

WHERE IS BERLIN?
CULTURAL COMMONS AND URBAN POLICY
AMONG REAL AND VIRTUAL WALLS

Chiara Donelli and Michele Trimarchi ^()*

1. Cultural Commons within a complex urban texture

To speak about commons in Berlin implies a strong reference to the micro-structure of 'kiez'¹. This is the key-word useful for us to interpret and understand such an odd collection of various splinters. Berlin is formed by twelve Bezirke, self-government units with no legal personality. But 'kiez' refers to a city neighbourhood, a relatively small community within a larger town, a district that has developed its own charm and distinctive image, created by the inhabitants' social identity. The word kiez is used by Berliners to describe the neighbourhood where they live and feel at home. It is an atmospheric stratification of local and relational memories rather than a precisely defined area with formal labels and borders. Nothing can contribute more to the diversification of the city than this strong sense of identity of specific area; the 'kiez' palimpsest could be considered the partial outcome of the strategies aimed at careful urban renewal² in the attempt at combining the physical renewal of existing buildings with the need to preserve the urban and social structure.

Although in recent years this concept was criticized, due to its lack of sustainability, the empirical evidence was paradoxically refuted by the theoretical elaboration: the process of urban renewal was based on the shared beliefs that:

a) the displacement of low-income population from the city centre should be avoided;

^(*) Chiara Donelli is Doctoral Student in Economics and Management at the University of Ferrara, Italy; Michele Trimarchi is member of the Faculty, Doctorate in Architecture and Territory at the University of Reggio Calabria, Italy.

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" Kiez is a German word that refers to a city neighbourhood, a relatively small community within a larger town. The word is mainly used in Berlin and northern Germany. In Berlin the term usually has a positive connotation, as inhabitants often identify with the Kiez they live in. (www.berlin.de)

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Concept developed in west half of the city in the context of 1987 International Buildings Exhibition (IBA), 1984. Firstly applied in Prenzlauerberg in 1993. Hamer H.-Walther, The City Centre as A Place to Live, Urban Design International., 1981 September – October, v.2, no. 6.

- b) the socially hybrid structure of the city has to be preserved;
- c) the residents should be involved in the process of decisions directly affecting them.

The recent results of the referendum³ concern the former Tempelhof airport, and demonstrate that this shared belief is still important for the residents, despite the urgent needs of housing project. Will this belief resist when the number of residents is expected to increase? What is going to happen when the enormous need for space will have to be primarily satisfied? Or This question still unsolved but it emphasizes the divided texture of the city, where the problems of reconstruction have been essential for the reflection into the design of the cultural landscape and the public institutions.

2. Does a wall/scarf play the role of backbone?

For decades the Berlin Wall has played the role of backbone for cultural and social dynamics, viewed from both (reciprocally impermeable) perspectives. As it has already been analysed by several scholars, the fact that the city was heavily bombed in the WWII and rigidly divided by a wall until twenty-five years ago, should be considered as a stepping stone for understanding its peculiarity. A complex history over its shoulders offers distinctive reflections upon the urban layout. No needs to invent a new city, the challenge was rather to understand and restore its identity. The debating question was not "How can Urban Planners recaptured the loss?" but which one, among the Berlin's many pasts, should they choose? The memory of the 1920s without Nazis and Communists? Or the Berlin divided without the wall? Either Western or Eastern memories?

The singular situation in front of the planner was a city in which the wall inhibited any push into the hinterlands and left a big empty grey zone crossing it in the middle. The concept of centre and periphery was completely upside down. The history of the wall and the consequences lead to a hotly complex dispute, which will not be analysed here. The

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" Tempelhof Airport was built by the Nazis between 1936 and 1941, and it later became a hub for the Berlin airlift during the Cold War. The site was closed in 2008, and two years later it was reopened as a public park. In May 2014 a referendum decreed with almost 65 % of those who voted the support to "100% Tempelhofer Feld," rejecting the city's proposal to build 4,700 apartments and commercial spaces, as well as a public library, on the 380-acre former airport site. Only 18.8 % of voters supported the development plan, which was put forward by the Berlin Senate in 2013. Berlin residents have rejected plans to develop the former Tempelhof Airport site. They want to keep the urban space as a public park. Bartlick S., Berlin voters claim Tempelhof , 27 May 2014, www.dw.de

wall is mentioned here not as a part of an inglorious past, that obviously undeniably swayed the urban development of the following years, but as a part of a collective experience, indispensable for understanding Berlin's structure. The notion of a wall carries an historical chest, from the medieval time the concept of being walled was not only sign of security but basics of identity.

Its fall has been the occasion for unavoidably and desirably reshaping the whole metropolitan area and its newly opened connections with the German territories. Post-reunification has meant here twentyfive-years' boom in creativity: the city of talents pursued the urban marketing strategy to subsidize creativity for a successful urban development for the future. The image the city wanted to screen itself was a tidy link between culture and creativity. A lot has been written about the tendency to use culture and entertainment as the most powerful tools to renovate degraded urban areas, viewed as consistent and effective strategy to reshape the city's status.

This was the case of the two symbols of the modern Berlin: the Reichstag and the East Side Gallery, in which contemporary art has solved many controversial political problems⁴. After a first disruptive wave against the Wall, it became necessary to decide its destiny between a complete obliteration and the realisation of an open memorial. One of the quickest solutions⁵ came in 1990 from the Scottish Gallerist Christine MacLean, who founded the East Side Gallery. The former Berlin Mauer was not demolished and it did not become a memorial, but it was transformed into the largest open air gallery (1.3 km long) able to involve 118 artists.

The second solution came years later, when the re-unified Germany was tackling the Capital issue: Berlin had been re-established as the German Capital two years after the fall of the Wall, but the actual government was still active in Bonn, until 1999. Bonn has always been a temporary solution since 1949, but after forty years it was difficult to consider it still temporary. What to do? The discussion was long and intensive, since each of the two sides of such an institutional dilemma were endowed with strong reasons to advocate their town as the right Capital. The substantial and symbolic features of the

4 From the 1970s to the early 2000s, authors such as highlighted the progression of the pairing of culture and urban planning. Between the other: Zukin S. *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1982; Sorkin M., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1992; Bianchini F. & Parkinson M., *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1993

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" Other solutions occurs years after such as the Bernauer Strasse park memorial (1999), the Berlin Wall Trail 160-km cycling path developed in 2010.

contemporary Berlin ended up to play the decisive role in order for the decision to be adopted: Germany wanted to be focused upon its most diverse and cosmopolitan city, unique for its typical urban virtues such as tolerance, experimentation and irreverence.

How could such a historical transition be marked to the death strip into the Bundestag resettlement? The suitable answer was a massive artistic performance, with the Reichstag Palace being wrapped for two weeks by the internationally acclaimed artist Christo. This event was experienced by five million people, and the absence of any clear message left a wide range for interpretation and sensibility; it had been a celebration for some, a memorial for others, a political event, a party, the attempt at re-conquering the Mitte district, or just the symptom of its absolute dereliction. The Wall was over, and Berlin had to craft a new backbone.

The rehabilitation of degraded urban space has not only been associated with renewal plans, but also with the implementation of flagship projects in the form of large arts, entertainment and sports facilities. That was true also for Berlin: different types of tourist attractiveness were pursued and although the city was founding its vocabulary upon the words: dynamic, cheap and innovative, massive investment programs like the regeneration of Potsdamer Platz⁶ and the renewal of the Museum Island, have been carried out.

Archistars, mega events and spectacular entertainment facilities mashed together towards the establishment of a cultural image capable of attracting tourists and investments, especially in the real estate market. By the beginning of the 2000s, Berlin managed to market itself from “city divided” into globally known international cultural district and from a cold-war wall tourism into a wide and multidimensional cultural destination. Still, that was not enough to keep it from falling into financial bankruptcy in 2001. Where is the ‘poor but sexy’ Berlin? The overmentioned slogan was a clever practice of turning upside down the image of the ongoing financial crisis of local government in 2000. That is why, in 2001, with the rise of a new political coalition to power and the administration of Mayor Klaus Wowereit, new policies were created in order to emphasize Berlin’s role as a creative city and overcome the consequences of the fast de-industrialization occurred after the reunification.

A well known US urban studies theorist, Richard Florida, had pointed out the creative

⁶ Potsdamer Platz, was sold in May 1990 by the Berlin Senate to the Daimler-Benz corporation at a price below market value-a controversial sale later challenged by the European Commission. Ladd B., *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, University Of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998

professionals as being extremely mobile in the modern era, in constant pursuit of the best city where to live. Their choice, according to his research, would be based on the availability of a high quality life and a very specific set of amenities, amongst which the presence of cultural facilities: an alternative or even subcultural scene rather than big museums and pasteurized cultural centres; green areas and small local parks rather than big league sports stadiums; small cafes and bars rather than chain restaurants.

Florida's theory became the clear Wowerit's approach, including his famous slogan. In other words, Berlin was bankrupt, but possessed an image of "coolness" which could be exploited in the name of profit. The aim of new joint urban and cultural policies became the attraction, not only of cultural tourism, but also of skilled creative professionals from all over the world, able to overcome a failed economy through the accumulation of cognitive capital. If until the early 2000s, we could observe a focus on the pursuit of the "capital of culture" status, now we can clearly observe a search for the "creative city" .

The Wowerit strategic plan seems to be fully achieved. What make the creation of creative hub in the middle of the Europe possible? Not only a strategic plan but a pool of cultural policies, public action, attitude and different contingency:

- a) The openness of the city towards a wide range of possibilities leads to create a bunch of different types of format.
- b) The historical tide relation between the city and contemporary art. As art scene was playing a key role in the the city recovery process base on city's attractiveness for artist, it never lack to provide to artist new material and new form of interest: starting from the wall, passing trough the squats movements, arriving to the plethora of abandoned site.
- c) The charm image magnets for youngs. Berlin was marked as an alternative city during the division, during which west citizens were exempt from the military service and soon became a magnet for the young. No mandatory closing times for bars led to a thriving nightlife where small cafes, independent production, graffiti art and subcultural squats merged to generate a cool and authentic wave.
- d) The aspect of being the capital attracts more attention. International operating corporations know that their commitment by being a sponsor will become known far beyond Berlin's borders. Artists come here to spoilt the numerous possibilities of visibility and financing.

e) The capital of encounter and network creation. Artists come and go. The community is permanently changing, one central point doesn't exist. The diversity and variability makes the art scene of Berlin different from other art metropolises.

f) The hard shelter of good and affordable living conditions, in Berlin played also a crucial role in the development of contemporary art.

g) The concession of visas for foreign artists and professionals of the creative class.

h) The state support of start-ups and project space.

i) The polycentric structure of the city. Every district of the city is city itself, with more than 100,000 inhabitants and different social structures and living conditions. The polycentric structure of Berlin is also reflected by the art scene, such a differentiated panorama fits in everyone's need. Berlin is the city of contradiction ongoing economic woes and dramatic history but creativity and cultural richness continues to flourish. Is really Berlin the metropolis of hope or instead become the metropolis of the hopeful?

3. Tacheles experience: an exemplar common

Until the wall was standing and threatening, the singular situation in front of the planner was a city in which the wall inhibited any push into the hinterlands and left a big empty grey zone crossing it in the middle. The concepts of centre and periphery were completely upside down. The no man's land of the former area of the wall became the habitat of innovative solution and unpredictable solutions. This is where the story of one of the most debated art center (Tacheles) took place.

"Game Over-Press start" says the website front-page of Kunsthaus Tacheles, although the latest article is dated 2011. Unless it is still mentioned in most of the city guide in the section "things to do" to be involved in the real wave of the city while walking down in Oranienburgerstrasse, nothing is left of the original alternative scene of which Tacheles was the standard bearer. Tacheles art centre has been cleared in September 2012, after decades of bureaucratic wrangling over the debt-ridden building. Is the game really over?

The game, at least for the urban analysis, is not over if we consider the reflection and development of the area. Existing studies already demonstrate how squats have been a feature of the development of many cities. But the neighbourhood between Auguststrasse

and Oranienburgerstrasse is a different story: the location was playing a key role in the creation of different actors and public action was establishing a new type of urban development. Despite the central location of the area, its proximity with the city's attraction has undoubtedly influenced its destiny; this artistic cluster is still a valuable point of reference in order for us to understand the influence of culture in the development of other parts of the city.

Only a few buildings survived the WWII in Berlin's city centre and Auguststrasse had the luck to host three of them: the ex AEG showcasing space, a majestic building built in 1907, point of connection between Oranienburgerstrasse and Friederichstrasse; an Ehemalige Jüdische Mädchenschule (former Jewish Girls' School), and a Margarina Factory. The division came, and although this area was extremely close to the Museumsinsel and Alexanderplatz, it was still too close to the wall to be really attractive for public investments. The former AEG factory was temporarily used as the movie theatre Camera, but it was soon abandoned and partially demolished in 1980 due to structural problem; the same destiny occurred to the Margarina Factory which was completely abandoned; only the Jewish School had a second life and became the Bertolt-Brecht-Academy.

Although in East Berlin the arts had to conform to the ideology of the political system, beyond the governmental art system some individuals dared to show art in private spaces. Auguststrasse turned to be a meeting point of the eastern artistic community, developed around the gallery called "Weißer Elefant" (white elephant), which was founded on the initiative of the working group of young artists at the GDR-artists' union in 1987. Eventually the 3rd October 1990 the wall fell down, and a chaotic situation exploded, a sort of Anarchic Vacuum. All around the Wall and East Berlin became a law-free zone: private and state properties were abandoned, the building seized from the socialist government were abandoned and planned to be given back to the original owners.

Although the squatters were illegal in West Germany, for the new reunified Berlin there was no regulation yet, and the strong need to get rid of all the memories associated with the Socialist Regime progressively increased the number of occupied buildings. The still existing open, although abandoned space offered chances for creation and the frame for an artistic production which normally takes place where inharmony and conflict can be sensed. People started to pour documents, furniture and memories over the streets like a big flea market. While many Westerners fled to escape to the East, many artists went in the opposite direction, taking advantage of the freedom to use urban

spaces as a playground for creation.

The Wall had been a strong presence in history, asking for a confrontation and offering a clear compass in return. Augustrasse soon became a profusion of DIY⁷ cultural projects, squatted houses, temporary clubs, and makeshift bars. At those times also the municipality had a new need to fulfil: redefining the centre once again. This empty, wasted buildings in need of rehabilitation, close to the Museumsinsel and Synagogue were extremely appealing. In this case the emphasis of the district was put on art. This was also by credit of the Building Society Mitte (WBM), which administered the majority of living spaces there, and one dedicated employee: since 1990 Jutta Weitz had been in charge of the renting of commercial space to artists.

A fitness centre wanted to rent the margarine-factory, but it was avoided by Jutta Weitz, who together with the Culture Office assigned it to Klaus Biesenbach as tenant with a group of artists and curators. That soon became the art association KW Kunst-Werke-Institute for contemporary art, which adopts the art-theoretical and social discourses and tries to introduce them through exhibitions and a framework for discussion. This group of artists tries to introduce an interdisciplinary approach that means no dust-gathering permanent collection, allowing innovation and curatorial creativity to run wild across five floors, of malleable space and challenge the artist to work with the neighbourhood. The exhibition Berlin 37 Räume [Berlin 37 Rooms] made this project a reality. The format was innovative and flexible: 37 different empty apartments, 31 Berlin-based curators involved, each of whom staged a site-specific one-person exhibition in a single room. The project, which ran from 14 to 21 June 1992, included international artists like John Cage and locals such as Aura Rosenberg, and ran parallel to Documenta 9, in Kassel. Eight years after a new format was designed by the same crew of artist and curators which founded KW: the first Berlin Contemporary Art Biennial, addressing the controversial theme of cultural development.

At a few blocks' distance, on 13th February 1990 a group of artists called themselves Kunstlerinitiative Tacheles (artists' initiative Tacheles) and occupied the ex-AEG buildings, before the scheduled demolition planned for October of the same year. The artists' initiative was to create a new report for buildings and structural analysis and

⁷ The DIY (Do It Yourself) ethic is tied to punk ideology and anticonsumerism. It espouses the rejection of consumer culture, using existing systems or existing processes that would foster dependence on established societal structures. This concept was mostly associated with the music scene. Emerging punk bands began to record their music, produce albums, merchandise, distribute and promote their works independently, outside the established music industry system.

through negotiations with the Construction Authority Berlin-Mitte, which was responsible as a legal entity for the complex, and proved that the building was structurally safe. Due to the positive result, the house was first declared a national monument provisionally, which could be confirmed by another report on 18 February 1992. The building was organized as an art house with ateliers, exhibition rooms, a cinema, a theatre, two cafe. Tacheles suddenly became a pivotal spot of the independent democratic culture, an art house freely accessible 24h, every day of the year.

Tacheles was not the only building occupied, but a part of a wider squatting practice started in the 80s in the West and quickly spread to the former East Berlin. Municipality soon perceived the potentiality of bottom-up culture and tried to transform its attitude into established practice. Although in 1998 the Fundus Gruppe, a large property developer, bought the Oranienburger Strasse site and won approval to build a €400 million luxury development, the economic crisis scuttled its plans, and the squatted building was lately given to the artists with a 10-year lease in 1998 at a nominal rent of 50 cents.

With the renewal of the city centre in the 1990s, the proliferation of art galleries, museums, cafes and restaurants led to a glamourisation of the formerly Tacheles area, and consequently a rise in rent price. The artists started to move out, seeking other cheap areas. At the same time the house lease expired and the HSH Nordbank (the owner of the building after the Fundus group bankrupt) found that the area could prove extremely profitable. The monthly rent was raised from 50 cents to €17,000 and HSH Nordbank refused to discuss their decision in public. Tacheles area attracted a massive amount of tourists, being featured in almost every tourist guide in the world, as well as in local marketing campaigns by the Senate. Still, its reputation was not enough to save the buildings from eviction. After several legal battles and months of squatting in the backyard of the house, the last artists was forced out of the site in June 2013.

The building was then sold to The Perella Weinberg real estate in September 2014. The closure of Tacheles was deemed as the end of the squat movement or the setback for the independent culture in Berlin. There are different opinions at the matter of its implications.

The destiny of the other experiments was different. The KW became an exhibition space of 2000 sqm on five floors. Trustworthy with the initial philosophy of being more readily responsive to artistic innovation and to creative programming, the KW does not have a permanent collection. Nevertheless the independent scene obtains finance through an annual grant from the State of Berlin, as well as external funding for specific projects.

Since then every two years the KW organizes a Berlin Biennial in various places of the city. Almost in front of it in the fall of 1996 the Sophiensäle re-opened in 1996 as a space for independent theatre production.

After the collapse of the Iron Curtain the Berthold Brecht Academy was closed in 1996. It fell into disrepair soon after the fall of the Soviet Union. Temporarily opened for an installation during the 4th Biennial in 2006, it was definitely returned to the Jewish Community in 2009. Now, it honours the past and the creative future by combining a selection of smaller gallery spaces and eateries within its walls, transforming itself into a positive, enlightening space. The potentiality of the kiez and the plan for the future from the Perella Weinberg real⁸ estate perspective seem clear:

Developing the Tacheles site would help connect the commercial hubs in the area, including Hackescher Markt, Friedrichstrasse and Oranienburger Strasse. It's important to build a mixed-use project which will create life in that part of Berlin. It was an extremely active area in the early part of the 20th century.

This prolific cluster at the crossing point between Oranienburgerstrasse and Auguststrasse could have been burnt down at the beginning, move to a different area or simply gradually disappear. The former Tacheles area flourished for over ten years and eventually redefined its profile from a revolutionary area into an established cultural district. The 90s experiment bears fruit, although not the one originally planned. It was loyal to its cultural background: new commercial galleries showed up everyday, this is the area chosen from private collectors to exhibit their pieces (see collectors room), filled with touristic attractions. But few of the original vivid and experimental place is left, gentrification arrived here much sooner than the Tacheles closure.

4. "Berlin doesn't love you"

Berlin doesn't love you, say many tickers plastering traffic lights in Kreuzberg. Besides the mainstream not all the residents, especially those of the city centre, have reacted so enthusiastically to the constantly increasing flood of visitors, which hit a total of 500,000 who spend time in Berlin on an average day. Berliners were probably not prepared to pass from 7 million overnight stay in 1993, to 25 million in 2011 (the actual figures are believed to be at least double of the official ones), that is why not all the residents are

⁸ Fahmy D., Perella Weinberg Buys Former Squatters' Site in Berlin, www.Bloomber.g.com, 25 September 2014

cheering the influx of visitors, although tourism generated gross revenues of 10.3 billion euros in 2011, equal to nearly 10 percent of the city budget.

Already before the fall of the Wall politicians were giving high attention to tourism, because it was regarded as an important instrument in the propagandist competition of both halves of the city. The visual power of the fall of the Wall was a great incentive to bring new wave of interest and start to implement a credible tourism policy and appropriate marketing activities. In 1992-1993 it was decided to involve private sector more strongly in the marketing of Berlin as a Location. The tourism office Berlin Tourismus Marketing GmbH (BTM) is a public-private partnership, which is partially financed by the city of Berlin and the tourism industry, now renamed as Visit Berlin. In 1994, followed the founding of Partner für Berlin, a second public-private partnership started to carry out a marketing strategy for Berlin.

The marketing public relation activity carried out by the Berlin Senate and Partner für Berlin to reach this social-political objective has been varied and versatile throughout the years from the campaign be Berlin (founded in 2008), participatory marketing campaign launched in 2008 in which the city was an international and open metropolis, a young exciting location for business and science, as well as a future-oriented industrial region, a world renowned creative metropolis or quite simply the “place to be”. Additionally, interest and acceptance of Berliners for the changes the built environment of their cities were stimulated through a series of events. In the first four years of “be Berlin” the city has developed a clear brand profile. Additionally the Senate, despite the sharp budget crisis, created a tourism concept aimed at increasing the number of visitors, allocating additional public subsidy, intensifying tourism marketing, and carrying out various policy measures to promote Berlin as a “creative city”.

As confirmed by an image survey conducted by TNS Infratest on behalf of the Berlin marketing campaign at the beginning of 2011, the “Metropolis on the Spree River” today is perceived more strongly as an attractive place where to live and work than in 2007. The high percentage of income in the city makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish between tourism and other forms of migration and mobility, as well as other forms of leisure and consumption. There is a growing number of highly mobile academics, artist, and creatives worker, and entrepreneurs that can be encountered in Berlin. They are sometimes referred to as YUKIs (Young Urban Creative Internationals).

These temporary users can not be unambiguously classified as either tourist or residents and due to their growing presence, new tourist areas grow, in which traditional tourism

is being combined with other forms of place consumption; its systematic occurrence ends up to exert a substantial impact and to modify the urban texture. Phenomena of gentrification clearly arise. A continuously ongoing differentiation or segmentation of tourism led to new motives beyond the usual tourist destinations, and increasingly shifted to the centre of attention. As it happened for East London, there is an increase in the number of cafes, bar, institution and other venues for target groups that simply enjoy going out, or are hungry for experiences. Urban and social processes focused upon transformation are favoured.

Tourism is for sure an essential element in the profound transformation of Berlin, it disseminates its marks upon the city in terms of image, atmosphere, and self-conception. One particular characteristic of the tourism boom in Berlin is the spatial expansion and dispersion of tourism itself. Furthermore this is not followed by noticeable changes in the administrative measures related to tourism: Berlin Kiez had played a rather subordinate role within BTM and in the development of tourism in the city. The main advertisement campaign is still targeting the city centre and other mainstream or big-ticket attractions located elsewhere, despite the fact that travel guides (Lonely Planets, Chat@win) has for long recognized the tourism potential of many Kiez.

The city's approach to tourism policy was almost exclusively concerned with marketing initiatives, the reorganization of Berlin's Urban environment according to the needs of affluent consumers and the visitor economy as well as other activities aimed at promoting further tourism growth. What is absent is the consideration of uncontrolled tourism effects on residents and neighbourhood: costs compared to benefits, distribution of tourism and its sustainability. Tourism should not be the main topic of political discourse but there is a need to discuss the urban economic development and the sustainability of this tertiary-sector based model.

5. Different maps, different stories, the same city

5.1. Berlin's backbone: mapping the intangible

Berlin is huge, it has the same extension of NewYork City (area of 892 km²) with one third population (3.4 million inhabitants)⁹: people are prepared to travel extensively. It is laying there, as close as possible to reality; we could say it's democratic, nothing is underline or in brackets, not even the tourist place following somehow the idea "Berlin's

9 Statistischer Bericht, Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, Potsdam, 31.12.2013

doesn't love you"¹⁰. A structure of bus net, inner connection, lakes as not geometrical blue dots, widespread green areas, empty spaces and, again, infinite streets. Berlin stands there, naked in front of its visitors. Close to it, the U-Bahn map, a knot of colourful lines, intersections, stations, connections used to travel and think long-distance. Thinking about Berlin through its maps arises from the fascination of two completely different structures, telling the same stories. Why not turning upside-down the dynamics and use the same structure (cultural maps) for telling different stories?

Berlin as a plethora of different realities, different geographies, different stories, as fragment has already been investigated upon, but where are these fragments? And in which direction are they going? Each map is drawing new connections, telling different stories and reshaping the city skeleton. Creativity has always played a huge role on how we think and organize space, it's naturally built in in the process of organising and planning. Berlin has incorporated the creative discourse within its urban development, requiring (and crafting) new rules to orientate urban planning, always aiming at building highly competitive city images. In order for us to understand *where is Berlin* we need to start with its cultural map, analysing different maps to understand its parts, sinking into its contradictory aspects and perspectives, accepting the impossibility of drawing whatever general rules or analysis, also related to its landscape.

5.2. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

5.2.1. A synopsis

The National Museums in Berlin, the origins of which lie in the foundation of the Royal Museum of Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, belong to the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (The Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation). Supported collectively by the German government and all the 16 federal states, the National Museums in Berlin regard themselves as a "universal museum, spread over several sites across the city"¹¹.

Museumsinsel	Other locations
- Alte Nationalgalerie (modern artworks) 1876 - reopened 2001	- Hamburger Bahnhof (contemporary art) - Moabit Border 1906 (<i>Royal Museum on Traffic and Construction</i>) - 1996 (opened as an art

¹⁰ Novy J., *Berlin does not love you. Notes On Berlin's "Tourism Controversy" and its Discontent*, in "The Berlin Reader", Transcript, Berlin, 2013

¹¹ www.smb.museum

	museum)
- Altes Museum (classical antiquities) 1830 – reopened 1966 (the collection was restored in 1998)	- Museum Berggruen (classic modern art) ¹² - Charlottenburg 1996
- Neues Museum (Egyptian and prehistory collection) 1859 - reopened 2009	- Museum of Photography / Helmut Newton Foundation - Charlottenburg 2004
- Pergamonmuseum (middle east, Islamic and antique collections) 1930 – reopened 1953 (closed for renovation 2014-2019)	- Museum Scharf–Gerstenberg (surrealist art) ¹³ - Charlottenburg 2008
- Bode Museum (sculptures and byzantine arts, medals and coins) 1904 – 1956 (fully reopened 2006)	- Kunstgewerbemuseum - Schloss Köpenick (Museum of decorative art) - Köpenick 1963
Kulturforum	Dahlem
- Gemäldegalerie (old Masters paintings) ¹⁴ 1998	- Museum of Asian Art (Collection of South, Southeast and Central Asian Art; Collection of East Asian Art) ¹⁵ - 1970 -

12 From 1960 to 1995 the building was the house of the Antikensammlung collection of Antique sculptures and artefacts). The gallerist and collectors give his private collection to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin in 1995 as a ten-year loan. The museum was converted and reopened in 1996. In the year 2000, the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage) managed to purchase the collection for the Nationalgalerie with funding from the German government and the state of Berlin. (www.smb.museum)

13 The works on display are owned by the *Foundation of the Dieter Scharf Collection in Remembrance of Otto Gerstenberg*. There is currently a ten-year loan agreement between this foundation and the Berlin State Museums, while the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation has allowed it the use of the East Stüler Building in Charlottenburg. (www.smb.museum)

14 The collection was first opened to the public in 1830 (As a part of the Royal Museum) in the upper floor of the now called Altes Museum. In 1904 the collection move to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, now the Bode Museum, where the collection continued to expand. The collection was gravely damage during the war. The surviving collection was divided between East Berlin (mostly at the Bode Museum on Museumsinsel) and West Berlin in Berlin-Dahlem. The main core of the collection was eventually relocate in the building at Kulturforum. (www.smb.museum)

15 The collection of the Museum of East Asian Art in Berlin. Was founded in 1906 and located on Museumsinsel. In 1924, the exhibition was moved into the building belonging to the Arts and Crafts Museum, which at that time was also home to the Museum of Pre- and Early History (Martin-Gropius-Bau). During the Second World War, there were regrettable losses,

	reunified 1992
- Kunstgewerbemuseum (museum of decorative art) ¹⁶ 1985 (closed for renovation 2012- 2014)	- Ethnological Museum 1873
- Kupferstichkabinett (drawings and print collection) 1994	- Museum Europäischer Kulturen 1999
- Neue Nationalgalerie ¹⁷ (contemporary art) 1968 (closed for renovation 2015-2018)	

In the maps used to visualise the locations of different museums, it clearly appears how the location influenced the destiny and identity of the different museums aggregation. The location of the national museums in the map is reassuring for the visitors: museums are mainly centrally located, mainly aggregate in cluster, refer all to the same website, discount for cumulative entrance are present, early renewed or even new, and easily accessible. What could be more destabilizing for the visitors is the wide, and sometimes repetitive, pallet of offers. How to figuring out which museum is addressing which topics? what make different the Hamburger Bhanhof from the Neue Nationalgalerie? It is clear enough the lack of any master plan nor for museum's collection, nor for their spatial locations.

The National Museums encompass centuries of acquisitions in various disciplines and severe bombing during the IIWW. The city museums in the early 90s was still emerging from a long siege: there were two major Egyptian collections, two of classical art, two

partly due to damage to the museum building and partly to the removal of a large number of artifacts to Russia. After the war, the Red Army took about 90 percent of the distributed collections to the Soviet Union as war booty. From 1952, it was the Pergamon Museum that exhibited East Asian Art. After the Berlin Wall went up, it was decided in 1970 to build new exhibition premises in West Berlin in the Zehlendorf district. In 1992, the two separate collections were brought together in Dahlem. (www.smb.museum)

¹⁶ In 1881 it relocated into the Martin-Gropius-Bau – where Priam's Treasure was also on display for a time – and in 1921 it moved into the Stadtschloss. Parts of the collection were destroyed in World War II, and the surviving items were split between East and West Berlin. The Eastern collection moved into Köpenick Palace in 1963, while the Western exhibits moved first into Charlottenburg Palace, then into the new museum building in the Kulturforum in 1985. (www.smb.museum)

¹⁷ The building designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, allows for the display of only a small part of the collection, and the displays are therefore changed at intervals. The upper part is dedicated to temporary installation.

“national” picture galleries and more, everything was scattered among several locations. The relaunching of the museum heritage was pursued with a massive Masterplan, which is still ongoing, tackling the task of reallocation and unification of the collections and develop new infrastructure.

Located in various neighbourhoods throughout the city, we could pinpoint major sites. The main point of interest was represented by the two former western sectors: Museumsinsel and the Humboldt Forum, for his central location and as a symbol of a glorious past sullied by the DDR period¹⁸, and the Kulturforum, as a part of the massive renewal of the area of Postdamer Platz. Although necessary the two main master plans were not addressing the whole scenario of the State museums, nor the problem of a congruent programming, but just a limited part of the centrally located institutions, addressing more to the issue of the city's image. Understanding the routes of the masterplans for the different museum's area is the key to understand the orientation and relation, for the future and ongoing, with the urban textile.

Together with the State Museums, Berlin has a wide range of different institution and exhibition spaces devoted to Contemporary Art partly public financed, such as the Martin Gropius Bau, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Akademie der Künste, Kunstvereine enrich the range of public exhibition spaces, as well as private collections and experimental forms of the independent scene, as long as they are not sharing any programming with the State Museum won't be analysed herein.

5.2.2. Museumsinsel

Although most of these museums have an international standing, the best known are a group of five museums situated close to the symbol of the modern Berlin, the Television tower, on the Museumsinsel on the river Spree. The island was located in the eastern part of Germany, in its location we could catch the reasons for the extensive reconstruction process during the DDR time. The Bode Museum, the Pergamon Museum and the Altes Museum were rebuilt, in record time, to close with the terrible memories of the Nazism and the war, which underwent without any historical preservation policy.

The Master-plan for the Museumsinsel cluster was initiated in 1999, the same year in

¹⁸ The island was located within the DDR in the eastern part of the city. After reconstruction the island became a cultural showcase for the DDR and the Soviet Union. Its location in the eastern part of Berlin has important impacts on the way in which the museums were rebuilt and the DDR focused the rebuilding of the museums on restoring and reconstruction rather than modernization.

which it was designated as World Heritage site. Due to its cultural importance and the 3 million visitors each year the plan has the goal to modernize the island in an “up to date museum district” by respecting in the same time the unique historic ensemble of architecture and art. In 2025 the plan should be completed, with the task of: maintenance and modernization of the traditional historic entrance, creation of a new U-Bahn stop, built the The James Simon Gallery (entrance to all museum, cafeteria, bookshop), create an archeological promenade to connect museum collections, outsourcing the museums internal functions. None of the stated objectives address structural change, or plan to reunified the divided collections, nor to up to date to the collection in accordance with the new museum standard. Mismatching is the comparison with the Berlin's contemporary art scene, which still struggling to find a point of reference in the institutions.

5.2.3. Humboldt Forum

The DDR never existed declaim an ironical graffiti which appeared a few days after the demolition of the Palast der Republik¹⁹ (2008). Anything that resembles or remembers communist regimes or an inglorious past must be sanitised, defaced, erased, so that in 50 years there will be nothing left to remember that part of Germany was once ruled by a Communist regime. The decision is really far from the *Charter of Venice* prescription of respecting historical structures in different states of preservation. The Palast der Republik was completely demolished to rebuilt the Palace of the Hohenzollern (torn down in 1950 due to the bomb damage of the WWII), which had once stood on this site.

In the near future the Berlin centre will have a *new big flagship centre for art, culture, science, and learning* in the early renowned area of Masterplan, without any memories of the outrageous past or the current problem of the merging area. The Humboldt Forum was created as a partnership between the *Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (The Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), the Zentral und Landesbibliothek Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin; museum, library, and university are set to return to their place of origin, and in particular with the *Kunstammer* (cabinet of art) that was originally housed here. This applies most especially to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, which will have two of its museum collections (before hosted in the western district of Dahlem) on

¹⁹ The Palace of the Republic opened on 23 April 1976. Located in the centre of Berlin, it is a striking structure housed the East German People's Parliament [*Volkskammer*], hosted the conventions of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), and served as a concert venue. Its thirteen restaurants offered a total of 1,500 seats. According to official figures, by September 1990, roughly 70 million people had visited this landmark. (www.germanhistorydocs.org)

show in the Humboldt-Forum, that of the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst.

The Humboldt-Forum will aim to better the current understanding of our globalized world. It will both raise questions and search for ways to solve them. It will highlight economic and ecological developments in the global society and show what tasks lie ahead in shaping them, be it in the world of politics, the economy, or culture. In keeping with the two brothers from whom its name is derived – Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt – this place will stand as a living symbol of the respectful and equitable cohabitation between the cultures and nations of the world.²⁰

For the Humboldt-Forum, as for the Museumsinsel, the main effort was put on the rebuilding of the sites, with the particular goal to delete the memory of the DDR from the city centre of the “New Berlin”, rather than to build the backbone of the “creative Berlin”. No change in the collections are planned, just a resettlement of two museums, from the outskirts of the city to its main heart.

5.2.4. Kulturforum

Moving south from Museumsinsel, in the eastern sector, following the route of the massive urban redeveloped node of Potsdamer platz and the Bundestag, lies the recent museum area of the Kulturforum. The museums complex was built to overcome the absence of a suitable cultural complex in the eastern half of Berlin. Finally the plan by giants of modern architecture, Hans Scharoun and Mies van der Rohe, emerged in 1960. A new cultural centre, two museums, a state library and a philharmonic concert hall, was planned close to the shame ruins of Potsdamer Platz. The destiny of the plan was less harsh compared with the Palast der Republik. The construction of the site, turned out to be providential also for the early reunified art's collection of the east and west Berlin, that's why despite the communist origins the plan served out also in the reunified Berlin. Two new buildings had been completed, by those time, to house collections belonging to the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: the Neue Nationalgalerie, with its collection of modern art, and the Kunstgewerbemuseum with decorative art.

After overhauling the original architectural plans in, new buildings were erected for the Gemäldegalerie, the Kupferstichkabinett, and Kunstbibliothek.

The development also saw the creation of temporary exhibition galleries, which are used

²⁰ *ibidem*

by all three institutions to present special cross-collection exhibitions. The long-term plan of the foundation is to make the Museumsinsel into an area for museums showing Classical art (and moving back the Gemäldegalerie to the Bode museum), while making the Kulturforum into an area dedicated to Modern art museums (and add the recent donate Pietzsch collection to the Kulturforum)²¹. Berlin State Museum undoubtedly has benefited from the massive investment into core areas, furthermore the museums location is a strategic assets for the relaunching of the tourist image of the city centre.

None of the museum of the Museumsinsel has in agenda activities, workshops, special programs aimed at encouraging visitors (especially the inhabitants) to came back and “live” instead of simpy “visiting” the museum. The inclusive map of the state museum is confusing, not well finished, compared with the one distributed with the Berlin Welcome Card, much more appealing and neat. For instance the Gemäldegalerie held master pieces from XII to XVIII century, follows modern museology standards and facilities, centrally located and close to the early renewed area of Postdamer Platz, but it’s not enough to make it as popular as its “cousins” on the Museumsinsel, in which visitors face long queues, overcrowded areas and lack of didactic and explanatory tools. The small number of visitors is here the results of a limited marketing campaign of the city marketing institution, which poorly advertise the Kulturforum in the tourist map (no intuitive icon is present) at the benefit of the more central and renewed area of the Masterplan around Alexanderplatz.

In the decision of rebuilding the two sites and the old urban grid, Berlin has chosen to embrace an early phase of modernity, that concluded in 1918, and to distance itself from more recent and disquieting assaults on tradition. This tentative embrace of modernity want to became a symbol of dynamic change, and offer to visitors and citizen a reassuring image of stability. But Berlin have since long time reject stability for innovation and flexibility.

5.3. Galleries and art market

5.3.1. Remoteness from the Market?

The reputation of being “Poor but Sexy”, doesn’t imply a distance from the market but somehow fuels it: Berlin is now more than just one hotspot of the international art

21 Wilder C., *Berlin's Culture War: Debate Pits Modern Art against Old Masters*, Spiegel.de, 14 September 2012

production. Few other major city in the world are endowed with such a large, dense art scene: Germany's capital is home to around 400 galleries, and for almost 20 years a new gallery has opened almost weekly at various locations across the city. The galleries offer more than 57,000 sqm of exhibition space for artists from home and abroad to show their work. Although Berlin's reputation as a sort of "non economic zone", for art galleries it seems almost an imperative to, at least, open a branch in the city. According with the research work carried out by the Institute of Strategic Resource Development²², one of the main attractions to prefer Berlin is the lively art scene, both for the artist living here and their audience.

There is a shared perception from the cultural actors that Berlin art's sustainability could not really relay on the city's market, which is not able to adequately respond to the offer. The art market shows weaknesses, and the local army of collectors does not manage to fulfil the available options. Despite the galleries' professionals complaint that the city lacks a real collectors' class, this is a negligible problem because Berlin plays the part of a central node in the worldwide network. In an international perspective Berlin's model is particularly desirable for potential connections, for both its bohemian image and low production expenses.

This scenario auto-incentives new establishment of small or bigger galleries. The pioneers gallery of the 90s have become the main protagonists and have enhanced their district highly. The density of galleries is welcomed by gallery owners. On the other hand, the competition for attention and information keeps growing. The location is a strategic assets to take advantage of the synergy effects due to the closeness to other galleries. Berlin, as a perceived site of artistic and theoretical production, is one element in a structure of symbolic and economic value enhancement.

5.3.2. Different maps for different markets

The art commercial scene follows different routes of evolution compared to State Museums and independent scene. Differently from the State Museum galleries are not bound in historical buildings and enjoy a flexible structure able to adapt to the city's artistic development; and differently from the independent scene, thanks to their financial structure galleries are more able to locate in different areas, independently from

22 *Studio Berlin*, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.) and Institute for Strategy Development (IFSE), Berlin, June 2010; *Studio Berlin II*, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.) and Institute for Strategy Development (IFSE), Berlin, June 2011

project-grant programs. The choice of their location is mainly based on different sceneries according to the network built by the galleries. This the reason why a commercial galleries' overview seems hard to sketch through a unique map.

What makes the decisive difference between Berlin and a gallery neighbourhood, such as New York's Chelsea, is that Berlin galleries are scattered all over the city rather than being concentrated only in one geographical area. There's no institution or established network which generate an all-inclusive index of commercial scene, instead there are plenty according with the market they refer to. Various brochures and flyers provide information about current exhibitions and upcoming openings. The two channels used here to analyse the galleries location in the city centre are: Index and LVBG. The first is chosen due to his wide diffusion (displayed in almost every gallery) and historical importance²³, the other, the *Landesverband Berliner Galerien* (LVBG), according with the selective requirement for being included²⁴. According with the two maps, four main commercial clusters could be drawn. Berlin-Mitte is one of the districts with the highest density of galleries, although during the years galleries change to a large extent. Most of the young galleries settled around Auguststrasse were founded in the 90s. The district that once used to be the symbol of the independent ongoing culture, is now affordable only for established galleries due to increasing average rent. While large galleries point out their reputation by moving to new and usually larger or more individual spaces, smaller galleries gather in neighbourhoods where space is conveniently available.

Berlin-Mitte is now probably the most important location for galleries. This is followed by districts of the former western part of the city: Charlottenburg and Schöneberg (Kurfürstenstrasse e Potsdamerstrasse). The new hub, along Potsdamer Strasse, situated mostly in West Berlin's Tiergarten district, is actually an old one. Until World War II, around 200 art and antiques dealers were situated in the then-elegant neighbourhood, along with a lively night-life scene; after the war the dealers failed to re-materialise along the street. Charlottenburg was already the preferred neighbourhood of some important

23 Index brochure has been founded in 2001 e and is published quarterly. In the early years, the selection for the "index" was done in a democratic decision-making process by the galleries. Meanwhile, the number of galleries is so big that it is selected strictly, who will be among the 60 chosen ones. The responsibility for this lies in the hands of a selection committee appointed for two years.

24 Requirement for became members: Gallery shall be in operation for 3 years. The Gallery shall produce at least 4 exhibition per year. The Gallery must have its own space, suitable for art presentation. Opening hours must be at least 20 hours per week. The Gallery shall continuously promote artists alive with appropriate space to present their work. The Gallery shall operate by the standard guidelines of the Federation of European Art Galleries Association (F.E.A.G.A.). www.berliner-galerien.de

galleries and dealers in the years before the Wall fell. The continued movement of galleries in and out of the district continues to give it a fresh lease in terms of art and lifestyle, or how it was define *an exodus of luxury to West Berlin*²⁵. More and more investors, such as the *Rich Russians*, tend to live in the western district, and so this business goes where their clients are.²⁶

There is also another story, the one of the Galleries which resettle out of the beaten track, and quickly become magnets for new settlements and resettlement of other galleries, which already happen, for example in Kreuzberg. The former high-immigration area of Kreuzberg now became a fully established galleries' area. Various galleries have settled also around the street of Checkpoint Charlie, Moritzplatz and Meringhdam²⁷. Most of the galleries in Berlin have several moves behind them, in the geography of this movement we can observe two mayor trends. The one which moves from one art centre to the next gallery hotspot, and the one which intentionally avoids clusters, and settle in at less occupied places such as Moabit, Neukolln or Wedding, and gradually redefine the focus.

5.4. Between institution and market: Kommunale Galerien

At the junction between commercial galleries and the State Museums, there are thirty freely accessible local galleries in different Berlin district .Kommunale Galerien Berlin are together the *AK KGB -Arbeitskreis Kommunale Galerien Berlin* (Working Group Municipal Galleries Berlin) places for the promotion of artists, of artistic experiments and the development of presentation and communication formats; these are places of cultural and art education for people from all different backgrounds, cultural traditions and generations. Their different target orientation reflects the cultural diversity of the city and works as the site for presentation and professionalisation of artists and art organisers. They have been built for creating networking action among different scenes and professionals, particularly between the independent scene and institutional cultural workers.

They offer artists and artists' initiatives an exhibition forum at the local level: the local vocation of the gallery is clear already in the guide's leaflet, in which information are only in German. One of the few galleries known outside the boundaries of its district is the

25 Graw I., *The myth of remoteness from the market*, Text zur Kunst, Berlin, n. 94, June 2014, pg. 62

26 *Ibidem*

27 *Galleries Try to Find Their Niche*, New York Times, 13 May 2014

Haus am Waldsee in the district of Steglitz-Zehlendorf, which has been showing international positions of contemporary art since 1946; and the Kunstraum Bethanien.

Policy action is considered weak from the strategic perspective: a clear orientation towards decetralisation of the art system is still missing. Contemporary art in Berlin lives from the emergence of the broadest possible range of places and events, whose complex and exciting atmosphere makes different areas of Berlin so attractive. This diversity has emerged without any planning, but now it needs commitment to be maintained so that it can continue to blossom. Municipal galleries in the different city districts could play an important role, if their tasks and fields of activity could be redefined and thereby upgraded.

Indeed the foundation and essence of such artistic work is often local, not-connected and with no sufficient resonance in the city. For the first time the 29 art spaces united to offer a comprehensive overview of their varied programs, taking advantage from the visibility of the Berlin Art Week. The results are still really poor: the only attempt at overcoming the lack of collaboration and synergies was to build a website and create a leaflet with vague information about the different places. To develop connection, think in a city perspective and build transverses' frame and activity should be the next commitment in the Kommunale Gallerien's agenda.

5.5. *Independent scene*

5.5.1. *Zwischennutzung*

A major force and many peculiar factors involved in Berlin cultural geography are the *Projekträume* (project spaces, interim use). Project space are alternative, self organised art spaces, usually artists or curatorss run which contribute to the Berlin art scene with different perspectives. Since 1972, when the first project space open its door in Berlin, the number kept increasing year by year. Open and fluid structure, easy to reallocate, affordable price, high numbers of potential participants, are all features that perfectly match with the city's *start-up culture*.

The practice of *Zwischennutzung*, (temporary rent contract usually with controlled price introduced in Berlin in the 90s), feed for the most part the proliferation of such a culture. The diversity of temporary usage reflect the heterogenous nature of their promoter: start-ups; migrants; system refugees; drop-outs; and part-time activists. The

grounds was particularly influential for the proliferation of such contracts due to high amount of wasted and empty spaces, the outcome of the speculative boom of the early 90s²⁸. They are literally wastelands: sites that are wasted as long as no investment or profitable use can be found for them, *urban sites that appear to be unmarketable in the medium to long term*, as phrased by the Department for Urban Development²⁹. *Zwischennutzung* had positive implication on different actors. A trend in the use of such a type of contract could be observed especially in low-income, high immigration kiez, and this provides landlords with incentives to use such a contract to avoid squatters and redevelop the area, without being bounded in long term contracts.

Contextually, the cultural activities offered to the local community, are regarded as the key element in the upgrade of problematic areas: on one hand the usual audience of off-scenes discovers new places in the city, and establishes new connections, being stimulated by curiosity. Artists and curators, on the other hand, gain access to temporary working spaces for a lower or free rent, although they have to face short term programming. Although for several years these sites were neglected by local policy-makers and left out of the official promotional discourse of urban elites, they were perceived as irrelevant, marginal, or weak in the dominant commercial market.

In 2007, the Senate Department of Urban Development commissioned a study to investigate how urban development and planning policy could encourage the further growth of cultural industries, as part of a deliberate attempt at transforming disused urban areas into new creative clusters. Policy-makers started to realise that one of the city's main features could be promoted as a strength to attract more young creatives. The first report on the cultural economy had already mentioned the availability of vacant

28 Following the reunification of the city, in the early 1990s many of the vacant plots located in the central districts of Berlin became prime pieces of real estate in the context of the speculative boom which hit Berlin in 1990–1991. Many sites in the Friedrichstadt were snapped up by international investors; while one the most famous “wastelands” inherited from Berlin's division, the Potsdamer Platz, was sold in May 1990 by the Berlin Senate to the *Daimler-Benz corporation* at a price below market value—a controversial sale later challenged by the European Commission. This was a period of economic boom and inflated growth forecasts for Berlin, which came to an end in 1993. Those brief years of building boom left an oversupply of office space which has not been absorbed since. Lower than expected growth rates and investment flows have limited the demand for commercial development on Berlin's remaining vacant lots. Colomb C., *Pushing the Urban Frontier: Temporary Uses of Space, city marketing, and the creative city discourse in 2000s Berlin*, *The Journal of Urban Affairs*, Volume 34, Number 2, pg. 131–152.

29 SenStadt Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, *Urban pioneers. Berlin: Stadtentwicklung durch Zwischennutzung. Temporary use and urban development in Berlin*. Berlin: Architektenkammer & Jovis Verlag, 2007,

spaces for temporary uses as the key for the continuous development of the cultural economy. Now that the positive implications are under everyone's eyes urban developers consider off-artists the symbolic pioneers of the reconquest of places, leading to new real estate redevelopment.

The artists, the one who were facing the dark side of gentrification process and try to escape from it, are the actors who unconsciously feed it. Indeed the former poor area of Kreuzberg and Neukölln are now simply gentrified areas.

5.5.2. Who is next to you: Projekträumekarte

The *Interaktive Projekträumekarte* (interactive historical map), realized in the *Freie Szene* context by Severine Marguine, pinpoint in the map with different colours realities according to their status and general information (name, website, year of foundation/closure). A call for connections had become a necessity also in the independent scene; as Severine Marguine³⁰ pointed out, the problematic part of these realities is the absence of any network or database of information related to the locations. Not only visitors but the actors themselves do not know each other. Mapping was the first step for getting to know the work and ideas of artists across space and time, to a greater extent than ever before. Additional spatial and historical information locating the other activities can make us able to identify the emerging and consolidating patterns in the migratory flows.

Project Spaces are characterised by a tension between their present use value (as publicly accessible spaces for social, artistic, and cultural experimentation) and their potential commercial value. Overturning the theory, when in a particular area we can observe a density of project spaces this is a signal of commerce peripheral areas, where the rent are perceived as affordable by both the artists and curators. To analyse the trajectories of these temporary uses and interim spaces means to understand the broader political economy of urban transformation, economic restructuring, and changing urban governance in Berlin³¹. The temporary uses followed various trajectories over the years; some have been able to consolidate their presence by securing a long-term agreement to remain on site, other closed or changed structure into a proper business or institution.

30 Cultural sociologist, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg + EHESS Paris. The creator of the map. Interviewed on 21 August 2014

31 Haydn F. & Temel R., *Temporary urban spaces: Concepts for the use of city spaces*, Birkhäuser, Berlin, 2006

Slightly after the fall of the Wall, the former Wall East Sector of Prenzlauer Berg and Mitte (Oranienburgerstrasse) saw new space blossoming thanks to the declaration of the area as a redevelopment zone (*Sanierungsgebiet*). The old district of Prenzlauer Berg was in the immediate vicinity of the city centre but was circumvented by the Berlin Wall and was therefore neglected during the lifetime of East German state. It is hard to describe this district about which so much have been written in the past ten years³². It won't be reductive to say that in the second half of the 90s a considerable increase in investments occurred, resulting in a rise of prices and an increasing number of spaces (indicatively around 2000) closed or moved to different areas. The area of Mitte, as described before, indeed saw the commercialisation and institutionalisation of many structures that used to be independent in the 90s.

The wealthy areas of the west, as Charlottenburg and Wilmersdorf, never really experienced such a diffusion of Projekträume, differently from the galleries scene, and barely no social housing building, compared to traditionally inner urban, unemployed working-class areas such as Kreuzberg, Friederichshain, or Neukölln. In the course of the development of the city, gentrification became the dominant trend for development of most inner city neighbourhoods; various studies already discuss the different types of gentrification and the different phases occurred in various times³³.

From the fall of the Wall an inverted trend in the new-establishment occurred: the northern areas lose rooms at the benefit of the southern district. Indeed, the concentration of newly opened pioneer location (such as project spaces, clubs, galleries) has shifted from Mitte (1992), to Prenzlauer Berg (1997), to Friedrichshain (2002) in a clockwise movement across the city, reaching Kreuzberg and even parts of Neukölln³⁴. The establishment of this sort of cultural and "sub-cultural" poles is connected with a shift of image of the new locations, specifically the development of an "artists'quarter", "gallery district" or "hip district" in both the media and public perception. Consequently rental price rose not only for housing but also for the retail segment, so that interim use,

32 Bernt M., *Stadterneuerung unter Aufwertungsdruck*, Pro Universitate, Bad Sinsheim, 1998
Kratke S., *Berlins Umbau zur Neuen Metropole*, in *Leviathan*, 1991, n. 19.3, p. 327- 352
Bernt M. & Holm A., *Exploring the Substance and Style of Gentrification: Berlin's "Prenzlberg"*, in Atkinson R. & Bridge G. , *Gentrification in a Global Context*, Routledge, London, 2005

33 Holm A., *Berlin's gentrification Mainstream*, in Bernt M. et al., *The Berlin Reader. A Compendium on Urban Change and Activism*, Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2013; Smith N., *New globalism, new urbanism: gentrification as global urban strategy*, *Antipode*, V. 34, 2002 (<http://antipodefoundation.org/>)

34 *ibidem*

dependent on affordable rent, started to move.³⁵

Today's map is wider and addresses districts that used to be perceived as peripheral, such as Reinickendorf and Gesundbrunnen, and now they broaden the border of interest of the city. Additionally the rise of a new area of aggregation could be observed, since 2000, in the southern Wedding close to the border of Gesundbrunnen, in the kiez of Pankstrasse.

Differently from the large scale investment of the 90s, the city is now involved in the global competition for creativity-based industries, and some way has to be found to keep some commodities or places unique and particular enough. The implication of this is that urban policy-makers are now explicitly targeting the "off-beat," "alternative," and previously "underground" subcultural and artistic sectors ³⁶, for instance Kreuzberg as a gentrified, established underground cool area.

5.6. Broadcast map: the image to tourists

The maps are pieces of the puzzle of the city's identity, every map has been crafted by different entities to build or make visible connections, to attract visitors or customers, and to Provide them with guide and orientation. None of the previously considered maps has been built for showcasing a specific image aimed at marketing the public. The transformation of the city was promoted to an internal and external audience of Berliners, visitors, and potential investors through diverse city marketing events and image campaigns. In the 1990s iconic architecture of flagship urban redevelopment projects were promoted to symbolise the international vocation of the city, Berlin was expected to compete with London, Paris and New York. Until the year 2000, the visual imagery of the promotional campaigns designed by the city marketing organization *Partner für Berlin*, predominantly displayed three sites as symbols of the "new Berlin": Potsdamer Platz, symbolizing the invoked status as global capitalist service metropolis; the new Government Quarter and the Reichstag; "Neue Mitte " and its reconstructed urban fabric as symbol of a retrieved traditional European urbanity³⁷.

The perception changed when the expected economic growth did not come, and the city

35 Shaw K., *The place of alternative culture and the politics of its protection in Berlin*, Planning Theory & Practice, Amsterdam and Melbourne, n. 6, p. 149–169, 2005

36 The importance of the approximate 150 non-profit and mostly self-funded artists' run spaces was recently honoured by the Berlin Senate. In September 2012, the first prizes for artistic spaces were awarded. Seven selected artists' initiatives each received €30,000 grants.

37 Colomb C., *Staging the new Berlin*, Routledge, London, 2011

strategy had to adapt to that. The beginning of the new century was then characterised by the “Berlin poor but sexy” strategy. Urban development started to address the independent scene and showcase the Berlin Promise of a city for creative people. One interesting reflection is the city’s image showcased to tourists. The two maps of the BVG and *City Welcome Card* put spotlight on the city centre, pinpointing as major points of interest places in the city centre with international vocation. All the activities suggested are located in the district of Mitte, few exceptions are made in the eastern district of Charlottenburg; the area around Kurfürstendamm and the Zoo (sadly famous for the Christian F. book) is taken as the flagship of successful requalified areas. The guidelines for the new planning have been prepared to point out the qualities and the potentials of the ‘City West’ around the Kurfürstendamm boulevard. The area will be transformed in one of the major shopping centres of the city, as a place of great interest for visitors, a location for offices, for university education and research, as well as a high status residential district³⁸.

The project *Everyone loves Berlin*³⁹ is looking at Instagram data from Berlin. The visualisation allows users to visually explore the density of pictures taken in Berlin. Furthermore the data can be filtered by nationality of the photographers, allowing a visual comparison of differences in interest and view. In the *selfies generation*, the aim is to understand how visitors look at Berlin, and where pictures are taken. Snap pictures and, consequently, upload on a Social network means a recognition of some places rather than others as points of interest. It is reassuring enough for urban planners, then the tourist map and the *Everyone's love Berlin* map barely coincide. The tourist map are the actual result of the strategic urban planning in Berlin, based on policy, tool and strategy determining the medium and long-term goals for the future of the city.

5.7. A hidden map: Urban Development Planning

Behind the maps showcased to the public, there are different organs and institutes, which analyse the weaknesses and the strong points of the city and set the areas of different potential development according with this. The task assigned to the *Stadtentwicklungsplan Zentren 3*⁴⁰ (urban development planning) is to identify social an

38 *Flächennutzungsplanung für Berlin*, [Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt](#), Berlin, 2009

39 Project by Nicole Meckel, Sebastian Moschner, Janina Schulikow, Ina Soth, Philipp Geuder of University of Postdam.

40 Urban development plans (UDP) are instruments for the informal city structural planning.

spacial problems at an early stage and to develop corresponding coping strategies to deal with these problems. Current examples are the focus put on potential attractive areas for shopping, used in set district to achieve development.

The objectives address the urban centre as the focal points of the city. Therefore it is an urgent task for municipalities to strengthen the different centres of the city. Plans and guidelines establish a very important base for the development of urban centres and retail areas as follows:

- Strengthening the position of Berlin as a metropolis.
- Maintaining and developing polycentricity.
- Boosting the functional mix in the centres.
- Controlling quantity to boost quality.
- Upholding neighbourhood shopping facilities.
- Harmoniously integrating retail outlets requiring large amounts of floorspace.

The guidelines underline the need to furtherly boost Berlin's attractiveness as a shopping location. As an important economic factor, tourism is to be leveraged in the development of Berlin's centres. In this connection, a focus is put on maintaining and strengthening multi-functionality in the centres, supporting the synergies between retail and services, and cultural, leisure and administrative institutions⁴¹.

In the other hand the *Flächennutzungsplanung für Berlin-FNP*⁴² (land use plan) define the strategic objective of the city development strengthen the diversity of the different realities which compose the city, from urban diversity to a balanced use of urban land in the various districts, from further employment to polycentrism, from wise location of public services to smart solutions for commercial traffic⁴³.

The map gives a simplified picture of the typology and the density of spacial relationships for Berlin and the surrounding area. It shows characteristic features of the city, including

Urban development plans are designed for the whole city of Berlin and include directives and objectives for different functions such as work, living, social infrastructure, transport, supply and waste disposal.

41 *Stadtentwicklungsplan Zentren 3*, Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, Berlin, 2011

42 The Land Use Plan (FNP) is a general development plan containing planning objectives and proposals for the whole area of the city of Berlin. The plan was enacted by the City Council (Abgeordnetenhaus) and is kept up to date by regular amendments.

43 *Flächennutzungsplanung für Berlin*, Senatsverwaltung für [Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt](#), Berlin, 2009

the inner city enclosed by a circular railway line, the transitional zone between inner and outer city, the interconnected large scale forest areas, the corridors of built up areas and of open spaces, and the interfaces between urban built up areas and peripheral open landscapes.

Not only the spatial development of the city is fundamental for planning, but it also helps to understand how demographic changes are confronted to different areas, and how to upgrade different urban areas according to their respective shortcomings. While the city is still attracting young people, the structure of the population is changing: the urban community is becoming older and more international⁴⁴. In this perspective the spacial development pattern has been investigated and forecasted.

The attractiveness of Berlin as a place to live and to work is partly dependent on the variety of different urban centres offering different types of opportunities. From the fall of the Wall the migratory inflow into the city is regularly increasing. In twenty-five years, more than 2.9 million people arrived in the German Capital and almost the same (2.7 million) amount emigrated⁴⁵.

No longer the Wall divides the city today, but the S-Bahn Ring marks the separation between newcomers and “real Berliners”. Within the ring only one up to three is born in Berlin. The map shows how the city failed in maintaining its native inhabitants in the inner city.

The other interesting data are the nationality of migrants. Turkish immigrant are mostly concentrated in the west area: Wedding, Kreuzberg partially in Neukölln. The new lines of immigration still follow the former route of the wall. The high amount of immigrants in the centre seems to contradict the gentrification displacement due to the progressive rise in prices; gentrification arrives here in the form of “displacement from the lifestyle” in reduction in housing quality (share apartments, old and not renewed buildings)⁴⁶.

A considerable part of the immigration are related to the city’s cultural opportunities. In the *BerlinStrategie| Stadtentwicklungs-konzept Berlin 2030* (Urban Development Concept Berlin 2030) an entry is reserved for the “cultural diversity”. Different strengths deserve a key role in the creation of possible future opportunity for the city, as underlined in the Urban development concept, which emphasizes the importance of an extended and diversified cultural supply, of architectural views as witnesses of the different ages of the

44 *Statistischer Bericht*, Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg, Potsdam, 31.12.2013

45 *ibidem*

46 Blasius J., *Verdrängungen in einem gentrifizierten Gebiet*, in Blasius J. & Dangschat J. S., *Lebensstile in den Städten. Konzepte und Methoden*, Opladen: Leske+Budrich, p. 408-425

city, of the ability to attract creative industries, of multiculturalism, and of public funding of the arts.

The development of cultural areas keeps on being oriented towards the touristically exploitable inner city, rather than on peripheral area. The structure of the population is changing the trends and requires an adaptation of previous planning strategies. It is becoming increasingly important to stabilise certain city quarters, to provide housing for new types of demand, and to upgrade different urban areas according to their respective shortcomings. The eye-catching feature of this comparison is a traditional image of the city centre advertised to tourist, confronted to a well-aware concrete dimension of a polycentric structure by the planner.

Like most things in Berlin, the art scene is fragmented and diverse. From the independent scene of the Verein, to the different type of institutions, passing through different festival and initiatives. Specific purposes and different target audience segments make some areas more catalyst when compared to other ones. Analysing maps and specific histories makes the cultural map of the city more understandable. Future urban development is in the hands of the cultural actors. The city future could be easily designed and threatened for specific purposes and for creating value. The crucial points of reflection are not the part of the city map which is highlighted for specific dynamics, but the mapless part: these are the areas that with various reasons are not considered in the touristic, commercial, maps. The maps express different realities, that are still not in reciprocal connection.

6. When problems became opportunitites: what's after Tacheles?

6.1. Too many maps for a consistent strategy

The question is whether the commons, with its powerful political dimension, can transcend extreme need and symbolic resistance on the one hand and harmless local initiatives on the other:

The 90s were the period of the big investments in real estate and flagship projects, such as Postdamer Platz centre and Reichstag. High investments in culture started to come, as well as possible rooms for fostering the city's image as a new capital. This big investment was never supported by any policy or long term strategy, but what was heavier without any consideration of the ongoing situation. This could be easily observed in the maps, in

the years in which the municipality was investing on the Mitte district (Postdamer Platz, Museuminsel, Reichstag), the independent cultural scene was carrying interest in completely different areas, mostly more recognised and more related with the residents. The attempt was to fill the empty grey zone, left by the Wall, with high profile architecture without the recognition that the population, the real potential stakeholder, had already been displaced away.

The new century brought the awareness of relying on a poor budget, and to be attractive at the same time. Was that an illusion? In the coming years poverty cannot be anymore adopted as an asset, and some questions needed to be asked. Answers were quite difficult, if not impossible, as Scheffler observed: Berlin is condemned to becoming and never to being. It is a mixture of disappointed expectations and unrevealed opportunities. The year of the fall of the Wall was for too long considered the year zero, the point which everything could have been started from. The Wall was a big wand for the city, but this doesn't mean an absence of identity, although the municipal emphasis upon special effects aimed at keeping high attention on Berlin was not necessarily successful, and the city was not benefiting from such an approach. The needed backbone is still missing.

From the material point of view the Wall is clearly over; from the symbolic perspective many different walls, much more intangible and hard, grew in the city. Maps allow us to detect the skeleton (if it exists), in any case they make connections and contradictions visible. The materials are all there, Berlin is laying with its bare viscera and no backbone to hold them up. The question shouldn't be: which cultural maps?, but: how to develop a consistent map? It's clear enough that there are still different rooms for creating synergies and develop "inter-map" strategies. Berlin needs to craft a strategic map where differences are acknowledged and respected, but similarities unified and connections strengthened; it also refers to contemporary art, unavoidably.

The maps now still diverge. Tourism is perceived as a gentrification accelerator, the main scene benefits from external visitors, but the independent scene and residents perceive only its negative effects. What could be observed, on the other hand, is the absence, in the independent scene, of any attempt to attract new types of audience (e.g. tourists, non-Berliners), such as the absence of platforms, information tools, clear location maps and reciprocally compatible opening hours of the different venues.

Past experience could tell us a lot. The city didn't learn from the success of *Zwischennutzung*, an interesting method to manage vacancy and to capitalise on the off scene. The magmatic and undefined movement of squat, and project space later, never

met any institutional feedback and was never included in the city's planning. The independent scene is no longer understood primarily as a cultural attack against the mainstream or as resistance to a hegemonic culture. Now is the time to start looking at it as niche markets to be fed.

The structure of grant is again an example of the blindness of city planning, the most part of income statement of project space is occupied by grant and institution's donation, such as Hauptstadtkulturfonds. No type of verifier or incentives are present in the pursuing of project's aim. This is one of the factors leading to the proliferation of dozens of new project spaces, which didn't manage to establish real form of collaboration or economic sustainability. Meanwhile the culture that was regarded as potential developer in problematic areas (such as the one connected with Quartiersmanagement), it is not necessarily addressing and tackling local population.

All the maps of this patchwork, although different and possibly conflicting, are feeding each other. The protagonists involved in contemporary art are numerous, and there is no person or institution which occupies a central role. A leadership based on cost of city's facilities was defended and pursued during the years, but it's not enough. The city never really pursued the twofold strategy which was arising naturally: differentiation and segmentation. After a necessary period of introspection, the German Capital is now at the point in which looking outside and thinking wider is no more an option, but a need. Berlin is now part of a wider framework which include Europe and many other creative cities. Could Berlin de-localise and reconsider its splinter in a global frame? Weak public action leads to magmatic urban development; will Berlin be able to restart from its splinters and build its backbone from here?

Unbridled capital, Berlin holds the reputation of a city where everything is possible, where its own scars and voids become a playground for creativity and experimentation for everything from the arts to politics and from architecture to philosophy; a *carte blanche* of unlimited possibilities. Different Berlins are laid on the maps as no grasped opportunities or new market losses. The city is (should be?) ready to be reinvented with new perspectives and real synergies.

6.2. Cultural commons for next years' Berlin

Quite often 'commons' is used as virtuous label for complex phenomena. It is not among our intentions to focus upon the political and policy view of commons, which tends to

focus upon sentimental statements rather than technical features. Any common should arise from a legislative and regulatory framework in which relevant elements cannot be either public or private. A common is undivided by nature, and the sharing setting can normally generate unsolved issues whose crucial weight flows into the 'tragedy of the commons', a major negative paradox able to show the symmetrical correspondence between costs and benefits. *Cujus commoda ejus incommoda*, used to say ancient law experts in Rome. It did not change that much.

In the case described here the recent history of Berlin proved complex and fertile, and through its contradictory events it led to a binary outcome whose extremes are an intensive gentrification on one hand, and a sort of creative anarchy on the other. Creative action has been therefore either displaced by the invasion of new bourgeoisies in search for urban glamour, or by the atomisation of activities and exchanges, more inclined to vertical business than to horizontal synergy. Of course it suffers from the typical manufacturing capitalism disease which tends to measure outcomes (not certainly values, which are out of its vocabulary) in short-term perspective and in merely quantitative terms, i.e. ignoring the slower but more powerful impact upon society and the economy, and at the same time considering competition more realistic than co-operation.

In such a backward framework creativity requires protection, and the intellectual property rights regulation tends to raise walls and to close doors. Whatever we may believe of the legal justifications of intellectual property protection, we should acknowledge the inter-disciplinary option whose features need to consistently combine the legal features of creativity on one hand, and the economic benefits of circulating creative ideas. In such a respect neither public ownership (too general) nor individual property (too particular) can consistently respond to the complex needs of a post-feudal and post-manufacturing framework in which the value of ideas can be properly measured through their ability to fertilise further creative intuitions, production and exchange.

Cultural commons⁴⁷ do not imply any physical property: cultural heritage, museum endowment and even performing arts objects cannot represent a common property case, despite the sentimental definitions such as the 'humanity heritage' often related to the Unesco sites list; at the same time they cannot be normally traded in a private market framework, despite the numerous art thefts and the ambiguity of contemporary art equally hosted in public museums and in private collections. Cultural commons cannot

47 see for a recent discussion on cultural commons Bertacchini, Bravo, Marrelli and Santagata (2012)

generate the 'tragedy of the commons', since their shared use does not produce any spoliation or decay, and it does not imply the usual difficulty connected to the identification of the formal and substantial stakeholders.

Urban cultural commons can still be the effective response to Berlin's dilemmas between gentrification and anarchy. What the fall of the Wall generated has been a long and systematic loss of any territorial, social and even cultural orientation, due to the (too) many virtual walls whose impermeability ended up to keep the lively and magmatic patches of the city tightly separated. Even the Tacheles experience, although fertile from many points of view, proved unable to craft social and cultural connections out of its physical area and its intellectual milieu. Commons can overcome reciprocal separation, since they multiply their creative, dialogic and relational value due to their common property in which individual effort is enhanced and acknowledged since other individuals are carrying such effort ahead, entering the process whereby creative intuitions are transformed into products and actions. Nobody is harmed.

Such an option requires specific administrative action, starting from a selective and generous tax exemption aimed at encouraging consistent although heterogeneous localisation in a district and shared use of facilities. Rather than monetary subsidies, whose flows end up to generate competition due to their quantitative constraints, public action should focus upon infrastructural, technological and human capital building support; this would, again, encourage the common management and responsibility of cultural resources and projects. It could avoid gentrification until the creative effort prevails upon the mere sale of atmospheres and products; and it could at the same time overcome the anarchic individualism normally related to the non-strategic growth of creative action, introducing substantial elements of shared responsibility and longterm views. Berlin needs cultural commons.

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