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Agrarian Movements and Food Sovereignty–

A Case Study on the Austrian

Nyéléni Movement

Master's thesis

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Submitted: February 17

“The most systematic and comprehensive organic and living alternative to existing hegemonies comes not from the ivory towers or the factories but from the fields (Patel, 2006, p. 90).”

“Revolutionary movements do not spread by contamination but by resonance. Something that is constituted here resonates with the shock wave emitted by something constituted over there. A body that resonates does so according to its own mode. An insurrection is not like a plague or a forest fire – a linear process which spreads from place to place after an initial spark. It rather takes the shape of a music, whose focal points, though dispersed in time and space, succeed in imposing the rhythm of their own vibrations, always taking on more density. To the point that any return to normal is no longer desirable or even imaginable (Committee & others, 2009, p. 6).”

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List of Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
Attac	Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and Aid to Citizens
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIAN	FoodFirst Information and Action Network
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPC	International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty
LVC	La Vía Campesina (Spanish term for "the peasant way")
NEL	Netzwerk Existenzgründung in der Landwirtschaft (Network for extra-familial farm succession)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOeK	Nyéléni Österreich Koordination (Nyéléni Austria Coordination Team)
OeBV	Österreichische Berg- und Kleinbäuer*innen Vereinigung (Austrian peasant and mountain farmers union)
SCnCC	System Change not Climate Change
TAM	Transnational Agrarian Movement
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
Urgenci	International Network for Community Supported Agriculture
WTO	World Trade Organization

Acknowledgement

Mama, Papa, Daniel für Alles!

Verein NEL – grande como siempre

Hannes für viel Geduld und deinen Humor

Ella, Theresa und alle anderen LeidensgenossInnen

Danke an IfÖL, Milena Klimek, Valentin Fiala, Bernhard Freyer

CarmenCita and the best neighbours in town FFFF Family and Doris

Und meine Kolleg@s – Bernadett, Johnny, Magdalena, Olga, Kathi, usw.

Danke an Nyéléni Österreich, vor allem an FIAN, AgrarAttac und die ÖBV

1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation

Right after I started studying at the University of Vienna I got involved in a student protests for free access to universities and against the financialisation of education, which started in October 2009. Soon the protests which were known under the term *unibrennt* (university burning) spread around 80 universities in several European countries (Foltin, 2011, p. 196). It is known as the largest Austrian education protest in modern history. This was the first time that I was actively part of a social movement, first only as demonstrator but soon I got involved in various working groups. The movement followed a grassroots approach, the protesters communicated mainly via social media and it was broadly supported by the civil society and well-known personalities from arts and culture, sports and education.¹ The tide turned against the protests when the initial euphoria of the people and the shock of the officials faded out. Finally, the occupation was vacated after three months by the police. According to the media as well as to a lot of former activists the protest did not achieve their goals as the situation at Austrian universities did not improve at all. This is of course a matter of fact, but in my opinion there were achievements of the movement on a different level. In my personal case and in the case of maybe hundreds of other young students being part of this protest was a political and organizational learning-by-doing crash course. A lot of people I got to know during this time are still active in a variety of civil society organizations and informal ties and connections still exist. Holst (2002) refers in this context to the “pedagogy of mobilization”:

“Through participation in a social movement, people learn numerous skills and ways of thinking analytically and strategically as they struggle to understand their movement in motion. Moreover, as coalitions are formed people’s understanding of the interconnectedness of relations within a social totality become increasingly sophisticated (Holst, 2001, pp. 87–88).”

At the moment I am the chairlady of the nonprofit organization *Netzwerk Existenzgründung in der Landwirtschaft* (NEL) which deals with access to land for beginning farmers. Since we started working in 2013, we have always been in contact with the *Österreichische Berg- und Kleinbäuerinnen Vereinigung* (OeBV Vía Campesina) and therefore became part of the Nyéléni Austria movement. I participated in the first Austrian Nyéléni forum for food sovereignty in 2014 and in the European forum in 2016 during conducting this thesis. Taking this into account I would describe myself as an activist researcher. Activist researchers develop their theoretical framework and methods in a dialectic rela-

¹ Further information: <http://unsereuni.at/ueber-unsereuni/>

tion to their activism. To guarantee valid outcomes a mixture of methods and a critical review by other researchers and my co-supervisor has been done during the whole process.

“In the examples discussed here, decisions about framing research were shaped and influenced by explicit political positions, sets of understandings and ongoing relationships with/in social movements (Choudry, 2014, p. 87).”

1.2 Background / Problem

The slogan ‘bread, dignity and social justice’, which came up at the Egypt uprising 2011 reflects the complex interactions of political and economic grievances of the predominant food system (Kininmont, 2012). The continuous and **multiple crisis of today’s neoliberal food system** cause hunger, poverty, climate change and political conflicts throughout the world (Mann, 2014, p. 3). Traditionally, studies and analysis around agricultural policies often focus on market dynamics and governmental decisions as key players. With the current economic and social crisis the role of counter movements and **civil society-driven innovations** for a transformation of the agri-food system are becoming become more important. To offer a profound analysis of this power shift it seems nevertheless too early because of a lack of sufficient scientific analysis (Renting, Schermer, & Rossi, 2012, p. 291).

Around the globe **transnational social movements are on the rise**, tackling existing problems and offering numerous possible alternative paths for the future. The emergence of transnational agrarian movements (TAMs) like La Vía Campesina² (further described in chapter 3.1.1) is one manifestation within this development of **grassroots resistance and global influence** at the same time (Mann, 2014, p. 7). The dynamics and contribution of transnational agrarian movements in political as well as agricultural discourse has not yet been sufficiently examined, nor has their ability to scale up and broaden concepts such as food sovereignty been thoroughly analyzed (Borras Jr, Edelman, & Kay, 2008a, p. 180). Compared to more established NGOs, this underrepresentation in science, in the media and in the general discourse on agriculture is accompanied by everyday problems such as the lack of legitimacy within society and difficult resource allocation (monetary, members). At the moment the concept of food sovereignty as well as transnational agrarian movements itself are hardly recognized in the broader public and one big obstacle for the movement is: how to get from a side issue towards more societal recognition?

² A transnational agrarian movement of peasants which constituted itself in the global south and has now around 200 million members around the globe. Further information: www.viacampesina.org

Agrarian resistance has a long history in all parts of the world but this new form of movement has certain characteristics. An important power shift from NGO-solidarity towards self-representation and organization took place within rural communities since the 1990s (Borras Jr, 2008, p. 205). In response to the highly globalized commodity chains of today's food system the movements started to "both localize further, in response to state decentralization, and to internationalize, in response to globalization" (Borras Jr, 2008, p. 203). The **concept of food sovereignty** often emerged as a common framework to mobilize a broad coalition of movements and is defined as 'the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems' (Nyéléni, 2007). The International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty for example might be the biggest agrarian-based network of movements and NGOs, from different political standpoints, currently uniting more than 6,000 organizations and 300 million small scale producers³.

Within such big, transnational movements it is important to mention that "while it is critical to have a common framework, there is no single path or prescription for achieving food sovereignty. It is the task of individual regions, nations, and communities to determine what food sovereignty means to them based on their own unique set of circumstances" (Schiavoni, 2009, p. 685). Thus, ongoing research on the framework of food sovereignty seeks to gain a richer and deeper understanding of that **diversity as an element of niche complementarity** leading to strong and resilient local food systems (Wittman, 2011, p. 97). The manifold different engagements and relations of agrarian movements on the concept of food sovereignty are little known.

A profound analysis of the Austrian case is a **contribution to the complex puzzle** of already existing research on transnational agrarian movements. As there is hardly any scholarly literature on the Austrian food sovereignty movement and its activities so far, it is difficult to give general assumptions because when analyzing transnational movement regional, **cultural and historical dimensions** play an important role and must be taken into account as they are very diverse in their appearance (Borras, 2008, p. 199).

The specific case of Austria

Not only the agricultural sector but the Austrian political culture in general aims for basic consensus within and between parties and social partners with a poorly developed conflict culture. Informal political activities like the participation in a social movement or NGO's are culturally and historically little embedded in society although it has become more prominent since the 1990s (Pelinka, 2006, p.

³ Further information: www.foodsovereignty.org

231). Talking about social movements in Austria, the main points of conflicts described are around topics related to gender, environment or migration (Pelinka, 2006; Pelinka & Rosenberger, 2007; Seifert, 2003).

The first counteractions in recent history against the dominating agricultural politics started in 1974 with the foundation of the *Österreichische Bergbauernvereinigung* (OeBV) as a counterbalance to the conservative farmer's association *Bauernbund*. This kind of bottom-up activity caused fierce resistance from established parties as the Austrian agricultural sector is characterized by a strong wish for harmony and conflict avoidance (Rohrmoser, 2001, p. 500). For nearly two decades the OeBV worked on local issues of small scale and mountain farming and did pioneer work in the field of organic agriculture. They were also the first organization which was pushing for introducing a pension for female farmers in Austria. The association has turned into the national focal point of La Vía Campesina (LVC) in 1996 and organized together with Attac and FIAN (further information in chapter 6.2.1) the first European Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty in Krems in 2011 (see chapter 6.2.1).

Meanwhile, over the years a **greening of the mainstream agriculture** as well as a conventionalization of alternatives like organic agriculture took place in Austria (Darnhofer, Lindenthal, Bartel-Kratochvil, & Zollitsch, 2010, p. 67). Most consumers see the high percentage of organic and direct marketing in Austria as very positive and according to (Schermer, 2015, p. 128) 'this leaves only a tiny minority with the claim for more radical changes of the food system'. Therefore, it is assumed that the concept of food sovereignty is generally little known and not part of the agricultural debate in Austria so far. Furthermore there is a **lack of historic documentation** as well as a lack on scientific research on agrarian movements in Austria which makes it difficult to get a detailed picture about the actual situation. To fully understand the role of food sovereignty in Austria it is vital to understand the actions of state actors and societal actors as a dialectical relationship and not as independent from each other (Schiavoni, 2017, p. 3).

2 Conceptual framework

This master thesis first, traces how (Nyéléni process, chapter 3) and why (Food Regime Theory, chapter 3.2.1) the concept of food sovereignty has been constructed over space and time. Secondly it is examine how the concept of food sovereignty is translated into the habitual practices of the Nyéléni Austria movement. For the case of Austria, Lofland's theory on *Social Movement Organization* is used to gain a rich picture of the organization of the Austrian movement. The concept of *Transnational Agrarian Movements* first developed by Santurino M. Borras Jr. is additionally included in the analysis which allows a further distinction within the broad field of social movement research (Borras Jr, Edelman, & Kay, 2008b; Borras Jr et al., 2008a; Edelman, Kay, & others, 2008).

Additionally, this thesis explains and uses Food Regime Theory, developed by Friedmann and McMichael (1989) as an underlying framework to analyze the role of the Austrian Nyéléni movement for the transformation towards food sovereignty and to locate it within the actual discourse on agriculture. The food sovereignty concept helps to analyze the conducted projects and habitual work of the Nyéléni movement in Austria and to find possible different understandings of the initiating organizations.

2.1 Research objectives

The intent of the master thesis is to bring together and analyze two approaches which aim both for agrarian and societal change, the concept of food sovereignty and agrarian movements. The specific relation between agrarian movements and the concept of food sovereignty will be discussed, especially highlighting how food sovereignty is translated into practice in Austria. **Analyzed here, is which understandings of food sovereignty exist among the three initiating organizations, AgrarAttac, FIAN and OeBV and if there are differences, which different understandings are there?** Therefore the thesis **describes the Austrian Nyéléni movement itself.** The aim is to situate it in time and space, give an overview about the historical evolution, the theoretical concept and ideology, the members and the organizational structure of the movement.

With this basis the aim is to show the potential role of the Austrian food sovereignty movement as well as their limitations in scaling up and amplifying the concept of food sovereignty. The thesis illustrates if and how agrarian social movements have an influence on dominant agricultural as well as societal discourse in general as well as in the specific case of Austria. Analyzing the program and

aims of the three initiating organizations – the main fields of tensions will be analyzed and presented in detail.

2.2 Research questions

On the basis of the described research problems and the elaborated objectives of the research the following hypothesis and research questions were derived:

- A. How is the concept of food sovereignty translated into the regular practice by the Nyéléni Austria movement?
 - a. Is there a similar self-perception and understanding of food sovereignty within the movements initiating organizations (AgrarAttac, FIAN and OeBV)?

Hypothesis: The concept of food sovereignty is reflected in the work of the Nyéléni Austria movement. The three initiating organizations of the Nyéléni Austria movement, have a similar self-perception and refer to the same concepts of food sovereignty.

- B. What are the main aspects of the Nyéléni Austria movement?
 - a. What are their values and beliefs?
 - b. How is it organized?
 - c. Who is part of it?
 - d. What strategies does the Austrian Nyéléni movement pursue?
 - e. Which reactions do they stress in society?

Hypothesis: The Nyéléni Austria movement is an important player in the Austrian civil society. The movement is broadly organized and strongly united in diversity without any observed internal contradictions.

2.3 Outline

Table 1 illustrates the outline of the thesis. The conducted research questions are related to a hypothesis and to the methods which should explore the research objectives. The underlying research problem and the related theoretical concepts are also displayed.

Research Problems	Research Objectives	Research Questions	Theoretical Concepts	Hypotheses	Methods
The engagement and relation of agrarian movements on the concept of food sovereignty is little known.	Explore the relation of agrarian movements and food sovereignty and how the concept is translated into practice in Austria. See if there is a different understanding among the three initiating organizations.	How is the concept of food sovereignty translated into the regular practice by the Nyéléni Austria movement? 1) Is there a similar self-perception and understanding of food sovereignty within the movements initiating organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of Food Sovereignty • Food regime theory 	The concept of food sovereignty is reflected in the habitual practice of the Nyéléni Austria movement. OeBV, FIAN and AgrarAttac, the initiating organizations of the Nyéléni Austria Movement refer to the same concepts of food sovereignty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review • Semi-structured interviews with AgrarAttac, FIAN and OeBV • Focus group discussion
There is a general lack of research on transnational agrarian movements. In the Austrian public agrarian movements are hardly noticed	Locate the Food sovereignty movement in Austria in time and space, show the potential and limitations and compare the three initiating organizations and explore tension fields.	What are the main aspects of the Nyéléni Austria movement? 1) What are their beliefs? 2) How is it organized? 3) Who is part of it? 4) What strategies does the movement pursue? 5) What reactions do they stress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social movement theory • Food regime theory 	The Nyéléni Austria movement is an important player in the Austrian civil society. The movement is strongly united in diversity without any observed internal contradictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews with AgrarAttac, FIAN and OeBV • Focus group discussion

Table 1 – Conceptual outline of thesis. Source: author's elaboration

3 Background

In the following chapter a short overview about the existing literature is drawn and crucial theories and methods, which were used in previous works, are discussed.

3.1 Field of research

Although the academic field of social movement analysis has rapidly grown, scholars have given transnational agrarian movements relatively little attention and systematic examinations are still rare (Borras Jr et al., 2008b, p. 180). Some exceptions include: (Borras Jr et al., 2008b; Desmarais, 2007; Edelman, 2009, 2014; Holt-Giménez, 2006; Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2010; Rosset & Martínez-Torres, 2012, 2013; Schiavoni, 2016). Speaking about TAMs the concept of food sovereignty is often mentioned, where there has been a surge in literature about the concept of food sovereignty in the past years (Brent, Schiavoni, & Alonso-Fradejas, 2015, p. 3).

In the following chapters I explain and clarify the two underlying concepts, food sovereignty and social movements, and their state of the art in detail. For a better understanding first the concepts are defined and explained separately until in chapter 4 the synthesis and connections of these concepts are explained. Furthermore identified limitations within the current field of research are discussed at the end of each chapter.

3.1.1 The concept of food sovereignty

The international coordination of La Vía Campesina plays a central role in developing and promoting the concept of food sovereignty throughout the world. 1996 LVC introduced the concept of food sovereignty for the first time following an international meeting on the fringe of the WTO general assembly in Rome. The concept of food sovereignty was continuously coined and the most recent version was formulated at the Nyéléni Forum 2007 in Mali as follows:

“Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies... It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems deter-

mined by local producers and users. Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets ... Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations (Nyéléni, 2007, p. 9)."

La Vía Campesina wanted to introduce a concept opposing the neoliberal corporate-driven agricultural system and the idea of a new "green" revolution with food security as underlying concept. The intent was to radically widen the concept of food security and include the issue of which kind of food and how it is produced, at what scale and by whom (Desmarais, 2007, p. 34). The goal was to offer a framework to address needs of change on the international as well as on the national and local policy level (Harper, Arora, & Energy and Resources Institute, 2005, p. 52). The empowering of peasants to advocate for their own rights and to break free from the paternalistic embrace of NGOs is a central point of the concept and represents an important power shift within civil society (Mann, 2014, p. 6).

"Food sovereignty is the ideology that drives the countermovement actions against the dominant state and market regulation of food regimes (Perrey, 2013, p. 15)."

Since the concept was introduced it has constantly been reshaped, whereby it always reflects the various different actors involved as well as the dominant global agrifood system. The definition and the practices of food sovereignty are dynamic, just like social movement itself and they are being reshaped over and over again. This dynamic characteristic is best reflected in the Nyéléni process which was implemented in order to amplify the concept of food sovereignty and to engage a broader number of constituencies.

3.1.1.1 The Nyéléni process

Together with various peasant, environmental and advocacy groups the global Nyéléni movement for food sovereignty was created which is considered as one of the largest and most important transnational alliance of peasant and family farmers, indigenous people, fishers and shepherds, landless peasants and farm workers (Choplin, 2011, p. 9). Nyéléni is a loose network with the aim to promote, develop and scale up the concept of food sovereignty through the organization of national and international gatherings. It was formed at an international forum in Mali in 2007 and consists of organizations, movements and individuals which meet at Nyéléni fora all over the world to discuss food sov-

ereignty and related topics. The forum is supported by a diverse number of social movements, NGOs and groups like La Vía Campesina, FIAN International, Urgenci, Oxfam, Action Aid, or GRAIN⁴.

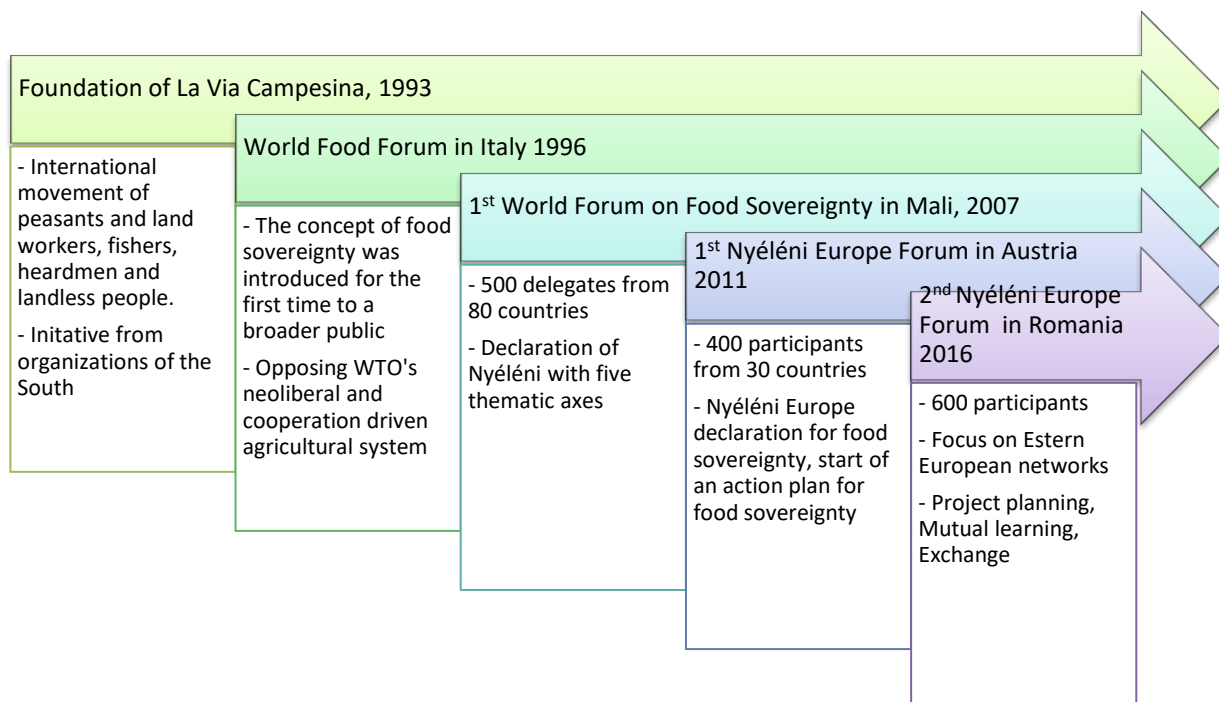


Figure 1 - The evolution of the concept of food sovereignty. Source: author's elaboration.

This process is explained here in detail with the aim to catch the dynamic, grassroots development of the food sovereignty concept. The latest and currently most cited version of food sovereignty was elaborated in a participatory process at the Nyéléni Europe meeting 2011 in Austria.

The concept of food sovereignty can be illustrated with six different pillars which state that food sovereignty: (1) focuses on food for people, (2) builds knowledge and skills, (3) works with nature, (4) values food providers, (5) localizes food systems and (6) puts control locally. These pillars are not a strict guide but should be seen as helpful guidelines to analyze the multiple dimensions of food sovereignty, as it is seen by social movements (Schiavoni, 2016, p. 18). Additionally to that theoretical framework of the concept the movement agreed on five different thematic axes to work on for the further development of food sovereignty (Nyéléni, 2011):

⁴ Further information: urgenci.net/; www.oxfam.org/; www.actionaid.org/; www.grain.org/

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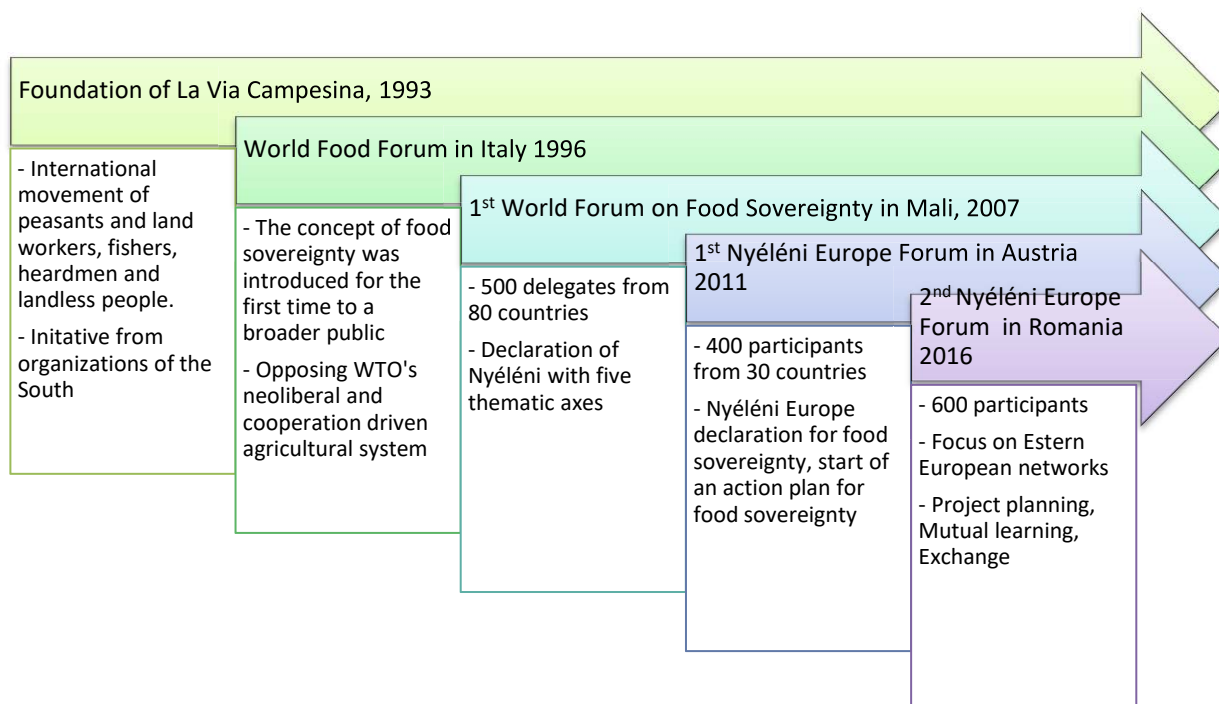


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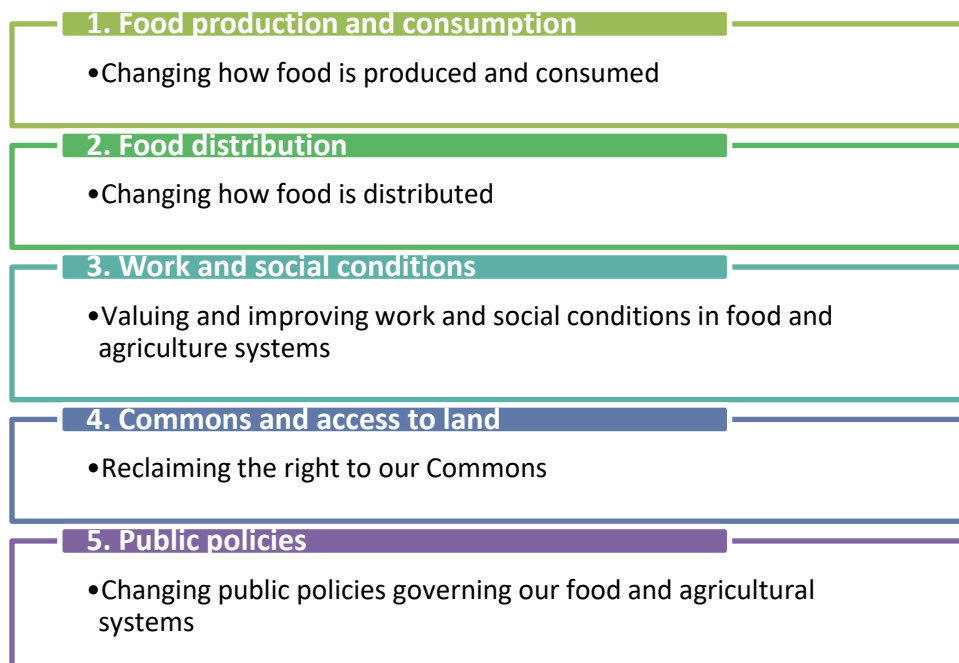


Figure 2 - Five thematic axes of food sovereignty. Source: author's elaboration.

A power shift took place within civil society organizations as they achieved direct engagements in international councils like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), regional trade councils and even state governments (Mann, 2014, p. 6). The concept was institutionalized and incorporated into the national constitution of Venezuela, Senegal, Mali, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Nepal and Bolivia (Edelman, 2014, p. 960). This incorporation processes have been discussed critically by many scholars in recent literature like Hall et al. (2015), Schiavoni (2016), Patel (2009) or Edelman (2014) and the call is getting louder to assess how and to what extent the concept might change because of the state involvement.

3.1.1.2 Critical voices

Other critics deal with the nature of the concept itself. (Ariate Jr, 2011) criticizes the broad and in his opinion therefor too vague definition of the concept of food sovereignty. Additionally, he states that in literature failures of the movement are simply not mentioned, as for example the kibbutz movement in Israel where the pursuit for food sovereignty developed towards an authoritarian system. Henry Bernstein writes about multiple critical points concerning the concept of food sovereignty:

“The grounds for that skepticism, I trust, are clear. They include a critique of any ‘peasant way’, of beliefs that ‘peasants’ practicing low-(external) input and labor-intensive farming, can feed current and projected world population, and of a failure of FS on the ‘downstream’ side

necessary to move it forward from its constitutive binary, thesis and antithesis, towards a synthesis that yields a program of 'transformation' (Bernstein, 2013, p. 23)."

The two above mentioned authors are both warning of over romanticism of the vague concepts of *peasant* and *peasant community*. But also the vague definition of *sovereign* – is it a nation, or an ethnic group – is being criticized (Edelman, 2014). (Agarwal, 2014) also talks about possible contradictions due to the broadness of the whole concept such as anticipating national and local sovereignty in the production of food at the same time, which could easily lead to a conflict of interests.

3.1.2 Social movements

According to Della Porta and Diani (2006, 20), social movements are a distinct social process with at least three characteristic features:

- Networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations,
- Engagement in political or cultural conflicts,
- Shared collective identities.

Therefore one single organization cannot be a social movement, regardless of how big it is, but it can be an important part of a movement. The ubiquitous phenomena of globalization with the shortening of space and time led to an increased number of transnational social movements. Furthermore it can be observed that there was a shift from material to non-material demands since the 1960's, which is in line with current post-modern political demands. The term "new social movements" came up to describe this form of movements (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 61).

Another contrast can be found between established, conventional styles of political participation of social or political actors (politicians, interest groups, NGO's) and the political work and protests of social movements (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). As SMO's are usually less institutionalized and not that dependent on funding compared to established parties they can act more freely and react faster on changes and certain events and incidences. In general the relationship between social movements and organizations is very complex, organizations are often part of movements and movement members can be part of an organization and so on. On the one hand established organizations provide a basis to organize movement activities, raise political consciousness and mobilize resources for campaigns and collective action. On the other hand tensions can occur because of complex power rela-

tions regarding finance, influence and dependency on donors(Desmarais, 2007, p. 23). According to Foltin (2011, p. 19) the foundation of a formal NGO aims to integrate the population into dominant structures and leads to deradicalization and co-option of movements in the long run.

In analyzing social movements it is important to remember that they are dynamic, historical phenomena and as such “are shaped by circumstance; they are contingent things, which grow or shrink in response to factors that enable or constrain them” (Dütting & Sogge, 2010, p. 3). As movements form, they go through stages of growth and fluctuation, in some cases growing constantly in strength and impact over time and in other case movements can cease to exist, most commonly when the central cause of a movement has been addressed. Other reasons for movements to cease include systematic suppression by their surrounding or internal dynamics(Horn & BRIDGE (Organization), 2013, p. 19).

The type of work and carried out action of a social movement is highly dependent on the sets of knowledge, experiences and resources available to engaged members(Woods, 2003, p. 320). Also the networks and linkages of different movements and organizations are highly dependent on its respective members. People become party of movements through their previous links and conduct collective action which leads to new links and networks (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 115).

3.1.2.1 Transnational agrarian movements

As already mentioned in chapter 3.1 the field of transnational agrarian movement research is still a young discipline within social movement analysis. It is important to consider that in scholarly literature there is no common use of the term. Some authors (Borras Jr et al., 2008a; Borras Jr & Franco, 2009; Edelman et al., 2008) use the term transnational agrarian movement (TAM) to describe for example La Vía Campesina other authors like Martinez-Torres and Rosset (2010) refer to it as a transnational social movement and Desmarais (2007) to a rural social movement.

Besides the different wording there are certain general characteristics identified for this type of movement: TAMs show a strong focus on local and regional topics with a simultaneous transnational networking. Linkages of peasants and organizations are deeply rooted and have always existed and developed over time. After World War I for example, a green and red peasant international established internationally as a response to the changing political environment. As movements always have been a reflection of the current system they developed and changes over time (Edelman et al., 2008, p. 14).

Currently there are more radical and more conservative groups, showing a broad range of political opinions, most of them identifying a counterpart to grasp around a topic and unify different actors (Borras Jr et al., 2008b, p. 187). Demands of contemporary TAMs vary from typical post-modern demands for recognition to classical demands of redistribution of land, means of production and so on. The expression “not about us without us” is an often used expression to underline the grassroots approach and to neglect a pure NGO representation and dependence of peasants (Edelman & Borras, 2016, p. 103).

3.1.3 Limitations

The specific volatile characteristics of movement organization itself and the dynamic character of the food sovereignty concept make it difficult to give concrete answers to some of the proposed questions. The concept of food sovereignty for example is mentioned to be seen as a tool as well as an anticipated goal at the same time which can lead to confusions during the research process. It is also very difficult to measure the real impact of social movements. It is criticized that research focus only on certain issues and countries and therefore the samples of social movements is not very representative (Burstein & Linton, 2002, p. 399). Furthermore social movements often operate on informal levels like awareness raising or advocacy work, where direct impacts are hard to measure.

For this thesis it has to be considered that only because the three initiating organizations (AgrarAttac, FIAN, OeBV) are highlighted they don't claim to have a special position or more power within the Austrian Nyéléni movement than others (see chapter 6.2.5 for a list of participating organizations). Highlighting these three organizations serves here only as an entrance point for the conducted research.

3.2 Theories and methods

In the following chapter the scientific context and the most common methods which are applied in analyzing the field of research are described. To provide a theoretical framework for understanding the emphasis on the concept of food sovereignty by transnational agrarian movements the food regime theory by McMichael and Friedmann is used. This section aims to locate the researched case politically and historically within the bigger picture of the current food system.

3.2.1 Food regime theory

The Marxist concept of food regimes aims to explain the current neoliberal food system which characterizes where production and consumption of food are de-linked in space and time. In the focus of

the analysis are the different patterns of how food circulates in the global economy without giving attention to the different forms of agriculture across the world. Moreover, the concept tries to identify the ways of capital accumulation in agriculture and the respective underlying global power relations (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989; McMichael, 2005, 2009).

Historically three food regimes can be identified which show distinct power relations in periods of about 25 – 40 years (Perrey, 2013, p. 7): The first food regime (1870-1930s) is characterized by colonial imports and grain exports from the north, the second regime (1950s-70s) came up in the context of the cold war and introduced new biochemical inputs. The emphasis on neoliberal politics and World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) driven privatization and institutionalization of food production marks the corporate-food regime which we are facing at the moment. This regime is characterized by a “new” green revolution introduced by multinational supermarket chains, global animal protein chains, GMO’s and an extreme monopolization. With setting up free trade agreements structural adjustment programs were embedded into world economy and therefore insulated the food system from as many democratic influences as possible (McMichael, 2009). The rising power concentration of a few multinational corporations combined with a modernist development agenda of the World Bank or the IMF leaves little space for small-scale producers and peasants around the globe. It is seen as an inevitable development that an increasing number of the rural poor is leaving primary production and migrating to urban areas (Pimbert, 2009, p. 3f). Arising social and ecological problems and rising tensions and conflicts are ignored.

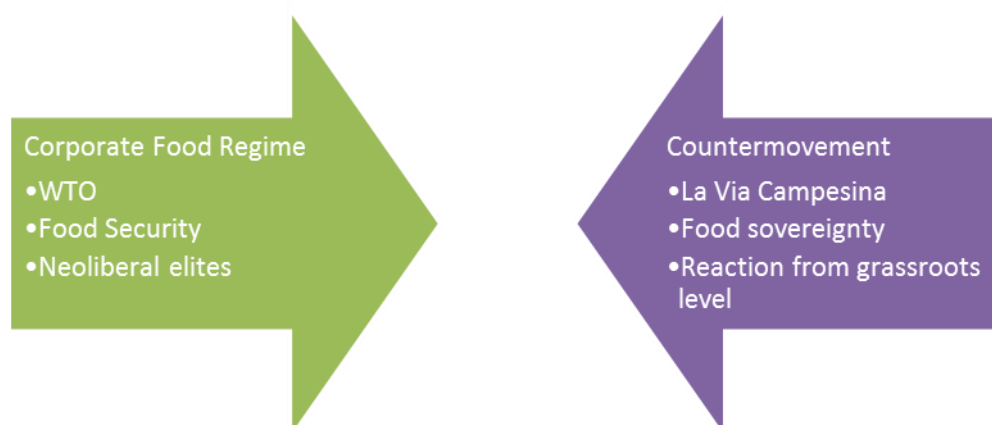


Figure 3 - Food regime theory and transnational agrarian movements. Source: author’s elaboration

Together with the respective food regime a reaction or countermovement “from below” has been evolving. It is argued that a good way to look on complex systems is when it is in crisis, therefore Friedmann suggests to: “refocus historical analysis on transitions” between regimes, where social movements act as “engines of regimes crisis and formation (Friedmann, 2005, p. 239).” In this sense the current international mobilization and rise of transnational agrarian movements like La Vía Cam-

pesina can be interpreted as a signal of a transition period. The concept of food sovereignty with its social, political and ecological dimension has the possibility to serve as the basis of influential social movements, especially in moments of crisis because then the trajectory of the current corporate food regime is significantly shaped through its resistance (McMichael, 2005, p. 290).

According to McMichael (2005, 2009) it can be observed that the tension between a strongly globalized agriculture and a locally-based but transnational food sovereignty countermovement can be described as follows:

“The food sovereignty movement is not simply about peasants, or food, rather it addresses the undemocratic and unsustainable impact of the contemporary trade and investment regime. It is about reorganizing inter-national political economy, modelling social struggle around democratic principles, gender equity, producer rights, ecological practices, and rebalancing the urban/rural divide (McMichael, 2016, p. 1)”.

This means in other words that the concept of food sovereignty is not a stable set of ideas and practices but a dynamic moving target which reflects the current situation of our system and society.

Over the past years some heavy critics have formed against the theory around the question how useful the food regime framework is to analyze the current food system, whereby methodological weaknesses (Araghi, 2003) and (Goodman & Watts, 1994, 1997). Bernstein argues that the market has fully absorbed agriculture into the neoliberal system and therefore shifts from the term agriculture to the term farming. McMichael and Friedmann both introduced social movements into their approach to widen the debate (Bernstein, 2015, p. 22).

3.2.2 Methods commonly used

The empirical methods for analyzing social movements range from quantitative to qualitative and from a macro to micro scale of analysis. The proliferation of movement studies in the past two decades caused theoretical as well as methodological advances in the field (Klandermans & Staggenborg, 2002, p. X).

Since the 1980's the method of frame alignment processes according the model of Snow et al. (1986) has been used regularly to analyze social (Carroll & Ratner, 1996; Martin, 2003; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996). A similar popular method is the case study. The detailed study of one particular case in combination with a triangulation of methods is also applied in this study and further explained in

chapter 5.2. (Larsen, 2008) for example combined the case study with the above-mentioned theory of frame alignment when analyzing rural protests in British Columbia.

Within social movement research the field of participatory research methods like participatory action research or activist research has to be mentioned. Edelman (2009) argues that in social movement analysis the borders between activists and researchers can be blurred which can have positive as well as negative effects on the output. Nevertheless, the importance of knowledge production from within a movement and strands of farmer-to-farmer informal learning networks are mentioned repeatedly (Bevington & Dixon, 2005; Choudry, 2014; Choudry & Kapoor, 2010).

Drawing a lot of attention towards methods the sampling process has to be mentioned here as well. As Coyne states, especially in qualitative research design the sampling process has too little attention although it has direct and indirect effects on the outcome. A poor description of applied sampling methods leads to a reduced reproducibility and transparency (Coyne, 1997, p. 623).

4 Theoretical framework

In this chapter I first, introduce the structure upon which this thesis is built upon. Subsequently I show how the theories and concepts explained in the previous chapters are linked with each other and how they create the framework for the analysis.

Lofland's (2009) book about case study research on social movement organizations was the basis for conducting the research questions and analysis of this thesis and for the structuring of the results. The subtitle "Guide to Research on Insurgent Realities" was used as a practical manual for the scientist. The basis of the concept is composed out of seven generic questions around movements which form the five main aspects characterizing a social movement:

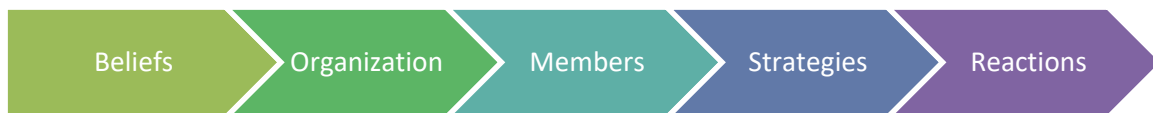


Figure 4 - Main Aspects of SMOs after Lofland

These five points pictured in Figure 4 are depending on each other and influencing one another. Generally speaking this means that on the basis of a certain set of beliefs, an appropriate type of organization will be chosen which in turn attracts a specific type of people. On the basis of their values, beliefs, experiences and knowledge a set of strategies is constituted which again cause a certain reaction.

According the posed hypothesis in chapter 2.2 the concept of food sovereignty is reflected in each of the five aspects. Besides focusing on the Nyéléni movement itself the food regime theory (chapter 3.2.1) is used to explain the setting in which movements may arise and to give a profound historical and political overview. The following Figure 5 is a synthesis of the introduced concepts and frames in chapter 3:



The food regime theory is the starting point and overall framework for this thesis. It gives a broad overview about the current neoliberal agri-food system and locates the analysis in economically, historically and politically. Within this system counter movements, like the Nyéléni Austria movement for food sovereignty, have a distinct role and show distinct concepts and characteristics. The concept of food sovereignty which is commonly used by transnational agrarian movements is meant to oppose the concept of food security which came up by key players of the corporate food regime like the WTO or IMF. For a distinct analysis of the Austrian branch of the Nyéléni movement the Lofland's model of five main aspects of movements was chosen.

Figure 5 – Framework of the theoretical concepts.
Source: author's elaboration

5 Methods

As in this thesis the opinions, motivations and underlying reasons of activists and their organizations are the main subjects examined, a qualitative approach was chosen. According to Döring & Bortz (2016, 63) “qualitative research aims to understand and interpret social phenomena from the standpoint and experiences of involved individuals.” A quantitative approach on the contrary aims to analyze the experiential reality based on variables and its relations among each other where you aim to get numeric data (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 15).

A single case study approach with a triangulation of qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion and a document analysis, was chosen for this thesis. Single case studies “provide a primarily descriptive overview of a single, usually national-level movement. The case is the movement as a whole, and the objective is to situate it in time and place, in history that is, and to say something about its beliefs or ideology, its appeal and diffusion, and its operation (Snow & Trom, 2002, p. 161).” Being a researcher and participant of the movement is a problematic balance but it can be a vantage point as it facilitates access to the movement and it might promote trust for a relaxed interview situation. Understanding and reflecting one’s own position as a researcher is key to conduct valuable interviews (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 97). The following section explains the research process in detail.

5.1 Sampling

In this research the single case study is conducted around the national-level food sovereignty movement in Austria which is called *Nyéléni Austria – Österreichisches Forum für Ernährungssouveränität*. The sampling method is considered to have major influence on the outcome of a study and therefore has to be done carefully considering sample size, method and frame (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 294).

For the **semi-structured interviews** I followed a purposive sampling approach which means that a conscious selection of a defined number of people on basis of a certain feature combination is chosen (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 294). In this case it was directly asked for one person from each of the three initiation organizations who is working on a regular basis for them. The organizations then by itself recommended interview partners on grounds of their involvement in agricultural topics and the Nyéléni movement.

Organization	Interviewee position	Educational background	Code
AgrarAttac	Activist	University degree	Interview#4
FIAN	Paid staff	University degree	Interview#2
OeBV Via Campesina	• Former paid staff	University degree	Interview#1
	• Member (Peasant)	University degree	Interview#3

Table 2 – Interview participants. Source: author’s elaboration

For the **focus group discussion** a non-probabilistic sample with a self-selection of the interviewed persons was applied. With this method mainly well accessible individuals are chosen in a relatively random selection (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 294). Therefore an email was written and sent via the Nyéléni Austria mailing list. This mailing list reaches around 600 people from whom I received 10 replies. I invited all of them and finally eight people participated in the discussion. Four of them were male and four female, in total representing seven different organizations or groups, which can be seen in Table 3:

Type of activism	Main involvement	Gender	Occupation	Code
Internship	FIAN	M	Student	F01
Paid-staff	Arche Noah	M	Student	A02
Activist	System Change not Climate Change (SCnCC)	M	-	S03
Former Activist	AgrarAttac	F	Student	A04
Board Member	NEL	M	Student	N05
Paid-staff	OeBV, SCnCC, AgrarAttac	F	Office management,	O06
Activist	SOLILA	F	Student	S07
Activist	AgrarAttac	F	Student	A08

Table 3 - Focus group participants. Source: author’s elaboration

5.2 Methods of data gathering

For this case study different qualitative survey methods were applied. The triangulation of methods was put into practice with four semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion and literature review. Starting with a case study research it is important to ask the question: what is the case about and in which environment is it embedded. Snow and Trom (2002, p. 147) define three core characteristics of case studies, including “(1) investigation and analysis of an instance or variant of some bounded social phenomenon that (2) seek to generate a richly detailed and ‘thick’ elaboration of the

phenomenon studied through (3) the use and triangulation of multiple methods or procedures that include but are not limited to qualitative techniques.”

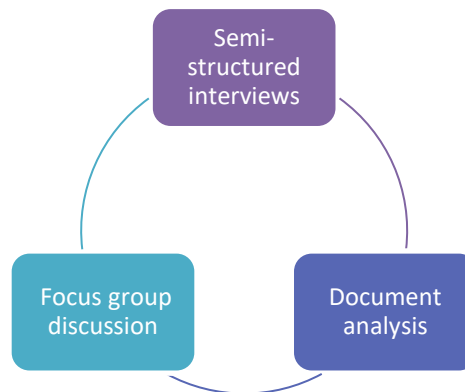


Figure 6 - Triangulation of methods. Source: author's elaboration

Semi-structured interview

Within the field of social movement research, semi-structured interviews are especially important for gaining in depth information on mobilization for and exploration of social events from an activist perspective (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 93). Open questions leave space for the interviewed person to shape the conversation together with the interviewee and to reply in own words (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 365).

For this thesis the four semi-structured interviews were conducted with the interview guideline provided in Annex I. All interviews were conducted in German as it is the mother tongue of the interviewees as well as the interviewer. Before the actual interviews were conducted one trial interview with a former activist of the movement was conducted to get qualified feedback on the questions. I included this trial interview in my further analysis as I got very valuable information and the interview questions didn't changed at all. Only the order of the questions was changed as it was the feedback of the trial interview. The interviews lasted from 55 – 90 minutes, mainly depending on the personality of the interview partner and their way of explaining things. Three interviews were conducted at the house of the interviewed persons and one was conducted in a park in Vienna.

Focus group discussion

In the next step a focus group discussion with eight participants was conducted to discuss on several issues which arose during the interviews. In this way a focus group discussion is useful to “help interpret or to develop recommendations for later action or study (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 13).” The

discussion among the participants of a focus group around the posed question is in the focus of the researcher. It is from particular interest how and if consensus around a posed question can be made and which range of opinions toward a certain topic can be identified within the group (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 359).

For elaborating the whole setting of the focus group discussion a practical handbook (Krueger & Casey, 2009) was consulted. The discussion took place in my apartment and was conducted in German because it is the mother tongue of everybody involved. The group was placed to sit in a big circle and snacks and drinks were provided to create a comfortable atmosphere. The discussion lasted 110 minutes whereby the introduction of the participants took part before as had to wait for people who came late. After a short introduction and explanation of the rules I posed the prepared questions which can be found in Annex II. For all data recordings a Samsung Smart Phone was used.

Document analysis

Document analysis is a qualitative approach in which already existing documents are in the focus of the researcher. For this case study mainly the online presence of the three initiating organizations as well the Nyéléni Austria homepage was analyzed as it is the main way of communication and interaction⁵. Additionally two brochures (AgrarAttac, 2013; Nyéléni Austria, 2014) about food sovereignty which were published by the movement have been analyzed. Key words which were applied include: food sovereignty, Austria, mission statement, history, projects, topics, events, cooperation partners, friends of Nyéléni, press, press release, publications. For the actual research German key words were used as the working language of the organizations and the movement is German. The data gathering process lasted from Mai 2016 until December 2016. The gathered material was further analyzed and coded in the same way than the gathered material from the focus group discussion and the interviews. This process is further described in the following chapter.

5.3 Methods of data analysis

For transcribing the interviews and the focus group the free software *Express Scribe Transcription Software* was used. According to Kohlbacher (2006), the approach of Mayrings qualitative content analysis fits into case study research. It is applying a systematic, theory-guided approach to text analysis using a category system to overcome shortcomings of classical content analysis. This analysis followed three mayor steps. First a reduction and summary of the given transcripts whereby similarities were summarized and the preserved content is generalized and abstracted (Mayring, 2010, p.

⁵ Analyzed homepages are: From AgrarAttac: www.attac.at; FIAN: <http://fian.at/de/>; OeBV: www.viacampesina.at, Nyéléni Austria: <http://www.ernaehrungssouveraenitaet.at/>

65). In a second step an explicatory paraphrase was used to explain and clarify the given material, which is then structured in the final step. These three steps were made with the help of the QDA-Software *Atlas.ti*.

In the common scientific practice there are two ways to identify codes. On the one hand through a deductive way starting from a given theory to develop the codes and on the other hand the inductive way where the codes were developed in the course of analyzing the given text (Kuckartz, 2007, p. 60). In practice a mixture of both methods is applied regularly where a coding plan is prepared which is then refined and complemented throughout coding (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 330). For the deductive generation of the codes for analyzing the case study the five main aspects of Lofland's analysis on social movement organization (2009) was used for choosing the codes, which is explained in detail in chapter 4. After applying these codes for the whole material, sub-categories for a further distinction were set up. These categories were chosen out of the text, thus in an inductive procedure. Additionally Saldaña (2009) was consulted for further information on coding. He states that coding is a cyclic activity whereby rarely one cycle is enough for coding everything. In this case three cycles of coding were carried out to further refine, elaborate and manage the set of codes (Saldaña, 2009, p. 8).

5.4 Limitations

The positioning of a researcher has a high influence on the quality and scope of the obtained data. Therefore the bias has to be considered throughout the whole research process (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 113). An important corrective was the master seminar where the state of the art of the research was presented and discussed four times with colleges and supervisors. The co-supervisor reviewed all questionnaires before conducting the interviews and the focus group discussion. Hidden social hierarchies or power relations were discouraged with a self-selection of focus group participants (Bortz & Döring, 2006, p. 70). The selection of semi-structured interviews reduces researcher bias because the narrative responses reflect an overall perspective of the participants and within a focus group discussion the researcher plays only an observing role in the discussion (Turner III, 2010, p. 756).

Methodological limitations might also arise from the nature of focus group discussions itself. In this case it was possible to generate a vital discussion, nevertheless two participants seemed to be quieter than the others and one or two participants talked a lot. Another point is that within a group people might not speak completely open or they change their opinion according to the group dynamic. When the focus group was discussing about internal conflicts, one participant said:

“Oh but I do realize that you just don’t know what you can tell and what you can’t. (focus group)”⁶

⁶ „Oje aber i merk schon da weiß ma gleich nimmer was ma erzählen kann und was ned.“

6 Results

In the following chapter the most important results from the semi-structured interviews, the document analysis and the focus group discussion are presented. It was not distinguished from which applied methods the results were derived because all built upon and complemented each other. Identified different opinions and contradictions did not arise out of the different methods applied but out of the different opinions of organizations and individuals engaged who participated in the research. After a presentation of the most important results these differences are further elaborated and discussed in chapter 7.

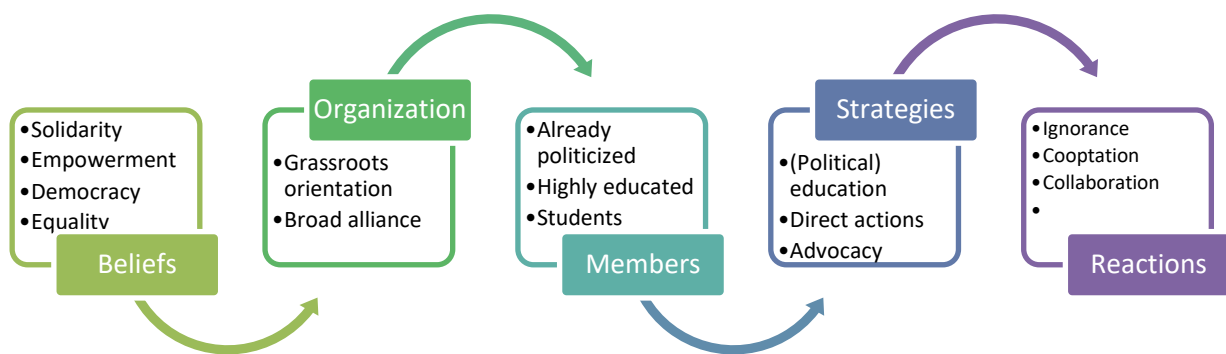


Figure 7. Five Main Aspects of Nyéléni Austria. Source: author's modification after Lofland 2009

As the graphic illustrates, the five main aspects of social movement organization by Lofland (2009) are not a random collection but depend on each other. Beliefs like solidarity, a democratic orientation and a strong collective consciousness are reflected within the grassroots organization of the movement, the type of members which are attracted, the strategies they apply and finally the reactions these strategies cause. In the following the bullet points shown in Figure 7 are discussed in detail.

6.1 Beliefs

The concept of food sovereignty was mentioned by each interviewed organization to be the framework for their work. Each of the organizations has a different thematic main focus and way of working and therefore plays a different role within the movement.

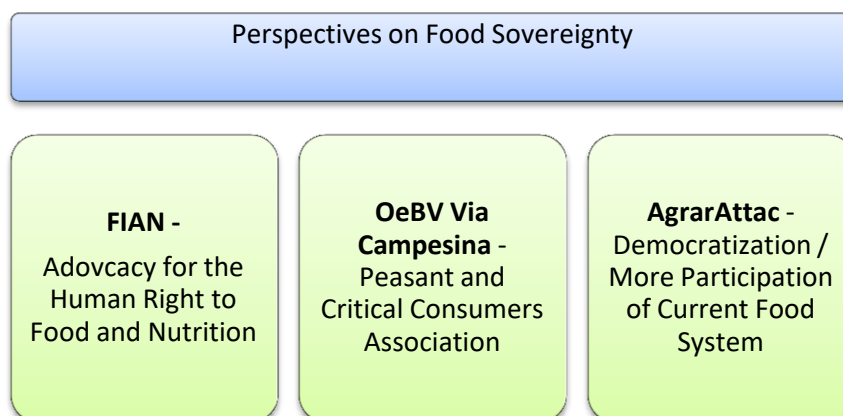


Figure 8 - Perspectives on Food Sovereignty. Source: author's elaboration

As the OeBV is strongly linked to the international branch of La Vía Campesina they brought up the concept of food sovereignty in Austria which was then discussed and reshaped in participatory processes during the Nyéléni gatherings.

FIAN is related to the concept of food sovereignty due to their work on basic human rights to food and nutrition and AgrarAttac refers to a democratic and participative control of food production and consumption which they see guaranteed by the food sovereignty concept. The OeBV sees itself as the Austrian peasant representation which gives a voice to Austrian peasants.

Self-perception of the initiating organizations

“Actually as FIAN is a human rights organization and sees itself like this, and I think this is our particular contribution within the food sovereignty movement and our support service or offered support for social movements. And we support a form of agriculture which ensures the right to food and the right to a proper living standard and the right for a proper income for persons who live from agriculture (interview#2).”⁷

“And it [OeBV] is the only organization which I know which maintained a quasi-movement-character in spite of a certain institutionalization and which takes great care to maintain it. That’s a special characteristic of the OeBV (interview#1).”⁸

⁷ „Also nachdem ja FIAN eigentlich eben aus oder ist eine Menschenrechtsorganisation und versteht sich auch als solches und das ist finde ich halt so unser ganz spezifischer Beitrag innerhalb der Bewegung für Ernährungssouveränität und das ist auch so unsere Unterstützungsleistung oder unser Unterstützungsangebot für soziale Bewegungen. und wir unterstützen eben eine Form der Landwirtschaft die das Recht auf Nahrung gewährleistet und die das Recht auf einen angemessenen Lebensstandard, ein angemessenes Einkommen für die Personen die von der Landwirtschaft leben.“

⁸ „Und sie ist die einzige Organisation die ich kenne die sich trotz einer gewissen Institutionalisierung einen quasi Bewegungskarakter erhalten hat und die ganz bewusst

„Actually something like four years so that I had the feeling that it [AgrarAttac] is more an incubator for all kind of things, e.g. Nyéléni Austria and different other things or System Change not Climate Change, where a lot of people from AgrarAttac are a part of (interview#4).”⁹

The re-democratization of the whole food system in combination with an emancipation of the people was stated as important point several times during the interviews (interview #1, #3, #4). A contradiction was identified because of the wish to further professionalize the movement, in form of a paid coordination job. A development towards stronger institutionalization was seen critically by some and no general consensus was found in the discussion.

As a more utopian vision the movement aims to transform society as a whole towards a society with social, ecologic and economic justice for all where capitalism has been abolished. Austrian “*De-growth*” and the “*Good life for all*” movements are therefor also being supported by the Nyéléni movement (interview #4, F-S03).

Solidarity, diversity and tolerance with and between peasants, retailers and consumers as well as with marginalized groups such as refugees represents an underlying principle of the movement which is also found in all its working areas.

Rural / Urban perceptions

One point which was broadly discussed during the focus group discussion was whether the movement can be seen as a rural or an urban movement or a mixture of both:

F-A02: “Probably the movement just needs a little bit more time to spread outside Vienna. –F-O06: “Actually I don’t think that it is an impulse from Vienna because I think Nyéléni was for me always a strong impulse from the OeBV and probably from FIAN.”¹⁰

drauf schaut dass sie den auch hält. und das ist eine Besonderheit von da Öbv.“

⁹“Eigentlich so, oder 4 Jahre sogar, dass man, dass ich das Gefühl gehabt habe es ist mehr so ein Inkubator für alle möglichen Dinge wie z.B. Nyeleni Österreich und verschiedene andere Dinge. oder System Change not Climate Change, da waren total viele AgrarAttacies dabei. (Interview #4)“

¹⁰ F-A02: „Also dass das vielleicht halt für die Bewegung noch ein bisschen Zeit braucht aus Wien auch noch rauszugehen.“ – F-O06: “Also ich finde ja nicht dass es ein Impuls ist von Wien jetzt weil ich finde Nyeleni war für mich immer ein starker Impuls von da Öbv und vielleicht ein von Fian.“

The self-perception of the interview partners varied, some people insisted to be a key priority to connect more with people living in rural areas for example via setting up more regional groups. Others pointed out the importance of the city and its high multiplication factor for alternative projects.

The broader Austrian context

The movement wants to represent a critical opposition against the mainstream agricultural politics in Austria as well as on the European level. A rise of general political conflicts was observed as right wing groups or parties have tried coopting and including the concept of food sovereignty and organic farming into their own agendas (F-O06). The Austrian Nyéléni movement positions itself clearly against any such developments and furthermore wants to actively combat such appropriations of the concept through right wing currents.

“My utopian idea for the Nyéléni movement is that on the one hand we can handle the extreme shift to the political right which we are facing in our society at the moment [...] and at the same time that we, what is crucial to me, are able to maintain our grassroots orientation. (F-O06)”¹¹

An overall political climate of obedience to authority and low spirit of resistance of Austrians was attested by the interview partners. Autonomous thinking of farmers is quite rare and the conservative, traditional farmers associations are strongly embedded throughout the country. The OeBV stated that this leaves only a tiny space for alternatives. Arising frustrations due to a deterioration of living and working conditions in the agricultural sector and a rapid decline of the number of farmers is noticed within the whole country. These developments are seen as a chance for the movement to attract new members (interview #1, #3, F-O06).

6.2 Organization of the movement

In chapter 3.2 some general organizational characteristics of social movements have been elaborated. To get a holistic perspective about the Austrian Nyéléni movement first, the three initiating organizations are described in detail followed by an analysis about the movement itself. The short introduction about the historic development of the single organizations helps to understand why and how the movement was formed. This is especially useful in the attempt to embed dynamic processes

¹¹ „Mei Utopie so für die Nyéléni Bewegung ist, dass man einerseits diesen enormen Rechtsruck den ma grad in unserer Gesellschaft sehen einfach begegnen können [...] und dass ma aber gleichzeitig, das ist für mich so elementare: schaffen wir die Basisorientierung aufrecht zu halten.“

such as the food sovereignty movement in a historic analysis and to show the longer historical process (Schiavoni, 2016, p. 3).

6.2.1 Demographics

	Year of foundation	Foundation in Austria	Legal status	Honorary board	Communication channels
AgrarAttac	1998 in France	2005 in Vienna	None	-	Mailing list
FIAN	1986 in Germany	1989 in Upper Austria	Association	9 members	Mailing list, magazine, Facebook, Twitter
OeBV Via Campesina	1993 in Italy	1974 in Upper Austria	Association	10 members	Mailing list, magazine, Facebook
Nyeléni	2007 in Mali	2011 Forum in Lower Austria	None	10 (NOeK)	Mailing lists, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr

Table 4 - Initiating organizations. Source: author's elaboration

Attac - Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and Aid to Citizens

The globalization-critical network Attac was found 1998 in France to oppose the neoliberal way of globalization and create a more social, ecological and democratic-controlled financial system. Attac aspires to be a movement of popular education and wants to educate and inform the public about connections of politics and economy. Originally it was founded following an article in the newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique* as a single-issue movement to promote the introduction of the Tobin tax on currency speculation (Ancelovici, 2002, p. 436). The international movement consists of around 50 national chapters on four continents. Attac works strongly with the principle of decentralization: local associations organize meetings, conferences and compose documents and campaigns.

The Austrian branch of Attac was formed in a constitutive meeting in the year 2000. The organization consists of more than 40 different groups which are either content groups, regional groups or cross sectional groups, like for example AgrarAttac or SeniorAttac. Most of the work is done by volunteers with the support of five office employees. To guarantee the greatest amount of independence, the majority of the funds come from membership fees and private donations. ("Attac Austria | The international Attac network," n.d.)

OeBV Vía Campesina Austria

The OeBV was found in 1974 in Upper Austria with the aim to provide an alternative representation group for mountain farmers in Austria. After some years they expanded their work to include family

and small scale farmers in general into their advocacy work. Already from the first day political and agriculture-specific education was an important field of work.

„That’s still a topic for the OeBV: Who wants to get active and which tools do you need therefor? How do you learn that because the majority wasn’t born with these [skills] – that you know how the European agricultural policy and the national agricultural policy interact and what the Chamber [of Agriculture] is doing, who are the most important players on the global scale and which role plays the EU with all this things. – You have to learn this and the OeBV simply tries to offer this. And then in 1996 under the buzzword food sovereignty, what in principle means the same. Actually this is integrated there. (interview#1).“¹²

The biggest part of the budget comes from public funds like the ministry of education or the ministry of health and women’s affairs and in seldom cases also from the ministry of agriculture and forestry. Additionally individual project funding like Erasmus+ are very important. A smaller part is the money from membership fees, private donations and newspaper subscriptions. Decisions are made by the honorary board which consists exclusively of active farmers in consultation with the paid staff and have to be in consensus.

La Vía Campesina became active on the international banquette in 1993 when it was founded by peasant organizations from South America, Asia, North America Europe, and Africa whereby the initiating impulse came from the global south. It was possible to connect the social struggles of five different continents and overcome the north-south imbalance and create an autonomous grassroots organization and pluralistic movement (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2010, p. 150). Since La Vía Campesina was formed the OeBV is part of the movement and changed its name to OeBV Via Campesina Austria. By August 2016 LVC states that the alliance consists of 164 organizations in 73 countries which represent at least 200 million families around the globe (Rosset & Martínez-Torres, 2012, p. 17).

¹² „Das ist nach wie vor a Thema bei der Öbv. wer will sich engagieren und was brauchen sie für ein Handwerkszeug dafür. Wie lernt man das weil damit kommt der Großteil nicht auf die Welt dass ma weiß wie sind jetzt das Zusammenspiel von EU Agrarpolitik und nationaler Agrarpolitik, was macht die Kammer was, wer sind die wichtigsten Player auf globaler Ebene. und was hat die EU mit dem ganzen zu tun. das muss man lernen. das muss man lernen und das versucht die Öbv halt einfach anzubieten. und dann 1996 unter dem Schlagwort Ernährungssouveränität was im Prinzip das gleiche bedeutet. also da ist das einfach inkorporiert. (interview#1).“

FIAN - FoodFirst Information and Action Network

FIAN international is a human rights organization which is advocating for the right of food and nutrition. It was formed in Heidelberg, Germany by a group of students who split themselves from Amnesty International. It consists of 19 national sections and individual members of over 50 different countries.

„At that time and still now Amnesty [international] is working mainly to civil, political human rights and this group wanted to work especially towards economic, social and cultural rights and especially to the right of nutrition. (interview#2).“¹³

The Austrian branch of FIAN was formed in 1989 by a group of activists in Upper Austria. Starting with solidarity letters FIAN is now focusing on professionalization of their case work where they help communities in their struggle for access to land. Therefore main funding's come from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and European project funding. Additionally they get private donations and membership fees. Decisions are made in consensus by the honorary board in close exchange with the office team. There is also an international organization and strategy plan which is elaborated with the help of the national organization and seen as a guideline for them (interview#2).

Nyeléni Austria

Individual activist from Austria have been part of the international movement since its beginning in Mali 2007 (chapter 3.1.1). It took nevertheless a few more years until the Austrian branch started their work. A very crucial event for the development in Austria was the first European Nyéléni gathering in 2011 which took place in *Krems*, Lower Austria. It was highlighted in every interview and most of the focus group participants mentioned it as an entry point or first contact point (F-A02, F-O06, F-A08). The planning of the forum started already more than a year earlier as well as certain, not coordinated activities around the topic of food sovereignty. This process and forum is seen commonly as the starting point of the food sovereignty movement in Austria.

Two years later a group of people formed again to start with the preparation of the first Austrian Nyéléni meeting. It took place in April 2014 and is seen as an important milestone for the developing of an active movement in Austria. Important regional groups formed and a lot of current projects and actions started at this forum.

¹³ „Amnesty hat zu dem Zeitpunkt und tut das auch nach wie vor, arbeitet hauptsächlich zu bürgerlich politischen Menschenrechten und die Gruppe wollte halt im Speziellen zu wirtschaftlichen, sozial, kulturellen Rechten und da spezifisch zum Recht auf Nahrung arbeiten.“



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Figure 9 - Nyéléni Austria gathering 2014 in Goldegg, Salzburg

During interview#4 the structural feature of the gatherings was highlighted as a very positive thing. For the participants of the Fora certain quotas, which are not binding but an orientation, are recommended as followed: 50 % of the participants should be women, one third should be under the age of 35 years and one third should be active peasants or farmers. The idea behind such a quota is to avoid imbalance and guarantee a certain degree of self-representation among the different constituencies.

¹⁴ <http://www.ernaehrungssouveranität.at/aktuelles/fotos/> [Retrieved: 20.11.2016]

6.2.2 Funding

The movement itself has neither a fixed budget nor paid staff and therefore has to apply for funding for each project and forum anew. The three initiating organizations are the most important source of money. The lack of a stable basic funding is considered to be a major challenge for all three initiating organizations and in the further consequence the movement itself because the acquisition of money is very time consuming and insecure which makes it difficult to plan in the long run. The number of activities and conducted projects depends – though not exclusively - on the amount of received money.

“In the association’s work the financial situation is probably always our biggest obstacle (interview#3).”¹⁵

Nevertheless all of the three organizations stated that they are keen to work as independent as possible from public funding’s and big institutions. Some groups which are organized within the Nyéléni movement are organized in a more informal way and stated that for them the invested time and skills of their members are more important than money. They want to keep the contact with money on the lowest possible level and create structures of sharing and exchange. At the end there was no common opinion about that:

F-A04: “If the financial resources are missing and if you have the prospect that you probably, that you can at least work for a small workplace. This is almost non-existing. And the people who only invest so much voluntary are not many.” – F-S03: “Well I don’t know, actually I just thought if it is the financial resources, does it has to be financial because I ask myself probably it needs a stronger solidarity network. Actually I don’t know if this might be too abstract.”¹⁶

6.2.3 Structure and Governance

For the decision making process the plenary sessions and the Nyéléni Austria coordination team (NOeK) are important to mention. Every year there is a spring and an autumn plenary session for all

¹⁵ In der Vereinsarbeit unser größtes Hindernis ist wahrscheinlich immer die finanzielle Geschichte

¹⁶ F-A04: Wenn man also finanzielle Ressourcen fehlen, dann halt auch also das ma die Aussicht hat, dass ma vielleicht damit, dass man sich zumindest ne kleine Stelle oder sowas irgendwo erarbeiten könnt.. Gibts fast nicht und die, die halt nur ehrenamtlich so viel reinstecken sind halt dann, sind halt nicht wirklich viele.- F-S03: Ja ich weiß ned also ich hab grad so ein bisschen so so gedacht hm sinds die finanziellen Ressourcen also muss es sozusagen finanziell sein weil ich frag mich so, vielleicht brauchts ein stärkeres so solidarisches Netzwerk. Also ich weiß nicht ob das jetzt nicht vielleicht zu abstrakt ist jetzt.

activists in and around the movement. Usually it is a two days event which is an important instrument for the movement to make decisions and discuss recent topics and decide about future topics and projects.

“In this case the Nyéléni-Forum should not be seen as a unique, isolated event like some other conventional conferences. It is rather the highlight of a process which began already long before the forum and which also won’t end after the forum. Participation plays here an important role (Aiterwegmair & Straub, 2017).”¹⁷

These gatherings are organized by the NOeK. The NOeK is a group of around 10 people who can apply or be nominated by any organization which is somehow related to the Nyéléni movement. An equal gender quota for the team is mandatory. The NOeK is responsible for organizational issues like organizing the plenary sessions and gatherings as well as ad-hoc decision making if needed.

Decisions at the plenum as well as within the NOeK have to be made in consent, which means that nobody of those involved has serious objections against a decision. All decisions made and also objections have to be made on basis of the actual version of the principles of food sovereignty. Detailed information about the evolution and the current definition of the concept of food sovereignty is given in chapter 3.1.1.

The NOeK structure was seen critically and too intransparent by the members but also by the initiating organizations in the beginning. There was a lack of knowledge concerning how decisions are made and with the strong claim towards a grassroots approach of the members of the NoeK nobody wanted to make any decision at the end because they felt that they don’t have the legitimacy. To react upon this critics, detailed information about the decision making processes were provided online with the invitation to everybody to participate (interview #4).

“Actually I think it is important to document the different hierarchies which simply exist right from the beginning which we managed quite well by now but at the beginning it was definitely a problem for Nyéléni Austria (interview#3).”¹⁸

¹⁷ „Das Nyéléni-Forum ist in diesem Rahmen nicht als einmaliges, isoliertes Event zu betrachten, wie manch andere konventionelle Konferenz. Es ist vielmehr der Höhepunkt eines Prozesses, der schon lange vor dem Forum begann und auch nach dem Forum nicht enden wird. Partizipation spielte dabei eine wichtige Rolle.”

¹⁸ „Also da find ichs eigentlich gscheit wenn man die hierarchieebenen diese einfach gibt besser dokumentiert von Anfang an und das haben wir inzwischen halbwegs gut hinbekommen aber das war halt bei Nyéléni Österreich auf jeden Fall a Problem am Anfang.“

During the focus group discussion it came up that most people are satisfied with the governance and decision making processes, only one activist stated that she still has the feeling that small, more informal groups are sometimes not heard enough (F-S07).

A certain concentration of knowledge happens because of a lack of communication channels and because some people are simply more active and involved than others (interview #4). The discussion about advantages and disadvantages of paid staff has a long history and is still difficult. Some people fear that having paid staff will lead to increased decision making power of individuals, to a lower grassroots connection and towards an institutionalization of the movement (F-O06, F-S03). Nevertheless half of the focus group participants stated that they would see it as a good chance to develop the movement itself and some projects and working topics further (F-A04, F-N05). For the OeBV it is additionally very important to have a strong and active peasant basis which should represent the organizations backbone.

Regional groups

In the sense of a grassroots movement it was stated as a priority to meet people where they are and build up as many regional networks as possible (interview #4, F-N05). Therefore there are four extra discussion mailing lists for the regions north, south, west and middle. As these regions are quite big and sometimes difficult to connect a contact mailing address for each federal state, where people can get in contact with the movement, was set up additionally. The decentralization and broadening of the movement were also mentioned to have a key importance for the continuity and successful establishing in the future. The groups play a central role for the exchange within and outside the movement; they try to connect with local people, groups and topics to raise awareness and exchange knowledge and experiences.

6.2.4 Communication

Internal

The most important communication tool within the movement is the mailing list. This mailing list is received by around 600 people but the exact number of subscribers is not checked regularly so this is only an estimated number. Besides the mailing list, the homepage of the movement¹⁹ provides background information and an event calendar with all kinds of events which are somehow related

¹⁹ www.ernaehrungssouveraenitaet.at

to the movement. The NOeK has an additional internal communication list as well which is not accessible for everybody. The internal communication was a point of critic several times, the wish for an additional discussion forum was addressed several times (interview #4, F-N05), others complained about too much emails (F-A04). During the focus group discussion there was a consensus about the wish for an improvement of the internal communication structures but at the same time there was no agreement about how to improve it in the future.

The Nyéléni Austria forums are the most important physical gathering points for the movement. These meetings are seen as a very important requirement for the continuity of projects and for internal and external communication. The importance of a good internal communication was mentioned several times, especially for building up a strong community spirit (F-S03, F-A04).

External

The role and the importance of media partners were especially highlighted as the mass media coverage is very little or even not existing at all. In the following table there is an overview about the most important media partners. They consist mainly of alternative, left-wing radio stations and publisher of books, newspapers and magazines.

Name	Type of media	Main focus
Augustin	Newspaper	Street paper, project to support homeless people
Biorama	Magazine	Sustainable lifestyle
Falter	Weekly newspaper	Critical, leftwing newspaper in Vienna and Styria
FM4	Radio	Alternative radio station
Frauen* Solidarität	Library, magazine and other publications	Feminist developmental information and education work
Freies Radio Freistadt	Radio	Non-commercial, critical, independent radio in Upper Austria
Lebensart – Businessart	Publisher of magazines and reports	Sustainable innovations and lifestyle, fairness, environmental protection
Mandelbaum Verlag	Publisher	Critical, leftwing publisher
Promedia Verlag	Publisher	Critical, leftwing publisher
Radio Helsinki	Radio	Non-commercial, critical, independent radio in Graz
Radio Orange 94.0	Radio	Non-commercial, critical, independent radio in Vienna
Top Kino	Cinema	Viennese art house cinema
zeitdiebin.at	Online Platform	Leftwing information network

Table 5 - Media partners. Source: author's elaboration

The movement is also represented in the social media channels Flickr, Facebook (2,055 likes) and Twitter (116 followers)²⁰. Improvement measures concerning the public relation work and thus, an increased level of attention, were mentioned in all interviews and also in the discussion as an important future topic. Although some individuals see social media critically, the overall potential and the need to be regularly present on social media nowadays was seen as high. To reach people apart from the digital world, FIAN (FoodFirst Magazin) and the OeBV (Wege für eine *Bäuerliche Zukunft* – Ways for a peasant future) publish a magazine on a regular basis for their members and any interested subscribers.

6.2.5 Nyéléni Network and Cooperation Partners

Besides the number of media partners several cooperation partners were mentioned during the interviews as well as in the publications of the movement (see e.g. Ernährungssouveränität Jetzt, 2014).

The broad basis of the Nyéléni Austria movement is reflected in the big variety of different cooperation partners according to their type of organization, the degree of institutionalization and their working topics. The type of cooperation varies from financial and/or technical support, project partnership to an informal exchange of knowledge and ideas.

The manifold actors which are engaged within the movement are for example: peasants, consumers, CSA projects, Food-Coops, worker unions, seed activists, human right activists, solidarity groups, development organizations, feminist groups, social workers, landless people, researchers, journalists, cultural initiatives, cooks, retailers, restaurants, urban and rural activists, migrant organizations, people's kitchen and all kind of marginalized people's groups. There is no formal membership within the movement and no clear principles about who is part of the movement. Therefore the following list is a synthesis of names which have been mentioned in any possible way together with Nyéléni Austria:

Name	Type of organization	Main focus
Afrique-Europe-Interact	Transnational network	Right to freedom of movement
Arche Noah	NGO	Preservation of seed diversity
Auge UG	Trade Union	Independent, green, alternative union
BIO Austria	Association	Largest organic farmers association in Austria

²⁰ Actual status: 01/30/2016

Brot für die Welt	NGO	Development aid of the evangelical church
Caritas	NGO	Aid organization of the catholic church
Demeterbund	Association	Organization of Austrian biodynamic farmers
Dreikönigsaktion	Organization	Organization of catholic children group
Erde & Saat	Association	First organic farmers association in Austria
EZA	Company	Fair trade
Feld X	Informal group	Intermediate use of unused agricultural land
Foodcoops.at	Platform	Information and coordination platform
Finance & Trade Watch	NGO	Education, environment, human rights
Grüne Bäuerinnen und Bauern	Political party	Division of the Austrian green party
IG Milch	NGO	Lobbying for fair milk prices
Katholische Frauenbewegung / Jugend	Organization	Divisions of catholic church
NEL–Netzwerk Existenzgründung in der Landwirtschaft	NGO	Access to land for beginning farmers
ÖH Uni Wien / Boku	Students Union	Representation of university students
Pro-Ge	Trade Union	Representation of production workers
Sezionieri	Campaigning group	Rights of seasonal workers
Solila	Informal group	Guerilla gardening
Stop TTIP	Campaign	Against the free trade agreement TTIP and CETA
Südwind	NGO	Development Policy Association
System Change, not Climate Change!	Movement	Climate justice
Urgency	Network	Community Supported Agriculture
Via Campesina - International	Transnational network	Peasant movement
Welthaus Graz	Institution	Developmental institution of the catholic church in Styria
WIDE	Network	Network for development policies for women rights and feminist perspectives
Wir haben es satt	Platform	Broad platform against industrialized agriculture

Table 6 – The Nyéléni Austria network. Source: author's elaboration

Regarding the topic of cooperation and networks several points were stressed. All three organizations mentioned the high importance of creating networks and cooperation with a diverse group of actors and a high number of cooperation especially in the field of social and environmental topics.

“I also think it is very important that the movements are networking among each other. It is completely stupid to exclusively look on your own topic because this is not even possible. In reality it is not divided at all (F-S03).”²¹

Nevertheless this comes along with several critical points: Problems concerning the compliance were mentioned as some, mainly more established NGO's, work tightly together with the private sector. Therefore they don't seem to work completely independent which could generate problems when cooperating with them. Cooperation with e.g. a big supermarket chain would bring money and secure the continuity of the movement but on the other hand it generates a conflict of interest and is ethically questionable (interview #2, #4). When it comes to more radical direct actions more institutionalized organizations fear a loss of funding or other consequences whereas the Nyéléni movement itself is financially independent and therefore has a broader spectrum of actions.

“In some organizations, which work very close together with the private sector, it becomes visible that at some positions that they can't react that freely and that creates of course problems and conflicts for cooperation (interview#2).”²²

Another area of tension is the balance of national and international work. As resources, both financial and personal, are limited the relation between national campaigns and international networking activities has to be balanced carefully. Two organizations (interview#1, #4) criticized that the efforts for international projects and networking seem too high compared with local and national projects. The importance and also the usefulness of the international work were questioned several times. On the other hand, when having a look on the recent history of the European Nyéléni movement (chapter 3.1.1) it can be observed that the Austrian branch plays an active and important role. The first European gathering took place in Austria in 2011 and also in the second gathering in Romania 2016

²¹ „Ich finds auch so wichtig, dass sich Bewegungen auch vernetzen untereinander. Also es ist völlig blödsinnig sozusagen nur so aufs eigene Thema zu schauen, weil das kann man ja gar nicht. In der Realität ist es ja nicht getrennt.(Fokusgruppe)“

²² Bei manchen Organisationen die sehr eng mit dem Privatsektor zusammenarbeiten [...] wird einfach sichtbar, dass man dann bei manchen Positionen, dass die dann nimmer so frei agieren können und das schafft natürlich a Probleme in der Zusammenarbeit oder Konflikte

the Austrian team was with three representatives out of fifteen an important part of the coordination committee (Nyéléni Europe, n.d.).

The ongoing political and societal changes in Europe have effects on the work of the single organizations and the Nyéléni movement itself. FIAN stated for example that they concentrate their work on the human right to nutrition more and more within Europe and also within Austria as they feel that poverty is rising. A re-sharpening of the target area and target group of the individual organizations and the whole movement might be necessary in the future. This also includes the search of new partner organizations and networks which are already working in this field.

6.3 Members / Activists

	Members (estimated)	Paid staff
AgrarAttac	no regular members - 10 regular activists	None
FIAN	200	5 (part time)
OeBV Via Campesina	250 (mainly) peasants	4 (part time)
Nyéléni Austria	no regular members – no. of activists very variable	None

Table 7 – Members. Source: author's elaboration

For the movement itself it is not possible to assess a number of members as there are no clear rules about what means joining and membership. The number of active people is highly dependent on the distinct occasion, project or event. Asking about members the interviewed organizations referred to the around 600 people who are in total on the Nyéléni mailing lists and therefor within direct reach of the movement.

Geographical reach

One point which was mentioned several times, on the level of the individual organizations as well as for the movement, is that there is a pre-existing friendship nets according the origin of members. There is an east-west decline in activities in Austria and the states Upper Austria, Lower Austria, Vienna and Styria were especially mentioned to have a high number of activists. Historically this statement is supported by the fact that FIAN and the OeBV were founded in Upper Austria and Attac in Vienna. Besides the geographic difference a rural-urban gradient is observed. One organization (in-

interview#2) mentioned also a generation gap: What is necessary to attract both younger and older activists?

Homogeneity

Members of the movement are mostly a homogenous group according to features like ethnic, class and educational background. All three organizations mentioned that their members have an above average educational background and a high number of students as members. Although a random sampling with a self-selection of participants was applied for the focus group discussion (see chapter 5.1) all eight participants have completed a higher education. Additionally the movement attracts mostly people who were already politically organized or at least interested.

“And besides the regional particularities are mostly people [participating] who are already a little bit practiced in critical thinking and who are no longer willing to swallow everything but who haven’t resigned neither (interview#1)”.²³

Mobilization

It is a big challenge, mentioned by every organization, to address new, active members and reach their potential target groups equally throughout Austria. AgrarAttac for example offers special introductions for interested people and potential new members before each plenary session. Big gatherings like the Nyéléni forums and workshops, discussion events or concrete actions are seen as an important instrument to recruit potential new members and spread public awareness for the issue.

„Then I think a lot of people just realized: Yeah we are a movement. We are a group of people which wants [to go] in the same direction and together we do can achieve something. I think realizing that was very important and actually the most important part of the forum (interview#1).“²⁴

The lack of a stable number of activists, combined with the lack of a basic funding described in chapter 6.2.2 comes along with problems for the movement organization:

²³ „Und sonst abgesehen von den Regionen-Spezifika sind hauptsächlich Leute die eh schon bissl geübt sind in kritischen denken und die nimmer bereit sind dass sie irgendwie alles schlucken aber auch ned resigniert haben.“

²⁴ „Wo ganz viel Leuten damals glaub ich klar geworden ist: Aja wir sind eine Bewegung. Wir sind eine ganze Gruppe von Leuten die in die gleiche Richtung wollen und die und wir können ja miteinander doch etwas bewirken. Dass die, das zu realisieren war glaub ich extrem wichtig und eigentlich der wichtigste Teil vom Forum.“

F-A08: "The knowledge just about what already happened should not be lost because there were always just a few people who participated somewhere and at a certain point it scatters and then it is not so easy any more to reconstruct what actually happened. I think that was... F-O06: "That was a big problem at the Nyéléni [gathering]. [...] F-A08: "There is actually plenty of documentation about content-related events or so but how concrete concerning resources or how you start something, there is very few."²⁵

The concentration and partial loss of knowledge and experiences partially from the fluctuation of activists and partially a poor documentation of fora and events is seen as challenge by activists (F-A04, F-O06). One idea to overcome the poorly developed methodology was to apply technics of the Art of hosting approach (interview #4). which is a community learning approach that "incorporates learning through practice, reflection and the intentional creation of a community of practitioners" (Quick & Sandfort, 2014, p. 303).

For long term memberships the social component was mentioned to be a very important factor. As there is little or no financial refund for the work other incentives like mutual support or skill sharing are especially important.

"Like I know it from my personal surrounding, friendships develop so when I go there because I want to see the people and the topic is only secondary. That was important to me and I am friendly with them because we have a common agenda but the people are important to me and I think a real dynamic emerges where the interpersonal matches (F-O06)."²⁶

This friendship networks and interpersonal relations sometimes come along with fights and internal conflicts. Nevertheless, within the focus group the conflict culture among was described to be on a very high level and generally conflicts are not on a regular basis (F-S07, F-O06).

²⁵ F-A08: „Das Wissen a einfach a über das was schon passiert ist, dass das nicht verloren geht bzw. weil das dann eben immer nur a paar Leute waren die dann irgendwo dabei waren ist es dann irgendwann verstreut sich das so schnell, dass eigentlich garnimma so leicht rekonstruiert werden kann was eigentlich passiert ist. Das wir glaubi schon... F-O06: Das war beim Nyéléni a riesen Problem. [...] F-A08: Es gibt schon einige also es gibt schon viele Dokumentationen also über inhaltliche Veranstaltungen oder so aber wie konkret eigentlich von wegen Ressourcen oder wie man was angeht also darüber gibts dann recht wenig“.

²⁶ " So wie i des kenn aus meinem Umfeld, is einfach dass Freundschaften entstehn also da wenn i da hingeh weil i de Leut sehen will und was nur irgendwie in zweiter Linie ums Thema geht. Des war ma schon a wichtig und i bin mit denen befreundet weil ma a gemeinsame Agenda haben aber die Leute sind mir ein Anliegen... und i find halt richtige Dynamik kommt rein was zwischenmenschliche passt.“

The importance of informal meeting points like bars, restaurants and coffee shops for recruiting new members but also for existing members to meet, exchange and build up friendships was highlighted. The interviewed parties mentioned in Vienna the *TUeWi* or the *Dezentral*²⁷ in Innsbruck as examples for important meeting points for members (interview #4, F-N05, F-S07).

6.4 Strategies

During the focus group discussion (F-A08, F-A02) participants identified two different levels of actions on which the movement acts. One can be defined as theoretical, background work which is more strategical planning, lobbying, advocacy and content work. The second area is more present to a broader public and unites the practical work which is visible to the public like direct actions, events, workshops, -projects and case work. Working areas or anticipated goals arise out of the daily life of the members and activists or are a reaction to mainstream politics like for example the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union. The scale of strategies ranges from local and regional level to international projects and partnerships.

To set up a stable movement infrastructure with concrete projects and actions, a stable number of activists and a broad critical discourse it takes time. At the moment the broadening of the movement and amplifying of the concept of food sovereignty as well as the setting up of concrete projects was stated to have priority. The issue of building alliances, on a national but also on European and international level is considered as key strategy for the future. Especially women's rights groups, environmentalists or anti-globalization movements as well as NGO's or supranational governance institutions are mentioned to be important allies (chapter 6.3.5).

Another key aspect of the work of the movement is knowledge and information. Starting with educational programs such as courses, seminars and public events, new knowledge is generated in form of conducted case studies and research. The movement published several publications around topics concerning food sovereignty (*Time has come for Food Sovereignty!* 2013, *Food Sovereignty Now!* 2014). To reach a broader public the organization of film screenings in cooperation with local cinemas is organized every year in different regions.

As already mentioned, the public relation work is considered to have a key importance to all organizations as the issues of broadening the movement with new members is a key priority. In this context

²⁷ <http://tuewi.action.at/>, <http://decentral-ibk.com/>

the movement wants to further develop communication strategies for online and offline communication.

Intervention methods like symbolic public actions, marches and manifestations, street theater, occupations, bicycle tours, open field or office days are organized mostly in irregular intervals.

As a mayor strategy to recruit new members, spread awareness and connecting existing members more effectively, setting up new projects and actions the Nyéléni Austria Fora are mentioned. At the national as well as the European level the Nyéléni Fora are the heart of the movement as important decisions are made there and position papers as well as strategy papers are elaborated in a participatory manner.

“I think the fora are the most important events or like I perceived it by now that they really boost the movement (F-S03).”²⁸

The recruitment of new members was discussed during the focus group as well as during each interview which was already discussed in the previous chapter (6.3). The wish to have a concrete strategy to attract new activists and broaden the movement was repeatedly mentioned, setting up concrete strategies could help.

According to the interviews (F-N05, F-A04, Interview#1, #2, #3) the point of strategy is highly limited by a lack of resources like time and money but also by a general lack of political tradition and fear of people to speak up.

6.5 Reactions

The point of reactions can be explained around the different group of reactors as well as type, scope and intensity of reactions: The societal reactions are due to time and resource limitations not analyzed in this study but the self-perception of the interviewed parties is examined as follows:

Reactions						
		Ignorance	Rejection	Cooperation	Cooptation	De-recruitment
3	5 The public	X		X		

²⁸ „Also ich glaube, dass die Foren sind einfach so die wichtigste Veranstaltung oder dieser Bewegung wie ich das bis jetzt so wahrgenommen habe und dass wirklich, dass da so viel Schwung reinkommt.“

	Mass media	X				
	Government officials	X			X	
	Similar SMOs			X		X
	Counter organizations	X	X			
	Beneficiary constituents	X	X	X		

Table 8 - Reactions and reactors. Source: author's elaboration

The activists feel that there is little or even no recognition of the work and the achievements of the organizations in the Austrian public (interview#1, interview #3). Some projects and topics were mentioned where the movement or an initiating organization was crucial in initiating a critical discourse in Austria, like the pension for female farmers, legal status for food coops in Upper Austria or the promotion of the human right to food and nutrition.

“Since the beginning of FIAN it can be observed that the right to food is used as a political instrument in many ways and is incorporated on different levels (interview#2).”²⁹

The mass media is hardly covering any topics or concrete actions of the movement, sometimes on local newspaper but normally it is ignored.

The reactions of similar NGOs and other social movements vary from rejections to a hardly recognition of the movement towards sympathy and cooperation. In Table 5 the Nyéléni network was displayed and with around 30 organizations within the broader network a reasonable number of civil society actors are represented. AgrarAttac stated that it happened repeatedly that people switched to another organization from within the movement, a kind of de-recruitment took place.

The OeBV states that starting their activities in 1974, there was a strong defense of the system and especially of established farmers' unions which was characterized by repressions, ignorance and exclusion of the OeBV and their members in rural areas. This changed a little bit over the years as the movement itself is now working with big established farmers associations like Bio Austria or the Demeter Bund (see chapter 6.3.5). Counter-organizations like more conservative farmers' representatives still reject to work together with the OeBV (interview#3). During the interviews it was stated

²⁹ „Seit den Anfängen von FIAN sieht man schon, dass sich das Recht auf Nahrung in vielerlei Hinsicht also politisches Instrument verwendet wird und Eingang findet auf verschiedensten Ebenen.“

several times that all of the initiating organizations feel to have a disadvantage regarding public funding due to their critical position towards mainstream politics (interview#1, #2).

Beneficiary constituencies, according to the concept of food sovereignty, peasants, land workers, fishers, shepherds, urban gardeners, women and so on, react very differently. The reactions vary from an active rejection to ignorance of the movement or to joining it. The very strong position of conservative farmers union like the *Bauernbund* is seen as a major obstacle to for reaching more farmers (interview #1, #4). Additionally it was assumed on the basis of personal experiences that the awareness level of Nyéléni Austria is very low among beneficiary constituencies (interview #3, F-F01, F-006). It was also stressed in the focus group discussion that it is important to consider how to address a certain topic:

“In my opinion, I made the experience with most of the farmers; if you try to disabuse somebody, the reaction on impulse is to shoot against it and to fight with harsh words. So I think this is useless from my own experiences (F-F01).”³⁰

³⁰ „I bin der Meinung, dass ma den meisten Landwirten sagen braucht die Erfahrung hab i gemacht wenn ma mit der Belehrungskeule kommt dann, dann wird ganz im Affekt also dagegengeschossen halt und Streit und mit harten Worten reagiert. Also das bringt einfach nix also und ist halt meine eigene Erfahrungswelt.“

7 Discussion

In the following chapter the research questions together with the underlying hypothesis which can be found in chapter 2 are discussed on basis of the gained results from chapter 6. The chapter follows the outline of the research questions whereby points that were often mentioned are highlighted as sub-headlines.

7.1 Food sovereignty and Nyéléni Austria

Hypothesis: The concept of food sovereignty is reflected in the habitual practice of the Nyéléni Austria movement. OeBV, FIAN and AgrarAttac, the initiating organizations of the Nyéléni Austria Movement refer to the same concepts of food sovereignty.

All interviewed parties referred to the same concept of food sovereignty as anticipated goal and framework for their actions. The concept is the uniting feature and common identification of the diverse member organizations. During the interviews it was stated clearly that every of the initiating organizations has its distinct entry point and working priority within the field of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is translated into reality both in an adversary as well as in an exemplary way (Lofland, 2009, p. 106). AgrarAttac focus on events and direct actions, FIAN is doing mainly advocacy work for marginalized groups whereas the executive board of the OeBV consists only of peasants which advocate on their own behalf. To investigate how food sovereignty is translated into practice, it has been attempted to relate the current projects and topics of interest of the movement (Nyéléni Austria, 2014) to the five thematic axes of the food sovereignty concept which are described in chapter 3.1.1. The diverse range of conducted projects reflects the different, sometimes very heterogeneous organizations and individuals involved in the movement very well:

Food production and consumption	Food distribution	Work and social conditions	Commons and access to land	Public policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 20 CSA farms in Austria • Promotion of agroecological principles and practices • Stress-free slaughtering • Vegan-Organic Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 40 FoodCoop's in Austria • Direct marketing • Farmers markets • Peasant driven agricultural cooperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sezonieri - Campaigning for fair loans for seasonal harvest workers • Women / Men working group • People's kitchen • Campaign: Fair prices for milk • Film festival: Hunger makes profits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gardens • Green urban commons • Guerilla gardening • Alternative ways of farm succession • Collective farming • Seeds as common good • Land occupation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigne against CETA / TTIP, land grabbing, GMO • Activism and manifestations • Political education programs • Lobbying, Studies • Case work - human rights violations

Table 9 – Current topics and projects according thematic axes of food sovereignty. Source: author's elaboration

Having a closer look on actual projects and working topics, a diverse picture of different working areas can be identified: The above mentioned projects vary in terms of involved parties, target group, scale and the current state of the art. Some are just ideas but some like the CSA network, the FoodCoops, Sezonieri or the campaign for milk are already running very successfully. Each of the different dimensions of food sovereignty, the ecological, the economical, the political and the social dimension is reflected and no distinct main focus within the concept can be identified.

Additionally the Nyéléni gatherings in Austria are organized around the five thematic axes and therefore serve as an organizational tool. The decision making process within the movement is also organized around the concept, any kind of raised objection have to be argued on basis of the concept of food sovereignty. Therefore it can be summed up that for the case of the Austrian Nyéléni movement food sovereignty is not only the anticipated goal but moreover an intellectual and organizational framework.

The food sovereignty framework can not only be applied for analyzing the movement itself but for having a closer look on each project which is conducted. For the assessment the addressed points in the Nyéléni declaration are set in relation with the FoodCoops description.

Example FoodCoops

The example of FoodCoops is further explained and analyzed as it was the project which was most often mentioned during the focus group (F-A08, F-F01, F-A02). Three out of eight focus group participants came in contact with the movement because of the membership in FoodCoop.

FoodCoops are alternative food networks of self-organized consumers. They are very different in terms of organizational structure, size, degree of participation, decision making and history which makes a further description difficult (Jaklin, 2013, p. 23). “What is striking is the integrated nature of criteria applied, often combining ecological, social and other ethical concerns with food quality, as well as the fact that informal, flexible forms of coordination and control systems based on direct relations and mutual trust are preferred to formal arrangements (Renting et al., 2012, p. 298).” The addressed social, ecological and ethical dimension is in line with the definition of food sovereignty (see chapter 3.1.1). The often mentioned counteraction against the neoliberal agrifood system, which is a key characteristic in the food regime framework (chapter 3.2.1), is also addressed in this case as follows: “Their [alternative food networks] importance should not be underestimated. They function as a symbolic critique of, as well as alternative to, the type of market-governed conversions that are central to Empire. Indeed, they may be viewed as acts of insubordination to Empire” (Ploeg, 2008, p. 270). A further more precise location of the FoodCoop project within the framework of food sovereignty is difficult as there are manifold different organizational types.

Having a look on the Lofland’s (2009) model of the five main aspects of social movement organization and comparing the project with the gathered results from chapter 6, following assumptions can be drawn:

In Austria there are at the moment approximately 80 FoodCoops documented, around half of them in Vienna, followed by Upper Austria, some can be found in Tirol, Salzburg, Styria and Burgenland. Additionally new groups are already in a constitutive process (www.foodcoops.at). This geographic pattern corresponds with the findings in chapter 6.3 that there is a regional difference in activities of the movement.

One curiosity is that mass media took up the topic already early. Newspapers like *derStandard*³¹ or *OÖ Nachrichten*³² had several articles about FoodCoops over the past years. This relatively high mass media coverage compared to other projects of the movement might be one reason for the success of

³¹ 2011-2016: 4 articles, www.derstandard.at (key word : food coop)

³² 2011-2016: 7 articles, www.nachrichten.at (key word : food coop)

FoodCoops in Austria. Secondly the project has a relatively low inhibition threshold as it is a concrete project where the consumption of food is in the focus. Pre-requirements for activists are considered to be very low:

“Actually I think that it is not necessary that everybody is aware that he is now active in the food sovereignty movement but instead it is at least equally important when people are simply on a subjective level, just somehow on a lower level getting in touch with FoodCoops or I don’t know direct selling and CSA and so on [...] And this, sorry, is probably easier on the countryside to start with this [FoodCoop] and then continue somehow.”³³

These two facts, the higher mass media coverage and the low threshold can be an explanation why this project has expanded more rapidly and successfully than other projects of the movement.

In chapter 6.5 it was stated that governmental officials mainly ignore projects from Nyéléni Austria, but not in this case. The reaction from governmental officials came in March 2016 when the chamber of commerce in Upper Austria denounced a local FoodCoop to make profits but don’t pay tax on it and therefore wanted to force them to acquire a trade license. What happened then was a surprise for activists and all involved parties. Mass media took up this fight stating and clearly positioned themselves on the side of the FoodCoop activists (APA, 2016; ORF ÖÖ, 2016a, 2016b). The green party of Upper Austria as well as the biggest organic farmers’ organization BioAustria actively supported the fight. After several round tables with government officials, activists and politicians an agreement was found (Pressekonferenz, 2016). The clear legal framework which was elaborated for FoodCoops could be a further boost for upcoming new initiatives as the legal basis is now safe. The interesting question which remains is if another project is going to get bigger and more successful how will governmental officials and the mass media react.

³³ Also i glaub dass garned unbedingt notwendig ist, dass jeden bewusst is das er jetzt in der Ernährungssouveränitäts Bewegung aktiv ist sondern dass mindestens genauso wichtig ist wenn Leute a einfach auf der Sachebene also auf irgendwie einer niederen Ebene einfach mit dem in Berührung kommen eben durch FoodCoops oder keine Ahnung Direktvermarktung, CSA und so [...] und dass das, tschuldige, vielleicht am Land a leichter ist zuerst mit dem anfangen und dann erst irgendwie weiter machen.

7.2 *Nyélení Austria – Unity in diversity?*

Hypothesis: The Nyélení Austria movement is an important player in the Austrian civil society. The movement is well organized and strongly united in diversity without any observed internal contradictions.

In this context it is important to highlight the dynamic character of food sovereignty once again. Additionally to the above discussed notion that it is a goal and an organizational framework for the Austrian movement it can be referred to as a process (Edelman et al., 2014; Schiavoni, 2016). One main characteristic of movements in general is that they are often the first to bring up new topics which arise within civil society. Analyzing social movements it is important to see them as vehicles or catalyst because “effective social movements’ lasting contributions emerge in a changed climate of ideas rather than in changed policies (Dütting & Sogge, 2010, p. 9).” The importance of movements lies in the altering of political and cultural conditions, directly or indirectly where impacts are not always directly visible and measureable but important for starting a process. However, movements also tend to move around nuances of their own mantras with complicated discourses, difficult to permeate in society (Raña Villacura, 2015). A focus group participant tries to explain this fact as follows:

“What you mentioned, the high-level [of food sovereignty itself], I would agree with you. Actually I think that already politicized people are coming. It has to do with what you want with that. You want something which requires certain preconditions. You want to sit together with people and you don’t talk about their immediate surrounding but about something what happens on a higher, political level. [...] where people who studied and are used to think in such structures do more easily at all (F-O06).”³⁴

The connection between a complex system-critical background work and concrete projects with a strong grassroots connection has to be evaluated and reshaped constantly. As movements are less institutionalized and therefore more flexible they can usually reply to newly upcoming tensions, needs and wishes of society more promptly than established parties. Depending on the culture of the political system the reaction vary between the countries. Della Porta and Diani (2006, 208) state that: “The elites in these countries [Austria, the Netherlands, West Germany] tend to recognize the legiti-

³⁴ Es ist aber natürlich dieses Hochschwellige was du angesprochen hast, das sehe ich auf jeden Fall. also ich glaub das sind politisierte Leute, die da kommen, das sind das hat einfach was mit dem zu tun was man da will. ma will etwas was sehr vorraussetzungsvoll ist. man will mit Leute zaumensetzen und ned über ihr unmittelbares Lebensfeld reden sondern über etwas was auf einer höheren politischen Ebene passiert[...] wo si halt Leute die studiert haben und die gewohnt sind in solchen Strukturen überhaupt zu denken sich halt leichter tun.

macy of interests lying outside the party system, knowing that the movement of today may be the interest group of tomorrow.” This assumption is also reflected in the statement of an interviewee also followed:

“And this is, mainly on higher level agricultural policy, quite valued. They know that it is important, that a critical opposition speaks up which is not in a political party. (interview#1).”³⁵

That kind of recognition has not only positive effects as it was stated that in practice some ideas get co-opted by the system without any kind of reward for the actual initiators. This point was stated several times during the interviews (interview #1, #2, #3) and is seen as a mayor point of demotivation of members. Keeping the food regime framework in mind, it is a normal and understandable reaction of the dominant system trying to first de-radicalize and then incorporate such concepts and movements into the neoliberal system. Green washing is only one expression which came up in this context in the past view years. Although there is no direct funding of the government project funds from distinct ministries are important sources of money for FIAN as well as the OeBV (see chapter 6.2.1).

It was discussed if and how the changed political climate, which was attested by Pelinka & Rosenberger and also in interview#1, may affect the attraction of potential new members and the broadening of the movement in general. On the one hand a change towards more unconventional forms of political participation is positive for each kind of civic society initiative. This trend also comes along with a higher feeling of insecurity and frustration and does not automatically mean new members for Nyéléni Austria, but for example for right wing movements. Therefore it was simultaneously described as a chance as well as a big threat for the future during the focus group discussion (F-O06) and interview#1.

7.2.1 Values and Beliefs

Regarding the point of believes the heterogeneity of the different entry points or the main focus of the different actors within the movement towards food sovereignty was seen as a chance and described positive.

³⁵ Und das wird [...] vor allem auf der höheren Ebene in der Agrarpolitik durchaus geschätzt. Die wissen, dass das wichtig ist dass es sozusagen eine kritische Opposition ist die den Mund aufmacht und nicht in einer Partei ist.“

“I hope that it continues like this, that within the movement the different approaches just remain and that we are tolerant in this regard (F-S07).”³⁶

Values like empowerment, solidarity, diversity and tolerance, which were collectively identified as underlying basis for the movement, are so-called post-materialistic values and are characteristic for new social movements (see chapter 3.1.2). Also materialistic values like a fair income for peasants, family farms and fair wages for seasonal workers are on the agenda. This set of values with a mixture of materialistic and non-materialistic values is corresponding with the values attested to be typical for transnational agrarian movements (Edelman & Borras, 2016, p. 4).

Within the Nyéléni Austria movement a plurality of organizational forms, from more radical groups with loose organizational tiers to formal organizations, exists. Although not representative for the whole movement the three initiating organizations display the different degrees of professionalization. AgrarAttac is only a loose group of activists without any legal status whereas FIAN and the OeBV are legal associations with an own office, paid staff and concrete memberships. “Even though social movements do not equate with the organizations active in them, organizations often play very important roles within them (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 137).” Unsurprisingly the wish for a paid coordination staff for the Nyéléni Austria movement, which would represent a step towards further professionalization, was discussed controversy during the focus group discussion without concrete ideas or consensus. One activist stated that:

“I made the experience that people who are very movement-orientated, who don’t think that much within institutional structures lose out very often. And I think from movement-politics view it is a problem. I have observed that it works like that already several times and that then frustration arises (F-O06).”³⁷

Historically this institutionalization debate is a shifting terrain: When the first transnational agrarian movements came up, one major point was to shift from NGO-solidarity dependence to a self-representation of peasants (Edelman & Borras, 2016, p. 112). With the development of the transnational Nyéléni movement and along with it, the broadening of the movement in form of including NGOs from very different fields, the traditionally strong rejection of NGOs was mitigated. Neverthe-

³⁶ “I wünsch ma a das so weitergeht und dass a innerhalb der Bewegung dass die unterschiedlichen Zugänge einfach bleiben und dass man da tolerant ist.”

³⁷ I hab halt da den die Erfahrung, dass Leute die sehr bewegungsorientiert sind, die ned so sehr in institutionellen Strukturen denken da ganz oft den Kürzeren ziehen und das find ich halt bewegungspolitisch a Problem. Also das hab ich schon öfter beobachtet, dass das so funktioniert und dass dann Frustrationen gibt.

less different opinions on the future development of the movement can still be observed in the Austrian case. Several general assumptions for distinguishing agrarian movements and NGOs were developed and the Austrian movement is located within this frame as followed (Borras Jr, 2008, p. 207):

NGO	Movement	Nyéléni Austria
Can't represent rural poor	Only representation of rural poor	Disagreement among activists about this point
Led by middle-class intellectuals	Led by poor peasants	Mostly middle-class intellectuals, some peasants
Bureaucratic, undemocratic	Non-bureaucratic, democratic	Non-bureaucratic, democratic
Funds	No funds	No funds
Paternalistic	Not paternalistic	Not paternalistic
Conservative	Radical, employ direct action	From conservative to radical

Table 10 –NGO – movement comparison. Source: author's modification after Borras Jr.

In Table 10 the attempt was to locate the Nyéléni Austria movement within the NGO – movement concept. Borras' scheme represents only an orientation for a categorization because in reality there are plenty of very different movement organizations. It is shown that Nyéléni Austria is more likely to be considered as a movement but also shows similarities with a NGO organization, especially when considering the point of participants, representation or actions. Just as the variety in different organizational characteristics, the organizational change and its development over time don't follow a single model. Although an institutionalization is considered to be the most likely strategy for many movements which has already survived for a certain time but there is always also the possibility of cessation or radicalization of a movement (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 151).

7.2.2 Activists

The above mentioned point of self-representation of peasants is contradictory to which was found out in this study. Only the OeBV stated their intensive work with peasants as a basis of the organization whereas FIAN and AgrarAttac stated to have mainly highly educated members from urban areas which correspond with typical NGO staff. Unsurprisingly the OeBV stated also that they are afraid to lose the grassroots connection of the movement (interview#1). Another point which was stressed several times during the interviews (interview #1-#4, F-S07, F-N05) was the strong regional differences among the active members with a significant east-west decline in activities. Lofland tries to explain this difference as follows:

“The reasoning here is that proximity and social homogeneity increase the physical and psychological ease of interaction, which in turn facilitates collective action of all kinds, including new SMOs (Lofland, 2009, p. 185).”

Another explanation is addressed by Woods as he points out that the national scale might be to overrated and “subnational regional contexts can be equally significant in influencing the political socialization of participants (Woods, 2003, p. 323).” When analyzing reasons for the participation in movements the national scale as level for analysis seems simply too big. Local politics and civil society structures have to be analyzed further for an accurate analysis of the regional imbalance of activities within Austria.

Pre-existing friendship nets, communication infrastructure or any other type of already existing common history facilitates the establishment of a social movement (Lofland, 2009, p. 186) as well as a long-term engagement of activists (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 134). In turn, linkages between different groups or movements are created by individuals who are part of different groups. This fact is observed in the east-west decline of activities of the Nyéléni Austria movement. Within the focus group discussion it was confirmed that friendship ties facilitate participation and long-term membership in a distinct movement (F-O06).

This is also one reason why some people are very present in the movement as they are sometimes not just part in only one organization or project. The big danger of this fact is a possible burnout of active members, especially when planning a big event, which was described in the literature as well as in the conducted interviews (interview#4) (Lofland, 2009, p. 239). Such an overstressing of individual is a sign of structural problems which has negative effects on the individual as well as organizational level, as it easily leads to a concentration of knowledge and power.

Taking these things into account, the recruitment of new members was one of the things which were stated most often during data gathering (interview#1-4, F-F01, F-A02, F-N05, F-O06). The wish to find new members and reach broader societal groups is also very important for a long-term continuity of the movement:

“Major portions of the activities of most SMOs in most movements most of the time are dependent on a rich infusion of in-kind donations(Lofland, 2009, p. 166).”

Donations in kind can be in form of work, participation, lifestyle as well as goods and services according to the special skills of the members. Thus, the lack of basic funding, which was stated several times (interview#1-#4, F-A04, F-N05) as a major challenge for the movement, could be met with a distinct and stable number of activists. Therefore the wish to attract new activists seems even more reasonable and important.

The general shift in the Austrian society towards the participation in more informal political activities is an opportunity for reaching new activists (Pelinka & Rosenberger, 2007, p. 94). A broad interpretation of the concept of food sovereignty might additionally help to reach a broad variety of potential new members but on the other hand a dilution of the term is also feared. The current political situation which comes along with a rise in frustration and insecurity in the farming sector is seen as an opportunity to reach more people, as disappointment with the established parties seems to be increasing (interview#1, #3).

7.2.3 Strategies

The type and range of strategies is closely linked to the points of beliefs, organization and members. Strategies are either actions which are undertaken to achieve the goals of a movement, in this case it would mean for example to reach food sovereignty, or to fulfill secondary matters like strategies for finance or organization of members (Lofland, 2009, p. 257f). The heterogeneity of agrarian movements is well reflected in the very broad repertoire of strategies which makes an exact classification difficult. Having a look on the concrete projects and the main objectives, the basic strategies for reaching them can be identified. One big set of strategies was identified around the topic of knowledge, education and information of the society. According to Lofland (2009, 261) the main objective of these strategies is a societal manipulation and a personal transformation. Furthermore it was observed that the strategies of Nyéléní Austria are a mixture of attrition strategies as well as frontal assaults, they are rather overt than covert, aiming local amelioration (of social conditions) and consist of nonviolent actions which are rather educative and conversionist.

The selection of strategies is depending on several factors. During the interviews a lack of basic funding was mentioned to limit the scope and type of strategies and conducted projects, in a similar way to the lack of a stable group of activists (interview#1, #4). Strategies are closely linked to the values, experiences and knowledge of the members and are influenced by society. The national political culture, historical traditions and the spirit of the time – the *Zeitgeist* – play a vital role in the election of strategies (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 206). The Nyéléní Austria movement is mainly choosing little confrontational and seldom illegal strategies like occupation of blockades but instead choose

educational strategies or direct actions which are less radical. Nevertheless some organizations have been part of more radical actions like land occupations or a blockade but there is no general consensus upon it, and some organizations are not supporting this kind of actions (interview#4).

Movement and media

A group of reactors which was discussed on intensively was the Austrian mainstream and mass media which nearly completely ignores the movement. It is an important point to consider as “pluralism of the mass media and the richness of meso-level media emerge as important conditions for the spread of movement messages (Della Porta & Diani, 2006, p. 222).” Nyéléni is hardly present on the mass media at all and therefore created strategies to overcome this shortage in with own social media channels and cooperation with small, alternative media partners (chapter 6.2.4).

The use of alternative communication platforms is considered as important point (interview #2, #4, F-S03, F-O06). The role of the so-called social media channels including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and so on are strongly rising and the topic has been addressed by all interviewed parties as an important issue. It represents a tool to overcome the hegemony of mainstream media and therefore can be seen as a re-appropriation of the

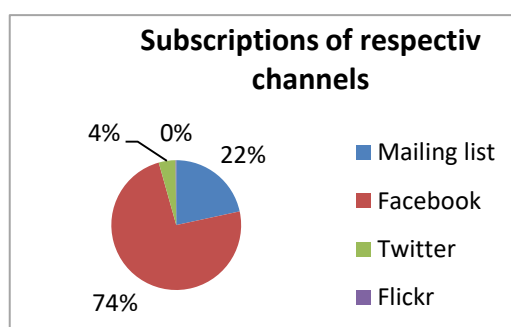


Figure 10 - Media channels. Source: author's elaboration

public sphere. Nevertheless in scholar literature social media is discussed controversial, arguing that greater access to information does not automatically lead to an increase in active engagement of people (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 7). In this context Morozov introduced the term “slacktivism” – a type of activism for slackers which he describes as a feel good but at the end often useless internet activism (Morozov, 2011). Another field to consider are internal communication dynamics which may change towards the backstage of social media like Facebook chats and groups and through instant messaging services like WhatsApp (Gerbaudo & Treré, 2015, p. 869). Nevertheless the structural features of social media like the easy accessibility, cheapness and functionality correspond with the needs of social movements (Voigt & Kreiml, 2011, p. 7).

Figure 9 underlines the notion of the importance of social media within the Nyéléni Austria movement as they represent around 80 % of total subscribers compared to the 20 % of subscribers of the more traditional digital communication tool, the mailing list. Keeping in mind the above mentioned limitations, social media represents a cheap and easy way in communicating internally and externally. The combination with more traditional ways of communication like mailing lists but also non digi-

tal communication can facilitate the broadening of the movement in the future. A mentioned generation gap as well as different opinions about social media could lead to further discussions in the future if the social media channels are pronounced in the future (interview#2).

8 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to analyze if and how the Nyéléni movement in Austria have incorporated the concept of food sovereignty into their habitual practices as well as their organization. The important role of food sovereignty as underlying concept and anticipated goal was confirmed throughout the interviews as well as an analysis of their actions and carried out projects. The work introduced the manifold already conducted projects and current topics whereby it can be assumed that the discursive hegemony of the conservative agricultural representatives in Austria is at least being challenged. A strong interconnection between the concept of food sovereignty and agrarian movements can be observed for this case, the opinion and ideas how to come there are nevertheless more diverse. With the constant attempts to amplify the concept of food sovereignty and to engage new constituencies in the movement a major challenge will be to maintain the strong grassroots connection while building political power.

“Talking the talk is not the same as walking the walk.” – American proverb

Agrarian movements are new phenomena in Austria, their potential and limitations as well as internal dynamics are not known. There is a general lack of research on transnational agrarian movements therefore this research adds to the limited body of agrarian movement analyses

In Europe as well as in the Americas civil society is (re)emerging as important driver for changing the agri-food system (Renting et al., 2012, p. 304). Within the last two decades a shift towards an increased participation in informal political activities in Austria has been observed, which offers an opportunity for Nyéléni Austria to grow and establish as important player in civil society (Pelinka & Rosenberger, 2007, p. 94). Nyéléni Austria is still a young movement, which managed to set up a nationwide active movement for food sovereignty in only a few years. It is a political project aiming at agricultural and societal change with deeper historical roots in Austria, reflected by the history of the three initiating organizations AgrarAttac, FIAN and OeBV Vía Campesina. Although it is difficult to measure the direct output or the influence of the Nyéléni Austria movement, the formation of an active movement itself is already an important contribution towards the opening up of spaces - physical as well as theoretical - for social experiments and critical discourses around food and agriculture in Austria. This development towards more informal ways of political participation together with the ongoing challenging of the hegemony of traditional mass media through social media channels represent good preconditions for a further establishment.

High efforts have been made by the movement to overcome internal contradictions, to link highly heterogeneous groups and to build even cross-border networks. The current strategies aim mainly local or regional changes but the strong embeddedness within European and international movements and organizations is also important to consider. Even within the small country of Austria the movement faces difficulties in attracting people from different social origins, ethnicities, political opinions and regions. A transnational mobilization seems even harder with the additional language, cultural and historical differences. The very broad nature of the food sovereignty concept can be an advantage but therefore also a certain amount of contradictions might always remain within agrarian movements no matter how the movement will develop (Borras Jr et al., 2008b, p. 199).

Additional fields of conflict like the question about the degree of institutionalization or the concentration of knowledge among few activists were identified, which have to be discussed further to guarantee a continuity of the movement. As the social dimension of movements is crucial, a stable communication as well as physical and intellectual spaces for an exchange and personal development is important. Current attempts to co-opt and integrate the concept within national constitutions are seen critically by many scholars as well as activists in Austria and worldwide. The process of incorporation of certain ideas is nevertheless a very natural development as according to McMichael and Friedmann ideas of social movements have always been appropriated into the dominant food regime to maintain corporate control. "All social movements are by their nature decentred multi-leadered [sic], amorphous and often contradictory (Woods, 2003, p. 324)." - Achieving a convergence in diversity within the agrarian movements and a simultaneous clear demarcation of the agricultural mainstream will be the internal challenges for the future.

Recommendations for further research

As the field of academic research on agrarian movements is limited there would be a great variety of options to continue working on the topic. According research design: This case study focused only on Austria but as the movement is strongly interlinked with the European Nyéléni network a more international focus would be useful. A different idea would be to focus on a more transdisciplinary approach and include a higher number of civic society initiatives from Austria like urban movements, marginalized people movements and so on. It would be also interesting to dig deeper into certain aspects of the movement, for example a *Value-Belief-Norm Theory* (Stern, Dietz, Abel, Guagnano, & Kalof, 1999) could be applied to assess why people are supporting social movements in Austria or to follow Diani and analyze the network nature of movements (Diani, 1995).

A final important point would be to ask political decision-makers in Austria and agricultural professionals outside the movement. Participatory research should not only focus on people who are for a certain cause but also people who are against it as we learn from our critics. More generally speaking it should be asked: Which potential does the concept of food sovereignty has to challenge the root causes of hunger?

9 Abstract and short summary

Transnational agrarian movements are on the rise as a response to the current multiple crises within the agri-food sector. Their internal dynamics and external effects are too little examined and their ability to scale up and broaden concepts like food sovereignty is not understood fully as they have diverse cultural, historical and political backgrounds. This master thesis examines the case of the Austrian branch of the transnational Nyéléni movement for food sovereignty. During the last decade a greening of the mainstream agriculture in Austria took place which has left only little space for more radical alternatives. Nevertheless a small countermovement has been growing during the last few years. Taking a closer look at the three initiating organizations Attac, FIAN and OeBV Vía Campesina the thesis aims to describe the Austrian Nyéléni movement itself using the food regime and the social movement framework. A single case study including a triangulation of methods with semi-structured expert interviews, a focus group discussion with activists and a document analysis was conducted. The thesis identifies how the concept of food sovereignty is translated into the habitual practices of the movement. On the basis of Lofland's model of five main aspects of social movements the underlying beliefs, the movement organization as well as their members and strategies and the reactions from outside are elaborated. The study contributes to a better understanding of the very heterogeneous field of transnational agrarian movements. Finally, also addressed are the limitations of the current Austrian Nyéléni movement their internal contradictions and its possible contributions towards the transformation of the agri-food system.

Keywords: Transnational agrarian movements, Austria, food sovereignty, Nyéléni, food regime theory, social movements

9.1 *Deutsche Kurzzusammenfassung*

Transnationale agrarische Bewegungen, als Antwort auf die multiple Krise des Agrar- und Ernährungssystems, befinden sich im Aufwind. Aufgrund ihrer diversen kulturellen, historischen und politischen Hintergründe sind internen Dynamiken und externen Effekte zu wenig analysiert und ihre Fähigkeit, Konzepte wie Ernährungssouveränität zu vergrößern und zu verbreiten, ist nicht geklärt. Diese Masterarbeit untersucht die österreichische Ausprägung der transnationalen Nyéléni Bewegung für Ernährungssouveränität. Während des letzten Jahrzehnts fand eine Ökologisierung der konventionellen Landwirtschaft in Österreich statt, was dazu führte, dass radikaleren Alternativen nur wenig Platz blieb. Trotzdem ist in den letzten Jahren eine kleine Gegenbewegung gewachsen. Durch eine fundierte Analyse der drei initiiierenden Organisationen Attac, FIAN und OeBV Vía Campesina versucht die Arbeit die Nyéléni Bewegung im Food Regime und im Ernährungssouveränitäts Framework zu untersuchen. Eine Einzelfallstudie bestehend aus einer Methodentriangulation mit teilstrukturierten ExpertInneninterviews, einer Fokusgruppen Diskussion mit AktivistInnen und einer Dokumentenanalyse wurde durchgeführt. Die Arbeit zeigt, wie das Konzept von Ernährungssouveränität in der alltägliche Praxis der Bewegung umgesetzt wird. Anhand Lofland's Modell der fünf Hauptaspekte sozialer Bewegungen wurden die zugrundeliegenden Überzeugungen, die Organisation der Bewegung ebenso wie deren Mitglieder und Strategien und die Reaktionen von außerhalb ausgearbeitet. Die Arbeit trägt zu einem besseren Verständnis des sehr heterogenen Feldes von sozialen Bewegungen bei. Schlussendlich werden die Grenzen der derzeitigen Nyéléni Österreich Bewegung, interne Widersprüche sowie mögliche Beiträge zur Transformation des Agrar- und Ernährungssystems besprochen.

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11 Appendix – Interview guideline

Providing context: I am currently writing my master thesis on social movements in Austria and therefore I have a look on the food sovereignty movement. Additionally I want to research and compare the three initiating organizations of the Austrian FS movement (FIAN, Attac, ÖBV) to get a rich picture of the movement.

Pre-Questions: Is it ok for you if I record the interview? Is it ok if I mention the name of your organization in the master thesis?

1. First, I want to ask you some basic data:

	Foundation	No. of members	Relation paid / Unpaid work	Finance	Cooperation in AUT / EU	Membership	Decision making
Attac							
FIAN							
ÖBV							

1. How has the organization occurred?
2. What are the aims of the organization?
 - a. Possible follow up: Which changes do you perceive for agriculture and society?
3. How has the work changed over the years?
4. How do you choose your thematic focus (e.g. your campaigns)?
5. What are the biggest challenges what you have to face? / And your biggest success?
6. What would you need to strengthen your organization on a local, national and international level?
7. Who are your members?
 - a. Possible follow up: Which strategies do you pursue to reach people?
8. How do you want to develop in the future?
 - a. Possible follow up: Do you have concrete strategies?
9. How do you see the role of the other initiating organizations (FIAN, OeBV, and AgrarAttac)?

12 Appendix II - Focus group discussion

Providing context: I am currently writing my master thesis on social movements in Austria and therefore I have a look on the food sovereignty movement. I interviewed the three initiating organisations of the Austrian FS movement (FIAN, Attac, ÖBV) to get a rich picture of the movement. Now in a second step I would like to discuss the questions with you also, to get an activist point of view. The data will be treated 100% anonymous trustworthy.

Pre-question: Is it ok for everybody if I record the discussion? Is it ok if I mention the name of your organization in the master thesis?

During the discussion please make sure to stick to following general rules:

- *Don't interrupt each other,*
- *be nice*
- *don't speak too softly and*
- *only talk one after one.*

1. How did you become part of this movement?
 - Possible follow up: Why especially this organization / movement / etc.?
2. What are the biggest difficulties the movement is facing at the moment?
3. How do you see the division of roles between the different actors and organizations?
 - Possible follow up: Where are hierarchies?
4. How does the movement appear in the Austrian public?
 - Possible follow up: Which reaction does it stress?
5. How will the Austrian Nyéléni movement develop in the next years?
 - Possible follow up: Do you see a positive or negative future?
6. Are there any more aspects which we haven't talked about yet and you want to speak about?

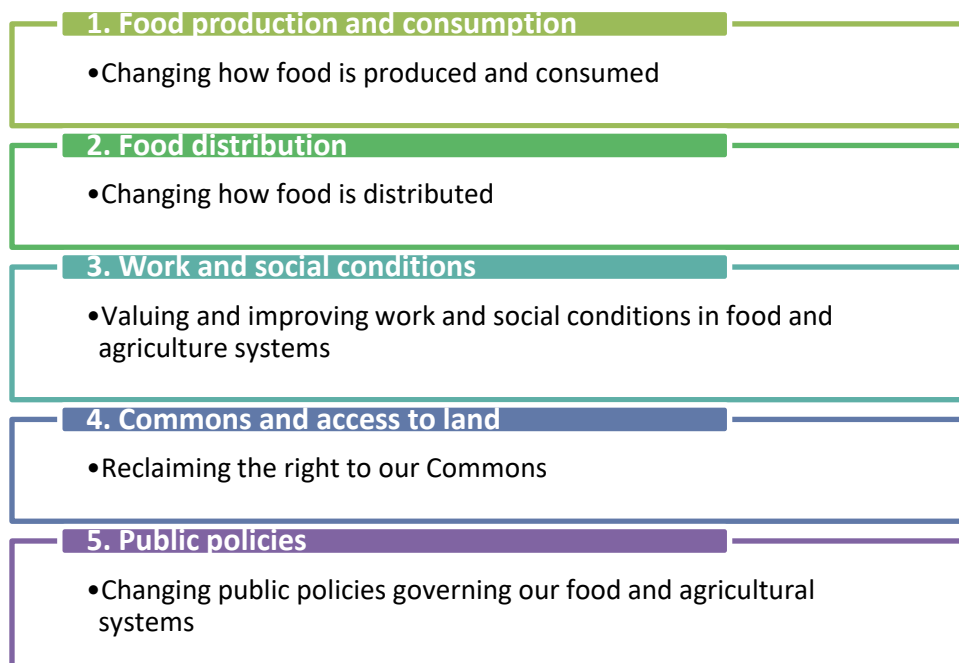


Figure 2 - Five thematic axes of food sovereignty. Source: author's elaboration.

A power shift took place within civil society organizations as they achieved direct engagements in international councils like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), regional trade councils and even state governments (Mann, 2014, p. 6). The concept was institutionalized and incorporated into the national constitution of Venezuela, Senegal, Mali, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Nepal and Bolivia (Edelman, 2014, p. 960). This incorporation processes have been discussed critically by many scholars in recent literature like Hall et al. (2015), Schiavoni (2016), Patel (2009) or Edelman (2014) and the call is getting louder to assess how and to what extent the concept might change because of the state involvement.

3.1.1.2 Critical voices

Other critics deal with the nature of the concept itself. (Ariate Jr, 2011) criticizes the broad and in his opinion therefor too vague definition of the concept of food sovereignty. Additionally, he states that in literature failures of the movement are simply not mentioned, as for example the kibbutz movement in Israel where the pursuit for food sovereignty developed towards an authoritarian system. Henry Bernstein writes about multiple critical points concerning the concept of food sovereignty:

“The grounds for that skepticism, I trust, are clear. They include a critique of any ‘peasant way’, of beliefs that ‘peasants’ practicing low-(external) input and labor-intensive farming, can feed current and projected world population, and of a failure of FS on the ‘downstream’ side

the analysis are the different patterns of how food circulates in the global economy without giving attention to the different forms of agriculture across the world. Moreover, the concept tries to identify the ways of capital accumulation in agriculture and the respective underlying global power relations (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989; McMichael, 2005, 2009).

Historically three food regimes can be identified which show distinct power relations in periods of about 25 – 40 years (Perrey, 2013, p. 7): The first food regime (1870-1930s) is characterized by colonial imports and grain exports from the north, the second regime (1950s-70s) came up in the context of the cold war and introduced new biochemical inputs. The emphasis on neoliberal politics and World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) driven privatization and institutionalization of food production marks the corporate-food regime which we are facing at the moment. This regime is characterized by a “new” green revolution introduced by multinational supermarket chains, global animal protein chains, GMO’s and an extreme monopolization. With setting up free trade agreements structural adjustment programs were embedded into world economy and therefore insulated the food system from as many democratic influences as possible (McMichael, 2009). The rising power concentration of a few multinational corporations combined with a modernist development agenda of the World Bank or the IMF leaves little space for small-scale producers and peasants around the globe. It is seen as an inevitable development that an increasing number of the rural poor is leaving primary production and migrating to urban areas (Pimbert, 2009, p. 3f). Arising social and ecological problems and rising tensions and conflicts are ignored.

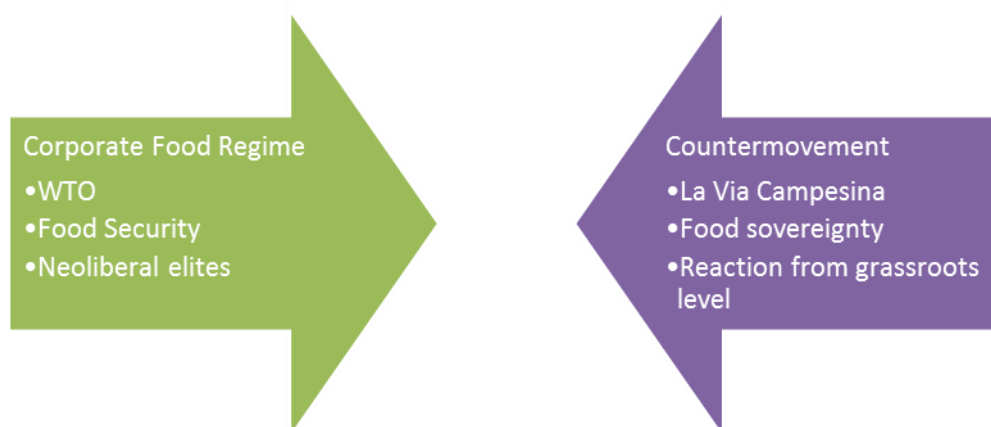


Figure 3 - Food regime theory and transnational agrarian movements. Source: author’s elaboration

Together with the respective food regime a reaction or countermovement “from below” has been evolving. It is argued that a good way to look on complex systems is when it is in crisis, therefore Friedmann suggests to: “refocus historical analysis on transitions” between regimes, where social movements act as “engines of regimes crisis and formation (Friedmann, 2005, p. 239).” In this sense the current international mobilization and rise of transnational agrarian movements like La Vía Cam-

6 Results

In the following chapter the most important results from the semi-structured interviews, the document analysis and the focus group discussion are presented. It was not distinguished from which applied methods the results were derived because all built upon and complemented each other. Identified different opinions and contradictions did not arise out of the different methods applied but out of the different opinions of organizations and individuals engaged who participated in the research. After a presentation of the most important results these differences are further elaborated and discussed in chapter 7.

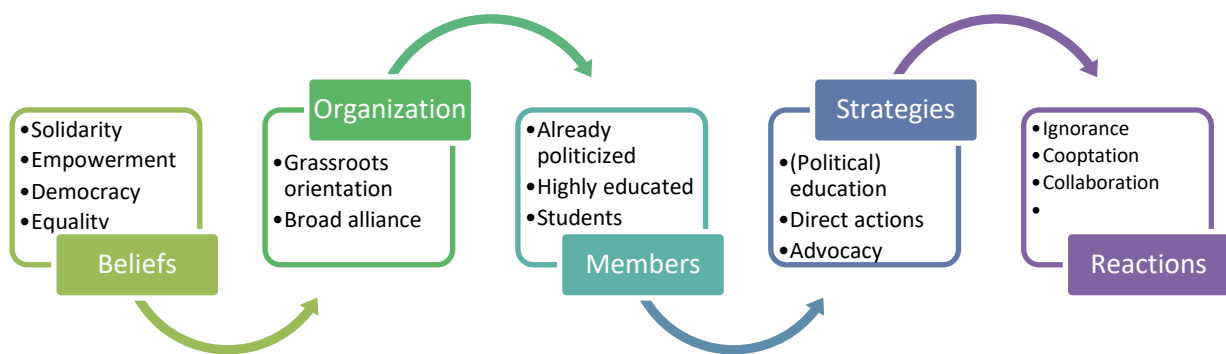


Figure 7. Five Main Aspects of Nyéléni Austria. Source: author's modification after Lofland 2009

As the graphic illustrates, the five main aspects of social movement organization by Lofland (2009) are not a random collection but depend on each other. Beliefs like solidarity, a democratic orientation and a strong collective consciousness are reflected within the grassroots organization of the movement, the type of members which are attracted, the strategies they apply and finally the reactions these strategies cause. In the following the bullet points shown in Figure 7 are discussed in detail.

6.1 Beliefs

The concept of food sovereignty was mentioned by each interviewed organization to be the framework for their work. Each of the organizations has a different thematic main focus and way of working and therefore plays a different role within the movement.

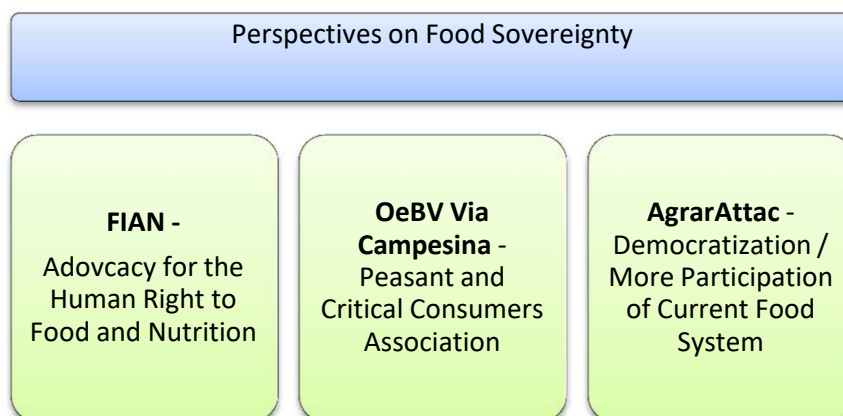


Figure 8 - Perspectives on Food Sovereignty. Source: author's elaboration

As the OeBV is strongly linked to the international branch of La Vía Campesina they brought up the concept of food sovereignty in Austria which was then discussed and reshaped in participatory processes during the Nyéléni gatherings.

FIAN is related to the concept of food sovereignty due to their work on basic human rights to food and nutrition and AgrarAttac refers to a democratic and participative control of food production and consumption which they see guaranteed by the food sovereignty concept. The OeBV sees itself as the Austrian peasant representation which gives a voice to Austrian peasants.

Self-perception of the initiating organizations

“Actually as FIAN is a human rights organization and sees itself like this, and I think this is our particular contribution within the food sovereignty movement and our support service or offered support for social movements. And we support a form of agriculture which ensures the right to food and the right to a proper living standard and the right for a proper income for persons who live from agriculture (interview#2).”⁷

“And it [OeBV] is the only organization which I know which maintained a quasi-movement-character in spite of a certain institutionalization and which takes great care to maintain it. That’s a special characteristic of the OeBV (interview#1).”⁸

⁷ „Also nachdem ja FIAN eigentlich eben aus oder ist eine Menschenrechtsorganisation und versteht sich auch als solches und das ist finde ich halt so unser ganz spezifischer Beitrag innerhalb der Bewegung für Ernährungssouveränität und das ist auch so unsere Unterstützungsleistung oder unser Unterstützungsangebot für soziale Bewegungen. und wir unterstützen eben eine Form der Landwirtschaft die das Recht auf Nahrung gewährleistet und die das Recht auf einen angemessenen Lebensstandard, ein angemessenes Einkommen für die Personen die von der Landwirtschaft leben.“

⁸ „Und sie ist die einzige Organisation die ich kenne die sich trotz einer gewissen Institutionalisierung einen quasi Bewegungskarakter erhalten hat und die ganz bewusst

Food production and consumption	Food distribution	Work and social conditions	Commons and access to land	Public policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 20 CSA farms in Austria • Promotion of agroecological principles and practices • Stress-free slaughtering • Vegan-Organic Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 40 FoodCoop's in Austria • Direct marketing • Farmers markets • Peasant driven agricultural cooperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sezonieri - Campaigning for fair loans for seasonal harvest workers • Women / Men working group • People's kitchen • Campaign: Fair prices for milk • Film festival: Hunger makes profits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gardens • Green urban commons • Guerilla gardening • Alternative ways of farm succession • Collective farming • Seeds as common good • Land occupation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigne against CETA / TTIP, land grabbing, GMO • Activism and manifestations • Political education programs • Lobbying, Studies • Case work - human rights violations

Table 9 – Current topics and projects according thematic axes of food sovereignty. Source: author's elaboration

Having a closer look on actual projects and working topics, a diverse picture of different working areas can be identified: The above mentioned projects vary in terms of involved parties, target group, scale and the current state of the art. Some are just ideas but some like the CSA network, the FoodCoops, Sezonieri or the campaign for milk are already running very successfully. Each of the different dimensions of food sovereignty, the ecological, the economical, the political and the social dimension is reflected and no distinct main focus within the concept can be identified.

Additionally the Nyéléni gatherings in Austria are organized around the five thematic axes and therefore serve as an organizational tool. The decision making process within the movement is also organized around the concept, any kind of raised objection have to be argued on basis of the concept of food sovereignty. Therefore it can be summed up that for the case of the Austrian Nyéléni movement food sovereignty is not only the anticipated goal but moreover an intellectual and organizational framework.

The food sovereignty framework can not only be applied for analyzing the movement itself but for having a closer look on each project which is conducted. For the assessment the addressed points in the Nyéléni declaration are set in relation with the FoodCoops description.