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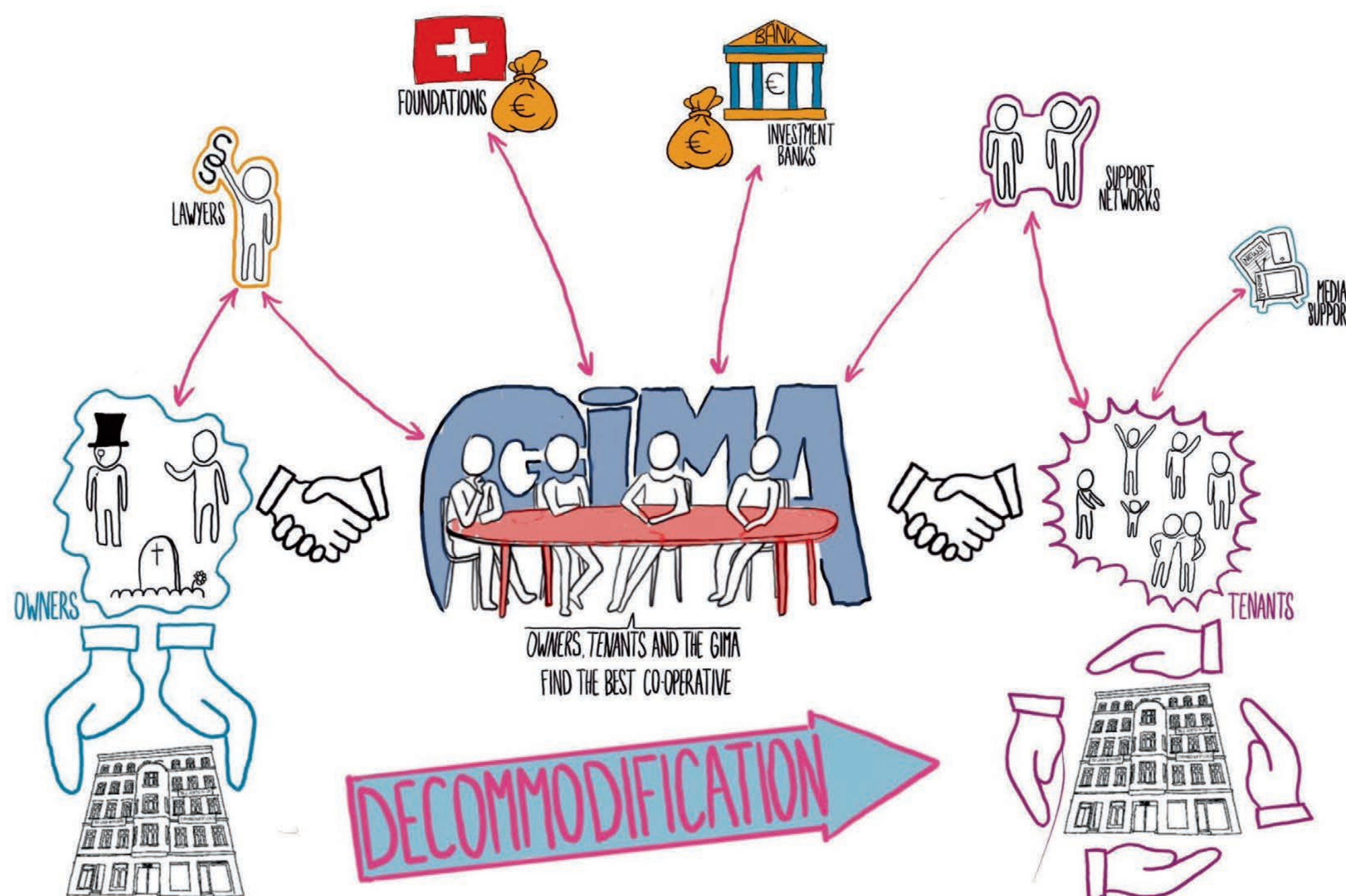
Reclaiming the City - the Role of GIMA

YOU CAN RUN A BUILDING ECONOMICALLY AND OFFER SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE RENTS - IT'S POSSIBLE! PEDRO ELSBACH, MEMBER OF GIMA, ELSBACH STIFTUNG

De·com·mod·i·fi·ca·tion

In recent decades housing has been viewed less and less as a part of public services and more as an object of speculation and capital accumulation - in short: housing became a commodity. The consequences are rising rents and displacement processes.

The decommodification of housing involves both detaching it from market mechanisms and eliminating its treatment as a commodity.



What is GIMA?

The main goal of all GIMAs is to take tenements off the speculative market and prevent them from being treated as goods.

The first **cooperative real estate agency (GIMA for short)** was founded in 2007 in Munich to support established co-operatives amid arising prices. In 2021, GIMAs in Frankfurt am Main and Berlin were founded as a result of tenant movements.

The specialty of the agencies lies representing their non-profit member organisations and providing guidance both for tenants and landowners, resolving issues and coordinating the process to sell their house to one of the GIMA-members. Another distinctive feature of the GIMAs lies in their structure: **GIMA itself operates as a co-operative**, comprised of non-profits that actively participate in purchasing, managing and utilizing properties for the common good.

In Munich, the GIMA actively champions the interests of non-profits in municipal housing policy and has also set up a foundation ("Daheim im Viertel").

About 1/3 of GIMA cases in Berlin start with landowners considering selling their property for the common good, while 2/3 are initiated by tenants facing the threat of a sale to an investor. GIMAs receive **2 to 3 percent of the purchase price** for its work.

ABOUT US

WE ARE FOUR STUDENTS OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AT HU BERLIN WITH DIFFERENT PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS: TABEA BIECK, CAMILLE KLUMMEYER, TALE WOLL, ARTHUR ZSCHABITZ

SOURCES



How the K12 was decommodified:



2020: How it began

- Notice to tenants about the sale of the house at Kastanienallee 12 (K12)
- Tenants organized themselves, reached out for support and contacted the GIMA

Who wanted to buy us?

- Landowners, K12 and SelbstBau eG were brought together and were advised by the GIMA in frequent meetings

Foreclosure threatens

- Landowners and the co-operative agreed on the sale, the funding approval from the senate still remained
- Meanwhile, the forced sale was imminent



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2021: Networking, protesting & uniting

- The K12 started a press campaign reaching out for community and political support along with the GIMA and potential buyers

2022: K12 is saved and decommodified

- K12 finally received the funding approval
- Purchase from SelbstBau eG, Edith Maryon Foundation and through the tenant shares (10 %)

What are the difficulties?

The GIMA Berlin receives 15-25 inquiries annually. "Of these 15-25 cases, 5-10 cases are processed and **two per year have worked out so far**", Julian Zwicker, GIMA Berlin.

Various factors influence the low success rate. The established brokers and real estate market have accustomed landowners to high offer prices and fast procedures. All GIMAs follow a socially responsible approach, which requires a certain amount of time and a willingness not to demand the highest prices. Although the price gaps are usually not that large, landowners are often reluctant to enter this unusual procedure. Furthermore, particularly in Berlin and Frankfurt, the GIMAs are facing severe difficulties due to the lack of long-term financing for the sale, construction, and renovation of non-profit housing projects — a situation that is partly attributable to insufficient political will. The process of protecting houses from being sold to investors also highly depends on the tenants' willingness and their financial opportunities. It is assumed that at least 80 % of the **tenants will become members of the co-operative** by buying shares. The higher the purchase price of the house and the younger the co-operative, the higher the required shares - up to **350 €/sq m**. Without appropriate funding, people cannot afford to save their homes, and the financial risk becomes too great for the co-operative.

Are GIMAs the solution?

GIMAs are already effectively contributing to the decommodification of housing by providing advice and support to transfer rental properties to co-operatives and thus save them from being sold to investors. They also represent their members' interests and engage in political lobbying. Nevertheless, the possibilities and impact of GIMAs are limited. With sufficient public funding for housing and more political will as well as a stronger right of first refusal, GIMAs could save many more houses every year and thus secure affordable housing in the long term.

WITHOUT THEM WE WOULD ALL NO LONGER BE HERE! KATHE WENZEL, TENANT IN THE K12

HOW TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD? IN SEARCH FOR COOPERATIVE TRANSFORMATION

