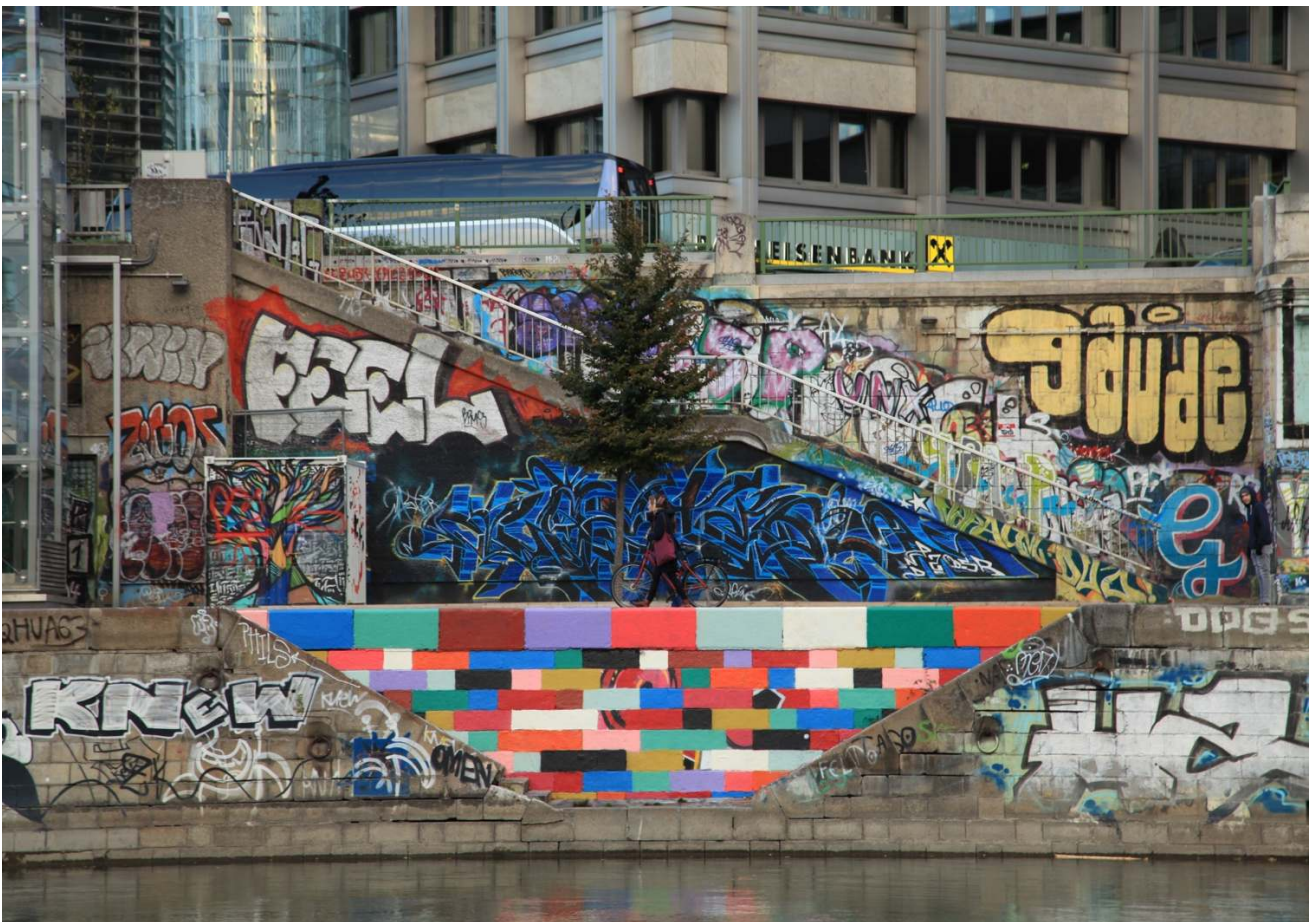


Colours along the Danube Canal

Case Study on the Graffiti Scene in Vienna

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(source: own work)

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Abstract

Graffiti and street art have become a prominent feature in the creative city model of today's contemporary urban reality. One possible reason for that is the implementation of legal walls, which has allowed artists to use surfaces in the public space without having to fear any judicial consequences. Moving this illegal practice on to legal walls has widened the spectrum of acceptance from the media as well as the public. However increasingly are legal walls threatened through re-development projects and vanish from the cityscapes. Based on interviews with stakeholders in an area in Vienna where such walls were implemented, this study will draw conclusions on the effects of such legal walls for urban revitalisation and for the enterprises that locate along such walls.

Keyword: Graffiti, Street art, Urban development, revitalisation, public space

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1. Introduction

Discussions on graffiti and street art are far-ranging, from its illegal nature and not being considered an art form at all, to its growing significance within today's art world, to its role for the contemporary urban city and the quarters, in which it flourishes, as well as on its impact on urban development and the regeneration of areas. It is a polarizing subject and political, economic, and social opinions are split between two poles. The ones advocating the presence of graffiti and street art within the urban environment and the others who vigorously try to ban its existence from cityscapes, confronting it with zero-tolerance policies, and white washing of walls, buildings and whole neighbourhoods.

With increasing importance given to the creative industries and the move away from an industry based economy to a service-led economic model for global cities, graffiti and street art have started to experience a revitalisation of its image. What started off, as a subcultural movement in subway tunnels along the East-Coast of the United States, has now become a global movement. Through the rise of the quality of art works and superstars affiliated with this art form such as Banksy or Shepard Fairey and the following institutionalization, with respected galleries and public institutions such as museums, schools and social, humanitarian organizations, having exhibited or involved graffiti and street art within their programming this art form has gained wider publicly acclaimed recognition. Existing literature by scholars, academics on its impact on urban development and the transformational power of graffiti and street art for communities, neighbourhoods and whole city areas have added to its recognition. With the mainstreaming of graffiti and street art, this urban art form started facing new challenges and threats. As an article in *the Guardian* writes “the increasing commercialisation of street art, and its appropriation by advertising, brands and even property developers who commission murals to help gentrify an area and drive up house prices, is an issue for the movement worldwide” (Ellis-Peterson, 2017). A process also known as “gentrification graffiti” which is “representative of the cycle of transformation in cities around the world, whereby artists are caught up in contributing to their own displacement.” (Cathcart-Keays, 2015)

On the contrary, instead of commissioning it, the reverse process of ‘white washing’ for instance in cities like Sao Paulo and the tearing down of legal graffiti havens such as *5Pointz* “the world’s largest open-air aerosol museum” (Feuer, 2017 quotation: Eric Baum) have provoked an outcry in the movement, which resonated globally and captured the attention of the international media.

Those places not only “offer a space for social intervention, where artists can act as mentors, using graffiti as a force for community cohesion and a potential route out of crime for inner-city kids” (Cathcart-Keays, 2015) but also stimulate creative production and add vibrancy to the environment.

To protect such legal sites and its surroundings, from private monopolization, increasing real estate investments and guaranteeing artists free access to spray and paint surfaces, has to be prioritized by policy makers in regards of city development. Among other things, this study aims at advocating and protecting these sites. To expand such creative playgrounds within inner city circles, thus setting a focus on the significance of graffiti and street art for the contemporary city and on its impact on urban development and revitalising city areas.

Even though graffiti and street art is considered a subgenre of public art, most scholar’s writings on public art, leave out the role of graffiti and street art. They either don’t refer to it at all, or just slightly touch on it. There continues to be a clear distinction between the art genre and its sub-category. While there are now academics that specialise on graffiti and street art they miss to establish a clear link between the two. That’s why this study will further focus on establishing a link between the literature that exists on public art and the one written for graffiti and street art.

The first aim of this thesis, thus becomes to interconnect the literature on graffiti and street art with the writings on public art. Further to advocate the implementation of legal walls, since besides newspaper articles, there hasn’t been any extensive coverage on the effect of such legal sites on their environment. The case study chosen for this thesis, is a clear example of it. Last but not least to counter the spread of white-washing and tearing down of graffiti and street art through real estate investments and private organizations. In order to do so, this thesis critically engages with existing literature on public art especially looking at graffiti and street art, the creative city model, as well as on revitalisation and gentrification in cities.

This study is based on a case in Vienna, more specifically on the area along the Danube canal, where WienerWand, a policy initiative, that was put into place in 2004 liberalised a number of walls and gave access to graffiti artists to spray in various locations of the city legally. The subsequent caused transformation of one specific area, especially over the last 10 years has been significant. What not all to long ago had been considered a place for the have-nots, homeless and criminals has become a popular local recreational area. The media and public debate however completely ignore the fact that the legal presence of graffiti and street art along the Danube canal,

might have been an important factor on the positive development along the canal bed of the Danube as well as for the neighbouring districts, especially for Leopoldstadt, the 2nd district of Vienna.

This study further intends to highlight this possible role of graffiti and street art in this process of revitalisation. It seeks to understand the value of this public art form for the various stakeholders, that have settled there or relocated their businesses along the Danube Canal, as well as to further determine whether graffiti and street art were taken into account as a locational factor when deciding to move there.

From this my research question formulates as such: *How do different stakeholders value graffiti and street art in urban areas?*

In order to answer this question, a qualitative approach was used and in-depth interviews were held with different actors on site. This research will prove itself as relevant for policymakers, entrepreneurs and the wider public, and should lead to further acknowledgements on the impact that graffiti and street art have on the urban environment and its social, cultural and economic realities.

There is much existing literature on the value of graffiti and street art, which has made use of the quantitative approach (McAuliffe & Cameron, 2012) where public opinion polls were applied in order to come to conclusions on the value of graffiti. This research considered the fact, that ultimately it's the enterprises, public institutions, individual artists, collectives and bottom-up initiatives that are responsible for transforming an area, as they take actively part in reframing the urban environment. Due to this fact, the opinions of those participating in the transformation of the area were of validity to this study and deliver a new perspective on the value of graffiti and street art.

This thesis is structured as followed, first a theoretical framework will analyse the literature on three main theories (Public Art, Creative Cluster & Gentrification) all of which consist of sub-chapters. Second, the methodology part, aims to provide an overview on how the research was conducted. The third step will introduce the case study, looking into the area along the Danube canal and its developments over the last 25 years, before presenting the findings and discussions of

this study and drawing conclusions as well as giving advise on how further research could be done in this field of study.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. *Public art within the urban context*

2.1.1 Urban space

In order to theoretically frame the term public art, it is important to define the space that is meant, in which this art form takes place. For this study relevant is the open and free accessible space within the city, which can also be referred to as urban space. The city and its urban space being described as a fast moving and complex system of encounters, exchange and constant transformation. “For perhaps the most basic definition of cities is that they organise people and things in manifold constellations (Thrift, 2005, p.140). This density and juxtaposition of difference has productive, generative effects – it produces urban space. Space is conceived here as an effect of interrelations and interactions: a simultaneous, unfinished co-presence of difference” (Massey, 2005).

The co-presence of difference, which is inevitable within a city, can on the one hand stimulate innovation and harmonious interconnectivity between citizens and on the other hand lead to exclusion, isolation and deadlocks between its citizens. Ideally, urban planners, architects, politicians, artists, public and private institutions try to come up with inclusive and sustainable solutions, aiming at respecting the universal needs of every citizen. One of those needs is the provision and guarantee of public space. One art form that actively takes place in public spaces is public art. As culture and the creative industries have moved into the focus of those concerned with urban development, art is being used as a tool to revitalize areas, bring people together and make an area aesthetically appealing, a powerful instrument to do so is **public art**.

2.1.2. Public art

Within this research, public art will be defined in the urban context of the city, as art that seeks and enables to transform the scape of a neighbourhoods, areas or the city as a whole. This form of art happens within spaces that are accessible to everyone, thus are not constrained through any circumstances or restricted to a certain number or type of people. Public art can be expressed in

many forms: murals, sculptures, 3D installations and performances are some of the many. Its range is diverse and manifold. As described by three scholars, the main purpose of it is “to engage with its audiences and to create space – whether material, virtual or imagined – within which people can identify themselves” (Sharp, Pollock & Paddison, 2005, p.1004). As the authors (2005) add one of the main characteristics of public art is its great visibility, also referred to by them as ‘inescapability’ since between the grey concrete building blocks of a city, public art has the power to stand out and differentiate an area.

2.1.3 Public art & urban regeneration

“Public art plays an important role in the production of urban space. Public art can be seen to contribute to the production of an innovative or creative milieu” (Landry, 2000; p. 119), within which creativity can be nurtured and flourish” (McAuliffe Cameron, 2012; p.7). The economic and even more so the social impact which public art can have, has been highlighted by many scholars. It can lead to the revitalization of an area by attracting and engaging its surrounding residents, or making it appealing for them to use the public space as a meeting point and place to share ideas. Encouraging this exchange, as stated by Tim Hall & Ian Robertson (2001) “can help to develop identity, develop a sense of place, contribute to civic identity, address community needs, tackle social exclusion, possess educational value and promote social change” (p. 5). Besides, the social impact, public art can have a strong economic impact as well. These have been summarized by the Policy Studies Institute, London (1994), as: “Attracting companies and investment, having a role in cultural tourism, adding to land values, creating employment and increasing the use of open space” (p.38). Besides bringing “economic and social benefits alongside the aesthetic” (Sharp, Pollock & Paddison, 2005, p.1013), public art can signal transformation in an area, by showcasing that creativity is taking place. “Visible creativity in public art helps to make an area’s reputation as an emerging creative district (Zukin & Braslow, 2011, p.138)”. Especially one public art form is meant for emerging areas: Graffiti and Street art. “In the creative district’s early, quasi-spontaneous formation, public art is anonymous, provocative and mimetic of the local vernacular. In, later stages, public art is esthetically mainstream, often commercially orientated and self-referential, confirming the district’s own emerging reputation”. (Zukin & Braslow, 2011, p.132)

Concerning urban regeneration, public art contributes to the reputation of places as creative, with “transgressive or overtly critical public art, such as graffiti and street art (operating) as signs that attract rather than repel investors” (Zukin & Braslow, 2011, p.138). Many artworks are

concentrated in areas of social deprivation and this highlights how public art has been used as a tool to aestheticize areas within a city as well as the city at large. In addition to this it is important to mention, the findings by Joanne Sharp, Venda Pollock and Ronan Paddison (2005) who write that “the installation of public art needs to be sensitive to local diversity” (p.1020). “Context and community involvement are increasingly important”. (p.1017) “Public art can contribute to, if not create, community cohesion” (p.1010).

2.1.4. Graffiti

Graffiti and street art, have become an essential part of the contemporary city and its modern urban context, as “a prominent element in many of today’s urban cultural landscapes” (Cooper, 2004; Ferrel & Weide, 2010). We find the origins of this public art form along railway paths, subway tunnels and underground vehicles in Philadelphia and New York in the 1970s. “Graffiti as we know it today developed toward the end of the 1970s in New York and Philadelphia”, “where artists such as *Taki 183*, *Julio 204*, *Cat 161* and *Cornbread* painted their names on the walls or in subway stations around Manhattan”. (Ganz & Nicholas, 2004)”.



Picture 1 and Picture 2: TAKI183 (source: TAKI 183: The boy who became a legend with his marker', n.d)

Out of the undergrounds of the New York subway system, graffiti and later street art grew to become a global phenomenon, establishing a presence in every major city and within the urban context around the globe. What started as a subculture (subculture being defined: as an “informal or organic small-scale association of people united by a common interest” (Thornton in Campos, 2012, p.158) and movement for the ones left out and excluded from society who saw it as an opportunity “to become someone, even if this was only recognized within their own sub-sect”

(Gleaton, 2012 p.8) rapidly grew to establish itself in mainstream discussions, especially through the rise of Hip-Hop culture in the 90s throughout the United States.

The ‘Graffiti Art movement’, can be interpreted “as urban youth’s creative response to harsh urban conditions” (Gleaton, 2012, p.10) with “dispossessed young people in New York City in the 1970s and early 1980s channeling their frustrations and boredom into making visual art” (Gleaton, 2012, p.10). Graffiti as such “is one of the most spatial forms of artistic expression, graffiti writers take “the city walls themselves as the canvas for new image-making” (Austin, 2010, p.33).

The practice itself is mainly exercised by young man, who grew up under harsher conditions “in general male, relatively young and almost always start with illegal graffiti activities” (Halsey & Young, 2006). The art “represents a style that is “‘in your face’, anti-authoritarian, irreverent, irrepressible, wise, ironic, a voice for the powerless and the have-nots” (Gleaton, 2012, p.13). “It carries rebellious, anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist messages typically unauthorised or supported by local governments” (Tunnacliffe, 2013, p.12). It incorporates strict rules and codes such as ‘not going over’. Ferrel & Weide (2010) further write there is a “a wide agreement about not putting graffiti on monuments, religious buildings, private homes, automobiles, and statues (Van Loon, 2014 p.5) but also in regard of not painting over respected or qualitative higher art works,

The shared motivation of most graffiti artists is *name recognition* and achieving fame ‘getting up’. This fame however is not directed towards public recognition but much more related between other sprayers and peers. As acknowledged by Nicolas Ganz (2006), graffiti is largely governed by the desire to spread one’s tag and achieve fame. Other intrinsic motivations are highlighted by Brewer and Miller (1992) “such as the power to transform public space and rebellion” (Van Loon, 2014, p.14)

2.1.5. Street art

“In the 1990s, neo-graffiti breaks from the graffiti subculture model with the movement of artists into the graffiti world using all kinds of media to create all kinds of images influenced by a fine arts aesthetic”. (Fraser & Alison, 2016, p.34). At this time many other forms of artistic intervention in the public space started to derive from graffiti. “Over the past few years, graffiti artists have been using a wider scope of expression. Personal style is free to develop without any constraints, and stickers, posters, stencils, airbrush, oil-based chalk, all varieties of paint and even

sculpture are used.” (Gleaton, 2012, p.12). The rise of street art is documented as a phenomenon, of which graffiti is considered a pioneer art form. Even though they are closely related to each other, overlap and happen to inhabit the same environment, it is important to distinguish the two forms, and categorise them into two different ways of creative expression.

Street art as well as graffiti is accessible to everyone regardless of point of view, and by its very nature acts as an arena for expression and a sounding board of sorts for the marginalized. Street art, however, “tends to have fewer rules and embraces a much broader range of styles and techniques” (Gleaton, 2012, p.6),”by adopting new methods and techniques, street art manipulates urban space.” (Tunnacliffe, 2016, p.12). It reflects “the place in which it is installed as artists utilize their surroundings in creative ways” (Gleaton, 2012, p.13),”. Street artists strive to demonstrate, that “while public space can be contested as private and commercialized by companies, it is the artists who offer public space” (Gleaton, 2012, 2012, p.29). “In the 21st century, urban street art exploded. Rebellious against consumerism, it proved an alternative” (Tunnacliffe, 2016, p.12), “street art became a counterbalance to commercial advertising and its assault on consumers” (Gavin, 2007, p.6) Both “Street art and graffiti will always retain a sense of authority that will forever be “relevant in terms of representing the outside, non-edited view” because the artists’ work is presented directly to the viewer with no curator in between to dictate what is good and what is not” (Gleaton, 2012, p.20)

2.1.6. Graffiti/Street art a form of public art

Deutsche (1996, p.56) defines public art as: “a practice that is within the built environment, is involved in the production of meanings, uses and forms for the city. (Menor, 2015, p.60). Both graffiti and street art fall under this category and yet much of the literature on public art separates itself from graffiti and street art or at least doesn’t include it, even though “public art, rather than participating in an inclusive agenda, can function as an oppositional or resistant force, highlighting excluded groups and visualising protest to dominant regeneration schemes. (Sharp, Pollock & Paddison, 2005, p.1015) This it mainly does this through graffiti and street art which are in its nature ‘expressions of resistance’. “The increasing importance given to creativity allows art to move out of the art gallery and into the street, and in a related way, takes artistic practices in the street and re-values the product as art.” (McAuliffie, 2012, p.5). Graffiti and street art have played an important role in widening the spectrum of what can be considered art within public spaces. Babington (2010) writes on the development of graffiti: “The graffiti subculture has multiplied its forces of collaborating practitioners and has spawned numerous street art offshoots that have since

2000 revolutionised creativity in public spaces” (McAuliffie, 2012, p.14). It is further argued that “new forms of public art derived from graffiti” (McAuliffie, 2012, p.2).

However, there is one major difference between graffiti and street art and most other forms of public art “Inhabiting the same urban public spaces public art is art that is sanctioned by the government or a private business, i.e., the moral entrepreneurs, for an exterior or interior location that is considered to be for public use” (Fraser 2016, p.34). “The moral entrepreneurs desire a city to be neat, tidy, and only represented by sanctioned public art while (neo)graffiti artists use urban public spaces to express their own desires and experiences.” (Fraser 2016, p.35). These commissioned “public artworks, [...] seek to address their environment, i.e. be site-specific; however, they are denied any real possibility for negotiation or critique of the ideologies of exclusion because of the ways in which they are bound by these ideologies in their creation. It is in this regard that (neo)graffiti may represent a more public form of art because it is done by people attempting to negotiate and, ultimately, work against the ideologies of exclusion present in urban public spaces” (Fraser 2016, p.38) “Unlike public art, graffiti and street art, far from showing satisfaction with this aesthetic, choose a radically different use of the city” (Menor, 2015, p.59). They are, “artistic interventions that invite us to look at the other side of the urban landscape, in which citizens play an active role by building, repairing and imagining public space. These interventions show us new ways of living this urban landscape” (Menor, 2015, p.59)

2.1.7. Graffiti/Street art as a force of revitalization

“Concerning urban regeneration, public art contributes to the reputation of places as creative.” (McAuliffie, 2012, p.7). The presence of both graffiti and street art, within a neighbourhood or particular city area can have an immense impact on the quality of life on site. “Street art is an efficient way to bring “cultural assets to a neighbourhood that didn’t have any” (Arlandis, 2013). It has the power to function as a mechanism for change in revitalising urban quarters. Graffiti and Street art “rejuvenates public spaces while taking back to the culture of over-consumption.” (Gleaton, 2012, p.39). A Fraser (2016) notes “Graffiti flourishes where it’s the worst” (p.39). “Wilson and Keil (2008) argue that real creativity in the contemporary city comes from the low-income and marginalized poor, who constantly find innovative ways to adapt to or transform the urban environment” (Collins & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2016, p.8). Graffiti and street art, are thus strong indicators of creativity for a city and point to areas, in which artists and other creative workers live. Graffiti and Street art, are significant as a representation on the streets of these creative milieus “Public art, including graffiti, confirms a district’s “creative” reputation” (Zukin

& Braslow, 2011, p.133). Those places within the contemporary city can be identified as such through the presence of art in public space. “Former and emerging creative districts are also differentiated by the presence or absence of street art and graffiti” (Zukin & Braslow, 2011, p.139). Proving the creative character of a neighborhood, this art form becomes of great use for the branding of a creative city, which attracts investment and tourism. Further it is said, “the presence of, both graffiti and street art, signifies an eventual change in artist-led creative districts as these areas move from being places of artistic production to places of artistic consumption” (McAuliffie, 2012, p.7).

2.1.8. Graffiti/Street art role for the contemporary creative city

Since Florida’s writing on the impact of culture on urban development and the shift from an industry based to a service orientated economic model for cities, governments and city councils have been focusing strategies on urban development, stimulating creativity and promoting the creative industries inherited to their places. Forkert, (2011) writes “Cities also currently compete with each other in a neoliberal, globalized capitalist paradigm using the cheapest forms of labour to create capital and enhance their own image in what can be understood as the global city” (Fraser 2016, p.33). According to Sharon Zukin (1996) “The global city desires art contained within the system” (Fraser, A. 2016, p.33).

Culture plays an essential part, by fulfilling three major roles for the creative city model, summarized in the text by Menor (2015):

- 1) Culture plays a key role attracting capital flows in form of tourism and investments. (p.65)
- 2) Culture can strengthen a particular social order in public spaces. (p.65)
- 3) Culture has been manipulated skilfully as a tool for gentrification in degraded neighbourhoods. (p.65)

With the rise of the creative industries, also graffiti and street art found greater acceptance and public recognition. “With the rise to prominence of creative city discourses graffiti and street art have been revalued as creative practices” (McAuliffie ,2012, p.17). Graffiti and street art, are now considered part of a city’s identity and cultural representation, and play an active role in the impacts of culture. “What is new for this contemporary cohort of writers and artists is the wider official and public recognition of the value of the creative industries” (McAuliffie, 2012, p.14). “Creative workers’ are busy bridging graffiti and contemporary art worlds” (McAuliffie, 2012, p.17). Graffiti and Street artists in the contemporary city are often working as hybrids using their

skills acquired in public spaces in various forms “Street artists can now be found in design agencies, working as freelance graphic artists, completing commissioned public works, designing shoes, and even curating their own exhibits” (Gleaton, 2012; p.51). In fact, the rise of the creative economy sees the deviant careers of graffiti writers (Lachmann, 1988) increasingly overlapping with legitimised (even valorised) career paths involving their emergence as members of the creative class” (McAuliffe & Iveson, 2011, p.136)

This blending of professions has allowed it for graffiti and street artists to slowly move away from a reputation which is linked to criminal activities and instead being recognised as part of the creative establishment of a city. “It is now common, for that cultural capital is to be leveraged for financial capital by individual graffiti writers, who themselves are often participating in corporate or municipal efforts to leverage graffiti’s cultural capital for branding projects – including efforts to position corporations or places in relation to the so-called ‘creative economy’”. (McAuliffe & Iveson, 2011, p.136)

Yet, even though graffiti and street art are being incorporated within the creative industries and the promotion of the creative city image, due to its conflicting history and continued illegal activities, it still resonates as a provocative counter movement and insurgency against the authorities of a city. “Graffiti and neo-graffiti artists’ expressive agency functions as acts of resistance and place-making in the creative cities frameworks as it applies to urban public spaces” (Fraser, 2016, p.32) “Urban public space are carefully shaped by those in control, the government and corporations, with the intention of creating spaces and citizens within those spaces that can be a functioning part of their neoliberal capitalist system. Graffiti and neo-graffiti act as a visual interruption to this system” (Fraser, 2016, p.32). In the end, “graffiti is about the question of who has the right to (co)design the urban landscape. Graffiti can be conceptualized as an important contribution to the oeuvre of postmodern cities: to “an urban reality whereby use ... still wins over lucre and profit (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 102).” (Van Loon, 2014, p. 9)

2.2. *Creative Cluster*

2.2.1 Creative City

For this research the creative city model, its cultural quarters “a city's cultural environment is defined by its different types of creative production and their milieu or "scenes" (Silver, Clark & Rothfield, 2006) and defining characteristics will be a central thematic. Cities like New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Hong-Kong or Singapore have one thing in common, they are globally known for having a certain magnitude for creative individuals and are branded as such themselves. Artists, designers and architects, locate within those cities, in which, they feel inspired and where the quality of life is considered high. Hosting a large number of these individuals can be considered beneficial for a couple of reasons “Creative people and their innovations have long been thought to be generators of urban vitality (Fischer, 1975; Jacobs, 1961, 1969; Park, 1928)”. (Currid, 2007, p.455). Further, “creative people, culture and the arts always enhanced the urban image and made cities more livable” (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.149). The creative aspect of a city draws investment from abroad and brings professionals as well as tourists from all over the world to the creative capitals of this planet. Thus, there is a “growing consensus that art and culture have become important contributors to regions and cities” (Currid, 2007, p.462). “According to R. Florida (2002) the so called creative class is strongly oriented towards large cities and regions that offer a variety of economic opportunities, a stimulating environment and amenities for every possible lifestyle” (Lavanga, 2013, p.11). Generating cultural capital and attracting the creative class has become one of the main focus of much of urban development. “Planners and economic developers have long noted that clustering like-minded firms, labor pools, institutions and resources is important to transferring information, supplies and ideas efficiently, resulting in localized economic benefits” (Currid, 2007, p.460), since “the creative industries, which employs the creative class, are highly dependent upon each other's proximity, as this provides them with competitive advantages through creative exchange and networking” (Currid, 2007, p.460).

2.2.2. On locational factors

Locational factors play a major role in the formation of clusters and cultural quarters. Industries and creative enjoy certain advantages from each others proximity. As Florida (2002) further notes, the clustering of creative, within cities is mainly due to employment opportunities, diversity and

higher tolerance to diversity and artistic expression there. “The notion “localization economies” denotes the positive externalities these firms may enjoy from such co-location. These include labor pools, unrelated knowledge transfer, product combinations and skills that can be shared easily within a working environment but also on a social level. “Skills, knowledge, and ideas flow with labor between firms, they are also exchanged outside the economic sphere, through urban social life” (Lorenzen, 2008, p.5). An essential part of a city’s creative identity according to Florida (2002) is that it develops “a culture of openness and cosmopolitanism that attracts workers of the ‘creative class’. Attracting such individuals requires that cities cultivate urban neighborhoods with clusters of small-scale music and performing arts venues, art galleries and trendy nightclubs, as well as create opportunities for collaboration between arts organizations and private enterprise.” (Collins & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2016, p.402). Within such environment the creative industries can thrive and stimulate economic growth as well as social exchange. In order to better understand the dynamics of the creative city, the next section will look into the description of a creative cluster.

2.2.3. Creative clusters, cultural quarters

A creative district locates, embodies and represents a place where people can perform their differences from mainstream behavioral norms and social roles in relative safety. (Zukin & Braslow, 2011, p.136). Within cities, the creative class tends to cluster within such districts, that are “more densely supplied with cultural producers and institutions” (Currid, 2007 p.461) and which are famous for their distinct character and “buzz”. Areas that have a certain charm, where housing is affordable and the possibilities for socializing through industry events. “Industry events play a dual role, both formally displaying culture and providing informal networking sites.” (Currid, 2007 p.458)

and nightlife (nightlife as a source of inspiration; a way to meet cultural producers) are easily accessible. The research done by Elizabeth Currid (2007), provides further findings on how “designers, artists and musicians can engage one another and advance their careers through their social lives because of dense clustering of different creative subgroups within the same limited geography (p.460) and gives further evidence on the importance of agglomeration.

“Agglomeration played a crucial role in providing access to others” (p.460) and “the necessity for "scenes," nightlife and formal industry events in the creative economy” (p.458) which offer possibilities for the creative class to advance their careers, find exposure and create job opportunities.

Those clusters attract the creative class for the same factors all around the world. Essential are lifestyle, social interaction, diversity, authenticity and identity or quality of a place (Florida, 2002). The “bohemian index” shows, that when “a place is diverse, tolerant, and amenity-rich, indicating its ability to attract not just other artists, but also other high-quality human capital” (Currid, 2007, p.456), the creative class feels themselves at home. In many cities, cultural industries strategies are used to form “cultural quarters” and “cultural districts” One, “main trend emerging at national level is the development of creative clusters fostering innovation through strong links between art, new media and technology, education and businesses”. (Lavanga, 2013, p.10). Those “cultural clusters are usually developed and initiated by local or regional governments in from of public-private partnerships” (Lavanga, 2013, p.10). Two main reasons for the implementation of such quarters become clear. On the one hand to foster a creative community and form a creative establishment within the city, which can be branded to the outside, and on the other hand to made it easy for creative individuals to meet, exchange ideas, information and connect on a professional as well as on a social level.

“The idea behind the development of cultural clusters is that cultural industries have strong place-bound characteristics, relying on local production networks. (Lavanga, 2013, p.10). “They are labour-intensive; their organization model is rather the network interaction of micro and small producers than the supply-chain hierarchy of fordist industries. (Lavanga, 2013, p.10) and last but not least the economics of scope “generated through spatial proximity, which induces them to share production facilities, draw on the same audience and engage in collaborative marketing” (Lavanga, 2013, p.10)

Creative industries strategies and forming clusters are often used by local governments in order to revitalize certain areas and bring new life into districts that have experienced a decline in economic terms. Many cities have used cultural revitalization strategies promoting a neighborhood’s ethnic heritage, establishing a cultural or arts district or developing cultural and community centers or local museums. (Collins & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2016). “The purpose of such projects is often to attract human capital, business growth and investment” (Collins & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2016, p.401)

2.3 *Gentrification, an unsustainable process*

2.3.1. Gentrification theory

The process of gentrification, has been central to urban development studies. It can be understood as a process which is “part of a ‘new urban political economy’ that regards urban development mostly as a result of economic, especially capitalist interests in urban spaces” (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140). Smith (1996) describes gentrification as a “product of investment in space production and not a result of consumer sovereignty” (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140).

“Gentrification is first and foremost displacement, and thus a negative phenomenon for many underprivileged residents” (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140). What this definition withholds is the process that leads to this final outcome of displacement and increase of social inequalities, Hom (2010) on gentrification, writes that the process is to be divided into four phases.

The first phase, marking the beginning of regeneration of an area with, “Pioneers moving into the still de-valorized neighborhoods (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140). Followed by a second phase and the ”symbolic valorization’ of a still economically de-valorized area. Art galleries, artists’ studios, arts related or ‘artsy’ shops and an accompanying official media campaign changes the image of this neighborhood into an ‘exceptional place’. (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140).). In the third phase, the gentrification process moves from symbolic valorization to ‘economic valorization, “rent improves infrastructure and the supply of bourgeois shops: ‘symbolic’ cultural capital is replaced by ‘real’ cultural capital (Zukin, 1990). [...] A major wave of affluent gentrifiers move in and in the first long-term poor residents are displaced. (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140). In the last phase, “wealthy buyers and high-price tenants pay an additional ‘exceptional’ rent for the now widely known ‘exceptional place’ that contributes to their status distinction. By now all pioneering artists have been displaced and the formerly bohemian, alternative, or genuine innovative (creative) arts scenes have been replaced by arts institutions that cater exclusively to the gentry of the last phase.” (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140).

Once this point is reached, an area has been put upside down and there is little to nothing left of its initial identity and authenticity. Known examples of this process include SOHO, New York, Kreuzberg, Berlin or Shoreditch in London. Places that initially were inhabited and revitalized by artists and the creative class, and where today commerce and profit are dominating the area. The cultural aspect of these districts has diminishes to a level, which is considered not considered

attractive anymore to the creative class. Either because of lost interest ('re-location') or because of the rising real estate prices (displacement). The "cultural, new middle class is typically displaced by those employed in the financial sector – a process which has been alternatively termed 'financification'" (Lees, 2000, p.398). The ones responsible for its positive development move away. "Older tenants are evicted or displaced, urban infrastructure unrelated to the lifestyles of the urban gentry is demolished or 'recreated' as 'authentic neighbourhood' feeling" (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140)

Within the process of gentrification lies the great paradox of artistic and cultural economies. Namely "that density and cultural vitality support the social milieu that makes cultural production possible, and yet the same attributes attract non artists who bid up the cost of living, thus pricing out cultural producers (Currid, 2007 p.463). As described above, "the use of culture in the reastheticisation of the urban environment also brings the danger that areas, as they become more attractive places in which to live and work, experience gentrification" (Joanne Sharp, Venda Pollock & Ronan Paddison, 2005, p.1014). There are many who are marginalised by processes of redevelopment, or who are displaced by the process of regeneration (Smith, 1993)." (Joanne Sharp, Venda Pollock & Ronan Paddison, 2005, p.1016). The critical shift between revitalization and gentrification lies somewhere between the second and third phase where a "district's creative reputation becomes a marketing tool for more affluent cultural consumers" (Zukin & Braslow 2011, p.136). To give an example of a marketing tool related to a district creative reputation is the implementation of visual representation (Graffiti & Street Art)

2.3.2. The use of culture in policy

Policy makers have long realized the impact that art and culture can have and how it can function as a catalyst for the regeneration for certain districts. The "potential of art and culture as a tool of wide-scale urban renaissance, social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal" (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.49). "Both art & culture, and gentrification have been extensively used in public policy as instrument of physical and economic regeneration of declining cities, and the two are often associated in a relationship of mutual dependence" (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.49). Even though it is defined as unstable process: "By displacement, gentrification diminishes the 'just city' because it reduces the quality of life especially of the poorest for the benefit of the riches (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140) it is being targeted in urban policies, as "urban renaissance policies are not primarily concerned with addressing the social and economic problems of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. They seek other, desirable but different, outcomes: urban

containment, physical renewal, improving the vitality and quality of urban environments, and strengthening the urban economy” (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.52). Policy initiatives aim at generating cultural production and consumption which is being facilitated “through public art and artistic events, and particularly through the creation of landmark physical infrastructure for the arts, such as galleries, museums and concert halls” (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.46). The “the main driver of gentrification is public policy which seeks to use positive gentrification as an engine of urban renaissance. This involves the use of public art and cultural facilities as a promoter of regeneration. (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.39).

2.3.3. On the role of the artists

Various scholars, have asked for the role of the artists within urban (re)development process, For instance, Richard Lloyd (2006) describes “the growing and enduring significance of artists and artist-related activities”. (Kirchberg & Kagan, 2013, p.140) “Creative people and their innovations have long been thought to be generators of urban vitality (Fischer, 1975; Jacobs, 1961, 1969; Park, 1928)”. (Currid, 2007, p.455) It is certain to say, that many districts have been revitalized by artists and entrepreneurs. Examples were mentioned earlier. Further examples include districts such as in Amsterdam (‘Red Light District’), where “artists have been explicitly used for a short period of time to renew the image of an area connected with sex, drugs and criminality” (Lavanga, 2013, p.12) or Helsinki where “even though public support has been important, the private initiative and early involvement of artists and creative entrepreneurs have been decisive to the success” of an area. (Lavanga, 2013, p.17). “Cultural analyses of gentrification have identified the individual artist as an important agent in the initiation of gentrification processes in old working-class neighbourhoods.” (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.39) “What the artist par excellence provides as an engine of gentrification is cultural capital” (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005, p.40). “Artist-led processes of urban revitalization, like SOHO in New York or Wicker Park in Chicago. Namely, Art Walk and Gallery Row were ultimately used by city planners and private developers to brand this part of downtown Los Angeles and attract a gentrifying class of artists and other ‘creative professions” (Collins & Loukaitou-Sideris 2016, p.409)

An extensive literature exists on how artists advance the process of gentrification. However less is written on their involvement in the resistance regarding this unsustainable process. We have evidence by Kirchberg & Kagan (2013) on the city of Hamburg where artists managed to mobilize and carry out goals that included a “strong crossover of artistic, social and political objectives” (p.142). What artists started was a “renaissance of political consciousness for a livable and socially

non-exclusive urban environment in Hamburg” (p.142) Which was intended to “oppose the management of the city as a brand, but also how to nurture the city as a community, and to strengthen the inhabitants” (p.143). There are distinctive cultures of resistance against gentrification in which artists involve themselves. Artists and art can also become active in the resistance movement (“the design of the façade being a ‘political statement’ including political slogans and graffiti and an arts performance)” (p.146). “One is “the artists and cultural of visual resistance who commit their recalcitrant acts through detournement, graffiti and symbolic temporary appropriations of spaces” (p.145)

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design (Qualitative approach)

The purpose of this study is to understand the value of graffiti and street art within the urban context and analyse the relationship between this public art form and its environment based on a one specific case study.

The following research question and objectives aim at structuring an extensive body of analysis on the subject matter described above.

The research question: *How do different stakeholders value graffiti and street art in urban areas?*

Objectives:

1. To investigate the relationship between the public art form of graffiti/street art and the enterprises in the Danube Canal area (Case Study)
2. To understand the impact of graffiti and street art on urban revitalisation
3. Establishing a literature that links graffiti and street art with other public art forms

To answer this question and meet its objectives a case study was selected. An area in Vienna known as the *Donaukanal* (Danube Canal). A recreational area with the longest legal walls and graffiti and street art tolerated distance in Europe. The Danube Canal area, was chosen mainly because its unique setting in the heart of the city-centre, which highlights an exceptional contrast between modernity and youth's urban reality and on the other hand the city's old, majestic part constructed during the Habsburg dynasty. Further because of it's breeding ground for urban creativity and clear presence and thus inescapable impact of this form of public art on its surrounding environment.

As, the research design should be in accordance with the objectives of the research (Bryman, 2016), a qualitative approach was chosen carefully, under consideration of the specific context and case of the Danube Canal. The benefits of this research strategy include an inductive approach, which involves gathering data in order to establish a theory (Bryman, 2016). This data was collected through in-depth interviews with various stakeholders significant to the area along the Danube Canal. Their opinions and perceptions were considered vital to form valid conclusions. Reasons, why I choose a qualitative instead of a quantitative analysis were that there

is already an extensive literature available, relying on big data collections and surveying of the public to validate graffiti and street art in their neighbourhood. While literature based on in-depth reasoning and opinion gathering is still scarce. I believe that in order to really understand the value behind this art form I needed to approach the stakeholders who through their social, cultural and economic initiatives are mainly responsible for the revitalisation of the Danube Canal area.

Another reason advocating for a qualitative approach is that there are no actual people residing directly at the Danube canal, which is considered a recreational not a residential area, nonetheless there is a high agglomeration of enterprises (clustering) and businesses on site, which are affecting the developments in neighbouring districts. Further, as various scholars acknowledge. The qualitative research model is defined by its context-sensitivity, which is helpful to increase the researcher's data immersion in this study (Payne and Payne 2004; Babbie 2011). Through in-depth interviews "the complexity and particular nature of the case in question" (Bryman, 2016, p. 66) is brought up, allowing for systematic gathering of detailed information in order to understand a particular setting, person or process (Rutterford, 2012)

The interviews were kept semi-structured and a list of questions, divided into topics, was prepared before hand. Questions had to be adjusted according to the diverse backgrounds and roles of the stakeholders to the area. At the beginning of the interviews a more general understanding on the significance of the area for each interviewee, as well as the areas importance to the city of Vienna was followed, by going more into detail on the stakeholder's locational choices and motivations to work and having moved to the Danube canal area. Further questions on the role of graffiti and street art for urban development and especially for the area at the Danube Canal and their organization were formulated. Last but not least questions were asked on how this areas legality of graffiti and street art has impacted the transformation of the image of a whole city.

The case of the Danube Canal, will prove itself helpful and can offer policymakers, academics and urban planners all around the world with valuable knowledge on how and why to support and incorporate graffiti and street art within their creative city model.

3.2. Sampling – units of Analysis

The sample (n=18) and units of analysis were made up of various stakeholders important to the Danube Canal and were ultimately selected based on their settlement or involvement in the area as well as in the graffiti and street art scene in Vienna. All of the interviewees, carry essentially a part in the revitalisation process of the area. Their settlement to the Danube Canal area varies from 15 years to one year in time. Their diverse backgrounds and businesses make it difficult to categorize them as one, however it is fair to say, that they are all inevitably linked to the creative industries. This holistic approach, of having chosen a greater variety in the selection of the units of analysis not centring around one focus group, “allowed for a comparison of the various insights provided by the different respondents (Creswell 2009). Amongst the interviewees, creative workers and entrepreneurs as well as policy makers were included. A more specific categorization can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Units of analysis

Stakeholders (Danube Canal)	N
Gastronomes	4
Street Artists	4
Galleries (specialising on Urban art)	2
Night-Club	1
Graffiti & Street art Tours	1
Photographers (documenting the Danube Canal area)	1
Festival coordinator (on urban aesthetics)	1
Policy makers	3
Public Art Institution	1
Total number of interviewees	18

In Figure 1, the various stakeholders and the relationship between each other are highlighted. What can be observed is an inevitable connection between the different units. Special emphasis has to be put on the relation between enterprises and artists who on the one hand compete for for space/walls, but on the other hand collaborate on projects and exterior design.

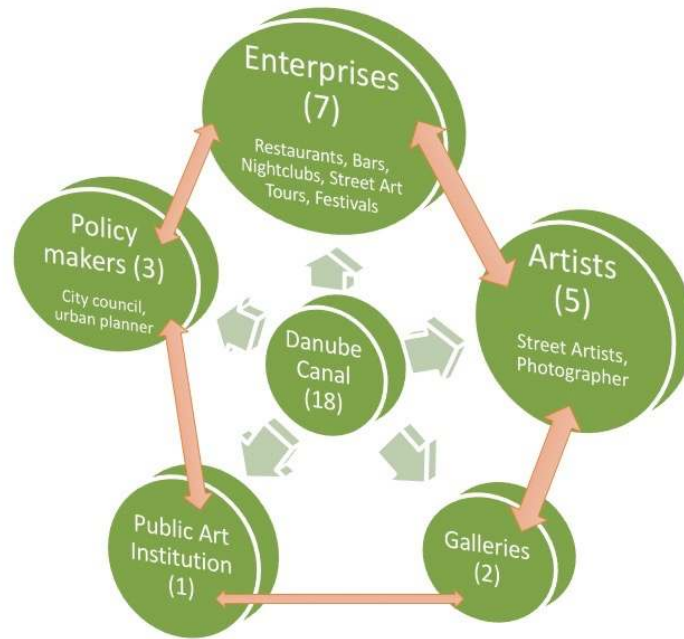


Figure 1. Units of analysis

3.3. Data collection

The data was collected at one point of time, within a period of two weeks in the spring of 2018. The first interview was held on April 30st and the last one on May 14. All the 18 interviews took place in a Face-to-Face (FTF) conversation, except one which was held over Skype. The interviews lasted between 20 and 75 minutes and were mainly held in German with the exception of one which was led in English. Even though interviews were initially planned to be all taken in English, based on the advice of other researchers that interviewees would feel themselves more comfortable to answer questions in their native language and would be able to articulate their thoughts in ways that would prove themselves more efficient in the analysis of the study, I decided to transcribe and then fully translate the interviews from German to English.

Data sampling was conducted first, by contacting various stakeholders via email but also social media platforms (Instagram for the artists). Looking up their contacts, based on an online research, on their location or due to their involvement in the area. In total 20 stakeholders were contacted out of which 13 agreed to meet for an interview. A second step was going to openings of galleries specialising on urban art and speaking to people involved in the scene. Two interviews were

secured through this rather spontaneous initiative. A third step, derived via snowball sampling. Explicitly asking interviewees to share contacts of people who could be vital or interested in to this study. Three more interviews were added, through a snowball effect. All the interviews were recorded in accordance with the person and transcriptions were sent to the individual person before including it into the study.

3.4. Data Analysis

After having transcribed and translated the interviews into English, thoughts, comments and notes were added. Subsequently the answers to the interview questions, were coded. “Moving from generated codes towards more abstract conceptualisations” (Bryman 2016), and categorised into different fields of topics. Three main topics could be established from the data gathered, which were then marked with different colours. The first overarching theme was concerned with culture and creativity on site (Graffiti & Street art, legal walls, conflicts), the second topic focused on clustering (locational factors, city/neighbourhood branding, advantages & disadvantages) and the third topic on gentrification (urban development/revitalisation & cultural policy initiative such as WienerWand). Through this categorisation and colour fragmentation, similarities and differences in the answers become clear and patterns for example between the same group of stakeholders emerged. A free transcription software was used (oTranscribe) in order to enhance the process.

3.5. Limitations

A general limitation concerning all qualitative research is its objectivity, and that its findings are gathered based on the interviewees point of view. This can lead to certain biases, as they choose sides and favour a position that could be beneficial to them or people in their network. A further limitation in qualitative research is that it is nearly impossible to connect with everybody concerned with the study a researcher is dealing with. This concern is especially valid if a large number of people important to the context are left out or only one group of stakeholders would be included. In this case however most of the stakeholders were included. Only three stakeholders, that would have definitely enhanced the data were left out due to an overload of work as the case with an architect responsible for having developed the concept of the area, or as had been the case with two nightclubs due to a tight schedule of partying and having to recover during the day. Definitely a limitation was the time-frame in which this study was conducted. A last limitations

was having to translate the interviews from German into English, even though I carefully translated word to word and the original meaning was kept, small variations not influential to the outcome of this thesis might have occurred

4. The Case Study ‘Danube Canal’

Since this study focuses on one specific area in Vienna it is important to introduce the place and give an overview on its specific setting and context. The Danube Canal is a side arm of the Danube river, flowing through the city centre of Vienna. It incorporates a total length of 17,3 kilometres. Unlike other cities, like Paris, London or Rotterdam, which build their whole infrastructure around their waters, making it of a central significance to its citizens, the Danube Canal in its past compared to a rather unattractive place, with few green spots, concrete floor and dirty water. Its historical context is a rather triste one with few noteworthy exceptions, as for instance, it being a pivot for food commerce and the existence of the fish market in the 1800 century as well as the possibility for children to use it as an adventure playground, during low water. (Peter Payer, 2011)

For this thesis relevant are its developments over the past 25 years. The time in which the Danube Canal experienced a continuous revitalisation and expansion of its usage by private initiatives as well as through the public. Nowadays, it is considered a real hotspot in the city, comparable to places like the Karlsplatz or Museumsquartier, and is branded to locals and tourists as the only recreational area in the middle of the city, where especially during the summer months, the Viennese experience a diverse and vibrant urban life.

The image it represents today, didn't happen overnight but took decades to be acknowledged. An ‘urban oasis’ (WienTourismus) in between concrete walls in the city centre of Austria's capital. Instead for years, it was symbolic for a topographic and social break line crossing the entire city, where the inner-city part around the 1st district was meant for the wealthy and social upper class, while on the other side of the canal, city-outwards, the districts made up of the 2nd, were populated by immigrants the Jewish community and the working class people. Up until, the millennium turn and even beyond it, the Danube Canal had been considered: the sewage of Vienna, where only the “scum” of the city (punks, sprayers, criminals and addicts) would go to enjoy their spare time. It's name including the word ‘Kanal’ which is often referred to as sewage, which in fact it had been to the city as far up as till 2003 (the sewerage of the whole city was released there including, to some extent the garbage collectors, who would unleash parts of the waste they had compiled directly into the Danube canal water) and the bad smell that came with it made it a deterrent and very uninviting place.

From the 1980s onwards, leisure and cultural activities were initiated, by the city of Vienna in collaboration with smaller enterprises, which started to set in motion the revival of the area. The first remarkable facility was a showboat called, Z-Club which opened in 1984. A year later the first remarkable facility was a showboat called, Z-Club which opened in 1984. A year later the first restaurant ‘Johann Strauss’ opened its decks (also a boat) and included Waltz dancing hours in their program. What followed in 1988 was an art and culture market “Kunst & Kultur Markt am Donaukanal” on weekends in the summer and a place for the alternative art collective Agora, which is still operating today.

In 1991 plans by the city council, started to be developed to completely redevelop the area with the goal of integrating the Danube Canal into the city. Up to this point, the slow revitalisation of the area was stimulated by the modernisation of the waste incinerator in Spittelau remodelled by Friedensreich Hundertwasser. Giving this waste disposal site an artistic touch and turning it into a city landmark, would prove itself beneficial especially in recent years (between 2010 – 2018) nurturing the development along the railway-arcs in Spittelau, which are now being used by night-clubs, start-ups and artist studios.

With the deportation of Flex into the area by the City of Vienna, in 1995, the first underground music venue found its home along the Danube canal. What followed was an audience that was affiliated with subcultures. From techno music to smaller alternative bands, Flex offered a new unique program in an for that time unusual setting. The ‘summer stage’ was added a year later attracting a different sort of audience, however it took until the turn of the millennium that the Danube canal began to be integrated into urban life. In the Urban Development Plan (STEP) of 2005, (a newer version was released in 2014) the Danube Canal was targeted as one of the 13 core areas for urban development in Vienna and became a centre of attention to architects and urban planners. The opening of the Strandbar Herrmann in 2005 is considered by many as an icebreaker, ultimately moving the the Danube canal for the first time into the focus of the media and into the eye of the public. Ever since the Danube canal has experienced an ever growing number of visitors and expansion of a clustered nightlife economy. In addition to the growing popularity of the area a Masterplan (2007) was developed, in order to protect its diversity and secure its use to the public as well as private initiatives. The revitalisation and image change of the Danube canal, have ever since attracted a growing interest by private enterprises, more than 23 organizations are now located in the Danube canal area. This has lead to an extreme increase in the usage and reduction of public spaces.

Discussions around the usage of the space have been inflated by citizens' groups, political parties and less by the media due to the area having reached a point where commerce is dominating everyday life along the water. As the findings of this study will reveal, especially small-scale entrepreneurs and creative fear about their existence at the Danube Canal, and the process of gentrification is starting to leave its marks on the neighbouring districts. One group of creative especially concerned of the recent developments at the Danube Canal are coming from the graffiti and street art scene who have been a vital part of the area since the beginning of the 1990s. With the first legal wall being placed at the Danube canal still under the era of major Dr. Helmut Zilk, the Danube Canal became an instant reference point for the graffiti scene in Vienna. For a time, it would only be known to sprayers and people associated with the scene. In 2004, the project Wienerwand was brought into life, under the conduct of major Michael Häupl and in cooperation with representatives from the graffiti scene a commission was formed who advocated for the establishment of a greater number of legal walls, since then 21 legal walls were added in the city of Vienna with three of them being located along the Danube canal. This next two paragraphs are directly taken and translated from the webpage of Wienerwand and describe its function as well as a personal note by major Michael Häupl explaining the intention behind the project.

“As part of the Wienerwand project, the city of Vienna is offering legal space to young artists from the graffiti scene. The areas are marked by WienerTaube as Wiener Wand and are associated with conditions of use. (Wienerwand.at)

Vienna is a city of cultural openness, lived tolerance and humanitarian engagement. We are committed to cultural diversity, cultural open-mindedness, empowerment and acceptance. The City of Vienna supports the diversity of artistic expressions; In addition to traditional cultural sites, youth culture also finds its place in this city. Graffiti is one of the most visible, and certainly one of the most discussed forms of expression of youth culture. Graffiti is art, but graffiti is also criticism and rebellion and, like any other art, sometimes deals with the social situation in an uncomfortable way. The project WienerWand, with the establishment of new legal graffiti walls, is intended to support this art practice and promote dialogue between the writers and the public. In many cities, graffiti is seen as a purely criminal act that can only be countered by rigorous prohibitions. We believe that tolerance and a broadly based discussion are the better way.

Therefore I wish the project Wienerwand good luck.”

(quoting “Wienerwand.at”, n.d.)

Since its inauguration the Danube Canal has transformed into a mecca for graffiti and street art, with amateurs up to international street art superstars using the surfaces along the Canal. What the findings will further show is that, it has allowed for a new generation of local artists in Vienna to use these walls as training grounds and to experiment with different aesthetics, forms and motives, while not having to worry about judicial punishment or imprisonment for reasons of vandalism. This new wave of exciting young artists has led to the rise of the subculture from the sewers of Vienna into established gallery spaces, slowly transforming the negative image that the general public associates with this public art form into a positive one. Even though media coverage by newspapers such as *derStandard*, *Die Presse*, *Der Kurier* or *Die KronenZeitung* and discussions in public forums, are still predominantly negative towards the graffiti and street art, we see a shift in coverage on tourism in Vienna. Organizations are increasingly using graffiti and street art at the Danube Canal to brand Vienna as a creative city, and showing a younger and modern side of Vienna that stands in contrast to the historical sites and museums, that normally attract tourists into the city.

For instance, LonelyPlanet writes in one of their headlines: “When the heat turns up in Austria’s capital, the Viennese head to the Donaukanal for refreshment, rejuvenation and relaxation. With long summer days stretching until late September, there’s plenty of opportunity to explore the energetic paths dripping with street art on either side of the canal that splits the city” (Planet, 2017) Takeusanywhere writes on street art in Vienna “The most obvious place to look for street art in Vienna are the banks of the Donaukanal which in fact are one big urban canvas” (@takeusanywhere, 2016). Another especially popular webpage to the younger generations CultureTrip, writes: “This area (Donaukanal Strasse) presents some good opportunities to spot some street art that decorates the grey concrete of the canal’s pathways” (Jackson, n.d.) further in another article specialising on street art: “The concrete walls aligning the Danube Canal are like one long blank canvas, inviting underground artists to make their mark” and “bridges and walkways are covered with splashes of colour, combining conservative architecture with an unconventional urban edge” (Jackson, n.d.). Last but not least a blogger from the UK writes “The street art at the Danube Canal, however, is energetic and vibrant, and helped me to connect to a city that I had struggled to relate to previously” (Awcock, 2017)

With the progressive commercialisation of the area and the overpopulated use, the surfaces used, by the artists to spray have started to disappear again, ultimately forcing them to relocate their activities to less known walls and illegal spots back into the peripheries of the city. In order to

secure public space and define clear rules on the usage of space Design and Development guidelines (2013) were added in addition to the Masterplan defining three different space usage concepts for larger areas:

- 1) Enabling (facility) spaces
- 2) Consumption-free recreational use
- 3) Commercial use

The Design and Development guidelines (2013) are an additional and “more detailed continuation and completion of the master plan, with the aim to formulate an instrument for the further development of the Danube Canal, the strengthening of public space, as well as clear rules of the game for projects on the Danube Canal”. (‘Gestaltungs- und Entwicklungsleitlinien für den Wiener Donaukanal, 2014). Within this document it is acknowledged that “the development of the last years on the Danube Canal has mainly promoted gastronomy and city beaches” (‘Gestaltungs- und Entwicklungsleitlinien für den Wiener Donaukanal’, 2014) as well as that the “thus experienced attractiveness of the place and increase in value of the situation results in a use and investment pressure of private investors”. (‘Gestaltungs- und Entwicklungsleitlinien für den Wiener Donaukanal’, 2014). It therefore suggests “a rhythm of free space and non-consumption oriented spaces after the phase of activation by commercial operators” (‘Gestaltungs- und Entwicklungsleitlinien für den Wiener Donaukanal’, 2014) and that “the future of this space is not to be "blocked", but explicitly kept free for spontaneous, self-developing, participatory projects” (‘Gestaltungs- und Entwicklungsleitlinien für den Wiener Donaukanal’ 2014). Whether this will be the case is to be awaited, however the opening of the ‘Blumenwiese’ vis-à-vis of ‘Motto am Fluss’ raises the doubts, that the area will be able to protect its public spaces, gradually gentrifying the area along the water leaving less and less space to the ones that are mainly responsible for having transformed the area into what it is today.

5. Findings & Discussion

In this section I will present the findings of my qualitative study and link them to the theoretical framework of the literature review. The first part of the findings will revolve around defining the Danube Canal as a creative cluster something that hasn't been done before, but rather was it seen as an attraction park for grown ups and leisure related activities. What follows are the findings on the impact that graffiti and street art has had on the area, among other things answering the research question on how stakeholders value this public art form in the urban context, as well as compare the literature on gentrification with the current situation in the area.

5.1. The Danube Canal, a creative cluster.

As described in the part of the case study, not all to long ago the Danube Canal was not considered a popular place, and creativity certainly didn't play a significant role for the area. Neither were there pubs, eateries or restaurants, attracting an audience into the area.

As one of the interviewees retains:

“A couple of years ago you didn't want to go to the Danube canal. It was a degenerated area, from drug deals and other little crimes, to the smell of the canal, the Viennese people would avoid going there.” (Interview 2, gallery owner)

This situation has changed drastically over the last couple of years having developed from an area that was notorious for its discouraging atmosphere into one of the main hotspots of the city.

“This area (Danube Canal), which has been one of the most degraded places in the city has become to be a striving center for arts and culture” (Interview 15, project owner/photographer).

Arts and culture were strategically used by the city council to redevelop the area and were aimed at generating an inclusive and diverse milieu in the center of the city.

As the Danube Canal coordinator recalls:

“The development at the Danube Canal has taken a very natural process, rather than looking for big investors, the city of Vienna looked into a variety of different scenes, that

could be tasked with regenerating the area and giving it a new image. Stakeholders within the creative industries (arts, culture and gastronomy), with a focus on the nightlife economy, were targeted in order to establish a diverse and inclusive offer along the waterfront. (Interview 17, Danube Canal coordinator)

Nowadays, a definition used by Florida (2002) for describing a creative cluster within the contemporary city, is applicable to the Danube Canal region. The area represents “a culture of openness and cosmopolitanism that attracts workers of the ‘creative class’. Attracting such individuals requires that cities cultivate urban neighborhoods with clusters of small-scale music and performing arts venues, art galleries and trendy nightclubs, as well as create opportunities for collaboration between arts organizations and private enterprise.” (Florida 2002).

A creative cluster further incorporates, diversity and tolerance this is definitely the case at the Danube canal various interviewees state:

“What happens at the Danube canal, is the meeting of different social classes” (Interview 14, street artist)

“I see it as a place for everyone, it doesn't matter what your working for, from which social background you come from” (Interview 5a, gallery owner)

“Its the diversity that forms the Danube canal and makes it to something special” (interview 12, night-club owner) – referring to the great variety of different cultural and culinary offers at the Danube Canal

I love him. For me the Danube canal is a different city within the city of Vienna, it mediates a feeling of freedom, which I believe comes very much from the graffiti scene. (Interview 11; artist)

“There is a high tolerance from the public towards graffiti and street art. Also the police and government tolerate it along the Danube canal. Even though not all the walls are officially approved legal to be used.” (Interview 6)

Further approval of the creative character of the area and force of attraction to the creative class is the practice of a public art form that has been vital to the area's development ever since the establishment of the first legal graffiti wall in 1994. As Landry (2000) writes on creative cluster in relation to public art "Public art plays an important role in the production of urban space. Public art can be seen to contribute to the production of an innovative or creative milieu." (Landry, 2000, p. 119). Further "public art, including graffiti, confirms a district's "creative" reputation" (Zukin & Braslow, 2011, , p.133). People associated with the scene have ever since the establishment of the first legal surface, used the area as a meeting point.

"The Danube Canal is one of the biggest, if not the biggest open-air gallery of Europe. Through this superlative it is of great significance and has gained a high profile even on an international level. We have three legal walls, this attracts the artists and through the restaurants, bars and metro-stations we have also an audience for the graffiti and street art." (Interview 11)

Another creative practice that flourishes along the waters of the Canal is the electronic underground music scene, with venues such as **Flex**, **das Werk** or **Die Grelle Forelle** attracting local as well as international music producers and DJs to gather there on the weekends.

"Grelle Forelle functions as an institution for electronic music, everybody interested in electronic music goes there. Another example is Das Werk, which is directed to a different public. It's more politically orientated, left-wing". (Interview 9, artist in residence at the Danube Canal)

Through the settlement of this two creative subcultures at the Danube Canal, workers and organizations of the scenes experienced "localization economies". This has been the case as nightclubs and event organizer frequently incorporate the graffiti and street art in their business model, hiring artists for marketing reasons and in for the promotion of their venue or events. This synergy is exemplary of a creative cluster formation and has helped both the scenes to grow and achieve public recognition.

The Danube Canal has become a focal point for public interest, which means it definitely has some sort of force of attraction. (...)

Different stakeholders on site as well as off site have defined the Danube Canal as creative cluster as well:

“The Danube canal is a creative cluster, it starts here with us and the Grelle Forelle and goes the canal down to the Hafenkneipe” (Interview 12, Das Werk)

“I would definitely say it is a creative maker-space, yet the art world doesn't acknowledge it as such. Often I believe, that those (meant are the high arts institutions), don't define graffiti as art form but see it as something else.” (Interview 3, festival coordinator)

“In my opinion we don't have one cluster at the Danube canal but many, its surface is very long and diverse, for different music genres and a variety of different people. It is also one of the places in Vienna where you see the most public art” (Interview 5, gallery)

In the last statement, lies the difficulty of defining the Danube Canal as one creative cluster. Due to its long distance (17.3km) and the fact that the canal stretch passes various districts of the city, it cannot be as easy centered as for instance a Soho Ottakring, Museumsquartier or a Karlsplatz region, all of which have a defined area and thus can be easier termed as a creative cluster. In comparison to those areas, interviewees answered:

“The Museumsquartier is defined by a specific area and is centered in one. The Danube canal on the other hand is massive and comprises different districts, and parties involved in its development” (Interview I)

“If we compare the Museumsquartier with the Danube Canal, as a creative cluster, it has a defined space, subsidies and among each other interconnectivity between the different institutions located there, working together collaborating on exhibitions.” (Interview 3, festival coordinator)

“The Danube Canal stands over the Museumsquarter and Karlsplatz, you have a greater diversity in activities and cultural offers. On a good day we have more than 30 000 people

walking along the Danube canal. We have much more offers in the gastronomy, there are ateliers, from a cultural perspective the Museumsquartier has a lot to offer especially through its two main museums MUMOK and Leopoldmuseum, however here a lot of contemporary art is happening as well, not as recognized, however I see many young artists coming up from the scene at the Danube Canal. In regards of the gastronomy we by far stand over the Museumsquartier or the Karlsplatz” (Interview 12, nigh-club owner).

5.2. Colourful public art along the Danube Canal

In order to connect the literature on public art with graffiti and street art the following findings highlight similarities and differences of this art form with its sub-category, as well as well as pointing to the significance of graffiti and street art to the area and vice-versa, eventually answering the research question on how stakeholders value graffiti and street art in this specific urban area.

5.2.3. Revitalisation Graffiti

The impact, that public art can have on its surrounding, thanks to its great visibility varies from the quality of the art. In many cities public art installed into neighborhoods or on to building blocks as the case with mural paintings (a modification of the original graffiti), signals a reassessment of the area and an increase in the value of the painted building. Besides the economic impact, it can also have a positive effect on a person’s psychology.

As an art historian, specialized on urban art and offering graffiti/street art tours summarizes:

“People feel themselves more comfortable, they feel safer also because its an expression of civilization. It further stimulates exchange and communication "I don't like this" or I really like this". Not only between the artist and the spectator but also between two spectators. This can lead to community building. It's something that ultimately can link people together, unite them. It creates an identity for the neighborhood and even for whole cities as has been the case with Lisbon”(Interview 11, art historian)

An artist adds:

“It can change the entire visual appearance of an area, it influences the people in the neighborhood, by playfully interacting with the surrounding, stimulating your imagination “ (Interview 13, artist)

Both on an economic spectrum as well as on a psychological level, public art has had a tremendous effect on the area along the Danube Canal. Artists have taken an active role, since the very beginning of its revitalization, transforming the visual landscape of the Danube Canal, by expanding their territory throughout the entire urban stretch. Various stakeholders point to the significance of the graffiti and street art in the the area’s revitalization.

“The Danube Canal was revitalized through graffiti/street art, it became a colorful and lively area, with many things to see.” (Interview 2, festival coordinator)

“The graffiti artists have had a great influence on establishing a scene in the area and also on having revitalized the area.” (Interview 10, gastronome)

“Graffiti and street art has transformed a boring and smelly corner into something unique.” (Interview 15)

“Graffiti and street art was here (at the Danube Canal) first, then restaurants, bars and nightclubs followed. There is now clearly a healthy synergy between the two, which is pollinating for everyone.” (Interview 11, gastronome)

Nowadays the area has turned into a main attraction point all year long, while most of the gastronomy closes during the winter months at the Danube Canal, the graffiti and street artists continue working throughout the year constantly adding new color patterns and changing the visual landscape along the water. The area has become the newest hotspot in town. Two interviewees describe the current state of the Danube Canal as such:

“If I look at the Danube canal today, it is one of the most thriving areas of the city, if not the most stimulatory meeting point of the city, especially during the summer. You have sport, culture, including the sprayers who are a big part of it, you have little parks for

children and families there and different amusement options. It has really become a local recreation area, in the center of the city, while 10 years ago there was nothing here”

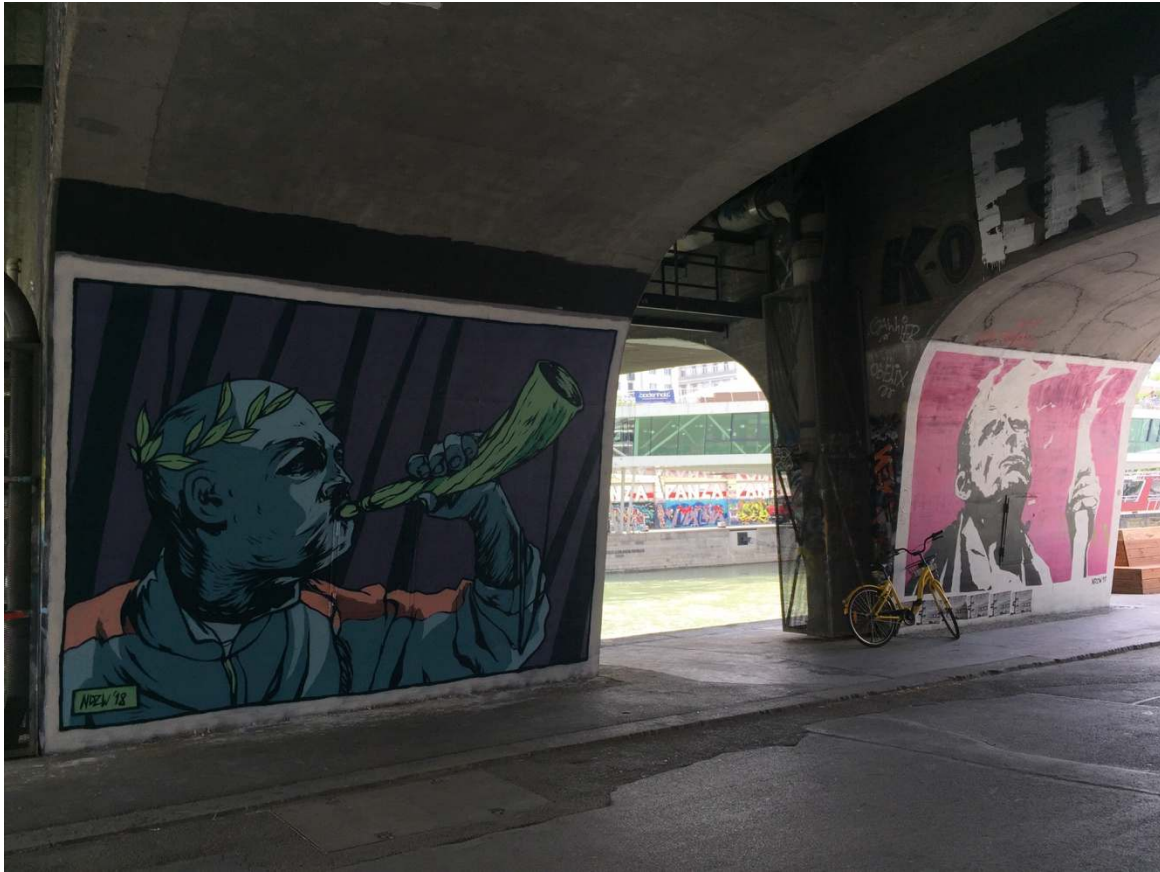
(Interview 9, entrepreneur)

Not only has the Danube Canal, become an area that attracts the Viennese population, but also has it gained importance in the branding of the city as a creative and modern capital for foreign investment and especially cultural tourism. Of growing significance, in promoting Vienna to a younger more alternative crowd of visitors, is the graffiti and street art scene along the Canal. With AirBnB and other enterprises, adding to their experiences, a graffiti/street art tour, InstagramWalks and workshops on how to spray-paint, tourism is being channeled towards the Danube Canal.

The art historian, offering graffiti/street art tours adds:

“A very new phenomenon is that people are travelling to cities for the sole purpose of visiting the graffiti and street art sites, through this a whole city area can gain and make money out of it.” (Interview 11)

The commercialization of this art form has mainly been possible, due to an international reputation it has gained, for being considered an open-air gallery or also mecca for graffiti and street art, attracting internationally acclaimed street artists to paint there themselves, however without making any financial profit from it, neither without a guarantee that their art work will outlast a week, without being tagged or painted over, by someone else.



Picture 3 (source: own)

“The Danube Canal is one of the biggest, if not the biggest open-air gallery of Europe. Through this superlative it is of great significance and has gained a high profile on an international level” (Interview 11)



Picture 4 (source: own)

“In the last 10 years, it has become much more international. We hear from international graffiti artists that come to the Danube canal to create murals and paintings. It has gotten a global reputation, as an inner-city gallery for graffiti and street art.” (Interview 6)



Picture 5 (source: own)

“For me personally, I really like the Danube canal and the art there, because you can recognize so many different artists and style, also there is a respect for more established street artists. Famous street artists that go there, their pieces normally stay untouched for very long. It's like an open gallery. It is definitely a spot in Vienna, for example when friends or artists are visiting us, from different countries, where we take them or tell them to go and check out the street art, spray themselves, there. Its really an attraction related to this art style.” (Interview 5a, gallery)



Picture 6 (source: own)



Picture 7 (source: own)

“What is beautiful about the Danube Canal, is that you have a complete mixture of established street artists and beginners who just want to have fun. In any other place that would not be possible”. (Interview 5b, gallery)

Due to this growing magnitude, the quality of the art works has constantly improved. Even though you still find mainly tags, bombings and other scribbling, some of the facades are now decorated with beautiful art works.



Picture 8 (source: own)

“The quality of the street art along the river has constantly improved, and since a couple of years, started to attract international artists coming from all over the world to spray here. To add to their portfolio, the Danube canal. Not only sprayer but also photographers document the area and specialize on it, due to a certain fascination” (Interview 2, gallery)



Picture 9 (source: own)

“I believe that in the last 10 years the street art at the Danube Canal has become much more professional. At the beginning there was a lot of scribbling, experimenting and now we have really beautiful paintings. Really great art, where when I see them, I have to stop and think wow, respect to the person who did this” (Interview 8, gastronome)



Picture 10 (source: own)

The main reason for the improved quality of art works are the legal walls, since they offer the artists the possibility to experiment and try out different techniques as well as to work on a piece over a longer period of time, without having to fear prosecutions. Through the prominence of the Danube canal artists with an art education have moved from their studio space to the public sphere. This is a crucial factor in the perceived change of quality for the public. The embrace of this artists, has mainly to do with the exposure that they are able to get, through social media (Instagram, Facebook) by placing their art works at the Danube Canal. Last but not least the fact that organizations, situated at the Danube Canal commission art works hiring international as well as locally established street artists in order to paint their facades. As such the Danube Canal has become a platform for artists to showcase their skills and talents and establish their names within the art world.

“On a regional level most definitely, for instance artists such as RUIN, SKIRL, PERK UP, FRIEND, they have used this walls instinctively to their advantage also a CARUS and collectives such as ULFS have gotten to contract works through their exposure at the Danube Canal and have received higher recognition within the art world. At the moment you have PEKS and DEADBEAT HERO, who are using the Danube Canal as a platform. Also a NYCHOS in his early days has consequently used the Danube Canal to promote his art works” (Interview 15)

Artists reflect:

“There are many artists, who have used the walls at Danube Canal but in general legal walls all around the city to gain visibility and grab attention from the public. Wienerwand plays an important role in the promotion of local artists, and many have profited from this initiative”. (Interview 8)

“For BASK, the Danube Canal was a great place for self-marketing purposes. There are a couple of us, who realized this, another example is MANTRA. The Danube Canal is ideal in order to promote your own brand, a single individual and not big cooperations.” (Interview 14, artist)

“I love working with a big format its a platform to present your work, the more public art pieces I do the more requests I get and the more people contact me. At the end of the day I make a living out of working in public spaces, however I like to spray at the Danube canal only for publicity reasons, I prefer to spray a lot more in less known spots and abandoned places.” (Interview 13, artist)

Galleries reflect:

“Surely the Danube Canal offers the possibility to show a great amount of people your work. This in combination with knowing how to use social media platforms to reach an audience can be helpful for establishing a career as a graffiti or mural artist in Vienna. Many artists use the area along the Danube Canal on purpose to gain visibility, they are aware of its magnitude. If you place many of your art works there the chances are high that

through social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter) you can get a higher reach than if you would spray in other parts of the city.” (Interview 2)

“A crucial point that is very good for the quality of the graffiti and street art scene is that we have atelier artists transforming to street artists, because of the higher possibilities to get publicity.” (interview 11)

“Personally I'm checking along the Danube canal for new artists, I look at the ethnographic changes that are happening there and see what's new each season. What is very interesting is to see how artists develop their work, the Danube canal is a great place to observe this process.“ (interview 5a)

Those positive developments for the graffiti and street art scene and the subsequent rise of this subculture have not stayed unnoticed by the enterprises that have located at the Danube Canal over the last 15 years. While many of organizations embrace it and include it in their corporate identity, there are also the ones that value it negative. The following part of the findings will include, statements regarding the value of graffiti and street-art from entrepreneurs and creative workers located at the Danube Canal. Most of the stakeholders, value graffiti and street art as part of the identity of the Danube Canal. “It is a part of it's identity. If you want to open something here, you have to acknowledge graffiti and street art as part of your DNA. Enterprises that move here see graffiti and street art as part of their livelihood” (Donaukanal coordinator). They agree, that it adds vibrancy and a certain atmosphere to the area, which especially attracts a younger “hip” generation of people. By now it has also found acceptance in the older generation of people, who are not scared off by the many tags and bombings on the canal walls.

Basically all of the gastronomes I interviewed at the Danube Canal, see graffiti and street art vital in attracting customers for their businesses “graffiti had a big impact on the frequency of visitors at the Danube canal, which by now is very high, and of which we profit from, of course” (Interview 10). Most of them choose to incorporate graffiti and street art in their business model, by having artists design their facades they adjust themselves to the environment. “You have eateries and businesses, such as Tel Aviv Beach who hire artists and allow them to paint their walls” (Interview 3)

When asked about whether graffiti and street art played a role in their decision to move to the Danube Canal, nearly all of them stated different locational factors as more influential to their decision. “There are other locational factors of greater importance for investors to move to the Danube canal than graffiti/street art,” (Interview 1) for instance, being located at the water, very close to the 1st district (city center) and accessibility for many people, as well as the unique architectural features along the Danube Canal. From the city railway arcs to the Urania building and the possibility to have a restaurant on a boat, or nightclubs in containers all of those were mentioned as inimitable places to the city of Vienna, thus having attracted the various enterprises to the Danube Canal. However once located in the area, these organizations realize the immense gravity that graffiti and street art has on for their customers, who have been observed taking numerous pictures with street art pieces and leading lively discussions on the quality of the art works while enjoying a meal or a drink. “As we can observe, many of the businesses incorporate graffiti and street art trying to fit into the place. Graffiti/Street art is definitely a factor”. (Interview 4)

Besides the efforts from organizations to incorporate graffiti and street art, “street art belongs to our organization, we let artists paint this whole facade last year and will have it renewed in the following weeks for “Das Donaukanaltreiben” (a yearly festival happening in May) (Interview 6),” there are also the ones who try to differentiate themselves, trying to appeal not only to a certain type of audience but to a wider spectrum. “For a cultural institution such as Das Flex, the value of graffiti/street art is much higher than for example for a restaurant such as Motto am Fluss”. (Interview I)

Despite the differences on including graffiti and street art into their organizational model, there is a general consensus between the businesses, that street art and graffiti, is part of the urban development in the area and a main reason for people to come to the Danube Canal and spend their time and money there.

“Graffiti and street art is a part of the whole that makes this urban area special. If I think about it now, how would the Danube canal look like without graffiti, it would not be the Danube canal, it would be a grey and boring place, an area that would remind of the cold war period. Instead it gives the place color, an identity and vitalizes its whole surroundings.” (Interview 7)

Through the general recognition of this art form along the Danube Canal, the graffiti and street art scene in Vienna has experienced a certain image change in recent years, leading away from being identified with criminal activities and vandalism but instead being more and more recognized as an official art form. The tolerance and acceptance, especially from the younger generations is much higher towards graffiti and street art, in comparison to a couple of years ago. With a growing number of institutions, from public museums, public art institutions “due to our institutional background, having commissioned and realized various street art projects it has gained more acceptance in the public realm” (Interview 1), to the WienerLinien and advertising companies advocating street art, as well as festivals dedicated to urban aesthetics, the Calle Libre and galleries such as Oxymoron, “there have been a couple of associations, initiators and organizations who have helped to change the image of graffiti/street art in Vienna, which is now not only negative. Through our gallery we have reached a point where people from outside of the graffiti/street art scene have taken notice of this art form and the art we stand for. (Interview 2), Improper Walls, Inoperable or HilgerNEXT, which are offering the public to see graffiti and street art parts within a private and intimate setting as well as through the curation of massive wall murals, have raised the value and shifted public perception in favor of this public art form. What will hopefully follow next is the media, which is still very much against this freedom of public expression. Also the Danube Canal has played a significant role in the change of public opinion, towards this form of art, in Vienna. “Most people in Vienna don't bear reference to graffiti and street art. Due to the Danube canal the public is more aware of it” (Interview 15) an artist adds “Through the Danube canal even illegal spots got to be considered differently, in the sense that not everything is examined as disruptive.” (Interview 8). The possibility to see such a great variety of graffiti and street art along the Danube Canal and the high frequency of visitors as well as the amount of photos that are uploaded on to the social networks has certainly had its effect on public.

5.3. The Danube Canal in 2018, at a turning point? (Considering Gentrification)

Throughout my findings it became clear, that the Danube Canal has reached a point in its development where smaller enterprises as well as artists started to fear for their long-term existence at the Danube Canal. An increasing number of private investors has been moving into the area occupying facades with their businesses which once were used as public spaces and by artists to paint on. This leads to the fact, that artists now prefer to paint in fringe areas of the Danube Canal, where they can work in peace, without the masses of people strolling by, taking pictures of them at work. “You can't really work at rest there anymore but you have more the

feeling of being in an exhibition space, which is unnecessary for graffiti and street art.” (Interview 8)

One artist summarizes the situation as such:

“It were the artists, who developed the area and acquired the walls that were illegal to paint on. Now it is tolerated by the government and the police doesn’t intervene, that’s why it’s really sad to see, that new organizations are moving into the area every year, claiming the walls and spots, that were once made attractive by the artists. Those investors and enterprises see in the Danube canal the new hot spot of the city, only keeping in mind the profit that they can make from it. What follows is the timbering of public walls, which ultimately disappears. This not only happens with the walls but also with green areas and concrete surfaces. Public spaces which were intended for people to use freely, without having to consume anything are now occupied by restaurants, bars and eateries, where you can only stay if you consume something” (Interview 8).

As the walls become increasingly occupied by restaurants, bars and other enterprises, artists lament that these organizations, instead of supporting the local scene and upcoming artists from the Danube Canal, hire artists with an international reputation to decorate their facades. Most of them don’t invest money into the scene, but instead prefer high profile artists in order to distinguish themselves and create an exclusive area only for people consuming (Interview 12).

Another effect of this increasing agglomeration is that the competition between the artists is raised due to scarcity of space that can be used and the “respect code”, initially a big part of the graffiti culture, for greater pieces of art, loses its significance. “It’s not a place that is attractive to me. It became too artificial. I don’t find it cool or appealing, people there don’t respect the area anymore”. (Interview 13) Even though it is sure, that graffiti and street artist will continue to spray at the Danube canal, due to its central location, high visibility and offer of different walls to experiment on, the public space in the area has to be secured, in order for artists to continue to spray, no matter their reputation and level of proficiency. For some of the people coming from the creative establishment of the city, the Danube Canal has already started to lose its authenticity, and they by now prefer other places to go and spend their time at. “For artists it has become an area that is not so attractive anymore, while for the public and the enterprises it became the number one hot spot of the city” (Interview 11)

Not only for the art community at the Danube Canal the increasing density and loss of public space is worrying but also for smaller enterprises located at the Danube Canal. As highlighted by various entrepreneurs in the area, this year will mark a turning point and will decide on future developments in the area. This has mainly to do with the new contracting of the licenses for tenants that will go out during this year. The Danube Canal as a property is divided into three assets. It belongs 1/3 to the government of Austria, 1/3 the county of Lower-Austria and 1/3 the city of Vienna together they will ultimately decide on the distribution of the areas. “It is unsure at the moment how many of the current tenants will be able to keep their spot. If it should turn out, as many of us believe, that only capital will decide on who will be able to keep their spots, then this will have a very negative impact on the developments at the Danube canal.” (Interview 13)

Further another entrepreneur states: “We are at a moment where the city of Vienna wants to end ongoing loan contracts for smaller entrepreneurs and replace them by big gastronomies. (Interview 18) Keeping this in mind, many fear, that the prices for the rent will increase, ultimately pushing out smaller enterprises who will make space for larger enterprises. Some also expressed their concerns of one big investors wanting to take over the area, this of course will raise the competition with the ones that are able to pay the higher rents, fortunate enough to stay at the Danube Canal. One of the entrepreneurs, comments on this with: “This would be the endpoint of the canal, once you have only the elitist class here and the alternative side has completely vanished from the waterfront, graffiti and street art will disappear as well” (Interview 15).

“Current discussions on the development of the Danube Canal and politics point to the expansion of the gastronomy, which will result into mass consumption, away from this urban feeling and towards larger gastronomies with big corporations behind instead of small entrepreneurs as still mainly the case here”. (Interview 4)

At this moment (11.06.18) however all of this are only predictions and we will have to wait and see for actual outcome. However, what is sure after all and were entrepreneurs and artists agree upon is that the area along the Danube Canal will continue to flourish over the years to come. “I believe that for the next two or five years it will continue to be an emerging waterfront” (Interview 16) attracting more people every year, also it will continue to play an even more important role for the tourism sector of the city and thus will attract a growing international audience. Many of the

entrepreneurs still see potential in the development of the area and don't consider the Danube Canal as gentrified yet.

In regard to the whole distance of the Danube Canal there is still a lot of public space available and through the Masterplan, clear rules on the distribution of public and private space have been defined. Still we have to observe the development carefully and with attention to all the different parties involved securing a peaceful with each other that continues to benefit everyone and segregates no one.

6. Conclusion

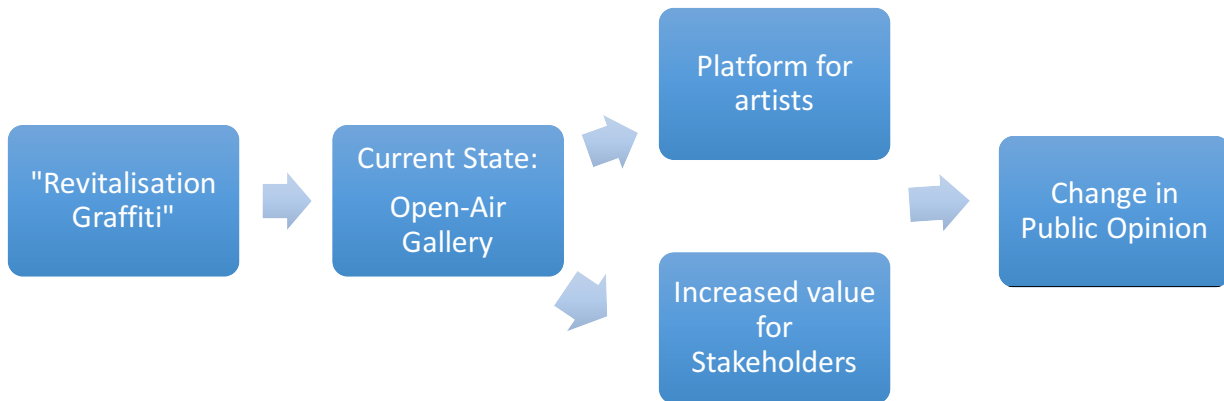


Figure 2 (source: own)

This study aimed at showing the impact that public art, in form of graffiti and street art, can have on an area's urban development by examining the value of this art form for the stakeholders located along the Danube Canal. For both stakeholder groups, the entrepreneurs as well as the artists who work along the Danube Canal, the value of graffiti and street art is of great significance and has helped establish businesses and artistic reputations, that reach beyond the area. On the one hand, as the findings have shown for the enterprises, the transformation of the area into an "open-air gallery" has led to an increased number of visitors, not only by locals but especially tourists, who consider the Danube Canal as the new hotspot in the city.

A first result, is that graffiti and street art have proven a strong magnitude especially to the younger generations (18 to 35 years old) who come in great numbers to the Danube Canal. This has led to increased monetary turnovers for the businesses and allowed them to raise prices, without the consequences of losing customers, but instead attracting wealthier visitors. The area has been promoted by tourist agencies, galleries and festivals, as a more modern side of Vienna and in recent years an infrastructure surrounding graffiti and street art started to appear, with workshops, tours and shops moving into the area, specializing on graffiti and street art related retail and activities.

A second finding is, that graffiti and street art has given the area a specific atmosphere ("vibe") and identity. Numerous enterprises mentioned that they themselves, identify with this public art form trying to incorporate it, into their businesses, in order to add artistic value to their organizations. Rather than confronting it, they recognize graffiti and street art as part of their DNA and as a crucial component of the Danube Canal, which could not be imagined without it. This full embrace however is not supported by everyone and there is a small number of enterprises who don't want to identify with it trying to target a different audience.

A third finding suggests, that for the smaller enterprises, graffiti and street art have been especially of value, as a form of resistance signaling towards bigger investments: "You are not welcome here". A clear example of this has been the tagging and bombing of the Zaha Hadid building located at the Danube Canal since 2005. As such graffiti and street art have functioned as a revitalizing force up to this point, and as a deceleration to the gentrification process happening in the area.

On the other hand, for the artists, the Danube Canal and the activity to spray there has become a central aspect in their marketing strategy and promotion of their individual brand, purposefully placing art works there, in order to reach a wider audience. As an open-air gallery, graffiti and street art along the Danube canal functions for them as a platform to show their art, form alliances with other artists and collaborate on walls and other projects, as well as, become noticed by galleries or hired by agencies or real estate investors to paint facades of buildings all around the city. This has led to established careers for some of the artists and is being noticed by the upcoming generations of street- and even atelier artists, who increasingly move into the area to work. Through this rise of graffiti and street art along the Danube canal and its identified value for both stakeholder groups as well as the increase in quality of the artworks over the years, public opinion in Vienna starts to shift in favor of this art form recognizing its aesthetic value and its positive impact on the area, rather than than seeing it purely as vandalism.

In conclusion it is fair to say that the case of the Danube Canal, has demonstrated a powerful example of the impact that graffiti and street art can have on the urban development of an area. Through the implementation of legal walls and further support by the city council and most stakeholders involved not to restrict graffiti and street art to the legal areas only, but to tolerate its expansion throughout the urban parts of the Danube Canal, it proved to be beneficial for everybody involved. Many of the enterprises have gone to identify themselves and adapt to their environment fully embracing graffiti and street art and there is clearly a positive synergy happening between the commercial world of the businesses located at the Danube Canal and the artists that go there to paint, of which many confirmed that they owned the Danube Canal a fair bit in their career as an artist as well as on a personal level.

6.1. Limitations & Further Research

As this study has been conducted based on a qualitative analysis, one nearly unavoidable limitation has been to include all the the stakeholders located in the area. Especially from a policy perspective this research could have included a greater sample of respondents. Having had included the the perspectives of the two nightclubs would have definitely added value to this

research. However, having interviewed 18 different individuals, this analysis is comprehensive enough and gives extensive insights on the value of graffiti and street art for stakeholders in urban areas. Due to the specific case and setting of the Danube Canal it would be interesting for further research to evaluate the impact on graffiti and street art on a neighborhood based level, focusing on residential areas and see how graffiti and street art can impact leads such type of environments. Furthermore, a specific analysis on the value of graffiti and street art for the tourism sector of the city of Vienna would further prove helpful to evaluate this art form, in regards of city marketing strategies. Last but not least, research could be done on the effects of the implementation of legal walls in different cities around the world and would provide more insights on the positive effects of such policy initiatives for all parties involved.

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