

# Model projects as tools for cooperative urban development: The case of Haus der Statistik in Berlin.

**K Gundlach<sup>1 2</sup>, F Marlow<sup>2 3</sup>, N Peters<sup>2</sup> and R Wall<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Natural Building Lab, Technische Universität Berlin, Straße des 17. Juni 152, 10623 Berlin

<sup>2</sup> ZUammenKUNFT Berlin eG, Karl-Marx-Allee 1, 10117 Berlin

<sup>3</sup> Institut für Europäische Ethnologie, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Straße 41, 10117 Berlin

k.gundlach@tu-berlin.de

**Abstract.** According to the New Leipzig Charter, urban development processes should be ‘a matter of all’ – the common good, climate protection and environmental justice, to name but a few aspects. Currently, new forms of innovation seeking models emerge within this context of sustainable urban planning practice - for example, real-world field laboratories and model projects. *Haus der Statistik* in Berlin is one such ‘model project for cooperative and common-good-oriented urban development’. It is widely recognized for its demand- and process-driven approach, as well as its project development being based on public-civic partnership. As anthropological and urbanist researchers and practitioners involved in the project, we give a situated account on the socio-political elements of the Haus der Statistik’s public-civic partnership and investigate the potentials of this model for a more sustainable urban development. The structure of the paper is threefold: Firstly, we introduce the so-called model project Haus der Statistik and its common-good orientated agenda and relate it to sustainability goals of the New Leipzig Charter. Secondly, we introduce the specific public-civic-framework in regard to its methodological framing within the context of model projects and comparable approaches that focus on collaborative, transdisciplinary and innovative methods, such as real-world field laboratories. Thirdly, we reflect on the elements of the public-civic-partnership framework that have been explored and developed at the ‘model project’ Haus der Statistik since 2015 and its implications for a more sustainable urban development.

**Keywords:** Haus der Statistik, model project, real world laboratory, cooperative urban development, public-civic partnership

## 1. Introduction

Berlin, Alexanderplatz. We are standing in the Winter sun, a bit lost on a huge square, surrounded by department stores and construction sites, overshadowed by Berlin’s formally socialist TV tower. From under the square’s completely sealed surface, one of Berlin’s most busy public transport hubs keeps spilling out shoppers, tourists, loiterers, and commuters. Broad thoroughfares full of cars cut the square from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Across a vast crossroads, there is an empty concrete structure, grand letters reading ‘STOP WARS’ painted on its derelict façade: The Haus der Statistik. After more than ten years of vacancy and successful interventions by activists, the Haus der Statistik site is being



developed as a long-term affordable place to live and work. The 45,000 square meters of existing 1970s buildings, initially built as the GDR's statistics administration, are undergoing renovation. In the coming years, they are to be supplemented by 65,000 square meters of new construction. Thus, hopefully, Haus der Statistik will provide affordable housing, spaces for art, culture, social affairs and education, and Berlin administration office spaces – including a new city hall for Berlin's Mitte district. But already now that planning is still going on and renovation work has just started, there are socio-cultural activities that take place on site and fill the place with social energy. For example, in the backyard, adjacent to the more residential neighbourhood with an open building structure from the 1960s, visitors will find a low-rise building – the “Haus der Materialisierung” (House of Materialisation), where a whole bunch of initiatives and organisations bundle their efforts in prefiguring a circular economy hub: Exemplary proto-typical uses are tested in the House of Materialisation, which are to be anchored in the neighborhood planning in the coming years. The former archive building already houses open workshops for textiles, metal and wood, as well as urban gardens and workshop and seminar rooms for self-organised work. Along the way, people also learn to represent their interests and to develop operating models.



**Figure 1.** Haus der Statistik. View at main facade from Alexanderplatz across junction.



**Figure 2.** Haus der Statistik. Gathering outside Haus der Materialisierung.

Which socio-political framework is needed to let those user-driven experiments of sustainability transition become an integral part of a long term urban planning process? Which kind and what level of institutionalisation is needed to secure a long term common good orientation and at the same time allow process openness for experiment and creative adjustment of changing interests or needs? These are the questions we want to explore in this paper. They are a daily concern for us and for many others involved on site. Even though the project has already made considerable progress, many questions remain unanswered, many promises still unfulfilled. In this paper, we are opening the discussion towards thinking of Haus der Statistik's socio-political framework as a specific form of public-civic partnership. We do this from a partial perspective: All four of us have been involved in shaping the path of the Haus der Statistik for some time now, either as part of the Haus der Statistik initiative since 2015 or as members (board of directors, supervisory board, and employee) of ZUSAMMENKUNFT Berlin cooperative, which is the civic partner within the Koop5 cooperation consortium, a partnership of civil society, politics, and administration that has jointly steered the project since 2018. In doing so, we can build and draw on the work and knowledge of a large number of activists, who have been experimenting for many years with the establishment of self-governing and cooperative structures. In the first chapter, we provide an overview of the sustainability goals of the New Leipzig Charter and address the extent to

which the Haus der Statistik contributes to sustainability transition. In the second chapter, we look at terms that can be used to conceptualize the methodological approach of Haus der Statistik. We contrast the established technical term "Reallabor" with the term "Modellprojekt" (model project), as they are used both in the discourse of transformation sustainability science as well as in a broader political communication to describe innovative and transformational project contexts. However, here we look at the theoretical background of public-civic-partnerships and relate key findings to the context of Haus der Statistik. In the third chapter, we expound elements of modelling a Haus der Statistik by following the model project's recent history, framed as a public-civic-partnership and reflect on this – partly ongoing – process with regard to the question of tension between continuous institutionalisation and process openness. We come to the assertion that the project not only promises the implementation of a whole range of sustainability goals, but its socio-political framework seems particularly suited to creating meta-sustainability: long term orientation towards needs.

### *1.1 Haus der Statistik in the context of the New Leipzig Charter*

In this article we look at the socio-political framework of Haus der Statistik through the discursive lens of socially, ecologically and economically sustainable urban development and how it is contributing to the sustainability goals of the New Leipzig Charter (hereafter: NLC) [1]. In recent years, attention to the role of the built environment in achieving climate goals has increased significantly. This can be seen in the NLC and other policy papers that develop strategies for a sustainability transition such as the Agenda 2030, New Urban Agenda, Paris Convention and the Green Deal. While the first Leipzig Charter focused on integrated urban development as a central approach to strengthen the European city, the Charter's updated version from 2020 emphasizes ecologically, socially and economically sustainable strategies. We use NLC as a reference point to understand Haus der Statistik in the context of a sustainability transition within urban planning. The NLC defines the common-good oriented city in three dimensions: the just city, the green city and the productive city. The just city is defined by access to services of general interest, housing and energy supply, daycare and school. The green city is described by green and open spaces, circular economy, short distances and a mix of residential, retail, and manufacturing uses. The productive city puts an emphasis on new forms of mixed-use urban neighbourhoods and local supply.

To achieve a transition towards this common-good oriented city, the NLC develops principles of good urban governance through means of integrated, multi-level, site-based approaches, participation and co-production. The integrated approach aims at a simultaneous and equitable consideration of all concerns, combining and reconciling different, sometimes contradictory interests. The multi-level approach is committed to principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, as well as vertical (transdisciplinary) and horizontal (intra-disciplinary) cooperation. The site-based approach requires an in-depth analysis of specific situations and defines the role of cities as providing public services to guarantee basic rights. Participation and co-production should take place through the involvement of economic actors, the general public and other stakeholders, thus strengthening local democracy. The preconditions formulated for community-oriented and sustainable urban development are partnerships, special funding programs, continuous training and specialisation of actors, and corresponding political strategies. We argue that Haus der Statistik can be understood as a relevant contribution to sustainable urban development. We will do this via tracing two dimensions of sustainability: firstly, the structural-systemic dimension, in which long-term structures of participation and co-production of civil society are established through a learning, iterative public-civic partnership approach, and secondly, the programmatic dimension, where concrete solutions for ecological and economical sustainability are developed through spaces for negotiation and experimentation.

## **2. Terms of Haus der Statistik: Model Project, Real-World Laboratory, and Public-Civic Partnership**

In this chapter, we take a closer look at terms that lend themselves to framing Haus der Statistik's experimental process - all of which do specific work. They are tools that make certain aspects

particularly visible while relegating others to the background. Asking what work a term can do, and what gets lost in specific formattings of terms, we decided to take seriously the debates in the field and to explore its terms. We end up focusing on the term public-civic partnership, testing its capacity to include the key elements of cooperative urban development analysed in this article.

We start by discussing the most prominent term ‘model project’: As in ‘Modellprojekt Haus der Statistik’, the German-speaking debate increasingly uses the term ‘model project’ to refer to projects who are orientated towards sustainability, the common good and collaborative constellations of actors. But still, the term can be deemed quite fuzzy: In Berlin state government’s current coalition agreement, the term is used a total of 16 times to refer to a wide range of projects funded by the state of Berlin [2]. Furthermore, there are nationwide ‘model projects’ in the public education and health sectors, as well as projects by non-profit organisations. These ‘model projects’ operate not only in different sectors, but also on all sorts of scales. Instead of setting out to sharpen this term during this article, we rather chose to highlight its ability to be applied by different actors for the purpose of pursuing their specific agendas. The term ‘model project’ can thus be understood as an important tool in enabling cooperation without shared understandings of the objects acted upon – something like a ‘smart equivocation’ [3].

In the context of sustainability transition, another term frequently used is ‘real world laboratory’ (hereafter: RWL), often also understood as ‘urban living labs’, ‘urban transition camps’ or ‘real experiments’. RWL are described as “scientifically constructed spaces of sustainability research with intervention character” [4]. The central modus operandi of RWL is commonly a transdisciplinary cooperation of different actors from science, economy, politics, administration and civil society actors. Accordingly, knowledge production is a central component in RWL. At HdS, the term is used for such a specifically formatted setting: At Haus der Materialisierung, one such RWL is officially operating at the moment under the name “Reallabor Zirkuläres Wirtschaften im urbanen Kontext: Umweltkommunikation im Haus der Materialisierung”. Michael Ziehl [5] has used this term in a situation quite close to ours: In trying to make sense of a complex process of cooperative urban development from the perspective of an involved actor, he treated Hamburg’s Gängeviertel as RWL, sustained through and supported by research interventions. However, we argue that the Haus der Statistik clearly exceeds the RWL framework: As we will lay out in depth in the succeeding chapter, we argue that the Haus der Statistik’s public-civic partnership surpasses the focus on knowledge production for a scientific research field by establishing a sustainable socio-political framework aiming among other things at long-term affordability with high levels of decision-making authority granted to users.

So in how far can the Haus der Statistik be understood as something more than a RWL and an arbitrary model project – and which term might open up a productive conversation about socio-political frameworks? This is where the term PCP comes in handy: At Haus der Statistik, the term ‘public-civic partnership’ is used to describe a legally binding structure (see chapter 3.4). This understanding of public-civic partnerships as ‘operating model’ corresponds to a related concept of PCP spelt out by Russell / Milburn [6] as ‘public-commons partnership’. They describe PCP as “socio-economic models” of joint ownership and governance, “in which the two principal parties are a state agent (such as a municipal council) and a Common Association (such as a cooperative or community interest company)” [6]. Russell and Milburn, however, argue for opening up the term PCP beyond its institutional form: „The PCP model is less a fixed institutional form, and more a series of principles and processes that need to be designed and implemented on a largely case-by-case basis” [6]. Above all, they see PCP as building blocks of a linkage that goes beyond singular projects and push us to “thinking of PCPs not in isolation, but as part of a self-expanding circuit” [6]. We propose yet another opening: What can the term PCP make visible if we do neither limit it to an institutional form, nor to its role in a socio-economic network? Can it also describe the socio-political framework that allows us to keep the whole process in view, including a multitude of attempts at convergence and further development? Thus, we might for now stick with understanding PCP as ‘public-civic partnership’ in a broader sense: Horvat [7] describes ‘public-civic partnerships’ as „hybrid forms of institutional arrangements wherein the democratic

agency of citizens and their vibrant social energy is coupled with the institutional stability of public administration" [7]. Essentially, they consist of "multi-year experimentation processes" [7].

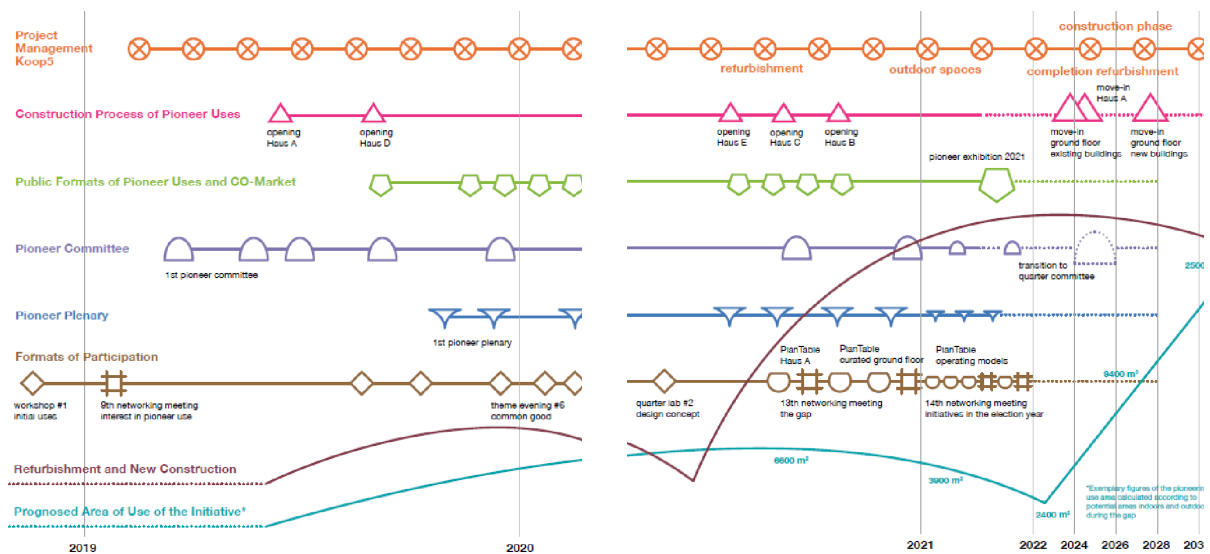
### 3. Elements of Public-Civic-Partnerships at Haus der Statistik

In this chapter, we look at consecutive phases of the model project, highlighting elements that help reflect the value of Haus der Statistik as towards a more sustainable urban development by its Public-Civic-Partnership.

#### 3.1 Phase 0: Initiation through Civil Society (2015 – 2018)

The story of Haus der Statistik as an internationally recognized model project starts with an artistic protest action by *Alliance of Threatened Berlin Studio Houses* (AbBA) in September 2015. A large banner in the style of an official construction sign was put on the facade of the main building: "Spaces for art, culture, education and social affairs are being realized here". This is seen as a particularly relevant event in the positioning of urban activists as crucial partners in the socio-political framework of the later Haus der Statistik. Immediately afterwards, the 'Initiative Haus der Statistik' (hereafter: IniHdS) was founded, demanding the preservation of the existing buildings as well as the creation of affordable inner-city socio-cultural spaces. In this initiative, AbBA was joined by several art collectives, architects, foundations, associations and individuals. The interest of civil society in IniHdS led to discussions at times gathering more than 300 participants. To understand why this initiative had so much resonance, one must take a look at the general situation in Berlin: Since 2004, property prices had more than doubled. Caused by the neoliberal policies of the 1990s and early 2000s, the state of Berlin had sold most of its property. IniHdS can also be considered part of an urban political scene in Berlin, particularly committed to the re-municipalization of building stocks, long-term affordable housing and commercial space, connected to a general upsurge of the supra-regional discourse on the "right to the city". In December 2015, IniHdS presented its concept for transforming the whole building complex into a 'center for refugees – social – art – creatives' [8]. This concept directly responded to the political and social circumstances of the 'summer of migration'. To implement their demands, the initiative aimed at building a network of political supporters early on. As a first step, IniHdS was able to win the support of Berlin-Mitte's district mayor, leading the district council to politically advocate for the initiative's concept. It was suggested that the state of Berlin should lobby Berlin's government to implement IniHdS' concept, whereas the district office was to coordinate the planning law requirements.

In spring 2016, members of IniHdS took over a cooperative, ZUSammenKUNFT Berlin eG (hereafter: ZKB), as legal representative. They produced a feasibility study including concepts for programming, potentials for residential building construction, profitability and operating models, and cooperative development involving the state of Berlin [9]. In the course of Berlin House of Representatives elections in September 2016, these plans experienced a major setback: It was decided that large parts of the existing buildings were to be converted into public administrative space, drastically reducing the space initially designated to housing IniHdS' concept [10]. After forming a government, the centre-left parties agreed on declaring Haus der Statistik as a 'project with model character' which should be enabled by 'new cooperations and broad participation of the urban society' as well as re-municipalization of the property through rebuy from BImA (Bundesanstalt für Immobilienaufgaben) [11]. After the building's re-municipalization in 2017, the Senate of Finance, BIM (Berliner Immobilienmanagement GmbH) and ZKB agreed on a distribution of uses: The initiative's program of socio-cultural uses was thereby awarded 20% of the space in the existing buildings and approx. 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> of the space in the new buildings. The rest of the existing structure was attributed to administrative uses (BIM). Approximately 25,000 m<sup>2</sup> of housing (WBM) and 25,000 m<sup>2</sup> for the district's town hall were to be created in new buildings [12].



**Figure 3.** Timeline of model project Haus der Statistik's past, present and future.

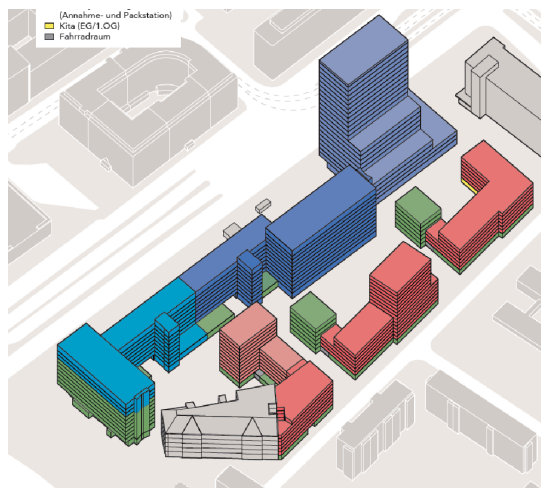
**3.1.1 Reflection on Phase 0.** Phase 0 at the Haus der Statistik was characterized by great civil society commitment. This set the tone for the future alignment of the project: instead of having a private or institutional actor inviting the public to participate in a project with already defined goals, it was the IniHdS opening a discussion about the future of a site in the centre of Berlin by formulating a concept. Unlike RWL, the model project Haus der Statistik was not related to a real-world problem through a scientific lens, but arose from a demand on-site, which was developed by civil society itself into a project framework with objectives, and criteria, and was not conceived within the framework of a scientific research. For this to happen it was undoubtedly beneficial that the members of the initiative were well networked and had a high degree of professionalism; they were for the most part already active in urban development and knew the associated processes very well. As described by the NLC, every governmental level has a specific responsibility and a multi-level cooperation engages actors from different competence levels, to jointly tackle all levels of urban and spatial policy [1]. A development concept that was intelligible for governmental actors as much as urban activists paved the ground for a multi-level governance framework. The socio-political situation of engaged actors as described above can also be understood as having a strong impact on these developments: Creating networks and finding accomplices in these fields was part of the societal actor's competence. However, the interference by the senate during the discussions on the concept of usage shows us how governmental hierarchies and decision-making powers can lead to exhaustive processes and frustration. Which raises the question of how, despite existing power imbalances, civil society needs and concepts can be evaluated as an equal interest in a beginning project phase. In addition to the sustainable structural-systemic cornerstones layed out in Phase 0, the initiative also layed the cornerstones for the sustainable social, ecological and economic dimensions of the urban development process. By lobbying for the preservation of the existing building stock, the initiative introduced the necessity to find innovative ways of a more circular construction industry for derelict buildings and thus creating a 'greener city' [1]. Also, the concept of a 'centre for refugees – social – art – creatives' effectively sets a common good orientation and aligns development goals towards a 'just city' [1].

### 3.2 Phase 1: Integrated Workshop Process (2018-2019)

After the re-municipalization of Haus der Statistik, the 'Koop5' was established in 2018 to develop Haus der Statistik in joint responsibility. It consists of the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing, the Berlin-Mitte district, the state-owned companies WBM Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Berlin-Mitte mbH and BIM Berliner Immobilienmanagement GmbH, and ZKB. Koop5 frames its cooperation

via cooperation agreements [13] – defining common goals, working formats, roles and organizational structures, degree of involvement. The agreements focus on inventing a structure for cooperating at eye level between public and civic actors. In parallel to these cooperation agreements, financial agreements are developed. These agreements regulate the cost distribution between the cooperating partners. In course of the first financial agreement, the Koop5 decided to reimburse ZKB for fixed work packages [14].

A key outcome of the first cooperation agreement was to conduct an ‘integrated workshop procedure’, lasting from September 2018 until March 2019. This procedure was jointly developed by the Koop5 and external experts, inventing methods for the following dimensions of the project: urban planning, participation, and project management [14]. Three design teams worked on urban design concepts as a basis for the urban development plan. A vacant pavilion on site was revived as WERKSTATT office. In order to do justice to a broad participation of the urban society, the process included a variety of participation formats from low-threshold information to decision-making. ZKB was commissioned to carry out most of these: At Café Statistik, the neighbourhood and interested members of the urban community were invited to find out about the ongoing process three afternoons a week. Workshops were held on various topics such as building density, user-oriented urban development, and co-housing. A special feature of the integrated workshop procedure were the formats in which the design teams publicly presented their work and received feedback from the urban society and the Koop5. In addition to formal situations of participation, elected members of the urban society were involved in the expert panel that ultimately decided on the winning design of Teleinternetcafé and Treibhaus Landschaftsarchitektur. The urban design concept was thus shaped by continuous communication and feedback loops. In parallel to urban design and participation formats, Koop5 continued to work on the complex project management: With regard to the different roles (client, supervision, financier, user, initiator) Koop5 partners occupy in different and sometimes changing constellations, a number of formats were developed for technical control of cross-cutting issues.



**Figure 3.** Haus der Statistik. Urban design by Teleinternetcafé and Treibhaus.



**Figure 4.** Haus der Statistik. The WERKSTATT on-site pavilion.

**3.2.1 Reflection on Phase I.** In this phase, multiple relevant solutions were developed according to key principles of good urban governance, such as a sustainable governance structure and innovative solutions of the project. To begin with, the cooperative agreements manifested the commitment of Koop5 towards an integrated development approach, where all concerns and interests are simultaneously considered and balanced, as suggested in the New Leipzig Charter [1]. A cooperation in which all stakeholders have equal say in the project management and cost distribution is the basis to bindingly install consideration of all stakeholders – including civil society. The NLC also calls participation and co-creating central aspects of integrated processes, claiming these approaches could “help cities manage

conflicting interests, share responsibilities and find innovative solutions” [1]. The developed method of an integrated workshop procedure formalises the co-productive, integrated approach: Instead of a regular design competition, the integrated approach created different modes of exchange, cooperative solution seeking and knowledge exchange. A key element for this method was the WERKSTATT as a space rooted in a specific urban context. Set in a former bike shop on ground floor level and with big shop windows directed towards the street, it enabled continuous communication about the process, allowing questions to appear outside of a set framework of participation formats and rather on an everyday basis of passing by. ZKB created an innovative environment to experiment with new formats of participation that aim at different types of expertise, allowing discussions on different levels via plotted plans, built models or a cup of tea. These rather undirected formats of exchange also allowed new relevant topics to be identified. Concerns and needs of stakeholders on site created an even more complex picture of the intended mix of uses and programming. In order to feed the results of these formats into the process it was essential for the Koop5 to meet in a joint project management body. Here, it was possible to design and coordinate how a better transfer of knowledge between the different process steps could succeed and how, in this case, the results of the exchange formats of the WERKSTATT could be integrated into the other process steps.

### 3.3 Phase 2: Pioneer Usages and Demand Planning (2019 – 2022)

With the end of the integrated workshop process, the phase of ‘pioneer usages’ began: During the planning and construction phase, prototypical uses are testing on a small scale what later will be permanently implemented on a large scale. Pioneer uses are considered the basis for a long-term, community-oriented development of a lively neighbourhood. With the first activation of the existing buildings in the summer of 2019, participation thus turned into something more concrete, intended to promote the development of a vibrant, diverse and inclusive neighbourhood as early as possible. Since the first socio-cultural uses in the summer of 2019, successively more and more spaces at Haus der Statistik have been opened up: Some users occupy the spaces permanently, others only for a few weeks, and still others only for certain days. By 2021, about 6,600 m<sup>2</sup> of spaces had been activated (inside and outside) and more than 500 different actors were using the spaces. The selection of users is based on a mission statement developed by members of Koop5 and delegates of urban public society, with ZKB curating and coordinating the pioneering process.

On a content-programmatic level, the pioneer uses have evolved into 6 thematic clusters: sustainable management, health and nutrition, culture and performance, social learning, local democracy, diversity and intersectionality. These clusters refer to identified key topics on-site, but also to the development of the initiative's program and as a sustainable anchor in the yet to be built quarter Haus der Statistik. In addition to the mix of uses, the pioneer uses support the early establishment of neighbourhood structures in which allocation and decision-making processes are developed. Of particular note in the context of this article is the *Haus der Materialisierung* - accompanied by RWL “Reallabor Zirkuläres Wirtschaften im urbanen Kontext: Kompetenzaufbau und Umweltkommunikation” – where various local actors research, work and experiment on sustainable practices such as working with recycled materials, markets for used or re-used materials or educational training on sustainability topics. Pioneer uses are seen as a learning process for current and future planning: In the sense of cooperative neighbourhood development, there is an ongoing translation of findings, demands and concrete experience values, into the planning process. With the so-called “demand planning”, a way was found by ZKB and the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing (SenSBW) to transfer the findings from practice and action on the ground into a context of urban development. SenSBW commissioned the ZKB to carry out the demand planning. Based on the demand planning, ZKB determines the essential demands and elements for a transfer to the operating phase. The commission includes the demand planning for curated first floors in the existing and new buildings, a concept for Haus A as well as



sustainable and experimental concepts for so-called experimental houses for social-ecological forms of working and living [15].

*3.3.1 Reflection on Phase 2.* Educational and transformational goals are achieved through the continuous development of local civic structures within the framework of the pioneer uses. Formalized structures such as pioneer committee, council of users and Haus der Materialisierung are based on negotiation. They are continuously developed and consolidated on site. However, Rächle and Schmitz' [16] criticism of RWL can be taken up here: RWL often include the knowledge of professional actors in processes, whereas there are either no or less formalised structures for other bodies of knowledge. The cooperation between civil society and public actors developed and formalised through cooperative neighbourhood development at Haus der Statistik enables the long-term incorporation of social system knowledge into the long-term process of neighbourhood development (cf. pioneer usage and demand planning).

*Phase 3: Public-Civic Partnerships reconsidered (2020 ff)*

In the course of the process, the term 'cooperative urban development' has become more and more established and has recently begun to replace the term 'model project' in official documents. Accordingly, Berlin's re-elected government still mentions Haus der Statistik in its coalition agreement. Only this time, Haus der Statistik is not branded a 'model project', but explicitly linked to 'cooperative urban development': "The coalition continues the policy of cooperative urban development on selected properties such as the Haus der Statistik [...] and is expanding cooperation with the urban society in the development of new sites" [11]. But still, tipping points have not been reached to legally ensure the long-term security and affordability of the spaces. So, at the moment ZKB is calling for certain areas to be granted for 99 years to non-profit developers and operators on a leasehold basis. Simultaneously, ZKB is striving to institutionalize a binding and resilient web of governing structures. The envisaged operation model contains the following elements: a non-profit foundation in which the state of Berlin has a guardian role; a non-profit development company and operating cooperatives, where civil society actors are directly involved as stakeholders; a neighborhood cooperative for the curating of ground floor areas and open spaces; an association of all users for participation in the neighborhood committee and neighborhood cooperative. Through carefully relating these elements, long-term affordability shall be infused with high levels of decision-making authority granted to users [17]. At Haus der Statistik, this very model is called 'public-civic partnership', establishing fertile ground for our testing of the term's applicability to the socio-political framework of the whole process of cooperative urban development.

#### 4. Summary

In this paper, we started by asking which socio-political framework was needed to let everyday experiments of sustainability transition flourish and how this experimental flourishing could be made permanent. By reflecting on the processes of cooperative urban development at Haus der Statistik within its specific public-civic-partnership framework, we gathered some hints on how to possibly frame these questions. We discussed in how far Haus der Statistik is pursuing sustainability goals in specific ways, and how it can be understood as an initiation of NLC's principals. We further discussed how Haus der Statistik can be classified as a RWL, and in which ways its structures and practices point beyond a formatting of Haus der Statistik as a site of knowledge production. Understanding the term 'model project' as a smart equivocation making possible cooperation of different actors beyond shared understandings, we examined how Haus der Statistik's urbanist processes are more and more framed in terms of 'cooperative urban development'. These processes, we argue, need a framework that allows for establishing infrastructures that help driving 'cooperative urban development' on demands and experimentation, and orienting it towards sustainability and the common good. To address this framework, we suggest to apply the term 'public-civic partnership' beyond governance models and operating systems. While the establishment of tipping points is essential to guaranteeing long-term

goals, we must not lose sight of all the experimentation and hard work happening on the way and around concrete decision-making processes. This is not meant to be a final answer, just a conceptual change of perspective for further use, refinement and questioning – for whether the Haus der Statistik will meet the high expectations and keep all its promises is not yet foreseeable and is a work in progress. One promise, however, has come true: The Haus der Statistik already is a vibrant part of the city - the Haus der Materialisierung producing one of the most obvious tales of flourishing sustainability transition experimentation, which rely on and in turn fuel cooperative urban development and its socio-political framework: “public-civic partnerships [...] rely on experimentation, and emerge in different forms within the fluidity of new social movements and initiatives that call for more equality and sustainability [...]” [7].

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