The politics of land and food in cities in the North:

Reclaiming urban agriculture and the struggle Solidarisch Landwirtschaften! (SoliLa!) in Austria

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1. Introduction

What is the connection between urban land-squatting actions and a discussion of agricultural land conflicts?[1] What is the relevance of urban agriculture and struggles for access to land in urban areas? Are there any linkages between land struggles in Austria and other parts of the world? How can urban movements for land and food sovereignty be envisaged?

To explore these questions we look at a specific urban struggle for access to land and the particular situation of urban agriculture, including the potential for resistance and alliances. The case is an urban land-squatting action in Vienna, which started on 17 April 2012, the global day of peasant struggle, and which gave rise to a collective called SoliLa! The four authors are members of this collective. In this chapter we look at what happened during the squatting action and consider its implications in an urban, national and international context. Our case of an urban land squat is unique in the context of this overall study, and presents a chance to discuss the relationship between urban and rural movements and how to envisage alliances between them, while also questioning the rationale of such a dichotomy.

We start with an overview of the context, retracing some crucial moments of structural change in Austria and using the idea of 'imperial mode of living' (Brand and Wissen, 2012) to analyse some key dynamics. We then map the setting of Vienna in order to explore how urban planning influences agricultural usage, and how concepts of the right to the city and food sovereignty can be combined to imagine an alternative food system in the city. Several past and current movements in Vienna regarding land sovereignty also highlight the challenges facing urban food movements. It shows that, as an urban land-squat action, SoliLa! is connected to a nearly 'forgotten' tradition and so can be seen as an attempt to reclaim this past in order to create alternatives. Against this backdrop we look more closely at the case of SoliLa!, tracing the events of April 2012 and the issues that were raised concerning food systems and the dominant mode of production, distribution and consumption. We address three issues that seem especially important for an analysis of urban land struggles. The first is the question of access

* SoliLa! stands for "Solidarisch Landwirtschaften!/Solidary Agriculture!" SoliLa! is a collective of people living in Vienna struggling for access to land in the city in order to start growing vegetables, driven by the desire to question the current mode of food production, distribution and consumption and to create alternatives. The group formed around a land squatting action that took place on the 17th of April 2012, the global day of peasant struggle. Kim Möhrs is a SoliLa! activist. Franziskus Forster is a SoliLa! and AgrarAttac activist who also studies Development Studies and Political Science at the University of Vienna with a focus on political ecology and critical agrarian/food studies. Sarah Kumnig is a SoliLa! and Reclaim the Fields activist, and a PhD student of Social Sciences at the University of Vienna, studied Social Anthropology with a focus on social movements. Lukas Rauth is a SoliLa! Activist who studied Development Studies at the University of Vienna and is now part of a collective-self organized café/restaurant.

to land and how the case of SoliLa! can be viewed as a struggle for land sovereignty that challenges the dominant mode and opens up a different way to view the facilitation of access to land. The second is the issue of education, since the squatted land was formerly used by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), which raises the question of an alternative emancipatory education geared towards food sovereignty. The third is the question of building alliances between struggles for food sovereignty and the right to the city, and the strategic implications of the SoliLa! experience.

2. The history of land struggles: making visible the forgotten moments of resistance

At first glance the history of land struggles in Austria seems rather straightforward. Moments of self-organised grassroots resistance – at least the recorded history – are rare. Yet the history of the peasantry is not just about struggles for land, but also about resistance to exploitation and domination (Rohrmoser and Krammer, 2012). In this section we describe some mostly overlooked examples of land struggles in Austria, starting with a short interpretation of the historical context. It is important to do this in order to understand today's agricultural structure, as an ahistorical perspective would effectively undermine the legitimate claims for a 'people's counter-enclosure' (Borras and Franco, 2012). This chapter does not seek to present a comprehensive history of land struggles in Austria.[2] Rather, it offers a brief overview with a few exemplary cases of land conflicts highlighted in text boxes. We are aware that this is a very limited overview and that there must be many other memories that history has not recorded or that were deliberately 'forgotten'.

2.1 A history of peasants' subordination

The late 18th and especially 19th century brought profound structural changes: an 'agrarian revolution' and transition to capitalism, with the commodification of land and labour as a consequence of the end of feudalism. Feudalism formally ended with the land reform of 1848 ('*Grundentlastung*') and a partial transfer of land to the peasants living on and working it (Rohrmoser and Krammer, 2012). Mainstream history often describes this reform as the 'liberation of the peasants'. But this obscures peasant struggles for a more radical land reform and masks the continuity of power relations, since the so-called liberation went hand in hand with the creation of 'free' waged labourers for a 'free' market within the ongoing processes of commodification.

The commodification of land is another crucial prerequisite for the transformation to the capitalist mode of production. In the Austrian context, Rohrmoser and Krammer (2012) point to the liberal inheritance law, formalised in 1868, as a crucial point concerning this commodification, treating land as a commodity. The processes described are crucial steps in creation of a rural or agrarian proletariat and the separation of producers from the means of production as a defining feature of capitalism (Bernstein, 2010). Within the process of land reform the ownership structures were gathered in a land title register. Thus, many tenure rights were formalised as part of the 'simplification of land-based social relations', leading to further enclosures (Scott, 1998). This, and later a new inheritance law that reintroduced the model of a single successor, deepened an emerging debt crisis that contributed to the formation of a landless class that was forced into agricultural wage labour. By eliminating one form of subordination, a new set of dependencies was created. Within this transformation, power was consolidated in favour of landed property. Another consequence was the process of peasant dispossession ('*Bauernlegung*') (Rohrmoser and Krammer, 2012). During the liberal phase, non-agrarian investors bought agricultural land during the emerging agricultural crisis. The consequences of this process can still be detected today (see Box 1).

Box 1. **The connection between land conflicts and the clergy**

A key factor with respect to land struggles in Austria is the clergy and clerical institutions. The church reportedly owns up to 250,000 hectares (ha) of agricultural land (Jungnikl, 2012), making it one of Austria's largest landowners. According to local media the archdiocese of Vienna recently bought a considerable amount of land in Lower Austria for three times more than local farmers would usually pay. According to an agrarian newspaper it is the special tax exemptions afforded to clerical institutions that make such land grabs possible, raising crucial questions concerning the role of the state (B.W., 2012). It is important to look at the church's land speculation in the context of land conflicts and the concentration of land in Austria. With Rohrmoser and Krammer (2012), who show that in 1883 clerical institutions already possessed 230 large-scale landholdings, we see the continuity in the chuch's accumulation of agricultural land.

The revolutionary tendencies of 1848 were largely neutralised by political divisions between the working class and the peasantry, which was dominated by landed property and the bourgeoisie. All attempts by the peasants to organise were averted or subsumed by mostly conservative forces, especially from 1907 onwards with the conservative Christian–social alliance.[3] This tendency continues today; nearly all peasant interest groups and lobbies controlling agricultural policy, as well as the rather powerful Raiffeisen bank, are tightly bound to those forces.[4] This whole complex can be seen as a historical process of land concentration. In the early 20th century, those with more than 50 ha formed just 1% of all landowners and possessed 40% of all productive land (Rohrmoser and Krammer, 2012: 70).

2.2 Agrarian transformation in the 20th century

The 20th century brought a 'great transformation' in Austrian agriculture, i.e. from a capital-extensive to a capital-intensive ('productivist') food regime (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989), and the full integration of agriculture into the capitalist economy. This shift had important consequences in terms of the distribution of and access to land.

2.2.1 Early 20th century

The first half of the century was characterised by a lack of food and agricultural products leading to periodic food crises and famines.[5]

For Langthaler (2012) the agricultural policy of the 'Austrofascist era' marked the beginning of the transition. He characterises the era as 'conservative modernisation'. Nazi agricultural policy first pointed 'towards a highly productive as well as community-bound rural society as part of German industrial society, based upon state-of-the-art farm technology on the one hand and a critical mass of a "racially pure" peasantry on the other hand. Second, diverse Nazi projects of agro-modernisation affected the agrosystem not totally, but only *partially*' (Langthaler 2012: 20).

2.2.2 Post-World War II: the 'great transformation' of agriculture

After World War II the 'great transformation' of Austrian agriculture was signalled by an enormous boost in technological change, mechanisation and innovation, which led to a high increase in labour productivity.

Box 2. **Allentsteig**

In Allentsteig, a municipality in Lower Austria, nearly 7,000 people were displaced and lost their homes when a military training area was established in 1938 during the National Socialist regime. Since 1957, the 22,700 ha area remains in the hands of the military. There are still small farmers, some of them successors of the displaced, cultivating parts of the land, working and living under precarious lease contracts (Springer, 2012). This location can be seen as another case of forgotten' history, a history of lost experiences and dispossessed memories' (Bernold, 2008, authors' translation).

Table 1: *Key figures of Austrian agriculture*

	1951	1970	1990	1995	1999	2007
Share of GDP (in %)	16,4	6,9	3,3	2,4	1,9	1,6
Farm holdings (in 1000)	432,8	367,7	281,9	239,1	217,5	187
Share of primary occupation (in %)	69	59	38	34	37	38
Share of mountain farmers (in %)	39	37	35	38	39	37
Average farm size (ha UAA)	9,6	10,5	12,6	15,3	16,8	18,9
Share of agricultural exports (in %)	1,0	4,5	3,5	4,3	5,1	6,8
Labour force (in 1000)	1.079,6	523	271	219	198,4	175,2
Share of total labour force (in %)	32,3	17,4	7,7	6,6	5,8	4,7

Source: Groier and Hovorka, 2007: 14

The following developments are characteristic of the time from 1950 onwards: an enormous increase in productivity and capital intensity, decreasing importance of agriculture in the Austrian economy, strong reduction of the share of labour force in agriculture (as a precondition for the generalisation of wage relations), massive structural change, which has accelerated since 1990, and a deepening integration into world markets (Groier and Hovorka, 2007).

At the farm level there was a shift to intensification, rationalisation and specialisation of production, achieved through greater mechanisation and agro-chemical inputs. These dynamics resulted in a concentration of land. As Table 1 shows, between 1951 and 2007 the average farm size doubled (average farm size: 18.9 ha).[6] Austrian agriculture is – compared to other European countries (Eurostat, 2012: 29ff) – relatively small-scale but this does not disguise the accelerating structural change leading to greater land concentration. Between 1995 and 1999 most farms that closed operations were those of 2–5 ha (23%); 45% of all closed farms were below 5 ha. The larger farms were less likely to close (Groier, 2004). In 1951, over 1 million people were employed in agriculture, a figure that had dropped to 175,000 by 2007 (see Table 1).

The political representatives and the agrarian lobby refer to this process as a 'natural necessity' with the imperative of 'grow or die'.[7] The role model of the agricultural policy is the 'competitive and entrepreneurial farmer'. Hence, it is the individual farmer who is responsible for 'success' or 'failure'.[8]

Box 3. **Agricultural Associations in Tyrol**

In Tyrol, one of Austria's nine provinces, from 1951 onwards 176 municipalities have been dispossessed in a complex process of regulation.[a] This means the ownership of 2,104 km^2 (20% of the total Tyrolian land) was transferred to 399 agricultural associations by official notifications, handed out by the powerful agricultural agency. In the process small-scale farmers and the general public lost their historical rights to the commons. This was made possible by the adjustment of a law ('*Flurverfassungsgesetz*'), enforced by the powerful alliance of the people's party (ÖVP) and the 'Peasants' League' ('*Bauernbund*'), as well as some influential local farmers. This conflict was obscured for more than 50 years and is still not settled. The very limited resistance efforts were oppressed and critical voices were silenced.

In 2008 a finding by the constitutional court was very clear in determining the communities as the owners of the common land but still there is no resolution for how to handle this complex situation of dispossession.[b] This example demonstrates the complexity of land-based social relations and the continuity of land struggles in Austria as well as the importance of history in this context.

[a] In this context the term 'regulation' means the complex administrative process of dispossession that lasted for decades. For more information, see Keller (2009); Schermer and Siegl (2008); Siegl (2010).
[b] For more detailed information see Keller (2009); Schermer and Siegl (2008); Siegl (2010).

2.3 An ecological perspective[9]

From an ecological perspective (Krausmann et al., 2003), agrarian development involves a transition from subsistence to industrial production, which can be characterised by fundamental changes in the socioeconomic metabolism and land use. Krausmann et al. (2003) show that from 1950 to 1995 there was a continuous decline in cropland and grassland areas, an increase of soil sealing, and a slow increase of forested areas. Furthermore there was a process of segregation of cropland cultivation and livestock husbandry. Agriculture changed from being an energy-delivering sector to an energy-consuming sector. Rather than energy efficiency, the important indicators become output per unit area and per agricultural worker, the production of luxury goods (e.g. a high proportion of meat in the diet) or industrial raw materials.

This resulted in the disintegration of local nutrient cycles, rising inputs of mineral fertiliser, and livestock fed by increasing amounts of cropland produce and imported protein foodstuffs. This shift was a consequence of the massive input of fossil energy into Austria's agricultural system. The transition to one-way throughput systems resulted in the intensification of transport. This also produced a dramatic change in cultural landscapes (Krausmann et al., 2003).

3. 'Imperial mode of living'

It is important to analyse agriculture not as something separate from but as embedded in processes of social, economic and political change. Given the declining economic importance of agriculture in Austria, it is necessary to focus not just on agricultural but also on other processes that influence land use. For the purpose of this study it is important to stress the deeply rooted fossil-fuel-dependent patterns of production and consumption. These patterns imply a disproportionate and exclusive claim on global resources, sinks and labour and the externalisation of the socio-ecological costs. They form the basis of what Brand and Wissen (2012) call the 'imperial mode of living':

> We introduced the concept of 'imperial mode of living' in order to focus the dimension of the rootedness of capitalist-fossilist-industrialist-society-nature relations in everyday and institutional practices as well as in hegemonic or at least dominant perceptions of 'attractive' living. The mode of living needs to be understood in close relation to capital's strategies, the deeply inscribed mode of production, and power-shaped settings of the norms of consumption. (Brand and Wissen, 2012: 17)

This has important consequences in relation to land questions. In Austria, as in many other countries in the Global North, we can see this rootedness in agriculture and industry, in patterns of mobility (especially cars and road systems), soil sealing, the spread of supermarkets and modes of consumption, patterns of energy use, housing etc.

In the Fordist period the imperial mode of living became a mass phenomenon, although not socially neutral.[10] Nonetheless the period marked an era of the generalisation of this mode of living with far reaching socio-ecological implications. We use this political understanding as a basis for our case study.

3.1 Soil sealing and 'land import'

Austria is dominated by Alpine landscapes. This means a relatively high percentage of mountain farms: 60% of Austrian farmlands are referred to as unfavourable (disadvantaged) mountainous regions ('*Berggebiete*') in EU agricultural statistics. The remaining territory is under high pressure of competing land uses.

'Land import' refers to land outside the country that is used to produce goods consumed in Austria. In 2000 the amount of imported land surpassed Austria's agricultural area by 2.8 times (Erb et al., 2002).

Austria loses 20 ha per day due to the 'need' to use land for roads, buildings, infrastructure and leisure purposes, which translates into a total loss of 75 km² per year (Umweltbundesamt, 2012: 2). This is twice as fast as in Germany. In the EU overall, 1,000 km² are lost per year. This implies a loss of agricultural land. In particular, settlement expansion and urban sprawl are often directly linked to the loss of highly fertile soil because settlements were originally established close to fertile land. Since 1951, Austria has lost one third of its arable land (Kienzl, 2012). This leads to the paradoxical situation that Austria has to import ever more products ('land import'), while the most fertile soils in Austria are sealed.

Box 4. Resistance to Infrastructure Projects

There have been several expressions of resistance to infrastructure projects. For example, in 1984 the Hainburg floodplain close to Vienna was occupied to prevent the construction of a hydro-electric plant. In the 1980s and 1990s several construction sites were occupied during the expansion of the Pyhrn motorway (Tatblatt, 1989; Gutschik et al., 2007). In 2006 the Lobau floodplain close to Vienna was occupied to protest against the construction of a motorway.

One important cause of this loss of land is the already high and increasing urban sprawl in Austria. Urban sprawl is based on assumptions such as the cheap and long-term availability of fossil-fuel energy and the blurring of its disadvantages, the possibility of energy demand being covered by imports and that private cars guarantee mobility. These assumptions are becoming more problematic (Weber, 2012).

In Austria, population growth is mainly restricted to a few hot-spot areas. Most rural regions are seeing population decline and a loss of infrastructure. Between 1991 and 2001 all towns and cities were

affected by massive suburbanisation with a declining percentage of the population living in city centres (Umweltbundesamt, 2011).

The average settlement area increased by 160% between 1950 and 2007 from 200 m² to 520 m² per capita – whereas in the same period Austria's population grew by 20% to 8.3 million. The increase mainly occurred at the expense of arable land and pastures. Hot spots of urban sprawl and soil sealing are the Vienna agglomeration, Linz, Graz and the Inn valley in Tyrol. Urban sprawl and low urban densities are particularly visible in the regions around Vienna, where the sealed surface is on average above 300 m² per capita (Umweltbundesamt, 2011).

Regarding land grabs, it is important to emphasise the role of Austrian actors living outside the country (mostly in Eastern European countries). Most of these activities are hidden because of a lack of transparency and a lack of data.[11]

These facts need to be analysed in relation to the 'imperial mode of living'. Historically specific concepts of 'progress' and perceptions of 'attractive living' loom large here. The Fordist transformation in the division of labour and the resulting increases in productivity and wages led to an increasingly commodified reproduction of the labour force, i.e. the private car, 'cheap' food produced by agro-industries, the (suburban) single-family house, increased distance between producers and consumers and higher levels of transport and roads, as well as technological innovations (e.g. chemistry, communication, electronics) and the rootedness in development dependent on fossil fuels. Successive governments facilitated all of this, for example through infrastructural, agricultural and economic policies, as well as the credit system. In sum, this enabled a relatively stable development model with increased levels of commodified production and consumption (Brand and Wissen, 2012). All these examples have consequences for land use, as they imply the expansion of industrial agriculture, roads, single-family houses etc. If we take this into account it is possible to interpret the dynamics of soil sealing, increasing 'land imports' and land grabs as one interwoven process. They are manifestations and consequences of the 'imperial mode of living'. Cities are deeply bound to this mode of living. Harvey (1976: 314) highlights this as the '… fact that cities … are founded on the exploitation of the many by the few. An urbanism founded on exploitation is a legacy of history. A genuinely humanizing urbanism has yet to be brought into being'. This 'humanizing urbanism' is also at stake in relation to urban agriculture.

Following this brief account of some of the contours of the Austrian context, the next section focuses on the special situation of Vienna.

4. Urban agriculture in Vienna

Vienna, the capital of Austria with 1.7 million inhabitants, is located north of the Alps. Vienna has a long history of agricultural use, as its expansion took in the surrounding villages and incorporated partially preserved agricultural land (Bobek and Lichtenberger, 1978). As we will see this process was contested by the local population. Currently around 15% of the city area is used for agricultural purposes. The city runs the largest farm, which covers over 2,000 ha, in addition to which it rents out 400 ha to farmers in the city.

Compared to the rest of Austria agriculture in Vienna is characterised by a high degree of vegetable production. The city is highly dependent on importing food since it is far from being self-sufficient. While the self-sufficiency rate varies from harvest to harvest, in 2010 it produced the following (as a percentage of needs): fruit 1%, grains 6.4%, vine 3.1% and vegetables 32.8% (Landwirtschaftskammer Wien, 2011).

Like the rest of Austria, agriculture in Vienna has seen the strong tendency for small farms to abandon agricultural activities. This process can be highlighted in the years between 1995 and 1999 (Table 2). While in 1995 there were 1,177 farms in Vienna, the number fell to 821 in 1999, a 30.2% decline (Groier, 2004). Closer examination of the data makes it clear that most of the farms that have disappeared are small-scale farms – 67.7% of less than 5 ha (Groier, 2004).

Table 2. *Farm closures in Vienna between 1995 and 1999, by size of landholding (in %)*

Below 1 ha	23
1 ha – below 2 ha	22.8
2 ha – below 5 ha	23.9
5 ha – below 10 ha	14
10 ha – below 20 ha	4.5
20 ha – below 50 ha	5.3
50 ha – below 100 ha	3.1
100 ha – below 200 ha	2.2
200 ha and above	1.1
Total	100

Source: Groier, 2004

Unfortunately there are no data on how the size of agricultural land changed during those years. A general tendency can be discerned from 1999 to 2010: the land under agricultural use shrank from 8,785 ha (Statistik Austria, 1999) to 7,414 ha, which means a loss of nearly 20% of the land under agricultural use. In 2010 there were still 558 active farms in Vienna (Statistik Austria, 2010).

From these two trends it becomes clear that one consequence of the loss of small-scale farms is the concentration of land, but this sheds no light on the massive loss of agricultural land over time. We address this issue below, but first we take a brief look at the governing political parties in Vienna and their stance on agriculture.

Since 2010 the two governing parties in Vienna are the Social Democratic Party (SDP)[12] and the Green Party. It is hard to find any statements concerning agriculture by the SDP apart from promoting city-funded community gardens that are shooting up all around town, which was a major demand from the coalition partner, the Green Party.[13]

The Green Party has long been trying to promote organic, GMO-free agriculture in Vienna, and being elected into a coalition government in 2010 it now has the power to push ahead on some of its demands. This has yet to bring about a major focus on agriculture in city politics or benefit small-scale agriculture.

4.1 Urban planning and the effects on agricultural land use

In general, Novy et al. (2001) characterise recent changes in Vienna's urban planning as being more open to business (a clear shift towards entrepreneurialism, managerialism and business-friendly policies) and to a new urban elite, excluding the 'non-professional' public, and thus more socially selective. The two main objectives are to make Vienna more internationally competitive and the motivation of the relevant actors to realise this.

> **Box 5. Political culture in Austria**
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> The political culture in Austria is marked by what Rohrmoser and Krammer (2012) describe as a 'culture of silence', which is deeply embedded in history. This culture expresses itself in the widespread Austrian strategy of conflict avoidance and is reflected in the corporatist model, which leads to the exclusion of the wider public. But it is also reflected in attitudes like Nazism and xenophobia, which are not dealt with in a forthright manner, but are downplayed. This can be described as a major weakness of Austrian political culture, with an inability to address conflicts appropriately and productively. Conflicts are considered as something negative. This can also be seen in the state apparatus, which is strongly oriented towards conflict avoidance and its partial mediation. This political culture has very problematic implications for democracy.

4.1.1. Urban governance in Vienna: changes and continuities

Before we turn to urban agricultural planning we must discuss the characteristics of urban governance and urban planning in general, since these have crucial implications for urban agriculture.

After 1945, Vienna was dominated by a corporatist form of social democratic governance. This was characterised by a combination of a top-down approach with specific clientelist practices. For a long time, planning was mainly seen as a technical problem, a task for problem-solving experts. The urban development plan was the instrument for this top-down model and centralised decision-making. This changed in the 1980s, when new forms of urban governance emerged in a context of a neoliberal political restructuring.

> New organizational structures, planning agencies, and forms of public–private partnership and urban planning were implemented. This rearrangement of urban planning modified the traditional top-down approach, integrating new social actors in the new highly elitist form of governance. Thereby, strong patterns of exclusion and authoritarian decision-making characterized strategic planning and everyday policy-making. The arbitrary, opaque and elitist decision-making at the top is complemented by fragmented, selective and controlled experiments 'from below'. These so-called bottom-up approaches mainly served strategic exclusion or co-optation of weak and oppositional forces, and conflict avoidance. (Novy et al., 2001: 142)

Novy et al. (2001) emphasise the importance of the history of real estate in Vienna. After 1918, the social democrats established a local welfare state – widely known as 'Red Vienna'[14] – a central focus of which was the provision of houses owned by the local government, the main actor within this state bureaucratic model. The state remained the central actor till 1980 (although with an important shift from the local to the national state since 1945). After 1982 there was a constant process of re-commodification of housing, which led to a general rise of housing rents. This increased the profitability of the real-estate sector and led to the increasing importance of private capital. This has important implications for farmland, as potential rents increased and led to land speculation.

4.1.2. Urban planning and urban agriculture

We now focus on the current role of urban planning in Vienna. There are different central planning regulations in the hands of the municipalities: the land-use and building-regulation plans and the Urban Development Master Plan (*Stadtentwicklungsplan*, or STEP). The land-use and building-regulation

plans allow for local parliaments to decide on how land should be used (housing, agriculture etc.), which means that these plans are essential in the implementation of local and supra-local development plans. Since these plans are not made at the same level as the STEP, this leads to conflicts and also selective implementation. As Hamedinger (2004:7) puts it:

> Considering the decreasing room of financial manoeuvre of the municipalities, mostly a serious tension emerges between the utilization of land in order to increase the local capital stock and the utilization of land in order to take care of supra-local interests like 'sustainable development' (as for example counteracting urban sprawl). This conflict between local spatial planning and financial reality is a key issue in the everyday development of the city/municipalities and explains, why the guidelines of supra-local plans (like e.g. the STEP) and provincial development guidelines are one thing and real application of planning is another.

The STEP is published roughly every ten years by the city of Vienna, the first in 1985 and the last in 2005.

The latest edition (STEP 05) focuses on the concentration of the city, as Vienna is projected to grow from 1.7 million inhabitants in 2012 to roughly 2 million by 2030 (Statistik Austria, 2012). As city sprawl and the resulting construction of infrastructure is viewed as being too costly and ecologically inefficient, concentration on urban fallows is promoted as a fitting alternative, mainly on industrial wasteland, but if necessary also on agricultural land (Magistrat der Stadt Wien, 2005).

It is noteworthy that the first two STEPs (1984/94) include no information or planning concerning Vienna's agriculture. There are some vague commitments to preserve agricultural areas as they supposedly have a number of beneficial characteristics for the city and add charm and value to the districts where they are located. But there is no distinction or clarification about which agricultural plots should be preserved, and where these are located, and which can be used for the expansion of infrastructure or housing projects (Magistrat der Stadt Wien, 1994).

This changed with STEP 05 as during 2003 and 2004 Vienna's City administration, in cooperation with the Chamber of Agriculture for Vienna, compiled an Agrarian Development Plan (Agrarstruktureller Entwicklungsplan, AgSTEP), which was designed to feed into the STEP and give a clearer overview of the current situation of agriculture in Vienna, as well as what this means for urban development. The AgSTEP was called for by Vienna's city councillor for the environment, because of the lack of any specific planning for agricultural areas in the context of urban planning, which resulted in conflicts with urban farmers during the planning and implementation process. This new focus on agricultural areas was partly due to a recommendation by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, which conducted research on the contemporary situation of agriculture in Vienna (Magistrat der Stadt Wien, 2004).

The AgSTEP breaks Vienna's agricultural land down into six sub-areas, in which two categories are identified – the 'priority-region agriculture' and 'other agricultural areas' (Magistrat der Stadt Wien, 2004). The plots in the 'priority-region' are mostly made up of large-scale connected plots located on the outskirts of Vienna's settlement area, including all vineyards and some smaller areas with 'specific local significance'. These 4,800 ha are to be reserved for agricultural use and be taken into account in urban planning. The 'other agricultural areas' amount to 2,173 ha or 31% of the land being farmed in Vienna. This is basically the land that, if necessary, will be used for the concentration of the city – and some has already been included in building plans. These plots are located closer to the city centre than the 'priority-region', but most are situated in the periphery of the city. A common denominator of nearly all these plots is that they are much smaller in size and scattered throughout the urban landscape of housing and infrastructure (Magistrat der Stadt Wien, 2004).

Those two suggested areas were adopted by the municipal council in STEP 05, including a commitment to follow the proposals made in the AgSTEP (Magistrat der Stadt Wien, 2005). This decision must be understood as a preference[15] for 'modern' large-scale landholdings, which are supposedly more competitive within the current mode of production than small-scale farms, which are deemed dispensable if the city needs land for construction. This plays a major role in the case of Vienna since, as already mentioned, the city is the largest holder of agricultural land and rents out 400 ha to local farmers. In other words, if the city has different needs for these plots, the farmers might not get their contracts renewed.

As already pointed out, this is alarming as urban agricultural land usually is very fertile since settlements are historically concentrated in fertile regions (Stierand, 2008). Furthermore, in urban environments there is also a higher risk of contamination (e.g. through industrial usage).

4.2. Right to the city

Forms of urban planning, as described above, are clearly framed by a 'politics of the possible' within capitalist society, oriented towards stabilising capitalist development. In this setting, urban agriculture faces greater pressure for competing uses than does rural agriculture. According to the dominant discourse, this condition is rooted in the 'scarcity' of land in and around cities, as well as the diverse and sometimes competing interests regarding the use of this limited space. This in turn influences the value of land, which is not measured in terms of agricultural use but of its most profitable use (Stierand, 2008). From this perspective, agricultural land, in times of growth, is merely a buffer that can be appropriated for current needs. Agriculture is the 'weaker' (i.e. less profitable) use that has to give way if deemed necessary (Stierand, 2008; Ziegler, 2010).

It is in this context in which the narrative of 'scarcity' is so convincing. Scarcity serves to explain the dominant social order and distribution. A growing body of literature questions this 'fundamental condition' and argues that scarcity is socially produced (Metha, 2010). As Metha (2010) argues: 'Scarcity is not a natural condition. Rather, the problem lies in how we see scarcity and the ways in which it is socially-generated through imbalances of power that deny people access to life-giving resources'.

Land scarcity in Vienna is an effect and not a cause of its problems. Scarcity is socially produced through everyday practices that are connected to the 'imperial mode of living'. Seen from this perspective, the current urban-planning process serves as a process of depoliticisation, in which highly political questions are reduced to technical ones to which 'experts' provide the 'solutions'. This can be described as the naturalisation of the status quo and as a process of 'colonising the future' (Hildyard: 2010), ignoring the root causes of the real problems, as well as producing scarcity.

It is crucial to politicise this process of producing 'social facts'. This means not simply accepting these facts as a given but exposing them as being rooted in everyday political decisions, which can therefore be altered. In the dominant logic, it is inevitable that scarcity emerges from a seemingly self-evident use of land for the most profitable purpose (i.e. exchange value, of which scarcity is a precondition). This must be the starting point for the struggle for the Right to the City has to start. The alternative vision of the Right to the City is not limited to the actual city – it is fundamentally different from the existing one. It starts from the assumption that 'urban society has a logic different from that of merchandise. It is another world. The urban is based on use value' (Lefebvre, 1996: 131). This notion of the 'right to the city' is a collective right that can be realised only through collective action and the claiming of rights according to people's needs. This means not just critiquing the status quo but also challenging what is assumed to be possible.

In the Austrian and Viennese context this clearly means overcoming the deep-rooted democratic deficit and the strategies of conflict avoidance. It means reclaiming the right to democracy and participation and refusing to be passive spectators of decisions made by small elites.

5. Urban food movements in Vienna[16]

Regarding access to land means looking beyond the formal practices of institutionalised politics. As James Scott (1998: 49) puts it:

> We must keep in mind not only the capacity of state simplifications to transform the world but also the capacity of the society to modify, subvert, block, and even overturn the categories imposed upon it. Here it is useful to distinguish what might be called facts on paper from facts on the ground. (…) Land invasions, squatting, and poaching, if successful, represent the exercise of de facto property rights which are not represented on paper. (…) The gulf between land tenure facts on paper and facts on the ground is probably greatest at moments of social turmoil and revolt. But even in more tranquil times, there will always be a shadow land-tenure system lurking beside and beneath the official account in the land-records office. We must never assume that local practice conforms with state theory.

Thus we wish to uncover some 'facts on the ground' during Vienna's history of urban movements reclaiming and using land. We capture this history by looking at three distinct movements: the allotment garden movement, the settlers' movement and community gardens.

5.1 Allotment garden movement

Vienna's allotment garden movement started off as a 'poor people's movement' and developed in the interplay between bottom-up self-organisation and top-down state-managed programmes. It was appropriated by the Nazi regime and ended up as a leisure activity and recreational space.

Before 1914 there was hardly any allotment garden movement in Vienna, but the disastrous food-supply situation during World War I forced people in the city to start growing their own food. There were different strategies for acquiring access to land. Some people rented plots from the city administration while others cleared state-owned forests close to the city in order to start their gardens (Novy, 1981). The movement soon gained momentum and allotment garden associations were created. In 1916, when the umbrella organisation of allotment garden associations was founded, the gardens covered around 1.2 million m^2.[17] Apart from renting land, the city administration also provided 'War Vegetable Gardens' as well as 'Emergency Gardens' during the Great Depression to secure the food supply in moments of crises (Ziegler, 2010).

Box 6. **Kleingartenverein auf der Schmelz**

One of the best-known allotment garden associations in Vienna is the *Kleingartenverein auf der Schmelz*. Located in the west of the city, the area has faced a history of competing interests. While it was still on the outskirts of Vienna, with fields and grasslands, the military started to use the land in the 19th century. Becoming a working-class neighbourhood the royal parade was moved to the district in 1864 for reasons of power representation. There were a couple of planning proposals for the area, such as a city museum and a university of fine arts, but none was ever realised. In the end, the people who established themselves in the area grew vegetables. With an extension of 165,000 m^2 it is the biggest allotment garden in a dense city area in central Europe (Krasny, 2012a).

Under the Nazi regime allotment gardens were appropriated for the National Socialist 'blood and soil' ideology, in which the gardens were portrayed as places where natural and healthy foods should be grown to strengthen the 'German nation'. With the implementation of the 'Aryan paragraph' it was prohibited for all 'non-Aryan' people to work the land (Krasny, 2012a).

From the 1960s the allotment gardens became seen as recreational and leisure areas. Ornamental plants replaced vegetable gardens and fruit trees. Another major change in the use of the allotment gardens started in 1992, when the city parliament passed a law allowing the construction of houses in the allotment gardens (Schindelar, 2008). Today there are around 40,000 allotment gardens in Austria covering an area of 1,000 ha.[18]

While they are formally organised in some 400 allotment garden associations, there is very little collective activity. If we draw a line between a property-oriented individualism and more democratic forms of collective organisation, the allotment gardens can be understood as a rather conservative form of urban land use in which people build fences around their individual plots and have little interaction with their neighbours (Guter, 2012).

Box 7. **Macondo**

A special example of bottom-up self-organisation, which led to the creation of allotment gardens, is 'Macondo'. Located in one of the outer districts of Vienna and surrounded by former barracks, which were used to house refugees, the gardens of 'Macondo' were started in the early 1980s by refugees mainly from Chile. They cleaned up the waste on the fallow land in order to grow vegetables. Around 80 gardens were established, which were tolerated for almost 30 years. In 2009 the '*Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft*' (BIG)[a] forced the gardeners to decide either to sign expensive leases or to leave the gardens within two weeks, or face eviction. Most of the people could not afford the high prices and left the gardens. Apart from an art project there was very little resistance to the eviction of people who had made this land arable (Krasny, 2009, personal interview with a gardener in 2012).

[a] A state company under the federal ministry of economy, that holds and manages public real estate and bought the property in 2000.

5.2. Settlers' movement

The settlers' movement also has its roots in the dramatic housing and food-supply situation in 1919. Driven by poverty and hunger, people in Vienna cleared state-owned forests close to the city for firewood and garden plots and started to build huts. Soon the collective organisation started and a construction cooperative was created in order to build more houses and to pressure the city government. In 1920 the first big demonstration of some 50,000 settlers took place (Novy, 1981).

It is interesting that the settlers' movement disappeared almost completely from the official history despite its obvious success in having built around 7,000 houses in the cooperative settlements. Klaus Novy[19] frames this as a systematic expulsion and suppression of the alternatives in history, and as a means to prevent collective learning. According to him, the settlers' movement must be understood as a critical influence on and stimulus for the new housing politics of the reform socialism in the 'Red Vienna', although the original ideas of the settlers' movement concerning social, economic and cultural aspects went far further than was later realised by the institutions (Novy, 1981).

The heyday of the settlers' movement was from 1921 to 1923. An almost complete system of self-organised cooperatives was set up for the construction and coordination of the settlements, including the production of building materials. This made it possible for the movement largely to avoid cooperating with the city administration, although in response to their pressure on the authorities – such as their major demonstration – they received some subsidies (Novy, 1981).

In the settlements the cooperative owned the houses to prevent the emergence of private property. In order to receive a house, each settler had to contribute between 1,600 and 3,000 working hours. This was a major step towards including people with little financial means since until then every member of a construction cooperative had to make a personal contribution in form of money. Only after the houses were finished were they distributed according to need or by lot.

Apart from the houses, the self-run food-supply system, using fields and backyards to grow vegetables, played a crucial role in the settlements (Exner, 2012), as did the collective infrastructure: there was a community house, playgrounds for the children, spaces for consumer cooperatives and educational projects. Novy frames the settlers' movement with its non-capitalist collective organisation through co-operatives, as an emancipatory alternative to a conservative property-based individualism (Novy, 1981).

The importance of art for the settlers' movement is demonstrated in a settlement constructed just for artists, who in return painted the community house of the settlers' cooperative (Novy, 1981).

Notwithstanding the settlers' movement's efforts to create a more egalitarian and emancipated society, there were still hierarchies within the cooperatives. One example is the reproduction of patriarchal structures, which manifested themselves in valuing women's working hours as only 75% of men's (Krasny, 2012b).

During the strong years of the settlers' movement the city administration had begun to focus on the issue of housing, installing a settlers' office in 1921, and building apartments. From 1924 the authorities slowly appropriated the settlement idea and started to institutionalise the settlers' movement. Communal settlements were established without consulting the cooperatives and the architecture changed from settlements to super-blocks of apartment buildings. Although the settlers' movement tried to resist this transformation, they finally lost the battle against a state bureaucratic model, and top-down communal socialism replaced the cooperatives' bottom-up self-organisation. In 1930 the city administration started settlement projects on the outskirts of Vienna for unemployed people who were selected according their educational level. A crucial aim was to prevent the cooperatives from gaining autonomy through subsistence food production in order to ensure that the new settlers would be an urban labour force. There was no funding for collective infrastructure (Novy, 1981).

5.3. Community gardens

Within the long tradition of urban gardening in Vienna, there has been a notable increase in community gardens in the recent past. Although it is not possible to give an exact number, since there are many informal community gardens, estimates list around 35.[20] The gardens are relatively small, which makes it almost impossible to grow enough vegetables for subsistence. Most of them rent their land from the city or the BIG, which shows that property relations are not questioned.

While people's specific motivations vary, there is a general tendency towards viewing community gardens as a space for leisure and social interaction. As Elke Krasny (2012b) points out, however, the cultivation of land in the city carries with it the potential for people to interact, organise and participate. Through the cultivation of vegetables in the city by former 'mere consumers', community gardens can be seen

as a space in which the dichotomy of producers and consumers is questioned. This can be a starting point to raise issues concerning the dominant system of food production, distribution and consumption.

Concerning the way community gardens are structured, there is a broad variety ranging from rather individualised land use to more collective and democratic organisations. While in most cases the gardens are made up of individual beds where gardeners work and harvest on their own, there are also gardens where the planning is done more collectively and the fruits are shared.

Box 8. **Guerrilla gardening**

There is a broad spectrum of guerrilla-gardening initiatives in Vienna. People start vegetable and flower beds in parks, next to streets or in backyards, plant fruit trees or create gardens on fallow lands in the city. The actors and their motivations are just as diverse as the reactions from the authorities. Some groups focus on direct action to reclaim the city, others try to grow their own food and or to make the city more beautiful. While some are swiftly evicted and their gardens destroyed, others are tolerated for years and some are even encouraged by the city administration.[a] The best-known guerrilla garden in Vienna is the *Längenfeldgarten*, which was started in 2009.[b]

[a] In 2012, the administration of Vienna's sixth district sent a letter encouraging the residents to do 'guerrilla gardening' in order to make the district more beautiful.
[b] More information is available at: http://ggardening.kukuma.org/category/langenfeld/ (accessed 30 January 2013).

In response to the increasing interest in community gardens, in 2011 the new city government started a subsidy programme. In each of Vienna's 23 districts one garden is supposed to receive up to €3,600 as a one-time start-up payment.[21] The condition is that the garden be organised in an association. Since very few people are organised in associations, the city administration cooperates almost exclusively with the '*Gartenpolylog*', an urban gardening network that starts up and coordinates garden projects in Vienna. According to the '*Gartenpolylog*' the number of people interested in participating in a community garden far exceeds the amount of available beds (one garden received 180 applicants for 20 beds), so most have long waiting-lists and the beds are distributed by lot.[22] This suggests that in the gardens coordinated by the '*Gartenpolylog*' it is not the users who organise to obtain access to land according to their own needs.

5.4 Urban gardens as contested territories

Urban gardens are contradictory spaces, contested territories in a material, symbolic and also an ideological way. As discussed, a wide range of actors with different motivations are using, creating or reclaiming urban gardens. Making a sharp division between alternative and conservative projects is problematic since these evolve over time and space. It is, however, possible to distinguish emancipatory tendencies from more conservative practices in terms of how they are organised. Thus we can contrast the two main approaches as individual private property versus a more democratic and anti-capitalist collective organisation. Here it is important not to romanticise collective organisation since collectives are also sites of power relations and always imply the inclusion of some people and the exclusion of others.

As we have seen from the examples of the guerrilla gardens, the settlers' movement or SoliLa! (discussed below), community gardens are places of struggle for autonomy and self-organisation that articulates resistance to a destructive, exploiting and excluding system and creates emancipating alternatives. At the same time, some community gardens, despite their limited size and the tendency

to become 'feel-good' areas, must be taken into account as spaces of 'hands-on urbanism'. Krasny (2012b) underlines that the cultivation of urban land can be understood as a means to regain agency and decision-making power over the making of the city. It would be short-sighted to present urban gardening as intrinsically counter-hegemonic since the gardens can equally serve as spaces of state regulation and control and as a means to discipline people. This can be seen in a study on community gardens in London, which shows how the 'employability' of the gardeners involved can be 'developed',[23] which fits the vision of the 'competitive city'. Another example of how corporate interests use urban gardens is a community garden started in 2012 by the multinational corporation 'Danone', with a kindergarten in Vienna. [24]

Throughout history, the role of the state was central in regulating and limiting access to land, suppressing some kind of gardening projects while promoting others. As we saw with the settlers' movement and the early allotment movement, planning and the selective institutionalisation of demands is a key means by which the city administration deals with dissent and regains control. Another important strategy is that of conflict avoidance, which can be observed in the context of community gardens. The subsidy programme for a limited number of community gardens and the distribution of the garden beds by lot can be understood as a strategy of pacification. Since there are many more people interested in participating than garden beds available, drawing lots makes it possible to exclude people without any institution being responsible for the decision.

One issue facing all urban gardening projects irrespective of how they are organised is their effect on their surroundings. Green urban spaces can play a key role in processes of gentrification, which might explain why some guerrilla gardening projects are tolerated or even encouraged by the city administration. The 'upgrading' of city districts can go hand in hand with the eviction of poorer residents, something urban gardening projects have to reflect upon (Guter, 2012). As Eizenberg (2011) points out in the case of community gardens in New York, this 'improvement' of city areas by grassroots movements can also be understood as a positive change. The creation of green spaces according to people's needs and wishes is part of the reinvention of the city, which we discuss in the context of the right to the city.

In sum, gardens are dynamic, textured and uneven spaces where competing motives and contradictory narratives cross, shape and re-shape each other. One historical meaning that must not be forgotten is the appropriation of the garden for the National Socialist 'blood and soil' ideology. We mentioned earlier how the garden was constituted as the place were natural and healthy foods should be grown to strengthen the 'German nation', and how it was prohibited for 'non-Aryan' people to work the soil (Krasny, 2012a). With that in mind, Krasny (2012a) argues that the reclaiming of gardens in Austria and Germany has a historically more complex, but maybe also a deeper meaning, a means of radically practising anti-racism. So, the urban community garden can be understood as a contested territory and is always a dynamic political space. It is in the everyday practices where changes happen and the political is negotiated.

6. SoliLa! – reclaiming urban agriculture

6.1 Case description

SoliLa! (*Solidarisch Landwirtschaften!* Solidary Agriculture!) is a group of people in Vienna trying to find a piece of land in the city to start growing vegetables, driven by the desire to question the current methods of food production, distribution and consumption and to create alternatives. The group formed around a squatting action that took place on 17 April 2012, the global day of peasant struggle.

The land was in Floridsdorf, one of the biggest districts in the north of the city, of around 3.5 ha and formerly rented by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, the Universität für Bodenkultur (BOKU). It is owned by the BIG, a state company under the federal ministry of economy, which holds and manages public real estate. Over the years it has been used by different groups: the university for research (including GMO fruit trees), small-scale student gardens, a shepherd, beekeepers and a small group of gardeners ('*Großstadtgemüse*' or GSG).

Since the end of 2011 most of the plot had lain fallow because the BOKU wanted to cancel its lease and return the land to the BIG. According to the rectorate, the reasons were 'increasing cost efficiency' and a cheaper contract for land outside Vienna. The only activities that continued at this point were the GMO tests and the formerly legal GSG project. This project, which used a small part of the plot for vegetable growing, lost its formal tenure in the process of returning the land. Still, some members of GSG continued to work parts of it, tolerated by most of the BOKU employees but not officially by the rectorate.

SoliLa! is a heterogenous group of people, some positioning themselves as 'prospective peasants'[25] in the context of the Reclaim the Fields (RtF) constellation.[26] But for the purposes of this chapter, and in recognition of the widely contested definition of 'peasants' in the literature, we use the less controversial term 'farmer'. The group, consisting of mainly young people, including students and gardeners, was looking for land to start a community-supported agriculture (CSA)[27] project in Vienna. They found out about the BOKU's plans of to get rid of the land and tried to rent it, which proved impossible since neither the BIG nor the BOKU claimed to be responsible for it. This might be partially explained by the city government plans for a housing project in the near future, since 25% of the land had already been designated for construction.

In this context the group decided to squat the land, with the aim of preserving this piece of fertile agricultural land, to take a step towards food sovereignty and to revive forgotten practices concerning access to land in Austria.

As the mobilisation was carried out rather openly, announcing the plan to squat, as well as the day and time of the gathering in advance, the call to support and join the action[28] was answered by some 100 people, who arrived with bikes and tools on 17 April. After a short assembly the group obtained access to the land in a collective and non-violent manner. As there were no attempts to stop the action by the police and BOKU officials who were present, people immediately started tilling the land, planting the prepared seedlings, setting up the basic infrastructure that had been gathered beforehand (e.g. a compost toilet, a collective kitchen and tents), preparing press releases, spreading information about the action, etc. During the following ten days of collectively working the land and putting the vision of solidary urban agriculture into practice, the SoliLa! group was formed.

The motivations of the group were in part heterogeneous but everyone shared a common vision:

- Food sovereignty, meaning a more self-organised, democratic and autonomous mode of production, distribution and consumption of food, and greater opportunities to obtain local, organic and seasonal food, bearing in mind the socio-ecological implications of the 'imperial mode of living' (Brand and Wissen, 2012).

- A space where discrimination and forms of social oppression, exclusion and domination on the basis of e.g. gender, race, class, age, or sexual orientation would not be tolerated, through an ongoing process of self-reflection on the way the squat was organised as well as how all participants were embedded within these forms of discrimination.

- Build a strongly interrelated network and alliances between different groups and people.

- Share skills, ideas, resources, etc.
- Strengthen a process towards an emancipatory project outside the hegemonic logic of commodification.
- Work towards the creation of spaces that allow for more self-determined and autonomous ways of living in terms of education, work, food, etc.
- Land sovereignty and raising the issue of conflicts over access to land and claiming land for those who (want to) work it.
- Oppose the policy of urban concentration at the cost of agricultural land, and the policy of vacancy, which according to some estimates means 60,000–80,000 unused apartments in Vienna (IG Kultur, 2010).

From the outset, one key demand was the maintenance of the agricultural use of the land in a collective manner. SoliLa! did not claim exclusive use of the land and welcomed other initiatives and people getting involved. It quickly became evident that this squatting action enjoyed a lot of support from different political groups as well as from farmers, political organisations like the Austrian branch of Via Campesina, parts of the general public and also surprisingly positive media attention.[29] The action met with broad acceptance, support and participation from people living in the neighbourhood. Many people joined the struggle, came to work the fields, donated food, signed and spread a call for support, or simply came to discuss and share ideas. Following this, a main argument made by the rectorate against the squat was the open access to the land, which they argued affected 'security' issues and the problem of liability in case of any accidents.

Whether the GMO research that was still running in two special pollen-resistant greenhouses was the underlying concern, and whether this was based more on security or political issues, is open to interpretation. Of course, one basic reason to oppose the squat was to prevent this form of action from achieving any success in Austria.

After ten days, on the official grounds of 'security', the rectorate ordered an eviction, which was effected by a private security company in the morning of 26 April. It is unusual for private companies to force eviction orders in Vienna. The eviction affected nearly all the activities on the plot. Personal belongings that were not removed in time were dumped in trash containers brought for this purpose. Even the formerly legal and later tolerated GSG was brutally raided, not only using chainsaws to destroy all the infrastructure, but also ploughing up the cultivated fields in order to destroy all the plants. This can be viewed as a highly questionable method of opposing activities on behalf of the University, but also in terms of their own students since the rectorate described the eviction as a non-violent, peaceful act without any incidents, according to an email sent to all the BOKU students and employees.

6.1.1 Background of the squatting action

One pivotal issue that accompanied the group before, during and after the action is the question of 'how to produce' as well as 'who produces'. Existing stereotypes and norms (especially concerning gender) inherent in society in general and the food system in particular had to be confronted.

Starting from the perspective of food sovereignty, it was clear that the squatting needed to empower the local community and get them involved in the process of squatting and farming activities. Furthermore, the idea was to involve different collectives and groups from Vienna who were working on similar issues, such as farmers' and food cooperatives – the former supporting the project with know-how, infrastructure (like tools) or basic necessities (like seeds), the latter representing potential consumers

of the to-be-grown vegetables. The intention was also to involve other political initiatives, as for example a free shop ("gift" economy) as well as the local bike scene (like Critical Mass), among others. The idea was not only to produce food for the benefit of the squatting group, but also to embed the action in the local context, involving as many people as possible and creating an inclusive space that functioned in a different way to the dominant forms of production and social interaction. By putting into practice a model that involves all people longing for a new way to produce, distribute and consume food, SoliLa! tried to present an alternative to the 'imperial mode of living': an inclusive and democratic system of food production that is better suited to a 'post-fossilist' society.

The strategy of squatting must be understood against the backdrop of access to land in Vienna, as a number of groups have been struggling for access to agricultural land. There are other examples of CSA initiatives that have trouble acquiring land or retaining rented land. One such example is a farm called *Ochsenherz*, which has been cultivating land 30 km outside Vienna since 2002. In 2011 it started producing as a CSA and currently provides vegetables for around 220 people. A part of the roughly 5 ha it cultivates is rented and the owner has plans to use this land for construction. Since the beginning of the CSA, *Ochsenherz* has been seeking other land to rent, so far without success. A similar situation faces another group called *Wilde Rauke*, which has been trying to start a CSA project in one of Vienna's outer districts, close to Jedlersdorf, where the SoliLa! action took place. The idea received widespread interest and there were at least 50 people keen to join once a plot is acquired. So far the search for a suitable piece of land has been disappointing and after a year of looking and a missed season, a tiny part of the group is starting the coming season on three small allotment plots.

The general situation of access to land has to be viewed through the preceding analysis of pressures on agricultural land in urban areas. Fertile land is constantly diminishing and it becomes increasingly difficult for people to start farming or to maintain their farming activities. Market forces are the main reason for the difficulty in obtaining access to land. At the same time, the practice of squatting land has nearly disappeared in Vienna since the days of the settlers' movement. But the strategy of squatting buildings has a long history in the city,[30] with a recent peak being the student movement, called '*uni-brennt*',[31] starting in 2009. It can be described as an important link to SoliLa!, not only because several actions took place parallel to the SoliLa action, but especially because it is a major moment in students' politicisation, which persists in the collective memory.

6.1.2 Negotiations as a means to weaken social movements?

Shortly after the harsh eviction SoliLa! was invited to a round table at the city hall, to start a process of negotiation. This must be seen in the light of the pressure the squatters placed on the BOKU directly after the eviction. The same day a group of activists protested inside the rectorate and expressed their anger in a non-violent manner and a few days later there was a day of action and solidarity. The case also attracted a lot of media attention.

The institutions represented in the negotiations (BIG, BOKU, the Green Party and the city administration) appeared to be willing to sign a contract enabling the SoliLa! group to use parts of the land. While the proclaimed aim of the BIG and the BOKU for the negotiations was to set up a precarious contract to permit a short-time use, the plan to redesignate the land as viable for construction and the realisation of a building project was never in question. During the whole negotiation process the BOKU was eager to keep the activists calm and threatened that any further actions, as well as media coverage concerning the GMO-testing, would lead to an end of negotiations.

In the end, the contract was never drawn up and the negotiations were suspended by the representatives of the BIG and the BOKU, who gave no official reason. Such events show how public institutions can use the terrain of negotiations with social movements to weaken them in a process of co-optation, depoliticisation and division. By threatening to call off the negotiations the rectorate effectively split the activists into those who saw a chance to get access to the land and did not want to jeopardise this, and others who wanted to put more pressure on the negotiating parties in order not to lose the power to decide how the land should be used. With this split and internal disagreement the movement was disempowered and control over the pace of the negotiations remained firmly in the hands of the institutions, ultimately resulting in their unilateral termination and a lost farming season for SoliLa!.

6.1.3. Movements and constellations

SoliLa! is not an isolated case. It is deeply rooted in, and thus better understood as part of, a longer history of struggles, centred around food sovereignty and access to land as well as space in general. Many people involved with the squat are part of a wider movement for food sovereignty and have been active in initiatives at the local or international level working towards an alternative food system in spirit of the Nyeleni Declaration. This is partially because the Nyeleni-Europe Forum took place in Krems, Austria, in August 2011, which gave a boost to initiatives and activities on food sovereignty in the region.

Some of the squatters also consider themselves among the 'stars'[32] of the Reclaim the Fields (RtF) constellation, a transnational network fighting to recover control over food production and their way of life. Within the RtF-Constellation the issue of access to land, via squatting or other means, is pivotal as many of the its members do not have the means (i.e. money or credit) to gain access to land. So the sharing of experiences of land squattings and strategies from different local contexts was an important prerequisite for the squatters at Jedlersdorf to be able to conceive of squatting as a strategy to gain access to land. This was reinforced by the local historical perspective of the settlers' movement and their success in acquiring land through squatting on an impressive scale in a self-organised manner.

Since the process in which SoliLa! is embedded is still ongoing, the eviction and failed negotiations do not necessarily signal the end of its history, but could be seen as a new beginning.

Following this overview we now focus on three issues that seem to be of significance concerning land struggles and which can be illustrated by the SoliLa! case: (a) access to land; (b) education; and (c) the right to the city.

6.2. SoliLa! – a case of land sovereignty

All the struggles against enclosures, over land use and the cases of resistance we have discussed so far are in some way connected to the issue of access to land. This is why we want to take a closer look at the case of SoliLa! and how it can be understood in terms of the concept of land sovereignty (Borras and Franco, 2012).

From the outset, it was a key concern for SoliLa! to raise the issue of access to land and to open up the discussion with a broader public. As shown above, it is increasingly difficult to obtain access to land. Competing interests are placing pressure on land, leading to its allocation according to the most profitable use. Thus soil sealing and the speculation by real-estate companies are pushing up the price of agricultural land. Since in Vienna it is almost impossible to get a reasonable lease, so purchase seems

the only way to obtain access to land, the squatting action of SoliLa! can be viewed as an effort to recall the historical strategy of squatting as a means to gain access to land, a history that has nearly been forgotten. Looking back on a history of resistance, SoliLa! can be understood as form of direct action in order to facilitate a process of collective learning and open discussions on issues that the prevailing historical discourse has suppressed.

Box 9. **Strasshof**

The practice of land squatting took place after World War II. After a protest assembly in Strasshof, Lower Austria on 1 June 1947, around 40 peasant farmers 'attached' 40 ha of fallow land within the property of a big landowner called Odstricil. This act of reclaiming the land and redistribution was even approved by the local government because of the cultivation law ('*Anbaugesetz*') in place at that time. Also in Waidhofen an der Ybbs, in Lower Austria, 13 farmworkers' families tried to cultivate some fallow land in a collective and self-organised fashion, claiming land for those who work it (Genner, 1979).

Using the concept of land sovereignty as a way to facilitate access to land, it was crucial for the squatters to emphasise the rights of the people farming the land and the need to involve them in any action concerning that land. Thus, in preparing the action, the squatters tried to include all the stakeholders using the plot (a community garden, a collective student garden, the beekeepers) in the planning process leading up to the squatting – the only exception being the BOKU rectorate since they claimed already to have returned the land to the BIG. The local community involvement and their ideas for the plot were also key issues for the squatters.

In opposition to the threat of being enclosed and to the construction plans that would include sealing the surface, changing the use of the land and restricting access to it, the creation of alternatives on the land can be understood as a process and practice of 'commoning'. Within the concept of land sovereignty, 'commoning' is not seen as a romanticised form of land use. Rather it refers to a way of organising access to and use of land in a collective manner in which the rules and rights are defined through a process in which the diverse interests and needs within the group are democratically negotiated. The commons remain contradictory, but still there is emancipatory potential in reinventing the commons, which includes alternative social relations and alternative relations with nature. That is why SoliLa! never claimed the land for itself, but maintained it as an open space for people from the local community to use. During the squatting many neighbours took up the invitation to the land to discuss the ongoing process, to start a vegetable garden of their own or just to chat.

All of this shows that the vision of land use is embedded within social power relations that go far beyond the realm of agriculture. By questioning the decision-making process on access to land, SoliLa! also posed questions concerning social interaction, history, processes of production, distribution and consumption, and the dichotomies between urban and rural and between society and nature in order to envisage alternatives. The eviction, ordered by the BOKU rectorate, has to be seen as an effort to curtail this process, which illustrates what a threat the squat must have been to the rectorate and highlights how powerful a practice of land sovereignty can be in questioning the 'imperial mode of living'.

6.3. Whose education? The connection between SoliLa! and emancipatory education

The fact that SoliLa! formed on a piece of land that was formerly used by the BOKU raises issues about the education system and the societal aspects of education in general. As mentioned, since the rise of the '*unibrennt*' movement in 2009, issues of education and especially university politics have been emphasised in social movements and by the general public. Since then, key aspects like claiming a more democratic organisation of universities and a critique of their increasingly neoliberal orientation and neglect of socio-political ramifications, were, and still are, debated from a new perspective. This is embedded in a broad wave of student mobilisations, which can be perceived at the global scale.

Box 10. **'occupy the farm'**

An interesting link is the 'occupy the farm' movement in Berkeley, California. At the same time as the SoliLa! action took place, in Berkeley 'a coalition of local residents, farmers, students, researchers and activists (planted) over 15,000 seedlings at the Gill Tract, the last remaining 10 acres of Class I agricultural soil in the urbanized East Bay area. The Gill Tract is public land administered by the University of California, which plans to sell it to private developers'.[a] There are several parallels between SoliLa! and this simultaneous example of direct action and resistance, concerning developments like urban sprawl, a deficit of socio-political obligations within the university but also the ability to 'envision a future of food sovereignty, in which our East Bay communities make use of available land – occupying it where necessary – for sustainable agriculture to meet local needs',[b] as the 'occupy the farm' movement puts it.

[a] Source: http://occupyberkeley.org/2012/04/24/occupy-the-farm-planting-15000-seedlings-at-the-gill-tract/ (accessed 14 January 2013).

[b] Source: http://www.takebackthetract.com/index.php/the-farm/ (14 January 2013).

One central unifying point of resistance connecting various of these movements is the demand for more democratic forms of education and, as Ribolits (2009) puts it, an education system free from economic values, claiming that education is not bound to the dominant dogma of human capital that equates human beings with commodities.

In order to transform the education system, there is a need to create counter-hegemonic alliances based on self-organisation and democratic action. An example for this approach to education 'from below' is the 'Soldidarity University of Vienna' (KriSU), which formed during the '*unibrennt*' movement as an initiative to create autonomous spaces for 'another type of academic practice, one that is not oriented toward competition, economic growth as an end in itself, and training for the labour market'.[33] KriSU and SoliLa! formed an alliance to further develop alternative practices of education and research. Such practices can enable emancipatory collective learning, which is suppressed in most contemporary universities.

The bias of universities and their research becomes clear in relation to the ongoing GMO testing on the squatted plot. SoliLa! juxtaposed this research with a different vision of how agricultural knowledge should be produced and disseminated, with a clear stance against GMOs and the hegemonic economic logic of commodification they represent. SoliLa! can thus be seen as a step towards re-democratising an education system free from the economic principle of competition. Politicising education and research means raising questions about their purpose, who benefits and who loses, who defines and decides

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upon this, and who are the main actors. Democratising research and education is also an important precondition for democratising the food system.[34]

6.4. Food sovereignty means the right to the city!

People who live in towns and cities are thought of only as consumers. Food sovereignty and food democracy mean much more than just choosing the 'right' product in a supermarket. The case of SoliLa! shows that there are larger and more meaningful possibilities for people living in cities to act. This points to thinking of ourselves not as passive consumers of the 'outside' world but as active producers of the world in which we live, which is a core tenet of the food sovereignty movement today. This has important implications for discussions about and actions for food sovereignty. In times of multiple and global crises, food sovereignty represents a very important response on the part of social movements. Urban and peri-urban food production has an important role to play, but depend on access to land.

Since the agro-industrialisation process there has been an increasing 'distancing' and disconnection in the food system. This takes many forms (Clapp, 2012). One form is the distancing between cities and the places where food is produced. These processes enable a huge concentration of power, while at the same time most people lose any local and democratic forms of control over the food system. Shortening supply chains and localising the food system are strategies to rebuild and reclaim the food system. It would be naïve to see 'localism' as a goal in itself. The local is often a site of inequality and hegemonic domination. Therefore, it is important to question 'unreflexive localism' and to build local alliances that address equality and social justice (DuPuis and Goodman, 2005). This means also reflecting on locally embodied contradictions: enhancing the quality of life (environmental, social) in some places often leads to the deterioration in living conditions elsewhere.

As we have shown, the 'imperial mode of living' plays an important role in the process of 'distancing'. Cheap energy, a complex transport infrastructure, agro-industrialisation, and trade agreements and the expansion of super- and hypermarkets make it possible to buy food from 'nowhere' via the corporate food regime (McMichael, 2009; Campbell, 2009) – if you can afford it. At the same time more land is sealed because of urban sprawl. The separation of consumers and producers deepens through this process.

As argued earlier, the 'imperial mode of living' is one of the key causes of the current multiple crises of capitalism. Through this perspective we can see the structural causes of these crises and the need to focus on changing agricultural, trade and economic policy, for example, as well as to struggle against land grabbing, agro-industrialisation etc. But the 'imperial mode of living' also clarifies that this is deeply rooted – although not socially neutral – in the everyday life of people in the Global North (Brand and Wissen, 2012). It is important to recognise because this hegemonic configuration is stabilised through the consensus of the masses. This rootedness is stabilised through dominant perceptions of 'attractive living'. If achieving food sovereignty entails overcoming the 'imperial mode of living', then we have to take this into account. Seen through this lens makes it impossible to see the world as divided between 'above' and 'below'. An emancipatory transformation presupposes a focus on the different forms of relations of domination and the struggle to overcome them. Needless to say, this is a complex but nonetheless critical project. It is also a struggle for alternative modes of living, which are 'attractive', or as some social movements call it, are part of 'buen vivir', or living well (Acosta, 2009).

Here it is important to add:

> An emancipatory politics has to take care not to be moralistic about environmental issues.
> Of course, we need to consume less meat, cars/auto-mobiliy and electrical gadgets. But

this cannot amount to a simple moral claim that ignores social structures and the power relations on which they are based. Alternative and attractive forms of living, producing and exchanging; new social divisions of labour; and alternative identities are necessary, as well as possible, and in many cases revolve around concrete struggles for the protection of the natural commons. (Brand et al., 2009: 14)

Food sovereignty is not just about eating locally and eating well. It is about transforming the system. It is about asking who controls the food system and fighting to democratise it, and to build alternative livelihoods based on local needs (rather than capitalism's 'accumulation for accumulation's sake'). As examples from all over the world show, resistance and civil disobedience are important strategies in this transformation. Given that cities are historically specific forms to organise and regulate society's relationship with nature, then urban struggles are socio-ecological struggles. Seen in this light (of urban political ecology), it is important to stress that there is nothing inherently unnatural about cities. Rather, the question is about what kind of city and urban landscape, since there are different urban and environmental processes that negatively affect some social groups while benefiting others. 'In other words, urban political ecology is about formulating political projects that are radically democratic in terms of the organization of the processes through which the environments that we (humans and non-humans) inhabit become produced' (Heynen et al., 2006: 2).

Urban social movements around the globe are struggling for the right to the city. SoliLa! suggests an alliance between activists for food sovereignty with those who struggle for the 'right to the city'. There are some clear similarities and convergences. Issues such as who has the right to produce the city, to whom the city belongs, and what kind of city we want are closely related to food sovereignty, as becomes clear if these issues are posed in relation to food. For example if we look at how land is used and who has the power to define how land is 'developed' then it becomes obvious that food sovereignty and the right to the city have something in common. It is an urgent task to build alliances on this common ground.

As David Harvey puts it:

> The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold. The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights. (Harvey, 2012: 4)

SoliLa! struggles for the right to the city as well as for food sovereignty based on the conviction that alternative forms of agriculture have an essential meaning in relation to the right to the city.

7. Conclusions

Finally, we ask what lessons can be drawn from the SoliLa! case. During the research and writing process we were aware that we had explored and raised new and unfamiliar questions. This is largely because we discussed questions in a specific urban context that are usually applied to rural settings. But we are convinced that there is something important to be said about urban struggles for food and

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land sovereignty. The debate on land sovereignty and an alternative food system is as much an urban as it is a rural debate – something which is often overlooked. We hope to shed some light on aspects that might be inspiring for other social movements and further actions.

If we think about the issues raised so far, there seem to be different but deeply connected processes at work. On the one hand is a rural exodus and increasing migration to towns and cities. This is related to the loss of infrastructure and worsening living conditions in rural areas, as well as the decline in the number of farmers. On the other hand we see growing cities and their increasing concentration and massive urban sprawl. This also contributes to the decline in the number of farmers, the concentration as well as loss of agricultural land, soil sealing and a lack of access to land.

What lessons can be drawn from the SoliLa! case? Obviously, the issue is complex and ranged from historical learning processes to urban planning, housing, education, access to land and the right to the city, to name just a few. Across these different dimensions are different possibilities for alliances and convergences. SoliLa! was very active in building alliances as these are a key resource for urban land struggles.

A general lesson to be drawn is the question of how to think about the urban and the rural. Very often the debate is framed as urban *versus* rural. Of course there are differences, as well as similarities. In the SoliLa! case the question was framed in a different manner: the problem is not urbanisation as such (there is nothing inherently unnatural about cities), but of how to imagine and create different, emancipatory towns and cities. This framing creates the possibility to act and struggle for a process of radical democratisation of the production of the city. In this case study we emphasised not seeing cities as isolated entities but as networks of socio-ecological processes that are local and global at the same time. The processes that support urban life such as water, food and energy are always connected with processes elsewhere. The problems and their root causes become clearer and can be challenged more easily when the connections are exposed. As the effects of an increasing number of global problems manifest themselves in cities, local struggles can connect to similar struggles in other areas of the world. This can be strategically used in local actions. We hope that this case study might open up debate for this kind of strategic thinking. Here, again, the question is not to find a single appropriate scale for action, as the question is rather how to connect at different scales in an effective way to work for common goals.

In this context SoliLa! questioned the dominant decision-making processes on access to land and opened up the debate about alternative forms of organising production, distribution and consumption of food in Vienna. It also showed how this was connected to different forms of social relationships beyond the dichotomies of urban and rural and of society and nature. This can be read as a practice of challenging the dominant 'politics of the possible'. Nearly all the issues raised are deeply framed by processes of commodification. As Lefebvre insisted, 'limiting the world of commodities' is essential to any project of radical democracy, urban or rural, because this would 'give content to the projects of democratic planning, prioritizing the social needs that are formulated, controlled and managed by those who have a stake in them' (Lefebvre, 2009 [1966]: 148). This vision has to be contrasted with more depoliticised visions that limit demands for inclusion within the existing system. Seen from this perspective makes clear the necessity of a radical transformation. SoliLa! aimed to transform dominant narratives and attack hegemonic images. One issue here is the dominant narrative of scarcity and its connection to the 'imperial mode of living'. Seen through this lens, the problem of access to land is not one of absolute scarcity and 'lack of supply', but rather of socially generated scarcity. For example, when we focus on the dominant mode of living, we need to question the fundamental assumptions on which it is built: limitless and exclusive access to land and other resources, sinks and labour power elsewhere.

This makes clear that socially generated scarcity arises from imbalances of power that deny access to land. The reality is – and has always been – that those with the most bargaining power obtain access to resources and make decisions about the use of land. Here again, it is important to focus on increasing inequality in rural and in urban regions. In short, we want to argue that the 'imperial mode of living' generates specific scarcities that are not 'natural' but are rooted in power relations, which means that they can be and need to be changed. At the same time, the 'imperial mode of living' is manifested in the built environment, leading to specific scarcities of land. SoliLa! challenged this seemingly natural condition in promoting alternatives and opening up a debate about how to produce the city according to people's needs.

If we want to make struggles for food sovereignty more relevant to urban populations (who are mostly regarded as passive consumers), the SoliLa! case shows that there is an evolving process of specific significance: in recent years new types of consumer–producer cooperation in food networks have emerged in which consumers play an active role. Through alternative food networks consumers actively take on the role of co-producers. There is a huge range of new networks ranging from food cooperatives to CSA and urban gardening projects. These also create the space to politicise questions of access to land. These processes are connected to an active revaluing of agriculture (in urban and in rural contexts) that cannot be overestimated. Food sovereignty has the potential to become ever more relevant for urban populations as they seek alternative forms of a better life. At the same time as they transform themselves they produce alternatives in everyday life. This is a slow process but can be connected to radical change. SoliLa! shows a specific form of how these processes can be connected by raising further questions about access to land. This clearly shows that even slight changes at the individual level can be connected to radical change, by challenging and transforming dominant modes of living, and how this issue can be raised and politicised within a specific vision and form of urban agriculture.

Another dimension here is to resist the suppression of historical alternatives by taking direct action. SoliLa! can be understood as an attempt to recall the strategy of squatting land in Austria. As history shows, it was possible for social movements to gain impressive access to land. SoliLa! facilitated learning from historical processes, which opens up possibilities to envisage different forms of towns and cities.

Another important aspect is the politics of scale, whereby the local and the global, the regional and the national are deeply intertwined. That means that the global or the local are not pre-determined but are produced, reproduced, modified and challenged in a multiplicity of actions at various levels. This is always a contested process. Social movements are able to produce and use a range of scales, but not as they please. The politics of scale is made by dominant as well as by subaltern actors. Although SoliLa! primarily acts at the local level (in a district in Vienna), it actively produced, used and acted on other scales to change power relations. For example at a transnational level, activists of SoliLa! were connected to the constellation of 'Reclaim the Fields', which was important in terms of 'know-how-transfer' and learning processes. Another dimension was the choice of the date of the squatting action: 17 April being the Global Day of Peasant Struggle. This can also be seen as a specific symbolic politics of scale, as all around the world there were actions in favour of food sovereignty on this date. The importance of transnational diffusion cannot be overestimated here. Another example was the Nyeleni-Network in Austria, which facilitated mobilisation. Also the quite positive local Viennese and Austrian-wide media attention was significant. In effect, the strategy of SoliLa! can be described as a 'glocal' or 'multiscalar' strategy, which is not solely bound to the local level and can be seen as a 'glocalised protest'. This simultaneous agency at different scales is a significant strength. These processes cannot be separated from each other.

Different actors have different possibilities for acting on different scales since power relations are embedded within them. Seen from a different perspective, of course, also the BOKU, the city government and the BIG used this potential, in this case to foreclose scales, i.e. in terms of decision-making and to maintain control. This shows that not everybody has the possibility to produce, act on and use or erase different scales, which has important implications for alliances and resistance in terms of class, gender and race. These options and barriers have to be taken into account in thinking about new alliances. For example knowing about what is going to be decided where and when and how is a precondition for appropriate action.

There were different scales at work, which should be considered when analysing land struggles. It is possible that the politics of scale are different in the rural and urban contexts. It is an important question to think about what this could mean in terms of urban–rural alliances and the possibilities of resistance. This is an issue on which further discussion and experience sharing is necessary. Maybe thinking about food sovereignty in urban contexts and connecting it to struggles for the right to the city could facilitate a productive debate with experiences of rural struggles about these questions.

As a current example of land struggles, SoliLa! was unable to gain access to land. It is likely that in the coming years the number of land struggles in Austria will increase. Seen from this angle, SoliLa! was an important beginning. It is clear that urban agriculture will play a central role in the future. SoliLa! has suggested some first steps and may be inspiring for other projects.

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Endnotes

1. We use the term squatting rather than occupation, as we see ourselves within a political tradition squatting on land, buildings, etc. in order to create spaces that present an alternative to the hegemonic capitalist logic. In this sense, we understand squatting as a process in which people appropriate the means to produce/live that they have not previously enjoyed. For us, squatting is part of an emancipatory practice and does not carry the colonial and military connotations of 'occupation'.

2. For a more detailed overview of the history of peasant struggles, agriculture and land reform in Austria see Rohrmoser and Krammer (2012) and Linsberger (2010).

3. Rohrmoser and Krammer (2012) note a crucial lack of historical reflection on attempts of by the peasants to organise themselves.

4. One important exemption is the ÖBV/Via Campesina Austria, a small, but very active and progressive peasant organisation. See: www.viacampesina.at/.

5. For a detailed study of this period see Linsberger (2010), Rohrmoser and Krammer (2012) and Mattl (1981).

6. Average figures conceal inequalities, but the lack of data means we have to rely on these figures.

7. For an overview of the phases of agricultural policy in Austria see Hovorka and Hoppichler (2006)

8. The organic agriculture movement stared in the 1970s. Compared to other European countries, Austria's share of organic agriculture is very high: 12% of all holdings are organic farms (17.2% of the overall agricultural area) (EUROSTAT, 2012: 126), although there are tendencies for organic agriculture to become more conventional. For further discussion see Lindenthal et al. (2008). For a discussion of changing consumer–producer relationships in Austria since the 1970s see Schermer (2012).

9. Krausmann et al. (2003) refer to this perspective as 'socio-ecological'', based on the approach of 'socio-economic metabolism'' (Fischer-Kowalski and Haberl, 1998). But the conception of society seems to be very thin, i.e. a very general distinction between 'agrarian' and 'industrial' society'. Nonetheless, they raise interesting points regarding long-term changes in land use, although in manner abstracted from real-life inequalities and power relations, in which there seems to be no agency. Therefore we call it an 'ecological perspective', which serves to focus on long-term changes. This should be seen in relation to societal changes described in this chapter.

10. Of course, gender, class and ethnic inequalities did not disappear. On the contrary, these dimensions intersect with each other and are key to analysing different aspects of the imperial mode of living.

11. The case of the Raiffeisen Bank was researched by van Gelder and Kuepper (2012).

12. The Social Democratic Party has been in power since the end of World War II and is by far the dominant party in Vienna. The Green Party has not been in power very long and it remains to be seen what impact it will have on city politics and planning processes.

13. For more information, see: http://www.wien.spoe.at/umwelt/internationales-interesse-wiens-nachbarschaftsgaerten, http://wien.gruene.at/2011/04/11/gemeinschaftsgarten (accessed 13 January 2013).

14. 'Red Vienna' refers to the time between 1918 and 1934 when the city government was run by the Social Democratic Party and was 'known for reforms concerning healthcare and education as well as social housing projects. More than 65,000 apartments were built mainly for low-income people and financed through a special 'housing tax' on homeowners (Novy, 1981).

15. This choice was based on decisions made by the city government and – according to the corporatist model – and by the Chamber of Agriculture of Vienna.

16. In this section we will focus on three urban food movements that are relevant for a discussion on land use in Vienna. We do not discuss other important movements, like the 1911 food riots or the contemporary food cooperatives.

17. Source: http://www.kleingaertner.at/wir/geschichte/gesch_1911.htm (accessed 30 January 2013).

18. http://www.kleingaertner.at/wir.htm

19. Klaus Novy (1944–1991) was professor of urban economics and a key figure in 'Red Vienna', the housing cooperative movement and the settlers' movement.

20. Source: http://www.gartenpolylog.org/de/3/wien (accessed 13 January 2013).

21. Source: http://www.wien.spoe.at/umwelt/stadt-wien-foerdert-gemeinschafts-und-nachbarschaftsgaerten (accessed 13 January 2013).

22. Source: http://www.wien.gv.at/tv/detail.aspx?mid=219014&title=Gemeinschaftsgärten-werden-immer-beliebter (accessed 31 January 2013).

23. Source: http://www.skillsdevelopment.org/PDF/Urban-agriculture-research-full-report.pdf (accessed 31 January 2013).

24. Source: http://www.vienna.at/urban-gardening-im-prater-schulkinder-gestalten-hochbeete/3280327 (accessed 13 January 2013).

25. This term is used by the Reclaim The Fields constellation, describing the situation of people taking action to regain control over food production, having no access to land or the means to afford it. See: http://www.reclaimthefields.org/who-we-are (accessed 30 January 2013).

26. The term 'constellation' is taken from the 'Who we are' text of Reclaim the Fields (see http://reclaimthefields.org/who-we-are). For further explanation, see the first RtF-Bulletin, available at http://reclaimthefields.org/content/bulletins.

27. CSA is an alternative mode of organising farms by eliminating intermediaries, linking consumers and producers more directly to counter this dichotomy and to guarantee the economic basis of agriculture in common, among many other reasons. CSA allows for (partial) independence of the market, which increases the room for manoeuvre to organise production, distribution and consumption more according to the needs of the community, with a view to social justice and sustainability. SoliLa! echoes this mode of organising as *Solidarische Landwirtschaft* ('Solidary Agriculture'), as it is usually referred to in German-speaking countries. See for example: http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/.

28. See e.g. http://17april.blogsport.eu/2012/03/22/land-denen-die-es-bewirtschaften/ (accessed 10 January 2013).

29. See, for example: http://oe1.orf.at/programm/301574/; http://derstandard.at/1334531056374/Feldbesetzung-in-Wien-Wir-bleiben-um-zu-gaertnern/; http://derstandard.at/1334796288491/Wien-Floridsdorf-Boku-liess-besetztes-Feld-von-privaten-Sicherheitskraeften-raeumen/; http://fm4.orf.at/stories/1697501/; http://www.vienna.at/zu-besuch-bei-den-feldbesetzern-von-floridsdorf/3231700/; and http://diepresse.com/home/bildung/universitaet/752794/Boku-laesst-von-Studenten-besetztes-Feld-raeumen- (all accessed 30 January 2013).

30. A broad selection of squatting projects in Vienna featured in an exhibition in the 'Wien Museum' in 2012. See: http://www.wienmuseum.at/de/ansicht/ausstellung/besetztkampf-um-freiraeume-seit-den-70ern.html (accessed 30 January 2013).

31. Source: http://unibrennt.at (accessed 13 January 2013).

32. The terminology in this paragraph is mostly taken from the 'Who we are' text of Reclaim the Fields (available at: http://reclaimthefields.org/who-we-are). For an explanation of the 'constellation' and 'star' terminology, see the first RtF-Bulletin, available at: http://reclaimthefields.org/content/bulletins/.

33. Source: http://krisu.noblogs.org/post/category/petition/ (15 January 2013).

34. One attempt to work towards democratising research and education is 'Democratising Agricultural Research for Food Sovereignty in West Africa', published by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). The title illustrates that the content and especially the guidelines mentioned in the study are not universally applicable but must be examined in each context (Pimbert et al., 2010).