged from some preliminary research of the author.

145 Federici and Cox, *Counter-Planning From the Kitchen*; Meldini, 'A Tavola e in Cucina,' 453.

146 Meldini, 'A Tavola e in Cucina,' 453. Author's translation.

147 Asquer, *Storia Intima,* 65.

148 Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Skeggs and Adkins, *Feminism After Bourdieu*.

149 Adkins, 'Introduction,' *Feminism After Bourdieu,* 9.

150 Idem.

151 Although Skeggs and Adkins do not mention the 'domestic field' in their text, it exists literature that looks precisely at the 'domestic field' through Bourdieu's theory.

152 Montroni, 'La Famiglia Borghese,' 109. Author's translation.

153 Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto,* 28. Author's translation.

154 See Paolo Portoghesi, *Leggere l'Architettura* (Roma: Newton-Compton, 1981).

155 The presence of this room clarifies the social status of the inhabitants that were meant to occupy these buildings.

156 Interview with a resident, Ridolfi's towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome. August 2019. Author's translation.

157 Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi,* 44. Author's translation.

158 Delphy, *Close to Home.* In her book she discusses the fact that marriage determines women's class position as they are usually associated to the social class of their husbands.

159 See Milani and Pegoraro, 'Tra pentole e legami familiari.'

160 Pasquinelli, *La Vertigine dell'Ordine*, 55. Author's translation.

161 Delphy, *Close to Home.*

162 Delphy *Close to Home,* 48.

163 Ibid, 51.

164 Idem.

165 Italo Calvino, 'La Nuvola di Smog' (The Cloud of Smog), in *Gli Amori Difficili* (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1999). Author's translation.

166 Cosseta, *Ragione e Sentimento*, 37.

167 See Matrix, *Making Space* and Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*.

168 Luca Zanuso, 'Studies on the Double Presence,' in *La Ricerca delle Donne*, ed. Maria Marcuzzo and Anna Rossi-Doria (Milano: Rosenberg & Seller, 1987). Author's translation.

169 Skeggs, 'Context and Background,' 2.

170 Scaraffia, 'Essere Uomo. Essere Donna,' 251-252. Author's translation. See also Federici and Cox, *Counter-Planning from the Kitchen*.

171 See Giorgio Di Giorgio, *L'Alloggio ai Tempi dell'Edilizia Sociale: dall'INA-casa ai PEEP* (Roma: Edilstampa, 2011).

172 Ibid, 16. Author's translation.

173 Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi.*

174 Montroni, 'La Famiglia Borghese,' 110. Author's translation.

175 Italian ministry of interiors, data for 2021 (+3% femicides from partner), 110 deaths of women from the hands of their partners. 89 cases of domestic violence a day. The Italian Ministry of Interiors reported that in 2021 over a thousand serious cases of domestic violence were reported in Italy, but it is believed that many cases have not been reported.

176 Scaraffia, 'Essere Uomo. Essere Donna.'

177 Ibid, 219.

178 Ibid. Author's translation.

179 Ibid, 221. Author's translation.

180 Adkins, 'Reflexivity: Freedom or Habit of Gender?' in *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 197-198.

181 Ibid, 196.

182 Cosseta, *Ragione e Sentimento*, 21. Author's translation.

183 Scaraffia, 'Essere Uomo. Essere Donna,' 242-243. Author's translation.

184 Ibid, 243. Author's translation.

185 Cosseta, *Ragione e Sentimento*, 31-33.

186 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 25.

187 Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

188 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 29.

189 Ibid, 61.

190 This is valid even for those that reach an economic independence through an extra-domestic job, hence break free from the mechanisms of economic dependence described by, among others, Delphy and Donzelot.

191 Charlotte Druckman, 'Why Are There No Great Women Chefs?' *Gastronomica* 10, no. 1 (2010): 24–31. https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2010.10.1.24. In 2021 among 178 Italian restaurants with one or more Michelin stars, only 42 were directed by women.

192 Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi,* 172.

193 Idem. Author's translation.

194 Federici and Cox, *Counter-Planning From the Kitchen*; Balbo 'La Doppia Presenza.'

195 Scaraffia'Essere Uomo. Essere Donna,' 250.

196 Both Asquer and Scaraffia hints at these dynamics. Although Asquer's book was published in 2011, her reflections can apply to the current situation.

197 Guido Gozzano, poem 'L'Amica di Nonna Speranza,' in *Tutte le poesie*, ed. A. Rocca e M. Guglielminetti (Milano: Mondadori, 1983). Author's translation.

198 Miller, 'Appropriating.'

199 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 29.

200 Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi,* 47-48. Author's translation.

201 Ibid.

202 Ibid, 79. Author's translation.

203 Ibid.

204 Lawler, 'Rules of Engagement,' 122.

205 Bourdieu cited by Lawler, 'Rules of Engagement,' 121. The citation comes from *In Other Words: Essays Eowards a Reflexive Sociology*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), 155.

206 Lawler, 'Rules of Engagement,' 122.

207 Idem.

208 Adkins, 'Introduction,' 9. Emphasis as original.

209 Adkins, 'Reflexivity: Freedom or Habit of Gender?' 191-192.

210 Ibid, 198.

211 See Giddens *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), and Csikszentmihaly, and Rochberg-Halto, *The Meaning of Things.*

212 Interview with a resident, ICP complex, Rome. August 2019. Author's translation.

213 Ibid. Author's translation.

214 Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi,* 55-56. Author's tranlsation.

215 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 22-24.

216 Bourdieu, *Distinction,* 69.

217 Morelli, *La Casa che Vorrei Avere*, 135, cited also in Cosseta, *Ragione e Sentimento*, 110. Author's translation.

218 Imma Forino, 'Kitchens: From Warm Workshop to Kitchenscape,' *Domestic Interiors: Representing Homes from the Victorians to the Moderns,* ed. Georgina Downey (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 91–110.

219 Irene Cieraad, '"Out of my kitchen!" Architecture, Gender and Domestic Efficiency,' in *The Journal of Architecture*, 7:3 (2002): 274.

220 Barbagli, *Sotto lo Stesso Tetto: Mutamenti della Famiglia in Italiana dal XV al XX Secolo*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984): 27

221 Ibid.

222 Idem.

223 Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi,* 74.

224 Jamieson, 'Intimacy as a Concept.'

225 Idem.

226 Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*; Jamieson, 'Intimacy as a Concept,' 'Boundaries of Intimacy;' Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu.*

227 Interview with a resident, Ridolfi's towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome. August 2019. Author's translation.

228 Ibid.

229 Ibid.

230 Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity.*

231 For Italy see Asquer, *Storia Intima Dei Ceti Medi,* Salvati, *L'Inutile Salotto.* Other countries: Cieraad 'Out of my Kitchen!' and Jamieson, 'Boundaries of Intimacy.'

232 Jamieson, 'Intimacy as a Concept,' 'Boundaries of Intimacy.'

233 Ibid.

234 Cieraad, 'Out of my Kitchen!' 274.

235 Ibid, 275.

236 See Stefania Prandi, 'Stirare, Cucinare o Fare la Spesa' *Il Fatto Quotidiano* (2014). As mentioned earlier, 60% of Italian men never cook, 73% does not set up the table, 99% does not wash or iron clothes and 70% does not go grocery shopping.

237 Interview with a resident, Ridolfi's towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome. August 2019. Author's translation.

238 Ibid. Author's translation.

239 Rachel Scicluna, *Home and Sexuality: The 'Other' Side of the Kitchen* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017),14.

240 This reading can be associated to the anthropological tradition that started with Bourdieu's study of the Kabyle house. Bourdieu, 'The Berber House or the World Reversed.'

241 Ibid.

242 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 83.

243 Ibid, 91.

244 Miller in 'Appropriation,' and Baker in *Retro Style* mention this aspect.

245 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*.

246 Cieraad, 'Out of my Kitchen!'

247 Baker, *Retro Style.*

248 An article published the 21st of April 2021 on Italian newspaper *Il Sole24Ore* titled '"Woman housewife" and "man with pants", stereotypes persist among adolescents' and reports some data on the persistence of gender stereotypes in Italy. This is just one among the many articles and statistics on the topic that demonstrate how gender stereotyping and traditional family models sadly persist, even among the younger generations. It is clearly stated: 'the pandemic, and consequently physical distancing and domestic confinement, has even revitalized gender stereotypes and, therefore, the gender roles prescribed by it. We then find ourselves today having to face an even more complicated scenario than that of the recent past. Precisely because of a regressive "sliding" into a never abandoned past where the idea of the supposed subordination of women to men, the existence of a natural role for women (that of mother and wife), remain the basis of prejudice, discrimination and violence against women.' Author's tranlsation. Oppedisano, Gabriella, '"Donna casalinga" e "uomo con i pantaloni", gli stereotipi resistono fra gli adolescenti,' *Il Sole24Ore* (21 April, 2021). Available at: https://alleyoop.ilsole24ore. com/2021/04/21/donna-casalinga-uomo-con-pantalonistereotipi-resistono-fraadolescenti/?fbclid=IwAR1eIyAQYyb1gtFwe9QYoWixlxSxCEsptHU_Tkeamz8YYtFsDiCjLP_

Conclusions

From the comparison between post-war housing in Italy and France, it became apparent that in both cases the state historically exercised a regulatory power that had effects on daily life and dwellings' design. In France, the definition of practices and codes made it possible to establish class distinctions and regulate social conflict. These mechanisms still influence the aesthetic dimension of French living today. They affect the domestic environment in terms of reception practices, relationships between spouses and external affective ties, they also dictate domestic consumption choices, and subsequently influence taste and interior decoration. French women have gradually seen their individual spaces disappear and, consequently, have devised spatial and aesthetic solutions to regain their lost independence. All this takes place in the reception areas of the house, which still very often coincide with the living room and the conjugal bedroom. In the Italian context, normative power was exercised explicitly on both a cultural and religious level. This unifying thrust was aimed at strengthening social cohesion and control, exercised through patriarchal power at the family level. Italian women became custodians of Italian culinary culture – that is both the symbolic and spatial centre of Italian culture and home – and have learned to create room for emancipation through the reproduction of traditional practices. Even if employed (hence forced into experiencing double presence), they have managed to carry out small spatial adjustments aimed at decentralizing patriarchal power in the home. At the same time, like French women, they turned domestic consumption into an emancipatory practice; their tendency to conserve objects and their sometimes-explicit stances towards architectural design have opened new horizons for the consolidation of their identities and cultures.

From Within, therefore, explored the personal and spatial dimension of interior occupation, it delved into the everyday life of post-war housing inhabitants, focusing on women's subjective experience of the domestic space – the context for the negotiation and consolidation of their selfhood. This dissertation then clarifies that personal interaction with architectural space is driven both at a physical and intangible level by habitus, and from this interaction individual selves and spaces are altered. This research above all, demonstrates that a study of contemporary domesticity in architecture is interdisciplinary. Its contribution to social theory pertains to the demonstration that habitus is spatial. It has both subjective and objective tangible implications, which make it a fundamental analytical tool in the field of architecture. In fact, these considerations, although pertinent to the study of domestic interiors, could potentially extend to other architectural typologies. If considered without its subtitle, the main title of this thesis refers to all enclosed environments, which might be spatially altered as a consequence of habitus' subjective, embodied and spatial dimensions.

This leads to the term 'uncovering' used in this dissertations' title, which provides a further layer of specificity to this research. The act of making visible overlooked, personal aspects of lived experience in architecture reflects the feminist foundations of this study. This dissertation, in fact, uncovered mechanisms of dominance and repression of otherwise valuable domestic cultures, aesthetic solutions, design processes. Individual voices, personal stories, photographs of private spaces, along with existing social and feminist theory proved to be fundamental for the formulation of cultural domesticity. The centrality of feminine

culture that emerged from this study proved that the discussion around heterosexual domestic interiors is not exhausted but, on the contrary, can lead to the formulation of a new methodologies for the analysis of contemporary domesticity and housing. In specific, cultural domesticity uncovered the connection between social, cultural and spatial changes in the domestic sphere. This research also challenged the existing male, high-cultural canon in architectural history by studying often overlooked housing projects and their interiors.

What emerged from this critical but also practical uncovering is an overall 'inequality and sexism in attributing value to people and objects'[1] – architecture included – that should be addressed by architects, and more specifically architectural historians. It becomes, therefore, necessary to propose a new value system that exists outside the 'dominant symbolic.'[2] The judgement of architectural value is, indeed, not exempt from Bourdieu's mechanisms of judgement of taste that can be mis-used to contain 'good' taste and, subsequently, high-culture, within the sphere of influence of a male elite, but can also influence self-making and individual choices with an impact on architectural design – as demonstrated in this thesis. The definition of value not only determines what is worthy of investigation but also produces distinctions – at an institutional, disciplinary but also interpersonal level. Skeggs explains that value can be stored in the self (Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital) and it is precisely through the use and reworking of either institutional or 'ordinary' culture that value is generated or accrued.[3] It is also through enculturated inhabitation practices (and the objects around which they revolve) that the women in this study were able to generate valuable (domestic) culture. This study, indeed, looked at these alternative manifestations of culture in France by focusing on the aesthetic appropriation of French interiors, and in Italy, thought the reappropriation of traditional codes, spaces and practices connected to food culture.

Cultural domesticity ultimately developed as an interdisciplinary, theoretical lens that describes gendered domestic cultures, clarifying the specific typological focus of this research, and exemplifying the cultural dimension of this study. Culture indeed played a transversal role across all levels of analysis brought forward in this dissertation; cultural sociology clarifies that self- and class-making are determined by culture, including gender identity, and material culture acts as a mediator between individual choices and architectural space. To sum up, culture determines the ways in which people construct their self-identities, see and orient themselves in both the social and physical space. The inevitable interaction with it – itself an act of design – generates new cultures. This thesis ultimately answered the original research questions by demonstrating that a cultural, gendered and transformative reading of dwelling plans provides new insights on housing and domesticity.

Furthermore, this study argues that post-war and even Modernist design of dwellings is not universal but rather a reflection of either the architects' habitus or the cultural context in which the project is located. Indeed, post-war, mass-produced towers and slabs, although seemingly identical on the outside, hide deep cultural differences on their inside. In specific, this thesis demonstrated that these differences are readable in plan and in the aesthetic, but also spatial traces left by daily occupation. The predominance of certain aspects of

stereotypical, constructed national culture had, in both contexts studied, an impact on domestic practices and the distribution of dwellings (even across different social classes). Recurring cultural aspects that influenced interior distribution of domestic spaces – specifically the relationship between selected rooms of the house and specific pieces of furniture around which relevant enculturated practices take place – have driven both the design and use of mass-produced housing.

This dissertation focused on the feminine dimension of domestic culture in Western countries, two spheres (the domestic and the feminine) that have been historically joined.[4] From this analysis, it became apparent that feminine domestic cultures have two important implications. First, new design solutions proposed by the first women architects have been informed by lived experience and were in direct opposition to male, Modernist designs. Thus, feminine cultural domesticity can potentially inform architectural practice and propose valuable, alternative design solutions. Second, given the oppressive, heteropatriarchal and architectural framework that historically trapped women into the domestic sphere, the home became the ground of resistance that in turn shaped women's self-identity. In other words, it is precisely within the objective structures (of national culture, patriarchy, class, economy and the dwelling's layout) that framed women's personal experience and trapped them inside (reassuring) stereotypes, that they found ways to express themselves. Feminine domestic culture is, indeed, based on the reworking of institutional frameworks, which are oftentimes 'traditional' or alternatively patriarchal and normative. I use the term 'traditional' because it resonates with Adkins and Skeggs' 'detraditionalisation' and 'retraditionalisation' – which partially explains this process of negotiating personal and gender identities within oppressive, outdated, backward-looking, conservative, stereotypical models. The emergence of nuanced patterns of resistance, of original cultural, aesthetic, spatial interpretations and modifications, even if small and apparently insignificant, became central to this analysis, as they are valuable manifestations of women's cultural domesticity. In view of these considerations, it is possible to affirm that women's domestic cultures are characterised by small acts of resistance that have two main tangible implications: they impact domestic consumption and, consequently, interior decoration, and they can lead to spatial modifications of the internal layout of domestic interiors.

Cultural domesticity, thus, becomes a new analytical lens for a reading of the domestic space that takes into account the cultural and gendered dimension of housing design and its occupation. It, therefore, looks at the embodied, hence transformative aspect of domestic interiors as the outcome of individual negotiations within the architectural space. In fact, through inhabitation, decoration, and small spatial alterations the occupants, and women in specific, actively participate in the continuous design of the domestic space. This thesis ultimately suggests a new methodology for a feminist study of contemporary domesticity, which broadens the horizon of architectural research. In specific, this dissertation's methodology could potentially have an impact on three different areas within the discipline of architecture: architectural history and theory, architectural practice, and conservation theory of architectural heritage.

The spatial focus of this dissertation can be, first of all, applied to architectural practice. In specific, it can inform new housing designs based on a feminist reading and understanding of the domestic space or feminine domesticity. It can alternatively frame the study of existing projects, concentrating on the spatial implications of daily occupation. Concerning both architectural history and conservation theory, previous considerations on the judgement of cultural value can be applied. Cultural domesticity indeed subverts current narratives around the value of ordinary (feminine) architectures, objects, and practices, and some existing theories support the epistemological turn that this thesis is bringing forth. Marxist intellectual Raymond Williams, for instance, closes the gap between the individual and institutional in terms of culture. His statement that 'culture is ordinary' is particularly relevant here as he writes:

> These are the ordinary processes of human societies and human minds, and we see through them the nature of a culture: that it is always both traditional and creative; that it is both the most ordinary common meanings and the finest individual meanings. We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life – the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning – the special processes of discovery and creative effort. Some writers reserve the word for one or other of these senses; I insist on both, and on the significance of their conjunction. The questions I ask about our culture are questions about our general and common about deep personal meanings. Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind.[5]

By elevating the personal to the status of culture Williams' point strengthens this thesis' feminist position that embraces the political relevance of the personal. Culture is indeed seen as an ordinary manifestation of individual needs. By attributing cultural value to ordinary housing and interiors, by extending the array of valuable projects worthy of the attention of architectural historians, new architectural histories can emerge. Moreover, the architectural, personal, but also social implications of habitus open to the relevance of social theory in architectural history. As discussed, feminist architectural historians relied on different disciplines for the study of historical architecture and renowned figures in the discipline. Social theory (and relative investigative lenses such as ethnography) proved here to be an important theoretical lens for the study of architecture that takes into consideration lived, individual experience. This approach challenges, once again, the existing, sexist basis of architectural history as it shifts the focus to alternative, overlooked figures (including the occupants) and buildings. An example of how this new approach can apply to architectural history is the short section on Italian women architects in Part II. From my research emerged a penury of existing literature on the work of early women architects in Italy and France, along with the projects of amateur women designers and interior decorator. This line of enquiry deserves further studies, examining the work of women that engaged with architectural design both from a professional and amateur perspective.[6]

These considerations can also extend to conservation theory, which relies heavily on art and architectural history and determines the cultural value of architecture based on explicitly

high-cultural and sexist canons. This specific line of enquiry was first explored at the early stages of my research, but became marginal to its exploration of cultural domesticity. It remains, nonetheless, a potentially interesting subject that can open to further investigations. What emerged from my early analysis is that two different approaches towards cultural heritage currently shape the theoretical debate in that field. On the one hand, there is an institutional approach that promotes a top-down heritagisation process. This judgement of heritage value is mainly object-focused, and centred on both relevant historical events and personalities, often males.[7] The second one sees heritage as a transformative problem by focusing on its performativity. Heritage is believed to evolve along with life, it is a cultural process both plural and contested, and it is often times intangible in its nature.[8] This second focus could potentially define an alternative interdisciplinary and context-based approaches for a feminist conservation theory. The current uncertainty around the criteria for the preservation of Modernist housing is rooted in this dialectic, mainly due to the fact that a limited number of exceptional buildings is countered by the pervasive presence of mass-produced, ordinary housing units – typologies that recently became historicised.[9] Conservation theorists are still struggling to find criteria for the judgement of their cultural value, which resulted in large demolition campaign across several countries.[10] This research demonstrated that a cultural understanding of the interior, rather than the exceptional qualities of the exterior, may potentially solve this problem by offering another perspective. Specifically, a shift in the attribution of value to ordinary, personal, and feminine culture in both architecture and conservation theory has the potential to radically change the debate around cultural value.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the analytical lens of cultural domesticity can potentially be applied to any cultural context. This is due to the fact that in both Italy and France a strong cultural tradition exists, and clearly impacts daily life and the organisation of domestic spaces. The study of enculturated practices along with the identification of sexist spatial and symbolic boundaries inside domestic interiors is, in fact, particularly explicit in both contexts. Once uncovered the main characteristics of cultural domesticity, it becomes easier to identify similar dynamics, even if they manifest in more subtle ways. It would be, therefore, potentially interesting to extend this study to other Western countries, identify new gendered, alternative domesticities and their socio-spatial implications, and even explore how cultural domesticity could potentially apply to non-Western contexts. Socio-spatial analysis could be flanked by new critical gender and race theory, extending cultural domesticity to non-binary or diverse ethnic identities.

The critical, feminist lens of cultural domesticity can form part of new pedagogies to read and teach architectural theories and practices. This supports a questioning of the boundaries and gendered connotations associated with architecture and interior design. As the thesis argues, a study of domestic interiors requires cross-disciplinary scrutiny, synergy, and research methods. For example, the extensive use of social theory in this thesis along with reflections that pertained to material culture – usually applied to interior architecture and design history and theory – have been instrumental for its spatial and architectural studies. This has implications for pedagogy, as cultural domesticity demonstrates the need to broaden methodologies used in architectural history, including the study of individual

practices in inhabiting domestic space. This make existing distinctions between architectural and interior design history and pedagogy obsolete.

Numerous other unexplored paths could emerge from this dissertation, for instance, new readings of Modernist interiors' design and occupation could be investigated, including both renowned projects and neglected ones. Objects, domestic items and even furniture still play a marginal role in architectural research, but they proved central to the study of contemporary domesticity. Historian James Clifford provides an interesting reading of the art-culture system that can be of relevance for the analysis of the cultural value of domestic objects.[11] This aspect was partially explored at the beginning of this research but was later excluded from this analysis. However, Clifford's study – that looked at the changing values and status of artefacts – provided useful insights into the value attribution of objects as the result of an aestheticised involvement with objects of consumption that has emerged in the twentieth century. For instance, he explains that some items with no apparent value have the potent to be elevated to the status of culture. He referred specifically to furniture, utensils, home appliances and other cultural artefacts with anthropological interest that were previously considered unique. The acknowledgement of the possibility of change in both value and meaning of ordinary, mass-produced objects opens to new scenarios in the analysis of domestic items and interiors in museum studies that could be further explored.

Postmodern theory that concentrates on the study of subjectivities, along with a postmodernist analysis of systems of representation are also very important analytical lenses that pertain to the study of gender in architecture that have not been included in this research. Moreover, some of the reflections on intimacy briefly mentioned in this analysis are, in my opinion, worthy of further investigation, as they expand the study on the personal, emotional and interpersonal dimension of design. Indeed, if given more time and space, I would have concentrated more on the role that interpersonal relations and networks of affection play in interior occupation. Relevant findings on this matter could have emerged from a longer and carefully planned ethnographic enquiry. The latter leads to the last important and only partially explored aspect of this research; it pertains direct to observation, interviews, and fieldwork as valuable research methods in architecture. This dissertation benefitted greatly from fieldwork, most of the key intuitions of this thesis emerged precisely in the summer 2019. Had there not been a pandemic, I would have continued fieldwork to update some of my findings based on my research developments. For example, I would have asked more questions on the division of housework or on food preparation. It would also have been very useful to visit more dwellings, in order to increase the sample on which to base my research.

To conclude, I would like to further extend a point briefly made earlier. This research demonstrates that the debate around heterosexual, middle-class, nuclear families and women – the subjects of stereotyping and normalisation throughout the twentieth century – is not exhausted. Indeed individual, gendered identities are negotiated precisely within normalising, stereotyping institutions and systems. They are the foundations of a daily struggle that ultimately produce meaning, change, value and culture. In both cultural contexts studied, women were able to construct an aesthetic dimension that impacted their daily life

and identity through consumption and appropriation, while spatial alterations also opened to women's agency in the design of domestic interiors. Throughout this research it became, therefore, necessary to rethink what constitutes design: reproduction or reappropriation of institutional frameworks or spaces became a valuable aspect of architectural design seen as a continuous, daily process that is not the exclusive prerogative of the architect. It is also tightly connected to self-formation and the construction of gendered and ethnic identities, which are becoming increasingly valuable components of architectural research. This applies specifically to studies on lived experience, which have been so far marginal to architectural theory and practice. This research, therefore, positions itself within the broader context of new architectural histories, specifically the emergence of new feminist architectural histories and theories, with a methodological emphasis on the relationship between identity, culture, lived experience, spatial alterations and existing architecture. It also provides new insights into the current debate on the present and future of domesticity that expanded in the past years due to the pandemic. The homes we have all been forced into are loaded spaces, hence, reflections on contemporary and even future domesticity cannot be detached from an understanding of cultural domesticity and its implications.

Notes

1 Adkins and Skeggs, eds., *Feminism After Bourdieu*, 183.

2 Ibid, 88.

3 Raymond Williams, 'Culture is Ordinary,' in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1958).

4 They have been joined despite the slow emergence of alternative domesticities, which are finding their way beyond the heterosexual norm, as explained by Scicluna and Brent Pilkey and others. See Brent Pilkey, Rachael Scicluna, and Andrew Gorman-Murray, eds., 'Alternative Domesticities,' *Home Cultures: The Journal of Architecture, Design and Domestic Space*, 12:2 (Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2015): 127-138; Brent Pilkey, Rachael Scicluna, Ben Campkin, and Barbara Penner, eds., *Sexuality and Gender at Home: Experience, Politics, Transgression* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

5 Williams, 'Culture is Ordinary,' 93.

6 I intend to pursue this line on enquiry in my future as feminist researcher, author and educator.

7 See David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

8 Mary N. Taylor, 'Intangible Heritage Governance.'

9 Henket, 'The Icon and the Ordinary.'

10 Modern housing demolitions have not been quantified yet so the worldwide magnitude of the risk cannot be proved it is, however, we do know that France's *Programme national de rénovation urbaine (PNRU)* of the early 2000s envisioned 200,000 demolitions, which is almost 4.5 million of dwellings. In the past years, around 100 of London's 'sink estates' were demolished, and in 2018 Moscow's mayor launched a project that includes the demolition of 8,000 Soviet-era public housing estates (which is 10% of the city's housing stock), displacing about 1.6 million inhabitants.

11 James Clifford, 'On Collecting Art and Culture,' in *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1988) 215-251.

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List of Illustrations

Cultural Domesticity: The Housing of Gender

Part I: The Art of Reception and Décor

Source: https://www.musee-orsay.fr/fr/oeuvres/la-comtesse-marie-blanche-de-polignac-8062

Fig. 1.15. Daniel Marot, *Lit à la Duchesse* from the *Second Livre d'Appartements* (1702).
Source: Susan Yelavich, *Design for Life: A Centennial Celebration* (New York: Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1997), 98.

Fig. 1.16. Hôtel de l'Avenue de Ségur, Paris (1880 c.ca). On the top right corner (2) the study can be converted into *monsieur*'s bedroom. (1) *Monsieur*'s *annexes* and (3) *madame*'s *annexes*. At the centre the marital bedroom, right next to the living room and directly accesible from it.
Source: Eleb, Monique. *Architecture de la Vie Privée*. Bruxelles: AAM, 1990.

Fig. 1.17. Ground floor of Groupe Ney, Paris (1927).
Source: Dossier *Les Habitations à Bon Marché de la Ceinture de Paris: Etude Historique*, 41. Paris: APUR and Paris Habitat, 2017.

Fig. 1.18. Photograph of the front-facing rooms of the HBM type, living room on the left and bedroom on the right.
Source: Idem.

Fig. 1.19. Bedroom, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.20. Sewing machine in the bedroom, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.21. Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine, details of the bedroom's decoration in *Recueil de Décorations Intérieures*, plate 15 (1801–1812).
Source: shorturl.at/xGIRW

Fig. 1.22. Diagram of the distribution of a twentieth-century middle class apartment with two different solutions for the representational spaces. Left: large living room and master bedroom next to it (room on the left), with direct access. Right: double living room (room at the centre and the right) with central opening connecting the two spaces, and adjacent master bedroom (room on the left) with direct access from the central living room.
Source: Eleb, Monique. *Architecture de la Vie Privée*. Bruxelles: AAM, 1990.

Fig. 1.23. Bedrooms of an HBM housing project.
Source: Dossier *Les Habitations à Bon Marché de la Ceinture de Paris: Etude Historique*, 104. Paris: APUR and Paris Habitat, 2017.

Fig. 1.24. Middle class dwellings from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, which exemplifies the persistence of the main bedroom-living room distributive model despite the simplification of the plan and its gradual reduction in scale.
a) *Maison de rapport* (1850s)
b) HBM (1920s)
c) HBM SAGI (1930s)

Fig. 1.25. Unknown, drawing of the *Bourgeois Décor* (1880 c.ca). The Athenaeum Collection, Philadelphia
Source: Ursula Paravicini, *Habitat au Féminin*. Lausanne: Presses Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes, 1990, 45.

Fig. 1.26. Paul Lacroix, *An Interior in the Reign of Louis XVI. Illustration for The XVIIIth Century* (1880).
Source: Paul Lacroix, *VIIe siècle. Institutions, usages et costumes. France 1590-1700* (Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1880).

Fig. 1.27. Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune, *Have No Fear, My Good Friend* (1775).
Source: The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Fig. 1.28. Photograph of *Le Salon des Arts Ménagers*, Paris (1923).
Source: Fonds historique/CNRS

Fig. 1.29. Photograph of *Le Salon des Arts Ménagers*, Houseware show, CNIT centre (1961).
Source: Fonds historique/CNRS

Fig. 1.30. Detail of the living room, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.31. Social housing project commissioned by the Rothschild Foundation, 117 Rue de Belleville, Paris (1908).

Fig. 1.32. Masterplan, Groupe Ney, Paris (1928).
Source: Dossier *Les Habitations à Bon Marché de la Ceinture de Paris: Etude Historique*. Paris: APUR and Paris Habitat, 2017.

Fig. 1.33. Photographs of Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.34. Living Room, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.35. Detail of the living room, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.36. Interior, Groupe Ney, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.37 (a, b, c, d). The four types of HBM dwellings (1930s).

Fig. 1.38. Still frames of the documentary *Sarcellopolis* by Sébastien Daycard-Heid and Bertrand Dévé (2015). The images show the inhabitants of the *grand ensemble* Sarcelles, Paris, that start occupying their apartments.

Fig. 1.39 (a, b). Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.40. Fernand Pouillon, plan of Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (1957). Annotation in red added by the author.

Fig. 1.41. Advertisement for the sale of dwellings at the Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019). The real estate agents used the term 'living room' instead of *'salon'*, which may indicate that French buyers were interested in a more 'international' way of living.
Source: Real estate agency on site, photograph of the posted taken during fieldwork.

Fig. 1.42. Advertisement for the sale of dwellings at the Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019). Interestingly, the marital bedroom is called here *'grand chambre'* (big room).
Source: Idem.

Fig. 1.43. Interiors, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).
a) Living room. It is shown here the direct relation between salon and marital bedroom, which has no direct

access to the intimate half of the house. Annotations added by the author.
b) Marital bedroom inside the same apartment.

Fig. 1.44. Interiors, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).
a) Living room. There is no connection here between marital bedroom and salon.
b) Interior, corridor leading to bedrooms. The master bedroom, at the end, is separated from the salon and is connected to this intimate half of the house.

Fig. 1.45. Details, Résidence Salmson at Point-Du-Jour, Paris (2019)
a) Embroidery set in the living room.
b) Japanese doll collection.
c) Display cabinet in the living room.

Fig. 1.46. Living room, Tour Bois le Prêtre, Paris (2016).

Fig. 1.47. Martin Van Treek, plan and elevation of the project Orgues de Flandre, Paris (1974).
Source: Lurcat, André. 'Grandes Orgues pour Célébrer les HLM.' In *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (November 1979): 44-47.

Fig. 1.48. Orgues de Flandre, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.49 (a, b, c). Plans of the dwellings visited, Orgues de Flandre, Paris (1974-2019). In red the spatial alterations of the inhabitants.

Fig. 1.50. Interior apartment fig. 1.49 b, Orgues de Flandre, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.51. Interior apartment fig. 1.49 a, Orgues de Flandre, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.52. Study, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).

Fig. 1.53 (a, b, c). Living Room, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).
a, b) Photographs of the bookshelves and folding screen separating the living room. They recreate the 'double living room' and, when needed, separate the living area from the studio space.
c) Living room, detail.

Fig. 1.54 (a, b). Living room-studio, Résidence Salmson at Point-du-Jour, Paris (2019).
a) Convertible studio space.
b) Detail of the livingroom-studio.

Part II: The Art of Conserving and Culinary Traditions

Fig. 2.1. Pellegrino Artusi, first pages of the book *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well: Practical Manual for Families*, 1st ed. (1891).

Fig. 2.2. Roger Viollet, Spaghetti eaters in Naples at the end of nineteenth century (1880 c.ca).
Source: Roger Viollet Collection.

Fig. 2.3. Still frame of the movie *A Special Day* by Ettore Scola (1977).

Fig. 2.5. Gabriella Mercadini, Women's protests in 1960s Italy. Banner states: 'We break our backs with work, but we are still unemployed' (1976).
Source: Donata Pizzi collection.

Fig. 2.6. Francesco Martinelli, plan of a rural residence, ground floor (above) and first floor (below), Apulia (1800 c.ca).
cam.: Bedroom; mag.: Storage; stalla: Stable; cuc.: Kitchen; pass.: Corridor; poll.: Hen-house; corte: Courtyard; tett.: Ceiling
Source: Martinelli, Francesco. *L'Architettura delle Campagne Marchigiane* (Diss. Politecnico di Milano).

Fig. 2.7. Francesco Martinelli, typical plan of a rural dwelling in central Italy, (1800 c.ca).
ga.: Hen-house; a.: entrance; S.: stable; ca.: cellar; Sm.: Storage; l.: bedroom; m.: storage; C.: kitchen
Source: Martinelli, Francesco. *L'Architettura delle Campagne Marchigiane* (Diss. Politecnico di Milano).

Fig. 2.8. Photograph of a nuclear, middle class Italian family. The head of the family, in the middle of the picture, is very formal and well dressed (1880 c.ca).
Source: 'Italiani a Tavola,' exhibition catalogue.

Fig. 2.9. Martina Moscarelli, ICP Testaccio, Rome (2014).
Source: Moscarelli, Martina. 'Case ICP a Testaccio.' In *ArchiDiap* (October, 2014). Available at: https://archidiap.com/opera/case-icp-a-testaccio/

Fig. 2.10. Quadrio Pirani and Giovanni Bellucci, masterplan, ICP Testaccio, Rome (1911-1917).
Source: Idem.

Fig. 2.11. Quadrio Pirani and Giovanni Bellucci, first floor plan of the building in Via Rubattino, ICP Testaccio, Rome (1911-1917).
Source: Idem.

Fig. 2.12 (a, b). Ludovico Quaroni and Giuseppe Francisi, Palazzina Corso Trieste 142 and 146, Rome (1937). Original drawing and diagram of one apartment. METTO ORIGINALE
Source: Feuidi, Federica. 'Palazzina Corso Trieste 142 e146.' In *ArchiDiap* (July, 2018). Available at: https://archidiap.com/opera/palazzine-a-corso-trieste-142-e-146/

Fig. 2.13. Palazzina Corso Trieste 142 and 146, Rome (1937).
Source: Greco, Antonella. *Guida alle Opere Romane di Ludovico Quaroni*. Roma: Palombi Editore, 2003.

Fig. 2.14. Plan, INA-casa housing in Corso Grosseto, Torino (1953).
Source: Ravelli, Luigi. 'Consuntivo Tecnico ed Economico per Costruzioni Tipo INA-Casa Presso una Grande Industria.' In *Arti e Rassegna Tecnica della Società degli Ingegneri e degli Architetti in Torino* 7:1 (January, 1953): 11.

Fig. 2.15. INA-casa housing in Corso Grosseto, Tourin (1953).

Source: Idem.

Fig. 2.16. Green areas, Towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.17. Internal courtyard, Palazzi Federici, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.18. Details of a *salotto*, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.19. Postcard depicting the ideal Italian family (1910 c.ca).

Source: Melograni, Piero, ed. *La Famiglia Italiana dall'Ottocento a Oggi*. Roma: Laterza, 1988.

Fig. 2.20. Billboard. Image of the family according to the political party *Democrazia Cristiana* (Christian Democracy), or DC (1965).

Source: Idem.

Fig. 2.21, 2.22. Liliana Barchiesi, *Le Casalinghe* (the housewives), Milan (1979).

Source: Donata Pizzi collection.

Fig. 2.23. Still frames of the RAI documentary *Passato e Presente: La Donna che Lavora* (Past and Present: The Woman at the Workplace) (2018).

Source: RAI Archives.

Fig. 2.24. Advertisement. 'Savings Day' by Savings accounts Trevigiana Bank (1948).

Source: Melograni, Piero, ed. *La Famiglia Italiana dall'Ottocento a Oggi*. Roma: Laterza, 1988.

Fig. 2.25. Bombelli Girolamo, Casa del Dopolavorista by Luisa Lovarini in the Triennale's gardens, Milan (1930).

Source: Fondazione La Triennale di Milano.

Fig. 2.26. Bombelli Girolamo, kitchen of the Casa del Dopolavorista by Luisa Lovarini, Milan (1930).

Source: Idem.

Fig. 2.27. Bombelli Girolamo, salotto (dining and living room) of the Casa del Dopolavorista by Luisa Lovarini, Milan (1930).

Source: Idem.

Fig. 2.28. House for a Modern Quarter (1920s).

Source: Cosseta, Katrin. *Ragione e Sentimento Dell'abitare: La Casa e l'Architettura nel Pensiero Femminile tra le Due Guerre*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 2000.

Fig. 2.29. The House I'd Like to Have by Lidia Morelli (1933).

Source: Morelli, Lidia. *La Casa che Vorrei Avere*. Milano: Hoepli, 1933.

Fig. 2.30. *Salotto*, Palazzi Federici, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.31. *Salotto*, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.32. *Salotto*, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.33. Mario Ridolfi and Wolfgang Frankl, towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome (1949-1955). The plan and diagrams show two apartments visited during fieldwork.

Fig. 2.34. Federico Patellani, photograph of a woman and her daughter in the kitchen (1977).

Source: Federico Patellani archive.

Fig. 2.35. Diagrams n° 1, 17, 30 and 31 for the internal distribution of dwellings, *INA-casa Dossier* n° 1 (1949).

Fig. 2.36 Irenio Diotallevi and Franco Marescotti, diagrams describing the problem of the 'disorganisation and absence of method' in the design of dwellings, and the solution that reflects 'organisation and method' (1948).

Source: Diotallevi, Irenio, and Franco Marescotti. *Il Problema Sociale, Costruttivo ed Economico dell'Abitazione*. Milano: Poligono, 1948.

Fig. 2.37. Marital bedroom, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.38. Mario De Renzi, Palazzi Federici, first floor plan, Rome (1931-37).

Source: Schipa, Elisa. 'Casa Convenzionata (Palazzo Federici).' In *ArchiDiap* (January, 2016). Available at: https://archidiap.com/opera/casa-convenzionata-palazzo-federici/

Fig. 2.39 – 2.40. Still frames of the movie *A Special Day* by Ettore Scola (1977).

Fig. 2.41. Bedroom, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.42. Bedroom, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.43. *Salotto*, post-war *palazzina*, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.44. *Salotto* and *ricorrenze* table, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.45. The sewing machine as significant objects, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.46. Plan, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

a) Central *ricorrenze* table (fig. 2.47).

b)Today's disposition of the *ricorrenze* table (fig. 2.44).

Fig. 2.47. Sketch of the disposition of the *ricorrenze* table, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.48. Lorenzo Chiaraviglio, three different proposals for the distribution of the INA-Casa's dwellings, Vercelli (1953-1955)

Source: MaXXI Archives.

Fig. 2.49. Photograph of a kitchen-alcove inside a minimal house (1930s).

Source: Morelli, Lidia. *La Casa che Vorrei Avere*. Milano: Hoepli, 1933.

Fig. 2.50. Loconsolo Silvestre, *Marcella Scabbia, Civil Servant, and her Family Having Breakfast* (1978).

Source: Federico Patellani archive

Fig. 2.51. Nino Migliori, family dinner inside a kitchen-dining, Bologna (1957).

Source: 'Gente dell'Emilia' series Archivio fotografico Nino Migliori.

Fig. 2.52. *Ricorrenze* table, Palazzi Federici, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.53. *Ricorrenze* table, ICP housing, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.54. Kitchen and kitchen table, Towers in Viale Etiopia, Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.55. Habitable kitchen and kitchen table, ICP housing (plan fig. 2.46), Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.56. Open plan living, kitchen island, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, right), Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.57. Open plan living, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, right), Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.58. *Ricorrenze* table, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, left), Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.59, 2.60. Rendering, renovation project, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, left), Rome (2019).

Fig. 2.61. Bookshelves, detail of the hats' collection, Towers in Viale Etiopia (plan fig. 2.33, right), Rome (2019).