Practicing Space via Urban Community Gardening

A Case Study from Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv, Berlin, Germany

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Abstract

The way we produce, eat and comprehend food ebbs and flows with time, space and present environmental, social and cultural contexts.
Currently, globalization, which creates a seemingly tightly knit world, has formed a mainstream food system consisting of industrial food production which distances the process from the earth to the table. Thus, the urban population has been shaped to be separated from the space and practices that are involved in food; its creation, management, consumption, waste and general placing in society.
The above-stated scene conveys the desire of some members of the urban population to take back space in the ever-growing cemented urbanscape by growing their own food and learning skills and practices while forming a community that connects food, space and power. This trend is called urban community gardening.
The aim of this research study is to produce and take a glimpse of the practices of urban collective gardening and its shaping of physical and social space as tactical instruments in forming, aiding in existence of and elongating the space of alternative food system forms of being.
To form an explorative approach, an ethnographic case study on Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv in Berlin, Germany is used. The aim of the case study is to provide a real-life exploration of an example of how urban collective gardening and its practices may exist and shape social space.
Henri Lefebvre's triad of practices and Michel de Certeau's comprehension of a practice is adopted as the theoretical framework to guide the definition of practices and view how they may be forms of tactical strategy in alternative food system resistance used by the city's inhabitants against the mainstream bureaucratic forms of power.
The findings of the research illustrate the significance of a variety of practices in each step of forming, existing and elongating Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv's space in Berlin showing the importance of flexibility in small ways of resisting the mainstream forms of present food production.
To conclude, the study provides an exploration of what it looks like to practice space and the results of habitual everyday actions in forming something meaningful, not only in terms of the subject of crops, but in terms of community, physical place-making and methods of resisting.

Keywords: Mainstream and alternative food systems, Urban Collective Gardening, Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv (PGK)

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Abbreviation

DIY-Do it yourself
EVFBS -Evangelischen Friedhofsverband Berlin
PGK-Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv

1. Introduction

Dirt, worms, faraway tractor and animal sounds, calmness, smell of fresh air with a linger of cut grass, people with calloused hands and dirty boots moving. These are some probable descriptions of a farm, the location that is stereotypically associated with the flourishment of grown food. However, would it come as a surprise to you the reader, that the research location of which I write is of an entirely different nature; one surrounded by the hustle and bustle of urban populates, cement, tall buildings, smells of vehicle pollution, and sounds of phone calls? The location of the urban - a city.

As the Earth's population increases, it is connectively becoming smaller through globalized production systems. Thus, currently, the global and urban food systems mostly run on the current mainstream food system of a high-input and efficient prioritizing system of food production, consumption, and waste. Its common characteristics are defined via uniformity, abundance, and a multitude of natural, monetary, and human capital. It is set on the premise of maximization as illustrated by food production being responsible for over a third of greenhouse emissions (Müller 2024). The current calculations estimate that by 2050, 51% of the world will not be able to live from their national resources (Hönle et al. 2017). This issue leads to many wanting to prove these calculations wrong - thus planting in concrete cityscapes where most of the population resides.

Urban agriculture has existed since the dawn of cities with allotment gardens emerging in England at the end of the 18th century due to land enclosure and financial instability (Granzow & Shields 2019). Although urban agriculture existed previously, the end of 18th century marks cities to be recognized as having the possibility to not only be ‘urban’ but as domains of the stereotypically rural space food growing capabilities (Doernberg et al. 2019). There was a previous city as a growing space of amnesia due to the increase of focus and prioritization on industrialized ways of life, housing and care of the urban workforce (Doernberg et al. 2019). Nevertheless, globalized food systems brought affordability and availability in terms of variety and quantity of food, but it came mostly from the globalized connectivity and financial possibility of countries’ regimes rather than from the urban locality (McMichael 2013).

Within the grey backgrounds of the city, a slow but continuous trend of urban gardening has progressed. Green growing spaces have been surging and prevailing. Thus, the question emerges regarding how urban gardening, as a facet of alternative food systems, can exist, grow and co-exist within the mainstream food system.

Seeking to answer a small part of this much grander question, the Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv's (PGK) collective urban garden in Berlin, Germany, serves as my case study to unearth the roots of the mainstream food system.

1.1 The Aim is the Adventure

At the end of a shoveled ditch, the aim is the expedition of exploring urban gardening practices and their role in the network relationship to space. This line of questioning includes how the processes employed by gardening participants:

- create and sustain a collective urban garden
- form effects on the urban landscape
- contribute to the garden's participants

and in turn how space shapes the practices and their actors.

Thus, the aim is to add to a discussion and comprehension of the urban gardening narrative's existence and how throughout its different phases it persists to prevail. To explore such a multi-layered topic, a real-life case study is adopted to ground the research in one of the possible ways that community gardening and space coincide. A real-life case study extends the possibility to examine up close how urban gardening practices, their actors, the city, city's actors and infrastructure fit in the co-existence puzzle. It acts as a tool – a set of binoculars focusing one's vision, providing more details and possibilities to see the multi-sidedness of an action and a space and how it fits in within the bigger picture of a community, its society, the lived infrastructure and their connection.

1.2 Purpose and the Research Question

To obtain a small slice of how the non-mainstream way of food production may prevail in a food system not made for it to survive, the research question focuses on the case study of Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv and asks:

What role do the daily practices of Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv's collective urban gardening play in actively establishing, continuing existence, changing, and elongating social space?

2. Background

To set a clear-cut understanding of the research topic and a clear vision of the case study's background, the main themes will be discussed below.

2.1 Ambiguous organisms explained

2.1.1 A Food System – Simple to Define?

Attempting to define a food system would lead to writing an entire thesis. Although the term is relatively new, it was used to describe very definite diets in the 1930s and only in the 1970s it began to describe complex socio-environmental food arrangements or structures (Brock 2023). Thus, for us to have a common understanding, the following writing will use Samara Brock's description of Valerie Olson's analysis of solar systems - an ode to the understanding of food systems (Brock 2023). Such a view considers food systems as holistic structured assemblages of physical and philosophical actors, natural and social resources and their processes (Brock 2023). It is integral to note Samara Brock's comment that not only are these components and their relationship of significance "… but how these systems are understood to be bounded in space and time" (Brock 803: 2023). In this regard, the food structures and their inner actors, resources and processes are grounded and realized within various contexts and systemizations.

2.1.2 There is Always an Alternative

The present mainstream food systems exist within the broader globalized consumption context where consumers and production actors such as land, farmers, and their processes have become disconnected (Doernberg et al. 2016). This type of system, Hönle et al. (2017) named as a delocalized food system where the regional space loses significance. It occurs due to the logistical pathways being connected to transnational bounds leading to temporal, spatial, seasonal, cultural, and religious importance of discombobulation (Hönle et al. 2017).

This begs the question of what could we do differently; what are the alternatives to the mainstream? Thus, welcoming the alternative food system approach emerging out of the need to establish another perspective on how food is not only processed but viewed too. There are no one-size-fits in terms of alternative food systems. However, broadly speaking there are forms of food systems that as Faltmann and Stotten (2025: 2317) state, oppose the "…dominant large-scale, industrialized, delocalized food systems…". They tend to be characterized through the prioritization

of sustainable present and future practices and ethos. The economic center is created through a more intimate producer-consumer relationship. It is formed via localized, small-scale food production centering around environmental and social well-being (Faltmann & Stotten 2025). All of these aspects co-exist in a symbiosis with profitability rather than economic profitability over other aspects as presently seen in the mainstream food system (Faltmann & Stotten 2025).

There are various ways to go about alternative food system features, based on the regional, economic, social, and environmental context. The present paper aims to broadly comprehend the ways in which alternative food systems may live, make space for themselves and hold power via existence through practices and space within the current food system scope. Therefore, it is important to remember - with the variety of contexts there is a myriad of styles to accomplish an aspect of an alternative food system. Thus, the paper will investigate only one contextualized way of holding and forming existence. However, it does not signify one method as the only way it may function. It is rather a way to view how it may be done and what it may look like rather than categorical instruction of how an aspect of an alternative food system must behave.

2.2 What does Food have to do with a City?

2.2.1 Collective Urban Farming

Urban farming is a term describing the process of growing, processing, handling and recycling food and sometimes other resources within the urban environment (Chen et al. 2024). The topic has been emerging over the years as a growing urban population brings with it environmental issues such as a decrease in resources, making food security within cities a widespread problem. (Padilla et al., 2018). Urban farming benefits various sectors of a city. It may benefit the economical realm in promoting a circular economy which renders more logistically efficient cities through aiding local-economy growth in and the addition of a bio-based economy (Padilla et al. 2018). It is worth noting that local production does not always signify local consumption, exemplified by the Berlin-Brandenburg agricultural production where the majority of the produce grown is exported even with regional and organic consumer interest being higher than being provided to (Müller 2024). It has its advantages to the social aspects of urban life not only in terms of food security and foods' accessibility but furthermore as an approach to create greener, healthier more community-enforcing cities (Padilla et al. 2018). Last but very much not least, urban farming boosts the city's sustainability by promoting green spaces thus bettering air quality, reducing surface runoff and city pollution as well as increasing biodiversity (Padilla et al. 2018). It manages land in sustainability focused efficiency

which is integral to the ever-decreasing amount of urban land (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026).

Alas, urban farming is a broad term which includes various types of farming in the urban world. Collective urban farming/gardening boils down to the act of farming done in an urban plot by a group of people (Chen et al. 2024). Its purpose does not end in growing produce to provide a decorative assemblage in space, or as leisure of place-marking, or to obtain profitability but furthermore as a community-forming tool in the anonymity-ridden urbanscape (Chen et al. 2024). It may be done as a private group of people or as an open group collecting local interested people to garden, obtain and share knowledge and create some sort of greenness in the urban surroundings (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026)

2.3 Context, context, context, let's put food on the German Map

The description below of Berlin's food system will focus on its main features and specific characteristics, making it Berlin rather than another urban city.

2.3.1 Germany Briefly

Germany and its 83.5 million people are located centrally in the Northwest of the European continent (Federal Statistical Office 2026). Yearly, it produces 88 million tons of food to feed its population and exports an extra 44 million tons worldwide (Bundesvereiningung der Deutschen Ernährungs Industrie 2026). However, do not let those high numbers fool you. Germany heavily relies on its virtual land, land outside of Germany, to feed the German population with a total of 28% of virtual land use in 2010 with national land adoption decreasing by 4.8% (Hönle et al. 2017). It illustrates a delocalization issue and a further dependency on the food system growing in actors, processes and resources to feed Germany's and Berlin's population (Hönle et al. 2017).

2.3.2 Berlin

Berlin currently houses approximately 3.5 million inhabitants (World Population Review 2026). At the current rate Berlin's population is predicted to reach 3.8 million by 2050 (Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung 2026). On average, a Berliner consumes 100 kg of food yearly (Müller 2024). It does not account for the 500,000 daily visitors that the city's food system caters to (Foodclic 2024). 22% of Germany's low-income populates, often coming from various ethnic-background and or economically poor communities, suffer from the unavailability of wholesome daily meal consumption (Foodclic 2024). It mirrors food poverty issues not

only within Berlin's food security footing but within the European context too (Foodclic 2024). Thus, due to multi-purpose needs a more cohesive and connective food system is required to form a sustainable and efficient way to feed Berlin's daily life's participants.

2.3.3 Berlin's Nutrition Strategy

To move from what Hönle et al. (2017) branded as an 'international competitiveness' approach instead of a focus on regional self-sufficiency and diversification of production, Berlin has signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. It is a pact signed by various cities, used as a tool for building sustainable urban policy measures and goals (MUFPP 2025). Berlin signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact in April 2018 and its city strategy, the *Nutrition Strategy (Ernährungsstrategie*)**,** was instilled after its signing (Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie GmbH n.d.). It consists of eight areas of action with a focus on population health via the increase of organic, regional, seasonal, healthy, and fair-trade food exemplified by 50% of food supplied by school canteens providing healthier, less sugary and fully organic meals in 2021 (Müller 2024).

Another target is the increase in regional food production via the promotion and networking of farmers and suppliers. Some of the instrument actions include Food Campus Berlin, built to house a sustainable food industry hub (Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie GmbH n.d.). Furthermore, a popular supermarket chain, REWE, is working with a Berlin startup ECF Farmsystems to include many regional products (Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie GmbH n.d.). Berlin is part of the German Organic city network and as of 2019 works with the Association for the Promotion of Organic Farming Berlin-Brandenburg (Fördergemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau Berlin-Brandenburg n.d.) to promote and foster organic agriculture and work with the municipality to ensure the increase of organic food served in schools (Fördergemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau Berlin-Brandenburg n.d.). Organic and regional products are greatly valuable to the public as 70% of Berlin population purchase organic products at least occasionally (Doernberg et al. 2016). In 2023 Berlin-Brandeburg consumers spending on organic products doubled in one year making Berlin population spending on organic produce an 11.8% share of organic product spending of the German population (Fördergemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. n.d.). As of 2024 Berlin obtains 143 bio food shops where most organic food is sold and bought (Fördergemeinschaft Ökologischer Landbau Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. n.d.). Additionally, 250 weekly food markets were present in 2016 (Doernberg et al. 2016).

Lastly, a spatially significant food-infrastructure move is the city's desire to form neighborhood hubs within each of Berlin's neighborhoods with currently 29 hubs present (Haus der Nachbarschafft n.d.). The hubs – urban gardens, buildings, marketplaces are meant to be spaces "…for storing, processing and distributing food"

and as meeting places for workshops and community meeting and food connection formation. The action area highlights Berlin's green infrastructure with plenty of urban gardening spaces, school gardens, and gardening schools" (Senatsverwaltung für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz 2024). This area of action specifically addresses the importance of urban gardens in their function as community spaces and as part of Berlin's marketing as an urban but green location.

The presence of the nutrition strategy allows for a clear-cut present and future Berlin's food system vision and aids in formal regulation and policy formation possibilities (Doernberg et al. 2019). However, arguably Berlin's infrastructural polycentrism seeps through its' strategy too, as aspects working to create an environmentally, socially and economically are not connected rather compartmentalized. The departments involved in urban food projects vary, with the majority in environmental, planning, education, health, and consumer protection (Doernberg et al., 2019). As Doernberg et al. (2019) state, Berlin has many steering instruments, mostly in spreading information, and regional economic instruments. The instruments are productive however they are rather reactive processes to issues rather than proactive and opportunistic methods to change the city's food infrastructure and create a co-existence between the urban and the agricultural.

Berlin Food Council has vocalized its' problems with the slow processes and the measurable goals and instruments being not determined enough to contribute to offsetting the previously induced problems and ones being established presently (Müller 2024)The strategy areas of action come across very health and education cantered. Although those areas are notable, they lack a cross-sectional policy use in which various aspects of a city and political departments work to achieve the points of action (Doernberg et al. 2019). There is a visible lack of urban space planning departments as parts of the action area projects illustrating that the problem is seen as being connected to health and the society are not seen as physical spatial mapping of the city (Doernberg et al. 2019).

3. Theoretical Background

A conceptualization of what space is and how it is established via PGK's practices calls for a spatial framework. This research has been guided by Henri Lefebvre's constitution of space in its definition and the ways to view its establishment, change and movement via PGK. With the addition of Michel de Certeau's thought of what makes an everyday practice and its' role in quietly going against the grain of mainstream systems.

3.1 Social Production of Space

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) framework is adopted by a plethora of writers and researchers. Reading the interpretations, it is clear that everyone has their own opinions regarding Lefebvre's ideas. Therefore, the following part will draw from my interpretation that this research is guided by.

To whittle it down, Henri Lefbvre (1991) argues for space to be an open system, an active three element social arrangement of physical and touchable aspects, mental aspects of knowledge and conceptualization and human attachment. He constitutes these elements into the Spatial Triad as seen in *Figure 1* and explained below:

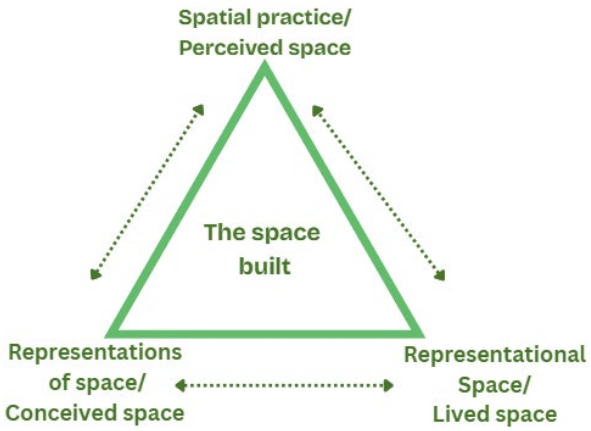


Figure 1: Spatial Triad illustrating elemental connection.

- ***Spatial Practice/ Perceived Space:*** the routines and actions adopted by us to interact and synchronically build our environment, congruently shaping our daily lives (Granzow & Shields 2019).
- ***Representations of Space/ Conceived Space:*** the physical and political infrastructure construction, thus the control of space. Lefebvre notes it as "[…] conceptualized space, the space of scientists, urbanists, technocratic

subdividers and social engineers […] all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (Lefebvre 1991:39). It is the way in which the abstract is shaped into a controlled reality.

- ***Representational/ Lived Spaces:*** The human emotional, symbolic and identity-formed attachment to a space (Kanosvamhira 2025). Lefebvre (1991:39) describes it as "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of "inhabitants" and "users"".

These three space forms coexist, arrange, and modify each other. Doreen Massey's (2005) three elemental points on space concisely summarize the main concepts of Lefebvre's framework as she conceptualizes:

i. Space is a product of interrelations curated via interactions (Massey 2005).
ii. Space is multiplicity, as the three elements co-exist and co-process together a variety of truths and presences exist (Massey 2005).
iii. Space is never completed, thus forever under construction (Massey 2005).

To conclude, as we humans partake in the process of space production, we form relational co-existence of elements that create social space, a space that is molded by us in turn molding us. Thus, social space is not merely a physical touchable place but a place that has been formed through human social attachments through symbolisms, practical uses and identity formations.

Finally, Lefebvre's (1991) thought is based on Marxist philosophy; he believes that space is never neutral; there is always power and control in each space. His spatial formulation is strongly based on the aspects of power in correlation to capitalism, and it forms an infrastructure feeding capitalistic tendencies rather than the needs of inhabitants (Lefebvre 1991). He describes space activated by power via two concepts of space creation via domination versus appropriation. Domination of space is fixed to a space built through technology and need for power (Lefebvre 1991). Hence, it is efficient and formed through a top-down approach (Lefebvre 1991). Juxtaposed, appropriated space is one that is used naturally and embraced through a bottom-up approach, shaped by the users of the space and their realistic spatial needs (Lefebvre 1991). Community urban gardening is a primal example of appropriation as people take on the urban built environment prioritized for profit-making and repurpose it for welcoming nature and community - something not capitalistically engrained and or efficient in the capitalistic way of thinking.

3.2 The Mighty Daily Practice

Power exists and is experienced in a myriad of contextualized layers. Coming with the territory, comprehending, explaining and fighting power is viewed via a variety of philosophical and political lenses (Granzow & Shields 2019).

During mid to late 1900's French social theorists were investigating and scrutinizing power, with Michel Foucault using Jeremy Bentham's panopticon idea to draw power as a concept that is ever consuming via socially built systems to control and overcome the public (Safaei 2022). He explored the ways in which humankind becomes disciplined, singular, and general.

However, Michel de Certeau (1988) with inspiration from Henri Lefebvre's exploration of space creation examined the relationships of the intricate and singular everyday practices of a city's habitants whom he called practitioners. Thus, he wrote T*he Practice of Everyday Life*. He explored how small everyday actions may be tactically adopted to think about mainstream power and ways in which they may be applied consciously or subconsciously to revoke mainstream ways of existing (de Certeau 1988).

De Certeau (1988) divides two sets of practice categorization, which connect to the perception of and the function of space.

Firstly, there is *strategy*:

- A method of calculating, structuring, and institutionalizing space (de Certeau 1988). It could be categorized under Lefebvre's (1991) distinction of space domination. Main actors include the bureaucrats, politicians and urban planners. In short, it is the placement of regulations, norms and deliberate stability, via urban planning and/or policy agenda setting (de Certeau 1988).

Secondly, there is a *tactic*:

- The everyday practices done by the everyday people (practitioners) which resist strategy (de Certeau 1988). These are the ways in which we contest and or play with norms set upon us, through everyday action (de Certeau 1988). In turn the everyday and space become the spheres in which resistance may be practiced (de Certeau 1988).

To exemplify and explore these categorizations, he examines the practice of walking and compares it to language. As the practitioners walk, they write and re-write the structured city and space surrounded by the practitioner (de Certeau 1988). Via tactics the practitioner distorts the social and physical boundaries set by strategies – the set plot is reconfigured via what seems like a miniscule action (de Certeau 1988).

He argues that power resides over a panoptic view high up, thus instigating a general view of the city which provides practitioners and their everyday small practices an invisibility cloak(de Certeau 1988). Therefore, the small actions become individualized practices with which practitioners may obtain small conscious and or unconscious power forms within a city(de Certeau 1988). Therefore, a city is an active member of the practitioner's story rather than an unmovable monolithic controllable object dictated by power structures.

With power comes the choice of what should not exist, and de Certeau (1988) argues it is done through urban planning and bureaucracy. Nonetheless the marginalized still exists, they are just hidden behind power structures. However, he argues that the marginalized have a skill of re-emerging via active everyday practices (de

Certeau 1988). Thus, a theoretical framework of perceiving the claimed as insignificant practices of alternative ways of forming and existing within the alternative food system may aid in answering how alternative food systems manifest and exist within the mainstream food system.

4. Methodology

An experience of vast paths. That is the aim of exploration. A way to make the aim more walkable is by focusing on a case study to peek into an example of how urban gardening may function through a contextualized space. Therefore, to adventure into the nitty-gritty mosaic-like relationship of daily action-practices and spatial place-making of urban collective gardening a dialogically-mutualistic mixed-method approach was used within the case study (Jones-Hooker & Tyndall 2023).

4.1.1 An Ethnographic Touch

Ethnography is an anthropological method aiming to make the strange familiar and familiar strange via the exploration of people, their culture and the way they live and why (Braae & Steiner 2018). Thus, a short-term three-month focused ethnographic case study approach was utilized to fit within the time requirements and provide a more rigid research boundary. The word ethnography stems from the Greek word *ethnos* meaning people or culture and *grapho* describing the word writing, essentializing it as written people-culture (Young & Tuthill 2017). Therefore, its' aim is to share information on people based on the researcher's interactions with the studied and within their contextualized life through experiencing it with them (Young & Tuthill 2017).

I applied to PGK as an intern volunteer in the months of March to June.

I did not know how crucial joining in March, the preparatory month for the Garden, was to understand the Garden activities and actor roles. In March all of the preparatory activities took place to set up the Garden for success not only in terms of crop success, but for the café, Garden ground excursions and various summer and fall events taking place in PGK.

I want to very clearly state that my intention of ethnographic work is as a paradigm of exploration and description rather than explanation. Explanation implies hierarchy and power – as a voice of PGK's reality (Harwati 2019). But one reality does not exist. Thus, becoming a participant and member of PGK myself, I describe my reality and possible parts of PGK's and its' participants' reality of the ever-changing garden in the spring season of 2026. Hence, PGK's participant-informants become collaborators as they shape how we perceive the fieldwork as well as they form the fieldwork (Chiseri-Strater 1996).

At the start of my internship and field study, I accidentally stumbled upon structural observation, meaning in the first two weeks although I took field notes, read about PGK, talked to participants, worked and joined as many different assignments as possible I did not go through active research per say (Jones-Hooker & Tyndall 2023). It allowed me to comprehend the practices, their existence reasoning, the

language used and interpret the happenings throughout the next two months to systemize and place these interpretations into categories of data and analysis (Geertz 1973).

Throughout the case study I took field notes, drawings and photos of PGK (see *Figure 2* for a visualization of my fieldnote companion). I kept a small notebook in which I jotted down to do lists of the day, German words that were knew to me as I entered the space as a B1/B2 German speaker. My lack of native language knowledge aided in asking more questions, leading to participants explaining clearly the process and tools allowing for a more detailed communicative manner.

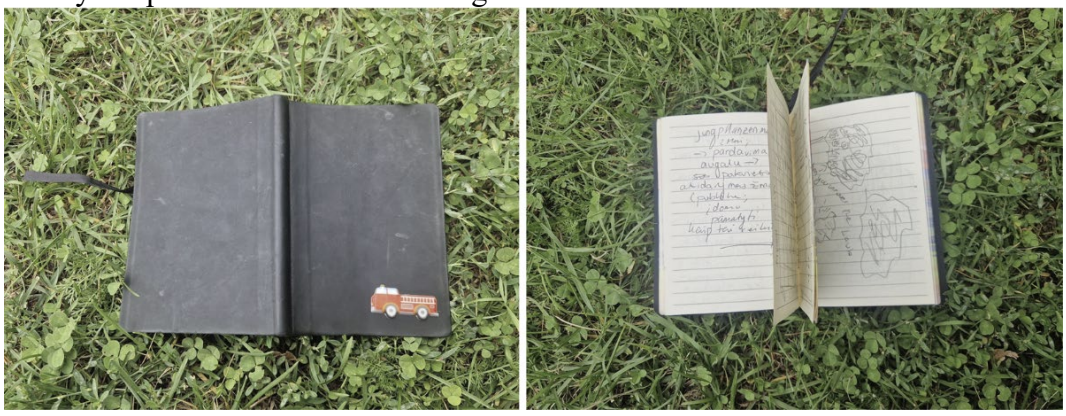


Figure 2:My ethnographic fieldnote companion – the notebook.

My notes were mostly taken on my metro ride home, but during breaks I casually started drawing the specific plots of land we were working on and the tools connected to those plots. This occurred naturally as although I took photos, quite frankly taking photos felt unnatural to do as usually our hands were dirty with soil or covered in a gardening glove holding a shovel or two. As one moved along the plot many times, the phone was tucked away somewhere. Hence, drawing at a brake felt more realistic. It also led to PGK members' awareness that although I am a volunteer, I am also a researcher aiding in transparency.

4.1.2 How do you do? Shall we have an Interview?

Paul Lichetrman (Lichterman 2017) points out that “interpretive reflexivity tracks missed connections, lost opportunities to act differently by attributing meanings differently, as well as the ethnographer’s little reality tests that get it right”. This statement hit a chord with me as I was brainstorming on who to interview and how to explain why I interviewed them or not. Simply put, my eight interviews were done with the people I worked with and with whom I built a personal rapport. It made the most sense to interview the people I was naturally spending the most amount of time via the daily practices of the garden tasks. That is to say - I definitely missed out on interviews, information and practices of many people who work in PGK specifically the members who work more in the office with organizational and bureaucratic work. I interviewed three volunteers, three employees, and two open Garden Day members.

A semi-structured interview stye was chosen; I would have a couple main questions based on the person's position in the garden. My usual starter questions were:

- Why and how did you pick PGK to work in?
- What is PGK?
- How does your routine in the garden look like?
- What are the most common practices, and which are the most important/interesting to you?

These simple questions allowed me to start the conversation and as the conversation flowed, I made up questions and comments to allow a natural conversation to flow (De Fina 2019). This felt like a natural choice as already talking was the background practice of all actions on the Garden. Therefore, all the interviews took place during working time. Thus, there were no interviews without interceptions, topic changes and other participants who were always aware of an interview taking place chiming in. Although, most participants allowed to be named in the research, as not all wanted to be, I chose for all to be anonymized, insuring for all to be comfortable to express their thoughts.

4.2 Mapping into Research

One of the first articles I read on Prinzessinnengarten was Gabriel Wulffs research in collaboration with Natalia Hosie (Wulff 2014). It is research on PGK in its' previous location via cartography (Wulff 2014). In their maps, PGK was not only geographically situated, but the use of space and inter-relationships of PGK were mapped too (Wulff 2014). They inspired me to create my own pseudo maps and to reconsider what a map truly is.

Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge (2007) view mapping as a process, not a representation. Such a view links to the research topic in itself. Via such a paradigm cartography becomes ontogenetic, linking mapping to a process of creation and as an active organism (Kitchin & Dodge 2007). Thus, maps are not stagnant; they are actively curated and formed and are reactivated every time someone reads and uses them. They are created by a cartographer who has an aim of what they want to represent (Kitchin & Dodge 2007). Thus, maps in their essence are that present moment illustrated descriptions with specific aims and reasons for why and how something is shown. Depending on the sort of map, there are different degrees of subjectivity. However, one could argue that all maps have a certain subjective power of what is represented and how (Kitchin & Dodge 2007).

Drawing on this idea, I decided to let my mappings be unconstructed and natural. Most of them do not look like the mainstream idea of a map. Hence, I would call them sketch-maps. They are rather sketches of the place. They are sketches of the actions taken at specific areas of PGK. The practices in question were mapped via drawing tools to represent the practices. The maps were accompanied by my notes

of that space, practices, and various stories of the day. This way, these sketch-maps became the central part of my fieldnotes. They rapidly became sketched notes and placings of actions, people and themes within a location, reflecting on the DIY-nature of the garden as I learned how to draw and place my thoughts on the go.
I share some of the maps throughout the paper as a data source to connect practices and spatiality. Some are straight from my notes, some redrawn to make more sense as there I used a mix of Lithuanian, German and English note taking throughout. To accompany with the visual of sketch-mapping, throughout the paper there are many photos added. The goal of the photos is to provide another visual of the present space. To provide you with the lens of reality that the practitioners faced at a specific point. Therefore, sketch-mapping, photography and noting what was experienced is a crucial aspect of this research in its' exploration as the goal is to extend the lens to you. Maybe you will see something that I have missed, or through the tool of visualization you will be able to connect certain ideas.

5. Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv – the Case Study

5.1.1 Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv as a Case Study

To employ contextual depth, a case on Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv was chosen as the main methodological research tool. There are copious understandings of case studies across various disciplines (Gerring 2004). In this research, a case study is a study of one organization-space and as Robert K. Yin (2004) describes it as a process elucidating process, choices, people, places and how they exist in the world and with what purpose and result.

As case studies are used across a broad range of thoughts, there are no specific tools or parameters that one must use. Both jokingly and seriously, my supervisor advised 'to do what you have to do' and so did Garreth Dohetery's supervisor on his reflexive research work. Thus, I decided to do just that by forming an inter-mixed ethnographic case study as my methodological compass.

5.1.2 The Facts

Prinzessinnengarten, the place where "[…] the plants grow, just as the Social relationships, along each other" (Berlin Channel 2019).

-Marco Clausen, one of the PGK co-founders

Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv is an urban collective garden which sprouted in Berlin, Germany in 2009 within a 600 sqm brownfield site in Prinzessinnestrasse (the name of the street) (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). The original garden plot still stands, however in 2018 the headquarters moved to the current St. New Jacobi Cemetery site (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). Although the space has changed, as well as some of the community too, it operates still with the same ethos and grounding thought.

Its grounding is within the idea of connecting the urban population with their land through transforming abandoned land to grow food and urban land sovereignty knowledge and practice (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026)s.

Space plays a fundamental role in the garden's founding as in its manifesto the goal of the garden is to create spaces where seeds of tolerance and collaboration are planted and nurtured. It is built on the concept of freedom in terms of socioecological existence, movement, nature, land and human rights and to fight against the urban and political infrastructure of privatization of land (Clausen 2015).

The reason as to why I am naming the current St. New Jacobi Cemetery as a headquarter site is due to PGK's co-creation and care of over 140 off-shoot gardens (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). These include gardens within schools, museums, public recreational areas, residential building backyards, refugee centers, and office

grounds (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). Depending on the contracts, communities, needs and finances, the amount of active work by PGK to care for the gardens differs. Usually, PGK aids with garden creation, manual labor, supply production and bringing in not only knowledge on growing produce, agroecology and community-formation (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). As time passes by, they decrease their work to allow the community to establish their own ways of gardening life.
Although, most of their work is in growing community gardens, PGK works with various organizations and neighborhoods as well to aid in taking care of their green plots insuring for the presence of greenness to be spread in various corners of the city (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026).
The case study will focus on the headquarter garden where not only the main community garden exists, but where employees and many educational events are housed.
However, throughout my fieldwork the employees, community members, volunteers talked and worked on other PGK sites with myself visiting and working on six other PGK gardens.
As I was collecting data I was deliberating if the research should be focused on only the headquarter, but with the research question on the extension of community green spaces within the food system and the city's infrastructure, it is impossible not to talk about the physical extensions of the garden. Therefore, information from and on the other gardens will be sprinkled throughout my data, analysis, and discussion chapters.

5.1.3 Physical and Structural Context



Figure 3: The outside gate of PGK, The New St. Jacobi Cemetery. On the left side the image exemplifies PGK from the other side of Hermannstrasse. The right-side image shows a close-up of the gate opening to PGK.

The New St. Jacobi Cemetery is bustled within the busy Hermannstreet (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). It is intriguing how as one enters the Cemetery and the Garden site it suddenly becomes quieter and greener; the smells of Kebab shops and

transport sounds dissipate behind the gate. To visualize the street and the gate see *Figure 3*.
In 2018 PGK signed a renting lease until 2035 of 7.5 ha of the New St. Jacobi Cemetery land (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). A community garden residing within a cemetery might sound odd. However, 65% of cemeteries in Berlin are no longer in use due to loss of popularity in terms of burial processes, making 674 ha of land unused (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). Thus, the Department of Environment and Climate are advocating for what Samuel Holleran (2023) terms as *sunsetting burial ground* – the transformation of cemeteries into greenspaces Therefore, the Protestant cemetery Association *Evangelischen Friedhofsverband Berlin* (EVFBS) and owners of the New St. Jacobi Cemetery are encouraging various communities to use and re-use the land (Holleran 2023). The cemetery will shut down by 2038 with PGK's lease ending then too (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). Although the rented land is owned by EVFBS, PGK is a renter who can grow produce, build on the premises, host events and use some of the property's buildings. Additionally, PGK takes care of the overall property via caring for the premise through agroecological principles, building and gravestone care.

5.2 Where are we and what is that?

To describe PGK's work structure and spatiality the buildings and locations within the cemetery will be used as connective descriptors and will aid the narration of the collected data further on.

5.2.1 The Chapel Hall



Figure 4: The funeral chapel hall, now used as an event and organizational space.

As you enter, on the right side, the 1897 funeral chapel hall is found as seen in *Figure 4* (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). It does not act as a traditional chapel anymore. The chapel acts as an office, meeting and event space for employees, volunteers, and PGK clients. PGK runs on a flat hierarchical working structure with employees having specific expertise and responsibilities, but all chipping into garden work and discussing all PGK matters. PGK depends highly on their volunteers and interns who may join for a couple of days or up to a year. They come from different walks of life. It may be teenagers who just finished school, people with a break in their working life or part-time employees or university students on internships. Volunteers and interns tend to work more on the practical care of PGK gardens, usually working three to five days a week during normal working hours.

PGK is made by the people for the people, thus it is a non-profit independent organization, which may have projects funded by the municipality. However, as control is highly connected to monetary support, PGK's goal is to sustain itself financially. It stems from donations, arranging Garden tours and educational workshops, providing gardening consultations for offices and various organizations and renting the chapel and other parts of the space for educational events, movie screenings, parties.

There is no fixed pricing system. The pricing depends on the clients' financial and social positioning, for example a refugee charity would obtain the chapel space cheaper than a private business due to their financial and social service capability difference (Nomadisch Grün gGmbH 2026). It illustrates that their profitability is part of their social grounding for their existence.

5.2.2 The Fram Shop and Information Centre

Another building by the entrance is a juxtaposition to the grand chapel- a cozy wooden hut structure that acts as the Farm Shop illustrated in *Figure 5.*



Figure 5: The Farm shop and information Centre. On the left side the figure shows the outside of the open Farm Shop and on the right side it displays the inside of the shop with the various items sold.

The farm shop and information centre is run by one of the employees and the volunteer team and sells plants grown at the headquarters perfect for small urban plots and balconies. Moreover, it sells a mixture of herb salts, apple juice, herbal teas, soil and postcards made all on site, as well as seeds, and various garden supplies all from regional farmers and producers.

5.2.3 Studio NagelNeu

Outside of the entrance (see *Figure 6*), a repurposed nail salon acts as the NagelNeu community space run by PGK.



Figure 6:The outside of NagelNeu. It is placed between a kiosk on the left side and the start of New St. Jacobi Cemetery's fence.

The space has a kitchen and space (see *Figure 7)* to be rented as a party, presentation and discussion and monthly acts as a space for free clothing swaps, German language speaking practice, and neighborhood cooking events. The studio acts as a revenue income as well as an open space to build community.

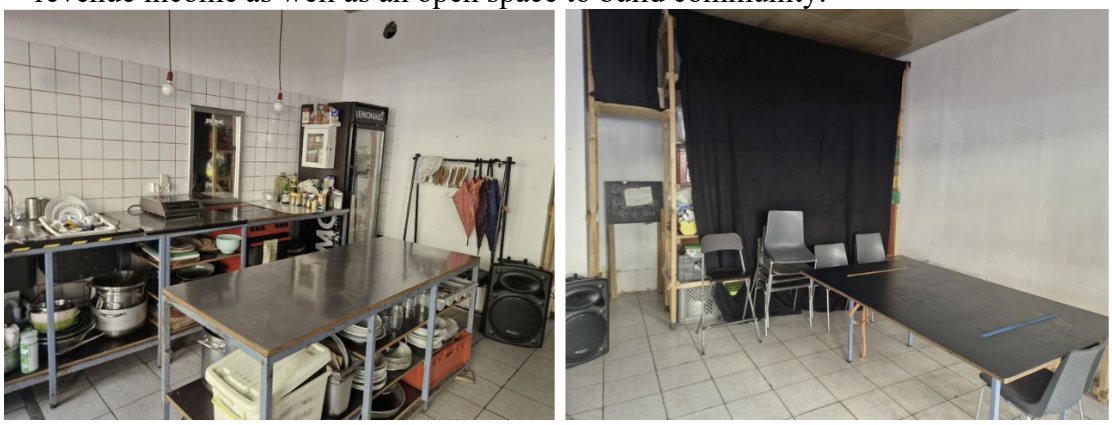


Figure 7: The inside of Studio NagelNeu. On the left-side it illustrates the kitchen space of Studio NagelNeu and on the right-side it shows a space with some chairs and a table is transformed per community's needs.

5.2.4 The Café

Wandering behind the Farm Shop a mix of coffee and vegan-vegetarian meals meets one's nose coming from the café. It houses around 15 tables decorated with flowers from the garden grounds (see the space above in *Figure 8)* It is open during the spring and summer seasons. Leftover garden produce and edible weeds found on the grounds are used by the café.

The weeds that are edible are checked by one of the employees overseeing the biodiversity of the grounds and seems to know every inch of the natural habitat.



Figure 8: The Café space. It illustrates the ordering van filled with drinks and treats made in the kitchen. The right-side image shows a snippet of the café space for café clients to enjoy.

5.2.5 Educational Space



Figure 9:The educational space. The right-side details the beds used for education purposes and schools as well as the education space in the background with a table and benches next to it used for workshops.

As one passes the tree alley and the gravestones on the right side one finds the educational space (see *Figure 9*), with community gardening used for projects with kindergarten and school children. The educational spaces house many workshops about sustainability, beekeeping as bees and their hives are found on the grounds too as well as more specific food and sustainability topics depending on the audience.

5.2.6 Raised Bed-Plot

As one walks further on the lefthand-hand side the raised-bed plot can be found and seen in *Figure 10*. Here, every Monday, everyone can join a PGK employee and PGK volunteers and garden together. The raised beds and benches are all handmade and gear towards Gabriel Wulff's (2014) concept of *frugal opportunism* via which as much as possible is made from present resources not only minimizing costs but adding to circular economy. The produce grown is chosen at the start of spring during the planning process by all PGK members (employees, volunteers and community members). The chosen produce is based on seasonality, agroecological and regional considerations. The gardening process on Mondays is free and welcomes all. When there is produce present, everyone can as they please.



Figure 10: A snippet of the raised-bed plot.

During the week the employees and volunteers take care of the high beds. The audience varies – neighbors, planting enthusiasts, new Berlin inhabitants, pensioners, parents, school and university students and people who are new to the planting world.

5.2.7 The Field

At the back of the grounds, a field with three sections may be found, displayed in *Figure 11*. It runs on the same basis as the raised-bed plot but open to all on Wednesdays. If one gardens even once on the grounds, they are welcome to grab produce grown on the field. All levels and ages are welcome and thus connect to Gabriel Wulff's (2014) termed concepts of suboptimality' and or educated amateurship, granting participants to join without an overwhelming expectation and provides an open atmosphere.

PGK's presence has brought light and a social connection to the cemetery, illustrated by many passerby's forgetting that they are in a cemetery and treating the space more as a park especially at the end of the cemetery where no gravestones are present and more gardening areas exist.



Figure 11:The field plots. The photo on the top left exemplifies part A of the field with a variety of crops being grown. The image on the top-right exemplifies part B and C of the field being prepared for crops to be grown in with a close up of red lettuce being grown in part C of the field shown in the bottom image.

6. Results and analysis

The following chapter will show the results gathered from interviews, ethnographic field notes, sketches, and photographs. An analysis will follow, answering the main research question with an influence from segment 1.1's sub questions[1] which helped guide which data was shown.
The following segments are divided by firstly setting the practice categories and their movements through the physical space through mapping. Secondly, the practice categories are analyzed by describing what makes them a social practice and a tactic, examining them as working against conceived spaces and the role of physical space in connection to the social practices. Lastly, the subchapters based on the social practice categories inspect how the practices become representational spaces to their environment.

6.1 Categorization

With PGK's diverse set of actions, comes a variety of practices that needed to be accomplished for PGK's goals to be achieved. Thus, continuous repetitive daily, bi-daily and/or weekly practices are carried out by PGK's practitioners. The 10:00-18:00 days consisted of many actions. However, there were some which kept reoccurring and became set ways of actively residing within the PGK realm. By looking through my ethnographic notes, interviews and field notes, a compilation of main practices was listed and categorized into six categories based on their main characteristics embodied through my experience. Below, the categories are illustrated with their examples see *Table 1.* It is important to note that some of the practices overlay in more than one category and there is subjectivity in terms of where they belong. The categorization was based on the practice's main characteristic from my own experience. The category descriptions are as follows:

- *Movement*: practices with the main function of the practitioner moving and/or an object being moved.
- *Modification*: practices transforming and/or fixing an object or part of PGK's space.

[1] A reminder of the research question: What role do the daily practices of Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv's collective urban gardening play in actively establishing, continuing existence, changing, and elongating social space? The sub questions are: how do processes create and sustain collective urban gardening, form effects on urban landscape and contribute to the garden's participant all the while the space shapes the practices and is shaped through them?

- *Verbal communication*: practices including/ triggering dialogue between PGK practitioners.
- *Earth contact*: practices directly affecting/touching PGK's soil
- *Community formation*: practices specifically set with a conscious/unconscious goal to form and keep community.
- *Care:* forms of practice leading to more awareness of the physical, social and organizational PGK environment. These are the small practices arising with knowledge or with the desire to acquire more knowledge on PGK and gardening.

Social Practice Category	**Examples**
Movement	Walking, driving, wheelbarrowing, raking, DIY-ing, carrying, composting,
Modification	DIYing, raking, trimming, sanding, painting, fixing, making space/objects aesthetic, preparing for objects to be sold, cooking and serving food
Verbal communication	Sharing information, chatting, tour guiding, community event organizing/joining, listening, workshop curation, advertising
Earth contact	Watering, planting, hoeing, prying soil with a mattock, digging, weeding, collecting crops, raking, composting, trimming grass/plants
Community formation	Team/member organization, chatting, teaching/ learning, listening, waiting, sharing information, workshop and community event creation/attending, planting, picking crops/ moving together with others
Care	Remembering, observing, listening, sharing information, chatting, waiting, checking in with natural and social surroundings

Table 1: Illustrates the social practice categories with their examples.

6.1.1 One Answer Only?

Firstly, as the creation of the category list was being formed an extra row of establishments, continuous existence, change and elongation categories in terms of each category and example was started. However, as I began to sub-categorize, I realized that most were categorized as all four or at least as three of the stated categories. Thus, concluding that these practices change shape and function, but they exist

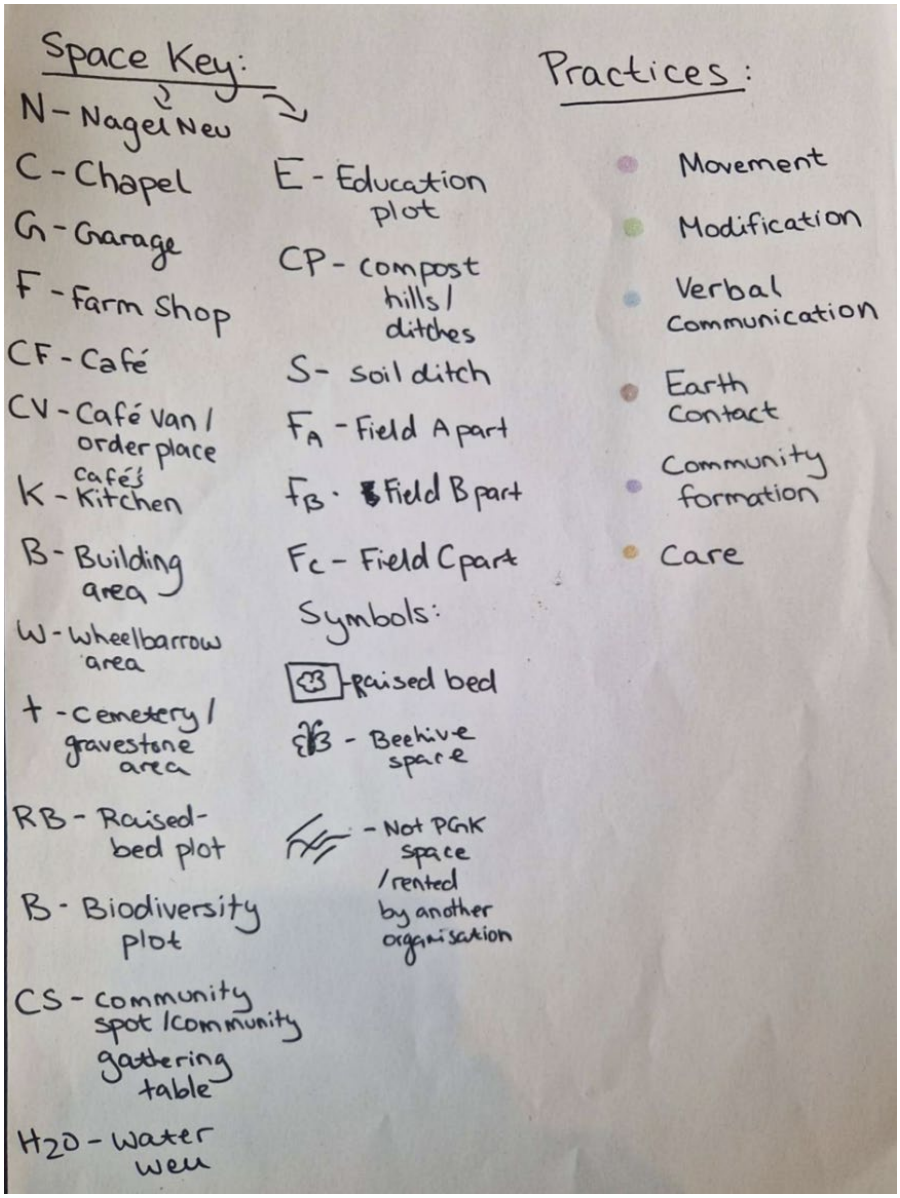
throughout the different stages of social space in co-presence. Therefore, this category was scratched. Rather, the practices will be used to view how they establish, aid in the existence of, change, and extend social space in a flow throughout time.

6.2 Mapping

Throughout the fieldwork sketching of spaces and practices symbolized by drawing the tools within the space became a regular experience. Multiple daily practices occurred throughout PGK headquarters and extended through a variety of PGK spaces. To illustrate the lack of spatial bounds of practices and how skills transferred via space the following maps are added below.

6.2.1 Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv's Practice Map

Map 1's key shows *Map 1*'s key of PGK practices in the New St. Jacobi Cemetery grounds seen as *Map 1*. The key and map is drawn by hand and scanned in to continue the DIY (do it yourself) nature of the Garden. With all my sketches taken it felt as a computer generator map would be out of place, it also allowed for the colorful pencil colors to intermesh and show the interconnectedness of the practices. The map is my own representation of the space thus although I tried to place all the plots in a correct manner, they are not perfectly placed, rather are there to provide a better comprehension of the layout and how the practices via colors intermesh making a once black and white picture into a colorful action-based Odessey. Not only were the practices transferred and interacted throughout space, but the spaces also dictated the transpiration of daily practices. The reasoning could be due to physical factors, as for example planting occurred at the back of the PGK headquarters as no active gravestones were found there. A lot of trimming and weeding occurred in the Atelier gardens as PGK was hired by a film studio to create an aesthetic outside area and increase greenness for the employees to enjoy during their breaks.



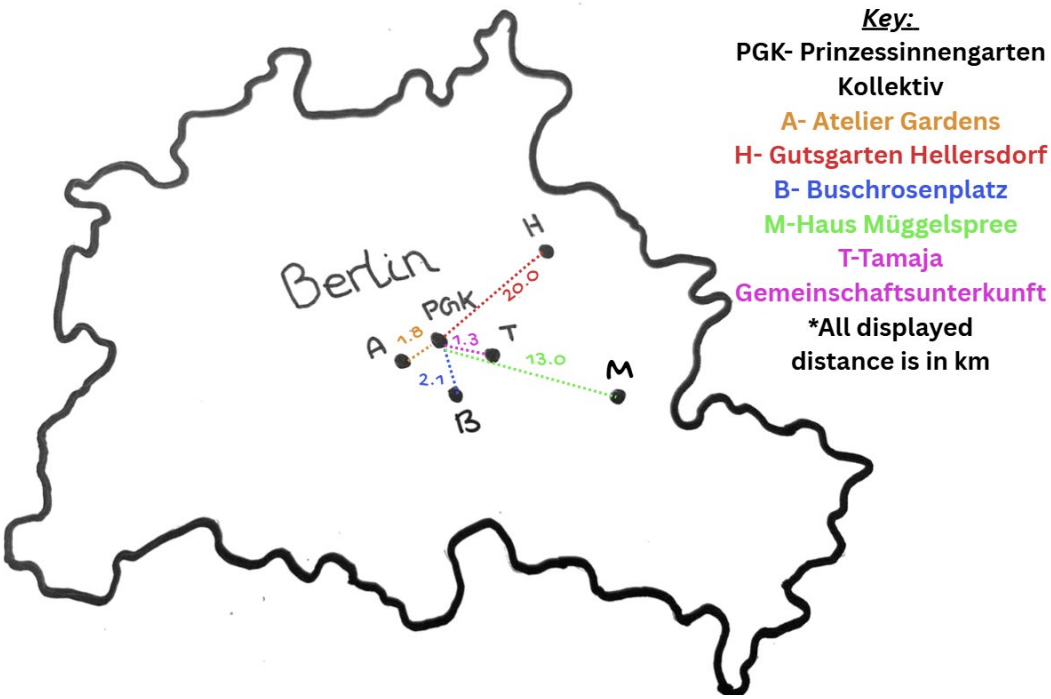
Map 1.1: Map1.2's Key: Practice and space key connected to Map 1



Map 1.2 Self-drawn map of the PGK space in the New St. Jacobi Cemetery with colors showing the various practice categories. See key above.

6.2.2 Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv's Location Map

The following Map 2 illustrates a self-drawn outline of Berlin and the locations of the Gardens I worked in during my research. They are not all of PGK's locations as there are over 150 locations and as I only worked in six of them, practices in those Gardens were not researched. The map illustrates approximate locality of each Garden and the distance of each from the PGK headquarters in the New St. Jacobi Cemetery. To comprehend the distance, I used Google Maps. However, I would like to note that distance calculation depends on which mode of transportation one views, thus I made estimates based on the car (city-infrastructural transport mode) and walking (a PGK social practice). To get to those Gardens PGK practitioner's use mixed modes of transport, sometimes a car, a metro, a bicycle and sometimes just one's legs. Firsly,the map's purpose is to highlight the extension of space stemming from the headquarter based in the New St. Jacobi Cemetery. Secondly, it is used for you the reader to have a better understanding of the variety of Gardens the data stems from. There were other gardens we worked on which asked for some Garden work help, however they were on a project-basis and were their own gardens built by other communities. These gardens are not displayed as they are not PGK founded and/or PGK only-partnership gardens. To view the map see *Map 2*.



Map 2: Hand-drawn map of Berlin with PGK's locations from the case study. The key indicates the colour systemization and was digitally made for more clear eligibility.

6.3 Spatial practices

In the following sub-chapters, each practice category will be analyzed in terms of Lefebvre's (1991) triad, comprehension of practices' existence as tactics based on de Certeau (1988) and the practice's addition to social space parameters. As there were many examples in each category, one practice from each category will be focused on. They could have been chosen based on an ethnographic anecdote, an interviewer's focus or the practice's daily repetition or my own fieldwork experience.

6.3.1 Movement

Movement as a way of being is intrinsically linked to freedom. One can choose if one stays in a place or situation. Physical, bureaucratic and/or social infrastructure dictates that freedom through physical barriers, laws or social 'silent' rules of how one should move. Thus, our individual choices of how to move become ways of routinised acceptance and/or rejection of the rules set upon our movement decisions.

The daily movement practices in PGK were all connected to bodily practices where only one's body or an additional tool was used to move objects and oneself around space. The practices all included various methods of shortcuts. For example, when carrying something alone or with others the shortest routes were strategized and adopted or when DIY-ing (do it yourself), shortcuts to picking materials that were on hand were chosen rather than outsourcing. The repetition of choosing the movements and influencing consciously or sub-consciously others to do the same is what formed the basis of how PGK functions. It formed the subconscious method of choice. Movement as a spatial practice within PGK realms became inherently a tactic, as a simpler way of carrying something would be to drive the 30 heavy benches from one end to the other end of the Garden, or rather than cutting 40 pieces of wood buying already cut ones. Therefore, these more time- or body-taxing actions play with the present-day set norms of comfortability. Why walk when you can drive, why bring compost to a ditch and mix it with a garden fork when there are composting bins and a composting infrastructure set by the city? One answer could be *resistance.* Resisting as a daily practice of movement to comply with the norm of comfortability and letting someone else create.

On my first day of PGK, I was introduced to wheelbarrowing. Our first task was to dig up a mulch hill and wheelbarrow the mulch to the raised-bed plot. We formed two mulch patches to set out planted pots on (see *Figure 12*)



Figure 12: Mulch brought from the mulch hill in the raised-bed plot, placed underneath plants and in plastic boxes to keep the area warm.

so they can start acclimatizing to the outside from being kept inside over winter. We also needed it to pop onto the ground where the café is, to hide the soil people would be marching on.

Right from the get-go the volunteers showed where the wheelbarrows are (as seen in Figure 13)



Figure 13: Wheelbarrow parking place, next to the building corner and garages.

and without question knew which ones to choose based on size, wheels which were pumped and their preference made over their time at the Garden. Via the wheelbarrows I got a sense of the short cuts of the land as previously when I got a Garden tour only the pre-set official paths were taken. Tools and objects were grabbed as the volunteers strategically discussed the other tasks of the day connected to the area or areas passed on the way to mulch digging.[2] *As we kept digging throughout the first couple of days the same set of conversations occurred. Someone would ask if it would not be easier to just use the Garden's van to bring the mulch as it was heavy and there was a lot of it, but in the end all would agree that it is just 'easier' and 'practical' to do so. In the end we used an attachable trailer* (see *Figure 14) to transport the mulch which we all strenuously pushed and pulled.*



Figure 14:The attachable trailer used by us the five volunteers to push from the end of the Garden to the café, the route may be imagined via using the practice Map 1 The mulch pile being by the biodiversity and raised-bed plot area.

Throughout these wheelbarrowing processes, practicality and strategy were used as descriptors of why wheelbarrowing was chosen over other forms of movement. As mentioned before, there were probable faster and less bodily taxing ways of moving. However, they were still not chosen as illustrated from the example of wheelbarrowing. They were movement choices going against the grain of comfortability, going against the set representations of comfortability within space. Interestingly, in the first couple of days I kept questioning why we do not just drive or use the bike to bring the mulch from one side to the other. This question especially came about in the evenings when the body felt the aches from constant moving and heavy pushing and carrying. Nevertheless, as days passed by the body got used to the movements and I would instigate using the wheelbarrow, or carrying something by

[2] To obtain a better grasp of the multifunctionality of the wheelbarrows, see *Appendix 1.1 and Appendix 1.2* filled with photos and sketches of wheelbarrows, their objects and existence in different PGK spaces.

hand. It became the norm; it became our as a whole routine practiced within the PGK bounds.

It became clear that wheelbarrowing was a practice going against the grain of the norm of conceived space practices when two wheelbarrows were needed for the PGK community garden set in Hellersdorf, 20 km away from the New St. Jacobi Cemetery. The Garden's two vans were unavailable, thus two other volunteers and I were asked to bring two wheelbarrows with public transport. A tool and movement that was practiced within PGK bounds daily became something we had to actively think and strategize about. *When we wheelbarrowed across the streets and brought them to the metro and buses, we could not but notice the stares, and people chatting with us to question our practice. We had to also buy a separate ticket for the wheelbarrows under the guise of a bike to 'legalize' the wheelbarrow existence within public transport.*[3]

It became very visible how our regular practice questioned the norms outside of the PGK space. Of course, we laughed it off but there were certain anxious comments at first from our volunteer group about what we would do if we were not let on a bus or metro. The comments and thoughts might seem innocent but may be seen as feelings coming with resistance and anxieties coming with forming and existing in juxtaposition to the formed social mainstream infrastructure. By using other than conceived space practices within the PGK space, the space became attached to these practices and conscious and/or subconscious thoughts of tactical opposition. PGK as a social space is repeatedly imprinted with bodily ways of movement which contort what comfortability and practicality is.

Movement category practices were crucial in forming PGK's representational space. That is due to as mentioned before modes of movement being small but daily, highly repetitive practices which over time became an unquestionable way of being and thinking through one's body. Practitioners who did not at the start of the experience enjoy the practices as a volunteer who mentioned in an interview her despise for walking, throughout time commented how she found strategies in enjoying it by walking with other practitioners, carrying, wheelbarrowing, or raking to keep her mind busy. Thus, as she said *'I actually weirdly enjoy walking now, well in PGK only. I will still not go on a random walk by my own will outside of here though'.*

Her notion symbolized this attachment of a movement practice to PGK and binding her identity as a PGK practitioner via walking the PGK space.

6.3.2 Modification

Modifying as a form of fixing, building, painting and making space aesthetic was a daily practice and goal within PGK. The whole vision of PGK is to address urban

[3] To view the placing of the wheelbarrows outside of the PGK space see *Appendix 1.3.*

space sovereignty for all through the tool of greenness. Thus, constructing and creating is in a way a practical form of PGK's ethos of existence in a tolerant manner with one another and nature. This co-existence needs to be built to fit in within the frames of PGK's vision. Therefore, these practices were a daily occurrence in building the social space around oneself and maintaining it as well. It was normal to walk across the Garden and notice and comment to one another when something is broken or could be modified to be more functional. Throughout time 'having an eye' for noticing what may be DIYed becomes routine and unconscious. PGK works within a circular economical system. Therefore, everything and anything may be used to build, fix and cook. As an example, learning about and picking edible weeds was a weekly practice. They were served by the café in their everyday dishes. There were many cases where we went around just looking in garages, the Chapel or other plots for random tools and mediums to make or fix something. Garages became the hotspots of DIY as all the tools and various objects tended to be brought and stored there.[4]

A story of the water well and the missing wrench (see Figure 15 for a visual story addition):

There was one wrench that was always used to open up the well's tap. One day it went missing which led to a volunteer and I coming back from one of the garages with 10 different tools:

- *5 wrenches*
- *a bulky, crooked fork,*
- *a hammer,*
- *an army knife,*
- *two types of pliers*

The plier that nobody believed in won the competition and was used later on even when the original wrench was found.

[4] To aid in visualizing the variety of objects and their visualities, see Appendix 2.

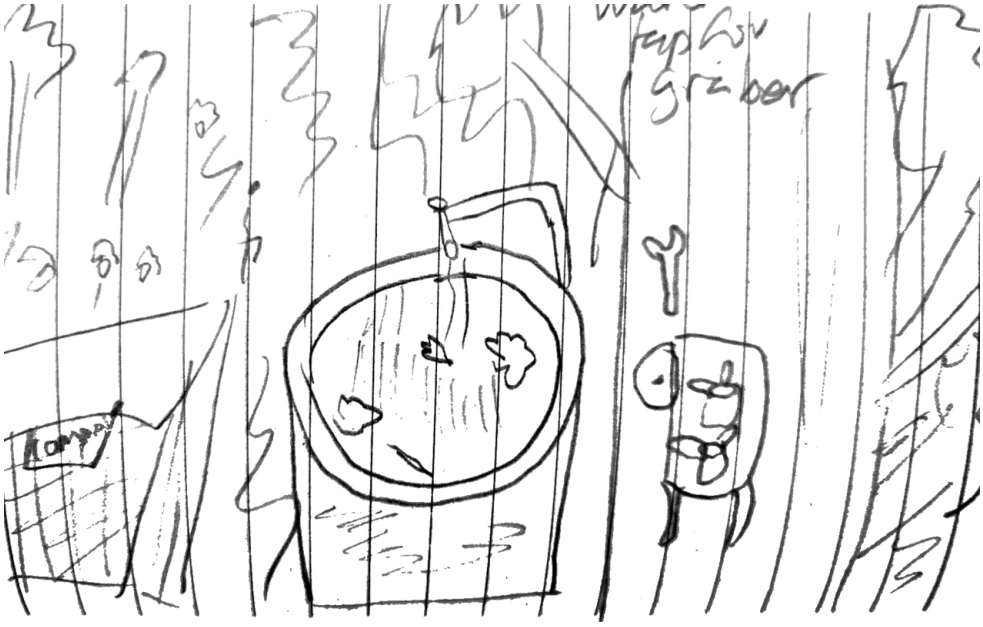


Figure 15:Figure: A sketch of the well, and a wheelbarrow filled with watering cans and one of the wrenches which did not win the competition.

This type of DIY-everything is fixable thought process becomes a tactic against the mainstream need to buy everything new and use objects only set for their purpose. Thinking outside of the norm becomes a spatial practice as well as a strategy going against the conceived space practices of buying new and thinking within a set box.

At the end of April, one of PGK's employees responsible for biodiversity and planting plants to be sold at the Farm Shop came to our volunteer group.

'Na, I have a task for you, lot', he said with a sneaky smirk. 'We need to build a greenhouse for the chili peppers and tomatoes; it is too cold for them to be outside at the moment'.

One of the volunteers asked, 'build? Where?'

'Ha. At the Chapel's cellar of course'.

We followed him to the cellar used primarily to store random materials and resources. To paint a picture there were boxes, benches, clothing rails and cameras, a nail polish and many other items you set and forget about.

As we came in, the employee took random objects and said 'we need to build the greenhouse here, Prinzessinnengarten style. Here are the growing lights, we need to hang them up on something and form a place to set the plants on.

At the end, the greenhouse was a construction of benches put together with insulation plastic propped up with some help of sticks underneath for extra support, clothing racks connecting the benches and used to hold up the lights with various strings found around plot see Figure 16.



Figure 16: The DIY greenhouse. On the left side it illustrates the in the midst greenhouse build and on the right side it shows the finished result with the lights on and the plants set.

Most of the volunteers working on this project were veterans working already three or more months, but the one new volunteer was confused and kept asking for reassurance in constructing the greenhouse contraption. Nobody knew what we were doing or what really the ending result should be. However, the feeling of trying, doing and talking with one another as the process went on was natural to us and was something that became natural after some time to the previously new volunteer.

The action of modification and learning how to think outside of the clear-cut guideline method of building is something which is fostered by routinised practices. Free thinking and trying is what constructs the free PGK space built for everyone's enjoyment and built by anyone without needing specific skills rather a will, motivation and the practice of care.

The mentioned DIY greenhouse excerpt had a significant quote 'PGK style' this statement would fly around often. It was stated whenever something was turned from a random combination of things, a mix of know-how levels and skill sets into a real achieved object. Modification processes varied more than the movement practices as fixing, cooking, painting and DIY-ing inherently do not have a definite movement. It is more a specific way of thinking creatively and analytically to connect various sets of knowledge, different practitioners and objects. Via the 'PGK style' one's identity transforms too.

On a sunny day one of the employees in charge of the café's management asked us to build a menu stand for a big and long board. It had to be strong and stable



enough to hold the board against the wind and mulch flooring formed previously. This was a task for three of us volunteers. Two of us with not a lot of building skills and one who previously did not have many skills but desired to learn therefore became the go-to building companion. Our non-building enthusiast companion volunteer was having one of those mornings where nothing goes right and said 'ugh I don't want to do this; I don't know where to start and have no want or need to start. My other companion and I cheered him on and said, 'let's just go to the garage and look around'. As time passed by, we looked around started throwing ideas and saw what stuck by trying them. This process resulted with a functional stand (see figure 17). With a wink, the building enthusiast companion said, 'look anyone can be a builder in PGK, even a grumpy one'.

Figure 17:The menu display in question.

This little story signifies how the practitioners within PGK motivate each other to attribute skills and identities that they might have not resonated with previously. Space pushes us to modify as we become modified in understandings of ourselves and modify the space congruently.

6.3.3 Verbal Communication

There is great power in one's voice be it formal communication via advertisement, educational events or casual small talk. These practices connect people and form groups and communities. Talking brought awareness, closeness and knowledge. Verbal communication built everyday practices as it was a means of organizing tasks, a means of comprehending the space and others, thus via communication PGK practitioners build their environment.

Chatting is a continuous habituative everyday PGK practice. As the practitioners set foot on the premise, greetings between practitioners begin; smiles and nods are interchanged with visitors. Throughout the day as one mixes compost, sands tables, does the laundry and waits for an activity to begin, constant mingling and chattering fills the air. Chatting is always in the background of other practices. To the point where I do not have a single interview that was not intermixed with a chat. Someone

would always come by and join our conversation, or the interviewees would intervene the questions with a 'normal life' chat. As for instance:

We were working in the Atelier Gardens and snipping old grass as an interview with my volunteer companion was taking place.

Me: So, what would you say happens daily'

Volunteer 1: Hmmmm, well we have daily morning volunteer meetings, something to do with soil be it digging or bringing it somewhere or planting in it, then a lot of DIYS which is something I try to not have as a daily act especially after not getting much sleep.'

Me: Yeah, you are not a fan of DIY, huh? Good thing we are Atelier Garden, then, said with a smile.

Volunteer 1: Yes, a hundred percent, I stayed up watching football yesterday with my dad. Did you watch it? It was such a good game, man.

**a couple minutes of talking about Football* and another volunteer joined the discussion.*

Volunteer 2: Yeah, I can't believe they won in the nick of time…. But Volunteer 2, Elizabet is interviewing you, remember?

Afterwards throughout the interview volunteer 2 was working with us and added their thoughts on my questions too and various side-discussions continued between us and an employee supervising and snipping grass and getting rid of unneeded plants throughout the rest of the interview time.

This small ethnographic snippet is a good example of how topics change from one to another; people flow in and out of conversations as they naturally move through space with their spatial practices.

Overall, during all my interviews practitioners in some shape or form would touch upon chatting. Be that through explaining what a good coworker looks like and them being described as open and communicative, through describing working as something they enjoy as they get to be in nature and talk to interesting people or talk about chatting as something that is a productive way of recruiting new members who come to one of the PGK spaces.

Chatting may involve different topics stemming from garden related ones to personal life, political debates, and questions such as how do clouds exist. The chats not containing Garden related knowledge might seem useless or as air-fillers, but I would argue the opposite. Chatting forms relationships; people get to know each other aiding in community formation. Practitioners become bounded by one another, the employees with the volunteers, the volunteers with members who come join for the garden days, garden members with café visitors and vice versa. Chatting and getting to know one another adds to identity formation as a PGK space member and practitioner. Thus, chatting becomes a tactic to form community which resists the urban anonymity feeling, distance becomes closeness and through the bond people are more motivated to add more to the Garden.

Verbal communication is loud in terms of opposing representations of space. PGK provides a lot of information on gardening, sustainability, circular economy and various ways to oppose the feeling of being stuck within cemented bounds of a city. PGK not only provides workshops but also provides free consultations for Berlin's citizens who want to start their own balcony garden or in the inside garden of their residential complex. Support in the vessel of knowledge drives people to start and cultivate their own sprouts of greenness.
As stated, above communication assists in bond and community formation therefore forming representational lived space through others. Many of the PGK open Garden Day members said that they joined the Garden as they were new to the city, were taking a job break or wanted to widen their social and knowledge circles. This was very noticeable with the members who have been part of the open days for years, as they would know everyone, bring food to share and stay after finishing gardening and enjoy one another's company. Throughout the conversations a mix of personal life and sustainability and gardening themes would be touched up. The big bench and table by the planting field plot could be sprawled with not only gardening tools and seeds, but somebody's baked bread, a random photo of someone's baby, a pamphlet of a cool event and residues of the wine drunk throughout. Through these interactions it was visible that PGK was not only a gardening space but a space of human-connectivity and warmth.

6.3.4 Earth Contact

Without working the soil, the Garden would not exist. Hence, there was a great variety in earth contacting practices physically modifying the PGK space. Their routinization was crucial in keeping the garden alive and thriving, seen via *Figure 18* displaying the change in soil as autumn leaves were taken away for spring grass and flowers to grow.



Figure 18: Images displaying the difference between a raked spot in the Educational space and not raked away.

As one started participating within PGK tasks one learned how to properly, safely and functionally dig, and use various tools such as mattocks or gardening forks.[5] As one works the soil the co-existence of time passing and knowledge transferring via verbal communication and care practices, one learns of the various signals plants and nature are communicating.

One becomes in tune with its' needs. Watering is a solid example of how the simple task of daily watering brought more awareness to one's environment. The volunteers had a daily task of checking the raised-beds soil, newly brought out mulch area plants, the field crops and some of the gravestones that were paid for by the owners to be watered how the act of watering exists throughout. Comments and thoughts about the weather, what it is at present and what it will be like tended to follow through the checking and watering processes as well as comments on plant growth and their health. There were sometimes comments on what could be done to aid in progress or questions that could be asked by the employees who have more knowledge. This awareness did not stop with the volunteers, but the open Garden Day members would comment and compare the soil and plant health to previous times and/ or to their own gardens or experiences. Many times various knowledge from others followed suit with a probable new task or plan coming suit. It many times extended the earth at hand to other PGK locations to compare the results or sharing experiences of working in those areas and what could be done or what could be done in those areas too.

[5] see *Appendix 3* to view the process of building a raised-bed and planting it.

Working the Earth leads to an active awareness of the surroundings, which is a crucial tactic against being mindless. One could argue that being aware is a synonym for resistance, without awareness there is nothing to resist, nothing to notice to be against. Awareness brought change, and a mindful co-existence with nature, the practitioners and PGK's project.
The above thought brings about the idea of soil contact as a tactic against urban infrastructural design of soil being hidden and or soil being in contact only with people who are paid to do so or in spaces that are dictated to be. Cities, with Berlin being no different, have landscape architects and gardeners who take care of how and what happens with the city's soil. There are parks and green spaces where people are infrastructurally and socially confined to sit on and touch grass. Although PGK and their practitioners also cannot just randomly start planting around the city and even in their Gardens themselves. They have the possibility to choose where in their spaces they do so. Yes, the choice is made with the PGK community and based on what makes the most functional, nature-context in terms of seasonality, soil fertility, animals in the area etc. However, the choice to work the soil and work it in a way that benefits the entire system comes down to the practitioner. In terms of resisting the conceived urban space the natural and human space dictate the way in which it exists. Rather than the urban space dictating the social space contortions.

Most urban citizens do not learn how to work the soil, skills such as ploughing, using mattocks and various farming tools and having that 'sense' for land originating from practical knowledge tends to be missed. It comes from the simple fact that urban citizens do not need to work on the land to obtain food, they can easily go to grocery stores or markets and pick, pay and leave. When I mentioned to my non-PGK friends of my workdays within the Garden they tended to be impressed by the practices and a comment of it being something they could and knew how to do would follow. With working the soil came a certain skill-based identity. It did not only strengthen the bond between PGK members as they shared skills and learned from one another working alongside each other. It was moreover an identity attachment with oneself of comprehending the space one works but it also formed an identity to outsider urban residents. It defined PGK space for those who do not work the soil daily, it banded the urban gardening practitioner to PGK and its' daily existence.

6.3.5 Community Formation

Community formation practices were integral to the social aspect of social space creation, existence, and expansion. In turn, the presence of the community formed and nurtured physical PGK space. Since PGK's model is one of a community gardening style, community formation via talking, listening to one another, working together, meeting organization and attendance were daily practices done actively

and as the community grew closer occurred in a habitual way. Being part of a community, communicating with one another, taking care of each other and identifying with one another was a routinised practitioner practice coming from existing within PGK space. The tactic side of community formation practices is the human-biological need of pact survival. Power comes in numbers and affiliation with one another. Going against the structured system is a lot easier with other people than doing so alone.

One of the practices coming to mind is the practice of people organization[6]. This practice mostly came from the employees to start with and was continued as volunteer, event and Garden Day practitioners joined. PGK had set monthly meetings where the volunteers and the employees would meet and discuss all sorts of realities and Garden tasks. The employees had internal meetings discussing work as well as open meetings where all members may join to discuss and state opinions on Garden matters. All open-Garden Days had first 10 or more minutes set aside for examining and deliberating the day's tasks. The workshops, tours, events were all organized to have people join, learn and see PGK and its' activities[7]. All these tasks joined practitioners, and many of PGK spatial practices occurred during and or due to the practice of organizing practitioners. When the volunteers were interviewed the employee in charge of curating and organizing volunteers was always mentioned without being prompted to. She acted as the front of PGK to the volunteers and many of the volunteers contributed to them joining PGK due to her warmth and transparency of the tasks and what PGK is.

The organizational practices tend to seem extra invisible, illustrated by one of the employees working on organization of the various PGK community gardens and spaces throughout Berlin. *Throughout her interview when I asked about her organizational work, she kept changing the topic. At the end of the interview, I told how interesting it seems to be communicating with people all day, strategizing what events to organize, how to aid in community formation etc. She responded with a surprised 'honestly, I feel like it's quite boring. You probably get more interesting answers from the others who work more with hands on work. I wish I was gardening and enjoying the outside air more and making less phone calls and writing less emails.'*

However, all these routinized organizational practices led to the organization of PGK members. The non-soil contact practices are just as important in the process of space and thus the existence of the Garden. Through the organizational practices the people who want to become practitioners may connect and keep one another in check in terms of what their roles and goals as practitioners are.

[6] See Appendix 4.1 to see how meetings are formed and the role of space as a connective people tool.

[7] See Appendix 4.2 to visualise a workshop and how skills, knowledge, sustainable objects and people connection is formed.

Organizational practices and their importance were once again confirmed in terms of acting in contra to conceived space through the PGK community garden run in Hellersdorf (see *Figure 19).*



Figure 19:A snapshot of Hellersdorf Garden in its' spring phase of transformation. It is made up off raised beds, a couple garage vans full of tools as well as a van with a kitchen and a hang out community space.

As the employee who was mostly in charge of that Garden project said *'Hellersdorf is the only other community garden that is run by us that works in practically the same model as the original PGK garden, as we have specific garden days and even our building materials tend to come from the original garden and the community model was completely based-off the original PGK garden'.*

Other gardens are also run similarly to PGK but PGK tends to help with the initial set-up and then the communities tend to tweak their spatial practices depending on their needs, however Hellersdorf has not changed many of the practices. The garden has been running for more than 10 years and is situated in the East of Berlin where the employee stated reside many of Berlin's marginalized population - a pattern still from WW2 Berlin realities. As the employee stated, the PGK help lasted longer than usual due to its communal marginality characteristics. *He mentioned that 'marginalized members of society tend to not be trained in communal being, that is why*

they might not view community as a precious asset'. '... that is why it has been hard and complex to bring about a communal aspect to this Garden. The Hellersdorf municipality financed the project, that is why we started here and even when the funding stopped the community and us as an organization always tried to find funds to stay a bit longer and help the community out.'

Different to other Gardens the physical help of building raised beds, linking water hoses, building fences etc., is focused on the least by PGK. Yes, there is always a volunteer on hand on open days due to many of the community members being older making physical tasks harder. However, the employee said that most of his tasks reside in conflict-resolution, team building and being the source of starting conversations and chatting culture with one another. He summarized Hellersdorf employee and volunteer practices as well as PGK's practices eloquently as he said *'we are an organization that provides a service, not ownership. A service of socialization'.*

The Hellersdorf Garden is a viable example of how throughout Berlin's urban infrastructure realization the marginalized and their ways of being were left to be fended off by themselves. However, PGK's physical extension 20 km away from their headquarters to the area that is unkept socially and psychologically provides a space to connect and form a social space bound by nature and by learning to accept one another.

6.3.6 Care

Care tends to be connected to a rather passive feeling rather than an active practice, but I would argue that PGK practitioners displayed that care may be an active presence. Talking to PGK practitioners it was visible that caring for nature, food choices, Berlin, the future and humanity were some of the reasons driving to join the Garden. Practices such as awareness of one's surroundings led through the actions of listening and observing, remembering tasks and conversations discussed and waiting for one another were all practices which to certain extent seemed unconscious and matter of fact. However, they were something that needed to be actively habituative. They were practices influenced by others. Throughout the fieldwork there were copious amounts of time where practitioners would fill up other practitioners' water bottles, bring their things to storage or help out without being asked to. These practices would be built upon by others and continued a chain of care. Care is a tactic of noticing and reflecting, it drives change and social connection. Awareness is the opposite of blindly taking the system for granted. It allows one to stop and notice. This practice of awareness is highly visible when working with plants and nature. By working with plants and observing them one can provide a better environment for them to grow. Viewing changes or problems in collaboration with knowledge forms the next practitioner's actions. In a way, care functions as the human body's core. A strong core assists in keeping up the balance and when

other parts of the body are weaker, a strong core seemingly silently helps in filling up the needed strength to go through an action. Care works in a similar manner, when motivation is needed, caring and being cared for aids in continuing to work the Garden. This core like trait is what goes against the grain of power infrastructure and/or to use Lefebvre's triad term elemental representations of space. Living in a city is comfortable, power structures are enrolled for citizens for citizens to have time and freedom to work, take care of their personal lives and not be obliged to care for their environment as political figures, bureaucrats and city-planners are paid to do so. Thus, by being aware and bringing awareness to one's environment is a tactic of taking power back. Yes, observing a small plant and the factors of sun on its' growth might seem quaint but this small action of care doubles and triples through time and via multiple practitioners and adds up. Thus, fueling this chain of care which motivates others to notice and to join, further compelling the previously stated set of other spatial practices to occur. Moreover, it transforms the physical space not only by the visible natural growth of plants, but also through an increase of Garden spaces and an increase in knowledge space creation.

'*Our purpose is to train the heart, well I see it that way at least… because if you care for carrots you care for your heart. The process of carrot growing teaches you to take care of our environment.'*
This sentiment poured out at the end of the interview with PGK employee in charge of Hellersdorf PGK Garden.
'*Training the heart'.* Actively caring and physically working on the Earth at the same time works your own skills of responsibility. It forms an identity of an active part of society; it may start off with the feeling of being an active member of PGK and slowly it may transform your views and actions outside of PGK too. Being aware in one certain space may evolve into other aspects and spaces of the practitioner. When one leaves through the Garden's gates the skill of care leaves with the practitioner. This was felt, as many mentioned changing their eating, recycling, active membership of society habits. Many discussed joining more petitions, involving oneself with more sustainable food media, joining the many protests in Berlin in connection to rights of space after joining PGK.

In terms of the care category, I would argue that all the other practice categories are motived and or exist in a constant co-relation with the care category. For example, via observing the way plants grow a practitioner can comprehend when they should water a plant. The observation of the plant is motivated and comprehended by learning from other practitioners about the plant and its' environment. Vice versa the other five categories expand the unconscious care practices. For example, I joined a PGK composting workshop set for a tour group of university students. I learned how composting works and noticed how the next two-week field notes tended to

have some notes on our composting activity. My awareness of the composting pile at the end of the cemetery and the compost needed to be brought from the kitchen to the compost pile drew more of my focus. It also led me to noticing that some food was not allowed to be composted. Thus, I shared the information with the kitchen staff continuing the information sharing cycle. Thus, unconscious care was a catalyst for the daily practices as well as was driven by the practices practiced. That is not to say that the other practice categories did not trigger other practices. For instance, when digging soil together (a movement practice) we, the practitioners, tended to chat with one another and share knowledge as well as get to know each other leading to verbal communication and community formation category aspects intervening. However, I would like to emphasize how the underlying care about one's environment was the reason for PGK creation, its maintenance and space expansion in the long term.

7. Discussion

The question of what the study of practices has brought to comprehend the realities of PGK, urban gardening, urbanity and food systems is guiding the following discussion. Discussing with myself, the members of the Garden and my supervisor, I realized that the themes touched upon same as the practices in the space of PGK, interflow. Without one there would not be another.

Therefore, the following discussion delves into a discourse of commentary on PGK, urban gardening and food systems with a flowing back and forth commentary of all three topics dialogically as they reflect and affect one another. At the same time the question of PGK's creation, existence and elongation of space plays at the forefront of comprehending PGK, the scene of gardening in urbanity, alternative and mainstream food systems and the instrument of power and care. Each sub-section's discussion comments on how the said themes connect to the research question as well as touches upon the possible future research suggestions and the current research limitations.

7.1 De-objectification of Crops



Figure 20:PGK's harvest from the field, for all member's who worked that day to share.

Before entering the fieldwork I remember reading Mikey Tomkins' (2014:13) call for "a need to move beyond the notion that the objective or objects of harvest alone can represent practice". Beforehand although I agreed with the concept, I do not think I understood the full capacity of this sentiment. However, via the study of practices this notion seen through the results has come into the foreground. Yes, having a successful crop yield and having produce to share within the PGK community is a method to rate success of the Garden (for a glimpse into PGK's harvest see *Figure 20* above).

However, it is not the main and only method. Rather it is one of the ways to measure success, I would argue that these results were just as important and/or more significant at some points in time:

- Amount of PGK members in correlation to their progressive affinity to the Garden, the relationships built between them and other PGK members and nature.
- The agroecological health of the PGK spaces and their existence effect on urban space health.
- Spread of information and the formation of knowledge on sustainability, circular economy, DIY skills, food and space sovereignty.
- Cultivation of critical thinking and care by being a PGK practitioner.
- Harvesting of freedom in terms of financial PGK existence, expression of thought and being through tactical practices.
- Normalisation of practices fostering the above stated results.

However, the stated results are difficult to quantify. Many of them are connected to subjective identifying measures -how does one qualify care or normalisation of something?
This brings one to the idea of capitalism, which is what the mainstream food system and thus urban industrial city landscapes are currently built on. Urbanity and the mainstream food system is viewed and calculated through the optics of capital and efficiency – how to build a more efficient infrastructure bringing in more capital at the same time feeding more of the urban public? Therefore, we as urban practitioners, and the bureaucratic mainstream power begin to objectify the crop as an object of capital and measure it based on how much monetary profit it delivers and how many people it can feed. Now alone, this is not bad but crops and the environment they grow in are not one-dimensional characters made for just human benefits. Crops grow in the natural environment; they bring biological factors to their environments where they synergically co-exist with other natural actors. Crops produce food, not just the caloric biological food but they bear and bring cultural and socially connective properties to humanity. They produce stories and knowledge on the non-edible side of nature; our landscapes and environments we all co-exist in. They also generate choices; what we choose to grow what the environment, climate

chooses to allow to grow. Comprehending crops brings so much more than capital and mouths fed they bring practices – practices growing our care and tools of observation which head to other practices of social space construction. Therefore, I would argue that this study has brought yet another real-life example to Mikey Tomkins (2014) call for de-objectification of crops, and in turn a move to viewing complexities and their co-existential characteristics.
The concept of de-objectification of monetary outlook on crops adds, to a certain extent, an answer to the research question. Through PGK's practices a contra crop objectification space is created and fostered, through PGK's ethos goals being met. Their goals do not focus on monetary influx, they use monetary benefits to exist within the city – to pay rent, to afford resources, to pay employees however not to make profit for the sakes of it. By focusing on their ethos of community growing, knowledge spreading, caring for the environment and working to secure land which is taken to be used for profit making they create a space of capital de-objectification and formation of their alternative social space. The practices are a requisite to acquire this space. The tactical practices everyday slowly chip at the ground and form the set goals (de Certeau 1988).
For further research, it would be compelling to research and compare how other urban collective gardens in Berlin and Germany work towards the capita de-objectification of crops and what role it plays in their standing as well are the main practices which bring about the de-objectification.

7.2 Built-Urbanity of Comfort

Urban cities were built to house the labourers who work to provide capital for themselves and the one's in power (de Certeau 1988). This is where the idea of comfortability has arisen. Cities are built so the labourers can efficiently and comfortably live their lives so they have more time to work (de Certeau 1988). Afterwork activities granting the urban dwellers to relax are built in a way which continues the cycle of capital flow to the city as recreational spaces cost money to attend.
As stated above from an infrastructural approach a city may be measured via its comfortability for the inhabitants (Maksimchukand & Pershina 2020). Comfortability in terms of how well connected the spaces are, how many possibilities and varieties of actions connected to the spaces there are and how fast one may obtain services and objects (Maksimchukand & Pershina 2020).
The presence of grocery stores comes into play. Growing one's food takes a lot of time, in terms of seasonal time but likewise in terms of labour time. It also takes a lot of labour and care. This is not very 'comfortable' especially after or before a full day of work. Thus, grocery stores and fast food take away these problems. Mainstream urban spaces of food may be characterised as spaces one may speedily obtain a variety of food for the price of money. There is nothing wrong with this idea,

it allows people to be nourished calorically, nutritionally and accessibly. However, it designs a population detached from the landscape growing the said food. Urban populates loose the knowledge on where and how the food has come from and about. It detaches us, people who are part of the natural environment, it also creates a clear-cut categorization between the grey cemented urban and the green vast rural space. It leads to eating in a way where we are locationally and seasonally detached; avocados eaten from Peru in Berlin on a random winter Tuesday. The detached nature shapes the urban social space into one characterised via speed, quantity and variety always. Urban gardening puts a pause in that cycle (Granzow & Shields 2019). The urban-life practitioners go from the space of already sourced produce to building their own space of what is deemed in the urban-built space as uncomfortable practices involving the opposite characteristics of observation, taking time, quality, locality and connection. Suddenly, the practitioner who may feel as an individual in a grocery store making their own choices of what to pick, becomes a connected piece within their social space as practices of building, growing and eating become interconnected with the other collective urban gardening practitioners and their natural environment (Lefebvre 1991).

That is not to say that the mainstream food system structure does not connect people. Strategically, the mainstream system connects many and different continents, transportation and logistical systems, governments and landscapes. However, they are all structured in a way to efficiently produce rather than connect on a human and environmental level.

The PGK field study illustrated how once one becomes a practitioner of the Garden comprehension of comfortability alters. It was shown via the wheelbarrow example but also through the constant need to exercise all practices throughout the creation and existences of the Garden. As I realised early on of presenting the practices they continuously exist throughout the Garden's history, just their reasoning or way of use differs depending on the result needed.

However, for the already built structure to exist and grow, they tend to stay as practices taking:

- time
- physical body function
- critical and mindful thinking
- constant need to learn and share the knowledge

The stated above prices of the practices are not particularly comfortable in comparison to easily ordering food on one's phone. However, one could argue that it is what it takes to capture some control and to shape one's own reality. In the mainstream food production system, somebody does and manages the uncomfortable tasks it just might not be the urban dweller; however, they do occur. They might be practices that are done in a faster way, or in a more mechanized manner but they still must occur, just the burden is taken away via paying money to practice comfort.

PGK's uncomfortable practices are what forms the space, they are performed out of the set ethos of PGK. The ethos' correlate to an alternative way of thinking within the built urban environment. Therefore, to obtain a different infrastructural goal differentiating practices ought to occur, which are uncomfortable because they are not the set norm.
These uncomfortable practices likewise are what sets the identity of the practitioners. They extend not only PGK space in its' physical terms of forming other Garden plots, but they create practitioners themselves as certain moving alternative identity spaces interacting with other urban dweller practitioners. Through interaction they can question their identities and either join PGK and/or alternative food system spaces and ways or further cushion themselves into the set mainstream food structure.
Although, researching a focused case study brings its benefits of obtaining a more realistic slice-of-life comprehension, I think a comparative case study between a Berlin urban garden and PGK would allow to further comprehend the importance of communal urban gardening and realistic ways to grow them within the Berlin and German urban life fabric. Especially it would be interesting to compare urban collective gardening and another popular urban gardening method in Berlin of practitioners who rent high-raised beds in an urban garden plot and plant for themselves in co-existence with others. I believe a comparison would bring more data to analyse the role of community and the role of comfort.

7.3 The Alternative Entering the Grounds of the Mainstream

PGK exists within the urban, it is surrounded by the mainstream food system. The Berlin municipality - the mainstream urban curator finances some PGK projects, even the President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier gardened in PGK for a Saturday afternoon. PGK is not isolated from the mainstream food system and/or urban infrastructure. It works within it and through their practices forms their alternative food system social space. As Henri Lefebvre (1991) Michele De Certeau (1988) convey, social practices are not about doing something extravagant to oppose the system rather small, invisible like strategic practices carving out their space within the power-held mainstream space. They work from the inside within the insides' rules (de Certeau 1988). That is the beauty of such tactics. The practice of talking, carrying, listening, waiting, DIY-ing they are movable not stagnant they can exist within their social space but also exit it and move within the mainstream, they may spread. Their spreading and transformational quality is what allows PGK space to be extended over PGK boundaries. For instance, one may chat about PGK within the Gardens as well as chat about them at someone's home at a party and the

conversation may start being about PGK but then quickly change to another topic, dropping some PGK social space crumbs in a non-PGK space.
A question which may occur with this free movement concept may be why is urban collective gardening or specifically PGK not considered as the mainstream system? With the data and research done it is impossible to answer with one defiant answer as it is all contextual and PGK is only one small maize part of the corn cob that is the alternative food system within the great corn field of the mainstream food system. However, there are a couple reasons as to why PGK stays within the alternative side of the field.

7.3.1 Balance

Firstly, one may argue that there is always a need of a balance. Without the mainstream there would not be the alterative and vice versa. Especially when it comes to plays of power as Henri de Certeau (1988) mentioned there is always a marginalised group that is placed out of bounds of urban infrastructure. However, it always reemerges as it still exists within landscape. Contradicting power actors; institutions, communities, spaces are crucial to keep the ruling power system in-check. They devise the power of freedom and a significant role in producing critical thinking of how the present system functions.

7.3.2 Money and Control – a Dangerous Mix

Secondly, in terms of PGK, their goal is to be a space of freedom, tolerance and coexistence of variety.
Researching them and talking to PGK practitioners, the idea of money being a way of being controlled was very palpable. Therefore, they worked on project-based financing with German governmental bodies, rather than working as partners. They wanted to still have their say and choices, keeping it, project based meant both sides could compromise and work together for a set time. Not only did PGK obtain financing via projects, but additionally they were able to practice their sets of tactical practices all while financed by the system it is going against. It further illustrates how habitual PGK practices are to their core a social practices as they are not visible from the above power's view as tactical actions of resistance (de Certeau 1988).

7.3.3 The Spatial Fix

Thirdly, a reason as to why PGK and many collective urban gardens stay alternative is geographer's David Harvey's (2001) notion of the spatial fix. He argues that access capital must be grounded and fixed within the ground for it to not lose its' value and in turn grow new capital (Harvey 2001). Therefore, taking up space via building various infrastructure parts is an integral aspect of growing profit chains

consequently reorganizing space (Harvey 2001). Thus, through this process landscape is built to form profit. However, at a certain point it cannot keep up with the system and new aspects to the built environment ought to be added to keep the chain of profit continuing (Harvey 2001). This may likewise mean that the older built aspects are torn down to build new fixed profit objects due to new progress (Harvey 2001). Hence, the mainstream system is built upon a consistent cycling of anchoring capital, profiting from it and continuing to do so with new forms of anchors throughout time (Harvey 2001).

However, urban collective gardening specifically is not made to do so. It is not made to make capital, or to monetarily profit from it. Paradoxically PGK's goal is to fight against such abandoned spaces via growing food by creating spaces of grounded nature plots and working to ensure that spaces are taken up by communities rather than profit-making. Even if PGK Gardens need to move out of the spaces, they greenly grounded PGK's practices attempt to reawaken nature and to ground biodiverse measures to allow the environment to grow on its own term as well as grounding forms of community. Yet, if the space of practice changes people's identities and affinity's to the idea and to others' is formed beyond physical infrastructure rather a societal level infrastructure.

Nevertheless, as explained before, that does not fit in within the spatial fix idea, as there is no focus on capital progress rather focus on creation of a stable food, space and human relationship system based on measures beyond capital growth.

8. Conclusion

The action and practice packed journey has come to an end. An exploration of practices and their role within a corner of the vast alternative food system have taken place. There are no yes or no, black and white answers to the roles of daily practices in establishing, continuing the existence of changing and elongating space in PGK. However, that was not the goal to begin with, rather an explorative case was discovered and displayed.

PGK's daily practices are varied, stable and transformative – they interact with nature, practitioners, urban-dwellers, the PGK space as well as the urban infrastructural places. Daily practices are integral in building and reconstructing the urban food system, space and society. Researching them fosters the de-objectification of crops and rather opens a door to acknowledging relationship formation, spreading of information and critical thinking, nature's health, and the symbiotic existence of the results. Daily practice research has brought upon a closer inspection on how the urban built world and mainstream food systemic infrastructure affects and continuously interacts with aspects of alternative food systems - in this case collective urban gardening.

Daily practices play a myriad of roles in all PGK space existence. The space is continuously shaped, questioned and interacted with. Unceasingly the physical and social aspects interplay within the existent space and mindset. The small reality snippet obtained through PGK's practitioners illustrates how strong a small repetitive action may be, even when zoomed out within the globalized mainstream food system.

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Popular Science Summary

Presently, urban and the rural landscapes are divided. Cities are no longer seen as food-growing spaces. Therefore, urban habitants tend to buy food from grocery stores. This food is sold in all seasons because it tends to come from all over the world. Food grown in a city for city populates seems like a dying trend but there are urban inhabitants who come together and want to add nature and food grown by themselves back into city genetics via gardening. This type of process is called *urban collective gardening***.**

There are different ways that people set up this type of garden, but at its core is a type of garden in an urban area- a city, where people can garden for themselves and their community.

Most times this type of gardening focuses on being environmentally friendly and building a social group which gardens, talks to one another and enjoys nature within the city together. This type of food growing is part of the so-called *alternative food system*. An alternative food system is a way food is made, sold and understood that goes against the popular way of making, selling and comprehending it.

Having a background in urban collective gardening and food systems, this research looks at *processes*. It focuses on actions which urban populates take via urban collective gardening to go against the mainstream food systems as well to keep urban gardens alive. The paper uses research from Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv (PGK) an urban collective garden in Berlin, Germany to answer this question:

What role do the daily practices of Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv's collective urban gardening play in actively establishing, continuing existence, changing, and elongating social space? In simpler terms this question is asking:

- What practices happen in PGK?
- How do these practices help to make it live, change and extend PGK to other areas in Berlin?

The research looked at different practices in PGK and sorted it into different themes to understand the part that practices take. The results of the research showed that there is no one most important practice. Their happening at the same time is what helps PGK to exist, change and to build other Gardens in different places. The practices help to build different parts of PGK - some practices help to take care of the physical garden, sharing environmental knowledge and forge community.

Appendix 1.1 Wheelbarrows and their Objects



Wheelbarrow filled with raked leaves left from the autumn months.



Wheelbarrow with picked leaves from a biodiversity plot and a handmade Cafe sign given by a practitioner on the opposite way.



A wheelbarrow full of soil in preparation for a workshop for a group of students to make seed bombs.

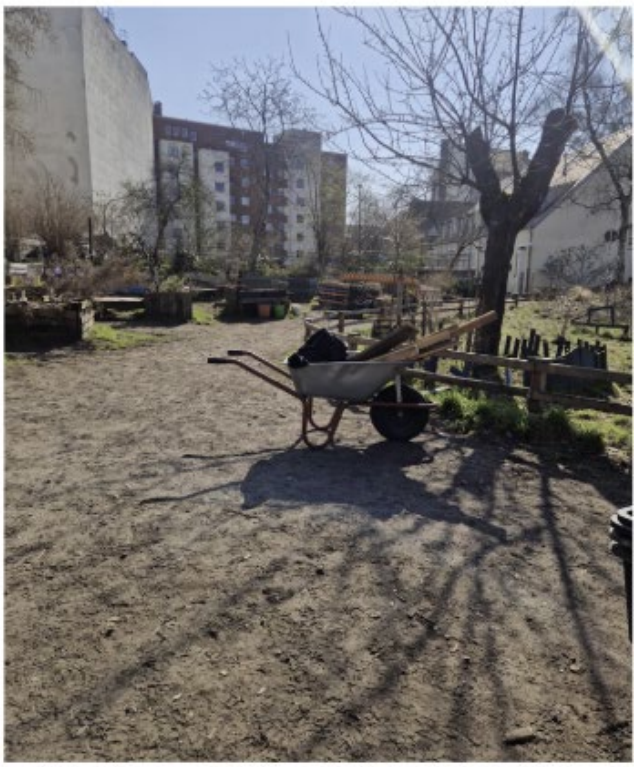


Wheelbarrow used for sieved soil to be sieved into and brought for planting plants sold at the Farm Shop.

Appendix 1.2 Wheelbarrows in Diverse PGK Spaces



Wheelbarrow with various personal things in Atelier Gardens.



Wheelbarrow with fence building tools in Karma Kultur (not a PGK Garden but a Garden PGK was working with to help building).





Wheelbarrows at the senior home garden.

Appendix 1.3 Wheelbarrows Outside of PGK Space



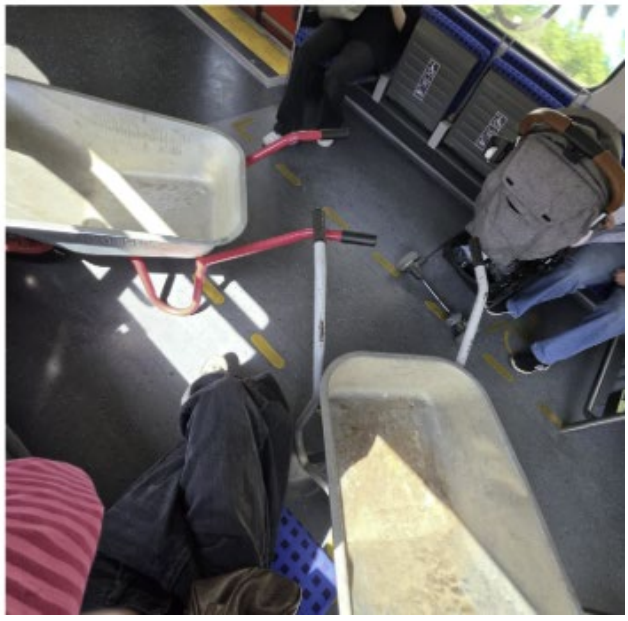
Wheelbarrows outside of a senior home where a workshop was taking place.



Wheelbarrows being brought by PGK practitioners to a workshop in a school. There is a juxtapostion of a wheelbarrow being used in the back by a construction worker - an infrastructure practitioner using practices and tools fitting to their 'allowed space'.



A wheelbarrow was brought in a metro. Due to its out-of-placeness, it had to be contorted in a way that is abnormal in PGK space. The wheelbarrows also took up a lot of space, as seen in the image on the bottom right side.



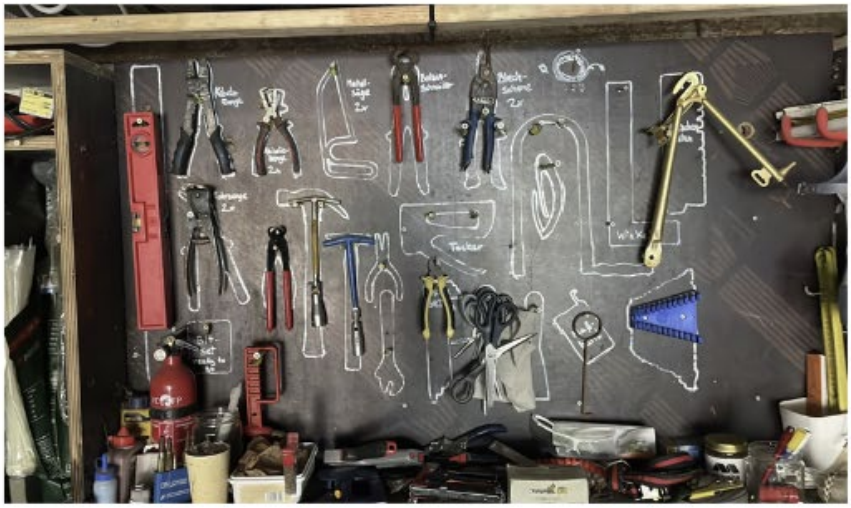
Appendix 2 Garages – the Spaces of Modification



The garage next to the building filled with various tools, wood pieces, bike fixing supplies and a variety of objects such as rainboots or previous failed DIY's.



A sketch of a locked cupboard in the garage photographed above. The cupboard has all of the electrical tools.



A zoom into the tools board and various boxes filled with nails and painting supplies underneath. It is all found in the garage next to the building space.



The insides of the gardening garage behind the kitchen. Although it mostly had gardening objects, theses objects were used in correlation with various DIY projects, linking DIYing and gardening.



Another inside snapshot of the gardening garage.



The outside of the Education space garage, with some gardening and DIY tools seen on the outside on the right side.

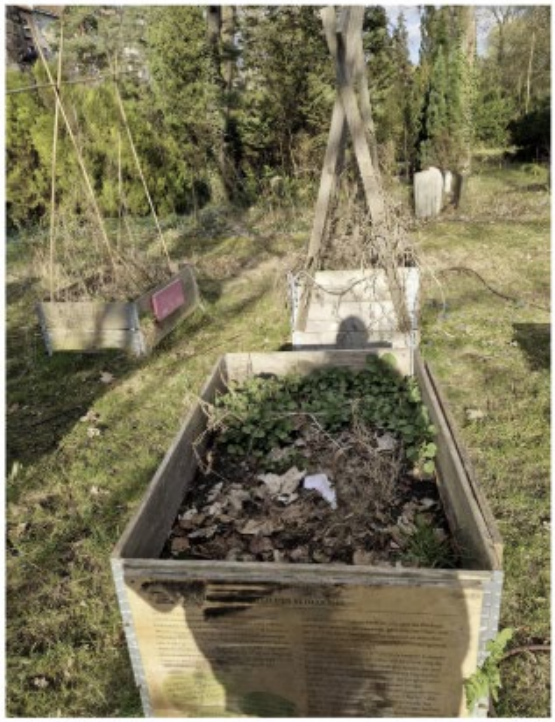
The inside of the Education space garage filled with workshop DIY tools. →



Appendix 3 How to Build a Raised Bed and Plant it?



Instructions on setting up a raised-bed.



Firstly, pick a broken raised-bed to change.





Secondly, take the soil out, transferring it to a soil sack, to not waste soil. Then get rid of the old wooden slabs.



Thirdly, put together a new box, by putting sticks and soil at the bottom and pouring the re-used soil on top.



And tada! The soil is ready to be planted in as seen on the bottom left side with a bed of potatoes being planted, or a raised-bed not being planted in right away on the top right photo and thus needing to be cleaned up from weeds beforehand.



After planting, watering and observing, the plants start to slowly grow as seen on the bottom right photo with a pea-shoot raised bed.



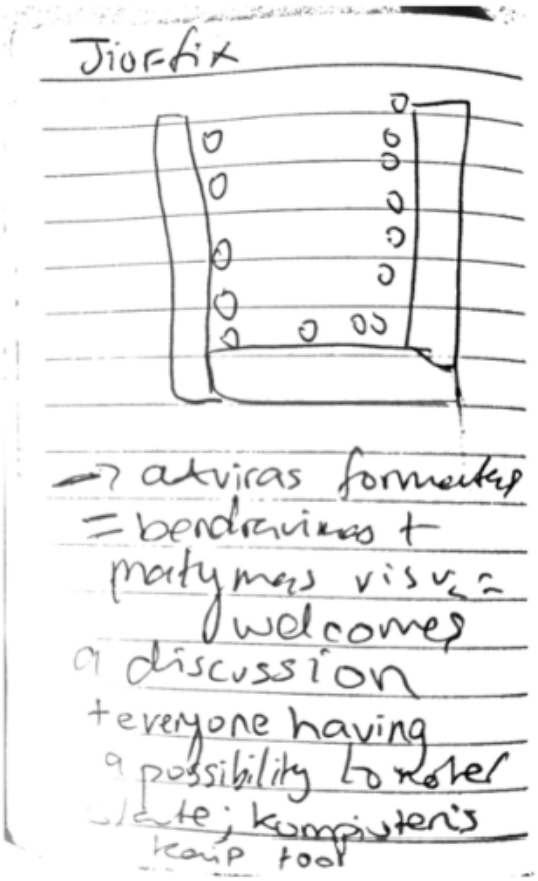






With time, care and season change, crops grow and are ready to be picked by the PGK members. As seen in the top photos, the salad growth changes. The raised-beds are tagged with number plates as seen on the top left sketch. They are numbered, and their crops are noted down to be able to keep up with the plants' growth and looked at in the next season when choosing what to plant.

Appendix 4.1 Social Organization in Physical Space



Notes from Jourfix, a monthly meeting between PGK employees and PGK volunteers. They take place in the Chapel, or when the weather is warmer, outside of the Chapel with a combination of tables, chairs and benches brought from various corners of PGK space. They are set up in a way where members can see each other, fostering an open discussion.



A sketch of a community table in the raised beds, but there are similar tables in the Education space as well as the Field.
These tables are used for workshops as well as meeting spaces and spaces to sit together during Open Garden days. They allow for a place to stop and talk, thus fostering connection.

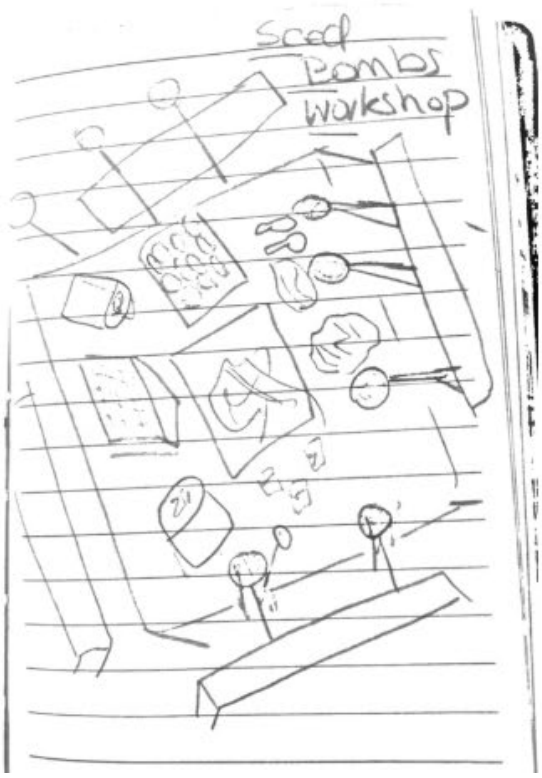
Appendix 4.2 Workshops and their Physical and Social Results



Seed bomb and paper plant pot workshop prep with buckets filled with soil, compost and clay as well as as old newspaper and rolling tools.



The result of a newsapaper plant pot workshop.



The sketch of the workshop participants displays how a table full of workshop tools becomes active and full with the addition of people learning, talking and doing.

Appendix 5 Publishing and Archiving

Approved students' theses at SLU can be published online. As a student you own the copyright to your work and in such cases, you need to approve the publication. In connection with your approval of publication, SLU will process your personal data (name) to make the work searchable on the internet. You can revoke your consent at any time by contacting the library.

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