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**Die Suche nach dem Sinn -  
eine Situationsanalyse des Modell Steiermark**

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## **i. Presentations and talks relating to this project**

Doctoral School Program Architecture. History and Design.

Talk: “From trigon 67 to Modell Steiermark – how an art exhibition triggered a change in housing policies”

Politecnico di Torino, Castello del Valentino, Italy. December 2017.

trigon 67/17 International Symposium – Recapitulations & Perspectives

Talk: “From trigon 67 to Modell Steiermark – how an art exhibition triggered a change in housing policies”

Trieste Contemporanea, Trieste, Italy. November 2017.

European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry

Poster presentation: Using Grounded Theory and Situational Analysis to fathom the Field of Architecture. A Situational Analysis of the Modell Steiermark.

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium. February 2017.

2nd National Conference of Doctoral Schools in Architecture, Urban Planning and Design.

Paper presentation in the track “narrazioni”: “The Quest for Meaning – A Situational Analysis of the Modell Steiermark”

IUAV University of Architecture, Venice, Italy. December 2016.

## **ii. Publications relating to this project**

Zwangsleitner, D. (forthcoming) *Aspetti della narrazione sulla produzione architettonica, retoriche e memorie personali*. In: La Ricerca che Cambia. Atti del secondo convegno nazionale dei dottorati italiani dell’architettura, della pianificazione e del design. Università Iuav di Venezia 01-02/12/2016 a cura di Lorenzo Fabian e Mauro Marzo. LetteraVentidue.

Zwangsleitner, D. (2017) *Using Grounded Theory and Situational Analysis to fathom the Field of Architecture*. In: European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry Book of Abstracts, Leuven, Belgium. p. 126.

# **Die Suche nach dem Sinn – eine Situationsanalyse des Modell Steiermark**

## **1 Introduction**

“Modell Steiermark”, in force from the 1960s throughout the 1980s constitutes a crucial period in the architectural development in 20th century Austria. This time span saw a very rich and adventurous regional architectural scene and enjoyed the reputation of being the most dynamic one in Austria.

Based on an interdisciplinary cooperation between architects and the public administration a (legal) framework was instated in the federal state of Styria [Steiermark] that very highly valued the importance of architecture and spatial-planning with the participation of the public.

These efforts led to the creation of social housing projects that included aspects of sustainability and responsibility and integrated the future inhabitants in the process of planning and use. The involved architects thereby tried to redefine their traditional task and to reposition themselves in the field of architecture. This report will discuss the impacts of this politicization and the reorientation or rather the shift of architect's role during that period. Special attention will be given to the implications that arise from these changes. While laying the basis to a contemporary self-conception this important period is not yet understood.

Although Modell Steiermark appears to have taken place in a crucial period of the architectural development in Austria and its unique conception, it is only fragmentarily tackled by research. As an interdisciplinary program that, from the very beginning, tried to include the various stakeholders of architectural conception, production and use, it appears important to put a research strategy to work, that strives to draw a comprehensive picture of the situation.

Two facets of Modell Steiermark stand out, the inclusive approach and all-encompassing nature of it and the shift and reinterpretations of architect's role.

The delimitation of this study: Although it includes a general depiction to frame the situation appropriately this thesis focuses on housing projects that included user participation. Timewise it is delimited by the forerun in the late 1960s to the dismantling of the program in 1992.

## **2 Relevance for the current discourse in architecture**

While being absent in the 90s and early 2000s international architectural discourse lately experiences an increasing interest in socially and political topics. In 2016 the Pritzker Architecture Prize, the most prominent prize the architectural scene / field has to award was given to Alejandro Aravena. With this decision, the prize committee gave the simmering social concerns in architecture a new "official" ennoblement.

Looking back, a direct extrapolation of western participation-strategies of the 1960s to 1980s is more than unthinkable. Dissolving welfare state housing programs and more and more privately driven development of housing space and cities undermined it altogether. Even more as participation strategies got discredited as they had often been used as camouflage and technique to gain approval of controversial projects. Architects today must face even stronger headwinds than before! Besides general contractors and manufacturers of prefab-houses also project developers take on the production of economically exploitable space.

The role of architects in the future is still to be defined. Their interdisciplinary training qualifies them to play a coordinating or mediating role in the very diverse and highly competitive field of the production of architecture and the city. Therefore, it appears crucial to gain a deep understanding of the strategies that architects undertake to position themselves in the field of architecture. To claim an accentuated role in this vast field it is necessary to ascertain the own position and to know how one's self-conception is being constructed.

### **3 Narrating architecture**

Narratives are fundamental to human life. It is even suggested to be the core defining element. As Fisher (1984) put it, we are “homo narrans”. He then introduces the “narrative paradigm” (1985) to describe that all meaningful communication is a form of storytelling. It further suggests the persuasive power of good narration over good argument. While not undisputed, his assumptions, one may call it a communication theory, had a lasting impression on communication studies in special and the humanities and social sciences in general - often referred to as the narrative turn (Barusch 2012; Goodson & Gill 2011). For more recent take ups see Niles (1999) or Jonathan Gottschall's “The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human” (2012).

As Barusch (2012) points out the etymological roots of the word narrative do not only correspond to the Latin meaning “to tell, relate, account” but has itself its root in the Greek term *Gno* meaning “to know” – central for researchers, given their impulse for insight and knowledge.

With regards to Modell Steiermark and to this study, narration is significant in a variegated way, since not only the participation process is inheriting a narrative structure.

Furthermore, the actors promoted architecture utilising narrative approaches in manifold ways. Be that education experiments with groups of children of all ages, campaigning and talks to Styrian mayors and decision-makers, the organisation of international workshops, congresses and exhibitions and in particular the participative, dialogical design process of the housing estates.

#### **The narrative capacity of participation**

The (participatory) process that the architects applied and worked with aims at developing a story together with the future inhabitants. Developing this story collectively – working out a narrative – it can act as the conceptual basis of the future architectures.

The various undertakings these architects tried out, beginning with educational experiments, ..., up to the participation of the future inhabitants in the planning process were not only intended to understand the users’ desires or needs but as an empowerment process that enables the dwellers to get to know their own interests and needs.

These actions then cannot only be understood as empowerment processes but as well to construct a mutual narrative. A narrative that can possibly build a connection between the dweller’s life and the physical structures they live in. As is often the case the quality of architecture is valued based on its “sustainable” usability. Hence, a long-term usability, which is more likely to be achieved with a high degree of dweller’s (or user’s) identification with the building. In order to get to that, priority must be given to the user’s needs. One promising way to gain an

understanding of which is user-participation. As dwellers themselves (the people who actually live in these houses) have a specific understanding and conception of the use and experience of space, architects would do well to consider their opinions for the design process of the dwellings (Hofmann 2015, p.8).

### Understanding and embedding narratives

What could be more appropriate to fathom narratives as to talk with the protagonists themselves. Let them linger in their recollections, let them tell their experiences, their motivations. As Donna Haraway (2016) put it « some of the best thinking is done in storytelling. »

To do so, I undertook a series of narrative interviews with the main actors of this period. The narrative interview is classified among the qualitative research methods (Lamnek, 1989; Flick et al, 1991), to be considered a form of unstructured, in-depth interview with specific features. This type of interview allows to focus on the motivations and the driving forces of these protagonists.

These interviews, together with contemporary sources from the professional and lay media, archival material, exhibitions, documentation of activities and not least the architectural projects themselves form the highly diverse body of source material.

These sources will be analysed using Grounded Theory Methodology (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Subsequently, according to Situational Analysis (A. Clarke 2005) a series of maps will be generated. This approach allows for analysing complex social worlds / arenas.

Although Grounded Theory Methodology and even more Situational Analysis are less than common in architectural research, their conception predestines them as ideal for researching the architectural field. Being a highly complex matter, it consists of a dense net of interdependencies that mostly remain hidden under the surface respectively are outshone by more obvious and representative strands of argumentation.

Grounded Theory (GT) was discovered in 1967 by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss and since then developed to be one of the most widespread approaches of qualitative social research. It is characterized by the construction of theory through the analysis of data. One of the significant characteristics of GT is to understand the research process as circular and iterative.

Central steps of the research process include memo-writing and coding of the data. These develop and change throughout the whole research process.

To understand the complexity of the examined situation best possible the GT Analysis according to Strauss & Corbin (1990) is enlarged with Situational Analysis (Clarke 2005).

Clarke's account of situation refers to the situatedness of knowledge, produced by individuals or groups that are embedded in different networks (Haraway 1988). These networks have a decisive influence in the relational process of knowledge production.

With Situational Analysis Clarke suggests the use of three types of maps to enable "relational analyses" (2005, p.30) 1. In Situational Maps, 2. Social Worlds / Arenas Maps 3. Positional Maps.

In a first step, a Messy Situational Map is drawn which consists of all elements that are "in" the situation - they are quickly drawn as they occur. Clarke then suggests ordering this map according to categories she defines on p. 90 (Clarke 2005). That creates an Ordered Situational Map. Further steps will include the creation of Social Worlds / Arenas Maps to access analytically the meso-level.



#### 4 The cultural humus as trailblazer for change in architecture

This chapter emphasizes the cultural humus in Graz / Styria from the late 1960s onwards that formed the basis for the development of Modell Steiermark.

To tell the story of *Modell Steiermark* one has to go back in history, to times when the term *Modell Steiermark* has yet to be coined and filled with contents.

I want to step in in the mid-1960s, at this time in Austria the period of reconstruction after the destructions and distortions of World War II came to an end. The social and economic difficulties left by the war fostered a very pragmatic approach to building. This pragmatism was a very welcome distraction and relieving of the “guilt and soul-searching” (Blundell Jones, 1998, p. 44) that followed the end of Nazism and World War II. The promoted motto was to look forward in a down-to-earth-way.

Anyhow, the country finally saw itself in a consolidated situation, the most severe housing shortage was eased, infrastructure was sufficiently functioning.

This reconstruction was significantly influenced by the housing cooperatives. The housing types that were put to use were considered generally valid and subsequently produced by the copy / paste process in large series. These schematic, standardized plans, which are still widely used today, were able to respond quantitatively to the housing shortage, but they did not create lasting quality, satisfactory housing and only superficially dealt with public space.

The ongoing critique of this dogmatic interpretation of modernism and the reduction of architecture to economic aspects lead to the suspension of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in 1959. The international discussion about the "disintegration of the city" and the no longer existing public space, which took place in the mid-sixties, also took place in Austria. Attempts to link high urban density with the specific qualities of the individual were expressed in utopian and visionary projects as were conceived by several architects of the Graz architectural scene, among them Bernhard Hafner and Günther Domenig / Eilfried Huth with their famous project *Neue Wohnform Ragnitz*.

1959 was the founding year of Forum Stadtpark, a multi-disciplinary action group of artists, scientists, and cultural workers. The “trigon” Dreiländer-Biennale connecting and presenting cultural production in Austria with practices in Yugoslavia and Italy was instated in 1963 under the aegis of Hanns Koren and very much drew on the experiences of Forum Stadtpark. The 1967 edition of “trigon” then is considered to be the precursor of steirischer herbst, which is still active and highly regarded art festival in Graz.

“trigon 67” was called ambiente / environment and the architects responsible for the design are the aforementioned Günther Domenig / Eilfried Huth. The design of this exhibition in fact very much resembled their structuralist approach and

aimed at putting forward the idea of a more symbiotic relationship between architects, the various stakeholders involved in the production of architecture, and last but not least the public (see Burleigh 2015, p. 63). Burleigh's article discussing the "trigon" biennales of '67 and '69 has the title "exhibitions against architecture." While I don't consider it directed against architecture per se, I understand the aspirations of the involved actors and architects directed more towards a liberation and expansion of architecture. It can also be understood as critique of modernist architecture, which increasingly was not any longer able to respond to qualitative needs.

In fact, the architectural concept of "trigon 67" as well as the presented artistic positions were very eager to underline the potential for a built environment that can arise out of the inclusion or participation of non-architects.

While Wilfried Skreiner (1967) focused on sculptors and painters. For architecture in general it meant to include the future inhabitants of the housing projects.

It therefore must be considered a step of utmost importance in the genesis of what later would be called Modell Steiermark [Model Styria] and as such was to change the way architectural production in Styria took place, with the participation of inhabitants becoming a central concern.

Its importance lies not only in the transformation of the utopian scale to a concrete dimension but also in the presentation of this approach to a broader public. In fact, this exhibition triggered a much cited "Schock der Moderne" [shock of modernism] (see Steinle & Foitl 1996) in Graz and led to the corresponding public discussion with not exactly restrained calls for the resignation of cultural administrator Hanns Koren and curator Wilfried Skreiner.

This upturning development, the emerging upheaval, cannot be considered in isolated from socio-cultural change, and it is no coincidence that this took place at the time in question, i.e. in the late 1960s. The so-called '68 movement led internationally to strong social changes, progressive democratization, and above all to a strong politicization well into the private sphere.

In its entirety, Modell Steiermark was never limited to architecture, but rather was only one of many pillars of the democratization of all spheres of life. In fact it was meant to function as a long-term program for the development of Styria and was instated by the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP).

In 1968, the Housing Promotion Act was a central step in shifting the competences for housing subsidies from the state to the regional governments. In addition to the promotion of the subject and instating upper income limits for residents of subsidized apartments, new funding was made available for housing research, which also included financing for ground breaking projects such as the well-known Terrassenhaussiedlung in Graz.

Hubert Hoffmann, professor for urban planning since 1959 had a decisive influence on the scene both as an “activist” and as a teacher. The architecture faculty at the University of Technology in Graz was generally becoming a hotspot of the coming development.

While elsewhere cities were burning due to the 1968 student revolts, a “revolution in the drawing rooms” took place in Graz.

At the same time, the most famous participative processes in architecture were underway on an international level in various countries. In Italy, Giancarlo De Carlo developed the Matteotti housing project in Terni from 1970-75. Lucien Kroll developed the participation dormitory La Mémé in 1970 in Brussels. Christian Hunziker coordinated the participation process New Center for Avully in Geneva in 1973.

In 1974 in Graz, Kroll and Hunziker were widely acclaimed participants of the Steirische Akademie für Baukultur [Styrian academy for building culture].

However, the decisive factor was actually that these initiatives could all be part of the Styrian model of the ÖVP. The then still councillor for housing and later Governor of Styria Josef Krainer gave the impetus in 1972 to set up what was initially only thought of as discussion platforms., dealing with different topics for the future development of Styria. For the platform dealing with architecture and planning. Krainer was happy to find committed comrades in Hermann Schaller and Wolfdieter Dreibholz, who later became central figures for housing projects in Styria.

The guidelines developed in this working group called "Building and Dwelling" included at its very core the involvement and participation of the future inhabitants already at an early stage as well as the compulsory implementation of an architectural competition for projects with more than 50 units.

The first participatory housing projects had already been built (e.g. Eschensiedlung Deutschlandsberg, 1972, Arch. Huth) and the first official competition in the framework of Modell Steiermark (Markt Hartmannsdorf 1982-83, Arch. Windbichler) had already taken place when the legal-framework was established.

Talking in numbers, between 1985 and 1991 115 housing competitions were carried out within the framework of Modell Steiermark. In 1986 the share of projects accounted for 20% of the total construction volume of housing in Styria, while the remaining 80 % was organized traditionally via housing cooperatives (Tschavгова, 2010, p.189).

The end of Modell Steiermark in housing came with the local elections in 1991 with a change in the balance of political power.

The Styrian People's Party, after reigning the country for more than 30 years with absolute majority suffered a defeat with losing 7.5 % of voters and arriving at a share of 44.2 % of the electorate (Bermann, 1992, p. 63). Although still providing the provincial governor, the ÖVP was no longer in charge of the housing department that from now on was presided by the extreme right-wing "Freedom Party" (FPÖ) that achieved a share of votes of over 15%. Although the newly sworn in housing minister was an architect himself he took a very critical not to say contemptuous stance towards the projects of Modell Steiermark. He stated bluntly that "housing is no playground for architects" (as cited in Blundell Jones, 1998, p. 88) as if there had been no benefits for the inhabitants or the public at large.

Very telling is the comment by Otto Kapfinger (1995, p. 53) describing one of the most striking characteristics of Modell Steiermark that it had been a reform from above, from the centre of political power ("Reform von oben, aus dem Zentrum der politischen Macht").

At the same moment, it can be considered an effort by heroic individuals (Weibel 1996, p. 112), coming from many different fields, who left disciplinary boundaries behind for dynamic team processes taking place while interacting with politics. Whereas inner dynamics and the determination to discuss also controversial topics certainly played an important role. Retrospectively it is fascinating that in this time, in this place many acteurs with very different backgrounds and therefore bound to very different interests were committed to one cause, resembling almost a kind of pact.

The prospective world-changing quest of these protagonists, their motivations although in individual detail never fully accessible to research are in a very much shortened way, at the same moment leaving as much space as possible, described in the following quote

« The Idea behind this [...] is that we rise up, and often fail, but ultimately, our efforts will never end, because if desire fails, life is over. » (Didi-Huberman 2016).

## 5 Situational Maps of Modell Steiermark

This chapter includes an unordered as well as an ordered Situational Map of Modell Steiermark representing temporally the whole period of Modell Steiermark's forerun and life span. While the unordered map reflects and communicates the messiness of a situation as one approaches it from outside, and the seemingly impenetrable thicket, the ordered map offers to analytically grasp all the existing elements (Actors and Actants) that are in the situation. This map does not consider the temporal aspect, that is the chronological occurrence and gaining of significance of the single element. On the contrary it should be considered a "Big-Picture-Map" including all the elements that are in the situation lasting from the end 1960s to the end of Modell Steiermark.

### Unordered Situational Map: (DZ after a concept by Clarke 2005)



## **Ordered Situational Map:**

(DZ after a concept by Clarke 2005)

### **INDIVIDUAL HUMAN ELEMENTS / ACTORS**

#### Prospective dwellers

Sokratis Dimitriou  
Wolfdieter Dreibholz  
Hubert Hoffmann  
Kurt Jungwirth  
Christoph Klauser  
Hanns Koren  
Josef Krainer jun.  
Heinz Rosmann  
Hermann Schaller  
Wilfried Skreiner

#### Architects

Dieter Angerbauer  
Heribert Altenbacher  
Helmut Croce  
Franz Cziharz  
Günther Domenig  
Klaus Gartler  
Heidulf Gerngroß  
Ernst Gieselbrecht  
Eugen Gross  
Friedrich Groß-Rannsbach  
Bernhard Hafner  
Heiner Hierzegger  
Werner Hollomey  
Eilfried Huth  
Klaus Kada  
Wolfgang Kapfhammer  
Ingo Klug  
Gert Kossdorf  
Karla Kowalski  
Gerhard Kreutzer  
Günther Krisper  
Walter Laggner  
Fritz Matzinger  
Vladimir Nikolic  
Werner Nußmüller  
Herfried Peyker  
Hermann Pichler

Helmut Richter  
Florian Riegler  
Hubert Rieß  
Dieter Spielhofer  
Herrad Spielhofer  
Wilfried Stummer  
Peter Trummer  
Nikolaus Schuster  
Michael Szyszkowitz  
Johannes Wegan  
Irmfried Windbichler

## **COLLECTIVE HUMAN ELEMENTS / ACTORS**

Associations of future dwellers per project  
Federal Ministry for Building and Structure (Bundesministerium für Bauten und Technik) (1966-87)  
Federal Ministry of Economics (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Angelegenheiten) (since 1987)  
Government of the Federal State of Styria (Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung)  
Building and Planning Department of Styria (Landesbaudirektion)  
Arbeitskreis 12 Bauen und Wohnen (Policy Platform 12 – Building and Dwelling)  
Local government / Mayor

Housing cooperatives  
Rottenmanner Siedlungsgenossenschaft  
Österreichische Gemeinnützige Wohnbaugesellschaft mbH (ÖWGes)  
Gemeinnützige Alpenländische Gesellschaft für Wohnungsbau und Siedlungswesen (GWS)  
Neue Heimat  
Gemeinnützige Grazer Wohnungsgenossenschaft (GGW)  
Architect's offices  
Construction industry  
Federal Chamber of Architects and chartered Engineering Consultants for Styria and Carinthia  
Association of Austrian Architects  
Technical University Graz – Faculty of Architecture  
Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)  
Socialist Party of Austria (today Social Democratic Party of Austria, SPÖ)  
Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)

## **NONHUMAN ELEMENTS / ACTANTS**

housing constructions

Federal Housing Construction Subsidy Acts (WFG) 1968

Special Housing Construction Subsidy Acts (Sonderwohnbaugesetze) 1982, 83, 84

Federal Housing Construction Subsidy Acts (WFG) 1984

Federal Constitutional Law (BVG) 1987 (change in competencies for housing subsidies from state to region)

Styrian Housing Construction Subsidy Acts (Stmk. WFG) 1989

Styrian Housing Construction Subsidy Acts (Stmk. WFG) 1993

Urban Development Concept Graz Stek 1980

Urban Development Concept Graz Stek 1990

Forum Stadtpark (seit 1959)

Tri-country biennial Trigon Austria-Italy-Yugoslavia (since 1963)

exhibition "Trigon 67 Ambiente / Environment"

exhibition "Trigon 69 Architektur und Freiheit"

Steirischer Herbst (since 1968)

"Steirische Akademie für Baukultur" (Styrian academy for building culture) 1974

House of Architecture (hda) (since 1988)

survey "Möglichkeiten und Grenzen demokratischer Mitbestimmung im sozialen Wohnbau" (1979 – 82)

journal "Wohnbau" (1974 – 85)

symposium "Mitbestimmung im Wohnbau" (Wohndorf Tulbinger Kogel, Lower Austria, 1980)

exhibition "Neue städtische Wohnformen" (Vienna, ÖGFA, 1966/67)

## **DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS**

architecture responsible for people's housing needs

participation of dwellers is necessary and good

dwellers choose themselves how they want to live

role and self-construction of architects

general politicization

architects as counsellors of people in need

public authorities as counsellor of people in need

socio-political commitment of architects

housing cooperatives control the construction of housing

## **POLITICAL / ECONOMIC ELEMENTS**

state subsidies for housing

change in competencies for housing subsidies from state to region

("Veränderung") (especially WFG 1968, WFG 1984, B-VG 1987)



research program for dwelling – Federal Ministry for Building and Structure  
(since 1968)  
construction costs for housing  
(affordable) housing needs  
participation process laborious and costly, raises planning costs

## **TEMPORAL ELEMENTS**

period of reconstruction after World War II  
critique of modernism (suspension of CIAM 1959, foundation of Team 10)  
'68 movement  
participation process as “invisible planning task” is time consuming  
long-term satisfaction with housing

## **SOCIOCULTURAL / SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS**

1973 oil crisis  
“The Limits to Growth”, Club of Rome 1972  
Schematic, modernist housing estates  
General democratization / citizen's emancipation  
concept of housing minimum  
loss of image of housing cooperatives  
loss of image of architects

## **SPATIAL ELEMENTS**

need for space for dwelling  
higher-density typologies vs. housing sprawl  
spatial distribution of housing space

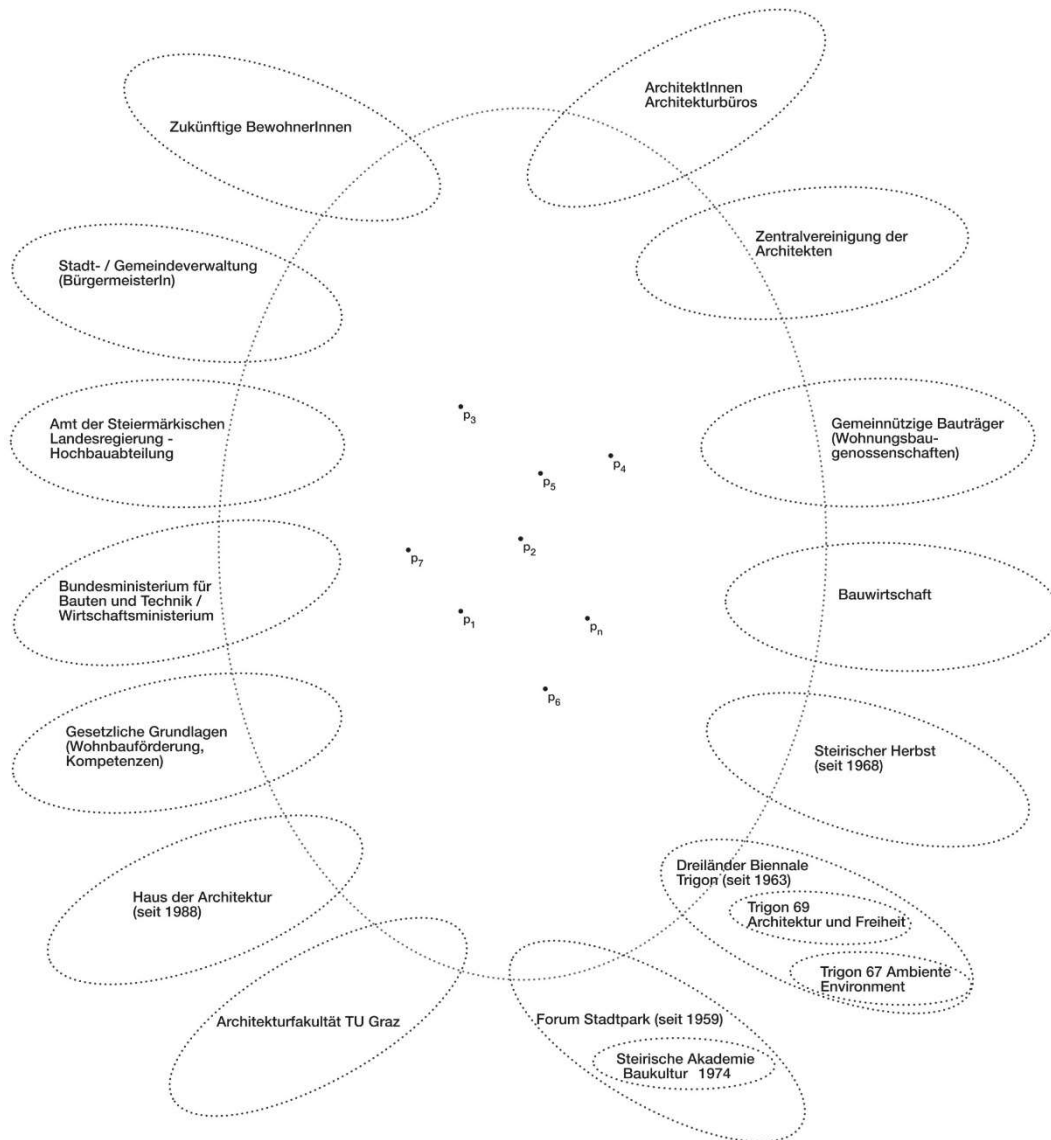
## **MAJOR ISSUES / DEBATES**

definition of quality in architecture  
schematic housing estates of the reconstruction period  
elimination of housing shortage  
housing cooperatives control the construction of housing  
user participation with the construction of housing  
general democratization  
ecology / environmental consciousness - higher-density typologies vs. housing  
sprawl  
need for affordable housing

## **RELATED DISCOURSES (NARRATIVE / OR VISUAL)**

housing question  
general politicization (68 Movement)  
crisis of Architecture / Modernism  
aesthetics of participative architecture  
concept of the user in architecture  
architecture as long-term process  
critique of functionalism  
influence of the political parties (ÖVP / SPÖ / FPÖ)

## 6 Arena of participatory housing projects - Modell Steiermark



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