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IRKS

Living together in the Gemeindebau in Vienna: On Tensions, Conflicts, Fears and Hopes.

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Executive summary

This report deals with conflicts at the local action research sites of the ALTERNA-TIVE project in Vienna – the intercultural settings of neighbourhoods in social housing estates (Gemeindebau).

We approach this task by first contextualizing broader social developments impacting this research field. The first part, the introduction to this report, is followed in the second part by a discussion of the history and the political importance of the *Gemeindebau*. The third part deals with the phenomenon of immigration in Austria from a socio-historical perspective. The fourth part describes the developments on the field of mediation in Austria. In part five, we offer the reader a closer look on the research field and introduce our local partner organisations, 'wohnpartner' and 'Bassena am Schöpfwerk', and their community-building activities in social housing estates.

Part six constructs a link of these contexts to empirical realities and introduces life in social housing estates from residents' perspectives. Through 'voices of residents' we look further into social life there as it is remembered and as it is perceived today. We hear of social relations as important resources to tackle the challenges of daily life and as lines of tensions or conflicts. This representation is grouped around chosen themes, which throw specific – and hopefully interesting – spotlights at the data we gathered through empirical research in the second project year.

In the section '*The world we have lost*' we offer a more differentiated perception of present-day experiences of living together by comparing them with a bygone past. In the section '*The fear of the other*' we expand on the theme of fears on "both sides", that of the migrants and the 'Old-Viennese'. We try to come closer to the social dynamics that lie behind those fears, to link them to the wider societal developments that have taken place and that we have described in part two and three of this report. Thus we look at how people are being confronted with a new politics of diversity. This is set against the background of what the Gemeindebau represented in former times, the changes that have occurred and – not least – the politics of right-wing parties and the attraction they hold for large segments of people living in Vienna. In the following two subsections we have recounted examples taken from group discussions that illustrate the intricacies, contradictions and potentials of '*experiences of multiple belongings*' and of '*experiences of (relative) citizenship: belonging but different(ly)*'. Both

subsections relate to interviews with migrants living in Austria and discuss their accounts in relation to the concepts of identity and citizenship. We argue that the exclusive logic inherent to national identity makes it difficult for transnational migrants to reconcile the emotional sense of 'feeling home in both' countries on a cognitive level. Thus our interview partners see themselves confronted with the either-or question of who they 'really' are, while experiencing how their sense of belonging to the Austrian society is constantly questioned by others, even if they possess national citizenship.

In the concluding part, we try to come up with a first theoretical realignment of empirical findings with some theoretical contents we presented in our report on *Activating civil society*. Hence we expand on our critical reflections concerning the meaning and practice of 'active participation' on the one hand and discuss local expressions of 'othering' and 'politics of diversity' on the other. Eventually, we raise crucial questions to be addressed through future research on the philosophical concept of recognition and its practical relevance for the fields of interest in this report.

1. <u>Introduction</u>

After the first year of the ALTERNATIVE project in Vienna had been dedicated to theory work, the second year brought about a shift of focus towards empirical research, aiming to dig deeper into the social realities within our research field - the public housing estates in Vienna – called "Gemeindebau".

This engagement in the first instance consisted mainly of an analysis of the phenomenon of neighbourhood disputes in these areas; and their local context, understood as being constituted by the relationships between various actors engaging in these neighbourhoods (such as residents, community organisations and other institutions acting on behalf of the City of Vienna, such as the administration body for public housing "Wiener Wohnen").

In a second instance we also wanted to get a grasp of the existing ways of handling neighbourhood disputes, in order to prepare the ground for the upcoming "intervention" – the skills training for residents in restorative practices. Keeping in mind the overarching question we are pursuing within the ALTERNATIVE project, of how restorative justice might contribute to conflict resolution processes in intercultural settings, we were mainly interested in existing strategies of conflict resolution depending on the active participation of residents and civil society or community organisations. However the empirical material we will present does not add anything particularly new to what was found, interpreted and commented upon in the course of countless other studies – in Austria and elsewhere in Europe, some of which we will consider, especially in the theoretical re-alignment of the closing chapter. The surplus value of cognition we hope to offer will therefore primarily consist in setting a few hallmarks i.e. to focus on a few topics within the narratives of the residents, which will enable us to make this re-alignment.

Throughout the research process, our objective was to listen to and to look carefully at what people told us, to then deconstruct their explanations and situate them in their broader context. While doing so, one of the difficulties we had to deal with, was stemming from the fact that our research and interview questions were centring on the normalities of their life, at times on things so self-evident – to both, them and us, the researchers - that they are usually not reflected upon and form part of some kind of practical knowledge hard to put into words. We therefore face the challenge of

trying to look beyond "normality" by digging deeper into these accounts of local experiences, reading them as testimonies of general societal developments, experienced by individuals on the local level of social housing estates. These changes are of course linked to broader societal developments, which withdraw from immediate human perception, but affect the living conditions at our research sites to a considerable extent.

This report consists of seven parts, of which the first part is the introduction. The second, third and fourth parts are dedicated to the historic socio-economic and political background of the location where our research takes place. We draw on extensive literature and on previous research done by researchers at the IRKS, some of it in the context of EU Framework Programmes. These parts will be followed by the presentation of 'the field' where we talk in more detail about the partner organisations we cooperate with in our action research. This will happen on the basis of documentation of the organisations and on interviews we conducted with staff members of these organisations. Part six can be regarded a core part of this report. It represents 'residents' voices', as they emerged from our qualitative research, the interviews/talks and the protocols of participant observation. This material is grouped around a few themes that pertain to the changes that have occurred regarding neighbourly living together, the fear of the other and the construction of new and multiple identities. Finally, in part 7 we attempt to realign theory and empirical results. This part brings together pieces of theory that we dealt with in the course of the first project year on the one hand and empirical findings from the second phase of research on the other hand. Once more we have attended to the topics that have guided both our theoretical and our empirical interest: active participation on the one hand and 'othering' and citizenship on the other; we end up with reflections about the politics of diversity and about the usefulness of the concept of recognition.

However at this stage our reflections are to be regarded as work in progress, they remain tentative and call for further discussion. On this note, we will now start out with an attempt to arrive at a closer understanding of our specific research site.

2. <u>The Setting</u>[1]

2.1. To understand the Gemeindebau

Presently, about 500.000 residents of Vienna, with a total population of 1.7 million, according to Statistik Austria, are living in flats built, owned and subsidised by the city (http://www.statistik.at/web_de/presse/061801, last accessed 6th February 2014). This substantial public share of the housing market, the specific architectural language of its buildings and the political visions they embody make up a unique phenomenon.

The Gemeindebau is, in fact, an icon of the 'Red Vienna', which in turn can be characterised as the apex of a social-democratic government carried by the political ideology of Austro-Marxism that took precedence in Vienna between the two World Wars, more precisely between 1919 and 1934. It has undergone massive transformations and today's social housing estates are quite different as concerns their standing as part of social welfare arrangements. Despite these developments, on the one hand, one can say that public housing in Vienna has contributed to the costs of housing remaining (until most recently) affordable for the majority of the population of the Austrian capital. Sociologists have mentioned its considerable potential of steering the politics of housing, of economic redistribution and social integration.

On the other hand, these transformations have left their mark on the social composition of the social housing estates and on their position within urban social inequalities. Their social and political importance shape the field of action for our research.

2.2. On the history of the Gemeindebau in Vienna

We will start by giving an account of its history, since we believe that this is the appropriate way to understand what is so special about the public or social housing estates of Vienna and to understand the political vision and the political practice that went with it, as well as the way it has changed in the course of almost 100 years. And

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[1] Katrin Kremmel has presented information on this topic in a paper prepared for the workshop "Restorative Justice in New Arenas" in Onati, Spain 2012; here I, Christa Pelikan, am expanding on her research.

finally, we will shed some light into what kind of intercultural setting it has become during the last decade(s).

In the literature on Vienna's public housing three important phases have been distinguished: The phase between the World Wars, the post-war phase of reconstruction and the formation of the corporate Fordist welfare state and finally the third phase, during which these welfare arrangement were transformed due to the influence of global change and overall neo-liberal tendencies.

During the first phase the housing policy of the Red Vienna emerged as a reaction to the squalor of living circumstances in a rapidly growing capital at the end of the 19th century and as a consequence of the new social democratic regime that set out to overthrow the old powers and the old social order. The housing construction programme of Vienna was financed by special earmarked taxes and included a 'Reichensteuer' levied on luxury goods.

The rationale that carried these efforts that had indeed a sweeping success - within 10 years 70.000 flats had been built, the first 25.000 within three years - was the improvement of the material, the social and the mental living conditions of the working class (not the pauperized masses, but the organised and politically conscious workers). Bottom-up 'autonomous' initiatives like the settlers' movement that were surfacing immediately after WW1 did not survive and came to a halt. In fact, after a phase of 'wild settlements' that can be characterised as an emergency measure and a short phase when these activities were supported by the administration of the City of Vienna, the movement became co-opted and suffocated by large scale efforts that became manifest in the Gemeindebau (Novy 1981, Förster 1998). The public housing estates were supposed to anticipate a new socialist society and to instil and to foster in its inhabitants the qualities required for this new society. There were - and to a degree there still are - courtyards, premises for cultural and social activities, there is quite often a kindergarten. Housing was understood not just as providing shelter, but also as social and cultural praxis, as a contribution toward the constitution and reproduction of the working class family. It was also about the mobilisation of 'Gemeinschaftsgefühl' (community feeling') and solidarity as basis of proletarian class-consciousness, or "to give the proletarians dignity and turn workers into citizens as a

result of the creation of the welfare state" as another author, Andreas Novy formulated it (Novy 2011, 241).[2]

In the second phase, public/social housing estates became part of the project of a corporatist welfare arrangement resting on the consensus-oriented labour relations of a 'social partnership' (Sozialpartnerschaft). [3]

Housing constitutes a third column of institutionalised social entitlements. The two other columns of these entitlements are first of all the system of social security that is connected to the prime mode of provision, wage labour, and the subsidiary system of social aid/assistance. Provision of housing in this understanding appears as part of a welfare regime; it is understood as complementary but separate.

It is no longer targeted exclusively at the working class but increasingly at the social middle classes, their advancement and defence against economic and social risks. Architecturally, the estates become more standardised and 'industrialised', communal facilities (except the common laundry rooms) are no longer part of the building.

The access criteria are defined by occupational status, family status and citizenship (in the narrow sense of having Austrian citizenship); the working migrants (guestworkers) that were present in Vienna since the early 60s were excluded.

The third phase is characterised as 'individualisation and fragmentation in the post-corporatist welfare state'. In public housing the overall global tendencies become manifest as higher rents but also more flats for singles and so-called emergency flats for persons and families in difficult and disadvantaged circumstances, i.e. with very special urgent needs. These 'Notfallwohnungen' (emergency flats) offer access to non-Austrian citizens for the first time.

In 2010 the requirements for getting access to municipal housing have been revised. The upper limit of the annual gross income was raised significantly. Whilst it was Eu-

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[2] In their research on conflicts, Haller and Morawetz were searching for this community feeling - although they were talking about identification. This feeling was clearly dwindling or almost non-existent. Interestingly, they found remnants of this identification in some of the 'older' estates, the ones that had been built in the 1920 - 1930. e.g. the `Karl Seitz-Hof' the former 'Gartenstadt' (garden city) that was also the site of fights in the course of the civil war of 1934. These heroic tales certainly contributed to creating this Gemeinschaftsgefühl - it has not lasted beyond the 1980s or 1990 though.

[3] Austria enjoys - or has enjoyed - a particularly well-developed system of co-operation between the major economic interest groups and between them and the government. Such co-operation was essential for the reconstruction of Austria after the Second World War and created the basis for further economic growth and social stability. The social partnership can be regarded as a very special brand of a political structure set upon the Fordist mode of social integration and of balancing the powers of work and capital/ entrepreneurship with an emphasis on corporatist negotiations and the achievement of compromise.

ro 47.270 until October 2010 for a household with three persons it is presently Euro 67.490 (for a single household it amounts to Euro 2.859 per month). Raising the upper limits is supposed to facilitate more of a social amalgamation in the public housing estates.

There exists a certain tension between the goal inherent in this policy line and the factual tendency of providing for the socially and economically disadvantaged urban population under conditions of an inescapable all-encompassing 'commodification' of housing in general. The EU-directive "On the services of general economic interest" of 2010 has further contributed towards this development by defining social/public housing as one of the social services, but not from a universalistic perspective but focussing on its function of providing social protection and social inclusion of the economically disadvantaged groups.

The relationship of this EU-directive and national policies with a very specific tradition in Austria would certainly warrant further investigation. It would also be worthwhile to make use of theoretical efforts that place these developments within a new social project of citizenship. Yasemin Soysal (2012) puts forward the thesis that there transpires a citizenship model that privileges individuality and its transformative capacity as a collective good. While the welfare state itself has gone through a transformation, increasingly moving away from a system of 'passive benefits' to 'social investment' in human capital these developments are coupled with an emphasis on education in 'active citizenship', which envisions participatory individuals who are adaptable in an increasingly globalized society, and ready to contribute at local, national and transnational levels. This project, while expanding the boundaries and forms of participation in society, at the same time burdens the individual, rather than the state, with the obligation of ensuring social cohesion and solidarity, disadvantaging not only non-European migrants, but also what Soysal calls the 'lesser' Europeans, those not able to live up to the highest form of life - of being productive" (Soysal 2012).

These long waves of development in Austria have been termed 'the transformation of the social' by sociologist Christoph Reinprecht (2012). He is dwelling on the very theories put forward by Soysal when he states that it is the transformation from a uni-

versalistic policy of securing access to affordable housing for the working population to counteracting the exclusion of 'new' disadvantaged strata of the population, not least those with a migration background.

In the course of this research we will attempt to grasp the meaning these changes have for the people and various groups of people living in the Gemeindebau - focusing on the issue of conflict and conflict resolution. In other words we ask in which way does the 'transformation of the social' imprint on people's lives? First we have a look at the present-day social demographics of Vienna's social housing estates.

2.3. The socio-demographic composition of people living in the Gemeindebau.

The residents of social housing estates suffer from a general lack of resources. Compared to inhabitants living in other types of housing, the residents of social housing estates have lower educational attainment, lower per capita income and higher unemployment rates (IFES 2007). In 2008 almost 30 percent of the tenants lived below the poverty line.[4]

According to other research results (SORA 2010) the proportion of income families had to spend on housing was higher than for those outside the Gemeindebau (despite the fact that rents are still markedly below rents on the 'free market). In 2003, 4.600 eviction orders were issued and 9.900 tenants were in danger of becoming homeless. This is twice the number of tenants of private or cooperative housing who were confronted with this situation.

Overall the social composition of the tenants changed from the 1970s onwards; the proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged households increased.

When comparing the data from the City of Vienna in general with those pertaining to the Gemeindebau the following picture emerges:

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[4] This poverty line comes in different versions; firstly there is the category of those at risk of poverty, which includes individuals whose household-income is below 60% of the median income, the threshold defined for the EU countries; one speaks of manifest poverty when lack of income results in severe restriction of material, social and cultural participation in society. Cf.: Statistik Austria

Per capita income

	Vienna general	Social housing estate
< € 950	33 %	44 %
< € 1550	38 %	42 %
< € 2050	17 %	10 %
> € 2050	12 %	4 %

Occupational status

	Vienna general	Social housing estate
Full employed	44 %	35 %
Part-time employed	9 %	6 %
Unemployed	4 %	11 %
Retired	28 %	38 %
Other (household)	15 %	10 %

Educational attainment

	Vienna general	Social housing estate
Primary school	17 %	22 %
Apprenticeship	28%	42 %
Secondary (middle) school	23 %	21 %
High school	18 %	10 %
University	14 %	6 %

The demographic composition of the residents of the public housing estates regarding their ethnic and cultural background has also changed. In the course of the project 'living rooms - Politik der Zugehörigkeiten im Wiener Gemeindebau' carried out by a group of researchers of the Institute for Political Science at the University of Vienna and teachers and students of the University of Applied Arts in Vienna (Bettel/Mourao-Permoser/Rosenberger 2012) the demographics of five estates have been surveyed. The definition of the migration background proved difficult. Included are

now persons with primary migration background (no Austrian citizenship and born outside Austria), secondary migration background (born in Austria but with no Austrian citizenship) and tertiary migration background (Austrian citizenship but not born in Austria). Second-generation migrants, persons whose parents have been born outside Austria are not included in this counting.

According to these calculations 40% of the residents have a migration background; however, if it were possible to include the second generation of persons with migration background the figures would be considerably higher. Estimations allow us to assume a marked increase of people with a migration background between 1996 and 2010.

We face an intersection of the social homogeneity of comparative economic deprivation and dependency on social assistance on the one hand and ethnic heterogeneity on the other hand. The latter adds the lack of resources due to language and cultural barriers and consequent exclusion to an already existing disadvantaged position. Migration and social deprivation merge and contribute to a tendency of social downward-mobility. This affects the life-world of people. There is the experience and the 'feeling' of more social inequality and there is more insecurity and lack of safety. (Rosenberger and Mourao-Permoser 2012, 207)

The way these dynamics are portrayed in the media contributes to the negative image of the Gemeindebau and this in turn affects the self-image and self-confidence of the residents. Within this negative spiral, the Gemeindebau has become the target of political campaigns – most prominent in the course of the election campaign for the City Council in 2010.

These dynamics have to be understood in the wider context of immigration in Austria, and more specifically in Vienna.

3. <u>Understanding migration in Vienna</u>

3.1. The history of migration in Austria

The migration flows that are significant for the present day situation began during the 1960s when labour migrants (guest-worker, Gastarbeiter) were recruited by the Austrian government. The "integration" of these newcomers and their children from the former Yugoslavian Republic, Turkey and other –mainly- Eastern European

countries, who did not return to their home countries after retirement, as they were expected to, is still posing challenges that need to be addressed.

But let's get further back in history to more adequately place Austria as an immigration country. We quote from the case study 'Vienna, Austria' as part of the report 'Housing and Segregation of Migrants' provided by the 'European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions' (Fassmann and Kohlbacher 2007). Between 1945 and 1989, Austria was one of the main transit countries for refugees fleeing communist regimes in eastern and central European countries. About two million people found temporary shelter in Austria during this period. In 1956, over 180,000 refugees from Hungary entered Austria, of whom 20,000 were granted asylum and stayed in Austria. In 1968, about 162,000 migrants from the former Czechoslovakia entered Austria, with the majority later travelling on to other western states. During 1981 and 1982, about 150,000 Poles came to Austria because of the suppressive Polish regime of General Jaruszelski. In 1981 out of a total of 34,500 asylum applications about 29,100 were submitted by Polish migrants.After the introduction of a visa requirement, the number of asylum applications from Polish citizens was sharply reduced.

The 'guest workers' of the 1960s came on the basis of bilateral agreements with Turkey (1964) and the former Yugoslavia (1966). In 1969, the number of guest workers in Austria amounted to 76,500 people. The number of inhabitants of Austria at that time was 7, 441.000. By 1973, their number had almost tripled to 227,000 people, of whom 178,000 came from the former Yugoslavia and 27,000 from Turkey. The oil crises of 1973 and 1981 and a period of economic recession radically reduced Austria's demand for guest workers. As a response to the recession in the early 1970s, guest-worker recruitment was abolished, and the Aliens Employment Act (Ausländerbeschäftigungsgesetz) was passed in 1975. This law still remains one of the primary control mechanisms of foreign employment in Austria. The number of guest workers significantly declined with the introduction of the Act. In 1985, the employment of Yugoslav and Turkish citizens in Austria amounted to only half the level in 1973.

After economic recovery, some former migrants from the former Yugoslavia returned to Austria. As guest worker recruitment had ceased, other forms of migration became

more important – for example, family reunification, clandestine migration and asylum migration.

A temporary economic boom in the late 1980s created labour demand in some industrial areas which was, in particular, met through the recruitment of labour from the former Yugoslavia. The political crisis in the former Yugoslavia after 1990 and the Balkan war in 1992 once again increased the number of Yugoslavs residing in Austria. Some of the immigrants already present in Austria and formerly excluded from employment succeeded in gaining access to the Austrian labour market as a result of the boom. In 1990, a regularisation of the employment status of thus illegally employed foreigners took place, with the result that the employment status of 29,100 persons was regularised.

As a result of the rising numbers of Yugoslavs and eastern Europeans entering the country during this period, the number of non-nationals in Austria doubled, from 344,000 persons in 1988 to 690,000 persons in 1993, while the share of foreign workers as a proportion of all those in employment rose from 5.4% to 9.1%. It must be emphasised that guest worker migration in the 1960s had permanent effects on the current composition of the foreign resident population in Austria. According to the 2001 census, for example, more than 730,000 or 9.1% of Austria's approximately eight million inhabitants were foreign residents, i.e. persons with foreign background. A significant 62.8% of them came from the two traditional recruitment regions, the former Yugoslavia and Turkey.

Austria's population has become even more diverse in recent years. Between 1985 and 2001, over 254,000 foreigners were naturalised. Austria's proportion of foreign-born residents in 2001 (12.5%) was even higher than that in the US.

The official political line and public opinion mostly ignore the fact that Austria is a traditional country of immigration. Immigration policy reflects that ambivalence. In the early 1990s, profound political and economic changes were transforming Europe and new integration measures have been introduced as a result. The fall of the Iron Curtain and Austria's accession to the European Union (EU) in 1995 resulted in more open borders, temporary migration, as well as transnational mobility. The Balkan Wars produced significant inflows of refugees from those areas to Austria's southeast. During the 1990s, Austria opened its borders to war refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Like other European states, Austria did so by instituting a special legal basis

called 'temporary protected status' for the admission and residence of conflict refugees outside the normal asylum procedures. Between 1992 and 1995, a total of about 95,000 war refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina found shelter in Austria. Most of them were granted temporary protected status and received official assistance. Due to an active government integration programme, by July 1999 about 70,000 Bosnians had been provided with long-term residence permits in Austria. The majority of them also entered the Austrian labour market. About 10,000 people returned to Bosnia-Herzegovina, while a further 10,000 refugees moved on to other countries. The conflict in Kosovo in 1998 led to a mass displacement of Kosovo Albanians to neighbouring countries. In 1999, Austria received 5,000 refugees from Macedonia and granted them temporary protected status.

The 330,000 foreigners employed in Austria in 2001 made up 10.5% of total employment. Half of them came from the former Yugoslavia, 20% from Turkey and 11% were EU nationals, mostly Germans. Some 111,000 work permits were issued to foreigners in 2001. In the same year, 75,000 Austrians were employed in Germany and Switzerland. Still, the unemployment rate of foreigners is about 1.5 times the rate for native Austrians. Estimations regarding the number of unauthorised foreigners in Austria differ considerably.

Since the 1st January of 2003, non-EU foreign nationals with residence permits have been required to have basic German language proficiency or pay half the cost of German language courses. The maximum limit on the number of immigrants permitted to enter Austria was set at 8,050 persons in 2004, and the two major streams of newcomers were further categorised into key employees (2,200 persons) and family reunification (5,500 persons) and then assigned to Austria's nine provinces.

Austria's immigration policy can be characterised by some ambivalence manifested in measures that both welcome and restrict immigration. On the one hand, the growing discontent of large parts of the population with the high levels of immigration during the first part of the 1990s was met by policy proposals focusing on 'zero immigration'. Consequently, traditional labour migration and family reunification programmes were severely curtailed. At the same time, new measures were introduced to ensure a better integration of immigrants. The introduction of the principle of consolidation of residence by the same law reduced migrants' status insecurity and enhanced their

integration. Another positive, albeit limited, step taken by the government was the reduction of the waiting period for family members of migrants to gain access to the Austrian labour market. The government also facilitated the recruitment and employment of seasonal workers. In addition, the government allowed individual federal states (Bundesländer) to conclude treaties with neighbouring countries under which they can determine the number of 'commuting' foreigners and an additional number of key personnel – outside the national quota – from these countries.

The history of the Austrian 'guest worker regime' shows that temporary migration has a tendency to become permanent and has long-term implications for the size and composition of the country's immigrant population.

We now take a look at the situation that characterises Austria's capital regarding migration.

3.2. Statistics on migration to and in Vienna

One of the fundamental findings is that in 2009, 44% of all Viennese have a migration background, i.e. they -or at least one of their parents- were born abroad or they are foreign nationals. To provide a more differentiated picture of what constitutes a migration background, we find persons of:

- Foreign nationality and born abroad, active migration experience: 17%

- Foreign nationality and born in Austria, not (yet) naturalised, passive migration experience 13%

- Austrian nationality and born abroad, naturalised, active migration experience: 11%;

- Austrian nationality and born in Austria, migration background as at least one parent was born abroad, passive migration experience: 13%

(Statistik Austria, Mikrozensus 2008/2009)

Through the 'Vienna Integration and Diversity Monitor (2009-2011)' we gain additional information on the socio-demographic set-up of the population with migration background in Vienna.

In 2011 already 49% of Viennese had a migration background (i.e. either they or at least one of their parents were born abroad). The distribution by age group suggests that the development towards a society marked by diversity will continue in the next few years. Depending on the age group, between 45% and 55% of Viennese between

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20 and 40 years of age have a migration background. The share is particularly high among children and young people: the percentage of children who immigrated to Austria or were born in Austria but have at least one migrant parent is nearly 70%.

On the one hand, we read that even though Viennese households in general have seen an increase of their household income, the income gap between the long-term resident immigrant population and households without a migration background has persisted. Third-country nationals are particularly disadvantaged and faced with hardship.

On the other hand, an increasing number of people from the immigrant population reach higher levels of education. This is owed to integration efforts and successes both of the immigrant population and the education system. New immigrants as well as the young migrant generation are better educated. Fifty% of new immigrants have at least completed upper level secondary schooling, and about half of the young migrant generation (15 to 29 years of age) are better educated than their parents. But this cannot obscure the fact that the children of migrants stay mainly in the schools that do not lead to secondary education. While 64,5% of children with German as their first language will attend High School (Gymnasium) after completing the first four years of primary school, this percentage is only 37,2% of the children whose first language is not German. The other way round, while 11% of the students with German as a first language do not follow any further schooling after primary school, the respective percentage is 19,5% for boys and 18,5% of girls of second generation migrants. More girls with migration background than boys end up as unskilled workers (30,1 % versus 20,4). And, finally, children of migrants are overrepresented in special schools, those requiring additional pedagogical efforts (Biffl and Skrivanek 2011).

3.3. Integration policies and diversity management in Vienna and the role of the Gemeindebau

As concerns integration policies, Vienna has substantially differed from federal integration policies, an essential difference in the policy approach towards integration relates to political rights. In 2003, the City of Vienna introduced voting rights for third-country nationals at the level of the Vienna districts. The conservatives (Österreichische Volkspartei – ÖVP) and the right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) brought this reform before the constitutional court, which in 2004 declared the reform in breach

of the Austrian constitution's principles on voting rights and thus cancelled the reform. A piece of EU-policy and decision-making has proved to be of incisive importance for Vienna's migration and integration policy:

The EU - directive

As a consequence of migration flows coming to Vienna, affecting the composition of the population of Vienna, the 'closure' of the Gemeindebau was no longer tenable.. The decisive pressure to change the access policies came from the EU. The EU directive (Council Directive 2003/109/EC. of 25 November 2003) 'concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents', albeit not suddenly changing everything regarding the admission of migrants to the Gemeindebau, did mark a new policy that made this change possible - and necessary.

The criteria for access to a flat in one of the public housing estates are now the following:

+ The applicant holds Vienna as her place of residence at least for two years.

+ The applicant has either Austrian citizenship or that of an EU member state (or Switzerland), or is recognised as a refugee, or has long-term entitlements of residence according to the relevant laws.

These relevant laws are the ' Settlement and Residence Act' (Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetze – NAG). They regulate the conditions and the requirements for obtaining a long-term residence permit for foreigners from other than EU or EWR countries; there is an array of conditions, including proof of employment (or enrolment at a university) and of habitation, including knowledge of German (BGBl.1/100/2005 www.gv.at.ris/dokumente).

These developments can be interpreted as a re-organisation of the welfare state beyond the boundaries of the national state and as a movement beyond a narrow concept of citizenship. The Gemeindebau has indeed become a place of considerable demographic change and of fluctuation, a place where nowadays we find wide ethnic diversity.

Opening the Gemeindebau for the migrant population became a target of renewed political fights and of a flow of expressions of indignation. Between the social democrats of the City of Vienna and the conservative opposition the timing of this opening

and the concomitant information about new rules and new access criteria was contested and became an issue of mutual reproaches. The Freedom Party despite having agreed on the adoption of the directive very soon changed its position – or forgot about it – and called for its revision.

Especially the criteria for awarding a flat in the Gemeindebau (Vergabekriterien) are under suspicion of unjustly favouring persons and families with a migration background. On the surface and as it appears in the perception of observers, of residents and of applicants, this preferable treatment is pervasive and remains conspicuous. Rumours persist and people resort to the stories they have heard and the instances of such policies and practices.

Since the establishment of the Red-Green Government in November 2010 guiding 'Principles of Vienna's Integration and Diversity Politics' have been issued.

The document starts by saying that the City of Vienna has to take care to safeguard, stabilise and advance the quality of life in Vienna by ensuring equal opportunity for all inhabitants, taking into account the diverse living patterns, origins, social backgrounds and special needs of people with mobility handicaps and to enable them to live a meaningful life by assuring access to cultural life, to social, educational, healthcare and care for the aged facilities, to housing of sufficient size and quality, and to nature and recreational spaces, as well as to guarantee social security, personal safety and the protection of property, and to uphold social integration.

Vienna has - at last - confirmed its status as a city of immigration (Die Stadt Wien versteht sich als eine Einwanderungsstadt). It contends that following the city's self-interest, Vienna will make use of the potential and capacities of the migrants and their social and cultural diversity and opts for 'integration-oriented diversity'. It is an attempt at addressing both diversity and integration/inclusion. The statement emphasises that the diversity is apt to overcome a deficit-oriented approach that has dominated approaches to 'integration' during the previous decades.

This approach focussing on the capacities and potentials affords the inclusion and participation (both as being part and having part) based in mutual respect. It states that democracy, freedom of opinion, the dignity of each human being, freedom from violence, gender equality and safeguarding basic social needs form the indispensable foundations of living together - and must not be questioned. It is a participatory ap-

proach – explicitly meant to overcome former paternalistic tendencies. Cooperation and communication with experts ought to take place in a horizontal manner, one based on equality between the partners.

(www.wien.gv.at/menschen//integration/pdf/integrationsleitlinien.pdf, latest access 6th February 2014)

For now, we turn to our research site, Vienna's social housing estates, the Gemeindebau. It has become the focus of a heated highly emotional debate about migration and the standing of migrants in Austria, more specifically in Viennese society.

3.4. The political (and the media) debate

We have already presented some data on the socio-economic composition of residents of social housing estates. They point in the direction of increased precariousness of their social and economic situation. A general loss of social standing has been diagnosed.

As concerns presentation in the media it appears easy and 'tempting' to establish a connection between this loss of status and an increasing ratio of 'foreigners', of migrants living in these public housing estates. There has been a large media coverage during the last few years. Voices were heard – and presented - that portrayed the Gemeindebau as the site of a parallel society, a foreigners' ghetto. A notion that is apt to provoke outrage on the side of the social democratic government of the City of Vienna that is still proud of her housing policy having prevented stark social segregation – not to speak about the formation of ghettos.

A TV-series, in fact a reality-soap titled 'We are living in the Gemeindebau' that had achieved high audience ratings, triggered reactions and manifestations of enraged protest. It was accused of presenting an exclusively negative image of the Gemeindebau attending to the most cherished prejudices about foreigners, about social scum and thrash in general. In public perception the Gemeindebau had become a hotspot of social problems.

Bettel, Mourao-Permoser and Rosenberger (2012) name deprivation and isolation next to neighbourhood conflicts between 'old-time residents and newcomers (Einheimischen und Zugewanderten) as the most pressing of these problems. They be-

moan the loss of community and the erosion of a feeling of collective belonging.[5] But they also point to the empirical evidence that according to surveys carried out in 2008, the residents themselves did not back up the images disseminated by the media.

There seems to be a high degree of contentment with the general living situation – both regarding the material conditions and the social surrounding, especially the quality of neighbourly relationships. Around three quarter of the respondents characterised these relationships as polite and amicable. Four out of five persons said that they experienced conflicts with their neighbours never or only very rarely; but 40% reported also that they had heard of other tenants being involved in conflicts of that kind (Rosenberger and Mourao-Permoser 2012, 43).

The majority of residents – thus the conclusion of the authors – do not directly experience neighbourhood conflicts, despite their being overly present in the public sphere. And in this sphere the conflicts are mainly connected to the topic of foreigners, migrants and 'Turks'. Identity politics are thus construed via the ethnicisation of conflicts, predominantly neighbourhood conflicts.

The election campaign 2010 for the City Council is the most prominent occurrence in that respect.

Election campaigns in general according to Geddes and Favell (1999) set off a discourse resting on the creation of in-groups and out-groups. Migrants and foreigners are especially well suited to construct such groups. The mobilisation of voters alongside these divisions and alongside the question of who belongs to us and who is therefore legally and morally entitled to stay here – moreover to live in the Gemeindebau – thus lends itself to be instrumentalised for such campaigns.

The right-wing FPÖ vehemently demanded the revision of the adoption of the EU directive that had 'opened' the Gemeindebau to foreigners (as we have stated above – dependent on a number of additional requirements). The strategy followed was the

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[5] Whereas we conceptualise 'belonging' as different from the concept of solidarity, Rosenberger and Mourao-Permoser use a very broad understanding of 'Zugehörigkeit' (belonging). They deliberately distance themselves from an understanding at the micro level, which they understand as addressing personal feelings only; they talk about the 'mobilisation of belonging' as a political process.

creation of fear of the 'Old-Viennese' to become excluded from social entitlements – access to flats in the Gemeindebau being one of the most prominent and most visible of these entitlements. The spectre of the exclusion of 'our' people – the fear of the alien – was evoked.

In this election campaign 'the fight for Vienna' between the right wing party and the social democrats, the party in power in Vienna since decades was explicitly announced. To seize 'Definitionsmacht' (the interpretative power) of who 'belongs to us' and who is truly Viennese can be understood as a prerequisite of the seizure of political power. As an outcome of this election, the Freedom Party had considerably increased its votes but remained far from achieving the dominance it had been fighting for.

3.5. Strategies of coping with conflict in the Gemeindebau

For the agencies of the social-democratic government this election campaign had brought about a kind of shock. In the following years, 'Wiener Wohnen' (the administrative body for the public housing estates) has tried to find ways of counteracting the continuing 'Anti-Migrant' and Anti-Foreigner onslaughts of the Freedom Party.

We might roughly discern two strategies: there is for once an increased emphasis on rallying residents around the 'Hausordnung' the house-rules, rules of behaviour pertaining to the obligations of a tenant.

Crass breaches of these rules can result first in a letter of rebuke or warning and – if it becomes repeated and no change of the incriminated behaviour can be observed – an eviction order might be issued. In fact, this is rarely the case. Most eviction orders follow from non-payment of the rent.

Apart from the Hausordnung there is also a 'Hofordnung' for the courtyards as public or semi-public spaces, and there is even a laundry room order (common laundry rooms or washhouses still exist and are in use in most of the public housing estates).

Rule enforcement is the task of Wiener Wohnen and to a wide extent we see – also through our fieldwork– that the expectations of the residents are directed towards this rule enforcement. To quote from the folder 'Living Together' ('Zusammenleben') issued by of the Mayor of Vienna:

"I regard rules for living together as important. Vienna ought to stay a city that offers chances to all people. Therefore it is a core piece of my policy for Vienna for the sake

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of a good living together (Zusammenleben) to take care that rules are being observed and respect as well as considerateness are exercised."

However, in everyday life Wiener Wohnen confronts residents with the challenges inherent to bureaucratic institutions, with all their standardised proceedings, appearing to be nothing more than meanders to those unfamiliar with their internal system, the regulations they have to adhere to, and the official language they use to communicate. In fact, conflicts with Wiener Wohnen and the struggles residents have to undertake in order to achieve something through its institutional channels account for quite some of the troubles residents report as experiencing. As the landlord of social housing estates in Vienna, Wiener Wohnen is held responsible not only for many issues within the estates - as the disposal of garbage, the maintenance of certain infrastructure, security matters and above all, cost calculations of rent and overheads - but also impacts on the daily life of residents.

One example of this kind of power wielded by Wiener Wohnen is recounted by one of the residents who recalls the initiative she and her neighbours had taken for years to keep their stairways nice and homely, by putting some effort into setting up and maintaining green plants there. During a formal visit, the fire police discovered these plants, reported them to Wiener Wohnen, who then ordered all plants to be taken away, even those which were not obstructing the escape ways for emergency cases. After a long fight, residents finally had to give up, remove their plants and turn the visuals of the stairways back into their clean "prison-look".

The fate of the "Blumenkisterl" – big containers to plant flowers outside the house doors – took a similar turn: in a few of the housing estates Wiener Wohnen is now filling them with cement, as a reaction upon the complaints they received about kids throwing around the earth.

However, residents do find themselves in an ambiguous situation here, while at times overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the institutional power of Wiener Wohnen, it is the expansion of this very power they identify to be the solution of other annoyances they are facing - for example for what is perceived as continuous misconduct of other residents. The belief is that if Wiener Wohnen were allowed to do flat visits, like back in the 'old' days, in order to control residents more effectively and if only Wiener Wohnen had additional means to sanction those who do not comply with the

house rules, then a lot of residents could be spared of a lot of social disquiet in the neighbourhood.[6]

The other strategy deployed attempts to offer assistance for dealing with conflicts that arise in the intercultural setting of the Gemeindebau. The sub-organisation wohnpartner was established explicitly to serve this policy. Conflict mediation had occurred already earlier in the context of the so-called community service agencies (Gebietsbetreuung).

In order to have this service city-wide and not only restricted to reconstruction areas (as was the case with Gebietsbetreuung) the responsible alderman in the City Council in 2010, decided not to outsource this task but to keep it inside the housing agency and to start to staff it – quite generously - with the necessary conflict workers and with mediators.

There exist guiding principles for the work of wohnpartner that state that wohnpartner is responsible for conflict management, community outreach and networking project within Vienna's community housing.

3.6. Previous assessments of conflicts in the intercultural setting of the Gemeindebau

Commissioned by the City of Vienna, the Institute of Conflict Research together with the Institute for the Sociology of Law and Criminology undertook an assessment of models and practices of conflict resolution in large-scale housing estates during the years 2001-2002; the report has been published in October 2002. It provided an overview of these models all over Europe and it therefore started with presenting empirical evidence regarding the socio-demographic set-up of large scale housing estates, their being characterised as 'problem estates', as deprived, or rundown estates. We learn that it is the combination and mutual influence of economic, architectural, social and organisational deficits that contribute to this conception.

Right in the beginning the authors state that interventions that are meant to counteract the downward spiral of development and the ensuing break down of a meaningful or at least bearable life in those estates cannot overcome the force of market mecha-

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[6] We will expand on this theme later in this report.

nisms. These estates become increasingly the place of harshly segregated economically disadvantaged groups of the population, to a large part made up of migrants whose 'activation' proves difficult due to their lack of social economic and political resources.

Haller and Karazman-Morawetz (2004) have emphasised that Vienna's large social housing estates, the Gemeindebau in Vienna deviates from this picture. In the previous chapters we have given some indication of the changing socio-demographic set-up that point into the direction of increasing precariousness of the tenants with rising numbers of persons and families with a migration background. We have already quoted the assessment of Christoph Reinprecht that we face an intersection of the social homogeneity of comparative economic deprivation and being dependent on social assistance on the one hand and ethnic heterogeneity on the other hand. But social housing in Vienna is still far from being about rundown living quarters with highly disadvantaged and socially and economically deprived inhabitants. The present-day housing policies of the City of Vienna still hold at bay an unimpeded onslaught of the housing market.

According to the findings of the INSEC study (Sessar et al. 2004) the Fordist era in Vienna lasted until the 1990s (and beyond), and only at the beginning of the 21st century certain modifications and restructuring could be observed, which up to this time had little in common with the sort of neo-liberal turnaround that has occurred in many other west-European countries and cities. Thus, Vienna still appeared as a city that is known for having maintained its welfare infrastructure, and also makes use of that image for her positioning in the international competition of cities. Public transport, public education, institutions and programs of adult education, a broad range of social services and counselling programs are available. Focusing on integration with regard to immigrants, the establishment of the fund for integration (Integrationsfonds), and the soft urban renewal and area management prevented both rapid exchange of population and extreme concentrations of disadvantaged strata in certain quarters and districts of the city. The empirical evidence that has been collected in the framework of INSEC basically confirmed and supported some of the findings from other surveys: The quality of living in the city of Vienna is evaluated highly by a clear majority of the population, and existing problems and troubles are not primarily presented and complained about in a semantics of insecurity, anxiety, or fear

of crime. In the Viennese ideological framework "global anxieties" function as a sort of counter-weight or a contrast medium rather than as amplifiers of "local insecurities". Contrasting the scenarios of real and imaginary "global disorder", as provided and reinforced in the media (and to a certain extent: academic discourses) made the vernacular troubles and turbulences shrink to mere nuisances that are accepted more easily.

On the other hand, it was predominantly with regard to the immigrants that discrimination - in the labour market and the housing market was prevalent - and already in the INSEC study the potential for trouble and conflict could be fathomed: The respondents from the research site 'Rennbahnweg' (where there exists a large social housing estate) voiced their fears of what might happen when the Gemeindebau would become 'open' for non-Austrians.

Notwithstanding these marked differences that characterise large scale housing in Vienna and make for its more favourable situation, and conflict lines found are of the same kind in all of Europe. They have already been there at the time of the research, i.e. the beginning of this 21st century (and probably a few decades ago).

There are mainly:

-problems of noise;

-problems around pets (dog-shit)

-problems regarding the behaviour of children and youngsters (the way the use public space, vandalism, just 'hanging around)'

-problems around alcohol and drugs;

-problems around dirt, garbage, smells

-car-related problems (parking lots, etc.)

This 'international list' is corroborated by the findings from research performed in Vienna (Hanak, 1996; Reppé and Reiter 1997) with only slight and negligible differences regarding the sequence of the problems named.

Already at that time Reiter & Reppé could identify an ethnicisation – or culturalisation - of conflicts. Especially the conflicts around noise, garbage and relating to the use of public space by children became increasingly framed along the division lines of old-time residents (Alt-Eingesessene) on the one hand and newcomers, foreigners

(Ausländer) on the other hand. At that time only persons that had an Austrian passport, naturalised foreigners, were eligible for living in a flat of the Gemeindebau. One could already observe the uneasiness the 'occupation' of public space did arouse amongst the Old-Viennese residents.

And as early as 1996, in an article presenting first results of the INSEC-project, Gerhard Hanak had interpreted the feelings of insecurity presented by the Austrian majority towards their foreign neighbours, as being caused by a "culture conflict". He compared aspects of the Austrian national culture (high control of affects, strong separation of private and public space, individualization) with aspects of 'Einwandererkulturen' (cultures of immigrants). The usage of public spaces (pavements etc.) for purposes other than established in Austria (traffic vs. playground) by migrants (also depending on these spaces because of small flats) is experienced as the "occupation" of "territory" and the "expulsion" of natives from these spaces (Hanak 1996, 68ff). Hanak had also mentioned that problem handling by way of a direct encounter appears hampered and happens less frequently than with other Austrians. There is uncertainty regarding the language and the general sharing of norms and expectations. The tendency to turn to the authorities is more pronounced – and accordingly lasting solutions and a more general adaptation and change of the situation that lies at the basis of the conflict do not occur. Conflicts between Old-Viennese and Newcomers tend to remain – they smoulder, producing lasting uneasiness, frustration and fears.

Looking at the interventions tried out in various places, one main finding catches our attention: It is always a combination of measures that makes for success and for change. One-sided interventions, e.g. physical improvement measure, or furthering a social mix will very soon become evaded or counteracted by stronger forces. The activation and democratic participation of tenants appear as an inevitable condition for achieving a long-lasting and a sustainable effect.

Haller and Karazman-Morawetz (2004) quote from a study carried out on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of the UK:

focusing on issues that go wider than bricks and mortar
- improving community facilities, promoting local employment, improving housing management;

- involving a range of local agencies that reflects the breadth of issues to be tack-led;
- maximising resident involvement, and especially at (and if possible before) the design stage; and
- developing a systematic and strategic approach to the long term continuation of activities on estates...

Besides, it affords an approach that is process-oriented, instead of focussing an iso-lated interventions and a specific outcome.

What did the authors find in Vienna's Gemeindebau? Already at the time the research of Reppé and Reiter took place there had been the pilot project 'Intercultural Living' initiated in the 21st district where a number of flats (51) grouped around a courtyard was erected. Sixty-eight% of the tenants were Austrians, 20% had been born abroad and 12% were living in mixed partnerships. In this case the tenants had been already involved in the process of planning. When asked about the quality of life and especial-ly of 'living together' in the new housing estate the majority of the respondents said that there was no difference from a conventional (non-mixed) estate; about the same number of respondents regarded the mixing as enriching and only from one of the residents came the statement that due to different ways of life there are more poten-tial conflicts. We are told that one has to consider that residents in this estate are middle-class and in rather comfortable economic circumstances. Nevertheless the author pointed out that a process of accompanying mediation for the tenants beyond the time of settlement is important.

Resuming their findings, Haller and Karazman-Morawetz have also pointed out the proposal to establish mediation services and to ensure that access is easy. Certain structural conflicts including those that are based in different patterns and cultural practices would afford an expansion of the mediation model, one that enables wider groups of people to become involved in such a process of conflict resolution.
Finally, it will need preventive interventions that promote inter-cultural dialogue as well as the programmes supporting the activity and the democratic participation of residents.

We will in this place insert a chapter on the development of mediation in Austria as this does strongly influence the way the potential of conflict resolution 'the restorative way' is perceived in Vienna.

4. <u>On the development of mediation in Austria</u>

4.1. The special case of the ATA

The history and the development of social mediation in Vienna are closely bound to the emergence of Victim Offender Mediation.

Contrary to what happened in most European countries (as well as in other countries across the world) 'Mediation' in Austria started and became prominent first of all in the field of criminal law. This history and its specific dynamics have been recounted on several occasions (Pelikan 2000; Pelikan 2010).

In Austria the idea of VOM was brought up in the context of the debate about a new Juvenile Justice Act that had been on and off the political agenda since the late seventies. The initiative was taken predominantly by juvenile judges, together with public prosecutors in the field of juvenile justice, and by the Probation Service Association (Association for Probation and Social Work) – now 'NEUSTART'.

The impetus for reform came from a strong feeling that the repertoire of responses to deviant behaviour of young people was a rather restricted one and unduly severe. It must be added that these deliberations and debates took place in a climate of decreasing juvenile crime rates and alongside a noticeable tendency to deal with minor offences at the level of the public prosecutor's office by not proceeding with prosecution, i. e. by just dropping the charge. Yet this practice in turn bred discontent or at least uneasiness. Were there no more appropriate and carefully thought out responses than just dropping the case, especially where the victim was more severely affected – responses that at the same time would avoid the detrimental and stigmatising effects of conviction?

At that time, concepts and practices of diversion already existed in other countries. However, the Austrian Probation Service – being a semi-autonomous agency at that time – did not want to simply adopt these concepts (like, for example, the Munich "Brücke" model of "work instead of punishment") because they perceived a certain danger of them being used as an agency of control inside the Criminal Justice System (CJS), i.e. as a supervisor of orders of the court. At that time this role was not in line with the Austrian Probation Service's understanding of its own role in the context of criminal policy. Thus, an "alternative to the alternative" was called for.

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At the theoretical level, the Vienna Institute for the Sociology of Law and Criminology (IRKS) was both influenced by and influential in disseminating at the policy level Christie's (1977) notion of the re-appropriation of conflicts. It was therefore indeed *Konfliktregelung* as proposed already in the 1970s by Heinz Steinert, the late scientific director of the Institute of the Sociology of Law and Criminology (IRKS) a friend of Nils Christie's, which became the reality of a pilot project for juveniles in 1984. 'Konflikte regeln statt strafen' (Haidar et al. 1988) was the title of the book that reported on this pilot and assembled various voices: the practitioners', i.e. prosecutors' and judges' and the social workers', the researchers' - in their capacity of both doing the accompanying empirical research and keeping on theorising, reflecting on what had happened and what was further ought to happen (Haidar et al. 1988).

Steinert, in his introductory chapter to this book had put forward the concept of 'conflicts' offering a completely new perspective on 'crime' and its consequences. He wrote: "We can assume that there exist autonomous ways of dealing with difficult situations and with conflicts that do not call for penal law. And it cannot be excluded that these ways work quite satisfactorily (...). *Konfliktregelung* means that a breach of the law must not inevitably be answered with punishment, and it means that a reaction and decision is not necessarily oriented at the person of the offender (as implied in the maxim of 'education instead of punishment' - *Erziehen statt Strafen*). Instead one could in a very pragmatic way focus on the situation: how to tackle it? Will punishment contribute to its 'solution' or improvement? Maybe such a solution has already been brought on the way? (...) Finally, one can offer assistance to those affected by 'the conflict' in order to arrive at a solution." (Steinert 1988: 17)

These proposals and contributions materialised in the form of the first pilot project initiated and managed by a special working group within the Association for Probation Service and Social Work. Three court-based projects were set up in which victims and young offenders should seek to resolve their conflict with the assistance of a social worker, a *Konfliktregler*. The working group set out to make links with public prosecutors and judges handling juvenile cases at these courts.

Right from the beginning the so-called "*Begleitforschung*" (accompanying research) was meant to investigate on-going work within the pilot project. The research report was presented in 1986, followed by a publication of the results together with several related articles in a special issue of the "Kriminalsoziologische Bibliografie" (Haidar

et al. 1988). At that time it was obvious that the pilot project was to be regarded as a success: it worked surprisingly well, especially in terms of the willingness of the victims to co-operate and to participate in VOM. They accepted the new approach and the vast majority approved it as being beneficial.

The pilot project was thus continued. Simultaneously the draft for the new Juvenile Justice Act was revised and concrete provisions for conflict resolution were included to make this new instrument applicable over a wider range of cases of juvenile delinquency. In the course of intensive discussions with legislators, the concept of "conflict resolution" underwent some changes and modifications. In the end, the text of the law no longer used the term "conflict". It had become "Out-of-court offence compensation" (*Außergerichtlicher Tatausgleich* - ATA), embracing a broader understanding of the 'restorative' effort.

As already stated, it proved more difficult to arrive at the next step - the introduction of VOM as the core piece of an amendment to the Criminal Procedural Law. Despite the undeniable proof that this intervention worked, opposing forces rallied when plans for incorporating this new intervention into the Criminal Procedural Law became more concrete. Objections were voiced by two different groups: the conservative party and some representatives of the CJS on the one hand, and representatives of the women's movement, more specifically the women's shelters, on the other. The latter were not against VOM in general, but thought that this procedure should not be applied in domestic violence cases (a debate that is still on-going). On the other hand, we see that the practice of VOM in Austria is to a considerable extent constituted of cases of partnership violence – and the efficacy of this intervention has been researched intensively.

Trying to characterise the spirit that carried the introduction of VOM into the CJS, we might speak of a genuine European model of a true alternative to the criminal procedure – promoting the active participation of both victim and offender, striving for reparation and thus eschewing punishment and 'working through' the conflict by attending to the concrete experience of the people involved, of doing and done-to, of harming and being harmed. It was thus committed to the principles Christa Pelikan had declared constitutive of restorative justice: the participatory, the reparative and the social (or 'life-world') element (Pali and Pelikan 2010). However, at the same time, this Austrian practice of VOM stayed well connected to the CJS, and the public

prosecutors remained the gate-keepers (or the 'masters of the procedure', as they preferred to call themselves). To withdraw from prosecution was – and still is – the predominant mode of reaction when an agreement is reached as a result of VOM. Due to the strong support it had received from the social sciences, VOM in Austria remained, for a long time, committed to the 'third path' of reacting to wrongdoing (Rössner 1989, Frehsee 1991, Walter 1994).

It was this alliance of social science, of a strong probation-service and a number of influential members of the judiciary, the prosecutors and of policy-makers that were ready to enter these new paths that carried this innovative model of intervention. These people shared the excitement of trying out something new and they shared the experience that these new ways did indeed 'work' and produce the effects they had hoped for.

An array of favourable conditions provided the indispensable background for this reform endeavour to succeed. The 'miraculous' part is that the success of the first pilot project came unexpected, albeit hoped for - and in addition: it is always a bit of a miracle if the right persons, the right ideas and certain favourable socio-political structures come together at the right place and at the right time.

An important feature of the Austrian VOM is that it is a professional model. This stems from the vital role the 'Association for Probation and Social Work' played in carrying out *Konfliktregelung* (conflict regulation/resolution). The *Konfliktregler*, i.e. the mediators of the association, were social workers that had acquired their specific qualification and their professional profile initially through 'learning by doing' in the course of the pilot projects and with the assistance of its accompanying research. It was evident and it was stressed explicitly that this professional profile had to be different from that of the 'probation officer'. Mediators had to attend to the requirement of standing 'between' offender and victim acting as instigators or catalysts that enabled the parties to take care of the conflict and the matters arising from the act of wrongdoing. It was deemed a highly demanding task – standing up to the paradox of finding its optimal professional expression in making oneself redundant, remaining in the background and bringing the capacities of the parties to find a solution themselves to the fore.

What is still completely absent in Austria is any kind of community involvement. While it was never considered during the phases when the pilot projects were planned and carried out, it has become a deliberate decision to stick to the 'professional model' (Hofinger and Pelikan 2005, Pelikan 2007). A discussion of the role and meaning of community involvement can be found in Christa Pelikan's treatise 'On mediation procedures' (Pelikan 1999).

The pilot had shown that this alternative perception was possible - and moreover that the parties concerned experienced it as 'ordinary and reasonable' - as 'common sense', Tony Marshall (in a personal communication) was later to coin the one-word definition of 'Victim-offender mediation'. And it worked! Doing conflict regulation outside the court, offering this possibility to those that were affected by a 'conflict', an act of wrongdoing as defined within the Penal Code, was accepted.

The moment the overwhelming success of this pilot project found its stark expression in Austria in certain clauses of the new Juvenile Justice Act, it had to change the name: Konfliktregelung became Außergerichtlicher Tatausgleich: 'out of court offence compensation/regulation'. The 'criminal act' (Tat) entered the stage again – Conflict regulation became moulded according to the requirements of criminal justice. Thus the Austrian model has been merged with and swallowed by the criminal justice system (CJS) and its logic - the logic of offender and victim. Anyway, after the gradual extension of a pilot project in the field of general criminal law, the Tatausgleich in Austria became part of a package of diversionary measures within an amended criminal procedural law at the beginning of 2000. We had a legally based nationwide practice of what was former Konfliktregelung - but it was no more than one of those diversionary measures and although renouncement of an indictment was and still is the most prominent reaction of the CJS, it is a diversion only from the mainstream of the criminal procedure. It is definitely part of it, well and still increasingly enclosed and hedged in by legal regulations.

How far has Austria come on the way back into perceiving the Tatausgleich in terms of the CJS? Or in other words, what has remained of the idea of a conflict regulation that is different from the ways of the 'law' and its neglecting and overriding people's ordinary ways?

The *Tatausgleich*, despite its being fenced in by legal regulations, has preserved a certain amount of autonomy - which is partly due to the standing of the organisation

'Neustart', which is responsible for all extra-judicial services in the realm of criminal law in Austria, including doing victim-offender mediation, the *Tatausgleich* and especially providing for the recruitment and training of the *Konfliktregler*, the 'conflict settlers' or mediators.

Regarding the *Konfliktregler*, Austria chose from the beginning to follow a model of professional assistance to the parties. But one must also mention the fact that the profession of the *Konfliktregle*r was invented, constructed and developed from scratch – i.e. doing it and at the same time reflecting on the practice. The paradoxical content of the work of a *Konfliktregler*, entailing the task of stepping behind the parties and making oneself redundant, is embodied in what a young woman *Konfliktregler* reported to Christa Pelikan in the course of a seminar on developing a methodology: 'The night before doing my first case, I was lying awake and I kept thinking: "What can I do in order to enable these two (the parties) to get in and talk through their conflict?"'

4.2. Mediation in Civil Law, including Family Law

Before the 90s another pilot project was set up in the field of *Family Law*. This time it has the characteristics of pure mediation and it was followed by a proliferation of individuals as well as of groups and organisations as providers of mediation services.

An interesting feature of this project was the fact that many of the family judges that were involved in the pilot project participated in a rather intensive mediation training, consisting of four four-days sessions taking place over the course of about 18 months. This training was not intended as turning judges into mediators, rather they ought to gain a deeper and more realistic understanding of what mediation is about, not least making them aware of the profound differences between mediation on the one hand and striving for a negotiated agreement at court on the other hand.

Again an organisational link was established with the court and judges were supposed to refer or rather recommend cases. The success of this policy was limited; the numbers of successfully closed family mediation cases that could be taken into account in the resolution issued by the court, remained low. In these cases a - means-tested - contribution from the Ministry of Family affairs can be applied for. Mediators whose services fall within the remit of this scheme have to be registered and fulfil certain qualification criteria.

Mediation has become more widespread *in environmental affairs*; large-scale group mediations have occurred in connection with the erection of additional airstrips of Vienna's International airport Schwechat.

Two studies conducted by the Austrian Society for Environment and Technology in 1989 and 1999 respectively showed that mediations were first and foremost infrastructure projects, followed by trade and industry related projects and projects undertaken by municipalities. In 50% of the cases mediation had been preceded by a long lasting conflict (up to 20 years). In terms of how the cases came to mediation, the proposal typically came from the project initiators, followed by local politicians. In most cases, citizens taking part in mediation were motivated by their opposition to a project based on fears for their environmental and physical health and wellbeing.

The majority of mediation proceedings were concluded within one year. The provisions in the mediated agreements typically go beyond legally prescribed guideline, restrictions and duties of the parties responsible for the project and include creative solutions. The agreements mostly deal with noise prevention precautions, reduction of emissions, information systems and compensatory environmental measures.

The research also pointed out that the involvement of all relevant parties, the participation of a professional mediator or mediation team, a clearly defined procedural structure, and the creation of a binding outcome in the form of an agreement were the most significant factors for success in environmental mediation.

Finally, an obligatory attempt at mediation is required in all cases dealing *with rent and housing affairs*. An amendment to the law on Neighbour Relations requires all neighbours who turn to the courts with a complaint to prove that they have made such an attempt.

However, when studying the relevant regulation to be found in the Civil Law Amendment of 2004 (Zivilrechts-Änderungsgesetz 2004) more closely, we come to discover that the regulation applies only to conflicts that ensue from infringements of the right to uninhibited access to light and air through trees or plants on neighbouring premises.

4.3. Mediation in community service agencies (Gebietsbetreuung)

The regional community service agencies of the City of Vienna, which are entrusted with the task of providing information and counselling on issues of revitalisation, on renovation of housing and rental law, had started to make use of the instrument of mediation already in the 1990s.[7] The type of conflicts that were deemed amenable to this instrument did not differ from the conflicts we see today and which we have been talking about. In the report of Haller & Stögner (2004) the role of migrants is also addressed. A majority of conflicts involve persons with a migration background; they did figure very rarely as 'complainants' though but are almost always the party that is complained about.

The procedure applied was also by and large the one characterising the activities of wohnpartner today.

Elements of mediation were applied, while a fully- fledged mediation was – at the time the study was conducted – an exceptional event. It was generally regarded too demanding and requiring resources that were not existent. The readiness and capacity of parties to engage in a process of mediation to muster the communication skills and the amount of self-activation necessary for 'real' mediation were deemed low-grade. Interestingly, we were told in an interview about exactly this kind of sceptical attitude and the belief that mediation is for middle-class people only.

The application of mediation differed widely between the bureaus of area management; the percentage of agreements reached was reported as amounting to 79%. The necessary adaption of the standard mediation method was already on its way in one of the bureaus and consisted mainly of an extensive and elaborated clearing phase that served to assess the capacity of the parties to engage in mediation, in addition compensatory empowerment could be achieved in that phase.

On the other hand, the researchers were already at that time (2008) – told about large-scale mediation that had involved many of the tenants and parties in conflicts in a Gemeindebau. We will refer to this in the next part.

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[7] www.wien.gv.at/Gebietsbetreuung

5. <u>The field</u>

In this part we intend to present information and insights into the general organisational set-up, the policy-orientation and the praxis of the organisations that are our partners in the ALTERNATIVE project. The establishment of cooperation with these partners - Bassena am Schöpfwerk and wohnpartner - was constitutive for the work to be carried out at the Vienna research site. We encounter ourselves in a field that is already 'occupied' and where a lot of activities are going on, where a lot of experience has been gathered and where therefore restorative justice has to find a place that appears adequate and convincing to those players that are there already and have been active for quite some time. Our first task for the second year of the project was therefore to find out what is going on, on the one hand and to make the project and its potential known to these partner organisations on the other.

5.1. The organisation wohnpartner

Structure and activities of wohnpartner

The creation of wohnpartner and its organisational integration into the large service organisation of 'Wiener Wohnen' merits special attention. This entails specific decisions as to the way these services are to be delivered and, more important, about the degree of autonomy that is 'granted' to the tenants and to potential NGO's becoming active in the field of conflict resolution.

It is completely in line, it is, in fact, a continuation of the policy followed by the City of Vienna since the times of the Red Vienna.

There is first of all the decision to keep this kind of activity and this 'service' for the Gemeindebau within the confinements of the administration of the City of Vienna; within the large organisation of Wiener Wohnen, respectively 'wohnservice'. It is a huge hierarchically organised structure where wohnpartner has been fitted in. The advantages that go with this structure - general availability, consistency and equability of services is thus balanced against a certain bureaucratisation and the public perception as part of an administration that offers services as well as control. It is a bit of a 'Fremdkörper', a foreign body within this huge administration and it is continuously called upon to ward off misplaced and 'wrong' expectations. Being part of the City

Administration means also to be part of the Social Democratic, the Red Government [8] - that is under severe attack from the right wing Freedom Party. And the policy followed regarding migrants is at the centre of these attacks.

The intention that went with the foundation of wohnpartner was to extend mediation work beyond the reconstruction areas where it had already been in use for a few years (since around 2000). The other columns of the activities of wohnpartner comprise community outreach, predominantly understood as preventive work, and networking. Wohnpartner nowadays consists of 9 teams that work in 17 places all over Vienna. It has about 150 employees, one third of them is of non-Austrian background; those with Turkish/Kurdish background and those from the countries of former Yugoslavia are most strongly represented, but there also a few from countries of the Near East, from Asian and African countries. There are additional personnel to carry out specific tasks, especially in the context of 'wohnpartner unterwegs' (wohnpartner on the move); they are bound to wohnpartner by special contracts. In addition, there exists a pool of external mediators that are prepared to assist as partner in carrying out mediation - which is always performed as co-mediation.

A considerable part of the staff has participated in training as a mediator. There is extensive on-going training for the staff and for the members of the networking organisations.

All these facts can be found in a glossy brochure, the annual report of wohnpartner that makes for interesting reading. As can be expected, this is the presentation of a success story.

Let's attend to a few cornerstones of these activities.

We have been talking about rules. In relation to this, an important initiative is worth mentioning – the creation of the Vienna Charta a process that lasted from 2010 until November 2012 when it was presented to the public. This effort brought together citizens in order to discuss way of living together and

[8] Although there was a period when a coalition of Conservatives and Social Democrats made up the government of the City of Vienna, this did not markedly influence the public perception of this government as being deeply entrenched Social Democratic.

getting along peacefully. It was emphasised that nothing was prescribed from above — that the City of Vienna merely facilitated the process. The aim of the process was to agree on common ground rules for the future of our city. In the Charter process, the people of Vienna could express their views on how good neighbourly relations should work from now on and what they would do to contribute to that. It was not about things politicians or the city administration should do, but rather about what every individual can do to improve the way we live together in our city.

Certain principles and rules for this 'getting along' were decided upon in the course of more than 50 discussion rounds all over Vienna. Observing mutual respect, consideration for the needs of others and providing spaces for exchange emerged as those overall principles or rather preconditions.

The special service of 'Willkommen Nachbar' (Welcome Neighbour) was established as one of the outcomes of these discussions, teams of people who are to visit, to greet and offer support to newcomers to the Gemeindebau. These welcoming teams, consisting of volunteers, receive special short training for this task. They meet about twice a year to exchange their experiences and to further develop their strategies of approaching newcomers.

Truly impressive are very special events that occur in cooperation with other services and engaged individuals, e.g. the project 'Kunstgastgeber'. Residents of the Gemeindebau volunteered to host for a certain time – about a week – the presentation of an artist. It was intended to create transitional spaces – transcending the boundaries between public and the private space. The works of the artists are created as connected to the location where they are shown. It proved to be a very fruitful cooperation and for many of the participants it marked the beginning of real friendships.

These are examples of 'Gemeinwesenarbeit' (community outreach). According to the rationale of wohnpartner community outreach is considered to be a dynamic process that constantly evolves through continuous work with expert panels, reflection and training and especially through practical, day-to-day work. Wohnpartner contends that it accompanies, initiates and supports open-ended processes on site by activating

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available resources. It fosters participation in order to achieve sustainable solutions developed in co-operation with residents.

5.2. Statistics – the conflict management work of wohnpartner[9]

We will here have a closer look at conflict resolution or rather conflict management work of wohnpartner.
They list the types of conflicts where residents have asked the assistance of wohnpartner. In 2012 altogether 3080 cases were brought to wohnpartner.

Type of conflict	Number
Usage of common facilities	67
Generation conflicts	33
Questions and information regarding administration	94
Courtyard usage	180
Intercultural conflicts	40
Conflicts stemming from a special situation[10]	245
Conflicts around functions in organisations	22
Conflicts around noise	1541
Personal conflicts	542
Social problems	188
Conflicts around pets	133
Usage of laundry room	15
Total	3080

In the year 2012 200 mediations were performed. It is indeed only a very small percentage of the conflict work performed by wohnpartner.

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[9] The information used in this chapter has been provided by the central office of wohnpartner that is responsible for documentation and its processing; we have to thank Markus Schaden-Gaal for his assistance.
[10] 'Special situations' are mostly referring to psychological or psychiatric problems.

Type of conflict	Number	%	All closed cases 2012	Ratio of mediations / all closed cases 2012
Usage of common facilities	1	0,50%	62	1,61%
Generation conflicts	2	1,00%	36	5,56%
Questions and info: administration		0,00%	98	0,00%
Courtyard usage	5	2,50%	186	2,69%
Intercultural conflicts	7	3,50%	49	14,29%
Conflicts from special situation	5	2,50%	271	1,85%
Conflicts around functions in organisations	3	1,50%	20	15,00%
Conflicts around noise	116	58,00%	1514	7,66%
Personal conflicts	48	24,00%	591	8,12%
Social problems	11	5,50%	202	5,45%
Conflicts around pets	1	0,50%	117	0,85%
Usage of laundry room	1	0,50%	17	5,88%
Total	200	100,00%	3163[11]	6,32%

The 200 mediations took place in 178 different conflicts. This implies that there is an average of 1,12 mediations per conflict case (those where mediation took place at all). Altogether mediation happened in only 6,32% of all closed cases. Looking at the conflicts around noise we can see that this type of conflict makes for 58% of all mediations; on the other hand it is only 7,66% of noise conflicts that are tackled by performing mediation.

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[11] The difference in the total number as compared to he table above cannot be explained satisfactorily

The majority of cases are dealt with by a wide array of interventions, ranging from just talking and giving advice, short-term crisis intervention or making a phone call to round table conferences, or fully-fledged mediation. The investment of time and effort differs accordingly. From the table above we can see that the category that is termed 'intercultural conflicts' according to the documentation of wohnpartner is indeed one where in a comparative high percentage (14,29%) of all closed cases mediation was applied. About 154 cases (77%) ended with an agreement, 12 (6%) without an agreement. For 34 (17%) cases the result remains unclear or it is not known. Mediations are generally performed as co-mediation. Mostly both mediators are staff of wohnpartner; in 65 cases one of the mediators was an external person. Six mediations were performed with the assistance of an interpreter.

5.3. From the interviews with social workers of wohnpartner

The activities of wohnpartner

The interviewees contended that the work of wohnpartner rests on three pillars: community work, conflict work, working with specific projects. Neighbourhood is the all-encompassing theme. This is laid down in the slogan: Promoting good neighbourhood! ('Für eine gute Nachbarschaft!').

As concerns the projects one can discern 'top down' and 'bottom up' projects: the latter are area specific projects, and they are often planned as processes running over a certain period in time. 'Hofnutzung', the use of the common courtyards that are an integral part of most of the estates might be the subject of such a project. This usage of the semi-public space is often one of the most contested matters and a source of conflict and of grievances for different groups of residents. We have been told about one such project that has lasted more than five years and has found a temporary conclusion only recently. The top down projects are those that are executed all over Vienna, and have already proved feasible and 'successful', i.e. 'Welcome Neighbour!'

Each team has decided to focus on at least one priority area. These are either especially difficult and problem-ridden areas where a special effort at improving neighbourly relations seems necessary, or they are those where a budding activity already exists that it seems promising to further endorse and promote. As an example of the first type, one of the team-leaders provided us with a sketch of what this area is like: "There is nothing out there, no place, inside or outside where people can meet, no

social networks whatsoever. In addition, the only place that might function in that way, a small retail shop ('Greissler') is threatened to be closed down; there is even an initiative of some of the locals to do away with the shop. They complain that it has become a meeting place of alcoholics who are noisy and who leave their beer cans lying around." For the wohnpartner team to deal with this initiative, to arrange for discussions about the conflicting needs of the residents and first of all: to save the retail shop will be their task in this area.

There is a rationale or guiding line for doing conflict work apart from the guiding principles that is followed in every team. It runs thus:

Whenever a person is calling on wohnpartner with a complaint - about a neighbour causing irritation or disturbance, or a threat to his/her feeling of safety, the person is asked to show up for a personal face-to-face interview which is supposed to be quite in-depth and where the social workers see it as their main task to 'take this person serious' (jemand ernst nehmen') and to listen carefully to her grievances and complaints.

Taking people's utterances serious does not mean to take them 'at face value'. Rather one has to ask: what is behind the words used and behind the complaints expressed? In fact, to dig into the statements and the complaints more deeply is state of art in any mediation. It is about helping people to bring to the surface their real needs and interests - they have to become aware of them and find a way to articulate them.

Especially, complaints directed at migrants and their way of living as an expression of their 'particular nature' afford to 'break down' the general accusations and to arrive at naming the concrete disturbance and irritation.

On the other hand, we have been told that it can happen that migrants who are the target of a complaint by an Austrian very quickly and very readily declare that they fully understand and that they will change their ways and behave according to the demands of the other. If the party promises that she will completely stop cooking the kind of food whose smells are molesting the neighbour, a social worker feels urged to go more deeply into the matter. First of all, s/he tries to check how realistic such a promise can be, and secondly what kind of fears might lie behind this readiness to comply?

The next step after listening to a complaint consists in offering the 'complainant' to address the other party, the one the complaint is directed against and to invite

him/her for an individual interview. Often the first interview, based on the fact that people are listened to, results in their feeling less helpless and - following an advice of the social worker - attempt to address the other person and find a common solution of their own. In fact, this kind of empowerment is the preferred strategy of wohnpartner and the conflict work they undertake.

The routine way continues with an individual talk with the other party; we have been told that in the majority of cases there is a reaction to the letter of invitation from wohnpartner - sometimes it takes another letter - but those not reacting at all are rare.

This seems to be due to several factors: first there is certain curiosity and the urge to respond and give vent to one's own point of view and second there is wohnpartner's perception as an authority, a 'Behörde', whose requests one must comply with.

Again, finding a solution of one's own is most often proposed in these meetings and it is – according to the social workers interviewed – attempted by the parties in a number of cases.

In some cases this offer and the assistance provided by wohnpartner is not accepted and made use of by the residents. In this case they are informed about the costs and the potential consequences of turning to the landlord to lodge a complaint or report to the police. Most interview-partners have stressed that there are cases where this strategy might be the one that is appropriate for certain cases; they will not dissuade the parties from choosing this way by all means.

Applying mediation is just another strategy offered by wohnpartner - assistance in resolving the conflict together, finding a solution that is the one that fits this problem, enabling the parties to go on living together as neighbours. And most complainants do indeed prefer to live peacefully together in their neighbourhood.

We have gained the impression that especially those social workers that act as mediators make quite an effort to convince residents that turn to wohnpartner for advice and assistance of the usefulness of mediation as a means of finding a sustainable solution and of achieving a more peaceful living together. Although they stress also that they do not rely exclusively or even primarily on mediation, they believe in the potential of this instrument. There are more doubts especially regarding the parties' compliance with the agreements arrived at as a result of mediation. One social worker had the impression that a substantial percentage of parties turn up again with a grievance

after some time. And we heard twice that the practice of having usually a single mediation session only, was regarded as insufficient in the majority of cases. We could hear the proposal to change this practice.

As concerns the mediation process in particular, an interesting contribution came from one of the mediators who related his experience with the use of shuttle mediation. He had in the beginning of his practice as a mediator resorted more often to the strategy of indirect or shuttle mediation. Now he does so only on rare occasions. "You get lost, easily" he said and he meant that in the course of delivering the respective messages to both sides, the essence of mediation as really listening to the other might not become effective; the process might become a mere 'negotiation'. Now, he says, he uses this strategy only when he has the impression that he can in this way achieve a first convergence or understanding of the parties.

Conflicts attributed to inter-cultural differences

Our interview-partners perceived and judged the incidence of this kind of conflict differently and they displayed different lines of arguments regarding this incidence.

Thesis 1 is what we call 'The defensive line', which argues that by and large the Gemeindebau is not ridden by conflict and even less so by conflicts along the lines of cultural difference.

There is a variant of this argument – it pertains to the prevalence of conflicts in the Gemeindebau in general though; e.g. one social worker stated: "We do have a biased perception, we do not see those instances where conflict handling is done by the residents in their own way - including peaceful ways - and without resorting to reporting to Wiener Wohnen or the police."

During those summer months walking inside quite a number of those estates, their courts and the pathways between the different buildings, a peaceful atmosphere was prevailing, of course, it was to a large part summer-time laziness and quietness with the warm weather, or even the heat, responsible for the slower rhythm of life, the subdued tones of chatter and of children playing. These circumstances notwithstanding, this impression is not completely out of the ordinary and thus misleading. The peacefulness is a feature at least of some of the estates – but the disturbances of peace are there as well.

Thesis 2 argues mainly that conflicts that are due to cultural differences are pervasive in most of Vienna's social housing estates.

Thesis 3 argues that there are conflicts that are framed along intercultural lines but - when looking more closely - turn out to be inter-generational conflicts.

In any case and independently from these perceptions, the strategic guideline mentioned above regarding the attempt to 'break down' conflicts is of special importance when complaints are framed by the residents in inter-cultural terms (it is these Turks and their habits that are unbearable!). Parties are asked to formulate concrete disturbances and irritations that affect their life and their well-being. The explanation of one of the team-leaders: "we try to explain to the people that together we can tackle those concrete problems, while we cannot change other resident's nationality, or his place of birth or his religious or ethnic affiliation". If residents insist that their problem is exactly this religion or nationality of the party they are complaining about, wohnpartner has to withdraw its support.

We have heard that in general, residents have adapted to those basic rules of the game; "they know the code", as one social worker put it and the majority refrains from explicitly uttering insults and invectives against residents of non-Austrian origin. Underlying there might still be something in that line smouldering - and it might be expressed as the demand for foreigners to become assimilated to the lifestyle of the host country. The social workers contend that in the majority of cases they are confronted with afocus on concrete needs, can be achieved. "Conflicts with migrants are only rarely explicitly addressed. People have learned the code: no insults of foreigners – of course, something might run below the lines usually it surfaces as the demand for adaptation and assimilation: work and behave!"

What kind of conflicts is wohnpartner to tackle? One of our interview-partners suggested differentiating two types of conflicts, depending whether they pertain to the public or rather semi-public space and the courtyards or to the inside of the buildings and the tenants' apartments.

In the courtyards there is noise from children playing football, or from youngsters sitting together smoking and drinking in the evening; children are riding their bicycles (which is not allowed).

And then there are the Turkish women, housewives who are sitting together in the courtyards, often with their small children running around being noisy, their behaviour not sufficiently controlled and curbed by their mothers. Or the mothers just sit there, chat and eat nuts and seeds, leaving the shells on the ground – and they cannot be addressed and talked to – according to the 'Old-Viennese' because they do not understand German.

There is a story we have been told that refers to these women. A woman came to wohnpartner to complain about the Turkish women sitting together every day in the courtyard, cracking their nuts and seeds– and talking in Turkish. She thinks this causes a kind of defilement of the courtyard that ought to be stopped – but you cannot talk to them! Isn't there anybody to definitely forbid them to do this? Well, there is not! – neither Wiener Wohnen as the landlord, nor the police, least of all the wohnpartner. The woman went away, left to her own device. But she returned a few days later and she told the social worker the following: she had taken a bowl and brought it down to the women, she set it on the table gesturing that it was meant to hold the shells of the sunflower seeds. Then she left and from her window she saw that after a while the women left with one of them carrying the bowl. After a while there was a knock at her door and she was given back the emptied bowl. And she saw that the remaining shells that had fallen to the ground were swept away by one of the women.

This little story does not need much 'interpretation' here, first of all, because the lesson to be derived from it is such an obvious and such a simple one. But we have meanwhile told it to many other people active in this field, because it illustrates two things: the often trivial nature of conflicts in inter-cultural settings and the trivial, the simple but at the same time truly creative ways these problems can be dealt with. We have also started to further ask our interview-partners what might be the preconditions for people to act as this woman did? What makes for the personal qualities of being relaxed and open, of being creative – and even more important how can these qualities become elicited and be supported?

We have attempted to address the topic of traditional Turkish women that appear difficult to approach by the Viennese residents. And we have especially asked those social workers of wohnpartner that are themselves of Turkish respectively Kurdish origin. We got differentiated answers that helped us to gain a better understanding.

They put forward the perspective according to which these women are indeed laying claim to the semi-public space of the courtyard - as a space where an important part of their way of living can enfold. The language barrier makes for restrictions in expressing – and negotiating - this claim though.

It has been broken down several times by using 'sign language' as in the case story related above. We know of another instance, where a Turkish woman, wearing the veil but in command of German, approached a man who used to sit on one of the benches in the courtyard during the hot summer days wearing shorts only, with his belly and torso exposed. This woman told him one day: 'You know it might be nice for you to sit like that, but there are quite a few women from my country whose husbands will not allow them to go down to the courtyard in order to sit and breathe some fresh air – because of you sitting there exposed like this! You should at least wear a T-shirt!' This man whose living conditions were rather poor (a problem with alcohol was hinted at) agreed to this request. In exchange for him obliging, he asked to receive some of the nice, good-looking and good-smelling food he had seen the Turkish women preparing and eating.

The story was told to us as an illustration of a traditional Turkish woman being able to come forward and to take a step actively expressing her and her country-women's needs and their demand for getting space for their way of living.

The irritations these women constitute are the other side of the coin. To some part it seems a vague feeling emanating from their sheer presence, their congregation in semi-public space. The threat of these alien ways of life taking over, suppressing and edging out the old-Viennese style of living – and that of a younger generation of women as well – has been expressed in one of our interviews with an elderly couple, residents of a social housing estate.

We will talk about mutual fears and at more length below; we will dedicate a separate section to this topic.

We also came across an example of a conflict that had escalated to a more serious and disquieting stage. The site of conflict is again the courtyard and the noise of children playing football. In the course of a tenants' meeting about 50 signatures had been collected asking for restrictive measures, at least a warning to be issued against the families. Six or seven children were regarded as especially troublesome, impertinent and defiant. These families were of Chechen origin. A few days before the interview

took place, a Chechen woman had called on wohnpartner and told about her situation. Her children are not allowed to play in the courtyard with the other children and are isolated: the others have been told that they are Chechen and Muslim and therefore to be regarded as terrorists, in this case as 'double terrorists'. The wohnpartner assured the woman that such behaviour and such slander is not to be tolerated and that it is wrong. Wohnpartner's work is generally based on the working principle of all-partiality, but there are clear limits, and accusations of terrorism grounded in religious and national affiliation are clearly rejected.

So far we cannot report which steps have been taken further. According to the mediator, it will be necessary to enter an exchange with the tenants that had asked for measures to be taken against these families. Will this prove feasible?

In the previous paragraphs we referred not only to conflict constellations but also the to the strategies deployed when trying to approach and deal with conflicts that arise from inter-cultural settings.

Going back to the various types of conflicts and turning to those conflicts that are located inside the buildings and the apartment, there is, first of all, once more, noise as the prime source of conflict. In fact, it is not a culture-specific but an all-encompassing problem and it is to a considerable part due to bad building structures, to thin walls, or shaky window frames that let each tenant partake in the activities and in the movements of his/her neighbours. But again, these molestations might be attributed to culture-specific circumstances: too many people congregating in apartments, too many visitors, especially at the time of Ramadan or insufficient control and disciplining of children.

As concerns the visitors, we have heard of an instance where a Turkish woman has made up her mind not to receive any visitors during the upcoming Ramadan. But, she told the social worker, she can do this only because this year her old parents are away on holiday in Turkey. For them to refrain from inviting friends and relatives during Ramadan would be very hard. It means not living up to, of disappointing and rebutting the claims of their religious and cultural tradition and therefore facing potential disrepute and loss of honour.

Then there are smells that are regarded as a nuisance and as unbearable and those are indeed predominantly culture-specific. We have already pointed to one variant of a reaction on the side of the party that the complaint is directed at: over-readiness to

comply with the demand for stopping such molestation and this means not cooking traditional 'smelly' dishes any longer. To arrive at a realistic agreement that takes care of vital needs of both sides of the conflict is perceived as the task of conflict work. In fact, this becomes even more pronounced when turning to conflicts that ensue with regard to the use of public space. The most impressive example occurred in an area where there is a mosque built in close vicinity to one of the social housing estates. There were complaints about noise, also during late hours when people were walking home from the Mosque, about the use of parking lots, etc. Irritations and anger became especially poignant when one of the Muslim festivities took place simultaneously with the religious celebration of Christian Easter. Then it was decided to have representatives of various institutions, including wohnpartner and representatives of the Mosque coming together to talk and discuss; a kind of group mediation was instigated. It resulted in an agreement on the religious festivities with the representatives of the Mosque agreeing, firstly, to restrict the celebration of their festivity to days outside the two highest days of Easter, the next year this festivity was to be held at a different time altogether (this kind of flexibility being compatible with religious prescriptions). It was also decided that there should be announcements of special events around the Mosque and meetings of the representatives of those affected in order to discuss the arrangements necessary to avoid tension and friction between groups of different religious affiliation. The whole process took quite some time as the social worker of wohnpartner told us. It afforded a lot of preparatory meetings and talks with each of the groups and a persistent effort at building trust. Each of the groups needs to find itself really represented by a person of the same cultural background.

It seems so far an impressive example of what is possible and again we might ask which preconditions and which specific features of the process made for its success. This needs yet more investigation.

We will now turn to more general topics that have turned up in the course of the interviews with the members of the wohnpartner-teams.

What are the dynamics underlying those conflicts that are framed as inter-cultural conflicts?

On fears and the quest for belonging

One of our interview partners, of Kurdish origin, who has been living and working in Vienna for 22 years, has drawn the picture of migrants, Turkish migrants and their dream of living in security as part of a democratic society. He said:

> They bear years of hardship and poverty hoping for really arriving in the 'promised land'. Some of them get ill; there is even a specific disease and a special department in Vienna's General Hospital attending to this disease. Vienna's social housing estates are an important ingredient and a 'sign' of this 'promised land'. When they got access to social housing estates and arrived there, they were overjoyed, a dream had been fulfilled, this was their social way up; they felt that now they were belonging.

To belong to the accepting society is what they really strive for, says this social worker. The Austrian society promises economic and social safety, and moreover the dream of a real democracy with safety from arbitrary encroachments of one's personal liberty, freedom from repression by police powers or from the side of other authorities.

On the other hand, fears of a kind of arbitrary repression are still lurking in the background. They can make migrants especially vulnerable. The examples we have related of an excessive readiness to comply with demands of adaptation including renouncing parts of one's cultural traditions and way of living, cooking certain kinds of food, or having visitors that stay late at night, can be seen as an indication of this vulnerability.

On the other side, the side of the 'old-time Viennese' residents, we see and hear expressions of the fear of foreigners from other cultures overrunning Vienna. The 'natural' dominance, or rather the perceived singularity of their way of living as the one and only way has been shattered by the influx of foreigners. Especially for those in economically disadvantages positions with little means, holding on to the old ways and living in a world that is familiar, remains an important bulwark against social descent. To dissolve those fears is certainly not always possible – to take them serious is an indispensable first step.

On the other hand, we had a kind of dead-end-argument (Totschlagargument) used by some migrants, namely the contestation that complaints are ultimately fostered by racist sentiments and will therefore never be amenable to any kind of dialogue or a rational dispute.

Activity - passivity

"They have learned to complain and to launch a complaint". This was the initial statement in one of our interviews. They are not used to taking their affairs into their own hands; in the Gemeindebau there was always and still is a whole hierarchy of authorities, of administrative bodies and of politicians that are responsible can be called upon whenever something unpleasant or severely disturbing the quality of life happens. These authorities are expected to enforce the house rules, to issue warnings; ultimately they have the power to evict a tenant that is not behaving according to these rules. In fact, this is also expected first of all from wohnpartner and therefore, 'enlightening' residents who turn on them - or are referred to wohnpartner by other agencies (most often Wiener Wohnen) - about the scope and the limits of the assistance they can offer. This implies the parties to become active themselves and to set steps to deal with the conflict at hand themselves. Wohnpartner has to rely on people's voluntary engagement and their voluntary acceptance of the services wohnpartner can offer.

In all of the interviews conducted, the possibilities and the modes of and instruments of activating residents was a topic that received attention. But the social workers have displayed differences as concerns their perception and judgement regarding the activity-passivity of residents, ranging from despondency and giving up hope to keeping up hope and struggling confidence.

In fact, most of the projects and community work ('community outreach', as it is called in the guiding principles) are about getting in touch with people and encouraging them in becoming active. In general, 'activation' is regarded a difficult task. The prevailing attitude, the attitude learned by the inhabitants of the Gemeindebau, by Viennese and Austrians is one of passivity, or rather waiting for those at the 'top' to take care of - to give orders, to control and to punish. We have to be careful though, because we have also heard statements that contended that it is possible to activate people and that you will always and everywhere find individuals as well as groups of

residents that take responsibility and take care of problems - and of conflicts in the Gemeindebau. And also in the course of the conflict work of wohnpartner, they do succeed in a considerable percentage (no numbers given!) of cases to strengthen the capacities of the parties to become active and try for a solution of their own. Summarising, the prospect is not at all bleak and hopeless.

While 'activation' is, as said, a major concern in all wohnpartner teams contacted, it seems that there are factors that are conducive to retaining confidence and trust in people's capacity to actively tackle and resolve conflicts. Having achieved the goal of getting in contact with people and to arrive at a continuity of relationship, makes it possible to proceed on the way to people becoming used to taking their affairs into their own hands. 'You have to try again and again and use different angles of providing the kind of support that strengthens self-activity' said one of the social workers. She put forward the contention that activity emerges where people have needs (Bedürfnisse). Following from this thesis we have then together considered what it means to have needs and whether having needs is not just a static given or a fixated individual quality but a process as well. Needs can be developed, needs can be aroused. To become aware of one's needs, of needs that go beyond the daily routine implies undergoing a process of confrontation with other possibilities and with a broader view on what life can look like. The experience of these additional possibilities can arouse further needs. Becoming aware of those needs can then become a step towards more self-activity.

We have also asked whether social workers perceive the tendency and readiness to become engaged in active conflict resolution to be higher with the old-Viennese or with the migrant residents. The answers stressed the tendencies of remaining passive in the Viennese population and saw more readiness to go about resolving conflict on their own initiative with migrants. But there is the language barrier. And this is a barrier indeed that impacts on the perception as well as the realisation of activity in conflict resolution.

On the other hand, when asking this question regarding activation and regarding differences in the capacities for active conflict resolution we came across an unexpected topic and across concepts we had not dealt with in our theoretical work so far. Social workers talked about the importance of hospitality and of neighbourliness in the cultures of South-Eastern European and of 'Oriental' countries.

Hospitality and neighbourliness

These were topics – and concepts – that were brought to us as unexpected in the course of our talks to the social workers of wohnpartner.

Hospitality, we were told, plays an important role in Turkey and also within 'Oriental' countries. It makes people more open to receive strangers, it gives a form to the relationship between the newcomer and the receiving host. This means also that certain rules of behaviour are to be observed on both sides.

Hospitality becomes also manifest in the great readiness of Turkish and 'Oriental' women to contribute food to common festivities without asking for a refund.

And finally, another observation reported by a social worker was that in conflict-related work, including mediation, the Viennese strive for a solution at the objective, often the material level or the level of deciding on certain rules of behaviour; this is expected to improve the relationship. On the other hand, the Turkish people are first of all interested in (re)establishing a relationship, the solution regarding practical matters is then supposed to follow from that more easily.

This is something the migrants might be able to contribute, something that may enrich local cultures of living together.

5.4. Bassena Stadtteilzentrum am Schöpfwerk

The community centre "Bassena Stadtteilzentrum am Schöpfwerk"[12] is active in the neighbourhood of the Schöpfwerk[13] ever since the first residents moved in in 1982. The community centre's team of social workers consists of the head of the centre and four staff members.

Unlike wohnpartner, the Bassena's link to the administrative and political structures to the city of Vienna is less direct, as the community centre is a sub-organisation of and thus financed by the NGO "Verein Wiener Jugendzentren"[14] (Vienna Youth Centres). This NGO receives its funding from the City of Vienna; in its board representatives of the City Council are included as well as representatives of different youth organisations. But the Bassena has gained a degree of financial independence through

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[12] www.bassena.at
[13] Today the housing estate inhabits about 5.000 residents, who speak up to 20 different languages.
[14] www.jugendzentren.at

creating an additional legal entity in cooperation with other social institutions active in the neighbourhood that has its own bank account and small resources it can recur to, in order to finance and implement projects, the Verein Wiener Jugendzentren refused to fund.

In what follows, we will discuss the Bassena's activities, from a more interesting angle - at least for our purposes - by focussing on the element of active participation.

On the importance of active participation in the work of the Bassena

Active participation, as implicitly understood by the Bassena team, is a deeply political agenda that fulfils at least three functions. At its core, activating residents is both a working strategy and the objective that figures most prominently among the goals the Bassena team set up for its own work - activating individuals, who can possibly be linked to each other and ideally become ties of a local network of residents. Whether we think of "Kaesch" the alternative trading system, whose members (residents and non-residents) can sell services and self-made goods to each other for an alternative, virtual currency; or of the mobile "Amt für gute Ideen" (office for good ideas), staffed with two members of the Bassena team, who spend time in the courtyards and streets of the housing estate, attracting attention with a shopping trolley decorated with plastic flower chains and involving passers-by in conversations; activating strategies are on the one hand directed towards building those sustainable connections among people, that manage to deal with social marginalisation and the side-effects that come with it, where the institutions of the welfare state do not reach. On the other hand, their objective is not only to compensate the short-comings of the welfare state, but also to support and maintain the functions attributed to a vibrant civil society – which is most importantly a civil control of public policies and - if necessary – resistance to them.

A special quality of the Bassena lies with the fact that its social workers also have their office within the community centre in the housing estate. The Bassena is thus a local institution directly and easily accessible to residents. During daily shifts, the overarching aim for the social workers is to get in touch with people, to listen to their current concerns and interests. Wolfgang Starzinger, a social worker of the Bassena team, recalls how he got to talk to about five individual residents in autumn 2012,

who were concerned by rumours on the European policy to privatise drinking water. Knowing about their shared interest, he got these residents in touch with each other and supported the group as a moderator during its strategy meetings, where the residents decided to launch awareness-raising initiatives and organised a discussion round and a film presentation on the topic for the whole housing estate.

"The simple fact that about 50 people attended the event that night showed the organising group, that their concern was a shared one, that they were not alone with their worries. They had created (...) an easily accessible setting for discussion and engagement, for exchange amongst residents. (...) Of course this is not, this does not change the world, but here in the housing estate, there was at least a change of awareness."

Yet on another level, groups like these come to play an important role in negotiation processes vis-à-vis politicians, whose doors usually remain shut for individuals, but who (sometimes) follow the invitations of groups (of potential voters).
In practice, we thus encounter a variety of purposes the active participation of residents is thus sought for:
1. to make up for the effects of social exclusion;
2. to promote general awareness raising;
3. to support political representation and the capacity for political resistance.

Still absent from this discussion is that kind of active participation we looked for, having restorative justice approaches in mind – the participation of affected residents in dialogical processes of conflict resolution, aiming to find an outcome, that might restore the harm done and meet the needs of everybody concerned. Knowing, that the Bassena team does not mediate between conflict parties anymore, the absence of this type of active participation does not come as a surprise.
What has to be added is not the active participation of residents to solve a conflict, but the provocation of conflict to activate residents. For example when the abolition of the "Gratisbazar", one of the most successful projects of the community centre was discussed among staff members, the head of the community centre explicitly pointed out: "The best thing that can happen, is a revolt of residents – of course we will have

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to handle their emotions in constructive ways – but a counteraction from their side gives us the chance to tell them to take over the project and do it themselves."

Yet another example for this perhaps unusual activating strategy evolved out of an issue, which had been on-going in the housing estate for quite some time already: carpet washing. In the Schöpfwerk, residents share common laundry rooms to wash their clothes. The water and electricity bills for these laundry rooms are shared among all residents in equal parts. After mostly Turkish women (or Austrian women whose parents had migrated from Turkey to Austria) started to wash their carpets in these laundry rooms, a rule prohibiting the cleansing of carpets was included in the house rules for two reasons: when the wet carpets are carried up into the flats for drying, the stairways become stained with water and when the carpets are dried on balconies, water starts to drop down and destroys the façade of the newly renovated houses on its way to the ground.

However, this regulation did not take the need of the women into consideration, who were left without a place to wash their carpets, which do have an important meaning in their households, as they are used for praying, to sit down during meals, to welcome guests etc. Therefore, the women continued to wash their carpets, knowing that it was forbidden.

This caused continuous discussions and disagreements among residents, as some insisted that they did not want to pay for water and electricity that others were using to wash carpets - something they themselves did not do and that was forbidden after all. As the Turkish women were struggling the most to forward their argument and be heard in these discussions, the Bassena team decided to support them in the search for a solution that would please everybody – the installation of a separate laundry room, where exclusively carpets should be washed. In order to gain public support for this agenda, the Bassena team organised a carpet-washing-plant, in the morning of the big party celebrating the renovation of the housing estate. A few women gathered to wash their carpets on the ground in the biggest square of the housing estate, and put them up on the fence of the neighbouring school for drying. They afterwards collected signatures of other residents in support of their petition. This action itself, carried out visibly in the public space of the yard steered up the emotions of less supportive residents, who deeply rejected the action and directed complaints towards the

community centre. These residents and the involved women now met for the first time, in order to discuss what had happened.

Already at first sight the commonalities between "Gemeinwesenarbeit" (GWA) as described in theory and restorative justice are striking. Both focus on the life-world experiences of people, trying to get the ones affected actively involved in efforts to positively impact on their life-worlds. The efforts undertaken usually follow a needs-based approach and aim at finding more effective and inclusive ways to satisfy these needs in future (for further reading see e.g.: Odierna 2004, or Stövesand, Stoik and Troxler 2013). As Wolfgang Starzinger points out in an interview: "GWA tries to pre-define as little content as possible, but tries to work with people where they stand and for what they need instead (…). Individual conditions are taken into consideration to then try to accompany people on a way that brings about improvement for them."

Yet GWA explicitly strives for structural change, an objective whose place has not yet been clarified in restorative justice theory. On the contrary, restorative practices have rather been accused of the ambiguous effect of reproducing structural problems and power imbalances. These critical voices fear that conflict resolution approaches could work as a means to 'pacify' people and take off the urge and the capacity to resist underlying power imbalances or repressive hierarchies (see Sullivan and Tifft 2006). GWA, however, according to Wolfgang Starzinger, is about

> (…) the differences in society. Different people have different chances in society - due to structural conditions (…). Taking these social differences into consideration, the agency of social work becomes extremely important, that social work interferes to balance this social inequality, (…). When you work on cases of individuals, you lose these structural problems behind the individual case a bit out of sight. Your task is to help individual clients to reintegrate, this approach creates something close to a competitive situation among clients, for example on the labour market. Those who are well assisted might manage to "reintegrate", until the next one comes around (…). GWA is a different approach, more sustainable as it seeks to empower people for a long-term perspective and differently from case work, GWA looks at communities and empowers them to change something in their neighbourhoods.

6. **Residents' voices**

Against this background we will now trace a selection of themes that have come up prominently in the course of our empirical work – the interviews and the observation protocols. They pertain to the experiences of living together in the Gemeindebau understood as an intercultural setting; the first two themes were mainly voiced by residents of old-Viennese origin, the rest portrays some aspects of the thinking and feeling of residents with migration background.

This presentation will be preceded by a few paragraphs depicting our methodological approach.

6.1. The methodological approach

The empirical material was extracted from interviews and observation protocols. The latter were in turn the result of participant observation. We will shortly describe the very special participatory way participant observation was set out in the Bassena: In the beginning of March 2012, Katrin Kremmel became a "special intern" of the team of community workers at the Bassena; it was clear that she was – and is - also a researcher in a project focussing on social life in this neighbourhood. Working alongside the team means that she participates in their weekly team meetings, is present during daily shifts, where she spends time within the facilities of the community centre and in the semi-private space of the neighbourhood itself, like its parks, courtyards and passages, getting to talk to residents – sometimes about whether they would like to drink tea or coffee, the loss of a father, or a sick child; sometimes about uncertain future perspectives - due to troubles at their work place, or due to not having a work place at all, despite an (Egyptian) university degree and countless counselling sessions at the AMS (the Austrian public employment service). Apart from these at times quite mundane interactions, she also participates at sessions of so-called residents' groups, meeting regularly in the Bassena. These groups consist of approximately seven members each, who get together to network and discuss topics they take common interests in.

These experiences and observations were documented in a research diary, which was then analysed.

The interviews that were conducted with residents of Bassena were planned and designed as narrative interviews. We wanted to know about their perception of life in their housing estate. Preparing for these interviews, we perceived of these residents as actors, living in the social structures within their neighbourhoods – structures they were able to reproduce and/or to impact on in a modifying way. Thus we wondered, how they perceived of these structures or social relationships, which could be thought of and function as both – important resources in the daily struggle to manage the challenges of daily life, and as lines of conflict between residents.

Starting from these pre-assumptions, we designed a set of open questions, inviting our interview partners to narrate their point of view. Also, the intention of these questions was to open up the narrative space, to demarcate its limits, but nevertheless leaving the decision of how to fill this space to the interviewee. The goal of this exercise merely was to find a few possible ways of framing the issues we were focussing on, so we would have them at hand, if needed to flexibly guide the conversation during the interview.

Consequently, 13 residents, from diverse social backgrounds, differing in age, gender, religion, and occupation, and with different positions within the neighbourhood were interviewed. A first engagement with the collected data further drew our attention towards the concepts of identity and justice, what led to two group discussions, involving five residents each. On both occasions, our researcher prepared a condensed input, also including theoretical content, which was then discussed by each group. All interviews took place within the facilities of the community organisation Bassena.

In addition, three staff members of the Bassena were interviewed in order to hear their reflections on the objectives of their professional engagement in situations of conflict within the intercultural setting of social housing estates.

With *wohnpartner* our empirical work had started with *interviews with staff members*. We did altogether 18 interviews, the supervisor of professional work, the team-leaders and with the social workers engaged in working with the conflicts that are brought to wohnpartner by the residents of Vienna' s social housing estates.

These interviews can also be characterised as narrative interviews: they had the character of 'talks' (Gespräche), the focus being on a description of the concrete work performed by the interviewees. It was not predominantly question and answers, rather just providing a few incentives for starting the narratives of the interview-partners; question followed then from what was presented in these narratives.

Deriving from our theoretical work, there were a few topics that served as guidelines - first of all 'active participation'. Since 'activation' is central to wohnpartner's work from the outset, it was easy to build it into the talks. Mostly, active participation was being discussed by the staff members in its negative condition - as difficulties to activate residents, especially when it comes to active engagement in situation of conflict.

The other topic addressed explicitly was 'belonging' and identity building in connection to opening the Gemeindebau to migrants. In the course of pondering this theme a new topic was brought up by one of our early interview-partners: the topic of fears, first of all the fears of the migrants. It was then introduced to the other interviewees and they expanded on it.

We did not refrain from presenting considerations that have come up in the context of ALTERNATIVE. As already pointed out, the interviews were rather talks than sequences of questions and answers. The researcher was not only on the receiving, but also on the giving end of the interaction. She used stories and considerations of other interviewees to further spur reflection about the issues related to their work and to the overall theme of conflicts in the intercultural setting of the Gemeindebau.

The interviews with residents took place mostly at the premises of the organisations, one at the working place of the interviewee and once in her apartment. The talks with the long-time residents were used to get information about 'living together' and about conflicts in former times as compared to nowadays. Special emphasis was put on the perceived effect of more people with migration background now living in the social housing estates and on the role of the Bassena, respectively of wohnpartner in dealing with conflicts in intercultural settings. The readiness of residents to become active was a central topic in most of these interviews as well. 'Living together' with other people in the Gemeindebau being the kind of overarching peg that held the narratives together.

There was a group discussion with three caretakers that took place at a café that has become a well-known and well-accepted meeting place in one of the social housing estates. The participants of the discussion had been asked by a representative of wohnpartner whether they would be willing to join in such a discussion; they had received basic information on ALTERNATIVE and on the fact that wohnpartner cooperated with the Institute for the Sociology of Law and Criminology.

As with the experts' interviews our researcher started with providing a very general request to tell about the kind of work they are performing and the changes that had occurred by doing this work. The four persons did engage in a very lively, at times even heated discussion that enfolded its own dynamics and furnished a lot of information and provided for a lot of insight into their perception of conflicts in the intercultural setting of the Gemeindebau.

Altogether the researcher followed the same methodological course as with the experts' interviews - using questions only sparingly and engaging in a talk with her vis-à-vis.

These interviews as well as the discussion that took place was tape recorded and - transcribed, albeit not linguistically and in full-length.

In addition we did participant observation of some of the specific activities of wohnpartner, e.g. '*wohnpartner on the move*'. This is taking place during the summer months. A team of two persons walks through the estates and the various courtyards, signalling their readiness to talk, to listen to requests and complaints and just to chat.

The 'Hof-Café' is a one-time activity where - outside in one of the courtyards belonging to an social housing estate - a table is set up in the open, coffee served, together with a few cookies, some information material is laid out and two social workers are present for a couple of hours. Passers-by are invited to have coffee and to talk. It is the attempt to become a potential addressee of concerns - manifest in listening to these concerns, mainly about the youngsters around the playground that are causing troubles - noise once more - for people living nearby.

The 'Residents' café' is meant to be an informal meeting point and place: for two hours every Tuesday it was 'open' - people were supposed just to drop in. There is

always tea and coffee - some sweets, cakes or something in that line that comes partly from wohnpartner, partly from the visitors.

Our researcher was present during four evenings when the café was open; interviews were conducted twice during café hours. She also contributed to the preparations of food and assisted in taking things away. She had introduced herself the first time she came and shortly explained each visitor individually her role and position. This procedure had been discussed with the organiser of the café beforehand.

Notes on the activities and the researcher's involvement were immediately produced after the visits to the cafés.

Concerning the qualitative data analysis the following procedure was observed:

First of all, we started from a holistic understanding of each individual case/interview setting it in its specific social context. What do we know about the social background of the persons interviewed, what is their relation within the setting of the Gemeindebau?

Interpretation was further concerned with reflections on the narrations produced, taking interviewer-influences into consideration, i.e. the way the communication between interviewer and interviewee was perceived from the outset and the way communication (mutual expectations) developed in the course of the interview. We also directed our attention to the fact known from socio-linguistic and ethnological research that what is told in an interview is to convey a certain message to the listener and to create a certain image of the person. Rendering the narration, implies the construction of an identity; it is part of the "politics of constructing an identity" (Identitätspolitik).

In a more general way: Which messages did the interviewee try to get across? What did she/he assume the interviewer expects – to which degree does he/she want to comply with these expectations or to undercut them?

These holistic interpretations of individual utterings are in the next step confronted with the material from the other interviews/discussions. We were comparing and contrasting cases, entering an investigation of the explanatory potential of the pieces of theories and the concepts we have chosen. We were focussing on active participa-

tion and respectively on the difference between activity versus delegation and on the politics of diversity and the reaction of residents towards it.

The same cyclical approach we had used for conducting the interviews was applied also for steps of interpretation. Alternating between the deductive and the inductive perspective, we tried to find out about the structural and the personal factors that accounted for one side of the difference or the other one becoming prevalent.

Playing back our preliminary findings, or theses to the practitioners constituted one step in the process of interpretation/analysis. It is supposed to be repeated in the course of the project, including the 'intervention' phase.

6.2.   The world we have lost[15]

We have explicitly asked elderly people to compare life and living together in the Gemeindebau as it has been a few decades ago with the way they experience it now. As was to be expected – not least from what we knew from previous research, the loss of social bonding, of knowing the other residents was addressed by several of our interview partners.

The abolishment of the "Hausbesorger", the Austrian version of a caretaker/janitor, who, at least in the social housing estates, used to live in the houses they were taking care of and thus served to residents as somebody to turn to with their concerns, is one of the 'signs' of the change that has taken place. As a matter of fact, after the 'old Hausbesorger' had been abolished according to a Federal Law in 2000, many complaints about the loss of personal care-taking were voiced. Wiener Wohnen has finally established the model of new care-takers that come in two versions: one version is a team of care-takers who works at the estate once a week, and the second version is an individual care-taker who works every day of the week with fixed working hours, and lives close to the estate. The latter mentioned individual care-takers get specific training. The administration of the laundry rooms is another example. It used to be within the responsibility of residents themselves, but was formally taken over by Wiener Wohnen, who installed "Natürlich sicher" (naturally secure) – a system of new lockers and electronic key cards as measures to organise access to the laundry rooms.

[15] Here we are referring to the title of a book of historian Peter Laslett

Then there is the fate of the common hobby rooms in each house for leisure activities, which were closed and most of them are now vacant, after they had repeatedly been left messy after noisy parties – all of these are but a few typical examples for the de-personalisation process that has taken place in this context.

Generally we may distinguish between two ways of narrating, carrying two different sentiments. The first type of narrations are downright complaints, angry and full of accusations, partly accusations of 'the politicians' that have allowed these aliens to come and keep alluring them by the benefits of a generous welfare regime, partly accusations of those that followed these allurements and are now overflowing and submerging the old ways and habits.

The second type is a more sober and factual one: yes, things have been different years ago – and the world has become more complicated – altogether there are also improvements – and we have to learn to get along.

We start with the second type of interviews. These interview-partners – all of them persons older than 50 year were talking at some lengths about by-gone times. They insist that neighbourly relationships were closer and more frequent back in the old days, but at the same time they still consider themselves as having a vivid social life in their neighbourhoods nowadays. Frau Senger[16] recalled how difficult it was in the beginning in these new estates to get in contact with people. "Now – well there are maybe 3 to 4 families with whom I have closer contact – thinking about it: it is not so little isn't it?"

Frau Kulhavy told: "Yes, the estate where I have been living previously, there I knew everybody, children and grown-ups. That was the way it was. People were going on a trip together they were having festivities. It was much, much, much better! People were more ready and more able to look at each other, to take care of each other." The German term she uses is: 'aufeinander schaun' – a very telling and indeed ambiguous term. 'Looking at' or 'upon each other' implies both an intricate mixture of taking care and controlling the other.

A very balanced account was given by an elderly couple; they had childhood memories of the old social housing estates where people had to use the common public tap on the corridor, the so-called Bassena: "There were much more quarrelling – on the

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[16] All names used in this text are fictitious names.

other hand you could always rely on somebody to help you out and to lend things you needed. You were forced to get along – despite a lot of friction."

But Frau Waldreiter also speaks about her childhood in the time after WW1: "On Friday night when people collected their unemployment support payments they bought a package of grieves or of cheap sausage and they were sitting together, talking politics – sometimes singing together." This sounds nostalgic: tales about bygone hardship, romanticised by the memories of talking and debating things that were important and made people feel bound to each other. 'Es is a andere Zeit'–" The times they are a-changing" concludes Herr Waldreiter.

Another differentiated perspective was to be heard from Herr Doblinger, who has been living at the Schöpfwerk since 32 years. He said: "Living together was much better in former times. There were also people from outside Austria - we talked to them, we have 'geblödelt' (literally talking silly, a kind of wise-cracking, making fun of a situation). I was tenants' representative and people asked me how to do things and what was feasible and almost always I said: Oh, yes, that will be ok! It was wonderful!"

Half an hour later when asked what he regards as positive about the present-day situation, Herr Doblinger said: "Well the estate has been renovated and we, the elder residents, are a real community. We are able to wise-crack together! Because those coming from elsewhere speak German beautifully. It is a very good way of living together!"

The interview with a group of care-takers/janitors exemplifies the other type of narratives. For these three women, who have been active in this function for many years, the 'old times' are those where everything was not only better, but it is the state of affairs they would like to return to – the past ought to become the future. Being aware of the fact that this is not going to happen, they are left to the device of complaints and of accusations.

Frau Mahringer vividly describes what it meant to be a care-taker at her first post and moreover how she experienced the role of the caretaker when she was a child.

> It scared the shit out of me, whenever a ball had to be retrieved from a place where we were forbidden to go! And especially in case the caretaker had seen this happen. And I wanted to do things this very same way. It worked for the

first few years. Then renovation including the yards took place and we got a beautiful green area, a slope covered with low shrubs. Children used this and especially in winter to roll down using plastic bags in place of a sledge; this was, of course, forbidden and I tried to keep them from doing it, proposing alternative activities, building a snowman, etc. but that was of no use; and until today the children are going on to do what it is forbidden to do, causing enormous damage all the time. And the administration – instead of holding the parents accountable and making them pay, has decided to shuffle off the costs to all tenants, raising the operating costs. And this is the reason the old Viennese tenants are so angry and have turned against the new residents.

Frau Mahringer says implicitly but very clearly that it is the children of the migrants that are inapproachable and undermining her authority. The shopkeeper. Herr Lohberger says at some point in the group interview: "It would be great if the caretaker were to be regarded and treated as the 'Respektsperson' the person that is paid respect the way it has been in the past!"

There is indeed a whole bundle, an agglomeration of negative, bad and angry feelings that go together with the longing for a past that was free of these irritations - when the caretaker was an authority a 'Respektsperson'. Essayist Franz Schuh evokes the image of one of these persons of frightening powerfulness, this 'Re Ubu of his childhood'. He adds though that already in the late 1950s this power had weakened. He also reminds us that this power did derive its 'aura' not least from the existence of an all-encompassing authoritarian regime. (Schuh 2012)

Later in this group interview the call for giving some authority and moreover some sanctioning power to the care-takers was voiced. The caretakers should be allowed to collect fines and to order children to do cleaning tasks. When told that this will not be feasible because sanctioning power rests only with the police (and the courts), the discussion albeit reluctantly took another turn. Frau Serko started to recount her personal strategies of dealing with those kids that are not abiding the rules, making noise and dirtying the stairways:

Yes, I also make them clean up, handing them a dustpan; after wards I invite them to have an ice-cream; and then I have to deal with those elderly ladies that

are all the time shouting at the kids. Tell her that she has to withhold her anger. And I have a very effective means of making her comply: she is forbidden for a whole week to caress my dog. She might be in tears because of this – but I remain impervious to her entreaties.

Frau Serko's colleagues were both amused and impressed. The statement opened a new track of thinking about rules, about authority and about communication. The mix of rewards and informal sanctions Frau Serko applies come as reaction to the concrete situation and to the needs of the people involved. She makes use of her position as a care-taker, as a node or linchpin without insisting or pretending to own a formal authority she would not be able to enforce anyway.

Once more the discussion turned to the changes that have occurred: the loss or stark decrease of face-to-face communication.

6.3. The threat of the other

Some aspects of neighbourhood life, of course, did change due to the influx of migrants, and reportedly have become more complicated, mostly due to communication difficulties and language differences. At times, these difficulties do not arise from not having a common language to communicate in, but also from a certain insecurity about the subtext words carry, whether or not and if, how this subtext will be understood. As one of the residents describes, she used to experience a certain discomfort when meeting Muslim neighbours in the elevator or on the stairways, for not knowing whether or not the Austrian greeting "Grüß Gott" (Greet God) could be offensive to them.

Perceived differences in habits and common practices might lead to learning experiences and very simple misunderstandings, as recalls an Austrian lady during an interview. She happily received a plate with sweets from her Egyptian neighbour each year after Ramadan, which she returned emptily, until she learned one day, that she was expected to give back a similar gift in exchange.

However, these perceived differences also led to the construction of oneself or one's own group identity in comparison with the other, and consequently to the construction of an Austrian way of going about things, which had formerly gone unnoticed: Austrians don't spit on the ground sucking up the saliva from the back of their throat

(something that especially young teenagers smoking their first cigarettes do a lot – including Austrian ones), and Austrians don't leave remains of their food on the ground in the parks, as they could attract pigeons and rats.

In a most pronounced way we found statements referring to the threat of the other and moreover conjuring the imminent danger of one's own culture and tradition becoming suppressed and superseded by the other one, i.e. the Turkish and Islamic according to Frau Prager.

A concrete conflict that took place on the occasion of meeting in one of the Residents' cafés had provoked the outrage: Frau Öczan, a woman from Turkey who came to Austria when she was a child, was recounting the occurrences around the big Islamic festivity that had started one day; her grandchildren had visited and – as is the custom – they had to kiss the hands of their grandparents.

"But this is terrible, this gesture of submission – in our culture and for myself children are as valuable as adults – they don't have to bow!"

Later in the interview with Frau Prager who had left the café asserting that she would never again visit this place, she said: "Why did she talk about this at all? Who is interested in hearing about this? I am not interested in these traditions that might have been prevalent here in Europe, in Vienna maybe 500 years ago! It is just backward!" And she went on:

> But there we are – it is all around us now and everybody talking all the time about the foreigners and how we have to integrate them and how we have to pay attention to their culture. And with wohnpartner and in this café as well. All those culture evenings – yes, Austrian customs are presented as well – and all this fuss that is made about food and cooking! I am sure they will take over, that's what they are up to. Fortunately, I will not see it, because I am too old.

In the course of this interview she told also about her frustration and disappointment with wohnpartner in general. She developed her ideas for the residents' café, informed us about her proposals for activities and the contributions she would be able to make. An embroidery course, sketching something more refined! But she met only with lack of interest or even resistance by the wohnpartner. Frau Prager is an old and an active member of the Social-Democratic Party. She is therefore opposed to the

Freedom Party and its xenophobic politics – but she contends that HC Strache (the party leader) is right when it comes to the Turks and other foreigners having become too numerous and too influential. According to her, it is also true that they come here because the Austrian welfare system is the most generous in all of Europe – and that they are extremely skilful in using it!

> Yes, I am a Social Democrat and Bruno Kreisky (who was Austrian Chancellor between 1970 and 1983, and a very important and influential statesman of international renown) did important things for this country. But he was wrong when he called the guest workers in the 60s when they were indeed needed – but he ought to have them sent back later! We did not need them any longer – I have also worked for some time in Switzerland after the war, when I was not needed any longer, I went back to Austria. They ought to have been sent back! I am not a Socialist when it comes to these politics.

What are the dynamics we fathom behind these expressions of anger and of rage? Let's try to envisage the situation of Frau Prager: She is a person of good social standing, was in middle level leading positions in her former job, and was always active at the local level at the Social-Democratic party. She has seen and experienced personally the change that took place in the Gemeindebau, the influx of migrants, especially so after 2006 when the EU-Directive came into effect. In the interview she admits to having had no real adverse or painful encounters with neighbours. She complains about Turkish people not greeting, staying up longer at night – but she was able to settle with them, finding indeed understanding and compliance with her request. She would not be able to attribute her rejection of them to anything in that line. The endless story she told about a glass having fallen from the balcony above where this Turkish family lives is very telling in that respect: there is no real accusation to be made!
Frau Prager – as a matter of course – made contact with wohnpartner; they are regarded as one of the countless sub-organisations of the administration of the City of Vienna. And there she met with the effort to promote good neighbourhood between the new residents that have come from abroad and the Old-Viennese. In addition there were very strong women amongst them playing a visible role, sometimes more

Turkish women came and they started to speak Turkish. She says: "It has become too 'türkenlastig' (lopsided towards the Turkish people).

At that point, we want to emphasise that language is very important! It is a truism – but cannot be overrated. To live in a surrounding where you hear predominantly, almost exclusively a language you do not understand can be very disquieting; it can be experienced as loss of ground or the loss of the net that holds you; fears are evoked. Frau Prager who was used to her opinion being paid attention to, found herself increasingly in a position of being marginalised – the advice she tried to give on how to run the organisation remained unheeded, and was not regarded as adequate to the situation. What she had to offer in the way of activities – i.e. embroidery – also met with disinterest. There is the feeling of loss, of being edged out and becoming deprived of ones' entitlements. These entitlements, especially as concerns various social services, are no longer bound to Austrian nationality. Access to a flat in the Gemeindebau is – as we have explained – is one of the most prominent of these entitlements that have been extended to non-Austrians.

Frau Prager perceives the practices of wohnpartner paying a lot of attention to cultural diversity as further undermining her social standing. Frau Prager feels threatened: They, these 'others' "have become so dominant, they get all the attention, everybody thinks that what they have to say is so interesting – when in fact it is outrageous. In about 30 years they will have taken over, they want us to become submitted to their culture!" she says. Does she really believe in this scenario? It is exactly this scenario the right-wing Freedom Party uses to mobilise its constituency. Fears are a fertile ground for political polarisation.

Very similar sentiments to those voiced by Frau Prager came from the caretakers and here especially Frau Mahringer, the oldest of the three was very outspoken.

"There you hear them in the school – all the time singing in Serbian and Turkish – why don't they sing our Austrian songs? Why don't they learn first of all what's the mentality here and what are the rules?" Her colleague caretaker Frau Özbek who is married to a man of Turkish origin tried to explain that in this school, to evoke understanding for different cultures and for diversity in general is a prime overall aim. This entails also an effort to promote living and learning together of children with handicaps, physically or mentally and those without. It is obvious that one will not oppose the integration of children with a handicap – and therefore for the moment

no more is said on the topic of paying attention to different cultures. But Frau Mahringer recurs to the theme towards the end of the discussion; she insists that learning the' Austrian mentality' is more important than learning Turkish or Serbian songs. It is at least at the surface more of an irritation than an expression of fears and of rage she expresses.

It is once more the call for unconditional adaptation of the newcomers! They have to abide by the rules and by the customs of the receiving country.

And, finally, this uneasiness, these sentiments and the demands emanating from it crystallize in the complaints about the women wearing the headscarf, the 'Kopftuchfrauen'. We will not go into this topic at more length – just mention that presently a large EU-project involving the authors of 'living rooms' mentioned in the first section of this report is under way. We will therefore in this place only contribute a few glimpses from our research focusing on the statements we heard from the side of the 'Old-Viennese. For them, they, the Kopftuchfrauen are the very symbol of the refusal to 'integrate' to adapt, or the other way round: to stop clinging to their foreign and disturbing habits. It appears a mixture of uneasiness, anger and contempt the headscarf arouses.

6.4. Experiences of multiple belongings

The complaints about the ruptures of 'normality` and daily routines on behalf of 'Old-Viennese' residents mirror their emotions triggered by the experience of unsettled grammars of belonging. Migrants and "Neo-Austrians" do experience such disturbances as well although their point of departure is different: They have left their well-known place of belonging. They have come to another country and have made an attempt at adapting to the other way of life. Disturbances and uneasiness might occur when they visit their country of origin.

Some of the complexities of this issue are displayed in the following quotation, taken from a group interview, during which Herr Said recalled the experiences he had when he visited Egypt, the country where he was born, during his summer holidays.

> S: When you get there in the beginning, everything is ok and good and then when you have seen everybody, the situation is different, the people there who we know also have different interests. In the beginning, they see you, the greet

you, but then they have their own things going on (…) and you won't have anything to do. And then you'll feel this home-sickness, longing for Austria, after some time. Also in the face of others there, people I don't know in the bus, I notice that I am a stranger there, a complete stranger, in a strange society. And from my behaviour I think others can tell too, that I am not so… and therefore I don't want to get in touch with people this much. As long as I am with my family there, you feel this warmth and you've got the impression that life remained the way it was, but then…

KK: you said you perceive yourself as being a stranger, what makes for this feeling?

S: the behaviour, that is different I think. When you sit in a bus, I used to talk to people in the bus about things going on, now I don't trust anymore and only speak up about things that I have learned here, I say 'please, no, it does not work like this'. I already experienced bus drivers getting down from their vehicle do fetch coffee, tea, and I told him, same with taxi drivers. Here you can't imagine anybody doing something like that…"

It is the experience of "not having anything to do", while everybody else gets busy and back into their routines that is the first rupture of the way things used to be, he tells us about. At that moment, he seems to be confronted with the reality, that the place in the world that used to be the locality, "the where" of his engagement with daily life, is not his home base, not the centre of his actions anymore. He senses, that his home is somewhere else, thus becomes home-sick and longs for Austria. He has become a stranger in a society he once belonged to. This personal perception of his own estrangement is coupled with the belief that also others can tell by observing his behaviour, that he is not a local, what seems to disturb his sense of security and makes him cautious in his interactions with others. He pictures himself as only engaging with the way things are going down, if he feels the need to speak up and to disagree with what is happening. His disagreement is informed by the experience, that these things are done differently in another context, what enables him to observe and judge the situation from another point of view. Migration inevitably exposes its subjects to societal codes of practice, which strongly differ from what we are used to. His last statement can be read as an example of how these experiences can add new criteria to our

schemes of evaluation and open up the possibility to challenge the way things are, because we know – alternatives exist.

Some other bits and pieces of this interpretation might appear to be a more nostalgic reading of his account. However while speaking, Herr Said's voice was calm and his body language relaxed, free of tensions. He talked about his emotional dynamics during summer in a rather un-emotional, and amused way – especially when he remembers the bus driver, deserting his vehicle for a good cup of coffee. While he talked, he seemed to be making sense out of his experiences, what seemed to allow him to successfully integrate them into his view of himself.

During the same group interview, a short theoretical sketch of the concept of identity was shared with the participants, who were asked to discuss about it. This theoretical sketch was accompanied with concrete examples of why identity is considered a. as something constructed through processes of self-ascription and external ascription and b. as having multiple layers, which change over time and might differ or even be contradictory. Moreover the defining power each one of these layers might have on the subject is heavily dependent on the context we encounter the subject in (I'll think of myself as a student while being at school, returning home for lunch, my parents will address me as their daughter etc.).

Maria, who also participated in the same group interview, immediately related these theoretical assumptions to her personal perceptions:

"I strongly experienced this relationship, this identity, the contradictions inside of me when I went to visit the Philippines. I have an Austrian passport, I live here for longer than I lived on the Philippines. Yet I felt like a Filipina, when I went there. I had this warm feeling of being together with my people and I felt relaxed. I was 21 when I left, but my roots, that is unexplainable, I feel really well together with these people. My daughter told me, you are talking in your language again, that is strange. I told her, yes I feel good like this. But after about a month, I fell homesick for Austria again. I missed the black bread and the different style of living. I am used to this way of life. I choose my things here in Austria very consciously. And then I had this conflict, suddenly I felt like I wanted to have this, or that, what we have here in daily life. Then I said, who am

I really, am I an Austrian, or Filipino? People told me, yes you look like a Filipino, but from the way you behave, you are Austrian. My behaviour is really different from what they know there. That's something that always sticks to me, who am I, but I feel home in both (...)."

After a first period in the environment Maria had grown up in, during which she experienced a strong sense of being back together with her people, she began to miss the home she had built for herself in Austria. It is a home she constructed herself, by consciously selecting the things she enjoys. Here, the sense of belonging to Austria is grounded in choice, whereas her sense of belonging to the Philippines has something to do with natural origin, with roots, that cannot be explained. The exclusive logic inherent to national identity does not give Maria the necessary space to accommodate both senses of belonging, but leads her to conceive of her situation through an either-or-question of absolute truth: 'who am I really, am I an Austrian, or Filipino?'
This logic is reproduced through the perception of both herself and the people around her, who do not know what to think of her, because Maria looks one way, but behaves another. Thus her emotional sense of 'feeling home in both' countries is subordinated on a cognitive level, where the contradiction of feeling like belonging to two categories that appear to mutually exclude each other cannot be resolved.

6.5. Experiences of (relative) citizenship: belonging but different(ly)

But belonging and identity of the migrants living in Vienna is far from fixed and settled. The following discussion intends to grasp one aspect of the way the 'grammar of belonging' continuously challenges the legitimacy of their claim to belonging to the Austrian society.
During a monthly meeting of the group 'kultureller Austausch' (cultural exchange), Ahmet got up and handed over an edition of "Österreich", an Austrian tabloid, to everyone and asked us to read the headline article. The article reported on the arrest of Mohamed M., born and raised in Austria, at the Syrian border, where he had planned to join the Jihad. Mohamed M. had previously called the attention of the Austrian media upon him, when he reportedly posted a video of himself burning his Austrian passport, declaring, that he did not consider himself an Austrian citizen anymore, because he hated the country. Ahmet and another group member both knew Mo-

hamed M., who was one of their former students and had attended their mosque. Ahmet expressed his rage about the media article, which, he found, constructed Mohamed M. as a 'Muslim terrorist', implying that he was a foreigner and not an Austrian citizen. Eventually Ahmet referred to himself, saying that he not only had Austrian citizenship, but that he also considered himself to actually be an Austrian and demanded everybody else to think of him as an Austrian too. Moreover, he wanted us to think the same of Mohamed M., to consider him as a fellow Austrian citizen, for whom we were carrying certain responsibility.

Ahmet needed us to think of Mohamed M. as Austrian, also to support his personal conception of himself – as being Austrian.

In the eyes of many, claims of belonging to the Austrian nation are not solely justified through the possession of formal citizenship, and Ahmet is well aware of the fact, that he is still being considered an Egyptian foreigner, despite his papers. The term "Neo-Austrian" (Neo-Österreicher) emblematically stands for the need to maintain that those who legally are the same as 'we Austrians', are still a bit different though. However, the mere recognition of differences does not constitute a problem, but the fact that this difference is instrumentalised politically in order to exclude some from access to the resources of the welfare system and socially in order to justify those demands, that call for 'their' unconditional adaptation to 'the Austrian way', is the main problem.

It is in the light of these two functions that Ahmet seeks to overrule and 'out rule' any external ascription other than Austrian to his identity and insists on the legitimacy of his self-definition as Austrian.

7. <u>First attempt at a theoretical re-alignment</u>

In this final section we search for the connection between the theoretical efforts made by ourselves and the other research teams and our empirical findings. More empirical material – including findings from previous research are presented and discussed and the realignment attempted here is a very tentative one. Since more empirical findings are to be expected as an outcome of the intervention phase – this process of a re-alignment' is in progress.

7.1. On active participation

What is special about Vienna? In 1998 Gerhard Hanak has stated in the context of the EU (Framework 5) project: INSEC: Insecurities in European Cities referring to the research sites in Vienna:

> (…) there is not so much evidence of the respondents' participation in local net-works and associations. Anyway we would suggest, and have argued elsewhere, that according to the empirical evidence from some Viennese residential quarters urban residents' sense of security is based on their trust in "the system" (= local welfare state and the urban infrastructure) rather than on regular involvement in activities and patterns of association and participation operating on a local level (Sessar 2004, 105).

Hanak was at that time addressing two core issues of INSEC:
The global trends of increased insecurity framed in Ulrich Beck's Risk Society thesis and the way these global tendencies become manifest and empirically determined in the research sites chosen for INSEC (mostly areas with a large proportion of inhabitants of the lower socio-economic strata) become manifest on the one hand and the potential for active participation as part of a coping strategy with insecurity and anxiety.
The Austrian case appeared within INSEC as a surprising one, deviating in several aspects from the other research sites Hamburg, Krakow, Budapest and Amsterdam; most astounding: the global trends pointed out proved of little relevance for people's

lives in Vienna. The explanation put forward by the authors of the INSEC report on Vienna reads thus:

> Late/post modern regimes and strategies of governance frequently operate on "technologies of the self" and pragmatic modes of control that hardly rely on "moral controls" and correctional discourses. Considering the whole range of the qualitative data urban residents seem to have adjusted to the shift in social control and the new governmentality in many respects, and take most of its effects on urban living conditions for granted. In the political and historical context of the Viennese local welfare state (= modification and revision rather than replacement or abolition of the Fordist framework of regulation since the 1990s) the shift in control strategies has been softened, and there have been few manifestations of apparent polarisation, social disintegration and exclusion, both on a local and city level that would have motivated a return to punitive and repressive ideologies and policies (Sessar 2004: 95/96).

But there was – already at that time – one exception from this general assessment: The authors found them in several narratives and accounts that deal with some consequences of migration (and its impact on the city and on the quarters where there is a special concentration of immigrants). Effects of globalisation come into view and seem to enter the subjects' life world mainly as increased migration and to a certain degree, exchange of population, triggering tensions and rejection among different ethnic groups, etc. In the case of Vienna this aspect of social change has caused latent rather than open conflict, even if there has been a considerable tendency of concentration of immigrants in certain types of residential quarters. Remarkably, our data suggests that the phenomenon causes more discontent on the transdanube housing estates (there is a large 'Gemeindebau'!) where the proportion of the non-Austrian population is still below 10 per cent, due to the fact that most immigrants have to qualify for Austrian citizenship before becoming eligible for public housing) than in the Leopoldstadt quarters (where the foreign population amounts to 35 per cent), suggesting that the late "intrusion" of migrants to Viennese public housing estates that started in the 1990s is considered more of a problem by the native Austrian long term residents than is the higher proportion of migrant population in the old housing

stock and in urban areas where there has been a relatively long tradition of migrants amounting to some 20 per cent of the resident population. However, the data suggests that foreigners and migrants are perceived not so much as a threat and a risk, but as noisy, annoying, and not adjusting which contributes to social disorder (see Sessar 2004, 96).

In ALTERNATIVE we have tried to trace the instances of active participation both through the participation of the researcher in various activities - and also in the course of interviews with staff of wohnpartner and the Bassena as well as with residents.

7.2. Active participation as a core concept

Active participation appears as a core concept in the work of wohnpartner and in the work of the Bassena am Schöpfwerk! There are differences between the two organisations though that pertain to Bassena engaging also in bringing together and supporting residents to stand up against authorities and against policies these authorities want to impose on the residents. Empowerment of residents to become able to actively participate in the handling of their own conflicts is the pivotal task wohnpartner is concerned with. We might discern a middle level of active participation that exists in both organisation and is directed at a type of community work that aims at a more general enhancement of people's readiness and capacity to actively participate in shaping their own lives.

The complaints about the lack of active participation

The complaints about the difficulties to induce people to take their life into their own hands and to become active - which would be of paramount importance in connection with dealing with conflicts - still prevail, and were mostly obvious in the interviews we have conducted with the staff of wohnpartner**.** It looks as if indeed nothing had changed in the course of the last 15 years.

But we have to be careful. Whilst we cannot overlook the overall tendency to demand the authorities to step in and to resort to a delegation of the conflicts we have heard of many instances where the residents did participate in various activities initiated by the organisations and we have heard also of instances where they not only engaged in

these activities but where they further expanded them - or started something new themselves.

A 'Viennese brand' or variant of 'becoming active'? - some case stories

Maybe we can even speak of another 'Viennese brand' or variant of 'becoming active'. It evolves against the background of a plethora of agencies and sub-organisations that can be called upon for providing support. These agencies, not least wohnpartner itself, are trying to tread the difficult tightrope walk between providing care and exercising control.

The director of Bassena explained about the difficulty of initiating and stimulating activity without 'taking over', and leaving the people themselves once again in the role of 'consumers' "do not prepare and do so much - it will just make them rely on you; and hinder their own activity."

In a similar vein, the supervisor of professional work of wohnpartner explained: "you mustn't impose a programme on people - you must wait and see what comes from them themselves. Maybe start with the proposal of something small and limited and see whether people will hook on to the idea and take over - or not".

We will in this place refer another case story - the story of the residents' café established by wohnpartner located in one of the younger social housing estates. It is also the one where there is a mosque close by (we have mentioned the group mediation that took place when severe conflicts around noise, parking problems and arose in connection with an Islamic festivity that took place around the time of Christian Easter).

The residents' café was meant to be an informal meeting point and place: for two hours every Tuesday it was 'open' - people were supposed just to drop in. There is always tea and coffee - some sweets, cakes or something in that line that comes partly from wohnpartner, partly from the visitors. When I came first, there were altogether about 10 - 15 people present; it was the first time after the summer-holiday. This café ended with a kind of éclat - Frau Prager after a verbal encounter with Frau Özcan leaving and declaring that she will not come ever again: "Me and those wearing the headscarf - that does not go together!".

There were fewer visitors the following weeks, and one got the impression that interest was flagging - no real coffeehouse atmosphere did arise.

In the interviews with Frau Özcan and Frau Senger conducted after one of the cafés, we talked at some length about this problem. Frau Senger said:

> Who will come if it is not the two of us? If you (addressing Frau Özcan) are not there, your Turkish fellow country-women, will stay off - and I admit that I myself am not really successful in stimulating other Austrians to come. They feel uneasy if they see that there is a group of Turkish speaking women: they feel uneasy, excluded - and they get angry.

"Well, yes", admitted Frau Özcan (who speaks not only perfect, but beautiful German) "On the other hand, the Turkish speaking women, when under pressure to speak German in the café, they feel insecure."

When proposing to do field research in the café, the social worker of wohnpartner responsible for the café (a woman of Iranian origin) had explained to the researcher that it will be possible to meet Turkish women and to speak to them - also to those who are not proficient in German, because there will be others to translate. But such a situation did never arise.

This specific residents' café seems to point to the limits of 'activation'. But we have been told of examples where activation was possible and even had some longer lasting effects: In one of the conflicts about the common use of the court-yard wohnpartner was able to organise two working /discussion groups. One was dealing with the question: 'what is irritating and does not work during our common usage of the court-yard?'; and the other was dealing with the question: 'how would we like our living together to look like and to function?' Although no concrete agreements were reached in this discussion process a common sense of working together was achieved, especially since the children became involved and were able to bring forward their ideas and wishes. The children had on the other hand the opportunity to listen to and to understand the point of view and the experiences of an elderly lady - and the children were also involved in the final round of announcing via the microphone the results of the discussion. A general sense of pride of what had been achieved - not least being proud of the children - was prevailing at the end of this event.

Connecting our field research to the theoretical work - the thesis of Yasemin Soysal

In a next step we might ask: Do we find instances of an increased demand on individuals according to the new social project Yasemin Soysal has outlined: a citizenship model that privileges individuality and its transformative capacity as a collective good. "Thus, while expanding the boundaries and forms of participation in society, this project at the same time burdens the individual, rather than the state, with the obligation of ensuring social cohesion and solidarity."

Soysal's analysis is in fact a variant of what we have indicated as a signpost in our theoretical deliverable: There we have pointed to active participation' as a constituent of the strategies of new governance. We have stated that techniques of responsibilisation, which are closely related to active participation, are designed to make people take care of their own affairs and to become self-entrepreneurs. While this also holds the promise of freedom and self-realisation, it is on the other hand, criticised as a means of more sophisticated and refined means of social control that results in people submitting to the inescapable pressure of competition in the market. In Soysal's words: it burdens the individual rather than the state with the obligation of ensuring social cohesion and solidarity.

The topic of individualisation has already been addressed within INSEC mentioned above – as well as within the CASE project. The gist of the analysis of the empirical data from Vienna at that time: "Considering individualisation, there are a few statements that might be read as complaints about the dissolving of social relations and milieus or about the loss of cohesion affecting local communities and neighbourhoods." The findings in ALTERNATIVE provide an additional instance of this type of complaints - or as we have seen of rather matter of fact statements. And there are also statements to the end that indicate that in the interviewees' perception the influx of people with migration background has aggravated the problem of 'cohesion'. On the other hand, we find no empirical evidence for a special burden of becoming active that is placed on people with migration background. There are invitations to become active, on the different levels mentioned.

In the interviews with wohnpartner staff we have heard the statement that residents with migration background are more ready to take an active role in dealing with con-

flicts arising in the neighbourhood. When discussing this question in the course of the seminar on Restorative Justice held for wohnpartner, namely whether it is easier to 'activate' people with migration background, the contributions rather confirmed that there is no clear pattern discernable along this difference. The success of activation depends on different circumstances, on individuals taking a certain role, on people's occupational status - or it appears as mere chance.

Activation of people with migration background - case stories

But it became also obvious that when it comes to people with migration background these invitations acquire a specific quality. Or rather the activation strategies of the two organisations reveal their inherent tension in relation to activating the others - and the effects of these strategies or policies reveal in turn the inherent contradictions of dealing with diversity - of the policies of othering. At first sight they can be understood as following the rationale of compensatory empowerment; people with migration background will receive special attention, because they might be in need of such compensatory empowerment. We have read in the City of Vienna's new 'Principal guidelines on integration and diversity' that the deficit-oriented approach is supplanted by the resources and capacities oriented perspective. Can we recognise in which way this approach becomes manifest in the various activities?

Let's once more have a closer look at one of the activities of wohnpartner we were able to observe. The 'Hof-Café' is a one-time activity where - outside in one of the courtyards belonging to a social housing estate – a table is set up in the open, coffee is served, together with a few cookies, some information material is laid out and two social workers, Herr Sokol and Frau Bergmann are present for a couple of hours. Passers-by are invited to have coffee and to talk. It is the attempt to become a potential addressee of concerns - manifest in listening to these concerns; the youngsters around the playground that is causing troubles - noise once more - for people living nearby.

During this late afternoon it was three young men - already known to the social worker - who stayed there some time, then another youngsters exchanging just a few words and pushing on and, finally an elderly man, 'old-Viennese' with his grandson

and his dog who also had already contacted wohnpartner previously, who had a long exchange with the social worker.

Firstly, the three young men around 15 or 16 years of age, with migration background (could have been from the Balkans, or from the Near East): they were together as a group but they were quite different: one of them close to acquiring a degree from a technical middle school, one having finished elementary school, and looking for an apprenticeship, the third is in the care of a well-known official organisation working with handicapped youth. Together they represented a wide span of different life-situations and future prospects of young men, albeit it would have been hard to discern anything specific to be attributed to their migration background. Especially in the case of the young man that was mentally handicapped (50%! as he declared himself with something like pride in his voice). He seemed to appreciate the support he and his family receive from this organisation and getting this care and support is regarded as a matter of course: this is how things are in this place.

The three of them do not believe that it will be possible to talk directly to those residents that keep complaining about noise. This just goes on as it has a long time since. They say that they are abiding by the rules concerning the time when doing ball games on the grounds should stop (8 pm!) and the social worker confirms that this is what he has observed last time when he visited the premises.

When he mentions this fact some time later talking to one of the 'old-Viennese' visitors to the Hofcafé, Herr Brendl, one of the most outspoken and persevering complainants, this man answers that it is only when nobody from wohnpartner or any of the other organisations is around, that the noise becomes unbearable. He expands on his complaints about the youngsters 'with migration background' (using always exactly this term: never foreigners, Turks, or one of the more derogatory denominations; he is one of those that has 'learned the code' and uses it). Once more he explains the many life style restrictions he has to bear. Has to turn up the TV set very loud, keep the windows closed in the heat of summer, and still has problems to fall asleep. He is adamant when it comes to emphasising that these problems never occurred in former times and with the younger generation of Austrians - never ever! Herr Sokol, the social worker in a kind and half serious, half mocking way sets out to inquire whether there are no possibilities to directly talk to these youngsters and arriving at some arrangements - wasn't he playing football himself? Couldn't he offer his services as a

trainer and coach to the young people? Herr Brendl declines, but he is visibly flattered and - more important - he feels listened to and taken serious by the entreaties of Herr Sokol. The youngsters with migration background on the other hand can also relate easily to the people from wohnpartner; for them the support and the understanding they get is tangible. They are assured of their rights and they are assured that they would get the support a mediator should they be ready to enter such a process.

In the concrete case the two sides remain 'balanced', both experiencing recognition. Appeals are repeated that it would be favourable for them to enter direct negotiations.

To repeat and to summarise:

* Active participation as a political goal, a pathway to more democratic societies is still difficult to evince when it comes to living together in the Viennese Gemeindebau. Reliance on the authorities to step in and to enforce various sets of rules, using administrative fines and ultimately eviction is still the most pervasive and the dominant mode of reacting to conflicts - the same kind of conflicts that have been there for decades: noise, garbage, pets, cars.

* Problems have become exacerbated with an increased influx of people with 'migration background' after the 'opening' of access to public housing estates.

* The organisations that are partners of the Viennese research group within ALTERNATIVE, namely wohnpartner and Bassena deploy a wide range of strategies that are meant to support residents that get in trouble with each other. In the case of the Bassena it lends support also to those that are involved in conflicts with various administrative agencies and their decisions.

* These strategies could, on the one hand, be perceived as a modification and continuation of the maternalistic governance the City of Vienna has put in practice in its housing policies when it started in the 1920s. But there are, on the other hand, a few niches left within the housing policy Viennese style, with its tightly woven net of agencies and sub-agencies where a bit of a countermovement might thrive.

* We might ask the question whether this is still a politics of structural equality following the paradigm of redistributive justice. Or has it already some way advanced toward a politics of difference that places recognition as central? Or is it the influence

of EU politics that has left its mark on national politics and has made for those fundamental changes of orientation?

"The redistribution paradigm focusing on injustices defined as socio-economic was thus subsequently superseded and/or complemented by the recognition paradigm focusing on injustices understood as cultural patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. (...) Commitment to substantial equality thus requires attending to rather than ignoring such differences." (Pali, 2013, 9;)

* Finally, we could not find evidence pointing in the direction of an increased burden put on people with migration background - as Yasemin Soysal has identified it: a global trend that comes as a consequence of a mode of governance that espouses participation as an expression of individuality and its transformative capacity as a collective good.

7.3.   On othering, on citizenship and the politics of diversity

On 'cultures of immigrants' *(Einwandererkulturen)*

Let's once more go back to the findings of the INSEC report regarding diversity: Gerhard Hanak had compared aspects of the Austrian national culture (high control of affects, strong separation of private and public space, individualization) with aspects of 'Einwandererkulturen' (cultures of immigrants). The usage of public spaces (pavements etc.) for purposes other than established in Austria (traffic vs. playground) by migrants (also depending on these spaces because of small flats) is experienced as the "occupation" of "territory" and the "expulsion" of natives from these spaces (Hanak 1996, 68). Hanak had also mentioned that problem handling by way of a direct encounter appears hampered and happens less frequently than with other Austrians. There is uncertainty regarding the language and the general sharing of norms and expectations. The tendency to turn to the authorities is more pronounced – and accordingly lasting solutions and a more general adaptation and change of the situation that lies at the basis of the conflict do not occur. Conflicts between Old-Viennese and Newcomers tend to remain – they smoulder, producing lasting uneasiness, frustration and fears.

Did the IRKS at that time join in the discourse on the new cultural racism, in which "notions of racial difference were increasingly concealed inside apparently innocent language about culture" (Barker 1981, 3)." (Pali, 2013) Has Gerhard Hanak fallen

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prey to "culturalism" – the assumption of common beliefs and practices within a discrete ethnic group – especially within contemporary policies of multiculturalism? (Pali, 2013)

The discourse on 'othering'

In the theoretical work, following the discourse-analytical approach we have decided upon and which Brunilda Pali has in exemplary manner realised in the deliverable on 'Alternative Epistemologies of Justice and Security', the discourse on 'othering' takes central place.

To use another quote from this paper: "From the angle of the discursive analyst, identities are constructed through practices and discourses of 'othering' that generate difference."

And getting more explicit she sets out four dimensions of identity formation.

> Arguing in line with Stuart Hall and Edward Said, we can say that each age and society re-creates its 'Others'. Far from being a static thing then, identity of self or of 'Other' is a historical, social, intellectual, and political process. One of the main contributions, of post structuralism to social theory in general is the theorisation of (collective) identity, and in particular its relationship to difference. The argument can be summarised as follows: First, social identities are not given, but discursively constructed. Most identity groups are not based on objective physical similarities or differences, although most of them claim that they are 'natural' rather than socially constructed. For social identities to be articulated, there must be available in public discourse some criteria of ascription (...). Second, identities can never be entirely fixed. They shift around and can change, if need be more than once depending on the context (...). Third, identities are always constructed against the difference of an 'other' constitutive outside (...). A fourth dimension of social identity is treatment by others. Who we take ourselves to be is shaped by the regard of others. Even if individuals resist identification, patterns of behaviour toward them may compel them toward such identification. This dimension suggests why identity is a matter for politics: treatment by others on the basis of one's social identities can profoundly shape one's life prospects. (Pali 2013, 42)

Empirical evidence on 'othering'

Now let's confront these theoretical efforts/treatises with the empirical evidence acquired so far in the course of our project. We did hear stark statements, sometimes enraged outbreaks about the others, the migrants. A comparison between the people from former Yugoslavia (they are still called 'Jugoslawen' in Austria) and 'the Turks' amounts to the complaint about the Turks being not willing to integrate and to assimilate. They do not get acquainted with and do not adapt to our mentality, said the care-takers. The term 'mentality' was used rather glibly in this discussion round: 'it's a different mentality'. They are preserving their habits - most conspicuous the women keep wearing the headscarf. Interestingly, in our material so far we find few statements referring to differences in religion, or more specifically to the Islam as a source of feeling threatened.

They are the others - and they insist on their Otherness. Language - a language one cannot understand - is the most obvious trait that marks this Otherness.

On citizenship and on entitlements

The fourth dimension of othering mentioned above: treatment by others comes also into play. In Austria the migrants have been treated differently for a long time; not being granted access to public housing was one of the most prominent signs of this discrimination apart from discrimination on the labour market. And this has changed because Austria had to comply with EU regulations regarding non-discrimination. They had been treated differently because they are different in the eyes of the administration and the eyes of large segments of the public. Now they are to be treated as citizens with all rights accrued to this citizens' status.

The phenomenon of the others is therefore according to our reading of the evidence concerned with entitlements and with the conditions and prerequisites of citizenship: Who is entitled to fully enjoy all those provisions and services of the welfare state? People who just come there and take residence, try to find work?

A topic that was addressed in several interviews: "But we the Austrian have gone through the times of hardship in the post WW2 period; we have built this republic and its welfare regime: We have earned to reap its benefits; these newcomers did not contribute to its coming in place - and therefore they ought not partake in it."

The understanding behind this reasoning is that entitlements have to be earned. To convey them to everybody who has come to this place is against this understanding of distributional justice. As we have outlined above - the Gemeindebau as one of the most important achievements of the 'Red Vienna' was to be reserved for those that had a stake in this achievement - Vienna's working class. The criteria for getting access to a flat in the Gemeindebau by defining the prerequisites for becoming eligible introduce at least a certain period of residence based on some long-term residence permit as the basis of having earned the privilege of living there.

The politics of diversity

But there is more than the politics of non-discrimination, or of distributional justice. The politics in Vienna does subscribe to a politics of diversity - what we would like to call a modified and mollified /mitigated brand of a politics of difference. Both our partner-organisations, wohnpartner and Bassena follow a strategy of empowerment for those in a disadvantaged position, always with the aim of enabling them to participate as fully as possible in the handling of conflicts or more generally partaking in the social life of the neighbourhood. Once again, differences between the two do exist. Wohnpartner commits itself to the principle of all-partiality; whilst we would like to contend that this is compatible with 'compensatory empowerment' it poses some restrictions on the way conflict work is done. Bassena does not engage in conflict resolution between two parties and is generally sceptical regarding the value and practicability of all-partiality. Notwithstanding these differences, especially in the field of community work, wohnpartner as well as Bassena pay a lot of attention to migrants, their representation in various activities, and the defence of their rights.

But according to the policy line developed and propagated by Bassena empowerment is understood differently. Unlike youth work, which is declaredly partial and siding up with adolescents, GWA does not focus its empowering efforts on one particular group within the social space it is working in, but it pursues the objective of creating an eye-to-eye level among all participants. Such an approach allows for the deconstruction of homogenizing perceptions of social groups and in that it enables us to take both power differences among the supposedly powerless, for example "The Turkish women", and the vulnerabilities of the seemingly powerful "the white male residents' representatives" into account. Differences intersect, vulnerabilities are mani-

fold and thus also affect those who, at first sight seem to belong to a dominant group (white males). This fits with Judith Butler's call for paying attention to these very vulnerabilities or what she calls the 'precariousness of all human life'.

Such recognition of shared precariousness, according to her, introduces strong normative commitments of equality and invites a more robust universalising of rights that seeks to address basic human needs for food, shelter, and other conditions for persisting and flourishing. Avoiding analytic traps on reliance of humanity on 'nature', she links the existential conception of 'precariousness' with a more specifically political notion of 'precarity' (Pali 2013: 17).

On the other hand, what we can find in the interviews with residents is the expression of uneasiness, even of outrage provoked by the politics of diversity. We have therefore asked: Is the policy of paying attention to diversity and to promote diversity – as it is written in the guidelines of wohnpartner – and as we could observe it as practised – a source of breeding more discontent? And not just discontent but an undercurrent of fear and rage that will erupt and end up in violence?

We are definitely far from antagonism and fear becoming expressed as physical violence. The scenario of the Turks and the Islam taking over evokes rage, maybe despair. 'They are too many and they receive too much attention!' – Moreover they are privileged, partly because of their impertinence and skilfulness, partly because of the failed political agenda of the ruling Social-Democratic party in the town-hall. We have already explained that the kind of rumours that are spread are difficult to counter by presenting statistical 'facts' and by pointing to guidelines and criteria that are to bar privileges.

The usefulness of the concept of recognition

We will at that point once more take recourse to the notion and the concept of recognition - the way Jessica Benjamin has introduced it. Mutual recognition that culminates in the contention that only one that is recognised can fully recognise the other. As Brunilda Pali has stated, this concept of recognition is bound to justice. She has further contraposed Taylor and Honneth's understanding of the concept of recognition and that of Nancy Fraser:

Taylor and Honneth (2003) tie the concept of recognition to questions about self-realisation and maintain that it is in the quest for recognition by another subject that we seek to fulfil our own identity. Differently, Fraser wishes to escape the pitfalls of thinking about recognition in terms of psychological ideas about self-realisation and stresses instead that we should conceive of recognition as belonging to institutionalised patterns of cultural valuation. By treating misrecognition as a matter of an externally manifested violation of justice, we understand that what we need to do is to change social practices 'by deinstitutionalising patterns of cultural value that impede parity of participation and replacing them with patterns that foster it' (Pali 2013: 22).

Moreover, recognition - the way it is introduced by Benjamin - bears relevance to politics, and to political struggles. It is about overcoming the antagonism of domination and submission, of master and servant. Mutual recognition affords standing up to the tension of recognising the other as different and simultaneously holding on to one's own difference.
It is in fact the working principle of restorative justice dialogical procedures - it points the way out of struggles about difference and identity.

However, here we are back at theory - how about the empirical evidence? It is for the next phase of ALTERNATIVE to furnish this evidence. Suffice to say that in the course of the seminar and the workshop with members of our partner organisations we have successfully started a process of mutual recognition between researchers/scientists and practitioners. This justifies our hope for proceeding that way.

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