

RENTAL VACANCY

How do Austrian politics address the issue of vacant houses?

Johanna Teufel und Cecilia Janz

11733084 | 11717322

Table of Contents

1. Rental Vacancy	2
1.1 Definition	2
1.2 Situation in Austria	2
1.3 Situation in Vienna.....	3
2. Political Action	3
2.1 Austrian Government	3
3. The Video.....	4
3.1 Background Information.....	4
3.2 Artistic Strategies	5
4. Conclusion.....	5
5. Bibliography	6

1. Rental Vacancy

1.1 Definition

Rental vacancy is a term that describes empty and unused properties, them being apartments, shops or similar areas. The reason for their vacancy can be dew to various reasons, such as prices, location, etc. (Nutzer_innen Beirat Leerstand Wien, 2020).

There are different forms of rental vacancy, such as speculative vacancy, where a building or apartment is not sold by the owner, even though there is demand for it, because they are speculating on rising prices.

Another form is structural vacancy. Here the demand for property is missing for a certain amount of time, which often occurs in more structurally weak regions.

Short term vacancy can also be added to this category which can occur during the change of tenants (Exporo AG, 2020).

1.2 Situation in Austria

It is hard to measure rental vacancy in Austria as it is not mandatory to report vacant properties, as it is the case in Switzerland. It is almost impossible to quantify the amount of rental vacancies in Austria. What can be statistically measured is inventory of living spaces, that are not primary residences, meaning secondary residences, holiday apartments and also rental vacancies due to moving tenants. In Austria the number lies at 16% which equals about 750.000 apartments. How many of these apartments are vacant can only be speculated. In Vorarlberg the number is estimated to be between 8000 and 15.000 apartments. In Salzburg it is estimated, that there are 60.000 secondary residences and rental vacancies; 3500 of them being in the city Salzburg (Der Standard, 2017).

1.3 Situation in Vienna

In Vienna rental vacancy can also only be estimated. In 2015, 35.000 apartments were reported to be vacant by the city government; 10.000 of them long-term vacancies, which means longer than 2,5 years (Falter, 2019).

2. Political Action

2.1 Austrian Government

„Die Bundesregierung möchte das Angebot an Wohnungen vergrößern und wird zu diesem Zweck gemeinsam mit den Ländern den Leerstand mobilisieren.“

(Regierungsprogramm, 2020)

„The Austrian government wants to increase the number of flats and will therefore mobilize rental vacancies together with the federal states“

The Austrian government has been inaugurated for two and a half months at the moment. It is therefore hardly impossible to make a statement towards their housing and rent policies. Nevertheless, one can make some assumptions what the conservative-green coalition plans by analyzing their government agenda.

The government aims to mobilize rental vacancies in order to increase the number of flats on the market. Moreover, they want to fight structural rental vacancies by intensifying the housing development promotion and redevelopment programmes. Even though these are just statements in the government agenda, it is also very interesting to have a look at their rent policies on a whole. The government wants to create housing solutions which are

sustainable, affordable and developed in a democratic process.¹ Those three pillars would increase the quality of life for tenants and Austrian citizens.

Critics say, that there must be an evaluation of the actual number of rental vacancies, otherwise one could not take those plans seriously. Furthermore, it is important that the redevelopment programmes are financed through the public sector and afterwards stay in the regulation of prices in the law of landlord and tenant (Regierungsprogramm, 2020).

3. The Video

3.1 Background Information

The Video shows different places of rental vacancies in Vienna. The source is the so called *Leerstandsmelder* (<https://leerstandsmelder.de//wien/>). The *Leerstandsmelder* is a interactive map which fights the uncertainty of actual number of rental vacancies. This uncertainty is one of the very causes why it is so hard to fight rental vacancies. The *Leerstandsmelder* does that by providing a tool which is open for the public. To sum it up, the *Leerstandsmelder* is understood as a political campaign which aims to make rental vacancies visible.

To show the different places the open platform *google earth* is used. A Screenvideo was put into Adobe Aftereffects. Afterwards Effects, Sounds and Typography was added. The final edits as well as the colorgrading were done in FinalCut. Overall, we used opensource and license free material. This was also important towards keeping the Aesthtic of the purpose of the project: creating accessible, affordable and open ressources.

3.2 Artistic Strategies

Since the most students in the Course “Quality of Life, Planetary Boundaries and Economic Growth” are living in Vienna the video was chosen to also show places in this city most students can relate to. It is nevertheless important to state, that this should be symbolic. We chose this artistic method of relation in order to trigger emotions in the viewers. We want them to ask themselves question like:

Do I know this place?

Have I ever been there?

Ah! I think my friend lives nearby!

And thereby create the feeling of being affected. This was very important to us since rental vacancies is an issue which is discussed in a very abstract way and many people do not realize how this matter affects every single person who is paying a rent directly. The number of flats on a market do influence the height of one’s rent.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, we see the high potential of using empty spaces. Sadly, this potential is not used to the fullest. The responsible politics behind it need to be more radical, active and demanding.

Overall real estate speculations are only making the problem worse. The neoliberal aim towards boundless growth is harming humans’ quality of life on this planet.

5. Bibliography

Nutzer_innen Beirat Leerstand Wien. "Was ist Leerstand?" *Nutzer_innen Beirat Leerstand Wien. Leerstand für alle öffnen!* 2020. http://www.nb-leerstand.wien/?page_id=193 [accessed 17 March 2020]

Die Neue Volkspartei; Die Grüne Alternative. „*Aus Verantwortung für Österreich. Regierungsprogramm 2020-2024.*“ Januar 2020.

Exporo AG. "Leerstandsquote." *Exporo*. 2020. <https://exporo.de/wiki/leerstandsquote/> [accessed 17 March 2020]

Der Standard. "Mangel an Daten zu Leerstand stellt Gemeinden vor Probleme." *Der Standard*. 28 July 2017. <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000061900379/mangel-an-daten-zu-leerstand-stellt-gemeinden-vor-probleme> [accessed 17 March 2020]

Franziska Zoidl. "10.000 Wohnungen stehen in Wien langfristig leer." *Der Standard*. 27 August 2015. <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000021362439/10-000-wohnungen-stehen-in-wien-langfristig-leer> [accessed 17 March 2020]

Falter. "Erfasst endlich den Leerstand in Wien." *Falter*. 6 March 2019. <https://www.falter.at/zeitung/20190306/erfasst-endlich-den-leerstand-in-wien/4b49e91576> [accessed 17 March 2020]

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/arSVemh9cdM>