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Atelier Paris-Berlin : Grand Berlin, écriture de l’histoire et politiques urbaines. Temps de discussion

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Séminaire

Atelier Paris-Berlin : Grand Berlin, écriture de l'histoire et politiques urbaines

Jeudi 21 février 2019 : 9h30-13h

Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville

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Corinne Jaquand

I'm wondering about the number of projects who were not realized in Berlin. This collection of master plans with or without continuity are part of the history of the city. Our researches should take very much these unbuilt plans into account. And then, there is also the topic of destruction. Of course, we are all aware of the destructions uttered by the bombings. Markus has showed that destruction was something connected also with waves of modernization.

Harald, you seem to have a mixed opinion on the "*Zweckverband Groß Berlin*", whereas in France at the same period we've had no experience of this kind and on this scale of what we would call *intercommunalité*. From an Parisian point of view the "Verband Groß Berlin" has been an important step towards the creation of the Greater Berlin, an very important *préliminaire*, especially regarding the development of an effective metropolitan transport network still used today. So why do you have this pessimistic evaluation?

Harald Bodenschatz

Well, the evaluation is usually very negative because the expectation of the time was to create a new municipality. Municipality is the right instrument to really do something. The Zweckverband is the result of a compromise, the acceptance of the impossibility of creating a new municipality. Its aims and instruments were restricted. It succeeded in protecting green areas but could not implement a comprehensive transport policy. The development of the economy and the control of urban expansion were not within the reach of the Verband. The context was the social imbalance between very poor and very rich municipalities. It was necessary to have a new financial redistribution that was not on the Zweckverband's agenda, and the richer communities managed to avoid any sharing. Therefore, the social equalization in Greater Berlin could only be realized partially after 1920. As everywhere in the world lots of urban projects and infrastructures were abandoned or remained incomplete, but what's specific in Berlin is that some of them were realized decades later or sometimes 100 years later, at the reunification.

Clément Orillard

About the period following World War II, you talked about of the municipal constitution of 1947 and then jumped to the division between East and West. I was wondering whether this Constitution has been for the whole city or for the western part only. And if the idea of Berlin as one city, and not a city divided in two, and I'm thinking in particular to the Berlin Hauptstadt competition of 1958, was promoted by the professional milieu beyond political divisions?

Harald Bodenschatz

The 1947 constitution concerned the city center of Berlin, and the name « Magistrat » continued to be used to refer to the municipal administration of East Berlin until 1989. But the term « Greater Berlin » was gradually abandoned when the two states separated. Greater Berlin no longer made sense. The construction of the wall has definitively put an end to it. The 1958 Berlin Hauptstadt competition was a political provocation, an instrument of propaganda against communism and a total provocation against the East Berliners. A year later, the GDR responded with a competition for the center of East Berlin, a very interesting competition that has not yet been adequately documented. An informal link existed between planners on both sides who shared the same dogmas for an automotive-oriented city. In the 1950s, the East was more conservative towards the urban fabric and the West more destructive, but thereafter the positions were reversed.

Nathalie Roseau

I was wondering about the political position of the Berliner Umland in 1920?

Harald Bodenschatz

The municipalities around Berlin were against the Greater Berlin constitution of 1920. There was a cultural fighting of the Umland against Greater Berlin.

Frédéric Poucin

I have a question for Dorothee Brantz. You spoke about the shift from the hygienist towards ecology. Could you precise how and when this question of ecology came up.

Dorothee Brantz

Well, that's a very good question, but I would need more time to clarify this change because we have to consider over time the overlap from one paradigm to another. Public health is still a fundamental issue today, but it is addressed from a medical point of view. I think we can make comparisons between our two cities, for example, in Paris, it seems to me that at the beginning of the 20th century, the emphasis was placed on technical infrastructure, water, sewers, to prevent disease and reduce mortality. While at the time, in Berlin and in the major German cities, the debate focused on cultural reform, which was more concerned with the emancipation of the body through outdoor activities, sport and physical culture, it was the so-called « Körperkultur » that accompanied the women's emancipation movement.

Alessandro Panzeri

I have a question about brownfield sites undergoing conversion, such as, for example, the former Tempelhof airport, which has been converted into a metropolitan urban park. What is the policy of metropolitan green spaces on this subject? And are there any links to the ten-kilometer

green corridor you showed us?

Dorothee Brantz

There are links, I'm not actually sure about Tempelhof itself, but there are also attempts to make connections between parts, they are also trying to do this with the S-Bahn lines. There're green corridors along them too. They are not suited for all people to walk along but they are useful for the migration of certain animals. Tempelhof is an interesting example for this kind of conversion and also for the conflict about it. It's a great example of an initiative of citizen making politics leading to a local referendum. People have decided in favor of keeping the airfield as a park instead of building on it. Thanks to the referendum, it is now an open park. There are still pressures to create housing on the fringes. It is an open space with on-going frictions. It is a place to be kept on watching in the future to see what kind of political debates and activities it gives rise to, and what kind of arguments are going to win out. Another aspect is also interesting. In Berlin green spaces are everywhere. When it was an airport it was an area where nobody wanted to live around. Since converted into an open space, property prices are rising around and it's becoming a very attractive area. Parks and public gardens generate real estate valuation and are a factor in gentrification. It turns out to be an argument against the implementation of green spaces. Obviously green spaces shouldn't be a space for privileged people.

Clément Orillard

I have some comments concerning Markus' presentation. Lot of events you talked about for Berlin are mirroring others planning processes occurred in France around the 1980's. For instance, the ZIP programs applied to the *Mietskasernen* – the so-called “de-coring of the blocks” – are similar to the policy applied in the Marais quarter in Paris. It was a similar process of mixing the modern dogma of sun, light and air with the aesthetical preservation of the traditional urban fabric – in case of the Marais, public pathways were introduced through the blocks.

Another point : about the continuing vision of Berlin as a whole notwithstanding the wall. You've showed the *Collective Plan* of Hans Scharoun, connecting the eastern and western parts. How can you explain that?

Markus Tubbesing

At that point the city sides were not apart. We've had a continuous planning of Berlin as a whole until 1961.

Nathalie Roseau

Could you precise what you've called “the mainstream research” in the 1970s, and its discrepancy thereafter?

Markus Tubbesing

What was being taught at the universities around this time was basically the modernist doctrine in urban planning. The approach of the historical city, developed by Geist and Kürvers, was very unique at that time. It was not part of a broader academical program and they were not incorporated into a large group of researchers. It was more or less resisting the mainstream. The situation today is more or less equivalent. Making a handbook about urban planning and contemporary design by referring to the historical city as one of the most obvious patterns would probably isolate you. Urban planning and urban design still reflect a discipline that looks into the future. Referring to the past, to previous urban patterns, is not very welcome. What is mostly being taught at schools of urban design is a kind of new academism under the so-called “innovation” dogma. Only a few teachers today try to address the fact that historical cities are also possible options for contemporary and future living. Geist and Kürvers have opened one's eyes to this existing structure. Reflecting history when it comes to developing Berlin was probably at its highest point after reunification, at the end of the 1990s, as the Senate for Construction under the direction of Hans Stimmann followed the motto of “Critical Reconstruction”. But since then the interest is decreasing gradually.

Loïc Vadelorge

Were there previous resistances against urban projects in Berlin before the 1970s? In France it is a common place to identify resisting movements at the turn of the 1980s, but social history showed that it began in Paris in the 1960s, and even during the 1950s as big areas were demolished mostly in the *faubourgs* – following the so-called policy of *îlots insalubres*. What are the difference between Berlin and Paris?

Markus Tubbesing

I'm not sure of my knowledge about the examples you've pointed out. Is it something coming from the intellectual milieu or from the worker milieu? Concerning Klausener Platz, the inhabitants were mostly law incomer. I didn't witness those times, I read it in some reports. Until 1975, there was basically no culture of resistance, no organized neighborhoods. What I actually found out is that there've been not one single lawsuit intended by tenants against the cancellations of their contracts.

Harald Bodenschatz

In Berlin it started in the new quarters of the city. There was a lot of initiatives which were a starting point. And then the next step was in Kreuzberg.

Markus Tubbesing

The point is that the claims had nothing to do with heritage but social grounds. The people living in were accustomed to their neighborhood and did not want to move.

Harald Bodenschaft

Social housing rents were three time more expensive than for the unrenovated apartments in Kreuzberg.

Markus Tubbesing

Hardt-Waltherr Hämer's argumentation for preserving the city was a more levelled one. It was not merely a question of building heritage but a social and economic approach exploiting the mood that was coming up amongst the population. When it comes to underlining the qualities of the historical city, we have to argue at different levels in order to make it possible, as Hardt-Waltherr Hämer smartly did interacting history, building heritage and social context. We, urban planners, architecture historians, shouldn't try to put history too far up in the agenda. History must come in but at a certain point. Hardt-Waltherr Hämer didn't really argue referring a scientific knowledge of history, he argued at different levels so that, at a certain point, he could bring out a system of argumentation that also incorporated history, of course.

Corinne Jaquand

In France urban history is turned on one side to the policies of heritage, such as the revalorization of late modernism buildings threatened being destroyed, and, on the other side, the memories, based on the documentation of groups of inhabitants and political actors through the social history. The original purpose of our group IGP was also to think over the city in progress – the Greater Paris in progress. So it should also be one of our next challenges to tackle this.

Markus Tubbesing

Our group of historians is working on an exhibition for the jubilee of 100 years of Greater Berlin, that is in 2020, in order to crystallize options for the future. It's extremely difficult to make people following us, because most public participants, and especially the companies involved into city developments, avoid history when coming up to future options, history meaning to them troubles and complications. They're first of all interested in making money on future developments. It's a quite delicate task to explain that learning from the past is a valuable approach to planning and design. In my opinion we're at another quite low point in regarding urban history as being helpful.