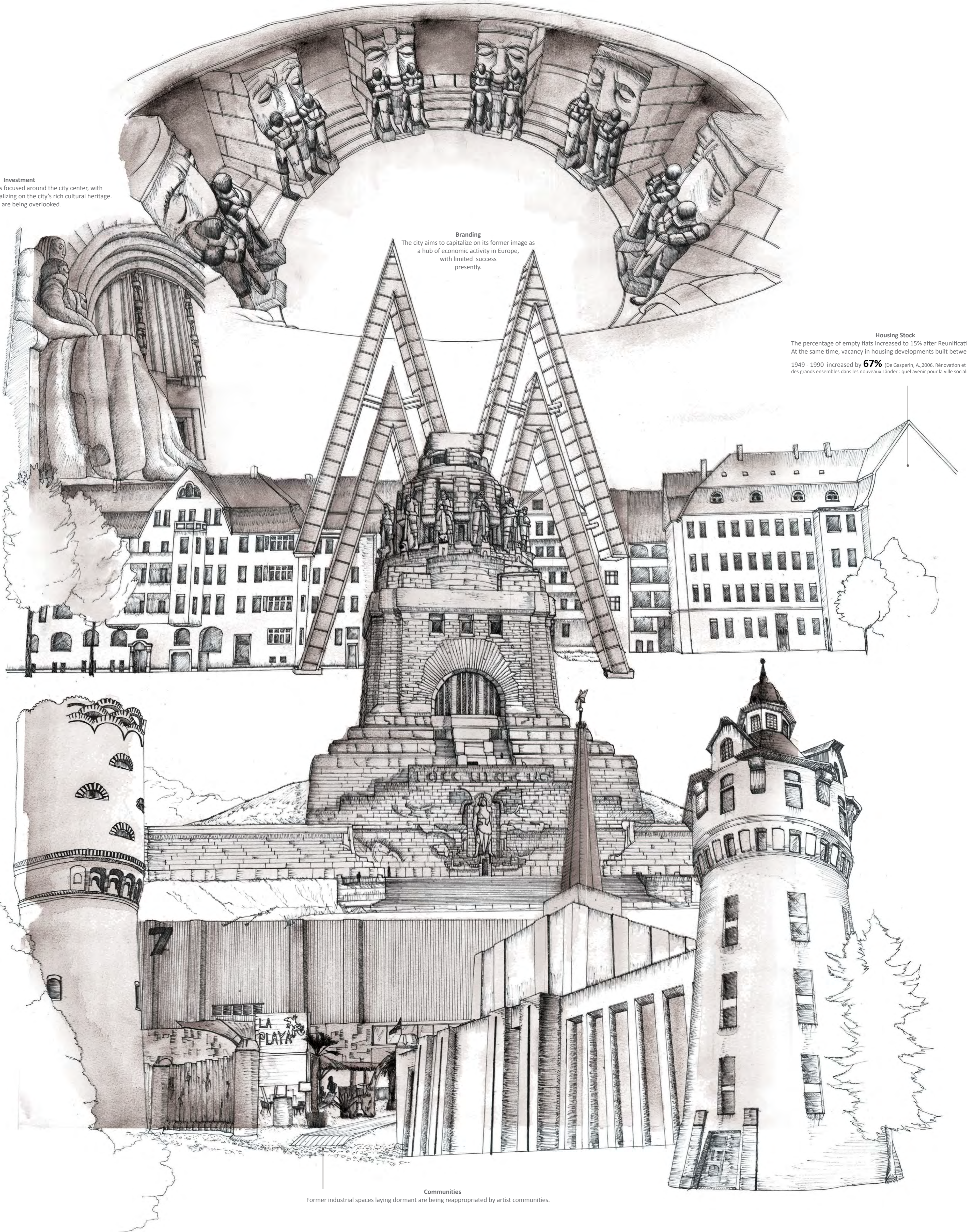


LEIPZIG - Delicate Economies And Crumbling Infrastructures



**Investment**  
Development and investment is focused around the city center, with emphasis on tourism and capitalizing on the city's rich cultural heritage. However, neighboring quarters are being overlooked.

**Branding**  
The city aims to capitalize on its former image as a hub of economic activity in Europe, with limited success presently.

**Housing Stock**  
The percentage of empty flats increased to 15% after Reunification, in 1990. At the same time, vacancy in housing developments built between 1949 - 1990 increased by **67%** (De Gasperin, A., 2006. Rénovation et réhabilitation des grands ensembles dans les nouveaux Länder : quel avenir pour la ville socialiste ?).

**Communities**  
Former industrial spaces laying dormant are being reappropriated by artist communities.

ABSTRACT

But how are present-day shrinking cities any different from historic ones? Since the first human settlements, epidemics, wars and natural catastrophes have decimated populations in cities or even entire regions. One could think of Rome, a city which has experienced periods of lengthy decline and rebirth or others, like Atlantis, that have disappeared altogether.

Present-day shrinkage is different from historical examples because, unlike the latter, it has been taking place during times of peace and increasing affluence, as opposed to a violent external force.

This new type of shrinkage occurs as a result of globalization and its reorganization of space and time, leaving old industrial centres behind in the competition for resources within the global cities' network.

For my research I have chosen Leipzig as a case study, since it represents a specific case whereby all the main factors of shrinkage overlap.

PURPOSE AND METHOD

For my research I have chosen Leipzig as a case study, since it represents a specific case whereby all the main factors of shrinkage overlap.

The aim of this study is to examine the dimensions of structural change brought about by the phenomenon of shrinkage, changes which have affected the economy, the urban fabric and the city's culture.

Data gathered - Qualitative.

Methodologies

- Historical (reviewing of photographic archives and museum visits);
- Psychogeographical - visiting neighborhoods which have suffered the greatest impact due to shrinkage;
- Visual records;
- Interviewing. Informal conversations with people who live and work in the areas visited.

SUMMARY

The postmodern reurbanizing policy of Leipzig concentrates on the old city center and increases polarization of the city even more. Core areas of events and consumerism are developed for the globally oriented 'new entrepreneurs' and service providers of the information economy (loft-living, restored buildings in older neighbourhoods, gated inner city communities), as exemplified by Connewitz and the development of Media City cluster.

Despite attempts at a European reurbanization of the city center, the urban cultures in shrinking cities are being suburbanized, reduced and hollowed out into suburban ways of life.

Does this provide a more straightforward transition to the culture of post-Fordist flexibility and individualization of work and life?