



INSTITUTIONALISING THE DIRT TRAIL

prompt, participatory and self-built urban upgrading processes in Berlin

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cities are networks in which needs and contingencies flow uninterruptedly, overwriting the urban fabric and defining relationships whenever original between events, potentialities and possibilities within settlement systems become increasingly complex (McFarlane, 2011). Very many factors – expected or unexpected, planned or improvised, permanent or temporary, intentional or incidental – arise, through multidimensional urban scenarios which embrace both the physical and spatial realm as well as the political, socio-economic and legal one.

Pursuing their daily aims, inhabitants exercise, consciously or not, their ability to adapt and change the relational environment, fitting in a creative way, within the dynamics and policies of city life, in ways that are beyond the tools of conventional design and configuring hybrid scenarios, in which the distinction between technical and amateur, between formal and informal is far from clear (Tonkiss, 2013).

As Kevin Lynch remarked, the city manifests itself more and more clearly as «the product of countless operators which, for specific reasons, are constantly changing the structure. [...] Controls to which its growth and its shape are susceptible, are only partial. There is no final result, only a continuous succession of phases» (Lynch, 2006).

The societal changes involve, over relatively long time scales, modifications to the urban fabrics. However, some transformations, which today are of indubitable consistency, are increasingly representative of immediate social relationships between individuals belonging to big or small groups, more or less structured and organized and relationships between different groups, where interests occasionally converge on specific issues. These relationships, according to Henri Lefebvre, are attributable to the size of the near order (Lefebvre, 2014). The environments production and the social relations in which it takes place, is a production and reproduction of highly contaminable identities in a city which is and remains the object, but its objecthood is like that of language which people and groups receive, and then modify (Lefebvre, 2014). We are faced with a composite reality in which relationships have to be

elaborated, constructed, reconstructed and contaminated as a product of many factors that are constantly changing the structure and triggering a succession of phases that never comes to an end.

In such a scenario the two dimensional instruments of the traditional urbanism have shown their ineffectiveness and always more frequently they are replaced by self-organized practices and make-shift actions that, due to the increasingly recurring “exceptional” occasions, bypass processes and timing of the so called formality, and pursue urban tactics to provide prompt and consistent answers to specific needs. The places where these forms of reclaim of urban space for alternative citizenships deploy, are generally unused areas – wastelands – discarded by the conventional urban metabolisms because «they might be physically demanding, not easily accessible, too small or of irregular shape, with tricky ownership rights, not lucrative, with other regular usage at some part of the day that might be in discord with other suggested usages, and so on» (Doron, 2008).

The research is divided in five sections aiming to investigate the temporary use of urban areas as an opportunity to experiment new forms of urbanity based on negotiations, little tweaks implementation and experimentation of new social behaviours.

In the next chapter, a theoretical framework on the subject will be provided; in this context, the origin and the meaning of the concept of intermediateness and interim(ness) will be discussed; a bird’s-eye on the declination of the phenomenon and its meaning within the Western countries will be given; and the relationship between city planning authorities, intermediate users, citizens and economical actors will be analysed. In the chapter 3, the city of Berlin will be presented as the most significant field of investigation for temporary uses, due to the particular relationship that all actors – both public and private – have build over the years and a wide availability of spaces where to test forms of dialogue; in particular, the urban circumstances undergone from 1989 onwards, will introduce and explain the motivations why a considerable amount of vacant areas punctuate the city. Subsequently, a “taxonomy of abandonment” will provide a classification of the spaces available for temporary uses in

the years following the reunification. In the chapter 4, three case studies will be analysed in order to better understand how the mechanisms of negotiation – of meanings and behaviours – contribute to the gradual implementation of an experimental attitude capable to redefine the terms of urban configuration. Finally, in the chapter 5, the elements fostering willingness among all actors involved in the urban transformation will be traced starting from the critical analysis of the success factors recurring in the cases study.

As anticipated, Berlin is an emblematic reference to look at in order to understand how, over the time, urban governance practices have set up a kind of more explicit relationship with the practices emerging from social demand, arriving to “institutionalize” these processes in the juridical form of “temporary uses” (*Zwischennutzungen*). Due to its particular history, the city had a considerable amount of vacant spaces compared to other European cities (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2007), and temporary uses were experimented up to explore their programmatic meaning in the circles of the sub-, counter- and alternative culture evolving as alternative practices of urban planning (Haydn and Temel, 2006).

During the last two decades, «temporary use was [thus] adopted as the magic word for Berlin cultural policies» (Balzer, 2012): a city finding its prerogative in its being edgy (Peck, 2005) – in the words of Klaus Wowereit¹: *arm, aber sexy*².

Nowadays the benefits of this “alternative” relationship with residual urban areas and interim usage of land have been widespread acknowledged, the way to look at wastelands and temporariness shifted from “neoliberal urbanism failure” to global trend for edges restyling. In the meantime, Berlin is facing with the threats that too much success and the attempts to reframe the bottom-up practices in its institutional context risk to erode its famous freedoms.

¹ Mayor of the city from 2001 to 2014

² Poor, but sexy

1.1. Relevance and objectives of the work

Even if interim uses can, at first glance, appear as the solution to the stagnation and the scarcity affecting the post-crisis cities, it is necessary to notice that dealing with their means and assumptions is not easy at all. Sometimes the same in-between condition giving them flexibility and reactivity to environmental pushes, seems to contradict, even in the most experienced cases, as Berlin, some fundamental rules and interests of the actors involved in their development.

The people engaged the interim use of an empty plot aim usually to reach a planning security for their projects, therefore they strive to conclude long-term rental agreements, so that they can plan accordingly. Nevertheless, temporary use contracts are shorter than normal lease contracts – they usually run from one to three years and often the notice periods are equally short, going from one to three months – and the owners have the special right to cancel the contract once the land is sold or once the plans for the new following uses are sufficiently advanced.

Another awkward question, obviously, concerns the landowners wishing to sell or rent their properties for the highest market price or, rather, to start building and developing their lands as soon as possible. By allowing interim uses, they get little or even no incomes, in many cases just covering the operating costs. On the other hand, normal rental contracts increase the risk of delays in the development of projects or, indeed, the properties become more difficult to sell.

The local planning authorities, by their side, have usually propensity for a clear allocation of uses, more appropriate to shape an "ordered" city. In each urban area as well as in the whole city, they assume therefore a more favourable position towards "permanent" solutions because in their vision the short-term and provisional nature – and sometimes the slightly shape of chaos – that goes along with temporary uses, requires them a considerable effort. Temporary uses are thus often tolerated only as a stopgap measure, filling up the absence of alternatives or "pleasing" - and crushing - social pressures.

So, the general question of why such non-optimal solutions are increasingly popular, turns out. Despite the contradictions outlined, some authors such as Spars (Spars, 2010) consider the recourse to temporary use of urban areas as a successful solution satisfying each actor involved.

Anyhow, the debate on the motivations and goals of the actors involved in temporary uses is at the moment opened, particularly with regards to the analysis of behavioural shifts and to the constant re-definition of actors' positions. The most significant contribution to the topic was produced by Urban Catalyst, who in several publications (for example, Oswalt, Overmeyer and Misselwitz, 2013) drew conclusions about the motivations of temporary users and classified different types of interim users. Another important investigation has been carried out by the geographer Benjamin Otto who has inquired and deepened into the motives and goals of both interim users and owners while providing a detailed and accurate census of temporary uses in Berlin.

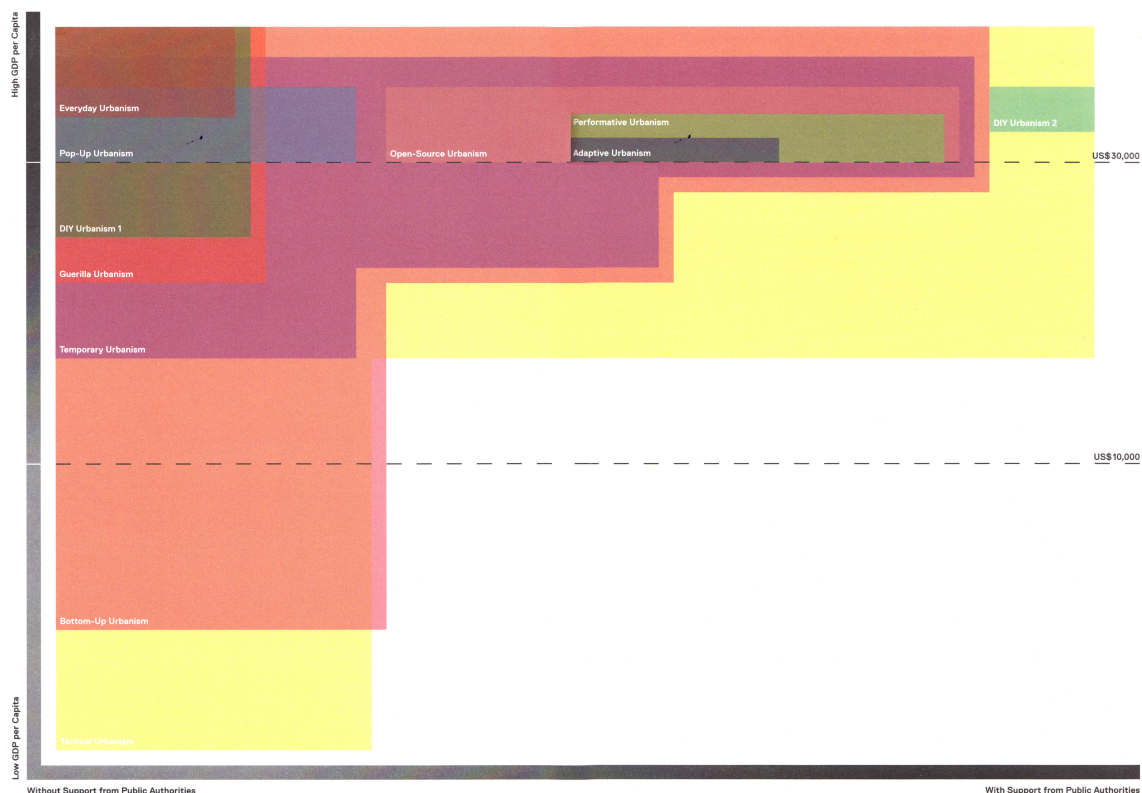


Fig. 1. *New Urbanisms: Theories* (Self-Building Cities, Volume 43, 2015).

This research aims to supplement the previous findings by its own investigation on the behaviours of city institutions and temporary users dealing with the planning offices, paying a particular attention to the institutional reframing processes of the phenomenon. The aim is to objectively trace the trajectories of actors involved and to compare them with the meanings assumed by both the processes and the urban spaces themselves.

Before exploring these fields, it is necessary on the one hand to develop a reasonable and clear definition of temporary use, on the other hand to precisely focus on the features of the places where these processes, sometimes of joining, sometimes of collision, happen. Currently there are no universally accepted definitions, even because the wide applicability of these urban tactics has produced very many shapes of the phenomenon. Instead, many definitions were given in face of very specific conditions (e.g. **Fig. 1**).

1.2. Research questions

In order to exactly define the meaning of the term temporary use and to properly and clearly distinguish it from the conventional use of urban space, there are some significant questions to deal with:

- I. Which are the main characteristics of temporary use projects and what their significance is about?

This first question requires to explore the meaning of temporary use and the importance of this phenomenon for urban fabrics and social environments. It is also important to frame the shapes that temporary uses can assume in relationship with the type of vacant fields and buildings in which they rise, the political and institutional background and the socio-economical factors. For this purpose, in the third chapter, a taxonomy of abandoned urban areas and temporary use projects will be provided. In this case the research will be based on the most recent surveys produced in Berlin, assumed as the principal scenario for interim uses in Europe (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2007). This step is particularly important because it requires a wide detection of temporary projects which is useful to underline their breadth and diversity, to enable an in-depth understanding of their distribution in specific areas of the city and to explore the meanings of their spatial manifestations.

- II. Which reasons and objectives have the actors – interim users, institutions, landowners and economical operators – involved in temporary uses? How much institutions, owners, investors and users are willing to venture in experimental collaborations? Is it possible for them to converge on a common ground and, if so, which is the outcome? Which are the factors influencing this possibility?

In every case it is possible to find arguments why the various actors should be in favour of a dialogue, as well as others pushing everyone in the opposite direction. This research is principally interested to analyse those phenomena where all actors involved, established significant relationships based on the mediation and on a step-by-step experimental attitude to small behavioural modifications.

- III. Assuming the city of Berlin as pioneer in its attempt to frame interim uses of urban space inside a strategic vision: what relevance temporary uses have for the city planning? Which formal and informal planning instruments have been applied by the Berlin planning authorities in dealing with temporary uses and how are they used? Have temporary uses been integrated in the city planning processes and, if so, in which way has it happened?

Even if at first glance municipalities seem to have relatively irrelevant influence on temporary uses, since these projects generally arise spontaneously and unplanned, the moment in which planning authorities come into contact with them is very delicate. It has to be considered, for instance, that sometimes temporary uses start – amongst other reasons – as practices in opposition to the existing development plans, in order to show alternative possibilities for an area. This raises the question of how city authorities deal in their everyday practices with the interim uses issue and which planning tools they use.

According to some authors like Urban Catalyst or Stevens & Voigt (Oswalt, Overmeyer and Misselwitz, 2007 and 2013), interim uses can be fruitfully integrated into urban planning and development processes as positive impulses in global strategies of urban development. But, as the same authors argue, for this purpose, new and flexible approaches have to be integrated with the conventional planning processes; new instruments capable to activate and promote temporary use projects, to mediate and facilitate the relationships between users and owners, and – of course – to shape a temporary use friendly environment within the planning and administrative agencies.

This research aims to analyse the complexity of the very delicate moment when the “dirt trail” of temporary uses – with all its related practices – meets the actors of conventional development and economy in a process of institutional reframing. Which are the factors encouraging fruitful collaborations among actors which would be normally lined up poles apart? Is it possible to overpass the impasse which sets the bottom-up against the top-down in favour of a new idea of developing the urban space based on dialogue, mediation and cross-fertilisation?

2. TEMPORARY USES AND THE CITY

2.1. Definition

At this point the need to define a meaning of Temporary Use is increasingly pressing. There are some basic characteristics recurring in every interim use, such as the limited time in which it occurs, a variation in the previous and – often – in the following use, the particular characteristics of the land. But, of course, an analysis addressed to understand the spatial manifestation of a collective desire meeting both the political and the economical field requires some more considerations. This is why, this section of the work will provide a definition starting from a discursive and critical comparison between the most significant observations provided in the last years on the theme of temporary uses, and from the analysis of the intrinsic features of the phenomenon.

It is interesting to observe how, over the years, and in particular contexts, the idea of temporary and interim use is changed and become increasingly broadened. At the beginning, for instance, interim projects were principally referred to the very low-cost temporary use of unused industrial buildings and areas (Scholz, 1997 in Otto, 2015), as deducible from this definition, the theme was – still in the late 90's – quite unexplored, to the point that it was not yet easy to recognize its potential inside the urban environment. In fact, some authors described it as a not really special phenomenon, merely referred to the temporary use of a space lying fallow (Bürgin and Cabane, 1999). The ideas of transitional, interim and temporary are, since when the first studies on the theme were developed, gathered and used interchangeably (Koll-Schretzenmayr, 2000) to define time-limited intervention on former productive areas which, in periods of deindustrialization, represented one of the most consistent spatial resources in the Western cities. Some years later temporariness assumed a broader meaning including in its definition a new perspective in which people, and not only developers, were recognized as main actors of the urban ground (Lindborg and Hentilä, 2003), but if this perspective could, somehow, anticipate a new way to look at temporariness, as a bottom-up phenomenon with social and political implications, it also starts to

problematize on the question that owners receive, within a logic of urban area seen as “common ground”, no or no relevant financial income from the use of their lands and buildings (Lindborg and Hentilä, 2003). Therefore, even if the fields where interim projects have been implemented are widely recognized as not immediately suitable for conversions, with a low utilization rate, low rental yields and high maintenance costs, temporary uses have always been understood as solutions just feasible until the occurrence of a profit-enhancing conversion made by the owner himself. Over the years, the tendency was acknowledged as a new form of design and land use capable – while leaving open the options for different, future developments and without altering the owner’s planning right – to dampen urban deprivation and provide new high-quality urban effects (Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung, 2004) thanks to the peculiarity which they draw by their own temporary nature (Haydn and Temel, 2006). It can be easily noticed how, among the years and through an increasingly aware observation, those conditions once perceived as instability and scarcity raised in a more optimistic meaning, becoming resources in contexts where flexibility and attitude to optimize have become increasingly important.

2.2. A complex issue

During this investigation, it has become clear that currently in the existing literature on the subject it doesn't exist a standard definition of the term because, in the face of more or less conspicuous variations both in their forms and in their surrounding environments, interim uses have been classified and treated as independent phenomena. Another recurring description frames them as special kinds of use that, due to particular reasons, leak from the conventional field of urban plots use. However, it is not often clear where, exactly, the line between "normal" and "special" use is. Therefore, a more specific understanding of the term is directly linked to the aims, the background and – of course – to the personal interests of both the authors and the actors dealing with the argument.

For its width and blurredness, the condition of temporariness fits to very diverse uses of land and buildings: from seasonal pop-up stores, to the use of a vacant buildings as art-galleries; from the interim transformation of abandoned industries in music clubs, to the establishment of urban gardens where thousands of citizens engage in the neighbourhood social life; from former railway repair factories where no-profit associations have been settled to provide cultural events in troubling urban areas, to abandoned airfields where gardening activities, leisure and sports projects are fostered by institutional actors.

In order to restate the complexity of the phenomenon it is sufficient to consider the meaning of the term "use" and its implications inside the contemporary, pluralistic, society.

In the modern capitalistic idea, the concepts of use and property are inseparably related, since the use of something is usually reserved to its owner who, in turn, can alienate his rights on an asset by transferring them to a third actor through tenancy and leasing contracts. If as a definition it can look linear and maybe even obvious, in the urban context, it becomes an awkward and complex argument. According, for instance, to §1 of the German Building Code, it is possible to classify four main types of land use:

urban development, mixed construction area, commercial construction area and special construction area. Each specific allocation is made through land use and development plans, involving the local community (see. Section 2.4). In this context the expectations of different social groups – with different and very specific interests on the use of land and buildings – can easily rise to conflicts and struggles. Thus, use is not the "natural" basis of the existence of a property, it is something much more complex, something which has to be defined and improved through social negotiation processes between owners, beneficiaries, state organs, inhabitants and – of course – users themselves.

If the questions related to the use are delicate, the concept of temporariness and its implications within interim urban situations is even more complicated. Even the definition given by scholars doesn't help to exactly and universally define what exactly is "temporary" or "interim". Interim uses are always not conceived in the long run (Eissner & Heydenreich, 2004, in Otto, 2015), but, rather, as "time-limited" uses (Koll-Schretzenmayr, 2000, in Otto, 2015). However, what is exactly the meaning of terms such as "long run" or "time limited"? Since everything has a limited lifecycle, all land or building uses come to an end or – at least – to a radical transformation that state them as new, unprecedented, uses. So every use can be considered as temporary from a certain perspective (Haydn and Temel, 2006) and permanent uses can be, theoretically, considered as abstractions, since no use is everlasting. As Haydn and Temel argue, the temporal parameter itself is not a constituent element of the interim uses, so the fact that a use is understood as temporary depends much more on economical, political or organisational factors. Temporariness as spatial manifestation doesn't refer to a certain period of time, but rather to the construction of a meaning given by all actors involved in an urban phenomenon. Therefore, also the concept of temporariness can be traced back to a mediation between owners, politicians, planners and the users themselves. It is clear that, the meaning of temporary or interim use, cannot be the same for a group of citizens engaging in a neighbourhood activity, for an entrepreneur retrieving investments to implement an experimental economical enterprise and for an owner waiting for more "conventional" uses of his property, since the interim one is not the highest-quality use allowed by planning (Lehmann and Dransfeld, 2008). If not

considered by the too simplistic regulatory perspective – where the idea of temporariness assumes a specific value in terms of duration – the question is extremely delicate especially in those moments when actors – with different background, perspectives and objectives – face each other in situations where the chance of a fruitful mediation can easily drift towards friction and conflicts, squandering therefore the potential of a precious instrument of change which is increasingly influencing the behaviours of the urban actors.

2.3. The significance in urban contexts

The more or less regulated temporary transformations of urban plots, raised all over the world during the last years, have shown a substantial incisiveness both on the structure and on the way to use and to act in the contemporary cities. Within a new wave of participation and responsiveness, citizens are discovering and renewing their interest for the public and collective domain and experimenting the chance to easily modify the urban fabric through temporary and opened design actions (Carbone and Omassi, 2015) which are often shared in real time as reproducible good practices.

The temporary urban upgrading actions have gained a special role within the practices aimed to improve cities' living conditions because they foster the awareness that citizens can act as main characters in the processes of transformations of urban environment, mutual relationships and community (Lyndon, 2012).

Even if in the past years the ideas of temporariness and informality were mainly related to the Global South economies, there are nowadays very many reasons why temporary projects have received increased attention also in the wealthy economies in the West. Among others emerge, for instance, the flexible and reproducible nature, allowing to adopt their means at different conditions and scales: from the street (e.g. **Fig. 2-3**) to the building (e.g. **Fig. 4, 5**) passing through the residual or discarded space (e.g. **Fig. 6, 7**) and arriving to the scale of the connected network of urban spaces.



Fig. 2, 3. MUF Architects, *Hackney Wick & Fish Island, East London, UK, 2010* (MUF Architects archive, 2010).

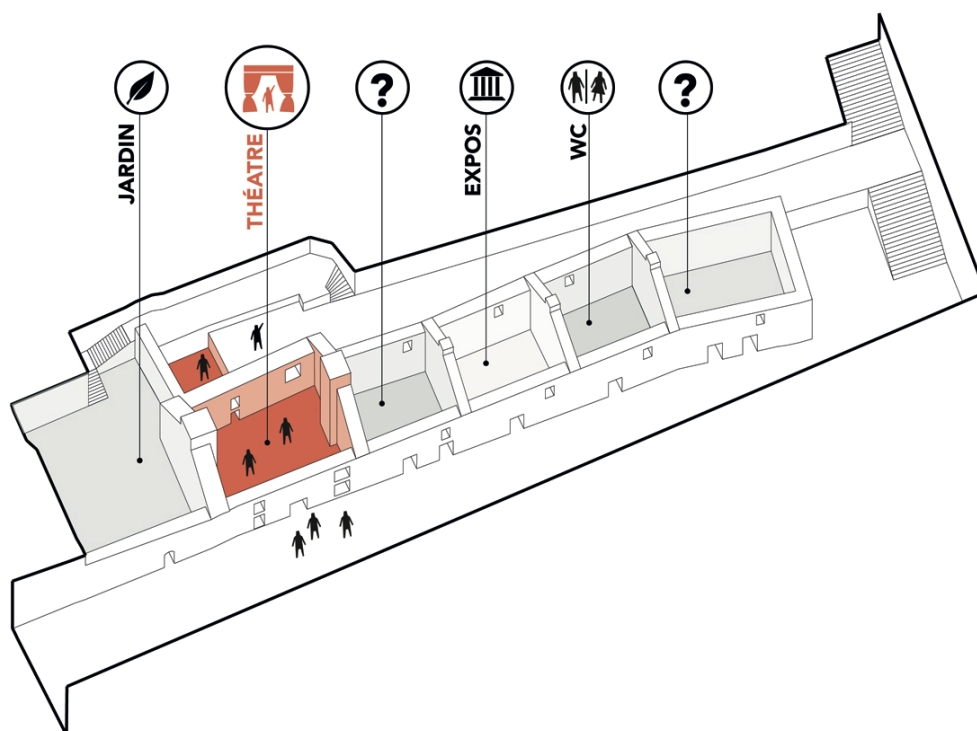


Fig. 4. Collectif ETC, La salle UN:UN, Brest, France, 2012 (Collectif ETC archive, 2012).



Fig. 5. Collectif ETC, La salle UN:UN, Brest, France, 2012 (Collectif ETC archive, 2012).



Fig. 6. Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, *R-Urban Agrocité, Colombes, France, 2012* (<http://www.urbantactics.org>, 2017).



Fig. 7. Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, *R-Urban Agrocité, Colombes, France, 2012* (<http://www.urbantactics.org>, 2017).

Another reason why temporary uses have become increasingly popular, is related to the awareness that they can be implemented in short term, with low-budget, experimentally and playfully, as tactics to promptly and effectively “bite” the urban fabric. Accordingly, programs and building processes are often developed and tested counting on a strong collective participation of citizens and other actors which are increasingly interested and available to engage in the “creation” of the city around them.

Each temporary intervention has a high degree of connection with all others and, simultaneously, a strong autonomy which allows, as in an heterarchical network (Woods, 2002), the immediate and pain-free substitution of those useless parts normally affecting the whole neighbourhood environment. Within an aggregative process, the autonomy of each part gradually emerges, shaping whenever new organisms with their own transformative potentials and boundary relationships. Moreover, as in a contagion process, when new areas of the city come in contact with “infected” fragments, they catch the contagion and set up new catalysis. This process reformulates both the physical and the non-physical nature of the public, leading to the definition of a new idea of publicness considered as a territory to inform the urban fabric according to a new perspective where the physical means of urban design – durability, functionality and economical factors – can be overstepped and the individuals became part of strong and responsive social communities. The complex territories contextually generated, result by a multiplicity of embedded forces of different localised interests which are constantly re-spatialized in relation to the debates and conflicts informing an idea of urban arena in which every area and building have, theoretically, public features. In this perspective the disciplinary boundaries between architecture and urbanism fall down in favour of a new frontier framing the public acts of designing as providers of «real, comprehensive constructs to help localised urban constrictions meet occasional social emergences (public interest)» (K. Allen et al., 2010).

Of course these considerations are not always the main reason for temporary uses’

popularity. The coincidence of a backdrop scenery, of demographic shift, and the increase of social and commercial networks has restored the most elementary settlement needs: venturing together and minimize the risks. Interim-ness is the ideal condition allowing groups of local actors to test spatial solutions before venturing in expansive and gambling challenges within an approach that follows a step by step trend and passes through the constant optimization of the social assets, the maximization of commercial opportunities and the improving of the quality of life.

Over the years, temporariness and the urban perspectives that it allowed captured the attention of a very differentiated audience and become a mainstream urban phenomenon to such an extent that in 2011, the attitude to pursue low-cost and temporary intervention to improve the quality of life in urban areas was recognised as a planning trend. In this year a group of young American planners defined with the term Tactical Urbanism an approach enabling the possibility to trigger long term urban transformation processes passing through the implementation of small-scale and time limited interventions (Khawarзад, Woudstra and Bartman, 2012). In 2012 this perspective was presented as “top planning trend” (Nettler, 2012) in the USA pavilion, which for the XXIII International Architecture Biennale of Venice examined the theme “Spontaneous Interventions: Design actions for the common good” (Lang Ho, 2012).

In May 2015 the MoMA presented the exhibition “Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanism for Expanding Megacities” with the aim to explore the possibility to «elicit a new politics of urban growth for the contemporary city, taking into account bottom-up sociocultural productivity and stealthy, urban resilience as the agile devices to restructure top-down, unsustainable urban policies» (Gandanho and Cruz, 2014).

Since then the phenomena have been widely observed, sometimes, as often happens, to the point of banality: now there is even a “Pop-Up Business for Dummies” stating on its blurb that anyone can set-up a pop-up venture, whether it be shop, studio, gallery, or community hub (Moore, 2015).

2.4. The other side of temporary uses

If, on the one hand, temporary projects appeal the social desires providing chances for people to engage and deploy creatively, quickly and experimentally their projects, the low-cost perspective can easily attract the speculative interests of both developers and municipal authorities. In particular, the possibilities enabled by interim uses have been noticed, and appreciated, by property owners and developers for being cheap and risk-free and therefore used for many reasons which are far away to be socially useful.

Consequently, it happens sometimes that what rises as a free access space on an empty lot is, in years to come, transformed into a fenced area related to luxury apartments. In this context temporariness is no more than an interstitial condition between a situation of paralysis – generally attributable to the lack of assets – and a long term property development. This condition introduces an idea of “urban screensavers” in which interim solutions are “tools” to supply pop-up injections of oddness and entertainment in urban areas undergoing a transitional phase in their use (Moore, 2015). It is impressive how the term “screensaver”, generally associated to the virtual image or animation appearing on the old computers during a period of user inactivity, represent a certain way to exploit interim uses. The device was originally implemented, for the inner monitors, in order to avoid damages of cathode ray tubes occurring when images were too long displayed. Nowadays, even if LCD screen doesn’t require this measure anymore, screensavers are anyway used for esthetical reasons. The term was for the first time associated to the built environment by Fiona Whitworth³ during an interview on 17 October, 2014.

If in the case of Berlin, since the first 2000’s, this phenomenon has always been perceived in extremely negative way due to the disastrous effects of gentrification it implied, but currently the trend to associate interim uses to the idea of screensaver is worldwide adopted by many developers who don’t even need to hide their strategic and more profitable goals. The publication Volume 43 curated by C-Lab (Columbia

³ Director of Strategy of the Queen Victoria Market in the City of Melbourne

Laboratory for Architectural Broadcasting), AMO (Office for Metropolitan Architecture) and ARCHIS, investigates the theme of “housing and self-building as a field of (inter)action” and presents, between others, three examples of this tendency.

In London, while waiting for planning amendments to erect an office building in Union Street, the developer Lake Estates supplied – over four years – a pub, a public house and an urban garden adopting interim measures on the site (e.g. **Fig. 8**). In Athens, developers Oliaros has fostered several interim uses with cultural and artistic features in order to reactivate the neighbourhood and to catalyse interest in their plan to redevelop over sixty properties in the area of Kerameikos-Metaxourgeio. In 2013, while developing its 35-million AU\$ property, the company Neometro supplied a non-profit gallery, a fashion store, a café, and a 12.000 sqm community garden (e.g. **Fig. 9**).

The over-mentioned interim projects are little steps in a longer-term strategy and even if it cannot be denied a certain positive impact, it has to be noticed that the “screensaver perspective” just exploited as a mere cosmetic operation doesn’t even contemplate the deep nature of temporariness which suggests “a fluidity of temporality, rather than an understanding of time measured and designated as insignificant or as located between the ‘real’ times of before development and after development” (Till, 2011).

Another deviation affecting the scene of interim uses is their deployment inside urban marketing strategies. In this context they are seen as the magic wand capable to foster the growth of creative and cultural industry, thus transforming abandoned urban lots into new, trendy creative clusters: ideal stages for industries and entrepreneurs – more or less directly – related to the creative economy. For instance, in Berlin, according to Claire Colomb, the Senate Department for Urban Development and the local tourism marketing agencies, gradually integrated spaces and people belonging to the scene of interim uses and bottom-up processes into institutional marketing and media imagery (Colomb, 2012) in order to state a fresh image of Berlin in the new millennium (Colomb and Novy, 2012).



Fig. 8. Heather Ring, *Union Street Urban Orchard, London, UK, 19th June – 19th September 2010.* (<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/>, 2017).



Fig. 9. Jenny Humberstone, *3000 acres, Melbourne, Australia, 2013* (<http://www.milkbarmag.com>, 2017).

Once again the case of Berlin is particularly relevant, showing how the idea of “cultural innovation” has addressed the decisions of many actors within a whole city affected by deindustrialization and extremely low growth (Scharenberg and Bader, 2010). In this context, it has been observed that while «a branding strategy using a city’s subculture may enhance the city’s symbolic value» it also can dangerously «undermine the everyday conditions necessary to sustain the creative process itself» (Scharenberg and Bader, 2010). As argued by some scholars, in the post-Wall Berlin scene, a reframing process of these new forms of cultural and social expression in the programs of policy-makers and real-estate investors, has been triggered in order to implement Berlin’s “creative city” agenda (Peck, 2005). But the contradictory nature of this move, as observed by the geoscientist Ingo Bader and the political scientist Albert Scharenberg, have in a way undermined the creative process spreading in Berlin by rising investors’ interest in previously neglected areas changing the way such spaces worked in the urban and social landscape and, of course, threatening the possibility to translate these urban tactics inside a large scale strategy. In this context it clearly emerges that the mere taking advantage of bottom-up potential, if not supported by a political agenda with a strong attitude for mediation, can easily generate a dissipative impasse where conflicts on the part of temporary users and the perspective of local struggles can reach broader proportions.

Nevertheless, this kind of summary recourse to interim uses in urban underused fields, raised over the last years as a planning orthodoxy because it is – of course – a cool and cheap way to call for creative citizens to join and having – not too much, not for too long – fun in what, without them, would have remained places of abandonment.

This agenda “purges” subcultures from being icons of “cultural attack against the mainstream” or resistance to the hegemonic culture, and frame them in a more comforting perspective of “niche markets” (Scharenberg and Bader, 2010) in which the “urban pioneers” are just short-term “tools” inside a – still dominant and unchanged – idea of capitalistic urban development. This situation is potentially ruinous because it can generate a «widespread alienation and resentment among the cultural producers

who experience first-hand the appropriation and exploitation of their creativity for the economic benefit of others» (Harvey, 2002).

2.5. An exceptional nature

A theoretical, in depth, analysis on the exceptionality of urban spaces' temporary use requires a wise preliminary definition of some, one another related, key concepts in order to find out how institutions can face with the "unorthodoxy" of bottom-up movements which, in certain senses, can be interpreted as a reaction to bureaucracy and, sometimes, to regulations.

Of primary importance is then to state the democratic constraints of public space; if public spaces are places, provided by depersonalized state authorities, where public rights find their primary spatial manifestation and the policy is a mean to define the public right on the basis of public interest, then they are the places where public interest manifests. But, what is public interest if not the aggregate of each individual attitude and instance? It is exactly at this point that a paradoxical situation emerges: even if public right is conceived as a mean to fulfil public interest, it can't meet each individual particularity and, as a consequence, the aggregate of particularities underlying the public interest itself. This happens because the abstraction of rules can't completely fit to the specificity – of daily needs – therefore many needs, emerging in a formally regulated framework, have to be fulfilled in a parallel "informal" urban system which in the case of temporary, bottom-up, urban projects develop «as basic negative dialectic movements that allows recuperation of alienated properties, helping to smooth the functioning of a whole» (Vekstein, 2010). In this sense, temporary uses can be considered as chances to engage the various individual instances, and as the glue aggregating specific issues and attitudes. The institutionally framed part of the city and the apparently elusive one of interim uses, are, in this perspective, more related to each other than is generally believed since in these interstices of the conventionally regulated system public interests often manifests itself. Despite the possible political interpretations of the phenomenon and the ways interim uses manifest themselves in the urban fabric seems to be – when not antagonist – at least paralleled, they rarely reach the status of self-sufficiency, because their own existence is deeply related to the structures of the institutional framework for which they provide services and

opportunities otherwise unavailable due to the prohibitions and restrictions of the surrounding bureaucratized environment.

The case of Berlin is particularly interesting because over the year many attempts to establish an explicit relationship between these two urban dimensions have been made. In terms of land use, interim projects are, actually, supposed to be set up following the same rules – of type, dimension, construction and build-up plots – prescribed in § 34 Abs. 1 BauGB for permanent buildings. Therefore, if they take place on a plot with an existing building plan, they must not contradict the provisions for that area, but in the event of that happening the § 31 Abs. 2 BauGB is applied. It allows a release from the basic principles of the development plan, if the latter are not affected from the temporary provision, if the variation is urbanistically justifiable or if the public interest makes necessary an exemption.

Of course, this step towards the exceptional nature of interim uses have been made because, after a decade of observations in Berlin, and of worldwide recognized effectiveness of these urban dynamics, it seems to be even more concrete the possibility to look at these processes as means to reconsider the ways to intervene also on consistent parts of urban fabric and to trigger technically, functionally and conceptually light solutions for contemporary metamorphic environments. Moreover, temporary projects can easily fit both to the bureaucratically “crystallized” historical centres of European cities (e.g. **Fig. 10**), and in those marginal areas demanding the experimentation of new means and policies more than whatever infrastructural investment (e.g. **Fig. 11**).

Another reason why the interest on the implementation of small scale urban tactics is increasing, lies in the fact that the results they trigger can be observed and measured in real time and, if necessary, due to their interim nature, can also be punctually adjusted and immediately re-checked: always remaining opened to new edits. These non conventional aspects make them exceptional grounds where new social structures test the solutions necessary to pave the way for large-scale strategies – or even policies – assuming an empiric attitude that, because of its openness towards constantly on-going

urban design processes, links each individual both to the collective and to institutions within a process that merges the public interest with the aggregate of each individual attitude and instance.

In this perspective, emerges the idea of an adaptive governance and advances the possibility to explore a ground of «continuous learning by close feedback loops of knowledge within and between management levels and large flexibility in the institutional landscape» (Rydén, 2015).

This is why the relation between Temporary Uses and Institutional framework is particularly complex, but this is also why a research addressed to find the instruments and the behaviours to protect the exceptional nature of temporary uses is, now more than ever, necessary.



Fig. 10. Studio 8 e ½, CONtemporary Library, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 2012 (Studio 8 e ½ archive, 2012).



Fig. 11. Gravalos di Monte Arquitectos, Estonoesunsolar - San José, Zaragoza, Spain, 2009 (Gravalos di Monte Arquitectos archive, 2009).

2.6. The relationships with the Institutional Framework

Interim users can be more or less connected to the institutional framework, most of this possibility is principally related to their political affection and to the kind of connections they are willing to establish with the surrounding political arena. For instance, in his publication “Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities”, the author, Jeffrey Hou, describes some phenomena ascribable to the field of temporary use – all those belonging to the movement of Guerrilla Urbanism – as a military declination of an action-oriented approach aimed to improve public spaces through short-lived, unauthorized and often illegal interventions (Hou, 2010) (e.g. **Fig. 12**).

In other cases, as it happens for Temporary Urbanism, there is a wider openness – by all the parts involved – to debate, therefore the chance to explore interim uses as an alternative form of urban development can be easily explored. The Berlin based group Urban Catalyst has firstly identified this phenomenon in its hometown and later recognized it as widespread practice in many European and North American cities (e.g. **Fig. 13, 14**).



Fig. 12. Tacheles Kusthaus, Berlin Mitte, Germany, 1991-2012 (Berlin Affordable Art Gallery archive)



Fig. 13, 14. Coloco, *Asfalto mon amour*, Lecce, Italy, 2013 (Coloco archive, Danilo Capasso Photo).

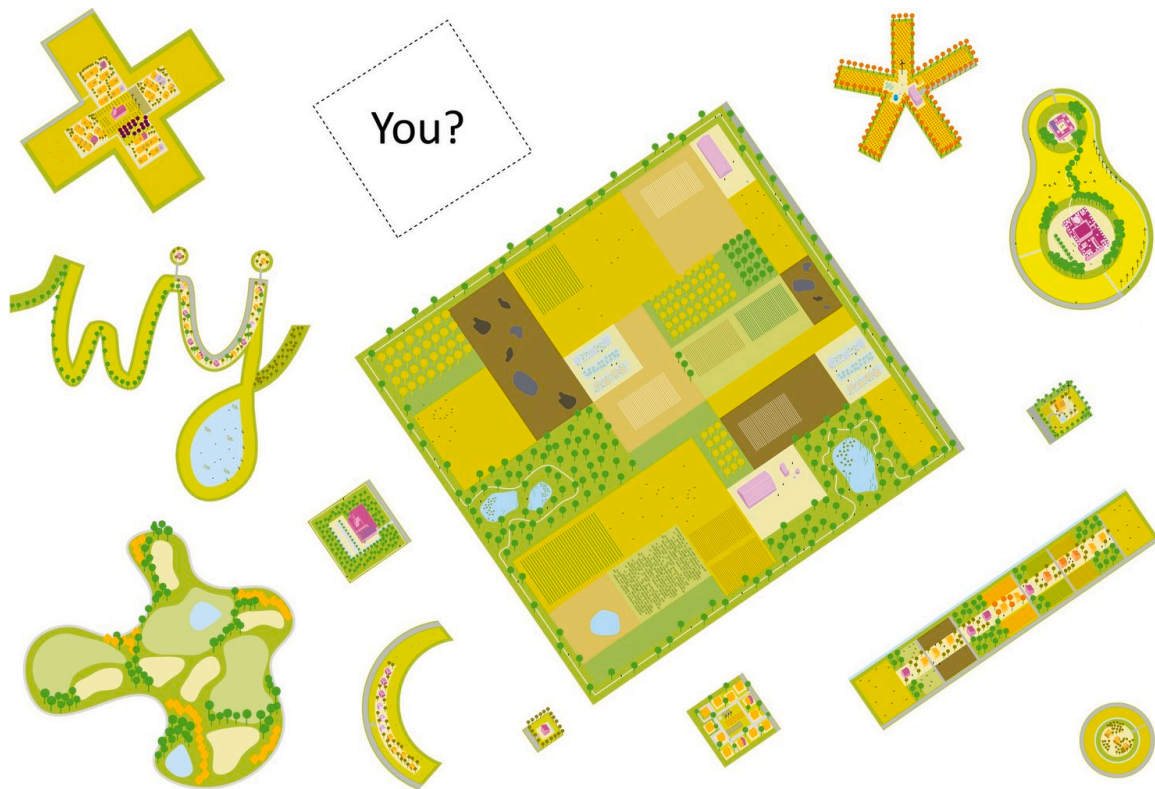


Fig. 15, MVRDV, *Almere Oosterwolds, The Netherlands*, 2011 (<http://www.archdaily.com>, 2017).

It also happens that municipalities frame the recourse to interim urban provisions inside a strategic approach; the Dutch group MVRDV defined for its Almere Oosterwolds project the Do-It-Yourself Urbanism 2 as a strategy that municipality can adopt to empower inhabitants to develop, and build, certain areas of the city (e.g. **Fig. 15**).

Of course the more these processes, emerging as direct response to social demands, move closer to the institutional sphere, the more they risk to be exploited in neoliberal urbanism deviations, to be “trapped” into the formal bureaucratized framework, or also to be neutralized through institutionalization within processes where «demands which challenge the hegemonic order are appropriated by the existing system so as to satisfy them in a way that neutralizes their subversive potential» (Mouffe 2013, in Gualini, 2015).

And besides, their reactive nature can easily be perceived as an interruption of the expected fabric of the common imagination, as a disrupting factor which shifts the

familiar into the field of weird, unaccustomed and dangerously rebellious: something which should have been disguised but has been suddenly revealed, becoming the uncanny (Vekstein, 2010). In this condition, the rushed and clumsy attempts of reframing these phenomena generally irremediably dissipate a conspicuous potential gathered over the years just because a public behaviour of acquiescence would violate the established habits and procedures making there for all clear something that would have been more comfortable when left ambiguous. In facing this question, it may be useful the adoption of an approach capable to go beyond the idea of controlling and predicting in order to support new urban dynamic systems with a natural inclination to self-develop. Otherwise what could be a testing ground for the resilient city, is absorbed in wasting attempts of bureaucratic reframing inside principles and regulations that neutralize these precious instrument of change. It is certainly fascinating the idea of an environment where the transformations entail dynamic and syncretic processes including all the dimensions of the socio-urban landscape, but this idea of the city as ecosystem risks, without a targeted effort, to be no more than a mere analogy and the chance to find fruitful overlaps between the institutional and the bottom-up generated environments inexorably blurs.

The main obstacle to face with is, in this context, the transformation of the established top-down conventional manner into a more flexible system where “orthodoxy” can interactively meet the fields of bottom-up. Open-mindedness to the unconventional and a strong willing for mediation are certainly key factors in the implementation of a high responsive environment where municipality, citizens, associations and service providers fruitfully meet. The general approach behind such a process is to follow a step-by-step model instead of implementing oversized developments in one go. This criterion allows to understand the multiple scenarios arising from an on-going process and to open up to innovative and socially flexible models of development (Breddels, 2015).

2.7. When Parts Collide

At this stage it is useful to reflect on the concept of exception in order to understand if the institutions' behaviour within the over-described scenario can have an authentic political aim. The concept of exception plays in this context a key role and it is assumed as a system through which the law meets the life in that ambiguous fringe located in-between jurisprudence and political fact (Saint-Bonnet, 2001) grasping them together through its own suspension (Agambem, 2003) and defining new forms, spaces and times of collective action in which actor's positions deeply change towards the ones established by the previous institutional layout.

As we have seen, temporary uses can happen for many reasons but now a further reflection has to be done in order to understand why the overstepping of ideological barriers dividing the top-down and the bottom-up city, is not easy. In situations of decrease, as we can observe in many post-crisis western cities, institutional tools to intervene on the urban space can be very limited due to the lack of the economical assets which are the basis of the top-down urban development. In this context of stagnation, spreading unhappiness and disappointment among citizens, to allow "in between uses" and their informal dynamics, is a way to provide services that would otherwise lack through the suspension of institutional sovereignty and the transfer of such a commitment to someone else. In this context, as we will see in the third chapter, bottom-up actions are the only way that citizens have to react to downturn and to foresee some opportunities.

It is interesting, in light of this, to put forward the option that, by allowing these kind of parallel small scale phenomena, even if at a first glance the institutional role could be perceived as suspended, it is possible to enter in the speculation about the exertion of the sovereignty to not oppose the emergent bottom-up practices.

Accordingly, through this moment of institutional suspension, boroughs are simply supposed to shift the fields and the ways of using their power, by allowing citizens "to do" without the regulatory framework restrictions in order to take, in case of good

results, without any investments, the advantages of the fertility of the collective “creative” actions. Of course, in this perspective it is not far-fetched the shadow of a sharp power strategy aimed, after reaping the benefits, to re-absorb phenomena which could have otherwise legitimate “the liberation of antagonistic social forces” in moments of institutional absence.

This interpretation is interesting because shows an exploitative perspective in which the relationship of subordination that social forces owe to institutions and strong economical actors remain latent until the police order re-emerges, with the aim to relocate every actor in its social position under the leadership of those designated to administrate (Rancière, 2011). Then, as soon as the first results of the free use of the city became visible, the same actors which were defenceless when faced with crisis and scarcity, assert their duty to act and to find a way to re-frame “the bottom-up” in their mechanisms.

Such institutionalisation process can have a disruptive impact on temporary uses, therefore a coherent political agenda aiming to really find new ways to reconnect citizens’ desires with politics and urban environment should be informed by a strong attitude to recognise and avoid the co-optation in favour of discussion and gathering together. Otherwise the main risk is to suppress a too complex phenomenon within bureaucracy and regulation, a phenomenon that emerges in the urban residual areas and, often, is not conceived to relate with, and belonging to, an institutional context. This formal and conceptual collocation “on the edge” can be in a way intended as an emblematic subtraction from the range of hegemonic culture: an icon of resistance to the capitalistic society (Doron, Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008).

The differences between temporary use actions and institutional protocols are not only ideological but also methodological; this is why to the decrease of the one can follow the growth of the other. Within the hypothesis of institutional suspension to “allow things happen”, the so called urban pioneers can take advantage of a certain blurredness, allowing them to better express their attitude to creatively face with the crisis contingencies and to overcome a deeply problematic scenario, as winners. In this

context, the ideas of insecurity and scarcity enable processes that shift the perception of critical issues towards positive perspectives in which high responsiveness and attitude to optimize are the answer to spread optimism within the urban environment.

If the city planning departments, authorities and all the actors framed in a conventional way to develop the urban space are by nature – and uses – less flexible it is due to their tendency to remain anchored to the expansive and wasteful means of a two-dimensional planning tradition, to an out of date model of ownership and idea of production.

This can deeply affect any attempt to frame temporary uses inside the institutional context, kindling a widespread disagreement among both the temporary users – directly affected by the measures adopted to reframe the non conventional practices – and the mass of angry citizens (Gualini, 2015) gravitating in their environments, in turn engaged in defence of the public space as commons undermined by capitalism and bureaucracy. If on the one hand it is interesting to look at the processes of contention, as potential catalysts of agonistic pluralism (Mouffe, 2000), on the other hand this impasse affect, in the very short term, the vitality of the creative scene of a city which in the re-institution of the police order has to “adapt to the legality”. The conspicuous amount of rules and commitments imposed within the “formal framework”, drastically reduced the freedom of uses and, as a consequence, the responsiveness of actors towards the even more shifting and renegotiable milieus emerging in the city.

At this point the infertility of a misguided relationship between the actors involved in the bottom-up scene can even be worsened shifting in more radical position flowing into counter-hegemonic movements struggling against an unfair process of exploitation and co-optation. At this point an exclusively oppositional attitude can emerge producing the contrary effect to legitimate the forced reframing of the same phenomena they aimed to protect. In this regard it is interesting to look at 1830’s contentions of Paris when the French working class struggled to affirm its value as a conscious community – and non merely affirming an unconditional aversion for the condition of inequality they were affected. Jaques Rancière instils the perspective that, in such a contentious

relation, exclusively focusing on disruptive deployment of the struggle, prevents for the movements the precious chance to declare their status of non disobedience and contextually their capability, as much as institutions (which are their own bureaucratic transposition), to imagine in which way the public good has to be achieved (Rancière, 2011).

It needs to be said that, generally, the means used by both the municipality and the professional to negotiate with the actors involved in, and gravitating around, temporary uses and bottom-up projects, are inadequate and off the chart. Even if participatory practices have spurred a new interest around the questions related to the citizen's role in the public sphere, placing institutional behaviour in an apparent pretention to dialogue, it has to be recognised that the tendency to inscribe actors and situations in given categories is rarely suitable to the complexity of the urban ground, especially in view of contentions. Therefore, the localism of the phenomena, often, invalidates the methods of conflict resolution (generally conceived to solve big contentions) proving them to be ineffective towards the complex dynamics of subjectivisations of all the actors involved. Actors which could, moreover, be unwilling to partake in negotiation tables seen as "farcical" and useless.

Instead of just testing methods, it may be useful, in order to deeply understand how to let this complex process of debate work, to observe how the relationship between institutions and temporary users evolve over the time; in a perspective where the behaviours and the influence that each actor has on the other became the core of the observation. At this purpose a critical analysis of the scenario generated in Berlin by the conjunction of bottom-up urban practices and the institutional framework, referring to cases study where the relationship reached an interesting equilibrium, could be particularly useful to prevent distortions which, otherwise, would generate an impasse; shifting the perspective of conjunction in an experimental approach for new policies and citizenships into the field of power-struggles.

The analysis of the cases studies, provided in the chapter four, also pays a particular attention to the meaning of exception and to the ways it has been inflected in a city

which allocated during the last decade a big amount of resources to provide spaces for the agonistic dramas of citizenship (Holston and Appadurai, 1996).

Each case is deeply differentiated in terms of property rights, legal status and nature of the land producing, therefore, different legalities of citizenship.

3. TACTICS FOR UNEVEN FIELDS: THE TURNING POINT OF BERLIN

3.1. The capital of temporary uses

In order to explain why Berlin is the “capital of temporary uses” (Bodenschatz, 2011) and, therefore, represent, for this research, the most interesting ground of investigation, some general considerations must be given to how the urban development of the city, from 1989 onwards, has been influenced by the strong presence of brownfields. But also, so as to understand why the city was so full of empty plots a further regression is necessary. In fact, already during the *Deutsches Reich*, Berlin was extensively demolished both to overcome the spirit of the past with new representative buildings, and to achieve a higher density rate through the construction of more compact building (Oswalt, 2000; Hertweck, 2011). Several plans where, nevertheless, not implemented anymore, so all the areas intended to house the new buildings were left, in the end, empty. Subsequently, in the final stage of the Second World War other destruction occurred when the bombs dropped by the Allies, left – almost everywhere in the downtown – seriously damaged many areas and buildings to the point that half of the total housing stock and one-third of the industrial complexes were completely destroyed (Riedmann, 2005, in Otto, 2015).

After the end of the war the restoration of a considerable part of those building remained undone for decades, due to the particular historical situation of Berlin as a city divided and officially managed by two countries. Instead, large scale demolitions – even of only slightly damaged or intact buildings – were carried out with the only aim to eradicate the vestiges of the past and in particular of the most recent history (Oswalt, 2000).

Then along came the collapse of the DDR with its consequent political and economic transformations requiring, inter alia, another wave of large-scale demolition for all those buildings which – for political, aesthetic or economic reasons – were, at that point, “out of date”. Once again, no immediate developments were provided (see Christiaanse, 2011; Altrock, 1998) thus, the amount of urban empty frames continued

to spiral out of all proportions.

In this situation most of the developments that we can observe nowadays in the field of interim uses, were enabled. Within the framework of the unification, for instance, the replacement of DDR's economic system with the BRD's market economy had a significant impact on the property ownership. In the DDR, in fact, most of the land was owned by the state (Strom, 2001) therefore, when a substantial part of these properties had to be returned to the former owners, or sold to third parties, a certain blurredness as regards the legal status of properties in the former East Berlin caused delays in the reorganization of the heritage land ownership, which, as we will see, strongly influenced the emergence of temporary uses in the city (see also Lenhart, 2001).

In particular, the motivations of the over mentioned delays, depended on the fact that the former owners, or rather their legal successors, upon request received their possessions back if they were expropriated after the founding of the *DDR* in 1949 or before in case, for instance, of sites formerly owned by Jewish previously expropriated during the Nazis' regime. But more than 170.000 reassignment (Strom, 2001) claims had to be checked and processed and due to the large number of cases and to partly missing documents, it took several years (Bader, 2005). In case of obstacles, such as the difficulty to obtain information on the former owners, the lands were furthermore transferred to the city, until the redefinition of the property conditions, and managed by third parties such as housing associations, etc.

During this period, the absence of an owner – who could impose his property rights and therefore proceed against spontaneous and informal uses – strongly encouraged the growth of temporary projects.

In addition to the unclear ownership conditions, the deep changes in the institutional structure, slowed down the implementation of the building regulation policies and didn't allow to allocate resources and responsibilities in the field, since all the political efforts were mainly addressed in the establishment of western productions in the former east side and in the merger of the two separate administrations into a single one (Lenhart, 2001; Schwanhäußer, 2010; Gutmair, 2013).

These operations were combined with substantial economic structural changes striving for the hard attempt to inscribe within the isolated⁴ BRD's market economy the DDR's one which was oriented towards a planned economic system and towards the exchange with companies in other socialist countries. All this, was happening against the background of a Germany with an average of 22% of workers' employees in the industrial sector – far superior to Berlin's 8% (BfA, 2014).

As a result, most of the industries established in this period, and also those already based in the western part, were hardly competitive under the market conditions themselves; moreover, most of the buyer in the socialist countries suddenly disappeared as a result of the transformation processes (Leupolt, 1998). Therefore, only a few companies overcame to this period, mostly with significant employment rationalisations within a scene of countless closures and mass dismissals.

In this context, the unemployment rate rose to almost 20% because the most of people could not be integrated by either modern industries or business-related services, especially since they had a background in the manufacturing sector (Geppert et al., 2009) so, their profiles were, in the best cases, only partially compatible with new job opportunities available.

Also the service sector did not raise as fast as expected and the displacement of parliament and government agencies back to the city did not improve as hoped the situation. Compared to all other German conurbations, the city recorded the weakest economic development (Brake and Mundelius 2011) from the mid-1990s to 2008. In this scenario, where every hope for economic growth and every kind of attractiveness – especially towards private investors – was vanished, with a background of empty sites and wastelands punctuating both the urban fringes and the central areas of the city, the breakthrough of Berlin was waiting to happen.

⁴ Until the reunification, the industrial companies in West Berlin were hardly able to expand and also to relocate to the surrounding areas because the city was an enclave within the DDR area.

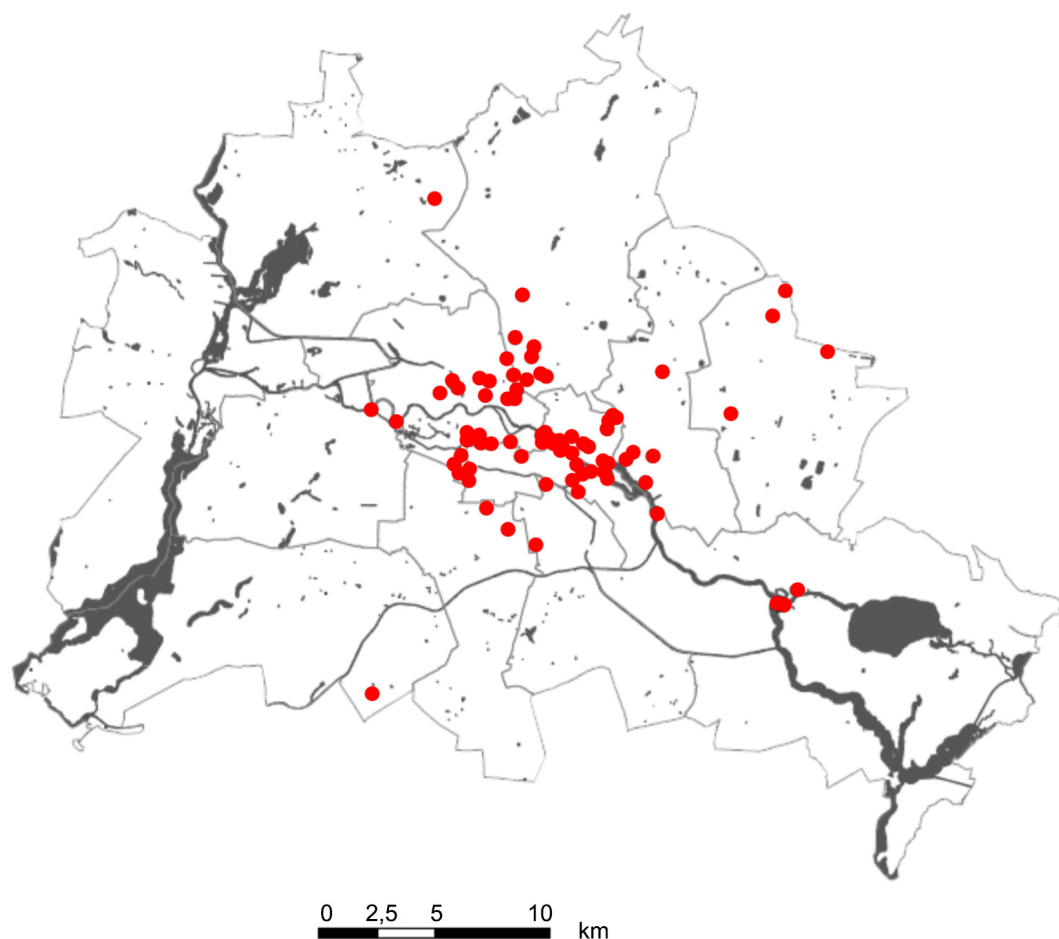


Fig. 16. Temporary uses detected in Berlin in 2012 (Otto, 2015).

While the government of Land Berlin – close to the bankruptcy in 2001 and with a debt amounting to approximately 60 billion euro in 2010 – was swinging among the severe cuts to be made in public expenditure and the pressure to improve its economy, citizens started taking the initiative in their own hands and since most of them, in the best cases, only had a very small amount of capital or, in the worst ones, they did not have capital at all, their social and professional networks represented, together with “a high degree of energy and commitment, and great willingness to improvise”, their main resources (Oswalt, Overmeyer, Misselwitz; 2013) to undertake the dramatic scenario they were faced to. Using this means they boosted, in several urban areas, alternative uses and economies taking also advantage, of course, of the inexistent or at least very

low commercial value of lands. In this scenario many “urban pioneers”, such as Jutta Weitz from the *Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Mitte*⁵, were enabled to lay the seeds of what emerged as an incredibly dynamic temporary use scene. Finally, a new chapter in Berlin’s history was beginning, in this period, pop-up shops, artists’ communities and small self-employed from the cultural and creative fields (Koelbl, 1999; Gutmair, 2013), found within a large scene of legal, partially-legal or even – often – illegal clubs and other activities, the perfect ground to start the transformation of the city into “the capital of creativity” (Ring, 2013; Gutmair, 2013; Vogt, 2005) (e.g. **Fig. 16**).

⁵ Housing Company Mitte

3.2. Taxonomy of abandoned spaces

As we have seen, Berlin has been for quite long time the city of emptiness, in the words of Philipp Oswalt «an accumulation of absences of the past and the future»⁶ (Oswalt, 2000); but this prerogative was also its most valuable asset (Christiaanse, 2013).

The abandoned “layer” of Berlin was consistent and included a very heterogeneous typology of areas which has been accurately classified by the geographer Benjamin Otto on whose work this paragraph is based. The spaces available for temporary uses have been divided in five main categories: industrial and commercial areas, infrastructural/circulation paths, ex Wall strip and other military sites, vacant lots, urban renewal and cemetery areas (Otto, 2015).

Between 1995 and 2002 the population decrease was circa 17% and even reached 29% in the Marzan Nord neighbourhood. In this context, surplus housing stock and disused public amenities – for a total amount of 140 hectares – were also demolished according to the government regeneration programme, Stadtumbau OST (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2007), and the empty areas resulting from the demolition were principally owned by the Liegenschaftsfonds Berlin⁷ (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2007).

In 2010 in Berlin there were more than 5000 homes collapsed (LaFond 2010) and, as classified in the Environmental Atlas of the Senate Department for Urban Development (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2011), almost 3200 hectares left fallow – corresponding to 3.6 percent of the city of Berlin – were counted.

This percent is of course higher if we take into account all the small brownfields not recorded, for methodological reason, in built-up areas. These unused plots still represent – nowadays to a less extent – a consistent part in Berlin’s topography, with a higher concentration in the areas outside the S-Bahn ring.

⁶ Translated from German by the author.

⁷ Real Estate Fund Berlin.

In 2007, due to the substantial economic changes and relocations, Berlin counted more than 500 hectares of abandoned industrial and commercial areas (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2007). Both large-scale factories in industrial estates and small vacant industrial sites close to residential areas, were neglected by urban development due to the impossibility to provide the measures and investment necessary for the reclamation of the lands and for the conversion of their former uses. On the infrastructural and mobility level the changes in logistics' organization subsequent to the reunification, turned into superfluous many urban areas (Hofmann, 2010) even because a considerable amount of traffic and commercial flows were shifted from the railways and the waterways to the roads. Furthermore, some infrastructure facilities, which during the years of division were duplicated, were abandoned after the reunification leaving a remarkable capital of warehouses, railway lines, train stations and airports.

Several contiguous areas, even reaching ten hectares or larger in size – as the ex Eastern Harbour (10 hectares), the ex RAW area in Warschauer Straße (10 hectares) and Tempelhofer Feld (356 hectares) – have been for a long time predominantly public owned or also owned by just one holder as, for instance, Deutsche Bahn AG⁸ in the case of RAW. In the eastern side of Berlin, the vast areas in the immediate proximity of the wall – cleared and used as border security systems during the years of division – constituted, an enormous “no man’s land along the route of the former Wall” (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2007) of about 300 hectares including both the downtown and the suburbs (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2002). Here, even if some plots were re-built or used as green areas, very many temporary uses found a fertile ground for their activities.

In 2005, there were approximately 1,000 vacant lots in the downtown (Bodenschatz et al., 2005). At the end of 2011 the Senate Department for Urban Development still counted approximately 650 of them (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2012). These areas are generally smaller than 1000 square meters, but together they sum up

⁸ The railway company

to 140 hectares (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2012). They are mostly properties of private landowners, but sometimes also of project developers, commercial enterprises or of the State of Berlin. Some of them have been used for years by car dealers or other trades, while others have been fenced and densely covered by vegetation and at most are used as parks for dogs. Since vacant lots often are surrounded by residential areas, they are particularly sought-after as sites for Interim uses. Due to the currently increasing building activity, the number of vacant lots is expected to decrease significantly in the coming years within the S-Bahn ring.

In addition, due to a perspective of demographic and social change, 40 percent of the cemetery areas was abandoned for two main reasons: the first attributable to the significant decrease, since 1970, of the number of deaths in Berlin; the second due to the shift in the funerary culture to cremate dead people instead of burying them (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2006)

3.3. Types of use

This paragraph provides a tableau of the variety of interim projects developed in Berlin over the years and rapidly frames why, certain typologies are particularly interesting within a research that aims to understand how and why actors behave in a certain way in an experimental process of institutional reframing. Each category listed below plays a significant role within the definition of a new – fresh – idea of urbanity finding in inclusion, negotiation and open minded entrepreneurship, its main features.

According to recent surveys (Otto, 2015), the most recurring cases, such as beach bars, beer gardens, clubs, cafes and restaurants, constituting the category of gastronomic usage, represent, with a total amount of 29%, the main address of all temporary uses in Berlin (Otto, 2015). The first beach bars in Berlin – the Oststrand in Friedrichshain and the Bundespressestrand in the Regierungsviertel – opened, respectively, in 2002 and 2003 and in the following years many similar activities emerged everywhere in the city. Actually their concentration is mainly traceable in the inner area and, of course, close to the Spree river. Some of these cases, besides being interesting for overstepping the logics of maximum profit by paying a particular attention to the social role they can have, are significant because they have been particularly effective in intertwining significant relationships with the planning bureaus, institutions and big investors and played, therefore, a crucial role in the redefinition of the relationships between all these actors.

The second most common category (including the 18 % of the cases) is represented by the urban garden and horticultural uses; these kind of projects have mainly social and educational aims and rise often – but not always – outside the S-Bahn ring area (Otto, 2015).

The category is particularly interesting for this research because, as we will see, they have such a cultural asset that allows citizens to acquire a deep understanding of urban areas, enabling their potential to develop them through small and gradual interventions. The hands-on approach on which the activities of the urban gardens are

based, allows to critically understand the potential of both the urban relational spaces and the collective sphere, framing this category as an authentic catalyst of communication; an urban common with very essential features enabling a great variety of collateral activities.

Moving forward: the 16% of all temporary projects in the German capital, mainly observed in the inner area, is related to the scene of art, theatre and exhibitions and, therefore, it belongs to the category of artistic and cultural activities. The remaining 11%, 10%, 8% and 7% belong respectively to the fields of leisure and sports activities, social projects, commercial uses and informal housing (Otto, 2015).

The category of “social projects” is another question of interest of this research since the meaningful role it plays in a scene of strong demographic migration currently registered in Berlin. Both the inhabitants and the increasing number of refugees looking for asylum find – within the environments generated by temporary and bottom-up projects – precious opportunities of encounter and dialogue.

The actors of interim uses can frame their projects in different ways; generally, the ones related to commercial use have the legal form of GmbH⁹ (*Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung*) or GbR¹⁰ (*Gesellschaft bürgerlichen Rechts*), others – mainly with non commercial use – works as association, interest groups or, even, without formal structures. It is interesting to notice how, in Berlin, sometimes a combination of these different possibilities generate hybrid shapes where negotiation and dialogue became decisive moments.

⁹ company with limited liability

¹⁰ civil-law association

3.4. The institutional framework

We have seen how, over the years high vacancy rates, derelict land and slow economic development became the city's most relevant resources establishing the starting point for what, within a relatively short time, would have been perceived as a new cultural trend, capable to bridge different cultures and, as a consequence, to fit to the complexity of the even more heterogeneous citizenry which in Berlin – and in every contemporary city – was gradually emerging, shaping a new meaning of urbanity based on concepts such fragmentation and creolization.

In this context, a new class of citizenry – creative, smart, linked, resilient – seemed to have found its own way of escape from failure and desolation and to explore new forms of economies based on a sort of “interconnected localism” allowing the chance to improve new ideas of inhabiting according to which the urban space is fixed as the origin of a complex relational system capable to produce and to spread social welfare, integration and participation. This free and artistic scenario, its sense of protection against the equalizing forces of globalization and economic pressure and a certain air of anarchy which could be felt all around the city, would have been, soon and worldwide, acknowledged as the most exclusive Berlin's peculiarity, attracting young creative, professionals and entrepreneurs from all over the world (Louekari, 2006).

In the early years, within all other factors over described, a moment of institutional suspension due to Land Berlin priorities, firstly oriented towards pursuing the Planwerk Innenstadt¹¹ (Senatsverwaltung, 1997), played a crucial role in the shaping of the image of an open city where informality and temporariness could have been explored within a colourful and interconnected scenario. During these years, the remarkable economic effort required for the development of the Zentrenband – the axis “connecting east and west city through the ‘critical reconstruction’ of the historic centre” – substantially reduced the finances and the attention of the institutions, which, in turn, assumed a

¹¹ The plan for the inner city was approved by the Berlin Senate on 18 May 1999.

tolerant attitude towards the spreading of informal uses of urban neglected spaces. But in a later time, when the Planwerk Innenstadt was extended to the Ostbahnhof area – where a consistent amount of temporary uses raised over the previous years – and the results of the “acquiescence” trend started to be acknowledged with all the potentialities subsequently enabled, something changed; and the former relationship of tolerance became more complex including, sometimes, even aims of tactical exploitation of the phenomenon.

Therefore, researches on temporary uses were funded in order both to understand how to set a dialogue between the parts, and how to fully grasp and explore the big amount of advantages and potentialities related with them. Such advantages – all without any significant financial expense – included, as not long after stated in the publication *Urban Pioneers* sponsored by Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung Berlin, the reactivation of vacant sites through a new positive image, the preservation of squatting vandalism and decay and the creation of strong local identities.

At this point, since the temporary uses’ cultural consistency was acknowledged the city planning department moved its next steps towards the strengthening of the phenomenon recognising the official role of consultants and agencies working on behalf of owners, municipalities and temporary users in order to optimize the results of new collaborations aimed to explore temporariness as an opportunity to “reframe” anti-establishment squatter collectives within an institutional context (Mackey, 2007). These agencies, conceived to support temporary users “in building organisational structures, planning, marketing, obtaining funds, and securing permits” (Oswalt, Overmeyer, Misselwitz; 2013), assumed a key role both in the coordination of local programs and in recruiting owners to make spaces and structures available on a temporary basis, advising them in selecting temporary users and in solving legal problems (Oswalt, Overmeyer, Misselwitz; 2013).

Moreover, in several circumstances, city authorities have set up discussions and focus groups involving professional, associations, entrepreneurs and temporary users as well, in wide debates on how to deal with what has been envisaged as one of the main asset

available on the territory. An important occasion to establish these new relationships was promoted by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development in 2004. During the event, named "*Zwischennutzungen und Freiflächen. Städtische Lebensräume der Zukunft*"¹² a conspicuous and heterogeneous amount of actors discussed on the perspective to experiment temporariness as an instrument of practical participation in the neighbourhood development and, of course, also as a way to revitalize the numerous Berlin's vacant areas. This was also the chance, for some participants to lay the groundwork for trans-disciplinary and durable collaborations addressed to implement innovative ideas to be applied and experimented on the field. It is in this kind of context that the architect Stefanie Raab and the urban and landscape architect Maria Richarz – already working on the potential innovative usages of brownfields – started to work, in May 2005, on their first GbR: a joint venture having as a pilot project: "Commercial vacancy as a neighbourhood resource". The idea was firstly tested through some projects in the area of Neukölln until, the well known Coopolis: *zwischen nutzungs agentur*¹³, was officially established as a company providing services and consultancies to support and follow interim uses in their whole lifecycle.

If all these new condition and figures could be perceived as complicating factors within a scene drawing from improvisation its vitality, the situation became even more delicate when the regulatory and economical aspects came into play.

¹² Temporary uses and free areas, urban living spaces of the future.

¹³ Coopolis: temporary uses agency.

3.5. Regulatory and economic aspects

Through the introduction, in 2004, of the concept of *Baurecht auf Zeit*¹⁴ into the BauGB (Building Code), legislators attempted to enable, for the first time, the recourse to temporary uses for the management and the utilisation of specific kinds of urban areas. Even if the principal aim of this provision was to simply foster interim uses as replacement of activities turning in their conclusive phase (Schmidt-Eichstaedt, 2007) it laid the basis of something that, after many years, turned as a very key factor in the exploration of this new scenario.

In § 9, para. 2 of the BauGB, it is fixed, since then, that in certain particular cases – stated inside the Building Code – constructions and other uses can be “allowed or not allowed, for a fixed period of time, until the occurrence of particular circumstances”.

As it can be noticed, the provision has a certain blurredness that leave space to different possibilities of interpretation that, as argued in the following chapter, represented in the years to follow a significant element for the negotiations and the setting of precedents between actors which, especially in the first phases, seemed to be, in some cases, uncompromisingly fenced in their uses, speculations and ideologies.

But before arriving to this moment it is necessary to analyse how this complex relationship has evolved over the years and the contradictions it required to face with. This passage will clarify the reasons why the propensity, of each part involved, to constantly redraft behaviours, have been, in a certain way, more effective than the regulations itself.

The main contradiction of the provision can be framed in the need of a mandatory fixing of the usage along the interim occupation of a “certain” area. This aspect is, in fact, particularly inadequate to deal with the phenomenon of interim uses because of the nature of temporariness itself; a nature, strongly related to characteristics such as the openness and the modifiability of a scene which is too dynamic and fast-paced to be

¹⁴ Time limited building right

inscribed in the temporal and spatial horizons of planning authorities.

Many scholars observe that it is not possible to fix a general expiration date of building rights and temporary uses (Battis and Otto, 2006; R. Wolf, 2007; Dransfeld and Lehmann, 2008), and neither fixing the “after use” (Scheele and Malz, 2007), as the BauGB requires, since these questions, strongly limit interim uses’ field of application.

City authorities, by their side, have been cautious in their assessment of the possibilities to actively integrate temporary use projects in the planning process, because they don’t correspond to the ideal planning conceptions of an “ordered” city which, accordingly, allow to frame uses in a “proper” way.

The uncertainty about both the results and the concrete possibility of application, combined with the over mentioned aspects, with an overall laconic situation and with the lacking of resources – even human resources with an adequate expertise – in the planning offices, implied that the *Baurecht auf Zeit* – already not very common nor in Berlin neither in Germany – hardly gained, over the first years, significance in the scene of interim uses (BBR 2008; Gawron 2010; MBWSV NRW 2012; BMVBS 2013;) and all the formal planning instruments implemented, played a rather marginal role in it (Otto, 2015).

In fact, even being – the *Baurecht auf Zeit* – the most important formal instrument for dealing with the question, it was for long almost not applied and, whenever the projects on stage were incompatible with the stipulations of the development plan, the authorities used to answer, pursuant to § 31 BauGB, with exemptions or tolerance. This happened mainly to bypass the fact that, according with § 34 of the Building Code, projects had to be implemented following the prescriptions of land use provided by the development plan or, whatever, they had to be integrated in it.

In the case of many beach bars, for instance, authorities simply overstepped the existing development plan prescriptions (from the 60s or 70s), allowing them – as exceptions – for limited periods and, also, took their socio-spatial outcomes into account in the provision to come.

Then, informal instruments were often used to overcome the limitation imposed by the bureaucracy, and the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg district has been particularly active in setting significant precedents in the scene. Here, in fact, also the questions related to the leasing agreements, with the Liegenschaftsfonds Berlin, for the development of no-profit activities or public spaces, were discussed involving actors and citizens within the whole district. The Liegenschaftsfonds Berlin was founded in 2001 with the mandate to sell – or rent until their sale – "land and properties belonging to the non-operating patrimony of Land of Berlin" (LGF, 2011). With its establishment, the policy of the land and of the twelve districts was unified and professionalized.

While, at the beginning, its only aim was to sell the lands to the highest bidder, it has been included, since 2011 by decision of the Chamber of Deputies, also the need to take in account, among the criteria of evaluation, also the quality of the project to be developed in the area, so that achieving the maximum profit is become not anymore the top priority (LGF, 2011). In addition, since 2005 is has been made effective the possibility to rent "hard to sell" properties at a preferential price, for "eligible or non-profit" temporary uses, so long as the leasing is, at least, cost-effective (LGF, 2011).

This provision, made by of the House of Deputies, was useful both for the citizens aiming to venture in interim projects and the neighbourhoods themselves, since it allowed to provide a certain economic background to deal with the bills and the budget rules. It is remarkable the fact that, in the period between 2001 and 2012, 153000 square meters of land were rented for interim uses (LGF, 2013), and that in the years from 2008 to 2012 there were 178 temporary rental agreements over an area of about 65000 square meters (LGF, 2013).

But if on the one hand, these new explorations represented significant achievements towards an innovative and dynamic way to allow "things to happen" in the city, on the other hand, some threat started to emerge. Also the results of gentrification became visible; about 6300 properties – 16 million square meters – were sold by the Liegenschaftsfonds, with a profit surpassing 2.4 billion euros (LGF, 2013); this, obviously, happened at expenses of the interim uses' scene.

The next chapter will explain – through the case studies – how, despite the notable amount of inaccuracies and contradictions occurred, temporary projects became the main expression of a new way to act in the city, not addressed to end users but rather to users in time, capable to sustain debasements – crossbreeding – and to face with coexistences however unprecedented.

The cases analysed also underline that the process of “formalization” of interim uses, despite the first attempt to make it by default in the planning offices, is the result of a severally overwrote relationships, of negotiations and, sometimes, of conflicts which led to slight adaptations: politically and socially significant milestones in a process that, for its being experimental, needed to be defined through experiences.

4. CASE STUDIES

4.1. Methodology and research approach

In introducing this chapter, it is necessary to specify that it has not been possible to follow a linear standardized research approach (see Flick 2005: 68), in which hypotheses are theoretically deduced and subsequently empirically tested, since there is still no theoretical basis from which derive the hypotheses. It also should be taken into account that anyways, even without any prior hypotheses, the knowledge, the implicit and explicit theoretical positions and, of course, the interest of the researcher, deeply affect the methods and the aims of the analysis, constituting irremovable foundations for the whole investigation (Pfaffenbach and Reuber, 2005).

It is also important to stress that, in the international scientific literature, there are neither official statistics nor other regular surveys on temporary use of fallow and free lands and vacant buildings in Berlin, except for a publication of the Senate Department for Urban Development (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2007) which provides a relatively comprehensive overview. In this study, carried out from 2004 to 2006, around 100 temporary use projects have been classified, but among them only 43 projects and uses have been published and described in detail on the basis of some main characteristics such as the size of the area, the type of contract and the actors involved.

The open and undefined nature of temporary use phenomena has required to analyse three – very different – case studies through a qualitative research approach that allowed to observe them as open-ended urban processes. In this context, the need of a high level of flexibility, necessary to deal with both the actors and the situations, made useless the instruments of quantitative approach because there were no statistical assumptions and conditions describing the standard relationships within this field of interactions and, moreover, the cases analysed have not remained stable since the beginning onwards.

The means used during the investigation, allowed to flexibly manage many aspects of the study – for instance, the addition and exclusion of questions, or the improvisation

during the interviews – and to obtain responses under which redirecting questions and reactions in order to reach a more complex level of observations.

The abovementioned approach, based on semi-structured interviews (with interim-users, owners and service providers of temporary use projects) and participant observations, had the principal aim to collect textual data (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes). It has been combined with an iterative study design according to which both data collection and research questions have been adjusted according to the emergent instances. This combination has demonstrated to be particularly effective for the understanding of the motivations, people's individual attitudes and the institutional or entrepreneurial behaviours, when exposed to the solicitations of different bottom-up practices. It is clear that all these aspects, aimed to explore the cases rather than to confirm preconceived hypotheses, would not have been detected by highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation.

These methodological choices have been driven by two main reasons traceable in the diversity of the cases analysed and in the analytical objectives of the research, requiring to describe variations, to explain relationships and to describe aspects related to individual experiences and group norms.

Furthermore, during the investigations it has emerged that, at the moment, only a very limited literature on the subject has a predominantly qualitative approach, since the most significant publications are mostly oriented to analyse the issue in the broader context of economic and social change (see *Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, 2007*).

In conclusion, the qualitative research approach adopted, allowed to in deep understand the backgrounds of each actor's behaviour and to obtain complex and detailed data, by stimulating actors to provide meaningful and culturally salient responses that have been useful both to trace the breadth of their motives, and the possible patterns of action, as well as the circumstances under which certain actions occurred. The goal of the investigation has not been the statistical representativeness,

but rather the plausibility and the intersubjective accountability (Steinke et al., 2004; Reuber & Pfaffenbach, 2005; Cook and Crang, 2007).

4.2. Choosing the case studies

The first assumption for deciding whether to take into consideration or not in this research is the definition of “temporary use”: a use taking place on fallow land and/or buildings, conceived from the beginning as temporary, associated to a change of use and with a – temporary – nature, which is clear to every actor involved from the outset.

The search of the case studies has been carried out, firstly, by evaluating the existing literature on the subject. The starting point was the already mentioned survey provided by the Senate Department for Urban Development (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2007), supplemented by data from the current literature, dissertations and thesis on the subject, including, among others, Otto (2015), Haydn & Temel (2006) and Rosol (2006).

Other projects have been found in Berlin newspapers (V. A. Berliner Zeitung, Tagesspiegel, taz and Berliner Morgenpost), city magazines and, especially, social networks, often advertising events and chances to involve people in neighbourhood activities. Furthermore, some interesting projects have been discovered through informants with whom contacts were already taken. They shared contacts – of their social networks – which, in their opinion, could have contributed to the study; in this case, a chain referral sampling method (snowballing) has been adopted.

In addition, interviews to politicians, employees of the planning offices and of the Senate Department for Urban Development have been collected from precedent surveys and newspapers, and analysed in order to further clarify how the institutional reframing processes have been faced in particular conditions.

By the comparison of the over mentioned sources, approximately 130 areas were reviewed, on which, 114 different temporary use projects currently take place. The difference between the two data has arisen from the fact that 26 of the recorded projects changed their location one or more times.

Due to the extent of the general definition and of the search outcome, it has become clear that more parameters for the selection of the case studies were necessary to

define a focused objective. Therefore, the projects to be selected had also to meet other criteria:

1. the cases fall in the categories listed in the chapter 3.2 (Taxonomy of abandonment);
2. very short-term temporary uses have been considered not interesting for the purpose of this research because their durations (of maximum six months), generally correspond to the maximum staying – just in one place – of itinerant circuses or fairs (Otto, 2015: 60). Under such short utilization fall many temporary art installations, music and art festivals or promotional events;
3. temporary uses are not unprecedented new phenomena (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2007: 21; BBR 2008: 6): for centuries circuses and fairs were located in one place for a few days or a few weeks and then moved on. The temporary use of land for weekly/flea markets is widespread, as well as the use of brownfields as parking or storage areas. The kinds of use chosen as case studies within this research, are characterised by the implementation of innovative uses with such a cultural asset that allows people to reach a deep understanding of the link between urban areas and social relationships. The cases have demonstrated that the neighbourhoods can be laboratories of transformation (Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2007:24), platforms where to experiment strategies for urban development (Cabane and Bürgin, 1999) drawing from the idea of temporality their own qualities (Haydn & Temel 2006);
4. self-building projects and processes have occurred on the land and triggered meaningful moments of debate and experimentations with citizens, owners and institutions. The hands-on approach enables in-deep collective reflections on the importance of urban common spaces as catalysts of communication, capable to aggregate and harmonize diversity;
5. the cases have a high degree of connectivity both between internal actors and with collateral, or even external, ones: the actors proved to have a strong

attitude in using the (social) networks as opportunities to rethink the ways processes can be organized; in taking initiative; in joining open-minded people to team up with; in finding resources and, finally, in connecting expertise;

6. by dealing with the political, economical or bureaucratic framework, the users of both the parts, have produced interesting outcomes through a – more or less heated – process of mediation between bottom up and social movement environment and the institutional and economical one.

The data on the projects have been classified according to the following categories:

- Data collection
 - Type of use
 - Start of the service
 - Legal Form
 - District
 - Current address
 - Plot classification (chapter 3.2)
 - Size of property
 - Change of location
 - Land owners
 - Land users
 - Right of use
 - Previous use
 - Planned new utilization
 - Development Plans
-
- Activities
 - Kind of users and visitors
 - Network

The case studies have been photographically documented and their locations have been recorded and cartographically displayed (**e.g. Fig. 17**).

Within the following part of this chapter, three projects that address different scales and situations will be presented. Their features are very specific and different one each

other, but they share the ambition to make intelligent use of available networks and infrastructure and to mobilize potentials. The projects address different issues (social justice, reuse and urban life, private initiative) and they are located in the Berlin districts of Neukölln and Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg: the first project is Die Gärtnerei (**e.g. Fig. 17, 03**) (an experimental neighbourhood project in the Jerusalem cemetery in Neukölln); the second one is Prinzessinnengärten (**e.g. Fig. 17, 02**) (an urban garden on a vacant lot in Moritzplatz); and the last one is the Bar 25 (a former club/*Strandbar* on the *Spreeufer* in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg) and its evolutionary process up to became the cooperative Holzmarkt (**e.g. Fig. 17, 01**).

These three cases are located in Berlin, in three different kinds of plots owned by different subjects: a former burial area, a vacant lot and an ex-wall strip (as classified in the chapter 3.2). Their combined analysis shows a wide range of organizational structures, of historical background and economical assets. While Die Gärtnerei is a no-profit organisation, Prinzessinnengärten integrates profit and no-profit activities and Holzmarkt is currently a cooperative that brings together several actors. All of them, however, resort to temporary uses to deal with the main urban issues in Berlin and to answer to pressing issues such as the arriving of refugees from the Middle East and the need to foster their integration process; the reclaim of urban green spaces as places where to experiment alternative urban lifestyle; and, lastly, the gentrification with all its implications. The projects have also been selected because they provide very diverse circumstances and aims to use self-building: for Die Gärtnerei it has the educational purpose to improve refugees' skills and, therefore, to help them in finding a job; Prinzessinnengärten means it as an instrument to promptly export viral good practices; and in Holzmarkt it is used as a resource to test spatial solutions and to shape a constantly evolving urban environment.

The analysis of the different conditions, aims, means and ways to deal with both institutions and economic players that characterise these projects, provides unsurveyed clues on how to handle, how to manage, how to operate in a ground which is still quite unknown and, therefore, opened to explorations. The diversity of the cases and their

combined outcome, have been inspirational.



Fig. 17. Case studies locations: 01 - Holzmarkt; 02 - Prinzessinnengärten; 03 - Die Gärtnerei, Berlin, Germany (Google Maps).

4.3. Die Gärtnerei: a project for and with refugees

- Data collection: semi structured interviews with the founders, non structured interviews with the users, direct field observations, participation in events, facebook.com/diegaertnerei.berlin, diegaertnerei.berlin, schlesische27.de/s27/, raumlabor.net.
- Type of use: Integration Project
- Start of the service: May 2015
- Legal Form: no-profit organisation
- District: Neukölln
- Address: Hermannstraße 84
- Plot classification (chapter 3.2): former burial area
- Size of property: 1600 + 5000 square meters
- Any change of location: none
- Land owners: Bulgarische Orthodoxe Kirche
- Land users: Die Gärtnerei, Schlesische 27, Raumlabor Berlin
- Status: current contract until December 2017
- Previous use: Cemetery
- Planned new utilization: none
- Development Plans: No development plan
- Activities: Landscape and shelter architecture, self-building, design of common areas, socializing, events in times of arriving, cultural events, workshop programmes, youth projects, public meetings, cooperation with local initiatives, Cafe NANA: refugee-teacher "Volkshochschule", projects with apprentices and students, seasonal markets, winter apothecary.
- Kind of users and visitors: general public, volunteers, workshop participants, refugees, church communities, students.
- Network: State of Berlin, Kulturstiftung des Bundes, Der Paritätische Verband, Soziale Stadt, Berlinbaut, Bezirksamt Neukölln, Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, Städtebau-förderung, Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktoricherheit, Hamburger Bahnhof, foundations (i.e. Anstiftung & Ertomis), universities, private sector actors, local NGOs, refugee aid and church communities, local media and press, individual customers and volunteers.

Location of the property in the city and project history

For a number of years now, Berlin is undergoing big changes due to large numbers of young people who have reached the city as refugees. According to the *Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl 2015/2016*¹⁵, the asylum application rates in Berlin have been in the years 2015 and 2016 respectively 33.281 and 27.247 (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2015 and Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2016).

The arrival in Berlin of thousands of refugees has been an occasion to spread new perspectives of social cohesion, to discuss on how to shape new forms of cooperative neighbourhood, how to foster alternative economies and how to secure neighbour's right to the city.

At this purpose, Berliners' attitude to networking and concretely take action on the urban ground, has come to bear in an interesting – and unprecedented – way. As already mentioned in the chapter 3.2, due to new religious convictions and uses, a large part of the cemeteries in Berlin, especially in Neukölln, are disused and it is precisely in this neighbourhood – in a former burial plot – that the case study discussed in this section is.

At the exit of the U-Bahn station Leinenstraße, inside an old stonemason's house in Hermannstraße 84, a group of artists and architects, together with young people coming from Syria, Palestine, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, is experimenting new and sustainable forms of living together in the city.

Die Gärtnerei (e.g. **Fig. 18**) is an artistic multicultural project, offering services and assistance, such as vocational guidance, to refugees in order to facilitate their integration within the local community. Barbara Meyer runs this project together with Nils Steinkraus and Sven Seeger from Schlesische 27. Die Gärtnerei was initiated in 2015 by Schlesische 27 and Raumlabor Berlin, in cooperation with the Evangelical Cemetery Association Berlin Mitte and, despite its young age, it already has a very wide and strong network of supporters, volunteers and sponsors (among which, the Federal Cultural

¹⁵ Current number of people applying for asylum

Foundation and the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Berlin).

The project has arisen on two areas in the Kirchhof der Jerusalem: a 1600 square meters' space, in the rooms of the former stonemason, actually used as training schools for German and professional courses (e.g. **Fig. 19, 20**); and a second 5000 square meters' burial plot, located in the back part of the cemetery and unused since twenty years. Here over the 2015 an urban garden, a footbridge-promenade, a relational space and a small recreational area (e.g. **Fig. 21, 22**) have been set up through some self-building workshops organized within the project and involving refugees and neighbours.



Fig. 18. Die Gärtnerei website homepage layout ([http://www. http://diegaertnerei.berlin](http://www.diegaertnerei.berlin), 2017).



Fig. 19, 20. The stonemason self-building with refugees and a volunteer running a class, Berlin, Germany (Die Gärtnerei Archive, 2016).

Since its beginning, the core participants have extensively used the social networks – mainly Facebook – to post communications about urgently needed things or services and in a few months, they have involved a considerable amount of volunteers (almost 50) working as teachers, gardeners and ambassadors for the project and they have raised donated materials, seeds and plants. The wide network emerged is one the main resources of the project, in fact many things here happens due to the good relationships that die Gärtnerei, together with Schlessisches 27, established in this very short time. The Bulgarische Ortodoxe Kirche, for instance plays a key role by providing, for free, spaces for the activities and by allowing – through the concession of the *Kirchenasyl* – the staying of many core participants even if they have not been provided with legal asylum by the local boroughs. The people with *Kirchenasyl* even don't have the right to attend the *Integrationskurs*¹⁶ and to subscribe to the job center therefore, other volunteer actors provide within the project, free German, building and gardening courses. In a way the wide and differentiated network of volunteers working for die Gärtnerei, provides for many of those services lacking due to the consistent amount of asylum application slowing down the institutional work.

In case economical assets were required to fulfil specific needs, there have been a certain amount of sponsors available to economically support the project.

In 2016 Jörg von Kruse, director of the company i+m Naturkosmetik, donated 13,400€ with the objective to encourage the project and its good activities. Over the previous months, the Berlin-based company distributed, with the help of the BioCompany Market and the TAZ online shop, a shower gel fair edition "Let's support Refugees".

In the same year, *Die Tageszeitung*, a national daily newspaper, asked to Raumlabor Berlin, as part of Die Gärtnerei, to curate the exhibition TAZ.LAB 2016 titled *Fremde oder Freunde* (foreigners or friends), with the aim to test Berliners' ideas of diversity and integration.

¹⁶ Integration course addressed to migrants.



Fig. 21. The construction of the footbridge-promenade, Berlin, Germany (Die Gärtnerei Archive, 2016).



Fig. 22. The self-made greenhouse, Berlin, Germany (Die Gärtnerei Archive, 2016).

As it happened for the restyling of the stonemason house and for the implementation of the external areas in Hermannstraße 84, the exhibition was self-built together with the core participants of the project (e.g. **Fig. 23**).

In October 2016 the refugees involved in the project developed a lectures program and invited citizens to engage with their culture under the format of NANA Akademie (Nana is the Arabic word for mint, a fundamental ingredient for tea and a symbol of gathering and sharing) (e.g. **Fig. 24**).

The very heterogeneous, and even playful, program culminated in a Pecha Kucha event (e.g. **Fig. 25, 26**) during which the representatives of the main social addressed activities in Berlin (such as Prinzessinnen Gärten, Kunstasyl, Über den Tellerrand, Agora Collective, Schlesische 27 and Raumlabor Berlin) took the word and brought at the attention of the participants their experiences and good practices. Before and after the speeches, the core participants of the project, led a collective cooking session involving over 60 neighbours both in the preparation of an African meal and in a community dinner.

Since then, one Friday a month, Die Gärtnerei invites neighbours to the Café NANA creating new opportunities of discussion on how to work “for and together with” the new complex, multicultural and hybrid class of citizenry emerging in Berlin.

Currently the core participants are working to face with the expiration, in December 2017, of the leasing contract for the use of the former stonemason house. It is interesting to report that instead of feeling threatened by this perspective, the users interviewed consider this moment as a change which is coherent with their interim nature therefore, they are taking it as a further chance to enrich the project and strengthen their role in the neighbourhood. At this purpose, they are planning collaborations and exchanges with both schools and associations, such as Bildungs Manufaktur and Cucula (another projects conceived within Schlesische 27), in order to

extend their operating range from exclusively providing courses to *Kirchenasyl*¹⁷ refugees to organizing institutionally recognised classes for refugees within the *Ausbildung*¹⁸ and the *willkom Klasse* (a national program for the integration of young refugees) programmes (Esther Häring, personal communication, March 1, 2017).



Fig. 23. Raumlabor Berlin, TAZ.LAB 2016 - *Fremde oder Freunde, Berlin, Germany, 2016* (Raumlabor Berlin Archive, 2016).

¹⁷ Church asylum

¹⁸ Training courses



Fig. 24. NANA Akademie, Berlin, Germany (Die Gärtnererei archive, 2017).





Fig. 25, 26. Pecha Kucha in the former burial area, Die Gärtnerei, Berlin, Germany, 8th October 2016 (author's archive, 2017).

Organisation, operating mode and interaction with the local welfare system

In support – and in reaction – to the theoretical and political debate about the perspectives of refugees in Germany, the initiators of the project addressed their effort towards a pragmatic, prompt and action-oriented approach aimed to achieve tangible and significant goals in the configuration of a new idea of neighbourhood which takes in account the consistent transformation to the social milieu addressed by the arriving of refugees.

Through its actions, Die Gärtnerei works to establish a “welcoming culture” and to trigger dynamics of “neighbourhood creolization”. Its activities, bi-univocally provide access to education and discussion and unfold perspectives of local self-efficacy and self-determined community. Its heterogeneous and experimental environment overpasses the logics of “helping disadvantaged categories” and demonstrate that an authentic integration passes through exchange processes in which everyone has something to offer. In fact, while providing opportunities to show to the neighbours the advantages of cooperation and mutual exchange, the activities organised relieve the refugees from the wait for the asylum status or for the work permit and project them in the neighbourhood environment.

German language and training courses courses, as well as internships in Berlin companies and classes on the educational system, are provided three days a week by local volunteers. Professional training, gardening and urban landscaping activities are daily carried out in the urban garden area in heterogeneous environment with young students and users from neighbourhood.

This educational and do-it-yourself creative approach, provides advantages for both the refugees and the local inhabitants by improving knowledge and craft skills (through courses, workshop and field trainings) and implementing new – shared and opened to modifications – public relational spaces. Also in this case the “boundary activities” offering is wide and transversal: the project has a network of local schools (i.e. the Heinrich-Zille-Grundschule) and associations interested in the self-building and creative/educational workshops, in the open-air activities and neighbourhood

excursions. In the meantime, the area of the public access community garden (Bendt et al., 2013), is very frequented by people from the neighbourhood who regularly go there to chat and take care of the garden. (e.g. **Fig. 27**).



Fig. 27. Neighbours at Cafè NANA, Berlin, Germany (Die Gäertnerei archive, 2016).

The project is set as a platform that by making social engagement and neighbourhood work accessible to everyone, attempts to convey visions of how the coexistence of different cultures can look like while taking care of the public good. For this purpose, as already mentioned, the combination of do it yourself practices with social networks, plays a key role: by using these platforms to ask for goods and volunteering, the core participants reinforce, in more or less habitual users, the idea of “asking for” and “donating” which envisages the chance for citizens to concretely partake even with a minimum effort (such as by loaning a tool or giving some seeds for the garden) in the safeguard of public spaces and urban relationships as commons. According to this logic,

each self-built small architecture and urban furniture is not only realized for its usefulness, but it also represents each individual above mentioned effort. They prove that something is happening on the nearby fallow land of the western part of the Evangelical cemetery, that a surprisingly rich environment is developing and, above all, it is a creative, multi-ethnic place of encounter and think-tank, a place for collective discussion and experiments of social crossbreeding.

As we can notice, self-building is a true leitmotif of the project because, as stated by Esther Häring (the project coordinator), when people build something together they feel better connected to that and to the environment. As a consequence, self building is the way to provide people with both an increased understanding of the project and the socio-material resources to develop their engagement: it is, for people, the chance to learn from each other in ways that can benefit wider social–ecological systems’ (Reed et al., 2010, p. 2). In this context, the most genuine manifestation of hospitality as a culture rather than a mere cultural behaviour also emerges because the “host” extend, through the act of building together, the control over the land in order to free the refugees by the sense of subordination generally related with the condition of being “guest”. In the words of the core members interviewed, self building is not only a way to improve refugee’s skills in order to allow them to find a job, but it is rather a catalyst of hospitality through which gathering together for a good – the urban space – belonging to everyone, on which leaving traces of how people can partake in making “their own house” (Esther Häring, personal communication, March 1, 2017).

Die Gärtnerei depends on people’s collaboration as well as on donations, therefore, the companies with a green-brand-orientation can easily find in this project the common ground to establish collaborations.

Often marketing includes, among its activities, researches and programs aimed to increase target consumers and to influence their spending habits. By promoting the core message of a good cause, as in this case, a company can better reach the public interest providing consistent benefits due to the fact that “consumer culture emphasized that, to be socially valued, cultural content must pass through branded

goods” (Holt, 2002). Of course, the combination of “trade initiatives” – spreading pyramidal principles, advancement of consumerism and capitalism – with the bottom-up socially addressed organisations such as the one here described – grounded on ideas of grass root action, altruism, democracy and voluntarism – can be easily perceived as conflictual (Csaba, 2005).

In this framework, for instance, i+m Naturkosmetik and Bio Company created and distributed the above mentioned shower gel fair edition "Let's support Refugees" with which, while funding project's program and providing resources to deal with every day challenges – such as an urgent doctor's visit, or legal advice and BVG ticket – they also attempted to increase the popularity of the brand among target potential costumers. Nowadays it is well known that “even a concern about ‘mere reputation’ has to be grounded in ethical principles” (MacDonald, 2011). Therefore, companies always look for partners providing them that “ethical surplus” to create common identifiers and shared experiences. This perspective brings up to mind an exploitative paradigm of cultural authority in which companies co-opt both good practices and people in ordinary associative advertising strategies exploiting their non-market desires (such as being socially accepted or belonging to social groups).

Even if the core participants recognise this risk, they foresee the more desirable scenario according to which, good practices can be really effective in creating frameworks where a socially useful mission is the common ground where different stakeholders overpass the ideological and behavioural contrasts in order to build mutual trust, reinforce relationships and achieve results by working on a shared program.

4.4. Prinzessinnengärten: the shapes of mediation

- Data collection: Prinzessinnengärten.net/home/blog, nachbarschaftsakademie.org/blog/, semi structured interviews with the founders, non structured interviews with the users, direct field observations, participation in events.
- Type of use: urban garden
- Start of the service: summer 2009
- Legal Form: no profit organisation + company with limited liability
- District: Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg
- Current address: Prinzenstraße, 35-38
- Plot classification (chapter 3.2): vacant lot
- Size of property: 6.000 sqm
- Any change of location: none
- Land owners: Land Berlin
- Land users: Nomadisch grün GmbH
- Right of use: lease contract until 2018
- Previous use: Kaufhaus Wertheim until 1945, afterwards fallow with informal uses and *Flohmarkt*
- Planned new utilization: land for sale
- Development Plans: no development plan
- Activities: urban agriculture; flea market; local market; socializing; café; cultural events; workshop programmes; youth projects; art installations; concerts; beekeeping; annual day of urban nature; annual harvest festival.
- Kind of users and visitors: general public; volunteers; workshop participants; unemployment benefit receivers; social workers; beekeepers; researchers (frequent); tourists.
- Network: State of Berlin; Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung; foundations (i.e. Anstiftung & Ertomis); SlowFood; private sector actors; educational institutions (i.e. Fachhochschule Eberswalde); local NGOs and CBOs; botanical and agricultural organizations; local media and press; local restaurants; individual customers.

Location of the property in the city and project history

Since when, in the early 1980s, the first community gardens were established in the West side of Berlin, the plots where they arose have represented a frontier of discussion, and sometimes of conflict, between social movements and local authorities. Citizens have lobbied municipalities for more green spaces, sometimes by directly greening – or squatting – public land with the aim to stop development plans (Rosol, 2006). By the other hand, local authorities have generally been sceptics in relation to the theme of self-determination of green spaces on public land. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of self-organised urban gardens in Berlin is consistent and displays a wide range of possible institutional organizations.

Prinzessinnengärten is a social, mobile urban garden in Moritzplatz structured as a combination of non-profit organisation and limited liability company.

It is located in the northern part of the neighbourhood Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg; the area is very close to the former border, between West and East Berlin, in Heinrich-Heine-Straße. Since 1945, the square and its surroundings have been densely re-built, due to the massive bombing attacks that, before the end of the Second World War, caused the destruction of a large part of the built environment, including the Wertheim department store, standing on the ground where Prinzessinnengärten currently lies. At first, due to its peripheral location within West Berlin, there were no development plans for this area; therefore, after the demolition of the Wertheim department store, in the early 50s, the 6.000 square meter plot was left abandoned (e.g. **Fig. 28**). At present, the southern and western surrounding areas are owned by commercial enterprises while the rest has been employed for residential buildings.

Prinzessinnengärten is located on a land – firstly transferred to the Liegenschaftsfonds Berlin in 2002 – since the summer 2009. Over the period from the 1990s to 2004, a flea market was the only use occurring there and it came to an end when an investor planned to build on the area a shopping mall (Apin, 2008). This plan, however, failed and over the following five years, the area was informally used by local residents as a dog park.



Fig. 28. *Prinzessinnengärten, Berlin, Germany* (photo by: die Aulöser).

In the meantime – since the end of 2008 – the socio-historian Marco Clausen and the filmmaker Robert Shaw (founders of Nomadisch Grün GmbH) were looking for a suitable space for their project ideas in the inner city of Berlin. At the beginning, their attention was turned on a plot on the Spree bank – the so-called "Cuvrybrache" – on the corner between Schlesische Straße and Cuvrystraße, but their attempt to obtain it failed due to the owner's concern that the success of their ideas would have slowed down the rapid realization of the project development in course (Clausen, 2012). Then the two founders of Prinzessinnengärten came finally into contact with Franz Schulz (mayor of the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg district from 2006 to 2013) and they started, with his support, taking a closer look at the possibility to set the project in the area of Moritzplatz (M. Clausen, personal communication, January 26, 2016).

In this phase, as stated by the people interviewed, Franz Schulz has been a key

character in the process of discussion and mediation with the Senate, the local authority itself, the planning boroughs, and, of course, with the Liegenschaftsfond.

The former major had, in the past, a role in the administration working in the urban planning sector; therefore, he totally knew how to deal with technicalities and rules, and after becoming the local Green Party representative, he made his experience available – to encourage the phenomenon of temporary uses in the whole neighbourhood Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg (M. Clausen, personal communication, April 11, 2016).

Franz Schulz «strategically used building right to, at least, have a discussion with the Senate, because without any leverage it was a borough governed by a “Green Party” dealing with the Senate, governed by “other” parties for whom it would have been not easy getting things done against the agenda of the Senate» (M. Clausen, personal communication, April 11, 2016). Even in the negotiations with the Liegenschaftsfond, the former mayor acted as strong player without succumbing to the temptation to sell grounds – or giving building permissions – without appropriate, socially useful, compensations.

After these first contacts with the local authorities and the Liegenschaftsfond, another important link was established with the specialist shop for artists and architects “Modulor”. At that time, Modulor was already in Moritzplatz and the owners were interested in a positive and alternative development of the Wertheimbrache area, coherently to their business orientation – mainly addressed to creative people and professionals. After a meeting and an extensive debate, it also became clear that both of the actors shared the same vision on the meaning of social participation, so that they agreed on a cooperation. Over the first period, Modulor rented as principal tenant the land giving to Nomadisch Grün the time required for the founding phase.

Before the official start of the activities in June 2009, the plot was cleared of two tons of garbage with the help of neighbours and volunteers, called through an announcement on the local newspaper, and partially reclaimed to be used as a land for farming (Clausen, 2012).

According to the first official rental agreement, running until the end of 2010; Nomadisch Grün had to pay a 2,300 € monthly rent including operating costs. After this period the founders of Prinzessinnengärten strived to conclude a contract for at least three years for the same – or also, for another – piece of land, in order to achieve longer-term plans and to apply for funding opportunities, often addressed to project of at least 3 years of duration. Anyway, for the year 2011, Nomadisch Grün just reached with the Liegenschaftsfonds a one-year lease contract agreement. The main reasons of this result were two: there was no official support from the Senate for a long-term project; and since the property was assigned to the Liegenschaftsfonds, the sale of area was on the agenda, therefore, a long-term lease was not possible (Apin, 2011).

In 2012, the plot was going to be sold again but, against the sales plans, the operators initiated a petition on Change.org which was signed by more than 30,000 people and supported by the District Authorities which, even before the local elections of November 2011, had visited the garden and praised its contribution to the liveability and social coherence of the district (e.g. **Fig. 29**).

As a consequence of the strong public and political pressure, the sale transaction was blocked and, in December 2012, the Liegenschaftsfonds returned the property back to the district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. In the same month, a crowdfunding campaign on startnext.com was launched with the aim to collect money for the activities to come as, for instance, educational workshops, exhibitions, the construction of a neighbourhood composting system and the institution of a collective bicycle workshop. These were only some of the proposals advanced in the “call for funds”, but supporters chose overall to foster a project capable to «show that participation can be more than the laying out of already finished plans in remote backrooms» (startnext.com/Prinzessinnengärten). The campaign was actually also an opportunity to invite neighbours to «work together on the ground in order to develop ideas concerning the future of the city where they wanted to live» (startnext.com/Prinzessinnengärten). Also this campaign produced a high degree of consensus and collected 24.635 € in less than tree months (e.g. **Fig. 30**).

Diretta a [Berliner Senat](#)

Dem #Prinzessinnengarten eine tragfähige Zukunft eröffnen



Vittoria confermata

Questa petizione ha creato un cambiamento con 24.165 sostenitori!

Condividi su Facebook

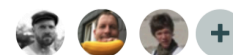
Aggiungi un messaggio personale (opzionale)

Berliner Senat: Dem #Prinzessinnengarten eine...

Fig. 29. The Change.org campaign (<http://www.change.org>, 2017).



Der Prinzessinnengarten muß bleiben! Hunderte von Freiwilligen haben mitten in Berlin eine verwaahlte Brache in einen blühenden Garten verwandelt. Diese einzigartige Oase ist bedroht. 30 000 Menschen unterstützen unsere Kampagne "Wachsen lassen!", um den Garten zu erhalten. Mit Eurer Hilfe gilt es jetzt, den Boden für eine Zukunft des Prinzessinnengartens zu bereiten. Setzen wir ein Zeichen für Freiräume in der Stadt: Wir brauchen nicht nur einen, wir brauchen viele Prinzessinnengärten!



Wachsen lassen!

Berlin



24.635 €
22.000 € Fundingziel

781 Fans | 574 Unterstützer

Projekt
erfolgreich

Fan werden (781)

Fig.30. The Startnext crowdfunding campaign (<http://www.startnext.com>, 2017).

In October 2014, the district and the operators closed a leasing contract for the area, running until the end of 2018.

In the summer of 2015 the Nachbarschaftsakademie – a Prinzessinnengärten project – launched on its blog a call for «activists, artists, architects, researchers and representatives of initiatives working on questions of urban and rural resilience, commons, land-politics and social housing»¹⁹. The idea was supported and promoted by the German Federal Environment Foundation – laid with the help of the IKEA Foundation – by the Technische Universität Berlin, the Universität der Künste Berlin and the Kobelsdorff Schule Berlin. The aim was to invite citizens, together with partners from Moritzplatz, Kreuzberg and Brandenburg, to self-build a ten meters experimental architectural structure (die Laube): an open platform with a nucleus to be gradually implemented under the guide of the designers – Florian Köhl (fatkoehl architekten), Christian Burkhard (Architectuul) and Marco Clausen himself – and, subsequently used as the physical space for the Nachbarschaftsakademie. (e.g. **Fig. 31**).

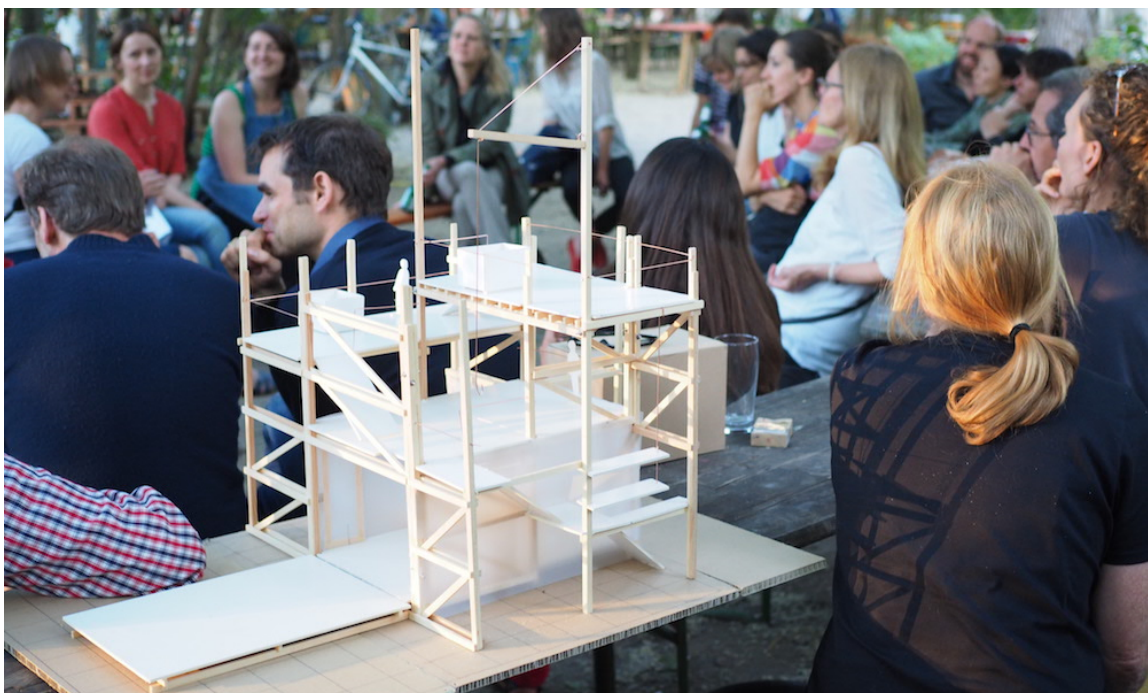


Fig.35. Workshop to show Die Laube project to citizens, Berlin, Germany (Marco Clausen’s archive, 2016).

¹⁹ URL: www.nachbarschaftsakademie.org/en/programm-2015/

Organisation, operating mode and interaction with the local welfare system

Conceived by Nomadisch Grün GMBH, Prinzessinnengärten has gradually grown through a number of consecutive and additive projects involving up to 2,500 collaborators per year since June 2009.

For being located on a publicly owned land, opened to anyone at all times during the day, collectively managed by a variety of interest groups, and without any significant formal obstacles for people's participation, the garden belongs to the category of public access community gardens (Bendt et al., 2013).

In Prinzessinnengärten, in fact, every inhabitant of the neighbourhood can ask for a space where to cultivate vegetables and herbs. The principal aim of gardening is not, anyhow, the production of food but rather, creating opportunities for ecological education and networking with other people, organisations and local authorities. Workshops on horticultural topics, as well as many forms of informal learning, are therefore held through practical exchanges between both gardeners and visitors and the gardeners/volunteers themselves (Clausen, 2012).

The cultivation of plants and vegetables follows the prescriptions of organic quality protocols, so the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers is not an option and only bio-certified seeds, preferably of old and rare varieties, are used. There are no paved parcels or private fields – the gardening is done jointly and for the gardener's sake – and each seasonal harvest is directly processed in the restaurant or sold to other restaurants, shops and visitors of the garden.

Prinzessinnengärten is currently an important meeting place for the neighbourhood with a wide range of visitors' age and thus a place of exchange between different cultures and generations (Nomadisch Grün 2010). Nomadisch Grün is also child and youth education oriented and cooperates with schools from the surrounding providing them the chance to partake in gardening workshops and to understand how to process together the harvest.

The plants are cultivated in beds made of reused materials, such as wooden or plastic

crates and bags, for two main reasons: on the one hand, such kind of cultivation is possible regardless of ground quality; on the other hand, Nomadisch Grün reassures the land owner that the area can be quickly cleared in the case of contract termination. Also the restaurant, the bar and the tools storage are housed in converted ship-containers, so that they can be classified as flying buildings with a temporary use permission to be periodically renewed (e.g. **Fig. 32, 33, 34**).

Prinzessinnengärten itself does not receive funds from the Federal Government or from the UE so, the project and the workplaces for 15-20 people are financed through various sources, mostly related to the presence of temporary buildings and platforms among which – covering approximately one third of the costs (Apin 2011) – the café, the restaurant and the little shops of plants and crops. The rest is provided through paying admission events, guided tours, advisory activities for companies and other no profit organisations, donations, voluntary work and sponsorships.



Fig.32. Movable plastic bags in the garden, Berlin, Germany (author's archive, 2016).



Fig.33. Movable plastic beds in the garden, Berlin, Germany (author's archive, 2016).



Fig.34. The shipping containers housing the café and the restaurant, Berlin, Germany (author's archive, 2016).

The field observations and the interviews to various actors met in the garden during 2016, have shown that the community is very willing and opened to forging new relationships and to expand both their network – by attending other organisations' events or by inviting them to public debates – and the field of actors gravitating around the project. For this reason, over the year, a considerable amount of external collaborations with educational institutions as well as with private and public sector actors has constantly attempted and fostered.

It has also been observed that often Prinzessinnengärten employees and volunteers offer their skills and knowledge to no-profit organisations, schools and other public institutions interested in implementing activities and courses about urban gardening as a vehicle of step-by-step community building. This orientation is constantly pushed to create opportunities to engage participants and visitors with different interests and to enrich the already very wide repertoire of cohesive occasions available (e.g. **Fig. 35**).



Fig.35. Neighbours in the garden, Berlin, Germany (author's archive, 2016).

At this purpose, the “internal” programs of the garden are often reviewed and integrated with many – boundary – activities that, covering transversal issues, attract a wide range of people and give them the opportunity to relate their individual experience as with socially defined competences (offices and administrative institutions) as with groups of subjects in which behavioural codes are adopted even without being officially or legally prescribed.

These so defined boundary activities are meaningful for creating an accountable citizenship because they are catalysts of relational opportunities and, in the meantime, of moments of friction in which the specific issues, emerging by individual experiences, must face with institutional frameworks as well as “other’s” perspectives and experiences. For the quality and the amount of its activities, Prinzessinnengärten is a significant reference to look at in order to analyse and to understand how, the complex moments of dialogue and negotiation between different actors give, to all the parts involved, both the awareness of participating in an evolving social structure and the new knowledge allowing them to do it properly.

The guiding principles followed within project to achieve this objective are, in the words of the founders: being a vehicle for virtuous social processes; developing an experiment-friendly do it yourself environment; having a strong non-profit attitude. According to this last prescriptions, Nomadisch Grün is, for instance, obliged to invest the 51% of its financial resources into activities such as public education and nature protection; the remaining 49% can be used for commercial activities such as the restaurant, the café and the production of plants and vegetables to be sold.

As it is a social enterprise, even if the founders have the faculty to ultimately make decisions on how strategically run the project, various participants have their say on specific, momentary, questions in the everyday practices. This setting, combined with the mutual teaching/learning approach, enrich the field of interactions with a non-normative perspective in which the rules are accepted because of a shared repertoire – of means, behaviours, jargon, mental categories and knowledge – and learning is conceptualized as a product of people’s engagement in the practices of social

community and engagement with the bio-physical environment. This combination intrinsically produces meanings and identities (Lawrence, 2009).

The interviews with volunteer gardeners, bee keepers and other people gravitating around Prinzessinnengärten, have moreover revealed that some recurring issues – such as an increased concern for the environment – have been detected by the volunteers themselves since they started attending the urban garden. Most of them also stated that their perception of urban space has completely changed, so that they continuously found themselves assessing the potential of “greening” wherever they go.

As above anticipated, another relevant resource of the project is Die Laube: a self-organized three floors building for Nachbarschaftsakademie’s activities. Its wooden structure – temporary, flexible, open and accessible to everybody – is developed on a 100 square meters’ floor space and grows to 10 meters in height. It is conceived considering many parameters, among which, the needs not to shield the light of the garden, and to create additional areas for gardening on the terraces. The green terraces, or open-air rooms, provide spaces for educational and community building activities such as workshops, seminars, film projections and public conversations (e.g. **Fig. 36, 37**). Die Laube has been conceived as an urban common property: a space for social, ecological and cultural commitment. Thus, between April and July 2016, some groups of students, trainees and volunteers took part to self-building workshops aimed to realise the temporary structure. Some interviewed users stated that this process has represented itself an authentic and important learning moment by addressing them to a new way to look at the public spaces as “platforms” where sustainable and collaborative processes strengthen the roots of an authentic community. In accordance with this “common property” idea driving the project, all the non-commercial uses proposed by neighbours are collectively evaluated, planned and organized according to programs which follow and develop the core themes of Prinzessinnengärten: urban ecosystems, changes in urban society, city-country relations, sustainable building, nutritional sovereignty, community building, local digital networks, arrival city and future-oriented forms of living together (nachbarschaftsakademie.org).



Fig. 36. Ground floor open-air room in Die Laube, Berlin, Germany (author's archive, 2016).



Fig.37. First floor open-air room in Die Laube. Users can add functional elements in order to customize its spaces, Berlin, Germany (author's archive, 2016).

The interest in socio-ecological transformations is here combined with methods of collective learning in order to set open discussions on relevant questions about the future of temporary uses not only in Moritzplatz but in the whole city of Berlin. For instance, in the winter of 2015, when a huge advertising façade recalling elements of the garden itself was installed, without any permission, on the wall behind Prinzessinnengärten, a protest was organized by the Nachbarschaftsakademie to reclaim the de-commercialization of public spaces. The campaign highlighted that «advertising is one of the countless examples in which advertising agencies and real estate developers are trying to make a profit from images and concepts of the urban garden movement» (nachbarschaftsakademie.org) (e.g. **Fig. 38**).



Fig 38. Picture of the advertising façade from the Nachbarschaftsakademie's archive. The brand had been deleted in order not to promote the company (Nachbarschaftsakademie archive, 2016).

In this perspective, it is interesting to reflect on the whole meaning of the collective self-building of Die Laube, which in a wider perspective can be intended as a new negotiation instrument in view of the elections to come in September 2016 (M. Clausen, personal communication, March 02, 2016). The structure has been, in fact, completed in July 2016 under a regular authorisation released by the municipality borough and in partnership with other important institutional and private partners. At this point, since

the political will is – as anticipated – relevant in many cases of temporary use (no profit organisations are economically disadvantaged if compared with other potential competitors) it is clear that the possibility to lose the support of the Green Party – administering at the time the neighbourhood Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg – could have undermined the existence of Prinzessinnengärten itself. Therefore, again, the project has demonstrated not only to have a large group of supporters to account to, but it has also followed an institutional *iter* allowing the construction of a – one hundred square meters for ten – structure just two months before any possible political shift.

In such occasions it clearly emerges that urban and neighbourhood policies, as well as all those initiatives triggered under civil society and movements' actions, are not only forms of direct engagement and dialogue, but also – and especially – represent forms of community empowerment and social negotiation processes opening up to new ways of looking, reflecting, exploring, showing and telling the urban space as a ground of analysis, action and commitment.

With its heterogeneous environment and wide network, Prinzessinnengärten is a local, experimental, place-making arena in which citizens and other actors learn and discuss about gardening and local ecological conditions; learn how to run a social enterprise; improve self-organizational skills and foster opportunities of social integration; gain an authentic knowledge about the politics of urban space in Berlin.

4.5. From Bar 25 to Holzmarkt: a new urban-development model

- Data collection: Bar 25 – Tage außerhalb der Zeit, spiegel.de, skruff.com, tagesspiegel.de, semi structured interviews with core participants
- Type of use: *Strandbar*, urban garden, theatre, club, restaurant, temporary offices
- Start of the service: Bar 25 in 2004
- Legal Form: cooperative/joint business
- District: Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg
- Current address: Holzmarktstraße 19-30
- Plot classification (chapter 3.2): partly ex wall strip
- Size of property: 18,672 sqm
- Change of location: Holzmarktstraße 25; Köpenicker Straße 50; Holzmarktstraße 19-30.
- Land owners: Stiftung Abendrot
- Land users: Holzmarkt plus eG, Mörchenpark e., Genossenschaft für urbane Kreativität
- Status: 75 years lease contract
- Previous use: Industrial
- Planned new utilization: *Strandbar*, urban garden, theatre, club, restaurant, offices, hotel
- Development Plans: yes

- Activities: clubbing, self-building of relational spaces, urban gardening; socializing; *Strandbar* chilling; cultural events; workshop programmes; art installations; open air concerts.
- Kind of users and visitors: general public; clubbers, volunteers; professionals, workshop participants; social workers; tourists, creative, professional.
- Network: State of Berlin, MoCAD, Mörchenpark e.V., Radialsystem V: space for art and ideas, Viva con Agua, Newten Ventures, Native Instruments GmbH, Fame Restaurant; Stiftung Abendrot; private sector actors; local media and press;

Location of the property in the city and Project history

Holzmarkt means “Timber Market”, the name refers to the fact that until the 19th century, wood was traded and stored on the area, in Holzmarktstraße 19-30, where the project rises. It has been conceived as the new centre – a green oasis surrounded by rails, streets and the river – of an area where the scars left by the fall of the Wall are still visible, a place on the *Spreeufer*²⁰ between the districts Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and Mitte (Rapp, 2012).

Holzmarkt has to be considered not only as a fascinating state of affairs between pioneering past and the future, but rather as a very interesting evolutionary process in which all actors involved played a key role both in the history of Berlin and in the experimentation of new entrepreneurial forms based on citizen’s participation, social networking and mediations with local authorities and economic operators. The project has its roots in the Bar 25, a very well known *Strandbar*²¹, relational space, theatre, bar, restaurant, hostel and – during the night – techno club, near the metro station Ostbahnhof. It achieved international recognition between 2004 and 2010 to the point that anyone who wanted to jump into Berlin’s underground culture, considered this place as the Mecca.

In the 2004, Christoph Klenzendorf and Danny Faber, put a group of volunteers together and transformed an abandoned shore, partially an “ex-wall strip” area, into a green and lively space in which entrepreneurial and public features would have been shortly thereafter successfully combined. The first activities that the initiators organised were «some illegal parties here and there» (Skruff, 2012), but soon, even without any significant assets, the Bar 25 took off. During the earliest period the only resources of the project were an interim-use lease contract, a Volkswagen van repurposed as a beer van, a strong commitment and network, and an in deep knowledge of Berlin’s clubbing scenario, but the network grew immediately and, «after the first year the whole place was packed» (Skruff, 2012.). Then, the initiators started to expand and invest more

²⁰ Spree shore.

²¹ Beach bar.

money and energies, opening a restaurant and a hostel. It didn't take much time for the Bar 25 to ensure lifelong attention amongst ravers, people looking for alternative experiences and even people who could afford expansive high class dinners and parties. (e.g. **Fig. 39**).



Fig.39. Quentin Tarantino at Bar 25, Berlin, Germany (<http://www.bz-berlin.de>, 2017).

This very mixed and enjoying environment, capable to attract different people from all over the world became soon an important reference of Berlin's cultural movements and even assumed leading positions in the awkward moments of contention with the planning authorities and developers, emerged to protect citizen's rights against the advance of gentrification due to the project Mediaspree. In this context the core actors

of the project took an active role in the campaign “Spreeufer für alle!”²² and in supporting a referendum, held on July 13, 2008, which passed with three times the amount of signatures required for a popular support. The project’s public commitment continued in the years to come and raised it to an increasingly relevant position that significantly overpassed its entertainment nature engaging environmental, social and political issues.

In fact, the demonstrations against the Mediaspree development plan, have been not the only circumstance in which Bar 25’s network has taken a serious political and economical stand and in August 2010 the project participated in the organisation of the first Fahrrad Disko²³ event, consisting in a group of people riding close to a DJ set in order to provide clean kinetic energy for the functioning of the sound system. The project was conceived to show alternative business models for the reduction of energy consumption. In 2011, the company GMI and the Club Commission – partners in the organization of Fahrrad Disko – started a consulting activity for clubs which want to improve systems capable to reduce, by 10/15%, the energy waste.

Nevertheless, in September 14, 2010 the project was closed precisely because of the Mediaspree plan, but as Christoph Klenzendorf stated, they already knew that as interim users, they were only allowed to stay there for a couple of years, therefore, they found another location in Köpenicker Straße 50 and established the Kater Holzig GmbH in a former soap factory on the opposite bank of the Spree. The idea was almost the same as Bar 25: there was a restaurant, a techno club and a self-built relational area and playground just a few hundred meters away. But this time both the network of the project and its public orientation had significantly expanded and its success was immediate to the point that even several state senators used to attend evening meetings at Kater Holzig (Rapp, 2012). But, again, it had to be closed and leave room to luxury apartments with views on the Spree river, costing up to 2 million euros each. (e.g. Fig. 40, 41).

²² Spree riverbank for all!

²³ Bike Disco



Fig.40. Kater Holzig, Köpenicker str.50, Berlin, Germany (<http://www.residentadvisor.net>, 2017)



Fig.41. Luxury apartments with views on the Spree, Köpenicker str.50, Berlin, Germany (<http://www.glosch.com>, 2017).

The ground where the project currently stands – de-industrialised after the reunification and contaminated by waste from East German industries – was initially owned by Berlin's municipal waste disposal company (BSR). As a first step, the property was transferred to the Liegenschaftsfonds Berlin and then after the reclamation, that was borne by the municipality, the bidding process was finally launched. In the late May, with the right climbing partners at the table, the Holzmark group won the bidding competition - with both its substantive concept and its economic approach and the project started. The property was sold to Stiftung Abendrot²⁴ that, in 2013, rented it to the cooperative for 75 years with the possibility, for Holzmarkt, to buy it in certain fixed moments or also after the expiry of the contract.

The project has a very strong public feature including the provision of a village square, affordable housing, Kidzklub, and structures in which offering cultural programs, events and educational workshops. Among its partners for instance, the Civic Association Mörchenpark e.V. has received a wide strip of land, between Michael and Schillingbrücke, on the riverside to be re-naturalised and used as a public space in the interest of the neighbours: a recreational zone with the only natural riverside located in the urban area of the Spree, a public access community garden, a riverside walk and a school.

In June 2014 the first activities started with the club Kater Blau and the *Strandbar* Pampa where do-it-yourself furniture, sofas and hammocks have been made available free of charge to anyone who wants to enjoy the waterfront of the river Spree (e.g. **Fig. 42**). Both the Kater Blau and the Pampa have been realised as temporary uses since all the built parts and the furniture follow the flying buildings prescriptions indicated in the BauGB. Since the area is under construction, and the complete development will be made in about ten years, the same regulatory framework addressed the provision of other services such as a theatre and many container-offices for musicians and creative. These temporary uses, together with the Fame restaurant, have been conceived with

²⁴ A Swiss sustainable pension fund

both the aim to financially support the building process and to empirically test spatial solutions to be transferred in hybrid buildings where a permanent layer is conceived to be periodically overwritten with temporary ones through self-building workshops.

Since its new beginning, the project also supported, as a partner, many cultural initiatives playing an active role in international initiatives such as the project Detroit-Berlin Connection (a project conceived to transfer Berlin's transformational energy to Detroit). After the first and the second Annual conferences in 2014 and 2015, In August 2015 the project hosted the first Detroit Delegation in Berlin and organised meetings with members and representatives of the City of Berlin, as well as economic players, local community and developers. In October 2015, under the Motto 'Let the City be our Playground', with the partnership of the Foundation Bürgermut and the support of European Commission, they participated in the organization, and hosted, the "1st Conference for City Makers – Players of Change", through which they invited creative from Berlin to present and discuss their ideas with experts and public actors, and to share with local citizens, new knowledge and experiences pertaining to the field of good urban practices.

Within this process of transformation, the project – started with very limited resources – impressively expanded up to become the balance between a very wide range of stakeholders among which, a civic association with several hundred members (Mörchenpark eV), a cooperative numbering more than 100 members (the Genossenschaft für urbane Kreativität), a Swiss foundation financing the acquisition of the area (the Stiftung Abendrot), and a multitude of economic subjects within the cooperative²⁵. This new, transversal and inclusive way to develop the urban space has currently a commendation from most of the important players in the city and district governments (Rapp, 2012) because it may really represent what people expect for the next future of Berlin.

²⁵ The Holzmarkt project gathers 13 GmbH (limited liability society), 2 eG (registered cooperative society) and many other actors and employees. This organisation is conceived both to split the risks among the parts and to provide internally the majority of service as possible.



Fig.42. The Strandbar La Pampa, Berlin, Germany (<https://schoenes.berlin>, 2017).

Organisation, operating mode and interaction with the local welfare system

What Berliners are venturing with the Holzmarkt project is basically a classic citizens' movement to take their city back. They have the self-confidence. They are the fibres of this city. These people are changing their city as they see fit and establishing their own rules. They want to institutionalize the dirt trail.

Der Spiegel, Nr. 12 / 18.03.2013

As stated above, with its charm, openness and creativity, Berlin has attracted, over the last years, entrepreneurs from all over the world; the Holzmarkt project attempts, through its model, to embody the qualities for which the city is become so popular and to ensure them within a new idea of urban development which considers the land as a commodity for the whole city, a capital for public infrastructures, civic engagement and affordable housing. Its integrated approach provides economical services while ensuring creative and collective spaces for a citizenry reclaiming its right to the city in opposition to exclusively profit-oriented investments and all their implications. In this context, the long term lease contract achieved by the cooperative represents the condition to deeply experiment its model and to attempt the setting of new neighbourhood standards that promote the idea of sharing instead of owning.

This vision is coherently reflected in the cooperative form, whose members are co-owners and investors: they elect the representatives of the General Assembly within which all the basic needs of the cooperative are discussed, decisions are taken and the members of the Supervisory Board are elected. The cooperative is divided in three main players: Holzmarkt plus eG, founded by the initiators of the Holzmarkt project, deals with the quarter management issues, it is the creative director, developer and support of the overall project; Mörchenpark e.V, a no-profit funded by membership fees and donations, dealing with all the aspects related to civic engagement, publicness and participation; and Genossenschaft für urbane Kreativität, a cooperative of service providers which brings assets and capital.

Holzmarkt is conceived as an authentic self reliant neighbourhood in which all the services – including the production and the supply of green energy – are provided

within the cooperative itself. In this context, the Holzmarkt 25 eG, together with the Genossenschaft für urbane Kreativität, has shares in the leasehold society Holzmarkt Betriebs GmbH (Holzmarkt Operation LLC). As the quarter manager, it is responsible of civil contracts with leaseholder societies and the operators of the Eckwerk in the northern part of the plot as well as the Hotel in the southern one. In the meantime, in order to ensure transparency, the Genossenschaft für urbane Kreativität together with the Mörchenpark eV appoint the members for the Supervisory Board.

The land has been divided by the Foundation Abendrot into four legally separate plots; the Holzmarkt Betriebs GmbH is, in this context, commissioned with the long-term preservation of the neighbourhood character and, at the same time, designates the respective leasehold lessee. (e.g. **Fig. 43**)



Fig.43. Holzmarkt development plan (Holzmarkt archive, 2013).

The first part, the Village, is the centre of the whole area, it goes from the railway line to the hotel and its master plan has been designed by the studio Urban Catalyst: a local urban planning office with a strong background field of temporary use²⁶. For this first plot, a four steps development plan has been designed; according to the project, the phase 0 – which is already concluded – was mainly focused on the implementation of temporary events and exhibitions both on the road front and on the Hotel's construction site. Urban gardening activities, clubbing in flying building, a *Strandbar* and a waterfront promenade were also part of this first step (e.g. **Fig. 44**).

²⁶ See Oswald, P., Overmeyer, K. and Misselwitz, P. (2013) *Urban catalyst: the power of temporary use*. Berlin: Dom Pub. and Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung (2007) *Urban pioneers: Berlin: Stadtentwicklung durch Zwischennutzung = temporary use and urban development in Berlin*. Berlin: JOVIS Verlag.

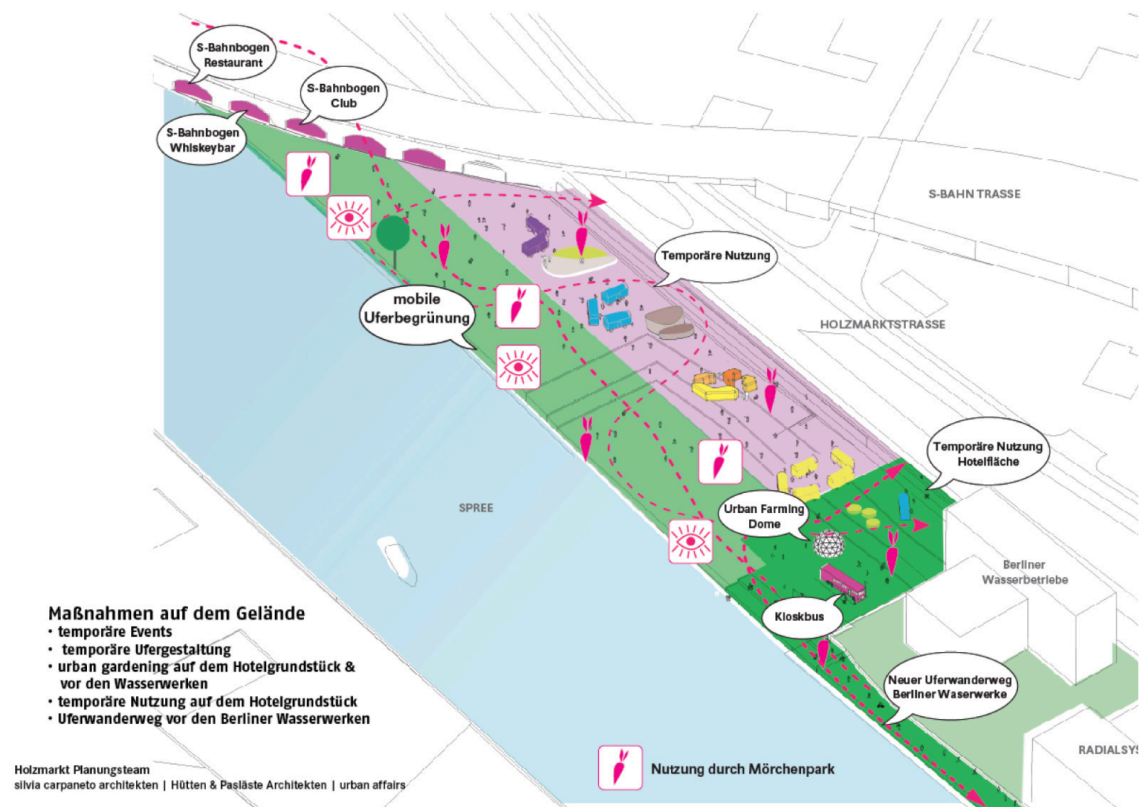


Fig.44. Urban Catalyst Studio, *development plan: phase 0, Berlin, Germany, 2011* (<http://www.urbancatalyst-studio.de>).

The project is currently undergoing the phase 1, which provides the implementation of the construction site in the whole central plot and the presence of a restaurant (the Fame Restaurant) and some temporary-use-based services such as container-offices, a theatre (the Ding Dong Dom), a club (the Kater Blau), an urban garden and the *Strandbar* (the Pampa) (e.g. **Fig. 45**).



Fig.45. Urban Catalyst Studio, *development plan: phase 1, Berlin, Germany, 2011* (<http://www.urbancatalyst-studio.de>).

According to the phase 2 plans, over the next period a partial use of the buildings will be already possible and their covers will be used as urban gardens, the Mörchenpark – which has been given for free to Mörchenpark e.V – will open without any fences as a public space and will start its activities; the waterfront promenade will be almost entirely usable; the difference in height between the bank and the river will be flattened in order to provide a flat shore; and the construction site of both the restaurant and the club will be implemented. Regarding the riverbank walk and the design of the public areas, the cooperative is attempting to set up an urban development contract with the district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg in order to share the responsibility for the public space and to jointly discuss on the liveability and the naturalization of the area. (e.g. **Fig. 46**)



Fig.46. Urban Catalyst Studio, *development plan: phase 2, Berlin, Germany, 2011* (<http://www.urbancatalyst-studio.de>).

When the third phase will be concluded, all the areas belonging to The Village will be usable, both the restaurant and the club will be completed, in the northern and in the southern areas the construction of the Ekwerk and the Hotel will start, the waterfront promenade will be wheelchair accessible, the S-Bahn bows will be re-opened in order to maximize the accessibility to the public spaces along the river, and the restaurant's roof will be opened to pedestrian circulation (e.g. **Fig. 47**).

Here, all the activities – the market, the creative village, the club and the restaurant among others – will be fragmented in order to cover the whole area's surface according to ideas of low density, small scale, inexpensiveness and partially do-it-yourself building. It is interesting to notice that – being characterized by a strong permeability and by a discontinuous design – the project is significantly less dense than the realizable capacity stated in the development plan. This characteristic is conceived to “infill” publicness



Fig.47. Urban Catalyst Studio, *development plan: phase 3, Berlin, Germany, 2011* (<http://www.urbancatalyst-studio.de>).

wherever possible and to allow continuous changes to be implemented through temporary self-built solutions: they are considered as catalysts of diversity, and therefore of new energies and ideas. In this sense, the Mörchenpark and its public nature is a straight answer to the 2008 citizen-initiated referendum *Spreeufer für Alle!*. Moreover, as a voting member, the association brings citizens' interests in the Holzmarkt agenda in order to permanently secure public space on the Spree riverbank (e.g. **Fig. 48**).



Fig.48. Mörchenpark, Berlin, Germany (<https://schoenes.berlin>, 2017)

In this area, the dialog with municipal bureaus has been intense and particularly interesting, especially when the idea to realise a flat river bank was gradually discussed in a very open minded institutional approach. Even if the Mörchenpark is, in fact, conceived to cover almost the whole central area of the plot with very peculiar self-built spaces, in the southern side – where the flat bank is supposed to be – a completely undeveloped green flat shore, with a width of 10 to 35 m, has been accepted with the the two only restrictions to: restore it “as it was” in case of any organizational change (if the plot is sold or alienated); and ensure exits for beavers and otters.



Fig.49. Bird's-eye view of the Eckwerk. On the right the Village (<http://graftlab.com>, 2017).



Fig.50. Internal view of the Eckwerk (<http://graftlab.com>, 2017).

In the northern part of the area, behind the viaduct, Genossenschaft für urbane Kreativität is in charge for the development of the area where the Eckwerk will be located. The Eckwerk will be a multifunctional 35,000 sqm building designed by GRAFT and Kleihues + Kleihues, conceived to create an inspiring and lively complex where to redefine the boundaries between public sphere and privacy, between life and work, through the fostering of innovation, creative power, synergies and cooperation (eckwerk.com, kleihues.com) (e.g. **Fig. 49, 50**). In this building, service providers – who

cannot settle permanently – will offer services such as consultants in the fields of law, tax or financing; but also to support academic researches and start up. The spatial strategy of the building consists in a base where five interconnected towers with exclusive access will be arranged and, in addition to many relational spaces, a professional and highly productive urban garden will be realised on the 2,000 sqm area of the roofs, within a logic of short distance producer-consumer community, supplying food to residents, restaurants and village shops. In addition, the Eckwerk will use all the areas and the services provided within The Village coherently with the general purpose to deeply interlink every activity of venture with all others and to foster a mixed creative environment.

The five towers will be connected through the “mountain path” that while tying together all the blocks, will cross differently shaped open spaces for socialisation and recreation. At the same time «the path invites pedestrians to stroll around, to follow the hustle and bustle along the socle and terrace level and to cast a glance at the city and the Holzmarkt village without disturbing the working and living areas» (eckwerk.com). Coherently with the general principles of the cooperative, also this space is conceived as a (open)source urban space where to find inspiration, exchange and collaborative working tanks to subsidized rental conditions addressed to host selected charitable, social and cultural projects.

With all its features, Holzmarkt aims to be a model and prototype organism where citizens, boroughs, creative, researchers and entrepreneurs implement projects and new living conditions. The processual nature of the project is also reflected in its open-ended development plan; in fact, even if the whole development project is supposed to be ready in the next 10 years, the cooperative members will «never envisage it being totally finished, [they will] never stop developing» (Skruff, 2012) it accordingly with an idea of neighbourhood able to constantly and critically re-invent itself.

This is how, where today the scar between east and west is still visible, this new quarter aims to connect the districts of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and Mitte and to ensure, within a participative environment “free Sprea for all!”.

5. CONCLUSIONS: INSTITUTIONALIZING THE DIRT TRAIL

The case studies analysed show new synergistic perspectives in which urban spaces' production occurs as a public act of design. The complex combination of both spatial and non-spatial configurations surpasses and reconciles, in these contexts, the simplistic formal/informal, profit/no-profit, top-down/bottom-up dichotomies, and enables dynamic balances between the citizens and the whole urban environment catalysing processes for the self-determination of strong local communities. People operating within these frameworks, constantly improve their creativity, responsiveness and attitude to face with "the unexpected" and to increase their willingness to discuss – or negotiate – meanings and positions shifting the "disjunctive" nature of antagonistic forces, peculiar in the counter-cultural movements, towards a 'constitutive' perspective which allows to set a field of relationships where the exquisite complexity of the urban relational scenario becomes promptly and empirically verifiable. The city-making actions intersect, in this way, the themes of urban design and the urban space planning and configuration arrive to influence the socio-cultural and political spheres becoming an instrument of change: a tool for the public enhancement of the city. The design process enabled in this context is based on a collaborative debate that allows to face with frictions and awkward moments as chances to set mediations for the production of legal, social, economical and political precedents allowing, while solving problems, to individuate experiences and contents to be exported and re-contextualized from place to place within an adaptive urban layer.

The mechanisms and the dynamics that over the last years have allowed to find a common ground between institutions, temporary users and diverse economical actors are not recurring in the majority of bottom-up practices and movements since, generally, they stand as alternatives to the institutional framework: as the counter-parts of bureaucracy, of market oriented development and binding regulatory framework. But when, as in the cases chosen, these practices are conceived to compensate urban dysfunctions and deficiencies, then they can really be intended as a new nourishment for the urban system and, as a consequence, the perspectives to overpass the

ideological impasses assume even more defined traits.

In this context a great variety of specialised actors with very different positions within the urban scenario, continuously and willingly process inputs to creatively produce specific socio-spatial configurations. For this purpose, the majority of actors in the cases analysed has demonstrated a strong availability to challenge conventional behaviours, bureaucratic procedures and ideological assumptions, enabling a more flexible field of interactions in which coherently answering to dynamic urban issues instead of smothering them in bureaucracy and strict regulations.

Looking back to the history of Berlin in the 90's many things happened in the temporary use scenario thanks to the good willing of people with a true interest in implementing an "in-progress" creative and shared urban layer. These actors had a strong network and, as in the case of Jutta Weitz, a good position within the Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Mitte (company that owned many buildings and free-spaces in Mitte). The combination of such kind of coincidences is, in the words of Marco Clausen, one of the key factor to enable an authentic process of neighbourhood shaping through a coherent employment of both temporary uses and bottom-up energy. In analysing Prinzessinnengärten, for instance, we have seen how Franz Schulz, the former major of Kreuzberg-Friederichshain, even without giving formal support to temporary use projects in the Bezirk he was administrating, made informally available to them both his institutional network and his technical knowledge in order to secure temporary uses and the good practices arisen against the increasingly pressing gentrification. As Marco Clausen stated, when the project Prinzessinnengärten started it was not easy anymore to obtain contracts from the Liegenschaftsfonds Berlin for in-between uses since the state owned company's model was generally addressed by "selling and privatization"; and in his opinion, nowadays, it is becoming increasingly hard to obtain lease contracts for temporary uses despite certain institutional orientations due, among other contingencies, to both the 2008 referendum against the development plans of Mediaspree and the 2015 one to stop the development plans for the Tempelhofer Feld with which 64.3% of voters stood together in defence of the publicness of its whole 300

hectares area. Therefore, he considers his project and some others as exceptions, as episodes that are possible until the political willing safeguarding them persists.

Other important factors are the availability and the capability, to discuss about the ways to implement and to spatialize the temporary use projects. In this context the openness of the regulations is very important. As we have seen their flexibility allows to better fulfil variation and diversity, generally shrank under the categories and cases of the conventional urban development tools adopted for the long term development processes. Instead, in Germany, the BauGB articles 30, 31, 33, 34, 35 regulating – among other questions – temporary uses, are conceived to allow things happen as long as the landscape, the access to city infrastructures, the quality of life and the future development plans are preserved. In fact, as all the interviewed users stated, there's generally a quite flexible way to follow the BauGB prescriptions on temporary projects, therefore there's always an open discussion with the authorities in charge. This happens also for the individuation of the circumstances in which temporary uses can be allowed or not (§ 9, para. 2).

Of course sometimes, nevertheless the political willing, the interaction with the employee working in the administration can be not exactly easy because of this interpretative orientation. Therefore, while in many cases this factor works as a *passerpartout* to enable projects in very different circumstances, it can also generate impasses: for instance, whenever the people in charge to allow projects in the bureaus prefer to “play safe” and to avoid liabilities for the decisions they take. But anyways, even in these cases, the actors interviewed confirmed that there is still space for negotiation.

Within the Holzmarkt project, for instance, all the questions related to the land use and start-up phase have been easily faced thanks to the BauGB's prescriptions that allow in Germany the construction of flying buildings. In this way, with a step-by-step investment program, the initiators and the core actors started using the land, providing services and making profits to be re-invested in the completion of the whole project. Among the temporary structures set up in Holzmarkt, the Ding Dong Dom is in this

context particularly interesting because only when the building was already standing in the area, the fire department was asked to analyse the structure in order to, eventually, allow the use as a theatre. In this circumstance, the temporary wooden building did not follow the prescriptions required to be used as a theatre but the same authority rejecting that specific request, suggested to ask for a permission to use it as a “practice room” (J. Husten, personal communication, January 26, 2017). At the moment, the structure is an important reference in Berlin for art-performance enthusiastic who regularly attend live shows in the Holzmarkt’s practice room.

An interesting change, useful to trace some main characteristics of this approach, is currently occurring also in die Gärtnerei. Here, in view of the training rooms displacement due to the lease contract expiration, self-building and flying-temporary-building are the main instruments driving a radical transformation of the whole project scheduled for 2018. On this basis, it is envisaged to wide the project’s network and to increase the opportunities to cooperate both with the other associations within Schlessiche 27 and with external actors such as schools, federal integration programmes and neighbours (Esther Häring, personal communication, March 1, 2017). The new permission asked for flying buildings includes an iron and glass greenhouse in the former burying area of the cemetery, new relational and educational spaces, an *eco-fahrt* (eco-path) and new rooms for lessons (Sebastian Latz, personal communication, March 1, 2017). In this context it is interesting to notice that what would have been considered as “uncanny” for whatever conventional land use, is in this case taken as an opportunity. The displacement of spaces with a strong identity for the whole neighbourhood and the need to restart with new activities has actually been the chance that the project needed to enlarge and to enhance its activities. It has indeed happened thanks to the regulatory openness, to the cheapness and the possibility to test spatial solutions enabled by self-building, to good mediations and relationships with the Cemetery Association Mitte, to a strong network of sponsors and to the capability to creatively face new instances. The strong flexibility of this project and its “planning on the go” attitude is underlined also by the fact that die Gärtnerei, will be in 2018, framed inside a new and wider “container” (Vera Fritsche, personal communication, February

17, 2017) – ad-hoc generated by the project core participants – which is supposed to change the main name in “Co-op Campus Netzestraße” in order to establish a new strong relationship with the neighbourhood, taking the name from the new planned entrance. In this case it is clear the effectiveness of those attitude exposed over the work to not plan for the long-term and to wait for the contingencies to arrive in order to answer them with specific actions. According to this orientation, for instance, even if some main ideas for new learning and educational activities and activities for gathering together have already been envisioned, the project’s program is still undefined because, as also the Holzmarkt’s core participants stated, it is important to give to both the investors and the sponsors enough information to let them know what they are paying for but it is also important not to “cross the bridge until coming to it” in order to keep alive a strong responsiveness for unpredictable occurrences. It has been in fact confirmed by the three cases analysed, that the institutional and regulatory openness has to be accompanied with a very flexible program allowing projects, at all scales, to face with the unexpected.

Another interesting shade of this attitude returns again in the Holzmarkt project in which mediations and agreements are continuously to the agenda. The project history has established a strong optimism to find, in the end of a confrontation, a solution putting all parts together. This is, for instance, the case of a transversal discussion on the noise pollution between the project coordinators, the Deutsche Bahn AG and the municipal bureaus. The question has in particular raised for the Eckwerk project because the residential use required for the building can not be allowed since it is not fulfilled the 30 decibels limit required by law for this kind of building. When the core actors found that the city bureaus could not move by these prescriptions, they funded a neighbourhood initiative to trigger a public debate and to ask for more protection measures against the noise pollution. Public events, collective discussions and demonstrations have brought the question to politics’ attention in order to negotiate a sustainable solution for everybody. This kind of approach made Deutsche Bahn AG itself evaluate measures to reduce the problem and implement – on his charge – solutions to

reduce the noise of the trains by adapting the acoustic pollution to the requirements provided for the rural inhabited area. Even if, as also the users interviewed argue, the transport company could have done more in this context – like soundproof barriers – it has been recognised the good willing to consider a neighbourhood request and, of course, this fact represents another important step for the project as it has enabled at least the possibility to build the Eckwerk as an office building, with the intention to make empiric sound tests addressed to demonstrate its habitability or, eventually, to evaluate further punctual interventions to optimize the soundproofing. But, as stated by Johannes Husten (project coordinator), weather it would not be possible to obtain the residential use licence, they will in the end have an office building that responds 100% to noise pollution requirements and, in such a case, the project will be adapted to the new possibilities to come (J. Husten, personal communication, January 26, 2017).

What it has been observed in Berlin makes very clear the mechanisms for which transversal openness, temporariness and hands on approach (through self-building), are deeply related one each other and allow an “on the go” local planning perspective in which real instruments of action and change, instead of the strict regulation, provide smaller scale urbanities through which enabling mechanisms that just would not happen otherwise and continuously confirming the effectiveness of a step-by-step and action oriented approach.

These instruments, traceable in the “tool-box” of all the cases analysed, can work in very different and specific contexts going from the Holzmarkt’s expectation to produce and foster very different socio-economic mixes; to new neighbourhood perspectives giving people, as in the case of die Gärtnerei, the chance to learn how to cooperate by making urban relational space and how to directly influence their own living environment; to authentic political actions, as emerged in Prinzessinnengärten, designating a way to develop in which the initiative to transform the urban environment, and the power to decide, lies not with the strong capitalistic economical powers, but instead with a group of citizens gathering together to protect the urban space as a common against the gentrification.

As argued in the paragraph 2.7, the relationship between all actors could also be considered in a perspective focused on the speculative, co-optative (Rossini, 2016) and exploitative dynamics occurring within bottom-up urban phenomena, addressed for instance to frame them in territorial marketing strategies (Colomb, 2012) but, once again, it has to be noticed that the aim of this research has been rather to pinpoint and analyse the fruitful interaction processes between all actors and to find the dynamics allowing to catalyse synergies.

Both the institutions and companies' availability – or interest – to venture these multilevel cooperation and participation processes has, in any case, made Berlin pioneer in establishing an alternative relationship between the institutional context and the bottom-up one in order to test new forms of making urban spaces in which every discussion, mediation and spatial configuration is a moment of re-composition of the public sphere.

In this moment the attitude to understand the emerged urban configurations, allows to transfer and re-contextualize the solutions found for each specific context and environment so that each case is a precedent that shows how to undertake the problems emerging while attempting unconventional developments. In the mean time, every circumstance, together with its different actors, assets and developments, always produces unprecedented socio-spatial configurations by re-using given solutions.

Temporary uses can thus be a very powerful instrument allowing significant changes to happen and for this reason they can represent a solution to re-activate the numerous post crisis urban scenarios punctuating the western Countries. But the institutions are the only entity capable to enable consistent transformations of the urban environment going beyond the episodic “good practices”, exclusively successful at the micro or small-scale. From the Berlin experiences we can learn that regulations are not the solution for our complex urban scenarios – as Rem Koolhaas argues the question is not exclusively about producing new rules or replacing rules with other rules – but it is rather important to implement specific political programs to enable a coherent and large scale effectiveness of temporary uses.

Of course, as also Marco Clausen claims, there is even in Berlin still much work to be done because many issues are not yet solved and the risk to squander this creative and bottom-up potential of the city is still real. Therefore, if temporary use has to be coherently adopted as a strategy to enable a more participative urban design, the over mentioned political discussion needs to be addressed by some relevant issues: how to find new forms of ownership to secure for the years to come the public dimension of the city; how to distribute the resources; how to use the effects of temporary uses on the long term; how to secure them and the investments of the community; how to engage and involve them into the planning; and, finally, how to up-scale them. In this way the local level becomes the starting point to spread an idea of spatial configuration embodying dignity through inclusion in an urban layer where each construction is a social celebration of mutual realisation, engagement, accountability and communal achievement and the collective action is a public display of belonging to a city capable to transform the social disappearance into manifestations of citizenship and publicness.

In this context the good practices – disappearing and reappearing intermittently – can be continuously broadcasted in both socially and geographically different landscapes, bringing new energy to a network within which the act of taking care of the urban relational space is a contagious phenomenon that strengthens the community and triggers chain reactions that spread public commitment throughout the city, re-defining its essence by daily processes of interaction and by the anthropological need of encounter and simultaneity, of sharing beyond the market imperatives in a perspective of innovation based on reciprocity.

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