1. Introduction

Currently, an ample discussion is taking place about identity of cities, of its images or distinct character. In this discussion arguments of scholars of various fields, such as sociology, psychology, human behavioural research, town planning, architecture, geography, urban design are broadly discussed, but it is also a main concern of city governments and local politicians as well as inhabitants. Particularly in Central Europe and within the European Community, it seems that identity for individuals is not longer bound to states, but to the local cultural heritage of cities (Gospondini: 2004). The blur of national identities seems to be a result of the superior system of the European Community and therefore people identify themselves more with cities. However, economic patterns are changing currently, too. Big industrial plants, attracting many people coming from far and wide to work here, coined the last centuries. After World War II big companies not only created corporate identity for their products, but also started to shape their branches according to this CI. For example, Behnesch and Partner built a glass-crystal structure for the Nord-LB in Hannover, a bank, to transport the message that all actions of the bank are as transparent as can be to customers and the outside world in general (Brandt: 2008). Big car trusts, such as Volkswagen, aim to convey the message of latest technical standards as well as the aim of being environmental friendly by a theme park around the production plant in Wolfsburg (www.autostadt.de). Since Wolfsburg is relatively small and the production facility is comparably massive, Autostadt imprints the image of Wolfsburg as a whole. Not only are most people living in and around the city in one way or another economically dependent on Volkswagen, the architectural features of Autostadt as well as its location – adjacent to the central station – make Volkswagen the most prominent feature in the city of Wolfsburg. Thus, Volkswagen creates corporate identity for the whole city.

Such industrial facilities with the aim to imprint a whole area with their image can be found all over Europe. However, these big production facilities where thousands of workers are employed will play a minor role in future economy in first world countries and in particular in Central Europe. These huge places of production will be outsourced to countries where labour is cheaper. In this vacuum that is left in countries in Central Europe a new form of economy is emerging, the so-called creative or cultural industry.

Creative workers, such as designers, architects, computer specialists, artists generally, and many more, seem to be the future economic force in our area. Creative or cultural industries of the Third Millennium act differently than the big companies from the past (Florida, 2006). Creative industries are characterised by small offices, with 10 to 20 people working together (Florida: 2005). Such small offices are much more dependent on a well designed urban fabric and a certain image raised by the distinct identity of a city: a small enterprise cannot any longer create the environment it needs by itself, like a bank or as an extreme Volkswagen. In the turn, creative companies will choose cities, where they already find an environment that suits both, an attractive ambiance for potential customers as well as for employees (Brandt: 2009).

These two above described trends direct to the ongoing discussion of distinct images of cities, established upon the cultural heritage and/ or identity. Cities compete in gaining as many (not only, but mostly) creative industries as possible. City marketing is on top of the agenda, and many new strategies and activities can be observed. For example, there are competitions for "capital of cyclists, the "livcom award", "cultural capital of a year", and many more. Besides, many festivals and celebrations are funded, such as fireworks, new year's celebrations, dance- and theater festivals, Christmas markets and so on. A very important role in the process of creating identity of a city plays the built environment and cultural heritage[1]. The image that is transported to the outside world often uses the built environment as a generator.

Space as a carrier of images and identity has by no means developed in recent years. Looking back into pastiche times, cities almost always competed with each other in gaining inhabitants, workers and work. Italy and Germany, for example, were throughout medieval times and after more city-states than elements of a superior state. Interestingly, the proportion of cultural workers and creative people was relatively high (Hall, 1999). Moreover, in Antiquity, Greece, Mesopotamia, or Persia at its commencement, had similar patterns. Generally speaking, cities at all these times had the same problem: creating an image to the outside and place bound identity for dwellers and inhabitants. In almost all examples, the built heritage played a major role, which will be highlighted in the following paragraphs. By following these explanations it is aimed to get a clearer understanding of the importance of the built environment, and how much it influences identity. To demonstrate that the interplay between built environment and identity is not solely a European phenomenon, but did evolve everywhere in the world, it is necessary to look carefully at other regions, with various cultural, economic and social as well as environmental backgrounds. The examples shown below are taken from a broader research (Bornberg, 2003, Bornberg, 2007, Bornberg, 2008) and are chosen since they suit to demonstrate the interplay of identity and built environment.

2. Some vernacular forms of place bound identity

2.1. Nias, Indonesia

I want to start with an example taken from Nias, Indonesia. Nias is a small island off the western coast of Sumatra. The island was created by innumerable earthquakes and finally arose from under water. Until today Nias is convulsed by regular earthquakes, the last deductive one occuring on March 28th 2005 with 8.7 RS. Although used to earthquakes, thousands left the island in fear the whole island would sink again. Religious and social life as well as economy is therefore reconciled with the rigours of the natural environment. The many different names of the island, such as Hulo solaya-lala, the dancing island, or Hulo ze'e, the island of the weeping people, or Uli Danö Hae, the island being a cradle constantly rocked, refer to the circumstances Nias people live in (Dawson and Gillow, 1994). Not only was nature feared, but people were also shocked by the many tropical

diseases, the custom of headhunting added to the uncertainty of every day life in traditional Nias (Hämmerle, 2007). In the past Niassa were famous for their active trading with other islands and even with mainland Asia. The most important export product was captured people sold as slaves overseas, a tactic that made upper ruling classes and chiefs particularly wealthy. Thus, a rigorous hierarchy, which divide people in three classes, and an oppressive system of the ruling class, was established in age-old times (Bornberg, 2008).

The traditional layout of the villages reflects these particular social circumstances. Since headhunting and intertribal warfare were ruling every day life for a long time, villages have a defensive character. They are ideally built in undulating landscapes, with the villages perched on top of a hill. Access was provided only via steep stairways and a sentry guarded the entrance. From here two long rows of terraces framed a central wide path leading from this lowest point to the highest point, the chief's hut. From here, the whole village could be overlooked and potential enemies could be spotted from far (Bornberg, 2008). Stonewalls surrounded the village, another precautious element, and terraces were interconnected on the first floor level so that inhabitants could flee from one house to the next without ever touching the ground (Viaro, 2007).

The central street was split into a central paved area, the public realm, and the semi-private area between this paved area and the houses, used for every day duties. A wall of megaliths, symbolising ancestors of the related clan of the house behind as well as showing off wealth of the families, screened off the private path from the public (Lehner, 2007). In front of the chief's hut, which hosted both, the temple of ancestors and the men's meetinghouse as well as the private retreat of the chief, the central plaza or ceremonial ground is located (Fig. 1, Fig. 2).

Perched on top of this widened part of the path are several ritual stones and megaliths. It is believed that the megaliths and stones are the seats of ancestors; in particular the people from old that once founded the village. Sitting on the stones, it is believed that ancestors watch the remarkably large number and variety of celebrations, dances, stone jumping and many more (Viraro, 2007). Megaliths are an integral part of social memory, since each stone is related to his founder, such as important persons or feast holders. Therefore, the stones help to establish personal as well as collective memory and therefore create a sense of belonging to and identity (Bornberg, 2008). The megaliths in front of the chief's house have a special status, since they, too, prove his social status and the claim to rule all: in front of his house the megaliths of the village founders are set up connecting the common ceremonial ground with the chiefs house. It can be said, that the here displayed stones are a marker for the high social status of the chief as well as the focus of identity for the village as a whole (Bonatz, 2007).

2.2. Yanomami, Venezuela

The Yanomami lived traditionally in Amazonia/ Venezuela on the upper course of the Orinoco. In the last century their territories began to shrink and today solely lie in the jungle and along the sidearms of the Orinoco. Recently upcoming tourism, as well as the better economic chances in the big cities of Venezuela weakens traditional life and today it is not clear how many clans still live in the rain forest (Guidoni, 1975). From observations of the few remaining villages it can be assumed that their traditional way of life is deeply rooted in a spatial concept (Smole, 1976).
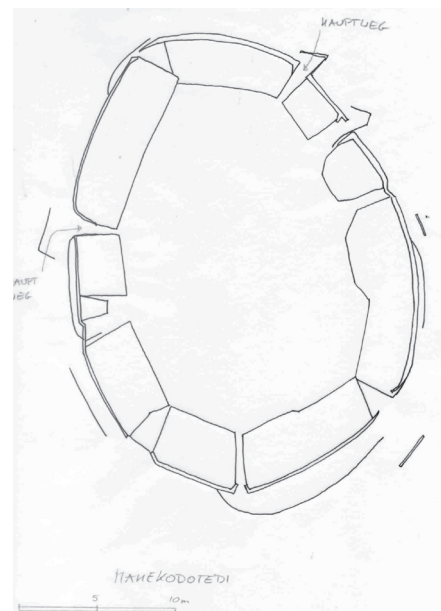

Fig. 3

Traditionally, Yanomami are semi-nomads, living in permanents settlements for five to ten years. Their village, the shabono, is seen to be the centre of a territory assigned to a kinship. The search for the rigth place is vital, since drinking water, appropriate land for gardenplots and other natural resources must be available easily all year (Smole, 1976). As soon as a perfect area is found, a large space will be cleared and then

Fig. 1, Fig. 2

Fig 1: Hilinawaloefau, Nias, Indonesia. View of the chief's hut and the ritual megaiths. Photograph taken by Petra Gruber, Vienna

Fig. 2: Hilinawaloefau, Nias, Indonesia. View of the main road towards the entrance of the village. Photograph taken by Petra Gruber, Vienna.

Fig. 3: Schematic site plan of a traditional Yanomami shabono, by author.

enclosed by high ridged roofs, rising to heights up to eight meters (Fig. 3). These weather sheds host the private retreats of the individual families, however, dividers or screens are missing totally (Bornberg, 2008). Each family groups its hammocks and personal belongings around a fireplace under the roof, which keeps insects, beasts but also spirit beings away during night time (Zerries, Schuster, 1974).

The vast open plaza in the centre is the ceremonial ground of the village. This space is much larger than the space for individuals: the ceremonial ground provides some 33 m2 for each individual, while the private retreat only measures some 16 m2 (Bornberg, 2008). Although no artefacts or ceremonial structures are built up – they would render a semi-nomadic group inflexible – it is clearly seen to be the space for hunting ceremonies, rites, dances, funerals, and is broadly speaking their temple (Zerries and Schuster, 1974). The space itself is creator of identity and each individual feels his affiliation.

So far the examples were taken from the vernacular, where it is clearly evident that space creates identity and a sense of belonging to. However, one could argue that looking to primitive tribes is not a sufficient method to discuss the interplay between the built environment and the creation of place bound identity and image in contemporary European cities. Therefore, two examples from Europe, one being Siena, Italy, and the other one Paris, France, will highlight that the interplay of space as a creator of common identity did evolve in Europe, too.

3. Examples taken from Europe

3.1. Siena, Italy

The next example is taken from the widely known and often discussed Piazza del Campo di Siena. The Piazza is most certainly a focal point of identity for Sienes people, although it today appears often crowded by tourists swamping into the square.

Siena was a flourishing city in the 13th century, becoming a regional power in Tuscany. Although Siena's heydays lasted only a few decades, it was resolved to unify three smaller towns to one bigger city, namely Siena. In order to demonstrate this new citizenship a new centre was needed (Waley, 1991). Much care was taken to choose the perfect location, since none of the former parts should overreach the others. Particularly the Piazza del Duomo was already widely known and the new space should counteract the bishop's see. Therefore, the new city centre was created on former green land, lying in the centre of the three former towns (Coubier, 1985). The Piazza del Campo was shaped in a semi-circular form, with the blunt end on the lowest part of the sloping plot (Fig. 4). Here, the largest building was put up, the Palazzo Publico, the town hall, and the Torre del Magna, the clock tower. All other sides were bordered by the private palazzi of the "Nine Noble Families", the ruling clans. Only few narrow paths, some superstructed by arches, lead to the Piazza. Apart from a fountain, the Fonte Gaia and some pollards dividing an inner area and an outer circular path, no other structures are set up (Bornberg, 2003, Bornberg, 2008).

Fig. 4

Today, the Piazza del Campo is widely recognised to be of outstanding beauty and thousands of tourists come here to adore it. On a warm summer's day the piazza will appear crowded with people coming from far and wide to see its architecture and one could assume, that tourists have taken over the piazza with Sienes inhabitants being the minority. However, this scenario changes rapidly in times of the main event that is celebrated here: the Palio. This horse race, which origins in the times when the plaza was founded, is held since then twice every year. After a long phase of preparation, each clan or family provides a horse, a jockey and standard bearers, all dressed in the costumes and emblems of the clan. These colourful Contradas enter the Piazza in a long parade and are welcome by the spectating crowd who is waiting in the inner area separated by the pollards. Then the horses are raced in several round on the path (Cecchini, 1958). Great is the fame and honour of the winning team, which indicates that horse and jockey are chosen with great care.

The interesting aspect of this example is, that the event of the Palio unifies Sienes inhabitants regularly and creates place bound identity and civic pride. It is, too, important to note, that the Palio is not held somewhere, maybe in an area suiting the event much more: the Piazza is not really big enough for the event, nor is the sloping landscape suitable for it. Therefore, it can be assumed that the festival or event with the purpose to deepen civic pride is even more effective if it is held on a particular spot in the city, mainly the centre. The physical environment will help to remember this even in times when the celebration has passed by. In the turn, the space will help to establish collective memory and will act as a reminder for all.

Fig. 4: View of the Piazza del Campo die Siena towards the Torre del Magna and the Piazza del Publico. Photograph taken by by author.

3.2. Paris, France

The context of space as a reminder of a certain event is very well understood in the following case study. Looking at the many monuments of Paris today, one could wonder why there is no monument from the French Revolution. Monarchy had its Triumphal arch, the Dome of Invalids, columns, the Tuilleries and the Louvre (Fig. 5, Fig. 6) and the adjacent areas. Representatives of the church had the Notre Dame and the Île de la Cité. The Revolution had, as Mona Ozouf pointed out, just the plain, open Mars Field, a vast open area with only the sky doming it (Ozouf, 1987). This fact is even more interesting to look upon, when we think of all the celebrations and festivals that were invented by the leaders of the French Revolution. Following the argumentation above, holding celebrations that are meant to deepen a sense of belonging in a certain space fosters the process of civic pride and place bound identity. It can be assumed that leaders of the French Revolution where very much aware of this correlation. So why does the French Revolution not have a monument then? Why did they not establish a central square to foster civic pride and the new constitution? To answer these questions, we must take a closer look to the early days of the French Revolution.

Fig. 5, Fig. 6

Firstly, it has to be noted, that the rulers of the Revolution initiated many festivals all year round. Even in small villages and towns nearly monthly some sort of festival was held. Lots of money and time was used for decoration, providing food, drinks and so on, which is even more surprising when looking at the ten years of the revolution, which were stamped by riots, destitution and general uncertainty. These circumstances can only be explained by the philosophy of the revolution: one of the core agenda was to create the new citizen. The new citizen should be a free und independent individual, deciding his own matters. It seemed, that festivals were the perfect medium

to establish this: in the celebrations, not the guilds were parading, but also, children, elderly, and women of all social statuses; in short: human race was participating. Focal part of each festival was the collective vow of fidelity to fraternalism, the new constitution and to dissociate from the Ancien Regime. To establish the new ideas the form of parades seemed to suit best.

It is, too, remarkable that organisers of the parades had a keen sense for the public open space. The first actions of the revolution were to break down barriers and walls, to overcome gaps and to create an open public area aiming to extinguish collective memory of the past. Consequently, the only monument of the French Revolution was the plain, wide-open Marsfield, free of associations with anything (Ozouf, 1988). However, choosing a virgin space such as the Marsfield was the only choice, anyway. The longer the revolution lasted the more tragic spaces within the city were added. The Place de Grève, the Place du Carousel, or the Place Louis XV were used for the many executions, sometimes so frequent that even pigs, used to clear the space from the left overs, refused to run across (Sennett: 1997). Besides, many other places of Paris were associated with the old regime, and thus leaders of the Revolution found it very hard to establish the new ideas here. How much space was identified with the past can be observed when following the explanations of the parade of August 10th 1793. This parade was carefully designed to show Paris inhabitants the history of the Revolution. Five spaces were chosen, the Bastille, Carrefour Poissonniere, and the Place de la Revolution, formerly known as Place Louis XV, the space in front of Saint-Louis-des-Invalides, and finally the Marsfield. Although the parade was aimed to show the historic component, it was impossible to inscribe the festival in these parts of Paris (Ozouf, 1987). Facades were decorated with much effort; flowers and trees ranked from the buildings, other parts were covered with plaster sculptures, all in order to minimise associations with the past (Sennett, 1997). But all the effort seemed in vain; people wandered silently past all these stations remembering the shots, executions, bloody deeds as well as the power of the Ancien Regime.

4. Human relationships and space a theoretical framework

Particularly the case study taken from Paris demonstrated very well that space and the built environment do create a certain character. Social action and interaction seems to be indivisibly linked to the built environment, where these actions happen. This can be characterised by the basic human behavioural need to combine actions and emotions with the environment. Space is a carrier medium that bears an emotional context and thus symbolises human social relations. In this respect, space will be memorised with the event and then becomes a symbol for it, since space unfurls stronger associative powers than time; space is always there (Simmel, 1958). "Space is not the indetermined medium which Kant imagined; if purely and absolutely homogenous, it would be of no use, and could not be grasped by the mind. " (Durkheim, 1957, p. 11). Spatial representation is dependent on cultural factors. As Durkheim points out, a community will

incorporate undifferentiated space according to its social system. The various layers of space will be filled with sympathetic values that have been attributed to a certain region of a territory or settlement (Durkheim, 1957). As seen in some cases discussed above, the social configuration of a society is made manifest in space. The zoning in Nias villages and Yanomami shabonos, the layout of the Piazza del Campo di Siena, are perfect examples of this correlation.

Relatedness to space can be explained by the human need to combine things with actions and emotions (Pareto, 1917). Permanent combinations of space and actions create collective emotions that are if frequently repeated associated with space and create "mémoire collective", as Maurice Halbwachs named it (Halbwachs, 1980). This „mémoire collective" is embedded in space and thus has social meaning. In memory space is the longer-lasting association than an event, since space prevails. Particularly where intense inter-relations between social action like celebrations or rites take place in a certain space, rites will become inseparably linked with it and this will add to the collective memory. Space must be seen as a very important part of communication: By using space, individuals experience their space and collective social behaviour will be established (Park, 1952).

A social situation will be symbolised by a particular space. However, if the social situation refers to the community as a whole, space must provide certain qualities (Simmel, 1958; Simmel, 1992). It must look unique, it must have a splendid outlook, and it must have qualities all members feel affiliated to. Stability and permanence of space as well as its uniqueness is important since each community intends to certify its own status and identity (Halbwachs, 1980). As seen in the case studies above, only those spaces are used for building place bound identity that are by the particular society believed to have certain qualities and suit to represent the community. The ritual megaliths in Nias, seen as the seats of ancestors, are not standing somewhere, but in long rows along the path, dividing space into a semi private rear path and a front public path. Thus, subregions are distinguished that are occupied by the clans and help in the inner orientation of the village. The circular form of the Yanomami shabono is as well an expression of the social system of the tribes. As common in many other vernacular tribes around the world, the shabono is divided exactly according to the tribal circle, shows the relations between the clans, and their social status. Even Medieval Piazza del Campo di Siena has a semi circular form: even here the Palazzi of the Nine Noble Families, in other words, the ruling clans and representatives of Sienese society, are encircling the Piazza, together with the Palazzo Publico, the town hall.

5. Conclusions

Space has the power to establish an image and place bound identity for a community. This correlation was obviously seen in the chosen case studies. Nias, Yanomami shabonos as examples from the vernacular, and Siena and Paris taken from Europe are only a few cases where the discussed phenomenon was highlighted. However, the list could be extended, since space

as a creator for place bound identity was used in many parts around the world, at any time; for brevity's sake it was not possible to show more (for a more comprehensive study: Bornberg, 2003). Nevertheless the demonstrated cases pointed out the interplay of social behaviour and space perfectly well.

In the last paragraphs of this article it was highlighted why space can create place bound identity and represents a community, its social configuration and the claim of each community to be unique und distinctive. However, the case studies from above demonstrate that certain risks are embedded, too. Particularly the example of Paris in the times of the French Revolution shows, that space can also be associated with actions that belong on one hand to the collective memory, but are not necessarily "good" memories. Space can also be associated with fights, bloody deeds, riots, a social order that oppressed many, and so on. In general it can be said, that as soon as social order changes, the relationship to space must change as well. In the case of Paris, associations with the urban fabric of Paris and the Ancien Regime as well as the many riots and executions held here made it impossible to use these parts of Paris; therefore, as Mona Ozouf pointed out, the only solution was to go out into the wide open Marsfield to establish a new sense of belonging to (Ozouf, 1988) as well as the creation of a new nation.

Fortunately, positive examples of public open spaces as media for civic pride and identity far more common. Siena, for example, has its Piazza del Campo, and the fact, that the Palio is held since medieval times and fulfils its purpose until today, is an indicator, that people feel the affiliation to their city. Vital festivals on a particular spot in the public open are also quite common in Germany, such as Schützenfeste, Carnival's parades, Christmas markets, and many more. Some of them are age-old, some are newly introduced: dance festivals, "Euro-City" festivals, harbour festivals, autumn- or spring festivals and so on are currently introduced in many cities in Central Europe and are well attended and loved by inhabitants as well as outsiders. In our context it is, too, important to look at the spaces of the urban fabric where these celebrations are held. Very much like the old and vernacular examples, the festivals are taking place in the city centres, in the heart of towns, on prominent spots, where the majority of citizens feel already an affiliation. For town planners and urban designers it is very important to note, that none of these festivals do take place in the outskirts, maybe in the forest, countryside or a space accidentially chosen. They all are staged in the very centres, since these parts help to foster collective memory and civic pride. Therefore, it is a very clear result of this article, that the physical environment does create a sense of belonging and civic pride.

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