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Multi-Actor Housing to Address Vulnerabilities at a Personal and Local Level

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Abstract

In response to an everlasting housing crisis, cities worldwide have witnessed a surge in alternative housing initiatives (AHIs) driven by third-sector organisations. In Brussels, a network of third-sector organisations has been developing strategies with each other and local authorities, resulting in a plethora of initiatives focusing on various critical situations. Drawing on ethnographic research in a Brussels AHI, this article investigates how its complex multi-actor structure affects the daily life of its inhabitants both within their dwellings and the wider neighbourhood. By capturing the tactics employed by third-sector actors on the ground, which often deviate from their initial strategy for reclaiming the right to housing, as well as the homing practices of the inhabitants, the article focuses on tracing how and why such a housing configuration does or does not address its inhabitants' interplaying vulnerabilities related with the housing crisis as well as their relationship with the local urban fabric.

Keywords

alternative housing initiatives; homing; multi-actor housing; right to housing; tactics

1. Introduction

Nowadays, many cities across the world have experienced a rise of housing initiatives driven by third-sector organisations (Czischke et al., 2012) that attempt to guarantee the right to housing in response to an everlasting housing crisis fuelled by an increasingly commodified housing market (Madden & Marcuse, 2016) and a stagnation in the social rental sector (Priemus, 1997). In this article, we refer to this emerging field of

collaborative housing as "alternative housing initiatives" (AHIs) as opposed to traditional welfare regimes of public housing provision, given that their primal reliance is on multiple partnerships between third-sector actors along with a collaboration with local authorities for the provision of housing to vulnerable groups.

Nonetheless, in many cases, AHIs are more than just an alternative solution to social housing and therefore to the housing crisis. The multi-actor hybrid systems driven by the third sector have been captured as having the potential to address different expectations at a time by including and cultivating several dimensions (Evers, 2005). Housing projects driven by the non-profit sphere are often noted for providing housing for vulnerable groups with a will to encompass other aims linked to their vulnerabilities, such as "hybrid products and services (combining housing with social and neighbourhood support services)" (Mullins et al., 2012, p. 407). Moreover, as products of negotiations and a patchwork of actors offering different resources, they are frequently associated with the inclusion of further alternate living dimensions such as the adoption of a certain collective-living form (Czischke, 2018), a transit-temporary tenure, or multilevel management (Smith, 2010).

The relationship between these dimensions and a complex multi-actor set-up, or with the residents' experiences within such housing forms is increasingly being explored in the field of housing studies, particularly concerning collaborative housing (Bresson & Labit, 2020; Czischke, 2018; Thompson, 2020; Mullins & Moore, 2018). Nonetheless, the effect of these complex partnerships on each actor (Czischke, 2018) and on the domestic experience they produce in everyday life remains relatively under-researched. This article aims to contribute to the knowledge gap by focusing specifically on third-sector-initiated forms of collaborative housing through an in-depth analysis of an AHI in Brussels, Belgium. In particular, the article aims to study if and how this AHI configuration addresses various vulnerabilities of inhabitants related to the housing crisis. More specifically, by documenting the tactical processes of third-sector actors on the ground as well as the homing tactics of the inhabitants within their dwellings and in their surroundings, we will shed light on and identify the extent to which such AHI supports inhabitants individually and their ties to the local urban fabric.

We begin this article with a literature review of de Certeau's model of "tactics" and strategies and their interpretation in the third-sector world as well as Boccagni's notion of "homing," which are used as lenses for the analytical part of this article. Then, we discuss our methodology for studying the AHI and describe the strategic setting guiding it. The core of the article is about the tactical practices guiding such initiative, along with their interplay. Finally, we conclude by discussing certain dimensions of the project concerning their relevance to the right to housing.

2. Tactics as a Negotiation

In his work *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau (1980) introduces the concept of tactics as a way to interpret and make sense of everyday life. In his conceptualisation, the dominating *strategies* of authoritative powers that represent the dominant order's standpoint (Dey & Teasdale, 2016) are met with opposition from the *tactics* or "ploys" (Gálvez et al., 2021) and actions used by people in their everyday lives to resist them. Although highly insightful, many scholars argue that de Certeau's conceptualisation of tactics remains broad and its operationalisation ambiguous (Andres et al., 2020; Buchanan, 2000; Dey & Teasdale, 2016). Such ambiguity in de Certeau's work allows liberty over its interpretation leading to "the potential for tactics and strategies to be seen as a continuum rather than opposites" (Andres et al., 2020, p. 2444).

Expanding that ambiguity into the realm of the third sector, Dey and Teasdale (2016) use the concept of "tactical mimicry" to interpret tactics more as a negotiation in the everyday processes of organisations. This interpretation refers to actions that are nonconfrontational forms of resistance that exploit the opportunities provided by the strategies (Dey & Teasdale, 2016). For instance, in the case of a third-sector organisation in their study, it was parasitically manoeuvring under certain circumstances while still adhering to the imposed government requirements, maintaining the existing balance of power (Dey & Teasdale, 2016). This interpretation is particularly valuable in the context of AHIs, where third-sector organisations occupy an oftentimes difficult-to-classify in-between position manoeuvring their collaboration with local authorities or other non-profit organisations (NPOs) and institutions (Mullins et al., 2012) to set up and maintain them.

Research on the experience of the home underlines that inhabitants of such initiatives are likely to develop tactics too, both in response to the actors responsible for their living situation, as well as their everyday living environment. For instance, Gálvez et al. (2021) argued that principal tactics could even be detected in the everyday life of individuals in unintentional ordinary processes like complaining, criticising, or explaining minor details.

Some authors build further on this, linking tactics to the space of the home. Many scholars attribute tactics to how the sense of home is negotiated to reproduce one's perception of home. Such tactics of "homing" are being developed to adapt the home to make it more "personal, private, protected, and predictable" (Boccagni, 2022, p. 593); or to provide "security, familiarity and control" (Kim & Smets, 2020, p. 610). Even so, tactics also include forms of "unhoming"; the choice to not engage with the home environment as a way of negotiation, "particularly if this is sub-standard, unchosen, or provisional" (Boccagni, 2022, p. 597). Finally, both the living environment and cohabitation play a role in negotiating one's home. On the one hand, it is acknowledged by Bianchi and Costa (2024) that shared housing can encourage civic participation through the development of bottom-up solidarity. Nonetheless, shared arrangements are often created out of necessity to cope with an unaffordable housing market, thus taking the form of non-homes (Boccagni & Miranda Nieto, 2022).

Our interest here is to explore the concept of tactics, which is present in both third-sector and home studies research, by examining a third-sector housing project as the setting where these interrelated disciplines materialise.

3. Contextualisation and Methodology

The Brussels Capital Region (BCR) is encountering an everlasting housing crisis as access to both owner-occupied and rental housing is becoming increasingly difficult for a substantial part of the city's population in recent years (Mosseray et al., 2020). The homelessness count of 2022 registered more than 2,404 homeless people and 7,134 people living in precarious conditions, illustrating an increase of 18.9% over 2 years (Bruss'help, 2022). In direct correlation, the region's social housing stock represents less than 8% of its total housing stock (Mosseray et al., 2020) and has faced severe stagnation since 1989 (Aernouts & Ryckewaert, 2015). The number of households officially inscribed on the waiting list for accessing it represents almost 10.5% of the city's population, with many of them remaining there for over 10 years (Bernard & Traversa, 2022).

Social rental agencies that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s (Verstraete & De Decker, 2018) have since been institutionalised and structurally funded as an additional offer of affordable housing alongside social housing. The recognition of the Community Land Trust in the Brussels Housing Code (Federale Overheidsdienst Justitie, 2013) and its permanent partnership with the BCR has equally contributed to the increase of the affordable housing stock. Moreover, linking to the fact that the BCR is characterised as having one of the "largest non-profit sectors in the world" (Salamon et al., 2003, as cited in Deleu et al., 2022, p. 104), a plethora of AHIs initiated by the third sector have been emerging. Nonetheless, their institutionalisation occurs in a more fragmentary way, with only specific forms being recognised in the Brussels housing code. While this recognition makes them eligible for governmental support (Bernard & Sohier, 2015, as cited in Lenel et al., 2020), they have not yet received permanent funding. These initiatives currently lack uniform regulations in terms of admission criteria, temporality of stay, or accommodated target groups. As a result, the initiatives' characteristics greatly vary and are often dependent on the vision and decisions of the initiating third-sector organisation. As this overview of the housing landscape shows, the plethora of relatively weakly institutionalised AHI projects in the BCR presents unique opportunities for conducting in-depth fieldwork.

Data collection took place in 2022 and 2023 for a project providing temporary accommodation to five women in need and their children, in a neighbourhood characterised by poor housing quality. The selected project was initiated by a synergy of actors guided by an organization against homelessness (further OAH).

Data gathering by the first author relied on qualitative research methods. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews with actors and inhabitants of the project were conducted. More concretely, interviews were conducted with a coordinator of the OAH (initial discussion in September 2022 and follow-up discussion in October 2023 [Interview 1]), a worker of the Social Rental Agency (SRA) managing the project (November 2023 [Interview 2]), a worker of the Municipality-architect linked to the project (November 2023 [Interview 3]), two workers of the OAH (initial discussion October 2022 and follow-up discussion in November 2023 [Interview 4]; October 2023 [Interview 5]), and five (adult) inhabitants of the project (March 2023 [Interviews 6 and 7]; September 2023 [Interview 8]; October 2023 [Interviews 9 and 10]). Secondly, two co-creation workshop sessions were conducted with the inhabitants over the use of the project's collective spaces. Third and lastly, during an in-depth ethnographic fieldwork, the first author recorded lived experiences by participating and assisting in an activity dedicated to the inhabitants. Such action enabled a regular engagement with them to capture everyday life occurrences related to the AHIs, to conduct short everyday discussions, and to discuss and become familiar with the organisations involved. These actions were all captured as field notes in a notebook, as audio notes, or photographs on the first author's mobile phone.

As far as the processing of data is concerned, a thematic analysis considering spatial and institutional characteristics is presented in Sections 4 and 5 of this article. First of all, given the particular research focus on housing and its everyday experience we aimed to analyse the living environment characteristics that inherently are related to the personal space of individuals. While the fieldwork allowed to gather very rich data in this respect, it also necessitated great care in terms of protecting the inhabitants' privacy. Living environment data is therefore presented by combining textual descriptions and drawings rather than photos. Drawings in particular were selected for their analytical significance, given that everyday sketches are tools that enable understanding and articulating the homemaking practices of inhabitants (Beeckmans et al.,

2022), bringing to the fore their spatial agency (Awan et al., 2011). Specific parts of photos or conceptual, abstract handmade sketches were digitally redrawn and overlapped with textual notes or quotes of participants, delineating a clearer view of the living environment setting in relation to the everyday practice.

Secondly, in Sections 4 and 5, diagramming is used to visualise the connection between the actors unravelled during the data-collection process. This allows one to capture the actors' relations and identify their magnitude (Yaneva, 2022) more systematically.

Finally, the analytical part presented in Section 5 on the tactics of actors and inhabitants in everyday life was based on a thematic classification of the research data in a lexicon comprising of "feelings, settings, and practices" inspired by the "research matrix on home" of Boccagni (2017). There he provides these three interdependent dimensions as levels of analysis of a house in its everyday quotidian emergence. This subsequently led to the thematic coding of each category. These code-themes afterwards enabled intersectional insights which were crossed with the main theoretical lenses (tactics as a negotiation of a strategy and everyday life) discussed in the previous section.

4. Setting the Scene: Developing the Strategy

The project investigated in this article was initiated through a multi-actor agreement with various drivers, who united around a shared strategy centred on the provision of housing. The non-profit OAH initiated, guided, and orchestrated the strategy, given that the NPO general mission is "to promote infrastructures useful to their public" (Interview 1, 2023). The OAH, established a partnership with a non-profit women's organisation (further WO) to initiate the process and the forthcoming everyday management and to ensure knowledge, expertise, and guidance for the support of the specific target group (Interview 3, 2023; Interview 4, 2022).

According to the actors' interviews, to develop the project, the OAH entered further into a partnership with the local municipality to use one of their buildings. In exchange, it would develop an affordable housing project and be responsible for its management as well as offer social support to its inhabitants. As stated by a municipal worker closely involved in the project, the municipality found the proposal appealing as it owns many single buildings that cannot be offered to their social housing company, since the latter considers them too time-consuming to manage efficiently and profitably (Interview 3, 2023).

The creation of a housing "infrastructure" rather than just a "project" was demanded by the municipality, leading to an opting for a temporary lease model (Interview 1, 2023). Under these conditions, the OAH reached out to the BCR and obtained a subsidy for the project, specifically destined for municipalities to renovate their building stock (Interviews 1 and 3, 2023). In order to develop the agreed tenure model, the OAH collaborated further with an SRA in the same municipality (Interview 2, 2023). They would act as administrators for the logistical support of the rental contracts and rent collection of such temporary housing project with a foreseen maximum occupancy of 18 months (Interview 2, 2023). Their role was described as "natural" given the close collaboration with the OAH in other projects managed by the latter (Interview 2, 2023).

Finally, these negotiations were formalised and agreed upon with the formal partners in a written convention (Interviews 1, 2, and 3, 2023). The project was designed to house women in need and their
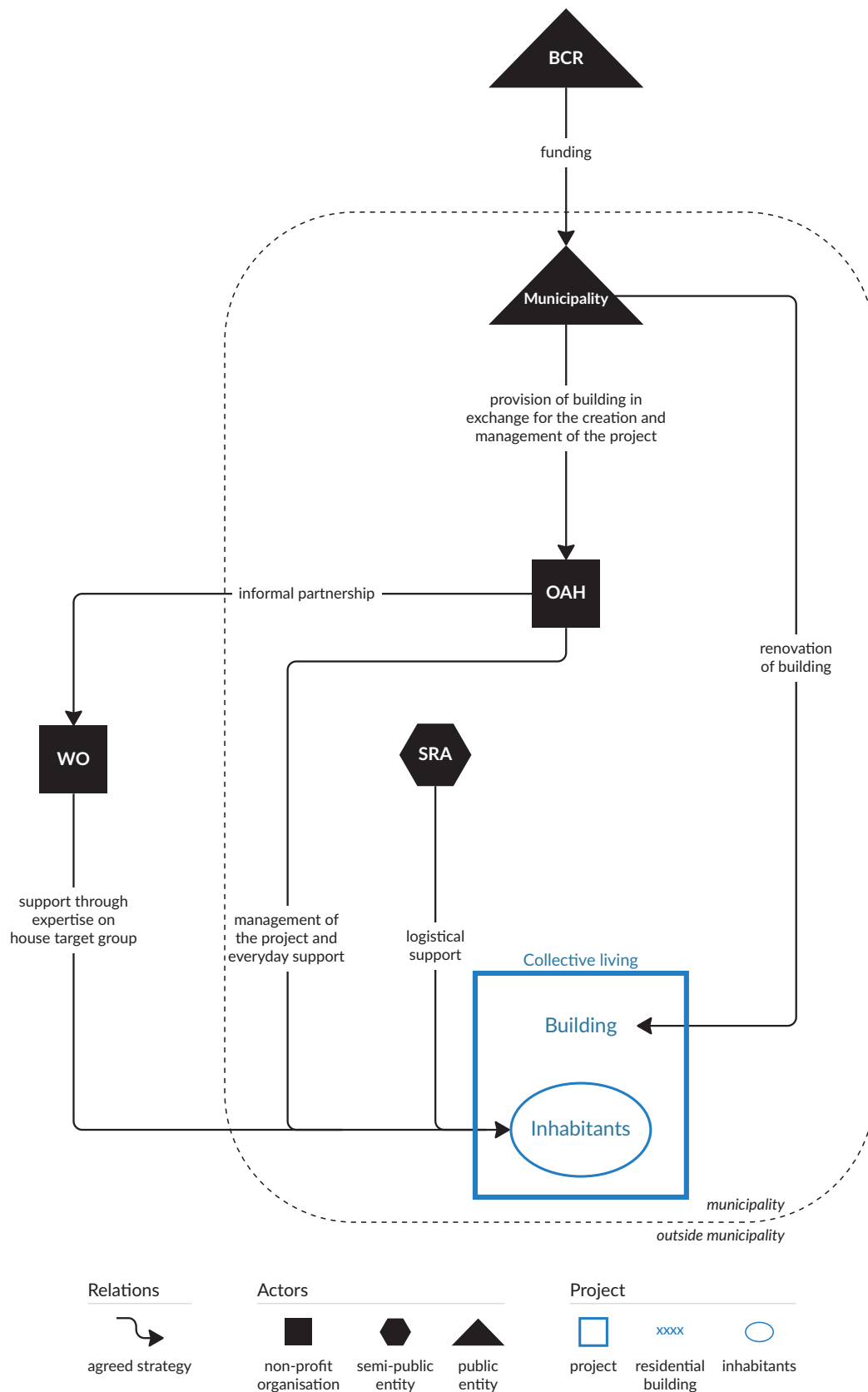
BCR

funding

Municipality

provision of building in
exchange for the creation and
management of the project

informal partnership OAH

renovation
of building

WO

SRA

support through
expertise on
house target group

management of
the project and
everyday support

logistical
support

Collective living

Building

Inhabitants

municipality

outside municipality

Relations

agreed strategy

Actors

non-profit
organisation

semi-public
entity

public
entity

Project

project

xxxx

residential
building

inhabitants

Figure 1. The agreed multi-actor strategy for the elaboration of the project.

children (Interviews 1 and 3, 2023; Interview 3; Interview 4, 2022) and it has collective living areas (kitchen, dining room, living room) and individual units, accommodating five households (notes from January and February 2023). The NPOs opted for a collective housing project given that such a building would "function better with a communal space on the ground floor" (Interview 3, 2023). In addition, it was also essential for the administrations involved given that "politicians are very responsive to this kind of proposals, so when the OAH said 'collective house,' they agreed to fund it" (Interview 1, 2023).

All in all, by juxtaposing and grouping the perspectives of the different parties involved in how the AHI was brought together, and considering the partnerships, their hierarchies, and drivers forming this strategy at the institutional level (see Figure 1), we identify three prevalent features. First of all, the initiative enacts a collective living strategy, which was a necessary and central element for the project's realisation, given it was desired by both the municipal and regional administrations but also due to the specific spatial possibilities the acquired building offered. Secondly, the initiative can also be seen as an urban strategy for the renovation of the municipal building stock and the creation of urban infrastructure since local actors detected the building as an opportunity to fight homelessness. Thirdly, as each partner plays a different role in getting access to different resources (building, funding) and expertise (target group, housing issues, logistical administration), it is a distinct-missions strategy that governs the AHI. Different goals are therefore encompassed within the same project, not necessarily considering each other, thus validating what some scholars engaging with de Certeau hint at; strategies can be polyvocal by possessing different levels of authority, and following different temporalities (Andres et al., 2020). This results in a fragmented management lacking a conscious and strongly co-developed vision.

To conclude, it is important to note that these features encompass the AHI's strategy following de Certeau's definitions and theories. As such, the term is not used to delineate literally "quotidian" and "therefore the tactical" (Andres et al., 2020, p. 2441) perspective but reflect rather the perspective of stakeholders as institutions, and thus the "dominant order" (Dey & Teasdale, 2016, p. 489). This section therefore breaks down the strategy, its hierarchies, and basic features, and is considered a valuable, necessary part of our subsequent analysis of the AHI's everyday tactics. It helps draw conclusions on the support offered to inhabitants, considering how a better understanding of the strategy's polyvocal nature brings essential knowledge to how the tactics are being played out (Andres et al., 2020).

5. Operationalising the Strategy on the Ground

5.1. Understanding the Actor Tactics

While the housing strategy described above integrates explicit missions in a contract, the operational implementation on the ground through direct everyday support by the OAH, the WO, and the SRA led to the provision of additional services and the modification of certain missions (see Figure 2).

Three main sets of tactics were identified in the practices of the workers on the ground. The first two are considered to act as indirect everyday negotiations and interpretations of the strategy, and the latter is viewed as in confrontation with the initial strategy.
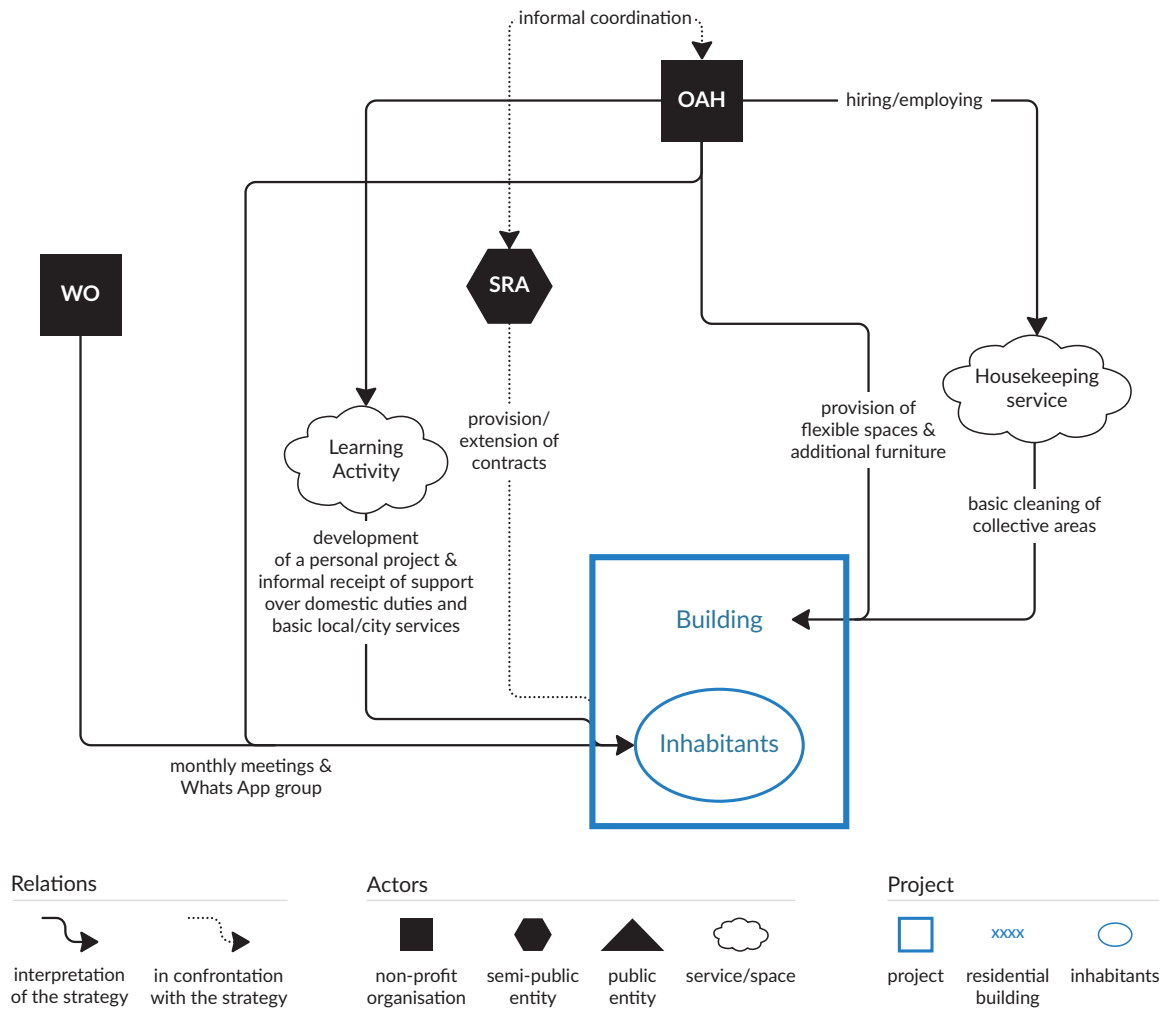
Figure 2. The actors' grounded tactics for the support of the project.

5.1.1. Tactics of Presence

The OAH developed grounded practices such as setting up a learning activity, organising monthly collective meetings with inhabitants, guiding inhabitants to local and city services, and creating a WhatsApp group.

More concretely, the learning activity set up by the OAH for inhabitants of the house was to realise a project mostly linked to their personal development in a space within the same municipality (notes from January and February 2023; workshop notes from May; Interview 5, 2023). Such activity, besides serving as "a useful workshop adapted to the inhabitants' needs and wishes" (Interview 5, 2023), allowed inhabitants to interact directly with the OAH workers, thus avoiding waiting several weeks to address these problems (Interview 5, 2023; notes from March and April 2023). For example, during the activity, inhabitants are informally assisted with issues that go beyond its scope, like translating official letters or problems concerning the management of the shared infrastructure, such as the presence of cockroaches in the kitchen or the non-respect of house rules (notes from March and October 2023). In addition, it is a place that acts as a reference point for inhabitants to acquire information on navigating the city and the areas in the vicinity (Interview 5, 2023). For instance, during the observations of the first author in the activity, inhabitants have guidance over the presence of

certain services like community medical centres (notes from March 2023). This frequent casual contact enables inhabitants to express their needs in an everyday, spontaneous, and less structural way, and goes hand in hand with the objective of the workers to "prevent inhabitants feeling isolated but instead surrounded by assistance when needed" (Interview 4, 2023).

In addition, the OAH together with the WO provide social support to inhabitants through monthly collective meetings specifically aimed at the "organisation of the project collectively" (Interview 4, 2023). Here, again, formally and collectively, issues related to the shared property are discussed, such as the possibility of placing a personal indoor exercise bike in the living room and the rules over its individual or collective use (notes from April 2023). In addition, the workers attempt to forge connections with the urban fabric by informing inhabitants of organisations, places, and activities in the city and the direct surroundings (Interview 4, 2022). Besides the monthly meetings, one final practice involves a WhatsApp group created by the social workers, which serves as a direct communication channel. As explained, such a group "is for all information [among inhabitants and the social workers] but is also set up for internal coordination among them" (Interview 4, 2023). During the observations, the WhatsApp app group was used on multiple occasions, such as when inviting external guests to the project, organising collective dinners, deciding on who would take out the garbage, or even identifying a collective available moment for meeting with the social workers (notes from March and April 2023).

To conclude, these practices, delineated as tactics of presence, enable "entering" into the project's life in informal everyday ways rather than relying solely on formal procedures. They allow the OAH and its workers to avoid a controlling role. Furthermore, the intentions behind these tactics suggest a detected need for the project to ensure security beyond the basic human entitlement to housing, including a lawful tenure and a safe environment (Carver, 2011). This is evident considering that actions were taken to explore the full potential of this multi-actor project and its shared resources, attempting to cultivate autonomy, agency, and collective security. This was either achieved by setting up structures for in-house collective decision-making or by cultivating linkages with the wider area and the city. Using the locality of the involved actors (i.e., knowledge of other local actors) expands the urban strategy from urban renovation towards a more inclusive urban strategy by making the municipality and the city infrastructure more accessible. As such, this provides the inhabitants with tools to "accommodate [themselves] according to [their] ability and art" and, in essence, brings them closer to performing their act of dwelling (Illich,1984).

5.1.2. Tactics of Adaptivity

We note another set of practices of the OAH workers in the assistance they provided when certain inhabitants wanted to transform the housing project into a more individualised one. This was for instance by foreseeing in the initial design certain "flexible" spaces like "a corner...with a bench" that are left to be creatively used by each inhabitant (Interview 3, 2023). Furthermore, it was also detected when the OAH mobilised a housekeeping service for the maintenance of the collective spaces of the project once a week, as a means "to avoid and calm down conflicts between the inhabitants" (Interview 1, 2023). As observed, and during short conversations in the workshop, cleaners were initially hired to clean the surfaces and floor but eventually did much more, such as an in-depth cleaning of the collective areas (workshop notes from October 2023). In short, these practices that we identify as tactics of adaptivity aim to be reflexive of everyday struggles by balancing out the collective and private equilibrium of the initial strategy through manoeuvring and creatively interpreting

the notion of collective living. They further suggest that beyond adequate habitability through sufficient and structurally sound space (Carver, 2011), the project calls for an open-end "dwelling" that is not "completed before occupancy" (Illich, 1984) but instead open to adaptations and explored in its full potential.

5.1.3. Tactics of Familiarity

Lastly, we note the coordination and informal negotiations of workers of OAH with those of the local SRA due to pre-existing collaborations and their specific locality. For instance, workers engage in ad hoc informal discussions on practical matters due to the physical proximity (i.e., same municipality) of the OAH and the SRA (Notes—Apr & Nov 2023; Interview 2, 2023). Interactions involve the coordination of practitioners on communication with the inhabitants such as agreeing to not give notice when a contract is ending, and engaging in informal negotiations to extend contracts beyond the agreed timeframe of 18 months in cases where inhabitants are unable to find stable housing (Interview 2, 2023). As such, we outline these practices as tactics of familiarity between the workers. Similar observations were made by Felder et al. (2023), who argue that long-term interactions create a familiar sentiment through invisible ties of mutual recognition due to social or spatial proximity. In our case, this results in an informal overturning of the project's initial strategy by blurring and integrating the features of the distinct missions, ultimately leading to a more coherent strategy.
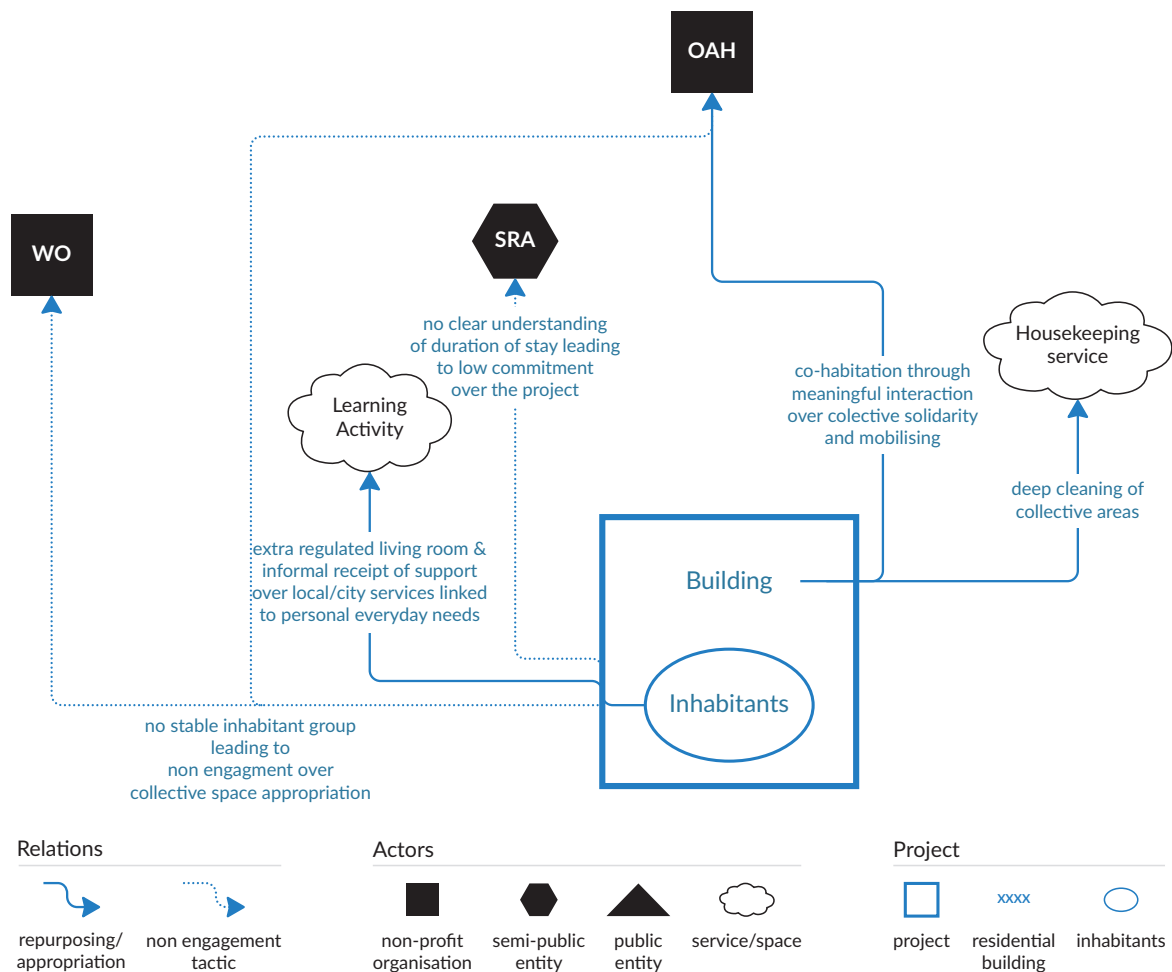
5.2. Understanding the Tactics of Inhabitants in Their Everyday

In everyday life, inhabitants also engage in tactics negotiating their sense of home, either by choosing not to engage with it and just getting by (un-homing) or by appropriating and adapting it (homing; see Figure 3).

In the cases of un-homing, we deem that the inhabitants' tactics simply persist as ways to negotiate their everyday living. In the cases of homing, we deem that residents enter a confrontation and co-creation process with the actors' strategies and tactics described in the previous section, in a direct continuum.

5.2.1. Tactics of Un-Homing

On the one hand, most inhabitants are relatively indifferent about participating in collective dinners in the dining room (notes from April 2023). Moreover, the internal communication between them and in support of collective spaces relies only on the basics, such as taking out the garbage (notes from March and April 2023), while "there's no specific system of organisation" (Interview 10, 2023). On many occasions also, things over the collective areas are left unfixed (notes from October 2023); "armchairs are left broken" (Interview 7, 2023). Such practices relate to feelings of fear and a sense of futility inhabitants have due to the temporal-transitional nature of the project. As some inhabitant interviewees said, this temporality is experienced in terms of changing resident composition every few months, which in turn requires a new adaptation of the atmosphere of the project every time. Nonetheless, the short temporality also concerns the actual stay. Although the latter can be extended beyond the short timeframe, such a possibility is not clearly communicated from inception, but only later and informally (notes from January and October 2023). It entails that some inhabitants, as interviewee 9 (2023) eloquently described it, are "always under stress" and it plays a key role in preventing residents from investing in the organisation. We therefore note a strong link between inhabitants' low commitment to and participation in the collective management of the project,

Figure 3. The tactics of inhabitants in the everyday living of the project.

and the actors' distinct-missions strategy, which results in a non-coherent collective aim. This is further complicated by the informal ways in which the duration of residence is extended (actors' tactics of "familiarity"), yet not formally expressed, disconcerting inhabitants even more. In response to such circumstances, residents then choose to refrain from getting involved to gain control of their everyday lives.

Similarly, while some inhabitants put candles or flowers on the collective stairs and corridors next to their individual rooms (notes from February 2023; see Figure 4a), they make relatively minor adjustments in the shared areas of the project, such as changing the orientation of a computer screen in the living room to ensure more privacy (notes from February 2023; see Figure 4b). Most inhabitants attribute such small gestures to past incidents when former residents had taken personal items from the collective spaces (workshop notes from May 2023). As one inhabitant explains, she was not eager to "leave things in the living room, there are too many people, and they'll take them" (Interview 6, 2023). As a result, residents care for and claim only their private spaces as well as the liminal spaces of the project that are under their influence. As opposed to this, collective spaces are only claimed through punctual actions. These past practices continue to influence the behaviour of newer inhabitants by reinforcing perceptions of mistrust and uncertainty about how to behave in the shared spaces (workshop notes from May 2023). Therefore, while most interviewed inhabitants feel attached to and care for their personal home spaces, some express
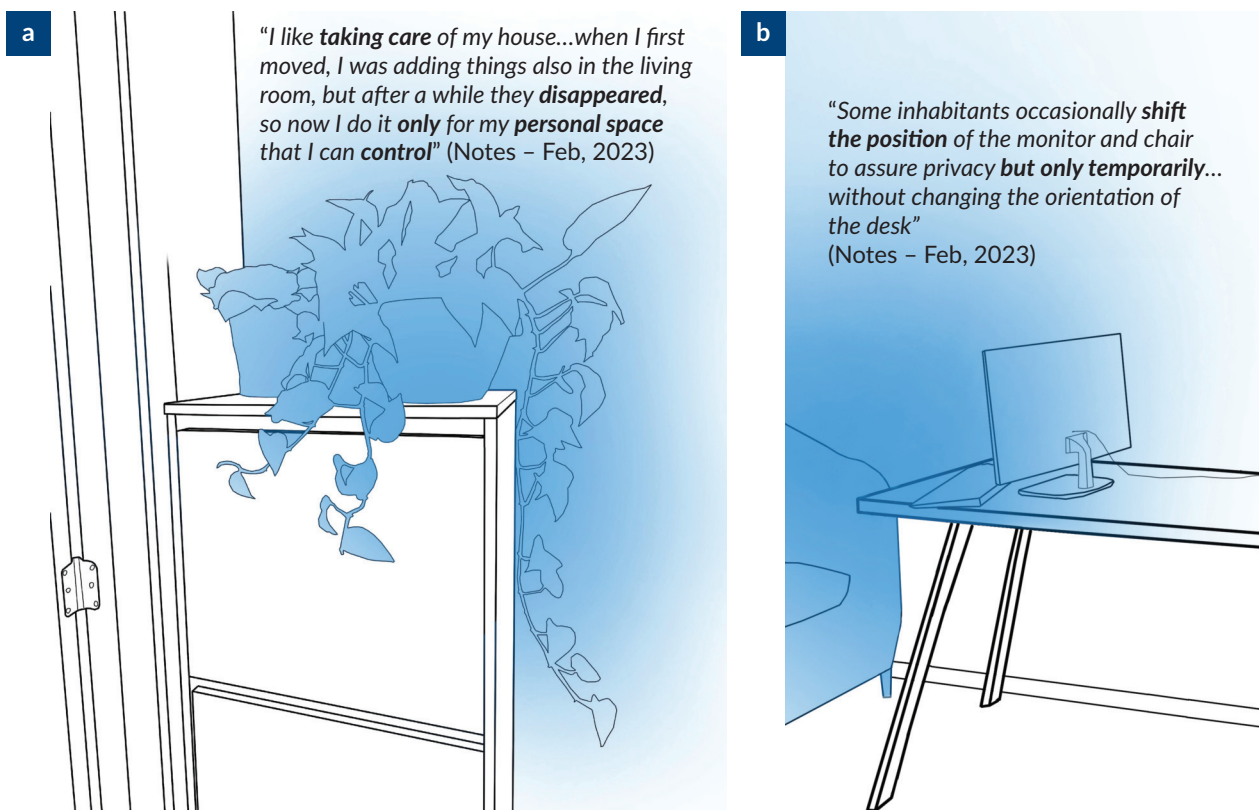
Figure 4. Snapshots of everyday life across the project.

feelings of insecurity and discomfort regarding the collective spaces. In this context, the inhabitants' micro-appropriation and punctual changes to collective spaces are once again linked to the actors' distinct-missions strategy, resulting in a temporary collective living arrangement that does not allow sufficient time for community bonding. This is partially mitigated through the tactics of adaptivity that allow the rearrangement of the project's space. However, this flexibility mainly applies to individual spaces. Moreover, as concluded during the workshop with the inhabitants, this flexibility is only casually enabled. There is a lack of systematic approach to re-adapt the collective areas by integrating more individually and personally defined spaces within its design (workshop notes from May 2023). As a result, this compromise results in relatively autonomous individual spaces and a project that does not reach its full potential, as inhabitants tend to bypass the collective space and use them only temporarily, to navigate the tensions that come with cohabitation.

Regarding attachment to the wider neighbourhood, the majority of inhabitants expressed feelings of disorder and neglect over the municipality. Reasons cited include people often "spending the evenings drinking" outside the house (Interview 9, 2023), concerns about "the dirt" (Interview 8, 2023), and frustration with the "administration that takes so long that it's impossible" to receive financial aid and social benefits they depend on (Interview 10, 2023). As a result, most interviewed residents indicate that they have only spent limited time in the area's public space, even though they perceive the project very positively, as highlighted by one; "this house is really nice but if we put it elsewhere, I would never want to leave it" (Interview 10, 2023). This behaviour is thus linked to the projects' proposed urban strategy, of renovating buildings in areas of the BCR to increase the housing stock. This strategy mainly focuses on quantitatively

increasing housing without enhancing the overall liveability of the area's public spaces, thereby not providing homing opportunities for the inhabitants close to the project. Consequently, due to their limited ability to influence the challenging external environment, most inhabitants refrain from engaging with the public spaces in the area, often preferring to relocate to a different municipality after their stay in the project.

All in all, while certain characteristics of the project succeed in providing secure legal tenure safeguarding against evictions (Carver, 2011) and offering access to a plethora of spaces, the project lacks the necessary time considerations, which is essential for fostering a sense of home in a collective living arrangement (Aernouts & Ryckewaert, 2019). Moreover, it fails to ensure long-term reassurance regarding tenancy security, negatively affecting the inhabitants' ability to connect with the immediate surroundings where inhabitants reside (Grønseth & Thorshaug, 2022).

5.2.2. Tactics of Homing

On the other hand, some inhabitants choose to spend time in certain interior places located in the municipality and, more specifically, in the space of the learning activity (Interview 5, 2023; notes from February and March 2023). During the hour of the activity, and next to engaging in the development of their personal project, these residents adapt and transform this place into a kind of living room. First of all, these participants clearly care for this space, decorating it with flowers (notes from April, 2023). Second, the activity occurring there creates opportunities for more informal interactions. It creates an opportunity to informally, and individually confide their problems of cohabitation to the workers (Interview 5, 2023; notes from April 2023). While working in parallel on their project, inhabitants sometimes interact, engage in dialogue, and casually bond over common issues (notes from December 2022). One revealing example is their conversation about personal administrative problems, about which they have different opinions on how to face them, fostering better mutual understanding (notes from December 2022). This place is viewed by many interviewed inhabitants as a positive space outside the project, with one of them noting "I really appreciate it, it's the best activity I can get" (Interview 8, 2023). It "provides a positive distance for thinking about problems; an emotional distance" (Interview 5, 2023). As such, this can be seen as an extension of the collective living strategy, where inhabitants use and further repurpose the tactics of "adaptivity" and "presence" developed by the actors to their terms, turning such space into an extra place of homing. By diverging from the dominant dynamics, this intermediate or negotiating stage facilitates the development of networks and skills, a mechanism also acknowledged by Wallin-Ruschman and Patka (2016). In essence, the physical as well as emotional "distance" from the project leads to less forced interactions, balancing the aims of the collective living & sharing strategy that was put forward in the project.
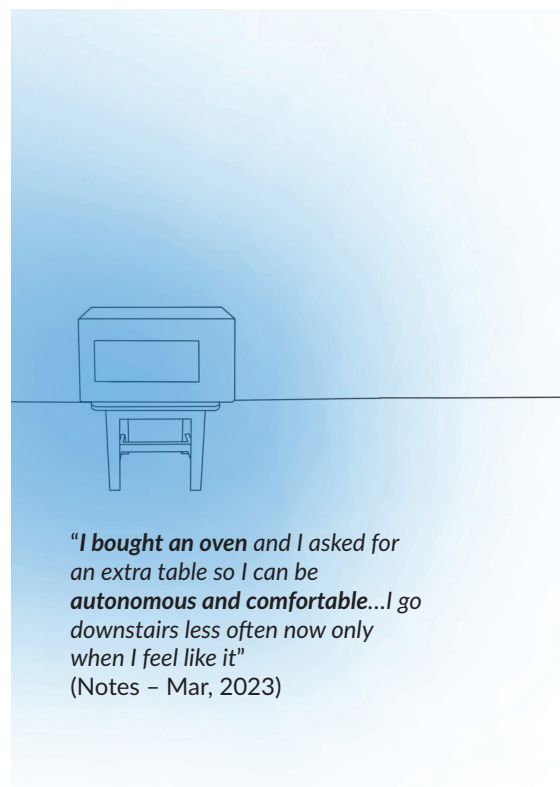
Furthermore, inhabitants use such activity as a reference point to navigate to vicinity areas and the city, not only through casually receiving some elemental information during the time of the activity on services in the city offering support, as first envisioned by the workers, but also based on their own everyday needs. For instance, residents ask for information about language courses offered, as well as places offering second-hand furniture in the city (notes from April and October 2023). Such actions are influenced by the regular interaction (notes from April 2023) as well as the environment described in the previous paragraph given that it is "a space...a warm environment where there is trust...not a top-down relationship" (Interview 5, 2023). This generates the necessary conditions for inhabitants to claim a connectivity that is more spontaneous and linked to personal everyday infrastructures. This is yet another way in which inhabitants

repurpose the designed urban strategy and related tactics of rendering the municipality and city infrastructure more accessible (tactics of presence).

Finally, the shared spatial configuration of the project enables access to extra spacious new places such as a big living room, dining room, and kitchen, where most inhabitants ascertain that they have freedom over them, given that internal everyday management is defined among them (workshop notes from May 2023). Despite the minor tensions surrounding these places that most of the residents remark, they enable them to relax by making them feel at home and allowing them to concentrate when pursuing their personal (and professional) goals. Interviewee 10 (2023) explains:

> Since I was born, I never lived alone[independently], in my own house. The living room makes it a home....It has allowed me to relax the fact that there are no rules...the fact that it is a house and not a small corner.

Inhabitants cultivate agency by consciously making decisions about how to use the house in ways beyond its original design. This is done by demanding changes to the intended use of these spaces, or by deliberately refusing the intended use, mainly by exploiting the tactics of presence and adaptivity set by the workers on the ground. For instance, they refuse to clean collective areas and pass on the need for an in-depth cleaning from the housekeeping service during the time of the learning activity (Notes from October 2023), or half of the residents admitted in the interviews requesting extra furniture to rearrange their individual spaces to more autonomous ones. As one inhabitant notes: "We've turned it [inhabitant's private space] into a small living room with a table, a place where we can share meals" (Interview 7, 2023; see Figure 5). These

"*I bought an oven* and I asked for an extra table so I can be *autonomous and comfortable*...I go downstairs less often now only when I feel like it"
(Notes – Mar, 2023)

Figure 5. Snapshot of everyday life across the project.

conditions set the basis for repurposing the collective living strategy from communal living through sharing infrastructures towards other ways of cohabitation. Rather than spending time as a group, this is guided by meaningful interaction over collective solidarity and by mobilising as inhabitants. Examples are discussing common problems such as finding a house or exchanging practical details (notes from May 2023) such as "registering to the municipal housing lists [and] making lots of contacts" (Interview 9, 2023). Other instances of everyday solidarity and friendship (notes from May 2023) include sharing time spontaneously, like interviewee 10 (2023) recalls: "We stayed downstairs with the kids [babysitting them]....I went to [Interviewee 7] room and the kids played [together]....It was really nice."

To conclude, the project offers inhabitants the ability to dwell through "generat[ing] the axioms of the spaces they inhabit" (Illich, 1984), as illustrated in the various open-ended tactics that take place in their domestic space. By regaining the sense of control over the way they inhabit in a material but also organisational manner, the project at the level of the home as well as at the urban level creates processes at the "intersection of interlocking scales and at the nexus of the private and public sphere" (Nagi et al., 2023, p. 83).

6. Conclusion

This study examined how the daily operations of a multi-actor AHI in the BCR influenced the dynamics among the involved actors and the domestic experiences of its inhabitants. It did so by interpreting the grounded actions of the workers and inhabitants of the project through the lens of tactics. We believe this contribution is relevant, as it proposes a theoretical framework for analysing and interpreting third-sector AHIs, contributing to a broader research interest in understanding the vast diversity of "collaborative housing" forms emerging worldwide (Czischke, 2018). We further assert that conclusions can be drawn to empirically discern these initiatives' societal contribution, as well as the nature of the right to housing they encompass.

In more detail, the findings show that this multi-actor initiative generates a project where the strategy of the stakeholders, together with the grounded tactics of the workers and inhabitants, act in a cooperating continuum. In this interpretation, this project is a successful mechanism of support for the inhabitants' vulnerabilities linked to the housing crisis. First of all, the multi-actor collaboration enables the intelligent mobilisation of resources, such as giving access to building stock and funding. Second, the project's organisational and spatial configuration also fulfils the inhabitants' right to housing by providing new, affordable, qualitative housing with extra spaces that inhabitants alone would have found difficult to access (i.e., a spacious living room, dining room, and kitchen). It is further satisfied by enabling qualities of the right to dwelling in the sense of living and being in the world through shaping and participating in its environment (Illich,1984).

Inhabitants can shape their home and daily lives according to their needs, as the organisational system of the project reduces the distance needed for accessing the decision-making order of such housing (through the actor's tactics that enable on-the-ground adaptations or further missions based on everyday challenges). It even allows for direct participation by repurposing or appropriating various tactics and producing further missions. As such, the project succeeds in cultivating mechanisms that go beyond housing, such as enabling inhabitants' agency (through solidarity, mobilising, and expressing a new housing model), security (providing rest and focus) and inclusion (connection with the local and city services). Nonetheless, the multitude of actors involved in the project occasionally results in a fragmented top-down strategy and operationalisation. This

leads to contradictions and compromises between the aims of the different actors that negatively impact the everyday lives of the inhabitants. This is evident in the conflicting aims of creating, on the one hand, a temporary housing project, and on the other hand, one that relies on collective living. The challenges and perplexities these conflicting dimensions create in the everyday life of inhabitants infringe on achieving the full realisation of the right to housing, as the project mainly succeeds in providing a right to shelter.

Furthermore, by interpreting the strategies and tactics within this third-sector multi-actor housing project as a continuum of interplaying processes, the research contributed to the theoretical discourse over the interpretation of de Certeau's notions. In particular, by tracing in detail how this continuum unfolds in a multi-actor housing project, it highlighted the role of NPOs and the third sector as a representative example where such theorisation applies. This article suggests that the tactics of non-profit actors are an essential negotiating stage for dialoguing and redistributing control between the housing authorities and inhabitants, especially the ones excluded from the existing commodified housing market. As such, they occupy an intermediary position between the residents and the institutions that embodies and allows one to understand the continuum between strategy (of institutions) and tactics (of residents).

Additionally, the actions of the actors involved provide further insights into viewing such third-sector housing as a valuable tool for the urban fabric, as an urban strategy, and in everyday life. First, it is a successful strategy for repairing and protecting the local building stock by constructing a more qualitative environment. Second, the project hints at a model in which housing and supporting services can be integrated into the household, while also informing and building connections to create a cohesive system with the other external local and city services.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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