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A Grätzel: a signifier of a Viennese microcosm.
On the relation between local economic practices and
the strategic construction of added meaning.





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added meaning

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Abstract

This thesis traces the role of neighbourhood shops in the discursive shaping of a Grätzel along two lines: production of meaning through local economic activities as an unintentional slow process, and the strategic construction of meaning. Under the influence of global market forces the very role of neighbourhood shops has changed: They have retained (a part of) their status as important nodes of production and trading, yet their perception has changed as their growth has been bonded with symbolic economy. Effectively local economic practices have increasingly been sustained by means of discursive imaginaries. This thesis understands signifiers as a means of communicating discursively constructed imaginaries, which is linked to post-Fordist construction of meaning through affect as symbolic value, thus offsetting deficiencies of the Fordist, function-lead urban design in providing appealing spaces of consumption (meaningful places) for a new emerging class of affluent, but selective consumers. Attributing added meaning and symbolic value to everyday practices, mostly related to local economies and neighbourhood encounters, could discursively be traced back as far as the 1960s, when everyday practices have become a part of urban imaginaries opposing Fordist development schemes. Everyday life concerns everyday economic, cultural, social, political practices in a city's space in relation to concrete actors' strategies that evolve in or about space. As the scope of interest of various actors has expanded to cover multiple dimensions of space, materialities have been epistemologically interwoven with other aspects of everyday life. Everyday practices and thus local economic practices have been attributed symbolic value (where, for example, the very same act of shopping in a local shop carries different meaning than shopping in a chain market next door) in the game in which various actors actively seek to get involved in the (re-)production of space and the construction of (altered) meaning. This thesis puts focus on the relation between incremental production of meaning and strategic construction of added meaning by taking a look at a Viennese microcosm: A Grätzel and its local economic activities.

Kurzbeschreibung

Diese Arbeit geht der Rolle von Nachbarschaftsgeschäften in der diskursiven Formung anhand zweier Linien nach: Der Bedeutungsproduktion durch lokale ökonomische Praktiken als unabsichtlicher, langsamer Prozess und der strategischen Konstruktion von Bedeutung. Unter dem Einfluss globaler Marktkräfte hat sich die eigentliche Bedeutung von Nachbarschaftsgeschäften verändert: Sie haben zwar einen Teil ihres Status als wichtige Knotenpunkte für Produktion und Tausch behalten, ihre Wahrnehmung jedoch hat sich geändert, da ihr Wachstum an symbolische Ökonomie geknüpft ist. Tatsächlich werden lokale ökonomische Praktiken zunehmend mittels diskursiver *imaginaries* gestützt. Diese Arbeit versteht *signifier* als ein Mittel um diskursiv konstruierte *imaginaries* zu kommunizieren, welche mit der Post-Fordistischen Konstruktion von Bedeutung durch emotionale Symbolisierung verbunden ist, wodurch den Defiziten des Fordistischen, funktionsgeleiteten Städtebaus (vermeintlich) entgegengewirkt wird, indem einladende, handelszentrierte Orte (*meaningful places*) geschaffen werden für eine neu entstehende Klasse von wohlhabenden, aber wählerischen Konsumenten. Alltagspraktiken zusätzliche Bedeutung und symbolischen Wert zuzuschreiben, vor allem lokale Ökonomien und nachbarschaftliche Begegnungen betreffend, kann diskursiv bis in die 1960er Jahre zurückverfolgt werden, als Alltagspraktiken Teil urbaner *imaginaries*, zu Gegensätzen Fordistischer Entwicklungsschemata wurden. Alltägliches Leben betrifft tägliche wirtschaftliche, kulturelle, soziale und politische Praktiken im Stadtraum in Beziehung zu konkreten Strategien von Akteuren, die sich im Raum (oder über den Raum) herausbilden. (Spätestens) Seit sich der Interessensbereich unterschiedlicher Akteure hin zu einer Behandlung multipler Dimensionen von Raum ausgeweitet hat, sind Materialitäten epistemologisch mit anderen Aspekten alltäglichen Lebens verflochten. In einem Spiel, in dem verschiedene Akteure danach streben an der (Re-)Produktion von Raum und die Konstruktion von zusätzlicher Bedeutung aktiv teilzuhaben, wurde ebendiesen alltäglichen Praktiken symbolischer Wert zugeschrieben (indem, zum Beispiel, die eigentlich gleiche Handlung des Einkaufens in einem lokalen Geschäft eine andere Bedeutung mit sich trägt, als der Einkauf bei einer Supermarkt-Kette nebenan). Diese Arbeit legt den Fokus auf die Beziehung zwischen inkrementeller Bedeutungsproduktion und strategischer Konstruktion zusätzlicher Bedeutung indem ein Blick auf einen Wiener Mikrokosmos geworfen wird: Nämlich auf ein Grätzl und dessen lokalen ökonomischen Praktiken.

Preface - A personal account

Growing up in Vienna, means growing up in a city where everyone seems to have an idea what a Grätzel is, or at least what it is made of. Nevertheless, a precise definition can not be found, and may refer to any scale in a range from a large neighbourhood to a building and its nearest surroundings, as well as to individual streets or a market place. The spatial boundaries are mostly blurred, and if anything only vaguely identified. As unbound and blurred as a Grätzel's spatial limits are, as manifold the very essences that make this term are: A Grätzel means a place to live, a place to produce, a place to consume. It is a substance that one attaches experiences, emotions, narratives, and affects to.

This thesis is a material reflection on an ongoing process that started quite some time ago: One day I found myself immersed in questions related to the field of critical urban studies, trying to grasp, to unravel the complexities (and sometimes mysteries) of the production of space and urban cultures. No wonder I got both lost in theory as well as in socio-spatial intricacy and it took time, lots of patience from my colleagues and actually just the opposite of reason to get to this point. Only through affect this thesis came into being - affect for a specific socio-cultural context. Affect for a space I fell in love with because its atmosphere is enchantingly mundane. It also took local people's affect, to share their experiences, their everyday life practices. It was actually a mosaic of stories that made me question the Viennese term Grätzel I was so attuned to and ultimately helped me to link these narratives and practices back to theory.

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1 | Introduction



Image 1: Finding niches? A shoe shop at Kalvarienberggasse © Johanna Aigner

1. Introduction

1.1. Contribution to the field

The making of a Grätzel has been linked to local (economic) practices and (local) discourses; two interrelated processes, which are closely connected to personal and group experiences, as well as (communicated) narratives. Local (economic) practices understood as everyday practices performed by individuals, groups of actors, or institutions, which are related to or rooted in a Grätzel, clearly influence the shaping of its space. At the same time they play a crucial role in shaping discursive realities¹, coining local discourses that equally contribute to the shaping of a Grätzel. However, over the last decades, together with the transformation of the mode of signification in mass communication, discourses have progressively been strategically used in place promotion strategies in a widespread attempt to discursively increase symbolic value. Associations that people attached to a Grätzel were in the past primarily linked to other individuals, groups and spatial practices rooted in the local context, that have entered popular narratives. Today it seems, as if individuals, groups, private as well as administrative bodies, who (mostly) operate beyond the local scale, strategically refer to a Grätzel because it is the local, where the global is enmeshed into everyday life (Bridge&Watson 2011b: 383, referring to Low 2011). This implies that a Grätzel is not only intersubjectively generated, but is employed as a signifier for attributed meanings in the production of urban imaginaries that utilize and address local economic practices.

This thesis concerns the production of a Grätzel as both a signifier and the lived space along two main lines of an argument. The first line points to the symbolic economy as a theoretical framework and a practice of the strategic construction of (added) meaning aiming at utilizing and enhancing symbolic value (of certain spaces and spatial practices that unfold within). This practice of conceiving space is contrasted by the second line of an argument that deals with the slow incremental production of meaning through everyday practices. For this purpose non-relational theories are employed as a framework that links everyday practices to the production of meaning. Empirical study explores local economic practices as they are addressed by the strategic construction of added meaning and as they are interpreted as everyday practices through which meaning is produced. This thesis explores local economic practices as spatial practices, the acts that unfold in neighbourhood shops and local street markets. The economic notion that depicts local businesses as mainly dependent on local cooperations, and/or local sales (Läpple, 2005: 616-618) is taken into account to distinguish neighbourhood shops from global players, yet their position in local and global economic flows has not

¹ See chapter 2, section 2.4, which is based on interview series B to E, and content analysis of popular media discourse.

been further discussed, as the focus has been placed on local businesses as anchor points of everyday practices and as actors in the production of meaning. Neighbourhood shops and local street markets are analyzed as nodes where everyday practices (such as encounters and exchange) unfold, as well as spaces of representations, where local symbols are produced.

1.2. Theoretical and analytical framework

The role of local economic practices in the (discursive) shaping of a Grätzel is traced along two theoretical lines: production of meaning as a slow incremental process (Lefebvre 1991, Watson 2006, 2009), and the strategic construction of meaning in portraying life in a Grätzel (Zukin 1998, Zukin [1995] 2008). In the context of economic and societal transformations the perception of (the importance of) local economic practices has changed. Neighbourhood shops have retained (a part of) their status as important nodes of production and trading, yet their perception has changed as their growth has been bonded with a domain of symbolic economy. Local economic activities have effectively been sustained by means of discursive imaginaries. Attributing new meaning and symbolic value to everyday practices, mostly related to local economic practices and neighbourhood encounters, could discursively be traced back as far as the 1960s, when everyday practices have become a part of planners' imaginaries, being promoted by planning activists opposing modernist development schemes (Jane Jacobs being the most prominent one). This practice soon developed into a strategic (planning) approach with conflicting (spatial) outcomes, which has been heavily criticized by accounts on the strategic production of the land value disparity, known as the rent-gap (Smith 1987).

As the scope of interest of researchers, planners and even everyday users has expanded to cover multiple dimensions of space, materialities have been epistemologically interwoven with other aspects of everyday life (Viderman 2010, referring to Lefebvre 1991). Applying relational conceptions of space in urban research (Bridge&Watson 2011a) have further stressed the paradigm shift towards understanding human activities, materialities and relationships between humans and non-humans, as well as cities as a whole, as (societally produced) processes (Lefebvre 1991). A further strand refers to an understanding of everyday life as everyday economic, cultural, social, political practices in a city's space in relation to concrete actors' strategies that evolve in or about space, that despite ongoing processes of urban transformation in the context of capitalist development persevere in public spaces (Knierbein, Aigner&Watson 2012, Madanipour 2003, Swyngedouw et al. 2002). At the same time a growing interest in the symbolic economy has been supported by the increased mobility of people and capital (Zukin 1996). Therefore the importance of a strategic construction of an image associated with the increasing symbolic value by the means of attributing

additional meaning within urban imaginary, is higher than ever (Zukin et al. 1998, Viderman 2010). Attempts of boosting symbolic value are coupled with the competition for attention (Davenport&Beck 2001, Knierbein 2010) and resulted in the use of signifiers, which allow for accommodating various meanings in place promotion (Knierbein 2011, Viderman 2010). After Roland Barthes's statement "the signifier is empty, the sign is full, it is a meaning" (1994: 295) underpinned the mode of signification in mass communication, actors increasingly turn to communication-based strategies in place promotion, which has become an integral part of urban regeneration as a crucial tool for overcoming what is perceived as cities' negative reputation (Jayne (2006: 167).

This research draws on Lefebvre's conception of space as a complex social product. His theoretical concept is based on the following contemplations: Space is not just a mental product but it is based on concrete materiality (Lefebvre 1972: 164). At the same time Lefebvre opposes object-centred materialism by stating that space is not a thing, and cannot be conceived as an object (ibid. 1991: 108/90). This leads to a historical-material conception of space neither as a subject nor an object, but as societal reality, which can only be conceived as the concrete material process of production, which is to be analysed in the context of specific historic processes of production (ibid. 1972: 164, 1991: 138/116). According to Lefebvre (1991: 84-92), space is both the medium of social relations and a material product that can affect social relations. It is a complex social product(ion) based on values and the social production of meanings. Lefebvre's 'spatial triad' points to dynamic inter-relations between the perceived, the conceived and the lived. In spatial terms this is translated to 'spatial practice', 'representations of space', and 'spaces of representations' respectively (Lefebvre 1991: 50/40, 328/285, 426/369). Schmid (2005: 207) further explains that for Lefebvre these aspects also constitute the underlying formants of the production of space. This conception thus binds three formants together.

Firstly, perceived space comprises the material production and the production of goods as exchangeable objects. This production is defined by needs (Schmid 2005: 207). It includes daily routines and urban realities in the production of space. Perceived space can be grasped by senses, as an action that is not performed from a distance, but inherent to every social practice.

Secondly, conceived space encompasses the production of knowledge² as a production process of fragmented information in a Fordist fashion by different disciplines on an ulterior level. It is the result of scientific knowing, which penetrates the working process and materializes (ibid. 2005: 207). This understanding of knowledge results from a critique on the production of knowledge within the boundaries of one discipline, whereas Lefebvre sees a potential in trans- or post-disciplinary approaches that tackle complex relations and crucial questions in their totality. Conceived space is referred to as envisioned city (e.g. planned schemes) and brings together the elements that constitute space in its complexity. Lefebvre identifies instrumental representations of space as reductive forms of knowledge which he considers a productive force in the capitalist mode of production (Lefebvre 1991: 44, Charnock&Ribera-Fumaz 2011: 10, 13). In doing so, he provides a point of contact to the knowledge economy³, a concept established later.

Thirdly, lived space is about the process of production of meaning. This is a poetic process that brings *oeuvre* into being (ibid. 2005: 207). Lived space is made up by more than symbols and images (such as music, film, etc.) and is produced by inhabitants and users: lived space is constituted by how it is experienced and lived in everyday practice. Lefebvre acknowledges that theory is not able to grasp this dimension through analysis in its whole, there's always something left that cannot be explained (Schmid 2005: 317, 244). Jayne (2006: 156) acknowledges that "the work of Lefebvre provides a conceptually convincing way of understanding that the city is at once real, imagined and perceived, and that it is through a combination of these elements that the city exists."

The three-dimensional conception of space, as described above, leads to parallel approaches towards three production processes, namely the material production, the production of knowledge (which is also referred to as mental production), and the production of meaning (Schmidt 2005: 320). Firstly, material production creates material realities, which are accessible for both senses and perception. But these realities do not unfold their meaning before spatial practices interweave with these materialities. Spatial practices constitute perceivable space, and vice versa practices require perception of space. Perceived space is the very space of

2 Lefebvre distinguishes 'knowledge' from 'insights'. Kurt Meyer (2008: 153) discusses 'insights' as: "(...) the situation of the observer in relation to what is observed is constantly kept in mind. The window overlooking the street is not an abstract location from where the mental eye could, so to speak, abstractly grasp what is happening in the street. It is a real location not only enabling sights but leading to insights. The observer is implicated in what is happening on the street." Full reference: MEYER, Kurt (2008) Rhythms, Streets, Cities. In: Goonewardena et al. (eds.) Space, Difference and Everyday Life. Reading Henri Lefebvre. New York, Milton Park: Routledge.

3 See footnote 12 in chapter 2 for Lefebvre's critique of language, and symbols in the instrumentalization of knowledge

interaction, which inherently includes people's activities, brought about by using, living, inhabiting this space. Secondly, production of knowledge generates conceived space through representation of space. Lefebvre's concept rests on the notion of knowledge as 'active knowledge', which penetrates the process of production and in doing so materializes (ibid. 2005: 320). What 'space' is, is defined through societal conceptions, which are based on societal conventions, that define what elements are put in relation to each other and which ones are excluded (ibid.). These conventions are learnt, but neither fixed, nor stable. They are changing, being often contested and negotiated in the discursive (political) realm. Consequently Lefebvre here refers to a societal process of production which is linked to power relations. Schmid (2005: 320) further points to a wider understanding of representation of space, which not only includes lingual form, images and graphic representations but also societal rules and ethics. Thirdly and ultimately, the process of production of meaning is a 'poetic process', 'a free realm' which transcends the other two dimensions. In the process of production of meaning space is attached with symbolic order and thus constitutes spaces of representation. These spaces are lived, not conceptualized (ibid. 2005: 320). Shields (1991: 50-58) summarizes Lefebvre's threefold dialectic as a combination of everyday practices and perceptions, representations of space and the spatial imaginary of the time.

1.3. Translating dialectics to this research

As already indicated, the focus of this investigation lies on the relation between everyday practices, more specifically local economic activities, and the strategic construction of a neighbourhood in Vienna: a Grätzel. Based on the relational conception of space (Lefebvre 1991), this work develops its argument along two theoretical strands, symbolic economy on the one hand, and Non-Representational Theories (NRT) on the other. These macro-level theories are consulted in the micro-level analysis of (the production of) a Viennese neighbourhood, namely its local economic practices and meanings behind its signifier, the Grätzel.

A Grätzel itself is a floating signifier, in a sense of Barthes (1994: 295) defines as a 'floating chain of signifieds', which is open for attaching multiple unstable meanings. It is a socio-spatial entity, that is everything but exactly defined. For this, a Grätzel can be interpreted as a signifier (a vehicle for conveying attached meaning). The first argument supporting this thesis is that what is perceived as a Grätzel seems to be closely linked to tradition and affect on the one hand, and anchor points of social encounter and interaction on the other. The first notion refers to social imaginaries, often associated with a feeling of belonging to a certain neighbourhood, that bears traces of its history. The second association reflects on a link between encounter (and sociability) and places for provision of

certain services as well as goods. The third argument points to place promotion strategies, which do not exclusively cover the whole city, but are also applied to smaller scales. The Grätzel is a signifier increasingly used by various actors interested in promoting their objectives by attaching (preferred) meaning to a socio-spatial mosaic. Such a broad signifier has the capacity of hosting existing associations, while simultaneously allowing their (strategic) modification and the creation of new associations (Viderman 2010: 126). Whereas the application of place promotion strategies at the very neighbourhood level is anything but unique (ibid. 2010: 126-127), Grätzel for the fact that it embodies pre-existing conceptions, associations and emotions, introduces a certain degree of flexibility for ‘disguised’ promotion strategies (in contrast to purely strategic attempts, created from scratch, such as SoHo⁴). Bearing traces of history of place and tradition, being linked to everyday life and experiences, Grätzel embody a strong emotional component, yet they are not precisely defined, and thus are able to absorb any meaning; being both (un)intentionally used or, at times, manipulated. The underlying research interest hence concerns specific effects of non-material economies on the production of Grätzel, and related spatial practices. Ever since everyday practices have been attributed symbolic value (where, for example, the very same act of shopping in a local shop carries different meaning than shopping in a chain market next door), various actors actively seek to get involved in the (re) production of space and the incremental construction of (altered) meaning.

Local economic activities belong to the sphere of encounters and cultural exchange as much as they are economic activities. They play important role in the production of (public) spaces as spaces in which diverse urban cultures can communicate across their differences, become aware of themselves and others, can play out individual and collective identities. In this context public spaces are the projection fields of hope for counteractions against forces that partition cities and societies along cultural and economic lines (Watson 2006, Madanipour 2010). By focusing on practises and affect in an understanding of everyday life⁵ as embodied space, through which human experience and consciousness materialize and spatialize (Low 2011: 467, referring to Csordas 1988 and Merleau-Ponty 1982, 1964), this part of the research concerns the feeling of belonging through bodies, practices and performativity in the taking-place of everyday life.

4 SoHo stands for South of Houston and is the product of popular re-naming of emerging and re-purposed neighbourhoods in New York which started already in the 1960ies. See RAPKIN, Chester. The South Houston Industrial Area (Prepared for the City of New York, City Planning Commission, Department of City Planning, 1963); or in popular media: HEVESI, Dennis. Obituary: Chester Rapkin, 82, Urban Planning Theorist. *New York Times*, February 3, 2001.

5 Lefebvre understood the everyday as banal, mundane, quotidian (Shields 1999: 69) and issued a critique of everyday life, as he considers it the domain where capitalism is sustained and reproduced, which leads to diminishing its quality and suppressing self-expression (Lefebvre 1947).

1.4. On aims. Research question, hypothesis and range of research

The title reflects an understanding of signifiers as a means of communicating discursively constructed imaginaries, which is linked to post-Fordist construction of meaning through affect as symbolic value, thus offsetting deficiencies of the Fordist, function-lead urban design in providing appealing spaces of consumption (meaningful places) for a new emerging class of affluent, but selective consumers. In its attempt to produce (added) meaning as a means of conceiving space, this process considers local economic practices vital parts of socio-cultural mosaics. At the same time these local economic practices, regardless of being a subject of strategic endeavours, contribute to the incremental production of meaning over a longer period of time. This disparity between the strategic construction of meaning and the incremental production of meaning through local economic practices lies in the focus of this research.

Research question:

- ▶ How do the incremental production of meaning and the strategic construction of (added) meaning relate to each other in (the production of) a Viennese microcosm and its signifier (a Grätzel), in regard to local economic practices?

This question puts the following **hypotheses** into play: In the process of developing urban neighbourhoods, involved actors make use of the term Grätzel in popular discourses for instrumentalizing everyday practices (such as local economic practices as anchor-points for socio-cultural encounters), through attributing ‘added meaning’ to them in order to enhance symbolic value. Although everyday practices have been attributed meaning strategically, they also as spatial practices produce meaning in a sense of a slow incremental process. This question and hypotheses address the relation between a) the discursive construction of added meaning using a Grätzel as a signifier and b) the incremental production of meaning through everyday practices, namely local economic practices. The thesis discusses how everyday practices are both unintentionally and purposefully used in the production of meaning.

Objectives, aims & limitations

This project aims at critically reflecting on a Grätzel as a signifier in strategic place promotion opposed to incremental production of meaningful space as lived space. In a dialectic way, this discursive construction of meaning which is referred to as added meaning (working concept)⁶ shall be contrasted by local economic practices as a medium of social-cultural encounters and affect. It is these practices that are producing meaning over a longer period of time in a *Lefebvrian*

⁶ For the working concept of ‘added meaning’ see introduction chapter 2.

understanding of production of space. Ultimately, the aim is to compare a Grätzel as a discursively produced space with a Grätzel as a lived experience through everyday practices. The investigation of the symbolic value of a Grätzel is not meant as an endeavour towards defining a blurred term, but as an attempt to grasp the multiple facets of constructed and produced meaning pertaining to a Grätzel. The thesis will reflect on the (dialectic) role(s) of everyday practices in the discursive (re-)production of the Grätzel and its use as a signifier in place promotion. The strategic construction - the adding - of meaning will be portrayed in the 2nd chapter through the exploration of the term Grätzel in local discourses, with a specific focus on place promotion approaches. In the 3rd chapter local economic practices will be scrutinized as everyday practices on the accounts of affect and performativity.

1.5. On methodology. How this research is set up

Reflecting on Park's notion of a "mosaic of social realities", Knierbein (2011: 83, 96) proposes a post-disciplinary position in urban studies in the context of urban cultures to overcoming linear, two-dimensional thinking: intuition and heterogeneity in investigating relevant problems of spatial dimensions in a process and context-oriented fashion may cut through professional limitations (*ibid.*). Research in this field is based on the investigation of the acting *subjects* (Lefebvre 1991: 17, [1974] 2000: 381, 382f). The project aims to portray how meaning is constructed strategically under the discussed signifier (Baudrillard 1981: 194, Barthes [1957] 2000: 123, Poster 1990: 58, Jeffares 2007: 3-4), and contrast it with the production of meaning through everyday practices, namely local economic practices, in order to depict how they combined influence the production of space. Whereas the first aspect pertains to an enquiry about strategic endeavours by actors involved in urban planning to influence or significantly contribute to the production of meaning related to everyday life, the second aspect pertains to the exploration of local economic practices as an intrinsic ingredient of the production of meaning *per se*. Based on the literature review, the questions will be tackled by applying a multi-method approach, which fits well post-disciplinary urban studies (Knierbein 2011: 97, 101), dialectically (not dichotomically). In this case two dimensions are mutually contrasted: strategic construction of meaning using a Grätzel as a signifier and the incremental production of meaning through everyday practices (in a Lefebvrian understanding), namely local economic activities over a longer period of time.

Methods chosen in this project, are

- ▶ Literature review (secondary text analysis), covering relevant theoretical research on critical urban studies and planning theory;
- ▶ Qualitative content analysis of local popular discourses and documents related to planning/development/promotion strategies;
- ▶ Narrative respectively semi-structured/problem-centred interviews in order to gain an insight into the set of actors taking part in the discursive shaping of the Grätzel as well as discourses and narratives pertaining to everyday practices;
- ▶ Participatory observations of everyday practices related to local economic activities as an analysis of everyday spatial practices and social interaction in public spaces, in order to investigate knowledge produced by everyday practices, which are informed by and inform discourses;
- ▶ Triangulation between methods (Flick 2000: 309) in order to overcome limits of each single method by methodical variety and the combination of methodical alternatives, which are not considered an obstacle but a precondition for post-disciplinary positions in critical urban studies (Knierbein 2011: 91).

The project develops on the basis of a qualitative single case study research which links back to broader theoretical questions and permits research of everyday life environments by concentrating on selected research subjects, namely those pertaining to local economic practices, discursive dimension of space and planning practices. Yin (2003: 98) states that case studies provide a strategy to tackle posed how and/or why questions by investigating current phenomena in a real-life context, by tackling relations between research subjects from various standpoints.

1.6. Introducing a Viennese microcosm

While the theoretical framework is set on the macro scale, the project's spatial scope is the micro-scale a part of Kalvarienberggasse - between the Kalvarienberg Church⁷ and Ottakringerstraße (see image 9). The epistemological contrasting of macro and micro levels, are penetrating each other at the meso-level which is in this context the urban space of Vienna. Although the City of Vienna has been promoting the claim 'Vienna is different' for more than 20 years, Vienna is not so

⁷ The Kalvarienberg Church of Hernals (also known as Bartholomäuskirche) was used as a protestant church in the early 17th century before being turned into a catholic church during Counter-Reformation. As a symbol for catholic faith a Stations Of The Cross (Passionsweg) was erected, from St. Stephan (St. Stephen's Cathedral) to Hernals (Vsedni 1999). In the early 18th century Pauline Padres erected a so-called Kalvarienberg next to the church. The Bartholomäuskirche was given its final appearance in 1894 in the process of a larger conversion (Zabusch 2003: 23f).

different, but path-dependant; and as any other city specific in its political culture and therefore in political and planning practices aimed at dealing with structural changes and emergent needs⁸. Interestingly, the city's government seems to be determined to maintain a long tradition of promoting social democratic values, while taking an active role in promoting post-Fordist societal and economic policies. Vienna's specific planning culture is characterized by its long political history of social-democratic authority, which only recently incorporated a coalition with the green-party.

The micro-scale takes us to Vienna's 17th district, named Hernals. At this point we immerse ourselves in a Grätzel, at first etymologically: Being related to the German word 'reißen' (to ,tear' or ,snatch'), the word Grätzel may be linked to the 'mittelhochdeutsch' (in English: Middle High German⁹) term 'ge-reiz', which refers to the word ,Umkreis' (which translates to the English word perimeter, but also has a notion of 'locality' or 'vicinity') (Duden online 2012, Lexer 2012)¹⁰. Already at the Brothers Grimm times, "(...) a quarter is used in relation to larger districts in an undefined sense for pointing to a part of a city, that differs from its neighbouring part one way or another (...)"¹¹ (Grimm&Grimm 2007: Section 313/12). This ascription of a Grätzel's identity through either differences from another area, or another atmospheric sense of living and means nicely links to a notion of Grätzel as inherently felt, perceived, experienced socio-spatial categories of everyday life (Schnur 2008: 34).

Engaging with a microcosm we find ourselves in a Grätzel around Kalvarienberggasse: This street cuts through the whole district and connects it to its neighbouring district. In Hernals and in the Kalvarienberggasse one can find local economies of various types and backgrounds - from traditional businesses with a long history, to migrant economies, to services catering for socio-cultural uses, as well as businesses associated with so-labelled creative and cultural industries. Furthermore, Hernals is one of the areas that allow for observing, analysing and reflecting changing rationalities in (the shaping of) popular discourses: Most recently a real estate developer published a guide to prospective

8 See for instance NOVY, Andreas, REDAK, Vanessa, JÄGER, Johannes, HAMEDINGER, Alexander (2001) The End of Red Vienna. Recent ruptures and continuities in urban governance. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 8, 2, pp. 131-144.

9 Refers to a prior stage of German language, subsuming all High German variations in general between 1050 and 1350.

10 Alternative spellings in German are: Grätzl, Gretzel, Gretzl, Krätzl, Kretzl.

11 Own translation, original citation in German: "(...) wird viertel in beziehung auf grözere bezirke in unbestimmtem sinne gebraucht, um einen stadtheil zu bezeichnen, der irgendwie von benachbarten sich abscheidet (...)".

profitable investments¹² in various areas of Vienna, addressing and advertising Grätzel, including the vicinity of Hernals. In doing so, the Grätzel transcends discursively proclaimed urban imaginaries in the making and meanings generated in everyday practices. This specific section of the Kalvarienberggasse between the Bartholomäus Church and Ottakringerstraße was chosen because of two reasons: Firstly, it is not - yet - part of strategic management programme of the Vienna Chamber of Commerce directed at shopping streets, thus allowing for a glance beyond strategic marketing; and secondly, both planning initiatives and private actor's discursive strategies are directed at this area, making it a place where it is possible to observe mundane everyday practices and to trace discursive construction of meaning at the same time. In Viennese neighbourhoods, local economic activities have been important ingredients for the very essence of a Grätzel in everyday life, thus being facilitators of exchange/trading activities, social encounters and cultural exchange (Interview A).

12 JP Real Estate company's 'Grätzel Bericht', available online at URL: http://www.jpi.at/sites/default/files/presse/graetzel/Der_Graetzlbericht_Ausgabe_1.pdf (last accessed on 22 February 2013)

2 | Strategic construction of added meaning and local economic practices



2. Strategic construction of added meaning and local economic practices

This chapter establishes a link between signifiers and symbolic exchange before showing how symbolic value is used in contemporary cities to produce, what in the course of this thesis is referred to as the strategic construction of added meaning. This working concept draws on Lefebvre's three-dimensional understanding of the production of space. It addresses actor's strategic endeavours in the process of generating symbolic value. They conceive space by using place promotion strategies in order to produce symbolic value by altering or adding new meanings to spatial practices and lived space. Emphasis is put on the increasing importance of symbolic value in post-Fordist urban development: Added meaning within the symbolic economy is linked to very concrete, spatial scales and, more importantly, to local specificities (thus pointing to spatial practices and the material dimension of space). This is why the theoretical arguments will be followed by the introduction of the Viennese Grätzel as a signifier in the construction of added meaning and beyond. Yet, this strategic construction of added (intentionally preferred) meaning attributed to the existing spaces and practices is a process running simultaneously to the process of socio-historic and cultural production and re-production of meaning through individual and collective experiences and imaginaries. A sequence of narrative interviews will show how Grätzel is often perceived through a lens of nostalgia for both place and tradition and attributed experiences and narratives linked to mundane, quotidian routines. Although these characteristics are closely linked to perception, representation and practice, which will be the focal points in chapter 3, the subject matter in this section is to depict how the Grätzel is discursively produced by strategic use of emotions and affect in the process of construction of added meaning.

2.1. The signifier and the signified

The verb to signify refers "to be a sign of something; to mean"¹³. The linguist de Saussure postulated that "the relation between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary" for the meaning (of a language) is greater than every single part's per se, a direct link between the shape and the concept cannot be found (de Saussure 1916, Bussmann 1996: 434). De Saussure's argument is that it is due to convention, that people who speak the same language, have intentionally or unintentionally agreed, learned or otherwise come to the agreement that certain letters or sounds sum up to a certain image constructed in one's head. This has been further challenged by Foucault's proposed link between linguistic signs and

13 See definition in Cambridge dictionary, available online at http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/signify_1?q=signify (last accessed on 14 February 2013)

culture. Introducing what he calls ‘dominant discourse’, a connection between physical and discursive ‘reality’, he claims that lingual practices may be used as a tool for knowing and constructing the world within a culture (Rivkin&Ryan 2004: 54). Foucault (1972: 118) states that “(...) each discourse contains the power to say something other than what it actually says, and thus to embrace a plurality of meanings: a plethora of the ‘signified’ in relation to a single ‘signifier’. From this point of view “discourse is both plenitude and endless wealth“ (ibid.). Foucault interpreted the single ‘signified’ in relation to a plethora of signifying elements bearing ‘wider meaning’, which is carried through systems of thoughts, institutions, practices, attitudes etc., ultimately linking this argument to the formation of knowledge and relations of power (ibid.).

Baudrillard¹⁴ put emphasis on the notion of distinction upon constituting meaning (or value), through classification of what is not. Moreover, the meaning for Baudrillard presented itself as being inherently self-referential, as one object’s meaning cannot be interpreted without its relation to another object’s meanings (ibid. [1968] 1996: 14). With reference to society, he substantially differs from Foucault for putting emphasis on the delusive character of endeavours by human subjects to understand non-human objects, which are only to be understood in relation to the signified (including the corresponding process of signification (ibid. [1968] 1996: 8-12, 2003: 3). In this process the subject, as he put it, might end up in a state of “hyperreality“, a simulated version of reality, which towards the end of the 20th century lead to obliteration of reality by the ‘global society’ (ibid. [1983] 1991: 12). Baudrillard though differentiates signs and significations from the symbolic realm, as exchange is possible for the first two like commodities. He (1981) further supplemented Marx’s concepts of use value and exchange value with semiological theories to interpret capitalist society as the symbolic realm, in which consumption, rather than production, was the driving force, and exchange value is being boosted detached from use value. In the political economy, use value indicates to what extent an object corresponds to human needs, while exchange value is determined by the abstraction of the object’s use value in relation to other goods and leads to territorial capital accumulation in (urban) space. However, Baudrillard (1981) notes that products and services act as signs that communicate certain messages and images that are independent of their use. Exchange value is affected by the subjective experience of the user and does not necessarily reside in an object's tangible materiality, but rather in the message it communicates, underpinning symbolic exchange¹⁵.

14 Who was a former assistant of Henri Lefebvre.

15 For Baudrillard symbolic exchange is a social institution that results in unconscious determination of behaviour before the action is even being considered. Therefore consumption ultimately determines the social status (1981: 31).

Although an individual is included in this process, the focus lies on collective representations, which are basically created through advertisement and mass media (Rätzsch 2009: 96). Symbolic value in Baudrillard's understanding materializes through simulation, and as such is conceived as the product of social transformations and change. The importance does not only lie on the supply with basic goods, such as food, clothing, or even shelter anymore: As the consumption of symbolic goods presses forward and is absorbing excesses of production in doing so, possession of certain commodities is inherently linked to continual circulation of signs (Koch&Elmore 2006: 22). These changes and societal transformations are consequences of interrelated historic conditions, for example, technological advancement. Subsequently Baudrillard is taking the argument even further than analysis of both fetishism and symbolic exchange, laying the foundations for a symbolic economy and its power to affect the social order (ibid. 2006: 25-26).

Lefebvre¹⁶ ([1970] 1991: 131) also established a link between the (semiotic) multiplication of images and the transformation of everyday life in the city by asking “Do spaces formed by practice-social activity ... have meaning? What sort of semiotic analysis should be applied? May a social space viably be conceived of as a language or discourse?”. Lefebvre argued that, through multiplication, signifiers became detached from concrete references. He interpreted such multiplication as a means of escape of signs and symbols from control, imposed by social and political institutions (Shields 1999: 157).

16 Lefebvre's position towards language, is discussed in GOONEWARDENA, Kanishka, KIPFER, Stephan, MILGROM, Richard and SCHMID, Christian (2008) *Space, Difference and Everyday Life*. Reading Henri Lefebvre. New York, Milton Park: Routledge. In the introduction, the editors refer to Lefebvre's critique, which was linked to the instrumentalization of knowledge: "(...) as demonstrated by David McNally, a radical approach to language such as Mikhail Bakhtin's and Benjamin's cannot abstract it, as do structuralism and post-structuralism, from the 'historical bodies' theorized by Marx, Darwin, and Freud and their material practices. Lefebvre, though not discussed by McNally, understood this when he refused Foucault's notion of the body as the 'effect' of discursive practices and declined the invitations of Ferdinand de Saussure or Derrida into a 'world of signs' followed by an 'erasure of referentials'. For him, the abstraction and 'self-referentiality' of the linguistic turn in social theory represented not so much a critique as an alienated symptom of profoundly modern-capitalist phenomena: the instrumentalization of knowledge, the universalization of commodification, and the coronation of exchange-value" (Goonewardena et al. 2008: 10).

2.2. The spatialization of symbolic exchange: Attributing symbolic value to space

A popular perception of exchange that puts a greater importance on image or ‘sign value’ of products and services than on their use value (Baudrillard 1981: 112), has profoundly penetrated into the production of the post-Fordist city. Harvey (cf. 1994: 372) brought the production of symbolic value into relation to the development of new types of non-material economies, that have increasingly determined the production of a city’s space. He explains this economic turn by de-industrialization and the emergence of a flexibly organized economy, as well as by the paradigmatic shift of urban politics towards an entrepreneurial governance, as cities are devoid of their traditional manufacturing base, and challenged by the promotion of economic competitiveness as a means of underpinning prosperity (Harvey, 1994: 372f). Cities spaces have consequently been attributed a greater speculative value in the (real estate) markets, therefore turning into ‘spaces of urban consumption’ (Jayne 2006: 184-195). A plethora of actors interested in increasing the value of space relies on urban cultures and cultural practices as a means of gaining profit (both material and non-material, fiscal and non-fiscal)¹⁷. No wonder that the role of urban cultures¹⁸ in the production of space and related services has drawn a particular attention of urban researchers to what Zukin ([1995] 2008: 2-12, 265) defines as a city’s ‘symbolic economy’.

Through efforts of portraying the physical and emotional distillate of a city (its spaces, as well as certain lifestyles, a city’s values, a city’s atmosphere) ‘symbolic economy’ makes use of symbols and spaces which add meaning to human and non-human composition in a city, through place making and marketing endeavours. For Zukin the term ‘culture’ has been attributed meaning for any economic activity that does not create material products, whereas material practices of politics and economics are the ones that inherently construct a

17 For an account on attention economy, which is based on the grasping of the scarce resource of attention at any cost, see for instance FRANCK, Georg (1998: 10) *Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit. Ein Entwurf*. München: Carl Hanser; or KNIERBEIN, Sabine (2010) *Die Produktion zentraler öffentlicher Räume in der Aufmerksamkeitsökonomie*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

18 In this context Zukin refers to ‘cultural producers’, related to the field of arts, cultural institutions and organizations (ibid. [1995] 2008: 12-13, 112) at first. Then she is opening up to a broader notion of culture, beyond ‘high’ culture, but not as far as to the very unspecific notion of ‘culture’ as “society’s generally accepted patterns how to see, think, and act“ (ibid. [1995] 2008: 163). Referring to the popular notion of ‘ethnicity’, she acknowledges an aspect of difference, as well as a notion of ‘culture’ as ‘collective lifestyles’ (ibid. [1995] 2008: 163). Picking up Zukin’s statement, that “(...) ‘culture’ is something that sells“, I would stress that what ‘urban cultures’ in this narrow understanding in the context of construction of meaning mostly refer to are qualified, promoted lifestyles, rather than socio-cultural (as well as socio-economic), mundane ways of life which materialize in certain spaces. The latter are the cultures I refer to in chapter 3, when I discuss everyday practices.

symbolic economy (ibid. [1995] 2008: 2-12, 265). In this construction ‘culture’ refers to a system of the production of symbols which is based on the symbiosis of an image and a product. ‘Symbolic economy’ designates an abstract, non-material economy stimulated by the growth of cultural consumption and the industries that cater to it (ibid. [1995] 2008: 12, 13, 265). The ‘symbolic economy’, which incorporates cultural production and creative services, which in turn add to the symbolic layers of a city, has become one of the most important generators of urban development, as creative products and services cannot be reproduced elsewhere. Meanwhile the production of meaningful spaces through physical structures has lost significance, real estate is recycled rapidly, and built environment is increasingly being considered just a stage for the action of the young and the creative (ibid. [1995] 2008: 9).

The production of urban public culture as a social construct of manifold social encounters and interactions in everyday life takes place on the micro-level, more precisely in the streets, parks, shops, which are ultimately those spaces where public life in cities might eventually be experienced (ibid. [1995] 2008: 190). For grasping everyday life though, it is crucial to look beyond high-streets and central spaces of a city to those places of lived experience where, as Zukin ([1995] 2008: 190) puts it, “(...) identities and communities are formed. With their constant streams with immigration and markets to supply the daily needs of large population, great cities create more complex, diverse, ambiguous, consumption spaces.” She even stresses this argument further by pointing to “Neighbourhood shopping streets, especially when they are connected with ethnicity, social class, and gender, [as] sites where identities are formed” (Zukin [1995] 2008: 190).

2.3. Linking strategic construction of added meaning to the Grätzel as a signifier

If we turn back to Lefebvre, whose ‘spatial triad’ results in distinctive city spaces and images, and to Zukin ([1995] 2008: 363-365), who asserts that cities indeed differ through urban lifestyles, we may conclude that the signified content – the representation of space – is potentially distinctive. As we will see in the following part, in this process of strategic construction of added meaning, the relation to emotions and affect through personal experience related to everyday practices is of utmost importance. Linking this back to the term Grätzel, added meaning is only generated through preformed associations connected to a particular experienced space in a city. As Lewis Mumford assessed (1954: 258) “Neighbourhoods, in some primitive, inchoate fashion exist wherever human beings congregate, in permanent family dwellings; and many of the functions of the city tend to be distributed naturally - that is, without any theoretical preoccupation or political direction - into neighbourhoods.”

The following part traces popular connotations related to the term Grätzel before they are contrasted by perceptions of what a Grätzel is. The German ‘Stadtviertel’ or ‘Quartier’ (urban quarters) has been subject of numerous scientific reflections on the quarter as space of social, political and cultural practices¹⁹, but it differs from the notion of Grätzel in one crucial aspect: Quarters are understood as a spatially defined entity of relations, provision or regulation (Neef 2011: 235). Although Grätzel and quarters share the notion of overlapping social relations and networks, the aspect of being ‘determined from an outside-perspective’ (ibid. 2011: 235) cannot be applied to the Grätzel, as the following study will show. Silke Steets (2010: 277) also stresses the relevance of the everyday life insight: Instead of defining the term through administrative boundaries as in districts, a quarter, a Grätzel should be conceived as realm of experiencing lived space, and thus should be comprised in its totality as a meaningful spatial realm. It is the people living in a city, that can distinguish microcosms beyond a certain attributed character as places of their living environments.

These everyday life insights and popular discourses were intentionally given priority over scientific reflections on neighbourhoods²⁰, Kiezes, or Veedel (terms used in the Berlin and Cologne context respectively, that to some extent are comparable to Grätzel)²¹ as the main research interest was to portray the Grätzel as a product of intersubjective everyday experiences on the one hand and associations which might be intentionally used in the production of symbolic value on the other. The concept of the strategic construction of added meaning aims at portraying how place promotion strategies refer to the Grätzel as a signifier for meaning produced through spatial practice and lived space. Thus, the following part is focusing on popular narratives and discourses which are used in place promotion strategies in order to produce symbolic value.

19 Among others: NEEF, Rainer (2011) Quartiersleben und Soziale Klassen. In: Herrman, H. et al. (eds.) *Die Besonderheit des Städtischen, Entwicklungslinien der Stadt(soziologie)*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. pp. 235-264; SCHNUR, Olaf (2008) *Quartiersforschung im Überblick: Konzepte, Definitionen und aktuelle Perspektiven*. In: Olaf Schnur (eds.): *Quartiersforschung. Zwischen Theorie und Praxis*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften; GRAFMEYER, Yves (2007) *Le quartier des sociologues*. In: Authier, J.-Y. et al. (eds.) *Le quartier. Enjeux scientifiques, actions politiques et pratiques sociales*. Paris: La Découverte. pp. 15-20; BAHR, Hans P. (1986) *Humaner Städtebau. Überlegungen zur Wohnungspolitik und Stadtplanung für die nahe Zukunft*. Hamburg: Christian Wegner.

20 For instance MUMFORD, Lewis (1954) *The Neighborhood and the Neighborhood Unit*. *Town Planning Review* 24: 256-270.

21 See for instance SCHNUR, Olaf (2008) *Quartiersforschung im Überblick: Konzepte, Definitionen und aktuelle Perspektiven*. In: Olaf Schnur (eds.): *Quartiersforschung. Zwischen Theorie und Praxis*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

According to Duden, which is commonly used as a reference point for orthography, grammar and standard definitions in German language, a Grätzel is “part of a living quarter, a street within this quarter; a block of houses” (Duden online 2012)²². Along the very same lines, but a bit more detailed, <http://wikipedia.org> defines “Grätzel as parts of Viennese living districts. A Grätzel mostly comprises several blocks of houses, however, there are no official demarcations for these smallest urban entities. A part of a district may encompass several Grätzel” (Wikipedia online 2012)²³. For grasping what a Grätzel is made of, how it is perceived by different individuals and (institutionalized) actors, narrative interviews on the question “What makes a Grätzel a Grätzel“ were used. This very broad question was specifically chosen (reflecting on basic principles of this method, Flick 2009: 229), to provoke the sharing of personal stories related to a specific socio-historic context.²⁴ The recent popularity of the term, both in media and urban development discourses was reflected on by applying qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2002: 114ff).

2.4. On Grätzel as lived neighbourhoods and in strategic urban development and place making

This chapter is dedicated to discourses and narratives pertaining to the Grätzel, which I will trace along two lines: Firstly, as insights in the emergence of the Grätzel as an intersubjective, mental product; and secondly, as intentional consumption of affect in the construction of added meaning in the access of symbolic value.

The Grätzel as an intersubjective mental product²⁵

Narrative interviews showed that a Grätzel emerges through people’s identification with the place, with their living or working environments. It does have blurred boundaries which are not fixed, which are constructed around a projection of experiences and associations. The Grätzel, as much as the mental projection of it is in flux, it is changing both over time or at the very moment one’s everyday life environment is enlarging due to new or other practices and

22 Original citation in German: “Teil eines Wohnviertels, einer Straße in einem Wohnviertel; Häuserblock” Source: URL <http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Graetzel> (last accessed on 16 February 2013).

23 Original citation in German: “Grätzl sind in Wien Teile von Wohnbezirken. Alternative Schreibweisen sind Grätzel, Gretzel, Gretzl, Krätzl und Kretzl. Ein Grätzel umfasst meist mehrere Häuserblöcke, jedoch gibt es für diese kleinsten städtischen Einheiten keine offiziellen Grenzziehungen. Ein Bezirksteil kann mehrere Grätzel umfassen” Source: URL: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grätzl> (last accessed on 16 February 2013).

24 The author is well aware of the limits of this method, among others the construction of narratives in the specific context of the interview-situation (Flick 2009: 237f).

25 Based on interview series B-E in January and February 2013.

routines. A Grätzel is a small-structures entity, where people's everyday life unfolds in urban space. It is a part of a bigger entirety, with a certain distinctiveness. Grätzel may also have a negative connotation, inherently linked to the range of uneasy feelings experienced in a place in everyday life. For some it's even a 'neutral' term - neither positive nor negative but linked to a certain density of people (for example, at some tenement blocks, the high number of people would qualify for the emergence of a Grätzel). Identification with this space, that transcends conceived and lived spaces and emerges in perceived space is mainly linked to certain 'anchors': urban (public) spaces for 'retreat' from the velocity of contemporary urban life, urban (public) spaces for encounter, and possibilities of local supply with goods and services.

More notably, the feeling of belonging, which reduces the anonymity of urban life, is linked to 'key figures' conducting their everyday local economic practices, like 'Greissler' (small local shop for daily food supply)²⁶, small shops, hosts of restaurants, cafés, small boutiques, street markets, or even some shops in an area catering for a certain clientele (bourgeoisie shops, creative industries, or niche markets). For some, a Grätzel is actually made by people - it is them, their business they attach meaning to, by chatting while shopping and hearing the latest gossips or by quarrelling. Grätzel sometimes are characterized as places where different people, having different cultural backgrounds and different age groups live or work at. Interviewees stated that they do not only identify with only one, but with several Grätzel at the same time - all depending on daily routines, such different places of working and living.

The Grätzel is constructed through a very specific notion of community which does include to some extent interaction with others, while nonetheless keeping a certain distance (e.g. having a feeling that faces are known, without maintaining personal contacts and noticing whether people move away). This aspect of community can also result in a certain protectiveness for the 'own' Grätzel (from caring about what happens, to taking an observant stance towards newcomers). The feeling of belonging to a Grätzel is mostly linked to a place's history, to nostalgia, as well as an emotional attachment to (physical) structures. Perhaps surprisingly, interviewees showed a strong historical reference in determining what a Grätzel is, such as identifying places along different types of crafts or manufacturing businesses or ethnic and religious specificities. This shows, that Grätzel are mainly produced on the basis of three aspects: Firstly, the feeling of belonging to a place (to feel at home): secondly, identifying with a place (or with the constructed imaginary around it), and, thirdly, the feeling of being in a familiar

²⁶ 'Greissler' used to be an integral part of Vienna's urban fabric, but since the emergence of hyper markets, discounters and chains, which affected also consumption patterns, these type of local economies is in decline.

environment, which is well-known, and acts either as the incarnation (in case of negative emotions) or as an antidote to the uncanny.

Consumption of affect in the construction of added meaning²⁷

The Austrian daily newspaper ‘Die Presse’ started a sequence labelled ‘Grätzelserie’ (Grätzel series), introducing different Grätzel in more or less regular intervals. It started off with a portrait of the ‘Servitenviertel’ in Vienna’s 9th district, describing it as a Grätzel with a ‘village’s charm’ and the ‘ambition of luxury’ (Die Presse 02.11.2012). This old part of the city indeed has a specific bourgeoisie flair, displayed by beautifully renovated *Gründerzeit* houses and chic boutiques. In the second issue ‘Die Presse’ already took a look at Hernals. It labelled the neighbourhood as one that “has fallen into a deep sleep“ (Die Presse 09.11.2012), pointing towards a state of decline and a need for substantial renewal. Furthermore, Die Presse mentions numerous small shops, among which most of them are ‘cell phone shops’ or hairdressers, and concludes that one would be “hard pressed to find well-off clientele, as these shops reflect the neighbourhood’s economic background.“ They point to the reminiscences of “Hernals’ golden times, in the 1950ies and 1960ies when it was a popular destination for going out and spending the evenings“ (ibid.). It however points to new cultural projects that could revive this neighbourhood’s old glory. In the third issue Währing, Hernals’ northern neighbour, or more precisely the Kutschkermarkt (an old street market) was put into the spotlight. The portrait paints a picture of the market’s reincarnation due to the commitment of local stall owners (Die Presse, 06.12.2012). The last part, for the time being, was dedicated to Favoriten and the changing neighbourhood around Vienna’s New Main Station in the 10th district. What used to be home to mainly working classes, is now one of Vienna’s largest urban development projects²⁸. This formerly stigmatized area has not only caught the attention of developers, but also of people sensing the change towards an upcoming neighbourhood, which is reflected in local businesses and shops, too. The old ‘Greissler’ next door, is in the process of metamorphosis into a gourmet food shop, without changing an owner. All of the accounts within the ‘Grätzelserie’ are giving voice to one, sometimes two, real estate developers, as experts for the neighbourhood’s future

27 Based on a qualitative content analysis of a series of articles in local daily newspaper Die Presse, 02.11.2012, 09.12.2012, 06.12.2012, 28.12.2012 and the so-called ‘Wiener Grätzel Bericht’ (Viennese Grätzel report, available online at URL: <http://www.jpi.at/news/jp-der-gratzel-bericht>, last accessed on 22 February 2013) by JP real estate company - Jelitzka und Partner (URL: <http://www.jpi.at>, last accessed on 22 February 2013)

28 For a reflection on Vienna’s urban development policy, also related to the development at the New Main Station see KNIERBEIN, Sabine, MADANIPOUR, Ali and DEGROS, Aglaée (forthcoming 2013) Vienna. (Re)Framing public Policies, (Re)Shaping public Spaces? IN: Madanipour, A., Knierbein, S. and Degros, A. (eds.) Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe. Routledge.

development. This includes managers in leading positions at JP Real Estate company, in 3 out of 4 editions.

JP Real Estate company is a private sector actor, who openly refers to a Grätzel for marketing its services and real estate developments.

“Viennese people are known for an affinity to complaining and to perceiving the glass of life not so much half-full but rather half-empty. But one thing connects them for the better: They love their city. And each and every Viennese has two ‘Viennas’ at the same time, the city’s centre with all its iconic buildings on the one, and one’s own Grätzl on the other hand - this part of the city, in which one lives.”

- JP Real Estate, 2012

In Autumn 2012, the company published the first edition of a so-called ‘Wiener Grätzel Bericht‘ (Viennese Grätzel Report), where they pointed to selected areas - Grätzel - in Vienna, they considered as key areas for profitable investments in the years to come: “This very report shows (...) Grätzel with a long, and good tradition, for which for different reasons an upswing can be predicted. (These are) Parts of the city, where both investments or moving there for private or business purposes will pay off“ (JP 2012: 3). JP promotes “Life between culture and technique“, “A ‘Grätzelteppich‘ (a carpet of Grätzel, in reference to a type of carpets being made of different parts)“, “At Europe’s junction“, “Noblesse at the corner“, “Go West“, or “Enjoying life in the new Ottakring“ (ibid. 2012: 4, 8, 11, 12, 15, 18).

JP presented this report, which was intended to be different than usual real estate market analyses, by putting emphasis on ‘not-yet‘ but ‘soon-to-be‘ ‘in-quarters‘, at Yppenplatz, an upcoming neighbourhood in the 16th district²⁹. Although not a precisely new or distinctive strategy, the interesting aspect however is, that it openly employed the Grätzel as a signifier for the construction of added meaning by claiming “The Grätzel makes the value“ (ibid. 2012: 24). By advertising ‘homes‘, it addresses future clientele (searching for real estate to live in, as well as for real estate as an investment) on an emotional level. In relation to the Grätzel JP puts into spotlight certain types of neighbourhood shops, such as exquisite boutiques “(...) ‘(Regular costumers) value my shop since many, many years - even if they don’t live or work in this neighbourhood anymore, the like to pass by every now and then.’ No wonder. Robert Opocensky offers top-range products and culinary dainties. Since 31 years now, this committed advocate of indulgence cares for Vienna’s first ‘Edelgreisslerei‘ (Noble ‘Greissler‘): fresh, organic fruits and vegetables, freshly baked goods by proficient Viennese bakeries, rare hams

29 Der Standard 16.10.2012, Die Presse 16.10.2012.

and meat products of organic Austrian breeds, a large selection of international and Austrian ‘delicatessens’, on top an exquisite selection of top-range wines - and, small lunch dishes, which make someone’s palate as well as one’s heart leap for joy“ (JP 2012: 11). With such a display, JP influences the construction of a certain narrative and imaginary around a place by referring not only to contemporary places for certain groups like creatives, students, artists, etc. (ibid.) but also to certain lifestyles, which can be mirrored in consumption preferences, too.

It is not only an emotional level JP tackles for addressing clientele, JP also makes use of the term Grätzel because it hosts intersubjective meaning that is rooted in affected³⁰ experiences, as previously sketched. By consuming intersubjective affected meaning JP Real Estate company actively shapes urban imaginaries in Grätzel, that it considers promising high yields. It does so with the help of mass media accounts which idealize certain ways of life, and prefer certain types of neighbourhood shops over others. In the case of Hernals, the construction of added meaning has already been followed by concrete physical manifestations in space. Image 2 at the beginning of this chapter shows a construction site in the vicinity of Kalvarienberggasse. It seems as if agendas set by JP Real Estate company and also by other actors who take an active role in the shaping of urban imaginaries are directed at enhancing symbolic value through affect (JP 2012: 3f).

30 Within this work ‘affected’ refers to feelings attached to an experience through an affection.

3 | The production of meaning through local economic practices



Image 3: Exchanging everyday practices? Pain quotidien de Vienne © Johanna Aigner

3. The production of meaning through local economic practices

In contrast to the strategic construction of added meaning in the previous chapter, this section now aims at exploring production of meaning through everyday practices, and more specifically local economic practices as part of them. Bridge and Watson (2011: 277, 278)³¹ acknowledge a turn in cultural geographies which lead to the recognition of emotions. Bachmann-Medick (2009: 292) describes this as a new cultural geography which zooms in on power relations through spatial categories: It is by focussing on the micro perspective of spatial effects and the relations between subjects and objects, bodies and minds, interactions and socio-cultural encounters that spatial conceptions seem to introduce both ideologic landscapes and spatial representations which are disrupted by power relations.³² Reflecting on affect in the context of what Thrift (2007) labelled Non-Representational Theory, Watson (2010 L) dedicated some thoughts to the effects of affect on the relevance of affect for the constitution of city publics, namely on the embodied movements as social dispositions, on bodily performances and on emotions carried in and communicated through bodies on street markets. The following section's aim is to depict local economic practices as everyday practices in the context of affect and performativity in the constitution of publics and cultures. In that sense, the specificity of a local public is constituted through materials as well as through social action and discourse.

3.1. On affect in the production of meaning in everyday life

Affect and feeling are terms that are used interchangeably, but any attempt to define either of which aiming at a distinction, seems to provoke criticism pointing to a fruitless attempt, both physically and socially (Henderson 2008). Anderson (2006: 735) points to “affect as trans-personal capacity, a body has to be affected (through an affection) and to affect (as the results of modification).“ Developing his argument on Massumi (2002), Anderson stresses that “being affected - affecting emerge from a processual logic of transitions that take place during spatially and temporally distributed encounters“ (Massumi 2002: 15).

Social Constructivism is basically concerned with representation, that is with the “symbolic orders of the social (or the cultural) realise themselves in the distribution of meaning and value, and thereby reinforce, legitimate and facilitate

31 For a complete account on the reasons behind the turn towards emotional geographies see BRIDGE, Gary and WATSON, Sophie (2011) Reflections on Affect. In: *Ibid.* (eds.) *The New Blackwell Companion To The City*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 277-287.

32 See also KEITH, Michael and PILE, Steve (1993) Conclusion. Towards New Radical Geographies. In: *ibid.* (eds.) *Place and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 220-226; or MASSEY, Doreen (2003) Spaces of Politics: Raum und Politik. In: Gebhardt, Hans et al. (eds.): *Kulturgeographie*, Berlin, p. 31-46.

unequal distributions of goods, opportunities and power“ (Anderson&Harrison 2010: 4). Drawing on post-structuralist body of thought, Non-Representational Theory or rather theories³³ challenge(s) Social Constructivism as they take an interest in body, practice and performativity in the taking-place of everyday life. While Social Constructivism claims that ‘action’ is not in the bodies, nor in the practices but in the projections of meanings and ideas onto these bodies (ibid. 2010: 5), NRT have a common understanding of approaching meaning and value as ‘thought-in-action‘ (ibid. 2010: 6). Therefore NRT have also been referred to as “a theory of mobile practices“ (Cadman 2009: 3). Due to the fact that NRT reject to put representations into prior epistemological position and instead consider practices as key constituents in the production of meaning (ibid. 2009: 4). NRT aim at closing what they considered a pitfall of Social Constructivism, namely between theory and practice, between body and mind.

Drawing on American Pragmatist Dewey, Bridge (2005) describes Body-Minds, as both of them together, where emotion and cognitive reflexion are (equal) parts of the same intelligence system of human organism. What Dewey and Bentley (1945) call ‘transactions‘ involves mediatized communication as well as face to face encounter, implying that subjects and objects involved in some notion of process. Translating this to thoughts on publics in a city, Watson (2010 L) puts emphasis on bodies as well as minds in the constitution of publics, and suggests how the public is constituted through materials as well as social action and discourse. For further analysis of local economic practices, there is need for clarification on the notions of everyday life, practices, affect and performativity in an understanding based on NRT.

Everyday life is considered not only a mere setting for daily routines and mundane practices, it is also the scene of improvised and transformative practices. It connects to the pre-cognitive aspects of embodied life, which Thrift (2007: 7) calls “rolling mass[es] of nerve volleys [which] prepare the body for action in such a way that intentions or decisions are made before the conscious self is even aware of them.” Anderson&Harrison (2010: 7) even take it further and state that “(...) the root of action is to be conceived less in terms of willpower or cognitive deliberation and more via embodied and environmental affordances, dispositions and habits.“ Watson and Bridge (2011b: 383, referring to Low 2011) stress, that it is precisely “(...) through embodied space, that the global is integrated into the spaces of everyday life where attachment, emotions and morality come into play.“ In that sense, embodied space is considered as the site of trans-local and transnational space as well as personal experience and perception. Non-

33 Lorimer states (2005: 83) that “Non-representational Theory is, an ‘umbrella term‘ for diverse work that seeks to better cope with our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multi-sensual worlds.“, that’s why the abbreviation ‘NRT‘ refers to the plural.

representational theory is a theory of **practices**, as such it focuses on “mundane practices, that shape the conduct of human beings towards others and themselves in particular sites” (Thrift 1997: 127). Thrift (2007: 8) further clarifies that NRT concentrates on “practices, understood as material bodies of work or style that have gained enough stability over time, through, for example, the establishment of corporeal routines and specialized devices, to reproduce themselves.“ They are “‘productive concatenations’ that have been constructed out of all manner or resources and which provide the basic intelligibility of the world“ (ibid. 2007: 8). Making a pledge for intersubjectivity, **affect** is not related to personal feelings, in favour of what Massumi (2004: xvii) describes as ”pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implies an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act.” Dewsbury et al. (2002: 439) further break this argument down to ”[a]ffects are not about you or it, subject or object. They are relations that inspire the world.” The importance hence lies on affect and emotion in opposition to rationality in the constitution of realities. Ultimately, **performativity** is interpreted as ”the processual and transformative nature of practice is immanent in both actions and events“ (Lorimer 2007: 90-92). Scholars such as Sennett (2000: 385) stressed the importance of the the performative over the rational and emphasized on the constitution of the public through the collective act of a playing out. Trying to overcome the division between the rational and the performative Bridge (2005: 79-80) among others affirmed that performance and theatricality were central to social connections.

Linking NRT to local economic activities as everyday practices

Neighbourhood shops are argued to serve as anchors for local economic practices and (possibly) for socio-cultural encounters and interactions. These, in turn, are inherently social products, and as such as places of social encounter and interaction. Although, as Roger Keil (2011: 713-725) declares, cities and within them, networks, are unbound in a phase of transnational urbanization, the need for social, economic, familial and legal connections is still dominant. Trade and exchange, both immanent features of neighbourhood shops, and linked to local economic activities, have always been an integral part of the history of humanity as well as of cities. They can serve as anchor points for establishing a connection between everyday practices and socio-economic as well as socio-cultural exchange. Here, formal market mechanisms overlap with the patterns of action of practical trade and social interaction that arise in everyday life in the public sphere. Trade is one of the central features of lived spaces, and local economies might bring about a revival, producing public life in a sociological-descriptive sense (Knierbein, Aigner&Watson 2012). NRT allow for an understanding of local economic practices as everyday practices, and thus, as a context in which embodied space assembles and enacts the transnational connections through the sounds and

smells of the products, through the different foods and commodities. Focusing on economic activities which are linked to mundane everyday practices, performativity is not conceived as an act in time, but rests on two notions that are specifically interesting for this case: Firstly it is a ‘momentum’ that enables the next - both the unpredicted (ibid. 2009: 5). Before diving into everyday life as it is played out in Kalvarienberggasse, we take a brief look at its becoming - a historical account and literary insights.

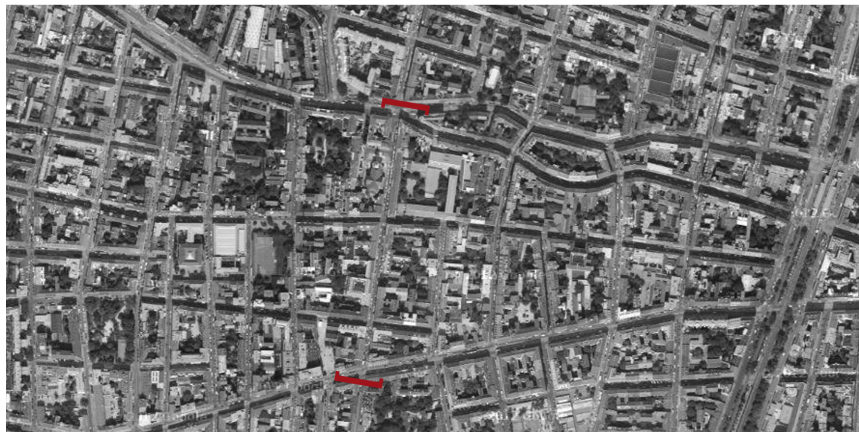


Image 4: Zooming in on Kalvarienberggasse © maps.google.com, author's own image



Image 5: Kalvarienberggasse direction Elterleinplatz around 1912 © Anonymous

3.2. Portraying everyday practices in a Viennese microcosm.

A case study

The history of Hernals until the nineteenth century is a history of three villages - Hernals, Dornbach and Neuwaldegg - outside the city's walls, which developed along historical roads, today named as Hernalser Hauptstrasse, Dornbacherstraße and Neuwaldegger Straße, on the very border to its neighbouring district, spreading along Ottakringer Strasse. Hernalser Hauptstrasse and Ottakringer Strasse are until today distinguished from the regular strict urban grid, as the only two curved streets in the district. At the end of the nineteenth century, in the early 1890ies, the three villages outside the walls, including Hernals were administratively and physically incorporated into the boundaries of the city (territorial reform 1890) and were joined to become the 17th district of Vienna home to more than 75.000 people from all around the monarchy. The walls have been removed, and

“ The idealizing of past harmony mainly is used as a protection shield against a prevailing, intimating present. (...) The myth 'Alt-Wien' (Old Vienna) is made up by the picture of idyllic, cosy, endearing Biedermeier. Actually, the times of Vor-März (pre-revolution) were restless, chaotic, with a high velocity of change, traffic on streets was frantic, hygiene conditions were devastating. And the urban landscape was altered without compromises: Familiar rows of houses were demolished in order to make room for castles concealed as blocks of flats... “.

- Kos, 2005: 9 (*)

substituted by the boulevard named Gürtel (belt), which is Vienna's second ring around the former city's boundaries, and today's inner districts. The district now stretches from Gürtel to the north-western heights of the 'Wienerwald' (Vienna woods), a large forest of over 1.000 square kilometres. People in Hernals strongly depended on vineyards before the destruction of those (vini-)cultures during the Turk-Wars in 1529 and 1683. Subsequently vineyards was

"I have been told, that they are taking all the villages into the city of Vienna, one after another, oh, how beautiful this thing will be when half the monarchy will huddle together in the capital."

- Richter, [1794] 2005: 16 (*)

"The alleys' narrowness shoves pedestrians next to each other; High Streets seem to be more vibrant despite the modest



Image 6: Wine house at Kalvarienberggasse 14-16 around 1905 © Anonymous

replaced by agriculture, although coming back as home-vineyards after a break of decades. Together with an increasing number of crafts and businesses, which spread widely due to comparatively low living expenses, the former villages' structure and appearance changed.

The industrialization in the course of 19th century lead to increasing construction on the districts' space, and a more urban character (Zabusch 2003: 19, 25, 26, 30). In the decades marked by fast growing

frequency, as if they were of Berlin width."

- Alexis, [1833] 2005: 22

"It was here, when the reformation tore apart the intellectual unity of Europe, the counter-reformation's headquarter. The Osman's advance failed twice at the wall's of Vienna. And as barbarism erupted again in our days, tougher and more eager to rule than ever (...) Because it consisted of so



Image 7: A glance at Kalvarienberggasse around 1910 © M. Sperling

population in the city (1869-1910), Hernals was also completely transformed. The former village became a district of tenement houses arranged in blocks within the regular network of streets. The beginning of the 20th century marks not only the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy after World War I but also the period, during which the density reached its peak with 103.305 people living in the district. At this time in Hernals, having an area of 11,35 square kilometres (since 1892), 9.102 people were living on one square kilometre (own calculation, based on Statistik Austria 2001).

In the 1920ies the City of Vienna erected 14 social housing projects (Gemeindebauten) in Hernals to fight both housing shortage and unemployment (ibid. 2003: 31). Increasing tensions between social democrats and conservatives lead to unrest and riots, before in 1932 the national socialist party gained 17% of votes in the districts' elections

many elements, Vienna became the ideal fertile soil for a collective culture. were (attuned) to that. To mix seemingly opposites, undo to create a new element of European culture in the process of permanent harmonization was this city's actual genius. "Otherness was not conceived hostile, as anti-national, was not dismissed as un-German or un-Austrian in an arrogant fashion, but taught and sought. (...)"

- Zweig,
[1940] 2005: 151-152 (*)

"No other city has been struck as badly by peace after World War (I) in 1919 as Vienna. Just think about it: a capital of a monarchy of 450 million suddenly has only 4 million people. It is not an emperor's city anymore, the emperor



Image 8: Elterleinplatz as a crossroads around 1905 © M. Sperling

(Seliger & Ucakar 1985). This was produced by a city-wide, as well as national tendency of minor living conditions, high unemployment rates due to an economic crisis, civic unrest and political instability at the times of First Republic, which was from 1933 on organized as ‘Ständestaat’ (cooperative state). During World War II Hernalers was facing air strikes as a result of overall bombing of the city which led to substantial destruction of the old physical structure. After the end of World War II, the district was occupied for six months by Russia, before in autumn 1945 it became the US Army’s occupation zone. Between 1945 and 1998 44 social housing projects were erected (Zabusch 2003: 32).

Today Hernalers has a population of some 53.409 residents, of whom 28,8% are of foreign nationalities (most notably from Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Turkey)

is gone, and with him all the festiveness's glamour. (...) The word is everywhere, that Vienna will soon come to an end. Grass will grow in the streets, ten-thousands would have to move away to avoid starvation (...)“

- Zweig,
[1940] 2005: 156 (*)

“We are still living in scrubby ruins and houses which have not yet been destroyed by decay. One tries to patch with surrogates, in the metropolis the ghost of allotment gardens goes round, to just get rid of the worst damage. This is not yet the beginning of reconstruction, which has start come eventually. It should be able to spread as fast and well prepared as possible, and it will be necessary to apply the right methods and proposals, in order to

(Statistik Austria 2011³⁴). Transnational flows of migration and cultural practices become enmeshed in the everyday life and routines of local residents, conferring new socially constructed relations of power and meaning (Watson 2006: 172 referring to Smith 2001: 1-3, Low 2011: 464, 469f). While 44,6% of people living in Hernals have a job, 4,6% are unemployed (Statistik Austria 2010³⁵), 50,8% are non-working (among which 20% are retired, the rest either being too young or in education, or for other reasons classified non-working). Out of 20.921 people having a job, 10,7% run a business (ibid.), while retail is the most common branch with over 13% of all people having a job working there. The largest group of 36,3% of 40.665 people over the age of 15 hold a mandatory school leaving qualification, the second largest group with 25,4% have completed professional training in crafts, 25% have graduated from high-schools (or professional training schools with similar school leaving certificates), and 13,3% have pursued further education up to the level of academic education at post-secondary institutions (Statistik Austria 2001³⁶). With a size of 11,35 square kilometres Hernals is Vienna's tenth largest district (Zabusch 2003: 19). Several large regeneration programs marked the end of the twentieth century. The largest was certainly the regeneration of the Gürtel, which resulted in a bustling nightlife in a numerous clubs opened in the arches underneath the subway line.

clear up our cityscape which has been badly wrecked for more than a century.“

- Hoffmann,
[1945] 2005: 159 (*)

34 Source of analysis by STATISTIK AUSTRIA: Datenbank POPREG.

35 Source of analysis by STATISTIK AUSTRIA: Abgestimmte Erwerbsstatistik 2010 mit Stichtag 31.10., Gebietsstand 2010.

36 Source of analysis by STATISTIK AUSTRIA: Großzählung 2001.



Image 9: Easter Market Kalvarienberggasse © Röder

Local economic practices around 1900 - A story of affect

”The hundred year old ‘Stalebnerwirtschaus‘ (traditional restaurant named Stalebner, after the family’s name) has been torn down, a new one was erected. Time passes. A chapter of Hernals’ ‘joie de vivre’ thus is closed. ‘Wienerliedersänger‘ (singers of the Wienerlied, a Viennese type of music), comedians, local writers and all manner of other entertainment artists have celebrated the ‘Kebraus‘ (the clean sweep, the grande finale), the farewell of an elemental feature, which will now be merged into urban banality. (...) The new, young, city has grown beyond them (these old establishments, ann.) and we forgot about them. We will get over Stalebner, too. The necrology is due to him, without a doubt. For he (Stalebner, ann.) was famous and can loom back on a grand past. He played a role in Vienna’s history of morality, and his influence was present, was felt at times in this city. Stalebner, not just a ‘Wirtschaus’, but a philosophy of life. The ‘Wirtschaus’ has been torn down, the philosophy of life may endure. Maybe. (...) Hernals ... If one looks at the nuances of the Viennese manner, from Laimgruben to Liechtental, and in a wider arc from the Black West to Krottenbach, one will find that Hernals is something special: a rougher ‘Wienertum‘ (Viennese custom), less idyllic, but more abandoned, more towards the rampage, more glaring. Less graceful and gentle, but rendered more fiery and wild by outbound temperaments. (...) It is this Schalanther’s soil that brings about people, who have the absolute will of joy. (...) ‘Beim Gschwandner, Stalebner, da lernt ma si kehner...‘ (At Gschwander, Stalebner, one gets to know people) (...) The old house of Stalebner is a part of the history, a part of Vienna’s culture, it used to be a trait of character of this charming city, which in its essence is more than just merry and fun, like some people think or try to make one think.“

- Salten, [1909] 2005 (*)

The following case study has been developed on the basis of empirical research during which two methodological approaches were applied. A semi-structured, problem-centred interview was used for investigating both the general socio-historic context and the evolving (planning) practices³⁷. NRT methodologically put emphasis on performativity, the goal here was not merely to investigate socio-cultural realities (from the outside), but to dive into the very context and to engage with it (Dirksmeier&Helbrecht 2008: 8-9). Thus the analysis of local economic activities was approached at first by participatory observations. As Flick (2009: 291) states that observations allow for a "glance at the particularities of the everyday and of the routines" in a specific context. Especially in this very research, which aims at investigating quotidian routines of local economic activities as everyday practices, before going into the context, pre-established assumptions were questioned, challenged and re-formulated once I dived into the context. This led to a reflection on methodological approaches (which is to some extent also represented in the critique by NRT) and can be found in this work's conclusions.

3.3. Analysis of local economic practices³⁸

Neighbourhood shops, as place where emotions and affect in space materialize might be considered focal points of a community because of local economic practices. They are places for shopping, for starting up businesses, as well as for meeting and encounters. They are sites of local people and local difference, where the main goal is to meet local people's needs. Although neighbourhood shops are as different as their products and customers, the following typologies were constructed: (A) Traditional small businesses, (B) businesses and services catering to market niches, (C) 'ethnic' businesses catering to specific groups, (D) street markets of different popularity, in different locations and categories, (E) creative industries, (F) businesses operated by large companies (franchise, hypermarkets, chain stores, chain restaurants etc.). Four specific local shops (all related to typologies A to C) were chosen for detailed observation. Business of typologies D to F were not taken into account due to temporary staging of the event (the special occasions street market in Kalvarienberggasse only takes place in the weeks before Easter), due to their minor link to everyday practices in the sense of this research (as creative industries core business is not related to local economic

37 Although NRT has contested traditional methods used in fieldwork, among which focus groups, participant observation and interviews are named particularly because they tend to highlight contemplation and interpretation (see PATCHETT, Merle (2010) A Rough Guide To Non-Representational Theory. Available online at URL: <http://merlepatchett.wordpress.com/2010/11/12/a-rough-guide-to-non-representational-theory/> (last accessed on 19 February 2013), Dirksmeier&Helbrecht (2009: 5) qualify this by stating that "(...) in the case of interviewing, non-representational theory is not interested in the representations which are produced, i.e. the transcript, but rather in the interaction process of interviewing itself."

38 Based on empirical research through participatory observations in Kalvarienberggasse.

practices), and due to their inherent juxtaposition to the aspect of local economic practices (super- and hypermarkets are embedded in transnational economic networks).



Image 10: The Kalvarienberggasse as a local economic mosaic? © Johanna Aigner

Statistics provided by the Vienna Chamber of Commerce for people interested in starting a business³⁹ show that the largest number of people living in the vicinity (in total 4.252) belong to low- to middle- income level households, which is reflected both in product and price range that was presented at the neighbourhood shops in question (see graphic analysis of number of people living in the section of Kalvarienberggasse, as well as their purchasing power in relation to levels of completed education). The methodological approach as well as to the analytical interrelation of parameters in the Vienna Chamber of Commerce's study of the location Kalvarienberggasse needs to be critically interpreted because the constructed relation between purchasing power index and educational background is not of any relevance to this thesis' topic. The study only serves as a basis for socio-economic data beyond the district level, which was unfortunately not available in any other way.

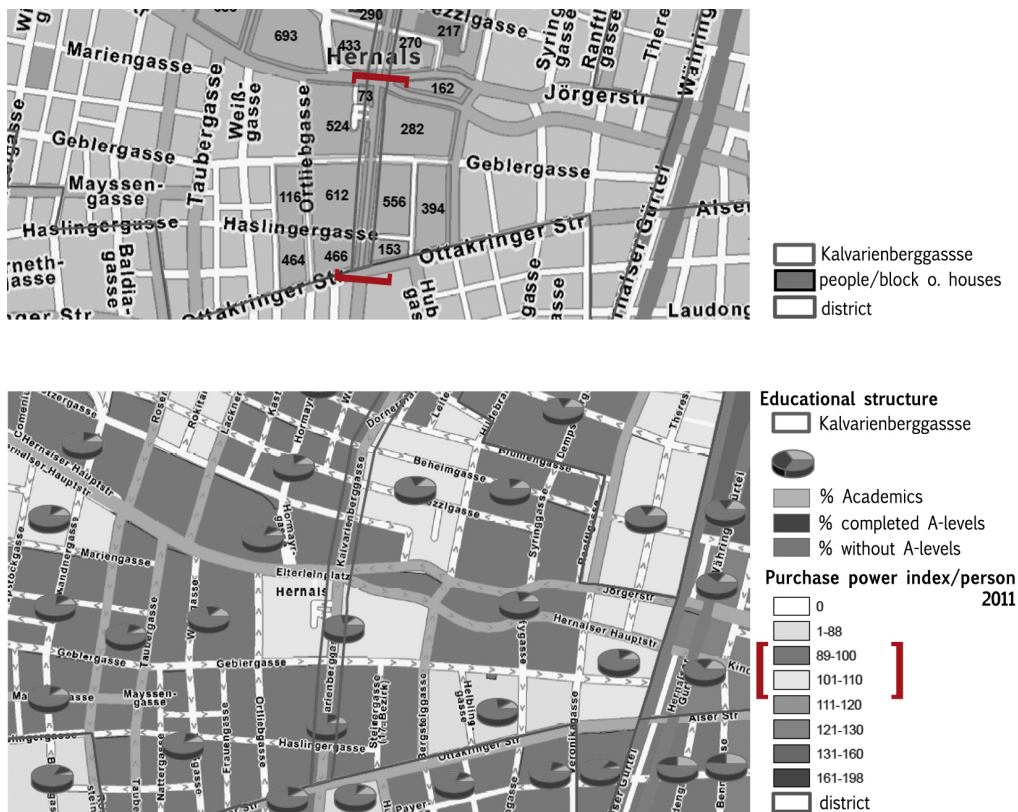


Image 11: Number of people and purchase power index in the Kalvarienberggasse
© Vienna Chamber of Commerce

39 Sources of analysis by Chamber of Commerce Vienna: Demographische Daten - Einwohnerzahl 2009 (inkl. Nebenwohnsitze), Volkszählung 2001; Kaufkraftdaten - Institut für Angewandtes Marketing Graz, 2012; Unternehmerdaten - Herold halbjährlich 2012; Verkehr - Abteilung Stadtplanung und Verkehrspolitik der Wirtschaftskammer Wien; Passantenfrequenz: Zählung Wirtschaftskammer Wien Oktober 2010.

Reflections on bodies in relation to performativity and affect

Firstly, the presentation of bodies allows for drawing inferences, involving body shape, clothes and styles of movement (Goffman 1967) as well as body cloth (Bridge 2005: 113) assuming that different types of gaze and inclination of the head can express certain class positions. This is important to a notion of being co-present in public, as bodies present certain class dispositions. Furthermore it influences how people react to others who are different from themselves, because societies are organized around ways of personal disposal (Bridge&Watson 2011b: 383). Communication happens through body even before a word is spoken (ibid. 2011b: 383).

Secondly, body performance and related presentation (meaning the way that bodies convey information and receive it from others) is put forward (ibid.). On the other hand bodies can establish barriers to communication before even engaging in discussion: through communicating content of their presentation, such as ethnic, class, or gender (ibid.). At the same time bodies can break down divisions of spaces of a city by being presented in a certain conciliatory fashion, thus (co-)constructing publics that are more mundane and probably not the spaces of public discussion or communication.

Thirdly, bodies often might act both as reservoirs and a record of emotion which is visible to others (ibid.). Setting emotion opposing to reason, and following the Habermasian line of argument, that the use of reason is a prerequisite for discussion in public, might lead to the conclusion that emotion does not belong to the public realm (ibid. 2011b: 383). The mood of the city and the way the body senses that mood can be important because this sets the tone for urban encounter - like for example, walking down a street feeling fearfully (ibid. 2011b: 384). The sense as well as linguistic representation it could be argued, might be significant for urban publics and sounds of a city for example can register mood. Steve Pile (2011: 296) drawing on Freud talks about the way affect emerges and argues that cities are full of affect, for example feelings of uneasiness while being lost in or out of place.

Bakery and Café Weigl - Kalvarienberggasse 19, 1170 Vienna (A)

Bakery Weigl is a typical neighbourhood bakery at the corner of Kalvarienberggasse and Geblergasse which exists for some 35 years. Even before that, a bakery has been operating at this very corner and thus being one of the traditional neighbourhood shops. The business is based on selling self-made goods, such as rolls, pastries, and some basic groceries supply, but it also provides a small in-house coffee service next to the shop, which was (compared to the take-away branch) used relatively little. This bakery presents itself in a traditional, overly clean but already aged material layout, that tries to reflect on contemporary

consumption patterns by offering a limited number of chain products (such as drinks, milk, etc.) complementary to the core business. The female, mid-aged employee is not only proficient in pointing to the specificities of their home-made goods, but also - after being hesitant first - well versed in the business's history. The bakery is open on Sundays too (at least on Sundays before Easter). Customers are most likely those people who are living in the Grätzel for a long time (up to 40 years), but also - out of convenience, new inhabitants in the neighbourhood. Customers also appear to be to large parts culturally and socio-economically homogeneous (hardly no observations of clientele of openly exhibited ethnic or religious difference).

Shoe Shop, Kalvarienberggasse 26, 1170 Vienna (B)

This shoe shop, specialized in children's shoes at comparatively lower price range (compared to high street shops and outlets) and having both 'no-name' and labelled shoes on offer, welcomes customers with a traditional division of labour. The (male) shop owner is mostly busy what seems to be with organizing stock and budget, whereas the single (female) employee is friendly offering assistance while keeping her (professional) distance. Customers are made up by diverse clientele, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and cultural background. This shop appears to cater for a specific niche market, namely for people who for different reasons are not particularly mobile (thus not doing their shopping somewhere else) and/or who do not seek for a large selection of different ranges products. At the same time the sheer number of shoes cramped into a comparatively small space is both visually and physically overwhelming. There's a certain flair of people valuing both time for professional consultations, and time to look around without being pressed to choose, to try, to buy at an instant. It's a totally different atmosphere compared to High Street Shops because there is hardly any pressure to fit into certain fashionable dress codes. People really do need to rub along each other in order to pass between the stacks of shoe boxes. It may be perceived as something like a hybrid between a shop out of one's early childhood memories and due to the sheer number of staples, a specialized offers shop that could be projected to a bazar, too.

Hürpas Turkish Grocery Store - Kalvarienberggasse 4, 1170 Vienna (C)

Belonging to a regional, fairly small group of ethnic markets, that can also be found in other neighbourhoods, Hürpas is specialized in selling products imported from countries of certain origin (Turkey, the Balkans), but also provides a limited selection of Austrian products. Compared to the other neighbourhood shops this analysis is based on, both vending space and employees exceeds the others. Hürpas is the only example where more than two people appeared to be working at the same time. Prices are significantly lower compared to both Austrian chain stores, and to (popular) street markets. This all points to the fact,

that this shop could probably be already regarded as a small to medium-sized supermarket (depending on the specific example) if it were not for the fact that it seems to cater for certain ethnic groups. Thus, language seems to be one of the key criteria for engaging in conversation beyond the basic act of ordering and selling products. Customers are mostly a group of people who either feel comfortable seeking known products as well as comparatively cheap prices.

Gasthaus Gruber, Kalvarienberggasse 4, 1170 Vienna - (A, B, possibly C)

Entering Gasthaus Gruber, one finds oneself in what is perceived as a typical Viennese traditional restaurant. Both smell and materiality bears traces of a Viennese mundane restaurant culture, that is as much part of our presence as it is of our history. Having limited opening hours, the owner Mr. Gruber is serving (what is perceived to be) traditional Viennese dishes. The number of customers is strongly varying although male, mid-aged Viennese well-known customers, who seem to have some kind of a specific relationship to Mr. Gruber due to regular visits seem to form the predominant clientele group. At Gruber, it's not simply about drinking or eating out, there's a range of related activities, such as collective watching of sports events on TV, or hosting meetings of the local savings club twice a month. This restaurant takes over the typical function of a neighbourhood restaurant or pub, as a place for sociability (for certain groups), for spending the day, for gossiping, for drinking. Probably Mr. Gruber is one of the most informed people about his clientele's gossip, not least because 'Stammtische' (regulars' tables) are a local tradition. Mr. Gruber has already taken an active role in contributing to specific projects and initiatives in co-operation with the local Urban Renewal and Quarter Management in the context of cultural festivals (eg. Soho Ottakring gets in touch with Hernalds 2010), themed weeks in the neighbourhood (such as Architecture Days, for example) etc. by allowing for the use of its courtyard and additional rooms.

Interim reflections on preliminary assumptions and findings

One of the basic assumptions, that establishing contacts beyond the act of shopping and trade at neighbourhood shops is more likely than at a franchise business was not proven in this case. This could be due to age group, as it proves to be difficult to provoke talks when you're an outsider not belonging to a certain age group. This leads to very limited possibilities of establishing a contact and getting information beyond the mere information on products themselves. The experience of socio-cultural encounters through everyday practices seem to be exclusively accessible to certain groups of people: Certain consumption patterns, which are constructed by (transnational) market forces and applied by urban strategies as much as they are part of everyday life, as well as socio-cultural and socio-economic preconditions determine the search (and eventually the success) of local shops' finding niches to cater to different publics. There is a multitude of

social and cultural groups shaping everyday practices in the same spatial section although their practices might not lead to encounters between and across those different groups. This may be due to language and age barrier or because of differences in mobile capital. Mobile capital in this context does not exclusively refer to physical, but also to socio-economic, and cultural preconditions that might influence the (number of) choices available. Because of their relatively open and semi-formalized structure (high flexibility of adapting to customer's preferences and demands both in terms of price and product range), neighbourhood shops (in a lesser extent than street markets) though offer the opportunity to meet the economic existential challenges of everyday life. Interestingly however, that due to attracting a specific but more diverse clientele than both the bakery and the Turkish grocery store, the shoe shop seems to transcend classical concepts of exclusiveness versus accessibility. Through Mr. Gruber's active involvement in neighbourhood projects and his performative practice, this specific neighbourhood restaurant seems to stand out compared to the others (although Hürpas might have a similar role which was not traceable that far for the author's limitations in terms of language skills).

3.4. Planning practices in a Grätzel⁴⁰

Vienna's planning culture has been historically marked by a significant involvement of the city's government, reigned by social democrats, in the production of city's space. Probably the most renowned material evidence are the public housing estates (Gemeindebauten), financed and formerly owned by the city, which today represent almost a quarter of the city's housing stock. Yet, the post-Fordist transformation of urban policy has not completely circumvented Vienna (Novy et. al 2001). For the last twenty years the city government has not been directly taking on the construction of public housing, but rather provides incentives to private developers for the provision of affordable flats (The last Gemeindebau was erected in 2004). Instead, the city's administration focuses on more comprehensive approaches to improving the city's space, declaratively aiming to further advance both the city's competitiveness and social cohesion. Planning however remained a fairly centralized mission in the hands of the city's administration, and Vienna's residents accept if not suppose that the city provides for all their urban needs. The planning process in Vienna is directed by the city government's administration and is managed as a cooperation of the city's various departments responsible for certain aspects of space (land use, infrastructure, open space planning, architecture and urban design, strategic planning, etc.), with the task to maintain and further improve "one of the most beautiful and liveable cities of the world" (city's mayor Häupl 2010). Planning in Vienna nowadays is

40 Based on interview A with an employee of the Urban Renewal and District Management Office for 9th, 17th and 18th district

largely reminiscent of post-Fordist planning policies across the western world, in which cities' administrations position themselves as managers or networking partners, aiming to attract and allow as many investments as possible (Novy et al. 2001). In order to contribute to the quality of (everyday) life of the vast majority of residents and to social cohesion in a certain neighbourhood, planning authorities in Vienna also turn to another common aspect of the post-Fordist planning policy. This approach is characterized by 'acupuncture' planning, which is small scale interventions undertaken with the hope that they would diffuse into a broader area. In the case of Vienna these small-scale interventions are closely connected to the historical division of the city. Vienna is composed of 23 administrative districts (Bezirke), which semi-autonomously set priorities for interventions at the local level and receive their maintenance budget from the city hall, where they lobby for their actions, such as improvements to parks, public spaces or schools. These local actors link the city's strategic planning goals to the concrete small-scale interventions at the neighbourhood level. Through these small-scale planning programs they are responsible for maintaining the city's positive perception of quality of life, on the whole compensating for the city's retreat from construction of public housing estates.

Yet in the last twenty years a new group of planning actors at the local level has arisen in city's districts, alongside with a growing popularity of discourses related to decentralization of planning. The first so-called 'Gebietsbetreuungen' (abbreviation: GB, Urban Renewal and District Management Offices) were established already in 1975 as a pilot project resulting from (individual) activism by (or around) the architect Kurt Smetana, who, as a result, was assigned as the first contractor in the local context of Ottakring (Interview A). In course of the 1970ies and 1980ies the city governments' policy programme of Soft Urban Renewal led to be establishment of GBs almost all over the city, but first in the north-western districts on the outer side of the 'Gürtel'. This was a reaction to the need for improvement of both physical structure and enhancing possibilities for socio-cultural exchange of and in dense, mostly End of 19th Century fabric (Interview A). With the exclusive support of the city's government privately administered (managed) offices named Gebietsbetreuung⁴¹ were created with the mission to maintain the urban flair of their respective districts, and to more actively engage residents in districts' urban development. These teams are dedicated to communication to and with residents, and finding out specific needs (for space) of individuals and groups in the district

41 In the context of thesis the private contractors called 'Gebietsbetreuungen' refer to the branch of 'Gebietsbetreuung Stadterneuerung' (Urban Renewal Offices). Prior to 2010 'District Management' offices, which are concerned mediating everyday life in or around public housing estates (more prominently related to social work) have been part of the same organizational scheme. From 2010 onwards former 'District Management' offices were incorporated as 'WohnpartenerInnen' into the city administration's housing service.

(Interview A). When discussing their affairs, a significant proportion of the staff working for the contracted private office in local contexts states that networking is what they do (ibid.). Through the organization of events seeking residents' active engagement, as well as through the implementation of a series of small-scale interventions that are realized through the participatory processes, these teams aim at fostering residents' sense of belonging to the district (Interview A).

4 | Discussion



Image 12: Traditional reminiscences? Gasthaus Gruber © Johanna Aigner

4. Discussion

4.1. Added value through added meaning? Discussing the strategic construction of added meaning

“Place promotion intentionally makes use of affects, emotions, of the production of meaning in its Lefebvrian understanding as a starting point for gaining influence on the production of space, in order to cater for certain groups.”

- Viderman, 2012 L

Although the strategic construction of added meaning is a process evolving simultaneously to the socio-historic and cultural production and re-production of meaning through individual and collective experiences and imaginaries, post-Fordist urban development increasingly emphasises the notion of affect. As already discussed in the 2nd chapter, in its ‘Wiener Grätzel Bericht’ JP Real Estate company, rather subtly point to Lefebvrian discourse in order to introduce affect into the promoted narrative, because people’s emotional maps are inevitably coloured by experiences, routines, stories, etc. (JP 2012: 3). In highlighting facets like “The city’s centre is well documented. Every day legions of tourists take pictures of the very same houses, places, and monuments. But their Grätzel belong to Vienna’s people (...)”, JP repeatedly makes use of the signifier Grätzel (JP 2012: 3). A strong emphasis is discursively put on the feeling of belonging through local economic practices, such as “There is the ‘Stammwirt’ (a term for a restaurant or pub), the shops, where you are known, where people are greeted by their name, yes, even, with a distinctive, accent, which differs in nuances from the next Grätzel’s (...)” (ibid.). These excerpts demonstrate JP’s aspiration to construct added meaning for local economic practices, which would otherwise remain (to be perceived as) everyday practices related to local businesses.

This example also shows that both Grätzel and neighbourhood shops have been increasingly used as signifiers strategically filled with new meanings. We witness the process of supplementing what we thought to be ingredients for a Grätzel with new strategically defined attributes reflecting preferences of targeted consumerists (e.g. creative classes). Indeed, as examples from around the world show, the new attributes seem to well reflect new (bourgeoise) consumerist patterns, thus not only boosting certain lifestyles but also specific types of neighbourhoods. Although promoting diverse and heterogeneous neighbourhoods, such strategies often take a selective approach towards existing spatial practices, thus reducing choices available in a certain neighborhood. Only carefully selected (types of) shops and services are labelled, promoted and supported as local businesses, resulting in the (re)production of certain urban imaginaries.

Although promotion of cities and cultures claims to be about specificity and distinction, do we actually end up creating a false nostalgic picture of Grätzel and neighbourhood shops, which makes cities, and neighbourhoods look more and more the same?

The places that are surrounded by a special flair, that are discursively (re-) produced as desirable for some reason or another, are the products of specific circumstances as well as (latent or marginal) needs. The strategic construction of meaning does open up to a larger number of actors that may have latent claims, and leads to emergence of new cultures. At the same time, it bears a risk of instrumentalization of everyday practices for strategic urban development - both from the side of public authorities and private sector actors - which eventually leads to spatial multiplication of similar strategies, processes, and thus desired outcomes.

“(...) Soft Urban Renewal, which exists since the 1970ies, has led to interesting projects, especially related to vacancies in the End of 19th century buildings' ground floor zones. If boutiques, new gastronomy, etc. is revived, it's often because of civil society's contribution. Look at the Schleifmühlgasse [...]. In urban renewal it is often not so much about money and big projects, but about commitment and dedication. [...] The city as a product of societal processes cannot be planned, therefore the point is, to not spoil (unplanned) endeavors by urban planning and urban design (...)”

- Seiss, 2013

In this interview Seiss⁴², tries to make palpable that the production of space is a highly complex societal process, involving lots of different actors and that planning is not (anymore) exclusively about functional zoning. He praises the City of Vienna's strategic programme of Soft Urban Renewal⁴³ before talking about desirable outcomes in terms of chic boutiques and coffee houses in one of the probably fastest changing neighbourhoods, the Freihausviertel⁴⁴. Although he considers certain typology of neighbourhood shops as vital ingredients of cities and neighbourhoods, the question remains, whether his notion would also include shops and businesses catering to different niche markets and quotidian needs. If it would not, is such as a bourgeoisie notion intentionally or unintentionally detached

42 Radio Wien interview on 16 February 2013.

43 For information on 'Soft Urban Renewal' see FEUERSTEIN, Christiane and FITZ, Angelika (2009) Wann begann temporär? Frühe Stadtinterventionen und sanfte Stadterneuerung in Wien. Wien, New York: Springer; or consult the GB's website for a first glance URL: <http://www.gbstern.at/stadterneuerung/stadterneuerung/sanfte-stadterneuerung/sanfte-stadterneuerung/> (last accessed on 21 February 2013).

44 The 'Freihausviertel' is a neighbourhood in Vienna's 4th district, close to Vienna University of Technology at the Karlsplatz. It is located at the interface between Vienna's old city centre and the Naschmarkt, one of Vienna's most popular street markets.

of reality in its complexity and constructed as idealized imaginary? The contemporary popularity of local economic activities in strategic development programmes could in fact also be considered in line with with an imaginary of (disguised) bourgeoisie living concepts, which put emphasis on creativity as a feature of vibrant neighbourhoods. JP (2012: 3) in its Grätzel Bericht certainly promotes certain ways of life (for certain neighbourhoods) by indicating: “Where there used to be back-rooms for playing cards and some feud amongst the criminal community used to be played, today there are houses of the young and less young, ‘hip‘ urban dweller. Similarly, Neubau, the 7th district for instance, has changed, where the renewal of Spittelberg, the construction of ‘Museumsquartier‘ (museums quarter) and the (re)design of Mariahilferstraße has turned the (Grätzel) from a neglected inner district to a contemporary place for students, artists, and creatives.“

4.2. Local economic practices and the notion of affect

Local economic practices may serve as embodied spaces and facilitate human encounters across their differences. Like markets (Watson 2009) they are forming (inter)subjectivities in different publics in process, as places for socio-cultural encounter and exchange where people form multiple connections. They are assemblages of people, things, sites, spaces, and technologies. As the affect of local economic practices is specific, so is their sociality and nuanced publicness. They are situated in a specific socio-cultural context and do shift and change in this very context across time. Bodily movements as particular social and class dispositions can only be unravelled by diving into the local specificities in order to find out how they are mediated and conducted. Affect predisposes local economies towards being facilitators for (possibly) vibrant public spaces (e.g. in the streets), a space of social encounter or a limited public space. Affect is the key to seeing if neighbourhood shops are also places, where people move together (or ‘rub along‘, Watson 2006), opposed to places of tension and conflict.

Positive affect and emotion range from traders involving themselves, theatricality and performatively, thus constructing the space through their bodily performance in a certain kind opposed to the usual conventions of retailing. Positive affect may be considered the emotional base for local economic practices. As examples of street markets (Watson 2006, 2009) have shown, older people and single parents, having limited mobile capital, tend to be amongst the groups who profit from that. Depending on the degree of performative engagement in interpersonal exchange, people get recognized by traders, sometimes even asked about their situation. This aspect, though not related to neighbourhood shops only, is interesting as people tend to form a conduct that transcends the division between commercial space and community space. Negative affect on the contrary is mostly related to the changing character of local economic practices over the last years.

This may be due to changing patterns of ‘passing on the business’ within familial structures. The sense of becoming run down and depressed overshadows the possibilities of encounters across differences. The blame is put on super markets and, in cases when the feeling of resentment takes a hostile route, on new people coming to the neighbourhood, starting up new businesses. These changes gave voice to different kinds of emotions boiling down to some kind of nostalgia for a particular imagined space.

Referring to the previous section and the discursive construction of added meaning, one needs to ask whether ‘blaming’ only private actors for instrumentalizing meaning is hypocritical? Indeed it is: JP Real Estate company does not claim that Grätzel is about local socio-cultural encounters. Instead they advertise a certain neighbourhood characterized by a range of neighbourhood shops and related spatial practices, thus putting a strong emphasis on the dimension of consumption. The image of the Grätzel promoted by JP, was not yet encountered during the research in the explored neighbourhood, but it is probably in the process of making. There is no establishments in the street that obviously cater for the clientele addressed by the developers (Latte shops, organic shops⁴⁵). Even if this painted picture of the act of shopping does not relate to the facets of everyday life that are currently exiting, it is just as intentional to promote neighbourhood shops as places for encounters rather than as businesses for securing livelihoods.

4.3. Towards overcoming biases? Discussing the discursive production of space

It seems as if socio-cultural interaction and encounters which are often attributed to local economic practices (being it markets or neighbourhood shops, Watson 2006, 2009) might as well be found in chain stores and hypermarkets. Those encounters can be a part of everyday local economic activities. Interestingly however, was to contrast observations and interviews in everyday, quotidian environments with those programmes and pamphlets that are currently not only promoted by private sector actors, like JP Real Estate company, but also by planning authorities and professionals. Hence the question arises, whether the praised role of local economic practices is just a part of the promoted imaginary revolving around a Grätzel? Local economic practices being depicted as vital ingredients in the production of a neighbourhood as space filled with affect (contacts, encounters, experiences), might stand in discrepancy to the *Lefebvrian* understanding of the production of meaning through everyday practices over a

45 See ATKINSON, Rowland (2003) Domestification by cappuccino or a revenge on urban space? Control and empowerment in the management of public space. *Urban Studies*, August 2003/40(9). pp. 1829-1843.

prolonged period of time (local economies as a mosaic of activities and as a relational, not a container space).

One provocative thought might be to interpret the popularity of local economic practices in the discursive production of space because of their exclusive character. Local economic practices are inclusive as they enable and foster socio-cultural exchange, if not across 'all' differences, at least across some - yet, they are also exclusive, for they cater to specific groups. Quite popular reference towards local economic practices in strategic urban development programmes opens up possibilities for certain actors holding different types of capital (creative, social, cultural, fiscal, etc.). Promoted imaginaries and added meaning thus do not necessarily correspond with everyday practices currently existing in the local context, but rather display idealized image of theory and practice professionals. How important strategic construction of added meaning is shows the embedding of certain practices and environments in our everyday spheres only through their (discursive) presence and promotion. These newly embedded practices have a capacity of slowly pushing to the margins ways of life that were previously lived in the local context, which might be perceived as discomforting by professionals.

Neighbourhood shops however have some capacity to adapt to the changes in their environment, for creating specific offers for specific groups, for having comparatively high flexibility in terms of product range and price management, and for thriving on benefits of being close-by shops (especially relevant for people or groups who have less mobile capital). Yet their transformed role contributes to the production of altered imaginaries and materialities. In the end though, the underlying hypothesis of this research, that neighbourhood shops are places and anchor points for local economic practices, and thus for socio-cultural encounters and interaction (which were also stated by interviewees on the question what for them makes a *Grätzel* a *Grätzel*) proved to be correct to a limited extent only: In the framework of this thesis, neighbourhood shops could not be distinguished from other businesses that are not labelled local solely on the grounds of facilitation of socio-cultural encounters because the encounters experienced in these shops were reminiscent of encounters that could be found elsewhere.

5. In a nutshell. Towards a conclusion



Image 13: Shopping cultures? Hürpas Family Market © Christina Simon

5. In a nutshell. Towards a conclusion

The conclusions provide reflections along three lines of argument, first being methodology, and the next two being contained in the research question, namely the strategic construction of (added) meaning and the incremental production of meaning in (the production of) a Viennese microcosm and its signifier (a Grätzel).

A Grätzel is a signifier of intersubjective feelings that people attach to their everyday environments, largely influenced by everyday practices. It is also a signifier used in the construction of added meaning, that is employed for generating symbolic value (through place promotion strategies). Both dimensions largely rely on local economic practices as a component in the production of meaning. They simultaneously embody spaces that are constituted through affect and performative practices, gradually producing meaning over prolonged period of time, and enter the domain of strategic planning, as an important ingredient of the strategic construction of added meaning. A Grätzel as a signifier thus spans over multiple dimensions of the production of space, progressively giving way to well-thought-out approaches aimed at enhancing symbolic value of certain spaces. These approaches rely on the production of meaning through everyday practices that embody affect, yet supplement them with a more strategic notion of the construction of added meaning, as the competition among cities and neighbourhoods within the city pushes various actors into direction of reinterpreting and promoting local qualities (specific attributes).

Reflections on methodology

Arriving at this point where I am expected to draw conclusions I have to dedicate the first thoughts the most 'embodied', possibly the only 'real' conclusion - funnily enough it is strongly related to affects: To euphoria in the beginning when I started reading huge theoretical concepts; immediately followed by confusion because of the very same concepts; to disappointment after first observations in the micro-context; again to confusion after being there; to loss when I had to let go of pre-conceptions, to confusion again, when I reflected more in depth on two different strands of theory and finally to a feeling of 'sobering up'. I started with the following preliminary assumptions, which resulted from previous work on street markets when I dived into the microcosm in Kalvarienberggasse: Local economies are anchor points for socio-cultural encounter and interaction. They are particular embodied spaces in a city, as they are places where people just rub along with each other and encounter each other, where they play out their differences by just being in space together. Local economies are focal points of community in an economic as well as in everyday life understanding. They are the everyday life setting for shopping, for starting up businesses but also they are of importance for facilitating meetings and encounters. They consist of people, embodying local diversity and meeting local people's needs and are vibrant public

spaces, in that way, that they create a local space of social encounter (for certain public). Not all of these assumptions were met. The re-conceptualization of what everyday life as embodied space in this very context is really was a incremental process. It is important to me to stress here, that it actually required to let go of pre-established conceptions that were ‘romantisizing‘ or ‘qualifying‘ both Grätzel and local economies, putting them into another light before being able to look beyond professional and personal pre-conceptions and stereotypes. It seems as if we intuitively choose for methods we are accustomed to when we are approaching a research question. Through both the theoretical strand of NRT which introduced different notions as well as different approaches towards investigating a phenomenon and as a result of these contested starting assumptions, I ended up engaging in doing research in way that could be labelled as ethnographic approach. I do think, this process of letting-go and re-conceptualizing is one of the main findings of this work, and led to the discussion about professional biases. Because of the fact, that this research turned out to be more of a muddling through, and because it was a quite small scale fieldwork, there is definite need to engage in further investigation of both the Grätzel and local economies as (intentionally or unintentionally re-produced) concepts in contemporary urban development by really taking NRTs focus on practices seriously and translating this into re-conceptualization of a methodological set, too. This should allow for reflection on macro-level theories on the micro-scale (thus hinting that ethnography might prove valuable) and for the intentional combination of different bodies of thought.

Reflections on the working concept of added meaning - between mental production of space and affected spatial practices

This thesis introduced two different theoretical strands linked to the production of meaning: One pointing to a growing domination of symbolic value over exchange value in the shift towards the domain of symbolic economy, making use of symbols and spaces which add meaning to human and non-human composition in a city. The other strand highlighted the notion of affect in the production of meaning through everyday practices. Drawing on Lefebvre’s conception of space, this thesis showed that the process of production of meaning is a ‘poetic process‘, ‘a free realm‘ which transcends over all three dimensions of space. This means that meaning, understood as both mental production of space and spatial practice at the same time, is not exclusively produced in relation to either of those theoretical strands. It is produced across the conceived, perceived and lived space. Although epistemologically distinguished, mental production of meaning related to the symbolic economy (strategic construction of meaning) overlaps mental production of meaning related to affected spatial practices (such as local economic practices), as they “meet“ in the lived space. In post-Fordist urban development these two

dimensions mutually influence and inform each other, as the attention has been put on the notion of affect for the sake of overcoming certain pitfalls of functional division in a Fordist production of the urban.

Reflections on affected spatial practices in the production of meaning

“Social construction of space is the actual transformation of space - through people’s social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting - into scenes and action that convey meaning.”

- Low, 2011: 465

The reflection on two different theoretical approaches, relating to the role of mundane everyday practices in the production of meaning has displayed that affect related to everyday practices has taken an increasingly important role in the strategic construction of added meaning. Where it seems as symbolic economy is aware of the ultimate role of conceived space, NRT is opposing the role of pre-established conceptions, negating an ulterior influence on the act of attaching affect to a practice. As Helbrecht put it (2004: 194) ‘It is the ontological point of view that experience precedes thinking and thus precedes all representing.’ Watson and also Thrift put emphasis on the production of space by people, detaching them from pre-imposed dimensions by focusing on the body and mind relation and emotions and affect.

A notion of affect was present in the interviews related to the very essence of Grätzel as well as in discourses related to place promotion (of neighbourhoods). A framework provided by NRT, which explore aspects of presentations of bodies, bodily performance, body and emotion, and finally affect in relation to everyday practices, however, was only to the limited extent traceable in the case of Kalvarienberggasse. It lead to the conclusion that every economic practice depends on the degree of performative skills of actors involved, both traders and customers: varying degrees of these skills are reflected in the degrees of establishing socio-cultural interactions, possibly exchange beyond the mere act of shopping. The study of local economic practices mainly showed relations to the aspect of affect, the performative practices (which is more dominant on street markets for example) were not observed as a spectacle or *carnevalesque* staging. Ultimately the act of exchanging, buying and selling, is detached from any additional meaning projected under the label of local economic practices (such as solidarity for example), but meaning in this sense arises from performative skills people (traders) possess and their ability to convey emotions and affect. It is this people’s acting which is the reason behind positive as much as negative affect towards mundane, everyday practice.

NRT contributed to thoughts on the constitution of the political and to a transfer into being political by, firstly, placing affect as key element to both individual and political dispositions which also encompasses ways of governing (Cadman 2009:6). Secondly, NRT considers utopianism as the source of hope, which needs to be retrieved from the realm of ‘not yet’ (ibid.). NRT approaches political space as not fixed, but seek to refine possible political spaces through awareness and openness. Another aspect to politics non-representational geographies aims at enhancing productive potential through what they refer to as politics of disclosure which aims at the use of creative potentials of the precognitive realm (such as body practices and performance arts). Ultimately NRT draws on a *Deleuzeian* inspired notion of disclosure towards witnessing. All of these approaches share not only an experimental character, but also at detachment from universal judgements in favour of acknowledging the multidimensionality of political and ethical dispositions (ibid.).

One might ask, what role the very production of meaning through theorists does play (in the strategic qualification of conceived space) in the (re-) production of space. I want to catch up the thread of the previous chapter ‘Towards overcoming (professional) biases?’ by drawing attention on the need for a critical reflection of ‘our’⁴⁶ own role in the production of meaning and thus meaningful space. To cite Yildiz (2011: 133) here, who draws on Wacquant (2006: 79) by pointing to a crucial momentum: ”Terms like ‘parallel society’ or ‘ghettoization’ in the scientific production of thought, have lead to what Bourdieu calls ‘scientific myth’, which is a discursive arrangement, using scientific codes to reframe what seems to be new interpretations of social phantasies on differences between ‘us’ and ‘the other’“ (own translation). My final point here is, that the reproduction of scientific narratives along the lines of ‘us’ and ‘the other’, is not only related to thoughts on migration and diversification, but is also more than relevant to the (re-) production and promotion of urban imaginaries addressing ways of life and specifically to concepts such as local economies. I started with a collection of eclectic pieces in the course of this work, which should be further complemented or contrasted in order to eventually grasp what might unfold at Kalvarienberggasse - a mosaic of mundane everyday practices, some of them pertaining to, some of them contrasting promoted narratives around the Grätzel.

46 By ‘our’ or ‘us’ I mean professionals - both practitioners scholars contributing (scientific thought) to the production of urban imaginaries (at least in the context of conceived spaces).

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List of abbreviations

GB Gebietsbetreuung (Urban Renewal and District Management)
NRT Non-Representational Theories

(*) author's own translation of original German texts.

Appendix

Data obtained through interviews

Interview A. Problem structured interview with DI (Arch.) Amila Sirbegovic, an expert involved in the Urban Renewal and District Management Office for districts 9/17/18. Interview conducted on 21 December, 2012, in the duration of 86 min. Transcript in possession of the author and available upon request.

Interview series B. Narrative interviews with 8 people conducted on 31 January 2013. Transcript in possession of the author and available upon request.

Interview series C. Narrative interviews with 5 people conducted on 1 February 2013. Transcript in possession of the author and available upon request.

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