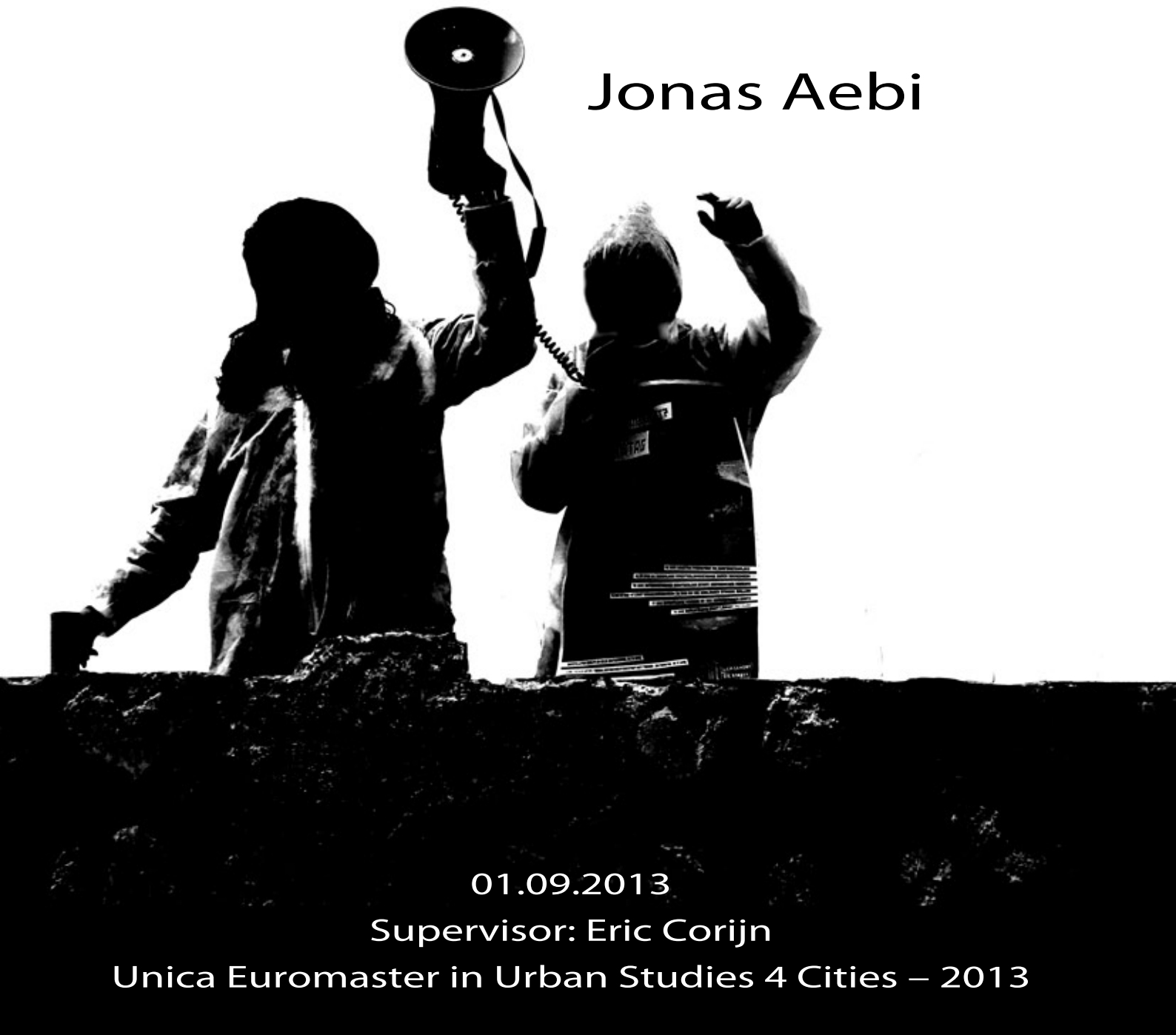


BETWEEN CRY AND DEMAND

Class Composition and Housing Struggles
in Vienna and Madrid

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“In the beginning is the scream. We scream.

When we write or when we read, it is easy to forget that the beginning is not the word, but the scream.
Faced with the mutilation of human lives by capitalism, a scream of sadness, a scream of horror, a
scream of anger, a scream of refusal: NO.

The starting point of theoretical reflection is opposition, negativity, struggle. It is from rage that thought
is born, not from the reasoned-sitting-back-and-reflecting-on-the-mysteries-of-existence that is the
conventional image of the thinker.”

(John Holloway)

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PREFACE

“Preguntando caminamos” - *“Fragend schreiten wir voran”* - *“Asking, we walk”* - This is the powerful slogan of the Zapatistas in Chiapas. The revolutionary path we walk is not a path full of certainties and successes, but of uncertainties, questions and failures. When I was in Vienna, a squatter-friend of mine proposed to write a new slogan at the wall of the squat: *“Fragend scheitern wir voran”* - The wordplay is hardly translatable, but just by replacing one “r” in the original, the slogan has powerfully changed its meaning: Asking, we fail. The failure is not a loss. The failure is a step on the path we walk asking – a step forward, if the failure is the bearer of new knowledge. Stephen Shukaitis has written: *“Especially if one is speaking of social theory, new ideas are even more likely to emerge from the frustration of revolutionary hopes than from their fulfillment.”* (Shukaitis & Graeber 2007: 17) He sees the failure of social movements, of revolts, uprisings or revolution the bearer of new imaginaries of new knowledge that can lead to new uprisings. The question is, how we deal with failures. Actually, this thesis is full of failures. One could say, it is a discussion of failures. But, even if the text talks about failures, I don't think it is one. It was an experiment to transgress the framework of an academic world in order to not suffocate personal experience and political action in an alleged objectivity. Therefore, I hope that the text can contribute ideas to those the text is written for: all people struggling for a decent living, who no longer accept capital and state authority over the question of how we want to live, and especially, how we want to dwell in our cities.

I thank all the compañer@s, especially in Vienna and Madrid, who were so kind to talk, discuss and fight against evil landlords with me! And I thank all the 4Cities people and professors who made this two years unforgettable. Thanks to Eric Corijn and Miguel Martínez López, for the support. Thanks also to my parents and my closest friends for making this possible by being there for me! And a special thanks to those who helped me in the last desperate hours: Debbie, Liis, Sevi, Guus and Marion!



Demand
the
impossible

0 INTRODUCTION

"The right to the city is like a cry and a demand." (Lefèbvre 1996: 158)

In the beginning, the right to the city is a refusal. A refusal of a capitalist society that controls the way we live in cities. It is thus a cry, or as Holloway would say, a scream. This refusal of the many forms that domination and exploitation take is direct, spontaneous. It is, initially, not formulated as a demand, but as a negating cry. Yet by proceeding from this cry towards a political opposition, the right to the city formulates itself as a demand and as forms of organisation. The question at stake in this paper is, how we proceed from the non-organised, spontaneous cry to the organised, outspoken demand. The following reflections are thus located between cry and demand, in the space where subjective resistance and collective action join and create new knowledge and subjectivities of struggle. The research is positioned in the tradition of militant research, which aims at combining academic reflection with political action, empirical research with movement building. However, as my process has shown, my approach differed in decisive points from the principles of militant research. My intentions and concepts are very much connected to the researches of the Italian Operaists (Workerists), who investigated class composition and hidden or spontaneous forms of resistance in Italian Fordist industries in order to reinforce class struggle. Operaists alongside other Marxist and critical theories have focused on the factory as the political locus of class struggle (hence they have critically been termed 'factoryists'). The Fordist factory was seen as the productive place of the economy, whereas the city and urban space were seen as the sphere of reproduction, of "collective consumption" (Castells 1973). With the crisis of Fordism and Taylorism the walls of the factory burst, releasing the economy into the urban space, the "fabbrica diffusa." Today, a network of Global Cities has become the nerve of finance and service economy. Authors such as Harvey and Hardt & Negri claim, that the creation of ground rent constitute a major basis for capital accumulation. With urban space and life being itself a productive force of capital, one could follow Hardt & Negri's analogy made in their book "Commonwealth" (2009: 250): "*the metropolis is to the multitude what the factory was to the industrial working class.*" However, if the metropolis should become to the multitude what the factory was to the industrial working class, then the question of the organisation of resistance has to be asked anew. The general thesis of this paper is thus: If urban movements are to oppose capitalist expansion in postfordist cities, new forms of (self)organisation and appropriation have to be found that have the strength to create antagonistic conflicts in urban space. Such a step requires knowledge about the social realities and the diverse forms of perceptions, interests and resistances of city dwellers as well as about the forms of organisation of resistance in urban struggles. Focusing on housing struggles and tenants resistances, this study aims at providing such knowledge. I chose Vienna

and Madrid as case studies for this research, not only because I have been studying, living and participating in such struggles during the last two years of the 4Cities-Master course. Due to their distinct political, social and cultural structures these cities offer two interesting cases. Especially in the housing sector, Vienna and Madrid occupy oppositional positions. While the Austrian capital has become famous as the “Red Vienna” during the early 20th century, shaped by an exemplary public housing policy and rent regulation, the Spanish capital, strongly affected by the economic crisis, experiences the consequences of a market-driven housing provision and subsequent real estate bubble. Even though both cases are analysed as forms of neoliberalisation, the differences between the two are emphasised, which allows a proper understanding of the local specificities as well as of global tendencies. The two cities also differ strongly in their culture of resistance. While in contemporary Vienna, social movements are not non-existent but quite rare or weak, crisis-struck Madrid has seen important mobilisations such as the 15-M movement, reflecting back on a rich tradition of social and resistance movements. The two case studies thus represent two distinct stages of social movements. In Vienna, the struggle against rising rents, speculation and displacement launched by a squat and a political group called “Wilder Wohnen” is at an early stage, in the state of “becoming”, while in Madrid, struggles against the widespread housing crisis have already led to the emergence of a strong social movement and organisational structures such as the “Plataforma des afectados por la hipoteca” (PAH). To analyse such differences not only as a prove for local embeddedness of struggles, but as localised expressions of an opposition to global processes of capital accumulation will help to reflect upon the possibilities of shared objectives or exchange of experiences – and essentially to a process learning from each other.

My comparative analysis explores “class struggle” in both cities, exemplified in their respective housing sector. It is grounded in a theoretical framework which draws strongly on Operaism. The concepts of the technical and political class composition, which are strongly based on class structures in factories, are transformed to urban space. The struggle against displacement and evictions are emphasised and positioned at the core of the antagonism against urban capitalism. I focus on the two research questions:

How does the class composition brought forward through policies in the housing sector influence housing struggles?

Which collective and individual forms of self-organisation and appropriation of spaces are present in housing struggles?

The methodology used to answer the questions is grounded on aspects of militant research. However, due to limitations of time, this approach had to be modified and is presented in a more “traditional” way. Analysis of the class composition is based on secondary literature and statistical data, while the political class composition and hence the forms of resistance were analysed using qualitative, ethnographic approach using participant, militant observation, qualitative interviews and informal discussions. The text presented here is in some ways a synthesis of a more extensive research in Vienna, resulting in a text circulating within internal media of the movement (see A.C); and a shorter research in

Madrid in order to guarantee a comparative approach. Thus, the paper does not directly represent “a” militant research, but should rather be seen as a (methodological and theoretical) proposal and first assessment of principles for militant research in the housing sector.

The paper is structured in a way that assumes a linear process, from the elaboration of methodology, towards theoretical clarification of the research, to the analysis of the case studies and the concluding syntheses. However, I would like to stress that this structure is not equivalent to the research process itself, which has been far more uneven, full of failures and uncertainties (reflections about the process can be found in chapter 6).

The first chapter discusses the methodology in a rather extensive way, since militant research is not a clear-cut methodology, but inherently dependent on the socio-historical conditions and the form of struggle it intervenes in. After reflecting on our ways of knowledge creation, the chapter thus offers a short history of militant research that aims at embedding the examples with their perspective historical and geographical situation. Finally, this will lead towards a summary of the main principles of militant research and the question of how these could be applied in urban space.

The second chapter discusses and defines theoretical core concepts of this study. Principally, the discussion aims at clarifying, what class composition and struggles to create an antagonism towards capitalism could mean in the housing sector. This question leads us to dig into neo-marxist theories of capital accumulation in cities.

The theoretical part is followed by the two case studies. The third chapter deals with a neighbourhood in Vienna the fourth chapter deals with the struggle against displacement in crisis-struck Madrid.

Finally, the findings are compared and discussed in the fifth chapter, followed by a reflection on the research process as a whole in the sixth chapter. This fifth chapter will first compare the two cities with the aim to understand how class composition – the socio-economical structures – influence local struggles. Differences that will lead to an understanding of the diversity of tactics, strategies and organisation of resistance. Without seeking an objective truth or *the* right way to struggle, the chapter finally offers proposals and reflections on future practices of struggle – in the hope that the struggle for housing becomes one of the struggles to overthrow the capitalist domination of our urban societies.



1 MILITANT RESEARCH

We live in great times! Our world grows smaller and smaller, we are connected by information technologies and global market to the last corner of our planet and we are able to study one single Master in four different cities in Europe! We have talked about Virillo, about speed and acceleration, and we have talked about Castells and Sassen, about the “network society” and its deeply segregated global cities. Probably we have been investigating the whole time, consciously or not, the structures and consequences of our globalised “knowledge economy.” In any case, this paper, even though it mostly talks about something else, begins with the question: “Which knowledge do we want?” It does so, because the starting point of the following thoughts are an opposition to these forms of knowledge that our hegemonic academical world produces nowadays. Since the OECD declared in 1996, that all OECD countries would be moving towards the so-called knowledge economy, many economists and social scientists have increased their interest in the knowledge society stating that, *“economic success is increasingly based on upon the effective utilisation of intangible assets such as knowledge, skills and innovative potential as the key resource for competitive advantage.”* (Brinkley 2006: 5) Inversely, the increased interest of the economy into knowledge creation has affected the perceptions of universities, towards a vision of knowledge as assets: Universities are seen to be *“critical to the creation of intellectual and knowledge assets in the national and local economies through transfer of academic knowledge and expertise to improve productivity and to create new products and services.”* (Williams 2008: 16) So much to the economist's vision towards universities. Since some time, critical academical movements are emerging that question the state of our universities. Fuelled by a layoff of a Belgian professor that opposed a GMO-Experiment by civil disobedience, the “slow science movement” for example questions *“that not only researchers, equipments and public money are of interest for the industry, but also the very stamp of scientific legitimacy.”* (Stengers 2011: 4) Science, nowadays produced “fast, competitive science” where the quantity of technocratic, economically exploitable becomes the measure of “scientific viability.” Instead, they call for a slow science, whose *“scientific reliability is situated, bound to the constraints of its production”* and that *“researchers learn to be affected, actively affected”* (ibid. 12) by the role knowledge plays for the construction of our future. The question is thus, how, for whom and for what purpose we, as students and academics, produce knowledge – questions which are unavoidably political as the consequences of the “knowledge society” definitely should made obvious. One strand of research that takes the question of knowledge production as starting point is militant research (MR), a diverse strand of approaches, based on the concept of “situated knowledge.” Even though, MR is a wide field of diverse approaches, they share some basic features which will be shortly discussed in the next paragraph. This summary is not thought to be exhaustive and does not aspire to depict a (non-existent) homogenous field, but to give a broad overview on the diverse approaches such research can take.

1.1 MILITANCY IN RESEARCH

1.1.1 Epistemology of Militant Research

„The oppressed are identified, measured, dissected, and programmed from the outside by the oppressors or the oppressor's representatives. [...] The results, moreover, are practically never communicated, or even discussed, with the persons who are most directly concerned, that is to say, the oppressed. The research is always done „on them“, and that means „without them“. (IDAC 1975)

Formulated against a science that proclaims the university and its institutional power relations as incubators of “true” knowledge, MR proposes ways of knowledge creation that uses the concept of “situated knowledge,” introduced by Haraway, who states that *“it is precisely in the politics and epistemology of partial perspectives that the possibility of sustained, rational, objective inquiry rests.”* (Haraway 1988: 584) Contesting science's claim for incubators of objective truth, MR builds on the knowledge of subjective and collective experience of ongoing social struggles. The research thus often follows the question, *„...how to produce knowledge that emerges directly from the concrete analyses of the territories of life and co-operation, and experiences of uneasiness and rebellion.”* (de Molina 2011: 143) By taking their own commitment as starting point of knowledge creation, militant researchers follow Shukaitis' & Graeber's (2007: 16) epistemological premise: *„Revolutionary dreams erupt out of political engagement: collective social movements are incubators of new knowledge.”*

In the refusal of finding “objective” truths we find what Negri (2007: 69) has called the *“return of the object to the subject.”* Hence, the *“question of subjectivity between resistance and conformism [Anpassung]”* (Becksteiner 2011: 6, tA [own translation]) becomes central. The researcher is thus not simply the active, subjective part that intervenes in the field of reality, but it is the “researched” themselves that are creator of the knowledge. Hence, MR *“tears down the division between the subject-researcher and object-researched.”* (de Molina 2011: 145) The subject, in this view, contains both, structures of domination, and potential of revolution, and it is exactly by creating knowledge of the potential forms of resistance, that the (researcher-researched) subject gains the possibility of breaking the determining character of forms of domination – a possibility, based on knowledge, but realized by resulting action: *“This moment of engagement and disruption (which Negri terms “self-valorization”) is a leap where the subject asserts itself against the determining social relations of capital and instead constructs others.”* (Grindon 2007: 103) By acknowledging the political dimension and power relations inscribed in all forms of knowledge creation, MR rejects the strict division between a supposedly neutral and objective academical reflection and an “impure”, because subjective and partial political action. Instead, militancy and research are seen of two sides of the same process:

“We think of our practice as a double movement: to create ways of being militants that escape the political certainties established a priori and embrace politics as research (in this case, it would be 'research militancy'), and, at the same time, to invent forms of thinking and producing concepts

that reject academic procedures, breaking away from the image of an object to be known and putting at the centre subjective experience (in this case, it would be 'militant research').” (Colectivo Situaciones 2007: 74)

1.1.2 Varieties of Militant Research

Since the second half of the last century a variety of MR emerged. Thereby, Participative Action Research (PAR) developed by the Brazilian liberation pedagogue Paolo Freire in the 1960s can be seen as an original inspiration (see Hall 1984, Kirkendall 2010, Torres 1995). PAR emphasises the importance of the participation of the oppressed within the research of their situation and the connection of the research with action, for “*reflection without action is sheer vandalism or armchair revolution and action without reflection is pure activism, or action for action's sake.*” (cit. after Baum et al. 2006: 856) Inspired by liberation pedagogy, PAR was originally used in the global south to oppose colonialism, but equally transferred to other domains of education and feminist struggles. Another important strand were the co-researches in factories from Marxist groups such as Socialisme ou Barbarie (SoB) in France or the Operaists in Italy (see 1.2). Inspired by these researches, a variety of new forms developed in the last decade, especially within new social movements. Just to name a few: Activist Research (see Martínez & Lorenzi 2012, Juris 2007, Team Colors Collective 2010) mainly “*aims to facilitate ongoing activist (self-)reflection regarding movement goals, tactics, strategies, and organizational forms.*” (Juris 2007: 165) Other researches focus on the field of precarity (see 1.2.3), while Militant Cartography projects seek for counter-representations of spaces (see Toret & Sguiglia 2006, Counter Mapping Collective 2012). Table 1 shows an overview of selected forms of MR.

Approach Topics	PAR	Marxist Co-research	Precarity Co-research	Activist Research	Militant Cartography
Field of research	Colonialism, Education, Feminism	Factory / working class	Urbanity / precarious work	Social movements	Neighborhood/ Urbanity/ Processes
Main goal of research	Empowerment	Self- organization / resistance	Self- organization, resistance	Self-reflection, further actions	Counter- Representation /Clarification of Spatial or Processual Structures
Main topic of research	Education, Oppression	Subjective Resistance, Subsumption to Capital	Subjective Resistance, Possibilities of collective organising	Social processes/ conflicts within movements, Repression, Collective Action	Networks of Resistance/ Alternatives, Networks of domination
Methodologies	Problem- Action- Reflection	Qualitative interviews, Participative Observation	Qualitative interviews, Participative Observation, Derive	Qualitative Interviews, Collective Discussion, (Self- Biographical) Ethnography	Cartography

Table 1: Characteristics of different forms of militant research, own layout

The concrete forms of involvement, participation and methodological design differ from the approaches. For this paper asks for the transformations struggles have undergone with the emergence of the postfordist economy, the autonomist Marxist MR will serve as heuristic framework for the research. Therefore, the next paragraph will shortly discuss the development of Marxist MR.

1.2 MILITANT RESEARCH IN AUTONOMOUS MARXISM

It was Karl Marx himself that introduced a form of “militancy” to Marxist research. When the French newspaper *Revue Socialiste* asked Marx in 1880 to create a „questionnaire for workers“ (Marx 1973), in order to investigate the conditions of the French working class, he developed a questionnaire with more than 100 questions. However, the design of the questionnaire goes further than being a pure inquiry of the material conditions of the workers – it has a “double function” as Karsunke & Wallraff (1970: 15, tA) called it: “*The answers would not only provide data to the condition, but equally to the consciousness of the respondents – which may contribute to a change of both*”, because “*while seriously attempting to answer the questions, he [sic!, the worker] would become conscious of the social conditionality of his situation.*” Therefore, we can

already find in Marx' work a tendency of empirical inquiry that aims at the subjective creation of resistance by research. After Marx' and the French socialists' intentions to create a serious research about the conditions of the French working class (the results have never been published), the idea of MR eventually revived in the 1950s. With the development of the "*keynesian welfare state*" Jessop (1992) and the Fordist regulation of class contradictions through the hegemonic integration of the working class through corporatism (see Lipietz 1998a Hirsch 1990, Castel 2000) new forms of MR emerged in Europe. The conflicts between co-opted left parties and trade unions and a reinforced dissatisfaction of the working class in the Taylorist factories opened a new field for radical political intervention. In the 1950s, the French group "Socialisme ou Barbarie" (SoB) started to stress the importance of a renewed interest for the working class, which had to be researched and organised outside of the corrupted elites of trade unions and communist parties. An analysis of the working class should not be made from "the outside", but from the "inside", investigating the constitutive social relations, subjective opinions and feelings of the workers in their everyday struggle within factory work and life (Gabler 2001: 352). SoB henceforth published so called "témoignages," ethnographical and self-biographical testimonials of factory life written by members of the group working in these factories, investigating "*the lifeworld lying beneath the formal-rational organisation of production.*" (Gabler 2006: 179, tA)

1.2.1 Operaismo: Class composition in Italian Fordism

In a quite similar way, a renewed interest on the social realities of the working class was introduced by the Operaist movement, an autonomous Marxist movement in Italy of the 1960s and 70s. In order to understand the shifts that Fordist reconstruction of the Italian industry brought to class struggle, Italian intellectuals started a new reception of Marxist literature. One of the major theoreticians, Mario Tronti, accomplished an "*inversion of class perspective in Marxian theory*" (Cleaver 1992). While traditional Marxism sees in capital the dynamic part of the historical development of capitalism, Tronti posted that the working class is "*able to recompose the structures and distribution of power among themselves in such a way as to achieve a change in their collective relations of power to their class enemy.*" (Cleaver 1992: 7) The struggles of the working class forces capitalism to adjust to the demands and the antagonisms created by the working class. For the working class is now seen independent from its subsumption to capital and has (theoretically) gained autonomy, a whole new set of analysis opens up for Marxist theory: the question of the historical condition and the cycles of struggle of the working class. Romano Alquati, another Operaist, proceeded this theoretical and empirical development with the notion of *class (re)composition*. Alquati distinguishes between the technical and the political class composition, where the technical composition represents the way capitalist organisation of production and labour division controls and dominates the working class, while the political (re)composition „*refers to the subjective structure of needs, behaviours and antagonist practices, sedimented through a long history of different struggles.*" (de Molina 2011: 4)¹ For Alquati, the autonomy of the worker, his subjective perception of the

1 The political class composition thus transgresses the notion of "Klasse für sich", which refers to the class consciousness, because in its core lies the subjective moment of resisting order, which is not compulsively bound to a class consciousness, but nurtures itself from experiences and feelings. It is based in the underlying, non-conscient experiences and forms of cooperation.

conflicts within his factory work, and his ability to resist, individually or collectively, is the starting point of research and political intervention.

The class composition thus demanded for new empirical research that didn't base its epistemology on the structural Marxism, but rather on the question of the subjective and collective perceptions and experiences of the working class. Regarding „*the inquiry as the basis for a political intervention*“ (de Molina 2011: 149), MR for the Operaists was connecting the question of theory with the question of political organisation, Alquati (1985 (1974): 2, tA) himself describes this attempt as “*..a study of the composition of the working class [...] starting from the inside of the movement and functional for its subjective organisation*“ (Alquati 1985 (1974): 4, tA)² Hence, the research was a movement in search of new forms of research corresponding to new forms of autonomist class struggles in Italian Fordist society.

Inspired by researches of the SoB and PAR, Alquati and opted for a “co-research” (conricerca), an approach that implied the participation of the workers themselves in the research. The basic premise of his research was, that the workers would become active part in the research and that this co-development of research would at the same time lead to autonomous political organisation. Co-research, though following sociological methodology in this case mainly aimed at the simultaneous creation of knowledge useful for the political self-organisation of the workers, as well as the creation of relations between Operaist organisers and unorganised workers. Relations that have proven to be explosive in the late 1960s and the 70s (see Wright 2002).

1.2.2 Leaving the factory: fabbrica diffusa and self-valorisation

With the revolts of students and workers in 1968 (notably inspired by Operaism or SoB), and growing economical problems, topped by the oil crisis of 1973, the internal contradictions let collapse the project of Fordism, leading into a new form of capital accumulation and regulation, that can be called Postfordism (see Aglietta 2000, Boyer 1992, Brand/Raza 2003, Jessop 2003). The Operaists see their theoretical assumptions verified: it was the uprising of the working class, its total opposition to the subsumption of labour to capital in Fordist factories that forced capital to adjust the production process. The industries started restructuring its composition, moving towards more flexible, more autonomous forms of labour. However, such a class re-composition asked for a review of the theoretical assumptions. Inside of the autonomist movement in Italy, criticism on the limitations of a factory-based analysis and political practices were formulated by different fractions (such as Lotta Continua, see Wright 2002: 140f). Most prominently, Maria Rosa della Costa (Della Costa & James 1975) drew attention from a feminist perspective on the forms of capitalist domination within the sphere of reproduction, transgressing the contained view on productive labour relations. The shift towards Postfordism substantiated these limitations of Operaist theory. Here, Antonio Negri's theory of “self-valorisation” tried to overcome these shortcomings. While Negri analysed the Fordist worker-prototype as the “mass worker”, he henceforth saw in the “social worker” the new type of worker that would emerge of the re-composition of labour. While the real subsumption of labour by capital happened in Fordist

2 „eine Untersuchung über die Zusammensetzung der Arbeiterklasse [...] und zwar aus dem Innern der Bewegung heraus und funktional für ihre subjektive Organisierung..“

industries by the total closure of the factory – resulting in a total control of space and time within the factory by capital – the new type of factory opened its walls to society, creating a “fabbrica diffusa”. Thereby, “self-valorisation” stands as the power to resist within and outside of capital relations against capitalism. Negri thus sought for the “*full potential and expression of the working class power of refusal, of its power to subvert capitalist domination.*” (Cleaver 1992: 7). This constitutive and creative power to organise social relations outside and against capitalism was thus not limited to the factory worker, but concerned the organisation of the society as a whole. Operaism had left the factory.

1.2.3 Towards urban militant research

However, in spite of Negri's reformulation of class composition, the postfordist transformations of the economy and the emergence of new social movements unfolded the weakness of the Operaist research: The contained view on the factory was unable to connect sufficiently the industrial factory with the general conditions of life, happening ie. on neighbourhood scale. Only in the last decade, forms of MR research emerged, which adopted to this shift of the economy towards urban space. Especially, MR have been initiated in the field of precarious work (see FelS 2012, arranca! 2008, Precarias à la Deriva 2011, Hamm 2005). In this field of transformed labour relations abandoned by traditional union organising, several activist and research groups have intervened with MR in order to investigate possibilities of struggle against precarity. In 2010, the Berlin-based group Für eine linke Strömung (FelS), for instance, initiated a research that focused on the “Jobcenter Neukölln”, a jobcenter where HartzIV-recipients are being placed, trained, but equally controlled and disciplined. As FelS writes, the Jobcenter is responsible for 80.000 HartzIV-recipients, in a neighbourhood with 310.000 inhabitants (FelS 2012: 33). For FelS, the Jobcenter thus was a primarily place, where precarious labour and life conditions were organised for a whole neighbourhood, why they chose to intervene and investigate in order to “*grasp the deficiencies in the Jobscenter, which affect us collectively and create common perspectives for action.*” (FelS 2012: 21, tA)

Another example of militant investigation in precarious labour is the “Precarias a la derivas” (Pald) project that was initiated during the general strike 2002 in Madrid. While regular employed and unions called for a general strike, a group of unorganised women in precarious labour relations, began drifting through the picketing lines and the urban space, in order to find other women in precarious labour relations. This derive was not only a part of the strike activities, but aimed at crossing urban space and time to create new connections between former individualised women excluded from traditional labour struggle – to find “*a common will in the world of dispersion.*” (Precarias à la Deriva 2011: 51, tA). After the derive, the group started communicating their outcomes and invited women to further assemblies leading to a form of political organisation.

Further, the parallel shift of economical spaces and spaces of resistance also increased the interest on new methodologies such as derive or mapping for MR. Militant Cartography equally has become a wide field of research and interventions: “*By producing maps as militant research, autonomous cartography constitutes a conceptual framework for understanding and creating geographic and political change in the post-Fordist economy.*” (Counter Mapping Collective 2012; 461)

These examples are interesting in the sense that they transgress the contained view on the factory by re-scaling the research field into the neighbourhood or other social spaces in general. Nevertheless, these new forms of MR have two problems concerning the question at stake here: Either, even though extending the focus to the neighbourhood, they still remain in the contained view of productive labour (or the reproductive work in the case of Pald) as field of investigation. A shift towards the analysis of the everyday experiences of city dweller, not of precarious workers is needed.

1.3 METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The aim of this research is to ask for possibilities of MR in housing struggles. Therefore, the research, orientates at the autonomist Marxist forms of MR, that is an investigation of the everyday struggles and resistances against capitalist control while the “classical” space of MR, the factory is given up for a broader look on urban space, and housing in special. This shift requires a theoretical clarification of what capital accumulation and class struggle in urban space signifies. The next chapter will elaborate such a theoretical framework. In order to reflect on this theoretical assumptions, the empirical part includes an analysis of the economical structures of the housing markets in the two case studies, which is made by secondary literature and statistical analysis. Therefore, the first research question is:

How does the class composition brought forward through policies in the housing sector influence housing struggles?

For the field research, the methodology is grounded in MR principles, but due to restrictions, only applies in Vienna. Here, research follows process proposed by the IDAC:

„The process of militant observation is made up of four fundamental stages: approaching the group and establishing a relationship with it, the period of observation and collecting of information, the organizing of the collected information, and, finally, returning the material to the group for discussion and elaboration.“ (IDAC 1975)

The research consisted in different steps. First, the research consisted in establishing a relationship with the group, by active, militant participation in the struggle and group discussions about the interests, perceptions and situated knowledges inside the political group. This introductory phase was complemented with a preliminary inquiry of the neighbourhood, where places of interest and important actors of the struggle were detected. In a second step, the collecting of information consisted in a movement in search, as described by de Molina (2011 181); The research used as

“a lever for interpellation, subjectification and political re-composition” by “using the mechanisms of the survey, interview and discussion group as an excuse to talk with Others and between themselves [...] Those mechanisms can be used [...] in search of forms of resistance, cooperation and flight that pierce it”

Hence, the qualitative interviews, which aimed at an “equal-to-equal-discussion” (FelS 2012: 22), where researcher and researched are understood as equal participants, aimed at creating knowledge about possibilities and difficulties forms of self-organisation and appropriation in the struggles as experienced by the participants, guided by the second research question:

Which collective and individual forms of self-organisation and appropriation of spaces are present in housing struggles?

Additionally participant observation was used during militant interventions and moments of struggles. After the research, the outcomes were presented in a text addressed to the housing movement in Vienna (see A.C). However, such design has proven not to be realistic for especially the timeline of this Master thesis. In this sense, the Vienna case may be seen as an attempt to create a militant research. The Madrid research on the other hand ceased to be militant (for further reflection on these problems see chapter 5). In Madrid, participative observation and qualitative interviews were used to answer the same research questions.

The case study in Madrid can thus be seen as a form of comparative study, where were used to answer questions arising from the Viennese research. This will be discussed in the comparison in chapter 6 .



YUPPIES OUT!!
GENTRIFICATION IS
CLASS WAR

2 CLASS STRUGGLE IN URBAN SPACE

“Social movements, new or old, are seen as agents of change – as historical actors, located in time, not in space. [...] Urban sociologist's treatment of the urban social movements did not miss their location in space, but it had another shortcoming: a tendency to model the urban social movements on the labour movement, thus missing what is new in these struggles against urban renewal projects or for the collective reappropriation of urban space” (Franzén 2005: 52f)

2.1 CAPITAL ACCUMULATION IN URBAN CAPITALISM

In Fordism, urban development was bound to a framework of social welfare that aimed at guaranteeing the provision of urban infrastructure. Modern, Fordist cities, divided functionally into its different spheres, were spaces of reproduction, while factories, even though integrated in cities (but walled off from them) were the spaces of production. Urban space hence found its main function as a space of collective consumption, as Castells (1973) analysed it in his influential book “The Urban Question”. In this manner, as Castells 2012 (1973): 35, tA) observed, the provision of these “collective needs” in cities were “*generally not profitable for capitalistic intervention.*” - hence, bound to state intervention.

The crisis of Fordism and the institutional consolidation of neoliberalism have had a major impact on the geographical fixes of economies (see Peck & Tickell 2002, Brenner & Theodore 2002). The destruction and deregulation of the keynesian-welfare state have rendered the national scale less able to regulate globalising markets, while major economic, social and political tasks have been consolidated on the supra- as well as on the sub-national scale. Cities have become major agencies in the construction of local markets and social cohesion. David Harvey did describe these processes as the shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism in urban governance. The shift signifies that policies take “*the form of a negotiation between international finance capital and local powers doing the best they can to maximise the attractiveness of the local site as a lure for capitalist development.*” (Harvey 1989: 5).

While the cited analyses stress the importance of the political embedding and path dependency of local sites in the process of neoliberalisation, Harvey points towards the strong economical reason underlying these processes. The crisis of European industries in Postfordism has led to a weakening of this sector for capital accumulation, which in turn forced the economy to cut capital accumulation widely from industrial production, shifting its concentration towards the financial markets, which is why Aglietta (2000, tA) called the postfordist economy a “*financial market-driven accumulation regime.*” In the words of Harvey, the

crisis of Fordism can thus be partly read as a “*switching crisis*”, where capital moves from the first to the second circuit of capital. With this growing importance of the financial capital real estate markets, as a part of the second circuit of capital, are an important sector where accumulated capital can be reinvested when the first circuit of capital does not deliver the needed profit for reinvestment (Harvey 1989b: 57ff). Hence, the development of entrepreneurial strategies in cities are strongly connected to capital's need of investment in real estate markets to guarantee accumulation in postfordist industries, making urban space itself one of the centres of postfordist capitalism as has been the factory in Fordism. Henceforth we will thus refer to all these forms of capital accumulation bound to investment in real estate markets as “urban capitalism”. The most important feature of the growing importance of urban capitalism in Postfordism is, that it changes the role of cities as spaces of collective consumption and welfare interventions.

“The city can no longer be understood as a welfare-container, in which the conditions guaranteeing a functioning of the capitalist economy are provided, but must be considered itself *as a centre, arena and object of the capitalist economy*. [...] In particular, the extensive privatisations of the last decades have directly connected the issues of housing provision and urban infrastructures with the contradictions of a finance-dominated accumulation regime.” (Holm 2012: 19ff, tA, my emphasis)

This in turn connects urban struggles with the contradictions of capitalism, whereby an opposition against the capital accumulation of urban space can take antagonistic positions against capitalism. Accordingly, when capital accumulation and its contradictions are moving into urban space, the question of the organisation of resistance against capitalism equally moves towards urban spaces:

“the metropolis is to the multitude what the factory was to the industrial working class” (Negri & Hardt 2009: 250)

While Hardt & Negri's analogy presents the question at stake here in a quite catchy manner, its theoretical and political consequences are far more complex – and their notions such as metropolis and multitude seem not to be clear-cut theoretical concepts useful to follow in this place. The question to be asked here is, which transformation the concept of class has to undergo when it is applied to urban spaces and housing in special. However, this transformation is not unproblematic and in many cases prone to some confusions as the next paragraph about gentrification will show. In this field, the need for MR within urban spaces arises and calls for a general review of what we think and know of class struggle in urban space. Therefore, this short theoretical discussion aims not at developing a coherent theoretical concept, but at proposing a working thesis and a framework for empirical analysis. In order to do so, a hermeneutical procedure is used that is to apply the concept of class composition to urban space and ask – on a theoretical as well as on an empirical level – for the similarities and differences between class composition within industrial production and urban space – in hope that the path proposed here can lead to further theoretical and empirical reflection.

2.1.1 The gentrification trap

Without going into a debate about gentrification theories, one main problem of class conception within urban space can be seen clearly within gentrification:

“[A critique of gentrification] is not directed [...] against capital, but against a specific audience identified with the commercialisation. [...] Gentrification as a social relation is neither analysed within the economical nor the demographical structure of the city; a socio-critical class analysis is lacking as is a critique of the political economy of the city. Instead, a current critique on gentrification focuses on the defence of a leftist, subcultural Status-Quo, that is, the defence of alleged urban free spaces. (Behrens 2009: 2, tA)

Even though such a sweeping attack on urban movements requires a very critical reading, Behrens points towards a certain lack of a class analysis within urban movements, sometimes expressed by a certain incertitude how to effectively oppose the displacement of the working class and eventually by a retreat towards defence of the own (sub-)cultural spaces. In a similar way, such political strategies reflect academical discussion, where critical class analysis have repeatedly being “evicted” from gentrification research as Slater calls it: *“For some time now, there has been wide agreement that class should be the undercurrent in the study of gentrification. [...], and the research response has been to find out about the behaviour of the middle classes...”* (Slater 2006: 742) Mainly directed against demand-side theories that were inspired by the stage model of Glass (1964) or the “double invasion-succession-cycle” of Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik (1979), Slater criticises the orientation towards a Chicago-school -inspired class struggle between different classes of urban dwellers for inner-city neighbourhoods – a critique formulated likewise in Neil Smith' analysis of gentrification as *“a back-to-the-city movement by capital rather than people.”* (Smith 1996: 67) The problem of such a class analysis lies in the fact that it detaches class struggle from accumulation. Harvey (1989b: 57) reminds us *“that accumulation is the means whereby the capitalist class reproduces both itself and its domination over labor. Accumulation cannot, therefore, be isolated from class struggle.”* This in turn signifies that class struggle, if it is to be antagonistic to the reproduction of class relations, has to be directed against the forms of accumulation. In order to work with a class concept within urban space, the first question to be answered is, how capital accumulation in urban spaces works. Therefore the next paragraphs will quickly discuss these processes.

2.1.2 Accumulation through rent

“In a capitalist economy, land and the improvements built onto it become commodities. Private property rights confer on the owner near-monopoly control over land and improvements, monopoly control over the uses to which a certain space is put. [...] From this condition derives the importance of ground rent as a means to organize the geography of economic location.” (Smith 1996: 55)

The very basis of capital accumulation in urban space is, that land becomes private

property and turn land and built environments into commodities. However, if capital is invested in real estate, its turnover to surplus works differently than in industrial production. The landlord or the real estate developers accumulate capital through rent. Here Harvey (Harvey 2012: 89ff) and Hardt & Negri make similar arguments concerning the role of ground rent in urban capitalism. When capital accumulation in the second circuit of capital takes a major role in economical growth, then accumulation through rent gains more importance compared to industrial production:

“Whereas the industrial factory generates profit, then, since its productivity depends on the schema of cooperation and the command of the capitalist, the metropolis primarily generates rent, which is the only means by which capital can capture the wealth created autonomously.” (Negri & Hardt 2009: 251) This means that, “the exploitation of labor-power and the accumulation of surplus value should be understood in terms of not profit but capitalist rent [...] created at a level far abstracted from the labor process.” (Negri & Hardt 2009: 141)³

We arrive here at an enduring problem within Marxist theory, already discussed by Marx (against Ricardo) or by Engels (against Proudhon) and resumed by Harvey (1989b: 90), who asks: „*How can raw land, not itself a product of human labor, have a price [...]?*” If, according to Marx, it is only labour that creates value, raw land should not have a price. As Harvey further observes, Marx answered to this problem that land should be treated as “*pure financial asset*” or a “*fictitious capital*” (ibid.: 95). Engels in turn answered to Proudhon's equation – “*The tenant is in the same position in relation to the house-owner as the wage-worker in relation to the capitalist.*” (Proudhon cit. after Engels 1970 [1872]: 19) – that the equation is completely misleading because rent is extracted from the worker not in the moment of production but within consumption – it does not create any surplus value, why it has to be treated as a “*simple commodity sale*” (ibid.). While this discussion would require a thorough revision of the Marxist value theory, it nevertheless points to certain limits of a Marxist class analysis of housing, because it binds the extraction of surplus value strictly to the labour process and “degrades” accumulation through rent to a “*secondary form of exploitation*” (Harvey 1973 101). But exploitation still appears, when regarded from perspective of the worker: For the worker, the amount of hours to work to guarantee his/her own reproduction increases with a raise of the rent to pay. Here, Marxists tend fail to take the worker's position, because they are focused on the production of surplus value by the capitalists (Cleaver 1992). A class analysis of urban capitalism therefore needs to overcome restrictions such as a distinction between first and secondary forms of exploitation, between purely productive and purely reproductive spheres. Class struggle thus has to be expanded towards other fields of capitalist control – beyond its pure form in productive labour, towards a general struggle against the domination of capital as social relation. The argument made here is, that when it comes to capital accumulation in housing a class analysis cannot base itself on the position of workers within production, but

3 Of course, the process of urban capitalisation cannot be understood exclusively in terms of rent abstraction. A stronger interest of capital for the urban process is equally driven by the economical interests of productive sectors associated to real estate and infrastructure development, such as the construction sector. Capital accumulation in this sectors very well uses the abstraction of profit by surplus in the labour process.

has to take as starting point the position of tenants within the housing market,⁴ as well as the relation towards the landlord.

2.1.3 Accumulation through dispossession

The second important feature of accumulation in urban capitalism – closely related to the first one – is, that in contrast to “accumulation by exploitation” in the labour process, the urban process is based on what Harvey calls “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2008: 34). Accumulation is made possible by the intensification of the profitable use of urban land. Deprived uses of land which, due to its location within a city, could provide a higher value if used differently, are being redeveloped. Thereby, the former users of the land have to move in order to create more profitable uses. Accumulation through rent therefore is prepared and exercised at the cost of a displaced (ie. dispossessed) lower class. This process has already been described by Engels in 1873:

“The growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those which are centrally situated, an artificial and often colossally increasing value; the buildings erected on these areas depress this value, instead of increasing it [...]. They are pulled down and in their stead shops, warehouses and public buildings are erected. [...] The result is that the workers are forced out of the centre of the towns towards the outskirts.” (Engels 1970 [1872]: 18)

We see here, that accumulation through dispossession is the basic feature of – but not limited to – gentrification.⁵ Displacement therefore happens not mainly because other social groups invade a neighbourhood, but because land and built environment are being commodified. Displacement thus is an expression of class struggle, because it is connected to capital accumulation.

2.2 CLASS COMPOSITION AND HOUSING MARKETS

To sum up, if accumulation depends on the extraction of rent, class relations within the housing question are defined by the position that a tenant takes within the housing market. This position defines the ways, a tenant relates to the landlords or urban developers

4 Nevertheless, it is obvious that this position is strongly dependent on the labour situation of a household, for the rent is an important expenditure of the monthly salary. However, even between similar socio-economic situations, a differing tenancy relation can importantly change the well-being and tenancy security of a household.

5 When starting the research for this thesis, my idea was to research resistance against gentrification. However, it became quickly obvious, that a concentration on gentrification does not completely suit the theoretical framework, nor the first empirical outcomes of the research. The problem is, that a research on the resistance against capital accumulation in urban space needs to clarify the ways accumulation is realised, where gentrification can be seen as one specific form of accumulation strategies. The focus lies here “*on the effects – not the causes – of gentrification*” (Slater 2006: 743) which find a main expression in the displacement of the lower classes. However, forms of displacement or rent increase do not necessarily stem from what literature would define as gentrification – and therefore, a framework of class analysis should concentrate on the general contradictions that a capitalist organisation of urban space creates. Hence, gentrification should be seen as one specific historical process of a more general process of capital accumulation by dispossession.

ability to extract rent. Secondly, if accumulation by dispossession is the process by which capital accumulation expresses itself within the urban process, the question of displacement becomes central in class struggles.

2.2.1 Class Struggle in Housing

„What the working class is cannot be separated from how it struggles“
(Tronti 1971: 200, Wright 2002: 85)

We now have to return from the depths of structuralist Marxism to the project of this thesis, that is to ask how class relations are expressed within housing struggles. The discussion of the structuralist approaches to a “housing class” were made in order to clarify the class concepts we can use to observe class struggle in urban space. However, neo-marxist theories neglect that capital accumulation is prepared and exercised by human agency. We follow thus Aquati's way who argued that, “[s]o-called economic laws [...] had to be rediscovered as political forces, behind which lay the motor of working-class struggle.” (Wright 2002: 84) Only by opening the framework to this agency, the possibilities of class struggle emerge. What we thus aim at here, is an integration of qualitative research that bases itself in an analysis of class relations as struggle, not as socio-economic position. Representative for the structuralist approach, we can read Smith rent gap theory, where he lets us know: “*Gentrification is a structural product of the land and housing markets.*” (Smith 1996: 67) But, the pure economic structures do neither explain where and when land is being redeveloped nor how capital accumulation is exercised against the struggle of the inhabitants facing displacement.

“The price mechanism alone does not determine if and when buildings will be devalued, demolished, or reborn. [...] Within each locale, a lattice of state and nonstate institutions— thick and hierarchal in some places, thin and ephemeral in others - influence value in the built environment.”
(Weber 2002: 523)

Weber's argument mainly points to neoliberal strategies of state intervention to prepare the real estate market for profitable investment to which we could refer to as the technical class composition. A focus on the “*lifeworld lying beneath the formal-rational organisation*” (Gabler 2006: 179, tA) of capital accumulation in housing however asks for inquiring the concrete situations in which capital accumulation at a given locale takes place. Here quantitative analysis of displacement (see f.e. Betancur 2011, Van Criekingen 2008, 2009)) have to be extended towards “*the nuanced, qualitative experience of individuals struggling to remain in their homes.*” (Newman & Wyly 2006: 42, see aswell Slater 2006: 749). There have been made some qualitative analyses about struggling against displacement (Newman & Wyly 2006, Pearsall 2013). However, what we aim here is to combine such an analysis not only with the question on how to resist displacement but to ask how such struggles have the potential to contribute to an antagonistic position against capital. To summarize, inversely to a structuralist approach on the creation of class relations within cities as determined by the processes of capital flow into cities, this approach concentrates on the formation of class relations by their

political struggles. When the research question asks for the relation of technical and political class composition regarding class struggle in housing, we will have to shortly define what we understand under technical and political class composition, which in turn will provide a framework of analysis for the two case studies.

2.2.2 Technical class composition

In Operaism, technical class composition refers to the ways capitalists create a *“particular distribution of inter- and intra-class power which gives it sufficient control over the working class to guarantee accumulation”* (Cleaver 1992: 7). While in industrial production, this composition is mainly reached by the technical organisation and control of the production process, capital accumulation within housing has to be guaranteed by the (legal and economical) construction of a housing market that turns housing in a commodity (or hinders housing to become a commodity) to allow investors and landlords to accumulate rent from the tenants. The technical composition refers to the ways, capitalism and state power organise the housing market, how people are distributed within it and finally define the power relations and form of exploitation through the appropriation of rent. A class analysis can thus follow Proudhon's equation by inquiring how the relation between tenant and house-owner contributes to capital accumulation. Such a relation, even though influenced, does not correspond to the class composition of the labour process – neither are the interests of house-owner equivalent to those of capitalists, nor defines the position within the labour relations the position on the housing market. Here we can use a framework proposed by Kesteloot et al. (1997: 173f), that applies Karl Polany's three modes of economic integration (market, redistribution and reciprocity) to the housing market. Thereby the market integration works by renting or buying a house on the private housing market. This integration is limited primarily depending on the income of a household. Integration through redistribution is thus addressed to those households excluded by the market integration and works mainly through the provision of (public) social housing below market price. Finally, integration through reciprocity applies to all other forms of housing provision that are mainly based on family support or mutual support inside f.e. an ethnic community (eg. flatsharing). However, Kesteloot approaches the integration by the side of the tenant's “survival strategies” – for the question at stake here, these forms of integration not only define the possibilities of access to housing, but equally the relations and position a tenant takes within a system of capital accumulation.

Thereby, we have to analyse how these markets come into being and are transformed – a process which is not simply defined by economical laws and structures, but are result of political agency and cultural practices. Hence, the state plays an important role, and the concrete markets are very strongly dependent on the welfare regime (Arbaci 2007, Fernandez-Cordón & Leal 2009, Matznetter 2002). In the case studies we will have to analyse, how state policies have changed and to which forms of housing markets these transformations have led to. The framework of this analysis is given by Kesteloot et al. (1997) and the analysis of welfare regimes in housing (Barlow & Duncan 1994, Arbaci 2007), which lead to different compositions of the tenancy regime (relations between private and social housing, or renting and homeownership). We can define the technical class composition in

housing as: The ways, state and capitalism create a housing market which distributes tenants in a way that it installs power relations that allow the accumulation of capital.

2.2.3 Political class (re)composition

“The political recomposition is fed by the forms of resistance, the broken but still deviant, dissident and subversive moments of subjectivity against the formation of capitalist society at the height of the development of the productive forces.” (Becksteiner 2011: 5, tA)

While capital seeks to control working class by subordination to the capital relations – and thereby to break worker's autonomy, the political recomposition of class refers to all the forms of cooperation and resistance that constitute the working class as a political power against capital. In order to use such a framework for urban struggles, it makes sense to refer to Negri's term of self-valorisation, which includes all forms of “*creative uses of times, spaces and resources liberated from the control of [...] capital*” (Cleaver 1992: 19). While struggling against capital's domination, the people not only oppose the social relations imposed by capital, but create new social relations. Self-valorisation therefore combines the power of refusal with the power of constitution (ibid.). Within urban capitalism the creative use of space can oppose capital's control over space. While capitalist relations in urban space are marked by the production of abstract space, favouring the market value of the city, a political recomposition points to the practices that re-appropriate space as a use value, as an *oeuvre*, after Lefèbvre (1996). As formulated in “Right to the City”, the two main methods to regain control over urban space are *autogestion* (self-organisation) and appropriation (Lefèbvre 1996: 174). *Autogestion* refers here to all forms of autonomous, basis-democratic forms of cooperation and organisation (see Ronneberger 2011). Appropriation can be understood as all practices that “*physically access, occupy, and use urban space*” but equally “*produce urban space so that it meets the needs of inhabitants.*” (Purcell 2002:102) and functions as a direct practice to confront,

“capital's ability to valorize urban space, establishing a clear priority for the use value of urban residents over the exchange value interests of capitalist firms. In addition, appropriation reworks control over urban space, resisting the current hegemony of property rights and stressing the primacy of the use-rights of inhabitants. Challenging property rights, of course, means challenging the foundation of capitalist class relations.” (ibid. 103)

Following Alquati's interest in the 'invisible' and 'spontaneous' forms of resistances, the analysis of political class composition thus not only has to look at ways tenants organise and resist against landlords, but also to look at their “self-valorisation”, that is to ask for 'invisible' and 'spontaneous' forms of self-organisation and appropriation. The analysis of political class composition opens thus the field for ethnographical research within urban space, and especially within the living spaces of the people. We define thus the political composition in housing as the forms of collective and individual resistances, self-organisation and appropriation of space that contribute to an opposition against capitalist control of space.



WOHNEN
DARF
KEINE WARE
SEIN

3 „WOHNEN DARF KEINE WARE SEIN!“ - VIENNA

In December 2012, “Wilder Wohnen”⁶, a broad alliance of activists, academics and housing organisations called for three-days of activities around the topic of housing. With the slogan “Wohnen darf keine Ware sein,” (a home is not a commodity) they directly addressed their opposition to the ongoing commodification of housing in Vienna. Within this field, “Wilder Wohnen” and other initiatives intervened to broach the issue from a social movement perspective. Thereby, the alliance chose the second district (Leopoldstadt) as main field of their interventions during the action days. This focus was manifest because this district does not only offer obvious signs of gentrification and large scale developments, but equally earned attention due to one of the only squats, henceforth called the Pizzaria, which is located in the district. The Pizzaria has gained public attention, because the house is owned by a company specialised in speculation with apartment buildings using impudent practices to displace the tenants. From its beginning, the squat was directly linked to a struggle against displacement, or as the collective writes: *“In the middle of the Viennese second district, which is under strong gentrification pressure, we put an anchor to intervene in the ongoing process of displacement.”*⁷ Since July 2012, the collective and inhabitants of the second district organise monthly demonstrations under the title “The damn right is too high!”

,This research took place within this context of a growing interest for housing questions in the part of a radical left and ongoing struggles against displacement in the second district. During the last two years I have spent in total about eight months in Vienna and participated as a militant (and eventually as a researcher) in these struggles. As time passed, many steps to construct a movement in Vienna have been made and many small successes have been realised. However, it seems that until today, the desired mass mobilisation (and sensitisation) did not occur, yet. In general, Vienna has not seen any important housing struggles in the last decades. Insofar, the task of movement building in Vienna seems quite a difficult task – but I hope that these reflections can at least start some forms of discussion or reflection to strengthen these efforts.

3.1 NEOLIBERAL SCRATCHES OF THE RED VIENNA

Vienna is insofar special, as it has a strong history of housing policies sustained by decades of social-democratic majority rule. In the analysis of different welfare regimes, Austria is seen as a typical example of the conservative and corporatist welfare regime, *“displaying all the attributes of such an ideal type: a strong regulation of the labour market, welfare provision based on fragmented systems of social insurance, a strong role of the family vis-à-vis market and state, and*

6 The name is an allusion to the municipal housing institution “Wiener Wohnen” and signifies as much as “living wilder or “wilder dwelling”

7 <http://pizza.noblogs.org/pizza-info-flyer/pizza-info-flyer-english/> (30.08.2013)

kinship, corporatism and etatism as the dominant mode of solidarity.” (Matznetter 2002: 267) The housing market is structured by a “unitary market”, where the social and private housing market compete with each other. Vienna has known a strong public housing policy since the beginning of the 20th century. These policies were the result of early housing struggles, the so-called “Siedlerbewegung” (dwellers movement), that started the self-organisation and self-construction of housing in order to answer to the housing crisis after WWI. As a reaction, the social-democratic government introduced a housing policy, including “*provision of housing or support for cooperative self-help construction.*” (Novy et al. 2001: 136) This was the birth of the “Red Vienna,” a social housing policy oriented towards the provision of the working class with affordable public rental housing, shifting after 1945 towards a stronger “*social partnership, which was a corporatist tow-down model of regulation*” (Novy et al. 2001: 135). This culture of massive social housing provision implemented in the city went hand in hand with the Soft Urban Renewal program or the rent control tool that aimed at avoiding segregation and rising rents in Vienna (Paal 2008: 138). In 2011, the city of Vienna “*is still the main player, setting the criteria for the production of housing, actually owning or through subsidies indirectly controlling about 50% of the housing stock in Vienna.*” (Rumphuber et al. 2012: 05, see Fig. XXX) The city owns in total 27% of the housing stock, while another 21% is owned by limited profit housing developers, controlled through subsidies and quality measures by the city.

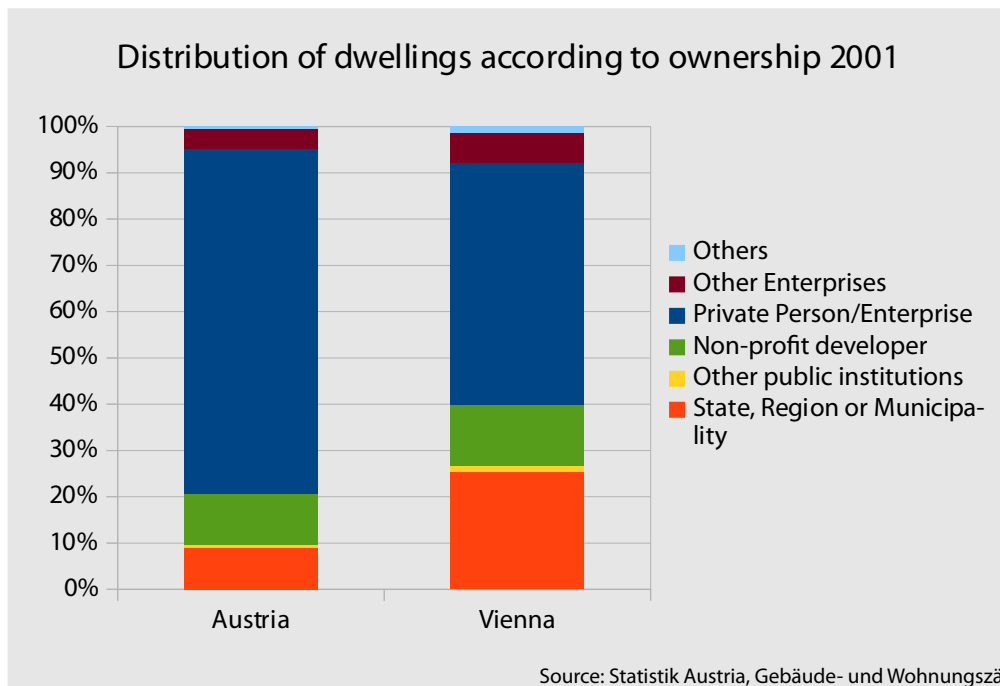


Fig. 1: Distribution of dwellings according to ownership in Vienna and Austria 2001. Source: Statistik Austria, Gebäude- und Wohnungszählung 2001

Looking at the tenure status (Fig. XX), the influence of public housing provisions in Vienna becomes apparent. The city, next to the vast amount of social housing, has a share of rental housing far above European average (Eurostat).

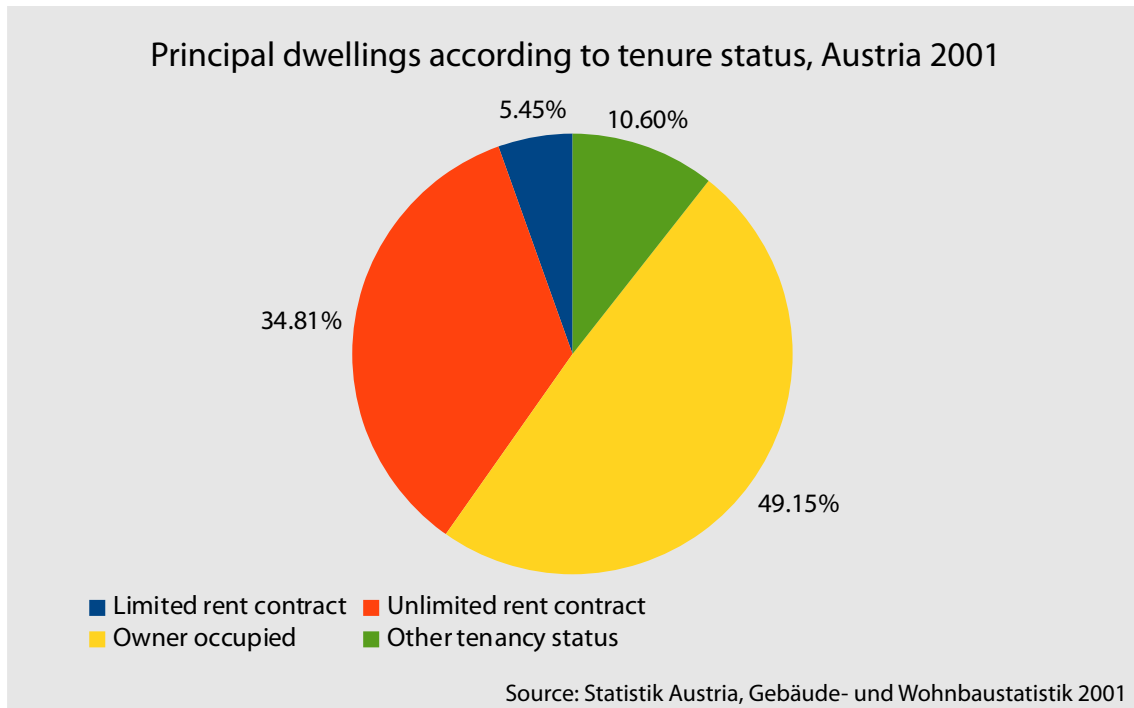


Fig. 2: Principal dwellings according to tenure status 2001. Source: Statistik Austria, Gebäude- und Wohnungszählung 2001

Despite the achievements of social-democratic corporatism, the policies have changed substantially since the late 1980s. With the increased importance for Vienna as a gate to the east after the Fall of the Iron Curtain and with ongoing globalisation the real estate market of Vienna has become a new ground for capital investment: *“Within a few years [in the 90s, after opening to the East] the demand on high-quality offices and apartments increases – the real estate market is booming.”* (Paal 2008: 141) The city responded to this re-commodification of the housing market with an ongoing deregulation (and re-regulation) of the market and the tenancy laws. On one side, Austria and Vienna followed policies aiming at the “creative destruction” of the strong public housing policy: In 2000, the central government allowed the use of the housing funds for infrastructure provision and permitted the sale of the public housing stocks at market value. *“This potential commodification of the public housing stock meant a crucial change in urban governance. As a consequence, new actors – particularly private real estate investors – entered the stage.”* (Novy et al. 2001: 131) Meanwhile, Vienna froze the budget for public housing and in 2004 the city ceased to construct new housing. On the other side, the commodification of the housing market was put forward by rent deregulation. The strong rent controls limiting rent levels according to the quality of the dwelling (the so-called category system) were deregulated in 1982 which made prices in the private renting sector more than double between 1985 and 1993 (Novy et al. 2001: 136). As a reaction, the rent was re-regulated in 1994 by a new national legislation that introduced the so-called Richtwert (a flexible upper limit of rent while for older buildings the category system was reintroduced – resulting in a non-transparent patchwork of rent regulations). Further, limited rent contracts were introduced which had additional effects on the increase of the rents. Even though the price increase slowed down after 1994, average main rents still have increased by nearly 50% between 2000 and 2010, wherein the increase is significantly higher for the private sector and

for limited contracts. Most drastically the main rents have increased by nearly 67% in dwellings built before 1945 (AK Wien 2012). Hence, Vienna changed its path, from a de-commodified housing market, controlled by a big share of public housing and rent control, towards a re-commodified housing market, where rent de- and re-regulation and new global political constellations opened the market to private investors. In this sense, we can follow Paal who remarks: *“This means, that for Vienna, the era of municipal-socialism in urban renewal seems to be over now. [...] In the meantime external pressure and increasing competition – often discussed in relation with globalisation and neo-liberalism – even catch up Vienna.”* (Paal 2008: 144)

But what are the social effects of this commodification? While public discussion mostly turns around the rising share of income to be spent for rent, there are other factors of interest here. As Till & Till-Tentschert (2006) show (see Table XXX), the structures of the housing market in Vienna mainly have negative effects for people renting housing (nearly the half, 41%), migrants (where 54% live in non-integrated housing conditions) and especially for people in danger of poverty, where 80% live non-integrated. Especially, one can observe, that a fifth of all young people live precarious, while nearly a third of all migrants live overcrowded.

Integration of Housing in Vienna (in percent)

Housing Problems	Integrated	Non-integrated			
		Total Non-integrated	Precarious	Overcrowded	Deprived
Nationality					
Austrian	72	28	16	7	5
Foreign	46	54	13	27	14
Age					
20 – 39	64	36	20	10	6
40 – 64	74	26	13	6	7
65 and more	[85]	[15]	[8]	[3]	[4]
Danger of poverty					
Not in danger of poverty	77	23	9	9	5
In danger of poverty	20	80	53	15	12
Tenancy status					
Homeownership	[90]	[10]	[5]	[4]	[1]
Renting	59	41	18	11	12
Gender					
Male	71	29	14	9	6
Female	67	33	17	10	6

Source: Till & Till-Tentschert 2006, based on data from: Statistik Austria; EU-SILC 2003; Numbers in [] with small case numbers

Table 2: Housing Problems in Vienna 2003. Source: Till & Tentschert 2006

To sum up, Vienna has shifted its housing policies importantly in the last two decades, leading authors to title their researches *“The End of Red Vienna”* (Novy et al. 2001) or *“The End of the Viennese Way”* (Paal 2008). In spite of a strong public housing stock and a very high standard of living, rising rents and housing problems have become publicly acknowledged as existing problems.

3.2 CASE STUDY NEIGHBOURHOOD – INTRODUCTION TO THE STRUGGLE

3.2.1 Current transformations of the Leopoldstadt and the Volkertviertel

Within this context of neoliberalisation of the housing policies of Vienna, the second district (Leopoldstadt) is one of the major areas where newer urban development and renewal takes place. Since its “foundation” by the regulation of the Danube in 1873, the Leopoldstadt has been a working class district, due to its close connection to the harbour and rail cargo industries. Nowadays, the second district can still be seen as a working class district, with a relatively high proportion of foreigners compared to the Vienna average. However, due to its closeness to the city centre (which borders the district at the canal) and due to large brownfield areas at former train stations, the district is attractive for private investment in housing. Hence, since a while, the district undergoes remarkable changes. Between 2004 and 2008 the Praterstern train station, an important hub for regional trains, was redesigned. In 2009 the construction for a new campus for the university of economics and business started. On the former areas of the train stations, Nordbahnhof and Nordwestbahnhof, new projects by private developers or in PPPs have been initiated and will be realised in the upcoming years. On the southern side of the district, the Karmeliterviertel is located, which is one of the neighbourhoods, where processes of gentrification influence the transformation of the area (Huber 2011). Within these transformative projects and processes lies the case study neighbourhood to which I will henceforth refer to as Volkertviertel (even though the area includes the Allierten- and the Odeonviertel as well). Fig. 4 shows the location of the area, and its surrounding projects mentioned above.

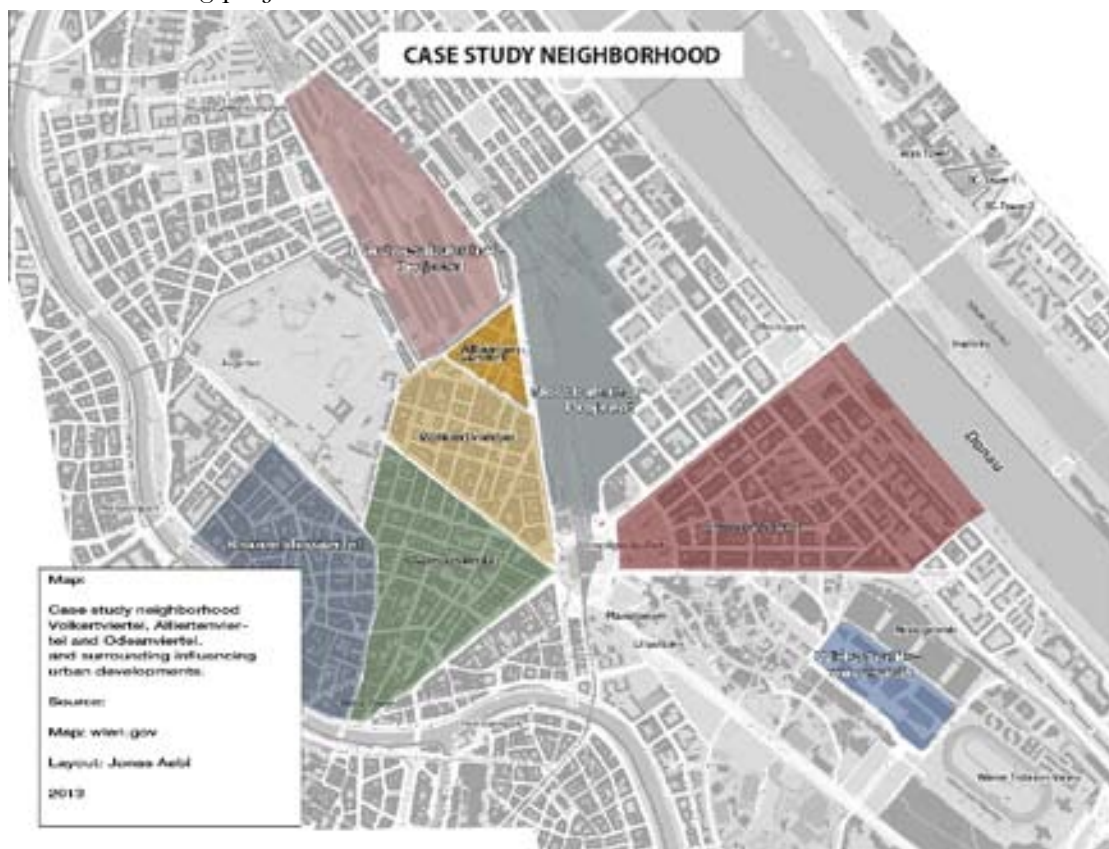


Fig. 4: Case study neighbourhood, own layout

Even though there has not been any research done on this neighbourhood, the indicators seem strong, that the neighbourhood is slowly transforming, leading to an increased interest of private capital to be invested in the area. The influences of the surrounding projects, and the observed renovation activities seem to point to a restructuring of the neighbourhood, which may not be introduced by gentrifiers, but stem directly from active investment. Hence, the choice for this neighbourhood was made, because of the investment strategies existing in this neighbourhood.

3.2.2 Speculative investment in the neighbourhood

This increased interest of investment in the area expresses itself not only in an increased development of brownfields or renovation of roof tops, but equally takes the form of so-called “*freeing of inventory*” (“Bestandesfreimachung”). Thereby, the “inventory” refers to people, households living in old apartment blocks with unlimited rent contracts and a relatively low rent. This strategy consists in buying houses that are partially vacant, whose remaining tenants are, with a wide range of legal methods such as offering a reward for moving to (near)-illegal methods such as sabotage, threats or harassment being forced out of their houses, to eventually gain rent by selling renovated flats for owner-occupancy or an empty house ready for complete renovation. Thereby, one of the houses bought by such investors is the Pizzaria-squat⁸ - however, as Fig. XXX, result of a first mapping, shows, within the area around 10 houses are owned by such investors.

8 Actually, one of the methods used by the owners led to the squatting of this concrete estate: The owners personally approached some punks, offering them a house for a limited period. The underlying agenda of this offer was thus to cast out the remaining tenants in the house, who were supposed to be disgusted and annoyed by the new neighbours. The squatters on the other side, realised this project and managed to create a solidarity with the tenants and eventually squatted the house when the temporary contract expired.

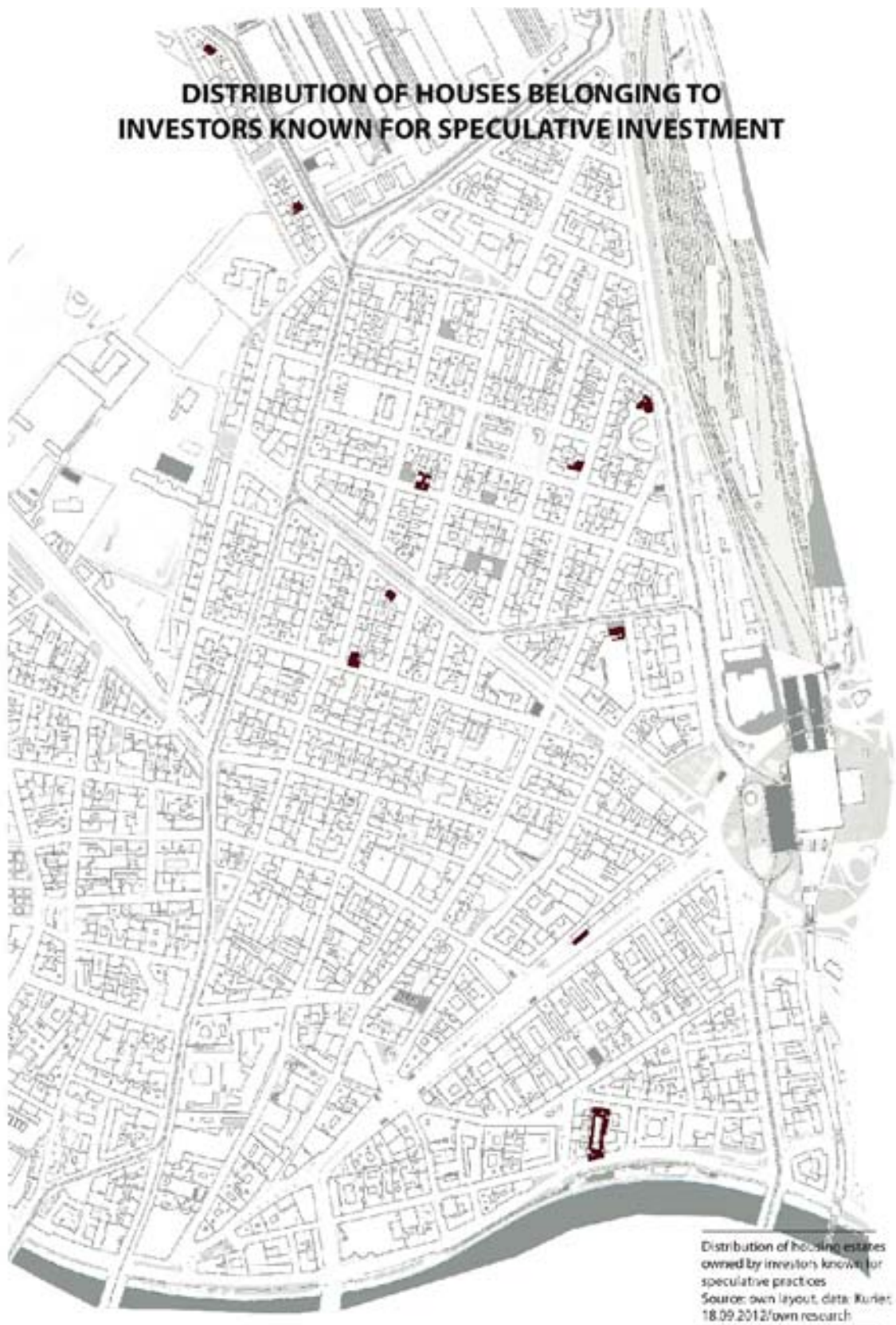


Fig. 5 Distribution of the housing estates owned by investors known for speculative practices, Source: Heute 18.09.2012, own research.

Strategies like “Freeing of inventory” thereby make use of tactics of direct displacement, using methods well known and described around the world and history (see for example Castells 2012 (1973) description of struggles in Paris end of the 1960s). Many of the methods (not repairing damages, cease cleaning semi-public spaces etc.) are part of extracting rent from built environment by disinvestment, since the applicable rents do not deliver direct profit for the investor, as Neil Smith has described for gentrification (Smith 1996: 36ff). On the other side, the strategy directly aims at transforming the remnants of the social-democratic rent regime of the last century to the new neoliberal regime of owner-occupancy or limited contracts with rents allowing private capital to be invested profitably. In short, what we observe in the neighbourhood is, when analysed within a framework of capital accumulation and class struggle, the materialisation of a commodification of the housing market, where an existing housing stock, legislated and regulated by the state is transformed into a commodity which can be traded with profit.

3.3 DIFFICULTIES & POSSIBILITIES OF THE TENANT STRUGGLE

In a first synthesis, I would like to stress the outcomes that are related to difficulties of struggling against the landlord, as well as bringing the housing question back into political debate. Thereby, what we will look at is the concrete difficulties tenants have when they are being harassed by the landlord to further ask which forms of resistances exist. Thereby, the four people were interviewed that lived in three houses owned by speculators. Three other interviews have been made with other inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Based on these interviews, observation and collective discussions, I propose difficulties which are the individualisation of the struggles and its institutional embedding. For an overview on different actors mentioned and their potentialities and conflicts, Fig. XXX shows their distribution within the district.



Fig. 7: Location and main conflicts/potentialities of actors discussed in the research, own layout.

3.3.1 Individualisation of the struggle

Landlords use the individuality of living as a strategy to create social divisions between tenants. In some cases, living in an apartment block creates an individuality and anonymity between the different tenants. The apartment is seen as the own private, personal space, while the semi-public areas of a house either are of no interest, or are controlled by the landlords. Thereby, the relations with neighbours often were described as friendly, but not extending from greeting each other. On one side, cultural differences or following different lifestyles even create conflicts between the neighbours. But, while such an anonymous contact can also be desired, it nevertheless weakens the position of tenants vis-à-vis the landlord. While the landlord aims at the collective displacement of all tenants, these practices are directed against the individual households. Hence, these social divisions can be used by the

landlord to individualise the struggles fought. This is a strategy already described f.e. by Castells as: “...a gradual approach, which aims to treat every case separately and break the resistance by tearing them apart in time and space.” (Castells 2012 (1973): 52, tA) A lack of exchange with the people living in the same house reinforces this “individualisation” of the conflict. This is a situation which can be used by the landlord to create divisions and mistrust between the different tenants. As one tenant told, this can lead to a complete insecurity, whom one can trust:

“With the people in the house it was difficult. I rarely had contact. Equally, many were strange. It was, as if, from a certain moment, you didn't know anymore, who is on whose side. If they don't work together and give you a hard time on purpose. Or if they have been frightened by the landlord that they start telling him things.” (A., Interview, 12.03.2013 – tA, originals of all interview citations in the Appendix)

Equally, in another house, the distrust between the tenants has been reinforced, because the landlord could gain the trust from some tenants:

“The woman in the second floor was well with the owner. He went having coffee at her, again and again. They got along together. In the end she went, because she got a lot of money from him. She said, give me this amount, and took it.” (M., interview 01.03.2013, tA)

In this sense, the difficulty for collective action lies in the structure of the rent sector: Apartments are rented individually, where the owner keeps the control of who is living in house. As one tenant said: “*I didn't choose who is becoming my neighbour.*” (T., Interview, 02.05.2013, tA) This individualises the tenants, giving the landlord the possibility to pressure people on a personal level – if this is the case, struggles are perceived on this personal level. Here, the structure of the housing market plays an important role. Tenancy is defined as an individual contract, which is made individually between the tenant and the landlord. If we compare this structure for example with the situation in corporatist labour contracts, we see that there is missing a collective bargaining of tenancy contracts. Thereby, this individualisation also scare tenants tending them do avoid conflicts with the landlord, as one interviewed activist said:

“Then there would be the possibility to go to the tenant association, but, well not a lot of people do this, because they are afraid, to have problems with the landlord, an get kicked out.” (L. interview, 24.02.2013, tA)

Hence, in order to overcome such individual struggles the formulation of collective demands becomes an important factor.

3.3.2 Forms of self-organisation and appropriation within the house

The problem of the individualisation of living has its cultural roots within a broader process of individualisation and bourgeois ideology, where the dwelling appears as the most personal space – often shared with the nucleus family. Often interviewed inhabitants observe

a certain disinterest of neighbours, to participate in collective projects.

“That means, the people living in our house are quite petty-bourgeois, conservative I would say a bit generalised. [...] A network within the house does not exist, how it probably did in earlier days. [...] The attempt to get into contact with neighbours somehow does not really work.” (L., interview, 24.02.2013, tA)

Instead of being regarded as collective spaces, houses are looked at as a divided spaces of private dwellings. In order to overcome the individualisation of the struggles, forms of collective living, especially inside a house become important. Thereby, these forms have to try to overcome the problem that neighbours often *“value[] the presence of the other [...] but choose[] not to interact with them. They are, as it were, much valued as a kind of social wallpaper”* (Slater 2006: 743) These forms of self-organisation and appropriation do not have to be based on the political level of struggle, but start already with sharing every day life or by appropriating the semi-public spaces such as the corridor or the courtyard. These semi-public spaces are spaces of encounter where neighbours can exchange. Here, forms of appropriation can deliver first forms of collective experiences which contribute not only to collective struggles but equally deliver security.

“But when the new owner came, we were alone. Only we, and two neighbours. Then also this [man] from the first floor. We never knew, who is in the house. But since our people are here, it is better. We know who is here. And now we are like a family. We talk in the staircase, we are going along and we help.” (J., interview, 13.03.2013, tA)

In other cases, projects such as a common garden or painting in the courtyard were forms that appropriated these spaces. Only the fact that one meets in the staircase and exchanging news can give the tenants some security and trust towards one another. As experienced within the Pizzeria, solidarity that reinforces the possibility of collective resistance is gained with little, everyday exchanges. While the landlord's goal was to use the Pizzeria inhabitants to further create a conflictual climate within the house, they slowly worked on creating an atmosphere of trust and exchange with the neighbours. But there are equally other forms of self-organisation that aim more at the political level.

3.3.3 Institutionalisation of the struggle

Another important common topic in the interviews was the relation towards tenant organisations. The social-democratic and corporatist tradition of Vienna has a strong network of highly institutionalised tenancy organisations. All interviewed tenants had a relation with such organisations, but there are different opinions on their work. One tenant mentions the help that especially the 'Urban Renewal Office' could give them. In this case, the institutions could support the tenants, which did not have enough knowledge to struggle on a judicial basis with the landlord. Another tenant criticised especially the tenant institutions:

“First I went to the tenant association. [...] But I was disappointed, because they did not pursue the case. I was sure I was not the only person being harassed by the

landlord, and I would have expected that they would get active and start organising people. But they didn't do anything further.” (A., interview, 12.03.13, tA)

The criticism towards these institutions stems from the different perceptions of the conflicts. Whereas some tenants expect that the institutions organise collective action on a political level, institutions seemed to tend to individualise the problem, treating every case as a single case to be solved according to the legal possibilities. For others, this was enough, as long as the harassment stopped.

These remarks show clearly the double effects of the strong institutionalisation of tenancy conflicts: While these institutions can offer the tenants a needed support especially in struggling on legal terms with the landlord, they follow at the same time a strategy of conflict avoidance, and in some way a de-politicisation, due to an individualised treatment of the cases. Novy et al. (2001: 141) observes: *“Urban Renewal Offices', spread all over Vienna, provide municipality-sponsored district-level advocacy which aims at defusing hidden discontent in relatively degraded areas as well as preventing the open escalation of conflicts.”* However, in this concrete struggle, the Urban Renewal office, in contrast to other organisations, played an important role in connecting affected neighbours.

Since direct displacement is often connected to illicit methods at the grey zone of the law, court cases are an important field of struggle. Besides the threats, that the tenants actually could lose the court cases and get displaced, the court cases serve as a method to pressure tenants by dragging them into seemingly endless legal procedures. Landlords thus deliberately use the tenants' right as a form of pressure. In this sense, the tenant law, even though it may circumvent illegal forms of displacement does not seem to be productive to contribute to collective resistance practice. Not only do judicial cases take time and energy, and can be a strong psychological burden, but the whole legal system seems to make problems to the tenants, because in many cases, the tenants are not accustomed to the legal world and have a distrust towards lawyers.

To conclude, for the tenancy sector, there exists only a *“weak and co-opted civil society..”* (Novy et al. 2001: 140) which aims at conflict avoidance. The further question for the analysis of the material was thus to ask for hindrances and possibilities to organise struggles in a way that they create a more collective action, which deals with the housing question not only in an individualised, legal discourse, but creates antagonistic positions.

3.3.4 Critiques and perspectives on the movement building process

The attempt to create collective resistance against displacement in Vienna focused in the beginning mainly on raising public awareness by media presence⁹ and collective actions such as the action days of “Wilder Wohnen” or the monthly rent-demonstrations. The question arises, how these strategies actually correspond to the perceptions and experiences of affected inhabitants. The following reflections thus aim at presenting some points to be

9 However, media coverage of such strategies is mostly focused on the “Wild-west-practices” (der Standard 30.08.2013), personalising the conflicts in the “bad speculator.” This in turn not only omits any connection with structural processes of commodification, but equally creates a discourse of good and evil which in turn sheds light on “good” practices of speculation. At this point, it seems necessary to create a counter public by shifting the discourse towards general processes of commodification.

discussed in a future debate on movement building (for a more extensive discussion see Appendix C.).

3.3.5 From Gentrification and cultural diversity

Concerning the perception of inhabitants, the conflict is not mainly viewed in “urban renewal”, but arises in the moment where displacement becomes a problem. Using a critical gentrification rhetoric, a movement has to acknowledge, that often, the perception of urban renewal follows Newman & Wyly (2006: 44) observation: *“Residents appreciate many of the changes, but fear that the changes ultimately will displace them.”* Especially in the second district, where red-light district, drug-dealing or a youth culture in front of the Praterstern exist, forms of renewal are perceived as positive changes. Here, a movement would have to deal with diverse ideological and political perceptions of renewal, which can equally be combined with xenophobic or reactive opinions.¹⁰ Hence, the question of ideological and cultural differences is closely connected. As the second district shows, neighbourhoods attractive for private investment often are working class neighbourhoods with a high cultural diversity. First processes of gentrification even reinforce these differences: *“Clearly, social differences emerge whose line of demarcation henceforth runs through the neighbourhoods”* (Behrens 2009: 6, tA) Traditional methods of movements can fail to access this diversity of cultures, because they make use of cultural practices often unknown to other groups. This requires what Holms (2010: 39, tA) calls a: *“A break with subcultural practices of self-marginalization and a conscious opening towards the social realities of the neighbourhood.”* A self-reflection on the methods and languages of the movement could push forward such an opening. Even though the monthly demonstrations in the district may have produced a certain public, it mostly ceased to connect with the inhabitants. The interactions often stay on the distribution of information.

The Pizzaria seems to be confronted with a similar problem. The squat functions as a centre of the struggle, offering space for discussion and encounters. And even though the public visiting the squat transgresses the typical subcultural borders, the relation with the inhabitants of neighbourhood often fails due to different cultural practices and perceptions. Squatting culture is largely unknown in Vienna. Insofar, organising people against displacement in Vienna has to be fulfilled by an opening for cultural diversity. And a willingness from all side to accept the Other as a common partner in struggle. It is important to discuss, how this cultural diversity affects the methods, languages and spaces of a housing movement and how access to these groups can be found. The question to be discussed is, if there should be less activism on the streets but more organising in the neighbourhood.

¹⁰ This in turn is equally used by landlords to create further distrust between inhabitants of a house, as one interviewed answered to the first distribution of the outcomes: “es ist ja auch so, dass der [Landlord] gezielt menschen in seine schon-leerstehenden wohnungen setzt. und in meinem fall waren das "ausländer_innen", die ja explizit von meinem wohnungsturnachbarn als "gsindl" bezeichnet wurden und weiters hat er auch gesagt, dass er auch lieber ausziehen will, weil's mit "denen" im haus nicht auszuhalten ist (-statt mit dem hauseigentümer). also er instrumentalisiert menschen (die oftmals keinen aufenthaltstitel in österreich haben) und bedient sich der abgründigkeit der österreichischen (latenten bis offenen) rassismen und fremdenfeindlichkeit.”

3.4 CONCLUSION

What the Viennese context shows, is that there is a lack of a “*collective practice concerning tenant interests.*” (Behrens 2009: 8, tA) Struggles are fought individually, while collective organisation rests marginal – when they are limited to mutual support of the direct neighbour. This points towards the need to create structures which combine the support of tenants in danger of displacement with the formulation of collective political demands. Here, Vienna asks Madrid about forms of collective organisation and demands. Thereby, the organisation of collective forms of living, by the appropriation and self-organisation in the houses and the neighbourhood become an important factor. The squatting of the Pizzaria shows, how forms of collective appropriation not only create a public space in which collective political action can emerge, but also, how collective living can create new forms of solidarity between inhabitants. If collective forms of struggle have to be found, the critique on the commodification has to transgress the pure material-quantitative aspects of living, such as rising rents or charges. It equally has to grasp the individualisation of living that fosters the commodification and strategies of displacement. Therefore, the integration of these qualitative aspects of housing in a movement discourse and especially in collective practices can lead to the formulation of new demands and alternatives.



NI CASAS SIN GENTE
NI GENTE SIN CASAS

4 NI CASAS SIN GENTE, NI GENTE SIN CASAS - MADRID

Compared to Vienna, Madrid offers a perspective of an economy deeply struck by the economical crisis. The Madrid example allows a clear understanding of the consequences of postfordist economy and neoliberal policies in cities and the housing market. In Spain, Madrid has been one of the main areas where urban development and the real estate boom have let its impacts, because *“Madrid was the city that benefited most from Spain’s full membership of the EU, as governmental and commercial organizations chose to locate their offices in the capital [...], thereby bringing or encouraging direct foreign investment.”* (García 2010: 969) Within the two last decades, Madrid was rebuilt from the capital of Franco's Spain towards a “Global City” (Observatorio metropolitano 2009). Today, Madrid has become the third financial centre of Europe. During this time, the region of Madrid grew from 4.7 millions inhabitants in 1981 to 6.4 millions inhabitants in 2011 (INE 2011).

With the crisis, innovative social movements organising around the housing question emerged. In 2008, the Plataforma des afectados por la hipoteca (PAH) was founded in order to organise people affected by the mortgage-crisis. From the 15M-movement neighbourhood groups emerged which deal with housing topics. Equally, the squatter movement won strength (Martínez 2012). Within this wide field of social movements, I participated in different meetings and struggles, conducted four interviews and further informal discussions. In the case of Madrid, the goal of the research was mainly to gain an overview and analyse the different struggles of the movement because the strategies used – even if not new in a pure sense – are innovative for housing movements. A special focus were forms of collective action in housing struggles, which is why the emphasis was put more on organised than unorganised forms of appropriation and self-organisation. This kind of panoramic presentations of the strategies will further be compared with Vienna and discussed in chapter 5. The field of qualitative research was limited to Madrid, but the situation can only be understood when drawing a picture of the development of the whole nation.

4.1 THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HOUSING SECTOR IN SPAIN

4.1.1 A Society of Proprietors or a society of debtors?

In general, Spain has a welfare state that is similar to other countries of southern Europe – why f.e. Arbaci (2007) speaks of the Latin-rim welfare model (including Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece – pejoratively called “PIGS” during the crisis) whose *“housing policies are characteristic of a weak and family-reliant Welfare State”* as well as a high share of homeownership (Fernandez-Cordón & Leal 2009: 28). This model of welfare state has been politically introduced by the regime of Franco. In 1957 the Franquist regime presented their

new housing policies with the saying: “*Queremos un país de propietarios, no de proletarios.*” (cit. after Colau & Alemany 2012: 34) While Franco's relation towards the working class has been characterised by an authoritarian wage repression (Charnock et al. 2012: 6), the main pillar of the pacification of worker's struggle was the housing policy, which aimed at creating a social control of the working class by turning them into a class of homeowners “*con el objetivo de desactivar la ínfulas revolucionarias de una clase obrera desafecta.*” (Colau & Alemany 2012: 34f). Since the 1960s, Spain thus underwent an important transformation of its housing stock. While in 1950 51% of the Spanish population lived in the renting sector – in Madrid over 90% in the same year – already in 1981, 73.1% lived in the owner-occupied sector (ibid.: 33). At the same time, over 90% of the public housing stock was privatised.

After the democratisation, Franco's economic policy largely remained, while driven by an ongoing integration in the EU and the global markets. When the PP won the elections in 1996, Spain introduced stronger neoliberal policies (Charnock et al. 2012: 7). The economy of Spain seemed to do well, with an average growth of 3.5-4 % per year. By 2004, unemployment fell to a historical low of 8.1%. However, with a residual manufacturing industry, economic growth has been concentrated on the service sector and, especially, on the real estate sector. The econometrists Cosculluela-Martínez et al. (2013: 1840) estimate, „*that more than 54% of net employment created by the Spanish economy, during the period 2000–2005, could be caused, directly and/or indirectly, by housing investment. Also, more than 34% of output growth accounted in the period could be attributed to the same fact.*” The boom on the real estate market was supported by a deregulation of planning and of tax incentives for the construction and acquisition of real estate. In 1998, the state enacted a new land-law, which has become known as the “ley del todo urbanizable”, because, except for protected areas, every surface of the country could be developed (see Durán 2006: 20f). Between 2001-2008 4'095'448 new dwellings were built, a production far above demand (Fernández-Tabales & Cruz 2013: 8). Yet, prices for real estate did not follow the “laws of the market,” but remained highly overvalued. One main reason of the discrepancy between offer and prices was an inelasticity of the housing market. With the ongoing destruction of the rental market and the public housing stock, the Spanish housing market missed an alternative to homeownership that would lower the prices on the housing market. As Fig. 8 shows, in 2011 82.2% of the total housing stock of primary homes were owner-occupied, while only 9,3% were rented on market price and 2.8% as social housing. The real estate bubble emerged and grew.

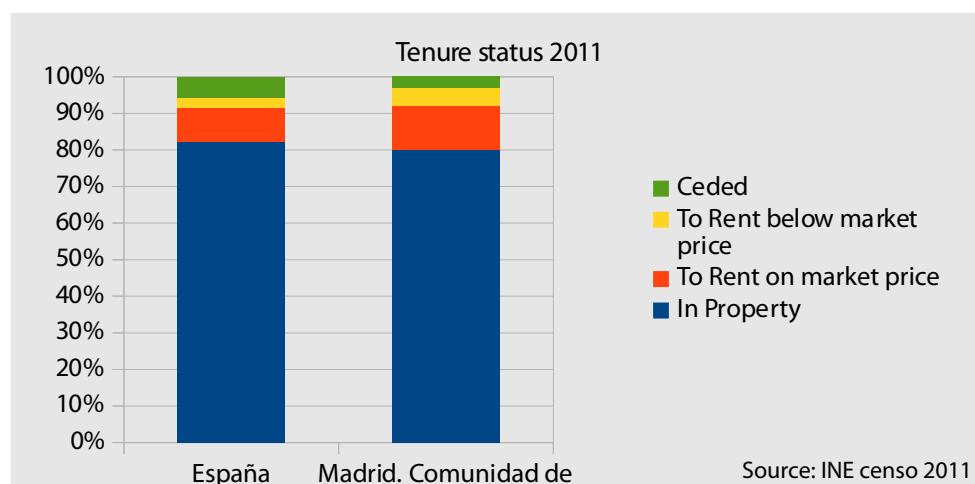


Fig. 8: Tenure status in Spain and Madrid 2011, Source: INE

On the other side, the offer of housing was satisfied with a deregulation of the credit system, allowing the banks to pursue an offensive policy of allocating credits and mortgages with exploitative conditions (while people were quasi being forced to accept a mortgage in order to have a house to live).¹¹

Result of this deregulation of the credit system was a growth of average household debt from 55 to 130% during 1997-2007 – of which more than two thirds of the debts were mortgages. (Colau & Alemany 2012: 53) In short, economic growth in the time before the crisis was heavily financed by speculative capital invested in real estate markets, and was backed by credit-based demand – as Fig. 9 shows. Insofar, the Spanish way was “*an model example of the interaction between financial forces and real estate developers*” (Fernández-Tabales & Cruz 2013: 10, tA) On the brink of the economic crisis, the resulting class composition on the market has simultaneously transformed and intensified the structure intended by the Franquist housing policies. Spain has become a society of homeowners, but of indebted-homeowners. The society of proprietors has become a society of debtors.

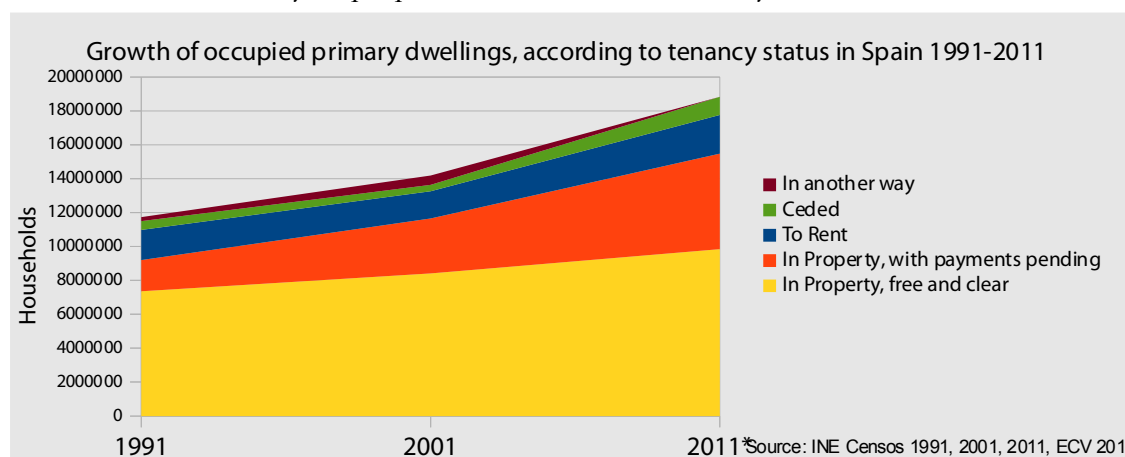


Fig. 9: Growth of principal dwellings, according to tenure status, Source: INE

¹¹ However, it must equally be noted that similar loose allocation for mortgages was given for secondary homes. Secondary homes take an important role in the Spanish housing market; “In Spain as in other countries, the study of the housing market and the residential behaviour of households cannot be limited to the stock of main residences: indeed, more than 15% of Spanish households own both their main residence and a second residence.” (Fernandez-Cordón & Leal 2009: 31) This question of secondary home-ownership cannot be further developed in this paper.

4.1.2 From the economic to the housing crisis

When the crisis stroke the financial markets in 2007 and the overall economy in 2008, the connection between global finance capital and the Spanish real estate market let burst the housing bubble and the financial system in Spain. At the same time, the near cessation of any construction activity contributed to an important rise in unemployment which by 2013 increased to over 20% in Madrid (INE 2013). Soon after, the economic crisis expanded into a housing crisis when unemployment struck mortgage debtors who henceforth were unable to pay the instalments. A good third of the owner-occupied dwellings are owned with a pending mortgage, which makes about a third of the whole housing stock. In total numbers, this amounts to nearly 5.5 million households with mortgage debts. In 2011, a 7.4% of all the households indicate to have problems with payment delays concerning their primary home (which amounts to more than a million households).¹²

Results were an escalating number of foreclosures. The absurd situation Spain finds itself is, that despite 3'443'365 millions vacant dwellings, 349'438 households have faced foreclosure between 2007 and 2011. In this same period, these foreclosures have led to 166'716 evictions – which makes an average of more than 113 families or other households being evicted per day (INE 2012, taken from Colau & Alemany 2012: 228ff).¹³

Fig. Xxx shows the spatial distribution of foreclosures and evictions in Spain – if taken per household, especially the southern part, and there the coastal areas are the most affected of the crisis while average evictions per week (which could be understood as the density of the presence of the crisis) are the highest in the big cities, such as Madrid (131.7 evictions per week), Barcelona (96.5) or Valencia (93.3).

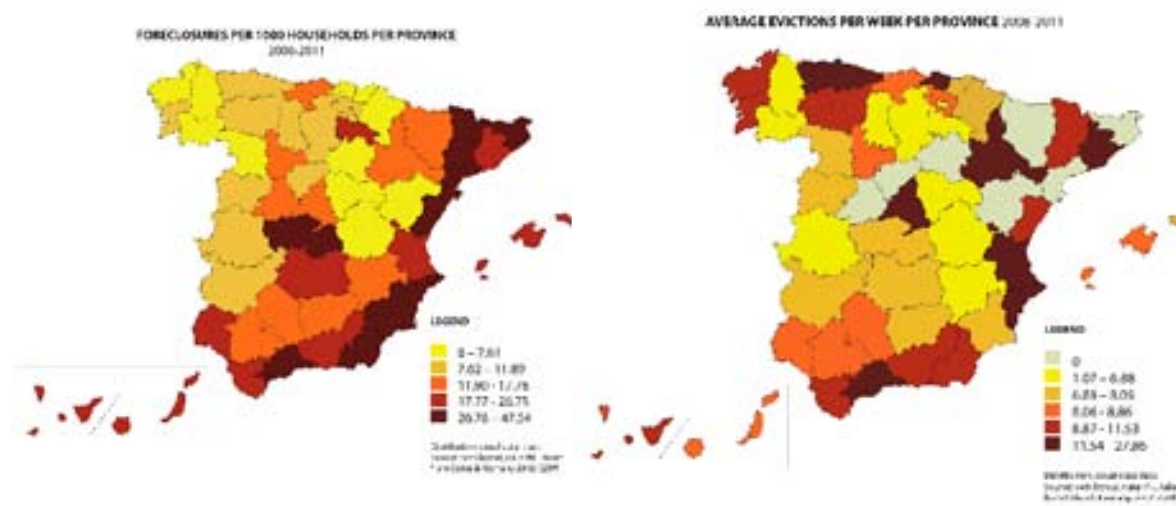


Fig. 10. Foreclosures per inhabitant and evictions per week per province 2008-2011, Source: Colau & Alemany 2012, INE

12 Own trend calculation: 29.9%, as published in the Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida of the INE 2012, of 18'0830692 households existing in 2011 (INE 2011) equal a 5'407'024 households with a pending mortgage. Equally, a 7.4% of the households with payment delays equal a 1'338'193 households.

13 Even though it has been noted that people effectively losing their homes involuntary due to problems to mortgage instalments is far higher than the numbers of evictions – in many cases, foreclosures don't lead to evictions, because the people decide to move before their eviction.

In terms of socio-economical structures, data collected by the PAH (Fig. XX) show that the crisis affects the society across class structures – especially affecting middle-class Spanish families.

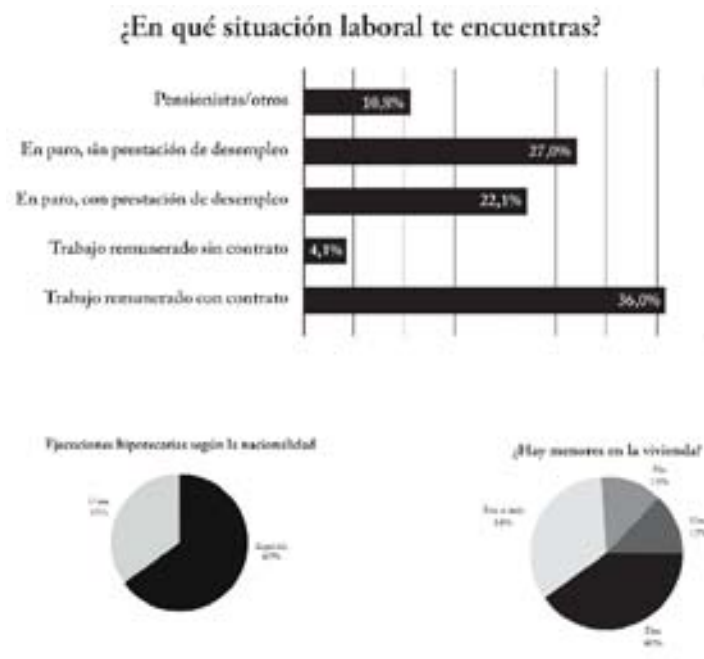


Fig. 11, Nationality, occupancy and family composition of households facing foreclosure, Source: Colau & Alemany 2012

4.2 AUTONOMOUS AND COLLECTIVE ORGANISING

4.2.1 Emergence of the Plataforma des afectados por la hipoteca

The PAH was founded in 2009 in Barcelona as a platform to offer self-help for affected by the mortgage crisis. Eventually the movement spread over the whole country. Obviously, the movement gained strength by the spread and severity of the problems, but another reason for the success can be found in a residual institutional setting of interest groups for the affected. The structure of the PAH is a decentralised, horizontal network based on direct democracy and self-organisation of the affected. The PAH fills a gap of organising within the housing sector, which is fostered by a convergence of several movements emerging during the crisis. On one side, the PAH succeeded the movement “V de Vivienda,” which was mainly a youth movement mobilising against the rising prices for housing before the crisis – a focus that shifted with the economic crisis.

“V de Vivienda was a movement composed mainly of young people with precarious wages and work conditions [...] while the social base of the PAH was composed mainly of families affected by foreclosure processes. [...] Would the affected become activists?” (Colau & Alemany 2012: 93, tA)

In Madrid it came to a convergence of the PAH with the squatters movement and the 15M-movement (see Martínez 2012) who decentralised its structure towards the neighbourhoods of the city. Fig. 12 shows in a schematic way the spatial distribution of the main actors discussed in this paper, applied for the neighbourhood Lavapies.

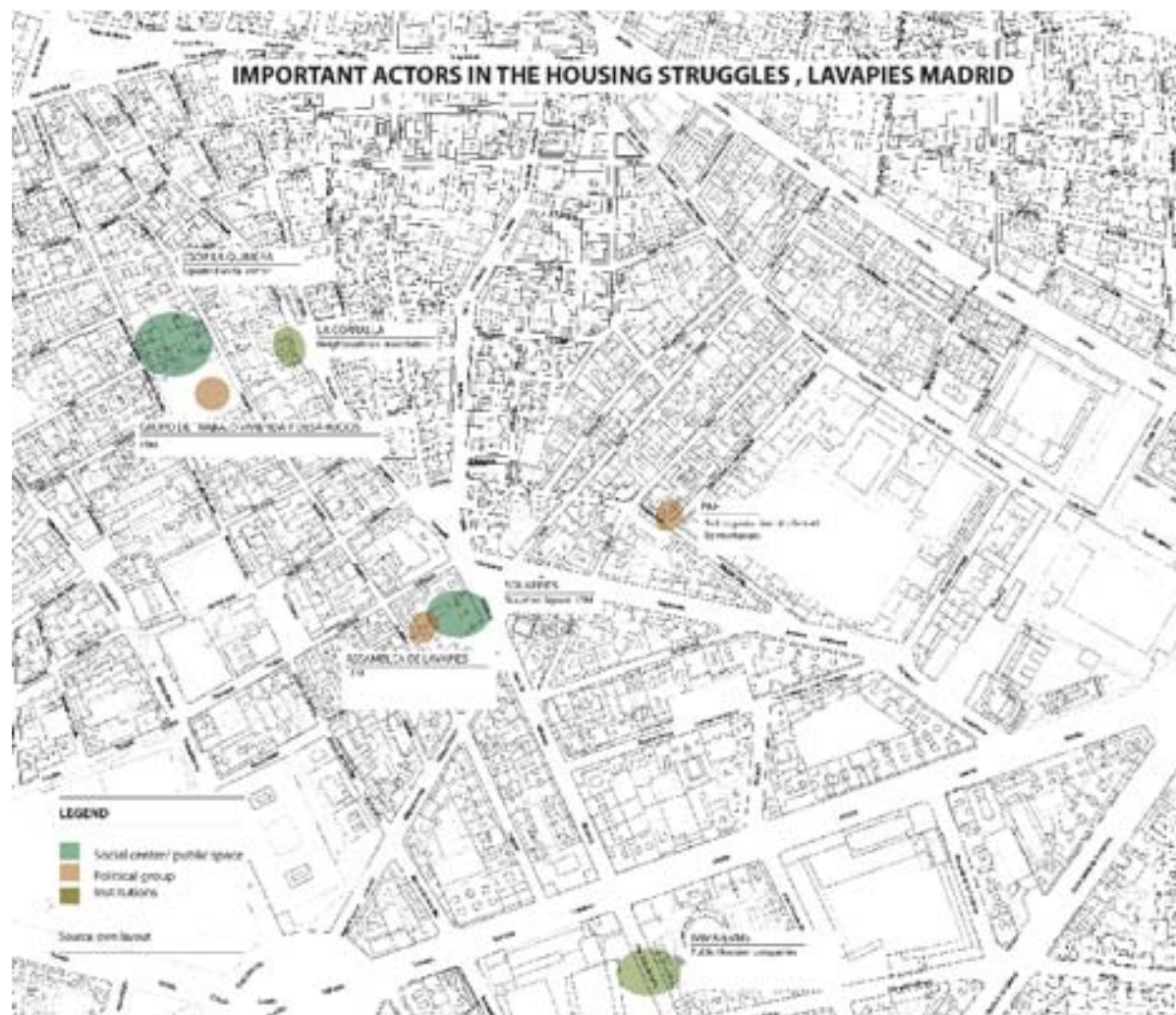


Fig. 12: Main actors of housing struggles (in Lavapies) discussed in the text, source: own layout

Under the call “Toma los Barrios” the 15M initiated over 100 local “Asambleas Populares,” assemblies taking place regularly with a direct-democratic process open for all inhabitants of a neighbourhood. By “Taking over the neighbourhood” the movement bases itself in public spaces or social centres. The “Asambleas” themselves have created different working groups (Grupos de trabajo) that organise around specific topics – of which one concentrates on housing. The “Stop Desahucio” campaign of the PAH served as a connection between the different movements (ibid.). The following part will discuss this campaign under the perspective of appropriation and self-organisation.

The first demand of the PAH was the “Dación en pago”¹⁴ which is a first reaction to the increase of foreclosures and evictions of mortgage debtors. The claim was made because

¹⁴ The claim is made, because according to Spanish law, an executed foreclosure means that the debtor loses not only his home to bank, but is forced to pay the interest rates of the debts at the bank, as well as the “negative equity” of the effective value of the dwelling.

according to the Spanish law an eviction means that the debtor loses not only his home, but is forced to pay the remaining mortgage and interest rates of the debts at the bank. By being dispossessed by the bank, the debtor not only loses his home, but is further bound to his debts,¹⁵ therefore: “*to the eviction, a financial sentence is added, which transforms into a sentence of social exclusion.*” (Colau & Alemany 2012: 31) Started in 2011, the PAH has collected over 1.4 million signatures for an “Iniciativa Legislativa Popular” (ILP)¹⁶ where the PAH demands the “*dación en pago*” for mortgage debtors, the paralysation of evictions and the transformation of foreclosed dwellings to dwellings rented as social housing to the former owners. However, the PP – ignoring a 90% majority of people in favour for the ILP¹⁷ – follow policies that support the big financial institutes that allow their recuperation of their loans from the mortgage debtors.

4.2.2 Collectivity by self-organisation

Compared to Vienna, the construction of a “society of proprietors” created similar problems of individualisation, with different means. The construction of a class of homeowners, creates an individual financial responsibility, where the whole value of an apartment weights on the household. On the other side, the individual situations are deliberately used by companies and bank to evict people, piece by piece, temporally and spatially segregated from each other, as one activist explains:

“For me it was a pity, because I thought that commonly we could defend this in another way. But finally, all the process started separately. One like mine, one in the house, one in another house, so each case is being different. For example I have been evicted one week ago, but the other houses are different, because they have other trials.” (S. interview, 02.07.2013)

But, most importantly, the experience of the individual processes of people facing foreclosure, are often combined with feelings of shame, of guilt, not to be able to pay the mortgage. Similar to the individual rent contracts in Vienna, the personal dependence on the mortgage individualises the tenants, while at the same time creating feelings of culpability. At this stage, “*El proceso de desculpabilización es un paso necesario y previo al apoderamiento.*” (Colau & Alemany 2012: 94) Hence, the PAH not only became an organisation to offer the affected help, but especially to offer a platform of collective discussion and organisation:

“The reason: the difficulty that we affected people have to speak publicly on a reality we see as a personal failure. [...] Hence, one of the most important achievements of the Plataforma was to make visible a problem that is experienced individually, a problem that rarely managed to pass the sphere of the private and intimate, and transform it into a social problem.” (Colau & Alemany 2012: 16, tA)

15 A legal practice which has been judged illegal by the Court of Justice of the EU in March 2013. see: <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/2013/03/14/europa-declara-ilegal-la-ley-espanola-de-los-desahucios/> (30.08.2013)

16 http://www.afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/ilp_dacion3b3n-en-pago-retroactiva_moratoria-de-desahucios_alquiler-social.pdf (30.08.2013)

17 <http://www.diagonalperiodico.net/m/17560> (30.08.2013)

The form of self-organisation can shift the perception from an individual to a collective, structural level. Empowerment for the affected is created by the horizontal and collective structure of the meetings, as an affected notes:

“Somos gente que nos vemos aquí para hablar del tema de las hipotecas. Hay personas que están afectadas que tienen hipoteca y no pueden pagar, que tienen problemas con la hipoteca. Hay gente que es solidaria que no tiene ese problema pero se solidariza con los que lo tienen. Este es un espacio de encuentro de unos y otros, y hablamos del problema. Hablamos de qué cosas se pueden hacer, da la acciones a hacer, etc. pero sobre todo es un espacio para ponernos de acuerdo, para ayuda mutua, para encarar este tema” (cit. after Contreras 2012: 15)

The PAH thus advises for collective advisory sessions: *“From the PAH we encourage you to do collective advisory sessions, with the objective to collectively share the experiences of other affected, share knowledge with other attendees and optimise the resources.”*¹⁸ In opposition to tenant organisations that professionally treat the singular cases, the self-organised form of resistance aims at the combination between individual problem solving and collective empowerment and political actionability. Hereby, the autonomous organisation of the PAH and the 15M-assemblies stand in opposition to other neighbourhood organisations, working with the state, as one activist notes:

“For example, generally people who have housing problems go to the Asamblea de Lavapiés, a group of people created more or less since 15M, young people, who are lawyers or social workers and in general people that want to help. There is a lot of people who go to ask for help. Because this institution [Corralla in Lavapiés]... and it already happened that when people go to ask for help, they take part of the government side. If you ask them for example, they want to kick me out of the house, they say, ok, wait, no worries we take care. They talk to the government, but they say then: Ok, you have to go, but you can have a „interlocutorio“, they are not going to stop the desahucio. So people don't ask for this things.” (E., interview, 07.07.13)

This collective form of dealing with individual cases equally is translated in the forms of action taken by the movement, as the next part shows.

4.3 STOP DESAHUCIOS — THE PICKET LINES OF URBAN CAPITALISM

The campaign “Stop Desahucios” of the PAH calls for civil disobedience in order to stop evictions. With direct actions the judicial “eviction committee” is hindered to enter the dwelling in question. By blocking the entrances, the staircase and the apartment, the actions draw from practices of squatting by applying them in private apartments. Until August 2013, the PAH has stopped 725 evictions in the whole country and – in cooperation with the 15M

¹⁸ <http://www.afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/criterios-para-constituir-una-pah.pdf> (30.08.2013, tA)

assemblies – 185 in Madrid.¹⁹

In order to present these actions to the reader and to analyse this procedure, the following extracts of field-notes taken during the participation in such direct actions are used (for an extend summary of one such action, see A.B). The following exert is a description of the moment where the eviction committee is hindered to enter the house:

The eviction committee starts preparing to enter the house. For a short moment, hectic movements. “A la puerta! A la puerta!” The remaining activists quickly move into the courtyard, lining up in front of the entrance door. [...] When the committee arrives in the courtyard, we start chaining up, arm in arm, several lines in front of the door. The slogans continue – now: “Que no, que no, que no tenemos miedo!” and “No pasarán!” Now the three officials approach the human chains, they attempt to break through, entering the door. For a minute, a skirmish, some pushing. They give up, turn around, go outside. The chains break up, euphoric sounds, “Este desahucio, nos vamos a parar!”, some people fall in their arms. But the euphoria does not take long. The struggle is not won. (Field-notes, Stop Desahucio, 03.07.2013)

The presence of bodies in the streets and in the house, where capital pervades the living of the people, hinders the state of executing the right to private property. The eviction of a family from their home does not only displace them from their lifeworld and creates social exclusion, but is also the violent manifestation of the rule of market value over use value, of the definite moment of “*accumulation through dispossession*.” As the lay-off of the worker symbolises the ultimate rule of the capitalist control over labour, the eviction manifests the corroboration of the rule of private property of land over the human need to housing. Insofar, these actions resemble strongly the picket lines used by trade unions and workers to block the entrances of the factories. Thereby, eviction blockades serve different goals, which some authors (Wheless & Müller 2005) distinguish with traditional picketing. “Stop desahucios” can be understood as “*recognitional picketing*” for the blockades in front of the door aim at averting the eviction. Further, the actions equally serve as “*informational picketing*” by the way the presence of the people – not only in front of the door – but in the streets and semi-public spaces of the house, combined with the banners, signs, chants and slogans, directly create a public, a publicity that raises awareness for the cause, brings back a formerly private, individualised problem into the public space of the city, calling for interaction with the inhabitants and passers-by, as the next exert shows:

“The lawyer returns back to the entrance door, where around 100 people are standing. She announces that the eviction is paralysed, adjourned indefinitely. People start to cheer, she holds one fist up. [...] Both sides of the narrow street are packed with people, holding their placards in the air, chanting slogans. The passing cars have to slow down. One activist prompts the cars to hoot, some of the cars respond by hooting. The crowd responds: ‘¡No desahucio más!’” (Field-notes, Stop evictions, 08.07.2013)

Equally, when the commodification of housing signifies, that capital relations are installed within the private space of living, the antagonism between use value and market

¹⁹ <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/> (30.08.2013)

value of a space become apparent. In the moment of an eviction, the struggle against this process of commodification consists in establishing a connection between the personal and the political, the private space and the public space. Appropriations of private space to turn them into a political space is one element of the Stop Desahucio actions.

The chants, supported by a megaphone, echo in the courtyard: “Este desahucio, nos vamos a parar!” then “Vergüenza, Vergüenza!” Some inhabitants of the surrounding houses start gathering in front of us. Some wear sportswear, house-shoes. The slogans seem to have interrupted their daily morning courses, dragging them out of their private flats. Some seem to sympathise, others the opposite. (Fieldnotes, Stop Desahucio, 10.07.2013)

To sum up, next to saving a home for a family, ” stop desahucio” actions can have a similar effect as the collective assemblies of the PAH on a spatial level: The process of politicisation and collectivisation of a former personalised problem through appropriation of private, semi-private or public space equally creates the possibility of an awareness rising of the home as locus of struggle. Thereby, one important shift can be observed: With the growing privatisation of public space this leads to a convergence between struggles for public spaces and housing, because they “*a la que dan lugar los antagonismos sociales que demarcan los bienes comunes y los límites de la soberanía privada.*” (Martínez 2012: 5)

4.4 SQUATTING AGAINST THE AUSTERITY POLITICS

4.4.1 Struggles on the renting sector

While the PAH focuses on mortgages, the crisis has equally aggravated the situation for young people and migrants. Table. 3 shows the distribution of different demographic groups on the housing market. Especially the young and the immigrants²⁰ face these problems of the renting market.

Share of Households per Tenancy Regime according to selected attributes of the head of household (2011)
Source: INE (ECV 2011)

Demographic attributes of the head of household	Owner-occupancy	Renting with market price	Renting below market price	Ceded
All households	82.2	9.3	2.8	5.7
Spanish	85.2	6.1	2.8	5.9
Foreigner (EU)	42.8	52.7	2.1	2.5
Foreigner (Rest of the World)	27.4	67.3	2.7	2.6
16 to 29 years	50.5	35.1	2.9	11.4
30 to 44 years	76.6	13.9	2.1	7.4
45 to 64 years	85.1	6.6	3	5.2
65 or more years	90.5	2.8	3.3	3.4
Male	83	8.9	2.3	5.7
Female	80.9	9.9	3.6	5.7
Single-person households	76.7	11.9	3.9	7.5
2 adults with one or more children	83.7	8.8	1.4	6.1

Table 13: Share of tenancy regime according to socio-demographic characteristics, Source: INE

20 In respect of an ongoing gentrification in f.e. Lavapiés, attention has to be given to migrants. Without having a family to rely on poor immigrants are forced to find other survival strategies, which are mainly concentrated on the renting market, but whose increasing pressure and prices equally forced them into strategies of reciprocity (Kesteloot et al. 1997), as a Bangladeshi inhabitant tells:

“Normally, there are about 6 to maximum 8 Persons living in one flat. „It is muy triste, really something of the sadest thing of our life.“ We sleep with four per room. Like this, the rent can be under 100 Euros a month.” (B., interview, 09.07.2013)

After the deregulation of the renting sector with the Ley de Arrendamientos Urbanos (LAU) from 1994, prices were liberalised and contracts limited to five years. In general, the government has pursued austerity policies leading to the further dismantling of the residing welfare systems. For the housing sector, the austerity mainly consisted in a ignorance and idleness to solve the problems. This has further aggravated the situation, especially because the demand for renting increased, further pressuring the prices on the rental market (Colau & Alemany 2012: 77). In Madrid, the situation of social housing is especially critical: In the community and the municipality of Madrid, two housing organisations (IVIMA for the community, EVMS for the municipality) are responsible for the social housing provision. In 2012, both government have announced to topple their social housing programs, and subsequently, estates have been sold, spilling money back into the hands of the governments. According to the PAH the two enterprises have executed more evictions than any other enterprise in Madrid. In average, 40 executions for evictions have been made per day in 2012.^{21, 22} Another strategy used is to construct housing, but to keep the apartments vacant, in order to sell them after 8 years on the market. This is possible due to a law which allows social housing to be sold, when there is no demand for it. A first reaction to this dismantling, is to use squatting of the houses of the EVMS in order to pressure the company to rent the houses, as one squatter tells:

“Probably we didn't make this pressure for the enterprise, I'm sure that the building would still be empty. So probably for making this pressure by occupying the flats, they start to think, ok, how can we deal with it. They start to call the security person, to close the doors, for me it is very easy: if you rent a house, nobody will occupy it. But after they started to do it, it was a happy moment.” (E., Interview, 02.07.2013)

4.4.2 Squatting democratised

In lack of social housing, Madrid faces a, what I call a, democratisation of squatting. Even tough squatting has a long tradition in Madrid (Martínez 2013), the crisis has reinforced squatting, extending it towards a broader public. For young people, one way to react on the housing crisis can be the prolonged stay at their nucleus family (Fernandez-Cordón & Leal 2009). On the other side, in a situation of high youth unemployment, squatting of empty flats has become a strategy of access to housing, as one squatter tells:

“I lived in a rented flat... and I had to work and to pay my studies, so I had no money at the end of the month to buy food [...] so, I started to think of other alternatives, so I decided to squat.” (R., interview, 08.07.13,)

But equally for people being evicted, squatting can become an alternative:

“And after that there was a man around the 40s. That came more or less at the same time. But we didn't know him, but we met him, and he was a kind person. He was

21 <http://www.diagonalperiodico.net/global/ivima-y-emvs-pelotazo-la-vivienda-social-madrid.html> (30.08.2013)

22 This summer, the PAH has reacted to this growing concern of evictions from social housing and founded the “Plataforma de Afectados por la Vivienda Publica y Social de Madrid” (PAVPS).

living in the street because he was „desoccupied“ (evicted) from his house, like three years ago. He had nothing, no money, no house, and his bank kicked him out his house. And he was living in the street, but he knew about this building, so he said, ok, I come inside aswell. You know, there are different profiles of people, always.” (S., interview, 23.06.13)

Additionally, as a reaction to the lack of alternatives in the social housing sector, the PAH launched campaign “Obra social” (Community Public Housing). Started in 2011, with the reoccupation of an evicted flat, the campaign reacts to the lack of social housing and alternatives for evicted families by re-occupying vacant apartments and blocks. In July 2013, the PAH published a manual with practical and legal tips how to squat a house. In there, they define the “Obra social” as:

“una campaña de ocupaciones y de reuperación del derecho a la vivienda que responde a un estado generalizado de emergencia habitacional generado de forma artificial y deliberada pro los bancos y el gobierno”²³

Squatting vacant flats takes the double side, being a political action whereby the appropriation of the flat serves as a means of pressure, while being equally the appropriation of a living space. Thereby, squatters of flats also experience problems inside the house as one squatter said that occupied an apartment in an owner-occupied building:

“There were people that had a mortgage to access their own flat. So they felt it was a big injustice, because they had to work, to give their life to to a mortgage to be able to access the apartment, while we just went to the flat. So there was a big conflict with the neighbours who completely opposed the occupation.” (R., interview, 08.07.13)

What the examples of resistance and the analysis of the housing market in Madrid show, is a picture of an emergency state, which, despite the social tragedies the austerity measures produce, has led to innovative strategies. Practices such as squatting is used by the traditional squatters movement as by the housing movement, and especially, the role of squatted social centres or public spaces as places of encounter and organisation for the housing movement become apparent. In all these spaces, gaining collective control over space becomes the way to find alternatives.

To sum up: In such a paradoxical situation of unemployment, vacant buildings, homelessness, evictions and privatisation of social housing, we can only listen to John Holloway, who has observed in an interview:

“And I think that more and more people are being forced to reinvent their politics or reinvent their ideas about politics, both in terms of protests – but also I think in terms of creating alternatives. If the system has no room for us, if the system simply leaves 50% of young people unemployed, if state benefits are cut back, if the state absolutely refuses to negotiate, if the police become more repressive, then I think we are forced not only to think of creative forms of protest but also ways of how we

²³ <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/2013/07/09/obra-social-pah-manual-desobediencia-civil-viviendas-entidades-financieras/> (30.08.2013)

actually survive and how we actually create alternative ways of living. And we see that very much in Spain and in Greece, where things are going in that direction.”²⁴

²⁴ <http://roarmag.org/2013/04/interview-john-holloway-revolution-state-power/> (30.08.2013)



5 CONTESTING URBAN CAPITALISM, EVERYWHERE!

5.1 COMPARISON: TWO WAYS OF CAPITAL ACCUMULATION

The two case studies differ strongly in important points: the housing policies and the welfare system, the economic crisis, the culture and histories of social movements, but equally the approach of the research. This complicates a comparison. Nevertheless, the framework of the housing policies and class composition allows a comparison. The first part will compare the two ways of housing provision which influence the struggles. Without seeking for universal solutions, the second part discusses similarities and possibilities for further struggles and alternatives.

5.1.1 Two Manifestations of Neoliberalism

Following Peck & Tickell (2002) neoliberalisation is a process politically implemented on all levels of government. Thereby, the paths of neoliberalism differ strongly, as the two examples show. Apparent is the different path dependency between a neoliberalisation of the Viennese renting market and the Madrid homeowner market. The two cities show nearly opposite structures of the housing market (see Fig. 13) which has its historical reasons resulting from two distinct ideologies of regulation of class contradictions: A social-democratic provision of public housing for the working class and a neoliberal (and franquist) pacification of the working class through home-ownership.

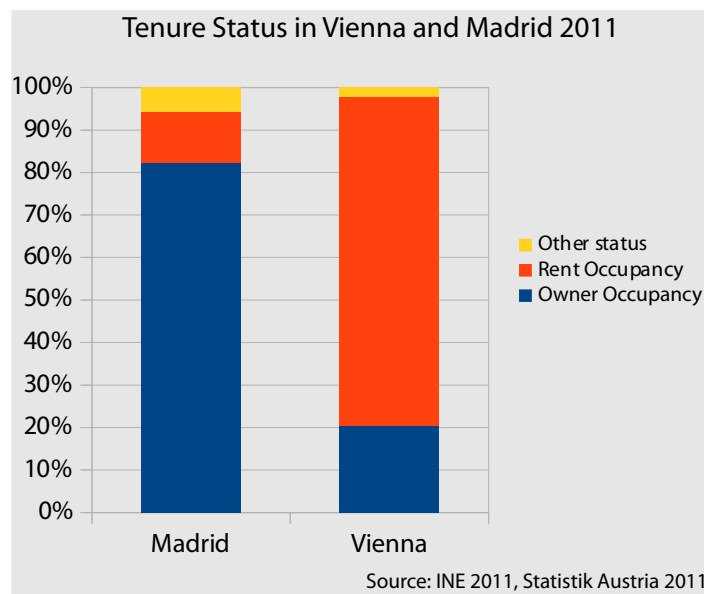


Fig. 14: Comparison between the Viennese and Madrid tenure status. Source: INE

However, some authors have argued for a convergence of European welfare policies (for a critical discussion see Arbaci 2007), due to “*the emergence of a neoliberal ideology that favoured blind subservience to the “invisible hand” of the market.*” (Valenzuela 2012: 408) As the two case studies show, such a convergence is far from being realised, too strong are the contextual-bound characteristics. Nevertheless, some similarities can be observed. On one side, the ongoing de- and re-regulation of the renting market is favouring limited contracts and the abolition of strict rent regulations. On the other side, policies and investment strategies tend towards home-ownership, a tendency already observed by Slater (2006: 750). Concerning the implication of neoliberal policies, the two cities are in a different stage: While Madrid suffers from a crisis of the neoliberalisation of welfare state and housing provision, Vienna's neoliberalisation is softer and slowed down by remaining welfare institutions. The Viennese demand “*Wohnen darf keine Ware sein*” seems old-fashioned in the Madrid context: Since a long time “*la conversión de la vivienda en un bien de inversión, más que de uso*” is pushed forward (Observatorio metropolitano 2009: 24). Another similarity is, that the structures of the housing market affect especially young people and migrants. In both cities, these two groups struggle with access to housing. Here, a special focus of movements is advisable. For the young generation, one of the main problem lies in the affordability of housing, often coupled with a precarious work situation (or, high unemployment in Spain). For many migrants, the reaction is an orientation towards the residual or informal housing market, leading to overcrowding (see Kesteloot et al. 1997). Thereby, housing is integrated in a complex network of illegality, social exclusion and poverty. On the other side, the debt-driven provision of home-ownership in Madrid extended housing problems towards other groups of the population, affecting especially Spanish families of the middle class. As discussed in the theoretical part, accumulation strategies on the housing market transgress the class structures composed by labour relations because they create new relations towards capital, as the mortgage system in Spain demonstrates. However, mainly induced by the aggravation of the economic situation of families, f.e. due to unemployment, the crisis of the mortgage system shows the strong connection between labour and housing relations.

5.1.2 Renting and Owning

The most apparent influence of the housing policies on struggles against displacement is that housing policies favour certain sectors for capital accumulation, which in turn influences the struggles fought. Thereby, the difference between accumulation and struggle in the renting sector and in the home-owner sector deserves attention. The discussion between renting and home-ownership was already discussed by Engels and Proudhon in the 19th century (Engels 1970 [1872]), where Proudhon insisted on the emancipatory possibilities of homeownership. However, especially in a finance driven accumulation system, both sectors are prone to capital accumulation.

The strong rental market in Vienna arouses the interest of investors in apartment blocks with rental apartments which can be renovated and sold as home-occupancy. In these struggles, two characteristics result: First, as observed, the organisation of similarly affected

can take place within an apartment house, since the house is owned by one landlord. Additionally, a wider collective organisation would have to follow the structures of ownership of the landlord in order to connect different houses of the same landlord. Second, the confrontation with the landlord is direct, sometimes even physical and the displacement is induced by the strategies of the landlord. Here a solidarity between inhabitants can develop out of the opposition against the landlord. In the home-owner sector lies between the tenant and the bank loaning the mortgage. This results in different forms of organisation: Since mortgage are individual contracts, the affected cannot count on similar affected in one house. The spatial distribution of similarly affected is more dispersed. Here, the PAH reacted by creating assemblies for each bank or company respectively. Hence, the collective organisation of affected depends on the structures of ownership – structures which are mostly non-transparent and inaccessible. Further research on structures of ownership could thus elude spatial distributions of capital accumulation and networks of resistance to be created.

5.1.3 Organisational Challenges

Another important difference of housing policies between Vienna and Madrid is the historical formation of tenancy organisations and institutions. The social-democratic formation of an institutionalised civil society in Vienna has created a wide network of organisations for tenant protection. However, as analysed, the Viennese institutions offer only a limited possibility for collective action. They often rest on the level of individual, juridical conflicts and conflict avoidance (Novy et al. 2001; Paal 2008). If in this case, struggles are to formulate collective demands, the collective organisation will most likely emerge outside such institutions. Such an institutionalised field is lacking in the home-ownership dominated Madrid. Even though there exist neighbourhood institutions, the current struggles are dominated by the social movements. Hence, the autonomous self-organisation of the affected is used to formulate collective demands. The structures of the PAH assemblies and counselling, the public character of the 15M-assemblies already imply the collective handling of the individual cases. Bureaucracy and individual service are replaced by direct democracy and self-help. And a focus on the connection between individual protection and collective demands and actions and emancipative struggles exists (Martínez 2012). A lesson to be learned of the Madrid experiences is, that the struggle for decent living can be directly connected with antagonistic positions, what points to possibilities to combine alleged reformist with alleged revolutionary topics (see Holm 2012: 23).

5.2 CLASS STRUGGLE IN URBAN SPACE, REVISITED

5.2.1 Resisting Accumulation by rent

One important lesson of the respective housing policies is, that the real estate market has become an area of capital accumulation. The forms, capital accumulation takes depend strongly on the structures of the housing market, and forms of dispossession can take several forms, of which especially direct displacement and eviction were discussed. We have to

emphasis the importance of financial capital in the construction, but also in the consumption of real estate. While the traditional way would be to orient struggle against productive capital it becomes clear that speculative capital very well directly affects social situations and creates new dependencies. With a massive distribution of mortgages to households, financial institutions “fix” their investment in space (Harvey 1989b). The value of mortgages, differently to direct investments in built environment, thus don't depend in first line from the value of the real estate itself, but from the ability of the debtors to pay the instalments. Here, in the same way as the household becomes dependent from financial capital, banks themselves become vulnerable, because their accumulation regime depends on the interest rates to be paid by the debtors. Similarly, renting implies a relation between the tenant and the landlord, which is in many causes connected with a debt of the landlord at financial institutes. In this sense, as the capitalist depends on the labour force of the worker – his discipline or motivation – the landlord or the financial institute depend on the discipline of payment of the tenant. On a theoretical level, the consequence of this parallel is, that an antagonistic position is not directed, but against the payment of the rent, or the mortgage. In so far, the rent strike as a means of resistance could gain more attention within urban movements.

5.2.2 Resisting accumulation by dispossession

As argued, central classical Marxist concepts fail to see these forms of domination. However, there is another contradiction in Marxist thinking that seems to be more adequate to understand struggles in urban space: The contradiction between use value and exchange value or market value (Lefebvre 1996). We can understand the struggle between capital accumulation and city dwellers as a struggle between the use value or the market value. This implies an important distinction, as DeFilippis observes for gentrification:

“The importance of gentrification... is that it clearly demonstrates that low-income people, and the neighborhoods they live in, suffer not from a lack of capital but from a lack of power and control over even the most basic components of life – that is, the places called home” (DeFilippis 2004: 89)

What DeFilippis points to here is, that this lack of control over their own homes actually renders people vulnerable to displacement. Class struggles in urban space are thus always linked to the question of the control over the uses of space. In the housing market this becomes especially true when strategies of capital accumulation lead to the destruction of homes, of the lived space of the tenants – who perceive and use their home as the most secure and private space of life. Regaining control over our homes, our neighbourhood is thus the main feature of an opposition to control by private property. Seeing the city as “*collective organisation of living*” (Castells 2012 (1973): 32) would imply to ask how we, as collective city dwellers, could regain control over the space to organise our lives.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE MOBILISATIONS

5.3.1 Quo Vadis, Welfare State? - Alternatives to State and Market

In autonomist Marxism of the 1960s and 70s the critique of state and economy was based on the “thesis of bureaucratisation” as developed for example by Castoriadis (SoB) who

“...observes an increasing fusion of economy and state, the replacement of the bourgeoisie by its bureaucratic class and a growing bureaucratisation [Verstaatlichung] of every aspect of life. Against this tendency, he opts for the worker's self-management and the independence of the proletariat from parties and trade unions.” (Ronneberger 2011, tA)

Fifty years later, neoliberalism completely inverted this tendency: nowadays we observe the transformation of the bureaucratic class into an entrepreneurial class, and an increasing commodification of every aspect of life. Yet, and even the more, opting for self-management and independence from state-related organisation remains urgent. The deficiencies of neoliberal deregulation and austerity become apparent in Madrid or Spain as a whole. It demonstrates the unwillingness, but also the inability of any political party to really tackle the social problems created by neoliberal capitalism. Also Vienna shows that social-democratic policies likewise have drifted towards neoliberalism. Here, though on a completely different level, rents in social housing rise as do evictions²⁵ (being evicted from a social housing apartment is probably the ultimate prove of the defeat of a constitutional right to housing against its commodification!). Opting for an increased attention of the state towards housing problems equally has to face the power relations and interests of capitalists. For housing provision is an essential element in urban capitalism, even reforms of the housing sector touch central processes of capital accumulation. Nowadays, the question is less “*if mobilisations [manage to] connect conflictual urban topics with general political contradictions.*” (Holm 2012: 18, tA) because contradictions of capitalism and urban topics are intrinsically linked. There already lies an antagonistic position in the demand for a social housing provision, which is why a return to f.e. welfare provision could only be reached against the will of a capitalist class. Reforms would have to attack directly the economic constraints and the ideology of the free market. Housing struggles, even in Vienna, would need a movement able to enforce alternatives to the market with strength from the street. The question of alternatives therefore plays a crucial role in the construction of resistance.

But which alternatives exist? When it comes to housing, the question of alternatives to the market mostly is limited towards the question of the material provision of housing. As Birke (2010: 179) notes, urban movements often fail to interpret the question of housing “*über die raumpolitische Dimension im engeren Sinne hinaus.*” A search for alternative forms of living outside a commodified form has to interrogate in the subjectivities and everyday practices in order to find alternative forms of everyday life itself.

²⁵ For a discussion see: <http://urbanizm.net/28360/wohnen-in-wien-einblicke-ins-verborgene-teil-1-delogierungen/> (30.08.2013)

5.3.2 The Private is political: Towards new collective forms of living

“Only in the factory is the worker of today a real proletarian, and as such a revolutionary within the meaning of the proletarian-socialist revolution. Outside the factory he is a petty-bourgeois, involved in a petty-bourgeois milieu and middle-class habits of life, dominated by petty-bourgeois ideology.” (Rühle 1924, cit. After Wright 2002: 80).

Even if we do not necessarily have to agree with Rühle's thesis from 1924. But, we could argue that if there exists such a lack of revolutionary culture outside the factory it is itself inherited by revolutionary theories neglecting the reproductive spaces. The point is Rühle's emphasis on a certain culture of resistance which is translated into subjectivities of struggles that create the revolutionary. As we have seen, housing refers to the most private and everyday cultural spaces of our lives and as such, it is within these spaces that the commodification intervenes, steadily modifying our cultural practices and subjectivities. Commodification has to be understood, freely adopted from Habermas, as the colonisation of social relations by capital relations. That a dwelling is a commodity not only means that there is a price to be paid to an owner, but also that this space can be owned, that there is another person executing control over the space. In consequence, this puts forward the fetish-character of this good and a defeat of the view that housing is a human need which can not be denied to anyone. Thereby the individuality of living, as it has been observed in both of the case studies, reinforces the commodification. We have to add to the refusal of housing as a commodity the refusal of the commodification of our living. In short, if we are to oppose capital relations within housing, we have to oppose an individualised culture of living - to doubt on our current way of life as Castells said: *“As there is a close connection between the union movement and the revolutionary working class movement, there exists a connection between urban demands and the doubt on our current form of living.”* (Castells 2012 (1973): 124, tA)

The change we have to do to move from individualised housing struggles to the formation of collective resistance become apparent. In order to see ourselves as part of a collective force, we have to leave our individual, private spaces, accepting that our private life is political, that even in our four walls, we are not “secured” from relations of domination put on us from the outside. Here, further research could interrogate on the connections between resistance and an anthropology of dwelling.

On the level of appropriation, we have to open our perspective towards the Other, the neighbour, transgress the borders inflicted by the architecture of the apartment block or by the rules of landlords. Maybe, sharing Georges Perec's interest for the in-between spaces – *“We should learn to live more on staircases. But how?”* – is one step. Here, even in the smallest appropriations of spaces lies a collective dimension that creates social relations outside and against capital. Social relations which, as we have seen, become important relations for collective struggle and organisation. Here we can understand Hardt's & Negri's claim: *“The politics of the metropolis is the organisation of encounters.”* (Hardt & Negri 2010: 115, tA)

5.3.3 The role of squatting and indeterminate spaces

But, of course, the organisation of collective struggle is not limited to the house. For

the organisation of a collective housing class, these public spaces play an equally important role. The control over these places, by appropriation and self-organisation cannot be disconnected with housing struggles. Thereby, these spaces mainly serve as gathering places of the movements, be it the Pizzaria in Vienna or the Solarpies or the many other social centres of Madrid. Here, the important role of such indeterminate spaces (Groth & Corijn 2005) do not only consist in their influence of urban agenda setting, but in organising a broader network of urban resistance by offering spaces of encounter and organisation:

“Rather than ‘bottom–up planning’, the actions have to be understood as creating platforms to attract different urban actors and as searching for coalitions and synergies that lead to a more adequate diagnosis and possibilities for new ways of thinking. They want to offer an encounter between different elements of the fragmented and segmented polis that can no longer be adequately categorised in terms of clear-cut interest-groups.” (ibid. 521)

Especially when the structures of the housing market distribute tenants with common interests or conflicts in urban space, such centres can serve as spaces of convergence. But, the appropriation of such public spaces not only becomes a focus of urban struggles, but can be used as a weapon against business practices of real estate companies (Holm 2010: 35). The squatting of the Pizzaria opens a space for dissident voices in Vienna and a meeting place of parts of the urban movement, while simultaneously blocking and opposing the strategies of the landlords. The more silent squatting of EVMS or IVIMA buildings in Madrid create alternative forms of living, while pressuring the company to re-rent the buildings and impeding them from selling to the private market. In these cases, squatting is a strategy that aims at both, the direct opposition to commodification and the creation of laboratories for alternative forms of living. However, even though the economic situation in Spain and the campaigns of the PAH may have pushed squatting into the perception of a wider public, opening up possibilities even for middle-class families to squat their evicted flats, the precarious situation squatting still makes it to subcultural and marginalised practice. The question is, if basic features of squatting could lead to a direct alternative.

During the time of the 'Red Vienna', the construction of social housing was not only a means of housing provision, but it was an attempt to create a new form of collective living, which was supposed to lead to a reinforced self-consciousness of the working class. The housing estates of the 20s and 30s were built with a focus on the collective spaces, such as kindergartens, libraries or laundry rooms. Of course, these “working class palaces” have been implemented in a top-down process, but nevertheless they showed a class transformation that was introduced by a new, collective housing culture (Frei 1984). Nowadays, when this forms of collective living have been replaced by commodification and individualisation, the question towards alternatives should be combined with the search for alternative forms of living developed with a “bottom-up” approach which makes the self-organisation of the inhabitants to its principle. Searching for such practical solutions outside market and state, but equally transgressing the precarity of squatting, seems to be one an important tasks of future housing movements. Here, housing movements could discuss initiatives such as the

“Mietshäuser-Syndikat”²⁶ (housing cooperatives combining ownership with renting), which aim at giving the full collective control of the housing estates to the inhabitants. A renewed interest eg. for the “Siedlerbewegung” could also give new inputs for such alternatives.

²⁶ <http://www.syndikat.org/> (39.08.2013)



ABAJO EL
RÉGIMEN
VIVA LA
LUCHA DEL
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NO SON
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6 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH AND MILITANCY

Especially if one is speaking of social theory, new ideas are even more likely to emerge from the frustration of revolutionary hopes than from their fulfillment.” (Shukaitis & Graeber 2007: 17)

6.1.1 Lessons and difficulties of the research design

Probably this research began with and was fed by “revolutionary hopes” - and probably ended in some kind of frustration. The intention to do a “militant research” that would follow some of the main principles of MR arose out of the conviction, that knowledge production, especially in a Master like 4Cities should be critically examined. Additionally, the intention was to actually research about the experiences made during this two years – to live inside the own research than just researching *something*.

If one wants to position his/her own scientific work in a critical stance towards mainstream academical work it is important not to hide this process behind a final text pretending a coherent research process. Instead a transparency of the process is needed. This is why I would like to point out the problems and shifts of my research process. The initial research aimed at conducting two researches in two cities, in collaboration with a political group, respectively. The results should be constantly discussed and given back to the groups – while the interviews with unorganised inhabitants aimed at facilitating their collective organisation. However, already in Vienna it became obvious that this research design would fail. The main reason can be found in the time frame set for the research. Here, an important lesson arises. MR requires time: “*in general, a research process which is truly democratic will take longer than the quick, on-off surveys to which we are more accustomed.*” (Hall 1984: 296) We return to the critique of the Slow Science movement at the pressure of today's academical world. If one wants to integrate situated knowledge in the research, if one wants to constantly re-evaluate the research with the researched, this needs more time than expected by academical institutions. Already the access to the field that is based on mutual trust can take months. MR calls for a “politically committed research” whereby “*taking the role of ‘circumstantial activist’ [...] is not sufficient.*” (Juris 2007: 165) This could only be realised partly in Vienna, while the short time spent in Madrid, together with other difficulties such as language, only sufficed to be a “circumstantial activist.” The decision to change the initial design as well as the theoretical background and the research question thus emerged out of this lack of access. However, it equally reflects on what Alquati has self-critically experienced:

„...in spite of all, we did not make a “workers' inquiry”. In contrast, we did a sociological inquiry about the working class, because, once again, th

individual workers only appeared as sources of primary information during the research process. Information we further developed at the outside. But the transition to the second stage required a relation to the collective worker and the aiming on the subjective moment!" (Alquati 1985 (1974): 5, tA)

Hence, aiming on the subjective moment exactly needs the access and trust of the researched, and a synergy (Martínez & Lorenzi 2012: 168) that high as to be able to know, which form of knowledge is can be functional for the organisation of a movement. Here, the difference between the research in Vienna and Madrid can clearly be observed. It is a difference, in Martínez' & Lorenzi's (2012: 168) words, between sympathy and empathy: "*Sympathy is taken for granted in AvR, but not enough. Empathy, on the other side, requires dissent and critical thinking.*" Clearly, the level of analysis in Madrid could not proceed to such as stage as to critically reflect movement practices, while such a stage was made possible by the long militant participation in Viennese struggle. In this sense, the experience in Vienna resulted in a knowledge which I regard as able to bring forward a self-reflection of the movement. This might be missing in Madrid. Therefore, the two analyses can also be read as a difference between (an attempt of) militant observation and traditional participant observation.

6.1.2 Militant research in the housing sector

Another problem experienced was, that a research which aims at movement building has to be grounded within a political group or movement which has existing structures of support and organisation. In Vienna, the choice of the case thus had the problem, that there was no organisational structure where the research could have fallen back on. In this sense, organisation and research were started at the same time. For further researches, the connection to existing structures seems important. Nevertheless, the faced problems deliver some good insights to militant research in the housing sector. In general, I think that these problems similarly apply to forms of neighbourhood organisation, if they aim at organising unorganised inhabitants. If militant research in the housing sector wants to be used as a tool to organise, it must "*challenge the distances produced in a hyper-fragmented social space*" (de Molina (2011 181). Especially the non-transparent land tenure and the individualised form of housing problems can only be overcome by working together with tenancy organisations – or by going from door to door. Second, this points towards the importance of combining spatial with sociological approaches, mapping and inquiring in the experiences of people at the same time. Third, exactly the interference in the private space can be a problem. Here, the small experience I made was a distrust towards the "intruder" in the private space. Another question is the approach towards people: To present oneself as militant or as researcher changes strongly the situation. One consequence was, that in some cases I refused to look at interviews as interviews, leaving the recorder aside, stopped constantly taking notes or following a guideline – which though led to interesting talks between militants or affected. One reason therefore is, that the first interviews failed to be "militant" in the sense as they could transgress the researcher-researched relations (also because it was perceived in this way by the interviewed).. Further, as a militant I had to learn to accept, that some people just don't want any trouble coming in their private apartment and refuse to look at housing as political topic, or that "*landlords are not always maximising their income.*" (Newman & Wyly 2006;

49). In general, as the text probably shows, drawing a line between the own militant ideas and the situated knowledges is hard to draw. Naturally, the approach was grounded in my own militant ideas, which mainly consisted in the idea that housing struggles go further than fighting for a decent living, towards questioning capitalist organisation of space. Being able to reflect the own ideas and political convictions therefore is a major ingredient of a movement that asks walking.

7 CONCLUSION

After all the short-cuts and detours of this paper I would like to conclude with a citation of Birke (210: 190):

“Wie kann es zu weitergehenden Protesetn gegen die neuen enclosures kommen? Wie können sich – zumindest potentiell – Kämpfe um den öffentlichen Raum gegen Mietsteigerung und gegen die Krisenfolgen miteinander verbinden? Ich weiss es nicht. Diese Frage lässt sich nur in der Praxis der Kämpfe selbst beantworten.”

The citation summarizes pretty well the central intentions and statements of this paper. First, as discussed in the theoretical part and in the analysis of the housing policies, I propose to look at urban capitalism as a hegemonic form of capital accumulation in postfordist societies. This means to accept, that antagonistic struggles can take place outside the productive sphere, in urban space and in housing struggles. Thereby, this paper aimed at gaining an understanding of the relation between the macro and the micro level, that is, the structural and political forces of domination and the subjective and lived forms of resistances. On one side, the growing interest of capital for our way of life, on the opposite side the desire of every human being to determine one's own life: The cry.

In this area of conflict, the research lied the focal point, with the goal to escape objective truth or pure descriptive analysis. Insofar, I hope that some ideas emerging out of this reflection can be functional to reinforce the perception of *“housing as a question of social justice.”* (Slater 2009): The demand.

However, as Birke remarks: This is just a text. What is made out of the ideas emerging from this reflection depends on the way the struggles are fought. This is why, I stop writing now. Act!

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Online Resources

- <http://madrid.tomalosbarrios.net/>
- <http://www.afectadosporlahipoteca.com>
- <http://roarmag.org/>
- <https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/>
- <http://wilderwohnen.blogspot.eu/>
- <http://www.syndikat.org/>
- <http://translate.google.com/> & <https://www.leo.org/>

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A APPENDIX:

A.A LIST & TRANSLATION OF INTERVIEWS

Abbreviation	Place	Date	Comments
K.	Vienna	19.02.13	Artist, 2 nd district resident
L.	Vienna	24.02.13	2 nd district resident, activist
M.	Vienna	01.03.13	2 nd district resident, Problems with landlord
Z.	Vienna	04.03.13	2 nd district resident, Problems with landlord
A.	Vienna	12.03.13	20 th district resident, Problems with landlord, displaced from 2 nd
J.	Vienna	13.03.13	2 nd district resident, evicted from a house
T.	Vienna	02.05.13	2 nd district resident, Problems with landlord
S.	Madrid	23.06.13	Activist/Squatter, Vallecas
E.	Madrid	02.07.13	Activist/Squatter, Lavapies
R.	Madrid	08.07.13	Activist/Squatter, Lavapies
B.	Madrid	09.07.13	Inhabitant Lavapies

Originals and Translations of the interview citations:

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(A., Interview, 12.03.2013)

“Mit den Leuten im Haus war es schwierig. Ich hatte selten Kontakt. Auch waren viele sehr schräg drauf. Es war so, dass man ab einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt nicht mehr weiss, wer jetzt wirklich auf welcher Seite steht. Ob sie nicht zusammen mit dem Besitzer arbeiten und absichtlich einem das Leben schwer machen. Oder ob sie vom Besitzer so eingeschüchtert werden, dass sie ihm Sachen erzählen.”

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(M., interview 01.03.2013)

“Die Frau im zweiten Stock war gut mit dem Besitzer. Er ist immer wieder bei ihr Kaffee trinken gegangen. Sie verstanden sich. Am Schluss ist sie auch gegangen, weil

sie von ihm viel Geld bekommen hat. Sie hat gesagt, gib mir diesen Betrag Geld, und hat es genommen.“

PAGE

(L. interview, 24.02.2013)

Da gäbe es ja die Möglichkeit, sich an den Mieterschutz zu melden, aber das machen halt wenige Leute, weil sie Angst haben, dann mit dem Vermieter Probleme zu bekommen, und sie dann rausfallen.“

PAGE

(L., interview, 24.02.2013, tA)

“Das heisst die Menschen die in unserem Haus wohnen sind halt relativ bürgerlich, konservativ, sag ich jetzt mal so verallgemeinert [...] eine Vernetzung innerhalb vom Haus gibt es nicht, wie es das wahrscheinlich früher gegeben hat. [...] Der Versuch, mit Nachbarinnen irgendwie in Kontakt zu treten funktioniert nicht wirklich.“

PAGE

(J., interview, 13.03.2013, tA)

“Als der neue Besitzer kam, waren wir alleine. Nur wir, N. und die andere Nachbarin. Dann auch noch dieser [Mann], vom ersten Stock. Wir wussten nie, wer jetzt im Haus ist. Aber seit unsere Leute hier sind, ist es besser. Wir wissen wer hier ist. Und wir sind alle wie eine Familie. Wir reden im Treppenhaus, wir verstehen uns und helfen.“

PAGE

(A., interview, 12.03.13, tA)

“Ich habe mich als erstes an das Mieter-Selbsthilfezentrum gewendet. [...] Aber ich war enttäuscht vom Selbsthilfezentrum, weil diese den Fall nicht weiter verfolgt haben. Ich war mir sicher, dass ich nicht die einzige Person bin, welche vom Vermieter bedroht wird, und hätte erwartet, dass das Zentrum von alleine aktiv wird und Leute zu organisieren beginnt. Aber von denen ist nichts weiter gekommen.“

A.B TRANSCRIPTIONS OF SELECTED FIELDNOTES

- Madrid, 3 of July 2013, Acacias, 8.00-12.00h. Eviction of a family

“The day before the eviction, which was announced several days before on the PAH Madrid homepage, twitter runs hot: From @DRYmadrid to @officinadevivienda, the tweets announce name, place and hour of the #stopdesahucio action. We will meet at 7.30 already. The desahucio is announced for 9.00, but who knows when the police will show up. [...] The next morning I got up at 7h. While walking from Lavapies towards the Rio, I cross the employment office at the Paseo de las Acacias, where a line of more than fifty people waits for the office to open. “The crisis is visible in the morning”, I think. [...] When I arrive to the house, there are already a 20 people standing there. Some wear the green “Stop Desahucio” T-Shirt, some other T-Shirts for public health care or education. I first stand in front of the entrance, say hi to some people. It's morning atmosphere, not so many other people seem to be out of the house at this hour. I join a conversation about the case. The woman facing eviction is a single mother with two childs, 6 and 10 years old. It is already the third eviciton fo the family. The case, even tough not a classical mortgage eviction, is especially hard, because it is the grandparents of the children (the parents of the divorced father is supposed to pay monthly pension to the family which he nearly never does) [...] At 9, there are over 50 people united. I look around, and what is stunning is the diversity of the people, there are young people, some have a punk look, there are older people. There are men and women, Spanish and foreign people. We distribute ourselves: Some are standing in front of the block, some in the courtyard inside the block, some in front of the entrance door, some in the staircase. A few people are staying with the family in the apartment. I join others walking around between the different “blockades- [...] The police arrives first, four officers in one car. Soon after, one activist says: “The committee is coming!” A group of four people, two women, two men, well dressed arrive. As soon as discovered, a bunch of people walk towards them. I am confused, mix up the lawyers of the PAH with the committee. A lot of people talk, argue, try to convince them to immediately turn around. The whole discussion seems like a theater. A very tragic one. The lawyer try to avert the evictions on a legal way, for the last time. There have already been many legal negotiations before the eviction. The “stop desahucio” action is the last measure to take. [...] The lawyers fail – the comitee starts preparing to enter the house. For a short moment, hectic movements. “A la puerta! A la puerta!” The remaining activists quickly move into the courtyard, lining up in front of the entrance door. [...] The private security guard equally observes the events – but he stays passive. When the committee arrives, we start chaining up, arm in arm, several lines in front of the door. The slogans continue – now: “Que no, que no, que no tenemos miedo!” and “No pasarán!” Now the three officials approach the human chains, they attempt to break through, entering the door. For a minute, a skirmish, some pushing. They give up, turn around, go outside. The chains break up, euphoric sounds, “Este desahucio, nos vamos a para!”, people fall in their arms. But the euphoria does not take long. The struggle is not won. People move again outside. There is more police, the lawyers negotiating with the committee. Inside, one neighbour screams at the activists. A bit later, outside, her son (as I realise later) discusses discusses with two activists. He complains for the mess they

do in front of their house. The activists try to explain him the situation his neighbour family faces. He answers: “Yes, but there are so many problems in the world you can fight for.” The activists reply: “Aaah, but if there is a problem right in your house, concerning your neighbour, you can fight for this!” He denies and says: “No, look at my neighbours: When I come home at 12 in the night, and as soon as I’m a bit loud, they immediately start complaining. Se let it be their problem, not mine.” The activists give up, shaking their heads, turning away from the neighbour. A bit further outside, the lawyers and activists are still discussing with the committee. Unclear situation, nobody seems to know what will happen next. Once, two police officers attempt to enter the courtyard. Many activists run back inside, the slogans start again. The police turns around. After about 20 minutes, the committee decides that this attempt to evict will be cancelled. But they set a new date, three months later. There are restrained reactions. For today the eviction could be prevented. But, as a man tells me, there is no definite solution. “We want a definite solution, always. Three months, that is nothing.” Nevertheless, the mother facing eviction comes outside, in front of cameras, microphones and activists, she thanks the people. But it is clear for us all: The struggle goes on. [...]”

A.C TEXT CIRCULATED IN WIEN

„Wohnen darf keine Ware sein!“

10 Thesen zu Möglichkeiten und Schwierigkeiten einer Wohnungsbewegung in Wien

Als im letzten Dezember das Bündnis „Wilder Wohnen“ mit dem Leitspruch „Wohnen darf keine Ware sein“ zu Aktionstagen aufgerufen hat, schien es, dass das Rote Wien aus dem Winterschlaf zu erwachen begann, in welchen es die Jahre sozialdemokratischer Wohnpolitik gewiegt hatte. Nun, neun Monate ist einiges passiert, auch wenn vielleicht erwünschte Dynamiken sich noch nicht entfaltet haben. Dieser Text will deshalb einen Anstoss zu einer Reflexion geben, welcher vielleicht auch in Wien die Idee weiter bringt, dass der Kampf ums Wohnen zu einer der zentralen Kämpfe im frühen 21. Jahrhundert wird.

Warum es auch in Wien eine wohnungspolitische Bewegung braucht

Die Stadt Wien brüstet sich gerne mit den Errungenschaften der sozialdemokratischen Wohnungspolitik. Wohl auch nicht ganz zu unrecht. Jedenfalls bleibt Wien einzigartig, was der Anteil von städteeigenen Liegenschaften und von staatlich gefördertem Wohnbau betrifft. Insgesamt kontrolliert die Stadt direkt und indirekt über Subventionen immer noch über die Hälfte des Wohnungsmarktes. Diese Errungenschaften sind nicht bloss einer sozialdemokratischen Politik zu verdanken, sondern nehmen sehr wohl ihren Ursprung in sozialen Bewegungen, wie etwa der Siedlerbewegung zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts. Allerdings hat dieser Glanz des Roten Wiens in den letzten Jahrzehnten mehr als einige Kratzer und Flecken erlitten. Mit der Öffnung der EU nach Osteuropa, aber auch mit einer verstärkten globalen Konkurrenz zwischen den Städten ist das Interesse und der Druck auf dem Wiener Immobilienmarkt enorm gestiegen – und die Stadtregierung hat einiges unternommen, um dieser Nachfrage des Kapitals stattzugeben. Die Zahlen sprechen für sich: Bereits zwischen 1985 und 1993 haben sich die Mietpreise verdoppelt. Zwischen 2000 und 2011 sind die Mieten immer noch um 40% gestiegen, wobei die Steigerung bei privaten Mietwohnungen und befristeten Verträgen wesentlich höher liegt. Auch wenn in Wien immer noch ein grosser Anteil von Sozialwohnungen und leistbarem Wohnraum besteht, die Tendenz ist eindeutig: der Druck auf dem Markt nimmt zu, leistbarer Wohnraum wird knapp. Diese Entwicklungen sind im Lichte einer globalen Tendenz zu betrachten, welche nicht bloss als Neoliberalisierung städtischer Politik beschrieben werden kann, sondern auch seine ökonomischen Logiken hat: Im Zuge der Deindustrialisierung und der damit zunehmenden Wichtigkeit des Finanzkapitals sind Immobilienmärkte und städtische Infrastrukturen ins Zentrum der Kapitalakkumulation gerückt. Städte sind, nach Andrej Holms Worten nicht länger „Wohlfahrtscontainer“ fordistischer Gesellschaften, sondern selbst „Zentrum, Arena und Gegenstand der kapitalistischen Ökonomie“. Stadtregierungen stehen unter ökonomischem Zugzwang, jedenfalls so lange sie im Spiel der internationalen Standortkonkurrenz mitspielen wollen. Eine Kehrtwende müsste demnach grundsätzliche Strukturen des Kapitalismus transformieren. Und dass dies von einer sozialdemokratischen Reform ausgehen würde, ist wohl heute unwahrscheinlicher als es jemals war. Kurz, eine Bewegung wird nicht darum herum kommen, solche grundsätzlichen Fragen zu stellen. Entscheidend für eine wohnpolitische Bewegung wäre es somit, eine breite Basis mobilisieren zu können, welche Druck nicht bloss hinter dem politischen Vorhang oder im medialen Theater, sondern auf der Strasse oder in konkreten Kämpfen aufbauen kann.

Bewegen wir uns noch? - Schwierigkeiten des „movement buildings“ in Wien

Mindestens seit Ende letzten Jahres gab es in Wien vermehrt Versuche, wohnpolitische Themen von

Bewegungsseite zu bearbeiten. Im Dezember gab es Aktionstage des Bündnis „Wilder Wohnen“, bereits etwas länger wurde von der Pizzeria Anarchia und BewohnerInnen des zweiten Bezirks die monatlichen „Die Miete ist zu hoch“ Demos initiiert. Aber auch andere Initiativen, von Recht auf Stadt über Mietshäuser-Syndikat, aber auch etwa die Solila-Landbesetzung befassen sich mit diesen und ähnlichen Fragen. Obwohl sehr vieles geschehen ist, so wirkt es jedenfalls, haben diese Initiativen bis heute leider noch nicht zu einer erhofften Massenmobilisierung (und -sensibilisierung?) geführt. Bewegungen, so schrieb Castells einst und so lehren uns die jüngsten Revolten in Istanbul oder Brasilien erneut, brauchen konkrete gesellschaftliche Anlässe, welche eine Verbindung gesellschaftlicher Widersprüche und politischer Ziele mit alltäglichen Konflikten zulassen. Einen solchen Anlass, davon geht dieser Text aus, könnten etwa die Verdrängungsstrategien von Investoren darstellen. Deshalb wird hier als Ausgangspunkt der Kampf gegen die Castella GmbH – der Besitzerin der Pizzeria Anarchia – gebraucht, um Reflexionen über den Wiener Kontext zu machen. Dabei sind solche „Bestandesfreimachungen“ bloss die Speerspitze eines tiefer liegenden Problems der Kommodifizierung des Wohnens, welche eine Artikulation von grundsätzlichen Konflikten zulassen würde. (Doch, so scheint es, werden in Wien lieber sceneinterne Konflikte ausgetragen.) Vielleicht kann aber eine Reflexion über die Erfahrungen im Kampf gegen Castella helfen, solche Konflikte zu verstärken. Dafür habe ich deshalb für einige Zeit Gespräche und Interviews mit Aktiven und Betroffenen im zweiten Bezirk geführt, mit dem Ziel, nach Formen der Organisation und des Widerstandes gegen Verdrängung und Mietstress zu suchen. Einige Resultate, kombiniert mit anderen Überlegungen, sollen deshalb hier in Form von Thesen kurz auf- und ausgeführt werden. Dabei sollen die Thesen weder eine wissenschaftliche Objektivität, noch einen klaren politischen Standpunkt wiedergeben, sondern als Diskussionsansätze dienen. Holloway 2002

1. Der Konflikt wird nicht so sehr bei der Aufwertung, sondern bei der Verdrängung wahrgenommen

Vielfach zielt Gentrifizierungskritik darauf, die einziehende „kreative Klasse“, oder die Aufwertung des öffentlichen Raumes als Ursachen für Verdrängung verantwortlich zu machen. Sicher auch zu recht. Jedoch fällt auf, dass viele Formen der Aufwertung gerade bei Menschen oftmals sehr gut ankommt, welche später als Erstes von Verdrängung betroffen sind. Selten hat wer etwas gegen einen renovierten Kinderspielplatz. Oftmals (und gerade im zweiten Bezirk) auch nicht gegen „sicherere“ Strassen. Was aus Gesprächen hervorgeht, ist, dass erst die konkrete Bedrohung, den Lebensraum zu verlieren, als Problem angesehen wird, während eine vorhergehende Aufwertung jedoch erwünscht ist. Deshalb lässt sich fragen, inwiefern ein Diskurs „gegen Aufwertung“ wirklich die Leute erreicht, welche Gentrifizierung als erstes trifft – oder ob der Fokus nicht mehr auf konkrete Strukturen und Probleme gesetzt werden sollte, welche zu Verdrängung führen. Die Gegner_innen, das sind nicht so sehr die Künstler_innen oder die Hippsters, sondern die Investor_innen. Ein Fokus auf Verdrängung hat zudem den Vorteil, dass (im Gegensatz zu einigen Gentrifizierungsverständnissen) Verdrängung keine abstrakte Kategorie darstellt, sondern konkrete und tragische soziale Realitäten. Die nachfolgenden Thesen beschäftigen sich deshalb damit, wie diese sozialen Realitäten politisch bearbeitet werden können.

2. Kollektive Kämpfe müssen kulturelle Grenzen überschreiten, auch was die Methoden einer Bewegung betrifft.

Bei Fragen des Wohnens spielt die kulturelle Vielfalt eine immens wichtige Rolle. Gerade dort, wo Armut oder Verdrängung zum Problem werden, sind die Einwohner_innen stark kulturell gemischt. Migrant_innen sind von Problemen mit dem Wohnraum am stärksten betroffen – 54% der Migrant_innen leben in unbefriedigenden Verhältnissen (nicht-integriert, nach einer Studie der Uni Wien 2006). Ein Aufbau eines kollektiven Widerstandes ist deshalb entscheidend an die Frage gebunden, ob, nochmals mit Andrej Holm, ein *“Bruch mit elitär-subkulturellen Praktiken der Selbstmarginalisierung und eine bewusste Öffnung zu den sozialen Realitäten der Nachbarschaft”* zustande gebracht werden kann. Die Erfahrung in der Pizzeria zeigt, dass eine solche Öffnung und die Schaffung von Vertrauen Zeit und Energie braucht, doch in dem Moment, wo solche Solidaritäten zwischen den Kulturen entstehen, eine starke Kraft das Resultat sein kann. Künftige Mobilisierungen werden

deshalb wohl kaum darum herum kommen, nach Wegen zu suchen, kulturelle Barrieren zu überwinden. Wichtig ist deshalb, danach zu fragen, wie eine kulturelle Vielfalt sich auch auf Methoden, Sprache und Orte einer Bewegung niederschlägt, und wie Zugang zu verschiedenen Gruppen gefunden werden kann. Zwar ist es ein Start, Plakate auf verschiedene Sprachen zu veröffentlichen, aber die Frage stellt sich, ob zum Beispiel Demonstrationen dafür ein geeignetes Mittel sind. Vielleicht bräuchte es weniger Aktivismus auf der Strasse, als Basisarbeit im Grätzl.

3. Die Individualität des Wohnens wird von Vermieter_innen direkt benutzt, um soziale Trennlinien zwischen den Mietenden zu schaffen.

Es sind nicht nur kulturelle Unterschiede, sondern auch alltägliche Differenzen, welche innerhalb eines Hauses (oder einer Strasse) zu Konflikten zwischen Nachbar_innen führen können. Vielfach resultieren solche Konflikte aus der Art und Weise des Zusammenlebens. Die Mietwohnung ist für viele das eigene private Reich, alles was ausserhalb davon liegt entzieht sich der Kontrolle (aber auch manchmal dem Interesse) von den Mietenden. Gerade über die halböffentlichen Räume eines Hauses (sei es das Treppenhaus, der Innenhof etc.), oder der öffentlichen Räume eines Grätzls übt der Vermieter, bzw. die Stadt vielfach die Kontrolle aus. Doch genau diese Räume sind Begegnungsräume der verschiedenen Bewohner_innen. Dabei pendeln die Verhältnisse zwischen den verschiedenen Mietenden zwischen Solidarität und Unterstützung einerseits, Misstrauen und Konflikt andererseits. Im schlimmsten Fall werden Konflikte über den/die Vermieter_in ausgetragen. Gerade im Fall der benannten Spekulanten wird dies immer wieder benutzt, um Argwohn innerhalb eines Hauses zu stiften und eine gemeinsame Solidarisierung zwischen den Parteien zu verhindern – bis zu dem Punkt, wie eine ehemalige Bewohnerin dies beschrieben hat, dass man nicht mehr weiss, wem im Haus vertraut werden kann, weil die anderen vielleicht mit dem Vermieter unter einer Decke stecken. Dies schwächt so die Position gegenüber des/der Vermieter_in, weil ein individueller Kampf geführt werden muss, obwohl davon eigentlich viele Bewohner_innen gemeinsam betroffen sind. Deshalb scheint es hier nicht nur wichtig, kulturelle Grenzen zu überwinden, sondern auch innerhalb von Häusern oder Grätzl solidarische Formen des Zusammenlebens aufzubauen.

4. Einer Individualisierung der Kämpfe kann entgegengesetzt werden, wenn sich neue Formen kollektiven Zusammenlebens herausbilden: Eine Kritik muss nicht bloss bei den quantitativ-materiellen, sondern auch bei den qualitativen Aspekten des Wohnens ansetzen.

Eine Kritik an der Kommodifizierung des Wohnens sollte deshalb über quantitative Probleme, wie etwa Mietpreise oder Gebühren hinausgehen, und die qualitativen Aspekte des Wohnens ins Blickfeld nehmen. Sei es eine kleinbürgerliche Ideologie oder eine stetig zunehmende Individualisierung, diese schlagen sich auch beim Wohnen nieder, und die Wahrnehmung des Wohnens als individuelle, private Angelegenheit trägt dazu bei, dass die Wohnung als Ware betrachtet wird, für die selbstverständlich bezahlt werden muss. Formen des solidarischen Zusammenlebens ausserhalb der eigenen vier Wände oder des eigenen kulturellen Horizontes sind aber wichtige Elemente für kollektive Kämpfe. Vielleicht ist es wieder an der Zeit, an ältere Diskussionen anzuknüpfen, um alternative Wohn- und Lebensformen zu entwickeln, welche sich gegen eine individualisierte Form des Wohnens – und so auch gegen die Kommodifizierung richten. Insofern macht es wohl doch Sinn, von „Wilder Wohnen“ zu reden. Wie viele Gespräche gezeigt haben, können sich dabei solidarische Formen des Zusammenlebens schon auf eine Selbstverwaltung von halböffentlichen Räumen (sei es ein kleiner kollektiver Garten im Hof, vermehrtes Diskutieren im Treppenhaus), oder beim Teilen alltäglicher Aufgaben beziehen. Der Austausch zwischen Nachbar_innen kann so nicht bloss kollektive Handlungsfähigkeit und Fähigkeit zur Selbstorganisation ermöglichen, sondern auch Sicherheit geben. Hier ginge es etwa darum, zu diskutieren, wie solche Formen in einem Grätzl angestossen werden können. Gerade im zweiten Bezirk gibt es schon solche Ansätze, wie etwa das Grätzllabor.

5. Die sozialdemokratische Strategie der Konfliktvermeidung bevorzugt individuelle Lösungen und verhindert letztendlich

politische, zivilgesellschaftliche Fortschritte.

Was der Kampf gegen Castella zeigt, ist, dass gerade städtische, aber auch Mieter_innenschutz-Organisationen zwar eine sehr umfassende Unterstützung für Mietende anbietet, welche zu einer direkten Verbesserung der persönlichen Situation führen können. Jedoch arbeitet diese Unterstützung vorwiegend auf eine Konfliktvermeidung, oder möglichst einvernehmliche Konfliktlösung hin. Dabei werden die Konflikte de-politisiert, und auf eine rein institutionelle oder juristische Ebene gestellt. Die ohnehin schon bestehende Individualisierung der Betroffenen können durch dienstleistungsmässige Abfertigung in Mietverbänden oder städtischen Schlichtungsstellen weiter zementiert werden und die Formulierung kollektiver Forderungen und Ziele verhindern. Es scheint, dass Solidarität und kollektive Handlungsfähigkeit zwischen gleich Betroffenen herzustellen deshalb ein wichtiger Teil einer Aufbauarbeit ausserhalb von institutionalisierten Verbänden ist. Eine Diskussion über das Verhältnis zu solchen Institutionen könnte deshalb weiterführen.

6. Das Mietrecht ist zwar eine Hilfe gegen ungerechte Vermieter_innen, aber nicht unbedingt für den Kampf für soziale Gerechtigkeit.

Genauso lautete ein Grundtenor unter Betroffenen, dass die unzähligen Gerichtsverhandlungen etwas vom anstrengendsten im Kampf gegen Vermieter_innen sind und eine enorme psychische Belastung darstellen. Obwohl das Mietrecht hier gegen illegale Mieterhöhungen, Übertretungen, Belästigungen seitens der Vermieter_in Schutz bieten kann, wird das Mietrecht in vielen Fällen umgekehrt von Vermieter_innen benutzt, um Mietende unter konstanten Druck zu setzen. Folge sind unsinnigste Forderungen oder Kündigungen, gegen welche sich Mietende in monate- oder jahrelangen Gerichtsverhandlungen wehren müssen – wenn sie denn überhaupt erst vor Gericht ziehen. Auch hier gilt, dass solche gerichtlichen Verhandlungen genauso individualisierte und de-politisierte Kämpfe hervorbringen. Hier liesse sich diskutieren, ob es Sinn machen könnte, andere Formen der Unterstützung zu entwickeln, wie etwa kollektive Rechtsberatung oder gemeinsame Gänge zum Gericht. Im Falle der Castella hat sich gezeigt, dass erst eine politische und mediale Bearbeitung zu einer – zumindest temporären – Beruhigung der Angriffe und Anklagen geführt hat. Denn, und das wird bei den vielen von Gericht verordneten Delogierungen oder bei der Räumungsklage gegen die Pizzeria deutlich, auch beim Mietrecht gründet die Rechtsstruktur auf dem Recht auf Grundbesitz, welches allen Rechten der Mietenden übergeordnet wird. Doch, ist es nicht genau dieses Recht, welches den Grundstein für die Kommodifizierung des Wohnens legt? So könnten etwa Verhinderungen von Delogierungen, ein Mietstreik oder andere Formen zivilen Ungehorsams geeignete Mittel sein, diese Problematik zu thematisieren.

7. Die strukturellen Ursachen von Verdrängung oder Mietpreiserhöhungen deutlich zu machen, scheitert vielfach an einem medialen und städtischen Diskurs, der sich gegen Spekulation richtet.

Der öffentliche Diskurs ist weit davon entfernt, die Kommodifizierung des Wohnungsmarktes und dessen Begleiterscheinungen als strukturelle Anpassungen anzuerkennen. Der Diskurs bleibt auf einer typischen Personalisierung der einzelnen Konflikte stehen. Dass im Falle der Castella dabei dreiste und dreckige Methoden angewendet werden, spricht zwar wirklich für die Unmenschlichkeit dieser Spekulanten – wirft jedoch gleichzeitig einen Schatten auf die strukturellen Ursachen. Insbesondere die mediale Diskussion dieser Fälle hat sich, hier stellvertretend für den Diskurs, auf die „Wildwest-Praktiken“ (Standard) der Spekulanten konzentriert, damit aber verdeckt, was hinter diesen Praktiken liegt: Das von der Stadt sehr wohl geförderte Interesse von privaten Investor_innen auf dem Wohnungsmarkt. (Immerhin werden in diesem Gut-Böse-Diskurs auf einmal die „Pizza-Punks“ in gutes Licht gerückt). Die Stadt Wien vertritt hier selbst eine Position, welche aus Beteuerungen besteht, doch das Beste gegen Spekulation zu tun. Insofern sind diese aber kontraproduktiv, weil sie eine Dualität zwischen „guten“ privaten Investoren und „bösen“ Spekulanten aufrecht erhält. Denn so erscheinen auf einmal Verdrängungsstrategien, welche sich nicht illegalen Methoden behelfen, als legitim. Doch gerade die Diskrepanz zwischen altem, sozialerem Mietrecht, welches Altmietter_innen weitgehenden Schutz gibt, und den heutigen Profit-Möglichkeiten auf liberalisierten Wohnungsmarkt

führt schliesslich zu solchen „Wildwest-Praktiken“ - weil die „guten“, legalen Formen der Verdrängung in solchen Fällen nicht möglich sind. Die Frage stellt sich hier also, wie ein Diskurs aufgegleist werden kann, welcher eine ganzheitliche Sicht auf Kommodifizierung und Verdrängung wirft, der nicht bloss konkrete Verdrängungsstrategien umfasst, sondern sich mit weiteren stadtplanerischen sowie ökonomischen Prozessen auseinandersetzt.

8. Eine Kritik an Kommodifizierung und Verdrängung eröffnet Möglichkeiten, konkrete Forderungen, Alternativen und Systemkritik zu verbinden.

Deshalb lässt sich fragen, wie wohnpolitische Themen dazu dienen können, die konkreten Kämpfe für den Erhalt von leistbarem Wohnen und Lebensraum mit systemkritischen Positionen zu verbinden. Wie das amerikanische Right-to-the-City-Network schreibt: *„Wir müssen Alternativen aufbauen und wir müssen das System direkt herausfordern. Dies sollte ein sowohl-als-auch sein, nicht ein entweder-oder.“* In einer Zeit in welchem die Stadt selbst zum Zentrum der Kapitalakkumulation wird, sind diese Besitzverhältnisse direkt mit systemischen Widersprüchen verbunden. Es kann deshalb Sinn machen, als Bewegung dort präsent zu sein, wo der Kampf gegen Verdrängung direkt die Besitzverhältnisse angreift. Also etwa bei der Verhinderung von Delogierungen, wo der Erhalt des Lebensraumes über das Recht auf Grundbesitz gestellt wird. Zudem können auch Besetzungen unter diesem Blickpunkt betrachtet werden: Grade die Erfahrung der Pizzeria zeigt, dass Besetzungen nicht bloss andere Formen des Zusammenlebens und Zentren des Widerstandes darstellen können, sondern sehr wohl auch direkte Waffe gegen Geschäftsmodelle von Investoren sein können. Diese Formen des Widerstands zu beleben könnte auch in Wien neue Dynamiken in die Frage der sozialen Gerechtigkeit in der Stadt des 21. Jahrhunderts geben.

9. Eine einfache Rückkehr zur korporatistischen Wohnpolitik wird vor allem an der Struktur des städtischen Wohnungssektors gehindert.

In vielen Diskussionen und Texten wird die Rückkehr zu einer verstärkten Wohnpolitik der Stadt gefordert. Es ist Wiener Eigenheit, dass der soziale Wohnungsbau einen so starken Platz einnimmt, und für Jahrzehnte scheint es funktioniert zu haben, damit die Mietpreise auch für den privaten Markt zu drücken. Seit einigen Jahren aber hat sich auch hier eine Wende abgezeichnet, worauf verschiedenes hinweist: Das Wohnen in Gemeindebauten gerade durch stark steigende Gebühren konstant teurer. Dazu kommt, dass Wiener Wohnen in den letzten Jahren eine Vielzahl der Wohnungen „aufkategorisiert“, d.h. auf Kategorie A Wohnungen aufgerüstet, sodass mittlerweile über 60% aller Wohnungen unter diesem höchsten Standard laufen. Die Delogierungen in Gemeindewohnungen haben seit 2007 rapide zugenommen, währenddessen sie in privaten Wohnungen stagniert sind. Dies lässt daran zweifeln, dass die Grundidee, dass der städtische Wohnungsbau die Preise für private Wohnungen drückt, wirklich noch funktioniert – oder ob die städtischen Immobilien nicht schon längst selbst zur Ware geworden sind. Kurz, es lässt sich bezweifeln, dass die städtische Politik und Verwaltung heute noch wirklich eine Alternative zum Markt darstellt, oder nicht genauso von Marktlogiken durchdrungen ist. Deshalb wäre es an der Zeit, nach Alternativen zu suchen, welche Abseits von Markt oder Staat entstehen. Hier wurde in Wien ja auch bereits etwa die Idee des Mietshäuser-Syndikats diskutiert.

10. Neue Formen des Zusammenlebens fordern neue Formen einer Wohnbaupolitik: Die Selbstorganisation zur Grundlage machen.

Eine weitere Frage, welche sich im Zusammenhang mit sozialem Wohnungsbau stellt ist, in wie fern Alternativen zum Markt auch mit Alternativen zum individualisierten Wohnen verbinden lassen. Obwohl in der Anfangszeit des sozialen Wohnungsbaus in Wien der Bau der städtischen Wohnblöcke – etwa des Karl-Marx-Hofes – mit neuen Formen des Zusammenlebens verbunden wurde, hat diese visionäre Perspektive heute an Bedeutung verloren. Ein „Zurück zum sozialen Wohnungsbau“ sollte deshalb nicht losgelöst von der Frage diskutiert werden, welche Formen des gemeinschaftlichen Wohnens wir wollen. Dabei kann es sich heute kaum noch um die „von oben“ verordneten Formen

der Moderne handeln. Vielmehr ginge es darum, neue Formen „von unten“ auszuprobieren, welche die Vielfalt und die Selbstorganisation als Grundlage nehmen. Um den Kreis zu schliessen, müsste wohl eher wieder bei der Siedlerbewegung angesetzt werden.

Wien bietet hier also einen interessanten Kontext, nicht in erster Linie weil die Not die Menschen zu Alternativen drängt, sondern weil in Wien Wohnen seit Aufkommen des Kapitalismus ein wichtiges Feld sozialer Kämpfe war. Und auch wieder wird, wenn es gelingt, Wien aus dem Winterschlaf wachzurütteln.

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