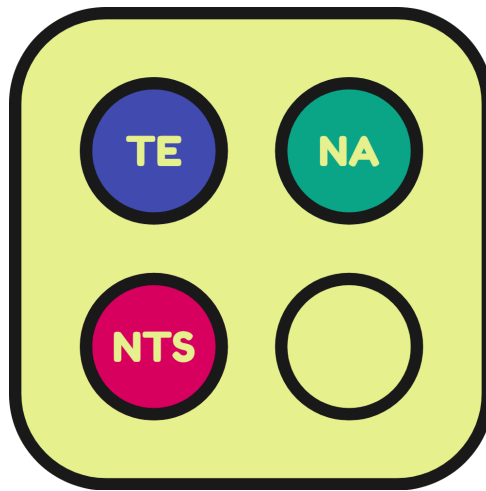


THE TENANTS

a role-playing game about community dynamics

5-12 players | 45-120 minutes | age 16+



AUTHORS

Game design and development: Zbigniew Janczukowicz

Text editing, translation to english: Wojciech Nowak

MATERIALS

www.nausika.eu/timedive

PRINTOUTS

CONTACT

biuro@nausika.eu

+48 518 584 244

www.facebook.com/nausika.foundation

www.instagram.com/nausika.foundation

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A role-playing game about community dynamics

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

5-12 players

DURATION

45-120 minutes



PLOT

The third decade of the 21st century, Kraków, Poland.

The Old Town is overrun with tourists, townhouse after townhouse falls victim to investors converting apartments for short-term rental.

However, there are still historic townhouses inhabited by locals. Tenants struggle with the technical condition of a building, which looks impressive from the front, but does not meet basic standards inside.

Financial resources are small, and they are getting smaller because of inflation but also long-lasting conflicts and miscommunication between neighbors stand in the way of their effective use.

Tenants is a role-playing game in which you will take on the role of residents of 7 apartments belonging to an old townhouse in the historic center of Kraków. You will meet during the annual meeting of the homeowner association to discuss the renovation fund, which will not be enough to satisfy everyone.

TAGS

community, negotiations, elections, common good, conflict of interests

GAME DESCRIPTION

Residents is a role-playing game for beginners, requiring no prior preparation, created to train communication skills and decision-making.





It is addressed not only to young people, but also to adults who face the challenge of managing a common good on a daily basis.

Players take on the role of tenants of a historic townhouse during a decision-making meeting of the homeowner association regarding finances and renovation.

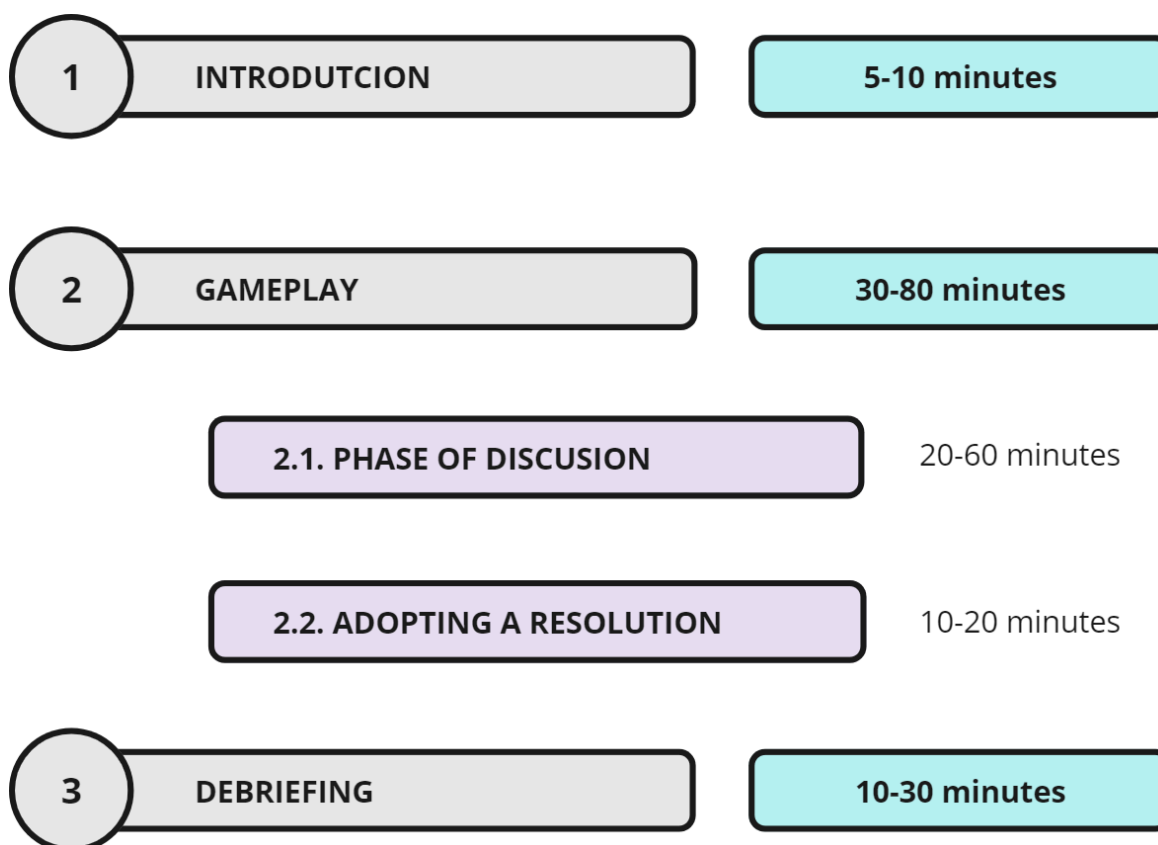
The townhouse is a common good, but the most important thing for everyone is their own apartment. Everyone perceives the building through the prism of their needs, financial situation and lifestyle. The ground floor residents complain about the cold coming from the basement, and the attic residents complain about the leaky roof. Additionally, everyone's life is made miserable by the reprehensible behavior of one of their neighbors, which, to make matters worse, they consider as an example of good manners.

In order to adopt a majority and specific resolution that will enable effective use of the available renovation fund, the characters will have to demonstrate the art of compromise, active listening and seeing the world from different perspectives.

At the metaphorical level, the game's plot can be easily related to any community managing the common good (a townhouse as a city, state, environment, planet), and the dynamics of the group process to any negotiation situation subject to the following conditions:

-  time to make decisions is limited
-  the amount of resources is limited
-  knowledge of decision-makers is partial
-  everybody thinks subjectively

GAME STRUCTURE



Hint for the Game Master: the goal of this game is not to create a realistic simulation of the homeowner association. This game was designed to create an atmosphere of heated discussion and to mock certain behaviors. According to that you shouldn't try to recreate a real homeowner association meeting. Moreover in every country this type of meetings may look differently and on top of that the competences of tenants may also vary. The structure of this game is based on polish way of doing, but it shall be seen as a purely fictional situation.

PREPARATION

Game master

One person is enough to run this game. Game master should read the entire Instructions carefully.

Location

- Prepare a room with a large table and chair for each player;
- you will also need a flip chart or writing board;
- loose sheets of paper and pens for players to take notes will also be useful;
- no people from outside the game should enter the room during the game (that would disrupt players and make it harder for them to immerse themselves in the story being told and the roles being played);
- players and game master should have access to the Internet (they can use private phones if there is a good signal in the room).

Printing

- Print all pages of this [PRINTOUTS](#): one-sided on A4 color paper;
- each page (starting on page 3, with the inscription “Family”) fold along the dotted lines so that it looks like a three-winged leaflet;
- put together the **Apartment Cards** and **Identifiers** corresponding in number so that when you place them on the table, only the side of the Identifier with the illustration of the door and the apartment number is visible.

Putting out the cards

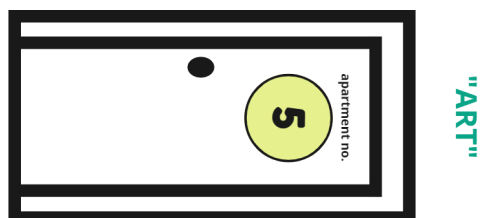
- Before the players enter, lay out 7 pairs of cards on the table (each pair has a apartment card and an identifier), and place at least one chair in front of each pair of cards;
- set up your chair in a position that will allow you to see and be seen by each player during the game.

Information about the townhouse

- Read the **Townhouse Description** and Relation Diagram (in this Instruction);
- prepare a laptop or tablet with good connection to the Internet;
- during the game, you will need to check sample renovation offers and prices on the Internet.

MATERIALS

Players will interact with two types of info cards, which examples are shown underneath. **Identifiers** and **Apartment Cards**, both have dotted lines which show where they should be folded. In a preparation, put each **Apartment Card** into a corresponding **Identifier**, it should be done in a way that players will see only an illustration of a door with a **WORD**.



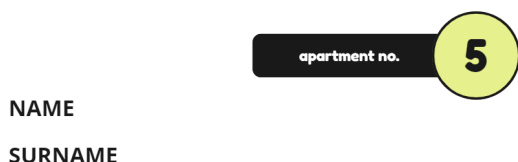
Identifier

A door on an **Identifier** will be the only piece of information with which players will decide in which apartment their characters live.



When players have chosen their apartment they have to write the surname and name (or multiples, if there are more players).

And at the end **Identifiers** should be folded in the way to look like a triangle, in which the base will be a side with a **WORD** and the visible sides will be those with name and surname.



Apartment Card

On a **Apartment Card** are all the information players should use while playing their characters. "About..." sections mostly focus on relationships between tenants and how they see the townhouse.

Apartment Card doesn't describe in detail the characters of players nor relationships between people living in the same apartment. If your game has more players (or they would like stronger immersion) it is worth it to give them some time to come up with more details. You can encourage them to do it by asking question like those:
How old is your character? How long are you living in this townhouse? What are the vibes of your apartment?



ABOUT THE BUILDING

In the entrance hall of this prestigious building are historic stained glass windows. Unfortunately, in lamentable condition! Rust, traces of greasy fingers, smudges from cigarette smoke. It's embarrassing to look at. And yet, specialists in restoration of monuments can bring them back to their former glory and glamour.

ABOUT YOURSELF

For several years you have been living near the city, and renting an apartment to a wealthy family from India. The arrangement has given you long-awaited financial freedom. You respect your residents and visit them once a year for a traditional Bengali-style dinner.

ABOUT THE NEIGHBORS

Your residents are complaining about frequent power shortages. You suspect that the source of the problem is the tenants in apartment 2, who have installed a whole battery of cryptocurrency miners at their place, which require an absurd amount of energy to operate.

How to run this game

INTRODUCTION

Greet players entering the room, tell them to choose a seat at the table and not touch the cards placed on it (*players choose their apartments based solely on **WORD** located on top of the **Identifier***).

The game can be played by 5 to 12 people. It doesn't matter if you find out how many players there are only at the last minute.

- **If there are 7 players**, let each player represent 1 of the apartments. Each of them should sit individually in front of the Identifier.
- **If there are fewer than 7 players**, some of the Identifiers will be left without a player. Take them with you, you can treat them as letters with complaints and recommendations from absent residents.
- **If there are more than 7 players**, the additional people will be family members or roommates, the same Apartment Card applies to them, but more people should be listed on the Identifier. Let the players choose their own groups according to their will.

Once everyone is seated, explain the rules of the game:

- in a designated game space (e.g. the room where you are sitting), there is a game convention (the homeowner association meeting is taking place here) and role-playing (you are members of the homeowner association at the meeting);
- each player can leave the game space at any time and return at any time – then, at the story level, we assume that the character has left the meeting or returned from the toilet.

Additionally, provide players with tips on how to play:

- there is no conspiracy or hidden meaning in the game – the company is a legal real estate management company, and its representative does not impersonate anyone and does not want to deceive you;
- let everyone have their say, remember that everyone has important information on their Apartment Card about the overall condition of the townhouse.

THE COMPANY'S TASK

As the Game Master, during the story part of the game you will play the role of the Representative of the company managing the townhouse.

The company is an entity legally authorized to administer real estate, employed by the homeowner association to manage the building, regular duties include:

- cleaning and monitoring the common space in and right outside the building;
- collecting and recording rent payments from apartment owners (community members);
- carrying out renovations of common parts of buildings.

The first points are performed on an ongoing basis as a continuous order, while the last point requires a binding Resolution adopted legitimately by a majority of the homeowner association. Resolutions are adopted on an annual basis, i.e. they can be adopted once a year.

The renovation fund accumulated on the association account is exactly PLN 300,000 (if you are playing in another country, you convert the value of the funds to the appropriate currency or use PLN).

The story takes place in the same city and in the same year as the physical event. Thanks to this, you can use construction calculators available on the Internet and current offers from stores and renovation companies - the Game Master and Players can check offers on the Internet on an ongoing basis during the game.

The valuation should be realistic. If you order the replacement of 200 m² of roof tiles for PLN 2,000, no one will do it, or maybe one person will just pour a bucket of glue on the leaking place (bad idea).

Price lists can be checked by both tenants (players) and the Company (game master), but the decision on the content of the Resolution rests with the tenants. The main role and task of the Company is to carry out the process of adopting the Resolution.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNHOUSE

The Game Master does not need to have any knowledge about architecture, just a bit of imagination and common sense. The detailed technical plan of the townhouse was not included in the game because the authors want each player to imagine it a little differently.

The following dimensions and information about the technical condition of the townhouse should be considered as objective facts, the rest is up to the imagination and improvisation of the Game Master and players.

The townhouse is located in the historic center of the city. It was built in 1895, on the foundations of the previous building, dating back to the 17th century.

Building measurements:

Total area of the townhouse: 670 m²

Total roof area: 220 m²

Total garden area: 90m² (including 40m² of the garbage gazebo)

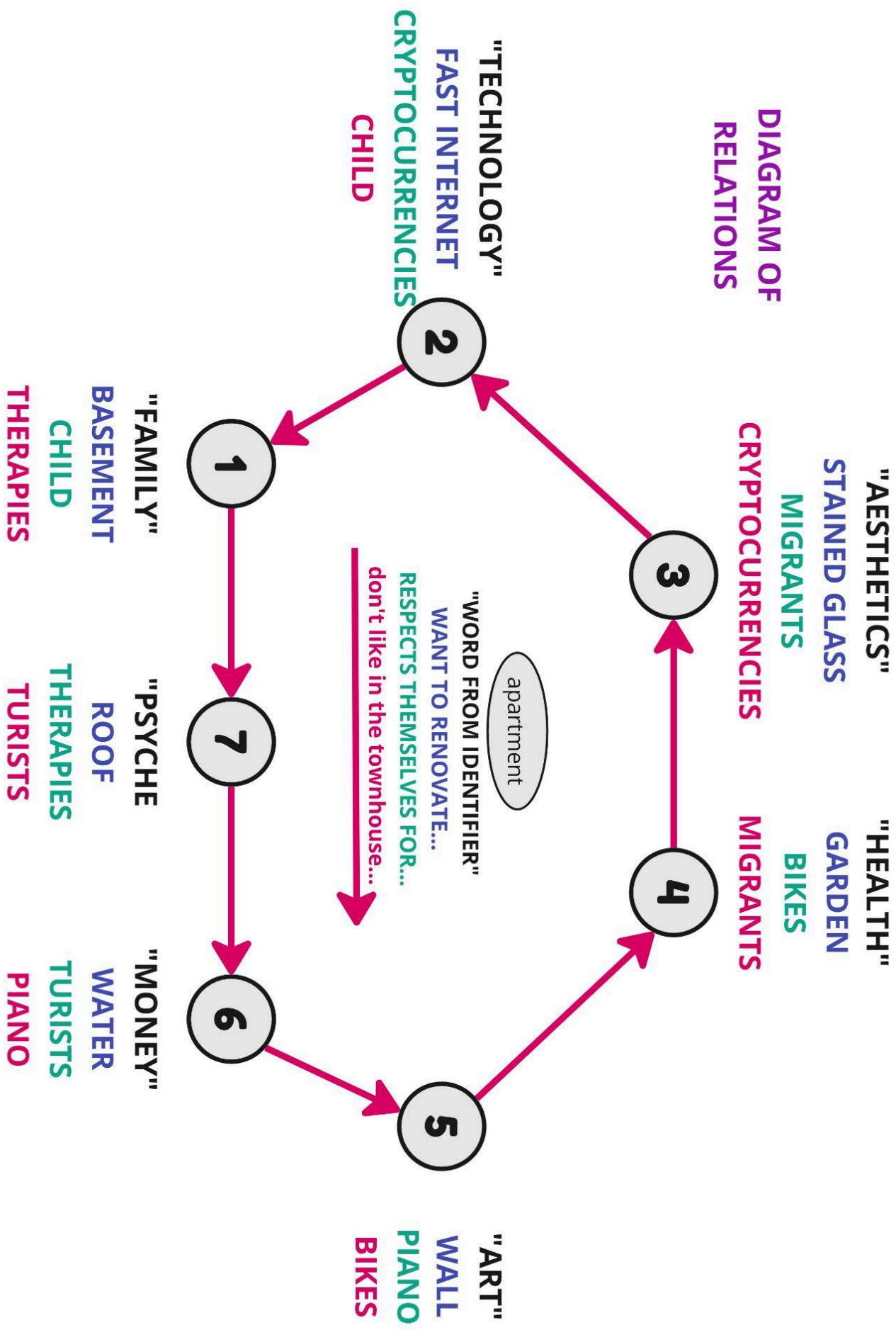
Installations: gas, electricity and cold water are supplied to each apartment, most apartments have radiators that are powered by their own gas furnace or electricity.

Basements: each apartment has a small storage room in the basement, the condition of the basements does not allow them to be inhabited.

More detailed information:

- the townhouse is not insulated from the outside;
- the townhouse shares side walls with similar townhouses;
- the front wall of the townhouse is covered with decorative plaster imitating stones, crumbled in places and smeared with street graffiti;
- the back wall of the townhouse is covered with gray lime-plaster, which shows lichen and traces of flowing water;
- the staircase has an internal air corridor, the old balustrades on the stairs are too low and may pose a problem in the event of a building inspection;
- the slope of the front wall was last measured 15 years ago and was 4 degrees from vertical.

DIAGRAM OF RELATIONS



ADOPTING A RESOLUTION

The residents' goal is to pass a Resolution that meets all of the following conditions:

1. More than 50% of community members agree to it (apartments represented during the meeting, 1 apartment = 1 vote).
2. Provides a clear list of renovation investments with the maximum amount allocated for each investment.
3. The total investment does not exceed the total amount available in the renovation fund.

If any of the conditions are not met within the planned time, the renovation budget will be frozen for the future (and will shrink due to inflation).

If the Resolution is passed, selected investments will be commissioned to contractors at the rates specified in the Resolution and, if these rates are reasonable, the quality of life in the tenement house will have a chance to increase.

For example, the correct content of the Resolution may look like this:

- PLN 80,000 for roof sealing;
- PLN 130,000 for basement insulation;
- PLN 10,000 for replacing intercoms;
- PLN 50,000 for garden renovation;
- PLN 5,000 to clean the front wall.

Players will make completely different decisions each game. The Company does not evaluate them substantively, it only ensures that the total investment does not exceed PLN 300,000 and that the Resolution is adopted by vote.

Hint for the Game Master: players will likely be arguing over various renovation and personal details for most of the game. Let them do it, even if they stray from the topic of renovating the townhouse. About 10 minutes before the end of the game time, remind them that the Resolution must be passed (and what conditions it must meet), otherwise none of the renovation tasks will be completed.

DEBRIEFING

After completing the story part of the game, it is worth having a conversation with the players and reflecting on the processes that happened.

Remind players:

1. Thank you for playing the TENANTS role-playing game. It was written under the influence of actual and one-time participation in a meeting of the homeowner association of a real townhouse in the center of Kraków. The author of the game did not appear in person at subsequent meetings. We hope your experience is more encouraging ;)
2. Remember that this was a role-playing game in which you acted as fictional characters. Your characters may have behaved badly and rudely. No one wanted to offend anyone as a player. If you feel uncomfortable or need clarification, now is a good time.

Lead the discussion. You can ask the following or other questions:

1. Who feels like their character achieved their goals during the homeowner association meeting? And who feels the opposite?
2. What was the decision-making process like? How did you manage to come to a joint decision? Or why couldn't it be undertaken?
3. A homeowner association is a metaphor. Similar processes are playing out at many other levels. It is about negotiating when it comes to the common good. The dynamics of such a process can be summarized in the following points:



time to make decisions is limited



the amount of resources is limited



knowledge of decision-makers is partial



everybody thinks subjectively

Try to give examples of similar situations from your own life or anecdotes, media, news or literary fiction. How were they resolved? Did they end tragically or comically? You can't avoid negotiations in life, so it's better to be patient, clever or at least have a sense of humor ;)

