

THEORIZING AND EVALUATING VIENNA'S CONCEPTS AND PERFORMANCES OF QUALITY SPACES

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- Island urbanism, resulting in a fragmented patchwork of physically disconnected unfinished parts within the urban area (Novy et. al., 2001, Oswalt, 2006).
- “Instead of cities being determined by pre-planned structures, they are revealed as amorphous, ...indeterminant sites, ...they are temporary, emergent and transitory, ...an endless world made up of tightly interconnected but heterogeneous spaces.” (Wigley, 2001, p.11).
- “We are in the epoch of simultaneity ...in the epoch of juxtaposition, ...of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed” (Foucault & Miskowiec 1986, p.22).

Drawing on the meanings shaping urban discourses and utopias, the paper seeks to scrutinize the situationists' conceptualization of “New Babylon” and its enhancements by Sloterdijk's concept of “Foam Cities” with the intent to examine physical form, social relations and the ambient qualities of urban space as the relation among sites, simultaneously re-presenting different quality spaces.

Introduction

Notions on the urban form and spaces are based on utopias of urban society, urban lifestyles and shortfalls of previous urban experiences. Recent discourses and concepts of urban utopias and urban planning have developed as a backlash to the shortfalls of modern urban planning. However, conceptualizations of the urban form by modernism referred to the experiences of the gloomy pre-modern city that did not match with the utopias of modern urban society.

Changes in modes of production and technology in the post-industrial era as well as the failures of modern urban planning gave rise to new visions on urban futures shaping the post-industrial city. Homogenous suburbanization of residents, workplaces and shopping malls coincided with de-industrialization and the decline of inner city areas. Now functionally divided cities of homogenous precincts as envisioned by the

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Modern Movement have become the representation of the gloomy city. The utopia of the functionally divided city was replaced by visions of a poly-centered and compact city. Issues of culture, heritage and identity, social cohesion, creativity and environmental care have been shaping the discourse on and the performance of quality spaces. However, the fragmentation of urban areas has become subject of critical urban discourses.

Urban utopias are fluid concepts of inherent chronological contexts and dualisms of the “good” and the “sinister” city. The good city is the city to become, even if referring to romanticized visions of urban histories. “Every glorious past is always the invention of some present for the sake of a future yet to be achieved” (Sloterdijk, P. cit. in Elden & Mendiata, 2009, p.4). In contrast, the “sinister” city refers to the failures and unintended effects of preceding urban utopias.

Heterogeneous re-presentations, fluid concepts and contexts of urban utopias refer to Foucault’s notions on relational power, dispositifs and heterotopias. By making implicit values visible, urban planning can be perceived as both: as a re-presentation of power and a technology of power. (e.g. Lefebvre, 1996). Following Foucault, space is fundamental in any exercise of power. Imposing a vision and re-presentations of urban utopias on urban spaces symbolizes who belongs to specific places. Power relations constitute a network that is constructing and shaping discourses, belief systems and hegemonies, eventually spanning the matrix of a dispositif, constituted by an intertwined heterogeneous ensemble of discursive and non-discursive elements as institutions or architecture. The dispositif is the relation among these elements, having a dominant strategic function in terms of intended and unintended strategies. Inherent contradictions and unintended effects are re-interpreted and re-integrated, leading to new strategies. Hence, a dispositif is a fluid relation of power, knowledge and space that is continuously negotiated. Urban planning following visions or utopias of cities constitute a dispositif - in relation to space, one among other dispositifs (see Pløger, 2008 and Dahlmann, 2008). Dispositifs are the agenda settings and agenda framings of urban planning and development.

In Vienna, like in many other Metropolitan Areas in the Western Hemisphere the dispositif constituting intentions of urban stakeholders and the urban form has continuously been re-shaped, in the early postwar period inspired by thoughts of modernism towards an urban renaissance, moving on to a adapting urban development to the demands of the globalized economies and the global competition of cities. Soft skills of cities have become prominent in the competition between the cities and of sites within the cities. The post-modern transformation of society marked by individualization, diversification of households and lifestyles, in sync with intertwining physical manifestations of prevailing previous dispositifs, has transposed the urban form into poly-atmospheric ambiances, now becoming absorbed into the dispositif shaped by global climate change and the call for ecological sustainable cities. The spatial dispositifs on the urban forms as one among others, though are fractured by dispositifs shaping the discourses on social sustainability, culture, heritage

and identity, modes of production or environmental care. Related utopias that emerge out of these dispositifs all come together and physically manifest themselves in their spatial representations.

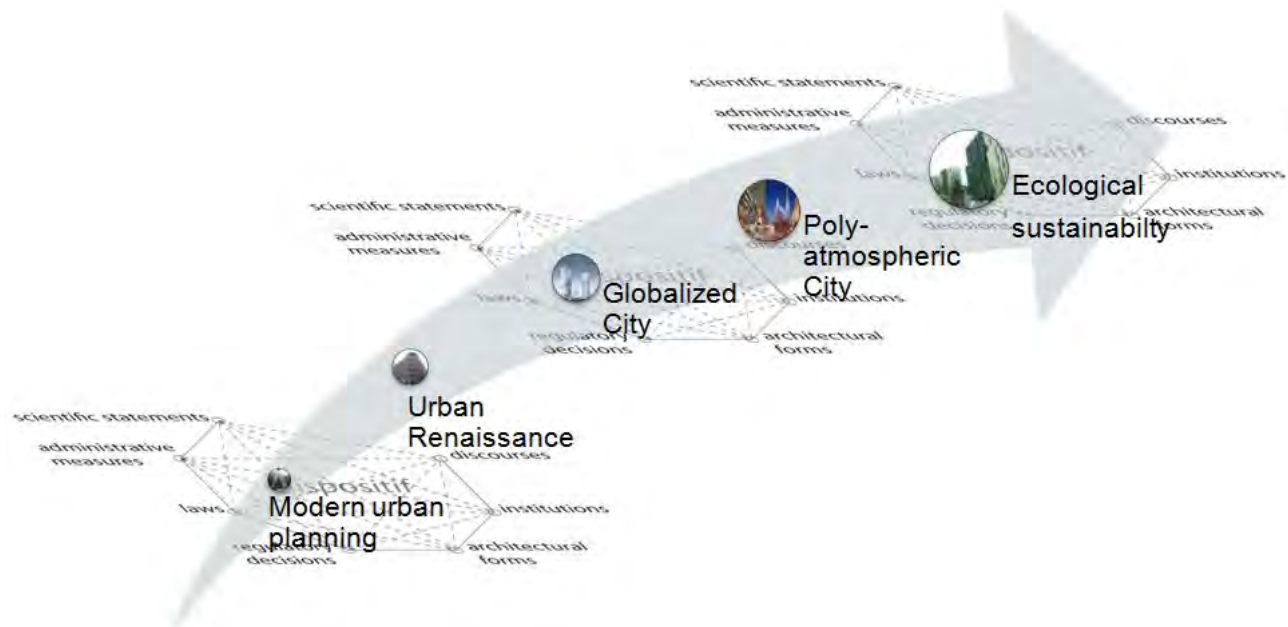


Figure 1: Fluid concepts of dispositifs shaping urban planning in Vienna

From urban utopias to heterotopias

Utopias are spaces without a real place. When put in to practice, urban utopias are transformed into ‘heterotopias’ – real and unreal urban spaces – or ‘a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live’ (Foucault, 1986, p. 24). Foucault identifies two functions of the heterotopias: “To create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned...”, and implicitly incorporating the inherent contingency of the dualism of good and sinister places, “...to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy” (Foucault, 1986, p. 27).

Meanings attached to spaces and places are essential in the concept of heterotopias. Heterotopias can be endowed with one or more, even different meanings. These meanings might change over time, even disappear. When their meanings are becoming obsolete or disappear, heterotopias dissolve, eventually leading to new dispositifs that shape new meanings – utopias of the urban and new urban heterotopias.

The city of meanings

Meanings have always been attached to urban spaces and places at different spatial scales. When modern urban planners reduced the meaning of the urban form to its mere functions, it was the Situationist movement that considered psychological meanings in terms of detecting and creating emotional affective

urban places as the prime agenda in constituting quality spaces. Situationists envisioned the city as an arbitrary assemblage of emotional spaces or “situations” in terms of stages that provoke emotional “situations”. Buildings and architecture were to either preserve and/or to enhance emotions – the poetic power of spaces and places - the poetic meanings of urban precincts, that “correspond to the whole spectrum of diverse feelings that one encounters by chance in every day life. Bizarre Quarter vs. Happy Quarter (specially reserved for habitation) Noble and Tragical Quarter (for good children) - Historical Quarter (museums, schools), Useful Quarter (hospital, tool shops), Sinister Quarter, etc.” (Chtcheglov, I. cit. in Sadler, 1998, p. 120). The functionally divided city was to be replaced by several dualisms of situational quarters.

By seizing Lefebvre’s ‘theory of the moment’ situationists worked on endowing urban spaces with meanings, emotions and possible sensual experiences that had been neglected by modern urban planning, hence create moments or situations. Architecture and urban planning were considered as a means of transforming society and vice versa, the transformation of society was regarded as a prerequisite of the utopia of another urban life. The ‘political’ program of another life was to redeem urban dwellers from the constraints and boredom that functionalism imposed on them by the conceptualization of a unitary urbanism.

Unitary Urbanism

The concept of unitary urbanism was grounded in the critics of modern urban planning in general and in the conceptualizations of the Charta of Athens and the ideas of Le Corbusier in particular. The critics focused on the strict fission of urban planning and the disregard of the cultural issues of urban society, reducing urban life to four functions: work, leisure, housing and traffic.

The modern city was reflected as a product of as well as producing the exploitation of labor force, as a ‘machine’ fostering (industrial) production and the circulation of goods and labor force. Art and creativity were suspected of losing their meanings. In unitary urbanism art and creativity were to attach a volatile meaning to daily life. Urbanism itself has to be construed as an art work, made to please and to render creative and ‘meaningful activities in life and culture’ (Constant cit. in Pinder, 2005, p. 197).

In the notions of a unitary urbanism city space is active. When being used as machinery it is to endorse the laborers into a dull state of mind and behavior, though it is also the source of bringing about another life of individual creativity. Unitary urbanism was to be an urbanism of harmonizing lifestyle and environment, a lifestyle with no goal, not conveyed by a superimposed or functional meaning but which makes life itself a goal, a lifestyle aiming to be the creation of the individual’s life. In the readings of the situationists, the exclusive meaning of creativity was to develop and perform individual life styles.

Dérive, the meaningless drifting through urban spaces has been used to identify and to endow urban spaces with emotional, affective, hence, psychological meanings. For their first drawings situationists cut out meaningful sections of city maps and placed the pieces in a different order.

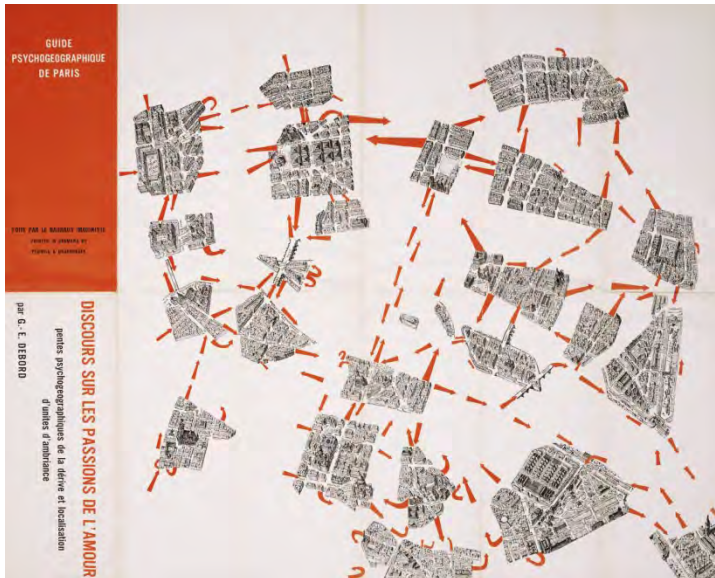


Figure 2: Guy Debord's Guide Psychogéographique de Paris. (© imaginarymuseum.org/LPG/Mapsitu1.htm)

Still, the meanings attached to the identified emotional and sensual places seemed to refer to a romanticized historic interpretation of pre-modern urbanity – to a past that has more to offer than the present. When psychogeography was to identify and explain the subconscious influences exerted by the urban atmosphere, unitary urbanism was to consciously use psychological effects of the environment, eventually crystallizing in the utopia of a New Babylon conceived of Constant Nieuwenhuis or, as he was referred to, “Constant” (see Wigley, 1998, pp. 131).

New Babylon – city of future

“... For him [Nieuwenhuis], feelings of emotion (ambience, affective) are not external to space, nor is space indifferent to emotional feelings. He was able to recapture and elevate a concept from the grand architectural tradition in which space creates something such as gathering together, a joy, a sadness, a submission, in short, space is active ... This is what Constant called an architecture of ambience ... the creation of ambience, emotion, situation, what I called a theory of moments. I find myself in accord with situationists when situationism puts to the forefront such ideas of creation, of the production of new situations...” (Lefebvre, H. cit in Soja 1996, p.50)

When Constant presented his utopia of New Babylon in 1960, it was an onset on the prevailing view of ‘modern’ urban architecture and modern urban planning schemes, an ideogram of the (future) urban society and a political statement. New Babylon envisaged sensuous, amorphous, ambient and indetermined sites for

leisure and play, temporary, emergent and transitory (Wigley, 2001, p. 9). It was an advancement of a Marxist post-revolutionary urban future that emerged from the situationist movement.

The New Babylonian Society

As a critical metaphor to the exploitation of the productive labor force of the citizens enhanced by rationalized, organized and controlled modern urban planning, New Babylon was to incorporate desire and space, leading to new architectural forms and eventually a new society. In the utopian non-commodity society production labor will be absorbed by machine production and release the creative energy of the city dwellers.

In his vision on the future urban society Constant extrapolated the nomadic existence of the emerging globalized city dwellers. Due to air traffic the living space of the nomadic inhabitants of a New Babylon is expanding, widening their horizon and variety of experiences. Following this line Constant projected the 'endless' city and proclaimed the recovery of psychological spaces. New Babylon re-presents a transient city, a complex sensuous reality of interconnected heterogeneous spaces, each of which offering a variety of environments. Released from productive labor city dwellers are disengaged to constraints of time and place. Constant anticipated the mobile, flexible and globalized post-modern society. Creative fluxus performers are acting out their lives by drifting and circulating through various ambient surroundings. New Babylon draws on the Situationists' concept of *dérive* – a meaningless strolling – by providing quick passage to sector groups of different worlds - an imaginative journey through the sectors.

The architecture of New Babylon

In the sectors Constant imposed his transcription of psychological spaces, reflecting on the conscious and subconscious impacts of urban environments, atmospheres or ambiances. However, there is no unique atmosphere of the spaces provided in New Babylon. The structure itself and the atmosphere are transient and volatile, subject to continuous modifications by the interactions of the people who pass through it.

New Babylon leaves the old city behind or beneath. The sectors are hung structures or elevated by pilots. The ground level is left to pre-existing urban structures like historic urban cores and/or provides unlimited space for traffic and infrastructure. Cars and transportation infrastructure just as the completely mechanized production plants are confined to the ground level, crisscrossed by freeways. Accessibility of the sectors is provided by air-traffic, by car from the ground level or by an underground system.

The elevated sectors themselves are multilevel structures stretching up to 10 hectares. Placed seemingly arbitrarily side by side and interconnected by a network of possible transportation lines, an endless matrix of sectors and interconnected lines is spanned. However, New Babylon does not dismiss the given urban structures completely. In various drawings, Constant superimposed his visions on maps of already existing

cities like London, Rotterdam or Amsterdam, carefully paying attention to the given urban morphology, e.g. the city center of Amsterdam was considered worth to be spared and bypassed by the “floating” superstructures (Sadler, p. 140).

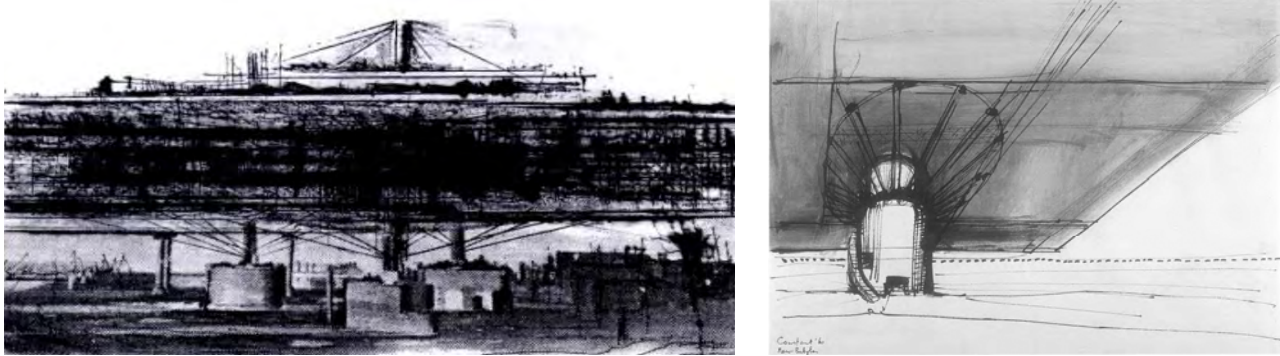


Figure 3: Constant: View and support of a sector. (© Wigley, 1998 (left), © Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (right))

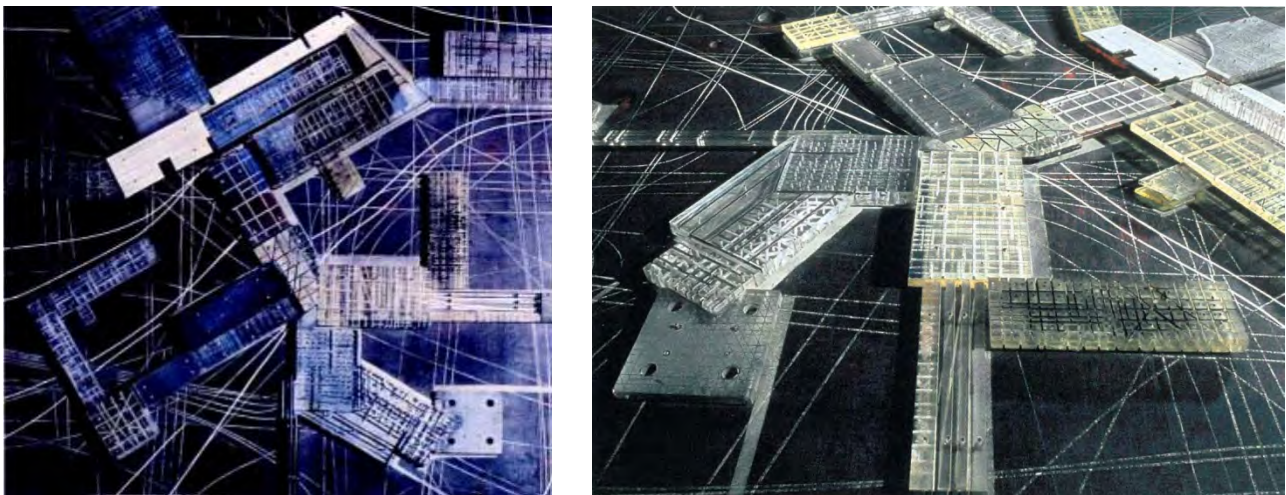


Figure 4: Constant: New Babylon, overhead views. (© Gemeentemuseum, The Hague)

The sectors are conceptualized as cities, however adapted to the demands of the post-revolutionary society. As enclosed entities the sectors provide units for temporary housing and warehouses. Still, the sectors are devoid of workplaces, but provide open spaces as ambient playgrounds for the drifting city dwellers. The ambient spaces inside the sectors are artificially constructed environments. Illumination, air conditioning and climate control are subject to permanent variation. The architecture inside the structures is based on the principle of confusion and playful ambient constructions. A mazy assembly is endowed with water effects, ballrooms, a circus, great plaza floors and ambient houses or rooms like the quiet room, the loud room, room of images for cinematic games, the rooms for rest or even rooms for erotic games. Even if enclosed, terraces can be found attached to the structure for experiencing the open sky or the water games. The car-free environment favors the *dérive* of the city dwellers. Inside the structure passages enable the drifters to connect physically just as visually with the ephemeral ambiances and situations e.g. demonstrations on the white plaza.

However, the ambiances conceal the programmatic vision on the future societies. The ambiances are not to be changed by the city dwellers themselves but by a “Team of Situationists” just as the extended stay in one of the ambient rooms or houses was to have a certain “brainwash” effect to “erase the effect of habits” (Constant, in Wigley, 1998, p. 122).

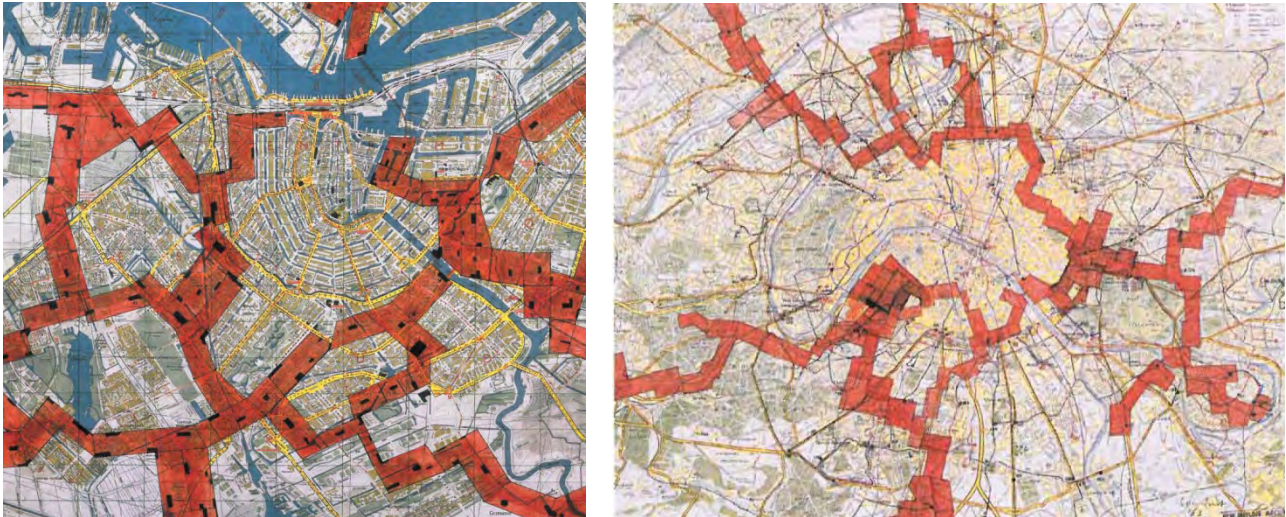


Figure 5: New Babylon/Amsterdam (left)/London (right). (© Gemeentemuseum, The Hague)

Foam City

Drawing on the Situationists’ notions the philosopher Peter Sloterdijk refined the conceptualization of New Babylon by pointing at the topological characteristics of recent cities. In his rationale of emerging ‘Foam Cities’ Sloterdijk focused on the prime function of the city of a meeting place. The concept of the urban society and social spaces is based on the assumptions of “connected isolation” that is represented at the level of apartments, housing estates and settlements (Sloterdijk, 2004, p.257).

The Foam City is a site of collectors addressing the convenable masses and harbors apartment complexes serving as housing capsules for singles and nuclear families. In addition, facilities of the working environment are represented, providing the economic base for the urban dwellers. The three poles of urban life – work places, housing and spaces for collective assemblies are linked with each other by transport and communication infrastructure. The characteristic trait of the Foam City is the agglomeration of atmospheres of unique urban space settings – a ‘foam’ of urban spheres. Following Sloterdijk, the urban macro foam has to be read as a Meta-Collector, collecting sites of assemblage and non-assemblage (Sloterdijk, 2004, p. 655). The intrinsic function of metropolitan agglomerations is to provide the co-existence of centers and non-centers, not as a superimposed center but as an agglomeration or a piling up of a discrete spatiality of the types collector, business, apartment and designed public spaces. The current city that has emerged as a meta-collector does not refer to the individuals either assembled or isolated – or the apartments of the individuals – but to spaces as invented space settings. In these inventions of space settings individuals might make use of

the options of gathering or not and might make use of options to communicate – or not. New urban realities and quality spaces are made up of constructed installations of atmospheres and environments.

Emerging Foam Cities?

When it comes to recent development and utopias of urban futures connections could be made between the drawings of New Babylon and the concept of Foam Cities. Intentional just as unintentional urban planning strategies and urban development reshaped the urban form convergent to what was envisioned by Constant and noted by Sloterdijk. Since Constant presented his utopia of New Babylon in 1960, societal changes, changes in modes of production and technological advancements could be observed as assumed by Constant, incrementally transposing urban forms according to his projections.



Figure 6: Superstructure over Vienna, Hans Hollein, 1960 (© Collection Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris)

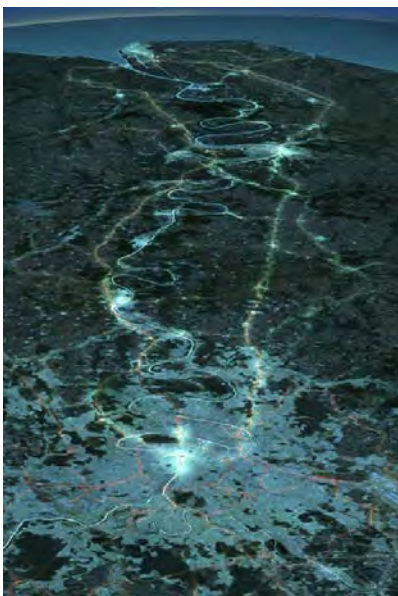


Figure 7: Drafts Grand Paris. (© Antoine Grumbach et associés (center), © Atelier Castro Denisoff Casi / La Courneuve-Manhattan (right))

Architects were influenced by Constant's conceptualization of New Babylon, however mediated and transformed his ideas. Emerging conurbations just as recent planning schemes as proposed e.g. for Grand Paris or New York point at that direction, performing and promoting “endless cities” by integrating the poly-

centered and poly-atmospheric conceptualization of ambient quality spaces, now adapted according to the emerging dispositif of the environmentally sustainable city.

Urban renaissance – compact city - the production of ambiances

The production of ambient quality spaces in Vienna can be traced back to the overlapping cycles of modern urban planning and urban renaissance in the 1980ies. At that time new construction on greenfield sites at the fringes of the city slowed down. Even though and because suburbanization continued, the focus of urban planners was redirected to inner city development.

A new urban class evolved, at first preferring an avant-garde, later on a bourgeois life-style in a traditional urban ambience. Still, the living qualities within the inner city did not match the romanticized vision of the new urbanites at all. The building fabric of the housing stock, dating back to the second half of the 19th century was deteriorating. In 1961 around 45% (300,000) of all occupied apartments in the city were classified as substandard, i.e. without running water and/or WC inside the apartment. The ambience of the inner city precincts was more related to what was referred to by modern urban planners as the “gloomy” city: Congested by cars, declining building fabric, deteriorating shopping streets, bad lighting conditions and lack of green spaces that might serve as social spaces. City dwellers living in these neighborhoods at that time still refer to Vienna as a grey and dark city.

In the first place city planners and developers followed the notions of modern urban planning in terms of jettisoning all historic types and forms and decided in favor of new constructions replacing the old housing stock. Starting in the 1980s, the dispositif constituting urban renewal was reinterpreted by the narratives that imposed a romanticized meaning on the historic urban ambience. Still, the living quality had to be improved. The City of Vienna launched an ambitious soft urban renewal program, targeting the preservation and improvement of the historic ambience in the inner districts, improving the housing quality and ensuring the social sustainability of the renewal process. Subsidies were provided to initiate the renewal process by covering investments for the reconstruction works. By these means, rent increases should be reduced to a moderate level. Between 1984 and 2007 financial support for the renovation of approximately 4,500 residential buildings at a total cost of almost 5.2 billion Euros was granted. The municipality of Vienna's share amounted to about 3.5 billion Euros (www.wbsf.at). The more than 210,000 apartments renovated and improved comprise about one quarter of the entire apartment stock in the city, about the same amount that is provided by public housing.

The issue of social sustainability was redirected from the provision of social housing schemes at the urban fringes to the inner city, but it was also a shift from mere functional urban planning to considering sensual, emotional and ambient aspects in urban planning schemes. The aesthetic quality of the neighborhood in terms of preserving and re-establishing romanticized historic neighborhoods was in sync with the

transformation of the urban society into a life-style society, differentiating into ‘Bobos’, ‘Yuppies’, ‘Dinks’ or ‘Power Couples’, and the cultural values of city-dwellers and their desire for neighborhoods where they could find identity and feel at home. The apartment as ambient lifestyle capsule of households was extended to the neighborhood. The concept of ambient urban spheres or sectors implicitly entered urban planning schemes.

However, the vivid quality of social spaces, as promoted by Lefebvre and consequently by the situationists could not be recovered. Public spaces as the streets and plazas in the redeveloped neighborhoods did not serve as social spaces anymore. Small shops and cafes as places of encounter, creativity and discussion closed down, replaced either by food chain stores, apartments or garages. Small manufacturing firms vanished and so did the meaning of a lively mixed used urban precinct. The meaning of the streets as places for social assemblage disappeared and was replaced by a homogenized and globalized ambience of gentrified neighborhoods. At the turn of the Millennium the dispositif of urban planning became modified. Urban renewal in terms of upgrading the apartments behind the historic facades slowed down and was replaced by new narratives. Planning the globalized city became the canvas of urban planning projects.

Towards a poly-centered and poly-atmospheric city

New Babylon was superimposed over existing urban forms. Urban planners in the “real” city have to interact with the already given. Like Constant foresaw the impact of de-industrialization on urban society, the number of work places in industrial production had decreased in Vienna since the 1970s. Industrial sites lost their functions and their meanings, eventually falling into decline and taken over by nature – seemingly referring to New Babylon where the structures are continuously extending in one direction, whereas abandoned sectors are left to be recycled by nature. The heterotopias of the industrial city were dissolving and disappeared transforming the sites into “waiting lands” (Christiaanse, 2002) – waiting for a new meaning, then a new function attached to the sites.

The redevelopment of brownfield areas was triggered by and embedded in the new meaning of urban renaissance. The sites became emanated with particular meanings embodying new visions of urban lifestyles. Terms as ‘Loft Living’ or ‘Live and Work’ represented a new culture of a first avant-garde, later on a bourgeois urban lifestyle. The pristine function of the site became inverted and attached with the “myth”, theme or narrative of an alternative urban life-style.

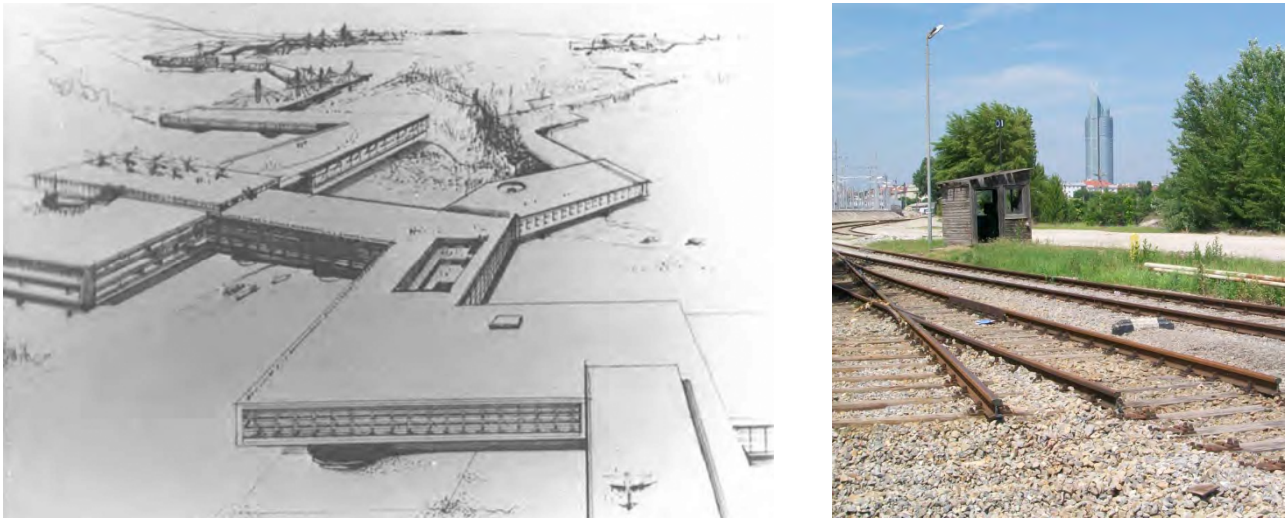


Figure 8: New Babylon: Transient development (left) – Vienna: Brownfield area Northern Railway Station (foreground), Millennium City (background) (right). (© Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (left))

With reference to the concept of Foam Cities or its predecessor New Babylon, redeveloped brownfield areas have been transformed into sector-like ambiences, loosely interconnected to the other sectors of the city and redeveloped brownfield sites by mass rapid transit system. The sites are attached with a theme that occasionally refers to the former uses like ‘Tobacco Factory’, ‘Cable ‘Factory’, ‘Brewery’ or ‘Gasometer-City’. The historic building fabric was re-used as a signifier of the narrative and the identity, hence, attaching a meaning to the site and enhancing the ambient quality of the site in terms of architectural diversity.

At the dawn of the Millennium the disposition of urban planning in Vienna incrementally modified the urban form according to Constant’s drafts of New Babylon. The city had to adapt to the demands of the globalized economies that could neither be met in the historic precincts of the inner city nor in the homogenized remainders of modern urban planning schemes.

Following the planning scheme of the compact, poly-centered city, new urban centers emerged or were implemented into abandoned brownfield sites. Connectivity became the decisive location factor of these new urban centers. New urban centers were located at the intersections of inner city highways and the mass rapid transit system, resulting not only in a time distance convergence between the new urban centers and the new urban centers and the airport, but also to the new urban centers and the ambiences of the historic inner city and the city center. Like the sectors of New Babylon, even if not physically placed side by side, considering time-distance, they are. Urban planners enhanced this development by planning transportation infrastructure. Converted brownfield sites were connected by extensions and modifications of the underground system. Today the “sectors” of new urban centers and accordingly adapted brownfield sites seemingly follow the arbitrary zig-zag patterns that constituted Constant’s New Babylon.

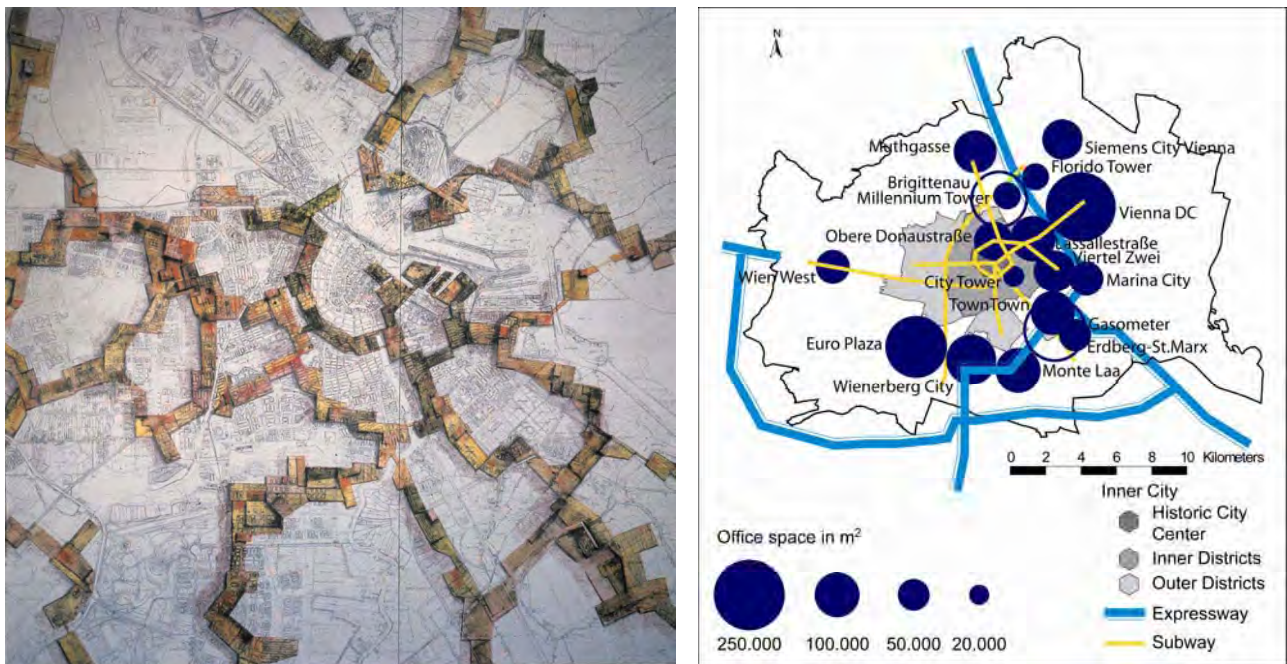


Figure 9: New Babylon/Amsterdam (left) – Office space in New Urban Centers and redeveloped brownfields, completed 2000-2009/Vienna (right). (© Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (left))

The newly built urban centers implicitly refer to the construction-scheme of the sectors as conceptualized by Constant for his New Babylon. Built on platforms they span over the inner city freeways resp. transportation infrastructure. Located at the intersections of inner city freeways and the underground systems, they are easily accessible by car from the ground level or by underground. Even if the New Urban Centers are not directly reachable by air-traffic, they are well connected to the airport. According to their promotion sites, the Vienna International Airport can be reached within 20 minutes, even if located more than 20 kilometers away.

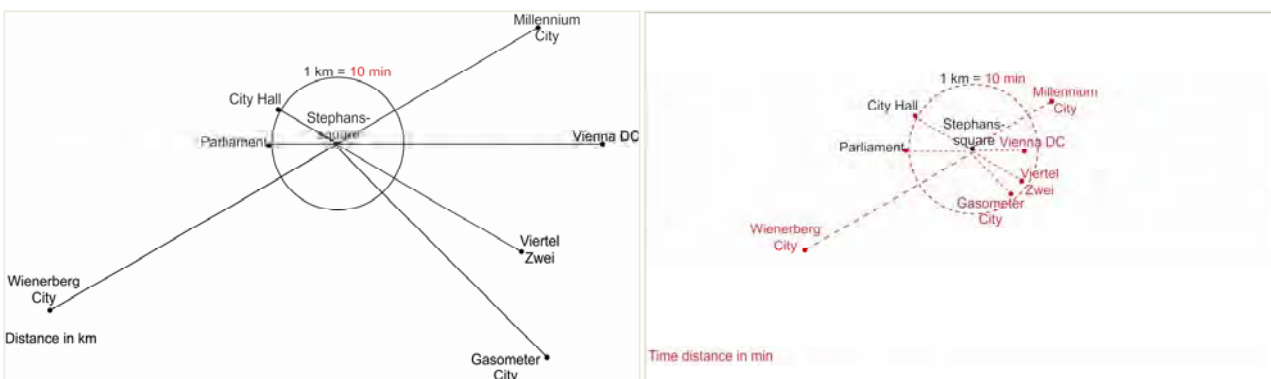


Figure 10: Time-distance convergence: City Center – New Urban Centers

The new urban centers or “sectors” are conceptualized as mixed used urban environments, in contrary to New Babylon, though not providing work places for industrial production but office spaces. Implicitly following the urban planning schemes of New Babylon, the sectors are piled over transportation

infrastructure and provide car-free but city-like environments in terms of enclosed shopping malls and apartments. The playfulness is referenced by urban entertainment centers, just as the new urban centers or sectors are attached to recreation areas. The flexible arrangement of spaces as it was foreseen in New Babylon's sector have become realized in terms of flexible office spaces and schemes for apartments, just as residential and office buildings provide playful ambiances, equipped with swimming pools, recreation and leisure facilities. The meaning to the housing estates has been attached by labeling them as 'residential parks', later on by dedicating individual residential buildings to specific themes or lifestyles, like "Hanging Gardens", "Living at the Golf Court", "Monte Verde", etc.. New urban centers and redeveloped brownfield sites have become the heterotopia of a globalized but individualized lifestyle society. The ambient quality of the historic urban form in the inner districts has been complemented by a diversification of lifestyle environments in the new urban centers and redeveloped brownfield areas. At least as far as the intentions of the developers are concerned.

According to the dispositions modifying the urban form, the disposition of social sustainability has changed. The ambitious social housing program silently faded out. The task of social sustainability was handed over to the soft urban renewal program, to housing associations and the provision of individual subsidies. At present about 60% of Vienna's population lives in subsidized apartments. Due to this fact social inequalities like segregation remain at a moderate level, enabling even the urban middle classes to make their choice among the sectors providing a variety of lifestyle environments.

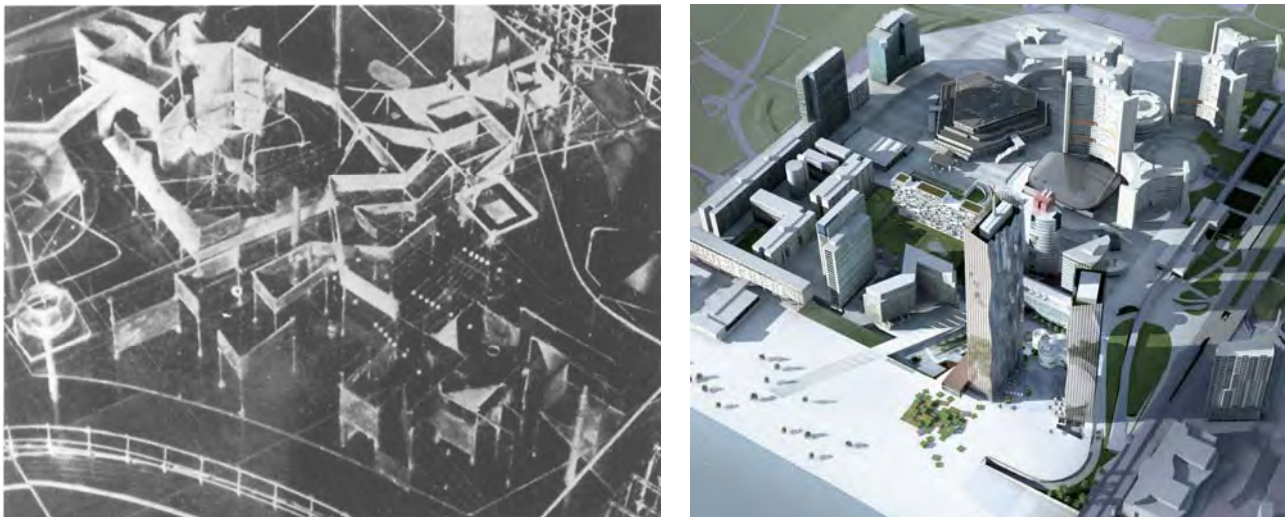


Figure 11: Constant (ca. 1960), View approaching sectors G and E (left), View approaching New Urban Center Vienna DC (ca. 2014) (right). (© Sadler, 1998 (left), © beyer.co.at (right))

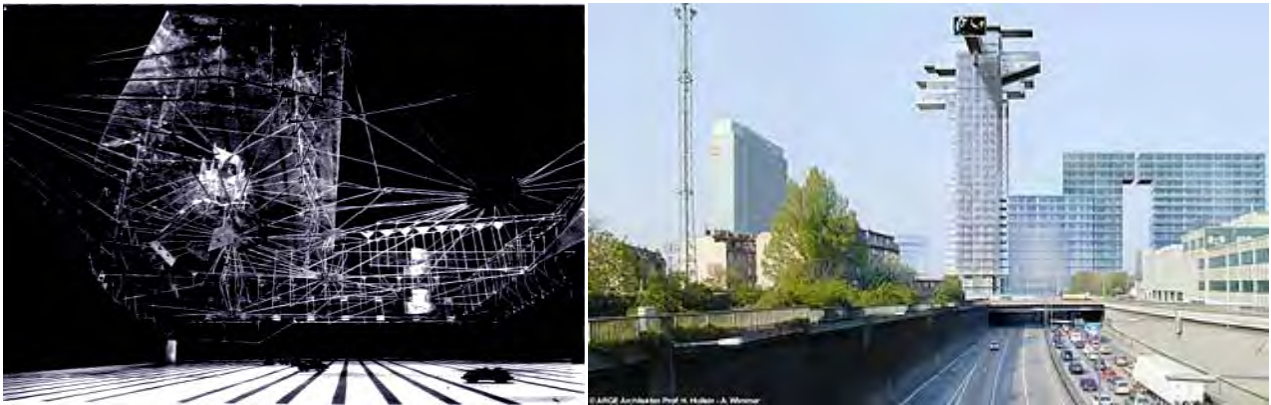


Figure 12: New Baby Ion/Orange Construction (left) – Vienna/New Urban Center ‘Monte L aa’ (right). (© Victor Niuewenhuis (left), © ARGE Hans Hollein - Albert Wimmer (right))

In the newly built housing estates the City of Vienna fosters socially mixed developments by offering a mix of subsidized and non-subsidized rental as well as owner-occupied apartments. Still, these means do not reach those at the lower end of the social strata, but do not confine the middle classes to specific urban milieus. Within the housing estates, however, social stratification is reflected in the quality of the apartments. The less attractive are restricted to the segment of subsidized housing, the most attractive and luxury spaces are rented out or sold at market prices. In the case of high-rise apartment buildings social segregation has been transformed into the vertical dimension, with the most affluent residents on the top floors. Hence, the non-commodity society as envisioned by Constant has been replaced by a welfare society performing an individual life style (Lootsma, 2001, p. 106).

The ecological sustainable city

Like the issue of social sustainability the dispositif of ecological awareness has been affiliated with transient meanings. When modern urban planning was guided by the dispositif of ‘reconquering the sun’ (Le Corbusier) and providing open green spaces in urban settlements that were at odds with the congested densely built up inner city precincts – eventually supposed to be flattened –, by the increase of car traffic and growing green movements, the ecological dispositif of urban planning was reinterpreted. Urban Renaissance, focusing on the idea of a compact city, was, beside others, to reduce the waste of land reserves by urban sprawl and the negative impacts of increasing car traffic. By promoting walkable and car free urban environments the dispositifs of reconquering the social spaces in the city and environmental care came together. At the turn of the Millennium the issue of global climate change entered the urban arena, shaping the dispositif of low carbon cities. Zero energy architecture and ecological sustainability attached new themes to new urban sectors and life styles. The playful eclecticism of post-modern architecture is becoming replaced by a new “low carbon” functionalism, though endowed with meanings of an ecological sustainable life style as ‘Car Free City’, ‘Bike City’, ‘Ville Verdi’, etc..



Figure 13: From urban renaissance towards the low car bon city. Ville Verdi (left) - Refurbished Gasometer-City (right).

Accordingly, the dispositif shaping the issue of social sustainability was modified and re-interpreted. Subsidized housing is to provide affordable housing in the environmentally sustainable sectors of the city. The issue of ‘soft urban renewal’ has moved on from the re-construction of the historic inner city neighborhoods to ‘thermo-energetic’ urban renewal, now focusing on the buildings constructed since the 1950s, among them the social housing estates built according to modern urban planning schemes. When social sustainability at that time meant to providing affordable but high quality apartments for low income households, now it is to lower the expenses for energy consumption in these households.

Urban voids

Modern urban planning, just like as previous urban utopias, was to impose a comprehensive meaning on urban planning schemes and to remove the remains of previous urban development. Since then the cycles of dispositifs (re-)shaping the urban form accelerated, each of which focusing on particular urban sites that were either reinterpreted or had to be newly constructed, eventually resulting in fragmented patterns of urban planning. Hence, in between the sites that moved into the focus of new meanings attached to urban planning,

urban areas lost their meanings eventually turning into voids of urban planners. In Vienna the remainders of modern urban planning such as social housing estates at the urban fringes, but even low quality apartments in the inner city not affected by the soft urban renewal program have become such voids, having turned into the areas where the powerless urban dwellers, such as low income or immigrant households are concentrated. Even though these groups attach their own meanings to the sites, they do not follow the mainstream of urban planning. When turning to Constant's New Babylon, these areas are now representing the "old" city that is left behind or beneath by developing the poly-atmospheric city.

Heterotopia City Center

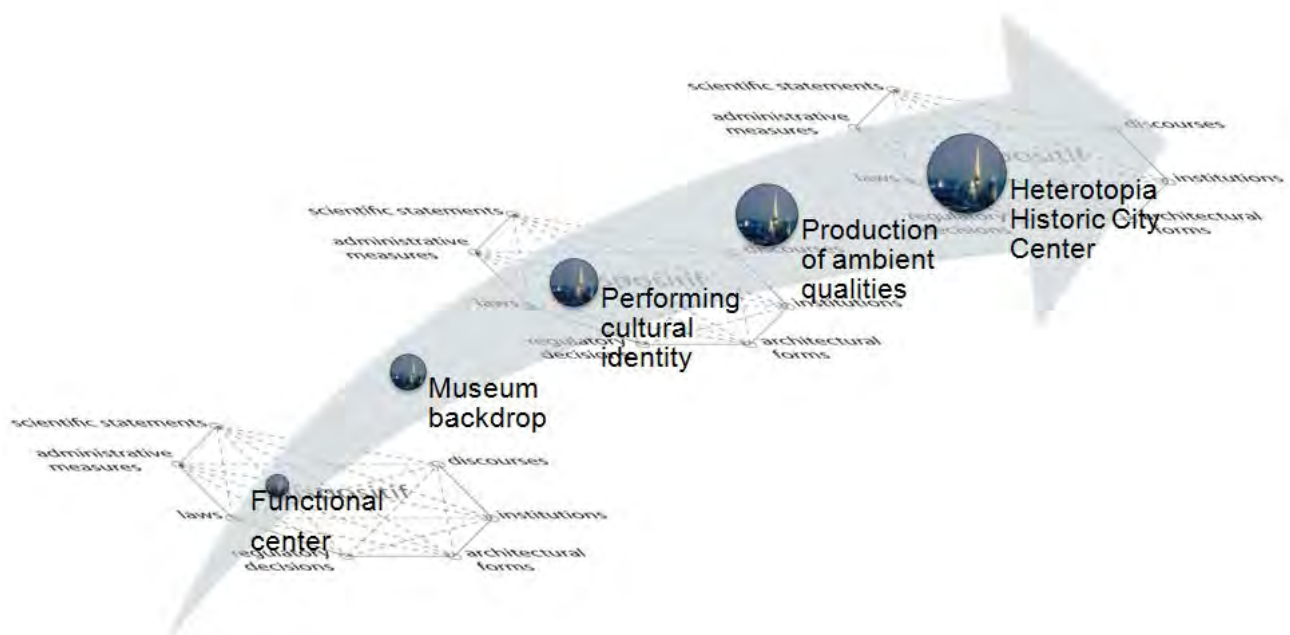


Figure 14: Fluid dispositifs of the historic city center

Urban utopias imply visions on a perfected form and representation of society. Though, utopias are places without a place. When transferred into space, urban utopias are becoming converted into heterotopias, "effectively enacted utopias ... a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live..." (Foucault, 1986, p. 24). Following this line the enacted dispositifs of urban utopias as modern urban planning schemes, urban renaissance, brownfield redevelopments, planning the globalized or low carbon city bear similarities to heterotopias. Heterotopias can take various forms, however it has to be expected that there are no universal forms of heterotopias. Foucault describes several traits of heterotopias, implicitly arguing the more traits apply to particular spaces, the more are the spaces approximating to the universal form of heterotopias or highly heterotopic places. By dissecting the traits of heterotopias the city center unfolds as the most highly heterotopic place in the City (of Vienna), turning the meanings of the city center from the functional center of the city into a place of symbolic representation of the cultural heritage

and identity of the entire city and moving on to the production of ambient qualities and a kind of a playful environment, bearing similarities to the emotional environments of New Babylon. In sync to the principle of heterotopias: "...heterotopias can change in function and meaning over time, according to the particular 'synchrony' of the culture in which they are found" (Soja, 1996, p. 160).

When modern urban planning proceeded and the inner city district fell into decline, the city was to become a city without meanings, history and identity, the city center was out of the focus of urban planners. Since the 1970s the production of ambient qualities in and of the historic city center came to the fore. In 1978 the entire Historic City Center was designated as a 'protected zone'. The ambience of the heterotopia 'Historic City Center' was enhanced by refined regulations on the outward appearances, e.g. character and style of the buildings, and broken down to every single detail of the visual coherence, e.g.: shop entrances, windows replacements, etc. (UNESCO, 2008), excluding influences of modern architecture. Even the vision of a mixed-used old-fashioned city center was considered worth preserving by designating neighborhoods of the Historic City Center as protected residential areas.

By establishing the UNESCO Cultural Heritage core zone and buffer zone in 2000 another layer of regulation and control, now spreading over the entire city has been implemented. The production of the heterotopia "Historic City Center" has moved on to put the setting in perspective. Sight axes and sight lines to the Historic City Center have become a prime agenda in urban planning of the entire City of Vienna. New urban development as new high-rises have to adjust according to the sight axes to the Historic City Center, referring to a painting of Vienna's skyline in the 18th century. In imposing the hegemony of cultural identity by preserving the cultural heritage the Historic City Center is "...linked to accumulation of time in an immobile place of time – as museums or libraries..." as it is a principle of heterotopias (Foucault, 1986, p.26).



Figure 15: Layers of regulations on the visual coherence, imposed on the city center

In the sectors of Constants New Babylon ambient qualities are provided by changing lighting conditions just as places for pleasure and entertainment like circuses. The production of these ambient qualities in the city center of Vienna required another layer of control. The 'Lighting Master Plan for Vienna' was passed in 2007, regulating how each individual structure has to be illuminated. Public spaces are integrated in the spectacle of the Historic City Center, taken away from the public and returned as a controlled and commodified experience. Planning schemes for the main shopping district at first suggested transforming the space from a congested shopping street into an ambience for strolling flaneurs or consumers. The most recent refurbishment, completed in 2010, however was exclusively focusing on the production of the ambient quality as enticing lighting or 'polished' surfaces. By evoking 'controlled' emotions power can be exerted over behavior and minds. Urban design evolves as a technology of designing emotions, as envisioned by Constant for the sectors of New Babylon, eventually erasing the mundane habits.



Figure 16: Main shopping district, ca. 1960 (left), drafts for refurbishments 1970 (center) and 2010 (right). (© Gruen V., left, center)

“Opposite these heterotopias that are linked to the accumulation of time, there are those linked, on the contrary, to time in its most fleeting, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival” (Foucault, 1986, p.26). As the playful ambiances of New Babylon provide spaces for events and festivals, in the Historic City Center public spaces and the historic facades have become attached with the meaning of a stage for performing urban culture. Squares are re-interpreted as art-place and become occupied by events and performances all year long.



Figure 17: Festivalized square in the city center in front of the City Hall (left), Traditional amusement park 'Prater' (right). (© foto-julius.at (left))

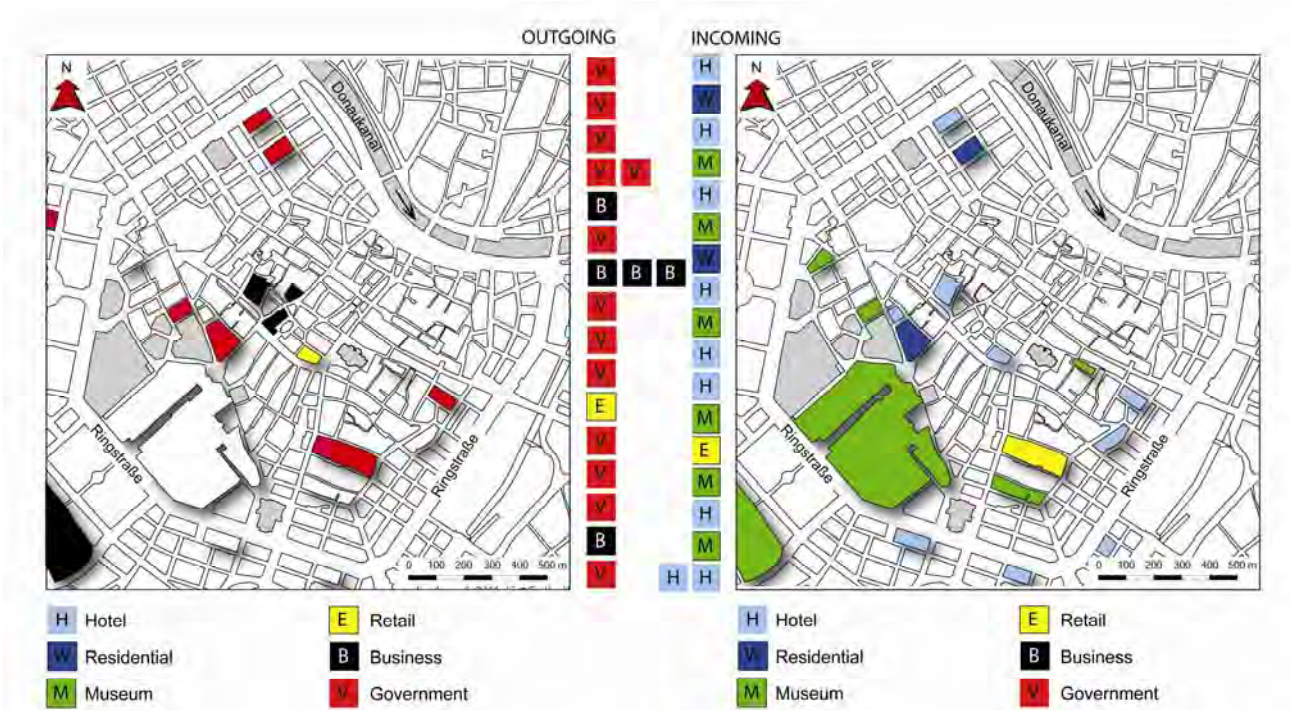


Figure 18: City Center: Urban functions follow the urban form (Exchange of functions 2000-2010)

However, the production of ambient qualities is moving on to the social design of the environment, removing social groups considered as deviant. Even shop owners have to give way for re-presentations of art, implicitly in accordance to the dispositif to remove anything that can disturb the magic show of an historic city center. By the prevailing power of the ambient quality now the urban functions follow the urban form. The meaning as the functional center of the entire city is weakening. Work places and headquarters of leading companies are relocating as the strong regulations on the ambient quality do not meet the demands of globalized economies anymore. Government departments and offices of the city administration are leaving the city center, giving way for accommodations for a climbing number of a mobile, drifting urban class.

Hotels now take advantage of the ambient qualities. City planners foster the playful ambience of the city center. Cultural institutions are expanding. At the least a attractive back of the Historic City Center globalized leisure facilities are established like a ‘bathing ship’ or artificial beaches.

Even the transformation of the main shopping area in to a globalized shopping destination is part of the playful ambience. In performing individual life styles consumerism has become an important means. Drifting city dwellers use the ambience of an historic city center to inform themselves on the recent trends of fashion and life styles by what is provided by the globalized and exclusive chain operated stores of globalized retailers that have established behind the protected historic facades of the stores. The motives of city dwellers for coming to the Center are: to experience and perform an exclusive urban life style characterized by strolling, window shopping, meeting friends, going out for lunch, dinner, to bars and cultural activities (IFES, 2009).

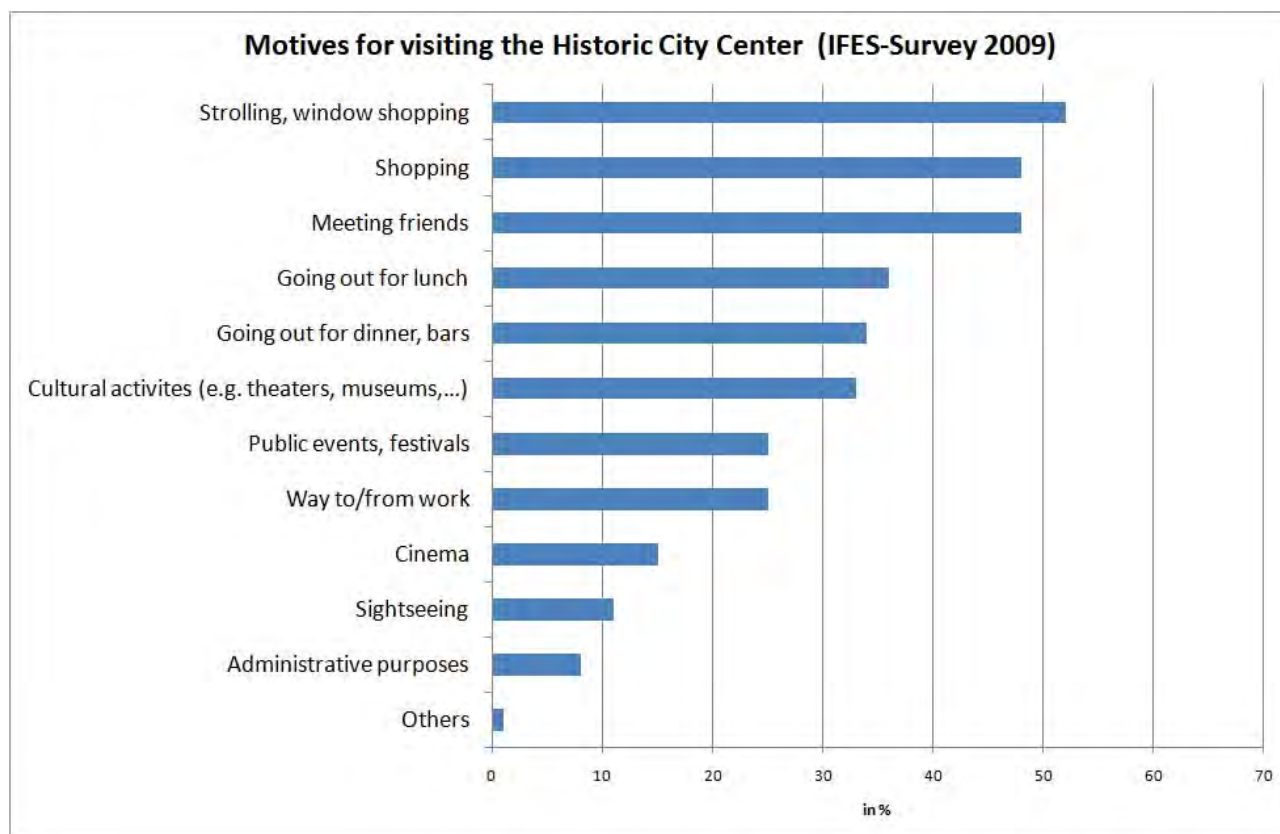


Figure 19: Motifs for visiting the Historic City Center (Source: IFES, 2009)

The prime function of the city of a meeting place, as Sloterdijk notes, has become represented in the Historic City Center in terms of an exclusive “ballroom” or “assembly hall” - in relation to the other sites in the city – serving as social space providing city dwellers the option to be with and among people and to pursue and perform an exclusive urban life style that can neither be performed in the declining shopping streets, nor in the homogeneous housing developments at the urban fringes, nor in the emerging sectors shaping the ‘New Vienna’. Following the principles of heterotopias the historic city center is turned into a highly heterotopic

place “...onto which the whole world comes to enact its symbolic perfection ... a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy ... a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned...” (Foucault, 1986, p. 27). However, by refining and tightening regulations for the production of a perfect place “All the conditions come together thus for a perfect domination, for a refined exploitation of people as producers, consumers of products, consumers of space...” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 85), inverting the pristine intentions of the situationists utopias of quality spaces.

Outlook

Following the Master Plan the remodeling of the city by sectors imposed over and extending the given urban form just as the production of ambient and themed quality spaces is not finished yet. The Master Plan of the City of Vienna points at this direction by designating 13 key areas, each of which dedicated to a specific ‘theme’, hence to specific combinations and variations of quality spaces, providing the dramaturgies and the “soundtracks” of the aesthetization of daily life (Walter Benjamin). Following the notions of Foucault, Constant and Sloterdijk, the future city has to be understood as a relation among sites, loosely interconnected, a ‘Meta-Collector’ of constructed ambient urban environments.

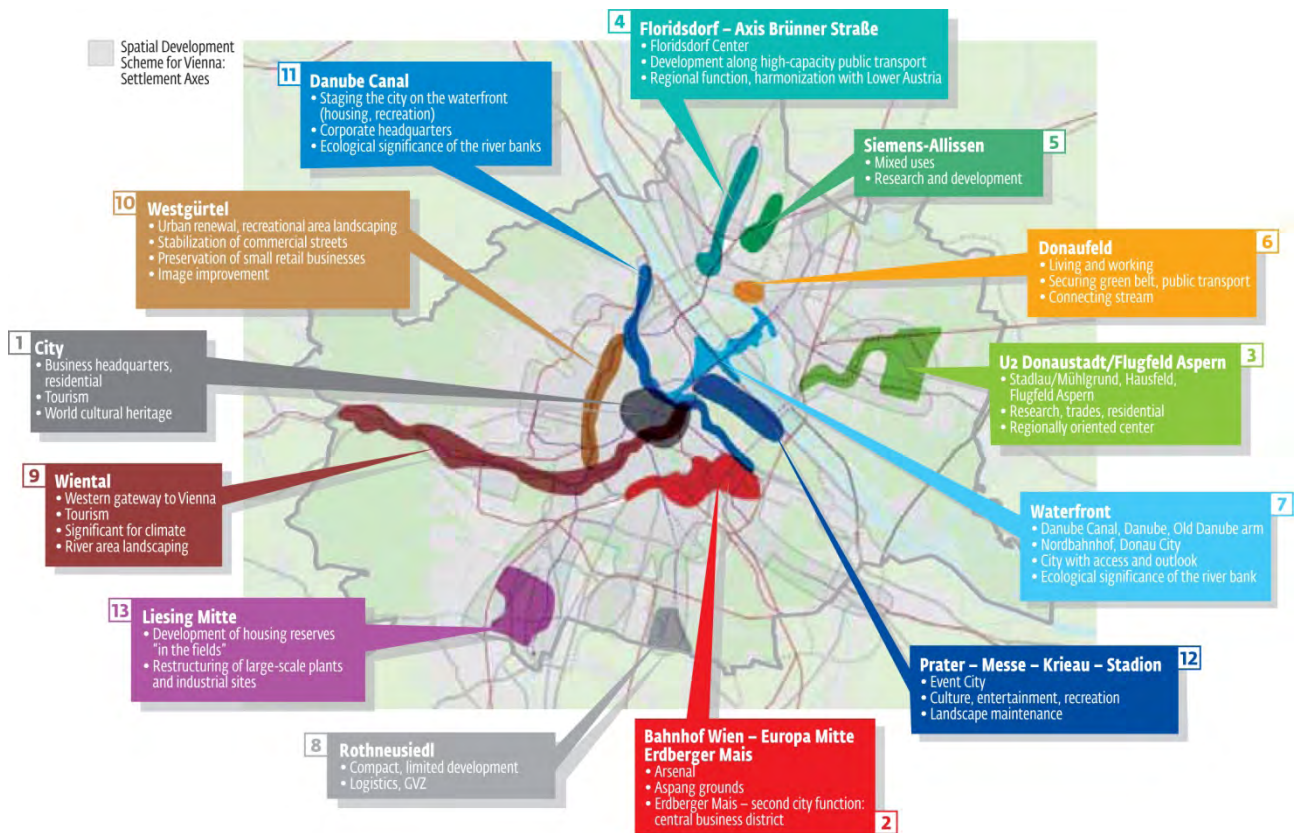


Figure 20: Urban Development Plan Vienna 2005. (© City of Vienna)

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