



# On the “Eigenlogik” of cities and Flagship architecture as part of a Megaevent

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***European Capitals of Culture (ECOC)*** is an annual EU project kicked off in 1985.

- to emphasize the richness, diversity and shared history and heritage in Europe
- to build a sense of community
- to attract tourists and media attention

### **Mega Event**

For a whole year almost everything is dedicated to cultural projects and events in the cities nominated as Capitals of Culture.

**Graz** was Capital of Culture in 2003.

-Second largest city in Austria

-282,479 inhabitants



DFG Research Project

**“Star architecture and its role for re-positioning small and medium-sized cities”.**

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## Question

Whether and how the mega event “Capital of Culture”, and particularly one core element of this event – the construction of the art gallery Kunsthaus – has been transforming the Eigenlogik (intrinsic logic) of the city of Graz?

## Eigenlogik

Praxeologically it concerns the often hidden structures of a city as locally habitualized, mostly tacit processes of meaning constitution and their bodily-material embeddedness.



*Spacelab Cook-Fournier*



On the right bank of the Mur the historic centre declared World Heritage site in 1999 including university complex, bourgeois quarters and old town; on the left bank the suburban town, working-class housing, iron-processing companies and prostitution.





The **Kunsthaus** has been interpreted as the **visual statement of a social rethinking after fascism and post-fascism**.



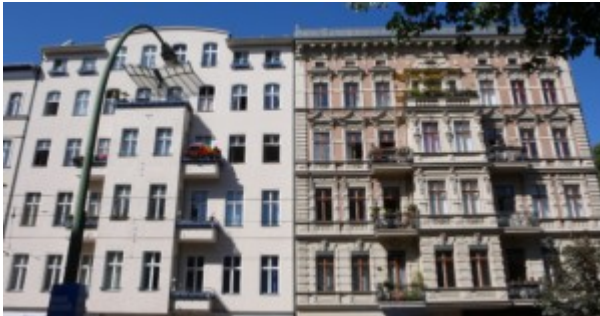
### **Urban politics after World War II**

On the one hand there was the historic city centre seen as the “**authentic**” part of town with all sorts of architectural styles ranging from the Gothic period to Renaissance and Baroque.

-“the proper Graz”

-“honest, workmanlike, truly authentic”





On the other hand: the houses in the suburbs of Graz had been stripped of any traits of historicism.

As an international architectural style, Historicism was deemed

- dishonest,
- unsubstantial and stereotyped



Blob architecture was appreciated as refreshingly “alien” in their familiar, homey, cosy surroundings. The Kunsthaus was even welcomed as the first “global player” among what was perceived to be an ideologically and spatially rather narrow environment.

The **mega-event „Capital of Culture“** has introduced fresh speech acts to the public discourse and new constructions in the public space.

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The Kunsthaus is at once part of and in line with the **intrinsic logic of the city**.

In the tradition of Graz' ***Bildungsbürgertum***, i.e. the educated middle-class milieu, social change seems to manifest itself in the form of cultural, architectural achievement, and the city chose a *cultural* event – its year as “Capital of Culture” – to make the change happen.

**Higher-income groups** take a more positive view on the matter since they benefit from the cultural events and can more easily avoid annoying or disturbing situations. Plus, they are less impacted by increasing prices.

The mega event ECOC has placed issues of difference, diversity and Graz' fascist past on the public agenda.

