

MISCHUNG: POSSIBLE! CONTEMPORARY MIXED USE IN DENSELY BUILT URBAN QUARTERS

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Mischung: Possible! The CHALLENGE of FLEXIBLE CAPACITIES

Flexible capacities cater for a wide range of uses and therefore potentially play an important role in urbanization processes, both in ecological and economical terms and from the point of view of the current societal challenges (demographic changes, new working conditions and spatial organization, real estate). Yet few measures are available to achieve flexible spatial qualities in new urban developments responding to the societal and technological differentiation. Though these qualities are aimed at in many urban concepts, their actual implementation is blocked by a variety of hardly researched barriers. In the context of the 'Mischung: Possible!' research, mixed-use has been understood as a basic condition for achieving flexibility of use at urban scale.

The topic is based on the Smart City Demo-project "Mischung: Possible!", funded by the Austrian Climate and Energy Fund (<http://www.smartcities.at/stadt-projekte/smart-cities>).

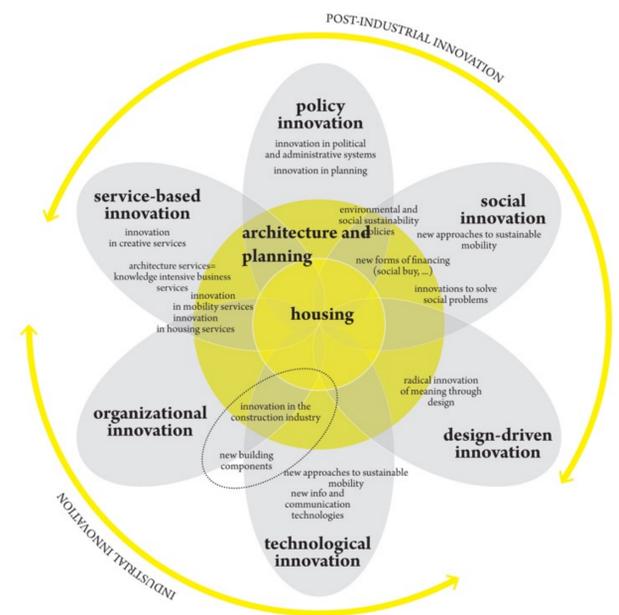
Background

Mixed use: which innovations?

To come into play with implementation, the contemporary framework of mixed-use urban development needs to be presented as an environment where the planning of the physical structure (the 'hardware' of mixed use) more and more becomes intertwined with the need for the development of appropriate soft tools and processes (the 'software' of mixed use).

Good ideas about flexible housing and building design are available, yet until now their implementation remains highly unsatisfactory. Especially immaterial aspects connected to flexibility and mixed-use, of institutional, instrumental and process-based nature, tends to be disregarded. These immaterial aspects include contractual aspects, right of use, planning use categories and regulations such as parking requirements, as well as formal and informal aspects related to communication and participation. It is therefore important to understand innovation in the framework of mixed-use urban development both in relation to these material and immaterial dimensions, moving beyond industrial notions of innovation, related to the technological and organizational dimension of production towards post-industrial notions of innovation, related therefore to planning processes, social innovations, service-based innovations as well as the development of new meanings and interpretations of building typologies in relation to contemporary extended notions of 'use' and 'work'.

Key terms like 'use' and 'work', cultivated by western modern societies over centuries, are shifting towards new destinations today. There is uncertainty about the real future of work and the figure of the user in a more and more global, commodified and technological world. There is uncertainty as well about the future political forces and the future public opinion. What we see for now is, that both the growth and the technological paradigm, as the predominant orientations at the macro level are failing apparently at steering society towards a sustainable way of life



Preliminary research results and open questions

In this perspective, the aspect of affordability in the context of mixed use and its flexible capacities represents a core area of research. Affordability is essential with regard to the mixed-use development process as well as to the phase of use and re-use of the spatial capacities. In combination with accessibility, affordability is important for the distribution and redistribution of opportunities in the city and is therefore substantially responsible for the spatial arrangements as an expression of the cities social structure.

An important perspective is the differentiation between the potential of fine- versus large grained mixes. **Fine-grained mixed-use, ensuring the provision of affordable workspaces, has been recognized as particularly important for ensuring the existence and development of small and middle enterprises as well as a relevant factor for the residential use quality and use-value, as well as in urban contexts. This differentiation, embedded in spatial and typological configurations as well as in economical set-ups related to affordability, relevantly contributes to the range of flexible capacities of these quarters.**

Especially for these kind of mixed-uses, the project Mischung: Possible! is developing a series of innovative models based on combinations of incremental and radical innovations both for what concerns spatial configurations as well as soft tools and processes.

The aim is to identify possible leverage:

Functional and spatial/typological leverage

The distinction here is between fine-grained and large-grained functional mix and adaptability, with particular focus towards flexible and open-use spatial typologies that allow over time change of uses. Functional and typological criteria need to be related to a predefined observation scale or field, such as: quarter, block, building, unit.

Sustainability criteria

Specific focus here lies on mobility, and how mixed-use developments can positively reduce car use because of proximity between live, work and services. Life-cycle of buildings and quarters constitute a further relevant criterion, especially when building can be adapted to different uses over time and are therefore more robust.

Use quality and use value

Mixed use can strongly contribute to the quality of public space, as in most configurations it constitutes a necessary transition between housing uses and public space and makes it more lively and intense. It can therefore strongly contribute to the attractiveness of a certain area as whole for various milieus interested urbanity, underpin social mix and social inclusion, raise the chances at individual level of balancing work and private life thanks to physical proximity between different functions.

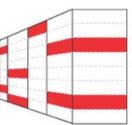
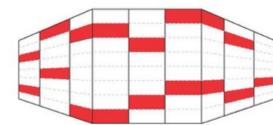
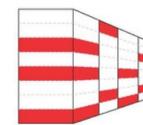
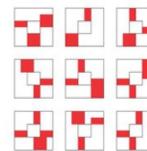
Real-estate

Mixed use is from a real-estate perspective rarely attractive on the short-term. It requires a mix of competences rarely in the hand of one developer alone. Additionally, differently from housing in many contexts in strong demand, non-housing functions are mostly difficult to let and represent a substantial risk. Yet successful examples show the potential of raising both housing and non-housing values in the long term because of the specific urban identity.

Process-based criteria

Mixed-use can also be understood a process reaching from conception to use phase over the long term. Specific implementation measures are necessary in order to implement mixed-use, and it is important to develop an approach that moves beyond spatial structure but integrate economic and social processes.

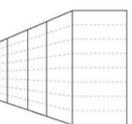
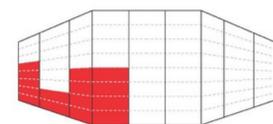
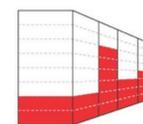
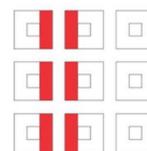
SCENARIO 1



Stadteil mit 20 % Nicht-Wohnnutzung pro Gebäude

Die Räume des Arbeitens sind kleinteilig über das ganze Gebiet und die einzelnen Gebäude verteilt. Auf jedem Bauteil sind 20% Nicht-Wohn-Nutzungen untergebracht. Die Hälfte davon wird mit reduzierter Miete vergeben. Das Gebiet wird gleichförmig und flächendeckend durchmischt, ohne gezielte Bündelung.

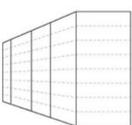
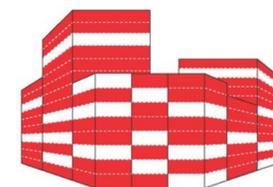
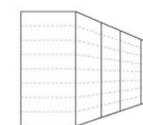
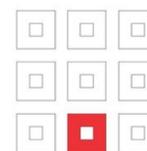
SCENARIO 2



Civic Boulevard (linienförmiges Gebäudeensemble)

Die Räume des Arbeitens sind entlang eines Straßenzugs im Sokebereich konzentriert. Erdgeschossnutzungen und Arbeitsräume wirken zusammen, um maximale Belebung zu erreichen und eine urbane Achse auszubilden.

SCENARIO 3



Hochpunkt als Impuls-Cluster

Nicht-Wohn-Nutzungen werden auf einem Baufeld konzentriert. Dieses Baufeld erfährt eine vertikale Verdichtung, um zum urbanen Aktivitätspol für das Gebiet zu werden.

Contact

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