The Role of the Commons in Countering Market-Based Transformations of the City:

The Viennese Grätzloase

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This paper focuses on an analysis of the "Grätzloase" program, which was launched by the Viennese city government in 2015. The program is supposed to create socially mixed shared spaces in the city and encourage citizens to participate in the shaping of public space. In our analysis of the Grätzloase program, we focus on the theory of the commons. The commons are debated as alternative ways of organizing production and are defined by their specific social and institutional arrangement of production and utilization. We examine how commoning as a specific form of production can contribute to reshape public space. In our empirical analysis, we focus on whether and to what extent the Grätzloase program has transformed public space in Vienna. We examined its economic anatomy, the specific institutional arrangements and its cultural and social functioning. Furthermore, we focus on identifying the groups and elements that drive processes of inclusion and exclusion.

1 Introduction

This paper focuses on an analysis of the "Grätzloase" program, which was launched by the Viennese city government in 2015. The term "Grätzloase" is a compound of the words "Grätzl" (Viennese slang for a distinct neighbourhood area) and "oasis" or "haven". The program is supposed to create socially mixed shared spaces in the city and encourage citizens to participate in the shaping of public space. Individuals as well as associations can submit their ideas for reshaping areas of public space by creating cultural or other activities to enjoy leisure time together.

In our analysis of the Grätzloase program, we focus on the theory of the commons. Commoning means organizing production in a non-market way - instead, the commons rely on the principles of "[…] utilizing, cooperating, sharing and contributing […]" (Hamedinger 2012, 123, translated by the authors). We examine how commoning as a specific form of production can contribute to reshaping public space

Today, many sociologists, geographers and economists highlight the commons as an important counterpart to dominant developments in the era of Post-Fordism. Due to increased economic pressure, cities are transformed in accordance with market principles in that city governments transfer ownership and control of public space from the broader community to private actors (Nemeth 2012, 2).

This paper aims to examine whether and to what extent the Grätzloase program has transformed public space in Vienna.

In order to analyse if and how the program challenges the market-based transformation of the city in the sense of the commons, we need to examine its economic anatomy, the specific institutional arrangements and its cultural and social functioning by looking into the specific institutional and socio-economic structure of the Grätzloase program:

Who is involved, who benefits and who provides funding? We will try to link those three aspects: First, we investigate which institutional stakeholders participate in the project and in which way they do so. Second, we focus on aspects of financing, i.e. examine the public and private sources, which enable the realization of Grätzloase activities. In addition, we raise the question of how sustainable the Grätzloase investments are and look at distributional implications. Third, we focus on identifying the groups and elements, which drive the process of inclusion and exclusion.

2 About the commons

2.1 Producing under non-market conditions

Eight years after the outbreak of the financial crisis that led to a period of economic stagnation and increasing social and economic inequality across the industrialized world, the discourse on alternative ways of organizing production and consumption has gained new momentum.

The commons represent a form of collective production under non-market conditions. Generally speaking, the term "commons" refers to shared resources. Originally deriving from an ecological perspective, the commons nowadays are also widely discussed amongst political scientists, sociologists, economists, geographers and lawyers (Ostrom/ van Learhoven 2007, 7). Within this growing field of academic interest, the range of investigated topics has broadened from natural resources like grazing, fishing or foresting to a more general understanding of shared resources, including e.g. public spaces in urban areas, bicycles or cultural resources (like software or information).

According to Elinor Ostrom, author of the standard work "Governing the commons", a common pool resource "[...] refers to a natural or man-made resource system that is sufficiently large as to make it costly (but not impossible) to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits from its use" (Ostrom 1990, 30). More generally, a common can be described as a mix of social arrangements between humans regarding resources. "A common is not a thing, and neither is it a resource or the simple act of sharing. The commons is a social relationship based on human activity. It consists of both a resource and a manner of using, caring for and preserving it by a collective subject (Fattori, 2011; Federici, 2011; Helfrich, 2008; Linebaugh, 2008, 2014; Ostrom, 1990; Rifkin, 2014). The commons are administered collectively, by adopting a set of norms regarding their use that ensures their preservation for future generations" (Azzellini 2016, 3).

That means the commons are not defined by their type of resource but rather by their specific social and institutional arrangement of production and utilization: A selected group of users shapes, governs and utilizes a common pool resource.

The idea of how the commons should be produced and organized is about: "[...] sharing resources together, cultivating rules, taking ownership of the world without taking possession of it" (Armutskonferenz 2013, 10). That means the rules are created, managed and used by a certain group of users, and it includes preventing depletion or underuse of the resource (Helfrich 2012, 16ff). Governing the commons is based on the principles of utilizing, co-operating, sharing and contributing but does not include profitability. They are meant to create common solutions for concrete problems, e.g. managing public space or a common forest (Armutskonferenz 2013, 10ff).

The production form associated with the commons is debated as a potential counterpart to the ongoing process of commodification: "While the commons tend to build spaces free of capital relations, '[c]apitalism has been a program for the commodification of everything' (Wallerstein 2000, 157)" (Azzellini 2016, 4). Access to a common resource is regulated by its users with an emphasis on their responsibility for preserving, reproducing and augmenting it as well as ensuring fair use conditions for all users. Commodities are produced and sold under market conditions; therefore, access to a commodity is determined by its owner with an emphasis on exploiting the resource in order to gain maximum profitability. The transformation of a common good into a commodity is called enclosure (Linebaugh 2008, 145ff; Helfrich 2012, 67-68).

2.2 Public space - a common?

Public space is a central element in European notions of urbanity. A crucial criterion is the separation between the public and the private sphere (Klamt 2012). A core element constituting public space is free, equal and uncontrolled access for all city dwellers (Wehrheim 2011, 167). It can be described as the basis and core of civilized urban societies. Sociologists regard it as a cultural pattern of interpretation – public space is seen as shaped by interaction and communication, facilitating social intermixing and furthering processes of opinion making (Löw/ Steets/ Stoetzer 2008, 22). Thus, the concept of public space includes people and things, as it is constituted through their relations, behaviour and actions (Frey 2004, 220).

Public space is subject to processes of social transformation and hegemonic interpretation. Due to the transformation of Fordism – starting in the 1970s –, the constellations of growth and power in public space have changed according to Hamedinger. Shifts in politics have diminished the role of the state in building, retaining and taking care of public space while forwarding the notion that those tasks are best taken care of by private companies or individuals (Ha-

medinger 2005, 553). The transformation of public space takes place through institutionalization processes, which are planned by central stakeholders and are absorbed into capitalist exploitation logic (Knierbein 2010). According to Selle, the different aspects in this transformation of public space are: "[...] an increased usage by individual motor car traffic, selling entities of public space to private corporations, an increased usage by trade and gastronomy, relocating tasks of public spaces in private-owned but public-used spaces like shopping malls and the increase of surveillance and security strategies in public spaces [...]" (Selle 2004, 125, translated by the authors).

Even if most discussions on the commons focus on rural areas - for common resources like grazing, fishing or foresting - recent research has broadened the concept to include urban areas (Harvey 2012, Hardt/ Negri 2009). In this notion, cities constitute "[...] a vast common produced by collective labour [...]", and consequently "[...] the right to use that common must be accorded to all those who have had a part in producing it" (Harvey 2012, 78). Commoning in urban areas needs a mixture of regulations, standards and public investments as well as private individuals and initiatives (Harvey 2012, 78ff). Urban commons usually refer to public space, which makes them an important element of innovation and transformation. "Scholarly work on the urban commons usually focuses on public space and the attempts to counteract its increasing commodification" (Azzellini 2016, 1). The privatization of public space has been crucial in driving the process of commodification. Examples of how people counteract the commodification of public space include collective (temporal) appropriation like occupation, protests or publicly accessible festivities and the reappropriation of formerly commodified public space, like urban gardens or collective housing (Dellenbaugh et al., 2015, quoted from Azzellini 2016, 2).

The commons are seen as a form of production that interacts with both spheres, state and private. "The commons is neither state nor market: it is not a public good administered or regulated by the state, and it is not private property or a source of surplus value extracted by outsiders offering 'participation'" (Mattei, 2012, quoted from Azzellini 2016, 3). Public space is also not defined as solely assigned by the state (or private individuals) but is constituted by means of human relations, behaviour and actions. Commoning within public space addresses the social assignments between the inhabitants regarding collective production.

However, it should be noted that the concept of the commons falls short on the question of inclusion and exclusion. Although human relationships play a central role within the commons, as common goods are supposed to be governed by the rules created, managed and used by a group of users, it is not clear how those groups constitute themselves. Who can take part in governing a common,

and who cannot? Are common goods equally available to all social groups? As the absence of individual ownership does not automatically imply the absence of an inclusion and exclusion mechanism, it remains unclear who is affected by those mechanisms and how they function. Free, equal and uncontrolled access is a core element of public space, so aspects of inclusion and exclusion become even more important. If we wish to examine the shaping of public space within the framework of the commons, we need to broaden the concept of the commons by integrating the perspective of inclusion and exclusion mechanisms.

With respect to a commons framework, the Grätzloase program fulfils an important function in reinterpreting and reusing public space. It aims to enliven public space and foster citizens' participation by supporting collectively organized projects that e.g. turn parking lots into seating areas or revitalize public squares through festivities. Grätzloase projects are organized under non-market conditions, meaning they are not supposed to make a profit but rely on the commoning principles of utilizing, cooperating, sharing and contributing. The program represents a political attempt to shape public space by motivating citizens to participate in the organization of projects for and within their neighbourhoods. The Grätzloase initiative thereby aims to counteract tendencies of enclosure and despairing of public space. Within this paper we take a close look at the commons characteristics of the Grätzloase program by considering inclusion and exclusion dynamics; this approach reflects power structures within public spaces that are of vast importance when investigating them.

3 Methodology

Our research is based on data from the official online presentation of the Grätzloase program.[1] The website names and describes 27 Grätzloase projects in the year 2015 and 43 Grätzloase projects in 2016.[2] The online overview offers information about the location of the projects, the chosen topics, activities and the organizational characteristics. In some cases we also found photo-documentation of Grätzloase projects and further information like separate web documentation of specific projects, the associations involved etc.

For our analysis of the Grätzloase program and their commons character, we focus on the following dimensions.

» Organizational or institutional unit: We clustered the units into five categories (1) government entities, like municipal departments (Magistratsabteilungen), and related institutions, such as publicly

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[1] http://www.grätzloase.at/.
[2] Data collected on 22 September 2016. Subsequent amendments are not considered.

financed associations, (2) associations, citizens' initiatives and/or individuals, (3) mixed non-commercial entities, (4) mixed commercial entities and (5) commercial entities.

» Spatial formation: address, specific public space area (such as parks, parking space etc.) and physical structure of the projects.

» Temporal formation: one-off, temporary or recurring.

» Economic formation: In which way do commercial entities participate in the program, and what are the possible consequences?

» Commons character: utilizing, sharing, cooperating and contributing.

» Activity profile: main activities and aims of the projects.

Based on the online information available, all 70 Grätzloase projects of 2015 and 2016 were analyzed using the criteria outlined above. The resulting overview allowed us to take a glance at the underlying requirements and procedures.

We examined and characterized the main activities of the Grätzloase projects based on the online presentation of the projects on the website (www.grätzloase.at) and, for some projects, on further online information provided by the project organizers. After describing the activities, as well as the organizational, spatial and temporal dimensions of the projects, we build abstract overview categories using elements of the Grounded Theory Methodology based on a complex analysis approach developed by Corbin and Strauss. This method can be applied to different types of data material (interviews, visual material, articles, etc.). An essential element is the open coding process that allows grouping data into concepts and then into categories (Corbin/ Strauss 1996, 44).

Our analysis focused on specified dimensions and entailed an open coding process. The main intention was generating an overview of the field. While the material was openly coded, only codes with a connection to public space were developed. Our detailed investigation of the activities resulted in an overview of the main categories of activities. Furthermore, we reconstructed the most important aims of the projects in connection to public space to show their underlying ideas of shaping public space.

We analyzed the spatial location of the projects using cartography; the map gives a geographic overview of the projects. In addition, we interviewed one person responsible from the Viennese city administration. It was a guideline-based interview to address open questions after the first step of the examination. The interview questions focused on organizational and procedural details of acceptance of, accounting of, and criteria for the submissions.

We decided to integrate all documented and realized Grätzloase projects to give an overview of the entire field.

The analysis gives an accurate and detailed account of the specific characteristics of the program, the projects' main activities and underlying intentions as well as their spatial, economic and temporal formation.

4 The Viennese Grätzloase: dimensions of the program and projects

The Grätzloase program aims to recover and liven up public space in Vienna, to create liveable urban environments and shared socially mixed public spaces, which requires active citizens who plan and realize all activities and initiatives.

The program is affiliated to the Lokale Agenda 21 Wien (LA21) association, which coordinates and organizes processes fostering sustainable urban development at the district level in Vienna. The program was launched in 2015 and is set to run until 2017. One person is employed for 30 hours a week and works exclusively for the Grätzloase program. However, further human resources of LA21 are also used.

The program has an annual budget of EUR 200,000 including personnel costs and public relations. Of this, EUR 125,000 are earmarked for funding specific projects. The maximum funding amount is EUR 4,000 Euro for regular projects and up to EUR 8,000 for special cases. The actual amount paid out depends on the respective costs.

Anyone who has an idea to revitalize public space can submit a project. The criteria for acceptance are: a creative project to liven up public space, strengthening social cohesion in the neighbourhood, encouraging other inhabitants to participate and non-profit orientation. After positive evaluation of the submissions and processing for further application steps by LA21, the projects are selected by a jury composed of representatives of several municipal departments (Municipal Department (MD) 19 - Architecture and Urban Design, MD 21- District Planning and Land Use, MD 28 - Road Management and Construction, MD 46 - Traffic Management and Organisation), the office of the policy group for urban planning, traffic & transport, climate protection, energy and public participation and Vienna's Mobility Agency.

LA21 then draws up a cooperation agreement together with the applicant. The agreement contract includes the budget, accounting details as well as liability insurance details and has to be signed by the applicant. If the applicant has advanced any money for the project, he/she is refunded. There is no fixed refund date; experience has shown that it normally takes place after the project has been completed. Applicants are only refunded for invoices they can produce; lump-sum payments are not permitted. Alterna-

tively, invoices can also be paid directly to vendors, which is the preferred mode of those responsible at the LA21.

Projects approved by the jury become official Grätzloase projects, but that does not imply an official permission to take action. Therefore, the next step is to get approvals from the regulatory authorities and other supervisory agencies, which has to be done by the applicant but is supported by LA21 staff. In summary, the Grätzloase program supports projects and activities in public space with (small amounts of) money and organizational help.
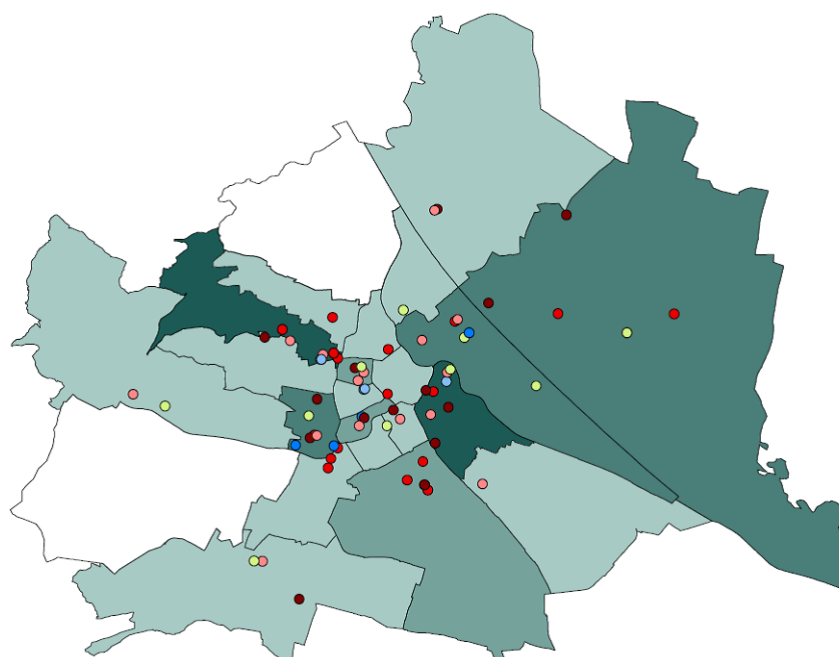
4.1 Organizational framework and spatial formation

The vast majority of Grätzloase projects are planned and organized by groups. Therefore, the program depends on organizational units that plan and realize the activities. Our analysis shows that there are five main types of organizational units: (1) government entities and related institutions which are financed by tax money and directly or indirectly belong to the governmental body (e.g. Municipal Departments, association JU-VIVO or LA21), (2) associations, citizens' initiatives and/or individuals, (3) mixed non-commercial types of organizations and institutions, (4) mixed commercial entities and (5) commercial entities like local companies.

The map shows the absolute number and location of projects in each district as well as a breakdown by the organizational units involved. We included the spatial distribution of the projects to show possible biases or limitations of the Grätzloase program in reshaping public space. As the total number of projects is rather small, the map depicts all projects of 2015 and 2016, so there is only one dot for projects implemented in both years at the same location.

The spatial distribution of the dots shows a concentration of projects in densely built central areas and fewer projects and activities in the peripheral districts, which means that spatial access to the projects is not equally distributed. This seems to be even more so for projects with a commercial or mixed commercial organization structure - commercial organizers are more market oriented and prefer a better-off environment.

Existing organizational structures play an important role in the realization of Grätzloase projects. These are often institutions already anchored in the (local) environment (e.g. associations or citizens' initiatives) or (semi-)public institutions that work in similar fields. Many Grätzloase projects are organized and/or supported by them.

A detailed investigation of the individual projects shows that determining their commons character is not always easy, since the activities vary quite a lot. While some garden projects, such as "Eine Insel und Blumen zum Essen - Schwendergarten 2015", include moments of contributing (gardening, planting, care), sharing (garden, green, fruits), cooperating (community garden) and utilizing (prolonged use of the garden), others have a less pronounced commons character. An example is "Spicy Vienna", where people could sample and mix spices and learn about their possible uses. In this case, the dimensions of contribution and cooperation are far less distinct.

Figure 1: Grätzloase projects in Vienna 2015/2016, classified by organizational entities
Source: Own research

Revitalization, robust design and the involvement of city inhabitants are important constants of the Grätzloase program. Utilizing and sharing, which are more prevalent in the projects than contributing and cooperating, are typical features of public urban space. Equipment and furnishings are intended for collective use. Grätzloase projects often also include joint activities.

4.2 Main activities, intentions and dimensions of meaning

The recovery, preservation and revitalization of public space is central to Grätzloase projects, as they aim to create a liveable city with shared socially mixed public spaces. The projects implemented in 2015 and 2016 cover a wide range of initiatives including e.g. Christmas festivities, community gardens and street festivals. While the design and character of each Grätzloase project is different, frequent dimensions are music, food and entertainment programs. In addition, the projects are constituted on the basis of meetings in public space to pursue a common activity, such as playing sports, making furniture or coming together for a community breakfast.

Table 1 gives an overview of the main initiatives implemented as part of the Grätzloase program.

The Grätzloase program includes both temporary and continuous projects. Nearly all projects are of a temporary, almost elusive nature- some of them last for only one day. While all projects are of limited duration, continuation tendencies have become apparent as some 2015 projects were again implemented at the same location and/or by the same organizers in 2016.

The underlying intentions of Grätzloase projects vary just like their organizers: People wish to relax and spend time together, communicate, create tight-knit neighbourhoods and green their surroundings, while the organizers include government units, associations, local enterprises as well as private individuals. We also observe a trend of increasing commercial interconnection in that e.g. parklets appear in close proximity to businesses involved in the organization of the project.

Within the organizational framing the projects and activities manifest themselves in recurrent intentions. The Grätzloase program fosters the revitalization of public space by means of common activities, meetings, festivities as well as the creation of community gardens or parklets. Strengthening neighbourhood relations is of central concern. Thus, the program attempts to reshape and reinterpret public space. People's ideas and wishes for shaping public spaces often show the following dimensions:

Activity	Description
Sports	Public space functions as a meeting point for joint sports activities including football, yoga, qigong or walking.
Food and cooking	Preparing and having a meal together turned out to be of great importance. People form cooking clubs or meet up to bake bread. Dining together is often an important part of festivals, and the public breakfast is an occasion to meet people from the neighbourhood. Shared cooking and tasting unknown dishes can also help initiate encounters with foreign cultures.
Music	Music has been a unifying aspect of Grätzloase activities. People make music or sing together, and bands perform at festivals.
Games	The element of play is important, too. People create space for children to play and have fun, e.g. by temporarily transforming a parking lot into a playground but also by organizing kids programs for festivals or a MicroSoccer tournament.
Creating public space furniture	Several projects focus on creating and/or building furniture for public space, e.g. sculptures, or they convert parking lots into parklets equipped with seating, tables and greenery. Also the infrastructure of community gardens, such as beds, troughs, etc., is often produced together.
Gardening	Community gardens are important Grätzloase sites. They can include the joint production of infrastructure, construction and planting of the community garden (e.g. "Erna Poppersgarten") or the improvement and transformation of existing infrastructure, by painting adjacent walls etc. (e.g. "Gartenfest Längenfeld"). The gardens vary in size and form; they can be small plots and greening in densely populated residential areas as well as large-scale projects intended for self-supply (e.g. "Freiluftsupermarkt Atzgersdorf").
Creative activities	The program also covers creative activities, such as cinema shows or workshops where people can learn different things from how to paint graffiti to architectural knowledge or musical singing and dancing.
Bartering	Every once in a while, bartering emerges as an activity, too, with people mostly exchanging plants and clothes.
Consumption and buying	Some Grätzloase projects have strong commercial ties in that the (mostly local) companies that helped create a project use it to sell their products.

Table 1: Grätzloase program
Source: Own research

Revitalization of public space

Public space is often revitalized through joint activities such as sports and exercise ("Gemeinsam Aktiv im und um den Bednarpark"), a community breakfast ("Frühstück am Rauscherplatz") or festive activities. The arts and culture also play an important role in this respect: Grätzloase projects are often realized by art institutions or cultural associations.

Reinterpretation and conversion of public spaces

We also observe a tendency to convert public spaces. A good example is the "Parkplatz? ... Spielplatz!" project, which turns the parking lot of a retail chain into a playground on Sundays. Parking spaces are transformed into parklets, i.e. traffic areas are converted into recreation and leisure time areas. This may be interpreted as a temporary reappropriation of public space, which has declined due to increasing private transport. Hence, this transformation tendency reflects the reconquest of public space for new or recurring forms of use.

Accentuation of public space

Some Grätzloase projects aim to accentuate and shape public space, for example by creating a public space where consumption is non-compulsory (e.g. "Places for People"), promoting girls in public space ("reuMÄDCHENplatz") or including people with disabilities ("Grätzlfest am Kalvarienberg").

Strengthening neighbourhoods

Strengthening neighbourly relations is central to Grätzloase projects, but people's understanding of the concept of neighbourhood differs. On the one hand, it has a strong social and cultural connotation in terms of the living environment. Grätzloase projects aim to connect the neighbourhood internally, counteract the anonymity of the big city, help people get to know each other, dismantle prejudices and develop ideas for the close neighbourhood (e.g. "Bankerl Tag", "Pink Pong", "Dernjacgasse", "Lebendiges Frauenfeld").

On the other hand, the concept of neighbourhood also implies a second dimension of interpretation, which also occurs frequently. The term "neighbourhood" is associated with local consumption structures, so markets and shops in the close neighbourhood as well as the inhabitants belong to it. This conceptual difference is also reflected along the Grätzloase activities. In some cases, the revitalization of neighbourhoods goes hand in hand with commercial activities (e.g. "Fünftes Esterhazy-Gassen-Fest", "Pop-Up Messe im Stuwerviertel").

Case study: the parklet

Parklets are specific spatial and physical formations that are typically installed in (former) parking spots. These parking spots are designed and furnished by the project submitters, whereas the furniture is owned by the Grätzloase initiative. While the 2015 submissions included only a few parklets, far more parklets were realized in 2016.

Parklets seem to be a spatial formation which are suited to different places and activities. While some initiators plant grass and create seating areas for passers-by, parklets can also be found near schools that have no suitable forecourts. Some parklets aim to create spaces where consumption is not mandatory whereas others are tied to businesses. In other words, different parklets show different intentions, but they share three main characteristics: They are temporary (like all Grätzloase projects), the majority is located in former parking spaces and most of them rely on (self-designed) furniture. As mentioned earlier, the number of parklet projects increased in 2016. The second year of the Grätzloase program saw the institutionalization of spatially manifested forms of which the parklet is an important example.

At this point we can formulate the following hypothesis: Continued spatial conversion within the Grätzloase projects appears over time through the parklets. Further, parklets represent a form of spatial institutionalization of the Grätzloase. They reinterpret existing areas - parking spots - and convert them into newly used spaces. The creators' intentions may differ but the form is structurally, physically similar. Consequently, the following factors support the reshaping of public space: recognized activities (like seating areas in public space, greening etc.), temporary appropriation (lasting appropriation could be more conflicting) and the physical manifestation of new forms of use.

4.3 Commercial enclosure and aspects of commodification

A strong boundary line of the Grätzloase program as a commons is formed by the commercial ties of some projects. "While the commons tend to build spaces free of capital relations, '[c]apitalism has been a program for the commodification of everything' (Wallerstein 2000, 157)" (Azzellini 2016, 4). Some projects show aspects of commercial enclosure, which is not necessarily astonishing as local enterprises are explicitly invited to participate. Nevertheless, it means that in some Grätzloase projects, public money is used to strengthen commercial organizations.

Among the Grätzloase projects involving one or more local companies, a parklet may be located in front of a business. In this way, the business area is allowed to expand into public space and to draw the attention of pedestrians. Such projects include capital-based relations and a busi-

ness-based logic of advertizing. There are also street festivals where commercial products are sold at stands or fair-like events where goods cannot only be exchanged but also purchased (Selle 2004). Giving shops and restaurants increased access to public space advances the commodification of public space, which is what those Grätzloase projects do.

Also, Grätzloase projects allow the placement of products or companies, in a marketing context. That means that initiators of Grätzloase projects (which can also be local companies) presented themselves with beach flags, business cards etc. in the projects. For example, the football field required for a MicroSoccer tournament can be borrowed from a company, which is then presented at the event. Following Azzellini's assumption that the commons build "spaces free of capital relations", the program does not really counter the market-based transformation of the city.

Instead, the support for market-based companies as part of the Grätzloase program means that it fosters the commodification of public space. First, the program opens up an opportunity for companies to use public resources in order to extend their business. In addition, it remains unclear whether they compete with private individuals or non-profit associations when applying for Grätzloase funding, as the annual budget for the program is limited. In this context, companies are in an advanced position as they tend to have more resources than individuals or non-profit associations and can also expect a monetary return. Second, the involvement of companies changes the character of the projects: Whereas commoning relies on the principles of utilizing, cooperating, sharing and contributing, companies rely on the market-based principles of profitable production and consumption. Therefore, Grätzloase projects involving companies are at risk of being dominated by saleability, consumption and profitability.

4.4 Access barriers: inclusion and exclusion

The degree of institutional and bureaucratic enclosure is relatively high in the Grätzloase program. The application procedure is rather complicated and can be a hurdle. First of all, potential participants must be aware of the program. It was only established in 2015, so many people do not even know it exists. Second, participants must be confident they can implement such a project and have the necessary skills (developing an idea, writing a project application, integrating and/or motivating other institutions or people in the immediate neighbourhood, and perhaps ensuring pre-financing). After the project application, the initiators have to overcome another hurdle: Once their project has been approved by the jury, they still need the official approval from the city administration.

Education and income as well as social and cultural resources (e.g. expression and communication skills, access to networks, knowledge of formal and political processes and rights, available capital, time) significantly influence the degree of political participation. These factors have a particularly strong impact on more recent forms of participation. In the context of citizens' involvement, Breitfuss speaks of "hard to reach" groups, which include "migrants, young people and people on the margins of society" (Breitfuss 2013, 62, translated by the authors), but also people with scarce time resources. Deliberative participatory procedures tend to favour higher-income and well-educated people, whereas the unemployed, migrants, people with disabilities, low-income and low-education groups are usually not represented. As these social groups are underrepresented in political and participatory processes, their interests get less public and political attention. This misalignment can lead to an increasingly uneven distribution of resources and at the same time entails the risk of intensifying the participatory gap. When governments try to implement a renewal of democracy with measures that systematically exclude weaker population groups, they do not contribute to democratization but to division. This is why the design and implementation of new participation procedures must be carefully considered and must focus on ensuring equal participation and solutions for broad-based and equitable participation (Hammer/ Ritt 2013, 44ff).

The extent of institutional and bureaucratic enclosure is limited by the bridge-building function that is central to the Grätzloase program, which was created to provide assistance to citizens who wish to redefine and shape public space. The program can also be viewed as a test and a first step in institutionalizing new ways of cooperation between citizens and the administration concerning the co-creation of public space.[3]

According to Mattei (2012) and Azzellini (2016, 3), "The commons is neither state nor market: it is not a public good administered or regulated by the state, and it is not private property or a source of surplus value extracted by outsiders offering 'participation'. Commoning is the alternative to the supposed dualism of state vs. private [...]". It should be emphasized at this point that the Grätzloase program cannot fully be described as a common because of the high degree of institutional and bureaucratic enclosure. However, at the same time, it is important to notice that the program aims to revitalize and reconquer public space. The program itself is characterized by its temporary experimental character (it is set to run and has a budget only until 2017), its participatory requirements (urban residents invent, plan and realize the projects) as well as its relative openness (various project ideas can be submitted).[4]

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[3]   According to a person responsible at LA21, all jury-approved submissions were also approved by the city administration.

[4]   This relative openness is limited by the jury decision. We were unable to determine how many submitted projects were rejected by the jury.

The framework of Grätzloase projects seems to be relatively tight, as they include essentially conflict-free, approved activities in public space as well as tried-and-tested forms. For example, sports or festive events in the public space are typical features of today's European urbanity. The Swiss sociologist Reutlinger refuses to speak of one single important characteristic of public space. Public space in his notion must be described as "[...] temporary, locally specific and dependent on interpretation [...]" (Reutlinger 2015, translated by the authors). Public space is produced over and over again, while certain notions become accepted as the norm and other distracting elements are excluded. Accordingly public space is always a "matter of arrangement and negotiation" (Fritsche/ Reutlinger 2015, 201, quoted from Reutlinger 2015, translated by the authors). This process of negotiation is subject to hegemony; it has a tendency to conceal conflicts and entail mechanisms of exclusion. Certain forms of use and groups of people are stigmatized as inappropriate (Reutlinger 2015). Acknowledged forms of use of public space often follow the idea of a typical work biography: It is a space for recreation and leisure activities such as "sports, consumption, strolling, idleness, being among people, enjoying oneself [...]" (Reutlinger 2015, translated by the authors).

This way of interpreting public space is also reflected in the Grätzloase program and its activities. Homeless people, who are more dependent on public space and also use public space more extensively than all other groups, are unthinkable as a target audience or as potential organizers of Grätzloase projects. But also young people, who claim public space in ways that deviate from recognized forms of use, are structurally excluded from participation. Thus, despite the proclaimed relative openness of the program, the projects carried out remain limited to recognized forms of use and organizers. This leads to the exclusion of less recognized groups and controversial issues. However, limitations and extensions emerge, too, e.g. when explicit reinterpretations of space and new forms of space (like the parklet) are being tested within the scope of the program.

We identify three dimensions of exclusion in the structure and implementation of the Grätzloase program. First, there is no participation of stigmatized groups, and second, controversial subjects (e.g. drug use in public space, lack of public toilets) do not play a role in the projects. The third dimension is based on the following hypothesis: Bureaucratic hurdles and the complicated application and implementation process lead to socioeconomic exclusion. Still, in light of tendencies of enclosure and despairing of public space as well as the fact that city inhabitants do not have too many opportunities to take action (red tape etc.) the program has an important function. The Grätzloase team fosters communication between applicants and the city administration and thus helps combine and reconcile the different ideas for public space. Besides the financial support of the Grätzloase projects, this bridge-building function is probably the most important function of the program.

5 Conclusion

The Grätzloase program was first implemented in 2015 in order to reshape and enliven public space by fostering citizens' participation. The program reached a growing number of people: In 2016, the program funded almost twice as many projects as a year earlier.

People who wish to organize activities in public space have to overcome numerous bureaucratic, social and economic hurdles, and they have to ensure compliance with regulations. In this context, the Grätzloase program fulfils two important functions: First, it helps people realize their ideas by supporting their projects with small amounts of money, and second, it helps applicants overcome bureaucratic hurdles.

However, the integrative approach of the Grätzloase program is limited by several dimensions of exclusion: First, the institutional arrangement of the program is characterized by a relative high degree of bureaucratic and institutional enclosure. If we consider the definition of the commons as human relationships based on shared responsibilities and self-administration, the bureaucratic hurdles show the limits of the Grätzloase program functioning as a common. The program relies considerably on existing structures such as associations, citizens' initiatives or local enterprises. The hurdles also imply a form of socioeconomic exclusion, as applicants who have access to well-developed socioeconomic resources (networks, communication skills, knowledge of formal processes, time etc.) find themselves in an advanced position.

Second, the Grätzloase projects belong to a spectrum of conflict-free, approved activities (community gardens, parklets, festivities etc.) and thereby represent a more or less conventional understanding of public space. The program does not reach out to marginalized groups or include controversial issues. A concrete example is the exclusion of homeless people, a group that makes extensive use of public space. The formal process involved also functions as an exclusion mechanism, as applicants must invest quite a lot of time, knowledge and effort to meet all requirements. Spatial access to Grätzloase projects is not equally distributed, either, as they are concentrated in densely built central city areas. This is even more true for projects realized by commercial or mixed-commercial organizations.

The commercial ties of some Grätzloase projects stand in contrast to the idea of the commons as a way to counteract the commodification of public space. The inclusion of local enterprises introduces the logic of market production and marketing, and in some cases, the principles of utilizing, sharing, cooperating and contributing become secondary to the market-based principles of profitable production and consumption. The expansion of business areas through Grätzloase projects fosters the commodifi-

cation of public space and in some cases even implies a re-distribution of public money and resources to businesses.

Our empirical examination of the common's framework revealed that the principles of utilizing, sharing, cooperating and contributing can not be easily detected. A clearer elaboration of the terms would help to make them more suitable for empirical purposes. Also, reflecting on mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion is indispensable in a society permeated by power and domination.

In light of the wide range of projects implemented, the commons character differs among the projects. All of them show aspects of commoning. The characteristics of utilizing and sharing, which are typical features of public urban spaces, are more distinctly present than contributing and cooperating.

In spite of the limitations mentioned earlier, the Grätzloase program represents a novel approach of political and administrative stakeholders to fostering citizens' participation. It is a new attempt to include the city's inhabitants in the shaping of public space. Its limited duration until 2017 suggests that new forms of politics still cause uncertainty. While an extension of the program would certainly be worthwhile, exclusion mechanisms should be reduced and commercial ties should be suspended.

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