

X-Change
Developing the Secured By Design European Exchange Tool

Fear of Crime and Gender Mainstreaming in the Building Sector
in Austria

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February 2008

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Project information

X-Change – Developing the Secured by Design European Exchange Tool is a project funded by the European Commission under the AGIS Research Programme 2006. The project is coordinated by the University of Salford, UK.

The problem

Despite a general decline in recorded crime across a number of European states, fear of crime is now widely recognised as one of the most pressing concerns affecting people's quality of life. To tackle this growing problem, a more empathetic and human-centred approach to crime prevention is required – one that focuses on innovation and design. Whilst there has been much work in the field of design-led crime prevention in current years, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), this has mainly been based in the United States and UK. Such approaches rely for their effectiveness on systems and processes that often do not exist outside these countries.

This project addresses two questions regarding the improvement, adaptation, exchange and dissemination of information and best practices on design-led crime prevention across borders.

- How can UK- and Netherlands based CPTED information and best practice be adapted, shared and effectively applied in different European contexts?
- How can feelings of insecurity and fear of crime be reduced through urban design and planning?

Project vision

To develop a human-centred, 'design thinking' tool and associated procedures – the SBD European Exchange Tool – that promotes the exchange of best practice in design-led crime prevention across borders, provides a practical approach to addressing fear of crime, engages planning professionals and enables innovative, design-led crime prevention appropriate to different European contexts.

To ensure that the SBD European Exchange Tool is evidence-based and sensitive to different European contexts, rigorous research has been conducted by a team of interdisciplinary researchers from the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, France, Greece and Poland. The project team conducted a critical review of two established crime prevention accreditation schemes – Secured By Design in the UK and the Dutch scheme 'Police Label Secured Housing'. Research in the separate countries investigated the conditions, barriers, enablers and other issues impacting on the adaptation of CPTED best practice to different European countries, and also the problems and issues relating to fear of crime in those contexts.

This report represents the contribution from Austria, which summarises research on fear of crime and describes the process and administrative composition of planning authorities in Vienna, which have adapted the idea of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Fear of crime

Research into fear of crime in Austria

Is fear of crime measured? How?

What are the current levels of fear of crime?

Has fear of crime increased or decreased?

Are there particular issues that contribute to fear of crime?

Is fear of crime considered by designers and planners? If not, should it be?

In Austria, fear of crime is not measured on a regular basis, and Vienna is not a city with a high tradition in research on crime prevention through environmental design. However, during the last decades several studies were conducted that considered subjective feelings of insecurity at least as one aspect of comprehensive surveys on lifestyles and quality of life. Whereas quantitative assessments focussed more closely on a narrow understanding of crime in a legal sense, qualitative studies applied a wider definition with a focus on disorder and incivilities and respective coping strategies. Examples for both, quantitative and qualitative research shall be introduced briefly.

Quantitative surveys on fear of crime

With respect to the quantitative surveys, the Vienna City Council ordered two broad telephone surveys with more than 8.000 respondents in 1995 and 2003. The first survey – “Leben in Wien (Life in Vienna)” - studied perceptions of local safety-conditions, victimisation and risk-perception of crime. The second survey additionally included questions about crime-reporting to the police and effects of social disorder such as a drug-scene or a red-light district.

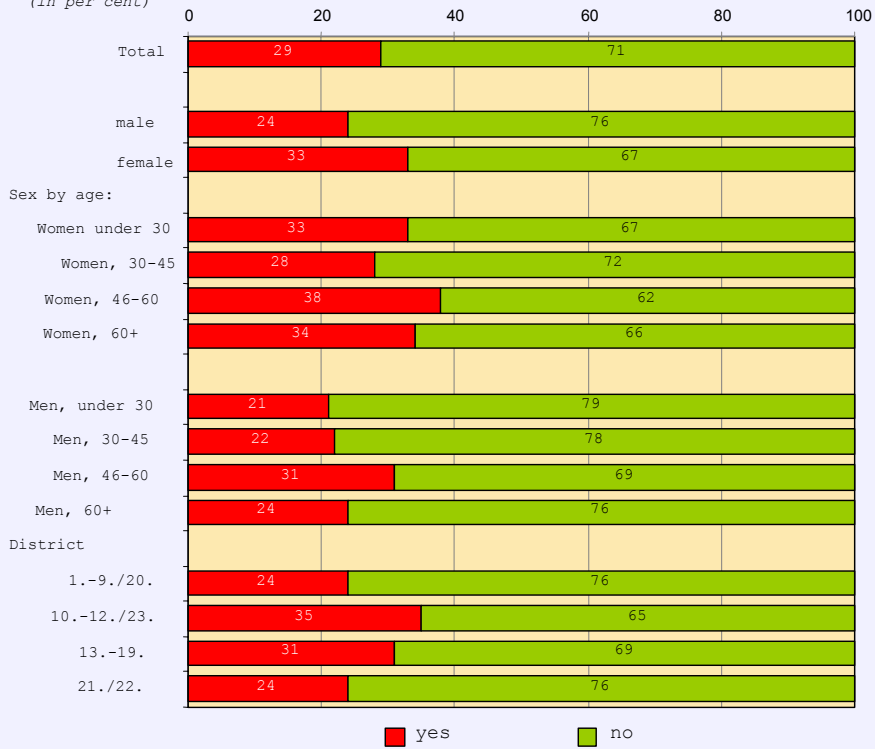
The most recent survey on “fear of crime” was conducted in March 2005 as a telephone survey (600 Viennese citizens) by IFES Research in cooperation with the Institute for Sociology of Law and Criminology. Results give evidence for a rather positive and optimistic attitude concerning fear of crime, as 70% of the respondents stated that over the previous year they never experienced a situation when they felt afraid of becoming a victim of crime, and 29% said they were afraid at least once. 40% of those generally fearful persons say that they were afraid only once or very rarely, only 11% of the generally fearful people live in permanent fear. This group represents only 3% of the total sample. Adding to this the proportion who mentioned fear sometimes or often, a total of 18% expressed their personal concerns about crime. All others, with regard to fear of crime, live a relaxed and careless life.

A gender difference was found in all age groups, but seems rather moderate on an international scale: 1/3 of the female respondents and 1/4 of the male respondents mentioned fear of crime. With regard to age, the highest proportion of fearful people was not found with the elderly, but in the age group from 46–60 years of age, which suggests a concentration on fear of property crime such as burglary or car-theft.

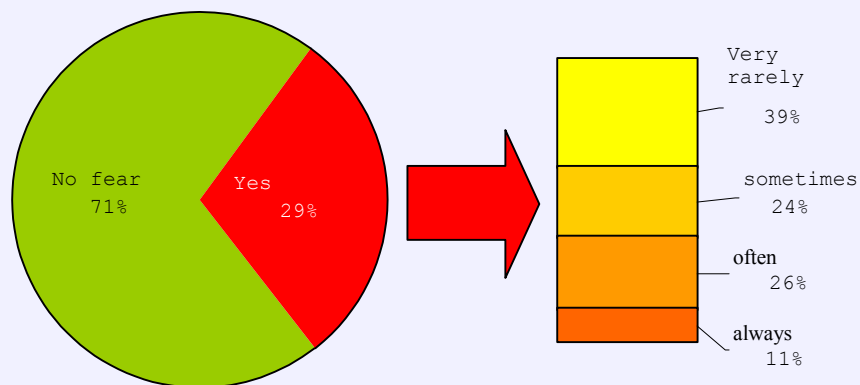
Second, this survey asked for the *intensity of fear*, and 36% of the generally fearful sub-sample expressed rather moderate fear, whereas 10% of this group expressed (fairly) strong fear. Again this accounts to less than 4% of the total sample.

Question: Were you afraid of becoming a victim of crime in the last year?

(in per cent)



Question: Were you afraid of becoming a victim of crime in the last year? If yes: How often?



Fear of burglary

In the course of another recent research project, conducted by the Institute for Sociology of Law and Criminology (Stummvoll 2006), data on feelings of insecurity concerning **burglary** were collected in 2005 in a telephone survey of 1.000 respondents in Vienna. Insecurity was

measured first indirectly: As many as 24% of households do not have any kind of security measure like a safety lock, safety door, alarm system, motion detector, a dog or double grid. Most of the respondents who live without security measures live in rental flats in high density areas of Vienna. The most frequent reason given was a high feeling of safety and high costs disproportional to the needs.

Direct measurement of insecurity confirms results from earlier studies: 59% of the respondents feel “very safe” or “rather safe” concerning burglary in their neighbourhood. Only 17% feel “rather unsafe” (11%) or “unsafe” (6%). Own dwellings are considered “safe” by 50% and “rather unsafe” by 19% of the respondents.

For more detailed information about social and spatial circumstances of fear of burglary, a look at the results of the survey “Life and quality of life in Vienna” (IFES 2003) is helpful:

- Residents in quiet areas at the periphery feel safer than residents in crowded inner-city districts.
- People in “deprived areas” feel less safe
- People who live in areas with a bad image feel less safe
- People who are unsatisfied with the general housing conditions feel less safe
- The feeling of safety is lower in areas with a (subjectively suspected) proportion of foreigners of more than 50%
- People who feel disturbed by traffic, local pubs or neighbours show a lower feeling of safety
- A lower dwelling standard has a negative effect on the feeling of safety
- Those 12% of the respondents, who miss a local police station feel less safe than others
- Attachment with the neighbourhood has a positive effect on the feeling of safety
- Social, financial and health-conditions correlate with the feeling of security.

These results show that fear of crime is to be regarded independent of actual crime rates, but rather correlates with a number of complex social and spatial living conditions in Vienna.

This perception was confirmed in the international comparative research project “InSec – Insecurities in European Cities”, where survey-data on the perception of safety in selected local neighbourhoods in Vienna, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Krakow and Budapest were compared. Explanations for the relatively positive performance of Vienna (see graph 3 and 4) were found in correlations with data on social and physical circumstances in the neighbourhood. A high feeling of safety in Vienna correlates with the following factors:

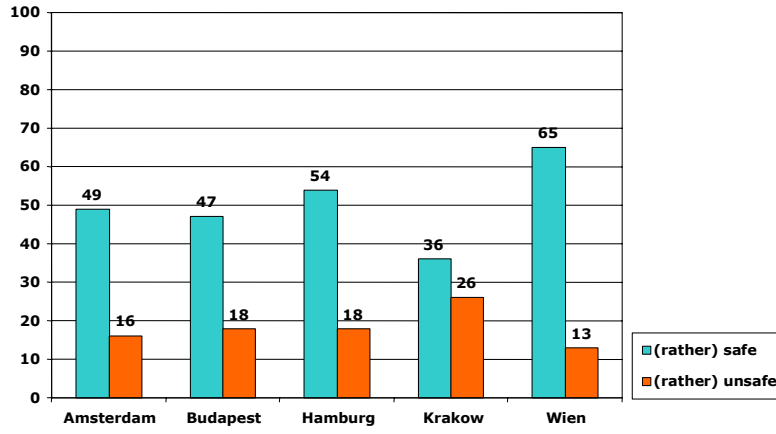
- No scenario of urban decline
- No severe spatial concentration of physical or social disorder
- Very little violence and no substantial conflicts in public space (hooligans, riots etc.)
- Xenophobic tendencies are not connected with fear
- High trust in the administrative infrastructure and the local welfare state
- No effective and sustainable political or public debates about fear of crime

In addition to these structural qualities in the city of Vienna, qualitative studies were conducted to focus more closely on particular characteristics of urban space.

Perception of Safety in local neighbourhoods in five European Cities

n=4996; in %

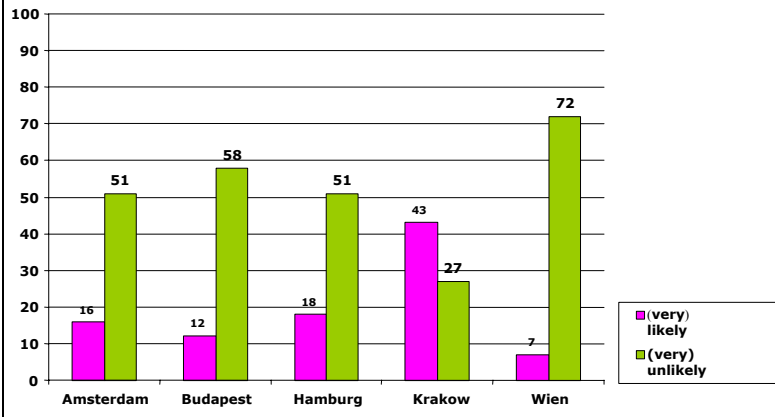
Neighbourhood is safe - unsafe



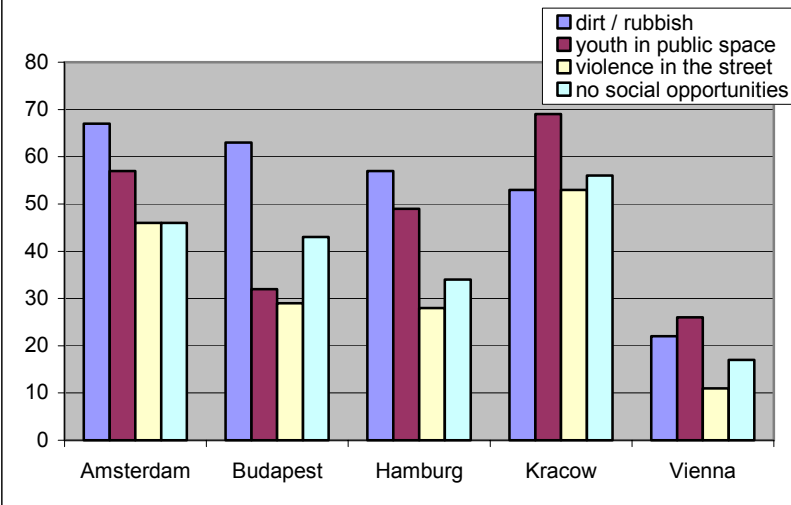
Subjective risk of victimisation in five European cities

n=4755; in %

How likely is it for you to become a victim of harassment, theft, robbery or violence in the near future? (sum-index)



Problems in the neighbourhood



Qualitative Research on feelings of insecurity

In a secondary analysis of the InSec-material the particular notorious places mentioned in open questions in the questionnaire were further studied in 86 narrative interviews to learn more about the “settings” in the city of Vienna that generate fear and insecurity¹. Without giving details about the particular places here, it can be concluded that the topography of insecurity does not correspond to a map of crime, but rather reflects a map of disorder and concentration of observed incivilities. This includes observation of and confrontation with socially deprived, marginal groups of society (homeless people, drug addicts, a bunch of drunks with their dogs). This kind of insecurity is closely related to reactions like emotional stress and feelings of perplexity and helplessness about coping strategies. Most irritating seems the fact that these confrontations break the rules of anonymity and “civil inattention” (Goffman) in public space. In short: Fear is either understood as the observation of misery of marginalised groups, or as anticipating situations that may get beyond control (insulting, intimidation, aggressive behaviour)². In these cases individual coping strategies seem insufficient as potential opponents appear dubious and incalculable.

A second source for “fear of crime”, next to signs of social disorder, can be found in assertions about physical disorder: Especially one major train-station (Praterstern – Wien Nord), which is currently under substantial reconstruction, was mentioned with regard to physical decline, vandalism, urinary-smell, poor lighting, dirt and rubbish. Long, bare and empty passages were mentioned as fear-generating places yet without any form of social disorder. But again, all this has little to do with an understanding of fear of crime in a strict legal sense, but rather with feelings of uneasiness.

Apart from explicit experiences with particular fear-generating situations, insecurity can be explained by another phenomenon: Some places in the city were mentioned as notorious places simply because these places have been labelled as dangerous over time. The social construction of myths, often produced and transmitted by the media, gives places a certain notorious image. Often, one serious case of crime and respective media response is enough to turn a housing estate or a public park into an evil place. Although not frequented personally, these places were mentioned as “dangerous spots”.

Signs of social and physical disorder as described above sometimes occur together in underground stations. Particularly older people avoid the underground system and prefer tramlines, although this often means accepting detours and takes more time. The combination of provocative youth who “capture” or at least dominate certain places, bad lighting in long underground passages and scruffy people present situations that generate fear. In contrast to underground trains and stations, busses and trams seem to profit from natural and formal control by conductors and available drivers, who can interfere directly in such cases of incivilities, whereas the underground system is experienced as a rather abstract technical system, which generally lacks direct control mechanisms and provides less transparent social settings. Public order is based on observing the rules by a majority and immediate interference of some kind of authority in critical situations. Counting on moral courage of the public is in vain.

In contrast to the “InSec” -project and the “mental mapping” of notorious places in the city, an older Viennese study focussed on the perception of (in-)securities in *local neighbourhoods* in two selected areas in Vienna. In 260 narrative interviews with local residents “episodes of insecurities” were collected, and again problems of disorder clearly dominated over fear of

¹ In the quantitative survey a minority of 41% of the respondents could mention such places in Vienna, whereas a majority could not think of such places at all.

² The “horror-scenario” of the 1980s, i.e. to be attacked with a contaminated syringe, was missing completely in the statements of this study.

crime: Stories about experiences of crime in a legal sense, including property crime and personal crime in a very wide sense (including vague rumour), amounted to 30%, whereas a majority of 70% of the stories were related to insult, recklessness, dubious or scruffy persons and signs of physical disorder.

Cultural conflict as a matter of insecurity

In many interviews conducted in the study “Wien – Sichere Stadt” in 1993/94 “foreigners” were mentioned as a major source of feelings of insecurity. The conflict is based on a concept of “generalised otherness” which is expressed in several modes of conduct: First, foreigners and people with a cultural background in Turkey and the regions of former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Serbia) are considered to show different forms of conflict resolution: They prefer informal ways of vigilantism, whereas native Austrians either try to avoid conflicts or quickly call for authorities (the police). Second, it was mentioned that foreigners had different leisure-preferences: They prefer to spend time together in groups in public parks and in the street, and they seem to use public space not so much as transit space, but as places to linger and talk. This gives locals the impression of foreigners dominating public space. Third, the concept of migrant workers that was popular in the 1960s and 70s seems obsolete, and thus the socio-economic status of foreigners or Austrians as “second-generation-foreigners” with a migration background is unclear. This leaves locals puzzled and often leads to speculations about illegal activities to make a living, while at the same time taking advantage of the national welfare system. Such implicit considerations are found responsible for the build-up of prejudice, social antagonism and hostility. However, for many respondents in the study this conflict remains subliminal, and therefore the image of foreigners remains intimidating and threatening. In fact, direct confrontation rarely occurs, because certain places and areas are crossed quickly or avoided altogether. These few residential areas in Vienna are neighbourhoods characterised as “blind spots” in the city.³

Consequences for design-led crime prevention

This particular understanding of insecurity has led to a specific reading of “fear of crime” in Vienna: Quantitative and qualitative research results show that concern about crime is not of primary importance. Neither violence nor property crime are considered a big problem in the city, at least thoughts about victimisation of criminal offences are very rare and can not inhibit people in their daily routine. Only 6 in 10 respondents could mention at least one particular place in the city that is connected with insecurity. On the other hand, “fear” has to be interpreted as a sublime set of anxieties and missing personal coping strategies in social situation in public space. Generally speaking, “insecure places” in the city of Vienna are not notorious places of crime, or places of experienced victimisation, but rather represent (1) a notorious reputation of certain problems of disorder in the city, or (2) places of “uncomfortable confrontation” with marginalised groups of society (drug addicts, drunkards, homeless, foreigners). Nevertheless, the spatial concentration of signs of severe social and physical disorder is moderate and to a certain extent constructed and perpetuated by the media.

These findings have consequences for planning strategies: Vienna represents a typical “low crime – low fear of crime” city in Europe, and this shifts the impetus of safety policy from measures of surveillance to measures of social integration. This does not mean to neglect formal control or target hardening measures, but to supplement these traditional forms of crime prevention with social intervention and re-integrating measures of marginalised groups. The challenge for urban planning is to integrate technical and social solutions in the form of a close cooperation of authorities in environmental design and diversity management.

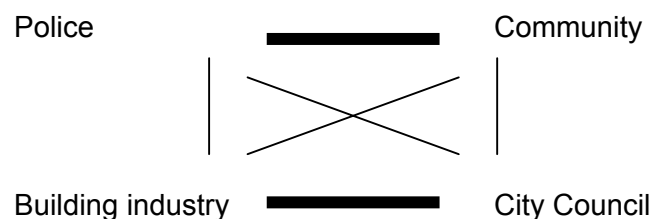
³ The term “no-go areas” is not suitable here, because this would induce the image of high crime areas (especially violence), which is not the case here.

Accreditation Schemes

Are there any schemes similar to Secured By Design?

- Type of scheme (e.g. National scheme or European Standard)
- Issues covered
- Operation
 - *How is the scheme managed?*
 - *How is the scheme funded?*
- Implementation
 - *How is the scheme delivered (nationally and locally)?*
 - *Who delivers the scheme, and what are their qualifications for this?*
- Theoretical foundations
 - *What research/literature underpins the scheme (e.g. CPTED, Situational Crime Prevention, etc.)?*

One aim of this international research project is to collect information about national policies that correspond to the design-led approach to urban safety in general and to the British model of "Secured By Design" in particular. "Secured By Design" is a police initiative to encourage the building industry to adopt crime prevention measures within the design of the built environment (Wootton 2007). It has to be acknowledged that under the Austrian federalist system housing is a legal matter in the competency of the nine separate county legislations. Therefore, this report focuses only on safety policy in the city of Vienna, where activities in that matter are concentrated. In short, the policy in Vienna corresponds to the British concept in thematic terms but differ in administrative terms: Design-led safety measures are considered in the building policy in a very particular approach. However, the administrative circuit between the police, the city council, the building industry and the community is not closed, as communication about security is focused mainly on the connection between the police and the community on the one hand and the city council and the building industry on the other.



Relatively strong ties between the police and the community are administered by the Police Advisory Service, which provides information on target hardening through electronic and mechanic security devices including safety doors, locks, grids and alarm systems. Here the police cooperates closely with the security industry. Officers in the Police Advisory Service also give information on appropriate behavioural measures for individual self-protection. However, there is no special police department that employs "architectural liaison officers" who would advise the building industry or assist in housing and landscaping projects. In so far, there is no regular communication between the police and the building industry.

The building industry (building association, housing developers) has not incorporated any safety guidelines that can be compared to CPTED or Design Against Crime principles in their agenda. Crime prevention and security are no issues used to promote housing projects in public.

The community calls for more police presence and accepts legal amendments supporting formal surveillance (data mining, -storage and -processing of CCTV, DNA and biometric data) as results of political decisions on federal level.

The Vienna City Council does not communicate crime prevention measures to the general public. However, CPTED principles have been incorporated in the Viennese housing policy under the title of "*Gender Mainstreaming*". In the following issues and implementation policies shall be summarised briefly with reference to the administrative structure of urban development in Vienna.

Gender Mainstreaming

In 1992 the Vienna City Council established the "Frauenbüro", the "Municipal Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs". In 1998 this department started to focus on the realisation of women's interests in the planning process under the new name "Leitstelle für Alltags- und Frauengerechtes Planen und Bauen". Since then the office has defined its mission as being to guarantee that new housing projects meet particularly women's requirements for a feeling of safety in public and semi-public space. It is assumed that in everyday life women are likely to be exposed to situations that cause insecurity and an intrusion of privacy, which lead to the need for appropriate planning and building standards which take into consideration women's feelings and their need for safety in urban space. The booklet "Richtlinien für eine sichere Stadt (guidelines for a safe city)" was developed in 1995 on the grounds of CPTED principles in a feminist perspective and intends to inform builders, architects and the housing associations throughout the planning process. The core issues for designing buildings and public space are defined in the in the "guidelines for a safe city" (see also: Stummvoll 2004):

- Orientation
- Good overview
- Visibility
- Lighting
- Accessibility
- Vibrant urban environment and multiple social functions
- Responsibility
- Avoiding conflicts
- Ensuring maintenance

These issues were translated into the concept of Gender Mainstreaming, without any explicit reference to the original concept of crime prevention through environmental design. In fact, crime prevention is only implicitly considered, which seems to reflect the general moderate concern about crime in the society (see above). For example, terms like crime, crime prevention, security, policing or safety management are not mentioned in the current version of the Urban Development Plan (Stadtentwicklungsplan STEP).

Gender Mainstreaming principles enter the urban development process in various ways and on several stages: On the level of urban development as well as on the level of single projects.

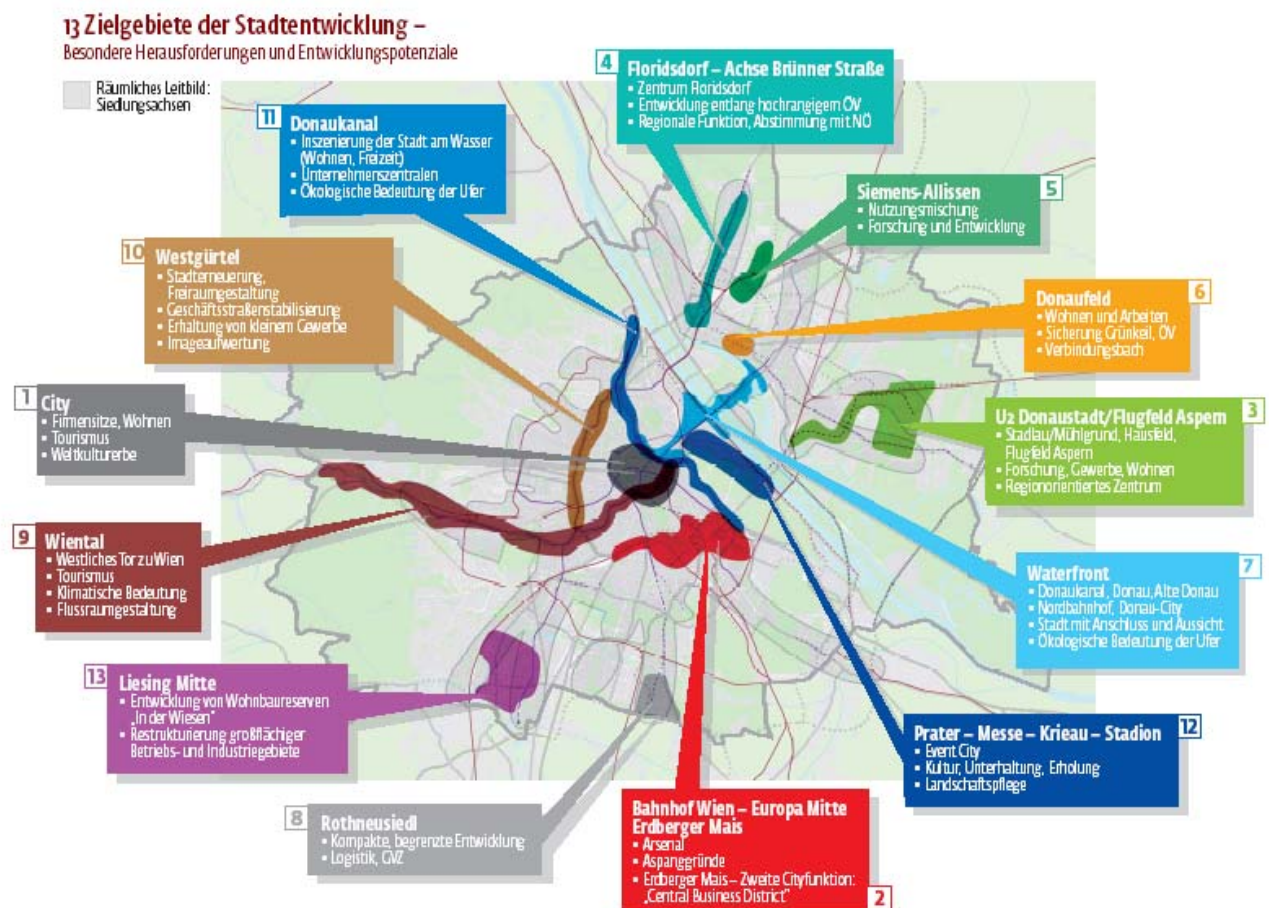
1. The **Urban Development Plan** from 2005 is the highest and most general document for urban design and the major plan for long-term urban development in the city of Vienna. It contains Gender Mainstreaming, as one of 5 principles beside "quality of life", "sustainability", "participation" and "diversity". Gender specific perceptions, living conditions and demands shall be considered in all planning and decision-making processes in order to prevent discrimination and to foster equality (STEP 05, p. 28).

However, the team which established the Urban Development Plan was primarily constituted of administrative officers at the planning department in the Vienna City Council with support from the "Austrian Institute for Regional Studies And Spatial

Planning" and a private institute concerned with planning and communication ("PlanSinn"). No representatives of the police or crime science (crime prevention, crime mapping, criminology) were considered as external advisors for public safety. Consequently, security and crime were no topics thought relevant to the urban development process in the future. Instead, Gender Mainstreaming was defined as a comprehensive concept of urban safety as an important pillar in the Urban Development Plan.

- The Urban Development Plan defines "13 Key Areas of Action for Urban Development" as large areas in the city, which are given special attention in the planning process. For example, the current plans for the reconstruction of the central train station involve a comprehensive (re)development of the surrounding area, including parks, shopping malls, business and housing projects. For each Key Area a **masterplan** was established that includes several local development projects.

The "Municipal Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs" is represented as advisor in selected local projects for the establishment of masterplans from the very beginning. These efforts to integrate Gender Mainstreaming on the level of masterplans of city development is fairly new as for a long time the "Municipal Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs" was restricted to reviews of single housing projects.



Picture 1: 13 Key Areas of Action in the city of Vienna as defined in the Urban Development Plan.

3. One specific feature of all housing policies in the country is the possibility to apply for governmental subsidy for the erection and reconstruction of houses, apartments and homes according to the law (e.g. Wiener Wohnbauförderungs- und Wohnhaussanierungsgesetz – WWFSG 1989). This opportunity is used extensively by builders, housing associations, private developers and home owners, and it presents the third opportunity to examine new housing developments for their compatibility with Gender Mainstreaming principles. This process of **examination for governmental subsidy** can be described as a comprehensive check under the participation of several magistrates that represent the department of housing law (MA 50), the department of urban design (MA 19), the department of building inspection (MA 37), the department of designation of urban areas (MA 21), the department of real estate management (MA 69), the department of urban renewal (MA 25), and finally the "Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs" (MA 57). Each of the participants produces a statement and the project will be further discussed and decided in a final committee – the official **advisory board for urban planning** (Grundstücksbeirat) – representing the fields economy, ecology and architecture (2 architects, 1 physicist, 1 ecologist, 1 structural designer and 1 landscaping architect). The "Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs" is represented in the advisory board for housing. In the cases of competition for development, where several housing developers compete for developing land, the "Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs" is represented in the jury with the right of rejection.

The "Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs" does not get informed by the police and has no access to respective data on crime hot spots or other real security problems. They focus primarily on general theoretical aspects of fear of crime and respective consideration in urban development and housing projects. Empirical research on fear of crime or crime are hardly requested.

Conclusion

In conclusion, crime prevention through environmental design enters the planning and building process in disguise as the concept of Gender Mainstreaming. This particular concept of safety is considered in a long-term and over-all development plan for the city of Vienna and in the course of single project evaluation for governmental subsidy. Between these two levels there is much space for a mandatory consideration of safety guidelines at the set up of all project developments. If crime prevention and security concepts entered the life-cycle of project development (Wootton and Davey 2005) already at the stage of definition of project objectives given by the housing associations and building authorities, the planning process and respective examinations for governmental subsidy could be improved substantially. To facilitate and support this practice the British model Secured By Design as well as the procedural and thematic guidelines for urban safety as defined in the European Pre-Norm ENV14383-2 can be helpful⁴.

⁴ The Pre-Norm 14383-2 "Prevention of crime – Urban planning and building design" was elaborated by the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN/TC 325) and is currently under evaluation.

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<http://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/step/pdf/step05kurz-en.pdf>

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