

Berlin is Becoming the Capital – Surely and Securely¹

Volker Eick

The change from being an extended workbench, from the metropolis of subsidies to the East-West hub, to “enterprise Berlin” (Eberhard Diepgen) – this is both the dream and belief of the city’s political and business elites. But not theirs alone. International marketing and development agencies, multinationals (or at least their counterparts), banks, PR strategists and not least the federal government, all want to give Berlin the right form and shape or, even, to continue in the good old German tradition of “where we stopped in 1945” – as the CEO of Berlin Bank AG (now, since its merger, the 8th largest bank of Germany) reported with a refreshing honesty.

Deregulation is the magic word and Berlin is being trained in five central aspects to become a global city. All the elites who rally around profit maximization share a common interest; to proceed without disturbances with Berlin as the logistical center. The required security apparatus, put together by the federal government, the Berlin Senate and private sector shortly before the turn of the millennium, happily takes to the stage – in contrast to the city’s poor. The latter have to disappear. A little journey through Berlin’s present shows the instruments designed to get rid of the poor as well as saying goodbye to the goal of abolishing poverty.

1. ADMINISTRATION: The merger of different Senate positions and the reduction of the Berlin administration (by 30,000 to 50,000 posts) was introduced in 1992 with the so-called Heckelmann papers (cf. Münter 1992); the change from cameralistic budgeting to “lean public administration” is in process (Liebold 1995: 1); potential “efficiency savings” of a further 20,000 jobs are considered as realistic if the *Länder* Berlin and Brandenburg merged (cf. Sparmann 1995:

1 | Source: Eick, V. (1995) “Berlin wird Hauptstadt, aber sicher ...” In Sträter, F. (ed.) *Los Angeles – Berlin. Stadt der Zukunft – Zukunft der Stadt*. Context Verlag, Stuttgart, 129-142.

6); the planned aggregation of currently 23 districts into only twelve has so far failed due to the resistance of local administrations.

2. PRIVATIZATION: Services and construction projects that until now have been solely public are increasingly conducted as public-private-partnerships (Zawatka-Gerlach 1995: 9); the privatization of transport and other utilities and public services (water supply, hospitals, street cleaning) is running at high speed (cf. Jurczyk 1994); municipal city marketing and tourist advertising are being privatized; the direct investment strategies for industry and service sector businesses are being transferred into private ownership or taken out of parliamentary accountability.

3. INVESTMENTS: The Senate contributes in four key investment fields to Berlin's anticipated future leading position, both globally and within Germany: the expansion of Berlin as a location for industry fairs, the establishment of Adlershof as a research and technology location, and the expansion of Berlin as the site of parliament and government. All of which illustrate an urban politics of international dimensions (cf. IHK Berlin 1992 and 1993). In the meantime, larger social housing projects are threatened, halted, delayed or subjected to financial reductions (cf. Lessen 1995: 7).

4. CAPITAL: These processes of deregulation are superposed by the decision of the German Parliament (the *Bundestag*) to transfer its own location as well as the site of the federal government to Berlin, even if not all government departments arrive in full but (in the first instance) only with a so-called head office. City center locations were primarily chosen as sites for departments and administration, leading to a subsequent relocation of embassies, (foreign) industry and trade agencies and lobby organizations alongside company headquarters and banks.

5. URBAN STRUCTURE: The concept of decentered concentration, promoted as a key vision by the Senator for Urban Development, Volker Hassemer, is intended to strengthen the poly-central structure of the city. The relocation of industrial companies into the Berlin hinterland (its affluent commuter belt), an orientation towards services for the city center (European Service Metropolis) as well as a modified concept of careful urban regeneration (cf. Bodenschatz and Welch-Guerra 1993), however, leads in a programmed and determined framework to small-scale social polarization (cf. Borst 1993; *Der Spiegel* 8/1995: 52 f.).

Admittedly, new lines of conflict are pre-programmed into the changes sketched out above. However, the grand coalition of SPD and CDU that governs in Berlin is not threatened by a parliamentary opposition and can integrate the remainders from the Fordist era of the "Berlin quagmire" (CDU) and respective "sleaze" (SPD) into its modernizing strategy (Sontheimer and Vorfelder 1987). While the numerous newly arriving and aspiring elites in their demands for political power provoke new conflicts, the power of definition over what consti-

tutes accurate goals, important problems and serious problem groups remains in the hands of the established pro-growth coalition.

FROM MANAGING THE POOR TO REMOVING THEM

Up until the middle of the 1980s we can talk with certain justification about certain freedoms in Berlin for migrants, prostitutes, beggars, homeless, punks and drug users. This can be done without trivializing the repressive politics against marginalized groups or even ignoring the conflicts between squatters and the Senate in the early 1980s. Not at least the pressure from the so-called new social movements also led to the creation of a network of self-help initiatives that was able to institutionalize aspects of these freedoms. In this way, poverty was at once managed while the responsibility was handed to intermediary organizations and NGOs. For this, (little) financial resources were provided. None of the problems were resolved by this policy – a fact also acknowledged by the self-help groups – but it nonetheless created the above-mentioned freedoms (cf. Lang 1994). The support for such projects is now being reduced by the Berlin Senate, making way for a discourse and program of exclusion. If up until reunification poverty was considered primarily as a problem of a social nature and of public order, the poor are now regarded as a threat to safety and security (cf. Cremer-Schäfer 1993). Social exclusion and stigmatization go hand in hand with spatial separation.

The homeless are now persecuted more strongly and systematically expelled from public spaces; subway stations, parks and places near tourist attractions more and more turn into no-go areas for them. In recent years they are not only threatened by the police and shop owners but also increasingly subjected to private policing initiatives. We can observe similar developments for those migrants who live from trading cigarettes, gambling and begging. The hunt on foreigners as pursued by the official government over the past three years additionally exacerbates their living conditions (cf. Amnesty International 1994: 160 ff.).²

Senate policy initially focused on the growing number of people who lived in *Wagenburgen* (alternative settlements made of vans, construction and recreational vehicles), mostly in inner city locations. Not only poverty but also the desire for alternative forms of living contributed to this residential form that

2 | E.g., the so-called Polish market was an urban space in Kreuzberg, directly adjacent to Potsdamer Platz where – organized mainly by Polish and Turkish traders – clothing, food as well as alcohol and cigarettes were provided cheaply in a judicial grey area (under black market conditions). The Berlin Senate first established a police task force and then, in the summer of 1989, banned the market.

until now has also been marketed by the Senate as a tourist attraction. Massive police operations have so far evicted two of a total of twelve *Wagenburgen* from the inner city (Engelbecken/Kreuzberg; Potsdamer Platz); two have been allocated alternative locations on the edge of the city (cf. Büttner 1995: 24). The media prepared for the evictions with propaganda headlines such as “Slums in Prime Location,” “Centers of Epidemics,” “Hiding Place for Criminals” (tatblatt 1993: 16). In addition, the police clear local drug scenes in some urban spaces with the support of private security services. In this process, a large part of the drug scene at Nollendorfpfplatz (Kreuzberg 61) has moved to Kottbusser Tor and Mariannenplatz in the previous postal district Kreuzberg 36.

In a city without a red-light district regulation, prostitutes are also subject to increasing pressures. These attacks are currently centered on the future government district (Tiergarten-Süd). Here, prostitutes ought to disappear, regardless of recent agreements having been reached between residents and prostitutes (Hydra 1994: 3). This stance is, among other arguments, being justified by drug-related prostitution. It is considered as not fitting for the area. Therefore, the then Permanent Secretary of the Senator for the Interior, Armin Jäger, suggested that “fences with locks should be erected” and a more visible [police] presence demonstrated (Berliner Morgenpost, March 26, 1992).

“KILLING THEM SOFTLY ...” — OLD AND NEW ACTORS IN BERLIN

Violence, crime and security are the key vocabulary with which the ruling elites want to keep the “new Berlin” free from potential disturbances or to cleanse it. This approach to the regulation of poverty has changed the structures of the security apparatus and has expanded its scope of duties. Security structure in this context means “security of the interior,” i.e. security organized and financed by the state (police, border police, armed forces, secret service) as well as the private security sector and neighborhood watches and architectural measures designed to establish a particular notion of security in architectural form. Private security includes all private persons and businesses that “provide security services in which they, for payment, try to protect individuals, property and interests from danger” (Nogala 1992: 18).

... THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The federal government, together with the *Treuhand* (the privatization agency for formerly state owned properties in East Germany), is one of the largest ground and property owners in Berlin. With the decision to relocate the parliament and government to Berlin, it was demanded to disempower the districts

of Tiergarten and Mitte and shift decision-making powers for central decisions to the federal government. The “Capital Contract” regulates these interests and has led to a centralization planning authorities (cf. Schulz 1992: 1). The distribution of government buildings across the two districts (in contrast to the closed-off government district in Bonn) will lead to decentralized mobile security zones, for each of which access rights will be granted or denied according to its needs. All planning processes are conducted under the highest security level so that no detailed information can be obtained (cf. Zwoch 1994: 1327).

The debate concerning the scale of the intended exclusion zone around the *Reichstag* is, however, a sham. Police as well as the federal government want, for technical reasons, an exclusion zone as small as possible; vehicle movements between each government building and during visits of foreign government guests will be the deciding factor. The former State Secretary for the Interior, Hans Neusel, already confirmed this by declaring site and building protection as one of the key problems (die tageszeitung, August 9, 1991). The Border Police (BGS) controls the local train system (*S-Bahn*), German airports and has also begun to control the long-distance railway stations since October 1992. Beginning in January 1995, Deutsche Bahn AG (German Rail) has established within its “SSS concept” (security, service, cleanliness) an additional and new security service. In Berlin, 426 BGS officers with dogs are on duty against homeless people on *S-Bahn* and long-distance railway stations. In Ahrensfelde, 30 kilometers outside Berlin, the “Security Squadron Federal Government” was established in January 1992 on a former GDR Ministry of State Security property (Der Tagesspiegel, January 26, 1992).

This image of a purified Germany ought to find its architectural expression, according to the federal government’s will, to an exceptional extent in the old and new capital (cf. Arch+ 1994; Libeskind 1994: 38 ff.). Besides the staging of the mock City Palace, discussed all over the country, the continuing scandal over the New Guard House as the central memorial site of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the concept of the government district and *Reichstag*, the presentation of other central spaces also takes on a new significance. The federal government has gained significant influence following the decision to relocate the capital. We can observe a national setting in scene of the city by the federal government. It finds its expression in the federal armed forces marching underneath the Brandenburg Gate and the renaming of streets. It also establishes new conditions for access while redefining groups that are in disagreement over the ruling forms of use of these spaces as a potential disturbance. All that could damage this staging, while also possibly making visible the consequences of the pursued strategies of modernization, has to be expelled from the urban stage.

... BERLIN'S INDUSTRY AND TRADE AGENCIES, THE SENATE

The business owners who form the Working Group City (AG City) in the West center of Berlin (Kurfürstendamm) are, alongside the Chamber of Commerce of Berlin, the economic key agents of a politics of exclusion. With direct reference to Berlin's new role and financial losses due to the visible misery outside their shops, they demand the removal of the poor. The traditional business people of the upper middle classes in Berlin fear the poor as much as they fear the competition of newly arriving businesses. Customers with high spending power are in demand and one needs at least to clampdown on "people who damage their businesses" and who are responsible for "conditions such as in Chicago," according to these retailers – even more so if foreign competition cannot be kept away. This, at least, was the argument made by the chair of the AG City, Peter Hosemann, at a press meeting (Link 1993: 16). With this argument, those who organized within the AG City were able to force the Senator for the Interior to provide every day up to 100 police officers solely for the Kurfürstendamm and to continue a practice of illegal employment, i.e. private security companies working without a license (cf. Remke and Rechenberg 1992). At the same time, the AG City thus defined what undesirable persons are at Kurfürstendamm and its adjacent streets: unemployed young people, gamblers, the poor and the homeless.³

Initial conflicts with the police, who were irritated by the fact that numerous people from the pimp scene and involved in prostitution were now employed by private security services, had been resolved. Thanks to their superior contacts to the Senate, the business owners remained dominant. Silently, a coalition of private security services, the Senate for the Interior and the police command has been formed against the city's poor, transcending any democratic concerns. Even threats of disinvestment are part of daily life in the business camp if it sees its profits endangered: there existed considerations to leave the city center, so they said. The "sliding of the city centers" caused by "the nuisance of beggars and impostors in pedestrian precincts" and "questionable events with cheap stalls" were not desired since they "attract a different audience and block the expensive shop windows" (Friedemann 1993: 41).

Another important actor in implementing the new security doctrine is the Berlin public transport company, *Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe* (BVG).⁴ Formally it

3 | The AG City convenes four meetings a year with representatives of the police, private security, the Senate and the Boroughs as well as staff of, often church-funded, homeless hostels. In these meetings the latter are told where homeless people are not desired.

4 | As recently as the late-1970s the BVG rejected private security services; now it refers with pride to IHS and its work. From January to September 1992, its "balance of

reports to the Senator for Transport but in matters of maintaining public safety and order it is instructed by the Senator for the Interior. These instructions are given by a longstanding hardliner of Berlin's security policy, Senator for the Interior Dieter Heckelmann. The removal or changing of seats in subway stations already began in 1987 (cf. *die tageszeitung*, October 17, 1987). At this moment, security technology (CCTV cameras and emergency telephones) are installed in order to increase passengers' "feeling of safety" in the subway stations (Richter 1994: 19). In addition, a weekly exchange takes place between BVG, police, border police, Senate for the Interior and the IHS security service (cf. Pütter 1992: 36). Future tasks are allocated accordingly. These meetings are as little subject to (parliamentary) control as there currently exists a legal basis against the recording of personal information by private security (cf. Berliner Datenschutzbeauftragter 1994: 73).

Berlin took up security aspects in the building control of social housing as the first *Bundesland*. Berlin's social service administration is also innovative: under its instruction, the Berlin job center, through the SECU employment agency, offers positions to long-term unemployed who in uniform and equipped with walkie-talkies accompany older people in their shopping and in errands to administration offices and banks (cf. Arbeitsamt II 1994: 1). This initiative occurs alongside numerous other similar ones that intend to provide a (re-)newed function for uniformed presences within urban spaces. The Berlin Senate also intends, for the first time, to deploy the Voluntary Police Service (FPR) aggressively in urban spaces, while until now the FPR only supported the police in site and building protection. Plans exist to deploy the FPR against illegal barbecues in municipal parks and green spaces from summer 1995 onwards. The largest inner-city park, Tiergarten, is primarily frequented by Turkish families and lies right in the middle of the future government district (cf. Heisenkamp 1994: 17).

... THE BERLIN POLICE

In total, Germany had 325,460 people employed in the police in 1992. In Berlin, the ratio of police per population is the highest with 32,500 people. "A police officer is responsible for 107 citizens in the German capital [...]. On average, the ratio police to resident is 1:243 across the country" (Höft 1992: 63). The

activities" reads as follows: "A total of 167,000 operations: 35,300 passengers prevented from travel due to alcohol consumption, 46,000 instructed to leave stations, 25,000 homeless people called to order; 15,653 times 'influence exerted' on noisy young people, 6,439 times patrolled against smokers, 1,637 against musicians, 3,115 against beggars, 1,694 against *ad hoc* trading" (Club der Verdrängten 1994: 5).

total number of police officers in Germany is 225,000. There are now 200,000 private security personnel.

The formation of special task forces to directly target undesirable people was not met with any critical responses. Part of these task forces is the Group AGA (Targeted Surveillance of Foreigners) and the special task force *Blauer Dunst* ("Blue Smoke," primarily active around the Brandenburg Gate) against Polish and Vietnamese cigarette traders (cf. AG Innere Sicherheit 1994: 22). Special units of the Berlin police, border police and the Federal Office for Criminal Investigation (BKA) are dedicated to (foreign) young people who are assumed to be involved in youth gangs (cf. Senatsverwaltung für Inneres 1994: 44 ff.). In addition, many assaults against migrants are evidenced and recorded; the racist character of the Berlin police is by now the subject of publications of the human rights organization Amnesty International. The fact that the Berlin police apparatus, including large parts of its trade union, is infiltrated by members of the far-right party *Die Republikaner* (Republicans) (Krüger and Steinborn 1993: 286) has been the subject of long and inconsequential debates.

So-called Operative Groups (OG), whose range of duties contains the current and future core city center areas, provide support for these developments. Their organizational structure demonstrates the new policing that centers on the targeted extraction of undesired persons from particular spaces. Heckelmann instructed the establishment of the OG City West in July 1993 exclusively to target beggars, the homeless and foreign gamblers (Pütter and Strunk 1994: 27). Corresponding to the investment and tourist centers of the Berlin Senate, so far four OG have been established: OG Alex (Alexanderplatz), OG Potse (Potsdamer Straße), OG City West (Kurfürstendamm), and, in January 1994, OG SO 36 (Kreuzberg). Also, any possible political protest has already been prepared for: the political police of the city, the Berlin State Security, holds a database of 300 people, originally set up for protests against the Olympics and now continued as "Anti-Restructuring File" (Berliner Datenschutzbeauftragter 1994: 70 ff.).

... AND PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICES

750 private security services were counted in 1989 all over Germany. In October 1992, the police assumed that 170 legally registered private security services existed in Berlin alone. The sector consists of around ten large providers and numerous small (also illegally operating) businesses (cf. Jürgensen 1994: 14). Until now, no legally regulated training schedules exist.

Private security services currently find themselves in a third wave of expansion, after 1945 and the late 1960s and early 1970s. A fundamentally new aspect in this is the expansion of their duties. Up until now almost all their activities

could be characterized as site, building and personal protection. This is no longer the case. Increasingly they take on tasks that originally resided within the powers controlled by the state, i.e. the police forces: traffic monitoring and the control of public spaces such as subway stations, pedestrian precincts and parks. Private security by now also frequently assists, illegally and in cooperation with the police, in the eviction of squats.⁵ Search tasks are requested and already practiced within a legal grey area. Private security services are also usefully deployed in custody against delinquent foreigners or rejected asylum seekers prior to their deportation (cf. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, August 28, 1993).

New technologies, new management concepts and processes of social polarization have contributed to this third wave of expansion for the private security sector. Its main task, the “abstract prevention of danger,” is exclusively provided to affluent institutions, firms and individuals. In Berlin they are employed by the federal government, the Berlin Senate, as well as private industry. With their deployment in the city’s public transport network they also redefine public space into private space. The consequence of this is that private services define the conditions of access to these, now also privatized, public spaces. The re-orientation of how the city center is architecturally staged – filled to the hilt with shopping malls and precincts and a semi-public space (see “Daimler-City” at Potsdamer Platz or the Friedrichstadtpassagen as one of 911 building sites in Berlin-Mitte) – supports this process of eroding public space.

Large companies such as Veba AG (Raab Karcher Sicherheit), Stinnes AG (Brink’s Schenker GmbH), Pedus AG (Peter Dussmann Sicherheitsdienste), Wisser Group of the textiles and cleaning magnate Claus Wisser (Industrie- und Handelsschutz GmbH), or the Berlin Penz-Garski-Immobilien GmbH with its B.O.S.S. Sicherheitsdienst, stand behind these private security services. Former police officers as well as staff of other security forces are active in these companies. Founded in 1977 and in Berlin active since 1990, the Industrie- und Handelsschutz GmbH (IHS) is, e.g., led by former head of the German Intelligence Service, Heribert Hellenbroich, and is one of the big ones in the sector with 2,500 employees.

INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL IN BERLIN

If international companies are only mentioned in passing in this discussion of Berlin’s new security regime, this is also due to the fact that most of the larger

5 | As in Cologne (cf. the 1994 documentary “Unsere Stadt soll sauber werden”), in Potsdam and Berlin (cf. *Der Tagesspiegel*, June 16, 1994; and *Berliner Zeitung*, May 31, 1994, and June 16, 1994).

construction projects are still in the process of being completed.⁶ Thus, little actual experience exists to date. The multinationals have so far, similar to the developers, let themselves not be directly drawn into the debates and round tables around security but, instead, act autonomously and directly. Many projects in Berlin are conceptualized so that atriums, covered spaces and underpasses form semi-public spaces that are controlled by private business. This creates the preconditions for businesses themselves to become agents in these new spaces. Numerous examples for this approach exist in the US and are referred to not only by many of the international companies but also by the AG City (cf. Sorkin 1992; Davis 1990).

There exists, however, evidence of some of the big investors in other cities. Sony AG, now with a construction project at Potsdamer Platz, thus threatened a relocation of its headquarter in Cologne in 1988 unless adjacent Roma and Sinti camps were not immediately removed. The campsite, according to the then Sony head, Jack Schmuckli, was “worse than a waste dump” (Tolmein 1988).

Also present in Berlin and also active in real estate is Douglas Holding AG (cosmetics), which recently demanded that city centers had to be managed “in the same way as shopping malls” (Friedemann 1993: 41). Its Chair of the Board also criticized transport policies that were damaging to retail businesses. Douglas Holding AG threatened that the company would withdraw from city centers if the city fathers were not able to keep their city center clean and targeted crime successfully. Similarly, not all shop owners could afford private security and the police devoted more attention to illegal parking than criminals and drug users (*ibid.*). The influence and significance of international capital for aspects of security policies cannot be anticipated at this moment in time. Also for this reason we need to defer analysis of whether the concluding quote from the biggest real estate leader in Berlin describes a line of confrontation that may be applicable to the whole of Berlin at a later stage. We could probably only wish this to be the case for the population of the city, in the face of existing alternatives and despite its inherent contradictions:

6 | I will refrain from listing a myriad of international and national companies that have announced to, or already did, relocate their headquarters or branches to Berlin's city center. An overview is provided by Jones Lang Wotton (1992) and Müller International (1993); for the consequences, see Brake (1992), Eichstädt (1992) and Krätke (1991). Their contributions amount, in terms of security policies, to what the federal SPD politician Jürgen Starnick (1994) formulated as an excuse for the security interests of the federal government as follows: one will discover “for the remainder of the parliamentary and government buildings that they compare with the headquarter of Deutsche Bank like an igloo to a castle.”

“Several people are militantly resisting against looming changes in their ‘Kiez.’ Newly opened shops for more affluent consumers have their window fronts smashed, hated ‘yuppies’ need to bear the verbal abuse once they have moved into refurbished loft apartments. Those considered to be ‘speculators’ have to expect the worst. In short: those who invest and live here [in Kreuzberg] have to rely on a certain toleration and should not have any fear of contact vis-à-vis the colorful people of dropouts (and scroungers)” (Plötz 1994: 52).

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