MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

verfasst von / submitted by

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science (MSc)

Wien,   / Vienna,

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt / degree programme code as it appears on the student record sheet:	UA 066 664
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt / degree programme as it appears on the student record sheet:	Masterstudium DDP Urban Studies
Betreut von / Supervisor:	

Designing the social: The impact of architectural design on the homemaking processes of vulnerable groups

A comparative study between two social housing units: HAK in Vienna & Candries in Brussels

ABSTRACT

Although homemaking processes are well studied within the context of housing, it is significantly more complicated when it comes to people with unrooted homes. Most of the literature that covered housing experiences in relation to homemaking processes focused on owner occupied housing. Little was researched on social housing, even though it represents an important dwelling for vulnerable groups. Social housing tenants in European welfare states come from diverse backgrounds which often makes them subject to socio-spatial segregation on the (social) housing market. Various scholars argue that welfare regimes and housing systems play an important role in this but their focus has been on quantitative methodologies to determine housing discrimination, whereas design research, ethnography and interviewing as data collection methods were rarely considered. In order to broaden the perspective of housing research, this thesis proposes home research as an instrument to assess segregation practices in social housing against people from migrant backgrounds, queer people, single mothers, and disabled tenants. Two case studies of newly built social housing units in Vienna, Austria and Brussels, Belgium were selected. To reach a holistic understanding of the meaning of home and homing, a number of mixed methods are part of this research. Architectural design research, semi structured interviews and observations were utilised to address the crucial role architecture plays in home research and therefore in comparative housing research. Even though the results do not allow a concluding evaluation of the selected housing, they show the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in housing research. Additionally, they show how imperative qualitative methodologies that consider individual homemaking experiences are to grasp how architectural design contributes to shaping the *social* in social housing and how it impacts the homemaking processes of vulnerable groups.

Key words: Homemaking, vulnerable groups, architectural design, social housing, comparative housing, segregation

ABSTRACT

Obwohl der Etablierungsprozess eines Zuhauses im Kontext von Häusern gut erforscht ist, ist es wesentlich komplizierter, wenn es um Menschen geht, die kein verwurzeltes Zuhause haben. Der größte Teil der Literatur, die sich mit dem Zusammenhang von Zuhause und Wohnen befasst, konzentriert sich auf Eigenheime. Zu sozialem Wohnungsbau wurde hingegen wenig geforscht, obwohl er eine wichtige Wohnform, insbesondere für vulnerable Gruppen darstellt. Die Mieter*innen von Sozialwohnungen in den europäischen Wohlfahrtsstaaten haben diverse Hintergründe, was sie häufig der sozialräumlichen Segregation auf dem (sozialen) Wohnungsmarkt aussetzt. Verschiedene Forscher*innen argumentieren, dass Wohlfahrtsregime und Wohnsysteme eine wichtige Rolle dabei spielen, allerdings lag der Schwerpunkt bisher auf quantitativen Methoden zur Ermittlung von Diskriminierung im Wohnungswesen, während Designforschung, Ethnografie und Befragungen als Methoden der Datenerhebung kaum berücksichtigt wurden. Um die Perspektive der Wohnungsforschung zu erweitern, wird in dieser Arbeit die Erforschung des Zuhauses als Instrument vorgeschlagen, um Segregationspraktiken im sozialen Wohnungsbau gegenüber Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund, queeren Menschen, alleinerziehenden Müttern und behinderten Mieter*innen zu bewerten. Es wurden zwei Fallstudien von neu errichteten Sozialwohnungen in Wien, Österreich, und Brüssel, Belgien, ausgewählt. Um ein ganzheitliches Verständnis der Bedeutung von Zuhause und Wohnen zu erlangen, wurde eine Reihe von gemischten Methoden in diese Untersuchung einbezogen. Architektonische Designforschung, halbstrukturierte Interviews und Beobachtungen wurden eingesetzt, um die entscheidende Rolle der Architektur in der Erforschung des Zuhauses und somit in der vergleichenden Wohnungsforschung zu untersuchen. Auch wenn die Ergebnisse keine abschließende Bewertung der ausgewählten Wohnkomplexe zulassen, zeigen sie doch die Bedeutung interdisziplinärer Ansätze in der Wohnungsforschung. Darüber hinaus zeigen sie, wie wichtig qualitative Methoden sind, die die individuellen Erfahrungen bei der Etablierung des Zuhauses berücksichtigen, um zu verstehen, wie die architektonische Gestaltung zur Formung des Sozialen im sozialen Wohnungsbau beiträgt und wie sie sich auf die Etablierungsprozesse vulnerabler Gruppen auswirkt.

Schlüsselwörter: Zuhause, Vulnerable Gruppen, architektonisches Design, sozialer Wohnungsbau, vergleichender Wohnungsforschung, Segregation

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I. Introduction
I.1. Research foundation
I.1.1. Why architectural design?

The reason behind my choice of pursuing this master's program was laying in an inner conflict I had after graduating from architecture school. I felt that the architecture I learned was not speaking to the people. It was speaking to the eyes of those who assigned themselves accountable to give architectural critiques that mostly aligned with the aesthetic discourse. Maybe they sometimes align with the emerging sustainability paradigms that give way more importance to the economic and ecological aspects rather than the social one. I criticize this neglect and chose to focus on the importance of architectural design as a component of granting or hindering social justice. In researching the prospects of the social and human integrity of architecture, I learned that familiarity plays an important role for the architect to hand in a design that replies to the needs of its user. Rasmussen (2010) compares the architect to a music composer when they work with proportions that they are familiar with:

> here the comparison of the architect with the composer is fully justified - the composer in front of the capability to translate his composition into notes so that others can play his music. He can do this because the sounds at his disposal have been precisely defined and because each note corresponds to a sound that he is absolutely familiar with. (P.147, Author's translation)

Familiarity according to the Cambridge dictionary means the good knowledge of something, or the fact that you know it so well. Despite the knowledge architects gain from studying the elements attributed to the future project they are designing, like an urban analysis, a socio-economic analysis of the neighbourhood, climate studies and many more aspects, they tend to turn a blind eye to the knowledge produced by the people who reside in the neighbourhood or those who will use the buildings, especially when it comes to designing housing. Designing houses is well known amongst architects for the challenges it encompasses when trying to reply to the client's needs. The client in most cases is the homeowner. The results eventually tend to be pleasant for both sides, a client that had everything they dreamed of and an architect who replied to someone's need in creating their home. This is not at all the case when it comes to designing social housing for the masses. The client here is not the person who will live in the house but the city as a housing provider. This is where the aspect of the architect's familiarity gets blurry. The expectations of the city on what a good housing should be for the tenants is way detached from reality. Even though some might assume that the policies and regulations allocated by the city are curbing architects from fully utilising their artistic and creative solutions, nowadays municipalities are encouraging innovative and creative architectural solutions within fundamental regulations which gives architects more responsibility. This is the reason why I chose to research the role of architectural design in granting social justice.

I.1.2. Why social housing?

Social housing in Brussels, is municipal housing in Vienna, is affordable or subsidised or public housing in other cities. The terminology varies but the aim is one: The provision of housing that costs less than the average housing in the private market. This aim comes from a social initiative of supporting the lower income class to access decent housing. I chose the term social as a primary reference to this type of housing where the state subsidy plays the main role in its provision. This focus on state subsidy led to a quantitative approach to housing provision that eventually neglected its social values by focusing on technicalities like size, price or number of flats (Ozer & Jacoby, 2022). The interest in social housing as a focus point is my attempt to bond the architecture of housing to its social component. I found it intuitive to research social housing because of how under-

researched it is especially from an architectural perspective. Housing provision for low-income groups is providing shelter, a sense of security and a home. This concept of home within public housing provision is what the thesis will focus on as a way of assessing to what extent architecture plays a role in granting this social aspect or maybe replying to its social values. All along this thesis I will adopt the term *homing*, that Boccagni defines as people's ''evolving potential to attach a sense of home to their life circumstances, in light of their assets and of the external structure of opportunities'' (2017, p. 23). I will be using this term in the text to describe the process of creating one's home in the assigned flats of the chosen case studies. Juhani Pallasma (3:55) in his lecture named *The complexity of simplicity: The inner structure of the artistic image,* stated that ''Architecture projects an ethic narrative of human life and culture''. I argue that in this projection of narrative, lays a responsibility of merit, where the architect is asked to represent ethics and culture through their work. This merit brings us back to the concept of familiarity and how important it is to be emerged in the context, which comes from bringing together the social and the spatial.

1.1.3. Why vulnerable groups?

At first my research was merely focusing on tenants with migrant backgrounds. As I am a migrant myself, hopping from one country to another and living from governmental subsidies (scholarships) that never fully covered my monthly expenses to grant a comfortable living, raised my curiosity of how even less privileged people are managing their lives in the shadow of lower incomes, higher expenses, lack or absence of social security, all together with this constant feeling of instability and fear of not being able to get their visa for the upcoming year. With further research I realised that vulnerability is layered withing broader shapes and forms of social housing tenants, and that migrants are not the only ones who suffer diaspora. In fact, I argue that single mothers, people with disabilities and queer tenants are also living in diaspora. Rejection from society is an essential component of their everyday lives, be it when trying to secure a stable income or when trying to be socially accepted beyond idealistic norms, these people struggle on their way to reach comfort and stability and learning from their stories of homing will give a new perspective on how to conceptualise housing by dissociating from the standardised nuclear family structure that architects and planners consider as the primary figure of housing tenants when designing for the city.

1.2. Brief introduction of the topic

Although homemaking processes are well studied within the context of housing, it is significantly more complicated when it comes to people with unrooted homes. Most of the literature that covered housing experiences in relation to homemaking processes focused on owner occupied housing or migrant enclaves. Little was researched on social housing, even though it represents an important dwelling for vulnerable groups. It is crucial to keep in mind that social housing is pre-designed housing that relies mostly on the prediction of the architects and policy makers of what a decent home would be for the tenants, which is challenging considering that social housing tenants in European welfare states come from diverse backgrounds. Yet, what typically unifies them is their low income, which makes them subject to segregation on the housing market.

Segregation in (social) housing has been debated in architectural and social studies, with various scholars arguing that welfare regimes and housing systems play an important role in socio-spatial segregation. Be it the case of ethnic minorities, refugees, queer people, single mothers, or others, the focus has been on quantitative methodologies to determine housing discrimination. However, these studies have not engaged with the issues raised by other fields of housing research. Design research, for instance, addresses the crucial role that architecture plays in comparative housing

research. Design layouts like open space, circulation, orientation, lighting, heating, ventilation, openness, and other features can very much shape the socio-spatial environment and therefore should be considered in socio-spatial segregation studies.

This thesis will delve into the role architectural design plays in vulnerable groups' homemaking processes in social housing. More specifically, in this thesis, I will be looking at newly built social housing projects in Vienna, Austria and Brussels, Belgium in order to investigate whether or not their building standards provide the expected housing quality necessary for *homing*. This will be followed by field work with a bottom-up approach of research, where observations and semi-structured interviews will be the source of the qualitative data.

I will discuss the relevance of the tenants' feedback and their feeling of belonging to the political claims associated to social housing aims. This will help to find answers to the research question *''to what extent does the architectural design shape the 'social' in social housing, and how does it impact the homemaking processes of vulnerable groups?''* and reveal the neglected connections between architectural design and its impact on homing and the feeling of belonging. I argue that housing design should be studied carefully in accordance with the cultural, physical and economic aspects, and under consideration of the social diversity of the future tenants in order to provide them with a decent housing quality.

1.3. Overview of the research

The next chapter is a literature review of academic debates revolving around housing studies and home research. The third chapter is the methodology section that explains data collection methods and their limitations, the purpose of the research, and the research ethics and author's positionality. Chapter four is the introduction of the case studies followed by the findings in chapter five. This chapter includes a local welfare and housing governance overview of both Brussels and Vienna followed by a design analysis of chosen flat types and then the presentation of narratives and stories of the tenants. In chapter six I discuss the implication of the findings and their relation to the academic debates touched upon in the literature review and how they reply to the research question. Finally, the conclusion will summarise the research with the addition of reflections and limitations.

II. Literature Review and theoretical framework

The literature review will cover a number of academic debates believed to be important as a kickstart to the development of this thesis. The first part of this literature review gives different readings of *home* from migration, people with disabilities, single mothers, and queer perspectives that eventually assemble under marginalisation when it comes to domesticity and the search of home. Given the disadvantaged circumstances vulnerable people face on their way to settle down and subsequently start a new homemaking process, the sections will also engage with the body of literature that focuses on the struggles to access (social) housing in Europe. These struggles resulting from segregation to access housing are in a way related to the nature of the welfare typology of each country and city. Since Vienna and Brussels are the two cities where I want to conduct my research, the second part will define their housing systems following one line of argument and will derive their segregation positionality accordingly. Subsequently a counter argument of other scholars presenting alternative methodologies will discuss different ways of perceiving comparative housing studies, other than welfare typologies, through a qualitative research lens. The last part, inspired by the work of scholars emphasising on the importance of interdisciplinary research, will shed light on the role of qualitative research methods to better understand homemaking processes of social housing tenants. It encompasses an analysis of multiple definitions of *social housing* to eventually shed light on the role that architectural design plays in socio-spatial narratives and finally discuss its potential in creating alternative domesticities that aims at replying to the diverse needs of the tenants.

II.1. Homemaking processes of vulnerable groups

Even though the notion of home is still strongly connotated with the notion of the physical house, this section of the literature review takes into consideration both home as a house and the home as an outcome of social practices and personal attachments (Gorman-Murray, 2006). Home has been defined through academic research as a safe haven for those who seek protection from the public sphere and the outside world (Madanipour, 2014). It has long represented privacy, intimacy, stability, and safety. Yet this perspective is seen to be limited to the white bourgeois family ideal that neglects many aspects like power structures, class differences, ethnicity and race, family hierarchies, gender roles, body impairments et cetera. This is why in the upcoming sections, different approaches to home and homemaking will be discussed.

II.1.1. Diaspora, homeland, host land and transnational homemaking for Migrants

Homes for the migrant has been debated in Eurocentric literature arguing that the feeling of home as a dwelling was not relevant until the modernist thinking of the enlightenment of the 17th century (Somerville, 1997), and that home was more of a reference to the community or country of origin. This limited perspective neglects the family composition of the eastern and non-European migrants at their homelands. Home does primarily refer to the house and goes even further: ''Bayt translates literally as house, but its connotations resonate beyond rooms and walls, summoning longings gathered about family and home. In the middle east, Bayt is sacred'' (Shadid, 2012).

Although referring to the home might sound as if it is addressing a static entity whether a house, a family a certain person or a land, Boccagni (2017) in his book *Migration and the search for home* argues that for migrants, home is a process created around the temporality of a mobile pattern. Moreover, he addresses the notion of *homing* for migrants as an attempt to appropriate the everyday life practices in order to create a 'home-like', in light of their feeling of home. The notion of *homing*

as defined by the author is ''People's evolving potential to attach a sense of home to their life circumstances, in light of their assets and of the external structure of opportunities'' (Boccagni, 2017, p. 23). The layers of circumstances asylum seekers, guest workers or refugees face are of potency to disrupt our conventional understanding of home. Additionally, the combination of sequences of cultural identities interrelated together, hamper the normative perception of home that relies on stability and locality. Hence, a migrant's feeling of home is formed by a new and unique perception, a blend of the previous home(s) and the new/future home. Blunt and Dowling (2022) define home for migrants as an interplay between stability and movement, between the located and the mobile. This notion was also seen in the work of researchers (see Boccagni, 2017; Clifford, 1997; Gilroy, 2003) that refer to this dichotomy of locality and movement with 'roots' referring to the origin homeland and 'routes' that signify the homing on the move.

Gerharz et al. (2011) in their UNECE 'Guidelines on Social Housing' argue that the social housing privatization in some countries and the resulting decrease of social housing share led to a tenure segmentation by income. This has contributed to the social and spatial polarization hand in hand with segregation and thus the stigmatisation of social housing in some countries. Academics agree on the fact that social housing is discriminatory against ethnic minorities, refugees and vulnerable groups in contradiction to the political claims associated to social housing and its accessibility (Gruber & Franz, 2020). Kohlbacher (2020) argues that refugees who are already not accepted in the private housing market due to the low income, lack of communication skills and unstable social status are also excluded from co-operative apartments due to their lack of the required capital.

Whether social housing should only target low income and vulnerable groups or host a larger societal class like the low middle and middle-income class is still a central subject of debate amongst many scholars. Some studies believe that social housing should exclusively target the lower income groups (FEANTSA, 2017). One of their arguments is the fact that social mix is nothing but a buzz word with paradoxical effects on local policies (Bricocoli & Cucca, 2016) and that the popularity of the term social mix is only due to the 'public emergency' of the concentrations of migrant communities that were perceived as a threat to social cohesion.

Another argument by Bricocoli and Cucca (2016) states that the hype around aiming for social mix is a re-enactment of the US American example, and once used in Europe, it got detached from its principles of inclusivity and cohesion and was transformed to a tool of increasing real-estate profits. On the other hand, in the social housing context, evidence was provided that targeting exclusively the low-income groups pushes forward the stigmatization of social housing and the socio-spatial segregation (Gerharz et al., 2011). This leaves us with the argument that a broad-based social rental sector with a diverse dwelling stock and resident class mix will prevent stigmatization (Priemus, 1997). As a counter argument, Aigner (2019) claims that in countries with better social housing positionality it is still witnessed that there is a selective prioritization in the social housing accessibility amongst vulnerable groups themselves, where women and families with children are prioritized over single men in granting access to social housing. This leaves them reliant on the private housing market. In addition to that, she argues against the assumption that ethnic networks are key in migrants' access to housing. Although some scholars stress the importance of involving all members of the urban society in the battle against discrimination in the private housing market (Kohlbacher, 2020). Aigner (2019) comes to the conclusion that ethnic specific networks albeit helping with providing shelter to newcomers, do not provide them with decent living conditions. She also

concludes that immigrants are hardly better off in a social housing city with a broad social rental sector.

II.1.2. Homemaking and disability: homing between corporality and stability

Research on people with disabilities have been increasing in the last years, with a serious focus on accessibility, mobility, and inclusion. Architecturally, this was perceived in the introduction of mandatory building standards like elevators, ramps, wide corridors, and accustomed bathrooms in housing or public buildings. Yet the precarity goes way beyond technical solutions. In academia, the study of homemaking processes neglected people with disabilities as the focus was largely on the homemaking processes of white, owner occupied housing by healthy middle-class residents (Aplin et al., 2020). The interaction within one's home is conceived by their corporality, and as Imrie (2004) argues, the study of homemaking should be including this relation between body and space. Since the design of housing is based on assumptions of the typical healthy body and its functioning, taking into consideration impairment, health problems and disease while conceiving homes is crucial for a welcoming experience for disabled people. This does not only imply wheelchair accessibility, but also heights of kitchens, shelves or kitchen furniture (Imrie, 2004).

Additionally, people with disabilities are subject to socioeconomic precarity that comes with difficulties finding stable jobs in addition to the limited welfare subsidy and support that makes their housing situation worse (Aitken et al., 2019). Their displacement due to health conditions, low building maintenance (specifically in social housing) resulting in serious health problems (Aplin et al., 2020) makes their homing processes more complicated and therefore they can be more unsatisfied with their homes compared to those who are not disabled (Aitken et al., 2019).

In the study conducted by Aplin et al. (2020) with disabled people inhabiting social housings in Australia, the perception of home by the interviewees was reliant on the feeling of safety and security as well as the relief of not having to move again. They have shown satisfaction whenever they were able to add their own decorative touch to their homes, but when it comes to making heavy technical modifications that enhance their independency, the majority of the interviewees talked about long waiting processes and bureaucratic struggles which postponed their homemaking processes after moving in. This is again related to the socio-cultural assumption of what a quality flat could be that does not take body impairment, interior flexibility or the integration of rooms into account while providing flats (Imrie, 2004).

II.1.3. Homemaking for single mothers: A feminist approach

This section sheds light on the precarious situation of single mothers on their way to find decent housing and subsequently create their home. Single mothers are defined as mothers who live without a partner with one or more children younger than 18 or between 18-24 if they are not actively making money like the case of students (Nieuwenhuis & Zagel, 2022). Previous research on single mothers focused primarily on mental health issues, gender roles, social networks and parenting (Mednick, 1987 cited by (Mulroy et.al, 1992) and disregarded the causality with low income as a widespread problem. This precarious situation was/is linked to the stigmatization of single mothers and their children (perceived as future delinquents) because of the heteronormative social pressure on family structures (Rotramel, 2021) which results in the imbalance of gendered social rights and discrimination. The housing crisis resulting from discrimination is proved to be an outcome of the patriarchal societal structure that results in the difficulty of maintaining a single mother headed household without risking poverty (Andersen & Larsen, 1998). The concept of the monogamous

family structure that derives from a background of men supremacy did not derive form the rectification of the relationship between man and woman (Madanipour, 2014), it evolved with the idea of inheritance of the father's child together with slavery and private wealth (Engels, 2004). This ideology resulted in the perception of men as more adequate and worthy of stable jobs thus creating gender imbalance in the job market. Housing problems single mothers face are themselves linked to inadequate professions; and in case of not having family support for the childcare, arranging both work and care becomes more challenging.

In a study conducted to assess housing satisfaction amongst south Korean single mothers in subsidised housings, Cho (2020) emphasises the link between the comfortable income and the housing satisfaction. This strong socio-demographic characteristic is very much related to the single-mother's psychological resilience linked to the stability of the economic status (Kim, 2020). The sense of community is present in various papers discussing its influence on the home making processes of single mothers. Their relationship with their neighbours, especially those who share a similar experience of exclusion from society or the condition of raising a child on their own creates a specific type of social bonding with the community (Kim & Kaplan, 2004). The strong sense of community and relationship with neighbours comes from a background of insecurity. The feeling of safety is therefore crucial for the experience of homing amongst single mothers.

II.1.4. Home making for queer tenants: critique of the heteronormative reading of home

The perception of home as both a place we come from, but also a place we seek that will most probably be influenced by past home experiences (as partially mentioned beforehand) is considered a heteronormative reading of home (Fortier, 2001). Since home is perceived as the environment where we grow up, collect memories and attachments, it is presumably believed that we would seek to recreate parts of those memories in our future home. In the case of queer homemaking processes and perceptions, this dual interpretation is no longer valid. ''Home is the place you get to, not the place you come from'' (Monette, 1991). Assuming that the majority of queer people come from heterosexual family structures, leaving the family home to seek the inclusive home is considered a homemaking process in diaspora, due to the association of the family home with the fear of expulsion and violence (Blunt & Varley, 2004). This takes a broader spatial scale in the situation of queer refugees who seek asylum because of the national homophobic and transphobic laws and the social pressure in their countries of origin.

The meaning of home in housing policies as well as home research became a synonym of the heterosexual family home perceived to represent the ideal life (Bell & Valentine, 2012). It favours heteronormativity and the cis-gender family ideals associated with it in housing provision. In similar cases, this domestic heteronormativity is also present in the case of accommodation provision to host asylum seekers (Wimark, 2021). The separation of refugees according to the binary gender roles creates tension amongst heterosexual refugees, and in several cases, this leads to the exclusion of the queer from these accommodations and therefore their displacement, again.

Queer asylum seekers migrate due to the hatred, violence and rejection faced in their countries of origin, and according to a study conducted by Wimark (2021) about queer refugees in Sweden, an important number of the queer asylum seekers are subject to homophobia and transphobia in the hosting accommodations as well. Queer theory challenges the duality of home as the place we come from and the place we seek. This approach is associated with the 'deliberate' choice of leaving the place of origin in order to seek home. Yet in cases like forced displacement, even the sought home can reject, and this layers more diaspora in search of home. Lesbian Italian - American

author Maria Capello argues, that home is in itself queer, and even intensely queer, because it is located between the 'here' and 'there' or what she calls a space of betweenness (Cappello, 2000). In order to unsettle the heteronormative approach to the family home (Blunt & Dowling, 2022), Fortier (2003) interpreted this approach when she writes ''Not only can home be a space of multiple forms of inhabitance – queer and others – but belonging can also be lived through attachments to multiple 'homes''' (p.131). She also argues, in her study of queer movement, that home should be associated with migration and belonging. She analyses the relation between queerness and home as an act of ''home-coming'' with home as a destination rather than an origin (Fortier, 2001).

To destabilise the hegemonic practices translated in housing policies and homemaking research and their narrow definitions of homes as a space for the monogamous nuclear and heterosexual family structure, Pilkey (2015) argues that architecture is capable of challenging the heteronormative design of homes and can provide alternative approaches to domesticity, whether in the case of founded families or cohabiting and also by taking into consideration practices like collective child-rearing, lesbian donor conception, gay fatherhood and similar. Recently, in mainstream media and architecture magazines, the representation of gay men homes started to follow a stereotypical picture of white, good looking (according to the mainstream beauty standards), middle and high middle class, effeminate males showing interest in colourful and aesthetically well designed houses (Pilkey, 2015). On the 'opposite' side, lesbians were pictured as opposite to femininity and were pictured in movies or novels as opposed to the stereotypical female roles by refusing to stay at home or use the kitchen and prefers to do manly things like DIYs (Pilkey, 2015). Even though one might argue that these publications are a step further against normative binary gender roles, they barely touch upon the intersection of the class, identity, ethnicity and mostly sexuality of the one's who do not identify with them.

The different understandings of home showed the disparity between people's experiences and how affected they are with both the hegemonic discourse and their particular and individual situations. Nonetheless, in order to assess this hegemony, and to what extent it is discriminatory against the previously mentioned minority groups, looking at the housing provision can be of great help to see how cities put these discourses into practice.

II.2. Housing (design) comparison: towards alternative domesticities
II.2.1. Housing comparison

After understanding the different perceptions of home amongst vulnerable groups, and in order to proceed with the aspect of segregation in housing, this section will focus on the literature covering comparative housing research. It will shed light on the relationship between social housing policies, social housing design and their relationship with inclusion and life quality.

European comparative studies have been adopting Esping-Andersen's (1990) three welfare regime typologies as a reference of classification and a ground base for comparing European welfare countries. This comparative and classification method was perceived as a theoretical catalyst for more specific fields like the housing system comparisons (Arbaci, 2007). In a specific focus on welfare states, Arbaci (2007) argues that the socio-spatial ethnic segregation is highly shaped by the mechanisms of differentiations resulting from distinct housing systems in different welfare regimes. Housing systems were developed by scholars like Kemeny (1995) who adopted Esping-Andersen's approach in order to categorise housing typologies, namely the dualist and unitary rental systems. To give a brief explanation for both: The unitary system is a single market system that hosts

both subsidized housing and private rentals. It is a system that allows an overlap between profit and non-profit renting (Matznetter, 2002), and thus a fair competition between subsidised and non-subsidised housing (Hoekstra, 2009). This results in a more regulated rental market, or in simpler words, cheaper rent prices. The dual system is a system in which the state controls the non-profit sector protecting the unregulated private market from competition (Arbaci, 2007). In this case the private market is subject to speculations resulting in higher rent prices. Brussels and Vienna are the two cities where I will be doing my research. Preliminarily, the two cities are at opposite sides of, firstly, the housing rental systems and secondly, the type of welfare regime. Brussels represents a liberal cluster with a dualist housing market and Vienna a corporatist cluster with a unitary housing market.

The previously mentioned two housing systems are expected to influence the social distribution in different ways, leading to multiple forms of socio-tenure segregation. The unitary system, as explained before derives from a social strategy. The social housing access is not limited to low-income groups, on the contrary, it expands its offer to middle and high middle class. Therefore, it is believed to be more inclusive to different social groups due to the increasing socio-tenure mix. On the other hand, a divisive socio-tenure situation is due to the exclusive, protected, and segregating housing in the dualist system (Arbaci, 2007). In the particular case of single mothers for instance, the housing situation is seen to be imbalanced regarding the typology of the housing system, where in the unitary housing system and higher rent regulations are associated with better housing conditions, whereas the dual housing system where housing prices are higher is associated with worse housing conditions (Nieuwenhuis & Zagel, 2022). As Vienna and Brussels are on the opposite sides of the spectrum, this gives us a presumption on their different positionalities in the socio-spatial segregation practices. In this case quantitative research (numbers of tenants, ethnicities, social class) was the kind of empirical data collected to create this categorization. This type of quantitative approach gives a specific context to housing comparative research and although it has been adopted by various scholars as a basis for comparative methods over the years, it is seen as limited (Ozer & Jacoby, 2022).

In order to contribute to a more interdisciplinary housing research agenda, and overcoming this limitation, Ozer and Jacoby (2022) argue that housing design comparisons, although under-researched in housing studies, is nevertheless very important to identify possible relationships between architectural design and comparative housing research. They also point out the weaknesses of only focusing on the comparison of housing systems within welfare regimes and its limitation to the western European context, proposing alternative comparative methodologies with higher focus on qualitative comparative tools referring to Anna Haworth et al. (2017) and Stephens and Norris (2017) and giving the example of design as a research subject. The problem here is that disciplines like architecture and urban planning/design, are perceived to represent a top-down approach, or as Certeau (2008) names them in his book *The practices of everyday life* they create strategies. As a response to the probability of these strategies falling into a trap of malfunctioning, De Certeau emphasises the importance of the bottom-up approach or what he names the tactics. Luck (2019) argues that as design is acknowledged to have a social purpose and contributes to policy making, it is also a space for non-academic researchers (practitioners) to contribute and be valued as part of a research process. The narrative of interdisciplinarity in comparative housing studies also supports the direct involvement of the tenants and their potential of producing good evaluation results (Gerharz et al., 2011). When it comes to designing social housing in Vienna and Brussels (both metropolitan areas with high multi-ethnic, diverse, and dense urban demographic fabric), the

potential of hosting tenants from different ethnic backgrounds, different sexualities, different health conditions and social status is quite high and therefore allowing them to take part in the design process is crucial to accomplish a dwelling that fairly responds to their needs.

The virtues of an interdisciplinary approach towards housing research including conventional comparative methodologies like welfare regime typologies, local welfare analysis but also other approaches like comparing housing design regulations, focusing on ethnographical research and collection of data by interviewing are believed to be important to the development of this thesis.

II.2.2. Shaping the social

Although the previous section emphasises the importance of an interdisciplinary extension to the conventional housing comparison methods, it is still neglecting the *social* role architecture plays in shaping one's homemaking process. Therefore, this section will propose an additional and more detailed method in an attempt to attract the attention of architects and planners to take into consideration and value the personal experiences of tenants as a research guideline. In the absence of a conventional definition, a comparative study of 16 European definitions of social housing between 2010 and 2017 unveiled that the focus of the definitions lays mostly on terms like affordability, low income and need (Granath Hansson & Lundgren, 2019), while scholars like Atkinson and Da Voudi (2000) claim that the contemporary European societies shifted the debate from a focus on the economic inequality and financial exclusion to a more social and cultural dimension of exclusion, the whole perception, creation and contextualization of social housing is witnessing a narrative shift towards a more social approach. Hence, the imperative shift of the architecture of social housing from a design that responds exclusively to affordability to a design that responds to social inclusivity. This fine thread is what this research revolves around.

Segregation studies, migration studies and social studies rarely touch upon the importance of architecture's role in shaping the socio-spatial fabric. Moreover, architecture itself tends to neglect its own role to address these issues. Jones (2009) argues that it is mandatory to look beyond reductionist accounts that neglect the role architecture plays in culture production hand in hand with its engagement with aesthetics and semiotic components. On a similar note, buildings function within a society, are part of a society and do not only serve the ones who design them, this stresses on the argument that architecture should be subject to interrogations and discussions. Gawlikowska (2013) argues that architecture and urban space have an ability to communicate, she emphasizes on the importance to look on how this communication is perceived by non-experts, not only the audience from disciplines other than architecture and design, but also those who experience the space. In other words, architecture is expected to detach from its elitist bubble and give a chance to its diverse users to contribute to its creation.

A study conducted by Ozer and Jacoby (2022) explored 20 different subsidised housing standards across the globe. They critically approached the role of design standards expected to respond to certain needs and predictions highly shaped by the socio-cultural behaviour of people. In their research, technical standards like room numbers, room size, common areas and so on were taken into consideration for the comparison. It is indeed important to analyse and compare the housing design control of social housing as it is expected to be the direct translation of how regulations and policies perceive what a 'decent' dwelling is. This takes us one step narrower than with the comparison of housing typologies since design controls represent a dynamic interpretation of the expected tenants' interaction with the space. Karn & Nystrom (1998) argue that since these standards are very much reliant on cultural norms, it is absurd to expect the possible transferability

of design standards between countries, especially those with highly different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. I argue that this statement is applicable on the narrower scale, and that design standards should be more relevant to the locality and the uniqueness of each social housing in accordance with the tenure typology that does not always represent the nuclear white family ideal.

II.2.3. Alternative domesticities

This thesis merges between architecture and homemaking processes by focusing on domesticity as a space that hosts these two components. To continue the line of argument that is mentioned above, Layne (2020) argues that the creation of homes is not solely reliant on one discipline's creative act, but is subject to the intentional defamiliarization of the components of everyday life by the wider society. This is where the term alternative domesticity challenges the hegemonic and normative understanding of home. The heterogeneity that encompasses sexuality, diaspora, reduced mobility, identity, gender and similar neglected aspects are taken into consideration when studying and researching homemaking processes in relation to domesticity. Madanipour (2014) argues that political decisions are made according to ideals that are not representative of reality, he states:

> What is often at stake is the discrepancy between the reality of most people's lives and an idealized pattern of family, a pattern that is used as a basis for moral discussions and policy decisions (p.88).

To elaborate more on alternative domesticity, this section gives multiple examples of how individuals experience homing differently and showcases the importance of narrowing the aperture on these exemplary lessons. In the case of researching migrants' domesticities, finding a relevant understanding of a specific and personal things like one's home is considered wishful thinking. However, researchers like Boccagni (2017) tried to approach migrants homemaking by categorising their integration in their host countries. He argues that migrants' way of homing is divided between two different yet co-existing stances, one is the claim to belong, and the other is the claim to exert control. The first is seen to be the ambitious stance that creates more of a coherence between the migrant and the local. The latter is perceived as the more ambiguous and challenging one since it is, according to the author, the action of copy-pasting cultural norms from the home countries to the hosting countries.

Additionally, it became less relevant to rely on older migrant experiences in order to understand the dynamics of nowadays' migration. Turkish migrants, for instance, changed their mobility and instalment goals throughout the years. Whereas in previous years the guest workers would save money to build or buy a house in Turkey when they come back, more recent migrants do not think about going back. Instead, they started investing in the enclaves in the host country (Necef, 1992). These enclaves, often times, result in a collective sense of longing. Similar experiences can be shared amongst certain groups, not only those who come from the same countries but also those who practice the same religion or those who share a similar food culture, language et cetera. This can be translated in similar smells, practices, chants, or music associated with a common feeling of longing. In the case of social housing, where the design standards are strictly regulated by the state, homing practices are rarely taken into consideration in the creation of the dwellings. More than that, the act of changing interior spaces is strictly prohibited by law. In few of their interviews with Somali, Iraqi and Turkish migrants' perception of home in Danish social housing, Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen (2012) discovered that those who use strong spices in their traditional food culture were not happy with the open kitchen space resulting in strong smells sticking around in the living areas.

Socialist feminist critiques to the Marxist interpretations of home emphasised on the correlation of capitalism and patriarchy as similarly influencing the hierarchy between men and women in the domestic sphere as women are put in the position to reproduce the male's labour power (Blunt & Dowling, 2022). Opposing to the conventional role of the woman in the domestic space and its association to the private space by calling to change the woman's behaviour to not conform with the patriarchal gender roles, needs to come hand in hand with the call to change the domestic to a convenient space for women. The conception of communal spaces for instance, creates care networks for single mothers to feel safe and secure with their children and not feel unempowered by being on their own (Cho, 2020). Additionally, the geographical location, the layout of the flats that should consider the growth of the child and similar factors are of great value to help women detach from the hegemonic approach to family ideals and their projection on the built environment. Hence, a just homemaking process.

In the case of queer domesticity, researchers have shed light on practices like gay or lesbian kinships, polyamorous relationships, trans residents, and even cohabitation, or heterosexual polygamists in an attempt to challenge the conservatism of domesticity praxis as well as academia. The focus on the architectural aspect of domesticity that forces the duality of (binary) gender roles or the hierarchal power structures in families and understanding these causalities helps the interventions to create queer spaces not conforming to these dualities. The non conformation to these dualities does not necessarily mean creating what opposes them. Queering domesticity should not be a reactive act. If intimacy, darkness, and privacy are conservative heteronormative and hierarchical approaches to family structures, glass walls should not be the queer approach to the bedroom design, because this act of opposition relates back to the heteronormative reading of privacy, instead, approaches like flexibility and the in betweenness are more likely to be queer (Pilkey, 2015).

Disabled people's alternative domesticity as mentioned in the above section shouldn't stop at the response to the conventional technical requirements like a wide corridor or an elevator. The minimal details of design primarily set for non-impaired tenants is a reminder that they have to spend their lives adapting to things that were not meant to accommodate their bodies in the first place (Imrie, 2004). The broadening of what disability means in the standardisation of housing is in no way inclusive to all impairments. This is why solutions that surpass ramps and corridors are imperative to respond to accessibility for disabled people.

The interrelation of these marginalised factors and the common circumstance of neglection that these people go through in their way to create their home is the catalyst of this research focus. It is an ethical intervention to push towards an inclusive and socially just perception of domesticity that eventually helps granting an equal homemaking process for all.

The study of home has been gaining attention in different disciplines; conventional migration studies, for instance, have been quantitatively analysing migrants' perception of home, by looking at the concentration of ethnic groups in one area and deriving their integration levels within the host country. However, given the fact that homemaking relies on individual perceptions, the understanding and experience of being at home is rarely identical even to the next-door neighbour (Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen, 2012).This encouraged scholars like Valentine et al. (2009) to believe that qualitative methods give a better understanding and mostly give more flexibility to the potential of the findings. Scholars have started applying observations, ethnography, interviewing, photography, visual analysis methods and other qualitative and creative methodologies in order to better grasp the complexity of a one's perception of home. Ethnographic research should be

conducted taking into consideration positionality, relationships with the research subjects, safety, emotional involvement and potential influence on the research (Blunt & Dowling, 2022).

Building up on the previous argument of this literature review, on the importance of qualitative research for the development of this thesis, it was necessary for me to follow a tangible approach. I will not only compare the social housing design standards of Brussels and Vienna's social housings but also include observations in this design analysis as well as interviews and photographs. Because in order to help answering broader questions, it is irrelevant to seek meaning only within the discipline of art and architecture (Panin, 2007). I will try to explore how the tenants experience their everyday life in these standardised houses by talking to them and listening to their stories. This will help reveal the unseen side of the homing experience of tenants that might align with or deviate from the architects' predictions.

III. Methodology

This thesis relies on mixed methods in order to respond to the research question. Part of the methodology is inspired by the work of Ozer and Jacoby (2022) *'The design of subsidized housing: towards an interdisciplinary and cross-national research agenda'.* At first, an analysis of policies is conducted. This part is related to the social housing history and the different phases it witnessed during different political systems and housing governances. Secondly, a design analysis is conducted for both chosen projects. This part gives a contextualisation of the architectural concepts, the reasons behind their selection and an explanation of their main aims. It is not only reliant on documents and architectural observations, but also on interviews conducted with experts like architects and project managers. The design analysis follows a path of comparison through plans and technical standards like the size of the bedrooms or the positionality of the kitchen and the living space in the flats. Since technical standards reflect a prediction of the socio-cultural dynamic of homes, its second part touches upon how the space is used and if the architectural expectations were reflected in the way tenants proceed with *homing.* The last part is studying if the socio-spatial rationale behind these architectural decisions is reflected in the way tenants are using their homes. This part relies on conducting semi structured interviews with a number of tenants from each social housing unit. The interviews are a method to better grasp how they perceive their 'home' and to connect to their personal stories on their way to create (or not) their homes. The interviews are also followed, whenever possible, with a visit inside the flat in order to take photographs of spaces of particular interest or objects of value to the person.

III.1. Purposes

My research is a humble contribution to the study of homes and housing research. It gives credit to those who need to be better researched in academia, by giving them a voice to express themselves and help include their contributions amongst the expertise. It also draws the link between architecture and sociology. A link that is often neglected. Homes are not something one can vertically project on people; it is a long process that is not equally at the disposal of everyone. This is why the aim of this research is to contribute to a collection of studies that work on assembling testimonies of vulnerable groups on their way to create a home to bring together different disciplines in order to reduce inequalities in domesticities. In fact, social housing is gaining more interest in segregation and inequality discourses. And even though the path is still at its beginning, many researchers are taking the initiative to introduce interdisciplinary and qualitative research methods to the research of homes. These emerging debates are important to take into consideration when planning, conceptualizing, and defining policies for standardized housing like social housing.

III.2. Data Collection methods

At the onset of the research, I conducted visits to multiple social housings in both cities to make sure that the construction phase was over and that the tenants moved in. After that I conducted informal interviews with tenants to have an idea about the procedures, waiting lists and overall satisfaction. I was also trying to reach the responsible authorities for few selected projects as well as the architects and asked for online and face to face interviews whenever it was possible. Some replied with rejections and some never replied. In the meanwhile, the selection of the case studies was reduced to HAK in Vienna and Candries in Brussels. This time I was more persistent to contact the architects, so I travelled to their offices, and even though on both occasions they were not there, I got contacted by them subsequently for online interviews. In Brussels, both the architect of the project and a responsible architect in the Logement Molenbeekois accepted to have a video interview with consensus on recordings. In the case of Vienna, both the architect of the project and the project

manager in Wienerwohnen only accepted to reply to my questions in a written format[1], except from the landscape architect that works with a separate office who accepted the online interview with consensus on recording. Plans, drawings, and reports were sent to me after these interviews.

With the tenants, my plan was to record each interview, transcribe them automatically through a transcription software and subsequently evaluate the material through qualitative content analysis. This method aims at using the material to develop a category system or what is known as coding, that is based on theoretical predictions (Mayring, 2023). Unfortunately, the recording of my interviews in Candries Brussels were all lost due to a technical problem related to my recording device (phone). I decided to write down everything I remember from the Brussels interviews as soon as I learned about the loss. The coding is still valid for both the transcribed interviews and the notes. Yet in the findings part the difference will be in the quoting. Unlike the findings for HAK Vienna, there will be no quoting of the replies of tenants in the case of Candries Brussels. I rely on my memory[2] and the notes that I took while interviewing the tenants. There are 27 subcodes in total that eventually converge under 4 main codes that were used in the sorting of the findings as well as the discussion.

Some of the challenges I faced while conducting the empirical research is the long waiting time in winter in both Vienna and Brussels. This factor limited my fieldwork to waiting for three hours per day. And since I did not reside in neither of the cities, I had to travel to conduct my research which limited the time even more. This led to a relatively small number of interviews (12 interview) and an even smaller number of people who invited me to their homes (5 people). Additional to the weather, the conditions of interviewing tenants were most of the times not favourable. People were either going out to run some errands or coming back home from work which in both cases meant that they did not have a lot of time and were on multiple occasions refusing to talk to me or only accepting if we do the interview fast. This was also a reason behind the low number of interviewees and those inviting me to their homes. Conducting ethnographic research has always been known for the situation of unease it might cause to the researcher or the interviewee and as Boccagni (2017) wrote:

> those encounters are filled with embarrassing silences, awkward conversations, uncertainty about bodily posture, closeness, and presence as well as hesitant approaches, which point to our awareness that 'rules', or situated cultural conventions, may well be transgressed. (p.255)

Apart from time, the psychological and health condition of the tenants was of great influence on the research and if they wanted to contribute or not by answering the questions. On two occasions in Brussels, both old male tenants asked me if I needed anything and if I wanted to stay inside the building instead of waiting in the cold outside but refused to do the interview with me. The first person said he was in a rush to go to the doctor and then when he came back and when he learned about my background he had a long conversation with me about his health condition, his migration from Morocco to Belgium, his appointment at the doctor but refused to do the interview. His reason

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[1] The interview questions are attached in the appendix and answers will be provided on demand via email shouyeme@gmail.com

[2] I realized that I lost the recordings two days after the interviewing, I tried to write down everything I could remember out of fresh memory. After few days I came back with a more relaxed mind to go over them again.

was the fact that his children were the ones who did all the bureaucratic procedures for him to be assigned the flat. Even though I clarified multiple times that my research is about the perception of home and the influence of the space on the homemaking process he still denied doing the interview. The other person told me shortly that he is feeling very lonely, and that his life does not make a lot of sense after he lost his wife few years ago, and that after his children got married, he is suffering from loneliness and that architecture and policies have nothing to do with his sadness and that it is a situation of despair. On the next day he found me waiting again in front of the housing, he said hi to me and passed. The third time he saw me, he asked me where I am from and if I wanted to stay inside the entrance. When he learned I was Tunisian, he was very surprised and also told me that he is Tunisian as well. We had a discussion about our cities, where I live and why I am doing my research. Yet again, he refused to do the interview.

III.3. Research ethics and Author's positionality

I want to draw the attention to my background as a north African woman of colour who lived in Turkey for some years and now is a migrant in Europe. These circumstances influenced my research especially in terms of approaching the topic and subsequently my interpretation of the findings. In addition to my knowledge of Arabic, Turkish and French, my Arab and Muslim backgrounds are fairly present in the way I communicated with the interviewees. They sometimes created a relationship of trust which led eventually to some people opening up about their private life stories and sometimes led to rejections for reasons like my inability to speak German. These factors also influence how I interpret the social, cultural, and religious identity claims that are similar or identical to those that I grew up with. Additionally, my education as an architect is influent in the sections where I conduct a spatial analysis of the floor plans and the socio-spatial translation of the conceived drawings into physical spaces.

This research considers observations and semi-structured interviews as primary sources for the qualitative data collection. The aim behind this choice is to avoid the objectification of the interviewed people and their consideration as numbers in the research development. It is also a way of giving them freedom to express themselves and not only ask them to reply to the questions and guide them towards a certain hypothesis, rather to give them an opportunity to speak their minds and choose themselves what kind of topics they want to talk about so that the outcome is produced by the participation of the subjects and not by the extraction of the researcher. At the same time, I am aware of the influence my presence causes especially in visiting someone's home and that this in itself affects the research (Blunt & Dowling, 2022).

Furthermore, I want to reflect on the unconscious and conscious prejudice I have towards the interviewees and towards my approach to social justice. They materialized in the way I tried to conduct my interviews and the way I emphasise the sensitivity of the topic, considering that it was dealing with personal experiences of people that were sometimes coming from harsh and hurtful realities. This research does not aim at categorizing tenants and experts as a fix dichotomy nor replacing stereotypical images of social housing tenants with new ones (Wacquant, 2002). This is why, in many of the interviews[3], there have been personal stories and intimate topics that I decided not to include in the research to respect the privacy of people. Moreover, I have decided to anonymise the tenants' names and replace them with fictional names to avoid any identification or

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[3] Transcriptions of the tenants' interviews will not be included in the appendix in order to protect their privacy but can be provided on demand by the Author.

disturbance that might occur from the research especially that they are tenants of publicly owned housing. Every time I recorded the interviews, I obtained a verbal and a signed consensus[4] from the interviewees, and I also obtained signatures of consent from those who did not want to be recorded.

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[4] An eexample of the form is attached in Appendix 2

HAK - Vienna

Candries – Brussels

The reason behind choosing HAK in Vienna and Candries in Brussels is their implication with the sustainability paradigm that both Vienna and Brussels promote for their social housing agenda. Additionally, they were recently constructed (2021-2022). Even though the architectural conception dates to few years back, these two projects are representatives of the latest architectural perception of social housing quality. At the beginning of the research, I deducted a list of projects from the websites of the SLRB [5] (Société du Logement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale) and the Gemeindewohnungen[6], I conducted few visits in 2022 to have an overall idea if the projects were fully built and if the tenants moved in. I informally interviewed some of the tenants and sent e-mails to the architects and the responsible authorities of the projects. Some experts never replied, some refused to make the interview, and some were not very proud of their work like in the example of Lavoisier, in Molenbeek Brussels where the architect stopped replying to my e-mails after writing:

> I must specify that the building does not seem to me to be an example of a "good" conversion of an industrial building into social housing because of the dominant formal and structural rigidity and the very high and disproportionate floor heights in relation to the Size of social housing premises. – Architect of Lavoisier - Brussels

After few rejections the choice was then reduced to *HAK* in Vienna and *Candries* in Brussels.

IV.1. HAK Handelskai 214 – Vienna 2021 Architect: querkraft

In 2017 a competition was opened by WIGEBA, a company owned by the city of Vienna that is responsible for the newly built social housing. The plot designated for the housing used to host a long parking lot and apparently was not attractive to development projects due to its thin and long shape. (Length 400m – Width 20m). It is also tangent to a railway that separates the plot from the Danube River. The winning project chosen by the Austrian consultancy company *Nextpm* is a proposal by the Vienna based architecture office *querkraft*. The proposal consists of seven buildings with varying heights that are placed all along the plot. The ground floor consists of a parking lot,

Map 1: Newly built municipal housing in the city of Vienna in blue and the location of HAK in black
Source: Author

waste rooms, bike parking, Mailboxes, and an information office. The first floor is fully communal. It consists of a mix of closed, semi open and open spaces (Picture 1), with the presence of communal rooms like laundry rooms and meeting rooms (Picture 2). The open space is a mix of a green area and playgrounds for kids and adults. According to the responsible architect the strength point of their proposal was to provide a project with a green band (Picture 3) that is open to the public with

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[5] Housing Company of the Brussels-Capital Region: https://slrb-bghm.brussels/fr/projets-et-chantiers
[6] Council housing In Vienna: https://www.wienerwohnen.at/gemeindewohnungenneu.html

voumes that respect the neighbouring apartments (Picture 4) especially in terms of sunlight and the view to the river (Fig.1).

> We tried to keep the free view to the [Danube] also for the habitants of the existing building, so we planned the new volumes as narrow as it can be and give them 7m overhang about the public pavement to the river. The 7 new buildings were placed in front of the existing [staircases], the height[s] of the buildings [were] defined by the old ones, so there can be enough sunshine for everyone. An open-air green band connects every building and creates a social and green meeting point at the area, where everybody is invited to.

	Green band
	Circulation
	Alignment with the staircases of the neighboring building
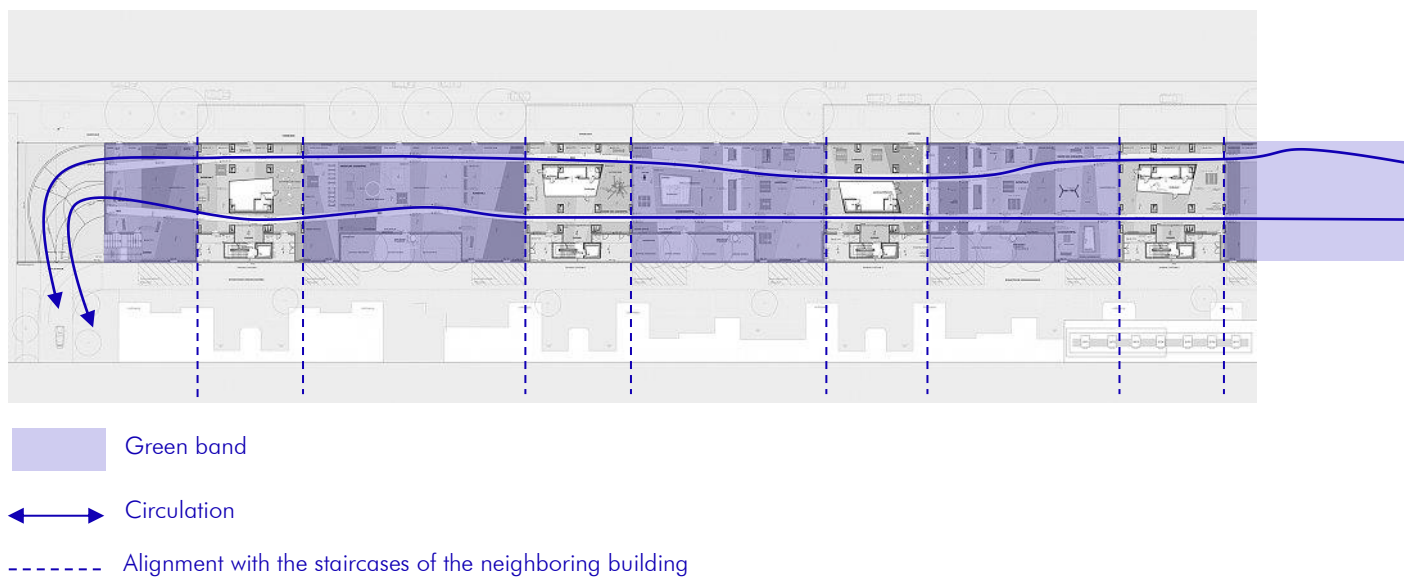
Fig. 1 : HAK Ground floor plan, circulation, green band and alignment

Source: https://www.querkraft.at/projekte/hak-gemeindebau with modification of the Author

The façade characteristics of this social housing are the prefabricated concrete loggias coming together on both sides of each building, permitting every flat to have a view on the Danube. This approach comes from the slogan ''a view of the Danube for all'' (querkraft, 2022) that was promoting the projects to the future tenants as an approach to a cohesive existence with the Karlheinz-Hora-Hof, a prefabricated social housing that hosts1040 flats inaugurated in 1976 (Wiener Wohnen, 2005).

Picture 1 : HAK Semi open & open space for kids and adults

Source: Taken by Author
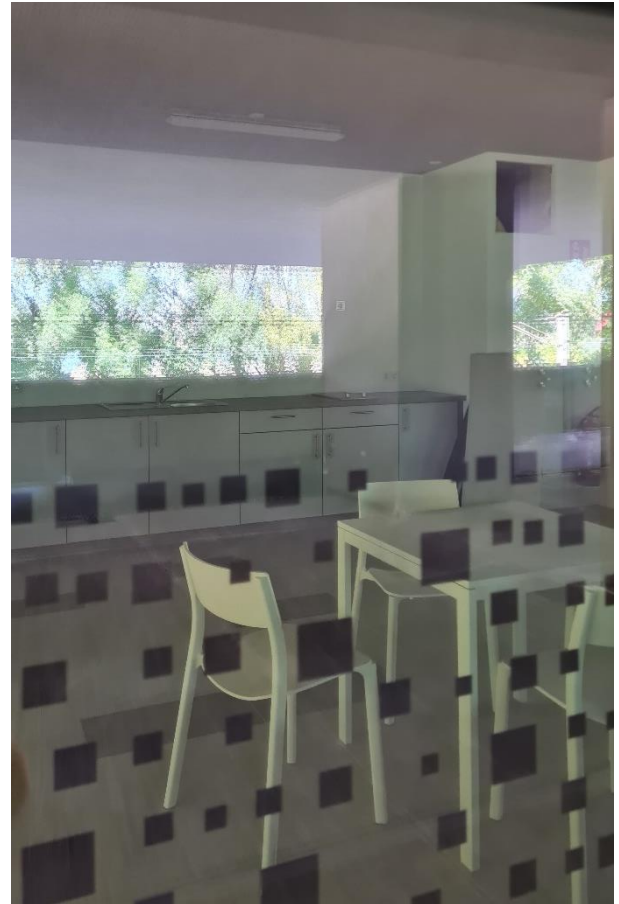
Picture 2 : HAK Communal Kitchen

Source: Taken by Author

Picture 3 : The Green band and the communication with the neighbouring building

Source: Taken by Author

Picture 4 : Playground

Source: Taken by Author

IV.2. Candries – Brussels 2021
Architect: LPP Architectes

In 2012 a public competition was opened for a social housing project in the Molenbeek district of Brussels capital region. The jury consisted of a representative of the state secretary for housing, a representative of the *Logement Molenbeekois,* an academic architect, a representative of the AATL (The Administration of Spatial Planning and Housing) and the SLRB (Regional Housing Company of Brussels). The area is known for its large migrant demography and was subject to stigma after the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels caused by a café owner in Molenbeek. The district now tries to overcome this stigma by subsidising cultural spaces and events and

Map 2 . Newly built municipal housing in Molenbeek district Brussels in blue and the location of Candries in black

Source: Author

encouraging social and cooperative housing provision. Le Logement Molenbeekois is constructing fourteen social housings, renovating five which makes it the district with the densest new social housing projects in the Brussels capital region. The winning project was a proposal by the Brussels based *Ledroit Pierret Polet* architecture office. It was praised for its integration in the surrounding housing fabric (Picture 5), with a mix of solids and voids that replied to both privacies, with separate entrances for few flats, and the communal living with a mass that hosts multiple flats (Fig. 3). The project also replied to all the regulations from wheelchair accessibility, minimal circulation area (Fig. 4), material use, ventilation requirements, acoustic insulation as well as the provision of private terraces/balconies (Picture 6) to each flat and a communal open space (Fig. 2).
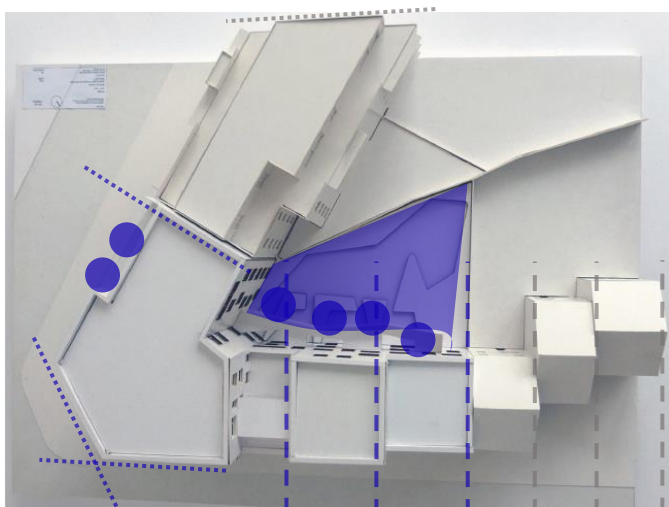
Common open space/Garden

Private terrace/Balcony

Neighboring small-scale apartment buildings

Flats with private entrance

Neighboring larger scale apartment building

Attached flats with a common entrance

Fig. 2 : Integration of the project in the built environment
Source: Source: Candries Planning permit, Notes and Appendices with Author's modification
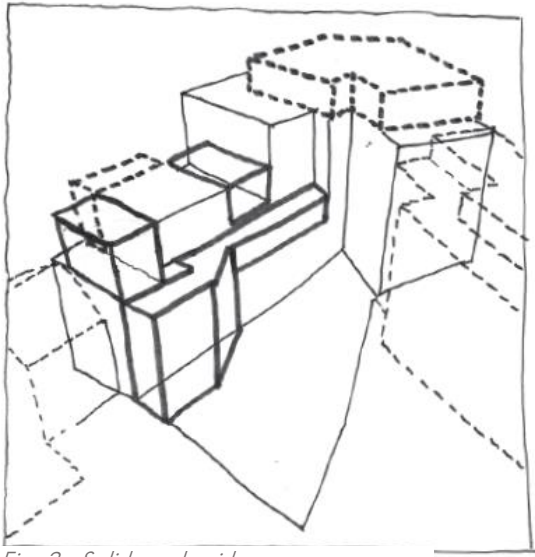
Fig. 3 : Solids and voids

Source: Source: Candries Planning permit, Notes and Appendices
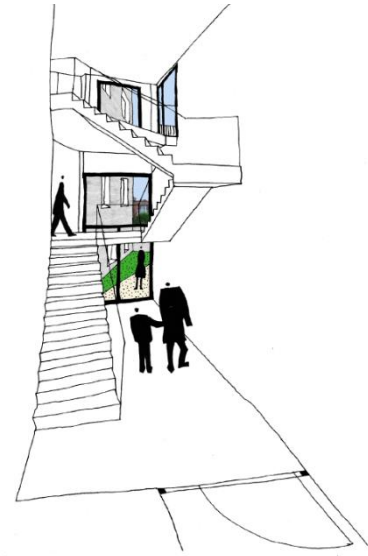
Fig. 4 : Vertical circulation at the entrance

Source: Source: Candries Planning permit, Notes and Appendices

Picture 5 : Candries Southeast façade
Source: Taken by Author
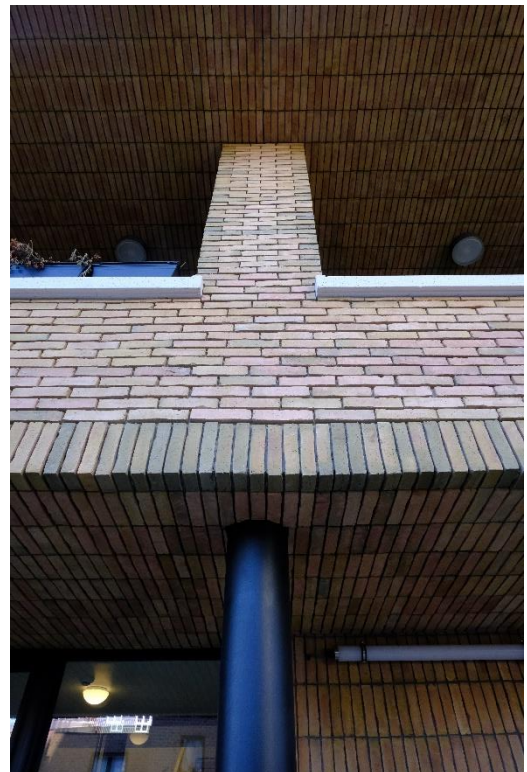
Picture 6 : Candries private balconies
Source: Taken by Author

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V. Findings

V.1. Social housing under local welfare and housing governance

It is indeed important to look at globalisation, economic restructuring, welfare regimes, housing systems and social inequalities to be able to understand segregation patterns. But scholars like Friesenecker and Kazepov (2021) emphasise the importance of the local context in terms of housing provision, tenure segments and socio-spatial setting in accordance to the economic restructuring as well as the particularity of social inequalities that differ with each city context when investigating seggregation. In simpler terms, they argue that the lens should zoom on the local housing governance deriving from path dependent urbanization practices. Stephens (2020) emphasizes that the role of local institutions should be studied more carefully in addition to looking at the housing systems because the more we focus on the city level changes that occur in the government the more we are able to associate the housing accessibility, rent or provision policies with the socio-spatial tenure segregation. The table below (Table 1) gives generic information about the social housing situation in both Vienna and Brussels.

City	Provider	Tenure type	Target group	Home ownership % - Social housing %
Vienna	Wienerwohnen	Rental	Low income- middle class	21% - 24% [7]
Brussels	SLRB	Rental	Low income	39,77% of privately owned flats [8] – 8% [9]

Table 1: Overview of the housing provision, tenure type, target groups and percentage of social housing and home ownerships in Vienna and Brussels
Source: Created by Author

The case of Vienna

As a 4Cities student, my housing experience was impacted by the housing provision and rent regulations in the different cities. Despite the fact that we stayed for short terms, we all had the opportunity to directly experience the influence of housing policies on the most tangible indicator: rent. In Vienna, the majority of the students had their cheapest rooms ranging from 250 euros/month to a maximum 500 euros/month whereas in Brussels and Madrid, the average rent was between 500-600 euros, and in Copenhagen 600 euros or more.

Vienna housing has high standards, in terms of building quality like insulation, space as well as the location and price. One line of arguments emphasises the role of the unitary housing system, the abundance of social housing and the policies the city of Vienna has been developing throughout the years. These policies resulted in the broadening of the access to social housing amongst different social classes which, according to some scholars, helps acquiring social mix. These policies made the private rental market subject to regulations and therefore protected the rent against speculation and high pricing.

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[7] Source: Vienna in figures 2022 https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/statistics/vienna-in-figures.html
[8] Source: Observatoire de la propriété résidentielle 2015-2017 https://logement.brussels/qui-sommes-nous/donnees-statistiques/
[9] Source: convention relative à la réalisation de nouveaux logements en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale

Friesenecker and Kazepov (2021) studied the different political changes that the city of Vienna has been going through and their implications on the housing situation in the city. Vienna's famous socialist past has been preserved in different forms despite the political changes the city has been going through. Thus, the most important political factor that influenced social housing policies in Vienna is ''Red Vienna'' or the peak of the social housing provision in the city that started in 1920 for around 20 years where 60.000 social housings were built (Justin Kadi & Johannes Suitner, 2019). The strategy was to grant housing for municipal servants, high skilled and low-skilled workers (Friesenecker & Kazepov, 2021). The long ruling of the social democratic party since World War II preserved the goals of granting equal and accessible housing for all. In 1989, the breaking down of the Iron curtain was one of the three most influential factors on the political situation in Vienna, as it led to an important migration flow that created housing issues and pressure on the housing provision for the city. The introduction of the time-limited contracts (In other words deregulation of the private market in some districts) was an amendment to the law in an attempt to raise the housing supply which led to the marketization of private rentals. This neoliberal approach provided landlords with small freedom to raise their rent according to specific premises like location (Friesenecker & Kazepov, 2021). This resulted in a rise of market-oriented private rental in the city.

In 1995, access of Austria to the EU was the second big political change in the country. In a way, this influenced the construction rates of municipal housing due to the criteria that Austria had to comply to after signing the Maastricht agreement. This was primarily a decrease in the budget. On the other hand, taking part in the EU also influenced laws regarding access of people from migrant backgrounds to the social housing in Vienna, as any person with a 5-year residency in Austria (two years for refugees that are granted asylum) is eligible to apply for social housing (Kohlbacher, 2020). It is important to mention that Vienna has never privatized its social housing stock unlike cities like London and the municipal housing preserved its characteristic of having the cheapest rent prices in the city.

In the 90s the city land funds started to buy land in potential development areas and started opening development competitions. This made it the main steering organisation for social housing provision in the city. One of the pioneer construction companies is GESIBA, a non-profit company established by the city of Vienna in 1921. After working in providing affordable building material and taking part in cooperative housing projects, GESIBA started its own social rental constructions. They worked on both municipal housing and the revitalisation of old industrial buildings and housing units. This is a model of the non-profit corporatist governance. It is important to mention that this helped to shift the focus from solely touching upon affordability to the focus on sustainable housing provision, which became one of the key concepts of social housing in Vienna. Green spaces, communal spaces and accessibility for elderly and disabled people are being taken into account. Social housing now targets inclusion and interaction. We will discuss later in the thesis if they managed to reply to these goals.

The case of Brussels

As mentioned before, my personal experience of living in Brussels taught me that rent prices are on average higher than in Vienna. This is also due to the dualist housing system Brussels has, meaning that the private housing market must not compete with the publicly provided housing. Despite the struggles in housing provision for the lower income classes, the conservative approach to housing always encouraged ownership over subsidised rentals. In Belgium, almost 72% of the population

are homeowners in 2022 (Eurostat, 2022). In 2004 participation became an important part of the housing associations amongst social housing residents, where residents have the right to elect their representatives for a period of three years, from which two representatives have the right to interfere and participate in the government board when it comes to renovation work. Unfortunately, the housing associations still struggle to find enough representatives of the tenants which itself results in weaker response rates from the government board (Aernouts, 2020).

After World War I the growing need of housing led to a more socialist approach which included home ownership as a strategy to tackle land speculation. Preliminary plans to build Garden Cities in the surrounding of the city centre were part of the planning which despite the failure in its implementation, inspired the creation of the national company of cheap housing to organise construction plans for social housing companies (Aernouts & Ryckewaert, 2015).
After world war II and in the middle of the post war economic crisis the city decided to give up on the Garden City models and instead followed the modernist approach to housing which included high raise buildings for the masses, and even though the social housing reached its peak in this period, the hegemonic conservative approach to home ownership and the strict policies and regulations limited the mix of use in the social housing units, making it solely residential. The bureaucratic difficulties with the private companies responsible for the services parts of the projects made them less appealing.

Between 1971 and 1980, 11,203 social housing units were built in the capital region of Brussels (Zimmer, 2009). In 1980, the right-wing government came up with strict laws against the existing social housing under the claim of eliminating ''inhuman'' housing and hard to appropriate dwellings and sometimes even public space (Aernouts & Ryckewaert, 2015). This led to a collective activist movement that fought for a more human approach to housing and stood against the destruction of the old city. Followed by the regionalisation of Belgium into Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels capital region, the social housing construction rate in Brussels reached its lowest levels. It is important to associate this decrease to the ongoing political choice of supporting home ownership, where only 40% of the housing budget is devoted to social housing whereas the rest is for encouraging homeownership and renewal programs (Aernouts & Ryckewaert, 2015).

Even though social housing provision has stagnated since 1989, the city has been supporting recommendations proposed by housing initiatives such as support services and expansion of staff resources (Zimmer, 2009). There was a particular encouragement of ''social cohesion projects that work on increasing tenants' participation to tackle social problems. These programs are held between community development and social housing agencies (Aernouts & Ryckewaert, 2015).

Understanding the political and historical context of housing provision is crucial to give a city-specific contextualisation of the social housing situation and therefore locally identify the setting from which social housing design regulations are incarnated. In the next part, the scope will be narrowed. An overview of the design regulations will be given, followed by their architectural analysis.

Architectural design analysis has been gaining importance in academia due to the socio-cultural, political and economic aspects it encompasses (Ozer & Jacoby, 2022). More specifically, in the case of social housing design regulations are deriving from the political history and the housing market of each city. Researching them helps to understand the socio-cultural expectations of the housing system when it comes to the provision of housing. Few exemplary components of design regulations are the areas dedicated to the living space (number and width of rooms per person, living rooms, terraces), the wet areas (Kitchen – Bathroom), the horizontal circulation (Hallways, corridors, entrance, pavement, open space), the vertical circulation (stairs, elevators, basement), common areas (communal rooms, laundry rooms, communal garden), the materials used (insulation, window types, floors), the amount of light in the flat, safety measures, maintenance and many more. These regulations are subject to analysis and research. For comparative housing research, It is easier to conduct a comparative study using design regulations in the social housing context for the simple reason that it is more regulated than the private market (Ozer & Jacoby, 2022). In some countries the design regulations are simply proposed with a standard flat layout that is replicated in every social housing plan. In the case of Brussels and Vienna, especially in the recent years, the design layouts are up to the architects. The city provides a document with regulations like the ceiling height, the minimum width of the furniture per room, the minimum distance of circulation between two types of furniture (e.g. Bed and desk), stair width, some material proposals and similar points that provide a range of flexibility to the architects. They are ought to come up with innovative solutions that respond to a better housing quality.

Flexibility in the design phase was appreciated by the architects designing the two chosen case studies. According to the architect of Candries, the fact that there are regulations is not limiting for her, on the contrary it gives a pleasant challenge to find creative ways within these regulations so that they can reply to both the aim of the architectural concept and the necessary building codes. She says ''I don't feel blocked by the constraints we are given. And if sometimes we feel blocked, then we break these rules. So, I don't necessarily need more freedom.'' Additionally, the competition approach both cities are adopting when it comes to opening a call for a social housing project, is seen to give the architects room for creativity and new ideas for the purpose of winning the project. In the case of HAK Vienna the responsible architect wrote that the strength point that led to winning the project is the open green space: ''The new 420 meters long green band is a social meeting point and a quality place for the whole neighborhood. This garden deck is directly connected to the [Danube] island over a footbridge and offer[s] several activity possibilities for everyone.''

In the case of Candries Brussels the strength point is to create a sense of privacy in the neighbourhood and in the building itself, and as the architect responsible for the project explained:

> It is to sew up a plot that is between small-scale houses and then larger-scale buildings. And so how to make a building that is a bit of a hinge between different scales. And mixed in with that is the fact that there was still, yeah, it's not huge, but there are still 26 apartments within the same building and how to create a kind of domesticity in this building.

When it comes to the interior spatial divisions of the flats it is important to have a look at the standard design regulations provided by both cities and compare to the outcome in the proposed plans. In order to carefully study the documents, I contacted the architects and the project managers at the social housing companies in both cities. In Brussels I was able to get the documents that had the

detailed design regulations for the logement Molenbeekois, and the architects provided me with a final file with very detailed technical drawings that included the sizes of the flats in net square meters as well as the measurements of the rooms and their functions. In the case of Vienna, I found it hard to develop a communication with both the architect and the project manager of HAK, they both did not accept to have an online neither a physical interview and accepted to reply to my questions solely in a written form which did not allow further questions or access to further detailed documents. Eventually I was able to access a floor plan prototype and did approximate calculations according to the technical scale of the drawings and with the help of one interviewee who showed me a plan drawing with measurements.

In the upcoming section I will place the flat plans of some of the interviewees taken from the documents provided by the architects. It will be accompanied by a description of the layout as imagined and drawn by the architects, and some information about the size of the flats and the rooms inside (Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). Since design regulations are believed to reflect ''national regulatory cultures, procurement models, and housing markets'' (Ozer & Jacoby, 2022, p. 14), the dwelling layouts are an architectural representation of these regulations. Subsequently, each plan analysis is followed by a 3D modelling of the flats of those that allowed me to come inside their homes and take photos. These models are created and assembled with comments on the interior furniture and space usage by the tenants.

This exercise aims at understanding how the home is perceived by the architects when drawing the floor plans and how the tenants are personalising these given spaces according to their needs, choices, and everyday life practices. The examination of the spatial practices that are reflecting the creation of homes by the tenants is only possible when entering the space and observing it through the guidance and demonstrations of the host. Ideally, the observation should be accompanied with more interaction with the tenant and with spending more time in the flat with them and their family members so that their spoken descriptions during the interviews get translated into spatial practices. In the case of my research, I had the chance to spend more time with some tenants than with others, and that allowed me to learn more about how they slowly made their flats into a space that is now adequate to their needs.

Entrance hall	6.40 sqm
Toilet room 1	1.25 sqm
Shower room	4.78 sqm
Bathroom	3.14 sqm
Parental room	14.67 sqm
Bedroom 1	9.34 sqm
Bedroom 2	9.55 sqm
Bedroom 3	9.03 sqm
Bedroom 4	9.18 sqm
Kitchen	10.42 sqm
Living+dining room	29 sqm
Terrace	16.71 sqm
Total surface	129 sqm

Table 2 : Surfaces in Square meters of the flat
Source: LPP Architectes
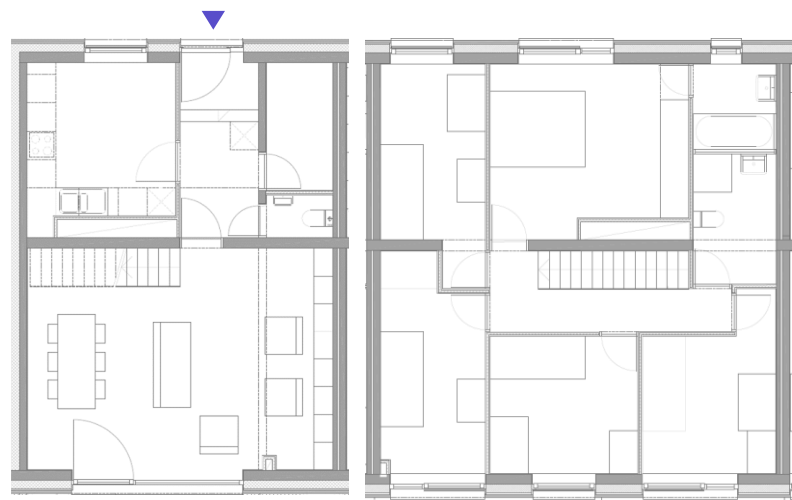
Fig. 5 : Floor plans of the ground floor on the right and first floor on the left of a 5-room duplex in Candries

Source: LPP Architectes

5-bedroom apartment as a duplex (Fig. 5; Table 2). The ground floor is the living area including an entrance hall, a depo room, a toilet, a kitchen separated with a wall and then the living room that open to a private terrace on the ground floor related to the communal garden. The stairs lead to the upper floor with one parental room connected to a bathroom and four other rooms for the children as well as one shower room that includes a second toilet. The circulation on the ground floor is not separated from the living area. It is a strategy to maximize the functional areas on the expanse of corridors which are perceived as non-functional areas that is why the entrance hall in this case works as a corridor that leads to multiple rooms.

Alain, his wife and their four children live in the apartment together. I was not able to enter the flat and take pictures or make observations, but I chose to include this case in the design analysis because from the questions I asked, it became clear that the kitchen layout was kept the same as what the architects drew. The family did not seem bothered by the open kitchen layout. In fact, everything in the flat was perfect and convenient according to Alain and his family. No interior changes or noteworthy additions were made. Which means that the flat replies perfectly to their needs.

Entrance hall	3.34 sqm
Corridor	4.42 sqm
Toilet room	2.34 sqm
Bathroom	3.40 sqm
Parental room	14.38 sqm
Bedroom 1	9.06 sqm
Bedroom 2	9.04 sqm
Kitchen	6.17 sqm
Living+dining room	26.65 sqm
Balcony	6.90 sqm
Total surface	86.47 sqm

Table 3: Surfaces in Square meters of the flat
Source: LPP Architectes
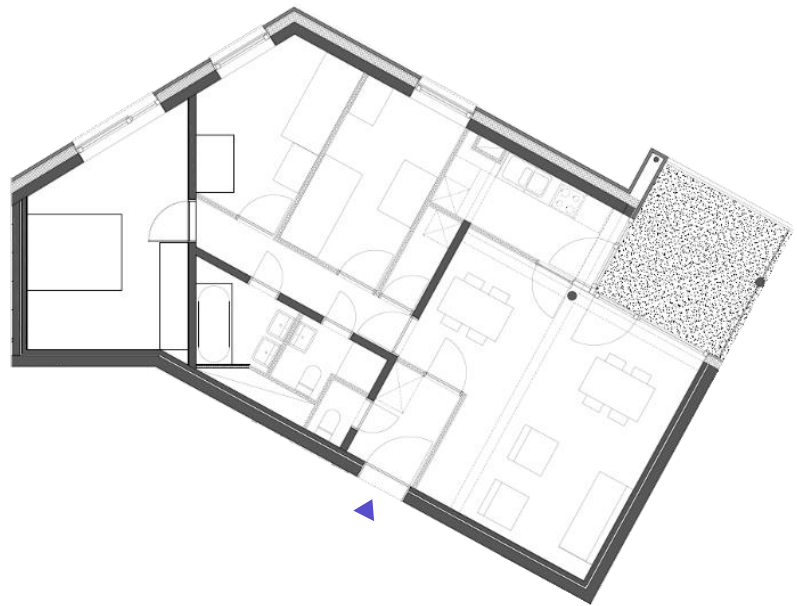
Fig. 6 : Floor plan of a 3-room flat in Candries
Source: LPP Architectes

3-bedroom flat for 5 people (Fig.6; Table 3). The entrance hall is separated from the living area and leads to both the living room and the corridor. Flat layouts that have corridors are called layouts with separate circulation. On the right we see two chairs facing the TV table, and a dining table next to the Balcony's window. Another table is placed between the entrance hall and the kitchen. The kitchen is semi combined with the living room. Even though the kitchen is separated by a wall that has a door on the proposed floor plan, in reality there is no door (Illustration 1) The kitchen has a door to the balcony therefore has natural light penetrating during the day.

On the left side there is a corridor that leads to a depo room followed by two children's rooms on the right, within each shows a 90cm single bed, a desk and a wardrobe. At the end of the corridor is the parental room that hosts a double bed and a bigger wardrobe. The shape of the parental room is following the shape of the plot that is situated in the corner. On the left side of the corridor there is a toilet room followed by a bathroom.

Ismail and his family adapted the spaces to their family needs, we can see that in the living area they did not place a second table but created a corner of playing for their 1-year-old child (Illustration 1). They also placed an L shaped Moroccan sofa in the living room that can host up to 6 people, unlike what the architects perceived by placing two chairs. One of the children's rooms has a bunk bed for the two middle children of Ismail. The space of the room was not sufficient to place two desks and two wardrobes, which meant they have to share them. The second childrens room is for the oldest 18 years old child. The parental room is shared between husband, wife, and the baby. The most notable points of the interview with Ismail about the layout of the flat were the fact that the kitchen does not have a separating door from the living room, the fact that the room shared between two children is very small for them and wishing that the parental bedroom was rectangular for more space.

Kitchen opening
instead of door

Baby's crib

Bunk bed shared by two
children

Playing space
for the baby

Baby stroller

Moroccan
style sofa
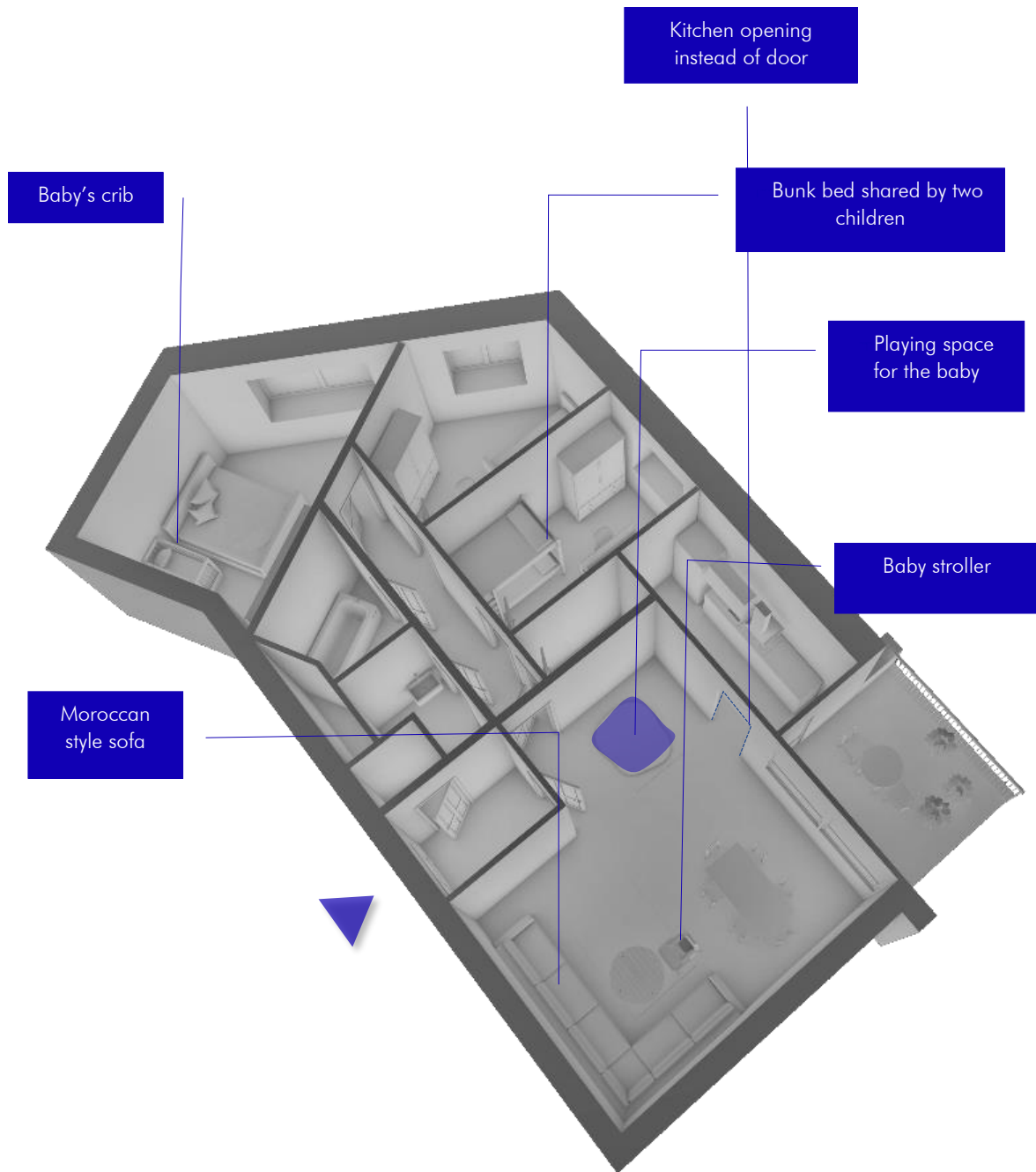
Illustration 1: Ismail's flat
Source: Created by Author

Birgül in HAK – Vienna: 2-Bedroom apartment – 2 Parents 2 Children (1 daughter 16 years old - 1 son 10 years old)

Entrance hall	~ 4.18 sqm
Bathroom	~ 5.62 sqm
Parental room	~ 11.21 sqm
Bedroom 1	~ 9.49 sqm
Kitchen	~ 3.00 sqm
Living+dining room	~ 23.72 sqm
Balcony	~ 4.67 sqm
Total surface	~ 60 sqm

Table 4 : Approximate surfaces in square meters
Source: Author's calculation
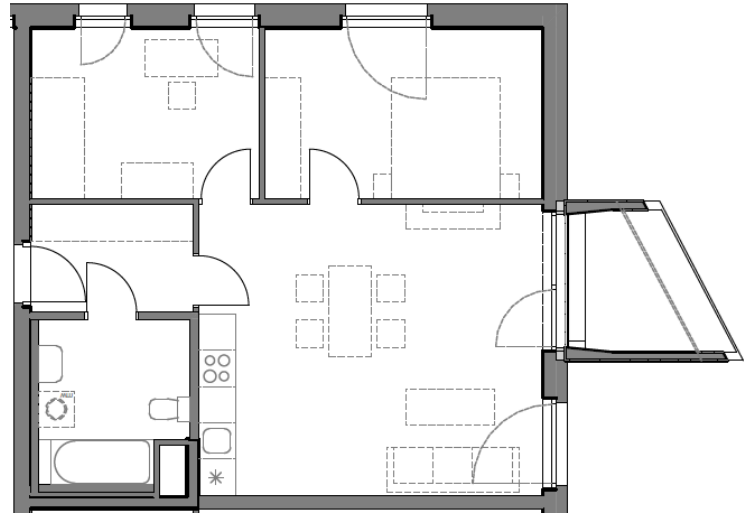
Fig. 7 : Floor plan of a 2-room flat in HAK
Source: querkraft

2-Bedroom flat for 4 people (Fig. 7; Table 4). As every single other flat in HAK, it has a balcony facing the Danube River on the side. The flat layout includes a separate entrance hall, that is connected to the bathroom and that leads to the living space. In this example the circulation is connected, it means that there is no corridor separating the living space from the bedrooms. The bathroom is situated in a separate space next to the depo room. The kitchen and the living room are freely connected without a physical separation. The first bedroom on the right is the child's room, it can host a single bed, a desk and a wardrobe. The second room is the parental room, it hosts a double bed and a wardrobe.

Birgül's first remark when I entered her flat, was her wish for a separate room for storage instead of combining the storage with the entrance hall (Illustration 2). She thinks that the big storage wardrobe takes a lot of space. The second thing to remark was switching the parental room to the smaller room. Birgül has two children that must share one room and that is the reason why they dedicated the larger room to the children to share. Similar to the case of Ismail, Birgül's children have a bunk bed and share one wardrobe and one studying desk. The sofa at the flat is an L shaped sofa that goes until the balcony door. She expressed her regret that the door is not sliding or opens to the other side and that she would have bought an even bigger sofa. The other difference from the architectural proposal is the kitchen. On the plan the kitchen shows a simple kitchen, but in reality, even though it did not fit to the dedicated flooring separation, Birgül's kitchen is L shaped and bigger than the space initially planned for it (in the next sections photographs will be provided).

Double bed without nightstands because of lack of space

Eliptical machine for indoor sports with a view to the Danube

Space dedicated for storage at the entrance hall

Shared studying desk between 16- and 10-years old siblings

Space dedicated for the kitchen vs space used by the tenant

Bunk bed

Space dedicated for a pet (Rabbit)
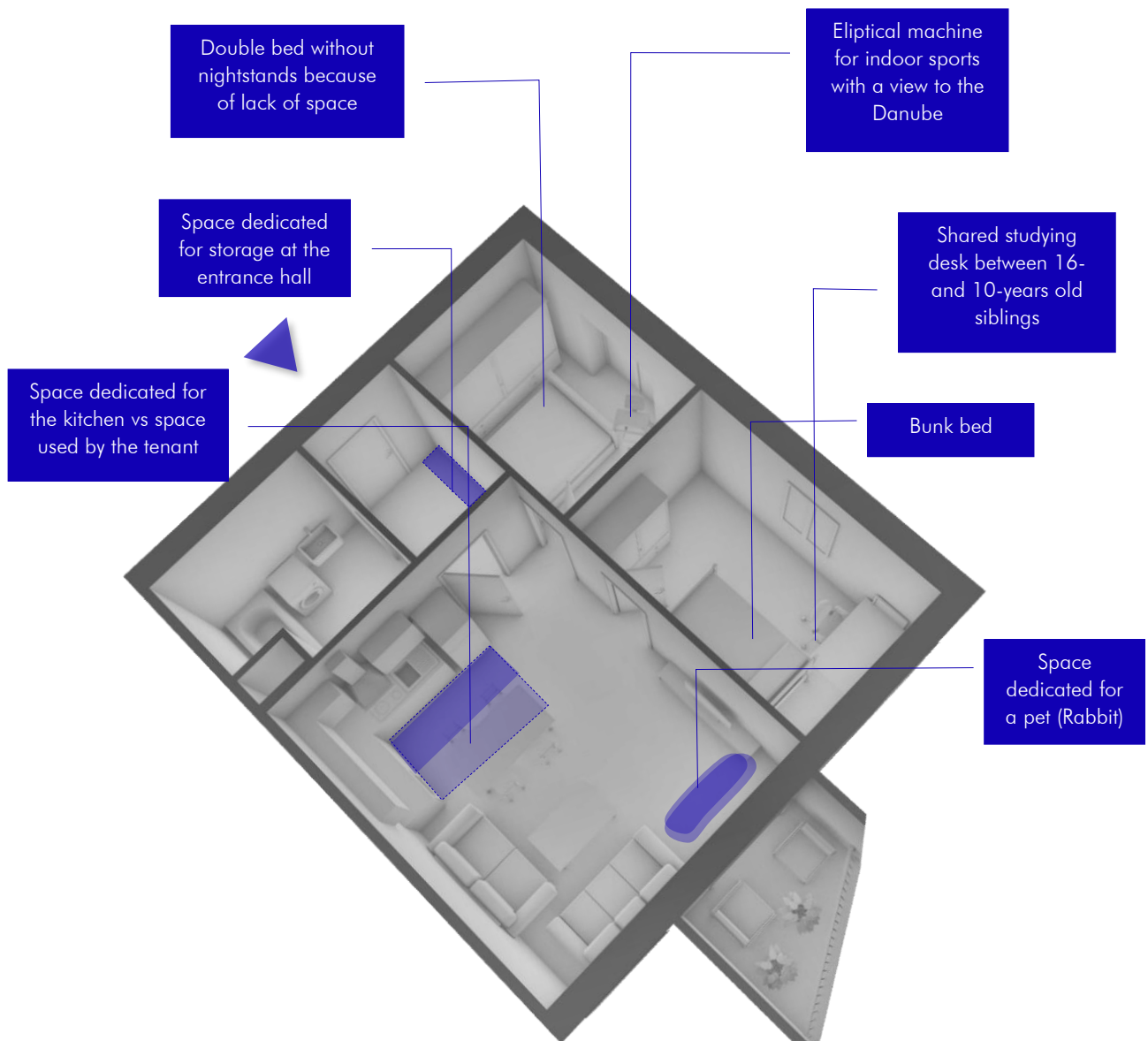
Illustration 2 : Birgül's flat
Source: Created by Author

Entrance hall	7.16 sqm
Depo room	1.46 sqm
Toilet room	1.17 sqm
Bathroom	3.68 sqm
Parental room	14.28 sqm
Bedroom 1	9.16 sqm
Kitchen	8.13 sqm
Living+dining room	21.11 sqm
Balcony	8.80 sqm
Total surface	70.35 sqm

Table 5 : Surfaces in Square meters of the flat
Source: LPP Architectes
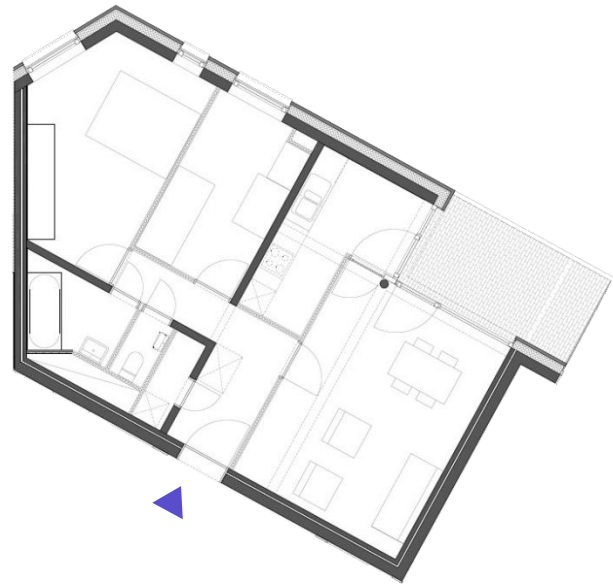
Fig. 8 : Floor plan of a 2-room flat in Candries
Source: LPP Architectes

2-Bedroom flat for 3 people (Fig. 8; Table 5). The entrance door leads to an entrance hall and on the left, there is a depo room. The entrance hall is physically separated from the living room with a wall and a door but organically connected to the hallway that leads to the rooms and the bathrooms. On the right side, the living space is separated with a wall from the kitchen. As seen in the case of Ismail, the floor plan shows a physical separation with a door between the kitchen and the living space, but in reality, there is none (Illustration 3). The kitchen is tangent to the balcony from which it gets the natural light, and it is the same case for the dining space. On the right side of the corridor there is the toilet and the bathroom. On the right side there is a child room with a single bed, a desk and a wardrobe followed by the parental room with a double bed and a wardrobe.

Amer was bothered by one detail in the kitchen, it is the fact that he has to make a whole turn from his bedroom to the kitchen and that he would have preferred if it was directly connected from the corridor. When I was inside the flat, I could tell that the kitchen was very tight in terms of space and that some drawers could not be opened fully because of the presence of the fridge (photos will be provided in the next section). The other difference between the proposed plan and the family's way of using the space is the use of the bedrooms. Amer is using the 'supposedly' parental room while his parents are sharing the smaller room. In both rooms a double bed is placed and in Amer's room there is an extra desk. In their flat also reside two cats, that have their water and food bowls in the living room as well as a small space for playing.

The Kitchen opening

Praying mat

The room used by Amer's parents

The opening Amer wished for

Eating and Drinking bowls for the cats

Tight space between the drawer and the fridge
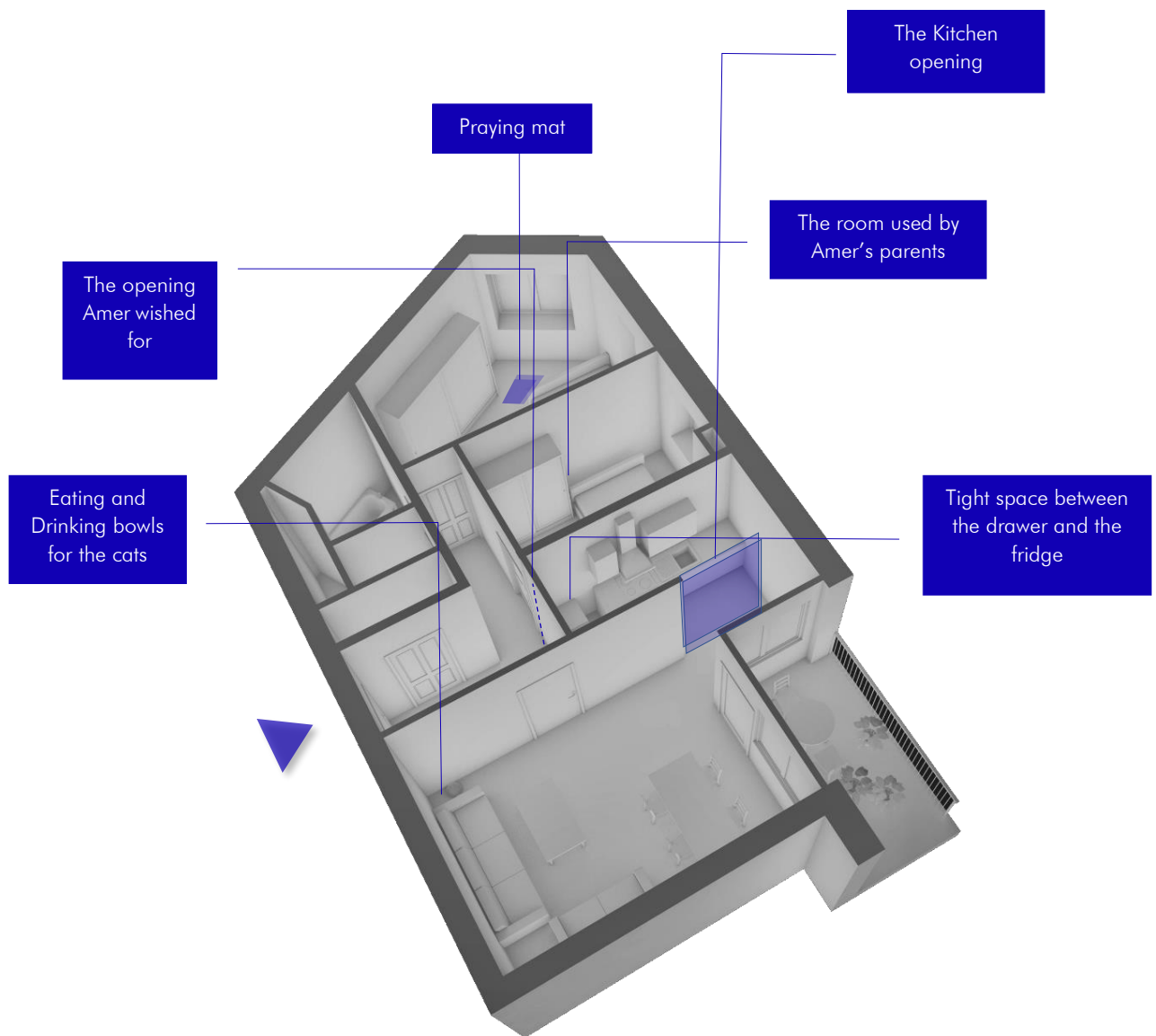
Illustration 3 : Amer's Flat
Source: Created by Author

Entrance hall	~ 5.24 sqm
Bathroom	~ 4.95 sqm
Parental room	~ 10.27 sqm
Dreaasing	~ 3.65 sqm
Kitchen	~ 3.56 sqm
Living+dining room	~ 14.30 sqm
Balcony	~ 4.67 sqm
Total surface	~ 46.65 sqm

Table 6 : Approximate surfaces in square meters
Source: Author's calculation
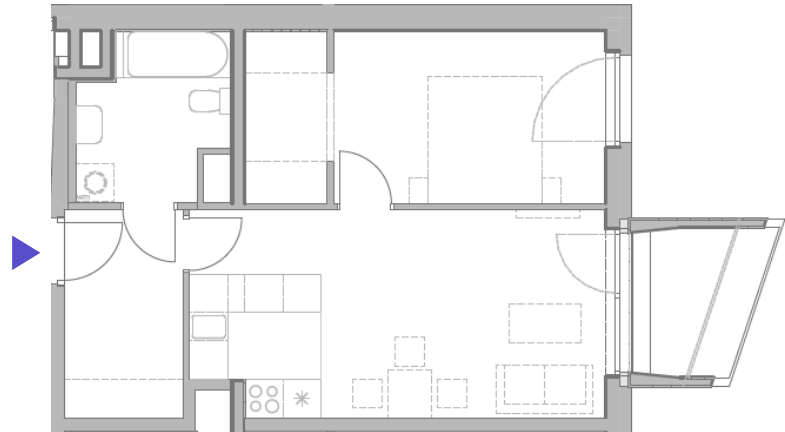
Fig. 9 : Floor plan of a one-bedroom flat in HAK
Source: querkraft

1-Bedroom flat for two people (Fig. 9; Table 6). The entrance hall has a space dedicated for storage. It leads directly to the living space that is itself combined with the kitchen. As seen with the flat of Birgül, the circulation in the apartment is combined. On the left of the entrance hall is the bathroom. After passing the door of the entrance hall, on the left is the bedroom. The bedroom is dedicated for a double bed. A part of it is a built-in dressing area. Outside of the bedroom is the living space combining the living room, the dining room and the kitchen which gains its natural light from the loggia. The kitchen is planned as a U-shaped kitchen and the sofa as a two-person sofa next to a table and three chairs.

Malina does not live alone, she lives with her 3-year-old daughter, which means that she added a baby crib next to her bed that does not come next to the door, but actually faces the door to win the free space for the crib (Illustration 4). The dressing part is used as a wardrobe for her and her daughter's clothes and accessories. One of the most interesting changes Malina had from the proposed plan is the kitchen. Her U-shaped kitchen comes in a way that separates the kitchen space form the living room. A playing space for her daughter is taking place in the living room with some toys, books and a swinging chair. The balcony is used for planting and placing some crafts and handmade decorations.

Playing space
for Lilly

Malina's wish for a
separate room instead
of the dressing part

U-shaped kitchen as a
separation from the
living room

Lily's crib

Space dedicated for
the kitchen with
ceramic flooring

Playing space
for Lilly

Existing window that
was blocked because
of fire safety distance
to the neighboring
building

The extra space that
Maina uses as kitchen
space

Illustration 4 : Malina's Flat
Source: Created by Author

Rea in HAK – Vienna: 1-Bedroom apartment – 1 Woman – 1 dog

Entrance hall	~ 5.47 sqm
Bathroom	~ 5.21 sqm
Parental room	~ 10.01 sqm
Dressig	~ 3.00 sqm
Kitchen	~ 3.02 sqm
Living+dining room	~ 15.38 sqm
Balcony	~ 4.67 sqm
Total surface	~ 46.67 sqm

Table 7 : Approximative surfaces in square meters
Source: Author's calculation
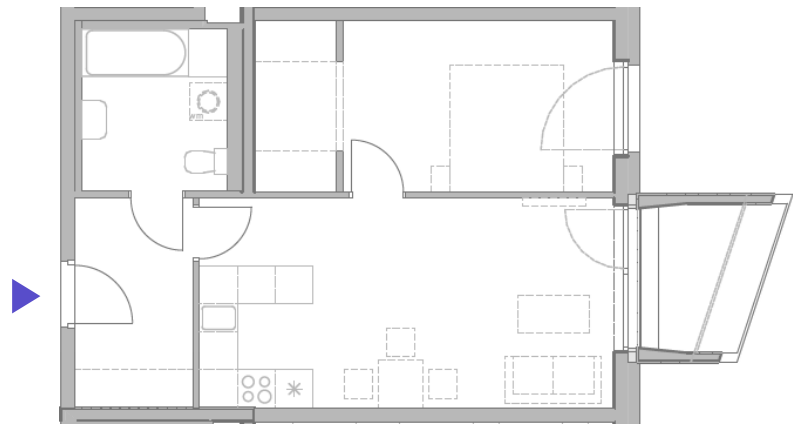
Fig. 10 : Floor plan of a one-bedroom flat in HAK
Source: querkraft

1-Bedroom flat for a disabled woman and her dog (Fig. 10; Table 7). The flat is almost the same layout as the previous flat with small distinctions in surfaces. All the flats in HAK are 'accessible' with a wheelchair. It means that there is an elevator that takes the disabled person to their designated floor, and the corridors that lead to the flats are wide enough for a wheelchair to pass. The inside of the flats is also usable with a wheelchair. The entrance hall is separated from the living space. On the left side there is an accessible bathroom adapted for wheelchair users, a bathtub, and an accessible sink. The entrance hall leads to the living space that is combining the kitchen with the living room and dining room. The kitchen layout shows a U-shaped kitchen open to the living space from one side. The sofa represented is a two-place sofa. On the left is the bedroom. It is designed to host a double bed and is extended by a built-in dressing space.

Rea does not use the wheelchair to go out, she has a scooter that she felt obliged to take home for safety reasons. She must keep the scooter inside her bedroom (Illustration 5) when she brings it from the outside to switch to her wheelchair. She wishes for an extra room like a depo room to be able to store her scooter instead of having it next to her bed. Rea does a lot of crafts and uses the dressing area for both storing clothes and storing her crafts. She also installed a folding table in the dressing part to have it as a working base for her handmade jewellery, soaps, and many other decorative things. The kitchen is not U-shaped, it is L shaped and gives her more room to move. It also surpasses the dedicated ceramic flooring premade as an indication of the kitchen space. The Balcony has a mosquito cloth on the outside.

Space for created
objects and dog's
wardrobe

Dedicated space
for the kitchen vs
the used kitchen
space

Wardrobe and
working area for
creative objects

Table to showcase
crafts

Scooter

Mosquito cloth for
protection against
pollution
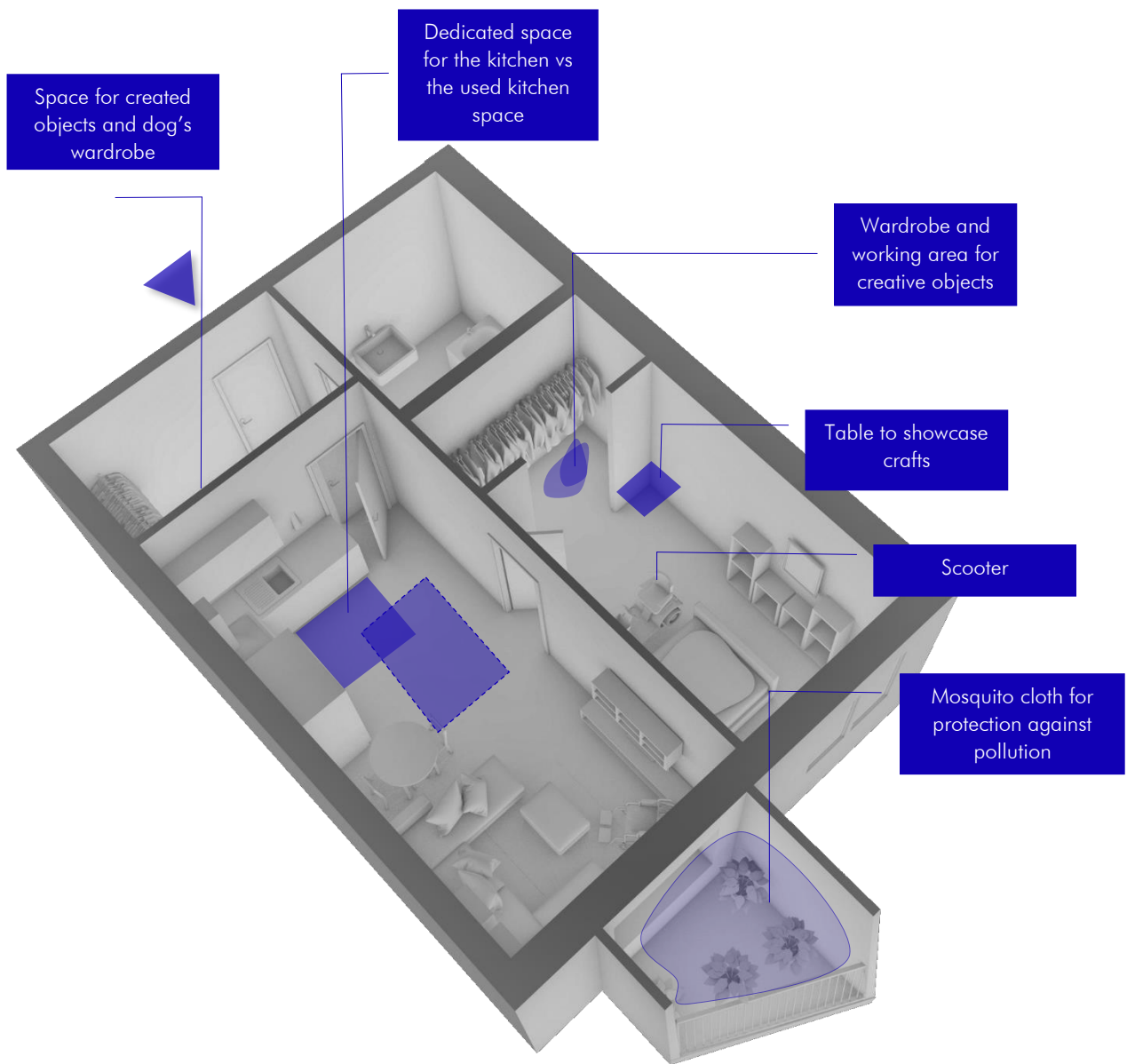
Illustration 5 : Rea's flat
Source: Created by Author

V.3. Homes from the perceived to the lived

After gaining a first inside in the ways in which the tenants of the studied social housings changed the interior of the flats according to their needs and deviant from the architects' intentions. This section of the analysis is the part where the residents give their own interpretation of their dwellings. I conducted an inductive coding system from the series of interviews I did with the tenants. It is a chronological and narrative interpretation of their way to create their home. The first part is *the path towards homing*. It is a section that covers everything that shapes the way of moving in, from price, feeling of safety, access to the authorities and bureaucratic difficulties prior to the assignment of the flat. The second category is *the Assigned Domesticity.* It brings back the design analysis from the point of view of the tenants. In this section they express their perception of details like width, natural light, accessibility, number of rooms, typology of the lived spaces, circulation, and temperature. Afterwards comes the *Homing beyond housing*. It's the sense of community, that encompasses the perception of the open and communal spaces, the relationship with the neighbours, noise, and diversity of the tenants. The last part is the *Homemaking*. This part brings together the overlaps of each section by attributing the subjectivity of feelings, like the feeling of being at home or the feeling of belonging. In that way, listening to the tenants and their description of the previously analysed technical parts gives a subjective environmental approach (Cho, 2020) to how we perceive the domestic space. It gives life to the technicalities, and therefore creates the missing link between the perceived and the lived. The materiality assigned to this part is furniture and objects.

V.3.1. The path towards homing

As mentioned in previous sections, social housing provision in Vienna is bogger in numbers than in Brussels. This is clearly perceived in the time applicants spend on waiting lists before they get assigned a flat. A Belgian father of five kids in Candries has been on the waiting list for 20 years, before he got assigned a five-room flat. He mentioned that he was in a private flat of three rooms for six people and that they suffered from the lack of individuality and intimacy. The average waiting time of the interviewees in Candries is 11 years for the first assignment to the social housing and few months if they apply for a lateral transition from an old housing. In the case of Vienna, in both cases it takes few months. Getting assigned to a social housing for the first time implies requirements like renewing the application every year or ''you have to have lived five years at the same address unless you have another reason'' as an interviewee expressed. Lateral transitions are granted when someone is in urgent need to change. In some cases, interviewees mentioned problems with neighbours at the previous housing, the fall of a part of the ceiling because of humidity or the growth of mould on their walls. Some of the reasons were having additional kids and the need for an extra room or the other way around, having one or more kids moving out at some point. Coming from a north African/Arab family I am aware that it is more likely that kids do not leave their parents' houses until they get married. The tradition of independence after the age of eighteen is not at all common in middle eastern, Turkish, and north African family traditions. What I found interesting while conducting the interviews with families from Moroccan and Turkish migrant backgrounds, is that even though all the interviewed kids were born in Belgium and Austria, and sometimes the parents as well, the kids still stayed with their parents until marriage.

Houda, a daughter of old parents in Candries mentioned that her sister is getting married and soon the family will be left with an extra room. They are now wondering if they should sign up for a new lateral transition to a smaller flat or stay in this one since the price will go lower. Prices in Brussels are calculated yearly according to two variables namely the basic rent and the income coefficient. The income coefficient changes depending on the total income of the family members including kids

over the age of eighteen. This detail came up often in the interviews at Candries where most of the tenants find the price of the flats very expensive. Amina, a mother from Moroccan background was clearly outraged because she has to pay one thousand euros for a two-bedroom apartment for two parents and three kids. She finds it unfair to pay this amount of money for a flat she did not have the chance to visit beforehand. And when asked if she wants to move out, she replied that she is very scared to be assigned a worse flat than this one. For her the most important change compared to her old flat was the smaller size, and the fact that she had to sell all her previous furniture because it was too big for this apartment.

In Vienna the rent is calculated by square meters, regardless of the income of the family. This was pleasant for a Turkish family of two kids with a flat of two rooms.

> On the one hand, it's good when it's not big, because the rent here, for example, let me tell you that you didn't ask […] I only [pay] five hundred and sixty [with] garage […]. Five hundred and sixty all together is very good in my opinion

Birgül stated. Overall, the residents of HAK were satisfied with the rent except from Rea, a disabled Austrian woman who lives in a one-bedroom flat with her dog. She expressed ''and I have to pay 239 euros monthly [for gas] and 149 euros for rent […] That's not fair. This is not social. Yeah, because when I count it rent energy, heater, that's not social.''

The feeling of safety in the neighbourhood and in the apartment building was praised in both units by all the interviewees. They expressed their satisfaction with the use of electronic chips to enter the buildings, as well as not having to deal with problems individually but having a service number to call whenever it is required. Houda talked about moving out of her parents flat to a private flat when she got married and mentioned how uncomfortable she feels every time she has to call her landlord when there is an issue. She says that having the service is very convenient and that it is an important factor why she applied for social housing and now is on the waiting list. Rea, the woman with disability did not have a good experience with the service in HAK. She has lung problems and thinks that the air surrounding the housing is polluted due to the lack of green space. Once she tried to install a filtering net on her balcony to improve the quality of the air coming to her flat, she says:

> When he [a responsible] see the plastic on my balcony he called me and said how crazy you have to be that you do it. How you can think about it? He talk with peoples in wheelchair like they're not normal.

Air pollution is an important factor for Rea's feeling of safety. It is a topic that was not mentioned by any of the other tenants in both cities. But due to her problems with breathing, air pollution is a crucial factor of how she experiences her home. Now that she had to put down the filtering net, she replaced it with a mosquito net.

> Maybe it's a little bit filter [the net on the balcony] I hope so. I tell myself so. How you can get optimistic is… I think always and Lilly, the smoke. How would she grow up here with this oxygen? […] I'm 54 I will die. I know I have seen it I will die […] But Lilly is a baby.

Lilly is the three years old daughter of Malina, a single mother and side neighbour of Rea. Malina feels very safe in the surroundings of the housing even though at first, she thought it was too far from the city. When I interviewed her in summer, she was confused by how the lights of the open space

at the first floor were constantly on. But when interviewed after few months in winter she says ''I think that's not so much wrong if you live alone as a single mother […], so I feel in good hands.''

Bureaucratic navigation, rent price, access to authorities when needed and the feeling of safety are perceived as key factors on the way to moving or during moving to one's home. In the next section we will touch upon the interior of the dwelling, where architecture is being experienced.

V.3.2. Assigned Domesticity

On the interview sheet I deliberately started asking generic questions like the number of rooms or the number of people living in each flat. I assumed that one bedroom is assigned per person and in the case of family flats, one bedroom is assigned for the parents and one bedroom is assigned for each kid. I discovered later that one third of the interviewees in both cities had less rooms than the number of people. Similar to the case of Birgül in HAK, Ismail a father of four children in Candries said that he lives in a three-bedroom flat. The older brother has his own room. Two of the kids (between 7and12) share one small room that does not fit two beds side to side which led the family to place a bunk bed and one shared desk for both. The newborn is in the parents' room. Ismail wishes that they had a larger room for the two kids, this was also Malina's wish. She thinks that as Lilly gets older, sharing one bed might be uncomfortable for her.

In other cases, where the number of rooms was enough for the number of people, accessibility problems were mentioned. Layla spoke about her parents' flat of five rooms. In Candries, the flats with four rooms and five rooms were designed as duplexes where the living area is on one floor and the bedrooms are on the upper floor (seen in Fig. 3). The old mother of Layla has knee problems and with the use of the stairs her situation is getting worse and now she prefers to spend her nights downstairs on the couch. Even though most of the interviewees were satisfied with the presence of the elevator and the width of the corridors for wheelchair users, Rea has a different opinion. After suffering from a stroke and a failed marriage, Rea found herself dealing with her and her dog's life in a wheelchair indoors, and a special scooter outdoors. After renting a place in the downstairs garage for her scooter, she twice had an accident because of a loose tire. Since then she stopped renting the garage plot and now takes the scooter to the flat for safety reasons. She places the scooter in her bedroom (Picture 7). When we talked about the layout of the flat she stated that it would have been better if there was one more room. She expressed: ''But this monster [the scooter] Yeah, so I told him. What's coming now? Snow growing. And then walk out with him, and putting in[side]. Complete bacteria. Wet, snow, everything in my home. Yeah, that's not good.'' Rea converted to Islam few years prior to her stroke, and in Islam maintaining the house floor as clean as possible is very important because it should always be appropriate for the sacred praying mats to be placed on the floor at praying times. Even though Rea does not use a praying mat for her prayers because of her impairment, the dirt that her scooter causes disturb how she feels in her space. Dirt problems are not the only issues Rea is facing while using her scooter. She mentioned that in front of the elevator door, the stripes indicating the first step of the stairs are supposed to be in yellow and black so that they are seen by the users with weak sight or in her case with a scooter, but for design reasons, the stripes on the HAK stairs are in gray and white and that makes it hard for her to see where the stairs start and therefore makes it challenging to come out of the elevator. Additionally, the door at the end of the corridor is always closed and is very heavy on her hands whenever she tries to open it.

The corridor door is closed because of the strong wind flow coming from the perforated metallic staircase (Picture 8). Rea suffers a lot from the cold, her health situation is critical and very sensitive

to the temperature. Other than lung problems, she suffers heart problems, rheumatism, and constant headaches from the cold. She thinks the insulation is not well done, especially the presence of the trickle ventilator right above the couch bothers her. She suffers headaches whenever she spends time on her couch, she states: ''I live here with shit bones. And my dog snore like I never heard before from indoor. She is sick. I have to cover her always.'' In Candries, comfortable temperature was one of the few things every interviewee agreed on. The thick insulation of the exterior walls minimizes the cold, and the installation of a double flow ventilation system helps to reduce the use of the heaters. One interviewee even mentioned that her parents do not open the heater that much in winter and that the heat coming from the neighbors in addition to the thick insulation is enough to keep the flat warm. Anne Ledroit, one of the architects of Candries explains:

> It is strongly insulated from the outside, at the same time there is a double flow ventilation, that is to say that we ventilate the rooms with air that we get from the outside but that we warm up with the air that we have just removed. So there is a heat exchange […] it heats up without mixing, obviously.

Picture 7 : Rea's scooter next to her bed - HAK

Source: Taken by Author

Picture 8 : perforated metallic staircase wall - HAK

Source: Taken by Author

One other strength of Candries was making sure the natural light comes from two facades in each flat, and this was mentioned several times positively in the interviews, especially with the presence of a large private terrace or balcony in every living room. This is not the case in the Viennese housing. Interviewees were overall happy with their balconies but many of them talked about how dark their flat and kitchen were because of the loggia part of the balcony that reduces the direct sunlight from entering the window.

However, Birgül with her flat that has a facade on the Danube, was very excited to show me the view from her bedroom. ''Can you take a look at the view? I use it very fondly, of course it is different between night and day. Besides, this place is like a port, they call it a port island.'' She was very happy with her new flat and one could tell the excitment in her voice. But one thing bothered her very much; the open kitchen. Birgül apologized many times to me because she cooked right before she invited me to see the flat. For her the smell of food in the livingroom is shameful infront of guests. She asked her son as soon as we stepped inside to urgently open the windows. Her wish was to have a seperate kitchen from the living room so that the smell of food does not spread in the flat. In both cities every flat has a kitchen open to the living room. And since both units were newly built, the kitchen furniture was not included with the flat.

So every tenant had to buy their own kitchen. From my observations, the spaces dedicated to the kitchen were always too small. In HAK the flooring designated for the kitchen space is a different material from that of the living room which makes it clear how much space the architects assigned for the kitchen. None of of the homes I visited had a kitchen that fit to the space made for it (Picture 9). In Candries a similar issue is present (Picture 10). Kitchens in Middle Eastern and African homes are not only a place to cook but also to eat, spend time and gather with family memebers. It is also a space where women traditionally spend a lot of time especially if they have guests. Ismail, when asked about the kitchen mentioned that his wife would have preferred a seperate kitchen, and that even though his kitchen is semi open to the living room, his wife doesn't feel confortable being there when they have male guests. Women privacy in morrocan culture is important, he mentioned, and the layout of their kitchen takes away the privacy from his wife. Malina, coming from a Bulgarian background also mentioned that the kitchen is important to her. She bought a U shaped kitchen to create a sort of separation from the living room. ''Someone told me that Austrians are not so much cooking home like they prefer to eat outside but i don't know if this is true''. This was her explanation of the small floor space designated for the kitchen. In fact, the people who were explicitly happy with an open kitchen were the ones originally Austrian and Belgian and at the same time working fulltime jobs outside of their homes, whereas those who complained about the kitchen were either housewives like Birgül and Ismail's wife or Rea because she spends a lot of time inside her flat on an everyday basis.

When I asked about whether it is possible to make changes inside the flats or not, everyone answered with a firm no. Nobody is allowed to suggest or make any changes. As Rea mentioned, as soon as she put the air filtering net she was asked to take it down. Now she is even scared of adding shelves to her bathroom. Her bathroom came with no shelves at all. She explains:

> You have a place in the corner for the washing machine. You have the washing machine then is the heater, then you have where to hold where you stand up and sit down. You cannot [hang] any clothes, any towel. Because you cannot. […] I have many different soaps [...] I have a nose yeah and I like to smell every time […] But here you don't have in this place. Because you cannot make any work […] everything goes bad.

The space at Rea's bathroom cannot allow her to add a standing shelf, her only recourse is adding mural shelves to place her soaps or low wall hangers for her towels. But she feels like she cannot risk it with the authorities, especially after the call she received.
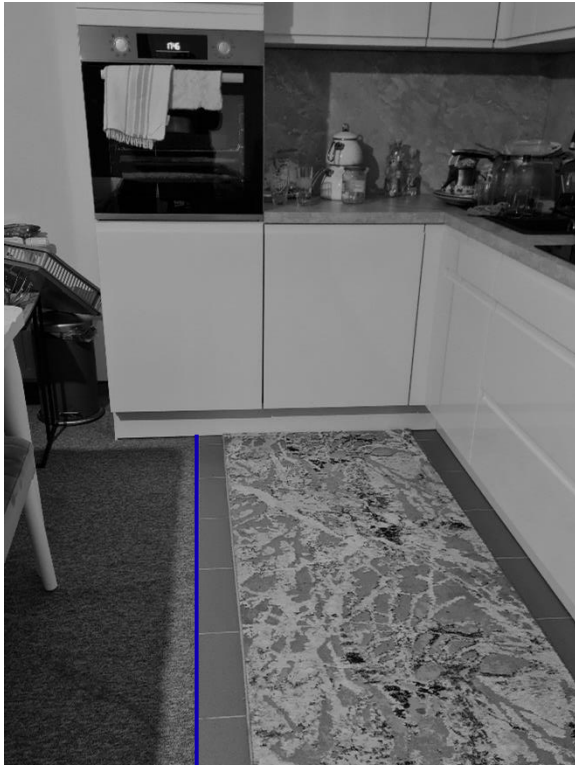
Picture 9 : Brgül's Kitchen flooring is smaller than the kitchen - HAK
Source: Taken by Author

Picture 10 : Amer's kitchen space - Candries
Source: Taken by Author

V.3.3. Homing beyond housing

The sense of community was approached in almost opposing ways from the architects of the HAK and Candries. As mentioned in the design research section, the main architectural concept that made *querkraft* architects win the competition for HAK was the fact that it created the green band, a mix of closed, semi-open and open spaces that are accessible to the public. This space is a sort of invitation of the surrounding housing tenants to interact with their neighbours. The green band also includes multiple playgrounds for kids and teenagers, tables and benches for adults, besides communal rooms all along the plot. When I asked the interviewees what they think about the communal rooms, I was surprised by how little they use them. It is true that all interviewees thought it was a good idea to have communal rooms and the playground. The playground was only used by Malina and her daughter Lilly, and the kids of Birgül. Maria, a young single adult, finds it cool to have the first floor as a playground and green space, but she doesn't use it. ''Like these shared things are like for families with children. Or if you want to use laundry room. I have my own laundry machine. I don't have kids so […] I have my life. I don't need it.'' In fact, none of the interviewees used the communal laundry room, each had their own laundry machine at home. As for the communal rooms, I learned that few events were organized to bring the neighbours together and get to know each other. A Punch night in winter was also organized but none of my interviewees participated in these events.

The architectural concept that made *LPP* architects win the competition for Candries is very different from the Viennese one. Their praised idea is the attempt to create private domesticities within the ensemble. Anne explains:

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> So that people have the impression of each living in a small house within a whole. So it's both working on the urban scale and the scale of domesticity [...] not to have the impression of being a kind of number in a building without scale, but rather to inhabit, almost a private house, perched or in contact with the ground, but in a larger whole.

Three of the flats in Candries have separate doors from the main entrance. And even though they share their terraces at the ground floor with the communal garden, they have cable separations between their private gardens. When I asked Alain, a Belgian father of four kids who lives on the ground floor about his relationship with the neighbours, he said that he does not have a problem that the tenants come from diverse backgrounds and that the separate entrance to his flat makes his interaction with the other tenants minimal. He was satisfied with everything in the flat but wished a solution different from the cables separating his garden from the garden of his neighbour.

Diversity of the tenants in terms of ethnic backgrounds was constantly mentioned in both social housings. Nobody seemed to have a problem with that, except from Layla, the daughter of a Belgian father and a Moroccan mother who thought that the building only had sub-Saharan, Turkish and north African migrants which for her is not very diverse. She was positively surprised when I told her that there is a Belgian and a Spanish family I interviewed. For her, not getting to know the neighbours when everyone moved in is a pity, especially that all the tenants were the first to ever live in the newly built housing. She thinks the communal garden has a lot of potential, like a space for growing vegetables and a compost bin, but nobody is using them. She also talked about the fact that as her parents are growing older it would have been nice if they interacted more with the neighbours to not feel lonely. In Candries there is no effort to bring the neighbours together, the tenants barely know their side or front neighbours. Ahmad, a father from Sierra Leonean background said that community life in Belgium is nothing like back home, and that people are isolated unlike the neighbourhood spirit he used to witness in Sierra Leone. However, Birgül in Vienna is happy that she is isolated from her neighbours, she explains:

> Then at some point everything was too much for me. No, I don't want to see anyone. [...] Because I am resting my head[10]. This is the perfect place to rest your head. It's really like your own hotel. It's like a hotel concept. It's not a lie if I say I'm not seeing anyone. It feels so good to me like that, [to be] only with my family, I don't like crowds. I don't like people from outside, I talk to few people, this is my style.

Birgül emphasised that she has a relationship of respect with the neighbours, a formal one of greetings and nothing more. She also explicitly expressed her happiness with the presence of other muslim people, and hijabi[11] neighbors who also got asigned flats with good views. The only two neighbours that had a frequent communication were Malina, the single mother and Rea the woman with disability. Rea mentioned that she also spoke several times with other neighbours from HAK and from the older social housing on the other side of the street. Her Austrian neighbour constantly expressed her anger with the quality of the housing, she complained about how noisy the open space gets in late summer nights, especially with the obligation to leave the windows open because of the heat. Rea thinks that most of the residents will leave as soon as they can, she expressed:

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[10] Resting one's head: Kafayı dinlemek is a Turkish saying that means relaxing
[11] Hijabi means a Muslim woman who wears a 'hijab حجاب' a headscarf

> I don't believe that someone will stay longer than five years. They'll change when they have money they will change. No one can live with everything [here]. And I have many contacts. I can say 80% from the people that live here like me and they'll say the same. The people [...] from the old blocks there, they don't like the people here in the new. Because of the view. And I have Many peoples there [who] talk with me [...] They always talk to me. They ask me. What they tell me, when they build up, they build it too fast and when you do anything fast ... ?

''...It is not good.'' I completed the sentence to her nodding.

V.3.4. I finally made it … home

One of the most challenging parts of my interviewing, I would say, was to shift from talking about technicalities to a more emotional perception of space, and the feeling of being at home. Part of me wanted to ask everybody to take me to their flat and talk to me about their feelings of belonging and their homemaking process from the time they moved until the interview day. But the interviewing circumstances were not always favourable to ask these questions. Coming out or coming back to one's home are instances where people are either in a rush or too tired to do an interview. In most cases, their homes, according to them, were not presentable to invite someone in. However, in order to create a way to discuss this part, I asked questions about furniture and objects used inside the flat and how they help to build a relationship with a space that was handed blank.

Furniture is a concrete measurement of a space, whether it is sufficient, comfortable, or tight. As mentioned before, the flats were handed new, without a kitchen. Each tenant in both housings bought a kitchen that goes well with their preferences but also with their budget. In HAK some of the tenants expressed satisfaction with the freedom of deciding the shapes of their kitchens on their owns and saw it as a sort of flexibility that fits their different needs of arranging the space. This was perceived in the case of Maria, a single Austrian woman and Malina the single mother in HAK. Both chose a U-shaped kitchen to create a separation with the living room. In the case of Candries, the kitchens were semi open. They had a separating wall from the living room, and this wall had no door. In one case this opening created a lack of privacy for Ismail's wife. In another case, the opening of the kitchen was obliging the user to make a turn in order to pass from the other rooms to the kitchen and Amer, an adult male from Spanish background who is living with his parents, found it a bit annoying to be obliged to do these extra steps.

When asked about the furniture and if there were any precise preferences made, the tenants with migrant backgrounds were the ones who seemed more excited to show me the furniture that reminded them of their home countries. Birgül showed me her bedroom furniture that she brought last summer from Turkey.

> The price of furniture seems high to me, yes, the situation is not bad, but it is also from Turkey, that is, less than half the price. Cheap, and of course we were in Turkey, we brought it on the way. We have a car, we removed four rear seats. We took something like this to the back of the car, we brought it with the trailer […] It was hard, it wasn't easy but we brought it.

The bedroom furniture has an oriental style to it (Picture 11). The living room on the other hand has more modern furniture but the layers of the curtains are clearly a Turkish style. In Turkey, the middle

east and Africa, curtains are an important part of the culture. During the day the thin white curtains cover the windows while letting natural light penetrate the house, and at night, for complete privacy, the opaque layer of the curtains is used to hinder the neighbours from looking inside the flat while the lights are on (Picture 12)

Picture 11 : Wardrobe imported from Turkey with flower ornaments - HAK
Source: Taken by Author

Picture 12 : Opaque and transparent curtain layers - HAK
Source: Taken by Author

Oriental style furniture was not only seen in the Turkish flat, the three families in Candries from Moroccan backgrounds also mentioned a Moroccan style living room. Houda told me that her mother has already turned her sister's room into a second living room with a Moroccan style after she got married.

She explained that this time it is a new Moroccan style furniture, unlike the old ones they had. Instead of a long L shaped sofa, they have a collection of small sofas and small tables. Having two living rooms in an Arab home is very common. The more casual one, is for the daily use of family members, where you can lay down on the sofa and watch TV or have a cup of tea with the family members. The second one, most of the times bigger and closer to the entrance, is the living room for guests. Those, family members do not use on a daily basis. In the context of social housing, tenants from migrant backgrounds barely find a flat with enough rooms to have a second living room, but in the case of Houda's family the moving out of one of the daughters made this possible. Layla said that their previous flat had a Moroccan style living room so that her mother, who is married to a Belgian man, does not feel dépaysée[12]. But in this flat they have modern furniture that goes with the contemporary architecture of the building, as she explained. Ismail also has what he

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[12] FR: Faire changer d'environnement, de pays, de cadre habituel. ENG: Make a change of environment, country, usual setting.

called a modern style Moroccan furniture. He bought it from Brussels and was very excited to show it to me (Picture 13). For Ismail, this style makes him feel like home. He also has lamps that have Arabic calligraphy style writing on them (Picture 15-16).

Picture 13 : Modern Moroccan sofa
Source: Taken by Author

Picture 14 : Mural writing There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. لا إله إلا الله و محمد رسول الله
Source: Taken by Author

Picture 15 : Chandelier that writes in ALLAH in Arabic calligraphy
Source: Taken by Author
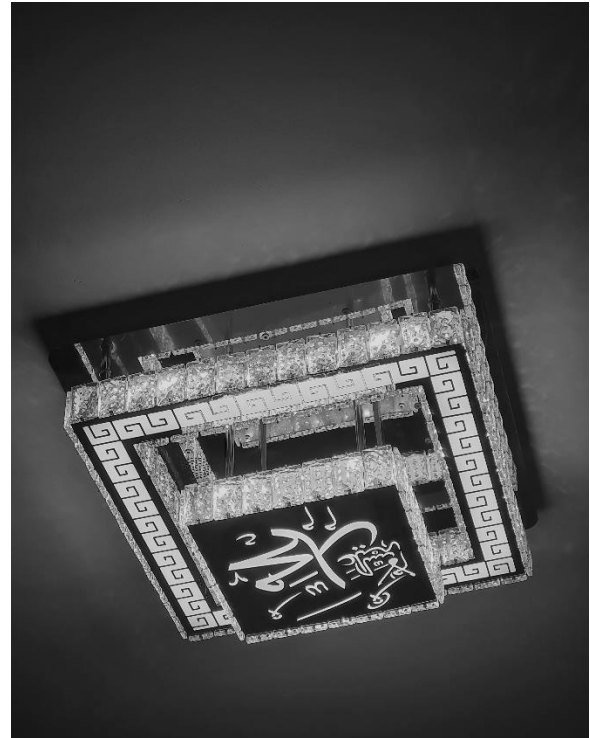
Picture 16 : Chandelier that writes in Mohamad in Arabic calligraphy
Source: Taken by Author

Picture 17 : Objects at Ismail's living room   *13*

Source: Taken by Author

Picture 18 : Picture of Virgin Mary and Malina's mother who passed away

Source: Taken by Author

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[13] Picture 16: Object on the right writes ما شاء الله و لا قوة إلا بالله Whatever God wills and no power except God, Clock in the middle with a picture of Mecca, Object on the left writes بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful.

Objects play an important role for Ismail's feeling of home. They represent his cultural and religious identity as well as a feeling of familiarity to how homes back home felt like. He was one of the few interviewees who was opening up about his perception of home. Even though the issue of privacy was brought up when he complained about the semi-open kitchen, Ismail talked about the importance of the furniture and objects they have in the living room and how they create a homey feeling that reminds him of Morocco. The objects he was talking about are of religious meanings like the calligraphy on the wall (Picture 14) or the small decorative pieces that have Islamic prayers or the photo of Mecca (Picture 17).

When asked about what kind of objects make her feel like home, Malina referred with her hand to a picture of Virgin Mary, next to the picture of her mother (Picture 18). ''I am Orthodox, so I have my thing there from there [Bulgaria]''. In the shared room of Malina and her daughter Lilly, she showed me a decorative cushion on her daughter's bed that was written in Cyrillic letters (Picture 19): ''That's what friends bought for me she found it on Instagram and was deciding between English or Bulgarian and then she chose Bulgarian.'' Next to her daughter's bed lays a kids book in Bulgarian (Picture 20). For her, not being able to be around family often, especially that her mother passed away and that she does not frequently visit her father, should be made up for by talking and reading in Bulgarian to Lilly.

Picture 19 : Decorative object with Cyrillic letters
Source: Taken by Author

Picture 20 : Children's book in Bulgarian
Source: Taken by Author

Home practices like cooking, creating objects, playing, and decorating seem to play a role in how tenants experience their homes. After interviewing Rea for one hour, and after listening to all the struggles she had to experience in her flat, I finally asked her if there is any time where she felt at

home here. She mentioned her previous home, and then started showing me her decorations (Picture 21).

> [The previous home] That's the best home I ever had. [The current home] I make it nice. Yeah, I like it. So like how is it because it's my idea, yeah. [I ask] someone come to make it […] like I want it, how I need it. I say So so so so. And he made it. […] I like it… But I cannot, think about it, [when] everything [is] wrong.

The only moment when Rea was happily showing me things and smiling, was the part when she showed me her creations. Rea makes soaps, jewellery (Picture 22), decorative objects and many more crafts that she showcases all around her tiny flat. She asked a person to help her hang her plants and her creations on the walls and the shelves. But every time she remembered another deficiency in the flat, her smile came to an end and she reexplained how hard it is for her to survive all the flaws with her health problems and reduced mobility.

Picture 21 : Decorative macramé, plants and a Qoran
Source: Taken by Author

Picture 22 : Handmade Jewely by Rea
Source: Taken by Author

V.3.5. Discrepancies between the perceived and the lived

After laying out the interviews with the tenants to better understand how they experience the space and perceive their homes, this section will give a summary of the findings and highlight the few dichotomies with the expectations of the architects in each social housing.

Starting with the HAK Vienna housing, as mentioned above, the most important architectural aspect of the housing was building a way that does not block natural light and the Danube view for the older social housing as well as granting an accessible open and green space for the neighbourhood. The project manager also confirmed that HAK's ''architectural reaction to the environment'' was the reason why the jury committee chose it as a winning project. When I interviewed the landscape architect responsible for the project, she stated that after winning the competition, *querkraft* asked to team up with *Kieran Fraser,* a Viennese landscape design office. She also mentioned that even though she did not think a landscape architect was necessary to the project, she is happy with their outcome. Adding a green space accessible to the neighbourhood appears to be a solution to destigmatize the surrounding area that was once called the ''horror community building''[14]. Most of the residents were positive about the accessible open space, except from few who thought it can get very noisy at night.

The social housing stock in Vienna is famous since the Karl Marx Hof for its strict regulations about open spaces and communal rooms. Unfortunately, the communal rooms within the green space in HAK were lacking furniture and were not being used when I did my observations both during summer and winter.

> It was a proposal from us, to create a social area under every seven building, which can be used by every tenants of the 7 building. At the beginning we suggested several different functions in this rooms, but it wasn't possible to finance the equipment and the interiors due to the budget.

Budget restrictions were not only mentioned in this case but also when it comes to using environmental friendlier material and renewable energy sources for the construction. In order to minimise the budget, the architects replicated the types of flats several times in the floor plans to make it easier in the construction phase.

> I have to mention that I think the project could be built so quick and qualitative, because the whole planning team, the client and the whole construction firm [were] motivated to create the best we could with the budget we had.

Yet according to Rea, the fast construction was not as efficient and good as the architect claimed.

The rent pricing system in Vienna according to square meters was appreciated by every tenant, but their heating costs made the monthly budget for housing a bit too high for Rea, due to her health situation. She needed a warmer atmosphere in order to feel comfortable indoors. The number of rooms being less than the number of tenants was the most occurring problem mentioned by the HAK tenants. On a more specific note, the interior layout, the safety measures and the use of material were not replying to a comfortable and fair accessibility for those using wheelchairs and scooters for their everyday life practices.

In the case of Candries, Brussels as discussed with one of the architects, providing a sense of privacy for most of the flats was the main architectural concept. The communal space is brought to the minimum, in a way that it was merged with the vertical circulation. The stairs were conceptualised

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[14] Mentioned on the website of Kieran Fraser https://www.kieranfraser.com/work/completed/gemeindebau-neu-handelskai/

as an interaction space for the tenants and not just a fire escape tool complementary to the elevator. It was emphasised with natural light and a connection to the entrance hall. The common garden was also merged with some of the private terraces. Private terraces were positively praised by all tenants, they brought more daylight to the flats and gave an opportunity to enjoy the good weather in the warmer days. Unfortunately, none of the tenants used the communal garden. In fact, the design code of the city of Brussels explicitly asks to minimize the dimensions of common areas (Annexe 4, n.d). The architect eventually fought her way to create this communal garden. She explains:

> The problem we often face is that we put things in place for the collective, but there is not necessarily maintenance of social housing companies and therefore we do not know at all, a few years later if that, if it worked or not, it would be necessary to do a good accompaniment. I think that these social housing companies, they are more and more aware of this and that it will come, but normally there was a vegetable area with vegetable gardens, A water fountain, benches, a large grass that are wedded. But if all that isn't a bit maintained … then I don't know.

When it comes to the common criticised aspect of the housing, the rent prices were mentioned frequently with some tenants mentioning that the rent price is double what they used to pay in their previous social housing in Molenbeek. The other frequent criticism was the tight room number as well as their size especially when it comes to kids sharing one bedroom. This was brought up by many tenants. The disappointment associated to this feedback is the fact that the tenant must accept or deny the assigned flat before having the chance to ever visit it and experience it physically. Looking at the plans was not enough for Ismail or Amina to realise that the shared room for kids will be smaller than imagined. On multiple occasions, the working desk was shared between two kids, and the playing areas were placed in the living room (Picture 23).
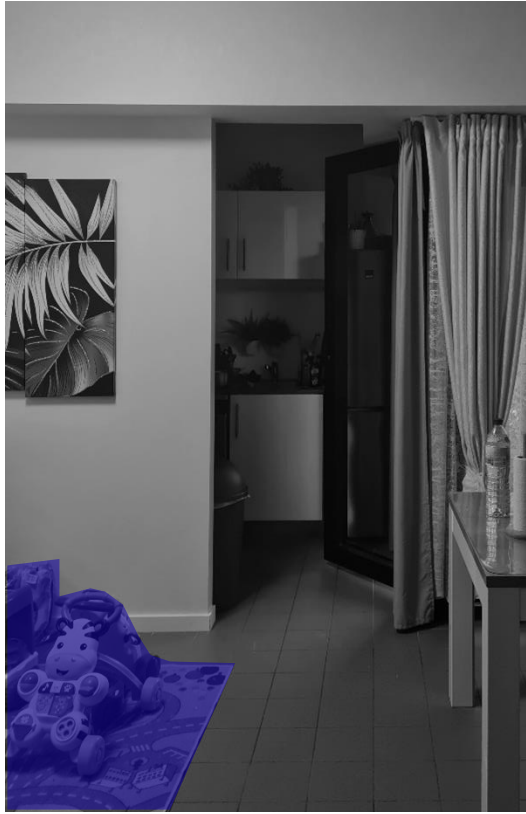
Picture 23 : Playing corner in the living space
Source: Taken by Author

Problems of accessibility to wheelchair users were not prominent in Candries. Houda was grateful that the bathroom is well equipped for a wheelchair user and that the corridor is wide enough to have two people because her disabled father needs to do walking sessions everyday as a recovery practice for his legs and needs to be assisted by another person. The insulation capacity of the windows and the walls was positively mentioned even by the most disappointed tenant.

VI. Discussion

Discussing the implications of the empirical findings and their response to the research question - *to what extent does the architectural design shape the 'social' in social housing, and how does it impact the homemaking processes of vulnerable groups?* - will follow the three steps undertaken in the findings section. At first a summary of Vienna's and Brussels' positionalities in terms of housing segregation will be derived from the policy discussion in relation to welfare regime typologies and the local welfare and housing governance. This will be followed by the spatial and architectural overview of social housing flat typology, and an understanding of how it replies to the visited tenants' needs and everyday life practices. Finally, a compilation and interpretation of the observations and interviews with the tenants will be bringing together all the discussed concepts.

VI.1. From welfare typologies to more nuanced research

As discussed in the literature review (Chapter II.3.1), according to welfare regimes, Vienna is considered a Corporatist cluster with a unitary housing system (Arbaci, 2007) with a broader social housing provision with cheaper rent prices and better housing quality (Ozer & Jacoby, 2022). On the other hand, Brussels with its liberal cluster and dualist housing system is providing higher rent prices for worse housing conditions (Nieuwenhuis & Zagel, 2022). According to Arbaci (2007) the positionality of the cities have direct implications on socio-spatial segregation practices, which makes Vienna in this case less segregating than Brussels, whether against ethnic minorities or lower income tenants, in terms of housing provision. One might argue that looking at the rent prices as well as the number of social housing flats per capita, and the margin of social classes that are eligible for the social housing gives Vienna a better positionality on the segregation scale. Yet, many aspects that have a great influence on what segregation might represent for tenants are dismissed in this type of comparative research. Two of these components are being discussed in this thesis as crucial aspects of housing comparative research. The first one is allocating significance to the role architectural design plays in reflecting the socio-cultural predictions of decent housing in social housing provision, and the second is giving a space for the diverse social housing tenants to express and talk about their experiences and homemaking processes within social housing.

Recent discourses that were adopted by Vienna and Brussels in social housing policies have introduced new ideas and additions apart from building with standardised building codes. Brussels created a social accompaniment called PLC (Projets de cohésion sociale) where the social housing companies organise events and get-togethers with the tenants or the neighbourhood residents and include them in organising and participating in events and weekly meetings related to neighbourhood initiatives. On the other hand, Vienna introduced a new category of housing called SMART flats, where the goal is to dwell young families, couples, singles, and single parents in flats with, what they call, optimised functionality in terms of square meters (which means fewer square meters) that host the maximum of functions for more affordable prices. George Perec in a critique on how planners and architects design spaces that fit into a standardised, monotone, and precise timeline of everyday practices writes:

> I don't know, and don't want to know where functionality begins or ends. It seems to me, in any case, that in the ideal dividing-up of today's apartments functionality functions in accordance with a procedure that is unequivocal, sequential and nychthemeral. The activities of the day correspond to slices of time, and to each slice of time there corresponds one room of the apartment. [...] In this model, which, I would stress, is both fictional and problematic, though I'm convinced of its elementary

rightness (no one lives exactly like that, of course, but it is nevertheless like that, and not otherwise, that architects and town planners see us living or want us to live)[…]. (Perec & Sturrock, 1997, p. 28–29)

The design analysis of a number of the flats in both social housings was a study of how architects, city planners and housing company managers perceived the most convenient layouts considering the needs of the neighbourhood, the future tenants as well as the provided budget. In the study conducted by Ozer and Jacoby (2022) the intention behind the design analysis they introduced in their paper was to give an idea on how different countries' design standards reflect their own cultural norms. This applies in the case of Vienna and Brussels as well, the design standards also reflect national cultural norms. In Vienna the presence of communal rooms and accessible open spaces comes from the socialist history the city has, whereas in Brussels, taking the communal spaces to the bare minimum comes from the rationale of giving more private space on the expense of the communal spaces. These two approaches were also the main architectural conceptions that made the projects win the competition. The interior of the flats was with an open kitchen to the living room in both cities. This free plan conception is a modernist western approach (Madanipour, 2014) that led to a postmodernist perception of the living areas (at first only living room and dining room afterwards the kitchen also took part of it) as an entertainment space. Even when interviewing the architects and tenants from European origins, the open kitchen living room layout was perceived as an obvious solution for the living space. Yet, the diversity of the tenants and their different backgrounds do not necessarily align with the 'obvious' perception of privacy within the flat. Different tenants approach privacy and intimacy in different ways, which was reflected in their opinions about the kitchen/living room separation and how it affects their comfort on an individual level or the community level when hosting guests. Whether the everyday practice of tenant align with or diverge from the meaning allocated by the architect to the space (Lewis et al., 2018), learning about these practices by visiting the flats allows a creative and nuanced way to analyse homemaking.

The last part of the findings is the interviews with the tenants and the visit to their flats to create a dialogue between the unspoken and the spoken (Lewis et al., 2018) to extract a better understanding of what the *social* is and how is it perceived from different perspectives. Moreover, it touches upon how the architecture impacts the homemaking process of the tenants and how these processes clash or resonate with the policy and architectural discourse.

VI.2. Rethinking Social Housing: Moving Beyond Affordability

Shaping the social is a bit of an outreach if we do not have a clear definition of what the term social implies when we talk about social housing. As mentioned in the onset of the literature review, most of the definitions associated to the term social housing have a socio-economic connotation that mainly draws its meaning from affordability. Before calling for a broader scope on the terminology, I would like to draw the attention to the different points of view concerning affordability first. On the experts' side, affordability was mentioned as a limitation to their work. The fact that they had to work within a restricted budget made some of their plans unrealisable. The low budget could not cover the equipment of the communal rooms as well as their hope for a more environmentally sustainable building material. In other cases, it created some challenges with the construction team when some superposition of rooms required extra work in terms of installations. Affordability for the tenants is basically associated to what they pay monthly for their housing. This includes rent, consumption bills or deposits. Vienna, as expected provided a cheaper version than Brussels in terms of rent prices, but for the gas prices for instance, the efficiency of the insulation was not performing very well.

Unlike in Candries, the tenants in HAK mentioned the high gas prices that added up on the overall gas crisis in Europe due to the war in Ukraine.

VI.2.1. Building Communities: Fostering Social Cohesion in social housing

It is crucial that affordability plays a role in social housing. Eventually the socio-economic precarity deriving from social class differentiations and the challenges to keep up with the ongoing raise of rent prices hinders all those who suffer from job instability or integration hardships to find their ways towards a stable and safe housing. Though, solely focusing on affordability as a measurement to assess housing quality is insufficient to guarantee *social* housing. Cities have been aware of this, and different approaches are being taken into consideration when planning for newer social housing projects. The city of Vienna, for instance, has been giving importance to the communal spaces since the very first social housing projects. Green courtyards that host neighbourhood events and kids' playgrounds have always taken part in the plans of social housing in Vienna. Even though the rationale behind communal spaces goes back to the communal showers and bathrooms, it was still persistent after these two entered the private sphere, but in different forms like laundry rooms, common kitchens, playgrounds, and common spaces. Moreover, this practice is still very prominent in the newly built units and sometimes encouraged as a way to help destigmatise a neighbourhood like seen in the case of HAK. Besides the spaces designated for adults to organise events or get-togethers and kids to have playgrounds, teenagers also started to be taken into consideration while designing these spaces. For the social aspect, the design of the common spaces thus is seen as just as crucial as affordability. This implies that the focus on communal spaces is developing with a shift in narratives, at least in Viennese social housing. Communal spaces are important when it comes to fostering social cohesion and the feeling of belonging to a community. This was mentioned twice in Candries when Ahmad pointed out how isolated people are in the building and that community life is absent compared to Sierra Leone and when Layla showed concern that her parent will grow lonely in the building. They regretted the lack of communal spaces and wished it was emphasised by the authorities. Even though these practices are seen in intentional cooperative or co-habitation housing projects, they might translate sometimes into closed communities like gated communities. This is why in the case of social housing, delivering these spaces as open to the public is of great importance to the sense of community on both the housing level and the neighbourhood level and consequently for the broad notion of the *social*.

VI.2.2. The significance of safety as a housing priority

Communal spaces do not only serve the aim of leisure, but they also have other fundamental roles like the feeling of safety in the neighbourhood. When interviewing an Austrian single male in HAK, and when I asked about the feeling of safety, his perception of safety, surveillance and community was different from the other interviewees. Mark thinks that the strategy of social mix the city of Vienna is adopting is not fair and that social housing should be only available for those with the lowest income. He stated that he does not feel very safe in the building because he thinks his neighbours are consuming illegal substances and having parties all the time and are spending money on illegal things which, for him, reflects the fact that they are not really of low income and therefore are not worthy of social housing. He does not trust the surveillance cameras installed in the building either and thinks they are just there to give the impression that the space is being surveyed but, according to him, it is not. Mark was the only interviewee expressing such general feelings of unsafety in the study. This goes to show that feelings of safety can differ from individual to individual.

Malina as a single mother, on the other hand, explicitly mentioned how she thinks the lighting of the communal space gives her a feeling of safety in the neighbourhood. Even though she had doubts when accepting the assigned flat because of the non-centrality of the housing, she was pleased by the sense of community and therefore the feeling of security as a mother living alone with her child. Safety also goes beyond the collective scale to the individual scale. The association of home with the feeling of safety and security is an ongoing debate in home research with opinions criticising this association's link with the western middle-class ideal of a stable family. In feminist literature the association of safety and home comes also from the assessment of home as a space of conflict, domestic violence and patriarchal behaviour (Blunt & Dowling, 2022), which creates a space of unsafety. On a similar note, in the case of Rea the disabled woman the warning because of the minor modification she made on her balcony, created in her a sense of insecurity within her private realm. She is now constantly afraid of making the least changes in the flat because of her experience. The call she had, the manner in which the responsible man spoke to her, created a *panopticon effect* in Rea's own home. She is feeling like she is constantly surveyed and does not allow herself to make a mistake and risk a fine by, for example, adding shelves to her bathroom. As someone with reduced mobility, she tends to spend more time inside her flat than the average person (e.g. working adults or kids at school) and this amplifies the unpleasant feeling of self-surveillance . The feeling of safety has thus been seen to play a significant role in the tenants' homemaking process, even more critically if they deviate from a western, middle-class family ideal.

VI.2.3. Incorporating multicultural diversity for inclusive housing

The issue of social mix, as discussed in the literature review, is an ongoing debate in housing studies. Its relation to diversity and the de-stigmatization of social housing and certain neighbourhoods does not sound convincing for some. In this regard, when talking to the architects and if they had an idea about the tenants, they replied that they knew they were very diverse. They defined diversity of tenants with old people, families, single people, teenagers, and kids. I argue that diversity of tenants goes way beyond these categories, and even though the aim of the architects while designing the communal spaces was to bring people together, a serious neglect of ethnic diversity, the role of women, disabled and queer tenants is apparent. It is true that these spaces are not fully used yet. According to Gehl (1987), life between buildings is a process, it follows a mimicking timeline that when a group of people start to do activities others will slowly follow. He argues that it is a self-reinforcing process, that grows organically. However, it might be that in some cases, especially of neighbourhoods associated with stigma or greater diversity of tenants, this approach might require an additional attention to inclusivity. Inclusivity does not only imply people designing different flat types (essentially with different room numbers) or bringing together tenants from different social classes but also considering differences in physical, cultural, and social circumstances. These considerations have to play a role in the development of the communal spaces, in a way that they can be used by a diverse group of tenants.

VI.2.4. Breaking barriers: Beyond the conventional understanding of accessibility

Physical conditions like reduced mobility of disabled people or older people are heavily impacted not only by the architectural accessibility to the buildings and flats but also the social exclusion these people face just because they are perceived uncapable of conforming to the needs of capitalist societies. Accessibility was mentioned in both examples of social housing, for instance when Layla when describing the issue her mother is facing with the stairs in her flat so that she can go to her bedroom. In another example, the case of Houda's father, who endured an accident that resulted in him using a wheelchair, the accessibility to and within the flat was not a problem for him to carry

on his life. But this was absolutely not the case for Rea. As mentioned on multiple occasions in the findings, Rea suffers a lot in her flat in Vienna. The wide corridor or the presence of the elevator are not sufficient for her to maintain a 'normal' life. Health problems linked to physical impairment are often neglected in the discourse of accessibility and that was enough for her to struggle on multiple levels. The corridor, for instance, was indeed wide enough for her wheelchair of scooter to pass, but the heavy door that is hard to open with her arms makes the space hardly accessible.

> In particular, disabled people often experience the home as a series of 'disembodied spaces', or places that are designed in ways that are rarely attentive to their physiological and bodily needs and functions. Thus, interactions between features of bodily physiology, such as muscle wasting, and domestic design, such as heavy doors, can combine to demarcate domestic spaces that are off limits to (particular types of) impaired bodies. (Imrie, 2004, p. 748)

Similarly, cold, noise, room number, ability to make changes and similar details created a barrier between Rea and her homemaking process. Yet what I think should be taken into consideration is the fact that Rea lives alone, whereas Houda's father lives with his family and therefore has an entourage that takes care of him and of the flat. Rea on the other hand is the primary responsible for herself and her dog. Her movement and activity in the flat are completely dependent on her body. This requires more effort hence more recognition of her health issues resulting in weak muscles, lung and heart problems that necessitate assisting spatial solutions in order to make her everyday practices more comfortable and therefore makes it easier for her to create her home. Considering these conditions, the architectural conception would serve to fulfil the goal of social housing in one additional aspect, that of accessibility and enablement.

VI.2.5. Religiosity and culture depicting social identity

What made Rea, sometimes, overcome the pejorative idea she has of her flat is her way of decorating it and the objects she owns, or creates. These objects were plants, Macramé[15], lights, photos, murals, books, handmade creations, jewellery, flowers as well as religious pieces like a Quran book, a clock with the Kaaba[16] and other Islamic murals. Rea, spoke to me about her conversion to Islam very proudly, assuming that I come from a Muslim background myself. Religiosity was not only apparent with Rea when we spoke about her feeling of home, it came across in six of the twelve interviews I did in both housings. Ismail, Ahmad, Amer, Birgül and Rea were showing me their objects that represented their Islamic identity, and Malina her Christian orthodox identity. Religiosity plays a fundamental role in defining one's social identity. The feeling of safety that comes with the feeling of belonging to a certain religious group creates a safe environment within the unfamiliar or the other. Birgül mentioned that she is isolated and does not feel like interacting with her neighbours, but she expressed her happiness when seeing other Muslim tenants on the same floor. In the case of migrants, the discrimination that comes along with having an apparent difference like skin colour, scarf or beard enhances the longing for an environment in similarity and acceptance. Having a community that shares the same culture and religion strengthens the religious identity which makes the feeling of discrimination and rejection less affecting due to an increased self-esteem and confidence (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). In this case, even if the religious identity is not omnipresent in the collective environment, tenants are bringing it to their homes.

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[15] fabric creation based on a particular technique of knots
[16] The House of Allah for Muslims, the stone building in the heart of Mecca

Religious identity can be a part of cultural identity. When I asked Ismail what kind of things, he had that reminded him of Morocco, he mentioned both furniture and objects, even though the objects were not traditional Moroccan objects but just representations of Islamic religious symbols and scripts, whereas the furniture style (wood and fabric) are of Moroccan origin. The organisation and choice of decorative objects in homes is perceived as a reflection of cultural values (Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen, 2012). In fact, the correlation between culture and religious identity also encompasses a spatial and architectural aspect to it like when Ismail talked about how his wife does not feel comfortable with an open kitchen whenever they receive guests. The privacy of women in the presence of male guests is a widespread cultural aspect of the Arab household (Al-Thahab et al., 2014) and it is not solely related to Islam but also present in multiple cultures like the Amazigh traditions of north Africa. For Rea, the spatial translation of her Islamic identity was her discomfort of having to bring her dirty scooter from the outside to inside her bedroom, a space that is supposedly adequate for praying and should be maintained as clean as possible. And for Birgül it was translated in wishing for a separate room for the kitchen because of the smell deriving from cooking and how inappropriate it is to have it spread all over the flat. On a similar note, the spatio-cultural aspect of tenants from migrant backgrounds, as in the case of Amer and his Muslim Spanish family, is perceived when the kids do not leave their parents' flats until they are married, no matter how old they are. With the interviewees, ages of children still living with their parents ranged from 18 to 32. This practice can be due to economic reasons but in many cases, it is due to cultural and religious reasons, like the feeling of strong family bonds, family care provision for each other or the prohibition of premarital sexual intercourse, where children are only allowed to reside with their partners after marriage. In this case, the assigned flats for parents with more than one kid were, in multiple occasions, with a number of rooms less than the number of kids. My assumption is that the room number is a reflection of predictions that the older kids are moving out soon so that there will be a spare room to be taken by the younger kid who shared a room with their sibling. But that is not necessarily the case in the example of non-European families.

On a similar note, three of the interviewees from migrant backgrounds talked about the living room as a space to host guests. From what we saw in Birgül's and Ismail's living rooms, they both chose sofas that host at least 6 people as well as Houda talking about using a bedroom as a second living room space with Moroccan style chairs and tables. Religious celebrations and cultural events mostly happen inside homes. Even though traditionally the whole big family would gather at the grandparents' home or the oldest sibling's home, the crowded visits to family members in celebrations are a widespread tradition amongst Arab, North African and Turkish families. This implies that spacious living rooms that can host bigger sofas are important not only spatially but also culturally. These examples show that space plays a role in the enablement of people to express their cultural and religious identity. One could argue that considering this link as it plays an important role in the homemaking process of certain people, will immensely add up to their experience of according meaning to their home.

All the aspects mentioned above are different facets of what we refer to as the *social* in social housing. They overpass the limited perception of affordability as a main goal for this type of housing and bring together the multiscalarity of perceiving the social from different perspectives. The fact that architects and policy makers do not take into consideration these perceptions and practices and how diverse and enriching these individual and collective testimonies are, can make their work end up like a modernist *machine for living* (Le Corbusier, 2014).

VII.1. Concluding thoughts

In order to empower those who do not have a voice, this thesis tried to compile different methodologies to understand how architecture influences the shaping of the *social* in social housing and how we can measure architecture's inclusivity towards different vulnerable groups as well as its impact on their home making processes. The research process included a critique of conventional comparative housing research and a proposal towards a more qualitative and interdisciplinary research approach to housing studies. These mixed methodologies included local welfare policy analysis to locally contextualise the housing governance and the rationale behind social housing provision on the city level. This analysis acknowledged the importance of social housing provision in Vienna and recognises its socialist history that was preserved and still is reflected in the social housing provision and prices, but it also sheds light on the recent changes the city of Brussels is trying to introduce in terms of encouraging initiatives and subsidising housing that is aiming for social cohesion and inclusivity.

The introduction of design research as an analytical method helped us understand the relation between housing policies and regulations and their implications in terms of architectural design. The design research method itself branches into two parts. The first is a broad understanding of the architectural proposals of the chosen case studies in order to comprehend what the architects perceived while drawing the plans and conceiving the flats, and the spatial and cultural reasoning behind their decisions. It showcased how in both case studies most of the architectural proposals reflect certain practices of everyday life that were subsequently compared to the actual use of the space by the tenants. The second part included a visual representation of how the spaces are being utilised and whether or not they are following what the architects perceived in terms of space usage. This part also focused on furniture layout, division of space, everyday life practices and objects as tools to interpret the dynamic within the domestic sphere. It eventually showed that in multiple cases the proposals by the architects and housing providers were not conforming with the diverse needs and backgrounds of the tenants.

In order to better understand this spatial dichotomy between the perceived and the lived, comes the part of the tenants' feedback and *homing* stories. This part unveiled the diverse perceptions of homes amongst the tenants, which gives a spoken addition to the previous unspoken (Lewis et al., 2018) findings. *Homing* is a long process; it goes by the multiple stages and is different from one person to another. Affordability, community, safety, diversity, and social identity were proven to play a crucial role in the *homing* process. Subsequently, these aspects are part of a broader notion of the *social*, and therefore should be taken into account while creating social housing.

I argue that cities and architects need to give more credit to the opinion of the users when conceiving their work. Even though participation is an occurring concept in city planning, the practices reliant on it as a fundamental part of decision making are not yet prominent. However, the introduction of homemaking studies as a source of broadening the prospects of the socio-cultural reasoning behind the conception of housing is in itself a step forward in housing studies. It is true that studying homes is like studying individual lives, and designing publicly owned housing according to individual interests is utopic thinking. Nonetheless, I argue that the introduction of some practices can shape the way towards creating inclusive housing. For example, providing a range of flexibility in creating

or changing one's home layout should be introduced in the building policies of social housing. The opportunity to add interior separations or to propose different space divisions inside the flats provide tenants with the possibility to translate their social identities into a spatial outcome.

We saw in both the literature review and the findings of this thesis that the relationship between body and space is of a specific importance when it comes to tenants with reduced mobility, and that even though Pilkey (2015) argues that everyday practices are intertwined with the decorative practices of one's home, I would argue that in addition to the decorative parts comes the importance of the space functionality and to what extent it can hinder or postpone the feeling of home for people who suffer health issues or disabilities. In the case of women and single mothers, the emphasis on communal spaces and enhancing social activities, neighbour relations, and safety withing the open spaces were of extreme importance. If a single mother that had to share one room with her daughter could have had the chance to make interior separations and changes in the flat, she would have thought to stay longer in her home rather than planning to move out, one more time, once her daughter gets a few years older. The failure of flats in replying to details, that might seem unimportant but actually are of a great influence on people's homing process, creates a feeling of uncertainty and temporality which results in a constant feeling of instability that can hinder the community life and the organic evolutions of relationships with the neighbours.

Shedding light on these revelations and how individual experiences vary on large scales between tenants and their homing experiences makes it difficult to generalise the categorisations of cities in terms of (social)housing discrimination against lower income groups. Even though scholars like Arbaci (2007) draw the attention towards the topic of segregation especially against ethnic minorities as a subgroup of low income tenants, I find it difficult to determine the positionality of cities and generalise their housing segregation practice without looking at more tangible aspects related to housing. This means that this research, even though proposing alternative assessment methodologies, is not aiming to derive a firm categorization that showcases one case as better than the other, but instead proposes bottom-up perspectives and a call for more qualitative and interdisciplinary approaches to housing studies as well as home research.

Studying the design implications of the projects, interviewing the architects and experts, and subsequently interviewing the tenants widened my perspective of perceiving how space can considerably influence the making of a place. The approach that this thesis followed, from policy analysis to design analysis to actually speaking to tenants and visiting their homes, reflected how imperative it is for housing research studies, especially comparative housing studies to open to more interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies. It also elucidates the role of design research, observations and interviewing in housing studies to work towards interdisciplinary pathways (Ozer & Jacoby, 2022) that aim for justice and inclusivity.

Inclusivity in social housing projects does not only denote designing inclusive housing, even though this argument is of great magnitude in my thesis, but also inclusivity in the design phase itself. Housing should be studied by architects, hand in hand with sociologists and non-experts of a certain relation to the project like future tenants, or residents of neighbouring housings. The bringing together of different stakeholders will help create the previously discussed familiarity (Chapter I) with the project, to contribute to a fair homemaking process for the marginalised and under researched, the vulnerable groups that are the protagonists of this thesis.

VII.2. Research limitations

In order for the space to become a place (Lewis et al., 2018) time is needed. Malina was the only interviewee that I talked to in summer and later in winter, she expressed that after a few months living in her flat, she started to feel at home. The challenging part with the case studies is the fact that the tenants moved in recently. The reason behind choosing newly build units was to assess the latest design regulations and architectural features present in social housing provision in both Vienna and Brussels. This choice was both valuable and challenging for the research. On one hand, one might argue that the tenants did not have enough time to make a habit of their everyday practices at the new home. This makes their perception of home influenced by the fresh memory of their previous homes. For instance, many interviewees kept comparing the new flat to their old ones in terms of space, neighbourhood, price, furniture et cetera. On the other hand, the recent moving of the tenants gives a certain objectivity to the research especially on the technical part with them speaking about physical deficiencies of the building. All in all, the fact that they moved into a new housing and being its first residents helped the research with the question of how the architectural design impacts the home making processes of these tenants.

On other occasions, tenants refused to do the interviews but when they saw me multiple times waiting in front of the building, they developed an empathy towards me which led them to start some conversations. In most situations where I faced rejection at first, people eventually accepted to speak to me and even if at first, they were short with their answers, towards the end of the interviews the conversations developed into longer discussions. I believe that the time restriction is a big limitation to my empirical research because studying homes is a research that feeds on mutual trust (Pink et al., 2017) and simultaneously creates it. In both cases time is a crucial factor. In fact, asking the tenants to take me to their home to observe and take some pictures is very challenging without this mutual trust. The photos that were taken were mostly taken by phone. Even though I have always taken my camera in my backpack when visiting the flats, I did not have the courage to photograph with it because the phone gives a less intimidating feeling and therefore it was my main photographing tool for the interior of the flats. This constant thinking of ethics and positionality drove me to take less pictures than intended in order not to make the interviewees feel uncomfortable in their own homes. Ethnographic work and excessive observations are indeed involving the researcher's emotions and senses (Blunt & Dowling, 2022) which can sometimes be hindering when it comes to time or communication constraints that create challenges to conduct the fieldwork necessary for nuanced research.

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Appendix 1. : Interview guide for the tenants[17]

Date et heure:

Consentement à l'enregistrement :

Nom/Âge/Sexe/Profession :

Nationalité(s) :

Combien y a-t-il de pièces dans l'appartement ?

Combien de personnes vivent dans l'appartement ?

Depuis combien de temps vivez-vous ici?

Depuis combien d'années étiez-vous sur la liste d'attente ?

Est-ce le premier logement social que vous fréquentez ?

1. Comment décririez-vous l'appartement ? Grand petit ?

2. Qu'est-ce qui est différent de la maison que vous imaginez parfaite pour vous ?

   Qu'est-ce qui est différent de chez vous là ou vous avez grandi ?

3. Qu'aimez-vous dans ce bâtiment ? Y a-t-il quelque chose que vous n'aimez pas ?

4. Que pensez-vous de l'espace ouvert, des espaces communs et des couloirs ?

5. Y a-t-il suffisamment de lumière dans l'appartement ? Comment est le chauffage et la climatisation ?

6. Y a-t-il quelque chose auquel vous souhaiteriez qu'on en eût pensé ?

7. Y a-t-il des choses qui ont changé depuis votre arrivage ? Que pensez-vous de ce changement ?

8. Avez-vous changé des choses à l'intérieur de votre appartement ?

Quel genre d'objets utilisez-vous pour vous sentir comme chez vous ? (Depuis le pays d'origine ou similaire)

9. Pensez-vous qu'il y a une diversité de cultures dans le bâtiment ?

10. Quelle est votre relation avec les voisins ?

11. Quel genre d'activités faites-vous avec vos voisins ?

12. Où faites-vous ces activités et à quelle fréquence ?

13. Comment décririez-vous votre relation avec vos voisins ?

14. Vous sentez-vous en sécurité dans ce quartier ?

15. Y a-t-il quelque chose que je n'ai pas mentionné et dont vous aimeriez parler ?

- Y a-t-il quelqu'un à qui tu me conseilles de parler ? Pensez-vous que les jeunes locataires auront des perspectives différentes ?

- Puis-je avoir votre contact pour d'autres questions ?

- Cité ou anonyme ?

- Heure de fin

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[17] Translations to German, English and Turkish are available and can be provided on demand shouyeme@gmail.com

[Concevoir le social, l'impact de la conception architecturale sur l'intégration des immigrés dans le logement social]

Consentement à participer à la recherche
• Je……………………………………… accepte volontairement de participer à cette étude de recherche.
• Je comprends que même si j'accepte de participer maintenant, je peux me retirer à tout moment ou refuser de répondre à toute question sans aucune conséquence d'aucune sorte.
• Je comprends que je peux retirer l'autorisation d'utiliser les données de mon entretien dans les deux semaines suivant l'entretien, auquel cas le matériel sera supprimé.
• Je comprends que je ne bénéficierai pas directement de ma participation à cette recherche.
• J'accepte que mon entretien soit enregistré sur bande audio.
• Je comprends que toutes les informations que je fournis pour cette étude seront traitées de manière confidentielle.
• Je comprends que dans tout rapport sur les résultats de cette recherche, mon identité restera anonyme.
• Cela se fera en changeant mon nom et en masquant tous les détails de mon entretien qui pourraient révéler mon identité ou l'identité des personnes dont je parle.
• Je comprends que des extraits déguisés de mon entretien peuvent être cités dans la thèse/présentation, les articles publiés, etc.
• Je comprends que si j'informe le chercheur que moi-même ou quelqu'un d'autre est en danger, il devra peut-être le signaler aux autorités compétentes - il en discutera d'abord avec moi mais pourra être tenu de le signaler avec ou sans ma permission.
• Je comprends qu'une transcription de mon entretien dans laquelle toutes les informations d'identification ont été supprimées sera conservée pendant deux ans
• Je comprends qu'en vertu de la légalisation de la liberté d'information, j'ai le droit d'accéder aux informations que j'ai fournies à tout moment tant qu'elles sont stockées comme spécifié ci-dessus.
• Je comprends que je suis libre de contacter toute personne impliquée dans la recherche pour obtenir des éclaircissements et des informations supplémentaires.

Chercheur : Houyem Snene - Étudiant en master - Université de Vienne - shouyeme@gmail.com

Superviseur : Walter Matznetter – walter.matznetter@univie.ac.at
--- --------- -------
Signature du participant Date

Je crois que le participant donne son consentement éclairé pour participer à cette étude
--- -------- --------------

[Designing the social, the impact of architectural design on immigrants' integration in social housing]

Consent to take part in research

• I………………………………………… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

• I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

• I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

• I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

• I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

• I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

• I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

• This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

• I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis/ presentation, published papers etc.

• I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

• I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years

• I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

• I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Reasearcher: Houyem Snene - Master student - University Of Vienna – shouyeme@gmail.com
Supervisor: *Walter Matznetter – walter.matznetter@univie.ac.at*
-- ----------------
Signature of participant Date
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study
-- ----------------------
Signature of researcher Date

Nom Age

Profession

QUESTIONS GÉNÉRALES

Depuis combien d'années travaillez-vous pour LEDROIT PIERRET POLET?

Que pensez-vous de la situation du logement social dans la ville de Brusseles ?

En quoi le nouveau logement social est-il différent des anciens ?

La cohésion sociale a joué un rôle important dans les objectifs de la SLRB, dans quelle mesure pensez-vous qu'elle est prise en compte ?

Quelle est la situation du droit des immigrés au logement social ?

Pensez-vous que la ville de Brusseles accorde de l'importance à la situation des personnes vulnerable (migrants, mere celibataire, personne a mobilite reduite, LGBTQ) en termes d'accès au logement social ?

Quelles sont les conditions prioritaires pour les listes d'attente ?

QUESTIONS SUR LE PROJET

Quel était concept architectural du projet Candries ?

Sur quelle partie avez-vous travaillé ?

Qu'est-ce qui a fait que le projet a remporté la premiere place ?

Pouvez-vous expliquer comment vous avez choisi d'orienter et de répartir les différents types d'appartements ? (quel type d'appartements à quels étages, était-ce un mode de mixité sociale entre appartements individuels et appartements multiples etc. ?)

Quelle est la partie dont vous êtes la plus fière dans le projet ?

Quelle est la partie dont vous êtes le moins fier dans le projet ?

Comment avez-vous prévu les espaces communs?

Existe-t-il un processus de rétroaction que la ville attribue pour s'occuper de la satisfaction des locataires ?

Les locataires semblent satisfait de l'isolation thermique du batiment, quel systeme avez-vous utiliser pour chauffer le logement?

Y a-t-il un détail que vous trouvez important et que je n'ai pas mentionné dans mes questions ?

QUESTIONS SPÉCIFIQUES

- Est-il possible d'avoir accès à un document avec les plans d'étage et la répartition des appartements dans le projet ?

- Préférez-vous être cité ou anonyme dans la thèse de recherche ?

MERCI!

Name /Age

Profession

How many years have you been working for Querkraft?

What do you think of the social housing situation in the city of Vienna?

How is the new social housing different from the old ones?

Social cohesion has been taking an important role in the UNICE social housing guideline, how much do you think it is being taken into consideration?

What is the situation of immigrant's right to social housing?

Do you think the city of Vienna gives importance to the migrants' situation in terms of accessing social housing?

What are the prioritized conditions for the waiting lists?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT

What was the main concept of the Handelskai 214 project?

What part have you worked on?

What made the project win the competition?

Can you explain how you chose to orient and destribute the different types of flats? (what type of flats on which floors, was it a method of social mix between single flats and multiple flats etc.?)

What is the part that you are most proud about in the project?

What is the part you are the least proud about in the project?

Is there a feedback process that the city assigns for looking after the tenant satisfaction?

I spoke with the landscape designer of the project and she explained the importance of the green space and open space of the project. Do you want to explain more how you decided to accommodate this open space that is accessible for everyone ?

How did you plan the common areas on the ground (1st) floor, was it a proposal by the architects or by the city of Vienna?

Is there a detail that you find important and I did not mention in my questions ?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- Is there possibiliy to have access to a document with floor plans and the distribution of flats in the project?

- I tried to reach out for WEGEBA but I couldn't reach them, Is there someone you recommend me to talk to to have more information about the new social housing in Vienna ?

- Do you prefer to be Quoted or anonymous in the research thesis?

Appendix 4. Interview guide for the project manager working at WIGEBA - Vienna

Name/Age

Profession

GENERAL QUESTIONS

For how long have you been working in WIGEBA and can you describe your profession?

What is the difference between Gesiba and Wigeba?

How was the decision to build social housing on the plot of Handelskai 214 made? Who is responsible for this decision the city of Vienna or Gesiba/Wigeba?

What are the most important focus points of the new social housing in Vienna? Is it energy consumption, green space, social cohesion, affordability or inclusivity, etc. ?)

Do you have a document of statistics about the social housing tenants in vienna ? (typology by number like: single men, single mothers, disabled people, family with children etc.)

What are the new social housing standards (building codes)? Is there an accessible document I can look at for these standards?

What is the situation of immigrant's right to social housing?

Do you think the city of Vienna gives importance to the migrants' situation in terms of accessing social housing?

What are the prioritized/emergency conditions for the waiting lists?

-Is there a responsible person that checks the satisfaction of tenants?

 - Example: What are the square meters standards, the open space, playgrounds, communal space, balconies etc.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Who decides the results of the competition, and what were the factors that made this project by querkraft Architects win?

What was the selection process? Who works with the architects after they win the competition?

-How free are the architects when it comes to designing social housing? Is the amount of freedom What kind of heating is used in Handelskai? is it district heating?

Do you know in advance who will live in the social housing? (Number of tenants, age, gender, social/cultural/ethnic backgrounds, family members etc.)

What is the part that you are most proud about in the project?

What is the part you are the least proud about in the project?

Was the bridge that relates to the Donau existing before the social housing project?

-Do you consider incorporating participatory processes when it comes to futre projects ?

Is there a detail that you find important and I did not mention in my questions ?

 - Do you prefer to be Quoted or anonymous in the research thesis?

THANK YOU!

Appendix 5. Visualisation of the distribution of code frequencies in each interview with the tenants
(Generated by MAXQDA, a coding software used for this thesis)

Code System	Alain -…	Ismail …	Amina…	Houda…	Amer -…	Layla -…	Malina…	Maria …	Birgul …	Rea - …	Malina…	SUM
Expert flexibility												0
Square meters	1	2	2			1		1	1	1	1	10
Personal things										3		3
Responsibles	1	1							1	5		8
Se sentir chez soi					1					2		3
Temperature/Insulation	1	1	1	2	1	1	1			10		18
Safety	1	1	2	1	1	1		1		8	3	19
Affordability			3	6		2	1	2	1	3		18
Open space	3	2	1	1		1		2	2	3	2	17
Number of rooms	1	2		1		3			3	2		12
Entrance hall				1					2			3
View									1			1
One bedroom flat								1			1	2
Diversity	1	1	1	1		1		1	2		1	9
Kitchen	1	1			1	2	3	6	5	1		20
Neighbors	2	3	2		2	4	1	1	3	3	4	25
Overall Satisfaction	4	1	4	3	2	1		7	4	7	1	34
Deficinecies								2	1	5		8
New/not new in Social housing	2	2	2	1		1		1	1	1	2	13
Objects related to homes		1					2			3		6
Flexibility		1		1	1	1	1	1		1	1	8
Accessibility		1		3	2	1				7	1	15
Natural light	1	1		1				3			2	8
Furniture		2	1	1	1	1	1	2	4			13
Communal space		1				2	1	3	2	1	2	12
Noise										4	2	6
More than one bedroom flat	1	1	3	1	1				2			9
∑ SUM	20	25	22	22	15	25	12	32	34	70	23	300