

**Keywords** alternative housing initiatives, Brussels, third sector, network, mapping

**Abstract** In recent years, a great number of alternative housing initiatives (AHIs) have emerged in Brussels as a response to the lack of affordable and qualitative housing. While many are explicitly recognized by and in close partnership with a governmental entity or have emerged within grass-roots housing activism, others fall somewhere in between. Such in-between initiatives are marked by their reliance on the non-profit sector and by their linkages to both public and private actors. Despite the vast emergence of such initiatives in Brussels, little focus has been given to how these more hybrid shapes of housing provision and their actors link with each other and are impacted by the landscape in which they are embedded. By adopting an exploratory take based on the development of a series of maps serving as a tool of critical enquiry along with semi-structured interviews with housing professionals, this contribution attempts to unravel third sector-driven AHIs as a network within the overall housing landscape. Findings uncover the structure of the network surrounding such initiatives, its primary components as well as some underlying themes that depict the hybrid, in-between nature of these initiatives.

**Résumé** Au cours des dernières années, un grand nombre d'initiatives d'habitat alternatif ont vu le jour à Bruxelles en réponse à un manque criant de logements abordables et de qualité. Beaucoup de ces initiatives sont le fruit d'un partenariat étroit avec une entité gouvernementale ou ont émergé de pratiques activistes en matière de logement. D'autres se situent toutefois à l'intersection de l'initiative citoyenne et de l'action publique. Ces dernières se caractérisent par leur dépendance à l'égard de la sphère associative et par leurs liens avec des acteurs publics et privés. Malgré la multiplication de telles initiatives, peu d'attention a été accordée à la manière dont ces formes plus hybrides de production de logement et leurs acteurs sont liés les uns avec les autres. Cette contribution adopte une approche exploratoire basée sur une série de cartes utilisées comme outils d'enquête critique et sur des entretiens semi-structurés avec des professionnels du logement. L'analyse porte sur le rôle des initiatives d'habitat alternatif produites par le secteur tertiaire en tant que réseau au sein du paysage global du logement bruxellois. Les résultats révèlent la structure du réseau entourant ces initiatives, ses principales composantes ainsi que certains thèmes saillants qui mettent en évidence le caractère hybride de ces initiatives.

# Conceptualizing Third Sector-Driven Alternative Housing Initiatives: Insights from the Brussels In-Between Housing Landscape

## Introduction

In recent years, a considerable number of alternative housing initiatives (hereafter AHIs), which are accessible to disadvantaged individuals, have emerged in Brussels and become a subject of interest in governmental and practitioners' reports (perspective.brussels, 2022; Habitat et Participation, 2007) as well as in academic housing literature (Bernard, 2018; 2019; Verstraete and De Decker, 2017). We frame such initiatives as 'alternative' in both a normative and legal way. They are normatively alternative to traditional housing policy initiatives that provide the right to housing, such as public housing and homeownership support; and they are legally alternative insofar as they were not included in early versions of the Brussels housing code (Brussels Capital Region, 2003).

Some AHIs, such as the Community Land Trust Brussels, are considerably marked by and in close partnership and co-development with a governmental entity (Aernouts and Ryckewaert, 2015), while others, like squatting, are strongly characterized by their link to bottom-up or grass-roots groups and activities (Dawance, 2008). Nonetheless, many cases occupy a more 'in-between' position, neither fully co-developed, nor purely bottom-up. In this article, we focus particularly on the latter. They are a response to the ongoing housing crisis,

emerging from multiple-actor partnerships guided by the non-profit sector and opting for a collective living arrangement.

Such cases have also been observed internationally, most notably in the UK and the Netherlands (Czischke, 2018). These "more hybrid shapes of provision have emerged in the recent decades in which housing is delivered through cooperation between different types of actors...as well as an increasing mix of public and private finance" (Van Bortel, Gruis, Nieuwenhuijzen and Pluijmers, 2019; quoted by Van Bortel and Gruis, 2019: 1). In Brussels, such cases are conceptualized as "hybrid" living by the Brussels Capital Region's multidisciplinary centre of regional development expertise, which goes by the name perspective.brussels (perspective.brussels, 2022: 19). They have also been recently recorded in the Brussels Housing Code, reports and/or inventories under various names, including solidarity, modular, intergenerational and transit/temporary housing forms (Habitat Groupé Solidaire, s.a.; perspective.brussels, 2022). Several of these forms fall within international typologies of collaborative housing, an umbrella term for collective housing types (Czischke, 2018). For instance, intergenerational housing, a form of living with at least two units, "one of which is occupied by a person over the age of sixty-five," which "provide[s] mutual services" (Brussels

Capital Region, 2013, Art. 2), has been discussed in relation to the Belgian, French, German (Labit and Dubost, 2016) and Dutch (Arentshorst *et al.*, 2019) contexts. Modular housing, which refers to dwelling boxes either in empty buildings or on empty land, has been encountered in Brussels (De Smet, 2022) but also in the UK (Ehwi *et al.*, 2023). In Brussels, transit/temporary housing is seen as collective housing for “specific target groups”, allowing inhabitation “for a maximum fixed duration” (Brussels Capital Region, 2013, Art. 2) or under legalized short-term occupation projects (Bernard, 2017). In the Netherlands, such housing is mentioned in analyses of refugee collective-housing projects (Kim and Smets, 2020; Seethaler-Wari, 2021), and in Switzerland in ephemeral shared-housing projects (Debrunner and Gerber, 2021). Having said that, it is important to note that some forms within the scope of this article fall solely within typologies that have been framed only in a very localized manner (i.e. in Brussels), such as solidarity housing, a collective form of living that includes at least one person in a state of financial precariousness (Brussels Capital Region, 2013, Art. 2).

Despite strong interest in Brussels, third sector-driven AHIs have only been partially considered within policy and academic research. While several academic and policy studies have provided substantial knowledge on specific housing projects (Lenel *et al.*, 2020; perspective.brussels, 2022), they have seldom been studied in relation to the broader landscape of third sector-driven AHIs. To this end, this article aims to shift the focus and unravel third sector-driven AHIs as a system within the overall housing landscape. By developing and interpreting findings in four exploratory maps that build on “map-making as propositions” (Awan, 2017: 120), e.g. a tool of critical enquiry which “emphasises relations over discrete objects” (*ibid.*: 5), we will shed light on and identify the key structures, collaborations, strategies, and internal nuances within third sector-driven AHIs.

### **Intersecting the Non-Profit Sector with the Emergence of AHIs in Brussels**

Overall, the Brussels Capital Region constitutes a very complex area within the Belgian state. This is because of its significance and the multiple roles that it holds: being the nation’s capital, located within the Flemish territory but with historically a French-speaking and currently very international population, having policy-planning capacities (Malherbe *et al.*, 2019) and its own housing code (Verstraete and De Decker, 2017). Despite this magnitude and prominence, the region has the greatest share of inhabitants at risk of poverty among the Belgian regions (Aernouts and Ryckewaert, 2018) and a substantial number of non-profit organizations (Deleu *et al.*, 2022).

According to Malherbe *et al.*, the emergence of the Brussels non-profit sector can be attributed largely to the Belgian state’s approach to engage “in a process of decentralising territorial solidarity mechanisms based on the principle of subsidiarity” (Malherbe *et al.*, 2019: 4). It is also attributed to Brussels social movements, which “generated a significant number of associative actors” (*ibid.*), as over time they have been tackling urban issues by entering the void created by the withdrawal of the welfare state (Moriau, 2017; quoted by Malherbe *et al.*, 2019).

In the case of housing organizations in particular, the high number of non-profit actors follows the latter trend. With regionalization in 1989, the Brussels Capital Region’s urban policies focused on keeping the middle class in the city, while housing policies centred around the poor condition of the social housing stock and its dire need for renovation (Aernouts *et al.*, 2020). This led to a stagnation of social housing production and generated, as Aernouts and Ryckewaert describe, the “do-it-ourselves attitudes” (Aernouts and Ryckewaert, 2015; 2018: 6) of activists and associations. This resulted in the emergence of new housing initiatives that built on the legacy of housing innovations that had occurred in the 1970s and the 1980s.

In the current wave of AHIs, the presence of the non-profit sector in the

housing domain is not merely linked to ‘core’ housing organizations derived from social movements but also to other types of organizations. The current actors involved also include citizens’ initiatives, migrant organizations, spiritual and cultural associations (Vestraete and De Decker, 2017; Deleu, 2022). Furthermore, many AHIs targeting senior citizens are developed by the non-profit sector together with public social services centres (CPAS), social housing companies and municipalities (Lenel *et al.*, 2020).

All in all, the non-profit sector’s configuration in the current state of housing provision in Brussels remains relatively perplexing. Housing researchers worldwide have paid scant attention to how this mixed economy of welfare impacts housing organizations and housing provision (Mullins *et al.*, 2012).

### **Capturing Third Sector-Driven AHIs as a System**

In an attempt to untangle such a complex configuration, and inspired by Nishat Awan’s concept of “maps as propositions”, in which “it is the process of map-making itself that generates new knowledge” (Awan, 2017: 120), we created several maps. They intend to serve as an analytical tool for grasping alternative housing forms in relation to the overall landscape but also to each other, since map-making as an act has the “purpose of making relations, to somehow connect things, places and people in order to reveal organisational structures or the way in which a certain space or project is working” (*ibid.*). The created maps refer to and critically expand former initiatives in the field of housing studies, such as the framework of multistakeholder collaboration in housing co-production (Czischke, 2018) and the graphical summary of the organizational structure (Sansen and Ryckewaert, 2021).

Information was gathered primarily through desk research of data and reports by the organizations, publicly available reports and a literature review on AHIs. Notably, two inventories (perspective.brussels, 2022; Habitat Group Solidaire, s.a.) significantly contributed to the identification of the housing projects included in the maps. Based on recurrent qualities and characteristics

mentioned in these articles and reports, the final criteria for housing projects were as follows: (1) primarily initiated and managed by a third-sector entity; (2) initiated in the current wave of AHIs (we take as a milestone the 2007 financial crisis); (3) a certain level of collective living; (4) affordable for disadvantaged individuals; and (5) located in the Brussels Capital Region. Overall, it is important to note that the maps are rather representative of a series of initiatives each of which is perceived as a home rather than just an accommodation facility. The projects were selected through a snowball sampling technique over a determined period. While these maps may not be fully exhaustive due to the magnitude of the non-profit sector and their alternative housing projects in Brussels, we believe that the emergence of additional information would not alter but rather complement our insights.

As a second step in the map-making, nine semi-structured interviews with housing professionals or initiators of nine AHIs were conducted to provide insights into the motivations behind the identified patterns. The interviewees were selected based on the varied positions their projects occupy in the actor maps which are presented in the next section.<sup>1</sup>

### **Untangling the System Actors and Organizational Structure**

The actor maps (Figs. 1a–c) show AHIs (numbers) and the non-profit actors (polygons) that offer development and daily management support for them. In the first phase, we traced the projects’ central vision, the audience involved, and the organizations’

**1** Four exploratory interviews were conducted in October 2022 with representatives of third sector-driven AHIs located in: the shelter cluster (Interview 1), the recovering-from-crises cluster (Interview 2), the multifunctional cluster (Interview 3), the care cluster (Interview 4), the intersection of the shelter and multifunctional clusters (Interview 5). Four interviews discussing the findings of the mappings were then conducted in July 2023 with representatives of third sector-driven AHIs located in: the multifunctional and care clusters (Interviews 6, 9), the recovering-from-crises and multifunctional clusters (Interview 7), the recovering-from-crises and care clusters (Interview 8).

specializations. This led to the determination of four thematic clusters (coloured ellipses) (Fig. 1a). The first cluster, which we label *shelter*, comprises initiatives with a core emphasis on the urgent confrontation of the loss of housing and on the adaptation of inhabitants to a housing environment as a first step to addressing their troubles. Organizations in this cluster work mainly on issues related to homelessness and street outreach.

The second cluster, *recovering from crises*, includes initiatives for people that have faced hardships in their living circumstances. Organizations linked to this cluster's initiatives deal with issues of migration, housing and poverty. The third cluster, *care*, includes initiatives focusing on support needed due to ageing or physical or mental disabilities in a collective home-like environment; organizations involving specialized assistance for such groups or community work are linked to projects in this cluster. The final cluster, *multifunctional*, comprises initiatives and organizations that do not all necessarily address a particular audience. For instance, in the case of Interview 3, it is revealed by the initiator of the project that it does not have a mission "defined by a target group". Initiatives are rather characterized by polyvalent actions (social, spiritual, cultural) to approach a way of living in the city (Fig. 1a).

In a second phase, we traced the relationship of AHIs to actors responsible for their everyday support through either the daily management or the development of the housing project (Fig. 1b).

In a third phase, we mapped the formal tools for realizing AHIs, such as legal agreements or collaborations with semi-public entities (Fig. 1c).

Looking closely, we could untangle various patterns, highlighted by blue-dotted outlines.

### **Cross-Cutting Points**

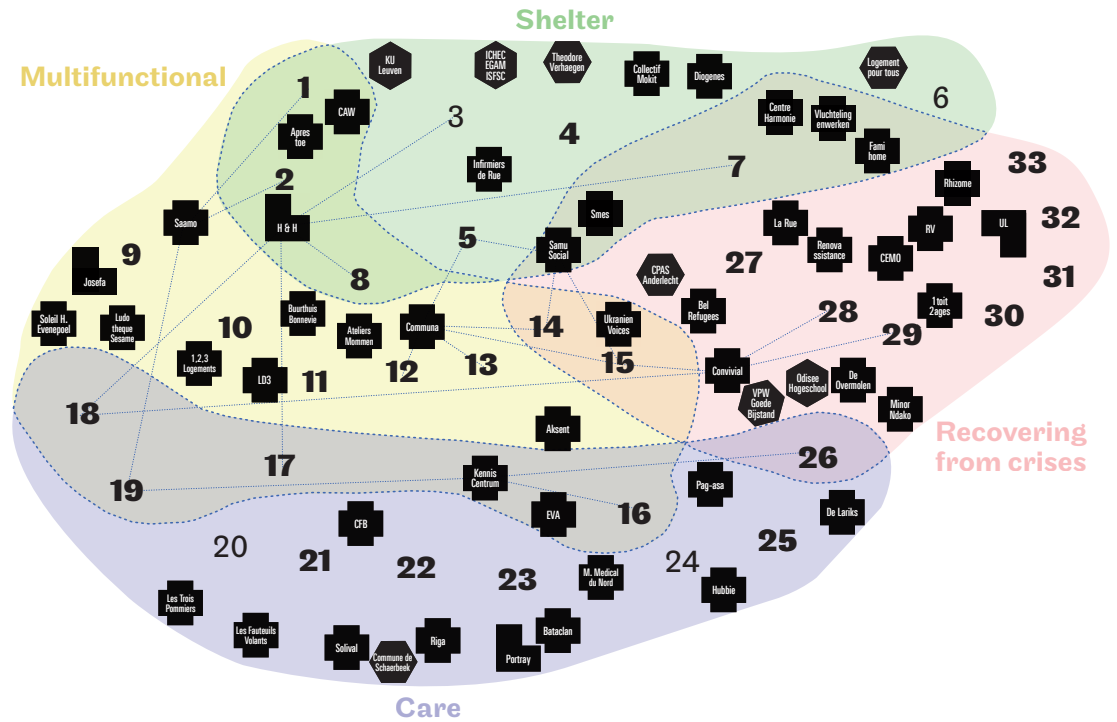
A major pattern that was untangled during the mapping process (Fig. 1a) was that while the majority of the identified housing projects and organizations can be subdivided into four distinct thematic clusters, the clusters still converge at cross-cutting points. Several housing projects can be

classified under two clusters. For instance, a great number of multifunctional housing initiatives also adopt either a care, recovering-from-crises or shelter cluster approach (see the blue-dotted ellipses). Likewise, actors such as Habitat et Humanisme, Saamo or Communa initiate projects from different clusters (see blue-dotted lines). Generally, it seems such actors play a central role in AHIs since they structure and induce overall cohesion by acting as agents for the circulation of information from thematically different clusters. The interviewees seemed to confirm this pattern.

They firstly highlighted that the cross-cutting actors contribute pertinent complementary knowledge that may be missing from the operational practices of another cluster. For instance, a housing project manager of a homelessness organization (Interview 1) explained that his organization's cooperation with an NGO that initiates projects in multiple clusters in the following terms "for the technical and construction aspect...they are property developers with a social vision... so they really have been working thoroughly on [alternative housing projects] and thus they joined to help on developing a modular housing project..." Second, some interviewees confirmed that, through their engagement in various clusters, these cross-cutting actors act as well-known experts when seeking to realize AHIs in general (Interviews 1, 6). As a social professional of an elderly housing project revealed: "We inspired other projects...for example Casa Viva and Habitat Riga came to see us" (Interview 6). Third, it was pointed out that in addition to transferring information, they provide testing grounds for the merger of different thematically oriented cluster approaches, generating knowledge about the possibilities and limitations of engaging multiple target groups and visions (Interviews 7, 8).

### **Entanglements**

By mapping the partnerships for realizing AHIs (Fig. 1b), we described how entanglements occur within each cluster. The entanglements are influenced by the number of organizations in each housing project and their degree of participation in more than



**Single-location Project (Bold #) / Multiple-location Project (Regular #):**  
 1. WoonMobiel, 2. Woonbox, 3. Home Sweet Home, 4. Modulo, 5. Sorocite, 6. Fami-Home, 7. Relais, 8. La Perle, 9. Maison Josefa, 10. Poissonnerie, 11. Ateliers Mommen, 12. Le 70-treize, 13. La Serre, 14. Maxima, 15. Emil, 16. Biloba Huis, 17. Palais, 18. Projet Jolly, 19. Casa Viva, 20. Trois Pommiers, 21. Janganda, 22. Habitat Riga, 23. Maison Genot, 24. Hubbie-a, 25. Hubbie-b, 26. Samenhuizen & Co-kot, 27. Quatre-Vents, 28. Projet Leon, 29. Industrie, 30. Habitat Solidaire, 31. Maison communautaire-a, 32. Maison communautaire-b, 33. Rhizome.

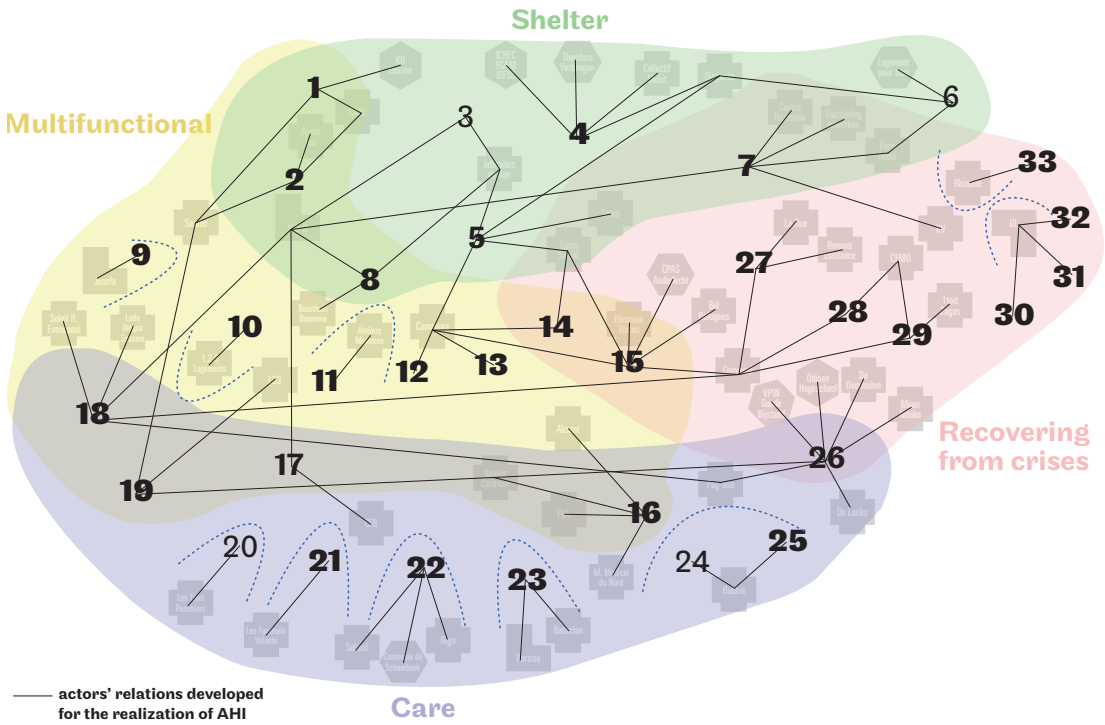
**Actors**



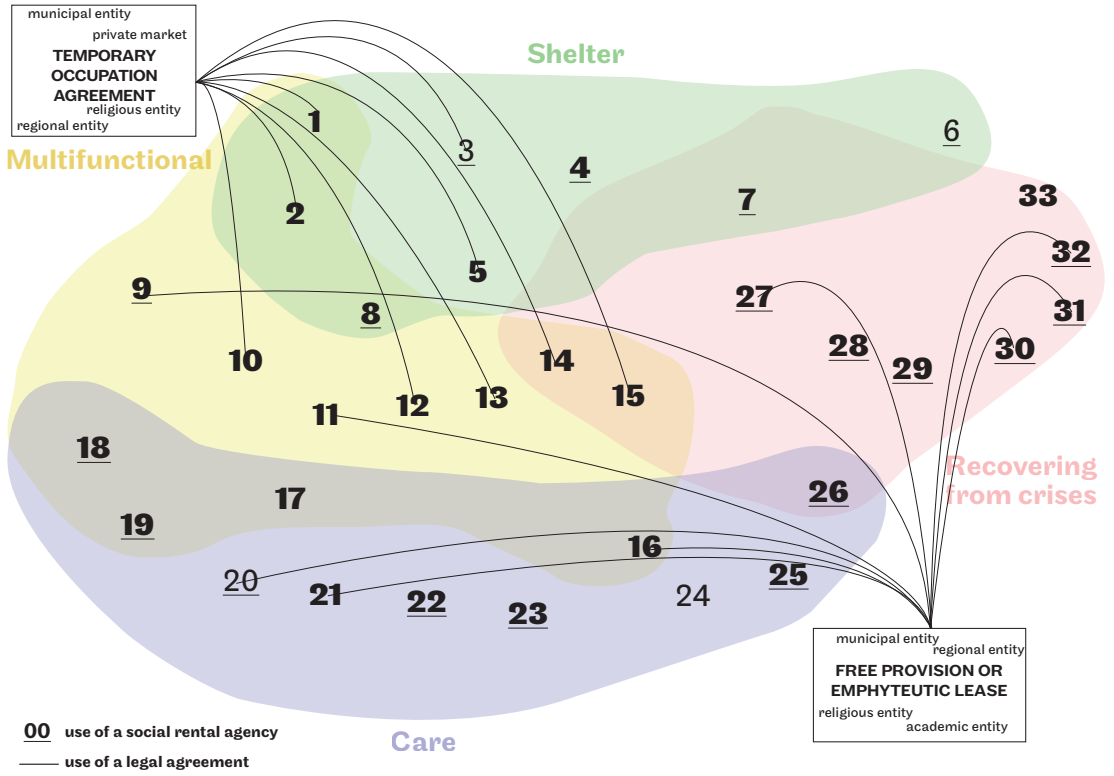
**Thematic cluster**



**Fig. 1a** AHIs and their supportive actors grouped in thematic clusters. © Aikaterini Anastasiou, 2023.



**Fig. 1b** The supportive actors' relations for the realization of AHI. © Aikaterini Anastasiou, 2023.



**Fig. 1c** The formal tools used for AHIs by their supportive non-profit actors.  
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one project. As the mapping suggests, in the majority of the care cluster housing projects, support is provided by no more than two organizations. Furthermore, in most of the cluster's initiatives, organizations are only involved in one or two projects. As such, the care cluster has the lowest level of entanglement, with many projects and their actors being detached from the network (see blue-dotted shapes). The shelter cluster's entanglement is the greatest, as the projects have on average the highest number of actors with the highest participation in more than one project. Overall, certain clusters are marked by the collective action of a multiplicity of actors, while the other clusters are marked by the action of one or a few organizations.

In interviews, several explanations are given for this pattern. Project coordinators and social professionals involved in shelter cluster initiatives (Interviews 1, 5) link the high entanglement of partnerships to the complexity of developing technically advanced and experimental spatial forms (such as modular housing projects). For them, collaboration with different recurrent non-profit actors and, in the latter case of the experimental spatial forms, with an academic institution, was essential in order to deal with the quest for available land and the bureaucracy of obtaining an urban permit. Relatively high entanglement affects the recovering-from-crises and multifunctional clusters, in which AHIs collaborate with various well-known organizations with distinct and identifiable roles. They do this either to address a certain vulnerability in a manifold way (Interviews 7, 6), for instance by focusing on restoring a living environment “not only through housing but by opening up possibilities in many areas, legal, language-communication, etc.” (Interview 7), or by addressing a mix of vulnerabilities or unique needs of people living together in one housing initiative (Interviews 8, 9). In the case of fewer entanglements, such as in the care cluster, AHIs cited autonomy as a primary concern. For instance, in the housing project of a foundation for people with mental disabilities (Interview 4), the director linked the low level of entanglement

to “the goal” for inhabitants “to minimize their dependency”. Therefore, in this case, the institutionalization of social relationships through the cooperation of multiple actors is not pursued. Instead, “each inhabitant is urged [and helped] to develop his own sustainable personal social network” (*ibid.*).

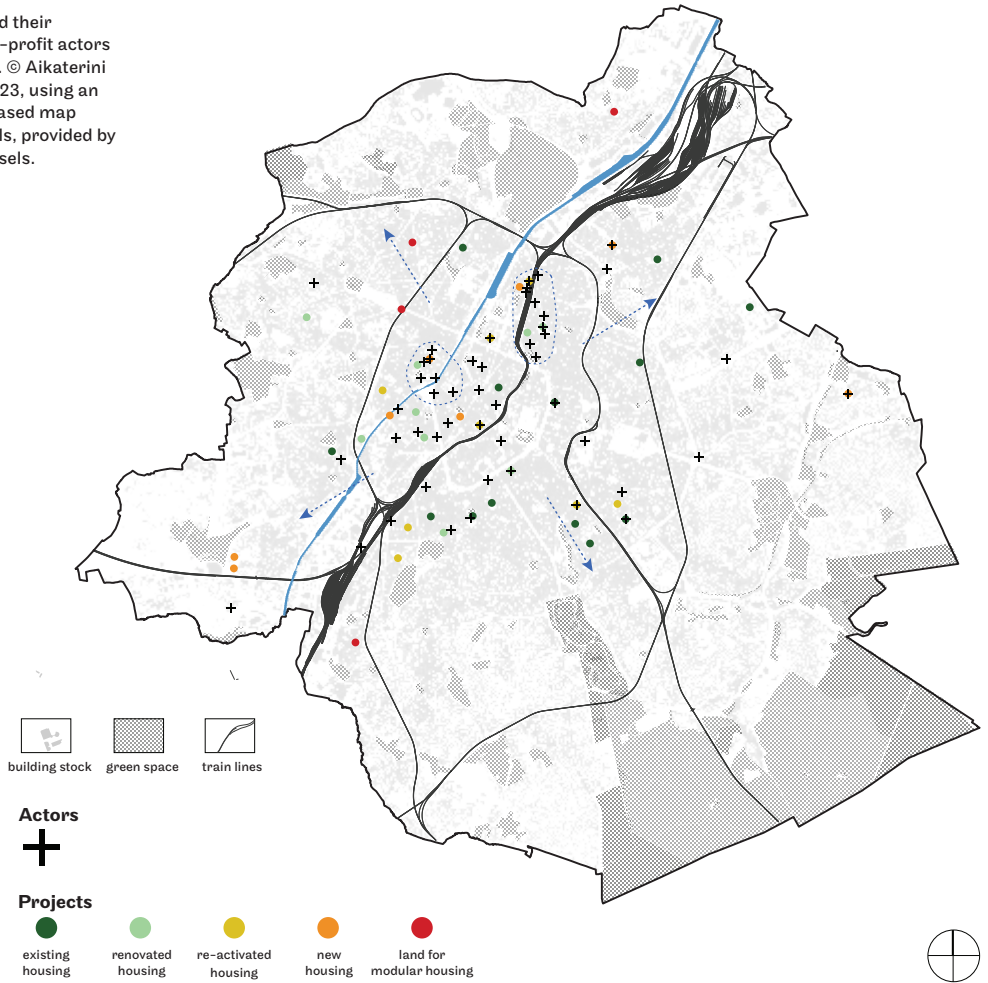
### **Formal Tools**

A third major outcome of the map-making revolved around the widespread use of specific formal tools in third sector-driven AHIs, taking the shape of either legal agreements (temporary-occupation agreement, provision agreement, emphyteutic lease) or collaboration with social rental agencies (**Fig. 1c**). Mapping the formal agreements and recording the groups of entities with whom they are made confirmed existing knowledge on indirect (mainly financial) support from actors such as the regional or municipal authorities (Lenel *et al.*, 2020). At the same time it also uncovered the support of other players such as academic institutions and religious entities that provide available building stock or land.

Moreover, the map-making suggested that the engagement with a social rental agency is extensive among all thematic clusters. Diverse reasons were attributed to this by the interviewees, such as reassuring the actors who provide the building stock or land (Interviews 1, 2, 8), simplifying the rental process for collective and transient projects (Interviews 3, 4) and providing financial bonuses (Interviews 4, 8, 9). The presence of temporary agreements, in contrast, predominantly appears in the shelter and multifunctional cluster. Longer-term agreements are much more present in the recovering-from-crises and care clusters.

In the interviews, it became clear that, on the one hand, the short temporality of temporary occupation agreements is deemed appropriate in matters of urgency and crisis (Interviews 1, 7). For instance, a housing project manager of the shelter cluster explained how for their project the temporary occupation agreement is in harmony with the urgent need and vision to launch the Housing First programme with a modular approach. As he stated, “[W]e

**Fig. 2** AHIs and their supportive non-profit actors in urban space. © Aikaterini Anastasiou, 2023, using an open source-based map layer of Brussels, provided by [datastore.brussels](https://datastore.brussels).



thought we would manage to find housing, but very quickly we realized that it was very complicated [to rent in the existing housing stock]...” (Interview 1) On the other hand, mainly longer-term agreements were chosen, as they allow community and social engagement to develop (Interviews 4, 6).

### **Spatial Embeddedness**

Moving forward, the spatial map (Fig. 2) shows third sector-driven AHIs (dots) in urban space and their supportive non-profit actors’ network (+).<sup>2</sup> Further, we highlighted the projects’ construction type.

### **Distribution and Construction Type**

A significant outcome of this spatial map (Fig. 2) is that in some areas in Brussels, such as those located at the intersection of the municipalities of Molenbeek and Brussels and part of Schaerbeek (the broader area of the Brabant and Nord districts), several mapped housing projects and organizations are in close proximity to one another (see inside the blue-dotted ellipses highlighting the pattern of circles and crosses). In such areas, a blend of different projects and organizations come into contact, whether or not through a partnership. As a result, spatially, these areas provide interaction through physical proximity. More broadly, the map demonstrates a scattered pattern of initiatives and organizations extending from central areas of Brussels to its periphery.

<sup>2</sup> The map is created based on information found on official sites of the organizations involved, existing reports and inventories. For a limited number of projects, for the protection of privacy of vulnerable inhabitants, only a random point in the corresponding municipality is recorded.

In an interview with a project's general coordinator in the Brabant district, this recorded pattern of proximity in this location was attributed to specific district deficiencies which motivated particular actors to operate there and even united them; creating an AHI has been one of the chosen means to tackle the deficiencies. Working together with other local organizations was attributed to the spirit of "becoming aware that we wanted to address the same issues" (Interview 6).

The high number of AHIs scattered across areas, however, is not attributed to neighbourhood motivations but to the availability of land or building opportunities in combination with projects and actors that prioritize a more in-house approach of activities destined mainly for their residents (Interviews 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9). For instance, as explained in Interview 8, a project's installation in an old school building in the Brussels pentagon (the pentagon-shaped city centre) was based on an opportunity: the existing site had available space for the creation of alternative housing for different target groups. The site already provided several functional services, but the project's main location was carefully considered to ensure that its vulnerable residents wouldn't be exposed to the neighbourhood (Interview 8).

Furthermore, this dimension of opportunity becomes even more striking with regards to the morphological housing configuration strategies of AHIs. In the spatial map (Fig. 2), it becomes clear that the housing configurations in the inner city are strikingly different from those in the periphery (see the blue-dotted arrows pointing to the change of housing configuration pattern when moving towards the periphery). More specifically, despite the fact that the use of existing housing or the creation of new housing (through construction or alteration of use) can be observed equally in all areas of Brussels, housing projects in and around the pentagon revolve much more around the use of the existing building stock. Here you can find mainly renovation strategies (light green circles), reactivation of vacant buildings (yellow circles) and use of existing housing (dark green circles). Moving to the periphery

or industrial sites, there is a high presence of projects relying on the creation of new building stock: empty land for modular housing strategies (red circles) and the creation of new housing (orange circles).

In the interviews, these housing configuration strategies are largely linked to access to housing or land (Interviews 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7). For instance, a housing coordinator (Interview 7) mentions how office space was reconverted into housing by seizing the opportunity of empty office spaces in the periphery of Brussels through a temporary occupation agreement. Additionally, the abundance of space was highlighted as pertinent. The coordinator said, "[H]ere we have a lot of space...we have a lot more freedom... here it's a bit of a blank slate" (*ibid.*).

## Conclusions

Considering the substantial but relatively uncharted emergence of third sector-driven AHIs, this article offers an exploratory study to analyse the landscape as a whole. We aimed to identify critical patterns regarding their spatial implementation and embeddedness as well as official partnerships and legal agreements created for their development.

Examining these initiatives by tracing their broader landscape and relationship to it, the article suggests they can be seen as a network. Thematic clusters of housing projects, cross-cutting points acting as knowledge bridges, widely recurrent formal tools such as social rental agencies, and close proximity in specific city areas all constitute *convergence components uniting the initiatives into a web*. Such an assertion is supported additionally when outlining distinct *sub-components*, e.g. *branches* of the network integral to AHIs' operational behaviour. These branches manifest as differentiations in the levels of the actors' entanglements for the purpose of creating AHIs, via the use of legal agreements or housing configuration strategies.

Moving forward, the complexity of AHIs driven by the third sector is identified in the fact that they possess a "diversity...encompassing different motives, institutional logics and behaviour" (Czischke, 2018: 63), as they are neither directly co-developed with

a public entity nor purely grass-roots but lie rather in between. Therefore, it remains difficult to grasp how they are shaped and subscribe to concrete formal or informal housing regimes. In this contribution, by concentrating on four separate maps (Figs. 1a–c, Fig. 2), each of the aforementioned network components was highlighted to identify and grasp the network's elemental composition and how those components contribute to the in-between nature of the AHIs under study. Based on the analysis, we can highlight three themes.

The first relates to the *type of actors* that have been supporting them. Tracing the legal forms they hold through the combined action of mapping and interviewing, we detected, on the one hand, that several actors belong to the formal sphere of institutions (religious and academic institutions and semi-public entities) but also to a more bottom-up world linked to non-profit entities and community work (NGOs, foundations). Although the latter are also linked to institutions, they are mostly initiated by frontline workers and private individuals. Similarly to cases mentioned in the international literature, where a combination of different actors is involved in providing access to resources and opportunities (Raynor and Coenen, 2022; Czischke, 2018), actors in Brussels play varying roles. NGOs, foundations, and academic institutions contribute to the everyday support of the housing initiative, to knowledge exchange and/or to the reconstruction of the surrounding environment. Religious institutions and semi-public entities grant access to material goods or services (land, building stock, and rental process simplification). As such, all the above actors mutually influence the profile and vision of the initiatives, implying therefore 'in-between' operational tactics.

The second theme concerns the *form of interactions and relations* these actors develop with each other. On the one hand, they are relatively formalized given the official partnerships for everyday support or legal agreements for indirect support in material goods. On the other hand, they also revolve around exchanges occurring more informally, in a looser framework such as informal dialogues

to exchange knowledge and sustain housing projects.

The third theme concerns the initiatives' *spatial configuration*. In alignment with the existing literature on Brussels that highlights the scarcity of land (Ananian, 2016) and the pressure and competition over available building stock (Van Crieelingen, 2010), a diverse set of formal agreements, such as temporary occupation agreements, free provision agreements, and emphyteutic leases, are often used to access land or building stock. These agreements highly influence the terms of the adopted morphological configuration strategy of each initiative.

Nonetheless, in those initiatives, the visions prescribed by bottom-up organizations for a specific living programme (per the "Entanglements" section above: mix of unique needs in one housing initiative; fostering autonomy) also play a role. As revealed through interviews, the spatial outcome is also a result of negotiation, of non-profit actors making sense of and exploiting these agreements to identify and utilize sites that present spatial opportunities, qualities and potential for experimentation that enable their alternative visions.

As a final point, given that this contribution revolves around exploratory recording and analysing of third sector-driven AHIs as a system within a limited timeframe, it is essential to note that the field continues to evolve and change, developing or including further (sub)branches. Therefore, this contribution establishes a foundation for grasping them more effectively. For instance, it is important to keep in mind that exceptions deviating from the identified patterns exist, since the findings reflect an average of projects' behaviours. Additionally, the results of untangling divergent chosen logics (e.g. mix of unique needs, fostering autonomy, embeddedness or non-embeddedness in the neighbourhood) and methods (e.g. types of legal agreements, use or non-use of a social rental agency) for alternative housing production raise further questions on how they are internally agreed on and shaped by the actors coming together in support of such projects, as well as on how the prevalence of a logic or method in one AHI could have

an impact on the pursuits of another AHI. Further research, either through detailed mapping and interviews on the integration of projects into the network, or through analysis of day-to-day practices using ethnographic research, could shed further light on the specificities of the network. It could lead to a more global view of the network's behaviour, showing the harmonious or conflicting nature of the processes underlying the network and the way in which these processes materialize in the various projects.

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