Rebuilding Collective Memory

An Analysis of the Dynamics and Dimensions of the Community Garden Movement in Berlin

Master´s Thesis

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Reclaim the Commons.

Abstract

Community gardens are urban spaces where different collective activities are carried out to provide social and ecological services to the city. These spaces are viewed as innovative locations where social, environmental, political, and aesthetic experimentation take place. In a city where they were initially seen as an abstract trend, community gardens have evolved to become a vital part of Berlin's urban landscape. Today, over 200 community gardens enrich the city, following years of efforts to be recognized and heard. This analysis aims to celebrate the community garden movement in Berlin, seeking to create a space for reflection through the creation of a collective memory narrative. In search of collective memory, the work uses storytelling as a critical tool to explore and challenge traditional narratives. The analysis is based on the stories of five representative community gardens: Rosa-Rosa, Prinzessinnengarten-Kreuzberg, Prachttomate, Himmelbeet, and Allmende-Kontor. These stories highlight the struggle of these community gardens to persist despite the conflicts of interest surrounding the use of public space in Berlin, emphasizing the importance of their perspectives and how they challenge the dominant narrative of urban development in the city. In addition, the community garden movement is examined within the theoretical framework of social movements, exploring the complexity of its dimensions and the challenge of creating an effective network that allows the movement to continue to flourish in order to seek social and ecological regeneration within the city of Berlin.

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1.Introduction: Rowing forward but looking backwards

In the waning days of September and the early whispers of October, the several green spaces of the city of Berlin wave goodbye to the warmth of summer. Winter's coldness awaits on the horizon, but before its icy grasp tightens, autumn unfold its cloak, announcing the inevitable arrival of winter. Thus, the natural world prepare itself once again for the arduous journey through the long, wintry expanse that lies ahead. People take the opportunity to go for walks in the surroundings of the city, such as forests and lakes, and enjoy the few remaining warm days. While walking, you can immediately see that the soil in the forest is completely covered by the leaves that slowly fall and generate a warm bed of organic matter, making the soil fill with the necessary minerals to supply microorganisms with necessary nutrition. Thus, again, a cycle of organic decomposition begins, allowing, with the help of rain, the appearance of fungi. After the rain, the fungi grow rapidly and spread throughout the forest territory, appearing as if from nowhere. Many of them do so from an immense fungal underground that remains completely out of our sight, a system of communication between mycorrhizal as complex as the neurological system of the human being, and still largely unknown.

If we attune to all the elements that change in the forest, a new landscape presents itself to our eyes and we could start to see things in a different way. In this way, social movements like forests, are complex systems that change and develop with time. Their dynamics and dimensions are constantly changing and are composed of different stages. Like mushrooms in the forest whose underground ecosystem not visible to the naked eye, it is often believed that uprisings and social movements are spontaneous or grow out of nowhere like mushrooms, but often they require a great deal of planning and less visible groundwork in laying the foundations and structures for change. It is hard work, fueled by informal communication networks that, even at their limits, manage to create a base of information exchange so that the system of change remains in place (Solnit, 2016). Like mycorrhizal-fungi[1], their work is silent but loud enough to be heard and, just as mycorrhizal-fungi look for the roots of a tree to create a symbiosis so that they can grow strong and expand the network, the pursuit of social change

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[1] Mycorrhizal fungi are a type of fungi that form symbiotic relationships with the roots of most plant species. This relationship is mutually beneficial, as the fungi enhance the plant's ability to absorb water and nutrients while the plant provides the fungi with carbohydrates produced through photosynthesis (Tsing, 2015).

works in a similar way, requiring constant communication and exchange with other actors to find benefits and synergies within the complex system.

Changes in ideas and values are also driven by the efforts of writers, academics, social activists, and members of social networking movements. They all work tirelessly with the purpose of bringing about transformations in society, sustained by a shared conviction. Initially, the process of seeking change may seem insignificant or peripheral until tangible and structural results are manifested (Solnit, 2016). Similar to a forest, a social movement is composed of diverse dimensions, processes and histories that entail a long struggle and sacrifice to achieve its goals. Ideas or concepts that were once considered utopian, outrageous, ridiculous, extreme, or innovative gradually become normalized until new generations accept them as inherent. It is rare to have the opportunity to witness the transformation in real time and to understand how the structure of the problem was modified so that current generations can benefit from past sacrifice.

"*Memory produces hope in the same way that amnesia produces despair*" notes theologian Walter Brueggemann (Brueggemann, 2012. p. 9). In the past, the world was not as it is today and, while change doesn't always mean improvement, it is inevitable. However, by working together, individuals can positively influence and participate in change. This underscores the importance of collective memory, *our* history. Just as the branches of a tree symbolize the hope for change, its roots embody the memories that support that hope. Without memory, we are stuck. Amnesia deprives us of examples of positive change, proof that it is possible to achieve our goals, proof that we can do it and that we have done it before. Sociologist George Orwell wrote: "*Who controls the past controls the future, who controls the present controls the past.*" (Orwell, 1984. chapter 3, p. 19). Controlling the past begins with understanding it; the stories we tell about who we were or what we did shape our present and future possibilities.

Changes are rarely simple, and this premise is a central starting point to this analysis. Sometimes, they are as complex as chaos theory and as slow as evolution. Even what seems to happen suddenly has its roots deep in the past or in seeds that have lain dormant for a long time. This is why it is crucial to question not only what has generated those long-term significant moments, but also what they consisted of in their heyday. When people begin to recognize that they live in a world where some dreams have come true and understand that behind those dreams and hopes there is hard work, that memory, that seed, can become a

compass, an identity, a gift for those who seek change but feel lost in the darkness of oblivion. Philosopher Paul Goodman wrote: "*Suppose we have had the change we talked about and dreamed about. Suppose our side has won, and we have the kind of society we wanted. How would you, personally, live in this society? Start living that way now!*". (Goodman, 2010). This passage reflects on partial and temporary victories, as well as the impossibility of achieving total victory. The idea of total victory is compared to the concept of paradise, a place where there are no problems and activity is meaningless. The idea of total victory has traditionally been associated with the left, but it is argued that it is virtually impossible, since victories come in various forms, large or small, and are often gradual and unexpected (Solnit, 2016). The importance of recognizing failures and difficulties in the process is stressed, as these points of friction can lead to new possibilities and the formation of a sense of community and collective power.

Berlin is mentioned as an example of a city where significant changes have been experienced, and the potential of civil society as a "sleeping giant" that can awaken and generate transformations, including through peaceful means, is alluded to (Romvári, 2021). The presented work specifically addresses the community garden movement in Berlin[2], highlighting the work done by committed individuals to bring forward projects that were in a dormant state and allow them to flourish as part of change. It is recognized that this movement has a history of transformations, successes and failures that deserve to be remembered and analyzed. It concludes with the hope of building confidence in the ability to generate change, whether small or large, and encourages moving forward into the future while remembering the past as a way to guide new generations.

The relevance of this paper can be divided into three stages. First, it aims to reflect on the *collective memory* of the movement in order to gain a deeper understanding of the work that people have done over the past few years to create the structures that we know today. Second, as the word "movement" is quite widespread, and since many academic papers talk about a garden movement, this paper will try to identify this word within the Social Movement Theory in order to clarify what kind of movement we are dealing with. This point will handle the

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[2] In this paper, the term "community garden movement" is used instead of "urban gardening movement" to emphasize this specific type of urban gardening within the city. Urban gardening is a broad field that encompasses various methods of interacting with urban infrastructure, from guerrilla gardening to allotment gardens. Therefore, this paper will focus solely on the domain of community gardens in Berlin.

analysis of the community garden movement within the theoretical framework of Social Movement Theory with a multi-dimensional approach, identifying the challenges behind building a social network within the movement and what the key aspects are to take into consideration in order to develop a trustworthy network in Berlin. Thirdly, it is intended to provide the actors involved in the movement with a space for reflection. Despite the favorable circumstances in which the movement finds itself, in comparison to the previous decade, the city still requires the active engagement of civil society to address the structural challenges it faces.

The analyses presented in this paper will address the following questions:

a. How have the dynamics, structure, and challenges of the community garden movement in Berlin evolved or changed, and to what extent can be the community garden movement be frame under a *social movement*?

b. How does *collective memory* within the community gardening movement in Berlin influence present interactions, organizational structures, and responses to challenges particularly in navigating changing dynamics and external pressures in the urban landscape?

c. What challenges do community gardens in Berlin encounter in maintaining effective interactions and network systems? // How do community gardens address these challenges, particularly within the framework of social movements, to sustain their impact and relevance in the urban landscape?

2. Theoretical Framework: Social Movement Theory

Since the 1940s, the study of social movements has gone through several changes. During this time, Anselm Strauss identified the lack of research that has been done to understand the complexity of the functionality of social movements at a "*crudely descriptive level of understanding and a relative lack of theory*" (Strauss, 1947 p. 352). Twenty years later, sociologist argue that "*the study of social changes, social movements, have received relatively little emphasis*" (Killian, 1964 p. 426). The decade of the 70`s mark a breaking point in the study of social movements, when the notion of *collective action* was considered "*one of the*

most vigorous areas of sociology" (Marx & Wood, 1975). Following this period, sociologists, anthropologists, and ethnographers were able to identify "an explosion, in the last ten years, of theoretical and empirical writings on social movements and collective action". Presently, the examination of social movements has become firmly entrenched, as evident through dedicated academic publications, book series, and professional groups. Despite this, recent social and political developments spanning the last forty years have not diminished the importance or immediacy of studying grassroots activism. On the contrary, social movements, protests, and political organizations now constitute integral elements of Western democracies. Describing protest politics, grassroots involvement, or symbolic resistance as unconventional is no longer feasible (Porta & Diani, 2020).

The analysis of social movements requires a nuanced understanding of the interactionist perspectives that highlight the relational dynamics among participants. Therefore, a theoretical examination was conducted using four distinct dimensions within social movement studies as a guiding perspective: the theory of *collective memory* (Gongaware, 2010) within social movements; the *Social Movement Theory* according to Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (Porta & Diani, 2020); the *theoretical framework of Social Movement* developed by Dieter Rucht (Rucht, 2023b); and, last but not least, the *Theoretical Perspectives a Social Network within a Movement* (Porta & Diani, 2020).

2.1. Collective Memory in Social Movements

Collective memory in social movements refers to the shared remembrance and collective understanding of past events that groups within a society hold. These memories play a critical role in shaping social identities and driving collective action. The core idea behind collective memory in social movements is that it acts as a social glue, providing a shared past that enhances solidarity and continuity within the movement (Krawatzek, 2020). Additionally, collective memory serves as a tool for social or political mobilization, allowing communities to draw lessons and inspiration from past struggles (Erll, 2022). Moreover, collective memory is not just a passive reflection of the past but an active process of memory work, where groups actively construct and reconstruct their memories to make sense of their identities and experiences in relation to the broader societal or political landscape (Cordonnier et al., 2022). This memory work often involves negotiations and contestations within a group about what to

remember and how to remember it, which reflects the group's current needs, values, and goals (Jackson, 2021).

Collective memory serves as a vital tool in social movements, particularly in fostering continuity and nurturing a shared identity across generations. This shared memory enables movements to maintain coherence and momentum even as individual participants change over time. Collective memory can be divided under the following subcategories. (1) *Identity Formation and Strengthening,* whereby collective memory helps to cement a shared identity among movement participants. It provides a sense of unity and common purpose by linking current members to their predecessors who championed similar causes (Erll, 2022). This shared identity is crucial for sustaining engagement and participation across different generations within the movement. (2) *Learning and Strategy Development*, in which, by preserving the memories of past strategies, successes, and failures, collective memory acts as a learning tool for future generations within the movement. This ongoing exchange ensures that the movement remains relevant and responsive to changing social contexts while preserving its foundational values. This historical awareness can guide decision-making and strategy formulation, helping to avoid past mistakes and refine approaches based on what has been effective previously (Jackson, 2021). (3) *Inspiration and Mobilization*, through which collective memory can inspire and mobilize new members by providing powerful narratives of past achievements or injustices. These narratives help to contextualize the movement's goals and motivate action by showing the impacts of past activism, thus making the cause more tangible and urgent for those currently uninvolved (Krawatzek, 2020). (4) *Legitimacy and Credibility*, in which a well-documented collective memory can enhance the legitimacy and credibility of a movement. Demonstrating a long-standing commitment to a cause can attract broader support from the public and potential allies, which is crucial for the movement's growth and influence (Cordonnier et al., 2022). (5) *Cultural and Political Impact*, whereby, over time, the collective memory of a movement can permeate broader cultural and political realms, influencing public opinion, policy-making, and societal norms. As these memories are integrated into the collective consciousness, they shape societal values and priorities, potentially leading to significant structural changes (Yasseri et al., 2022)

Collective memory is not just about preserving the past; it is an active force that shapes the future trajectory of social movements, ensuring their relevance, continuity, and impact across generations. Researchers and activists gain valuable insights into the planning and execution

of campaigns by recognizing the influence of historical narratives on current activities and aspirations. According to Rucht (Rucht, 2023b), understanding social actions by embracing them as a *historical process* plays a key role in discerning the causes and consequences of actions. He emphasizes the interconnectedness of events, acknowledging their dependence on prior occurrences and decisions. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of historical context in analyzing social movements, demonstrating how past events shape present conditions and actions. In the broader societal arena, understanding collective memory's impact can guide movements in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions, demonstrating the power of well-articulated historical narratives to penetrate public consciousness and effect change (Gongaware, 2010).

2.2. Collective Action in Social Movement Theory

The concept of *collective action* within the context of social movements is defined as the joint, organized effort and strategy undertaken by a group to express dissent, criticism, or claims against other groups or powerholders. This typically involves public, performative protests aimed at gaining visibility, attracting support, and impacting social change (Porta & Diani, 2020). Collective action is crucial for the development and expression of a social movement's collective identity, which is constructed through shared goals, mobilization, and interaction with third parties such as the media, judiciary, and general public. This concept underlines the importance of understanding the triadic relationships between the actors, the opposing forces, and the media, where movements strive not just for visibility but for substantive societal impact (Miller, 201315.07.24 02:54:00; Mueller, 1992; Rucht, 2010).

Della Porta and Diani (2020) raise a crucial question in their work: what determines the forms and intensity of collective action? According to the "*political process*"[3] perspective (McAdam, 1999; Tilly, 2017), various factors shape the forms and intensity of collective action through interactions between social movements and their political and institutional environments. Eisinger (1973) emphasizes the role of the *Political Opportunity Structure*, which evaluates the openness or closure of the political system and includes factors such as the availability of allies and the responsiveness of political elites to movement demands. Tarrow (1994) discusses

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[3] It is important to acknowledge that there are various theoretical perspectives on the factors that influence the forms and modes of collective action within the context of social movements. For a comprehensive overview of the various approaches, please refer to the following list (Imhonopi et al., 2013)

institutional conditions that regulate agenda-setting and decision-making processes. This perspective challenges the notion that movements are necessarily marginal or anti-institutional, highlighting their role in shaping political dynamics (Della Porta, 1995). Social movements often aim for reform rather than total dismantlement, particularly in democratic countries with guarantees of freedom and political participation (Imhonopi et al., 2013). *Perception of opportunities* is significant in collective action, influenced by beliefs in the possibility of change, past successes or failures, and societal attitudes. Activists attribute systemic injustice or oppression to existing political and social structures, motivating them to challenge the status quo (Porta & Diani, 2020).

The political process approach has several criticisms, one of the most important being that it doesn't take *social construction* (Rucht, 2023a) into account. Scholars argue over agency's meaning in movements due to social and relationship ties, emphasizing movements' embeddedness in shared values and norms. These social elements also influence the framing of the choice of belonging, and the reception of a movement's messages by broader society. Conversely, social construction in movements shapes perceptions, challenging and reshaping societal norms. By reconstructing the social understanding of what is normal, acceptable, or just, movements can shift societal norms and policies in significant ways. Neglecting the social factors limits one's understanding of movement emergence and resonance (McAdam, 2000; Rucht, 2023a).

2.3. Conflictual Orientation, Informal Social Networks and Collective Identity

Collective actions are possible due to the three dimensions: the actors hold a conflictual orientation to clearly identified challenges or problems, they are connected through dense, informal networks, and they share a distinct collective identity (Porta & Diani, 2020).

With regards to the first point, participants within social movements have a *conflictual orientation to clearly identified challenges or problems* and they engage in *conflictual collective action* aimed at either advocating for or opposing societal change. Conflict is defined as a situation in which different groups seek control over the same resource, whether it's political power, economic resources, or cultural influence, and make claims that are detrimental to each other's interests (Tilly, 2017). Simply addressing shared problems, creating public benefits, or endorsing certain moral principles doesn't necessarily constitute social movement

activity. What distinguishes social movements is the concerted effort to identify targets for collective action, usually articulated in social or political terms. Conversely, if collective action solely targets individual behavior or blames broader issues like natural disasters or divine will, it doesn't fit the framework of social movement processes (Gamson, 1983). For instance, when addressing globalization concerns, conflict arises when organizations such as the World Trade Organization or the International Monetary Fund are criticized not for the actions of their officials or specific policy errors, but as representatives of particular interest groups (Porta & Diani, 2020).

The distinction between social movement processes and other forms of collective action lies in the presence of *dense informal networks*. While collective action often occurs within specific organizations, social movement processes entail both individual and organized actors maintaining their autonomy while engaging in continuous resource exchanges toward shared objectives. No single organized entity, regardless of its influence, can assert representation for an entire movement. Consequently, there are increased opportunities for highly committed or skilled individuals to independently influence the political process when compared to scenarios in which action is confined within formal organizations (Porta & Diani, 2020). Establishing social networks is a crucial tactic for grassroots community organizations, serving as a means through which individuals create spaces to safeguard their interests (Cox, 1998). The role of social networks is diverse and can be a way for new individuals to get in touch with the movement. Furthermore, the interaction between actors within the network and how involvement is facilitated to new individuals in activities within the movement create a "social capital" for people involved directly and indirectly with the movement (Edwards et al., 2001; Diani, 1997). During moments of collective gatherings, individuals establish and perpetuate dense networks of informal exchanges through meetings and shared spaces. These informal social networks contribute to alternative dynamics, preserving collective identities during phases when challenges to the movement are not actively taking place or the movement is going through a latency phase. In this context, networks provide the framework for "free spaces" within social movements, where individuals with specific worldviews reinforce mutual solidarity and experiment with alternative ideas in order to develop (Polletta, 1999).

Rucht argues (2023) that understanding social movements necessitates an analysis of their social dynamics, both *internally* and in relation to *external* actors. The internal dimension is a product of social interaction, formed through shared experiences, values, goals, and

communication within the community and activist (Teune, 2008). While outsiders may have limited insight into these internal processes, these groups also engage in relationships with external reference groups, including potential allies, intellectuals, authorities, political entities, and media, which can vary in nature from positive to negative (Rucht, 2023b). Recognizing the various roles within a movement helps in understanding how tasks and responsibilities are distributed among participants. Effective identification of actors allows for more strategic allocation of resources. Understanding who holds expertise, leadership qualities, or access to specific resources can optimize the movement's operations (Rucht, 2023a).

The last dimension of collective action is that social movements transcend mere protest events or specific campaigns; they embody a process wherein *collective identities* emerge, extending beyond particular occurrences or initiatives. Collective identity formation involves acknowledgment and the establishment of connections, fostering a shared sense of purpose and commitment to a cause (Rucht, 2023b). This enables individual activists and organizations to perceive themselves as interconnected with others, within a larger mobilization effort. Collective identities may also be based on shared orientations, values, attitudes, worldviews, and lifestyles, as well as on shared experiences of action (e.g., individuals may feel close to people holding similar postmaterialist views, or similarly approving of direct action, without expressing any strong sense of shared class, ethnicity, or gender) (Porta & Diani, 2020). An essential aspect of collective identity lies in understanding that constructing identity and rediscovering oneself isn't solely a psychological phenomenon (Jasper & McGarry, 2015); it's a social process involving interactions and negotiations over meaning with various actors. In line with both sociological and sociopsychological viewpoints on collective action, identity is not as a possession or inherent quality of individuals, but a social process (Stott et al., 2017). This process involves individuals and/or collective actors, in conjunction with other social participants, attributing specific meanings to their characteristics, life events, and the social frameworks in which they exis (Fominaya, 2018). It's crucial to acknowledge that social identification exhibits both static and dynamic qualities, which means that collective identity is formed and continually redefined (Fominaya, 2018).

2.4. Social Movement Heterotopias

The term "heterotopia" was coined by Michel Foucault to describe places and spaces that function in non-hegemonic conditions. Heterotopias are effectively "counter-sites" where the

real sites within a culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Unlike utopias, which are sites with no real place of realization, heterotopias are real places that serve to "unsettle" societal norms and create spaces of otherness that are neither here nor there, mirroring and yet distorting what is outside (Foucault, 2000). Foucault uses heterotopia to explore spaces that are different from all other sites because they either contest or invert societal norms. These are places of otherness that are critical, reflective, or even transformative. Unlike utopias, which are unreal and idealized, heterotopias are tangible and exist among us, such as cemeteries, gardens, or sacred spaces, which embody and yet also disrupt conventional social order. In social movements, heterotopias manifest as spaces where societal norms and conventions are challenged or reversed. (Beckett et al., 2017).

Social movement heterotopias are places of resistance and transgression. They provide a physical and symbolic space to challenge the status quo, potentially shifting societal structures and norms. In the context of social movements, heterotopias serve as crucial spaces of resistance and transformation (Beckett et al., 2017). For example, occupied spaces in the urban sector act as heterotopias by creating environments where new social orders and norms can be tested against the prevailing status quo. These spaces are not just sites of deviation from the norm but are foundational grounds for experimenting with new forms of social organization, identity, and power dynamics (Foucault, 2000). By establishing heterotopias, movements foster opportunities for change and the creation of new societal structures, challenging what is considered 'normal' and pushing the boundaries towards transformative alternatives. Foucault's framework helps to understand how social movements utilize physical spaces to disrupt routine politics and culture.

2.5. Tentacular Thinking and Staying with the Trouble

In order to decipher the collective memory and complexity of the movement, the critical lens of prominent feminist theorist Donna J. Haraway was used. Haraway emphasizes the need to reconfigure our relationship with the planet and its inhabitants in the current context of ecological devastation and multiple crises. For this reason, in addition to the classical theory presented in the previous chapter, Haraway's theory is presented as a counterpart to give a more critical lens to the analysis of the social movement. Haraway's thinking provided an organic approach to the movement, so that the complexity can be seen through a less Western lens and analyzed from a more "*staying with the trouble*" point of view (Haraway, 2016).

In "Tentacular Thinking," Donna Haraway explores the idea of interconnectedness and the necessity of moving beyond human-centric perspectives. Tentacular thinking encourages us to see the world through the lens of complex, interconnected relationships, akin to the many arms of an octopus. This perspective acknowledges the mutual dependencies and entanglements of all life forms, urging a shift away from individualism and towards a holistic understanding of the Earth's ecosystems. Tentacular thinking, as described by Donna Haraway, encourages researchers to adopt a perspective that recognizes the intricate, interconnected relationships among all beings and actors involved in the system. This lens moves beyond human-centric viewpoints and considers the complex webs of interactions that constitute ecosystems, societies, and individual lives. Haraway contrasts "sym-poiesis" (making-with) with "auto-poiesis" (self-making) to highlight different approaches to life and systems. Auto-poiesis refers to systems that sustain themselves independently, emphasizing self-sufficiency and isolation. In contrast, sym-poiesis emphasizes collaboration and co-creation, recognizing that all living beings are interdependent and co-evolve through their interactions. Haraway argues that sym-poiesis is crucial for fostering resilience and sustainability in the face of ecological crises. It requires us to embrace collaborative efforts and collective responsibility, rather than relying on isolated, self-sustaining systems. Haraway introduce the term of response-ability as well, the notion is a play on "responsibility" and is about cultivating an ethic of care, accountability, and interconnectedness in response to the challenges facing our world. It involves being actively engaged in fostering relationships that support the well-being (Haraway, 2016).

Donna Haraway emphasizes the importance of storytelling as a crucial method for understanding and addressing complex systems. This approach fosters empathy and a deeper emotional and ethical engagement with environmental and social challenges. Storytelling also promotes reflexivity and a sense of responsibility by situating humans within broader ecological and multispecies narratives, reminding us of our roles and responsibilities. Since this work is based in the narrative of collective memory within a movement, stories of the case studies presented here inspire hope and resilience by envisioning positive outcomes and demonstrating possibilities for change and adaptation. Haraway's concept of "*staying with the trouble*" involves using storytelling to navigate challenges creatively and collaboratively. Narratives preserve and transmit knowledge across generations and cultures, carrying the wisdom of past experiences and lessons learned, thus providing a foundation for future actions and decisions.

2.6. Activist Ethnography

This research advocates understanding the community garden movement's complexity; therefore, the theoretical framework of Social Movement Theory served to clarify the structure of this research. Nevertheless, the methodology used to gain the information required to answer the previous questions has a more critical starting point of view on the analysis of social movements.

Ethnography serves as a method for researchers to delve into the underlying dynamics of grassroots communities, often uncovering hidden or latent social conditions. By exploring these contexts, researchers can gain insight into the realities of these communities and connect this understanding back to their research questions and theoretical frameworks (Plows, 2008). My[4] journey with the community gardens in Berlin began years ago and, throughout this time, I have not only observed, but also actively participated in the movement. This deep involvement has fostered strong bonds of friendship and a shared sense of identity, both socially and politically. This interpersonal relationship with members of the movement benefits the research itself through the sharing of experiences, narratives, and histories. As such, the outcomes could have a greater representation and accuracy of the organizations involved in the movement (Sutherland, 2013).

One issue of earlier ethnographic research on social movements is that the findings of the studies fail to deliver results to the movement itself and the information stays behind academic walls, provoking disappointment by movement activists (Juris, 2007). As an activist, I also ask myself, as Flacks asks: "*what is all this analysis for? In what way does the validation, elaboration and refinement of concepts provide usable knowledge for those seeking social change*?" (Flacks, 1984 p. 138). For this reason, the methodology I will employ to undertake my analysis of the community garden movement is an *activist ethnography*. Activist ethnography is an approach that focuses on a clear and honest examination of the interplay between the relationship of the social movement theory and practice. It is a methodology that allows for a deeper understanding of the movement by being an active participant rather than a detached observer (Plows, 2008). This approach can be seen as related to the notion of

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[4] The use of first person allows me to reflect on my own biases, assumptions, and perspectives, which contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the study of the movement. It also allows me to describe the interactions, emotions, and insights in a more vivid way.

"participative action research" (Nelson, 2009). However, purely action research is explicitly supportive of the perspectives and goals of the actors who are being researched and aims for the research to have a positive outcome on the goals of these individuals (Greenwood & Levin, 2007)

The methodology of activist ethnography is centered on activism and diverges from the structural and somewhat detached methods favored by earlier scholars (Sutherland, 2013). Instead, there is an emphasis on exploring movements from an insider perspective, employing qualitative ethnographic techniques to comprehend and analyze the complex structure of the movement. Ethnography, along with complementary qualitative methods like interviews, offers access to diverse perspectives within a movement. This active dynamic created a symbiotic relationship whereby ethnographic fieldwork and theoretical exploration continuously influence and enrich one another during the research.

Conducting the interviews and visiting different spaces in Berlin has involved delving into the movement's development, local interpretations, constructions, and actions from the viewpoint of someone who is actively involved. By doing so, this approach seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by engaging in politically committed and collaborative participant observation within grassroots movements. Consequently, it not only produces scholarly insights into the essence of a social movement, but also fosters introspection within the movement itself, aiding in the understanding, analysis, and enhancement of its goals, tactics, structures, and processes.

3. Methodology

In carrying out the qualitative interviews as part of this research, participants were systematically selected through an analysis of key individuals directly and indirectly involved in the movement, as well as experts in urban gardening and urban planning in Berlin. A total of ten qualitative interviews were conducted using two distinct formats: structured and semi-structured. Structured interviews were utilized for experts in urban gardening and urban planning to ensure a clear and consistent pathway for gathering essential information in these main domains. Conversely, semi-structured interviews were employed for current and former activists within the movement, facilitating a thorough exploration of the movement's various dimensions and contexts. Additionally, seven interviewees were associated with the four case

studies examined in this paper (Himmelbeet, Rosa-Rose, Allmende-Kontor, and Prinzessinnengarten-Kreuzberg). This inclusion provided a historical background for each project within Berlin's urban space and insights into their development over the studied timeframe. For the case study of the Prachttomate community garden, a comprehensive literature review was conducted. Additionally, two site visits were undertaken, during which informal group discussions were held with the participants of the community garden. In total, the ten interviews generated 125 pages of transcription material, which were analyzed individually according to the specific focus of each interview. To discern pertinent information regarding the complexity of the movement, the theoretical framework developed by (Porta & Diani, 2020; Rucht, 2023b; Cordonnier, et. Al. 2022) was utilized as a basis. Consequently, the information gathered was classified into six categories:

1. Collective Identity
2. Social Networks within the Movement
3. Relationship with Internal and External Actors
4. Collective Action within the movement
5. Conflict Orientation and Challenges within the Movemen
6. Collective Memory within the Movement

Interviewees	Community Garden/ Organisation	Activist in the Movement	Not active anymore	Informal Network system	Administration (Senate)	Expert, urban planning	Expert, Urban gardening	Semi-Structure	Structure	Social movements according to theoretical framework	Lengh
1. Dörte Martens	KuBIZ Garten, Allmende-Kontor	X			X			X		X	0:49 min 9 pages
2. Frauke Hehl	Rosa-Rose		X	X				X		X	0:35 min 8 pages
3. Gudrun Walesch	Die Anstiftung			X			X		X	X	0:53 min 10 pages
4. Toni Karge	SenMVKU				X	X	X		X	X	0:57 min 11 pages
5. Caterina Menegoni & Meike Stark	Himmelbeet	X						X		X	1 hour 27 min 15 pages
6. Marco Clausen	Prinzessinnen garten-Kreuzberg		X	X				X		X	1 hour 07 min 15 pages
7. 2024_123	Kulturwerk bbk Berlin, Raumlabor					X			X		0:44 min 9 pages
8. Miren Artola	KuBIZ Garten, Allmende-Kontor, Workstation e.V.	X		X				X		X	1 hour 12 min 12 pages
9. Sonja Rosenthal	Himmelbeet, Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin		X	X				X		X	0:46 min 11 pages
10. Kerstin Stelmacher	Kleingarten Schlänandstrda, Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin, Allmende-Kontor	X		X		X	X		X	X	1 hour 58 min 25 pages

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[5] Table of interviews. This approach allowed for a structured and comprehensive categorization of the information, facilitating a detailed analysis of the various dimensions of the movement.

In addition to conducting fieldwork, a literature review was carried out. The approach used was *comprehensive and multi-dimensional* (Snyder, 2019). The scope of literature covered urban gardening in both general and specific contexts, particularly focusing on the associated movement. As the primary objective of this paper was to examine the collective memory of the movement, a historical overview of the case studies and the movement has been conducted to elucidate the key aspects and events within the movement. For this reason, the analysis encompasses an extensive examination of various successes within the movement in Berlin. This includes a review of academic literature, public petitions, public statements from the movement and activists, journal publications, materials employed by activists to mobilize collective action, and visual media related to the movement. This focus shaped the selection of literature, with the aim of gathering resources that discuss or depict collective actions and shared experiences within the movement. As a member of the movement and a participant in the *Allmende-Kontor* (the community garden I am part of in the Tempelhofer Feld), I conducted a literature review that employed an intuitive approach. My experience gained over the course of my activism and my exchange of information with other members of the movement allowed me to adopt a more flexible and adaptive approach to the specific needs of the study.

Given that this paper is an activist ethnography, I participated in diverse workshops, conferences, and activist meetings related to the community garden movement in Berlin throughout 2023 and 2024. Following the methodology described by Plows (2008), active participation in these events allowed the researcher to observe the different perspectives within the movement and to engage in collective reflection with other participants on the current state and future of the Berlin community garden movement. Thus, participating in these diverse formats and activities afforded me the opportunity to interact with individuals engaged in the movement and to cultivate relationships with the participants. These interactions encompassed both those who have been part of the movement for an extended period and those who are relatively new to the scene. During this time, I decided to become more active outside the fence of Allmende-Kontor and was able to observe the dynamics and diversity of the gardens and how this complexity plays a crucial role in the green infrastructure of Berlin. This also led me to take a more critical look at what it means to be part of a garden with many privileges, like the Allmende-Kontor, and to decide to interact with the Berlin network in order to visualize

and feel with more certainty what people often mentioned during my interviews "Ganz Berlin ein Garten"[6] (All of Berlin as a garden).

Event	Organized by	Date	Objectiv	Format	Contribution to the analysis
1. House of Gardeners in Berlin	Berlin Mondiale, Campus Dammweg	1. 05.07.2023 2. 19.10.2023	„House of gardeners" is an initiative seeking a space in Berlin for community gardens to exchange knowledge, resources, and experiences	Participatory, Network gathering, World-cafe Workshop, Top-Down	Collective identity Chapter 8.3. Informal Network system Chapter 10.2
2. Gärten Sichern, Urbane Freiräume erhalten	Himmelbeet	05.05.2024	Opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge about the challenge of maintaining spaces for community gardens in Berlin	Network gathering, Exchange of Knowledge, Workshop, Button-up	Conflict orientation Chapter 8.2.2. Informal Network system Chapter 10.3.
3. Tagung: Die Stadt ist unser Garten	Die anstiftung	24.-26.05.2024	Present the book: „Unterwgs in die Stadt der Zukunft", and reflect on the community garden movement in Germany	Conference Top-Down	Process orientation and collective memory Chapter 9
4. Werkstatt für den Netzwerkraum im Haus der Statistik	Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin (I was part of the organization)	02.06.2024	How to foster the network of community gardens in Berlin? Gather ideas for the use of the Network-space in Haus der Statistik	Participatory, Exchange of knowledge, World-cafe Workshop, Network Gathering, Button-up	Conflict orientation Chapter 8.2.2. Informal Network system Chapter 10.2.

[7]

In addition to the qualitative interviews and active participation within the movement, I conducted site visits to the gardens selected as case studies. During these visits, I collaborated with photographer Volker Gehrmann[8] to capture aerial perspectives of the gardens in order to gain insight into the evolution of the spaces utilized by the case studies over time. Members of the gardens accompanied us during our visits, which resulted in the emergence of informal group discussions and a more active observation and perception of the current state of the community gardens.

4. The emergence of community gardens as innovative spaces for social, environmental, and political experimentation.

In the current era dominated by neoliberalism, cities are becoming increasingly uniform: characterized by sleekness, orderliness, and a diminishing presence of spaces for innovation and experimentation. Community gardens offer a counterbalance in this regard, serving as experimental environments in the truest sense. These gardens already stand out distinctly: they are green, lack uniformity, exhibit a sense of disorder, and clearly cater to more than just human

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[6] "Ganz Berlin ein Garten" was the vision of one of the first garden activist in Berlin, Gerda Münnich (1939-2017), a vision which many activists still defend.
[7] Table of events in which I actively participate in order to understand the different dimensions and challenges of the movement.
[8] https://www.karacho.berlin/de/

inhabitants. The emphasis on self-empowerment is evident in these gardens, reflected in their preference for low-tech solutions. Consequently, rather than designer green spaces, urban gardens present themselves as meticulously curated yet authentically messy sanctuaries (Volkart, 2024).

Urban gardening involves residents taking ownership of and designing non-commercial spaces in their neighborhoods, essentially engaging in DIY placemaking. It's a grassroots effort where residents express their desire to shape their environment according to their own vision and requirements. This underscores the necessity for car-free, green, and inclusive spaces where people can gather, engage in activities, and connect. It emphasizes that urban areas should not just serve practical purposes but also foster a sense of community and belonging (Baier et al., 2024a). Nevertheless, urban gardens are far from being a romantic paradise: they're not flawless representations of peaceful coexistence or untouched nature; they are hybrid space;, they aren't free of contamination; they're mixtures of various influences, tainted by human activity and marked by narratives of triumph and defeat in battles for inclusion and bottom-up participation. These are places with a history, with more than just an emotion in their record. Often, they're established as temporary solutions before urban development takes over. They may also serve as arenas for cultural exchange or become battlegrounds for recognizing diverse lifestyles. Gardens are arenas of negotiation, conflict, and territorial occupation, where human and non-human communities coexist and cooperate. (Volkart, 2024). They symbolize miniature versions of our planet—a reflection of finite resources and boundless potential. Gardens are heterotopias (Foucault, 2000)—spaces where the other exists in the present moment, embodying a microcosm of the larger world.

Within this microcosm, one can find different collective activities, which are carried out to provide social and ecological services to the city (Kliem & Kuhlmann, 2022). These spaces are viewed as experimental locations where social, environmental, political, and aesthetic experimentation take place (Baier et al., 2015). For this reason, community gardening is more than just a trend. There are already more than 200 community gardens in Berlin, and the diversity of their use, location and organizational form is as great as their contribution to the city (SenUMVK, 2023). The wide variety of gardens offers interesting new perspectives where knowledge production and reproduction help to explore new social and ecological generative potentials, in most cases achieving forms of identity and community. These spaces create living alternatives that question the boundaries between city and country, nature, art, culture, and the

private sphere (Halder, 2018). As such, these messy spaces are gaining great deal of attention because of how they challenge the dichotomy between rural and urban sectors. Efrat Eizenberg (2017) argues that these spaces represent a midpoint between urban agriculture and the peri-urban sector, where knowledge of different cultures and perspectives clash, creating chaos within the (dis-)order of urban infrastructure. She constructs her argument with the help of the theoretical work of Henri Lefebvre (1968), which determines that any transformation of the prevailing social system must begin with the deconstruction of the alienation humans experience in everyday life or with the constitution of an alternative lived experience determined by value (more than exchange or economic matter). Despite their significant social and environmental importance, many of the city's gardens face multiple threats, as their sites are often occupied or located in areas undergoing redevelopment. Due to the increasing demand for space in the city, acquiring an area to start a new community garden project has become a major challenge for many initiatives (Van Dyck et al., 2017).

Community gardens grant an alternative lived experience within the modern urban environment. In pursuing social and ecological regeneration in the urban space, practical and discursive knowledge becomes a critical tool in attempting to bring about change (Kumnig et al., 2017). Halder understands community gardens as counter-hegemonic spaces that question existing state and capitalist norms. The gardens facilitate self-reflection on individual agency, enable the construction of new forms of knowledge and citizen participation, and foster proactive communities that provide options for creating progressive work structures (Halder, 2018).

5. The Community Garden Allmende-Kontor

Imagine squatting a whole airport- how is that even possible? In 2008, Berlin witnessed a surge of hope, envisioning the city as a platform for civil society to reclaim spaces lost during the financial crisis of the early 21st century (Romvári, 2021). *"It was the financial crisis and the real estate crisis (...) these two topics were the discussions in the 2000s, Berlin was a shrinking city[9]"* (Clausen, 2024, p. 4). Therefore, the word "gentrification" began to appear more in people's vocabularies. Simultaneously, the "Wir-Bleiben-Alle!" campaign gained momentum, alongside numerous urban development initiatives aimed at reinforcing the notion that the city's remains belonged the civil society. The Tempelhof Airport was perfectly situated within these conflicts (Romvári, 2021).

Located between the districts of Tempelhof, Kreuzberg and Neukölln, this vast open space was at the heart of the bustling city. It was highly coveted by politicians and construction and real estate industries, ready for upscale apartments with panoramic terraces. However, it was also coveted by those who wanted to live in the city for reasons other than profit. Despite clear development plans, the Senate remained inactive, with no set timetable for implementation. At the end of June 2009, activists announced that the old airport Tempelhofer Feld (flight operations ended on 31.08.2008) would be squatted. The action was unsuccessful, but it played a major role in the 2014 referendum to protect Tempelhofer Feld from falling into the "wrong" hands (Romvári, 2021).

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[9] Shrinking city denotes urban regions undergoing population decrease, economic decline, and social issues (Pallagst et al., 2017). In the 1990s and early 2000s, Berlin was described as a shrinking city. This prediction turned out to be wrong and was mainly an effect of the transformation after the 1990s. By 2012, the situation had completely changed (Clausen, 2024, p. 4).

[10] Image from (Halder, 2018)

Before the referendum in 2014, the airport opened its fences in the year of 2010 and it is in this momentum when people started to ask themselves "*Who does the city belong to?"* (Martens, 2024, p. 6). This is when the adventure of the "Allmende-Kontor" begins. Towards the end of 2010, community gardens in Berlin were proliferating like mushrooms in the fall, spreading faster than weeds, and embodying a vibrant and rapidly expanding community garden movement. A small circle of garden activists, farmers, gardeners, and environmental educators began in 2009 to increasingly forge alliances and networks with the idea of creating a common framework for the coordination and organization of urban agriculture in Berlin (Artola, 2024 p. 1). "*At some point we said that this increase is so significant, it's still the same, nobody has proper contracts, it's all somehow so precarious. Everyone must somehow still be afraid. And yet there was a stronger, well, a movement in Berlin, (...) that was really becoming visible (...). The activists are meeting up more and more on issues, joint events. Back then, it wasn't always about gardens. It was always about other things. Somehow greening the city or designing the city or somehow getting involved"* (Stelmacher, 2024, p. 2.)

The Allmende-Kontor project started to develop under this premise- to have a physical space in Berlin to interact and network with the different actors involved in the scene of urban gardening. "*We came relatively quickly to the point of saying we need to meet and consider whether we need to take a more structural approach to the topic. At the time, we called the topic Contact Triangle, which was actually very abstract. We were of the opinion that there are now so many gardens that they actually need a voice, that they need to organize themselves and they need some kind of office or someone who can take more care of it, who is approachable, who takes up problems, who mediates in politics, in the administration. And that's why we met in Lebus in November 2009. That was a pretty key even*t" (Stelmacher 2024, p. 3). "*And that was a bit of a bonding moment, where you realized, okay, there are now a few people who are not only doing their own projects, but also thinking about how to exchange ideas and how to make a movement out of it*" (Clausen, 2024, p. 2.). The search for this network center for community gardens was long and, after receiving rejections to establish this space, the announcement of the opportunity to apply for the use of space in Tempelhofer Feld appeared in 2011. When this group of 13 people applied in 2010 to use the space as a pioneering project in the northwestern part of the Tempelhofer Feld, they didn't know what this space would become in just a few weeks.

The building of the initial raised beds on the former airfield started on April 16th, 2011. The Allmende-Kontor[11] community garden came into existence with the aim of being a "showgarden" for urban gardening. It was designed to illustrate how a community garden could be established and managed collectively, while also fostering networking and public relations efforts. Additionally the "Kontor" was an office supporting the Berlin garden community. It is important to acknowledge that the idea of the "show garden" was a strategy to make the application form more attractive and suitable not only for the needs of the garden activist, but also for the neighborhood and community around the garden. However, "*in the beginning, it was all about winning this space to establish the "office"* "(Stelmacher 2024 p.3).

However, as a temporary initiative labeled as a pioneer project, the garden was planned to be discontinued after six years due to the transformation of the airfield into a park landscape with residential development. Gradually, significant opposition to any development on Tempelhofer Feld arose. The advocacy of the Democratic Initiative 100%Tempelhofer Feld e.V. persuaded the actors within the community garden to withdraw their intention to construct an office building and instead advocate for preserving the open space (Martens, 2024, p. 3). During the referendum on May 25th, 2014, 739,124 Berlin residents voted against development on the Tempelhofer Feld-Airport, consequently supporting the preservation of the community garden and the establishment of new commons gardens as well (Halder, 2018).

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[11] The Name Allmende-Kontor is derived from the words "Commons, -reclaim the commons", which basically means *Allmende* in German, and Kontor means in Norwegian *office.* (Stelmacher, 2024, p. 4).
[12] The first raised beds. (A. Giordiano, 2011)

5.1. Transition from a multifunctional project to a self-organized community garden.

From the day that the first raised beds were set up, people kept approaching showing interest in participating and being part of the initiative. In this way, the garden grew exponentially in less than a month. "*It was suddenly all about the garden, and we asked ourselves 'What is the long- term vison?' The garden was bigger than the Kontor. But for some of us, it was about the Kontor, the networking*" (Martens, 2024, p. 2).

For the Allmende-Kontor, the year 2014 played a crucial role in the future organization of the garden. It was not only the year in which the Tempelhofer Feld referendum showed Berlin's politicians that civil society doesn't want to repeat what happened at the beginning of the 21st century, the *shrinking city*, but it is also the year in which the garden developed a new structure and achieved what many self-organized projects stumble at, which is to be self-organized in the spirit of its founding, but also to be emancipated from the structures that gave rise to it (Halder, 2018). This process of emancipation meant an ongoing "negotiation" between the founders of the garden, but for Kerstin Stelmacher, the decision of letting out the project was "*right and healthful (…) the problem was that we didn't recognize equally that it wasn't just*

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[13] This pictures illustrate the state of the garden in 2014 when the referendum wins with 739,124 votes (*Allmende Kontor Chronik*)

about the beauty of the garden and that the garden works, but it was really very tedious organizational work" (Stelmacher, 2024 p. 9). Nevertheless, before the formal consolidation of the Allmende-Kontor in 2014 as a non-profit organization (Gemeinnütziger Verein e.V.), the garden went through different stages that reflect the multifunctional approach the space represented. The Allmende-Kontor was functioning not just as a garden but also as a hub for connections and interactions, which embodies a dynamic network characterized by unconventional thinking and dedicated individuals; radical aspirations and pragmatic attitudes; and a blend of amateurish experimentation and professional knowledge, fostering both respectful collaboration and conflict-resolution (Halder, 2018).
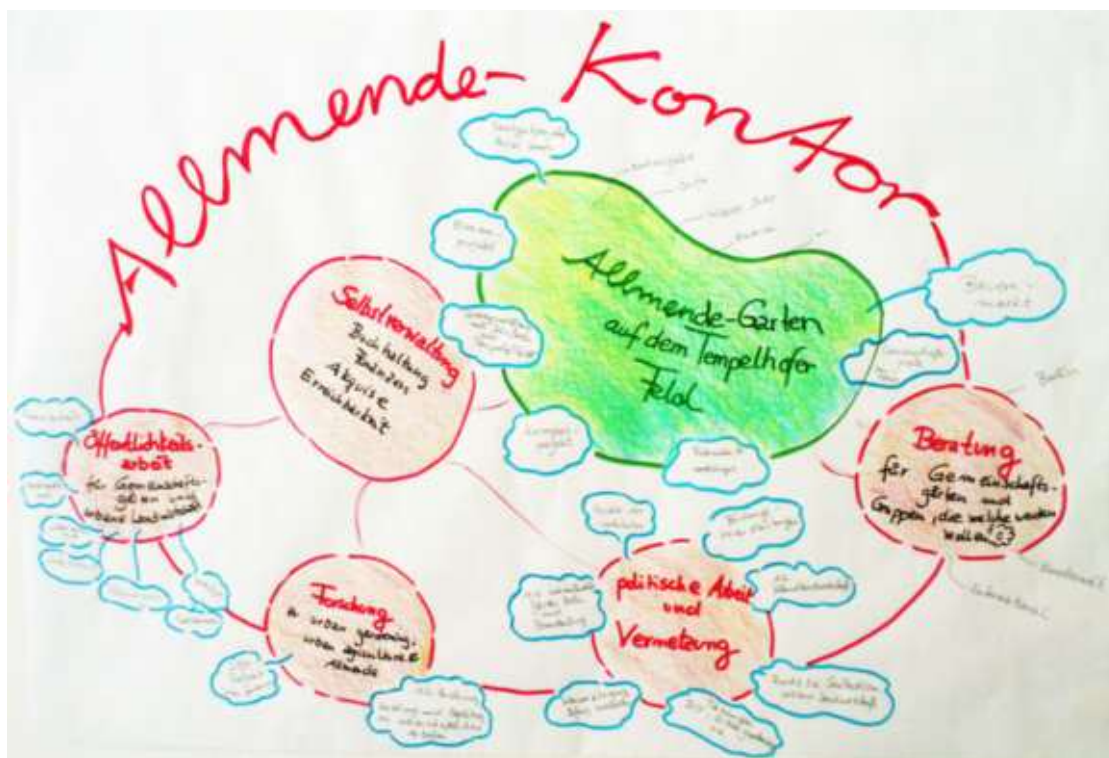
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[14] Five Dimensions drawn by Kerstin Stelmacher year 2011 (1) Neworking, (2) Education and public relations (3) Investigation (4) Consulting (5) Community Garden Allemnde Kontor, learning by doing. (Halder, 2018 p. 131)
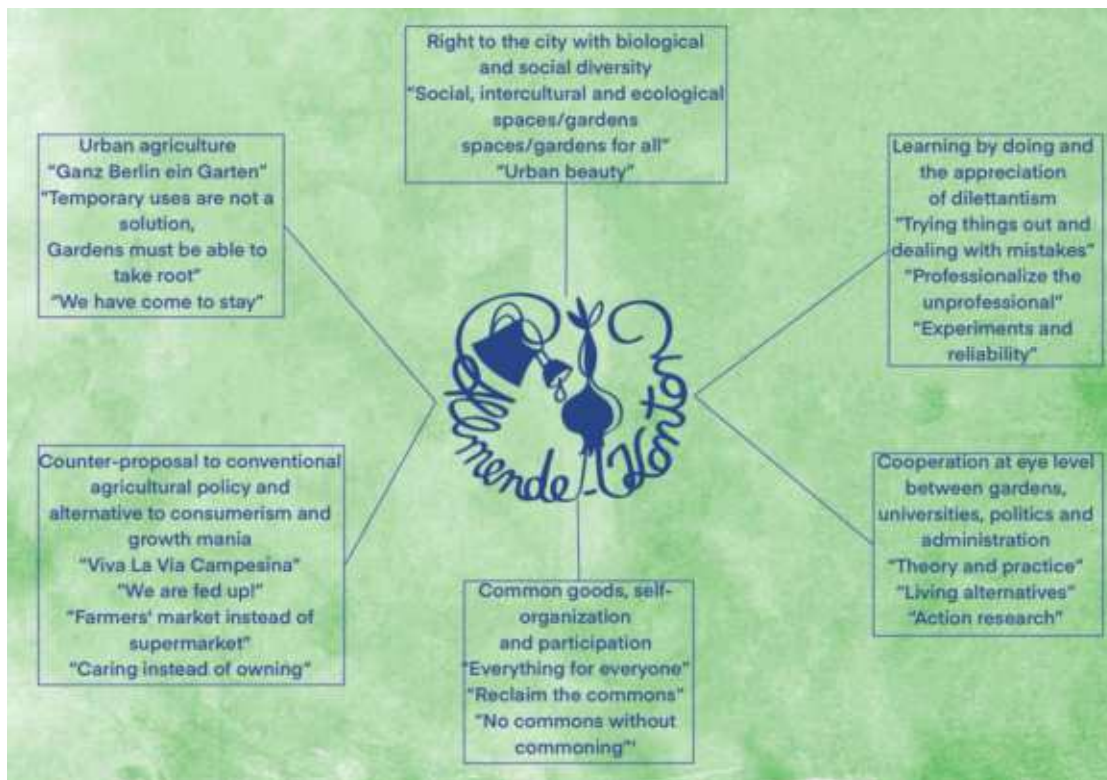
5.2. The Allmende-Kontor Today

Since the inception of the Allmende-Kontor in 2011, numerous stories and interactions between humans and non-humans have aimed to balance the development of this place over time. As someone who is part of this place, I have actively observed and participated in its various stages, learning how the participants continually adapt to future challenges within the garden. Thus, the different dimensions within the garden represented by Severin Halder are still functioning as fundamental pillars of the Allmende-Kontor. Nevertheless, the following discussion aims to elucidate my perspective as a researcher within the community garden movement, highlighting how my focus has been shaped by my experiences at Allmende-Kontor.

In the beginning of Spring 2023, a fellow gardener of the neighbor community garden "Schillerkiez-Gemeinschaftsgarten" said to me "*One day we won't all be here, but what will*

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[15] Dimensions of the Allmende-Kontor year 2014 according to (Halder, 2018 p. 130)

remain is the natural world, the plants, the bees, the rats. We assume this garden belong to us, but it doesn't. We are only guests here, that's why we have to learn to understand how to share and coexist with them." (Andreas, Schillerkiez-Gemeinschaftsgarten). Gardening, as well as all the different activities such as composting or beekeeping, in this place is a reciprocal endeavor, a mutual exchange where outcomes are contingent. It engages in a broad, ongoing process that surpasses human limitations and acknowledges the complexity of interconnected systems. It allows participation in the intricate network of interactions beyond mere human control or prediction. Seeds may germinate quickly or lie dormant for years, defying expectations, or not sprout at all. Within the realm of plants, there exists a generative, self-sustaining power rooted in ecological principles—a radical inclination towards fulfilling inherent potential encoded in the seed. This holds anarchic potential: the ability to enact sustainable change through decentralized, cross-species collaborations, each participant laying the groundwork for others (Volkart, 2024).

The Allmende-Kontor of 2024 has changed from its beginnings, as have the current living conditions. Today, we are going through several global crises, such as climate change, the Anthropocene, armed conflicts, and the COVID-pandemic, just to name a few. These global factors are playing a significant role in how persons engage with the garden. "*The pandemic has simply shown, as we have always said, how important these spaces are at all levels, including personal ones, including in this whole health factor, mentally and physically. The social factor, the exchange, the co-creation, this kind of democracy, which is not just voting, but co-creation*" (Clausen, 2024 p. 13). In this way, ways of thinking are challenged and this vision of kinship gives one the opportunity to see human-nature relations with another perspective, one of collaboration and resilience.

Under this frame of changes and challenges, the dimensions of the garden have also adapted. During these years of active participation, in helping with the administrative work and within the collective activities in the garden, I have seen how the dynamics and structures of the past have changed. As it was discussed in the theoretical framework, the critical feminist Donna Haraway proposes the Tentacular Thinking approach (Haraway, 2016). Haraway's tentacular thinking rejects rigid hierarchies and embraces fluid, interconnected modes of reasoning, operating across scales from micro to macro, recognizing connections between individuals, ecosystems, and planetary processes. It acknowledges the existence of different perspectives, experiences, conflicts, and ways of being in the world. Hence, inclusion is central to tentacular

thinking, as it seeks to amplify marginalized voices. Historical, cultural, and ecological contexts shape understanding within the place and perspectives, acknowledging how these factors influence ways of thinking and coexisting. Therefore, tentacular thinking encourages reflexivity and attention to the ways in which our own situatedness influences our perspectives and actions. It recognizes that beings are interconnected in complex networks of relationships, and it emphasizes the importance of attending to these entanglements in our ethical and political engagements with the world (Haraway, 2016).

Like the tentacles of an octopus, which are flexible and responsive to changing environments, in times of multiple crisis the dynamic of the garden has to adapt itself to the necessities of human and non-humans. As Haraway's theory agues, the community garden achieves the norm of *making-kin* which advocates of forging relationships with diverse species and entities, both human and non-human, to address challenges such as climate change. This involves recognizing and respecting the agency and significance of other beings, rather than viewing them as resources for human use.

The sentence "*Nothing happens, nothing occurs*" (Volkart, 2024 p. 117) represented my personal view of the garden before the pandemic. This perception that I had seems to be formed from the point of view of a dominant vision that wants to see a conditioned spectacular experience and not the subtle occurrences. Now, I understand that, although it is quiet in the garden, everything is happing. It is only that the resonance is imperceptible to our senses. This invisibility stems from both the molecular nature of plant processes and the lack of acknowledgment of their significance within mainstream culture.

Consequently, as the philosopher Masanobu Fukuoka reflects, "*In our modern society, people have become disconnected from the source of their food and the rhythms of nature. This has led to a lack of appreciation for the true value of the land and its resources*" (Fukuoka, 2009). As such, the ability and inclination to perceive such phenomena have either diminished or never fully developed. Gardening and being part of the community Allmende-Kontor within an ecological and social crisis involves reclaiming what capitalism has exploited and degraded: our awareness of connections within the Earth and the atmosphere, along with our capacity to engage with the environment sensorily. Additionally, being a self-organized garden, it encourages participants to care for social relationships, since solidarity, awareness and democracy are fundamental pillars in order to thrive as a community project. This reclamation

of social and ecological values isn't about saying there's one right way to be ecological or going back to only experiencing things through our bodies without any technology. Instead, it's about making us think about how we see things, who we are together, and the tools and technology we use to live alongside nature.

In this way, the Allmende-Kontor community garden gives people the opportunity to interact with the problem and to confront the ecological, social, and political crises of the present moment in their own way without falling into despair or apathy. Of course, as a self-organized project, it has conflicts and barriers, but it is a way of *staying with the trouble* instead of seeking easy solutions or quick fixes. As Haraway advocates, the garden offers the individuals a possibility to stay engaged with the complexities of the world within the frame and dimensions of the place and work towards more just and sustainable ways of living. As (Volkart, 2024) argues, if we seek change, if we want to think and live in a healthier world, then we need caring relationships. Human interactions are complex and often carry unexpected implications. Terms like "care" or "concern" can acquire negative connotations when they are used for economic gain, influenced by colonial viewpoints, or driven by personal interests. However, in a place like the Allmende-Kontor, where solidarity and relationships are essential for the system to function, genuine care and consideration become pivotal. These values are crucial in achieving systemic change through intentional actions and responses, especially in addressing the multiple crises we currently face.

NETWORK OF INTERCONNECTED RELATIONSHIPS AMONG DIVERSE ELEMENTS, INCLUDING PLANTS, ANIMALS, SOIL, WATER, AND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS. WITHOUT HOERARCHICAL STRUCTURES

RECOGNIZING THE COMPLEX WEB OF RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND THE GARDEN. INTERDEPENDECE BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN ELEMENTS AS WELL AS THE BROADER ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT IN WHICH THE GARDEN IS LOCATED

TENTACULAR THINKING

ALLMENDE KONTOR

ADAPTIVE RESILIENT INTERCONNECTED

ENTANGLED & INTERTWINED

NON-HIERARCHICAL

MULTI-SCALAR

INCLUSIVE & DIVERSE

REFLEXIVE EMBODIED & SITUATED

CREATIVE & RESPONSIVE

THE GARDEN ENCOURAGE FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY AND CREAITIVITY.

AWARENEES OF HOW THE ACTIONS WITHIN THE GARDEN CONNECT TO BROADER SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

WELCOMING PARTICIPATION OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, EXPERIENCES, AND ABILITIES. REFLECTION OF THE NEEDS AND INTEREST OF ALL MEMBERS.

GARDENERS IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADRESS LARGER-SCALE CHALLENGES

GARDENERS EXPIREMENT WITH DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES, PLANTS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, RESPONDING CREATIVELY TO CHANGING CONDITIONS AND ENVOLVING COMMUNITY NEEDS

[16]

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[16] Allmende-Kontor's dimensions analyzed through the lens of theory according to (Haraway, 2016). Illustration made by me

6. Internal Dimensions of the Community Garden Movement

Understanding the different dimensions of the movement requires a complex analysis of the different actors that are involve in the field. Chapter 4 illustrate the different roles that urban gardening plays in the city. Nevertheless, before conducting an analysis of the movement, it's important to recapitulate shortly the history of how these places became part of the urban infrastructure[17] in Berlin. The Allmende-Kontor emerged from recent agricultural developments in Berlin, which are rooted in the history of urban farming practices in the city. Berlin's gardening tradition has deep historical roots, dating back to medieval farmers and further evolving through movements like the garden city and reform initiatives, eventually culminating in practices such as allotment gardens, gardening education programs, children's farms, and spontaneous green initiatives in the 1980s (Meyer-Renschhausen, 2011). In the 90´s the concept of urban gardening in Germany wasn't known, "*community gardens didn't even exist back then, they were known as intercultural gardens and they existed here because of the model of the community gardens from New York*" (Hehl, 2024 p. 1).

Intercultural gardens foster a mutual understanding of both distinct and shared experiences across cultures. In these spaces, the variety of plants grown and meals prepared in this space promotes interaction between different cultures and the garden serves as an environment where strangers progressively transform into neighbors and trusted companions, illustrating a form of ecological interconnectedness among individuals from diverse backgrounds. These spaces were mostly founded by people without a migration background who decided to get involved in the community in order to promote solidarity with people who arrived in Berlin. For this reason, since the beginning, these spaces weren't only used to understand how to grow food in the city, but where also spaces where civil society saw the opportunity of using them as a form of urban activism and political protest. (Baier et al., 2024a).

In the midst of this ongoing experimentation within the urban environment, it is important to not overlook the *guerrilla gardening* collective action. As with many of the concepts behind urban gardening, this approach of interacting with urban space doesn't have one specific definition. One of the first mainstream appearances of this approach dates from the 70s in New York City, where various groups of artists and activists known as Green Guerrillas attempted

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[17] It's important to understand that one of the main struggles of the movement is the official recognition of urban gardens as part of Berlin's green infrastructure. This issue will be addressed in the chapter 8.2.

to influence the urban sector with gardening activities by embracing the idea that people can also be part of urban development. The core of the activities was based on the political activism in public space, with the pillars of solidarity, self-organization, creativity, and the improvement of living conditions in neighborhoods through the greening of spaces and the enhancement of their aesthetic appeal. „*Guerrilla gardening is street fighting with soft ammunition. In a subversive manner, unknown persons (rarely at night and usually without balaclavas) throw seed bombs into public spaces without official permission*" (Baier, et. Al. 2016, p. 178).

The term originates from a military context "Guerrilla" and refers to one or more small units that use limited resources to resist a significantly stronger and oppressive force, operating in a decentralized and often spontaneous way (von der Haide et al., 2011). This collective ideology of social empowerment crossed the Atlantic Ocean and arrived to Berlin by the end of the 20th Century. As it was mentioned in chapter 4, during this time the city was going through several changes, and the guerrilla gardening approach in Berlin had many similarities to the collective identity of "Wir bleiben Alle" campaign. For this reason, guerrilla gardening projects and initiatives typically viewed themselves as forms of resistance, employing strategies aimed at creating a fair and just society through the decentralized, inventive, and cost-effective implementation of liberating ideas. In doing so, they position themselves against neoliberal global economic policies (von der Haide et al., 2011). The concept of community gardens took off in Berlin in 2002, with initiatives like the Perivoli intercultural garden and the Wuhlegarten, and since then, have proliferated rapidly, partly fueled by the growing interest in unconventional forms of gardening such as guerrilla gardening.

Understanding the different dimensions of the movement requires a complex analysis of the different actors that are involve in the field. According to Della Porta and Diani (2020), social movements are characterized by key actors who encourage the interconnection of individuals to take collective action and promote the identity of the social group. The process of identifying individuals who have been key figures in the Berlin community gardens movement has proven to be challenging. This is due to the fact that each garden in Berlin is unique, which contributes to the movement's distinctive character and complexity. Nevertheless, the following section will focus on understanding the interaction between key projects and the activist during the time when the movement was flourishing. The projects which were taken into consideration are Rosa-Rose, Friedrichshain; Prinzesinnengarten-Moritzplatz, Kreuzberg; Himmelbeet, Wedding; Prachttomate, Neukölln and Allmende-Kontor, Neukölln. Four different districts,

five urban gardening projects. The way they are organized and how they create these rooted spaces varies in many ways, but they have similar backgrounds, such as rising in socially and environmentally disadvantaged neighborhoods and with great migrant and post-migrant influences.

6.1. Internal Dynamics

The aim of this chapter is to identify the key moments of collective action of the above-mentioned projects in order to reflect on the role of being connected, to identify the challenges and obstacles of collective action within the movement, and to understand how collective identity was formed during these events. It is important to note that these projects do not represent the whole community garden movement in Berlin. As we have seen, urban gardens in Berlin are different in many ways and often have different goals. There are many stories to be told, many conflicts and barriers that haven't been overcome, and the variety of their diversity is as great as the social and ecological s'rvices they provide to the city. For this reason, it is crucial to acknowledge that each project has its own dynamics and challenges, and that there is no "official" community garden movement organization, since, as Della Porta and Diani argue, there is no way that a single organization or project can represent all of the actors involve in the movement. There are moments when the movement requires support from external institutions such as the anstiftung, but "*a single organization, whatever its dominate traits, is not a social movement*". (Porta & Diani, 2020 p. 25).

To keep public engagement alive, activists promoted urban gardening initiatives through the Berlin Garden Map, a mapping project developed by local students and researchers in collaboration with the urban farming community (*Berliner Gartenkarte*). The map was also created to illustrate the great variety of community gardens, and to make the projects visible to the public. The map is also used by activists to show the great diversity of locations of the gardens around Berlin. The following map represents the widespread locations of different projects in Berlin, each with different needs and motivations and recognizes the city of Berlin as a space where temporary uses and squatting have expanded, though these trends are now declining despite ongoing demands for urban rights.

The projects I have chosen to analyze played a significant role outside the fences of their gardens. Each community garden in Berlin has different levels of involvement in the project. Some individuals are primarily interested in experimenting with gardening or learning new techniques. Others are more focused on academic work, or are more concerned with the social aspects of the projects. Finally, within this latter group, there are also individuals who are interested in being part of the informal network of gardens. One of the main reasons why activist decide to be involved in the outside pollical movement is because their gardens are confronting challenges which are only possible to overcome by looking beyond the garden.

Sonja Rosentahl, ex-activist for the movement and ex-member of the Himmelbeet explained to me; "*I think there is or was a great deal of solidarity at the time. You could say that. So that's definitely how it felt for me (...) There were always people who were only interested in their garden, in front of their compost, so they had zero interest in getting involved or networking in any way beyond that, and that's completely okay. I think it's super important that the gardens are also places where what's going on in Berlin or what's happening in the world doesn't really matter. So, this idealization of a garden place is something that people should enjoy living (...) But I do believe that this solidarity extends beyond the gardens and Berlin (...) And I think there has always been this idea that it is important to support each other. Solidarity as a shared identity*" (Rosenthal, 2024, p. 10). The projects selected for this ethnographic work demonstrated how participants and activists interacted to advocate for their needs and goals, forming alliances and fostering relationships of mutual support and solidarity.

The following map „Garten-Karte" (figure 20) developed by the Georile-Orangotango collective illustrates the location of the urban gardens that were part of my study. The map shows the location of the projects and, in the case of three of the projects, what their "moving" route was. The following chapters will examine these projects and the manner in which they interact with one another, as well as the strategies employed to ensure their continued existence and adaptation to urban pressures.
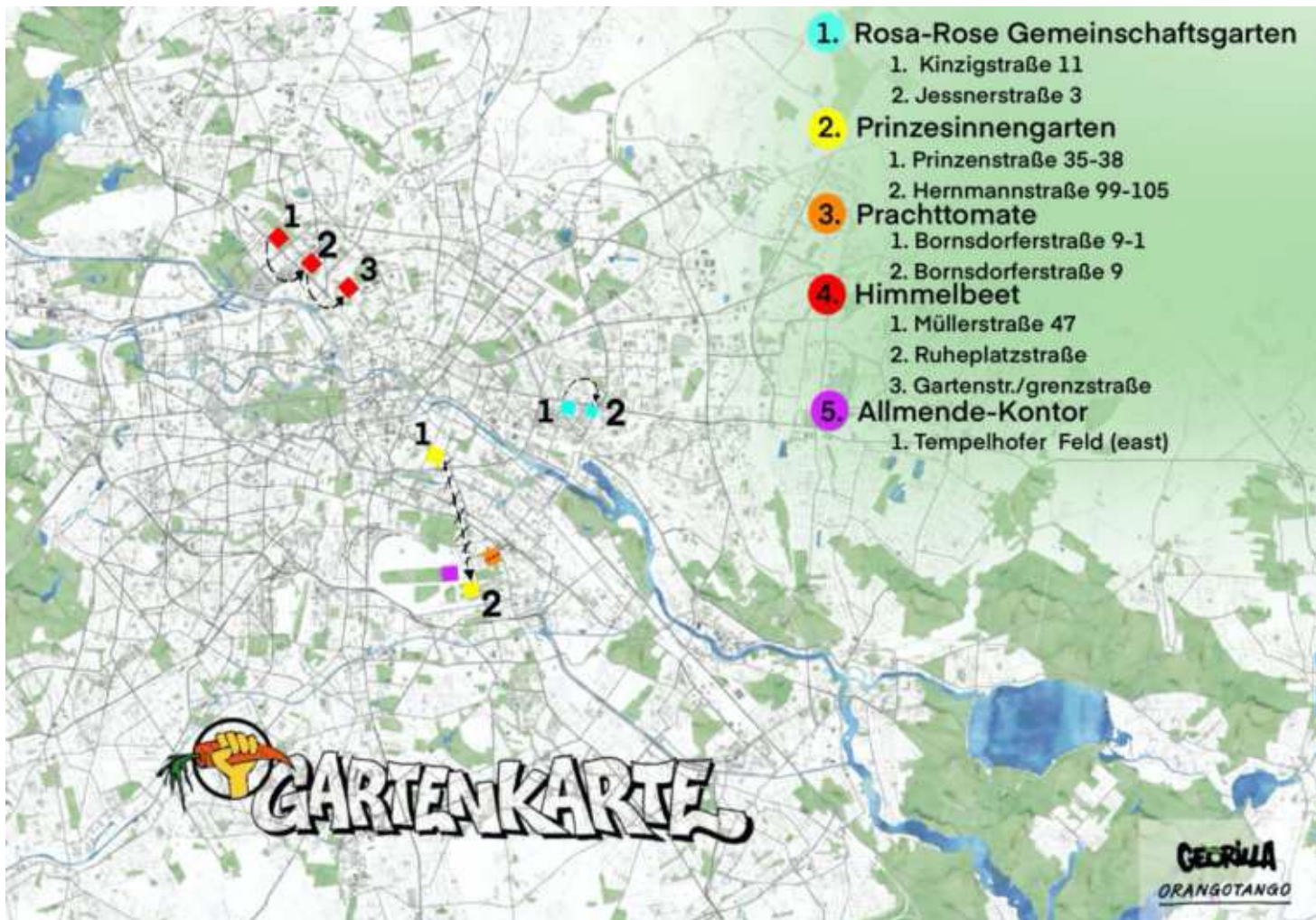
6.2. Community Garden Rosa-Rose

"*If you lack land for gardening, always remember that you lack the land, while others have more than enough. So, it makes sense to cultivate land that belongs to others ... Becoming a guerrilla gardener for lack of your own land is the most natural thing in the world.*" (Reynolds, 2010 P. 50).

This quote from Richard Reynolds, the author of "Guerilla Gardening: A Botanical Manifesto"—an essential and foundational guide for activists—highlights the political stance of the guerrilla gardening community, which was a key part of the emerging urban gardening movement in the 2000s.

Before the Rosa-Rose garden was formed, people were pro-active in the urban design of Berlin through guerrilla gardening. For Frauke Hehl, co-founder of several community gardens in Berlin such as Rosa-Rose, Laskerwiese, Allmende-Kontor and the formal organization of Workstation e.V[21], being part of the guerrilla gardening movement meant a symbolic act, where a political statement is executed. She saw the temporary planting of flower beds in abandoned car tires along roadsides as a powerful symbol of reclaiming public spaces from the dominance of commercial interests and concrete infrastructure. However, these actions are usually temporary and are dismantled or removed by the owners of the appropriated space. "*It was totally clear to me; green oases in the city are totally important places; they are social places, places of learning, political places. And yes, simply with the experience that if you only do it temporarily somewhere as guerrilla gardening, for example, you then have too little power, you have no rights and simply risk the whole thing being cleared away*". (Hehl, 2024 p.1). Consequently, Frauke Hehl and the initiators of Rosa-Rosa sought to prevent the potential dissolution or fragmentation of their collective actions. To this end, they opted to establish a fixed location for their activities, thereby becoming less transient and looked for a space where they can grow roots. "There were also many of the people who had previously done guerrilla

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[21] Workstation ideenwerkstatt e.V., founded in 1996 during a time of crisis and unemployment, challenged the idea that only paid work was valuable. It supported projects based on individuals' skills and interests rather than market demands. The workstation fostered diverse, emancipatory projects, including neighborhood designs, art and protest actions, film projects, and tech initiatives. Some, like Kunst-Stoffe e.V. and the Allmende Kontor community garden, became independent. Since 2005, the focus has been on garden projects (*Stadtnatur Selbstgemacht!*),

gardening together and who then said we wanted an area and then we appropriated the fallow land in the Kinzigstraße 11". (Hehl, 2024 p. 2). *Stadtnatur Selbstgemacht!*.

In 2004, the community garden Rosa-Rose was established in the densely populated Berlin district of Friedrichshain and was one of the most famous garden projects in Germany. In May 2004, local residents initiated the "Aktion Nachbarschaftsgarten" (Neighborhood Garden Campaign) bringing together various individuals to clean up the site and establish a community garden. "*It just wasn't like that back then, so Community Gardens simply didn't exist as a concept, as an idea. And it also started with the occupation of unused spaces*". (Hehl, 2024. P, 1). This new occupied space of Rosa-Rose Garden was designed to be accessible to everyone and serve a range of purposes.

[22]

Nachbarschaftsinitiative Rosa Rose

Nicht nur in Friedrichshain gibt es immer weniger nachbarschaftliche Netze, immer weniger Grüßkontakte auf der Straße. Der Öffentliche Raum wird zunehmend kommerzialisiert oder kostet Eintritt. In der Folge werden Menschen, die dem Konsumdruck nicht gewachsen sind, isoliert. Besonders davon betroffen sind Menschen mit geringen Einkommen. Immer weniger Flächen stehen zur Verfügung, auf denen Menschen sich wohnortnah begegnen und kennen lernen können ohne dafür Geld ausgeben zu müssen. Der Nachbarschaftsgarten auf der Freifläche soll diesem Trend entgegenwirken. Den AnwohnerInnen soll er die Möglichkeit bieten, ohne finanzielle Aufwendungen an einem gemeinschaftlichen, intergenerativen Projekt aktiv teilzunehmen, andere Menschen kennen zu lernen, sich handwerklich, gärtnerisch oder künstlerisch auszuprobieren. Im Mai 2004 haben einige BewohnerInnen der Kinzigstraße die Initiative ergriffen und zu der Aktion Nachbarschaftsgarten aufgerufen. Wir treffen uns unregelmäßig zum gemeinsamen Diskutieren, Arbeiten, Organisieren, Bauen, Pläne schmieden, Pflanzen, Gießen, Kuchen essen.

Kontakt: Rosa Rose c/o Kinzigstraße 9 10247 Berlin rosarotrose@web.de

The Rosa-Rose community garden was affiliated with the "Haus Project Kinzigstraße 9 (K9)", where Frauke Hehl also resided. Situated adjacent to the house, this space provided ideal conditions for exploring innovative gardening methods beyond guerrilla gardening. Since the garden was open to the public, anyone interested in using the space went through a process whereby the different uses of the space were discussed in a democratic way. The different actors involved here were politically interested people, artists who created installations and performances to enhance the garden's sensory and emotional aspects, and, of course, individuals interested in gardening. Together, they created a space for experimentation where

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[22] Picture from 2005, Position of the Rosa-Rose initiative regarding the development of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and how to counteract the displacement of a fair and inclusive neighborhood. (*Rosa-Rose*)

time and urban limits didn't exist. However, for them, one goal was the most important: "*clearly with the aim of somehow counteracting speculation, and that was of course the aim of Rosa-Rose*" (Hehl, 2024, p. 5).

[23]

As with any urban gardening project in Berlin, the Rosa-Rose space was influenced by different actors. The primary reason was the purchase of the land by an investor. This individual, originally from Friedrichshain but living in the countryside, bought the property with the intention of developing it. The land had become insolvent and was sold at an auction to satisfy

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[23] The first picture shows the space in 2004, before being occupied and transformed. The second picture illustrate how the space change in one year thanks to the engagement of activist (*Rosa-Rose*).

creditors, and the investor acquired it during one of these auctions. It is important to acknowledge, that according to Hehl, the investor had a reputation for targeting properties with left-leaning community projects, likely to weaken such structures. This created a significant challenge for the garden community. As the investor's plans progressed, the situation became increasingly dynamic and politically charged. The local authorities and the investor's intentions added to the instability, making it difficult for the garden to continue in its original location. The combination of the investor's purchase, the land's auction status, and the ensuing political dynamics ultimately forced the Rosa-Rose Garden to relocate.

In July 2009, the community garden Friedrichshain district faced police eviction when the investor plans to build on the Rosa Rose Garden were made official. The community responded with a parade that also served as a demonstration for grassroots sustainable urban development. During the event, plants were relocated to "asylum beds" within Berlin's networked garden scene. The Rosa Rose garden parade, featuring young people decorated with flowers who transported vegetable plants, bushes, and fruit trees on cargo bikes through Berlin, was more than just a retreat. It was transformed into a positive spectacle, a grand performance rather than a concession to property rights (C. Müller, 2011).

[24]

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[24] The Rosa-Rose community garden relocated to its designated asylum beds, 2009. (Müller, 2011b)

The exodus is perfect describe by Karin Werner: "*The exodus was staged as a public spectacle. Slowly and relatively quietly, the caravan of bicycles laden with plants moved through the streets, presenting the image of a hybrid creature never seen before, which was difficult to read at first glance. The composite of bicycles, people and plants was visually far more than the sum of its parts. It offered a picture puzzle, it posed riddles, it remains unforgotten by the audience. ... The garden became a singularly striking visual icon thanks to the spectacular action. The gravitational comedy of the exodus, the drama of the disembarkation and the grotesque and painful strangeness of the dislocation were communicated to the street audience without many words. The garden exodus was an aesthetic intervention with great impact and is part of the collective memory of the Berlin garden scene.*" (Werner, 2011, p. 65)

GEMEINSCHAFTSGARTEN
ROSA ROSE
STRIKE BACK!

25

The project received support from local government officials, like in the case of Katrin Lompscher, the then-Health Senator, and later involved in urban development, who endorsed the garden. Her connections from previous projects facilitated the acquisition of letters of support. Additionally, Franz Schulz, the mayor at the time, offered significant backing. The

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25The poster (2009) was presented during the conference "Die Stadt ist unser Garten", (event 3, figure 7) where I took a photo of it.

district eventually realized the importance of the garden, recognizing that its loss would be detrimental to the community. Solidarity from other gardening projects and activists within Berlin was evident. Support came from various groups, including Kiezgarten from Prenzlauerberg, and other politically engaged individuals. The community garden became a city-wide issue, drawing attention and support from many who valued green spaces and community initiatives.

The community garden found a new home at Jessnerstrasse 3. Today, the project is still based in this open park in Friedrichshain and, after two decades, the project that began as guerrilla gardening by a few activists is still functioning as a home for different species and allowing people to get in touch with their neighbors and create bonds of friendship and connection with the natural world. The project, which was just an idea to challenge speculation in Berlin, is now part of the history and memory of many people. Surrounded by concrete and buildings, the Rosa-Rose Garden story embraces the idea of *staying with the trouble* by confronting the complexities and difficulties of living in a damaged and fractured city like Berlin, and with collective action found a way to persist and keep thriving within the city by accepting the messiness and unpredictability of the city rather than trying to control or dominate it.

Rosa-Rose, Kinzigstraße 11, 10247, Berlin 2006

Kinzigstraße 11, 10247, Berlin 2014

Kinzigstraße 11, 10247, Berlin 2016

Google earth
satellite photos

43

Rosa-Rose, Jessnerstraße 10247 Berlin, 2024

© Karacho

[26]

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[26] I visited the garden with the photographer Volker Gehrmann (©Karacho) to see the garden from the bird's perspective. Anna, one of the members received us and we talked about the challenges and positive things about the garden. She argues that drug use by homeless people is increasing, because the garden is next to homeless shelter, and they have few people taking care of the administrative work of the garden. Nevertheless, besides all the difficulties of caring the project, she highlighted the importance of this space for the community and for the children.

6.3. Prinzessinengarten-Moritzplatz

"*Transformation is needed to be part of one's life, to be able to maintain subsistence. I don't believe in the private, i.e., in voluntary work, nor in the left-wing varieties of it. I believe it has to be rooted in our everyday lives and what we do for a living.*" (Clausen, 2024, p. 13). Under this promise, one of the most emblematic and transcendent projects of urban gardening in Berlin was born in 2009, the Prinzessinengarten-Moritzplatz.

The foundation of the Prinzessinnengarten began in the winter of 2008 with an extensive search for a suitable location. The founders, Marco Clausen and Robert Shaw, scoured the city on bicycles, examining over 100 potential sites. Their criteria for a location were specific: it needed to have adequate sunlight and water, a minimum size of 2000-3000 square meters, and be centrally located within Berlin's S-Bahn ring. The financial crisis of 2009 added another layer of complexity, creating an uncertain real estate market that paradoxically made it seem that vacant lots would remain available for a longer period. This misperception influenced their initial optimism about finding and maintaining a space. Moreover, Berlin's policy of privatizing properties through the "Berliner Liegenschaftsfonds"[27] (Real Estate Funds) complicated matters further, as this system was focused on selling public land to the highest bidder.

The Prinzessinnengarten significantly impacted the community in Kreuzberg when it was established in the ear of 2009. The neighborhood was characterized by low-income, migrant residents and the traffic circle at Moritzplatz was unattractive, dominated by cars and marked by vacant commercial spaces and a brownfield site. The ladder was transformed into a vibrant community garden. The garden became a well-known site for community engagement, attracting thousands of visitors and hosting numerous events. It received substantial media attention, which bolstered its popularity and highlighted the potential of urban gardening toaddress community and environmental issues. Prior to attaining this state, a considerable amount of effort was expended not only by the personnel employed by the Prinzessinengarten, but also by the wider community. "*There was nothing there! No infrastructure, we had no money, we never got any financial support, so it was a really steep mountain that we had to climb (...) the only infrastructure we had was the fence and we got electricity and water from the neighbor. (...) there was a support from the neighborhood in Kreuzberg, all in all we had a lot of help*". (Clausen, 2024 p. 15).

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[27] The Real Estate Funds Strategy is explained in the chapter 8.2.1

As any community garden in Berlin, the project was under constant threat of eviction due to the high value of the land. Since its beginning in 2009, the topic of urban gardening was not yet well known in Berlin, so, for many actors within the spectrum of urban space concurrence, the topic was unknown. Nevertheless, they managed to acquire the contract to use the space, a contract that could be cancelled at any time. The approach to securing the garden involved a dual strategy. On one hand, there was extensive behind-the-scenes political advocacy. The goal was to gain the support of the district authorities and navigate the bureaucratic complexities of the Real Estate Funds, the city's property management fund, which prioritized sales over political considerations. The Real State Fund was commissioned with the task of selling the space of the garden on behalf of the Berlin Senate. This precarious state was not only a barrier to reliable economic planning horizons for the project, but also 13 full-time positions were threatened and "*30.000 hours of volunteer work per season*" (Open Statement Prinzesinnengarten, 2014). Overtaking these problems involved a significant investment of time and effort to align the interests of local politicians with the goals of the project. "*We had so much to do, it was also an internal tension. It's always a question of activism, and networking is extremely time-consuming and it's always unclear what the outcome will be. (...) We had 30 employees at times, and of course we were also responsible for ensuring that people received their wages. So the tension in the group was also real*". (Clausen, 2024. P, 6). Franz Schulz,

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[28] Banner on the self-built "Laube im Prinzessinnengarten" (ZK/U, 2018)

the former mayor of Berlin, emerged as a key supporter of the Prinzessinnengarten and played a vital role in developing strategies to protect the area. Schulz was a political instrument in ensuring that the garden's land was not subjected to increased building density, which would have made it more attractive to investors but detrimental to the community-oriented nature of the project.

To complement the political lobbying, the project leaders launched public campaigns to raise awareness and garner support when the project faced a serious threat of being removed of the space in 2012. In order to counteract the threat of removal, they started the campaign "*Wachsen Lassen*", which included media outreach with an online petition that gathered 30,147 signatures and that allowed the garden to stay and gave the project a chance against privatization. The public pressure that the Berlin Senate got from this campaign obligated them to assign the space Real State Fonds from the district Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain, resulting in a formal contract with the district until 2018. Public visibility and media attention were crucial in building a broad base of support and putting pressure on political figures to act in favor of the garden. Those who showed solidarity by signing the petition not only stood for the garden but also "*set an example against displacement, privatization and speculation and for a city for the people who live here. A city that is not dominated by cars, concrete, and profit. A city not just for those who can afford it*". (ZK/U, 2018, p.6).

The timing of these efforts coincided with a broader public sentiment in Berlin that was increasingly aware of the value of preserving urban free

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[29] extraction from the 2012 "Wachsen Lassen" campaign.

spaces and community projects. The city's rapid development and accompanying real estate speculation threatened to erase the unique cultural and creative spaces that defined Berlin. This public awareness and concern provided a fertile ground for the garden's advocacy efforts. "*The speculation for spaces was crazy, it was surprising to see how fast it happened. And it was clear that we had to preserve and protect what was in public hands and the abandoned spaces*". (Clasuen,   2014,   p.6).

During this period, the question of property sales by the city became a hot political topic. The practices of the Real State Fonds, which favored privatization and sales, came under scrutiny. Politicians like Florian Schmidt, an advocate for urban free spaces, initiated discussions with property management to address these issues. Urban activists and politicians met with different actors in the "Runde-Tische" and discussed the issue of use of public space. The competition and this broader urban political movement aimed to protect Berlin's creative and communal spaces from being consumed by commercial development. The garden's leaders recognized that their struggle was part of a larger battle for urban free spaces and worked to integrate their efforts with other urban movements, including housing and anti-gentrification campaigns.

As the last available spaces around Moritzplatz were developed into expensive housing and commercial buildings, local communities mobilized against displacement and gentrification. Various social organizations, gardens, initiatives, associations, cultural and community centers, local businesses, and low-income residents united to fight for their rights to the city. The district repurchased properties and permanently removed them from the speculative market. In April 2018, 25,000 Berliners demonstrated to demand action against sell-offs and displacement. In this context, they worked together to ensure that the Prinzessinnengarten remained a public resource permanently (ZK/U, 2018). The Prinzessinengarten was also part of a collaboration strategy between Himmelbeet, Prachttomate and Allmende-Kontor. This network of urban gardening projects was built in 2017 in order to build resistance against the pressure against these spaces. The "Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin"[30] (Network Urban Gardens Berlin) became a key player within the community garden movement, since it provided structural resources for political lobbying. One of the roles of the Prinzesinnengarten within the Netzwerk

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[30] The Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin (*Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin, 2020)* will also be mentioned in the following chapters (Himmelbeet, Prachtomatte and Allmende Kontor). However, the analysis behind the structure of this platform will be done in chapter 10.1.

Urbane Gären was to make lobby-work on behalf of the gardens, but with limited means and resources.

Despite the constant threat of eviction due to the high value of the land, the garden's success underscored the importance of preserving public spaces for community use. It also contributed to a broader political discussion about the privatization of public land in Berlin. The garden's success story became a model of urban revitalization, showing how temporary usage of vacant lots could create significant social value and foster community solidarity.

The Prinzessinnengarten was born in hostile times, when various global crises hit the world. It is easy to lose hope for change, as global problems are complex, and to feel that change is far beyond our power as civil society. Marco Clausen reflects on the hope that urban gardens can bring by directly interacting with alternative economic models and alternative ownership models, and by demonstrating in practice that "*eine andere Welt ist pflanzbar"* (another world is plantable) (Clausen, 2024). The urban garden created an environment where people can learn about sustainable practices, ecological interdependencies, and the impacts of urban consumption. By growing their own food, managing compost, and maintaining beehives, participants directly engage with the material realities and complexities of ecological living.

As an extension of the garden's educational mission, the "Nachbarschaftsakademie"(Neighborhood Academy) offered workshops, lectures, and cultural events that delve into the intricate relationships between urban and rural areas, food sovereignty, and common goods. Over the past decade, they hosted 69 workshops, 232 educational events, and 105 cultural events, engaging approximately 50,000 individuals (Clausen, 2024). Marco understood the academy to be a form of bottom-up political education that addressed issues like food sovereignty, the right to the city, common goods, and urban-rural relations originating from the Prinzessinnengarten, and connected them to solidarity with distant places and initiatives. This collaborative learning was rooted in the specific location where they operated, therefore it was a medium to re-think and *making-with*, to *stay with the trouble* and confront global problems with solutions that had an impact in more than one individual, as it was clear to see in the petition "Wachsen Lassen" in 2012.

Both initiatives, the urban garden and the Neighborhood Academy exemplify *tentacular thinking* through their emphasis on interconnectedness and community collaboration. They

fostered networks of relationships that spanned local and global contexts, connecting diverse groups and initiatives. By involving a wide range of community members—gardeners, artists, activists, educators—the garden creates a rich web of interactions. The Neighborhood Academy's method of fostering interconnectedness and collaboration is evident in its diverse methods, such as artistic approaches, storytelling, and convivial activities. These methods make complex issues accessible and engage a broad audience, with formats ranging from film screenings and public discussions to neighborhood walks. In this way, the Neighborhood Academy allows visitors to interact with different layers of an issue and to see the issue from different perspectives, and to some extent to get politicized and have a more critical understanding of things (Clausen, 2024).

Despite its successes, the Prinzessinnengarten has faced challenges due to the precarious nature of self-organized initiatives. These projects often rely on voluntary engagement, which not everyone can afford. Nonetheless, the garden has highlighted the potential for grassroots education and community organization, even though such initiatives remain provisional and cannot replace necessary societal changes and new understandings of education. In 2019, the core group of the garden decided to move its mobile infrastructure to a new site in Neukölln, continuing its model of self-financed non-profit work under the name "Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv Berlin.[31]"

The new era of the Prinzeninnengarten at Hermannstraße 99 also represents one of the pioneering urban gardening projects in the shared use of space with a cemetery. A small group from the Prinzessinnengarten had decided to continue the work at Moritzplatz as an independent association and negotiated an extension of the contract with the district and funding for the reconstruction of the infrastructure with the Berlin Senate. On the one hand, this was intended to enable the continuation of community-oriented educational and neighborhood work, and on the other, to initiate a broad community participation process for a long-term community-oriented use of the site. This form of democratizing the use of the space had already been a key demand in the 2012 campaign to save the Prinzesinnengarten. Nevertheless, a new group of persons took over the association, opposed the Prinzessinnengarten model of funding activities and paying wages, and renamed the space Neighborhood and Inclusion Garden, which is managed on a volunteer basis.

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[31] https://prinzessinnengarten-kollektiv.net/

Prinzesinnengarten, Moritzplatz, 10969 Berlin. 2009

© Fabian Willi Simon

Prinzesinnengarten, Moritzplatz, 10969 Berlin. 2019

© Fabian Willi Simon

Prinzesinnengarten, Moritzplatz, 10969 Berlin. 2024

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6.4. Prachttomate Community Garden

In one of Berlin's most disadvantaged neighborhoods, the Prachttomate Community Garden has been thriving in Neukölln since 2011. The garden sees itself as a self-organized project and as a social space, where not just vegetables are grown, but also a variety of collective actions are undertaken in order to create a more inclusive neighborhood in Neukölln. Nonetheless, since its beginnings, the garden has been in conflict with real estate developers, particularly building groups that are constructing exclusive condominiums in the area. The gentrification in Neukölln-Nord and the rise in rents due to projects such as those of the *Urbansky Architekten*[32] have led to considerable tensions for urban projects like the community garden Prachttomate (Prachttomate, 2020).

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In November 2017, the members of Prachttomate had to clear half of their garden. A five-story building was to be built on the vacated site at Bornsdorfer Straße 11. These building group projects, which are managed by architectural firms such as Urbansky-Architekten, drive up rents and property prices and contribute to the displacement of the local population. The construction of the building has already been completed, and the community garden is situated

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[32] https://www.urbansky-architekten.de/home/home-2/
[33] (Prachttomate, 2020)

entirely beneath the shadow of the five-story edifice. This results in a lack of sunlight, which impedes the growth of plants and vegetables. However, the shadow cast by the building is more than just a challenge for the gardeners. It symbolizes the limitations they face and the way that open spaces like the Prachttomate community garden are often restricted by politics and left in the shadow of the highest investor (Prachttomate, 2020).

The members of Prachttomate rejected offers that would have allowed them limited use of the garden in return for agreeing to further construction projects. One such proposal included the right to use the garden in the building group's rear courtyard, which the members rejected as unacceptable. They did not want the garden to be degraded to a private annex to new luxury apartments. In the beginning of 2018, the district of Neukölln and the Berlin Senate opposed the exercise of the right of first refusal in the Karl-Marx-Straße redevelopment area, which would have enabled the construction of social housing, a daycare center, and the long-term safeguarding of the community garden. The official reason given was that there was no money available and the legal framework was too complicated. This decision was perceived by the members of Prachttomate as unreasonable and a further sign of neglect. (Prachttomate, 2020).

In order to make their concerns heard, the members of the Prachttomate engaged in various forms of protest and public relations work. They organized demonstrations, published articles and posts on social media and sought to engage in dialogue with political decision-makers. Through their activities, they drew attention to the social and ecological functions of the garden and campaigned for the preservation of this green oasis in the middle of the city. During this time, in 2017, the community gardens Himmelbeet and Prinzesinnengarten-Moritzplatz were also in great danger of being evicted. For this reason, with the community garden Allmende-Kontor, they used the network of community gardens to create pressure in the form of a manifestation (Rosenthal, 2024)[34].

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[34] Chapter 6.5 covers this event.
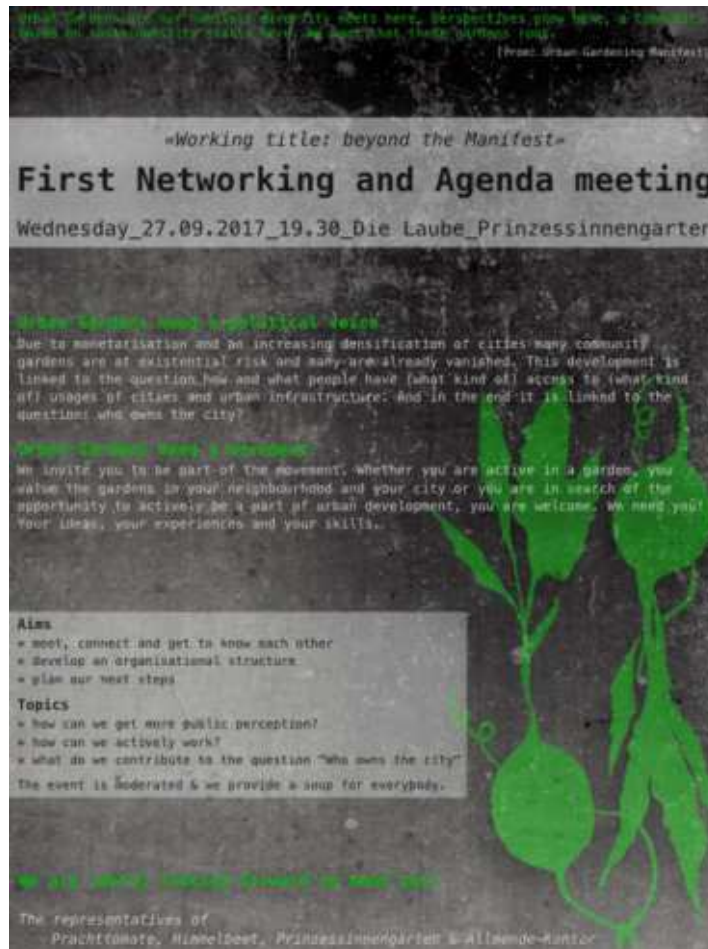
After losing half of the space in 2017, the project have a clear position on the relationship between the community garden and the administration. This statement was clear to notices when the administration (SenMVKU) announced the kick-off event for the Berlin "Gemeinschaftsgarten-Programm" (community garden program) on March 2021.

The community garden Prachttomate criticized the city's efforts in their press Statement "*Kein Green-New-Gärten-Deal*"[36] in March 2021, and expressed that the protection against displacement, which is essential for supporting existing gardens, was not addressed in the opening speech by State Secretary Tidow (SPD). Instead of concrete measures, there were only abstract declarations of intent and references to already existing initiatives such as the Grüne Charta (Green Charter). No mention was made of the existential threats faced by gardens like

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[35] Invitation to the network event "Beyond the Manifesto", organized by Prachttomate, Himmelbeet, Prinzesinnengarten & Allmende-Kontor, to promote the movement and develop an organizational structure. (*himmelbeet Berlin Wedding*, 2018)

[36] (*ERKLÄRUNGEN, PRESSEERKLÄRUNGEN, PRESSEECHO*)

Himmelbeet, and Prachttomate. The Statement underlines that, for over 10 years, Berlin's community gardeners have been advocating for their spaces to be integrated into building and planning law, as interim uses "Zwichennutzungen" are not a sustainable solution. Initiatives such as the Forum Stadtgärtnern[37], the manifest "Die Stadt ist unser Garten" [38](The City is Our Garden), and the Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin reflect these efforts. The conflict over land use is systemic and driven by profit interests and, as long as the use of property for profit is not restricted, the precarious situation of community gardens will not change. This also applies to other areas of people's lives. The Senate's participation processes, like the Green Charter and the community gardens program, attempt to address this conflict, but in the eyes of the Prachttomate project the approaches remain insufficient.

Even under the current coalition government, and attempts at small-scale market regulations, urban development remains neoliberal. Participation and maintaining civil society active as a governance instrument plays an important role here, due to the risk that gardens may become part of a green-capitalist development and perceived self-determination may turn into external control. For this reason, the people behind the project also stress the importance of self-organization and networking with other gardens, initiatives and movements.

The Prachttomate Community Garden detonates the idea that community gardens should be non-commercial, and that open spaces should be used and shared to challenge and combat the profit-driven promises of a "green-sustainable" tech-digital city. In a city where almost every square meter is subject to the profit doctrine, investors see the city as their prey, and people are displaced from their homes, a critical engagement with politics is necessary. The north of Neukölln falls into this typology of urban development due to the eviction of various social projects, be it housing projects or collective pubs.[39] Therefore, Prachttomate advocates for participation in the production of self-determined and counter-hegemonic spaces to promote fair and social urban development.

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[37] https://forum-stadtgaertnern.org/
[38] https://urbangardeningmanifest.de/
[39] In 2021, the housing project "Hermanstraße 48" was noted that the building was sold. More than 140 people live and work at the Hermanstraße 48 -some of them for decades. Families, individuals and large shared flats. (*H48 bleibt!*, 2023). In 2018, the collective pub "Syndikat" was evicted after being part of the Schillerkiez neighborhood for 33 years. (*Syndikat lebt!*, s. f.).

Despite all the political pushback and evictions, the Prachttomate remains a symbol of resistance against gentrification and the commercial exploitation of urban spaces. On April 20th, 2024 I participate in an event organized by the community garden in collaboration with the movement La Via Campesina, "Action Day La Via Campesina: on peasant resistance and struggles for land, water, climate and life" (*Gemeinschaftsgarten Prachttomate*) where I discuss the current status of the project with a member of the garden. The garden operates under an interim use contract that is renewed annually but can be terminated at any time with four weeks' notice. The members of Prachttomate continue to fight for the long-term preservation of their garden as a common good and against the ongoing privatization and commercialization of urban open spaces. The story of the Prachttomate is an example of the broader struggle of many community gardens and non-commercial open spaces against the overpowering interests of the real estate market. It shows how important it is to act in solidarity and campaign for the preservation of socially and ecologically valuable spaces in the city.

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[40] (Prachttomate, 2020)

Prachttomate, borndorferstraße 9-11, 12059 Berlin. 2014

Prachttomate, borndorferstraße 9 -(11), 12059 Berlin. 2019

Prachttomate, borndorferstraße 9, 12059 Berlin. 2020

Google earth
satellite photos

Prachttomate, borndorferstraße 9, 12059 Berlin. 2024

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6.5. Himmelbeet Community Garden

The ethnographic journey continues in the north of Berlin. Like Neukölln and Kreuzberg, the district of Wedding is characterized by social and economic disadvantages. The district is also strongly influenced by a population with a migration background. Therefore, the richness of culture and diverse perspectives can be observed and felt in the air on the streets of Wedding. In the midst of the extensive and dynamic urban landscape of Wedding, an urban gardening initiative emerged in 2012.

The Himmelbeet Berlin project exemplifies the multifaceted challenges associated with establishing roots as a grassroot initiative in an urban environment. As the name says, the Himmelbeet (sky-raised bed) started on the roof of a shopping center (Schillerpark-Center) on Müllerstraße 47. In 2012, the first raised beds were constructed, and various gardening systems were tested. After a year, the project decided to leave the 'sky' of Berlin due to the lack of long-term prospects, since fire protection measures were needed in order to keep developing the project on the parking deck. This work would have resulted in significant costs, which were beyond the project's budget. Therefore, in 2013, the project was relocated to one of the densest areas of Wedding, near Leopoldplatz (Ruheplatzstraße). This process was done with the support of the district of Mitte, since the space belonged to the "Schul- Sportamt Mitte".

Since 2013, the usage contract for the garden on Ruheplatz Straße was consistently short-term, typically lasting less than a year and often expiring in October. This created a persistent pressure of uncertainty about losing the space, which continued until 2021. The patron of annual renewal didn't allow the garden to have a long-term perspective for the future "*We were uncertain how long the garden would be allowed to remain because the area was designated as a sports facility in the town planning. Additionally, an entrepreneur with a football club intended to develop it for social purposes*" (Menegoni, 2024. P, 2).

This dilemma of the use of the space led the Himmelbeet to search for strategies in order to secure their permeance. This was undertaken by a specific group of people, in which Sonja Rosenthal was active until 2019. The Green Urban Labs initiative aimed to develop a model project that would allow both social projects (Himmelbeet and Amandla gGmbH, which wanted to use the space for the inclusive football project "SafeHub") to coexist on the site, with active involvement from the Administration and district of Mitte during the development phase.

Funding for the project was promised, but the administration never utilized these subsidies, leading to the project's eventual termination. *"We drew up finished plans and studies with architects, where you could see that there could be a community garden as well. So, it was actually our goal from the start to say that we would bring these two projects together, because nutrition, sport, young people, and the neighborhood overlap very well (...) We also got an award for the study, but the district wasn't particularly interested in that either"* (Rosenthal, 2024. P. 6.). The situation for Green Urban Labs shifted significantly in spring 2018, when the Mitte district office began contract negotiations with Amandla EduFootball. This shifted the potential for formal cooperation between the district office, Amandla EduFootball, and Himmelbeet to an informal level. Therefore, the Green Urban Labs was not able to get finance support from the district, which resulted in the project being terminated. *"It's almost a philosophical question of who is entitled to what? the question of who is entitled to what rights (...) This was one of the main difficulties. It was about the confrontation between two social projects, (...) The argumentation is different, if you have for example a H&M corporative in front, but not directed against another social project. This raises the question of how such a juxtaposition can take place"* (Rosenthal 2024. P. 7).

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The reaction to the threat to Himmelbeet was not isolated, but took place in a context in which other gardens were also facing similar difficulties. The threat to the Prachttomate in Neukölln and the Prinzesinnengarten in Kreuzberg was a further trigger for the activation of the Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin. This led to a coordinated effort that involved both the Himmelbeet and other endangered gardens. Support was provided on several levels. Firstly,

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[41] (*himmelbeet Berlin Wedding*, 2018)

there were diplomatic efforts that sought to sensitize politicians and administrators to the concerns of community gardens. This included direct talks as well as public rallies and campaigns, such as the one in front of the town hall in Neukölln. Mobilizing members of the garden communities and the local neighborhood was crucial in generating public pressure and highlighting the importance of the gardens to the community. With the support of the network, the garden initiated an online petition in 2019 to secure the project's space: "*It must have been either 2018 or 2019 (...), during which over 40,000 signatures were collected. This presence of the network was crucial*" (Stark, 2024. P. 3).

Collaboration with external organizations such as Allmende Kontor and experts such as Christa Müller provided additional support. These actors were not only able to provide sound arguments for the preservation of the gardens, but also provided valuable resources and expertise to strengthen the position of the community gardens in negotiations with the authorities. Despite these solidarity efforts, the challenge of maintaining the network was also evident, especially at a time when many gardens were facing precarious situations themselves. The Network activists often had to do paid work alongside their commitment to maintaining their own gardens, which limited their capacity to support other initiatives. Overall, these experiences illustrate the importance of solidarity and networking between community gardens in order to defend their interests and stand up to the threat of closure or loss of their land.

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[42] Manifestation on 2017 organized by the Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin to claim the precarious situation of the Himmelbeet, Prachttomate and Prinzessinnengarten.

The Himmelbeet project in Berlin has been a focal point of extensive discussions across various dimensions of the city's political landscape. A key strength of the project is its use of scientific data to create robust lines of argumentation. Consequently, the project places significant emphasis on collaboration with research institutions such as the "Institut für ökologische Wirtschaftsforschung (IÖW)"[43] and the anstiftung [44]. The project "Garten Leistungen" (Püffel et al., 2022) provides clear scientific data, demonstrating the various social and ecological benefits that urban gardening projects, such as Himmelbeet, can offer.

These benefits extend to both the urban environment and to people who are directly and indirectly involved in these initiatives. The anstiftung also played a significant role by providing support with their know-how. Christa Müller was present at events and helped establish this institution as one of its major supporters. She also served as a source of evidence-based research, which provided a strong foundation for arguments. Of course, it could always be said, "*Yes, we have a beautiful garden here and we want to keep it.*" (Rosenthal, 2024. P,2), but it is also about the garden's societal contribution. It was a crucial support to be able to point to social research, which demonstrates that urban gardening has a positive impact on political goals such as biodiversity, climate protection, sustainable nutrition, and the food transition. There was also constant contact with the Nutrition Council. Urban gardens, in this case the Himmelbeet, are often places where groups meet and start as grassroots movements, like the Nutrition Council (Ernährungsrat).

When the garden moved for the third time to its current location at Gartenstraße/Grenzstraße, one of the most significant outcomes of the community garden movement played a key role in supporting Himmelbeet in securing the new space. The establishment of a Senate Commissioner for Urban Gardens in Berlin is viewed as the network's greatest contribution, emphasizing the importance and helpfulness of this position. Additionally, without the help and support of Toni Karge, the person behind the Senate, the acquisition of the new space would not have been possible. Nonetheless, Sonja reflects on this process, which began in 2013 and concluded in 2021, saying that the political and lobbying work done during this time required a great deal of energy and sacrifice, which she felt was not appreciated by stakeholders in the district. "*The new space of the Himmelbeet is of course a huge success. But when you*

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[43] https://www.ioew.de/
[44] https://anstiftung.de/

see what a high price was paid for it in terms of personal commitment, I would still question whether it is such a positive result. I'm really happy for the people who are still active there and, above all, for the people who can use it and for whom it is an important place. But yes, it is important to think the high price that was paid for it” (Rosenthall, 2024. P. 5).

The entire process of relocating the garden to the new site in the Gartenstraße/Grenzstraße was conducted with the assistance of not only the personnel employed by Himmelbeet, but also the broader community. This endeavor was also endorsed by the Senate Commissioner for Urban Gardens.

Today, the project thrives again in the new space, creating new dynamics and critical thinking in the neighborhood as well as in Berlin as a whole. The story behind the process of the Himmelbeet moving between spaces invites us to reflect on the use of space. Community gardens represent more than just a physical space; they also have meaning rooted in the place where they are located, in the community that surrounds them, and in the ecosystem they have created. Gardens cannot simply be moved, as they contain living elements and a unique history that makes them inseparable from their surroundings. It is important to recognize and value this aspect of the place where a community garden is located, as well as the collective narrative that is created around it. There is a need to develop a narrative that not only values the activities that occur within the garden, but also its physical location and its importance to the surrounding community.

Ruheplatzstraße, 13347 Berlin. 2009

Himmelbeet, Ruheplatzstraße, 13347 Berlin. 2019

© Karacho

Ruheplatzstraße, 13347 Berlin 2023

Google earth satellite photos

Himmelbeet, Gartenstr./Grenzstraße 13355, Berlin. 2023

Photo taken after the moving © Karacho

6.6. Allmende-Kontor Community Garden

In this paper, I dedicated a full chapter to the Allmende-Kontor as it has been central to my research. Now that the history and background of the garden have been established, it is important in this section to explore the narratives it has created and received from the other gardens discussed in this chapter. The role of the Allmende-Kontor within the movement has developed more discreetly than actively.

Although the original goal of connecting urban gardening projects in Berlin and serving as a voice to the outside world was not achieved, the Allmende Kontor's role within the movement remained relevant in a different way. The idea of being a space for connection evolved and its role as a facilitator within this movement took on a new dimension. The role of the Allmende Kontor in the interactions described in the previous chapter was more passive than direct. As a legal organization (Eingetragener Verein "e.V."), the project made this established structure available to other initiatives that did not have this status, thus facilitating bureaucratic work, for example through the Netzwerk Urbane Gärten, which was the initiative organizing the political work against the displacement of the Prinzeninnengarten, Prachttomate and Himmelbeet in 2017. "*The Allmende-Kontor has always been a kind of melting pot for the garden movement in Berlin, and whenever we received a donation from the foundation, it had to be transferred somewhere. And of course, a foundation can't transfer it to a private account, so it had to go through the Allmende Kontor.*" (Rosentahal, 2024. P.3.).

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[45] Photo taken in the community garden Allmende Kontor in 2016 by Kristin Henzel.

Although the project has a contract in force until 2027, the current situation of the Tempelhofer Feld leaves the project in a delicate situation due to the possibility of the park changing its dynamics in a drastic way. The CDU (Christian Democratic Union) /SPD (Social Democratic Party) coalition intends to use their parliamentary majority to change the Tempelhofer Feld Law, originally established through a public referendum. This decision has sparked outrage, as it is seen as an attack on democratic processes and a move to benefit Real Estate interests and interests of pollical parties such as the SPD and CDU.

The Tempelhofer Feld, a symbol of democratic and public participation, now faces significant threats from this political maneuver. The garden has a clear position towards this situation and has been part of several collective actions with different initiatives that are directly or indirectly part of the Tempelhof Feld in order to reclaim democracy. This situation makes clear how vulnerable the political system in Berlin can be. For Kestin Stelmacher, this problem is not a surprise, but it is also an reminder as to how one must engage the political system in Berlin with the public space. As alarming as the situation is, it also presents an opportunity for the movement. Current observations indicate that both the CDU and the SPD continue to exert significant influence over Tempelhofer Feld. Activist acknowledge that the 2014 referendum marked a substantial defeat for the SPD, and "*it is evident that they are among the foremost adversaries of the movement, at least in the realm of party politics*" (Stelmacher, 2024, p. 24). The preservation of land and green spaces, especially in the most densely populated areas of the city, remains a critical issue. This concern may emerge as one of the most pivotal driving forces behind the movement. [46]

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[46] Public statement of Allmende-Kontor on the current situation against the policies of the SPD-CDU coalition.

Tempelhofer Feld (east), 2010

Allmende-Kontor, Tempelhofer Feld (east), 2012

Allmende-Kontor, Tempelhofer Feld (east), 2014

Google earth
satellite photos

Allmende-Kontor, Tempelhofer Feld (east), 2024

© Karacho

6.7. Sympoiesis and Tentacular Thinking within Internal dimensions of the Movement

The five case studies demonstrated in the previous chapters show how these urban spaces within the city generate complex systems of interconnectedness in order to subsist in a city that, as discussed, has been under constant economic pressure since the financial crisis of the 2000s. These spaces show resilience in the face of the wave of gentrification that is growing every year in Berlin. Above all, they bring with them a history that cannot be forgotten by the people who fight to this day to maintain these microuniverses within the urban area of Berlin.

The movement has evolved and, within this time, links were generated between different projects to generate more pressure and gain visibility in the policies of Berlin in order to secure spaces within the city. In this journey through the different urban gardens, I have observed how the members of each garden identify and coexist with their environment in a solidary and conscious way. Additionally, without the collaborative activist work that has been done, many of the projects we see today would not exist. For this reason, the struggle for spaces and the environment surrounding them, reflects the idea of how some individuals within the movement follow the principles of *staying with the trouble.*

The activist interact in a way in which their actions are correlated and complement each other. Thus, their interactions can be compared to the theory of sympoiesis, which was presented in chapter 2.5. The community garden movement is conceptually opposed to autopoiesis, a theory that defends the autonomy and self-sufficiency of living beings and systems. The movement framework is based on sympoiesis, which, unlike autopoiesis, highlights the interconnection and interdependence of all living beings, including humans, within a complex ecosystem. The system of the movement recognizes the complexity of the inhabitants and visitors within these places and engages with problems and barriers, finding complex solutions and paths instead of easy solutions.

Sympoiesis within a system like Berlin's makes everything more feasible. Ultimately, the term itself is not complex; it simply means 'making-with,' emphasizing that nothing creates itself in isolation. "Sympoiesis is a word proper to complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. It is a word for worlding-with, in company. Sympoiesis enfolds autopoiesis and generatively unfurls and extends it" (Haraway, 2016 p, 99). During my fieldwork in the

community garden movement, I observed firsthand the challenges and complexities associated with environmental and social crises.

Sympoiesis calls us to acknowledge our deep responsibility for our actions and choices, recognizing their impact on all living beings and environments with which we coexist. It emphasizes the importance of understanding that we are not isolated in eco- and social systems; our actions, regardless of their scale, can have long-term consequences on the local environment. Similarly, the actions of other living beings also influence us. In the community gardens I visited, the responsibility of being part of the problem was evident, with individuals striving to make a difference in the city in their own ways, while always reflecting on their choices. Within this responsibility of 'making-with,' there exists a complex system that makes all of this possible. "*As a gardener myself, I always feel connected and at the same time I am always surprised (...) at how diverse it ultimately is. All the systems and concepts from intergenerational gardens to intercultural gardens, raised beds, garden soil, fixed plots, communal beds, composting, bees, the system itself is so diverse*" (Stark, 2024 p, 9).

The facts illustrated in the previous chapters serve as a reminder that collaboration and relationships between internal stakeholders in the movement create a narrative of inspiration and hope by envisioning the outcomes of the movement and *staying with the trouble*. In some cases, such as Himmelbeet and Prachttomte, the outcome was not what was expected, but it is important to recognize the perseverance of the individuals who stood up for what they believed in, and that the struggle they went through remained in the memory of the movement. This narrative of preserving memory and transmitting knowledge can be seen in community gardens by collective actions. Here, people get involved and interact not only with humans, but also with non-humans and with the whole environment itself. When I reflected about the narrative of memory with Frauke Hehl, she argued that the collective memory of the community garden movement "*is not necessary well documented, it's more a case of doing it together and that's what I find so influential, but also charming about it, that you experience it together, create it together, do it together*" (Hehl, 2024 p. 7). This narrative of "making-with" preserves and transmits across generations and cultures. Actions carry the wisdom of past experiences and lessons learned, providing the foundation for future actions and decisions of the movement.

After visiting the various gardens and speaking with those directly involved in the movement, it is evident that the internal dimensions of the movement are rooted in a comprehensive

understanding of Berlin's urban system. This understanding acknowledges the interconnected nature of all beings within the city's environment. This movement's vision of fostering understanding and curiosity about how things work was only possible because its participants moved away from individualistic and utilitarian thinking. Instead, they embraced the interconnectedness of things and understood when it was time to step aside and allow new people to get involved. This acceptance of ideological differences, and ensuring these differences did not hinder the movement's progress, is a key aspect. Marco recognized this, for example, when he met the different actors involved in the movement for the first time in 2009 in Lebuz, "*there was a great deal of willingness to simply leave these differences behind and accept them*" (Clausen, 2024 p. 2) in order to find solutions in a pragmatical way.

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7. External relations with the Movement

In order to subsist in Berlin's complex political environment, community gardens must engage with a variety of stakeholders outside the movement. Berlin's political system is known for its complexity due to the communication that has to exist between the 12 districts, different administrations, and grassroots projects. Before analyzing the interactions with the political system of Berlin, it is crucial to mention the relationship between the movement and the organization "die anstiftung[48]".

7.1. Die anstiftung

Die anstiftung has served as a principal academic and knowledge-transfer resource for the movement, enabling activists to interact and collaborate during both times of struggle and stillness. Therefore, it has played a relevant role in forging the structure of the movement as "*not only a very important foundation, but also a constant and significant companion. This structure is therefore a very important part of the movement*" (Stelmacher, 2024, p. 23). When projects such as the Himmelbeet were under pressure, key actors within "die anstiftung" such as "*Christa Müller played a crucial role, supporting us with their know-how. She provided evidence-based research, which served as a foundation for our arguments. The social research conducted here demonstrated the impact on cross-cutting political goals such as biodiversity, climate protection, sustainable nutrition, and the food transition. This was a significant support for our advocacy.*" (Rosenthal, 2024, p. 2). Furthermore, *die anstiftung* is responsible for organizing meetings at the national level, such as the significant conference in Tutzing[49] and the Urban-Gardening Summer Camp[50]. These events play a crucial role in the development of the movement, as they foster the generation of many ideas and goals, enabling activists to establish a common framework for collective action. Therefore, it can be assumed that *die anstiftung* has been one of the main external actors of the movement, playing a crucial role as a facilitator in various dimensions, such as financial and know-how knowledge support.

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[48] https://anstiftung.de/
[49] https://urbane-gaerten.de/netzwerk-news/tagung-die-stadt-ist-unser-garten
[50] https://urbane-gaerten.de/urbane-gaerten/sommercamp

7.2. The Administration of Berlin

Before analyzing the relationship between these stakeholders, it is important to first understand how the city districts and Berlin administrations are organized. This will help one understand why activists often have different experiences with public authorities, whether positive or negative, and also to recognize that, if a group of people wants to start a community garden or urban gardening project, sooner or later the individuals will have to deal with these actors.

The Administration (die Verwaltung) forms a segment of the state's authority. As per the Berlin Constitution, the government provides the political direction for the executive branch. The administration enforces the laws and political decisions established by the political system and the Constitution. The primary distinction between different administrations is their classification as either private or public. (Private: for their own purposes - public: for everyone).

Administrative actions are carried out by public authorities[51] who operate within their designated responsibilities and on behalf of the legal entity under public law. The Berlin Administration system comprises four key actors: the State of Berlin (Land Berlin), which serves as the administrative body and legal entity under public law (regional authority); the District Office (Bezirksamt), which is the authority and organ of the legal entity under public law; civil society (Bürger*innen), consisting of individuals who act as natural persons for the legal; and Public administration bodies made up of legal entities and natural persons.[52](Schultz & Kerk, 2017; Firmbach, 2022) .

The Administration in Berlin serves various essential functions to ensure the effective management and provision of services to the public. The Regulatory Administration (Ordungsverwaltung) focuses on maintaining public safety and order, while the Service Administration (Leistungsverwaltung) encompasses the provision of general services that are in the public interest. The Planning Administration (Plannungsverwaltung) prepares administrative actions or controls citizens' actions, such as land use planning. The Tax

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[51] Behörde (The personal working within the administration): An public authority is an organizationally independent (but not legally capable) organ of the state or another public administration body (persons, corporation, institution, foundation) that carries out administrative activities with external effect.

[52] Legal Persons: Associations of individuals and other organizations that possess rights and obligations.
Natural Persons: Individuals who have general legal capacity, encompassing all people.

Administration (Abgabenverwaltung) is responsible for procuring the financial resources needed to fulfill administrative tasks. The Demand Management/Service (Bedarfsverwaltung) provides support for the work of various organizational units within the administration. Lastly, the Political Administration (Politische Verwaltung) includes management and leadership support, planning, preparation of decisions, consultancy, and office management. (Schultz & Kerk, 2017). Each of these functions plays a critical role in ensuring that the administration achieves their goals, maintains civil society and meets the needs of their citizens.

7.2.1. The Main Administration and District Administration (Hauptverwaltung and Bezirksverwaltung)

The unified municipality of Berlin was created in 1920. Berlin's administration has a two-tiered structure and is divided into the Main Administration and the District Administration. The main administration is the overarching level of administration. The main administration is headed by the Berlin state government, the senate (senate departments and their subordinate authorities), which is led by the Governing Mayor. The central administration is responsible for all areas that affect the whole of Berlin: Police, justice, and finance. (*Berliner Landeszentrale für politische Bildung: Hauptverwaltung*)

The lower level of the administration is formed by the twelve district administrations. The district administration consists of the District Assembly (Bezirksverordnetenversammlung, BVV) and the District Office (Bezirksamt, BA) (vgl. Berliner Landeszentrale für politische Bildung: Hauptverwaltung, o.J.). The districts are responsible for various local matters such as culture, green spaces or schools. The BVV is the "parliament" of the respective district, but has limited parliamentary rights and it is considered part of the executive. It cannot pass any laws and must adhere to the framework of the legal and administrative regulations of the state government (Senate) and the basic administrative policies of the districts. The district parliament consists of 55 members (district councilors). They are elected at the same time as the House of Representatives by all citizens living in the district who are entitled to vote and by all EU State citizens, who are registered in Berlin. The work of the district councilors is carried out on an honorary basis. *(Berliner Landeszentrale für politische Bildung: Hauptverwaltung)*.

The BVV elect an executive committee for the duration of the electoral term (district councilor chairperson or deputy chairperson and assessors). The main task of the BVV is to elect the district mayor and the district councilor. As a collegial administrative authority, the district office, understood as the political leadership of the district, is made up of the elected district mayors and the city councilors. The BVV monitors the business of the district office and can submit applications and recommendations to the district office and request information. It can also overturn decisions made by the district office and replace them with its own resolutions. A significant feature of the district structure is that it is largely politically independent of the Senate. (*Berliner Landeszentrale für politische Bildung: Hauptverwaltung,*).

Within Berlin's districts, there are diverse offices responsible for managing aspects of the city (e.g., youth welfare office and the health department). In the case of community gardens, the district offices responsible for dealing with their queries are the district offices for roads and green spaces (Bezirksämtern für Straßen und Grünflächen, Umwelt- und Naturschutzamt and

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[53] (Firmbach, 2022)

Stadtentwicklungsamt). The main issue is that these municipalities do not have staff specifically dedicated to the needs of community gardens. As a result, communication is often inefficient and leads to frustration. At the administration level, the situation is different. "*We were always told yes, but you're not an allotment garden. So they had a problem finding someone who was responsible for us. No one was responsible because we were multifunctional*" (Rosenthal, 2024, p. 8).

In 2017, because of pressure from by the movement and the permanently precarious state of communication between administration, politicians and activists, the petition "Urban Gardening in der Stadt verwurzeln**"** (Rooting urban gardening in the city) was signed by the SPD parliamentary group, the Die Linke parliamentary group and the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen parliamentary group. This motion, signed by the aforementioned parties in the Berlin "*House of representatives, argued for the need to have a person in charge of communicating the needs and problems of community gardens to the administration, a person who serves as a bridge. Furthermore, the Senate is requested to appoint a contact person for urban gardening. The contact person should be the point of contact for and mediator between those responsible for urban gardens in Berlin and the Berlin administration and sensitize the administration to the topic of "urban gardening" across all departments*" (Antrag, der Fraktion der SPD, der Fraktion Die Linke und der Fraktion Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. Urban Gardening in der Stadt verwurzeln. 2017, p.1)

As it was discussed in the chapter 6.5., Himmelbeet, since 2019 there is one person, Toni Karge, in the Senate Administration for Mobility, Transport, Climate Action and Environment (Senatsverwaltung für Mobilität, Verkehr, Klimaschutz und Umwelt, SenMVKU), who is the bridge between administration and community gardens. This position was the result of the motion requested in the Berlin Parliament in 2017. It is important to acknowledge that this position was only possible because of the pressure that activists made in the past in order to have a contact point within the administration who understands both sides. For this reason, it can be understood that this position in the administration is seen as one of the great achievements of the movement. Sonja Rosenthal defined it as follows "*of course, these was a success and I think you can only attribute it to the movement, I think it's really important to say once again that none of this would have happened if there hadn't simply been pressure (...) the decisions within the administration were always lacking at eye level. And Toni's position is of course very important here because he can meet other people in the administration on an equal*

level." (Rosenthal, 2024. P, 10). Consequently, the SenMVKU serves as the primary public institution that activists and gardeners must approach when issues arise within community gardens. However, as noted by Toni Karge, the administration often has limited capability to resolve these issues, as they typically fall under the jurisdiction of the district offices *"The problems that the gardens have with the administration are mostly at the district level, as these are the executive bodies*"[54] (Karge, 2024, p. 3).

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[54] The platform Produktives Stadtgrün, has a PDF on "Community gardening" on its website. Contact persons at district level for topics such as public green spaces, community gardens, allotment gardens, tree grates are assigned to the district offices for streets and green spaces.
Central contact persons and contact information can be found at
https://www.berlin.de/gemeinschaftsgaertnern/links-literatur/artikel.852878.php

Decision-makers in relation to community gardens in Berlin[55]

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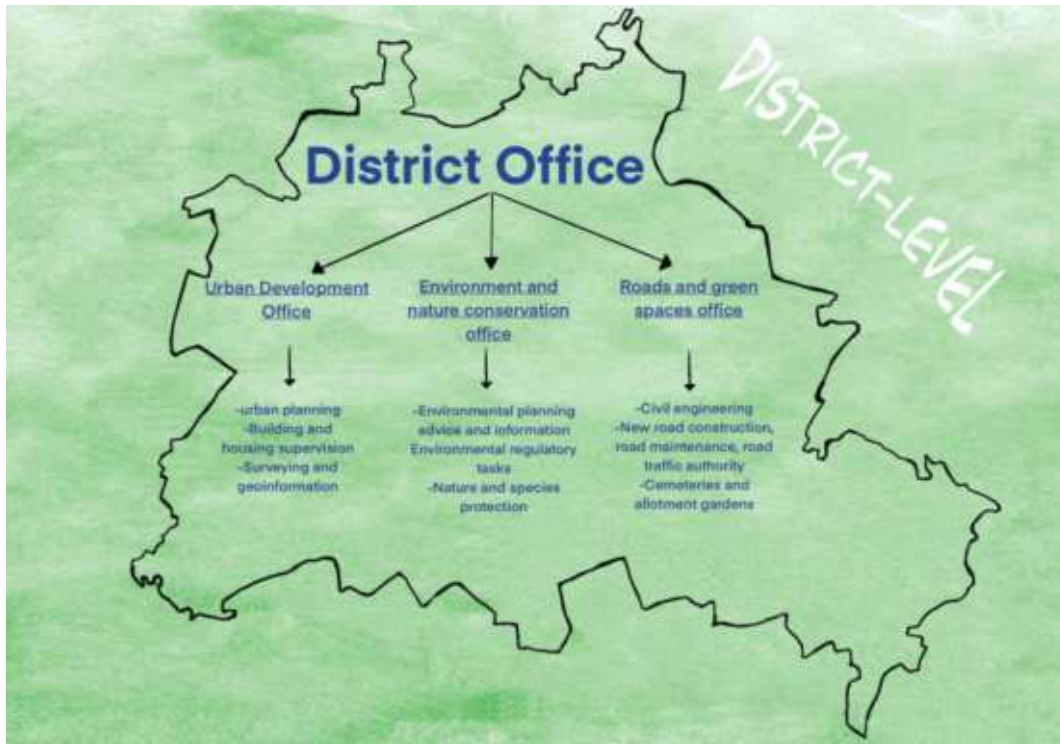
[55] (Firmbach, 2022)

7.3. The Administration and the Movement

The relationship between the community garden movement and the administration in Berlin shows a remarkable development from initial distance to a cooperative but critical collaboration. In the early phases of urban gardening in Berlin, the relationship with the administration was rather distant and characterized by mistrust. The administration showed little interest in the community gardens and activists often had to operate without institutional support. This initial distance meant that the projects were strongly grassroots-oriented and characterized by self-initiative and self-organization, one of the main features of this movement. This dichotomy started to change when the administration and politicians came to the realization that the movement would not simply disappear "*it was not a "Eintagsfliege", quite the opposite, even if it is progressing slowly, it was growing steadily*" (Stelmacher, 2024, p. 21). The background of the past administration politics regarding the strategy of the Real Estate Fund and the financial crisis, guided for the most part by the SPD party in the 2000s, led some activists and gardeners to see the administration as the main obstacle of the movement and, in some cases, as the "enemy". "*I think that was a very palpable mood for a while. There were a lot of conflicts in the scene about, do we want to work with the administration or not?*" (Stelmacher, 2024, p. 21). Nonetheless, this distrust of the administration and the district offices was also fueled by the lack of appreciation and recognition of these projects, which contribute so much to the city.

This phenomenon was clearly evident in the aforementioned examples, where activists in certain instances lacked the requisite support to retain spaces where the gardens were developed. This was particularly evident in the cases of Himmelbeet and Prachttomate. "*It's hard when you see how the political goals are set and how little support there is. And it's not just Berlin. Berlin is certainly a tougher place in this respect because the conflicts over the use of space are very intense here*" (Rosenthal, 2024, p. 6). Marco Clausen saw this lack of recognition more in a systematic way. He criticized that the city of Berlin fails to understand the deeper symbolic significance and the role that community gardens could play in the city's ecological future. It was emphasized that it is not enough to simply have many community gardens. Instead, a strategic partnership is necessary to integrate and develop these projects sustainably and meaningfully. For this reason, it is argued that the urban gardening projects should be understood as a tool for social transformation and as a social mission, actively involving people on-site. Community gardens can play a central role in this process by linking

ecological and social aspects and making the changes visible and tangible locally (Kliem, L & Kuhlmann 2022; Baier et al. 2024)

Since 2019, when the Gemeinschaftsgarten-Programm (SenUMVK, 2023) was developed by Toni Karge, the assumption that projects are not involved in politics is changing. Within the program, a number of objectives have been developed in a participatory way, for example to achieve a legal framework so that projects in Berlin can secure their spaces, or to finally be recognized within the infrastructure of Stadtgrün Berlin. The program is now a reality and was approved by the Senate in 2022. Various strategies and goals are currently being implemented by a group of 12 people. This group consists of six people representing the community gardens (of which I am a part), three researchers and scientific institutions, three office districts and the administration (*Berliner Gemeinschaftsgarten-Programm*, 2024) In this way, a holistic approach to the problems and challenges is generated, considering the different perspectives of the stakeholders. In addition to providing specific support elements, a major aim of the program is to systematically incorporate community gardens into Berlin's open space planning system, representing a shift in strategy rather than a complete overhaul.

According to Karge (Giseke et al., 2024) the community gardens in Berlin are moving away from a niche-focused, small-scale approach towards a collaborative model where civil society and municipalities work together on socio-ecological transformation, reflecting a new approach to municipal governance. "*The one thing that is happening at the moment is that community gardens simply have to be accepted as part of the "Berliner Stadtgrün" infrastructure. Just as we accepted the allotment gardens as part of the Stadtgrün 100 years ago. And that was not even questioned, that the green infrastructure of the city also consists of allotment gardens. And it's the same with community gardens. But that has to be accepted first, that would be the basis for a professional structure. And then there would have to be fixed contact persons in the various administrations*" (Karge, 2024, p. 2).

The current political momentum and the knowledge accumulated by the urban gardening community concerning its self-organized structures, diverse typologies of space use, resources, and legal frameworks form a crucial foundation for establishing and making visible the goals of the Gemeinschaftsgarten-Programm and the new approach to socio-ecological transformation within municipal governance. Considering these observations, it becomes evident that the administration in Berlin, particularly the "*Freiraumplanung und Stadtgrün*"

department, is implementing a notably progressive strategy towards the development and support of community gardens.

It is evident that the collaboration between community gardens and the Berlin administration has grown and this relationship has allowed large projects such as Waldgarten-Britz[56] to be funded, which means great progress for both sides. However, it simultaneously introduced concerns regarding potential dependency on external funding and the dilution of the movement's foundational principles, such as its self-organization. Activists have persistently emphasized the necessity for self-organization and have cautioned against excessive administrative involvement, which could undermine the autonomy and grassroots democratic structures of the community gardens.

Despite the enhanced relationship with the administration, the necessity to exert continuous pressure remains essential to ensuring the long-term security of community gardens. Activists advocate for intensified networking and political engagement within the movement to achieve shared objectives and to preserve the significance of community gardens within the urban environment. "*I see our relationship more as a kind of alliance. Toni has the ability to accelerate things and initiate processes that we either cannot handle on our own or would take significantly longer to accomplish. However, there are things that Toni Karge cannot do due to his dependencies, which we can easily as a movement take on. In this sense, I see us almost like a small, constructive partnership, complementing each other*" (Stelmacher, 2024, p. 22). Activists acknowledge the progress and growing administrative support, but they remain cautious about the potential risks of over-professionalization and financial dependency. Their dedication is directed towards maintaining community gardens as self-organized, democratic entities and reinforcing their role in urban development.

8. Core principles of the movement

From a comprehensive examination of the intrinsic aspects of the movement through the five case studies—Rosa-Rose, Prinzessinnengarten-Kreuzberg, Prachttomate, Himmelbeet and Allmende-Kontor—as well as an analysis of the external context, specifically involving the Berlin administration, the following conclusions can be articulated in relation to the theoretical framework employed in this study.

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[56] https://waldgarten-britz.de/home/

8.1. Collective Action

If we briefly recapitulate the notion of collective action within a social movement, it refers to the joint organized effort and strategy undertaken by a group of persons to express dissent, criticism, or claims against other groups of powerholders. This actions usually involves public, performative protest aimed at gaining visibility, attracting support, and impacting social change.

Within the context of community gardens, the concept of collective action extends beyond merely serving as a driving force for the movement; it embodies a fundamental characteristic underpinning the notion of urban gardening. Specifically, without the principle of *collectivity*, a community garden is unlikely to achieve a democratic, self-managed, and sustainable structure. Thus, within the internal framework of a community garden, the notion of collective action focuses on initiatives taken within the garden to establish democratic structures, foster solidarity among participants, and engage in communal activities such as composting, seed exchange, and experiential learning based on a do-it-yourself approach (Bennholdt-Thomsen, 2011). These practices allow the gardens to develop in an organic and balanced way, promoting the active participation of individuals in the creation of a collective endeavor.

Nevertheless, within an external framework, the collective action exhibited by the movement has demonstrated holistic and diverse approaches to critiquing various powerholders who aim to undermine the activities associated with community gardens in Berlin. In the pursuit of sustaining their presence within the urban system, the aforementioned projects have demonstrated that, in a city like Berlin—where the demand and pressure for public space is escalating daily—there is no potential for inaction. This is due to the persistent threat of being displaced or eradicated from the urban infrastructure. For this reason, one of the major forces behind the collective action of the movement is the neoliberal development of the city.

Through the journey I had during these years of activism within the Allmende-Kontor and outside the "fence" of the garden visiting the other community gardens in Berlin, as well as the four other case studies of this research, I have identified that collective actions have had a strong focus not just on food production, but are also driven by a broader set of motivations, including social, emotional, and transformative desires. These places represent a collective turn to nature, driven by a multi-generational group that is part of a consumer capitalist

environment, but whose actions seek to create alternative ways of living that incorporate elements of self-expression, community values, and ecological awareness. The trajectory of urban community gardening reflects broader changes in societal values and in creating spaces that fulfill current emotional and social needs, becoming places of belonging and agency.

In a city like Berlin, due to its long history full of political adversities, we can see that the city was marked at the beginning of the 21st century by a neoliberal policy that sought to be characterized by a market-driven approach to social organization, emphasizing individual responsibility, competition, and the commodification of all aspects of life. The historical context of the movement and the collective actions illustrated in the case studies reveal that these locations symbolize resistance against the neoliberal order. This resistance is demonstrated not only through performative actions, such as organized protests and the use of petitions, but also by the strategic occupation of public spaces, thereby posing a significant challenge to the prevailing ideologies about urban ownership and governance, claiming: who owns the city? Dörte Martens discusses the concept of utilizing a community garden as a form of protest and demonstration. She underscores that protest can take various forms and acknowledges that not everyone is inclined to participate in street demonstrations. Instead, a community garden can serve as an alternative form of protest by reimagining the use of public space (Martens, 2024).

Within the movement, collective action can also take a more subtle form than performing demonstrations and organizing public events. Dörte Martens (2024) suggests that urban community gardening encourages people to rethink their lifestyles in a capitalist city and adopt a more critical perspective. This experience provides an opportunity for individuals unfamiliar with self-organizing structures to understand their operations and the functions of a participatory democratic system. Through this involvement, people become more politically aware and motivated to advocate for changes within their urban environment. For instance, individuals learn to moderate collective discussions and lead group meetings on future actions, even if they have no prior experience. This learning process is essential in developing leaders within the movement who can guide it using a non-hierarchical approach (Stelmacher, 2024).

By fostering communal practices and shared spaces, these places create opportunities for collective engagement and mutual support. Gardening and the collective action within the garden in this context is more than an act of growing food; it becomes a form of social and

political expression. It allows individuals to experiment with new forms of social organization that emphasize cooperation, creativity and ecological sustainability, as well as interact with other forms of life. Community gardens serve as spaces where both human and non-human communities come together, fostering interactions, cooperation, and coexistence. They are microcosms of the larger world, illustrating how diverse beings can share finite resources while exploring limitless possibilities. In essence, the urban gardens act as "heterotopias"—distinct places that encapsulate diverse spaces of otherness, alternative realities within our present moment (Volkart, 2024). Within heterotopias, collective actions of the movement become more sensorial and offer new ways of perceiving the environment, where conventional social norms are suspended or redefined.

Therefore, urban gardening can be understood as a form of *social movement heterotopia* to a significant extent when considering the subtle collective actions within the movement. Urban gardens challenge neoliberal individualism by creating spaces for collective engagement. They enable experimentation with social practices that prioritize communal values over economic productivity. In this sense, they act as spaces of resistance against the isolating effects of neoliberal urbanization, offering emotionally and aesthetically fulfilling activities that reconnect individuals with nature and each other.

As heterotopias, urban gardens are not isolated from the dominant social order but are dynamically engaged with it. They serve as alternative spaces where societal norms are redefined or suspended, providing a critique of the mainstream and illustrating the potential for social change. Additionally, the annual Sommer camp (*urban-Gardening-Sommercamp*) organized by die anstiftung creates a unique space where activists and gardeners can break away from societal norms and directly confront various challenges. In these activist camps, the typical societal constraints are lifted, enabling participants to practice and embody ideals that are often impractical in everyday life. This creates a compelling vision of an alternative society, which serves as both an inspiration and a prototype for broader societal transformation. The camp's compensatory aspect facilitates the exploration of potential societal models, fostering innovation and creativity. This concept aligns with Foucault's (2000) and (Beckett et. Al. 2017) notion of social movement heterotopia, describing spaces of resistance and experimentation.

8. 1.2. Collective Action and Political Process in Berlin

The intensity of a movement's collective action is shaped by a variety of factors embedded in the interaction between the movement and its political and institutional environment. As discussed in chapter 7.3, the relationship between the movement and the Berlin administration has been progressive, allowing new forms of collaboration to take shape within the movement. For this reason, the *political opportunity structure* has shown an openness in some cases towards the movement and acceptance to the demands of the movement. The petition by the SPD, Die Linke and Die Grünen parties underscores the proposal for a dedicated person within the administration to facilitate communication between actors. Another example is the support of the community gardens Rosa-Rose and Prinzessinengarten by the mayor, Mr. Schulz, so that both gardens were able to find new spaces. (Hehl, 2024; Clausen, 2024)

As Berlin operates within the framework of a democratic system, as stipulated by the German Constitution, members of the movement have the right to engage in public advocacy. An example of such engagement is the 2017 protest in Neukölln, which raised concerns about Himmelbeet, Prachtomatte, and Prinzessinnengarten. However, for some activists, this "collaboration" was not enough, as many of the people behind the work had to sacrifice much more than just their time to maintain the spaces. (Rosentahl, 2024; Clausen, 2024). This notion leaves the *perception of opportunities* within the movement unbalanced, as Marco Clausen (2024, p. 11) claims, "*If you are intensively involved in this system, it has a strong effect on you, as you are constantly involved in small-scale discussions. Working in the district council (BVV) can be very challenging. (...) the issues you want to bring up often don't fit in with small-scale politics (...) You think you can play a key role and gain certain access, but basically you have very little power*".

It is posited that the movement's past achievements were limited due to a lack of cooperative engagement with administrative and district offices, compounded by insufficient recognition of the efforts made by activist towards fostering a more resilient and inclusive city. This lack of institutional support led to frustration within the movement, resulting in some participants disengaging from the cause. (Rosenthal, Clausen, 2024). Despite facing barriers and challenges to achieving full political recognition in Berlin, the community garden movement has expanded significantly in its number of gardens (SenUMVK, 2023). This growth marks a notable

advancement, suggesting an increasing potential for the movement to gain greater visibility and influence within Berlin's political landscape.

The above references lead to the conclusion that the urban garden movement in Berlin falls within the spectrum of *reformative movements*. Reformative movements aim to alter specific aspects of society to enhance its overall structure, without the intention to dismantle the existing system. In these movements, actors work within the State framework to advocate for changes, often addressing laws they perceive as unjust. Such movements thrive in democratic States where freedoms of speech and assembly, along with voluntary political participation, are protected. Reformative movements can either push for progressive changes or seek to maintain or revert to previous social conditions (Imhonopi et al., 2013).

The presence of a representative from the administration signifies a shift in *institutional conditions* in response to the movement's initiatives. This collaboration illustrates the movement's evolving stance, challenging the traditional perception of being anti-institutional by demonstrating a willingness to engage constructively with authorities to further its objectives. While initiatives like Prachttomate continue to assert a distinct stance towards administrative practices and methodologies, progress is being made by the administration towards establishing a legal framework that formally protects the spaces utilized by community gardens and integrates them into Berlin's recognized green infrastructure. This symbiotic relationship, which is being developed by the movement and the administration, has significantly improved this process compared to past experiences. Strengthened channels of communication now foster optimism within the movement, contributing to the vision of a more equitable and just urban environment for community gardens.

8.2. Conflict Orientation

"*What spaces are assigned to us? The ones that nobody wants. Then, when those spaces become desirable, they are taken away from us. As soon as someone can make a profit from them, they take them away from us. This is already about larger interests. That is where the conflict arises in which we are trapped, again and again. Then, if we consider that there is an abstract stakeholder, it would be about the interests of building something, the interests of using that space. It is clear that whoever has the right to this land is not us. We are not the ones who normally win*" (Artola, 2024, p. 10).

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the conflict over the use of space is clearly the movement's main problem and, at the same time, the engine of collectivity and solidarity in the face of moments of injustice or dispossession. Berlin, like other major metropolitan cities worldwide, is experiencing diverse challenges such as population growth and lack of social housing, leading to a complex system of space usage conflicts. This system originated years ago when policymakers decided to make the city more profitable and appealing to external investors. In order to understand the systematic conflict between community gardens and the established pressure for space in Berlin, it is necessary to analyze the root causes of the conflict.

8.2.1. Background of the Conflict

"*The state of Berlin only takes responsibility for things when it suits it. (...) Berlin is an uncertain partner; it depends very much on the particular constellation of the state that has the mandate. And you always have to keep an eye on the different levels of district and state.*" (2024_1234, 2024, p. 5.)

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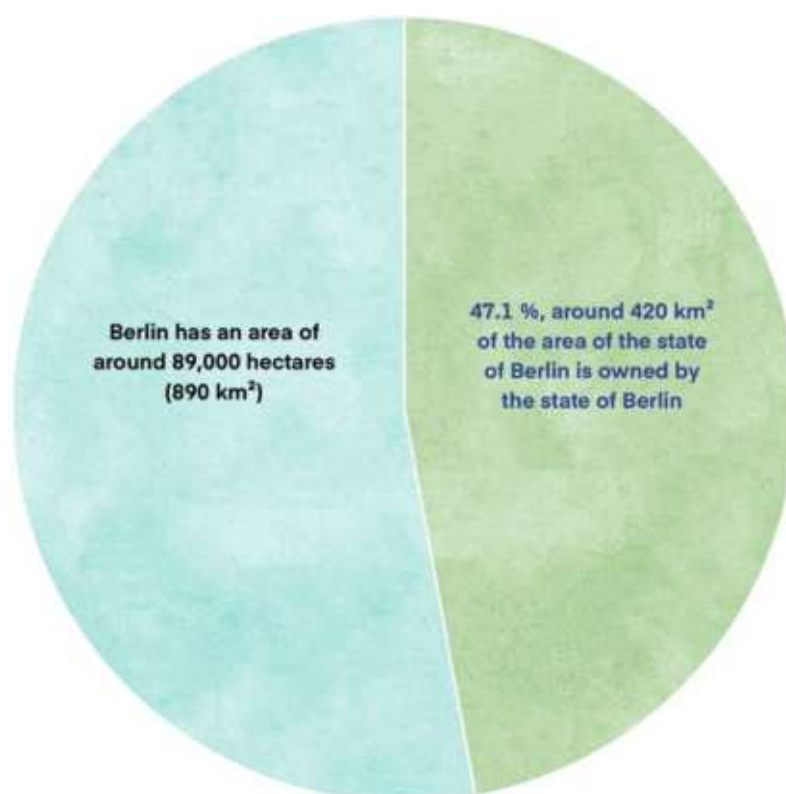
[57] Source (Mayer et al., 2022) (both graphics)

3 % of the properties
that have no use =
financial assets

64% of the property of
berlin (47% of the area
of the state of Berlin) is
water bodies and
green spaces

25% of the land area
is used for traffic

The remaining 8% are government
buildings, schools, universities,
cultural centres, among others.
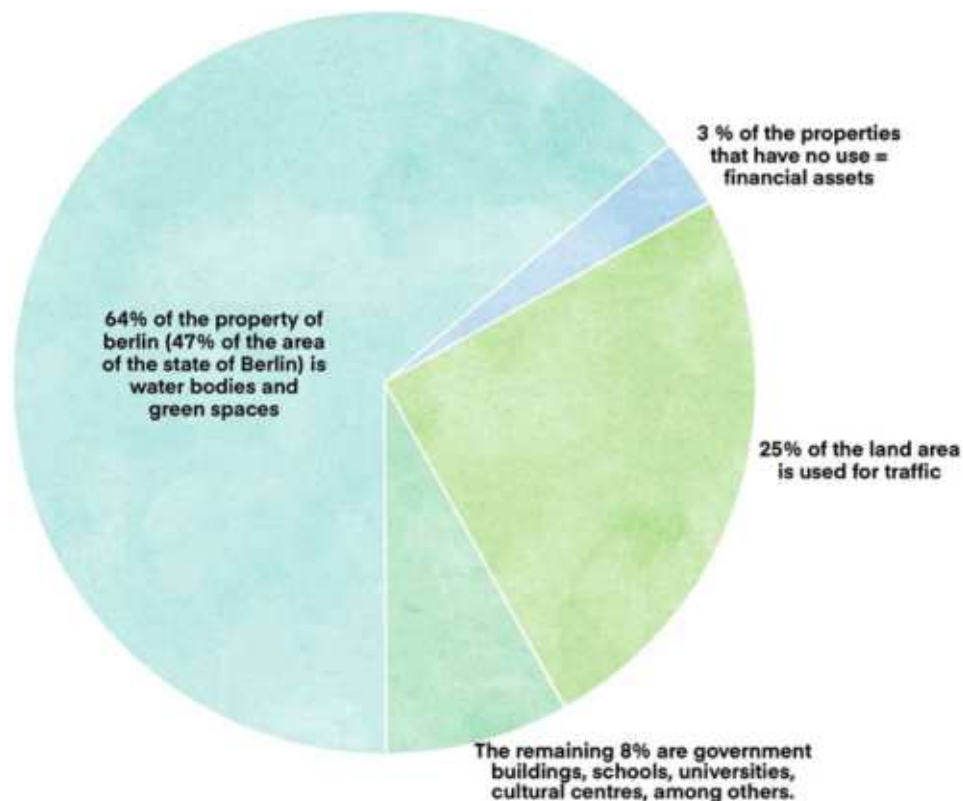
There are several reasons why more than half of Berlin's total area is in non-public sector hands. Over the past decades, Berlin has undergone significant changes in its policies regarding public properties. The reasons for the sale of city-owned land are diverse, reflecting economic, political, and social developments. A primary reason for the sale of public properties was to alleviate Berlin's financial burden. After reunification and the Berlin banking scandal, municipal debts significantly increased. Selling real estate was seen as a measure to consolidate the budget and reduce municipal debt. Between 1989 and 2019, Berlin sold approximately 21 square kilometers of urban land, equivalent to six times the size of Tempelhofer Feld. Berlin also faced the challenge that a large part of the remaining 420 km² of state-owned land is mostly undevelopable, as it comprises green, forest, and water areas. These land restrictions significantly limited the city's ability to create affordable residential and commercial space Feld (Mayer et al., 2022). Therefore, the sale of land was seen as a means to overcome these restrictions while still pursuing urban development goals. This strategic sale aimed to restore the city's financial stability. The main tool to sell the land was the Real Estate Funds [58].

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[58] This notion was already mentioned in the chapter 6.3. because the space use by the Prinzesinnengarten in 2009 was part of this strategy implemented by the State of Berlin.

The Real Estate Funds in Berlin was a crucial instrument in Berlin's real estate and property policy, particularly after German reunification. Established in 2001 as a publicly owned, private-law capital company, its primary goal was to manage, market, and sell municipal properties. The main purpose of the Real Estate Funds was to generate revenue for debt consolidation through the privatization of municipal properties, which marked the beginning of a radical neoliberal urban development for Berlin. Properties were sold to the highest bidders to maximize profits. A common practice in these transactions was *share deals*, where properties were sold as company assets to reduce taxes and expedite the process. From an economic perspective, the sales did not reduce Berlin's debt as significantly as hoped (2024_1234).

Despite the high proceeds, financial relief fell short of expectations, leaving the city with less land and without power to control the development of the city. One of the sectors that experienced the greatest consequences was the social sector. The extensive sale of municipal properties led to substantial social changes. For this reason, many low-income groups were displaced, and property and rent prices increased significantly (Mayer et al., 2022). This contributed to gentrification and restricted public control over the development of the sold properties, hindering long-term planning and social projects, as the city lost control over the use and development of these properties.

Due to these issues, Berlin's property policy was reformed in 2013 with the introduction of the "Transparent Property Policy". This new policy aimed to bring more transparency and long-term planning into the management of municipal properties. Among other things, this led to the development of a clustering procedure by the Berlin Real Estate Management GmbH (BIM), which enabled the systematic evaluation and use of properties based on various criteria. The goal was not to sell properties solely for profit but to preserve them for sustainable and community-oriented uses (2024_123).

8.2.2. The Conflict Orientation Today

"*There is currently no clear political will to actively tackle the problem. A solution can only be achieved through committed action and social engagement. The state of Berlin is politically very volatile and the situation often changes after elections or other political events. (…) The big issue is transparency in the city anyway. We have been calling for a transparent property*

register at the Real Estate Policy Round Table for years. Unfortunately, we are still a long way from achieving this" (2024_1234, p. 6- p.8)

As we have seen in the chapters on Himmelbeet 6.5. and Prachttoamte 6.6., the struggle for and loss of space within Berlin's urban system is a problem that is more present today than ever before for social projects. These two community gardens are just two examples of the constant struggle for space: other projects such as Peace of land in Prenzlauer-Berg suffered the loss of their space as well.[59] Finding space for displaced projects or new initiatives is challenging because "*the situation is very diverse. There are both public and private areas. Among the private areas, there are various forms, as well as different types of permits and contracts. Therefore, it is very complex to find a clear thread*". (Stark, 2024, p. 5). Regarding the program's framework, since one of the goals of the Gemeinschaftsgarten-Programm is to acquire new spaces for new community gardens, twelve categories[60] of space use were established based on the type of land (SenUMVK, 2023). The individuals who developed these categories were landscape architects. Naturally, they have their own perspectives on planning and access to this kind of information. Artola articulated this situation as follows: "*Ah, so, this is what it is about; What type of land is available, and how can it be utilized when the city is expanding and how to shared it?*" (Artola, 2024, p. 10). There are conflicts of interest as the value of the land rises due to speculation, but also because there is a genuine scarcity of available space, and furthermore "*the topic of green spaces and open spaces has been given very little attention at the Real Estate Policy Round Table in recent years*" (2024_1234, p. 4).

In this way, the field of tension where community gardens are located has developed amid the uncertainty of losing the spaces, lack of long-term perspectives, and a lack of recognition. In the past, the position of community gardens within the urban space was much more precarious than it is today. Observed improvements over time can be attributed exclusively to the dedication of activists, who extended their efforts beyond the confines of their individual plots. However, Artola (2024, p. 10) highlights a persisting issue of undervaluation, evidenced by the

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[59] https://www.peaceof.land/projekt/zukunft/
[60] 1. Community gardens in public parks and parks and squares. 2. Community gardens on cemetery areas 3. Community gardens in public spaces: Street space and parking lots. 4. Community gardens on roof areas. 5. Community gardens next to and in social and cultural cultural facilities. 6. Community gardens on transformation areas. 7. Community gardens in areas for children. 8. Community gardens in residential complexes. 9. Community gardens on and next to commercial buildings. 10. Community gardens on allotment sites. 11. Community gardens on agricultural land. 12. Community gardens on areas public educational institutions (SenUMVK, 2023).

ongoing relocation of these initiatives, exemplified by the case of Himmelbeet and Rosa-Rose in this paper. This recurrent displacement is perpetuated by the absence of a legal framework to support these projects and the prevailing perception that they primarily occupy transformative spaces. Artola critiques this prevailing paradigm, arguing that these gardens are not merely "spaces" but rather sites of collective creation and place-making. Karge's (2018) analysis of Himmelbeet from an urban planning perspective substantiates this view, concluding that the garden functions as a placemaking endeavor that provides multiple socio-ecological services to the city. For Kerstin Stelmacher, the predominant issue remains the spatial conflict within Berlin and its derivatives such as the uncertainty of not having secured spaces. This last point was highlighted during a Networking Gathering for community gardens organized on 02.06. 2024 (see figure 7; event 4).

In the discussion „*Welche Themen, Sorgen und Ziele verbinden uns in Gemeinschaftsgärten?*" (What issues, concerns and goals unite us in community gardens?), the primary conflict among the participants centered on the absence of a protracted temporal perspective for spatial interaction.[61] This conflict involves both the tension between the social movement and political decision-makers, as well as tangible competition for space that departs from traditional adversarial paradigms. This situation persists and is anticipated to intensify further. Nevertheless, the movement perceives this challenge as an opportunity to continue advocating for its objectives, to enhance its influence, and to consistently contribute to future-oriented urban solutions, rather than being constrained by outdated urban development practices.

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[61] Note that at the end of the discussion, the blue "Langfristige Sicherung" cart had more green dots, which means that it was the main concern of the participants after the discussion round was finished.
[62] The picture with the result of the Workshop was taken by me.

8.3. Collective Identity

Since the beginning of the movement in Berlin, one of its main characteristics and driving forces has been diversity, as the movement adheres to a philosophy that focuses on the pursuit of regenerative socio-ecological change in the city, which is enriched by the variety of activities and species that coexist within these ecosystems. Thus, the concept of collectivity and identity within community gardens transforms into a narrative that transcends the "*we*" or the "*I*", as the movement and its participants share these spaces with other species. Without these spaces, the movement is devoid of meaning, and the two cannot be separated. In a dance of intertwined existences, they engage in sympoietic storytelling, forging collective identities that encompass both human and non-human actors. This ontological entanglement underscores the co-creation of shared narratives, in which collective identity emerges not as a preordained essence but as a living assemblage that blurs the boundaries between species and categories.

I was an active participant in the workshops, network gatherings, and conferences (see Figure 7) where I interacted in different group dynamics with actors from different community gardens to reflect on their relationships with their environment and how they perceived the concept of collective identity within the movement. This process allowed me to observe and analyze the intricate ways in which the notion of identity is shaped within the movement, revealing its inherent complexity. The exchange with several community gardens reveals that the concept of *diversity* is highlighted as essential, with an emphasis on the variety of systems through which the community gardens are organized. Nevertheless, certain features are considered fundamental to a community garden, such as openness, solidarity, social connectedness, and challenging ways of thinking dominated by the capitalist system, such as unconscious consumption and loss of biodiversity (Menegoni, 2024). Community gardens are depicted as places where individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together to engage in gardening, interact, and exchange ideas. Dörte Martens stresses that the movement does not possess a singular identity but is characterized by considerable heterogeneity. According to Martens, while there is a shared sense of community identity rooted in self-efficacy and grassroots activism, diversity within the movement is extensive. This lack of a unified identity has posed challenges in negotiations with the city council and administration, which sought representatives who could embody the entire movement's interests (Martens, 2024, p. 9.).

The absence of a consolidated identity posed a significant challenge for the community garden movement towards external stakeholders. These actors, who didn't have any direct involvement in local grassroots initiatives, appropriated the concept and imagery of urban gardening to generate benefits aligned with their own interests rather than those of the original projects. This appropriation played a pivotal role in shaping the movement's identity, prompting efforts toward self-organization to counteract such external influence, extending beyond Berlin to a national level.

The Urban Gardening Manifest was conceived as a response to the growing commercialization and appropriation of community gardens by advertising and marketing interests. These gardens originally aimed to promote ecological and social values, which were increasingly being diluted by their association with "*commercial products like BMW cars and cigarettes*" (Clausen, 2024 p. 9.). The advertisements, which often featured images and narratives disconnected from the gardens' authentic missions, led to significant frustration among activists. The true goals and messages of the community gardens were no longer being accurately represented, making it necessary to actively resist this appropriation.

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[63] Propaganda of the company GASA in October 2023 in the gardens of Allmende-Kontor, the photograph was taken without the consent of the garden. Berlin, 2023. (The photo was taken by me somewhere in Berlin, 2023).

The appropriation of the notion of urban gardening led activists to underscore the intrinsic significance and purpose of these projects, which is aligned with political movements advocating for the "right to the city," the preservation of urban nature, the use of shared public spaces, and the promotion of an ecological and inclusive urban environment. A major focus of the manifesto dealt with the "*question of space, many people have found that it is difficult to start and maintain a garden at all. It was crucial to get a guaranteed space without constantly living in the uncertainty of having to leave tomorrow. This was the driving force*" (Clausen, 2024, p. 9). Thus, participants shared experiences of their difficulties in securing gardens long-term and the threats of eviction that loomed over many such spaces. The writing process was inclusive, involving a relatively small yet representative group of the community garden advocates, ensuring that a diverse array of perspectives and concerns were integrated into the final document.

The development of the manifesto was a social process that was carried out in three different stages. The first phase was developed in Tutzing 2012, where the idea of the manifesto was born. The conference on "*Do-it-yourself Cultures: Spaces and Networks of Post-Industrial Productivity*" was the trigger for activists collectively examining how to counteract the appropriation of an identity, thus consolidating the idea of creating the manifesto. The second phase of developing the manifesto occurred in 2013 during the second nationwide urban gardening camp held in Berlin. The primary objective of this camp, which saw the active participation of over 100 individuals, was to assemble a team responsible for drafting the manifesto. The final phase took place in 2014 in Göttingen, a city of symbolic importance to the movement, as it was where Germany's first intercultural community gardens took form. At the conference dedicated to the recognition of intercultural gardens in Germany, the team established in 2013 to develop the manifesto presented their preliminary findings. The finalized version of the manifesto was subsequently introduced at the third Urban Gardening Camp in Nüremberg in 2014 (*Urban Gardening Manifest*).

During my discussion with Marco Clausen, who was one of the members of the writing team, he argued that, despite the lack of formal organizational structures in the movement such as memberships or associations, the collective effort succeeded in achieving a consensus on the core contents of the manifesto. This process underscored the community gardens' commitment to self-organization and direct participation in decision-making processes. It provided a clear articulation of what the community gardens stood for and the values they embodied, enabling

them to position themselves distinctly against the backdrop of commercialization. By establishing a coherent and collective narrative, the manifesto allowed gardens to communicate their objectives and principles effectively to the public and the media. Although the manifesto did not directly influence politics *"it is important that there is an opportunity to agree on what we actually want together here, what it was all about, and to find a formulation for it and to have something that we can refer to, where we can also work on it. And that, I believe, is the important thing"* (Clausen, 2024, p. 9). Furthermore, it provided a basis for public discourse on the importance of community gardens and their role in promoting ecological and social responsibility. The manifesto contributed to preserving the identity and integrity of the community gardens, ensuring that their original ideals and goals were maintained. It brought the discussion of ecology and sustainability back to concrete, everyday experiences, rather than abstract or commercial interpretations. The collaborative and democratic nature of its creation reflected the values of the community gardens, helping to formulate a unified voice for the movement. This manifesto has thus played a crucial role in articulating and defending the purpose and value of community gardens within broader social and environmental debate between activist in the movement (*Urban Gardening Manifest*).

When reviewing Rucht's theoretical framework (Rucht, 2023b), collective identity is defined as a process that transcends political campaigns. This identity is formed through mutual recognition and the creation of connections, fostering a shared sense of purpose and commitment to a cause. These characteristics are fundamental to the movement, as this process has enabled the different actors involved to perceive an interconnectedness with various groups, despite certain structural differences. Although it is not possible for this identity to be entirely "identical" among all, it is built upon a pillar of scaffolding. In this scaffolding, solidarity and the vision of a just and inclusive city allow for the construction of stories around this structure. From the perspective (Jasper & McGarry, 2015), identity is not merely a psychological process but is also shaped by social processes framed by interactions and negotiations among different actors. Thus, a movement's identity emerges from a combination of psychological and sociological processes. This identity cannot be owned by any single group; it is constructed and possessed by the movement and its ongoing process. This was evident in the movement when creating the manifesto, where diverse opinions and perspectives were negotiated to reach a consensus within the democratic framework of a self-organized and non-institutionalized movement.
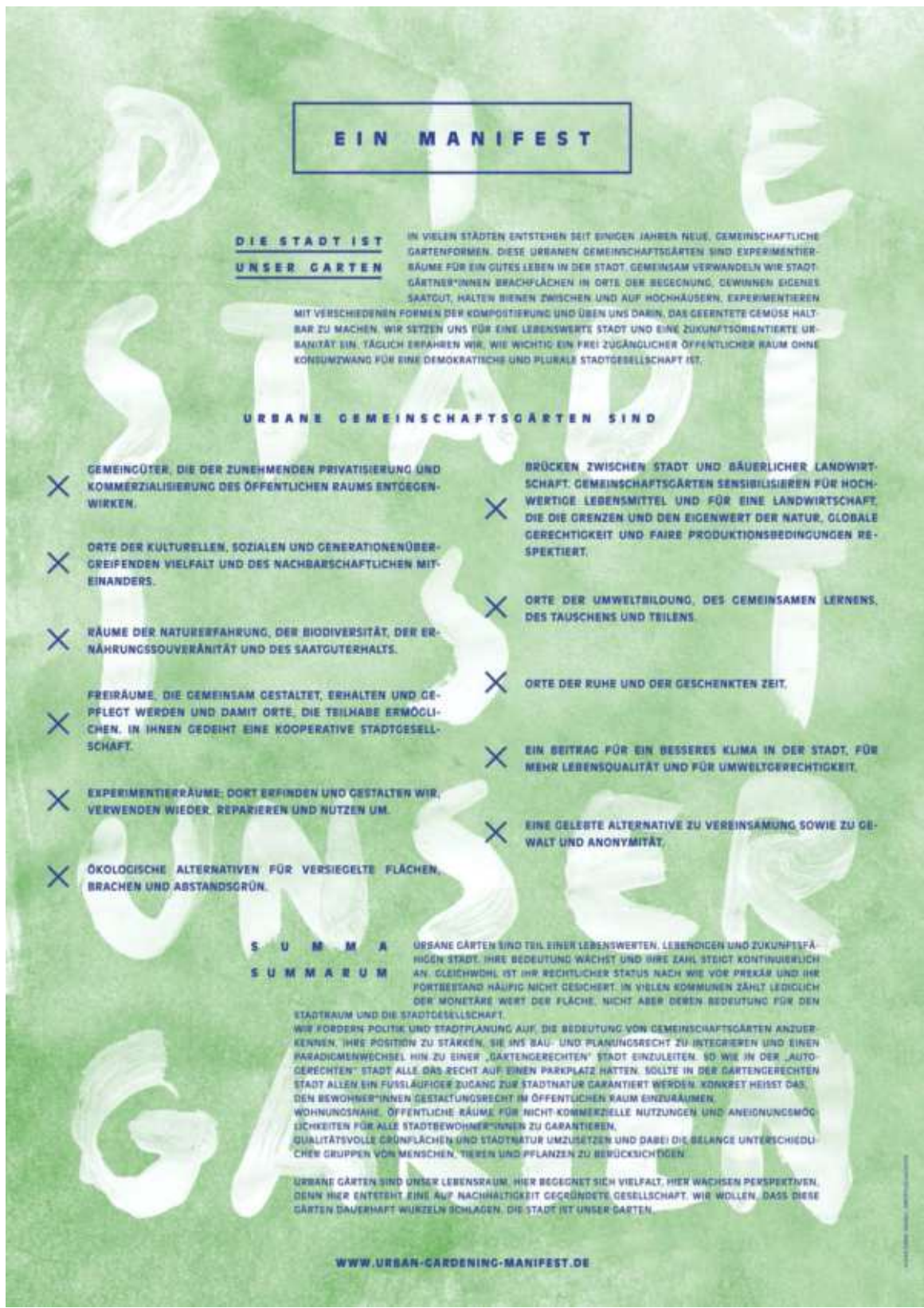
EIN MANIFEST

DIE STADT IST
UNSER GARTEN

IN VIELEN STÄDTEN ENTSTEHEN SEIT EINIGEN JAHREN NEUE, GEMEINSCHAFTLICHE GARTENFORMEN. DIESE URBANEN GEMEINSCHAFTSGÄRTEN SIND EXPERIMENTIER-RÄUME FÜR EIN GUTES LEBEN IN DER STADT. GEMEINSAM VERWANDELN WIR STADT-GÄRTNER*INNEN BRACHFLÄCHEN IN ORTE DER BEGEGNUNG, GEWINNEN EIGENES SAATGUT, HALTEN BIENEN ZWISCHEN UND AUF HOCHHÄUSERN, EXPERIMENTIEREN MIT VERSCHIEDENEN FORMEN DER KOMPOSTIERUNG UND ÜBEN UNS DARIN, DAS GEERNTETE GEMÜSE HALT-BAR ZU MACHEN. WIR SETZEN UNS FÜR EINE LEBENSWERTE STADT UND EINE ZUKUNFTSORIENTIERTE UR-BANITÄT EIN. TÄGLICH ERFAHREN WIR, WIE WICHTIG EIN FREI ZUGÄNGLICHER ÖFFENTLICHER RAUM OHNE KONSUMZWANG FÜR EINE DEMOKRATISCHE UND PLURALE STADTGESELLSCHAFT IST.

URBANE GEMEINSCHAFTSGÄRTEN SIND

✕ GEMEINGÜTER, DIE DER ZUNEHMENDEN PRIVATISIERUNG UND KOMMERZIALISIERUNG DES ÖFFENTLICHEN RAUMS ENTGEGEN-WIRKEN.

✕ ORTE DER KULTURELLEN, SOZIALEN UND GENERATIONENÜBER-GREIFENDEN VIELFALT UND DES NACHBARSCHAFTLICHEN MIT-EINANDERS.

✕ RÄUME DER NATURERFAHRUNG, DER BIODIVERSITÄT, DER ER-NÄHRUNGSSOUVERÄNITÄT UND DES SAATGUTERHALTS.

✕ FREIRÄUME, DIE GEMEINSAM GESTALTET, ERHALTEN UND GE-PFLEGT WERDEN UND DAMIT ORTE, DIE TEILHABE ERMÖGLI-CHEN, IN IHNEN GEDEIHT EINE KOOPERATIVE STADTGESELL-SCHAFT.

✕ EXPERIMENTIERRÄUME: DORT ERFINDEN UND GESTALTEN WIR, VERWENDEN WIEDER, REPARIEREN UND NUTZEN UM.

✕ ÖKOLOGISCHE ALTERNATIVEN FÜR VERSIEGELTE FLÄCHEN, BRACHEN UND ABSTANDSGRÜN.

✕ BRÜCKEN ZWISCHEN STADT UND BÄUERLICHER LANDWIRT-SCHAFT. GEMEINSCHAFTSGÄRTEN SENSIBILISIEREN FÜR HOCH-WERTIGE LEBENSMITTEL UND FÜR EINE LANDWIRTSCHAFT, DIE DIE GRENZEN UND DEN EIGENWERT DER NATUR, GLOBALE GERECHTIGKEIT UND FAIRE PRODUKTIONSBEDINGUNGEN RE-SPEKTIERT.

✕ ORTE DER UMWELTBILDUNG, DES GEMEINSAMEN LERNENS, DES TAUSCHENS UND TEILENS.

✕ ORTE DER RUHE UND DER GESCHENKTEN ZEIT.

✕ EIN BEITRAG FÜR EIN BESSERES KLIMA IN DER STADT, FÜR MEHR LEBENSQUALITÄT UND FÜR UMWELTGERECHTIGKEIT.

✕ EINE GELEBTE ALTERNATIVE ZU VEREINSAMUNG SOWIE ZU GE-WALT UND ANONYMITÄT.

SUMMA
SUMMARUM

URBANE GÄRTEN SIND TEIL EINER LEBENSWERTEN, LEBENDIGEN UND ZUKUNFTSFÄ-HIGEN STADT. IHRE BEDEUTUNG WÄCHST UND IHRE ZAHL STEIGT KONTINUIERLICH AN. GLEICHWOHL IST IHR RECHTLICHER STATUS NACH WIE VOR PREKÄR UND IHR FORTBESTAND HÄUFIG NICHT GESICHERT. IN VIELEN KOMMUNEN ZÄHLT LEDIGLICH DER MONETÄRE WERT DER FLÄCHE, NICHT ABER DEREN BEDEUTUNG FÜR DEN STADTRAUM UND DIE STADTGESELLSCHAFT.

WIR FORDERN POLITIK UND STADTPLANUNG AUF, DIE BEDEUTUNG VON GEMEINSCHAFTSGÄRTEN ANZUER-KENNEN, IHRE POSITION ZU STÄRKEN, SIE INS BAU- UND PLANUNGSRECHT ZU INTEGRIEREN UND EINEN PARADIGMENWECHSEL HIN ZU EINER „GARTENGERECHTEN" STADT EINZULEITEN. SO WIE IN DER „AUTO-GERECHTEN" STADT ALLE DAS RECHT AUF EINEN PARKPLATZ HATTEN, SOLLTE IN DER GARTENGERECHTEN STADT ALLEN EIN FUSSLÄUFIGER ZUGANG ZUR STADTNATUR GARANTIERT WERDEN. KONKRET HEISST DAS, DEN BEWOHNER*INNEN GESTALTUNGSRECHT IM ÖFFENTLICHEN RAUM EINZURÄUMEN.

WOHNUNGSNAHE, ÖFFENTLICHE RÄUME FÜR NICHT-KOMMERZIELLE NUTZUNGEN UND ANEIGNUNGSMÖG-LICHKEITEN FÜR ALLE STADTBEWOHNER*INNEN ZU GARANTIEREN.

QUALITÄTSVOLLE GRÜNFLÄCHEN UND STADTNATUR UMZUSETZEN UND DABEI DIE BELANGE UNTERSCHIEDLI-CHER GRUPPEN VON MENSCHEN, TIEREN UND PFLANZEN ZU BERÜCKSICHTIGEN.

URBANE GÄRTEN SIND UNSER LEBENSRAUM. HIER BEGEGNET SICH VIELFALT, HIER WACHSEN PERSPEKTIVEN, DENN HIER ENTSTEHT EINE AUF NACHHALTIGKEIT GEGRÜNDETE GESELLSCHAFT. WIR WOLLEN, DASS DIESE GÄRTEN DAUERHAFT WURZELN SCHLAGEN. DIE STADT IST UNSER GARTEN.

WWW.URBAN-GARDENING-MANIFEST.DE

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[64] (*Urban Gardening Manifest*) An English version of the manifesto can also be found here.

The manifesto is not an isolated social process but a *social construction* of the movement. The ideals behind delivering a manifesto represent a cognitive framework of the goals and demands of the movement, and this framework was a tool in creating an equal understanding of its beliefs and ideas. Therefore, the construction of the reality of the community garden movement by framing its issues and challenges put the movement in a stage where participants could reflect on the meaning-making and kinship of their engagement. The framing, which is presented in the Figure 64, represents the process of selecting, emphasizing, and connecting the different elements of reality of the movement that created a common narrative of collective action. The symbolic use of the phrase "Die Stadt ist unser Garten" (The city is our garden") not only constructs the social reality of the movement but also reinforces a sense of collective identity by providing common references and meanings.

This year, 2024, marks a decade since the manifesto was published, and the document is used to this day by activists to challenge the neoliberal order "*we don't let anyone tell us what community gardens are or define them for us, we do it ourselves*" (Stelmacher, 2024, p. 23). It is important to highlight that the manifesto is a static document, because it was a process that had a beginning and an end. Nevertheless, collective identity is a dynamic that is the result of the social construct that is continually reformed (Fominaya, 2018). Therefore, it is important to highlight what Dörte Martens emphasized, "*diversity is the basis of the identity of the movement*" (Martens, 2024, p. 9). This aligns with the concept that, much like in the natural world, identity is a dynamic and ever-evolving phenomenon, rather than a static and homogeneous entity, which is the case for the collective identity of the community garden movement.

9. Process Orientation and Collective Memory within the Movement

The journey undertaken has allowed us to discover the different layers behind the community gardening movement in Berlin. The orientation process is denoted as a tool for examining past causes, thereby enabling an understanding of the movement's impact on society by considering its historical development within the socio-political framework in which it is established. Rucht (2023b) argues that the finding the causalities and sequences of a movement can be done in order to clarify the emergence and impact of a movement towards transformation. As discussed in the previous chapters, Berlin's community gardening movement is distinguished by the diversity of participants involved both internally and externally. This collective effort,

involving over 200 urban gardening projects, has shaped a complex narrative encompassing both positive and negative outcomes. It is crucial to acknowledge that the five projects described in this paper do not represent the movement. Firstly, because the movement does not have a formal organization and is formed only by the informal interactions between stakeholders. Secondly, the organism of the movement lives through the different challenges and histories of all urban gardening initiatives and how each garden interacts with challenges. Each garden and the individuals within have their own way of "*staying with the trouble*" and searching for solutions within the system of Berlin. This allows the movement to have a highly complex system that embodies the difficulties of establishing a measurable analysis of whether the social movement has an impact on the development of the urban landscape of the city. Nevertheless, the five cases presented here represent milestones of the movement, as they advocate for the rights established in the Manifesto and reflect the complexity of the different actors involved in the pursuit of either gaining or defending urban spaces for the social and ecological transformation of Berlin.

In May 2024, *die anstiftung* organized the third conference in Tutzing, this time focusing on celebrating the community garden movement in Germany. The conference "*Die Stadt ist unser Garten*"[65] (the city is our garden) was framed by the history of the movement and examined as to what extent the actors within and outside the movement have promoted social and ecological changes within their respective spaces. The opening lines of the speech held by Christa Müller, director of *die anstiftung,* underscores that "*the development of community gardens is undoubtedly a success story, this garden movement has been playing a role in the debates for more than 20 years or even longer, how it docks on to discourses, how it appears in the media, and so on. In other words, there really is something to celebrate. We actually think that the garden movement is one of the most hopeful social movements to be seen at the moment.*" (Müller, 2024, p. 1). The book "*Unterwegs in die Stadt der Zukunft*" (Baier et al., 2024b) claims that the potential of urban gardens to provide answers to major social and ecological issues was recognizable from the very beginning. Today, this claim is more visible than ever, thanks to the multidimensional approaches that the movement used to address challenges and to be self-critical of its own position. The following timeline analysis helps to understand to what extent the movement in Berlin reflects what Müller claims in her speech.

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[65] https://urbane-gaerten.de/netzwerk-news/tagung-die-stadt-ist-unser-garten

Process-orientation

1996 !
Fundation of the Intercultural Garden Göttingen.
Location: Göttingen
First Intercultural Garden in Germany

1996 !
Foundation of AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft at FU berlin (by Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen), one of the basic sources for the later built network

1998 !
Foundation of the Workstation e.V.
Location: Berlin
Description: Organisation for rethinking Work concepts

2002
Publication: Wurzeln schlagen in der fremde, Christa Müller

2004 !
Foundation of the community garden rosa-rose in colaboration with the workstation e.v.
Location: kinzigtraße 11

2003
Gerda Münnich creates the network of intercultural gardens of Berlin

2003
The first community gardens are being established

2002
First network meeting intercultural gardens in Berlin

2006
Foundation of the community garden Laskerwiese with collaboration of the workstation e.v.
Location: laskerstraße, Berlin

2009 !
Exodus of rosa-rose to the new space in the jessnerstraße 3

2009
Foundatoion of Ton-Steine-Garden
Location: Bethaniendamm 26, Berlin

2009
Squad tempelhof movement, "Wir bleiben alle" intiative

2010
First garden-activist meeting with 50 gardens
Location: Stadtgut, blankenfelde, pankow
Description: Network and precarity of community gardens

2010
Opening Tempelhofer Feld

2009 !
First button-up meeting to discuss how to establish an organisational structure for community gardens.
Location: Lebus, Frankfurt oder

2009 !
Foundation of the Prinzessinnen Garten-Moritzplatz
Description: First mobile community garden in berlin

2011 !
Foundation of the Allmende Kontor by the "wilde 13" with collaboration of the Workstation e.V.

2011!
Transfering data and extension from urbanacker.net to stadtacker.net: web based source for knowledge and date about urban gardening and agriculture in berlin, by Allmende-Kontor, workstation, ZALF

2011
Foundation: Community Garden Prachttomate
Location: borndorfstraße 9-11

2011!
Publication: Urban Gardening, über die Rückkehr der Gärten in die Stadt, Christa Müller (hg.)

2012
Foundation of Himmelbeet
Location: müllerstraße 47

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[66] The timeline was developed by me using the information gathered from the interviews and literature review.

2012 !
Conference "Do-it-yourself-Kulturen. Räume und Netzwerke postindustrieller Produktivität" organised by "die anstiftung"
Location: Tutzing
Description: idea of the manifest comes to life

2012
First national level Sommer-camp
Location: Neuland, Köln

The tempelhofer Feld referendum wins with 739 124 votes.

2012 !
Netzwerkgespräche are initiated by Allmende-Kontor with the senat administration for environment and urban development
First bootom up map of berlin community gardens, "tomatoe-map", showing 99 community gardens, by Allmende-Kontor

2012 !
Himmelbeet moves to the ruheplatzstraße

2014 !
Third Sommer-camp
Location: nürenberg
Description: Manifest is presented and sign by 150 initiatives

2014
Network conference intercultural gardens
Location: Göttingen
Description: final editing of the manifest

2014 !
"Emancipation" of the Allmende Kontor from the founders, Allmende Kontor e.V is official a self-organise association

2013 !
Second national level Sommer-camp
Location: Berlin
Description: two drafts of the manifest are presented

Second Berlin Garden map is published, the "carrot map", mapping 140 gardens now, initiated by Allmende-Kontor, with support of the Senat & others

2017
Publication: umkämpftes grün, kumming et. Al. (HG).

2017 !
Foundation of "Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin"
Description: Founded by Allmende Kontor, Himmelbeet, Prachttomate and Prinzesinnengarten

2017
Network-meeting "Über das Manifest heraus"
location: Prinsesinnengarten
description: discussion of the acute space threat, Prachttomate, Himmelbeet, Prinzessinengarten

2017 !
Manifestation organised by Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin
location: Rathaus-Neukölln
description: Himmelbeet and Prachttomate are under acute threat

2019 !
Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin publishes a statement protesting against the published draft of the "Charta für das Berliner Stadtgrün" by the Senat. The Dauergartenvertrag is attached

2018
Publication: Gemeingut: ein Dauergartenvertrag für Berlin, Marco Clausen, Kerstin Meyer

2017
Request to the Berlin Parlament "Urban Gardening in der Stadt verwürzeln" done by: die Linke, die Grüne, SPD

2017 !
Prachtomatte loses half of its space

2019 !
Toni Karge starts working within the SenUMVK, being the bridge between projects and administration

Prinzesinnengarten splits into P.garten kreuzberg and K.garten kollektiv-neukölln

2020 !
The "Gemeinschaftsgarten-Programm" starts with the developing phase
Netzwerk Urbane gärten berlin criticises the coalition-agreement between CDU and SPD for not taking the Community-gardening programme into account and for questioning the referendum 100% THF

2021 !
Himmelbeet has to leave its space and is moved to the Gartenstraße

2024
Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin obtains a space in "Haus der Statistik" to promote the network between urban gardens. In collaboration with Allmende Kontor e.V

2024 !
Publication: Unterwegs in die Stadt der Zukunft, Müller, et al. (Hg).

Formation of the working group "Arbeitskreis" between administration, districts, research and activist to implement the community garden program

2023 !
The "Gemeinschaftsgarten-Programm" is resolved by the Senate

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The timeline provided in this study focuses exclusively on case studies of this paper and also four key urban projects: Ton-Steine-Gärten, Laskerwiese, and Interkulturelle Gärten Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. These projects are crucial for their contributions to fostering community cohesion and remain integral parts of Berlin's urban gardening development. However, it is essential to recognize that this timeline does not encompass the entirety of the community garden movement in Berlin, as it omits other significant initiatives. Despite this limitation, the timeline highlights pivotal events within and related to the movement, including principal meetings and conferences aimed at advancing the movement. It also illustrates interactions between the movement and external entities, such as *die anstiftung*, administrative bodies, and district offices. The analysis of the process orientation is needed in order to discern the causes and consequences of collective actions. In the case of the community gardening movement, each event identified in the timeline left a distinct mark on the historical process. During the course of my field study, 23 crucial moments[67] were identified by the interviewees.

These moments represented pillars in the development of the movement due to their impacts not only within the internal dimension of the movement but also externally. These past actions have shaped the current situation of the movement, allowing the movement today to be in a more favorable situation than in the past. The timeline was created to tell the story of the movement and to highlight its unique perspective, as described by Haraway (2016) as *situated knowledge*. It shows that the knowledge produced by the movement is always partial, specific to a location, and dependent on context. By using storytelling, the timeline underscores the importance of perspective and context, opposing the notion of objective, detached, and universal knowledge. Therefore, it highlights the specific, situated experiences of the movement and how their knowledge can challenge mainstream narratives.

Returning to Christa Müller's statement that the history of the movement is "*undoubtedly a success story*," some activists may find the definition of success as something subjective, as the cases studied in this study experienced more loss than positive results. The concept of loss encompasses not only the displacement associated with the projects and the broader implications of Berlin's privatization policies, but also the high mental and physical sacrifice of activist in order to defend these spaces: "*I believe this led many people, including myself, to eventually burn out. I couldn't handle it anymore because, after years of effort, it felt like we*

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[67] These moments are visualized in the timeline with an exclamation mark "!".

weren't making any progress at all. We were always stuck in this mode of defense and justification, with hardly any successes. And naturally, this leads to a decrease in motivation" (Rosenthal, 2024, p. 3). The lack of recognition for the engagement of civil society was significantly influenced by the urban development policy of Berlin during the financial crisis, necessitating ongoing and intensive efforts from grassroots initiatives to safeguard their interests (*Capital B - Wem gehört Berlin?*). However, these moments of frustration and failure serve as learning opportunities for future generations within the movement. The collective learning of this experiences acts as the core of collective memory, where experiences are shared in order to find a common narrative and to grow as a movement during times of pressure.

The work undertaken by *die anstiftung* in collaboration with various actors in Germany concerning the development of the community garden movement is notable. Their latest contribution, the book "Unterwegs in die Stadt der Zukunft," creates an atmosphere of reflection within the movement. The anthology establishes a collective memory of the movement, where various authors highlight past challenges and develop a framework of strategies that can influence current interactions and structures. This allows for learnings from the past to shape new structures and collective actions in pursuit of the socio-ecological change sought by community gardens, both in Berlin and nationwide. According to the theory, collective memory (Gongaware, 2010) functions as the social glue within a movement that promotes solidarity and continuity. Therefore, the next chapter will analyze how the participation of individuals in Berlin reflects the collective memory of the movement through the exchange of knowledge, where people build and rebuild their memories to strengthen the identity of the movement and its impact on Berlin's urban landscape.

10. Individuals, Informal Networks, and Participation within the Movement

The final chapter of this paper reflects on the past and present strategies within the movement that have been established to create the network of community gardens. The goal of this chapter is to recognize the different forms a network can take within a movement to organize collective action and promote the values behind the ideals of the movement.

Within the community garden movement, the function of social networks is ambivalent, as as Karge (2024, p. 5) claims, "*the engagement is actually related to the gardens, and the network work is on top of that. So, spatially speaking, there are the gardens, and then there is a sort of meta-level floating above them, which is an additional task*". This additional spatial requirement constitutes one of the primary challenges for the movement in maintaining the continuous dynamism of the network. In most urban gardens, it is necessary to deal with various challenges within the garden itself. These challenges, such as internal conflicts, vandalism, drug use by visitors, and others, clearly take precedence over external issues. Consequently, networking becomes a secondary task, as the scope of work in most gardens is limited due to their reliance on volunteer labor. On the other hand, gardens are also part of another type of network, the local network in their districts and neighborhoods, which also demand "*prioritization and time management because it can sometimes be very difficult to juggle everything. Maintaining the local network is especially important because it is fundamental. There are already many initiatives in the Soldiner Kiez, which are directly or indirect part of the project*" (Stark, 2024, p. 6).

These local networks create *social capital*[68] with other stakeholders from the neighborhood, which are also crucial in developing the garden. The benefit of this social capital is in bridging gaps between different communities and stakeholders and thereby fostering a diverse and inclusive environment (Stelmacher, 2024), which is one of the goals of the community garden movement. This integration promotes the formation of robust local social networks and platforms that facilitate the exchange of knowledge, skills, and experiences, both within the community garden context and beyond its boundaries into the surrounding neighborhood. Therefore, the local network plays a crucial role in the development of the project and in maintaining the spirit of a local grassroots initiative.

Nonetheless, "*networking outside the garden is incredibly valuable because it broadens one's horizons and provides support. It helps us realize that we are part of something larger. On our own, we can quickly lose strength, but being part of a movement makes it much easier to argue and act together*" (Hehl, 2024, p. 5). As demonstrated by the five case studies presented in this

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[68] Social capital refers to the social networks, relationships, and social interactions that enable individuals or groups to access resources, support, and opportunities within a society. It includes the norms, trust, and reciprocity that facilitate cooperation and coordination among people, enhancing their ability to work together effectively (Diani, 1997).

paper, the informal networks established by the movement are crucial for preserving these spaces. Consequently, activists such as Kerstin Stelmacher and Sonja Rosenthal perceive the network within the movement as a pillar for articulating the movement's needs and constructing a collective narrative aimed at external stakeholders, including administrative bodies and other entities imposing pressures on the movement. Since this paper aims to explore the collective memory of the movement, it is essential to consider the informal network systems that have emerged in Berlin to promote socio-ecological change within the city, as well as to understand past strategies that inform the development of new ones.

10.1. AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft, Urbanacker, Stadtacker and Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin

When discussing the historical and collective memory of the community garden movement, one must acknowledge the contributions of Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen (1949 - August 27, 2022). As a co-founder of the Allmende-Kontor and an early advocate of the community garden movement, her influence was pivotal in shaping the discourse and practices of urban agriculture in Berlin and across Germany. The initiative *AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft,* as mentioned by Dörte Martens, "*was of great significance, it consisted of numerous stakeholders interested in solidarity-based economics and urban agriculture. This group, which truly emerged from the agricultural sector, played a central role and accomplished a lo*t" (Martens, 2024, p. 1).

Elisabeth Meyer-Renschhausen co-founded the AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft at Humboldt University Berlin in 1996, co-create a platform to connect academic research with small-scale farmers. The platform aimed to bridge urban, rural, and academic sectors by developing research-based guidelines to promote the socio-environmental value of domestic gardens, part-time agricultural operations, and small-scale farming globally. To reach a broader audience, *AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft* used a mail distributor in collaboration with Workstation e.V. This network helped connect the founders of the Allmende-Kontor, such as Miren Artola. Despite the portal's closure, its legacy is significant as it transformed many dreams into reality.

Subsequently, the *AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft* transferred the website to the network www.urbanacker.net, an entity to which *AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft* itself was affiliated. The network was established in 2005 by activists, including members of the Allmende-Kontor, as a networking platform. Its purpose was to facilitate the connection and exchange of knowledge

and experiences among urban gardening projects (Artola, 2014). Although primarily focused on projects in Berlin, Urbanacker was also utilized by projects outside the city. One of the main contributions of the portal to the movement was promoting and raising awareness of the community garden movement in Berlin. At the time, the potential and benefits of urban gardening were not widely recognized. The platform played a pivotal role in raising awareness and highlighting the opportunities that urban gardening offers. Thus, Urbanacker allowed projects to present themselves, plan events, and exchange knowledge on gardening and organizational topics. Despite its success in networking projects, Urbanacker encountered various challenges. The platform required continuous maintenance and updating in order to remain relevant and not become an "internet corpse". For these reasons, it was decided to abandon Urbanacker in favor of a new, more comprehensive platform that would be nationwide and interactive (Artola, 2014).

Stadtacker is a project developed as part of the research project INNSULA (Innovative Analysis of Urban Agriculture) by the Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) in collaboration with various stakeholders in urban agriculture. It is an interactive online platform that collects knowledge, experiences, activities, and projects in the field of urban agriculture and makes them accessible to a broad audience. The platform aimed to promote information sharing, networking, and mutual support in urban agriculture. According to Artola, one of the main pillars of the platform was to encourage equal cooperation between the different stakeholders, scientific institutions and civil society actors. This facilitated the spread of innovative ideas and methods across Berlin's urban gardening community, fostering a more cohesive and informed movement. However, the platform also faces various challenges to its survival, particularly in terms of sustainability. A significant obstacle is maintaining the platform after the cessation of project funding. (Artola, 2014).

The three platforms presented above were an essential part of the interaction between urban gardening stakeholders. For this reason, their core was based on the creation of knowledge from a collaborative and equitable perspective to make urban gardens more visible on the map of Berlin. The Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin Platform, on the other hand, was born in 2017 from the need to create political pressure for the gardens studied in this article, due to the lack of security of their spaces and the precariousness in which they found themselves.

This network arose from an urgent need to enhance collective efforts in safeguarding the community gardens studied in this paper against the pressure to leave their spaces. As a grassroot initiative, it was founded by key activists in that time such as Sonja Rosenthal and the members of the Prachttomte, Prinzesinnengarten and Allmende Kontor. "*The network is a platform that takes a stance on urban political issues and is a contact point for politics and administration as a representative of the participating projects. We see ourselves as part of the movement advocating for the right to the city for all.*"(*Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin*). For Kestin Stelmacher, one of the key figures behind the Network, it is crucial that the platform highlights the status of the gardens and the conditions they are in—whether they are "secure" or facing acute threats

As it is acknowledged in the timeline represented in the previous chapter, the Network also takes critical political statements towards decisions of the administration or politicians, as was the case in 2019[69], when community gardens were reduced to the category of "Zwischennutzungen" (Temporary uses) in the "Charta für das Stadtgrün Berlin"[70]. The statement made by the Network was based on the work developed by Marco Clausen and Kersin Meyer (ZK/U, 2018). They demanded that urban and intercultural gardens should be permanently preserved as public assets, as they are vital components of Berlin's social and ecological infrastructure and are crucial for advancing a diverse, livable, carbon-neutral, and socially and ecologically just future. The statement was heard by the administration and community gardens have, as a result, been incorporated as part of the green infrastructure of Berlin.

The four mentioned platforms played a critical role in supporting and preserving community gardens, illustrating, in the case of the Netzwerk Urbane Gärten, the effectiveness of collective action and solidarity in protecting urban green spaces. In the four cases explored, the organization and maintenance of the network imposed significant demands on the individuals involved, often resulting in operational dynamics that could not be delivered. The challenges highlighted in the interviews across the four platforms mirror common issues encountered in grassroots initiatives relying on voluntary efforts, especially those dependent on the commitment of a limited number of individuals. This leads one to the conclusion that, as

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[69] (*Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin*)
[70] (*Charta für das Berliner stadtgrün*)

previously mentioned, networking and activism requires a high demand of both structural and human resources in order to ensure the continuous and sustainable maintenance of the network. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that, without the existence of these platforms, many of the projects that are now part of Berlin's green urban infrastructure would not exist today.

⁷¹

Platform	Foundation	Focus	Networking and exchange	Maintenace Challenges	Contribution to the movement	Evolution response
AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft	Grassroots initiative by academics and small-scale farmers	Urban agriculture and solidarity-based economics	Communication within the emerging movement.	Personal resources, Webseite maintenance ceased in 2011, Mailing-list aswell	Many event announcements circulated via the Kleinstlandwirtschaft-mailing list	Transitioned content to urbanacker
Urbanacker	Activist, including Allmende-Kontor members	Foster Urban gardening projects in Berlin	Connection and knowledge exchange among projects	Personal resources, required continuous updates	Raised awareness about the position of urban gardening in the city. Visibility	Transitioned content to Stadtacker
Stadtacker	Research project by ZALF and stakeholders (Allmende-Kontor)	Information Sharing in urban agriculture, know-how frame	Interactive online-platform for knowledge and expiriences	Post-funding sustainability	Source of information and more visibility within the urban sector in Berlin	Face sustainability challenges since lack of personal resources
Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin	Himmelbeet, Prachttomate, Allmende Kontor, Prinzesinnengarten	Safeguarding and giving the community gardens a political voice	Organising collective actions, Newsletter, organising meetings with activist	Volunteer reliance, operational demands	Political advocacy, protecting gardens, list of threatened gardens	Continues contributing to the movement, but with limitations because of Ressources

10.2. Informal Network System: Berliner Gartenaktivisten*innen Treffen

As discussed in the theoretical framework, the formation of informal gatherings organized by activists plays a central role in the movement's development. These informal network gatherings, unlike the previously mentioned platforms, take place in spaces where activists have the opportunity to interact and build relationships with other individuals, collectively seeking alternative ways of thinking towards the desired change. During collective events such as network meetings, informal interactions within these settings reinforce the values that enhance collective identities and solidarity. As a result, networks serve as a mechanism for maintaining the continuity of the movement, especially during periods of inactivity. In this sense, social networks function as oil, allowing the movement's gears to keep moving actively and dynamically, preventing the movement's values from rusting. In the community garden movement, these gatherings are known as "Berliner Gartenaktivisten*innen Treffen".

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⁷¹ Comparative table of the diverse platforms and their role in the movement

The first activists' meeting was held on March 27th, 2010, in Stadtgut Blankefelde, Pankow, and was primarily aimed at finding a common denominator within urban gardens. Its formation was based on the same ideological foundations of solidarity and the pursuit of collectivism to this day. From the outset, the movement maintained a critical stance towards the clear political development observed from 2009. Consequently, the main focus of the second meeting was on the discussion regarding "*how community gardening in Berlin can be more than just a trend but be recognized and supported as a confident and participatory form of urban design, and on what actions we can take together to achieve this*" (See figure 71).
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Einladung zum 1. Berliner GartenaktivistInnen-Treffen

Berlin, 13.2.2010

Liebe StadtgärtnerInnen,

in und um Berlin gibt es eine verblüffende Zahl und Vielfalt von Stadtgärten: interkulturelle Gärten, Schulgärten, Gemeinschaftsgärten, Kleingärten, Guerilla Gärten, Dachgärten oder - die wohl kleinsten Gärten in der Stadt – bepflanzte Baumscheiben. Ob zur Nahrungsmittelproduktion, als politisches Engagement oder zur Erholung, ob gemeinschaftlich oder allein, ob mit oder ohne Zaun – eines vereint sie alle: Die Freude am Gärtnern und das mitten in der Stadt.

Gärtnern in der Stadt ist kein Widerspruch! Im Gegenteil: Stadtgärten stellen und beantworten zentrale Fragen der urbanen Gesellschaft, z. B. zu sozialer, kultureller und biologischer Vielfalt, partizipativer Stadtgestaltung, Stadtökologie, Konsum, Bildung, Bewegung, Ernähung und Gesundheit, Solidarität, Integration und bürgerschaftlichem Engagement

So sehen und schätzen wir, die AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft als Gruppe des urabanacker-Netzwerkes, die Vielfalt und Bedeutung von Gärten in der Stadt. Und diese Vielfalt wollen wir zeigen, und wir möchten wissen, welche gemeinsame Nenner es gibt und ob ein größeres Netzwerk zur Förderung und für mehr öffentliche Wahrnehmung städtischen Gärtnerns für Berlin und Brandenburg entstehen kann.

Zum Kennenlernen, Diskutieren und Visionieren laden wir Euch daher herzlich zum 1. Berliner GartenaktivistInnen-Treffen am 27. März 2010 ins Stadtgut Blankenfelde ein.

Wir freuen uns sehr auf Euer Kommen!

AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft

E-Mail: kiezgarten@yahoo.de   Telefon (AG Kleinstlandwirtschaft): 26 122 87   www.urbanacker.net

EINLADUNG
2. Berliner GartenaktivistInnentreffen

Liebe StadtgärtnerInnen!
Nach unserer Ankündigung im letzten Jahr laden wir Euch nun nochmals ganz herzlich und mit allen nötigen Informationen ein zum

**2. Berliner GartenaktivistInnentreffen
am 23. und 24. März 2012,
im KuBiZ, Berlin-Weißensee.**

Gemeinsam mit Euch wollen wir zurückblicken auf zwei Jahre, die für das Gärtnern in der Stadt äußerst fruchtbar waren: neue Gärten sind entstanden, viele spannende Kooperationen und interessante Publikationen. Nicht zu verkennen, wie groß das Interesse der Öffentlichkeit, der Forschung und der Medien am Thema geworden ist. Das ist eine gute Entwicklung, finden wir. Aber wir wollen Sie mit Euch auch kritisch beleuchten und diskutieren, was es noch braucht, damit das gemeinschaftliche Gärtnern in Berlin nicht nur Modethema ist, sondern als selbstbewusste und partizipative Stadtgestaltung anerkannt und unterstützt wird und was wir gemeinsam dafür tun können.

Anbei erhaltet Ihr organisatorische Informationen und das Programm. Letzteres ist bewusst recht offen gehalten ist, denn gerade die Arbeit in den Kleingruppen wollen wir weitestgehend gemeinsam mit Euch anhand Eurer Anliegen gestalten.

Wir freuen uns sehr auf Euer Kommen!
Viele Grüße von
Julia, Kerstin, Malte und Severin für das Allmende-Kontor

Berlin, 26.2.2012

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72 First official meeting of the "Gartenaktivisten*innen Treffen" in Stadtgut Pankow. The announcement was distributed by the portal Urbanacker.net. Next to it, two years later, the second meeting of the activists, this time KuBIZ Garten, two years later and run by the consolidated Allmende-Kontor and initially also functioning as a network center for community gardens. Pictures courtesy of Kerstin Stelmacher. it is important to recognize that these meetings are undertaken thanks to previous informal meetings by the activists. In the first case by urbanacker stakeholders and in the second case by Allmende-Kontor.

In the field study, it was observed that the frequency and intensity of these meetings have declined in the present day. This decline is attributed to the community garden movement reaching a more sustainable and established phase compared to previous years, thanks to the groundwork and achievements of dedicated past activists. Reflecting on discussions from 2010, the key concern was to ensure that the movement is not just a trend, but that the city and other stakeholders recognize it for what it truly is: a diversified source of both environmental and social services for the city and part of the city's green infrastructure.

Today, this goal is close to being achieved, as the city of Berlin has begun to support urban gardening projects, demonstrating its interest in collaboration and in creating a more accessible communication bridge. As has been shown throughout this journey (see timeline), different kinds of collective actions and meetings have been carried out in order to achieve a more visible position within the city and to find that "common denominator" that was wanted in the first "Berliner Gartenaktivisten*innen Treffen".

The Network of Community Gardens in Berlin remains active and has evolved in various dimensions. Since 2019, the Berlin Administration has taken on a proactive role in supporting this movement. Various events have been organized to facilitate connections between different community gardens, such as the participatory development of the Gemeinschaftsgarten-Programm. A notable difference in the current approach is the top-down organizational strategy. However, according to Toni Karge, the administration's role is seen as instrumental for the movement, providing essential resources and facilities. Karge emphasizes that "*one of the administration's responsibilities is to maintain an engaged civil society*." (Karge, 2024, p. 7). Nevertheless, currently the network of community gardens is still active and organizing bottom-up activities.

This is reflected in the actions of the Himmelbeet project "Gärten sichern -Netzwerkaustausch" (see figure 7, event 2) where a participatory approach with community gardens is being developed in order to create a framework based on lived experiences regarding the issue of spaces in Berlin. The project is the continuation of "Garten leistungen" (Kliem, L & Kuhlmann, M., 2022). In this context, a two-day network exchange was organized in May, where different community gardens gathered to discuss the legal status of their gardens and exchange experiences. The framework was based on understanding the histories of various gardens and identifying similarities in the issues related to space utilization. Once again, the diversity of

each project and the differences in the problems were highlighted, underscoring the complexity of the subject. Past events and experiences were analyzed to develop strategies and create a unified narrative addressing the issue of the lack of a legal framework for the dispossession of spaces. During the network exchange, a collective memory exercise was conducted to maintain responsiveness to evolving social contexts while upholding the movement's foundational principles. The Himmelbeet garden facilitated the session by narrating the process behind the loss of their previous location on Ruheplatzstraße. The strategies were outlined to secure a new space on Gartenstraße/Grenzstraße. This framework serves as example how the movement aligns with Jackson's (2021) theory, which posits that social movements utilize the preservation of strategies, successes, and failures as a mechanism for learning and strategy development. In this workshop, a collective memory exercise was conducted to indirectly maintain responsiveness to evolving social contexts while upholding the movement's foundational principles. Furthermore, five questions regarding the different uses of the spaces where discussed:

1. What are the advantages of green spaces and urban gardens in public areas?
2. What are the concerns of the administration?
3. Through which channels can political pressure be exerted?
4. Mobilization, participation, and networking: which organizations and initiatives can be potential partners?
5. What are the arguments against community gardens in the city?

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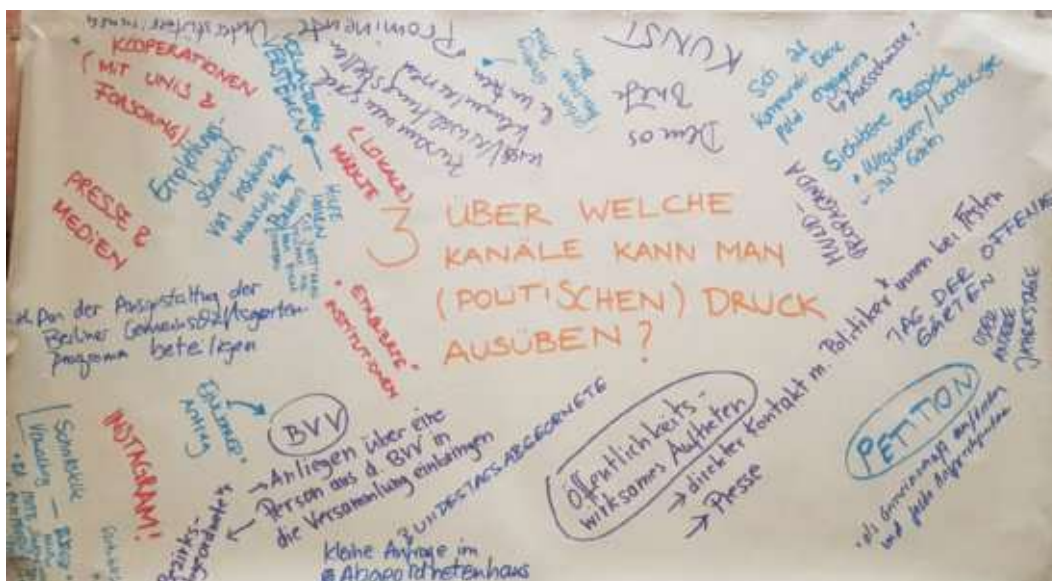
[73] The photographs taken by the Himmelbeet team were included in the event's official documentation.
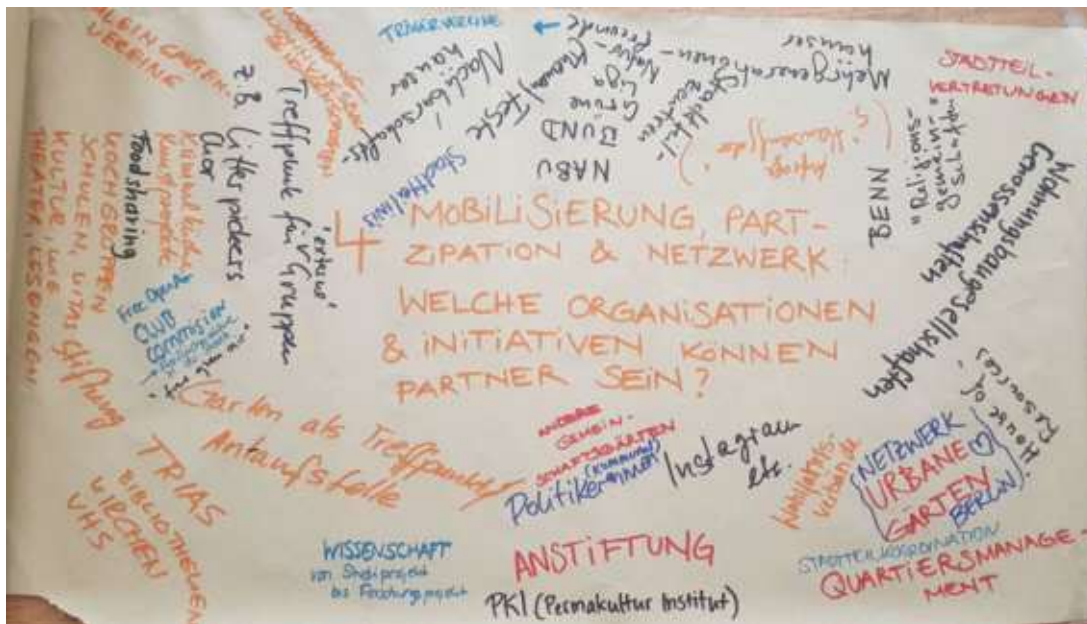
The discussions in groups three and four emphasized the use of collective memory for ongoing strategy development. This approach enabled participants to develop an awareness of the history behind each project, aiding in decision-making and strategy formulation based on past errors and know-how.

The ongoing process of discussion created a framework for participants to reflect on the different challenges that urban gardens face, not only in terms of space, but also the key structural challenges in terms of communication, networking and forms of organization. This led to the formulation of the following results, as seen in Figure 73. Despite the various challenges and obstacles in creating a seamless infrastructure within a community garden, the solutions proposed after the participatory activity indicate that addressing these issues requires diverse approaches while *staying with the trouble.* These solutions highlight the complexity of engaging with these problems using a holistic approach, emphasizing the need to embrace and navigate the difficulties comprehensively.

| Challenges	Solutions
Unequal destribution of responsibility	Lerning from others, using methods, small tasks, achieve goals, visible results, good moderation, rotation
Dealing with "difficult behaviour"	Courageously testing boundaries, code of conduct & awareness concept, what happens if the common rules are disregarded? Clarifying the process, structures for exclusion: where are our boundaries?
Lack of communication, no access to information, appropriate form and channels of communication	Addressing the problem, practicing eye level communication, access to communication tools & information, consistently sharing information, share sources of information, telegram rules and boundaries
Ineffective communication	Rules for meetings, Role allocation; timekeeper, visionkeeper, moderator. Prepare meetings well, make meetings as pleasant as possible, try new formats: "working together", regular appointment
Power conflicts, racism, sexism, classism...	Leave each other alone & let each other be, habituation and understanding —> Agreement and acceptance, patience and understanding, be calm; avoid raising your voice, code of conduct: set rules, reflect privileges —> invite others to do the same, set limits vs. Getting rid of political pressure, good communication—> in case of conflicts: look for external moderation
No structures for decision-making	Trying out and establishing decision-making methods, e.g. sociocracy 3.0: systemic consensus-building consensus or majority decision-making, decision-making principle: special consideration1. competence, experience2. care in everyday life3. formal responsibility
lack of (specialist) knowledge	Use the network and ask for help
Time pressure &lack of time	Time and project plan: calculate backwards, ask for an extension
No reflection on crisis, resistance to change	
Collective vision, Finding self-confidence in dealing with authorities, Working group: regular meetings for organizational structure and role allocation!	

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[74] The guidelines were the result of the two-day network workshop and were reviewed by the members of the himmelbeet community garden.

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The informal event organized by Himmelbeet highlighted the lack of security that community gardens have, as well as the insecurities felt by individuals—whether activists or gardeners—regarding certain issues, such as communication with the administration and official districts. This leads to the conclusion that, despite having more solid structures both within and outside the movement, there is still a need for stronger frameworks concerning communication between gardens and public authorities. Toni Karge also embraces this challenge, as he sees the complexity of the problem and acknowledges the necessity of having professional structures between administration, district offices (mainly more personal resources),and civil society in order to address the issues holistically (Karge, 2024, p. 2).

One of the most significant challenges in building a network within the movement is the lack of human resources. For this reason, on June 2nd, 2024, during the aforementioned Network Gathering (see figure 7, event 4), this issue was addressed in collaboration with various community gardens. Specifically, a discussion table focused on the topic: "*What can you do for the network, and what can the network do for you?"*

<div align="center">75</div>

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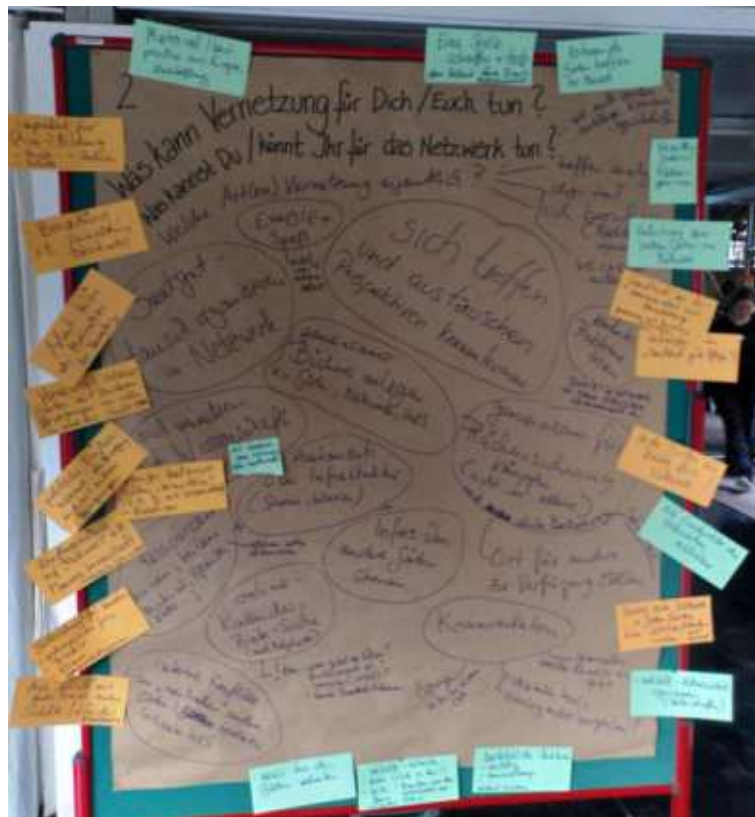
[75] The picture with the result of the Network gathering was taken by me.
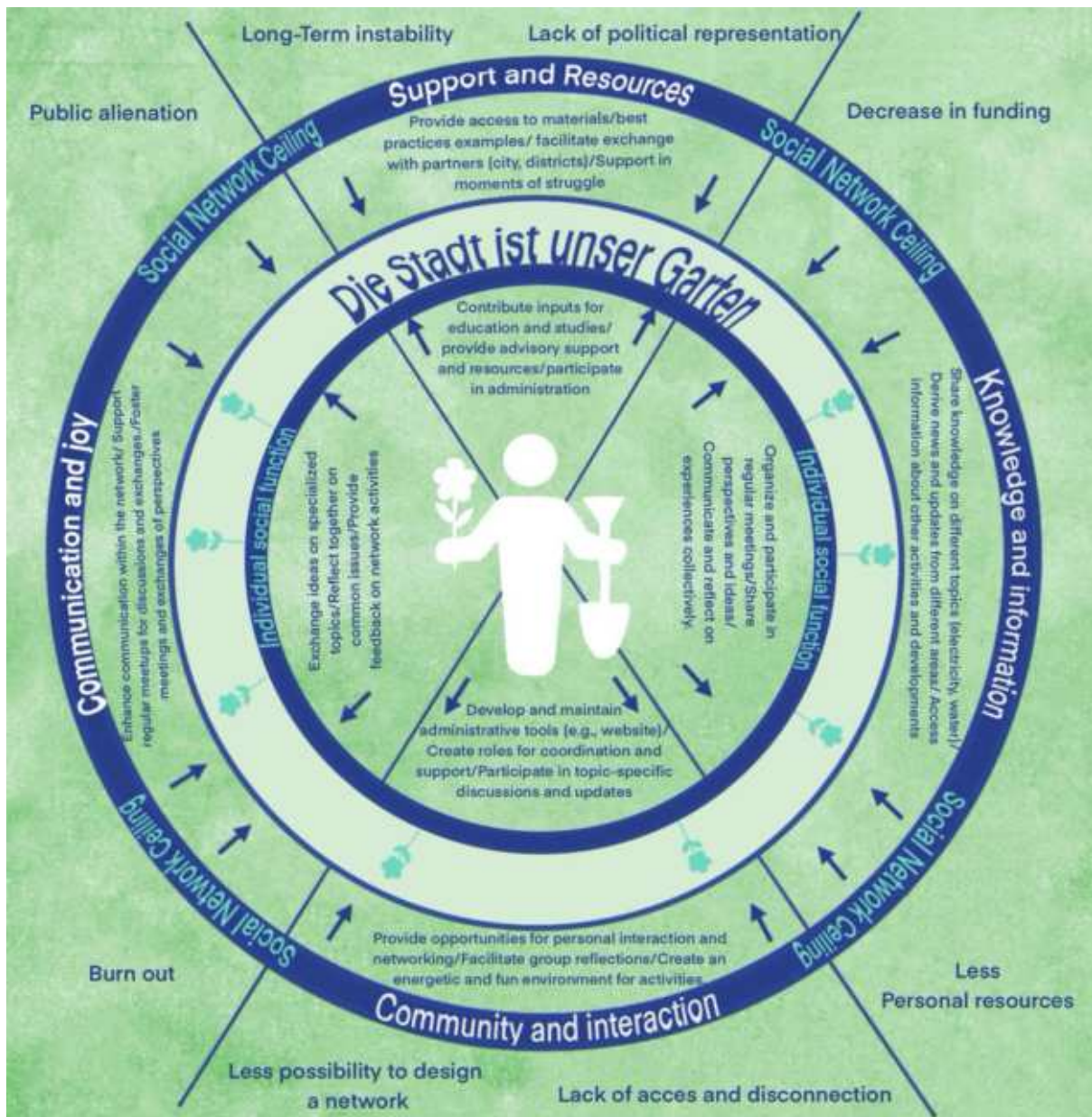
Figure 75 analyzes the ideas and concepts discussed in a participatory manner regarding social networks within the movement. The questions created for discussion, "*What can you do for the network, and what can the network do for you?*", were developed based on the experiences of activists who are part of the Netzwerk Urbane Gärten Berlin and the ones who have been part within the movement since its beginning's. There was a particular focus on the issue of work overload, especially when only a few individuals are responsible for keeping the network active. Therefore, the question "*What can you do for the network?*" was emphasized,

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[76] Figure 75: The Doughnut Economy model served as a base model to design this analysis (Raworth, 2017).

encouraging participants to reflect on the limits of their involvement and what they can contribute to the network. As demonstrated through this work, several urban gardens in Berlin would not have persisted, at least in its axes of self-organization and a bottom-up approach, without the network and the movement. This aspect underscores the importance of collective memory exercises, where past activities and experiences are reflected upon to motivate individuals to join the network. The analysis of activism behind social networks in the community garden movement concludes that, without active participation in the network, the sustainability of bottom-up urban gardens is unlikely. Similarly, activists need a network to thrive within Berlin's urban space.

For this reason, in figure 75 four categories have been created within this framework: *support and resources; knowledge and information; community and interaction; communication and joy*. The four categories fall within the social network ceiling of the movement, which defines the support the network can provide. On the other hand, the individual social function represents the contributions activists and gardeners can make to foster the movement. When the social network ceiling is exceeded or not maintained, it leads to problems and conflicts highlighted by activists in discussions, such as burnout or lack of political representation of the movement in public.

In the Doughnut Economy model the ceiling is represented as the planetary boundaries that must not exceeded to avoid environmental degradation. In both scenarios, ceilings act as boundaries ensuring sustainability, whether ecological or social. Thus, balance is critical in engaging with the network and in what the network provides to the movement. This balance ensures that both ecological and social systems of the movement remain within safe and just limits and find the path of the movement towards the collective narrative developed through years of activism: "Die Stadt ist unser Garten" (The city is our garden).

11. Conclusion

Berlin is a city that has been constantly reshaped by its complex history. It is a city that, in the past, was sold to the highest bidder, leaving behind a fragmented urban landscape. Within this fragmentation, urban gardens began to sprout, creating fissures through which a new vision of the city emerged. The gardens emerged with a clear statement, reclaiming urban space and claiming a voice in shaping the city as a space for living and movement. Urban community gardens play a central role in the current dynamics of green infrastructure in Berlin. They coexist in a complex relationship with multiple stakeholders, challenging, inspiring and disrupting them in different ways.

Community gardens uniquely bring together a diverse mix of people from various backgrounds, along with a wide variety of plants and animals. Light, temperature, smell, time, experience, colors, wooden huts, containers, equipment, observing, enjoying, conflicts, fighting, celebrating, gardening. Gardening, whether by yourself or collectively, meticulously for yield or more casually, each approach is valid and filled with its own rich histories. Over time, these urban spaces in Berlin have evolved beyond a trend. Urban gardens are an expression of citizens' desires for a green, open, and accessible place that they can shape as they wish. In the daily hustle and bustle of a city like Berlin, people temporarily become the curators of these gardens, turning each garden into an organic sculpture and the space into a museum without walls, open to all. Urban gardens provide a palpable sense of generosity and openness. They serve as bastions of health preservation, promoting resilience and facilitating equilibrium for participants. Engaging in such spaces allows individuals to experience firsthand the vitality of life, to embrace its dynamism, and to acknowledge its vulnerability.

In a fractured city like Berlin, the imperfect and broken gets a second chance in these places, where people experiment with materials beyond their market-designated use. Creating new ways of re-creating meanings and giving new opportunities to what was once thought lost. Experimenting, creating, up-cycling. As hubs of repair, these spaces do not distance themselves from the disturbance surrounding them; rather, they immerse themselves in it with dedication. In their earthy essence, they cultivate an awareness of the intricate web of life, thus engendering a planetary sensibility that challenges the prevailing anthropocentrism. As places of diversity, they recognize multiplicity and welcome it. As memory hubs, they facilitate the reconfiguration and rewriting of dominant narratives through the collective actions within the spaces,

redefining one's own place within these narratives. For this reason, the collective memory is reflected in the ideas sown by activists. These ideas have become more than just abstract concepts; they are now visible and tangible. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the branches of the trees in these spaces symbolize the hope for change, while their roots represent the memories that sustain this hope.

Urban gardens, as social movements, facilitate the reconstruction of a holistic vision of *"making-kin"* between individuals and inhabitants, fostering cooperation and collective creation. This narrative phenomenon unravels the complexities of autopoiesis, making way for a system of sympoiesis that seeks to transform the city into an equitable and just space for those who inhabit it in the pursuit of the "right to the city". In this way, the movement transcends the merely social, revealing and navigating the intricate web of interactions and correlations between participants both internal and external to the movement.

The social movement of urban gardening in Berlin reveals how the internal dimensions are in constant contact with the *trouble,* making the participants embrace difficulties and seek for solutions towards challenging times rather than fall into despair. In a metropolis like Berlin, global issues manifest themselves in the urban environment and are easily perceived. Urban gardens arise from dissatisfaction with global stressors and aim to develop specific solutions on a small scale, while still considering larger perspectives. Engaging in practical activities, fostering productivity, social capital, reciprocity, and a sense of abundance, these gardens generate social and ecological surpluses.

This trajectory of embracing challenges and fostering collaboration diverges from individualistic and hierarchical modes of thinking. Instead, the movement emphasizes interconnectedness and mutual dependence as essential for navigating conflicts successfully. Urban gardens, in this case, act as more than just recreational spaces and are hubs of ecological and social activism. They represent grassroot responses to urban challenges, advocating for food sovereignty, environmental justice, and sustainable living practices. This advocacy extends to broader societal issues, including inclusivity and empowerment for marginalized groups. They evolve the notion of a social movement into social movement heterotopias, where the essence of the urban gardens represents tangible spaces where social movements enact their visions for alternative ways of living and interacting. They provide physical manifestations of resistance, community solidarity, and sustainable practices within urban environments.

The evolving recognition of urban gardening within political agendas is rising. These spaces are focal points for diverse research on urban climate mitigation, prompting many municipalities to reassess their approach. The notion of being a *reformative and collaborative movement* in Berlin is gaining momentum as the community garden movement aligns itself with authorities to achieve a space within the urban sector and continue to provide ecological and social services. This shift is elevating them from the periphery to pivotal roles in local sustainability initiatives. However, this contrasts sharply with top-down approaches that favor expert-led projects, highlighting the ongoing tension between grassroots self-management and politically driven agendas. Nevertheless, in the process of this research, it has been demonstrated that the Berlin administration is open to communicating with local initiatives in order to achieve a third possibility of project management, i.e., collaboration. The community garden program and the current implementation strategy is clear evidence of this new approach (a co-creation approach), which facilitates dialogue and collaboration across different levels (research, politics, senate, district office and activist) in a dynamic and open-ended manner.

The journey to the movement's current position began with the activists' realization that individual projects alone could not survive in a shrinking city like Berlin. For this reason, the community garden movement in Berlin is part of a dense network that has taken different forms over time, from online portals to informal network meetings, in order to find a common understanding of the idealism behind the narrative of urban gardening. These forms of communication vehemently demand the transformation of prevailing conditions, such as the precariousness and lack of security of urban spaces. The demand for transformation is directly related to the conflict and is born as an engine towards the claim of the collective identity of "*the city is our garden*".

The history of social movements is intertwined with the production of social memory. This can be understood as how social movements are remembered and how they use this memory as a tool for reclaiming a just transformation within the conflict in which they are located. Alternatively, it can be referred to as how the practice of memory helps to forge collective identities. Through activism and the establishment of network systems, urban gardeners have the opportunity to share experiences, reflect on challenges and triumphs together, and collectively shape social memory and create an ecology of knowledge. Social memory, in this case, ensures that the future of the city does not consume us, but rather embraces us and supports the people and actions that led to a more inclusive and just place in the city. The

dispute for spaces in the city of the future is omnipresent and is contested in a field where usually the dominant discourse prevails. This discourse is evolving, incorporating new narratives about the creation of smart cities, data collection, control, and the datification of urban spaces, including urban gardens. Therefore, transforming cities to prioritize citizens' well-being and achieve socio-ecological balance requires a robust social movement. The community garden movement plays a crucial role in reclaiming collective memory and establishing equilibrium in the ongoing discourse.

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Declaration of Originality

I herewith declare that I wrote this master's thesis on my own and did not use any unnamed sources or aid. Thus, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made by correct citation. This includes any thoughts taken over directly or indirectly from printed books and articles as well as all kinds of online material. It also includes my own translations from sources in a different language. The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for examination. Additionally, I declare that the presented version of this thesis is identical with the provided digital version.

_____   _____
        Location, Date   Juan Esteban Coka Arcos

Interview Questions

Questions	Interviewees
Collective Identity	
- Do you believe that the community garden movement in Berlin has a collective identity?	G, M/C, D, M
-At the beginning, when you first got to know each other, did you already have a collective identity as a group, or did you develop this identity over time?	K, D, M
-This year marks the tenth anniversary of the publication of the Urban Gardening Manifesto. Could you tell me a little about it and why this initiative came about?	MA, K
Social Networks within the Movement	
-The Allmende Kontor was originally founded with the idea of being a networking center for community gardens in Berlin. Why was there a need for this at that time?	M, D, K
-What do you think caused it to fail? Why didn't the Allmende-Kontor work anymore as a networking center?	M, D, K
-You have a lot of experience and have seen many different community gardens nationwide. How do networks between community gardens work?	G
-To what extent do you think it is important for projects and people active in community gardens to network? Is there anything special that these projects gain from networking?	G, K
-Do you think there was more exchange earlier, i.e., networking with other gardens than today, and if so, why? To what extent?	K, D
-What role does social capital play within the movement?	K
-What was the goal of Stadtacker and Urbanacker?	F, M
- What can you tell me about the AG Kleinslanwirtischaft?	F, M
-What can you tell me about the Netzwerk Urbane Gärten?	F, G, MA, S, K
-What challenges and obstacles did you observe or more precisely observe in building a network?	F, G, MA, S, K
Relationship with External Actors	
-How do you see the relationship between community gardens and the administration? Do you think there is still a power dynamic between the two?	D, K, T, M, M/C, MA
-Now that the community gardens have a representative in the administration, is that one of the reasons why the projects are less politically active than they used to be?	D, T, K, MA, S
-How does the administration deal with the fact that some projects see the administration as an ideological opponent?	T
-Many projects in Berlin want to have a button-up structure or be self-organized. How do you see the role of the administration as an institution today?	T

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[77] Abbreviation of interviewees: Dörte Martens: D; Frauke Hehl, F; Gudrun Walesch, G; Kerstin Stelmacher, K; Meike Stark & Caterina Menegoni, M/C; Marco Clausen, MA; 2024_1234; Miren Artola, M; Sonja Rosenthal, S; Toni Karge, T

- To what extent is there a structure between districts, administration, and community gardens?	T
-What is die anstiftung? How did it come about?	G,
- How do you see the role of the actors in the movement? Do you think there are key actors within the movement?	M, G, D
Colective Action within the Movement	
-Why did you get involved in a community garden?	K, D, M, M/C, MA, S
-What role does it play as a demonstration? Would you say that using public space is a form of demonstration?	D, M
-In what way do you think community gardens are doing political work or even resistance?	K, MA, M, D
-Why did you stop being active in the movement?	MA, S
-Do you think it was more necessary in the past to have this political and somewhat more radical approach?	D, M, K
To what extent is collective action one of the most important features for keeping a community garden running?	K, D, M, M/C
-Why do you think there are certain people who try to network and do political work outside of the garden?	F, M/C, MA, S
Conflict Orientation and Challenges within the Movement	
-Do you think that community gardens in Berlin face a common challenge or, so to speak, a common enemy in Berlin as an institution?	M, K
-What are the challenges of buidling a social network within the the community gardens?	T,K, S, M, M/C
-What do you see as the biggest challenges and obstacles in implementing and developing the project?	M/C
-Do you think that gardening has become a luxury hobby for a certain group of people?	M/C, S
-Do you think that the community gardens receive enough recognition or appreciation from the city for the work they do?	MA, S
-How do you see the current situation of urban development and the area of competition in Berlin? Do you think that urban projects have more opportunities than before?	2024_1234
According to the study Urban Options Areas, more than half of Berlin's total area is in private ownership. Are there options for projects that are located on private land to free themselves from privatization?	2024_1234
-How can these projects deal with the threat of losing their space? Is there any possible support from the perspective of urban development?	2024_1234
-How do you see the responsibility of the city of Berlin for urban projects, especially those that benefit the community, in the light of previous decisions to sell land that have led to the displacement or termination of projects? Is there now the political will to take on this responsibility?	2024_1234
-One of the program's goals is to promote new community gardens in Berlin. How do you see this goal in the face of the competition from the large areas of land that exist in Berlin?	2024_1234

Collective Memory and Process Orientation within the Movement	
-What role do stories and experiences play in the community garden movement in your opinion? And do you think the movement has a kind of collective memory?	F, K
- Can you name important events that have influenced the community garden movement?What do you think has changed the most in the las years?	D, K, S
-Do you think that projects are safer today than they used to be?	D
-How have community gardens influenced politics, society and urban development in Berlin?	K, M/C, MA, M, S
Case Studies: Allmende-Kontor, Prinzessinnengarten, Rosa-Rose, Himmelbeet	
How did you become part of the Allmende-Kontor community garden?/ How did the project started?	D, K, M
How was the process of finding a common goal among the members of the garden? (Allmende-Kontor)	D, K, M
What can you tell me about the Himmelbeet community garden?	M/C, S
Can you tell me about the background of the garden and the problem when you had to move (Himmelbeet)?	M/C, S
the Himmelbeet is currently dealing with the issue of securing land. Why do you need to do this, and how are you dealing with the issue?	M/C
What can you tell me about the Rosa Rose community garden?	F
What can you tell me about the Prinzessinengarten, how was it built and what were the goals of the project?	MA
Did the garden and members got support from the movement or external actors when the garden went through difficult times? If yes, to what extent? (Himmelbeet, Rosa-Rose-Prinzesinnengarten)	M/C, MA, S