

**URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN THE AFTERMATH OF WAR:
An Exploration with Berlin as a Case Study**

by

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The public place in a city can be seen as a reflection of changes in social values, beliefs and social order. The urban elements of a public place serve as a commentary on the human condition through time. The changes that occur in the place as a result of changing social conditions are superimposed over but do not replace the preceding ones. The fabric of the city becomes more and more complex with each accretion. Some characteristics of past layers persist and project themselves into the current one and serve as a testimony to the past conditions. This information is stored as *collective memory* and is conveyed through *perception* of the built form and *remembrance* of associated meanings.

When war affects a city, the multiple layers are damaged to a great extent and the continuity between the past and present becomes less apparent. However, war damage offers the city the opportunity to rectify past errors and re-establish itself based on the positive aspects of the past.

The thesis hypothesizes that *continuity with the past is necessary in reconstructing a city destroyed by war* and this is established through the function of *selective memory*, obviating the layers associated with negative memories and considering those with positive ones. *Berlin* serves as an appropriate illustration offering a deeper understanding of the hypothesis through its own rich history, the effects of World War II and the Cold War and the subsequent ongoing reconstruction processes.

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This thesis aims to understand the impact of war on the social and spatial components of a city and will specifically concentrate on the public domain. The public domain serves as a mirror of the urban community as a collective enterprise. It provides the stage for interactions and communication. It serves as a setting for the collective. The social and spatial aspects of the city are involved in a dialectical relationship more acutely in a public place. The public place thus represents urban social life in general.

The spatial component reflects the dynamics of an urban community. It is the embodiment of the changes that take place in the city as a result of changing social order. At any point the urban public place is not a static representation of the human condition but a dynamic one. The transient nature of this along with the impermanence of human existence makes it imperative to have some referent, a representation of what was in comparison to what is and what will be. This is achieved by certain elements that persist into subsequent layers of urban growth, always standing as a testimony for the evolutionary nature of the city and serving as an instrument for measuring change. The spatial elements of the past persist and provide directions for the present. At any point in time, the city is not a static representation but a dynamic one, and the permanence serves to connect origin to destination. As Rossi says, in his description of an urban artifact: *“The idea of a history as the structure of urban artifacts is affirmed by the continuities that*

exist in the deepest layers of the urban structure, where certain fundamental characteristics that are common to the entire urban dynamics can be seen."¹

It is this continuity with the past layers that illustrates the evolution of a city. This aspect of continuity is realized through the faculty of collective memory in the city. What would be the repercussions if the city was destroyed through some means? Would not such a destruction disrupt spatial order and sever its links with the past? Undoubtedly, there is a disruption in the continuity that establishes and sustains all links between past, present and future. This thesis aims to explore the effects of war on a city in this respect. War results in severe conditions of deprivation and death. It results in disruption of social order and large scale destruction of city spaces. It confronts both the individual and society with very serious questions about the meaning of their existence. It forces them to come to terms with the impacts of their loss, and create a new understanding through reconstruction. Also, since destruction is caused by human thought and action, the need to reconstruct and feel whole again is intensified.

This thesis, through exploration of a city as a reflection of society at every point in time and its destruction caused by war, *proposes that the element of continuity is extremely significant in the reconstruction process of a city.* This is attained through the principle of *selective memory* which is an outcome of the natural human tendency to remember and cherish desirable memories and suppress

¹ Rossi, Aldo. *The Architecture of the City*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1982, p.128.

undesirable ones. This plays an important role in the reconstruction of a city through a process of constructive transformation. This research attempts to clarify this hypothesis by considering the Potsdamer Platz-Leipziger Platz area in the city of Berlin as an illustration.

Berlin has become the focus of world-wide discussions on a wide range of issues, particularly with respect to the reconstruction process after the reunification of Germany and the demolition of the Berlin wall. It has been in the mainstream news for the last eight years. The city is enveloped in a frenzy of architectural activity. It was the impact of World War II that introduced the wall and proposed a division in the heart of a city that was once united and was fast establishing itself as the center of the German Empire.

For centuries the area of Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz have served as important cross-roads. This area reflected every changing trend of Berlin in its essence and can be considered as a microcosm of the larger city. It is for this reason that the location becomes immensely significant as a study area. From its modest beginnings as a location for the market at the edge of the city, it became the center of Imperial powers and subsequently an important commercial center in Berlin. In 1945, bombs pulverized this tract of land and sowed the seeds of division in Germany.² The wall came up within a decade following the war and separated the

² At the time when World War II was coming to an end the Russians occupied one part of Berlin and the Allies occupied the other part. Accordingly Berlin was divided into two cities. The disparity between the two sides resulted in building the wall in 1961.

East from the West. The study area straddled this element of division and itself became reduced to a void, a 'no-man's land'. The term does not imply that the area became unimportant. In fact it was extremely significant as it became the new front line between the two different orders: capitalism on the west and communism on the east. The war removed most traces of the past orders in this area and rendered it suspended and in tension. Currently, with the removal of the wall, there have been several competitions held for reconstruction of this area. Unfortunately, the removal of the wall has unleashed conflicting ideals and recent reconstruction processes are torn between choices of catering to the wave of consumerism sweeping the city, or to refer to an idealized distant past. In the meantime, the memories associated with the area are slowly receding into oblivion. In fact, *"Each day in Berlin one finds oneself losing touch a little more with all that has gone on there before."*³

The *first* part of this thesis is an exploration into the social-spatial relationship and how they inform each other in the evolution of the city. It also helps understand the layering of the city through the above process, where the spatial reflects any changes in the social. Through this exploration the aspect of continuity is revealed. Berlin's rich intense history and growth is studied in detail to explicate the relationship between the social and spatial components of this case study, thereby providing an understanding of a city in general. This part will also deal with the destruction caused by war and the impact that it will have on the social and spatial components and on the disruption of continuity with the past layers, again employing Berlin as an illustration to substantiate this

³ Lawday, David., "Hidden Colors", *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 279, no. 3, May 1997, p.40

phenomenon. The *second* part will explore the significance of continuity in the reconstruction process elucidating some ideals of reconstruction based on this rationale. Berlin serves as an example through the study of the changes that have taken place in the city from post-war times till now, explicating the premise of continuity through selective memory informing and abetting reconstruction. The *third* part will present conclusions drawn from the above exploration. It will also outline the relevance of such a study today and define future directions of studies extending from this research.

PART I
CITY AND WAR

A city is many things. It has two essential components - social and spatial. Socially, the city refers to a collection of groups of people in a particular place. “*What is the Citie, but the People? True, the People are the Citie.*”⁴ Social implies the functions of expression and exchange of ideas and this takes place in a public place through interactions. These interactions are governed by changes in the value system of the city. The spatial component serves as a stage for interaction and communication among the people. It also serves as a representation for the social and is governed by social changes. The city remains the same with respect to its location but its spaces and structure get altered repeatedly adapting to the changes in its social essence.

The constituents of the city most pertinent in illustrating the social-spatial connection can be listed as follows:

- individuals who may share a few common traits, values and beliefs.
- communication as a tool to foster interpersonal relationships between individuals
- a delineated space which acts as a context and serves as the medium for interactions among individuals

⁴Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, act 3, scene 1

This inter-relationship between the social and spatial is apparent in the city of Berlin. Berlin is a remarkable city, mostly owing to its rich long historic past. The city itself is an embodiment of conflicting socio-political orders that have been instrumental in shaping it. These factors have always determined future directions. In fact, Siegfried Kracauer in his book, *Streets in Berlin and Elsewhere*, has described Berlin thus:

“One can differentiate between two types of cityscapes: those that are consciously formed, and those that arise without design. The latter....are not compositions, but rather accidental creations. Their elements emerge out of a range of diverse interests to produce a cityscape that is as little designed as nature itself, and which resembles a landscape in that it maintains itself unconsciously. Before my window, the city condenses into an image that is as wondrous as the spectacle of nature. This landscape is artless Berlin. Unintentionally she speaks out her contradictions - her toughness, her openness, her co-existence, her splendor.”⁵

This passage describes the character of the city and alludes to the nature of evolution, in terms of natural and designed features. This was Berlin before World War II. Berlin is a typical example of the city that has let natural forces of society shape and mold its physical presence. But its nature changed drastically after World War II. The war altered its natural course of evolution by disrupting the existing and past social orders and disrupting their spatial representations. It becomes obvious at this point regarding the appropriateness of Berlin in explaining this inter-relationship. However, prior to delving more into the transitions that have taken place in the history of Berlin and their impact on the city structure and form, it may be useful to study its generative forces - social forces - that influenced its manifestation.

⁵ quoted by: Stegers, Rudolf, “Artless Berlin”, *World Cities: Berlin*, (ed.) Alan Balfour, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995, p.56

The Social

Activities in the Social Realm

Humans are intrinsically social, meaning they interact with each other. Thus the term social, in the simplest sense implies interaction. It is the interaction between individuals that constitutes the collective. This interaction takes place in the public place of the city, which thus becomes the social space or the social realm. Thus, the two basic activities that take place in the social realm can be identified as:

- individual expression of views with respect to values, beliefs, aspirations and experiences
- collective sharing of these ideas

It is in the company of others that an individual gets the opportunity to express oneself. Being in the presence of others provides the reference for evaluating oneself. It also enables the individual to contribute to and gain from the plethora of collective knowledge. It is only by entering into relationships with others as a mode of personal expression that it is possible to assert the much sought after freedom that forms the essence of human existence. The activities of expression and exchange are carried out through interaction, which employ inquiry and communication as its faculties. Thus social interactions foster the development of personal wholeness. Aristotlean philosophy explains that human beings alone have the capacity to perceive and distinguish right from wrong, just from unjust and it is the realization and communication of these perceptions that leads to the establishment of the social sphere. While communicating *about* something results in contemplation and is more on a personal level and introverted, communicating *with* is

the basis of community. Human beings are always more than what they perceive about themselves; community by promoting self-expression enables every one to understand oneself. Thus an individual is formed only by attaining a sense of being by means of communication in a community. That which is experienced needs to be communicated and tested against the volume of collective knowledge. It is in this context that communication in terms of inquiry surfaces as an important tool. This involves a constant search, questioning, criticism and evaluation of the experience through the facilities of politics, arts, sciences, philosophy and religion. Communication as inquiry thus becomes an effort to elucidate our experiences. Communication is as a result of our efforts to clarify our thought processes.

Ordering the Social

The process of interaction between people becomes 'social' only when restrained and guided by value systems. "*The public realm, as the common world gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak.*"⁶ The value system that governs the social is based on the beliefs and attributes of that particular urban community. This governs the means and ways of interaction and communication. It establishes certain ground rules that prevent anarchy. In fact, the social realm was not recognized prior to the formation of the city-state. It is only after the establishment of a social order that the public and private realm were formed and the public perceived as a stage for interactions. It is also this communication that validates the establishment of social order.

⁶ Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958, p.52

Social Dynamics

The human condition is an element of change through time. We are all creatures of time and change. Humans thrive on change which is an essential human condition. Hence, the values of the social realm is subjected to periodic changes and the social is in a constant state of flux. "*Man in his creativity is a source of change, of historical time.*"⁷ Changes in social values and other principles that order society are evinced from the past societies. The medieval society was more of a closed order and advocated that the city was an extension of the family. It did not have clearly distinguished private and public realms and so did not have a social sphere as was evident in later societies.⁸ This has been described as a *Gemeinschaft* community by sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies. Following this, came the rise of the social when the act of expression in public gained impetus. The medieval cities were ruled by the king and society became more of a rational order than a theological one. Guilds were formed as trade gained impetus, leading to specializations amidst what was a fairly uniform society. The private and public realms became distinct and social interactions were restricted to the public realm. This led to the rise of the social. Society continues to become more specialized with the advent of industrialization becoming progressively open towards the nineteenth century resulting in the *Gesselschaft* type of organization.⁹

⁷ Tinder, Glenn, *Community: Reflections on a Tragic Ideal*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, p.8

⁸ Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958

⁹ Sociologists like Ferdinand Tonnies and Emile Durkheim have analyzed changes in the European social realm from medieval to modern times. Tonnies used the terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesselschaft* to describe the two kinds of social organizations. He believed that the close knit associations in traditional societies are no longer in existence. He described *Gemeinschaft* as that in which people are bound by sacred values and shared traditions. Commonality stemmed from common identity and supreme manifestation of the collective will. The other kind is *Gesselschaft* which was

To summarize, the social activities of expression and exchange take place in the public realm which is governed by social values. Society is not static but is in a process of constant change owing to change in values. At the same time, human beings crave for a sense of permanence as associated with immortality. Since human beings are themselves not immortal, they strive to create objects of permanence that will endure. They try to achieve this in the physical environments that they create. The next section describes the spatial as being a reflection of the social and how the social dynamics manifest themselves in creating the spatial. The social place serves as a reflection of the changes in social order and owing to its relative permanence, compared to the mortality of human life, stands as a testimony to the human condition at any given phase.

The Spatial

The physical public place is a reflection of the social. It is created to cater to the social functions of the public social realm. It is the outcome of production of the social and hence can be termed as the social place. Most of the urban experiences take place in the public realm. *“Facilitating access and a range of other uses, the public domain has historically provided perhaps the most accurate mirror of society as a collective enterprise.”*¹⁰

characterized by heterogeneity of values and traditions. In such a society, the individual becomes the fundamental unit as opposed to the former in which the family is the cynosure of society.

¹⁰ Curran, Raymond J., *Architecture and the Urban Experience*, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York, 1983, p.3

Prior to proceeding with how social changes affects the spatial, it is necessary to explicate the distinction between the terms space and place and understand why place is more relevant to this thesis. Space and place are familiar terms to us and sometimes their meanings tend to overlap. Space is more abstract than place. In fact place can be described as humanized space. Yi-Fu Tuan clarifies these concepts as: *“What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.”*¹¹ We have already seen how spatial is a reflection of the social context, that is endowed with values, aspirations and beliefs. It is for this reason that the concept of place becomes important in this thesis.

The spatial component of the public domain is fashioned, shaped and invested with social activities over a finite historical time frame. Social interaction in non-institutionalized public places is essential for community. Development of these kind of places tuned to fostering relationships should be emphasized. Public places facilitate this interaction. They are meant to support and enhance human interaction as the physical space of the city provides a setting for the collective. People come together and learn about others. Here the range of permissible action is analyzed and limits established on public behavior and social conduct. They are the embodiment of interaction. They foster social life and provide a stage for public life to exist. Public places thus become very significant as hubs of communication and human interaction. This is owing to the fact that it is in public places that people meet and express themselves. Thus these places of communications which comprise a complex web of interactions constitute the very basis on which the essence

¹¹ Tuan, Yi-Fu, *Space and Place*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, p.6

of a community depends. The public social intercourse that take place in the city are of tremendous significance as they feed the storehouse of collective knowledge that has immense cultural values and thus contribute to cultural development. Interactions require physical movement through physical channels. The ease with which interactions can take place is greatly influenced by the organization of the spaces of a city. The nature of space which fosters these interactions becomes a series of transitions from one epoch to another.

The urban public place is a product of the social. It can be comprehended as the outcome of social organization and operations at any given point of time. The social place, in addition to serving as a context for expression and exchange is also representation of the collective values. It is this aspect of the public place that serves as a record for the changing social values for posterity. By virtue of this quality, it acts as a vehicle of change and establishes a continuity in the fabric of the city that speaks of its evolution.

Spatial Reflections of the Social

“Once a place displays traces of habitation, it becomes telenomic, i.e, the print of human action.”¹²

The public place of a city has a greater function in reflecting the imbued social values. The spatial component of the city is as complex as its social one. The spatial aspect of a city reflects this complexity in all its forms, in the organization and juxtaposing

¹² Patrascu, Dragos. “Urban Proportions”, *Reflections: The Journal of the School of Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, vol.6, Spring 1989, p. 32

of spaces and masses. The built environment in this case becomes that which signifies or communicates. Hence it becomes representational. Society is dynamic and is always in the process of changing. The spatial being a representation of the social also reflects this change in its essence. This change is in accordance with the forces that generate these productions.

Spatial Dynamics

The changing social values and their reflection in the spatial can be evinced by taking a look at the general evolution in European cities. For instance, the early medieval order decreed a closed organization of spaces. Since the entire community functioned as a family, the spaces were tightly packed and the need for open interactive spaces was not expressed. During the imperial period, the public place came into being. It primarily served as an honorific place celebrating the power of the king. The spaces were less intimate in scale than the medieval cities. With this came the trend of creating monumental buildings to represent the social life for posterity. The nineteenth century saw the transformation of the city into a more democratic sphere where social interactions became paramount. This resulted in creation of spaces for debates and gathering. The organization of the city became more structured and the streets were organized in a grid iron manner. The increase in population and expansion of the city necessitated these reforms. This way, each inhabitant could be identified by his/her own specific co-ordinate in the Cartesian grid. Thus the city always transformed itself in accordance with the changes in the social sphere.

Permanence in the Urban Public Place

Since change is part of the basic human condition, the social public place reflects the human condition in the city. The earlier section (Chapter 1, p.5) talks about time and change being inter-related and how change is necessary for human existence. Though at times, the relationship between time and change may appear paradoxical.

- If time is a continuous passage then there is the question of whether a permanent value exists.
- On the other hand, changeless permanence would exclude activity and creativity which are essential parameters for human existence.

It is at this point that the spatial aspect of the city comes in. Since human existence is itself transient, we seek permanence in the works that we create, in the cities that we build. It must be understood that, as these changes are manifested and develop in a physical space they do not occur in a vacant or a neutral place but in a place which is replete with earlier such productions. Thus the space in a city provides an accurate record of earlier value systems. In addition to this, it also gives directions for future development in the city. The present has within itself, concepts of the past and the future. The present is itself a result of experience of past through memory and remembrance. It is also the result of experience of future through anticipation. *“What is happening is what the past has become and what is about to become is what the future will disclose.”*¹³

¹³ Harris, Errol E., *The Reality of Time*, State University of New York Press, 1988, p.28

It is necessary for the past to act as a referent for the present in order to understand the origins and destination of the present condition. This is achieved through persistence of certain aspects in the city. This persistence is what constitutes the aspect of collective memory which defines continuity in the city. According to Poete, there are certain elements in the city that persist in monuments and patterns of streets.¹⁴ He argues that the plan in fact, acts as a generator for subsequent urban forms. With this as the starting point the city evolves and grows, it deforms and transforms its original shapes. *“Cities tend to remain on their axes of development, maintaining the position of their original layout....”*¹⁵

Since these elements are representatives of the order of the cities and human condition at every point, directly referring to the past, they also serve as referents to the past orders. Thus in a city, there are several layers that are superimposed over each other. Since the past layers persist, they are experienced even in the present. I will address the significance that this continuity imbues with reference to this research in a later chapter. The physical form and structure of social public place persists over centuries revealing subliminal meanings that are products of the past. *“The city and the architecture represent what cannot be seen...thus becoming the means by which one is able to “see” the invisible.”*¹⁶

¹⁴ Rossi, Aldo, *The Architecture of the City*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982, p.59

¹⁵ Rossi, Aldo, *The Architecture of the City*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982, p.59

¹⁶ Agrest, Diana. *Architecture From Without*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991, p.112

Study Area: Definition

This thesis considers a segment of the city of Berlin which is a representation of the changes that have taken place in Berlin over the past two centuries. The study area is a plot of land about one square kilometer, on either side of the location of the Berlin Wall.

This area includes two important urban spaces of historic importance, the Leipziger Platz and the Potsdamer Platz. This area is:

- a public place and a representative section for the architecture of the entire city.
- illustrates the architecture of Berlin through similarity and disparity with respect to the city.
- is an important part of the city.
- has a rich historical past.

The relationship between the social and spatial is

evident here. It is for these reasons that the Potsdamer-Leipziger Platz area is significant to this research.

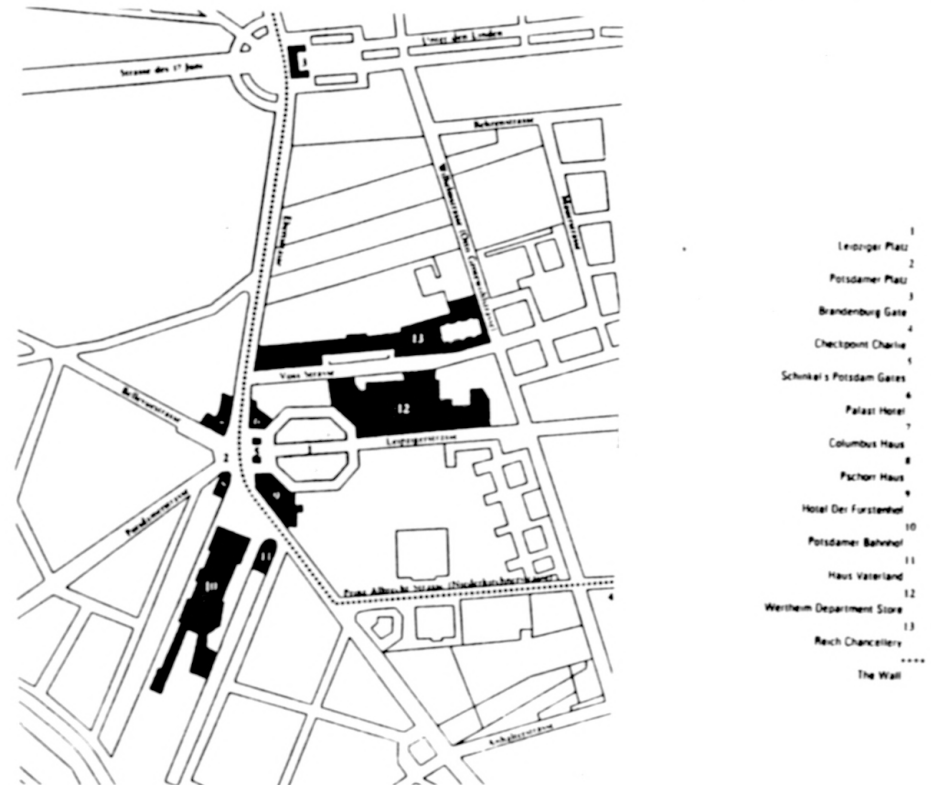


Figure 1: Plan of the Study Area - Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz.
(Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, Rizzoli, New York 1990, p 2)

As Alan Balfour has noted:

*“.....as time moved around this place, past intentions remained continually present.”*¹⁷

Berlin: Orders and Landscapes

It becomes necessary at this point, to identify this area with reference to the larger context of what is now known as Germany and in particular, to that of Berlin. Since the urban spaces came into existence in the middle of the eighteenth century, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the changes in the city from this period to the time of World War II.

Potsdamer Platz was created during the imperial rule in the latter part of the eighteenth century. This period marked the gradual shift in the society from an imperial to a liberal one. The industrial revolution further abetted this trend and introduced a new order of consumerism. This led to an intensifying dissatisfaction with autocracy. The nationalistic movement in the Prussian empire began to gain a strong foothold during the mid-nineteenth century. The transformation into a new German empire took place in 1871. The chapter will address this transforming social context with respect to Berlin since these are extremely pertinent to understand the shifting urban space and form of Berlin. The changing ideals of the Prussian empire, and hence Berlin, played an important role in

¹⁷ Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, Rizzoli, New York 1990, p.43

the city's evolution. In order to create a better understanding of the plethora of information about Berlin and its socio-spatial history, I chose to adopt the terms of “*Order*” and “*Landscape*”¹⁸ to denote the social order and the related spatial representations.

Origins

The city of Berlin came into existence in the thirteenth century on the banks of the river Spree (Fig. 2). In conjunction with its twin city of Colln on the other side of the river, it grew in importance as the juncture of several European routes. The early medieval city represented a community that was ruled by the absolute power of God. This was true of other medieval cities as well. The arrival of Friedreich von Hohenzollern in 1411 marked a shift in the power from God to a shared authority between God and the King. He was sent by the Holy Roman Emperor to

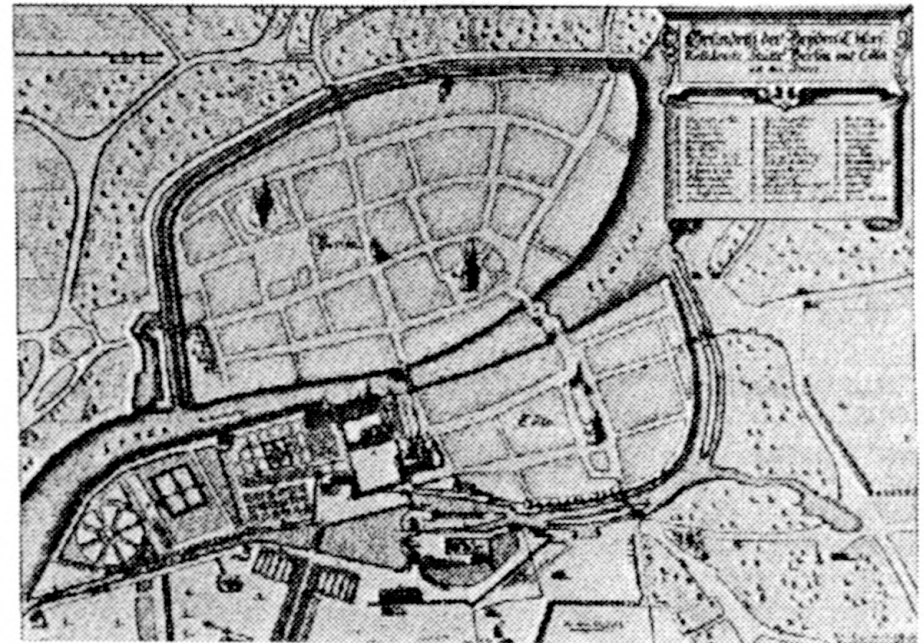


Figure 2. Berlin-Merian's city plan of 1652 (Source: Braunfels, Wolfgang, *Urban Design in Western Europe*, Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1988, p.213)

¹⁸ Alan Balfour uses these terms in his book, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, to represent the spatial changes in Berlin, especially in the Potsdamer Platz area, since the time the Achtek was created till World War II.

protect the Berliners from local barons who were harassing the citizens. This marked the beginning of a 500 year rule under the Hohenzollerns who rose from the level of petty princes to powerful monarchs. Friedrich von Hohenzollern appointed himself as the Elector soon after his arrival. He and successive Electors brought security to the city from the barons and contributed to its prosperity which continued until the Thirty Year War in the mid seventeenth century. After this Friedrich Wilhelm made plans to fortify the city of Berlin and construction was carried out from 1658-83. Establishment of the city wall provided a focus to the urban development of the city. This was followed by the establishment of major avenues, chief among them was the Unter den Linden which connected the Elector Schloss to Tiergarten. The imperial order was very instrumental in subsequent developments in planning and design that are of import to this thesis.

Order: Imperial ; Landscape 1

In the second half of the seventeenth century, beginning with the rule of Friedrich Wilhelm I (1657-1713) and followed by the rule of Friedrich Wilhelm II (1688-1740), the city expanded, and three major suburbs -

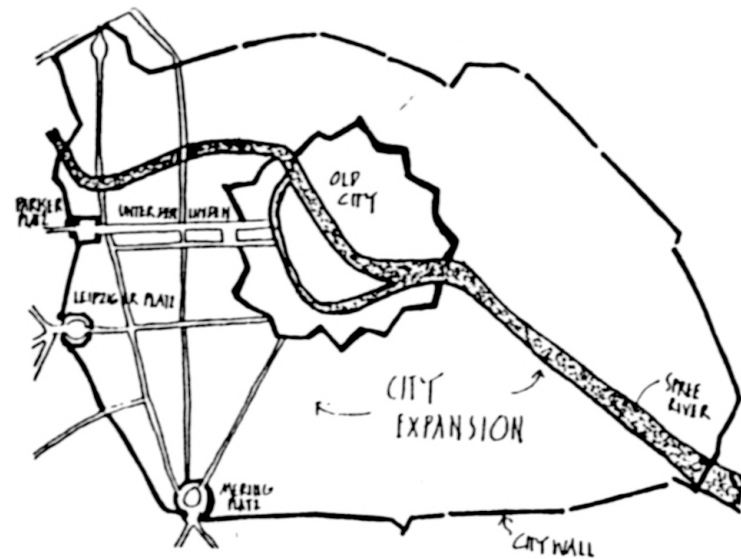


Figure 3: Illustration showing location of the gates with respect to the city wall and city center.

Friedrichswerder, Dorotheen Stadt and Friedreich Stadt - were established around the old town. In order to make the entrance to the city more ceremonious three city gates were established abutting three major urban spaces (Fig.3).¹⁹ There were major spatial organizations in the city too. Spaces were organized in a grid iron pattern, accentuating the rational order that was gaining popularity in the city. The grid epitomized the desire of the rulers to control the city. From 1740, for the next hundred years, the wall constituted the western edge of the city. The northern city

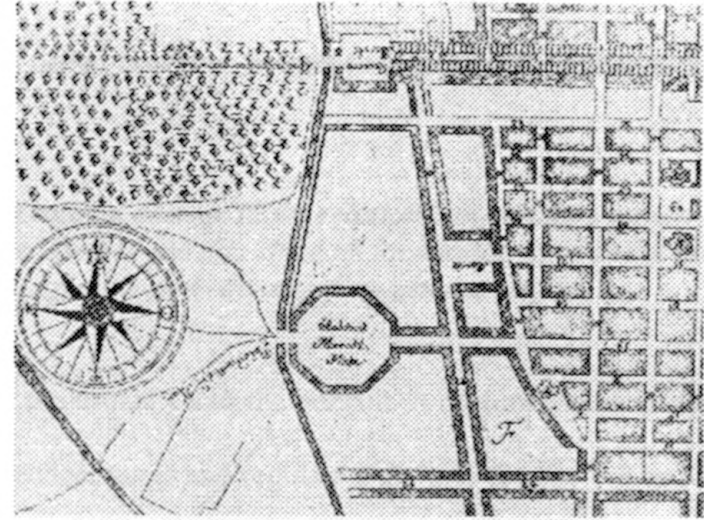


Figure 4: Achtek, Berlin plan in 1750's. (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p. 19)

gate, known as **Hallesches Gate**, marked the point at which Unter den Linden entered the city. This was connected to a square, now known as Pariser Platz. The southern one was known as the **Brandenburg gate** and the point of entry is marked by a circle (now, Mehring Platz). From this space three major streets radiated, the central one known as Friedrichstrasse. The middle city gate is the most significant to this thesis. It was the **Leipziger gate** (Fig.3) connected to the city wall by means of an octagonal space. This space was then known as the Achteck or eight corners (now, Leipziger Platz) and was originally conceived as a market place (Fig.

¹⁹ These spaces by the gates were established to create a more ceremonious entry into the city. However, they served a dual purpose. Friedrich Wilhelm I was renowned for disciplining his army and these spaces allowed for assembling the troops (Balfour, Alan. *Berlin -Politics of Order*, p.17)

4). Earlier market activities were mostly held within the city itself and the city center proved to be the place of interaction between the city dweller and the peasant. The newly imposed rational imperial order, however, sought to segregate the peasants from the city dweller.

“The idea of a marketplace on the edge of the city presented a radical change in the relation between the peasant and the city dweller. The peasant farmers who had brought produce to the city since its foundation were being held at the gate. Keeping the peasants at the edge acknowledged the deep division between country life and life in the new city.”²⁰

This intended to represent the radical change in relationships between the urbanite and the peasant. A custom wall was erected to the west of this market place. Its main purpose was to control trade, collect taxes and regulate entry into the city.²¹ The wall was about three meters high and bounded the western edge of the city. Beyond this wall, to the west, was a hub created as a result of radiating roads, one leading to Potsdam and the other to Charlottenburg. The two spaces of Achteck and juncture of the two roads (now, Leipziger Platz and Potsdamer Platz area) were conceived in association with each other as an informal gathering place, an extension of market activity.

²⁰ Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p.17

²¹ Its main significance though, was that it marked the place where later, the Berlin wall would be built. It marked the point of division that would happen almost two centuries later.

Order:Imperial; Landscape 2

Meantime, the order in the city which was a compromise of the divine and the aristocratic, had gradually been changing and by the eighteenth century, became totally aristocratic (Fig. 5). Friedrich the Great came to the throne in 1740 and established a neo-classical style of architecture. The Brandenburg gate was built as a testimony to this in 1789. The changing ideals were further asserted through Friedrich Gilly's design.²² It was the design of a monument to Frederick Wilhelm II and glorified the imperial order. It becomes obvious at this point of the increasing shift in the reality of the city to a more rational order. This stemmed from the thought that it was the role of the aristocracy

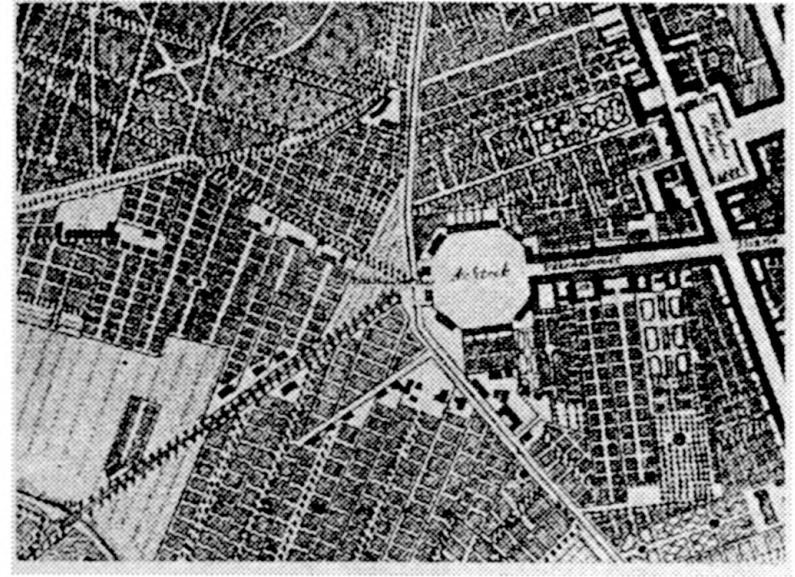


Figure 5: Achtek, Berlin - Rhoden plan of 1772. (Source: Balfour, Alan Berlin: *The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p. 19)

²² Gilly's monument was representative of the climax of imperialism, immortalizing Fredrick II. It was a reflection of the period in Berlin when there was rejuvenation of arts, culture and literature. It was a manifestation of patriotism to exalt the monarch and commemorate the king who had earned the title of Fredrick the Great. "This program is at once highly rational and deeply emotional, logical in its planning and overdramatized in its pictorial presentation." (*Schinkel's Berlin*, p.49) Fredrick Gilly conceptualized a reunification of all past meanings in the city and design a universal structure that would find its significance in the universal order. It was the replacement of the order of the Kings and Gods by that of the rational.

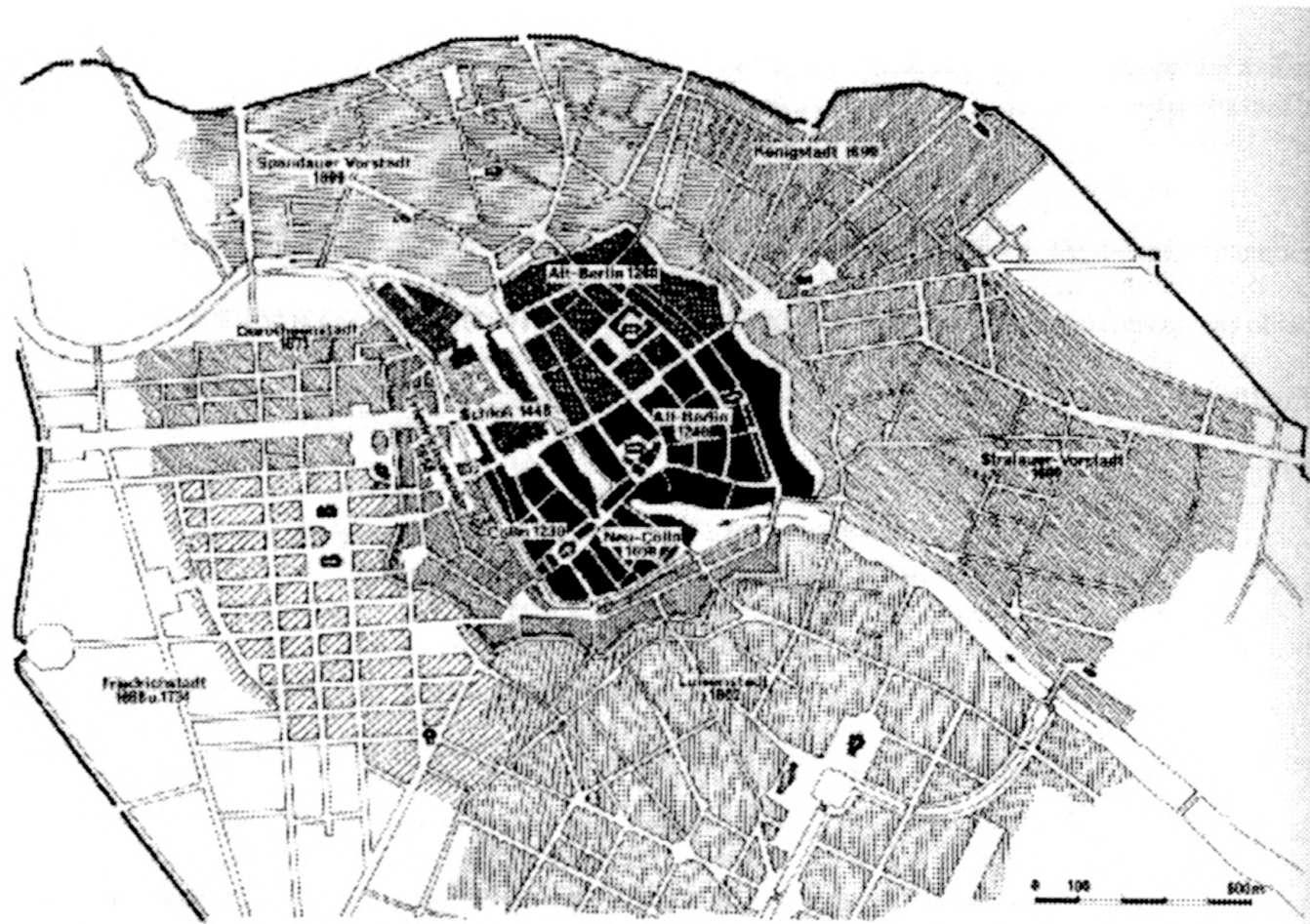


Figure 6: Berlin and its new towns, 1800. (Source: Braunfels, Wolfgang, *Urban Design in Western Europe*, Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1988, p.215)

to shape the city.

“The new plan was in direct opposition to the medieval city. It was an autocratic imposition projected to make the city controllable. It molded reality in relation to rational prediction and to simple notions of universal order, demanding that the city be the project of ideas rather than random incident.”²³

The city thus became the instrument of imperial order. Intense grid patterns in the city planning are the manifestations of this order. There is an obvious difference in the social order of the imperial city from the medieval city. While the former was objective the latter implied a subjective order. Though the Achtek was designed as a market place, its intended function was never fulfilled. Towards the end of the imperial rule, the Achtek became a formal place for the bourgeoisie. Thus the space became more formalistic as opposed to the idea of serving as a market place.

Order: Liberalism; Landscape 3

After the Napoleonic wars in the beginning of the nineteenth century there were tremendous changes in the social trends in Berlin. This was further spurred on by the advent of the Industrial Revolution. This brought about a wave of dissatisfaction with the imperial dominance. It was at this point that another visionary named Karl Friedreich Schinkel came to the forefront and put forth a design

²³ Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p.17

of a church that was a testimony to the war of liberation after the defeat of Napoleon.²⁴ Schinkel, Fredrick Gilly's pupil, designed a monument, a church to be built in the Achtek. This project, like the one designed earlier by Gilly, was not built. Schinkel however, was instrumental in designing the Schinkel's Gates in 1823 at the point of entry into the city from the Leipziger Platz.

A significant event that happened in 1848 was the revolution against autocracy. It highlighted the changing ideals in the Berlin society. In this fight for liberalism, the nobles joined hands with the poor and worked for a common cause. Although the rebellion was put down severely by the rulers, it marked the alienation of the proletariat from the autocrats. During the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm (1797-1888) who ruled from 1861-1870, all the German states were unified and Berlin became the capital of unified Germany. It was during this time that the custom wall was removed and the area became the center of the expanded Berlin. In the meantime the German society began to nurture the ideals of liberalism. Power and governance shifted from the ruler to the masses. Towards the twentieth century, this became more and was abetted by the growth of the industry.

²⁴ At first glance, the ideology of Schinkel's and Gilly's seem opposite. Gilly's design represented the manifestation of German intellectual enlightenment. Schinkel's on the other hand, represented the nationalistic sentiment. While Gilly's monument was to commemorate a dead king, Schinkel's was for the living. However, they were similar with respect to the fact that both the designs attempted to involve the overall context and not merely the building. Schinkel's design reveals the Italian influence.

Order: Mechanistic; Landscape 4

The city towards the end of the nineteenth century was thus continuously being formed and deformed by the elements of commerce and trade and the demands imposed on it by industry (Fig. 7). Architecture began to carry messages of a commercial city. City life was no longer understood in terms of personal relationships. *“Architecture, history’s most forceful instrument of permanence, disintegrates into commodification along with all else.”*²⁵ This



Figure 7: Photograph showing Potsdamer Platz in 1901 (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli Publications Inc., 1990, p.62)

led to the construction of new building types including shopping centers, department stores, railroad stations and factories. Potsdamer Platz began to

be shaped by the machines of necessity - the trolley car, streetcars and railways, its limits determined by the network of transportation. Thus, the products of industry influenced the physical reality of the city.

The first railway line was laid in 1860 and marked the beginning of a completely different order. The function of Potsdamer Platz altered considerably. It now became the hub of railroad and street car transportation. In 1900, it was estimated that 600 trams passed

²⁵

Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p.57

through this area in an hour.

“All of these modes of transportation came to Potsdamer Platz and competed for space with pedestrians and horses. They clattered, flashed their lights, shook the ground, and moved incessantly.”²⁶

The changing nature of the place was reflected in the establishment of a railway station at Potsdamer Platz. There was also a subway which had an entrance at the Potsdamer Platz. The growing importance of Potsdamer Platz as the hub of transport attracted several hotels, cafes etc. Potsdamer Strasse became the main commercial street in the beginning of the twentieth century. Buildings on this Strasse were constructed to promote consumerism which became a way of life. New building types came into existence to cater to this type of culture. Leipziger Platz also became the bustling center for trade and commerce. Wertheim Department Store (Fig.8), considered as the ‘Mecca’ of commerce in the early twentieth century, was built at Leipziger Platz in 1904. This transformed the Leipziger Platz area into a bustling center for trade. Thus, the nature of the

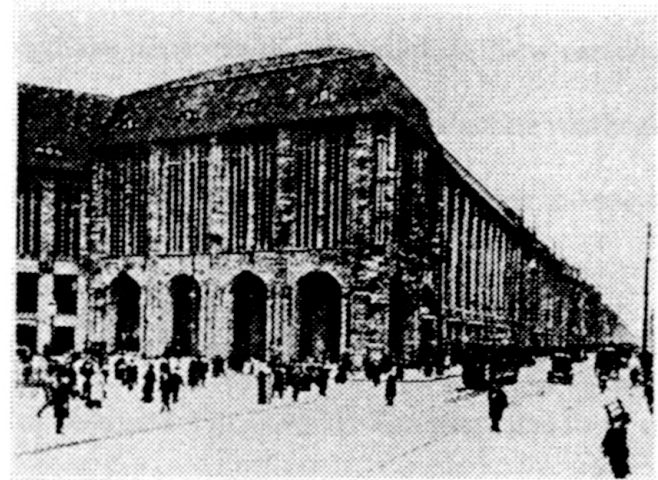


Figure 8: Wertheim Department Stores - begun in 1896 and completed in 1904. Architect: Alfred Messel. (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p.57)

²⁶

Ladd, Brian, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in Urban Landscape*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, p.116

study area once more underwent a profound change reflecting the society at that time.

The order of the city was coming to be dominated less by political forces and more by economic factors. “*Architecture has moved far from the simple, heroic constructions of Friedrich Gilly. It has moved from being an art capable of making the transitory permanent to become itself a product of the transitory.*”²⁷ The city thus was emerging from its theocratic and autocratic²⁸ order to become an unstable product of commerce. The unity was achieved through the networks of infrastructure. New paradigms of architecture were created as a result. Notions of commerce slowly tended to replace what existed before. Architecture was beginning to lose its autocracy, its will to dominate and command. Instead it was assuming a subservient role - that of luring the society.

At the time when these changes were happening in Berlin, World War I broke out in Europe. Though the consequences of World War I was not as dramatic or drastic as WW II, it nevertheless left a path of destruction in its wake. The war came to an end on November 11, 1918 with the signing of the armistice following abdication of the Kaiser. This marked the end of the imperial rule

²⁷

Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p.51

²⁸

Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin : The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990. These are terms used by Alan Balfour to represent rule by Gods and rule by Kings respectively.

in Berlin. The study area was not badly affected by the first world war in terms of the physical fabric although there were a few important social changes.

Order: Commercialism; Landscape 5

Even ten years after the war, the city was still caught in the surge of commercialism. Potsdamer Platz retained its image as the center of commercialism. If anything, this image became emphasized after the war for various reasons. Primarily, the abdication of the Kaiser made Berlin completely free from the imperial rule and caused consumerism to be manifested more emphatically in the city. The city remained disconnected and city life could no longer be understood in terms of personal relationships. A period of hyperinflation was followed in 1923 by economic depression.

Order: Early Modernism; Landscape 6

In the years that followed, there was an increasing unhappiness regarding the image of architecture as a representation of consumerism. There were some revolutionary dreams at this juncture which were aimed at redeeming the city from its current state. Two noteworthy attempts in the twenties and thirties of this century were Modernism and the wave of National Socialism. They sought to achieve the same goal, but they were quite different from each other in their means. While one was aimed at relinquishing all past affiliations of architecture in an attempt to purify it and let its honesty reveal itself, the other reflected on the aristocratic

nature of architecture, an architecture that could command and control. The manifestations of these are clearly evinced in the study area. *“The dreams of both Hitler and Mendelsohn met with dreadful poignancy between Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz...”*²⁹

Erich Mendelsohn with his modernistic vision and Adolf Hitler with his megalomaniacal desire to create architecture to control, were diametrically opposed to each other. However, they were both grounded in their desire to raise architecture from the quagmire of consumerism. Mendelsohn designed the Columbus Haus (Fig. 9) as an expression of Modernism as the sole savior. This was constructed at Potsdamer Platz. It reflected his overall strife for redemption of the city. *“The city would be reformed, cleansed of all deception and memory, to allow the emergence of a new man and a new culture.”*³⁰

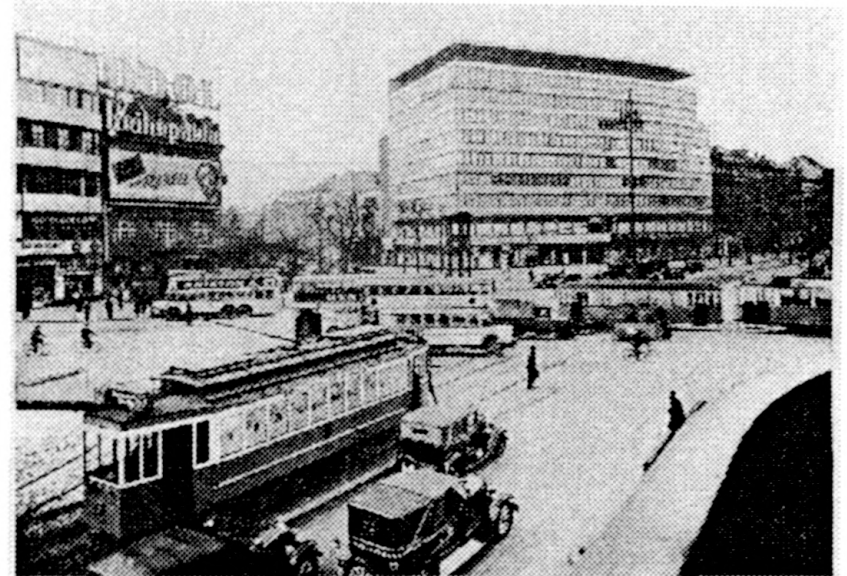


Figure 9: Columbus Haus viewed from Potsdamer Platz, 1932. (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p.64)

²⁹

Balfour, Alan, “The European City of Desire”, *The Architect’s Journal*, vol.105, no.25, June 24, 1992, p.31

³⁰ Balfour, Alan, “The European City of Desire”, *The Architect’s Journal*, vol. 105, no. 25, June 24, 1992, p.31

Columbus Haus was in direct opposition to Hitler's ideals. After Hitler came to power, Modern architecture had to take a backstage for a short while. Columbus Haus was reduced to a mere appendage to the colossal place constructed for Herman Goering, in Hitler's plans of Berlin.

Order: National Socialism; Landscape 7

Hitler was dissatisfied with Berlin's obsession with consumerism. His intention was to cleanse the city from such vile desires and to unify Berlin under the Socialistic ideal. He had a vision of architecture assuming its old place of aristocracy. In achieving this, Hitler had no concern about the natural order of the city. In fact his motive was to demolish the city to pave the way for the new plan. Hitler after he appointed himself as the Chancellor/ Head of State in 1934, commissioned Albert Speer to take care of the design for the city of Berlin. Prior to that, Speer was asked to design an extension to the

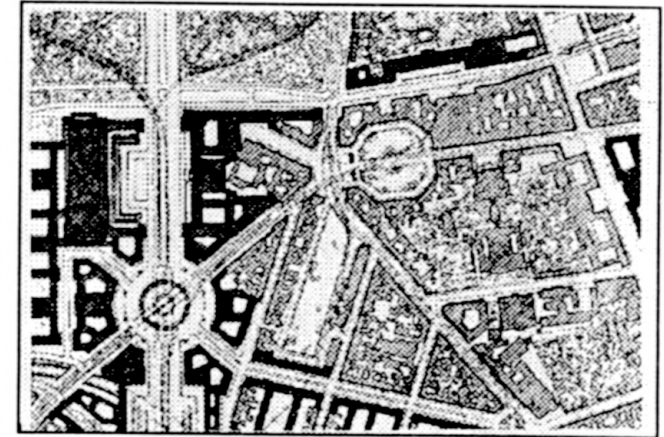


Figure 10: Segment of Speer's plan in the vicinity of the study area. (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p.90)

Chancellery on Voss Strasse. This was completed in a year and was ready for occupation in 1939. In the meantime, war was breaking out in several parts of Europe. In March 1938 Germany attacked Austria. The following year, Hitler's troops occupied Prague and soon besieged Poland. This forced the Allies to declare war on Germany.

In spite of the massive conflicts that Germany was involved in, Hitler continued to work with single-minded determination to materialize his plans for reconstructing Berlin. Speer had begun working on the master plan of the city in 1933 (Figs. 10,11). The mammoth project was scheduled to be completed by 1950. Demolition to make way for the colossal structures proposed in the plan were already beginning to take place in isolated parts of the city. In 1939, when war broke out, a model of the future Berlin as envisioned by Hitler was built.

In the meantime preparations were being made for the House of Tourism to be built on Potsdamer Strasse (Fig. 12), very close to the Platz. The site was cleared and construction was completed by 1939. This probably was one of the very few buildings that actually were constructed and continued to stay even after the war. Though Hitler had ambitious plans of finishing the rebuilding process by 1950, history took its own course. Germany was being attacked. Finally, on April 30th, 1945, when the war was about to come to an end, Hitler fled to the bunkers beneath the Chancellery and took his life. This place, very close to the Leipziger Platz

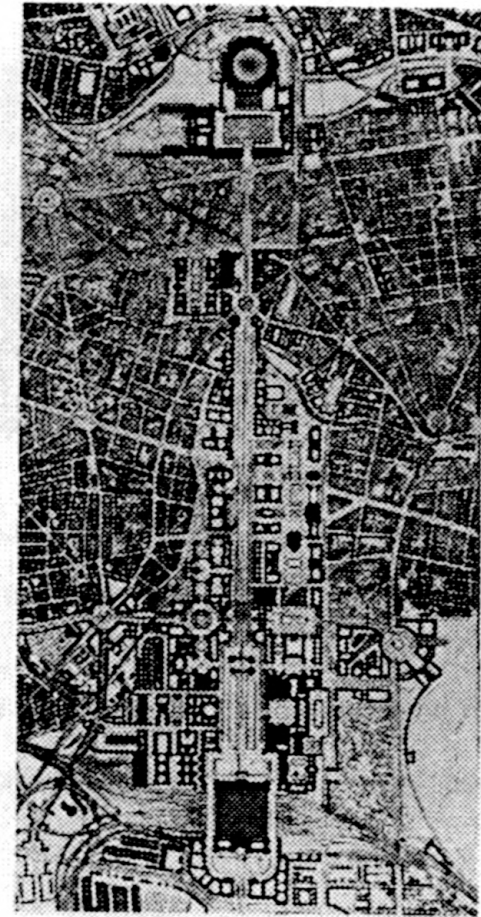


Figure 11: Speer's plan for reconstructing Berlin, 1940. (Source: Helmer, Stephen D., *Hitler's Berlin: The Speer's Plans for Reshaping the Central City*, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985, fig.16)

continued to be a place of immense interest for a long time due to the memory associated with the place.

Although Hitler's idea was to demolish major parts of the city to make way for his plan, he could not completely eliminate history. In fact, his plans had two historic precedents. One was that of the Champs-Elysees in Paris and the other was Rome. He wanted this plan of Berlin to far exceed the excellence of these two places. Had these plans been materialized, the entire history of Berlin architecture would have been erased. It is fascinating to conjecture

the state of Berlin had war not happened, for it was just the war that prevented Hitler from implementing his plans for Berlin, clearing away large tracts of land by demolishing historically significant buildings that had stood testimony to the past events. Ironically though, the war almost succeeded in accomplishing what Hitler had set out to do.

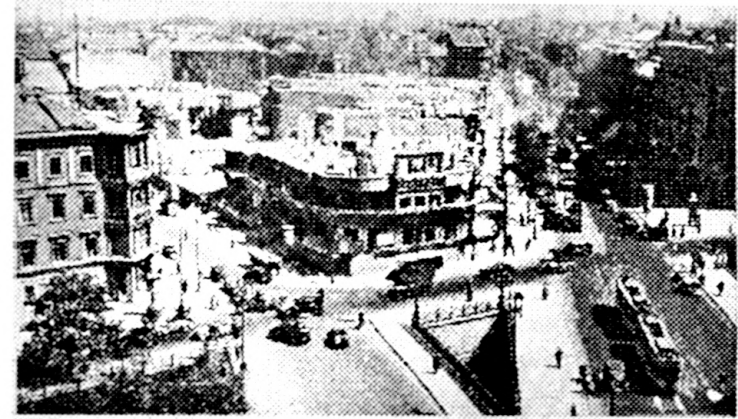


Figure 12: Demolition for House of Tourism in Runder Platz - a view from Potsdamer Strasse, 1940. (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli, 1990, p.90)

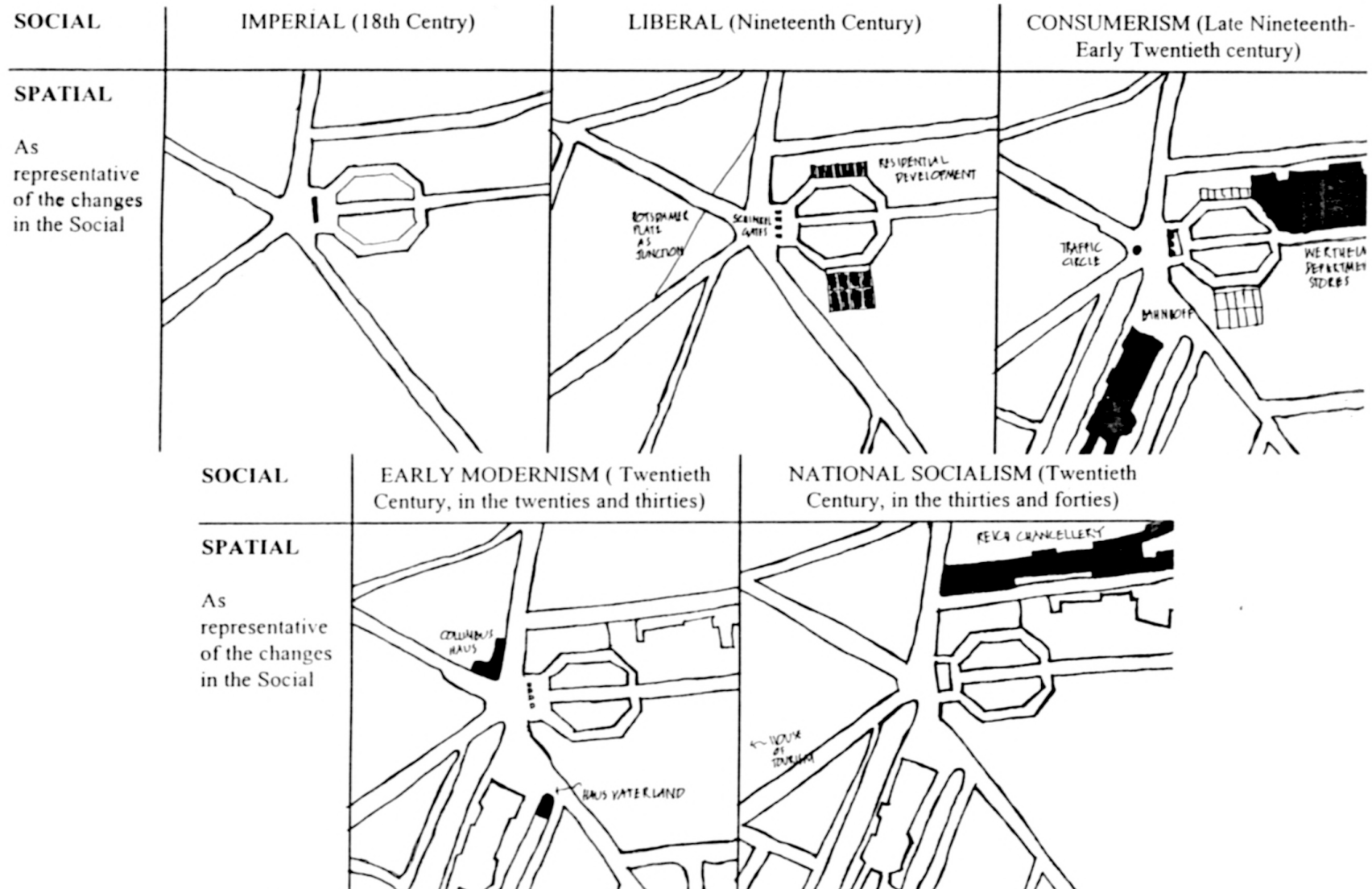


Figure 13: Illustration showing the evolution of Potsdamer Platz - Leipziger Platz area in Berlin, from the Imperial period until the years preceding World War II

This is the gamut of orders that attempted to shape Berlin, and hence the study area from the time of its origin until World War II (Fig. 13). They lay in inseparable layers, superimposed over each other, substantiating, informing and sometimes contradicting each other. Each accretion increased the complexity and texture of the urban fabric and texture. It is this compound, complex residue that war sought to destroy.

War is considered as a disaster that is caused by human actions. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, disaster is:

“anything ruinous or distressing that befalls; a sudden or great misfortune or mishap; a calamity.”

Disaster is derived from the Latin word, *astrum* which refers to a guiding star or figuratively, to fortune. Hence disaster means ill-fortune. Disasters are events with a beginning and end. They signify the interruption of natural processes of life, and leave behind damage of unfathomable magnitude. They leave behind in their wake, social and physical wreckage. Disasters are thus pernicious to habitation. The most visible effects of disasters are that they cause spatial and social damage. “*One must look for scars not only in the survivors' minds but in the tissues of their social life as well.*”³¹ There are two important aspects of disasters:

- they are events in time and space
- they cause tremendous impact on social units

Wars are disasters that are specifically a result of the “nature” of humankind itself. Human made disasters have another complex dimension; they question the very essence of human intention and existence.

³¹ Erikson, Kai. *Everything in its Path*, p. 155

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Socially, war impacts urban society at two levels:

- that of individual relationships to a collective social order
- consequent fragmentation of the social order

Wars are even more destructive, socially as well as physically, than natural disasters. War has tremendous impact on the texture and fabric of the city. It is a result of conflict and disparity. It results in a blow to the basic tissues of social life. It undermines the value of human trust, as war is the outcome of human decision. Hiroshima was an instance of total destruction caused by an atomic bomb that resulted in destruction of immense magnitude. The result was total destruction of social institutions and links. The survivors were too shocked to reconnect with others for a very long time and the community was totally disintegrated. A similar situation resulted in Beirut after its recent civil war. This chapter will further explore the conditions in Berlin after World War II.

Interactions come to a standstill and this causes everyone to relate as strangers, stranded in the destroyed fabric of the city. The absence of interactions make it difficult for people to estimate their standing in relation to others, which as we have already explored, is one of the primary parameters for formation of the social realm. Loneliness and lonesomeness prevail. *“The feeling of being alone,*

vulnerable, and isolated within the limitations of one's own individuality and abilities cannot help but produce anxiety and alienation. The loss of the normal is a loss of innocence that can never be recovered."³²

In any social system, it is imperative to attain a balance between individual spontaneity and conformity to the collective. This is because human beings cannot live alone by themselves, and complete individualism will lead to collapse of society. Human beings will always make common sense only by interacting with their fellow beings. Since war results in human beings losing their nexus with others to constitute a community, individuals begin to exist in isolation.

War also causes disruption in the social order by making it possible to indulge in violence and other activities that would have been considered anti-social otherwise. This is because the values which prevent such activities are suspended. War results in abnormal conditions of violence, deprivation and death and thereby reflects the condition when human beings are deprived of humanity. *"There was a feeling, also born of war, that living creatures on the other side, even children, had somehow lost title to the mercies that normally accompany the fact of being human."*³³

³² Lang, Peter (ed.) *Mortal City*, NY: Princeton Architecture Press, p.52

³³ Barton, Allen H., *Communities in Disaster: A sociological Analysis of Collective Stress Situations*, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969.

Social groups consist of individuals in contact with each other and such contact is established and promoted only through the presence and manifestation of some kind of social order, which may be formal or informal. These social groups have certain goals and values. The main ideal of the community is to attain certain positive goals and avoid negative goals, for the individual as well as common good. These goals are unattainable without communality. Thus a disaster is probably the most undesirable event that can prevent a community from achieving its goals.

The consequences of disaster not only depend on the nature of the event but the parties involved. This is especially true of war, where one side defeats the other. The experiences of the parties involved are different from each other because of this. This thesis will explore in detail the condition of the defeated side. The institutions that are vital to a particular society are the ones that are most vulnerable to attack. They are also the ones that determine victory or defeat of a system. For instance, if a society is dependent on a political or religious institution, then it can be easily destroyed as a result of any attack on these institutions. Another important observation is that the post war social order is almost always adopted from that of the occupying powers.

SPATIAL CONTEXT

When a city is destroyed, there is annihilation of physical tangible space that envelops, surrounds and houses all inhabitants. Multiple layers of urban growth and built history are razed to the ground. The city as we have seen earlier, provides the basis for experience

of the past and present while anticipating the experience of the future. Representations of the past and present, their connection and transition from one to another are all obliterated. The damage in the physical context results in obviating experiences of the city dweller. The city in its disheveled condition is no longer able to reflect the human condition and proves detrimental to the sustenance of the urban community.

In addition, the city is unable to perform its function of serving as a context for social interactions which forms the essence of the human condition. The common places that catered to social interactions are destroyed. War tends to ruin the threads that bind people together. In fact, it embitters people to such an extent that this is reflected in the city too. Inhabitants are reluctant to venture into public and open spaces due to the all-pervading fear that envelops them. They end up huddled in small clusters. Since space within which people interacted shrunk, the levels of interactions also are mitigated to a great extent. As a result, war not only disrupts the public place but also causes fragmentation.

The environment becomes a target sometimes to give vent to the frustrations of the survivors of war. In addition to destroying spaces that foster socialization, war in fact created its own spaces for different functions. They not only lost their intended identity but assumed others that essentially catered to militarism. It tends to convert playgrounds into battleground. All major public places like thoroughfares, bridges, crossroads etc., which served to foster communication and transportation are converted to barriers which

contradict their intrinsic purpose. Similarly, major squares, traffic intersections that served as hubs of activity, are converted to desolate places. Even ordinary places are not spared from this reversal of roles. They become dreaded landmarks to cater to the needs of war. These places assume other identities and become fearful points of references. *“Overnight, a road became a barricade or a “flying road-block”; a walled garden became a blockaded stronghold; a street corner turned into a check point.”*³⁴ The tempo of war imposed its own framework for the use of space and time. Also the public places became the object of precipitous shifts in use and as a result, the inhabitants learn to make adjustments to perpetual rapidly changing situations.

Any rapid change in the physical environment as is evidenced in cities soon after war, results in loss of spatial identity for the inhabitants. They are dislodged from the familiar and the normal and become more introverted as a result of the unfamiliar changes that are taking place. Kai Erikson's study on the effect of a flood in Buffalo Creek on the lives of the inhabitants, provides sufficient validity to this phenomenon. He remarks: *“When the landscape goes, it destroys the past for those who are left: People have no sense of belonging anywhere.”* They lose a sense of who they are.

War also fragments the connections that make sense of the city form and organization. Destruction on such a large scale not only removes memories but also symbols that have given meaning to existence. The past is perceived by recollecting memories associated

³⁴ Khalef, Samir and Khoury, Philip S. *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-war Reconstruction*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, NY, p. 37

with urban elements that are products of the past. The act of remembering recounts experiences. However, war destroys several layers of growth thereby fragmenting the associated collective memory. The physical context in its shattered state is no longer a reflection of the human condition.

Thus war creates an atypical condition. Its effects are revealed in all experiences that consolidate life of the inhabitants. The affected will never be the same again. The city, in its very essence will always carry the memory borne of this pernicious event.

“Many themes will be left with those who have experienced community or personal disaster: triumph over death; loss of innocence regarding death after the horrific deaths of others, devastation and destruction of property and place, community and culture, dislocation; and a new view of the self and of life...Those who have known this impact will never be quite the same again.”³⁵

THE 'WAR TO END ALL WARS':

The year was 1945. Russian troops marched into the city of Berlin. What happened as a result can be best described as follows:

“At the end the whole of Berlin seemed to be pounding with high explosives and roaring with flames. On May Day the bombardment rose to a crescendo, which only sank when the commander of the city surrendered Berlin the next morning. We had long ago become used to the debris and desolation, since the great raids of the R.A.F., but after two weeks of Russian siege it seemed that we were living in a ghastly inferno. Not only ruins everywhere, and entire blocks gutted and smoking, but everywhere craters in the streets, half-hearted trenches and pits for guns and tanks: bodies, ammunition, civilian cars smashed to scrap iron, trams torn and riddled, walls cracked and blackened, the crash of falling masonry mingled with the whine and burst of mortars and ‘Katyushas’, the moan of rocket guns,

³⁵ Baker, George W. and Chapman, Dwight W. (ed) *Man and Society in Disaster*, NY: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1962

the sharp defiant note of rifles, or the abrupt drilling noise of a Spandau from heaps of wreckage where it seemed impossible for any man to be. It was not just the end of the war, it was the end of war as we knew it, the ultimate reduction to ghastly absurdity. The civilians did not know what to do; in any case they could do nothing. They locked themselves into houses and cellars, and waited for the next explosion and the hurrying footsteps of advancing Russians."³⁶

The Russians intended to plunder, destroy and do everything that could avenge the death of their comrades who had been killed mercilessly by the Germans in the course of the war. It was their turn to retaliate. They completely surrounded the city and opened fire, indulging in random destruction. On entering the city they went about tearing down buildings from one neighborhood to another. These pernicious acts continued until July of that year when the rest of the Allies entered Berlin and came to the rescue of the Berliners.

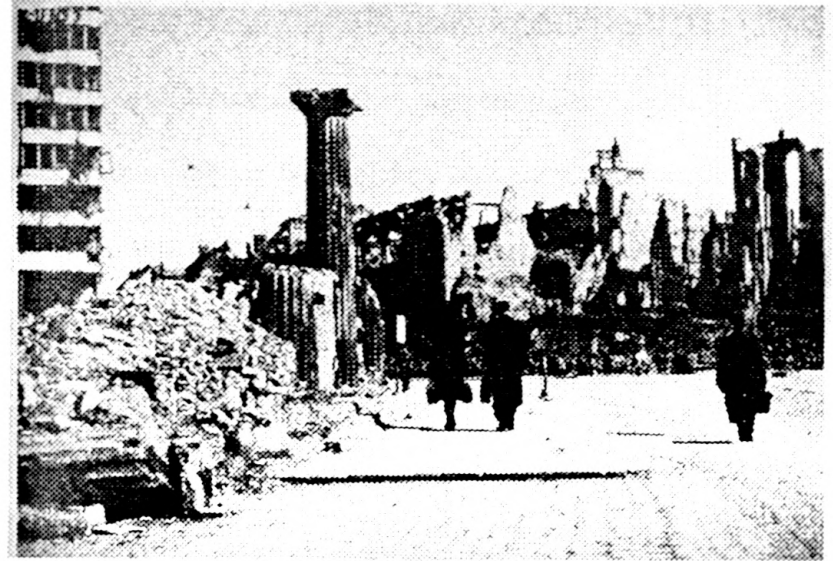


Figure 14: Photograph showing remains at Schinkel's Gates, 1946 (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990)

The days of Russian occupation of Berlin left an indelible mark in the memory of the city. Time seemed to have stood still in Berlin, suspended for eternity. Everything seemed to have been brought to a halt at that moment when the shells began to explode. The poet,

³⁶ Brett-Smith, Richard, *Berlin '45: The Grey City*, NY: Macmillan, St. Martin's Press, 1975, p.75

W.H. Auden described the scene in Berlin as being analogous to that of the Roman Forum. Memory of the past formed images that contradicted and sometimes were in direct conflict with the images that were actually visible in the present.³⁷

The panorama of destruction was appalling. People roamed the streets in the cold, hungry, with no roof over their heads. The rubble that marked the almost instant transformation of a city, molded itself into a labyrinth of caves that gave temporary shelter to those who were desperate for it. All places that represented special memories were still there, but could be seen only as traces under the rubble, in a heap. However, it was not the fragments themselves that were painful, for they ensconced the people in memories. They were still a familiar sight and hence protected them from harsh reality. It was the clearing of rubble that brought them face to face with reality.

All buildings looked alike as a result of the act of destruction. All of them bore the marks of shells and bombs. The odor and sights of destruction were ubiquitous. Although the evidence of ruin is everywhere, the mind still plays its own tricks. It attempts to recreate the picture of wholeness of the past but fails to do so. At the same time, thoughts rush forward to create the future and again since there is no referent of the past to begin establishing the future, the mind faces a dead end there too. Thus loss of the past signifies the loss of future too. The feelings oscillated between euphoria and terror, hoping and lamenting.

³⁷ Source: Balfour, Alan Berlin: *The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.156

The conflict in the city did not subside after the war. In fact, there was confrontation of two opposing forces in Berlin which were constantly pitted against each other. What resulted was the conflict of opposites encouraging the division of the city into East and West Berlin. The process of division started in 1948 when a man painted a line on the ground. This was immediately followed by protests in East Berlin against the Russians, the communistic regime and against division. The protest was brought to an end by the Russian soldiers. In the following years, the Columbus Haus was demolished and Leipziger Platz slowly began to fade away, more so with the destruction of the Wertheim. Division became more apparent with each passing year.

The most significant consequence of World War II in Berlin was the building of the wall. It marked a division which would subsequently become an inherent part in the history of Berlin. The wall was important not merely as an object of division but as everything else it embodied. The events that took place in the close of the war were very instrumental in the building of the wall.

The Wall

The Berlin Wall can also be considered to play a major role in the reconstruction process that took place after the war in Berlin. Primarily, the wall concretized a duality in social structure, order, politics, culture etc. It was the first construction that took place in the rectangular area including the Leipziger and Potsdamer Platz. This was the construction that would render different attributes to the space of Potsdamer- and Leipziger Platz for the next fifty years. What was to become a wall between the two sides started

out as a chalk mark on the cobblestones in 1948 by the British, wanting to distance themselves from the socialist state set up by the Russians. Subsequently the eastern sector of Leipzigerstrasse was closed to traffic.

In 1961, there arose a barbed wire fence at the end of Leipziger Platz. With this, what was till then a fictitious barrier became a physical reality. In six days, a temporary wall made of stones, replaced the barbed wire. Five years later, in 1966, a permanent structure was constructed, thus sealing the division that had begun to seep into the very heart of the two sectors. The wall, *"itself a boundary, it knows no boundaries, crossing cobbles, trolley rails, sidewalks, and foundations."*³⁸ From the air, the picture presents a panorama of



Figure 15: Building the Berlin Wall, 1961 (Source: Ladd, Brian, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 17)

³⁸Balfour, Alan, *Berlin - The Politics of Order 1737-1989*, New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990

conflicting orders on the east and west, separated by the wall. The conflict is most apparent in the Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz which abut the wall.

It is amazing that the stretch of land, so imbued with historical context and life should be reduced to a “no man's land” between the East and West portions of a divided city. The war by itself made the layers of the city discontinuous, limiting the knowledge communicated through them. The wall took this discontinuity further by imposing a new order, of division, which made it impossible to continue from where the war interrupted.

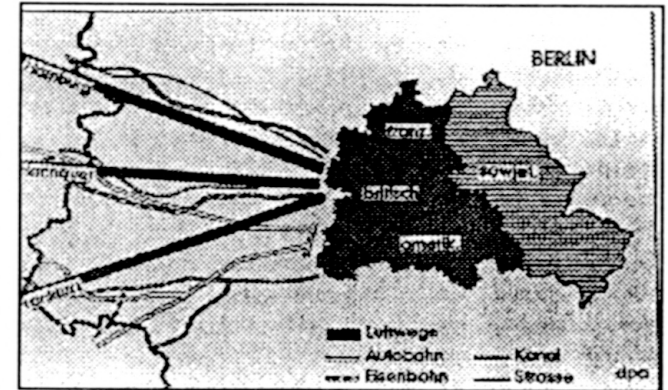


Figure 16: Illustration of Berlin divided. (Source: *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p.21)

PART II
RECONSTRUCTION

The city evolves over a period of time and is a constant reflection of the social condition that shapes it. Any change in the social is physically manifested in the city. This has been discussed in length in the first chapter of this thesis. Each alteration in the social constitutes a different spatial order that can be described as: “...*a frozen image that captures the manner in which the transitory present is perceived.*”³⁹ These layers are superimposed over each other contributing to the complexity of the city. This constitutes the evolutionary life of the city.

Persistence and Permanence in a City:

Although the city is in a constant state of flux, there are some elements in the city that persist through the years until forcibly destroyed. These constitute the permanence of a city. It has the capacity to filter through all transitions in the social framework that affects the city. Aldo Rossi, through Poete, establishes the relationship between permanence and the growth of a city.⁴⁰ According to him, permanence is inherently catalytic, although it can be normal and abet the growth of a city or pathological and hamper

³⁹ Boyer, Christine, *City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994, p.32

⁴⁰ Rossi, Aldo, *The Architecture of the City*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982, p.51

growth. In whatever way the permanence is categorized, it serves to bring the past into the present and interprets it accordingly. This permanence functions as a record of time although its original functions have altered tremendously. It has a deeper significance in that it serves as a testimony to the past social conditions. Permanence acts as a referent to present and future changes in the city and provides an understanding of what *was*, what *is* and implies what *will be*.

The Role of Collective Memory

As we have seen, this link between the past, present and future forms as essential a part of the human condition as does change. Since human life is not permanent, human beings have a need to create objects that endure. Buildings can be seen as the products of this belief. The task of establishing this permanence is a deliberate action of human beings in order to make themselves immortal in the world.

“The task and potential greatness of mortals lie in their ability to produce things - works and deeds and words - which would deserve to be and, at least to a degree, are at home on everlastingness, so that through them mortals could find their place in a cosmos where everything is immortal except themselves.”⁴¹

In fact this persistence in the urban fabric is the instrument for measuring change.

⁴¹ Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958, p.19

The question that arises at this point is: *How are past values extracted from this permanence?* The aspect of collective memory becomes very significant with respect to this. The past values are relegated to the realm of collective memory that stores them in its content. Thus, continuity is actually the experience of the past through the faculty of memory - collective memory.

Collective memory is significant in understanding the city. It is related to lived experiences. It is grounded in social experiences and associated with the temporal and spatial context. It is housed in the physical representation of the city. It is the physical elements of the urban landscape that persists from one time period to another that set off the collective memory associated with them. According to the French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs, memory is fundamentally different from history although both are related to the past. History takes over when the continuity with the past is ruptured. It has a tendency to fix the past uniformly, re-presenting facts. Memory, on the other hand, is inherent to a particular context and to the community. It is not universal and cannot be appropriated or controlled.

Collective memory is realized primarily through the process of remembering and recollecting. *"Memory is what we remember, remembering is fundamentally how we remember."*⁴² Remembering is the act that actually creates the connection between the past,

⁴² Seif, Farouk & Nyberg, Folke, "Monuments in the Realm of Memory", *Reflections: The Journal of the School of Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, vol.6, Spring 1989, p.80

present and future. Elements in the city that have persisted through time, trigger off memory only through the act of remembering and recollecting. Perception is essential to remembering and the sense of perception is dependant on the knowledge of the present to interpret the past.

Significance of Continuity

“To think means to be embedded in the present-time stratum (the outside) that serves as a limit: what can I see and what can I say today? But this involves thinking of the past as it is condensed in the inside, in relation to oneself (there is a Greek in me, or a Christian, and so on). We will then think the past against the present and resist the latter, not in favor of a return but “in favor, I hope of a time to come” (Nietzsche), that is, by making the past active and present to the outside so that something new will finally come about, so that thinking, always, may reach thought.”⁴³

The significance of continuity becomes evident from this discussion. To summarize:

- Continuity is established through elements in the urban fabric that persist.
- Permanence in a city is the means to understand how the present is different from past. It is dependent on perception of the present to understand the past.
- Continuity helps to understand past values

⁴³ Boyer, Christine. *City of Collective Memory: its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994, p.28

- It helps to comprehend the evolution of a city.
- The concept of the city as a collective memory serves as a guideline for future transformations in the city.

Berlin - Representation of Past Orders

It becomes necessary at this point to steer away a little from the discussion in order to put things in perspective. The study area under consideration is truly a superimposition of past orders, rendered discontinuous because of the war. The medieval, imperial orders and that of consumerism were all superimposed over each other, constituting separate layers. Yet these layers were inseparable because of the nexus of every layer with the past ones.

“.....it is knowledge of the past that constitutes the terms of the present and the measure of the future.”⁴⁴

The past, present and future are not independent of each other; in fact, they are interdependent. Thus at any phase of time, there is always an accumulation of the layers of the past, juxtaposed with the present layers, unfolding the story of evolution of the city through this connection. I do not state that all these layers remained intact through the passage of time. Actually some of them were destroyed. But these constituted selective destruction. An illustration of this phenomenon was Hitler's plans for Berlin. In order to

⁴⁴ Rossi, Aldo, *Architecture of the City*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1982, p.51

execute this, he intended to destroy parts of the city and construct the main spine of the city. As is evinced, this selective elimination of past layers would have become a significant contribution to the transition of the city into the next phase.

War, however, presents a different scenario. It does not affect a particular layer, but its destruction is ubiquitous. It does not restrict itself to destruction of a particular layer. What results is the fragmentation of the physical and the memory associated with it. Instead of gradually unfolding its story the city is able to project intermittent images of the past. The relationship of the past to the present is not made too obvious. When a city is destroyed by war, it is this continuity that is disengaged.

Soon after World War II Berlin was trying to recover from the large scale destruction. Of course the first step in the process was clearing away the rubble, though this act brought great pain to the Berliners. It meant complete severance from what had existed before, what they had associated themselves with earlier. The rubble formed part of their culture. As long as the remnants remained at least they could trigger the mind to reconstruct what was. When the physical remnants that give impetus to the memory to reconstruct is also removed, the feeling that results is a deep sense of loss.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The clearing away was constructive in two distinct ways. It brought people together and made them work in an integrated manner towards a common goal, sowing the seeds for re-establishment of a community. It also instilled a new sense of future among the people. Notes appeared everywhere making the first communication and correspondence ever, since the siege. This was more significant to renewal of life than physical reconstruction.

This condition can be observed in Berlin after World War II. All places that represented special memories were still there, but could be seen only as traces under the rubble, in a heap. However, it was not the fragments themselves that were painful, for they ensconced the people in memories. They were still familiar sights, hence the ruins protected them from harsh reality. In Berlin, war resulted in another drastic outcome. The occupation of the city by the Russian forces on the east and the Allies on the west brought about a fundamental division in the city. The Russians blockaded the city, and cut off major links to West Berlin. Eventually the wall came up between these two parts of the city and was established as the symbol of segregation. It ushered in a different kind of war - cold war - resulting from communism and capitalism in the two parts of the city. The united city was torn into two selves, each having its own order, its own culture and government and hence its own architecture. Since the connection with the past was intermittent, both did not succeed to develop an architecture that would take off from where war interrupted. That was not possible because of the inherent nature of war to affect a city in a particular way. Between the two sides, the East managed to establish the connection a little better than the West, chiefly owing to the fact that most of the historic areas were in the East after the division. That the architecture of the East was a lot more conservative could have also been a significant contributing factor.

Thus the study area becomes the reflection of two orders and the area in-between these two, which I term as “no-order”. This was the “no-man's land” between the divided city. These terms are misleading in a way, as they seem to imply a lack of importance. On the contrary, this piece of land between the two parts of the city was probably the most significant in the study area. This represented

a divergence of orders from this point. It also signified division. This was the neutral zone. Again, this term does not imply 'peaceful' or 'uninvolved'. This piece of land was far from being either peaceful or uninvolved. It was in a state of constant tension and its nature was in a state of flux directly reflecting any changes in the neighboring areas. Most importantly, this place had its own order, that of neutrality. It did not embody any of the past orders. In fact all those memories were frozen.

Reconstruction of a City

Reconstruction can take war as an opportunity to put an end to the development that had been taking place in the city, seeking to shun the past. This represents a preoccupation with the future neglecting the past completely. It strives to banish the past and sever all connections with it. This is not a typical condition, because most often there is a need to feel 'connected' again after the destruction caused by war. There is predominantly a need to forget unpleasant memories of the past and remember the positive ones. This brings into picture, the concept of selective memory thereby encouraging a quest for a useable idealized past.

The connection can be achieved only by reconstructing the fabric of the city. Although the physical is reduced to fragments, traces from the past persist.

*“Long, long be my heart with such memories
fill'd!
Like the vase in which roses have once been*

*distill'd:
You may break, you may shatter the vase if
You will
But the scent of the roses will hang around it
Still.*"⁴⁶

Continuity with respect to the past can be established through a process of transformation. Transformation is the operation of changing one configuration or expression into another in accordance with some set of rules. The most extreme resistance to transformation is restoration which involves reconstructing the past as it was. This method implies a denial of present conditions and involves a pre-occupation with the past. It is a fixation with sentimentality and nostalgia and a desire to go back to something stable in the past. It is a resistance to experimentation and progression. Since change is the basic parameter that fosters creativity which is essential to attain an ideal human condition, this approach results in stagnation and curtails growth.⁴⁷

What is required is the creation of a state that responds to the perpetual flux in the city. The reconstructed city must evoke memories of the past in present context. It must clearly represent a transition from the past to the present and into the future. The new

⁴⁶ By Thomas Moore, quoted by Seif, Farouk and Nyberg, Folke et al., p.80

⁴⁷ Piranesi's architecture represents an extreme condition of this school of thought characterizing an obsession with envisioning the past. This results in a city of monuments where history manifests instead of memory. This is an ideal example of architecture frozen and imprisoned in time. Piranesi's city is represented more as a myth. Piranesi was probably the greatest propagandist of the view that historic wealth can be represented as ruins. He brought ruins to the contemporary world. (Source: Agrest, Diana, *Architecture From Without*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991, p. 109-126)

architecture must involve fusing remembrances and dreams, the past and the future. There is a necessity for a continuity with the past while acknowledging the present and anticipating the future. The question which arises is that of the existence of the past. How is it possible to establish connection with the past when it has been destroyed and banished into oblivion? War undoubtedly razes layers of urban growth to the ground. However, it is not that all that existed has been wiped off completely. There still exists among the ruins traces of the past, which can be discerned to some extent.

*"The palimpsest is a rewriting; a writing or overwriting that which has been erased. The apparent change leaves behind the impression of marks behind. Those initial "traces" can be read through the second writing."*⁴⁸

It is the task of those undertaking the reconstruction of the new city to consider the degree to which the past "traces" can participate in future design considerations.

There are several alternative approaches to achieve this transformation in the city. Ignazio Morales's article titled, "From Contrast to Analogy", outlines a framework for the various types of transformations that in terms of *contrast* and *analogy*. It is not possible to generalize the idea behind all transformations because they are intricately related to the value of the particular place in which they are taking place.

⁴⁸ Crow, Dennis, "Le Corbusier's Post-Modern Plan", *Philosophical Streets: New Approaches to Urbanism*, Washington D.C.: Misonneuve Press, 1990, p.87

*"The relationship between a new architectural intervention and already existing architecture is a phenomenon that changes in relation to the cultural values attributed both to the meaning of historic architecture and to the intentions of the new intervention."*⁴⁹

Morales has identified four kinds of transformations, and classified them in terms of the broad categories of contrast and analogy.

Contrasting Transformation:

The first kind of transformation seeks to create a contrast without neglecting the old architecture. In fact this aims at *accentuating the old architecture by establishing a contrast with the new*. In another type of transformation, contrast between the old and new is established through differences in building materials, texture and geometry as well as methods of construction and techniques. The early modernists like Le Corbusier and Mies Van der Rohe advocated this kind of transformation. In his work, *The City of Tomorrow*, Le Corbusier talks about the significance of the past in establishing a new architecture that has been derived from the past, but has severed itself from the temporal context.

Analogical Transformations:

One kind of analogic transformation is the re-interpretation and usage of prominent features from an old building, in the design of a new building. This is manifested in:

⁴⁹ Morales, Ignazio, "From Contrast to Analogy: Developments in the Concept of Architectural Interventions", *Lotus International*, vol.46, p.37

- organization of plan
- formal repetition of a particular feature or element
- prolonging patterns of empty spaces etc.

The idea is to establish a *continuity between prominent elements of the past and the present*. Repetition is commonly employed. This kind of analogy is more formalistic than experiential or existential.

The other kind of analogic transformation does not depend on visual synchronism of specific elements in architecture. It is based more on the *meanings of forms*. Thus this involves a relationship between a language of architecture that has been evolved over a period of time owing to the meanings ascribed to it, and the formal outcome. A typology is established that transcends the temporal and contextual dimensions. It is based on the associated values of elements that have been established over the years, as opposed to the formalistic values. It is reconstruction on the fibers or essence of the city and certainly goes beyond the superficiality of form.

The idea of destruction and reconstruction as discussed above bring to light some important facts. The city that has been destroyed is stripped of the intricacy of its layers. These layers are destroyed for good and no amount of restoration would revive back their symbolic content. This is where the whole issue of transformation comes into the picture. Here again we have dealt with both kinds

of transformations - those that are sensitive to the past and those that are not. The type of transformation that is ultimately implemented in a city depends on the specific concept and collective decision.

How can this link to the past be established? In what ways can the past be connected to the present? What aspects of the past must be used for reconstructing the present? How can the past be used for reconstruction? It is not possible for the reconstruction to take into consideration principles from all previous layers of the city. It is here that selective memory plays an important role.

It is believed that after war, a city seldom returns to its inherent order, whether social, cultural, political or economic.⁵⁰ The value of the Berlin study area becomes obvious from the discussion so far. The physical manifestation of Berlin was altered based on the forces shaping it. Thus the city reflected the essence of the human condition at every point in time. The architecture of the city thus acted as a commentary on the evolutionary processes that took place in the city. It was possible to trace the events that shaped the city by observing the layers. If war had not taken place, Berlin's present order would have been a gradual evolution of the past orders. This continuity was lost as a result of war. The situation is analogous to a river changing its course. The city that resulted after war was divided in its very essence. It was no longer homogeneous. This was not a result of Berlin's evolution but based on the impact of war, which sought to eliminate the existing order and hence the social space of the city replacing it with those of the

⁵⁰ Barton, Allen H., *Communities in Disaster: A Sociological Analysis of Collective Stress Situations*, Anchor Books, NY: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1969

conquerors. The city was not only divided but both parts of the city were now under a different order. The Russian occupation in the East caused this segment to fall under a communist society and the Allies occupation on the West caused this segment to adopt a more liberal way of life, following the capitalistic trend in America, England and France.

Prior to understanding the transformations that are currently taking place in the Potsdamer-Leipziger Platz area, it is necessary to explore the nature of reconstructions that took place in the rest of Berlin after the World War II and the Cold War. Berlin's era of destruction began even in the thirties. Hitler cleared several blocks of the city to make way for his grand plan. It was his intention to transform the entire city of Berlin as an expression of autocratic power. The second world war in a way, completed what Hitler had set out to do. It destroyed several layers of urban growth in the city. Although Hitler's demolitions were not in the study area but in its vicinity, the war caused a lot of damage in this area. It left most of the buildings in ruins. What the war did not destroy totally the Berlin Wall did. Some of the buildings that survived the war in this area were later leveled to the ground to make way for the wall. Others that were in a damaged state were demolished. These three separate events in the history of the city set out to destroy layers of its rich urban growth but they all had some fundamental differences in their nature and intentions. The World War caused the most untargetted kind of destruction as it was unselective in its approach.

It must be understood that while considering Berlin it is necessary to pay attention to the two different kinds of reconstruction that took place between the World War II and now. These two reconstructions, post-war and post-wall, may seem different at first glance

but they have some basic underlying similarities. These similarities are more subliminal than overt and this chapter attempts to uncover and explicate them in terms of their contradictions and similarities.

4.1 The Larger Context

Post World War Reconstruction: Conflict of Opposing Orders

How is it possible to restore order in the city after such large scale destruction? This was the question in the minds of the Berliners. It is in this respect that the wall brought about a difference in the situation. Instead of a unified city working towards a common goal, there were two disparate societies working for distinctly different objectives. Reconstruction was carried out in the east and the west independent of each other. It became obvious that the conflict between the east and the west would play a major role in determining the nature of reconstruction in the city, thus shaping post-war Berlin. Lenin has given a definition for the operational power of the dialectic in his book, *Materialism and Empiro-centrism*:

*“The identity of opposite is the recognition of the contradictory, mutually exclusive, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of the world in their self-movement, in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the struggle of opposites.”*⁵¹

Each side sought to free itself from dependance on the other side, endeavoring to create a whole from each half. The blockade

⁵¹ Lenin, V.I., *Materialism and Empiro-Centrism*, NY: International Publications, 1927, p.377

following the culmination of the war severed all connections between the two parts. This was reinforced by the establishment of the wall.

East Berlin commenced its reconstruction process first. It was based on the intention to glorify Berlin's position as a capital city. It advocated the employment of traditional and nationalistic architecture, a totalitarian approach, by mirroring socialism and by providing unambiguous symbols of equal meaning. This architecture was characterized by profuse ornamentation and ornate detailing. *"It deliberately echoed the era before World War II, the buildings embodied the promise of a new society in which ordinary workers would enjoy the comforts of the old*

bourgeoisie."⁵² It was believed that only classical architecture could serve to express the inner content of social ideal. It was the result of a conscious attempt to create an authentic architecture to represent a proletarian culture.

After the wall arose competitions were organized in the east in response to the reconstruction activities in the west. The nature of

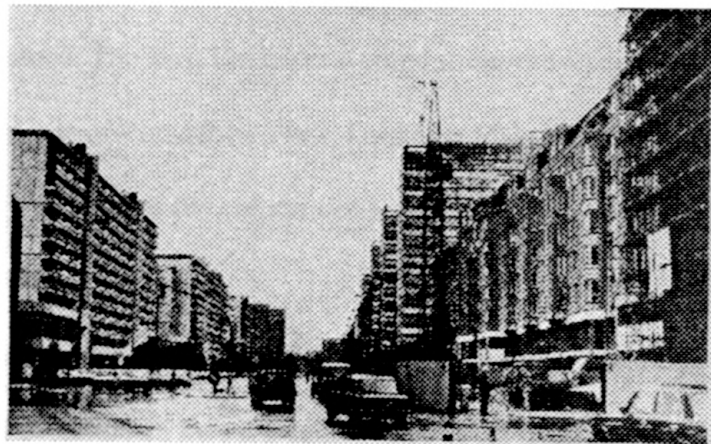


Figure 17: Photograph showing construction in Leipziger Strasse in the seventies (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin: The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.204)

⁵² Ladd, Brian, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p.183

all these competitions have some commonalities. They all represented a gradual shift from classicism to modernism (Fig. 17). Attempts were made to weave the old into the general scheme of things. Most important among them was the design for the establishment of Central Berlin which was held in 1957 and 1960. In the competition that was held in 1960, the winning architectural project was by Peter Schweitzer. In accordance with the Soviet's socialistic ideology, the architecture in the East was conservative. The architecture of the past continued to establish the fabric for the future. The East Berliners wanted to sever all connection with the West and hence completely failed to acknowledge anything to the east of Potsdamer Platz. Leipziger Platz disappeared without a trace from the drawings. These plans were to become a part of five year plans for construction in the East.

West Berlin addressed this question of reconstruction with a great deal more skepticism than the East. Most of the historic sites were concentrated in the East after the partition and West Berlin was left to establish its own center. The West tried to come up with something parallel to Stalin Allee. In attempting to do so it did not seek to imitate the ornate facades and classical architecture of the latter. Competitions were held in West Berlin emphasizing the modernistic approach. There was an intense desire to break free from the past completely. Ten years after the war, West Berlin threw open a competition for 'Berlin - The Capital city'. It was an international competition. Three of the entries can be considered for discussion - by Le Corbusier, Scharoun/Ebert and Spengelin/Pempelfort. These architects were intimately associated with Berlin before the war and they desired the places that they had experienced which had been nullified by the war. The main issues that needed to be addressed through this design were:

- establishing a new order
- healing past wounds
- addressing the reality of division, thus reconciling opposite forces of the east and the west.

Le Corbusier (Fig. 18), in his final design, chose to ignore most of these issues, except for restoring and preserving the octagon of Leipziger Platz. His plan conformed to the modernist ideology which sought to sever architecture from all connections with the past and seek a new beginning. Alan

Balfour comments on the plan: *“All surviving monuments of history, the great churches and palaces and museums, float fragmented in his unwillingness to weave a city fabric capable of incorporating past order.”*⁵³

Some salient features of his design were:

- establishing links between the units through four orders of speed

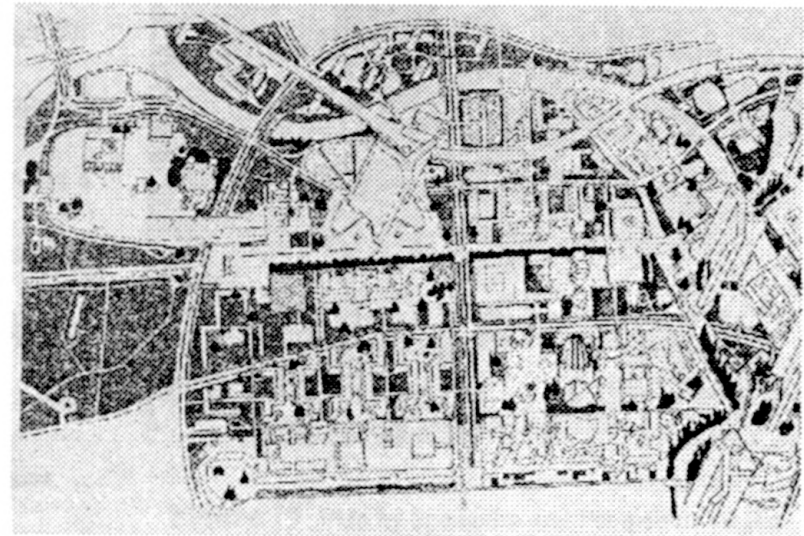


Figure 18: Le Corbusier's Plan for Hauptstadt Berlin, 1957.
(Source: Balfour, Alan, Berlin - *The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.171)

⁵³ Balfour, Alan, Berlin - *The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.170

- denial of history, memory, opportunity and hence advocating a static utopian condition.⁵⁴

This project was unplaced in the competition.

The winning entry was by Spengelin and Pempelfort (Fig. 19), both Berlin architects. This design respected and provided settings for almost all the fragments of the city after war. However, it removed without a trace Leipziger Platz. Friedrichstrasse was established as a new commercial street, which was one of the features appreciated by the judges. Unter den Linden was restored to its past glory. This was not a project which was passionate in what it communicated but it was respectable and not extremely controversial like that of Corbusier.



Figure 19: Plan by Spengelin and Pempelfort for the Hauptstadt Berlin competition, 1957. (Source: Balfour, Alan, *Berlin - The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.

⁵⁴ Static Utopian propositions are noted for their rigid and unchanging character. They do not conceive human society as subject to constant changes. Le Corbusier's plan for Berlin did not cater to the future but advocated an eternal present, thus appearing static.

The design by Scharoun (Fig. 20) was placed second.

Its chief features were:

- establishing a connection between the East and West by the removal of Friedrichstrasse, thereby eliminating the North-South emphasis.
- Understanding the need for reconciliation between the two segments and working towards it.

The design stressed the formation of a new city from the combination of “freedom and connection.” It endeavored to provide places where “*the individual, and great groups of individuals, have the same fundamental chances.*”⁵⁵ It adhered to an informal order, a natural order comparable to the medieval landscapes rather than to the rational and autocratic

order in Germany before the war. “*Scharoun presents the anti-thesis of all past architecture, an architecture which would be self-*



Figure 20: Hans Scharoun and Wils Elbert - View of the city, 1957,
(Source: Balfour, Alan, Berlin - *The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*,
NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.175)

⁵⁵ Balfour, Alan, *Berlin-The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.170

effacing, nihilistic, demythified and detached from the personalities of the culture."⁵⁶ In this design, the octagon of Leipziger Platz was re-established to form a bridge between the East and the West.

It is interesting to note that among the three projects that were discussed above the only one that advocated breaking away from the past was the design by Le Corbusier. This was also the only project that was unplaced in the competition. It can also be observed that the two winning entries strongly encouraged connection with the past in their designs. From this the significance to the Berliners of continuity in reconstruction processes becomes obvious.

Critical Reconstruction

Since the removal of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the city has had enormous opportunity to determine its future directions. On what ideals should reconstruction in the unified city take place? This is an important question that has been asked countless times over the past seven years. While addressing the task of reconstruction in the area following the era of division and the effects on the fabric of the city, Berlin seems to have four distinct choices.

- restore the city to its pre-war form
- cater to the whims of speculators and lose the city to commercialism

⁵⁶ Balfour, Alan, *Berlin-The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, NY: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.171

- propose a radical break with the past and all its connections
- attain a compromise between the three

In reality the city is being dominated by consumerism as well as a strong desire to establish Berlin, once again, as the national capital of a united Germany. The force of this national agenda is overpowering the local municipal needs and makes it obvious that the ideal solution, considering the circumstances is the fourth option.

In order to attain this compromise and veer away from a preponderance of commercialism, the theme of 'Critical Reconstruction' was adopted to reconstruct the entire city of Berlin. This method was originally proposed in 1980's by Josef Paul Kleihues for the International Building Exhibition.

*"The purpose of critical reconstruction is not to recreate historical conditions or a nostalgic landscape, but rather to achieve a differentiated, contemporary structure...It promotes the idea of the integral urban quarter; the intersection of historical and contemporary architectural and economic life."*⁵⁷

It was a project for urban redevelopment in West Berlin, in the South Friedrichstadt area and attempted to re-create the concept of mixed urban uses like in the nineteenth-century urban neighborhoods. This was a clear shift from the prevalent planning practices during that time. It mostly concentrated on creating residential neighborhoods.

⁵⁷ Stimmann, Hans, "Urban Design and Architecture after the Wall", *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995, pp.48-53

Critical reconstruction was adopted to reconstruct the post-wall Berlin and arose out of a discontent with planning during the cold war. It was a response for a need to restore Berlin's identity. In 1993, Eberhard Deipgen, Berlin's mayor reflected:

“It is a summer day at the turn of the century. The new square between the Lustgarten, foreign ministry, and city library has the character and charm of a cityscape like those we know from old black and white photographs. On park benches and chairs of a sidewalk cafe sit casually dressed students from the nearby Humboldt University. They drink espresso and leaf through a book from the library. Elegantly dressed visitors from all over the world look for tables in the restaurant or buy international newspapers. An ideal place for rest and escape after a stroll down Unter den Linden.....”

This was the image envisaged by several Berliners. They obviously believed that the essence of the city was represented in the nineteenth-century block structure where one block was composed of a variety of uses contributing to the texture of the urban fabric. Also, the ‘building in stone’ concept where there is clear distinction between the interior and exterior, expressed strongly through solid walls and openings, is recommended. It was believed that post-war reconstruction caused a lot of damage to this urban structure. Critical reconstruction became the policy on which reconstruction was to be based and was adopted by Hans Stimmann who was the Chief Architect of united Berlin. He served as the Building Director from 1991 to 1996. Stimmann proposed a set of planning guidelines that were aimed at restoring the old street lines and restricting building heights. The primary stipulations proposed by Stimmann are:

- following existing street patterns and building lines
- maximum eave height restricted to 22 m. and ridge height to 30 m.

- twenty percent of overall floor area was to be allotted for residential uses
- construction should have the character of an urban building. Each building should be set in an urban lot, the size of which is the urban block.

Critical Reconstruction was influenced by Schinkel's design ideologies. *"It is not the aim of the planning policy to create a kind of museum of outstanding buildings. Rather, it seeks to strengthen the identity of Berlin by insisting that architecture must relate to the city, to the historical and built context, to architectural tradition."*⁵⁸

The justification of adopting the model of critical reconstruction has been to evolve Berlin on the lines of other European cities. Traditionally, each plot of land had within it co-existing multiple uses and each block inter-related with the public areas and road networks extensively. However, with the influx of consumerism into the hearts of the city, it is not possible to exactly adopt the old practices. Owing to large scale speculation of huge plots of lands by private investors, it becomes possible to integrate multiple uses only within the confines of the urban block. This is what critical reconstruction proposes to do.

It is evident that war, by destroying existing fabric, provides an opportunity for the city to rectify past errors and preserve that which is considered desirable. This thesis has been able to demonstrate the significance of establishing a connection with the past through

⁵⁸ Stimmann, Hans, "Urban Design and Architecture after the Wall", *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995, p.53

collective memory. Also, human tendency serves to eliminate unpleasant memories and strives to create a nexus only with those that are desirable. These theories have been well illustrated through the reconstruction processes that have taken place in Berlin. With respect to Berlin, many buildings that were built during the Third Reich survived the war but were demolished later, during the Cold War. Examples of this are the House of Tourism building that was razed to the ground in the fifties. The Reich Chancellery stood even after it was damaged badly by bombing but was demolished by the Soviets who wanted to get rid of all associations with Hitler. This illustrated the need that is expressed through reconstruction, to selectively retain what is pleasant and desirable and distance itself from all that causes pain and unpleasant memories. Even post Wall reconstruction is an attempt to erase the blunders of planning strategies of the Cold War times that created a hiatus with the city's past.

Establishing connection with the past poses a danger of the city being restored rather than reconstructed through transformation. This could be as a response to fear of experimentation and futuristic ideas that have failed and a security of ensconcing the city in well tested and stable ideas of the past. This is not a desirable condition as it is not progressive and does not advocate change which is an essential constituent of the human condition.

The thesis proceeds to focus on the study area where the above mentioned situation is close to becoming a reality. Although the Hilmer and Sattler plan offers some flexibility with respect to commercial buildings it still is a conservative and retrograde

architectural solution. An exploration of the changes in this area from the beginning of Cold War until now will help understand why reconstruction in this area after the wall came down is considered so important.

4.2 Potsdamer-Leipziger Platz Area

Having obtained an idea about the nature of reconstruction that was taking place in the rest of Berlin, it is now appropriate to talk in detail about the study area in consideration, the Potsdamer-Leipziger Platz area. The above discussion will help illustrate the changes taking place in this plot of land with reference to the larger context.

'No-man's-land' and 'The Death Strip'

The struggle of opposites that came into existence after the Russian occupation on one side and the Allies on the other is manifested in every sense in the Potsdamer Platz. It was the border between East and West where capitalism confronted communism. Caught in-between, the place was



Figure 21: Photograph showing a view of Potsdamer Platz, the wall and Leipziger Platz. This shows the dearth of building activity in the area and the barbed wires that illustrate the tension that was subliminally present here. (Source: Balfour, Alan, Berlin - *The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.196)

in a constant state of turmoil. This was aggrandized during the East German uprising on June 17, 1953, when the West watched the East German protestors being forcibly suppressed by the Soviet army. The wall came up in 1961 and represented the beginning of Cold War by confirming the division of Berlin into two separate entities. The Leipziger Platz area was nicknamed 'The Death Strip' (Fig. 21) and was a desolate empty patch. All the buildings on this area that had survived the war were leveled to the ground.

The Western side carried on its share of demolitions too. Columbus Haus that sat on a plot of land abutting the wall was destroyed to make way for the barbed wires and land mines for border security. Potsdamer Platz like its counterpart in the East became a 'no-man's land' (Fig.21). It became a place to house mines, tank barriers and threatening signs. Tension became an inherent feature in this area existing subliminally at all times. Right in front of the wall is a stretch of sand that concealed in it, trip wires that set off alarms. From the Potsdamer Platz, a clear space with grass, access roads and cobbled streets with rails were the only sights, the evidence of what existed before the war, providing a hint of the activity in that area.

Development took place all around this area that marked the section of division between both sides. Leipziger Strasse on the east was beginning to show off its new architecture to the west side. Similarly in the West, various activities of reconstruction was taking place. Kulturforum was built close enough to the Potsdamer Platz area, deliberately drawing away its importance. The study area became a neglected plot of land as far as reconstruction was concerned and its main purpose was to protect the border. The wall

had transformed the place from being a hub of activity to being a desolate border area fraught with tension. It was not insignificant. In fact, the importance of this area was enhanced by virtue of its location. Its significance became emphasized yet again, after the wall came down.

When the Wall Came Down

The removal of the wall was the direct result of the socio-political changes that were taking place in Eastern Europe towards the end of the eighties. Czechoslovakia opened its borders to East Germany. For the first time, East Berliners could travel beyond their domain and could even reach the West side through Prague. In reaction to this, the East closed down the borders in an attempt to curb the emigration. However, this led to a large scale protest throughout East Berlin that made the authorities revoke the ban immediately. As a result, the East Berlin government itself decided to give free passes for transit into the West. This sparked off the exodus of hoards of East Berliners to what had until then been 'the other side', unreachable but desired. Following this, the security systems were disconnected and the border ceased to exist for all practical purposes. Tens of thousands of East Berliners swarmed to meet their friends or relatives in the West. Soon the wall itself, having lost its significance, was torn down.

Since 1989, the study area has been re-integrated into the main city. Within two years, the wall had completely disappeared. The removal of the wall succeeded in eliminating the superficial aspects of the division, retaining its subliminal essence in some ways.

Removal of the concrete from the wall will not help erase the recent past. However, serious attempts are being made to do so. Here again, the theme of selective memory comes into play striving to remember only the positive and desirable. Most Berliners wanted to see the end of the wall and all its unpleasant associations. Some wanted a part of it to be preserved as a testimony to the atrocities that had happened and as a reminder for posterity of the lessons learned. An article in the *Berliner Morgenpost* says:

“A few meters of Wall should remain standing as a memorial. That may be painful to some, but this decision is unavoidable. This structure of concrete and barbed wire has caused too much inhumanity and too much suffering, too many people striving for freedom were murdered at it, for its complete removal to be warranted. The small remnant of the Wall - at whichever location it may stand - must forever admonish that a people may never again be arbitrarily divided.”⁵⁹

Potsdamer Platz became the point of reconciliation between the East and the West. It was once again relegated to the task of being the center. The idea of reconstruction at Potsdamer Platz-Leipziger Platz area has especially attracted widespread attention over the past few years. It has received much publicity on account of its significance. The opening of the land has released vast tracts of land for development. The land is much endowed with historic significance and the big question then was about the role of history in the reconstruction process.

⁵⁹ Stoltenberg, Joachim, “Eine neue Zukunft”, *Berliner Morgenpost*, 14 June 1990.

*"History is now a potent force in Berlin. Recent history has to be lived with; more distant history is seen as offering a rich repertoire of architectural and planning traditions that can be used to give meaning to current proposals and determine directions for the future."*⁶⁰

Controversially, large portions of land in this area were sold, at what the government now considers as low price, to private investors. The international companies that have taken possession of the land are Sony, Daimler-Benz, Hertie, ABB. This historical center is fast becoming a new commercial center for Berlin. Since commercialism was fast attaining an upper hand and there was danger of it eliminating the historical significance of the study area, it was proposed by the city authorities to conduct a competition for the design of a master plan for the Potsdamer Platz-Leipziger Platz area.

⁶⁰ "The Force of History", *Architects' Journal*, 24 June, 1992



Figure 22: Master Plan proposed by Hans Hilmer and Christoph Sattler based on the planning principles proposed by Hans Stimmann, on the concept of Critical Reconstruction. (Source: Balfour, Alan (ed.) *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995)

This was an attempt to unify the divisions caused by large scale speculation. The competition was based on the principle of critical reconstruction.

Competition for the Master Plan for Potsdamer-Leipziger Platz Area

In 1990 a competition was held for the area of Potsdamer-Leipziger Platz. Among all the entries the plan proposed by Hans Hilmer and Christoph Sattler (Fig. 22) was considered as the most reflective of Stimmann's proposition for critical reconstruction. This plan was selected to serve as the master plan for the area. The important features of Hilmer and Sattler plan are:

- building heights were restricted to 35-50 m. with the exception of two towers that were permitted reaching to a height of 100 mt..
- New tree lined streets as defined by urban blocks and reminiscent of nineteenth-century Berlin were to be created
- A cohesive network of streets was proposed and each block size was fixed as 50 by 50 meters
- The street profile was a proportion of 2:1 (height of buildings being 35 meters and width being 17.5 meters), designed to permit natural ventilation and daylighting to the maximum extent possible
- A new road was proposed extending Leipziger Strasse to the West. This attempted to establish a connection between the two parts of the once divided city
- Leipziger Platz octagon was to be recreated

The Hilmer and Sattler plan undoubtedly fulfilled the need to establish continuity with the past by using the principle of critical reconstruction. It also is sensitive in its approach to reconnect both parts of the once divided city by extending the Leipziger Strasse to the west side, establishing a visual connection between the west and east. Also, the plan attempts to create an environmentally sensitive plan for the area by designing for maximum natural lighting and ventilation and proposing tree-lined streets.

Nevertheless, the plan is retrograde and is a romantic attempt to recapture the past. It set out to establish a connection between the past and the present forging a path towards the future. But it ended up being more of a restoration project than a reconstruction one. The concept of the urban block is an abstract one and by trying to derive specific planning guidelines to apply this concept, it has lost its essence. In the nineteenth-century Berlin, or for that matter any European city, each urban block was characterized by several functions, interdependent and at the same time independent of each other. The buildings were more human scale. Also, each block was subdivided into several plots of land that belonged to different owners. This contributed to the diverse texture of the urban fabric. This has become almost impossible to achieve owing to the infiltration of commercialism which has been manifested to a greater extent in the Potsdamer Platz area. It has become impossible to obtain the desired results from the block concept by rigidly imposing the nineteenth-century concept on it. Since the scale of the buildings are quite different it is not quite possible to achieve the same kind of urban fabric that existed in the nineteenth century city. Also, large scale speculation of land by private investors has rendered the concept of multiple ownership impossible.

In attempting to replicate the ideals of an earlier era, the Hilmer and Sattler plan has only ended up creating a disguise of what should actually be. It does not make much sense to replicate certain images of the past without considering the changes that are taking place now. Although the significance of the connection to past has been discussed in detail, it must not be accomplished in isolation of the present conditions. This stagnation in the nineteenth-century architecture is evinced by analyzing the entries for the Daimler-Benz competition. Interestingly, it was not the winning entry that attracted most attention but the design that was placed fifth. This was the design that was proposed by the Berlin architect Hans Kollhoff and was an exact application of the criteria proposed by Stimmann and utilized in the Hilmer and Sattler plan. Had the design been implemented it would have made this area look like a nineteenth-century boulevard. Eaves and ridge heights were strictly adhered to. All buildings had a standard section with two basement floors for parking, two ground floors for retail, four office floors and two attic floors for luxury flats. Although this design was not selected, it nevertheless gives an indication of what the kind of policies proposed by Stimmann would have resulted in. *"In Berlin, this architectural image has melded with Hilmer and Sattler's urban pattern to form an icon for every architect and investor who wants quick planning permission."*⁶¹

It is ironic that while the principle of critical reconstruction as proposed by Stimmann took the ideal of Schinkel's planning as its model, it ignored the most important trait of Schinkel's ideals. The spirit of Stimmann's planning is diametrically opposite to that

⁶¹ Stegers, Rudolf, "Artless Berlin", *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995, p.56

of Schinkel's in spirit. In his time, Schinkel in fact attempted to create a revolutionary city, shattering the uniformity of eighteenth century Berlin. Stimmann's principles and the master plan based on that are antithetical to this, proposing a stagnation in the past as opposed to progression and change. This is clearly expressed by Rudolf Stegers thus:

*"When Berlin was physically closed, it was mentally open. But when it became physically open, it became mentally closed. Now Berlin is repeating what other cities have done. There is no progression into the twentieth century."*⁶²

4.3 Berlin Today: United yet Divided

Potsdamer Platz is being developed in four sectors now under international investors. Competitions were held individually by these investors and designs were selected based on individual preferences. What is being built in Berlin today is very different from what was envisaged by the Hilmer and Sattler plan.

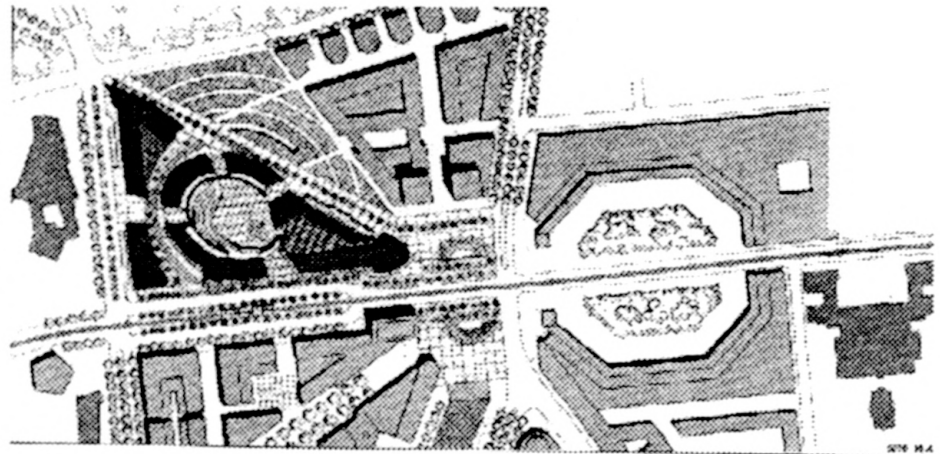


Figure 23: Plan for Sony - Helmut/Jahn Architects
(Source: Balfour, Alan (ed.) *World Cities: Berlin*,
Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995)

⁶² Stegers, Rudolf, "Artless Berlin", *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995 , p.56

The Sony Corporation (Fig. 23,24) occupies the north-west sector. Competition for this block was won by Helmut Jahn architects of Chicago. The architecture proposed by them is predominantly commercial. The spaces in the building include the Headquarters for Sony, offices, a cinema and cultural complex, shops, a hotel and apartments. The western limit is defined by a tower 100 meters high which is the headquarters building. The wall surrounding the complex demarcates it from the street lines. At the

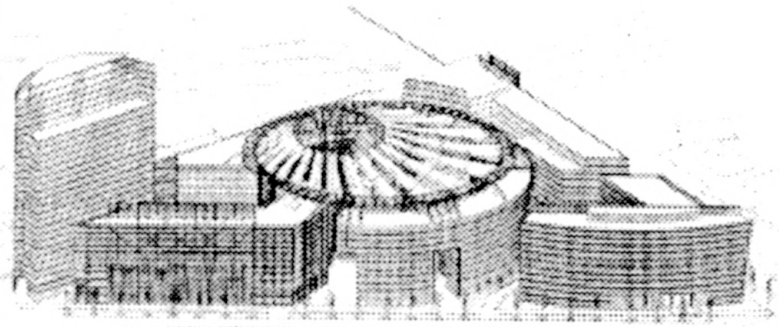


Figure 24: The Sony Building (Source: Balfour, Alan (ed.)*Berlin: World Cities*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995)

same time it also unifies the deliberately created interior individual spaces. The curved passages within act as the main pedestrian street and a covered forum inside acts as the primary public place. The forum roof is made up of state-of-art cable membrane and glass technology. This roof and the tower are the main accents of the complex.

In the south-west sector, **Daimler-Benz** (Fig. 25,26) is proceeding with construction based on the winning plan of Renzo Piano in another competition held by them. In this plan, adherence to the Hilmer-Sattler master-plan is mostly evidenced in the way Piano achieves the connection between Kulturforum and his new development. He re-establishes Potsdamer Platz as a tree-lined avenue leading to a plaza. This plaza provides access to the new development and Scharoun's library. The blocks surrounding the plaza

are divided into three sectors and individual architects are entrusted with portions of land to develop the master plan further. The division into three segments is primarily based on access to the plaza.

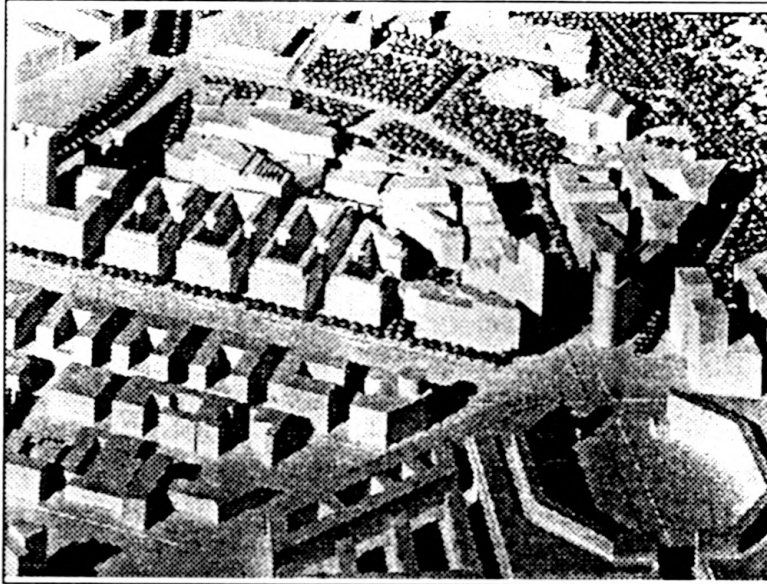


Figure 25: Daimler Benz sector - Site model by Renzo Piano. (Source: (Source: Balfour, Alan (ed.) *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995)

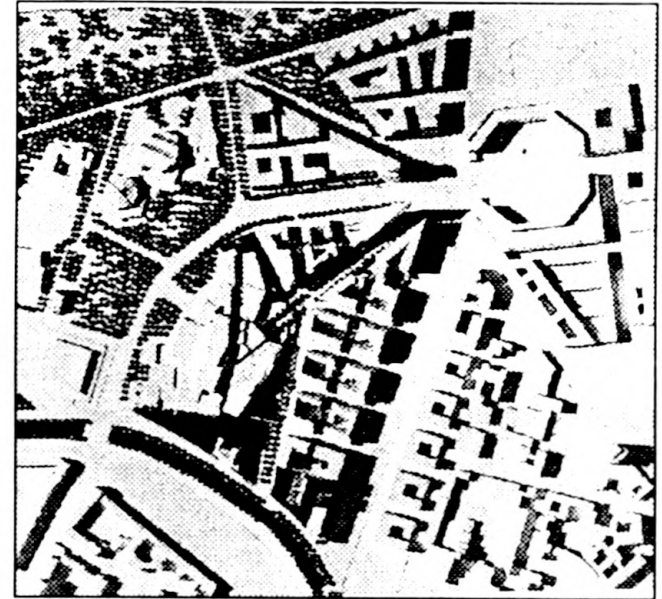


Figure 26: Aerial view of site model for Daimler-Benz. (Source: (Source: Balfour, Alan (ed.) *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995)

There are a total of nineteen buildings in this complex with three medium-rise towers. More than fifty percent of the space is allotted for offices, about twenty percent for residences and the rest is set aside for restaurants, musical theaters and other entertainment

facilities. There is a primary shopping street under a retractable roof and this is expected to be used by about one hundred thousand people every day.⁶³ Oswald Mathias Ungers, Arata Isozaki, Richard Rogers, Hans Kollhoff and Helga Timmerman, Rafael Moneo, Ulrike Lauber and Wolfgang Wohr have each been designated pockets of land for further development.

In the south-east, Giorgio Grassi's design (Fig.27) is being implemented for the **ABB** sector. Grassi's design is considered an orthodox interpretation of the Hilmer-Sattler master plan. It comprises of one twelve-storied building which represents the northern limit and four adjacent blocks each eight storeys high. The corner northern building follows the footprints of a pre-war entertainment center that stood in that very spot - the Haus

Waterland. There are four other building blocks, three of which, the middle ones, are H-shaped. Other than the fact that the

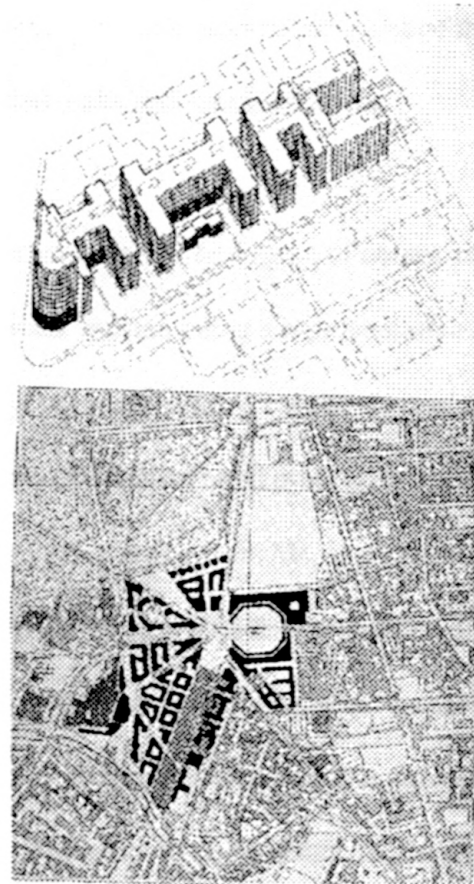


Figure 27: Giorgio Grassi's design for ABB sector. (Source: Balfour, Alan (ed.), *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995)

⁶³ Source: Balfour, Alan, "Berlin Conformed", *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995

buildings are withdrawn from the street facade and approached through courtyards, all other stipulations of the Hilmer-Sattler plan were strictly adhered to. The building facades are all uniform with gridded walls and small windows.

Each of the above discussed reconstructions are different from each other and vary in the degree of conformation with the Hilmer-Sattler plan. Sony, in general, chooses to ignore the plan and its stipulations, instead being a representative of commercialism. In the words of Alan Balfour: *"It is an explicit demonstration of the way corporate culture consumes and transforms the public realm."*⁶⁴ The design strives to create an ambitious and resilient architecture antithetical to all other constructions in the Potsdamer Platz area. Daimler Benz, through Piano's design, strives to create a more authentic civic life, in contrast to Sony's glamorous illusion. The architects delegated to the task of designing individual buildings do so within the constraints of the master plan. This is Piano's vision of creating a new European city. Grassi attempts to create a slower Berlin as a reaction to the threat of commercialism. Grassi's architecture fails to acknowledge commercialism as progressive and hence is considered retrograde in its ideals. Obviously, Berlin is in a dilemma, caught between two extreme conditions to re-establish its identity. *"Berlin faces the impossible task of reconciling the parochial and the cosmopolitan, expressions of pride and of humility, the demand to look*

⁶⁴ Balfour, Alan, "Berlin Conformed", *World Cities: Berlin*, Great Britain: Academy Editions, 1995, p.

forward and the appeal never to forget."⁶⁵ The confusion in Berlin regarding the reconstruction process to be adopted is evident through the above exploration.

⁶⁵ Ladd, Brian, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p.235

PART III
CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are discussed in three sections for clarity. The first section attempts to understand what is happening in Berlin today through the theoretical base that this research has generated, and in the process, surmise the future of Berlin. The second section highlights some general implications of the research and the final section puts forth the possible future directions that this study can take.

Berlin's Dilemma: “To Be or Not To Be”

It is necessary at this point to go back into the recesses of the past in Berlin and highlight the relevance of past events in what is happening in the city today. The occupation of the city by the Russians and the Allies and subsequent division into two parts, East Berlin and West Berlin, also had its impact on the architecture of the city. The influences from the two powers was tremendous and the architecture in Berlin became an expression of their ideologies. East Berlin was caught up in a communistic architecture and West Berlin revealed its capitalistic influences. Berlin's inherent identity had taken a backstage since World War II and the question of re-establishing its identity is the chief source of discussion in today's context. The lapse of time since

the World War until the wall came down is extremely significant. The period has resulted in obfuscating the memory associated with the traces left behind after war.

The previous chapter discussed the condition in Potsdamer Platz today and the nature of reconstruction processes that are taking place. It is evident that the current social order in Berlin has a strong inclination towards commercialization leading to large scale speculation of land in the Potsdamer-Leipziger Platz area by international investors. This undoubtedly is a significant influence in the urban transformation efforts that are underway. The thesis has clarified and established the fact that reconstruction through transformation involves considerations of present social values in combination with the values expressed through traces left behind after war. Accordingly the current trend of commercialism should work in coalition with selective memories alluding to an idealized past. The idealized past in this case, is the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century spatial order. However, the fifty years break has taken away the clarity of interpretation and has caused the intended sensitive and creative transformation efforts to descend into the realm of nostalgia. The pre-occupation with the representations of the past rather than the principles and essence of Berlin architecture led to the Hilmer-Sattler master plan being more like a restoration project.

What is happening in the Potsdamer Platz area varies in conformity to the Hilmer-Sattler plan. The Sony, Daimler-Benz and ABB constructions, as explicated in the previous chapter, are all different from each other, each attempting to be more 'Berlinish' than what Berlin is, endorsing its own interpretations instead. Alan Balfour describes the situation thus: *"Modestly different places from various time perspectives are all set within a pre-Modern time frame."*⁶⁶

This dilemma that is firmly grounded in Berlin can be evinced by the construction that is in progress. The clarity with which Schinkel, the Modernists or Hitler conceived the future is not evident now in Berlin. Instead, the future appears fuzzy since Berlin is caught in between the two extreme options of recreating the past or creating a completely different future when the ideal situation would be a synthesis of both. As Karl Scheffler says in his 1910 book on Berlin,

*"the tragedy of a fate that.....condemns Berlin forever to become and never be."*⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Balfour, Alan, "Berlin Conformed", World Cities: Berlin, Great Britain: Academy Editions,

⁶⁷ Scheffler, Karl, *Berlin - ein Stadtschicksal*, Berlin: Fannei und Walz, 1989, p.219, quoted by: Ladd, Brian, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p.124

Reflections

The research has attempted to put forth the following propositions with respect to reconstruction of a city after destruction by war, substantiating them with the example of Berlin.

The research establishes that reconstruction as a constructive transformation can be achieved by considering the current social conditions in combination with a consideration for continuity with the past spatial order which is a reflection to the past social condition.

The thesis has explored the process of evolution of a city and has clearly demonstrated the intricate relationship between the social and spatial components. Through Morales' work, it explicates the need to reconstruct as a transformation that is constructive and creative rather than restoration or creating a totally new architecture. The connection with the past is established through the process of collective and selective memory that is associated with the traces from destruction. World War in Berlin disrupted the cumulative product of several years of urban growth by destroying physical representations of the social life in the city. The clearing away of the rubble resulted in a greater trauma than the sight of ruins. This was because the ruins, in whatever condition they were, still provided a link with the past and helped recapture the past life at least through remembrance. The

removal of the rubble rudely pushed the Berliners into reality. This establishes the importance of continuity between past, present and future.

War provides a city with the opportunity to re-evaluate earlier planning and design processes and rectify past errors. In the Potsdamer-Leipziger Platz area bombing during World War II severely damaged most places and completely destroyed some buildings. During the Cold War that followed several more buildings were razed to the ground either because they were damaged beyond repair or because they were representative of unpleasant memories. The Columbus Haus was destroyed along with the House of Tourism and the Reich Chancellery. The obvious disadvantage of war is its capacity to unbiasedly eliminate positive and negative aspects of the past. But looking at it positively, war helps remove the clutter and simplify the complexity involved in accumulation and superimposition of several layers of urban growth. It also provides the city an opportunity to regard all past planning processes in a different perspective and re-evaluate them, throwing open the possibility of rectifying past errors as well as highlight positive planning techniques through better and more efficient design. There was a general discontentment in Berlin regarding the Cold War reconstruction processes. This is responsible for the turn that reconstruction has taken today, which focusses on a distant idealized past as a model.

The research has also demonstrated how selective memory is a significant abettor in the reconstruction process. This takes place in two ways:

a) By masking or eliminating physical representations that are associated with unpleasant memories or preserving them as indications of lessons to be remembered. This is a choice that the city has to make. It is evident that in Berlin's case, it was the former that took place. Soon after WW II, buildings that belonged to Hitler's period were razed to the ground. The need to forget the atrocities perpetrated by Hitler was immensely felt. A similar scenario resulted in the days that followed the removal of the wall. The wall represented years of undesirable and harsh memories and it was torn down with unbridled enthusiasm.

b) By highlighting positive memories from the past and considering them as an idealized model for future reconstruction. In the case of Berlin, late nineteenth century and early twentieth century planning and design is considered the summit of the city's achievements. Hence this period was considered an idealized past and served as a model for reconstruction. What resulted out of this consideration was the principle of Critical Reconstruction which is the basis for the master plan for the study area.

The thesis can be considered valuable in analyzing a similar situation where a city is destroyed by war. Since it elucidates the factors that must be emphasized in reconstruction, it can serve as a valuable guide to propose reconstruction of any city. It stated clearly

that what is desired is a new architecture for the city that seeks to establish connections between the past and present and forges a way towards the future as well as connects the two dimensions of social and spatial.

"Toughened by an inheritance of opposition to negation, new landscapes must emerge - landscapes capable of building, on such a disturbed base, bridges across the wound of future."⁶⁸

Future Directions

The most significant outcome of this research is its ability to demonstrate the applicability of the theoretical base constructed to any city to understand not just the past of the city, and its process of evolution, but its present as a consequence of the past and also the future. This has been clearly illustrated by employing Berlin as a case study. To recapitulate, the theoretical discourse of the thesis attempts to address three important issues:

- The city's evolution as a function of its social-spatial relationship
- War's effect on the fabric of the city

⁶⁸ Balfour, Alan, *Berlin - The Politics of Order: 1737-1989*, New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1990, p.253

- Reconstruction of the city as a consideration of current social conditions and traces from past spatial elements that are representative of past social conditions.

The concept of spatial being a reflection of the social, mirroring changes in the latter, is extremely significant. This provides a deeper understanding of the nature and structure of any city. Also the connection between past, present and future is an important consideration. The study, by bringing out the significance in these connections, will provide a better understanding of what a city is in general.

The method employed to undertake this study is fairly universal and versatile. The material can be used to analyze and understand other cities which have a rich historical past where war has caused disruption and destruction in the urban fabric, similar to Berlin. By doing so, the study puts forth a repertoire of information that must be collected prior to undertaking any reconstruction project. Its value also lies in its ability to serve as a guideline for collecting significant information for any competition based on reconstruction of cities.

This research and its approach throws some light on the larger picture of urban renewal by advocating a sensitivity in the design process. Urban renewal and reconstruction of a city after war have their obvious differences. The former involves selective removal of buildings and other physical elements that are obsolete and derelict or in need of replacement, in order to cater to current needs.

In the case of war, destruction is unbiased, all-pervading and unexpected, resulting in loss of lives as well. However, they are comparable in one aspect. The trauma associated with loss of familiar surroundings is felt in both cases. As Marc Fried says in “Grieving for a Lost Home”, which is an article on the trauma experienced by the residents of a locality in Boston as a result of relocation:

*“Any severe loss may represent a disruption in one’s relationship to the past, present and to the future.....It is a disruption in the sense of continuity which is ordinarily a taken-for-granted framework for functioning.....From this point of view, the loss of an important place represents a change in a potentially significant component of the experience of continuity.”*⁶⁹

It is evident that the sense of loss experienced in both cases is comparable. This research, by primarily emphasizing on re-establishing a stable environment through sensitive transformation, makes it possible to look at urban renewal with the same degree of sensitivity.

Finally, the value of any thesis lies in the extent it has contributed to developing the potential of the researcher. This study elucidates the nuances of the connections between past, present and future and social and spatial. By establishing, emphasizing and substantiating these facets of a city, it serves as a valid guide for reconstruction. In this way, it has enormously enhanced my understanding of these issues. It has contributed to developing me to be more prepared to make my sensitive design contribution to the architecture of the city.

⁶⁹ Fried, Marc, “Grieving for a Lost Home”, *People and Buildings*, New York: Basic Books Inc., Publishers, 1972, p.232

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CHRONOLOGY OF BERLIN'S HISTORY

1200	Berlin and Colln founded on the opposite sides of the river Spree
1415	Burgave Friedrich VI appointed as the Elector Friedrich I of Brandenburg
1451	Friedrich II moves into palace at Colln
1538	A new palace is built
1618-1648	Thirty Years War
1640-1688	Reign of Elector Friedrich Wilhelm
1647	Establishment of tree lined boulevards linking the palace with Tiergarten, known as Unter den Linden
1658-1683	Large fortification built around the Berlin-Colln area
1674	Establishment of Dorotheen Stadt, a new town, on the north side of Unter den Linden
1688-1713	Reign of Elector Friedrich III
1688	Friedrichstadt is established south of Unter den Linden
1709	All new towns are united with Berlin and Colln to form one city
1713-1740	Reign of Friedrich Wilhelm I
1740-1786	Reign of Friedrich Wilhelm II

1788-1791	Construction of Brandenburg Gate
1797-1840	Reign of Friedrich Wilhelm III
1813	Defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte in Russia
1817-1818	New guardhouse is built in Unter den Linden based on Schinkel's design
1823-1830	Building of Schinkel's museum
1838	Berlin's first railway line to Potsdam
1840-1861	Reign of Friedrich Wilhelm IV
1848	Revolution in Berlin
1861-1888	Reign of Wilhelm I
1867-1871	Construction of ring railroad around the city of Berlin
1870-1871	Bismarck appointed as Imperial Chancellor
1890	Bismarck resigns from position
1894	Completion of Reichstag
1902	Opening of the first subway
1914-1918	World War I
1918	Emperor's abdication

- 1923 **Hyperinflation**
- 1933 Hitler is appointed as Chancellor of Berlin
- 1938 Commencement of the first stage in implementing Speer's plan for Berlin
- 1939 **Germany attacks Poland**
- 1940 **First British bombs strike Berlin**
- 1943-1945 City is reduced to ruins from the Allies' bombing
- 1945 Hitler commits suicide on April 30
Berlin surrenders to the Red Army
- 1949 Blockade and air lift end in May
- 1961 **Building the Berlin Wall**
- 1963 **Agreement permitting West Berliners to visit their East Berlin relatives**
- 1969 **Willy Brandt, West German Chancellor, attempts to open contacts with GDR and Soviet Union**
- 1972 **Increasing contacts across the Berlin Wall**
- 1984 **Eberhard Diepgen becomes Mayor of West Berlin**
- 1989 **Berlin Wall is opened up in response to protests**
- 1990 **Re-unification of Germany**