Defining Berlin

Planning Policy Discourse After the Wall

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ABSTRACT

Focus for this thesis is the participation-planning strategy, the *Stadtforum* (the City Forum), initialized in Berlin after the fall of the Wall in 1989. The *Stadtforum* is seen as discourse on space: The ramifications of the discourse in this planning institution and the content regarding discussions on public space are analyzed. Theoretically it makes use of Lefebvre's theory on the production of space and tries to answer the question on what guiding images evolve. The argument is that the institution is the intersection point between representations of space and (democratic) representation in the public sphere. And the democratically important question goes: How 'open' or transparent is the juxtaposition of professional planners and the citizenry? Since the act of planning urban space also entails a definition and an articulation of the city's identity, planning becomes more intricate connected to political questions of identity and who has the power to create the citizens' history and environment according to their visions. This is important especially in a city that was divided for 40 years and developed different urban cultures on both sides. I further argue that the dominant image in the discourse is informed by postmodern ideals in urban design and architecture, and especially the European City ideal together with the now classic Jane Jacobs neighbourhood-ideal, and that this image is not an outcome of citizenry input in the discourse. The conclusion is that discourse is imperative in planning and important to keep an eye on, as more and more planning, both in theory and in practice, leans towards the ideal of transparency and democratic participation.

Defining Berlin: Planning Policy Discourse After the Wall

Introduction

Authors are often accused of simply wanting to share their obsessions with the reader.[1]

Also, to be frank, I like dense cities best and care about them most.[2]

What?

This text is generated by my own obsession – in line with Thrift's following sentence "I am afraid that I am no different."[3] The city and its public spaces and places: Why they feel, look, and smell the way they do. And here, in the beginning, I confess that the Jacobs quote also stands for me.

Though, the focus is not on my own experience of the city. It is an investigation of Berlin as the imagined city, problematizing the conceivement of spaces that is an inevitable consequence of planning practice. In the preceeding thesis I said that this one would be about the Berlin citizenry response to these visions and new spaces. Unfortunately I cannot keep that promise, since it would have needed a bigger apparatus and more time to fulfill.

Instead this text centers around the need to imagine the city to be able to handle or manage it in any practical and democratic way – the city put into words, pictured, and projected onto paper and other media: First and foremost, it is the thought orienting words and the resulting plans, blueprints and sketches, the 'eating ice-cream'-perspectives, the maquettes. And so put into discourse with its power uses and abuses.

The two lines of analysis that intersects here: Representations of and representation in space. The conceived spaces of the city represented in the public sphere of 'democratic planning' in civil society. These are really two fields of investigation. But from a spatial-political-culture point of view, I think they are essentially tied to each other. Foremost is the 'new' (it is ten years old now) participatory strategy in the Berlin planning context: The *Stadtforum* (the City-Forum). What happened to the hopes and wishes of a more transparent and public city planning? What kind of images, visions, and plans has it produced?

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[1] Thrift 1996: 1.
[2] Jacobs 1991: 16.
[3] Thrift 1996: 1.

How?

Intertwined, but separable, are the conceived spaces generated by urban specialists and the discourses and rhetorical devices (images) that evolves. But not only by urban specialists. In the case of the *Stadtforum* the intention was to open up and invite different images, experiences, and representations of citizens' cities. As I see it, these representations of space reflect and generates at least some of the meaning of cities. That is the reason why they are also politically interesting when put under some scrutiny: Who dominates the discourse among urban specialists and within the public sphere? What form and what content?

To be able to show this the analysis must create a distance from the phenomena or object (and its context) under investigation, to be able to break away from taken for granted paths and from that perspective contribute with an-other angle (the reflection). This investigation is mostly done out of archive and literary material: Comments and protocoles from the *Stadtforum* sessions and resulting plans. And by trying to situate this discourse in the larger context of planning theory and practice in contemporary (Western) cities.

Why?

Why is this particular perspective geographically important? The geography I write is concerned with space in general and with place and power structures in particular. If we narrow it down a bit we find the management of space and place as ever contested ground. This, along with the way we make sense of the world through meaning, which implies our construction of the world through the generation of meaning, is where crititcal cultural geography can contribute to an understanding of the production of space(s). This is, further on, done by imagining – through text, verbal, or other media for communicating. Needless to say, in contemporary society urban and city planners has a great part in this – when meaning are much more contested, fought over, and to a large extent commodified by the imperative of consumption.[4]

This is why the city as a lived space is – and precisely because of the differing meanings tied to it – important from a democratic point of view. As Holston and Appadurai has noted, cities are catalysts of citizenship and the strategic arena for identities to develop in the ramifications of and

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[4] E.g. see Sack 1988.

for the civil democratic society. City-streets are the spaces where different 'active ingredients' blend to produce both progressive and reactionary political movements.[5]

Although we must never forget that cities developes and emerges through webs of (more or less different) realities, there is, again with borrowed feathers from Holston and Appadurai, something necessary but not sufficient, irreducible and untransferable with "…the city's public street and square for the realization of a meaningfully democratic citizenship. If we support the latter, we may have to do much more to defend the former."[6] Obviously this is where, besides socioeconomic and ecological issues, the responsibility of planning lies (or should lie).

When it comes to meaning the constitution of knowledge is significant: The power to define and to use definitions is always interesting and necessary to criticize. That is how this text became a text on the imaginative and mimetical side of planning, since these sides imbues the practice of planning – they are imperative, by definition a part of what planning is all about.

Limitation and Delimitations

There is always the haunting problem of manageability and openess in any academic investigation. Of course, I cannot contain everything that has taken place and is related to what I am exploring in this text. That claim of holism would be a brutal self-delusion – akin to hybris – and anyway, any attempt to do so will not contribute to the 'readability' of the text. But there are a few delimitations the reader should be aware of (not to mention myself). These are:

1) Planning policy discourse is investigated with focus on urban design and spatial ordering – not, for example, public planning for labour policy. Further, within planning discourse in Berlin, I have focused on those parts that deals explicitly with a few public spaces (squares, streets, 'the centres', the nodes, and so on). Since the *Stadtforum* is more than this, and has been producing a massive body of visions and images for ten years now, it is necessary to be selective in order to keep the analysis within the time- and space-spans this master thesis is allocated. In other words, it would be more relevant to write a doctoral dissertation to be able to grasp and dissect every topic or theme that *Stadtforum* has dealt with. Not to mention a consideration of all the effects on the city.

2) Since politics are much mentioned or implied in the thesis, I also have to be explicit on the moral and political use of this text. Namely, critical analysis of people and space (e.g. narrowed

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[5] Holston & Appadurai 1996: 188.
[6] Ibid.:202.

down to 'the city') is *not* about giving recommendations for more progressive or just planning. It is a reflective comment on how we deal and operate with and in space. A comparison with the art-critic should throw some light on my position: The art-critics would be outrageous if they were to suggest to the artist what s/he think is a better rhyme or composition. But that does not hinder writers' or artists' use of the critics' insights to continue creating.

3) One further limitation is ironically enough language (the very object under investigation in a way): All translations from german and swedish are mine, unless otherwise noted, and it is my fault alone if they misrepresent any statements. But it is once again a question of space, and for future source-critique the apology goes: I simply have no place to put all the original quotes in notes. Though, when insecure over meaning I have put the original word or phrase in parenthesis.

4) This master thesis (*magister*) is nonetheless an exercise in academic research and writing, and even though it might contain attempts at original research and a deepening in knowledge of the phenomenon studied, it is mostly made out of fun and cannot possibly answer all questions arising and surrounding the field of investigation.

Distribution

Nothing unusual about the (narrative) structure here. First a presentation of the theoretical approach, which is based on Lefebvre's theory on the production of space, but departs from it to make use of discourse theory. After that comes a short interlude with some statistical and economical figures on the state of Berlin since the fall of the Wall. Then follows a chapter on the *Stadtforum* as a juxtaposer and diffuser of the imagined Berlin. This was the principal setting where the public, through participation or the (in the nineties) big mass-media coverage, was presented the new conceived spaces of Berlin. Here is also an analysis of the publicness of the forum, as part of the public sphere. After this contextual and formal presentation follows a chapter on the *Stadtforum* as producing images of the city: The sessions as representing the lived space of Berlin. These discussions were also important in the process of producing the Inner-City Plan, *Planwerk Innenstadt*. The end chapter sums up, reflects, and presents a critical point of view on what has been said, Berlin defined, and the future of democratic planning practice.

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cities. This is dedicated to Stor-Jonas (1916-1999) who always wanted the discussion to keep going.

What!

The Power of Imagination: That is what it is all about. The imagined city in the discursive setting that generates the 'real', physical spaces in the city. How was and is Berlin imagined in the visions of the citys' urban specialists? Questions to be answered here: Which are the dominating representations of space among the Berlin urban specialists? Leaving the question of what Berlin really is – something everyone has to make up their own minds about – I turn to what it is (or is supposed to be) in the city's planning scene.

Theoretical Orientation: Urban Specialists, Citizen Participation, and Discourse in the Planning Context

In this chapter I will present the theoretical tools I use to analyse planning practice. To begin with, this text is not a contribution to *the* public space debate (or, more accurate, loss of public space) – even though it uses some of the same footwork. I pose a slightly different set of questions within the political and democratic meaning of cities: The politics of images in public planning discourse in relation to the production of places. Which images of the city are being created under the present process of reconstruction and regeneration in Berlin?

I choose to problematize this question through an elite which I name *urban specialists*. This group dominates the field of urban management, I have to point out – because there are other elites depending on what perspective you use for analysis and, in terms of power, they are relational to each other: There is really no *one* hierarchy at hand. And a comment on the use of this generalising categorisation: First, it is ironic in a sense. It can be seen as a play (though honest) with what categorisation does to the thinking around a phenomena or subject. Second, it is a scientific method – naming and analysing, perhaps renaming and then categorisation to be able to grasp the significance of the phenomena.

Representations of Space: The Space(s) Produced By Urban Specialists

It is through representation, in whatever languages and images, that experience is brought most sharply into consciousness and that *paths are defined*.[7]

Representations make the city available for analysis and replay. Their strange effect is that, like snow falling in a souvenir snow-bubble, representations blanket the city, changing the way it appears to us.[8]

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[7] King 1996: 113; my emphasis.
[8] Shields 1996: 228.

Ten years ago Berlin was a locus of many question-marks concerning its future development. But as Cosgrove, in a short rebuttal to David Harvey's 'distrust in the significance of images', pointed out:

> The reconstruction of Berlin now in prospect will draw upon and negotiate a deep deposit of past and contemporary images. It is not clear how this repertoire is less *real* a force in shaping the geography of the new Berlin than the circuits of capital which will undoubtedly play their role in its reconstruction.[9]

This theoretical framework then departs from and draws upon a Marxist vein, namely that of Henri Lefebvre and his 'distinctive brand of Marxism',[10] in thinking about space. I will not use it to analyse the underlying economical processes, but rather applying it to the other force stated in Cosgrove's quote. To use it as a theoretical tool to analyse the production of place in contemporary planning in Berlin – to excavate the images that urban specialists use, as an intrinsic part of their social practice.

And as Lefebvre stated more than a decade ago: "…Marxism is, above all, a method of analysing social practices; it is not a series of assumptions, postulates, or dogmatic propositions, altough that is the way things are happening."[11] I think that the analyses, criticism, and method forwarded in the Marxist 'tradition' contains effective tools to deal with cities and their dispositions. It is, with Klostermans words, "…extremely valuable in helping to reveal the underlying nature of contemporary planning."[12]

What, then, is this 'underlying nature of contemporary planning'? Put another way: How does spaces and places evolve, come into being in the contemporary Berlin planning process?

Base: Lefebvre's Three Kinds of Spaces

Lefebvre's aim with his work in *The Production of Space* (1991) was to create a unifying theory between different disciplines concerned with space as their field of investigations – and especially to loosen philosophy from its mental 'jail' and what he thought of as its temporal bias. When

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[9] Cosgrove 1990: 522.
[10] See Soja 1996: 32.
[11] Burgel, Burgel & Dezes 1987: 29.
[12] Klosterman 1996: 161.

Lefebvre wrote his piece more than twenty-five years ago[13] his argument was that philosophical thinking had failed to give ground to a science of space. It has only produced "…mere descriptions which never achieve analytical, much less theoretical, status, or else fragments and cross-sections of space."[14] It has given ways of making inventories and discourses but failed to produce a *knowledge of space.* Thus, "…without such a knowledge, we are bound to transfer onto the level of discourse, of language *per se* – i.e. the level of mental space – a large portion of the attributes and 'properties' of what is actually social space."[15]

It might be that my account of Lefebvre's thoughts are simplifying or distorting his sometimes contradictory but complex theoretical body. But for my purposes it is not necessary to engage a comprehensive exegesis of Lefebvre's thoughts. Though three key concepts – or three kinds of spaces[16] – are essential and are to be used for orientation, as a point of departure. This set is symbiotic and ever interacting.

First there is the *spatial practice*. It is through spatial practice every society or socio-cultural context are given its perceived space, and it is the space which every society constantly produces (or secretes) and at the same time presuppose for its existence. This space embraces the close association between daily routine and urban reality, "…the routes and networks which link up places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure."[17]

The specific spatial competence and performance of every societal member is not deducable in any other way than through empirical observation. But on the other hand, it is by investigating a society's and its members' spatial practice an understanding and knowledge of the influence of the other two spaces on everyday life, urban reality, and meanings is reachable.[18] In Berlin, the most conspicious example – and even though dependent on two quite different societies as cause – is the Wall which created specific spatial practices both under and after its physical existence.[19]

Second, there is the *representational spaces* or lived space, which is the inhabitants' and the users' space, lived directly through symbols and images. It is the dominated and hence passively experienced space that the human imagination tries to change and appropriate: "It overlays physical space, making symbolical use of its objects."[20] I interpret this as the socioculturally (and wider outside the immediate professions that deals with spaces and places) mediated percieved space: A

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[13] The english translation is from 1991, but the original text was published 1974.
[14] Lefebvre 1991: 7.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Soja 1996: 10.
[17] Lefebvre 1991: 38.
[18] Ibid.
[19] See Borneman 1992; Schneider 2000.
[20] Lefebvre 1991: 39.

giving and taking; that it is impossible to experience any spatial phenomena without this cultural mediation – just as a parable with temporal phenomena (without making any real distinction between the two!) would show.

Third, there is the *representations of space* or conceived spaces, which are the "…the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived."[21] In my interpretation this kind of space amounts to the extraction and mapping of spatial practice and representational space. This conceptualized space, argues Lefebvre, is the dominant form of space produced in every society, and it is permeated by 'knowledge' – the french *savoir*, a mix of understanding and ideology. Perhaps, in this context, it lends itself to be termed 'professional informed understanding/competence' – eternally relative and changing.[22] That is, representations of space generates paradigms and paradigm shifts.

Examples may be found in diverse schools or doctrines on how to plan and regulate place. It is another form of production than spatial practice, when it more or less happens to the citizens' reality and they have to deal with its consequences. As an example of domination, one could mention the reign of the 'mob of technical-expertise' during the mid 20th-century downtown reconstruction of Stockholm.[23] One further example of the paradigms generated by and the consequences of conceived space might be Jane Jacobs' 'eyes upon the streets' and its development, over Oscar Newman's notion of 'defensible spaces', into the surveillance strategies used in many public spaces today.[24]

Who Are the Urban Specialists?

Urban planning is precisely about the imaginary, about competing representations, differing interests, differing ideologies, differing positionalities.[25]

For the first time in the history of planning the barrier is broken between the different disciplines: urban development, urban planning, urban renewal, architecture, design, cultural sciences, social sciences, etc. They are no longer interpreted as inherently separate

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[21] Ibid.: 38-39.
[22] Ibid.: 41.
[23] A notion personally derived from Thomas Hall, in a seminar on urban planning and big projects, Stockholm University, Dept. of Human Geography 17/9 1999; see also T. Hall 1999: 197.
[24] See Jacobs 1991: passim 35; Newman 1972; Sorkin 1992; Hall 1996a: 238-9; and cf. Kilian 1998.
[25] King 1996: 6.

professional fields, ranked in time. They are seen as different forms of an assortment of measures, not chosen on the basis of spatial characteristics but of content.[26]

In an analysis of power relations and the conflicts that arise in the management of urban space it is probably with conceived space – 'the dominating form of space' – that an investigation should begin. This is also, in this text, the question of how urban places and public spaces are produced and who has the power to create them according to their will and construed needs (or 'form of life'[27]). Here I must make the distinction between professionals and (other) citizens, while both are trying to reach goals set by their general outlook. But as Jackson puts it, on Gramscis reworking of the concept of hegemony: "Cultural practices have ideological effects to the extent that they contribute to the domination of one social group by another through the selective concealment of interests."[28]

As I see it and concluding from the above stated theory and quote, this power lies at large in the hands of those groups who are able to define and design representations of space, the groups that has the preferential right of interpretation when it comes to politics (by democratic empowerment or totalitarian force). As Soja explains conceived space, it is tied to "…the relations of production, and, especially, to the order or design that they impose. Such order is constituted via control over knowledge, signs, and codes: over the means of deciphering spatial practice and hence over the production of spatial knowledge."[29]

These groups I think of as the category of *urban specialists*.[30] They are the ones who use representations (the conceptualized space) as tools in their craft, but at the same time as tools of power – witting or un-. In this category belongs the professional urban planners, architects, and politicians in planning departments and ministries – the ones who have developed a competence in conceiving or conceptualizing space and are commissioned by the 'city' (the governing authority) to manage its different spaces.

It would perhaps be easy to conceive (although it might be a trap) urban specialists as forming a powerful culture or part-culture among other urban cultures: They have a history (conceptions of spatial order in a tradition – the evolution of theory and practice in urbanism), language (discourse), and sets of routines and rituals (bureaucracy and the 'first dig' and

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[26] Fassbinder 1996:72.
[27] See Hannerz 1992: 47.
[28] Jackson 1989: 73.
[29] Soja 1996: 67.
[30] I am aware of the fact that I am 'creating' a subject for study, and that this category might not have clear-cut defined borders in every occasion.

inaugurating procedure of cutting stripes where prominent guests have a role, as deities performing 'recognition', i.e. status lending to their work) – and meaning constructed within these groups ('what is the city? What are the goals and aims of planning this space?').

Planning paradigms, as producing conceptualized space (or representations of space, images and meaning), is one set of artefacts emanating from this culture. On the other hand, most conspiciously and consequential of the representations, are the artefacts of physical structures and mechanisms for regulating patterns of flows in the city. This is the production of spaces out of a local tradition (embracing the wider cultural setting) which constantly also borrows and naturalizes influnces from 'the outside' or global networks of urban specialists (acculturation and dissemination, as trends and ever evolving meanings).

Elementary parts of their images are grounded in their schooling – which makes a qualitative difference depending on the *zeitgeist*, i.e. the spatio-temporal context of ideas, ideals, and norms. To sum it up: They have a set of truths that informs their perception of the world, and which also guides their notion of development and are expressed in their representations of space. Internally in this or these groups – certain embracing schools and/or doctrines, paradigms and so on – there is of course the possibility of 'polygraphy' and conflicts between different views.

Emphatic Planning: Civil Society and Citizen Participation

The question concerning the urban specialists' real degree of control over city-life or lived space is a highly debated and complex one. My argument or hypothesis is that people, part-cultures outside this group, also has an interest in inserting their representations of space, their views, their images of space, in the political and professional discourse of urban specialists – because it concerns, through the symbiosis of place and identity, their representational space and spatial practice.

One line of investigation is the permeability of urban specialist discourse, or, as a question, how closed are the 'borders' of the conceived spaces? And if they are closed, who represents what?

To begin with, what is the tendency in contemporary planning theory? According to Lilja, planning is entering (or has already entered) a third phase in the history of modern planning. In the first phase it was dominated by instrumental reason and characterised by figures such as Robert Moses in the 1930s through to the 1960s in New York, and of course the modern movement and CIAM with (in Europe) Le Corbusier.[31]

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[31] Lilja 1995: 8.

The second phase is identified with the emergence of the 'seducer', i.e. still operating from an instrumental reason-stance but within the (political) ramifications of the welfare-state. These two generations of planners had in common that their actions were decided by intellectually generated ideas and visions.[32] The contemporary role I choose to define as an emphatic stance towards everyday life, and it is an emerging planning paradigm:

> The new planner and his/her [*dennes*] role, which now is under developement, is not guided by an instrumental reasoning. It is a planning anchored in the values that exists in the daily life and the place's historical tradition, in the region. The new planner is still rational, but his or her rationality is grounded in practical life-forms, not in abstract ideas.[33]

According to Ellin the shift of paradigms among the Western Urban Specialists was signalled by the American Institute of Planners (AIP) policy statement revision of 1967. No longer were they to be merely physical planners, planners now also had to account for social and economical dimensions, environmental issues, and to become urban generalists (or urban specialists). But also, in Europe and the USA, "…a number of other challenges toward the authoritarian planning-by-numbers in use since the 1940s appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s…"[34]

These challenges was the wave of new methods and principles, for example social planning, participant architecture, and advocacy-planning. This turn had consequences for the role of the planners in that they "…according to this self-critique, should be less authoritarian (more humble) and more overtly political, with the goal of empowering people to improve their communities and their environment."[35] The *Stadtforum*, the planning institution focused on in my text, is one contemporary effort making progress and turn away from planning practice as criticised in the 1970s.

A central theme or issue therefore in the new planning role (or a part of what I prefer to term as postmodern principles in planning) is the public dialogue with the citizenry – which also entails, with a political correct twist, an open mind (or ear) towards minorities, marginalised groups and the difference part-cultures make. It is possible to frame the new planning paradigm in the theoretical 'jargon' of Lefebvre: What is emerging, experimented with, and sometimes already established practices over the last decades is a try to combine or open up the representations of space to

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[32] Ibid.: 9.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ellin 1996: 48-49.
[35] Ibid.: 54.; see also Lilja 1999: 35-43.

qualified comments, input from, or verbalisation of representational space, in order to understand and plan the development of our spatial practice in a more emphatic way, if not even democratic.

But the practice of the new planning paradigm is not unproblematical. Discourse and the use of the public sphere can be used as a legitimising instrument. One earlier example, as Caulfield and Minnery suggests, drawing on the planning process in Brisbane, Australia, is that under certain conditions "…public consultation as a local state excercise has as much to do with legitimation as with genuine democratic participation. …[Their hypothesis is that] a major purpose of the extensive community consultation process was to give the BSP [Brisbane Strategy Plan] legitimacy."[36] And after a short review of theories on community participation in planning they state that "[t]heir failure to identify legitimation as an objective of community participation is a serious limitation."[37]

Planning as Discourse: An Outline of a Method

> …it is not a matter of choosing between objectivity and distortion, but rather between different strategies for constituting 'reality' in thoughts so as to deal with it in different ways, each of which has its own ethical problems.[38]

There is a vast landscape of reflection and critique that has emerged over the last two decades – about the city (as) text, the 'mental' and sociocultural conditioned operations of agents, and semiotics.[39] I will suggest nothing new, but I will present a loose method of analysis which I hope avoids some of the dead-ends in this field. Neither the (classic) problem of objectivity nor the rejection of any such effort is the primary issue here, though it is worth to take notice of a 'beware of'-sign when dealing with cities today:

> In short, far too much can be, and probably has been, read into the meaning of postmodern landscapes given their potential for duplicity. As in art appreciation, there is an irreducible

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[36] Caulfield & Minnery 1994: 674.
[37] Ibid.: 677.
[38] White 1978: 22.
[39] A quick glance through the article headings of the last decade in publications such as *Antipode*, *Progress in Human Geography*, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, and *Culture,Theory and Society* will at least prove the point.

sense in which an iconography of urban symbols, signs or signifiers ultimately lies in the eye of the beholder.[40]

An imperative introductionary comment is to acknowledge that even 'the city' as a term is not unproblematical. Most of us knows what it means but at the same time that meaning varies from person to person, group to group, between cultures, economical sectors, diachronically over historical perspectives, and so on. As Fritzsche puts it:

> Again and again in the history of modern thought, cities have been a challenge to clarity of vision: the details, in themselves decipherable, do not come together to make a full picture. In the first place, the city has always been characterized as a Babel of contesting voices and intentions. This social and political diversity has a crucial epistemological aspect, in that the incompleteness of civic rule is accompanied by the instability of narrative authority… Cities remain fascinating to this day precisely because they put into question delusions of order and fantasies of disorder alike and because they indicate the extent to which aesthetic preferences for either are ideological fallacies. The city frustrates both the dictator and the ragpicker.[41]

In my own investigation I too have to imagine the city and re-write the parts I use for analysis. This problem is condensed and made clear by Olsson: "No exit, for the phenomenon I wish to write *about* is at the same time the medium I am forced to write *within*… All criticism is by necessity an excercise in metalanguage..."[42] This dilemma is, further on, not made easier by the heritage of writing academically about the city. The city and the conceptualisations of its space(s) are close-knit through history by scientific projects:

> …we might note that the languages in which the city is taken to be known – the languages of economics, sociology, statistics, surveys, case studies, demographics, cartography, photography, 'empirical documentation': languages not only for describing the city, but languages *of* the city; languages that emerged with the city in the nineteenth century and through which the city emerged; languages embedded in the techniques and technologies of

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[40] Badcock 1996: 94.
[41] Fritzsche 1996: 3-4.
[42] Olsson 1987: 250.

disciplinarity,… and in which the city and its flows were constituted as knowable, graspable, harnessable and controllable.[43]

Ergo, the city is always part projected onto itself however we twist and turn our scientific endeavours – it always becomes and lives in a twilight zone of facts and fictions. Not that we should give up our projects of making sense of these spaces we call the city, but an awareness and sensibility is important. And, anyway, it is no less interesting to try to discern the consequences of these (very human) operations. Metaphors are simply very viable and powerful when we try to describe spatial phenomena. But as soon as we use words and, hence, figures of speech to describe, to communicate, we have also taken some objects or phenomena out of its contexts and infused it with some of our own meaning (what is meaningful for us, what words we use reflects this meaning and so on).

From Lefebvre's representations of space then it is a 'short step' to pick up or borrow some methodological tools from Hayden White's discourse analysis: "Tropics is the shadow which all realistic discourse tries to flee. This flight, however, is futile; for tropics is the process by which all discourse *constitutes* the objects which it pretends only to describe realistically and to analyze objectively."[44] What then is a trope? A figure of speech which within its category has forms and frameworks, certain common ways of describing or express what is to be communicated. The most common examples in literature, theater, cinema, scientific and everyday life[45] are the metaphor, the metonymy, and the parable. A narrative (a certain form of 'one-way' discourse) can also be told within the frameworks of tragedy, comedy, epic, or romantic tropes. In the scientific camp, the taxonomy is fairly common (sometimes combined with (un)conscious use of metaphor).

Theorists of discourse (social, political, cultural, and so on) claim the belief that how you use a word or how you describe a phenomena (signifying expression, sentence, or lengthier statement) informs a 'silent' understanding of the world around us.[46] It sounds banal, but take a look at the workings of metaphor generated concepts that is at work in everyday life. Or the body metaphor in urban design – its origins in the 16th-century, and a consequence that the city was seen by planners as an organism with traffic parabled to blood: The 'blood' must run frictionless through the 'body' otherwise sickness occurs – a notion not entirely wrong but it effected a heavy bias on big roads

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[43] Tagg 1996: 180.
[44] White 1978: 2.
[45] E.g. see Lakoff & Johnson 1980.
[46] E.g. see Gerber 1997.

through western cities; not recognising the 'Parkinson's Law of Traffic' that Peter Hall has pointed at.[47]

The *existential trope* is a trope I have made up myself (as a figure of thought). Because planning discourse on a general level is multi-facetted – using different tropes in the same context – I see it as a master-trope which articulates one essential practice of urban specialists: The art of defining the city (which they are paid by and kind enough to do for us).

One way of analysing discourse is to focus in on metaphors, analogies, 'imaginary leaps' of meaning – the construction of categories. That entails us to look for the source of the representations (e.g. a metaphor or figure of speech), that becomes and serves as 'guiding image' or filter, and what it does to the conceivement of restructuring or planning new spaces/places.[48]

With a quote from Lefebvre: "When codes worked up from literary texts are applied to spaces – to urban spaces, say – we remain, as may be easily shown, on the purely descriptive level. Any attempt to use such codes as a means of deciphering social space must surely reduce that space itself to the status of a *message*, and the inhabiting of it to the status of a *reading*. This is to evade both history and practice."[49]

With this in mind we now turn to the Berlin scene.

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[47] See Sennett 1994; Hall 1996b: 391.

[48] Some of the best (in my mind) examples or works in this genre is: Sennett 1994; Rådberg 1997; Holston 1989.

[49] Lefebvre 1991: 7.

Berlin's Disposition

> Both parts of the City have, of necessity, developed their own identity for over 40 years. Most Berliners are still carrying a piece of 'the Wall in their heads' and have to learn all over again that the other part belongs to their own City.[50]

Berlin has, maybe uncharacteristically of contemporary big-cities, a relatively aware public when it comes to planning and architecture. The berliners (with a severe generalization) are keen on informing themselves and debating what is happening to their city. For example, the exposition day at the new Scandinavian Embassies area, not long after the official inauguration, drew roughly 14 800 visitors to cue for a glimpse (even though not everyone was a native, most of them surely must have been).[51] A popular Saturday excursion, like going to the Zoo. It is another question who they were, what groups or social categories (ethnic, class, education, and so on), and, due to lack of statistics, unanswerable.

This is maybe a synergy with all the meaning surrounding 'Berlin' and the coverage of the city's development in national and international media (including the interest in urban specialist academic publications – geographers, sociologists, urbanists, and architects). Most Berliners I have talked to knows that they live in an exceptional space and time. This may also be caused by Berlin's new symbolism (or the symbolic position the city aquired) after 1989 as the place where the Wall fell – where the collapse of communism and the Iron Curtain was a concrete tearing down.[52]

Berlin as a De-Parted City

Walled by the Iron Curtain, West Berlin was a city that had to survive, prosper, and show the Other side the fortunes of Western Capitalism. Fundamental during the Cold War was the BRD federal subsidies program that created an unbalanced local economy in West Berlin. The city recieved roughly 50 percent of its annual budget in subsidies. This program was developed during the times after the 2nd World War when economic growth meant creating or saving industrial work-places (the 'German miracle'). It promoted manufacturing industry and the production of consumer goods

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[50] Frick 1991: 48.
[51] Personal information from the political advisor at the Norwegian Embassy, 1999-11-05.
[52] Cf. Cochrane & Jonas 1999: 147.

in the city, to be sold elsewhere on the German market: "Berlin thus became known as the 'workbench' of German industry, retaining a higher location quotient for processing food, cigarettes and electronic goods than other large German cities."[53]

Apart from the direct subsidies, every employee (almost all inhabitants) was granted a 'hardship-bonus' of 8 per cent of the annual salary. Thus, compared with the contemporary situation, West Berlin received in different subsidies three times more a year than what the whole Berlin-state recieves today.[54] Not only is the contemporary situation (or was in the nineties) marked by the loss of significant economic help. These arrangements, with the irony of history and hindsight, worked against Berlin. When the major phases of restructuring was happening in European and North American cities – the experience of job and capital flight to the Third World and the decay of older industries in the West[55], West Berlin and its local manufacturing industry was protected when other large urban areas changed economical basis towards informational industry.[56] Kuhle and Fiedler has even commented it as if Berlin was not 'allowed' to develope its tertiary sector as in the 'rest of the west'.[57]

East Berlin, during this time, was held tight by COMECON command economy, which also had localisational effects: The value of land was totally state regulated and did not follow the capitalistic pattern of ground-value (expensive centre/less expensive periphery as the simplified model would have it) and so, because there was no real question about ground investments, industries and housing could be localized in the middle of the city.[58]

The end of the Cold War thus was a traumatic experience for the local economy and the people employed. After *die Wende* ('the turn'), many manufacturing industries shut down or moved: Those in the former West could no longer recieve favorable subsidies and those in the former East could not compete in a market economy.[59] Employment in manufacturing industry in the city decreased with 57 per cent in the first four years of unity – in 1990 the number of employees was 384,000 and in 1994 down to 167,000. In a distinction between former East and West parts (not rare in statistics concerning Berlin and Germany), the Eastern parts has lost over 80 per cent "…where even the high-end research and development activities have collapsed and skilled workers have been trapped with inappropriate qualifications and experience."[60]

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[53] Häußermann & Strom 1994: 338.
[54] Ibid.; Cederberg 2000: 13.
[55] King 1996: 2.
[56] Strom 1996: 4.
[57] Kuhle & Fiedler 1996: 25.
[58] Mäding 1999: 95.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Cochrane & Jonas 1999: 147.

The unemployment rates 1996 were in the former western part 13.8 per cent, and in the former eastern part 12.4 per cent.[61] In 1998 the western figure was up to 17.4 per cent.[62] Berlin's disposition was not better of by the cut-downs in investment and budget by the public sphere in the mid 1990s because of the general economic conjuncture and the special situation in Germany after re-union with or taking over of the DDR.[63]

The city was subjected to speculation and an office building-boom in the 1990s. As a resulting consequence there was many empty office spaces in the latter half of the decade. Strom has described the beginning of the nineties as a permeated by a 'gold-rush mentality.'[64]

One part in this city's social situation is the ethnic groupings were the divided Berlin's different experiences in the issue of immigration and settlement of 'foreigners.' East Berlin did not recieve as many as the other side, which, on the other hand, was labeled 'the fifth-largest Turkish city in the world in the 1980s',[65] and these groups were concentrated in districts such as Kreuzberg, Wedding, and Schöneberg – all three districts today very central.

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[61] Marcuse 1998: 333.
[62] Hoffmann-Axthelm 1999:16.
[63] Mädinger 1999: 95.
[64] Strom 1996: 7-8.
[65] White & Gotting 1998: 218.

Figure 1: Berlin's administrative districts.[66]

Berlin Through Some More Numbers

The city has an area of 891,7 square kilometers, and the population density in 1996 was 3878,84 per square kilometer.[67] The demographics from the *Statistisches Landesamt Berlin* (Berlin State Bureau of Statistics) shows a small decline or a decreasing population growth in the 1990s (presented in the unit 1 000): 1991 Berlin had 3 446 inhabitants, in 1995 it was 3 471, and in 1999 the number was 3 387. But the proportion of 'foreigners' was increasing (in unit 1 000): 1991 resided 340, in 1995 it was 425, and in 1999 434.[68] So, the proportion has risen from roughly one tenth in the beginning of the decade to about one seventh-point-eight.

If one compares these numbers with the statistics on movements across the state border, i.e. how many moves their residence to and from Berlin, the bottom line of 1999 shows that Berlin population is declining partly because of emigration: While 1991 had the balance 25 428 and 1995 still plus with 10 006, the balance 1999 was -7 015. But, when speaking about moving around, the movement within the city has increased: From 1991 with the figure of 269 565 to the 1999 of 427

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[66] Figure source: Berry & McGreal 1995: 377.
[67] *Urban Audit*, 2000-09-27.
[68] *Statistisches Landesamt Berlin*, 2000-09-27.

597.[69] Now, these figures does not say anything about the movements or population changes with respect to the old East/West-demarcation, something that was common earlier or in other statistical contexts.

According to numbers overheard there is officially about 35 000 empty appartments in the city, and unofficially (whatever that means) the number is vastly higher – about 100 000.[70]

Planning Politics After the Fall of the Wall

Most of the big building sites that was the (worldwide most concrete) landmark of Berlin in the 1990s are reaching the end of their construction phase or are now new places inserted in the urban fabric: Names of places and streets such as Friedrichstraße, Potsdamer Platz, Unter den Linden, the Federal Parliament, and the areas connected to the Federal Government. But, with the words of Cochrane and Jonas, "[n]o single dominant image of the new Berlin has been constructed for the city since 1990. Instead a series of sometimes contested and sometimes complimentary visions have competed for dominance or coexisted uneasily alongside each other."[71] Strom has also commented the tensions within the planning system and the political understandings which are expressed through it.[72]

Urban planning in Berlin's first reunited decade was at least guided by two general visions – which in turn has informed the conceptual space of the city, and, hence, the lived spaces and spatial practice: On the one hand, there is the postmodern-principles within architecture and urbanism – where 'urbanity' is to be 'recreated' or achieved through density and neighbourhood development based on identity. This line will be followed in the next chapter, as it is expressed in the *Stadtforum* sessions.

On the other hand, there is the competition on the global scale and an aspiration of reaching top-ranking in the league of world cities – where the goal was to create space for 'business', infrastructure for personal as well as for information mobility, and the grand architecture *a-la-*Manhattan (see Figure 2). The two images was mirrored in Berlin Senate party politics of left and

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Personal information, during Ingela Lindh's introduction speech at the Conference *Helsinki-Berlin-Stockholm: Three Capitals Facing the Future*, Stockholm 2000-09-14.

[71] Cochrane & Jonas 1999: 147.

[72] Cf. Strom 1996: 7-8.

right: The Social Democrats (SPD) generally stood for the former view of urban development, and the Christ Democrats (CDU) for the latter. [73]

Figure 2: The Potsdamer Platz under construction, fall 1999.[74]

The fate of these two over-arching visions is perhaps somewhat different with the onset of the new millennium, when the two senate ministries – each responsible for urban development and at times in (great) conflict with one another – was fused into one. Since the fall of 1999 the former *Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Umweltschutz und Technologie* (SenSUT; the Senate Ministry for City Development, Environmental Protection, and Technology) and *Senatsverwaltung für Bauen, Wohnen und Verkehr* (SenBauWV; the Senate Ministry for Building, Residence, and Traffic) now goes under the heading *Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung* (SenS; the Senate Ministry for City Development) with senator Peter Strieder (SPD) leading the way.[75]

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[73] See Newman & Thornley 1996: 102.
[74] Photo by the author.
[75] SenSUT online, 1999-12-14.

Representing Representations of Space:The *Stadtforum*

The *Stadtforum* is a dream of a new planning culture in Berlin. A dream, at least from some in the ranks of Berlin urban specialists, of a more democratic planning process that entails a planning closer to the citizens. This is a context for the analyses in the chapter that follows: A guide into and an analysis of the public platform of planning in Berlin during the last decade.

What is *Stadtforum*? A Note on Structure…

According to Fassbinder, who was co-founder of the institution and worked as participant in the Link-group (see below), the concept was set out to combine a democratic planning course with efficiency and up-beat pace. Fassbinder hints at the 'two-flies-in-a-dash' strategy to work for both concerned citizens and time-pressured responsible politicians: The fear among citizens that the (formal political fraction of) urban specialists would do away with openess and citizen participation. And on the other hand: The need for fast decisions in the then newly released planning fever since the Berlin re-union.[76]

The decision was taken in March 1991 by the Berlin Senate to launch the new planning body of *Stadtforum*. At first senator Volker Hassemer (CDU), then heading the SenSUT, wanted it to be linked but not a subordinate part of the ministry. But in the decision in March 1991, the Berlin Senate took it another way: Although the body has no legal force of its own, it became closely tied to the SenSUT and the ministry took on the role as employer.[77]

Expectations on the organization where high. It was to be an institution that prepares directly for the SenSUT's decision making, and indirectly for the senate and parliament. It was also expected to deal with complexity in every particular planning problem and, as Hassemer is quoted by Strauch, 'in a strict disciplinary mode of procedure' should the complexity be reduced in a funnel-shaped way. The functionality of the forum was then framed with the catchwords 'tie-up-in-bundles, condensation, acceleration' (*Bündelung,Verdichtung,Beschleunigung*).[78]

The *Stadtforum* contains six organisational elements (see Figure 3): 1) The *Link-group*, with five members who are city planners and architects from Berlin. The group functions as a guiding

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[76] Fassbinder 1997a: 207.
[77] Wékel & Schlusche 1996: 74.
[78] Strauch 1996: 85.

body for the sessions. 2) The *Plenum*, who organizes the permanent members of the 'disciplinary public' (i.e. urban specialists and other professionals with competence), and they sit on eight benches according to area of knowledge: I) The special experts 'people'; II) architects; III) city and landscape planners; IV) regional and municipal district representatives; V) members of the Berlin senate parliament; VI) members of the federal parliament; VII) representatives of Berlin 'society' (associations, churches etc.); VIII) *Zwischenrufer* (a term which denotes someone who intervenes in a discussion), public figures such as artists, politicians, journalists etc.[79]

3) The *Workbench*, which comprises two core-members and, according to theme of discussion, external experts. They produce the 'in depth' content of themes and presents to the plenum the result of their work. 4) The *Moderator* (the conferencier - but the term also means 'tv-show host'), who leads the sessions and who is assigned to keep the dialog between the participants going. 5) The Senator for City Development, who is, as assigner/mandator, the supreme listener, but sometimes also acts as *Zwischenrufer*. 6) The *Expedition*, who organises the sessions and administratively coordinates the Stadtforum work.[80]

...and History: Conceptual Roots and Postmodern Principles in Berlin

Stadtforum has some of its deeper roots in the 'postmodern turn' in the 1960s planning debates, and there is a strong affiliation with the ideas of advocacy-planning, empowerment strategies, and consensus ideals. West Berlin was early in trying to get these new perspectives into practice with the initiation of the *Internationale Bauaustellung* (IBA; The International Building Exhibition). The IBA 'invented' and cultivated concepts that, manifested in the form of exhibition, thouroughly transformed 'from the bottom' and defined a new Berlin planning culture, argues Schlusche, which perhaps is an overstatement.[81]

Central to the exhibition was the guiding image of the inner-city as a place of residence (*Wohnort*) and the acceptance of the given urban structures, and this was to be achieved with a method of critical reconstruction informed by (minor) forms of citizen participation in the areas assigned for reconstruction.[82] Schlusche argues further that the *Stadtforum* is, in the main elements, a continuation of knowledge generated under the IBA planning process. It is the institutionalisation

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[79] Kleger, Fiedler, and Kuhle 1996: 215.
[80] Ibid.: 215-216.
[81] Schlusche 1996: 45.
[82] Ibid.: 46-47.

THE *STADTFORUM* SESSION ORGANISATION

ADMINISTRATION	'SUPREME LISTENER': THE SENATOR

THE LINK-GROUP	WORK-BENCH

THE '*MODERATOR*'

THE EIGHT BENCHES

LISTENERS	INVITED GUESTS	INVITED REFERENTS

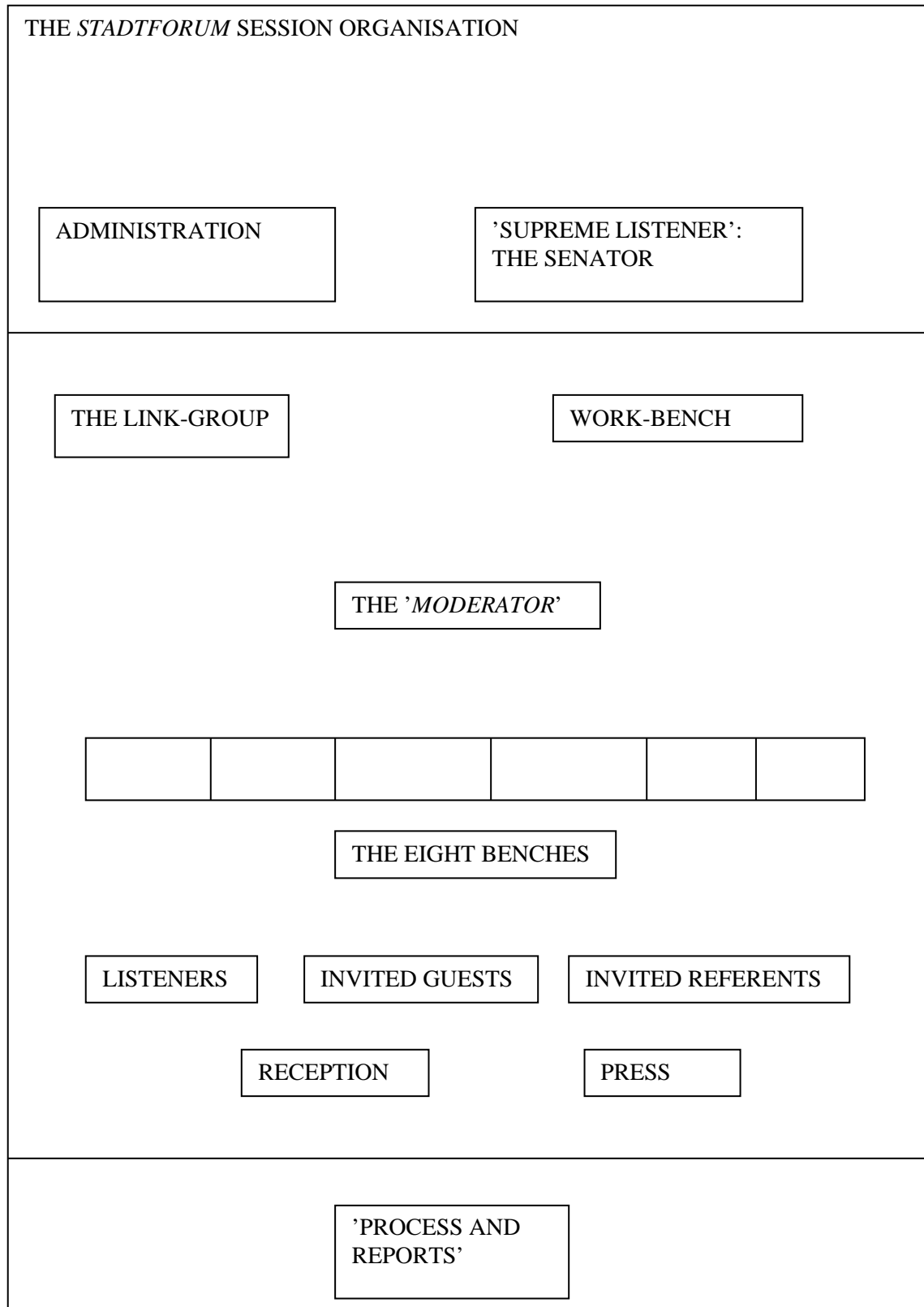| RECEPTION	PRESS

'PROCESS AND REPORTS'

Figure 3: Outline of Stadtforum elements.[83]

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[83] Figure by author, after Fassbinder 1997b:70.

of an administration-independent, city-public (*Stadtöffentlichen*) discourse on goals, content, and essential city-development projects – that, under the planning phases of IBA, was considered as imperative but only punctually brought about.[84]

Democracy as an Obstacle

Another dimension in the history of urbanism can be taken into account here. This dimension is the suspicion, defensive attitude, or even outright hostility towards planning that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s – at least in the germanic and anglo-saxon spheres.

Fassbinder frames this development as an ironic or paradoxical response to the postmodern turn: That it grew along with the ideas of citizen insight and participation into planning. This phenomena is now familiarized and stereotyped in planning theory discourse as the NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) attitude – and the german variant of the Florian Principle ('*D'accord, es muß sein, aber bitte nicht bei uns*') that, as Fassbinder writes between the lines, has become a nuisance for the urban specialists. [85]

Citizens started organising themselves to confront planned projects, such as plans to build housing, condensation of built areas, shelters for homeless people and refugees, and the localisation of garbage dumps, power plants, and other necessary infrastructural developments.[86] The problem of allowing information and knowledge to be free and to be guardians of democratic ideals leaves the planner in an uneasy position of knowing what has to be done and having to deal with informed and argumentative or simply 'no!' opposition.

This sets the *Stadtforum* strategy in a slightly different light. It emerges as a dialectical response and an effort of synthesis: The anticipated hostility forced a reorganisation of planning practice. And so it exists not only because benevolent and humanitarian-minded urban specialists have decided to invite berliners into discussing ideas and visions. It is also a pragmatic realism: Critique and opposition is but one obstruction among many other to achieving the planned goals, and so the city politics and its planners took the rational decision of neutralizing or, at least, absorbing the threat of blocade.

Though, I might be wrong setting the *Stadtforum* as the great conspiracy project. But this way of legitimizing political decisions over the planning of the city is important to have in mind

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[84] Ibid.: 53.
[85] Fassbinder 1997a: 199-200.

when talking about an institution that defines its grounds and goal as one of consensus and participation.

But to what degree is there consensus? The institution's mode of legitimation: Is it really working and to what degree is it a space of rhetorics for the diffusion of urban specialists' conceived space – a process that merely legitimizes or forwarding through compromise unwelcome solutions? Fassbinder writes, in the article that evolves around the above stated topics of citizen participation, about the need to 'mobilize the collective reason'.[87] Here is the kernel of discourse, or the representations of space: The urban specialists wants the citizens to be able to (reasonably, rationally) understand why their city spaces turn out the way they do in planning.

Critical Voices

There is, according to local critique, a tendency by the *Stadtforum* to centralize politics and planning. Berlin is more than its many parts, argues Duntze. With its different districts (*Bezirke*) and, within them, neighbourhoods (*Kieze*) it is 'a city out of cities'.[88] Some districts have initiated their own foras, but that does not degrade the significance of the *Stadtforum* project as *the* forum for the citizens and *the* producer of visions for the future, at least in terms of media coverage and political power (it is an agency of the senate).

But the *Stadtforum* has a problem with representation that goes into the core of the concept. Strauch notes that the benches for people other than urban specialists were relatively weak in use, a weaker presence of people. It disturbs the trust, continuity, and the original idea with the forum, Strauch states, when there are less 'other voices' and their different perspectives in the discussions.[89]

The Stadtforum was challenged (by the 50th session) by the initiation of the *Stadtforum von unten* ('*Stadtforum* from under'). This alternative organization gathered on its first meeting in October 1995 some 250 people from 80 'citizen initiative groups' (*Bürgeinitiativen*), and roundabout half of them where from the former East Berlin. Their critique of the '*Stadtforum* from above' was not altogether negative. One of the founding members, Bernd Holtfreter, thought that it was a good idea to let the experts, ministries, and state talk in public on the problems with and

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[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.: 204-205.
[88] Duntze 1996: 129.
[89] Strauch 1996: 86.

within urban planning. The problem was (or is) that the official *Stadtforum* is an expert organization too closely tied to the formal politics and 'power'.[90]

Schaffelder, in the same vein, states that the *Stadtforum* were (or are) used to legitimize planning in a way that is not democratic, since it is an expert organization, and that when the discussion is about the facade, it does not legitimate the project *per se*. In other words, too much debate over form, too little over the (social) content – a bias also commented upon by Otremba, in that they "…debated hotly, but over building form here and building heights there – only over the content hardly anything [*herzlich wenig*]."[91] The citizens were not asked and thus the legitimation-deficit. The deficit was also noticed in that the 'East city planning' and history were (or are) on the whole ignored: "…there are hardly any city planner in the Stadtforum that comes from the East-discourse."[92]

This lack of representation or even exclusion of groupings within Berlin might have serious implications for the democratic endeavour in the strategy. But, also, from a critical reflective point of view, the failure tells us something about the greater east/west situation in germany that permeated the urban specialist scene in the 1990s. As Genberg turns it, "[t]he exclusion of a group from the formally recognised public life tells us more about the ideology of the dominant society than it does about the political life of the excluded group. It does leave room for political activism or participation outside the formally recognised public sphere."[93]

It seems that this is rather the case, but here is also the wish to insert this 'from outside' or, in this case, 'from under' activism back into the formal public sphere (in line with the original idea of the forum). The '*Stadtforum* from under' is understood by Holtfreter as a collection of 'experts on practice' – which in this case means everyday-life: People engaged in the local situation, in the *Kiez*; and the hope was that they would mix expertise with the *Stadtforum* 'from above', of whom some experts were also frustrated and complained that they only made 'vapour' (*dampf*).[94]

Holtfreter believes the disinterest or incomprehence of a high number of berliners is due to the east/west question: The most of the big building projects are located in the former East part, but the decisions were made in the former West by 'West Berlin politicians, ministries, and architects'.[95] Five years after the movement started the facit of the *Stadtforum von unten* is that it

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[90] Interview Holtfreter and Schaffelder, in Kleger *et al* 1996: 143.
[91] Otremba 1996: 118.
[92] "…es gibt im Stadtforum kaum Stadtplaner, die aus dem Ost-Diskurs kommen." Interview Holtfreter and Schaffelder in Kleger *et al* 1996: 144.
[93] Genberg In press: 4.
[94] Interview Holtfreter and Schaffelder, in Kleger *et al* 1996: 144.
[95] Ibid.: 145.

was not very viable. Since it 'failed to success' – and therefore lost the support of its members[96] – today it hardly has any political force nor power basis of its own to push for change from.

So, among some urban specialists there are negative comments and criticism which could be summed up by – as Werner Sewing, professor in architecture sociology at the Technische Universität Berlin, stated it – naming *Stadtforum* as a propaganda instrument and a play-discourse (discourse in the sense of public participation and power sharing, and play as in a theater).[97] The sharpest verdict Sewing made (maybe a bit off the record) was that it does not really matter what the people in the *Stadtforum* says, it is just a show for the outside.

This is something the founder of the institution, former senator Hassemer, would not agree with. His reflections on the first five years is a eulogy to the discourse and a defence: "The contemporary development of Berlin is unthinkable without these advices [*Beratungen*]. The *Stadtforum* participants themselves cannot imagine what influence on the re-united city development of Berlin they have had."[98] And that the sessions were most important in guiding Hassemer's decisions in the senate ministry: "The *Stadtforum* gave me the security to decide, and not only in general form. The wisdom produced there was the concrete building-material for my inferences."[99]

These statements does not exclude the notion that the institution is important in disseminating the conceived Berlin, in defining or transmitting to the public the dominant images – how they ought to look at the city to understand what is happening today and the changes that lies ahead.

One last comment on the state of publicness: According to one student, with an interest in these matters, there used to be posters 'all over town' announcing the next session in line. Today it is hard to get information on dates and you are likely to miss them, since the present rate of sessions are once or twice a year (as compared to up to about five times a year in the first years). I had some trouble finding out when the next session was due, it was not (even) announced on the official website – which, by the way, in the summer of 2000 was not updated since 1998.

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[96] Sewing, W., telephone conversation July 2000.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Hassemer 1997: 14.
[99] Ibid.

The *Stadtforum* as Discursive Practice

Here I would like to present an example which I believe is emblematic of how the forum works, how it formed its discourse 'net', and also shows how this process-configuration was ironed out to a routine.

One central theme debated in the early years, around 1991, was traffic. It was the future railroad infrastructure which were focused upon. With hindsight, the debate was between the first concept of north-south axis and the later so called 'mushroom'-concept (see Figure 4). The north-south axis was suggested by the Deutsche Bahn and it was criticized as furthering a monocentric city by traffic and city planners as well as citizen initiative groups. Many diverging alternatives were presented and the *Stadtforum*, in order to tackle the controverses, formed the Workbench – which would analyze, do research on the subject, and evaluate all the suggestions. They were to present their views on the issue for discussion in the following session. The plans were revised and, now famous in the circles of urban specialists in Berlin, the mushroom-concept was born.[100]

This incidence set the structural routines for the future work of the *Stadtforum*. With the establishment of the Workbench, the experts trusted to evaluate concepts and ideas, the *Stadtforum* sets the frames for interpretation and trajectory of further discourse on different topics. But also, as Wékel and Sclusche notes, the *Stadtforum* was itself turned into an 'explaining institution',[101] which (as I see it) on the one hand made the path to rational decisions easier, but, on the other hand, in a way kept issues safe within urban specialist discourse.

Another element in the processual structure shows a discrepancy between ideal and reality, and which might also serve to keep the discourse intact. When issues are to be discussed they are first prepared and presented as papers by the Link-group and the Expedition. The problem was (or is) that the papers were in general handed out to the other members and respondents at the beginning of the sessions. This furthered another problem, the insufficient preparations for the sessions made by members (other than preparing ones) and their tendency to respond to presentations in a spontaneous, emotional fashion without careful consideration.[102] Not that emotions or spontaneity are not valuable and even necessary, on the contrary, but serious discussions of public matters also has to maintain some reflexive opinion or argumentative procedure.

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[100] Wékel & Schlusche 1996: 76.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Strauch 1996: 90.
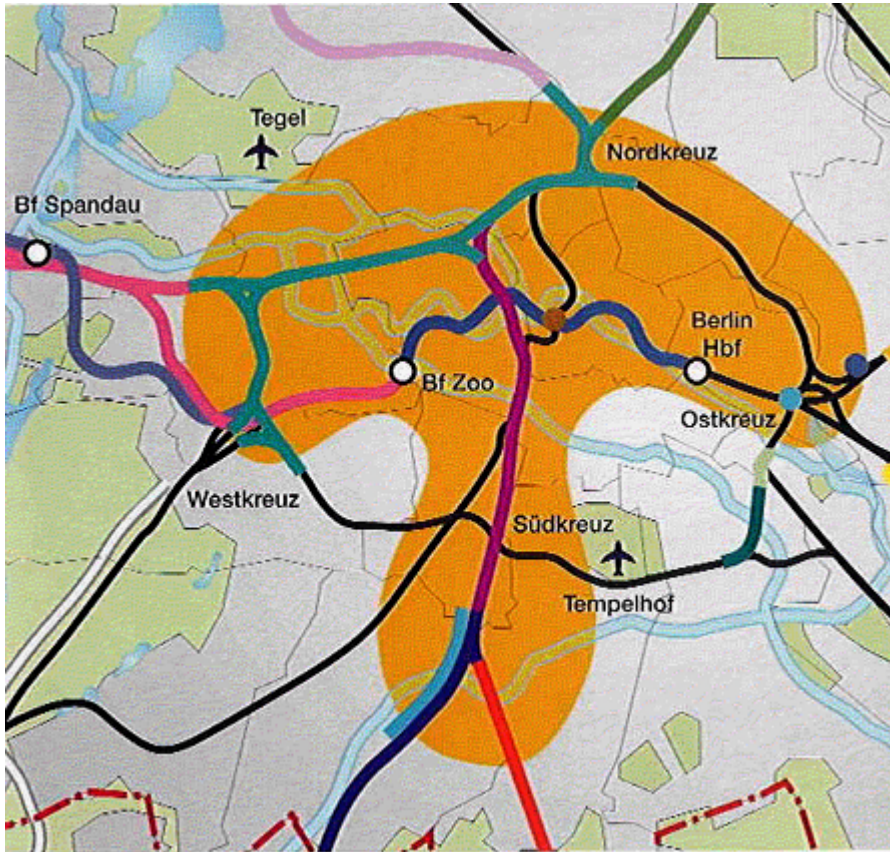
Figure 4: The ' Mushroom'.[103]

The consequence was prolonged sessions and less stringency in the debate. But it also developed an informal 'directory board' (and, thus, power basis) because the Link-group, the Expedition, and the Senate Ministry knew in advance and in detail the different alternative solutions and could use this knowledge to indirectly forward their positions by guiding the debate in the 'right' direction in order to find consensus.

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[103] Figure source: *Info-Box: The Catalogue* 1998: 19.

Summary on the *Stadtforum* Public Sphere

In a way Bernard Schneider's (also one of the founding members) view that the initial purpose was not public participation but rather to build a platform for qualifying the process of planning and decision by the senate could now be seen as a teleological explanation. Schneider also commented upon that something changed around 1995: After the elections the function of the *Stadtforum* tended to be more of discussing plans in progress or already 'made'. Interestingly, this was also the time when Schneider and Fassbinder left the forum as active members.[104]

And it is about time to explain this chapter's heading as a short summary – representing representations of space. With a negative definition one could say that the *Stadtforum* does not (or not enough) represent the Berlin citizenry, nor their meanings; in other words barely representing representational space – which is what the slogan of public participation is really all about. Instead it tends, while inviting everyone, to make room for the dissemination of urban specialist discourse and their (re)production of Berlin spaces and places, their solutions and their criticism.

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[104] Schneider, B., personal conversation september 2000.

The *Stadtforum* Discourse on Public Space and Urban Design: Defining Central Berlin

This chapter takes a closer look at the *Stadtforum* discourse on public space and urban design. The preceeding chapter stated, among other things, that the *Stadtforum* is an organisation dominated by urban specialists, that its discourse is relatively closed, but that its *raison d'etre* is to make planning and planning issues at least a bit more transparent to the public. This chapter now turns to what the urban specialists represent in this public sphere with an eye towards the concerns over public space. Also, that this discourse has had important effects in the conception of the important conceptual guide – the *Planwerk Innenstadt* (the Inner-City Plan).

The Existential Trope

The *Stadtforum* debates are very fragmented, the protocoles contains comments and contributions which seldom follows one another in a strict procedural sense. Though one thing is clear in the debates, propositions, and imagination concerning Berlin's public spaces (considering that they are about planning after all): The *Stadtforum* shows great interest in what I call the *existential trope*. That is, in a theme of meaning and identity. The existential trope is far from an exception in the discourses of urban specialists. A basic practice for every city management (or, generalized, planning by definition) is to survey and identify the present situation and then figure out what needs to be done – no difference if it is an urgent crisis management or development strategies for decades ahead.

In the protocoles from debates and hearings in the *Stadtforum* sessions concerning public space one find this recurring theme: The Berlin as thought-of, the search for what Berlin is, or what the city is supposed to be – its essential being in its public spaces. This is a discourse defining the city, articulating the power of images and the urban specialist conceivement of space, and, consequently, a discourse on the spatial organisation of meaning.

At the core of this discourse lies the question: What is urban and urbanity (particularly in the coming 21th-century)? This question will be dealt with below. But the question seems to generate a kind of set theory of belonging. To ask what is urban is another way of asking what belongs in the city – an act of definition and articulation of the city's appearance.

Within the existential trope the notion of belonging can be seen and found in the questions and definitions on what physically belongs in Berlin. These are questions concerning urban design

and public space, defining 'existentially' what Berlin is through the conceived space. This also has a clear link with previous West Berlin strategies and conceptions, such as the critical reconstruction, and it re-surfaces in the Inner-City Plan guiding images. These are questions of East/West-heritage, and the meanings of Alexanderplatz – the former East Berlin city centre – in particular.

As Berlin 'woke up the morning after' November 1989, the urban specialists had an immense task of coming to terms with what the city now was and were supposed to be – trying to grasp its being and new meaning as a re-united city. Berlin thus needed active imagining to pose the city as a candidate in the league of world cities in order to escape the association of the new capital of Germany with human misery due to unemployment, eroding industrial quarters and abandoned manufacturing facilities, and worn down houses. The city and its citizens has, successfully or not, had to organize itself on a new economic basis and 'discover a new identity.'[105] The Berlin Senate has consciously made the effort of remaking the city into a *Dienstleistungsmetropole* ('service supplying metropole') and further the tertiary sector.[106]

The trend recognizable in a row of European and North American cities has been a bit different for Berlin with its reunification. Here the different contexts that grew during the Iron Curtain division now has, at least in the rhetorics of senator Strieder, to be joined as *a* city again. In the case of Berlin it is also necessary to make place attractive for the citizens (i.e. to anchor taxpayers) and the ones that are supposed to inhabit and make up a desired 'social mix'. In other words there is a tendency to *normalize* Berlin, of trying to find out what is normal and not the unique features and history associated with it. Or that the city should function as a 'normal city' but that certain places are still to be represented as something special – tailor-made spaces for tourism.

Of course one has to separate the feeling of belonging as a citizen in a nation state and the identity connected to everyday places. But it is significant and worth to keep in mind, in the identity theme of 'normalization', that the division of East and West identification lives on:

A survey in 1995 showed that 19 per cent of the West, but 41 per cent of the East Germans do not (or only to a limited extent) feel as citizens of today's Germany, but 69 per cent of the West and 83 per cent of the East Germans feel strongly as West/East Germans.[107]

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[105] See Mayer 1997: 521.
[106] See Rada 2000: 19.
[107] Schneider 2000: 143.

Along these lines the urban sociologist (specialist) Häußermann has also asked the pertinent question on the 'wall in the heads' and the East German transition from socialism to capitalism:

> One peculiarity of this transitional phase is the persistence of traditional structures, habits, mentalities and political orientations alongside a totally new institutional and legal framework. Does this mean that different urban realities will emerge in the East to those in the West?[108]

I think it will and already has, and that this is especially so in Berlin. Therefore the importance of keeping an eye on the urban specialists' discourse on East and West public space.

East and West: 'Belonging in Berlin'?

Berlin urban specialists in the 1990s were obsessed (and still is) with what is urban: Trying to define, to reclaim, to represent, and to contextualize the future urban meaning in the process of reconstruction.

First there is a need, since it is an important term, to ask what 'urban' and 'urbanity' among the urban specialists means. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, the word merely means anything that has to do with cities.[109] As I see it, it has become a tool in the urban specialist conceivment of spaces. As an adjective 'urban' seems to be synonymous with 'city-ness' or all that belongs in a city, but ideally a sort of positive mess in contrast to the modernistic ideal (separation of functions, stripped down order and 'effective' or rational traffic-plannning by differentiation of kinds, the solitaire building condensing a social message and so on) which by postmodern urban specialists is commonly accused of killing the city or to be 'anti-urban'.

In that sense, the turning of the term (within the existential trope) to and inflating it with a positive value-base it has become a contemporary trend to use 'urban' to characterise what are good or bad, appreciated or repulsive visions and places. Compare to the term, as commonly used in mass-media by people and journalists, 'rationalisation' – a valueless term that means to make something (e.g. a process) more efficient or practical, today used in a negative sense because it is associated with capitalist strategies which (usually) leads to cut-downs in personnel and a higher rate of unemployment in effect.

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[108] Häußermann 1996: 220.

So the question is whether 'urban' denotes the qualities 'we' ideally want or if it (as I suppose it should) means the actually existing qualities of cities or a city – we might like them or not, but they are a part of the city (they are urban!). Terminology, as metaphors, have a way of becoming dense and injected with local or part-cultural meaning, associations attaches during discourse. 'Urban', like 'rationalisation', in the planning discourse – but also in some media-settings – has become a category, a figure of speech, that evoces (though perhaps different) meanings and what is meaningful of the city, and, as the trend from the 1990s goes on, positive values connected to the city-living and -life.

Then what does 'urban' mean in the Berlin planning context? In other words, what does 'urban' as a metaphor contain within the *Stadtforum* discourse? Might it be that 'urban' is a metaphor under the existential trope for a certain experience of the city, that is not synonymous but part of this more general picture? A term that is used as a link, or is supposed to link, the representational spaces (in-)to the representations of these spaces: A compressed translatory device, if you will.

Visions of Urban Centres

First, Berlin is polycentric – urban specialists, but also citizens, seldom fails to remark upon it, there is no one dominating centre: There are at least three (see Figure 5). *City West* which is Kurfürstendamm and Breitscheidplatz, *Stadtzentrum Ost* with Alexanderplatz, and Potsdamer Platz; and – depending on how you look upon it – all the other districts themselves contains their own gravity center and periphery. There is a basic difference, though, in the thinking around two of the three city centers in planning discourse. This difference can be captured in the words *conservation/protection*, which is a conservative stance, and *progressive/reformation*, an imperative of transformation stance. And it is clear that the west is to be preserved and the east is to be renewed.

In the 60th session senator Strieder stated, in line with normalisation and a bit contrary to the tendency in the discourse (of which he, the as new senator, takes a big part in), that Berlin must now finally be understood as one coherent city. The Inner-City Plan, whose first draft were discussed in this session, is a tool to mend the previous partitioned planning. The anticipation and goal is explicit to form a joint identity for the inner-city. Hans Stimman, the director of urban

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[109] Urban "[…] 1. of, pertaining to, or comprising a city or town. 2. living in a city or cities. 3. characteristic or accustomed to cities.", *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary* 1994.

development at the SenS, stated that sustainability, density, and identity are the key-terms for the running debate on urbanity.[110] The discourse *defining* urbanity, when it occurs, tend to be dualistic: What defines a city as urban are something caught between contrasting terms in a spectre (degrees) that cities or even places contains more or less of or has a balance of. For example, there is the contrast between tranquil and bustling spaces[111]; between the narrow and width, big and small.[112] These are 'formal' definitions, as in material or physical entities of the city.
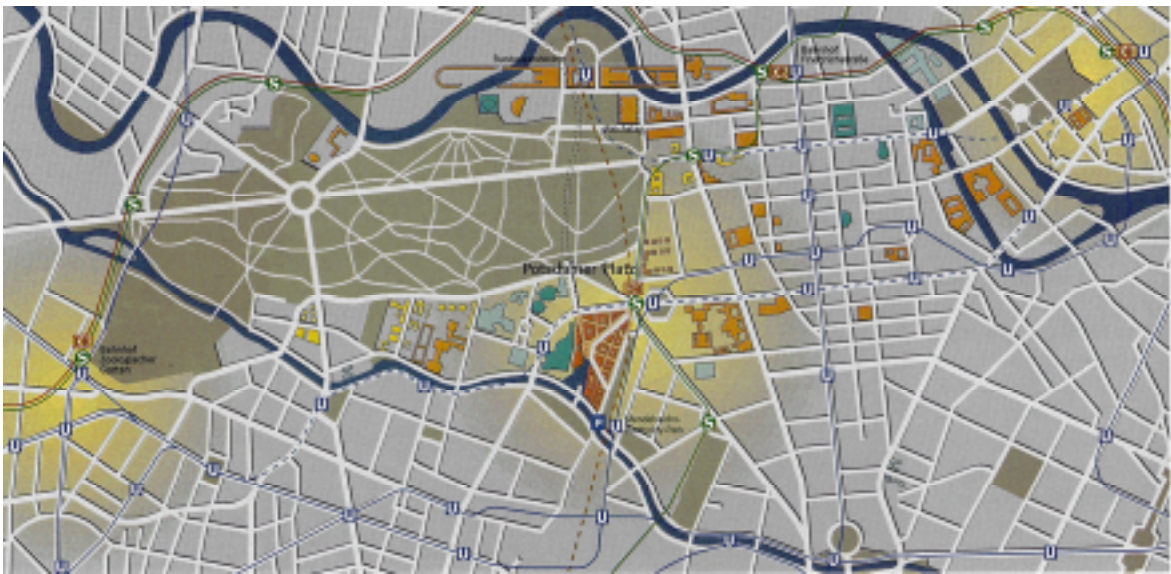

Figure 5: Berlin polycentricity: City West – left, Potsdamer Platz - middle, and Stadtzentrum Ost - *upper right.[113]*

City West

In the City-West the future is identified as the conservation and protection of its developed identity, or trying to keep things more or less as they are, and this identity lies in the mix of people and activities – culture, consumption, business. The rhetoric around what is to be done (or not to be done) is concerned with identifying the dangers that could cause the loss of the place's urbanity – which is poorly or never defined in the 25th session, it is taken for granted that everybody knows

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[110] *Stadtforum Protokoll,* 60th Session.
[111] *Stadtforum Protokoll*, 37th Session: 3.
[112] *Stadtforum Protokoll*, 37th Session: 5.
[113] Figure source: *Info Box: The Catalogue* 1998: 144.

what this particular urbanity is and that it is something inherently good.[114] City-West is situated in the Charlottenburg-district, and the catch-phrase for the continuation of this urbanity is to keep and help survive the 'Charlottenburg-cocktail.'[115]

The 1997 version of the Inner-City Plan has City West has one central focus: It describes Kurfürstendamm, Tauentzienstraße, and the surrounding areas together with Savigny Platz as 'autonomous representatives of a still typical Berlin urbanity.'[116] The 'analytical guiding thoughts' and 'strategical maximes' describes further what is experienced here from a conceptual point of view (verbalizing space into representation): The city-knot and the net; object and texture. In this the layering of historical block-structure – the grids of the 19th century – and the modernist 'solitaires' are the architectonical signifiers: The knot is to be interpreted as a collage, to 'override' the building-piece as object and as texture.[117] No radical changes and a wish to keep things as they are in other words.

The Stadtzentrum Ost

The *Stadtzentrum Ost*, on the other side (pardon the pun), is searching wider functions – with references to its golden age (see below). As in City West the mix of people is also underlined. But it is to develope into something new and rise from what it is seen to be today – an 'urban desert'.[118] This developement is conceptualised as the rise of a 'world-city place (*weltstädtischen Platz*) of tomorrow', a metropolitan place, and keep the connections to other areas around that will help to generate a specific *Alex-viertel* (*Alex* is colloquial among berliners for Alexanderplatz, the meaning is an Alex-quarter or –area). The rise also has a physical literal sense in that high-rise buildings shall transform the place to a vertical oriented place (*'der Alex ein Ort der Vertikalen wird'*). These visions were also inscribed in the competition guidelines for Alexanderplatz.[119]

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[114] Something that can be compared with a comment after a workshop on 'urbanity' made at the Stockholm round of *Helsinki-Berlin-Stockholm: Three Capitals Facing the Future*, where one urban specialist stated that "Urbanity is always the *good* stuff, not the bad."
[115] *Stadtforum Protokoll*, 25th Session.
[116] *Planwerk Innenstadt* 1997: 28.
[117] Ibid.
[118] *Stadtforum Protokoll*, 25th Session.
[119] *Stadtforum Protokoll*, 29th Session.

Figure 6: The Alexanderplatz, summer 2000 .[120]

One comment made in the 37th session was on the loss of function. In West Berlin the larger open spaces are not empty but dominated by traffic and commerce, and the eastern part is a scenography of state-power: Civil society must make demands on the eastern spaces, put them in the service of democratic functions and not rebuild them into West Berlin public spaces – something which in a way echoes Holston and Appadurai (see above).[121]

In line with a sort of emphaty: The responsible architect Hans Kolhoff wants to rebuild *Alex* into a 'peoples place' – a place that belongs to the people, but simultaneously an urban living-room (a notion of privacy).[122] The building of a new era with new memories, identities to give birth to new history for East berliners.

The 1997 'First Draft' Inner-City Plan and the 1999 Official Standard

With the Inner City Plan, published by SenSUT 1997 and with the sub-heading 'A First Design', senator Peter Strieder states explicitly that the blueprint is a 'conceptual basis for discussion' and it will not be used as a "…master plan [sic] to which other interests or existing plans must submit."[123] The key factors are – besides mobility, density, and sustainability – the spatial experience and identity. It is quite explicit favouring the 'mix of functions' and to continue the breakaway from

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[120] Photo by the author.
[121] *Stadtforum Protokoll*, 37th Session: 6.
[122] Kieren 1994: 98.
[123] Strieder 1997: 77.

modernist (or functionalist) planning. Also, in line with the critical reconstruction-concept of the IBA, the valuation of 'history' (or the history from the perspective of the present situation). After approximately a half-year of debating the plan Strieder, in the 63rd session, repeated and repeated that the goal was to find consensus on a guiding image.[124]

But still, the dominating image in the inner-city plan is (at least for Stimman) the European City. When it comes to city and public space structure in Berlin that is the Golden Age of the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. The European City ideal is the conservation of city-building according to certain levels of density, spatial structure, horisontality, and thorough mix and variety of functions. In Berlin specific, that embraces the 'allotments' – the block structure, 22 meter building heights, and at least 20 percent housing gross in new projects.[125]

In the 1999 publication, which the Berlin senate in 1999 adopted as 'the official all-bourough [district] planning standard',[126] Strieder states that the plan is a strategy to reurbanize and revitalize the historical centre (the former East) and the City West. This is a proposition to implement the catchwords of 'the compact city', 'the city of the short way', and 'the socially mixed city'. Here the trope works to define and keep on picturing Berlin as a metropolis of *Weltstadt*-standards – through setting parameters of density and people 'in place': The city's history are a cultural resource which, according to the plan, will be used or made available as identity building experiences for the berliners. But also explicitly for tourism. This is connected to the struggle against suburbia, to keep people within city limits and the metropolitan border intact to maintain the sharp contrast between rural/urban.[127]

What he also states is that if the socially mixed city is not maintained by these measures, the affluent citizens will move out and in the inner-city the low- or no-income citizens will be left. An intention which is already underway to be contradicted or perhaps producing a negative effect: In the central areas of the district Prenzlauer Berg (former East Berlin side), hip and with scenes, the gentrification process has gone a long way already and the 'blowing wind feeling' is that the ones making it what it was that attracted incentives for renovation are moving to another district – Friedrichshain, which is now showing the signs seen in Prenzlauer Berg in the mid 1990s and the next target of the gentrification cyclus. All in the name of urbanity.

The cures for an ex-divided city? Normalization. As Stimman puts it, on the decisions taken by the Berlin senate and parliament on the 18th and 27th May respectively to use the plan as official standard, that "…they mark the temporary end of an inner-city planning process, whose goal

[124] *Stadtforum Protokoll,* 63rd Session.
[125] Schulz 2000: 30.
[126] *Planwerk Innenstadt* 1999:184.

comprised to conceptually overcome the real and invisible borders of a city partitioned for decades, and to show an illustrative as well as a uniform comprehensive picture of the historical centre and the City West."[128]

Summary and Comment on the Discourse

What, according to the discourse, are Berlin supposed to be?

The existential trope has given a clear link to the city-life conceptualisation that is so attractive according to the Jane Jacobs-heritage within postmodern urbanist ideals. Jacobs thoughts – the critique of and remedies for modernistic (or, in her terminology, orthodox) planning – on cities can be summed up to a loose conceptual definition of what the (great) cities is or are supposed to be: When reading the introduction to Jacobs 'manifesto', the meaning or being of cities can be excavated to state a degree of speculation, room for irrational changes in land use, and a density containing 'intricate, many-faceted, cultural life'.[129]

Hall has, in a few sentences, condensed Jacobs' message or prescriptions for good urban neighbourhoods:

> [It] amounted to keeping the inner city neighbourhood more or less as it was before the planners had got their hands on it. It should have mixed functions and therefore land uses, to ensure that people were there for different purposes, on different time schedules, but using many facilities in common. It must have conventional streets on short blocks. It must mix blocks of different age and condition, including a significant share of old ones. And it must have a dense concentration of people, for whatever purpose they are there, including a dense concentration of residents.[130]

The irony that Hall points out on the some effects of this 'retro'-thinking lead to the yuppification of the city, or in today's terminology gentrification.

This close reading of the protocoles from the sessions dealing principally with the appeareance of Berlin public space shows a number of things: Namely, how a multi-vocal discourse all the same ends up in a general urban specialist discourse that is refined or essentialized

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[127] Strieder 1999: 5.
[128] Stimman 1999: 6.
[129] Jacobs 1991: 18-19.
[130] Hall 1993 ed.: 235.

in the Inner-City Plan and the use of 'hidden' metaphors. The metaphorical use of 'urban' or 'urbanity' is hidden because we do not recognize it as a metaphor.

That 'urban' as an adjective has become, more or less, synonymous with the 'European City' and the Jacobs-ideal. What one could ask is whether some of the proposed (and decided) suggestions, visions, and intentions are asked for or welcomed by the citizens in general in the inner-city districts. The answer to this question will elude us still, especially when there is no sign of their voices in the discourse.

Emphatic Planning in Berlin?

Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies.[131]

Why is it important to study and criticize urban specialists and their conceivment of space – the representations of space in planning? Once again, the importance lies in the question of a city's 'identity': First, there is always cities within cities (the plurality), and the city's identity changes somewhat depending on which 'camp fire' you sit around. Of course there are also general statements and overfloating agreements or views held in common. But to collect all versions and then try to refine it to *one* label is futile. Secondly, the city's identity according to people living there is also a mirror of their personal identity, a symbiosis.

Badcock put it thus: "[C]ities contain spaces and places that are used symbolically as well as materially in the act of embracing or excluding fellow human beings; indeed, that our very identity derives in part from surroundings that we individually and collectively cultivate in our own imagined likeness."[132] This is why the publicness, transparency, and democratic ideal is important in urban and city planning.

This is also why the politics of defining Berlin's identity – through place – is important to investigate: It is the nowadays imperative question in critical urbanism and geography that goes 'whose city?' As Zukin states it, "[t]o ask 'whose city?' suggests more than a politics of occupation; it also asks who has a right to inhabit the dominant *image* of the city."[133]

Now, since planning (at least in Berlin) has entered the third phase, and the planner take up the role as emphatic spatial organizer, it is clear that the intersection point of representations of space and representation in the public sphere is discourse. It is as ever important (and maybe more so today) to investigate what is being construed in these public settings – where where the danger lies in that the emphatic stance and invitation to dialogue, explicit public opinion, and critique may be held as 'hostage' or be merely neutralized.

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[131] Lefebvre 1977: 340.
[132] Badcock 1996: 93.
[133] Zukin 1996: 43; my emphasis.

The Dominant Image in the *Stadtforum* Discourse

The *Stadtforum* was initialized as an institution that would juxtapose representations of Berlin. The question is now, ten years after its appearance on the scene, whether this dream came true or, more or less, brought another set of problems to city management. The planning policy – both what is due in the city and how to plan it – in Berlin is, due to the political pressures and time-shortage in the 'first' decade, a good ideal but not enough it seems. What did the *Stadtforum* discourse on public space in Berlin produce? The inner-city plan, that seeks to normalize city space, and to find harmony or make the inner-city even more 'urban'. The existential trope, and its sub-themes of East/West, normality, and urbanity – dominated by urban specialist version(s) of Berlin.

How was the discourse in the *Stadtforum* constituted? As relatively closed and more of an exposure of urban specialists comments and visions. The influence of postmodern urbanism, and in particular the Jacobs-variant of it, is a strong guiding image among Berlin urban specialists. There is the search for the golden age, the nostalgia for times when Berlin was both culturally and technically at the cutting edge among world cities.[134] The street and the public space as it once was (or as it is seen through historical 'evidence' – other representations of space) are to generate a coming golden age, a normalization, and to put the later half of the last century (the partition) in parenthesis, obscuring or even repressing that urban experience and ways of life that developed on the east side of the Wall.

If the *Stadtforum* is (or has become) a legitimizing facade, what is being legitimized? The vision that the only way to go is to follow the 'urban'-ideal trend. This is 'harmless' for the old West Berlin centre, City West, but produces a radical rearrangement of the old East Centre part, *Stadtzentrum Ost.* The emptying out of its cultural content – the place that some DDR citizens was even proud of (not at all all of course). The new forms (evolving from the old spatial structure of the European City), the representations of space that will change lived and perceived space in Berlin – that will produce new places. These places are cosmetic. They will not change the social content of the places they override, save for Alex, which will be as foreign as the DRR modernism once was in its place.

The rhetorics around the Alexanderplatz comments it as an empty place – loose and voided forms without real content (save traffic) or that the content must be a fake since it was a product of

an illegitimate regime. Anyhow, it is not 'urban' enough, a waste of space and therefore at the disposal of total change. So the existential trope helps by defining a new place, and inserting new meaning which will reflect the new context and suiting identity along with it.

This is also an elementary part of the commodification of place or the activity of localizing the city as competing within the global-city league with what is idiosyncratic for this particular place. It is thus thriving towards a selling argument: What the city has to offer that is at least as good as the other ones and, preferably, combined with one or some elements (deemed as positive assets) that no one else has. Most city managements act in this way today because the economies of contemporary cities are dependent on their image.

This way of dealing with city assets also has its history. In the last twenty-thirty years or so, there has been a continual – though increasing in importance for the local economy – process of refining symbols and signs that 'the city' spins its identity around. That is, building the image of the city to be used to draw attractive groups of people and businesses. Or even more concise and consistent with the theoretical framework: Representations of the city (the means) that achieves an effect in the representational spaces and spatial practice to represent it on a market and haul in what is desired localizations (the ends).

A bit far flung and maybe *non sequitor*, the guiding images are to produce a space commody, a space to be consumed – since the prosperity or even survival of the city depends on taxpayers (which are hopefully affluent, clean, and does not demand to much of social programs), the tertiary sector, and informtion technology business. These must be willing to locate within city-limits and pay their taxes there. They are seen, by urban specialists and, above all, by senator Strieder, to appreciate the 'social mix'. That is the reason for it to be enhanced, it is not an intrinsic nor an disinterested imperative on the Senate's behalf. Berlin's charm, the multitude of people and life-styles, is already there – but under what conditions is it allowed to continue?

The difference between East and West is actively being flattened out. Not because citizens themselves want it (mind though, some of them do want it).

The Necessity of Discourse

Here I will briefly discuss the problems and consequences of the imperative of representing space for the city and the production of place. Urban specialists must create their conceived spaces – representations of space – to be able to manage the city (their responsibility in the division of

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[134] See Hall 1999: 239-79, 377-96; Lash 1993: 237.

labour) – but at the same time that this representation can be used as a tool of domination, or exclusion of alternatives, and political legitimation of the production of place (identity, meaning). This creates the discourse and it is available for analysis.

It leads to a democratic or participatory imperative: That every representation in the public sphere must take part in and use discourse. In planning that means to be able to decipher and understand the representations of space, and to be able to create your own versions (verbally and with other means) – otherwise your point of view is sure to be lost. Therefore, the emphatic planning is vulnerable of rhetorical eloquence and to elites' ways or advantage of know-how.

The *Stadtforum* is in a sense a one-way public-sphere – the participation of 'ordinary' citizens is delimited to sit and listen. So transparent it may be, and letting people make their own opinion, but *participation*?

What are the conclusions on the workings of representations of space in the age of emphatic planning? Could be that there is an established political correct search for input, but (and because of this) that it is trapped in new modes and practices of legitimation. The discourse dissemination becomes ever more important to secure the support from voters/taxpayers, opinions, and lobbyists.

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