

## Gentrification Hypotheses

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**Hypothesis # 1:** By employing a diversity of subsidised housing policies, Vienna is attempting to counter the exclusionary effects of gentrification.



The sign on the building reads “Vienna calls for soft urban renewal and energy saving”, indicating that the building is targeted as a site for renovation. Through the “soft urban renewal program” the city provides loans to private developers for the renovations, which allows it to regulate the rent at the same time. In this way, municipal buildings are maintained and the risk of displacement is minimised. However, it doesn’t prevent rents from rising after the 10-year rent freeze.

Context: <http://www.wohnfonds.wien.at/sanierungszielgebiete>



In the middle of the 17th district, Apfelbaum is a project intending to counter exclusion and displacement by offering subsidised housing options for 280+ people, with a focus on people with mental and physical disabilities. It partners with Liv ‘WORX, a real estate company in charge of renting out 16 business spaces, and who brand themselves using the future green and community spaces, the location in a vibrant neighbourhood, and the proximity to public transport and the centre. This raises the question: what will happen to the surrounding businesses and rent prices when the development is completed?

Context: <https://www.iba-wien.at/en/projekte/projekt-detail/project/apfelbaum-apple-tree>, <https://www.liv.at/portfolio/liv-worx-apfelbaum/>



The city of Vienna owns over 2300 Gemeindebauten and makes an effort to maintain them notably with the “soft urban renewal program”, but not all Gemeindebauten look as nice as Karl Marx Hof. One example is Maria Franc Hof, located in the 8th district. It stands out next to the ornate private buildings, which visually displays the socio-economic differences of the social housing residents and the private renters or owners.

Context: <https://www.wienerwohnen.at/hof/110/Maria-Franc-Hof.html>

**Hypothesis # 2:** Branded as the ‘liveable’ city, Vienna attracts an international crowd and this changes the commercial and housing landscape of the city, creating tensions between (long-term) residents, (short-term) lifestyle migrants, and tourists.



A sticker reading “Don’t be an A HOLE don’t airbnb” is plastered on a wall near the MuseumsQuartier, a cultural and tourism hotspot in Vienna. Although the wording is addressing short-term renters (eg. tourists, lifestyle migrants, digital nomads), it also carries a message for the city of Vienna to regulate the new housing market created by rent-seeking actors like Airbnb. Recently, the city of Vienna won a legal battle against Airbnb to ban the listing of municipal apartments and apartments in “residential zones”.

Context: <https://www.thelocal.at/20211015/vienna-municipal-apartments-social-housing-rental-airbnb/>



On Vienna’s high-street, international brands like Starbucks compete with local shops like the family-run “bio bäckerei”, while a man panhandles. Catering to two different lifestyles, Starbucks, with marked up drinks, appeals to a trendy crowd whereas the bakeries serve mostly local populations. On the same street, a shop uses destination cities (Rome, Seoul, Jeddah...) in the window, appealing to shoppers looking further than Vienna.

Context: <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/statistics/tourism.html>, foreign citizens make up 30% of Vienna’s population <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/statistics/population.html>



A sign reading “Atlantis Flugreisen” still sits on the corner of a building in Mariahilferstraße, even though the shop is gone. The international company TUI is now the nearest travel agency on Mariahilferstraße, but further up there are two smaller brands: itur (brands itself as a trendy internet-age agency) and dta Touristik (operates from this single location). Businesses unable to keep up with the trends, especially in tourism, are replaced with those who do business not only in their store, but also online and increasingly on social media.

Context: <https://www.instagram.com/tui.austria/>



**Hypothesis # 3:** Neighbourhood-scale renewal projects, like greening and pedestrian spaces, contribute to gentrification.



Lange Gasse in the 8th district was (partially) pedestrianised following resident demands, and is dotted with boutique shops and cafes. Pedestrianised streets make neighbourhoods attractive, which raises housing prices and causes displacement of those who can no longer afford the lifestyle of the new residents. In the case of Lange Gasse, the Maria Franc Hof social housing (pictured), with 77 apartments, ensures that low and middle-income households can continue to afford living in an upscale area.

Context: <https://www.wienzufuss.at/news/lange-gasse-begegnungszone/>  
<https://www.wienerwohnen.at/hof/110/110.html>



The transformation of Mariahilferstraße into a green, open, pedestrian area has made the street more accessible and safer for shoppers and cyclists. However, this has also made the street and surrounding neighbourhoods more attractive, which risks displacing independent shops who are out-competed by international brands who can afford the increased rents. Similarly, nearby residents may be displaced by increased rents.

Context: <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/studien/pdf/b008439.pdf> (p. 14, “Linear Open Space Types, Lively Streets and Pedestrianised Zones”)



Hamerlingplatz in Josefstadt (the district with the least green space, only 1.9% of the total area) is a park with a space for kids, a space for dogs, places to sit, and an underground car-park. Of the surrounding residential buildings, they are all private (Zinshaus at number 1, Wohnhaus at number 2) and the new-build is a luxury retirement home. A car-free green space in the middle of a dense district with private apartments and no surrounding municipal housing, may contribute to raising the rental and purchasing prices of housing.

Context: <https://www.immobilienet/zinshaus-kaufen/wien>, the senior's home <https://www.archoffice.wien/projekte/umbau-das-hamerling>  
<https://www.residenz-josefstadt.at/>

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