The vulnerable middle class?
Strategies of housing in prospering cities

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The vulnerable middle class?

Strategies of housing in prospering cities

Johannes Moser, Simone Egger (eds.)

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Introduction: The Vulnerable Middle Class? Strategies of Housing in Prospering Cities

Simone Egger/Johannes Moser

> *the soft swoosh at the back of your head*
> *you've got something to lose*
> *the ghost that climbs the tower*
> *you have the option to choose and falsely choose*
> *Get well soon: (How to Stay) Middle Class*

Konstantin Gropper, one of the most interesting independent musicians of the last decade, sings about the fears of the middle class of insecurity and social decline on the latest album by his band Get Well Soon, tellingly titled "Horror". This goes to show that the "crisis of the middle class" is no longer an exclusive topic of academic discourse but has arrived in the arts sections of leading media, in the arts in general as well as in many other contexts. This volume originates from the panel "The vulnerable Middle Class? Strategies of housing in a prospering city" which was organized by the two editors at the 13th congress of the Societé Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore 2017, titled "Ways of Dwelling. Crisis – Craft – Creativity"[1], in Göttingen. In ten presentations, seven of which are published in this volume, it addressed the question of how the rapidly rising cost of living in prospering cities affects the everyday life and life plans of the middle class. Particularly the depths of focus of a cultural anthropological, ethnographic view of the lived everyday life of people thus facilitates insight and understanding which is missing in certain macro perspectives in the social sciences.

Therefore, in the following contributions which are based on examples from Germany and Sweden, colleagues will discuss the question of how members of the middle class deal with residing and living in today's postmodern city, which tactics they develop and which strategies become apparent before the background of the processes sketched above. In her contribution "Dwelling in Postmodern Cities. Middle Class and Social Responsibility", Simone Eggers takes a cultural anthropological approach to the question of which status the middle class currently occupies in the city. Before the backdrop of political, economic and social processes which can be observed worldwide, she focuses on specific practices and discourses in Munich, also using the example of artistic involvement with these. Social and cultural anthropologist Stefan Groth examines the middle class using the example of the Rathenauviertel in Cologne in

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1   Societé Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore (SIEF). 2017. "SIEF2017 13th Congress: Göttingen, Germany. 26–30 March 2017. October 16, 2017". Accessed November 10, 2018. Available at: https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2017/index.shtml.

his article. Based on the term class, he asks about the lifestyles and aesthetics of the middle to which imaginations of a good life can be attached. European ethnologist and cultural anthropologist Laura Gozzer looks at coalitions which can be observed in Munich as well as in other large cities. Life in a cooperative as a social and spatial organization of society offers a way of opting out of the financial jungle of the urban real estate market, yet at the same time is to be seen in an ambivalent manner because of its exclusivity. Architect Max Ott, in his contribution "Help yourself, but build the right thing. A collaborative housing project in growing Berlin" also deals with the ambivalence of collaboratively designed housing projects. On the one hand, these are about self fulfilment and achieving one's dream of a good life, on the other, such concepts are indeed intended to offer impulses for a *better* society. European ethnologist and cultural anthropologist Libuše Hannah Vepřek examines the "Stattpark OLGA: An alternative way of dwelling as a critique of the (rental) housing logic" and asks in which ways an *alternative* style of living can be established in an economized city such as Munich and which shifts in meaning go along with such a self-chosen life design at the margins of the city. Cultural anthropologist Susanna Rolfsdotter Eliasson pursues "Strategies for achieving the good life" and focuses on a new generation of Swedes who come to own summer cottages in her text. The limited possibilities in the city can be compensated via the extended space in the country, and inheritance is also a central factor for the social middle class in Stockholm. Based on interviews, European ethnologist Sanda Hubana asks "Who's the master of the plan?" and discusses what it means when an inner urban area such as the Tempelhof field in Berlin is not built on because citizens have voted against it.

On a final note, we would like to point out that this volume is published in a limited print version and simultaneously as an open access publication.

Dwelling in Postmodern Cities:
Middle Class and Social Responsibility
Simone Egger

Abstract

This article deals with increasing rents and their effects on middle-class inhabitants of cities. Munich, the capital of the German *housing market crisis*, serves as an example for developments which can also be observed in many other agglomeration areas. The focus of the research presented here is on practices which aim at access to housing space and, consequently, are linked with representations which repeatedly take recourse to imaginations of a *good life*. The home plays a central role in the lifeworlds of not only individuals, groups and communities, but also societies which, in turn, form themselves as social structures. Individual living is always to be understood as a piece of a widely cast net and is connected primarily to the living of others, is integrated into policies, and dense urban housing particularly is always connected with questions about capital and habitus, about the design of the collective, about belonging, and the negotiation of difference and indifference. Social differences must be considered to arrive at sustainable solutions to the issue of the housing problem and the discussion around participation, however, at the same time, one needs to think beyond classes.

Keywords: arts, racism, social segregation, solidarity, collaboration, responsibility

Changing Games. Changing Players

"Joanna Warsza is the curator of Public Art Munich 2018" (Küppers 2018: Foreword), a three-month festival that explores both performative art in the city and the city through performative art. Public Art Munich (PAM) is a biennial art project held by the state capital Munich which takes place in public spaces from May to July and was held under the slogan "game changers" in 2018. Hans-Georg Küppers, director of the department of arts and culture, City of Munich, stated in the Foreward to the program:

[PAM 2018] will carry out an artistic examination of the immense changes currently taking place in politics, economics, and society with particular reference to Munich's past and present. Joanna Warsza has responded to situations and personalities in Munich who attempted to "change the game" by questioning established routines of thought and action and presenting alternatives (Küppers 2018: Foreword).

The series of performances began in the area of the 1972 Munich Olympic Games with a procession from the East-West Peace Church to the Olympic Stadium, initiated by Anna McCarthy and Gabi Blum, on April 30, 2018. The two female artists conceptualized a "Parade of the W(e/a)k" that invited the audience to participate in the complaint that "[i]n a city like Munich, where housing prices have skyrocketed over the past few years, it has become increasingly difficult for people with modest incomes to subsist" (PAM 2018: Opening Procession). Several hundred people associated with large parts of the city's art and culture scene took part in the procession. It consisted of actors in dystopic costumes, was equipped with elements of stage sets which were reminiscent of urban buildings and spaces, was accompanied by musicians who superimposed an equally dystopic atmosphere over the scene and was led by the artists themselves who were at the head of the parade, proclaiming their propositions by megaphone. The announcement of this happening stated: "Inspired by ideas about the rejuvenation of space, McCarthy and Blum aim to honor and propagate Väterchen Timofei's and Natascha's pride in a procession of the empowered or (so-called) 'weak' and 'outsiders' of Munich as an appeal to citizens to take matters into their own hands" (PAM 2018: Opening Procession).

Timofei and Natascha are two figures from Munich "city lore". After the end of the Second World War, these two refugees from Eastern Europe settled not far from a large urban mountain of rubble on the Oberwiesenfeld. Using debris and a variety of other objects collected on the streets of Munich, the couple erected several *Schwarzbauten* (illegal constructions), among them a small church (Egger 2012). When the entire area was to be redesigned in preparation for the Olympic Games in 1972, Timofei and Natascha succeeded in fighting the plans by the responsible politicians and were able to keep their garden in the South of the park. This conflict was accompanied by a reinterpretation. Marginalized city dwellers became highly regarded members of a diverse cityscape under the eyes of an Olympic world public (Egger 2012). The thought of appropriation and a recapture of spaces, of becoming active and not passively waiting, was taken up by Anna McCarthy and Gabi Blum as a starting point for their performance. They aimed to achieve the symbolic occupation of the Olympic stadium with people and flowers, a space which hitherto had not been connected with the question of housing, as was pointed out in a contribution to the cultural magazine *Cappriccio* on Bavarian television. In it, Anna McCarthy could also be heard as she welcomed the visitors to "our new home" in the Olympic Stadium, asking them to lie down, make themselves at ease and stay a while (Cappricio 2018).

Circles

Urban housing in the early 21st century has become one of the sites in the global postmodern world where the fight for the distribution of capital and sociopolitical participation is being fought. As architect Bettina Götz states, cities shrink or grow depending on the demographic developments and the political circumstances in the world (2017: 55). In the United States, the financial crisis has primarily manifested outside the abstract space of speculation in a tangible real estate crisis, and in Spain, housing is equally tightly linked with a downturn of the markets – which means predominantly the loss of property. Living space in both countries is usually bought and not rented. For a long time, this constituted the basis of a business which, at its core, revolved around material things – real estate – and, simultaneously, combines local credit approval with investments in hedge funds around the globe. In 2006, the US real estate bubble burst and shook the financial sectors throughout the world. Journalist Nikolaus Piper describes that for years, prices on US homes had been rising and many low-income families took part in the boom. Mortgage companies financed their family homes – which they could actually not afford – with mortgages that, because of the borrowers' low credit rating, were particularly expensive for them (Piper 2017: 26). As Piper further discusses in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on the occasion of the ten-year anniversary of the financial crisis, these "subprime loans" were sold on, bundled into packages and traded worldwide. German banks and their investors also participated in housing as a business on a grand scale.

As soon as the prices for economic capital rose and the debtors could no longer repay the money they borrowed, the entire model burst like a soap bubble and the collapse of the structure created high waves far beyond the limits of the actual finance market. The transnational dimension of the business caused effects that were felt around the globe. Not only in Germany did banks encounter existential trouble; the system collapsed, even more people lost their jobs, could no longer service their loans and, thus, were unable to keep their houses. Piper sums up that the finance crisis and the succeeding general world economic crisis have brought a lasting economic, political and social change (Piper 2017: 26). Billions of Euros were shifted from other areas, such as education, to save banks as a matter of course. At the same time, the numbers appear so fictitious that the question about opportunities wasted remains abstract. The loss of a house or an apartment, however, has not been simply abstract for most people, and neither can it be understood as a transaction gone wrong. The loss is harder and can be felt immediately. The home plays a central role in the lifeworlds of not only individuals, groups and communities, but also societies which, in turn, form themselves as social structures. Individual living is always to be understood as a piece of a widely cast net and is primarily connected to the living of others, is integrated into policies,

and dense urban housing particularly is always connected with questions about capital and habitus, about the design of the collective, about belonging, and the negotiation of difference and indifference. The practice of living here permits an everyday life which should not only be understood in a rational manner, but which is also connected with emotional ties and questions of aesthetics. Neighbors come to visit where we live, and it is often where friends and family are; one's own four walls, be they rented or bought, permit a private life and, at the same time, also public life; they keep memories and serve as storage also in a material sense; they are the starting point for the course of everyday life; they provide stability and, in the best case, facilitate "a good life".

Resources

At the same time, the rhythm of the city is characterized by being dynamic. Constellations change through movement, a continuously rewritten order of the urban, through constantly growing mobility determined by the economy. Social, cultural, political and economic actions and discourses have a particularly strong effect on coexistence in urban spaces which are often highly diverse by design. Today, most economically successful cities of all sizes are increasingly crowded. The prosperity of the cities forces them to deal with several challenges: People need infrastructure and space, first of all, for housing. In the face of the rising rates of influx, there is currently often not enough living space in relation to the number of people who seek housing. At the same time, urban properties have become a field of contest and speculation. The price of housing is growing disproportionately to the level of income. Furthermore, it is often luxury properties or apartments in the upper price segment that result from renovations and are usually offered in large numbers. It is predominantly the local councils which are tasked with providing affordable housing – and, at present, they often cannot keep up with construction in the face of the challenges, even more so since the construction of housing space by the public and private sector in the past few decades has successively decreased and, by now, the space required for it has often become scarce (Holm 2014). The "middle class" – and this refers to quite a large segment – is, in fact, not served at all any more. This imbalance is not only problematic for individual residents, but also has an effect on the city as a social structure overall.

"Scarcity", however, is always a construct, as economic sociologist Reinhold Hedtke illustrates by referring to Max Weber, who defined it as the relation between one or more needs and the subjective evaluation of the actor that the means and opportunities for action available are scarce (Hedtke 2014: 16). At the same time, Max Weber conceives of economies as the opportunity of choosing between aims and needs and not only selecting different means. Reinhold Hedtke writes that behaviors are deduced and subjectively perceived from the scarcity constructed in this way and are focused on

providing for the future (2014: 16–17). In the 2000s, and particularly after the turbulent times of the economic crisis, real estate has become a particular focus of investment both in Germany and elsewhere; the so-called "concrete gold" is seen as one of the safest investment options. In contrast to the US, however, in Germany, it is not possible to take out a loan without equity, a fact which, while it supports the system, causes a further increase in the rapid price rise of the all too scarce good. As long as the World Bank interest rates remain low, this business model pays off. Similarly, government regulation in the real estate sector has been increasingly phased out in recent decades, while listed corporations, for example, are expanding and advertise the quality of life in the cities where their headquarters are located – but do not create housing for their employees. Classic company apartments or housing for trainees is no longer constructed; "ordinary" housing has become a task for the private sector. Living space has, thus, become a commodity that is fought for with all kinds of capital. Readers frequently find listings such as the following in the real estate listings of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung:* "Family of academics is looking for 4–5 room apartment. Civil servant in the higher service, fully qualified lawyer and two sons (2 and 6) are looking for 4–5 room apartment with balcony, centrally located up to approx. 2000 € warm". Further advertisements are from a "quiet musician", "a congenial medical student", a "well-to-do retired couple", a "solvent marketing manager", etc., etc. (2016).

Good Life City

The panel at the SIEF conference in Göttingen 2017 had its starting point in a DFG research group on "urban ethics", in which one project, for instance, deals with the housing problem in Munich.[1] This city, the capital of the German "housing market crisis", serves as an example for developments which can also be observed in many other agglomeration areas. The focus of the research is on practices which aim at access to housing space and, consequently, are linked with representations which repeatedly take recourse to imaginations of "a good life".

Munich is attractive and popular. The population is growing and the demand for housing is high. Apartment hunters and tenants have to live with a short supply and high rental and

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1 DFG research group "Urban Ethics" at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich (2015–2018). Accessed July 1, 2018. Available at: https://www.en.urbane-ethiken.uni-muenchen.de/research-group/munich/index.html.

real estate prices. Supplying affordable housing is one of the central challenges of the city and the Munich real estate market.[2]

The department of urban planning and building regulations in the state capital Munich showed an exhibition titled "München: einfach wohnen? Wohnraum schaffen – Spielräume nutzen (Munich: living simply? Creating housing space – using room to maneuver)" as part of the series "Zukunft findet Stadt 2012" at the start of the same year.[3] Architecture and social models for a sustainable coexistence in the urban space were presented in the town hall gallery. Individual needs were translated into contemporary urban living. The exhibition by the majority Social Democratic city government closed with an ethical debate around sustainability and quality of life in which citizens could take an active role and were intended to participate.

What should Munich look like in ten, twenty or even thirty years? How can we live, reside and work well now, and in the future? What influence do economic, political and societal developments have on life in Munich? The urban development concept PERSPEKTIVE MÜNCHEN addresses precisely these questions. It shows perspectives for the economic, social, spatial and regional development of the city.[4]

Cities have been interfaces to which people have been moving in large numbers since the 19th century, because they have decided to live, work and make their fortune there, to escape restrictions, be free and pursue the attractions of the urban in all its assembled diversity. Currently, with the development of metropoles, the city is not the place in which one was primarily born, but rather the place in which belonging can also be possible beyond familial ties. Urban researcher Edeltraud Haselsteiner explains that

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2   "München ist attraktiv und beliebt. Die Bevölkerung wächst und die Wohnungsnachfrage ist hoch. Wohnungssuchende und Mieterinnen und Mieter müssen mit einem knappen Angebot und mit hohen Miet- und Immobilienpreisen leben. Die Versorgung mit bezahlbarem Wohnraum gehört zu den zentralen Herausforderungen der Stadt und des Münchner Wohnungsmarkts." Ausstellung „Zukunft findet Stadt". Accessed February 19, 2012. Available at: http://www.zukunft-findet-stadt.de/zukunft/standderdinge.html.

3   Ausstellung „Zukunft findet Stadt". Accessed February 19, 2012. Available at: http://www.zukunft-findet-stadt.de/zukunft/standderdinge.html.

4   "Wie soll München in zehn, zwanzig oder gar dreißig Jahren aussehen? Wie können wir heute, aber auch in Zukunft gut leben, wohnen und arbeiten? Welchen Einfluss haben wirtschaftliche, politische und gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen auf das Leben in München? Die Stadtentwicklungskonzeption PERSPEKTIVE MÜNCHEN setzt genau an diesen Fragen an. Sie zeigt Perspektiven für die wirtschaftliche, soziale, räumliche und regionale Entwicklung der Stadt." Perspektive München. Accessed April 28, 2012. Available at: http://www.muenchen.de/rathaus/Stadtverwaltung/Referat-fuer-Stadtplanung-und-Bauordnung/Stadtentwick-lung /Perspektive-Muenchen.html.

the differentiation of living from the "whole house" as a self-sufficient supply unit in which all day-to-day living took place in one household to "modern living" in the nuclear family occurred as a slow and steady process (2003: 11). Contemporaneously, agrarian societies changed because of the orientation towards industrial production and lifeworlds began to increasingly follow the rhythm of Fordist labor, which was often linked with mobility from the country to the city. Haselsteiner writes that densified forms of living and the development of a "housing market" had become a necessity in the course of industrialization (2003: 11). Before this background, cities could always also be understood as places of transformation, as journalist Doug Saunders (2011) illustrates in his volume *Arrival City*. Establishing one's own position in the heterogeneous urban fabric did not only make survival possible, but could also mean an advancement based on social, economic and cultural achievements that could extend over generations (Saunders 2011). The location in the city through real estate manifests this arrival in space and society, and "home" also becomes a fluid concept in the view of urban lifeworlds – all the more so in the "liquid modernity" (Bauman 2003).

Middle Class

Fordist labor occurs alongside post-Fordist labor in contemporary urban spaces. Doug Saunders points out that, particularly in the last decade, prospering cities and global agglomeration centers have attracted people across all borders who expect "a good life" through possibilities for education or a societal position through economic success (2011). Historically speaking, this movement is not a novelty; however, the real estate market has developed in a way over the past 150 years that has led to housing in the urban space becoming an almost insolvable problem in itself. Seeking and finding accommodation, thus, becomes a bottleneck which lets the urban real estate market become a site of history which reflects political processes, is interwoven with discourses, prompts immanent social questions and, through its practice, itself becomes an actor on the field of societal developments. The rising cost of living as well as existential trouble in access to housing has a tangible effect on life contexts. The Munich city administration, for example, is constantly looking for a large number of teachers for its kindergartens and crèches, but their low income is not enough for either accommodation or the cost of living in the major city. Back in 2007, Munich police officer Peter Steininger sued for an "agglomeration bonus" and took his claim all the way to the Federal Constitutional Court where his lawsuit ultimately failed. As the German press agency *dpa* reported, the Bavarian civil servant had argued that he was able to afford substantially less in the state capital than in his home town in the Bayreuth area. However, the judges in Karlsruhe ruled that while the legislator was free to make

adjustments to the remuneration based on the local price level, this was not an obliga-
tion (dpa March 6, 2007).

Roughly ten years after the lawsuit, the problem of the "affordability" of a good life
in the city increasingly also affects other segments of society. Rising rental prices in
flourishing cities all over the world are not only a problem of the poor, but also of the
middle class. One specific entry in the guest book to the exhibition mentioned above
illustrates this problematic situation:

In Munich, there are by now almost only social housing/funded apartments/Munich model
and expensive rental and owner-occupied apartments, "normal wage earners" should move
to the outskirts!!! (...) Almost nothing is done for the middle class! What kind of policy is
that?[5]

Social theorist Göran Therborn points out that, from a global perspective, the societal
middle has been growing all over the world since the 1990s, while workers and their
political goals have increasingly disappeared from view (2016: 297). Therborn speaks
of "middle-class societies" which have become a symbol of an alternative future (2016:
299). This societal class defines itself primarily through consumption, the purchase of
cars and real estate as well as investment in travel and electronic, respectively, digi-
tal gadgets. Therborn says that the consumer behavior of the middle class also has the
great advantage of leaving the privileges of the rich untouched, while, at the same
time, offering a reassuring horizon for the ambitions of the lower classes. However,
the dark sides of this dream, according to him, are the mechanisms of social exclusion
inherent in it (Therborn 2016: 299). Following this logic, those who cannot consume
are not only not a member of the middle class, but also a "loser" in general, because
"the good life" refers primarily to economic wealth. Alternative lifestyles with other
contents or values do not play a role in this context. In spite of all municipal efforts,
living in the city and being part of society have been reduced to a question of economic
capital.

Middle-class people are still privileged, while, simultaneously, becoming more vulner-
able, as sociologist Heinz Bude states when he writes that the mood of being defen-
sive, reserved and pragmatic matches the insight that the global situation is charac-
terized by a constellation with new focal points and new relationships of dependence.
In his words, societal inequality becomes a topic because it who is in front is always

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5   "In München gibt es inzwischen fast nur Sozialwohnungen/gef[örderte] Wohnungen/Mü[nchen]
     Modell u. teure Miet- u. Eigentumswohnungen, 'Normalverdiener' sollen an den Stadtrand zie-
     hen!!! (...) Für die Mittelschicht wird so gut wie nichts getan! Was für eine Politik ist das?" Entry
     in the guest book of the exhibition "München: einfach wohnen?" in the Munich town hall gallery,
     January 16, 2012.

on the line (Bude 2014). In the face of these processes and the symptoms connected to them, people are forced to act and often out of a state of distress; they initially follow personal motivations and look for individual solutions. Our interest focuses on the reactions of the middle class to these developments. We have been observing a rise of ethical debates in this field as well as aspects of shame and (in)visibility when people try to handle these situations. Which discourses are led around housing? How far do practices and ideas correspond, where are differences discernible and where do conflicts erupt? When do people act beyond their individual problematic situation? We ask about ways of activism or collaboration, civil engagement, strategies and tactics, following Michel de Certeau (1984). We search for examples by analyzing transformations and their effects on the middle class in prospering cities.

Distribution

An ad was posted in the Facebook group *"Wohnen trotz München"* (Living despite Munich) in the summer of 2017:

Top furnished apartment in the center of Munich. Furnished luxury apartment for rent from November 1. Rent warm 910 €. Top location. As new. 28 square meters. With beautiful terrace. Concierge service, laundromat and small gym available. Top furniture and Bang & Olufsen television and stereo. PN for inspection. Warm rent 910 €. Cheers.[6]

This social media site originated a few years ago in the environment of the city magazine *MUCBOOK* and was intended to help people help themselves. The main controversy consists in that while "the good life" in the city of the many is permanently invoked, in reality there is a division between actors who have a powerful voice and are relatively privileged and those who are silent but equipped with positions and, most importantly, with financial assets. Upon closer inspection, connections become evident which illustrate that access to urban living space is fought for with no holds barred. This asymmetry is particularly visible in the example of the inner urban areas. The societal middle, which, in parts, still has enormous economic capital at its disposal, be it through salaries from the private economy or the inheritance factor, participates in the increase in value in real estate which is not only intended to be a home,

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6 "Top Möblierte Wohnung im Zentrum von München. Möbliertes Luxusappartment zum 1.11. zu vermieten. Miete Warm 910 €. Top Lage. Wie neu. 28 qm groß. Mit wunderschöner Terrasse. Concierge Service, Waschsalon und kleines Fitness Studio vorhanden. Top Möbel und Bang&Olufsen Fernseher und Musik Anlage. Für die Besichtigung einfach PN. Warmmiete 910 €. Gruß." Facebookgruppe "Wohnen trotz München". Accessed August 6, 2017. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/wohnentrotzmuenchen/?fref=nf.

but also promises security in the sense of an investment of capital. Philosopher Julian Nida-Rümelin points out that contemporary philosophy differentiates between morality (with a universal claim to validity) and ethics (tied to particular lifestyles) due to the plurality of lifestyles in the face of the developments of modernity (2013: 59). Such a separation of spheres, which nevertheless remain closely linked, is also becoming discernible when transferred to postmodern urban society. Everyone can share in speaking about the "good city" and the "good society", but the interpretation of what is meant by this is linked to thoroughly diverging actions. Julian Nida-Rümelin (2013) speaks of a fragmentation and, looking at the markets, also continues to consider questions of social justice. If one follows the practices of the actors in the urban real estate economy empirically and shines a light on their activities to get access to living space, the discrepancy between the discourse around "the good life" and the lived everyday life becomes strikingly obvious.

Tactics[7]

Starting from Michel de Certeau's considerations on the "Practice of Everyday Life" (1984), it is apparent in contemporary Munich in a particularly exposed manner what is meant by "tactics and strategies". Art historian Gabriela Muri explains, with a view to the urban space, that strategies enable the subjects to have a certain measure of their "own" at their disposal, while tactics can only serve to appropriate the space of the other (2016: 373). While strategies organize space and are, thus, linked with power through discipline (2016: 107), de Certeau thinks of tactics, as Gabriella Muri puts it, as the resistant practices of ordinary people to subvert the premises of the world. The gaze is first directed at the tactics with which individuals – single people, housemates, couples or families – attempt to finance expensive housing space. A survey published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* showed the following distribution for tenants with new rental contracts (in which the term of rent had begun in the last four years and in which the rent had not yet been increased): 52 percent had found their apartment via an internet platform, 31.8 percent through friends, acquaintances or colleagues and the rest via real estate agents, classified ads or other avenues (Hoben, 2017). The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* further reported in the summer of 2017 that many apartments did not go on the market at all. This means that those without a corresponding network will find it very hard to become part of urban society.

The urban real estate market is at least two-tiered regarding different population groups. Using the example of Munich, even with all the strategic positioning carried out by local politics and the city administration in terms of heterogeneity in the

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7   This section is taken from Egger (2018).

different quarters, there is an implicit borderline between territories on which the efforts of members of wealthy actors concentrate primarily and which is clearly articulated on real estate sites, in classified ads by apartment seekers or in shopping guides. These never mention real estate in Milbertshofen, at the Dülferstraße subway stop or in the Hasenbergl. The tactics of residents with little economic capital can be observed other city spaces and function mainly via social networks and a tie to municipal funding strategies. The connection between social, cultural and economic capital which is employed in the search for an apartment or the financing of housing space is specific to the middle class. A vast amount of individual creativity is used to position oneself in and, most importantly, to be able to hold on to the urban space. The loopholes through which it becomes possible to find something in certain parts of the city despite skyrocketing prices are systematically sounded out and employed in this way by the societal middle. This occupation of spaces, however, must be seen in an ambivalent way and will, in the long run, amount to a significant threat to the social balance of the city. A society which is constituted in this way produces exclusion. According to a 2017 study, the categories "race", "class" and "gender" play a significant role in this. Christine Lüders, head of the federal anti-discrimination agency, says that the more tense the housing market, the higher the risk of discrimination. She stated in an interview with the weekly German newspaper *Die Zeit* that her agency also sees a trend towards certain groups, nationalities or asylum seekers being excluded in classifieds from the outset (Die Zeit, July 1, 2017). Discrimination against applicants with children or migrants is obvious (Brehm 2017). Gender and ethnic ascription are less virulent with a corresponding income. The category "stranger" is, thus, produced indirectly via the housing market even if such exclusions are not legally permissible. It appears that only those who can rely on a social network may participate. Individual action, thus, always has an influence on a collective context, even if this effect is not intended. Sociologist Oliver Nachtwey comments that today's middle classes have contributed to the finance market's strong increase through share purchases and investments, but they are now themselves tangled in their own volatilities, for better or for worse (2016: 82). The effects of these developments, however, characterize the situation on the urban housing market fundamentally. In the face of such examples, it becomes apparent that housing is a complex field of problems and politics for which there can be neither simple explanations nor simple solutions because of the different interests in the face of developments which have preceded the current state of affairs beyond the question of real estate.

Perception

Political scientist Margit Mayer (1999) discusses boundaries and inequalities between urban movements from the 1970s and 1980s as well as activist networks in the city of the late 20th century. She identifies various groups with diverse interests who coexist in the same urban environment. While initiatives founded in the aftermath of the 1960s "were part of a broader social mobilization", contemporary "urban movements, by contrast, are far more heterogeneous, fragmented, and even polarized, and they increasingly play contradictory roles" in urban development (Mayer 1999: 209). Cities in Germany, the United States and all over the world have changed from modern to postmodern urbanity in the last decades because of shifting terms in politics and the economy. Once again, it is the changing economy that the political scientist points to as an instigator. First of all, industrial production has been replaced by several sorts of services. Post-Fordist variety replaced Fordist organization and, due to fundamental change, converting processes started all over the social and even physical features of the cities. Additionally, economic activity in urban everyday life is expressed in the tertiary sector; a "creative class" creates its locations of working and networking, reinterprets the framework of Fordist labor, and factory floors become co-working spaces. Even though there have been far-reaching developments on the side of planning and a critical debate on the manner in which construction was able to develop, knowledge about past struggles no longer seems to be realized, while other concepts are "well intended" but are so far removed from the everyday needs of the target groups that the discussions and the actual lifeworlds do not even touch. The PERSPEKTIVE MÜNCHEN mentioned above also needs to be mentioned here, with its imaginations of a good life which rests upon participation. A few years after its appearance in 2012, the ideas of the city, which can be directly linked to the social movements of the 1970s, appear almost impossible to implement in the face of the realities – meaning, in 2018, an unleashed housing market. Another example are the numerous planning ideas for refugee accommodation in 2016 and 2017 of which only a few were implemented, and then, all too often not thinking of or with potential residents but undertaken over their heads.

A significant aspect of the entire subject matter are the nested logics and complex interrelationships which make housing a highly complex task. First and foremost, this means legislation at the federal and state levels which has an immediate effect on municipalities. Political interests are simultaneously negotiated in a contrary manner when different parties make decisions from their individual perspectives. As has been evident not least in the example of the global economic crisis, which is a real estate crisis at its core, the problem can no longer be thought of in a national or exclusively local

manner. Living in the city has, thus, to be conceived of 'paradigmatically' as a task for the future in which many questions converge.

Creativity and collaborations

"The Human Scale" is the title of a 2013 documentary. For this film project, Danish city planner Jan Gehl asks about the relationship between human beings and the urban: "50 % of the world's population lives in urban areas. By 2050, this will increase to 80 %. Life in a mega city is both enchanting and problematic. Today we face peak oil, climate change, loneliness and severe health issues due to our way of life. But why?" (Trailer 2013). What will become significant in the global present and future can be deduced from the condition of cities. The degree of urban density is affected by contemporaneity and points to the state of society in a wider sense. Political scientist Margit Mayer writes: "the struggle for a democratic, sustainable, and social city crucially requires forging coalitions among different strands of urban movements. This struggle will be successful only if the newly available avenues are not used defensively or protect individual privileges" (Mayer 1999: 231). It is not a simple antagonism between local societies and global capitalism, understood as a fight between two poles.

Viewing local movements as "innocent and good" vis-à-vis distant forces of domination and power would have been problematic for the 1960s and 1970s, when the majority of urban movements still were part of a larger social struggle against broadening forms of domination. Today's urban movements certainly cannot be seen, in their entirety, as part of emancipatory struggles. They are contradictory and complex agents in the shaping of post-Fordist cities (Mayer 1999: 231).

Actors from various movements have to join and match their different resources to achieve conversion in general. "Only if these movements interact, politicize the social polarization inherent in the Post-Fordist city, and build on the mobilizing potential of the new inequalities will the struggle for socially just, environmentally sustainable, and democratic cities have a chance" (Mayer 1999: 231).

The alliance *"Bezahlbares Wohnen"* (Affordable Living) is a loose association of more than 32 tenant associations and neighborhood associations in Munich which was founded in 2012.[8] It is concerned with the preservation of affordable housing, and tenants who have been evicted from their apartments are supported through networking with each other. In the summer of 2017, Maximilian Heisler, the head of the initiative

8   Bündnis bezahlbares Wohnen. Parteipolitisch und finanziell unabhängig. Accessed July 12, 2018. Available at: https://www.bezahlbares-wohnen.de/.

and very well-known Munich tenant activist, reported on current topics the alliance is dealing with in an interview with the city magazine *MUCBOOK*. He said that, on the one hand, they were concerned with the unspeakable actions by the SOS Children's Village in Untergiesing, where the organization, which is generally recognized as a social association, inherited a house at Hans-Mielich-Straße 1a and then approached the existing tenants with rental increases of up to 300 Euro per month. Heisler reported that pressure was exerted on the tenants and that Wachter, the last butcher in the quarter, was based in this house and now threatened. In his opinion, SOS Children's Village had here acted more aggressively than any real estate shark they had encountered over the past seven years. On the other hand, Heisler's association looked after almost a hundred tenants in the so-called Hans-Mielich-Carree, also located in Untergiesing. He described how the tenants had been fearing for a while that they would no longer be able to afford the apartments after the next sale of the residential complex of almost 260 units, but that, in this case, the new owner turned out to be an actor ready to compromise (Weitmann August 18, 2017).

As far as can be discerned, the marginalized, of whom we spoke in the context of the initially sketched "Parade of the W(e/ak)", are not defined more closely. There are many people moving on the fringes of society in a city such as Munich and, furthermore, in a rich city, even if the local social net is tightly knit. Bülent Kullukcu and Karnik Gregorian, Munich artists and directors who also work transnationally, have pointed to the situation of several hundred Bulgarian residents of the city with "Tagasyl", a social performance in the area around the train station in May 2018. An information pamphlet which visitors received as part of the perceptual walk through the lifeworlds of the Bulgarians stated:

We, the homeless EU migrants, demand accommodation all year round for all (involuntary) homeless people with places to stay in all day and privacy, the possibility of registration under the address of their accommodation, the opportunity to register with the city of Munich as a homeless person living in Munich, an all-day place to stay in the shelter against the cold, [and] that the admission for the cold shelter be valid all year round[9] (Kullukcu and Gregorian 2018).

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9   "Wir, die obdachlosen EU-Migrant*innen fordern – Ganzjährige Unterbringung aller (unfreiwillig) Obdachlosen mit ganztägiger Aufenthaltsmöglichkeit und Privatsphäre, – Möglichkeit der Anmeldung unter der Adresse der Unterkunft, – Die Möglichkeit, sich als in München lebende obdachlose Person in München anzumelden, – Ganztägige Aufenthaltsmöglichkeit in der Kälteschutzeinrichtung, – Die Einweisung für die Kälteschutzeinrichtung soll für die gesamte Winterperiode gültig sein." Kullukcu, Bülent, and Karnik Gregorian (Theatre Collective). 2018. Tagasyl. Social Performance. München.

Because of the tense state of the real estate market and because of racism, people might find work but no apartment, no accommodation; they are forced to look for places to sleep in public spaces and camp in parks. Their conditions are catastrophic, not only from a hygiene point of view. Having no place in the city, however, does not mean not participating; homelessness makes social segregation visible. The walk through the streets as part of "Tagasyl", led by a Bulgarian accordion player, was not part of PAM 2018, the Public Art Festival of the city. The question to ask here is what makes the initially quoted "game changer"/s? Thinking from the periphery of urban society, the perspectives on urban life and its problems shift through the engagement with the Bulgarians and their everyday life. One can indeed speak of change under the tree in the Nußbaumpark at Sendlinger Tor which serves as a sleeping place for many.

What is becoming increasingly obvious in the course of dealing with the problem of housing space is particularly the limited perspective from which the city is viewed in parts rather than as a whole by most actors. The contribution by the cultural magazine *Capriccio* about the opening of PAM 2018, for instance, pointed out that the Munich Olympic Stadium is not usually connected to the topic of "housing". Most city dwellers will not realize that for several months in 2015/16, refugees were housed on the premises of the sporting ground because of a shortage of accommodation. The public who participated in the parade at Olympic Park and who can, for the most part, be counted as members of the middle class themselves is facing the problem that they can no longer find access to the housing market. In terms of their economic capital, many of the artists and culture professionals are no longer part of a spectrum which would be required to even be considered when applying for an apartment. If something changes and owners of an apartment or a house sue for owner occupation, by now, many people who can still be counted as part of the societal middle face the challenge of finding anything at all. A name which might sound "exotic" because of its composition in the arts context may, thus, become a disqualifier for remaining in the city.

A note that read "Looking for an apartment in Schwabing/Maxvorstadt" was fixed to a traffic light in an inner urban area in June 2018. It continued:

I, Munich resident, with a good income, no children, no instrument, no negative entries on the credit report, am looking for: from 40 square meters, up to 1000 warm, from June/July/August. Built in kitchen and balcony would be nice to have but are not a must. Reward: 750 € for successful brokerage of the apartment![10]

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10 "Ich, Münchener, mit gutem Einkommen, keine Kinder, kein Instrument, kein Schufaeintrag, suche für mich: ab 40 qm², bis 1000 warm, ab Juni/Juli/August. EBK und Balkon wären wünschenswert, aber kein Muss. Belohnung: 750 € für die erfolgreiche Vermittlung der Wohnung!" Note at Schleißheimerstraße corner to Heßstraße, June 2, 2018.

All these tactical considerations, the positioning of one's own interests which is often so highly necessary and the incredible inflexibility of the urban space which is connected with it, the impossibility of change or even developing something like a sense of belonging at all, paralyze urban society within the innumerable open construction sites which, at the same time, have been characterizing the image and the rhythm of the city for years. Hans-Georg Küppers, Director of the Department of Arts and Culture, City of Munich, resumes: "Game Changers manifests the meaning of art in public space as we understand it with our program in Munich in exemplary form: As a sensitive indicator of the openness of this city and its commitment to a democratic and free urban society" (Foreword 2018).

Strategies

Urban housing shows that current planning is falling short. The development of a strategy which understands city and society as dependent on the economy and politics as a holistic task will be indispensable to be able to even approach the complexity of the problem. In the face of the enormous dimensions of these strategic considerations, the urban space can, however, also deliver tangible impulses, for instance, in terms of feasibility. A central aspect to consider here is that the city is often a construct shaped by power, starting with the rights of individual tenants via urban specifics up to state and federal law, such as the *Moderniersierungsumlage* (modernization levy) which is letting the price for living skyrocket in Munich. The translation between the "discourses around the good life" and the "practice of a good life" is one of the central challenges of the future. Another point is the reach of strategies. The question of how the housing problem and, thus, the discussion around participation can be tackled must look at social differences and, at the same time, think beyond classes:

In the ideal democratic city, the walls have fallen. Across the divides of difference, people connect; they agree to differ. Collective memory is organized into a then and now that celebrates the present as a collective achievement. The vision is one of tolerance and diversity, shared values and complexity – not all for one, but the many for the all (Beauregard and Body-Gendrot 1999: 14).

Urban economist Robert A. Beauregard and political scientist Sophie Body-Gendrot describe their vision of urbanity "where collective life and differences mutually coexist" (Beauregard and Body-Gendrot 1999: 14). Based on their understanding of democracy, citizenship not only means consuming what the government has provided, but also engagement in social activism for a civil society. For Beauregard and Body-Gendrot, this is the way to overcome injustice, oppression or socioeconomic divide. "In this

imagined city, frictions are not dispelled, failures are frequent, and disagreements are impassioned. The city of our imagination is not utopia" (Beauregard and Body-Gendrot 1999: 15). The readiness to take on and, simultaneously, hand over responsibility seems fundamental for such a strategy. An attitude of solidarity does not have to grow from an affective mood or moral considerations in this but can also start out from the insight that a good individual life is only possible depending on a good life for all or, at least, for as many as possible and, thus, based on social balance.

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Of *Good Averages* and *Happy Mediums:*
Orientations towards an *Average* in Urban Housing

Stefan Groth

Abstract

The paper focusses on the relation between references to an "average" and urban developments of crowding or increases in rents. The occurrence of normative orientations towards an "average" in diverse fields – such as debates on work-life balance and medium achievements in the workplace or goals to keep up with average performances in leisure sport – serves as a starting point to investigate the role of the "average" in urban housing. Based on qualitative interviews, discourse analysis and fieldwork in the *Rathenauviertel* and other districts in Cologne, it asks how ideas of an "average" feature discursively in urban housing and how they are connected to other fields. The paper starts by outlining the prevalence of orientations towards the middle in different fields and specifically in the realm of housing. It proceeds by highlighting how notions of the middle are conveyed in advertisements, how they are tied to normative presuppositions and what impact they have on esthetics and materializations. The paper shows how perceptions of public space change with shifts in urban housing and conditions of appropriateness are adjusted. It concludes by arguing that orientations towards the middle in urban housing can be understood as an interplay between external pressures, normative orientations and justifications.

Keywords: housing, average, normativity, Cologne, esthetics, public space

Introduction

Modalities of urban housing are mostly restricted by physical, financial and structural factors. The choice of residential districts, the size of accommodations or forms of cohabitation are contingent on rent price, income, infrastructure or space, even more so in the face of urban developments of crowding or increasing rents. In addition to economic and infrastructural factors, lifestyle, social relationships or the appeal of districts have an influence on housing decisions. How much you earn, where your friends live, how easy or hard it is to find a flat and how much you like a certain district – all these are important factors of choosing or being content with the location of a flat. Furthermore, political stances or ideas of a "good life" feature in housing choices: Sociopolitical attitudes or normative orientations and preferences for a specific milieu and lifestyle are influential for the selection of location, flat size or preferred building types as well.

Perceptions of "good averages" or "happy mediums" feature increasingly in such debates, specifically when housing choices are rationalized: The modalities of urban housing are framed as a balance between rent and size as well as the "right" amount of space and the "appropriate" amount of rent – both situated neither at the top nor at the bottom of the spectrum of rent price or square meter size. The "middle" as a rhetoric and social comparative plays a role when tenants of relatively small flats in attractive districts argue that they do not need more space or that the location's benefits outweigh high rents. This is especially the case for urban trend districts with high rents, a competitive housing market and predominantly smaller flats. My research on one of these trend districts, the *Rathenauviertel* in Cologne, has shown that spatial constrictions and financial costs are put in relation to concepts of moderation; references to perceptions of the "middle" are used to justify external pressures and partly reframe them as positive. Living in small spaces in central urban areas is portrayed as having advantages and being suitable to an ethical lifestyle, however, demarcations are drawn both against rents which are too expensive or overly luxurious flats as well as against dwellings which are too small and low quality. It is about finding the right amount, the "good average" and "happy medium" in relation to the specific lifeworlds of social groups in trend districts.

While processes of crowding and increasing rents are factors contributing to such references, this paper is interested in the specific constellation in which they are voiced, ranging from claims by tenants in the district, the presence of concepts of the "middle" in advertisements, normative perceptions, esthetics, materializations and planning logics. The occurrence of normative orientations towards an "average" in diverse fields – such as debates on work-life balance and medium achievements in the workplace or goals to keep up with average performances in leisure sport – serves as a starting point to investigate the role of the "average" in urban housing.[1] The paper is about the relation between references to an "average" and urban developments of crowding or increases in rents. Based on qualitative interviews, discourse analysis and fieldwork in the *Rathenauviertel* and other districts in Cologne, it asks how ideas of an "average" feature discursively in urban housing and how they are connected to other fields. In the course of the paper, I will shed light on some developments contributing to this theme and highlight some pertinent dimensions of interest to a cultural analysis of this topic. By bringing them together, I claim neither causality nor their belonging to

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1   The paper on "good averages" and "happy mediums" in urban housing is part of a bigger project on the "middle" and perceptions of an average as a positive point for orientation in diverse fields of practice. The project takes its departure from the observation that orientations towards the middle are common in fields such as work, leisure and housing. It is based on qualitative interviews, mainly in the fields of work, recreational sport and housing and, furthermore, includes historical perspectives on the emergence of the middle as a point of reference for social comparisons.

a well-delineated trend but aim to outline different aspects of a specific constellation which applies to a specific group or groups in districts such as the *Rathenauviertel*. However, I argue that orientations towards the middle can also be found in other fields and contexts and that it is a powerful concept, structuring perceptions, expectations and practices in the realm of housing and other areas.

The paper starts by outlining the prevalence of orientations towards the middle in different fields and specifically in a trend district in Cologne. It proceeds by highlighting how notions of the middle are conveyed in advertisements and are tied to normative presuppositions and what impact they have on esthetics and materializations. The paper shows how perceptions of public space change with shifts in urban housing and conditions of appropriateness are adjusted. It concludes by arguing that orientations towards the middle in urban housing can be understood as an interplay between external pressures, normative orientations and justifications.

Mediocrity, Medium, Average

Orientations towards the middle are a form of social comparative (Nullmeier 2016), a form of orientation that both draws a line against the bottom and against the top. In contrast to competitions, such orientations do not seek the best, but rather a medium position, a "good average" or a "happy medium" with which one is content (or claims to be content). They are socially constructed and gain traction through their relation to relevant social categories: Instead of being defined by objective or neutral factors, such as mathematical medians or statistic evidence, they are placed in reference to situated criteria. Friends, family or colleagues serve as points of reference rather than objective scales. What is understood as the "middle" is dynamically constructed and is contingent on personal living conditions. An average income to one person means something different to another; similarly, a sport performance can be perceived of by an individual as more than average at the point of its execution, but after two years of hard training, it can be deemed too low and not appropriate. Expectations and perceptions of the "middle" change over time and with shifting social conditions. The "middle" is flexible as it compares positions – in terms of income, housing situation, performance and other criteria – to the specific social context.

"Keeping up" with the midfield, achieving middle incomes or belonging to the middle class are increasingly powerful models for socioeconomic behavior and imaginaries. This is mirrored in recent sociological studies where the "civil normal biography" is preferred over "excessive luxury" (Calmbach et al. 2016) or where "conformity" with the middle class (Koppetsch 2013) is highlighted as a favorable goal. But how are notions of the "middle" and "mediocrity" – not as analytic terms but as terms and concepts prevalent in lifeworlds – referenced in diverse fields of practice? How does the

usually negatively connoted notion of "mediocrity" experience a reinterpretation to more positive images of balance, virtues of modesty, moderation in face of discussions on degrowth, wastefulness, sustainability, slowing down or work-life balance?

While the fields in which notions of "happy mediums" and "good averages" are referenced are very diverse and connected to diverging logics of practice, interpretations and structural specificities, the notions themselves stem from similar debates and discourses and share many commonalities. The "middle" is a powerful concept to structure action and perceptions. Orientations towards the middle in diverse fields merit deeper scrutiny to show how they are constituted in specific settings and constellations, which discourses they reference, how they relate to debates on competition and performance or how they are referenced to make sense of economic and social conditions.

Examples of the prevalence of the middle as a guiding concept are the sphere of work where sabbaticals, part-time work and home office schemes as well as the aforementioned *work-life balance* have become increasingly common. This is mirrored in interview statements from my project, arguing that the professional career is perceived of as less important than a happy and balanced life. While this is, in the first place, a voluntary limitation leading to less income and slimmer career chances, it is also argued as a positive choice leading to a happier life and less pressure from work. In the sphere of leisure, for example, in recreational road cycling as a sport, this orientation towards the middle, towards averages and, thus, also to some extent normalized performances is prevalent as well: Hobby cyclists argue that their motivation is not to win a race or to be the best, but to achieve good performances relative to friends, their age group or their own performance in previous years (Groth 2014). Belonging to the midfield is argued as an achievement of its own and framed as desirable; overly extensive training durations and aspirations are, in this context, seen in a negative way, as much as bad performances are. There is an interplay both in the sphere of work and in the sphere of leisure, between voluntary self-limitation – being content to belong to the middle – and external constrictions – not being able to achieve more than the middle due to economic or social pressure and constraints. Work and sports are two exemplary fields in which orientations towards the middle can be observed. However, developments and shifts towards a "new modesty" also play a big role in the sphere of housing, both in interviews I conduct and in diverse publications, events, social movements, materializations and esthetic dimensions. A common theme in these diverse sources is a focus on notions of mediocrity, averages or mediums. The middle, as a concept which structures actions and interpretations, is prevalent in making sense of housing situations.

Cologne: *Rathenauviertel*

My research on housing and notions of *good averages* and *happy mediums* focuses on Cologne, more specifically on the district of *Rathenauviertel*. Cologne, with roughly 1 million inhabitants, is Germany's fourth biggest city. Crowding and ongoing processes of urbanization shape Cologne as the number of inhabitants grows continually, whereas the number of newly built flats does not suffice or keep up. Rents are increasing in Cologne, where people pay 30 percent more than the German average (Wagner 2016). This is especially the case for trend districts: The *Rathenauviertel* has the highest rents in Cologne (12.50 EUR per square meter on average, with significantly higher rents for restored buildings). It has seen a percent increase in rents over the last two years, and there is a tendency towards smaller flats, with flat sizes an average of eight square meters smaller compared to developments in other parts of Germany (CityNEWS 2014). With its rising rents, a highly competitive housing market, restoration, relatively small apartments and a strong appeal for young families and singles, the district is a typical example of a trend district in an inner-city area. In spite of criticism against "luxury restorations" (Risse 2013) and gentrification, this is partly described as a positive development towards an attractive district and a valorization of the neighborhood.

Cologne has a highly differentiated neighborhood structure, the so-called *Veedel* (vernacular for *Viertel*, district), featuring different supply structures regarding shops, cafés and restaurants. The building styles of districts differ significantly with occurrences of appealing historic buildings spread thinly in a city where most neighborhoods were destroyed during WW II. The distribution of green spaces and parks also has an influence on the attractiveness of districts, and the *Rathenauviertel* offers both many attractive pre-WW II residential buildings and access to green spaces in the direct vicinity. It adds to the attractiveness of this district that the emergence and presence of trend districts affects social relations: They serve as meeting places and attract other tenants. The decision to move to a different district does not only depend on infrastructure, architectural features or leisure facilities, but also on whether friends and members of similar social groups are already living there.

My research on urban housing in Cologne's *Rathenauviertel* and, more generally, on developments in urban housing shows the prevalence of notions of the middle or average in making sense of and legitimizing housing conditions: Smaller flats, increasing rents and confined possibilities for urban housing are core aspects of living in the district, especially so for younger families, couples and singles moving into the district in recent years. References to perceptions of the middle or the average are tangible in different ways in conversations and interviews with inhabitants of the *Rathenauviertel*. One instance are arguments that living in small apartments can outweigh excessive

square meter sizes and plenty of rooms when they are not too small and when their quality is not too low. Here, the notion of a good average takes effect in the form of a demarcation against both too much and too little, sketching out a zone which is deemed an appropriate compromise between these two poles. Similarly, practical ground plans, good room divisions and reflections on sustainability are referenced to argue against flats which are too big and wasteful. Again, negative aspects of big apartments are highlighted as long as other factors – such as quality, practicality and location – can be framed to be in favor of small apartments. Big apartments are unattainable to many in districts like the *Rathenauviertel*, both regarding general availability and affordability. However, they feature in conversations, interviews and publications as a reference against which notions of averages or mediums in housing are constructed.

This can be understood partly as a reaction to increased rents and less space. In times of crowding, an extremely competitive market for flats in inner-city areas and difficulties in the search for bigger flats, orientations towards the middle are one way to make sense of one's situation in the realm of housing. It is a form of sweet-talking unaffordability and socioeconomic problems of a relatively privileged group of young families, couples and singles who want to live in the inner-city trend districts. Furthermore, it is one way in which such social groups under pressure make sense of a crisis in urban housing. However, it should not be understood as a unidirectional causality between a difficult situation in housing and resulting (re-)orientations towards the middle. Rather, it is worth scrutinizing the constellation of the current housing situation in districts like the *Rathenauviertel*. In addition to infrastructural factors, it consists of imaginaries, materializations, esthetic dimensions and normative presuppositions connected to references to the middle and mediocrity. Which expressions of them exist in such a constellation? What debates and trends contribute to the importance of the middle in it? And what are some of the effects of orientations towards the middle? In the following, this paper will present some aspects of this constellation, ranging from advertisements to interior design and the use of public space, where the middle is positioned as a form of leitmotif by some actors in the field of urban housing.

Advertising and Consuming Normativity

In an advertisement on furniture and interior design accessories, *Tchibo* – a large German retailer – featured the slogan: "Less is more – more and more people are of this opinion" (Tchibo 2016). Two things are of interest regarding this slogan: Firstly, it is a normative claim with – albeit rather implicit – references to debates on minimalism, sustainability and critical consumerism. In the context of furniture and interior design, it is not only the esthetic principle made famous by modern architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, advocating for open spaces, clear lines and against superfluous

ornamentation (Johnson 1947). It is, furthermore, both a rejection of excessive or indiscriminate consumption and unsustainable lifestyles coupled with the promise that this can have positive effects and "is more": Decluttering, reduction and consuming the right "things", following the logic of the text accompanying the advertisement on *Tchibo's* website, lead to happier lives. Secondly, the slogan and the advertisement text frame the orientation of "less is more" as a social trend which is shared by "more and more people". It hints that it is not only an individual orientation, but, if not consensus, the shared view of a growing group of people and that it has a fundamentally social dimension. In the advertisement, *Tchibo* makes clear that two reasons for the trend of "less is more" are "increasing rents" and "urban crowding". As external forces, they apply pressure on occupants to adjust to smaller spaces. While they are referenced at the beginning, the rest of the text takes a different tone and speaks about "opening up new possibilities": Creativity and decluttering, the conscious selection of furnishings and sharing things and space with others are portrayed as positive aspects rather than negative constrictions.

Tchibo is not alone with their reference to reduction and minimalism in the realm of interior design. Indeed, "less is more" and a focus on essentials are an ongoing trend. At the *IMM Cologne* 2017, the international furniture fair, the so-called flagship house – a format featuring a concept house as a model vision for future living – was called the "Sustenance" or "Elementarist House" – not excessive in layout or furnishings, but modest, of high quality and "reducing the elements to their essential" (Todd Bracher Studio n. d.). Designed by American, Todd Bracher, the "Haus" was a convergence of esthetic and normative dimensions: Housing is tied to a way of life subscribing to ecological principles of sustainability, mirrored in furnishings and floor plans. At the 2018 edition of the *IMM* 2018, Czech designer Lucie Koldova was in charge of the concept house, again presenting a minimalist design (IMM Spotlight 2017) with a focus on "dematerialization" and an understanding of "light as a feel-good factor and source of life" which results in needing "fewer other things" (Scharnigg 2018). Both concept houses reflect a tendency towards minimalist interior design lacking excessive ornamentation and connecting esthetic with emotive and normative dimensions. Both IMM 2017 and 2018 showed a generally strong trend towards minimalism and reduction. A focus on living in small spaces was tangible throughout the fair – and most notably so in the high-price segment.[2] This was described in a German newspaper report on the *IMM* 2018 as a move to "clarity" and a "detox for the home" (Scharnigg 2018). Apart

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2 Author's fieldnotes from IMM 2017 (January 2017) and IMM 2018 (January 2018). As one ventured further through the trade fair and towards the lower price segment in the halls at the far end of the trade fair site, however, reduction and minimalism were no longer the guiding motives. Particularly in the lower price segments, minimalism and reduction were not guiding motives.

from the *IMM*, there are numerous examples in blogs, books, magazines and advertisements featuring this move to modesty, reduction, living in smaller spaces, and sustainable and high quality furniture.

A relatively young trend, framing modesty in interior design and other areas as a Scandinavian virtue is related. The big furniture retailer *IKEA* dedicates an extensive subsite on their homepage to illustrate the concept:

Lagom: It's a simple Swedish philosophy on everyday life that means "just the right amount". An idea that we can strike a healthy balance with the world around us without having to make extreme changes, and without denying ourselves anything. With *Lagom* in mind, we think you can live a more sustainable, healthy and cost-conscious life at home, without any dramatic upheaval (IKEA n. d.).

In this advertisement campaign, there is also a normative thrust positing that consumption choices are tied to normative issues of sustainability, a healthy lifestyle or conscious consumption. Furniture and interior design are not limited to functionality or esthetics but are portrayed as enabling or mirroring virtues. In a series of video clips featured on *IKEA*'s *Lagom* website, sixteen people tell how they apply the concept to their lives: From saving energy and space to recycling, gardening and volunteer work – all with *IKEA* furniture in the background. The middle plays a central role in this conception, as it is about preventing excess and waste as much as it is about living comfortably and with not too few resources. It is about finding a balance without "denying ourselves anything" and with a strong normative conviction that the "right" patterns of consumption and the "right" way of living and housing are also ethically good – "sustainable, healthy and cost-conscious". The *Lagom* trend is currently very strong and can be found in numerous publications and contexts. This and other "less is more" trends entail implicit and explicit references to notions of adequacy, moderation, mediocrity and middle. They promise to contribute to a better life in different areas by setting the boundaries against too much consumption, things or waste. However, they also draw a line of demarcation from too little: The lifestyle that is alluded to involves comfort, balance and well-being; it is not precarious or characterized by scarcity and getting by. It is about finding the right measure and amount of furnishings, belongings and consumption. While it includes conscious spending and economizing, the concept of moderation entailed in it is related more to "good averages" and "happy mediums" than to dearth and abstinence.

The different publications and advertisements – with and without the catchy *Lagom* label – do not generally foreground external constrictions leading to the necessity to reduce or declutter. While crowding and increasing rents are alluded to and portrayed as influencing variables, they are not the main focus. Instead, positive aspects are put

on center stage, such as the functionality of interior design solutions or furniture. Yet, these positive aspects are not limited to functional or practical benefits of the furniture or styles advertised. They, furthermore, stretch to ethical issues, as the conceptions in advertisements, trade fairs and publications are coupled with issues of sustainability, environmental protection, health and creativity. Advertisements including ethical presuppositions, for example, for organic food or renewable energy, work with assumptions of the "value-base of the audience" (Fenwick and Wharton 2013: 45). Similar to the marketing of fair trade products (Quaas 2015; Winterberg 2017), parts of the furniture industry, including manufacturers, retailers and designers, pick up values in their campaigns and representations to cater to the expectation of their audience. As normatively laden imaginaries, they are connected – most directly – not only to discussions on the benefits of living in small spaces, but also, more generally, to debates on post-growth or degrowth, on ethical consumption and sustainability as well as to discussions on "minimalism", "decluttering" and so forth. They stretch from advertisements by large retailers like *Tchibo* or *IKEA* to magazines and the high price segment of furniture displayed at furniture fairs and smaller stores in Cologne. The consumption of specific styles promises to be not only esthetically pleasing, but also ethically just.

Esthetics of Minimalism and Modesty

References to the middle, to mediocrity or to *Lagom* in the field of housing are closely connected to esthetic dimensions. Trends such as references to Japanese interior design and minimalism feature strongly in advertisements and publications – conscious spending has an esthetic dimension.[3] "Trend consultant" Gudy Herder identified "Refined Raw" as one of the upcoming trends in interior design in a review of *IMM* 2017: "In a world ruled by accumulation including fast fashion, this consumer has a deep desire for going back to the simple and most essential. It's all about consuming less but better" (Herder 2016).

The slogan "less but better" was also used as a design principle by product designer Dieter Rams (1995), who focused on high quality, functional products. It is not constricted to quantity or to the build quality of furniture or accessories but entails a distinct esthetic dimension. "Better" describes not only material and workmanship, but also design principles and style. There is a clear trend in interior design towards small, functional and high quality furniture adhering to these principles and styles. This trend is also visible in the supply of furniture stores in and next to the *Rathenauviertel* in

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3   The number of books on living in small spaces on the German market has increased drastically over the last couple of years. Most of them share explicit references to the positive aspects of smaller flats, minimal design and general moderation in life.

Cologne; it is shared not only in the respective publications, shops and professional discourses, but also in the furnishings of my interviewees which are following these trends. With reference to Rolf Linder and Lutzer Musner's notion of "landscapes of taste and consumption", trend districts such as the *Rathenauviertel* feature form language in shop windows and the interior design of cafes (Lindner and Musner 2005).

This has tangible influences on the production of furniture. The *Association of the German Furniture Industry (Verband der Deutschen Möbelindustrie)*, highlights that sofas today take up 30 percent less space than six years ago without compromising comfort, *IKEA* increases the production of smaller beds, and producers of kitchen cabinets reintroduce sliding door designs from the 1960s in an effort to supply space saving designs (Haimann 2016). This can be understood primarily as a result of a development towards smaller flats and rooms, particularly in bigger cities where crowding and increasing rents are a problem. Furniture producers and retailers react to developments on the housing market, be it directly by surveying the market or indirectly by responding to their clients' demands for smaller furniture. Such production shifts take into account esthetic trends, so that smaller and more functional furniture fit, in use of forms and design. This is, of course, not the case for all producers, types of furniture and price segments: "Less but better" and minimalist approaches are selective trends among a myriad of other developments. However, orientations towards the "middle" have an influence on esthetics and their materializations. They impact the production of a segment of furniture and shape esthetic perceptions of "good" design which is not wasteful or too much. Among certain social groups, they have an increasing appeal, as mirrored in the representation of this esthetic in publications, trade fairs, furniture shops, shop windows and flats. Vice versa, current esthetic trends of modesty and their materializations have an influence on orientations towards the middle: The supply of furniture styles and their prevalence in furniture shops which are in vogue have the ability to bolster the orientations attached to it. The rhetoric surrounding esthetics of minimalism and modesty is quite explicit: *Lagom* and other arguments for moderation are posited as promises for a happier and healthier life without waste and excessive consumption. The values of the audience are assumed by advertising normative consumption patterns; at the same time, the representation of norms also leads to their diffusion to audiences not necessarily ascribing to them.[4] There is an interdependence between the esthetics of minimalism and moderation, on the one hand, and orientations towards the middle, on the other.

Furnishings are not constricted to functionality, their esthetic content not to appearance. What Maria Schwertl describes for specific objects such as images, flags or

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4   It is, however, difficult to assess to what extent this diffusion of norms by advertisements or publications is pertinent and stable, cf. Leach and Liu (1998).

religious artefacts in the flats of first- and second-generation immigrants from Turkey holds true for furnishings in general as well: They have the potential to be "objects of identification" (Schwertl 2010: 14 f.), carrying meaning and hinting at social values and perceptions. The preference for or the prevalence of specific esthetics hints at social meanings. Daniel Miller argues that every day "things" can be an expression of social meaning (Miller 2010), a perspective that is also present in the notion of *Dingbedeutsamkeit* ("remarkableness of a thing", Kramer 1995), highlighting the social and meaningful relations of things and their social embeddedness. Much like things allow analytic access to their social meaning and to the meaning of things for the social (Groth 2015: 60), I would argue that this is also the case for the esthetic dimension of things. It can be understood as both having an impact on perceptions of happy mediums or good averages and being an expression of them. Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch has made the case that "perceptions of life, norms and belief" are manifest in housing modalities of individuals (Katschnig-Fasch 1998: 10) – esthetic dimensions are part of these modalities.

Housing and Public Spaces

Orientations in urban housing towards to the middle are not constricted to private spaces, they also stretch to public spaces. In the case of the *Rathenauviertel* and other trend districts, modalities of housing include not only buildings and flats, but also the surroundings in the form of public infrastructure, parks, cafés and bars. While the attractiveness of buildings in districts is an important factor, the appeal of trend districts such as the *Rathenauviertel* is argued mostly with reference to public life and its possibilities:

During the day, the *Rathenauplatz* [the central park in the district] is an attractive meeting place for families and inhabitants of the district. Boule players toss their boules balls and parents enjoy a freshly drafted beer in the open-air pub while the kids rollick about in the playground. On mild summer evenings, the district gets crowded, the seats get scant and mostly younger people meet in the meadows. Here, too, people touch glasses, but cozily with drinks from the kiosk (koeln.de n. d.).

Here and in other publications, the social life of the district is highlighted to illustrate its attractiveness. To some extent, such a description is common for most districts. However, in the case of the *Rathenauviertel* and other trend districts, the possibility to use the public space for leisure activities differs from the enumeration of a district's advantages, such as the vicinity to supermarkets, schools and transportation. The promise entailed in such descriptions is that parks and other public infrastructure

provide extra space in the direct environment to spend time with friends and family. The neighborhood is marketed as a space which has the potential to bridge the gap between public and private space. A local magazine from Cologne described this relation between the private and the public regarding the development towards smaller flats as follows: "We will live in/on smaller spaces: The rural flight continues and high rents in large cities pushes us into smaller flats. In the process, the formerly public space of the city becomes more private" (CityNEWS 2016).

With the trend towards smaller apartments, due to the force of circumstances and conscious decisions to live in specific districts, an orientation towards public spaces in the city can be observed. Rhetorically, the appeal of the *Rathenauviertel* is coupled with the possibility to use the public space, in the form of parks and playgrounds, as quasi-private spaces. The shift to public spaces constitutes a distinct politics of space, claiming public spaces and their interpretation from a privileged position. Public spaces play a big role in the appeal of the district in interviews with inhabitants of the *Rathenauviertel*. Here, the possibility of using public space in this way influences perceptions of living conditions and of the size of apartments: They are referred to as alternative spaces which can be used in addition to private spaces of flats and commercial spaces such as cafés and bar.

This relation between public and private spaces in which the public space is enhanced in its status from a privileged position is worth closer scrutiny. Sharing some of the presuppositions, it is in contrast to efforts to "reclaim the city", for example, by the British social center movement (Hodkinson and Chatterton 2007), by developments stemming from the "right to the city" concept (Harvey 2008; Lefebvre 1968) and creative initiatives to rethink modes of participation in the city (Huber 2018). While such processes position themselves against the commodification of private spaces (Bojadžijev 2016) or increased efforts of policing (Eisch-Angus 2011a, 2011b), the appropriation of public space as private in trend districts is not *per se* or explicitly connected to normative claims. It is focused mainly on the existing possibility to use and consume space, not on claims to extend it or strengthen participatory processes. With its positive attitude towards public space as a given commodity and the related position to use it, it is harnessed by city marketing, local businesses and developers as a competitive advantage. Much as historic conservation and heritage programs are increasingly used as justification for urban gentrification processes (Collins 2008; Franquesa 2013; Herzfeld 2010), perceptions of public spaces are altered: They are seen as something of high social value in times of changes in urban housing and are translated into economic value. Orientations towards the middle in housing are accordingly not constricted to the private spaces of flats but have an influence on the use and interpretation of public spaces as well: As attractive districts, potential for development and spaces of consumption.

Negotiating Appropriateness as Social Practice

Debates on modesty and mediocrity, their medial occurrence and the use of public space alter conditions of appropriateness for urban housing. They have an influence on what is deemed appropriate in terms of size, rent, number of rooms, furnishings and location. Prices of 12.50 EUR or higher per square meter and small apartments would be considered to be too expensive or too small in other districts or cities. In trend districts like the *Rathenauviertel*, however, rents and sizes like this are accepted because of the advantages offered by the location. Conditions of appropriateness apply to rent prices and to the size of flats. Concepts of "good averages" and "happy mediums" come into play as the relation between minimal requirements and available space is negotiated. Here, too, flats are expected to be adequate in size and price, not too expensive and not too small, but in relation to their location in a relatively expensive district. The demarcation is made both against too little and too much, defining a space of appropriate conditions. The combination of factors, such as crowding, a competitive housing market in attractive districts and their appeal to specific social groups, establish perceptions of appropriate and – to some extent – also normalized conditions of living for these groups.

The negotiation of appropriateness is situated and flexible (Groth 2015: 75 f.). It is contingent on social relations, the characteristics of urban living, income, personal requirements, such as the possibility to commute to work, or to fulfill other infrastructural needs (e.g. shopping, education). As my research on the *Rathenauviertel* and representations in advertisements, magazines, blogs and interior design have shown, it uses references to "less is more", "less is better", concepts like *Lagom* and other orientations towards the middle to locate levels of appropriateness in urban housing. Furthermore, conditions of appropriateness entail ethical aspects. They make reference to debates on sustainability and minimalism (Derwanz 2015), post- or degrowth (Groth 2015; Poehls 2014, 2016) or ethical consumption (Carrier and Luetchford 2012; Luetchford 2016) to make sense of and rationalize such orientations towards "good averages" and "happy mediums" as good and ethically just. Thus, appropriateness as a normative concept (Merker et al. 1998) is constructed in interviews and publications with reference to multiple strains of discourse, ranging from personal needs and ethical claims to social relations and infrastructural factors.

Despite this flexibility and situatedness, perceptions and assumptions of appropriateness have specific materializations. They have an impact on the size of furniture, on design trends and on their representation in publications. As they are materialized in such form, they gain stability and influence. However, new and modified perceptions of appropriateness are not limited to tenants, magazine writers, bloggers or designers; they stretch to financial logics and planning processes as well. Real estate investors and

developers refer to mobile and flexible lifestyles and the benefits of smaller units when they rationalize the development of smaller, high quality units (Maneco n. d.). Crowding in urban areas and high rents are argued to be the main factors for an increasing demand for smaller flats. However, this is portrayed partly as a positive development with reference to arguments such as sustainability, functionality or the appeal of a combined kitchen and living room (Psotta 2014). However flexible or ephemeral references to the middle in urban housing by inhabitants in trend districts or in publications are, they are taken up and gain traction in political and economic processes, justifying and altering shifts in the perception of appropriate housing.[5]

Conclusion

There is an interplay between several aspects in references to the middle and neighboring terms such as modesty, *Lagom* or averages. For one, a form of sweet-talking of the pressures which the social groups in highly attractive trend districts experience can be observed. Tenants of small apartments in the *Rathenauviertel* justify their living modalities with perceptions of the middle, taking up normative frames ranging from moderation to issues of sustainability and critical consumption.[6] Such justifications are constituted communicatively and give insight into their normative foundations (Bergmann and Luckmann 2013),[7] which are not necessarily stable and systematized, but can be spontaneously invoked and altered.[8] While negative effects such as crowding, high rents and spatial constrictions are, in principle, acknowledged, they are backgrounded, as positive aspects are highlighted as a form of justification. These are further tied to new and changing esthetics and design trends, emphasizing minimalism or modesty and – either implicitly or explicitly – related to debates on degrowth and sustainability.

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5   This is, of course, not only the case for urban housing in trend districts. Perceptions of appropriate housing conditions in terms of cost and size are contingent upon political processes and economic pressures, particularly in precarious housing situations. While tenants in trend districts can afford the rent, but voluntarily limit themselves to smaller flats on order to live in attractive inner-city areas, the low-income sector is faced by harder restrictions, cf. Rötzer (2010).

6   A further worthwhile strand of inquiry would be to probe into the different orders of justification on which these references are based and to analyze their interplay, i.e. to scrutinize when and how they are referred to and how differences between them are made sense of (cf. Boltanski and Thevenot 2007).

7   The project aims to show, in a further step, how such justifications are integrated into biographical narratives to make sense of performances and choices in different fields of practice, such as housing, work and leisure (Lehmann 1980).

8   See Lambek (2010, 2015) on the discussion on "ordinary ethics," which takes up the question whether the evocation of ethical rules is based on complex value systems or rather embodied in and as practice.

Moreover, they are connected to shifting perceptions of public spaces and alter conditions of appropriateness.

While this case study on urban housing and references to the middle is limited to a specific social group of inhabitants of trend districts, perceptions of "good averages" and "happy mediums" are prevalent beyond this field. The occurrence of the "middle" in diverse fields of practice hints at a pervasive social comparative towards the middle as a competitive form. It aims at not too much but, at the same time, tries to avoid too little. It creates dimensions for comparison which require effort and are hard to achieve, albeit less hard than reaching the top or belonging to the group of top earners: Here, the metaphoric aim in a competition is not to win, but to belong to a social group oriented towards notions of the middle. Occurrences of the middle are embedded in constellations of questions of taste, virtue, economics and urban conditions. Orientations towards the middle as a specific form of social comparative introduce new criteria of appropriateness for housing and for what is deemed as adequate and acceptable regarding the size, design and location of flats. They mediate between questions of taste, virtue, economics and urban conditions and constitute a discursive interplay between elements of justification and legitimation, on the one hand, and of virtues and social values, on the other hand. The middle is a powerful concept, structuring perceptions, expectations and practices in the realm of housing as well as in other areas.

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New Housing Cooperatives in Munich:
Two Scenarios for an Ethnographical Class Analysis

Laura Gozzer

Abstract

This paper focuses on practices of positioning by founders and residents of newly established housing cooperatives in the German city of Munich. It takes the perceptions of founders and residents regarding their own socioeconomic position as a starting point: They reflect their own privileged status compared to others in precarious situations, and, at the same time, show their insecurity regarding rising housing prices in their home city. The paper conceptualizes this in-between position regarding ethical claims of new housing cooperatives towards commonly owned housing space and ideals of neighborhood. With the concept of (middle) class the paper sheds light on the relations between socioeconomic conditions and ethical subjectifications. After two introductory parts on the model of young housing cooperatives in Munich and approaches of class analysis in cultural anthropology and sociology, the main part of the article focuses on two case studies: The author interprets reflections and practices of a cooperative founder and a resident by using two different concepts of class as 1) position(ality) and 2) praxis.

Keywords: class, housing cooperatives, urban ethics

"People who cannot make it on their own get together. It's as easy as that",[1] says one expert during an information evening for potential founders of new housing cooperatives in Munich. He presents simple solidarity as the main principle: Residents who cannot afford to buy individual housing space or feel endangered by rental prices increasing fast get together as a group to establish commonly owned housing space. More and more housing cooperatives have recently come into being in Munich, one of the most expensive cities in Germany. Apart from representing an exclusionary model of self-help, the newly established cooperatives claim to establish an alternative to the financialization of urban dwelling – a process that is widely problematized in current public discourses in Germany and especially in Munich. Here, where the average rent is 1.65 Euros per square foot plus utilities,[2] young families and retirees especially perceive commonly owned housing space as a promising model that offers stable rents, a

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1   Fieldnote *Mitbauzentrale München*, LG, January 25, 2017.

2   This figure refers to new leases in the first quarter of 2017 and was calculated by Statista GmbH, a statistics company that operates an online portal (Statista GmbH 2017).

lifelong rental right and supportive neighborhood communities. Newspaper journalists celebrate the recently established cooperatives as a "light on the rather dark horizon" (Kastner 2016: 3), and Munich's city administration is also putting a great deal of faith in the cooperatives as flagships for an alternative city development (LH München Referat für Stadtplanung und Bauordnung 2017: 91–92).

Most founders emphasize that they are not only interested in securing their own housing situation, but also aim to change the social, architectural and economic fabric of Munich for the – normatively defined – "better". They refer to visions of good urban dwelling compared to anonymous neighborhoods and an excluding housing economy. Therefore, cooperative projects operate with ethical arguments and suggest answers to the question of "how one should live in the city" (Dürr et al. 2018: 5).[3]

Based on these preliminary thoughts, I posit the ethnographic research on newly established housing cooperatives in Munich in the realm of the interdisciplinary research group Urban Ethics that is interested in normative frames, ethical concepts and subjectifications in eight different cities. My ethnographic research on housing and housing politics in Munich focuses on different groups of actors and asks how they formulate ethical positions regarding housing economies and urban politics. Following these concepts, I understand new housing cooperatives in Munich as specific "urban ethical projects" (Dürr et al. 2018: 5). This leads to questions, such as: How do actors constitute themselves as ethical subjects (Foucault 1990) within these projects? Which techniques of government and which exclusionary processes are constitutive for these subjectifications?

During my research,[4] founders and residents constantly highlighted and discussed their own socioeconomic position regarding housing. Many of them described an in-between position: They reflected on their own privileged status compared to, for example, homeless people, and, simultaneously, showed their insecurity regarding rising housing prices in their home city. How can we conceptualize this in-between position regarding ethical claims of the initiatives towards commonly owned housing space? In this article, I use the concept of (middle) class to understand possible relations between

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3 This approach to ethics draws on Andrew Lakoff and Stephen J. Collier's philosophically inspired concept of a "regime of living." They write: "Ethics, in this sense, involves a certain idea of practice ('how'), a notion of the subject of ethical reflection ('one'), and questions of norms and values ('should') related to a certain form of life in a given domain of living" (Lakoff and Collier 2004: 420).

4 I draw on ethnographic material that I depicted during 2017. I visited information evenings for potential new founders and participated in tours through already existing buildings; to date, I have conducted six in-depth interviews with three inhabitants of cooperative projects, one person who was about to found a cooperative, and two board members and instigators. The main part of my ethnographic material stems from ongoing participant observation in a cooperative that is currently planning its first house.

socioeconomic conditions and ethical subjectifications better. I emphasize the socioeconomic contexts of the urban-ethical projects I studied by using class as an analytic perspective.

This paper starts with two introductory parts: Firstly, I present the model of young housing cooperatives in Munich and, secondly, I briefly sketch approaches of class analysis in cultural anthropology and sociology. In the main part of the article, I interpret the reflections and practices of one cooperative founder and one resident with two different concepts of class as 1) position(ality) and 2) praxis. I conclude with first ideas concerning my main questions: a) Why and how to use class as analytical tool in cultural analysis? b) How does class help in understanding current urban-ethical debates?

Young Housing Cooperatives in Munich

From a legal point of view, housing cooperatives are nonprofit enterprises; their members own the property and assets commonly. This means that the residents do not actually own their flats, as they do in the case of joint housing ventures.[5] Rather, cooperative residents acquire lifelong rental rights and a guarantee of relatively stable monthly rents. Therefore, they need to pay a membership fee and a deposit. The key principles of self-organization and -responsibility go back to the mid-nineteenth century when the first European housing cooperatives were established in several industrializing cities (Crome 2007: 212). Current cooperatives rely on this tradition and declare that the members' interests should be the basis and the goal for all decisions and practices of the enterprise (Crome 2007: 211).

Based on the model of common ownership, current housing cooperatives position themselves explicitly in opposition to the profit-oriented financialization of housing space (Mitbauzentrale München 2017). They own around 40,000 flats in Munich with its 1.4 million inhabitants, which correspond to five percent of the total housing stock. Most of these flats belong to so-called old housing cooperatives that focus on administering their housing stock and – until recently – have not shown much interest in providing new housing space. The founding of three new cooperatives, *WOGENO* in 1993, *Frauenwohnen* in 1998 and *Wagnis* in 2000, marks the beginning of a new generation. These young cooperatives distance themselves from their predecessors in two crucial respects: Firstly, they aim to reinvest their members' money constantly, to obtain more and more housing space. Secondly, most of them prohibit their members from passing on their rental rights to relatives to avoid improper allocations between

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5   While joint housing ventures *(Baugruppen)* aim to acquire private housing spaces and are, thus, often criticized for their exclusionary effects, housing cooperatives stand for a communal property system.

family members and keep the projects open to possible new members (Mitbauzentrale München 2017). Since their establishment, *WOGENO*, *Frauenwohnen* and *Wagnis* have bought existing housing stock and built new houses in developing areas of the city with often similar architectural characteristics: Inner courtyards, community rooms on the ground floor levels, shared balconies and bigger corridors, with the official aim of increasing communication between neighbors. No further cooperatives were established until 2015, but since then, eleven new housing cooperatives have come into being with names such as *PROGENO*, *Kooperative Großstadt* and *Bürgerbauverein*.

Different experts attribute the reasons for this "boom" (Kastner 2016: 3) or "renaissance" (Anfang 2015) to a dramatic increase in housing prices since the financial crisis of 2007. Consequently, it became almost impossible to get a flat in one of the cooperatives that existed already. Munich's municipal administration supports self-initiated housing groups, for example, by establishing the institution Mitbauzentrale München that has been providing administrative support for new housing cooperatives and joint housing ventures since 2014 (LH München Referat für Stadtplanung und Bauordnung 2017: 95). Apart from that, the city administration reserves a certain amount of communal building land for self-initiated housing groups[6] and cooperatives can buy these communal lots at reduced prices. In return, they must incorporate a certain amount of social housing in their projects and follow a tight financing plan for the building. As mentioned before, prices for shares and rents of such city-financed projects vary according to the total costs of the real estate project, the size of the flat rented and additional individual funding from the state or city. I use the calculations for an impending project as an example. The initial membership fee is 1,600 Euros and the reservation fee 4,000 Euros. The residents need to pay 71,500 Euros as deposit and a monthly rent of 920 Euros for an apartment of 807 square feet for two people.

Considering these main characteristics – common ownership, reduced rents, lifelong rental rights – together with the ideals that many current cooperatives represent, such as closer neighborhood relations and lively quarters, we already get a hint of the financial and ideological elements that constitute the field of cooperative housing in Munich, with its inherent exclusions, power relations and expectations towards residents. One of the most important questions in current debates around new housing space is "For whom?". To live in – let alone establish – a housing cooperative requires money, time and commitment. Many of the (future) residents and founders that I met perceive themselves as arriving at a biographical turning point. Whether it is a man who is planning to retire in a few years, a couple who is confronted with higher rents or a woman who has just got divorced, all of them are seeking to gain control and

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6   The administration has increased the amount of reserved land recently up to 20–40 percent for the years from 2017 to 2022 (LH München Referat für Stadtplanung und Bauordnung 2017: 15).

security regarding their housing situation, which is perceived as potentially under threat.

The model of cooperative housing seems most attractive to people who are holding on to their ideal of a stable housing situation, even though their economic capital is no longer sufficient for homeownership (at least in Munich). Even though current cooperatives implement subsidized flats and often include housing groups or projects from social organizations, they are far from providing housing space for the urban poor and homeless on a larger scale. Rather, they present models of self-help for relatively privileged, stability-orientated and long-term residents of Munich. Consequently, the city's administrative and financial assistance presents a form of support for urban middle-income groups, especially for young families and well-established retirees.

When we follow this line of interest, we arrive at discussions of the positionality of the actors involved, their resources, aims and ethical claims. Where do we get to if we declare that housing cooperatives are middle-class projects aimed at securing privileges and stabilizing an increasingly destabilized situation? It seems to leave us with a rather descriptive term that names people with more or less the same resources in society, but if we use class as a rather analytical concept, we can interpret more: The struggles in society, in this case about housing, and how collectives potentially form in specific temporal-spatial contexts.

The return of class in cultural analysis?

Since the 1980s, social and cultural scientists have widely abandoned class as a concept when analyzing social and cultural processes in Western societies and cities. Perceived as being too simplistic regarding the complex mechanisms in capitalist and post-capitalist societies, many scholars substituted it with notions such as lifestyle, milieu and the focus on autonomous individuals and their personal decisions.[7] Following Don Kalb regarding the anthropological discipline, most work has been stuck in a so-called "inward turn" (Kalb 2015: 10) since the rise of culturalism, a subjective and discursive turn in the 1980s, even though he names the Manchester School or British Cultural Studies as foundations to build on when thinking about class. Anthropologist Henrike Donner outlines a boom of the "middle class" concept in research concerning urban residents in "non-Western" contexts, for example, India, Turkey or Papua New Guinea (Donner 2017). Donner connects this rise to the fact that people adopt a

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7   While most sociological literature was influenced by notions of the fragmentation and differentiation of social groups, Pierre Bourdieu's works – amongst others – represent a "sharp break with the older postmodernism and poststructuralism and their concern with cultural expression" (Kalb 2015: 7).

concept of "middle class" for themselves and engage in practices of being or becoming middle class in "non-Western" countries, while in "Western" countries, people do not identify as class members. It remains questionable whether the increasing scientific focus on class in "non-Western" contexts also reveals a Eurocentric view that reduces "non-Western" urban residents to simply climbing up or down a ladder. While scholars capture them easily by the generalizing term class, the concept seems too narrow to describe "Western" urban residents that scholars prefer to represent in light of their diverse lifestyles.

Still, there is some academic discussion concerning classes in European societies and also in Germany. Current sociological studies describe the German middle class in a rather diagnostic fashion, for example, as increasingly afraid regarding their (potential) loss of power, stability and privilege (Nachtwey 2016), as panicking regarding current political, economic and societal disruption (Bude 2011), or as tending towards a "new conformity" (Koppetsch 2013). In addition, sociologists use the concept of class to describe and, therefore, generalize rising social groups, such as financial class, business class, creative class or "new urban middle class", that follow the ideal of singularity (Reckwitz 2017). Interestingly, the concept of class seems easier to apply to rising and successful members of society who use the term themselves (Kalb 2015: 16).

In the discipline of European Ethnology, Cultural Anthropology and Cultural Analysis, an increasing interest in economy[8] and recent ethnographic studies on social inequalities and precarization, such as Stefan Wellgraf's (2012) study about institutional classism in schools, Ove Sutter's (2013) research on the academic precariat or Moritz Ege's (2013) work on classifications and cultural figures, show a slight shift in the discipline's perspectives. Referring to these studies, the research field of inner-city housing seems to be another entrance point to follow a perspective on class in Cultural Analysis.

When we turn to the topic at stake – inner-city housing – we deal with an increasingly politicized issue in German media and politics. The so-called "housing question", a term referring to Friedrich Engel's observations in 1872 (Engels 1974 [1872]), presents one of the most urgent social questions in the country. Rising rental and real estate prices affect people's lives significantly and divide homeowners from tenants and the homeless. Therefore, a cultural analysis of the processes and modalities of inner-city housing connects inseparably to notions of socioeconomic embeddedness of urban residents regarding the financialization of housing space in most Western European cities. Studies on housing issues in Germany have addressed the middle class's attempt to separate from the poor and their role in gentrification processes (Frank 2013) and their activism in, for example, "right to the city" movements (Holm 2011) or other rather artistic groups (Moser 2017).

8　See the topic of the discipline's congress in 2017: "Economies/economic practices".

In this article, I experiment to see how concepts of class lead to a better understanding of housing practices, in this case – cooperative housing in Munich. Therefore, I aim to use class as an analytical perspective instead of applying it as a rather vague descriptive term for people who inherit a diverse but still similar range of socioeconomic positions. I am interested in the ways in which class relates to the urban-ethical framing of cooperative housing. I interpret the cases of two cooperative actors by using two different class-analytical approaches: Firstly, I focus on the narratives and practices of a founder by applying Pierre Bourdieu's (1985) terms of capital accumulation, probable class and social fields. Secondly, I shed light on the case of a resident by using a class concept recently suggested by Gavin Smith. He argues against an approach of "classing the population" (Smith 2015: 72), because it reproduces class structure. Instead, he suggests focusing on the transformative potential of class formation in the concept of "collective praxis".[9]

Planning and securing – class as position and sense of "one's own place"

Classes, in Bourdieu's words, are "sets of agents who occupy similar positions and who, being placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings, have every likelihood of having similar dispositions and interests and therefore of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances" (Bourdieu 1985: 725). He emphasizes the differences between this "class on paper" and "an actual class, in the sense of a group, a group mobilized for struggle" (Bourdieu 1985: 725).[10] The positions occupied depend on the accumulation of social, cultural and, therefore, symbolic capital, as well as on the specific logics of each power field in society, in our example – housing in Munich. Michael, a twenty-nine-year-old engineer, is founding a new cooperative with his colleagues. One of them spread a call for participation via email and by the time of the interview, around twenty people form a group that is meeting regularly to prepare the

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9   To use a class concept that entails the idea of transformative potential of suppressed groups for interpreting practices of relatively privileged urban residents might seem politically questionable, but I dare to see where it leads.

10   Bourdieu's concept of "class on paper" inspired researchers to classify people regarding their accumulation of different sorts of capital depending on power relations and logics in the specific fields (for Germany, Vester 2005). Quantitative surveys use Bourdieu's capital theory to map whole national societies (see in Germany: The SINUS Institute publishes yearly overviews of different national milieus). The disciplinary subfield of stratification sociology (Devine et al. 2005) approaches class, i.e. milieus, by referring to Bourdieu and suggesting a broader understanding of capital. Bourdieu's main interest in the logic of fields is, therefore, often underrepresented, not only in quantitative analysis, but also in ethnographic works that do not go further than carefully classifying actors in specific fields regarding their position without trying to understand the logics of each field and how it is connected to others on a larger scale.

procedure to found the cooperative.[11] Michael is currently living with his girlfriend in a two-room apartment provided by his employer. Even though he describes this apartment with a relatively low rent and situated in the popular student area in the center of Munich as "perfect",[12] he is considering his options for moving into a bigger apartment sooner or later. He is already thinking ahead to possible future needs related to his plan to start a family in the years to come. While most of his friends have already bought or built houses in less expensive cities or villages and had children, Michael wants to keep living in Munich, even though he does not see himself as capable of owning real estate here.

In Bourdieu's terms, Michael (in addition to many others) is confronted with the logic of the field of housing in Munich. In this arena, the amount of economic capital is crucial and divides homeowners from tenants, a division many associate with either stability and independence or potential insecurity and dependency on the good will of the property owner. Confronted with the housing prices, on the one hand, and his aspirations for the future: family, stability and comfort, on the other hand, Michael has to ask himself: Should I take on debts and buy, or should I stay in my current tenancy and wait? What are the alternatives open to me and what suits me (i.e. the position I inherit) best? Within this process of reflection, Michael has developed a "sense of the position" (Bourdieu 1985: 728) he occupies in the field of housing in Munich as one significant part of the social space in general.

Michael wants to take care of his and his girlfriend's housing situation before the couple is actually in need.[13] Therefore, he reflects on their possibilities. In the following passage, he refers to the initial membership fee of 1,000 to 1,500 Euros people need to pay to become a member of a cooperative and to have the option of joining a building project:

The housing market is tense and when you think about it, people pay around 2,000 Euros to a real estate agent when they search for a flat. Or even more. [...] Then maybe 1,500 Euros for the option of perhaps someday having a flat that is nice and affordable. [...] And you would get the money back if you decided not to move a few years later. Maybe that's enough reason for people to say, okay, I'll take the risk or [...] I'll do that. At least it's one option.

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11   One year after our meeting, the cooperative Michael co-founded is already in the process of applying for communal ground and accepting new members.

12   Interview with Michael, LG, October 5, 2016: 22.

13   Analysis of Michael's reflections regarding gender aspects shows that he represents the manager of the couple's future situation. For Michael, this responsibility does not seem to be a burden but more a challenge that he is motivated to face.

There are not many of them, so that's actually … If you want to keep living in Munich, that's pretty much the only option you have for getting an affordable flat.[14]

Michael now connects a broader rational argumentation with his own needs. By articulating these arguments in a generalized form (using the pronoun "you"), he connects his perception of his own position to that of many people facing the same problem. He refers to an unspecified, but in his mind, present crowd with the same worries. Michael considers three aspects in this part of the conversation. Firstly, paying the membership fee is a rationally wise investment compared to paying a real estate agent. Secondly, the investment is risky but necessary for him, because, thirdly, cooperative housing represents in his eyes – more or less – the only way out of expensive tenancies. Michael links practices of risk-taking with the desire for stability, on the one hand, and flexibility, on the other hand: The idea of getting the caution back in case he changes his mind is crucial. Therefore, the cooperative model seems to fit his ambivalent needs. Michael is dealing with the relatively limited options he sees to satisfy his desire to secure the couple's long-term housing situation – even if they are perfectly content at the moment. Sociologist Uwe Schimank describes proactive thinking about possibilities, options and alternatives, and thorough systematic decision-making as the core elements of the imperative of planning "one of the cornerstones of the middle classes' conduct of life" in the national context of Germany (Schimank 2015: 8, 14). Following his generalization, members of "the" German middle class aim at an "ambitious conduct of life with regard to rationality and sustainability of biographical decisions" (Schimank 2015: 8). This means, first of all, taking one's fate into one's own hands rather than remaining dependent on others, and secondly, making decisions in a rational and considered way instead of just following spontaneous or intuitive ideas (Schimank 2015: 13). Michael's narrative "fits" into these schemes: He tries to stay in control of his own life. While Schimank concludes that the routines of planning are less and less possible for members of the middle class due to new insecurities in their personal and professional lives, social and economic disruption, and political instability, Michael's actions are about staying in charge. His longing for predictability is evident when he tells me that he quit his job at university, because – even though he enjoyed his work – he no longer wanted to stay in insecure positions with short-term contracts.[15]

If we follow this interpretation, we end up at a rather deterministic view of the "middle classes' conduct of life" that is under threat. Cooperative housing would be one strategy in which the goals of stability and control can be upheld despite the financialization

14 Interview with Michael, LG, October 5, 2016: 8–9.

15 Interview with Michael, LG, October 5, 2016: 15.

of housing. This does not explain why only a few people react in the same way as Michael. Therefore, let us go back to Bourdieu, who suggests the notion of a "probable class, inasmuch as it is a set of agents that will present fewer hindrances to efforts at mobilization than any other set of agents" (Bourdieu 1985: 725). The same objective structures do not necessarily lead to the same practices, dispositions and interests; this is obvious for the example of cooperative housing: A lot of people deal with the same questions as Michael and inherit similar positions but still do not decide to establish a cooperative. Most of them arrange themselves in tenancies, others leave the city or take out mortgages and buy real estate, as Susanne Frank describes in her study on inner-city suburbanization of the urban middle classes (Frank 2013). Therefore, the decisions to join or establish cooperatives present one possible act of social positioning in the highly competitive and contested field of inner-city housing in Munich.

Using Bourdieu's theory of capital accumulation, we can emphasize the fact that money is not the only decisive factor regarding cooperative housing. A board member of one cooperative thinks that people who have recently moved to Munich are less likely to join cooperatives. In her opinion, most of the members know the city well and are part of specific networks – the only way they get to know of the existence of the cooperatives.[16] Apart from that, habitual dispositions greatly influence the decisions to join or indeed found a cooperative. Who perceives conversation cafés in the community rooms, exchange cabinets on the hallways, common gardening, shared balconies and monthly group meetings as something nice? Who likes the idea of common ownership and is ready and able to invest in it? Cooperative housing is accessible to a limited group of people dependent not only on their financial capital, but also on status, knowledge and social networks. Therefore, it produces new forms of exclusions and hierarchies.

To conclude: Michael's case represents a good example of the diagnosis of a "vulnerable middle class". Consequently, we could interpret his ambitions about founding a cooperative as coping strategies that follow a rather rational calculation. Michael inherits a medium position in the field of housing in Munich, and he tries by founding a cooperative to fulfill his ideal of a stable future housing situation in the city. In this regard, he follows a rather conservative approach in the light of current fragmentations of personal and professional biographies of young, well-educated urban residents. Even though his financial means are not enough for homeownership, he follows an ideal of housing stability.

16   Expert Interview, anonymous, LG, October 7, 2016.

From autonomous practices to collective praxis – cooperatives against speculation

A group of Marxist-inspired anthropologists (Carrier and Kalb 2015) recently aimed to reconceptualize class not as positioning in social fields regarding capital accumulation, but rather as inherent in social relations and actual practice. Gavin Smith (2015) suggests a political concept of class as an "emergent phenomenon arising from the refusal to accept this [given] social order" (Smith 2015: 73). Therefore, he does not understand subjects "in terms of being" but as "inseparable from social practice" and continues: "Subjectivity is inherently a process of becoming" (Smith 2015: 73).[17] An ethnographically inspired class analysis in Smith's sense explores "the conditions of class that allow opportunities for praxis" (Smith 2015: 73). Consequently, instead of classifying, an anthropologist's task is to "uncover the possible ways in which the autonomous practices of the self could be transformed into the collective agency of historical praxis" (Smith 2015: 74).

Flora is thirty-five years old and has been living for six months with her husband and their two children in one of the newly established housing cooperative buildings. She is an architect and currently working part-time in an office. Flora describes her situation in the years before she moved into the newly built cooperative house as a "precarious constellation".[18] She had been commuting between different cities for years due to limited contracts and changing job positions. She describes the instability and insecurity regarding work and housing as a burden. Additionally, the owner of the building where her partner had been living changed and their home became an "object of speculation".[19] She remembers that more and more people moved out of the house and found other solutions. One neighboring couple decided to build a house in a smaller city with less expensive housing prices. Flora compares the situation of the neighbors with their own and continues: "Taking our personal situation into consideration, somehow we didn't have any prospect of homeownership whatsoever."[20] Prompted by a family member, Flora and her partner joined a subgroup of a cooperative that was already in the process of setting up a housing project. They became members and reserved a four-room apartment in the future house. A few years later, they were able to move into the

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17 Consequently, Smith is opposed to the notion of "class consciousness": "There is no such thing as an a-historical, a-social individual (or collective) who is endowed with consciousness and engages in some kind of agency. Rather, the subject is constituted from the start through practice, which is always interactive and always shaped by the historical and social position of those who engage in it" (Smith 2015: 87).

18 Interview with Flora, LG, October 12, 2016: 1.

19 Interview with Flora, LG, October 12, 2016: 3.

20 Interview with Flora, LG, October 12, 2016: 4.

apartment they had opted for – with financial support from the city.[21] To finance the shares, the couple invested 77 Euros per square foot, a "whole lot of money" that they could only afford because of an inheritance.

Flora has orientated her life toward stability and security by quitting her job in another city, starting a family and investing her inheritance in shares in the cooperative. She describes these decisions and the move into cooperative housing as a "moment of *Spießigkeit*" (smugness).[22] Flora associates her longing for stability and security with a petit bourgeois and rather narrow-minded approach to life. She presents cooperative housing as a sign of conservativism with which she has problems identifying, as her amused tone shows. At the same time, Flora also perceives her moving to a cooperative project as a political act against speculation. She emphasizes the idea of establishing an alternative economic model of housing apart from privatization and capitalistic profit-making. She has been active in groups dealing with public space in another German city for the last few years and, therefore, is familiar with the topics and questions surrounding urban space. It is crucial for Flora to "withdraw housing space from speculation" and "to sensitize yourself, to commit yourself and engage, to dedicate yourself to something you really want to do".[23]

We see the variety of meanings Flora ascribes to her commitment to the housing cooperative. The couple thinks initially about buying private housing space, however, they later get to know about the cooperative via social contacts. Flora invests an increasing amount of time and effort into the cooperative and becomes one of the main actors organizing neighborhood activities. Smith's suggestion of seeing class when "autonomous practices of the subject" turn to "collective praxis of history" seems interesting here. If we generalize Flora's practices and reflections on a larger scale, we can see a mobilizing aspect in her actions. On the one hand, the intellectual transformation "from dense ethnographic narrative to the tendencies and processes of more broadly applicable theory" accompanies such a generalization and, on the other hand, we see the political transformation "from the isolated and situated practices of the person toward the praxis of the collective subject" (Smith 2015: 74).

Cooperative housing becomes part of Flora's political world view, aiming at alternative models of housing economies and city life, two aspects that she perceives as inseparably connected, as this quote shows:

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21 Regarding the size of the apartment, they played "poker", as Flora puts it, because the financial support from the city limits this in relation to the future number of inhabitants. However, by the time the project was finalized, Flora was pregnant with their second child. This process of reserving flats years before moving in shows the importance of anticipating the future for residents of cooperatives.

22 Interview with Flora, LG, October 12, 2016: 20.

23 Interview with Flora, LG, October 12, 2016: 17.

Actually, my impression is that this form of city, of life, of neighborhood and society … for a long time everybody had the impression that this is just something that you can buy with money. Especially in Munich … And that simply isn't the case any longer.[24]

Other forms of capital besides the economic rationale are placed in the foreground in cooperative housing: Investment in common ownership and commitment to ideals of sharing and neighborhood community. Actors collectivize, not often in harmony as my research material shows, but rather in constant struggle and conflict over personal priorities and group interests, over power relations and hierarchies. Nevertheless, the group stays relatively stable because the cooperative is also a financially defined collective.

Smith's distinction between autonomous practices and historical praxis remains vague. To which extent is investing shares in a housing cooperative an autonomous practice, dependent on personal ambitions, calculations and possibilities, and to which extent is it part of a collective praxis that might change current housing economies? Instead of looking at the sudden emergence of class, Smith directs our attention to "the conjunctural features of the relevant social formation" (Smith 2015: 73) to understand what the catalysts for praxis and its outcome are. The analysis should be about tracing "the link between the contradictions that arise in the unfolding reproduction or transformation of different forms of capitalism, on the one hand, and, on the other, cooperative and conflictual forms and practices. This allows us to explore the conditions of class that allow opportunities for praxis" (Smith 2015: 73).

The current increasing moral problematization of market-orientated financialization of housing space (Gozzer 2017; Heeg 2013) seems to be an integral part of the social formation that influences the newly established housing cooperatives in Munich. Housing here becomes a question of social inequalities that is not only limited to the working class and poor but has already included academics and employees or small entrepreneurs with medium incomes. If we follow this line of argumentation, housing cooperatively presents a "collective praxis" that, on the one hand, requests housing space for the few but, on the other hand, also questions the notion of private housing property in general.[25] Class in cooperative housing does not "supposedly arise," while other people "appear to be fragmented into isolated individuals" (Smith 2015: 82). Moreover, on a different scale, we can look at

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24 Interview with Flora, LG, October 12, 2016: 17.

25 The political element of the cooperatives researched materialized when leading actors in the field co-founded a political initiative that pleads for a revision of the so-called *Bodenrecht* (land rights) on a national level.

those moments of crisis, disturbance and the like, in which practice can go forward only by destroying not just the immediacy of the present (the undernourished sheep that has to be pastured, the shoe that has to be soled) but also by destroying the very social configuration that is responsible for the conditions of that present (the conditions of pasturage or of shoe production) (Smith 2015: 82).[26]

Not to be mistaken, this is not an optimistic, romanticizing view of a historical praxis of relatively privileged members of society. I would suggest an alternative approach to ideologies and hierarchies produced in such times of possible transformation. If we follow the hypothesis that housing cooperatives in Munich could be part of a historical praxis leading towards common ownership and sharing economies in the administration of housing space, the discipline of European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis can ask what exclusions, stigmatizations and new power hierarchies accompany such a shift. When legitimacies shift, who will become more powerful and who will lose power? How do new ethical subjects arise in practices?

Conclusion

I used two understandings of class as analytical tools to attempt to find out where they lead us. Some conclusions are too narrow or generalizing regarding the research material and leave alternative interpretations aside. However, what I aim to show in this text is that the choice of analytical lenses dictates what we can see in our empirical data and what we cannot. The confrontation with current housing economics, politics and, therefore, prices leads some residents of Munich with specific capacities regarding finances, social and cultural resources, and habitual dispositions to connect their own potentially endangered situation and a more general critique of German housing economy, the development of Munich and social relations in the urban in general. Founding housing cooperatives with support from city municipalities is one possible outcome of this reflected connection.

Looking at this empirical phenomenon with the first analytical lens – class as position – we can see residents who long for a stable housing situation (and sometimes also closer neighborhood relations) to secure their own resources and position. Consequently, we could understand cooperative projects as strategies to reproduce social order and uphold privileges by referring to a common good. Regarding the notion of

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26 However, housing cooperatives present a minor development on the housing market in Munich. That is why many housing activists do not ascribe much meaning to them regarding substantial changes. Moreover, quantity is a difficult parameter for cultural analysts to decide about relevance, even though the concept "transformation" entails far-reaching developments, a "historical" element in Smith's words. My arguments in this direction are hypothetical.

habitual dispositions, we can emphasize exclusionary elements of housing cooperatives and take a clearer view of who is more likely to commit to one of the projects concerning the concept of "probable class'".

Looking at cooperative housing through the second lens would take their political effects on economic modalities seriously. Cooperatives withdraw housing space from speculation; they receive building ground that is off the free market. The founders become housing space owners, together with others. They become something new, as Smith would put it: "The unfolding of our potential, the development of what we might be against the reality of what we currently are, is a struggle against the conditions that exist in the present, in order to make them into new possibilities" (Smith 2015: 81–82). We can outline that cooperative housing is a transformative praxis by those who are not content with their current situation or, even stronger, with their anticipated future. They act in a time of a perceived crisis of the increasingly problematized market-orientated economy and find a way to become others: Co-owners of commonly owned space.

A conception of class as social position highlights the motifs of preserving one's privileged social status via financial security, unlimited and comfortable housing, and intensified social ties in the neighborhood. An understanding of class as immanent in social relations and in light of its transformative potentials highlights the political and ethical ambitions of the actors to change the housing economy as well as modalities, such as architecture, neighborhood communities or quarter livelihood. Going back to the empirical data, a clear analytical decision on either reproduction or transformation seems impossible. Joining and founding cooperatives present simultaneously an option to secure lifestyles of stability in a place where this seems impossible and a political move, a collectivizing project, maybe even a historical praxis in Smith's sense. It is often both, also dependent on the specific contexts to which the members are attached, as we can already see when comparing Flora's and Michael's narratives.

How does class help us to understand ethical subjectifications and processes of social creativity better? Smith's class concept shows similarities to David Graeber's (2008) notion of social creativity: Both are interested in conditions and contexts that open windows for practices that change sociocultural orders. The combination of an interest in the establishment of new social relations and institutional arrangements with the idea of a class struggle that lies at the core of practices of change seems fruitful here. Social creativity in ethical framing intertwines with class as praxis and positionality.

The rather idealized image of middle class in terms of self-reflected and value-committed and voluntaristic urban citizens constitutes a basis for ethical subjectification processes. I do not assume that (somehow defined) members of the urban middle class tend to articulate problems and ideals generally in ethical terms. In urban-ethical perspectives though, some of the characteristics associated with being middle class in

historical and national contexts connect to the articulation of political matters in ethical terms. People position themselves as good citizens who commit to certain ideas of a good life in the city for everyone, not just for their own sake. They establish ideas of a common good. The resources available to relatively privileged actors adds up to that point. Those who are dominant in the field of housing cooperatives in Munich have the resources to make themselves heard. That is also how they are easily accessible for us as researchers, who strengthen their position to some extent by researching their urban-ethical activities.

Looking at housing cooperatives through the lens of class instead of focusing on neighborhood relations, architectural materializations or group finding processes inside the houses opens up a perspective on potential political effects, even though (or better: because) they present models of self-help. These are quite large steps, from the microscopic view of interview material to thoughts about a class of people aiming at changing city life through a different concept of ownership. However, perhaps that is the challenge European Ethnologists should face from time to time. Studies on housing cooperatives are often focused either on the ideals and practices of the groups, whereas some support and celebrate the initiatives (Helfrich and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung 2012), or on social conflicts and hierarchies inside the communities and houses. These are interesting points for analysis, indeed. Nevertheless, in the light of the current housing situation in Munich (and elsewhere) and an increasing number of people suggesting and working on alternatives to marketization and financialization, the notion of class leads ethnographers to central aspects on a larger scale: Questions of inequality, conflict and change (Carrier 2015: 37–39) that need ethnographic clarifications:

Because capitalism changes rapidly, the specific forms that classes take in capitalist societies will vary markedly. They will vary over the course of time, as capitalism changes, and they will vary across space, as different places occupy different positions in the larger economic system. This fluidity means that careful ethnographic research is especially important for describing and understanding classes as they exist in the specific place and time of fieldwork (Carrier 2015: 32–33).

In this argument, I see the chances for microscopic ethnographies that can shed light on class praxis or positions in small-scale fields but can and should – to a certain point – generalize on a larger scale.

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Help Yourself, but Build the Right Thing:
A Collaborative Housing Project in Growing Berlin
Max Ott

Abstract

Collaborative housing can be understood as a self-initiated and collective planning approach, where members of the urban middle-class gain access to housing. In reference to an ongoing spatial transformation in Berlin since the city's reunification, it has been described and defined in many different ways: As a revival of participatory design and its enacting qualities; as a contribution to an inclusive architecture based on the ideal of communality; as the outcome of a normative call for self-responsibility; and as a driver of gentrification processes. Against this backdrop, I argue that the ethics of collaborative urban dwelling are gaining a double meaning. Co-housing architecture is, on the one hand, informed by its members' ideals of how to live in the city and their attempts to give them shape. On the other hand, ethics should be considered as both a discursive resource to legitimize a particular interest and a mode of negotiating appropriations of urban space. The article illustrates this by using the example of a co-housing project which is currently under construction. It aims to show how this "architecture in the making" is shaped by ideas of communality and diversity and draws on theories of social creativity to point out how a participatory planning process and a concrete architectural structure enable and stabilize notions of becoming a "diverse community".

Co-housing in the making

I meet Jenny outside a bar where the water of the Landwehrkanal separates the Berlin districts of Kreuzberg and Neukölln. Jenny, who is in her mid-forties and works self-employed as a visual designer with a focus on books and magazines, arrives by bike. She has her studio nearby in a former factory building at Köpenicker Straße – a place once highly industrialized before the "Berlin Wall" had transformed it into an inner-city periphery. Nowadays it is exactly this area that has become a "center of attraction". It not only provides still affordable spaces for people like Jenny, working in the so-called creative industries, but the specific atmosphere of a culturally diverse, multifaceted, dense and fragmented urban area is also appealing to new residents and

visitors from abroad. The area around the Landwehrkanal and Kottbusser Damm is packed on a warm Friday evening in August like this.

I got to know Jenny at a construction site in Kreuzberg's Südliche Friedrichstadt neighborhood more than one year previously. Here, on the opposite side of the Jewish Museum, a former flower market is in the process of being converted into a mixed-use area. Once completed, a spatial fabric created by three large-scale multistory buildings will be the result of a participatory planning process that had been initiated by a network of stakeholders in the neighborhood at the end of the 2000s. They wanted to prevent the Berlin state from selling the property at the highest possible price, proposed an alternative approach and were able to convince the city government. Not the highest bid but only the projects that handed in the "best concept" were able to purchase property on the former market area. The invitation to bid had asked for propositions based not only on a mixture of different functions, a variety of housing typologies, and affordable spaces for artists and creatives, but also of social infrastructure in response to a neighborhood with a high unemployment rate. One initiator of this "concept procedure" explains its desired outcome: A real estate economy based on the expectation of financial profits and without awareness of the needs of the neighborhood should not build here, but people who are interested in a long-term development of an area with which they identify, as Kreuzberg is already or will soon become their everyday home.[1]

I participated in a design workshop in May 2015. It had caught my interest as someone doing research on self-initiated architecture and as an architect because it provided the possibility to collectively construct a small temporary building between a park and the construction site of the former flower market. This ephemeral architecture materializes discussions between the district's government and the initiators of the "concept procedure" concerning a "best concept" practice. It should serve as a spatial interface during the construction period where residents of Südliche Friedrichstadt and their soon-to-be neighbors could meet, talk and get to know each other better. The three projects winning the competition are not only contributing financially to the operation of this building. The workshop itself had already been meant as a technique of actively creating new neighborhood relations by a hands-on engagement of both people who are living and working in the area and the future residents. About 40 people were taking part – children from an adjacent school, employees from a kindergarten, an initiative working with teenagers in the neighborhood, journalists from the leftist newspaper taz as well as architects and members from the building projects. Among the latter was

1   Interview with FS (September 29, 2015).

also Jenny. She will move into the building of the collaborative housing initiative IBeB[2] when it is finished in autumn 2017.

Now, as we are sitting next to the Landwehrkanal, Jenny and I speak only a little about the original reason for our appointment, which is an upcoming summer party at the construction site at the end of September. Instead, Jenny tells me about *IBeB*'s architecture. Only a couple of days ago, the building had its topping out ceremony and the members of the co-housing project are now getting an increasingly precise impression of its three-dimensional structure, as they are able to walk through the whole concrete framing of their future home. This is exactly the moment when her anticipation of moving into a new place is once again rising notably, Jenny says. She grabs a pen and a paper and starts to sketch while taking me on a both virtual and fragmented sightseeing tour through a building in the making. Jenny is looking forward most of all to a large collective roof terrace. She imagines that it could work like a courtyard, where the residents would meet and sit together, but also as a quiet and hidden place where she could practice Qi Gong at sunrise. Jenny believes that from what she calls a "social-scientific" perspective, the roof of the building will be the most interesting part of the house: It will not only provide space for the terrace, but also for a range of smaller studio apartments, and Jenny says that she is already curious how the thresholds between semipublic spaces and private housing units will function in the near future. In her view, it is important that the small room adjoining the terrace space will also become communal and not a private apartment – this would potentially raise conflicts resulting from a direct proximity of different needs. But it is not sure yet whether enough members of the co-housing initiative are willing to finance the construction and maintenance costs of this room or whether it has to be privatized for exactly that reason.

While Jenny is drawing the floor plan of the roof level, I have the opportunity to watch someone who is used to working with quick sketches to visualize thoughts and ideas. However, with a closer look at the precise proportions of her sketches and the fine balance between abstraction and detail in her illustration of *IBeB*'s building, I also get the feeling that Jenny must have already seen a lot of visual representations of this co-housing architecture and that she might have taken part in many meetings concerning the planning process of the project. Indeed, Jenny is one of the first members of *IBeB*. She began to take part *about* three years ago and still remembers the initial steps from a first predesign of the building to an increasingly detailed construction documentation, a process that also sometimes involved controversial discussions about money and rising costs. Jenny believes that about 50 percent of the members of the

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2 The abbreviation "IBeB" stands for *"Integratives Bauprojekt am ehemaligen Blumengroßmarkt"*, which means "inclusive building project at the former flower market".

co-housing initiative would reach their "absolute limit" by investing their own money in the design, planning and construction of their future residency. She herself finances her apartment and a studio space with a bank loan that is secured by her parents' capital, who – a couple of years ago – sold their house to move into a smaller apartment in Berlin. It was also her parents, she says, who had been asking her for several years to think about gaining home ownership, an idea she never really felt comfortable with. An individual condominium in an already existing building did not seem to be simultaneously affordable and fitting her needs. Her understanding of co-housing projects had always been that of small groups of about 15 people, where everyone knows each other from the very beginning and is probably about the same age. This is not what she wants. Only when her friend Anne – a photographer – told her about the co-housing initiative *IBeB* did she begin to change her mind: It was the particular size of the housing project and the large group of more than 100 members that interested her. On the one hand, this promised a certain degree of anonymity, which is, in Jenny's view, an important quality of living in an urban environment. On the other hand, she saw a higher probability to get to know people who might be different from herself, something that also plays a significant role for her when she thinks about how she actually wants to dwell. So far, her expectations did not remain unfulfilled: There are people of different ages in the group – older ones, who would often, as Jenny thinks, very consciously decide to spend the last stages of their lives in a community; a lot of families with young children, sometimes forming a group of its own; and people of her own age who also work creatively by profession. Some of the people Jenny now knows, some of them she does not, and some were friends before. But for her, one thing is sure: She would not have got to know a person like Georg, a social worker and about 15 years older than herself, if she had not joined the co-housing initiative *IBeB*.

(Self-)Responsible neighbors

Jenny is one member of a co-housing initiative in contemporary Berlin. Through her words and sketches, I could get a first insight into a specific project in the making, learn something about how she relates to it and about some of her expectations and wishes regarding living in a new urban home. But how can recent collaborative housing in Berlin and its stakeholders be described from a more general perspective? There are different answers to this question beyond the very basic definition that co-housing means a planning approach where several individuals form a group to gain access to housing. Without doubt, co-housing initiatives found their spatial preconditions in Berlin's division by this infamous "architecture" (Koolhaas 1995) of the "Berlin Wall", a period that created huge inner-city peripheries, badly connected and not very attractive for a private real estate investment without the support of broader state funding

(Bodenschatz and Polinna 2010). Even more than a decade after the city's reunification, former border territories in districts such as Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain or Kreuzberg were still shaped by empty plots, urban voids, abandoned industrial areas or gap sites. However, it was most of all the concurrence of this high number of potential construction sites with a specific economic condition that created the breeding ground for new self-initiated collaborative building projects in Berlin's "new" inner city areas. The financial situation of Berlin at the beginning of the 2000s was very critical and public spending reduced significantly (Colomb 2012; Krätke 2013). The city's population did not grow, in fact, it rather seemed likely to shrink. Nobody was speaking about a "housing question" and rents in various inner-city districts and property prices were still low (Holm 2014). Looking back at this period, different architects tell similar stories: Their order situation was bad, but there was enough space and time for design experiments with relatively little financial risk. If someone was interested in a plot of land, long-term reservations without paying much were often possible. The challenge was most of all to find people who were interested in collectively financing an architectural project (Köhl 2011). This particular situation seemed to trigger a specific form of creativity and entrepreneurship. As one architect who participates in the conversion of the former flower market in Südliche Friedrichstadt explains: "Nobody gave us work to do. So we just started to initiate and organize our own projects and became at once architects, developers and sometimes even clients."[3]

From this first perspective, many co-housing initiatives in Berlin can be seen as both a pragmatic approach to gain property ownership and a practice of self-help by, at times, almost unoccupied architects. Furthermore, it is exactly within this profession that a discourse about the possibility of urban-spatial innovations resulting from collaborative and participatory planning is established. The German *Journal for Architecture and Urban Design Arch+* published two articles in the middle of the 2000s which focused on co-housing and contextualized it with changing paradigms of urban planning and modes of urban governance.

Günther Uhlig, both theorist and veteran of self-organized planning, considers the private initiative of co-housing groups to be an example of "social urban design" (Uhlig 2006). For him, collaborative architecture indicates a planning paradigm that has overcome the regulatory logic of the Fordist welfare system with its "top down" approach to the distribution of spatial infrastructure, such as urban housing. Uhlig refers to Michel Foucault's notion of a "neoliberal governmentality", a rationality that draws on peoples' ability to think and act as self-reliant subjects in project-oriented and entrepreneurial ways (Foucault 2008), which shapes contemporary techniques of urban governance. Uhlig aims to show why co-housing initiatives might provide chances for a

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3   Interview with BJ (September 10, 2015).

more inclusive urban spatial development, as they could use exactly those spaces for negotiation that a "mobilization towards self-initiative" (Uhlig 2006: 100) opens up. On the one hand, he identifies a "revival of participatory planning": Co-housing projects would show how the once passive objects of planning processes could become active subjects by gaining a specific expertise in modes of "rational calculating and acting" that comply with their "ethical ambitions and care for emotive values" (Uhlig 2006: 101). In contrast to their predecessors in the 1970s and 1980s, who were still struggling with the opposing political rationality of "administered subjects" (Uhlig 2006: 101), the participants in contemporary self-initiated planning processes would now increasingly interact with city administrations which were willing to cooperate and even learn from "bottom up" initiatives. On the other hand, Uhlig underlines the specific contribution of many co-housing architectures to a mixed, diverse and integrating urban environment which is no longer based on the modernist paradigm of zoning and functional segregation. Here, the combination of different functions would not only meet the requirements of those who do not see "work (as) the enemy of leisure" (Uhlig 2006: 100). Moreover, it would be carried out by people who care about their neighborhood, "offer service facilities, open up spaces for communication" (Uhlig 2006: 103), invest in the surrounding public infrastructures of their own building and, therefore, increase the livability especially in neglected city areas.

Jesko Fezer and Mathias Heyden investigate self-initiated and participatory architecture from a perspective that is both academic and based on practical experiences (Fezer and Heyden 2007b; Heyden 2008; ifau and Fezer 2011). They also identify qualities that would result from self-determined and community-oriented processes of spatial design, planning and appropriation. At the same time and in contrast to Uhlig, they question the techniques of neoliberal urban governance and a certain exclusiveness of co-housing projects much more (Fezer and Heyden 2007a). The authors focus on Berlin and relate co-housing initiatives to the governmental logic "of" and the city's marketing "as" a Creative City. From this perspective, this "cultural-economic self-organization" would present a "privileged option" (Fezer and Heyden 2007a: 92) for Berlin's government to highlight a kind of collective creativity and, at the same time, shift responsibilities in times of austerity politics, such as the privatization of communal properties and the exit from the subsidization system of social housing (Colomb 2012: 223–226). Fezer and Heyden emphasize that this form of governance does not only permit or promote "self-reliant reasoning and acting" – in fact it "calls for it" (Fezer and Heyden 2007a: 93). Thus, they point to the significance of "do it yourself" for the city's planning administration (Ring and SenStadt 2013; SenStadt 2007, 2011) that makes this practice so ambivalent: In a city that is marketed as creative, "do it yourself" might be, simultaneously, an ethical value and a normative expectation. Therefore, Fezer and Heyden address the question of who can participate and who cannot. They state that

the lack of "economical" as well as "cultural capital" would still be a limiting factor for participation (Fezer and Heyden 2007a: 93) and that it would need more supporting strategies to make self-initiated architectural projects accessible for a diversity of people and, hence, lay the foundations for a real "social urban design" (Fezer and Heyden 2007a: 95).

While Günther Uhlig believes strongly in the enacting power of collaborative and participatory planning when he describes co-housing initiatives as contributing to a more inclusive urban spatial development that might enable a flow of social capital even on the bigger scale of urban neighborhoods (2006: 104f.) and when he gets something positive out of "neoliberal governmentality", Jesko Fezer and Mathias Heyden take up a more ambivalent position that points out the chances but also the specific risks and limits whenever ideals of a politically implemented model of creative self-responsibility and the "bottom-up" processes of an appropriation of urban spaces intertwine. However, there is yet another perspective on co-housing initiatives and here they do not seem to support inclusive, diverse and mixed neighborhoods but, on the contrary, to threaten their existence.

In the summer of 2010, a co-housing initiative in the former border territory of East Berlin's district Alt-Treptow awarded itself a "gentrification certificate", claiming explicitly that their project does not contribute to such processes of valorization and segregation in the particular area. The certificate states that a newly constructed building would not harm or replace any local residents, instead, it would improve the living conditions in the neighborhood by transforming a once run-down empty lot in a lively place with new green spaces. The new residents would be "new community members", willing to integrate themselves into the existent neighborhood and open to discussing different points of view on their project as long as their own way of living would be accepted: "We are not big earners and not the ones who intentionally gentrify a given social environment" (BAWAMM GmbH 2010). This announcement, made visible on the construction site of the project, produced harsh reactions from both activist and academic positions. The arguments of a network of radical leftist groups point in the direction of what has been called in political theory and critical urban studies a "postpolitical condition" (Mouffe 2005, 2017; Swyngedouw 2007): No matter if a "mostly academic middle-class" was referring to the ethics of community as essentials for a "good dwelling in the city" and was reasoning about how their participatory projects would be oriented towards "common good" and not speculation and individual financial profit – it would, nonetheless, just have its own good in mind. In fact, members of co-housing groups would often just claim the existence of universal values and an unquestionable "common" interest and, simultaneously, reject any substantial critique against their privatizing access to urban space by calling opposing arguments just an expression of "particular interests". They would, therefore, deny that nearly every interest is

particular and, thus, obscure both the structural antagonisms in society that define "the political" (Mouffe 2005) and their own role as privileged "small investors for exclusive private property" (*Mietenstopp* 2009) who act within the logic of a market-based, competitive political economy. Urban sociologist Andrej Holm eventually argues similarly and replies to the "gentrification certificate" by suggesting that co-housing initiatives are more probably a "gentrification guarantee": No matter whether they like it or not, with their exclusive property rights and their cultural capital, they would always valorize a neighborhood and raise its attraction for a speculative real estate economy (Holm 2010a).

This debate about co-housing and its influence on social segregation does more than just give an example of the increasing significance of the topic "gentrification" in a city that is, in contrast to the early 2000s, under enormous pressure of growth (Helbrecht 2016; Holm 2010b, 2013). It also shows how a contestation of understandings of self-responsible and responsible acting as well as its implications begins to influence the mindset of urban middle-class dwellers. Reflecting shifting relations between gentrification and "new middle classes", sociologist Susanne Frank observes a specific "unease" (Frank 2013, 2017):[4] On the one hand, more of its members would start to reflect their role as privileged "drivers" of gentrification, who contribute to the transformation of a residential environment according to their own demands (e.g. in the field of education) and their consumer behavior (Frank 2013: 41). On the other hand, they would mostly feel uncomfortable with the consequences of social segregation, as this contradicts their ideal of living in mixed neighborhoods that consist of "residents from different countries, a diversity of lifestyles and manifold cultural attractions" (Frank 2013: 41). In addition to that, they would see themselves as potentially threatened by urban transformation processes and far-reaching neoliberal policies. Both the "commodification" of housing on an international scale with its effect of rising rents and accommodation costs in prospering cities and the privatization of the German pension system helped create – as urban geographer Susanne Heeg argues – a mode of "responsibilization" (Heeg 2013): Members of the urban middle class would now feel more or less forced to purchase private property on the housing market as a sustainable economic coverage for their own future.

A contradictory situation like this exemplifies what recent social and cultural anthropological studies on ethics and neoliberalism call "competing responsibilities" (Trnka and Trundle 2014, 2017): Being a member of a co-housing project in contemporary

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4   Frank defines the "new" middle classes as a heterogeneous group emerging from the structural transformation from an industrial to a service society. Its members often work in the cultural or creative industries and, most of all, pursue a way of life that is oriented towards living in inner-city areas and involves the rising significance of urban dwelling as a distinctive marker for identity conceptions (Frank 2017: 88 f.).

Berlin might mean that you are both conceptualized and understand yourself in some way as a self-reliant, community-oriented subject who feels responsible for a creative and collaborative "SelfMade City" (Ring and SenStadt 2013) and contributes to new "social" housing (Uhlig 2006), rather "affordable" than speculative (Dömer, Drexler, and Schultz-Granberg 2016). It might also mean that you are troubled about your family's future in an urban neighborhood with rapidly rising rents and take care of this by investing in home ownership, maybe with the help of your caring parents. Or it means that you will discover graffiti one day on the facade of the building you have just moved in and you will find yourself blamed for being responsible for the replacement of poorer residents in the neighborhood.

Shaping ethics of urban dwelling

Against this backdrop, it might not be a surprise when an appropriation of spatial resources by co-housing initiatives is increasingly accompanied by ways of reasoning in which "urban ethics" have a crucial and double meaning. On the one hand, co-housing is always informed by its members' ideals of how to live in the city and their attempts to give them shape, and Jenny's statements at the beginning of this article indicate this. As outlined on the preceding pages, the participants in such projects might comprehend their understanding of a particular urban life as something that is both threatened and, simultaneously, criticized in light of the contradictions of urban change. It is in this context that they develop their architectural projects and against this backdrop that their "ethics of dwelling" (Zigon 2014) are explicitly argued. This means, on the other hand, and not at last because of a potential intertwining of an "activating" urban governance, "self-responsible" subjects and the practice of "self-initiated" design, that ethics also gain a strategic dimension. They become a discursive resource to help legitimize a particular interest whenever questions of responsibility are in focus. They should be considered as a mode of negotiating the conditions and the outcome of spatial transformation.

This becomes visible on the construction site on the former flower market in Südliche Friedrichstadt in late September 2016, a couple of weeks after my appointment with Jenny. When Monika Hermann, district mayor of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, speaks the opening words of the summer party that the projects winning the competition for the "best concept" procedure have organized, she praises an urban development where "content" and not "money" would be central. She also reminds the members of the co-housing initiatives on-site that they are the lucky ones who have the resources to finance and build their own home. Therefore, they should feel obliged to preserve a mixed neighborhood and support its further existence actively. As one of these projects, Jenny's initiative *IBeB* introduces itself to the neighborhood that day by organizing a

crafting workshop for kids where they can build their "houses of dreams" and a mapping project for the grown-ups that asks how residents in the area perceive urban space. Next to these activities, the initiative has placed a bulletin board where the members have collected their motivations, objectives and wishes in an overall picture. They address the combination of autonomy and communality as an important matter, while looking for both possibilities for collaborative creation and more independence from the volatile housing market. They wish for a mixed inner-city living environment combined with an overcoming of anonymity. The group points to its own diversity in terms of age, profession and nationality. Some comments express their desire to stay in Kreuzberg. They emphasize affection to the particular area as a "diverse" neighborhood that has "normal structures" and not "trendy or posh".

Of course, it was not *IBeB*'s willingness to organize parties which allowed the co-housing initiative to acquire and develop land on the former market area. It was their concept for the large building that is currently under construction. What, then, are its principles and how is it shaped in a participatory planning process? Which spatial structure does a co-housing group, claiming communality and autonomy, urban mixture and diversity to be their values of living in the city, design? How is it "attuned" (Zigon 2014: 760) to such aspirations? David, one of the initiators of the project, remembers the formation of a core group who bought the property in 2013.[5] First of all, the question of how to finance the whole project had to be answered. It is easy to say: "concept outbids cash" when a strategy is presented that will overcome the usual procedure of favoring only the highest financial bid.[6] But that does not mean that *IBeB*'s building project is not about money: Overall, it costs more than 20 million Euro.[7] When the announcement of a concept-based procedure of developing the former flower market area was made public, there were two local actors responding, David explains. He is an active member of a small housing cooperative and has been living "around the corner" in one of the cooperative's buildings for 20 years. Together with two architectural offices, which are then just about to finish a co-housing project named *R50* in the neighborhood, David has already started a brainstorming process for a bigger project when the invitation to bid for property is launched in 2011. At this particular time, the team also benefits from an already existing network: There are many people who could not get apartments in *R50*, therefore, the cooperative and the architects are quickly

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5   Interview with David (October 19, 2015).

6   "Concept outbids cash" is the slogan that present the urban development of the former flower market public events (http://makecity.berlin/10630/concept-outbids-cash/?lang=en. Accessed August 31, 2017).

7   Participant observation of *IBeB*'s 44th general meeting. (Field note from September 22, 2016.)

able to round up about 25 interested members willing to invest money and time in the project.

The concept winning the competition that then creates the basis of IBeB's further planning process provides a functional mixture of different housing typologies, communal spaces, artist's studios and commercial units. However, when I ask David what he thinks is exceptional about the project, at first, he does not discuss this combination of different uses. Neither does he mention the particular "bigness" of the building, which is five-stories high, ninety-five meters long and twenty-three meters deep, creates space for about 150 residents and, thus, inspires one of IBeB's architects to call it a "city within the city".[8] Instead, David points out the emergence of a "social process" between the future inhabitants and its "incredible complexity". It would be "very special" to have a co-housing project that integrates both people who will gain privately owned apartments and members of a housing cooperative who will live in rented accommodations once the building is finished. Not to mention the third group of participants: a non-profit organization that will provide shared apartments for blind people. The group did not only constantly grow during the many meetings and discussions. In David's recollection, its members also "got to know each other better, learned to talk to each other, to make decisions, to respect each other and to stand controversies" when, for example, the design changed or the project costs increased. This – as he calls it – practice of becoming a group would have also been supported by a decisive element that the initiators of IBeB conceived, the concept of "solidary cross-financing": The future apartment owners pay 310 Euro more per square meter and, thus, guarantee a fixed rent limit of approximately 9.50 Euro per square meter for the apartments of their cooperative housemates. In David's eyes, this has positive qualities and effects that interrelate. It allows the integration of "relatively affordable" apartments in a co-housing project and provides a "different value" in an area with rising property prices. As the cooperative's share cannot be sold privately and is withdrawn from the speculative real estate market, a "social mix in the city, consisting of people who can pay more and those with less money" would be sustained. This was the main reason why the Berlin state decided to sell its property to the co-housing initiative for a preferential price below market value. And this agreement again was crucial for the willingness among the many members of the group not to question the system of cross-financing, David assumes. It would be all the more reasonable for the future home owners in the initiative to support the cooperative financially as they know they were only able to get access to that form of inner-city co-housing because of an institutional arrangement that is based on ideas of urban mixture and reciprocal help and responsibility.

8   Interview with TH and SH (September 24, 2015).

The architects developed a complex spatial structure of different typologies for the co-housing initiative until the beginning of the construction work in September 2015. The participatory process is organized in monthly meetings with the members of the group and shaped by various steps of adjusting, remodeling and determining floor plans and building standards. The outcome is a design that combines not less than 30 different types of floor plans to 66 apartments, 21 studios or commercial units and 2 communal spaces. The apartments vary in size between 24 and 160 square meters and have between one and six rooms. There are small studio flats, different maisonettes and family apartments extending from one facade to the other.

On the afternoon of the summer party in September 2016, I walk through the building which results from this volumetric composition of a diversity of formats for dwelling. I accompany Jenny, Emma and Tom, who want to show each other their future apartments and wish to have a look at the roof terrace. The installation of the first windows has just begun in the past few weeks and the insulation has not yet been attached to the building. It consists, for the most part, only of its primary material – bare concrete floors, ceilings and walls. At first, we visit Tom and Emma's apartments at the western end of the house. In Tom's apartment, which is so far only a single space, structured by just one load-bearing pillar, the three of them start a conversation about different possibilities of organizing the apartment with partition walls and whether it would be better to plaster the walls or to keep the concrete surface visible, as is Tom's intention. As we enter Emma's apartment on the fourth floor, where a ceiling-high window provides a great view over the surrounding neighborhood, Jenny smiles, pretends a sigh and asks, why is it not her who is going to live in this flat. Emma plans to build in a gallery later to gain additional space in her studio, an option which the ceiling height of 3.60 meters will allow. Emma's apartment is on the same level as the collective roof terrace on the opposite side of the house. A pathway stretches from the western staircase to the terrace, covering almost the whole long axis of the building. We walk in the open air now and pass a cubic arrangement of small studio apartments and concrete railings of small courtyards. These square courtyards reach from here to the first floor and provide daylight on different levels in the depth of the building for circulation spaces and the inner zones of the apartments. When we have reached the terrace, Jenny, Emma and Tom start talking about how to use this space once they have moved in. Jenny repeats her idea of practicing Qi Gong and an open-air cinema or playing squash are added to their virtual list of possible future activities. All agree, half joking, on one particular quality: In the evening, everyone can stay on the terrace as long as he or she wants, as it is never far away from home.

Jenny and I leave the roof and reach the last stop of our tour as we arrive at her studio apartment on the first floor. It is located at an inner corridor that provides access to the units on this level of the building and – by several open staircases – to eight

apartments on the second floor. The architects hope that not only the roof terrace, but also the complete circulation of the house and, therefore, this corridor will gain a communal character once the new inhabitants have started to physically appropriate their new homes. The corridor could serve as a place of a short encounter when residents pass it on the way to their apartments.[9] The courtyards, which I spotted on the roof level, will contribute to this idea. They not only bring daylight down to the inner corridor. They also create a remarkable spatial quality, because it is possible to have a look at the sky from the very inside of the building. While we are standing in Jenny's apartment, I can see from a window next to her entrance door, which is facing another window on the opposite side of the courtyard, that they also allow insights from one apartment into another. Jenny explains that just recently, when this became really visible for the first time after the concrete framing of the building had been finished, some people in the co-housing initiative started to complain about this immediate materialization of the idea of proximity. Jenny seems to be more relaxed: "Time will tell us how this works out", she says and adds that she likes this connection to the corridor and actually looks forward to waving at her friend and future neighbor Anne while standing at the window. She is not sure yet when she will connect her apartment with her subjacent small studio space on the ground floor level by opening a designated part of the floor and integrating a single-flight staircase. Neither when she will start to use this studio as a working space. First of all, she wants to get used to living in her new home. Later on, and "also depending on my financial situation", she will decide whether to give up her rented studio at Köpenickerstraße, whether to live or to work in the new studio space or whether to let it on a lease for a time and to keep "being at home" and "being at work" more strongly separated.

Diverse community: Assembled future prospects

Based on his studies on moral values, the cultural anthropologist David Graeber developed a theory of "social creativity". He focuses on processes of creating quasi-contractual arrangements and highlights the significance of a tangible materialization of new social relationships (Graeber 2001, 2005). Graeber argues that this materialization would be the result of collective efforts of people to come to an agreement on which values they share (2005: 411). At the same time, he is convinced of a mutual relatedness between such an objectification and the subjects who bring it into the world: "Our actions and creations do have power over us. This is simply true" (Graeber 2005: 431). Another point is of particular interest to Graeber. He states that physical creations gain their value and meaning most of all while being created. They become "gods in the

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9   Interview with TH and SH (September 24, 2015).

process of creation" (Graeber 2005: 431), in a transformative situation that stimulates a power of imagination among its participants (Graeber 2005: 432). Bruno Latour and Albena Yaneva address the idea of a reciprocal and processual relationship between materiality and sociality regarding architectural design (Latour and Yaneva 2008). They argue that it would be short-sighted to consider a building in the making as "a static object" – in fact it should be understood as "a moving project" (Latour and Yaneva 2008: 80). It would both be shaped in a continuous process by shared ideas and concepts, divergent interests, unforeseen changes, conflicts or contradictions (Latour and Yaneva 2008: 81 f.) and, at the same time, shape wishes, expectations and imaginations of what it can possibly become and what it might enable among those who are producing it (Latour and Yaneva 2008: 84). Latour and Yaneva hence suggest leaving behind an overly strict "divide between the 'subjective' and 'objective' dimensions" (Latour and Yaneva 2008: 85) in favor of investigating them as assembled.

How can theories of "social creativity" and "a moving project" help to better understand the particular co-housing architecture "in the making" that is the subject of this article? Which reflections on the empirical material, thoughts and observations that I have presented on the previous pages do they enable?

If we take into consideration the description of the model of "solidary cross-financing" that helped to form a group of different participants and come to an arrangement with the Berlin state that has the quality of a contract, we can certainly understand *IBeB*'s building as the physical result of a process of social creativity. If we are aware of how the functional mix and the combination of diverse typologies of apartments with collective spaces for interaction and encounter define concrete architectural qualities, it is also arguable to understand them as a materialization of shared ideas of autonomy, diversity and communality. However, on these last pages, I will approach the co-housing project from the other angle that Graeber, Latour and Yaneva's reflections emphasize. I will try to illustrate how the participatory design process and the building itself influence an idea of becoming what I propose to call a "diverse community" that offers both stability and the possibility of change. I consider this to be notable, especially in the light of depictions and critiques of co-housing and the values, privileges and "unease" of "new middle classes" (Frank 2013, 2017), which I introduced in the second chapter of my article.

When David speaks about the combination of rented and individually owned apartments in *IBeB*'s building, he mentions that a rent of 9.50 Euro per square meter would be "quite expensive" and only "relatively affordable". He is aware of the fact that the members of the co-housing initiative share a certain strength in terms of economic capital. When he compares cooperative housing to private ownership, he states that nobody could prevent the future "owners" from selling their apartment later and pursuing other interests apart from collaborative housing. But whenever he refers to the

process of planning the building, when he speaks about it as a "practice" of learning to respect each other and to find consensus, he is convinced that this very process can contribute to secure a "long term house community." Here, on the one hand, the cooperative board decided not to represent its members in the meetings but to encourage them to actively take part as a diversity of individuals in collective decision-making procedures and, therefore, to probably express and discuss different opinions, wishes and interests. On the other hand, an awareness of "who owns what […], who is with the cooperative and who is an owner" has dissolved over time: Every participant has learned that no one ordered "a single house as an individual client but an apartment in a much bigger context. Nobody could have fulfilled all desires, as everybody had to show consideration for the community." David is sure that the building could only be realized by a growing understanding of interdependency and a commitment to collaborate, which will sustain a sense for communality in the future.

While David's description of a community-building participatory process draws on ideas of "stability", Jenny's reflections on the concrete architecture involve a strong notion of "changeability" and the diverse opportunities that the building offers. Jenny is also not unconscious of a particular homogeneity within the co-housing group when she tells me that a majority of its members work in an academic context, in the creative industries, as architects, artists, photographers or designers. However, when she speaks about specific characteristics of the building, this depiction of proximity fades slightly into the background of her words and becomes just one element in her imaginations of collective dwelling. As she is describing the size of the building, she connects it with her expectations of a diverse group of participants, she highlights differences in age and lifestyle and she chooses Georg, a social worker in his early sixties, to illustrate what she means. Diversity is also in focus when we walk through the building, this time closely linked to its spatial structure, to the different ways of appropriation it offers and to the possibilities of influencing them according to changing needs and desires. In three different rooms, different options of adjustments and transformations, enabled by architectural qualities, are discussed. The collective terrace, unfinished and still "empty", opens up perspectives on various ways of using it, even when some of them seem quite unlikely, once the roof has also become a space of necessary privacy. Jenny connects *IBeB*'s architecture with an idea of living that allows one to combine working and dwelling or to keep those spheres separated, that provides space to be on her own and space to share with others, that allows one to combine anonymity, communality and intimacy. While she is standing in front of the window in her apartment, she is both glad to live close to a friend soon and not worried that neighbors she does not know well could look into her apartment while passing it.

Conclusion

In this article, I argued that the participatory design process of co-housing architecture at a former flower market in Berlin and its materialization should be understood in the context of an ambivalent situation where "responsible acting" is both claimed and contested and where ethics gain a double meaning. Based on this, I tried to illustrate how references to specific ideals of an urban life shape a particular building and how, as a "god in the process of creation", it is also the building itself which enables and stabilizes notions of diversity and community and provides a both concrete and imaginative space to fashion and refashion "self-other relations" (Moore 2011: 15). This again means – as I would suggest – that a bulletin board, like the one that *IBeB* presented to their future neighbors at the summer party in September 2016, is not just a simple strategy to pacify concerns about speculation and gentrification; it expresses a much more substantial conviction of building "the right thing".

To some extent, this might also help to comprehend better why whenever I observed members of the co-housing group confronted with the subject of "gentrification" or when I confronted them with that issue myself, they drew a strict and distinctive line, similar to the statement of the "gentrification guarantee" described in the second chapter. Their arguments always involved ideas of representing an honest and committed community of people who are interested in actively creating stable neighborly relationships and that this would define the very difference to both the private real estate economy as well as the system of subsidized housing.[10]

Nonetheless, this does not mean that imagining a "diverse community" does not go hand in hand with defining clear boundaries. Architecture does not enable everything just because it has enabling spatial qualities. Of course, a collective roof terrace is open for the residents of the building, their friends and maybe, now and then, for a researcher, but not for the wider public of Südliche Friedrichstadt. It might be valuable in many respects, but it also represents a distinction. This is also true for the ground floor level: A cheap chain store in the most prominent commercial unit would certainly reinforce the aspect of urban diversity in the building and probably create closer spatial proximity between people with different amounts of different sorts of capital, however, Jenny says that a *Starbucks* or *McDonalds* would be out of the question for the co-housing initiative: "We have a certain responsibility for this area."

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10 Interview with David (October 19, 2015); semi-structured interviews with Anne, Nora and Jenny (November 15, 2015) and with Anne (September 24, 2016); participant observation of two meetings between members of *IBeB* and residents from Südliche Friedrichstadt (February 25 and September 15, 2017).

Literature

The empirical material used in this article was collected through interviews, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. I refer to statements and observations made during a collaborative design workshop (May 16, 2015), an informational session concerning the urban development of the former flower market area (November 15, 2015), a meeting with Jenny (August 20, 2016), the summer party and a walk through *IBeB*'s building (September 24, 2016), and two meetings between members of *IBeB* and residents from Südliche Friedrichstadt in the temporary house next to the construction site (2015/2016. I use pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the persons quoted and initials for the architects whom I interviewed.

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Strategies for Achieving the Good Life:
A New Generation Becomes Summer Cottage Owners in Sweden
Susanna Rolfsdotter Eliasson

Abstract

Owning a leisure home is a phenomenon that goes back several generations among Swedes belonging to a span of social classes. This article looks at owning a leisure home in contemporary Sweden, focusing on a new generation of urban middle-class Swedes, between the ages of about 30 and 45, living in the cities of Stockholm and Gothenburg. How do individuals partaking in this study narrate their experiences of being owners of a leisure home? Informants voice thoughts on ownership, consumer society, environmental issues, the relationship between the city and the countryside, and life in an ever-changing urban setting. Hopes, dreams and fears of a new generation of urban middle-class Swedes surface through qualitative interviews about owning a leisure home.

Keywords: leisure home, narrative, middle class, generation, urban

Introduction

A close friend and her partner bought a small 1950s detached house two and a half hours by car from their home, a rented flat in central Gothenburg, in the autumn of 2015. The house in the southern Swedish province of Skåne was to be their summer cottage. They now travel there with their young daughter on many weekends and for longer stays during the summer holiday, Christmas and Easter. Owning a summer cottage is a phenomenon which goes back several generations among Swedes spanning different social classes. The aim of this article is to discuss and analyze this phenomenon, especially among the new generation of urban middle-class Swedes. What defining characteristics of their approach to owning a summer cottage can be understood as specific to their generation and socioeconomic status? The article looks at how participants in the study narrate their experiences of owning a summer cottage, emphasizing attitudes towards city life and strategies for coping with the increasingly difficult urban housing markets of Stockholm and Gothenburg. The project, called "A new generation of summer cottage owners", began in 2015 at the beginning of my PhD candidate position. My starting point was a general interest in the ownership of summer cottages in contemporary Sweden.

The tradition of owning summer cottages in Sweden

Owning a summer cottage, or *sommarstuga* in Swedish, is a practice that stretches back as far as the late 1800s. The first family-owned summer homes were built along the Swedish coastline by the wealthy bourgeoisie of the cities. They were splendid wooden buildings, resembling small mansions, with large windows facing the sea (Henchen-Ingvar 1928; Stackell 1974). During the 1920s and 30s, middle-class families also began building houses along the coast, albeit smaller and humbler. The age of functionalism and the fact that owning a summer home was no longer only possible for the very wealthy, caused many to opt for a simpler way of living, choosing to spend their holidays in a summer cottage. This new generation wanted to exhibit a more modern attitude. Hence the idea of the simpler life in the summer cottage was born (Löfgren 1999; Stackell 1974). The social policies of the Swedish Social Democratic Party of the time brought increased prosperity to the lower social classes and, thanks to the party's ideas about the need for workers to have recreational holidays in the countryside, working-class families also eventually had opportunities to build or rent a summer cottage (Pihl Atmer 1998). The Social Democratic reforms together with post World War II economics made the realization of the welfare state possible in the following decades (Larsson 1994). There was a general increase in the number of summer cottages built in Sweden after World War II, and after 1960, there was a real boom in summer cottage ownership. Bolstered by increasing incomes and the extension of the summer holiday to four weeks per year from 1964, more and more people wanted their own cottage in the countryside to escape to (Löfgren 1999). At the same time, urbanization intensified, leaving old fishermen's cottages and farmers' crofts available on the market (Gustavsson 1981; Lagerqvist 2011). For a generation of Swedes born in the 1930s and 40s, owning a summer cottage in addition to their suburban house could be regarded as a step up the social ladder. They would often build their own cottages and show them off proudly to friends and relatives. A summer cottage was a material manifestation of how far they had managed to get in life for many middle-class families from the 1960s onward. There are currently around 700,000 summer cottages in Sweden, with one out of four Swedes claiming to have access to one according to statistics. However, the possibility for a middle-class family with children living in the cities of Stockholm or Gothenburg to own both a house and a summer cottage is limited if not nonexistent in 2017. Both parents often need to be close to their jobs in the city and the only affordable option is to stay in their flat, which is sometimes owned, but often rented. At the same time, the desire to have a piece of the countryside to call one's own appears to live on. When it comes to owning a summer cottage, my informants' situation is certainly different from that of their parents' generation.

The new generation defined

The concept of "generation" is generally used to define and understand differences and similarities between individuals belonging to the same or different age groups. Using expressions such as "my generation" or "a new generation" can convey a lot of meaning. Sociologist Karl Mannheim (1952 [1923]) pointed out the importance of generation as a social category in addition to social class and culture (Pilcher 1994: 481). It has also been rightly pointed out that "far more stable is the perception of generations of computers than generations of humankind" (Nash 1978: 19). The participants in this study were born between 1971 and 1986, and I consider this of analytical importance for this research. Individuals who are born in a certain time and societal context will, in my opinion, inevitably share experiences to some extent (Gerholm 1993).

Approaching the new generation of summer cottage owners

The empirical material for this study was collected through qualitative interviews with participants, both in their urban homes and summer cottages. Additional material consists of observations in summer cottages, written texts on owning a summer cottage, such as magazines and real estate advertisements, as well as social media and television. It became clear early on in the project that participants in the study were negotiating and communicating identity positions in narratives about living in cities and owning summer cottages in the countryside. A theoretical interest in looking at what I call "narratives of identity" was born out of this realization. As previously mentioned, the participants in the study are owners of summer cottages between the ages of 30 and 45 (Rolfsdotter Eliasson, upcoming). This is an age when many Swedes with a middle-class background living in urban areas make important decisions about where and how to live. The areas of interest in my research are domestic living space, materiality and consumption in relation to generation and social class, specifically the middle-class, but also narrativity and identity construction. I use narrative analysis to identify "which" narratives about owning a summer cottage are constructed in the interview situation and "how" they are constructed. Researchers studying narrative usually define a narrative as a story, characterized by causality and related to a listener (Linde 1993; Riessman 2008). Furthermore, narrative has been identified as fundamental to human communication (Nylund Skog 2012: 19). It is often stated that individuals use narrative to understand their own experiences as well as those of others. "People make sense of their experiences, claim identities, interact with each other, and participate in cultural conversations through storytelling. Narrative is performed everywhere" (Langellier and Peterson 2004: 1). The concept of the "grand narrative" is used in the field of narrative research to describe a type of collective narrative that

Evelina and her family's summer cottage in the county of Halland.

helps to create meaning beyond an individual level. The individual often uses grand narratives about aspects of the world or society to situate her or his own experiences, as well as those of others, within a larger narrative discourse (Palmenfelt 2014: 16). My interest in narrative focuses less on the structure of the narrative than on what narratives do. What is the function and purpose of the narratives about owning a summer cottage that emerged in this study? What are they meant to communicate? I used the method of dialogical narrative analysis to analyze the meaning of the narratives produced during the interviews (Frank 2012). This theoretical approach provides tools for understanding how the participants in the study narrate their ownership of a summer cottage dialogically with me as a researcher, as well as with the grand narratives of contemporary society. The context in which the narrative is produced becomes central, as do the different factors that affect the narrative performed.

Stories don't fall from the sky (or emerge from the innermost "self"); they are composed and received in contexts – interactional, historical, institutional, and discursive – to name a few. Stories are social artefacts, telling us as much about society and culture as they do about a person or a group (Riessman 2008: 105).

American sociologist and narrative researcher Arthur W. Frank suggests viewing narration as a "dialogue of imaginations" since "stories are representations not so much of life as it is, but of life as it is imagined, with that imagination shaped by previous

stories" (2012: 50). Using dialogical narrative analysis has, furthermore, helped to identify the narratives of identity chosen by participants, to clarify and situate themselves and their ownership of a summer cottage in contemporary Swedish society. An important conclusion to draw from this is the fact that stories, however imagined, often have very real consequences for how people act.

Researching a middle-class phenomenon

Socioeconomic background is without doubt an important factor when it comes to considering who has the possibility to own a summer cottage. When discussing ownership of summer cottages in Sweden, the expression "middle-class phenomenon" often comes up. The meaning of the term "middle-class" can vary and is largely dependent on contextual assumptions. The term is often used casually in mainstream media, without more detailed definition, to describe a large and often diverse group of people. Social class was to a large extent under-communicated and perceived of as less important in late-modern Swedish public debate during the early 2000s (Wennerhag 2012). However, Swedish sociologist Lena Karlsson (2005) studied subjective class identification in Sweden and its impact on social attitudes and leisure activities. Karlsson's dissertation shows that most of the participants in her study considered Sweden a class society and were able to place themselves in the structure. An important conclusion, according to Karlsson, is that, despite what some critics of the idea of the class society claimed, class still mattered in Sweden, and the effects of class were as real and tangible as ever. It would certainly be problematic to use the concept of middle-class in a research context without questioning it further. Swedish ethnologist Magnus Mörk has pointed out that if researchers decide to take the term "middle-class" as a starting point, they can easily end up going in circles and only confirming what is already taken for granted (Mörk 1997). French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu took class analysis to an individual level with his term "class habitus," with habitus meaning the embodied form of class stipulation (1994: 251). He uses his theory to show how similar life stipulations or conditions for individuals lead to similar preferences, tastes and behaviors, and that habitus is the uniting and generating principle behind these practices. My informants would most certainly fit many of the criteria for being middle-class in contemporary Sweden. They also exhibit several examples of shared values and preferences in taste and behavior. Furthermore, American sociologist Erik Olin Wright has called the middle-class position "a contradictory class location", pointing out how, in some respects, middle-class people occupy an insecure position between high and low (1997: 19 ff). This insecure position and strategies for handling it become visible in relation to the participants in this study. In addition, I would also like to briefly consider Bruno Latour's performative definition of society, where the concept of class can be

understood as an effect, rather than an explanation, of human action (1998: 49). Class would then be performed in networks consisting of human and nonhuman actors. Understanding the term middle-class in this way would, in my opinion, highlight the procedural and unfixed character of social categories. At the same time, "the task of class analysis is not simply to understand class structure and its effects, but to understand the interconnections among all these elements and their consequences for other aspects of social life" (Wright 1997: 3).

The city dwellers

The question of why they wanted a summer cottage in the first place was put to all participants in the study. My informant Nina, an academic living in Stockholm, represents a common way of reasoning: "We live in a flat in the city; our kids are growing up in a rather tight space. So, it feels fantastic to be able to give them this opportunity, to be able to say: 'run as much as you can and want'. And for me too, to be able to work in a garden".

The initial research questions certainly dealt with my curiosity as to what drives urban middle-class Swedes in their thirties to follow the tradition of owning a summer cottage outside the city. At the outset, the problematic real estate market in the city was not considered a main explanatory factor for why the participants would consider buying summer cottages. However, the subject came up during one of the very first interviews. Another informant, Maria, an insurance administrator from Stockholm, had recently bought a summer cottage in the province of Dalarna together with her husband. Dalarna is located about two hours north of Stockholm by car. This is what she said during an interview in the one-bedroom flat she shares with her husband in Solna, near the center of Stockholm:

S: Would you consider moving there permanently?

M: I like living in Stockholm. Actually, most of all I'd like to live in a house in Stockholm, but we have looked. That's how it started, with us looking for a house in Stockholm, but we couldn't find anything that worked for us. [...] And with the prices being what they are, you just get so much more for your money in the countryside.

S: So, have you given up on the idea of buying a house closer to the city?

M: Mhm. Especially if you consider the prices. It's laughable. It just doesn't seem worth it; so yes, we've given up.

S: And how much did you pay for the summer cottage?

M: 560,000 [SEK] which was below the asking price, since we were the only ones who made an offer on the house.

S: No, you wouldn't get a house in the Stockholm area at that price.

M: (laughs) No, absolutely not, you could hardly get a flat. People can barely afford to move considering the capital gains tax. I think it's a real problem in Stockholm right now – that people feel stuck in their flats because they can't afford to move.

Maria went on to tell me how they wanted a garden, wanted to live a reasonable distance away from the center of town where they both work, and so on. For them, finding a home near the city that would meet these requirements proved impossible. In a way, this interview was the starting point of the realization that buying a summer cottage could actually be a way to achieve a way of life regarding housing that families desired and dreamed of realizing. This had turned out to be impossible for them in the city where they live and work. Owning a house in Stockholm was never an option for another informant, designer Maja, who lives with her husband Juan and their two small children. When asked whether the family had considered this, she explained:

We live in a rented flat in central Stockholm. We've been there seven years now. [...] We've tried to exchange it because we live in a reasonably new building and they tend to be expensive in Stockholm. But we haven't had any savings to put towards a flat or a house. And buying a house in Stockholm feels like … it's just not happening; it's too expensive. We started saving and then we felt like … this is what we want to do instead; so, we decided to put our savings towards the summer cottage and stay in our rental flat for now. Besides, we have a lease on the flat in Stockholm, so we're lucky.

Part of the reason that participants want to own a summer cottage is that it is the one dream that can become reality. For many, it also suits their lifestyle. They have jobs in the city and most of them enjoy what the city has to offer. Owning a summer cottage in the countryside means getting the best of both worlds, at a lower price. My informants appreciate the seemingly dualistic relationship between the city and the countryside. Some, like my informant Olle, who works in marketing in Stockholm, express a certain sense of aversion towards how the ever-growing capital is evolving:

Stockholm feels pretty tough now because there are so many people here and people move in and out, and they have sort of … the social contract has stopped working in a way. People have become tougher and less friendly and sort of … it feels more egoistic in a way. But when you get out in the countryside, it's the other way around.

Author Raymond Williams (2016 [1973]) links the existence of contrasting ideas about the countryside and the city to periods in time when societies have been facing changes and uncertainty about the future. These ideas appear relevant for my study on contemporary summer cottage ownership, at least to some extent. One of my informants,

Tomas, who is a teacher living in Gothenburg, even mentioned how knowing that he had a summer cottage in the countryside made him feel safe. It means that he and his family would have somewhere to escape to in the event of an outbreak of war or if, for some other reason, they would not be safe in the city. Tomas was, however, the only one of my informants to talk about his ownership of summer cottage in these terms. My informant Jesper talked about feeling a sense of alienation towards the city in this quote about Gothenburg:

I mean, Gothenburg, I hardly recognize it; it feels like a completely different city than in 2006. It's like, you're not worth anything here somehow, or I mean, there are processes going on here that you have no control over. Then it's nice to have somewhere …

Jesper and his fiancée Julia have bought an old crofter's cottage a couple of hours east of Gothenburg that they use as a summer house. In the city, they live in a studio flat near the center, where Julia works as a librarian. Jesper commutes all the way to Stockholm for his work as a magazine editor, so he needs to be close to the train station. For this couple, who do not have children, owning a summer cottage provides them with an escape from a city where they sometimes feel excluded and alienated. My informants all need to live in the city for their work and enjoy what the city has to offer. At the same time, the summer cottage provides a completely different experience for them. Idealizing life in the countryside is often considered closely connected to the process of urbanization (Bunce 1994). My informants conceive of life as safer, more traditional and easier to control in the countryside than in the ever-changing and fast-moving city.

Contradictory narratives of consumerism and ownership

One interesting way of analyzing what it is that make the participants stand out as belonging to a specific generation and being middle-class is to look at the contradictory narratives that emerge during the interviews. An interesting contradiction that I choose to understand as specific to this generation of summer cottage owners can be found in their attitude toward a consumer society. Most of the participants stress downsizing, consuming less and buying second-hand furniture. They are interested in growing their own food and want to contribute in various ways to a sustainable future. At the same time, they show an interest in consuming when it comes to interior decorating and home-making. In the following quote, Nina reflects on the question of how to make a domestic space feel like a home: "Home is when you've built up a relation to it over a period of time; you have memories and you maybe see a future in it. I think it's important to create meaning and I suppose you do that by buying things."

Nina points out that to create a feeling of home in a space where you live you have to buy things, even though it might make you take part in something you are trying to distance yourself from, namely a consumer society. An even greater contradiction is found in narratives about ownership. Tomas says: "It's a bit of a political question too, ownership … We're privileged; we're white, blonde people with university educations, and we have so much going for us already, and owning [a summer cottage] becomes another step up on that ladder somehow."

This sort of consciousness of their own position and narratives, where participants situate ownership in a wider context and relate it to things like migration and homelessness, keeps coming up in the interviews:

We are generally against this sort of capitalist ownership. Like, this is "my" house, "my" forest and so on. It's a strange thought, very ambivalent (Thomas).

I think it's a luxury to be able to have a summer cottage. This is something I think about a lot, now that there are so many people without a roof over their heads in Sweden. I'm thinking of refugees. […] There's also an environmental aspect and … it feels privileged in a way that I'm not completely comfortable with (Nina).

I think ownership is problematic. I think it's very disagreeable to take charge of an environment, in a way that can be understood as … well, egoistic. It's "mine" and nobody else's, and nobody is allowed to be there even when I'm away (Olle).

The quotes above all problematize owning a summer cottage, describing ownership as "a luxury", problematic, disagreeable and egoistic. About half of the informants also own their city flats, while the other half rent. Owning a summer cottage is problematized regarding its specific conditions though. In comparison to the city flat, it is empty for the larger part of the year. So, what is it, really, that participants wish to communicate through these narratives about their ambivalence towards ownership? Placing the summer cottage in its contemporary context, late modern Swedish society, means relating to the grand narratives of refugees, a consumer society and environmental issues. Using dialogical narrative analysis, this can be understood as participants trying to create order among ambivalent feelings about owning a summer cottage. Participants use narrative to create coherence in these stories reflecting their own life choices. The dialogical nature of the interview situation itself is also important. These stories are aimed at me, the researcher, and the informants all have their ideas concerning what my expectations on coherence in their stories might be (Fägerborg 1999). According to American sociologist and narrative researcher Charlotte Linde "the process of creating coherence in not a light matter; it is in fact a social obligation that

must be fulfilled in order for the participants to appear as competent members of their culture" (Linde 1993:16). Individuals in our western society are expected to be able to present themselves, or narrate themselves, in a coherent way, thereby making sense of themselves – regarding certain conventions – to other people. "Narrative is a significant resource for creating our internal, private sense of self and is all the more a major resource for conveying that self to and negotiating that self with others" (Linde 1993: 98). In this case, the other person is the ethnologist writing a thesis on owning a summer cottage. With me as the recipient, the slightly guilty, middle-class narrative about owning a summer cottage is constructed in the interview situation. A typical example of this is when Nina narrates her attempts at renting her summer cottage to migrants, something that proved impossible to do. The location of her summer cottage simply did not meet the criteria of the Swedish Migration Authorities *(Migrationsverket),* such as easily accessible public transportation and grocery shops. Nina told me how she was actually relieved by this, as she did not feel entirely comfortable with the idea of having strangers living in her house, an opinion that other participants also voiced in answer to the question of whether they would consider renting out their summer cottages. Owning a summer cottage is also defended and explained through meaning-making narratives about maintaining the buildings and putting time and effort into the place as a way of repaying the "debt" somehow. The informant Martina, a choreographer living in Gothenburg, uses a narrative of not just owning, but also giving something back: "Like we said before, owning a piece of land and a house, it's strange and at the same time it's like, well, we put 'our time' and 'effort' into this place. We're clearing it up right now. If we hadn't done that, the forest would slowly but surely have eaten its way into the house."

The words "time" and "effort" are key words in this narrative, explaining how the couple make sense of their own contradictory feelings about owning a summer cottage. Owning a car is another type of ownership that is also negotiated during the interviews. Individuals and young families living in Stockholm and Gothenburg often consider owning a car to be unnecessary. It often involves having to pay dearly for parking and, moreover, the trams in Gothenburg and the tube in Stockholm take you most places you need to go without the hassle of battling traffic. However, those who own a summer cottage miles away from the city often consider having a car a necessity. All but one of the participants in the study own a car. Many bought their car as a direct result of having purchased the summer cottage. Evelina, a teacher living in Gothenburg, told me when asked if she would consider moving to her summer cottage permanently:

No ... yes, well ... no. I like having people close by and I don't like having to be dependent on a car, which we are here. [...] We actually bought the car at the same time we bought the

cottage. As soon as we'd bought the cottage we realized "now we have to get a car!" [laughs] Before that, we used to borrow a car when we needed one. My parents have two cars and so does my husband's parents. But … no, I like taking the tram, being close to everything, because, I mean, to sit "here" in the winter … it's nice in the summer, but I wouldn't want to be here in the winter. It's cold and eerie.

Evelina expresses a certain hesitancy about owning a car in this quote. Though left unsaid in the quote, belonging to the urban middle-class in contemporary Sweden means considering cars almost a necessary evil of sorts. Your lifestyle as a city-dweller simply does not require driving cars and polluting the environment. It is considered by many who live in the city of Gothenburg, for instance, and often debated in the local media, that the city center should be a car-free zone. When you purchase a summer cottage, your requirements change, and my informants have found themselves depending on cars to get to and from their homes. Once again, the middle-class identity of the participants has shifted slightly. Being middle-class, in this case, can also be defined as having a certain amount of space around oneself; it means having possibilities, if not endless, to choose from. At the same time, my informants often seem eager to negotiate and explain their choices. The identity of being a car owner is not necessarily one that is desired by the participants in the study, but it turned out to be necessary to achieve the other dream, that of being a summer cottage owner. This shows how ownership of a summer cottage is constantly put in relation to other aspects of the middle-class position, in order for my informants to fulfil their desired identity as individuals.

Conclusion

The question explored in this article has been: What does belonging to the middle-class – in-between upper and lower class – mean for the participants in the study regarding summer cottage ownership and individual identity positions? Furthermore, how is this revealed in their narrated attitude towards, and understanding of, the countryside, the urban housing situation, consumer society, sustainability and so on? The informants have chosen to own summer cottages, but the experience is not without conflict. They voice contradictory feelings about ownership that the previous generation of summer cottage owners did not have, at least not to the same extent. Societal conditions have changed and being an urban, middle-class summer cottage owner in your thirties or early forties is not the same thing today as it was three decades ago. An understanding of the participants' cottage ownership can be found somewhere between the fact that they practice it and the way that they tell it or narrate it. Furthermore, it has to be constantly practiced, negotiated and narrated to be made sense of by and for the participants themselves. Perhaps, in a way, my informants, who belong to a

certain generation of urban middle-class summer cottage owners in late modern Sweden, can only be defined and characterized by their struggle to keep up a certain standard of life. Their parents belonged to a generation for whom owning a summer cottage was evidence that society had changed for the better. For my informants, summer cottage ownership can rather be understood as a sign of a transforming middle-class position. They desire what the generation before them – their parents, who in most cases also belonged to the middle-class – had. At the same time, it is a contemporary way of life that they dream of for themselves and their families and a lot of the time, it seems, an alternative one. The narratives of identity in this study show participants wanting to distance themselves from a consumer society and urban life as well as wanting to be part of it. The summer cottage sometimes simply provides an escape route and a well-needed change of environment. I see the continuing interest in the Swedish tradition of owning summer cottages among individuals born in the 1970s and 80s and living and working in Stockholm and Gothenburg partly as a sign of the changing conditions for the middle-class in these cities. In such cases, owning a summer cottage can be understood as a strategic practice. It is a way of achieving the good life from a class position that, more often than not, is insecure and of processual character. This is something that tends to be forgotten when the "middle-class phenomenon" of summer cottage ownership is discussed.

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Stattpark OLGA: An Alternative Way of Dwelling as a Critique of the (Rental) Housing Logic

Libuše Hannah Vepřek

Abstract

Wasteland in Munich is scarce in times of population growth and housing production. This implies fewer possibilities for urban open space and alternative ways of dwelling. *Stattpark OLGA* has been campaigning for public open spaces for several years. In contrast to common connotations of trailer parks as compromise solutions for people who lack economic means, the residents of *Stattpark OLGA* deliberately choose to live in mobile homes. This decision is part of their political project: The residents want to show an alternative way of dwelling. While many people pay high and increasing rents for small apartments, *Stattpark OLGA* demonstrates a possibility to ignore this capitalist logic while remaining a part of society. I understand the project as a form of "counter-conduct", a gentle form of resistance, as Michel Foucault described it. By focusing on the everyday life with the inhabitants' tactics of acceptance, this article discusses how trailer park dwelling is being realized by *Stattpark OLGA* in the context of the tight housing market and demonstrates how it is strongly intertwined with the city administration. According to Pierre Bourdieu, I argue that the inhabitants rely on their cultural and social capital to practice their chosen way of life as dwelling in wagons in Germany remains in legal limbo and unaccepted as an alternative to dwelling in fixed apartments or houses.

Keywords: trailer park, counter-conduct, tactics of acceptance, alternative ways of dwelling

Urban spaces in conflict

October 2015: the inhabitants of the Munich trailer park *Stattpark OLGA* together with 14 other local projects, such as the residential project *Ligsalz8* and the cultural center for unaccompanied minor refugees *Bellevue di Monaco*, take to the streets. They demonstrate against the sale of the city, misappropriation of living space and the high rents in Munich. They argue that due to these issues, not are only poor people marginalized and driven out of the city, but there is also no space left for noncommercial cultural and residential projects that would make the city more vivid and affordable.

The protestors demand affordable living space and urban public space "for all people"[1] (Stattpark OLGA 2015). The *Stattpark OLGA* dwellers' needs for a new site for their trailer park are the centerpiece of this so-called "convoy for public space". Campaigns like this demonstration are essential for the project's success in strengthening the position in the local discourse and receiving the necessary attention of the media and city municipality. Finally, in July 2016, the trailer park dwellers move to their new home in Sendling, one of the districts in the inner city.

Munich, a flourishing city in the south of Germany with approximately 1.55 million inhabitants, has been struggling with a housing shortage for many years. Not only is the gap between demand and supply for living space growing larger in one of the most expensive cities in Germany, but also land for house building is becoming scarce. Fallow land, which could be used for urban public space, is rare. *Stattpark OLGA* has been campaigning for these public open spaces for more than six years. Although the trailer park dwellers had to move from their location several times due to prearranged building projects, they always manage to find new sites and ways, if necessary, to live their way in this city of economy. In the following article, how dwelling is practiced as an alternative way of living in the context of the tight housing market in Munich will be discussed. According to Pierre Bourdieu (1983, 1998), I argue that the inhabitants are accepted and tolerated by the city administration because of their high social and cultural capital and the tactics they apply. It should be mentioned that there are other specific impacts on Munich that might play a role in the status of the trailer park group. One example is the coalition of the center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Greens, that had been governing Munich for more than 20 years up to 2014. This government was relatively open and supportive to innovative cultural projects.

This article focuses on the residents' perspective of *Stattpark OLGA*. In addition to practicing an alternative way of dwelling, *Stattpark OLGA* is also meant to be a critique of the capitalistic logic and can, therefore, be seen as a form of "counter-conduct", a gentle form of resistance, as Michel Foucault described it (2007). The *Stattpark OLGA* dwellers plan to introduce a new form of conduct besides the existing one. The research is based on ethnographic fieldwork realized in the period of February to December 2016. During these months, I spent several afternoons in *Stattpark OLGA* talking to the inhabitants and participating in different public events that they had organized. In addition to semi-structured qualitative interviews (Schmidt-Lauber 2001) with three male and one female inhabitants, informal discussions support the empirical data.

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1   Most of the sources are originally in German but were translated by the author of this article for this purpose.

Nowadays, new forms of dwelling such as living in corporate housing projects are increasingly accepted in Germany. Yet, trailer park dwelling is not legal. The first section of this article provides some substantial information on trailer park dwelling in Germany as an "alternative way" of dwelling to understand the difficulties the residents of *Stattpark OLGA* face in their everyday life, their critique and their need to apply tactics of acceptance to live their chosen way of life. Thereafter, a short history and field description of *Stattpark OLGA* will give some insights into the project and people who live there before focusing on their everyday life as a form of counter-conduct. The main tactics the inhabitants apply to maintain their existence and position in the city and which evolved through the analysis of the empiric data will be outlined. It becomes evident how this form of resistance is dependent on essential arrangements with the city and is linked, therefore, to the power regimes it intends to overcome. Both the trailer park and the city remain intertwined.

Alternative ways of dwelling in Germany

Trailer park dwelling in Germany started in the early 1980s with the occupation of urban waste land by circus wagons, trucks, busses and *Bauwagen*[2] (Canham 2006: 5; Lutz 2008). Trailer park dwelling discussed in this paper, taking the example of *Stattpark OLGA*, must be distinguished from trailer parks that are motivated mainly by economic reasons and from vagrancy. Although the opportunity to move at any time is a strong motivation for the *Stattpark OLGA* people to dwell in a trailer park, most of them prefer to stay on one site as they are strongly rooted in Munich. The geographer and urban researcher Jürgen Hasse sees the initial point for this movement in the restrictive actions applied by the state against squatting in those years (2009: 189). Confronted by these severe restrictions, squatters started to shift from occupying houses to occupying urban sites (Hasse 2009: 189). Nowadays, these established trailer parks can be found all over Germany, from Tübingen to Berlin and Munich. Most of them were built in the western part of the country and there are currently around 100 trailer parks nationwide with roughly 10,000 inhabitants (Canham 2006: 5; Lutz 2008: 44). It is hard to specify an exact number as trailer park dwelling is in legal limbo in Germany. Numerous illegal trailer parks exist in addition to the official ones. Consequently, the trailer park community in Germany is affected by continuous evacuations, breakups and new foundations.

2   *Bauwagen* are wagons that were originally produced for workers on building sites.

Dwelling in legal limbo and the dependence on the authorities' goodwill

The current idea of "dwelling" goes back to the early years of the modern era. The idea of "the common way of dwelling" (Hannemann 2014) started to take shape with the increasing development of urbanization and industrialization. The sociologists and urban researchers Hartmut Häußermann and Walter Siebel define the "ideal type of modern dwelling" based on Max Weber (Häußermann and Siebel 2000). The current social model and overall concept of dwelling is defined by living in an apartment or fixed house "with hierarchical-functional arranged rooms"[3] (Hannemann 2014). Sedentary dwelling is "common" compared to nomadic ways of living. Thus, trailer park dwelling in Germany is "unusual": it can be located at the "edge" of the civil "normality", as Hasse (2009: 45) explains. It is situated at the "edges" of the "discussion about dwelling, the edges of attention, perception"[4] (Hasse 2009: 45).

The distinction between "common" and "unusual" ways of dwelling is also formalized in building and planning regulations, implying that "dwelling" means living in fixed apartments and houses. Manuel Lutz, engineer and researcher in the field of critical geography, has been working on the legal aspects concerning trailer park dwelling in Germany. He concludes that whereas living on a trailer park site can be accepted by authorities, dwelling in wagons itself remains illegal. It is forbidden by the law on planning building projects in as much as wagons are dealt with as "structural facilities" that always require a license and, therefore, building permission (Freistaat Bayern 2007: 4 ff.; Lutz 2008: 58). Moreover, although the legal status is ambiguous, permanent dwelling in wagons is not allowed. One of *Stattpark OLGA*'s inhabitants, Stefan[5], explains his point of view on this situation: "Dwelling in wagons is not allowed, as it is not possible to register your address when dwelling in a wagon. But you must be registered. There is no way of getting around the residence registration in Germany. This is why it is illegal."[6] In comparison to the UK, it is obligatory in Germany to register in the residential registry. Hence, dwelling in wagons remains illegal despite the existence of the building permission mentioned previously.

Another aspect making the distinction between "common" ways of dwelling and dwelling in wagons and trailer parks even harder is formalized in the description of development plans. Land must be used the way it is specified in the development plan. The so-called *Baunutzungsverordnung* – an ordinance on the use of buildings – describes residential areas, industrial estates and industrial areas as types of use for

3   Translated by the author.

4   Translated by the author.

5   The names of the interviewees have been anonymized.

6   Interview with Stefan, April 15, 2016.

the development area, but no trailer parks or anything similar. Strictly speaking, trailer parks are not compatible with the law on planning building projects (Lutz 2008: 59). Nevertheless, these laws are more or less open to interpretation, meaning that there remains a chance that trailer parks in Germany could be legally accepted. Three different policies can be applied by authorities according to Lutz. Firstly, a temporary abuse of building regulations can be tolerated or, secondly, authorities can create a compatibility with them. This includes changes in the development plan so that wagons may be placed on the building site. The site, for instance, could be disclosed as "an alternative way of dwelling" as was defined in the regulations of Baden-Wurttemberg and Hessen, two of Germany's federal states. The third policy is a contractual arrangement whereas the contractual partner is a trailer park society (Lutz 2008: 61–63), as it is with *Stattpark OLGA* today, where well-meaning authorities have found a way to create a legal status for *Stattpark OLGA* as a registered society. However, similar to all other trailer parks in Germany, *Stattpark OLGA*'s existence remains dependent on the goodwill of the building authority and the city council. In March 2016, approximately 50 adults currently lived in "fixed" and tolerated trailer parks in Munich, whereof 20 are residents of *Stattpark OLGA,* Stefan explains in an interview.[7]

A short history and field description of *Stattpark OLGA*

Currently, nine women and eleven men together with six children live in the trailer park, with around 30 to 35 wagons and trucks which have been turned into mobile homes. The project's name *Stattpark OLGA* consists of *Stattpark,* literally meaning "instead of park". It is a pun as *Stadtpark* is the German word for "city park", and OLGA stands for *Ohne Lenkrad Gehts Auch* (It's also possible without a steering wheel). It began when fallow land in Munich was occupied in 2010. David, another resident of *Stattpark OLGA*, together with a group of friends, started to contemplate the possibilities of establishing a new dwelling project that could also work as a public alternative to the prevalent capitalistic logic. Consequently, it should be urban and established in the inner-city districts, so that it would be seen by the public. In comparison to the trailer parks in Munich that, at that time, already existed, their aim was to create a new cultural and political project that should be legally accepted and tolerated by the city municipality: "We stated that we really wanted a trailer park that actually functions as a political project, that reaches out to the public [...]",[8] David, one of the pioneers, argues. To realize this project, they started occupying a part of a former military area

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7   Interview with Stefan, April 15, 2016.

8   Interview with David, March 10, 2016.

in Munich.[9] After long discussions with the city, the five trailer park dwellers voluntarily left the area. The outcome of their negotiations was an arrangement for an acceptable trailer park on a city-owned area. After moving to this site, the inhabitants of *Stattpark OLGA* experienced the difficulties the city administration has with "alternative" dwelling projects: Firstly, the city did not know what to do with *Stattpark OLGA*. Which authority is the competent one? How can it be categorized in structural terms? Lutz described this way of (not) dealing with trailer parks as a "policy of laissez-faire" (Lutz 2008: 76), as the authorities did not legalize trailer park dwelling generally in Munich, while, at the same time, did not apply a repressive attitude towards it. Formally, *Stattpark OLGA*'s existence was organized by a clearance agreement, saying that the project could use the space temporarily without fear of being suddenly removed. After four years, the project had to move to another site due to a prearranged building project. Two years later in 2016, however, they had to move again, as was already mentioned in the introduction. Although the project has gained a lot of local attention and supporters in local politics, the search for living space was very difficult. In moving to the present site, *Stattpark OLGA* has finally signed its first rental agreement, promising more rights to the project.

Before focusing on the way *Stattpark OLGA* is managing to exist in Munich in comparison to other trailer park projects, the next paragraph will turn to a brief field description of living in *Stattpark OLGA* and the inhabitants, with their motivations to be part of the project.

The actors choose deliberately to live in these mobile homes instead of a house or a flat. Specific personal motivation for this form of dwelling differs from person to person, but all of them wanted to live together with other people in a community. In contrast to the "usual" way of communal life, such as flat sharing, the inhabitants see the advantage of mobile homes in the privacy they have. All adults have their own wagon or truck with a wood stove and cooking facilities. Some couples divided their living space by functionality: They have one wagon which functions as the kitchen and another one as the bed- and living room.

Compared with the "ideal type of modern dwelling" (Häußermann and Siebel 2000), it becomes evident that many values are shared: The separation by functionality, the partition of privacy and public, the home as a personally formed and cozy retreat, and the separation of work and dwelling as some inhabitants also have a second wagon as a workshop or studio. Another motivation shared by the residents is the wish to live "consciously", to know how many resources they need and use. In *Stattpark OLGA,* everyone has to carry the water needed and, although they have a basic access to the

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9   Today, the area is turned into the *Kreativquartier*, a creative quarter with housing and cultural institutions.

local power network, they try to minimize their use and generate solar power. They have several WIFI hot spots installed and, despite the ecological awareness and the effort to live in balance with nature, they are no "greenies", as one of the residents explains. It is not very energy-efficient to live in such a mobile home as the wagons are only modestly insulated, reflects one resident in an interview with the youth magazine *jetzt.de* (Mattheis 2011). Moreover, financial capital is not a primary reason for dwelling in the trailer park. It is true that this lifestyle is quite cheap in comparison to the Munich rental market, but still, the public events organized by *Stattpark OLGA* involve high costs.

In addition to the personal wagons, the community possesses several shared areas and wagons, such as the sanitary wagon with showers and, most importantly, the common space or the project's living room. This space includes the wagon where the weekly plenary meetings are held. Here, the inhabitants discuss the latest topics according to their grassroots democracy. One side of the wagon is lined with bookshelves comprising classic literature, such as Hermann Hesse and Franz Kafka, as well as children's books and anglophone literature. Everyone is allowed to pick a book, as these books are community assets. This shared wagon is connected to the so-called "glass palace" at ground level. The glass palace is a room of approximately 40 square meters with a wooden floor and full-size window walls. Some of *Stattpark OLGA*'s events take place here in the winter as it can be heated by the wood stove. Once, a colleague and I went to the *Platzcafé*, one of the regularly events where you can have a drink and mostly vegan food for a donation. My colleague remarked that this cozy room with a potpourri of chairs and small tables with flowers in vases on them reminded her of one of those so-called "Hipster Cafés" you can find everywhere in Munich. My colleague's astonishment refers to the reactions described by the exhibition and collection manager Goesta Diercks in his essay on an exhibition about pictures of *Bauwagen* taken by photographer Stefan Canham. Goesta Diercks describes the amazement of the visitors who might have had other assumptions about trailer park dwelling before:

Visitors to the exhibition were generally amazed and pleasantly impressed by one particular aspect of the world revealed: the remarkable "cosiness" and "tidiness" of the Bauwagen interiors, the imaginative skill with which they were arranged and decorated, and the evidence visible here of what might even be described as a latent "middle-class sensibility" (Diercks 2006: 139).

Such assumptions concerning trailer park dwelling are also present when it comes to trailer park dwellers: "Contrary to the prejudice, there are no poor and unemployed

people living [here]",[10] notices Moritz Tostmann in his article on *Stattpark OLGA* (2016*)*. The residents' milieu does not conform to these widespread assumptions that are (re-)produced in the media or public discourse. Although this article cannot provide a deep insight into the roots of these assumptions, it is a complex entanglement of different perspectives on nomadic forms and the propagated "common" ways of dwelling. With the youngest resident being two years old and the oldest 62, the average age is around 36. The dwellers' occupations are various: From documentarian, graphic designer, goldsmith and musician to architect, voice trainer, student of art education and even vehicle construction engineer – it is a mixture of "freelancers, employees, students, craftspeople, artists, pedagogues"[11], as one of them explains. Surely, there are other trailer parks where costs of living are not the primary motivation for the inhabitants, but as research projects on trailer parks in Germany show, in most cases, people started to live in wagons for financial reasons. The *Stattpark OLGA* people can be distinguished from most of the trailer park dwellers in Germany that were described in those research projects (Buchmann 1997; Schwanhäußer 2010; Thimme 1999).

The dwellers of a Berlin trailer park, for instance, described by the European ethnologist Anja Schwanhäußer in her research on the Techno Underground in Berlin, live a "proletarian cult of masculinity, physicality and preparedness for conflict"[12] (Schwanhäußer 2010: 177). They romanticize the proletarian cult and sympathize with the so-called societal bottom to distinguish themselves from the petty bourgeoisie. Although Schwanhäußer detects that most of the dwellers actually have a very educated and bourgeois background and that many ideas of dwelling correspond with petty bourgeois ways of thinking, they differ from the inhabitants of *Stattpark OLGA*. Despite the latter's inhabitants' temptations to dissociate themselves from middle-class conceptions, their habitat, the overall creative and cultured professions, and their high social and cultural capital – which will be outlined later when explaining their tactics – make clear that their position in the social space is not precarious but relatively privileged. Pierre Bourdieu argues that the amount and distribution of social, cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu 1983) is crucial for one's position in social space. Social space is, therefore, a space of difference that is clearly arranged hierarchically and where actors take their position according to the distribution structure of their capital (Bourdieu 1998: 26). To understand how the *Stattpark OLGA* people manage to live in their trailer park in Munich and to cooperate with the city, it is essential to consider their position in the social space in the city. The *Stattpark OLGA*'s inhabitants are clearly aware of their rather privileged position and use especially their strong social

10   Translated by the author.

11   Interview with Anna, December 13, 2016.

12   Translated by the author.

network to maintain their position. All my interviewees stressed that their good relations with the City of Munich would not have evolved without their big networks and it would also be impossible to organize all those regular cultural events without their high cultural capital.

Everyday life in *Stattpark OLGA* as a form of counter-conduct

Putting the trailer park back in the context of the highly economized city of Munich, it becomes clear that this is not a very space-saving way of dwelling. Although the focus of this article is from the perspective of the dwellers of the trailer park, it should be mentioned that this also creates a dilemma for the municipality. Whereas open cultural spaces are welcome in Munich, the city also has to provide enough living space. In days of shortage of living space, projects such as *Stattpark OLGA* can only be accepted as long as only a few people choose this way of living. Moreover, *Stattpark OLGA* does not only demand space from the city to live their chosen way, but

in our self-understanding, we focus on events, political work and therefore [we must be] within the city, within the neighborhood, within the town center because this must exist in Munich! It must exist as a contrast to, as a practiced critique of Munich's rental logic and housing market. This is why our living space has to be open to the public, for everyone. So that people can see alternatives.[13]

Stattpark OLGA explains on its website that the project is meant to be a "cultural and a living space" (Stattpark OLGA n. d.b) that acts as a counterbalance to the consumer culture of today's capitalistic logic as well as against the loneliness experienced in the city. Thus, it is not only a private residential project but a political one. Following the self-presentation, the actors want to overcome a hegemonic idea that is based on "profit or consumption" (Stattpark OLGA n.d. b) and which does not only lead the economy, but also plays a role in municipal-political decisions, for example, on affordable housing. Their resistance and protest against these logics becomes visible in the everyday life of *Stattpark OLGA's* inhabitants. The everyday life can be described as an "arena of political negotiations" (Fenske 2010: 9), where daily routines and lifestyles function as crucial spaces for the formation of the political will and practice (Fenske 2010: 9). Following Michel de Certeau (1984), practices such as walking, dwelling and cooking

13   Interview with Stefan, April 15, 2016.

are moments where non-privileged actors can reappropriate space within the mechanisms of discipline described by Michel Foucault in his thoughts on governmentality.[14] Dwelling and living in *Stattpark OLGA* goes hand in hand with challenging consumption logics and ideas of how life together should function following the argumentation of its inhabitants. In this sense, it can, therefore, be understood as a form of counter-conduct. Foucault, in his lectures on the history of governmentality at the *Collège de France* in 1978, develops the concept of counter-conduct (Foucault 2007), which means a gentle form of resistance which does not simply act against an existing government and power with "pure" resistance, but as a "struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others" (Foucault 2007: 201). These are specific ways of contesting the political sphere beyond open protest or direct confrontation, as the human geographer Marit Rosol explains (Rosol 2014: 71). Foucault's concept, therefore, allows an examination of the entanglements of power and resistance; it sheds light on the messiness and complexity of today's politics (Death 2010: 238). The continuous presence of dwelling and living in *Stattpark OLGA* can be understood as a critique of the present form of conduct. Counter-conduct raises questions about the desired form of conduct: "By whom do we consent to be directed or conducted? How do we want to be conducted? Towards what do we want to be led?" (Foucault 2007: 197). The inhabitants of *Stattpark OLGA* try to dissociate themselves from the capitalistic logic which significantly regulates and controls dwelling and living in these days in most countries of the world and attempt to present a new form of conduct in addition to the existing one. Their aim is to establish a new social order. They want to demonstrate that possibilities besides the current common ones exist. Dwelling in an alternative trailer park as a form of counter-conduct is, as has been described above, strongly dependent on the goodwill of the authorities, and it is, of course, even more difficult when the project criticizes the common form of dwelling and the hegemonic life models that are also represented in the structures of the authorities. The dwellers of *Stattpark OLGA*, therefore, apply several tactics in their everyday life so that they manage to be accepted and even supported by the municipality. The tactics do not form a direct opposition to the interests of the city. Instead, the city also benefits. Through the analysis of the empirical data, three main tactics could be evolved that play a crucial role in the everyday life of the residents. These tactics will be outlined in what follows.

14   With the concept of governmentality, Michel Foucault describes a technique of governing which is based on conduct and the direction of how we behave and act. "Government", thereby, does not only relate to political structures, but defines the way in which individuals are directed. This implies not only the conduct of others, but also the government of the self by an "ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics" (Foucault 2007: 108).

Tactics of acceptance

In the following, I will talk about tactics according to Michel de Certeau's understanding of these practices. The *Stattpark OLGA* people do not possess the urban land they live on but rent it from the municipality. Therefore, they basically escape the mechanisms of discipline and reshape the municipal space but always "without being outside the field" (De Certeau 1984: 96), without leaving the sphere of influence of the city authorities. These tactics of everyday life not only legitimize *Stattpark OLGA*'s existence in the city; with these, the inhabitants want to overcome the prevailing ideas and, furthermore, create a specific form of community in their everyday life. The tactics can further be conceived as forms of what David Graeber has described as "social creativity" (2008).

The first tactic is to focus on the neighborhood. While the very first motivation for most of *Stattpark OLGA*'s inhabitants is to live in a mobile home, the project itself is meant to be "for" the neighborhood. Keeping in mind that trailer parks are dependent on the acceptance of the neighborhood, it becomes apparent why *Stattpark OLGA* stresses this focal point. They want to enliven and enrich the neighborhood and strengthen its solidarity with leisure activities "for" the district by participating at the meetings of the district committee, declaring an open-door day and the organization of a house-warming party, where all the neighbors are invited to get to know the project. Moreover, they have installed a for-free shop in front of the project's area and invite the neighbors to their weekly *Platzcafé*. This focus on the enlivenment of the neighborhood implies that the project moves every two to three years to spread its effectiveness. But even though the *Stattpark OLGA* people try to strengthen the civil society as an active society with these offers, they are only partly appreciated by the neighborhood. Trailer park dweller Anna mentions that most of the visitors to the *Platzcafé* in the example are friends. Although neighbors sometimes show up, they have not managed to establish a neighborly meeting place at *Stattpark OLGA*. The way in which the offers are accepted depends on the specific neighborhood, Anna explains.[15] The project was largely accepted at their previous site, a neighborhood which is characterized by the former slaughterhouse. Today, the area of this former slaughterhouse is being used for cultural events (also as a temporary use of fallow land) and attracts numerous young people. By comparison, the project now has had its difficulties when arriving in the new neighborhood. Still, many external artists, musicians and private persons who intend to organize events make use of *Stattpark OLGA*'s offers, as will be described below.

15   Interview with Anna, December 13, 2016.

Secondly, *Stattpark OLGA* engages in local political projects by participating in and providing trucks for demonstrations, such as the "convoy for open space" described in the introduction. They have also, for example, transferred the regular *Platzcafés* several times to a housing and cultural project for refugees, *Bellevue di Monaco*. On 6 October 2016, they co-organized a solidarity event for refugees who were protesting in Munich at that time. One week earlier, the actors had also transferred their *Platzcafé* to help with the renovation of *Bellevue di Monaco's* house. With this tactic, they do not only show their solidarity with other local political projects, but also establish a wide network, which can, moreover, be understood as a backup whenever *Stattpark OLGA* needs help. As the project becomes visible in the city, it also supports the media representation and awareness of their own purpose.

The third and most important tactic lies in the provision of public open space and the realization of "unpaid cultural work," as one of the inhabitants declared.[16] All events taking place in *Stattpark OLGA* are based on donations and do not depend on entrance fees or sale of expensive drinks as is usual for most of the cultural locations in Munich. The community's idea is to declare the space open to everyone, especially for those who cannot afford the urban offers. *Stattpark OLGA* addresses the public with its events and contributes to the cultural and political education in the city. In addition to concerts and parties, they offer workshops to repair bicycles, free dinner evenings, film screenings, and lectures and discussions on sociopolitical topics. Furthermore, as an urban and public open space, they also invite people to give a speech, play a concert or to organize an event. *Stattpark OLGA* offers an event location "where anyone who has a topic on his mind that he wants to present or discuss [is free to ask for space]. And if the motives of the people are honorable and everything is cool, we always try to make it work,"[17] explains Stefan. Therefore, as long as people stick to values such as tolerance and openness, they are free to use the space according to their wishes. From time to time, birthday parties of nonresidents or yoga workshops are also held at *Stattpark OLGA*. The declaration of *Stattpark OLGA* as an open public space functions further as a counterbalance to the highly economized city. Still, the trailer park, as a registered society, has to fall back on the support of the city municipality to be able to provide this space and "unpaid cultural work". They can, for instance, rely on subsidies for the electricity they need for public events.

16   Interview with David, March 10, 2016.

17   Interview with Stefan, April 15, 2016.

Correlations of resistance and essential arrangements

In addition to the tactics mentioned, the wagon-dwellers furthermore display their project to the concept of temporary use of fallow land, which is also promoted by the municipality. In doing so, they want to show that they are no competition to the municipality and the economy. They do not occupy space needed for housing projects but simply use those spaces that are not needed at that moment. The concept of temporary use stipulates that the project must move to another area and neighborhood every now and then. As some of *Stattpark OLGA's* residents would prefer to stay in one location due to the school or preschool of the children, it becomes evident that the personal requests and the project's concept conflict. However, as the concept, based on the tactics, is necessary for the existence of the trailer park in the city center, the inhabitants must go along with it. Here, the tactics of the community of *Stattpark OLGA* and the municipality's interests merge. The city's attention to the concept of temporary use fits into the increasingly important competition among the cities and their culturalization which can be observed in times of neo-liberalization (Reckwitz 2009).

The ambivalence of the project now becomes clear as its inherent form of resistance is always linked to the regimes of power it wants to overcome: The attempt of *Stattpark OLGA's* inhabitants to present an alternative way of dwelling and form of conduct only functions in this very existent city with this city policy and its aim to culturalize the city. Carl Death gets to the point when he explains that "such acts of protest can both challenge and reinforce hegemonic power relations, *at the same time*" (Death 2010: 247). This trailer park project can be realized in Munich only by an interaction with the city such as *Stattpark OLGA* practices. The capability of applying several tactics and gaining such a good position in the network depends strongly on the inhabitants' high social, cultural and, partly also, on their stable financial capital. The milieu of the inhabitants is crucial to be accepted, tolerated and even supported by the city municipality as a cultural project.

The eviction of the trailer park *Gnadenacker*[18] in Munich in 2005 by local authorities stresses the significance of the milieu: This place was established in 1997 on private property, a field which had been left unexploited for several years. It was set up as a self-help project for homeless people who wanted to protect themselves from loneliness in an apartment and the abuse of alcohol, which often go hand in hand, as explained by a resident in an interview with a newspaper (Debrebant 2003). The project was "a pain in the neck" of the municipality from the very beginning, the speaker of the planning unit at that time, Günter Suska, declared (Debrebant 2003). But it was only when the German federal horticultural show, the *Bundesgartenschau*, was due to

18   "Field of grace".

take place in Munich in 2005 that local authorities started to tighten the repression on the project. By this time, 4 women, 20 men and 5 children lived in the trailer park. Suska stated once again in this context that "it is simply not possible that social misfits camp next to such an exhibition with a global response" (Debrebant 2003). The inhabitants of the *Gnadenacker* did not possess the necessary capability to form a lobby that could assist them in fighting the impending threat of an eviction. They lacked the specific resources that helped the *Stattpark OLGA* people to get a site from the city. These resources are also crucial for the form of counter-conduct as practiced by *Stattpark OLGA*. With the tactics outlined, the inhabitants of *Stattpark OLGA* respond to Munich's political structures and try to establish a new form of living together that goes beyond the consumption-based logics on a micro level. Their practices can be located between the self-interests of the project and public interests. It is declared as a "non-profit organisation in Munich" (Stattpark OLGA n. d.a) on the project's *Facebook* site, but, basically, the tactics are necessary for the inhabitants to practice their chosen way of life.

As has been explained above, living and dwelling in wagons is in legal limbo in Germany and, therefore, trailer park dwellers are dependent on the goodwill of the local authorities and the neighborhood. Thus, although the residents do engage in public welfare, the project is, nevertheless, not dedicated to the public primarily. The tactics are an essential precondition for the right of the trailer park to exist in the city. Therefore, the declaration of the project as a registered society is also fundamental as it forms the basis of the acceptance by the local authorities. This became specifically clear in 2016, when Bavaria's conservative party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), submitted an inquiry on the city-owned land which had just been assigned to *Stattpark OLGA* for their new site. As a new partner in the Munich city council for the first time in decades, conservative councillors started questioning the decisions of the more liberal government. In their letter, the CSU challenges the public utility of the project and, thus, whether the project is authorized to use the land within the scope of the concept of temporary use of fallow land. They accused it of being simply a private dwelling project which does not meet the requirements of an association of public utility (Kuffer et al. 2016). This underlines once more that it is the cultural project of public utility that is accepted, not a private residential project. Dwelling in wagons, therefore, remains unaccepted as an alternative to dwelling in fixed apartments and houses in Munich. The way of living chosen by the *Stattpark OLGA* dwellers, although partly supported by the local government, remains vulnerable. At the same time, it is also very exclusive itself – as it is only available for a very small group of actors with a privileged social position.

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Who's the Master of the Plan? Exploring the Tempelhof Field as a Space of Non-Dwelling Moralizations
Sanda Hubana

Abstract

In recent years, civil society actors have been fighting increasingly for political changes and access to direct democratic participation to gain control over public spaces in the relevant city societies. Urban spaces and planning and redevelopment projects turn, therefore, into symbolic venues of social tensions and cultural conflicts – even in Berlin. It is, therefore, important to analyze the transformation of established urban planning modes to understand upcoming urban futures. Consequently, one needs to look at them as a "cooperating city planning process" that embraces a new way of thinking and creating space by civil society, governmental and economic representatives. The participation process at the Tempelhof Field in Berlin is one example of such negotiation processes between civil society and governmental stakeholders who try to find out who is actually the master of the urban plan? Regarding this highly contested urban area, this paper tries to understand the reasons for the success of the referendum in 2014 and, consequently, the failure of the former development plan *Masterplan Tempelhofer Freiheit*. One of the key questions is: Why did civil society representatives fight against the construction of housing in a city with increasing prices for rents? This paper points out that the motives and motivations for being against the *Masterplan* are diverse and often based on mistrust. Moreover, it shows that the Tempelhof Field is a projection surface for other (unsolved) urban problems. Possible concrete solutions for such controversial planning processes will be discussed, followed by proposing the need to extend the development of a so-called "cooperating habitus" and various kinds of "cooperating partnerships" that consider the common good more.

Keywords: urban planning, dwelling, cooperation, participation, civil society

Starting Points

When we look closer at this special historical period of time we are part of and the different urban areas and arenas surrounding us, at least two tendencies become visible: Firstly, the growing number of inhabitants living in cities worldwide and, secondly, the increasing number of urban protest and grassroots movements protesting for different causes, such as affordable housing, the preservation of green areas in city center or better forms of participation in the relevant urban societies. In the last 15 years, Berlin – understood as a place and space with an unique history and *urban habitus*

(Lindner 2008: 87) – has attracted not only more and more tourists from all over the world, but also (global) real estate investors who want to get their own piece of the German capital. The financial crisis in 2008 made the situation even worse due to the growing number of investors who would rather invest in real estate properties than in other forms of (insecure) funds. On the local level, the activities of these financially potent stakeholders often lead to the modernization of flats, which increase the price of rents continuously, especially in the Berlin's city center. The so-called urban natives – mostly middle class, represented by retirees, students and families with average earnings – feel uncomfortable, insecure and threatened in their (urban) living rooms more than ever. As a result, they fight for political changes, access to direct democratic participation and, ultimately, the control of public spaces. Henry Lefebvre would say that they are claiming their "right to the city" (2016: 166).

Against this background, it is important to investigate the transformation of practices of urban planning regarding cooperation between civil society, governmental and economical stakeholders in the German capital. Strategic negotiation-process change and representations and activations of "local knowledge" as a civic science towards political, administrative and economical representation by self-organized civil associations are increasingly visible in urban arenas. Therefore, a transformation of established urban planning modes will be analyzed and critically examined as a "cooperating city planning process" (Becker and Hubana 2016: 174 ff.; Hubana 2014: 7; Löw 2001: 166-172, 226/227; Ostrom 1999: 19 ff.).[1]

One of these contested urban spaces is the former airport area of the "Tempelhof Field"[2] in the center of Berlin. The Tempelhof Field belongs to two districts, Tempelhof-Schöneberg and Neukölln, and is a huge area in Berlin which has been open to the public since 2010. The Tempelhof Field, with its more than 300 ha, has become a popular zone for Berliners to spend their leisure time with different kind of activities, such as skatesurfing and -kiting, jogging, cycling, having a barbecue, doing yoga or

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1   This paper is part of the PhD project "Conflict or cooperation? Urban planning and civil society in Berlin" that deals with the transformation of urban planning practices between governmental, economic and civil society representatives in urban development projects in Berlin. The research is carried out in three different research fields with different interests. While the main focus in the refugee initiative *Moabit hilft e. V.* is on the relationship between officials and volunteers in refugee work, the construction process of a cooperative is observed in the art and culture initiative *RAW KulturL eG i. Gr.*, which is dependent on the interaction of political, economic and civic actors. Finally, the practice of cooperation is investigated in the context of the newly invented participation model, of which representatives of the infrastructure initiative *100 % Tempelhofer Feld e. V.*, other citizens and the administration are basically part.

2   The name Tempelhof Field goes back to the Knights Templar, the former owners of the field, who had been in Berlin since approximately 1200 until Pope Clement V disbanded the order officially in 1312.

Photo 1: Public asset instead of building mania. Source: Sanda Hubana.

just having a chat with friends and enjoying the sunset. From 2011 to 2014, civil society actors mobilized against the joint *Masterplan Tempelhofer Freiheit*[3] of the House of Representatives and the Senate of Berlin. They were mostly afraid of losing another part of the public space within the city; they complained about an opaque participation process and mistrusted the promised construction of social and affordable housing. In 2014, this civil activation resulted in the Tempelhof Field Law (ThF Law) that now regulates the use of this urban area. However, due to a tempered discussion in 2016 and 2017 about the accommodation of refugees, the Senate of Berlin temporarily changed the law which had been introduced as a result of civil activation. Dwelling is one of the key questions in this research field and one of the main arguments for being against any kind of construction. This is astonishing, as Berlin has been struggling with a continuous increase of the prices of rents in recent years, so that more and more people with low incomes have to move to the peripheral parts of the city, and the need for

3   The term *Masterplan* is especially used in urban planning projects in Germany. Basically, it is translated in English into a development or comprehensive plan that defines the functions of an area that should be constructed in the future.

affordable and social housing is growing every day with the migration of EU citizens and refugees from all over the world to Berlin. Therefore, questions such as planning, construction and housing are very present in the context of the Tempelhof Field. The aim here is to better understand how and why different (and often conflictive) ways of imagining, thinking, designing and managing urban spaces occur.

This paper will be more of a first report about the Tempelhof Field as an example with a special focus on mainly middle-class civil society representatives, as they are the ones that are usually active in using the participation formats offered. Moreover, the main motives and motivations against dwelling and housing and the underlying moralizations that were the reason for the huge mobilization of civil society actors and, finally, led to the failure of the *Masterplan* of the municipality will be discussed, as these issues affect(-ed) former and current participation processes by the administration and politicians. Or, to put it into other words: In the end, it is important to know who has got the plan and is its master? Finally, this analysis provides the first results from one of the research fields and already offers first general insights into the overall urban topic. Both the developments on the Tempelhof Field and the research itself must be understood as a challenging process which is continuously *in* as well as *a* movement. The research is based methodically on George Marcus' multi-sited-ethnography approach (1995: 95–117) and carried out under urban conditions.

Histories of and stories about the field

The name Tempelhof Field goes back to the Knights Templar, who had founded an order in the 13th century in the area of the present-day Old Tempelhof. The field was used in the 18th and 19th century as a military area for parades and exercises of the troops of Berlin's garrison. In addition to its military use, it was also a popular destination for Berlin's population who spent their leisure time there. At the same time, the field is closely linked to the history of aviation and the armament industry during the Second World War. The airport was opened in 1923 and the National Socialists began to build a new monumental and representative "world airport" there in 1933. The Tempelhof Field was also related to the Nazi terror regime with the installation of a concentration camp and forced labor camps on the site. In 1945, the new airport was reopened by the US Air Force. During the blockade of Berlin in the years 1948/49, it gained its worldwide symbolism as the "gateway to freedom" or better known as the Berlin Airlift (Berliner Forum für Geschichte und Gegenwart e. V. 2013: 1 ff.; Kaschuba and Genz 2014: 7). With time, the airport lost its function as an (inter-)national civil airport and in 1996, the Federal Government and the states of Berlin and Brandenburg decided to close it. The latest history and stories about the Tempelhof Field will be presented in the context of the further analysis. However, finally, it should be said that all these
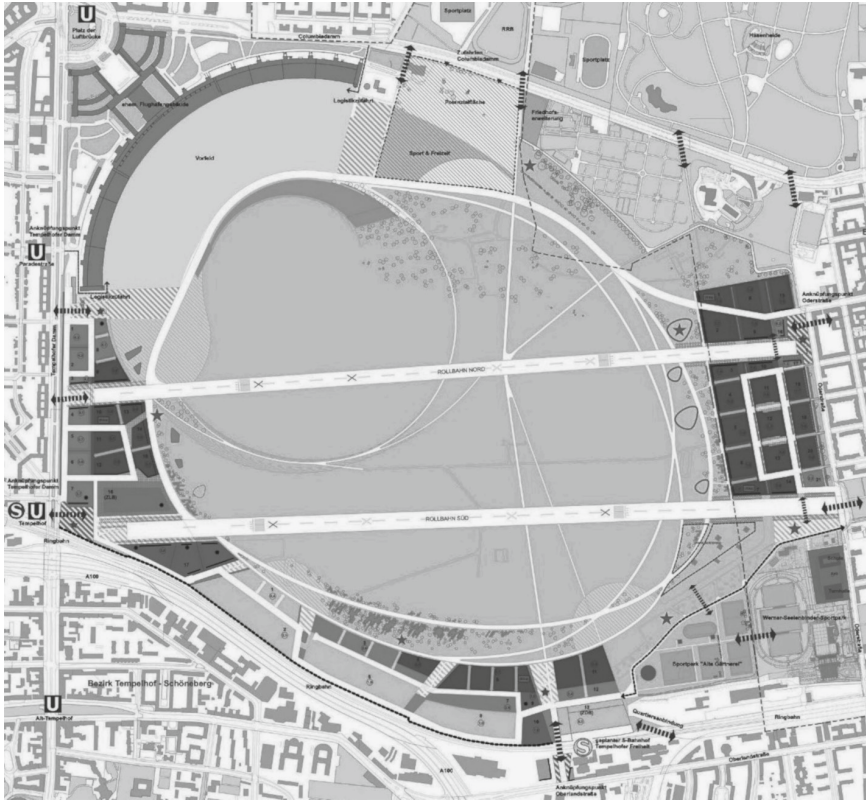
Photo 2: Masterplan Tempelhofer Freiheit. Source: Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, Tempelhof Projekt GmbH, Grün Berlin GmbH.

historical meanings and functions of this place are inscribed in the city of Berlin and are part of the collective memory of the city society. Therefore, a reactivation of these histories and stories is also an important part in this research field to better understand the persistent civic resistance against almost any kind of construction there.

Who's the master of the plan? Vol. I

After the official decision to close the airport in 1996, politicians and administrational actors began to think about the reuse and redevelopment of the former airport. More metaphorically, they started with the arrangement of the first volume of the future Tempelhof Field. Its official closure was in 2008 and it was only reopened as a park in

2010. Granting access to the public has, therefore, been a very recent event. This time also marks the beginning of the planning process around the *Masterplan Tempelhofer Freiheit* as it is called officially, followed by the very first noticeable actions of civic resistance.

The participation process of the urban development plan *Masterplan Tempelhofer Freiheit* took place from 2007 to 2014 (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt n. d.: 1–4). Its aims were as follows: Only the areas surrounding the central area of the Tempelhof Field were meant for the construction of housing, business and working places, spaces for education, culture and for spending leisure time, which meant that 230 of 303 ha would still have been open for public use (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt et al. 2013: 1). During the early summer of 2012, citizens were asked to participate in talks on the design of the upcoming landscape of the park. These talks took place in the districts nearby and were the starting point for the huge mobilization of the citizen initiative *100 % Tempelhofer Feld*, which began with their first activities in 2011. This initiative quickly formed an association[4] which could also officially start on creating a referendum (Die Landesabstimmungsleiterin Berlin 2011: 4). Thus, these initial indications of civic resistance are first glances of the imagination processes regarding another future form of the field and show that the process of a broader democratization in this special urban context had started practically. A public presentation of the *Masterplan* by Senator Michael Müller, who is now the current Mayor of Berlin, took place in March 2013. In addition, during 2013 and 2014, the citizens' initiative went successfully through the formalities of the direct democratic process step-by-step.

Tempelhof Field Law and results of the referendum

Only the most important aspects will be pointed out for the upcoming analysis and conclusions as this direct democratic process is really complex. Civil society actors in Berlin can initiate a referendum on a regional level when they want to enact, change or remove a law, have influence on the decision-making processes in the House of Representatives or demand an earlier termination of a legislative period (Die Landesabstimmungsleiterin Berlin 2011: 5–12). The citizens' initiative *100 % Tempelhof Field* wrote a law by itself and showed in that way another field of competence. The main aims of the newly presented – and subsequently successfully introduced – citizen law were as follows:

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4   In Germany, an association is called an *eingetragener Verein (e. V.)* and it is the usual legal structure that people choose to organize themselves when they do not have profit-oriented goals.
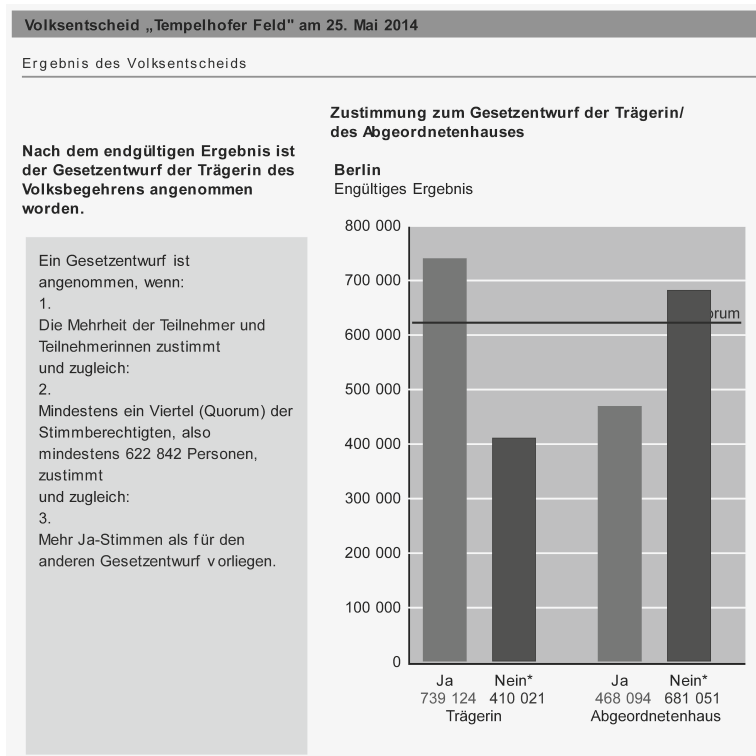
Photo 3: Results of the referendum on the Tempelhof Field. Source: Die Landesabstim-mungsleiterin für Berlin, Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg.

§1 Objectives of the law

(1) The objective of this law is to permanently preserve the valuable characteristics of the Tempelhof Field and the functions based thereon and to protect it against interventions which could endanger or alter them.

(2) The Tempelhof Field is in its entirety/totality unique in its value because of

1. its capacity and efficient functioning in the ecosystem,

2. the peculiarity and beauty of its landscape,

3. its benefits for recreation,

4. its cultural-historical significance and as a place of Berlin's history of aviation and the remembrance of the victims of national socialism.

It has this value independently of public or private investments (Tempelhofer Feld Gesetz 2014: 189 ff.).

Moreover, in § 5, which defines the rights and obligations of the legal owner, the state of Berlin, it is clearly stated that the construction of any kind of buildings is not allowed. Therefore, the law itself is a good example that shows how the engaged citizens imagined the further development of the field. Since the Berlin House of Representatives and the Senate did not want to discuss the demands presented in the draft of the law of the citizens' initiative and did not believe that the upcoming referendum against the construction would be successful, they decided to introduce their own legal counter-draft.

The referendum took place on May 25, 2014 – also the day of the European elections. Citizens were asked to give their vote either to the voting question of the citizens' initiative *100 % Tempelhof Field* or to the Senate of Berlin by marking YES or NO on the ballot. What was interesting and also a little bit tricky for the voters were actually the questions themselves, because they looked similar: The initiative asked to vote for the "Law for the preservation of the Tempelhof Field (ThF Law)" and the Senate wanted to win voters for the so called "Law for the preservation of the free-space of the Tempelhof Field" (Die Landesabstimmungsleiterin Berlin 2014: 3). At first glance, this might have been a little bit confusing, but Berlin's citizens knew where to put the cross. The result was that the first citizen law was introduced successfully by the referendum in May 2014 with a total number of 739,124 votes, which stopped the plans for construction and, consequently, the changing process of one important and symbolic part of the city center of Berlin.

Development and maintenance plan and change of the law

As a result of this referendum and the invention of the citizen law, the participation process of the *Entwicklungs- und Pflegeplan* (EPP) of the Tempelhof Field – the development and maintenance plan – started in 2014 and ended in 2016.

The result of the city's planning process was a brochure with different maps which show quite precisely how civil society representatives imagine the Tempelhof Field: Basically, everything should stay as it is. Although there is room for the interpretation of the EPP and a further development of it, it is obvious that the active citizens in this participation process wanted things to be preserved as they already were. A core group of 20 people, who belong mainly to the middle-class of society and are (habitually) motivated to use the participation formats offered, such as meetings or public debates, made this point clear. They want the field to be saved as an urban area of natural experience, recreation and in which to spend leisure time (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt et al. 2016: 5 ff.). Shortly
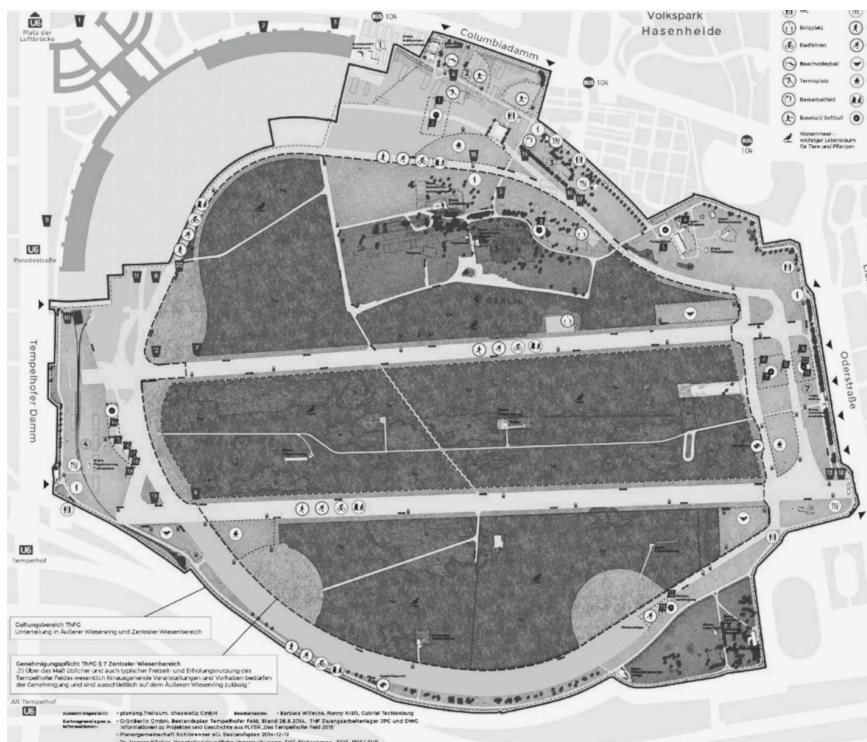
Photo 4: Development and maintenance plan of the Tempelhof Field (EPP). Source: Senatsver-
waltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, Grün Berlin GmbH, ThF +, Verfahrenskoordination
Tempelhofer Feld.

before handing over the EPP to the House of Representatives and the Senate of Berlin, a
new conflict came up in combination with an old one.

In 2015, political and administrative actors were looking for urban areas in the city
to build up the so-called "Tempohomes" and "Modular Housing"[5] for the increasing
number of incoming refugees.

This led, at the beginning of 2016, to the temporary change of the ThF Law and the
definition of two areas next to the airport building for this use. The assumption of the

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5   The term Tempohome stands for temporal home. Since 2015, this kind of accommodation is es-
pecially used for short-term accommodation of refugees in Berlin. But the Modular Housing are
planned for a longer period of time. They are also mainly used for the accommodation of refugees
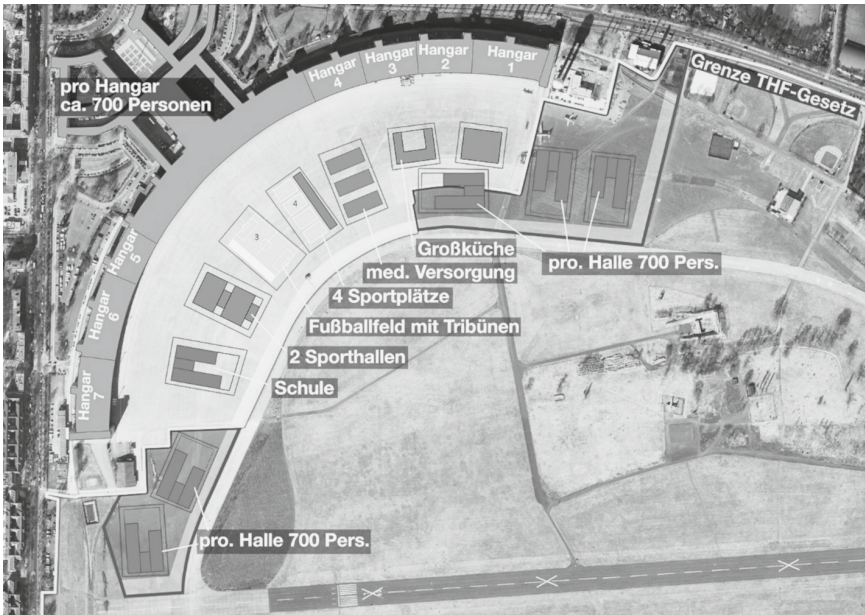in the German capital.

Photo 5: Changing map of the ThF Law. Source: 100 % Tempelhofer Feld e. V., Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, Tempelhof Projekt GmbH, GIS.

citizens' initiative was that the refugee accommodation might be a Trojan horse, since it was only about creating a refugee ghetto in this contested urban area with the intention of being able to change the ThF Law (100 % Tempelhofer Feld e. V. 2016). Others complained that the refugee shelters would lead more to a segregation of refugees, to a so-called *urban ghetto,* than to inclusion into the city society if they were located there. The motivations of the active citizens (to whom I spoke) against the refugee accommodation are not racist or nationalistic ones: they are more a tendency of NIMBY politics[6] due to the invented law that is maintained in this urban context. However, this argument is fairly ambivalent, as such NIMBY argumentations can (un-)intentionally be a smoke screen for racially motivated arguments, actions and oriented persons. This discussion was intensively reactivated during the spring of 2017 after the Tempohomes construction had started in February, and eventually led to a public discussion with political, administrative and civic representatives by the end of March, wherein the governmental actors emphasized that the Tempohomes would only stay until the end

6   NIMBY stands for *Not In My Back Yard* and means that a group of people does not want certain problems or developments close to their (local) neighborhoods.

of 2019 – as the Building Code defines it in § 246 (BauGB 2016: 141–144). However, this problem could not be solved during this public discussion due to the general mistrust about the real assumptions and aims of the governmental stakeholders. This makes clear that the social construction of mistrust is one of the most constitutive parts in urban development projects and urban planning in general. Emotions like this, which Helena Flam discusses as an important part of the constitution of social movements (2005: 36 f.), always need to be considered and managed somehow in such conflictive situations. One young refugee from Afghanistan who used to live in the Tempelhof hangars used for the accommodation of refugees in Berlin and who is now active in a cultural project on the Tempelhof Field said that the Tempohomes are better because they offer more privacy. When I asked him what he thought about the tempered, public discussion regarding this topic, after asking his senior colleague for permission to answer the question, he complained about the waste of common resources: "Sixteen million for two years? It would have been better to do this differently."[7] To sum it up, the danger is that the work on urbanity in this special context becomes exclusive and exclusory, because only a certain part of the urban population is capable and not afraid of raising their voices.

A space of non-dwelling moralizations: motives and motivations

The focus of this paper is to find out how non-dwelling moralizations are formulated in the ThF Law and articulated in the interviews. Which circumstances are responsible for the huge activation and mobilization of mainly middle-class civic activists during the referendum? What are their motives and motivations for being against the *Masterplan* of construction and for the preservation of the field as an open public green area without changing anything? What opinions do people articulate and what kind of moods are notable in this special urban context?
The law itself says, for example, that the Tempelhof Field is vitally important for the urban climate, has a special and unique beauty, has a recovery value for the urban population, and is of cultural and historical importance due to its special history. All these arguments are also found in the interviews. Why are there any conflicts then? For a broader understanding of the general conflict between governmental and civic actors and the underlying aspirations regarding the contested urban field, let us focus on those things that are not mentioned in the ThF Law.
First of all, there is the creation of an urban "Templar myth". According to this, the Tempelhof Field was given by the Templars to the Order of Saint John with the words "Freedom – for all times. For all people. Freely accessible". The activist Heinrich

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7   Field Diary from April 4, 2018.

Photo 6: freyheyt. für alle Zeiten. für Alle. frei zugänglich [Freedom – for all times. For all people. Freely accessible]. Source: tempelhoferfeld.info.

Bärwald put forward this argument in a document he created and published on his homepage. The image shows a certificate that looks like the screen shot of a computer game. The designer also created a history around this slogan:

After the death of Frederick of Alvensleben, the last master of the Templar Order in Alemannia and Slavia on February 6, 1313, the Templars left the Mark Brandenburg in a hurry and handed over the Tempelhof Field to the Order of Saint John with the legacy: "For all times – for all people" (Tempelhoferfeld. Info n. d.).

The event described was dated to March 20, 1313 by the author. Looking at the historical background, it is known that in 1312 – after a range of judicial proceedings, which began in 1307 under pressure from the French King Philippe IV, who had gained absolute power – the papal decree for the dissolution of the Templar Order came into being. As a result, their entire land ownership of the southern part of Cölln and Berlin were

passed to the Order of Saint John.[8] The idea of the story is performatively transferred via on- and offline tools into the everyday level of present day Tempelhof Field and the people dealing with it. The main function of the slogan "Freedom – for all times. For all people. Freely accessible" is to add a kind of historically connected legacy and, therefore, legitimacy to the recent and current civic aims and claims regarding the field and the participation process as an open space with freedom as its main resource, although it cannot be historically proved. Thus, in that way, Heinrich Bärwald added a tiny but important part to a story and published it on the internet, because it should also be part of the what Aleida Assmann calls "collective memory" (Assmann n. d.: 2) of, for example, the participation process in the German capital. In other words, history is used and reactivated for a new creation of historization and cultural heritage in an urban context.

Another point is that there is also a huge criticism of established forms of carrying out participation in urban planning in general. Wilhelm Schwarzwald and Reinhardt Hochwald, for instance, emphasized that they do not only want to talk about changes anymore, they want to be the ones who turn them into action. Therefore, they formed an association which itself is a typical structural form for organizing and a typical space for middle-class representatives:

We were so "dissatisfied" with the things happening at the Tempelhof Field that it was bad for our health. Since we got to know the official participation practice here in Berlin and above all on the Tempelhof Field, we decided to found an association to be able to engage ourselves in the participation. We have founded the Tempelhofer Berg e. V. to have a body with which we can officially represent ourselves. As a first step, we started – parallel to the official participation events of the Senate during the *Masterplan* process – our own events on the same topics and sometimes even at the same places as the administration of the Senate. Our aim was to develop a new format: We did not want to have a podium with experts that we can only ask what is planned for us. Instead, we have invited experts from universities and unions interested and tried to start a conversation "at eye level" with experts in the matter and of the place. We looked together what would make sense for this place and for

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8   The Papal Bull *Ad providam* was declared on the May 2, 1312. It was the official declaration to hand over all Templar assets to the Order of Saint John. The document can be found in the Archives Nationales in Paris, France (Demurger 2004: 263). The assets of the Templars in Berlin and its surroundings were first administrated by the Markgraf of Brandenburg. Most of the land ownership of the Knights Templar was passed over to the Order of Saint John under the *Treaty of Kremmen*, signed on January 29, 1318. The document is preserved in the Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv in Potsdam, Germany (Brzustowicz 2014: 157 f.). My special thanks goes to the historian Prof. Dr. Felix Escher, who also confirmed that there is no official document extant which dates back to the passing over of the field by the Templars to the Order of Saint John.

Berlin in an "open-ended" process. If it came out that it would make sense for all, for Berlin and its future and well-being, to have some houses on our field, then we – excuse me *100%* [*Tempelhof Field e. V.,* S. H.] – would not have been against it.[9]

This kind of self-empowerment, which ecologist Jörg Sommer describes as an emancipatory process in urban participation (2015: 19 f.), has often become visible in recent years – not only in Berlin. Civil society actors mobilize time, knowledge and resources for a transformation of participation forms and formats in the planning landscape of Berlin. What is interesting here is the perception of two kinds of expertise in the planning process and in designing urbanity in general: On the one hand, there is the formal, more technically understood knowledge and expertise and, on the other hand, the more informal, local one that lives through the everyday practice of engaged people and neighborhoods. What is missing here is the notion that most governmental stakeholders are actually aware of what participational planning means, but the implementation of it – due to, for example, administrative resistance, financial issues and the lack of methodological know-how – is the main problem.

One of the main reasons for the failure of the *Masterplan* was that there has been a huge mistrust regarding the promises of the politicians to build social and affordable housing for a socially disadvantaged group of (city) society. Bärbel Schneider, one of the people against the development, put it like this:

The *Masterplan* was made for gated communities. What they [the Senate, S. H.] didn't say was that the costs for developing the infrastructure on the Tempelhof Field would be too high and, therefore, social housing would not be financially viable. In our network of *THF* [*100% Tempelhofer Feld e. V.*, S. H.], we have enough people from urban planning, architects and economists. Real estate developers also said: "This won't work out. One cannot develop it in a cheap way." And then whether there are pollutants in the ground must be determined? Yes or no? One can guess that there are, because of all these years of kerosene deposits. What about the pipeline system of the field? Is it all usable or does it all have to be removed? And Berlin did not want to take these costs over. So, if the *Masterplan* had been built, the investors would still have to do everything by themselves. But because of that, they wanted to pay less for the land. And such a property should not be given away that easily for a few thousands of people who are able to buy themselves housing wherever they want to and to ruin the city climate in that way for millions of people. This is not an acceptable relationship! And the *Masterplan* failed, because of the fact that the Berliners knew: "Yes, we urgently need housing, but have done for 40 years." This has just been simply forgotten! And now the final conclusion is: "We build social housing all over the Tempelhof

9   Interview with Wilhelm Schwarzwald and Reinhart Hochwald on February 15, 2017.

Field." Nobody believed that! Just because of the form of the *Masterplan.* […] That's why I'm absolutely against construction.[10]

The reason for the intense mistrust and rejection of any kind of construction (even social housing) here is that there might be more people like Bärbel Schneider who just are not aware of the concrete procedural, technical and financial patterns of such planning processes. How do governmental stakeholders for instance, actually produce decisions, contents and maps for such urban areas that usually come into being.

Heinrich Bärwald, a civic actor against the project who has already been mentioned, referred more to the general mistrust of the competence of the politicians when realizing major urban projects. He explicitly points out projects such as the airport BER that should have been opened in 2011. It is considered as a Bermuda Triangle for German taxes as it is still being constructed without a finishing date: "The lack of credibility of the politicians. The confidence of the citizens; they have completely lost confidence in these politicians. […] What the reason is (laughs)? Who would entrust another airport to this Senate? That was the question."[11]

One of the biggest issues for civil society representatives, however, is the privatization of public goods due to the austerity politics that began in Berlin in the 1990s. One of my interview partners, Gerhardt Maiwender, a 68-year-old man who has been active in citizens' initiatives in Berlin since 1973 and who started his engagement concerning the Tempelhof Field in 1986 with the initiative *Citizens Initiative Flightfree Tempelhof* (BIFT), stated:

This was such a typical idea of urban planners who discovered an area in the city with which they now have to do something. The only idea I have heard from the administration of the Senate was: "How much do we have to sell so that we can finance the rest?" And this is a wrong way of thinking by urban planners. So, I cannot look to sacrifice the whole city or a third of it – in this case it was a third – and say: "I'm OK with the remaining two-thirds of it, that's what I design. But the rest I have to sell." I think this is basically wrong. This goes completely against the grain for me (angry)![12]

At this point, it is obvious that the main criticism goes hand in hand with what sociologist David Harvey defines as "neoliberal urban policies" (2014: 68) that were also part of the history and everyday life of the German capital after the fall of the Iron Curtain. On the practical level, Gerhart Maiwender, who is professionally an architect,

10   Interview with Bärbel Schneider on July 4, 2016.

11   Interview with Heinrich Bärwald on December 7, 2016.

12   Interview with Gerhart Maiwender on February 21, 2017.

blames the lack of creativity in using, creating and financially managing urban properties by urban planners. He criticizes the market-oriented thinking of urban planners, which, from his point of view, has or should have little to do with the genuinely professional competence of such an expert. More precisely, urban neoliberalism should not become part of the professional practice. Therefore, there is also the wish for a change of existing power relations. Wilhelm Schwarzwald und Reinhardt Hochwald, who have already been mentioned before, described what their assumption and aim is related to this topic:

Participation events are actually [...] instruments to organize power. Because it always transports a hierarchy, it always distributes the resources unequally, it always carries out an assignment of roles within itself and I do not always want to just blame those responsible from the municipality and senate. [...] This is not the administration itself. They get themselves agencies and bearers of these processes from the outside, which then carry out these events and organize the rest of it. And this is then operated in that way. I do not want to give names at this point, because this would be too expensive. [...] We criticize the participation process as an expression of existing structures. Ultimately, we criticize the structures. The procedures and structures are consistent. [...] And we also see the direction of the development and this is an eminently political process.[13]

Obviously, these two civil actors understand actual forms of participation as an expression of generating and maintaining power. In Michel Foucault's words this means that they are referring to forms and formats of "governmentality" (Foucault 2010: 114 f.) that are expressed and produced in such urban participation events. However, both of them see a way out of this participation dilemma and that this has to be a political process, which still has to be carried out.
Tarek Bülbül, a young proponent, made a more symbolic argument about what defines the value of the German capital. It is Berlin's "unfinished form" as a city that is always in a state of progress and which stands for Pierre Bourdieu's "symbolic capital" (2003: 211-216). Bülbül said:

One has to find out how to keep the capitalistic thinking out of it as far as possible, because otherwise you just have another park in Berlin. I am interested in preventing it from becoming a park with a predefined architecture, with runways, which are predefined, with a supply structure and so forth. This is also the charm of the field, that it is simply wild, that it has grown a bit wild, that it has this expanse, that it is not completely designed. And I believe that the Tempelhof Field will lose this charm when it is perfectly and completely

13   Interview with Wilhelm Schwarzwald and Reinhart Hochwald on February 15, 2017.

designed. [...] And that is what you have to manage, to fulfill interests, to feel comfortable, but, at the same time, that it does not lose this Berlin charm somehow. It is not completely constructed, it is not finished, somehow being still halfway in development. And it is also organically developed by its use and not because some landscape architects have sat down in their office and considered a super concept, how to change the walking paths.[14]

We have seen that there is a variety of non-dwelling moralizations that are directly or indirectly linked to questions that relate in one way or another to topics of planning, construction and housing. However, what is most impressive here is the fact that all of these different imaginations of and about the field, which are articulated by middle-class people, such as students, retirees, architects, doctors, nurses and even scientific employees who are actually directly affected by the housing question, connected pretty well and created a common ground for collective action in preserving the field as it is.

Who's the master of the plan? Vol. II

We have enough of these medi(t)ations![15]
Heinz Schmidt

The need for extending cooperation

There are a lot of claims regarding the Tempelhof Field. It is not only considered as a valuable green space, but it is also a projection surface for different civic motivations and needs. As seen in the comments, the moralizations concerning the field and against the *Masterplan* of governmental stakeholders are always dependent on and, simultaneously, part of current sociopolitical developments. Moreover, it can be said that the result of a referendum in 2015 might have been completely different because of the arrival of refugees in Berlin. This means that the developments on the field are a continuous and challenging process itself, which depends on a variety of movements in time: One step forward and two steps back, then three steps forward and one step back and so on. What also plays an important role are different, in Arjun Appadurai's words, "social imaginations" (Appadurai 1996: 5–9) and visions: Whom or what the urban space represents and how it should be spatially, structurally and socially designed. The concrete practice of space production itself is at stake here. This means that the argument of non-dwelling is supported by ecological, symbolic, social and historical aspects, as seen in the ThF Law. But there are also other structural, power-related,

14   Interview with Tarek Bülbül on February 16, 2017.
15   Field Diary from November 27, 2017.

political, economic, cultural and individual aspects, such as those the interviews presented have shown. What is surprising is that these anti-dwelling narratives can be pretty successful, even in a city which needs to deal with increasing prices for rents. More and more not only poor, but also middle-class people are forced to leave their familiar neighborhoods, where the prices for flats and houses are already too high for those mentioned to become an owner in the city center, and where the growing number of inhabitants (e.g. migrants, refugees) is an important aspect for future planning and planning of the future. How is it possible that these directly or indirectly moralized anti-dwelling narratives have been successful? How is it possible in a city like Berlin? On the one hand, there is a general criticism of existing power relations and of neoliberal tendencies in the city. On the other hand, the demand for new forms and formulas for a new "production of space" in Berlin, as Henri Lefebvre put it (2011: 102/103, 383), is also visible, which includes the desire for a reorganization and renegotiation of democratic roles: This means that "doing urbanity" by themselves is the new slogan for civic actors. In the special urban context of the Tempelhof Field, governmental stakeholders failed to communicate the precise content of the planning decisions for the *Masterplan* and how they would develop it procedurally in detail. Instead of transferring knowledge and, in this way, convincing the civic actors of the practicability of the *Masterplan* and the reliability of their promises, politicians and the administration decided to present a legal counter-draft. A move that even intensified the existing conflict. Secondly, the huge mistrust in the promised social and affordable housing is just a symptom of this development. When a person with an old rental agreement pays 5 EUR net per m² in Berlin, then it is understandable that a newly built social housing flat that costs about 6.50 EUR net or an affordable housing flat starting at about 8 EUR net per m² and even more[16], is, at first glance, a big deal and not considered as being social at all. Consequently, the general mistrust in political and administrative promises goes hand in hand with an unrealistic perception about the current possibilities of public housing associations and real estate investors to construct cheap buildings in a city where land and production prices are getting higher every year. To sum it up, the planning method itself combined with the mistrust and lack of profound knowledge about, for instance, economic frameworks, and the high level of individual and symbolical identification, for example, as the "civic (tax-paying) owner" of the field, are the main reasons for the success of non-dwelling narratives.

Furthermore, one can see that governmental representatives feel rather uncomfortable about many civic aims and demands. They feel threatened and are afraid of losing their field of competence and power.[17] When we look at the interactions of the admin-

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16   Field Diary from April 8, 2016.

17   Field Diary from May 8, 2017.

istrational and civic actors, it is notable that the social construction of mistrust and the (sometimes performatively) requested legitimacy of actions are the core topics of challenge for both sides. In the future, a transformation of attitudes and hierarchies, while respecting the competence of each other, is necessary to initiate new constructive, productive and sustainable urban cooperation. This itself is a twofold cooperation: The interacting civic, administrational, economic and political actors have to face the fact that they are all highly dependent on each other. They can only move forward together in urban planning processes. This requires the development of an attitude which is based on multipartiality, an orientation to the common good and in generating possible solutions. In addition, the interests of one or the other side should not be morally or politically delegitimized. They should rather be taken into consideration in a professional and human-oriented way regarding the common good, so that dwelling questions, the need for green spaces and even, to a certain extent, profit-orientation can be openly articulated and negotiated. In terms of hierarchies, there is a need for a fundamental shift towards trans-sectoral partnership alliances between, for example, administration and civil society, that have to be based on objectivity and mutual respect rather than sensitivities and hurt feelings. Finally, this transformation process also requires new structures that – independent of the relevant urban surroundings – express themselves in different forms and formats, such as "public-civic partnerships" *(PCP)*, "civic-private partnerships" *(CPP)* or even "public-civic-private partnerships" *(PCPP)*. In other words, this kind of extended or more radical form of cooperation requires the development of a "cooperating habitus", which is incorporated in thoughts, actions and structures, so that it might become the *urban habitus* (Lindner 2008: 87) of Berlin in the future.

Criticism on the particularization of commons
Social movements and citizens' initiatives are both ambivalent. On the one hand, they are important for sociopolitical changes, to ask difficult questions and to change established procedural patterns. On the other hand, they are not automatically the "good ones". Most of the citizens' initiatives claim to represent the common good, but it is important to look closely at who or what is actually represented. There is also a stubbornness becoming apparent when they are established. Therefore, it is important to ask: How can we keep a movement moving? How can they develop new roles instead of only focusing on being, for example, the "guardian of the field"? Are they open to others and other opinions or do they just stick to their established modes and moods? This is so important because the capacity to adapt different kinds of urban imaginations that are presented on various levels and articulated by different civic, administrational, economic and political actors is the necessary precondition for a cooperating city planning process.

During the activism of civil society representatives, defined professionalization tendencies are visible, as well as an economization and capitalization of such initiatives, which, in the end, mean the emergence of their "own bureaucracies" with a higher sense of continuity, what Max Weber described as the core of the administrational practice (1972: 128), and responsibility for common goods. This often leads to conflicts, especially when it comes to possible social positions, jobs or the use and distribution of resources. Citizens' movements, however, are always precarious movements, whose success depends on the management of existing resources (such as knowledge, people, networks, infrastructures and finances) in their field of action.

The result of the referendum presented reflects diverse interests: There are voters who have approved or rejected the competing urban plans. At the same time, the referendum does not only stand for the bad *Masterplan* and its vision of designing the Tempelhof Field, it was also a statement against the established political structures and their ways of representing power dynamics in the city. If we take a closer look at our democratic system on a regional and local level – here, Berlin – and the variety of civic protests regarding housing problems, current property politics and other topics of urban resistance, then the need for a new combination of representative, participatory and direct democratic policies is obvious. It needs a rearrangement of the first two, so that direct democratic ones remain as the last resort for civic adjustment when needed. However, this remains a challenging topic as a lot of civic actors exclude themselves from political constellations and most politicians and planners think it is a burden to involve people.

Regarding urban commons and the local process of designing it, there should be no exclusions of one side or the other. The claims and aspirations of all partners involved – even if it is the demand for (temporal) housing, green spaces or, to a certain extent, profit – should not be ignored or delegitimized. A particularization of urban commons is highly problematic and does not lead to the best possible solutions for the urban space. "Commoners" are both sides: The citizens and organized civil society associations, as well as politicians and administrational actors or economic stakeholders (Helfrich and Bollier 2012: 19). Existing conflicts of interest must be identified, investigated and negotiated in an open, honest and transparent process regarding the common good.

The problem is that this is still not happening. Instead, a *status quo* is implicitly or explicitly maintained at the Tempelhof Field. One process coordinator said: "In 2019, we will be ready to start with construction work."[18] This is a questionable timeline, due to a continuous conflict management, one can also say a treatment. Moreover, the

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18   Field Diary from July 5, 2016.

actual interactions between civil society, politicians and administration are still characterized by mistrust, insulted feelings and a lack of transparency.[19]

In the future, it will be necessary to go into and through the conflict, to negotiate and to find the best possible solutions for the Tempelhof Field as common property. The ability and capacity of relevant stakeholders to balance different interests and imaginations – the so-called "cooperating habitus" – will shape the future of the German capital. A responsible handling of urban resources is necessary, which needs to be developed in a process of cooperation, instead of becoming part of never-ending conflicts, fights and competitions. The Tempelhof Field as an "urban laboratory" will generate a lot of different experiences and insights into processes of urban planning and the conflicts surrounding them. It will be an example of a better understanding how to proceed in planning and managing city realities better. In other words, it will lead to an overall urban learning process. Eventually, this might result in a redistribution of competences and power positions of administrational, civic and even economic stakeholders in spatial as well as social planning processes in the future: More precisely, it might transform into a "cooperating city planning process".

To come back to the beginning – Who's got the plan and who's its master? – is a question which will be answered in the future. The success and failure of the negotiation process will depend on how all relevant sides are willing to approach each other and to have a serious dialogue that leads to new arguments, a new shaping of the Tempelhof Field as a central part of the city of Berlin and, in that way, of participation and democracy in general. It should be emphasized that otherwise, the work on urbanity might only be a privilege of a certain group of people (e.g. often middle-class representatives) and, thus, become an exclusive symbolic resource – a key tool for exclusion mechanisms and denials of any kind of urban progress. So, who's got the plan and who's its master? This discussion – or metaphorically said Tempelhof Field Vol. II – is to be continued.

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This volume addresses the question of how the rapidly rising cost of living in prospering cities affects the everyday life and life plans of the middle class. Particularly the depths of focus of a cultural anthropological, ethnographic view of the lived everyday life of people thus facilitates insight and understanding which is missing in certain macro perspectives in the economics and social sciences. Therefore, in the following contributions which are based on examples from Germany and Sweden, colleagues will discuss the question of how members of the middle class deal with residing and living in today's postmodern cities, which tactics they develop and which strategies become apparent before the background of the processes sketched above. The seven papers originate from the panel "The vulnerable Middle Class? Strategies of housing in a prospering city" which was organized by the two editors at the 13th congress of the Societé Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore 2017 in Göttingen, titled "Ways of Dwelling. Crisis – Craft – Creativity".