

## New Urbanism in Historic City Centers? The Glocalization of Vienna's Historic City Center as an Art and Cultural Hub

Gerhard Hatz

(Ass. Prof. Mag. Dr. Gerhard Hatz, Universität Wien, Institut für Geographie und Regionalforschung, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Vienna, Austria, gerhard.hatz@univie.ac.at)

### 1 ABSTRACT

Concepts of livable smart cities and smart urban growth have developed as a backlash to urban sprawl. However, these concepts refer to a romanticized historic interpretation of the “urban”. The production of “human spheres” livable and smart, where residents find identity and feel “at home”, has become one of the visions of the cities of tomorrow. Initially put into practice in suburban communities, conceptualized by private developers and designed according to the visions of New Urbanism the production of “human spheres” is accomplished by tight regulations on the physical environment and “declarations of covenants”, stretching beyond the public realm into the control of personal lives. In the rationales of an “Urban Renaissance” involving the regeneration of city centers as art and cultural hubs the production of “human spheres” as well as new forms of urban design and control have been transferred to inner city areas.

The paper critically dissects the glocalized redesign of the Historic City Center of Vienna and stresses the local implications of the “exclusivity” and the exclusionary character of a culture-led development. The future transformation of Historic City Centers as mixed used functional centers of cities into “human spheres” is questioned as the concept of livable and smart cities is contrasted by the production of hegemonic and homogenized urban spaces.

### 2 “GLOOMY” CITIES AND URBAN FUTURES

The patterns of urban futures are laid in the cities’ past. The urban form used to be a representation of modes of production and political systems. Visions on the urban form were based on visions on the urban society, urban life styles and shortfalls of previous urban experiences. Conceptualizations of the urban form by modernism referred to the experiences of the gloomy pre-industrial city that did not match with the requirements of the Fordist mode of production. New technologies, in particular the rise of the automobile, were incorporated in the planning visions of the urban futures of the industrial city, jettisoning all historic types and forms. A clear separation of urban functions for work, residential purposes and leisure was to remove the gloomy past of the historic cities. (Hebbert & Sonne 2006, pp. 6)

However, change in modes of production and technology in the post-industrial era as well as the failures of urban planning according to the principles of modernism gave rise to new visions on urban futures shaping the post-industrial city. Homogenous suburbanization of residents, work places and shopping malls coincided with de-industrialization and the decline of inner city areas. Now functionally divided cities with a dominance of homogenous precincts as envisioned by the Modern Movement have become the representation of the gloomy city. New Urbanists “...decried the lack of consideration of human scale in the products of modernists, and challenged planners to revise the rules of development to create and to safeguard vibrant urban places.” (Silver 2006, p. 179)

The new urban vision recalled romanticized childhood experiences of urban life as well as idealized representations of an urban life style in art (Zukin 1995, Kohn 2001), or as Allen puts it, a vision that “echoes ‘past’ traits that have seemingly been lost” (Allen 2006, p. 442). These narratives have built the canvas to fabricate a past out of allusion and imagination. Crystallized in the Movement of “New Urbanism” the visions have been transferred to inner city redevelopment strategies labeled as “Smart Growth” or “Urban Renaissance”. Private developers, urban planners and architects committed to these efforts revived a mixed-used concept of urbanity, incorporating safety, cleanliness and order (Kohn, 2001) by screening out and excluding any disturbance. Mimicking social and ethnic diversity as well as diversity of uses has embraced the nostalgic vision of urban life style, juxtaposing the socially and aesthetically homogenous suburbs. In Historic City Centers the visions of a new urbanism met with the requirements of the globalizing cities. At the macro level, the economic base of cities shifted “from a manufacturing to an informational to a cultural economy fuelled by forces of global capital, international tourism, and the search for comparative economic advantage.” (Freestone & Gibson 2006, p. 35)

Culture has become significant in urban planning and in the urban economy reshaping the inner city areas by cultural and symbolic economies. While the cultural economy fosters planning for the arts, the symbolic economies were to increase the symbolic capital of the cities. The symbolic economy points at the look and feel of cities and the production of spaces and places, whereas cultural economy gains competitive advantages by spill overs of the symbolic economy. The use of the local culture and the tangible just as the intangible cultural heritage has become a prominent means in positioning the city in the global markets. In this line the production of Historic City Centers is grounded on both, global and local rationales.

It is not within the scope of this contribution to tackle the economic impact of the cultural re-production of historic city centers. But what seems to be of utmost importance in this context is to point out the construction of narratives making up the canvas of recent urban planning and their translation into practice. The following sections are aimed at critically examining the convergence of visions referring to an idealized urban history conveyed by New Urbanists and their re-presentations in Historic City Centers. Imposing the romanticized visions faces the challenge "not just to redesign ... but to tackle the problems of the old urbanism, and to reintroduce viable community forms in existing urban areas." (Ward 2006, p.192). The means applied to impose such visions reveal coherence between public and private planners alike. Regulations on the visual coherence of the envisioned ambience of the "Historic City" are increasingly tightened. When the production of the "Historic City" became part of a symbolic economy and a means to position the city as a cultural hub in the global markets, the cities' culture became commodified. However, not just the culture, but the vision itself has become capitalized and globalized. Ideas, concepts and realizations deployed by New Urbanists are commodified products, marketed and exported worldwide, and the same holds true of the revival of Historic City Centers (Ward 2006). When the cultural heritage of the city is used for the city's symbolic economy and its global re-presentation, cities take advantage of the local. However, by making use of the local culture as a means of translating the idealized visions of historic city centers into reality, the product "Historic City Center becomes globalized in terms of re-presenting the local cultural heritage in Historic City Centers. "Cultural urbanism ... ... has moved on, detached from the place itself ... the essential character has become less and less local" (Ward 2006, p. 284). When the vision of Historic City Centers was put into practice and commodified, urban culture and cultural heritage were removed from their historic conditions. Culture has become an image, a re-presentation of culture designed to foster the consumption of culture itself.

Means of imposing the visions of Historic City Centers in particular concentrated on visual strategies, at first in order to preserve and protect the visual coherence of the Historic City Center, and eventually shifting towards displaying and performing the imposed vision. The Modern Movement intended to re-shape the urban form according to the urban functions. When the economic base of the cities shifted "from a manufacturing economy ... to an informational economy, and from an informational economy to a cultural economy" (Hall, 1998, cit. in Young 2006, p. 55) the city itself or, at least, what is constructed as the past by the present has become the economic base and the product, the commodity of the city. The visual production of the historic city center is extended to the entire city. The means applied to translate the idealized representation of the Historic City Center into reality do follow two rationales of the cultural re-production: The production and performance of the envisioned culture of Historic City Centers and designing out anything not coherent to this vision. Types and forms of historic city centers have moved into the focus of the post-industrial city. In the rationale of symbolic economy the types and forms of a romanticized livable Historic City Center have become an urban function. The uses and functions in the city center are now following the urban types and forms.

On analysing the impact of the new urban visions, the Historic City Center of Vienna serves as an example of how the functional center of the city is turning into a product - a commodity of the city. The means of production just as the production of the local cultural heritage cannot be considered as a backlash to history but as a further development of globalised modes of production. In this line glocalization becomes globalized. The vision of a livable and vibrant city center itself has been made a commodity.

### **3 THE 'COMMODITY' HISTORIC CITY CENTER OF VIENNA**

The city center of Vienna, the capital of Austria, reflects the city's entire history. The political and economic power in the country as well as an abundance of architectural symbols tied to Austrian identity and parts of the symbolic capital of the country are concentrated there. Vienna's historic city center – unlike the

downtowns in many US and some European cities – has remained the social and functional center of the entire city.

The cultural re-presentation of the Historic City Center goes back to the time when Vienna developed as the capital of the Austrian Hungarian Monarchy, an empire comprising more than 50 million inhabitants. At that time the financial and cultural capital of the empire was concentrated in the city center. The imperial palace located there was surrounded by prestigious palaces of the noble families and the gentry. Re-presentation and the production of culture have been an integrative part in urban planning of the Historic City Center for centuries. Attracted by Vienna as the uncontested cultural capital of the empire, composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Johann Strauss and his sons, Schubert, Schönberg, Mahler, or painters like Schiele or Klimt appreciated and benefitted from the creative milieu of the city favoring the fine and performing arts. However, with the end of the Austrian Hungarian Monarchy after WWI and finally after WWII, Vienna shrunk to the capital of a small state with about 6 million inhabitants and the cultural production of Vienna's glorious past was history.

Still, the visual representations have remained and become the narrative the cultural re-production of the Historic City Center is built upon at the beginning of the 21st century. The cultural re-production of the historic city center followed the notions of the symbolic economy. 'Vienna the imperial city' or 'Vienna the world capital of music' became the unique selling points of the city. By imposing these narratives on the Historic City Center converging policies set in effect by the private sector and the city administration unfolded. In contrast to a privatization of the public realm, in the Historic City Center of Vienna power relations are continuously shifting towards the institutional networks of the municipality, becoming the major player, developer and investor in the production of the meaning, the narrative and the affects attached to the Historic City Center. The means applied to accomplish the vision indicate a programmatic convergence between the concepts of New Urbanism and regulations enacted by the urban government. Power and control are increasingly exerted over residents, private entrepreneurs and private developers alike. Visual strategies and aesthetization of the public realm have gained power over needs and demands of private developers, investors and entrepreneurs, and have extended over time and space. From protection and preservation their objectives have moved on to the production of ambience and emotions. The production of the ambience is accomplished by tightening and expanding control over the visual coherence of the Historic City Center. Since regulations are put over the production of ambience but not the uses, options are closed down and give way to new uses taking advantage of the new urban form. Like Evans puts it: "Architectural statement and form over function and the vernacular is therefore a compromise which State and cultural institutions are willing to make, despite the 'danger that the cultural status symbol can shift the emphasis onto the building and its symbolic meaning to a degree where what is inside hardly seems to matter at all. The same could be said of the branded city as a whole, and the annual or all-year-round festival city." (Evans 2006, p. 207)

Making use of the cultural and symbolic economies as a growth engine of urban redevelopment strategies the expansion of cultural institutions is implicitly and explicitly fostered in the Historic City Center but limits options for other uses. Spill overs include related service industries and cultural institutions. Culture-led development is imposed not just to foster the city's cultural economy. Staging and performing urban culture closes down options for the use of public spaces, just as cultural strategies are used to prevent any rough urban experiences. By imposing regulations on preserving the historic ambience of the city, just as providing a visually coherent and mixed-used city center, urban functions not following the envisioned form have been hollowed out. The new urban functions follow the visions of the historic urban types and forms.

### **3.1 Visions by re-narrations - from shaping the urban form to shaping ideas and emotions**

The transformation of downtown areas into cultural landscapes is initially based upon the hegemony of visions by urban elites such as architects and urban planners. The production of cultural spaces reflects the negotiations on the use of space. (Zukin 1995, p. 151) In downtown areas where the symbolic capital of a city or an entire nation is concentrated, the cultural production of the space refers to high culture. However, to a lesser extent, producing, but even more so, displaying and selling the heritage of high culture features the expansion of museums, the re-definition of cultural institutions and uses and the production of the ambient qualities of spaces. The production of a cultural landscape implicitly and explicitly enforces moral policing of values and ideas. A road map from physical production over the production of ambience to the

production of life styles, ideas or beliefs seemingly unfolds. The designation under ‘criterion vi’ associates “directly or tangibly” the setting of the Historic City Center “with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.” (UNESCO 2008, p. 30) Under this declaration Vienna was acknowledged e.g. to be the musical capital of Europe.

In this line visual strategies are not only a means of protecting and performing urban culture but used for producing emotional spaces referring to living traditions, ideas and beliefs. Aesthetics is strongly linked with sentiments and therefore aesthetics and visual strategies are powerful instruments to evoke emotions. Zukin (1995) points out that the symbolic economy targets not only the look but, similarly, the feel of the cities. Allen (2006) examines how ambient power “works … through the experience of the space itself” (p. 442) when power is re-presented by visual strategies. Not surprisingly the Declaration of Covenants of Celebration cites Winston Churchill: “We shape our buildings and our buildings shape us” (The Celebration Company 2003, p. 29), asserting the claim not only to shape and control the design of the public realm but also to shape the individuals’ minds and emotions: “the new urbanist … paradigm challenges not only the prescriptive design standards and regulations governing … design but also the implicit values.” (Ward 2006, p. 181) Imposing a vision on urban culture by using urban design incrementally evolves as a means of designing emotion and values. Incorporating emotions and values into urban planning has become a vision on urban futures. In this line notions of New Urbanism and re-presentations of historic city centers converge.

#### **4 MEANS OF THE CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF VIENNA'S HISTORIC CITY CENTER**

When urban futures focused on the revival of historic cities, the visions were grounded in historic material provided by romanticized narratives on historic cities, created either by literature or the fine arts. However, the visions incorporated both: A visual representation of the historic cities just as a romanticized urban life style, imposing the narrative of a livable city. Not surprisingly, visual strategies in particular adopted by New Urbanism were to render narratives and urban re-presentations of a ‘livable city. “New Urbanism [concentrated] on design as an end in itself to create livable and cohesive communities.” (Ward 2006, p. 189) Visual strategies were intended as a means of translating the values of the romanticized urban lifestyle into practice. The implications of urban design, however, meant imposing regulations on the visual coherence on what was envisioned as the new old livable historic city. Regulations on the visual coherence evolved as a predominant means of imposing visions on urban futures just as future urban lifestyles. Conceptualized in charters of covenants adopted by New Urbanist communities, regulations on the visual coherence have been transferred to the cultural re-production of historic city centers. While in historic city centers imposing visual strategies faces the problem of interacting with the already given, the means applied converge with those of privatized New Urbanists suburban communities.

##### **4.1 Urban design – From Landmark Preservation to the production of ambience**

The cultural re-production of cities has evolved incrementally by the enactment of historic preservation. As Zukin (1995) points out, laws on historic preservation were extended horizontally and vertically over time and space and the same holds true of the Historic City Center of Vienna. From public buildings regulations expanded to residential areas and were increasingly exerted over residents, private entrepreneurs and private developers alike, primarily aimed at creating a specific ambience. The regulations developed at the end of the 19th century by establishing zoning codes, limiting the maximum height of the buildings in the Historic City Center. Introducing zoning codes synced with the last monumental construction activities that reshaped the historic fabric of the Historic City Center in the second half of the 19th century. At that time the fortification of the Historic City Center was demolished and the vacant land was turned into a prestigious boulevard – the ‘Ringstrasse’. The “Ringstrasse” was designed as a ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’. Re-presentative governmental buildings and cultural institutions, such as museums, theaters and concert halls established a cultural landscape.

The idea of a “revival” of a Gesamtkunstwerk comes up once again, when the recent regulations on and investments in the Historic City Center are brought together. For 70 years, until the 1970’s, the Historic City Center was not affected by further regulations, except those of Monument Protection and Landmark Preservation. The Monument Protection Act was passed in 1923, originally “automatically” protecting cultural buildings owned by the public, i.e. governmental institutions, the city or the church. War damages were replaced by contemporary architecture of the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Starting in the 1970's the urban fabric of the Historic City Center was increasingly placed under a preservation order and protected from influences of modern architecture. The regulations established since then display a tightening of control over the Historic City Center, a downscaling of control and an extension of the area affected by control on the visual coherence. In 1972 the Amended Law on Old Town Conservation was passed. A further amendment in 1978 enabled the Landmark Preservation Board not to protect just a single building but an entire group of buildings if designated as a valuable historic, not modern, architectural - ensemble. The entire Historic City Center has been designated as a 'protected zone', comprising about more than 1.700 protected structures, 1.200 of which residential. With the establishment of the protected zone, power has shifted from property owners to the city authorities. Any alterations of the physical structure of the buildings within the designated area have to be assigned to planning commissioners, in particular to architects and art historians.

The zoning codes regulating the maximum height of the buildings in the Historic City Center have been refined by limiting the maximum height of each individual structure to the present status quo, originally aimed at closing down options for investors, building owners and developers with regard to converting attics into additional residential or office spaces. In addition, the open spaces (courtyards, green spaces) within the single buildings have become subject to protection, which does not only refer to the building fabric itself but also to landscaping. Since the most recent amendment public parks have been designated as landmarks as well. Under the laws of monument protection public spaces like the lawns of the public gardens have become "privatized" by the public sector.

With the Amended Law on Old Town Conservation the Old Town Conservation Fund was established. Thus, additional expenses resulting from repairs and preservation measures required by Landmark Preservation are co-financed by the City. The distribution of funds has steadily increased over the last years, making the City one of the most prominent investors and stakeholders in the Historic City Center.

In 2001 the Historic City Center was designated as World Cultural Heritage, implementing another layer of control and protection and expanding power and control over the visual coherence to the entire city. The core zone of the World Cultural Heritage site is surrounded by a buffer zone extending into the adjacent districts. Regulations on preservation were supplemented by means of display and performance when sight axes and sight lines were incorporated. Sight axes and sightlines providing undisturbed views of the Historic City Center are now determining urban development projects all over the entire city. New developments like new office centers and high rises have to be adjusted according to these sight axes.

Aesthetics always has been used also as a means of re-presenting power and provoking emotions. However, ambient power even implies an obtrusive re-presentation (Allen 2006). In the case of the Historic City Center, the city could take advantage of the aesthetics and ambience provided by the architecture that either re-presented the power of the court, the nobility, the church and the bourgeoisie, firstly, by preserving and protecting the ambience and secondly, by putting the setting of the ambience in perspective. The shift from protecting and preserving the setting of the Historic City Center towards its performance was achieved by introducing an additional layer of regulation. The Lighting Masterplan for Vienna was passed in 2007. It puts a comprehensive lighting concept over the City Center, regulating not only the design of the street lamps but also the way a structure has to be illuminated. New illuminations have to fit into this concept, limiting individual options. The Lighting Masterplan as well as stricter regulations on aesthetics, visual coherence and ambience demonstrate, as C. M. Boyer puts it, "the ... organizational power of planning regulations and design controls that can turn the material form of the city to any successful ... magic show ... where illusion is produced ..." (Boyer C. M. cit. in Miles and Miles, 2004) Following the notions of ambient power as conceptualized by Allen and exemplified for Berlin's Potsdamer Platz, is pointing at a convergence of privatized public space and the public realm in Vienna's Historic City Center. „What goes on in such spaces, how they are used, is circumscribed by the design, layout, sound, lighting, solidity and other affective means that can have an impact which is difficult to isolate, yet nonetheless powerful in their incitements and limitations on behaviour.“ (Allen 2006, p. 445) Ambient power is exerted by the „character an urban setting - a particular atmosphere, a specific mood, a certain feeling - affects how we experience it“ (Allen 2006, p. 445). The design of spaces and emotions converges and stretches into individual behaviors and feelings.

## 4.2 New Urbanism in the Historic City Center

Refining standards on the visual performance of the Historic City Center indicate a programmatic convergence between the concepts of new urbanism and regulations, enacted by the urban government. As an example, excerpts of the Declaration of Covenants in Celebration, FL, USA, are compared with those regulating the ambience of Vienna's Historic City Center. While the city center of Vienna stands for the public realm of historic downtowns, Celebration stands for a prototype of a privatized community, designed according to the principles of New Urbanism by the Disney Company. In both the production of homogenized spaces by aesthetization, visual conformity and controlled diversity has become overwhelming and the force of law (Zukin, 1995, p.123f.) by an overall design concept. The Design Guidelines adopted by the Celebration Company: "The Community derives its unique character from a mix of compatible architectural styles and from the cooperation of all Builders and Owners in upholding minimum design, landscaping, and aesthetic standards" (The Celebration Company, p.22) comply with the UNESCO evaluation of the World Heritage "Historic Center of Vienna": "... building on medieval tradition and developing into an instantly recognizable Austrian form of Baroque culture, a Viennese Gründerzeit idiom, and a Viennese modernity, all of these styles aspiring to meet the challenges of a Gesamtkunstwerk, based on an overall design concept." (ICOMOS 2001, p.1)

The "maintenance" of the so homogenized and hegemonic ambience is accomplished by the commitment of the individual property owners. This involves the appearance on the outside, such as the painting of the buildings, porches and plants, and: "This ... applies ... to the modification of the existing buildings, with special attention paid to the preservation of the outward appearance, character and style of the building and in particular its scale, rhythm, proportions, technological equipment and colour scheme..." (Stadtentwicklung Wien, 2006, p. 101) for the Historic City Center of Vienna, paralleling the requirements of visual coherence adopted by Celebration Company: "No prior approval is necessary to repaint the exterior of existing structures contract, using the most recently approved color scheme or to rebuild or restore any damaged structures in a manner consistent with the plans and specifications most recently approved for such structures. Generally, no approval is required for work done to the interior of a structure; however, modifications to the interior of screened porches, patios, and any other portions of a structure visible from outside of the structure do require prior approval." (The Celebration Company, p. 23).

By conceiving a community or a city as a "Gesamtkunstwerk", options in the public realm are getting more limited. The power of aesthetics is imposed on the entire neighborhood and downscaled to regulate every single detail of the visual coherence. When in the privatized community of Celebration: "The Celebration Company is entitled to reserve rights of architectural review and control over any portion of the Residential Property..." (The Celebration Company, p. 23) and "...the design standards and architectural and aesthetics guidelines ... govern new construction and modifications to Units, including structures, landscaping ..." (The Celebration Company, p. 5), the regulations for the Historic City Center of Vienna are seemingly in compliance, however, justified by the urban culture.

According to the evaluation of the UNESCO, the Historic City Center of Vienna is perceived as a "cultural landscape" (ICOMOS, 2001, p.3) and review and control affect any portion of it. Design standards and architectural and aesthetic guidelines govern new construction and modification, including structures and landscaping: "All architectural intervention projects [in the historic city center] are primarily evaluated and reviewed by Municipal Department 19 (MA 19) - Architecture and Urban Design. This relates to new structures, additions and refurbishments including e.g. penthouse or loft projects, shop entrances, advertising installations, windows replacements, etc." (Stadtentwicklung Wien, 2006, p. 99)

Contrary to privatized public spaces and communities, power and control over the Historic City Center is increasingly concentrated in institutions of the city government. However, like in privatized urban communities, power and control are delegated to boards of architects and preservationists like art historians who are the real stakeholders in the Historic City Center as well as in privatized urban communities. In the Historic City Center the afore mentioned projects, even if small-scaled like "window replacements" are inspected and evaluated by a board of at least one but even up to seven architects and one art historian (Stadtentwicklung Wien, 2006, p. 99), similar to the power relations in the community of Celebration designed by the Disney corporation: "The Board has appointed an Architectural Review Committee which has assumed jurisdiction over matters within the scope of the authority delegated to the Association by The

Celebration Company. ... ARC [Architectural Review Committee] members need not be Owners or representatives of Owners. The ARC may, but need not, include architects, engineers, or similar professionals." (The Celebration Company, 2003, p. 24f.) Needless to say, owners or their representatives, tenants, or entrepreneurs are not intended to be members of the review boards nominated by the Municipal Department of Vienna. The private sector has been outmaneuvered and has to subordinate. However, the means and measures deployed by the city authorities do not differ remarkably from those, set in effect by private actors in privatized public spaces.

## 5 RE-SHAPING THE COMMODITY

By re-shaping the commodity 'Historic City Center Vienna' visual strategies and aesthetics preferring a visual coherence of the historic ambience of the city designed out any new developments. Arduous procedures exerted over applications on modifications to the historic building fabric resulted in uncertainties about costs and unpredictable delays in approving modification requirements or rejecting projects. In the designation of historic preservation districts, not only moral but also legal power is exerted on property owners, "to remain in or restore an areas character" (Zukin 1995, p. 122), "...the revival of historic types and form became a matter of doctrine." (Hebbert & Sonne 2006, p. 9) Not surprisingly, construction activities in the Historic City Center of Vienna shifted to small-scaled refurbishments in the interior of structures. A study of applications for construction schemes conducted for the years 1998 to 2002 revealed that out of 2.100 applications just one referred to the construction of a new structure. However, applications for the remodeling of the interior primarily included measures of modernization, improvements of the floor plan or enhancing the "prestige" and "design". (Blaas et. al. 2003, pp.19)

Increasingly planning in, and of the Historic City Center shifted towards creating ambience and displaying and performing the ambience. Means of displaying and performing the ambience have been stretched beyond the borders of the Historic City Center, now affecting new constructions of the entire City, provoking delays and downscalses of new projects. The planning history of re-development projects reveals the negotiations between investors' interests on the one hand and the prevailing ambient power on the other hand. Out of at least six planned high-rises in three redevelopment projects within the sight axes to the Historic City Center four had to be abandoned, projected building heights up to 100 meters were downscaled to no more than 70 meters. The effect of the proposed buildings on the views of the Historic City Center was one of the central issues in the debate on the project. In the end, the effect on the views determined the appearance of the buildings, but the controversy also caused considerable delays. Negotiations on the visual appearance and developers' interests amounted to 10 up to more than 15 years, including the eventual withdrawal of developers from the projects (Hatz 2007). It becomes clear that the production of the ambient qualities of spaces generates a filter for the uses of the spaces attracting urban functions coherent to the ambient quality and excluding those that do not comply.

### 5.1 Urban functions follow the urban form

The production of visual coherence and ambience has had repercussions on the function of the Historic Center as the political and economic center of the City. More than 100,000 employees (13% of the entire workforce of the city) have their work places in the Historic City Center. With about 40% of the entire city, the Historic City Center shows the highest concentration of work places in finance and insurance businesses and 19.000 employees of government institutions (27% of the entire city) are concentrated there. However, by imposing the romanticized vision and narratives on the Historic City Center options for enterprises and businesses to remodel the building fabric according to their requirements are closed down. Together with limitations to adapting apartments for office uses, specific land-uses and city functions the position of the Historic City Center as the prime location of workplaces has weakened. While for the entire City of Vienna the number of work places has increased, in the Historic City Center the respective numbers have declined. Banks, insurance companies, and governmental services record the highest losses compared to the other districts of Vienna. At the same time the adjacent areas have experienced an increase of employees in these economic sectors (Hatz 2007).

However, as a matter of prestige the headquarters of banks, insurance companies and other enterprises remain at locations within the Historic City Center, while their back office facilities, organizationally as well

as spatially, are outsourced and decentralized (Blaas et al. 2003). Prestige and representation have become the highest prized amenities of the Historic City Center and are attached to the ambience that is produced.

Governmental institutions follow the trend towards a decentralization of typical city functions reinforced due to the outsourcing of real estate management of public properties. Whereas from 1991 to 2001 in the entire City of Vienna nearly 18,000 additional work places in government institutions were generated, the Historic City Center lost more than 2,200 work-places and the adjacent districts in the World Cultural Heritage buffer zone another 2,200. This trend has continued in the years following 2001 by the decentralization of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Commercial Court, the Archives of the City Administration, the Patent Office, Vienna Health Care Office and the District Court of the Historic City Center itself.

The new uses replacing the former governmental functions underline the new strategic role of the city center. Hotels, apartments and international retailers take advantage of the value added by symbolic economies. However, aesthetics and envisioning a walkable Historic City Center have prevailed over economic interests. When the Patent Office moved out, the complex was supposed to be converted into a hotel. But the developer's intention of providing car access to the building was denied in favor of a pedestrian zone. The developer eventually withdrew from the hotel project and the former Patent Office complex was re-designed as a residential building, offering luxurious upscale apartments.

## 5.2 Glocalized culture and globalized retailing

Re-presentations of urban culture are inextricably linked with the notions of the symbolic economy. Performing urban culture in public spaces points at the capitalization of urban culture and urban life-styles. Cultural re-presentations were to attract a paying audience (Zukin 1995, p. 106). Imposing an idealized urban vision on a place implicitly and explicitly aims at increasing property values, "...as Kunzman (2004) ... put it: each story of regeneration begins with poetry and ends with real estate". (Evans 2006, p. 207)

The synergies of the symbolic economy with the capitalization of urban life-styles and the commodification of the ambience of the public realm materialize in the main shopping district. The globalized homogenization of retail landscapes has gained competitive advantages by the controlled diversity of cultural urban landscapes. Recycling historic buildings for retail functions is the city planners' and property developers' response to the standardization in the retail system (O'Brien and Harris, 1991, p. 111), even though such recycling has become a 'standardized product' in the restructuring of retailing in city centers worldwide (Zukin 1995, p. 22). Vice versa, creating the vision of mixed used city centers implies re-presentations of a culture of shopping. Suburban shopping malls "...mimic the appeal of old fashioned downtown areas. They link higher density housing with office and retail space, all unified by architectural cues that evoke the turn of the century ... the new multi-use malls include office space, libraries, housing, or hotels." (Kohn 2001, pp. 74)

The old fashioned downtown areas, however, approach the concept of shopping malls, following the visions of controlled diversity, mixed or multi-use city centers and the logic of ambient power. The cultural representation of the city center provides an adequate ambience for – not consumers – but flaneurs. Not only the facades of the buildings but store fronts as well have become the focus of landmark preservation. Imposing ambient power has shifted from the private entrepreneurs to the city authorities. A shopping mall-like ambience of safety, cleanliness, and "the soothing lightning, the polished surface ... and enticing displays, where no ... can disturb the illusion of a harmonious world" (Kohn (2001, p.76), has been imposed on the Historic City Center by multiple and refined layers of regulations, more and more following a logic of display, inclusion, incitement and seduction. Cultural re-presentations are in synergy with the capitalization of the public realm. Even though the historic appearance and design of the facades are regulated, this does not hold true of the uses "behind the historic facades". Increasing property values forced traditional retailers to move out. They have been replaced by international retailers, who gained competitive advantages by the use of the historic ambience provided by the urban planners. In the main shopping district the business segment "Fashion & Style" involving comparing products with a certain emotional and personal value like clothing, accessories, watches, jewellery and beauty products goes up to 70% of the premises, more than 80% operated by international chains (Hatz 2006). Tangible and intangible means of cultural representations have included functions with higher rent paying capacities. Options in terms of a variety of shopping amenities were limited and replaced by a multiplicity of standardized products provided by chain stores.

However, standardization and homogenization are disguised by a simulation of variety through the protected facades.

### **5.3 Narratives and cultural glocalizing of the public realm**

The narratives imposed on the Historic City Center reflect the idealized vision of life-styles of the urban elites: Visual Coherence and aesthetization, controlled diversity by providing a sphere of openness and accessibility in a romanticized historic ambience. The canvas of the grand narratives as “Vienna, the imperial residence”, “Vienna, the world capital of music” or “Vienna, the city of connoisseurs” provides the moral justification of enforcing the cultural representations of the urban elites in the public realm of the Historic City Center.

Since the 1990's cultural institutions, such as museums, theaters or concert halls have expanded in the Historic City center, increasing the hegemony of high culture. Cultural institutions “occupy space that might have been used in other ways” (Zukin 1995, p. 120). Theaters and Opera Houses are re-dedicated to performances of the high culture and public spaces are designated as “art places”. In 2000 the ‘MuseumsQuartier’ was opened. The complex was built in the second half of the 19th century as extension of the imperial palace, including the stables of the court and a palace of an aristocratic family. With the end of the monarchy in 1918 it lost its function and was used as an exhibition hall for national and international fairs. By re-interpreting the historic ambience, one of the 10 largest Museum complexes world-wide has been realized exclusively with federal funds and investments by the city.

Ambient power and cultural economy are intertwined and prevent other uses. New cultural institutions have been established behind the representative facades of former palaces of the court or the nobility, like the ‘Haus der Musik’, primarily aimed at displaying the heritage of high culture. The ‘Sisi Museum’ or the ‘Figaro Haus’, all established after the turn of the millennium, indicate the power of the narratives, imposed on the Historic City Center. In particular the latter, just one of the numerous apartments the composer occupied during his life-time, for the reason of lacking any original artefacts relating to the composer, is designed by a “virtual performance” of Mozart's genius. In addition, the ‘Theater an der Wien’ close to the borders of the Historic City Center was re-designated from a musical theater to an Opera House, in reminiscence of its early days, when Mozart himself was performing there. Re-presentations of high culture re-present the narrative imposed on the Historic City Center.

The marketing of Vienna as “Imperial City” or “World Capital of Music” transforms the cultural production of the city. Events have become important instruments in a city's symbolic economy. A prestigious stage of a cultural landscape provides a suitable scenery. By performing events on the stage of the re-presentative cultural landscape, the event is marketed by the urban landscape and the urban landscape is marketed by the event. However, a growing number of events increases the occupancy of public spaces where the events take place. Public space is taken away from the public but is returned as a commercialized controlled and ordered experience.

The square in front of the Vienna city hall provides evidence of how public spaces are increasingly becoming transformed by translating the narrative with tangible and intangible means of culture into practice. From the construction of the square in the second half of the 19th century up to the 1970's the square was a busy intersection of roads. In the 1970's cars were designed out by establishing a pedestrian zone. Since the 1980's the square has continuously been transformed into a stage of performances and events. Today the square is occupied by events and festivals or respective preparations all year long. However, for events involving many private businesses like the Christmas market or food stalls at the open-air opera film festival in summer, space has to be rented by the business owners. Public space is commercialized – by the public, using means of (urban) culture. Needless to add, commercialized occupations of public squares have been expanding over time and space.

The re-design of the public square of “Karlsplatz” indicates how globalizing local culture is re-directed into local planning. “Karlsplatz” is one of the busiest squares at the southern border of the Historic City Center. Its ambience is marked by a loose ensemble of cultural symbols tied to the Austrian and Viennese History, like the “Musikvereinssaal”, where e.g. the “New Year's Concert” takes place and is broadcast – or rather exported – worldwide. However, “Karlsplatz” is also a node of public and private transport and “Karlsplatz” is notorious as a center of the rough edges of urbanity. After WWII the location used to be a center of black

markets and in the 1970's a lively drug-scene established there. The re-design concept explicitly intended the re-interpretation of the square as "art-place Karlsplatz" and was supposed to "re-create equally an attractive and safe urban space." (Stadtentwicklung Wien 2006, p. 133) The project, aimed at improving the "appealing appearance" by refurbishing surfaces and parks, was completed in 2005. However, the drug-scene has remained, occupying the public space of an underground passage leading from the square to the subway station. Eventually in 2008 the project to re-design the passage was launched. By re-interpreting the passage as art passage a new lighting concept and the display of art and art installations is to provide an ambience attractive to "flaneurs" and reduce spaces evoking uneasy feelings and fear. Shop owners will have to vacate their stores to make room for re-presentations of culture. Cultural symbols are intentionally used for aestheticizing fear and making the area less attractive for drug-dealers and addicts. By visual strategies like aesthetics, display and lighting ambient power is exerted and imposes a gate of inclusion and seduction, following the rationale of compliance to cultural re-presentations and those whose culture is re-presented. Implicitly, the place becomes less pleasant for those whose culture is not re-presented and thus excluded.

Looking at the issue of urban futures and livable cities raises the question of whose urban futures are becoming to be re-presented by whose and what visions on livability. In the concepts of New Urbanism just as in the revival of historic city centers livability is a construction of an imagined past (and possibly an imagined future). In this line imposing a vision of livability by the construction of an imagined past implies its exclusionary character when it excludes and devalues those not sharing this vision.

## 6 LIVABLE CITY CENTERS OR EXCLUSIONARY ENCLAVES?

The re-narrations of livable communities by constructions of an imagined past are displaying a clear line of exclusivity. Communities designed according to the principles of New Urbanism materialize the middle class vision of livability. These values are mediated by the concept, the urban design and the chartas of covenants adopted by these communities. When the proponents of New Urbanism recall the concepts of the Garden City deployed in the 1920s, the Garden Cities' "social agenda was aimed at protecting residents from ... the social diversity inherent in dynamic urban environments", ... "safeguard social homogeneity" and provide "a ... barrier against the encroachment of deteriorated neighborhoods." (Silver, 2006, p.189) Still, the exclusionary character of communities and urban neighborhoods is regulated by the real estate market. The real estate market evaluates the re-construction of idealized urban histories as the highest prized commodities. In historic city centers symbolic economies by referring to and promoting of high culture, represent the visions and values of the urban elites and coincide with the re-construction of mixed-used livable urban environments

Since the end of WWI the Historic City Center of Vienna continuously lost resident population. In particular in the second half of the 20th century spaces for residential uses were increasingly occupied by urban functions with higher rent paying capacities. The re-presentation of a mixed-used Historic City Center was at risk and called for establishing another intangible layer for re-constructing the imagined past. The designation of the Historic City Center as a protected residential area prevented further conversions of apartments into office spaces. Even though the vision of a mixed-used old fashioned downtown was considered worth preserving, the regulations protecting tenants and owners were loosened. Rent regulations were lifted, coinciding with the commodification of the cultural landscape of the Historic City Center. Today, the real estate market creates another filter through which only urban elites can pass and move into the high-end apartments in the Historic City Center. These apartments which can be traced back until before the nineteenth-century were constructed to meet the expectations of the bourgeoisie and still relate well to the tastes and demands of today's high-end residential market, especially when it comes to size and amenities. By protecting and performing the ambience of the Historic City Center, its position as the center of the urban elites is protected and even accentuated accordingly: The average size of the apartments in the inner city exceeds the mean of the entire city by about one third: 104 square meters vs. 71 square meters. The average gross income of an employee living in the inner city in 2005 was more than double (122%) the mean for the city's inhabitants as a whole and nearly twice the income recorded for districts with the lowest gross income. The percentage of university graduates living in the inner city is three times higher than for the total city population. Almost a third of the inhabitants over the age of 15 living in the Historic City Center in 2001 had a college degree. The city mean for this group was barely 13%. Limitations on further conversions of rooftop apartments gate the already present elites and increase the intangible values of prestige and

exclusivity attached to their apartments and equally attached to their residents. By strengthening the cultural hegemony of the urban elites their life styles were imposed on the public realm of the Historic City Center.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Visions of livable cities and urban futures are variable. In particular they incorporate experiences of gloomy urban pasts. The conceptualization of modernism with a clear separation of urban functions gave way to visions of the livable post-industrial city. “An increasingly leisured society with more time and wealth at its disposal now expected cities to offer more leisure and cultural diversion. And the consumption that they generated could be captured to create a new economic base for deindustrialising cities. The resultant new attractions also recycled the redundant spaces of the industrial era.” (Ward 2006, p. 277)

However, the new visions of urban futures when referring to idealized urban pasts comes with serious considerations on imagined urban futures. Even though having in mind the shortcomings of planning visions conceptualized by modernism, post-industrial visions on urban futures are not grounded on a general masterplan for the entire city but rather provide life-style based conceptualizations of fragmented urban neighborhoods and communities. The fragmented picture consists of planning in and of new urban centers such as edge cities, suburban life-style communities, historic city centers and redeveloped brownfield areas, interconnected by the canvas of grand narratives. Whereas the modern city stands for the proponents and architects of modernism like Le Corbusier, Costa or Niemeyer, the New Urban City stands for Walt Disney and the Disney Corporation – building the narrative, James Rouse, festivalizing and exporting the downtown redevelopment model of Baltimore (Ward 2006) and Duany and Plater-Zyberg, the proponents of New Urbansim. The common denominator of the representatives of the new livable city is creating a narrative of a romanticized vision of an urban past and selling and exporting the vision. However, the visions on urban futures coincide with the new strategic role of cities in the globalized economies. Cities should be creative and a cultural hub, assets important in city marketing and as the cities economic base. In this line visions on urban futures itself have become a capitalized commodity.

Finally the question on urban futures has to tackle with the contradiction of envisioned urban futures and urban reality. Livable life-style communities still rely on car-dependency and New Urbanism rather reinforced suburbanization (Silver 2006, p193). Still, suburban lifestyles are regarded as “livable”, implicitly questioning if a ‘real’ city center is needed for this life-style or rather the display of a city center. As Ward puts it: “... many Americans yearned for a romanticised notion for a vibrant traditional city. In reality this was a place that had never been, a scene of happy animation where people might safely gather in numbers. It was a scene untroubled by all the competing and troubling realities of the industrial past or the post-industrial present. Here was a carefully managed enclave from which all the many problems of urban decay, crime, social and racial tension had been banished. Here too were cultural entertainment and sanitized fragments of traditional urbanism – the market hall, the handcrafted products and local traders of the cities before large scale capitalism. It was no accident that Rouse was a great admirer of Walt Disney and that the two men shared a similar vision of what an ideal American community should be.” (Ward 2006, p. 277) However, when it comes to imposing the vision and the means of imposing the vision the contradiction of livable communities and tightening regulations, the conceptualization of urban futures has to dissect whose vision and what is envisioned as livable.

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