Johannes Suitner

IMAGINEERING CULTURAL VIENNA

On the Semiotic Regulation of Vienna’s Culture-led Urban Transformation

[transcript] urban studies
From:

Johannes Suitner
Imagineering Cultural Vienna
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Media discourses always consider Vienna as a »cultural city«. This study shows how such a perception is skilfully shaped by political constructions of cultural imaginaries in and of the city. The book unveils how simplistic cognitive interpretations of culture not only define an unquestioned, reductionist idea of the city’s cultural character – it also explains how these imaginaries influence the recent urban development practice in one of Europe’s globalizing cities.

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Cultural Imagineering
A first encounter

In a globalizing world, often equated with increasing sameness, cities and their places can still be characterized by unique qualities (Kelly, 1999; Marcuse & van Kempen, 2000). If we see their pictures and hear their stories, we can still distinguish Paris from Rome, or New York from Chicago. Asking for the reasons to that, the answer often is “culture”. Today we are aware that culture is deeply linked with space. Even more, in the past decades planning research and practice have come to find that it is culture, which signifies places. Thus it has become a regular practice in recent planning to actively employ culture for highlighting the qualities of place (Mumford, 1970; Miles, 2007; Springer, 2007; Benneworth & Hospers, 2009). Herewith, culture has attained a pivotal position as a tool in governing urban development.

But the practice of culture-led place transformation is today stuck in a tension between two conflictive goals that build upon dichotomous interpretations of culture and cultural identities. On the one hand, powerful actors of the city increasingly utilize the forming forces of culture to promote individual economic and ideological projects in urban development (Zukin, 1989, 1995, 1996, 1998; Harvey, 1990; Jameson, 1998; Young, 2008). In this regard, they turn to approved cultural strategies that build upon dominant historic narratives and narrow interpretations of a culture that speaks a global language, while the “plural pasts” (Ashworth et al., 2007) and diverse identities of a local population are largely neglected (Kearns & Philo, 1993; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997a, 1997b; Porter, 2008; Turnbridge, 2008). On the other hand, the increasing cultural diversity of globalizing cities is actively fostered as a driver of development. It is an indispensable precondition to successfully cope with recent urban change, as the underlying interpretation of culture as diverse identities, lifestyles, and practices is considered a resource of democratizing urban development (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998; Moulaert et al., 2004; Puype, 2004; Bauman, 2011). Thus, the tension inherent in cultural planning today is that between an instrumental view of culture,
and preparing the ground for cultural diversity to unfold; between planning with culture for individual and elite interests, or planning for cultural development, a democratic city, and pluralized hegemony\(^1\) (Mouffe, 2007).

I make this tension the point of departure of this research. Yet, numerous well-formulated critical accounts of the utilizations of cultural specificity for capitalist and undemocratic planning projects already exist (cf. Zukin, 1989, 1995, 1996, 1998; Harvey, 1990; Scott, 1997; Jameson, 1998 to name but a few). Hence, Cultural Imagineering explicitly embeds the clinch between planning with culture and planning for cultural development in a differentiated conceptualization of urban space as consisting of materiality and meaning (Cresswell, 2004). Herewith it accentuates the so far under-investigated influence of discursive constructs of individual cultural visions on the outcomes of material place transformation. It builds upon the notion that urban discourses are more than just the sphere where the marketable recreations of urban cultural environments are created. Instead, they are increasingly understood as the tool for constructing powerful visions of an urban future (Healey et al., 1999; Torfing, 1999; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Smith, 2005). Acknowledging the deep links between practice and discourse, between materiality and meaning in urban space and its development, Cultural Imagineering assumes that actors intervening in discourse have the ability to influence material planning outcomes by constructing reductionist cultural visions of urban development – so-called “cultural imaginaries” (Taylor, 2004; Jessop, 2004, 2008). The depiction of such imaginaries and their conflation with the analysis of transformed material practice allows for answering a central question in the framework of current cultural planning practice: Which and whose cultural visions succeed to influence place transformation, and who benefits from the so-created material cultural places? This book contributes to the wide array of Cultural Political Economy research by theorizing the influence of cultural imaginaries on place transformation and empirically investigating Vienna as a case study of Cultural Imagineering.

\(^1\) The term hegemony refers to “[…] moral and intellectual leadership which treats the aspirations and views of subaltern people as an active element within the political and cultural programme of the hegemonizing bloc.” (Jones, 2006: 55)
CULTURAL IMAGINEERING

PLANNING WITH CULTURE BETWEEN MATERIALITY AND MEANING

“When it comes to art and culture, Vienna is not only a big city, but a world city.”

MICHAEL HÄUPL, MAYOR OF VIENNA

Cities are fascinating. As David Harvey outlines, they are somehow capable of accommodating the most diverse, maybe even opposing forces, “[…] not necessarily so as to harmonize them, but to channel them into so many possibilities of both creative and destructive social transformation.” (Harvey, 1985: 222) Reasonably, cities must then be understood as processes of constant change, undergoing boom, bust and revival (Hall, 1998). It is here that urban politics attempts to find ways of stabilizing periods of success, accelerating uplift and averting crisis. And while ever-deepening insight into the versatile capabilities of urbanity sustains the success story of urbanization per se (Jacobs, 1969; Mumford, 1970; Harvey, 1985, 1997), an evolving cognizance of the city’s multi-layered character and increasing diversity also makes it an ever more complex subject of active transformation in material terms. And here, Cultural Imagineering comes into play.

Contemporary cities are fuzzy concepts of loose ties, blurry scales, societal diversity and cultural difference. One could say that they have become “an inordinately complex world” (Jessop, 2008: 239). The transformation and utilization of urban space in favor of individual interests thus demands new instruments that are able of reducing urban complexity to support the accomplishment of these development visions. It demands an imaginary – a discursive construct of a “[…] common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy” (Taylor, 2004: 330). The imaginary is a political tool; a constructed, objectified common interest; a simplified narrative of a symbolic urban vision that “keeps things going” in an urban world that would otherwise be too complex to handle (Jessop, 2004, 2008; Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008).

For cities that are increasingly judged by such narratives, symbols and place-specific meaning (Kearns & Philo, 1993; Ward, 1998; Madanipour, 1999, 2003; Evans, 2001, 2003, 2006), the discursive layer thus needs to be understood as being more than an emotional representation of material urban environments. It serves as an objectified interpretation of what an urban future should look like.

(Taylor, 2004). The discursive layer has become the contested arena where the construction of visions and stories of future urban development are fought out (Eade & Mele, 2002). The so-created imaginaries become the political legitimation and regulative framework of an urban future, thereby also shaping the materializations in urban space (Jessop, 2004, 2008).

The planning-political mechanisms mediating between contesting expectations towards urban development are thus more than ever signified by communication, negotiation, and mediatization as the means to re-shaping such imaginaries (Healey, 1992, 1997; Healey et al., 1999; Helbrecht, 1993, 1994; Häußermann et al., 2008; Lundby, 2009). Consequently, the politics of planning, where opposing visions and values of urban development collide to form political antagonisms, and where power is obtained and exercised, condense in discourse (Torfing, 1999; Lees, 2004; Jacobs, 2006). Here, objectified knowledge is constructed, and the symbols of place are shaped to form an urban imaginary that decisively influences urban politics and planning practice (Davoudi & Strange, 2009; Keller, 2011).

Adopting the notion of a spatial turn, this book builds upon the duality of materiality and meaning and the notion of space as constituted by both material processes and discourse (Cresswell, 2004; Döring & Thielmann, 2008; Soja, 2008; Davoudi & Strange, 2009). The initial quote is a telling example in this regard. It originates from one of Vienna’s most influential political figures of the past two decades, the city’s mayor, Michael Häupl. I consider it expressive for two reasons. First, it reveals how powerful actors actively engage in urban development discourses by constructing a picture of political confidence, local power and scale in order to show “the right way” for the future of a city. Second, it also shows the pivotal position culture reached in urban development politics and recent planning, obviously being a decisive factor of a city’s position in a world economy. It hints at the wide-ranging turn to culture in planning and its increasing recognition as a representation instrument of both the powerful and marginalized people of a city (Berndt & Pütz, 2007; Young, 2008; Eckardt & Nyström, 2009). At the same time it leaves no doubt about culture’s fundamental role as economic resource utilized in postmodern, entrepreneurial politics of capital accumulation in a global capitalist economy (Zukin, 1995, 1996, 1998; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Scott, 1997, 2000; du Gay & Pryke, 2002; Harvey, 2002).

The influential character of culture in recent planning forms the second pillar to the concept of Cultural Imagineering. The wide-ranging cultural turn emphasizes the deep links between cultural specificity and space to form distinct locations of cultural uniqueness (Zukin, 1989, 1995, 1996, 1998; Jameson, 1998; Springer, 2007; Young, 2008). Furthermore, culture is increasingly employed in
planning to bridge the gap between identity and difference in cities consisting of many instead of one culture (Fohrbeck & Wiesand, 1989; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997a, 1997b; Madanipour, 2003; Bauman, 2011). As an elastic concept, it can be the constructed common interest to create acceptance in planning (Bassett et al., 2005) – either for the prospect of surplus value (Harvey, 2002; Lagendijk, 2004), or as symbolic expressions representing identities, value sets and political power (Kearns, 1993; Hall, 1997; Schulz, 2006; De Frantz, 2011; Grubbauer, 2011a, 2011b). In cities struggling with multiple crises, culture thus seems to having become the one answer to a number of questions on an urban revival (Göschel & Kirchberg, 1998; Evans, 2001; Garcia, 2004; Miles, 2007; Benerworth & Hospers, 2009). Hence, it comes as no surprise that material planning and the imaginaries influencing it are often based on conceptualizations of culture.

Although the term itself obviously implies numerous interpretations, in this work I refer to culture as an agent of change (Zukin, 1995). Herewith I point to its recent employment in economic and political strategies, i.e. its targeted utilization by actors of the city as a tool to secure, accelerate or stabilize desired urban transformations. In this regard cultural expression doesn’t even have to be the central planning goal, but often only serves as the medium through which change is legitimized, hence serving as an instrument for gaining or maintaining power and safeguarding economic profits. These utilizations are based on both the material cultural substance of place and the discursively formed imaginary, which attempts to employ a certain cultural vision for the benefit of individual interests in a city’s material transformation. The present book concentrates on the formation of such cultural imaginaries by reconstructing the discursive formation of planning decisions in culture-led urban development. It identifies urban discourses as important processes of meaning-making in the production of space (Cresswell, 2004; Schmid, 2008) and influencing factors of planning and political decisions concerning urban development. By unhiding the prevailing arguments and underlying rationales that influence culture-led urban development, it reveals the dominant value constructs and actors affecting a city’s cultural development. Thereby it sketches a picture of who has power in planning and power over space (Flyvbjerg, 2002, 2003, 2004) when it comes to employing culture as a resource of urban development.

To put this approach into practice, this piece of work builds upon a political-economic understanding of processes of urban transformation and urban planning. It considers urban development as a highly contested process of developing and utilizing urban space for capitalist and political principles of accumulation and representation (Harvey, 1985, 1989, 1990; Jessop, 1997, 2004, 2008;
Imagineering, 1999, 2003; Brenner, 2000; Jones, 2006; Bieling, 2006a; Stäheli, 2006). It refers to planning as processes embedded in urban politics (Häußermann et al., 2008), where imaginaries are constructed and translated into material realities.

At the same time, it dissociates itself from a radical constructivist perspective that considers discourse as the only source of power and determinant of materiality (cf. for instance Berger & Luckmann, 1980). Instead it stresses the notion of materiality and meaning as equally important influencing factors and determinants of space. So while its primary aim is to empirically detect influences of powerful discursive constructions on material planning outcomes, it still acknowledges the influence of materiality, i.e. history, path-dependency, institutions and practices, as a determinant of certain discourse formations (Jessop, 2004, 2008; Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008). Hence, embedding discourse in the material practice of urban development is important for at least two reasons: first, it is a necessary precondition for understanding locally specific development paths and discursive strategies, and second, it constitutes the central assessment criterion for critically reviewing the actual influence of discursive cultural constructs on material planning outcomes.

Imagineering and the case of ALCOA

By speaking of Imagineering, I deploy a term that was first uttered in an advertisement from the Aluminum Company of America, ALCOA, in Time Magazine in 1942 (Time, 1942). ALCOA created the word Imagineering to describe its effort of producing a versatile, easily applicable product for almost all purposes. The advertisement states: “Imagineering is letting your imagination soar, and then engineering it down to earth.” (Time, 1942: 56) Transferring this definition to the making of contemporary cities, it highlights the conception of the urban as a material and discursive site of society (Helbrecht, 2001). It stresses that under conditions of wide-ranging mediatization (Lundby, 2009) and an increasing emphasis on communicative politics (Healey, 1992, 1997; Helbrecht, 1993, 1994; Schneider, 1997), “letting your imagination soar” allows for the cognitive con-
struction of an urban future, which might become so powerful as to be “engineered down to earth”. In urban development, Imagineering thus stands for the discursive construction of an imaginary, i.e. a simplistic logic of planning, which might be powerful enough to influence the development paths of a city. In its out-and-out manifestation it leads to hegemony (Bieling, 2006a; Jones, 2006) – the implementation of discursively objectified planning rationales by subordinates, without them challenging these rationales or related objectives and structures.

In urban development, such imaginaries have been influencing planning practice since long. In European cities, for instance, the unquestioned distinction between public and private has long been a determinant of these cities’ spatial organization, legal regulations, and development visions. Current planning practice would be unimaginable without taking into account property ownership, which is due to a powerful social imaginary that conceptualized public and private as two oppositional, incompatible conditions (Taylor, 2004). Consequently, we all take public spaces, private properties and the related restrictions or permissions of their use for granted in our perception of today’s cities.

Fig. 1: ALCOA’s Imagineering: imaginary, materialization, hegemony

Source: ALCOA Inc., 2002: adapted presentation

Ironically, ALCOA did not just invent the term Imagineering for marketing reasons. The case of ALCOA is itself a great metaphor of how Imagineering successfully established hegemony in terms of economic production and consumption. The permeation of global markets and our everyday lives with their product, aluminum, speaks for itself. Although products made of aluminum hadn’t been a success story since the very beginning, ALCOA persistently engaged in promoting what they do (Smith, 1988). While during Second World War the ability of producing almost any military equipment from a cheap, light-weight and versatile material made ALCOA a prospering company, its definitive tri-
umph came afterwards (ALCOA Inc., 2002). Under a post-war economic regime of industrial production and mass consumption, and boosted further by the vast American political and economic power (Hall, 1998), the company further pushed its agenda, constructing a picture of a world unimaginable without aluminum (Smith, 1988).

In fact, this picture greatly influences our everyday lives still today. The company’s effort of “covering the world in aluminum” (ibid.: 308) is the reason why today we eat and drink literally everything from a can. Only naturally, anything from juice and coffee to fruits and vegetables is packed in aluminum – worldwide. What this impressively demonstrates, is how ALCOA has successfully conducted Imagineering. They have constructed an imaginary – a simplistic idea of a mode of production and consumption as a solution to a simplistic problem – and embedded it in public discourse via advertising. The imaginary legitimizes a certain form of production, frames consumer behavior and thereby stabilizes an economic model that has become hegemonic, as it permeates a global economy of production and consumption without question (cf. Fig. 1).

Apparently, the case of ALCOA holds a striking analogy to the process of Cultural Imagineering in the politics of planning. Here the cultural imaginary is the discursively constructed abstraction of the complex and overlapping matters of culture, city, and planning and their interaction to “get things going” in urban development. It delineates a simplistic, objectified planning reality that builds the legitimizing argument for the materialization of certain values and visions in urban space. As a perpetual discourse, it can even reach unquestioned ideological supremacy and become a hegemonic rationale of how modes of cultural production and consumption, the creation of wealth upon a certain form of culture, and urban culture-led development should function (Bieling, 2006a; Jones, 2006). As Evans (2001: 1) aptly puts it, “How and why culture is planned is a reflection of the place of the arts and culture in society.” And this place in society is of course influenced by the imaginaries that inform material practice.

The concept of imaginary

As a great variety of research has shown, discourses need to be understood as frameworks of urban social and political life (Salet & Faludi, 2000; Martin et al., 2003; McCann, 2003; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008; Lundby, 2009; Schipper, 2012). Hence, they are important factors in the politics of planning. Discourses can be interpreted as public negotiations about what is possible in the development of the city, and what is not. It might seem in the first place as if this conceptualization of planning as a discursive process builds upon
a communicative rationale (Healey, 1992; Schneider, 1997), putting the notion of an open debate about urban futures into practice by realizing broad discussions. Yet, discourses are permeated by unequally distributed power and constant fights for pushing through individual ideologies, opinions, and planning visions. It is obvious nowadays that the most diverse actors engage heavily in these processes of discursive meaning-making (Helbrecht, 1993; Zukin, 1998; Scott, 2001; Miles & Paddison, 2005). Thus, the fact that actors might use discourses strategically in the politics of planning must be a focal point of analysis (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005) – particularly in the highly contested approaches to culture-led development (Kearns & Philo, 1993, Zukin, 1995, 1998, Evans, 2003).

As processes of meaning-making, discourses have the ability to frame active urban development (Eade & Mele, 2002; McCann, 2003, 2004). For the case of Cultural Imagineering this implies that the actually overlapping and multiply interacting entities of culture, city, and planning are being reduced to a simplistic ideal of interaction, which I refer to as a cultural imaginary. Herewith I build upon the conception of “imaginary” as developed in recent accounts of Cultural Political Economy (henceforth CPE) (Jessop, 2004, 2008, 2013; Jessop & Sum, 2006; Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008). The origin of the concept lies in different fields from psychoanalysis to anthropology and political philosophy, all putting a different emphasis on its actual meaning (Strauss, 2006). Referring to Lacan, an imaginary obscures the real (ibid.), while for Castoriadis it is “a society’s unifying core conception” (ibid.: 324). Yet, I take philosopher Charles Taylor’s definition of modern social imaginaries as my point of departure. In this sense, it is both a cultural and ideological model of how things go and how they should go, serving as a legitimation of certain actions:

“I speak of imaginary because I’m talking about the way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings [...]. [T]he social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.” (Taylor, 2004: 106)

Yet, for employing the concept in processes of culture-led urban development, I move from Taylor’s definition to Jessop’s recently developed interpretation of the imaginary as a discursive construct established by a governing coalition to legitimate and stabilize certain economic regimes (Jessop, 2004, 2008, 2013). Taylor analyzes the imaginary at a structural level in order to explain how unquestioned beliefs or ideas of a society come into being in the long term (Taylor, 2004). CPE, on the other hand, interprets the imaginary in its instrumental form, i.e. as a discursive tool to actively establish a reductionist view of complex rela-
tions for individual interests. Jessop explains the phenomenon of imaginary by pointing at the economy as a field of political intervention. As this field is far too complex to be fully grasped by the diverse actors involved, it needs a simplified, abstracted vision in the form of an economic imaginary.

“The totality of economic activities is so unstructured and complex that it cannot be an object of calculation, management, governance, or guidance. Instead such practices are always oriented to subsets of economic relations (economic systems or subsystems) that have been discursively and, perhaps organizationally and institutionally, fixed as objects of intervention. This involves ‘economic imaginaries’ that rely on semiosis to constitute these subsets.” (Jessop, 2004: 5)

While imaginaries conceptualized that way might end up in determinant beliefs as well in the long run, it is the declared goal of this research to analyze only those discursive constructs that aim at regulating single projects in planning. Such imaginaries form a framework of legitimacy. They construct an abstraction and simplification of complex fields, relations, activities or systems (e.g. the contextual culture of a city) for that complex thing to become operable in a multi-scalar and multi-sectoral governing coalition (Jessop, 2004). Thus, an imaginary can be considered as the selective projection of complex processes in discourse (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008). It can inform and shape economic strategies on all organizational and territorial scales, it can inform and shape state projects and hegemonic visions, integrating private, institutional, and wider public narratives about past experiences, present difficulties, and future prospects (Albrechts, 2004; Jessop, 2004). As Jessop (2004, 2008) deduces so plausibly for economic imaginaries, the multifaceted political, economic and cultural structures of a city are far too complex and all-embracing to become a manageable object. Instead, they are packed into a simplistic picture that is meant to facilitate strategies of certain material transformations.

Hence, and this forms a major argument of this research, for becoming an agent of change in planning, culture needs to be reduced to a simplistic cognitive construct. Powerful economic and political actors employ reductive interpretations of how “a culture” might support urban development to legitimate material strategies for their individual benefit. Yet, as there are many understandings of and approaches to the fuzzy concept of culture in the context of urban development, this needs further clarification.
“Which culture?” Critically reviewing the culturalization of urban space

Culture is a broad concept (Göschel & Kirchberg, 1998; Miles, 2007; Young, 2008). We are facing a number of definitions that are so dispersed among disciplines and over time that they cannot be comprehensively managed (Fohrbeck & Wiesand, 1989). Thus, one might easily end up asking, “Which culture?” What do we mean when we speak of culture? How is it conceptualized, and which role does it play in the development of cities?

Social science definitions tend to interchangeably speak of culture as an item or product, a distinct attribute of social groups, or as a dimension of social interaction (Lagendijk, 2004). In this research I define culture as all contextually produced difference. As in anthropology, human and cultural geography and sociology, this is meant to describe the entirety of a system and the specific ways in which it functions (Fohrbeck and Wiesand, 1989; Göschel and Kirchberg, 1998). For culture and city this generally implies that they are to be imagined as liberating counter-proposals to the constraints of nature (Göschel and Kirchberg, 1998). Yet as is recurrently criticized, in this regard culture has literally become “everything and anything” (Madgin, 2009: 60). But as Miles and Paddison (2005) emphasize, “[…] culture needs to mean something, but it can and should not be expected to mean everything.” (ibid. 2005: 837)

The academic discourse distinguishes culture as “the arts”, artistic practices and objects, and culture as the conglomerate of all social, religious and political trends, norms and values, which characterize a social group or territory. While culture as the arts is the narrow definition, which mostly implies high threshold cultural projects for urban elites, the broad definition also comprehends all urban ways-of-life and signifying practices of identity and difference (Hall, 1997; Young, 2008; Bauman, 2011). The second acknowledges the disappearance of a high-low distinction and the evolvement of a popular culture instead, which has in the meantime become common sense in social science research (Evans, 2001; Bloomfield & Bianchini, 2001; Lewitzky, 2005).

For this work, I divide these definitions into three categories. Together they describe what I termed above as contextually produced difference⁴: first, heritage and traditions, i.e. the references to a city’s past and the modes of celebrating and representing norms, values, and beliefs that together form place-specific cul-

tural identities; second, all artistic and creative practices that are collectively discussed as contributing essentially to social and economic innovation in cities after Fordism; and third, the diverse ways of life and distinct everyday practices of a local population that shape places and the picture of urban life in today’s globally embedded cities.

But researching culture-led urban transformation would fail if it ignored the “[…] strong criticism of culture in modern society, [where] a general view increased that only certain social groups could make use of cultural opportunities for their demand for freedom.” (Eckardt & Nyström, 2009: 12) The past decades have brought about a number of critical accounts of such an instrumental view of culture in different parts of the world, at all times revealing that culture is utilized as an add-on to individual planning projects – a tool safeguarding the facilitation of economic and hegemonic ideological strategies. Hence, I describe my research as a critical review of the instrumentalizations of reductionist interpretations of culture. The following is meant as a clarification of what this means in the context of this book.

Cultural processes are frequently brought into line with the economic process, consequently separating cultural production from cultural consumption. Bianchini (1993), for instance, refers to the creative economy as cultural production, while he subsumes all infrastructures, events, and images based upon cultural content under cultural consumption. This division already suggests what is largely being criticized by several authors – that culture is increasingly considered as a commodity to serve only the economic interests of an exclusive group of people. This trend cannot be denied in the past decades – particularly in the context of utilizations of culture in profit-oriented urban development (Scott, 1997, 2000; Garcia, 2004; Miles and Paddison, 2005; Young, 2008).

“[P]lace, culture and economy are highly symbiotic with one another, and in modern capitalism this symbiosis is re-emerging in powerful new forms as expressed in the cultural economies of certain key cities” (Scott, 1997: 325)

As a consequence of the growing instrumentalization of culture in capitalism, critical authors increasingly point to culture as a number of unique, contextual processes and their role as critical resource for societal progress and inclusion as counter-conceptualizations to economic exploitation (Miles et al., 2000; Stevenson, 2001; Moulaert et al., 2004; Eckardt & Nyström, 2009). These authors also acknowledge that there is anything but a stable or undisputed definition of culture within one place. Rather, culture is a contested concept that is constantly re-framed, depending on underlying values, visions, and interpretations of the urban
world (Zukin, 1995; Hall & Hubbard, 1996). This is in line with Gupta & Ferguson (1997a, 1997b), who call for speaking of *multiple urban cultures* instead of *one culture* to acknowledge the overlaying and competing identities and cultures of place.

The acknowledgement of such a multiplied conception of *cultures* shifted the interest in the politics of planning to everyday experiences and the practicalities of the lived social life as a new quality to build upon in urban development (Young, 2008). Approaches thus diversified and implied not only high cultural interventions for positive economic effects anymore, but started to consider also the specific urban ways-of-life, the identities of urban citizens, and the characteristic history and heritage of the city. Here, culture describes the whole of what is specific of a place: the norms and values, the traditions and heritage, the ways of life, and typical landscapes (Göschel & Kirchberg, 1998). Interpreted as a development context, culture is a substantive value of any city. It represents the spectrum of human achievements, which constitute a city in its current form (Mumford, 1970; Eckardt & Nyström, 2009). Cultural development, in this sense, is closely linked with any urban development. “*Cities are produced, then, according to cultural values.*”, state Miles et al. (2000: 3). Yet, what needs to be repeated in this context: cities are produced upon a conglomerate of *competing* cultural values. Recent accounts of urban cultural development have all pointed to the cultural contestation over the city (Zukin, 1995; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997a, 1997b; Stevenson, 2001; De Frantz, 2005, 2011; Bauman, 2011). And it is also this research’s endeavor to employ a conception of the city as determined by contesting cultural values and identities and, relatedly, competing definitions of culture and its role in urban development. Such a broadened interpretation of multiple cultures also demands reconsidering culture’s general role in society.

“So the language of the modern period relegated culture to a sector of social life, rather than recognizing the cultural embedding of all social life.” (Healey, 1997: 65)

The identification of the primary position of culture for urban processes is a central theoretical shift, termed as a “*cultural turn*” (Eade and Mele, 2002; Legendijk, 2004; Berndt and Pütz, 2007). Consequently, the need for a *culturization* of planning is voiced in recent planning literature to meet the expectations of a new understanding of culturally grounded processes and to acknowledge difference in a culturally diverse urban environment (Young, 2006, 2008).

The above elaborations lead us to a conceptualization of culture in urban development that includes two opposed views (cf. Tab. 1). First, *culturalization*, which subsumes all approaches of planning the city with culture, meaning, the
typical and often criticized instrumentalizations of cultural values, images, products, or ways-of-life for political and economic reasons, particularly their utilization for legitimizing power or residing in a “global capitalist cultural economy” (Scott, 1997: 324). Culturalization interprets culture as a sector of social life and primarily as an economic resource, an image or a unique selling proposition of places in interurban competition (Ward, 1998; Benneworth & Hospers, 2009; Hornig, 2011). Thus, the outcome is one commodity culture – a mainstreamed delineation, adapted to a globally common language that understands culture as a growth factor and ideological representation of consumable places (Zukin, 1995; Scott, 1997; Hall, 1998; Madanipour, 1999, 2003; Gottdiener, 2000; Evans, 2001, 2003; Young, 2006, 2008). In this understanding, “Culture itself has become a key form of capital.” (Bloomfield & Bianchini, 2001: 101)

Culturization, then, is the opposing interpretation. It builds upon a cultural turn, which broadened the conception of culture, making it a useful analytical concept for revealing difference in planning (Eade & Mele, 2002; Young, 2008). Moving away from the notion of one local culture to a multiplicity of simultaneously existing cultures allows for seeing the varying developments, needs and potentials of these different cultures evolving in a city (Jacobs, 1998; Rojek, 2000; Bloomfield & Bianchini, 2001; Puype, 2004). It also unveils the contested nature of the city as the arena of cultural representation. Relatedly, a culturized view in planning is considered as the tool for seeing cultural difference and planning for cultural development. It endows planners with the ability to reveal niche-cultural expression and to support experimental cultures, empowerment, and cultural citizenship (Stevenson, 2001; Young, 2008; Eckardt & Nyström, 2009). Such a conception also allows to analytically approaching the antagonisms, commodifications, contestations and exclusions inherent in the discursive constructions of a commodity culture for facilitating political and economic strategies.

Of course, the latter is not uncritical either. Culture as contextually produced difference is also increasingly utilized in (re)urbanization processes for the benefit of individual political and economic interests. But in this regard, culture is again interpreted as a unique selling proposition and resource for economic profit only, pointing to culturalization and an approach of planning with culture. Hence, the distinguishing line I want to point at here is one between promoting individual political and economic benefits of gaining or maintaining power and creating profits upon the instrumentalization of cultural values and processes (=culturalization), and an inclusive process of planning for social and economic development upon the recognition of cultural diversity (=culturization).
Tab. 1: A culturized planning view. Critically reviewing the capitalist culturalization of the city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURALIZATION</th>
<th>CULTURIZATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>= Planning <em>with</em> Culture</td>
<td>= Planning <em>for</em> Cultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Culture as sector of social life</td>
<td>- Social life culturally embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Culture = arts &amp; ways-of-life, economic resource / commodity</td>
<td>- Culture = contextually produced difference and critical resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Culture as unique selling proposition (of products / places)</td>
<td>- Culture as analytical concept (difference)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Agent of change</td>
<td>- Concept for interpretations of cultural turn</td>
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→ Fostering one commodity culture

→ Fostering many cultures

This distinction opens up a broad spectrum of questions about the underlying values represented and pursued through supporting or instrumentalizing cultural activity. Literature offers a wide range of readings on the value tensions inherent in culture-led urban development (Bloomfield & Bianchini, 2001; Garcia, 2004; Jones & Wilks-Heeg, 2004, Kloostermann & van der Werff, 2009). It might either be a conflict of culture for aestheticization versus culture for society-building (Moulaert et al., 2004; Lewitzky, 2005), equity and inclusion versus efficiency and distinction (Evans, 2001; Gordon & Buck, 2005; Markusen & Gadwa, 2009), or the interpretation of culture as a critical versus an economic resource (Zukin, 1995; Eckardt & Nyström, 2009), which leads to such value tensions between actors involved. But in the end they all point to the above delineated distinction between culture as a planning tool in development strategies for the profit of few, and planning for a city of cultural diversity and the development of many.

Looking at culturalizations of the city through the lens of a culturized planning view hence allows to critically investigating culture-led processes of a city. Whether it is the interpretation of culture as an identity-forming factor, a resource of representing difference, a pillar of urban renewal, an economy, or an asset in inter-place competition – the critical question always is, who succeeds with pushing through their visions of a cultural city in the politics of planning. Presumably, the underlying values and principles of applying culture in planning, the ideologies and imaginations of a cultural city, collide in the discursive formation of space that constantly informs the materialization of culture-led processes. Explorations of the discursive construction of a rationale of planning the city with culture – the cultural imaginary – thus aim at disclosing the legitima-
tion, stabilization and regulation of a certain material cultural city. Whether the imaginary rather leads to a mainstreamed commodity culture for capitalist accumulation, or supports a city of cultural difference (Fincher & Jacobs, 1998; Stevenson, 2001; Young, 2008) and a pluralist politics of planning (Mouffe, 2007), forms a central question then.

As was shown, the understandings of and reports on culture’s role in urban development are manifold. Anyhow, the elaborations point to two general conceptualizations, which form the definition of culture to be employed in this research: first, culture and the arts as signifying practices and ways of life, expressions and representations of identity, and, relatedly, contextually produced difference; and second, an instrumental view of culture, where cultural processes and values are judged not by democratic principles, but promoted or excluded upon their assumed value for facilitating economic and ideological strategies.

Hence, an analysis of culture’s role in urban development must take this divide serious and consider the antagonism of "culturization" and "culturalization", of planning for cultural development and planning with culture, both as a theoretical and empirical foundation of urban research. As uncovering the dominant approaches to culture in planning aims at deconstructing a deeply political process, it further needs to combine the above antagonism with an analysis of power that is embedded in the belief that planning itself is a political process permeated by ideologies, values, beliefs, and power geometries. And finally these two pillars need to be grounded in a well-elaborated conceptualization of the city as both the arena where the politics of planning with culture are staged and as the material outcome of these processes.

**Thematically embedding this research**

As explained above already, there is no doubt that culture has reached a pivotal position in urban development today. This acknowledgement dates back to the early 20th century, when the Chicago School first stressed the notion of difference and cultural specificity in cities with its research on subcultures, migration and the city as melting-pot. Later, scholars such as Lewis Mumford heightened our perception of the particularities of urban economic and social life, urban architectural form and urbanity as such, brilliantly elucidating that all this needed to be understood as a unique culture of cities (Mumford, 1970). Yet, only in the early 1980s and after the experience of a wide-ranging urban crisis, scholars recognized new patterns of urban transformation that were distinctly “cultural” – not in Mumford’s sense of an urban culture, but as artistic and cultural practices and products spurring urban change. Sharon Zukin is maybe the most prominent
scholar in this regard. In her research she found that artists as specific cultural actors had a significant role to play in the visible makeover and economic regeneration of formerly run-down, de-industrialized urban quarters in New York (Zukin, 1989). It was back then that literature also recognized the evolvement of a “cultural society” ousting the industrial urban paradigm. Research based on the West-European context revealed tendencies of a turn to culture as the new signifying element of urban economies after industrial decline (Fohrbeck & Wiesand, 1989). Most obviously, culture had entered the center stage of political debate and planning practice (ibid.).

The advent of research on culture-led regeneration then came in the early 1990s. Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) collected a number of European examples of huge urban restructurings based upon culture. Thereby, they drew the picture of cities that found their confidence again after Fordist decline, establishing a new mode of planning, i.e. active regeneration through culture-led urban transformation. Simultaneously, a row of critical accounts of utilizations of culture for economic strategies and ideological projects appeared. Kearns & Philo (1993) highlighted the multiple instrumentalizations of a city’s past and its cultural specificities as political instruments, stressing particularly their use and precise framing for a new form of outward-oriented, entrepreneurial policy that implies the selling of places. With reference to Mumford, Sharon Zukin published “The cultures of cities” in 1995, criticizing the gap between an obvious diversity of cultures to be found in cities and the one culture persistently reproduced in planning. She refers to this phenomenon as a symbolic economy, thereby creating a valuable concept that points at the contest over the city in cultural terms (Zukin, 1995, 1996, 1998). Zukin’s influential concept resonated in a number of subsequent critical accounts of how cultural symbols are utilized in planning to represent power and a certain worldview of what the urban sphere should be like (cf. the contributions in Gupta & Ferguson, 1997a, 1997b, and in Göschel & Kirchberg, 1998). Together, these contributions set off a critical discussion about the multiple utilizations of culture as a tool in urban development. From accounts of cultural exclusion (Kearns, 1993; Zukin, 1995; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Madanipour, 1998, 1999), to more recent instrumentalizations of artistic creativity (Scott, 1997, 2000; Mattl, 2009; Stalder, 2009), the spectrum covers a huge variety of critical views on how culture is employed by political and economic elites to develop contemporary cities into wished-for directions.

At the turn of the millennium, when the urban renaissance was in full swing, research reflected on two decades of culture-led regeneration. The result was two lines of interpretation of how culture could help solving recurrent urban crises. One attempted to establish a new form of “cultural planning”, claiming an inte-
integration of all urban political spheres into a cultural perspective to support civic empowerment, pave the way for the development of cultural difference, and thereby cherish democratic principles (Evans, 2001; Stevenson, 2001). The other was an array of sometimes overly positive strategies and handbooks for urban policymakers on how to capitalize on their local cultures. Most widely known among these are the creative industry strategies promoted by Charles Landry (2000) and Richard Florida (2002), advocating urban economic regeneration based upon creative innovation and knowledge-intensive industries. These experienced a true hype, although they were subject to sometimes harsh critique (Peck, 2005; Göschel, 2009). Nevertheless, both strands of theory largely influence the politics of planning with culture still today.

These approaches are already by and large influenced by a widened interpretation of the concept of culture as not only a form of high-brow artistic production, but as the specific ways of life, practices, products, identities and images that as well influence the constitution and perception of place. In social science research, such a cultural turn allowed for extending the criticism of how culture is recently utilized in capitalism for legitimizing urban change and securing surplus value (Harvey, 1990; Jameson, 1991, 1998; Scott, 1997, 2000; Gottdiener, 2000). Referring to it as the culturalization of urban economies and cities’ physical appearance upon the commodification of cultures points at the currently dominant form of culture-led regeneration (Young, 2008). Here, the conditions of an increasingly globalized economy structure the context of urban development. The underlying principle of inter-place competition for all forms of capital makes culture the versatile tool to construct distinct places and products that, at the same time, speak a global cultural language. Hence, current culture-led transformation often largely builds upon the notion of global visibility through culture’s appeal and image value (Harvey, 2002; Evans, 2003, 2006; Lagendijk, 2004; Monclús & Guardia, 2006; Young, 2006, 2008; Miles, 2007; Eckardt & Nyström, 2009; Benneworth & Hospers, 2009; Sassen, 2011).

As can be seen, academic accounts of culture-led urban development practice are informed by a general critique of narrow interpretations of culture and elitist modes of governing urban change. This work builds upon a similar critique by adopting a political-economic understanding of urban development. The book’s aim of unveiling discursive cultural imaginaries as legitimations of urban transformations is based on theoretical considerations from CPE. CPE is described as an adaptation of urban political economy that seeks to go beyond the notion of the cultural, economic and political spheres as unequal variables. Instead, it considers all three as interdependent:
“[…] moving from a one-sided emphasis on either the cultural constitution of political economy, or on the political economy of culture, towards a critical cultural political economy of social processes. This means that culture cannot be reduced to the economic and vice versa. Social processes are co-constituted by cultural, political and economic processes.” (Ribera-Fumaz, 2009: 457)

CPE conflates state theory, the regulation approach and institutional economics with recent interpretations of a cultural turn (Jessop, 2004, 2008; Ribera-Fumaz, 2009; van Heur, 2010a; 2010b). Thereby, it sheds light on the influence of culture (interpreted as identity, difference, meaning, and practices) on the specific political-economic constitution of territories, and at the same time, on instrumentalizations of culture(s) in political economy (Best & Paterson, 2010). It is thus interested in both, questions of classic political economy, i.e. crisis tendencies in capitalism and related modes of stabilizing accumulation regimes, and questions acknowledging postmodern thought, i.e. semiosis and handling difference (Jessop, 2004, 2008; Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008; Ribera-Fumaz, 2009). As it would be an overambitious endeavor to attempt to uncover all of these layers of research in the framework of this book, this work focuses a distinct form of discursively constructed imaginaries as framings of a certain mode of planning. While this doesn’t mean to ignore the comprehensive framework of CPE, it emphasizes one layer as being of particular significance to the concept of Cultural Imagineering: the regulation approach.

In short, the regulationist approach proclaims that building regimes of accumulation for the creation of wealth in capitalist economies demands an equally strong construct of state regulations to avert the crisis tendencies inherent in capitalism. Regulation in this sense means the stabilization of the related modes of production and consumption, social relations and institutional forms, yet, not merely as legal, juridical, but as well as discursive regulations (Boyer & Saillard, 2002; Jessop & Sum, 2006). The regulation approach seeks to reveal the role of certain institutions and practices in securing accumulation strategies. It does so by analyzing political economy, civil society and the state to draw a comprehensive picture of how accumulation strategies are being governed (Jessop & Sum, 2006). While most regulationist research engages in answering rather big questions of comprehensive, somewhat paradigmatic regime transformation in this regard – most popularly that from Fordism to post-Fordism (Jessop, 1993) – my concern is of comparably smaller size. The regulation-accumulation-coupling as I conceptualize it for Cultural Imagineering demands a cultural imaginary to discursively regulate and stabilize a regime of culture-led accumulation, i.e. capitalization upon culturalization.
But this research seeks to enrich critical reviews of capitalist instrumentalizations of culture with an equally important perspective. Although acknowledging the centrality of culture in accumulation strategies upon urban development, it emphasizes a multi-faceted contest over urban space that extends beyond economic antagonisms. With regard to the definition of culture as a “signifying practice” in Cultural Theory (Hall, 1997; du Gay & Pryke, 2013), urban space also becomes the contested arena of cultural representation. Here, culture serves as the material expression of values and identities, often with no direct consideration of their economic capitalization, but as a symbol of ideological power or cultural difference (Jones, 2006; Bieling, 2006a; Schulz, 2006; Bauman, 2011). Hence, in conceptualizing Cultural Imagineering, I merge two strategic principles of employing culture in planning: accumulation and representation.

As the specificity of goods, ways of life and places, culture has become an indispensable economic resource. On global markets determined by similarity, cultural specificity is the unique labeling to attract resources and thereby secure capitalization – both upon material culture-led transformation and discursive culture-led reconfigurations of space. As Bauman (2011: 17) summarizes in this regard, “The function of culture is not to satisfy existing needs, but to create new ones.” As a representational process, culture serves identity formation and the expression of difference of the diverse identities inherent in a city (Hall, 1997; Baumann, 2011; du Gay & Pryke, 2013). Here, cultural processes are to symbolize values and ideologies of cities characterized by cultural pluralism (Stevenson, 2001; Bloomfield & Bianchini, 2001; Young, 2008). At the same time, cultural signifying practices are instruments of social control and representations of hegemonic power (Jones, 2006; Bieling, 2006a; Göschel, 2009). The decisive element, though, lies between capitalization and representation processes in urban space. It defines the material and discursive regulation of both strategic principles tackled in the analysis of Cultural Imagineering. Hence, this work is particularly interested in the imaginaries that form the discursive regulation of culture-led representation and accumulation strategies; the imaginaries legitimizing certain materializations of conceptualizations of culture in urban space, thereby fostering the establishment and stabilization of hegemonic power over space and power over planning.
Research Approach

Contemporary planning practice increasingly incorporates communicative modes of guiding development and negotiating about potential urban futures in its approaches (Healey, 1992; Helbrecht, 1994). It applies new methods of constructing meaning and image of places to attract a transnational capitalist class of investors, high-skilled workforce and visitors (Harvey, 1989; Jameson, 1991, 1998; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Jessop, 1997; Hall, 1998). And it is here that culture has become a thematic pillar to the politics of planning. Producing exceptional image value, culture-led processes have the ability of boosting political status and the economic value of place (Zukin, 1995, 1996, 1998; Springer, 2007; Best & Paterson, 2010). As culturalizations, they instrumentalize the distinct character of cultural processes and products to re-shape city space in favor of elitist economic and political interests, while the diversity of cultures of a city is marginalized by being excluded from representation and the economic process (Zukin, 1995; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997a, 1997b; Scott, 1997, 2000; Madanipour, 1998, 1999; Harvey, 2002; Miles, 2007). Which interpretation of culture is to be materialized in urban space and for what purpose, is hence a highly contested process.

In this regard, the basic assumption that power is unequally distributed among actors of the city becomes central, particularly if we consider power over space and power over planning not just as materially mediated, but also as discursively fought out (Torfing, 1999; Scott, 2001). Building upon the notion that discourse can produce meaning and unquestioned knowledge, the processes of meaning-making must be interpreted as powerful tools to steer urban development (Flyvbjerg, 2000, 2002, 2003; Jessop, 2004, 2008). This immediately brings a crucial question to the fore. What if meaning and image are not just discursive representations of the cultural artifacts of a city? If we conceptualize the mutual relation between materiality and meaning in the production of space as a process with constant feedbacks between the two, a discursive construct of the cultural city might not just be the outcome of a material practice serving marketing reasons and ideological representation. It might as well be considered as a targeted attempt of individual powerful actors to steer future urban development into a desired direction with no consideration of cultural diversity.

So, this research makes the two-way link between materiality and meaning its basic framework, bearing in mind that both are questions of power at the same time. Yet, it attempts to go beyond the widely-known critical accounts of instrumentalizations of cultural processes for establishing accumulation or representation strategies (Zukin, 1995, 1996, 1998; Hall & Hubbard, 1996; Kirchberg,
While it is obvious to us that the distinct cultures of a city are sometimes ruthlessly exploited by powerful actors for economic capitalization and ideological representation, we often seem to consider the material cultural processes and the distinct local practices of cultural expression as randomly evolving or predetermined. Yet, by acknowledging the interdependence of the material city and its interpretive layer, we need to recognize the influence of discursive meaning-making on material processes of the city as well.

Thus, this work emphasizes a so far under-investigated process in cultural planning research, i.e. the influence of discursive framings of culture on material practice. By turning to this view, the formation of the material cultural processes of a city takes on a political dimension. The local culture(s), upon which accumulation and representation strategies are established, cannot be interpreted as detached from the politics of planning any longer. The culture(s) of place are not anymore – if they ever had been – arbitrarily evolving local processes. Instead, the culture-led development of a city must be understood as a contested process that is influenced by discursively constructed cultural imaginaries.

Fig. 2: Conceptualizing the process of Cultural Imagineering

As Fig. 2 illustrates, the material city is conceptualized as a complex set of intermingled scales, where diverse actors intervene in planning to shape the city’s
form. They are all influenced by certain identities, value sets, lifestyles and beliefs that altogether form the place-specific cultures of a city. The cultural imaginary is the discursively simplified interpretation of how these variables should interact and develop to form a certain urban future. It is the objectified regime of truth of how planning can reasonably utilize a particularly defined culture to impose change on the city. The underlying assumption is that the imaginary frames the development of the material relation between culture, city and planning, while it is also made obvious that the materialities of urban space shape the cultural imaginary. Hence, I conceptualize a cycle, in which materiality and meaning mutually interact. Material development and urban practice, history and institutions, social formation, space and place influence the symbolic and cognitive layer of space to the same extent that discursive constructs determine material urban futures. For the cultural imaginary this means that it is a discursive regulation of a certain form of planning, legitimizing accumulation and representation upon urban culture-led transformation.

The concept of Cultural Imagineering focuses the discursive construction of a simplistic cultural development vision as a legitimation, regulation and stabilization of elitist culture-led accumulation and representation strategies. By discursively reducing the complex concepts of culture, city, and planning to a simple relation, powerful actors construct an argument for the materialization of a certain cultural vision instead of many others. Herewith they facilitate the realization of individual economic and ideological projects in urban development that do not serve a public interest, but secure only their benefit. In this sense, Cultural Imagineering is the regulation of hegemonic projects in planning upon a dominant and unquestioned interpretation of culture and its role in urban development. These unquestioned cognitive ideas are the cultural imaginaries that establish a rationale of planning the city with culture via discourse. They influence a cultural planning reality, thereby re-formulating the limits to what is possible and what is not in the development of a city. Hence, the pivotal question to be posed here is, “Which and whose cultural imaginaries succeed to influence the materializations in culture-led place transformation, and who benefits from the so-created material cultural places?”

Approaching the concept of discourse in analyses of the politics of planning

Cultural Imagineering wants to shed light on the so far under-investigated path-shaping of material culture-led development through discursive constructions of culture. Its analysis attempts to disclose how actors engage in discursively pro-
moting arguments for or against certain forms of planning to push through the materialization of their economic or ideological project. It therefore applies the theoretical concept of imaginary. To reveal the cultural imaginary empirically, discourse analysis is employed as the primary method of investigation. As discourse is a fuzzy concept though, it needs to be clearly defined for this work.

In its simplest, discourse means “text”. This implies not only written (or spoken) language, but also the process of meaning-making and interpretation that take all sorts of signs into consideration (Jessop, 2008; Wodak, 2008). In fact, it can subsume anything from traffic signs, pictograms or brand logos, to our surrounding physical environment of streets, squares and buildings – as long as it transports significant meaning. It thus determines the relationship between form and function. (Wodak, 2008) “A discourse is a differentiated ensemble of signifying sequences in which meaning is constantly renegotiated.” (Torfing, 1999: 85) This research largely refers to political economy influenced Critical Discourse Analysis and its prevailing discourse definition. Here discourse refers to the cognitive, symbolic layer of space, which constructs meaning to co-constitute the material city. It is regarded as an essential factor in stabilizing social order, objectifying knowledge, and legitimizing arguments for or against certain forms of planning.

“Discourses, then, can be interpreted as attempts to stabilize meanings and interpretations of material objects and processes, aiming at the institutionalization of a certain knowledge order” (Keller, 2011: 8, author’s translation).

Theories of discourse are always interested in the relation of power and knowledge as two key factors determining urban politics and social life. Two quite different conceptualizations of the role of power and knowledge in discourse are recurrently debated in the context of urban planning research. One derives from German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who, based on a theory of communicative action, elaborated on discourse ethics. He envisions an ideal-speech act, where power is equally distributed among actors, hierarchies are neutralized and decisions only made upon the rationally best argument. Thus, validity of discourses would derive from consensus and consequently allow for the democratization of urban society, he claims (Flyvbjerg, 1998, 2000; Torfing, 1999; Keller, 2011). In this conceptualization, discourse is a neutral ground. Equal distribution of power among actors facilitates the rationally best solution (Torfing, 1999; Scott, 2001).

Although the interpretation of power as fluctuating among actors is similar to both approaches, it is here that the second notion differs from the Habermasian
approach. Here, power is understood as a means to construct knowledge and a dominating discourse. This notion is most prominently represented by French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault. Like Habermas, Foucault was trying to depict the process of validation of opinions. Yet, he did not believe in a similar ideal as the Habermasian consensus-oriented “homo democraticus” (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Instead, he was keen on revealing processes that let one discourse become dominant among a number of competing discourses. Thus, underlying power structures play a central part in Foucault’s discourse theory as producers of universal knowledge (Mills, 2007; Keller, 2011) – a so-called “regime of truth” (Lees, 2004). Flyvbjerg (2000) aptly describes the difference between the two, leaving no doubt about him feeling closer to Foucault’s discourse theory and conceptualization of power/knowledge:

“The value of Habermas’ approach is that it contains a clear picture of what Habermas understands by ‘democratic process’, and what preconditions must be fulfilled for a decision to be termed ‘democratic’ […] The value of Foucault’s approach is his emphasis on the dynamics of power […] and how these might be influenced and changed in a specific political or administrative context.” (Flyvbjerg, 2000: 14)

Political philosophers utter a similarly situated critique on Habermas’ discourse ethics. Mouffe (2007) strongly disagrees with the concept of deliberative politics and rational discourses. Pointing at Habermas, she criticizes his notion of rationality, which considers the existence of some kind of universal truth. Zizek as well is opposed to this conception, insisting that the practice of communication is not comparable with the envisioned ideal-speech situation (Torfing, 1999).

Although adopting a narrower discourse definition than that applied in Foucault’s work, this research employs the Foucaultian discourse theoretical considerations and conceptions of power/knowledge regimes. It builds upon the basic assumption of unequally distributed power in planning and the idea that these power structures decisively influence the construction of unquestioned knowledge and meaning through discourse. The attempt of identifying a dominant discourse of planning with culture makes it an appropriate theory to ground this piece of work. If discourses are interpreted as producers of meaning and objective regimes of truth, they must be considered as powerful tools influencing urban planning realities. Thus, the analysis of discourses is one source for analyzing the politics of planning with culture empirically (Glasze & Mattissek, 2009; Schipper, 2012).
CPE and critical semiotic analysis

The research engages in revealing potential instrumentalizations and exclusions of cultural processes, stressing the notion of culture as a contested arena. The various conceptions and differing roles of culture ask for an altered research approach, which combines the political economy of urban development with the acknowledgement of a cultural turn. Relatedly, Young (2008) advocates a culturalization of planning to open our eyes to the multiplicity of competing cultures, and to understand the various shades of how culture is used, e.g. for state legitimation, community development, or marketing. In recent years, the concept of CPE has entered urban research, tackling just this issue of how cultural specificity is used in capitalist approaches to urban development, and how political economy itself needs to be seen as culturally influenced in the ways it functions (Jessop, 2004; Harrison, 2009; Ribera-Fumaz, 2009; Best & Paterson, 2010). In the meantime, critical accounts of CPE are manifold. Van Heur (2010a, 2010b), for instance, analyzes the cultural economy of electronic music production in London and Berlin as a culturally determined political economy of aesthetic production. Best & Paterson (2010) critically investigate the advertisements of HBSC in London as an example of how cultural difference is increasingly exploited in global economic marketing. And only recently, Jessop (2013) depicted the mechanisms of how the global financial crisis and the potential recoveries from it are being discursively constructed. In all these studies, “critical semiotic analysis” (Jessop, 2004) is a central empirical research method. Hence, for depicting the Cultural Imagineering of place transformation, I follow the call for critically investigating constructed meaning to detect the paths of a CPE of planning with culture in contemporary cities.

To be more exact, considering the arguments that power to produce and reproduce urban space is discursively and institutionally mediated (Jessop and Oosterlynck, 2008), and that mediatic permeation of literally all spheres of urban development is the current condition (Lundby, 2009; Friesen & Hug, 2009), I put my empirical research focus on the analysis of strategic and mediatic discourses. The need for integrating such analyses in recent urban studies is uttered by several scholars. Eade and Mele (2002), for instance, rate the exploration of urban discourses and the role of imaginaries in the production of urban space among the most important fields of contemporary research. Smith (2002) further explicates the important role of mass media in framing space production and urban development in general. The analysis of political and mediatic discourses has two parallel effects. Not only does it inform about the role(s) attributed to culture in urban development, it furthermore reveals who the discourse-producing actors
are. Hence, discourse analysis explicates who has power over such discourses and therefore can exert power over urban cultural development (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Mills, 2007).

Anyhow, discourse analysis is often criticized for blinding out extradiscursive concerns, such as path-dependencies, institutional frameworks, or material practice (Torfing, 1999; Jessop, 2008). In a radical constructivist perspective this seems plausible as any of these concerns is considered to be determined by discourse only (cf. for instance Berger & Luckmann, 1980). Yet, as was prominently elaborated, the understanding of the city as a dialectic relationship between materiality and meaning draws me to a different understanding. I apply a CPE approach, where urban phenomena are understood as being influenced by discursive features, while emerging from and again resulting in materialities (Jessop, 2004, 2008; Ribera-Fumaz, 2009; Harrison, 2009; van Heur, 2010a, 2010b). In this sense, CPE goes beyond Critical Discourse Analysis, as it is not only interested in reconstructing discourses, but also in depicting material change (Jessop, 2008; Ribera-Fumaz, 2009). Such an understanding of urban development considers the materiality of space as the ultimate objective of accumulation strategies and ideological projects, making it a second layer of empirical investigation, in which discourse is embedded as a presumably influential factor, yet not as an end in itself.

From imaginary to Imagineering: Confronting discourse with material practice

Pointing to Bayart, Jessop (2004: 24) clarifies, “Indeed, there is no [...] imaginary without materiality,”, emphasizing that the city represents a dialectical relation of discursively constructed meaning and the materially existent social formation, institutional and physical structures. The city houses processes, which always produce both material and discursively formed realities (Hofmann, 2011), meaning, the cultural imaginary is central for the culture-led transformation of the materialities of space, but not the only influencing factor. “Extra-semiotic factors”, as Jessop (2004) terms them, are equally important development characteristics. These material factors of place transformation subsume history, as well as a distinct socio-economic development context, a particular institutional framework and adjacent legal regulations, and all forms of path-dependencies resulting from these materialities. So while it is a stated objective of this research to explicitly analyze the discursive formation of a simplified cognitive construct of culture-led urban planning as a regulation and legitimation of distinct processes of capitalist urbanization and hegemonic ideological
representation, the analysis as well takes into account the material preconditions of place transformation. It analyzes the distinct development history of each case study site, the planning-political, institutional, and socio-economic, as well as the material cultural context of place as its materiality.

This is where the third layer of analysis comes into play. It is based on a review of the material practice of local place transformation, i.e. the documentation of significant material alterations. This includes physical transformations, institutional changes, and newly evolved or vanished processes, and is meant to uncover the transformed materialities of place. Reflecting the approach employed in policy analyses (cf. for instance Hajer, 2003; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Healey et al., 2003), findings on the transformed materialities of place are to be confronted with the analysis of discourse in order to depict potential moments of Imagineering. This aims at revealing whether the instrumental use of culture in imaginaries of urban transformation can actually be linked to the material transformations of place, or whether they remain on a discursive level.

**Empirical research object: Culture-led place transformation in Vienna**

For empirically analyzing processes of Cultural Imagineering, this research makes the city of Vienna its research object. It chooses the city for it being an exceptional case of intense planning-political interest in cultural affairs and the common sense that its development is characterized by a path that is distinctly “cultural”. Vienna forms a typical example of the European city and combines structural, architectural, and institutional characteristics from diverse periods of history, which very much influence its planning still today. Its outward image is largely determined by the powerful subject of a heritage culture from the times of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and meant to attract cultural tourism, while its self-perception is somewhat torn between traditional value constructs and growing lifestyle diversity through increasing metropolisation (Mattl, 2000; Maderthaner, 2006; Bihl, 2006; Meißl, 2006; Musner, 2006; Steinert, 2009; ES-PON, 2012). In public discourse and planning practice these interpretations of the city’s contextual culture are always involved in any development considerations, hence making Vienna a good case for analyzing potential hegemonic and counter-hegemonic constructions of culture as influential factors of material planning practice.

As an analysis of the city’s cultural transformation as a whole would neither be feasible, nor senseful considering its diversity in places, cultures, and planning preconditions, the analysis turns to three recent sites of culture-led place
transformation, making them the units of empirical analysis within the case study of Vienna (cf. Yin, 2009 for a detailed taxonomy of case study research designs). This potentially generates a wider range of results on different processes of Cultural Imagineering, while simultaneously allowing for obtaining potential similar patterns within Vienna’s cultural planning practice when conducting cross-case synthesis (ibid.). The three case study sites are: Karlsplatz, an inner city public space, Brunnenviertel, an urban neighborhood in transition, and Seestadt Aspern, an urban expansion project in the city’s periphery. In all three, culture is discursively and materially introduced as a factor of transformation recently. Also, the units of analysis cover three different parts of the city, i.e. central and peripheral, in order to unhide potentially different approaches to cultural development and planning with culture in different locations. Furthermore, the case studies also constitute processes at varying stages of place transformation to include this factor in the analysis as well. Ultimately they also cover three determinant thematic fields of Vienna’s planning culture: high-cultural institutions, ethnic diversity and soft urban renewal, and public infrastructure provision and social housing. Hence, they represent three different preconditions for Vienna’s urban and cultural development. The following introduces the case studies in short.

Karlsplatz is a large central public space of Vienna with a long development history. Its transformation within the past century includes manifold physical regeneration projects of a place that was ever since criticized for being unfinished and lacking a clear concept (Geschäftsgruppe Stadtplanung, 1981). Today, it hosts a number of important urban functions as it is a central hub for public transport, car traffic and pedestrians, and houses large cultural institutions, from the University of Technology to federal and municipal museums, a theater, concert hall, school, and the architecturally outstanding St. Charles Church. The density of art institutions and its close vicinity to the inner city and the Ringstraße make it a very much pre-determined space in cultural terms. Its recent transformation is thus also dictated by a politically promoted regeneration project, which aims at turning Karlsplatz from an undefined traffic hub into an aestheticized, representational art space of the city. The empirical analysis thus asks, whether the anyway dominant approach of promoting high culture for capitalizing on tourism is further consolidated through Karlsplatz transformation, or if the potential of a so far undefined central public space for a metropolis in the making is recognized to materialize in a new agora of Vienna.

The second case study site is Seestadt Aspern. The project located in the Northeast of Vienna currently constitutes one of Europe’s biggest planning projects, and it is a novice in the city’s planning cultural tradition. Forming a state-
induced urban expansion project, it not only breaks with the long tradition of solely promoting renewal and inner transformation in Vienna’s development, but it forms a symbol of a declared political belief in urban growth and metropolisation. Yet, the urbanization project is not just remarkable due to its size, but also as concerns the governance structure, which facilitates state-related, yet profit-oriented agencies with decision-making power in planning. This is reflected also by the planning approach, which turns to entrepreneurial modes of place branding as a development strategy. In this context, cultural interventions come into play to promote and legitimize the development project. Although its realization only recently began, Seestadt Aspern’s planning was soon accompanied by an intense strategic and mediatic debate on the distinct culture of place, its identity, and its role in Vienna’s development path (Tovatt Architects & Planners & Projektteam Flugfeld Aspern, 2007; Municipal Department 18, 2005, 2012a).

Hence, the question to be posed here is, whether, first, early materializations point to the influence of processes of Imagineering at all, and if, second, the transformed materialities of place are able to combine the utilization of certain cultures for a profit-oriented urbanization project with the expectations of the many cultures to be accommodated there in the future.

The third case study unit is Brunnenviertel, a densely populated urban neighborhood in transition. It is located in the northwestern part of Vienna, in Ottakring, the city’s 16th district. Brunnenviertel is determined by a large street market, which constitutes the neighborhood’s social and economic backbone, and the urban pattern of Gründerzeit housing structures, which were erected due to the city’s rapid growth in the 19th century and characterize the area structurally still today. It shows a unique urban character due to high densities and a mix of urban functions, while the low quality housing stock is a recognized challenge since long. Hence, the neighborhood is part of the city’s soft urban renewal program since the 1970s. Its socio-cultural conditions are shaped by an above average share of a migrant population, which started to become apparent mostly in a transforming local economy in the 1990s, and which was recurrently problematized in public discourse (Rode et al., 2010; Municipal Department 21A, n.d.). More recently though, it has attracted public attention for another reason, as with “Soho In Ottakring” a self-determined, local art-led project evolved that turned out to be an image factor for an otherwise problematized urban quarter (Rode et al., 2010; Suitner, 2010). Soho became a role model of art-led urban renewal in Vienna, which established both the arts and different lifestyles in place-specific discourse, but also increased the development pressure on Brunnenviertel upon its new cultural image. Hence, the empirical analysis considers Brunnenviertel as a contested neighborhood in transition, where state, market, and civil society in-
terests collide both in discourse and materially. The important question to be dealt with is, whether discursively informed materializations can be regarded as the sequel to a well-functioning bottom-up neighborhood development for a diverse population, or if individual interests succeed upon the materialization of different cultural imaginaries.

**Fig. 3: Locating case studies of culture-led transformation in Vienna**

![Map of Vienna with case studies](image)

**Structure of the book**

The first chapters are dedicated to theoretical elaborations on the concepts of culture, city, and planning, and their deep links as conceptualized in Cultural Imagineering. I start with the major transformations of cities within the past decades, introducing the spatial turn and consequent acknowledgement of a duality of urban space. The shift from static object to constant process is the beginning to the story of multiform urban complexity in economic, social, political, and cultural terms that planning faces today. Thus, the new modes of governing urban development are being discussed then, pointing at accumulation and repre-
sentation as the two principles permeating the politics of planning in contemporary cities and resulting in contests over the future use of urban space. With this in mind, the concept of culture is being introduced as the all-embracing concept in urban development today. Referring to recent scientific discourses on culture and planning, the salient narratives of culture as an agent of change are outlined. These reveal the variety of utilizations of culture in accumulation strategies and ideological representations. Theorizing the concept of Cultural Imagineering concludes the theory section of the book. It is pointed out that discursive constructions of culture in planning can become powerful regulations and legitimations for accumulation and representation strategies in the politics of planning.

Following, the empirical analysis of Vienna’s Cultural Imagineering is presented by an introduction of empirical research design and methods applied. To contextualize the case study, I start with the material urban development trajectory of the city. It embeds the case study in the specificities of a local planning culture and serves as an analytical background for assessing distinct discursive constructions and material processes. Following, the three Viennese case study sites are being investigated to unveil the Cultural Imagineering of place transformation. In the next section, the three are being conjoined to draw a comprehensive picture of the rationales and hegemonic practices influencing recent cultural planning in Vienna. Referring to the transformed materialities analyzed before, it points to a number of critical implications as concerns culture-led place transformation and Vienna’s cultural development as such.

I conclude on the empirical findings then, not only to sum up this piece of work, but to accentuate those results that are considered momentous for Vienna’s cultural development. It recommends necessary steps for Vienna’s cultural planning in particular and for planning for cultural development at large, and finishes with indicating further research needs in the context of analyzing processes of Imagineering.