

2024

*Executive
Summary*



Inhabiting San Siro

A co-research on the housing conditions and management networks of public housing

C U R A lab
Collective Urban Research & Action

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A co-research on the housing conditions and management networks
of public housing

2024 | *Executive
Summary*

A research promoted by:

CURA Lab - Collaborative Urban Research&Action
Department of Architecture and Urban Studies - Politecnico di Milano
Mapping San Siro

In collaboration with:

OFF CAMPUS - Polisocial
Tenants' Union Sicet Milano
MaudLab - Mapping and Urban Data Lab, DaStu - Politecnico di Milano

Networked with:

Università Milano Bicocca - Dept. of Human Sciences for Education „Riccardo Massa“
Associazione Alfabeti Onlus
Associazione Scomodo
CISL FNP Milano Metropoli
Legal Clinic - Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi
Cooperativa Equa
C.S.I. Centro Sportivo Italiano
Fondazione Soleterre



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DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA
E STUDI URBANI

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Foreword: research operations and methodological challenges

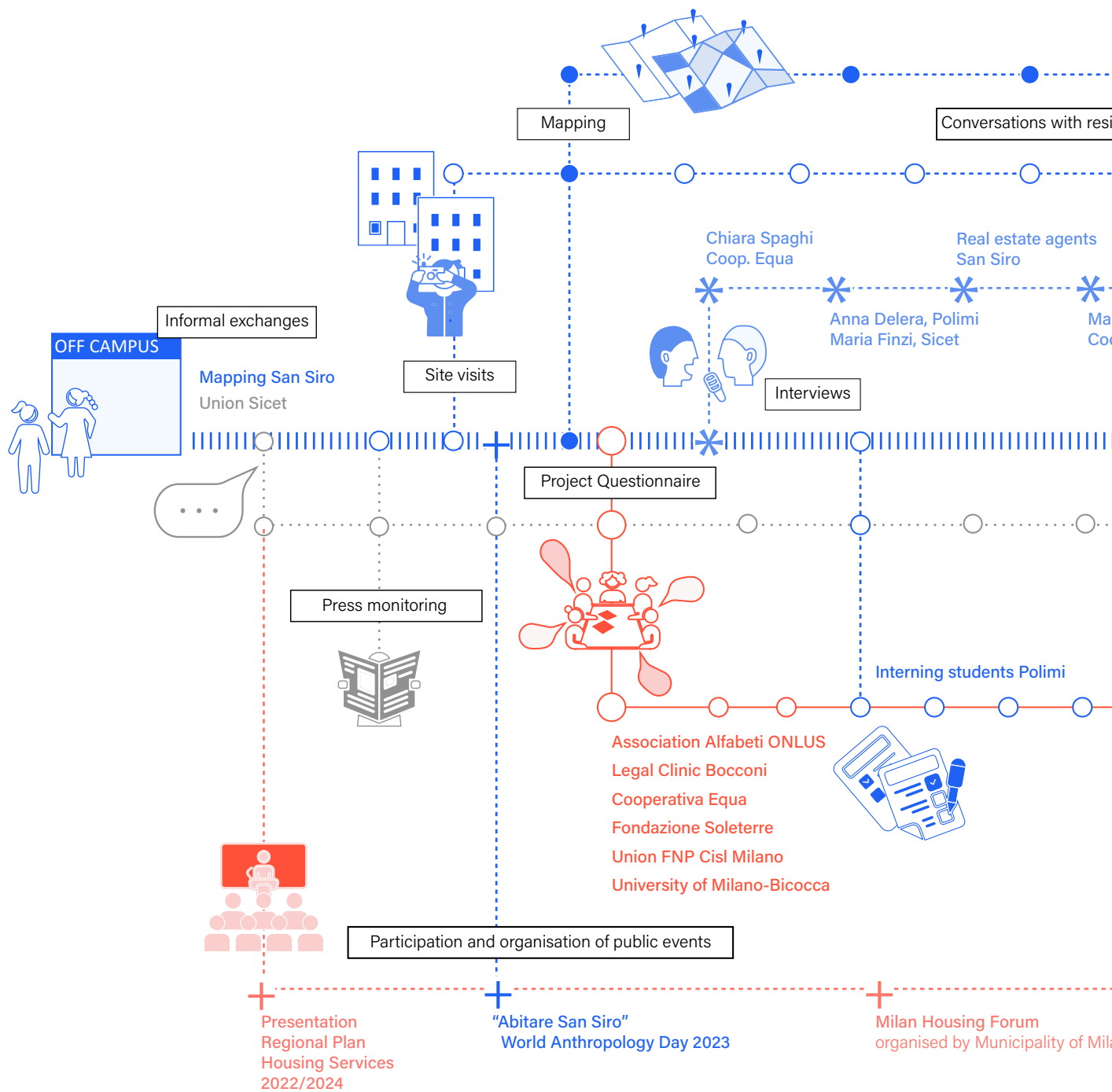
The issue of the right to housing, and in particular that of the right to public housing, today takes on urgent and priority characteristics, in the face of the great urban transformations affecting the city of Milan and the related processes of 'expulsion' - exacerbated in recent times by rising prices and the post-Covid economic crisis - of ever larger segments of the population. The San Siro neighbourhood is home to one of the highest concentrations of public housing in the city, with a housing stock of about 6,000 dwellings. The district still represents a valuable resource for safeguarding the right to housing for the most fragile segments of the population, particularly recognisable in its form of a quadrangle. However, the preservation and valorisation of this heritage seems to be recursively undermined by several factors that, in recent years, have caused slow and continuous processes of erosion and poor valorisation of the public housing stock. Sale plans, careless management, lack of adequate maintenance and the general slowness in public housing assignment procedures, together with punctual virtuous practices and experimentation, are among the factors that fuel the issues of housing in the San Siro district.

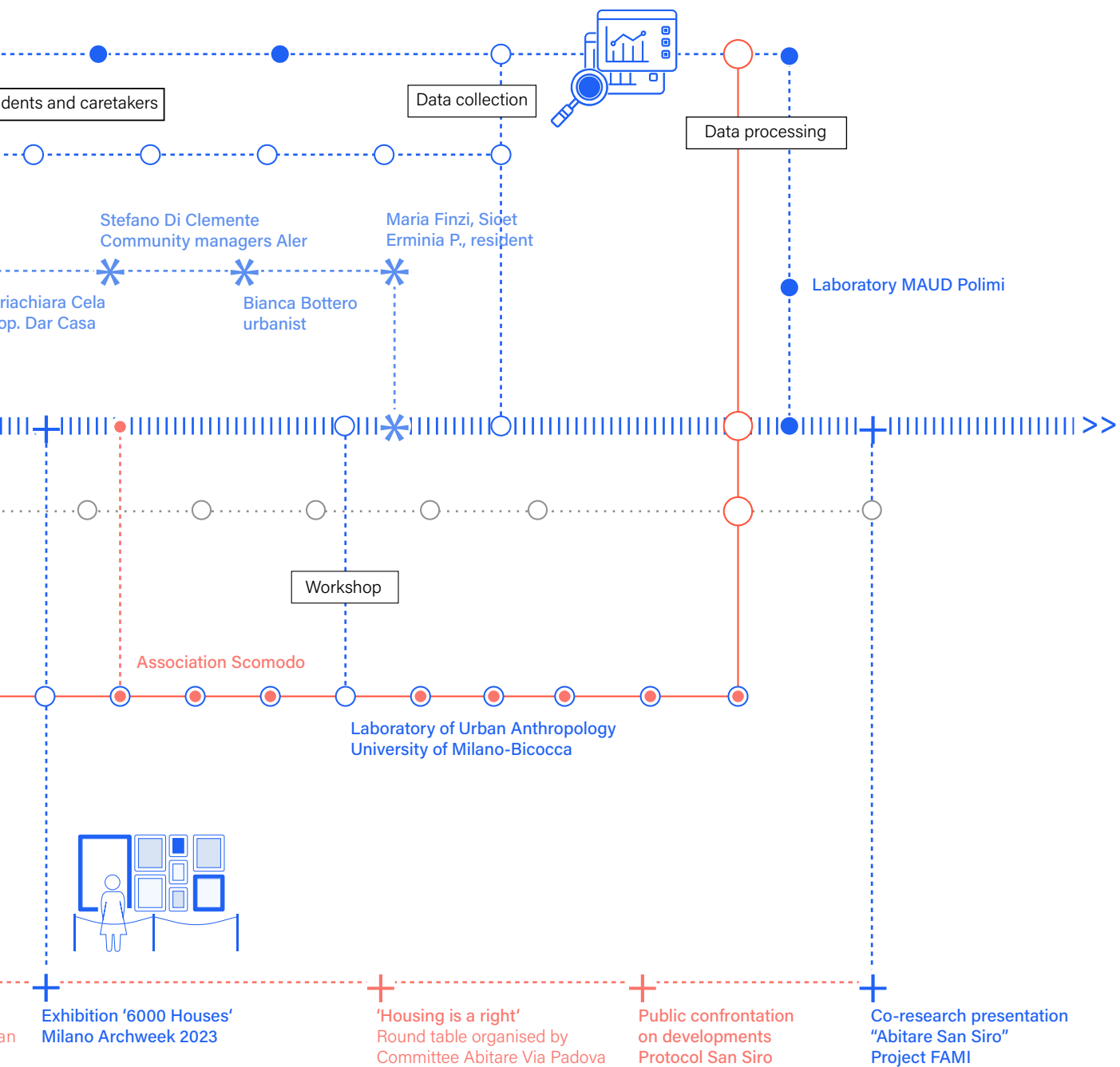
The objective of the research is therefore to bring out and represent the multiplicity of aspects concerning the 'housing issue' within the public housing neighbourhood, recounting the different points of view, the critical issues but also the countless resources that this neighbourhood has built and consolidated over time. The co-research path, developed from the knowledge of the area produced over years of activity and stable presence in the San Siro district, was developed in a network with a number of subjects who have long collaborated in the research group's activities and with whom a solid relationship of trust and exchange has now been established. In line with a situated and participatory approach to research, attentive to making the most of different forms of knowledge and data representation, the survey was carried out according to an open and adaptive path, making use of different research tools, such as visits to every civic house in the neighbourhood, interpretative mapping of the quadrangle, informal exchanges with inhabitants and caretakers, structured interviews with operators and experts, analysis of statistical data, press reviews, analysis of regulations and other public acts, and distribution of a neighbourhood questionnaire.

The use of different survey tools has allowed us to practice a variety of 'levels of reading' of reality, drawing from formal and informal sources, against a general difficulty in finding public data on the state of the heritage, its management, ongoing processes and future directions. Alongside the opacity of the available public data, which is often not up-to-date, partial or aggregated in different forms - and therefore difficult to compare - and sometimes even incoherent, there is the poor 'traceability' of many phenomena that cross the quadrangle, linked to the condition of 'invisibility' of certain profiles and the many informal housing practices. These profiles and practices represent a stable and growing reality in the neighbourhood, which we feel it is necessary to include in the research dimension, despite the difficulty of launching systematic operations. This complexity therefore corresponds to a research path that draws on multiple sources: it has often been necessary to compare different documents, to compare official data with an on-the-spot verification, to collect testimonies, interviews, and other 'voices' from the neighbourhood that have allowed the changing and articulated reality of living in the quadrangle to emerge in a more complete way.

The objective was to construct a complex image of the living conditions and forms of housing management within the neighbourhood, putting together different information and knowledge, and drawing out the 'latent' data, which those who know the area are aware of, but which are invisible within the more easily accessible statistical and quantitative representations. The stable and continuous presence of the research group within the Off Campus space of the Politecnico was a fundamental element in building bonds and relationships of trust, not only with the local network and the operators in the neighbourhood, but also with all those inhabitants who participated in the research in various ways. Special attention was paid to interaction with a variety of subjects during the research, public communication and the accessibility of the knowledge produced. This attention gave rise to a complex set of interaction and representation tools, which are included in the report.

Research Journey





1. Which is the relationship between the public neighbourhood and the city?

1.1 San Siro city of tomorrow?

An increasingly young and plural neighbourhood

[for more details, see sections 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 3.2.1 of the report]

1.2 A constantly eroding heritage: the public neighbourhood is no longer so public

[for further details, see sections 1.2.1, 1.2.2 of the report]

1.3 A housing stock full of voids

[for more details, please refer to sections 1.2.1, 2.1.2 , 3.2.2 of the report]

1.4 A contested heritage:

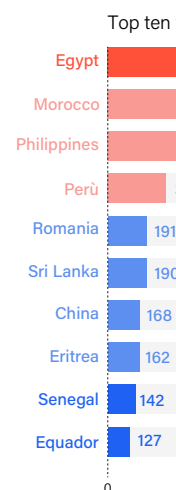
The projects in the San Siro area and the pressures of the real estate market

[for further details, please refer to sections 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3 of the report]

1.1. San Siro city of tomorrow?

An increasingly young and plural neighbourhood

The composition of the population in the quadrangle expresses its specificities that make it a **unique context** and to some extent different from the rest of the city. Historically an arrival district, this characteristic is renewed with the new citizens who now arrive in the city from international routes. About half of the population has a **foreign citizenship** (the Milanese average is about 20 per cent), with more consolidated communities (the first: Egypt, Morocco, Philippines, Peru), but also a great diversity of origins (there are 80 different nationalities). Many inhabitants have **dual citizenship** (data emerged from the questionnaires), indicating significant situations of **multiple belongings** to different worlds. San Siro is also the **city's youngest neighbourhood**, with an increasing presence of minors, often **second-generation**, young adults with foreign citizenships and **large families**. The elderly population, on the other hand, is increasingly small and at the same time fragile: there are many cases in the neighbourhood of elderly people who are not autonomous and lack adequate assistance. The research also tells us about a **city of invisibles**. In particular, there are two aspects that have become evident. The formal data do not intercept the many people who live in the neighbourhood but who do not have the tenure status, and who therefore since 2014 (art. 5 of d.l. 28 March 2014, no. 47 conv. with mod. in l. 23 May 2014, no. 80) cannot register with the Municipal Registry; or who live in the neighbourhood as a first-place base for relatively short periods of time. The widespread presence of **informal housing situations** linked to **solidarity** and **mutual aid networks** makes these presences numerous and relevant, but completely 'off the radar' of data and often also of policies. Another aspect 'distorted' by available public data is the large presence of second-generation minors, born and raised in Italy but included, in the statistics, in the category of 'population with foreign citizenship'. In this regard, the research questions how the use of certain terms may or may not contribute to fuelling **stigmatisation and stereotypes about the neighbourhood**, which over the years have already been widely spread by the media and public opinion. Terms such as 'foreigner', but also 'citizen with foreign citizenship' give little indication of the complexity of the life paths of many people who have lived in the neighbourhood for many years, and even less so of portions of the very young and second-generation population, waiting for the long road to Italian citizenship. In an ageing city, which is in danger of becoming increasingly polarised and individualised, San Siro could represent a **laboratory for a city of the future**, in which acceptance and coexistence between different people can be tested. A city in which it is good to live despite insecurity and poverty, in which a **comprehensive and integrative concept of citizenship** is learnt and tested.



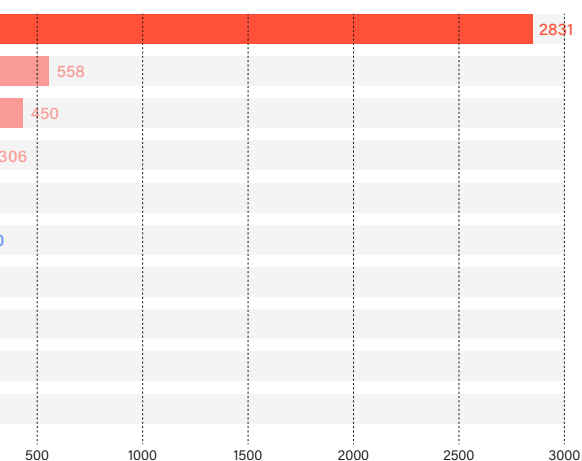
Sources: Data from the Registry of the Municipality of Milan 2023.
Own elaboration.



	2011	2021			Percentage variations	
	San Siro	San Siro	NIL 57	Milano	San Siro	Milano
Total population	9.484	10.524	30.163	1.319.767	+ 11%	+ 6%
Foreign nationalities	3.816 [40.2%]	5.835 [55.4%]	[32.8%]	[19.2%]	+ 53%	+ 43.8%
Population ≥ 75	1.160 [12.2%]	886 [8.4%]	[12.2%]	[13.1%]	- 24%	+ 9%
Population 0-19	1.836 [19.4%]	2.671 [25.4%]	[18.9%]	[16.82%]	+ 45%	+ 8%
Single-Households	3.065 [58.1%]	3.266 [59.8%]	[57.7%]	[54.0%]	+ 7%	+ 40%
Households ≥ 5	240 [4.5%]	463 [8.5%]	[4.4%]	[2.9%]	+ 93%	+ 16%
Employment rate (15-64)	3551 [59.6%]	3900 [58%]	[67.8%]	[70.1%]	+ 10%	+ 11%
Female employment rate (15-64)	1597 [54.1%]	1393 [46.5%]	[61.1%]	[64.9%]	- 13%	+ 9%

Sources: ISTAT - Population census data 2011 and 2021 [data by census sections]. Own elaboration.

foreign nationalities present in the quadrangle



Population percentages

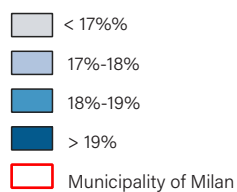
in the 0-18 bracket:

> Milan 16%

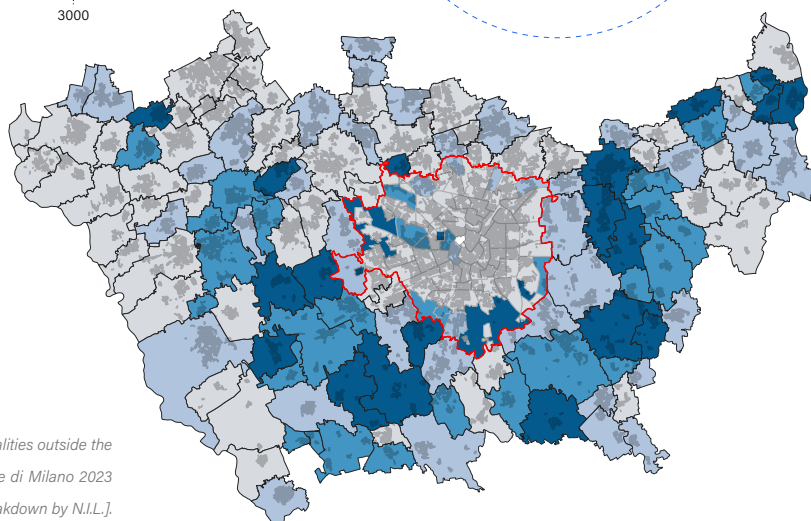
> Metropolitan city 16.7%

> Lombardy 16.8%

Population distribution
age range 0-18 in the City
Metropolitan City of Milan:



Sources: ISTAT 2023 for data on municipalities outside the
Comune di Milano, Anagrafe del Comune di Milano 2023
for data on the Municipality of Milan [breakdown by N.I.L.].

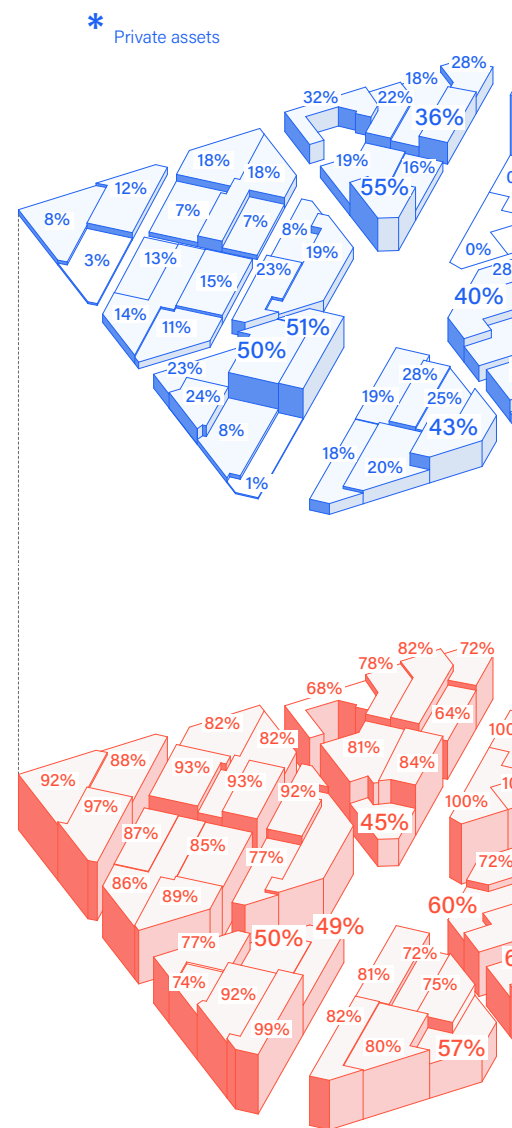


1.2 A constantly eroding heritage: The public neighbourhood is no longer so public

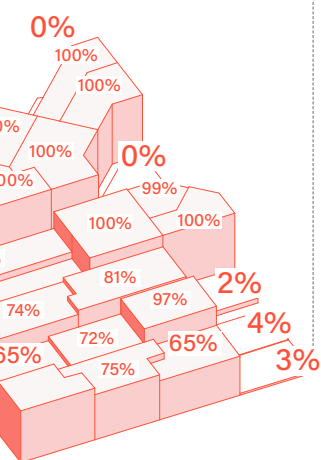
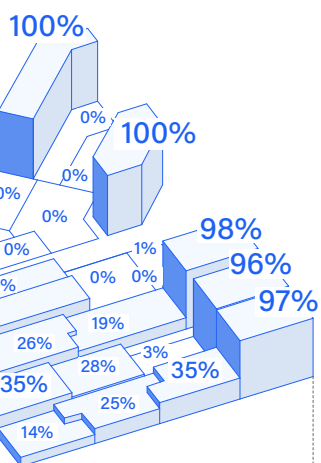
Over the years, the quadrangle has undergone a **slow but progressive change** - to be defined as decline in some respects - as a result of a lack of an integrated regeneration plan, of adequate programmes for building rehabilitation, and of insufficient economic resources available for an organic and widespread redevelopment. Over the past ten years, this important heritage has been subjected to **pressures of spin-offs, sales, and poor maintenance**, and has thus been diverted in various ways from the public allocation process.

Compared to the data from the Aler user registry in 2013, the data to 2021 reveal a **significant and further reduction in public housing**, a considerable increase in empty dwellings and above all in squatting. Dynamics affecting the state of the stock as a whole, linked to slow but progressive **'erosions' of a different kind**: for example, within the quadrangle almost all apartment blocks have shares of sold housing, with different concentrations but in a widespread form. On the whole, of the almost 6,000 public houses in the quadrangle, **only 42% are allocated under the S.A.P.** (Public Housing Services) regime, while almost ¼ of the estate is now privately owned, with condominiums completely privatised, especially in the eastern and south-eastern sectors of the quadrangle. A substantial share - almost 5 per cent - is managed outside public housing services. In the two sales plans carried out from 2013 to 2023, in fact, most of the disposals were planned (and carried out) in the blocks that were already largely privatised.

The image of the public quarter is one of 'Swiss cheese' ('holes' that are important and widening), with some 'parts falling off'. No longer the large public quadrangle, but a new form that refers to an **idea of erosion, on the edges and from within**. This produces a potential housing mix, but also very complex situations of mixed condominiums from the point of view of management, with shares of poor, crisis-ridden owners. It also questions us about the trajectory of this heritage: **from the largest public housing district in Milan**, with its more than 6,000 public housing units, **to what?**

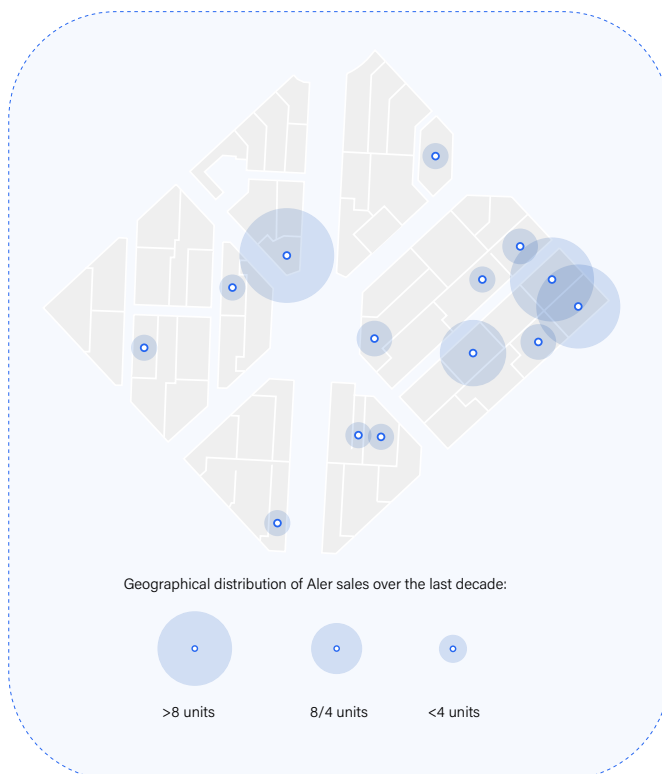
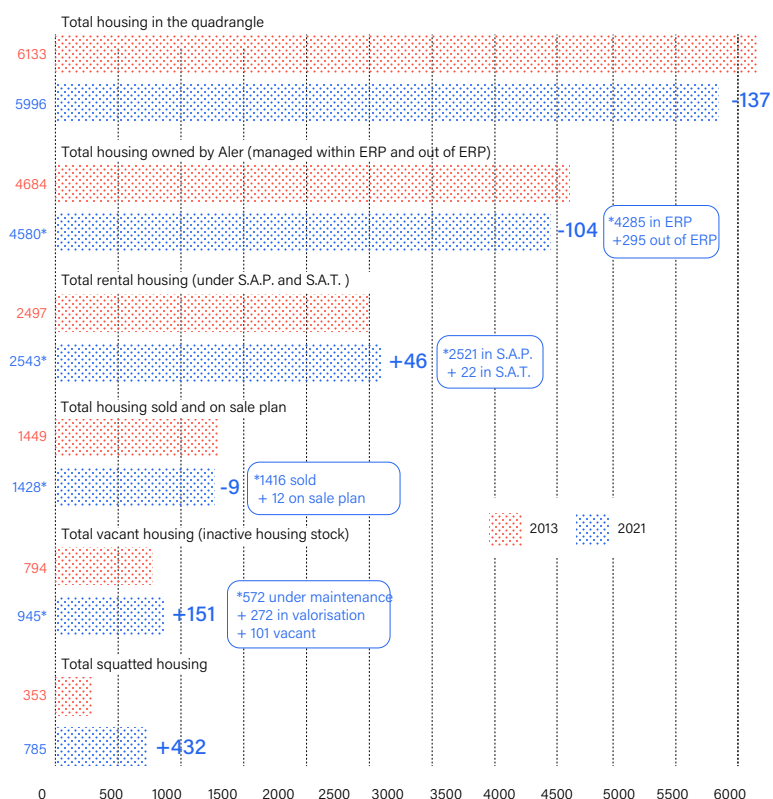


Sources: Inspections, interviews with inhabitants and caretakers of c
December 2022 - March 2023). Comparison of collected data with: Report
del quartiere Erp San Siro a Milano' by Mapping San Siro, 2014. Municip
'Approvazione delle linee d'indirizzo per la sottoscrizione del Protocollo
Siro tra Prefettura di Milano, Regione Lombardia, Comune di Milano e
Milano'. Own elaboration.



* Aler assets

ivic buildings within the quadrangle (period:
rt 'Mapping San Siro Data. Letture quantitative
pal Council Resolution no. 1003 of 06/08/2021
d'Intesa per la rigenerazione del quartiere San
Azienda Lombarda per l'Edilizia Residenziale



1.3 A housing stock full of voids

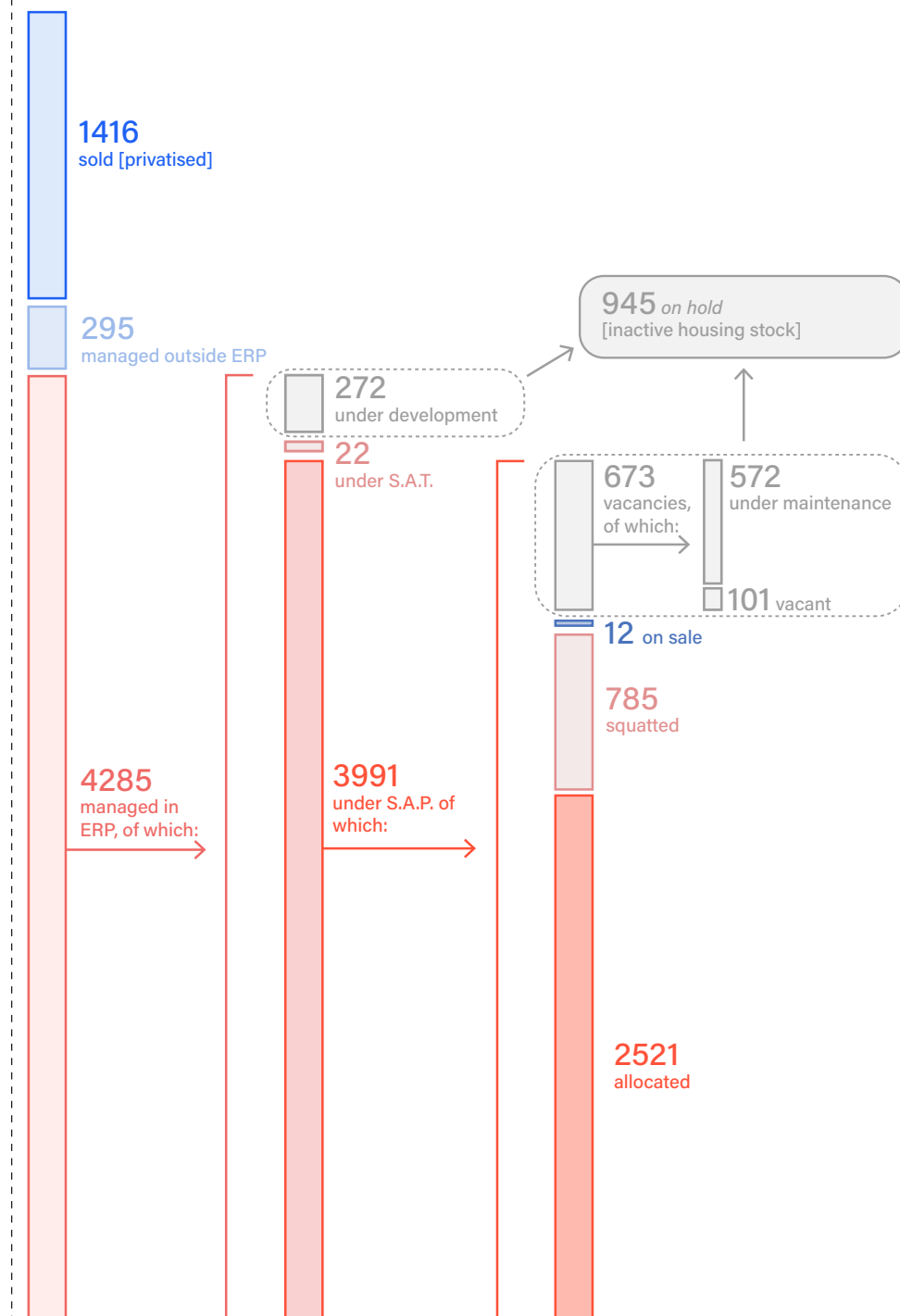
The research reveals another important issue that runs through the entire quadrangle: that of **empty and deactivated public assets**. Out of a 'potential' public heritage - i.e. at Aler's disposal and under management - of about 4500 housing units, **more than 1400 are unassigned**. **This is 33% of the Aler properties in San Siro**, which for various reasons, including lack of maintenance, uninhabitable and decaying conditions, are therefore dormant assets waiting to be assigned. On closer inspection, a substantial part of this latent heritage is squatted, and therefore **not really 'empty'**: the phenomenon of squatting - which is widespread throughout the neighbourhood - affects about half of the unassigned Aler heritage:

the number of vacant dwellings in the last two public documents is 785 as of 2021 (D.G.C. no. 1003 of 06/08/2021 'Approvazione delle linee d'indirizzo per la sottoscrizione del Protocollo d'Intesa per la rigenerazione del quartiere San Siro') and 694 as of 2023 (data presented by Aler during the public meeting of 06/07/23 'Sull'attuazione del Protocollo per la rigenerazione del quartiere San Siro'). In the face of **an ever-increasing demand for housing**, in the neighbourhood and in the city, the presence of housing vacancies in the neighbourhood presents a possibility - albeit precarious and illegal - of satisfying a primary need for an increasingly large portion of a fragile population. However, this dynamic remains opaque and changeable, and **poorly addressed by public policies**.

The slowness of public allocation processes also fuels this phenomenon: in the face of **general inertia in the allocation processes**, part of the dormant housing stock is in fact inhabited by those who need it, otherwise remaining empty awaiting allocation, for many months when the contract ends. Housing that remains empty (as of 2021 there are 685 empty dwellings, of which 572 in maintenance, 101 vacant and 12 for sale; in addition to these there are 272 dwellings under development) fuels the **precarious conditions** of those living in the neighbourhood. Symbolically, they often represent a sense of inertia and **inefficiency among the managing body**. They also fuel **health and hygiene problems in the buildings** - infestations of rats and other animals are not uncommon in empty housing - as well as increasing the **general sense of insecurity** among the inhabitants. The theme of empty housing, therefore, besides being somewhat anachronistic with respect to the theme of housing emergency on an urban scale, brings with it a **set of secondary problems**, one might say on a minor scale, problems that nevertheless have a **great impact on the daily lives** of the inhabitants of San Siro.



5996 total housing in the quadrangle, of which:



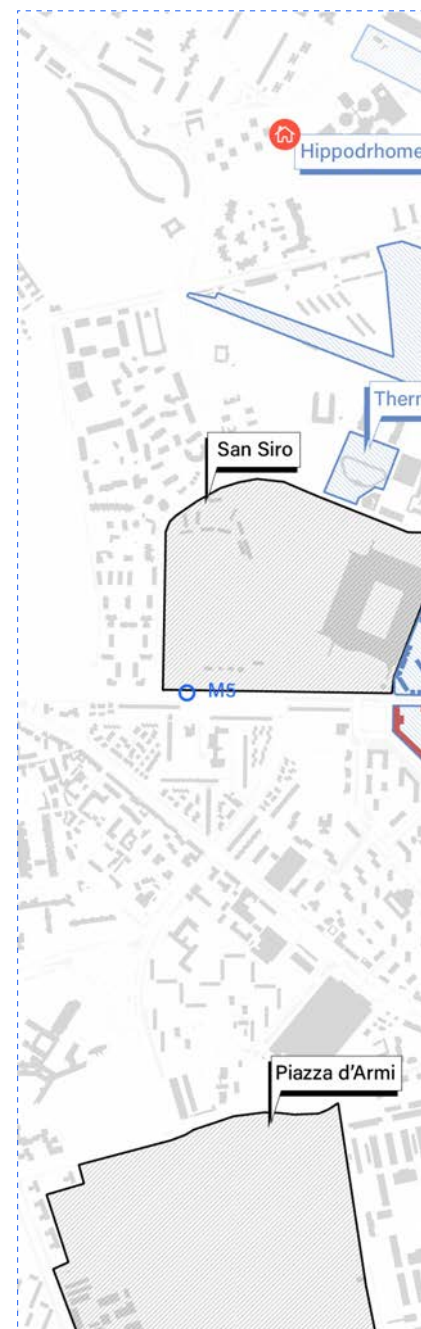
Sources: Municipal Council Resolution no. 1003 of 06/08/2021 'Approvazione delle linee d'indirizzo per la sottoscrizione del Protocollo d'Intesa per la rigenerazione del quartiere San Siro tra Prefettura di Milano, Regione Lombardia, Comune di Milano e Azienda Lombarda per l'Edilizia Residenziale Milano'. Own elaboration.

1.4 A contested heritage: The projects in the San Siro area and the pressures of the real estate market

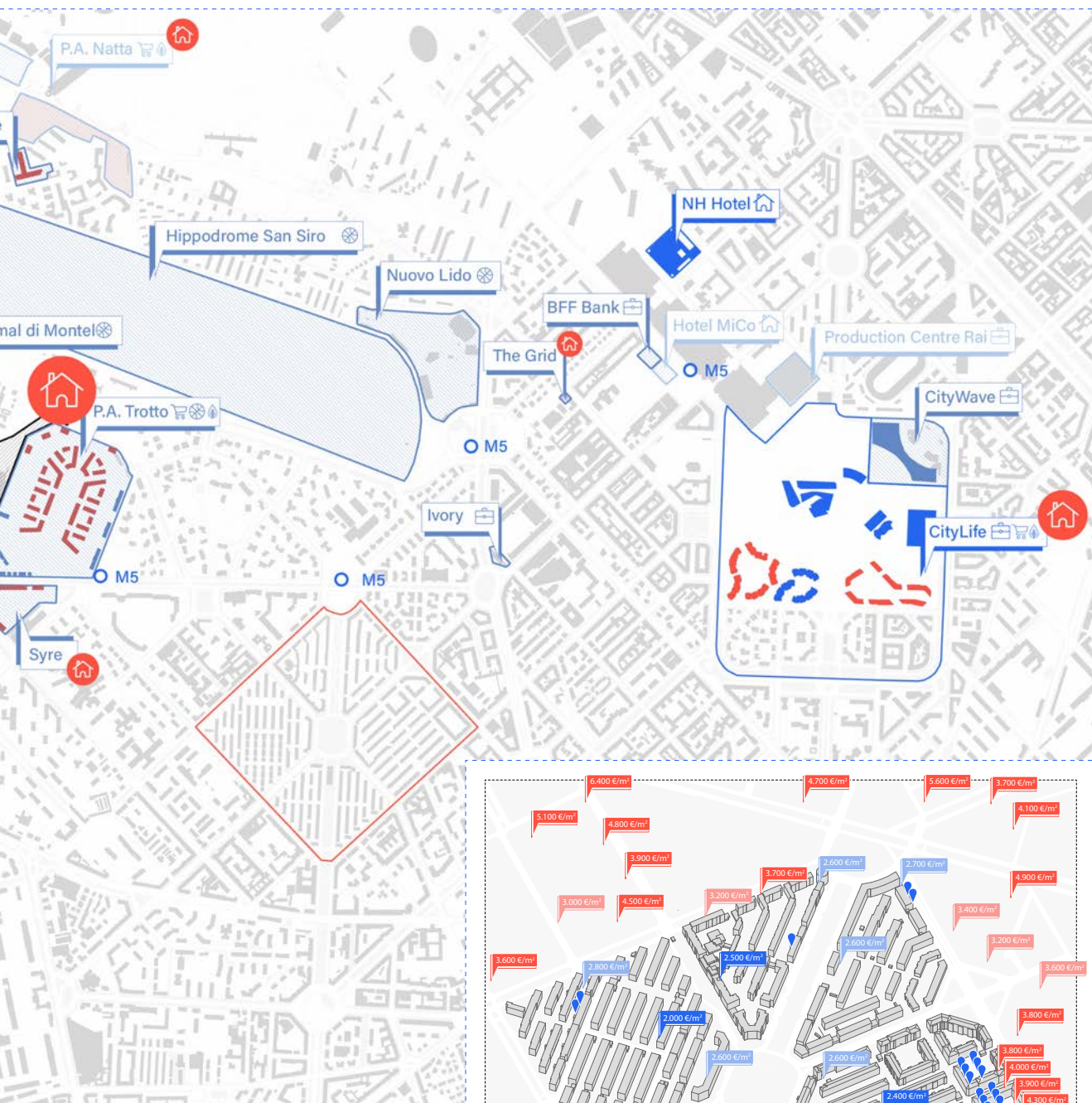
To the process of alienation of parts of the district, which has been undermined in its part of public housing, are superimposed the **dynamics linked to private property**, both within the quadrangle and in the urban sector. The western quadrant of Milan, around the quadrangle, is characterised today by the presence of **numerous transformations that have a significant impact on the entire area** and mark out directions of development. Non-residential interventions will bring (accessible?) services including sports, large events, leisure and wellness. Alongside these **new urban functions**, the projects currently underway bring up the image of a **new residential neighbourhood** in continuity - spatial and in terms of design - with the almost completed City Life neighbourhood: apart from a few hints of affordable housing (this is the case of part of the project for the Piano Attuativo Trotto), the transformations include **housing with luxury finishes**, large terraces, private green spaces and exclusive condominium services. These transformations represent **an element of risk for the San Siro district**, which is inevitably **subject to the pressures exerted by the dynamics of the real estate market**.

In fact, in the entire urban sector of San Siro, up to the streets just beyond the perimeter of the public housing quadrangle, there are **some of the highest real estate values in Milan**, and about **two times those more than within the quadrangle**. In addition to external pressures, the district also suffers from growing internal pressures: in the quadrangle there are a number of properties for sale by tenant-owners, but the most relevant data concerns the **way in which these properties are sold**: about **85% of the housing on the market within the quadrangle is for sale by judicial auction**. Most of the profiles of these owners have a migration background and have owned the properties for about twenty years. They are **poor and at-risk owners**, who have found themselves unable to meet their mortgages, particularly in recent years, and after the Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, interviews show that the 'new owners' within the quadrangle are predominantly young couples or students, mostly Italians, looking for an affordable flat in a central urban area. This picture also tells **traces of change within the quadrangle**. They tell of how a certain part of the property-owning population, progressively impoverished, is undergoing a **process of expulsion from the neighbourhood**.

Internal as well as external pressure, which is determined by the dynamics of the urban real estate market, endangers owners and tenants who have lived in the neighbourhood for a long time.

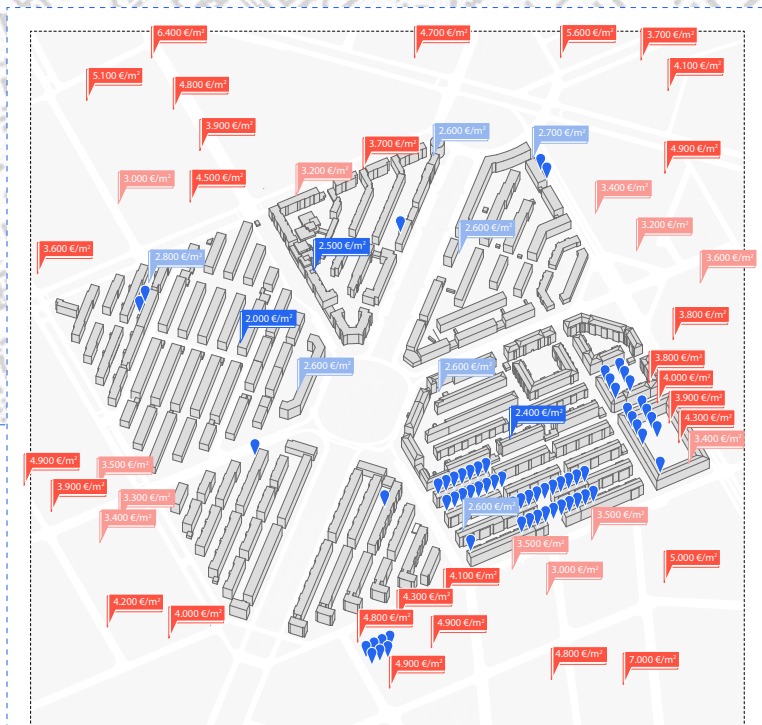


Schedule			
	Realized		Residential
	Ongoing		Residential
	Planned		Residential
	Area of future transformation		
Intended use			
	Residential		sports/leisure
	Hospitality		Commercial
	tertiary sector		Greenery



Private accommodation for sale in
Market prices in €/m²

- ≤ 2500 €/m²
- 2501 - 2999 €/m²
- 3000 - 3600 €/m²
- > 3600 €/m²
- ♦ Properties for sale by
judicial auctions



Source: www.immobiliare.it. Data updated to April 2023. Own elaboration.

2. What does it mean to live in San Siro today?

2.1 A fragmented neighbourhood: between difficult cohabitation and attempts of care

The research reveals a **fragmented picture** of housing situations in the neighbourhood, in which **situations of severe degradation coexist with attempts at care and 'good neighbourliness'**.

This picture depends on multiple factors, which stratify and thus 'multiply' degrees of complexity. In some cases, this stratification leads to **situations of almost total abandonment and degradation**, in other cases, on the other hand, a good combination of positive elements, including the presence of a **reference caretaker** - perhaps a historical and resident one - , **good maintenance and care** of common spaces and the removal of architectural barriers, a low presence of empty dwellings and a good presence of 'stable' inhabitants, favour situations of good coexistence.

Even if the presence of a caretaker is an indication of good management within a block of flats, often - as emerged from the neighbourhood questionnaire - this caretaker alone is not sufficient to guarantee a good quality of living: the **coexistence of populations with different cultures and ways of living** makes coexistence within block of flats difficult, sometimes conflictual. In addition to this, there are frequent **maintenance deficiencies, difficult waste management** in many buildings, and **structural problems with the accessibility of spaces**, for which work should be carried out to remove architectural barriers in almost all buildings (lifts are present in all staircases in only two out of 57 building blocks, while they are present in some staircases in 17 out of 57 building blocks).

Difficult cohabitations

'I am very careful to be indifferent. Almost every day the police is here because there is an extraordinary amount of dealing going on.'

*'Before, people **slept in cellars**, prostituted themselves, dealt drugs. During the day you couldn't see them, at night they fought over drugs. And you were trying to sleep?'*

Degradation

*'Look at this courtyard, there's a dead rat there, do you see it? **The rats go all the way up to the upper floors**. For women then, there's a **curfew at 9pm**.'*

Unsafety

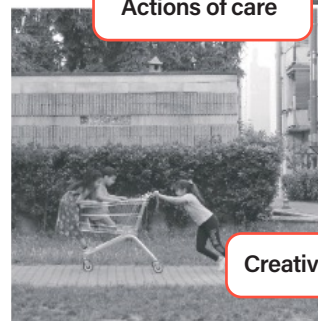
but also..



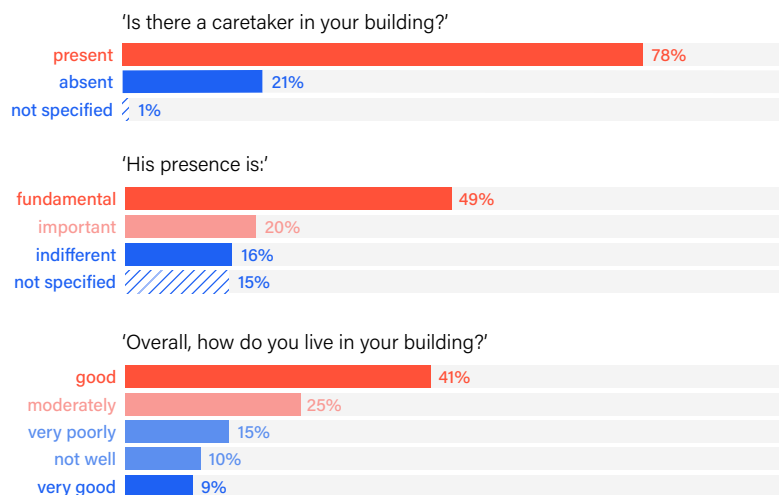
Moments of socialising



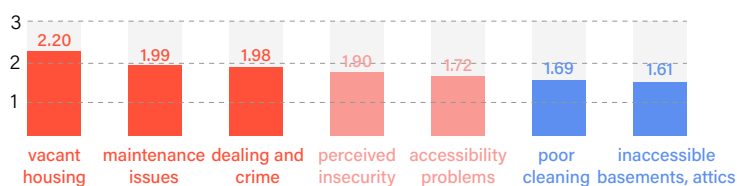
Actions of care



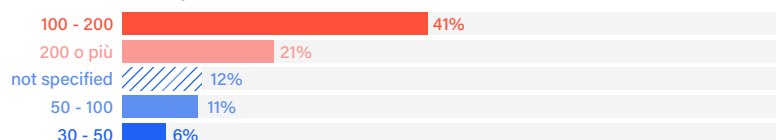
Creative practices of use



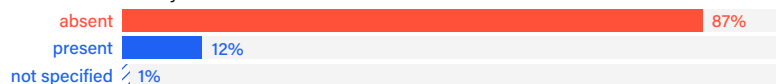
Main problems in common areas [average rating from 1 to 3 points]:



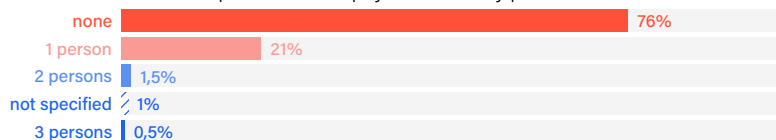
Monthly condominium fees:



Does your staircase have an elevator?



Number of persons with a physical disability per household



Sources: neighbourhood questionnaire. Own elaboration.

2.2 An overcrowded neighbourhood: cohabitation, hospitality, extended families

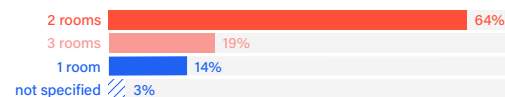
Although the housing density within the quadrangle is not particularly high (a figure partly distorted by the impossibility of including empty dwellings and inhabitants not registered at the Registry Office in the calculation), the figure that emerges from the research is radically different: against the **availability of small housing units** (78.6% of housing in the district is made up of flats of between 21 and 45 square metres), there clearly emerges a very **significant presence of large households**, with situations of long-term hospitality, the presence of families with three or more children, living together within 'extended' families. By comparing the size of the dwellings with the number of inhabitants inside them, a **situation of generally high housing density and widespread overcrowding** clearly emerged from the questionnaire.

This image tells of a housing complexity that suggests important reflections on space and design possibilities. To the 'inertia' to change of the residential heritage of San Siro corresponds instead **a great variety and changeability of cohabitation situations** (increase of large families, growing non-self-sufficient elderly population, widespread situations of social and sometimes psychological fragility) that call for the **need to work on flexibility, groupings and mobility of the households**.

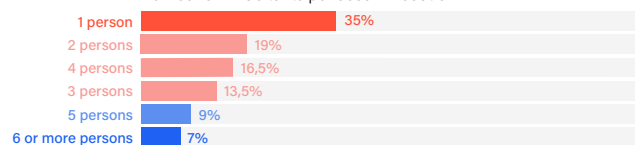
Total accommodation: 5996, of which:

- > 4472 [72.9%] between 28 and 45m²
- > 1250 [20%] between 45 and 65 m²
- > 52 [0.8%] over 65 m²
- > 353 [5.7%] below standard

Number of rooms per accommodation

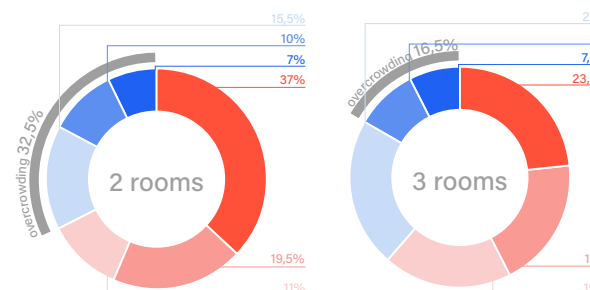


Number of inhabitants per accommodation



Relationship between number of rooms and number of inhabitants per dwelling:

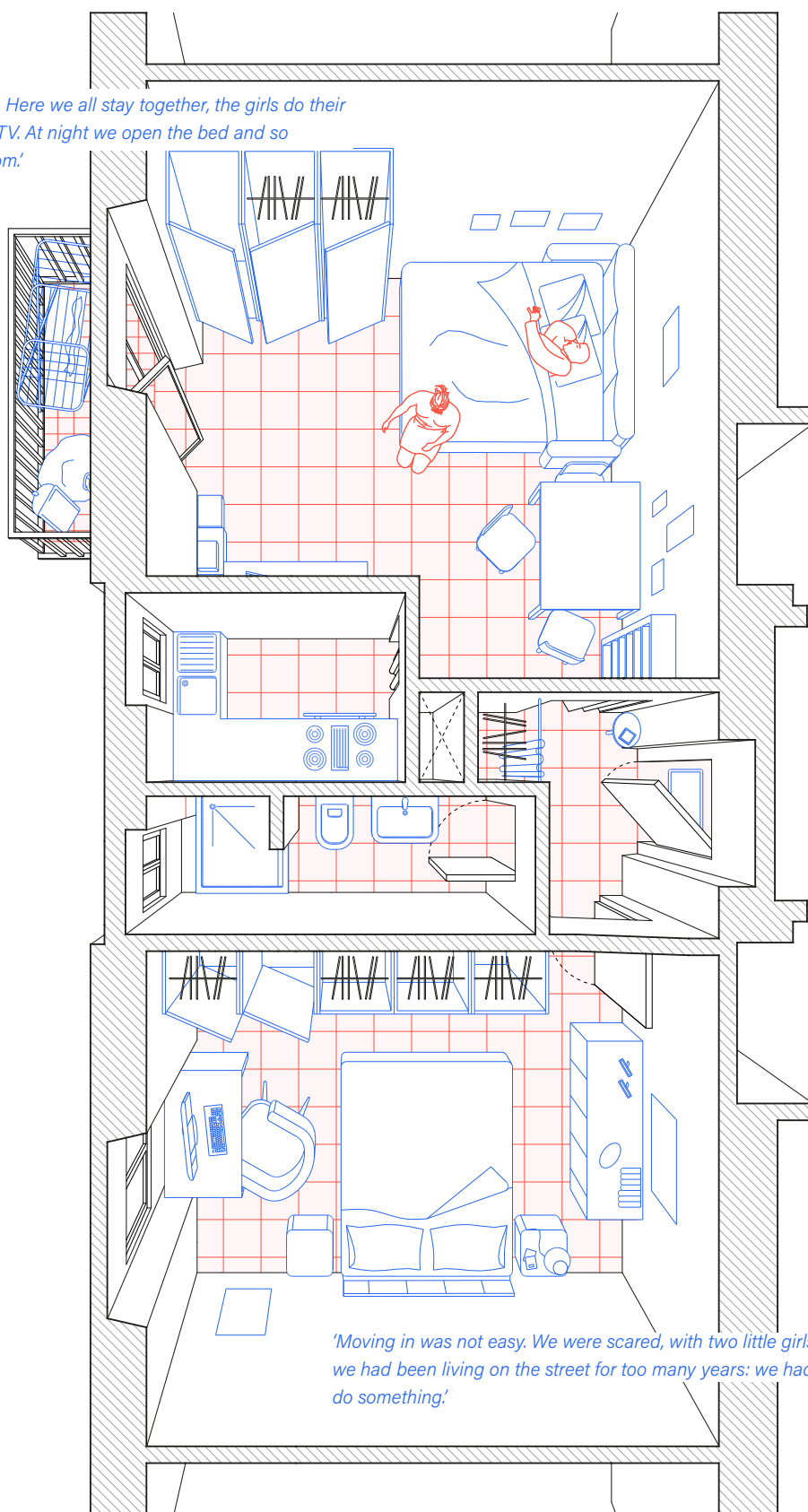
- 1 person
- 2 persons
- 3 persons
- 4 persons
- 5 persons
- 6 or more persons



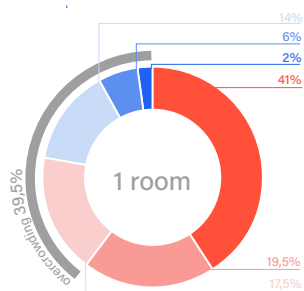
Sources: neighbourhood questionnaire. Own elaboration.

'This is our joker room. Here we all stay together, the girls do their homework, we watch TV. At night we open the bed and so it becomes our bedroom.'

'The balcony is a storage room, but also a laundry room, and also the only space to get some air and sun.'



'Moving in was not easy. We were scared, with two little girls, but we had been living on the street for too many years: we had to do something.'



2.3 An increasingly poor neighbourhood

The quadrilateral is home to a **population that is often economically very fragile, with low incomes or in many cases no income** at all. Aler monthly fees, according to the income brackets of its users, vary from about 60 € (protection bracket) to about 400 € (forfeiture bracket). The latest available data (Aler 2024 Forecast Budget) show that in the Milan area **almost 50% of Aler users are in the protection bracket**, and only 7.7% in the forfeiture bracket. These data provide a general measure for understanding the economic fragility of the population assigned public housing, and are confirmed by the neighbourhood questionnaire, which shows that about half of those interviewed have an **ISEE equal to or less than € 10,000**, as well as a low number of workers in the family (which in half of the cases is one, and in more than 30% of the cases is zero). In this regard, another relevant fact from the questionnaire concerns the type of job classification and stability over time: 30% of the jobs declared can be classified as **temporary contracts, self-employment, and informal and casual work**.

Poverty in the neighbourhood is also reflected in the **quality of living space and household equipment**: the questionnaire shows how some basic equipment commonly found in a home (such as a washing machine, oven, Wi-Fi and computer) is not present in many cases.

Some dynamics tell us of **phenomena of impoverishment**, which overlap with the poverty of the households living in public housing: the **owners are increasingly poorer**, often no longer able to sustain high mortgages but at the same time unable to find an alternative housing solution at an affordable price (see section 1.4); **tenants living in housing managed by social managers** (such as Dar Casa and Equa), although not presenting particularly serious situations of economic and social fragility, find themselves **often in difficulty in sustaining housing costs**, even if they are subsidised.

It is clear that in these various cases, **access to housing at an affordable cost is an important welfare measure**, supporting widespread fragility linked to **poverty and lack of work**.



Sources: neighbourhood questionnaire.

Own elaboration.

Heritage for sale
in the ERP quadrangle:

- judicial auctions
- Sale between private individuals or through real estate agencies

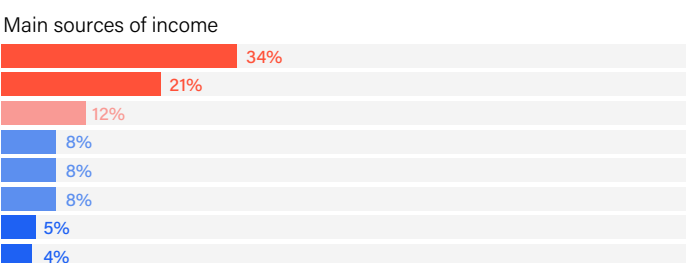
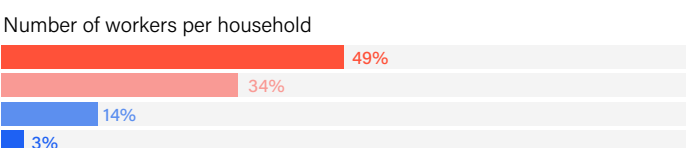
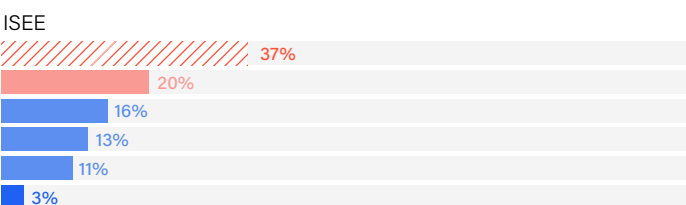
85.5 %

14.5 %

Source: www.immobiliare.it.

Data updated to April 2023.

Own elaboration.



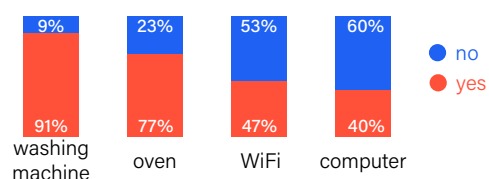
Distribution of ISEE-Public housing brackets

among Aler users in the quadrangle:

- > 48% | Protection bracket [average fee € 57]
- > 30% | Access bracket [average fee € 143]
- > 16% | Permanence bracket [average fee € 234]
- > 30% | Access bracket [average fee € 143]
- > 6% | Forfeiture bracket [average fee € 432]

Sources: Aler presentation updated 2016.

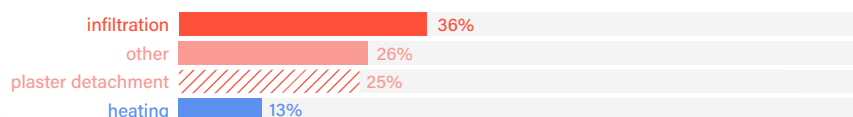
Equipment in the accommodation:



'Have there been maintenance problems in your house in the last year?'



Major maintenance issues:



Sources: neighbourhood questionnaire. Own elaboration.

3. Concluding thoughts

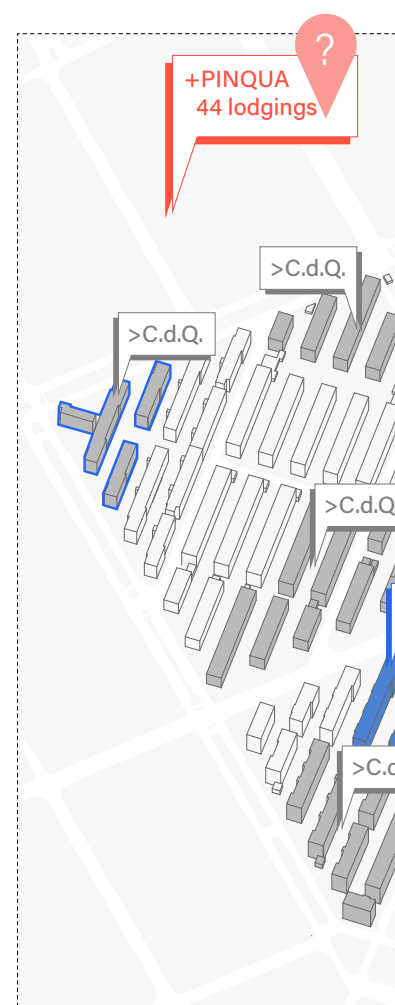


3.1 The public response on housing: between some innovative policies and many scattered investments

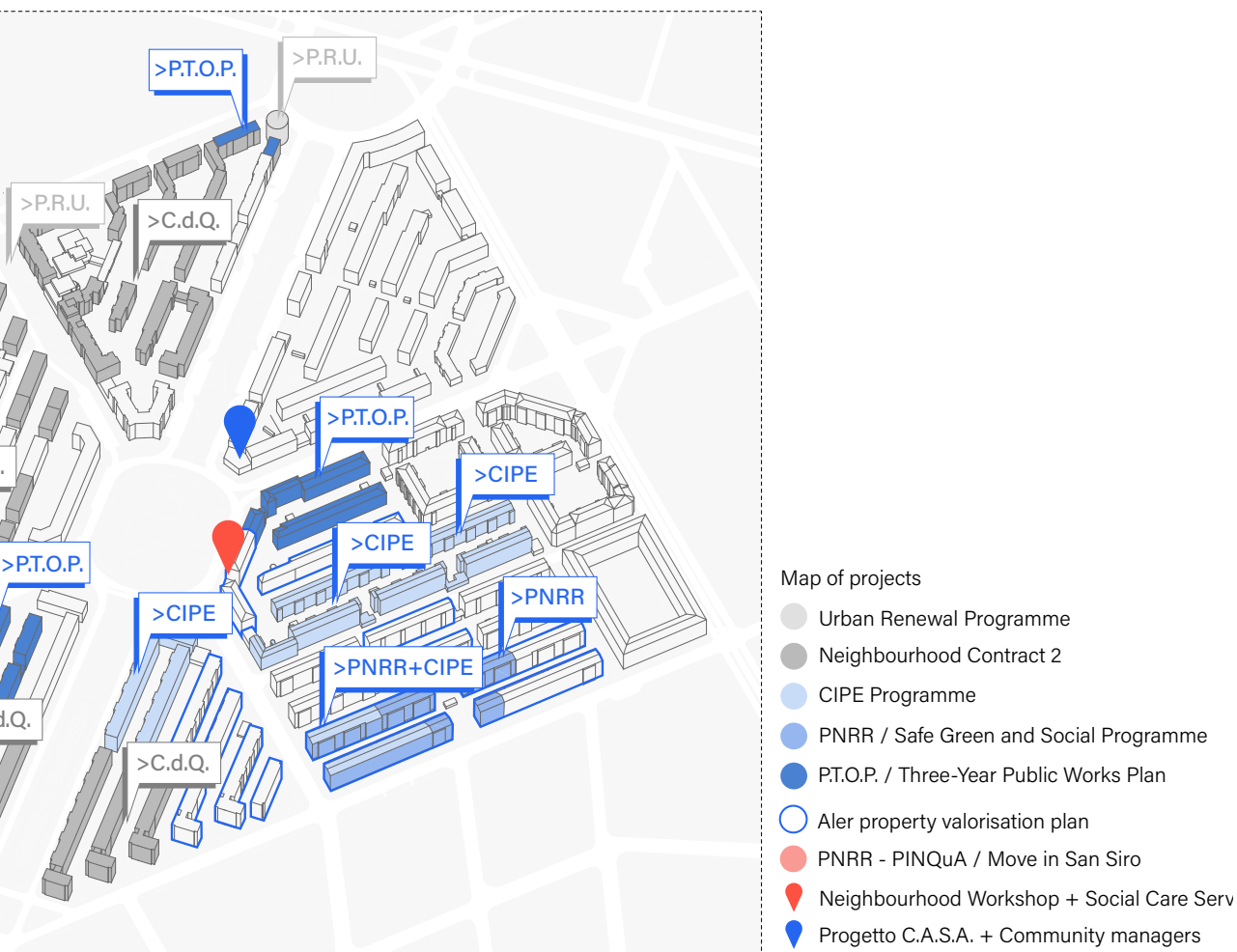
The attempt to construct a complete picture of the projects of the last twenty years responds to the need to understand where and how the various funds that the neighbourhood has received over time have been invested. In general, what emerges is a considerable **fragmentary nature of the interventions**, which - with the exception of the Neighbourhood Contract 2 and the C.A.S.A. of Aler and the Lombardy Region with the introduction of Community Managers - have so far been concentrated only in certain areas of the neighbourhood, mainly in the south-east quadrant, **leaving some highly degraded sectors**, such as the south-west quadrant and the blocks facing the north side of Via Paravia, without interventions.

Although there has been a **major resumption of programmes and investments** (started in 2021), after a long period of suspension at the end of the Neighbourhood Contract, projects appear fragmented, **without an overall vision or strategic framework**. Moreover, many interventions are **still at an early stage**, despite the fact that the deadline for completion is set for 2026.

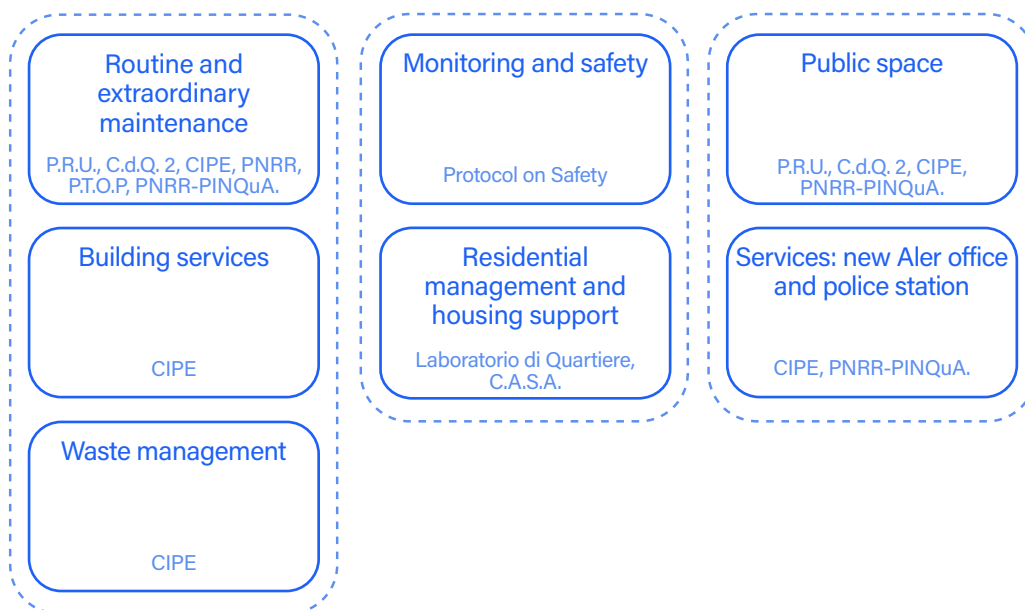
The research calculated that the public housing investment set for the district over the last six years amounts to **approximately 41 million euros**. Of this huge sum, however, **little has actually been spent, and the areas of intervention are rather 'ordinary'**, considering the exceptional nature and complexity of the housing issue in the neighbourhood. In fact, the main expenditure items concern ordinary and extraordinary maintenance, waste management, the (very limited) increase in the housing supply and the activation of some housing support services. These interventions are integrated in the case of the Pinqua Innovative Housing Quality Programme and the CIPE resolution, the arrangement of some public spaces, the relocation of Aler's UOG2 (managing operation unit) headquarters and the construction of a new police station. Compared to the **varying degrees of problems** in the quadrangle, but also to the **countless resources that the neighbourhood has built up and consolidated over time**, there still seems to be a **lack of a clear joint public will to utilise the available economic resources**, which could instead make San Siro an **innovative field for experimenting with policies and projects**.



Public funds allocated
for the San Siro quadrangle
in the last 6 years
40.1 million €



The fields of intervention:



3.2 'Good practices' in the quadrangle: some starting points

In the light of the considerations developed in the course of the research, we propose to look at some **examples of innovative public housing projects** that have unfolded over the years and stand as **good practices from which to learn**.

These examples can provide **hints for imagining future scenarios**, and to orient and direct housing policies in the neighbourhood.

1.1. The project of Civitali 30 of the Neighbourhood Contract

One of the virtuous examples is the **project for the building complex of Via Civitali 30** (included among the 14 buildings covered by the Neighbourhood Contract 2). For Via Civitali 30, in fact, complete demolition and reconstruction was initially planned, with a loss of the total number of dwellings and an overall decrease in public housing. **Thanks to the convergence of different wills and the active participation of the inhabitants** of Via Civitali 30, the project was modified over time and the **demolition of the building was replaced with extraordinary maintenance**.

This project testifies to the **possibility of reconciling an important change in architectural terms, with an economic saving** (guaranteed by the non-demolition and reconstruction of the building), **with a careful management of the inhabitants' mobility**, which takes into account particularly critical situations and the needs of the most fragile individuals.

2. The C.A.S.A. Project by Aler and the Lombardy Region

Equally interesting is **the more recent C.A.S.A. Project promoted by Aler and the Lombardy Region**, dedicated to housing support. The project introduced in the district, in addition to **a proximity counter dedicated to the inhabitants** in the district's main square, the **figure of Community Managers**, who to all intents and purposes act as an **intermediary between the public manager and the inhabitant**. The community managers carry out door-to-door work to identify particular needs, problems and issues among the tenants living in the neighbourhood. The experimentation works on improving day-to-day management as the key to intercepting the daily problems of the inhabitants, networking on each case with different Aler offices and other services, thus preventing the conditions from becoming 'chronic'.

3. The 'islands of good cohabitation' in the quadrangle

Finally, **another 'de facto' good practice** seems to us to exist in certain housing situations, identified in the course of the research as **'islands of good coexistence'** that constitute to all intents and purposes good practices within the neighbourhood, in which **various elements converge** to make them such. These are situations that are **managed and maintained in a good state, with care actions by both sides of caretakers and inhabitants**. In these 'islands' a common feature is the **presence of a concierge service in the mornings and afternoons, often with long-standing caretakers** who know most of the inhabitants well and **who live or have lived in the building in which they work**. In many of these cases, caretakers and tenants undertake daily actions to care for the common areas. It was also reported by some inhabitants that in these apartment blocks there are **informal networks of mutual help and control over the state of the accommodation**, indicating a **good climate of coexistence and solidarity**. Even in the cases of squatting, these do not create any particular inconvenience for regular tenants, as they are **'peaceful' and long-term squats**. Finally, comparing the location of these 'islands' with the mapping of the state of the public estate, it emerges that **these 'islands' coincide precisely with the very few buildings in the quadrangle that are still entirely public**, confirming the fact that **fragmenting and differentiating** the public nature of the residential estate **is not always the best solution** in terms of coexistence, quality of space and quality of living.

4. The housing projects of social co-operatives

Part of the public property in the quadrangle is entrusted to a number of **social cooperatives**, which provide housing services to categories of people in particularly fragile situations. Among these cooperatives, the one that has been present for the longest time and with the largest number of flats under management is the Cooperativa **Dar Casa**, which with its **39 flats scattered throughout the neighbourhood offers housing services with social support**, helping tenants to manage daily difficulties, relating to the building and neighbourhood relations. Dar Casa has also been involved, over the years, in **merging and making some 'below-standard' apartments habitable again**, overcoming the regulatory constraint that still prevents the assignment of about 350 flats in the quadrilateral (almost 5.7% of the total stock).

3.3 Overall vision:

A programme map to restore value to public housing

In an attempt to construct an image that, also in spatial terms, holds together the present characteristics of the neighbourhood and possible future projects, a programmatic mapping was constructed, a possible starting document for imagining future scenarios and for **orienting housing policies in the neighbourhood**. The map was constructed through an analysis that recognises, within the great heterogeneity of housing conditions in the quadrangle, **some features that certain housing situations have in common**. In some cases these are particularly critical and in need of targeted interventions, in other cases they are already in good condition, both in terms of the state of the buildings and in terms of maintenance, care and good co-existence between apartment blocks. **Four types of situations** have been identified, in an attempt to represent **four 'identikits' of apartment blocks on which to imagine possible interventions**, depending on the characteristics and degree of problematic living conditions. The main criteria for recognising households were both **physical** (the presence of empty dwellings and squats, the overall state of maintenance of the building) and **social, management and community-related** (the characteristics of the concierge service, the inhabitants' perceptions of safety and coexistence issues, the care and accessibility of common areas). On the basis of this subdivision, **specific intervention scenarios** were then imagined, holding together the quality of living, the quality of common spaces, social relations and support for the most fragile categories of inhabitants. This is inevitably a **grouping that brings together very different situations**, each with its own specificities, but it nevertheless appears useful in the perspective of **future planning that starts from the conditions of the spaces and the relations between them and the people who inhabit them**.

> Inspiring good practices

To be carefully preserved and replicated in the district

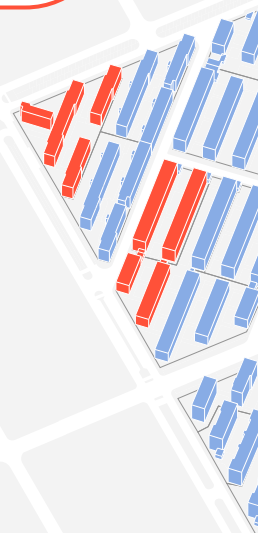
- > **Reduced presence of empty dwellings:** an inhabited building in all its parts promotes a feeling of general safety and the maintenance of adequate sanitary conditions, as well as the daily care of domestic and neighbourhood spaces.
- > **Presence of a long-term caretaker,** often resident in the building: the caretaker assumes an important role as a reference point for the inhabitants and as an active guardian. Knowing personally the individual housing situations and the specific conditions of fragility, he is a fundamental intermediary figure between the inhabitants and the managing body.
- > **Good state of maintenance and good accessibility of the building:** the manager carries out on time ordinary and extraordinary maintenance work, care of the green areas, the removal of architectural barriers and the restoration of the lighting and security system of the entrances.
- > **Good neighbourly relations:** positive relations between the building's inhabitants are fostered by collective actions for the care of common areas, undertaken on the initiative of caretakers and inhabitants. Shared use of common courtyards, guaranteed by the joint presence of caretakers and Aler community managers, mitigates conflicts and encourages sociability.



> Sectors with which to foster exchange opportunities

Possible interventions

- > **Improving the management of transitional spaces between public and private buildings,** encouraging shared care, fostering greater communication on possible uses and organising opportunities for dialogue between the inhabitants of the different buildings to mitigate possible conflicts.





> Situations to be assisted with punctual actions

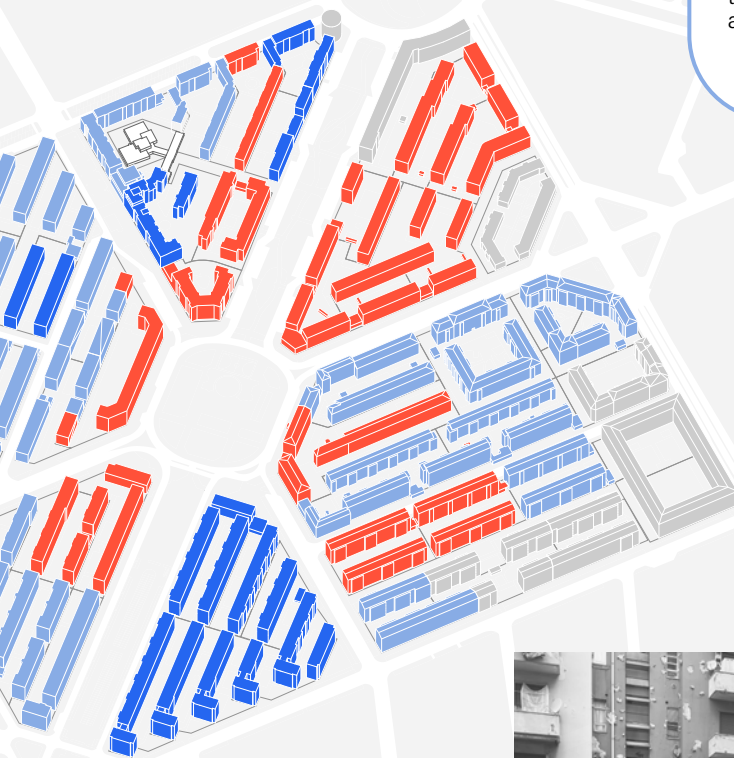
Possible interventions

- > **Unlocking dormant housing potential:** prioritise the allocation of empty housing by jointly rehabilitating disused flats within the same building and speeding up the allocation process. The PINQuA programme could be applied here by redeveloping the 44 dwellings in the programme within the same or two adjacent buildings. This punctual action would increase the positive impact of the project not only at the household scale, but also at the condominium and block scale.
- > **Increasing concierge services** by increasing concierge opening times and promoting contractual continuity of caretakers within the same building.
- > **Supporting forms of organisation among residents,** through synergies between the activities of caretakers and the initiatives of Aler's community managers.
- > **To increase security in the evening hours** by improving the lighting system in common areas and the control of main and secondary entrances.

> Areas of experimentation to be favoured

Possible interventions

- > **Set up a table of competences for the management of situations of particular fragility:** enhance the competence of local actors and institutions present in the neighbourhood, with a joint programme for the identification, support and accompaniment of situations of employment and of particular economic, psychological and social fragility. O three institutions such as Aler, the Municipality of Milan and the Police, among those to be involved, bearers of local instances, certainly include: Siset, Bocconi Legal Clinic, Community Managers of Aler
- > **To set up a team of experts in the field of architecture,** for the redevelopment and enhancement of the building stock, for the renovation of sub-standard housing and for the design of quality common areas within the buildings.
- > **Increasing and enhancing concierge services,** increasing concierge opening hours, promoting contractual continuity of caretakers within the same building and improving communication between the managing body, community managers and caretakers for better management of common areas, greenery and waste.



'Living San Siro.

A co-research on housing conditions and ERP management networks'

Research promoted by:

Mapping San Siro

CURA Lab - Collaborative Urban Research&Action

OFF CAMPUS - Polisocial

Department of Architecture and Urban Studies - Politecnico di Milano

Scientific co-ordination:

Francesca Cognetti [Politecnico di Milano - DASTU]

Research co-ordination:

Maria Elena Ponno [Università IUAV di Venezia]

In cooperation with:

Tenants' Union Siset Milan

MaudLab - Mapping and Urban Data Lab, DASTU - Politecnico di Milano

Networked with:

Associazione Alfabeti Onlus

Inconvenient Association

CISL FNP Milano Metropoli

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Cooperativa Equa

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The intermediate contents of the report were shared and discussed, in addition to the research partners, with: Cristina Badocchi (Milan City Council), Laura Basile (Milan City Council), Bianca Bottero, Manuela Brienza (Milan City Council), Fosco Bugoni (Aler), Jacopo Carbonieri (Aler), Sergio Danieluzzi (Milan City Council), Beatrice De Carli (London Met), Anna Delera (Polimi), Stefano Di Clemente (Aler), Rosa Di Lecce (Aler), Maria Finzi (Siset), Denis Gervasoni (Milan City Council), Paolo Grassi (CURA Lab - UniBicocca), Francesco Lorusso, Sara Mantovani (Aler), Dina Mohamed (Aler), Clara Orsenigo (Aler), Franca Primavera (Milan City Council), Milan Network of Committees, Sabina Uberti Bona (Milan City Council), Loredana Unali (Milan City Council), Lucia Ventura (UniBocconi).

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Contents of the report

Texts by:

Maria Elena Ponno, Francesca Cognetti

Drawings, photos and graphic elaborations by:

Maria Elena Ponno, Giulia Ranieri, Alice Alessandri

Graphic design by:

Maria Elena Ponno

Supporting the collection and processing of public data:

Giacomo Manfredi [Sicet Milano]

Alice Alessandri [Politecnico di Milano - DASTU]

Contribution to the implementation of surveys and interviews:

Giulia Vittoria Ranieri [student in Architecture, Built Environment Interior Polimi]

Rebecca Migliarini [student in Local Development UNIPD]

Statistical data processing::

Fabio Manfredini [MaudLab - Mapping and Urban Data Lab, Polimi]

Viviana Giavarini [MaudLab - Mapping and Urban Data Lab, Polimi]

Supporting the distribution and completion of the questionnaire:

Giacomo Manfredi [Sicet Milano]

Lorenzo Borserini, student in Urban Planning: City Environment Landscape [POLIMI]

Andrea Giacchetta, student in Urban Planning: City Environment Landscape [POLIMI]

Paola Raggi, student in Urban Planning: City Environment Landscape [POLIMI]

Filippo Ferrari [Associazione Scomodo]

Caterina de Luca [Associazione Scomodo]

Carlotta Simonetti [Associazione Scomodo]

Valentina Mazzenga [Associazione Scomodo]

Students of the Postgraduate Course in Urban Anthropology [Milan Bicocca University]

Contribution to the final drafting of the report:

Alice Ranzini [Politecnico di Milano - DASTU]

Rossella Ferro [Politecnico di Milano - DASTU]

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The issue of the right to housing, and in particular that of the right to public housing, takes on an urgent priority today, in the face of the major urban transformations affecting the city of Milan and the related processes of 'expulsion' - exacerbated in recent times by rising prices and the post-Covid economic crisis - of ever larger segments of the population. The San Siro neighbourhood hosts one of the highest concentrations of public housing in the city, with a housing stock of about 6,000 dwellings. The district still represents a valuable resource for safeguarding the right to housing for the most fragile segments of the population. However, the preservation and valorisation of this heritage seem to be recursively undermined by several factors that, in recent years, have caused slow and continuous processes of erosion and poor valorisation of the public housing stock. The aim of the research is therefore to bring out and represent the multiplicity of aspects concerning the 'housing issue' within the public housing district, reporting the different points of view, the critical issues but also the countless resources that this neighbourhood has built and consolidated over time. The co-research path, developed from the knowledge of the area produced over years of activity and stable presence in the San Siro district, was developed in a network with a number of subjects who have long collaborated in the research group's activities and with whom a solid relationship of trust and exchange has now been established. In line with a situated and participatory approach to research, attentive to making the most of different forms of knowledge and data representation, the investigation was carried out according to an open and adaptive path, making use of different research tools, such as on-site visits, interpretive mapping, exchanges with residents and the various voices present in the neighbourhood.



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E STUDI URBANI